

Indian Trails Near Nankin Mills



The map shown above is from the *Archeological Atlas of Michigan* by Wilbert Hinsdale, printed in 1931 and part of The University of Michigan's Michigan Handbook Series (#4). The Indian trails are shown in red. Many of the trails began because they followed waterways, such as the Rouge River.

Legend has it that the tribes of the Three Fires (Ottawa, Pottawattamie, Ojibwa) met near Nankin Mills. The convergence of the waterways and the Indian trails near the mill may add credence to that legends, since Indians could travel by boat or on foot to this spot.

It is quite possible that some of the same paths used by the Indians were also used by escaped slaves traveling along the Underground Railroad to freedom. If that was the case, Nankin Mills might have been used to mark their location. Was the Mill more than that? Was it also a way station? We will probably never know.

(The Elm noted on the map (just northeast of the Mill) was a post office that was operated out of a Detroit, Lansing & Northern Railroad depot. The post office existed from 1858 to 1906, according to the book, Michigan Place Names.)