No. 27. A History of the Plank Roads

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PLANK ROADS OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY

Also the villages from which proposed roads were to be built.
The "Good Roads" movement actually began in Michigan in 1844 with the chartering of the first plank road company. This company built the Detroit and Port Huron Road. The predecessors of the plank roads were the corduroy and ordinary dirt roads.\(^1\) The corduroy road was constructed by laying complete logs, side by side, across the roadway. Very little effort was usually made to level the road and therefore it was very bumpy. The corduroy road was usually found in swampy areas. It is noteworthy that the northern terminus of the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids plank road was a corduroy road previous to being a plank road. This road today is South Division Avenue, Grand Rapids.\(^2\)

In order to build a plank road the interested parties had to obtain a charter from the state legislature. The conditions governing the formation and operation of a plank road were contained in the General Plank Road Act of 1848. Before 1848 there were very few plank roads desired or constructed, but after this the legislature was so plagued with requests for charters that they passed a General Act to relieve the pressure.\(^3\)

2- Grand Rapids Press, April 9, 1909
3- According to the book "Index to Special and Local Acts of The Legislature from 1833 to 1927," compiled by Dennis E. Alward and Charles S. Pierce, Lansing, 1928, pp. 334 to 339, the legislature chartered 45 companies in 1848, 15 in 1849, and 45 in 1850. This would tend to indicate that the legislative docket was too crowded to allow individual care with each company and therefore the General Plank Road Act in 1848 was enacted.
The following is a brief explanation and description of this act. 4

The Acts for incorporating companies to build plank roads had to contain the following five points:

1 - names of at least three commissioners to receive subscriptions to the capital stock
2 - the points of terminus for this particular road
3 - the amount of capital stock of the company
4 - the number of shares and the monetary size of each share of the capital stock
5 - the duration of the company.

Included in an appendix to this paper are two such charters.

The commissioners named by the charter were to estimate within six months after receiving the charter, the length of their road and were to open books of stock for subscription. Notice to this effect was to be placed in at least one newspaper printed in each county through which the road passed. If the county did not have a newspaper, the notice was to be carried by a Detroit paper. When the subscription of stock equaled at least three hundred dollars for each mile of proposed road, the commissioners were to call a meeting of all the stockholders to elect a board of directors. This board was to consist of not less than three nor more than five members. The notice of the stockholders meeting was to be given in the same manner as that used for the opening of the books of stock described above. This announcement was to specify the time and place of the meeting.

The board of directors was to make an accurate survey of the road to be built and this survey was to be recorded with the county clerk of every county through which the road passed. 5


5 - County clerks, in reply to letters requesting information on the roads of Kalamazoo County, replied that they had no information in their files: (St. Joseph, Kent, Allegan, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren).
Annually the board was to send a financial report to the Secretary of State.\textsuperscript{6}

The road was definitely outlined and it was to be two to four rods wide. Sixteen feet of the road was to be a smooth, good, and permanent road. Eight feet was to be plank of not less than three inches in width. The ascent or descent of the road was not to exceed one foot in ten feet. The road was to be built so that easy passing onto and off of the roadway was possible by all vehicles. The road company could not place any obstruction to this passing on or off by its customers.

Tolls for the roads were to be collected by gatemen at the toll gates. These gates could be placed at any location the company desired. The rates were as follows:

Not to exceed 2 cents per mile for any vehicle drawn by two horses
1 cent per mile for a sleigh or sled drawn by one horse
3/4 cent per mile for each animal over two pulling a vehicle
1/2 cent per mile for a score of sheep or swine
2 cents per mile for neat cattle (cattle being fattened for market)
1 cent per mile for every horse and rider or led horse

The first toll gate could be constructed at any time after the completion of the first five miles of road. The toll gates were constructed by making an ordinary gate which stretched across the entire road. This would cause the driver and vehicle to stop when approaching the gate, pay the fare, and continue on when the gate was opened. The gatemen usually lived in a house constructed a few yards away from his gate.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{6}These reports are in Lansing. They were formerly stored in the Room of the Great Seal (State Department), but since then they have been transferred and have become temporarily lost.

\textsuperscript{7}The personal recollection of Mr. W. J. Riddler of Paddy Miller Road, Galesburg, Michigan. He will be 100 years old in March, 1950.
If anyone passed the toll gate without paying the legal fee he was subject to a twenty-five dollar fine. The Kalamazoo Gazette in 1856 carried the news story that one Reuben Edmonds not only ran through the toll gate but also assaulted the gate keeper when the later tried to collect the fare. Later he was overtaken, arrested, and fined twenty-five dollars by Judge Edmonds.\(^8\)

All plank road companies were assessed a specific tax of one per cent on their whole amount of capital paid in upon the capital stock also upon all sums they borrowed. Michigan, which had more plank roads than any other state,\(^9\) actually received very little from taxing these roads. The Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company was the only Kalamazoo County road ever to pay any of this state tax.\(^{10}\) Appendix C contains a chart of the specific taxes paid by the plank road companies of the entire state to the treasury from 1850 to 1861.

(In order to retain their charter all companies had to begin construction within two years after the charter was granted, an expend at least ten per cent of their capital on such construction. If any section of the road was not completed before ten years had elapsed, the right of way to that section was forfeited to the state.

The law also exempted some persons from paying the common toll under certain conditions. The sabbath day trip to church,

\(^8\)Kalamazoo Gazette, October 1856. Hereafter referred to as the Gazette.


\(^{10}\)Annual Reports of the Auditor-General to the Legislature of the State of Michigan of 1852 and 1853, Lansing, 1852 and 1853. Hereafter referred to as Auditor-General Reports 1850-1861.
and the journey to a funeral were both exemptable. If citizens were summoned by law to appear in court, or had to make any similar trip required by law, their trip could also be made free of charge. Another exemption was given for the journey to attend a military parade.

The board of directors had to keep the road in a continual state of repair. Any needed repair was brought to the attention of the directors and if they did not fix it, any person aggrieved or injured because of that neglected repair could sue the company for ten dollars in damages.

The General Plank Road Act was made effective on March 13, 1848. There was no large scale opposition to the law in either house of the legislature. The house of representatives passed the bill on February 26, 1848 and the senate on March 4, 1848. The senate vote was 15 to 4 and the house of representatives vote was approximately 37 to 12. There were only minor disagreements between the amendments of each house.11

This act was amended twice, once in 1855 and again in 1857. The amendment of 1855 allowed a chartered company to substitute gravel for plank under two conditions; first it was to be at least nine feet wide, and, second, it was to be at least ten inches deep.12 All other conditions were to remain the same. In 1857 the legislature changed the law to allow the gravel to be seven inches in depth instead of ten.13

The plank road mania replaced the desire for the railroad.14

Journal of the House of Representatives, Lansing, 1848.
This was mainly due to the fact that plank roads were cheaper than railroads. People in areas the size of Kalamazoo could finance a plank road but not a railroad. The Kalamazoo and Lake Michigan Railroad, chartered in 1836, was to be forty miles long and had a capital stock of $400,000 or $10,000 per mile. The Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company was chartered with a capital stock of $70,000 which was approximately $1,400 per mile. It cost a little more than seven times as much to construct a railroad as it did to construct a plank road.

The first notice concerning plank roads in the Gazette appeared February 25, 1848. This disclosed the fact that the legislature was considering the General Plank Road Act. The editor considered the terms of the act liberal enough with the exception of the toll rates. Two months later the paper made a prediction that the coming era was to see the rising importance of the plank road in daily life.

The governor at this time was Epaphroditus Ransom of Kalamazoo county. He was a known advocate of the plank roads and his term of office is noted for the many bills he signed which formed such companies. Governor Ransom signed the charter of the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company which was the first to be formed in Kalamazoo County. This company was to build a road from the village of Kalamazoo to the village of Three Rivers along the most suitable route.

15-Arthur Stoddard, "The Railroad History of Kalamazoo", typescript of paper from history seminar, Kalamazoo College Library, Kalamazoo, Michigan, p. 3.
17-Gazette, February 25, 1848.
The Gazette, aiding the agitation for plank roads published a letter from Mr. Thomas Alvord. This letter had probably been written to a person in the Kalamazoo area who was interested in the plank roads. Mr. Alvord was connected with the construction of plank roads in New York State and had had considerable experience there. His letter discusses various aspects of the plank road. The following is a brief outline of the letter.

There were three steps in the construction of a plank road: grubbing, grading and planking. The grubbing was necessary because of the virgin timber which was in this area during the period of the plank road construction.

Grading was necessary because provisions of the General Plank Road Act of 1848 required that the ascent or descent of a plank road must not be over one foot in ten. The grader below was described by Mr. Thomas Alvord in the Gazette in 1848:

![Diagram of a plank road grader](image)

The above grader was drawn by two horses and worked by three men.

The last step was the laying of the plank. The roadbed was prepared for the planking by laying the superstructure or stringers. The superstructure consisted of two 4" x 4" or

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19—Gazette, April 28, 1848.
20—Letter of Alvord, April 28, 1848, cited above.
3" x 5" planks running parallel with each other at the proper distance. The stringers were usually laid into plowed furrows and the dirt was packed very tightly around them. The main purpose of the stringers was to prevent one plank from being lower than the rest. The planks were laid onto the stringers by two crews of men. The first set of men carried the planks and placed them on the superstructure while the second, aided by crowbars, forced them into the proper position. This made a smooth road. If the planks were laid this way it was possible to cover one hundred rods of road per day. Using this method a change of plank carriers was needed every 15 minutes.

Natural action of the water during the rainy season had to be taken into consideration. The water could not remain in the dirt under the road for if it did the dirt would soon become soggy and work out from under the plank. This would leave a hollow beneath the plank which in a short time would cause it to split. All ravines were bridged if possible. If the road crossed a swale it was prepared in a special manner; first whole logs were laid crosswise on the road, a layer of brush covered the logs, a foot of soil was placed on the brush, and the plank was placed on top of the dirt.

The ideal road was eight feet wide and had two stringers beneath it. If the road was wider than this, only the center was used. In time the center of the road would be worn out while the edges were still very little used, which caused a considerable waste of plank. If a road needed to be wider than eight feet, it was better to build two narrow roads running side by side. Mr. Alvord estimated it would cost about $1,391.28 per mile to construct a plank road in Michigan. He also gave
an estimate of the traffic required to make a profitable road under the Michigan General Plank Road Law. "For an example taking a road twenty miles long, I estimate the following:

- Construction costs at $1,400 per mile
- The interest at seven per cent $1,960.
- Pay of five gatekeepers at $125 per year 625.
- Pay of one superintendent (also a gatekeeper) 240.
- Annual outlay of ten per cent for road repairs 2,800.
- Yearly expenses 5,625.

If you contract a toll of fifty teams each day of the year for one year----Yearly income $7,300.
Thus we have a balance of profit equal to $1,675.
This is equal to very nearly six per cent on the first cost of the road.

But say your road can be built at a cost of $1,200 per mile, as I think it can be:
- The interest at seven per cent $1,680.
- Pay of five gatekeepers 625.
- Pay of one superintendent 240.
- Annual ten per cent for road repairs 2,400.
- Yearly expenses 4,945.

Contract toll of fifty teams each day for one year
Yearly income $7,300.
Thus we have a balance of profit equal to $2,365.
This is equal to a fraction less than ten per cent on the first cost of the road."

AlWord's letter was used by the editor of the Gazette to explain to the future stockholders the possible profits from plank roads and some of the various methods used in the building of plank roads:

21-Here Mr. Alvord used the words "your plank road," which tended to indicate that he was writing to a person interested in the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road. This was the only Kalamazoo County plank road chartered at this time, April 22, 1848.

22-Gazette, April 28, 1848.
On September 20, 1848, there was a meeting of the people of the village of Kalamazoo at the county court house to discuss the excessive rates of the Michigan Central Railroad, which passed through this village. The main complaint was that a shipper in Niles, Michigan could send a barrel of flour to Detroit cheaper than a similar shipper from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Niles was located fifty miles further from Detroit than Kalamazoo, yet it cost a Kalamazoo shipper twenty cents more per barrel of flour on his transportation rates. This was the railroad practice of cutting the fare where there was competition and raising the fare where there was no competition—the "long and short haul" discrimination. This meeting in conclusion, appointed a committee to study two proposed solutions to the problem. D. S. Walbridge, Esq., was appointed chairman. The two solutions were either to improve the Kalamazoo River from Allegan to Kalamazoo (the river being navigable up to Allegan) or to build a plank road from Allegan to Kalamazoo. In either case, they could then ship by water to the East.23

This committee reported on October 6, 1848, in favor of the improvement of the Kalamazoo River.24 This proposal came before the legislature in the early months of 1849, and was presented to the governor in March.25 This bill, making the necessary appropriation's, was vetoed on March 14, 1849.

Nothing appears in the Gazette between September 22, 1848, and January 18, 1850, but the rival paper, the Michigan Telegraph, has a great deal to say on the issue and prints editorials completely in favor of the plank roads. The paper only desired that the people of this area should wake up and

23-Gazette, September 20, 1848.
24-Gazette, October 6, 1848.
move forward on the project before someone else took the advantage of the plank road from them.

The *Telegraph* in an editorial quotes the *Grand Rapids Eagle* as "screaming incessantly to the people of that valley to mend their ways and connect that valley with the railroad in Kalamazoo before someone else did it first."26 This paper, as all the papers of this period, was very optimistic in regards to the plank roads projects. The paper also states, "What the Erie Canal has proved for the Empire State and the West, the plank roads will realize to the villages of Western Michigan."27

In the same paper this statement appeared, "If this village can have a plank road from here to Three Rivers and Grand Rapids, together with our natural advantages it will make Kalamazoo the most flourishing town in Western Michigan. The real core of our problem is not a lack of capital, faith, nor industry, but rather it is lack of publick spirit."28

In general the editorials of this paper and the *Gazette* tended to point out the benefits of this type of venture to the people of the area, both as future stockholders and future customers. The advantages, as set forth by their editorials before August 21, 1849, are listed below.

The plank roads would increase communication to the smaller villages, as for example Otsego and Allegan.29 The roads would cause thousands of acres of land then of little value to be turned into farmland and would in turn increase their trade.30 The plank roads made it possible for the person with very little capital to secure an investment of unrivaled importance.31 The farmer or shipper by paying one dollar in toll would save ten dollars in the transportation of his goods. A team was able to pull nearly five fold more on a plank road than a dirt road and furthermore the harness and wagon would last four times as long.

26-*Telegraph*, December 2, 1848.
27-*Ibid*.
28-*Ibid*.
29-*Telegraph*, December 2, 1848.
30-*Ibid*.
31-*Telegraph*, December 9, 1848.
and four-fifths of the travel time would be saved. The surplus products of each community could be taken to market, thus enhancing the rewards of the farmer. The plank road would be more advantageous to a community than the railroad, considering the cost of building it. Lumber was plentiful in the area, being mainly white oak, hickory, and walnut, all hard woods.32

The Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company had been chartered on March 17, 1849. It had a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars, in two thousand shares of twenty-five dollars each. The commissioners of this road were Evert B. Dyckman, Daniel L. Kimberly, D. S. Walbridge, Hiram Arnold, and Edward S. Moore.33

The original charter of this company34 was amended by an act of the legislature on March 16, 1849, at which time Kimberly, Walbridge, and Arnold were replaced by William R. Watson, David B. Webster and Israel Kellogg.35 This company was largely inactive for the first year of its charter and it may have been for the reason of dissention among the commissioners, as the amendment suggests.

The company published on July 20, 1849, a notice that the books for subscription would be opened on August 20th in Kalamazoo, August 21st in Schoolcraft, and at Three Rivers on August 23rd, in each case from ten o'clock A. M. to four o'clock P. M.36 (An example of a notice of the opening of books to the subscription of stock can be found in the appendix.)

The men that were interested in this plank road project were the leaders of their communities, usually men of means which they

32—Telegraph, March 31, 1849.
34—Appendix A.
36—Gazette, July 20, 1849.
had won by their own hard work and luck. An example is Mr. Evert B. Dyckman, who was located in Schoolcraft and had a great interest in Van Buren County. He owned a grist mill, a general store, and an inn in Paw Paw. He was a real estate buyer and later became president of his own bank, E. B. Dyckman and Company. He was fairly active in politics, being a representative to the legislature for one term and later becoming the first president of the village of Schoolcraft.

The commissioners announced in the Gazette the calling of a stockholders' meeting for the purpose of electing a board of directors. The meeting was to be held at the Kalamazoo County Court House in the village of Kalamazoo on September 22, 1849 at one o'clock. Commenting on this announcement by the company, the Gazette said,

"Without a doubt this road will be built by men of energy and capital who will urge it on to immediate completion. This road will connect the very fertile valley of Prairie Ronde with Kalamazoo and the Central Railroad. With all the improvements going on around, Kalamazoo is destined to look up."

By law a company had to have subscribed at least three hundred dollars of stock per mile of road to call a stockholders' meeting, so by now this company must have had subscribed at least eight thousand seven hundred dollars.

On October 5, 1849 the Gazette carried the notice that at the board of directors meeting which was held on September 29, 1849 at the office of David B. Webster it was ordered that his office be designated as the office of the company. Mr. H. G. Wells, had been chosen by the directors to be the secretary.

Shortly after this announcement the company began to

37-Gazette, September 7, 1849.
38-Ibid.
39-Gazette, October 5, 1849.
construct the road. The road was to leave Kalamazoo on what is now Portage Street and circle slowly towards Schoolcraft, and from there it traveled almost directly south towards Three Rivers. By August of 1850 enough was finished so that the Gazette, in referring to the new livery stable of Messrs. Pattison and Parker, even suggested that their carriages would reflect credit upon Queen Viet and her little nymphs and make her heart palpitate with a ride on "our" new plank road among the region's little hills and majestic oaks.

The fall of 1850 saw the company running short of finances. This caused the breaking off of construction for the winter. After this, the board of directors published a notice in the Gazette of December 6, 1850, that they would open additional books of stock in both Kalamazoo and the Prairie Ronde House in Schoolcraft. The books were to be opened on January 4 and 5, 1851, respectively. H. G. Wells had been reelected secretary. The Gazette supporting the program, said, "the value to our community from the completion of this important throughfare is incalculable."

The citizens of this area responded rather well to the reopening of the books, for by January 10th some six thousand dollars had been subscribed, but it was necessary to subscribe at least two thousand more before operations could be resumed. The Gazette was of the opinion that if the residents of Kalamazoo could finance the road as far as the north edge of Prairie Ronde, the citizens of that locality, would carry the road.

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40-Gazette, Centennial Issue, January 24, 1937.
41-A large gap appears in the Gazette from October 5, 1849 to August 30, 1850. (This is a gap in information not papers)
42-Gazette, December 6, 1850.
43-Gazette, January 10, 1851.
44-Ibid.
There can be no doubt but what the wheat growing farmers of Prairie Ronde would greatly desire this road to be completed before the harvesting season only a few months ahead. This would provide them with a fine road to transport their goods to the railroad.

Shortly after the reopening of the books in 1861, the office was changed from David B. Websters' office to that of the new treasurer, Theodore Sheldon. This change was ordered by the board. 46

The newly subscribed stock did prove enough to begin construction again. The stock of such companies was not then paid for at one time but rather in installments as called for. Thus, the board of directors made the announcement in the Gazette that an assessment of twenty per cent would be made, to be paid as follows: ten per cent by the fourth of March and ten per cent by the fifth of April. 47 As the face value of the stock was twenty-five dollars, the above payments totaled five dollars. This road was probably constructed by the methods described by Mr. Thomas Alvord, which have been given above.

The construction of the road proceeded very well. It continued to progress towards Prairie Ronde and Schoolcraft. The editor of the Gazette visited the scene of the work during the week of April 18, 1861 and the directors of the road assured him that it would be ready in time for the harvest of the wheat. The road had progressed far enough by this time that one toll gate had been erected, indicating that they must have been at least five miles towards Schoolcraft. The collections from this gate had led the editor to make the cheerful statement that the

45-Ibid.
46-Gazette, January 24, 1861.
47-Gazette, January 31, 1861.
stock would soon command a premium. The road crews were also reported to be very large.48

Financial problems again bothered the company, so that another assessment of twenty per cent was made on the stock subscribed in January. This assessment was due on or before May 12, 1851.49

The last assessment of this January 1851 stock was published in the Gazette of April 25, 1851.50 The assessments were to be:

"40% Previously paid—$10.00
20% payable on 16th of June next ------ 5.00
15% " " " 15th of July next----------- 3.75
15% " " " 15th of August next------ 3.75
10% " " " 15th of September next---- 2.50
100% ------------------ Total paid on stock—$25.00"

Shortly after this announcement the Gazette carried a board notice that the books would be opened in the office of the Treasurers', Theodore Sheldon, in the village of Kalamazoo on the 24th of June and would remain open until closed by order of the board.51

Perhaps in an effort to draw more subscriptions, the board declared a dividend. Those stockholders holding stock as of January 1851 and paid in full would receive a dividend of five per cent. Those holding paid in full stock as of March, 1851, would receive a three and one-half per cent dividend.52

The following week the editor of the Gazette stated that he hoped the citizens of Kalamazoo would recognize the importance of this enterprise and take hold of it with the greatest energy.53 As a matter of fact, the various plank road companies now had a great deal of competition for the available capital of this village. For example the books of stock for the Kalamazoo

48—Gazette, April 18, 1851.
49—Ibid.
50—Gazette, April 25, 1851.
51—Gazette, May 23, 1851.
52—Gazette, July 18, 1851.
53—Gazette, July 25, 1851.
and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company were opened on August 15, 1851. During the fall of 1851 the Kalamazoo and Breadssville Company, the Centerville and Kalamazoo Company, and the Allegan County and Kalamazoo Road also opened their books. Thus the Three Rivers Company naturally was faced with some competition.

The Three Rivers road progressed regularly and by November the secretary announced that the annual stockholders meeting would be held on December 2, 1851 at the Court House in the village of Kalamazoo at two o'clock P.M. for the purpose of electing five new directors and enacting such other business as may arise.

The Three Rivers Road was paying dividends in January, 1852, for the Gazette notified the stockholders that such was declared on any paid in full stock as of March 1, 1851. The dividend was to be five per-cent for the six months terminating on January 1, 1852. This was payable as of the 31st. Mr. H. G. Wells was for the third year elected the secretary of his company.

By late February, the road between this village and Schoolcraft was completed entirely and was doing a good business. The apparent profits of the company led the Gazette to use it as propaganda for the campaign to purchase stock in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company. The Gazette thought that the whole difficulty would soon be not to find

54-Gazette, August 15, 1851. 55-Gazette, October 3, 1851.
56-Gazette, November 7, 1851. 57-Gazette, November 14, 1851.
58-Gazette, November 21, 1851. 59-Gazette, January 16, 1852.
60-Gazette, February 27, 1852.
subscribers but rather to procure the stock at anything like its face value.\(^{61}\) This was the case for only a few years. This company was listed as paying taxes to the state in the year 1853, but after this they were listed as owing but not paying.\(^{62}\)

However, despite this fact that they were a profitable company for some years, the road was never entirely finished to Three Rivers, which was approximately twenty nine miles from Kalamazoo. There were about six miles on the southern end of the road that were never built.\(^{63}\) For several years the stockholders were approximately able to make ends meet. But the railroad was just too much competition for the plank road. The railroads in the later 1850's were having a serious effect upon the business of the plank roads.\(^{64}\) With the coming of the Kalamazoo and White Pigeon Railroad in 1871 the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road was for all practical purposes terminated.\(^{65}\)

Actually the Three Rivers road was not the most important plank road in Kalamazoo County, but rather the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road holds that distinction. The latter was longer and carried a heavier traffic. The company that later built this was chartered March 25, 1850. The authorized capital stock was $70,000 which was issued in two thousand eight hundred shares at twenty-five dollars per share.\(^{66}\) Grand Rapids was approximately fifty miles north from Kalamazoo and in 1850 had a population of 2,686 persons.\(^{67}\) Grand Rapids at this time had no better means of marketing its produce than by the Michigan Central Railroad in Kalamazoo. It was a difficult trip.

61-Ibid.
63-Gazette, Centennial Issue, January 24, 1937.
64-History of Kalamazoo County With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers, Everts and Abbetts, Philadelphia, 1880, p. 169.
65-Ibid.
66-Appendix B
requiring over two days and if it was during a rainy season
many days were required. Thus the people in Grand Rapids
definitely favored a plank road for an outlet to the railroad.

The Kalamazoo Gazette and the Michigan Telegraph, the two
Kalamazoo newspapers, both favored this road and each spent a
great deal of space speaking of its advantages. The activity
of preparing for it goes back to December, 1848. The first
notice of interest appeared in the Telegraph, which was quoting
an article in the Grand Rapids Eagle which advised the people to
mend their ways and go to work immediately to put this road
into construction. The December 9, 1848, issue of the Telegraph
carried a flaming editorial which in conclusion stated,
"Let the capitalists investigate the project of the
plank road from the Grand to the Kalamazoo River at
this place and they will discover an investment of
unrivaled importance for a small amount of capital."

The same advantages were given for this road as were given for
the Three Rivers road. Briefly these were increased trade,
increased communication, increased travel, very good profits
for small capitalists, and a market for surplus crops of the
farmer.

Although the people of Grand Rapids were sure they needed
an exit to the rest of the world they did not know just
exactly where the southern terminus of that line should be.
The first indication of this indecision or quarrel appears in
the Telegraph on August 11, 1849. There the editor, after he
declared the mutual needs of Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, made
the statement that everything pointed to Kalamazoo as the natural
southern terminus of this road. The writer also gave two
reasons, which seem in the end to have been the main ones: first

68-Telegraph, December 2, 1848.
69-Telegraph, December 9, 1848.
the Kalamazoo route would be the shortest. (The Galesburg route was 52 1/2 miles long, the Battle Creek route was approximately 56 or 57 miles long, while the Kalamazoo route was about 48 1/2 miles long,) and the facilities of this route in the way of saw mills, timber, and general road bed conditions were better than the other two. 70 Evidently this argument raged for some time and continuously, because on August 31, 1849, a letter appears in the Gazette which again argued the point. 71 The letter was signed by the word—KALAMAZOO. The letter argued with the article which appeared some days before in the Grand Rapids Enquirer. It was the viewpoint of the Enquirer that the proposed road to Kalamazoo passed through a thinly populated area, the road would not have natural connections with other routes of travel, and the road would go to Kalamazoo, a place suggesting no very attractive association to the old settlers of this very flourishing town. The Kalamazoo writer countered with these statements. The other proposed routes of travel (Galesburg and Battle Creek) did not go through an area so well populated as the area of the Kalamazoo route. The Kalamazoo route would run within four miles of Otsego, cross the Allegan road, Yankee Springs road, Gull Prairie road, and when it arrived in Kalamazoo it would intersect the Michigan Central railroad and be on the direct route to the whole valley of the St. Joseph by way of the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road. KALAMAZOO suggested that the two cities bury the hatchet and disregard old ill feelings. 72 It is interesting to note that the strength of these favorers of the Galesburg and Grand Rapids route went so far in opposition to the Kalamazoo route as to charter a plank road company in 1849.

70—Telegraph, August 11, 1849.
71—Gazette, August 31, 1849.
72—Ibid.
and even to make the preliminary survey for their road, 52 1/2
miles. The work never progressed much further than this. 73
This company was also listed in the auditor-general's reports
of 1852-53 as owing a specific tax. However the tax was never
paid. 74 A Battle Creek and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company was
also formed, but only strong exertions were made and the project
was finally abandoned. 75

The Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids company did not actually
obtain a charter until March 25, 1850. Therefore, until that
point it was not a corporation and lacked the powers conferred
by the legislature on plank road firms.

Subscriptions began in the latter part of July, 1849 76 and
on August 31st the Gazette reported that some $30,000 worth
had been subscribed. The Gazette feared not that the stock
would be a bad investment but rather that one would not be able
to obtain it. 77 The papers all showed a great amount of optimism
over the sale and the profits expected from it. The discussion
of the best route continued. On September 7, 1849, the Gazette
announced that 2/3rds of the stock necessary for building the
road had been subscribed. 78 The Gazette even went so far as to
say, "We were about to say--as profitable as any other plank
road of equal length in the United States," 79 a very subtle way
of saying they thought the road would be most profitable.

The subscribers to the stock of the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids
road held a meeting at the Court House in the village of
Kalamazoo on October 19, 1849, for the purpose of taking measures

73-Baxter, op. cit., History of the City of Grand Rapids,
Michigan, p. 525.
74-Auditor-General Reports-1852-1853.
75-Baxter, op. cit., History of the City of Grand Rapids,
Michigan, p. 525.
76-Telegraph, August 11, 1849.
77-Gazette, August 31, 1849.
78-Gazette, September 7, 1849.
79-Ibid.
for the purchase of plank necessary to construct the road, to employ a competent corps of engineers to survey the route and procure the right of way from the authorities of the several towns through which the road was to pass. Governor Ransom was called to the chair, due to the absence of General Issac Moffatt, who was a local merchant. Simon Travers, a local surveyor, was appointed secretary. This meeting elected a committee of seven men to perform the following duties, 1—contract for the necessary plank to complete the entire road, 2—to cause the survey of the road to be made, and 3—to secure the rights of way. The committee was composed of I. Moffatt Jr., T. P. Sheldon, and J. P. Woodbury from Kalamazoo, C. H. Taylor, and George Kendall of Grand Rapids, F. J. Tanner from Paris (near Grand Rapids), and Abram Diedrick of Gun Plains.

This argument between the favorites of the various plank road routes even stretched into politics. During the elections of 1849 for the state legislature one Marsh Giddings was running for the office of representative on a coalition ticket. The Gazette was against him and two days before the election the paper reminded the people that, "Mr. Giddings was against your plank road (Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids) and said that he was backing the Galesburg road in an effort to get the Democratic vote." He was defeated.

The plank road committee provided for the preliminary survey by hiring one Simon Travers to complete the task. Mr. Travers was a scientific engineer with several years experience with the railroads of Canada and New York. The essence of his report follows. The whole distance was 48 miles. The route was the most direct and feasible one for plank road purposes that he had

80-Gazette, October 19, 1849.
81-Ibid.
82-Gazette, November 2, 1849.
ever surveyed. The soil was well adapted to plank roads and the grade was good, whole sections of sometimes a mile which needed no work except the sloping of the dirt from the center to the outside. The ditches along the side of the road would be constructed easily and the road bed made ready for the superstructure. In the timbered sections of land the road usually followed old established roads, so the timber had already been removed. Timber was in abundance and of good quality, being mainly of pine and white and yellow oak. The necessary saw mills were already located for this work of scaling the timber.

The committee report went on to say that an accurate survey would take from three to four weeks. Furthermore, when the accurate survey was completed the committee would advertise to receive bids for grading, plank, and superstructure. This will probably be about the first of February, 1850, it was said.

The Gazette on November 23rd carried an article offering constructive criticism and yet backing the plank road to the North. The writer stated that Kalamazoo was the natural focal point of Western Michigan, and if the people here were to be true to themselves they had to use the means so bountifully within their possession to insure rapid growth, and prosperity—which could not fail to be secured. Kalamazoo could be the center of collection and transhipment of the goods of the surrounding territory. The only thing needed to bring these things to us was the construction of an easy means of access to the various important points within the reach of us. The route to Grand Rapids that had just been surveyed was the most favorable for that object. Thus it needed only energy and

83—Gazette, November 9, 1849.
84—Ibid.
85—Gazette, November 23, 1849.
determination on the part of the citizens on the line to bring about a speedy completion of this important throughfare which would gain the above profits for the area.86

In order to gain these benefits, continued the Gazette, people of the region must conduct the enterprise understandingly and advantageously. There was lacking a recognized leader or head whose duty it would be to accompany and direct the engineer and thereby mark out a systematic plan of operation so that the work would be carried out intelligently. (Thus we note that there was a lack of organization which was to be expected because these people did not have a charter as yet and thus there were no recognized leaders in charge.) The writer went on to state that this should be remedied in the near future if the project was to be successful.87

The accurate survey of the route was finished before February 1st, as hoped for by the committee, and on December 21, 1849, the plank road organization advertised for sealed contract bids for the plank which they would need. They gave the following specifications for the lumber:

1-The planks were to be either white or yellow oak, pine, or hemlock.
   a-They were to be free from sap or rot.
   b-They were to be 3 inches thick, 8 to 12 inches wide, and 8 feet long.
2-The stringers were to be of white oak or pine and were to be 4 by 4's from 12 to 16 feet in length.
3-The lumber was to be delivered as directed:
   a-800,000 ft. plank & stringers--F. Fitts mill on Kalamazoo River
   b-600,000 ft.-  --On line of road-South part of Gun Plain
   c-600,000 ft.-  --Where road crossed Gun Creek
   d-600,000 ft.-  --Near the dwelling of D. Bradley in Wayland
   e-750,000 ft.-  --At Barnes' mill in Wayland
   f-750,000 ft.-  --At Moshers' mill in Wayland
   g-750,000 ft.-  --At Green Lake House in Leighton (Allegan County)
   h-750,000 ft.-  --At the dwelling of T. L. Tanner in Paris
   i-750,000 ft.-  --Village of Grand Rapids
   j-650,000 ft.-  --Total lumber which was to be contracted. 88

86-Ibid.  87-Ibid.  88-Gazette, December 21, 1849.
These bids were to be submitted at the office of T. P. Sheldon in the village of Kalamazoo, and in Grand Rapids at the store of George Kendall. They were to be received until January 22, 1850. The conditions were that ten per cent would be paid when the contracts were opened, and the balance was to be paid in full at the time of delivery, minus the usual twenty-five per cent to be paid when the contract was completed. The usual securities were required to insure the faithful performance of the contracts. These securities were to be included in the sealed bid. 89 The person putting in a bid for an amount smaller than the entire amount, was to give the exact amount and the price of the said amount which he was bidding on.

This announcement also contained the information that as the stock was entirely subscribed the road would probably be started as soon as the ground settled in the spring and the plank would be accepted when the grading could be made ready for it. 90

This company received its charter on March 25, 1850, and on May 3rd it was announced that books of stock were to be opened on Tuesday, May 24, 1850, in the village of Kalamazoo, May 31st in Gun Plains, June 3rd at Bradley's in Wayland, Monday, June 7th in Grand Rapids. The route still had not been definitely located as yet, for this notice began, "Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road to be built on the most feasible and direct route." 91 Another indication to this effect was a letter written by one Mr. Samuel Green of Alamo. He suggested that the Kalamazoo end of the road be changed so as to pass through the village of Alamo. His reasons were not sufficient,

89-Ibid.
90-Ibid.
91-Gazette, May 3, 1850.
however, because the tentative route was not changed.92

This plank road now disappears from the newspapers for a period of approximately a year.93 The next information is that of reopening of the books for the subscription of stock. (It will be remembered that the Gazette of December 2, 1849, stated the stock was entirely subscribed. It must have been only that it had been spoken for, because at that time it was not yet a chartered company and presumably now the books were officially opened for the subscription. That is my explanation for this apparent discrepancy.) This opening of the books named the Israel Kellogg House in the village of Kalamazoo and the Hiram Rathbone home in Grand Rapids as the two places to obtain stock.94 The September 26, 1851, issue of the Gazette announced that success was beyond doubt. Ex-Governor Ransom presented books of stock and $15,000 worth were taken the first day. The next day Mr. Ransom went to Grand Rapids and approximately the same amount was taken there. This insured the commencement of the road.95

The stockholders were now called to a meeting to elect a board of directors. This was to be held on Friday, October 10, 1851, at the home of Israel Kellogg in the village of Kalamazoo. The company had approximately $37,000 worth of stock subscribed at this time.96

At the stockholders meeting the directors chosen were Epaphroditus Ransom, Israel Kellogg, Charles Sheppard, and Wm. H. Withey.98 Mr. Ransom was chosen by the directors to be the first president and Mr. Kellogg was the first secretary. The board

92-Ibid.
93-Gazette, June 21, 1850. In the Gazette cited appears the report of the village marshall, (Alex Sheldon) who was at this time trying to carry through the project of planking the streets of the village of Kalamazoo. They planked what is now Portage Street.
94-Gazette, August 15, 1851.
95-Gazette, September 26, 1851,-----96-Gazette, October 3, 1851.
97-Baxter, op. cit., History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 525. ------98-Ibid.
at its first meeting announced an assessment of $1.25 on all subscribed stock, to be paid to the secretary by the 10th of December, 1851.99

The directors now employed Simon Travers to make another survey of the many routes possible.100 The board announced a short while later that the many routes had been examined and that they had finally decided upon the course known as the straight line course between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.101 The Gazette was still optimistic and predicted that this road would pay a dividend of thirty per cent due to the passage of plaster, iron, merchandise, agricultural products, and people over this road.102 According to the Gazette of January 9, 1852, the road was definitely settled as to location.103 Although the board announced to the public that the location was settled, this was not the case. The road was actually started from Grand Rapids towards Paris in Kent County. This proposed route would have passed close to Green Lake and then circled back later to meet the final roadway. The company had completed some three miles on this route before it was changed back to its final one. This final route upon which the road lay was roughly from Grand Rapids almost due south, through Sharps Corners, Moline, Wayland, Bradley, Shelbyville, Martin, Plainwell, Cokelyville, and Cooper, and finally ended up at the depot of the Michigan Central Railroad in the village of Kalamazoo.104

The company at this time called for sealed proposals to be received at the company office, until March 1, 1852, for plank

99-Gazette, October 31, 1851.  
100-Gazette, November 21, 1851.  
101-Gazette, December 19, 1851.  
102-Bid.  
103-Gazette, January 9, 1852.  
104-Grand Rapids Press, May 20, 1926.
to be delivered along the line between Kalamazoo and Andersons' Bridge. The information relative to these planks could be obtained from General Isaac Moffatt, the superintendent of the road, or at the business office. 105

Shortly after this the second assessment of $1.25 was ordered to be paid on or before March 10, 1852.

The building of the road was contracted to Mr. Titus Doan in February of 1852. Mr. Doan had during the previous five years been connected with the plank roads of the South-Eastern part of Michigan. He proposed to begin the road on both ends at the same time hoping thereby to finish in 18 months time.

In the spring of 1852 Mr. Doan proposed to build the road from Grand Rapids to a point ten miles south and from Kalamazoo to a point 14 miles north (To the place where the Kalamazoo River was crossed). He hoped to finish this 24 mile section of road by the first of November. 106 The completion of this road was to give the city to the North free access to the "rest of mankind!"

The third assessment of stock was announced as being due on or before April 10, 1852. It was an assessment of $2.50. 107

The work really began in earnest after the middle of April, 1852, for on the 16th Mr. Doan advertised "500 MEN WANTED". Mr. Doan also notified the Gazette that he was ready to let contracts for the grading and laying of plank 12 1/2 miles north from Kalamazoo and 19 miles from Grand Rapids south. He also wished to contract for the building of one bridge across the Kalamazoo River, which would be just north of the village of Plainwell. 108

Mr. Doan informed the editor of the Gazette by April 30,

105-Gazette, January 9, 1852.
106-Gazette, February 6, 1852.
107-Gazette, March 5, 1852.
108-Gazette, April 16, 1852.
1852, that quite a bit of the road was ready for the plank and only the bad weather was holding the work up. The rights of way had all been obtained and the papers for a loan from Eastern Capitalists had been in the East for some time.

The fourth assessment of ten per cent was ordered payable on or before June 24, 1852. The fifth assessment was to be paid under the following schedule:

- $7.50—Paid previously to this date
- 5.00—To be paid on or before September 10, 1852
- 3.75—" " " " " " " September 25, 1852
- 5.00—" " " " " " " October 25, 1852
- 3.75—" " " " " " " November 25, 1852

$25.00—Full payment for a share.

The annual meeting to the stockholders was held on October 5, 1852. The delay in the progress of this road by December was for want of plank. The grading crews moved too fast for the planking crews. The facilities were improving and it was hoped that they would soon be remedied.

Some general notes regarding the chief owners are available for the middle 1850's. This road was controlled by Mr. Ransom, Wm. De Yoe, and N. A. Balch in the year 1854. Mr. Ransom lost heavily in the plank road ventures and was finally forced to accept a government position in the West in an effort to rebuild his fortunes.

William De Yoe in 1856 wagered with S. N. Gantt of this village his holdings in the company over the outcome of the presidential election. Mr. Gantt was a Republican and favored Mr. Freemont to win. Mr. De Yoe backed Buchanan and thus put Mr. Gantt out of the plank road business.

The road was finally completed in the year 1855 and tolls...
were taken over its entire length from that time on until a few years after the Civil War. The line was finally forced out of business with the completion of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad. The first toll gate had been erected in Grand Rapids at what is now the intersection of Wealthy Avenue and Division Street and in 1869 this gate and the others were withdrawn from the road. The plank subsequently disappeared slowly and was replaced by gravel.

The other plank roads that were chartered in Kalamazoo County never produced or started their roads. These companies' names are listed here:

- The Kalamazoo and Otsego Plank Road Company
- The Centreville and Kalamazoo Plank Road Company
- The Galesburg and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company
- The Kalamazoo and Breedsville Plank Road Company
- The Kalamazoo and Gull Prairie Plank Road Company
- The Allegan County and Kalamazoo Plank Road Company
- The Kalamazoo and Black Lake Plank Road Company

Many of these companies, although opening their books for the subscription of stock, never completed their organization, probably because they lacked the popular support of the people.

Plank roads, even though the newspapers of the day thought they would yield great profits, actually did the opposite. They yielded profits only for a few years. After 1855 the railroads cut into their business heavily and the stockholders had a difficult time making ends meet. It was rather dangerous to drive on a plank road because of the soft shoulders. If a teamster allowed his wagon wheel to slip off the edge of the

116-Gazette, Centennial Issue, January 24, 1937
117-Grand Rapids Press, April 9, 1909
119-Gazette, Centennial Issue, January 24, 1937.
plank road there was a good chance of the wagon or stage coach tipping over and injuring someone. Therefore wrecks were common. Mr. Parker of the Kalamazoo Brass Band was an example of this. His team ran away on the old plank road and his injury was such that he was confined in bed all winter.

What are some conclusions as to the plank roads in Kalamazoo County? First the roads were a financial loss for the investors. The contemporary editorials of the day were all of the opinion that profits would be high in this project. Governor Ransom went along with this theory and lost his fortune as noted earlier. The Three Rivers plank road was profitable for a few years but after 1855 both it and the Grand Rapids road were headaches for the stockholders.

The plank road greatly speeded up travel and traffic. The stage coach line between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids was operated by J. K. Ward. Previous to the laying of the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids plank road the trip one way took about two days. On the plank road the trip required only one day. Thus this type of travel as far as time was concerned was cut in half. A farmer who lived near the road and used it had his travel time cut proportionally to the amount of road he used. The road was a fine inducement for manufacturing in Grand Rapids for now that place had an exit to the railroad over a good road.

The real estate along the plank road was of course nearly all taken, and a greater area of land was used as farm land. Thus agriculture was expanded and the farmers were able to produce not only their home crop but a market crop also. The

Land parallel to the road therefore tended to increase in value to its owner.

These roads caused a definite increase in the population of the various counties through which they passed. In appendix D one can see this on a population map. This map shows graphically the population of each area in 1854, 1860, and 1864. If a township was not listed in 1854 it will not be used thereafter on this map. This map also shows the net gains in the population over the various years. The plank roads of Kalamazoo County were completed by 1855. In nearly every township there was a greater gain during the years of 1854-60, than during the years 1860-64. There tended to be a greater increase of population in the area through which the Grand Rapids road passed than the area passed through by the Three Rivers road. The population increases were greater in Kent County than in any other county of this area. This county nearly doubled, from 17,869 to 30,743, in population. This would support the statement that the plank road opened Kent County to immigrants who otherwise may have gone somewhere else.

 Allegan County also grew very greatly in size, adding some 8,227 new people between 1854 and 1860. Kalamazoo, Van Buren, and St. Joseph Counties gained considerably during this period. The average population gain in this area during the years 1854-60 was very much greater than the average gain between 1860-64. Although the Civil War may have held up the natural flow of immigration, the census reports would indicate that the plank roads did bring about substantial and extraordinary increases of population. The plank road did open up the village of Grand Rapids and was a substantial factor in making it an important manufacturing area in Western Michigan.
The plank road in Michigan was an effort by the people to improve transportation from the almost impassable roads that were prominent in this era. They were short lived and expensive and the railroads soon put them out of business. The companies deserted their roads and slowly the planks rotted or were broken and replaced by gravel. They did in their day provide many but uncounted benefits for the people that lived near them. They were an attempt to bring Michigan out of the "dark age of highway building" and into the light of modern day.
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NEWSPAPERS

Grand Rapids Press: April 9, 1909
      May 20, 1926.

The Kalamazoo Gazette: Centennial Issue, January 24, 1937.
Charter to the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company

SECTION-I- Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, That Evert B. Dyekman, Daniel L. Kimberly, D. S. Walbridge, Hiram Arnold and Edward S. Moore, be and they are hereby appointed commissioners, Under the direction of a majority of whom subscriptions may be received to the capital stock of the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company, and the subscribers thereto with such other persons as shall associate with them, for that purpose, their successors and assigns, shall be and they are hereby created a body corporate and politic, by the name and style of the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company, with corporate succession.

SECTION-II- Said Company hereby created shall have the power to lay out, establish, and construct a plank road, and all necessary buildings, from the Village of Kalamazoo, in the County of Kalamazoo, on the most eligible route to the Village of Three Rivers in the County of St. Joseph.

SECTION-III- The capital stock of said Company shall be fifty thousand dollars, in two thousand shares of twenty-five dollars each.

SECTION-IV- This act shall be and remain in force for the term of sixty years from and after its passage, but the legislature may, at any time alter, amend, or repeal this act by a vote of two-thirds of each branch there-of; but such alteration, amendment, or repeal shall not be made within thirty years of the passage of this act, unless it shall be made to appear to the legislature that there has been a violation by the company of any of the provisions of this Act: Provided, that after said thirty years no alteration or reduction of the tolls of said company.

shall be made during its existence, unless the yearly nett profits of said company over and above all expenses shall exceed ten percent on the capital stock invested: Provided, there be no violation of the charter of said company.

SECTION-V- The provisions of an "Act Entitled an Act Relative to Plank Roads", approved March 13, 1848, shall be deemed a part of the Act.

SECTION-VI- This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Approved March 17, 1848
An Act to Amend an Act Entitled "An Act to Incorporate the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company and for Other Purposes," 1

SECTION-I- Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, That Section One of an act entitled, "An Act to Incorporate the Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company," approved March Seventeenth, Eighteen Hundred and Forty-Eight, be and the same is hereby amended by striking out in said section the names of "Daniel L. Kimberly, D. S. Walbridge, and Hiram Arnold," and inserting in the place thereof the names of "William R. Watson, David B. Webster, and Israel Kellogg."

SECTION-II- Within twelve months after the passage of this act the commissioners last named aforesaid with Evert B. Dyckman and Edward S. Moore, named in the act to which this act is amendatory, or a majority of them, shall proceed to estimate the length of the proposed road, and cause books to be opened for the subscription of stock in such company, according to the provisions of an act entitled "An Act Relative to Plank Roads," approved March Thirteenth, Eighteen Hundred and Forty-Eight, and the proceedings shall be as valid as if had within the six months contemplated by the provisions of the act last aforesaid.

SECTION-III- All acts and parts of acts contravening the provisions of this act, are hereby repealed.

Approved March 16, 1849

APPENDIX B

Charter to the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company

SECTION-I- Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, That F. I. Tanner, Theodore P. Sheldon, George W. Barnes, Isaac Moffatt, J. P. Woodbury, George Kendall, Charles H. Taylor, and A. J. Deiderick, be and they are hereby appointed commissioners, Under the direction of a majority of whom subscriptions may be received to the capital stock of Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company: And the subscribers there-to, with such other persons as they shall associate with them for that purpose, their successors and assigns, shall be and they are hereby created a body politic and corporate, by the name and style of the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company, with corporate succession.

SECTION-II- Said Company hereby created shall have the power to lay out, establish, and construct a plank road, and all necessary buildings and appurtenances, from the Village of Kalamazoo in the county of Kalamazoo, to the Village of Grand Rapids in the county of Kent, with the right of uniting said Road at any other point with the Plank Road of any other Company.

SECTION-III- The capital stock of said Company shall be seventy thousand dollars, to be divided into two thousand eight hundred shares of twenty-five dollars each; and said Company shall be subject to all general laws of this State now in force relative to plank roads, and the same are hereby made a part of this act.

SECTION-IV- This act shall be and remain in force for the term

of sixty years from and after its passage; but the legislature may at any time alter, amend, or repeal this Act by a vote of two-thirds of each branch thereof; but such alteration, amendment or repeal shall not be made within thirty years from the passage of this Act, unless it shall be made to appear to the legislature that there has been a violation by the company of some of the provisions of law to which it is subject; PROVIDED, That after said thirty years, no alternation or reduction of the tolls of said company shall be made during its existence, unless the yearly nett profits of said company, over and above all expenses, shall exceed ten per cent on the capital stock invested; PROVIDED, There be no violation of the charter of said company.

SECTION-V- This Act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Approved March 25, 1850
### Specific taxes paid to the state by the plank road companies of Michigan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Taxes Paid</th>
<th>Kalamazoo County Roads Listed</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$12.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>499.20</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>1,239.85</td>
<td>Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>1,239.85</td>
<td>Galesburg and Grand Rapids Plank Road Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>1,467.24</td>
<td>No Kalamazoo County Roads ever listed again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>828.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1,462.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1,795.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>750.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>145.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>45.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>00.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the intention of this chart to give the reader some conception of the profits realized by the state from this type of company. The chart also supports the statement that the plank roads of Kalamazoo County were not profitable roads. The Kalamazoo and Three Rivers Plank Road Company was the only of this county to ever pay a state tax. The Grand Rapids company never paid their tax. The Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road Company never were even listed. Notice also the extremely rapid slackening off of collections by the state after 1857. This would support the statement that the railroads cut into the business of the plank roads heavily after 1857.

1-This chart compiled from the Auditor-Generals Reports to the Legislature of Michigan, 1850-61, Lansing.
APPENDIX D

-NOTICE-

Notice that books of subscription to Capital Stock of this Centreville and Kalamazoo Plank Road would be opened at the house of S. Hawkins in the Village of Brady on 25, February, 1851, also in Kalamazoo House in Kalamazoo the 26, February, 1851, and also at the Exchange in the Village of Centreville in St. Joseph on the 27, February, 1851, at ten o'clock in the forenoon of each day.

Nathan Osborn
Mark H. Wakeman
Albert E. Massey Commissioners
Hugh Finley
Bradley S. Williams

1-Kalamazoo Gazette, January 24, 1851.
**APPENDIX E**

**POPULATION CHART BY COUNTIES**

1854-1860-1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>1854</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>NET GAIN</th>
<th>1864</th>
<th>NET GAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLEGAN</td>
<td>7,804</td>
<td>16,091</td>
<td>8,227</td>
<td>18,847</td>
<td>2,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KALAMAZOO</td>
<td>16,893</td>
<td>24,663</td>
<td>7,770</td>
<td>25,842</td>
<td>1,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENT</td>
<td>17,869</td>
<td>30,743</td>
<td>12,874</td>
<td>33,458</td>
<td>2,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST. JOSEPH</td>
<td>15,087</td>
<td>21,111</td>
<td>6,024</td>
<td>21,796</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN BUREN</td>
<td>7,780</td>
<td>15,230</td>
<td>7,450</td>
<td>17,820</td>
<td>1,590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-This information compiled from the Census and Statistics of the State of Michigan, 1854, 1860, and 1864, Lansing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alamo</th>
<th>Cooper</th>
<th>Richland</th>
<th>Ross</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oshtemo</strong></td>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
<td>Comstock</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texas</strong></td>
<td>Portage</td>
<td>Pawilion</td>
<td>Climax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prairie</strong></td>
<td>Ronde</td>
<td>Schoolcraft</td>
<td>Brady</td>
<td>Wakeshna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fabius**
- Flowerfield: 619, 1,097 + 479 = 1,576, 925 - 172
- Park: 1,060, 1,121 + 61 = 1,282, 1,255 + 72 = 1,327 + 72
- Mendon: 572, 1,560 + 72 = 1,632 + 72
- Leonidas: 992, 1,250 + 267 = 1,517 + 267
- Colon: 931, 1,209 + 285 = 1,494 + 285
- St. Joseph County

**Constantine**
- Florence: 938, 958 + 88 = 1,046 + 88 = 925 - 53
- Sherman: 490, 865 + 575 = 940 + 575
- Burr Oak: 1,150, 1,373 + 673 = 1,546 + 673
- St. Joseph County

**Mottsville**
- White Pigeon: 1,071, 1,659 + 609 = 1,582 + 77
- Sturgis: 445, 570 + 125 = 575 - 25
The red line is the approximate route of the plank roads of this area.

The first number given is the population in 1854--The next number is for 1860--The number to the right is the increase or decrease for the period between 1854 and 1860. The last number is the census of 1864--Again the number to the right is the change in population in the period 1860 to 1864.