



Genealogists of the
Clinton County Historical Society

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Clinton County Trails

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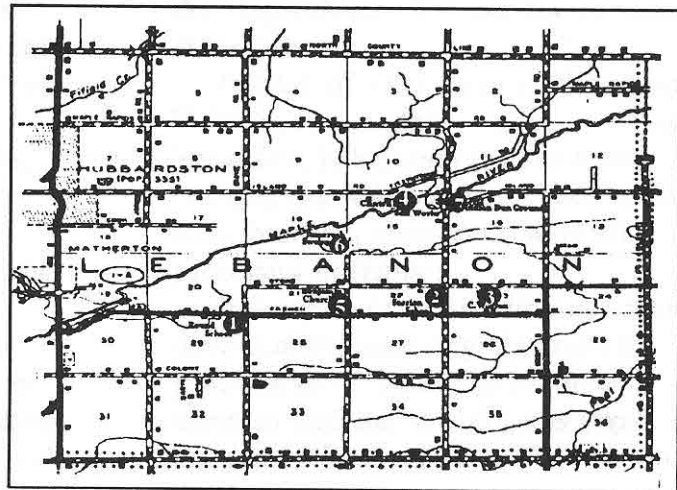
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NEWSLETTER

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LEBANON TWP.



- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 - Round School | 4 - Clinton County Salt Works |
| 2 - Sessions School | 5 - Benjamin Church Res. |
| 3 - Charles Warren Res. | 6 - Tamarack Swamp |
| | 7 - Old Indian Burial Ground |

This map shows approximate locations to points of interest referred to in the following articles about early Lebanon history.

LEBANON FIRST KNOWN AS WANDAUGON TOWNSHIP

Ref: Clinton County Republican-News Centennial Edition

The third township to be organized in Clinton included the entire northwest one-quarter of the county and was originally designated as Wandaugon, from the Chippewa Indian language meaning "salt springs." Within one month after the act of creating Wandaugon (April 2, 1838,) the settlers put pressure on the legislature, to change the name to Lebanon. However the omission of a short phrase, "the county of Clinton which is embraced in" was left out, and the name Wandaugon remained until the next legislature went into session a year later.

One of the biggest promotions in early Clinton County was the **Clinton Salt Works Company** in Lebanon Township. When it collapsed the thud was

heard throughout the state.

The company actually was based on the results of a scientific survey which showed salt springs existed along the Maple River in Lebanon.

The salt company was incorporated in 1837 under a special law passed by the legislature; and from there a village was platted and a bank was formed. On April 3, 1838, the legislature incorporated the Clinton Salt Works Company with **Robert S. Parks, Sawson S. Warner, Charles Hubbell, Thomas B. Andrews and Calvin C. Parks** as the principal stockholders. A village known as **Clinton Salt Works** was to be located in section 15 of the present township. The company erected several frame buildings in 1838, platted their village and founded the **Clinton County Salt Works Bank**. The capital of the bank was to be not less than \$50,000 and not more than \$100,000.

And that was the financial rub. When the village died in infancy and the bank soon failed, some people lost heavily, and long had a "salty" taste in their mouths from the disastrous financial venture into production of salt for commercial use, and further losses through the collapse of the **Clinton County Salt-Works Bank** during the "wildcat" banking period of the 1830's.

Rumor held later that the bank's only specie was a bucket of silver coins owned personally by one of the directors, **Moses Dean**, of Maple Township in Ionia County. Other stories held in subsequent years that before **Dr. Houghton** (state geologist) made his survey of the river, some of the incorporators of the salt works sank a barrel of salt in a hole at the bottom of the Maple River. Whatever the fact, both the bank and the salt works soon failed, and thus ended the manufacture of salt in Lebanon Township.

The first settler recorded was **Daniel**

Barker, a native of New England. He had first moved from the east to Washtenaw County. In May, 1834, he settled in sections 30 and 31. By Christmas he had 25 acres under cultivation and purchased 80 acres in section 20, giving him a total of 230 acres in three sections. In June, the following year he became the father of twin daughters, who became the first children born in Lebanon. On November 6, returning from Ionia where he had gone to buy flour and other supplies for the family, he drowned in attempting to cross the Maple River. He was but 30 years old at the time.

In May of 1837 three brothers, **John, William and Andrew Vance**, of Starker, Yates Co., N.Y., were next to settle. John bringing his wife and two children, and the other brothers, unmarried, were all successful in farming.

John became outstanding in Lebanon's development, parlaying his original purchase of 40 acres into holdings of 894 acres, in addition to 300 acres given his children. He too active part in organizing the township government, serving 11 years as supervisor and holding several other positions.

Another resident of Starker, **John Vance's** brother-in law, **John A. Millard** settled in Lebanon in July of '37. In succeeding years farms were occupied by the families of **Dr. Norton H. and Miner Y. Beckwith, Alonzo D. Brewster, Charles Sessions, James W. Tabor, Harvey Waterman, Russell Smith, Martin Yetter and A. Warner**. **Tabor**, in 1840, owned the entire section 18.□

RECOLLECTIONS OF WESLEY E. WARNER

Wesley E. Warner was born 11 October 1853 in Lorain County, OH. He came to

Lebanon Twp. with his parents (**Charles J. and Angeline J. Warner**) about 1855. He married **Celia B. Burnett** of Gratiot County on 4 September 1883. He died at age 77 in July 1931 and is buried in Sowle Cemetery.

Mr. Warner worked as a teacher from 1872 until he purchased the *Maple Rapids Dispatch* in July 1885. In the last year of his life he wrote several articles for The Clinton County Republican-News in which he described incidents in the early life of the northeast section of Clinton County. Those articles follow:

11 February 1931

During the summer of 1855 the Round Schoolhouse district was organized. The school board remodeled a log shanty which had been used by workmen to wire barrel staves in during the previous winter, and **Mrs. Angeline J. Warner** (the writer's mother) was hired to teach.

In the quietude one day a black snake was discovered lying full length (4' 2") in the crevice between two logs about 6' up and above some pupils as though inspecting their work. The pupils were marched out, and two large boys killed the reptile; but strange to say, at the first disturbance of his snakeship, it jumped from its position on the log and landed near the center of the floor at the feet of the boys, then recoiling, lunged at one boy's face and nearly hit him. The school went along as before.

Mention of the above snake's attending that school, recalls that about 50 years ago, the school board hired **Elmer Rogers** to teach a winter term. He tackled the job, but after a month those pupils who did not like him had most all quit school--no compulsory law those days. He had only one pupil each day for a week, then she quit and the board locked the door. Mr.

Rogers went to the school house each school day during the life of his contract and remained about an hour, then returned home. The residents of the district enjoyed making fun on him. At the close of his contract he called for his pay, but the board refused to cash up. He placed the matter in an attorney's hands and got his pay. The board did not laugh. Mr. Rogers is a prominent lawyer in Chicago now and chuckles over his victory in that case.

Some years ago every male citizen was required to pay a poll tax or work a day on the highway. A few dishonest men would refuse to pay or work. **John Pinkney**, an Englishman who lived on the Island many years, was elected path-master. He summoned one fellow who boasted of never having paid a poll tax. As he did not appear, Mr. Pinkney called him into court and he paid with costs added. Mr. Pinkney was getting after others when it was discovered that he was not naturalized, hence could not hold office.

5 March 1931

The schools in the Sessions district, No. 3, Lebanon Township, had not been a success for several terms on account of four pupils from a family who resided there then, but have since passed to parts unknown. I heard the director of that time about 40 years ago say that those pupils seemed to be determined to run the school as they pleased or break it up.

He hired a **Mr. Taft** to teach the winter term of 1859-60, and told him that the board wanted him to teach a school for the whole district and not for the troublesome family only. The school had been run by them long enough; the board would stand back of him.

He tackled the job and had things running nicely two or three weeks when he decided to stop a bad habit; viz, he

