

“Uncle Louis Campau, as he was usually called, was the next trader on the river, unless Mr. Generaux, at the Maple, was before him. Campau sat down at Grand Rapids, and built his log dwelling and warehouse about half way between Pearl and Bridge streets, on the bank of the river, the trail to which was where now is Monroe street.

“In the year 1837, the Grand River settlements were far detached from the rest of the world. The approach from any direction required much time, and was attended with some difficulty. If by what was called the northern route, through Shiawassee and Clinton counties, there was but one stopping place in each—Lang’s and Scott’s. Then there were some twenty-five miles of dense woods to reach Lyons, and about the same to Portland. These were the usual routes in, for the Ionia people.

“For Kent county and the region below, the approach was made usually by the so-called Thornapple road. This came from Battle Creek to Yankee Springs, in Barry county; then east of the Thornapple River, through the openings to Ada, where it joined the road from Ionia to Grand Rapids and Grandville. The travel below Grand Rapids was, in summer, by keel-boats or canoes, and in winter, on the ice. There was a trail, or bridle-path, to Grand Haven, and down the lake beach to Muskegon, and also to Allegan. Sometimes there was a winter road more direct, out, going through the heavy timbered land in Gaines to Green Lake, Middleville and Yankee Springs. There were other Indian trails in many directions.

“Most traveling was on horseback, requiring five days from Detroit to reach Grand Rapids. From Ionia, the traveler crossed the Grand River at Ada in a canoe, into which he put his saddle, towing his horse behind the boat. Coming from the south, when the water was high, the crossing of the Thornapple was in the same fashion. Soon scows were put on the river, on which teams and loads could cross.

“No roads as yet were made, nor bridges built, so the traveling by wagon was rough and slow.

“As to settlement, beginning at Portland, there were Mr. Moore, Mr. Boyer, and some half dozen other families. At Lyons, ten miles down the river, a few more than at Portland. At Ionia, the village was small, but there were quite a number