



Genealogists of the
Clinton County Historical Society

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 23,
St. Johns, MI 48879

Clinton County Trails

Published Quarterly, December 1998

Volume 13, Number 4

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pres.....
V-Pres.....Maralyse Brooks
Sec'yMyrna Van Epps
Treas William Serviss

GENEALOGISTS

Pres.....Maralyse Brooks
V-Pres.....Michael Pease
Sec'yArlene Lounds
Treas Carole Henry
Program.....Maralyse Brooks

MUSEUM

Catherine Rumbaugh,
Director

ARCHIVES

Myrna Van Epps
Archivist

NEWSLETTER

Myrna Van Epps
Arlene (Conley) Smith
Co-Editors

Last Session in the Old County Courthouse

August 17, 1998

Before the Honorable Jeffrey L. Martlew, Circuit
Judge

Edited from the court transcript

Judge Martlew: This is the last session of the Clinton County Circuit Court to be held in this building. This court held its first session in this courtroom in approximately October 1871. At that time the United States was still a young republic, less than 100 years old. The nation's attempt at self-disintegration had ended with the conclusion of the Civil War just six years earlier. Ulysses S. Grant was president of the United States. Robert E. Lee had just died without ever receiving a pardon for his participation in the southern rebellion. George Armstrong Custer was in command of the Seventh Cavalry in the Oklahoma territory, and another five years would pass before he would die at Little Big Horn. The telephone, automobile, and the airplane had not been invented; however, one could travel from here to California in about a week's time on the three-year-old transcontinental railroad.

On the world scene, Great Britain was the undisputed military and economic super power of the world. Queen Victoria sat on her throne. Her navy ruled the waves, and the English proudly proclaimed that, "The sun never sets on the British Empire." Winston Churchill had not been born; nor had Adolf Hitler, Benito Musselini, Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, or Dwight D. Eisenhower. France was ruled by Emperor Napoleon III, and Otto VonBismarck was chancellor of Prussia, pursuing his aim at a unified German state under the Prussian Kaiser Wilhelm the First.

Clinton County was strictly an agrarian culture, as was most of the United States. The only towns of any

size here were St. Johns and the villages of DeWitt and Ovid. Their business communities were entirely tied to the local farming economy.

One could travel from here to the state's capitol in Lansing on horseback in approximately a day; although, around the turn of the century, 30 years hence, inter-urban railways made that same round trip twice a day.

The world that saw the construction of this courthouse no longer exists, and those who built it could never begin to imagine the world we live in today. **However, this structure has served its purpose well for nearly 127 years.**

FAMILY HISTORIES

Featured here are family histories which were submitted ca 1993 for a proposed supplement to the 1980 Clinton County History book. (See *Clinton Co. Trails*, Vol. 12, #1)

FLOYD AND FLORENCE BINGHAM

By Dorothy A. LaBar

Floyd, son of **Alexander** and **Elizabeth (Martin) Bingham**, was born in Bengal Twp. on Jan. 10, 1879. He was of English, Scotch, and German Descent.

On Mar. 31, 1909, he married **Florence Burt** of Essex Twp. She was the daughter of **Edwin** and **Harriet (DuBois) Burt**, born on Nov. 17, 1883. They were of Irish, French, and English ancestry.

Floyd and Florence lived their entire married life on a farm located on French Rd., in Greenbush Twp. Besides farming Floyd served as a rural mail carrier for several years.

Florence was a graduate of the St. Johns High School and Clinton Co.

Normal. She taught at the Essex Center and Lowe Schools in Essex Twp.

They had four daughters: **Louise (Harold) Dershem**, **Louise (Mrs. Robert) Curry**, **Anna (Gordon) Grennell**, and **Dorothy (Cecil) LaBar**.

The family were members of the Lowe Methodist Church.

Floyd passed away June 10, 1956, and Florence on Mar. 31, 1957. They are buried at the Lowe Cemetery.

HAROLD AND LOUISE DERSHEM

Dorothy A. LaBar

Louise, eldest daughter of **Floyd** and **Florence Bingham**, was born Mar. 23, 1910, in Greenbush Twp. She was a graduate of Rodney B. Wilson High

School and Clinton Co. Normal. in St. Johns. She taught the Essex Center and Lowe Schools in Essex Twp.

On Mar. 31, 1936, she was married to Harold Dershem, son of **Harlan and Myrtie (Green) Dershem**. They owned and operated farms in Essex Twp. and were members of the Dairy Association.

Their children are: **Margaret (Mrs. William) McDunnell, Richard (Sharon), Marilyn (Terrance) Speer, Nancy (Eugene) Dunkel; and Phyllis (Alan) Moore**. A son, **David**, died in infancy.

As members of the Lowe United Methodist Church, Louise was an active member in the United Methodist Women's organization.

ROBERT & LOIS CURRY

By Dorothy A. LaBar

Lois, second daughter of **Floyd and Florence Bingham**, was born Oct. 31, 1911, in Greenbush Twp. She graduated from Rodney B. Wilson High School in St. Johns and the Lansing Business University. She was employed by General Motors Co. until her marriage to **Robert Curry** on Jan. 16, 1943. Lois is an active member of the Bethel Evangelical Free Church of Owosso.

Robert was the son of **Willard and Martha (DeSonia) Curry** of Hemlock, MI. He worked for Buick Motor Co. until his retirement. Robert passed away Apr. 18, 1979.

They lived in the Flint and Owosso, MI, area. Their daughters are: **Harriet (Thomas) Adams** and **Martha (Charles) Hathaway**. Charles died in 1987.

CECIL AND DOROTHY LA BAR

Dorothy A. LaBar

Dorothy, the youngest daughter of **Floyd and Florence Bingham**, was born July 10, 1916. She with her three older sisters were students for their first eight grades at the French School in Greenbush Twp. She is a graduate of Rodney B. Wilson High School and Clinton Co. Normal of St. Johns. Dorothy taught at the Rheubottom and French Schools. Dorothy retired from the State Dept. of Civil Service in 1981. She is a member of Pilgrim United Methodist Church in Bingham Twp.

On Aug. 13, 1937, she married **Cecil LaBar**, son of **Oscar and Lena (Brundage) LaBar** of Crystal, MI. They farmed in Clinton Co. most of their married life. Cecil passed away Dec. 16, 1969.

Their six children were: **Lois (Bruce) Anderson, Dennis (Eunice), Sue (Richard) Hardman, Rebecca (Kent) Daley, Florence Kay** and Michael (Donna). Florence Kay died on July 4, 1956, and Rebecca on Feb. 8, 1983.

SANDER PLINY PINO

By Dorothy (Pino) Sheap

My grandfather, **Sander Pliny Pino**, came to Essex Twp. in Clinton Co. from Kent Co. in 1854. He married **Julia Anna West** in 1878, and they lived in a log cabin about a mile from the Lowe School and Church. To this marriage were born seven boys and one girl: **Ivan, Floyd, J. Arthur, Ralph, Edna, Otto, Austin, and Vernon**.

I remember my father, J. Arthur, telling us that the older ones slept in the loft and that they had to shake the snow from the bed covers before they arose. But it was a wonderful life, according to

