

Clinton Independent

VOL. II NO. 4

ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN

APRIL 1978

MEETINGS

April 20 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
meets at the Municipal Building
in St. Johns at 8:00 p.m.

May 1 GENEALOGY BRANCH of
the Clinton County Historical
Society meets in the History
Room of the Bement Library at
7:30 p.m.

May 2 MUSEUM COMMITTEE
meets at the Museum 1209 South
Oakland at 7:30 p.m.

May 15 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meets at the Museum at 7:30 p.m.
All members are welcome.

May 18 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
meets at the Municipal Building
in St. Johns at 8:00 p.m. Essay
Contest winners will present
their award winning essays.

EARLY MAPLE RAPIDS DAYS DESCRIBED BY EARLY PIONEER HELEN M. PARR

This charming account of the early life in Maple Rapids is printed with the permission of Mary Beth Upton who is Mrs. Parr, s great granddaughter. Mrs. Parr read this account at a meeting of the Maple Rapids Grange in February of 1915, when she was 80 years old.

Maple Rapids in 1835 was a trading post established by George Campeau of Detroit. No steps were taken for the founding of the village until 1852. When I first knew anything about Maple Rapids there was only one house built of logs known as the Johnson House on the banks of the Maple River just west of town. There are some trees standing now that mark the spot. In that house up s rs was a small room where they kept what was called a store. They kept factory prints, tea, coffee, tobacco and whiskey. They done most of their trading

(continued on Back page)

ZACHRIAH CHANDLER WILL BE TOPIC AT INTERESTING APRIL 20, MEETING

The two statues which represent Michigan in Statuary Hall at the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. depict Lewis Cass and Zachriah Chandler, from Clinton County.

Chandler will be the subject of the April 20 meeting of the Clinton County Historical Society which will be held at the Municipal Building at 8:00 p.m. Libby Spoelma will share her extensive research on Chandler with us,

One time Secretary of the Interior in President Grant's cabinet, Chandler also served as Chairman of the Republican Party during the election of 1876.

For those of us who are curious about how places got their names, we will now know about how Chandler Road and "Chandler's Swamp" got their names.

Mrs. Spoelma will describe the life and times of Chandler and whi Michigan chose him to be ranked with Governor Cass in Statuary Hall.

PARMELEE MARKER TO BE DEDICATED MAY 29

Flying pioneer Philip Parmalee, who was a Clinton County native, will be honored at the dedication of a Tri-County Marker to be placed at his grave site in East Palins cemetery May 29, 1978 during Memorial Day activities.

Shirley Karber, who was instrumental in researching Parmalee, s historic career, will be chairperson of the dedication ceremonies which will take place at 12:30 p.m. after the regular Memorial Day activities at the cemetery.

with their Indians, buying furs and paying them in whiskey mostly. There was no road except the one on the west side which went straight to the Johnson House, on the banks of the beautiful Maple. Old memories make it seem that way to me. Indians just came to camp all along the river. They had dances. We could hear the drums from where we lived now where Frank Warren lives. There youst to be a small store on the place where Mrs. Van Scoy now lives about as big as a common sized corn house.

Hiram Benedict lived there at that time. This little store stood just east of the old log house which stood near where the new house stands where Mrs. McPherson lives was our nearest post office which was called the petit house. It was pretty near a wilderness when my folks first settled on their place where Frank Warren now lives (this is the Beach farm across from the Darwin Bancroft farm). We lived in what was called a double log house with a shake roof with a porch across the whole length of the house. Two front doors with wooden latches and hinges. There was a big fireplace in the south end of the kitchen. The house stood right in front of the house that stands there now. We youst to have the fourth of July celebrations there because it was the biggest house there was anywhere around. The neighbors went in together and cooked for the dinner. I remember one fourth of July they brought milk to our house about four weeks before the fourth for my mother to make cheese for the dinner. I tell you they got some lovely dinners them days. If it was a new country. I tell you I liked them old Pioneer days.

We didn't have much fruit them days except wild fruit which was plenty. Strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, huckleberries, gooseberries, wild plums and cranberries. You could go and get berries anytime in the season and preserve and dry them for winter. They didn't know anything about canning them days but I think I lived just as well as I do now.

Well I must tell you about the Indians. They youst to camp along the creek where A.D. Bancroft lives, both sides of the road there would be eight or ten tents. They covered them over with bark. They built the fire in the middle of the tent and there is a hole in the top of the tent for the smoke to go out of. They have stakes drove in the ground crotched ends and a pole laid on to hand their big kettle on when they make their soups of dried venisons bones corn beans. They didn't have any beds or chair just roll up in a blanket and lay down any where around the fire. One day there was an Indian boy came to our house said he wanted 'sitpenigun'. Of course we didn't know what he wanted and he went looking around the house and he found the shears he wanted to borrow them so we learned what they called shears.

I will now tell you of an experience I have later in life when I was keeping house in a log house on the place where Frank Parr lives now. I was all alone one night when I saw a man slipping up to the back window peeking through the curtains. First thing I thought of was a crazy man. Gene was a sleep in his trundlebed and Frank was running around the house. You can imagine my feelings about then. I took down a shawl and wrapped it around them both and went out the front door like a deer run clear over to my folks. When I got there I was nearly prostrated. I thot then that I would never stay alone again, but I have many a night. Well I guess I have told all you care to listen to so will close with this verse.

We lived not as hermits lives
 But oft in social converse met
 And fires of love were kindled there
 Merily passed the time
 Despite our wily Indian foes
 In the days when we were pioneers
 Sixty years ago.

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MAY, 1978

PHILIP PARMALEE TO BE
HONORED MAY 29 AT COUNTY
MARKER DEDICATION SERVICES

Aviation pioneer, Philip Parmalee will be honored at the dedication of a Tri-County Marker honoring his life and death. This marker will describe his brief career. The marker is the Society's way of saying that Clinton County still regards Philip Parmalee as a hero 65 years after his death.

The dedication ceremonies will take place at East Plains Cemetery beginning at 12:00 noon. A gun salute, a helicopter fly over by a squadron from Grand Ledge and a "first" in aviation, a fresh flower drop from a helicopter honoring Parmalee's gravesite. This impressive ceremony will be part of the marker dedication.

East Plains Cemetery is reached by following Colony Road west to Clintonia Road and then a few hundred feet north on Clintonia. One can also drive north out of Pewamo on Clintonia (Hubbardston) Road to the cemetery site. This Dedication will be one of the important events for Memorial Day.

DUES ARE DUE---PAY NOW AND
ENJOY THE YEAR WITH THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the beginning of the year we included a coupon for dues which could be sent with the check to the Society. In case you forgot please do it now. The coupon is included here again. Dues are still two dollars and can be paid to the Clinton County Historical Society, Box 174, St. Johns, Michigan 48879. Your remittance is appreciated.

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?" ESSAY
CONTEST WINNERS TO BE
ON PROGRAM MAY 18

If you have ever wondered how certain things were named, or how a place was so named, then the program May 18 in Fowler will be certain to please you. At this meeting students who have written prize winning essays entitled, "What's in a Name?" will read their own essays to the membership. These essays will tell us about the people who are behind the names. The meeting will be held at Waldron School at 8:00 p.m., May 18 in Fowler.

Many students from both elementary and high schools have competed this year. winners will be announced May 16. Judges Donna Carter and Millie Brown are reading the essays now and will make the decision as to who comes in first, second and third. They will then meet to decide which of the top essays deserve to be chosen grand prize winner. The grand prize is a traveling trophy which will be engraved with the student's name and school and year in which the prize was awarded. This stays with the school until the next year.

Each winner in grade school, junior high school and high school category will receive a trophy for first place, or a medal for second or third place winner. Each person who enters receives a certificate of participation.

The essays from this year and previous years are being organized and will be made available at the Museum. There is much research and much fine history to be learned from reading these essays.

Plan now to attend this interesting meeting which will be held in Fowler, May 18 at 8:00 p.m. in the Waldron School on Kent Street. All who are interested are urged to attend.

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____
INTERESTED IN _____
WOULD LIKE TO WORK ON _____