



# CLINTON COUNTY TRAILS



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## WILLIAM T. DAVIES RESIDENCE & GREENBUSH FANNING MILL

An original photograph of the William T. Davies home and fanning mill factory was taken ca. 1880. It shows William T. Davies with son, **Richard Connor Davies “Dickie”** and Robert E. Davies with daughter,



**Nellie Davies** along with several family members and employees of the factory. The original photograph was given to **Helen Post** by **Nettie (Davies) Vaughn**, daughter of William T. Davies. Helen Post was the granddaughter of Mary Ann (Davies) Goddard, sister of William T. and Robert E. Davies. Names of all the people appearing in the photograph were listed on the back of the photograph.

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**William T. Davies** came to Lyons, New York, from England and served an apprenticeship in the fanning mill trade for three years. He then worked as a journeyman in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1855, William T. Davies and his brother **Robert E. Davies** established a fanning mill factory in Greenbush Township, Clinton County, Michigan, on land owned by **David Sevy**, father of **Jeannette (Sevy) Davies**, wife of William T. Davies. In 1856, they rented land and moved the fanning mill to Greenbush center. The fanning mill separates grain from the chaff by fanning. The factory also built milk safes which were filled with flat, shallow pans where the milk was stored, cooled, and then skimmed. **William Henry Goddard**, husband of **Mary Ann Davies**, sister to William T. and Robert E. Davies, painted the fanning mills and milk safes.

The brothers cleared land, expanded the factory, and built homes across the road from each other. In 1871, William T. Davies started building a home on the east side of Scott Rd. next to the fanning mill. According to an article in the *Clinton Independent* July 29, 1875, the house was finished in 1874. Robert E. Davies' residence was completed around 1877. Over the years, the William T. Davies residence has changed owners many times and at one time it appeared to be abandoned. In 1996, **David & Judy Hubler** bought the property and proceeded to renovate and conserve it.

Compared to the original picture of the house, the facade changed with the removal of the front porch and the wing on the east side of the house. Vinyl siding replaced the wood. The corbels under the roof line and the front door are both original. They were restored by David Hubler, who discovered the original red paint tone on corbels and under layers of paint. On a section of the door is a design that may have been painted by **William Henry Goddard**. The design appears to be very similar to designs painted on the fanning mills. David remodeled all the outbuildings, replaced the windows, and repaired the stone foundation along with assisting the carpenters with renovations. Many interior changes were made to accommodate needs of the owners along with the addition of bathrooms, closets, and relocation of the kitchen. The front staircase was removed many years ago and this area became the living room. Some original floors were refinished and others replaced. When the linoleum and plywood was removed in the kitchen, the original brown, painted, pine floor was uncovered along with many years of dirt. Every project tackled increased in size and costs along with requiring another project. Local carpenters with experience remodeling old houses had their challenges updating areas due to uneven floors and ceilings.

One item found in the yard is a campaign token from 1868 when Ulysses S. Grant was running for President. It appeared when David dug up a large bush. Many small objects were found as the yard was cleaned up and landscaped. Unearthed were horseshoes, metal tools, square nails, floor grates, chains, and lots of iron pieces. The large rock pile north of the small barn became borders for all the flowerbeds.

The Clinton County Historical Museum has a fanning mill, milk safe, and copy of the original photograph on display in the Carriage House. The following books have a history of the factory and the Davies families: *History of Shiawassee and Clinton Counties with Illustrations*; Report Commissioned by Clinton County Historical Commission, History Division, MSU Museum, 1987; *History of Clinton County, Michigan*, article submitted by **Katherine (Post) Ward**; and *Portrait and Biographical Album; Daboll*.

Story & pictures submitted by Judy Hubler, as requested by the acting editor.



Davies fanning mill.

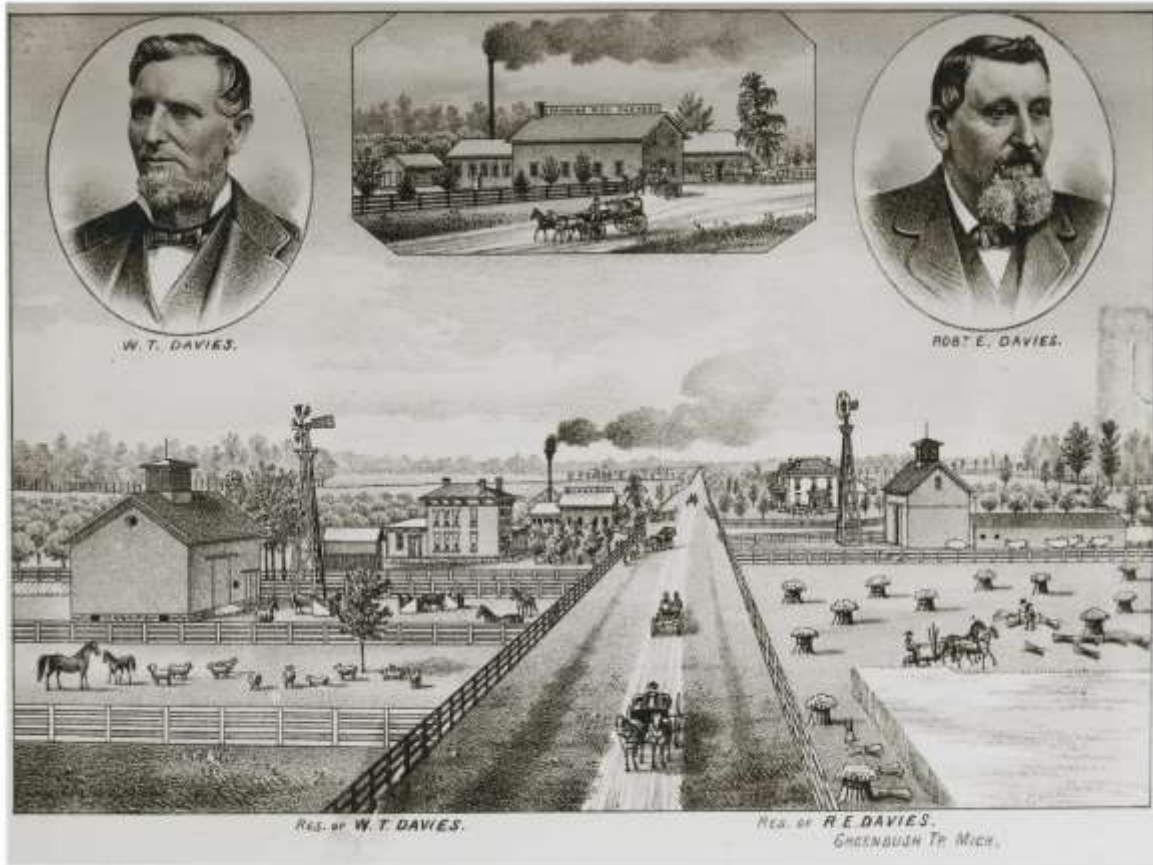


The original building of the factory still stands today with a sign on the south side that notes its historic location.



Current day picture.

In 1880, the brothers commissioned a sketch of their house and farm that appears in *History of Shiawassee and Clinton Co. with Illustrations.*



## MANUFACTURE AND AGRICULTURE COMBINED

One day this week we took occasion to visit the fanning mill works and farm of Messrs. **W.T. & R. E. Davies**, situated in the township of Greenbush. These gentlemen came to this country from England about 25 years ago and settled in Lyons, N.Y. where they learned the trade of making what is conceded in Northern Michigan to be the best mill in the market. They came to this country and settled where they now reside just twenty years ago and commenced the manufacture and sale of these mills which grew in favor as they were introduced. The first season they manufactured and sold about two dozen, from which time the number has steadily increased, and last year they manufactured for this season's trade 325, ranging in price from \$25 to \$28 each.

They consume annually, in the manufacture of these mills, a large amount of lumber, castings, paint, etc. They keep four teams upon the road and the growing demand for their mills has compelled them to add largely to their buildings and to make important additions to their machinery in order to expedite their work. W.T. attends to the general business of the concern while R. E. keeps the books and attends to the finances. They are both wide-awake and thorough businessmen and have performed an active part in the mechanical and agricultural interests of the county.

Last fall W.T. erected a magnificent farm house, the work on which was done by the day under the foremanship of Mr. **Joel Sage** of this village. We failed to learn the exact dimensions, but must say that it is the nicest arranged farm home we know of in the county. The Davies are prominent among the solid men of Clinton. *Clinton Independent*; 29 July 1875

**TO FARMERS  
AND  
FARMER'S WIVES!**

**FIRST: TO THE FARMER WE WILL SAY**  
That we are selling our  
**IMPROVED FANNING MILLS**

**VERY CHEAP**, notwithstanding the hard times. These Mills will separate Oats from Spring wheat clean Grass seed for market, and in fact serve the farmer in every particular. They are equal to any in use.

**SECOND: FARMERS' WIVES,**  
Cannot get along without one of our **MILK SATES**  
We are also making a first-rate  
**Spinning Wheel,**  
Which we offer for sale. Our Fanning Mills, Milk Sates and Spinning Wheels, will be sold for Cash, or on long time, to suit purchasers. We solicit patronage, and warrant prompt attention to all orders.

**W. T. & R. E. DAVIS**  
Greenbush, Clinton Co., Mich.

April 28th, 1862.

# 1918 Influenza Pandemic

By Wayne Summers

The deadliest pandemic in the history of the United States took place during the 1918-1919 Spanish Influenza. The pandemic killed over 650,000 in the United States including more than 15,000 in Michigan and at least 55 in Clinton County.

The Spanish Influenza was highly contagious with symptoms including chills, high fever, and severe body aches that developed rapidly. These often led to pneumonia.

The only treatment was quarantining those affected in their homes, making sure they had food and care, and praying for a recovery. Since it was believed the virus stayed in the air, people were also advised to keep windows open so their homes would be well ventilated.

In Michigan the virus became a serious health risk in October of 1918. By the middle of the month **Governor Albert Sleeper** had issued an order to close all churches and places of public amusement in the hope of slowing the spread. Schools were not included in his order, but most closed when the pandemic arrived in their district.

In Clinton County the first wave hit portions of the county by the middle of October. Among the schools that closed was the Grove School in Victor Township as nearly every home in the area had at least one person ill. Elsie and Ovid schools also closed with teachers and students home sick. By the end of October, the first four county deaths were reported in Dewitt, Ovid, and St. Johns.

During November the number of cases began to spread and rise rapidly, but they wouldn't spike until December.

St. Johns had been mostly spared during the early weeks, but that was to change in December as the virus hit the city overwhelming the available doctors and nurses. The local Red Cross and King's Daughters stepped in and helped check on the ill and make sure they had food and basic care.

Parents were warned to keep their children at home, off the streets, and away from other children. Adults were told not to congregate in public places.

The St. Johns post office struggled to deliver the mail as six employees were ill with no one available to take their places.

The Victory Theater which had had its grand opening on November 28<sup>th</sup> was closed and unable to reopen until the second week of January. Even then the owner, **R. J. McLaughlin**, felt it necessary to advertise the theater was aired and fumigated every day and all precautions had been taken to prevent the contraction of any contagious disease.

With the coming of the new year the number of cases began to decline. By March only three deaths were reported due to influenza and none in April.

During the six months of the pandemic all areas of Clinton County reported influenza deaths except for Dallas, Essex, and Watertown townships.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the pandemic was who it attacked. Those over 50 were generally spared, while young healthy adults were the most likely to succumb to the disease.

One of the first of these young victims was a St. Johns High School student, **Rodney B. Wilson**. Rodney, the only child of **Arthur and Nora Wilson**, was a popular, healthy, young 17-year-old when he was struck down by the virus and died on November 16, 1918. His parents wishing to memorialize their son later donated land where Nora's father's house had stood to the St. Johns schools for the new Rodney B. Wilson High School<sup>1</sup> building that opened in 1925.

Other victims of the pandemic included **Mike Nacaroto**, a 23-year-old immigrant from Italy, who had just started a new life in Elsie selling produce.

**Fred Von Thurn**, manager of the Triangle Truck company in St. Johns, died at the age of 37 after a short illness.

There was **Kenneth Foote-Livesay**, age 17, who died followed by his mother, **Nellie Livesay**. Housekeeper **Myrtle Stebbins**, age 25, died followed by her employer **William Sweeney** and later her mother.

Among the last to succumb were a young married couple, **Leslie and Lela Gutshall**, who were starting a life together on a farm in Ovid.

Every county resident was touched by the pandemic even if they did not experience the loss of a relative or neighbor. During those long months, although life as they knew it had changed, Clinton County got through it as neighbors gave comfort to the ill and grieving, and those left worked to rebuild their lives once the pandemic had passed.

<sup>1</sup> See *History of Clinton County* (1980) page 444 for more information

## Clinton County Influenza Deaths

October 1918-March 1919

BA=Bath; BE=Bengal; BI=Bingham; DU=Duplain; DW=DeWitt; EA=Eagle; EL=Elsie; GR=Greenbush; LE=Lebanon; OL=Olive; OV=Ovid; RI=Riley; SJ=St. Johns; VI=Victor; WE=Westphalia

\* Listed on death certificate that influenza was possible cause of death

Date	Name	Age	Place	Date	Name	Age	Place
				Dec 19, 1918	Nellie B. Livesay	45	GR
Oct 24, 1918	Charles L. Myers	26	SJ	Dec 19, 1918	Lucile A. Meredith	1m	EL
Oct 25, 1918	Marion Cate	42	DW	Dec 20, 1918	Marjorie Palmer	30	DW
Oct 27, 1918	Emma J. Flisher	68	OV	Dec 22, 1918	Theodore Haggerty	58	BI
Oct 27, 1918	Gertrude Slee	1	DW	Dec 22, 1918	Neva A. Gilson	24	SJ
Nov 4, 1918	Maurice W. Pierce	14	BA	Dec 22, 1918	Elmo C. Stoerck	27	SJ
Nov 11, 1918	Myrtle Stebbins	25	BA	Dec 24, 1918	Elizabeth Boyd	27	BA
Nov 12, 1918	William H. Sweeney	34	BA	Dec 24, 1918	Ida V. Culver	36	SJ
Nov 12, 1918	Phyllis A. Schoals	3	BA	Dec 24, 1918	Clarence Ross	27	SJ
Nov 13, 1918	Nina Risley	17	BE	Dec 24, 1918	Vida I. Robson	22	OV
Nov 14, 1918	Raymond J. Hayner	2	EL	Dec 25, 1918	John J. Workman	28	SJ
Nov 16, 1918	Rodney B. Wilson	17	SJ	Dec 28, 1918	Rosa L. Parker	1	SJ
Nov 18, 1918	Mildred R. Rice	16	LE	Dec 29, 1918	Roy Fancher	8m	SJ
Nov 26, 1918	Anna M. Rathfoot	36	EA	Dec 30, 1918	Jennie McCullough	37	GR
Nov 27, 1918	William J. Eiserman	34	VI	Jan 10, 1919	Mary Beach*	30	SJ
Nov 28, 1918	Rosalie Thelen	37	WE	Jan 12, 1919	Cena Stebbins	45	DW
Nov 30, 1918	Henrietta M. Miller	5	WE	Jan 12, 1919	Bertha Van Velsor	30	VI
Dec 10, 1918	Howard Foote-Livesay	17	GR	Jan 13, 1919	Fanny A. Plumstead	27	SJ
Dec 11, 1918	Kenneth H. Jones	17	DU	Jan 17, 1919	Anthony M. Heckman	18	LE
Dec 11, 1918	Mike Nacaroto	23	EL	Jan 17, 1919	Fred Von Thurn	36	SJ
Dec 12, 1918	Wendell L. Warren*	2	VI	Jan 21, 1919	Lottie J. Steinhorst	33	DW
Dec 12, 1918	Cleon Stevens	27	GR	Jan 27, 1919	Marguerite Thompson	30	VI
Dec 15, 1918	J. C. Ackles	30	BI	Feb 11, 1919	Elizabeth Hill	71	OV
Dec 16, 1918	Charles Furman	67	BI	Feb 17, 1919	Bessie L. Walker	34	DU
Dec 17, 1918	Etta M. Fancher	23	SJ	Feb 25, 1919	Mildred Hart	1	BA
Dec 17, 1918	George A. Stoerck	36	BI	Feb 26, 1919	Delia Cressman	38	RI
Dec 17/18, 1918	Fern Harris	37	SJ	Mar 16, 1919	Lela Gutshall	28	OV
Dec 18, 1918	Arthur Silm	25	RI	Mar 18, 1919	Leslie Gutshall	31	OV
Dec 19, 1918	Ella Blizzard	42	OL	Mar 27, 1919	Clara Frisbie	44	OV

### Clinton County Historical Society ARCHIVES

# TEMPORARY CLOSURE NOTICE

The CCHS Archives will be closed starting March 17 until schools are reopened. Our policy has been that we are closed when St. Johns and/or DeWitt schools are closed for bad weather but it is time to change the wording to include all abnormal school closings to eliminate confusion.

We thank you for your support in this decision. If you have questions, you can e-mail me at [petersj@msu.edu](mailto:petersj@msu.edu) or [ccgensoc@yahoo.com](mailto:ccgensoc@yahoo.com)

Julie Peters, Director Clinton County Historical Society ARCHIVES

## A GREAT IMPROVEMENT

Will be made by The Changes on D. G. H. & M. Depot. The depot at D. & M. (Detroit & Milwaukee) station is under-going some decided improvements.

The company's workmen began operations Monday morning and have the work well under way. A number of the rooms will be entirely changed with some new ones added. The main waiting room, 30 x 30 feet, remains as it is, as also does the baggage room, the extreme west end of the building. A large arch way will be cut between the two waiting rooms, the smaller one being cut down to 17x30 1/2 feet to allow for a gentleman's toilet room to the west. 7 1/2x10 1/2 feet. The office will also be made much smaller, 12x13 1/2 feet, with a large bay window extending some three or four feet on the platform side for convenience of the operator. A ladies' retiring room joins this on the west, 12 1/2 x 14 1/2 feet, with large double windows and furnished with comfortable upholstered rocking chairs. A doorway connects this room with the smaller waiting room. A lady's toilet room adjoining on the south.

The depot will be repainted both inside and out and some new furniture added. A new platform will also be laid. It is thought the work will be completed by the last of next week. *The Clinton Republican*, Aug 23, 1900 page 4 column 3.



## JANE INGERSOLL PIATT

When Michigan's First Lady Awards were handed out in 1976, as part of the state's Sesquicentennial celebration, **Jane Ingersoll Piatt** was one of 150 women, chosen for her substantial record of community service. She lived in Lansing much of her life but resided in Eagle Twp in her later years. She endeared herself to the neighborhood children who often dropped by to visit and give treats to Jack, the donkey she kept on her property and whose braying could sometimes be heard over a wide expanse of the area.

Jane was born in Grand Junction, Colorado, to **Laura A. (Selden)** and **Howard Ingersoll Piatt** on June 1, 1909. The 1910 census shows Howard working there as a secretary in a land company. By 1920 the family was living in New Jersey where he was a manager of a watch company. In the 1940 census they are in Lansing. Howard is president of a water heater company and Jane is head of a nursery school. By now she had a master's degree from University of Michigan. She died Feb. 4, 1997, at age 87. Her obituary suggests donations to the Women's Overseas Service League (WOSL). Howard and Laura Piatt are buried in Deepdale Memorial Park in Eaton Co., Michigan, but no burial record has been found for Jane.

Jane recalled her military career in April 1983 as the subject of a WOSL oral history project. This recorded interview can be read at <https://d.lib.msu.edu/wosl>. She joined the Women's Army Corp, July 21, 1942, and served during WWII and the Korean War. In the interview she details her military career and describes the many challenges for women in the military then. Training in Iowa in the cold midwinter in less-than-ideal uniforms was one of her first trials.

In March of 1943 she was one of four women sent to Washington, D.C., to Inspector General School. In October 1943 she was transferred to the Army Air Corp stationed in Tampa, Florida. From there she flew with a team to inspect units all over the country. Oct. 1943 found her at Florence Army Air Force Base in South Carolina in charge of making the dilapidated officers' club and quarters safe, sanitary, and livable, among other duties. After WWII she was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, as a counselor to returning servicemen. She later took a reserve commission in the air force.

Recalled in 1951 because of the Korean conflict, she was sent to England as an administrative officer. Jane also talks extensively in the interview about living in England for several years in the 1950's, her duties and living conditions there.

The list of Jane's activities in the Lansing area in an article about the 1976 award says that she designed, funded, and operated a nursery school from 1933 to 1958; taught and/or advised the mentally handicapped, teen girls in a half-way house, senior citizens, and veterans. It can be seen that her civilian life was impressively devoted to serving others and that she was well qualified for the First Lady of Michigan award.

Note: Jane's great uncle was **Robert H. Ingersoll** of "dollar watch" fame. (See *Clinton Co. Trails*, Dec. 2019.) Sources: familysearch.org; Wayne Summers' research

## Ken Coin – a tribute to a great historian

By Wayne Summers



Kenneth R. Coin passed away on April 4, 2020, in Lansing at the age of 63. Ken grew up in DeWitt and loved the town and its history. While a high school student he worked at the DeWitt District Library under Faye Hanson. Faye at that time was the unofficial town historian. She loved history and had begun collecting items of historical interest and writing about them in local newspapers. After she passed away in 1982, Ken stepped in and took over as DeWitt's historian.

Ken graduated from DeWitt High School in 1975 and while still in his mid-20's wrote and published the original edition of the DeWitt Area History in time for DeWitt's 1983 Sesquicentennial. The following year he began writing newspaper columns and articles that appeared in various county newspapers on and off for a number of years.

In addition to writing, he also was instrumental in the early history of the Clinton County Historical Society. The stenciling over the entry of the museum in St. Johns is his work. He worked diligently to save photos and other items from our past for both the DeWitt District Library and Clinton County Historical Society archives.

I first met Ken in the early 1990's when we were both serving on the DeWitt District Library Board. I have fond memories of doing a cemetery reading together and helping him sort and organize the latest box of old items someone had given him or that he had rescued at an auction. His passion was contagious and I still marvel how he managed to accomplish as much as he did.

While still a relatively young man, his knowledge of things that happened well before he was born was astounding. I remember laughing together as he told of meeting people for the first time who couldn't believe the town historian wasn't some gray-haired old man.

Unfortunately, things changed about 14 years ago when he suffered a major stroke. With the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of DeWitt to occur in 2008, I contacted him about updating and republishing his 1983 book. He admitted that while he'd like to, he knew he couldn't. I asked if he'd mind if I filled in and he told me to go for it. So, with his blessing I updated and prepared for publication his original book.

After that he moved to Florida and I kept in contact mostly through occasional emails and messages. He returned to the Lansing area in 2018 and began semi-regular Facebook bursts of postings with scans of old photos along with his always insightful, witty comments.

One project we had started to work on prior to his stroke was the publication of the Cook family letters. I digitized his typewritten text and had started to format it. He wanted to add a few items along with an epilogue. While still unfinished, I have added what we had completed along with most of his writings to the DeWitt District Library local history webpage. If you check it out you'll be amazed at how much he accomplished in two decades while working full-time and raising a family.

In his last communication to me he said he had started working on a new project to tell the history of the historic buildings of DeWitt. Just a day or two before his death I had messaged back asking how it was going. Unfortunately, some questions never get answered.

Ken was a lover of people and history. He was a kind, soft-spoken, generous man whose time on this earth was way too short. I am grateful to have known him, and we are fortunate to have had him here, even if for a short time, to collect and tell the stories of our past for future generations.

# A Brief History of Michigan Time

By Wayne Summers

I don't know about you, but I often find myself happening upon pieces of history which send me down interesting paths of discovery. Recently while going through a scrapbook from the 1920's, I found a ticket stub<sup>1</sup> from the October 3, 1925, football game between Michigan State and Michigan. That year's game was held at Ferry Field in Ann Arbor. Ferry Field had opened in 1906 and was used by the University of Michigan for football until Michigan Stadium opened in 1927. But, that wasn't what peaked my interest. Instead it was that the starting time was listed as Central, not Eastern as I had expected.

Today, all of Michigan except for the counties bordering Wisconsin are in the Eastern Time Zone. But, Michigan has had a long history of arguing over which time zone it should be in; a debate which continues into the present.

In Michigan's early days people went by local sun time. This worked well until the railroad came to town. Railroads needed a schedule and that meant having regional standard times. In 1885 the Michigan legislature passed a law placing all of Michigan in the Central Time Zone. This made sense as at that time the Eastern-Central time zone dividing line was approximately the Appalachian Mountains and placed Michigan in the same time zone as other states to our east like Ohio and Florida.

In 1907 the More Daylight Club was established in Detroit to move the city to the Eastern Time Zone so the sun would set an hour later giving them more time after work to enjoy the outdoors. At first the proposal saw little traction with people like **R. E. Olds** saying, "It seems grossly unfair that Detroit should embarrass other municipalities and citizens of Michigan by adoption of other than legal time."

But over time the concept gained acceptance in Detroit and in 1915 the city moved to Eastern time (not officially approved until 1922 by the Interstate Commerce Commission) giving the residents an extra hour of daylight each evening. Over the next few years other cities followed. This caused confusion as traveling short distances within Michigan often meant changing time zones.

As the *St. Johns News* stated: "...the diversity of practice is almost as bad as ever, because several of the largest cities use Eastern time in winter as well as summer, while at least one important city – Lansing – sticks to Central time the year round. The result is that nobody can be sure, without inquiry, what time prevails anywhere, either winter or summer, and there always is uncertainty as to the date of change in those places where the clocks are turned forward in the spring." (March 23, 1922 page 2)

To solve this problem, in 1931 the Michigan legislature adopted Eastern time for the lower peninsula while keeping the U. P. on Central time. (This was officially approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1936.)

During World War II some parts of Michigan went on War Time which moved clocks one hour ahead. In 1966 Congress adopted an opt out Uniform Time Act which included a Daylight Savings plan during the summer. Michigan decided to opt out and at the same time placed the entire state in the Eastern Time Zone.

In 1973 Michigan voters chose to opt back in to the Uniform Time Act with the exception of the 4 counties bordering Wisconsin which requested and were granted a move to the Central Time Zone. Since then the dates for Daylight Savings Time have been adjusted, but the arguments over what time zone we should be in and if we should change our clocks twice a year continue.

<sup>1</sup> The ticket was \$2 at the time which is equivalent to nearly \$30 in today's dollars.





## IS THAT YOU GRANDMA?

By Julie Peters

My paternal grandma, **Vina (Holley) Staines Reed**, died before I was born. My dad, **William Staines**, was only 23 when she passed in 1936 so what I remember about her is probably only half (maybe a quarter) of what my dad remembered in his short years with her. Her early life has been a puzzle for me since I started doing the family genealogy. My mother once told me that grandma was never very happy with her mother but never told me why. Maybe Mom didn't know.

What I do know is that Great-Grandma, **Mary E. (Holley) Eldridge Doyen**, was 16 and not married when Grandma was born in 1882. I don't have a copy of Grandma's birth certificate. When Grandma was 18 in the 1900 census, she was living with her grandpa, **Ralph Holley**, in Olive Township. She was listed as Vina Holley, granddaughter. The area for her father's birth place is blank. Her marriage record to my grandpa, **John F. Staines**, in 1906 lists her father as "unknown." After Grandpa died in 1923, Grandma married **Stephen Milton Reed** in 1925.

What is interesting on that marriage record is Grandma's "also known as" area below her name. It says Vina "Lemm" and lists her father as **V. Lemm**. So I checked the 1870 census for Ralph Holley in Olive Township. His daughter, Mary E., was 14 years old and just down the road lived a V. Lemm, age 26. The "V" stands for **Vanransalaer**. There is nothing else that shows V. Lemm as Grandma's father but it kind of makes sense. I would bet that a guy, not married, who had served in the Civil War, and was living just down the road, would have a certain appeal to a 16-year-old girl. We will never know for sure but at age 41 in 1925 Grandma lists her name as "Vina Lemm." Go figure.

I have some great pictures of my grandmother taken at approximately age 38 and here is where the last mystery is: After those pictures, I have nothing. But one day at the Archives, I was going through some photos and came across one that stopped me in my tracks. Of course, there wasn't a name on the back. [Please label your photos for future generations!] So the question is...

### Is that you Grandma?



Vina (Holley) Staines Reed



Unknown

You can tell me what you think at [petersj@msu.edu](mailto:petersj@msu.edu) Thanks!

## Do I have photos of your ancestors?

About twenty years ago my dad gave me an old family photo album. Just recently three uncles also each gave me an old family photo album! I had no idea these albums even existed. What exciting gifts for a genealogist right? Well, the problem is only two of the more than one hundred photos were identified! This identification project is much more than I can do on my own. Maybe you can help.

Many of the photos are portraits of young people from around the 1890's although there are some babies and some older people in the albums.

Most likely the albums were my great-grandparents' **Bernard Sontag** and **Louise Pitsch**, or Louise Pitsch's parents', **Hubert Pitsch** and **Lucy Wirth**. One album may have belonged to Bernard Sontag and his first wife **Theresa Thome**. Some people in the photos are relatives to my ancestors and others may have been friends.

The photos were taken in Westphalia, Portland, Lansing, Detroit, Chicago, Grand Rapids and Pewamo. I believe even the people from the big cities had ties to the Westphalia area.

Distant cousins have identified a few of the photos. Some of the surnames identified so far are **Wirth, Sontag, Maiwurm, Kolp, Pitsch, Leik, Arens, Thelen, Thome, Fedewa, and Martin**.

I've uploaded all the photos to a website called Dead Fred. Dead Fred is a website to help connect old photos with descendants. It's free and you don't need an account in order to view the old photographs.

Here's where I could use your help. I'd be very grateful if you'd go to the website and see if you can identify any of my photographs. Maybe you'll find a photo of one of your ancestors when they were still young and vibrant.

The user interface is a bit clumsy but here is how you can find all 108 of the photos I've uploaded.

Go to <https://www.deadfred.com/>

- Go down until you see a search box where it says, "Keyword Search". Type in "Westphalia Michigan". (Don't use a comma.) Click "Go!"
- You'll initially only see about 25 photos but there are actually 108 photographs. Click on any photo.
- To see all 108 photos look for where it says, "To view all records posted by this submitter, click here:" and then click on the box that says, "View other records".
- You'll see there are eight pages of my photographs. When you click on a picture for a better view, you'll see an identifying number in the tab at the top of the page. When you want to return to the pages with multiple photos close that tab.
- If you can identify anyone in these pictures, I'd really appreciate you letting me know who it is by using their identifying number.

You can right click on the photo for a copy or I'd be happy to send you a digital copy. Thank you so much for any help you can give me! Deb (Sunday) Trinter ~~~ [debtrinter@cox.net](mailto:debtrinter@cox.net) ~~~ 702-466-0380

## DISTANT SOCIALS

Social distancing is no fun. For fun in the distant past though, when people actually got together in the same room and virtual meetings were not even imagined, box socials were commonly held to raise money for a specific cause. The usual scheme involved the women decorating boxes and packing them with a meal. Then, not knowing on whose box they were bidding, the men competed for the boxes, a nice meal and dinner companion. There would be some background hinting and cheating going on, all in good humor, if you had your mind set on a particular partner.

There also was the "shadow" social, an event where the women's shadows were cast on a sheet and bid on by the men. Then there was the "toe" social! Here are some other variations of the social which took place in Clinton Co.:

There will be a "tie" social at the Fairview School Friday evening... Everyone is invited and bring well-filled boxes. *Clinton Republican*; 17 Oct 1918

The Hammond School will give a "hidden name" social ...next Friday night... Proceeds go for library purposes. Come boys, bring your girls and girls bring your pencils. *Clinton Republican*; 18 Dec 1895

A "grab bag" social will be given at the Bingham Grange Hall Thursday evening... at which time the drawing for the quilt made by the ladies of the order will take place. *Clinton Independent*; 6 Aug 1903

"Regretfully, due to present circumstances, the  
Clinton County Historical Museum  
(Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum)  
will be closed until further notice.  
Please call 989.292.9096 with questions."

The **Archives of the Clinton County Historical Society** is located at 16101 Brook Road in Dewitt Township 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 Thursday.

Phone: 517-482-5117 Ext. 2.

E-mail: [ccgensoc@yahoo.com](mailto:ccgensoc@yahoo.com)

Web page: [dewittlibrary.org/CCHS](http://dewittlibrary.org/CCHS).

CCHS members have free usage of the Archives, non-member cost \$5.00 donation per day.

The **Historical Society** meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 1:00 pm Nov. through March and at 7:00 p.m. Apr. through Oct. at the Redeemer Church – St. Johns Campus on State Street, at the northeast corner of the courthouse square in St. Johns, with entry through the south backdoors. Regular meetings are not held in June & December.

The **Clinton County Historical Museum** complex is located on the west side of the courthouse square in St. Johns. [pgsmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:pgsmuseum@gmail.com). To join the Friends of the Museum and make a donation of \$25, contact them at: [www.pgsmuseum.com](http://www.pgsmuseum.com); or PGS Museum, P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Mr./Mrs./Miss \_\_\_\_\_

List 5 Names you are Researching: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do we have permission to share your information with other researchers: (please circle Yes or No on each):  
Name & Address: Yes No E-Mail: Yes No

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Membership for the Clinton County Historical Society is \$20 annually.

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Send me Clinton County Trails by e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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.

*5<sup>th</sup> Annual CCHS Program*

for June 18, 2020

Is

**CANCELED**

CLINTON COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 174  
ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN 48879

