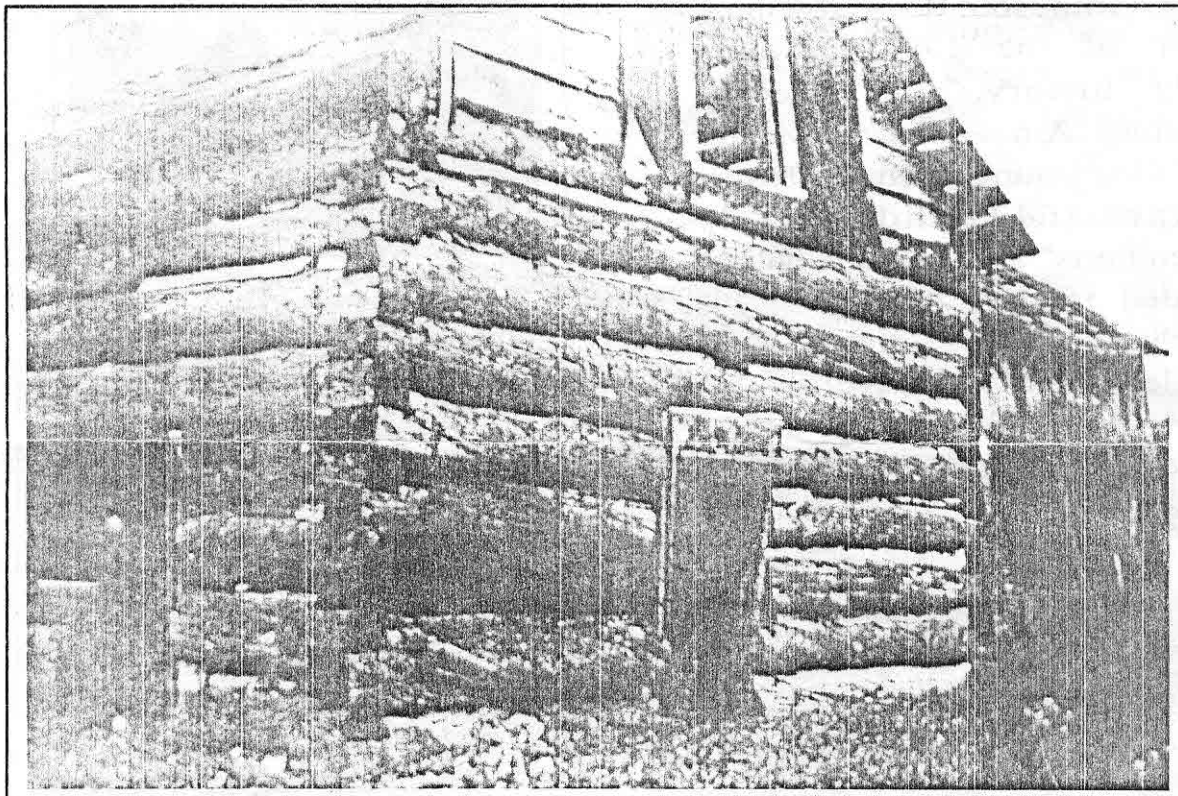


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FRANCIS DOWNING LOG CABIN

The picture of the Downing Log Cabin, was taken in 1940 and was located on Curtis Lake, 5 miles south of St. Johns to Centerline Road and east 4 miles, (two small lakes back off the roadway and on private land now) It was located on the south side of the road about a quarter of a mile back, and occupied in 1875 by Francis Downing and his wife, Josephine Archer. The family called it the "Five and Ten" (five acres with ten family members.)

Francis Downing, served in the 100th New York Inf. in the Civil War. He married Mary Wright, who died in 1865 in Lockport, NY. He migrated to Michigan and married 2nd, Miss Josephine Archer of Whitford, Michigan.

His son, CHARLES H. DOWNING, is the subject of this article. Grandson, Ross Downing, author of the 1989 Downing family history, "Sir George Downing, Ambassador Master Spy, Nine young Men Of Hope, Harvard:1642 and Family Descendants" and son of Charles, provided information about his father's life and his art. Ross provided photographs of his father's paintings for this article and will be presenting them to the archives.



PORTRAIT



CHARLES H. DOWNING

1875 - 1963

Charles H. Downing was a colorful person, literally. He was a painter and artist by profession. Here is part of his legacy, a collection of photos of his art.

Charles was born April 2, 1875, one of nine children, living on the "Five and ten" and later on the family moved to Ovid, MI.

Charles attended St. Johns, Central School when it was a high school. When Charles was 17/18 years old he road his bicycle to Florida, working his way down and back. He could spin many tales to his children in his later life about his experiences.

At an early age Charles and another artist set up a gallery in Detroit, Michigan, planning to paint all the pictures of the Detroit Tigers and sell them to the management to be hung in the proper places. Charles's first was of Ty Cobb, in his rookie year, 1930. The Tigers would not pay him what he wanted for the oil painting, so he refused to sell it. He stored it until 1950, when he ran across it in the attic. He corresponded with Ty Cobb, and

offered the painting to him. Ross Downing has two letters from Ty Cobb accepting the paintings.

During his career in Detroit, Charles learned much from his partner, who was a good artist. They painted signs on sides of buildings, lettered signs on trucks for businesses and ect. Charles eventually moved to Owosso, where he set up shop, doing the same as he had in Detroit. In his spare time, he practiced his art.



FAMILIAR DURING THE 1930'S/40'S

Charles painted almost all the signs, lettered all the trucks and painted the sign boards around the county for many years.

