

Part IV - Partial book extract

HISTORY
OF
IONIA COUNTY
MICHIGAN

HER PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

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Editor-in-Chief

With Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and
Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families

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CHAPTER XIII.

ORANGE TOWNSHIP.

Until March 19, 1845, the east half of township 6 north, range 6 west, was a portion of Portland, and the west half a portion of Berlin township. At the date mentioned, the entire township was given an organization of its own, and called Orange. The name was bestowed by Dean M. Tyler, but why cannot be ascertained. It was not in remembrance of any place in which he had ever lived, but in all likelihood suggested itself merely because it was a name of pleasant sound, without especial local application.

The first township meeting was held at the house of Dean M. Tyler, April 7, 1845, where Dean M. Tyler was chosen moderator. Alexander Dalziel, Adam A. Lewis, Myron J. King and Henry Bush, Jr., inspectors of election, and John Brown, clerk. Thirty votes were cast, and in each case they were given for every candidate presented. The returns of the inspectors of election certified that the officials chosen were as follows: Supervisor, Alexander K. Hall; clerk, John Brown; treasurer, Myron J. King; justices of the peace, Adam A. Lewis, Peter Hacket, Dean M. Tyler and Alexander Dalziel; highway commissioners, Arza H. King, Benjamin D. Brand and Alexander K. Hall; school inspectors, Alexander K. Hall and Alexander Dalziel; overseers of the poor, Dean M. Tyler and Thomas J. Marsh; constables, Henry Bush, Jr., George Lewis, George Jourdan and Morris Woodruff; highway overseers, Henry Bush, Jr., Samuel Utter, Thomas J. Marsh, Nathan Nichols, Gideon O. Holcomb, Isaac E. Tyler, Adam A. Lewis, James Humphreys, Z. G. Grinnells and Charles Matthews. Twenty dollars was raised for the support of the poor, seventy-five dollars for contingent expenses, and five dollars allowed as bounty for each wolf killed.

The first white settler in Orange township was Selah Arms, though some think Benjamin D. Brand should be given that distinction. As a matter of fact, however, Arms settled on section 25 late in 1835, while Brand, who came to Berlin as a farm hand for Philo Bates and William Babcock, did not reach Michigan until late in 1835 or early in 1836, and certainly worked for Bates and Babcock in Berlin awhile before he became a settler

in Orange. He was, therefore, the second settler, but the first to build a house in Orange township. Arms was a bachelor and camped out awhile before effecting any building improvement, although he did build the first frame barn. Brand's house was constructed entirely out of wood and bark and was put together without the use of nails.

At that time the township contained no road, save, perhaps, an Indian trail; was densely timbered in every part, and was, in short, a wilderness, inhabited by wild beasts and resounding with the cries of wolves by night and by day. This was by no means an inviting prospect to the hardy settler who counted upon making a home there, but it was a common prospect in Michigan at that period, and, what was more, it had to be faced as one of the features of the situation, and subdued, too, before the conquering advance-guard of the army of civilization could proclaim a victory over the forces of Nature and plant homes of plenty and comfort where forests stood before.

In 1837 there came a bevy of settlers, including Dean M. Tyler, from Oakland county, Michigan, Thomas J. Marsh, from eastern Michigan, and Peter and Barnard Hackett. Mr. Tyler was accompanied by his son, Dean M. Tyler, Jr., and with him made a settlement on section 24. He found a decent road from Portland to Wadsworth's sugar-bush, only three-quarters of a mile from his destination, and esteemed himself especially fortunate in having to cut a road only three-quarters of a mile.

Thomas J. Marsh came from Marshall, in February, 1837, with an ox-team, a sled and a few farm tools as the sum total of his worldly possessions, aside from his land. However, he was young and ambitious and, although he had to make his way through a forest stretch of forty miles, in which he saw but one human habitation, he felt, doubtless, quite eager and ready for the pioneer fight when he landed upon the patch of woods he had purchased and of which he proposed to make a fruitful farm. He cleared, unaided, four acres, and, sowing it to wheat, awaited the harvest with fervent expectation. Sad enough for him, however, was the realization, for his crop was a failure and yielded him just one bag of wheat, from which he got fifty-two pounds of flour. It was not much, to be sure, as the fruit of a year's labor, and likely enough he thought he had reason to feel discouraged, but he stuck to his faith and energy, and in due season Dame Fortune smiled upon him with gladsome encouragement.

The Hacketts located in the southwest corner of the town. In 1838 Isaac E. Tyler, son of Dean M. Tyler, and John Brown came to the Tyler settlement and directly afterwards Mr. Whittaker came to the same neigh-

borhood. Brown, the Whittakers and the Tylers, numbering, all told, sixteen persons, lived for two weeks in the cabin of Dean M. Tyler, Sr., and occupied in common the cabin's only room, measuring sixteen feet square. While they struggled to exist in these close quarters, all hands were hard at work cutting out roads to the places where Brown and Whittaker had proposed to settle.

Whittaker did not fancy the country very much, or perhaps found the job of pioneering more than he bargained for. At all events, he remained only a year, and then sold out to Adam Lewis and Alexander Hall.

John Brown, to whom reference has been made, was married in 1838 to Betsy A., daughter of Dean M. Tyler. The ceremony was performed at Mr. Tyler's house by Squire Northam, a justice of the peace at Portland, and that was undoubtedly the first wedding in the township.

The first orchards are said to have been set out by John Brown, Dean M. Tyler, Dean M. Tyler, Jr., and Isaac E. Tyler, in 1840, and the first field of wheat was grown by Dean M. Tyler. Mr. Arms, their neighbor, although earlier on the ground, was at first more particularly given to cooping than to farming, and on his place made a good many barrels and pails, which he sold to his neighbors. With the money thus obtained he got a start by which he was enabled to go ahead with his farming operations. The Tylers sold their first wheat at Ionia for forty cents a bushel, and had to pay five dollars a barrel for salt.

Fanning-mills were not to be had and, as the best substitute, fanning was done by hand. Fever and ague prevailed generally and troubled the settlers sorely in those parts. During the first ten years of his residence in Orange, Isaac Tyler spent most of his money paying doctor's bills and taxes, and for medicines and the simplest of life's necessities. The first birth in the town is said to have occurred in Isaac E. Tyler's family. The child was his daughter, Amelia, born in 1839, who married J. E. Smith and settled in Nebraska.

In 1838 Ira F. LeValley came to section 5, having walked all the way from Detroit. He found in the neighborhood Thomas J. Marsh, Alexander Dalziel, Benjamin Brand, Paul Steel, John Houseman, Jared F. Long, Jacob Houseman and John Long. In 1839 George Jourdan joined the settlement and, locating in section 13, was soon in the thickest of the pioneer fight. He was desperately poor and saw the time when he lived on a diet of two pancakes a day, while he had to go once or twice to mill as far as Pontiac or Jackson.

Alexander K. Hall made a location in 1840 on section 22 and, in 1842

William H. Allen, of Oakland county, came to section 15, having to underbrush for the distance of a mile or more from the east. The nearest house west of him was John Houseman's, two miles and a half away; the nearest neighbor on the south was Samuel Grinnells, on section 27; eastward, the nearest was John Brown, a mile distant, and the same distance to the northward was Myron King.

Adam Lewis settled north of Hall's in 1844, Theodore R. Darling, on section 26, and E. F. Smith in the Tyler neighborhood the same year. Becket Coleman came to section 26 in 1845, and occupied wild land that he had purchased of the government. His near neighbors were Theodore R. Darling, Adam Lewis and A. K. Hall. Two years before Coleman's coming, or in 1843, there were but three horses in the town. Of these, Dean M. Tyler owned two and Esquire Barnard one, the latter an Indian pony.

The settlers of 1845 told some merry stories of the good old times they used to enjoy in the form of social calls among the neighbors, and of evening trips of half a dozen miles or more by means of an ox-sled, with a nice jolly visit at the end of it. Afterwards, a midnight ride homeward made a pleasant break in the otherwise toilsome existence and helped to cheer up all hands amazingly.

South of Coleman's there were already on the ground Charles Matthews, on section 35, and Samuel Grinnells, on section 27. The latter settler was the first to make a beginning in that corner of the town. Later, Charles Covey came to section 36. Among the other prominent early settlers were Elliott Martin, Dolphin Kinney, the Smiths and Rikers, A. Hunt, Mount Vernon Olmstead, and the Kings, David and his sons, Arzah, Myron and Burton.

The first saw-mill in Orange township was erected in 1848 by Samuel W. Badger and Robert Kimball, on the north line of section 15. The second was the Keefer mill, built on the north township line in 1853. The Bellevue road, passing between Orange and Berlin townships, was at a very early day a much-patronized highway of travel, as well as a mail route. A great deal of traffic in the way of lumber, hauled southward by teams, passed over the thoroughfare and gave occasion for the establishment of numerous roadside inns. In Orange township the first tavern on that road was opened by William Snyder. I. M. Wolverton opened a house of entertainment at his place, and so did Ira LeValley at his, but these hostelries passed out of existence a long time ago.

Orange postoffice, the only mail station ever established in the town-

ship, was created in 1855, and the office given to Lewis Priest. His successor was John Mosser, and after him Doctor Tremayne.

SUPERVISORS.

1846, A. K. Hall; 1847-48, M. J. King; 1849-50, Paul Steel; 1851-53, A. K. Hall; 1854-56, J. Brown; 1857-58, Paul Steel; 1859, Seely Arms; 1860, Paul Steel; 1861-62, C. Mathews; 1863, M. V. Olmstead; 1864, no record; 1856-66, M. V. Olmstead; 1867-70, Paul Steel; 1871, M. V. Olmstead; 1872, P. Steel; 1873-74, J. L. Mosser; 1875, William Keefer; 1876, B. Mathews; 1877-78, William Keefer; 1879-80, M. V. Olmstead; 1881, William Keefer; 1882-86, M. V. Olmstead; 1887-89-90, Barnard Hackett; 91, Charles I. Goodwin; 92, Bernard Hackett; 93-94, C. I. Goodwin; 1895-96, Henry H. Jourdan; 1897-98-99-1900-01, Louis Olmstead; 1902-03, Frank Linebaugh; 1904-05, George L. Jourdan; 1906, John W. Adgate; 1908, C. J. Jourdan; 1909, W. F. Brickley; 1910, C. I. Goodwin; 1911-12, A. Fred Klotz; 1912-13, J. C. Linebaugh; 1914-16, Clyde Stout.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORLEANS TOWNSHIP.

Township 8 north, in range 7 west, was included within Ionia township until March 25, 1846, when it was organized by the Legislature as the township of Orleans and the first meeting ordered to be held at the house of Ira Wheeler. The meeting called for the purpose of naming the town was held at the house of E. B. Post, and among the names proposed those of Wheatland and Dover appeared to meet with the most favor, the former especially. It would have been adopted, but the discovery that there was another Wheatland in the state caused it to be set aside by the legislative representative of the district, and the substitution by him or somebody else of Orleans, doubtless from Orleans, New York. It seems that some of the folks in the western portion of the town thought Wheatland ought to be the name because they raised buckwheat, and indeed did call it Wheatland before the town was organized. When they gave their reasons for wanting that name adopted, Daniel Hoyt, always keenly alive to a sense of the ridiculous, exclaimed "What not call it Buckwheatland?"

At the first town meeting, held at the house of Ira Wheeler, April 6, 1846, Gilbert H. King and Jessie Wood, justices of the peace, were present as inspectors of election, and they with Milo K. Cody, David Courter and Garrett Snediker constituted the board of inspectors. Jesse Wood was chosen moderator and Albert Dorr, clerk, whereupon the polls were opened. Forty-one votes were cast and officials were chosen as follows: Supervisor, Gilbert H. King; clerk, Seneca H. King; treasurer, Ira Wheeler; justices of the peace, Guy Webster and Garrett Snediker; highway commissioners, Chester Goss and Joel C. Green; constables, Samuel T. Kidd and Isaac Harwood; overseers of the poor, Joel C. Green and Jesse Wood; pathmaster, Milo K. Cody, Garrett Snediker, John Highbee and Gilbert H. King. Upon the license question, the vote against the license was twenty-six to thirteen; at the next annual township meeting, the vote was in favor by twenty-eight to fifteen.

In common with the lands of Keen and Otisco townships, those in Orleans were not put upon the market until August, 1839, but lands were pre-empted and settlements effected more than a year before that date. What-

ever distinction can attach to the first settler in the town is due now, by the way of remembrance, to Guy Webster, of Ohio, who, then living on a farm in Lorain county, came out to Ionia county in the winter of 1837-38 on a tour of inspection, and fancying the lay of the land upon section 36 in Orleans township pre-empted a tract, returned to Ohio and at once began preparations for the removal of his family and goods to Michigan. He hired a young man by the name of William Henry Harrison Sutcliffe to help him over the journey, and all hands set out with two pairs of oxen, one horse and a lumber wagon packed with goods.

At Ionia, Webster left his family at McCausland's tavern and with Sutcliffe went to his Orleans place for the purpose of making a clearing and building a cabin. After he and Sutcliffe had been at work just one day they concluded that they must have a female to look after the cooking, and since their efforts in that direction had been attended with lamentable and disastrous failure Sutcliffe went over to Ionia after Lucretia, the thirteen-year-old daughter of Mr. Webster, later Mrs. Loren Sprague of Ronald. At the little fellow's request they brought back also Master Guy Webster, Jr., a bright little lad of six years; but young as he was he was just as ready to rough it as any of them, and eager too to do what he could to lend a hand in pioneering. Sutcliffe and the children came along on the road Webster and he had previously cut out by the way of Yeoman's place.

When Mr. Webster raised his log cabin he had besides that of Sutcliffe the assistance of Joshua S. Hall and Stephen Starks, two young men then just making a start in the woods in Ionia township near the northern township line. The floor of that cabin was not what in this latter day would be called a stylish affair. It was in short a "split" floor, and when Mr. Webster got enough of it laid to put a bedstead on he sent for his wife, who had thus far remained in Ionia in attendance upon her sick daughter, to come and help them keep house. With its split floor and its otherwise primitive appointments, Webster's log house was nevertheless a sort of house of entertainment for a time after its construction, and lodged numbers of people journeying that way in search of land or upon other business.

When Webster came to Orleans he brought a barrel of applesseed and planted the first orchard in the town, from which he was ultimately enabled to supply his neighbors with the stock for the foundation of other orchards. Guy Webster died in 1854, and his widow who lived with her daughter, Mrs. Loren Sprague, during the latter years of her life, died in 1874 at the age of eighty-four. As to Sutcliffe, who worked for Mr. Webster, he pre-empted eighty acres on section 36 soon after coming in and did some work

on the place while he boarded at Webster's, but not until 1843, when he married, did he make a settlement upon it. After a stay of ten years he left the community.

Joseph Collins, the second settler in Orleans township, settled on the northwest quarter of section 18 in May, 1838, but did not appear to make much of an effort towards improving the place. The very good reason for such lack of effort was that Collins was too poor to buy any land, and he knew that what improvements he might make he would have to give up just as soon as the land was sold. So he lived in a log shanty, raised barely enough to live on and made up his mind to live there until the purchaser of the land should put him off. He did not have to wait very long for that performance to take place, and then, like a philosopher, he went somewhere else. By some good fortune he got somebody to help him to a small tract of land in Otisco and there he lived until his death in 1850.

Although Mr. Collins was not especially distinguished for his pioneer performances in Orleans, his log shanty in that town became the locale of two interesting historic events—the first wedding and the first death known in that town. The wedding was a double marriage in which the brides were Lois and Sallie, daughters of Joseph Collins, and the bridegrooms William G. Bradish and Hiram Baxter, of Otisco. Squire Thomas Cornell, of Ionia, tied the knots, and of course there was a generally happy time although the Collins mansion was not precisely of the kind adapted to a very brilliant display in the way of marriage festivities. The weddings took place in the summer of 1839, and late that year Joseph Collins, Jr., a lad of nineteen, died at his father's house after a lingering illness, of consumption. He was buried at Otisco.

Early in 1838 Erastus Higbee came to Michigan from New York and stopped in Oakland county to visit Charles Broas, formerly a neighbor of Higbee's in New York. From Oakland county Broas and Higbee came to Ionia county in search of land, and following Guy Webster's tracks to Orleans reached his place on June 26, 1838. Broas pushed on and eventually located at the place now called Belding in Otisco. Higbee decided to locate in Orleans and pre-empted four lots of eighty acres each in section 36, where his son John later lived.

The next arrival in that neighborhood was the Rev. Archibald Sangster, an alleged Baptist clergyman. He had but recently come to America from England, preached a year at Ionia and in 1839, finding that his preaching did not pay as a financial venture, made a settlement upon section 35 in Orleans. After assuming the role of pioneer he preached occasionally here

and there, but as a minister of the gospel did not cut much of a figure. His religious belief was a little shaky at times, and for that reason possibly his influence was not quite so powerful as it might or should have been. John Higbee said he called on him one day and found the parson apparently disturbed in his mind; touching which condition, he presently remarked to Higbee that if he could by some exchange satisfy himself he would give the quarter section he owned for positive knowledge as to where he would go after death. Later, Mr. Higbee happened at a meeting where Sangster preached, and after service asked him whether he had satisfied himself as to the future. "Oh, yes," returned the preacher, "I think I've got it reasoned out all right." As he did not indicate whether he felt sure of going to heaven or to the other place, his conclusions were simply matter of conjecture. After he left Orleans he returned to California. To him is ascribed the honor of having built, in 1839, the first frame house in Orleans, the lumber having been obtained at the Dickinson mill in Otisco. The first frame barn in the town was built shortly afterwards by Guy Webster.

Speaking about John Higbee it may be remarked that in his day he was a famous hunter. Hundreds of deer had fallen beneath his unerring aim, and when he could not kill four a day he concluded the day was a bad one for deer hunting. He was likewise a sharp one after wolves, for the bounty, which at one time was as high as eighty dollars, was a big inducement. It was said that while Higbee was in the wolf-catching business he made money faster than any man in the town.

In 1838 Daniel Hoyt came to Michigan from New York state, and settling upon section 21 in Otisco, made a clearing and put in a crop of wheat. He made no attempt at a settlement there however, living meanwhile at the house of Philo Bates near Ionia. As he journeyed from time to time between his Otisco clearing and Ionia he passed by the land on which he later lived, and despite the fact that there seemed to be a general desire on the part of everybody coming out that way to settle near the Flat river, he made up his mind to buy some land in the town of Belding. He selected eighty acres on section 21, and at the land sale August 5, 1839, he bought the tract, that being the first land in Orleans sold at that sale.

When Mr. Hoyt bought his land and announced his intention to occupy it at once those at the land sale already living in that part of Orleans fairly shouted with joy at the prospect of getting a new neighbor. The persons referred to as already living in that vicinity were Asa Palmer, Lorenzo D. Bates and Joseph Collins. Palmer had been working at Dickinson's mill in Otisco since 1837, and in December, 1838, moved to a piece of land on

section 19, in Orleans township. In 1842 Mr. Palmer moved to section 21, and there resided until his death. In 1851 he joined with his brother Charles in the erection of the first saw-mill in the town, on Long Lake creek, in section 5, and before completing the enterprise added also as partners, Hiram Hall and Robert Howe. Later, Jude R. Spencer bought the property and added a grist-mill.

Among the settlers of 1839 was Chester Scofield, who, coming from Ohio near where Guy Webster had lived, bought some land of Webster in Orleans township, as did also John Frost, who came about the same time.

The identity of the first person born in Orleans is not easily defined, for there appear to be claims to that distinction on behalf of three children, of whom one was Abbey, daughter of Chester Scofield, born in 1841; in that year were born George Palmer, son of Asa Palmer, and Calista, daughter of Calvin Woodard, who married Mary Smith, sister of Chester Scofield's wife.

Nathan Redington and Deacon Pierce came from Lorain county, Ohio, in 1844, with a pair of horses and a yoke of oxen and settled in Ionia county—Redington on section 24 in Orleans and Pierce on section 30 in Ronald. Before that John Ditmars, son-in-law of Erastus Higbee, located on section 25, where he lived about twenty years and then removed to Kansas, where he died. On section 25 Joseph Carey also located in 1844, and about a year after Marvil Haight occupied some land in section 36 that belonged to his son-in-law, Joshua Hall. Jesse Wood came from New York state about 1844, and after living a brief period with his son William, in Ronald, settled on a farm in Orleans, on section 24.

Adam Buzzard moved from New York to Washtenaw county, Michigan, in 1837, and in 1840 was in Ionia for a brief stay. In 1845 he came back to Ionia county with D. C. Hurd and the two made land purchases on section 15 in Orleans. Buzzard worked for Hurd a year and then occupied his own land. Mr. Buzzard had a narrow escape from death in 1850, as did his companion on that occasion, E. B. Post, both of them having gone out on Long lake on a fishing excursion, Long lake being at that time a famous place for fish. While they were out a storm of violent fury came upon them, and before they fairly knew what had happened their canoe capsized and they were thrown into the water. Although the wind blew almost a hurricane and the waves dashed about madly, the unfortunate fishermen managed by heroic and desperate efforts to cling to the bottom of their upturned craft, and half dead with cold and exertion reached shore at

last in safety. It was a terrible experience, however, and one that neither forgot to his dying day.

In 1843 James Kidd located four hundred and forty acres of land in Orleans township for his father, William R., who in the spring of 1844 came out with his two sons, S. T. and Robert W., and occupied the land. In 1842 the Orleans settlers included Edmund B. Post, Alexander Howe and Angus McPherson. In 1843 Martin Eckert and his son Jeremiah came from Washtenaw county to section 18; Joel C. Green, to section 17; Richard Hill, to section 35; Isaac Harwood, to section 18; Milo J. Cody, to the Face farm, on section 23; David Courter, to section 17, and Richard Hale, to section 19. Those of 1844 included Albert Dorr, section 8; Ira Wheeler, section 15; Warner Wheeler, section 8; of 1845—Thomas Neep, William Bradley, Samuel Raby and Chester Goss; of 1846—James W. Gould, section 16; James C. Beach, section 28; Seneca H. King, section 20; Lewis J. Holcomb, section 19; Charles Chadwick, section 8, and Hiram Hall, section 17. Elder Robert Howe, Frank Olmstead and Erastus Sherwood were likewise among the comers of 1846, the last selling out in two years to Joseph Baldwin and returning to Oakland county. In 1847 there were Lewis and Myron Smith, on section 14; James Baird, on sections 16 and 17, and Hiel Preston, south of Daniel Hoyt's.

In the northwestern corner of the town there was a community of English or Canadian settlers among whom were the Bradleys, Neeps, Chadwicks and Autcliffs. Near Long lake, where Hiram Hall and T. W. Heald built a saw-mill in 1860, the early settlers were Theodore Leach, J. W. Drake, the Morses, Kings, Freeman Decker and Oliver Decker.

Among other early settlers in the southwestern corner of the town were Samuel Woolridge, E. D. Lambertson, T. W. Heald, R. P. Johnson, L. A. Benedict, Gilbert King, A. D. Johnson, L. M. Berry, John and Patrick Kelly, Fergus Flanagan, G. W. Basom, A. W. Smith and Abraham Alderman. The last mentioned settled in North Plains in 1853.

SUPERVISORS.

1847-48, G. H. King; 1849, S. H. King; 1850, L. D. Smith; 1851, Guy Webster; 1852, S. H. King; 1853, J. Jennings; 1854, W. S. Lazelle; 1855, S. H. King; 1856, D. Hitchcock; 1857-60, M. Lazelle, 1860, G. H. King; 1861-64, A. Dorr; 1865-66, D. C. Spaulding; 1867-71, J. Collins; 1872, F. Flanagan; 1873-78, F. Pitt; 1879-80, E. D. Lambertson; 1881-83, Loren C.

Falls, 1884-87-88-89-90-91-92; Luther E. Hall, 1893-94-95; Alfred A. Palmer, 1896-97-98-99-00; Fred Pitt, 1901 to the present time.

SHILOH.

The village of Shiloh, located on section 1, is a station on the Ionia and Stanton branch railroad, and, although the youngest of the villages in Orleans, is one of the smartest. Wilmer Bishop was the leading merchant, and with Charles Leach carried on a saw-mill and planing-mill not far from the village.

CHAPTER XV.

OTISCO TOWNSHIP.

On March 6, 1838, all that portion of Ionia county known as townships 7 and 8 north, in range 8 west, was organized as a township, to which was given the name of Otisco (probably from Otisco, New York), and the first meeting was ordered to be held at the house of Robert W. Davis. On February 16, 1842, township 7 was set off and named Keene.

The electors of the township convened, according to law, on the 2d of April, 1838, and organized by choosing John L. Morse as moderator, Nathaniel E. Horton, clerk, and Robert W. Davis, Ambrose Spencer and Rufus B. Cook, inspectors. The result of the election was as follows: Supervisor, John L. Morse; clerk, R. W. Davis; assessors, George W. Dickinson, Amos H. Russell and Ambrose Spencer; highway commissioners, George W. Dickinson, Ambrose Spencer and Rufus R. Cook; directors of the poor, William M. Springer and Volney Belding; justices of the peace, Robert W. Davis, George W. Dickinson, Rufus R. Cook and Nathaniel E. Horton; school inspectors, Robert W. Davis, George W. Dickinson and Nathaniel E. Horton; constable and collector, Ambrose Spencer.

The justices of the peace, one assessor, one highway commissioner, one director of the poor and one school inspector not qualifying, a special election to fill the vacancies was held on May 15, 1838, when the following men were chosen: Highway commissioner, George W. Dickinson; assessor, George W. Dickinson; justices of the peace, Nathaniel E. Horton, Rufus R. Cook, Amos H. Russell and Alonzo Vaughn; school inspector, John L. Morse; director of the poor, Paul P. Hewitt.

At the first meeting of the township board, September 25, 1838, the following accounts were audited: Thomas Cornell, two days' service in laying roads, four dollars; N. E. Horton, fees to county clerk, twelve and a half cents. At the same meeting three dollars were voted for the contingent expenses of the town.

Township 8 north, of range 8 west, known as Otisco, lies in the north-western corner of Ionia county, having Montcalm county on the north, Keene township on the south, Orleans township on the east and Kent county

CHAPTER XVI.

PORTLAND TOWNSHIP.

Township 6 north, range 5 west, in the government survey, is now known as Portland township, having, as boundaries, Lyons township on the north, Danby on the south, Clinton county on the east, and Orange township on the west. Besides being a rich agricultural region, Portland derives from the Looking Glass and Grand rivers, at Portland village, valuable manufacturing power, and in these substantial and enduring elements of prosperity the township is rightly to be considered as fortunate beyond many of its neighbors. The Grand river flows from south to north in a sinuous course, entering the town at section 33, and leaving it at the line between sections 4 and 5. On section 33, or more on the line between sections 28 and 33, it receives the waters of the Looking Glass, which comes from section 36 in a northwesterly course.

Toward the construction of the Detroit, Lansing & Northern railway, which traverses the township and has stations at Portland and Collins villages, Portland township contributed in a substantial way. On October 6, 1866, the township voted by two hundred and fifty-four to twenty-four, to grant aid to the enterprise to the extent of fourteen thousand seven hundred dollars, and it is said that almost as much more was received by way of individual subscriptions. On November 20, 1869, the township voted, by two hundred and seventy-four to fourteen, to extend fifteen thousand five hundred dollars as an aid to the construction of the Jonesville, Marshall & Grand River railway, but the road was not finished and that aid was not made use of.

The soil of Portland township is especially adapted to the cultivation of wheat, of which it returns large amounts. On the openings it is a gravelly loam, and on the timber-lands, heavier but still highly productive.

TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION.

The legislative act organizing Portland as a township was approved March 6, 1838, and read as follow: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the state of Michigan, that all that portion of the

county of Ionia designated in the United States survey as townships 5 and 6 north, in range 5 west, and also the east halves of townships 5 and 6 north, in range 6 west, be, and the same is hereby set off and organized into a separate township by the name of Portland; and the first township meeting therein shall be held at the house of Joshua Boyer, in said township." The town is supposed to have been named by the Newmans, but why Portland, nobody knows.

The first meeting was held according to order at the house of Joshua Boyer, on Monday, April 2, 1838. Asher Kilburn was chosen moderator. Joshua Boyer and William D. Moore were present as presiding officers, and William R. Churchill and Almeron Newman were appointed clerks of the meeting. As the result of the election, the following were chosen to the respective offices: Ira Webster, supervisor; Samuel Northam and Almeron Newman, justices of the peace; Almeron Newman, clerk; Elijah F. Shoff, Almeron Newman and Charles Gott, assessors; William D. Moore, Chancellor Barringer and James Newman, highway commissioners; Samuel Freeman, collector; A. S. Wadsworth, William R. Churchill and Phineas Coe, inspectors of schools; Samuel Freeman, William H. Turner and John Milne, Jr., constables; John Milne, Sr., and Samuel Northam, overseers of the poor.

Outside the limits of the village of Portland the first land entry and first permanent settlement by white man was made in December, 1833, by Joshua Milne, an Englishman, who had come to America only a short time before. Although Mr. Milne was the second settler in the town, Philo Bogue having been the first; he was the first to build a house. Mr. Milne made his first home on section 20 and remained a resident thereon until his death.

Thomas Shepard, a bachelor, bought some land on the west bank of the Grand river and came to the town when Milne did, but he did not stop long enough to take a place as a settler.

Ezra I. Perrin and John Friend joined the settlement in July, 1834. Friend went over to a place on Friend brook, just northwest of Portland village and began to get out the timbers for a saw-mill. He lived in a tent and pretty soon spent the most of his time in imagining he was either being attacked by a combination of robbers, bears and wolves, or that he was about to be thus descended upon and utterly annihilated. This fear developed into a mania and, finding that he could neither shake it off nor attend to the business upon which he had entered, he abandoned his undertakings and left the country.

CHAPTER XVII.

RONALD TOWNSHIP.

Lyons and Ionia townships possessed each one-half of the territory occupied by township 8 north, range 6 west, until March 19, 1845, when the township was given a separate organization and named Ronald. A. L. Roof was a representative in the Legislature at that time, and when the petition for organization came to him he observed that the name of Northport, as suggested for the township, was already owned by one other town in the state and being therefore himself called upon to name it, hit upon "Ronald" from the fact that he was just then engaged in reading a novel whose hero was named Ronald; and it happened, too, that Mr. Roof admired the character so heartily that he conceived the idea of thus honoring him.

The first township meeting was held at the house of William J. Clark, April 7, 1845, when Parley Eaton was chosen moderator, Royal Howell, William Jennings, William J. Clark and Chauncey E. Shepard, inspectors of election, and W. J. Clark, clerk. The meeting then adjourned to Chauncey Goodwin's house and proceeded to the election of township officials. Thirty-two votes were cast and officials were chosen as follows: Supervisor, William Jennings; clerk, William J. Clark; treasurer, Royal Howell; justices of the peace, John Ransom, Parley Eaton, Chauncey Goodwin and Joseph L. Freeman; highway commissioners, Phineas C. Hutchins, Stephen F. Page and Alanson Snow; directors of the poor, Parley Eaton and Mathew Van Vleck; school inspectors, William Jennings and John Van Vleck; constables, Julius Jennings, Ambrose Frederick, S. C. Barnes and Joel Smith; poundmaster, William Wood.

On motion, it was voted that officers doing town business receive seventy-five cents per day for services in town and when on business out of town they were to be paid according to law.

In the spring of 1837 on section 33, the first settlement was made in Ronald township. The pioneers were George Younger and Joshua Shepard, who came together, and together entered upon the mission of opening the tangled forest to the light of day and the influences of civilization. Shepard wore himself out and died soon after reaching the woods, but his widow

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEBEWA TOWNSHIP.

It is vaguely asserted that the first white settler resident in the present township of Sebewa bore the name of Jones, but whether John, James, Thomas or Peter, cannot be clearly ascertained, nor is it, perhaps, especially important as an inquiry, since Jones tarried but a short time before striking his tent. It is known that he and his wife came to town some time during the year 1836, carrying on their backs the few traps they owned, and settled on section 1. They were poor, and thought that by some hook or crook they might earn a living in the woods, and shortly raise a crop, for which they could get something before being called upon to vacate the premises. However that might have been, they did not apparently recognize the full force of the undertaking upon which they had entered, for it seems that they sickened of the work in a little while, packed up, and were off to more congenial climes. It must have been pretty lonesome for them, deep in the woods, the solitary settlers in a dreary stretch of country, hemmed in on all sides by howling wolves, and, to cap the climax, so poor that they had to make a meal on herbs and roots or starve. No wonder, therefore, that they did not care to stay very long. They may not have done much better by making a change, but it seems to have been agreed on all sides that they could not have done much worse. Jones may be dismissed early in the history as no very important factor therein, except as relates to the circumstances of his having been the pioneer of his race in the settlement of Sebewa.

The first attempt at a permanent settlement, and the one from which the history of the town properly dates, concerns the coming, in 1838, of John F. Terrill, Charles W. Ingalls and John Brown. Terrill located on section 25, and Brown and Ingalls on section 36, not far away. All three were pushing Vermont Yankees and laid hold with a will to the heavy task before them. Slowly, but surely, the forest-wild gave way before the sturdy blows of their ringing axes, and where formerly stretched a wilderness soon spread a pleasant prospect of comfortable, if not elegant, homes and fruitful farms.

In due time, John F. Terrill concluded to utilize the handsome water-

power of Sebewa creek, and so, in 1843, in conjunction with Anson W. Halbert, he built a saw-mill just west of where "The Corners" engaged the notice of the traveler. Halbert came to the town in 1841 and in that year he married one of Terrill's daughters. In the log house he had built at the Corners, he ventured into mercantile trade with a few goods, but, few as they were, they evidently sufficed, and more too, for Halbert did not feel encouraged to pursue the subject of trade beyond of disposing of his first stock. Strictly speaking, he was perhaps the first merchant at the Corners, but his effort was so fruitless that it has not been mentioned in the history of trade at the Corners.

Jacob Showerman and Eleazer Brown, with their families, joined the Sebewa settlement in 1839. Showerman had come into the town three years before (in 1836) on a land-hunting expedition, and found then but one settler in the town—Jones, on section 1, of whom mention has already been made. Showerman selected one hundred and sixty acres on section 22 and, after a fortnight's waiting at the Ionia land office for his "turn," entered his land and returned at once to New York.

When the Brown and Showerman families came, some time in the fall of 1839, they found that there were already on the ground, John Terrill, William Hogle, his son-in-law, John Brown; John Maxim, Joseph Munn and Charles W. Ingalls. Brown and Showerman arranged to lodge their families at John Terrill's until such a time as they could cut out a road in section 22 and put up habitable quarters there. To accomplish these undertakings required the labors of four weeks, and meanwhile the families of Terrill, Hogle, Showerman and Brown lodged and lived in Terrill's little log cabin of but one room. There were twenty persons in the four families and if those accustomed to plenty of space and modern conveniences can begin to imagine the worrying and wearying those twenty people endured during the four weeks they passed in that one room, they will be doing some pretty good work in the way of mind-pictures. Mr. Showerman settled in section 22, upon the purchase he made in 1836, and Brown, on section 26. As to the first birth in the town, Mrs. Brown said it was that of her daughter, Luriette, who was born in 1841.

In the fall of 1837, Rufus Goddard, coming westward from Livingston county, New York, tarried a while in Lenawee county, Michigan, and then, leaving his family there, pushed on alone in search of a location. He found one in Sebewa that suited him, and back he went to Lenawee county for his family. Benjamin D. Weld was to come out with Goddard to settle and

to give Goddard some assistance toward paying for his land, but Weld was not ready just then, and so all hands decided to stop in Lenawee a while longer.

In 1843 Mr. Weld came out with his family and settled in the southwestern part of the town. Goddard followed in 1844 and, settling on a government forty in section 23, went to work for Mr. Weld, from whom he had previously borrowed money, and in the way of labor proposed to repay him. It took him a year and a half to earn money enough to pay Mr. Weld and to buy a piece of land for himself, but he got around it at last and, buying an eighty on section 32, made a permanent settlement. On that place his son Daniel W., later lived.

Daniel W. Goddard was quite a character in the settlement, even when but a lad of fifteen or thereabouts. It was upon him the neighborhood depended for mill-service, that is to say, Daniel went to the mill for everybody, although the condition of the roads was so horrible that it was as much as he could do to haul ten bushels to Newman's mill, at Portland, and back again in two days. In one sense Daniel was a public benefactor, for the want of flour was sometimes a sore one and the procuring of it was most assuredly a trouble. Young Goddard would usually set out early in the morning with his ten-bushel load, drawn by a pair of oxen, and, by dint of much urging of his beasts, he would manage to reach the mill by ten o'clock that night. While his grist was being ground he would bunk in his wagon, wrapped in his blanket, and by daylight the next morning was off again for home. The time of his arrival at home was always pretty well along in the night, and to help and cheer him on the last few miles of his journey some member of the settlement would go out and meet him, bearing a lantern to show the way and himself abounding in social pleasantry to cheer the tired Daniel until he reached his destination.

Among the settlers of 1843 or thereabouts were also John F. Olry, Elkanah Carpenter, Andrew Estes, William Reeder, Major Brown (the widow of the latter marrying Weston Briggs), John Waddell, John Estep, Thomas Waddell, Stephen Pilkinton, Moses Hogle, John C. Smith and Anson W. Halbert.

In the northwestern corner of the town the attraction for the early settler was less positive than appeared to be the case elsewhere, for there was some marsh over there. Nevertheless, ventures were made in that direction about 1850, or perhaps before. Among the earliest settlers in that region were Pierce G. Cook, Nathan Stewart, Frank Brown and Solomon

Hess, all of whom A. M. Ralston found there when, in 1852, he made a settlement on sections 8 and 17. Later there came, among others, J. C. Clark, George Snyder, John Waring and John Johnson.

In 1852 there was a road on the line between Odessa and Sebewa townships, known as the State road, but, state road as it was, it was nevertheless a poor apology for a highway.

To the names of the settlers already mentioned, may be added likewise those of such later ones as Orrin Merchant, Edward Sanborn, Peter Mapes, David Griffin, William Estep, Chauncey Lott, Jacob Greene, I. Bretz, E. Probasco, T. J. Allen, A. Garlock, O. Stebbins and P. Griner.

The resident taxpayers of Sebewa in 1845 were: John Waddell, section 14, 80 acres; Edward Sanborn, section 1, 38 acres; Orrin Merchant, sections 1, 6, 60 acres; John Maxim, section 1, 38 acres; Peter Mapes, section 2, 80 acres; Joseph Munn, section 1, 38 acres; George W. Dickinson, sections 13, 24, 320 acres; A. W. Halbert, sections 24, 25, 240 acres; John F. Terrill, section 25, 70 acres; William Hogle, section 25, 50 acres; Richard Fleetham, section 25, 80 acres; Moses Hogle, section 36, 160 acres; Charles W. Ingalls, personal; John Terrill, personal; Eleazer Brown, sections 26, 27, 120 acres; Jacob Showerman, section 22, 160 acres; B. D. Weld, sections 5, 32, 33, 400 acres.

Although no record of the transactions at the first township meeting, in 1845, is in existence, the names of the nineteen persons who voted at that election may be here given, as follow: Joseph Munn, Paul Steel, Benjamin D. Weld, Edward Sanborn, A. W. Halbert, John C. Smith, William Hogle, John M. Terrill, Jacob Showerman, Orrin Merchant, Richard Fleetham, Moses Hogle, Walter Harmon, Eleazer Brown, John Maxim, George W. Dickinson, Elkanah Drake, Rufus Goddard and John Waddell.

Elkanah Carpenter, Richard O. McWorter, Cyril Carpenter, John Maxim, Oliver Brailey, John Waddell, Jr., Daniel W. Goddard, William Reeder, Moses Hogle, B. D. Weld, John Waddell, William Dunn, Orrin Merchant, John Cooper, David Griffin, Stephen Rider, Peter Mapes, William Waters, Major Brown, Apollos Halladay, Francis Brown, Albert Thompson, Perry Trim, Lucius Showerman, William Estep, Elihu Halladay, J. A. Whelpley, Daniel Halladay, Jacob C. High, Charles Derby, Jacob Green, Richard Fleetham, John Estep, Charles W. Ingalls, Charles Hammond, John F. Olry, Hiram Trim, P. G. Cook, Jacob Collingham, D. W. Rose, Jacob Showerman and Chauncey Lott were voters at the elections held in Sebewa township in 1853.

Township 5 north, range 6 west, now called Sebewa, was divided between Berlin and Portland townships until March 19, 1845, when, by act of Legislature, it was created a township with exclusive organization. The names first proposed for it were Charlestown, in honor of Charles W. Ingalls, and Liberia, but, Rufus Goddard suggesting Sebewa, after Sebewa creek, and meaning, "little river," public fancy was suited and "Sebewa" met with popular approval. The first township meeting was held at the house of Jacob Showerman, but no record of the meeting is in existence.

The following have served as supervisors of Sebewa township: 1847-48, B. D. Weld; 1849-50, R. Goddard; 1851, William Packard; 1852, H. Trim; 1853-54, B. D. Weld; 1855-56, C. W. Ingalls; 1857, C. C. Carpenter; 1858, A. Howland; 1859-63, L. Bretz; 1864-66, D. W. Goddard; 1867-69, I. Bretz; 1870, G. W. Goddard; 1871-72, L. E. Showerman; 1873, J. Waring; 1874-75, L. E. Showerman; 1876-77, A. M. Ralston; 1878-79, L. E. Showerman; 1880, D. W. Goddard; 1881-89, Watson Merchant; 1890, Riley N. Wilson; 1891-92, Watson Merchant; 1893, O. V. Showerman; 1894, C. L. Halladay; 1896, J. M. Bradley; 1897-16, Adam Fender.

SEBEWA.

The village commonly known as Sebewa Corner lies on both sides of the line between Sebewa and Danby townships and takes in the platted village of Cornell in Danby. Properly speaking, the name "Cornell" belongs now to the entire village, although it is of such recent bestowal, consequent upon the similar change of the postoffice name from Sebewa, that the average villager has not yet become sufficiently familiar with it to give it ready voice.

The first attempt at establishing a trading point at that locality was made in 1851, by a Mr. Hulse, who brought a few goods in a trunk and sold them out to Aretas Howland. There were a grist-mill and saw-mill in that locality when Hulse set up his store, and because they were there he thought, of course, a store was likely to meet with some support. These mills were on Sebewa creek, just west of the township-line road. The saw-mill, the first in the town, had been built by John Terrill and A. W. Halbert; the grist-mill, by Chauncey Lott and Jacob Green, in '1849, or thereabouts.

In 1852 Elihu Halladay settled near the Corners, and in 1853 came John Friend, who bought Jacob Green's log house and, after occupying it a year, built a house and in one part thereof put a stock of goods, becoming a trader. From that time to 1879 he kept store at the Corners almost con-

tinuously. The first tavern at the Corners was opened in 1854 by William Barber, and stood next south of Friend's house. P. G. Cook succeeded Barber as landlord, and after him Hiram Trim took the helm.

The postoffice at the Corners was called Cornell, although up to the spring of 1880 it bore the name of Sebewa. Cornell had since 1867 been the name of that portion of the village lying in Danby, the plat having been recorded in that year, and, in deference to request, the postoffice name was changed to accord with the name of the legalized portion of the village.

Sebewa postoffice was established along about 1846 or 1847, and B. D. Weld was appointed postmaster. In 1853 the office was removed from the Weld neighborhood, in the southwest corner, and transferred to the Showerman settlement, when L. E. Showerman received the appointment. In 1857 the office was moved to the Corners. John Friend was the first postmaster at the Corners, being succeeded by O. W. Kibbey and R. W. Wilson.



HALL-FOWLER MEMORIAL LIBRARY, IONIA.



CITY HALL, IONIA.

TRADERS AND TAVERNS.

In the fall of 1836 old Coon Ten Eyck, of Northville, Michigan, concluded that Ionia offered a good opening for a merchant, and so he arranged to send his son William up there, in company with John Lloyd, for the purpose of opening a store. Lloyd and Ten Eyck rented Samuel Dexter's barn, and engaged Ezekiel Welch, then captain of the pole-boat "Davy Crockett," to bring up a load of goods from Grand Haven. Welch set sail from Ionia on September 28, having on board twenty-eight passengers for Grand Rapids, at one dollar a head. Those who were in a hurry lent a hand in poling the boat; those who had leisure took matters lazily. Welch got the goods and brought them up as far as Utica landing, now in Easton, whence they were hauled by teams to Ionia, for the river above was then too low for a boat. Lloyd and Ten Eyck used Dexter's barn until they could put up a store-building, which was simply a hastily-constructed block-house. It occupied the corner of Main and Third streets, known as the "grab-store," because of the high prices charged by Lloyd for goods. Lloyd used to say, in explanation, that it cost a heap to get goods down the river, and he was bound to make Ionians pay for them. In December, 1837, they received a load of goods, by the steamer "Governor Mason," and it may be that they were enabled after that to put prices down to a decent figure. The second store was opened by M. J. Youngs, his being a hardware store. He afterward occupied the corner of Main and Kidd streets, where he was doing business in 1837, and where he eventually failed.

There was no village tavern until early in 1838, although there were boarding-houses before that, Asa Spencer, in 1836, opening the first one. The frame for the structure, which was called the Eagle Tavern, was, however, raised in July, 1837, but the enterprise was left uncompleted, until 1843, when Abel Avery bought and finished it, christening it the "Grand River Eagle." Samuel Dexter wanted a tavern for the town and, with J. W. Brown, register of the land office; Cyrus Lovell and others, formed what was known as the Ionia House Company, for the purposes of building a tavern to be called the Ionia House. A site was chosen on the corner now occupied by the Bailey House, and Jeremiah Eaton, a house-builder of Herkimer county, New York, was induced, by the promise of a liberal interest in the company, to come out and build the tavern. As before observed, the frame was raised in July, 1837, and a kitchen finished, but by that time the affair had gone in expenditure so far beyond the expectations of the