

*Part III - Partial Book Extract*

# MEMORIALS

OF THE

# GRAND RIVER VALLEY,

BY

FRANKLIN EVERETT, A. M.

---

*Has Oblivion a right to the Past?*

---

CHICAGO:  
THE CHICAGO LEGAL NEWS COMPANY.

---

1878.

The Congregational Church was organized by the Rev. L. M. S. Smith, in 1842. In 1853, they built their church edifice.

The Presbyterian Church dates from 1867. The Rev. Augustus Marsh has been pastor since its organization.

The Baptist Church was organized in 1840, with eleven members. The Rev. Moses Clark was the first pastor. The membership has increased to 140. The Rev. A. Cornell is in charge of it.

The Universalist Church was started in 1852, with ten members, under the pastoral care of Rev. C. W. Knickerbocker. The church was dedicated in 1855.

October 24th, 1867, J. H. Wickwire started the *Portland Advertiser*, which in 1870, was enlarged under the name of *Portland Observer*, Joseph Bailey, editor.

The village of Portland has made a fair beginning. It has already partially developed its fine water-power, and employed it in manufactures. Besides its saw and grist mills, it has a woolen factory, iron works, sash and blind factory, school furniture factory, stone works, etc. It is something of a trading center. Several lawyers there attend to people's social ailments, and several physicians to those of their physical frames. They cherish their graded school; and they, respecting their present condition, have faith in their future. And the meek historian must say, "So have I."

#### BERLIN.

Berlin was first organized as Cass, in 1838—a temporary arrangement. For a particular statement of its limits, see "Legislative History of the County."

The first meeting for the organization of Cass was held at the house of Wm. Babcock, April 2d, 1838.

Officers elected: Alonzo Sessions, Supervisor; John E. Morrison, Clerk; Philo Bates, John E. Morrison, Wm. B. Lincoln, Alonzo Sessions, Justices.

The number of votes was 33.

The town of Cass existed four years, when, reduced to its present dimensions, the name was changed to Berlin; and the

first election under the new arrangement was held at the house of Wm. Eddy, April 4th, 1842. The whole number of votes was 53.

John E. Morrison, Supervisor; Geo. C. Overheiser, Clerk; Geo. Townsend, Herman Babcock, Justices.

In what follows we are mainly indebted to the Hon. Alonzo Sessions, both for material and language. He furnished copious notes on the town, kindly giving the privilege of making such use of them as we chose. In general, his language is adopted.

In October, 1833, Alonzo Sessions spent several days within the present limits of Berlin. Then the marks of the surveyor were the only indication it had ever been seen by civilized man.

In November of that year, John E. Morrison came from Oakland county, and erected his log cabin in the northeast corner of the town, opposite to, and within half a mile of the present limits of Ionia City. In his cabin he put his wife and child, and with his axe he went to work, and made himself a good home.

After the county was organized, he was the first county treasurer. He was a practical surveyor; was the first clerk of Cass; was several times supervisor, clerk, justice of the peace, etc. Mr. M. is still living just across the line in Ionia. He has seen something of the world besides, having spent one winter in Texas, a year or more in California, taking the hazards of the overland route. Two years or more with his family in Tennessee, after the war was over, convinced him there is no place like home; and he returned to live and die near where his friends are, and where his valuable life-work has been done.

In October, 1833, Alonzo and Job S. Sessions came from New York to Detroit, then by way of Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Shiawassee and Clinton, on foot to Ionia. West of the Huron River the country was an unbroken wilderness—the only road an Indian trail. Before leaving the border settlements, they procured a supply of raw pork and bread, upon which they subsisted, while they lodged upon the ground, with no shelter but the trees.

At that time there were three log cabins in Ionia partially completed and inhabited. That farthest west was occupied by Judge Yeomans, with whom they got lodgings while prospecting for land. After deciding to locate in Berlin, they floated down Grand River in a batteau (which the judge had laboriously managed to get as far up as Ionia, loaded with provisions for the new settlers, and desired to have delivered to the owner at Grand Rapids), stopping over night with Rix Robinson, at the trading post below the Thornapple, and reaching the Rapids in season for dinner the next day. The remainder of the distance to the Land Office at White Pigeon was made on foot. The camp the first night was at Ball's Prairie, in Barry county.

As without tools, teams, seed and provisions, they could do nothing towards developing the land they had secured, and as their money was gone for land and in expenses, they went to work to earn money with which to make a beginning. Alonzo went to Ohio and taught school, while Job remained in Michigan, working on a farm. As wages were low, nearly two years passed by before they were in condition to return. It was in June, 1835, that they commenced to make for themselves homes in Berlin.

Alonzo Sessions left Dayton, Ohio, on the 25th of May. There are some incidents connected with the journey, that may interest those only used to modern facilities for travel. He purchased two horses, on one of which he packed his two trunks; on the other he rode; changing from the one to the other to equalize their labor. Traveling northward, along the Miami river, and frequently fording it, he soon entered a dense and nearly unbroken wilderness, where there was only here and there a settler. In places there were no roads, and scarcely a trail. It was raining daily, and every river, creek and bayou was full and overflowing. Many of the latter were more difficult to cross than the rivers, being more swollen and muddy. In places, canoes were found at the crossings; but more frequently he crossed on the back of one horse while leading the other. In this way he made his way to Defiance, several times swimming the rivers. At Defiance his troubles and dangers

were not ended. The only way to get into Michigan then, was to go down the river from Defiance by way of Perrysburg; and there were swollen creeks, without bridges, in abundance. From Perrysburg he rode to Ypsilanti, where he met his brother, left his trunks, and both started for Berlin on horseback. At Marshall, they turned north, slept at Bellevue; and rode through a dense, unbroken forest, where there was neither road nor trail, yet swamps in abundance. Their weary journey ended by arriving at Ionia on the 11th of June.

They immediately went to work on their land; planted some, hired team and tools, put about ten acres of land in condition, and sowed wheat upon it early in September.

In November, Alonzo Sessions built the second log cabin in Berlin, and in 1837 he built the first frame barn. He has been much in public life, for which, see the article that accompanies his portrait.

Job Sessions came to Berlin with his brother in 1835. He brought no money with him, or other means, but he had industry, strength and courage. He cleared and improved two good farms, and after putting them in good condition to live on, sold out and went to Spring Lake. He was several years treasurer of Berlin. He did his full share in opening and making roads and bridges; and in all the privations, labors, struggles, disappointments and progress of pioneer life manfully performed his part, and bore his full share.

Amasa Sessions came to Berlin in 1836, and made a beginning in the dense forest, on sections 3 and 4, about one mile south of the river. He had very little to begin with, except his hands and a stout heart, a strong will and unyielding purpose. He made one of the best farms in the county; put everything in order, knew how to keep them so, and accumulated money. He was several times supervisor, justice, etc., discharging every duty honestly and faithfully; and has, as he deserves, the respect and confidence of every one that knows him.

William Reed came in about the same time, and built a cabin on section 3. He had a small family, and but little else. He was a man of more than common force and energy. What

he undertook he accomplished. He made two good farms in Berlin, with valuable buildings complete; and was still at work with unabated energy and courage, when he unfortunately met a sudden death by the hand of a temporary tenant on his farm. His oldest son, William, has made a good farm near his father's, and is one of the most valuable, thriving and wide-awake men in town.

William Babcock came to Berlin in 1836, from Ontario county, New York. Being past middle age, he had accumulated property in New York. For particulars of Mr. B., see biographical notice accompanying his portrait. Mrs. Babcock was a model wife and mother, and she had only to live to make all dependent on her prosperous and happy. Too soon she went to her grave, and the Deacon never married again; he soon left his farm, became his own executor, and died in 1871 at Ionia, aged 88. His three youngest sons are still living in Berlin—all men of more than ordinary intelligence, who have earned and secured the respect and confidence of all who know them.

In the spring of 1836, Elisha Doty came to Berlin to live. He built a small frame house—the first in the town. About the same time his three sons—Charles, William and Allen—came in. William is the only one of the four now living.

Eleazur Murray came about the same time, and is still resident in the township. He brought very little with him except a young family, mostly girls. But he had industry, energy and courage. He has made a good home for himself and family, and has been one of the most useful citizens.

George H. Coe came into Berlin in 1839, and built a cabin on Sec. 3, where he still resides. He came poor, but has made a good farm; has children grown up as useful citizens. He has secured for himself the confidence and respect of all who know him, and still has the prospect of many useful years ahead.

David Woodruff came at about the same time, and from the same place, as Mr. Coe. He was absent a few years, as a pioneer in Montcalm county, but returned, and has been one of the most useful and valuable citizens.

A little later came Solomon Tanner, who was a natural pioneer. Born in the woods, he had made his mark in New York and in Eastern Michigan before he came to Berlin. He knew how to use an axe, a handspike, oxen, etc.; and he has left a very plain mark in Berlin. He did too much logging alone; and just when he had got a good farm, good buildings, and everything comfortable around him, he became sick, sent for a doctor, (of what school, Mr. S.?) and had to leave. He was a quiet, peaceable, unassuming, yet energetic, thorough man; attending to his own business faithfully, and performing every duty with fidelity and promptness. He had the confidence of all who knew him.

Nelson Beckwith came in 1837, and settled on the north part of section 7. He was poor, and with his young wife went into his log-cabin before it was completed. He was handy with tools; had more than usual perseverance and industry, and made himself a good, comfortable home. He built a good house, and was in circumstances to enjoy what he had earned; with his children around him, and with good prospects for the future. But in the night, when all were in bed, his house took fire. In his efforts to save his children from the flames, he perished with the child that he gave his life to save. His widow and surviving children are still in Berlin.

Robert F. Hall came about the same time, put up a frame shanty, and made some improvement on section 6. He had no family, but lived alone and made what headway he could, until one fatal day, in an attempt to cross Grand River—it is not known precisely how or when—he was drowned. His body was found some time after, floating in the stream. He was put down deep in the soil, and all his hopes, plans and expectations were buried with him.

Abraham Eddy came in 1837. He was a middle-aged man, poor, with a large family, some of them grown, and none very young. He commenced on 40 acres at the southwest corner of section 2, which he cleared, and to which he added more land, good buildings, and all needed improvements. He made money; settled his children around and near him; lived to see them prosperous, and died quietly, in March, 1875, at the age of 88.

John W. Young settled on section 2 at about the same time; made many improvements, but was compelled by ill-health to give up farming. He now lives in Ionia.

Lyman Simmons, at about the same time, settled on a lot of timbered land on section 11. Very few of our early settlers have had more to contend with, or more to discourage them than Mr. Simmons. But his industry, energy and courage have been equal to every emergency; and very few men in Michigan, or in any other new country, can show better results for the time and labor expended, than he can. His farm, his buildings, his orchards, and finally, everything about him are models of comfort, neatness and thrift.

One of the most enterprising and valuable of the early settlers of Berlin was Dr. William B. Lincoln. He came to Ionia (as noted elsewhere) in 1833; and peddled the first pills that did execution in the county. Not finding enough to do in Ionia, he bought a lot on Sec. 11, in Berlin. The Doctor was industrious, and handy with tools, a true Yankee in energy and thrift; and in the intervals of time, when his professional services were not in demand, made and mended boots and shoes; made doors and sash, or did any useful work that came in his way; among other things, serving the public as Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace. The Doctor got a good farm well under way, when his father came on from Vermont and took his place, he returning to Ionia. He was a good, kind, attentive and humane physician; no obstacle could keep him from his duty to the sick, and hundreds are living to appreciate and testify to his kind care and devotion in their time of sickness and danger.

Some time about 1842, Joshua Clark and his son, Edward O. Clark, came to Berlin and made a home on Sec. 33. They came from New York at a very early day, had previously lived some time in Marshall and Niles. Joshua was well along in years, but was a man of extraordinary industry and energy; had too much ambition for his strength; was a first-rate mechanic, understood his trade, and was too honest to slight his work. Though his constitution was weakened by sickness, and he was seldom well, he accomplished wonders,

and all that he did was done well. After clearing up a farm in Berlin, they went to Orange, made a good farm there, sold out and went to Saranac, where the old man died at the age of 78. Edward O. lived mostly with his father, until his death, and is now in business in Ionia. He married Olivia, daughter of Deacon Babcock. Harriet, the second daughter, married Joseph M. Babcock, in Berlin. Mrs. Clark was a model woman, wife and mother. She died in Ionia in June, 1872, aged 79 years.

I am about to speak of two of the early settlers in Berlin that have displayed extraordinary energy and thrift under circumstances of discouragement. Joseph Howard, a poor Englishman, and much poorer cobbler, came in 1843, put up a poor log shanty on land not his own, by mistake; yet near his cabin he had the misfortune, as was thought, to own the poorest 40 acres in town. He had a wife, and family of small children, and nothing else. But she was a good woman and a help, and they took hold together. The children were made useful, and taught to do what they could. They worked hard, lived cheap, earned and saved until the poor 40 acres was made productive, 65 acres more added, and all brought into good condition; good buildings erected, money saved and loaned on interest. Joseph lost his good wife, retired from business, and his son William reigns in his stead, the worthy son of a worthy sire.

The other was Henry P. Gates, who came from the Hoosier State in 1845, to escape the sickness which he and his family were subject to the whole time they were there. He had a wife and several small children, a pair of scallywag steers, and a miserable old wagon, and that was all. He traded all, except his wife and children, for a fraction of a little over 50 acres on section 5, being part swamp, and the balance side-hill, balancing the account with his note. He had Yankee blood in him, and knew how to work fast and well. He was by nature industrious, faithful and honest; and with health came energy and effort, and finally success. He has purchased 80 acres more land; has made a good farm with good buildings, and is living with his family in comfort and peace; and may long live to enjoy the fruits of an active and useful life.

Thus far we have closely followed Mr. Sessions. With him the work was done *con amore*. The author is feelingly aware that his work would be more valuable if every town had its man, who could so appreciatingly "tell what he knew."

ADDITIONAL.

Among the earliest settlers in the town may be placed, Philo Bates (just over the line, in Ionia), Benjamin D. Brand, Wm. Reed, Nathan and William Pierce (1837), Nelson Beckwith and Wm. Elvert. In the spring of 1838, Reuben W. Stevens and Luke Howard. Mrs. Taylor (over the line, in Ionia) states that they came from Washtenaw county, in the winter of '37-8. They came in the winter because then they could cross the streams on the ice. They brought a family of six children. Their journey lasted six weeks; and they thought they had a good time. Their goods were brought through by ox teams. It took about all they had to get through. They were soon very happy in a log cabin; managed to get *something* to eat. Mr. Taylor died in Feb. 1871, aged 79 years.

Let us listen to the yarn of that son of Erin in South Berlin, whose fine farm and good house show the result of his enterprise; and whose frank cordiality invites confidence and respect—Francis Humphreys.

He came to Berlin from Boston, Mass., in the spring of 1839; having left Ireland fourteen years before. He came to Bellevue; and then the problem was how to get on to Berlin. There was no road or track; the woods were dense, and no one there would attempt the job of forwarding them. But he was encouraged by being told that there was a man several miles north of Vermontville, who might possibly be secured—Mr. Peter Kinny. Humphreys left his wife, and went to seek Kinny. On the way, at night, he was treed by wolves, who tried to get at him. He fired at them with his pistols, and had the satisfaction of hurting some of them. Early in the morning, benumbed with cold, and hungry, he got down from his perch, where he had passed a sleepless night; came on, and found his man. Kinny was in bed, but got up, received him kindly, and seeing that he was famished with cold and hunger, told him to lie down on the bed and get a little sleep if possi-

ble, while he got him some breakfast. An arrangement was made with Kinny, whom he soon took a liking to, to go back to Bellevue, get his family and goods (about 16 cwt.), and go through to Berlin for \$40. Kinny, with two yoke of oxen, went back for the load; and got to Vermontville in five days. Nothing serious occurred so far; but here commenced the tug of war. The hardships of that journey were almost incredible; tugging through swamps, cutting out trees, getting across streams; in some instances being obliged to take the wagon apart, and carry that and the load piece-meal across a swamp, often not making half a mile in a day. Snow fell during the time and the cold sleety storms caused suffering in addition to their exhausting labor. Serenaded at night by wolves, tired, cold and wet, for five weeks they struggled on—and got through. It cost Kinny his life; he was so used up he never recovered. *This is pioneering.*

To further show how people lived and fared, take the case of Zopher Alderman and his family; and it may be observed there is nothing unique in it. There is a sameness in old settlers' stories. What is said of a settler in one town, may be safely predicated as having been the experience of those in others. We have thrown in a characteristic trial or adventure—some here and some there. Combine them, and suppose they all occurred in one town, and the picture would be true—a picture of pioneer life.

But to Mr Alderman. He came with his family from Detroit to Ionia. He was fifty-five years old; had a wife and eight children—from twenty-four years down. He had previously bought eighty acres of land. A yoke of oxen and two cows were about all the property he had. Still vigorous, and able to endure the hardest labor, he and his boys "pitched in;" cut and cleared twelve acres; chopped six more; working for others for something to eat. They soon had food of their own raising; but clothes and a little money for taxes *came hard*, to say the least. A son of Mr. Alderman, now residing in South Berlin, says, that one pair of linen shirts lasted him two years; mended and re-mended by every available kind of cloth, they did service until, patch upon patch, they were

curiosities. *Taxes* were a fright, for they must be *money*. Labor would command food, but not money; and the money must be got, cost what it would. Jobs were let by the towns to make roads across the swamps. The roads were of two kinds, the "rail-road" and the "log-road." The rail-road was made by grubbing out a track, covering it with split rails, and putting on the rails eight inches of dirt; the log-roads, by laying down logs as stringers, and covering the track with logs, putting on the same amount of earth. There would be fierce competition for these jobs, which were *cash*. Mr. A. states that he and others have taken these jobs—rail-road at ten cents, and log-road at twenty-five cents a rod; where, by the hardest labor, working early and late, a man with a yoke of oxen could earn twenty-five cents a day. That seems uphill business, but such things are not the hardest a pioneer has to submit to. Think of a man taking a bag of wheat on his shoulder, and going forty miles to mill; returning, wading in the snow—a four days' trip—which was done in Ionia county. *That* "your humble speaker" would not have done. He would have done as Mr. Alderman did—make a big mortar, and bruise the grain, content to eat for life; and not be so particular to have flour biscuit, purchased at so dear a rate.

William Babcock, when he came on, was 62 years old. He brought his wife and eight children, and took up "land enough to give each of them a farm." His five boys and three girls were, Julius, Hiram, Joseph, Henry, Marcus, Dolly, Lucy and Elizabeth. There was another son, but he never lived much in Ionia county, so he is not counted. He would, if counted, make nine. Julius died at Lowell, a farmer, in 1858. Hiram, Joseph and Marcus are in Berlin, and Henry in Ionia. They are all too young to have half done their life-work. Dolly, when she came on, was the third wife of Philo Bates. She is now the wife of the Rev. George C. Overheiser, of Ionia. Lucy now lives, the wife of Ed. O. Clark, of Ionia. Elizabeth is also in Ionia, the wife of Harvey Harter; all still living, after forty years, and all in one vicinity. Had they been Yankees, one would have been in Texas, another in Oregon, a third in Kansas; but here they all keep together, and it is to be hoped that they do it from "natural affinity."

Philo Bates (over the line, in Ionia), having been much married, brought on considerable of a family. His daughter Harriet married Dr. Gorham and H. H. Smith (not both at once), and resides in Jackson.

Orpha died in Jackson, the wife of H. Lathrop. Susan is in Jackson, the wife of C. Knickerbocker. William P. and Philo live in Ionia.

Philo Bates, Sr., died in 1838.

Benjamin Brand, who is mentioned as a pioneer, soon removed to Orange, where he lived a substantial farmer. He died in 1871.

William Elvert is still resident in Berlin.

Edward Butler was killed by a fall from a wagon in 1873. He was an early settler—a very worthy man.

On the farm of Alonzo Sessions is a “congeries” of mineral springs, one of them chalybeate, and another “white sulphur.” If the “mineral spring” business had not been so fully played, there are no places better fitted to start the excitement than Danby and Berlin. Danby with her chalybeate, and Berlin with her “white sulphur” waters. The spring on Mr. Sessions’ land may be taken as the sure indication that *gypsum* underlies that region; whether available or not, only exploration can tell.

#### BOSTON.

The settlement of Boston dates from 1837, when Worcester English, Timothy White, Jesse Williams, Cyprian S. Hooker, James Hoag, Moses M. Gould, Jeremiah Stannard, Orman Hunt, David Whitney, Becket Chapman, James M. Talent, and Albert Clement, located themselves in the part of the town of Cass which is now Boston.

They were followed, in 1838, by Riley and Diocletian Hess, and Jared Stocking.

In 1839 was added, as far as can be ascertained, Marvil Church.

1840 brought in Richard Vosper, Edson English, Sylvester Train, Stephen Nute and Edward Carveth.

For some years but few settlers came in. About 1846, the

They now worship in the third church edifice. The first was the small chapel above spoken of. The second was a fine wooden structure, built under the management of Father Rievers, at an expense of \$8,000, and which was burned in 1869. Not discouraged, they built again, and dedicated, in 1871, the noble structure that now stands. Its cost was \$12,000.

Since writing the above, that noble structure has been burned.

#### LOWELL.

The early history of Lowell is the history of Vergennes. The two townships were together organized as Vergennes, and continued in that relation until 1848.

The mouth of the Flat River was one of the points of earliest occupation; and was one of the centers from which settlement radiated. The several centers were Grand Haven, Grandville, Grand Rapids, Flat River, Ionia, Lyons and Portland. All of these points were occupied in 1836, or before.

In this article the *Flat River* settlement will be considered. In the ultimate arrangement, a part of it constituted the town and village of Lowell, and a part remained Vergennes.

The first white resident near the mouth of the Flat River, was Daniel Marsac, who came from Detroit for the purpose of trading among the Indians. He did not, until 1831, establish a regular trading station. Then he erected a log house on the left bank of the Grand River, opposite the mouth of Flat River. Marsac remained an Indian Trader, with no rights but Indian sufferance until the region was open to settlement. He then became a settler.

The real settlement at Flat River, dates from October 13th, 1836; when Lewis Robinson, Philander Tracy, Sylvester Hodges, Alva Jones, all from Scipio, New York; came up the river and located on the town line, two miles northwest of the mouth of the Flat River. There was at that time no one resident but Marsac. Tracy and Robinson had been there before, in July, and made their arrangement with the Indians; and Tracy stayed awhile to build a house, which he partly completed. When the rest came on they finished it. It was on the right bank of the Flat River, forty rods below where now is Halch's grist-mill. This house was built partly for a store, to be used by Rix Robinson, in his trade with the Indians.

The understanding with the Indians was, that they were to let Robinson have their old field, if he would break up another piece for them; and twenty acres of openings were broken up for them.

Robinson and Tracy fenced in about eighty acres, including what of the village of Lowell lies on the right bank of Flat River. Hodges and Jones split the rails. There Hodges set the first apple trees; one of which is now (1875,) standing on what is owned by Mrs. Caroline Snell.

Luther Lincoln came the same fall, and located on the left bank of Flat River, where Lowell now is. This Lincoln is the same one, who was before a pioneer at Granville. The same fall came Ebenezer K. Bickford, who started a house, but did not bring on his family until the next spring. Mr. Bickford stayed but a few years. These are believed to have been all who came in 1836. Mr. Hodges alone remains where he first located himself; the others having either died or moved away.

In their immediate vicinity, and in intimate relations with them were three or four hundred Indians, under an aged chief, whose name is variously given as Wobwindego (white giant) and Wobskindip. He died that winter, and was succeeded by his son Shogwogeno, a young man. Kobmoosa (the walker,) who had for wives three sisters of the young chief, was sub-chief. The chief had three brothers; men of fine presence and character—Ashkilbegosh, Acango and Wabesis.

Quite an influx of settlers signaled the year 1837, many of whom were transient. With regard to some there is doubt as to the date of their advent; the memory of the old settlers not altogether agreeing. We can without much hesitation place in this year: John Thompson, James Thompson, Cyrus Bennett, George Bisbee, John Fox, Phillip W. Fox, James Fox, Dr. Silas Fallass, John W. Fallass, Caleb Page, Thompson I. Daniels, George Brown, Rodney Robinson, Lucas Robinson, Lewis Robinson.

These took up land before it was surveyed. The three Robinsons were brothers of Rix Robinson, and were part of the ship load of Robinsons that entered the Grand River in 1835.

1838 shows quite an addition to the settlement—as far as we can gather: Charles Newton, Eliab Walker, Christopher Misner, Solomon Lee, Anthony Zerkes, Elder Wooster, Sherman Wooster, Morgan Lyon, William Robinson, Adam Van Deusen, Alfred Van Deusen, Jesse Van Deusen, Walter Van Deusen (blind), Walter Hyler, Jacob Francisco, Wm. B. Lyon, Ransom Rolf, Matthew Patrick, Samuel Rolf, Ira A. Danes, Albert Smith, Ebenezer Smith, C. A. Lathrop, Samuel Moye, Joseph Dieffendorf, Daniel Dieffendorf, David Dieffendorf.

There will be no attempt further to trace the progress of settlement. The town was organized as Vergennes, in 1838. For ten years the two townships were together. When Lowell was organized, the settlement did not cease to be a community, though belonging to two towns.

The first school in the Flat River settlement, or Vergennes, was taught in 1839, by Miss Caroline Baird, in a log house, built by the Robinsons. She closed her labors in the school by being married in the school house to Mr. Caleb Page. It was made a day of general jubilee. They both now sleep with the dead.

The next school was taught by Miss Maria Winslow, of Grand Rapids. She was the daughter of Dr. Winslow—the pioneer physician of the Valley; and for more than twenty years was known as a highly educated and efficient school teacher in Grand Rapids, and the towns around; and many are those who will remember her with veneration. She is now the wife of Heman Leonard, Esq., of Grand Rapids.

The first preacher in the settlement was Elder Mitchell, a Methodist missionary from the Ohio Conference. He soon found himself incompetent to endure the hardships incident to his pioneer circuit, and withdrew, to be succeeded by one who could endure them—the Rev. Mr. Frieze. Frieze was made of the right material for a missionary in the back-woods; with a physical constitution that defied labor to fatigue, and a soul singly devoted to his work. He had a circuit from Grandville to Cook's Corners, in Otisco. On this circuit he was obliged to go on foot, generally guided only by Indian trails; often obliged to camp in the woods at night, when going from

station to station, engaged in his labor of love. Buoyed by the desire to win souls, he was ready to endure all hardships, and to endure all privations. At one time, coming to Flat River, he got lost in the night, and floundering in the swamps, and wandering in the woods, his clothes were torn in tatters. Emerging at length, hungry and faint, he was ready to preach; but he was not in decent trim to appear before his back-woods' audience. He was supplied with clothing, and filled his appointment.

Frieze made his home for a time in Cannon, and is numbered there as one of the first settlers. He is now supposed to be in Ohio. Should he come in to the Grand River Valley, many an old pioneer would greet him with a double welcome, and a "God bless you, Frieze." It takes faith and godliness to preach on a circuit of forty miles, go on foot, and get no pay for it; but not much of either to preach for \$5,000 a year, in a fashionable church, with the admiring eyes of a thousand to keep one in countenance. The poor heretical writer thinks he could preach under such circumstances; but such labors as those of Frieze, he is afraid he should leave to such as Frieze.

Lowell was set off from Vergennes, and organized as a town, April, 1848. The first election was held at the house of D. A. Marvin. The first officers were:

Cyprian S. Hooker, Supervisor; Timothy White, Clerk; C. S. Hooker, Daniel McEwan, Samuel P. Rolf, Ira A. Danes, Justices.

In 1849, by the Legislature, a bridge was authorized at Lowell.

In 1857, 500 acres of land were appropriated for improving Flat River.

In 1857 the name of the village was changed from Danville to Lowell.

In 1859 an act legalizing the incorporation of Lowell was passed. (It had before been incorporated by the supervisors.)

The village never organized under this act of incorporation.

In 1861 Lowell village incorporated by the Legislature.

In 1869 Lowell was authorized to re-survey.

Such in brief is the legislative history of Lowell. To give

it, we have anticipated the history. Returning to the early times: A tract of land on the east side of the Flat River had been set apart as University lands; and had been pre-empted by Luther Lincoln, who built a log house there, which was used by Dan. A. Marvin as a tavern. Lincoln sold out his claim to Daniel Marsac, who, in 1847, platted it; and, liking his own name, called it Dansville. In 1850, Abel Avery, of Ionia, bought out Marsac. As yet Dansville was only a paper village. In 1846 Cyprian S. Hooker came from Boston; put up the first frame house; and moved his family into it two weeks from the time he commenced. In 1847 he erected a grist-mill, bringing the water in a race. In 1849 he built a dam across Flat River. He showed the Yankee disposition to do something. From his enterprise the village took its start. Soon a respectable public house was built by Mr. Avery; and by degrees the place developed, until it has become one of the smartest villages that are dotting the West; the Flat River is used to nearly or quite its full capacity for driving mills and machinery. It is a market town for the region north and south; doing perhaps as much business as any village of its size in the State.

As a village it sprung into existence. It was only a hamlet, with its mill, its tavern, its stores, etc., on a small scale until the D. & M. Railroad was constructed. Then, what had been a vision of fancy in the mind of Marsac, Avery, and a few others, became a fixed reality—Lowell *must* be a market town. Capital was attracted there, and men of enterprise selected it as their place to achieve fortunes. It did not grow up, as grow the villages that surrounded a mill, but sprung at once into a form that was based on solid substance. The style of building indicates independence, and little of the make-shift of many new places. Its blocks of stores would do credit to a larger place. Its streets, filled with teams, show trade. Its mills and manufacturing concerns give evidence of business life. The churches show that religion has a hold there, and the well-sustained Union School is evidence that intellect and culture are not ignored; and the cosy houses bespeak a refined and independent people.

## HUSTED'S NURSERIES.

Husted's Nurseries, the largest in Michigan, were begun in 1862, on one-half an acre of land. In 1863, three acres were added. In 1864 Husted purchased eighty acres, and set out 40,000 apple trees, and a small assortment of other fruits. From that time he enlarged rapidly, going into a general nursery business, until, in 1872, the nurseries covered 200 acres of ground, and the sales were \$50,000 a year. But it is sad to say that when blown up to this size, it "busted," and promises not to be so big a thing hereafter. In 1874, the property passed from Mr. Husted, into the hands of assignees, and Mr. Husted was left to ruminate on the impropriety of doing too big a business. He talks just as the boy does, whose father is putting him through a course of sprouts: "I never will do so again." There is such a thing as doing too big a business. Many a man has to go under because his debts are half as much as the amount owed to him. The balance sheet shows rich, but stern fact says, all is not well, that looks well on paper.

Hatch & Crow's flouring-mill is a thriving concern, and the men who own it mean business.

And we would specially notice the enterprise of the Blodgett Brothers, who run a snug woolen factory. The making of cloth has in general been left to the States further east. We send our wool there, and then buy it back in the shape of cloth. It is hazardous, away from the manufacturing centers, to invest capital in cotton or woolen factories, for the reason that it is about impossible to get the skilled labor necessary to carry on the business. Men are unwilling to put themselves under the power of one company, so that, if discharged, they must go without employment, or go five hundred miles to seek it. For that reason, the manufacture of cotton has not come to us at all, and only a small number of woolen factories are in Michigan—those generally doing a small business. Knowing that these disadvantages attend the woolen manufacturer in Michigan, we look on the man or company that starts a pioneer factory with special favor; and hail their enterprise as we do

that of the hardy woodsman, who opens the way with his ax. To invest \$1,000,000 in a woolen or cotton factory at the East is only a business enterprise—an investment of capital. The man or company, that does it, is on a par with those who put up immense saw-mills in the pine regions of Michigan. The old Indian Mill at Grand Rapids, which would, with its clumsy sash, cut 1,000 feet of boards in a day, was a thing for history to commemorate; the bigger concerns that followed, are looked on only as things of business. The day will come when the Grand River region will be dotted with cotton and woolen manufactories; when the Grand, the Flat, the Rogue and the Thornapple rivers will be utilized; and the whirr of the spindle and the clack of the loom will enliven the cities and villages on their banks. God speed you, Blodgett, in your attempt to prove that Michigan may manufacture, as well as raise, its wool.

It is true that all good things do not come at once. The saw-mill is the pioneer. Immediately follows the indispensable grist-mill. Then come manufactures in wood; and, as the evidence that a higher plane is reached, of the textile fabrics, and articles of luxury and taste. Michigan is still a young State, and has not reached her highest development; but, like John Brown's soul, she is "marching on."

The grave historian may stoop from his dignity, and speak of trifles light as air, for the amusement of the gay. But no apology is made for this little story of Rodney Robinson of early times:

In 1837, Robinson went to Kalamazoo for bread stuff. He stayed over night at Yankee Springs. Many other teamsters were there, and also a minister. Yankee Lewis had a large fire-place, and the wood had burned down, leaving a great bed of coals. Before going to bed they had prayers, and as they were getting ready to retire, a big bully, by the name of Scott, seized Rodney's dog and threw him upon the coals, evidently to pick a quarrel. Rodney seized Scott, and Scott followed dog. The company cheered, and the minister said, "Amen; God bless you!" Scott was badly burned, but seeing the eye of Rodney, was not at all disposed to try his revenge. He

said—"Guy Rivers! I did not suppose there was a man here who could do that." Robinson said—"I did." Scott felt fight, but concluded to let out the job. We hope the lesson was remembered by the bully, and that a wholesome fear afterwards would arise in his mind, lest the dog he would injure, should prove to be "a spaniel."

Young as Lowell is, it has had its centenarian, in the person of Mrs. Lucky, mother of Mrs. Patrick. She died, aged 103. Her portrait was taken when she was 100.

In contemplating these rare specimens of humanity, who outlive their generation and themselves, we can see the full beauty of the language of a Shenandoah chief, who said: "I am an aged hemlock. The winds of an hundred winters have whistled through my branches; I am dead at the top. Why I alone of all my kindred remain, the Great Spirit only knows." But,—

Life's long waking ended,  
She sweetly sleeps at last.

#### NELSON.

Nelson was one of the last towns organized in Kent county, being content to remain a *part* of a double town, until she had men enough to fill the town offices, without giving each man an office, and the best man two or three. Instead of claiming to be of age when a dozen voters could be mustered, she waited until she had fifty-four. The town was set off, and named by the Board of Supervisors, Oct. 13th, 1854. It was organized at the house of Charles H. Leake, April 2d, 1855, with the following officers;

Supervisors, Geo. Hoyle; Clerk, Geo. N. Stoddard; Treasurer, Charles H. Leake; Justices, Simpson Anderson, Samuel Panches, Harlow H. Stanton.

It matters little who were the pioneers of Nelson. The first use of the town was to rob it of its pine, of which it had an abundance. Stripped of that, it was not inviting. Its settlement and its enterprise have been governed by pine. That is disappearing, and the second class of enterprise is developing

brood is filling up the flocks decimated by man and all the predaceous birds. Defenseless, their existence is in their fecundity. As to whether they are a nuisance or not, opinion is divided; but certainly they are an interesting feature of Olive.

#### ROBINSON.

This town takes its name from its first settlers. It is elsewhere noted in this book, that a large number of the relatives of Rix Robinson came into the Grand River region in 1835. Six brothers—Nathan, John, Rodney, Edward, Lucus, and Ira—came in the vessel, "St. Joseph," from Detroit to Grand Haven. They, aided by the judgment of their brother, had come to the conclusion that this Valley was the place to build a fortune. So, with their wives and children, 42 in number, they came on together

Four of the brothers—Rodney, Lucus, John and Ira located in this town. About three years afterwards, Rodney and Lucus removed to Flat River, leaving the other two.

They took up land in the fall of 1835. They raised a few potatoes the next season; but spent most of their time lumbering. Like most of the operators in lumber at the time, they failed to make money by it. The fact is very noticeable, that lumber was manufactured before it was demanded; and in quantity in excess of the demand. Therefore it was a poor business. The person who reads this history, or one who in any way familiarizes himself with the doings in early times, will be surprised at the calculations that were based on pine—at the investment in mills, in advance of the real prospect in sales. Probably ten dollars were lost on mills and lumber, where one was gained. It seems that there was a kind of mania for saw-mills. Instead of putting up the cheap concerns that were really needed, expensive mills were erected; and failed to remunerate, of course.

As an instance of early times lumbering, the first winter Ira Robinson cut with an ax, and put by the river, 996 logs which had been contracted to the Grand Haven Company, at 50 cents a log. The Company did not buy them. They lay

by the river several years; and were then sold for a barrel of pork and two barrels of flour! Robinson found that getting rich by cutting logs was rather doubtful.

The growth of the town was slow; most of the land was owned by non-residents; bought on account of its pine. The town had little to attract those who were seeking places for farms. No settler in his senses would choose his location in a forest of pine. That pine will not then find a sale; the labor of clearing is immense; and then the stumps! Time rolls on; the openings and timbered lands have invited occupation; a demand has arisen for lumber; it has been cut and carried from the land. It is now easy to be cleared. The filling up of the region has given a value to the land; and the process of turning pine land into farms is going on. The stump 'machine' is civilizing the land in Robinson.

As said before, the occupation by settlers was slow. The town was not organized until 1856. The first meeting was at the house of Ira Robinson, when eighteen voters were present.

Its first officers were: John W. Barnard, Supervisor; Edward G. Robinson, Clerk; Willard Furgerson, Treasurer; Jonathan Hazard, Wm. H. Wood, Alfred Robinson, Fred. T. Ranney, Justices.

The settlers who came soon after the Robinsons, were: Wm. F. Wood, Jared and Harrison Conner, Alva Trumbull, James Black, Joseph Lemon, Dexter Ranney and — Hartenburg — all within three or four years.

It will be perceived that the town was not organized until twenty-one years after its first occupation. The number of its inhabitants at the time we have no means of ascertaining. The small vote at the first meeting has been given. In 1857, the vote was thirty-six. The first census, that of 1860, showed one hundred and twenty-eight. Four years after it was one hundred and twenty-six. So it seems that as late as 1864, there was but a very partial occupancy. In 1870, there were four hundred and six; showing quite an increase. This is in harmony with the experience of other pine townships. People began to see that a good use could be made of this land, and went to work to subdue it. At present the population is over five hundred.

There is in the town, the little village of Robinson, where Mr. Eastman has a mill. Around the mill some other business has clustered. There are two stores and a church.

As a matter of course, the town has but little history, other than its lumbering operations—all of which went to enrich or impoverish, as the case might be, the residents of other places. Robinson had to begin its history, and its development after it had been sacked and its primitive resources exhausted by others.

Its few pioneers were in during the time that tried the souls and the endurance of men. They suffered during the often mentioned "starvation winter," when \$20 was the price for a barrel of flour, and \$50 for a barrel of pork; and when, for the last, \$100 was refused. Mr. Robinson paid \$20 at Grand Rapids for a barrel of flour, and drew it home on a hand-sled. During that winter a team with flour got stuck by Bass River, and they were obliged to leave it. The people, recognizing the rights of dread necessity, took forcible possession—not as robbers, but as citizens, facing the responsibility of their deed. It was carefully weighed out to the needy, and charged to those receiving it. The whole was afterwards paid for. Before censuring, reflect on the great principle that necessity knows no law. If your children must starve, or you commit a trespass, how would you act? Those with a full stomach can moralize on *principles* and *rights*; but it is hard to be a saint or moralist when hunger is gnawing the vitals. "Lead us not into temptation," is about equivalent to "Don't let us be hungry."

Situated as the town is, it is easy to see what it will be. But at present it has the air of newness, and it is but imperfectly developed. Its beautiful river prospects will be appreciated. It bides its time.

#### GEORGETOWN.

Georgetown, consisting of four townships—5 and 6 N., Rs. 13 and 14 W.,—was authorized by the Legislature to organize as a town in 1839. But it seems that they failed to organize; for we find that, in 1840, the Legislature enacted that Georgetown is attached to Ottawa, if she does not organize.

At the October term, the father and son were tried for the murder. The young man was not convicted; his father was sent to prison for life. Watson was used as State's evidence, and was released after being in jail about four months. The trial was the most exciting that Ottawa county has ever had, and lasted six days.

The probable motive of the murder was to prevent Pound from being a witness against the Fullers, who were charged with displacing the track of the railroad.

On that charge, the young Fuller was afterwards twice tried, each time escaping conviction, by one dissenting jurymen. He stands before the public, a free, but branded man. Guilty or innocent, he has a heavy load to bear; that is, if he has a sentient soul.

#### ROBINSON'S PROCLAMATION.

The following, too good to be lost, is taken from the *Grand Haven Herald*:

In the spring of 1838, the Grand Haven Company had about 15,000 logs in rafts run into the bayou, staked by the shore and called safe by all. But heavy winds sent the logs adrift and the whole marsh was covered with them.

The fact was reported to Mr. Robinson and he blamed the agent of the company somewhat, for the want of attention to the proper securing of the rafts, nor could he be made to believe that the winds and current were such as to break all fastenings. At the request of the agent of the company (W. M. Ferry) he remained at Grand Haven a few days, and while there one Sabbath morning, a recurrence of wind and current came, and the logs with acres of marsh and weeds rushed to and fro like a mad storm.

Mr. Robinson called out the men and with boats caught and towed to the shore many logs, which he fastened with ropes and stakes. The work had hardly been accomplished and Robinson was viewing it with satisfaction, when the returning tide caught the logs and again scattered them, against all efforts made by himself and men.

Robinson looked mad. He called to "Uncle Mike" to get out his oxen, and with two yoke he had hauled up on the shore three large logs, and then told the teamster to put up the cattle. To the inquiry "what are you going to do with the three logs you have secured?" he replied, "I shall put them in Mr. Ferry's cellar and see if I can keep them still there."

That evening, after quite a chat over the occurrences of the day, Mr. R. turned to his office dusk, and in a *very short time* laid down his pen and handed me the accompanying paper, which I have always carefully preserved. I think it will be of interest to all old citizens of Grand Haven.

T. W. WHITE.

#### PROCLAMATION AND BLOCKADE.

WHEREAS, There is a bayou situate at Grand Haven (a little speck in the west at the mouth of Grand River of Lake Michigan), said bayou being adjacent to a steam saw-mill now building and nearly completed by the Grand Haven Steam Mill Company.

And whereas, sundry saw logs and pieces of hewn timber were lodged in said bayou for safe keeping, and whereas, for several months past it has been

the universal and continual practice of said saw logs and timber to take *French leave* and desert from said bayou, and transport themselves into Lake Michigan, and scattering themselves along the coast thereof, without consulting the interest of the owners of said property, and much to their annoyance, inconvenience and damage.

And whereas, in the course of human events it sometimes becomes necessary for the public good and safety as well as peace and repose of individuals to lay heavy hand on certain outrageous movements and aggressions, and severely rebuke and punish the perpetrators and aggressors, and in order to restrain and prevent the repetition of those things, powerful means are justifiable in many cases.

And whereas, moderate and ordinary means have altogether failed to produce the desired effect in constraining said logs and timber in their troublesome and unpardonable movements,

Now, therefore, know ye all whom it may concern, That by the power vested in me and the pile-driver, and men which have been steadily employed in and about said bayou for some considerable time past, I do hereby declare said bayou in a state of rigid blockade, and I do interdict and prohibit all saw logs and timber now lying in and about said bayou from passing or attempting to pass the line of forces under my charge, now lying at anchor or move across said bayou near the mouth thereof, and I do further order and direct that as soon as the ice shall be dissolved in said bayou, or be removed out of the way, that said logs and timber immediately remove from their strongholds in said bayou, where they are now seated and come forthwith directly into the boom prepared to receive them, near the steam mill above spoken of, there to be dealt with as may seem most to the interest of their proprietors or owners—hereby pledging myself that in case of a strict and due obedience to the above orders no more punishment shall be inflicted on any log than to slit it up in the ordinary way into lumber fit for market.

And I do further order and direct that no undue influence be made use of, by force or secretion, or in any other way whatever, to prevent the due submission of said logs and timber as aforesaid, either by marsh grass, flags, cat-tails, wild-rice, or by floatings claims, (many of which have been extremely active in said bayou during the high winds of last autumn), or by any seaweed or other vegetable substance whatever, but that they immediately uncover and relinquish said logs, that they may pop out from behind them, and immediately proceed to their place of destination as above directed.

And I do further hereby interdict all connection and intercourse between said logs and timbers and the amphibious powers, to wit: such as bull-frogs, tad-poles, turtles, terrapins, muscles and crawfish, and I do most especially prohibit said bull-frogs from clambering up said logs (much to the injury of their toe-nails), and then bellowing to the annoyance of the good citizens of Grand Haven and its visitors. I also expressly forbid turtles and terrapins from mounting said logs, and using them as a convenient place for making love in the sunshine by winking in each others faces; but that all and every one of the above named powers and animals desist from such evil practices, and permit said logs and timber to float along peaceably and unmolested into the boom as above directed.

Done in the office of the Bayou, on board the Pile Driver scow, this 25th day of February, A. D. 1838, and sealed with the hammer thereof.

RIX ROBINSON, [L. S.]

Commander in Chief of all the forces in said bayou.

T. W. WHITE, [L. S.]

Second in command, etc., etc., etc.

JOHN BROABRIDGE, [L. S.]

Admiral and Commander on board the ship "Thump-Hard."

#### THE FIRST INDIAN TRADER.

We are indebted to the Hon. WM. M. FERRY for the following short sketch of Pierre Constant, the first Indian Trader of Ottawa county:

"The first trader who located in what was Ottawa county—then embracing Muskegon county—was Pierre Constant, a Frenchman, of the type of that advance guard of pioneers—Marquette, LaSalle, Joliet and Tonti—who, two hundred years before, invaded and brought to the world the great Northwest. He was of the chevalier order of men—brave, honorable and undaunted, amid all dangers. In 1810, he engaged with the British Fur Company, then having a depot at Mackinaw, as a trader; and with his supply of merchandise coasted along the shore of Lake Michigan, and established a trading post on Grand River, near what is now called Charleston; and another on the banks of Muskegon Lake. He married an Indian woman of remarkable beauty and intelligence, by whom six children were born to him. Once a year, he, with his family and the results of his venture in furs and peltries, coasted down Lakes Michigan and Huron to Penatauquashin, the Indian depot for Upper Canada.

"The oldest of this family was a daughter, who inherited her mother's beauty, as well as the high qualities of the mind of the father; and this daughter, Louisa Constant, or "Lisette," as she was called, became her father's clerk when she was twelve years old; and was as well known for her wonderful faculties for business as she was for her personal attractions. In 1828, when she was seventeen years old, her father died. She closed up his business with the British Fur Company, and engaged with the American Fur Company, at Mackinaw, receiving from them a large supply of merchandise; and for six years conducted the most successful trading establishment in the Northwest. She married Wm. Lasley, of Muskegon, also an Indian trader; and now, an aged widow, resides in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Her son, Henry S. Lasley, is one of the prominent merchants of Montague, Muskegon county."

#### MASON LUMBERING CO. SALT WELL, AT MUSKEGON.

This company, with the view of testing the questions of finding salt or petroleum, sunk a well near the mill in Muskegon to the depth of 2,627 feet. The results were unsatisfactory, and they have only a deep hole to show for the expense they have incurred. A nearly saturated brine was obtained, but not in quantity to warrant the erection of works for the manufacture of salt. Petroleum in insignificant quantity was also obtained.

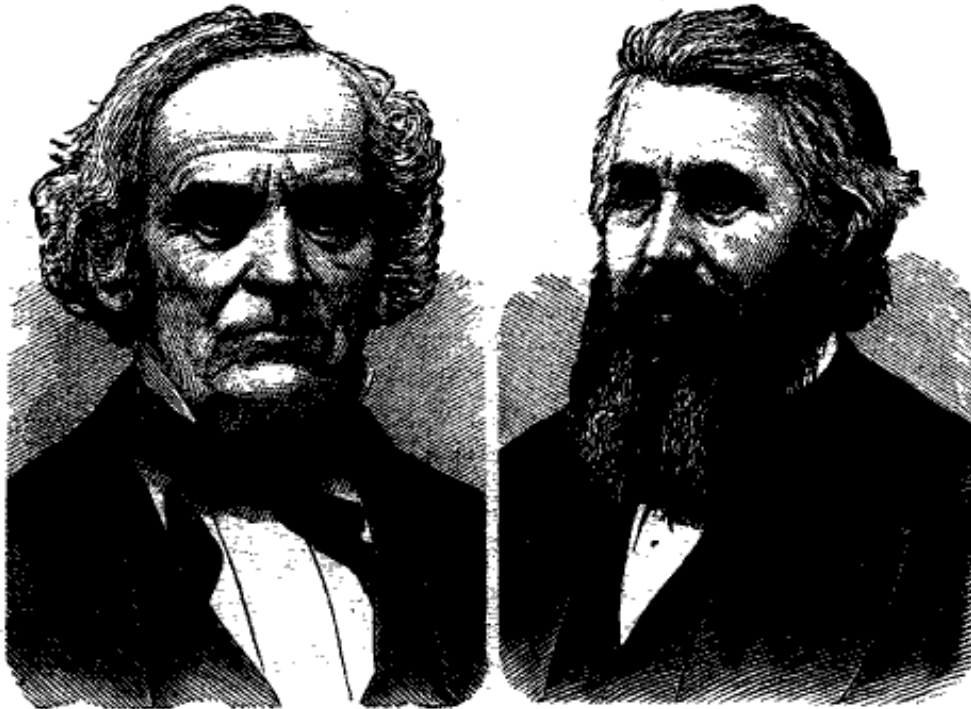
From the following will be seen the character of the strata passed through:

E. Church, he has ever been one of the leading spirits; and has aided, to the extent of his ability, the interests of the cause most dear to him. As a business man, he has never made a spread, or done big things; but by assiduous attention to business on a moderate scale, has secured an independence, which is as good as riches. "A man worth \$500,000 is just as well off as a rich man."

#### WILLIAM BABCOCK.

Dea. Wm. Babcock came into Ionia county in 1836, with his family, and located on Sec. 1, in Berlin.

He was a native of Massachusetts, born in Pittsfield, February 11th, 1783. While but a boy, he came with his father's family into Ontario county, N.



*William Babcock.*

*Sluman S. Bailey.*

Y., remaining there until he came to Michigan. By occupation a farmer; a man of robust habit and strong constitution; intelligent, industrious, honest and persevering. In 1812, he received a commission of lieutenant from Daniel D. Tompkins, governor of New York, to serve in the war with Great Britain. He had the command of a company for a considerable time, and acquitted himself with credit. He was a model citizen; a man who looked to the well-being of others; a devoted and energetic Christian and philanthropist.

He died Dec. 7th, 1871. The record of his life is the richest legacy he left to his numerous posterity.

L.

#### SLUMAN S. BAILEY.

Born at Summerset, Niagara county, Dec. 14th, 1821, and receiving a good common school and academic education, he was designed by his parents

felt when money gave out. Would you know what that is? Once fail *honestly*, and you will be thoroughly instructed. Fail as a scoundrel, in an open and above-board way, swindling your creditors, and you are called shrewd and keen. But if you struggle manfully to maintain your honor and do justice to all, look out for hard words, and for costs superadded to your burden of debt. So it was with E. B. Bostwick. He struggled, and struggled manfully, but every move seemed to sink him deeper, until finally he started for California as a last resource. He sleeps his last sleep on the desert plains. It matters little how he died. While on the way he sent back letters for publication in the Grand Rapids papers. In one of those he thrilled the hearts of his readers by an account of "a grave by the wayside." Another letter came, but not from him. It was from Canton Smith, his companion, and it told of Bostwick's death, and his "grave by the wayside."

#### EDWARD L. BRIGGS.

Was born in the town of Skaneateles, Onondaga county, N. Y., July 30th, 1830. In 1834, his parents moved to Michigan, and settled near Ann Arbor. Mr. Briggs was educated in the common schools. In 1850 he removed to Grand Rapids, where he has since resided, with the exception of two years spent at the South, in the States of Louisiana and Arkansas. In 1858 he was engaged in the survey of the public lands in Northwestern Minnesota, and run the first line of the United States survey that touched the Red River of the North. He acted as timber agent for the State Land Office, from 1859 to 1865; and a portion of the time as timber agent for the United States lands; and while acting in this capacity, traversed



*Edward L. Briggs.*

a large portion of the upper peninsula, and the newer portion of the lower peninsula. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1872, and served upon the committee on public lands, horticulture, and geological survey. He is at present engaged in the business of farming, manufacturing, and dealing in real estate. He was re-elected representative in 1874, and was chairman of the committee on public lands, and the special committee on apportionment. He was one of the original incorporators of the Grand Rapids Chair Company, and has been one of the directors of the company since its organization. He aided in the organization of the Citizens' Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Kent, Allegan and Ottawa counties, and has been the president and treasurer of the company since its organization, in 1874.

Mr. Briggs is still young; a man of ardent nature and of untiring energy. We hope it will be long before we get through with him. Now he is a farmer, and his house is a museum, where a taste for the æsthetic and genial sociality have made it an attraction. Long live Briggs and his accomplished lady.

#### EDWARD A. BURLINGHAME.

He was born in the town of Sterling, Windham county, Connecticut, Sept. 19th, 1832. At the age of fourteen the family removed to Union Village, where he was employed in a cotton factory, where he very soon became master of every process; and where, at the age of seventeen, he was promoted to the position of "second hand in the weaver shop," of 400 looms. At the age of eighteen, he, with the family, removed to Central New York, and was engaged in agriculture until he entered New York Central College. For a time he engaged in teaching; and in 1855 went to Madison, Wis., in the interest of J. & H. Miller, publishing house, of Columbus, Ohio, in whose employ he continued for the summer. In the spring of 1856 he came to Ann Arbor, in the interest of the same publishing house. He was married April 22d, to Sarah A. Snell. In the fall of 1858, he removed to Janesville, Wisconsin, and became a teacher connected with the public school of that city; and there began the study of law. While so engaged, he accepted the offer tendered to him to become agent and correspondent for the *Ohio State Journal*, which position he filled during the first Lincoln campaign; and he became an active worker, both on the platform and with his pen. While so engaged, he purchased a half interest in the *Local News and Advertiser*, of Ann Arbor, which he enlarged, changing the name to *Michigan State News*, and continued its publication during the campaign. In 1861 he sold out, and became connected with *The World We Live In*, a paper published in Cincinnati. In June, 1861, with others, he started the *Peninsular Courier*. In 1861, Mr. B. raised a company for the war.

In 1863, he purchased a farm three miles south of Grand Rapids. Staying there a while, he went to Illinois, where he purchased the office of the *Decatur Tribune*, the leading Republican paper of Central Illinois, which he run until Oct. 20th, 1866, and resumed his legal studies at Ann Arbor, where he graduated in the spring of 1869. In the fall of the same year he commenced the practice of his profession, at Grand Rapids. In the fall of 1872, he was elected prosecuting attorney for Kent county, and was re-elected in 1874; which office he filled with general approbation.

Mr. B. is still comparatively a young man; his life so far has been active and influential; and the public have hopes of him for the future.

#### LOUIS CAMPAU.

This pioneer, so long affectionately saluted and known as "Uncle Louis," had an eventful life, bordering somewhat on romance. In this brief sketch, the romantic can scarcely be alluded to, as the incidents would make a volume, instead of a biographical article.

He was of French descent, born at Detroit, August 11, 1791. At eight

1839. By the death of his brother and two sisters, he was left alone with his mother; and set himself up as a merchant, in the grocery business.

Possessed of rare sagacity as a business man, he speedily advanced in fortune until, in 1856, he found himself able to erect the block of stores which bears his name, on Monroe street. This was the first venture upon a large block of stores in Grand Rapids. Though in later years eclipsed by large and more pretentious structures, for many years it was the "big thing" in the city. In fact, it was a heavy venture, as the sequel proved; the wants of the place then demanding no so massive buildings.

That Mr. L. is a successful business man is not his particular merit. As one who looks to the public interest, and to the welfare of humanity, he has a stronger hold on the community. He has been a laborious and watchful member of the city counsel for many years; and has a heart for every work that is for the general good, and a hand ready to aid. He has no trumpet to blow for himself, and will let no other person blow one for him. He belongs to the old, rather than to the modern school, caring little for the vanities of life, but prizing the realities. Long may he wave; and may his shadow never be less. We need such men to give life to business, and to guard the public interests.

#### TRUMAN H. LYON.

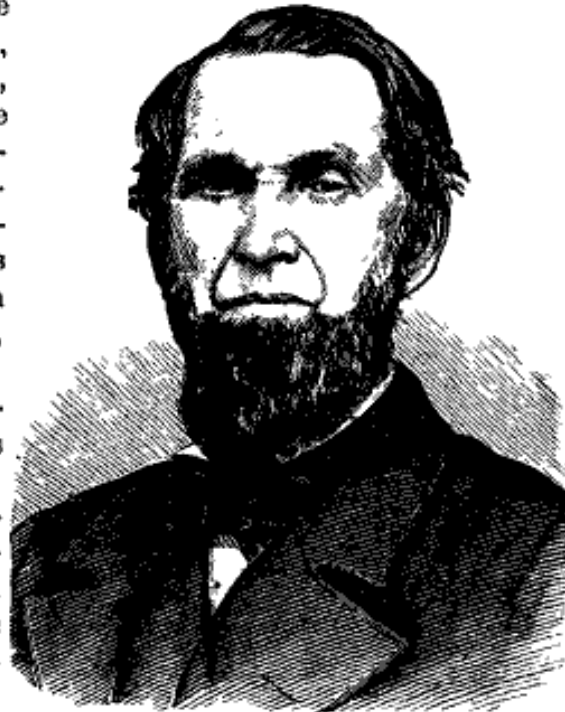
This man so long and so favorably known as a prominent actor in the Grand River Valley, was a native of Vermont; born at Shelburn, near Burlington, February 24, 1801. He had in youth but the common advantages; was apprenticed to the business of a cloth-dresser, which business he followed in Vermont until he was twenty-one, and afterwards on his own account, at Hopkinton, St. Lawrence county, N. Y.

In 1823, he married Miss Lucinda Farnham, who survives him.

He early developed business talent, and was looked to by the public as one to be made use of. Though a young man, he was placed in official station at Parishville—was justice of the peace, etc.

In the fall of 1836, he came to Michigan; first stopping at

Lyons, Ionia county, where he kept a hotel; was justice of the peace, side judge, and an official man generally; was in United States employ, superintendent of the light-houses on Lake Michigan; letting the contracts for their construction.



*Truman H. Lyon.*

He moved to Grand Rapids in 1840, where he kept a public house, and did business as a merchant. As a tavern-keeper, he kept the Bridge Street House two years, and afterwards the "Rathbun." For many years he was postmaster. He also carried on business as a cloth-dresser; and, on a small scale, woolen manufacturer. He was always a man that the public looked to as one to use, and they used him in various ways. In 1850 he was sent to the State Senate. He was a leading Free Mason—master of the lodge, and much honored in the order. He was always full of business, public and private, until laid aside by the terrible disease—sciatica—which finally, having exhausted all the powers of nature, ended in not unwelcome death, September 14th, 1872.

The character of Mr. Lyon is easily summed up. With no strikingly brilliant qualities, his plain good sense, his business capacity, his clear judgment, and personal integrity gave him a marked position among the leading men. He was an able counselor, public-spirited, and true to every public trust. He never sought to shine, and never put himself forward; was affable, courteous, and generous-hearted; placed himself above nobody; and bowed to nothing but superior worth. His talent was eminently practical, and his judgment discriminating and clear.

He raised a large family, who have taken prominent places as business men. One of his sons—Lt. Darwin—lost his life in the service of his country during the war. His only daughter—Mrs. Yale—preceded him in death. Five sons remain. Long prominent, and highly respected, his exit left a blank in the community. All felt the loss of the worthy old man, whom

everybody knew and esteemed. His life and doings are a part of the history of the region. Leaving no enemies and many friends, his memory will be cherished.

#### DANIEL McCONNELL.

The subject of this sketch was born at Newbury, England, on the 17th day of March, A. D. 1827. His father, a dissenting clergyman of the Methodist denomination, reared a large family in comfortable circumstances, and removed with them to America when Daniel was but five years old, locating at Rochester, New York. At the age of eleven years, Daniel was placed in the establish-

ment of a leading jeweler, of Rochester, where he remained between three and four years, leaving finally on account of poor health which



*Daniel McConnell.*

the fight at Locust Mountain, and again at Powder Springs. He was commissioned Colonel, Dec. 20, 1864. His commission as Colonel was given at the close of his service as a compliment to a gallant officer,

Peace restored, Col. Scranton returned to Grand Rapids, where he has settled down to the business of carriage building. Still in his prime, long may he live.

#### ALONZO SESSIONS.

For many facts concerning Mr. Sessions, the reader is referred to the history of Berlin.

From the earliest times he has been identified with the interests of Ionia



*Alonzo Sessions.*

county. He had his origin in New York; born at Skaneateles, Aug. 4th, 1810; lived with his his father, with common advantages for personal improvement, until he was of age. At the age of 17 he commenced teaching, and for a number of years was a part of the time so employed. For a time he was clerk in a store at Bennington, Genesee county.

In October, 1835, he came to Michigan to reside. Mr. Sessions is a man

of commanding presence, energetic, with strong convictions—a natural leader—one of those who will have decided friends, and whose go-ahead energy will provoke and secure opposition. His honor and integrity are, by those that dislike him, conceded to be beyond doubt. With a genial and social nature, and rare conversational powers, he is an agreeable companion and warm friend; perhaps not very valuable as an antagonist. His stern sense of honor, and unyielding self-respect have not always led him to steer clear of others' antagonism—but by his friends he is considered a friend worth possessing, and by those, who love him not, he is respected as "a foeman worthy of one's steel."

Soon it was found that Mr. S. was a man the public could make use of. He was made Justice of the Peace in 1836, Supervisor of Cass, and chairman of the board in 1838, sheriff of the county in 1840. For seventeen years he was supervisor and eight times chairman of the board. He was in the State Legislature from 1856 to 1862. Internal Revenue Assessor 1862—four years. Director of First National Bank at Ionia; its President since 1866; President of the Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company. Was Presidential Elector in 1872. At present (1877) he is Lieutenant-Governor of Michigan.

In 1837, he married Miss Celia Dexter, daughter of the pioneer of Ionia. He has seven living children, and has lost about as many.

#### AMASA SESSIONS.

Brother of the foregoing, now resident in Ionia, has been, in fortune and adventure, identified with him. As we have been unable to obtain the facts of his life-history, further than they are given in the history of Berlin, the reader is referred to what is there said of him.



*Amasa Sessions.*

#### CHARLES SHEPARD.

Dr. Shepard is one of the pioneer physicians of the Valley, being the third who established themselves as resident physicians. The first was the now venerable Lincoln of Ionia; the second, Willson, the too early dead. Dr. S. was born at Fairfield, Herkimer county, N. Y., July 18, 1812, in humble circumstances, and had but the common school chance for education. Ambitious, he went to studying medicine with Dr. H. W. Doolittle. He attended lectures

and took his degree at the Fairfield Medical College, March, 1835. In the fall of the same year, he came to Grand Rapids, then but a backwoods