
Synopsis of Beaverton's History

by Robert Frei

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| Circa 1889 | Donald Ross & George Dietz, both 17 years old, are sent by Donald Gunn Ross from Hatton Township, Clare County to scout a location for a "Sapless Paving Block" mill. The pair find the perfect location at the confluence of the three branches of the Tobacco River and the Cedar River. The place eventually was to become Beaverton. | 1902 | Water works installed to provide water for fighting fires and flushing toilets, not for human consumption. The electrical generating plant was also moved to the Ross dam. |
| Spring 1890 | Donald Gunn Ross and his sons establish a mill on the flats where the Cedar River joins the Tobacco Rivers -- they called the place Cedarville. The Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad builds a line from Coleman to the Ross Mill at Cedarville. Their incentive was a contract with Ross Bros. to ship at least 8 carloads of finished lumber product per day. The F&PM Railroad refuses to call the place Cedarville because that name is already taken by several other stations. The new name of Grand Forks was assigned by the new station manager for the place beginning in September 1890. | 1903 | Ross Bros. open the Beaverton Elevator, a modern, high-capacity grain handling facility on Pearson Street with the railroad on the north. The Niggeman family's Bank of Beaverton built a new facility - known today as the Trumpeter Building, and used this summer as the Beaverton Centennial Museum. |
| Feb. 1891 | After several attempts to find a name acceptable to the Post Office Department, the name Beaverton was finally assigned to the place. | Mar 13, 1903 | The Village of Beaverton becomes the City of Beaverton, chartered by act of the State Legislature. |
| 1894 | The Village of Beaverton is organized and chartered by the County Board. | Nov 1908 | With tremendous pride, Beaverton opens a new three-story school building at the corner of Tonkin and Ross - the spot across from the Dairy Bar where the gymnasium and cafeteria of the primary building now stands. |
| July 26, 1895 | The Beaverton Clarion begins publishing under the pen of W. Walter Dann and Son. The first issue reports that three flourishing churches in the city were Methodist, Presbyterian and Latter Day Saints. The last two were in the process of building houses of worship. | Sep 23, 1909 | All of Beaverton's main commercial district is damaged, and much of it destroyed, by a fire and explosion. The next night the destruction of the Passenger Depot and the Ross Mercantile company buildings was completed when fire rekindled - they had already been damaged beyond repair. Three weeks later the Commercial House Hotel, badly damaged by the explosion, burned to the ground. |
| Aug 4, 1899 | Beaverton's first electrical plant supplied street lights and illumination for the businesses and many residences in Beaverton. | 1911 | Sewer line installed on Brown & Ross Streets. It flowed into the river at the east end of Brown Street. |
| Spring 1900 | The Ross Bros. opened a new Bandsaw Mill just east and south of the Pearson Street Bridge. | 1912 | Unprecedented building boom sees the construction of most of the older masonry buildings still standing on the first block of West Brown Street. The Pierce Hotel was also constructed that year, but it burned in 1975, leaving a parking lot on the corner of Brown and M-18. A major flood damaged the lower-lying parts of the city - mostly the lumber mills located on land now covered by Ross Lake. |
| June 5, 1901 | Will Arnell Jr., on a violent, drunken spree, engages in a gun battle on Brown Street with Sam Dopp. Upon subduing Mr. Arnell, with two shots to the stomach, Sam Dopp and others entered the Commercial House Hotel managed by Arnell, and found Reah Arnell, Will's 5 year old daughter, dead of gunshot wounds, May Arnell, Will's wife, shot - she died the next day. Also injured were Will's invalid mother, shot in the arm by Arnell, Frank Arnell, brother of Will, shot in the arm, and Velma Ross, injured by shattered glass from a stray bullet that entered her bedroom. Mabel Arnell, Will's sister, was shot at twice, but not injured. Will Arnell Jr. was sentenced to 15 years in Jackson Prison for manslaughter. | 1917 | Another building boom brings the People's Bank (now Beaverton City Hall) a new post office (now the building west of City Hall) and a new bakery (now the 2nd building west of City Hall) - these three buildings are commonly referred to as the "Patterson Block". Also built that year was the Wickham and Nash building - the blue cement block building facing West on Pearson Street, now commonly known as the Shepherd Building (it was the birthplace of Brown Machine). |
| | | 1919 | Ronald Ross begins construction of the new concrete dam to replace the previous wooden one. That dam went into full production in 1921. |

1925	M-18 paved 14 miles north from N. Bradley, through Beaverton, toward Gladwin.	1939	One of Beaverton's first landmarks, the original Opera House, by 1939 the main sales room of the W. H. Hall & Son Lumber Company, was destroyed by fire. Also that year the current M-18 bridge was built and opened to traffic in October 1939.
June 14, 1925	American Legion Memorial dedicated with great fanfare, including a speech by the governor. The monument by Helmut Von Zengen was cast of pigmented concrete and stood near Brown Machine's main entrance until it was moved to its current location in Ross Lake Park.	1940	The Gem Theater opened with Jimmy Stewart and Rosalind Russell in "No Time for Comedy"
1926	State Bank of Beaverton and People's State Bank merge. The newly enlarged State Bank of Beaverton, under the management of Frank Niggeman, moved to the newer People's Bank building, now used as the Beaverton City Hall.	1943	Rail service to Beaverton discontinued and the tracks removed for use in the war effort.
Sep 1929	Miss Beaverton, Loraine Budge, named Miss Michigan at the Miss America Pageant at Baltimore, Maryland. A huge homecoming greeting was followed by an extravaganza at the "Liberty Theater" - the community building that stood just south of where the Gem Theater is today.	Spring 1945	The 1908 school building that had been the source of so much early pride in the city destroyed by an early morning fire.
1929 - 1964	Consolidation of the Beaverton City schools and those of the surrounding townships, including the "Brush College" school in Arthur Township, Clare County, made Beaverton one of the largest school districts in the state (area covered). It was a model of successful consolidation studied by many other districts. The Beaverton Rural Agricultural School became one of the most effective and efficient schools in the nation.	Fall 1945	The new bus garage opened instead as a classroom building to house students displaced by the fire the previous spring.
Oct 1930	After over 20 years of exploration, the first oil well was brought in near Beaverton. Two years later the Buckeye field was developed, and Gladwin County became the largest oil-producing area in Michigan for a brief time. Beaverton businesses servicing the needs of the oil industry survived the depression; oil payrolls and royalties assured the survival of many Beaverton retail businesses.	1950s	The plastics industry, especially thermoforming, developed in Beaverton and the surrounding area, fueled by the proximity of Dow Chemical company, the familiarity of local entrepreneurs with the new products being developed there, and the ingenuity and enterprise of many local people.
1935	The Beaverton Elevator burned to the ground. The only surviving section was a new concrete addition on the west end of the structure. A new elevator was built west of that addition on the property that once held the Ross Bros. Mercantile and passenger depot.	1952	Brown Machine incorporated.
1936	New High School opened behind the original 1908 building on Tonkin Street.	1954	New elementary building opened west of Tonkin Street.
1938	Sanitary Water system installed, including the water tower at Leo Ross Park near East Brown and Third Streets. Most of the potable water pumps around the city were then no longer maintained by the city.	1963	Construction began on a new sanitary sewer system and sewage treatment plant for the entire city.
		1965	New High School opened on South M-18 on the south edge of the City
		1975	Beaverton's landmark, the former Pierce Hotel, known for most of its existence as Muscle Shoals Hotel, destroyed by fire. The Beaverton Library, located in the building, was also lost.
		1985	New middle school opened; an addition to the north side of the high school.
		1985	Beaverton Dam refurbished and placed back in service by the City of Beaverton.
		1998	Beaverton's newest high school opened in 1998 on Roehr's Road south of the city. A major facilities improvement project also added classrooms to the 1936 building and the 1954 building.
		2001	M-18 Repaved and streetscape installed
		2002	Downtown Streets replaced and streetscape installed
		2002	New stainless steel, variable pitch turbines installed by the City of Beaverton at the dam, allowing the production of significantly more electricity, even during times of reduced water flow. The revenues allow the city to maintain the dam and Ross Lake as permanent features of the city.