



Site Name: *U.S. Military Road Marker*

Location: Saginaw Road and Dort Highway

Year Est: marker placed in 1927 (date source: historic publications)

History/Descriptive Notes: Erected by the Genesee Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, this marker (plaque on large boulder) was placed in honor of the military road that was used to transport troops and materials from Detroit to Mackinaw, and also for use by settlers. It was authorized by congress in 1827 and built north, to the Flint settlement area in 1833. Charles and John Butler were influential in seeing this road built. The marker is located within the Whigville Community area.

Due to the heavy traffic at its present location, this marker is difficult to read. The committee should discuss moving it to a more visible location, perhaps one that has significant pedestrian traffic and is still located on Saginaw Road.

Site Name: *The Plank Roads*

Location: Fenton Road, Holly Road, and Saginaw Road

Tax Parcel Number: n/a

Year Built: ca. 1850's (per historic publications)

History/Descriptive Notes: In the mid 1800s, as more people settled in the Grand Blanc Territory, traveling from village to village became a necessity. Roads, often times old Indian trails, were very treacherous to travel. In the late 1840s the idea of plank roads was established and companies were formed to finance and constructed these roads made of wide hewn timber planks. They were built throughout Michigan. In fact, Michigan was one of the leaders in plank road construction. Historic records state that Fenton, Holly and Saginaw Roads were originally plank roads, which allowed for travel between the Flint and Holly communities. Stage coach stops were located along these routes. The Gibson Tavern in Gibsonville (Whigville) was one stop located in the township as it is known today. However, funding was scarce, so to reimburse investors they became toll roads. It didn't take long for this "new" method of road construction to fall by the wayside. Although there are no remains of the plank roads today, they represent a unique place in the development of our roadway system. A marker commemorating these "original" roads is worth considering.



Uncovering the base of an old plank road in East Lansing - Photo courtesy of the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries

100 Site Name: *The Pere Marquette Railroad (also once known as the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and now known as the CSX Railroad)*

Location: Through the center of township in north south direction

Tax Parcel Number: n/a

Year Built: 1864 (per historic publications)

History/Descriptive Notes: The Pere Marquette Railroad that ran from Saginaw to Flint was completed in 1862. Shortly after, senator at the time, Henry Crapo, and others organized a railroad company to build a rail from Flint to Fenton. Grand Blanc residents recognized the benefits of having the rail run through their community and met with Crapo to establish a route. A few of the key stakeholders included Alvah Brainerd, John McFarlen, Edward Sawyer, and Edward Parsons. It is said the downfall of Gibsonville resulted when

C. D. W. Gibson, not seeing the benefits, refused to permit the rail through his property. With a more efficient transport of goods, this rail led to the growth of Grand Blanc Center and other communities along the route from Saginaw to Detroit. Edward Parsons was instrumental during its construction, cutting the wood that provided railroad ties. Should a marker be placed to commemorate this milestone, his property (The Parsons Home) would be a fitting location.



PM caboose in Saginaw - July 1949.

Photo courtesy of the Pere Marquette Historical Society website.

Site Name: *National Estates Neighborhood*

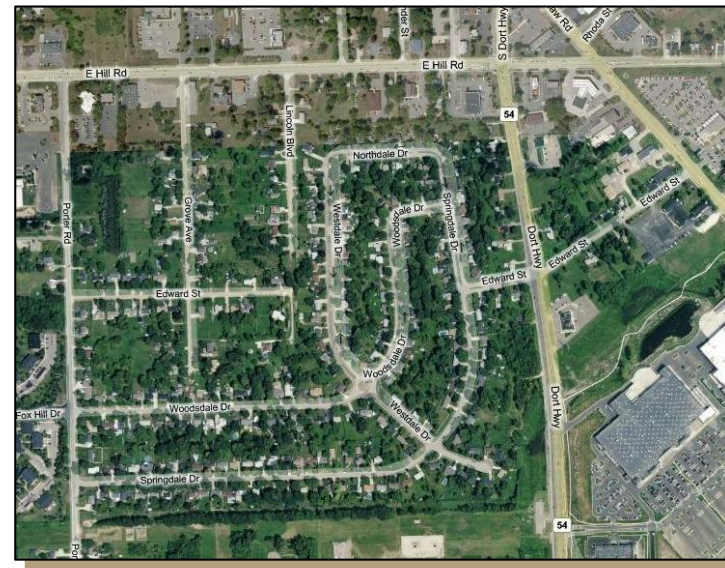
Address: between Porter Road and Dort Highway, south of Hill Road

Tax Parcel Number: various

Year Built: 1955+ (per tax records)

Architectural Style: various

History/Descriptive Notes: After World War II, the tank plant located on Saginaw Road was purchased by General Motors and became part of their world wide metal fabricating division. With its close proximity to the plant, National Estates single family subdivision was developed in the 1950s to meet the demands of the abundant GM employees to the area. Traditionally, as in Flint, factory employees would live in areas close or near the factories, as most did not depend on the automobile. Although this is not the first subdivision in the township, its relationship to the plant led to the residential development activity the community is now known for. The committee shall decide if a commemorative marker or other form of recognition is appropriate.



Site Name: *Mildred Doran and the Lincoln Airport*

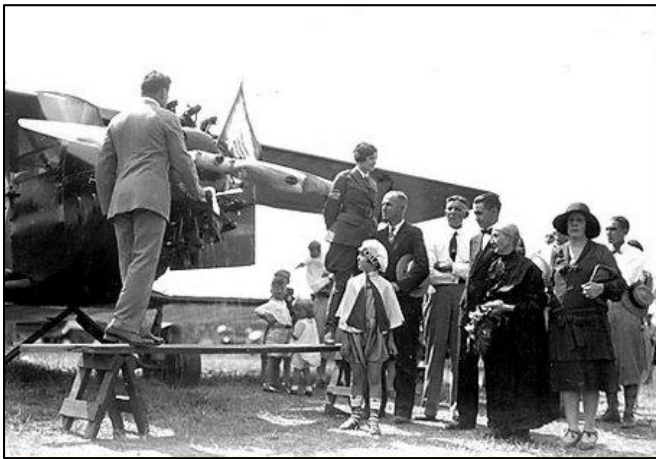
Location: Southeast corner of Maple Avenue and Saginaw Street

Tax Parcel Number: various

Year: 1927 (per historic records)

History/Descriptive Notes: Miss Doran wanted to be the first woman to fly across the Pacific Ocean so, when James Dole, the pineapple king, sponsored a race from Oakland, California to Honolulu, Hawaii, she was determined to be a part of it. She was inspired, like many others, by Charles Lindbergh's 1927 solo flight from New York to Paris. In 1927, Mildred was 22 years old and taught fifth grade in Caro. She also taught Sunday School at Lakeview Methodist Episcopal Church in Flint. The Dole Air Race or Dole Derby began on August 16, 1927. William Malloska, the owner of Lincoln Oil, wanted to sponsor a plane in the race. Mildred had only a few hours of flight experience, flying out of Lincoln Airport, a simple airstrip with a hangar also owned by Mr. Malloska.

Mildred hadn't learned to fly or to navigate but, as a female, she received so much press that the airplane was named for her and she became a passenger. There were (8) planes that qualified for the race. The *Miss Doran* left from Grand Blanc Township and flew to Oakland, California for the race. Once there, it took off and had to return, due to mechanical trouble, but was able to get back into the race. The plane never made it to Honolulu and was never seen again. The U.S. Navy sent 42 ships and 3 submarines to search to no avail. William Malloska, president of Lincoln Oil offered a \$10,000 reward for *Miss Doran's* recovery. A memorial service was held in Flint for Mildred and a local theatre showed the newsreel of the departure from Oakland.



Mildred with her plane - Photo courtesy of the Flint Journal- 8-31-08

Mildred Doran - Photo courtesy of StarBulletin.com.



In 1929, Lincoln Oil dedicated a memorial and shrine to Mildred Doran. It was a windmill-shaped gas station with an upstairs apartment named Doran Tower. It was located on the SE corner of Maple Avenue and Saginaw Street at the Lincoln Airport property. A large boulder with a bronze tablet was installed just south of the tower with an inscription. The inscription read: "Only those are fit to live who are not afraid to die." In 1932, Lincoln Airport gave way to Lincoln Manor subdivision. The plaque was lost during relocation due to road construction. The Doran Tower Restaurant which occupied the building closed in 1966 giving way to several other businesses.

Doran Tower was torn down in 1973 and the memorial expecting to remain for 100 years was gone. It is rumored that the foundation walls and possibly the basement still remains under the parking lot.

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