

# The Founders



***This cabin is similar to the one Johnson built***

Settlement of what would become Wayne began in the spring of 1824, when George Johnson bought 80 acres of land and built a two room log cabin for his family. This was the only house between Dearborn and Ypsilanti, and so it became a stopping point for travelers on the Chicago road. The first time this settlement was marked on maps in the 1820's it was simply called "Johnsons Tavern".



***Simmons hanging in Detroit, 1830***

In late 1825 Johnson sold the land and tavern to Stephen Simmons, who brought his wife and 5 children. Simmons ran the tavern until 1829 when, in a drunk and abusive state, he killed his wife. The tavern keeper was hauled off to Detroit and convicted of murder. He was hanged in Detroit in 1830, the spectacle of which inspired the banning of the death penalty in Michigan.



***Ezra Derby***

In 1832 Ezra Derby bought the land and tavern from the Simmons heirs and immediately began improving it. Derby built a sawmill, blacksmith shop, store and the first frame house in the area. In 1834 he subdivided the land and recorded a plat in Detroit called "Derbys Corners". This was the first attempt at establishing a town and subdividing land, so he is credited as the founder of what would become Wayne.



***General Anthony Wayne***

In 1836 Derbys Corners had about 10 families and three streets. When more land was subdivided that year, it was platted under the name "Wayne", named for the famous Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne. The name stuck, and that's how Wayne got its name.