

IVAN & CHARLOTTE (KEYES) ESTES
Interviewed by Hila Bross on 31 August 1977
For the Clinton County Historical Society – Tape #002
Transcribed by LaRene Smith & Myrna Van Epps, April 2006

Side 1

This is an interview of Ivan Estes of Tucson, Arizona, about early days in St. Johns, Michigan. This is part of the oral history project of the Clinton County Historical Society. The interview is being held at the home of Manning and Hila Bross, the old Salt Box House [restaurant at corner of US-27 and French Road north of St. Johns], and Hila Bross is doing the interviewing. The date is August 31, 1977.

Ivan, both you and your wife, Charlotte, are here with us this afternoon and both of you have the distinction of being descended from some of the earliest settlers in Clinton County, so I'm going to start with you and your ancestors who were early settlers in St. Johns. How about George Washington Estes? What relation were you to him?

George Washington Estes was my grandfather, on my father's side of the family, and he came to Michigan in the summer of 1845, and they came from Porter, Niagara County, NY, and traveled in a wagon drawn by a team of horses. They arrived on the present site of St. Johns on October 16, 1845, years before a house or even a shanty was erected here.

Where did your Grandfather live before St. Johns itself was in existence?

His first home was on 80 acres on the west half of the SW quarter of section 9. It was there that the first post office in the town was established with Mr. Estes the postmaster. The mail for the few residents for this portion of the county was then directed to Bingham and the post office was in the building occupied by Grandfather and his family. When he moved to the village of St.

Johns, he carried the office with him and remained as the postmaster until 1856.

How did he happen to come to St. Johns? How did he get acquainted with John Swegles and the others who were in the company that founded, planned, and built St. Johns?

Grandfather came to the area as a result of a friend who lived over near DeWitt and he came here with his wife and little son, Calvin, and a brother James. Late in 1853, while the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad was being extended westward from Detroit, a land company was organized to select a tract of land for a station or a village site. John Swegles was to buy the land and his first purchase was from Mr. Estes who helped him purchase a total of 920 acres. The site of the village hadn't been chosen and Mr. Swegles engaged Mr. Estes then to take charge of the surveying and clearing the land which was all timber.

Then in 1854, a board building was built on the northeast corner of Clinton and State and leased to Mr. Estes and used as a tavern, hotel, and stage stop. Mr. Estes named it the Clinton House and lived there for a number of years. My grandfather was also the marshal at the time and as the stage coach used to stop there, why there were several interesting things happened.

It seems to me I've heard that one of those things was really interesting and a little scary. Was there ever anything like a murder at that old hotel?

Yeah, there was a murder there, alright. My Uncle Herb, the old veterinary, told me the story that at the stage station it seems that a couple of Spaniards, (He said Spaniards; they could have been Mexicans, but I think probably Spaniards) came in on the stage coach in the middle of the winter with about three foot of snow on the level and these two fellows got off the stage coach and they came into the tavern and had a little argument. One of them pulled a stiletto, which I still have. He slashed the other one across the throat with it. Well, he threw the stiletto and ran. He started out through the snow, headed kind of northwest out of St. Johns, back towards DeWitt from which the stage coach had come in. So, they tried to save the fellow's life but his jugular was cut in two so nothing they could do about it.

So they said, "We'd better get him." So Grandfather and several of the other men took some of the horses, and they climbed on, put their overcoats on, and started out through the snow after him. Just before they left the stage station, grandfather hung a coil of rope on the saddle. So, when they caught this fellow--they captured him up in about where the city park is now, in the woods. We used to call it Emmon's Woods when I was a kid. They were debating what to do with him. So Grandfather said, "Well, there are two things we can do. We can take him back and then we can all go in and within about a month or two in court and mess around, and they're going to hang him anyway, 'cause we know he is guilty, so why don't we hang him here and go on home?" So they did! I can remember years later that they used to tell me that there was a ghost up in that woods when we were kids, so maybe that was him.

Well, that certainly is an interesting and kind of a scary story. I believe that this is the first time it has ever been recorded as history. It was certainly not in any of the published histories of Clinton County. I know that you have told different people but this is the first time that it's been done sort of officially. Were any children both to your Grandfather and Grandmother Estes while they lived in that house?

Yes. The first male child born in St. Johns was my Uncle George--George Albert--and he was born October 3, 1856. He spent the rest of his life here in St. Johns. Then in 1860, my father, Louis was born in the house and that house is still standing today. My dad told me that the house set at that time at the corner of Clinton and State; then it was moved a block east across from the old Methodist Church or corner where the old steam laundry used to be, a big brick

building. Then later it was moved onto its present location which is on Spring Street, just north of where the old Hart Clinic used to be. It's a small house and as I understand it now, I believe it's being used as a beauty parlor. It's my opinion that it is probably the oldest of the original homes ever built in St. Johns, because when Dr. Gale (sp?) was remodeling it, he found in the wall an old ball. He brought down to my dad, and it was a ball made out of string. He said to dad, "Lou, did you maybe play with this ball when you were a kid?" Dad said, "Well, we used to make 'em like that. We used to take a walnut; then we'd wrap it with cord." So, they cut the ball in two and sure enough, there was a walnut inside of it. So, that pretty well cinches it, as far as I'm concerned.

That's very interesting. I'm going to retrace the location of that house now to make sure that we have it right. It was originally built at the northeast corner of State Street and Clinton Avenue. In later years, we old-timers remember that the interurban station stood on that corner and now there are lawyers' offices there, Mr. Wells and Mr. Tahvonen. Then it was moved from that corner to make way for a brick building, I believe, over near where the Shell gas station is now and an old laundry used to stand there. That would be at about the corner of Spring Street and State Street. Then later, it was moved across the street and down to 106 Spring Street where Harriett's Beauty Shop is now. Correct?

Yes. I think that would be pretty accurate.

And you think that is the oldest house in St. Johns?

I certainly believe it is because, as I said, my dad was born in the house in 1860 and I doubt if there are any ones left. There are several of them that have burned but I believe that is still the oldest house left in St. Johns of the originals.

Do you know how Spring Street got its name?

I believe that Spring Street was named because in the early days there were several springs that came out of that hill and they used to pipe the water from those springs down to the three cisterns that they had (or a couple of cisterns at that time) down where the corners are now on Main Street, and they used those for fire protection. Then after they got the pumper, they used to use water out of those when they had fire protection.

I believe that your grandfather had something to do with giving St. Johns its name.

Would you like to tell us about that?

The way its been handed down in our family, and I think its probably pretty accurate: You see, Grandfather, and Mr. Burrows, and Swegles, and Sturgis, and some of the officials were seated on a log on Walker Street when the question of naming the village came up. Several names were suggested and grandfather felt the most eminently appropriate designation would be St. Johns as a mark of honor to John Swegles. The name seemed to suit the others and they, with one accord, assented to it. Mr. Swegles said he would submit the name at the next meeting of the land company for their approval, but before the next meeting was held, John Newell came in with goods for the opening of the

store and all of his boxes were marked "St. Johns, Michigan," thus showing the name had already gone abroad. Grandfather took the cover from one of Newell's boxes and nailed it to a tree with the name, St. Johns, showing in bold relief. Thus, the embryo of the village was started in the summer of 1854 with a hotel, general store, and a saw mill. In 1855 he helped form the first Baptist Church. The village was incorporated October 15, 1857, and in 1858 the first election was held and grandfather was elected marshal, a post he kept for many years. In 1858 he helped organize the first fire department and held office of first steward, and in 1874 became the president, an office he held until his death in 1906.

To honor the occasion of his birthday, the officers of the fire department surprised him by going to his home, spending a few hours with him and before leaving they presented him with a beautiful gold headed cane with the name of the recipient and date and the name of company inscribed upon it. I had the honor of presenting it to him and still have the cane in my possession.

How old were you then?

At that time, I was 4 years old and I vaguely remember it, maybe because I was told so many times about it, but also I vaguely remember grandfather always fed me peppermint. So, I think maybe I still have that recollection.

I believe that you had an Estes ancestor who fought in the war of the American Revolution.

Our records show that Stephen Estes in our fourth generation here in America, was in the Revolutionary War; then his son, Ethan Estes, who was my great-grandfather, was in the War of 1812; then my father's brother, Uncle Herb, Herbert Estes, was in the Civil War; then my brother, Herbert Estes, was in the First World War; then we had six of dad's grandchildren were in the Second World War and they all came back safely. Two of those boys were my own boys and one was Herbert's son. The other was Frank's son and two of the boys were my sister's sons.

Can you think of any anecdotes that you think should be recorded for posterity?

I remember one that my grandfather and your grandfather had in common. Your grandfather was a minister and he lived next door to my grandfather and he had a leak in the roof. So, he went over to Grandfather Estes and he said, "Mr. Estes, do you happen to have some shingles?" Grandfather said, "Sure, help yourself." So your grandfather took some shingles and patched his house and then he came back and he wanted to pay my grandfather for them. Grandfather Estes said, "No, I'll take it out in preaching." Your grandfather thought that was a good deal, so went along a couple of Sundays and he said,

"Mr. Estes, when are you coming up and take the first installment on those shingles?" "Well, he said, "we'll be up today." So, sure enough, your grandfather said, there was my grandfather and grandma in church. Well, he thought that was a pretty good deal, so a couple of three weeks later they hadn't been up so he said, When you coming to get another installment on those shingles?" Well, he said, "We'll be up. We'll be coming up today," and sure enough, there they were in church. Your grandfather thought that was going pretty good. So, it ran along a couple, three more weeks and grandfather wasn't much of a church goer, but then he was a pretty good old guy; but anyway, he said, "You know, Reverend," he said, "If it's all the same with you, I'll just call the deal square."

Don't you wish we could have heard our two grandfathers talking about this? Incidentally, just for the record, my grandfather that Ivan has referred to was the Reverend G. S. Northrop, who was minister of the Baptist Church, that I think, Mr. Estes attended from time to time. Where did you start school?

I started school in the old North Ward School, now known as the Perrin Palmer School. We called it the North Ward then. We went to the sixth grade there and then moved up to the old Central School High School; and seventh grade was with Minnie Barrington; and then we went to eighth grade; and then we had four years of high school in the old high school building. There's one interesting note that I'd like to add right here because Treva Chant, Treva Graham Hill, and I started kindergarten at the North Ward School and graduated from high school together. I think that's kind of a record, about 13 years of _____ kids going to school all straight through.

Did you have Anna Ketchum as a teacher at North Ward?

I sure did and I'll never forget my first morning of going to school with Anna Ketchum because all the rest of the kids had told me how bad she was and my brothers and sisters all didn't like her. I told my mother I'm not goin' to school to Anna Ketchum! Well she said, "You are going to school to Anna Ketchum." So that morning I was all dressed up ready to go to school and I was out in the yard and here comes Anna Ketchum--she lived just a block east of us-- come along up through there and she says, "Ivan, are you going to school with me this morning?" I said, "Yes, Ma'm" and I went to school with Anna Ketchum and I loved her.

Was it true that she used to have you sing and that she beat with the pitch pipe on the desk so much that there was a groove on the desk?

You've got it right down to a "T". I'll never forget it. Wham! Bang!

Did any of your family ever have anything to do with the St. Johns Table Factory?

Yes. My father was the foreman of the transportation department. In other words, he was chief teamster, I guess, as they had all horses at that time. He was there until the table factory closed.

What do you know about the Hayes Motor Wheel Works?

The Hayes Wheel Works was an operation during the First World War and they were making wooden wheels with wooden spokes that were used for trucks and automobiles. I had the honor of working there for about one week pulling nails and I didn't like the job so I quit.

I think I've told you the story about my grandfather when I was visiting and going to the Hayes Works and getting some parts of wheels to use for wood and for kindling, but then he made me a swing out of one piece. It was just a wonderful swing and fitted the human anatomy much better than the flat boards ever did. How about the Triangle Truck Company? Do you remember anything about that?

The Triangle Truck Company was an operation, I believe, along about the same time the Wheel Works was going, because Clyde Hendershot was one of the officials and Mr. Burke, Red Burke of the Burke Grocery Company; and also they assembled the trucks up there. They were very good trucks, in fact; and also during high school, I helped in the F. C. Mason Company. At that time F. C. Mason Company were making the frames for the trucks. So I do remember that but I don't know how long they were in existence after the war.

Can you remember about any other businesses or industries in the early days of St. Johns?

One that I remember was the Woods Mill. That was a flour mill and that was right in the same block with F. C. Mason Company, on the corner just south of there. That burned. Then a block east of that was an old mattress factory. I think it was called the Bunday Mattress Factory. Then another, of course, prominent industry in St. Johns was the cider mill. It was the largest vinegar works in the world and was owned by Elmer Emmons. We always called him Uncle Elmer and I never knew why until I started working on my genealogy and I found out that Elmer's wife's mother was a sister-in-law of my grandmother, Mrs. Smith.

Water is one of the most important resources for any community. Can you tell us anything about the history of the supply of water in the St. Johns area?

About the water situation in St. Johns, by the time I came along why it was pretty well underway, but as I understand it, the original springs that I mentioned before were used for the cisterns in the street for fire protection and then most everybody had their own pump and there were some on the corners. When I was born in 1902, I lived right across the road from the old city waterworks. At that waterworks plant they had several wells in the area and they were pumped and in the north end of the waterworks there was a room that had two large pumping plants run by engines that kept the city water pressure in the mains. They had water mains at that time. And then later on, they built the big stand pipe. I don't remember just when that was built there at the north end by the waterworks and then, of course, later on they built the other one. But originally, the water was pumped from the city water plant and now as I

understand it, its all done by electric motors from the wells which pump them directly to the stand pipe and the stand pipe then maintains the pressure in the water mains.

Also, in conjunction with the pumping station, they also generated the city electric power there at what we called the waterworks, but it also was the electric light plant too. Later on after the waterworks burned, why the Consumers Power Company came in and took over the power for the city, as I remember.

I understand that your father had some theatrical experience. Would you like to tell us a little about that?

Dad, for a number of years, was quite an accomplished actor. He had his own show company for a number of years. He put on shows in various towns in Michigan and some of his favorite plays was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Golden Farmer*, *The Moonshiner's Daughter*, *Judas Maccabeus*. From the records, I guess, they had some very interesting times with it.

You asked me if there was any particular thing little thing in the acting that I remember about my dad, and there's one story that he's told us: When he was putting on the show, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he played the part of Simon Legree. His Uncle Tom was a white man, just blacked up, you know, and they were up at either Saginaw or Bay City putting on a show, and Uncle Tom was taken sick on a Thursday night and they had a Friday and a Saturday night yet to put on. So he called into a casting agency down in Detroit and they sent up a man by the name of Hardigan to play the part of Uncle Tom. Well, after the first show, Dad always--if you remember *Uncle Tom's Cabin*--they carried a big old black snake and it was a regular bull whip and he also had a loaded grip on it. Well anyway, when it came to the whipping scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Dad would always change and use a paper whip which would snap and crack; and then of course, when he knocked Uncle Tom down, he would just push. This first night he had this man Hardigan and after the show he told my dad he thought his act stunk because he just wasn't realistic enough. So Dad said, "OK, maybe we can change it tomorrow night." So, Saturday night when they put on the show, Dad didn't change whips. He used the original black snake and every time he lashed the fellow with the black snake he screamed bloody murder and then when he went to knock him down why he just used the loaded whip and he knocked him cold and they had to wake him up before he could die! After the show, then this man said to my dad, "I want to see you after this show." So Dad was waiting for him outside as he thought maybe he was going to have a little scrap or something; but anyway, the fellow came up to him and he said, "Lou, I want to apologize to you. You are without a doubt the best Simon Legree in the business. I would like to join up with your show and we'll tour the world." But

Dad decided against it and years later Mr. Hardigan used to come over from Lansing. He'd be there on business and he'd get the interurban, and he'd come on over to St. Johns. He'd come down and talk to my dad and they would reminisce. So I vaguely remember that.

Did you ever have any theatrical experience yourself?

I don't know whether you would call it theatrical experience, but of course all the way through high school, about every play that was on I usually had something to do with it because I was a character. Anybody that ever knew me would know that there was always something going on, but the last one I remember was: the County Normal class put on a play in the old opera house and three of we boys in high school--I think I was in the senior class at that time--and one them was Dean Hart and the other boy was French Holbrook and myself, and we were the three boys that they had helping put on the show. The show was called, *Cupid At Vassar* and at that time the old opera house was where Kurt's Appliance Store is downstairs, and upstairs was the opera house. The other day I was in Kurt's and we went up and looked and there were still some old chairs and things up in the top above Kurt's store which was part of the old opera house. But we always had a lot of fun. Yes, I believe that was called the Allison Opera House.

You asked to tell a story about what happened and it was really funny because I was blacked up and I was playing the part of Shiny the Darkie and I was the manservant to the girl who came up from down South to go to Vassar College. Well, the first good laugh I was able to work out was with French Holbrook. He was a city slicker. He was sitting on a park bench, so and I went over and set down aside of him, and, he of course, pulled off to one side. He didn't want to be sitting down with that manservant. So he moved over and he kept moving over, and finally I got him clear over on the end of the bench and just before he got up, I got up first. Well, the bench went upside down and French went on his fanny on the floor. Well, that created a good laugh and then I sat down. As I sat down, I was supposed to laugh and say, "I sure fixed that city slicker!" And as I did—one of the lights was out in the footlight--and I looked down and my good old friend, Dr. Squires, was sitting down there and he was quite rotund if you remember him, and he had his hands on his tummy and he started to laugh. Well, that got me going and I laughed until I practically cried. I had to put more black on when I got off, but I played the laugh as long as I could and finally got off and got chewed out for playing it so long. But anyway, if you are playing a comedy part, you're supposed to play it all the laugh you can get out of it just like old Red Skelton and those fellows do it.

In the last act French was supposed to get ready to steal a girl's silverware and I was supposed to come up behind him with a horse pistol and arrest him and

take him off the stage. The gun wasn't supposed to be loaded, of course, but I had some blank cartridges and so just as we left the stage, why I shot one in the floor and I think French jumped twenty feet. Of course, that added to the comedy also. Then later on, why the next night I took put two shots down in the floor and I think that was about the last play they had in the opera house.

I'd like to ask your wife, Charlotte, some questions because Charlotte is also descended from some of the earliest settlers and some distinguished settlers of St. Johns. I believe that your great great grandfather, Samuel Rowell, was the second settler to come into Greenbush Township. Do you know anything about this?

I'm sorry, I don't know a thing about it.

Well, you'll just have to learn more about your ancestors because they were very interesting. Ivan, do you know anything about the Rowells?

No.

Side 2

Charlotte's maiden name was Keyes and her grandfather was Steven Keyes whose first wife was Louie Rowell and Louie Rowell's grandfather was the second settler in Greenbush Township and lived over where Greenbush borders Duplain Township. He settled in eastern part of Greenbush in 1845. He established an iron foundry there and later the iron foundry was operated by your great grandfather, Stephen Rowell. Stephen Rowell was a close friend of another great grandfather of yours, Harlan Keyes and the two of them used to go hunting up north together. Steven Rowell was a memorable looking gentleman. I've seen pictures of him with a great big beard and he was noted for his prowess as a hunter. Your grandfather Palmer was a well-known man in St. Johns. In fact, he was a medical doctor. Would you like to tell us some things about your Grandfather Palmer, Henry Palmer?

Grandfather Palmer came to this part of the country as a young man and made his home with my great grandparents, the Perrins. When he was ready to go to college, he was given some assistance and took up engineering, civil engineering, I believe it was. After completing that he went west and worked, I believe, on the first railroad in Colorado but couldn't or wouldn't tolerate the abuse given the Chinese help on the project. They weren't about to change their tactics either so he left and came back and went to school again to study to be a doctor. When he was in school at Michigan State Agricultural College--it was then—he, along with some others, made brick and built what is now (I believe, still standing) Old Main Building on Michigan State campus.

As a doctor in St. Johns, he was a very well-loved man and a very busy person. One instance that I remember Grandmother telling me about him was that: When people in the south [probably means "north"] end of town needed some exercise, he would prescribe certain pills for them and send them to a specific well in the south end of town twice a day. That was the only well that had the

water that was the right mineral for them. And if people in the south end of town needed exercise, he would give them a different colored pill and send them to somebody's well in the north end of town. So people had exercise problems then the same as they do now. These pills were made from steamed Boston brown bread that Grandmother made and my mother as a girl rolled them and coated them different colors.

My grandfather was a very heavy man and ran about 350 pounds when he passed away. He had a terrific appetite as his weight would indicate. He was a very busy man but he didn't push himself too hard. He had a couple of dredges and dredge crews, so when things piled up on him he would go out to one of the dredges. That's where you could find him if you really had to have him or else he'd turn the team around and head back for town. He'd go to sleep and the team would drive on home and into the barn and just stand there until Grandfather woke up.

As an engineer, Grandfather was very helpful to my great grandfather because Grandfather had his dredges and crew put in drainage ditches in much of the muck land north of St. Johns. Of course, at that time the area was owned by my great grandfather and it was called Perrin's Folly. The two men worked very well together and it is well-drained today. When the drainage ditches were put in, Grandmother used to tell about going out to Maple Island, where the Karber gravel pit now is located. They'd go out there in the spring and drive a team and buggy over a corduroy road along what is now Scott Road. Sometimes the water would be clear up to the hubcaps so the drainage ditches that Grandfather had put in sure did the job.

I've heard about your grandfather Palmer and his appetite. In fact, your grandmother told me that when they were first married she used to cook what she wanted and then she would cook twice as much of that for him. Then he would eat it and tell her it was good then asked to be excused and leave the house. She learned from other people that he would go straight to a restaurant and eat a great big meal after having eaten the meal that she prepared. After she learned that, she told me that she used to cook what she would want and then she would cook six times as much for him.

Along that same line, I might tell you a story that my grandmother used to tell me: [She] said that when my mother, Ruth Palmer, was a little girl and like many little girls, was in a big rush to eat her food and get out doors and play with her playmates and she was just shoveling the food in as fast as she possibly could. So, her father, Dr. Palmer, said "Ruth, do you know what a little pig is?" And Grandma said, your mother sat there and she looked at him and she thought and she looked and finally she said, "Yes, an old hog's daughter!" Well, that was the end of that!

I think it is rather interesting that both your grandfather and your mother did develop diabetes and perhaps that had some connection with an appetite such as he had.

True. Grandfather was diabetic and he died in 1909 and insulin didn't come in until 1921. He always said he'd dig his grave with his teeth and I guess you might say he did just that. Mother was diabetic for about 35 years but by then we had insulin and she pretty well controlled it. However, her death could be attributed to diabetes because it was a cardiac condition that terminated her life. My family regarded Dr. Palmer very highly. He was my grandfather and grandmother's Northrup's family doctor. My mother who was near-sighted was given glasses by your grandfather when she was about thirteen. In my husband's family, the Bross family, Dr. Palmer was their family doctor and he delivered my husband's sister when she was born. It was interesting that you were later to become her cousin when your mother married into the Keyes family. Did you ever hear about the Perrin Hotel in St. Johns?

No, I guess that's something I missed or else I've just forgotten it.

The Perrin Hotel was owned and operated by your great grandfather's brother, Porter K. Perrin. Both men were attorneys at law and ran a law firm together. On the side, Porter K. Perrin had this hotel. He hired a manager to run it. It was quite an impressive place, about 40 rooms, and it stood where the Methodist Church presently stands across from the courthouse. The Methodist Church at that time was farther east on State Street right at the end of Spring Street and faced north. When they wanted to build the old red brick Methodist Church in the late 90's, the Perrin House was divided into two sections and moved into different parts of town. Its interesting that your great grandfather, Harlan Keyes, who had been living on a farm that he owned in Bingham Township since 1876, decided to retire about that time and he bought part of the Perrin Hotel and it was moved to East McConnell Street. Your great grandparents Keyes lived there for several years. This house is now owned by Charlie and Jan Huntington.

Another side of the Perrin personality was the fact that Grandpa Perrin had lost one daughter in a train wreck--in Pennsylvania, I believe it was--Ella Perrin. That left him with just one daughter, Lucy, who married Dr. Palmer. After Ella was killed--I believe I was right when I say afterwards--the Perrins took in two fine young men, Eugene Livingston and Henry Palmer, later to become Dr. Palmer. These two young men worked there for him and he helped them and they helped him. Both of them have contributed a great deal to the community in their lives.

Mr. Perrin was a lawyer when he came here from Vermont. He also served as a state senator later on in his life. It was through his efforts that the Perrin Palmer School, as it is now called, was established. He gave the land for that. It was first called Perrin School. Many people living around that area called it the North Ward School, but it was officially named Perrin School. Then the name was

changed many years later to honor both men and called the Perrin Palmer School. I believe that was when they put up the new building.

Grandpa Perrin also figured quite heavily in the paving of Clinton Avenue when it was paved with red brick. I think Grandpa Palmer surveyed it out for that. They were farsighted people because that is a wide street for the days when that was first put in.

I think your husband, Ivan's grandfather, had something to do with planning that street because he helped draw up the plans for downtown St. Johns--George W. Estes. All of these men we've been talking about had a great deal to do with planning St. Johns and with the development of Clinton County. We can certainly be grateful for their farsightedness.

Among other things that come to mind are the houses that the grandparents built. Grandpa Perrin, rather, was the one who laid out and built several houses on both Lewis and Floral. Of course, as I always called it--we in the family called it--, the "big brick" and the "little brick." The big brick is where Dr. Howe now has his veterinary practice. There were several other houses in St. Johns built by them and houses and barns throughout the county. One of the houses in the rural area was the house that is now owned by Mrs. Alden Livingston. It was her parents' home--about 2-1/2 miles north of St. Johns on Highway 27.

Grandfather built that as a farm home when he purchased practically all of the muck land north of St. Johns. Because it was under water, most of it, they called it Perrin's Folly. He said it would be the most valuable land in the immediate area some day and that has proven to be true.

You have said that you don't know anything about this next thing I am going to bring up, but I have been told that the Village of Perrinton was also named for Henry M. Perrin, that he invested in land along the railroad that runs through Middleton and Perrinton and Pompeii and started that village. But you say that you've never heard anything about that. Henry M. Perrin was really a great man and contributed much to the early development of St. Johns.

I would like to say something about you, yourself, and your mother as I remember her when I was in high school. I belonged to the Campfire Girls and your mother was one of the ones who started Campfire Girl movement in St. Johns. I can remember the beautiful Indian dresses with the beads that you and she wore and the headbands and all that. It was really wonderful. The Girl Scouts have sort of crowded out the Campfire Girls but it was an excellent movement for girls and your mother did a great deal for it.

Ivan, I suppose you and Charlotte are anxious to return to Tucson which is where you now make your home.

Yes. We've been out in Tucson since 1943 and it is a wonderful place to live especially when you can sit out on the patio and look up at the mountains and see the snow and don't have to shovel snow like you guys do here. We'll be back to see you again some day, I hope.

I want to thank both you and Charlotte for giving us some intimate glimpses into the past of some of your ancestors who meant a great deal to the development of St. Johns and Clinton County.

This is Hila Bross signing off for the Clinton County Historical Society, August 31, 1977.