

FERNDALE

Ferndale began around the fall of 1923. They dedicated a building on Paxton and Academy in 1925. It was a wooden building in Ferndale built by Vernon Fry of Hamilton out of reclaimed lumber (chuckle). He had all this stuff torn down and had it laying around so built a church building. He was a builder and real estate man. At one time he owned practically the entire area around Livernois and Six Mile - where the Kroger and Kresge stores were and they were on 99-year leases where he got an annual income from them. He was a Ford Motor stockholder in the beginning which we talked about. He was from the Niagra penninsula around Hamilton in Canada.

Fry at Hamilton

Ferndale eventually purchased the land at Hilton Road at Eight Mile and built a basement building. Then they got T. C. Wilcox. They built the upstairs. I don't remember whether it was before or after that part of the building program that trouble began. He had trouble with the eldership. He changed the locks on the doors and wouldn't let the elders in. It finally ended up in court and the judge said they would decide the matter by popular vote. He appointed a moderator to conduct an election. The elders didn't want any part of that so they went out and started the Hazel Park work. Three elders went out there. Wilcox went on, became the master of all he surveyed, carried on a running feud with every other preacher in the Detroit area. It was one of the biggest problems that Detroit has faced in the last couple of generations, church-wise.

Interview by Harmon Black 14 Nov 1980

Hazel Park

Boyd: Why?

Black: Because of