

Dillon centennial farm was built from swamp, trees

If Colwood weren't on the dividing line between Columbia and Elmwood townships -- the apparent reason it got its name -- it probably would be known as Dillonville.

The Dillons were the first ones there.

Now the farm purchased by Edward Dillon in 1879, when the land was basically

a swamp and trees, has been designated a centennial farm by the Division of Michigan History.

Its owners are Mary Russell, who still lives on the farm, and her children, Wayne Dillon and Gayle Butzynski. Mrs. Russell's first husband, Steve Dillon Jr., was the grandson of the original owner.

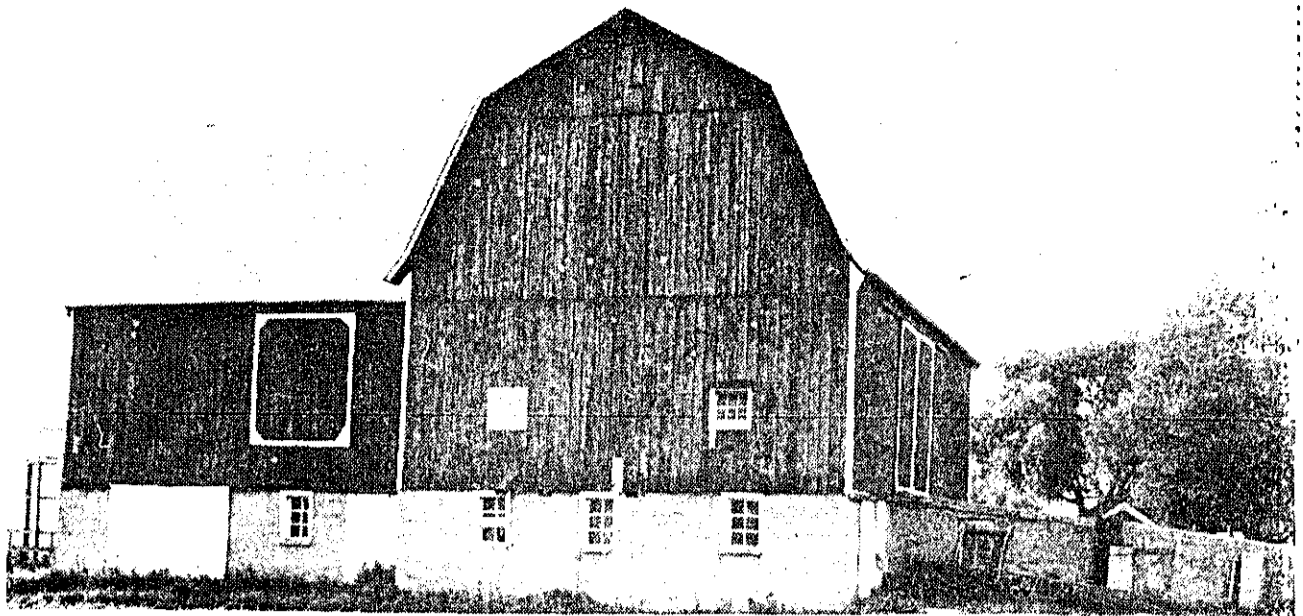
The family doesn't know too much about Edward Dillon, only that he came to this area from Canada, apparently from somewhere around Montreal.

The Dillon clan came to Canada from Ireland, but it isn't known if Edward was born in Canada or the old country.

The original farm was 160

acres, on the south side of what is now Dickerson Road, straddling both sides of what is now Colwood Road.

It is also known that Edward lost his eyesight here, went to a Catholic shrine in Canada and regained his vision.



THE BARN on the Dillon centennial farm was erected in 1916 and is used for storage of equipment and some grain. The barn and home, built about 1900, are on the Columbia township side of Colwood Road.



THREE GENERATIONS of the Dillon centennial farm family are Mary Russell, son Wayne Dillon and the sons of him and his wife Sherry, Scott, 8 (left) and Jeff, 10.

EDWARD DILLON AND his wife, whose maiden name was Maude Reid, had seven children. It was son Steve, born in 1884, who inherited the farm in the early 1900s. Three other brothers settled on farms nearby and three sisters married.

Steve Dillon married Jane Munroe from Columbia Corners, who gave birth to six sons and two daughters.

They originally lived in the house which still stands across the road from the centennial farm home. The latter was probably built about 1900. The land was tiled in 1910 and the still standing barn was constructed in 1916.

MOST OF THE CHILDREN of Steve and Jane Dillon stayed close to home, with the original farm shrinking to 136 acres as they were given land of their own.

Some of the land either the children owned or sold became the foundation of Colwood. Though the community was never very big, in the early 1900s there were a bank, blacksmith shop, general store, livery, doctor and dentist there. The bank building, constructed in 1916, is now a home.

The only businesses there now are the Colwood Bar, started by Lee Dillon, one of the eight children, about 1936, and the grocery and gas station, across the road from the original general store.

STEVE JR., BORN IN 1905, was the only one of the eight to stay on the family farm and inherited it when his mother died in 1952. His father died in 1948.

He married Mamie (Mary) Seurynek in 1943 and they moved into the centennial farm home in 1948. Steve Dillon Jr. died in 1955. His widow and two children, Wayne and Gayle, became and still are the owners. Mary Dillon married Don Russell in 1960.

The surviving children of Steve (Sr.) and Jane Dillon are the four youngest, Ed, who lives next door to his sister-in-law, Mary Russell; Mae Secord, living in Detroit; Bob Dillon, Reese, and Leatha O'Brien, Bad Axe.

DON RUSSELL, WAYNE Dillon, counselor and vocational director at Cass City High School, and a cousin, Rick Dillon, farm 420 acres, consisting of the original centennial farm, some land owned by Don and some rented. Farming is also a part-time occupation for Rick, employed by Hunt Construction.

By some of their neighbors' standards, Wayne pointed out, theirs is a small operation. One arm of a neighbor's folding three-section disk, for instance, covers as much ground as their entire disk.

About 200 acres is planted with navy and color beans, with the other crops this year being wheat, sugar beets and oats.

To Wayne Dillon, farming "is a break from one job. It's a whole different world, even when you're hoeing."

Jail or detention - Where do the delinquents go?

By James Iseler

It is 1 a.m. and a 15-year-old boy has been apprehended by police in the act of siphoning gas from someone else's car.

He is taken to the police station where repeated attempts are made to contact his parents. They cannot be found.

The youngster has been complaining all night that his rights have been violated and he is being held against his will. His fervor begins to get more violent and the police can look no longer for his parents.

They cannot keep him at the station and he cannot face a Probate Court hearing until morning. He must be lodged somewhere for the night.

If the above hypothetical situation occurred in Tuscola county, police would then call Probate Judge W. Wallace Kent Jr. for his decision. That decision, which must come in the form of a signed order, is whether to send the boy to jail or the Genesee Regional Detention Center near Flint.

No one wants to see their son or daughter thrown into jail for the evening. Yet the cost to the county for sending him to the center is one sheriff's patrol car and two officers taken off the road.

It takes an estimated 3-4 hours for the deputies to transport the juvenile and return. That will be repeated in the morning when they must bring him back to face a probate hearing before Judge Kent.

All too often, unless the youngster is under the age of 15, he or she is lodged in jail for the evening, separated from adult inmates, according to Sheriff Hugh Marr. He added he does not like that idea. "Jail is no place for a kid."

JAILING JUVENILES may soon be illegal if a new juvenile code is passed by the legislature.

According to Judge Kent, the new code would allow jails to be used only if they are specially adapted for minors.

"But I see that as an empty promise. I don't know of any jail that could be licensed," Kent stated.

The idea of a new code has been kicked about the Legislature for some time but if it passes, Kent will have no alternative in cases such as the theoretical one set forth other than to send the youth to Flint.

In addition to the cost paid by the sheriff's department, it costs \$81 a day to hold the juvenile in detention in Flint. Half of that is paid for by the county, the rest by the state.

AN OBVIOUS QUESTION arises -- why not build a detention center in this area?

Sheriff Marr said he is in favor of such a center. Cass City Police Chief Gene Wilson also said he would like somewhere nearby where juveniles may be lodged overnight.

But Kent claims the county neither needs nor can afford a short-term detention center in this area.

"We don't have enough kids in detention at any one time to economically justify a center in our county," Kent said.

From October, 1979 to March, 1980, 19 youngsters were taken to the Genesee center, Kent said. Nine were lodged in the jail during that same period.

At both places, juveniles are only detained overnight, for their preliminary hearing the next morning takes

priority over everything else, he added.

THE COST TO BUILD and staff a center where there would usually be only one or two juveniles at one time would far exceed the money Tuscola county pays to send them to Genesee, Kent said.

Offhand, Kent counted at least 15 people that would need to be hired for such a center. He did not specifically estimate how much it would cost.

Kent pointed out that Sanilac county has a short term detention home in Sandusky that is manned by a couple who live and work on the premises. However, juveniles there are not under lock and key.

"When we need an overnight, we generally need security. In effect, we need lock and key," Kent said.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO there was discussion of building a center for the three-county area but the idea fell through before any firm plans materialized, Marr recalled.

Even for a tri-county center, the costs would exceed the benefits, Kent pointed out.

He agreed more room should be devoted to housing juvenile delinquents but the problem is a lack of space in an already overcrowded prison system.

Approximately half the crimes committed in the state are by juveniles, Kent stated, adding there are only 800 state-run bed spaces for them compared to the thousands for adult criminals.

The state beds are in addition to about 120 private homes such as Teen Ranch, near Marlette. However, such places are primarily long-term juvenile homes, not designed for short-term detention use.

IN JUDGING THE NEED for a short-term facility in this county it may be useful to look at some figures for Tuscola's juvenile crime activity.

From January through June of this year there were 73 petitions brought before

Probate Court for juvenile crime. This compares with 73 adult cases that were processed through Circuit Court for the same period.

However, statistics can be misleading. The juvenile figures are for criminal cases only. They do not include statute cases such as run-aways and truancy.

Judge Kent said he has not noticed any rise in the juvenile crime rate over the years although it does seem to fluctuate during the year.

With the advent of warmer weather, the crime rate tends to rise, he said.

In fact, his argument that a detention center in the county is unnecessary may find more support. He claims the occurrence of juvenile crime should begin to drop since census results predict a downturn in numbers of high school age students.

New law needed if prison tax defeated

By Warren M. Hoyt
Mich. Press Association

A special legislative task force on prison overcrowding has reported a new law will be needed for early release of prisoners should voters reject a proposed increase in the state income tax for new prison construction.

The legislature recently took action to place before the voters in November the question of increasing the state income tax rate by one-tenth of 1 percent with the revenues earmarked exclusively for new prison construction and updating current facilities.

The tax hike would last only for five years and would produce some \$275 million, offenders.

Actual legislation for consideration by the legislature

Task Force Chairman Rep. Jeffrey Padden (D-Wyandotte) said the early release proposal is not the primary item in the package and expressed hope that implementation of other measures would not make it necessary to ever use such a plan.

HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT of Corrections Director Perry Johnson said that the alternative must be made clear to the voters. "You either provide adequate space for prisoners or you set them free," he said.

Padden said the early release proposal would only come into play if voters reject the proposal or it proves to be less effective than projected.

Other proposals being considered by the task force include a declaration of a prison overcrowding emergency by the governor when prisons exceed their capacities for more than 30 consecutive days.

Under such circumstances, the last 90 days of a sentence would be removed from prisoners who have served their minimum sentences thus expanding the number of prisoners who would be eligible for parole consideration by the state parole board.

IF OVERCROWDING continued, the proposal allows for removal of additional days from sentences, and authorizes state officials to refuse to admit nonviolent has not yet been introduced or even drafted.

House Speaker Bobby

Crim of Davison said he hoped the existence of the proposal, and its possible enactment, would put pressure on lawmakers and the governor to implement the other parts of the package, particularly the sentencing proposals.

He said not doing anything would invite prison riots or federal court action ordering changes in the state prison system.

The proposed sentencing structure would provide judges with guidelines based upon average sentences for each crime, with the judges required to justify on the record imposition of a greater or lesser sentence.

OVERCROWDING WOULD be eased by reducing guideline sentence durations or amending guidelines to recommend imprisonment for fewer criminals.

The task force also urged prompt action of the Revised Criminal Code pending in the House Judiciary Committee setting presumptive sentences for the most serious crimes and clarifying procedures for alternatives to imprisonment.

Other proposals of the task force include expansion of both community residential programs and community alternatives to incarceration.

The group also urged enactment of a House-passed bill pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee broadening authority of judges to order restitution and community service for offenders.

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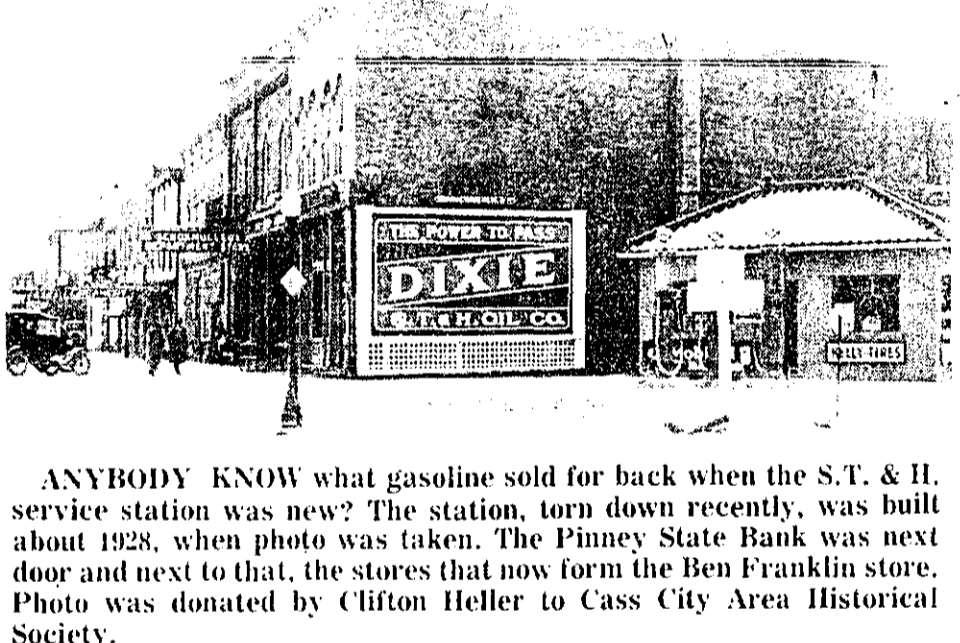
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