

Jacob and Asher Aray -- Pioneer Families in Pittsfield Township

Jacob Aray was born in Holland on 24 February 1767. He emigrated to Washtenaw county with his parents, in 1774. He died in Pittsfield Township on 19 July 1839.

Asher Aray was a resident of New Jersey. He moved to Romulus, Seneca Co., N.Y., and in 1827 came to Washtenaw county, where he died on 26 June 1871.

Asher Aray was an efficient "employee" of the Underground Railroad, and always kept a wagon in his stable for the express purpose of conveying fugitive slaves to the borders of Canada.



Source: This brief entry was prepared by the Historical Committee of Pittsfield Township, which helped compile information for The History of Washtenaw County Michigan (Chas Chapman & Co., 1881). Members of the Historical Committee were Horace Carpenter, David Dupue and Randall Boss.

The Aray Property on Michigan Avenue

The Asher Aray property on Michigan Avenue holds considerable local historic interest because the property owners were "virtual" African-American Patentees (see note below) and the property was the site of documented Underground Railroad activity. Asher is described as a very active conductor on that railroad, always keeping a wagon and horses ready to take freedom seekers on to Detroit and Canada.

The subject property is located in Section 23 of Pittsfield Township. Starting at US-23, the property extends one-quarter mile west to the "north-south half-section line". Michigan Avenue splits the property into two equal-size portions. On the south, the property abuts Textile Road. To the north it abuts the "east-west half-section line" of Section 23. The buildings used by Asher Aray were on the south side of Michigan Avenue.

The following summary of early ownership changes is based on property abstracts.

A more-contemporary account, from 1922 to the 1960s, is provided by Emily Salvette, whose family owned the property during this time period. Her account is based on oral history interviews with her mother, and her own knowledge of the property. Emily provided the abstract, which is summarized here.

Early Ownership History based on Property Abstracts,

Summarized by Marcia Ticknor

Initial property description: East Half of the Southeast Quarter of section twenty three in township three south of range six east, containing eighty acres. Also the west half of the southeast quarter of section twenty three, town three south, range six east, containing eighty acres.

160 A.	Wm. Taylor 80 A.	Dani. Hicks 80 A.	Sam. Beck 80 A.	Horv. Carp 80 A.	Chas. Koyman 80 A.	Geo. J. Jerning 80 A.	720 A.
Elihu Drury 160 A.	Wm. Geddes 240 A.		Jared Smith 80 A.	James Koyman 80 A.	John Jerning 80 A.	John H. Avery 240 A.	Wm. Stevens 160 A.
Benj. Earl 40 A.	Levi Brink 40 A.	Alber. Seavey 40 A.	James Aray 80 A.	John H. Avery 160 A.		Clemm Depue 160 A.	Euntes H. Hastings 80 A.
Elihu Drury 40 A.	Chap. Woodard 40 A.	Alber. Seavey 40 A.	James Aray 80 A.	James Smith 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	James Smith 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	Mathew McCallough 160 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	Fanny Nicholas 160 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	Fanny Nicholas 160 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.

United States to Clemm Depue patent dated August 1, 1827, recorded February 27, 1918. See map above.

Clemm Depue to Jacob Aray -- Warranty deed dated August 13, 1827, recorded December 15, 1830. Conveys southeast quarter of section twenty three, township no. three south of range no. six east, containing one hundred and sixty acres land. Note: Jacob Aray is a "virtual patentee" because he technically did not receive the patent directly from the United States government, but ownership was held less than two weeks by the original patentee before it was transferred to Aray. See map at right.

160 A.	Wm. Taylor 80 A.	Dani. Hicks 80 A.	Sam. Beck 80 A.	Horv. Carp 80 A.	Chas. Koyman 80 A.	Geo. J. Jerning 80 A.	720 A.
John Aray 160 A.	Jacob Aray 240 A.		Jared Smith 80 A.	James Koyman 80 A.	John Jerning 80 A.	John H. Avery 240 A.	Wm. Stevens 160 A.
Benj. Earl 40 A.	Levi Brink 40 A.	Alber. Seavey 40 A.	James Aray 80 A.	John H. Avery 160 A.		Clemm Depue 160 A.	Euntes H. Hastings 80 A.
Elihu Drury 40 A.	Chap. Woodard 40 A.	Alber. Seavey 40 A.	James Aray 80 A.	James Smith 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	James Smith 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	Mathew McCallough 160 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	Fanny Nicholas 160 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.
Chickasaw Land 27			John Gilbert 800 A.	Fanny Nicholas 160 A.	John H. Avery 80 A.	James H. Smith 80 A.	Wm. Dix 80 A.

Note: The east half of this property must have been sold by Aray, and is the topic of the abstract that traces that portion of land. No further details on the eastern half is included in this summation. This summation hereafter traces the history of the west half of the southeast quarter of section twenty three. This property would remain in the Aray family for almost 100 years.

Jacob Aray & Bethany his wife to Asher Aray -- Warranty deed dated September 3, 1829, recorded December 15, 1830. Conveys the west half of the southeast quarter of section number twenty three in township three south of range six east containing eighty acres. Note: These are the eighty acres that relate directly to Asher Aray's Underground Railroad activity.

Asher Aray & Catherine his wife to Jared Willson -- Mortgage dated May 17, 1843, recorded May 18, 1843. Mortgages the west half of the southeast quarter of section number twenty three in township three south of range six containing eighty acres, being the farm which the said first party now resides upon.

Jared Wilson to Asher Aray & Catherine his wife -- Discharge of Mortgage dated November 9, 1846, recorded December 2, 1846.

James W. Aray & wife, Eglan Aray & wife, Horace Aray, heirs of Ashier Aray, deceased to Jacob Aray & Martha Day -- Quit claim deed dated January 9, 1872, recorded March 12, 1872. Conveys the west half of the southeast quarter of section number twenty three in township three south of range six east containing eighty acres signed by James W. Aray, Horace Aray, Eliza Aray, Eglon Aray, Allie E. Aray & acknowledged by Eglon Aray & Alice Aray his wife, James W. Aray & Horace Aray.

Jacob Aray & Wife, Martha Day, heirs of Asher Aray to James W. Aray -- Mortgage dated January 9, 1872, recorded March 12, 1872. The west half of the southeast quarter of section number twenty three in town three south of range six east containing 80 acres. Signed by Jacob Aray, Mary E. Aray, Martha A. Day, Acknowledged by Jacob Aray & Mary E. Aray, wife of Jacob Aray, Martha Day.

James W. Aray to Sherman Hinckley -- Assignment of Mortgage dated May 25, 1872, recorded April 11, 1885.

Eglon Aray to Sherman Hinckley -- Assignment of Mortgage dated September 3, 1872 recorded April 11, 1885.

Sherman Hinckley to Jacob Aray & Mary E. His wife, Martha Day -- Discharge of Mortgage dated April 28, 1885, recorded April 10, 1886.

Jacob Aray and wife, Martha Day, heirs of Ashier Aray to Horace Aray -- Mortgage dated January 9, 1872 recorded March 12, 1872. The undivided one-fifth part of the west half of the southeast quarter of section number twenty three in town three south, range six east, containing 80 acres.

Horace Aray to Benjamin Day -- Assignment of Mortgage dated March 17, 1877 recorded May 22, 1885.
Mortgage paid in full dated May 22, 1885 -- signed B. Day.

Jacob Aray & Mary E. his wife, Martha Day to Horace Aray -- Mortgage dated April 10, 1885, recorded April 11, 1885. Mortgage the west half of the southeast quarter of section twenty three in town three south, range six east, containing 80 acres.

Mortgage paid in full dated November 14, 1905 -- signed Horace Aray.

Horace Aray, Complainant vs Jacob Aray Herbert T. Day, Defendants dated April 5, 1905 recorded May 9, 1905. Suit pending in Circuit Court of the County of Washtenaw for the foreclosure of a mortgage bearing date April 10, 1885 executed by Jacob Aray and Mary E. Aray his wife and Martha Day, since deceased, to the said complainant, Horace Aray.

Jacob Aray Mary E. his wife to Horace Aray -- Mortgage dated April 10, 1885 recorded April 11, 1885. Mortgages the west half of the southeast quarter of section twenty three, containing 80 acres.

Entry on the margin: I acknowledge payment in full satisfaction on this mortgage and discharge the same from record. Dated November 17, 1905. signed Horace Aray.

Horace Aray Complainant vs Jacob Aray, et al Defendants dated April 5, 1905 recorded May 9, 1905.

Suit filed for the foreclosure of a mortgage bearing date April 10, 1885 executed by Jacob Aray and Mary E. Aray, his wife to the said complainant Horace Aray 80 acres.

Jacob Aray & Mary E. his wife to Lottie J. Kitchen -- Mortgage³ dated May 11, 1887, Acknowledged May 11, 1887, Recorded May 12, 1887.

Lottie J. Kitchen to Jacob Aray Mary E. Aray -- Discharge of Mortgage dated March 30, 1905. Acknowledged March 30, 1905, Recorded April 6, 1905 undivided one-half of the west half of the southeast quarter of section 23.


Jacob Aray to Charles E. King -- Mortgage Dated January 20, 1887. Acknowledged April 13, 1887, Recorded May 12, 1887.

Charles E. King to Jacob Aray -- Discharge of Mortgage dated October 11, 1905. Acknowledged October 11, 1905, Recorded November 14, 1905.

Herbert T. Day & Ida A. Day his wife, being the sole heir at law of Martha Day to Jacob Aray -- Quit claim deed dated November 14, 1905, Acknowledged November 14, 1905, Recorded November 14, 1905.

Affidavit of Herbert T. Day -- Affidavit dated March 5, 1918, Recorded March 7, 1918. "I, Herbert T. Day of Ypsilanti, Michigan, being first duly sworn, doth depose and says that I am fifty six years of age, that I knew Asher Aray in his lifetime, he being my grandfather, that I was acquainted with and knew all of his children whose names were as follows: James W. Aray, Eglon Aray, Horace Aray, Jacob Aray and Martha Day. Further that one of these children, Martha Day who is now dead, having died before the year 1905 was my mother, that said Martha Day had two children, myself and one sister who died before the year 1905, leaving no issue and further deponent says not." Subscribed and sworn to by Herbert T. Day.

Jacob Aray & Mary E. his wife to Horace Aray -- Quit claim deed, dated November 14, 1905, Acknowledged November 14, 1905, Recorded November 14, 1905.

Horace Aray & Adalaide his wife to William G. Price & Olive I. Price, husband and wife -- Warranty Deed Dated August 22, 1907, Acknowledged August 23, 1907, Recorded August 23, 1907, Consideration \$4500.00. Conveys: The west half of the southeast quarter of section twenty three (and other lands) in the township of Pittsfield, Washtenaw County, Michigan. Free from all encumbrances whatever except a life lease held on a part of said premises, about forty acres, held by Jacob Aray. The life lease above mentioned does not describe the land being abstracted. Note attached at this point: Jacob Aray deceased Pittsfield Twp. 4/26/1912. Vol. 4 Page 3 Washtenaw Co. records. Horace Aray  brother of Jacob. 9/25/1926.

William G. Price & Olive I. Price to Horace Aray -- Mortgage dated August 22, 1907. Acknowledged August 22, 1907, recorded August 29, 1907.

Horace Aray to William G. Price & Olive I. Price, his wife -- Discharge of Mortgage dated January 22, 1916, Acknowledged January 22, 1916 Recorded January 25, 1916.

The former Aray property 1922-1960s, by Emily Hopp Salvette

The farm was bought for Otto and Emma (Morrell) Hopp in 1922 by Emma's father, Joseph Morrell. He turned the deed over to them in 1933. They had 7 children. Before 1923, they lived in Jackson. Otto was interned at Fort Custer in Battle Creek during World War I. He was first generation German, spoke German, and was all for the Kaiser. (Apparently, he spouted off one too many times, which was why he

was interned.) Emma Morrell was second generation French. They used to yell at each other in German & French -- an interesting marriage during those times....

My grandmother, Ruth McAllister, taught at Roberts School, which was southwest of the Michigan Ave.-Carpenter Road intersection. It was there that she met my grandfather -- Clayton Hopp, Sr. -- who used to bring his younger brothers down to school.

Buildings near Michigan Ave.

According to my mother -- Monica Williams Hopp, in the early years there was a farmhouse, a big barn, equipment shed, smoke house, chicken coop, well & privy on the property. The house is still on the property (it's the big white house by the road). Before he died, my father told me he thought it was built in the late 1800s or early 1900s, but he didn't know for sure.

Early on, Emma Morrell Hopp burned down the smoke house one day while trying to smoke hams with her daughter Goldie.

After World War II was over and everybody was home in 1946, my parents -- Clayton Hopp, Jr. & Monica Williams Hopp -- built a small house on the property near the farmhouse. (Subsequently, that little house was moved back by where the equipment shed used to be.) Otto & Emma's son Russell Hopp (Marie) also built a house that year. (It has burned down.) Clayton's sister Lois and her husband, Roger Katon, built a house on the property a year or so later, which still stands in its original location. In 1946 two of Emma's sons, Lyle and Charles Hopp, created 3 apartments in the farmhouse. Emma lived in one of the apartments for most of the rest of her life.

The big barn burned about 1952.

Homes on Textile Road

In the 1950s, four family members built houses on Textile Rd in what used to be the farm's orchard. Lots were sold, so a neighborhood developed in the 50s & 60s. There were 11 houses on the street, which was turned into a dead end by the construction of US-23. Lyle Hopp and his wife Helen built 2 houses, selling one to Robert & June Reid. Then Clayton, Jr. and Monica Hopp built a house there (3676 Textile), which was finished in 1956. Clayton's brother William Hopp built a house across the street, and down the street one of Clayton's cousins, Karen Hopp Ellison and her husband William built in the early 60s. All these homes are still there, but not owned by family members.