

Lake Somerset Railroad

Recently, I located two aerial pictures of the area before and after the construction of our lake community. These pictures are hanging in the Four Corners Coffee Shop. Here is a picture of the establishment when it was a general store in the 1800's.



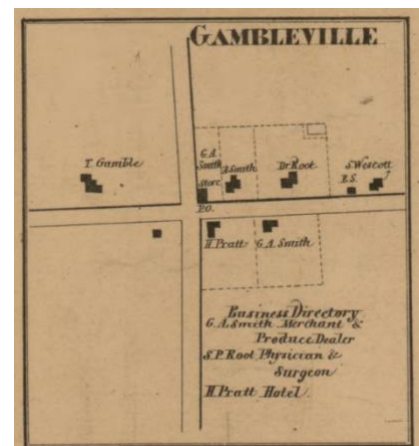
One of the aerials were taken in the early 1960's and later 1970's. The 1960 county aerial provides a historical view of the rail stop which was located in what is now our lakebed. The picture shows the farmland with Goose Creek meandering through the farmland. In addition, the swampy area and roadways in the area provide a viewer with a perspective of the terrain between US-12 and Harper Road during those years.

The 1857 plate map (left) hangs in the Hillsdale County Courthouse and shows Somerset Road running north from Somerset Center crossing Goose Creek. In this plate map, the railroad had not been built yet. After the railroad was built in the mid-1860's the Somerset Station was located just north of the creek on Somerset Road.

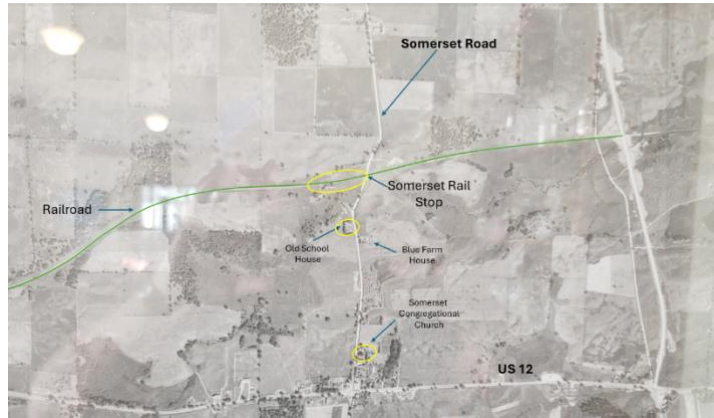


Somerset Centre was established as Gambleville named for an original settler, Mr. Gamble. Mr. Gamble eventually moved away, and the corner area was renamed. There were several businesses and homes along US-12. To the east of the intersection of US-12 and Somerset Road was A. Smith's and Dr Root's home. The Pratt Hotel was a stagecoach stop in the 1800's. It burnt down many years ago. It was located where Freddie Freezes' parking lot is now.

Mr. Azariel Smith is an original pioneer in this area. He had purchased 900 acres of land when he arrived in this area from Pennsylvania. He was the president of the Milling Company in Addison. He is buried in the Somerset Congregational Church commentary.



Somerset Road ran through our lake. Remnants of that road entry are visible today on the north side of the lake just to the south of the Northmoor Road intersection. The rail stop was on our lakebed. Further to the south up on a bluff is where the one room schoolhouse is located. Across the street is a blue farmhouse, both of which are still present today.



The video clip illustrates the location of the rail and roadways in the Lake Somerset overall footprint as the water filled the basin. It is not perfect, but it does give the viewer a perspective of the physical location of the rail, the rail stop location and the road which is now hidden from our view. I have yet to locate a picture of the rail stop, but the crossing lights are located north of the lake on Lake Somerset Road at a pole barn less than a mile away.