

A BIT OF HISTORY

The first settlement in this township was made in 1859 at Monroe Center by William Monroe. This was about 12 or 13 miles south of Traverse City. His brothers soon followed and many of them bought lots in the newly platted cemetery. Some of the early settlers were here before that and are noted in the listing for the 1881 plate map.

Grawn was surrounded by a large farming area comprised of choice farm lands which were sold to the early settlers for approximately 50 cents an acre.

The township of Blair was organized by the board of supervisor's in April, 1867. The first supervisor was Thomas H. Clyde. It included what is now Green Lake Township, which split off in 1883.

Some of the settlements in Blair Township are now only names on the map. Grawn is the largest of the towns. It was platted and recorded by James R. Blackwood and was given the name Blackwood. When the Pere Marquette Railroad came through and built a station they named it Grawn Station. The name was shortened to Grawn when the village was given a post office on Oct. 19, 1890. It was then officially called Grawn. Grawn was the name of the village's most prominent citizen, Professor Charles T. Grawn. Before moving to the Traverse City area, Professor Grawn was superintendent of State Normal School at Mt. Pleasant. He resigned in 1894 to become superintendent of Traverse City Schools, a position he filled for 13 years. He was also the maternal grandfather of Michigan Governor William G. Milliken. The first postmaster was William H. Gibbs. In a description shortly after 1900 it was described as having a population of about 200 and contained a hotel, stores, blacksmith shop, harness and shoe shop. A daily stage ran from the town to Wexford Co. There was a Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1905 Grawn was on its way to becoming a fairly good-sized town. It had two sawmills, shingle mill, barber shop, drugstore, three general stores, a produce company, hardware store, saloon, millinery shop and a big two story hotel. It's population was about 300, and still growing.

Monroe Center had the first post office on Feb. 28, 1866 with Mrs. Pauline Monroe as it's first postmistress. It operated until Aug. 30, 1910. There was a Methodist Episcopal Church. There also was an Odd Fellows Hall and Dining Room which cost \$2500.

Another small town was Slights or Sleights. It was formed around the sawmill of Kelley & Covell. It's station on the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad was first named Sleights. It's post office was called Slights and Charles T. Covell became its first postmaster on Mr. 3, 1893, succeeded by Walter N. Kelley on Apr. 23, 1895 and Frank S. Dean on Apr. 23, 1898. The office was moved to Keystone on Dec. 21, 1898. Keystone was a station on the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad in 1874. The post office was closed again on Apr. 15, 1908.

William Beitner built a lumber mill by the Boardman River in 1878 and it continued in operation until 1904. A station for the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad was built here in 1878 and called Beitner. A post office by that name was opened on Aug. 5, 1880 with Benjamin Hunter as its first postmaster. This office was transferred to Keystone on Oct. 9, 1883. On Feb. 1, 1893 they reopened the Beitner post office with Elsie Beitner as its postmistress. The office closed Mar. 26, 1895.

Reference: Grand Traverse Area Genealogical Society 1987