

Novi Historical Landmarks



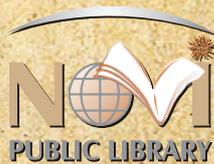
Novi Historical Commission



The Novi Historical Commission is a five-person group appointed by the Novi City Council to help preserve Novi's heritage and share the story of our history.

Since 1986, the Novi Historical Commission has worked in partnership with the City of Novi, Novi Public Library, educators, and others to provide programs and services regarding the history of our community. The collection and preservation of the history of Novi is being accomplished through the solicitation of donated documents, photographs, and recorded personal experiences. The Commission's work includes the development of presentations, exhibits, and events that showcase the over 180 year history of Novi. The Novi Historical Commission is located in the Novi Public Library and offers open office hours in the Local History Room on the first and third Mondays of each month. The Historical Commission holds their meetings the third Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. in the Local History Room at the Novi Public Library.

For more information about the history of Novi, visit cityofnovi.org or call the Novi Public Library at 248.349.0720.



Novi's first settler, Erastus Ingersoll, arrived in what would become Novi in 1825. He and five others traveled to settle in Michigan and farm new land. They found the land rich for the growing of fruit crops and harvesting of wool.

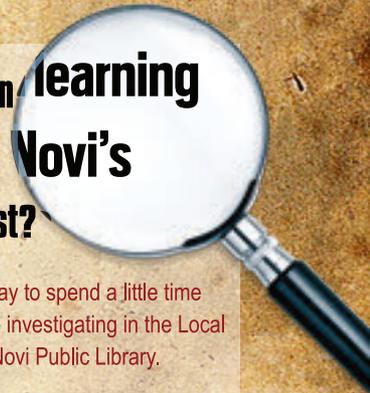
Although much has changed in the almost 200 years since these early pioneers made this their home, Novi remains a much sought after community for those seeking to plant their roots, grow a business, and raise a family. Several landmarks still remain which remind us of our rich heritage that planted a firm foundation for the success of Novi.

The map included was developed by the Novi Historical Commission to encourage Novi residents and visitors to learn about and keep Novi's history alive.





Interested in **learning**
 more about **Novi's**
 colorful past?



Those looking for a way to spend a little time together can do some investigating in the Local History Room at the Novi Public Library.

The Local History Room was recently renovated to include historical glass etchings. This display includes seven beautifully crafted historical landmarks from around Novi. Local artists, Ryan and Mindy Trainer, were responsible for creating these pieces. The etchings represent The Methodist



Church (1876), Walled Lake Park (1929), Novi Town Hall (1876), Bassett Home (1845), the Novi Special (1941-1965), and the Train Station (1870). This artwork was made possible through the generous support of the Novi Historical Commission. To view the artwork, please see a Librarian on the 2nd floor of the Library for access to the Local History Room.

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The Mystery of NOVI's Name...

Many stories on the origin of Novi's name have developed over the last century. Who hasn't heard the tale of Novi being named after the NoVI train station? But what is the true story of how Novi went from being West Farmington to Novi? It is one of Novi's biggest mysteries.

Barbara G. Louie, former member of the Novi Historical Commission, notes "there are at least nine different versions as to what the name really means and from where it originated." Curious yet?

Among these stories is the most popular, and, seemingly most logical, that the sixth township (NoVI) in the southwest portion of Oakland County was adapted by merely writing it out as one word: "NOVI." A similar tale of equal popularity, albeit not as logical, has the town named after Toll Gate No. VI on Grand River (or the old Detroit-Howell) Road. Unfortunately for this theory, the toll road was not built for another twenty-two years after the town was already named.

Speculation also includes the supposed date of the meeting that may have lent

itself to the name, Nov. 1, as well as the humorous anecdote regarding the blacksmith-preacher whose wife's name was Vivian, or "Vi" ... The blacksmith-preacher was most awfully tight and forever vetoed any spending suggestions from his wife... It was always "No Vi" to anything until his place was referred to by the whole neighborhood as, "down to No Vi's" then as "No Vi's Corners," and then just plain, "Novi."

Finally the latest theory on how the unusual name came about comes from as far away as Yugoslavia. According to this account, the Michigan City was named after the hometown of a woman who came from Yugoslavia in the early 1800's. She was a Moslem girl who broke away from her religious and family ties to marry one of Napoleon's soldiers. Together, they emigrated thousands of miles across land and sea to settle in the wilds of Michigan. Unfortunately, as delightfully romantic as this theory appears, it has yet to be proven conclusively. Research continues on the identities of the elusive couple. Among the

stumbling blocks is that the word "Novi" in the Yugoslavian language means "new" and that it could refer to countless towns in that country.

Barbara Louie published a book about the history of Novi NOVI on the Trail which is available to check out at the Novi Public Library to read more about the different theories on the development of Novi's name and Novi's history. Can you uncover the truth about Novi's name?

1. Bank Building



This building and the one story shop building to the east were built in 1929. The two story building on the corner was originally constructed as a bank. However, the building was never operated as such due to the 1929 stock market crash and attendant run on banks.

2. Bassett Farm/MSU Tollgate



Settlement of this property dates back to 1832, when the 160 acres, that would one day become the Michigan State University Tollgate Education Center, were purchased by Samuel Bassett from the federal government for \$1.25 per acre. Currently, MSU uses Tollgate for many research, teaching and demonstration projects.

3. Bassett School



Although the school was not built on land owned by the Bassett family, the school was known as the Bassett School. John Bassett, owner of the Bassett Farm on Meadowbrook Road, was known for his large library and strong belief in education.

4. Casino Dance Hall/Amusement (Pavilion Shore Park)



The casino dance hall was built on the south end of Walled Lake in 1925. It contained a 120' x 140' hardwood dance floor. The amusement park opened in 1929, with the roller coaster, "The Flying Dragon." The park was also the site of company picnics. The park was closed in 1968.

5. Chapman House



This two story Italianate house is known as the Chapman House or the Chapman/Porter house. The Chapman family and relatives owned this property near Walled Lake and other property elsewhere in what is now Novi. The Chapman's were instrumental in starting an early school in the Novi area.

6. Erastus Ingersol Homestead (Jaguar dealership)



Settlement of Novi began in 1825 with the arrival of Erastus Ingersol and his family from New York. The Ingersol family did not remain in Novi. After a few years of farming, they moved to Delta Township west of Lansing, where they were the first settlers in this area also.

7. Fuerst Farm (Civic Center Campus & Fuerst Park)



In 1827, Gamaliel Simmons of New York purchased 160 acres of land from the Federal government on the corner of Ten Mile and Taft Roads. In 1830 the first Novi town meeting was held in the Simmon's residence on this site. Jacob and Rebecca Fuerst purchased the farm in 1918. The former Fuerst farm is now the site of the Novi Police Department, Civic Center, Novi High School, Novi Public Library and Fuerst Park.

8. Knapp Cemetery



The Knapp Cemetery is typical of many small family graveyards of the 19th century. It was established in 1836 when Benajah Aldrich set aside one half acre of his farm for burial purposes. Henry Knapp, Benajah Aldrich's brother-in-law, was the first to be buried here.

9. Lincoln Place



The building was constructed circa 1839 by James Palmer, a blacksmith in Northville. The house was purchased by the Lincoln family (no relation to Abraham Lincoln) in 1844. The architecture is a similar design to the Abraham Lincoln House in Springfield, Ill.

10. Methodist Church



The church was started in 1875 with \$200. It closed for several years in the 1920s, reopening in 1929. The church was originally located on Grand River Avenue just west of Novi Road. In the spring of 1997, the building was moved to its current site on Beck Road.

11. Baseline Monument



This is a commemorative marker located on Eight Mile Road in Novi. The marker is a ten foot tall obelisk that describes the significance of surveying to the early settlement of Novi and Michigan and as a foundation to creating farms throughout the state.

12. Novi Train Depot



The arrival of the railroad was a boon to the Novi community. Farmers were able to ship commodities that were bulky and/or perishable to markets in Detroit, Chicago and elsewhere in the United States.

13. Old Township Hall



The Novi Town Hall was originally sited on Novi Road just south of Grand River. The building caught fire in an electrical storm and was destroyed in 1912. The present white frame building was constructed in 1914.

14. Rogers Residence



This Colonial Revival structure was built by Charles Rogers on the farm once owned by early Novi settler Sally Thornton. Rogers married Isabelle Thornton, granddaughter of Sally Thornton. The fireplace of the mansion features a cornerstone from the smokehouse of the Thornton farm inscribed 1877.

15. Sally Thornton Residence



Sally Thornton, a 48-year-old widow, came to Novi with her five children in 1827. Sometime after arriving in the Novi area, she bought 400 acres on both sides of Novi Road just north of Nine Mile Road. She built this Greek Revival house on the east side of Novi Road in 1860. In 1992, the house was moved to its current location.

16. Samuel White House



A prosperous farmer and veteran of the War of 1812, White was the second supervisor of Novi, a delegate to the 1835 Michigan Constitutional Convention and active in numerous other civic endeavors. He built this house for his wife and four children around 1840.

17. Simmons Orchard



The house and outbuilding were once part of a farm that comprised of over 150 acres. Fruit trees, especially apples, were grown widely throughout the area. Novi and the surrounding communities were especially known for the quantity and quality of the fruit which they produced.

18. Wool House



The Wool House was where local farmers brought their fleeces to sell. Sheep and wool production has long been one of the main outputs of the community. In 1910, the Novi Census indicated the community consisted of 1226 people and 9094 sheep.

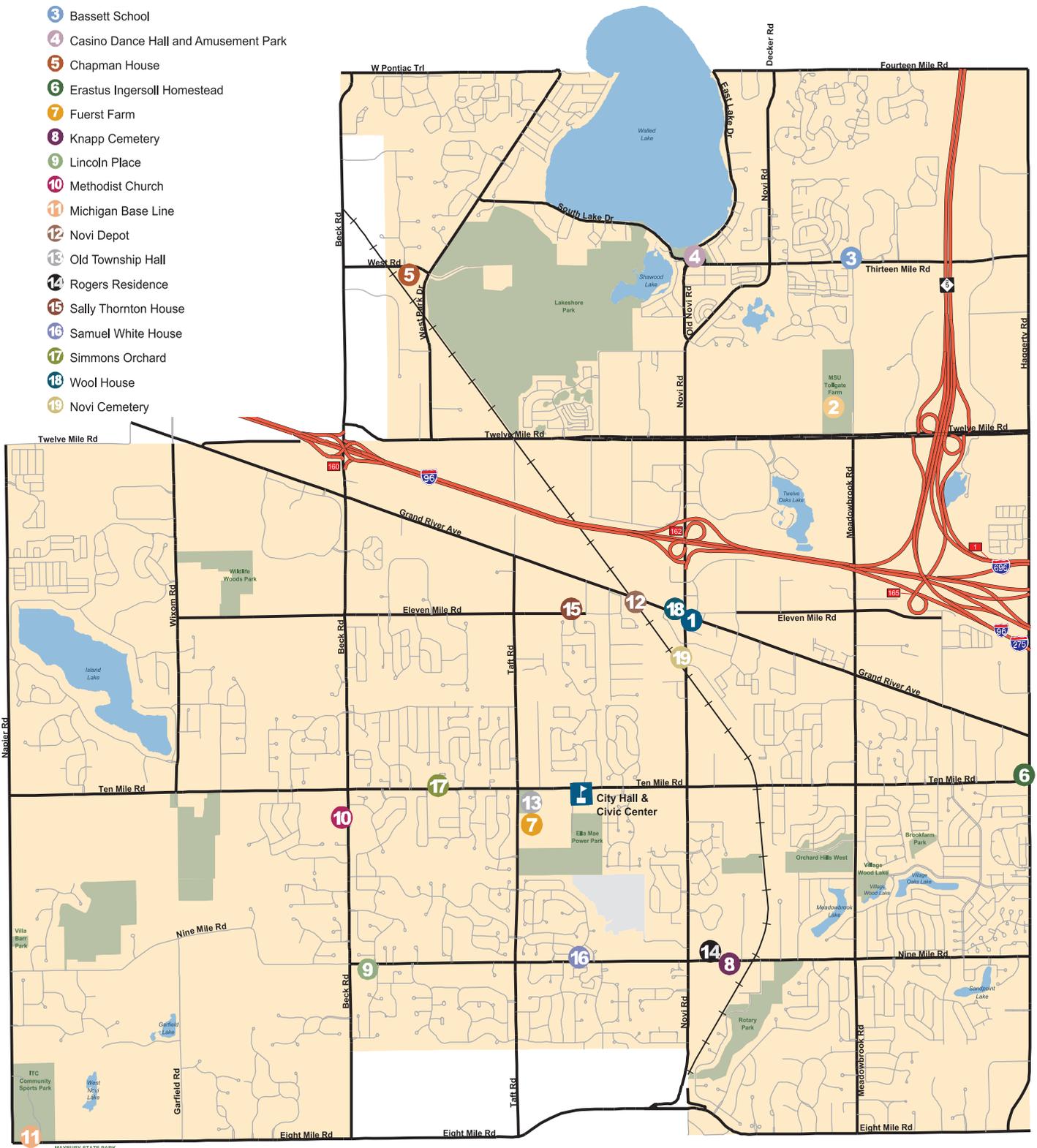
19. Novi Cemetery



The original burial ground that would become the Novi Cemetery was donated by early Novi settler Daniel Lee. In 1844, remains from graves on the Loren Flint farm, many dating from the early 1830's, were moved to the cemetery. The property was expanded to 2.5 acres in 1873 and renamed the Novi Cemetery. Many veterans are buried in the cemetery, including those who served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War and WWI and WWII.

Novi Historical Landmarks

- 1 Bank Building
- 2 MSU Tollgate Farm
- 3 Bassett School
- 4 Casino Dance Hall and Amusement Park
- 5 Chapman House
- 6 Erastus Ingersoll Homestead
- 7 Fuerst Farm
- 8 Knapp Cemetery
- 9 Lincoln Place
- 10 Methodist Church
- 11 Michigan Base Line
- 12 Novi Depot
- 13 Old Township Hall
- 14 Rogers Residence
- 15 Sally Thornton House
- 16 Samuel White House
- 17 Simmons Orchard
- 18 Wool House
- 19 Novi Cemetery



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 Information Technology Department
 Geographic Information Services
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