

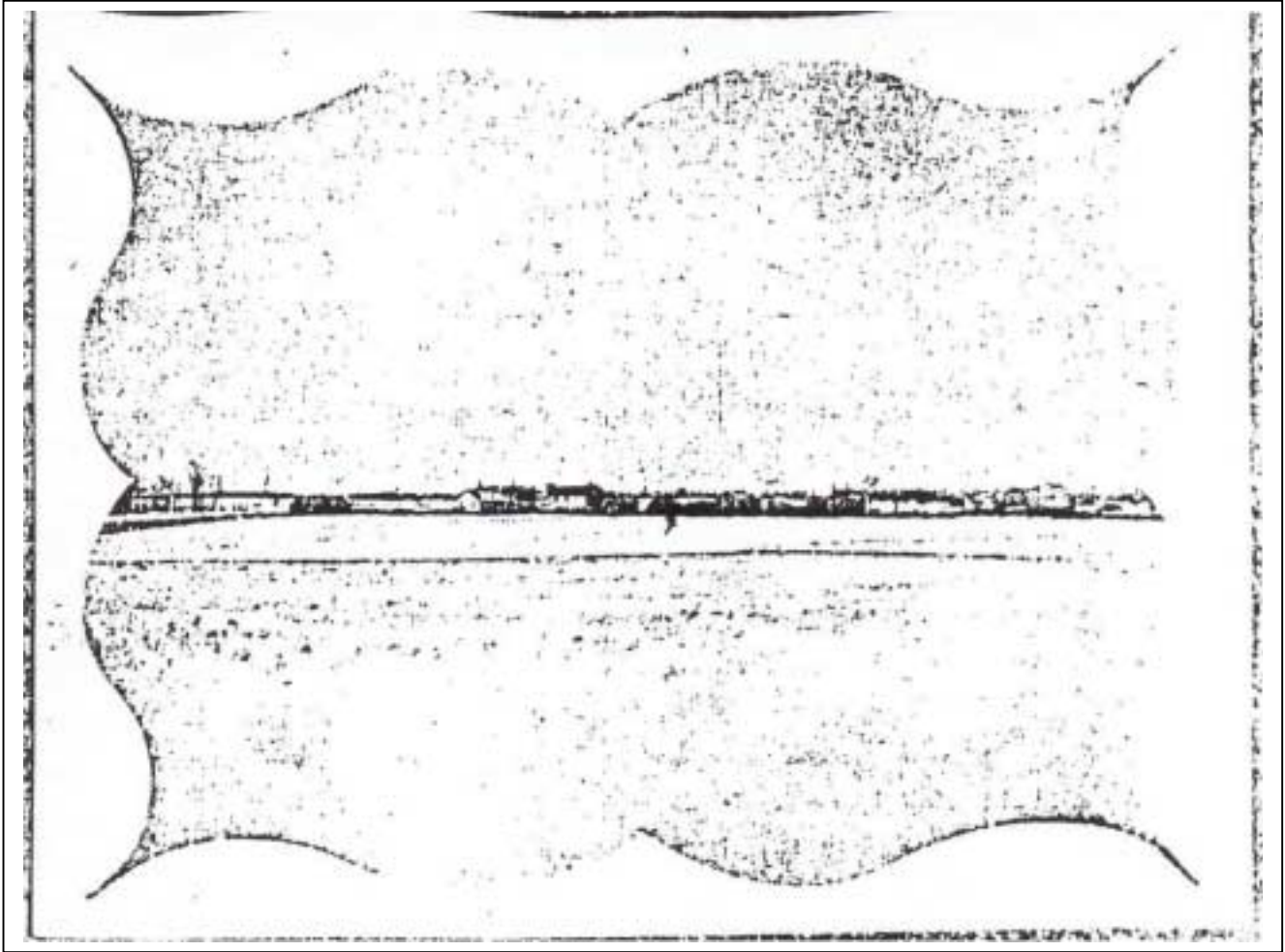
Forest Hill History

The remembrance of an era of a once active and bustling community, welded together by the bonds of friendship, fellowship, and concerns for the well being of their neighbors.

Compiled and written by:

Bertha Light

1979



This photo was found in an old photography album of pictures taken of the Forest Hill area by Henry Schrader. It was sent as a Christmas gift to a cousin in Sidney, Illinois. The picture is taken of Forest Hill looking northwest and shows the Blacksmith Shop, Cowles Store, Woodman Hall, the Landers home and the home built by Charles Cowles.

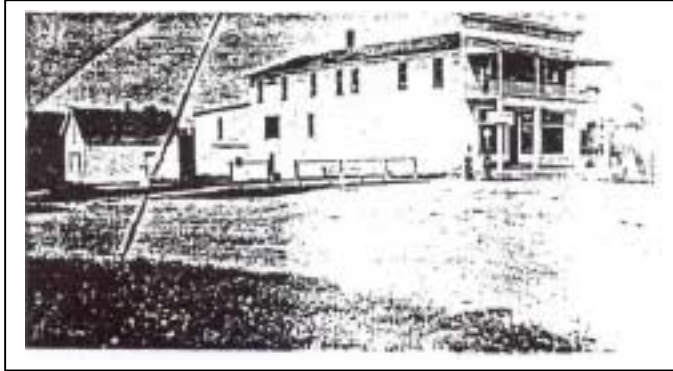
With the passing of the present generation, all memories and knowledge of the history of Forest Hill, located in the center of Riley Township, will have vanished. The remembrance of an era of a once active and bustling community, welded together by the bonds of friendship, fellowship, and concerns for the well being of their neighbors, will be gone. It was a community that provided a cheese factory, post office, blacksmith shop, ashery, Woodman Hall, and last, but not least, a general country store. The store was filled with activity when, on Saturday nights, the residents of the community came with their baskets of eggs to trade, and stock up on necessary items as groceries, meats, yard goods, drugs, medicines, hardware, nails, rope and anything else "from soup to nuts", as the old saying goes. It was a time when sugar came in 100 pound bags, cookies were displayed and sold from large square containers with clear covers, the vinegar barrel was laid on its side on a raised platform to make it easier to spigot out



**Front Row - Left to Right - Augusta (Schroeder) Martens, Herman Schroeder
 2nd Row - Christian Schroeder, Wilhelmine (Hahn), Augusta (Hopp) Krumm with infant
 Emma on lap, Rickie (Martin) Easton, Mary (Schroeder) Martin, Wilhelmine Schroeder
 3rd Row -Wilhelm Krumm, August Schroeder, Emma (Schroeder) Luect, Ida (Schultz)
 Schroeder, Eliza (Schroeder) Schumaker, Rosa (Schroeder) Jastram, Charles A. Martin
 (Photo was taken in 1900)**

the contents, the kerosene barrel was at the rear of the store with a hand-operated pump, the open cracker-barrel stood at the end of the counter, and the stick candy and jar of horehound candy had a prominent place on the top of the counter to entice the children.

After the shopping was completed, the evening was spent in discussing farm prices, settling township matters, talking over school problems, line fences, sheep claims, taxes, selling Liberty-Bonds, sharing the news of the community, and, yes --war talk. Many of the battles were fought on the home front, on a Saturday night at the Forest Hill Store.



**Forest Hill Store
M. Spitzley and Co.**
(Photo was taken about 1921)

In those days, there was no comprehension of convenience or fad foods, repackaged or self-service, and the use of a credit card was unheard of. The advent of the automobile and airplane, the radio and television, automatic washers and refrigeration, and electricity were heralded by "Aha" and "Ohs", by old and young alike, and welcomed with joyful anticipation.

I will never forget the excitement when we, as children, heard an airplane in the distance and would rush outside and watch as that "bird" flew overhead and see it disappear from view, little realizing that planes, one day would be a part of many households.

What a thrill it would be to turn back the pages of time, if we could "swap yarns" with the early settlers in the area and hear, again, the interesting and informative things they could tell us of the growth and development of

the community. Many stories, or happenings, related to the children by parents, grandparents, neighbors and friends are many times, the only link we have, to establish the date, or time, of some incidents which make up Forest Hill history and makes the community especially dear to many hearts. No longer does a passing motorist, traveling Jason and Forest Hill Roads see the once familiar sight of chickens, ducks and geese roaming in the door-yard; the beauty of a large, well-kept farm house and barn with a straw-stack or two and the peaceful grazing of the cattle and sheep in the pasture field, or wood-lot surrounding the homestead. However, people today, motoring through the quiet country-side on a fine improved gravel road dotted with new and improved homes and a four-family apartment, one little realizes that Forest Hill, so named by the early settlers because of the dense forest of stately ash, basswood, beech, elm, cherry, oak, maple and walnut trees that covered the hills surrounding the area, has an interesting history that dates back to 1833.

In May 1833, Judge Samuel Dexter, with a party of early pioneers and an Indian guide, were cutting their way through the dense forest following a trail made by the Indians and identified only by marked trees. With food rations running low and chilly and rainy weather hampering their progress, the journey was exhausting.

As they forged their way through this area, the two-year old son of Judge Dexter became ill and died of scarlet fever. Riley Dexter, from whom Riley took its name, was

buried under an immense elm tree beside the trail, as the party was ready to cross the Muskrat Creek. The tree has long since disappeared, but the burial of Riley Dexter remains in history as the first white child buried in Clinton County. A graphic account of the journey, burial and location of the burial place appeared in the Republican news of May 7, 1931 and appears in Appendix A.

As time progressed, the property on which the burial took place, located 1-1/2 miles north of Saint Peter Lutheran Church, was owned for many years by Frederick Mohnke and wife, Wilhelmine, Nee Schult. These parents, together with their eight children, immigrated to America in the spring of 1892 from Briggow, Mecklenburg Schwerin, Germany. Following Judge Dexter's perilous journey, the old Indian trail became known as Dexter Trail and extended from Pontiac to Ionia. The map shows the trail through Riley, cut by Judge Dexter, but as the township became settled and fenced, the original route was somewhat altered.

The land comprising the area of the Forest Hill community was Sections 8, 9, 16 and 17, which is the intersection of Forest Hill and Jason Roads. The original land-entries from the United States government were made to the following people, many of whom were non-residents and speculators who never became settlers.

Section 8

Philip P. Peck, Lenawee Co. Mich., Sept. 22, 1836, northwest quarter 8.8. Karcheval, Detroit, Mich., Dec. 10, 1836, southwest quarter, Seba Murphy, Monroe Co., Mich., Dec 13, 1836, east half of northeast quarter, William Gibson (**See Appendix Y - 6**), Senaca Co., N.V., Dec 13, 1836, west half of northeast quarter .

Section 9

Uzziel Kanouse, Washtenaw Co., Mich., Nov. 4 1836, east half

Section 16

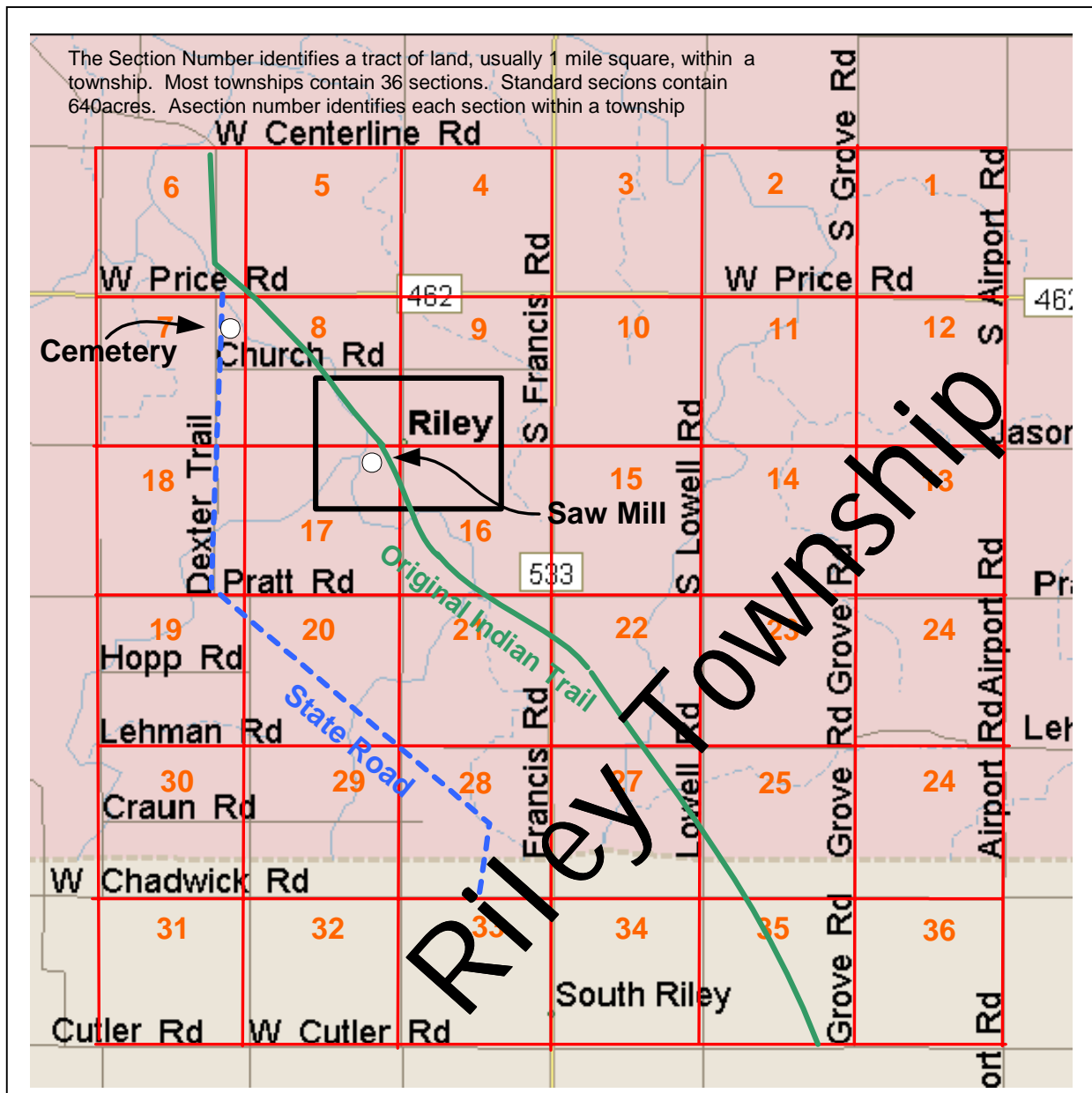
School lands

Section 17

David S. Hodgman. Onondaga Co., N.V. Sept. 27, 1836, east half of northeast quarter and northeast quarter of southeast quarter.

Elisha Hodgman, Onondaga Co., N.V., Sept. 27, 1836, west half of northeast quarter.

James V. Ryan, Ionia Co., Mich., Nov. 4, 1836, west half.



During the month of November 1836, Morris Boughton of Elmira, New York, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Benjamin Welch, came into Clinton County. Mr. Welch settled in Dallon and Mr. Boughton settled in what is now Riley, on the northeast quarter of Section 7, Town 6 North, Range 3 West, and assigned, according to a land entry, to Phebe Boughton. Mr. Boughton boarded at the home of Cortland Hill, the first settler in Bengal Township, who had moved into Bengal only a few months before. Mr. Boughton immediately began chopping trees and clearing his land. After putting up a log cabin on the southeast corner of his farm, he kept bachelor hall and his only cooking utensil was a kettle which served for baking, boiling and frying; a clean chip took the place of a plate.

Boughton was very industrious and as soon as ground was cleared, was growing good crops of wheat; he made a number of trips to Detroit, hauling wheat by ox-team, getting

50 cents a bushel. The nearest gristmill was at Ionia, 25 miles away and a round trip required three to six days, to complete.

After two years Mr. Boughton brought his sister Mrs. William Hayes and her husband, to live at the farm, thus relieving the lonely hours and he proceeded to build a log cabin for himself.

Mr. Boughton, having cleared the greater portion of his farm and erected comfortable buildings, set out for the State of New York and on the 10th of December 1843, was married to Lucretia Culver. They immediately returned to their home in Michigan where he became active in the affairs of the community and held many offices in the township and county.

The act organizing the township of Riley was approved March 15, 1841 and the first township meeting was held in April 1841 with township officers being elected. The second township meeting was held on April 7, 1842, 24 votes being cast.

In 1845 the four-acre site of the South Riley Cemetery had it's beginning and in 1847, the North Riley Cemetery (Boughton) was established on a portion of the Boughton property. This cemetery was taken over by an association, organized February 28, 1867, and reorganized April 2, 1879, with the following officers:

President: Cortland Hill
Clerk: S. N. Hildreth
Treasurer: C. F. Plowman
Sexton F. W. Benjamin

The first person buried in this cemetery was Mrs. Hannah Peck, whose remains were brought here in 1847. They were first buried in a farm-lot.

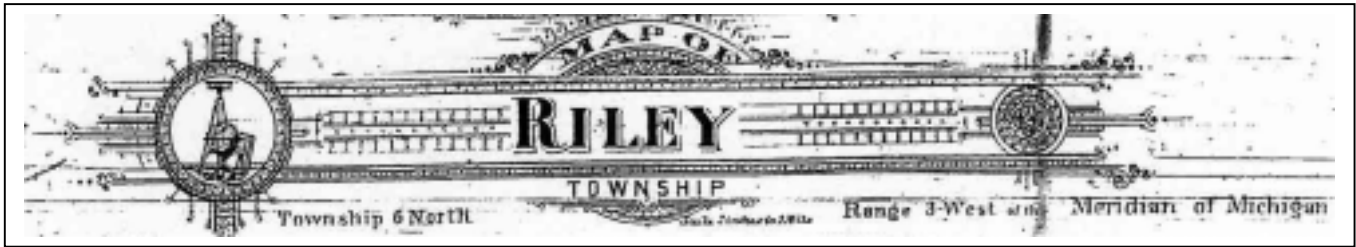
On February 16, 1876, at the age of sixty-four years, Mr. Boughton passed away, leaving a wife and eight children.

In 1886, five acres of the Boughton property was purchased for \$500.00 by Saint Peter Lutheran Church as a site for their future church which was built and dedicated in 1883. The land transfers for the church property are listed, on page 10 and 11.

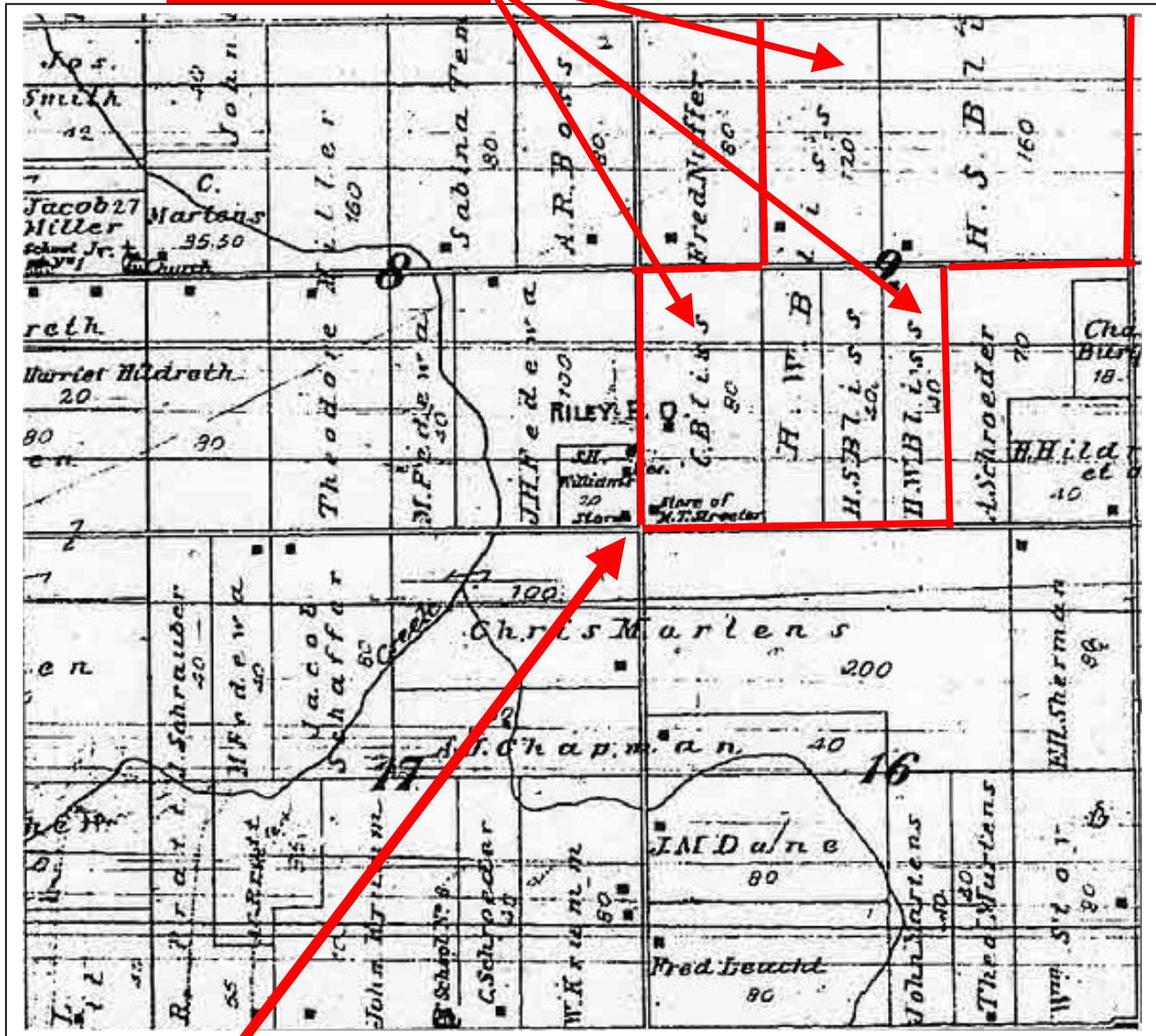
In May 1841, Philip P. Peck, his wife, three children and Mrs. Peck's father, John Gunn, moved from Tecumseh (where they had lived four years) to Riley. After a tedious journey, they found the road ended at Gordon Treat's clearing (Section 23, Riley Township). After that, marked trees to Morris Boughton's clearing identified the path, or trail. When they arrived at the clearing, near where the schoolhouse stands, Mr. Boughton was at work in his woods. He invited them to dinner, and told them they were welcome to occupy an unused cabin. The original Land Entry made to Philip P. Peck in 1835 was property that joined the Boughton property on the east.

Town 6 North, Range 3 West, Section 7, Riley

Original land entry with residence, date of entry, and description. Phebe Boughton, Wayne County, Michigan, Nov.2,1836, northeast quarter.



Henry W. Bliss property



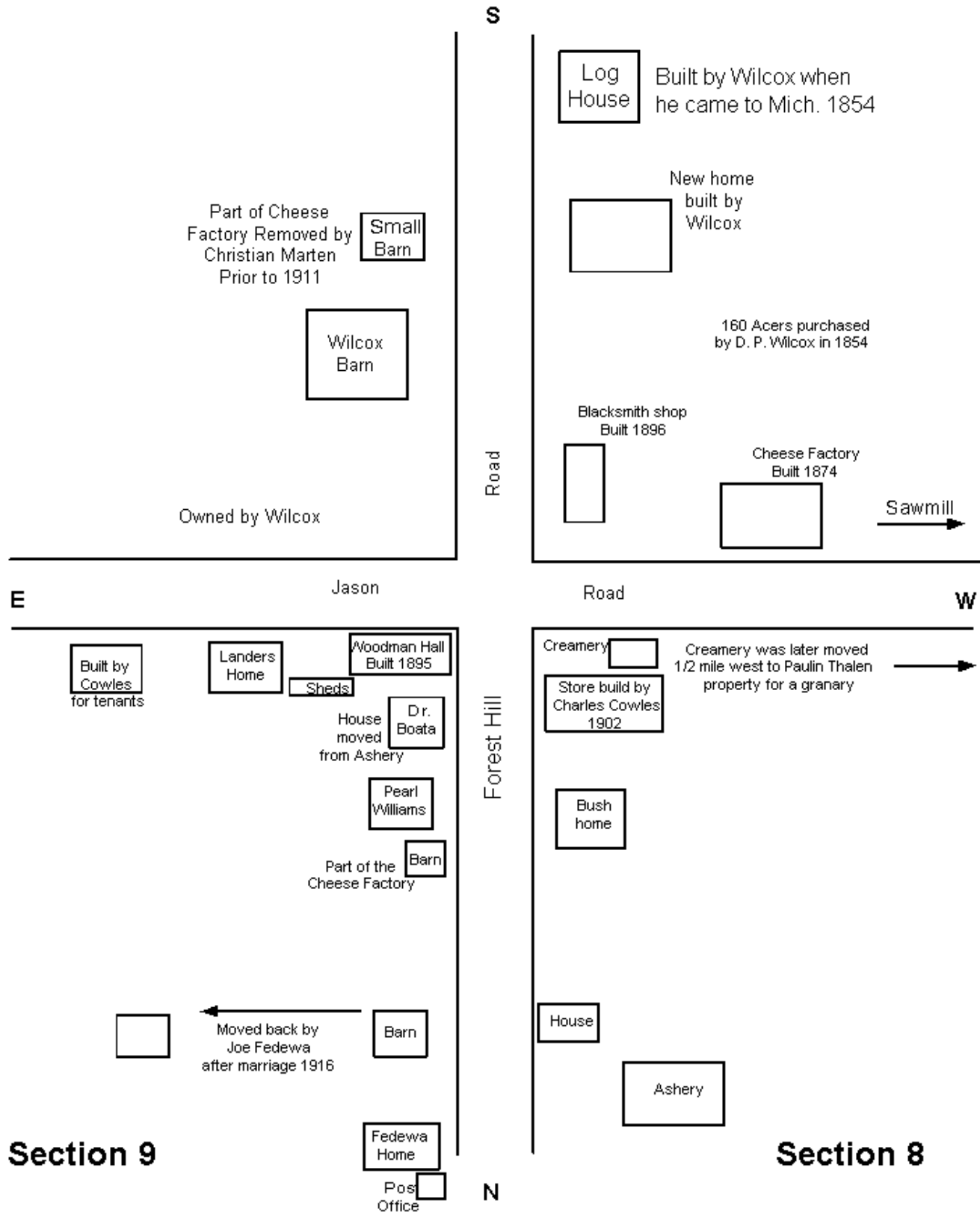
1896 Plat Map of Riley Township showing section 8, 9, 16, and 17

If you look closely, you can see building locations (small black squares).

FOREST HILL 1900

Section 16

Section 17



Copy of Original Deed

United States
To
Enos Boughton

Received for record
October 29, 1873
2 o'clock P.M.
Robert Young, Register

Certificate No.2412, The United States of America
To all to whom these Presents Shall Come.

Greetings.

Whereas. Enos Boughton of Ontario County, New York, has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States, a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Ionia, Whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said Enos Boughton, according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An act making further provisions for the sale of the Public Lands" for:

The North West Quarter and the West half of the North East Quarter of Section seven in Township eight, North of Range Four West in the District of lands subject to sale at Ionia, Michigan, containing Two 'Hundred and Fourteen Acres and Seventy Two hundredths of an acre according to the Official Plot of the Survey of the said Lands returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor.

Which said tract has been purchased by the said Enos Boughton now know, that the United States of America, in consideration of the promises, and in conformity with the Several Acts of Congress in such case made and provided, have given and granted and by these presents do give and grant unto the said Enos Boughton and to his heirs, the said tract above described: To have and to hold the Same together with all the rights, privileges, immunities and appurtenances of whatever nature hereunto belonging unto the said Enos Boughton and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof, I, Martin VanBuren, President of the United States of America have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of this General Land Office to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the tenth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty nine and of the Independence of the United States the Sixty fourth.

By the President
Martin VanBuren
By J. W. VanBuren, Secretary
H. M. Garland, Recorder of the

General Land Office
Recorded Vol. 7, Page 67

Celia E. Dunlap
to
George E. Boughton
Same description as above with exception of cemetery and school
December 13, 1878

George E. Boughton
October 4, 1879
Celia Dunlap, Francis Brown, Courtland Boughton, Edward Boughton and Harriet Nelson, all the State of Michigan and heirs of Morris Boughton, deceased
to
Lucretia C. Boughton (widow)

George E. Boughton and wife Anna
to
Edward P. Boughton of the same place
February 11, 1882
Same description as above for \$1.00

Edward P. Boughton and wife
to
Trustees of Evangelical Lutheran Church, Riley
Five acres for \$500.00
October 16, 1886

Boughton Family
Enos Boughton Phebe
Morris Boughton December 12, 1843 Lucretia Culver

- 1 - George E.
- 2 - Celia Dunlap
- 3 - Francis Brown
- 4 - Courtland
- 5 - Edward
- 6 - Harriet Nelson
- 7 -
- 8 -



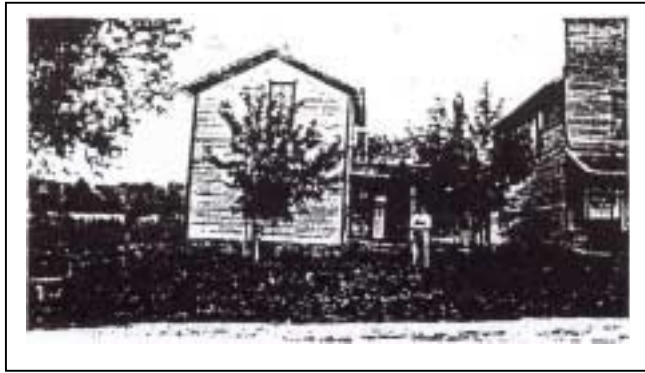
Monroe Bolles
(on steps of the Ashery)



Ball team in action with
the Blacksmith shop in background
(photo take about 1938)



Christian Martin Residence
(Former Residence of David Wilcox)



Woodman Hall to right of Photo
House occupied by Banta, Bolles, Pohl Silm,
Sehlke and Light

For the first year Mr. Peck worked some of the Boughton land on shares until he could clear some of his own land.

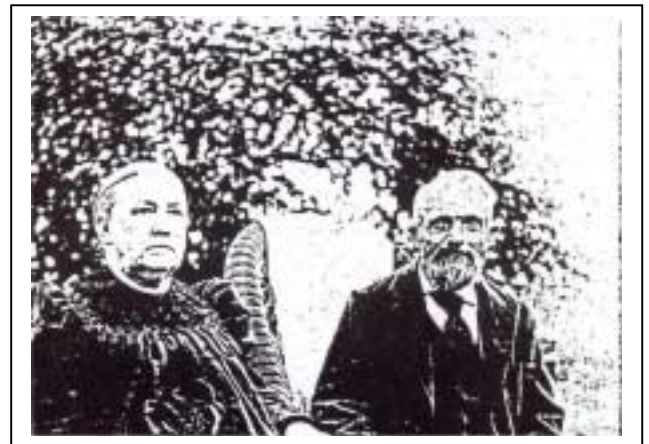
Through the summer he put up a sixteen by twenty foot log house, which later served as a first home for many immigrant families. The Indians shared their hospitality and became firm friends. On September 26, 1864, Mr. Peck purchased the E1/2 of the SE1/4 of Section 8 which later, was the site of the Ashery, or the Bolles property.

The North Riley Class, Methodist Episcopal Church was organized about 1842, at the home of Philip Peck, by a preacher from Lyons. The members were very few. The class was reorganized in 1863-64 and members were P. P. Peck and wife, Mr. Boughton and wife, J.H. Patterson and wife, John Jay and wife, William Owen and wife, B. N. Hildreth and wife, Lydia Hildreth, John Hildreth, Elizabeth Benjamin and Mrs. Temple; their meetings were held in the Boughton School.

A new home was built in February 1860, by the Pecks just east of the log house and an addition was added to the back of the house later on. The Peck's daughter, Amanda, married David P. [Pitney] Bliss and lived on the homestead. In 1895, the house and four acres of ground was purchased from Amanda for \$900.00 by Saint Peter Lutheran Church. This is the parsonage property and was first occupied by Pastor G. H. Berger. David P. [Pitney] Bliss, husband of Amanda Peck, came to Michigan in the fall of 1848 with his parents, David and Samantha Bliss and eight brothers and sisters. The family settled on a soldier's claim in Section 9 in Riley Township, which remained the family homestead until 1923. Their home had originally been in Vermont and the family had moved to New York State in the early 1840's.

After arriving in Michigan, then a dense wilderness, their lot was a hard one and living was difficult. They built a log house and went to housekeeping amid the hardships of the early settlers -- food scarcity, malaria, typhoid, mosquitoes, wild beasts, and few neighbors. The first Post Office in Riley Township was established in Section 9, on the property of Stebbins C. [Clark] Bliss about 1855. Jonathan Owen was the first postmaster. This Post Office, known as North Riley, was closed at various intervals for economic reasons. The Post Office does not appear on the 1873 Atlas but is listed on the 1896 County Atlas.

Samantha & David H. Bliss Family		
Name	Born	Died
David H. Bliss	04-14-1791	05-15-1859
Samantha W. Griswold	1794	12-27-1863
Children		
Stebbins Clark Bliss	04-19-1814	09-19-1906
Morilla H. Moore	10-16-1824	12-26-1868
Charlotte A. Temple	05-02-1814	03-12-1903
David Pitney Bliss	1828	12-17-1888
Amanda Peck	06-23-1833	03-08-1895
Heratio Simeon Bliss	04-17-1830	
Lucinda Hildreth	1838	
Sabrina Hortentia Bliss	06-07-1824	1915
Merritt Temple		
Adeline Chloe Bliss **	04-13-1822	08-04-1861
Cyrus Pratt	1820	08-07-1886
** died at birth of son Orvil		
Lucy Bliss	1816	1820
Lucy Maria Bliss	1820	12-07-1861
James Hodges	1819	1887
Henry William Bliss	12-16-1834	04-18-1929
Clarissa E. Welton	1842	1911
Augustus Lamar Bliss	Nov 1833	
Opelia M. D????		
Sidney Jared Bliss	09-02-1839	
Helen Jones		
Elizabeth Bliss Osborn	1827	1921
(Remained in N.Y.)		
Emila		1848
Samantha Amanda Bliss	10-22-1818	09-15-1851



Lucinda & Horatio Bliss

Through the tireless efforts and concerns for their fellowmen, the Bliss family holds a prominent place in Riley history and they contributed much to the growth and prosperity of the township and the community. Several members of the family enlisted, and served through the Civil War, and many held responsible positions in public office. Henry W. Bliss, another son of the Bliss family, was well known in the area as a farmer, as well as, a breeder of thoroughbred Shorthorn-Durham cattle. A news item appeared in the Clinton Independent, dated March 30, 1871, under "Home Matters": Maple sugar brought in by the Bliss Brothers of Riley Township purchase by A. Teachout at 14 cents per pound.



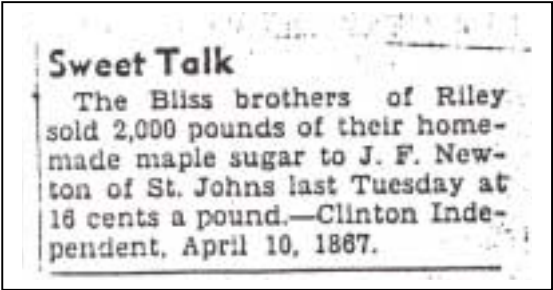
Daisy (Hilldrith) and Fred Ottmar
Wedding



Mary E. Bliss Temple
Daughter of Stebbins Clark Bliss

Henry Bliss born December 16, 1834, was married on October 5, 1862 to Clarissa Welton. "Uncle" Henry and "Aunt" Clarissa had no children but through their great kindness and love of people provided a home and family to Cottfred T. Ottmar (see photo above left), who, in his youth, came to this country from Germany. Having no family ties, he was taken in by the Bliss family who provided him a good home and a loving family. All the love that would have been bestowed on a child of their own, was given to Fred. Fred, born in 1868, was provided with a college education and graduated a lawyer. At one time, the older residents recalled, Fred ran unsuccessfully for Governor of Michigan. He served in many ways and various capacities in public office for many years. Fred was married to a local resident, Daisy Hilldrith, and they became parents of one son, Wilton H. who passed away as an infant in 1899. Daisy, born in 1869, was an accomplished musician and many of the Riley young people -- now Senior Citizens -- received their first music lessons from Mrs. Ottmar. The mastering of the musical "scales" was the first requirement of a thorough musical education and it was an "absolute must" with Mrs. Ottmar. Fred, in later years, acquired the Henry Bliss homestead where he resided until his death in 1958 -- his wife, Daisy having passed away in 1941.

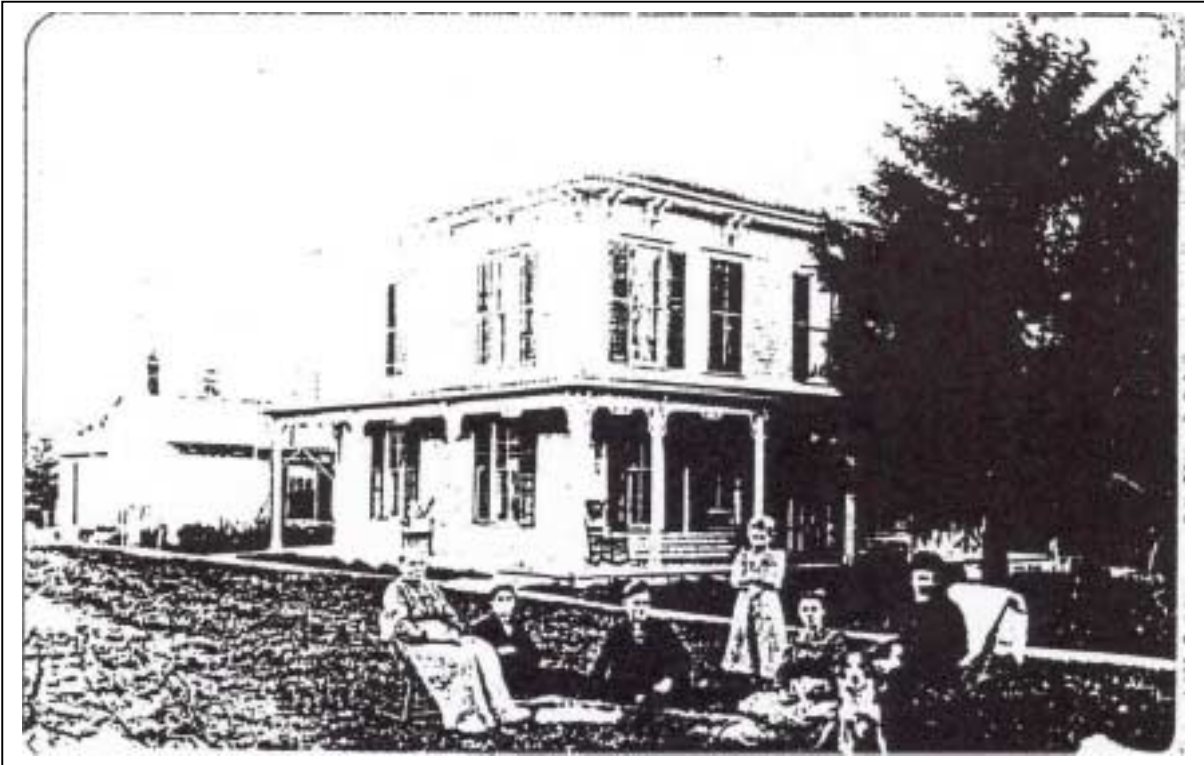
The Bliss's also provided a home and family for Beatrice Longoor who resided with them for many years. She attended the Boughton School and, later, was married to Frank Nichols.



An interesting account of the early life of the Bliss family was given in the obituary of Henry W. Bliss who passed away April 19, 1929, at the age of 94 years. The obituary appeared in the Republican News, April 25, 1929, and is found in appendix B.

David P Wilcox came to Michigan from Haddam Middlesex County, Connecticut and located first in Calhoun County when ill health prompted him to move to Kansas. After some time in Kansas, he moved back to Michigan intending to locate in the Grand River country. After exploring the school land in Riley Township in June 1854, he purchased 160 acres for four dollar an acre in Section 17. In July 1854, he moved here with his family and had to chop out, and underbrush the road from the corner where the cheese factory later stood, and south about one half mile where he built a log house. This house was located on the west side of the road and was on the farm where his daughter, Aurelia (Mrs. Chapman) lived later. He became interested in raising Shorthorn cattle and his farm became known as Forest Hill Stock Farm.

In 1864, he moved to Saint Johns and operated a hardware store. An item in the Clinton Republican, February 5, 1869 states "Mr. D. P. Wilcox of the firm Wilcox and



Christian Martin Residence prior to 1904					
Wilhelmina Martin	Charles Schafer	Charles Martin	Dorretta Krumm Witt	Friederike Martin Easton	Christian Marin

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

CERTIFICATE

No. 12,708

Augustus Bliss

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas Augustus Bliss, of Clinton County, Michigan,

has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States, a Certificate of the REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE of Ionia, whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said

Augustus Bliss according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for the South West quarter of the South West quarter of Section fifteen, in Township Six, North of Range three, West, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Ionia, Michigan, containing forty acres,

(Above)

the South West quarter of the South West quarter of Section fifteen in Township Six, North of Range three, West, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Ionia, Michigan, containing forty acres

according to the official plat of the Survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the SURVEYOR GENERAL, which said tract has been purchased by the said Augustus Bliss.

NOW KNOW YE, That the

United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED, and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT, unto the said

Augustus Bliss,

and to his heirs, the said tract above described: To have and to hold the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereto belonging, unto the said

Augustus Bliss,

and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, J. James Buchanan,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made PATENT, and the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the tenth day of March,

in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty seven,

INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES the Eighty first,

and of the



BY THE PRESIDENT:

By

James Buchanan,

By

G. H. Jones, Esq.

Secretary.

March 10, 1857

BY THE PRESIDENT: James Buchanan

Thurber, hardware dealers in this village, has purchased the lot adjoining their store on the south, for \$2,000.00. He contemplates erecting a brick building on the premises the coming year".

In 1872, after eight years in the hardware business, Mr. Wilcox returned to the farm having just built a fine residence on Section 17.

Quoting from the Clinton Independent dated July 24, 1873, under "Home Matters" we find, "We have been informed that David P. Wilcox of Riley Township, who has been in the hardware business is about to establish a Cheese Factory on his farm. Already he has established 200 cows in the local area to provide supplies for his business".

The Forest Hill Cheese Factory, owned and operated by a stock company, was organized in the spring of 1874. The building was thirty by eighty, and cost, with machinery, was twenty-four hundred dollars. The building was located on the northeast corner of Section 17. The stockholders David P [Pitney] Bliss, Wilcox, Horatio S. Bliss, Stebbins C. [Clark] Bliss, Bliss Temple, J. M. Dane, Henry Jones, Christian Jacobs, Andrew J. Chapman, Frederick Oding, John Pingel, Charles Waiters and A.R Boss. President of the company was D. P. Wilcox and A. R. Boss, Secretary. It is not definitely known when the Cheese Factory ceased operation.

The Wilcox's had two children -- Aurelia and Ella. A daughter, Mrs. Robinson, mentioned in 1880 History was residing on Section 34, Riley, but I cannot establish as a certainty if this was Ella or another daughter. Aurelia was married to Andrew J. Chapman and they resided on Section 16, the first place south of the new home built by the Wilcox's. This was the first home of the Wilcox family and the site of the log house built by them as they came into Riley in 1854. As I mentioned, the log house was on the west side of the road but new buildings later were erected on the east side and this farm in later years was purchased by Alfred D. Lance and wife, Hannah. Ella was married to Nestelle and later resided in Saint Johns. Mr. Wilcox at one time owned the greater portion, or the north one half of Sections 16 and 17. Charles E. Bills was taken into the Wilcox home at the age of six years, after the death of his mother in 1851. He made his home with the Wilcox's until his marriage December 25, 1867 to Jennie Baird. Charles, the son of Albert and Phoebe Bills, was born April 14, 1845 in Hillsdale County and passed away May 22, 1923 in Lansing, Michigan.

David Wilcox died at his home in Riley January 2, 1881, at 83 years of age. In the estate settlement, August Schrader purchased 80 acres for \$2,430.00 (\$31.00 per acre) in Section 16 from Ella H. (Wilcox) Nestelle and Albert J. Baldwin, Executer of the David P. Wilcox estate. This transfer was dated September 21, 1893. This is property later owned by, and the residence of Henry Schrader. The present owner is Walter Martens. Christian J. Martin, born in Prussia March 30, 1839, purchased the Wilcox property in 1894. This was his residence until his death April 1, 1933. Christian Martin came to America in 1869. After spending a few months in Buffalo, New York, he came to Westphalia where he worked on a farm for a time. In 1876 he was married to

Wilhelmina (Schroeder) Frank, a widow with three small children and settled on a farm in Section 5, in Riley Township, 1/2 mile north of Price Road on Forest Hill Road.

This family lived the difficult life of the pioneer settlers and patiently endured the misfortunes common to many families due to epidemics and accidents. The obituary of Christian Martins appears in Appendix K and it gives an insight into the strong character and faith these people possessed which helped them through many difficult times.

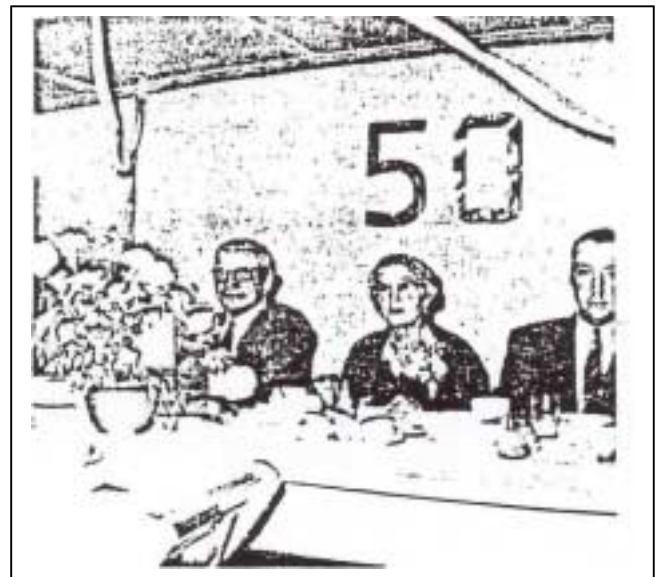


Charles A. Martin & Mary Schroeder
Wedding reception
Married May 23, 1906

After purchasing and moving to the Wilcox farm, Christian and Wilhelmina became the parents of two children - Friederike Johanna Caroline and Carl August Johann. Rike, as she was known to most of us, was born August 21, 1878, she was married to Frank Easton on April 14, 1903, and they later made their home in DeWitt. Carl, known as Charles, was born on the homestead, February 24, 1882. He was married to Mary Schroeder on May 23, 1906. After his marriage, Charles took over the management of the farm and Christian, being a widower (Wilhelmina having passed away April 25, 1904), continued to make his home there.

Memories are especially dear to our family as we remember a, kindly old gentleman, affectionately known to us as sitting on the porch in the sun. He eagerly welcomed "kids chatter" as we stopped for a rest on our way to the Forest Hill Store where we had to pick up our mail for many years. The nickels with which he rewarded us for small favors really "made our day" and nurtured a deep friendship which was never forgotten and which, today, remains a cherished memory.

Charlie and Mary, born February 9, 1833, had one son, Francis, born August 6, 1911, who farmed with his father until his father's death on August 25, 1958 following a farm accident. Mary passed away three months later, on November 22, 1958. Francis was married to Ethelyn Rossow on July 11, 1959 and they continue to reside on the homestead.



Charles – Mary – Francis
Marten
May 1956

The early 1890's finds the community, which will be known for the following 75 years as Forest Hill, experiencing growing pains and expanding with more people coming into the area. The Cheese Factory building, no longer being used, was divided and moved to new locations. One portion was moved to the south at the site of the David Wilcox farm buildings and was used as a small barn on the east side of the road. Years later, the building -- long since having served its usefulness -- was removed by Christian Martin before 1911. The smaller portion of the Cheese Factory building was moved onto property owned by Pearl Williams and still remains the barn, close to the road, on property presently owned by Elsie Horman.

In 1895 a new building appeared on the Jason and Forest Hill Road intersection. This was on property acquired by the "Modern Woodman of America" from Stebbins C. Bliss in the southwest corner of Section 9. The hall built by Glenn Bliss and John Pingel, members of the Lodge, became well known in the area as the Woodman Hall. At the rear of the Lodge Hall to the east, was a long row of sheds, which were used as a shelter for the horse and buggies, which provided the only transportation, outside of walking, in those days. In addition to being a meeting place for the Lodge members, the hall was used for many other activities. Public dances were held regularly -- the music of the fiddler and the singing voice of the caller as "alle man left your partner" filling the air was a delight to all, as dancing was enjoyed by the early settlers -- old and young alike. Among others, the wedding dance of Friedrich Christian Martin Hopp, born January 30, 1890, and Wilhelmina Marie Johanne Witt, born April 3, 1831, was held at the hall on February 16, 1911. Memories of the terrific mud at the time of this wedding made a sorry mess of some of the young men's Sunday suits as they attempted to "drop" planks to make it easier to get back and forth to the house.

After the hall was established, the lower floor was rented to M.T. Streeter who operated a grocery store here for a short time.

In 1897, Charles N. Cowles acquired the lower floor of the hall and developed and expanded the grocery business into a thriving enterprise. Charles was one of three Cowles brothers, the others being Austin and Ralph, and was married to Alice E. Bush whose parents resided across the road from the store (the parents later moved to Wacousta). Mr. and Mrs. Cowles operated the Forest Hill Store with the able assistance of Ruth Landers. Ruth lived next door to the store and she, also, taught school at the Boughton School during the winter months.

The property in Section 8, originally owned by Phillip P. Peck and wife, Lucy, mentioned on page 12, was experiencing many changes through the years. The property had been acquired by William B. Peck and wife, Nancy from Phillip Peck on August 16, 1880. On February 8, 1882, a property transfer from William Peck to Charles Bearndt and wife, Fredericka, was made. Through a mortgage foreclosure, the property was acquired by Henry M. Perrin and Porter K. Perrin on January 17, 1885. A year later, on January 21, 1886, the property was sold by the Perrins to Henry Heaven and wife, Sarah. The property conveyed the E3/4 of the SE1/4 of Section 8. On March 25, 1886, one acre of ground in the southeast corner of Section 8 was sold by Henry Heaven to

Samuel H. Williams and wife; Anna M. This was the property on which the Forest Hill Store was later built. On August 26, 1889, Henry Heaven sold 20 acres in the SE corner of Section 8, excluding 1 acre, to John H. Fedewa. In a transfer of property John H. Fedewa and wife, Lizzie, sold the 20 acres, excluding one acre (already owned by Williams) to Samuel Williams on November 21, 1892. This was the acreage that included the store and Ashery property.

The years preceding 1900 found more activity and growth in the Forest Hill community. Pearl, one of three Williams brothers -- Charlie and George, and sons of Samuel, had purchased property north of the Woodman Hall and built a new home prior to the moving of the smaller portion of the Cheese Factory building to this location. Being a blacksmith by trade, Pearl rented a small acreage in 1896 from Christian Martin and built a shop on the northeast corner of Section 17 where he worked at his blacksmith trade for many years. In addition to his blacksmith work he was a "handyman" and he had the skill to be able to repair most anything that was broken or failed to work properly. He was the farmer's friend and was called upon by the local residents many times to help out. Pearl was married to Jennie Kleckner of Fowler, who was born July 12, 1874 and passed away February 27, 1920. Pearl's father, Samuel, in addition to being a farmer, was a preacher and was, also known in the area as a horse jockey.



About the middle 1890's, the date is uncertain, a sawmill was in operation a short distance west of the intersection on Jason Road. With the abundance of trees and the desire to clear more acreage for cultivation, the sawmill was in great demand. August Schroeder, son of Friederick and Friedericka Schroeder, was employed at the mill. An episode, which lingers in the memory of the early settlers, was told like this, "A large tree

had been hauled across the section from the Sabrina [Bliss] Temple property (where Wilma Jastram lives) to the saw-mill. In the process of sawing up the tree, the saw hit a double-fist-size stone that had become lodged in the crotch of the tree. It had escaped detection until the saw hit the stone and practically blew up the saw operation. No one knew how the stone became lodged there, or if it had been deliberately placed there years earlier, as a prank, and with the passing of time was covered by moss and debris and was completely hidden from sight". May 26, 1899, Samuel H. Williams sold the north two acres of his property to James A. Keeney and wife, Jennie M., Mr. Keeney operated a shop for a short time and he, also, was a gun-smith; at various times, he worked at the carpenter trade. A daughter, Ethel, attended Boughton School with Alvina (Silm) Sehlke. According to a land transfer, there had been a Blacksmith Shop in operation on this location in January 1886 when the property was owned by Henry Heaven, but no other information was available.

James Keeney sold the property (2 acres) to Mary Holies on January 6, 1908. While the Bolles family owned the land, a profitable Ashery business was in operation. At this time everyone used wood for heating and cooking purposes so, consequently, there

was a large quantity of ashes available. Son, Monroe, built and operated the Ashery where ashes were collected and made into potash and soap. John Hopp, son of Theodore and Wilhelmina Hopp, was employed by Bolles to collect ashes throughout the community. (1903 - 1912)? For each bushel of ashes collected, or brought to the Ashery, the customer received one bar of soap. Lye was, also, sold by the barrel. After Monroe was married he resided at the Ashery property and his mother, Mary, lived next door to the Woodman Hall. The house that Mary occupied had originally been moved here from the Ashery property, and as time went on, additions had been put on, as the

need arose. The remark was made by several "The house was just put together". Frederick and Mary Bolles were parents of four Children Monroe, Roscoe, Elgie and an infant that died at birth.

Monroe Bolles was remembered as the owner of a one-seater, 2-passenger mobile, possibly 1901-1905 model. Many mentioned it as being one of the first Oldsmobile's made by R. E. Olds. Many smiles were evident as oldsters talked of Monroe, whizzing by in his "merry Oldsmobile". They described the car as resembling a cutter used by the early settlers in the wintertime. The car was equipped with small wheels and was steered with a stick instead of a steering wheel. As other types of heating became available, ashes became a scarce commodity and the Ashery business was discontinued. The property remained in the Bolles family until April 17, 1940, when the 2-acre plot was purchased by Carl G. Light. The plot was sold to Fedewa Builders (James Fedewa) in 1976 and sold in 1977 to Joseph and Cindy Miller who have erected a beautiful new home there. After closing the Ashery operation, Monroe moved to Merle Beach where



he assisted in the operation of the "Half-Way House". (1912-1913)? The Half-Way House was a large inn built on Muskrat Lake in Olive Township. It was a two-story building and the lower floor consisted of sleeping rooms for overnight guests and the upper story was used for recreation. This was a popular place for the young people of

the community to gather where dances were held regularly and memory, again, is vivid of the magnificent fireworks held there every Fourth of July.

Due to the rapid increase of business and the desire to expand, Charles Cowles had purchased property from Samuel Williams In Section 8, across the road from the Woodman Hall on March 27, 1899. He erected a new and larger store on this location and everything was all ready for the big move in 1902. Senior citizens today, still remember Charlie, his wife and Ruth Landers carrying merchandise across the road to the new store and stocking the shelves. Cowles continued to use the former place for small tools and hardware. Needing more assistance in conducting the business, Mr. Cowles built a new home, second place east of the Hall, to provide housing for hired help. A family by the name of Lawrence were the first occupants and Mr. Lawrence worked for Mr. Cowles drawing freight from Fowler. The next residents were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hopp who lived there the first year of their marriage (1911-1912). Fred, also, worked for Charlie hauling and delivering freight.

In reminiscing with former residents of the Forest Hill community, mention was made of the cream station which was in operation at Forest Hill. The date, again, is uncertain but was operated shortly after the new store was built by Cowles. The station was located in a white building just south of the store. Huge separators were mounted inside, and farmers from the surrounding area would bring their milk to the station and run it through the separators. The farmer would take the skim milk home where it would be fed to the stock; the cream would be taken to Westphalia or Fowler, sold and be made into butter. This building used as a creamery, was later moved one-half mile west, to the Pauline Thelen property where it was used as a granary.

In 1899, Robert Landers and wife, Mary E. moved into the growing Forest Hill community. They purchased the house just east of the Woodman Hall. Robert hauled milk into Saint Johns and he served as Justice of the Peace in Riley Township for many years. Robert and Mary had two daughters -- Maude Ethel and Ruth Vera; Maude became the wife of Archie Hildreth and Ruth was married to Bills. Another resident in the Landers home was Dr. C. B. Ripley. He rented a room and had his Doctor's office in the Landers home.

For some years the Forest Hill community was very fortunate to have the services of a resident physician; Dr. Ripley was the first of these and the date he arrived in Riley is not known. Again, incidents that happened, more or less, pinpoint the time he was in the community. As one example -Edwin S. Craun, a prominent Riley resident, born October 30, 1876, was involved in an accident that nearly took his life. As related:

"Mr. Ed Craun, when a young man, made a trip into Saint Johns with his horse and buggy. Having finished his errands, he was returning home. As he was going west on State Street his horse became frightened at the huge piles of brick, stones and other building material at the now site of the Congregational Church. As the horse bolted, it threw Ed out of the buggy and dragged him a considerable distance in the dirt and sand. Ed received a terrible scalp wound (as it was told "his scalp was laid open and

filled with sand and grime"). The Doctor living just south of the church was called. The Doctor arrived, accompanied by a friend -our own Dr. Ripley, from Riley and, together, they ministered to Mr. Craun. They cleansed the wound as best they could and stitched the torn flesh back -- thinking that "no way could this man survive". The cornerstone of the Congregational Church was laid April 13, 1899 and Ed lived a long life having passed away December 1, 1978, at the ripe old age of 102 years.

Another example -- a receipt, "June 18, 1903. Received \$16.00 in payment in full to date for all services and medicines in family of August Schrader. C. B. Ripley M. D."

Charlie Martin used to tell "many yarns" about Dr. Ripley and how they were pals and "horsed around" together before Charles was married in 1906. These incidents would, more or less, establish that Dr. Ripley was in Riley approximately 1899 - 1905 or 06.

The second doctor to serve the Riley residents was Dr. Peter H. Banta. He was born August 19, 1874 in Oakland County, Michigan. At age 5 his parents moved and settled near Hubbardston. He was graduated from Detroit College of Medicine in 1900. While in Riley his residence and office where the first house north of the Woodman Hall, and the date, again, is uncertain, but he was in Riley in 1907. An incident, again, establishes when he left Forest Hill, "Telephones being scarce and baby deliveries were always made in the home, when the time arrived that Francis Martin was to be born, Charles Martin drove his 1911 Model S Ford to DeWitt for Dr. Banta - he had just moved there from Riley. Everything was going smoothly until he got to the DeWitt Cemetery where he ran out of gas. He walked to the Doctor's office where he borrowed some gas and got the Doctor. Everything proceeded as scheduled and Francis arrived on the scene on August 6, 1911. " Dr. Banta died November 26, 1915, leaving a wife, the former Rosa Fedewa from Westphalia, and three daughters. Burial was in DeWitt Cemetery.

When Pearl Williams started the blacksmith business from "scratch" he had very few tools to work with, but horses being the only source of transportation and work power, the blacksmith work became a thriving business. Mr. Williams operated the shop until 1904, with the exception of a short time when Otto Dunnebach was employed there.

In early 1904, Charles Schaefer and wife, Mary (Rossow) moved to Forest Hill and Charles purchased the Blacksmith Shop from Pearl Williams. Charlie and Mary had one daughter, Romilla, when they arrived and Clarence was born February 14, 1906, in Riley. The Schaefer's lived for a short time in the home built by Pearl Williams (Elsie Horman's place) and later moved across the road -- first place north of the store. (Carrus place).

An accident that occurred while the Schaefer's lived a Forest Hill made an indelible impression on many people. As Quoted:

"Charlie, at the close of a work day, had burned a pile of collected rubbish and leaves at the Blacksmith Shop. The following day daughter, Romilda, then a child of five or six

years of age, had come to the shop and played there – as was her custom. She was attracted to the pile of ashes and began playing there. Evidently ashes and, as she was playing, her dress caught fire. Startled by the happening, she started to scream and ran across the road toward her home, clothing ablaze by this time. Her mother saw her coming and as she left the house, she grabbed a rag throw rug from the floor. When she reached the child, she threw the rug around her and rolled her on the ground. She was terribly burned over the body but experienced a remarkable recovery.” A second daughter, Loretta, was born in Riley.

Charles Schaefer operated the Blacksmith Shop until 1919 when the family moved to Lansing. About a year later Clarence, while riding his bicycle, was struck by a car and he died on October 2, 1920, following the accident. The Schaefer home was purchased by Aarland Maria (Slim) Tiedt and later, by John and Minnie Martens. The house is presently owned by Luella Carrus.

Concerning more developments around Forest Hill, the following was quoted by Ernest Hauser from information given to him by Christian Rossow, who passed away February 4, 1972, "Christ Rossow's folks moved from Westphalia area (one mile south and one and one-half miles east) in the spring of 1893, to the place where Christ Rossow lived on Jason Road. He said they drove the cattle and sheep from Westphalia, down Price Road, then Forest Hill Road, then east on Jason Road.

"On the one forty I own, on the south end, the trees were way out to the road. It was a very good woods for tapping, until 1930 when a cyclone went through and demolished the greatest part of the woods. This woods, earlier owned by August and Henry Schrader, was the scene of several Saint Peter Lutheran Church and Fourth of July picnics.

"Christ Rossow said he remembers when they drove the cattle and sheep by the woods, the trees were tapped, and they drank sap out of the buckets."

"My dad bought the Blacksmith Shop from Charlie Schaefer in 1920, and worked in it on the corner until 1940 when Charles Martin and son, Francis, moved the shop with their truck and W30 tractor with spade lugs, to its present location -- at the Herman Hauser home on Jason Road. Before it was moved, the building was setting on large stones, with a plank floor. In the winter the cold wind and snow used to blow in through the plank floor."

After the shop was moved, my Dad didn't shoe any more horses, but still ran the shop for another ten or twelve years, until his arthritis got so bad he had to quit. I still have most of the equipment and tools.

"I still remember when I was a boy and the Blacksmith Shop was on the corner, it was a very busy place for horse-shoeing and repair work in the horse and buggy days, especially on rainy days. Sometimes there would be a team of horses inside, and four or five more teams waiting outside to be shod. I also remember that some horses were

very hard to shoe because they wouldn't stand still and kicked a lot. Also, when as kids, many times when we came from school, and on Saturdays, we would have to help Dad by turning the bellows on the forge."

"Charles Martens, father of Herman and Robert, owned the land west of the store to the creek which, is now owned by Leo Fedewa. Christ Rossow said he used to help plant corn there by hand for fifty cents a day."

Ernest Hauser, who resides on Church Road, mentioned the fact that he had plowed up many pieces of pottery, musket balls, clay pipes, and Indian ornaments in a field just west of his home, leading one to believe that an Indian family had at one time made their home there.

Ernest Hauser -- son of Herman Hauser, born January 7, 18?? [not readable - perhaps 1884] and wife, Emilie (Grenke) born October 6, 1891 -- was born and lived with his parents and three sisters, Lillian, Frieda and Bertha in the home formerly occupied by Fred and Minnie Hopp and, later, by Heinrich and Johanna (Witt) Silm (1912-1919). Reinhardt Hauser, a nephew, came to live with the Hausers at an early age, at the death of his mother. Herman passed away March 30, 1964 and Emilie resided at the family home until the past winter when, because of ill health, she has been staying with her children.

Robert Landers, his wife, Mary having passed away before 1912, moved away from the area after the marriage of his daughters. The home was purchased by Charles and Louise (Schult) Witt, who resided there until 1943 when Louise passed away. Charles died in 1931. Henry C. and Doretta (Krumm) Witt lived there until August 20, 1977 when Doretta died -- Henry having passed away May 16, 1962. The property is presently owned by Charles Geller.

The home north of the Woodman Hall occupied by Dr. Banta became home to several families through the years, among them being Michael and Anna Pohl, Hannah Silm, Friederike Sehike, Minnie Irrer and Carl and Edith Light who moved there in 1941. This remained their home until 1965 when they moved to Saint Johns and the property was sold to Fedewa Builders (James Fedewa) in 1976.

The home, second place north of the Woodman Hall and built by Pearl Williams, became home following Charlie Schaefer, to Frederick and Friedericke Schroeder and William and Emma (Martens) Witt in their retirement years. The home is now the residence of Elsie Horman.

Proceeding north on Forest Hill Road from the intersection, the first farm, on which property the North Riley Post Office was situated (the Post Office was to the north of the house where Fedewa's garden used to be) was originally owned by Stebbins Bliss. This property was acquired by M. F. Fedewa and later, by his son, Joseph (prior to 1916) where Joseph moved following his marriage to Elizabeth Thelen in 1916. When they moved there, the barn was located south of the house, close to the road, where the

slab was still evident years later. This was the site of the peppermint still and about 1960 a new home was erected on this site by Joseph Fedewa, Jr. and wife, Janice. This home is now occupied by Jack Zorn. Lizzie Fedewa's comments were: "When we were married and moved here in 1916 we did all of our shopping at the Forest Hill Store --groceries, yard goods, and anything else we needed". The Fedewa children: Bernita, Mary, Odelia, Margaret, Leo, Katherine, Sylvester, Joan, Matthew, James and Joseph were all born and raised here. Sylvester, Matthew and Joan have dedicated their lives to their Church. Leo lives on the homestead with his wife, Alberta (Theis) who were married June 21, 1969. Joseph Fedewa, Sr. passed away while living on the farm in 1958. His wife, Lizzie, moved to Westphalia several (13 or 14) years ago (about 1965) where she still resides. Due to the building surge of the 1970's three new homes have been built to the north near Church Road.

Going west on Jason Road from the Forest Hill corner, the first farm of 40 acres was originally acquired by J. Fink, and the next 40 acres by Charles Hildreth. Later, this 30 acres was obtained by Jacob Schaffer. Shortly after the turn of the century, this property was obtained by Arthur Wirth and later, by Albert and Pauline (Fedewa) Thelen where their children Roman and Mary were born. The father, Albert, who was a brother of Elizabeth Fedewa, passed away suddenly when the children were 2 and 1 years of age. Pauline remained on the farm until the 1960's when she and son, Roman, moved to Fowler. The present residents are Gerald Pontius.

The next farm of 40 acres was acquired by G. Irish followed by 40 acres which was purchased by C. Martin. In later years this 30 acres was purchased by Mathias and Margaret Fedewa. Robert, a son now residing near DeWitt tells: "When we lived here the road (Jason) ended at our driveway. There was no road further west, just woods and swamp land." The Mathias Fedewas were parents of Joseph, Pauline, Johanna, Dora, Robert, Katherine, Arthur, Rose, and Henry. Mathias passed away when Joseph was 21 and Robert, 9 years of age.

This farm was later, acquired by Arthur and Dorothy (Schrauben) Fedewa. Arthur passed way December 15, 1977 and Dorothy is residing on the farm. Their children were Francis Ernest, Kenneth, Helen, Marie, Margaret, Anna, and Bernadette. Several new homes have been erected on the north side of the road in the past few years. Proceeding south on Forest Hill Road, the first farm remains the home of Francis Martin. There is a mobile home across the road where Henry and Ivan Rossow reside.

The next farm to the south, the original site of the log home of the Wilcox family and later, the residence of the Andrew J. Chapman and Alfred Lance families, was purchased by Edward and Emma (Schroeder) Luecht from Alfred D. Lance and wife, Hannah, on February 24, 1908. All seven of the girls were born and raised here and Dorothy, Bertha, Esther, Edith, who passed away May 4, 1975, Florence, Edna and Verna all have many happy memories of the farm and the Forest Hill community. N. R. Pratt used to say, "If you go by the Luecht place and don't see any girls around -- look up in the trees -- they will be there somewhere." Our Dad served as Township Clerk for some time, and at that time, a bounty was paid for sparrows and rats brought to the

Clerk. I can still see the pails and sacks of sparrow and rat carcasses brought to our home and had to be counted before being paid for out of Township funds. We talk, today, of corruption -- it happened then too. One day, toward evening, a young lad of about 16, who lived in the southern part of the township, came to the house with a sack containing 10 rattails (the law said rat heads had to be brought). Dad was skeptical and told him he could pay only for heads. The lad talked so convincing, and that he needed the money so desperately so Dad finally gave him an order for \$1.00 -- the price allowed by law. The following day, a neighbor of the young lad of yesterday (who also happened to be a cousin) appeared at the house with 10 rat head carcasses. Dad couldn't refuse payment because this lad was within the law, so this lad, also, collected \$1.00 for the same 10 rats. Dad never forgot that incident and, you can be sure, it never happened again. Edward and Emma Luecht made their home in Saint Johns after 1946 and in 1961 sold the farm to Raymond and Marjorie Gardner who presently reside there. Edward was born in Westphalia Township, December 18, 1833 and passed away at his home in Saint Johns July 19, 1963. Emma, born in Riley Township, Section 9, on August 16, 1882, died at her home on October 24, 1964. The next farm to the south had originally been obtained by J. H. Dane and later purchased by John and Wilhelmine (Hahn) Martens. John, born October 3, 1872 and Wilhelmine, born August 22, 1873, became the parents of four children: Florence, passing away as an infant in 1905, Mabel, Howard and Walter. In later years the management of the farm was taken over by son, Howard. John and Minnie moved to Forest Hill where John passed away October 9, 1957 and Minnie, on April 8, 1965.

Howard Martens, born in Riley on September 20, 1908 and wife, Leona (Behrens) born January 17, 1913, moved onto the farm in 1942, after operating the Forest Hill Store for several years. Since that time, in addition to farming, Howard has established a successful business enterprise, "Marten's Service", a Deuts dealership and Service and Repair shop has been in operation for many years. Son, Everette, who lives next place south, continued to carry on the business. Another son, Gary and wife, Karen, have erected a new home on land, which had been part of the Marten farm.

The next farm south, the residence of Everette and Ellen (Snyder) Martens, was originally property of W. B. Owen (east 30 acres) and Charles Boots (west 80 acres). The property to the east was later obtained by William Krumm and wife, Augusta (Hopp) where they made their home for many years. William, born in Canal Winchester, Ohio, July 8, 1867 and Augusta, born April 6, 1867, were married October 16, 1888. They became parents of Lulu, Doretta, Johanna, Lillie, Emma, Irene, Johann, Wilhelm and Ernest. William passed away July 2, 1941 and Augusta died February 15, 1949 at their home having lived their entire married life on this farm.

Clemons Kloeckner and wife, Marcella (Witt) reside on the last farm in the mile. This farm originally was obtained by R. Pinkham and later, by Fred Luecht, Carl Witt and Henry C. Witt. Henry C. Witt and wife, Doretta (Krumn) made this their home after their marriage April 6, 1915, and daughter, Marcella, was born here April 17, 1917. Henry and Doretta moved to Forest Hill in heir retirement years and Clemons and Marcella

have since made this their home. They have three children, all born here -- Cheryl, Roland and Rhonda.

Going east on Jason Road, two farmsteads were a part of early history. August Schrader purchased the first farm in 1893 from the D. P. Wilcox estate. Heinrich Johann Friedrich Schrader, born January 9, 1885, purchased the farm from his father where he built a new home prior to his marriage to Ida Schultz on September 27, 1911. Ida, born March 12, 1892, was the daughter of William and Marie Schultz. Henry and Ida made their home here, where Marie and Glenn were born, until 1948. During the cyclone that tore through the community March 28, 1920, they sustained much property loss in the complete destruction of their barn and other buildings. Henry passed away March 5, 1957 and Ida is living with her daughter and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Tiedt. Walter and Illah (Schaefer) Martens purchased and moved onto the farm in May 1948.

The property to the east of the Schrader farm was first owned by D. J. Peer and later by E. H. Sherman. William, born March 2, 1887 and Lulu (Krumm) Witt acquired this property in 1910 and -- they lived their entire lives here where Herbert and Howard were born. The Witt's, too, experienced calamity when the cyclone completely destroyed their home -- their house, barn and all out-buildings. William was in the barn when the storm struck and Lulu and the boys sought shelter in the corner of the basement. Miraculously their lives were spared and they escaped with minor injuries. Lulu was born February 7, 1890, and died October 6, 1962 and William passed away January 29, 1969. During the building surge of the 1970's several new homes have been built in this mile.

These people mentioned here, and all of them living within a mile of Forest Hill have, each in his own way, become an integral part of Forest Hill history and contributed to the growth and development of the community. As can be seen, this community has been unique in that many of the residents in the vicinity today were born here, grew up here and have continued to reside in the immediate area.

As the store was moved to its new location by Charles Cowles in 1902, "business was increasing as more farms were being settled in the Forest Hill area. As one glances through the list of new property owners coming into the community from 1900 to 1915, most of them were newly-weds and they had made a decision as to where they wanted to settle and raise their families. Money being a scarce item in those days, the neighbors worked together and shared tools and equipment. Many tasks were done by a crew, such as, threshing grain, buzzing wood, barn raisings, home butchering and many more. This factor certainly would have a stabilizing effect on a community and one family's misfortune would become the community's concern. How different today where one hardly knows his next door neighbor!

Charles Cowles, after moving to the new store, operated a successful and expanding business until March 22, 1910, when the Forest Hill Store and business was purchased by Michael Spitzley, Jr, and wife, Gertrude. Spitzley also owned the Woodman Hall

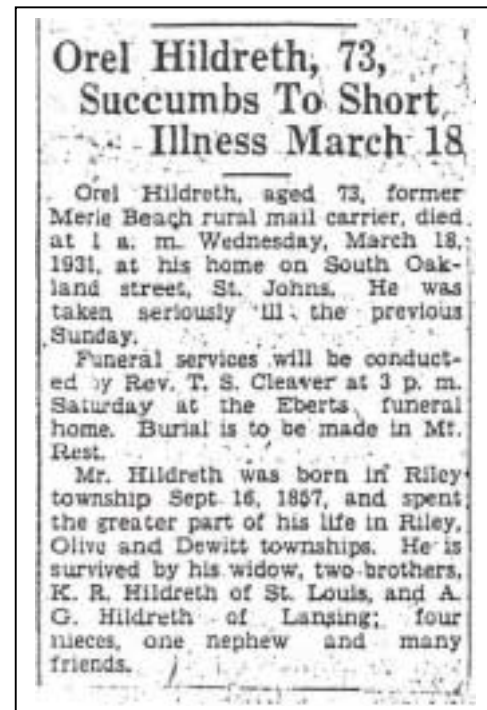
property when the Hopp wedding dance was held there. Mick Spitzley's employees were Frank Borman and Michael Pohl. Mike Pohl and wife, Anna (Smith) first resided across the road, north of the Woodman Hall, while Mick and his wife lived in an apartment above the store. Later the space was rearranged and two apartments were built upstairs -- Mike Pohl and family occupied the front and Nick and family occupied the rear apartment.

Memories are countless as we recall the years that followed. The Forest Hill Store was the center of activity. These were the years that were spoken of earlier as the meeting place for the community. Some people, in searching out memories, brought out the telephone booth, located in the center of the store which contained three, and possibly four, different telephones exchanges. Westphalia was the central line and Saint Johns, DeWitt and possibly, Fowler, were long distance lines coming in.

Forest Hill corner was the center for the mail route which now came out of Saint Johns. Earliest recollection of the mail delivery was the Star Route out of Grand Ledge in 1910. This was followed by carrier, Hildreth, as he drove his horse and Rural Delivery wagon through the area. The mail then went to Merle Beach with 2 cents first class postage. When this delivery was changed to the Saint Johns route, the carrier for many years was George Morton and later, Orley Clark. The RFD #4 route at that time came from the west on Jason Road and continued east, so Fedewas and Bolles from the north and John Martens, Edward Luecht and Charles Martin from the south had to pick up their mail at the Forest Hill corner. Picking up the mail was usually delegated to the kids when we became old enough to safely make the trip and return with the mail. Memories are many as we patiently (?) waited for the mailman to appear. Another job usually delegated to the "young fry" was to lead the horses to the blacksmith shop to be shod, and return with them when they were finished.



Orel Hildreth - 1914
Merry Christmas
Happy New Year





Mention was made of a time when a circus "came to town" and set up just west of the Forest Hill Store. These were the years that automobiles were becoming more available but the car was a choice possession which was well taken care of and used only on Sundays and special occasions. When the car was driven into the shed, the wheels were lifted with jacks to keep the weight off of the tires. When you were breezing along and a sudden rain shower came up, you pulled up along side of the road and hastily put on the side curtains which were conveniently stored along the top on the inside of the car. Election Days were special and a "really big day" for the storekeeper. Early in the morning the car would be loaded with food to take to the Town Hall to supply the hungry appetites there. A "hunk" of bologna and crackers always made a good combination. Election Day was not only for the men. The ladies

gathered at homes near the Riley Town Hall and usually tied a comforter or quilted a quilt.

Store-keeping in those days was no easy task -- no 9:00 to 5:30 and -- Wednesday afternoon off job. The store opened early in the morning for the farmers who needed some supplies before starting their day's work and wasn't closed until everyone went home.

Mike Pohl's wife, Anna, passed away while they were living at the store.

On November 16, 1925, Michael Spitzley sold the store to Walter F. Boos and three months later the store was sold again. On February 18, 1926, William F. Witt and Edward J. Witt purchased the Forest Hill Store from Mr. Boos. "Soldier Bill" as William Witt was known and Hulda Witt were married May 19, 1926, and Hulda assisted in the store. They resided in the upstairs apartment. William Witt and Edward Witt operated the store in partnership until 1928 (?) when William and Hulda moved to a recently purchased farm, one half mile north of the store. William, born in Riley on December 29, 1894, died at his home, November 10, 1964. Hulda later purchased a home and

moved to Saint Johns where she passed away June 28, 1969. In April 1929, while under the ownership of Will and Witt, the store was cleared of its counters and fixtures and took on a new look. For a few years the Forest Hill Store was rented for public dances, as a meeting place for group and public meetings, and one year, possibly 1930, the Saint Peter Lutheran Ladies Aid held their annual Chicken Dinner there.

During these years the store was the scene of many happy gatherings and good times, the first one of which was the wedding dance of Ernest Witt and Leotta Irrer, which occurred on April 30, 1929. Leotta relates: "Ern went over to the store and helped Ed move the counters so we could have our wedding dance there". On October 2, 1929, another wedding took place in the Forest Hill neighborhood and the wedding dance of Herman Pasch and Dorothy Luecht was held there. The Earl Miller orchestra, a popular dance orchestra from the DeWitt area, provided the music and Fred Martens calling:

The first two ladies cross over and side the gentleman stand
The side two ladies cross over and all join hands
Honor your partner lady, salute your partners all
Swing the left hand lady and promenade the hall

kept the dancers swinging merrily around.

These were the days that Old Fashioned German weddings were still popular. An outside bowery would be built which would accommodate the guests for the late afternoon meal. Chicken and chicken soup were a "must" on the menu and it was cooked outside in a huge black open kettle. After the meal, tables would be cleared away and the evening, until the wee small hours of the morning, would be spent in dancing in the bowery. The elder guest would enjoy themselves by dancing in the house where John Krause with his concertina, was a popular entertainer.



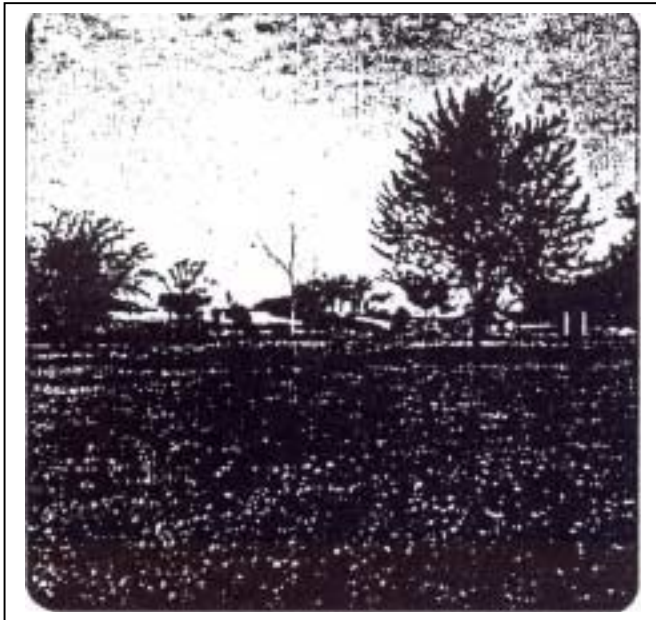
Marten Apartments – North Side
Original Forest Hill Store - 1979

On July 18, 1931, William P. Witt and Hulda sold their $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in the Forest Hill Store to William C. Witt while Edward Will continued his $\frac{1}{2}$ interest ownership.

In 1932 the store was operated by John Mankey. He had put in a small amount of groceries and the dances were continued. Mrs. Mankey relates: "We had such good times when we were at Forest Hill. "We

lived in the apartment above the store and I would put the children to bed and come down and enjoy the dancing. We served sandwiches at the dances." This was in

Depression time and no one had much gas to travel very far and no money to spend, so the dances at the store were a popular pastime.



Forest Hill
Back of the Store
Toward Ashery and Joe Fedewa Home

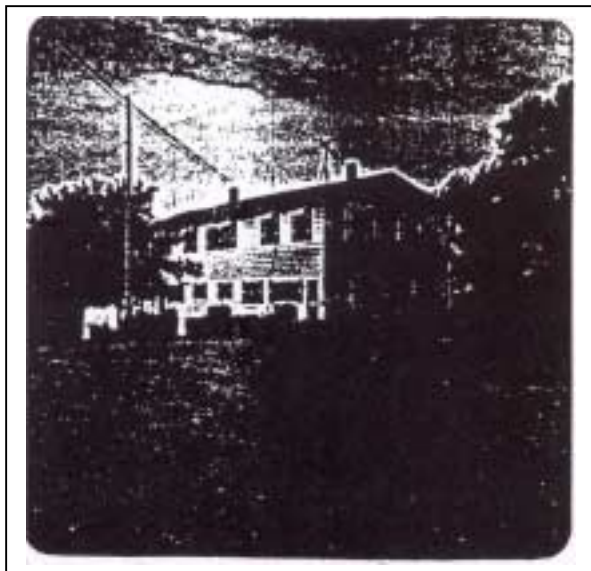
and Ralph Hayes did a tremendous job in reviving activity around the store and community. They sponsored a ball team and the games were played across the road from the store, to the west of the Blacksmith Shop. People came from far and near to enjoy the sport, which was a real heart-warmer after some difficult Depression days. Ralph left the store in 1938 and Walter Martens assisted in the store operation. Walter Martens and Iliah (Schaefer) were married April 27, 1938 and they lived in the apartment above the store. Iliah helped out in the store, as well as, Margaret Behrens. Many smiles emerged when residents recalled: "This was the time when Martens had a license to sell beer but it could not be consumed on store property. The Woodman Hall was across the road -- not on store property -- and it was a most convenient place, after a hard day's work, to enjoy a good cold bottle of Blatz, Strohs or

The community, as well as the state and nation, was hard hit by the Depression and Bank Holiday and many of the young men worked for other farmers for room and board. No one actually went hungry but many times beans or corn meal mush had to satisfy hungry appetites. Several farmers in the vicinity had sugar bushes and made maple syrup. It was a real chore to sell maple syrup at \$1.00 per gallon and many used syrup instead of sugar to save money.

After a couple of years, the store operation was taken over by Lawrence Walker who managed the store until 1935. In 1935 Marten and Hayes bought out the Walker stock and the Forest Hill Store was under new management. Howard Martens



Forest Hill
Looking North on Forest Hill Road



Original Forest Hill Store

now

Apartment House

owned by

Elmer W. (deceased) & Doria Marten

Photo taken 1979

Pabst Blue Ribbon beer." To make it even more convenient, an opener was attached to the porch post.

On November 5, 1935, Edward J. Witt and wife, Irene, sold their $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in the Forest Hill Store to William C. Witt making him sole owner of the Forest Hill property.

Several years previous to this, the Woodman Hall and property had been purchased by John Speerbrecker and Charles Silm. In 1939, or 1940, the Hall, which with the passing of many years, was in a state of disrepair and, was taken down. With its demolition went much of Forest Hill history and many memories of happy times.

Howard Martens continued the management of the store until 1942 when he took over his parent's farm operation. Then followed a vacancy of a few years.

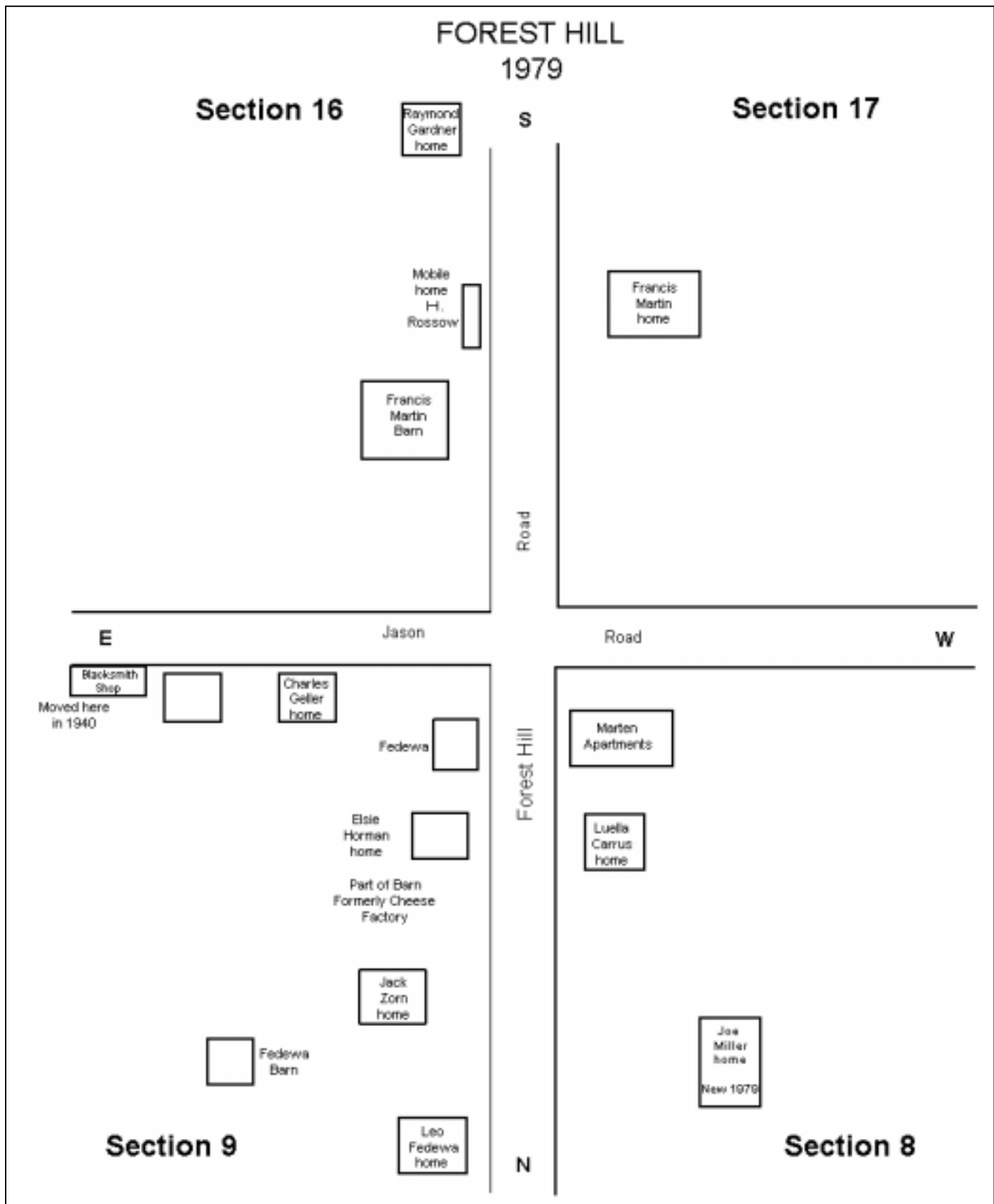
On January 23, 1946, the Forest Hill Store came back to life when the store and property was purchased by Elmer W. Marten from William G. Witt. After some changes and remodeling in the interior, the store, again, was in business. This ownership set a record which was the longest length of time that the store was operated under one owner and operator. In spite of the many changes and remodeling which was frequently done to the interior of the building, the exterior of the building remained the same as it was constructed in 1902 by Charles Cowles.

Elmer W. Marten, born June 29, 1898, and wife, Doris (Chant), born May 19, 1902, operated the store with the assistance of Neva, the Martens youngest daughter who, after her marriage on June 25, 1947 to Albert Flak, resided in the second apartment above the store. Albert and Neva had three children, Charleon, Phyllis, and Rita born while they lived at Forest Hill. In 1955 they moved to a home on Centerline Road where daughter, Joanne, was born. Virginia, born October 10, 1925, the eldest daughter of Elmer and Doris, was married to Leonard Jastram on October 13, 1944 and they are parents of two daughters, Marsha and Elaine. Leonard and Virginia are residents of Watertown Township, on Howe Road.

Elmer Marten operated a successful business in groceries, meats, frozen foods, ice cream, drugs and paint and expanded the hardware and automotive supplies, in addition to gas and oil. In 1950 plumbing and heating were added. In addition to Neva Flak, Jean (Marten) Mayers, Donna (Schaefer) Race, Florence Marten and myself were employees at the store. My period of employment was from August 1954 to November 1962.

Faced with declining health and approaching retirement years, Elmer and Doris Marten made a momentous decision to close the store operation. On Saturday, July 3, 1965, after nearly nineteen years in the store, Elmer Marten held a Forest Hill Merchandise Sale by which he disposed of the stock and equipment in the store. On September 22, 1965, the doors of the Forest Hill Store were closed and locked for the last time, closing an era which had existed for 70 years. After closing the store, Elmer enclosed the porch and remodeled and converted the building into four comfortable apartments -- the Martens living in one and renting the other three. Elmer W. Marten passed away May 26, 1975 and Doris maintains her residence in the apartment building, formerly the Forest Hill Store.

In recording the history of the Forest Hill area, I have tried, to the best of my ability, to get as accurate information as possible. It is a history of a community that grew, blossomed and faded within a span of 91 years and the common bond, from the time that the early settlers followed State Road, or Dexter Trail, through what is now Riley -- the well-knit community of Forest Hill, had its place of distinction in molding the lives and character of the people who have resided here. As progress continues to advance, what at one time seemed a necessity, is lost by modern developments. As the advent of the automobile and other modes of modern transportation lessened the need of the self-sufficient early communities, they certainly have a definite place in the pages of history, even though they are a forgotten community and as Ford S. Ceasar says in his



book "Forgotten Communities of Central Michigan" quote, "Time has slowly close the lid upon that chest of historical knowledge".

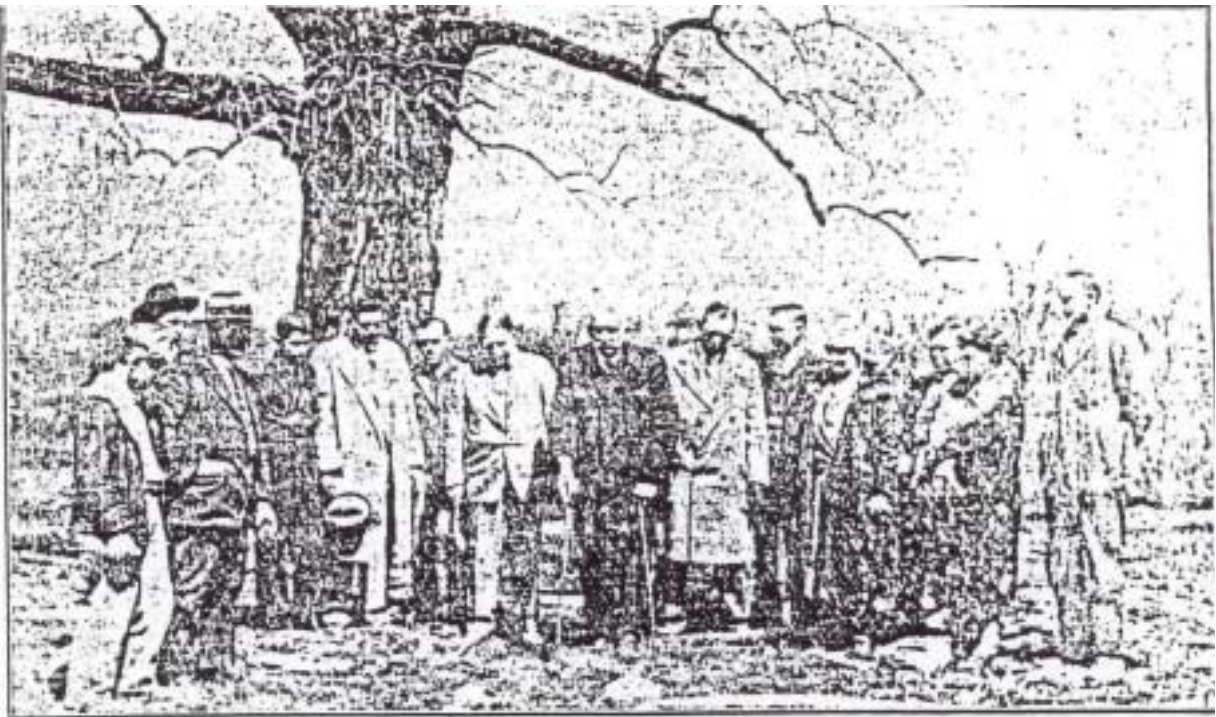
In conclusion:

June 1979, finds the only remnants that remain of the once active and bustling community, outside of dwellings, are the four family apartment building, once the Forest Hill Store; the barn on the Else Horman property which was the smaller portion of the Cheese Factory; and the Blacksmith Shop, which remains standing on the Amelia and Ernest Hauser property.

Appendices

- Appendix A Riley Dexter First White Child Buried in Clinton
- Appendix B Bliss Family History & Obituary of Henry Bliss
- Appendix C Obituary of Sidney J. Bliss
- Appendix D Obituary of Mrs. Merritt Temple (Sabrina Hortensia Bliss)
- Appendix E Obituary of H Glenn Bliss
- Appendix F Obituary of Earl Bliss
- Appendix G Obituary of Lucretia L. Temple
- Appendix H Obituary of Roe S Temple
- Appendix I Obituary of Henry Boss
- Appendix J Obituary of Dora Bell Boss & Francis Bucklin
- Appendix K Obituary of Christian Martens
- Appendix L Obituary of Mrs. Nellie Broughton Mossman
- Appendix M Obituary of Lillie E. Hildreth Welton
- Appendix N Obituary of Dr. Peter Banta
- Appendix O Obituary of Robert Landers
- Appendix P Obituary of Lucinus Young & Ira Thome
- Appendix Q Obituary Geo Hildreth Sears Gardner Sterling Bristol
- Appendix R Obituary of Jennie Kleckner
- Appendix S Obituary of Clarence Schafer
- Appendix T Obituary of Elizabeth Fedewa
- Appendix U Obituary John Martens Johanna Martens Daughter of John & Johanna
- Appendix V Obituary of Charles E Bills
- Appendix W Orpha & Orel Hildreth
- Appendix Y-1 Leon Schumaker Retires
- Appendix Y-2 Dorretta Krumm & Henry Witt Wed
- Appendix Y-3 Emma Schrader & Edward Laucht Wed
- Appendix Y-4 1870 Clinton County MI Census
- Appendix Y-5 Golden Anniversary Schroede - Obituary of Mrs. Fred Schroeder
- Appendix Y-6 1830 Original Deed to land in Riley Township

**Reprint of Newspaper article that appeared in the
Clinton County Republican News on May 7, 1931**



FIND LOST GRAVE – This group of St. Johns, Ionia and Bengal people, gathered on Sunday, May 3, 1931 on the Fred Mohnke farm in Bengal Township. George Swagart, then 86, in the center, is pointing to the spot where Riley Dexter, 2-year-old son of Judge Samuel Dexter, founder of Ionia, was buried in May of 1833. From left to right: Robert Padgett, Patrick Gallagher, Tyler Hill, Lyle Padgett, Verne Padgett, John Gallagher, Editor Fred D. Kiester (Iona County News), George Swagart, E.G. Hulse, Fred Mohnke, Mrs. L. P. Brock, Robert Irrer, Mrs. Kiester and Herman Mohnke.

Grave Found in 1931

**Riley Dexter First White
Child Buried in Clinton**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reprinted below is an account of the burial on Bengal township 123 years ago of Riley Dexter, the two-year-old son of Judge Samuel Dexter, who established the famed Dexter trail from DeWitt to Ionia and was leader of the colony that were first settlers in Ionia. The story was published in The Republican-News of May 7, 1931. Riley Township was named for Dexter child.

George Swagart, bowed under the weight of 86 years, but with a memory clearly recording the scenes of his boyhood of 70 years ago, pointed out with his cane, to a group of Ionia, St. John and Bengal residents, Sunday morning the last resting place of Riley Dexter, a grave made 98 years ago.

This incident took place on the farm of Fred Mohnke in South Bengal. It was at this in 1833 that a band of colonists who settled Ionia stopped, half-starved, nearly exhausted and discouraged, and buried little Riley Dexter, one of the children of Judge Dexter.

B. O. Williams of Shiawassee and the young Indian, Mackatepenace (Blackbird), son of the Saginaw chief, who were guiding the party across the uncharted area, stood in the background while the grief-stricken Dexter lifted his face to heaven in the gathering gloom and prayed to God to care for the soul of his little son.

■ ■ ■

Two Years hence, in 1933 the city of Ionia plans a Centennial. Mrs. L. P. Brock of that city, a local historian, headed the Ionia party, consisting of Editor and Mrs. Fred Kiester, who came to St. Johns Sunday morning for the express purpose of locating the grave of the Dexter child.

Mr. Swagart is the only living person who remembers its location. When a boy he worked on this farm which was a part of the section of land owned by Judge Courtland Hill, one of the first settlers in Bengal. "They used to keep a fence around the spot," said Mr. Swagart. "I remember it well – right here by the bank of the creek and just off the road which those pioneers cut through the woods."

The Story of the trip of Judge Dexter and his colony is one of the most interesting of this section. Mr. Williams, who guided them to the Indian village on the Looking Glass and who enlisted the services of the Indian, Mackatepenace, left the following account of the trip and burial of the Dexter child:

"Having in vain tried to get Beauben to pilot them, Messrs. Dexter, Yeomans and Wisnor came to us for help. I left our planting, taking my blankets and a small tent, and in six days landed them

at Ionia, looking out the route and directing where the road was to be. (The road was cut through heavy timber.)

"This was the first real colonizing party we had ever seen, myself never having been further west than DeWitt (the Indian village). I there inducted Mackatepenace (Blackbird) son of Kishkako, the chief of all the Saginaws, to pilot us past Muskrat creek, and from there I proceeded with the party. At that point a child of Mr. and Mrs. Dexter, a son of two years, died of scarlet fever."

"WE BURIED the child by torch and candlelight in a box improvised by the party. The road we opened was next year followed by other immigrants and was substantially the Grand River road through Shiawassee and Clinton counties, and was traveled for many years after."

Harriet, a daughter of Joel Guild, head of one of the families in the Dexter party, was 20 years of age at the time of this pilgrimage. In a history of Grand Rapids where she later lived, this lady left an even more graphic account of the sickness, death and burial of the child:

"It was raining when we reached the Looking Glass river and that night the boy was so sick that we sat up all night holding umbrellas over him.....

■ ■ ■

"THE NEXT DAY we soon entered a heavy timbered land (Riley Township). That night the boy grew worse and his mother and I sat up nearly all night with him."

"Our provisions were nearly gone and we could not stop, but about noon Mrs.

Dexter called a halt, noticing a change in the child.....a few minutes the little sufferer was dead. We could not tarry but we went sadly on and camped early. My mother furnished a small trunk used for carrying food and dishes, which served for a coffin. By Muskrat creek as the sun was going down, the little one was buried.

“**A LARGE ELM** by the grave was marked. Logs were put over the mound and fastened there to protect it from wolves that were plenty in that vicinity. The only service over the grave was a prayer by Mr. Dexter. The other seemed broken-hearted and all were grieved but we could not tarry there.”

“We had reached the point where we had to use meal father bought at Pontiac for the horses. We let the horses pick their living as best they could from grass and twigs along the way. (These colonists had with them some 20 cows.) We made log heap fires, filled a large brass kettle with water, placed it on the fire, stirred in the meal and made hasty pudding. This, with the milk for the cows, was our only food.”

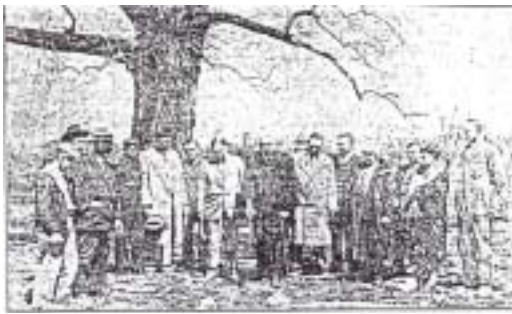
■ ■ ■

STARTING just a few rods southeast of the point where Mr. Swagart located the grave is the beginning of an angling road, which continues several miles in a northwesterly direction. It is now a highway but was the original Dexter road cut through the timber by Judge Dexter and his party of colonists. The road passes about two miles south of the village of Fowler and is now a good gravel road.

Another account of the scene at the burial of the Dexter child by one of the

party reads, “Never shall I forget that scene! The whole family, if not all others, were in tears. The gray-haired sire (he was 46 years of age) after visiting the heads of other families to lead the exercises of the mournful occasion, with tears streaming down his cheeks, read a burial service amid the sobs that nearly drowned his voice in that deep, dark and gloomy forest – the gloomiest spot of the whole route. The grave was made and can still be seen on the farm of Judge Hill on the bank of Muskrat creek.” (Judge Courtland Hill was the grandfather of Tyler Hill and was at one time probate judge of Clinton County.)

An interesting sidelight of the Dexter colony lies in the fact that the child, Riley Dexter, was a first cousin of Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, Mrs. Bryan being the daughter of Judge Dexter’s brother. The grandmother of both, Judge Dexter’s mother, was a member of the colony which crossed Clinton on their way to Ionia in May 1833.



GRAVE FOUND IN 1931

Riley Dexter First White Child Buried in Clinton

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reported below is an account of the burial in Bengali township 122 years ago of Riley Dexter, the two-year-old son of Judge Samuel Dexter, who established the famed Dexter tract from Dar-Whit in India and was leader of the colony that were first settlers in Iowa. The story was published in The Republican-People of May 7, 1921. Riley township was named for the Dexter child.

George Swegert, bowed under the weight of 88 years, but with a memory clearly receding the scenes of his boyhood of 76 years ago, pointed out with his cane, to a group of local, St. Johns and Bengali residents, Sunday morning, the last resting place of Riley Dexter, a grave made 88 years ago.

This incident took place on the farm of Fred Mohrke in South Bengal. It was at this point in 1923 that a band of colonists who settled Iowa, steeped, half-starved, nearly exhausted and discouraged, and buried little Riley Dexter, one of the children of Judge Dexter.

I. D. Williams of Shawnee and the young Indian, Mackalepewa (Blackbird), son of the Sagnew chief, who were guiding the party across the uncharted area, stood in the background while the grief-stricken Dexter lifted his face to heaven in the gutturing groans and prayed to God to save for the soul of his little son.

TWO YEARS later, in 1925, the city of Iowa, placed a Christian Mrs. I. P. Sims at the site, a local historian, headed the Iowa party, consisting of Miller and Mrs. Fred Kister, who came to St. Johns Sunday morning for the express purpose of locating the grave of the Dexter child.

Mr. Swegert is the only living person who remembers his location. When a boy he worked on the farm which was a part of the section of land owned by Judge Courtland Hill, one of the first settlers in Bengali. "They used to have a fence around the spot," said Mr. Swegert. "I remember it well—right in by the bank of the creek just off the road, while those pioneers sat through the woods."

THE STORY of the trip of Judge Dexter and his colony is one of the most interesting of this section. Mr. Williams, who guided them to the Indian village on the Looking Glass and who secured the services of the Indian, Mackalepewa, left the following account of the trip and burial of the Dexter child:

"Having in vain tried to get Swegert to join them, Thomas Dexter, Frank and Wm. came to us for help. I left our starting place, my horses and a small tent, and to the day landed them at Iowa, looking out the route and directing where the road was to be. (The road was cut through heavy timber.)

"This was the first real colonizing party we had ever seen, except never having been further west than DeWitt the Indian village. I there selected Mackalepewa (Blackbird) son of the chief of all the groups, to point us past

Muskat creek, and from there I proceeded with the party. At that point a child of Mr. and Mrs. Dexter, a son of two years, died of scarlet fever."

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Harriet, a daughter of Jost Child, head of one of the families in the Dexter party, was 30 years of age at the time of this pilgrimage. In a history of Grand Rapids where she later

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Dead, this lady left an even more graphic account of the unknown, death and burial of the child:

"It was raining when we reached the Looking Glass river and that night the boy was so sick that we sat up all night tending him with our hands."

"THE NEXT DAY we again covered a heavy timbered land (Bengali township). That night the boy grew worse and his mother and I sat up nearly all night with him."

"Our provisions were nearly gone and we could not sleep, but about noon Mrs. Dexter raised a halt, noticing a change in the child.... A few minutes later

little sufferer was dead. We could not carry him, so we went early on and carried early. My mother furnished a small trunk used for carrying food and clothes, which served for a coffin. By Muskrat creek as the sun was going down, the little one was buried."

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The following are reprints of two newspaper articles. The first was published in the late 1800's or early 1900's; "Uncle" Henry Bliss describes life as a pioneer in central Michigan during a Bliss Family reunion. The second is the obituary of "Uncle" Henry that was published on April 25, 1929.

**BLISS FAMILY HELD
REUNION
AT THE M.A.C.
SATURDAY
ABOUT 150 WERE
PRESENT**

**Detroit, South Dakota,
Kansas, and Clinton
County Represented**



The Bliss family held a reunion at the M.A.C. Saturday about 150 being present, the greater part of whom lay in Clinton County.

C. F. Ottmar of Riley, [\[his story on Page 14\]](#) read the following family history

David and Samantha Bliss lived in Vermont State and later moved to New York State in the early 40's. The family consisted of Stebbins Clark Bliss, David [Pitney Bliss], Horatio [Simeon Bliss], Augustus [Lamar Bliss], Henry [William Bliss], Sidney [Jared] Bliss, Lucy [Maria Bliss] Hodges, Sabrina [Hortentia Bliss] Temple, Adeline [Chloe Bliss] Pratt, Elizabeth [Bliss] Osborn and Emila [Bliss], who died in New York State in the spring of 1848. From this point of the family history begins our story as related to me by Uncle Henry Bliss. He said:

In the fall of 1848, father and mother, David, Horatio, Augustas, myself, Sidney, Cyrus and Adeline Pratt, his wife, and Rufus Pratt started for Michigan, and settled on a soldier's claim in the Township of Riley, Clinton County. Stebbins came in 1849. Jim and Lucy Hodges came from Wisconsin to Michigan and joined the family in 1849 Elizabeth Osborn remained in New York. Sabrina and Merritt Temple came in 1861.

Appendix B

We took an Erie Canal boat at Schenectady, N.Y., and arrived in Buffalo one week later. The weather was fine and the trip was very slow. The boat was drawn by horses and they walked all the way. We took a steamer from Buffalo to Detroit, Michigan.



Stebbins Clark Bliss

Uncle Clark Griswold, who worked at Northville, Michigan, sent a team of horses and a lumber wagon to Detroit to get us and took us all to his place. It was quite a load. Uncle Clark was husking his corn so we stayed a week with him and helped him finish. He then sent his team and a hired man, and a neighbor with his team and wagons, and took us and what goods we could carry to Riley. The roads were very bad and

the traveling was hard. The balance of the goods we left at Uncle Clark's. The next summer we hired Freeman Nichols, who then lived in the second house west of Borughton's Corners, to go to Northville to get the remainder of the goods. We had no money to pay for this, so we agreed to chop and clear a certain of acres of heavily timbered land to pay for this trip. We had to chop down the trees, burn them and fence the fields. We got a lot of experience. The logs were green elms and hard to burn. This was our first experience in clearing forests.

Uncle Clark asked Mr. Nichols how we were getting along and he told him that we were hard up, and so he sent along with the goods a whole barrel of pork for us. I tell you that was good. Uncle Clark was certainly a fine man. (Right here let me say that the writer of this article met Uncle Clark at the home of a relative, Uncle Henry, a few years before his sad and sudden death and he can frankly say that he never met a kinder hearted and more pleasing old gentlemen that Uncle Clark Griswold.)

We settled on the Northwest Quarter of section nine, Riley Township, Clinton County. When we got here we had no money to buy any food with and had nothing to live on. The country was new and wild. Lots of wild animals and game. Where we made our mistake was when we brought no guns with us. None of us were hunters. We could have had lots of game and deer for meat had we had a gun and ammunition. No one had told us about it. We knew nothing about the country that we were going to. Most of our neighbors here were as hard up as we

Appendix B



Marilla H. Moore Bliss
1st wife of Stebbins Clark Bliss

were. Morris Broughton was the only one who had anything to sell and all he had was potatoes. We bought potatoes of him for 25 cents a bushel, and paid for them by chopping cordwood at 25 cents a cord. We had to have some money so we took road jobs, that is, cut the trees in the road and build causeways of logs through the low places. Competition was strong and we had to bid low to get the job. We also burned logs and gathered the ashes and made black salts and sold it for \$2.50 a hundred. And when you got the money you were not sure it was worth anything. It might be worth something today and tomorrow be worthless.

We made a lot of sap troughs out of split logs. The winter was mild and we made sugar nearly all winter. This gave us some money to use and all the sugar we



It is supposed that the above tombstone was discarded after being replaced by the one at left.

needed for the family. There was no house on the land that we bought, so we moved in with Bill Peck. We had one room and boarded ourselves. Some of us slept on the floor in Bill Peck's house. Just six weeks from the time that we came here we had a house up made of logs and moved into it. It was 20 by 30. We cut a nice white oak and split out shakes for the roof, and plank for the floors, both up and down stairs, all out of this one tree. We had no cow the first winter that we were here. The next summer Horatio and Augustus worked

Appendix B

for a big farmer near Portland for \$13.00 a month. As soon as they had earned enough they bought a cow of this man that they were working for. They also bought grain and potatoes of him until we could raise some ourselves. That gave us something to live on. They also bought and paid for a yoke of oxen in the fall on 1849. That gave us our first team to work with. We would chop in the winter and clear it of in the summer and sow it to wheat in the fall. The first clearing we did by hand, as we had no team. In that way we cleared a few acres and sowed it to wheat in the fall of 1849. The first wheat we raised we took to DeWitt to mill for flour for our own use.

David was a good mechanic. He made bob sleighs out of roots of oak stumps that had the right crook for sleigh runners, ironed them of and we had something to go with. The first wheat that we sold, Horatio took to Detroit on these sleighs. On his last trip he sold the sleighs. That gave us more money to make a payment on our place. The first summer that we lived here we rented ten acres of land of Morris Broughton. We planted it to corn and potatoes. Mr. Broughton let us use his team to do that work and we got half of the crop for our share.

We had six years to pay for the place, so after we had land enough cleared we raised wheat and sold it. There was no railroad here, and Horatio had to haul it to Detroit. When the railroad was built to Jackson, we hauled it there. Later the Grand Trunk was built to St. Johns, and then we hauled our stuff to St. Johns and Fowler. The second year that we raised wheat to sell, there was a



wet harvest in the eastern part of the state, so the farmers from there came here and bought our wheat. We got \$1.50 a bushel at home.

While plowing among the stumps, Horatio broke a moldboard to the plow; so he and I walked to Portland and

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bought one, tied it to a pole, put the pole on our shoulder and carried it home in one day. Another time we walked to Lansing and got some drag teeth. They were 1-¼ inch teeth. We put them in bags, divided them equal in the bags, slung the bags over our shoulders and carried them home. We bought them of William Hildreth, who owned the Temple place and operated the foundry in North Lansing. We paid for them in work. I recall that Stebbins and I walked to DeWitt and bought some sheet iron for sap pans. We took along some eggs to pay for some groceries. We tied the



sheet iron and the groceries to a pole and carried them home. Westphalia was our nearest town and I walked there many times to do our trading.

Ruben Gunn was a wagon maker. He lived just east of us. He made our first wagon. It was made with a wooden axle

with a piece of strap iron over the top and bottom of the axle. We cradled all our grain up to the time of the civil war. We cut our hay with a scythe and raked it by hand. When the Civil war broke out so many men went to war that help became scarce, so David and I bought a combination reaper and mower. We went to Ions and bought a revolving rake. It was a simple affair but it saved lots of work. We paid \$110.00 for the first mower.

Father [David Bliss] died in [May 15] 1859, and left mother and I to struggle along. Then came the Civil war and all the boys responded to the call but (brother) David and I. Fortunately they all come back alive. Those were trying days. Mother died with Typhoid Fever in 1863, when all the boys were in the south. Sister Adeline died when Orville (her son) was born in 1861.

The second year that we were here we got the ague. This added to our misery. We took lots of quinine. Brandy and all the salt it would dissolve was the best remedy. Mr. Broughten and Mr. Hill had young orchards in bearing and we got our apples of them. We used to dry pumpkins for pie. We would slice the pumpkins in rings, hang them on poles and dry them. We had a cook stove, elevated ovens, they were good heaters and answered the purpose of heating, cooking and baking. Philo Peck had an oven that they placed in front of the fireplace and baked with. The mosquitoes were thick and we had to build smudges in the house to smoke them out. After awhile we got netting. We let our cattle run in common and had cowbells on them to locate them if they did not come home. The first

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winter that we had cattle we kept them on browse winters, as we had no hay. Cattle did well on it. These are just a few incidents of early pioneer life.

Here is another incident as related by Jim Warrens:

Stebbins and David Bliss went to St. Johns to mill one day. In those days we had to go around by way of the Jason schoolhouse. The land north and east was very low and filled with water, but a road had been cut through and they were building causeway thorough the low land. Coming home it was late and

they concluded to take the short way home. There war no "Detour" or "Follow the Arrow" signs along the highways. When they were within a mile and a half of home the horses stopped suddenly. It was late and very dark. They got out and examined the cause and found that they were at the end of the causeway not completed. They could go no further, so they unloaded the grist onto some logs to keep it out of the water, lifted the box off, uncoupled the wagon, turned the wagon around, coupled it up again, put the box on, loaded the grist, hitched the horses back on the wagon, retraced their path and went around, concluding that "the farthest way round was the nearest way home".

Obituary of Henry William Bliss

December 16, 1864 – April 18, 1929

RILEY COUPLE DIE SAME DAY

JOINT SERVICE HELD FOR HENRY BLISS 94, AND WIFE, 86 SUNDAY

Husband Had Lived On Same Farm 80 Years; Both Highly Esteemed

Henry W. Bliss, 94, one of the few remaining early pioneers of Clinton county, a resident upon the same farm in Riley for more than 80 years and a man of exemplary character, respected by all who knew him, passed to his reward at 8:30 P.M. Thursday, April 18, 1929, at Clinton Memorial hospital where, for the past two weeks, he had been under treatment for pneumonia. Three hours before his death – at 5:30 P.M. – his [second] wife, Mary Sutton Bliss 86, succumbed at the home of her grandson, Allie Stanton, near Gunnisonville, after being ill several weeks. She was not aware of her husband's serious condition, nor did he know that she lay at the point of death.

Double funeral services were conducted by Dr. Julia M. Walton of Jackson at the Osgood Funeral Home at 2 p.m. Sunday. Burial was made at the Broughton cemetery in Riley for Mr. Bliss and interment for Mr. Bliss was made at Alma. The following obituary accounts were written by C. [Fred]. T. Ottmar of Riley, (see photo and story about Cottfred T. Ottmar on page 14) who lived at the Bliss home for many years:

Strange things have happened, but seldom does it happen that husband and wife pass to the Great Beyond so close together as the subjects of this account – less than three hours apart and separated from each other by many miles; neither knowing of the other's danger point, barring accident or tragedy. Henry W. Bliss, a pioneer of Riley township lay in Memorial Hospital hovering between life and death, fighting a hard fight to live a few more useful years, and his wife near Gunnisonville, battling with the same foe, fighting for dear life to get well again, hoping and longing for the day when she and her husband might again be united at the old home on their farm in Riley. Neither realized what the other had won or lost in the struggle. And so it came to pass that three hours after her demise the two departed and we hope that they were united in that home not made with hands, where on discordant voice shall be heard and hosanna resound from every tongue.

Henry W. Bliss was born in Vermont, December 16, 1834, the son of David and Samantha Bliss. He is the last survivor of a family of 14 children, three of whom reached the remarkable age of over 93 years. His parents moved to New York State in the early 40's. In 1848 the family moved to Michigan, and settled on a piece of land, a total wilderness, on section 9 in Riley township, Clinton County. His father died in 1858 and his mother in 1863.

On October 5, 1862, he was married to Clarissa E. Welton [his first wife], of Adron, Indiana. With the aid and encouragement of his helpmate, he continued to clear up the farm, built a fine home, splendid barns and other farm buildings and turned the wilderness into a fine productive farm. They were known far and wide as "Uncle Henry" and "Aunt Clarissa". Many an orphan and homeless child found a home under their roof, for they had no children of their own, but no father or mother could have cared for their own children more tenderly that did this couple.

In September 1916, he was married to Mary J. Bird. They lived on his farm until last fall, when age and infirmities forced them to seek comfort among relatives. He was born into the new life Thursday evening, April 18, 1929, at Clinton Memorial Hospital, having reached the ripe age of 94 years, 4 months and 2 days.

In politics he was a Republican, casting his first vote for president for Fremont, the first Republican candidate for president. He cast his last vote for Hoover last fall. Religiously, he was a Spiritualist. He lived what he preached and preached what he conscientiously believed. He had an exemplary personality. He used no tobacco, was strictly tempered in eating and drinking. He had a very decided distaste for alcoholic liquor and used no profane language. He was honest and upright. In matters of difference he would give in to the other rather than be in the wrong.

In his religious convictions he was true to the last. Only a few days before his demise he told the writer, in low breath, "that all wrongs must be righted" this

was his philosophy of the hereafter, that before you can make any progress in the world Beyond you must correct the wrongs done here. And holding that up as his ideal he tried to live as close to that philosophy as he could. What a world amazing the knowledge that he had acquired. He had a fair knowledge of several of the sciences, especially chemistry. He was a great reader and was able to impart to others what he had read and discovered. He always said that he wanted to die as he had lived: "To live and die a Spiritualist."

He continually resided on the farm which his father bought in 1848, for over 80 years, until last fall, when old age and infirmities compelled him to break up his home and live with a niece, Mrs. C. G. Pope, of Bengal Township, who very lovingly and tenderly cared for him, all of which he deserved, more no one could do. About two weeks ago he was stricken with pneumonia. He was taken to Clinton Memorial Hospital, where everything that science and tender loving hands could do was done for him. He was not afraid to go. There was much more that he wished he could do and wanted to do, but the loved ones who had gone before were beckoning for him, to show him his new home, as he expressed it, that he had earned while sojourning here. God bless you old pal of over 46 years that I have learned to love and revere. May your life be ever an inspiration not only to me, but to others to walk ever in the light of God as revealed through your association with men. May your thought be a beacon light to keep us of the rocks and pilot us safely into the harbor of peace and when we too must go your way may we find you there on that beautiful shore with outstretched

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hand, bidding us to enter and be ever with you. This is my prayer, dear old pal. And may God in his judgment look with favor upon you. He understandeth all things. So "Goodbye, till we meet again."

Mary J. Sutton was born in Naples, New York, April 3, 1843. She was married to Richard Bird in New York state when a young woman. In 1878 they moved to Michigan and settled on a farm two miles north and one-half mile west of Fowler. After a few years they moved to Lyons, from here they moved to Gratiot County. In 1898 they went to the state of California. They did not like the climate there so they returned to a farm near Alma, Michigan. Some years after this the family moved to Missouri, then back to Alma where Mr. Bird was later killed in a railroad accident.

In 1916, she was married to Henry W. Bliss and resided on his farm in Riley township until last fall, when on account of poor health and infirmity, they decide to live with relatives. She had suffered all winter until she passed away at the home of her grandson, Allie Stanton, near Gunnisonville, April 18, 1929, where tender hands and loving hearts had cared for her. She preceded her husband in to the Beyond by only three hours, he being at Clinton Memorial Hospital, and did not know that she was sick. The remains were taken to Alma for burial beside her first husband.

She is survived by her daughter, Cora Grimwood, of Crystal, Mich., six grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and three great, great, grandchildren, also a host of friends and neighbors.

UNINSTRUCTED

"I'm going to send you down to earth."
Said God to me one day.
"I'm giving what men call birth.
Tonight you'll start away.
I want you there to live with men
Until I call you back again."

I trembled as I heard Him speak,
Yet knew that I must go.
I felt His hand upon my check,
And whispered that I might know
Just what on earth would be my task,
And, timidly, I dared to ask.

"Tell me before I start away
What Thou would have me do.
What message would Thou have me say,
When shall my work be thru?
Then I may serve Thee on the earth.
Tell me the purpose of my birth."

God smiled at me and softly said:
"Oh, you shall find your task.
I want you free life's path to tread,
So do not stay to ask,
Remember, if your best you do,
That I shall ask no more of you."

How often as my work I do,
So commonplace and grim,
I sit and sigh and wish I knew
If I am pleasing Him.
I wonder if with every test
I've truly tried to do my best.

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BLISS FAMILY HELD REUNION

AT M. A. C. SATURDAY—
ABOUT 150 WERE
PRESENT.

Detroit, South Dakota And
Kansas And Clinton Co.
Represented.

The Bliss family held a reunion at the M. A. C. Saturday about 150 being present, the greater part of whom live in Clinton county. C. P. Ottmar of Ribey, read the following family history:

David and Samantha Bliss lived in Vermont state and later moved to New York state in the early 40's. The family consisted of Stebbins, David, Horatio, Augustus, Henry, Sidney, Lucy Hodges, Sabrina Temple, Adeline Pratt, Elizabeth Osborn and Emily, who died in New York state in the spring of 1948. From this point of the family history begins our story as related to me by Uncle Henry Bliss. He said:

In the fall of 1848, father and mother, David, Horatio, Augustus, myself, Sidney, Cyrus and Adeline Pratt, his wife, and Rufus Pratt started for Michigan, and settled on a soldier's claim in the Township of Ribey, Clinton county. Stebbins came in 1848. Jim and Lucy Hodges came from Wisconsin to Michigan and joined the family in 1849. Elizabeth Osborn remained in New York. Sabrina and Marret Temple came in 1861.

We took an Erie canal boat at Schenectady, N. Y., and arrived in Buffalo, one week later. The weather was fine and the trip was very slow. The boat was drawn with horses and they walked all the way. We took a steamer from Buffalo to Detroit, Mich.

Uncle Clark Griswold, who lived at Northville, Michigan, sent a team of horses and lumber wagon to Detroit to get us and took us all to his place. It was quite a load. Uncle Clark was husking his corn so we stayed a week with him and helped him finish. He then sent his team and hired man, and a neighbor with his team and wagons, and took us and what goods we could carry to Ribey. The roads were very bad and traveling was hard. The balance of the goods we left at Uncle Clark's. The next summer we hired Freeman Nichols, who then lived the second house west of Boughton's corner, to go to Northville to get the remainder of the goods. We had no money to pay for this, so we agreed to chop and clear a certain number of acres of heavy timbered land to pay for this trip. We had to chop down the trees, burn them and fence the field. We got a lot of experience. The logs were green and hard to burn. This was our first experience clearing forests.

Uncle Clark asked Mr. Nichols how we were getting along and he told him that we were hard up, and so he sent along with the goods a whole barrel of pork for us. I tell you that was good. Uncle Clark was certainly a fine man. (Right here let me say that the writer of this article met Uncle Clark at the home of the relative, Uncle Henry, a few years before his sad and sudden death and he can frankly say that he never met a kinder-hearted and more pleasing old gentleman than Uncle Clark Griswold.)

We settled on the Northwest quarter of section nine, Ribey township, Clinton county. When we got here we had no money to buy any food with and had nothing to live on. The country was new and wild. Lots of wild animals and game. Where we made

our mistake was when we brought no gun with us. None of us were hunters. We could have had lots of game and deer for meat, had we had a gun and ammunition. No one had told us about it. We knew nothing about the country that we were going to. Most of our neighbors here were as hard up as we were. Morris Boughton was the only one who had anything to sell and all he had was potatoes. We bought potatoes of him for five a bushel, and paid for them by chopping cord wood at five a cord. We had to have some money so we took rap logs, that is, cut the trees in the road and built chukeways of logs through the low places. Competition was strong and we had to bid low to get the job. We also burned logs and gathered the ashes and made black shits and sold it for \$2.50 a hundred. And when you got the money you were not sure that it was worth anything. It might be worth something today and tomorrow be worthless.

We made a lot of sap troughs out of split logs. The winter was mild and we made sugar nearly all winter. This gave us some money to use and all the sugar we needed for the family. There was no house on the land that we bought, so we moved in with Philo Peck. We had one room and boarded ourselves. Some of us slept on the floor in Bill Peck's house. Just six weeks from the time that we came here we had a house up made of logs and moved into it. It was 18x30. We cut a nice white oak and split out shakes for the roof, and plank for the floors, both up and down stairs, all out of this one tree. We had no cow the first winter that we were here. The next summer Horatio and Augustus worked for a big farmer near Portland for \$13.00 a month. As soon as they had earned enough they bought a cow of this man that they were working for. They also bought grain and potatoes of him until we could raise some ourselves. That gave us something to live on. They also bought and paid for a yoke of oxen in the fall of 1848. That gave us our first team to work with. We would chop in the winter and clear it off in the summer and sow it to wheat in the fall.

The first clearing we did by hand, as we had no team. In that way we cleared a few acres and sowed it to wheat in the fall of 1848. The first wheat we raised we took to Dewitt to mill for flour for our own use.

David was a good mechanic. He made bob sleighs out of rocks, of oak stumps that had the right crook for sleigh runners. Ironed them off and we had something to go with. The first year that we sold Horatio took to Detroit on these sleighs. On his last trip he sold the sleighs. That gave us more money to make a payment on our place. The first summer that we lived here we rented ten acres of land of Morris Boughton. We planted it to corn and potatoes. Mr. Boughton let us use his team to do the work and we got half of the crop for our share.

We had six years to pay for the place, so after we had land enough cleared we raised wheat and sold it. There was no railroad here, and Horatio had to haul it to Detroit. When the railroad was built to Jackson, we hauled it there. Later the Grand Trunk was built to St. Johns, and then we hauled our stuff to St. Johns and Fowler. The second year that we raised wheat to sell, there was a wet harvest in the eastern part of the state, so the farmers from there came here and bought our wheat. We got \$1.50 a bushel at home.

While plowing, among the stumps, Horatio broke a mold-board to the plow, so he and I walked to Portland and bought one, tied it to a pole, put the pole on our shoulders and carried it

home in one day. Another time we walked to Lansing and got some drag teeth. They were 18 inch teeth. We put them in bags, divided them equally in the bag, along the bags over our shoulders and carried them home. We bought them of Wm. Hildreth, who owned the Temple place and operated a foundry in North Lansing. We paid for them in work. I recall that Stebbins and I walked to Dewitt and bought some sheet iron for sap pans. We took along some eggs to pay for some groceries. We tied the sheet iron and the groceries to a pole and carried them home. Westphalia was our nearest town and I walked there many times to do our trading.

Ruben Gunn was a wagon maker. He lived just east of us. He made our first wagon. It was made with a wooden axle with a piece of strap iron over the top and bottom of the axle. We cradled all of our grain up to the time of the Civil war. We cut our hay with a scythe and raised it by hand. When the Civil war broke out so many men went to war that help became scarce, so David and I bought a combination reaper and mower. We went to Lyons and bought a revolving rake. It was a simple affair but saved lots of work. We paid \$110 for the first mow.

Father died in 1853, and left

another and I to struggle alone. There came the civil war and all the boys responded to the call. David and I. Fortunately they all came back alive. Those were trying days. Mother died with typhoid fever in 1861, when all the boys were in the South. Sister Adeline died when Grand was here in 1861.

The second year that we were here we got the ague. This added to our misery. We took lots of quinine. Grand and all the rest it would dissolve was the best remedy. Mr. Boughton and Mr. Hill had young arthritis in reaching and we got our upper of them. We used to dry pumpkins for pie. We would slice the pumpkins in rings, hang them on poles and dry them. We had a oven stove, elevated oven, they were good heaters and answered the purpose of heating, cooking and baking. Phil Peck had an oven that they placed in front of the fireplace and baked with. The mosquitoes were thick and we had to hang swarms in the house to smoke them out. After a while we got settling. We let our cattle run in corn and had cowbells on them to locate them if they did not come home. The first year that we had cattle we kept them on browse winters as we had no hay. Cattle did well on it. These are just a few of the incidents of early pioneer life.

Here is another incident as related by Jim Warren—Stedman and David Bliss went to St. Johns to mill one day. In those days we had to go around by way of the Jason schoolhouse. The land north and east was very low and filled with water, but a road had been cut through and they were building a causeway through the low land. Coming home it was late and they concluded to take the short way home. There were no "De-tour" or "Follow the Arrow" signs along the highways. When they were within a mile and a half of home the horses stopped suddenly. It was late and very dark. They got out and examined the cause and found that they were at the end of a causeway not completed. They could go no further, so they unloaded lumber into some logs to keep it out of the water, lifted the box off, uncoupled the wagon, turned the wagon around, coupled it up again, put the box on, loaded up the grain, hitched the horses back on the wagon, retraced their path and went around, concluding that "the farthest way round was the shortest way home."

Thursday, April 2, Johns, Michigan—April 25, 1929

RILEY COUPLE DIE SAME DAY

JOINT SERVICE HELD FOR
HENRY BLISS, 94, AND
WIFE, 86, SUNDAY

Husband Had Lived On Same
Farm 80 Years; Both
Highly Esteemed

Henry W. Bliss, 94, one of the few remaining early pioneers of Clinton county, a resident upon the same farm in Riley for more than 80 years and a man of exemplary character, respected by all who knew him, passed to his reward at 5:30 p. m. Thursday, April 18, 1929, at Clinton Memorial hospital where, for the past two weeks, he had been under treatment for pneumonia. Three hours before his death—at 5:30 p. m.—his wife, Mary Sutton Bliss, 86, succumbed at the home of her grandson, Allie Stanton, near Gunnisonville, after being ill several weeks. She was not aware of her husband's serious condition, nor did he know that she lay at the point of death.

Double funeral services were conducted by Dr. Julia M. Walton of Jackson at the Cogood funeral home at 2 p. m. Sunday. Burial was made at the Boughton cemetery in Riley for Mr. Bliss and interment for Mrs. Bliss was made at Alma. The following obituary accounts were written by G. F. O'Connor of Riley, who lived at the Bliss home for many years:

Strange things have happened, but seldom does it happen that husband and wife pass to the great Beyond so close together as the subjects of this account—less than three hours apart and separated from each other by many miles; neither knowing of the other's danger point, barring accident or tragedy. Henry W. Bliss, a pioneer of Riley township lay in Memorial Hospital hovering between life and death, fighting a hard fight to live. (Continued on page 6, column 3)

RILEY COUPLE DIE SAME DAY

(Continued from page 3)

A few more useful years, and his wife near Gunnisonville, battling with the same foe, fighting for dear life to get well again, hoping and longing for the day when she and her husband might again be united at the old home on their farm in Riley. Neither realized what the other had won or lost in the struggle. And so it came to pass that three hours after her demise she departed and we hope that they were united in that home not made with hands, where no discordant voice shall be heard and harmonious resound from every tongue.

Henry W. Bliss was born in Vermont, Dec. 15, 1834, the son of David and Samantha Bliss. He is the last survivor of a family of children, three of whom reached the remarkable age of over 83 years. His parents moved to New York state in the early 40's. In 1848 the family moved to Michigan, and settled on a piece of land, a total wilderness, an section 9 in Riley township, Clinton county. His father died in 1858, and his mother in 1863.

On October 3, 1852, he was married to Clarissa E. Walton, of Akron, Indiana. With the aid and encouragement of his legitimate, he continued to clear up the farm, build a fine house, splendid barns and other farm buildings, and turned the wilderness into a fine productive farm. They were known far and wide as "Uncle Henry" and "Aunt Clarissa." Many an orphan and homeless child found a home under their roof, for they had no children of their own, but no father or mother could have cared for their own children more tenderly than did this couple.

In August, 1911, "Aunt Clarissa" departed this life, having traveled and worked together with her husband for nearly a half century. Their home was ever open to the young people of the community, and whenever a good time was desired their thoughts turned to "Uncle Henry's."

In September, 1918, he was married to Mary J. Bird. They lived on his farm until last fall, when age and infirmities forced them to seek comfort among relatives. He was born into the new life Thursday evening, April 18, 1929, at Clinton Memorial hospital, having reached the ripe age of 94 years, 4 months and 2 days.

In politics he was a Republican, casting his first vote for president for Fremont, the first Republican candidate for president. He cast his last vote for Hoover last fall. Religiously, he was a Spiritualist. He lived what he preached and preached what he conscientiously believed. He had an exemplary personality. He used no tobacco, was strictly temperate in eating and drinking. He had a very decided distaste for alcoholic liquor and used no profane language. He was honest and upright. In matters of difference he would give in to the other rather than be in the wrong.

In his religious convictions he was true to the last. Only a few days before his demise he told the writer, in low breath, "that all wrongs must be righted." This was his philosophy of the hereafter, that before you can make any progress in the world beyond you must correct the wrongs done here. And holding that up as his ideal he tried to live as close to that philosophy as he could. What a world

amazing the knowledge that he had acquired. He had a fair knowledge of several of the sciences, especially chemistry. He was a great reader and was able to impart to others what he had read and discovered. He always said that he wanted to die as he had lived: "To live and die a Spiritualist."

He continually resided on the farm which his father bought in 1848, for over 80 years, until last fall, when old age and infirmities compelled him to break up his home and live with a niece, Mrs. C. O. Pope, of Bethtel township, who very lovingly and tenderly cared for him, all of which he deserved, more so one could do. About two weeks ago he was stricken with pneumonia. He was taken to Clinton Memorial hospital, where everything that science and tender loving hands could do was done for him. He was not afraid to go. There was much more that he wished he could do and wanted to do, but the loved ones who had gone before were beckoning for him, to show him his new home, so he expressed it that he had earned what he was now enjoying here. God bless you old pal of over 46 years that I have learned to love and revere. May your life be ever an inspiration, not only to me, but to others, as well as ever in the light of God as revealed through your association with them. May your thoughts be a beam of light to keep us off the rocks and pilot us safely into the harbor of peace and when we too must go your way may we find you there on that beautiful shore with countless hands, reaching us to enter and be ever with you. This is my prayer, God send you, and may God in his judgment look with favor upon you. He understandeth all things. So "Goodbye, till we meet again."

Mary J. Sutton was born in Naples, New York, April 3, 1841. She was married to Richard Bird in New York state when a young woman. In 1878 they moved to Michigan and settled on a farm two miles north and one-half mile west of Fowler. After a few years they moved to Lyons, from here they moved to Grand Rapids. In 1890 they went to the state of California. They did not like the climate there so they returned to a farm near Alma, Michigan. Some years after this the family moved to Allouan, then back to Alma where Mr. Bird was later killed in a railroad accident.

In 1918, she was married to Henry W. Bliss and resided on his farm in Riley township until last fall, when, on account of poor health and infirmity, they decided to live with relatives. She had suffered all winter until she passed away at the home of her grandson, Allie Stanton, near Gunnisonville, April 18, 1929, where tender hands and loving hearts had cared for her. She preceded her husband in to the Beyond by only three hours. He being at Clinton Memorial hospital, and did not know that she was sick. The remains were taken to Alma for burial beside her first husband.

She is survived by her daughter, Cora Grimwood, of Crystal, Mich., six grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and three great great grandchildren, also a host of friends and neighbors.

David Bliss and Samantha (Grimwood) his wife, lived in Vermont state and later moved to New York state in the early 40's. The family consisted of Stephen, David, Hiram, Augustus, Henry, Sidney, Lucy, Rodger, Sabrina Temple, Adeline Pratt, Elizabeth Osborn, who resided in New York state and

this would be if all would live as he did. All who knew him could not help but respect him. His ever walked uprightly, and revered God in all his acts and words for the God that he worshipped was the creator of all good. To do good and be good was his religion.

His schooling was limited, but his education was not. The family being large it was uphill business to keep the "wolf from the door" so his school days were few. When the family moved to New York state, as a mere lad he had to work in the factory 12 hours a day. Although handicapped by this he studied by himself and it was

Emilia, who died in New York in the spring that the family moved to Michigan, in the fall of 1843.

From this point of the family history begins our story as related by Uncle Henry Bliss. I will give it in first person just as he told it to me.

In the fall of 1843, father and mother, David, Horatio, Augustus, myself, Sidney, Cyrus and Adeline Pratt, and Rufus Pratt started for Michigan to settle on a soldier's claim in Riley township, Clinton county. We took an Erie canal boat at Schenectady, N. Y., and arrived in Buffalo, N. Y., one week later. The weather was fine and the trip very slow. We took a steamer from there to Detroit, Michigan.

We settled in the northwest quarter, section 9, Riley township, Clinton county. When we got here we had no money to buy any food and had nothing to live on. The country was new and wild. Lots of wild animals. Where we made our mistake we brought no gun with us. None of us were hunters. We could have had lots of deer and game for meat had we had a gun and ammunition. No one had told us about it. We knew nothing about the country that we were going to. Most of the neighbors were as hard up as we were. Morris Boughton was the only one who had anything to sell and all that he had was potatoes. We bought potatoes of him for 25 cents a bushel and paid for them by chopping cord wood at 25 cents a cord. Compare this price with the \$1.25 a cord that you have to pay today. We had to have some money, so we took road jobs, that is cut the trees in the road and built causeways of logs through the low places. Competition was strong and we had to bid low in order to get jobs. We also burned logs, gathered the ashes and made black salts and sold it for \$2.10 a hundred. And when you got the money you were not sure that it was worth anything. It might be worth something today and tomorrow be worthless.

UNINSTRUCTED

"I'm going to send you down to earth."

Said God to me one day.

"I'm giving you what men call birth."

Tonight you'll start away.

I want you there to live with men Until I call you back again."

I trembled as I heard Him speak. Yet knew that I must go.

I felt His hand upon my cheek, And whispered that I might know

Just what on earth would be my task.

And timidly I dared to ask.

"Tell me before I start away What Thou would have me do.

What message would Thou have me say.

When shall my work be thru? Then I may serve Thee on the earth.

Tell me the purpose of my birth."

God smiled at me and softly said: "Oh, you shall find your task.

I want you free life's path to tread. So do not stay to ask.

Remember, if your best you do, That I shall ask no more of you."

How often as my work I do, So commonplace and grim.

I sit and sigh and wish I knew If I am pleasing Him.

I wonder if with every test I've truly tried to do my best,

Sweet Talk

The Bliss brothers of Riley sold 2,000 pounds of their home-made maple sugar to J. P. Newton of St. Johns last Tuesday at 16 cents a pound.—Clinton Independent, April 19, 1867.

Obituary of Sidney Jared Bliss

(September 2, 1830 – December 9, 1921)

Sidney J. [Jared] Bliss

Sidney J. Bliss was born in Borset, Vermont, September 2, 1830, and departed this life, December 9, 1921, in Long Beach California. He was the youngest of a family of 12 [actually 14] children, of David and Samantha Bliss, who moved to Michigan with their family in 1848, and settled on section nine, Riley Township, Clinton county, Michigan, then a dense wilderness. Here he grew up to manhood and helped clear away the forest and endured the hardships of the early settlers. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he enlisted in Co. G. 23rd Michigan infantry. He was wounded in action, but joined his regiment as soon as his wounds were healed and served to the end of the war with distinction and was honorably discharged in May 1865. He came home and settled on his farm on section nine Riley Township. In 1867, he was married to Helen Jones of the same place. Five children were born to this union. In the spring of 1890, the family

moved to Lansing, Michigan, where the mother died in the fall of 1896. In October 1907, he went to Long Beach, California where he taught music until his age no longer permitted. After leaving his farm in Riley Township he devoted his time to music. His home was always an attraction to lovers of music, for the entire family of seven were musicians. The family will be well remembered by the music loving public of Lansing.

The remains were brought to Lansing, where short funeral services were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Davenport, 223 S. Walnut Street, a niece of Mr. Bliss. Rev. G. H. Ashworth of First Universalist church, officiating. Interment in Mt. Hope. He is survived by his five sons. Dean, Irvin, and Earl of Detroit, Michigan, Roy of Toledo, Ohio, and Herman of Long Beach, California, and one brother, Henry W. Bliss, of Riley, Clinton County, and a host of other relatives and friends.

SIDNEY J. BLISS.

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Obituary of Mrs. Merritt Temple (Sabrina Hortentia Bliss)

Daughter of Samantha & David H. Bliss, Sister of Stebbins Clark Bliss
The obituary was originally printed 1915

NOBLE MOTHER GONE

Mrs. Merritt Temple Passed to the Beyond – Resident of Clinton County

Mrs. Merritt Temple passed away Saturday January 23 [1915] at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Henry Davenport of Eagle with all her living children at her bedside except Fannie Temple and Mrs. Minnie Dean, III at the Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

Sabrina H. [Hortentia] Bliss was born at Wilmington, Vermont, June 7, 1824, and at the time of her death was 90 years, 7 months, and 16 days old. With her parents, David and Samantha Griswold Bliss moved to Shaftsbury, VT when

about ten years old. A few years later moved to Arlington, VT, where she met and married Merritt Temple April 1, 1842. They lived upon their farm in Sunderland, VT, until November 1861, when they sold out and with their family moved to Riley, Clinton County, Michigan, where her father, mother, sisters and brothers had moved a few years previously, battling with the hardships of early pioneer life for their homes. They purchased a farm near her people where she has lived ever since until her husband's death 24 years ago, when failing health made it necessary to leave her home in winters and staying at the old homestead summers. With the exception of three winters she has lived with her daughter, Roe, and the last four years has lived with her all the time.

Mrs. Temple was the mother of 11 children of whom seven survive, John S.



Sabrina Hortentia Bliss Temple
1824 - 1915



Merritt D. Temple 1812 - 1890
Husband of Sabrina Hortentia Bliss

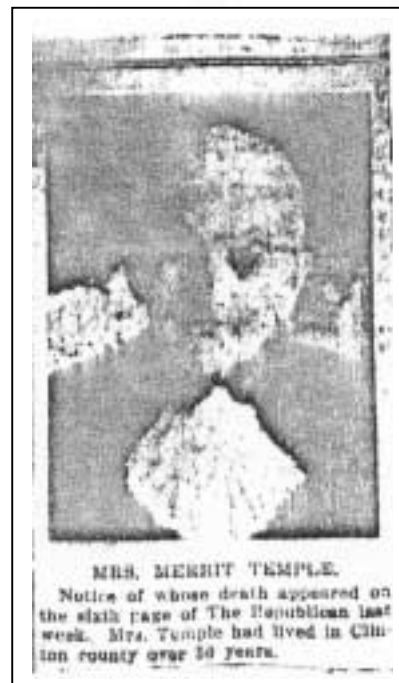
of Tecumseh, Bliss M. of Duplain, Herbert H. of Detroit, Mrs. Lucretia Pope of Bengal, Fannie Temple in the West, Mrs. Minnie Dean of Lansing, Mrs. Roe S. Davenport of Eagle, Bertha and Mrs. Emily Van Gleson passing away a few years ago. She also leaves three brothers, Henry W. Bliss of Riley, Sidney Bliss of Los Angeles, [actually Long Beach just outside of Los Angeles] California, and Augustus of Okalahoma besides twenty-four grand children and thirty-five great grand children and hosts of friends.

In early life she united with the Congregational church and had a noble Christian character and through the many trials of her life relying on Devine help to help bear her burdens. Here was a bright and cheerful nature ever striving to help bear another's burdens, cheer and encourage those with whom she came in contract. In bringing up her children, she was always exemplary before them, ever striving to instill into their minds the sterling virtues of honesty, industry and virtuous living, to teach them to aim for the higher things in life.

Surely her life and example has been a benediction to her children and to those that knew her best. Her failing eyesight that deprived her of reading the last few years of her life was one of her greatest trials.

Services were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Davenport Monday at 11 o'clock, Rev. Fisher of Eagle officiating. Remains were laid in the Niles cemetery vault. In the early spring they will be taken to the old home in Riley where Dr. Julia A. Walton of Jackson, spiritualist, will give an address

and the remains placed in the family lot in the Boughton cemetery



Obituary of Harry Glenn Bliss

Son of Lucinda Hildreth and Horatio Simeon Bliss

November 9, 1867 --- March 30, 1925

DEATH CLAIMS TWO RESIDENTS

HARRY GLENN BLISS AND WILLIAM C. WATKINS PASS AWAY

Each Was Highly Respected And Had Been A Life-Long Clinton Co. Resident

Two St. Johns men, H. Glenn Bliss, formerly of Riley township and William C. Watkins, who spent the greater part of his life in Duplain Township, have passed away during the last few days. Each left a wide circle of friends in this city and in the communities from which they came.

Harry Glenn Bliss was born in Riley Township, November 9, 1867. He was direct descendant of two of the oldest pioneers that settled in Riley. His grandparents came here in the early 40's [1840's] and he grew to manhood on the farm that his father cleared up.

He attended country school winters and helped at home summers until he was old enough to take the active management of his father's 200 acres farm which he did at a very tender age. In September 1908 he was married to Emma Bleis. To this union two boys were born, Maynard, age 13 and Lynn, age 11, all of whom survived him. Later he bought and shipped stock and also had a share in the firm of Bliss & Dane, doing a hardware business in Fowler many years ago. In 1920 he moved to St. Johns, Michigan to give his two boys advantages of an education that were denied him in his younger days. His family was his delight. He longed to

live and see his boys grow up and become useful men in the world and for them he fought the fight of his life.

For many years he suffered with the dread disease sugar diabetes. Often he felt sure that he had it conquered, but always after a while would find the trouble was still lingering with him but with each fresh attack he would gain increased determination to win out. This of itself was enough to try the patience of any ordinary man, but added to this suffering he was stricken with paralysis in July 1921. A fresh determination had to be summoned. He worked hard to overcome this new phase of his infirmities and with the inspiration of his family he gained ground so that after about a year's time he could walk again without the aid of a cane. Added to all this came the final blow. A few weeks ago gangrene set in. He went to St. Lawrence hospital for treatment, still hopeful of remaining with his family a while longer, but after all medical aid had failed he died Monday, March 30, 1925, aged 57 years, 5 months, 21 days.

He was a member of Wasousta lodge F. & A. M. and St. Johns Commandery K. T. The only public office that he ever held was highway commissioner of Riley Township.

Funeral services were held from his home at 2:30 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, Rev. Howard A. Blanning officiating. A great many of his friends and relatives attended. Internment was made in the mausoleum at Mt. Rest Cemetery where the Knights Templar conducted burial rites.

Appendix E

DEATH CLAIMS TWO RESIDENTS

HARRY GLENN BLISS, AND
WILLIAM C. WATKINS
PASS AWAY

Each Was Highly Respected
And Had Been A Life-Long
Clinton Co. Resident

Two St. Johns men, H. Glenn Bliss, formerly of Riley township, and William C. Watkins, who spent the greater part of his life in Dupont township, have passed away during the last few days. Each left a wide circle of friends in this city and in the communities from which they came.

Harry Glenn Bliss was born in Riley township, November 3, 1867. He was a direct descendant of two of the oldest pioneers that settled in Riley. His grandparents came here in the early '60s and he grew to manhood on the farm that his father cleared up.

He attended country school winters and helped at home summers until he was old enough to take the active management of his father's 200 acre farm which he did at a very tender age. In September 1908 he was married to Emma Bliss. To this union two boys were born, Raymond now 12, and Lynn, age 11, all of whom survive him. Later he bought and shipped stock and also had a share in the firm of Bliss & Daise, doing a hardware business in Fowler many years ago. In 1929 he moved to St. Johns, Mich., to give his two boys advantages of an education that were denied him in his younger days. His family was his delight. He longed to live and see his boys grow up and become useful men in the world, and for them he fought the fight of his life.

For many years he suffered with the dread disease sugar diabetes. Often he felt sure that he had it conquered, but always after a while would find the trouble was still lingering with him but with each fresh attack he would gain increased determination to win out. This of itself was enough to try the patience of any ordinary man, but added to this suffering he was stricken with paralysis in July 1931. A fresh determination had to be summoned. He worked hard to overcome this new phase of his infirmities and with the inspiration of his family he gained ground so that after about a year's time he could walk again without the aid of a cane. Added to all this came the final blow. A few weeks ago gangrene set in. He went to St. Lawrence hospital for treatment, still hopeful of remaining with his family a while longer, but after all medical aid had failed he died Monday, March 23, 1933, aged 65 years, 11 months and 21 days.

He was a member of Wadsworth lodge P. & A. M. and St. Johns Commandery K. T. The only public office that he ever held was highway commissioner of Riley township.

Funeral services were held from his home at 2:30 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, Rev. Howard A. Blanning officiating. A great many of his friends and relatives attended. Interment was made in the mausoleum at Mt. Rest cemetery where the Knights Templar conducted burial rites.

Obituary of Earl Bliss

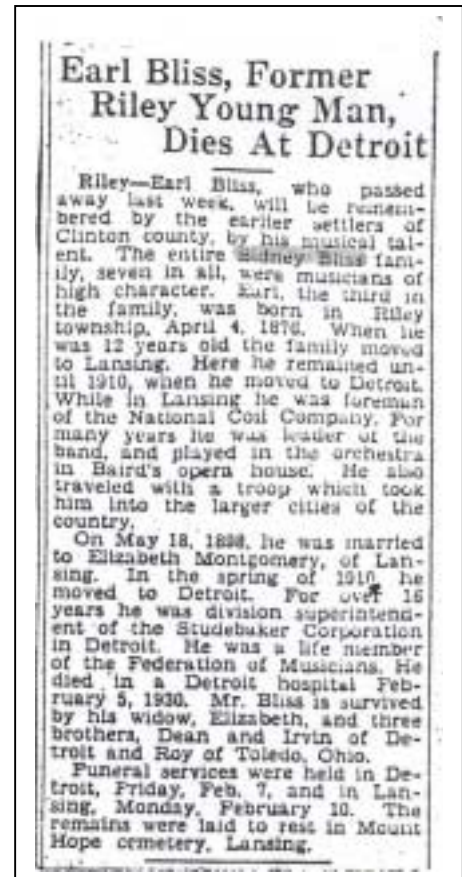
Son of Sidney Jared Bliss
(April 4, 1876 – February 5, 1930)

Earl Bliss, Former Riley Young Man, Dies At Detroit

Riley – Earl Bliss, who passed away last week, will be remembered by the earlier settlers of Clinton County, by his musical talent. The entire Sidney Bliss family, seven in all, were musicians of high character. Earl, the third in the family, was born in Riley Township, April 4, 1876. When he was 12 years old the family moved to Lansing [Michigan]. Here he remained until 1910, when he moved to Detroit. While in Lansing he was foreman of the National Coil Company. For many years he was leader of the band, and played in the orchestra in Baird's Opera House. He also traveled with a troop, which took him into the larger cities of the country.

On May 18, 1898, he was married to Elizabeth Montgomery, of Lansing [Michigan]. In the spring of 1910, he moved to Detroit. For over 16 years he was division superintendent of the Studebaker Corporation in Detroit. He was a life member of the Federation of Musicians. He died in a Detroit hospital February 5, 1930. Mr. Bliss is survived by his widow, Elizabeth, and three brothers Dean and Irvin of Detroit and Roy of Toledo, Ohio.

Funeral Services were held in Detroit, Friday, February 7, and in Lansing, Monday, February 10. The remains were laid to rest in Mount Hope cemetery, Lansing [Michigan].



Obituary of Lucretia L. Temple

Daughter of Sabrina [Bliss] Temple and Merritt Temple
(July 29, 1845 – April 20, 1925)

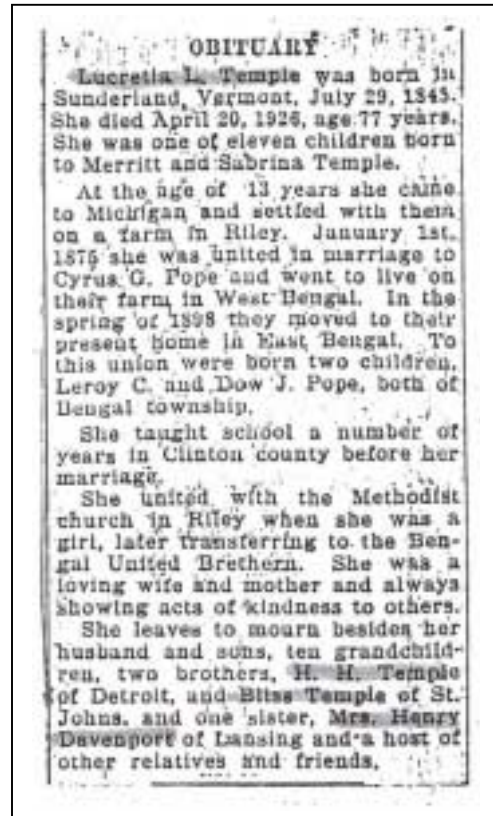
Lucretia L. Temple was born in Sunderland, Vermont, July 29, 1845. She died April 20, 1925, age 77 years. She was one of eleven children born to Merritt and Sabrina [Bliss] Temple.

At the age of 13 years she came to Michigan and settled with them on a farm in Riley. January 1, 1875 she was united in marriage to Cyrus G. Pope and went to live on their farm in West Bengal. In the spring of 1898 they moved to their present home in East Bengal. To this union were born two children. Leroy C. and Dow J. Pope, both of Bengal Township.

She taught school a number of years in Clinton county before her marriage.

She united with the Methodist Church in Riley when she was a girl, later transferring to the Bengal United Brethern. She was a loving wife and mother and always showing acts of kindness to others.

She leaves to mourn besides her husband and son, ten grandchildren, two brothers, H. H. Temple of Detroit, and Bliss Temple of St. Johns, and one sister, Mrs. Henry Davenport of Lansing and a host of other relatives and friends.



Obituary of Mrs. Roe S. [Bliss] Davenport

Daughter of Sabrina [Bliss] Temple and Merritt Temple

(March 7, 1861 – June 16, 1935 – Age 74)

Mrs. Roe S. Davenport Came To This County In 1863; Taught Many Years

Roe S. Temple was born in Sunderland, Vermont, March 7, 1861, and died June 16, 1935, at her home in Lansing. Funeral services were held in that city June 19, Rev. A. M. Jayne, pastor of the Central Methodist church officiating, and burial was made in the Duplain Cemetery.

She was the daughter of Merritt and Sabina [Bliss] Temple. In 1863 she came to Michigan with her parents and they settled on section 8, Riley Township. She was a granddaughter of David Bliss who pioneered in Riley when it was a wilderness, and whom the family followed to the county.

She attended country school and later obtained a teacher's certificate. She taught in the rural districts several years and also at St. Johns. After that she followed her profession in the Upper Peninsula and at Duluth, Minn. For some time she was bookkeeper for a lumber company in Tecumseh, Michigan.

Returning to Clinton County in 1899 she was married to Hugh Watson of Duplain and they settled on the Temple homestead. Later they bought a farm in Duplain and were moving there when Mr. Watson contracted typhoid fever and passed away. After his death Mrs. Watson sold the Duplain property and returned to Riley to live with her aged mother. She again took up teaching in Eagle village where she met and married

Henry C. Davenport on May 5, 1905. After a few years they moved to Lansing where they continued to live, and where Mr. Davenport died six years ago.

Mrs. Davenport was a charitable, Christian woman, highly respected and widely esteemed. She was the donor of the Hugh Watson Memorial vault in Duplain cemetery, and also donated liberally to the support of the Methodist church at Lansing, of which she was a member.



Obituary of Henry Boss

WAS PIONEER OF RILEY TOWNSHIP

HENRY BOSS CAME TO THIS
COUNTY WITH PARENTS IN YEAR
1855

The following sketch of the life of Henry Boss, late of Riley Township, was prepared by G. F. Ottmar, who had known Mr. Boss for over forty years:

Henry Boss was born October 3, 1854, in the state of New York. He was the son of Ami and Sophia Boss who came to Riley Township from New York State in 1855, when Henry was one year old. They settled on a farm on section eight and began clearing the farm. When Henry was but seven years old his mother passed away. His father then moved the family back to New York State. After a few years his father remarried and at once moved back to the old farm in Riley. Here the subject of this sketch remained and grew to manhood and purchased a farm on section ten. After the death of his father he moved to the homestead and remained there until twenty-four years ago when he sold this farm and moved to Watertown, where he lived until his death.

On March 30 1879, he was married to Dora Miller of Watertown, who cheered him on while they were young and trying to clear the farm, and ever sharing his trials and hardships. In later years, when misfortunes were his lot, she was his comforter and support. She tenderly cared for him and nursed him however hard the task was, without a murmur of complaint. This union was

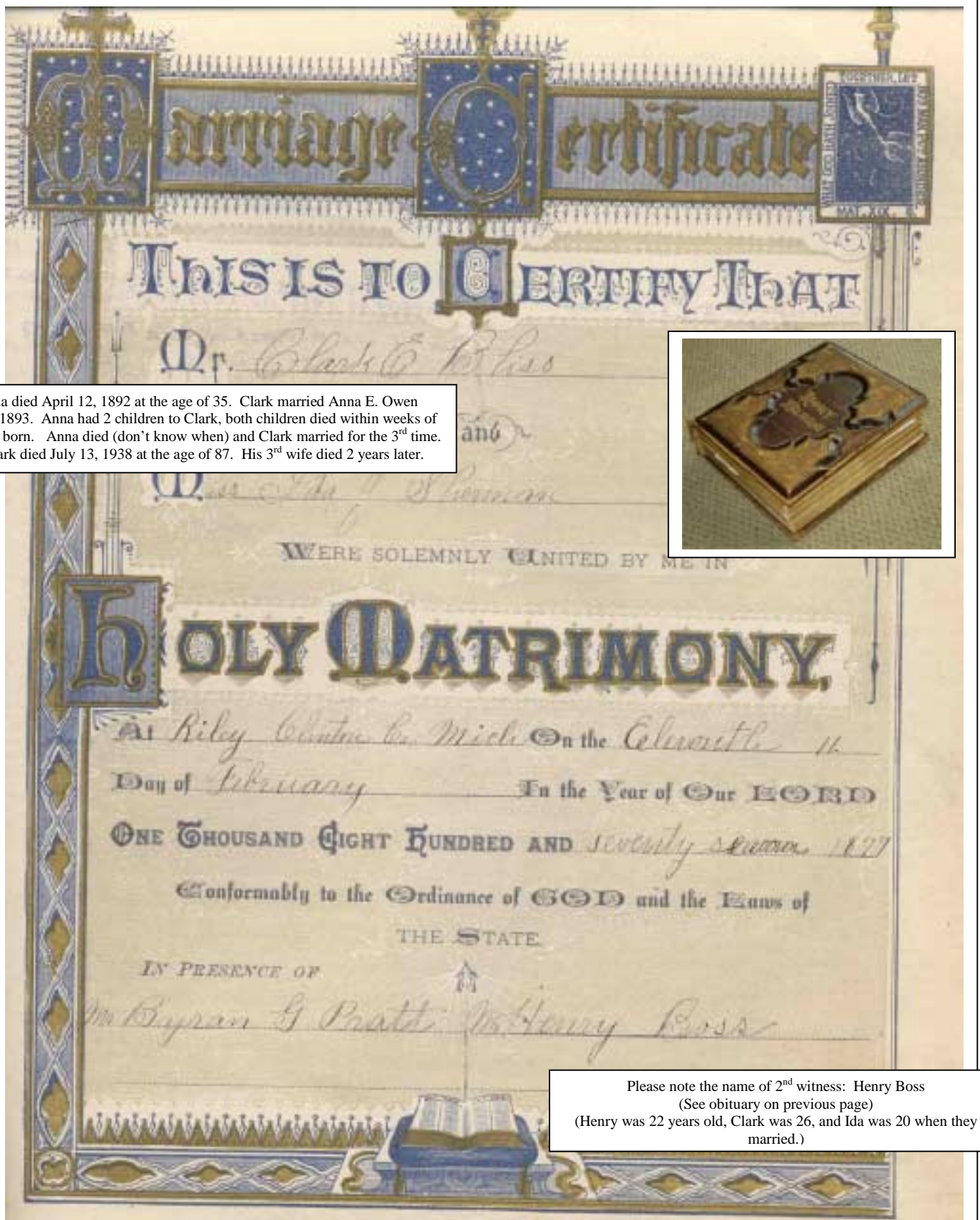
blessed with two sons, Leon and Carlton both living on the homestead.

About ten years ago Mr. Boss suffered a stroke of paralysis from which he never fully recovered. Two years ago he was attacked by another stroke which left him an invalid and he was a constant care until the end. On May 27 life's dissolution drew valley and shadow of death was illuminated by his consciousness of well-spent life and the hope of a glorious immortality.

While Mr. Boss was not a member of any lodge he was a firm believer in the "Fellowship of Man" for when you had added him to your list of friends he remained as long as you were true to him. Honesty and uprightness were some of his virtues. He was not a member of any church but a firm believer in God, and a great student of His open book, the Great Out-of-Doors, as revealed to him in the expression of the landscape, the orchards, the forest, and flowers, the birds in the air and the fishes in the sea. After his boys were old enough to relieve him of the laborious duties of the farm he spent much of his spare time with his God in the open. He would often camp in Northern Michigan, and fish and hunt where nature was unmolested and His handiwork found expression untarnished. There he would enjoy himself to the fullest measure. Only a few days before his transition he expressed the hope that it would warm up so he could go north among the lakes. His demise is mourned by his widow, Leon Boss and family and granddaughter Evelyne, Carlton Boss and one brother, Dr. Dill Boss of Wacousta, and a host of old neighbors and friends. The funeral was held Tuesday afternoon at his late home, Rev. Crawford of Wacousta officiating. Interment in the Wacousta cemetery.

Obituary was printed May 27, 1923

Henry was present at Clark Edward Bliss' wedding to Ida J. Sherman.
See the note at the bottom of the next page.



Ida died April 12, 1892 at the age of 35. Clark married Anna E. Owen Oct. 1893. Anna had 2 children to Clark, both children died within weeks of being born. Anna died (don't know when) and Clark married for the 3rd time. Clark died July 13, 1938 at the age of 87. His 3rd wife died 2 years later.

Please note the name of 2nd witness: Henry Boss
(See obituary on previous page)
(Henry was 22 years old, Clark was 26, and Ida was 20 when they married.)

This a page from the Bliss Family Bible that was presented to Clark and Ida at the time of their wedding on February 11, 1877. Clark is one of Stebbins Clark Bliss' (one of Riley's earliest pioneers) sons.

Appendix I



Clark Edward Bliss with 1st wife Ida J. Sherman
and son Floyd Martin Bliss
(Photo taken approximately 1889)



Clark Edward Bliss



Ida J Sherman Bliss

Appendix I

Obituary of Dora Bell [Miller] Boss

(Age 76)

Obituary of Francis Bucklin

(Age 80)

GRAND LODGE, May 14 – Dora Bell Boss, 76, died at 1:40 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the home, northeast of Wacousta. She is survived by two children, Leon D. of Riley, Carlton H. at home; four grandchildren and one brother, Chester Miller of Wacousta.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, the Rev. Bessie Rulison officiating. Burial will be in Wacousta cemetery.

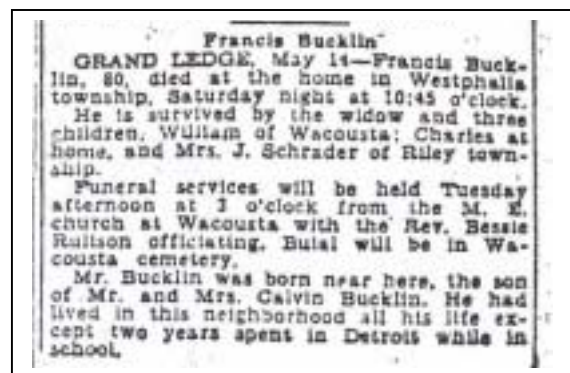
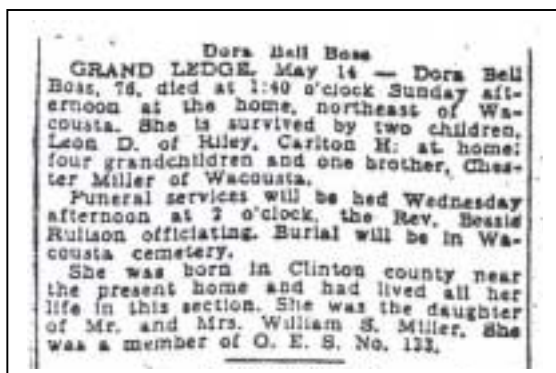
She was born in Clinton county near the present home and had lived all her life in this section. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William S. Miller. She was a member of O.E.S. No. 113.

GRAND LODGE, May 14 – Francis Bucklin, 80, died at the home in Westphalia Township, Saturday night at 10:45 o'clock.

He is survived by the widow and three children, William of Wacousta; Charles at home, and Mrs. J. Schrader of Riley Township.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock from the M. E. church at Wacousta with the Rev. Bessie Rulison officiating. Burial will be in Wacousta cemetery.

Mr. Bucklin was born near here, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Bucklin. He had lived in this neighborhood all his life except two years spent in Detroit while in school.



Obituary of Christian Martens

(March 30, 1839 – April 1, 1933)

Christian Martens Came To This Country 63 Years Ago: Endured Many Hardships

By G. F. Ottmar

The traditional “three score years and ten” was again broken by our late Christian Martens, when he passed his 94th milestone, last week Wednesday. We naturally think of a person, reaching that ripe age, as one who never suffered much or never met much difficulty, just a smooth course along life’s pathway.

This was not the appointed lot of our old neighbor, who closed his eyes in the last long sleep Saturday, April 1. He endured hardships and severe accidents that ordinary persons could not endure and lived through it all. He had the stamina and spirit of the true pioneer. He was rather above the average. He had the “iron constitution” of the early settler.

In 1873 he met with an accident, while yet a young man, living in Westphalia, when a large limb fell from a tree and hit him on the head, nearly killing him. It impaired his eyesight. Forty-eight years ago a team of horses ran away with him. The loaded wagon passed over him, breaking both legs and injuring his back so that he hovered between life and death for many weeks. He was confined to his bed for six months, and unable to work for over a year. Everybody expected to hear of his death at any time, yet he lived through it. He was badly crippled but was able to work again. Everybody said, “here is a man with an

iron constitution, an extraordinary person.”

Christian Martens was born in Prussia, Germany, March 30, 1839. He came to America in 1869, and stopped a few months in Buffalo, N.Y. From there he came to Westphalia, Michigan, where he worked on the farm for a few years. In 1876, he married to Wilhelmina Schrader Frank, a widow with three small girls. He settled on a farm on section 5, Riley Township. In 1894, he purchased the David P. Wilcox farm just south of Forest Hill, where he has lived ever since and where he was tenderly cared for in his declining years by his son Charles [see photo of wedding reception page 18] and wife Mary, and grandson, Francis. His wife preceded him into the life beyond in 1904. His daughter, Rika, kept house for him until her marriage and his son Charles always lived at home with him.

He spent his declining years of life leisurely. Working only as he was so inclined. Even though not compelled to labor, he was generally seen about the farm doing odd jobs. He loved to be out of doors. He was a great shepherd and could train a dog to do things with the flock or herd that were surprising. A dog was his constant companion when around the farm, and the animal would do anything that his master asked.

He was a conscientious Christian and an extraordinarily good neighbor. He had no enemy and was admired by all who knew him. He is survived by his two children, Rike Easton of DeWitt, and Charles A. Martens, of Riley; two

grandchildren, one great grandchild, and his three step-daughters. Mrs. Minnie Hopp of Riley, Mrs. Mary Richmond of DeWitt and Mrs. Anna Hahn of Lansing.

Funeral services were held Tuesday with the Rev. Coelner, his pastor, officiating.

Burial was made in the Riley Lutheran cemetery. The large gathering at the church bore testimony to the great admiration and esteem which the neighbors had for their old friend of ours.

RILEY PIONEER, AGED 94, DIES

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This County 63 Years Ago;
Endured Many Hardships

By G. F. Ottum

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(Continued from page one)

Westphalia, when a large limb fell from a tree and hit him on the head, nearly killing him. It impaired his eyesight. Forty-eight years ago a team of horses ran away with him. The loaded wagon passed over him, breaking both legs and injuring his back so that he hovered between life and death for many weeks. He was confined to his bed for six months, and unable to work for over a year. Everybody expected to hear of his death at any time, yet he lived through it. He was badly crippled but was able to work again. Everybody said, "here is a man with an iron constitution, an extraordinary person."

Christian Martens was born in Prussia, Germany, March 13, 1829. He came to America in 1863, and stopped a few months in Buffalo, N. Y. From there he came to Westphalia, Michigan, where he worked on the farm for a few years. In 1870, he was married to Wilhelmina Schrader Frank, a widow with three small girls. He settled on a farm on section 8, Riley township. In 1894, he purchased the David P. Wilcox farm just south of Forest Hill, where he has lived ever since, and where he was tenderly cared for in his declining years by his son Charles and wife Mary, and grandson, Francis. His wife preceded him into the life beyond in 1904. His daughter, Elka, kept house for him until her marriage and his son Charles always lived at home with him.

He spent his declining years of life leisurely, working only as he was so inclined. Even though not compelled to labor, he was generally seen about the farm doing odd jobs. He loved to be out of doors. He was a great shepherd and could train a dog to do things with the flock or herd that were surprising. A dog was his constant companion when around the farm, and the animal would do anything that his master asked.

He was a conscientious Christian and an extraordinarily good neighbor. He had no enemy and was admired by all who knew him. He is survived by his two children, Elka, Kesson, of DeWitt, and Charles A. Martens, of Riley; two grandchildren, one great grandchild, and his three step-daughters, Mrs. Minnie Hopp of Riley, Mrs. Mary Richmond of DeWitt and Mrs. Anna Hahn of Lansing.

Funeral services were held Tuesday with the Rev. Coelner, his pastor, officiating. Burial was made in the Riley Lutheran cemetery. The large gathering at the church bore testimony to the great admiration and esteem which the neighbors had for their old friend of ours.

Obituary of Mrs. Nellie [Webster] Boughton Mossman

(May 11, 1862 – April 19, 1936 – Age 74)

ST. JOHNS RESIDENT SUCCUMBS APRIL 19

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR MRS. NELLIE BOUGHTON MOSSMAN WILL BE HELD TODAY

Mrs. Nellie Boughton Mossman, 74, a lifelong resident of Clinton county, died at 5 o'clock Monday afternoon, April 19, [1936], of a complication of diseases and a paralytic stroke. Her death occurred at her home on North Ottawa Street, St. Johns.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2 o'clock this (Thursday) afternoon by Rev. Earl F. Collins at the Osgood funeral home. Burial will be made in the

family lot in South Bingham cemetery with Grange ritual services at the grave.

Nellie Webster was born in Riley Township May 11, 1862, the daughter of Chauncey D. and Lydia Webster, early Michigan pioneers. In 1878 she was united in marriage to Edward P. Boughton, who died July 30, 1919. She then moved to St. Johns and in September 1932, was married to James E. Mossman, who, with her son, Webster Boughton and family, and a sister, Mrs. Belle Noble, all of Detroit, survives.

She was a member of the Bingham United Brethren church and was affiliated with the Bingham and Pomona granges.

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She was a member of the Bingham United Brethren church and was affiliated with the Bingham and Pomona granges.

APR. 19, 1936

Mrs. Lillie E. [Hildreth] Welton

May 22, 1860 – November 1, 1916

(Age 56)

Mrs. Lillie E. Welton

Lillie E. Hildreth was born May 22, 1860, in the township of Riley, Clinton County, Michigan, where she has resided all her life. She passed from this life to the great beyond, November 1, 1916, at the age of 56 years, 5 months and 9 days. She was united in marriage to George W. Welton on March 15, 1887. To this union were born three children, Nora C., Mrs. Ruby Ward and Ray, all of whom are still living. She is also survived by her husband and three brothers Orel of Olive, Kirk of St. Louis, and Archie of Lansing. She also leaves two grandchildren, two nieces, and many other relatives and friends to mourn their loss.

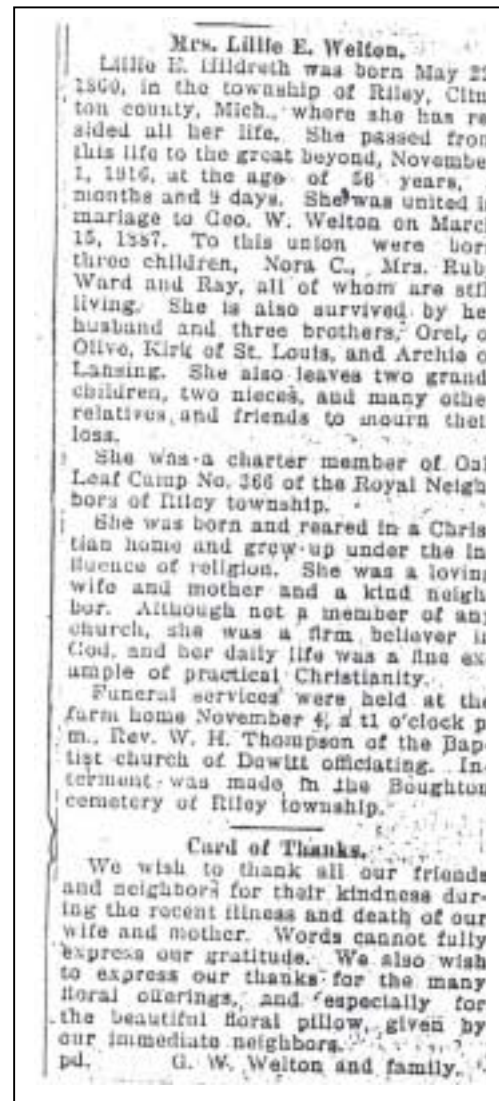
She was a charter member of Oak Leaf Camp No. 366 of the Royal Neighbors of Riley Township.

She was born and reared in a Christian home and grew-up under the influence of religion. She was a loving wife and mother and a kind neighbor. Although not a member of any church, she was a firm believer in God, and her daily life was a fine example of practical Christianity.

Funeral services were held at the farm home November 4, at 1 o'clock PM, Rev. W. H. Thompson of the Baptist church of DeWitt officiating. Interment was made in the Boughton Cemetery of Riley Township.

recent illness and death of our wife and mother. Works cannot fully express our gratitude. We also wish to express our thanks for the many floral offerings, and especially for the beautiful floral pillow, given by our immediate neighbors.

G. W. Welton and family.



Card of Thanks

We wish to thank all our friends and neighbors for their kindness during the

Appendix M

Obituary of Dr. Peter H. Banta

August 19, 1874 -- November 26, 1915

(Age 41)

(See text on page 23)

WELL KNOWN DEWITT PHYSICIAN EXPIRES

(See page 23)

Dr. Peter H. Banta, 41 years old, well known DeWitt physician, died at his home in that village suddenly, Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Death was due to stomach troubles. Dr Banta was taken ill Thursday afternoon, while making a professional call and had to be removed to his home. He had been in ill health for a month prior to his death, but his condition was not considered serious.

Dr. Banta is survived by his wife and two children. He was a graduate of the Detroit College of Medicine and came from Westpellia to DeWitt seven years ago. He was a member of the Masonic order. The funeral was held from the DeWitt M. E. church, Monday afternoon at 1 o'clock. Interment was in the DeWitt cemetery.

Peter H. Banta was born in Oxford, Oakland County, August 19, 1874, and departed this life November 26, 1915,

aged 41 years, 3 months, 7 days. At the age of five years he came with his parents to Clinton County and settled near Hubbardston. From the district he entered the Hubbardston high school, afterward spending four years in the Detroit College of Medicine, from which he graduated in 1900. Dr. Banta practiced medicine in Westphalia 7 years, in Mancelona 2 years and DeWitt, 6 years.

He leaves to mourn their loss, his wife, mother, three daughters, Lucile, Marian and Dawn; three sisters, Mrs. Carrie Heilner of Detroit, Mrs. Mabel Adams of Port Huron and Miss Lois Banta of DeWitt; three brothers, Andrew of Detroit, James W. of Port Huron and Martin of Detroit.

Card of Thanks,

We wish to express out sincere thanks to our neighbors and friends for their sympathy and kindness shown us in our great bereavement in the death of our husband and father, also for the flowers. Mrs. H. P. Banta and family.

WELL KNOWN DEWITT PHYSICIAN EXPIRES

Dr. Peter H. Banta, 41 years old, well known DeWitt physician, died at his home in that village suddenly, Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Death was due to stomach trouble. Dr. Banta was taken ill Thursday afternoon, while making a professional call and had to be removed to his home. He had been in ill health for a month prior to his death, but his condition was not considered serious.

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He leaves to mourn their loss, his wife, mother, three daughters, Lucile, Marian and Dawn; three sisters, Mrs. Carrie Hellner of Detroit, Mrs. Mabel Adams of Port Huron and Miss Lois Banta of DeWitt; three brothers, Andrew of Detroit, James W. of Port Huron and Martin of Detroit.

The funeral was held at the M. E. church Monday, Rev. T. H. Wright officiating. Rev. W. H. Thompson sang. Interment in DeWitt cemetery.

Card of Thanks.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to our neighbors and friends for their sympathy and kindness shown us in our great bereavement in the death of our husband and father, also for the flowers.

Mrs. H. P. Banta and family.

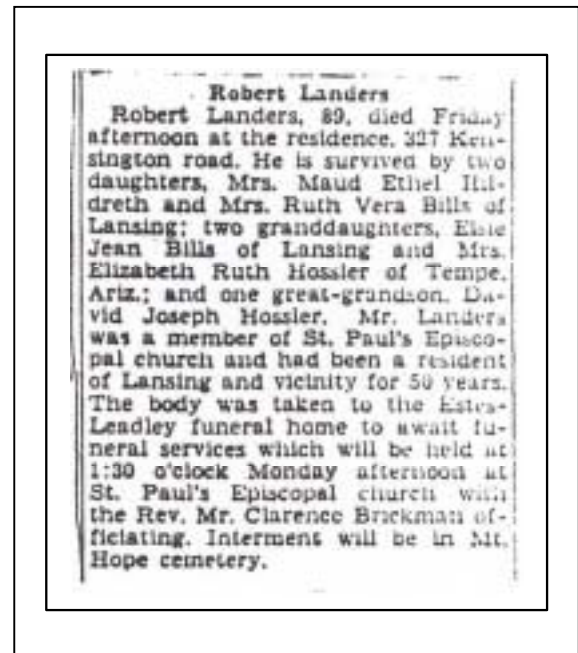
Obituary of Robert Landers

(Age 89)

Robert Landers

(See page 22)

Robert Landers, 89, died Friday afternoon at the residence, 327 Kensington Road. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Maud Ethel Hildreth and Mrs. Ruth Vera Bills of Lansing; two granddaughters, Elsie Jean Bills of Lansing and Mrs. Elizabeth Ruth Hossler of Tempe, Arizona; and one great-grandson, David Joseph Hossler. Mr. Landers was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and had been a resident of Lansing and vicinity for 50 years. The body was taken to the Estes-Leadley funeral home to await funeral services which will be held at 1:30 o'clock Monday afternoon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church with the Rev. Mr. Clarence Brickman officiating. Interment will be in Mt. Hope Cemetery.



Obituary of Lucinus H. Young
(Age 59)

Obituary of Ira Thome

LUCINUS H. YOUNG

Lucinus H. Young, a resident of Riley Township, died at the home of his sister, Mrs. Mary M. Bolles, Wednesday afternoon at 4 o'clock, February 4, 1920. He was 59 years old. Death was due to the hardening of the arteries. The remains will be sent to Ohio, where burial will be made. Mr. young came here from Cleveland, Ohio about six years ago to make his home with Mrs. Bolles. During his illness the past five weeks, his sister, Mrs. Kittie E. Moore, of Clarksburg, W. VA. , has been helping to care for him. Other relatives who survive him in this vicinity are Fred Coleman and Monroe Bolles, of Riley.

IRA THOME DIES

Ira Thome, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Thome, died at the home of his aunt, Mrs. Ernest Howe, in Eagle, Tuesday, February 3, 1920, at 11 o'clock. He had been ill a short time with pneumonia. He was well known in St. Johns, having attended school here. Funeral services will be held from the Howe residence in Eagle, Friday afternoon, and burial will be made in the Eagle cemetery.



**Obituary for George Hildreth, Mrs. Sears
Gardner and Sterling Bristol**
March 30, 1925

FORMER RESIDENTS ARE BURIED HERE

LAST RITES FOR MRS. SEARS GARDNER, GEO. HILDRETH AND J. S. BRISTOL

The remains of three former Clinton county residents, George Hildreth, Mrs. Sears Gardner and J. Sterling Bristol, were brought to St. Johns for burial this week.

Mr. Hildreth, aged 67, died March 30, at his home near Rapid City. He was born in Riley Township, afterwards moving to Essex where he lived until going to Rapid City 6 years ago. He is survived by one brother, John of Bingham, a half-brother, Milton of Grand Lodge, two half-sister, Mrs. John VanGleson and Mary Hildreth of Bingham, two children, Edna, 3, and George, 4, and a wide circle of friends. Funeral services will be held at the Ebert Chapel in St.

Johns at 1:30 o'clock this (Thursday) afternoon with interment in the Henderson cemetery in Essex.

Mrs. Gardner, a resident of this county many years, died at her home near Haslett March 30. About 8 years ago she left St. Johns with her husband who had been the proprietor of a feed barn here. She is survived by her husband and two children. Claude and Gertrude. Burial services will be conducted at 1:30 o'clock this afternoon at Mt. Rest Cemetery here.

The burial services of Sterling Bristol, 92, who died on the 1st of January 1925 at the home of his son, Jay Bristol, at Charleston, West Virginia, were held from the undertaking parlors of Osgood & Son, Wednesday afternoon; burial being made in the Lowe Cemetery, where the wife of his youth was buried in 1880.



Obituary of Jennie Kleckner

(July 12, 1874 – February 27, 1920)

(Age 45)

Jennie Kleckner was born at Fowler, July 12, 1874 and departed this life, February 27, 1920, age 45 years, 7 months and 15 days.

She was united in marriage to Pearl Williams, and to this union were born three children, Mrs. Coyno Slater of Owosso, Bernice and Arcie at home. She also leaves a father, two sisters, one brother and three grand children, besides a host of other relatives and friends.

She was a member of the M. E. Church. A good woman has been taken from our midst. She was a good neighbor, always ready to lend a helping hand, and always a kind word and cheery smile for all.

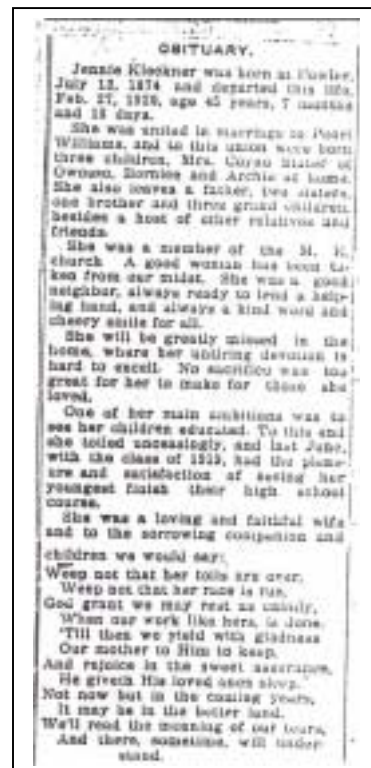
She will be greatly missed in the home, where her untiring devotion in hard to excel. No sacrifice was too great for her to make for those she loved.

One of her main ambitions was to see her children educated. To this end she toiled unceasingly, and last June, with the class of 1919, had the pleasure and

satisfaction of seeing her youngest finish their high school course.

She was a loving and faithful wife and to the sorrowing companion and children we would say:

Weep not that her tolls are over,
Weep not that her race is run.
God grant we may rest as calmly,
When our work like hers, is done.
Till then we yield with gladness
Our mother to Him to keep,
And rejoice in the sweet assurance,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.
Not now but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land.
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime, will under stand.



Obituary of Clarence Schafer

(Age 16)

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schafer

FORMER RILEY TOWNSHIP BOY FATALLY INJURED IN ACCIDENT

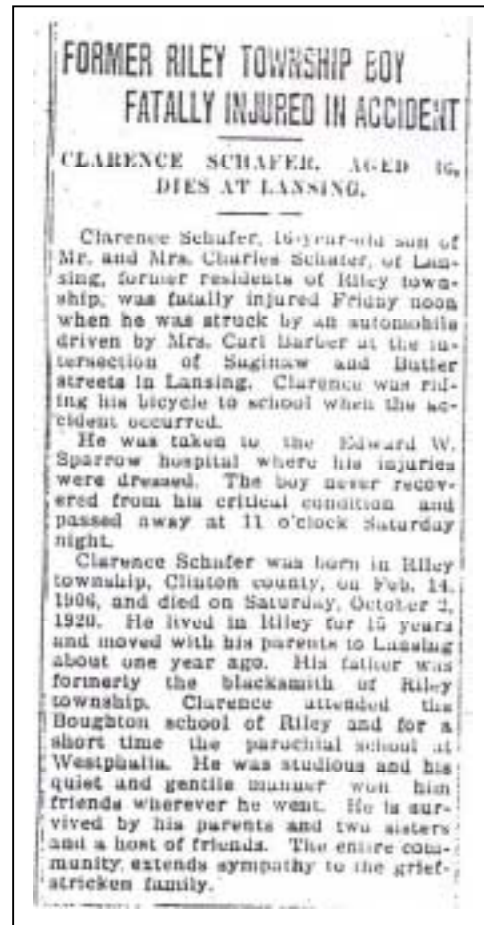
CLARENCE SCHAFFER, AGED 16, DIES AT LANSING.

Clarence Schafer, 16-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schafer, of Lansing, former residents of Riley Township, was fatally injured Friday noon when he was struck by an automobile driven by Mrs. Carl Barber at the intersection of Saginaw and Butler Streets in Lansing. Clarence was riding his bicycle to school when the accident occurred.

He was taken to the Edward W. Sparrow hospital where his injuries were dressed. The boy never recovered from his critical condition and passed away at 11 o'clock 'Saturday night.

Clarence Schafer was born in Riley Township, Clinton County, on February 14, 1906, and died on Saturday, October 2, 1920. He lived in Riley for 15 years

and moved with his parents to Lansing about one year ago. His father was formerly the blacksmith of Riley Township. Clarence attended the Boughton school of Riley and for a short time the parochial school at Westphalia. He was studious and his quiet and gentle manner won him friends wherever he went. He is survived by his parents and two sisters and a host of friends. The entire community extends sympathy to the grief-stricken family.



Obituary of Elizabeth R. Fedewa

February 9, 1895 -- September 13, 1979
(Age 84)

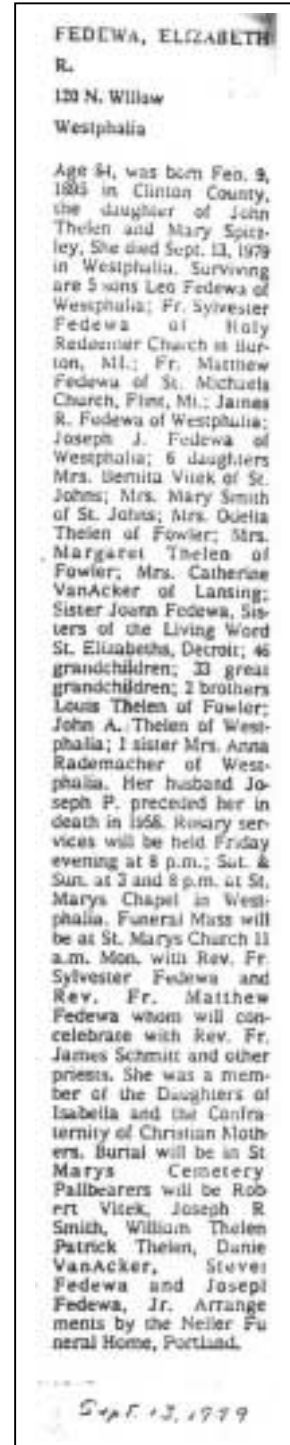
FEDEWA, ELIZABETH R.

120 N. Willow

Westphalia

Age 84, was born Feb. 9, 1895 in Clinton County, the daughter of John Thelen and Mary Spitzley. She died Sept. 13, 1979 in Westphalia. Surviving are 5 sons Leo Fedewa of Westphalia; Fr. Sylvester Fedewa of Holy Redeemer Church in Burton, MI.; Fr. Matthew Fedewa of St. Michaels Church, Flint, MI.; James R. Fedewa of Westphalia; 6 daughters Mrs. Bernita Vitek of St. Johns; Mrs. Mary Smith of St. Johns; Mrs. Odelia Thelen of Fowler; Mrs. Margaret Thelen of Fowler; Mrs. Catherine VanAcker of Lansing; Sister Joann Fedewa, Sister of the Living Word, St. Elizabeth, Detroit; 46 grandchildren; 33 great grandchildren; 2 brothers Louis Thelen of Fowler; John A. Thelen of Westphalia; 1 sister Mrs. Anna Rademacher of Westphalia. Her husband Joseph P. preceded her in death in 1958. Rosary services will be held Friday evening at 8 PM Sat. & Sun. at 3 and 8 PM at St. Marys Chapel on Westphalia. Funeral Mass will be at St. Marys Church 11 AM Mon. with Rev. Fr. Sylvester Fedewa and Rev. Fr. Matthew Fedewa whom will celebrate with Rev. Fr. James Schmitt and other priests. She was a member of the Daughters of Isabella and the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. Burial will be in St. Marys Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Robert Vitek, Joseph R. Smith, William Thelen, Patrick Thelen, Danie VanAcker, Steven Fedewa and Joseph Fedewa, Jr..

Arrangements by the Neiler Funeral Home, Portland.



Obituary of John G. Martens

July 21, 1864 – May 3, 1923
(Age 88)

Obituary of Mrs. (Johanna John Martens

January 24, 1844 – January 17, 1926
(Age 81)

Obituary of Mrs. Emma Witt

(Daughter of John and Johanna Martens)
March 5, 1876 – December 20, 1945
(Age 69)

JOHN G. MARTENS PASSES AWAY

WAS BORN IN GERMANY – CAME TO RILEY IN 1870

John G. Martens, one of Riley's oldest pioneers, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Will Silm last Thursday afternoon, aged 88 years, 9 months, and 12 days. Mr. Martens was a native of Germany and grew to manhood there coming to this country in 1868 with his wife and family and settling in Buffalo, N. Y. Eighteen months later they came to Riley and purchased 100 acres of land, most of it unimproved, and lived there continuously until recently,

Mr. Martens was born in Pomern, Germany, July 21, 1834. He grew to manhood in the "old country" and was married to Johanna Beau October 26, 1862. He cleared his farm in Riley, fenced and drained it, built the buildings, paid for it, raised a large family, gave them all financial aid to start out for themselves and above all gave them an honorable name and an unimpeachable character. What greater inheritance could he have given them? What greater benefactor to a community that

the fact that he raised a large family of honorable men and women, who are honored and respected, loyal and true American citizens on this farm they raised their children to manhood and womanhood and gave each a farm in this community.

Age compelled Mr. and Mrs. Martens to retire from the active duties of farm work. They sold the farm and went to living with their children. The past winter they spent with their daughter, Mrs. Will Silm. A short time ago Mr. Martens was affected with heart trouble and later with pneumonia. He gradually failed until the peaceful and Thursday afternoon, May 3. He was tenderly cared for by his daughter, Mrs. Will Silm, but the Reaper of time had cut great swaths into his life until He garnered his spirit into His sheaf and took him home there to hear the welcome lauded "well done good and faithful servant, enter into the reward of thy labor."

The funeral was held Sunday morning at the Lutheran church with the Rev. George Moering, pastor of the church officiating. Interment in the Lutheran Cemetery.

Appendix U

He is survived by his widow, who has stood by him and gave him her moral support as well as her ardent favor, and encouraged him in his trials and hardships for over 60 years. This makes them some of the very few who travel life's pathway in harmony and prosperity and share each others burdens as well as happiness for that many years. Thirteen children were born. One died in infancy. One son, August, preceded his father a few years ago into the great beyond. Eleven children are still living: Chas. F. of Lansing; Fred, and Martha Rossow of Bengal Township; Emma Witt, Will, Theodore, John, Lewis, Henry, Christ and Louise Silm of Riley Township: 33 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Also one brother, Christ, of Riley Township.

And thus has past from our community one of its oldest citizens, with an untarnished name as well as highly respected and Christian character. May his exemplary life be incentive to the younger people.

G. G. Ottmar

Mrs. John Martens, 81, Mother of 13 Children, Passes

Johanna Martens, nee Beu, was born January 24, 1844 in Pommern, Germany, on October 26, 1861, she was married to John Martens who passed away May 3, 1923

This union was blessed with 13 children, 1 dying in infancy and a son dying 18 years ago. Of this number, 8 sons and 3 daughters are still living: Chas. Of Lansing, William, Theodore, John, Mrs.

William Witt, Mrs. L. Silm Lewis, Henry and Christ of Riley, Mrs. Robert Rossow and Fred ob Bengal.

Besides these children who mourn the mother's death, she is survived by 34 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. She passed away Sunday January 17th at 2 p.m., having reached the age of 81 years, 11 months and 24 days. Internment was made in the Lutheran cemetery in Riley, Wednesday.

Emma Witt, 69, daughter of John and Johanna Martens was born in Riley Township on March 5, 1876, and died at her home in Riley December 20, 1945.

She is survived by three sons, Lewis, John and Elmer; one daughter, Miss Hulda Witt; Two sisters, Mrs. William Silm, Mrs. Robert Rossow; seven brothers, Charles, Theodore, John, Lewis, Fred, Henry, and Cris Martins. Her husband, William C. Witt, and two brothers preceded her in death.

Services were held from the Riley Lutheran Church Sunday at 2:00 p.m., Rev. Coellner officiating. Burial was in the Lutheran cemetery.

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CAME TO RILEY IN
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Age compelled Mr. and Mrs. Martens to retire from the active duties of farm work. They sold the farm and went to living with their children. The past winter they spent with their daughter, Mrs. Will Silm. A short time ago Mr. Martens was affected with heart trouble and later with pneumonia. He gradually failed until the peaceful end Thursday afternoon, May 1. He was tenderly cared for by his daughter, Mrs. Will Silm, but the Reaper of time had cut great swaths into his life until He garnered his spirit into His sheaf and took him home there to hear the welcome plauded "well done good and faithful servant, enter into the reward of thy labor."

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Besides these children who mourn the mother's death, she is survived by 34 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. She passed away Sunday, Jan. 17th at 2 p. m., having

reached the age of 81 years, 11 mos. and 24 days. Interment was made in the Lutheran cemetery in Riley Wednesday.

Jan. 17, 1924

OBITUARIES

MRS. EMMA WITT

Emma Witt, 69, daughter of John and Johanna Martens, was born in Riley township on March 2, 1876, and died at her home in Riley December 29, 1945.

She is survived by three sons, Lewis, John and Elmer; one daughter, Miss Hulda Witt; two sisters, Mrs. William Silm, Mrs. Robert Rossow; seven brothers, Charles, Theodore, John, Lewis, Fred, Henry and Chris Martens. Her husband, William C. Witt, and two brothers preceded her in death.

Services were held from the Riley Lutheran church Sunday at 2:00 p. m., Rev. Coelner officiating. Burial was in the Lutheran cemetery.

teen children were born. One died in infancy. One son, August, preceded his father a few years ago into the great beyond. Eleven children are still living: Chas. P. of Lansing; Fred, and Martha Rossow of Bengal township; Emma Witt, Will, Theodore, John, Lewis, Henry, Christ and Louise Silm of Riley township; 33 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Also one brother, Christ, of Riley township.

And thus has past from our community one of its oldest citizens, with an untarnished name, as well as highly respected and Christian character. May his exemplary life be incentive to the younger people.

G. F. OTTMAR.

May 3, 1923

Obituary of Charles E. Bills

April 14, 1845 – May 22, 1928

(Age 78)

(For additional information see text on page 17)

Charles E. Bills, son of Albert and Phoebe Bills, was born April 14, 1845, in Hillsdale County, Michigan. He died at the home of his daughter in Lansing May 22, 1928.

He went into the home of D. P. Wilcox to live after the death of his mother when he was six. In 1854 the family came to Riley, Clinton county, and took up 160 acres on section 17 which remained his home until after his marriage. Here he worked as only the early pioneers have worked, cutting timber, grubbing out stumps and breaking up new land.

On December 25, 1867, he was united in marriage with Jennie M. Baird and together they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last Christmas.

In 1870 the little family then numbering three again became pioneers in a new country. They entered Denver on the second passenger train that entered the city and located in Boulder. Here they remained until 1885 when they returned to Riley. The remainder of his life was spent in Clinton County.

He is survived by the widow, two sons, Bert of Riley, Charles of Lansing, one daughter, Mrs. Harriet Balmer at whose home he died, five grandchildren. Mrs. Ellen Cook and Virginia Steward of Los Angeles, Jean and Betty Bills and Dale Balmer of Lansing and three great grandchildren.



Obituary of Orel Hildreth

September 16, 1857 -- March 18, 1931

(Age 73)

(See picture and text page 29)

Obituary of Orpha Dane Hildreth

September 5, 1866 -- June 3, 1944

(Age 78)

Orel Hildreth, 73, Succumbs To Short Illness March 18

Orel Hildreth, aged 73, former Merle Beach rural mail carrier, died at 1 a.m. Wednesday, March 18, 1931, at his home on South Oakland Street, St. Johns. He was taken seriously ill the previous Sunday.

Funeral services will be conducted by Rev. T. S. Cleaver at 3 p.m. Saturday at the Eberts Funeral Home. Burial is to be made in Mt. Rest.

Mr. Hildreth was born in Riley Township September 16, 1857, and spent the greater part of his life in Riley, Olive and DeWitt townships. He is survived by his widow, two brothers; K. R. Hildreth of St. Louis and A. G. Hildreth of Lansing, Four nieces, one nephew and many friends.

Mt. Rest Cemetery. Rev. Rat T. Caldwell will officiate.

Mrs. Hildreth, daughter of Joseph and Martha Dane and widow of the late Orel Hildreth, was born September 5, 1866, in St. Johns. She was a member of O. E. S. of DeWitt.

She is survived by nieces and nephews. Mrs. Inah Simmons, Miss Ivah Faragher and Mrs. Laura Bancroft, all of St. Johns, Mrs. Ruth Davis of Perry, Harold Dane of Pottersville, Miss Helen Dane of Owosso, Mrs. Mary Hunter of Millett, Charles Dane of Vermontville besides a large circle of friends.

(See pages 17 & 27 -- J. M. Dane is the father of Orpha Hildreth)

State Deaths

(Special to the State Journal)

Mrs. Orpha Hildreth

ST. JOHNS, June 3, (1944) -- Mrs. Orpha Dane Hildreth, 78 died at St. Johns Memorial hospital after a brief illness, Friday.

Funeral services will be held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock (CWT) at the Eberts Funeral Home. Burial will be in



Appendix W

Leon Schumaker
Retires from the Board of Education
Originally Print in 1979

19 YEARS
I love children

By Patrice Hernak
Editor

St. Johns

“I was born here and I’ve been here since – except for a few board of education meetings.” Said Leon Schumaker in his half-serious, half-joking manner.

He was born 66 years ago on the Schumaker farm located on Francis Road, seven-miles south on M-21 at the intersection of Pratt and Frances roads. Riley Township and Leon Schumaker have been hand and hand ever since.

But, just as he and Riley Township have had a longstanding relationship, so have Leon and the St. Johns Board of Education. In fact, Leon’s served on the board for the past 19 consecutive years – longer than any other board member.

At 66 years old, however, he has decided it’s time for someone else to worry about the schools. He’s done his duty and now it’s time for someone else to serve on the board of education.

His last board meeting will be Wednesday, June 13, barring any last minute special board meetings before the new board members to be elected June 11 take office in July.

Leon was only 47 years old when he took office 19 years ago. Three outlying school districts, Pratt, Boughton and Hill, had recently joined the St. Johns school system

and people in that area asked Leon if he would fun for the board of education to represent them.

And so he did.

That was years ago, but in Leon’s mind the time has flew swiftly.

His daughter, Jane, who was in school at the time when Leon first went on the board, is married and residing in Phoenix, Arizona with her family and husband who is an executive for Ramada Inn.

His other daughter, Linda, is married to a Lutheran minister and she and her family also live in Phoenix. Between Leon’s two daughters, he has eight grandchildren.

Last winter Leon and his wife, Louise, spent two months in Phoenix, visiting their family. This took Leon away from the school board, and he said that is another reason why he feels it’s time for someone else to serve.

Why has Leon served so long on the St. Johns Board of Education?

“You know, I wonder that myself,” he said in the dining room of his rural farmhouse. He was dressed in bib overalls and looked the part of a farmer with 280 acres planted in soy, beans, corn and wheat, with a few cattle here and there.

After thinking of that question a little longer, he said, “I’ve been interested in it all along.”

He though about it a little longer and then said, “I’ve always liked children and I

always felt I could do something for the community in my own way.”

“You have to do something to make the world a little better before you pass through,” he summed up. That was probably the foundation of his reason for staying on the board for 19 years.

His love of children is a close second.

He gets a kick out of their stories and their perspectives on life. He said he has fun talking with them, and one could tell by the way he said it and the little story he had to go along with it about a youngster he spoke with not too long ago, that he truly loves children.

Leon, himself never received a high school diploma. He graduated from Pratt School in the eighth grade, receiving a diploma and then going to work on the farm with his father. Graduation from the eighth grade was par for the course back then.

Since he has served on the St. Johns board, the district has consolidated, built the high school and built the outlying elementary schools: Riley, East Olive, Essex Center and Eureka.

In addition to his regular monthly board meetings, he also found time to serve on the county Agriculture Stabilization Committee for 15 years and the Central National Bank Board of Directors for about 20 years.

It hasn't been all roses for Leon during his tenure on the St. Johns school board. He looks to the future and sees that no rainbows are on the horizon, either.

Disciplining children is becoming more of a problem, he said and his successors are going to find it rough to operate a system on less and less operating funds. The school budget is a lot tighter now than it ever was, he said without even deliberating.

But, those will be someone else's problems. He and Louise are going to travel next – to Hawaii again, or back to Florida, Washington D.C., the East Coast. There certainly will be trips to Arizona.

It's been 19 years with Leon serving on the board. He can now relax and say he had made his contribution to his community. Certainly, he has done more than his share.

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Editor

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Leon Schumaker

Dorretta Krumm and Henry Witt Wedding Announcement
April 6, 1915

April 6, 1915

**POPULAR RILEY COUPLE
MARRIED TUES., APRIL 6**

**MISS DORRETTA KRUM AND
HENRY WITT WED.**

The marriage of Miss Dorretta Krumm and Henry Witt was solemnized Tuesday morning at the German Lutheran Church in Riley at 10:00 o'clock. Rev. Heincke performed the ceremony, and Miss Hulda Mohnke played the wedding march.

The bride wore a becoming gown of white satin, draped with embroidered net lace with pearl trimmings, also a bridal veil. The bridesmaids were the Misses Lily and

Hannah Krumm sisters of the bride. The best men were Arthur Silm and Walter Schroeder the latter a nephew of the groom.

After the services they returned to the home of the bride's father. Wm. Krumm. Following congratulations, a dinner and supper were served to the immediate relatives.

The bride and groom gave a dance to their friends in the evening at Merle Beach Hall, receiving about 175 guests. A lunch was served.

Mr. and Mrs. Witt will commence housekeeping on their farm in Riley. They have the best wishes of their many friends.



Emma Schrader & Edward Leucht Wed

June 6, 1907

Riley

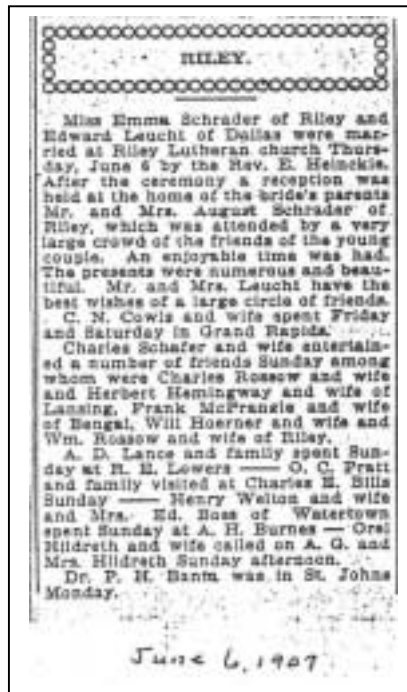
Miss Emma Schrader of Riley and Edward Leucht of Dallas were married At Riley Lutheran Church Thursday, June 6 by the Rev. E. Heinckie. After the ceremony a reception ws held at the home of the bride's parents Mr. and Mrs. August Schrader (See text on pages 23, 24, & 28 for more information on Mr. Schrader) of Riley, which was attended by a very large crowd of the friends of the young couple. An enjoyable time was had. The presents were numerous and beautiful. Mr. and Mrs. Leucht have the best wishes of a large circle of friends.

C. N. Cowls and wife spent Friday and Saturday in Grand Rapids.

Charles Schafer and wife entertained a number of friends Sunday among whom were Charles Rossow and wife and Herbert Hemingway and wife of Lansing, Frank McPrangle and wife of Bengal, Will Hoerner and wife and Wm. Rossow and wife of Riley.

D. Lance and family spent Sunday at R. E. Lowers ---- O. C. Pratt and family visited at Charles E. Bills Sunday --- Henry Welton and Wife and Mrs. Ed. Boss of Watertown spent Sunday at A. H. Burnes – Orel Hildreth and wife called on A. G. and Mrs. Hildreth Sunday afternoon.

Dr. P. H. Banta was in St. Johns Monday.



Golden Anniversary Announcement of Fred and Rika Schroeder

[This article is dated November 26, 1919]

Obituary of Mrs. Fred [Rika] Schroeder

November 26, 1850 – April 13, 1923

(Age 72)

WERE MARRIED 50 YEARS AGO

MR. AND MRS. FRED SCHROEDER
CELEBRATING GOLDEN WEDDING
NOV 26, WITH FAMILY AND
NEIGHBORS

LIVED ON RILEY FARM FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS

THEIR EIGHT CHILDREN WERE ALL WITH THEM, BESIDES OTHER RELATIVES.

Fred Schroeder, and his wife, Reke [Rika] Schroeder, celebrated their golden wedding day, Nov 26, 1919, at the home of their son-in-law, Christ Rossow, and his wife, Marie, and the latter's son. Richard Rossow celebrated his 16th birthday also. They thank the neighbors and relatives who helped celebrate that day and for the nice presents.

Fred Schroeder was born the 30th day of June 1841, in the Willich Marxhagen, state Mecklenburg Schwrin, Germany. November 10, 1866, mother and two brothers, August and Christ Schroeder, and came across the Atlantic Ocean and landed in New York, Nov. 25, 1866.

Mrs. Fred Schroeder was born Nov. 26, 1850, in the village of Ludishofe, Germany, and came to this country Nov. 2, 1850, in the village of Ludishofe, Germany, and came to this country Nov.

2, 1869, and was united in marriage with Mr. Schroeder in the township of Dallas, Clinton county, Nov. 26, 1869, by Joseph Smith, pastor. They lived in Westphalia for two years. IN 1871 they moved to Riley Township on their farm and lived there for 45 years, when they moved to the village of Forest Hill and have lived there three years. Mr. and Mrs. Schroeder are members of the Lutheran church. They have eight children, three sons and five daughters, who were with them that day, John and August of Lansing, Mrs. William Marten of Riley, Minnie Hart, Carrie Bucklin and Ricky Waldron of Watertown, Marie Rossow and William Schroeder of Riley and their grandchildren, Mr. Schroeder's two brothers, August and Christ, and Mrs. Carl Silm, sister of Mrs. Schroeder.

Before the meal was served the song was sung, "Praise the Lord, King Almighty," the psalm 103 was read by Mr. Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder says there have been great improvements since their first wedding day.

Mr. and Mrs. Schroeder are in good health and we wish them many years of happiness.
M.R.

Mrs. Frederick Schroeder

Rika Schroeder, the beloved wife of Frederick Schroeder, was born in Mecklenburg, Germany, November 25, 1850, and departed this life April 13, 1923, at her late home in Riley

township, having lived in said township for over 51 years. In the fall of 1869 she came to America with her father accompanied by her sister and her husband Mr. and Mrs. Karl Silm. They landed in Westphalia November 2, 1869. On November 26, 1869, she was married to Frederick Schroeder. Three years ago they celebrated their golden wedding at the pleasant home of their youngest daughter, Mrs. Christ Rossow, of Riley Township. They were blessed with nine children, eight now living, one died in infancy. The eight surviving children are John and August Schroeder, of Lansing; Mrs. Will Bucklin, Mrs. Harry Hart and Mrs. Allen Waldron of Watertown; Mrs. Will Martins, Mrs. Chris Rossow and William Schroeder (who live in the homestead) of Riley.

In 1871 she and her husband moved to Riley township on the farm which they improved. By hard work and strict economy they built the building, fences and drained the land, endured the hardships, reared a fine family of children, surrounded themselves with a large circle of friends and lived an exemplary Christian life. She was a devote wife and mother and had the respect of all who knew her. She was a lifelong member of the Lutheran Church. The funeral cortege was a true indication of the esteem of the friends and neighbors.

Funeral services were held at the Riley Lutheran Church with the Rev. George Mooring, pastor of the church officiating. The remains were laid at rest in the church yard (Lutheran Cemetery.)

A few years ago Mr. and Mrs. Schroeder retired from the arduous duties of farm

life and retired to her late home at Forest hill, Riley township, where they lived happy and contented, having earned this rest from hard work. She is survived by her husband, three sons, five daughters, one sister, Mrs. Silm of Riley, and a host of their relatives and friends. Heart trouble and pneumonia were the chief causes of her sudden death.

WERE MARRIED 50 YEARS AGO

MR. AND MRS. FRED SCHROEDER
CELEBRATED GOLDEN WED-
DING NOV 25, WITH FAMILY
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4614

1870 United States Census

Stebbins C. Bliss, wife Charlotte and children are listed as residents
of the Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of
Michigan on the 14th day of July 1870

Page No. 15

Schedule 1.—Inhabitants in Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of Michigan, enumerated by me on the 20th day of July, 1870.

Post Office: *Clinton*

S. S. D. Smith Ass't Marshal

608

The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family		Relationship to head of family	Color or race	Sex	Age	Profession, occupation, or trade of each person, male or female	Place of birth, naming State or Territory of U. S., or the Country, if of foreign birth	Value of real estate	Value of personal estate	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic	Whether foreign-born
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	146	Bliss, David P.	42	M	W	Farmer	Michigan				
14		" Amanda	36	F	W	Keeps House	Michigan				
15		" Eva	15	F	W		Michigan				
16		" Herman	9	M	W		Michigan				

No. of families: 1
 No. of white families: 1
 No. of colored families: 0
 Total: 1

1870 United States Census

David P. Bliss, wife Amanda and children Eva & Herman are listed as residents of the Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of Michigan on the 20th day of July 1870
(Who is Eva? This is the only record of her existence – so far.)

Page No. 153

and 17 are not to be added in respect to infants. Infants numbered 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 are to be numbered by an alternative mark, as follows.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Michigan, in the County of Clinton, of Michigan, enumerated by me on the 26th day of July, 1870.

Post Office: Hamlet

Sam. G. Smith, Asst. Marshal

609

1870 United States Census

Heratio Simeon Bliss, wife Lucinda and child Glenn (See Glenn's Obituary – Appendix F) are listed as residents of the Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of Michigan on the 26th day of July 1870

119	Bliss, Heratio S.	10	M	H	Farmer	6000
	" Lucinda	32	F	H	Keeps House	
	" Glenn	2	M	H		
120	Lucy Betsey	35	F	H	Keeps House	1400

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of Michigan, enumerated by me on the 20th day of July, 1870.
Post Office: Adrian A. J. Gamell, Asst. Marshal

The name of every person whose place of birth on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.		Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S. or the Country, if of foreign birth.		Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Wm. H. 27 M. H. Keeper House			Michigan			
2	Clarissa E. 28 F. H. Keeper House			Michigan			
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9	111 110 B. 40 M. H. Farmer	3500	1200	New York			
10	" John C. 35 F. H. Keeper House			New York			
11	" Edwin H. 19 M. H. Farmer			New York			
12	" George 14 M. H.			New York			
13	" Herman 12 M. H.			New York			
14	" William 12 M. H.			New York			
15	" John 11 F. H.			New York			
16	112 111 Chas. W. B. 40 M. H. Farmer	4000	1000	New York			
17	" George 40 F. H. Keeper House			New York			
18	" John 19 F. H. U. S. Marshal			Michigan			
19	" George 13 M. H.			Michigan			
20	113 112 Joseph 25 M. H. Farmer	4000	1000	Vermont			
21	" William 27 F. H. Keeper House			New York			
22	" Mary E. 3 F. H.			Michigan			
23	" William 27 M. H. Farmer			Michigan			
24	114 113 Joseph 27 M. H. Farmer	4000	1200	Vermont			
25	" Susan 40 F. H. Keeper House			Vermont			
26	115 114 Charles 32 M. H. Farmer	4000	800	New York			
27	" Betsey 32 F. H. Keeper House			New York			
28	" Eliza 21 F. H. Ad. House			Michigan			
29	" Charles 2 F. H.			Michigan			
30	117 117 Bliss, Henry H. 35 M. H. Farmer	5000	300				
31	" Clarissa E. 28 F. H. Keeper House						
32							
33	118 116 Chas. W. B. 40 M. H. Farmer	2000	1000	Michigan			
34	" Betsey 30 F. H. Keeper House			New York			
35	" Ben 2 F. H.			Michigan			
36	117 117 Bliss, Henry H. 35 M. H. Farmer	5000	3000	Vermont			
37	" Clarissa E. 28 F. H. Keeper House			Michigan			
38	" Betsey 30 F. H.			Michigan			
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1870 United States Census

Henry W. Bliss and wife Clarissa E. are listed as residents of the Township of Riley, in the County of Clinton, State of Michigan on the 20th day of July 1870

000
CERTIFICATE
No. 1760

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS

William Thomas Gibson, of Seneca County, New York

William Thomas Gibson, of Seneca County, New York

has deposited in the **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** of the United States, a Certificate of the **REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE** of *Seneca* whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said

William Thomas Gibson

according to the provisions of

the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for

the West half of the North East quarter, Section eight, in Township six North, of Range three West, in the District of lands subject to sale at Ionia, Michigan, containing eighty acres.

The West half of the North East quarter of Section eight, in Township six North, of Range three West, in the district of lands subject to sale, Ionia, Michigan, containing eighty acres.

according to the official plot of the survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the **SURVEYOR GENERAL**, which said tract has been purchased by the said *William Thomas Gibson*

NOW KNOW YE, That the

United States of America, in consideration of the Premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided, **HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED**, and by these presents **DO GIVE AND GRANT**, unto the said *William Thomas Gibson*

and to his heirs, the said tract above described: **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereto belonging, unto the said *William Thomas Gibson*.

and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, I, *Martin Van Buren*

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made **PATENT**, and the **SEAL** of the **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** to be hereunto affixed.

Second day of November 1837

WITNESSETH under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the *second* day of *November*, in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *thirty seven* and of the **INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES** the *eighty second*



BY THE PRESIDENT:

By

Martin Van Buren
Wm. Van Buren Secy.
Robert Wilson acting Recorder of the General Land Office

BY THE PRESIDENT: Martin Van Buren

See
reference
on page 4
of Forest
Hill
History.