



## BRIEF HISTORY

**T**his chapter includes a brief overview of the history of St. Clair County and Clyde Township. This information is part of the process of understanding past and present influences on the Township's development patterns.

St. Clair County modern settlement history dates back to the 1670s, when French Explorer Robert Cavellier de la Salle and French Missionary Pere Louis Hennepin sailed through the Detroit River and entered Lake St. Clair. The date was August 12, 1679, which was the date of the religious festival of Sainte-Claire, who founded the order of Franciscan nuns.

St. Clair County was detached from then Wayne County in 1820 by an order of Lewis Cass, Governor of the Northwest Territory. It included a much larger area encompassing St. Clair, Huron, and Sanilac Counties (and beyond). After several changes in shape over the years, St. Clair County took its present day form in 1852.

Clyde Township was incorporated as a village in 1836 with Ralph Wadhams as the Supervisor. In 1837, the Township had a population of 339 residents. Supervisor Wadhams was the proprietor of Clyde Mills within the Township and suggested the name of Clyde for the Township. At the time, the Township included land, which later became the Townships of St. Clair, Riley, Lexington, Columbus, Wales, Berlin, Emmett, Kimball and Kenockee. The organization of the new Townships situated Clyde Mills in Kimball Township in the settlement area known as Wadhams. The present boundaries of the

Township were established by 1855, and by 1860 Clyde Township had a population of 1,128 residents.

Historic settlements in Clyde Township include Ruby, North Street, Atkins, and Abbottsford. Ruby was an active settlement area in the mid-1850s. Saw mill owner John Beard was the first Postmaster in 1854. By 1876, there was a post office, plow manufactory, planing mill and church in town.

The Ruby Methodist Church congregation was organized in November 1854 at a meeting in the North Street Schoolhouse. In 1862, the group began to meet in a store building owned by John Beard. He later donated the building and lot to the church. In 1928 the church building was moved a short distance to its present location and a church house was added to the rear.

Abbottsford was originally settled around a saw mill in 1816 and called Fairfield. The name change was made to reflect the owner of the saw mill and grist mill. A post office opened in 1892.

Atkins was a station on the Pere Marquette Railroad and served as a post office as of 1873. Allen Atkins first settled this area in 1837.

North Street was also a station on the Pere Marquette Railroad. It included a post office, school and church in 1879.

*The following resources were used in the preparation of the history chapter: St. Clair County Master Plan (2000) by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission; A Brief History of Michigan and St. Clair County, by Tom Kephart (part of Michigan GenWeb); the State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Historical Center, Michigan Department of State; St. Clair County, Michigan. Its History and its People by William Lee Jenks; and History of St. Clair County Michigan Published by A.T. Andreas & Co.*