

# Clinton County Trails

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 3 1987 Looking For Your Roots? Come Visit Us!



A publication of the Genealogists of the Clinton County Historical Society

## NOTES OF INTEREST

Olive News (Clinton Independent) Jan. 17, 1884. Two of the old people have passed away during the past week. They are Mrs. Ione Dilts, age 87 and Henry Alward, age 82.

October 24, 1889 For sale. Hotel for sale, Farmers Hotel, Railroad Street, St. Johns, J. L. Ring property.

Robert H. Thompson, whose address was East Walker Street in St. Johns, was a WW I veteran and member of the 7th Balloon Corp. He served over seas in 1917 and 1918.

Walter L. Mundell, b Marshall, Mich. 1839. Enlisted for three years at Grand Rapids, Michigan as a corporal in Co. D., Third Michigan Infantry on May 13, 1861. Prisoner at Fair Oaks, Va., June 1, 1862. Returned to regiment Nov. 20, 1862. Re-enlisted December 23, 1863. Transferred to Co. E., Fifth Infantry June 10, 1865 as corporal. Mustered out at Jeffersonville, Ind., July 5, 1865. On April 24, 1865, received Medal of Honor for capture of a flag at Sailor's Creek, Va. April 6, 1865. Died at Fowler, Michigan. April 21, 1900.

Westphalia Births for 1907  
From Guy Frace Records

GROSS Margaret Gertrude b. Oct. 5, 1907  
parents Joseph J. Gross and Lizzie Smith

SMITH Edmund John b. Aug. 25, 1907  
parents Martin Smith and May Gross

SIMON Rewella Katrina b. Oct. 13, 1907  
parents Bernard Simon and Mary Ann Bengel

FEDEWA Christina b. Oct. 13, 1907  
parents Joseph Fedewa and Catherine F. Fox

## EDITORS NAMED

The Clinton County Historical Society at its August meeting named Lois Fohl and Catherine Reed as co-editors of the Clinton County Trails.

The Clinton Independent will be issued with the Clinton County Trails quarterly and mailed independently the other eight months of the year.

Any input into what you would like to see published will be appreciated. Send any material you might have that we can share to Catherine Reed, 581 W. State Rd., Lansing, 48906.

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## CONCERNING NORMAN S. WHITEFORD

Norman S. Whitford, dcd.  
PA 4 Sept 1848 by Philetus Whitford, father.  
Norman S Whitford d intest at New Orleans,  
returning from army service in the Mexican  
War. Asks admin to Peter Low of Mason. Adm  
bd 2 oct. 1848 to Peter Low of Vevey. Affdvt  
16 Nov 1848 by Hannan Sanford. She is mother of  
Philetus Whitford and Norman was his son. Norman  
unmarried Dec 1847. Dep by Minos McRoberts  
and Hiram Converse 6 Mar 1849. Norman S. Whitford  
was in Co. H of 1st Regt of Michigan Vols. d 24  
June 1848 leaving no widow or child. Letter  
19 of June 1921, from Mrs. John Hopkins of  
Eureka, Michigan on behalf of Mrs Maria Whitford  
an old lady. Letter from Oren Holtzman 5 Dec 19  
speaks of land in Mason and money deposited to  
Norman Whitford and Mercy Whitford. Mercy  
Whitford married and living as Mercy Snider.  
Letter from Mrs Rosetta Worden Hagan of Watts,  
California 23 Mar 1926 asking about details of  
the estate.

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The Clinton County Trails published to date will be indexed in the next issue.

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## EAGLE TOWNSHIP

Eagle Township was set off from Watertown Township by an act of organization in 1841. It was first settled by pioneers from Genessee County, New York, who established a small settlement on the Looking Glass River in section 23 in 1834.

The location and platting of Eagle Village followed the opening of the Ionia and Lansing Railroad. A depot was established in 1873 and named "Eagle." By 1880, the village included a general store, a grocery, a hardware, two blacksmith shops, a millinery, and a saw and grist mill. It was incorporated as the "Village of Eagle" in 1887.

## ESSEX TOWNSHIP

Essex Township was organized March 9, 1843. It had originally been included in both Wandaugon Township (later Lebanon) and Bengal Township. The first township meeting was held at the home of James Sowle, Jr. on April 21, 1843. The fact that the location of the township was remote is reflected by the results of a township election held in 1845 where bounties of two dollars and one dollar were voted for each wolf scalp and bear scalp, respectively.

The first settlement of any size was established by George Campau, the first settler in the Township. He erected a dwelling and trading post just north of what is now Maple Rapids. His post was the location of the first Township Meeting of Wandaugon Township in 1838, and of Lebanon in 1839.

The Village of Maple Rapids was first platted in 1854 by William A. Hewitt. He constructed a saw mill, a general store, and a hotel. Upon his death, his son Isaac resumed the responsibility of promoting the village and it is through his efforts that it experienced rapid growth and development. By 1880, Maple Rapids was one of the largest settlements in the county with a population of over 600 persons. It successfully supported three churches, two hotels, four general stores, two drug stores, three millinery shops, two groceries, two furniture stores, a music store, a jewelry store, two grist mills, a saw mill, two planing mills, a foundry, a bank, and a newspaper printing office. Daily stages furnished transportation to the village and it was connected to Fowler by a telephone line. Two factors apparently influenced its continued growth and its subsequent development into a major urban center a decrease in lumbering and related activities, and the lack of rail transportation.

## GREENBUSH TOWNSHIP

Greenbush Township was detached from Bingham Township and organized as a separate governmental unit on February 16, 1842. The name was suggested by Mrs. David Sevy, at whose home the first township meeting was held in 1842.

A small settlement called "McMasters Corners" developed around a tavern on the Lansing - St. Louis road. A hotel was soon con-

structed to accomodate travelers and a post office was added later. In 1878, it was renamed "Union Home." A second settlement developed in section 28 and was called "Frenches Corners." It experienced limited growth and soon erected a post office. It was renamed "Keystone" in honor of President Buchanan's native state of Pennsylvania. The most prosperous community in Greenbush Township had two locations and five different names before it finally settled with "Eureka." Known at various times as "Swizzletown", "Barrington", and "Williamsport", it was officially platted as "Greenbush." It developed, however, that another town of the same name existed in Alcona County and was causing much confusion. The townspeople agreed to change the name, and at the suggestion of its postmaster, Edward Stark, it became Eureka - a Latin word meaning "I have found it."

#### LEBANON TOWNSHIP

Lebanon Towship was organized on March 6, 1838, as "Wandaugon" Township. It originally covered the northwestern quarter of Clinton County. The first township meeting was held at the home of George Campau, near Maple Rapids, in 1838. One of the greatest promotions of early Clinton County took place within the present boundaries of Lebanon Towship. The Clinton Salt Works company was formed in 1837 after a scientific survey disclosed the presence of salt along the Maple River. The Clinton Salt Works Village was platted in Section 15 and included a bank, several frame buildings, and several homes. Although the state legislature required that the Bank's capital include from \$50,000 to \$100,000, it was rumored that it included only "abucket full of silver coins." Both the Bank and the Salt Works soon folded under pressure, and many investors lost heavily.

#### OVID TOWNSHIP

Ovid Township was organized on March 19, 1840 and named after the township of Ovid, New York. The first town meeting was held April 22, 1840.

For several years in a very remote area of the township, a group of counterfeiters successfully made illegal Mexican silver dollars. The four men and a woman, all from Detroit, were eventually apprehended and sentenced. The area was unflatteringly designated as the "Bogus Settlement" or "Bogus Corners", and remained as such for many years.

The Village of Ovid was platted in 1858 by B. O. Williams. Ovid became a rail station after a dispute between Williams and H. G. Higham, chief engineer for the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad. Williams had built a saw mill on the railroad in a settlement called Middlebury, a mile and a quarter east of the present Ovid. Higham wished to join Williams in developing the settlement, but when Williams refused, Higham constructed the depot on his own land, now occupied by the village. By 1880, Ovid was already a major urban center with a population in excess of 1,500



persons. Industries included a carriage factory employing over 100 persons, and a flour mill with eight employees. It also had two newspapers - the Ovid Register, and the Clinton and Shiawassee Union. Its first bank was a private corporation founded in 1868. On March 24, 1869, a legislative act provided for its incorporation as the Village of Ovid.

In 1858, William Shepard constructed a general store and laid out his village of "Shepardsville." By 1867, he had constructed a grist mill, a saw mill, and a stave factory within the village. It was also the location of a depot on the Milwaukee and Detroit Railroad. The village appeared destined for prosperity when it was struck by several disasters from which it never recovered. In 1867, the boiler at the grist mill exploded killing one man and injuring six. Four years later the stave mill burned. Fires also hit in 1872 and 1873, wiping out its major business establishments. An additional fire in 1880 reduced its major industry to ashes, a blow from which Shepardsville was never to regain.

#### OLIVE TOWNSHIP

An act of the legislature, approved March 20, 1841, detached Olive Township from DeWitt Township and organized it as a separate entity. It was named for Olive, New York, at the suggestion of Peter, Adam, and John Merrihew, the first settlers in the township. The first township meeting was held April 5, 1841. The only settlement ever to develop within the township consisted of only a few dwellings. Known as "Halfway House", it provided rest and relaxation to travelers on the Lansing - DeWitt - St. Johns Road.

#### RILEY TOWNSHIP

This township was set off from Watertown and organized as Riley on March 15, 1841. The first settler, Atwell Simmons, was a native of Ontario County, New York, and arrived in 1836. The first township meeting was held in April, 1841, and officers were elected.

The Riley post office was established in about 1855. Another post office, called South Riley, was established in 1857. Only two industries were constructed within the township - a saw mill in 1875 and a cheese factory in 1874. In 1847, Riley had a population of 134, which increased to 400 by 1854. The U. S. Census of 1880 listed over 1,400 inhabitants.

#### VICTOR TOWNSHIP

Victor Township was organized on March 9, 1843. It had previously been joined with Bath Township under the name of Ossowa. It was named for a township of the same name in New York State. The first election was held April 15, 1843. Until the summer of 1836, the township contained no white settlers. At that time Welcome J. Partelo settled in section 31. An interesting bit of history concerns the events leading to the

death of the Indian chief Chippewa by small pox in 1838. According to the historians: "It is said that Chippewa, maintaining that he had discovered a new cure for the disorder (smallpox), proceeded while severely ill to put his remedial measure into effect by leaping into a cask of cold water. Unfortunately for his theory, his remedy simply hastened his death, for almost directly after applying it, he expired." His grave still exists within the township boundaries, as does his son's, who died as a result of the smallpox epidemic which killed his father and swept through the entire Chippewa tribe.

#### WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP

Watertown Township, which originally included the entire eastern one-half of Clinton County, was organized on March 20, 1837. The earliest settler who broke ground within its present boundaries was unquestionably "Deacon" Marvin, who arrived in 1835. In July, 1837, an association was formed for the purpose of organizing a company to be known as the "Waterloo Joint - Stock Company." The purpose of the company was to purchase and improve land in the township and the origination of a town. A saw mill was first erected, followed by a grist mill, a general store, and a dwelling for housing the men employed at the mills.

After a dismal start, resulting primarily from poor management, the Company was sold at auction. The property continued to depreciate until 1848 when N. I. and Nelson Daniells bought the property. Under their management it flourished and by 1880, contained two general stores, a grocery, a drug store, a shoe store, two blacksmith shops, a millinery shop, a saw mill, and a grist mill. It adopted the name of "Waterloo", but was later changed to "Waucousta" in honor of an Indian maiden who reportedly had saved Fort Detroit from massacre.

In the summer of 1834, Erastus Ingersoll purchased a tract of land in Delta Township for the purpose of erecting a city.

In 1836, he added 80 acres in Section 35 of Watertown Township, and in the following year, an additional 80 acres in section 36. The settlement was platted as Grand River City in 1841. It was intended to serve as an educational center for the entire midwest and in 1839, the State legislature passed an act incorporating the proposed school as the Grand River Theological Seminary. The development seemed destined for success when the collapse of the wildcat banking system struck Michigan. It never recovered from the financial chaos which resulted.

#### WESTPHALIA TOWNSHIP

Westphalia Township was detached from Watertown Township and organized as a separate governmental unit on March 21, 1839. The name was suggested by Rev. Anthony Kopp in recognition of the fact that the earliest settlers in the Township had immigrated from the province of Westphalia in Germany.

The first settlers, five men, made their appearance in section 5 in 1836. They had selected their location upon the recommendation

of a Catholic priest in Detroit who advised them to settle in the Grand River county. Anthony Kopp, a priest, joined them in 1837, as did their families, and the German settlement was well under way. In 1856, a saw mill was erected closely followed by a grist mill, a general store, a brewery, a hardware, several blacksmith shops, and a boot manufacturer. By 1880, the settlement had assumed the name of Germantown and had grown to slightly less than four hundred persons. In 1883, it was incorporated as the "Village of Westphalia."

The original source of the material on the Townships is not known. Hila Bross gave it to Janet Snyder several years ago.

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The Clinton Independent, Thursday, January 10, 1884 P4, C2

#### Eagle News

Last Saturday morning Jesse Monroe died of cancer at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. J. W. Longyear, at age 92 years, 8 months. "Uncle" Jesse Monroe as he was familiarly called, emigrated to Michigan with his family from Buffalo, N. Y. He went to the town of Eagle, Clinton County, then an almost unbroken wilderness, penetrating into the woods 4 miles from any settler and located on 160 acres of land which he had purchased from the Federal Government the year before.

His widow died in 1870 and since her death he has lived with his children. His daughters are: Mrs. J. M. Turner, Mrs. P. Webber, Mrs. J. W. Longyear, Mrs. D. L. Case, all of this city and Mrs. Tr. Turner of Dewitt. He also leaves three sons. (Jesse Monroe is listed in the 1840 Clinton County Census.)

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The Board of Supervisors of the County of Clinton, State of Michigan assembled Monday, October 12, 1863 at Clinton Hall, Village of St. Johns. Meeting called to order by Porter K. Pervin, Deputy County Clerk.

Members responding to roll call:

Thomas J. Woodman - Bath  
Isaac V. Swartnout - Victor  
William C. Bennet - Ovid  
John D. Sickles - Duplain  
Fred'k R. Reed - Dewitt  
Sidney Alexander - Olive  
Henry M. Perrin - Bingham

Miron Ellis - Greenbush  
Geo. C. Jarvis - Watertown  
Lyman Hungerford - Riley  
Leonard Travis - Bengal  
Howland S. VanScoy - Essex  
Chas. M. Derbyshire - Eagle