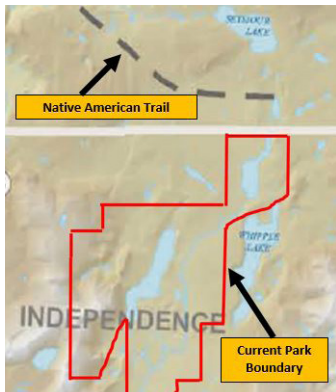


History of The Bailey House



CLARK Jeremiah 1837	CLARK Jeremiah 1837	COBB Myron 1837	WATERS Asa 1837	MAXWELL George 1837	CLARK Jeremiah 1837	WALTER Jacob 1837	BAILEY Wilson 1837
CROSS John 1837	PARKER 1837	PARKER William 1837	WATERS Asa 1837	WALSH John 1844	CLARK Jeremiah 1837	WALTER Jacob 1837	BAILEY Wilson 1837
CROSS John 1837	WEBBER George 1840	NORMAN Edward 1838	WALSH John 1838	BURRELL John 1837	DALDOWN Joseph 1844	BURROWS Daniel 1837	BURROWS Daniel 1837
ROPER John 1837	BENJAMIN Robert 1837	CHAPPEL John 1840	CLARK Jeremiah 1837	MULLEN Henry 1838	MONROE Joel 1837	WHISPLE Joseph 1837	BURROWS Daniel 1837
ROPER John 1837	TURBES James 1837	FAIRMAN Jan 1837	LEWIS David 1835	WHISPLE Joseph 1837	BURROWS Daniel 1837	RUNNELS Daniel 1837	

There is evidence that the history of people on the land that became Independence Oaks County Park most likely began with Native Americans long ago. The park includes the headwater streams of the Clinton River which was a major river used by Native Americans for hundreds of years. The park also includes wetlands, lakes, elevated areas and other environments favored by Native Americans for seasonal camps. A significant Native American trail ran just to the north of what is now Upper Bushman Lake. Stories passed down by local residents tell of the discovery of arrowheads and other projectile points on what is now park property. For example, Maria Arnold who grew up in the Manor House in the north part of the park talked of the many projectile points and a small stone bowl her father had found on their property.

In the 1830s people began to purchase the land that would one day become the park. The first person to do so was David Lewis, a blacksmith from Ontario, New York, who purchased 160 acres of land in 1835. Jeremiah Clark bought land in 1837 hoping to build a saw mill on the Clinton River but found insufficient water power for his project. About the same time the William Bailey family purchased land in what became Independence Oaks-North.

In 1835, Robert and Malinda Hotchkiss Bailey migrated from Southport in Chemung County, New York to the territory of Michigan, part of a wave of migrants looking for land and opportunity in what was then considered a wilderness. Many early Oakland County settlers came here with little but a few family possessions, a strong work ethic and a desire for a prosperous farm of their own.

The Baileys settled in Independence Township. Not long after their arrival, their son William married Clarissa Shotwell, the daughter of Clarkson and Keziah Sutton Shotwell who had settled on land in Section 12 of the township.

William and Clarissa farmed the land north of Robert Bailey's land in the northeast quarter of Section 3. They also owned land in the southwest quarter where the entrance to Independence Oaks County Park is now located. They raised 10 sons, several of whom remained residents of the township, Edmond, Charles, John J, Clarkson, George Washington, Franklin, William, Albert, Elmer and Herman.



Historical records indicate that the farm house located on at 9965 Sashabaw was built by William Bailey around 1878. They had had a previous house on the site but it is unclear when it was built. However, a newspaper article describes how that house burned in April of 1878:

"Fire was discovered in the kitchen and wood shed of the house owned by Wm. Bailey. The fire had gained considerable headway, and the house was soon consumed. The furniture on the first floor only was saved. The property was insured for the amount of \$1,500."

Given the fact that \$1,500 would equate to approximately \$30,000 today it is likely that they used the insurance money to build a new house in the same spot as the former one, perhaps on the same foundation.

Clarissa died of consumption in April of 1881. According to newspaper articles she was buried in the 'front door yard' and a headstone was placed on the porch. In August of that year William married Amanda Maxsom Ford.

William and Amanda lived in the house until 1885 when they moved to Holly, leaving the farm in the hands of William's ninth son, Elmer. Historical records indicate the marriage was rocky and filled with financial troubles. As a result William and Amanda separated and William returned to his home in Independence. Sadly, in 1888 he committed suicide by hanging himself in his horse barn.

According to probate records, William's two youngest sons, Elmer and Herman inherited the farm. It appears that Elmer lived in the house for a while but then moved to Lake Orion. Census records suggest that George W. Bailey, another son, lived in the house for some time after that since the plat map of 1896 shows him owning the land. Later it became part of the Franklin Bushman estate. E.V. Bailey, a nephew of William Bailey, eventually owned the land but never lived in the house. By 1940 it was owned by Arnold and Harriet Barrett who rented it out. It then passed from the Barretts to their daughter, Maria Arnold who eventually sold the land to Oakland County Parks and Recreation.

History of The Bailey House



The 188-acre property was named Independence Oaks-North because it connects tip-to-tip with 1,285 acre Independence Oaks County Park. The two park sections do not currently connect for trail access. Creating future access is a goal of the parks system. Independence Oaks-North features 31-acre Upper Bushman Lake, spring fed from the headwaters of the Clinton River Watershed. A Catch-and-Release Only Special Designation is enforced on Upper Bushman Lake as a result of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Order 244, making it the only public access lake in Southeast Michigan managed with special fishing regulations.

Named a Michigan Natural Features Inventory Priority One Conservation Area, Independence Oaks-North contains rare natural communities such as Southern Wet Meadow, Wet-Mesic Prairie, Prairie Fen and Hardwood-Conifer Swamp.

The 188-acre parcel was acquired in 2010 with a \$945,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, a \$105,000 Carl's Foundation grant via a partnership with Ducks Unlimited and a \$16,000 donation from North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy.



The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission worked with local citizens, Preservation Clarkston, MLC Building and the Clarkston Schools Construction Technology Program to find a way to preserve the Bailey House. It has become a teaching tool for construction trades for Clarkston students. The home will be renovated and restored and sold to a new owner, the proceeds of which will help further Preservation Clarkston's efforts to restore additional properties in the Clarkston area.



Note: Information on "The Bailey House" provided by Melissa Luginski, Oakland County Historical Commission and compiled by Oakland County Parks and Recreation Historian Carol Bacak-Egbo