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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

__X__ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

1. Early Northfield Township: An Agricultural Landscape (1824-1880)
2. Growth of Whitmore Lake: Railroads, Tourism, and Ice (1880-1945)
3. Changes to Rural Life (1880-1945)
4. The Post-War Era (1945-1980)

C. Form Prepared by:

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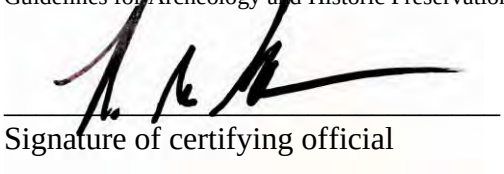
D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.



_____ _SHPO_____ _August_26, 2025_____
Signature of certifying official Title Date

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

James Gabbert _____ 11/17/2025
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.
Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1: 60-100 hours (generally existing multiple property submissions by paid consultants and by Maine State Historic Preservation staff for in-house, individual nomination preparation)
Tier 2: 120 hours (generally individual nominations by paid consultants)
Tier 3: 230 hours (generally new district nominations by paid consultants)
Tier 4: 280 hours (generally newly proposed MPS cover documents by paid consultants).

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Introduction

Northfield Township is located in northeastern Washtenaw County, sharing its northern boundary with Livingston County. Washtenaw County is a rectangular-shaped county encompassing about 720 square miles, and it is located approximately forty miles west of Detroit and approximately fifty miles southeast of Lansing. Although the cities of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Saline, Chelsea, Milan, and Dexter, as well as the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, are all located within the county, Northfield Township is largely rural. The unincorporated community of Whitmore Lake is located in the northwestern section of the township.

Whitmore Lake is the largest body of water in Northfield Township at 677 acres. The average depth is only ten feet; however, three deep kettle holes include the southwestern corner at thirty-five feet deep, the north shore at forty-five feet deep, and the northeast corner at sixty-nine feet deep.[1] This lake has always been the most popular in the county for boating and fishing, with bluegill the most commonly caught fish species. The lake is divided nearly in half by the county line, with the southern half situated in Washtenaw County and the northern half lying in Livingston County.[2] The lake was named for Judge Oliver Whitmore, who accompanied surveyor Jonathan F. Stratton to the area in the 1820s.[3]

In addition to Whitmore Lake, there are five other substantial lakes in the township, all in the northern half, and all kettle lakes formed by glaciers. Horseshoe Lake is south of Whitmore Lake and covers eighty-five acres with a thirty-foot average depth. Greatly impacted by runoff from the surrounding agricultural fields, aquatic plants are abundant in Horseshoe Lake, making this lake less desirable for fishing, boating, or swimming than Whitmore Lake. Wildwood Lake, in the northeast corner of the township, is surrounded by large areas of swampland, making its borders somewhat difficult to define. Originally known as Dead Lake, although the reason for this name is not clear, its deepest point is thirty-two feet. Tobin Lake, near the center of the northern part of the township, encompasses about one hundred fifty acres with a twenty-seven foot average depth. It was originally known as Jack Lake,

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[1] Note: Kettle holes are formed by glacial activity when buried ice blocks melt thereby creating a depression, typically resulting in either the formation of deeper areas within an existing lakebed or the formation of a new lake.

[2] Wystan Stevens, ed, *Northfield Harvest: A Pictorial History of Northfield Township and the Whitmore Lake Area* (Whitmore Lake, MI: Northfield Township Historical Society, 1999), 29, 32, 35; [George Sutton], "Northfield Township," *History of Washtenaw County, Michigan; Together with Sketches of Its Cities, Villages and Townships […]* (1881; repr., Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Mt. Vernon, IN: Windmill Productions, Inc., 1990), 641; Thomas Hennings, *Looking Back: The History of Northfield Township and the Whitmore Lake Area* (Whitmore Lake, MI: Northfield Township Historical Society, 1985), 3-8.

[3] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 651; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 59-60; Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin, *Washtenaw County: An Illustrated History* (Northridge, CA: Washtenaw County Historical Society, 1988), 24.

named for a horse that escaped his owner and was rescued from a small island in the middle of the lake. Lawton Lake, which is just east of Whitmore Lake and lies partly in Livingston County, encompasses only eighteen acres but reaches depths of as much as eighty feet. This lake, too, is surrounded by swampland and was therefore originally called Mud Lake. Van Atta Lake is a small lake of about five acres in the northeastern section of the township. It was named for the original settler on its banks, then renamed Peter Hill Lake when the land was sold. Several smaller lakes and ponds are also located in Northfield Township, most of which are in the northwestern section, and many of which are located on private property.[4]

A number of Indigenous peoples occupied Washtenaw County during the historic period, which is generally defined by the use of European goods made of metal or glass. Due to the ever-changing territories of these groups over hundreds of years, the merging and dividing of various groups, the infrequency of written records, and the impact of the European presence, it is difficult to pinpoint precise dates of occupation, territorial boundaries, or exact origins prior to arriving in present-day Washtenaw County. Still, archaeological investigations into the material record have revealed much about those who occupied the land prior to the arrival of Europeans.[5]

Tribes of Algonquins, the largest language family in North America, occupied much of Washtenaw County at least as early as the 1600s. The Miami people lived in the river valleys of southeastern Michigan, likely including the Huron River valley. A relatively transient tribe, the Miami migrated around centralized villages, believed to have been located near Detroit, Saint Joseph, and Fort Wayne (Indiana). The Miami people were later displaced from Washtenaw County by the Potawatomi, another Algonquin tribe. The Chippewa, or Ojibwe, were displaced from earlier territory north of Lake Superior and later Sault Ste Marie by the Five Nations (later the Six Nations), an alliance of Iroquois tribes known for aggressive warfare using European weapons, moving into southeastern Michigan. The Ottawa, an Algonquin tribe in southeastern Canada, were also driven out by the Six Nations and fled to present-day Michigan. There they friendly relations with the Hurons, Wyandots, Potawatomi, and Chippewa tribes, and eventually formed an alliance known as The Three Fires with the Potawatomi and Chippewa.[6]

The Sauk, another Algonquin tribe, were also believed to have occupied Washtenaw County at one time, though they were on unfriendly terms with The Three Fires and generally remained further north toward Saginaw. Still their presence is marked on the county's history with the presence of the Sauk Trail that originally connected Detroit to Chicago, by which the first Europeans arrived in Northfield Township in

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[4] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 36-39; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 641, 651; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 8-14.
[5] W.B. Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County* (Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr Publisher, 1927) 17-18; Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 27-29.
[6] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County*, 7-17.

the 1820s, and which is loosely the route followed by present-day Interstate 94. Closely related to the Sauk are the Foxes, who traveled through Washtenaw County in the early 1700s when they left the Green Bay, Wisconsin, area to attempt, unsuccessfully, to destroy Detroit. Little is known about their time in the area, but it is believed they relied on the hunting and fishing grounds during their campaign against Detroit.[7]

Wyandots, also called Hurons, of the Iroquois family were also known to have lived in southeastern Michigan. Believed to have previously occupied parts of present-day New York and southern Canada, these tribes were driven to the Midwest by the Six Nations. Their primary villages were located in present-day Wyandot and Brownstown, both east of Northfield Township, but they are believed to have occupied parts of Washtenaw County as well.[8]

Archaeological studies, especially those conducted by the University of Michigan, have revealed much about the lifeways of the Algonquin and Iroquois peoples living in present-day Washtenaw County. They constructed dome-shaped lodges of poles covered with bark or animal skins, and their carpentry also included making boats and paddles, bows and arrows, baskets, bowls, and hunting traps. They hunted deer, elk, and buffalo; fished for frogs, turtles, clams, and fish; and gathered berries, wild fruits, and edible roots; and cultivated corn, beans, and squash. Maple trees are so abundant that the late winter practice of making maple syrup traces back to Indigenous people in the region and continues in front yards throughout the county to this day.[9] They made clothing from tanned animal hides and jewelry from slate, clam shells, and baked clay.[10] Although artifacts like projectile points, blades, and jewelry used by these early inhabitants are commonly uncovered during heavy rains or while cultivating fields, few signs of their presence in the region remain on the landscape today.

Michigan was originally part of the larger Northwest Territory, along with present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and the eastern half of Minnesota. The region was ceded by Great Britain to the United States in the Treaty of Paris in 1783 following the Revolutionary War. The Michigan Territory was carved out of this larger region in 1805, however, before the federal government would allow White settlement, they began displacing the Indigenous peoples who already occupied the region so they could survey, subdivide, and sell their land.[11] As more European settlers arrived, animals were hunted and displaced from the tribes' hunting grounds, European medicines were needed to combat European diseases in Indigenous populations, and Indigenous peoples increasingly relied on European goods for their daily lives. As their self-sufficiency decreased, tribes began to accept annuities offered by the government in exchange for their ancestral land, while at the same time, the federal government began

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[7] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County*, 7-17
[8] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County*, 7-17
[9] Cleland, *Rites of Conquest,* 175, 192, 221; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 98-99, 123, 134-135.
[10] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County*, 18-22.
[11] Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 146.

to force their removal from the region in a concerted effort to claim land for crop cultivation.[12] The 1807 Treaty of Detroit resulted in the cession of Algonquin and Iroquois lands in southeastern Michigan, including present-day Washtenaw County, to the federal government. An 1827 treaty later ceded land in southwestern Michigan, and in the late 1830s, most Indigenous people who remained in the state were taken west of the Mississippi River by force.[13]l

The General Land Office survey of the Michigan Territory began in 1815, undertaken by the office of the U.S. Surveyor General. Joseph Wampler was selected as the contracted surveyor for Northfield Township. Wampler began by defining the outer boundary of the township, which included present-day Eight Mile Road as the northern line, present-day Dixboro Road as the eastern line, and present-day Joy Road as the southern line. Unlike these boundary lines, the western boundary is located about one-third of a mile west of present-day Hellner and Kearney Roads. Wampler then laid out the interior of the township, noting topographical features as he went.[14]

A land office was opened in Detroit in 1818 to begin the sale of land in the Michigan Territory, though sales were initially relatively slow. Purchases initially had to be for a minimum of 160 acres at $2.00 per acre, which limited potential settlers to those who could afford such a large tract.[15] Although the glaciers left behind tillable clays, sandy soils, and gravelly loams suitable for a variety of crops, as the Potawatomi had known, in his survey notes of Northfield Township, Wampler often commented there was "low swampy land," and U.S. Survey General Edward Tiffin's 1816 report of the territory alleged that the whole of Michigan was swampland where good agricultural land would be nearly impossible to find.[16] The greatest challenge to settlement, however, was simply reaching the Michigan Territory. Overland travel from the east to the Great Lakes was expensive and time consuming, water travel from the east to the territory on Lake Erie was dangerous and uncomfortable, and arrival by land south of Lake Erie meant crossing the Black Swamp, an approximately 1,500 square mile network of wetlands and forests spanning northwestern Ohio.[17] In spite of negative reports and difficulty of travel, European settlers had begun to establish permanent homes in southeastern Michigan by the 1820s.[18]

Authorization to establish Washtenaw County came in 1822. Territorial Governor Lewis Cass chose the name Washtenaw, which is believed to originate from the Ojibwe word "Washtenong," meaning "grand river."[19] The present-day towns of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Dexter, and Saline were settled by Europeans in 1824, and when the county was officially organized in 1826, Ann Arbor was designated as the county

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[12] R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis; Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 215-217; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 146.
[13] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County*, 13; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest,* 218-225.
[14] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 45-49; Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 93, 154-155.
[15] Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 93, 155.
[16] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 47; Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 13; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 156.
[17] Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 156, 159.
[18] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 16.
[19] Hinsdale, *The Indians of Washtenaw County,* 37-41.

seat. The county had three townships at that time, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Dexter, with Northfield Township originally part of Ann Arbor Township. Over the following decade, new settlements formed, including the present-day communities of Chelsea, Manchester, Milan, and Whitmore Lake (originally known as Northfield and later renamed in honor of Judge Oliver Whitmore).[20]

Context 1: Early Northfield Township – An Agricultural Landscape (1824 – 1880)

Settlement of Northfield Township and New England Protestants

European pioneers began to arrive in Northfield Township in the mid-1820s and were typically New Englanders seeking larger land tracts and more fertile soils than could be obtained in New England or New York. The first settler to arrive in Northfield Township was Benjamin Sutton, a New Englander seeking better economic opportunities. Sutton was born in Sussex County, New Jersey, in 1792. He tried his hand at farming, then making whiskey from apples, then as a mercantile, but he found success in none of these ventures. In 1822, he left New Jersey with his wife, Elizabeth, and six children in an effort to avoid bankruptcy.[21]

The Erie Canal had not yet opened and the road through the Black Swamp had not yet been built, so the Suttons came to Michigan by a difficult and snowy overland route through Canada, arriving in Detroit in the spring of 1823. The availability of necessary tools and supplies upon arrival in Michigan was important to facilitating the settlement of the territory, as very little could be hauled on the overland route from New England. Wagons, food, clothing, and other supplies were typically purchased upon arrival in Detroit, prior to embarking on primitive roads to points farther west. The Suttons temporarily rented a farm in Detroit from cartographer John Farmer, while Benjamin Sutton purchased supplies and made plans to continue west across the territory.[22]

In 1824, Sutton traveled from Detroit with John Allen and Elisha Walker Rumsey along the Sauk Trail, an early footpath used by Indigenous peoples, European traders, and settlers that began in Detroit and extended across southern Michigan, northwestern Indiana, and northern Illinois to present-day Rock Island on the Mississippi River. Sutton, Allen, and Rumsey traveled together to present-day Plymouth, at which point Allen and Rumsey turned south and later founded the city of Ann Arbor, while Sutton turned north into what would become Northfield Township. Sutton chose a tract of land with open prairie surrounded by crabapple and plum trees at the corner of present-day Sutton Road and Pontiac

[20] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 18-20, 22, 24; Walter Romig, *Michigan Place Names* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State Press, 1986); Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 167.
[21] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 51, 69.
[22] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 53, 70; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 26; Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 165.

Trail, where he built a one-and-one-half-story, two-room log cabin.[23] John Farmer's future maps of the area marked the location of Sutton's homestead, and Farmer named the northerly fork of the Sauk Trail as "Sutton's Trail."[24] Settlers who took Sutton's Trail into the northern section of Ann Arbor Township passed by Sutton's homestead, where he sold livestock to the newcomers.[25]

Moses Allen was the next to settle in what would become Northfield Township, relocating from New York in 1825. Allen brought apple seeds, apple saplings, and peach pits to establish orchards, which the Suttons took over in 1830. Many newcomers to the area purchased saplings from Allen or the Suttons, and orchard products soon became a substantial element of the early agricultural economy of the township.[26] Other early settlers from New England included Christian Zuck from Pennsylvania; Joshua Leland, William Allen, and John Renwick of New York; and Peter Sears, George Sessions and Nicholas Groves from Massachusetts.

Individual relationships between Indigenous peoples and White settlers appear to have been relatively cordial, in spite of discriminatory European attitudes.[27] Local historian Wystan Stevens notes they traded foodstuffs, metal household items, clothing, and other goods; hunted or fished together, sometimes with White settlers borrowing canoes from Indigenous neighbors; and sometimes Indigenous people helped White settlers recapture wandering livestock.[28] The Groves family, who came to the territory from New England in 1831, wrote about some of these interactions. William Taylor Groves describes his father, Albert Damon Groves, and grandfather, William Parley Groves, trading tobacco, molasses, or sugar, as well as loaning guns, in exchange for fresh venison. He also notes that the family sometimes gave their old clothing to Indigenous neighbors.[29] Groves recalls a family story in his journal: "it so happened one day when grandfather was suffering from a severe tooth ache that an Indian [sic] came by. He cast a glance [at] grandfather and offered him a chew of his tobacco indicating that it would cure pain. 'Uh, white man feel better.' And so he did feel better."[30] Similarly, Groves describes offering the use of their grindstone: "The Indians [sic] soon discovered our folks had a grindstone and that it

[23] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 51-53, 69-70; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 24-26; Bordin, *Washtenaw County:*, 37.
[24] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 53, 70; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 26.
[25] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 53-54; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 27.
[26] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 53-55, 70-71; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 639; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 29.
[27] Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 215-217.
[28] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 44
[29] William Taylor Groves wrote his reminiscences in a book he titled, "The Old Farm: The Story of Its History," as well as a number of other untitled journals, photo albums, and other documents. These materials remain in the possession of his descendants and were made available to the author. William T. Groves was the fourth generation of the family to live at the Groves Farm, and his journals record his own experiences, as well as his recollections of stories told to him by his father, Albert Damon Groves, and grandfather, William Parley Groves. Groves, "The Old Farm," 7-9; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Indians," 5. See also Cheri Szcodronski, "The Groves Farm," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2024.
[30] Groves, "The Old Farm," 7, 9.

would sharpen tools. Soon they started to bring their tommahawks [sic] and knives."[31] He also notes that "many a Indian [sic] drank from [the well]."[32]

In 1832 settlers in the area met at the Sutton home to prepare a petition to the state legislature for the separation from Ann Arbor Township and the formation of a new township. The petition was approved that December, and the new township was named Northfield. The name "Northfield" may refer to the township's location in northern Washtenaw County, but more likely it is a reference to the settlers' New England roots, as Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire all have towns that bear the same name. The election of township officers took place at Sutton's home the following spring.[33]
One of the first tasks undertaken by the new township government was to improve the roads. One of the most impactful of these efforts was the construction of bridge where present-day Pontiac Trail, the dirt road connecting Northfield Township to Ann Arbor, crossed the Huron River; before that time, farmers had to raft this crossing. By 1840, as road improvements made travel into the area significantly easier, Washtenaw County was among the most populated in the new state of Michigan behind only Wayne County, where Detroit is located. Road improvements remained a priority throughout the mid-nineteenth century, and in the 1850s a plank road was built from Ann Arbor to Howell, about eighteen miles to the northwest, passing through Northfield Township on present-day Whitmore Lake Road.[34]

One of the most prominent figures in the new community was the postmaster. The Northfield Post Office was established in a log building in Whitmore Lake in 1834, and George Dexter served as the first postmaster. Dr. Nelson S. Halleck took over the position in 1836 and operated the post office from his home at 9615 Main Street, which remains extant though substantially altered. Halleck was succeeded briefly by William Nelson Stevens, who served as postmaster from 1852 to 1854. When Joseph Pray took the position in 1854, the post office was relocated to Pray's general store, which also remains extant though substantially altered, and the post office name was changed from Northfield to Whitmore Lake. A second post office was established in 1850 at the Roswell Curtis Farm at 8275 Rushton Road. That post office was known as Gravel Run, the namesake of a small stream flowing into Tobin Lake. Curtis served as the postmaster until he sold the farm to William Doty around 1864, at which time Doty took over the postmaster responsibilities. The office closed temporarily in 1875, then closed permanently in 1878.[35] The Curtis-Doty farmhouse remains extant at 8275 South Rushton Road, although it is not known if any evidence of the post office remains intact.

As more settlers continued to arrive in the area, community institutions began to form among the growing population. In particular, churches formed the center of community life, providing a social

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[31] Groves, "The Old Farm, 8."
[32] Groves, "The Old Farm," 19.
[33] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 54-55, 69, 71, 91; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 640-641, 644; Hennings, *Looking Back,* 29-30, 76.
[34] Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 167; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 83, 93-94; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 77.
[35] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 133-135; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 89-90.

network for mutual support and assistance among those who left family, friends, and other connections behind when seeking new opportunities in the Michigan Territory. A Methodist Church formed in the early 1830s, primarily by Protestant settlers who had come to the area from New York. By 1832, Reverend Alvin Billings was holding services in the Wagner School. A second Methodist group formed a few years later and met at the Matthews School, also led by Reverend Billings. These groups later merged as the First Methodist Church of Northfield. A church building was constructed in 1847 at the corner of North Territorial Road and Earhart Road, a crossroads community known as Leland's Corners (and later Emery), and a cemetery was established north of the church known as the Leland Cemetery. Membership dwindled in the early twentieth century, with only thirty-six members in 1909 and eighteen in 1914, so the congregation dissolved in 1915, and members joined nearby churches in Whitmore Lake and Ann Arbor instead. The church has been demolished, but the Leland Cemetery on Earhart Road remains.[36]

By the 1830s, a small group of Methodists were also meeting in Whitmore Lake, gathering at various members' homes, especially the Christian Zuck House at 9301 Main Street (extant) following its completion in 1833.[37] In 1866, Louis R. Buchoz and Joseph Pray donated land for a church building on the shore of Whitmore Lake. A church circuit was formed in 1867, with a traveling pastor to serve the Whitmore Lake, Hamburg, and Webster churches. The following year, the church building was completed and remains extant at 9318 Main Street. To save costs, the church did not hire an architect. Instead, church construction was overseen by master carpenters among the congregants, Milton Field and Andrew Sawyer, with assistance from James Stilson, another local carpenter, and Jeremiah Jacobs, a local builder. The building cost less than $1,000 to build. The church also operated a Sunday School.[38]

The church grew quickly over the following decades, and by 1878, the congregation included about fifty people. In 1902 they began looking for a suitable site to establish a cemetery and acquired a site at Nine Mile Road and East Shore Drive in Livingston County two years later. Throughout the twentieth century, the church continued to serve as an important community institution. Although the church closed briefly during the Great Depression, it reopened with about sixty members by 1943. By the 1950s the congregation had grown to 133 members, and in 1953, the church was renamed the Whitmore Lake Community Methodist Church.[39] In 1962 several cottages were moved from the land adjacent to the church to make room for the parking lot. The last cottage, which served as the parsonage, was demolished in the early 1980s.[40] By 2018 the church was known as the Wesley United Methodist

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[36] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 649-650; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 60-61, 141-144, 321; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 9498.
[37] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 650; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 143-144; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 37-40, 94-98.
[38] Myrta A. Dempster and Clare Rorabacher, "Whitmore Lake Community Methodist Church History, 1867-1962" (Whitmore Lake, MI: Whitmore Lake Community Methodist Church, 1962), 1-3; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 143-144; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 94-98.
[39] Dempster and Rorabacher, "Whitmore Lake Community Methodist Church History," 5, 10, 16-17, 22-23, 27-29; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 144.
[40] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 144-145.

Church, and the congregation merged with the First United Methodist Church in Brighton, holding services at both locations.[41]

Irish Settlement

Among the early newcomers to Northfield Township, especially the western and central areas of the township, were Irish immigrants who began to arrive in the late 1820s"[42] Most had been farmers in Ireland, but when they arrived in New England, many took jobs as domestic servants and laborers, and those who did try farming found rocky soils unsuitable for cultivation. As a result, many of the early Irish settlers in the Michigan Territory were seeking affordable land with good soils.[43] Others had been employed as laborers constructing the Erie Canal and utilized the completed canal to migrate west following its completion in 1825.[44]

Most Irish immigrants were devout Catholics, and they formed a small congregation soon after their arrival in what would become Northfield Township in the late 1820s. They initially held mass in parishioners' homes and by 1829 were led by visiting priest Father Patrick O'Kelly, who had ministered to Irish laborers building the Erie Canal then traveled to Michigan with them when it was completed. By 1831, there were about ten families in the congregation. The parishioners built a log church near where the present-day rectory is located, becoming the third Catholic parish in Michigan and believed to be the first English-speaking Catholic parish, as most early Catholics in the Michigan Territory spoke French or German.[45] The log church was replaced in 1837 by a frame building near the present-day cemetery. By 1850 the congregation had grown to about ninety families, so this building was expanded and named Saint Bridget's Parish. In 1865 the parish was assigned its first pastor-in-residence and the first rectory

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[41] First United Methodist Church, "Whitmore Lake Campus," https://www.brightonfumc.org/coming-july-1-one-church-two-locations.
[42] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 37; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642.
[43] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 79-80.
[44] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 39; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 55, 79-87.
[45] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 154; Old Saint Patrick Catholic Church, "History of Old St. Patrick," https://stpatricka2.org/history-of-old-st-patrick; Northfield Township, Michigan, "Old St. Patrick Parish – Ann Arbor," https://www.twp-northfield.org/business_detail_T42_R75.php; Michigan History Center, "Michigan Historical Markers," https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/publications/pdfs/ArcGISOnline/interactiveMaps/markers/index.html; "The Life and Character of Rev. Father Richard," *Detroit Free Press*, December 20, 1872, Newspapers.com; Julius P. Bolivar MacCabe, *Directory of the City of Detroit,* (Detroit: William Harsha, 1837), 20; Richard R. Elliott, "Captain Alpheus White, One of the Founders, under Bishop Rese, of the first Irish Catholic Church in Detroit, 1834-5," *The American Catholic Historical Researches*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April 1898, 145-151; Richard R. Elliott, "First Irish Catholic Parochial Organization Established in the Western States," *The American Catholic Historical Researches,* Vol. 12, No. 3, July 1895, 129-139.

was built adjacent to the church that year, although it was later moved and then destroyed by fire in the 1930s. The cornerstone for the present church building at 5671 Whitmore Lake Road was laid in 1877, and oral tradition suggests parishioners themselves hauled stone and brick to the site from Ohio to build the church. In 1878 the church was completed and dedicated as Saint Patrick's, although the reason for the name change is not known. The present rectory was built in 1890, and the church bell was also installed that year and remains in place today.[46]

Some of the early Irish families in Northfield Township included the O'Briens, Stubbs, Kennedys, Ryans, Dotys, Cavanaughs, and O'Connors. William Doty arrived in 1831 and bought a tract of land at 8275 Rushton Road, Martin and Margaret O'Connor came to Northfield Township soon after their marriage in 1832 and established a farm at 2720 Five Mile Road, James and Mary Kennedy arrived in 1835, settling on a tract of land at 6905 Sutton Road; all of these farms remain extant. Not all who immigrated to the area owned their own farmland upon arrival, however. Some Irish women took jobs as domestic servants in Ann Arbor, while men worked as laborers on their neighbors' farms. Irish-Catholics commonly experienced discrimination as political parties of the mid-1800s formed around anti-immigration platforms. This likely contributed to economic struggles and, as a result, many Irish immigrants were still working as farm laborers and domestic servants by the 1880 census. Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiment at that time made the support of the church and surrounding Irish community especially important for newcomers. For example, Jack Coyle, who was a successful farmer and member of Saint Patrick's church, loaned money to Irish neighbors who were denied loans by banks for the purchase land, livestock, or equipment.[47] As a result, the presence of Saint Patrick's church helped fuel continued immigration of people from Ireland to Northfield Township.

In addition to the importance of the church in supporting the community, Irish-owned businesses also clustered together to serve the growing immigrant population. One of these enclaves was Welch's Corners, which formed as a small crossroads community at the present-day intersection of Whitmore Lake Road and North Territorial Road, just north of Saint Patrick's church and surrounded by Irish-owned farmsteads. The Midway Tavern opened in the 1830s and served local Irish and New England settlers. By the 1850s the tavern also served travelers utilizing the plank road or the public stagecoach line connecting Ann Arbor to Howell on present-day Whitmore Lake Road, or traveling to and from Detroit on present-day North Territorial Road. The two roads formed one of the largest and most heavily traveled intersections in the township at that time, and additional businesses, including a general store and a blacksmith shop, opened to serve those passing through the area.[48]

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[46] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 37-39; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642, 648-649; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 57-58, 79-81, 83, 154-157; Thomas Patrick Hennings, "From the Marshgrasses… A History of St. Patrick's of Northfield," Local History Room, Northfield Township Area Library, Whitmore Lake, Michigan; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 107-114.

[47] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 39; Stevens, *Northfield Township*, 64-65, 82, 85; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 107-114.

[48] Stevens, *Northfield Township,* 64, 94-95; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 107-114.

German Settlement

German immigrants also sought better opportunities in the United States, arriving in Washtenaw County beginning in the 1830s and remaining one of the primary groups arriving in America through the turn of the twentieth century. Many originated from southwestern Germany, seeking relief from consecutive years of poor crop yields, challenges with government leadership that led to the German Revolution, and ongoing impacts of the Napoleonic wars.[49]

Sometimes nearly the entire population of a village immigrated together, and this appears to have taken place in Washtenaw County. It is believed that Daniel Allmendinger, an immigrant from the Stuttgart area of Württemberg, met Johann Heinrich Mann and Peter Schilling, also from Stuttgart, while they were traveling between Michigan and Pennsylvania. Allmendinger told Mann and Schilling that he had just purchased land in Washtenaw County, and Mann and Schilling soon followed suit. Mann then wrote to his family in Germany "giving a very favorable account of what he saw of the new Territory and the route by which it could be reached by immigrants from Germany, from New York via Erie Canal and Lake Erie."[50] The letter was later shared throughout Stuttgart, resulting in the start of a significant period of emigration from Germany to Washtenaw County.[51] Michigan leaders soon began recruiting German immigrants to settle in the state and passed legislation in 1848 to "encourage land purchase by newcomers."[52] Bilingual booklets titled *The Emigrants' Guide to the State of Michigan* were distributed in Germany and New York's ports of entry. In addition to these efforts, those who had come to Michigan and found success often wrote to family and friends at home, encouraging them to emigrate as well.[53]

Preferring to purchase land near other German-speakers, most German newcomers settled southwest of Ann Arbor in Scio, Lodi, Lima, and Freedom Townships, where they formed very large communities.[54] A smaller community also formed in the southern and southwestern sections of Northfield Township. About 70 percent of Germans immigrating to the county were from the present-day Baden-Württemberg

[49] Dale R. Herter and Terry Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers in Washtenaw County: 1830-1930," 2007 (updated 2009), https://sites.rootsweb.com/~miwashte/washtenawgermansettlerhistory.pdf, 8-11; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 65, 146; John Arkas Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America* (New York, NY: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970), 64, 74-75.
[50] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers in Washtenaw County," 6.
[51] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 6; Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America,* 74.
[52] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 65, 146.
[53] Jonathan Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 6-7; Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 20.
[54] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 7.

state of southwest Germany and therefore shared a common dialect, Swabian.[55] The earliest German families in Northfield Township, arriving in the 1830s, were from the Stuttgart region of Baden-Württemberg and included the Kalmbach, Koch, and Zeeb families. Others, arriving in the mid-1800s, were from the Black Forest region of Baden-Württemberg, among them the Kapp, Kempf, Maulbetsch, Rauschenberger, and Theurer families. In addition, a smaller number of Prussians from northern Germany also came to the township in the late 1800s, including the Donner, Navroth, Nimke, Podewils, Prochnow, and Steffe families.[56]

Most of the land in Northfield Township, and much of Washtenaw County, was first purchased by or granted to English settlers who came to the Michigan Territory from New York, Pennsylvania, and other New England states.[57] While it was common for English settlers arriving in the early and mid-nineteenth century to later move further west, selling land to the German immigrants arriving in the mid- and late nineteenth century, German families typically passed their farms down through the generations. German culture also differed from English culture in the relationships between men and women, adults and children. Though in English culture women were rarely expected to work in the fields or permitted to imbibe in alcohol with men, all members of German families worked their farms and socialized together.[58] Local historian Jonathan Marwil noted, "the group with the most dynamic sense of themselves as a community were the Germans."[59] The result was a stable, tightly knit, and distinct German ethnic community.

However, as with their Irish-Catholic counterparts, this influx of German immigrants was not welcomed by all residents of Washtenaw County. An exhibit by the Ann Arbor District Library notes, "The 1840's and '50's saw a flourishing of anti-immigration and anti-Catholic sentiments in the county. Some of the town's citizens formed the 'Native American Association of Ann Arbor' advocating a tax on incoming foreigners, a twenty-one-year residence requirement for naturalization, and a 'certificate of good moral character' for entering aliens."[60] Marwil made a similar conclusion: the German community's "distinctly foreign character also made it suspect in the eyes of the those who feared the alien incursion."[61] Though other ethnic groups, including Irish-Catholics, had generally integrated into the surrounding communities by the mid-nineteenth century, Germans typically maintained distinct communities. Marwil observed, "They learned English but kept their native tongue and made sure their children learned it. They joined local groups and entered politics, but they prayed in their own churches, gathered

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[55] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 8-11; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 65, 146.
[56] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 6, 12-13, 18-19.
[57] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 4.
[58] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 23.
[59] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor*, 60.
[60] Ann Arbor District Library and University of Michigan, "Pictorial History of Ann Arbor, 1824-1859, Government and Growth," *The Making of Ann Arbor*, https://aadl.org/moaa/pictorial_history/1824-1859pg6.
[61] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 17-18.

in their own service organizations… Assimilated and much respected for their industry and public spirit, they nonetheless retained for decades a separate identity as well."[62]

German Lutheran churches and Prussian Methodist churches were established in German-speaking communities throughout Washtenaw County. Johann Heinrich Mann, in addition to persuading his Stuttgart family and neighbors to come to Michigan, also wrote to the seminary in Basel, Switzerland, requesting an Evangelical Lutheran pastor be assigned to the region.[63] Newly ordained pastor Frederick Schmid, who was raised in the Black Forest region of Germany, arrived in the United States in 1833. By 1869, Schmid had helped establish a congregation in Northfield Township, known by the German name Saint Johannes Gemeinde. The congregation included about forty people from Northfield Township and Ann Arbor, who originally met at the Sutton School (extant) at the intersection of East Joy Road and Pontiac Trail in the southeastern section of the township. Services were spoken in German, in the Swabian dialect of southwestern Germany, and education classes focused not only on religious doctrine, but also traditional German language and culture. In 1875, the congregation purchased three acres of land from William P. Groves to build a church. A frame church building was completed that year and the adjacent cemetery was laid out.[64]

German-speaking residents of Northfield Township benefited from German establishments in nearby Ann Arbor. By the 1880s, the city had a German newspaper, three churches, a German Workingman's Association, a shooting club, an athletic club, two choirs, a cornet band, and a large German-owned park.[65] Northfield Township Germans participated in the formation of the Schwaebischer Unterstuetzungs Verein (also known as Swabian Support Association or Schwaben Verein) in Ann Arbor in 1888. The official role of this mens' organization was mutual life and health insurance; members paid a $1.00 initiation fee and $0.30 monthly dues, then could request financial assistance from the group for hospital or burial expenses. Art French, former president of the organization, described the social benefits of membership: "it was a way to be with people who spoke their language, followed their customs, who had the same outlook on life."[66] The Ann Arbor Schwaben Verein Ladies Auxiliary Group is the women's branch of the organization. A reflection of the strength of German cultural groups in Washtenaw County, the group remains active today, hosting Bockbierfest each spring, a festival celebrating German culture with traditional German food, beer, and dancing, and Kirchweihfest each fall, also featuring traditional dinner and dancing.

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[62] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor.*
[63] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 6, 13, 24.
[64] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 650; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 145-147; Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 6-7.
[65] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 61-62.
[66] Grace Shackman, "The Story of the Schwaben Halle," *Ann Arbor Observer*, December 2002, via Ann Arbor District Library, https://aadl.org/aaobserver/15573.

Early Rural Education

In addition to the churches built by each of the ethnic groups who settled in Northfield Township, the township is also dotted with historic rural schools. Northfield Township residents were served by ten rural schools, eight of which were located within the township boundaries. The schools initially had two sessions: a three-month winter session for boys over ten years of age who worked their family farms in the summer months, and a four-month session in the summer for younger children. At that time, children attended six days a week for six to eight hours each day. Michigan residents balked at taxes to fund schools until around 1870, and in 1880, the state mandated a nine-month year for all children ages six to sixteen. Northfield schools, like many rural areas, suspended school during harvest times. Students studied reading, writing, grammar, spelling, history, and arithmetic, and were required to provide their own books.[67]

The first school in the township was built by Benjamin Sutton in 1828 near his home at East Joy Road and Pontiac Trail. Known as the Sutton School, the original log building at 2931 East Joy Road was replaced with the current brick one in 1875. This school remained in operation until it was consolidated with Whitmore Lake Public Schools in 1960.[68] The Leland School is a brick building built in 1867 at 6025 Earhart Road, at the intersection of Earhart and East North Territorial Roads, once the crossroads community of Leland's Corners/Emery. The current brick building replaced an earlier frame one and was named for Joshua Leland, who donated the land for the school. Leland School was consolidated with Whitmore Lake Public Schools in 1959.[69] Maple Ridge School is a frame building constructed at 4107 Six Mile Road in 1937, which replaced an earlier stone school destroyed that year by fire. The school remained in operation until the 1950s.[70] Welch's Corners School at 350 West North Territorial Road was originally known as Multhaup School for the family that owned the land (the name is sometimes anglicized as Multoph). The first school was built in 1832 and was replaced by the current building in 1887. The school was expanded with a concrete block addition in 1951. In 1959, as a result of consolidation, it became the Whitmore Lake Elementary School and remained in use until 1966.[71] All four of these school buildings remain extant but have been substantially altered for use as private residences.

An additional four schools are no longer extant. The Matthews School, later known as Fohey School, was built in 1835 near the intersection of Seven Mile Road and Spencer Road. This school operated at

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[67] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167-169.
[68] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 53, 167-168, 191; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 636, 642, 650-651; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 27-28, 117.
[69] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167-168, 191; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 124-125.
[70] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167, 177-178.
[71] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167, 179-180, 191.

least into the 1940s but was no longer standing by the 1990s.[72] The Wagner School, later known as Keenan School and then Murray School, was built in the early 1830s near the intersection of Five Mile Road and Earhart Road. Like the Matthews School, this school also operated until at least the 1940s but was demolished by the 1990s.[73] The Moe School, named for Abraham Moe who donated the land for the school, was established in 1839 on Whitmore Lake Road near the intersection of East Joy Road. When the Braun family later purchased the Moe farm, the school became known as the Braun School. The first building was a log school, which was replaced by a frame school, which was replaced by a brick school, and the final school building was built of brick and covered in stucco. The Braun School district straddled the Northfield-Ann Arbor Township line, so it was part of neither district; as a result, students were forced to pay tuition for high school in either Ann Arbor or Whitmore Lake. The Moe/Braun School remained in operation until the 1960s when the district became part of the Ann Arbor school system, and the building was demolished in 2015.[74] The Flintoft School, later known as Shaw School, was a frame school located at 1960 East North Territorial Road. The first school at this location was a log building constructed in 1840, followed by another log building in 1845, which in turn was replaced with a frame building in 1870. The school was named for Robert Flintoft who owned the adjacent farm and allowed the school use of his well for a small fee. Flintoft School was consolidated with Whitmore Lake Public Schools in 1957 and was demolished in 2007.[75]

The Village of Whitmore Lake

Jonathan F. Stratton was one of the surveyors who surveyed the Sauk Trail in 1825 when improvements were funded by Congress. After he and his surveying partner, Orange Risdon, completed the survey from Detroit to Ypsilanti, Stratton began surveying the northern and western areas of Washtenaw County. Oliver Whitmore, who had recently settled in the county and later served as a judge in Ann Arbor, traveled with Stratton. They camped on the banks of a large lake, which Stratton later named Whitmore Lake in honor of his friend. Cartographer John Farmer used Stratton's sketches to publish a territorial map of the county in 1826, which was the first to include the name Whitmore Lake.[76]

An early business district stretched along Main Street from the south side of Margaret Street northward to Barker Road, with residential areas extending both north and south of the business district. By around 1840, a physician's office was operating at the home of Dr. Nelson S. Halleck at 9615 Main Street, which remains extant but highly altered. William Nelson Stevens operated a general store, and his 1850 house at 9429 Main Street also served as an inn known as the Tremont House. The house remains extant

[72] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167, 175.
[73] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167, 177.
[74] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642; Stevens, *Northfield Township*, 167, 187-188; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 135-138.
[75] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 167, 178-179, 191; Jennifer DeLisle (NTHS President), email communication with author, July 13, 2021; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 131.
[76] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 59-60; Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 24; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 37.

but highly altered. Williams Nelson Stevens' brother, Albert, also settled in Whitmore Lake, and his house at 125 Barker Road has been altered for use as the Northfield Township Area Library. Albert Stevens operated the Clifton House Inn, built by Albert Burt in 1842 just north of William Stevens' house, and the Lake House Inn at the southwest corner of Barker Road and Main Street. The Clifton House was not only known as a quality inn for travelers on the Detroit-Jackson stage line and later railroad passengers, but also as the recruitment location for the Third Michigan Cavalry in 1861.[77] Neither inn remains extant.

John Rane's General Store was opened at 9541 Main Street in 1851, followed by Joseph Pray's General Store at 9531 Main Street, which also housed the post office from 1864 to 1856 when Pray served as postmaster. W.D. Moss built a third general store at 9519 Main Street in 1895, which was later owned by Rane's grandson, John W. Rane. Like his grandfather, John W. Rane also served as postmaster. His general store housed the post office from 1915 to 1930, and his house was built south of the store at 9509 Main Street. These buildings all remain extant but have been substantially altered. A small barber shop was originally located between the Pray and Rane general stores, but it has been demolished. Businesses were also located on the east side of Main Street, but they were replaced with marinas and lakeside cottages in the mid-to-late twentieth century.[78]

Agriculture and Subsistence

Although Washtenaw County's waterways were ideally suited for mill operations, and although most of the county's early settlements formed around mills, Northfield Township's settlement and economy were based in agriculture. The industry schedule in the 1850 census lists only one cooper and ashery in the township, and the 1860 and 1870 censuses recorded no industry schedule for the township at all.[79] Similarly, in the 1856 business directory, nearly every village in the county except Whitmore Lake had a grist, paper, plaster, saw, or shingle mill. The only industry noted in the township at that time was a dry kiln, which was no longer in operation by the time the 1864 directory was published. Instead, Northfield was an agricultural landscape.[80]

The earliest farmers in Northfield Township were subsistence farmers concerned primarily with self-sufficiency rather than profitability, and therefore farms were small-scale, generalized operations. Farmers grew Indian corn, wheat, oats, barley, hay, and potatoes – many of which are still grown in the township today. In the fall they grew strawberries, squash, and pumpkins. They also raised sheep, hogs,

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[77] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 197-216, 231-236, 252; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 157-173.
[78] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 197-216; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 89-90.
[79] United States Census Bureau, "Schedule 5 – Products of Industry in Northfield [Township] in the County of Washtenaw," 1850, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
[80] Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, "Washtenaw County Michigan Plat Maps 1856 and 1864" (Ann Arbor, MI: Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan, Inc., 1997), 22-24, 107-108.

and cattle, and kept dogs to protect their livestock from predators and crops from deer and other native grazers. Sheep-shearing took place each spring, while sheep, hogs, and sometimes cattle were slaughtered in the fall. Farmers also harvested in the fall, working together to cut and shock grain, pitch hay, and gather vegetables. Crabapple and plum trees were plentiful, and settlers brought pear, apple, and peach trees to the region as well. Wells provided water, pulled up by hand at first and later by windmills.[81]

Northfield Township is relatively flat, however the water table is also relatively high, resulting in abundant swamps and marshes. Not long after their arrival, settlers began to drain the swampland throughout the township to gain more acreage for agriculture by digging ditches and canals, or altering streams to be deeper, straighter, or longer. These early drainage efforts were the responsibility of each landowner at that time, but by the 1830s, the township had a permitting system in place for private owners to build and maintain drains. In the 1840s, public health became a factor in controlling swampland and in turn mosquitoes, and in 1851, the county began assuming ownership and responsibility for the drainage systems. By that time, a number of canals and ditches drained into Horseshoe and Whitmore lakes, and by the 1880s, about forty miles of drainage systems had been built. Many of these changes remain visible on the landscape today, including about twenty-six miles of man-made or altered drainage, and twelve major drains remain overseen by the county.[82] Primary drains remaining on the landscape include the Groves-Horseshoe Lake Drain, McCarty No. 2 Drain, and O'Conner Drain, all flowing northwest from the center of the township into Horseshoe Lake; the Catholic Church-Horseshoe Lake Drain, flowing north into Horseshoe Lake from Saint Patrick's Catholic Church at East Northfield Church and Whitmore Lake Roads; the Willow Marsh and Mauer Drains that flow west across the northeastern part of the township; and the Coyle Drain which flows through the western part of Northfield Township into Independence Lake in adjacent Webster Township.[83]

The 1850 agricultural census recorded 162 farms in Northfield Township. A comparison of improved land, meaning land used in cultivation, pasture, orchards, gardens, fallow, or occupied by buildings, shows that over half of these farms were fewer than fifty acres and only about five percent were greater than 150 acres. Most farmers produced wheat, Indian corn, buckwheat, hay, Irish potatoes, and sometimes oats, and most had as many as five milk cows, fifty sheep, and fifteen hogs. Some farmers

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[81] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 641; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 40, 97, 99-100; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan: An Historic Context for the Theme of Agriculture* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, Michigan State University, 2004), 11.

[82] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 27, 93, 107-108; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 641; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 12; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 50-51.

[83] Washtenaw County, "MapWashtenaw," https://gisappsecure.ewashtenaw.org/mapwashtenaw.

grew white beans, although they were highly susceptible to blight, and some farmers also had orchards at that time. Most farms produced up to 100 pounds of wool and 100-200 pounds of butter.[84]

The arrival of the railroad in southern Michigan opened new markets for Northfield Township farmers who were able to transport their products to Ann Arbor for distribution. As a result, subsistence crops began shifting to cash crops. The popularity of potatoes and apples as export crops increased; the demand for wool and dairy products grew; and as numbers of livestock increased, corn and hay became widely used for livestock feed and bedding. By 1870, Northfield Township had become one of the most productive agricultural areas of the state with nearly 14,000 acres in cultivation of the 23,277 total acreage of the township, and leading Washtenaw County in wheat production.[85]

Other significant improvements for agriculture in the mid-nineteenth century included the use of commercial fertilizers, the introduction of improved crop varieties, and the use of steel plows, mowers, reapers, threshers, and other new machinery. These improvements led to increased production with less human labor, and as a result, farmers began to operate larger farms with greater production and higher profits.[86] Of the 187 farms recorded in the 1870 agricultural census, just under forty percent were fifty acres or fewer, about half were between fifty and 150 acres, and about ten percent were larger than 150 acres.[87]

The 1870 agricultural census reflects the flourishing agricultural economy of Northfield Township. Farmers reported producing wheat, Indian corn, oats, hay, Irish potatoes and sometimes barley, and most had as many as ten milk cows, more than fifty sheep, and as many as fifteen hogs. White bean farming had fallen out of favor in the area, but most farms included an orchard, usually producing apples. Most farms by this time produced 100-500 pounds of wool and 300-600 pounds of butter.[88] Northfield Township farmers took vegetables, fruit, and wool by wagon to Ann Arbor markets, where produce could be shipped by train to Toledo, Detroit, or other nearby cities, sold in local markets, or bartered in town for other goods. Wool was taken to carding mills in Ann Arbor or Dehli Mills, just northwest of Ann Arbor, and a wool factory was located at Foster's Station, on the Huron River northwest of Ann Arbor. All three were served by the Michigan Central Railroad, which shipped processed wool to

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[84] United States Census Bureau, "Schedule 4 – Productions of Agriculture in Northfield Township in the County of Washtenaw," 1850, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 110.
[85] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 97; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 12-13; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 53.
[86] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 110; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 12.
[87] United States Census Bureau, "Schedule 3 – Productions of Agriculture in Northfield Township in the County of Washtenaw," 1870, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
[88] United States Census Bureau, "Schedule 3," 1870.

eastern textile operations. Cattle from several farms were often gathered into larger herds and driven to Detroit or other railroad depots for shipping to larger markets.[89]

In addition to farming, early settlers also took advantage of the abundance of the natural environment. They hunted white-tailed deer, ducks, prairie chickens, wild turkeys, and geese, and also caught pickerel, pike, bass, and other fish. Wild berries were abundant seasonally, wild honey was readily available, and sugar maple trees were used for making syrup.[90] Settlers utilized the abundant prairie grasses to feed and bed livestock, fill mattresses, and insulate ice blocks cut from the lakes in winter. Prairie grasses that helped sustain the township's early inhabitants are still seen on the landscape today. Big Bluestem, also known as Turkey-Foot Grass, may be found on gravel roadsides throughout the township. Switchgrass grows well in hot weather and is therefore good for pasture in the summer months, while providing nesting material and winter cover for wild animals and birds.[91]

The once-abundant caribou, moose, elk, and bears had largely been hunted out of the region prior to the arrival of European settlers, but European settlement had its own negative impacts on the ecosystem of Northfield Township. Hunting and habitat loss caused the decline of gray wolves, bald eagles, beaver, otter, wild turkey, prairie chicken, and passenger pigeon. Even white-tailed deer, which provided venison as a staple of the settlers' diet as well as hides for clothing and shoes, were nearly extinct by the 1880s. Although populations of deer, beaver, wild turkey, and bald eagles have recovered in the region, prairie chicken and otter remain uncommon, gray wolf populations in Michigan remain limited to the Upper Peninsula, and the passenger pigeon has been extinct since 1914. Some present-day species are relatively new arrivals to southeastern Michigan. The opossum and Northern Cardinal extended their range northward in the late 1800s; English House Sparrows and European Starlings were introduced in the late 1800s and early 1900s; and the European elm bark beetle and spongy moth, both of which kill trees with alarming efficiency, arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s, followed by the emerald ash borer in recent years.[92]

Architecture

The earliest houses in Northfield Township were small log buildings. Upon arrival, settlers typically constructed a modest home using timber cleared from their land in preparation for farming. These logs were sometimes dressed by removing the bark, then hand-hewn into square or partially square shapes, while others were used with the bark left on. Once planks from the sawmills throughout the county

[89] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 99, 109.
[90] Bordin, *Washtenaw*, 21; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 75; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 11.
[91] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 40.
[92] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 41, 75; Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 21; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 173.

became readily available, these rustic log buildings were replaced with frames ones.[93] For this reason, no log buildings are known to remain extant in Northfield Township.

The earliest surviving residences were constructed in the Greek Revival style, which was based on classical Greek architecture, an interest in which was spurred by early nineteenth century archaeological investigations in Greece, empathy for the Greek war for independence (1821-1832), and a waning affection for British styles. The style was popular in Washtenaw County from the 1840s through the 1870s, spread by carpenter's guides and pattern books. Characteristic detailing of the Greek Revival style includes low-pitched gabled forms; flat-roof one- or two-story entry porches with square or round columns; entrances with sidelights, transoms, and Classical surrounds; and bands of trim or dentil detailing at the cornice, sometimes with partial returns.[94]

The Greek Revival style was also common among churches during this era. The Wesley United Methodist Church at 9318 Main Street was built 1867-1868 and is the oldest extant church in Northfield Township. The church features elements of the Greek Revival style, including a pedimented front gable, multi-light transom over the front doors, and square corner pilasters. The front entrance is centered on the façade and features paneled wood doors with an entablature inscribed with "Wesley United Methodist Church." The front and side elevations feature tall, narrow stained-glass windows, and there is a three-part bell tower.

The oldest surviving building known to remain extant in Northfield Township is the Christian Zuck House at 9301 Main Street, completed in 1833. The tripartite house has a two-story main block flanked by one-story shed roof wings on each side. The façade is dominated by a two-story gabled portico with square columns. The entrance is centered on the façade and set in an elaborate classical surround with square pilasters, and it is flanked by six-over-six windows with paneled wood aprons and decorative crossetted wood surrounds. The house also retains the original field stone foundation and bark covered floor joists.[95] The Curtis-Doty farmhouse at 8275 Rushton Road, built in 1842, is a modest, rural interpretation of the Greek Revival style. The main block of the house is a one-story side-gabled form with a symmetrical façade, six-over-six wood windows, and dentil detailing at the cornice. The entrance is centered on the façade and sheltered by a flat entry porch with square, tapered wood columns. A one-story wing extends from the south elevation and features a secondary entrance sheltered by a shed-roof porch, two-over-two wood windows, and dentil detailing at the cornice. Another notable example of the style in Northfield Township is the 1846 Joshua Leland House at 3850 East North Territorial Road. This large, squat, front-gable, two-story house features a symmetrical façade, wide band of trim at the cornice, and wood corner pilasters. A door with multi-light wood sidelights all set in a decorative surround with square pilasters is centered on the façade. This entrance is sheltered by a flat-roof entry

[93] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 325.
[94] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 246-264; Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor: An Architectural Guide* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Historical Foundation, 2014), 1-2.
[95] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 61.

porch with a wide band of trim at the cornice and wide square wood columns. Above the porch, there is a French door with multi-light wood sidelights all set in a decorative surround with square pilasters supporting an entablature. Some examples of Greek Revival-style homes in the township have been altered with synthetic materials that cover or have replaced stylistic detailing, large additions that obscure the original form and massing, and loss or reconstruction of porches.

The Italianate style is also present in the township, with low-pitched hipped or gabled forms, sometimes with a cupola; windows with elaborate crowns, often set in arched openings; and widely overhanging eaves with heavy brackets. The style originated in England as part of the Picturesque movement, a reaction to the formal ideals of Greek Revival and other classical styles. It spread throughout the United States via influential pattern books published in the 1830s and 1840s. In Michigan, the style often dominates downtown commercial districts, but it was also common in both urban and rural residential architecture from 1850 until 1880.[96] Italianate farmhouses in Northfield Township are typically gable-front-and-wing forms with a two-story front-gable wing and a one-and-one-half or two-story side-gable wing, though other forms are also present. These homes typically feature either full-width or small entry porches and may be constructed of either frame or brick.

The 1875 Kalmbach farmhouse at 385 West Joy Road is a representative brick example of the style in the township, with a two-story gable-front-and-wing form with round windows in the gables, arched two-over-two wood windows with elaborate masonry hoods, and heavy wood brackets under the cornice. The house has a hip-roof porch supported by square wood posts with sawn woodwork, and also retains a stone foundation and interior brick chimney. The Nathan Esek and Sarah Emergene Sutton House (NR2022) at 5145 Pontiac Trail features pared-down Italianate-style ornamentation applied to an imposing two-and-a-half-story brick form. Built in 1864 and updated with the Italianate-style front wing around 1880, the house features small hip-roof porches with dentil detailing on the front and side elevations and a projecting, full-height polygonal bay on the front elevation. The windows are set in arched openings with simplified brick and stone hoods and stone sills. In lieu of the heavy brackets common to the style, the cornice is instead ornamented with a simplified band of trim above fixed, single-light frieze band windows at the upper half story. Once relatively common in the township, a number of buildings constructed in the Italianate style have been altered with the application of synthetic materials, alterations to porches, removal of characteristic window hoods or cornice brackets, and construction of additions.

[96] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 282-302; Wineberg and McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor,* 4-5.

Context 2: Growth of Whitmore Lake – Railroads, Tourism, and Ice (1880 to 1945)

Arrival of the Railroad

Although houses and hotels were built on the lakeshore as early as the 1830s, it was the arrival of the railroad that had the biggest impact on the Village of Whitmore Lake. The earliest railroad in the county connected Ann Arbor to Detroit in the late 1830s, but it was decades before the railroads extended to Northfield Township. The Toledo & Ann Arbor Railroad was completed between the two cities in 1878. In 1880, the Toledo & Ann Arbor Railroad merged with the Grand Trunk Railroad to become the Toledo, Ann Arbor, & Grand Trunk Railway, and the line was extended from Ann Arbor north of the Huron River. The line originally stopped at Leland's Corners, then continued north into Livingston County to the Worden Depot and South Lyon by 1881. The Toledo, Ann Arbor, & Grand Trunk Railway merged with the Michigan Air Line Railway to become the Toledo, Ann Arbor, & Northern Michigan Railroad in 1884. Over the next few years, the railroad company continued to acquire smaller railroad lines across northern Michigan, and by 1886, the line was completed from Ann Arbor through Leland's Corners to Whitmore Lake, then to Owosso and Mt. Pleasant in the middle of the state, and finally ending at the Lake Michigan car ferries in Frankfort and Elberta in northwestern Michigan. The railroad soon replaced waterways as the primary means of transporting people and goods in the villages and cities throughout Washtenaw County.[97]

In spite of the railroad's success, it faced challenges. The line from Leland's Corners to Worden was not well used, and in 1890 the railroad began efforts to decommission the line due to its unprofitability. There was much resistance from residents and business owners in Worden, but in 1891, under somewhat secretive circumstances, this section of tracks was removed.[98] Additionally, the railroad was not well financed, and therefore selected the cheapest land available regardless of the track curvature required to connect stations, the unevenness of the topography, or how well the land drained. As a result, a dangerous bend through swampy land was constructed at Leland's Corners to connect Ann Arbor to

[97] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 27, 47, 50; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 217; Dale Berry, ed., "Railroad: Toledo & Ann Arbor Railroad," *Michigan Railroads*, http://www.michiganrailroads.com/railroads-in-history/486-t-v/4081-toledo-ann-arbor-railroad; Dale Berry, ed., "Railroad: Toledo, Ann Arbor and Grand Trunk Railway," *Michigan Railroads*, http://www.michiganrailroads.com/railroads-in-history/486-t-v/4076-toledo-ann-arbor-and-grand-trunk-railway-company-the; Dale Berry, ed., "Railroad: Toledo, Ann Arbor & North Michigan Railroad," *Michigan Railroads,* http://www.michiganrailroads.com/railroads-in-history/486-t-v/4072-toledo-ann-arbor-north-michigan-railroad.

[98] Local historian Wystan Stevens describes the oral tradition: "On March 28, 1891, a Saturday, South Lyon heard rumors that the tracks were to be torn up; railway commissioner Whitman was notified and ordered the company not to proceed. Just after midnight, over a hundred burly men were carried to a point midway between South Lyon and Leland, and began pulling up rails. Working through the night and all day Sunday to avoid court injunction, they rendered the branch defunct." Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 221-222.

Whitmore Lake. Soon after the railroad was reorganized to become the Ann Arbor Railroad in 1895, the Leland's Corner bend was determined to be too dangerous to remain in use. The tracks were removed in 1896 and the line rerouted along a more direct route from Ann Arbor to Whitmore Lake, which remains the railroad path today. After the loss of the railroad, the crossroads community at Leland's Corners faded out of existence.[99]

Soon after the railroad was completed to the Village of Whitmore Lake, summer tourists began to take advantage of the inexpensive and convenient transportation to visit the lake's beaches, stay at the local hotels, and enjoy local restaurants and entertainment. Tourists initially traveled on what was known as the "Ping Pong," a passenger car pulled by an engine that made the trip back and forth between Whitmore Lake and Ann Arbor several times a day by the early 1900s.[100]

The first depot in the Village of Whitmore Lake was located in the 9300 block of Main Street, an area known as "the Grove." Around 1900, the depot was moved to Barker Road, but it was destroyed by fire in 1911. Initially a boxcar was converted for use as a ticket office, but after a downpour the following year caused delays in trains that left travelers stranded for hours without shelter, a new depot was constructed. In 1921, this depot was also destroyed by fire, but it was replaced relatively quickly, and this third building remained in use until 1950. The depot was demolished soon after closing, though the tracks remain in use today.[101]

Tourism at Whitmore Lake

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Whitmore Lake was a popular summer destination for tourists from Ann Arbor, southern Michigan, and northern Ohio.[102] The first hotel for overnight visitors was built in 1842 in the 9400 block of Main Street, at the south end of the business district. It was first operated by Albert Burt, but it passed through several owners during its history. The original name is not known, but it was called the Clifton House by the late nineteenth century and was renamed the Lake View Hotel in the early twentieth century. Throughout its history, the hotel hosted events attended by both local residents and guests staying at the inn, including Fourth of July events, picnics and gatherings for local organizations, harvest balls, and "fish, frog, and chicken dinners." William Zemke bought the hotel in 1925, and it served as the Whitmore Country Club until the 1930s. It operated as a popular tavern from 1933, following the repeal of Prohibition, until it was destroyed by fire in 1935.[103]

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[99] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 217-223; Berry, "The Ann Arbor Railroad Company."
[100] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 223, 225-226.
[101] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 225-228; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 155-156.
[102] Hennings, "From the Marshgrasses."
[103] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 651; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 231-240; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 157-165.

A second hotel was built in 1852 by William West and was known as West's Lake House. It was located at the southwest corner of Barker Road and Main Street at the north end of the business district and was larger than the Clifton House with three floors. Although it had several owners, it was owned by members of the Stevens family for most of its history. After the repeal of Prohibition, the owner obtained the first liquor license for the hotel, and it became known as Stevens Lake House and Beer Garden. Like the Clifton House, the Lake House offered local entertainment such as lake excursions, dinners, dancing, and concerts. In 1923, Stevens built the Lake House Pavilion dance hall across the street from the hotel and operated a bus line from the venue to Ann Arbor. The pavilion closed in the 1930s but later served as a roller rink, followed by a boxing and wrestling venue. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1942, and the Lake House Pavilion has been demolished.[104]

The lake itself also drew tourists to the small village. The hotels not only offered dinners and dancing, but also sailboats to those guests with the skills to navigate one and rowboats with fishing tackle. Nearly thirty species of fish were recorded in the lake ecosystem in the early twentieth century, including bluntnose minnows, bullheads, dogfish, bass, mud pike, and chubsuckers. To offset the ecological impacts of fishing on the lake, fish stocking programs began in the 1930s, and initially focused on bluegill, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch.[105]

There were also ferries to carry tourists between Pray's Landing on the southeast end of the lake, the Lake House hotel on the west side, and the Stilsonburg and Groomes bathing beaches in Livingston County to the north. The first known ferries were the *Lizzie Payne*, which began operating in 1884, and the *Oceola*, which began running the following year, both owned by Emory Snell. By around 1900, neither remained in operation, having either sank or been scuttled. In 1908, the *Jenny D* took their place. This vessel operated under several owners, but during the Great Depression, passenger traffic declined so dramatically that a ferry was no longer needed and the boat was scuttled.[106]

The local churches expanded their services to meet the needs of tourists, vacationers, and other long-term visitors in the summer. The Methodist church operated a beach near the corner of Main Street and East Shore Drive, which quickly became one the lake's most popular bathing spots. [107] In the 1930s, the church delivered hundreds of flyers throughout the community to invite residents and tourists alike to attend services.[108] Saint Patrick Catholic Church also offered services for tourists. Although church membership had dropped to only about sixty-eight families in the 1920s, attendance by tourists was so great that in the summer months there were two masses each Sunday.[109]

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[104] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 242-247; 256-257; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 165-173.
[105] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 33-35, 270.
[106] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 269-275.
[107] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 227.
[108] Dempster and Rorabacher, "Whitmore Lake Community Methodist Church History," 15, 22.
[109] Hennings, "From the Marshgrasses."

In addition to tourists, students from the University of Michigan frequently visited Whitmore Lake, perhaps most famously, the University's football team. From 1901 to 1912, Coach Fielding Yost conducted fall conditioning for the football team in the village, where they stayed at the Lake House hotel, swam in the lake, and ran drills in a nearby cow pasture.[110] The team's fans also took advantage of the hospitality of Whitmore Lake. In the 1910s, the Methodist Episcopal Church hosted chicken dinners for fans in the church's new basement kitchen and social hall. By the 1920s, the tradition had grown to serve over one hundred dinners each Saturday to fans traveling from home football games at the university.[111] Saint Patrick's church also sold luncheon baskets to football fans coming and going from home games in Ann Arbor in the 1930 and 1940s.[112] The relationship between the university and the township continues today through the mysterious shoe trees near the intersection of Spencer Road and Six Mile Road. Local tradition suggests that seniors from the university celebrate graduation by throwing a pair of shoes into the tree branches, though the origin of this tradition is unknown.

The influx of tourists in the summer months took a toll on the lake itself. After decades of fluctuating water levels that regularly resulted in flooded homes and unsightly beaches, the Works Progress Administration constructed a culvert from Horseshoe Creek to the southeastern end of the lake in 1936, known today as the Horseshoe Lake Outlet. To further combat flooding, the official lake level was set at 895.8 feet above sea level in the 1950s. In an effort to compensate for unrelenting overfishing at Whitmore Lake, the state continued fish stocking programs. Bluegill, largemouth bass, yellow perch were released in the lake from 1934 to 1940, and smallmouth bass were stocked in 1936 and again from 1946 to 1948.[113]

Residential Growth

The tourism boom in the village began with the arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century and expanded as the personal automobile gained popularity in the early twentieth century. This improved connectivity and ease of travel resulted in the construction of vacation homes along the lake's shoreline.[114] Some replaced businesses that were originally on the east side of Main Street on the lake's western shore, while others were built on East Shore Drive along the lake's southern and eastern shores. These residences were typically constructed as summer homes but over time have largely become year-round residences.

Residential development further from the lakeshore began to increase in the late nineteenth century as well. Margaret Street was an early neighborhood that formed in the 1890s on land formerly part of John Rane's farmstead. The first planned residential development in Whitmore Lake was Pray's Addition. The plat, recorded in 1899, included twenty-two small lots on Elizabeth and Joseph Pray's farm. The

[110] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 252-255.
[111] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 144.
[112] Hennings, "From the Marshgrasses."
[113] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 30-32, 34; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 82.
[114] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 74.

lots were laid out on Elizabeth Street, which extends south from East Shore Drive near its intersection with Main Street. By the 1920s, the development was built out with summer cottages, although some of the houses predate the plat's recording. Ann Arbor businessman Walter Mack built a house at 42 East Shore Drive, lot number 22, in 1875, and Ann Arbor farmer George McCormick built a house next door at 36 East Shore Drive, lot number 21, in 1890.[115] Both houses remain extant but have been highly altered.

Horseshoe Lake's shoreline saw similar development, starting with the 1929 Shady Beach Subdivision built on the western shore by the Horseshoe Lake Development Company. Unfortunately, the Great Depression hit soon after the development was laid out, and the Horseshoe Lake Development Company sold the lots for very low prices and even gave some away. The houses built in this development were inexpensive to construct, some amounting to little more than shacks or shanties for temporary and seasonal waterfront use. The Leocadia Subdivision and Horseshoe Lake Subdivision on the southern and northeastern shorelines soon followed and were similar in character.[116]

Business Growth

The business district on Main Street grew and changed during the early to mid-twentieth century in response the needs of tourists. In 1917, just south of the Main Street commercial core, Charles Pray's general store was moved from the southeast corner of Main Street and East Shore Drive to make way for Whitmore Lake's first gas station. This building is no longer extant, and a gas station, constructed in 1998, currently occupies the site. Within the commercial core, a small grocery store was opened in 1917 at 9555 Main Street, first operated by the Nixons. In 1939, J.D. Ramsay demolished the William Rane House to build a large commercial building at 9545 Main Street. The building has three storefronts and has housed a number of businesses, most notably Ramsay's Drug Store and Kroger grocery store. These buildings remain extant but have been substantially altered. Steffe Brothers Ford sales and service was built at 9561 Main Street, which was later the Nelsons' gas and service station. This building was demolished for the current building around 1979. The Totsie-Wotsie Restaurant was built at 9567 Main Street in the 1930s and was renamed the Tootsie-Wootsie Restaurant in the 1940s. The original building was replaced with the current building by 1960.[117]

The establishment of ice houses in the late nineteenth century also contributed substantially to the economic and population growth of Whitmore Lake. The first was the Spring Lake Ice Company, which was owned by the railroad company. Four storage buildings were constructed at the Grove in the 9300 block of Main Street, and a railroad siding was extended from the tracks to their immediate west. The Spring Lake Ice Company was purchased by John C. Carland of Toledo in 1896, and the buildings were destroyed by fire soon after. Carland renamed the company the Toledo Ice and Coal Company and built a much larger storage building in the 9800 block of Main Street. Another building was constructed

[115] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 329-333.
[116] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 330.
[117] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 206, 208, 212; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 145-154.

adjacent to the icehouse as a residence for seasonal employees. The company employed only twenty men in the summer, but as many as 250 in the winter. As a result, many farmers in the area were able to supplement their farm incomes by harvesting ice during the winter months. The Toledo Ice and Coal Company was later named Citizen's Ice Company, and in 1929, the icehouse was destroyed in a fire caused by a lightning strike, which also destroyed the adjacent employees' residence.[118]

A second ice harvesting business owned by William Roper also operated in the village. The icehouse was located in the 200 block of East Shore Drive and therefore lacked the railroad access enjoyed by the Spring Lake Ice Company. It is not clear exactly when the business came into operation, but it continued into the 1930s. After closing, the icehouse was removed, although a part of the foundation remains inches under the lawns of the houses built on that location. A third ice company, the Dodge-Lemen Ice House, operated on the north side of the lake in Livingston County.[119]

Community Services

Community services also expanded as the village grew in the early decades of the twentieth century. The post office had moved from location to location since the 1850s, but when Jay G. Pray became postmaster in 1905, he built a brick post office at 9419 Main Street. A new post office was constructed at 9725 Main Street in 1976, and the earlier building remains extant though altered.[120]

Washtenaw County took over responsibility for local roads in 1893, and state funding became available in 1905, although Washtenaw County did not receive any of these funds until 1914.[121] There were several major roads through the township by that time. The original trail connecting Detroit to Jackson includes present-day North Territorial Road. Eight Mile Road forms the northern boundary of the township and was originally known as Base Line Road because it follows the 1815 path used to survey the Michigan Territory. In 1837 the Flint-Ann Arbor Road was built connecting the two towns, which is now known as Whitmore Lake Road. A plank road connecting Welch's Corners, the intersection of Whitmore Lake Road and North Territorial Road, to Whitmore Lake was widened and graded with gravel in 1910 when it became known as the State Road, and later it became part of the original U.S. Route 23.[122]

Fire and police protection started to become more formalized during the early twentieth century, though they were not the professionalized organizations in existence today. Fire departments formed throughout the county early in its history, often in response to a devastating fire, but they were manned by

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[118] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 110, 277-282; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 54, 154, 185-187.
[119] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 281-282; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 185-187.
[120] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 134; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 89-90.
[121] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 52.
[122] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 341; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 82-83.

volunteers who were generally ill-equipped.[123] Northfield Township relied on the efforts of the community to put out a fire and sometimes received assistance from the fire department in Ann Arbor, which had been professionalized in 1889. A loosely organized volunteer fire department was established in the village in the early twentieth century, but it was reorganized after a 1943 fire destroyed the Whitmore Lake School and nearly destroyed the fire truck that was kept there.[124] Police protection was originally offered intermittently by an on-call sheriff's deputy, and by the late 1940s there was a full-time constable in the village.[125]

World War II Growth

In spite of the growth in housing, business, and public services during this period, the population remained relatively stable, indicating that most of the growth was due to tourism and seasonal residents. In 1880 the population of Northfield Township was 1,273 people, and in 1930, it was 1,090 people. However, by 1940, the population had increased to 1,707 people, then to 2,848 people a decade later.[126] This growth was due in part to World War II-related manufacturing in Washtenaw County.

In 1942 the Willow Run Bomber Plant opened in Ypsilanti, southeast of Northfield Township, when Michigan's automobile industry shifted to war-related manufacturing at the request of the federal government. The Ford Motor Company sent recruiting buses to Kentucky and Tennessee to bring large numbers of workers to Washtenaw County from Appalachia for these jobs. Although dormitories were built at the plant complex, many workers lived in Northfield Township and Whitmore Lake, taking the train to and from Ypsilanti each day. At its peak, the plant employed 42,000 men and women building B-24 bombers, which were then tested and flown to military bases from the airstrip at the complex. Through the mid-1940s, the plant produced a total of 8,685 planes, but following the war, the number of employees dropped to about 600 people and the facility was closed in 1947. Most of the employees who lived in the Whitmore Lake and Horseshoe Lake areas did not remain once the plant had closed.[127]

Architecture

The Queen Anne and Gothic Revival styles popular in the late nineteenth century may be found Ann Arbor and other Washtenaw County towns, however no examples are known to exist in the Village of Whitmore Lake. The Gothic Revival style originated in England as part of the Picturesque movement, favoring Medieval stylistic elements over Classical detailing of the preceding Greek Revival, Federal,

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123 Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 52.
124 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 95, 346-347; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 133-135; City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, "Fire Department, Historical Narrative," https://www.a2gov.org/departments/fire/about/Pages/History.aspx.
125 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 351-352.
126 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 353.
127 Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 80, 85, 166-167; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 334, 336-337.

and Georgian styles. The style was popularized by pattern books, especially those of Alexander Jackson Davis who is credited with building the first residential example of the style in the United States in 1832, and is characterized by steeply pitched cross-gabled rooflines, decorative vergeboards in the gables, pointed-arch windows that often extend into the gables, and one-story porches with flattened arches. Built primarily from the 1830s through about 1880, Gothic Revival architecture was especially popular in religious architecture and far less common in residential buildings.[128]

Like the Gothic Revival style, the Queen Anne style is a highly ornamental style originating from Medieval precedents. Popularized by a group of nineteenth century English architects, the Queen Anne style borrowed heavily from the Medieval models of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, having little to do with the 1702-1714 reign of Queen Anne as the name implies. The style was popular in the United States the late-1800s, spread though pattern books and mail-order house plans, as well as via the expanding railroad network along which precut architectural details were distributed. Balloon framing, which was much lighter than older timber framing, resulted in more asymmetrical, complex houses. The style was popular in Washtenaw County from about 1875 until the 1910s and is characterized by steeply pitched rooflines, patterned shingles, textured wall materials, asymmetrical forms, cut-away bays or bay windows, and elaborate sawn woodwork.[129]

While true examples of these are styles are absent from Whitmore Lake, elements of each are present on Folk Victorian homes in the village. Folk Victorian architecture became popular in the late nineteenth century as the growth of the railroads facilitated the movement of machinery and raw materials needed for mass production. Local builders simply applied the new, readily available trim to the vernacular forms they were accustomed to building. Applied to vernacular house forms, including front-gabled, gable-front-and-wing, side-gabled, or pyramidal forms, Folk Victorian architecture mimicked high style houses with pared-down Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, or Italianate-style detailing, including turned porch posts and balustrades, square chamfered porch posts, sawn woodwork and brackets, center gables, and peaked window or door surrounds.[130]

Most Folk Victorian homes in the village feature pared-down Queen Anne-style details applied to common vernacular house forms. The house at 87 Margaret Street in Whitmore Lake is a fine example of Folk Victorian architecture, featuring a wrap-around porch, turned posts and balustrade, sawn brackets and frieze band trim, sawn bargeboards, and a modillion cornice applied to a two-story, cross-gable form. The two-story house at 20 East Shore Drive features a complex hip-roof with projecting gables, turned porch posts and balustrade, cottage windows, and delicate sawn bargeboards. Many Folk

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[128] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses,* 266-280; Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia (*New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 155-157.
[129] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses,* 344-370; Wineberg and McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor*, 7-8.
[130] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 396-405.

Victorian houses in Whitmore Lake have been altered with enclosed porches or large additions, and most have synthetic materials that have replaced or covered original materials and detailing.

By the turn of the twentieth century, architectural trends nationwide had moved away from the elaborate ornamentation of the late-nineteenth-century Romantic Revival styles, shifting instead to the classical detailing of the Colonial Revival style. Colonial and Classical architecture experienced a nationwide resurgence as part of an eclectic phase of architecture that took inspiration from the American 1876 and 1893 expositions and by the 1910s, drawing on elements of the Federal, Greek Revival, and Dutch Colonial styles. Colonial Revival-style buildings are typically one-, one-and-a-half-, or two-story, side-gabled buildings with small entry porches supported by Classical columns. Entrances are typically ornamented with sidelights or fanlights, pilasters, and decorative surrounds. Windows are usually multi-pane double hung windows, sometimes set in pairs. Dentil detailing, modillions, bands of trim, and other Classical elements are also common.[131] Although popular nationally from 1880 to 1955 and commonly found in Ann Arbor and other small towns in Washtenaw County, no known examples exist in Whitmore Lake.

Several examples of the Craftsman style are present in the village. An extension of the Arts and Crafts movement of the early twentieth century, this style was dominant nationally starting around 1905, originating in California. It spread quickly through magazines and pattern books, becoming popular in Washtenaw County until the 1930s. Craftsman-style bungalows offered modern living, unpretentious natural materials, and were inexpensive and easily built. The Craftsman style is characterized by side- or front-gable forms, low-pitched rooflines with widely overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, decorative knee braces or brackets, double-hung windows with decorative multi-light upper sashes, and porches supported by wood posts on masonry piers.[132]

Perhaps the most distinctive example of the Craftsman style in the village is the 1923 Gustav Radtke House, a stone bungalow at 574 East Shore Drive. It has a side-gable form and a full-width, engaged porch with a combination of stone and wood posts set on stone piers, which has been enclosed with one-over-one wood windows. The house has widely overhanging eaves with wood knee braces, a small rear porch with exposed rafters, four-over-one wood windows, and a wide shed-roof dormer on the front elevation with slate cladding. Many examples of the Craftsman style in the village have been altered with the enclosure or reconstruction of porches, construction of large additions, and application of synthetic materials.

Whitmore Lake waterfront vacation homes exhibit a wide variety of vernacular architectural forms and details, varying greatly in size, massing, and stylistic elements, though nearly all feature large banks of

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131 McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 408-432; Wineberg and McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor*, 10-11.
132 McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 566-578; Wineberg and McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor,* 13-14.

windows facing the lake. Many of these buildings have been substantially altered with additions and synthetic materials, and few retain architectural distinction.

Context 3: Changes to Rural Life (1880 to 1945)

Agriculture

Like the Village of Whitmore Lake, rural Northfield Township was also affected by the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s. Railroad transportation reduced the cost and time to ship farm products, offered refrigerated storage of dairy products, and operated on regular, year-round schedules, making it possible for farmers to broaden their reach beyond local or regional markets.[133] Instead of hauling goods to Ann Arbor markets on primitive roads that were often muddy potholes in the summer and ice sheets in the winter, farm products could be shipped directly on the railroad. Depots were located in both Whitmore Lake and the crossroads community of Leland's Corners, known by that time as Emery, though the tracks had been removed from the latter location by 1896.[134]

New technology in the late nineteenth century also had an impact on Northfield Township farms. Steam-powered tractors, riding plows, spring tooth harrows, seed drills, row crop cultivators, forage mowers, twine binders, threshers, and large grain combines all increased efficiency and crop yields while decreasing labor needs. In the early twentieth century, gas-powered tractors and trucks replaced animals and steam. New machinery was often too expensive to be a practical investment for most farmers, however, further shifting agriculture to larger operations while smaller ones struggled to compete.[135] The 1880 census recorded about nine percent of Northfield Township farms with 150 acres or more of improved land, and by 1894, this number grew to twelve percent.[136] Efforts were made to mitigate these challenges in Northfield Township where a small number of farmers maintained the most expensive equipment and helped to work their neighbors' land. The Zeeb and the Maier families, for example, owned threshing machinery, and during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their threshing crews traveled from farm to farm in the fall cutting and gathering grains into shocks.[137]

The development of these new technologies and an increasing focus on cash crops resulted in distinct geographic preferences for specific crops throughout the state by about 1930 as farms began to

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[133] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 49; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 12, 15.
[134] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 109.
[135] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 100-101, 105; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 14-15.
[136] United States Census Bureau, *1880 U.S. Federal Census – Agriculture Schedule,* Microfilm, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Washtenaw County, *Washtenaw County Census, Schedule III: Productions of Agriculture, 1894,* Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
[137] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 100-102.

specialize in products best suited to the local geography, climate, and soils. However, Northfield Township and the surrounding area continued to practice diverse, general farming into the mid-twentieth century. Farms in this region were ideally placed to easily access not only the major urban markets within the state, but also transportation networks to the large markets and processing facilities of other states.[138] Therefore, farmers in this region continued to grow a variety of cash crops, fruits, and vegetables, and kept a variety of livestock.[139] The 1880 agriculture census shows that nearly every farm in Northfield township grew corn, wheat, hay, and potatoes. Over eighty percent of farms had apple orchards and about five percent had peach orchards. There was also diversity among the livestock, with over ninety-three percent of farms with dairy cows producing butter, nearly ninety-two percent of farms with chickens producing eggs, over eighty-one percent of farms with hogs, and over sixty-eight percent of farms with sheep producing wool.[140] The 1894 agriculture census showed similar generalization, with nearly all farms reporting corn, wheat, hay, and potatoes, sixty-seven percent reporting apple orchards, and a small number reporting peach orchards, pear orchards, and vineyards. Livestock showed similar patterns as well, with over ninety-six percent of farms with dairy cows, ninety-eight percent with chickens, over eighty-one percent with hogs, and sixty-two percent with sheep.[141]

Many farmers were reluctant to accept new technologies well into the twentieth century, despite the potential benefits. Tractors became readily available in the early twentieth century, with Ford introducing the Fordson tractor in 1917, soon followed by the production of tractors from the International and John Deere companies. In spite of the availability of this machinery, and even though most farmers owned cars and trucks by this time, many preferred walking plows pulled by mules rather than gasoline-powered tractors. Electricity and telephones were also slow to become widespread in rural areas of the township, with many farms not connected until the 1920s – well after these conveniences had been established in the Village of Whitmore Lake. On the other hand, this long-standing culture of self-sufficiency served farmers well during the Great Depression. Most were able to grow enough food for their families and their livestock, as well as surplus to barter for other services, like a call to the local doctor.[142]

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[138] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 20, 28.
[139] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 16
[140] United States Census Bureau, *1880 U.S. Federal Census – Agriculture Schedule*.
[141] Washtenaw County, *Washtenaw County Census, Schedule III: Productions of Agriculture, 1894*.
[142] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 104-105.

Crossroads Communities

Crossroads communities sometimes formed at the intersections of major roads in early Northfield Township. They typically began with a school or church, which formed the center of community life at that time, which were soon joined by small inns, blacksmith shops, or general stores serving both travelers and locals alike. Some crossroads communities even offered some measure of public services, such as a post office or cemetery. As urban centers began to form throughout the county, fueled by even larger roads or railroad depots, these crossroads communities stagnated and eventually faded out of existence. Still, evidence of their presence remains visible on the landscape today.

The earliest such crossroads community in Northfield Township was the largely Irish community of Welch's Corners, which formed in the mid-nineteenth century at the intersection of Whitmore Lake Road and North Territorial Road. The Midway Tavern and Welch's Corners School had opened in the 1830s, followed by a blacksmith shop and general store. The community continued to grow with the addition of a gas station and produce stands in the early twentieth century, and the Midway Tavern served as a polling site before it was destroyed by fire in 1961.[143]

Another crossroads community was Leland's Corners, later known as Emery, which was located at the intersection of present-day North Territorial Road and Earhart Road.[144] The area was named for Emory Leland, though the reason for the alteration in spelling is not known. Leland owned most of the land west of the crossroads and several community buildings were constructed on his property. His house remains extant west of the crossroads at 3850 East North Territorial Road. The Leland Cemetery was established around 1820 at the northeast corner of the crossroads, and when the township's early Methodist congregations merged to form the First Methodist Church of Northfield in 1847, they built a church adjacent to the cemetery.[145] The Leland School was built in 1867 and remains extant at the northwest corner of the crossroads at 6025 Earhart Road. In the 1880s, the Leland Station railroad depot was built adjacent to the school. In 1884, the Emery Post Office was established inside a general store operated by George and Clara Zeeb, which also housed the local telephone exchange by 1901. The Zeebs also purchased cream from local dairy farmers, then took it by wagon to markets in Ann Arbor. Henry Miller operated a blacksmith shop at the southwest corner of Northfield Church Road and Earhart Road. A brickyard was located just north of the Leland School and the frozen brickyard pond was used for ice harvesting in winter months.[146] By 1896, however, when the railroad did not attract enough passengers to remain profitable, the rails were removed from Emery and the depot was torn down by 1915. The post office was decommissioned in 1903 when rural carrier routes were established, though the store continued in operation until it was destroyed by fire in 1972. The Methodist Church was

[143] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 642; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 64, 94-95, 167, 179-180, 191.
[144] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 121.
[145] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 649-650; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 161-162; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 92.
[146] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 122-123, 126-127; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 89-90.

dissolved in 1915, and the church building was demolished in the 1930s. The Leland School remained in operation until 1959 when it was consolidated with Whitmore Lake schools, and it has been highly altered for use as a private residence.[147]

Steffe's Corners was a rural crossroads community that formed at the intersection of Joy Road and Pontiac Trail. The Sutton School had been operating at that corner since 1828, and in 1922, Abraham and Leah Steffe built a grocery and general store at the corner. The Sutton School had no well at that time, so children from the school filled pails of water from the store for use at the school. The Steffe family operated the store until 1945, and the building remains standing at 3025 East Joy Road, though it has been highly altered for use as a private residence.[148]

Growth of the German Community

German immigration to Washtenaw County peaked in the late nineteenth century, then slowed in the early twentieth century during a period of relative prosperity in Germany. By 1915 about one-third of farms in Washtenaw County were households with German surnames.[149] In Northfield Township, these families relied heavily on German-founded community institutions as the centers of their communities. Saint John's Lutheran Church, which had been established in 1869, continued to grow through the early twentieth century. New windows and pews were installed in 1914, the church was enlarged and renovated in 1925, and an organ was installed in 1929. The parsonage was also remodeled in 1929. However, the church and its parsonage were both destroyed by fire in March 1932, and all early records of the church were also lost in the fire. Within weeks, the congregation had built a new parsonage, followed by a new church building that fall, both of which remain extant at 2945 East Northfield Church Road.[150]

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these German communities remained relatively insulated – those of German parentage typically married others of the same heritage, parents continued to teach the German language, fables, and customs to their children, and German heritage organizations hosted public events to share German culture with outside groups. However, anti-German sentiment during and following World War I began an important shift in the German community. German-Americans across the country found their non-German friends and neighbors questioned their loyalties during the war. Marwil points out that for Germans living in the United States, "Germany was not an alien force but a familiar place inhabited by family and friends, a homeland of abiding memories."[151]

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147 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 124-125, 127, 129; Dorothy Kapp Shear, *Farm Girl in a Feed Sack Dress: Memories of a 1940s Michigan Family Farm* (Self-Published, 2011), 145-146; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 89-90, 92.

148 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 130-131; Shear, *Farm Girl in a Feed Sack Dress,* 144-147.

149 Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers in Washtenaw County," 8; Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America,* 63.

150 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 147; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 98-101.

151 Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 94.

This was certainly true in Washtenaw County, where loyalty to the United States and to Germany fell on a broad spectrum. While the United States remained neutral, it was generally possible for Germans in Washtenaw County to maintain loyalty to the United States as well as sympathy – and worry – for family and friends in their homeland.[152] When Congress declared war in 1917, some German-speaking residents in the county were openly pro-Germany. For example, Eugene Helber, editor of the German newspaper *Die Washtenaw Post*, was called to a hearing in Washington, D.C. for publishing pro-German editorials and was forced to resign as head of the newspaper. Others simply failed to buy war bonds, and following a pro-war bond rally in Ann Arbor in 1918, German-owned businesses were vandalized with yellow paint to indicate this perceived disloyalty. Others fully supported the United States in the war, and many Washtenaw County residents of German descent enlisted in the United States military.[153]

These challenges increased the importance of mutual support, uplift, and social opportunities among German immigrants in Northfield Township. In the 1920s when many Germans were leaving Europe to come to the United States, German families in Ann Arbor and Northfield Township gathered together at each other's homes or nearby lakesides for picnics, music, and dancing. As tensions increased in Europe during the late 1930s, and with it anti-German sentiments in America, the need for community support grew even stronger. As the number of families participating in these events grew, they outgrew hosting in their own homes. A large gathering of what would become the German Park Recreation Club took place in a rented wooded grove southwest of Ann Arbor in 1934, and the event was so successful that in 1938, ten acres of the current park was purchased to continue this tradition of hosting large picnics. Albert Duckek, Tony Vetter, Adolf Vetter, Carl Schamm, and Adolph Gress donated five dollars each to make the down payment, and they sold bonds to raise the remaining $475 needed to buy the property. The first public picnic was held on July 17, 1938, and the club continues to host three public festivals each year with traditional German food, beer, music, and dancing.[154]

German residents in Northfield Township maintained a close relationship to those living in Ann Arbor throughout the twentieth century. In the 1930s, German Park Recreation Club members founded a Bavarian Schuhplattler dance group who first practiced at venues in Ann Arbor and later in Whitmore Lake. The group performed at events hosted by the Ann Arbor Schwaben Verein, as well as traveling to Detroit and Toledo. The Workmen's Benefit Fund Branch No. 370 was founded in Ann Arbor in 1934 by German residents of both Northfield Township and Ann Arbor with help from the Detroit Branch No.

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[152] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 94.
[153] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 97; Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 26-28.
[154] Toni Jarvis, "Our History Remembered," *The History of the German Park Recreation Club: Celebrating 75 Years, 1938-2013* (Ann Arbor, MI: German Park Recreation Club, 2013).

40. Like the Schwaben Verein, this fraternal organization also provided life insurance and annuities for members.[155]

Architecture

Among the most decorative buildings in rural Northfield Township are the two Gothic Revival-style churches. The 1878 Saint Patrick Catholic Church at 5731 Whitmore Lake Road (NR1982) features a tall, square central tower with a tall, narrow steeple, finials, and buttresses. The tower projects slightly from the building at the lower level and contains the entrance, which is set in a pointed arch opening with quatrefoil windows above the double doors. A decorative brick lintel over the entrance projects slightly with buttresses and fleur-de-lis ornamentation. The front and side elevations feature tall, narrow stained-glass windows set in pointed arch openings with tracery, brick lintels, and stone sills, as well as brick detailing at the cornice and buttresses separating the bays. Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 2945 East Northfield Church Road, constructed in 1932, is a twentieth century example that demonstrates a shift from the narrow, vertical aesthetic of the nineteenth century to wider, lower-pitched forms in the early twentieth century. The church retains characteristic details including a crenelated square corner tower, pointed-arch windows with tracery, and a rose window. The interior also exemplifies the Gothic Revival style with a tall, open nave lit by large, leaded stained-glass windows; hand-painted panels featuring religious symbolism on the apse ceiling and walls; and pointed-arch motifs that emphasize verticality.

Residences in the rural areas of the township are typically vernacular buildings that lack ornamentation and feature traditional forms, usually two-story side-gable or cross-gable forms, often with one- or two-story rear ells, and usually with partial- or full-width porches. The c. 1886 Navroth-Graf farmhouse at 370 West Northfield Church Road is without ornamentation applied to a two-story gable-front and one-story wing form, which features a shed-roof porch with square wood posts and a matchstick balustrade. The 1909 Kempf-Hynes-Cavanaugh farmhouse at 1515 East Joy Road has a traditional side-gable form, full-width hip-roof porch supported by turned wood posts with sawn wood brackets, and a gabled dormer, but lacks stylistic detailing.

Folk Victorian farmhouses are common in the township, typically utilizing Queen Anne-style detailing but generally lacking the textured walls and asymmetrical character of the style. These houses are usually gable-front-and-wing, side-gable, or cross-gable forms, often with one- or two-story rear ells, and usually with partial- or full-width porches. The c.1871 Bessert-Ryan House at 7441 Spencer Road is a two-story gable-front with one-and-one-half-story side-gable wing form featuring turned porch posts with sawn brackets, delicate sawn trim at the eaves, and peaked lintels over two-over-two wood windows. The 1894 O'Brien farmhouse at 2375 East Five Mile Road is a two-story, cross-gable form featuring a corner porch supported by turned posts with simple sawn brackets and a turned balustrade, two-over-two wood windows, weatherboard siding, a field stone foundation, and an interior brick

[155] Jarvis, "Our History Remembered."

chimney. The 1903 Maier farmhouse at 611 West Northfield Church Road is two-and-one-half-stories with a cross-gable form and decorative wood shingles in the gables. It features a characteristic wrap-around porch supported by turned wood posts with sawn brackets and a turned balustrade.
A small number of Colonial Revival- and Craftsman-style homes are also present in the township. The 1922 Groves farmhouse at 6015 Sutton Road (NR2023) is a two-story, side-gable example of the Colonial Revival-style. The entrance is centered on the symmetrical façade and features a six-panel door and four-light-over-one-panel wood sidelights within a Classical surround with pilasters supporting an entablature. The house also retains eight-over-eight wood windows, weatherboard cladding, and a stone foundation. The 1924 Marie (Prochnow) and Arthur Zeeb House at 5380 Earhart Road is a Craftsman-style house constructed on a large, generational farm. It features a side-gable form with wide, overhanging eaves and a gabled dormer on the façade. The house has replacement siding and windows, but retains a characteristic full-width, engaged porch supported by tapered square wood posts on brick piers. The 1932 Schairer House at 1240 West North Territorial Road is a distinctive one-and-one-half-story house featuring elements of the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles including a jerkinhead roof with a hip-roof dormer on the front and rear elevations; small porches on each corner of the front elevation supported by square wood columns; narrow four-over-four wood windows set in pairs, sometimes with four-over-four wood sidelights; wide window and door surrounds with paneled lintels; modillions at the cornice; and faux half timbering and cornice brackets at the gable ends.

Context 4: The Post-War Era (1945 to 1980)

A Lakeside Community

The railroads remained a primary method of transportation and an economic driver in the village of Whitmore Lake into the mid-twentieth century, but with the rising popularity of personal automobiles the village began to shift from a seasonal tourism-based economy to a year-round permanent community in the 1930s. Tourists began to drive to Whitmore Lake for day trips rather than taking the train, and the depot was closed in 1950 due to dwindling passenger traffic. In the 1960s the beaches closed due to insurance concerns, thus ending the railroad tourism era in Whitmore Lake.[156]

At the same time, the rise in popularity and affordability of personal automobiles led to an increase in permanent residency in Whitmore Lake, as people could more easily maintain permanent homes in the village while commuting daily to jobs in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Brighton, and other nearby cities. Whitmore Lake's population increased from 1,707 people in 1940 to 2,848 people in 1950 and continued to grow over the following decades, reaching 4,672 people by 1980.[157] Many of the smaller seasonal cottages on the lakeshore were enlarged or replaced by larger houses for full-time occupancy, and waterfront homes with private docks extending into the lake began to fill empty lots and replace

[156] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 228.
[157] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 353-354.

businesses on the east side of Main Street. Additional houses were constructed on undeveloped lots, especially along East Shore Drive on the south side of the lake.[158] The Widenmann's Point development in the 500-700 blocks of East Shore Drive and Cedar Street was platted in the 1920s, but construction began only in the 1950s and continued through the 1990s.[159] The Roper-Leece Subdivision in the 200-400 blocks of East Shore Drive was also developed during this time. It included nineteen lots platted in 1964, which were largely built out by the 1980s.[160]

Along with residential construction, the business district began to expand to serve the growing population. Businesses began to extend west along Barker Road between Main Street and the railroad tracks as development along the waterfront became predominantly residential. By the 1970s, Community Pharmacy opened at 148 Barker Road, a grocery store opened at the southwest corner of Barker Road and Main Street, and an addition on the rear of the Halleck House at 9615 Main Street extended west along Barker Road and contained several storefronts. There were also restaurants, professional offices, and construction companies located in this commercial core of the village.[161] The long vacant Dodge-Stevens House at 125 Barker Road came under Northfield Township ownership and was adapted to serve as the Northfield Township Area Library in the 1980s.[162] Businesses also began to appear south of the original commercial district on Main Street near the school complex, including gas stations, restaurants, and construction companies. In addition to the numerous private docks on the western and southern shorelines, two public marinas also opened on Main Street.[163]

One result of the shift to a permanent, year-round community was the significant expansion of public services and infrastructure in the village during the mid-twentieth century. One of the most dramatic improvements was the reorganization of the school system to consolidate smaller rural schools into a larger township-wide district. Northfield District No. 11 served the village of Whitmore Lake, and like the rest of the township, originally included a small country school. Known as the Whitmore Lake School and located at 9129 Main Street, the first school building was destroyed by fire in 1943. A new building was immediately constructed just south of the original building at 8877 Main Street. In 1954 the district was renamed the Whitmore Lake Public School District and a period of expansion and consolidation throughout the township began. By 1960, Sutton School, Leland School, Flintoft School, and Welch's Corners School in Northfield township, as well as the Green Oak School in Livingston County, had been consolidated with Whitmore Lake School. In 1966 the Whitmore Lake School was

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158 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 201; Washtenaw County, "MapWashtenaw," Historic Aerials, 1940, 1960, 1966, 1979, 1984.
159 "Widenmann's Point," Plat Book 5, Page 46, March 6, 1925, Washtenaw County Register of Deeds; "MapWashtenaw," Historic Aerials, 1940, 1960, 1966, 1979, 1984.
160 "Roper-Leece Subdivision," Plat Book 17, Page 21, July 3, 1964, Washtenaw County Register of Deeds; "MapWashtenaw," Historic Aerials, 1940, 1960, 1966, 1979, 1984.
161 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 214-215.
162 Northfield Township Area Library, "Our History," http://www.ntal.org/our-history.html.
163 Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 214-215.

renamed Spencer Elementary School in honor of James Spencer, the first superintendent of the new district.[164]

In 1957 a new high school building was completed near the Whitmore Lake School. The high school was substantially enlarged in 1964, with the original high school building serving as the enlarged building's south wing. Athletic facilities were added in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which remain extant north of the school complex on Jennings Road. The west wing of the building was constructed in 1977 when the middle school was added, and a small addition was built on the south wing in 1989.[165]

Further change has come to the Whitmore Lake schools in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. Spencer Elementary School was demolished after the current elementary school was built at 1071 Barker Road near downtown in 1991. A new high school was built at 7430 Whitmore Lake Road in 2006. The middle school on Main Street later closed with those grades incorporated into the elementary and high school buildings, and the building now houses the district administration offices, a Montessori school, and a charter school.[166]

The fire and police departments also grew following World War II. Following reorganization of the fire department in the wake of the 1943 Whitmore Lake School fire, the township's first fire station was built at 75 Barker Road in 1946. The building was constructed by community volunteers using a variety of donated materials salvaged from other buildings. The front of the building included a garage to house the single pumper truck that the department had at that time, while an apartment at the rear of the building was occupied by the volunteer fire chief.[167] A new pumper truck was added to the station in 1948, followed by a tanker in 1950. More volunteer personnel were needed to operate the new equipment, so the first stipends were offered in the 1960s. In 1969 the Township took over the department and it was officially named the Northfield Township Fire Department. An addition was constructed onto the fire station in the early 1970s, and in 1977, Station No. 2 was built at 2727 East North Territorial Road and equipped with two pumpers, two tankers, three grass fire units, and two rescue units.[168]

The police department grew more slowly than the fire department, not expanding until the late twentieth century. The constable continued to serve as the only police until the current police department was

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[164] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 191-194; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 139-144.
[165] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 191-194; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 139-144.
[166] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 191-194; Jennifer DeLisle, email communication with author, July 13, 2021; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 139-144.
[167] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 95, 346-347; Northfield Township, "Fire Department History," http://www.twp-northfield.org/services_and_departments/fire_department/fire_department_history.php .
[168] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 346-348, 351-352; Northfield Township, "Fire Department History"; Jennifer DeLisle (NTHS President), email communication with author, July 16, 2021.

formed in 1985 with one full-time patrolman, a part-time sergeant, and several reserve officers; county police and sheriffs provided the only evening or weekend services. By that time, the fire station on Barker Road also housed the Township Hall, and the rear addition of the building was expanded by 1990 to house the police department. Twenty-four-hour police operations began in 1992, and the department increased to eleven full-time officers. The Barker Road facility was closed in 2001 when the Public Safety Building was constructed at 8350 Main Street to house the Township Hall, police department, and fire department. The Barker Road building remains extant and is currently under renovation for apartments.[169]

Roads changed dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century as well. The former Route 23 that wound its way through Northfield Township and the village of Whitmore Lake was replaced with a more direct U.S. Highway 23 in 1958. In addition to diverting traffic and tourists away from downtown, the new divided highway also cut across roads that once spanned east-west across the township, including Whitmore Lake Road, Jennings Road, Northfield Church Road, and Five Mile Road. The new highway also cut through the Shady Beach development at Horseshoe Lake, splintering the neighborhood. This was likely a deliberate choice – inhabited largely by Appalachian transplants who came to the area to work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant, the neighborhood had a poor reputation and oral tradition suggests some banks even refused to offer mortgages in the area.[170]

Many sewage tanks were still being emptied directly into the lake in the mid-twentieth century, and eventually the lake was deemed unsafe for swimming. As a result, Northfield Township purchased a sewage plant from the state in 1958, located on Nine Mile Road in Green Oak Township, Livingston County. Construction began on a sewer system on the western and southern sides of the lake, then along the eastern side. By 1980 the system was also completed around Horseshoe Lake and the northern side of Whitmore Lake, and in 1998 it was expanded further along U.S. Highway 23 and North Territorial Road.[171]

Decline of Agriculture

As a result of early twentieth-century improvements in farming methods, transportation, and marketing, most Michigan farmers, and in fact many nationwide, practiced specialized farming after 1945. Technological advances made it economically viable for farmers to specialize; for example, the advent of automated feeding equipment made it possible to maintain a larger livestock herd with the same labor. Northfield Township farmers, however, continued to practice generalized farming, growing a variety of cash crops while also raising livestock, much as they had done since the early nineteenth

[169] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 346-348, 351-352; Northfield Township, "Fire Department History"; Jennifer DeLisle (NTHS President), email communication with author, July 16, 2021.
[170] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 336, 344; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 83-84.
[171] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 344-345; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 84-85.

century.[172] Although farms remained generalized, there were changes in the popularity of some types of crops and livestock during the mid-twentieth century. Corn, wheat, and hay remained the most common cash crops, while the 137 fruit orchards reported in the 1894 agricultural census had dropped to just fifteen. While nearly every farm in the township raised dairy cows and chickens at the turn of the twentieth century, by the 1950s only about half of Northfield Township farms kept dairy herds. About two-thirds continued to house chickens by 1954, however chickens were not recorded at all in the 1959 agricultural census. Hogs and sheep were also common livestock in the 1894 agricultural census, but hogs were no longer recorded on the agricultural censuses of the 1950s, and only six farms recorded sheep herds by 1950, with sheep not included at all in subsequent census data.[173]

One of the most noticeable changes among Northfield Township farms following World War II was the shift even further from the family operations of the settlement period as many smaller farms were incorporated into larger commercial operations. The technology and machinery improvements of the early twentieth century combined with widespread farm electrification continued to widen the production gap between small family farms and larger agribusiness operations in the mid-twentieth century. Although these improvements resulted in greater production on fewer acres, as well as faster cultivation and processing with less manual labor, the expense of purchasing and maintaining the machinery necessary to remain competitive was too great for many smaller farms.[174] Nationwide, the acreage used for agriculture peaked in the 1950s at nearly 1.2 million acres, and then went into steady decline with less than one million acres by 1990. Correspondingly, the number of farms across the county peaked around 1935 at just under seven million, dropping to about 5.5 million by the 1950s and just over two million by 1990.[175] Similarly, the number of farming operations in Northfield Township, and Washtenaw County more broadly, began to drop dramatically. In 1935 there were approximately 3,500 farms operating throughout the county, but that number fell to just 1,400 farms by 1985. In Northfield Township, two hundred farms had been recorded in the 1894 agricultural census, but that

[172] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 20, 28.
[173] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 110; United States Census Bureau, *1880 U.S. Federal Census – Agriculture Schedule*; United States Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1950,* "Michigan by Counties," Microfilm, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; United States Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1954,* "Michigan by Counties," Microfilm, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor; United States Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1959,* "Michigan by Counties," Microfilm. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
[174] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 86; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 111; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 15-16; Bruce L. Gardner, *American Agriculture in the Twentieth Century: How It Flourished and What It Cost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 57-58, 62-63.
[175] Gardner, *American Agriculture,* 4, 50-51.

number dropped to 145 farms by the 1954 census and only 109 farms by the 1959 census.[176] By 1969, farmers made up less than one percent of the employed people in the county, and that number was cut nearly in half again by 1985.[177]

In an effort to maintain the profitability of farming, the federal government responded with a variety of regulatory actions, many of which took acreage out of service and/or limited the number of livestock permitted in order to prevent surplus production and the resultant depressed prices. Among these were the Agricultural Act of 1956, the Emergency Food Grain Program in 1961, and the Agriculture and Food Acts of 1977 and 1981, all of which would have affected Northfield County farmers growing wheat and other grains or raising livestock, dairy in particular. In fact, most dairy farmers in Northfield Township took advantage of the Dairy Termination Program of 1986, which involved the purchase of whole dairy herds by the federal government to prevent surplus dairy production and support dairy prices for those who continued farming.[178] Those participating in these programs were generally family farms, rather than larger commercial enterprises, furthering income inequality and production gaps between the two.

In the 1980s the combined struggles of decreasing land values, increasing interest rates, and decreasing crop prices led to widespread debt, bankruptcy, and foreclosure of farmland.[179] One result of this financial crisis was the rise of off-farm work among farmers by the late nineteenth century. In 1929, the first time this statistic was recorded in the census, only 6.3 percent of farm workers reported regular off-farm work, rising to 17.5 percent by 1949. By 1997, 35 percent of farmers reported off-farm work and 45 percent reported something other than farming as their principal employment, with 85 percent of farm families' income coming from off-farm work.[180] Another result of this continuous financial stress was the tendency for later generations of farm families to choose work outside of agriculture, often in favor of steady-paying government jobs.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the nature of Northfield Township had changed dramatically from the agrarian society of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the tourist-driven economy of the early and mid-twentieth century. The loss of agricultural land remains an ongoing concern for county and local officials, in spite of efforts to preserve existing farmland through tax credit programs like the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act of 1974.[181] Today, only two full-time family farm operations remain in Northfield Township, producing soybeans, corn, hay, and wheat, while

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[176] United States Census Bureau, *1880 U.S. Federal Census – Agriculture Schedule*; United States Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1954*; United States Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1959*.
[177] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 86; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 111; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 15-16.
[178] Gardner, *American Agriculture*, 242-244.
[179] Gardner, *American Agriculture,* 85.
[180] Gardner, *American Agriculture,* 71.
[181] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 98; Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, "Farmland Preservation," https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_2558---,00.html (accessed February 2021).

the once common dairy cows, chickens, sheep, and hogs have disappeared from the landscape.[182] Instead, many of the extant farmsteads have vacant agricultural buildings, fields leased to larger agricultural companies, and farmhouses that serve as rental properties for absentee owners. Farmland continues to be converted to lakeside and countryside housing developments for commuters seeking homes outside the city. As a result, the character of the township has shifted from a bustling tourist destination surrounded by active family farms to a residential area whose residents utilize the highways to commute to jobs in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and other nearby cities.

Impact of the World Wars on the German Community

Washtenaw County residents of German heritage were deeply affected by the world wars, especially World War II. World War I caused a period of nativism, but German immigrants were generally welcomed by Michiganders prior to World War II. These sentiments changed quickly after 1938, as suspicion and conflict toward German speakers increased in the county, and throughout the nation, largely due to the widespread feeling that Germany was the primary cause of second world war. German-born citizens were subject to rumors and slander, with the results ranging from simply causing conflict among neighbors to being arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.[183]

Some residents of German heritage in Washtenaw County maintained a lifestyle that reflected German culture while making efforts to be inconspicuous. German Park Recreation Club, for example, had been hosting public picnics to celebrate German culture since 1938 and attempted to continue through the 1940s. Tony Jarvis, lifelong member of the club, recalled, "we tried to have a few picnics, but the attitude towards the German people was strained. At one picnic a huge fight broke out… there were lots of nasty slurs and accusations, calling us Nazis. So we had to close the park to the public for a few years."[184] Erich Keil, another lifelong member of the park, explained that some Germans returned to Germany during the war but those who remained avoided political involvement. "They didn't want to cause waves and have to leave Ann Arbor," he said. "They cherished the fact that they had a piece of land to call their own."[185]

Others began to slowly assimilate more fully into American Society. The German language faded from homes, and churches began holding services primarily in English, including Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northfield Township. Church-associated schools throughout the county, which had previously taught German language and culture, removed those topics from their curriculums. For generations, German-speakers in the county had married others of German heritage, however later generations moved away from this tradition. The cumulative impact of the two world wars on the

[182] Lori Maulbetsch (owner at 2271 East Northfield Church Road), personal interview by author, May 2, 2021.
[183] Marwil, *A History of Ann Arbor,* 126-127.
[184] German Park Recreation Club, "The History of the German Park Recreation Club," 9.
[185] Personal Communication with Marlene Mead (German Park President) by Cheri Szcodronski, July 2025, via email.

Washtenaw County German community, including that of southeastern Northfield Township, resulted in a shift from a distinct, insular community in the nineteenth century to nearly complete assimilation into American society by the late twentieth century.[186]

Architecture

The Great Depression and World War II resulted in a period of slow growth, and when construction resumed in the 1950s, smaller houses with restrained ornamentation were typical. Characterized by a very simple rectangular, side- or front-gabled form, flush eaves, and a lack of architectural detail, Minimal Traditional-style houses were a response to the limited resources of the depression and World War II, followed by rapid home building after the war. The Minimal Traditional style was popular nationally from 1935 until the 1950s, but is rare in Northfield Township.[187] A rural example of the style is the 1956 Joann (Enders) and Kenneth Zeeb House at 5370 Earhart Road. Located on a generational farm, the one-story, side-gable house features an asymmetrical façade, flush eaves, and a picture window. The entrance is sheltered by a simple, gabled hood and accessed by concrete steps with wrought iron railings.

Through the mid-twentieth century, housing shifted from the traditional forms and colonial details of the Minimal Traditional style to the streamlined, modern aesthetic of the Ranch house. The Ranch style is characterized by a long, low profile with a low-pitched gable or hip roof, asymmetrical orientation of windows and doors, broad eaves, and picture windows. These wide, low, one-story houses, most often constructed with brick veneers, were attractive to working-class families as a low-maintenance alternative to siding, which required regular repainting. Additionally, the open floor plans with centrally located kitchens represented the family-centered focus of the 1950s house, a direct response to the fragmentation of rooms separated by hallways that earlier house forms provided. The Ranch house also often included an attached garage or carport, supporting an increased trend in automobile ownership nationwide in the decades after World War II.[188]

Ranch-style homes are common in rural areas of the township, sometimes as part of a generational farm but more often constructed on subdivided former farmland. The 1964 house at 1519 East Joy Road, part of the generational Kempf-Hynes-Cavanaugh Farm, features a characteristic low-pitched hip roof, off-center three-light wood slab door, and a three-part picture window. The house also has widely overhanging eaves and an attached garage on the west end. A small subdivision of primarily Ranch-style houses was developed on former farmland off East Northfield Church Road between Sutton and Earhart Roads. This subdivision includes hip-roof and side-gable homes featuring long, low forms with deep eaves; picture windows or bowed windows on the façades; entry stoops with wrought iron railings; and attached garages or carports. In Whitmore Lake, Ranch-style homes are less common and typically

[186] Herter and Stollsteimer, "A History of the German Settlers," 26-28; Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America,* 287-308.
[187] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 586-595.
[188] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 596-611.

constructed as village lots have been subdivided over time. The 1972 house at 9430 Main Street is a distinctive example featuring a low hip-roof form with deep eaves, glass block windows and a picture window, a wide interior chimney, and an attached garage.

Constructed in the mid-twentieth century, Modern Movement buildings were a reaction to traditional building methods and design elements inspired by historical styles, and instead emphasized functionalism, rationalism, and up-to-date construction methods. The design typically focused on the use of the interior spaces rather than exterior detailing, aims to connect the interior spaces of the house to the out-of-doors, and prioritizes private space. As a result, contemporary-style buildings typically feature natural materials; large banks or bands of windows, usually on the rear facing private outdoor spaces; and recessed or hidden entries, sometimes with blind walls on the front facing the street and public spaces.[189]

Though common in Ann Arbor, Modern Movement buildings are rare in Northfield Township. The most distinctive is the 1993 Macoska House at 8135 Kearney Road, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian style of the 1930s and featuring natural construction materials, a low profile, and broad roof overhangs. Walls of windows offer a connection between indoor and outdoor space, and the L-shaped form provides increased privacy. The Macoska House is the only such example in Northfield Township and one of only a few known examples in Washtenaw County.[190] More typical is the application of Modern detailing to a traditional form, as demonstrated by the Saint Patrick's Parish Center at 5731 Whitmore Lake Road. Built in 1978 and partially rebuilt in 1980 following a devastating tornado, this one-story gable-on-hip building has a textured stone veneer and features Modern detailing including tall, narrow fixed windows with stone lintels and aprons and a recessed entry with stone veneer walls extending out from the building to frame the entrance.

[189] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses,* 628-646; Harris, *American Architecture*, 74.
[190] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses,* 646.

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Each property type identified by this multiple property context may be associated with one or more of the following criteria and themes. Properties may be eligible as an individual building, a complex of buildings, or a historic district, and properties must retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association to convey significance under applicable criteria and themes. Integrity is evaluated as a property's ability to convey its significance and is considered without regard to physical condition.

Residential Buildings

Description

Although the rural and village areas of the township are each distinctive landscapes with different development histories, they both employed popular architectural styles from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. Residential styles include Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch. Vernacular residential buildings are also common, and may feature pared-down elements of popular styles, most often Queen Anne.

Houses in the village of Whitmore Lake are typically located on the shores of Whitmore Lake, including downtown residences on Main Street adjacent to the commercial district or former vacation homes extending along the southern shoreline on East Shore Drive. The earliest residential buildings in the village were typically constructed as part of larger farm complexes, since many of the earliest village residents also farmed. However, most historic outbuildings have been removed, and former farmland has long since been sold for village development. Some extant residential buildings remain from the village's heyday as a tourist destination, but most were built in the twentieth century as the village shifted from a seasonal population to a permanent one.

Many of the historic houses that currently dot rural Northfield Township were constructed with a variety of domestic and agricultural outbuildings forming clearly defined farm complexes. In some cases, the farmhouse remains the dominant building in a farm complex, sometimes with a highly intact complement of domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Others retain small outbuildings, such as sheds or chicken houses, but no longer retain the barns or field patterns necessary to convey the character of a nineteenth century farm. In still other cases, the outbuildings have been lost entirely, and the surrounding farmland has also been sold for development.

Registration Requirements

A residential building may be eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with an event or events that have made a significant impact on broad patterns of history, such as Ethnic

Heritage, Exploration/Settlement, or other areas. A residential building may also be eligible at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture as an important example of a type, period, or method of construction and may exhibit nationally popular styles or vernacular interpretations of those styles. In order to qualify for listing, the property must typically be more than fifty years old; retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association; retain historic materials, design, and workmanship with minimal alterations; and occupy the original site. Interiors must retain integrity as well, including the layout of rooms and character-defining features and materials, such as mantles, staircase balustrades, window and door surrounds, or other decorative woodwork. In addition to the primary dwelling, residential properties may include small-scale accessory resources, such as garages, sheds, or wells.

Common alterations to residential buildings include the application of synthetic siding, installation of replacement windows or doors, alterations to porches, construction of additions, and loss of historic secondary buildings or structures. These changes alone or in combination do not necessarily render a residential building ineligible, however changes must be evaluated in relationship to the overall significance of the property. Alterations to the historic form and materials should be evaluated in terms of cumulative change and permanence of the changes. Construction of additions may not adversely affect overall integrity if the addition is located on a secondary elevation and does not diminish the historic building; reflects the evolution of construction methods or architectural styles; or reflects changes in domestic lifeways over time. Likewise, loss of minor outbuildings or structures may not affect the overall integrity of the property if its historic function was primarily domestic in nature and not associated with agriculture, religion, or other uses for which secondary resources are integral.

Moved properties and properties less than fifty years old are typically not eligible for listing in the National Register. Those that may be eligible must meet National Register Criteria Consideration B or Criteria Consideration G, respectively.

Farm Complexes and Domestic/Agricultural Outbuildings

Description

Northfield Township is notable for the number of farm complexes that remain extant, especially those from the township's early and mid-nineteenth-century settlement period. Most farms established in the 1830s originally featured log homes built with timber that was cut as the land was cleared of forest for agriculture. These log homes were later replaced with frame buildings as settlers gained prosperity. Northfield Township farm complexes often retain outbuildings that date to the construction of the house, as well as later outbuildings that reflect the continued growth of the farm and evolution of farming techniques. Therefore, extant farm complexes typically have farmhouses dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century with outbuildings that date from the mid-nineteenth century through the late twentieth century. The farm landscape includes fields for cultivated crops, hay meadows, or livestock pasture, often bounded by wooded areas or divided by tree lines; a barn yard,

often divided into small holding pens for livestock; and the domestic complex with a yard, gardens, and outbuildings immediately adjacent to the farmhouse.

Farm complexes began to change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the arrival of the railroads and the availability of new markets, as well as the advent of new farming technologies, including commercial fertilizers and new machinery. Most farms in Northfield Township and the surrounding region increased in size but remained predominantly generalized farms, with a combination of cash crops, subsistence crops, and livestock. As new machinery allowed greater production with less manual labor, cash crop production increased. Likewise, with the ability to produce more corn and hay, larger herds of livestock could be maintained. Improvements in transportation meant vegetables, fruits, eggs, and dairy products could be stored longer and shipped farther, allowing increases in those farming operations as well. As a result, the farm complex adjusted with more storage buildings, larger barns, and the construction of silos and chicken houses during this period.[191]

Farmsteads included agricultural outbuildings related to housing, storing, and processing crops or livestock, and domestic outbuildings related to the operation of the household. The topography of Northfield Township is generally flat, allowing a relatively regular placement of outbuildings with respect to the farmhouse. Domestic outbuildings are typically arranged close to the farmhouse for ease of use by the farm family, while agricultural outbuildings are located further from the farmhouse. Animal barns in particular are often placed on the periphery of the farm complex, and outbuildings used in the care of livestock, such as grain silos or corn cribs, are typically in close proximity to animal barns. Northfield Township farms also typically included fruit orchards and vegetable gardens, which, though now largely absent from the landscape, are important to understanding land use over time.

Archaeological resources, such as foundations, ruins, changes in vegetation, and surface remains, are likely to be present on Northfield Township farmsteads and may provide valuable information about the ways farmland has been used over time. Changes in vegetation may indicate abandoned roadways, homesites, and fields, while the spatial distribution of features, surface disturbances, subsurface remains, patterns of soil erosion and deposition, and soil composition may also yield information about the evolution and past uses of the land.

Registration Requirements

The historic farm complexes of Northfield Township may meet National Register Criterion A for local significance in Agriculture, Exploration/Settlement, or other areas related to broad patterns of history. These properties demonstrate the migration of agricultural practices and building types westward, typically from New England, as Michigan was settled in the nineteenth century, as well as the continuous evolution of agricultural products, machinery, and practices from the early nineteenth

[191] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 15-17.

through the mid-twentieth centuries. Farm complexes and associated resources (including buildings, structures, sites, and objects) may also meet Criterion C for significance in Architecture as representative examples of a type, period, or method of construction and may exhibit nationally popular styles or vernacular interpretations of those styles. Historic farm complexes that are associated with the subsistence agriculture from the settlement period through the turn of the twentieth century and reflect the movement of building types and construction methods during westward migration may also be eligible under Criterion C for significance in Construction and Settlement/Exploration.

The farm complex derives its integrity and significance as a collection of multiple components and is evaluated as a whole rather than as individual resources. A farm complex is eligible if it retains the primary dwelling and a complement of domestic and/or agricultural outbuildings or structures that generally retain the historic spatial arrangement, typically a barn(s) and other substantial outbuildings historically associated with agricultural practices and lifeways. The primary dwelling must retain character-defining details, form, fenestration, and materials, with minimal alterations. Outbuildings integral to the property's agricultural history must remain extant and retain character-defining details to convey type, period, and use. Significant landscape features, such as historic pastures, field patterns, ponds or streams, driveways, farm roads, or mature trees or plantings beds should also remain largely intact. Archaeological resources, such as foundations, ruins, changes in vegetation, surface remains, and abandoned roadways, homesites, or fields, may provide valuable information about the ways farmland has been used over time. Many archaeological resources will be integrally related to historic activities and contribute to the significance of a farm complex and therefore may strengthen the integrity of a farm complex by providing physical evidence of activities no longer practiced or of resources no longer extant.

Farm complexes typically illustrate the evolution of farm practices and agricultural technologies over a long period of time, which often resulted in alterations to or relocation of farm buildings and structures that accommodated varying activities over time. Farm complexes also often demonstrate the decline of farming through the sale of historic pastures or cultivated fields for development. In addition, farm dwellings are commonly altered with the application of synthetic materials, alterations to porches, or construction of additions. Such changes do not necessarily adversely affect the integrity of a farm complex and must be evaluated within the context of the evolution in farming practices or development of farm technologies that the alterations represent.

Moved properties are typically not eligible for listing in the National Register and those that may be eligible must meet National Register Criteria Consideration B. The relocation of individual resources within a farm complex is typical in Northfield Township and does not require Criteria Consideration B evaluation. Properties less than fifty years old are also typically not eligible for listing in the National Register. Those that may be eligible must meet National Register Criteria Consideration G.

Churches and Church Complexes

Description

Throughout Northfield Township's history, churches have served as the centers of community life, often providing not only religious services, but also community meeting spaces and political forums. Church life was particularly important for newcomers to the township, who relied on one another for support and assistance as they built homes and livelihoods, and this was especially true for Irish and German immigrants who often faced discrimination. Northfield Township churches typically began as rectangular buildings but have large rear additions that reflect the continued use of the buildings and growth of the congregations over time. Most churches are part of larger complexes that may include a rectory, cemetery, or social hall, oriented in close proximity to each other to easily provide a multitude of services to the congregation and community. Churches and church complexes also often include a variety of significant landscape features, such as prayer gardens, driveways, recreational fields, mature trees, or planting beds.

The need for burial grounds was almost immediate upon settlement of new areas, and these earliest burial grounds were typically utilitarian and unmaintained, with graves usually unmarked, making them difficult to identify today. A very small number of cemeteries in Northfield Township were family cemeteries located on individual family farms; only two are known to exist. Instead, Northfield Township's extant historic cemeteries began as churchyard cemeteries. As communities began to develop and become more stable and churches were established as community centers, formal, planned cemeteries became more common. These picturesque landscapes were established out of necessity, but later followed principles of the Rural Cemetery Movement with tidy rows of graves, paths wide enough for a wagon or carriage, and poplar, willow, and cedar tree plantings. Graves are traditionally oriented east to west, with the head facing east. Grave markers include headstone and footstone, pedestal-tomb, obelisk, box-tomb, and ledger types, which display common funerary art including lamb, draped cloth, willow, urns, clasped hands, doves, crosses, and bibles. Grave markers are primarily made of limestone, granite, or marble and are arranged in a combination of individual burials with their own markers, family plots with a central family stone surrounded by individual graves, and obelisks or pedestal-tombs with several family members memorialized.[192]

Registration Requirements

A church or church complex may be eligible at the local level under Criterion A for Social History, Ethnic Heritage, Exploration/Settlement, or other areas associated with broad patterns of history. A church or church complex may also be eligible at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture as an important example of a type, period, or method of construction and may exhibit nationally popular styles

[192] Gregg G. King, et. al., *Michigan Historic Cemeteries Preservation Guide* (Canton, MI: Charter Township of Canton, 2004), 27-30, 38, 74-78.

or vernacular interpretations of those styles. An eligible property may be an individual building; may include small-scale secondary buildings, such as a storage shed, equipment garage, or well house; or may be part of a church complex with a fellowship hall, education building, rectory, or other substantial buildings or structures that were historically associated with religious activities. In order to qualify for listing, the property must typically be more than fifty years old; retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association; retain historic materials, design, and workmanship with minimal alterations; and occupy the original site. Interiors must retain integrity as well, including the layout of rooms and character-defining features and materials, such as staircase balustrades, window and door surrounds, stained or leaded glass, floor or ceiling materials, and other decorative elements.

Church complexes derive their integrity and significance from their multiple components and are evaluated as a whole. Buildings and structures within a church complex must retain character-defining details, form, fenestration, and materials, with minimal alterations. The complex should also retain significant landscape features and the historic spatial arrangement of resources. Cemeteries may also be a contributing resource within a church complex if the cemetery's layout, markers, and other character-defining features remain intact.

Churches and church complexes typically illustrate the growth and change in the congregation over a long period of time, which often resulted in alterations to or expansion of existing resources, or in construction of new resources that accommodated the changing needs of the congregation. In addition, churches and related buildings may be altered with the application of synthetic materials, construction of accessible entrances or elevator shafts, or alterations to the historic form. Such changes do not necessarily adversely affect the integrity of a church or church complex and must be evaluated in relationship to the overall significance of the property.

Churches must meet National Register Criteria Consideration A, deriving primary significance from historical or architectural importance, rather than from the religion itself. In addition, moved properties and properties less than fifty years old are typically not eligible for listing in the National Register. Those that may be eligible must meet National Register Criteria Consideration B or Criteria Consideration G, respectively.

Civic, Commercial, and Recreational Buildings

Description

Civic buildings in Northfield Township, such as schools, town halls, or fire stations, are generally clustered in the village of Whitmore Lake. As is common with this property type, many civic properties in Northfield Township have been built in the last fifty years, and rural schools, once located throughout the township, have been lost or repurposed following consolidation of the school districts. Commercial buildings are also typically located in Whitmore Lake, though retail, restaurants, and services contribute

little to the local economy. Rural Northfield Township once had a number of country stores within crossroads communities, but as these communities have become defunct, general store buildings have been lost or converted to other uses. Though Whitmore Lake once boasted hotels, dance halls, and other tourism-related properties, few of these remain extant in the village or elsewhere in rural Northfield Township. In recent years, a small commercial area has formed near the intersection of Whitmore Lake and North Territorial Roads, including primarily service stations, retail stores, and landscaping services. A small grouping of light industrial facilities has also formed on North Territorial Road, east of U.S. 23 and Whitmore Lake Road.

Registration Requirements

Civic, commercial, and recreational properties may be eligible at the local level under Criterion A for Social History, Ethnic Heritage, Education, Politics/Government, Commerce, Entertainment/Recreation or other areas related to broad patterns of history. These properties serve as centers of community development and identity, places where community members gather to be educated, conduct civic business, socialize, and care for one another. To meet this criterion, properties must be more than fifty years old; retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association to convey significance within one of the above themes; must be in its original location; and must retain integrity of materials, design, and workmanship to convey historic context and function. Complexes must also retain overall layout and a complement of resources associated with the significant themes and periods.
Civic, commercial, and recreational properties may also be eligible at the local level under Criterion C as significant examples of nationally popular building forms, plans, and styles, or as vernacular interpretations of these forms and styles. To meet this criterion, alterations should be minimal on both the exterior and the interior, with decorative detailing, window and door surrounds, roof detailing, and other character-defining architectural features visible and intact.

Alterations to civic and recreational buildings are common in an effort to maintain modern public facilities within a community, while updates to commercial buildings convey modernity and financial solvency to potential customers. Changes typically include the application of synthetic materials, construction of accessible entrances or elevator shafts, construction of additions, or interior renovations. Such changes do not necessarily adversely affect the integrity of a resource and must be evaluated in relationship to the overall significance of the property.

Moved properties and properties less than fifty years old are typically not eligible for listing in the National Register. Those that may be eligible must meet National Register Criteria Consideration B or Criteria Consideration G, respectively.

Ethnic Heritage Properties

Description

Many Irish immigrants began to arrive in the western and central sections of Northfield Township in the late 1820s. Most had been farmers in Ireland, first immigrating to New England then moving westward, largely seeking better soils for agriculture. The southeast area of the township was settled by a relatively large population of German immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century, and this pattern of settlement continued through the early twentieth century when many Germans were fleeing Europe for the United States. Irish and German immigrants in Northfield Township formed distinct communities, churches, and social groups in order to provide a sense of identity, mutual support, and safety.

Registration Requirements

In addition to the above criteria and themes, properties associated with the arrival of Irish or German ethnic groups or the establishment of Irish or German communities and institutions may also be eligible at the local level under Criterion A or Criterion C for Ethnic Heritage. These properties must have a direct connection to Irish or German ethnic groups, must illustrate one or more significant aspects of the Irish or German experience in the township, must meet the particular property requirements of the above criteria and themes, and must possess integrity for the theme of Ethnic Heritage.

Farm complexes in particular may be significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage if extant resources demonstrate the migration of building types or construction methods, which are usually expressed in agricultural barns and other outbuildings. Common ethnic influences in Northfield Township buildings include English, Welsch, Scottish, and/or New England types and methods, which are typically of timber construction, often feature several resources connected to form a courtyard, and may include three-bay threshing barns, bank barns, or raised barns. German-influenced buildings are also likely to be present in Northfield Township and may include bank barns, ground barns, open forebay barns, or closed forebay barns. Residential buildings typically do not represent Ethnic building traditions, instead demonstrating the limited availability of construction materials, the impact of nationally popular architectural styles, and the likely assimilation of immigrants into American culture.

Historic Districts

Description

A historic district is a concentration of buildings, structures, objects, and sites that share continuity in architecture, development, or historic themes. Historic districts are evaluated as a single entity, with the interrelationship of resources conveying the historic or architectural significance. Resources within a

district may lack individual distinction, while others may serve as focal points of the district. Historic districts may be characterized by a single function, such a commercial district, or a combination of resource types and uses, such as residential, commercial, and civic properties.

Registration Requirements

Historic districts will typically be eligible for listing under Criterion A or Criterion C. Historic districts may contain resources that are individually eligible for listing in the National Register, but significance may also be illustrated, or even expanded, when a group of related resources are evaluated within shared historic and architectural contexts.

As with individual resources, historic districts must possess integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register. Though non-historic infill, or buildings less than fifty years of age, may be present within a historic district, these resources should be relatively few in number and have a minimal impact on the visual cohesiveness of the district through their style, form, scale, and setting. Historic district boundaries must be clearly and logically defined, must be supported by the historic or architectural associations of its component resources, and should not artificially exclude noncontributing resources.

Contributing resources within a historic district will be those that are fifty years of age or more, are associated with the historic themes of the district, and were present during and possess integrity relative to the period of significance. Alterations, such as the application of synthetic materials, changes to porches, or construction of additions, do not necessarily render a resource non-contributing. However, resources must retain the character-defining features and materials that convey association with the themes for which the district is eligible. For historic districts eligible under Criterion C, resources must also retain the character-defining features of their historic architectural styles. Non-contributing resources are typically those that are less than fifty years of age, are not associated with the historic themes of the district, have lost integrity, or were constructed or moved from their original location outside the period of significance for the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Washtenaw County, Michigan
County and State

Historic Resources of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan, 1824 – 1980
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

This multiple property context applies to properties located within the legal boundaries of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This multiple property context of historic resources of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan, is based on a 2020-2021 architectural survey conducted by Cheri LaFlamme Szcodronski. The survey documented fifty-eight properties and groups of properties, which were recorded on Michigan State Historic Preservation Office inventory forms. Properties from vernacular to high style were recorded, including farm complexes, residential buildings, churches, schools, recreational sites, and cemeteries dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For each property, locational and parcel data was collected; photographs were taken; observations about condition, materials, and integrity were recorded; narrative architectural descriptions were written; and property owners were interviewed when possible.

Historical research was conducted primarily at local repositories and encompassed all history from European settlement (and therefore earliest extant properties) through the late twentieth century (including all properties fifty years old or older). Available research materials included property deeds and tax records; church and family histories; county and township histories; organizational collections with local histories and historical photographs; population and agricultural census records; county directories and farm plat maps; family maps, soil maps, school maps, and other historic maps; and Centennial Farms records, including genealogical materials, property ownership information, and historical photographs. In addition, property owners and community members were invited to share historical documents and photographs of their homes, farms, businesses, and the community, and those who participated provided ownership abstracts, family and church histories, plat maps, floor plans, newspaper clippings, and historic photographs of family members, farm landscapes, and local buildings. Oral history interviews were planned but could not be conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, oral history information was gathered informally during site visits, and when possible, property owners were interviewed about the history and architecture of that specific resource.

Examination of field data and research materials revealed four historic contexts that best reflect the history and architecture of Northfield Township: Early Northfield Township – An Agricultural Landscape (1824-1880); Growth of Whitmore Lake – Railroads, Tourism, and Ice (1880-1945); Changes to Rural Life (1880-1945); and The Post-War Era (1945-1980). Property types are organized by use/function according to prevalence. Registration requirements and integrity assessments are based on knowledge of existing properties through the field survey. Architectural and landscape features of the township's best-preserved properties were considered in developing registration requirements, while general statements about the lack of integrity for some property types are based on knowledge of alteration from historic form and materials, deteriorated condition, or absence from the present-day landscape.

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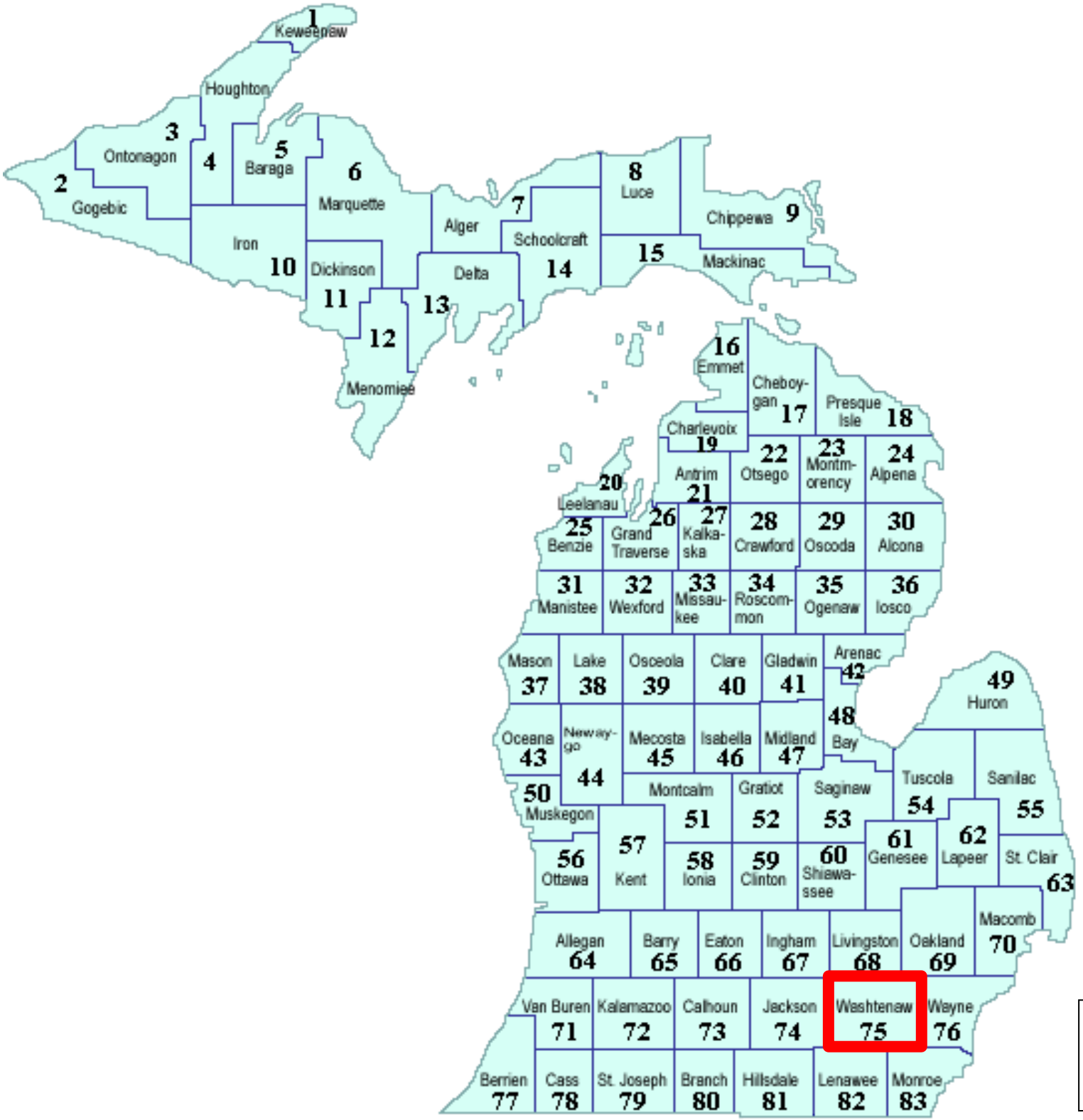
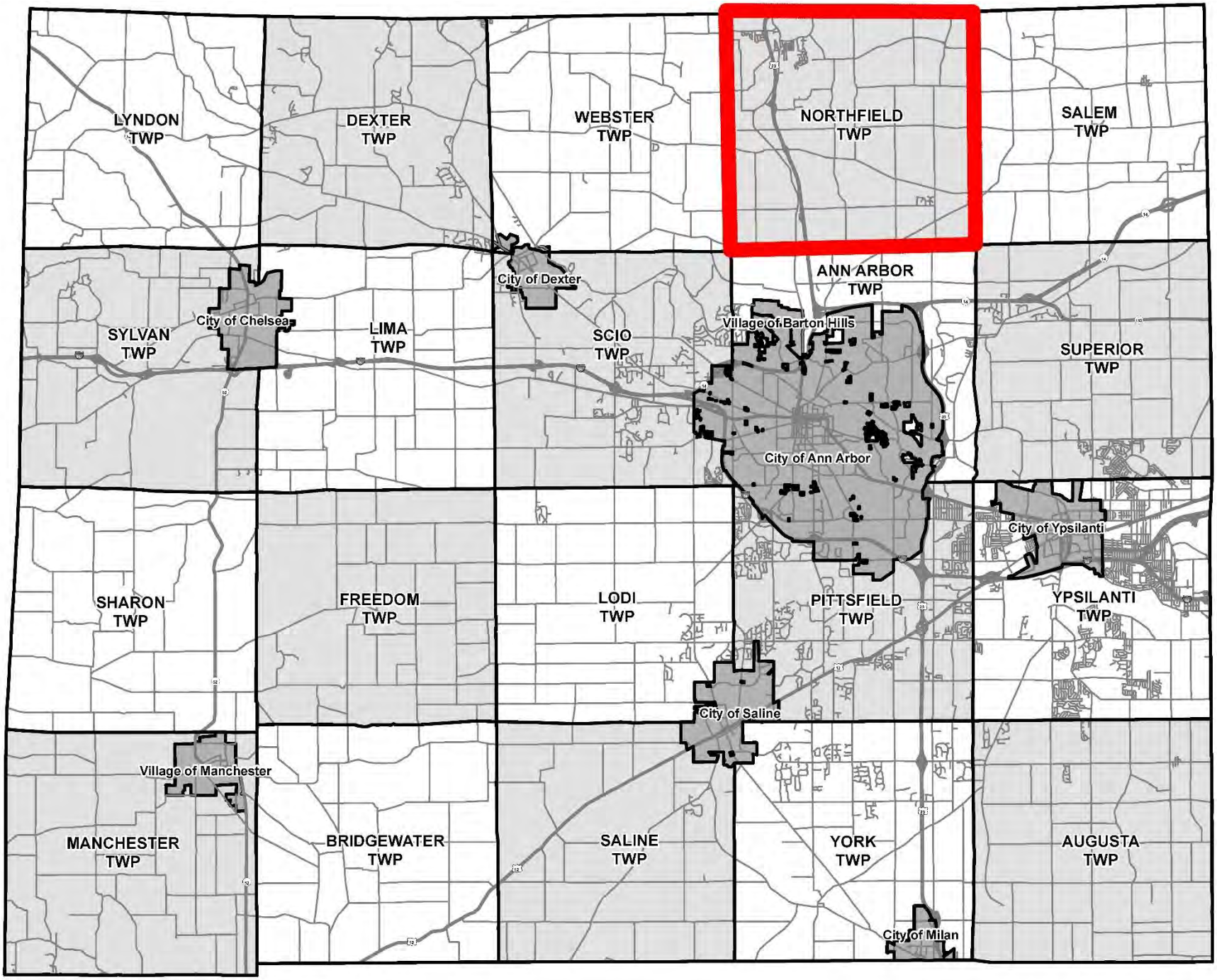
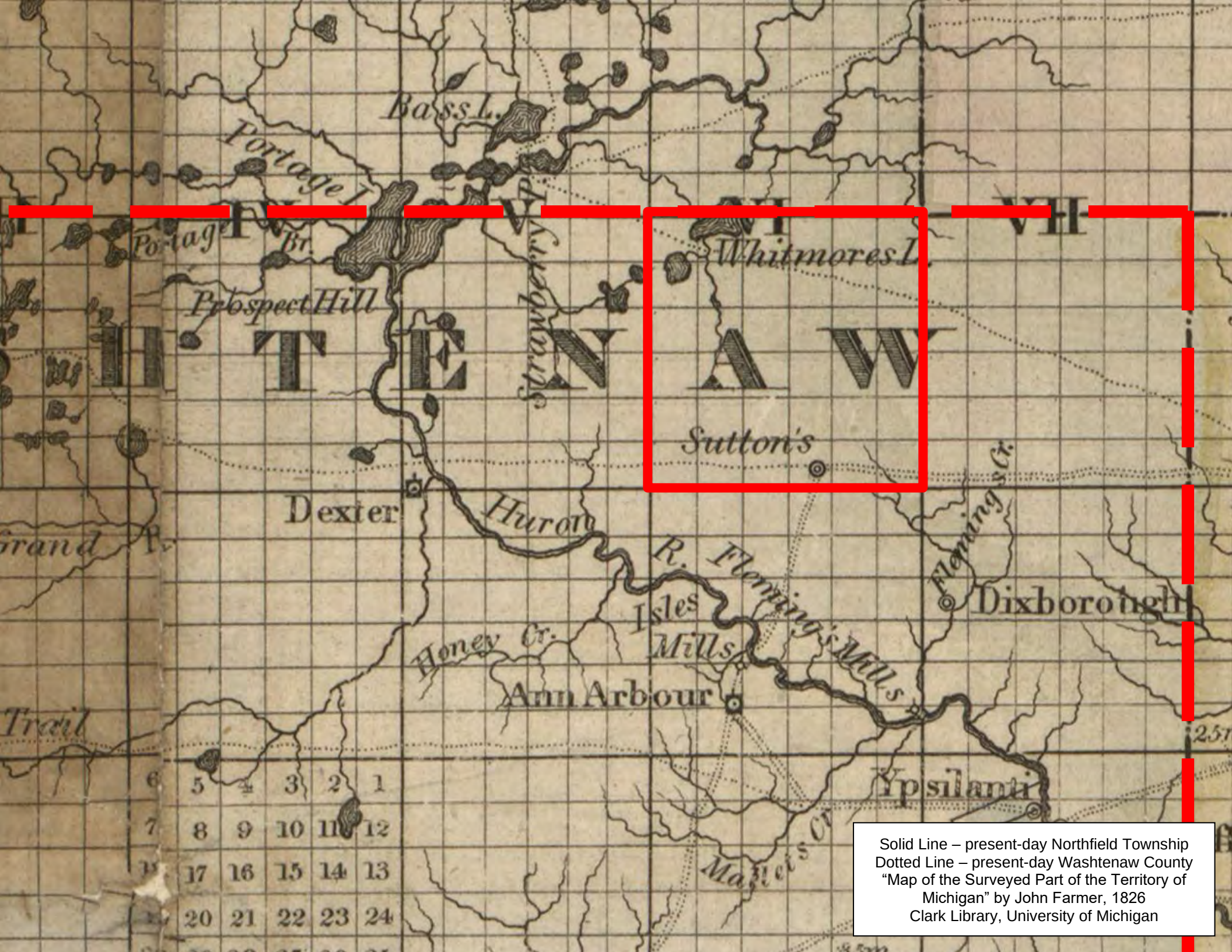
APPENDIX A: FIGURES



Washtenaw County Outlined in Red
Michigan's Counties
University of Michigan



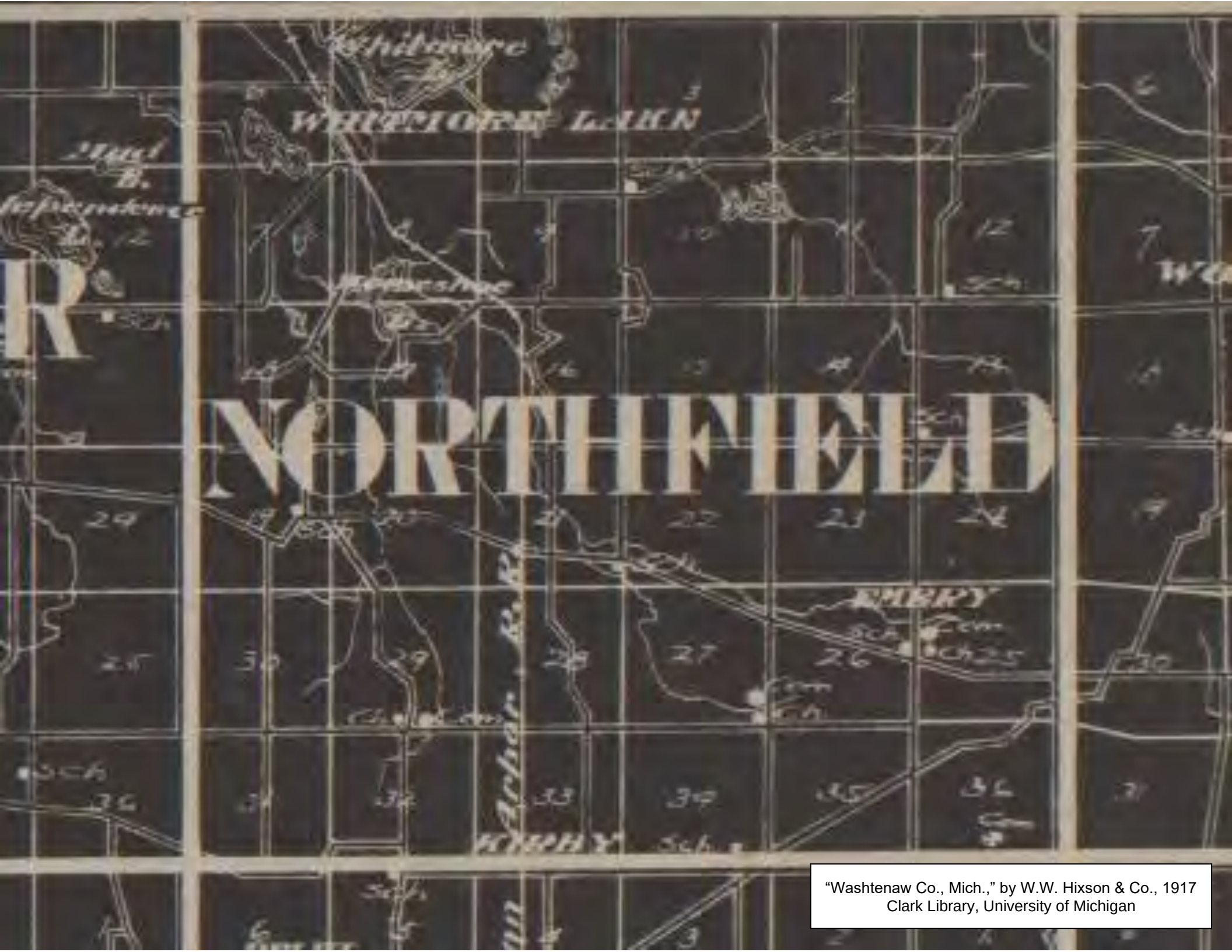
Location of Northfield Township (outlined in red). Townships of Washtenaw County, Washtenaw County Road Commission (base map)



Solid Line – present-day Northfield Township
Dotted Line – present-day Washtenaw County
"Map of the Surveyed Part of the Territory of Michigan" by John Farmer, 1826
Clark Library, University of Michigan



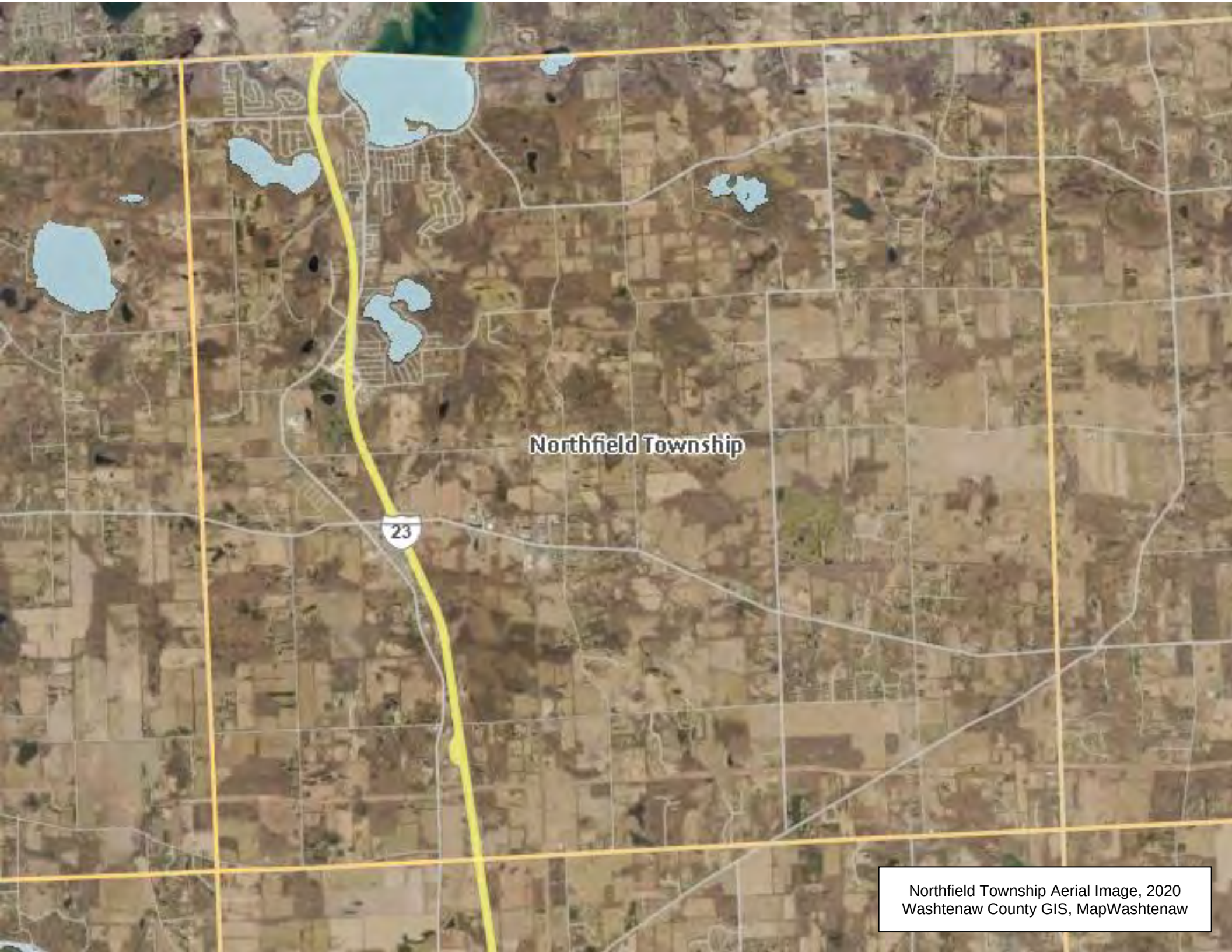
"Washtenaw County" by S. Pettibone, 1843
Clark Library, University of Michigan



"Washtenaw Co., Mich.," by W.W. Hixson & Co., 1917
Clark Library, University of Michigan



Northfield Township Aerial Image, 1940
Washtenaw County GIS, MapWashtenaw



Northfield Township Aerial Image, 2020
Washtenaw County GIS, MapWashtenaw



Sutton School, 1950s
Shear, *Farm Girl in a Feed Sack Dress*



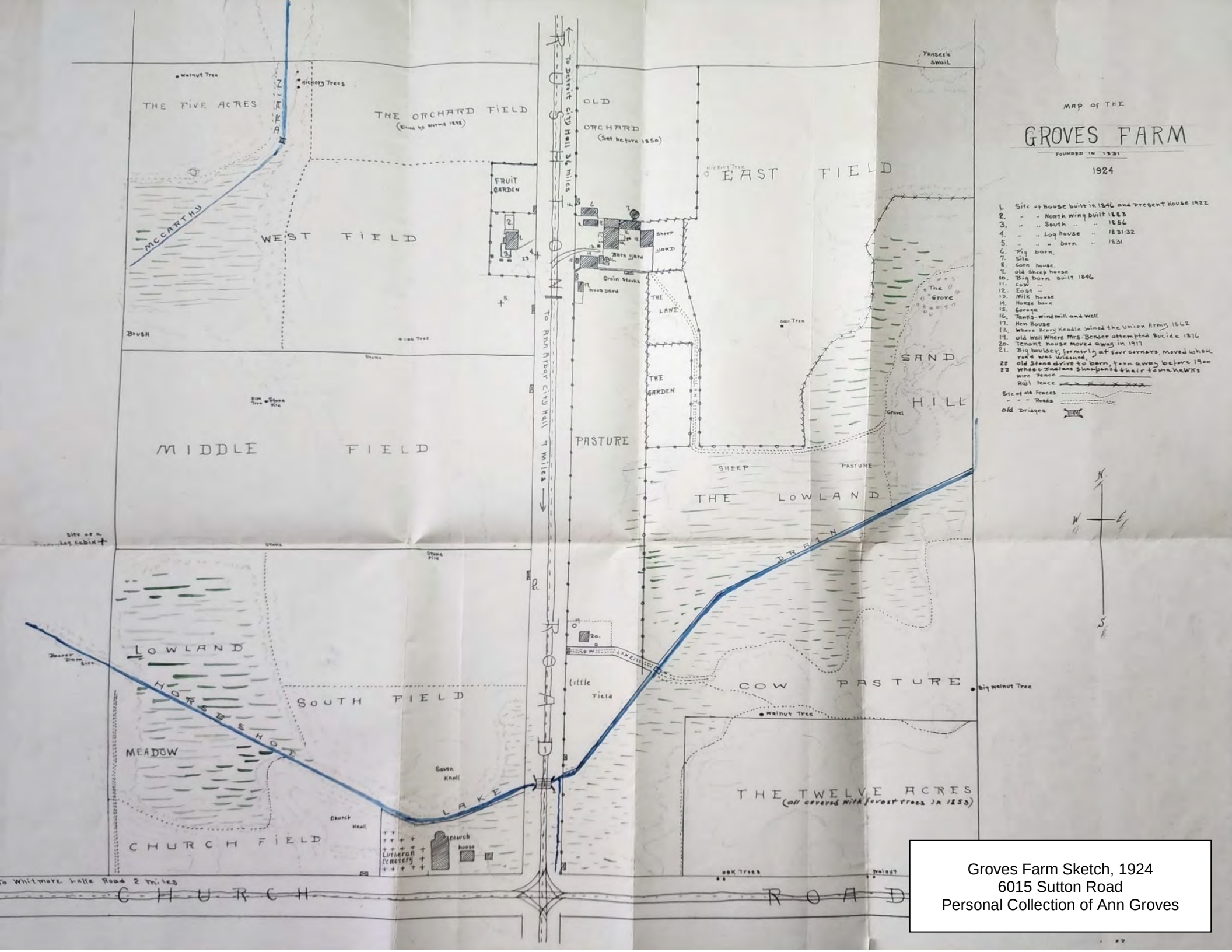
Wooster Farm, 1950s
7801 Earhart Road
Personal Collection of Mark Rondon



Kennedy Farm, date unknown
6905 Sutton Road
Personal Collection of James May



Groves Farm, early twentieth century
6015 Sutton Road
Personal Collection of Ann Groves



Groves Farm Sketch, 1924
6015 Sutton Road
Personal Collection of Ann Groves



Maier Farm, early twentieth century
611 Northfield Church Road
Personal Collection of Jacob Donner



Zeeb Farm, 1927
5310-5380 Earhart Road
Northfield Township Historical Society Collection
Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan



Whitmore Lake Depot, 1906
Personal Collection of Wystan Stevens



Whitmore Lake, c.1909
Personal Collection of Wystan Stevens



Whitmore Lake, date unknown
Personal Collection of Wystan Stevens



Main Street, Whitmore Lake, date unknown
Personal Collection of Wystan Stevens



Main Street, Whitmore Lake, 1939
Personal Collection of Wystan Stevens



Zeeb Farm
5310-5380 Earhart Road



Kalmbach House
385 West Joy Road



Leland House
3850 East North Territorial Road



Schairer House
1240 West North Territorial Road



Kapp Farm
2271 East Northfield Church Road



Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
2945 East Northfield Church Road



Kern Farm
3690 East Northfield Church Road



German Park Recreation Club
5549 Pontiac Trail



Curtis-Doty Farm
8275 Rushton Road



Radke House
574 East Shore Drive



Bessert-Ryan House
7441 Spencer Road



Wheeler-Leland Farm
7285 Whitmore Lake Road

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	COVER DOCUMENTATION
Multiple Name:	Historic and Architectural Resources of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan MPS
State & County:	,

Date Received: 9/5/2025
Date of 45th Day: 10/20/2025

Reference number: MC100012311

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__**X**__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __**11/17/2025**__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Provides a context for the founding, settlement, and development of Northfield Township as an agricultural region punctuated with lake resort development from the early 19th century up through the mid/late 20th century. Notes influences of the railroad and proximity to Ann Arbor. Provides identification of resources to be considered and their registration requirements. Individual resources and districts are eligible; resource include those tied importantly to ethnic settlement, plus institutional and civic buildings.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept Cover Document

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments: No see attached SLR: No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.
PRESIDENT

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed files contain the true and correct copy of the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for **Historic and Architectural Resources of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan, Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan**. This property is being nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This MPDF is a __X__ New Submission ____Resubmission ____Additional Documentation ____Removal.

_1_ Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
_0_ Locational maps (incl. with MPDF file)
_31_ Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s)
_1_ Pieces of correspondence (incl. with correspondence file)
_0_ Digital photographs
____ Other (incl. with nomination file): _____

State Historic Preservation Review Board

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the MPDF at its meeting on _Friday, May 30, 2025_. The Review Board voted _9_ to _0_ to approve the MPDF under National Register Criterion/Criteria _n/a_ and recommended the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the MPDF.

Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits

____ This MPDF is not utilizing the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits
____ This MPDF is being rehabilitated using the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits. A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Notifications

__X__ Notification of the MPDF was sent to the property owner(s) and chief elected official(s) on: _Wednesday, April 23, 2025_ .
__X__ No objections to the MPDF were submitted during the public comment period.
____ One or more objections to the MPDF were received during the public comment period.
____ One or more letters of support to the MPDF were received during the public comment period.

Certified Local Government

____ The MPDF is not located in a Certified Local Government community.
__X__ The MPDF is located in a Certified Local Government community. A copy of the local commission's review ___ was ___ was not received within 60 days, and ___ is ___ is not included with the correspondence file.

NPS Grant-Funded Submissions

____ Not funded with an NPS grant
____ Underrepresented Communities Grant
____ African American Civil Rights Grant
____ History of Equal Rights Grant
____ Tribal Heritage Grant
____ Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant
____ Disaster Recovery Grant

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 331-8917 or WalshT@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Ryan M. Schumaker
State Historic Preservation Officer