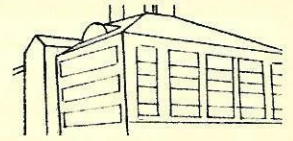




Clinton County Trails

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EARLIER WACOUSTA

by **Julie (Staines) Peters**, May 2006

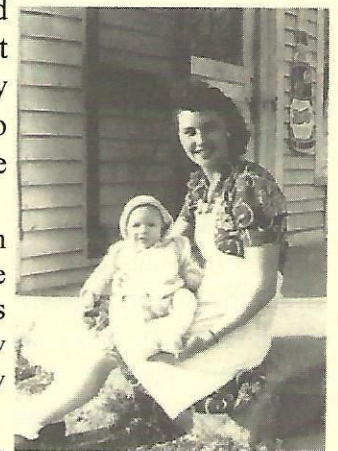
My mother, **Rose Mary (Kimball) Staines**, has fond memories of growing up in the 1920's and '30s on the Looking Glass River in Wacousta. She lived right across the road from the cemetery. My first memories of their house started in the 1950's and it was a big barn-shaped house then owned by my mother's brother, **Richard Kimball**. He and my Uncle **C. L. (Cliff) Kimball** were born in that house. They swam in the river that ran right behind the house. She remembers swimming down by the old mill (sounds like an old song doesn't it) that was located just north of the bridge on the west side of Wacousta Road. When my Uncle Cliff was 7 or 8 years old he was caught in the undertow where the water came over the mill. Luckily, Uncle Dick was there to haul him out. Later the mill was purchased by the Girl Scouts of America and torn down.

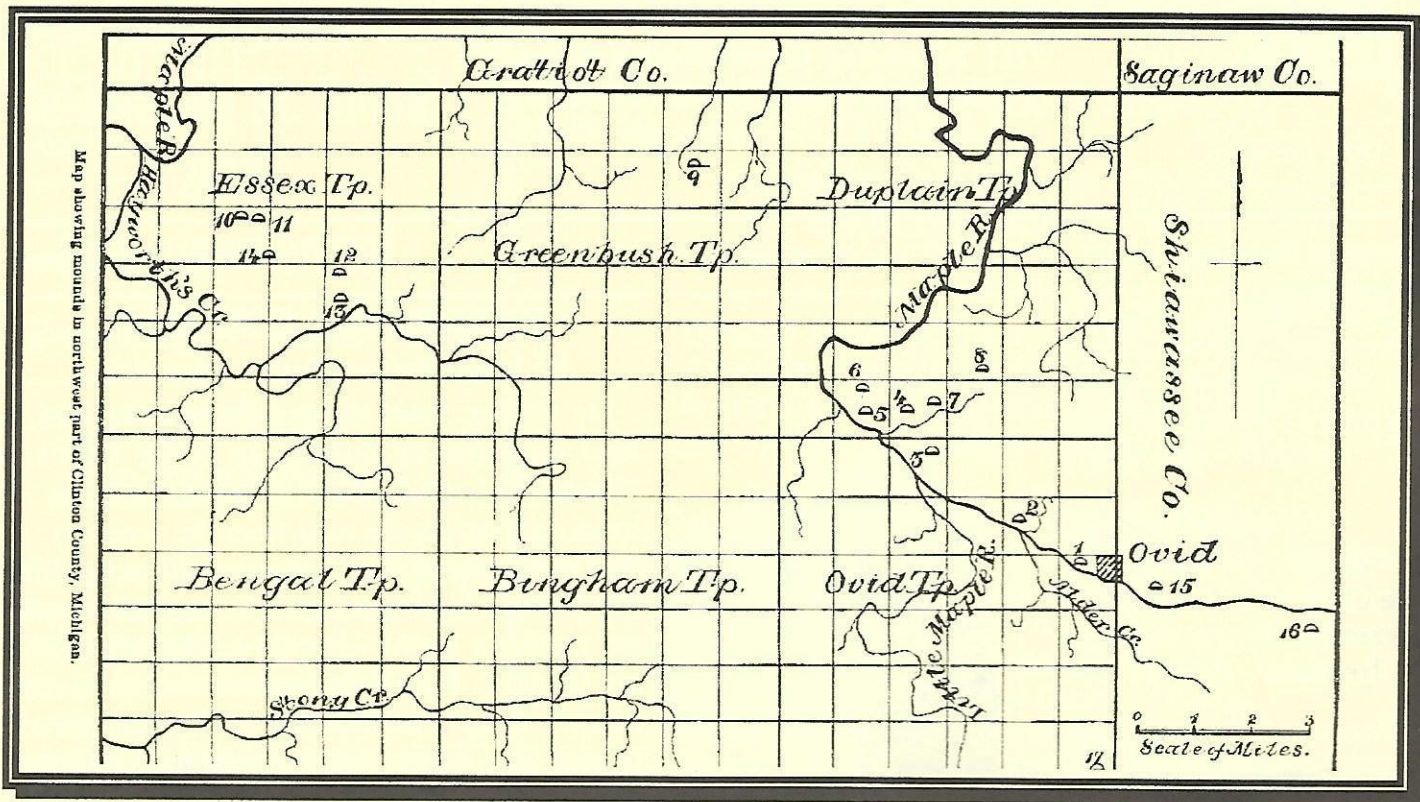
Across the road there used to be an island in the river where all the kids played ball. This was long before the park just north of the cemetery was created. The old bridge was a big steel and wood structure, the kind of bridge where you could actually see the river you were crossing instead of the enclosed bridge rails they make now.

My Grandpa, **Carlton Kimball**, bought the original house, which was much smaller, for \$700. He enlarged the house & built his own auto garage and gas station which he ran until the end of WW II. He had lost a leg in an accident around 1921 and just couldn't work on his feet anymore, so he and my Grandma, **Lois (Rose) Kimball**, sold the house to Uncle Dick and moved up to Half Moon Lake between Sheridan & Stanton in Montcalm Co.

When my dad, **Bill Staines**, was in the service, mom worked at the Kraft's General Store [now called the Wacousta General Store], which is still there, and has employed my mom's cousin, **Barbara Rose**, for many years. Here's my mom, in front of the store, holding my cousin, **Bob Kimball** around 1944.

The only time we go back these days is to visit my Dad's grave at the cemetery. I only get to see a glimpse of how Wacousta was "back when" through my mother's stories and it sounds like it was a good place to grow up.





***This map from 1884 showing Indian mound locations on the Maple River.
The map is by M. L. Leach***

Indian Mounds of Clinton County

By Wayne Summers

When the first European pioneers arrived in Clinton County they found natives living in several villages along the Maple and Looking Glass rivers. They also found at least 57 burial mounds situated near the rivers, most of which appear to have been built by the Hopewell Indians. Only a few of the smaller ones have been attributed to the Chippewa or Pottawatomie Indians that were present at the time of the European arrival. Unfortunately, by the 1880's most of these mounds had been obliterated by treasure hunters or farmers plowing over them. Here is a short history of some of these mounds.

Near the southeast corner of section 36 in Ovid Township was a mound about 5 feet high with a diameter of about 30 feet. It was on the land of Hugh Swarouth who dug in the center of it around 1840 and found bones near ground level. Mr. Swarouth claimed a tibia of unusual size was found at the site.

Also in Ovid Township, a small group of mounds was located just north of the river near the southwest corner of section 12. Continuing up the river, the next group of two mounds were near the center of section 11. The larger of the two mounds was about 2 feet high with a diameter of about 16 feet. It was surrounded by a trench from which the earth for the mound appeared to have been excavated. In the northeast part of section 4 was another mound about 3 feet high with a 16 foot diameter. The owner of the land, a Mr. Gleason, dug into it and took out a skull and saw a large number of bones.

There were five groups of mounds in Duplain Township. The first group was in the southwest corner of section 33 and consisted of 3 oblong mounds and 1 circular mound. Each was 20 to 25 feet long and about 3 feet high. Several of these were excavated by Mr. M. L. Leach in the 1870's. He found a number of skeletons which had been laid on their backs with knees drawn up in a fetal position for burial. He also found a stone ornament about 4 ½ by 2 ¼

inches which appeared to have been worn around the neck. It was a blue color when first unearthed, but soon turned black. This was the only item other than bones he found at any Clinton County site. Near the center of the circular mound Mr. Leach found two bodies that had been laid in a shallow grave. On top of these an additional body had been burned in a fire and in turn covered with additional dirt.

To the west, near the center of section 32 was a mound about 30 feet wide and 5 feet high along with several other smaller ones. Edward Paine, owner of the land at the time, unearthed several skeletons while plowing over the mounds. About 500 yards to the north was another large mound along with a small one.

The remaining mounds in Duplain Township were a group of small mounds just north of the river in the eastern portion of section 33 on the Charles Dailey farm and a large mound on the H. B. Smith farm near the southeast corner of section 27.

The only known mounds in Greenbush Township were two on the P. Jefferys farm on section 11. One was said to be about 35 feet in diameter and 4 feet tall and the other broader and flatter.

Essex Township was the home of a number of mounds. Near the northeast corner of section 16 was a large mound with a 50 foot diameter. A second smaller one was nearby to the east. In the northeast corner of section 16 was a circular mound about 40 feet across. Small mounds were also near the northwest corner and near the center of section 23.

The only group of mounds not attributed to the Hopewell Indians were about 40 very small ones on the section line between sections 15 and 16. James Soule reported an old Indian woman had told him they were the graves of the dead killed in a battle between the Chippewas and Potawatomies in the 1700's. Mr. Soule recalled seeing bones sticking out of several of the mounds and having pried out several skulls that had been protruding. These mounds were obliterated with the building of the Essex Center Road.

While the mounds along the Maple River succumbed to the plow and other human activities, at least two separate locations in the DeWitt area were spared and are listed as a Michigan Historic Site.

Next time we'll examine the early Indian Trails which the pioneers used to enter and settle Clinton County.

IVAN ESTES

Interviewed by Hila Bross on 31 August 1977

Transcribed by LaRene Smith & Myrna Van Epps, April 2006 and edited for this publication. The complete interview of Ivan & Charlotte (Keys) Estes is held at the Archives of CCHS.

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

His first home was in Bingham Twp. on 80 acres on the west half of the southwest quarter of section 9. It was there that the first post office in the town was established with Mr. Estes the postmaster. The mail for the few residents for this portion of the county was then directed to Bingham. The post office was in the building occupied by Grandfather and his family. When he moved to the village of St. Johns, he carried the office with him and remained as the postmaster until 1856.

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

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

My Uncle **Herbert Estes**, the old

veterinary, told me this story: At the stage station it seems there were a couple of Spaniards who came in on the stagecoach in the middle of the winter. There was about three foot of snow on the level. These two fellows got off the stagecoach and came into the tavern. They had a little argument and one of them pulled a stiletto, which I still have. He slashed the other one across the throat with it. Well, he threw the stiletto and ran. He started out through the snow, headed kind of northwest out of St. Johns back towards DeWitt from which the stagecoach had come. They tried to save the fellow's life but his jugular was cut in two so nothing they could do about it. So they said, "We'd better get him." Grandfather and several of the other men took some of the horses. They climbed on, put their overcoats on, and started out through the snow after him. Just before they left the stage station, grandfather hung a coil of rope on the saddle. They captured him about where the city park is now in the woods. We used to call it Emmon's Woods when I was a kid. They were debating what to do with him. Grandfather said, "Well, there are two things we can do. We can take him back and in and mess around with about a month or two in court, and they're going to hang him anyway 'cause we know he is guilty, so why don't we hang him here and go on home?" So they did! I can remember years later that they used to tell me that there was a ghost up in that woods when we were kids, so maybe that was him.

The first male child born in St. Johns was my Uncle **George Albert Estes** and he was born October 3, 1856. He spent the rest of his life here in St. Johns. Then in 1860, my father, **Louis Estes** was born in the house which is still standing. My dad told me that the house sat at that time at the corner of Clinton and State; then it was moved a block east across from the old Methodist Church or corner where the old steam laundry used to be, a big brick building. Later it was moved to its present location which is on Spring St., just north of where the old Hart Clinic used to be. It's a small house and as I understand it now, it's being used as a beauty parlor. It's my opinion that it is probably

the oldest of the original homes ever built in St. Johns, because when Dr. Gale was remodeling it, he found in the wall an old string ball. He brought it down to my dad and said, "Lou, did you maybe play with this ball when you were a kid?" Dad said, "Well, we used to make 'em like that. We used to take a walnut; then we'd wrap it with cord." They cut the ball in two and sure enough, there was a walnut inside of it.

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

I believe that Spring St. was named because in the early days there were several springs that came out of that hill. They used to pipe the water from those springs down to cisterns where the corners are now on Main St.. They used those for fire protection. After they got the pumper, they used water out of those when they had fire protection.

Grandfather and **Mr. Burrows, John Swegles, Mr. Sturgis**, and some of the officials were seated on a log on Walker St. when the question of naming the village came up. Several names were suggested and grandfather felt the most eminently appropriate designation would be St. Johns as a mark of honor to Swegles. The name seemed to suit the others and they, with one accord, assented to it. Mr. Swegles said he would submit the name at the next meeting of the land company for their approval. Before the next meeting was held, **John Newell** came in with goods for the opening of the store and all of his boxes were marked "St. Johns, Michigan," thus showing the name had already gone abroad. Grandfather took the cover from one of Newell's boxes and nailed it to a tree with the name, St. Johns, showing in bold relief. Thus, the embryo of the village was started in the summer of 1854 with a hotel, general store, and

a saw mill. In 1855 he helped form the first Baptist Church. The village was incorporated October 15, 1857, and in 1858 the first election was held and Grandfather was elected marshal, a post he kept for many years. In 1858 he helped organize the first fire department and held office of first steward, and in 1874 became the president, an office he held until his death in 1906.

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

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

About the water situation in St. Johns, by the time I came along why it was pretty well underway, but as I understand it, the original springs that I mentioned before were used for the cisterns in the street for fire protection and then most everybody had their own pump and there were some on the corners. When I was born in 1902, I lived right across the road from the old city waterworks. At that waterworks plant they had several wells in the area and they were pumped. In the north end of the waterworks there was a room that had two large pumping plants run by engines that kept the city water

pressure in the mains. Later on they built the big stand pipe at the north end by the waterworks.

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

Dad was quite an accomplished actor. He had his own show company for a number of years. He put on shows in various towns in Michigan and some of his favorite plays were *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Golden Farmer*, *The Moonshiner's Daughter*, *Judas Maccabeus*. When he was putting on the show, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he played the part of Simon Legree. His Uncle Tom was a white man, just blacked up, you know. They were up at either Saginaw or Bay City putting on a show and Uncle Tom was taken sick on a Thursday. They had a Friday and a Saturday night yet to put on, so he called into a casting agency down in Detroit and they sent up a man by the name of Hardigan to play the part of Uncle Tom. Dad always carried a big old black snake and it was a regular bull whip with a loaded grip on it. When it came to the whipping scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Dad would change and use a paper whip which would snap and crack. When he knocked Uncle Tom down, he would just push. This first night he had this man, Hardigan, and after the show he told my dad he thought his act stunk because he just wasn't realistic enough. So Dad said, "OK, maybe we can change it tomorrow night." So, Saturday night Dad didn't change whips. He used the original black snake and every time he lashed the fellow with the black snake he screamed bloody murder. When he went to knock him down, he just used the loaded whip and he knocked him cold. They had to wake him up before he could die! After the show, then this man said to my dad, "I want to see you after this show." Dad was waiting for him outside as he thought maybe he was going to have a little scrap or something, but the fellow came up to him and said, "Lou, I want to apologize to you. You are, without a doubt, the best Simon Legree

in the business. I would like to join up with your show and we'll tour the world." Dad decided against it. Years later **Mr. Hardigan** used to come over to St. Johns from Lansing on the interurban to talk to my dad and they would reminisce.

I don't know whether you would call it theatrical experience, but all the way through high school, about every play that was on I usually had something to do with it because I was a character. The last play I remember was when the County Normal class put on a play in the old opera house. Three of us boys in high school--I think I was in the senior class at that time--**Dean Hart, French Holbrook**, and I were helping put on a show called, *Cupid At Vassar*. At that time the old opera house was upstairs where Kurt's Appliance Store is. I believe that was called the Allison Opera House. I was blacked up, playing the part of Shiny the Darkie and I was the manservant to the girl who came up from down South to go to Vassar College. The first good laugh I was able to work out was with French Holbrook. He was a city slicker. He was sitting on a park bench, so and I went over and set down aside of him. He kept moving over and finally I got him clear over on the end of the bench. Just before he got up, I got up first. The bench went upside down and French went on his fanny on the floor. That created a good laugh and then I sat down. As I sat down, I was supposed to laugh and say, "I sure fixed that city slicker!" As I did—one of the lights was out in the footlight--and I looked down and my good old friend, Dr. Squires, was sitting down there. He was quite rotund and he had his hands on his tummy and started to laugh. That got me going and I laughed until I practically cried. I had to put more black on when I got off.

I played the laugh as long as I could, but got chewed out for playing it so long.

In the last act French was supposed to get ready to steal a girl's silverware. I was supposed to come up behind him with a horse pistol, arrest him, and take him off the stage. The gun wasn't supposed to be loaded, of course, but I had some blank cartridges and so just as we left the stage, I shot one in the floor. I think French

jumped twenty feet. That added to the comedy also. The next night I put two shots down in the floor and I think that was about the last play they had in the opera house.

GEORGE W. ESTES

George W. Estes died at his home in St. Johns [13 June 1906] Wednesday afternoon at 4 o'clock, aged 86 years. Mr. Estes was a genial, kindly man, who leaves an honorable name. He was the oldest pioneer of St. Johns and vicinity. His funeral will be held on Saturday at 10 a.m. at the M.E. Church. George W. Estes was born in Addison Co., Vermont, Feb. 18, 1820. He was married May 31, 1843, and Mrs. Estes died about three years ago.

Sixty years ago the 16th of last Oct., Mr. Estes, with his wife and infant son, and his brother, **James Estes**, came to Bingham Twp., having driven from Niagara Co., NY. Their first home was in a small shanty on the farm of **Calvin Rice**, one mile south and one mile west of this city. Later they built a home on the farm now owned by **George Monroe** and cleared up a small farm.

Auditor General **John Swegles** came through this section in 1846 looking for a site upon which to locate a town along the proposed line of the D. & M. R.R. He asked Mr. Estes to accompany him and look over the land. After the village St. Johns company was formed, Mr. Estes had charge of surveying and clearing up the streets and always kept in his possession as a souvenir, a notebook in which he recorded the time of the men employed.

Mr. Estes moved from his farm in 1854 and for a time kept a hotel near the head of Clinton Ave., later called the J. M. Newton House. He was appointed postmaster in 1852. Mr. Estes was very active for a man of his years and for the past thirty years was president of the fire department, an office he held at the time of his death. He was the first charter member of the department when a bucket brigade was organized in the early days of St. Johns.

The infant son of Mr. Estes died a few years after they came to Bingham. On Oct. 3,

1855, a son, **George A. Estes**, was born and he was the first white male child born in St. Johns. Mr. and Mrs. Estes resided for many years on Spring St. Since the death of Mrs. Estes he has resided with his daughter, **Mrs. Horace Tucker**.

Besides his daughter, he is survived by five sons: **Herbert, George A.**, and **Louis F.**, of St. Johns; **James D.** of Owosso, and **Charles H.** of Brooklyn, Mich.; and several grandchildren.

(*Clinton Republican*; 14 Jun 1906)

GEORGE A. ESTES

Tall Tales of Long ago Told Rotary by "First White Child"

"You'da ought to see her come up the lane, her tail a twistin' and bellerin' like split." St. Johns Rotarians roared as George A. Estes, 77-year-old pioneer of St. Johns and the "first white child" regaled them Tuesday with stories of his boyhood when this city was little more than a clearing. The above quotation was taken literally from Mr. Estes's account of how he shot a neighbor's cow by mistake. George was hunting and he saw a stir in the bushes. He suspected a bear and "let 'er fly." Later the neighbor told how the old cow had done 20 rods in nothing flat and when he tried to milk her, she kicked him off the stool. Some of George's shot had damaged her udder, but he never admitted his part in the affair.

One day George's little cur followed some Indians up what is now Spring St. and rushed into a low, swampy place near the present Methodist Church. Out charged a black bear. George was intent upon saving his dog, but the Indians were after the bear. There was a fusillade of shots and the beast died in the vicinity of Dr. Scott's residence west of the courthouse. Before the Indians reached their kill, an uncouth character, hunter, and hermit appeared on the scene and fired several shots from a pistol into the carcass claiming he had killed the bear. An angry dispute arose between the Indians and the intruder which local citizens allowed to continue for their own amusement but stopped when bloodshed was threatened. Young

Estes witnessed the whole affair from the fringe of the crowd, tightly clutching the collar of his precious cur.

"You fellers would have laughed your heads off," chuckled the aged narrator, "if you could have seen **Runyon** and **Cap Baylis** settle a bet. Cap was a dandy, slick and clean all the time. Runyon run the hotel and he bet Cap he could carry him across the deep mire that was then Clinton Ave. Bayliss got on his back and when Runyon got right in the middle of the street where the mire was slimy and deepest, he stubbed his toe and dumped Baylis into the mess. You'd a died to see him when he got up," chortled Mr. Estes. "Runyon yelled to one of the boys to pay Baylis his money—that he had lost his bet."

"I started learning the printer's trade when I was thirteen," the speaker related. "After awhile I got a job in **Schuyler Corbit's** office. One day "Skyl" told me to go down the street and see if I could get him a rabbit. Many of the men used to trade rabbits and other game for merchandise. I slipped over to the the *Republican* [newspaper] office and told **Pug Sweeney**. Pug said, 'Leave it to me. I'll see he gets plenty of rabbits.'" The young George returned to his case and soon the rabbit vendors began to file in. During the afternoon about 15 had come to sell Mr. Corbit game. He was almost distracted. "To top it all off," Mr. Estes said, "a dead cat was found and its tail cut off and the remains put into a gunnysack. We got a fig fellow from Victor to bring it up and ask Mr. Corbit to accept this rabbit for fifteen cents and apply it on his account. Corbit kicked but finally accepted the sack and its contents." Later in the afternoon, when the sack was opened and the perfidy discovered, the irate editor made young Estes go down the street and look for the Victor man.

One story followed another and Mr. Estes ended his highly interesting and amusing historical recital by telling how he tipped a hogshead over the top of a bad Indian character known locally as, "Tuggy." The redskin was a tough hombre when under the influence of firewater as he happened to be on this occasion,

according to Mr. Estes. With the help of bystanders he released himself from his prison and started out to scalp the perpetrator. "Say, I could run pretty fast them days," Mr. Estes said, "and maybe you think I didn't fly up what is Main St. now—and that Indian right after me. He always wore a hatchet in his belt and he had it in his hand and was yelling that he would kill me. I got home safe and left the Indians alone after that."

"Oh yes, that reminds me of the time the Indians who were along the new railroad track when it was first built. They had been told that the devil was going to come down those tracks. When the day finally came that the first steam locomotive hove into sight from the east, these Indians rushed out with logs and poles and piled them on the track. They armed themselves with clubs and got on the track ready to fight the devil. Say, it took a lot of the boys quite awhile to get 'em off'n the track and make 'em believe it wasn't Old Nick himself. I tell you, those were great days," concluded the speaker. "We used to have great times."

(*Clinton Co. Republican-News*; 20 Oct 1932)

George Estes, First Male White Child Born in this City, Dies

In the death of **George A. Estes**, Sunday, Apr. 14, [1935], St. Johns lost a resident who literally grew up with the town. The first male white child to be born here, he spent his whole life, nearly 80 years, in this city, and watched the development of the town from its earliest days.

Tradition has it that the first white child born in St. Johns was the daughter of one **Charles Cobb**, the event occurring in the summer of 1855, the child dying the following year. On Oct. 3, 1856, a son George A. Estes, arrived at the home of **George W. Estes**, one of the original pioneer settlers here.

When George was born the railway had not been built to St. Johns. At that time the young village consisted of a hotel, store, and sawmill. George was upwards of two years old when the first locomotive chugged into town. He attended the first school located at the corner of Walker and Mead Sts., on land now occupied by

the Episcopal Church. Among his play fellows were Indian boys and he often saw bear and deer on the edge of town.

As a young man George learned the printer's trade which he followed until poor health made a change of occupation necessary. He then became a horse dealer, buying and selling many fine driving horses. At one time he served as city marshal and in later years conducted a draying business.

On June 26, 1884, he was united in marriage to Mrs. Eliza Valentine. She passed away in the spring of 1911 and in 1912 he married Miss Eva Loomis of Pewamo.

... Besides the widow, he leaves two brothers: Louis of St. Johns and Charles of Brooklyn, Mich.... Burial was made in Mt. Rest Cemetery. (*Clinton Republican*; 18 Apr 1935)

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- Norris Family Genealogy & History, by L. Ray Lake
 - Howe Family Genealogy, by Michael E. Garey
 - Ancestors of Agatha Niel Anderson, by Jacqueline J. Lewis Danalewich
 - Ancestors of Ward Lewis, by Jacqueline J. Danalewich
 - Ezekiel & Sarah (Cryderman) Niles Genealogy; by Janalynn Martens
 - Clinton Co. Cogswells Family & Friends; 1887-2004*; newspaper articles collected by Halbert & Luella Cogswell
 - Research compiled by Thomas Thiehl:
Elijah & Abbie (Burdick) Curtis
Byrnes & related family, Vaniman
Eiseler & related families, Mosher & Mundell
Joseph & Sarah (Watkins) Bennett
 - Concord Funeral Home Business Records 1893-1909 (Jackson Co.)
 - Scrapbook held by Sadie (Weaver) Leonard
 - Clinton Co. Supervisors ca 1861; photo
 - Presidents, Soldiers, Statesmen, 1776-1896*, Vol. II, 1893 (Soldier's Edition)
 - My Golden School Days*; DeWitt HS ca 1914-15; kept by Juanita (Rockwell) Hardman
 - Serviss School; Dist. Assessor's Book 1866-1932
Reflections of Bath, Michigan; by Gene Wilkins
 - Sperry's Corners- pictures and history
-

Presidents, Soldiers, and Statesmen

(cont.) See Vol. 19, No. 1



JOHN C. REED was born in Dolphin County, Pa., Oct 13, 1844, and was a son of **John and Elizabeth (Weyler)**, dec. He was married first to **Rebecca J. First**, Nov. 10, 1867, in Wooster, Wayne County, Ohio, who has passed away. He was again married Nov. 2, 1880, in Maple Rapids, to **Martha**, sister of his first wife. She was born in Wayne County, O., June 20, 1854, and was a daughter of **Phenious First**, dec., and **Melinda (Castille)** who is still spared. No children were born to either marriage. Comrade Reed's loyalty to the Stars and Stripes enthused him to enlist. He was enrolled May 13, 1861, at Harrisburg, Pa., when but 16 years of age as a private in Co. F, 46 Pa. V.I., 2 Brig., 1st Div., 11th A.C., and in due time rose to the rank of 1st Sergt. He was honorably discharged Feb. 28, 1864, was veteranized and was granted a thirty days furlough. March 1864 he was transferred to Harrisburg, Pa., to Co. H, 16 U.S. Inf., 14 A.C. May 1864 he was detailed at Buzzard Roost as wagon master for two weeks. May 1864, at the battle of Altoona Mt., he was wounded by piece of shell. He was treated for same in hospital at Ringgold for two weeks. He was twice captured, but cleverly escaped each time. Nov. 1865 he was detailed at Augusta, Ga., to pick up government property and spent nine months in this way. July 22, 1864, his left ear was cut off by piece of shell at Atlanta. He was kept in field hospital one week and was then transferred to Nashville three weeks and Philadelphia

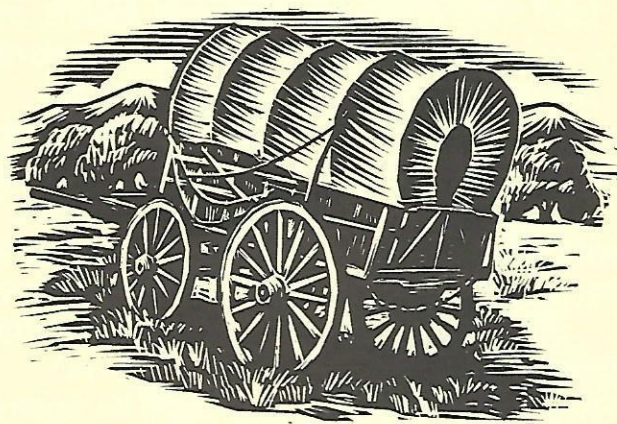
four weeks. He fought at battles of 1st Bull Run, Gettysburg, Lookout Mt., Chickamauga, Resecca, Missionary Ridge, Shilo, Stone River, Buzzard Roost, Snakes Gap, Altoona Mt., Chatahoocha River, Kenesaw Mt., Dalton, Peach Tree Creek, and New Hope Church, Dallas—43 engagements all told. His half-brother, **Augustus**, served in 140 Pa. V.I. His grandfather served in the Rev. War. Comrade Reed is a member of Billy Begole Post 127. He is unable to work and his address in Maple Rapids, Mich.

CHARLES H. RIDER was born in Orleans County, N.Y., Nov. 22, 1839. His father, **William Rider**, is still living, but his mother has passed away. He has been married three times. He was married first July 4, 1867, in Lenawee County, Mich., to **Harrison Pebels**. He was married secondly to **Mary Soles**, by whom he had one child—**William**. The maiden name of his present wife was **Julia Brown**. Comrade Rider was engaged in farming when the war broke out and enlisted from Rome Center, Mich., Aug. 27, 1864, when 24 years of age as a private in Co. B, 11 Mich., Cav. He was never wounded, but received an internal injury by his horse falling on him. He fought at Salt Works, Marion Bridge, Laurel Mt., and Andersonville Salsbury, receiving an honorable discharge June 17, 1865, at Knoxville, Tenn. His wife had four brothers in service: **Harris Soles, David, Duliss, and George**. The latter was taken prisoner by Mosby's men. Comrade Rider has held various offices of trust, having been J.P. in 1870-1-2-3. He is a laborer, and his address is St. Johns, Mich.

ANDREW ROBB, whose parents [are] **Andrew and Catherine (Loudoun) Robb**, dec., was born March 16, 1831, in Monroe county, N.Y. He came to Clinton County, Mich., in 1855, having previously married in DeKalb County, Ill., **Joan Grover**, who was born Oct. 19, 1832, in New York state. The record of their children is as follows: **Mary** (dec.); **Velma** (living); **Emerson** (dec); and **Attie** (dec). When the Stars and Stripes were pulled down from Ft. Sumter, our subject was engaged in farming. He was 31 years of age when he was enrolled from St. Johns, Mich., Aug. 14, 1862, as a private in Co. G, 23 Mich. V.I., and before the close of hostilities, he had attained the rank of Sergt. In the fall of 1863 he was ill with diarrhea and received hospital treatment for one week at Loudoun, Tenn. June 30, 1864, he was honorably discharged to

received promotion in same command. He was actively engaged in the battles of Atlanta, Franklin, Nashville, and all other engagements of his command, except during the time spent in hospital. He was honorably discharged June 28, 1865. Comrade Robb may be addressed at St. Johns, Mich., near which place he is engaged in farming.

WILLIAM H. SAGE was born June 6, 1845, in Huntington, Ohio, and was a son of **Samuel and Emeline (Bailey) Sage**, dec. Settling in Clinton County, Mich., April 1854, he was married July 4, 1867, in Lyons Twp., Ionia County, Mich., to **Isadore Nowland**. She was born at Ann Arbor, Mich., May 15, 1850, and was a daughter of **Andrew and Emeline (Wolcott) Nowland**. The former is living; the latter is dec. Five children have been born to them: **Emma L., Cora L., Corda M., Agnes I., and Hattie M.** Comrade Sage was one of the brave boys to respond to the president's call for troops. He had been engaged in farming when he was enrolled from this county as a private in Co. B, 8th Mich. V.I. and in due time was made Corp. July 1, 1863, he was confined in hospital at Mildale, Miss., two weeks and was transferred to Convalescent hospital in September for six months for treatment for chronic diarrhea. He re-enlisted as a veteran and was granted a veteran's furlough of thirty days. In the fall of 1862 he was detailed at Fredericksburg as guard to supply train for two weeks. May 1865 he was detailed with 30 men to take charge of review stand during the Grand Review at Washington. His battle record is as follows: South Mt., Antietam, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Mine Explosion, Yellow Tavern, Weldon R.R., Ft. Steedman, Ft. Mahone, North Anna, Petersburg, Five Forks, and capture of Petersburg. He was honorably discharged June 1, 1865, at Washington D.C. Comrade Sage has been drain commissioner two terms and highway commissioner. He is honored with the office of Sergt. in Hutchinson Post 129. He is a farmer by occupation and his address is Fowler, Mich.



EARLY SETTLER - EARLY FAMILY CERTIFICATES

Since January of this year, the Genealogists of the Clinton Co. Historical Society have awarded 34 certificates to descendants of Clinton County's early residents, those who were here at least before 1900. The Blakeslee family was awarded a total of 20 certificates making them the champions of this project so far. The applications which include the required documentation are all on file at the Archives. A list of the 2005 recipients can be found on our webpage and the form to apply for this recognition can be downloaded there also. [www.dewittlibrary.org/CCHS]

Following is a list of the settlers whose descendants have received certificates so far in 2006:

**Emmons Blakeslee
Robert E. & Alice (Thomas) Davies
James w. Dundon
Philander Howe
Ezekiel Niles
Oel Thayer Smith
William Tillman**

NAMING ST. JOHNS

Two versions of how St. Johns got its name are recounted in *History of Clinton County*, 1880, one of which is the same as Ivan Estes stated in his interview elsewhere in this issue. The other was also included in Vol. 1 of the *Michigan Pioneer Collections* in a paper by the Rev. C. A. Lamb. It follows:

Incidents in Pioneer Life in Clinton County. Some time in 1852 or 1853 the company of the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad surveyed different lines for their road and finally established their route where it now runs. In the meantime Hon. J. Swegles, ex-Auditor General, was keeping his eye upon their movements and, doubtless, had influence with the commissioners to bring it just where it is, and the moment he saw the stake put down for the site of the depot, he was ready with his corps of surveyors. Commencing at the stake, he first laid out Clinton avenue; from that we laid off the different blocks and subdivided them into lots. I carried one end of the chain to lay out the first plat. A stock company composed the company that had secured the land, (Hon. J. Swegles, --- Mead, Esq., and two others who lived in Detroit) but Mr. Swegles was most active in working it up. Inhabitants began to crowd in, and our friends began to agitate the question of a name. Swegles, Sturgis, Mead, and the writer were present. Several names were proposed. One proposed Richmond, another Sweglesville, yet another proposed Johnsville. I said, "Call it St. Johns." Swegles replied, "For some reasons I should be in favor of St. Johns," saying, "Amen, St. Johns let it be," and thus the child was christened, and thus the name remains to this day.

- **The Archives of the Clinton County Historical Society** are located at 16101 Brook Road in the DeWitt Twp. Community Center. Volunteers are there to give research assistance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursdays & Fridays. Phone: (517) 482-5117. Web Page: www.dewittlibrary.org/CCHS
- **The Genealogists of the CCHS** meet the first Monday of each month at 1:00 pm November through March or 7:30 pm April through October in the Firstbank community room, located downtown St. Johns. E-mail address: [ccgensoc@yahoo.com](mailto:cgensoc@yahoo.com). The **Historical Society meetings** are held 30 minutes prior to the Genealogist's meetings at Firstbank, the first Monday of January, April, July & October.
- **The Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum** is located on the west side of the Courthouse Square in St. Johns. Open April 1 - Dec 31. Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m. & Wednesday 2:00-7:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

LIST 5 NAMES YOU ARE RESEARCHING

Mr./Mrs./Miss _____

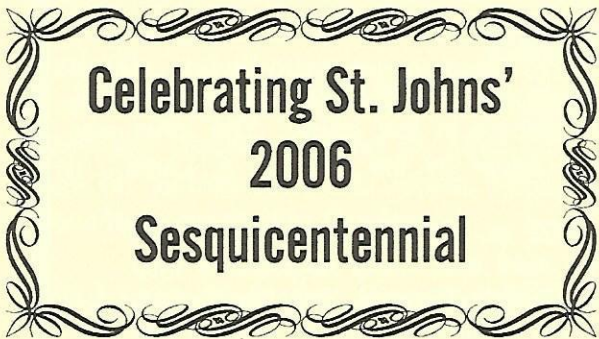
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ New _____ Renewal _____

E-Mail Address _____ Date _____

ANNUAL DUES to join both the Clinton County Historical Society and the Genealogy Committee are \$15 single and \$20 a couple/family. Membership is based on the calendar year and includes a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, *Clinton County Trails*. Checks should be made payable to the Clinton County Historical Society and mailed to P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879. Genealogical queries should be addressed to: Genealogists of the Clinton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 23 St. Johns, MI 48879.



**Celebrating St. Johns'
2006
Sesquicentennial**

**ANCESTRAL
CELEBRATION**

To honor the descendants of early settlers of Clinton County and the City of St. Johns, Michigan, the Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum staff and members of the Clinton County Historical Society are hosting an open house at the museum on July 23, 2006, from 2-5 p.m. The public is invited to enjoy the exhibits, demonstrations, and refreshments.

**ST. JOHNS SESQUICENTENNIAL
AT THE
PAINE-GILLAM-SCOTT MUSEUM**

The theme of the Museum Complex is
"BACK TO THE FUTURE"
for St. Johns Sesquicentennial year.

Through Artifacts, Photos, Advertising, and Clothing, one can visualize our Founders, Ancestors, and Citizens struggle to make a City---ALL looking forward to the "FUTURE."

The 1860 Historic House Museum, west-side of Courthouse Square, is the oldest brick house in the city, built ten years before St. Johns had a Courthouse.

Visiting Hours: Sundays 1-4 p.m. &
Wednesdays 2-7 ~~~ Closed Holidays.
Visit at leisure or arrange a Tour.
Tour Groups welcome by reservation.

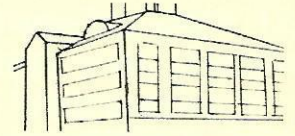
Info:call (989) 224-2894 or (989) 224-7402
Admission: Donation

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ST. JOHNS BICYCLE BAND

In the 1885, not content to only master the skill of riding a "high wheeler," some young musicians of St. Johns decided to try playing their band instruments at the same time. These men became accomplished at making music and steering with one hand while perched high off the ground on the unstable machine which had an oversize front wheel and a small back wheel. They became widely known as the St. Johns Bicycle Band (SJBB) and appeared in parades and shows from 1886 to 1891.

The SJBB had its debut when the idea was still fresh on Nov. 23, 1885, at the Diamond Rink, a new roller skating facility in St. Johns. Evidently, they were encouraged to carry on and by Apr. 17, 1886, they were participating in a concert in St. Johns along with local vocalists, the Robbins Band of Owosso, and the Horace Keys Ladies' Band of Elsie. The lineup for the Memorial Day parade on May 31, 1886, showed the SJBB in the lead as the march went from Clinton Ave., east on Walker Street to the cemetery. They also led the 4th of July parade that year. The *Clinton Republican* reported on July 18, 1886: "St. Johns has the only band in the world, so far as we have returns, that can discourse sweet music from a full complement of brass instruments and drums, from the saddles of their steeds of steel. When the SJBB rode up and down the avenue, two abreast, on their shining bicycles, playing stirring martial music, they were received with surprise, enthusiasm, and delight."

In 1977 the story of the SJBB inspired Ron Higgins of Royal Oak, a former St. Johns student, to assemble and coach a band comprised of relatives and some St. Johns 8th grade band students to ride in the St. Johns homecoming parade. Some of these musicians went through

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Statesmen (cont.) . . . 9
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The original St. Johns Bicycle Band was comprised of thirteen men. Here is a list of the known members, several of whom performed musically the rest of their lives:

ORIGINAL MEMBERS

- * Albert H. Brown
(ca1868-12 Feb 1941)
- * Charles M. Fowler, Jr.
- * Andy Hicks
(10 Sep 1871-26 May 1925)
- * William Holton
- * Martin D. Hubbard
(ca1877-ca29 Mar 1947)
- * David L. Hunt
(30 Apr 1866-4 Dec 1937)
- * Rodney S. Palmer
- * George R. Rhodes
- * Ralph V. Sage
(Aug 1868?-ca 24 Nov 1943)
- * Robert G. Steel
(ca1868-6 Sep 1947)
- * George A. Sumner
(ca1864-15 Aug 1955)
- * Henry A. Tromp
- * George Woodruff

OTHER MEMBERS

- * DeWitt H. Hunt
(15 Dec 1864-20 Jan 1958)
- * Fred K. Tremper
(2 Dec 1875-22 May 1944)
- * Putt Walton
- * Henry Washburn
- * Louis Washburn
- * Martin Washburn
- * "Warty" Washburn

the routines on tandem bikes. Several, who needed both hands to play their instrument, rode tricycles.

On June 13-14, 1992, the SJBB was re-created for the Great American Band Festival held in Danville, Kentucky. Alexander Pollock, Director of the Dodworth Saxhorn Band in Detroit, undertook the challenge first to obtain vintage cycles and uniforms; then to train the musicians (many of whom were members of the Whistle Pig Cyclones Magnificent High Wheel Band of Monroe, Michigan) to board the cycles with their instruments and finally to simultaneously play and ride. He was able to locate and restore an antique bass drum and to recruit a drummer and drum major. This ensemble practiced up on two period tunes, *Bicycle Bells March* and *Up in a Balloon*. After six months of preparation they rode in the convention parade and joined in entertaining the crowds at various venues during the 2-day event.

The following obituary abstracts and other biographical information expands the perception of this unique organization.

ALBERT H. BROWN – "Rochester Colony. Word has been received of the death Feb. 12 at San Pedro, Calif. of Albert H. Brown, aged 73. Mr. Brown was born on the farm one mile east of the Colony and spent his youth in this community. He played a horn with the young men of the community as a lad and continued his career as a musician for many years. He is survived by his widow; five sons, Carl, George, Marion, Selbert, Robert; a daughter Helen; and his twin sisters, Mesdames Ella Teeter and Helen DuBois. His brother, Will, passed away several years ago." *CCRN*; 17 Apr 1941



ANDY HICKS, son of Mrs. N. J. Chapin of St. Johns, was born on Sept. 10, 1871, in St. Johns and all his boyhood was spent in this city. ...He had recently been in New York City about



thirteen weeks playing in one of the most beautiful theatres in the world. He died May 26, 1925, at Passiac, NJ, and leaves a wife [Edna] and daughter, Mrs. Helen Lewis, and his aged mother of this city." *CCR-N*; 4 Jun 1925,

Following the above obituary, the *CCRN* printed a letter of condolence written to Hicks's mother from his co-actor and friend, Roger Imhof. Imhof praised Hicks as professionally "willing and ready at all times" and went on to describe his accidental death by gas affixation in his room in the Hygeria Hotel.

RODNEY S. PALMER, age 12, is living with his parents, B. D. & Mary Palmer, in St. Johns on the 1880 census. The father is a dry goods clerk. Rodney married Lida May Mc Collum of Washington state ca Nov. 1892. In 1910 and 1920, the federal census shows Rodney, a coal merchant, residing with Lida, and son, Charles Stuart, in Ellensburg, Kittitas Co., Washington.



MARTIN D. HUBBARD appears on the 1880 census in Bingham Twp., age 12, with his parents, James and Charlotte Hubbard. His father is a farmer.

"At 10:30 o'clock this morning, at the home of the bride's parents on Walker St. E., Etta J., second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred S. Fildew, will be united in marriage with Martin D. Hubbard. ...The groom is the only son of James A. Hubbard of Bingham Twp., and was born and has grown to manhood here..." CCR-N; 14 Sep 1893

Martin and Etta (Fildew) Hubbard, both age 41, are on the 1910 census in Pontiac Oakland Co., MI. At that time their children are Martha F. (12), Alfred J. (7),

Philip M. (4), & Mary J. (9 mos.).

"Martin D. Hubbard, former Clinton County resident, and brother-in-law of Mrs. J. T. Millman of this city, passed away in Pontiac at the age of 70 years. Mr. Hubbard was well known in these parts, having graduated from St. Johns High School [in 1888]. He was the organizer of the Hubbard Spring Works in St. Johns many years ago, later conducting the business of the company from Pontiac. Interment was in Mt. Rest Cemetery here Saturday, March 29." CCR-N; 3 Apr 1947

.....

DAVID LINCOLN HUNT "died Saturday afternoon, following a long illness. He was 71 years old and St. Johns was his home throughout his entire life. ... As a young man he became interested in insurance, a business he continued to follow the greater part of his life. In 1930 he was elected secretary of the St. Johns Building & Loan Association and devoted the next few years to the duties of that position until ill health forced his retirement. ...David Lincoln Hunt was born April 30, 1866, son of George and Adelaide Hunt, early pioneers of St. Johns. His father founded Hunt's Drug Store and at the time the son was born Mr. and Mrs. Hunt occupied living quarters on the second floor of the store building. He attended the village school and graduated from high school. ...He was married Sept. 9, 1901, to Miss Leah Fowler of St. Johns, who survives him, together with a sister, Mrs. Lena Petrie of Cadillac. ...Burial was made in Mt. Rest Cemetery. CCR-N; 9 Dec 1937



.....

LOUIS WASHBURN, son of Martin F., is described in the newspaper account of his wedding on 26 Oct 1904, as "prominent in musical circles, a member of the Congregational Church choir and the St. Johns band." [CR; 27 Oct 1904]

GEORGE R. RHODES is on the 1880 census; age 15; living in St. Johns with his grandparents, J. L. & Jennie L. Kellogg; and attending school. However, the obituary of Carrie (Plumstead) Rhodes (Mrs. Charles A.), who died in Detroit after being run over by an auto in Dec. 1919, states that George is her son and that Jennie Kellogg is her sister. Carrie is the "eldest daughter of the late Alonzo and Lucyietta Plumstead." CCR-N 1 Jan 1925



Rhodes organized the SJBB from members of the St. Johns Bicycle Club about Nov. 1885. He played cornet.

In June 1886 he bought a "fine Rudge bicycle" from Delois E. Leonard of Ovid. CR; 3 Jun 1886

George, his wife Jessie, and daughter Mytal (sic) are documented on the 1900 census as residents of Detroit, Michigan, where he is a railroad conductor.

DE WITT H. HUNT, a life-long resident of St. Johns, was born 15 Dec 1864 on East Higham Street to Arvella and Alonzo Hunt. He graduated from St. Johns High School in 1884 and began working in his father's drug store. He passed the state pharmacy exam in the 1890's and worked in the store his entire life. He was active in politics, business and fraternal circles, and the Congregational Church. Hunt was the church organist for 50 years. Though not an original member, he played the alto horn in the SJBB.

DeWitt Hunt married first, Hattie Baldwin (d 1893); second in 1910, Brownie Bromley (d 1937), with whom he adopted a son, Robert B. Hunt. DeWitt Hunt died Jan 20, 1958, at 93.

"In the bicycle band, which was sponsored by Robert G. Steel, son of the railroad builder and financier who played an important part in this city's early history, were members of well known families of the time, it was recalled by Mr. Hunt. These included: George Rhodes, band leader and cornetist; D. L. Hunt, who mastered the feat of playing the bass drum en route on his high-wheeled bike; Martin, Henry, and Louis Washburn, the snare drum played by Martin; Charles Fowler; Ralph Sage; and Martin Hubbard. ...Mr. Hunt recalled a day when the players ran off the pavement into the sand at Flint, ruining an otherwise impressive performance. ...There was one occasion [League of American Wheelmen convention in 1890's] when the band provided entertainment for a gathering at the Steel Hotel, and high-wheeled bicycles, leaning against the hotel walls while the players were inside for the concert, attracted as much interest from people in the street outside as the music within the banquet hall. Many of those who attended the meeting came there on high-wheeled bikes, as well, making an awesome sight to the beholders on that memorable occasion." CCR-N; 18 Aug 1955

.....
CHARLES M. FOWLER, JR., is on the 1880 census, age 12, living in St. Johns with his parents, Charles and M. J. Fowler. Charles, Sr., is listed as a hardware merchant.

.....
HENRY B. WASHBURN – "Wed., Jan. 18, Henry B. Washburn and Miss Marie Woodhead, both of Saginaw, were married at the home of the groom's parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. F. Washburn, in St. Johns. Mr. Washburn is well and favorably known in St. Johns and before going to Saginaw he was bookkeeper in the National Bank here for 8 years. At present he is secretary of the Alderton-Melze Wholesale Shoe Co. The bride is a musician of rare ability and has been teaching piano and pipe organ since she came from London, England, a year ago, where she graduated from a fine conservatory. Mr. and Mrs. Washburn will soon commence housekeeping in Saginaw on W. Main St." CR; 26 Jan 1911

HENRY A. TROMP is in school on the 1880 census, age 12, living with his parents, William F. & Elizabeth Tromp, in St. Johns. The father is occupied as a joiner.

"Henry A. Tromp and Miss G. Blanche, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Dunn, were married at the home of the bride's parents yesterday



morning at 10 o'clock. ...The bride and groom have lived in St. Johns since childhood..." CR; 30 Apr 1891

Henry A. and Gertrude B. Tromp are shown in the 1910 census in Lane Co., Oregon, where he is a bookkeeper.

FRED K. TREMPER '68, a lifelong resident of St. Johns, died at his home on South Oakland Street Monday afternoon at 5:30 o'clock, after an illness of nearly two years. ...Born Dec. 2, 1875, the son of John P. and Elizabeth Ann Tremper, he gained his early education in the city schools. Early in life he showed a marked musical talent and young started organizations (cont. on page 6)

RALPH V. SAGE

"Duplain: Brief funeral services were conducted by Rev. Dekker of the Baptist church of St. Johns at Mt. Rest Cemetery for Ralph V. Sage, who passed away last week, Wednesday, at his home in Philadelphia.

Mr. Sage, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Sage, was born in August. 75 years ago in Rochester, N.Y., and when a young boy, moved with his parents to Bingham Township, Clinton County, where they bought a farm thee and one-half miles northeast of St. Johns, and where the family resided



for many years. Mr. Sage was graduated from the St. Johns High School [in 1888] and also the University of Michigan.

In 1895 he was married to Miss Winifred Hulick of Detroit and they lived successively at Elmira, N.Y., Philadelphia, and Pittsburg, later moving to Johnstown, Pa., where Mrs. Sage died in 1904 leaving behind the husband, three small children Winfield, Eleanore, and Winifred.

Mr. Sage was a structural engineer and pursued his chosen profession for many years until his health failed. A few years after the death of his first wife, Mr. Sage remarried and Mrs. Sage, who survives him, has tenderly cared for the children until they grew to manhood and womanhood and has been a loving wife through the years.

Those who attended the brief services at St. Johns were the widow of Philadelphia; the son, Major W.H. Sage of New Bedford, Mass.; a daughter, Mrs. Winifred Brown of Chicago; a sister, Mrs. Carl Wilcox, Mr. Wilcox, and Hazel of Lansing; cousins, Mrs. John Hugas and Mr. Hugas of St. Johns; W. K. Ash and daughter Frances of Flint; and Russell and Ethel Ash of Duplain. Mr. Sage's daughter Eleanor and three children of California, were unable to be present.

During the years that Mr. Sage lived in the east he occasionally revisited the scenes of his boyhood and renewed his old acquaintanceship, and friends found him the same genial, witty companion as in days of yore. His mind was keen and those who attended the meeting of the alumni of St. Johns a few years ago will remember the fine address that Mr. Sage gave that night." CCRM; 1 Dec 1943

.....
 (Cont. from pg 5) with such high class entertainment concerns as the Hi Henry Show, Wallace-Haggenbach Circus, and his last show duties were with the Primrose Minstrel Show, famous in the early part of this century.

"On Oct 5, 1906, he was married in Indianapolis, IN, to Rose Moinet of this city, and to this union one son, John was born. Soon after his return to St. Johns he started the first moving picture show in the city in the wooden building now occupied by the Wilson Barber Shop. Later this show was moved to a location on East Higham Street. These were the pioneer day of the cinema and the general admission charge was five cents. Later Mr. Tremper was associated with his brother-in-law, O. E. Eisler, in a vaudeville venture in the old Allison Opera House, and still later in another ill-fated movie venture. Since that time he was employed in various business places and the last eight active years as janitor and engineer at the courthouse.

"Besides the widow and son, John, who is manager of the State theatre at East Lansing, he is survived by a brother, Roy Tremper, of this city. ...Burial was made in Mt. Rest." CCR-N; 25 May 1944

ROBERT G. STEEL was the son of Robert M. Steel, builder of the Steel Hotel. In July 1885 he attended a meeting of the National League of American Wheelman in Buffalo, NY, and by Aug. 1885 he was arranging a 6-day bicycle tour of the state. Steel had the agency to sell Victor bicycles in May 1886. He graduated from St. Johns High School in 1886. He became the sponsor of the SJBB, its captain, and drum major. Among his diverse achievements in later life, were receiving a patent in 1894 for an improved incandescent light and once serving as Deputy State Treasurer.



"Robert G. Steel and Miss Nettie Conn were married at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. B. P. Conn, Tues. morning at 7 o'clock ..." CR 8 Jul 1896

"Robert G. Steel, 79, former resident of St. Johns, died of pneumonia on Sept. 6, in Detroit. Mr. Steel had lived in Detroit for many years. Interment was in the family mausoleum in Mt. Rest Cemetery here Tuesday. A sister, Mrs. E. P. Waldron of St. Johns, survives." CCR-N; 11 Sep 1947

GEORGE A. SUMNER - "In the death of George A. Sumner from injuries sustained when he was struck by an automobile just after leaving church services last Sunday night, St. Johns lost its oldest active businessman. He was 91 years old on July 31 and, excepting for his childhood years in Ionia where he was born, had spent the rest of his life in this city and vicinity. ... He was an elder of the Seventh Day Adventist Church between 50 and 60 years.

"...To the older residents of St. Johns, he was remembered for his talents in music, especially band music. In his 20's he was a member of the St. Johns' famed bicycle band, a group of 15 young men who mastered the art of playing while riding the old high-wheeled bicycles. This was during the latter part of the 1880's and Mr. Sumner used to delight in recalling that the fame of the band was such that the original Barnum & Bailey circus sought to engage them as a feature of the daily circus parade. Reluctance of the parents to permit the boys to travel with a circus caused the idea to be dropped. Mr. Sumner was first cornet player of the band. He was also proficient on the violin and guitar, and in 1914 still greatly interested in band music, organized the first band at St. Johns High School. ...He used to be the librarian for

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- 📖 Pinckney Reunion secretary's book 1924-1933
- 📖 Island Aid Society minutes 1922 & 1923
- 📖 DeWitt Comm. Church Directory; 1998-99
- 📖 DeWitt Comm. Church, Naomi Circle; program books 1971-2 & 1973-4
- 📖 DeWitt Sesquicentennial Souvenir Book
- 📖 "Welcome to DeWitt" Directories: 1991 & two undated directories
- 📖 Our Martin-Lindquist Family Tree...; compiled by Barbara C. Martin
- 📖 Territorial Census 1827 (Michigan)
- 📖 Sesquicentennial Calendar, City of St. Johns,
- 📖 Playbill, Newton's Hall, 13 Apr 1871
- 📖 Photos:
- 📖 Greenwood School students; 1946-7
- 📖 Greenwood School students & teacher, 1954
- 📖 Little Brick School students & teacher; 1925
- 📖 Meridian School students & teacher; 1950
- 📖 Island School, teachers & students
- 📖 Island School (log bldg.)
- 📖 Maple Rapids School & students
- 📖 Sam Shafer
- 📖 Eunice (Randolph) Pinckney
- 📖 Isabella Findley
- 📖 Glenn & Eda (Cumberworth) White
- 📖 Joy McNeil
- 📖 Nellie, Moss, Beth, & A.J. VanSickle
- 📖 Walter, Annie, & Glen White
- 📖 Maple Rapids store, Charlie Altor & Cy Parr
- 📖 Clinton Co. Supervisors, ca 1861

the bicycle band, carrying the music in a trunk.

"George A. Sumner was the son of Edmund T. and Martha (Pettengill) Sumner. When the family moved to Clinton Co., he was sent to country schools on reaching school age. He was later [19 Jan 1886] married to Bertha Pettengill, member of a family not related to his mother's although bearing the same name. Two sons were born to them: Karl, who died in 1899, and Keith. The first Mrs. Sumner died in 1927 and on Dec. 22, 1941, Mr. Sumner was married to Ivah Greenwood in St. Johns. Mrs. Sumner and Keith Sumner, U.S. Navy Commander, retired, survive. Mrs. Sumner resides at the family home in Greenbush Twp., northwest of the city, and Keith Sumner lives in an apartment at the Steel Hotel. ...Burial was at Mt. Rest Cemetery."

.....

MARTIN F. WASHBURN --"St. Johns residents will be sorry to learn of the death of ... Mr. M. F. Washburn. [He] died at his home, 897 Hazelwood Ave., Detroit, on January 4th from a paralytic stroke. ...Mrs. Washburn and their four children, Mrs. F.C. Kingsbury, Ray A., Henry B., and Louie A., were at his bedside when the end came. Mrs. Washburn was born in Bouckville, NY, August 21, 1842.

"He came to St. Johns in 1878 to fill a position in the building and contracting department of the St. Johns Table Co. and remained with them for a number of years. Later he took over the shoe business of F.C. Minnie and was located for some time in the old Brown's Opera House block. When the St. Johns Mercantile Co. was established he went with them as a manager of the shoe department and remained in this position for a number of years.

"It is, however, as a builder—the occupation to which he gave all his later years—that he will be best remembered by his fellow citizens of St. Johns. Some of the city's important buildings remain as evidence of his activity. The Kenyon block is his work, and the Masonic Temple, and the Hyatt building. He also built the East Ward school as well as the Catholic parsonage and the Moss garage. ...He was always interested in public affairs and at different times served as alderman from the second ward and was an active member of the Board of Public Works for three years.

"But it is perhaps as a musician that many people will remember him best. Music was a constant joy and diversion to Mr. Washburn's influence. In the earlier life of the city, no great or festive occasion was ever complete without his band to enliven it or his orchestra to add to its pleasure...." CCR-N 10 Jan 1924

Martin Washburn(e) is on the 1880 census, a carpenter residing in St. Johns, with his wife, May, & children Ray (10), Henry (5) & Edith (3).

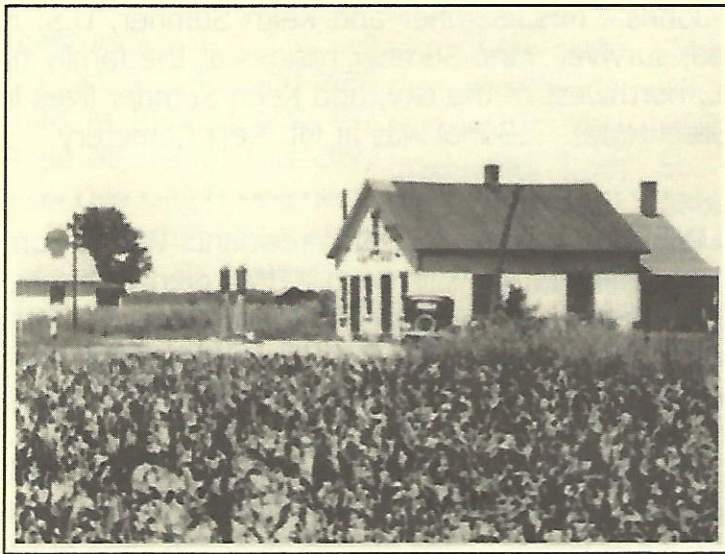
CR Clinton Republican
CCRN Clinton Co. Republican News

Note: No information was found on William Holton, George Woodruff, or Putt Walton, and the identity of "Warty" Washburn remains a mystery. Material for this story was gathered from the Archives of the Clinton Co. Historical Society, Bement Room at Briggs Public Library, Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum, and the website of the Library of Michigan

See "Clinton County Place Names" on our web page. [www.dewittlibrary.org/CCHS] Wayne Summers has set up a source there for identifying Clinton County locations by their obscure, obsolete, alternate, and informal names. [Additions or corrections are appreciated.]

One of these Country locations was named, "Sperry's Corner." Here you could find the neighborhood folk daily, evenings and especially on rainy days, playing cards, talking about crop and weather conditions, and sharing neighborly conversation at

"Sperry's Corner"



This neighborhood gas station and store was the entrepreneurial project of Juan E. (Joe) [b.1860 NY-d. 1940 MI] and Hannah E. (Newman) [b.1870 MI - d.1947 MI] Stanton. The Stanton home's garage, located in the middle of section thirty of Olive twp, facing west on Airport road (according to Arthur Newman, Hannah's nephew), was used to operate a small grocery store for several years. About 1929 or 1930, they built a grocery store/gas station situated on one acre of section one of Riley Twp. Clinton County tax records indicate they paid taxes on this property from the year 1931 through 1941. Interestingly, they were taxed separately, one tax

for the business and one for the gas tanks that were located in the ground. Art Newman also remembers a story of when a man bought gas, went into pay and pulled a knife on Joe and told him to give him his money. Joe quickly showed the man his shot gun and needless to say the man left rather quickly. Story has it that a few shots were heard as the man drove off.

In August of 1942, the Stanton's sold their home to Erwin [1911-1991] and Jewel (Reed) [1915-1993] Rossow for \$750. The store was purchased shortly after that, (either in the fall of 1942 or early 1943) by Dean Eleazer [1886-1959] and Luella (Winslow) [1888-1959] Sperry, who continued to run the business until 1955.

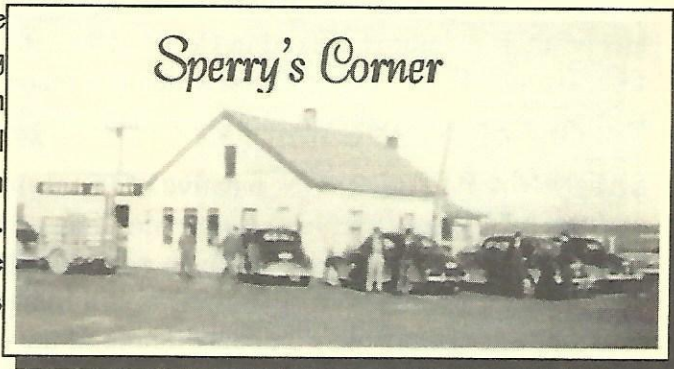
LeeAnn (Rossow) Dietz, remembers many a night going with her father, Erwin Rossow, and watching the men share conversation, card playing, and a drink or two. She remembers, single-dip ice cream cones for 5 cents, even though, Dean would give her two dips for the price of one. She remember Luella sharing her WWII gas rations with the Rossow family, allowing them to go on an occasional family outing, since her Dad's rations were all used for his transportation to work.

LaVern Rossow, son of Raymond [1905-1997] and Beatrice (Holland) [1910-2002] Rossow, remembers soda pop for 5 cents. Dean would give him 1 cent for every bottle that he picked up off the road, even if the bottle wasn't a recyclable one. So every time he went to the store, he would make a trip up and down Price or Airport road, picking up the bottles that were discarded. He remembers Dean & Luella as extremely nice folks. LaVern said, "You could always find men sitting in the parlor chairs at one of the round tables, playing an intense game of cards." He could remember Luella fixing a sandwich for any one that needed a bite to eat. He remembers the first gas pumps, having to pump the gas up into the top; then



Dean Sperry, Juan "Joe" & Hannah Stanton, & Dotty Christen

gravity would allow it to flow down into the car's gas tank. He remembers Dean fixing car engines and changing tires, along with selling gasoline and the dry goods in the store. Ivan Sperry, grandson of Dean & Luella, remembers helping sell soda pop and cigarettes [abt age 8-9] when the Mexican migrant workers would be in the area for summer harvests. He also remembers, a large slab of cheese hanging up in the store. His grandmother would give him a slice, which to this day brings delicious memories. He remembers them both



Luella (Winslow) & Dean Sperry

being very hard working and kind people, and that he received 2 cents for every bottle he picked up.

After 1955, the store was rented to the Shafer family for residence and then by the Ivan Sperry family. The Stanton/Sperry Store no longer graces the corner of Price & Airport, but the Stanton family home remains intact with many modern additions and is currently owned by Dean & Luella's great grand daughter, Jaymie Sperry.

Today, Sperry's Corner is just a memory of friendly neighborhood times.

by Rowland Smith & Kim [Howe] Sperry

PRESIDENTS, SOLDIERS, STATESMEN (continued) See Vol. 19, No. 1

JAMES A. NEWMAN was born in 1846 and was living in Clinton County, Mich., engaged in farming, when the late war of the Rebellion began. He was a member of Co. H, 2d Mich. Cav., 4 Brig., 3 Div., 4 C.C., being enrolled Feb. 9, 1864, and has an honorable war record. From July 10 to August following his Regt. was employed to guard railroads from Nashville to Rutherford Creek and from Nashville to Murfreesboro. He was to the front in the following engagements: Dug Gap, Red Clay, Etawah River, Ackworth, Nashville, Campbellville, Franklin, Cypress River, Raccoon Ford, Shoal Creek, Lawrenceburg, Columbia, Spring Hill, Bethesda Church, Franklin, Nashville, Richland Creek, Sugar Creek, Princeton Yard, Corinth, Tuscaloosa, Tryunne, Bridgeville, and Talladaga. His Regt. made an attack on rebel Cav. March 27, 1864, capturing three pieces of artillery and seventy-five prisoners. He was granted an honorable discharge Nov. 1, 1865, at Chattanooga, Tenn. Comrade Newman is engaged in farming and his post office is Bath, Mich.

SILAS W. NEWMAN was born in Bath, Mich., Aug. 7, 1847, and was a son of **Miles W. and Louisa (Rose) Newman**, dec. His wife, whom he married in 1868 in DeWitt, Mich., bore the maiden name of **Ellen A. Everetts**. She was born July 1850 at Adrian, Mich., a daughter of **James Everetts**, still living. Of this union were born six children in the order here named: **Sarah L., William H., Miles J., Robert, Claud, and Eva**. Comrade Newman fought and suffered the hardships of army life during the late war, being a member of Co. H, 2 Mich. Cav. He had been employed on a farm and was about 16 years old when he was enrolled. In 1864 at the battle of Pulaski he was slightly wounded in right knee by spent ball. His Regt. was dismounted to guard prisoners at Nashville and also to guard bridge at penitentiary. He also went on a foraging expedition. His fields of operation were Dandridge, Pigeon River, Dug Gap, Etawah River, Ackworth, Nashville, Campbell Station, Franklin, Cypress River, Raccoon Ford, Shoal Creek, Lawrenceburg, Campbellsville, Columbia, Spring Hill, Bethesda Church, Franklin, Nashville, Richland Creek, Pulaski, Sugar Creek, Princeton Yard, Corinth,

Tuscaloosa, Tryunne, Bridgeville, and Talladaga; receiving an honorable discharge August 1865 at Macon, Ga. His brother, **Adelbert**, served in Co. H. His wife's brother, **Myron**, also served and died at Bridgeport, Ala., from typhoid fever. Comrade Newman is a member of Geo. Anderson Post. He is a farmer by occupation and is at present employed on a farm near Bath, Mich., which is his post office address.

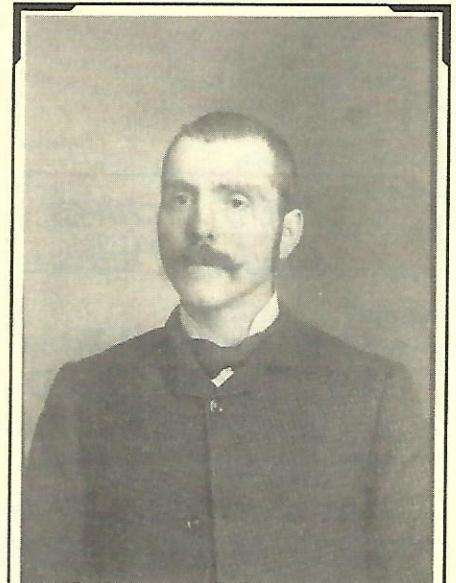
SELDEN A PATTERSON, a native of Pennsylvania, was born in Erie County, March 25, 1830. He was a son of **John and Eliza (Bennett) Patterson**, long ago dec. Coming to Clinton Co., Mich., in 1884, he was married Oct. 24 of that year to **Rosetta Smith** who was born in Chicago, Ill., Feb. 11, 1837. Her father, **John Smith**, is dec., but her mother, **Rhoda (Lewis)** is still living, aged 84 years. To them were born three children: **Ida B., Wilbur**, and **George A.** At the beginning of the war, our subject was engaged in farming and in response to a call for volunteers he enlisted Oct. 18, 1861, at the age of 31 years as a private soldiers in Co. G. 3 Mich. Cav. January 1861 he was confined in hospital at St. Louis nine days on account of inflammation of bowels. Feb. 6 he was furloughed for thirty days and reported for duty at end of time. He was honorably discharged Jan. 1, 1864, and re-enlisted at Lagrange, Tenn., in old Cav. He fought at New Madrid, Corinth, and numerous skirmishes, and was finally honorably discharged Feb. 12, 1866, at San Antonio, Tex. His brothers, **Edward** and **B.F.**, served in the late war. Comrade Patterson is S.V.C. of Wagner Post. He is a farmer by occupation with post office address at Eureka, Mich.

JOHN PATTERSON was born in Geauga County, Ohio, Dec. 25, 1837, and was a son of **Thomas and Mary Patterson**, dec. His helpmate in life's journey was **Sarah E. Decker**, the nuptial knot being tied Jan. 26, 1866, in Montcalm County, Mich. She was born in Tonawanda, N.Y., July 11, 1850. Their hearthstone has been graced with four children: **Annetta, Frank, Fred**, and **Charles**. Aug. 27, 1863, our subject donned the blue and entered the service of his country from Ionia, Mich., when 26 years of age. He was enrolled in Co. G, 10th Mich. Cav., as a private and soon rose to the rank of Corp. In the winter of 1863-4 he was ill at camp Nelson two weeks with chronic diarrhea and stomach trouble. He was also kept in hospital several times for diarrhea. The following are his battles: Preston, Johnsonville, Ream Station, Rogersville, Kings Salt Works, New Market, Williamsport, Duck Bottom, Sevier, Newport, Greenville, Moss Creek, Bulls Gap, Strawberry Plains, Flat Creek, Pea Ridge, Sweetwater, Carters Station, Johnson Station, Madisonville, Kingsport, Bristoe Station, and several others, receiving an honorable discharge Nov. 11, 1865. His brother, **Thomas**, served in 16th Mich. V.I. Cav. His wife's brother, **Harmon**, served in 5th Mich. Cav., was wounded and died in service. A second brother, **Ira**, belonged to 21st Mich. V.I., and died in the army. Our subject's son, **Frank**, is a railway brakeman and **Fred** is a barber. Our subject is living a retired life and his address is St. Johns, Mich.

WILLIAM PIERCE was born in Winsor County, Vt., March 3, 1823, and was a son of **John and Mary (Ralph) Pierce**, dec. He was married Jan. 29, 1864, in Ingham County, Mich., to **Naomi Stone**. Three children were born to them: **Stephen, Mary, and Eva**, dec. He was subsequently married to **Mary Lewis** who was born in Geauga Co., O., a daughter of **Caleb and Ruth (Dillingham) Agard**, dec. The children of this marriage are: **Rosa, Mary E. (dec.), Libbie, Walter**, and **Howard**. When the Stars and Stripes were hauled down from Ft. Sumter, he was engaged in farming. He was one of the brave soldiers to enlist in the nation's defense. He had been engaged in farming and was 42 years old when he was enrolled Aug. 28, 1864, as a private soldier in Co. D, 13th Mich. V.I., 2d Brig., 1st Div., 14th A.C. In April, 1865, he was confined in hospital at Bentonville for four weeks, suffering from chronic diarrhea. He participated in several important battles, including Bentonville and Sherman's March to the Sea. He was granted an honorable discharge May 17, 1865, at Dougall Hospital, New York City. He had two brothers in service: **Calvin** and **Almond**. His wife's brother, **William Agard**, died soon after he went into the service. Comrade Pierce is engaged in farming and his address is Bath, Mich.

Surnames:

- ♦ Margaret Morrissey: P.O. Box 9395, Analteim, CA 92812: **Woodruff, Wilson, Green(e) & Early.**
- ♦ Duane Norris: 4540 Hendee Road, Jackson, MI 49201-**Bauerle, Hepfer, Norris, Peters/Petter & Ledermann.**
- ♦ Lori Piercefield-Fox: 3011 Knoll Rd., Portland, MI 48875 - **Catlin, Ludwick, Piercefield, Fox/Fuchs & Benjamin.**
- ♦ Sally Pontius - 1611 W. Pratt Rd., DeWitt, MI 48820 - **Pontius & Cateline.**
- ♦ Marcia Porter: 2216 Kensington, Missoula, MT 59801 - **Knapp, Carpenter, Kyes, Miller & VanTassle/VanTossle.**
- ♦ Betsy J. Randall: 10462 E. 64th Street, Reed City, MI 49677 - **Perry, Oberla, Tompkins, Silvernail, Sullivan & Guyer/Gier.**
- ♦ Carol Henry: 8711 Meridan Rd., Bannister, MI 48807 - **Falor, Salisbury, Burch, Britten & Evert Lacy Holcomb.**
- ♦ Elizabeth Hinkley: P.O. Box 110, Mechanicstown, OH 44651 - **Parker, Cotes, Crane & Doane.**
- ♦ Joyce Holbrook: 123 Thompson St., Springfield, MA 01109 - **Keiser, Barrus, Wideman, Grubaugh & Nichols.**



The Archive's received this picture of **Sam Shafer**. The owner would like this to be given to someone in his family. If this is you, please contact the Archives at the number below.

➤ **The Archives of the Clinton County Historical Society** are located at 16101 Brook Road in the DeWitt Twp. Community Center. Volunteers are there to give research assistance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursdays & Fridays. Phone: (517) 482-5117. Web Page: www.dewittlibrary.org/CCHS

➤ **The Genealogists of the CCHS** meet the first Monday of each month at 1:00 pm November through March or 7:30 pm April through October in the Firstbank community room, located downtown St. Johns. E-mail address: ccgensoc@yahoo.com. The **Historical Society meetings** are held 30 minutes prior to the Genealogist's meetings at Firstbank, the first Monday of January, April, July & October.

➤ **The Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum** is located on the west side of the Courthouse Square in St. Johns. Open April 1 - Dec 31. Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m. & Wednesday 2:00-7:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

LIST 5 NAMES YOU ARE RESEARCHING

Mr./Mrs./Miss _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ New _____ Renewal _____

E-Mail Address _____ Date _____

ANNUAL DUES to join both the **Clinton County Historical Society** and the **Genealogy Committee** are **\$15 single and \$20 a couple/family**. Membership is based on the calendar year and includes a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, *Clinton County Trails*. Checks should be made payable to the Clinton County Historical Society and mailed to P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879. Genealogical queries should be addressed to: Genealogists of the Clinton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 23 St. Johns, MI 48879.

*2006 Archives
Closure Dates*

April 14 - Good Friday
May 29 - Memorial Day
July 3-4 - Fourth of July
Sept. 4 - Labor Day
Nov. 10 - Veteran's Day
Nov 23-24 - Thanksgiving
Dec 25 to Jan 1 -
Christmas/New Years

**Celebrating
St. Johns'
2006
Sesquicentennial**