

Mount Clemens Public Library

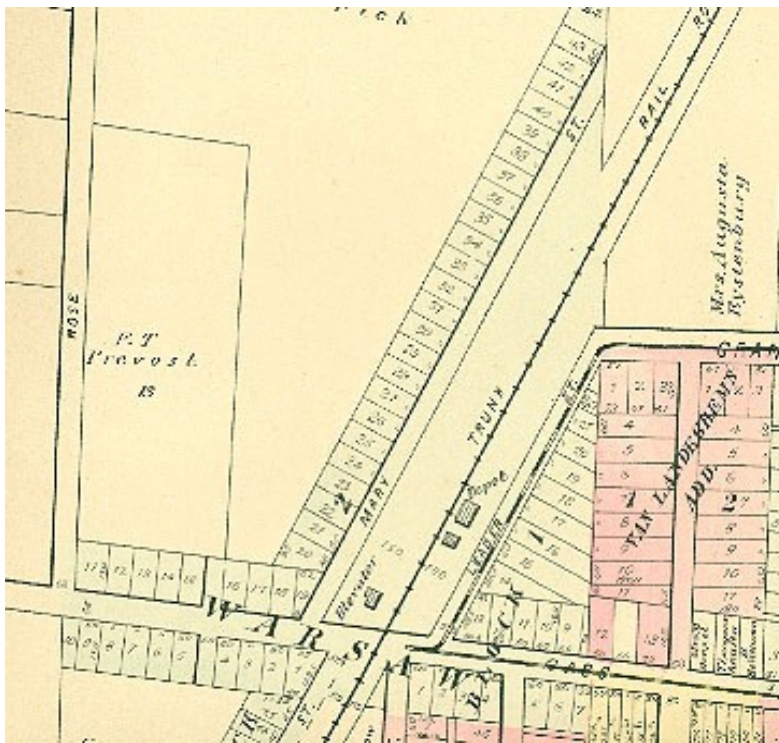
Local History Sketches

Warsaw

by Betty Lou Morris

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If a stranger to Mount Clemens asked you for directions to reach the city of Warsaw, would you know what to tell him? It is a long time since the area at the intersection of Cass Avenue and the Grand Trunk railroad tracks was commonly called Warsaw but that was and still is, its name. Sometimes Warsaw is mentioned among the “lost” villages of Macomb County like Frederick, Marcellus, Cady’s Corners and Belvidere –places once larger or more important than Mount Clemens with prospects of growth that would outshine the county seat. But for various reasons these communities failed to flourish. Warsaw, on the other hand, was never really a village. It was the name of a plat that eventually became absorbed as a part of the city of Mount Clemens.



Part of the 1895 plat of Mount Clemens, Michigan, showing Warsaw

When the railroad came to Macomb County in 1859, it cut through the farm property owned by Leander and Mary Tremble (Trombley). In 1862 the depot was built and that same year, to accommodate the sale of their property on either side of the tracks, the Trembles had it platted by Ludwig Wesolowski, a surveyor and civil engineer. The plat was recorded with the Register of Deeds in 1865 by Leander and Mary Tremble and it was named the “City of Warsaw”. Streets on either side of the railroad tracks were named Mary and Leander for the owners. (Leander Street ran north from what is now Cass Avenue, parallel to the railroad tracks to Grand Trunk Avenue. Both streets are now called Grand Avenue.) The plat itself, however, was named to honor the city of birth in Poland of Wesolowski, the surveyor. The relationship between the “City of Warsaw” and the city of Mount Clemens

is made clear in a deed executed in 1879, after Mount Clemens had officially become a city, when a lot in Warsaw was described as being in “the City of Warsaw subdivision of the city of Mount Clemens.”

“City of Warsaw” is how the area is labeled on the 1875 atlas map of Mount Clemens. The platted area shows not only the depot and buildings associated with the railroad but also buildings erected to house the business and commerce that was naturally attracted there by the railroad. There were a few homes, no doubt, but also small shops, housing grocery stores, laundries, cafes and especially saloons. The bar business has always thrived in Warsaw and a variety of hot spots and genial hosts have continually served the public near the depot through the years. Early on there was a grain elevator, a plaster and cement business and a brick and tile manufacturer in Warsaw. In 1875, however, the atlas shows sparse settlement along Shelby Road (now Cass Avenue) between central Mount Clemens and the railroad tracks.

The 1881 panoramic view of Mount Clemens pictures a dozen or so buildings in the vicinity of the depot and dramatizes the open land between Warsaw and the city. By 1895 the Mount Clemens map in the county atlas shows Cass Avenue to be pretty much settled with fine, large old dwellings, some of which remain today. There was no longer open land west of town to Warsaw, although the area where the railroad track crosses Cass Avenue is still labeled as Warsaw, indicating that that is what it was called. In the 1916 atlas for Macomb County, Warsaw is plainly labeled within the city of Mount Clemens.

The story of Ludwig Wesolowski is a romantic one. He lived his early life in Poland where he was trained in engineering. Forced to flee the country when the Czarist regime took over, he came to this area in 1838 as an engineer to work on the Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal. When the canal project failed, Wesolowski remained in Mount Clemens and raised his family here. He was elected as County Surveyor a time or two, and was responsible for much of the surveying and platting that took place in this growing community for many years. He lived here until his death in 1870 and is buried, along with his wife, in Clinton Grove Cemetery, for which he made the first survey.



Photo by Cathy Cook

The history of the various businesses and enterprises that operated in Warsaw over the years is of interest as well. The Hubarth and Schott lumber company was a Mount Clemens institution for over a hundred years. There was a grain elevator from the early days and always a feed and grain mill at the bend in Grand Avenue. There were many more, of course, not to mention the bars on Leander Street which are legendary with stories told about them that are fascinating.

The depot is a museum now and trains don't stop in Warsaw any longer. The business establishments that cluster around the depot area continue to thrive, however. Now, if someone asks you about Warsaw you can tell him to go west on Cass Avenue to the railroad tracks -- and he will be there! And if he is interested, you can also tell him how it came to have such a surprising name.