

The Vermontville colony, its genesis and history, with personal sketches of the colonists

THE VERMONTVILLE COLONY: ITS GENESIS AND HISTORY, WITH PERSONAL SKETCHES OF THE COLONISTS.

BY EDWARD W. BARBER.

Among Michigan towns and villages with an interesting early organization, not another one was more unique in its genesis, settlement and history than Vermontville. Founded by an organized colony of Vermonters, with Michigan, a church and a school in their minds, the land was purchased of the government in the names of selected trustees under a written compact, which set forth the plans, and purposes of the colonists. Only one person, the minister and leader, had ever seen Michigan. It was an ideal town and village, with a written constitution duly signed by each of the proposed colonists before the land was bought and its location known by any of them. They made the venture at random in an entirely unknown region, but they were men and women who believed in the guiding hand of Providence, and although more work than wealth fell to their lot, they builded even better than they knew.

THE PIONEER ERA.

After all, it was not dreams of great wealth, but desire for larger opportunities for themselves and their children, that caused these Vermonters to seek new homes in this beautiful peninsula of the great northwest. It was the era of the pioneers. The money age had scarcely dawned. Force was reckoned in terms of horse power; steam had barely commenced to haul feeble locomotives over strap rails spiked to stringers that were laid lengthwise of the roadbed; cross-ties and tee rails had not been thought of, and electricity was an untamed element of nature that flashed as lightning athwart the beclouded sky

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and caused people to say their prayers when the thunder pealed. The words oftenest used then were home, family, schools, education, churches, religion, virtue and morality; not, as now, gold, silver, riches, wealth, capital, interest, bonds, mortgages, stocks and dividends. No one expected to get a living without working for an earning it. Making money out of the labor of others had not become the overtopping ambition, except in the states where slavery existed. The atmosphere of life is now pervaded by money considerations. Life is not all what it was to those typical pioneers. Their quest was for good land. Great cities are busy making and selling goods, and the growing villages cluster around large factories as their

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life centers; while the agricultural village becomes smaller and less consequential. Nevertheless the best brain and brawn is still born in the country. Society is diseased with a feverish craving for money; it is more than Heaven, and with it none fear Hell. Big figures with the dollar mark before them are the open sesame to social recognition and political preferment. Such names as Carnegie and Rockefeller are oftener printed than God and Christ. Gold-plating sanctifies moral oftenness; financial tanks, loaded with railroad, oil, gas and other stocks, to say nothing about the enormous quantity of water injected into them, outrank churches and universities in popular estimation. Cash is monarch; character secondary. Our great men are monopolists and millionaires. The pioneer age had no wealthy ruling class. The money age brings new, if not more dangerous, social and political conditions, as unlike those of sixty years ago as special privilege, monopoly and inequality are unlike freedom of opportunity for all, equal rights for all and special privileges for none. The money age means vast accumulations of wealth by a few, created and sustained by the toil of the many.

When this band of Vermontville pioneers entered the Thornapple valley sixty-one years ago, a new epoch was marked on the dial of progress. Why did they locate there? First, because their agents found in town 3 north of range 6 west a body of contiguous government land such as they wanted; and second, the Clinton and Kalamazoo canal

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had been surveyed along that valley less than a mile from the spot they selected for a village. The Erie canal was a great success, and civilization always follows the natural or artificial channels of commerce. Their canal was not built, but the railroad came thirty-three years—one generation—later. Before that time—the land was located in May, 1836—na occasional explorer, trapper or hunter may have been there; and, if so, on those few occasions only had been heard in the dense wilderness the voices of partly civilized men. But even those voices, if they had broken the savage solitude, had died away and left no echo. But with the pioneers came a change. They came to consecrate that region to civilization, came to build homes, came to build the schoolhouse and the church, came to clear away the wilderness, came to lay the first foundations of civilized society.

MAKING PROGRESS.

Year by year the columns of smoke rising from the stick and mud chimneys of humble log houses grew more frequent; year after year more of the wilderness was removed, as the stroke of the axe and the crash of falling timber echoed through the forest aisles; progress was slow but it was steady; every blow that was struck was along the line of improvement and stimulated hope and courage; and though one after another of 3 the first comers, worn out, fell into their last sleep; though strong men died and gentle women were forced to repress the longings for more attractive and refined surrounding—which longings are inherent in the nature of true women,—still their patience and their faith triumphed, and they accepted their deprivations and the manifold burdens of their hard toil without plaint. Year by year more cultivated flowers bloomed; the fruit trees they had planted grew and began to bear; one savagery after another was driven away, one new comfort after another was secured, until early in the fifties, on the discovery of gold in California and Australia, and from pouring large supplies of the precious money metal into the channels of commerce, better prices for all the products of toil were obtained and a new impetus was given to material prosperity; one by one the crudities of the early settlements gave way to modern comforts and adornments, and under the transformation that has been wrought, that first coming of sixty-one years ago seems like ancient history.

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In this country it can never be repeated. Those who did not participate in it can have no accurate knowledge of it. The people who do not reverse the pioneers who blazed the trail through the wilderness and reared the first log temples therein are in sentiment a poor people indeed. We owe all that we have and are in this grand State of ours to those who "Hewed the dark old woods away And gave the virgin fields today."

However slight the respect men may have for the live, throbbing, pushing present in which the prick of a pin causes pain and a cruel word brings anguish, they have occasion for a good deal of reverence for the past. Out of the past came the present. Old aches and pains and struggles are forgotten in the glamour of enchantment that distance lends. Individual lives, social conditions, civic institutions, financial experiences, religious beliefs, home and country, immediate environment, and the broader sweep of world movements and national and racial destinies, are not present creations, but products of a long and prolific past. Former lives and ancestral types are merged in present personalities, and find expression in moral, social and political conditions, and in civic institutions. It has taken all of the past in every realm of nature, in every human love and thought and act to evolve the present. We are what we are in part because of the Mayflower, of Bunker Hill and Yorktown, and of the Erie canal which formed the first connecting water link between the east and the west along the parallel of New England and New York, as well as because of the immediate environments with which we are familiar. It is safe to say that but for the Erie canal, opened in 1826, there would have been no Vermont colony established at Vermontville in 1836; and I for one am here today as the 4 narrator of its birth and history, because such a colony had its beginning in the wilderness of Eaton county sixty-one years ago. Thus the past shapes the present, as the present moulds the future.

PAST AND PRESENT.

The heroic men who cut loose from old-world moorings near the beginning of the seventeenth century to plant new institutions in America because they had ideals that could not find expression in the stifling tyrannies that prevailed, did not separate

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themselves wholly from the past—they brought all they wanted of it with them—and used it in laying the foundations for a larger liberty, civil and religious, than the world had ever before known; nor did the New Englanders who came as pioneers to Michigan, here to make homes, settle towns, found villages and cities, build school houses and organize churches, divorce themselves from the habits of thought and social aims and customs of their immediate ancestors. They brought New England and New York with them to the west; into their statutes they copied the laws of the states they came from, with which they were familiar; and the Vermonters brought Vermont ideas and customs with them and planted them in an unbroken wilderness at Vermontville in 1836, for in May of that year the land was located for the colonists. The larger growth of freedom and independence in thought and action came from the transplanting to a new and broader arena of struggle and effort.

Fortunately for the spread of American ideas and institutions the pioneers have always been a hopeful, up-looking and on-looking people, desiring something better and willing to make the effort to find it, and they always found enough that was evil in the present to inspire them with hope and courage to work and fight for improved conditions for themselves and their children. If they denied freedom for others, because certain that their political methods and religious beliefs were the best for all, yet they claimed a large allowance of liberty for themselves, and would endure martyrdom rather than surrender the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, though not unwilling to compel others to worship as they worshipped. They were sincere, and the sentiment that led them to turn away from the tyrannies of the past and work out larger problems of civil and religious liberty was rooted in those fundamental ideas of equal rights and equal privileges for all before the law, which are yet to find fruition in that brotherhood of humanity which is the basic principle of christianity and the corner stone of American institutions, and holds men back on this continent from arrogating to themselves the right to rule others because of the accident of birth or the possession of wealth. He who worships at the shrine of wealth is not a true American, and though a 5

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bastard aristocracy of proud flesh may rob the people of the fruits of their labor, yet it never founded a commonwealth or changed a savage wilderness into the homes of a civilized and prosperous community. This is the work of pioneers. Vice born to the purple is not worthy of human worship. The grandest crown ever worn on earth was a crown of thorns.

THE PIONEERS WE HONOR.

We honor true manhood and womanhood in recounting the deeds of our pioneers. This laudable pride of American ancestry should grow stronger with the lapse of years. To preserve in permanent records the names and efforts of the early settlers of Michigan is the commendable purpose of this society. We bring them together in one place, enroll them in the archives of the State, and make this the Valhalla of our heroes—not slain in battle, but who achieved the greater victories of peace—and in literature instead of architectural monuments, preserve the names of our pioneers. It is not a narration of the deeds of blood-stained and crime-stained rulers, but of the common people who settled a state and set in operation the forces that made it in sixty years the eighth in rank as to population and foremost in loyalty and enterprise in this American sisterhood. Such ancestral price as that of the New Englander, one of whose ancestors had taken part in checking the tyranny of Andros' colonial government, is entirely justifiable. "The time will come, sir," he remarked, "when it will be accounted honorable to have descended from the men who settled this country."

Already such a time has come in Michigan. My purpose in presenting these thoughts is to stimulate the historic spirit among our people and awaken a livelier interest in the events of the past. In Europe family history is largely devoted to the record of inherited titles and landed property, but here there is nothing of the sort. We take no interest in the conferment of royal distinction upon some court favorite, worthy or unworthy, but in the founders of towns, villages and cities—the makers of Michigan—the builders of states and of the nation. A titled lineage is not an American inheritance, much as our snobs may ape the ways of old-world aristocracy, but an ancestry that kings despised and bigots

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persecuted. American history is the story of a people. We see as we study the past the pioneers as they walk the streets, sit with them at their frugal meals, hear them talk over the affairs of state and nation, note the firmness of their political and religious convictions, admire their assent to the rule of the majority without surrendering an iota of their own opinions, yet combined with a sense of social order in working out, by mutual action and reaction, the great problem of human liberty and religious toleration. To produce an orderly society out of all the conflict that abounds in nature and life required the discipline of centuries.

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SETTLEMENTS IN MICHIGAN.

In Michigan except at a few points, such as Detroit, Monroe, Mt. Clemens, Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie, we go back less than three-quarters of a century for the commencement of its settlement and civilization. An official list of the post offices in the United States of June 1, 1828, when John McLean, afterwards an eminent justice of the United States supreme court, was postmaster general, shows that there were only nine offices in that part of Michigan territory comprising the present State, namely: Ann Arbor, John Allen, postmaster; Detroit, James Abbott, postmaster; Monroe, Thomas M. Lumkin, postmaster; Mount Clemens, Alfred Ashley, postmaster; Mackinac, Jonathan N. Bailey, postmaster; Pontiac, Olmsted Chamberlin, postmaster; Sault de Ste. Marie, John Hulbert, postmaster; Tecumseh, Musgrove Evans, postmaster.

In 1831, on the first of April, according to a later official table, issued when William T. Barry was postmaster general, the number of post offices in Michigan had increased to sixty, and such present cities as Jackson (then called Jacksonopolis), with Isaiah W. Bennett, postmaster; Niles, Isaac Gray, postmaster, and Adrian, Addison J. Comstock, postmaster, appear in the list. Oakland county came to the front of that time with twelve post office, Wayne following next with nine, Washtenaw and Lenawee six each, Macomb and Monroe

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five each, St. Clair four, Cass St. Joseph three each, Berrien, Branch, Chippewa, Jackson, Hillsdale, Kalamazoo and Mackinac one each.

In the third tier of counties west of Oakland not a post office had been established seventy-six years ago. About the time a number of the southern counties of the State were named after members of President Jackson's administration, to wit: Jackson, Van Buren, Calhoun, Livingston, Ingham, Eaton, Cass, Branch, Barry and Berrien—Jackson receiving its name from the president, Calhoun from the vice president during his first term; Van Buren, secretary of state in the first and vice president the second term; Livingston, secretary of state; Ingham, secretary of the treasury; Eaton and Cass, secretaries of war; Branch, secretary of the navy; Barry, postmaster general; Berrien, attorney general.

PREPARATORY.

The surveyor antedated the pioneers, though first in the order of transition from savagery to civilization was the extinguishment of the Indian title, which was effected for Eaton county by the treaty of Saginaw in 1819, whereby, as appears in an exhaustive paper on the subject of the Indians of Michigan and the cession of their lands to the United States by treaties prepared by the late eminent President of this Society, Hon. Alpheus Felch, and printed in volume 26 of its "Collections," was negotiated by Gen. Lewis Cass as commissioner with the Chippewas. The initial point or southeast corner of this cession is in the meridian line six miles south of the north line of Jackson county, thence west sixty miles to a point about four miles northeast of the present city of Kalamazoo, and thence northeasterly through the counties of Barry, Ionia, Montcalm and Isabella to the headwaters of Thunder Bay river in Montmorency county, and embracing all the land east of it not ceded by previous treaties. This cession included all of Eaton county. In 1825 the east, north and west boundaries of the county were surveyed by Lucius Lyon, one of Michigan's first two United States senators; the south boundary was surveyed by John Mullett in 1826, and the subdivisions during the same year by Orange Ridsen, who lived at Saline and was a representative from Washtenaw county in the legislature of 1838.

GENESIS OF "THE UNION COLONY."

In the fall of 1835 Rev. Sylvester Cochrane, a Congregational minister of East Poultney, Vermont, came to Michigan with a view to making a permanent location. He was the father of Lyman Cochrane, a prominent attorney of Detroit and a valuable member of the legislature, who died a few years ago. Mr. Cochrane found settlements so few and the inhabitants so widely scattered that it was impossible for them, except when gathered in villages, to have schools and enjoy religious privileges. Education and religion were needed at the start as essential to the orderly development of civilized society. He returned to Vermont, thought out the plan of a colony and began preparations for the execution of his project. The prevalence of the "Michigan fever," easily increased by accounts of the great lakes in the heart of the continent, the oak openings, the beautiful prairies and the vast wilderness of the wonderful peninsula, where the wild Indians still had happy hunting grounds, made it an easy matter to arouse the hereditary tendency of members of the Aryan race to move westward among enterprising Vermonters. A strong and earnest man, full of missionary zeal, he visited different places in Vermont and met and conferred with those who desired to emigrate. Early in the winter of 1835-6 a meeting was held in East Poultney, which was attended by a number of persons who had caught the western fever. The plan proposed by Mr. Cochrane was discussed, approved and the initiatory steps taken to carry it into effect. Subsequent meetings were held in Castleton, Vermont, and on the 27th day of March, 1836, the constitution of "The Union Colony" was formally adopted. This being an unusual and unique inception of a colony for the settlement of a Michigan village and town, the document is worthy of preservation in a volume of the State Pioneer and Historical Society. That it might not be lost to posterity it is recorded in the office of the 8 register of deeds of Eaton country. This fundamental declaration of principles and polity, with religion, education and association as its leading ideas carefully drawn, is styled,

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF UNION COLONY:

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“Whereas, The enjoyment of the ordinances and institutions of the Gospel is in a great measure unknown in many parts of the western country; and

“Whereas, We believe that a pious and devoted emigration is to be one of the most efficient means, in the hands of God, in removing the moral darkness which hangs over a great portion of the valley of the Mississippi; and

“Whereas, We believe that a removal to the west may be a means of promoting our temporal interest, and we trust be made subservient to the advancement of Christ's kingdom;

” *We do therefore*, Form ourselves into an association or colony with the design of removing into some parts of the western country which shall hereafter be designated, and agree to bind ourselves to observe the following rules:

“1. The association or colony shall be known by the appellation or name of “The Union Colony.”

“2. The Colony shall consist of those only who shall be admitted through a committee appointed for that purpose, and will subscribe their names to the articles and compact adopted by the colony.

“3. We hereby agree to make our arrangements for a removal as soon as our circumstances will permit—if possible, some time during the summer or fall of the present year, 1836.

“4. We agree, when we have arrived in the western country, to locate ourselves, if possible, in the same neighborhood with each other, and to form ourselves into such a community as will enable us to enjoy the same social and religious privileges which we leave behind.

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“5. In order to accomplish this object, we solemnly pledge ourselves to do all that is in our power to carry with us the institutions of the Gospel, to support them with the means which God has given us, and to hand them down to our children.

“6. We do also agree that, for the benefit of our children and the rising generation, we will endeavor, so far as possible, to carry with and perpetuate among us the same literary privileges that we are permitted here to enjoy.

“7. We do also pledge ourselves that we will strictly and rigidly observe the holy Sabbath, neither laboring ourselves, nor permitting our children, or workmen, or beasts to desecrate this day of rest by any kind of labor or recreation.

“8. As ardent spirits have invariably proved the bane of every community into which they have been introduced, we solemnly pledge ourselves that we will neither buy, nor sell, nor use this article, except for medical purposes, and we will use all lawful means to keep it utterly out of the settlement.

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“9. As we must necessarily endure many of those trials and privations which are incident to a settlement in a new country, we agree that we will do all in our power to befriend each other, we will esteem it not only a duty, but a privilege to sympathize with each other under all our trials, to do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and to assist each other on all necessary occasions.”

The above fundamental declarations, in the nature of a constitution, clearly set forth the secular and religious purposes of the Vermontville colonists, and they indicate the dominant New England ideas of sixty years ago. They are distinctively Puritan in character. Minister Cochrane was the leader of the flock into the western wilderness and, no doubt, they were drafted by him. But a plan of operations was needed to carry into effect these declarations, and hence a series of rules and regulations was adopted as a

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practical mode of procedure in purchasing and distributing the needed land among the colonists. This plan is set forth in the series of votes and resolutions herewith presented in full, which may be properly designated as a

CODE OF LAWS FOR THE COLONY.

“The following votes and resolutions have been passed at the regular meetings of the colony, and are binding upon its members:

“1. *Voted*, That a committee of two be appointed, whose duty it shall be to make inquiry concerning the character of individuals who may wish to unite with the colony, and no person shall be admitted without the consent of this committee. (S. Cochrane and I. C. Culver were appointed a committee for this purpose.)

“2. *Voted*, That three agents appointed to go into the western country and select a suitable location for the use of the colony, and purchase the same. (Col. J. B. Scovill of Orwell, Deacon S. S. Church of Sudbury, and Wm. G. Henry of Bennington, were appointed a standing committee for this purpose.)

“3. *Voted*, That we hereby authorize our agents to purchase for the use of the colony three miles square, or 5,780 acres, and as much more as they may have funds to purchase.

“4. *Voted*, That the land, when purchased, be laid out by the agents so as to conform as nearly as the location and other circumstances will permit to the schedule adopted by the colony.

“5. *Voted*, That no individual member of the colony shall be allowed to take more than one farm lot of 160 acres, and one village lot of ten acres, within the limits of the settlement.

“6. *Voted*, That the agents be authorized to take a duplicate or certificate of the purchased lands in one name or the committee for raising funds; and the said committee shall hold the said lands in their possession until the first Monday in October, 1836, at which time

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the land shall be distributed among the settlers, according to some plan on which they may then agree; the village lots, however, may be taken up by the settlers when they first arrive, each one taking his choice of the unoccupied lots.

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“7. *Voted*, That each individual shall be obligated to settle the lot which he takes by the first of October, 1837, and in case of delinquency in this respect both the village and the farm lot may be sold to some other person, in which case the purchase money shall be refunded by the agents of the colony, with interest from the time it was paid.

“8. *Voted*, That each of the settlers, when he unites with the colony, shall advance \$212.50, for which he shall be entitled to a farm lot of 160 acres and a village lot of ten acres, to be assigned to him according to the rules of the colony; and if any settler shall find himself unable to advance this sum, he may pay in \$106.25, for which he shall be entitled to a farm lot of eighty acres and one-half of a village lot; and in case no money is paid before the departure of the agents, those who are delinquent shall give a note to the committee for raising funds, payable on the 25th day of June next, with interest for three months.

“9. *Voted*, That each settler, when he receives a deed of his village lot, shall give a note to the agents of the colony, payable in two years from the first of September, 1836, for the sum of twenty-five dollars, and this sum shall be appropriated towards defraying the expenses of building a meeting-house for the use of the colony.

“10. *Voted*, That an eighty-acre lot be reserved for a parsonage, out of the purchase, to be selected by the agents.

“11. *Voted*, That our agents keep a regular bill of their necessary expenses, from the time they start until they have made a purchase and surveyed the village lots, and the colony pay one-half of said expenses.

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“We, whose names are hereto annexed, do hereby pledge ourselves that we will willingly conform to all the articles and votes of the colony as contained above.

“The above and foregoing finally adopted March 28, 1836, at Castleton, Vt.”

NAMES OF THE COLONISTS.

The signatures of forty-two persons are affixed to the foregoing compact, but we give the names of only the twenty-two who became actual residents of the village and town of Vermontville, with the former residence and occupation of each when stated, in the order they appear. Except where otherwise noted they were citizens of Vermont, from Addison, Bennington and Rutland counties:

Rev. Sylvester Cochrane, Poultney, clergyman.

Hiram J. Mears, Poultney, wheelwright.

Levi Merrill, Jr., Poultney, farmer.

Simon S. Church, Sudbury, farmer.

Jacob Fuller, Bennington, cooper.

Oren Dickinson, West Haven, farmer.

Elijah S. Mead, West Rutland, farmer.

Wait J. Squier, New Haven, farmer.

Stephen D. Scovell, Orwell, farmer.

Simeon McCotter, Orwell, cabinet-maker.

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Walter S. Fairfield, Castleton, printer.

Sidney B. Gates, Brandon, farmer.

Daniel Barber, Benson, merchant.

Jay Hawkins, Castleton, farmer.

Martin S. Norton, Bennington, blacksmith.

Dewey H. Robinson, Bennington, physician.

Bazaleel Taft, Bennington, machinist.

Roger W. Griswold, Benson, farmer.

Edward M. Barbes, Benson, farmer.

Wells R. Martin, Bennington, surveyor.

Charles Imus, Dorset, Vermont.

Willard Davis, Bellevue, Michigan.

George S. Browning, Bellevue, Michigan.

Oliver J. Stiles, Bellevue, Michigan.

Of these pioneer settlers Dr. Oliver J. Stiles settled in the village, remained but a short time and moved to New York; Charles Imus settled on the farm now owned by Chauncey H. Dwight, four miles from the village, commenced an improvement, sold out in two or three years and moved away; Bazaleel Taft settled on his village lot, remained there about two years, then moved to a farm in the town of Kalamo, where he lived many years until his

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death; and Elijah S. Mead built a log house on his village lot and lived there a short time until his wife died in April, 1837, when he left never to return. The rest of those named became permanent settlers and were identified with the growth, progress and character of Vermontville.

CONSIDERATIONS.

Among the miscellaneous papers preserved by S. S. Church and now in the possession of his son, E. P. Church, superintendent of the Michigan School for the Blind, is one which sets forth the "Considerations for locating a colony," probably prepared by Rev. Sylvester Cochrane. It also contains the names of thirty-two of the colonists and the sum contributed by each towards the purchase money of the land—in all \$5,792.50.

At the outset of these "Considerations" the charge of Moses to the delegates from the twelve tribes of Israel who were sent to search the land of Canaan is referred to—Numbers 13, 17-20, namely:

"And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain;

"And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

"And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strongholds;

"And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not; and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."

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Of course the Vermonters were not freebooters like the ancient Israelites referred to, as they had put up the money to buy the land they wanted, and their faces, like those of their

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Aryan ancestors for forty centuries, were directed westward instead of southward; but their agents were asked to have in view, in selecting a location—"first consideration, a healthy place, with good water, realizing that life depends upon this; second, a rich and fertile soil, well watered, interspersed with wood and prairie of practicable; third, to be located on or near a water fall is of great service to a colony; fourth, consider the country around—is there a prospect of its being speedily settled—is it capable of supporting a dense population—is it where produce can be got to market—is the soil qualified for various productions, not only for grain of different kinds and fruits, But for the mulberry, cattle, horses and sheep; fifth, a situation where a canal or railroad may cross, or in the center of a county, will greatly increase the value of real estate; sixth, let it be near some navigable water, not compel one hundred and fifty souls to make a journey of one hundred and fifty miles through intolerable roads and get homesick before they see the place."

THE PROSPECTING PARTY.

April 2, 1836, S. S. Church and William G. Henry, members of the purchasing committee, left Vermont, met by appointment at Troy, New York, and started by stage for Michigan. Their first Sunday was spent in Auburn. In western New York Wait J. Squier, one of the colonists, joined them. These three pioneers to spy out the land went to Lewiston, near the mouth of Niagara river, intending to go through Canada to Detroit, but were advised not to make the attempt on account of the badness of the roads. Accepting this advice they went to Buffalo with the intention of taking a steamboat, but the harbor and lower end of Lake Erie being covered with ice, they continued their journey by stage to Erie, Pennsylvania. Arriving there they found the south shore of the lake was free from ice and that a boat would leave for Detroit in a day or two, on which they took passage. At Detroit they waited twenty-four hours for the stage to leave. It was an open wagon, the roads were horrible, and, besides paying fare, they worked their passage, carrying fence rails to pry the wagon out of the mud where the holes were deepest. Their objective point was the United States land office at Kalamazoo. Mr. Church stopped at Battle Creek, where his brothers-in-law, Judge Tolman W. and Moses Hall resided, for a much needed rest.

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Soon afterwards the committee met at Kalamazoo and began their search for a contiguous body of government land that would answer the purpose of the colonists. Failing to find such a tract as was wanted, Mr. Church returned to Battle Creek, procured a guide, and with one or two other 13 colonists who had arrived there, set out on an exploring tour; while Messrs. Squier and Henry went to Grand Rapids to look for a location in that part of the territory. The Church party explored Barry county as far as Middleville and from there passed up the Thornapple river some distance east of Hastings, without finding what they wanted, namely: a tract of government land of the quality and quantity needed in a solid body, unbroken by swamps or marshes and free from "catholes." The original intention to obtain a location in the oak openings was found to be impossible, as all the desirable land had been entered by settlers and speculators. In 1836 the fever of speculation in Michigan real estate was at its height, and dreams of rapidly acquired wealth by land-grabbers were abundant. They continued until the collapse of the bubble a year or two later. It was also the wild-cat money era. The outlook for the committee was discouraging. With the money of over thirty persons in their possession to be wisely invested, with the ideals of the colony uppermost and with each one of the investors interested in obtaining as good a quarter-section farm lot and ten-acre village lot as any of their fellow colonists, it is not surprising that the committee began to despair of success.

Returning again to Battle Creek Mr. Church, who was always on the alert for information, met Col. Barnes of Gull Prairie, who had helped survey Eaton county and was one of the original proprietors of Charlotte. From him he learned that the amount of land needed, if not taken within a short time, might be found in town 3 north of range 6 west. The next day by appointment they met at the Kalamazoo land office and obtained a plat which showed that only one parcel had been purchased in the township. A letter from Messrs. Squier and Henry stated that they were prospecting in the southwest part of Ionia county, with headquarters at Middleville. They had not found a desirable location on government land. Events began to focus on Vermontville.

PLANTING THE COLONY.

The committee were faithful to the trust reposed in them. They knew what they wanted, but thus far had failed to find it. In a narrative of the further steps taken to locate the colony, written by Mr. Church and printed in the Charlotte Republican several years ago, he says: "I repaired to Middleville and our company came in. They examined my plat and we concluded to go to Eaton county. The next morning I made out an application for land enough to cover the amount we wanted, sent one of our number to the land office with my application, while the rest of us went to Battle Creek to make arrangements to explore the town. Here we found two or three more of the newly arrived colonists. We were nearly two days procuring an outfit and getting to our destination. 14 The third day we explored the town, running nearly every section line. All were satisfied with the land. We then went to Kalamazoo and on the 27th of May, 1836, I took up the amount of the colony purchase, also about twenty lots over and above that for members of the colony and others. We then returned to the purchase and selected the south half of section 21 for the village. W. J. Squier had his surveying implements with him, so that we were enabled to lay out the village, which we did agreeably to instructions. Those of us who were present selected our village lots and marked them on our plat."

The village was platted one mile and forty rods long east and west by half a mile north and south and was subdivided into thirty-six lots, fronting twenty rods in width on the east and west street, extending eighty rods north and south and containing ten acres each. The east and west street became the leading highway from Charlotte to Hastings, and later, after the location of the State capitol at Lansing, a part of the Lansing and Allegan State road. The farm lots were located around the village in all directions. By adopting this plan of settlement the colonists became near neighbors and enjoyed the benefits of society, school and religious meetings from the start. Among the colonists were a clergyman, two physicians and a blacksmith. West, in Castleton, just over the town line, a shoemaker, Joseph Rasey, had settled on a wild eighty acres, and to him with a side of sole leather

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and enough upper leather to shoe the family the boys would go every fall, after the frost had begun to bite, and have a pair of cowhide boots made for winter, going barefoot and enjoying an occasional stonebruise having been the summer custom; while north of the village three and a half miles, in the edge of Sunfield, lived O. M. Wells, a tailor, who brought his trade with him from New York, and to him the cloth for making Sunday clothes would be taken and cut into garments to be made up by a seamstress in the house. The nearest place to get a pound of saleratus or green tea was at Bellevue, also the post office, fourteen miles away, and most of the trading was done at Marshall, twenty-eight miles distant, C. P. Dibble & Co. being the favorite merchants. The nearest grist mill was at Bellevue and the nearest saw mill, owned by Oliver M. Hyde, afterwards a prominent citizen of Detroit and mayor of the city, was in Kalamo, seven miles distant. From there W. J. Squier drew the lumber to build the first frame house erected in the village or town in 1837-8.

While William G. Henry was a member of the committee that selected the location and was one of the original members of the colony, signing its constitution and by-laws at Castleton, Vermont, he did not settle in Vermontville, but in Grand Rapids, where he was for many years a prominent and highly esteemed citizen. He married Huldana Squier, sister of Wait J. Squier, who, as the record shows, was a leading colonist. Mr. and Mrs. Henry's oldest daughter, Annette Henry, married 15 Gen. Russell A. Alger, a prominent citizen of Detroit and of Michigan, and now Secretary of War for the United States. As Mr. Henry was instrumental in locating the Vermontville colony, gave his counsel and advice to its organization, and selected a village lot, although not one of its pioneer settlers, he is justly entitled to special and honorable mention.

THE VILLAGE PLAT.

The Marshall and Ionia road passed through the center of the village from south to north and became the first weekly mail route from Bellevue to Ionia, through the western part of Eaton county. A post office was established in 1840 with Dr. Dewey H. Robinson as the

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first postmaster. From each of the four central village lots about an acre was taken and set apart for a public square. In the original conveyance from the trustees who located the land one thirty-second part of this square was deeded to each colonist. By common consent the northwest quarter of the square was used as a site for the first log school house and a few years later for the academy building, the southwest quarter for the Congregational church, the northeast quarter for a Methodist church, and the southeast quarter was occupied for some years by hay scales and has been quite a place of resort for Canada thistles, which were introduced in 1837 in the Vermont rye straw used by W. J. Squier to pack his household goods for moving. With very few exceptions the original settlers have passed away, but the thistles still survive them.

The following diagram, with the names of the original selectors of village lots as of record in the office of the Eaton county register of deeds, gives a better idea of the plat than words can convey:

16

Thus the “Union Colony” was planted. The actual fell far short of the ideal. Youthful imagination was disillusioned when living in the woods and clearing away the forests commenced. But few of the pastoral “considerations” presented in imitation of the ancient Hebrew example were realized. Barring the indigenous ague and fever, it was a healthy place; the water was good, the soil was rich and fertile but covered with heavy hardwood timber; there was no waterfall, only the sluggish Thornapple and Scipio winding through and miry bottom lands, with suckers, red horse, and pickerel; all forest and no prairie; far away from the desired center of a county and from markets—fourteen miles from Charlotte, fourteen miles from Hastings, twenty-eight miles from Marshall and twenty-six miles from Ionia; no navigable water nearer than Lake Michigan and the surveyed Clinton and Kalamazoo canal that never materialized; never a mulberry, but wild grapes, plums and cranberries and the most horrible and roughest roads—roots, stumps, corduroys and mud of great depth and adhesiveness—that mortals ever traveled through this vale of tears. The panic of 1837 came; the Michigan fever abated; there was no sale for land at

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any price; and with a good deal of heroism these early settlers commenced the work of making homes in the wilderness.

THE FIRST BLOWS STRUCK.

Some of the colonists who went with the first prospecting party to spy out the land, among whom the names of W. J. Squier, W. S. Fairfield and Levi Merrill, are mentioned, remained in the woods, and the latter part of May, 1836, went to work felling the forest trees, building log houses and shanties and clearing for crops a few acres of land. The first potatoes and corn were grown among the stumps and logs. Sometimes potatoes were cooked in the hot ashes of burning log heap and green corn roasted by its live coals. No portion of southern Michigan was more heavily timbered, mostly beech and maple, with ash, oak, elm, cherry, basswood and black walnut interspersed. The winter of 1835-6 was the last one of centuries of savage solitude. Prior to the advent of these first settlers, except an occasional blow struck by some hunter, surveyor or nomadic Indian, no sound of a civilizing axe had disturbed the silence or awakened an echo in the forest. So in May, 1836, the work of transformation from an unknown and prehistoric past of wild animals and men to the known present and to a future, the nature of which none of us can guess, actually commenced. The era of the bark shanty and pole and brush wigwam of the Indian ended there and then. Log houses were built that summer those who remained for themselves and their coming families, and a colony house was erected to shelter other settlers as they arrived. Log house raisings were frequent and all turned out to help each other without expecting or desiring pay for the labor. Each house raising was a thank offering to the new and always welcome settler.

During that summer, 1836, Bazaleel Taft came with his family and settled on his village lot, but he moved to the town of Kalamo in a year or two and resided there the remainder of his life. Reuben Sanford, having purchased eighty acres of land adjoining the colony, also moved in that summer with his wife and only child, a daughter, living for awhile in an unoccupied shanty on the Colver village lot until his own log house was built, and

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though not a member of the colony, become the first permanent settler in the town. Soon after their arrival, while living in the shanty, a son, Henry Sanford, was born, and was the first white child born in Vermontville. Twenty-five years later, when the civil war came, he was one of the first of the Vermontville boys to enlist as a soldier, and he died in the service. During the fall Jacob Fuller and wife, Elijah S. Mead and wife, Jay Hawkins and wife with one child, Horace Hawkins, who still resides on a farm his father located, and W. S. Fairfield, arrived. March 24, 1837, Mrs. Elijah S. Mead died after a brief illness, at the age of 22 years, the first death in the colony. There was no physician to be had; womanly kindness and care did all that was possible for her, but in vain; and, disheartened, Mr. Mead moved back to Vermont.

Besides these families, several of the men who belonged to the colony came that year to inspect the purchase and make up their minds about moving. On the first Monday of October, the third day of the month, a large number assembled at the colony house, and after a prayer by Rev. Mr. Cochrane, proceeded to distribute the farm lands by lot, agreeably to the plan set forth in the articles of association adopted at Castleton, Vermont, the previous March. To meet the expenses incurred by the agents for locating the land a committee was appointed to make an assessment upon the farm lots which, because of their location, were the most desirable. This was agreed to and the sum of \$400 raised for that purpose. Then it was voted to make the distribution by lot, and quoting S.S. Church again, "each one drew and was satisfied." In addition to the families already mentioned, several of the men who came in the fall remained, among them Oren Dickinson with two hired men, to make preparation for bringing their families the coming year. S.S. Church and W. J. Squier returned to Vermont that autumn for their families. About the middle of November, 1836, Mr. Church arrived in Battle Creek with his wife and six children, it having taken nine days to reach there from Detroit by wagon, and in January, 1837, they all moved to Vermontville and commenced housekeeping in the colony house. Mr. Squier returned with his family in April, 1837. In the fall of that year 18 several colonists had

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arrived, and among them Rev. Sylvester Cochrane with his wife and two children—Lyman Cochrane and Sarah Cochrane.

EARLY EXPERIENCE AND GROWTH.

The work of founding a new colony in the wilderness was begun. Only those who have had experience of pioneer life know what it means. After a few acres of land were cleared by each settler there was always enough to eat. At first provisions were scarce, and there was no certainty as to where a supply would come from. R.W. Griswold, soon after his arrival, started out to find something to eat with the horse team and wagon owned by Oren Dickinson. He drove to Climax, Kalamazoo county, where he found and purchased a load of wheat, had it ground in a grist mill at Verona, a few miles northeast of Battle Creek, and after a week's absence returned to the colony with the first load of flour, shorts and bran for the anxious pioneers.

But the women and men of that early period did not live by bread alone. Physically they needed food, shelter and raiment, but mentally they were sustained by an earnest purpose. Intelligent, courageous and devoted, deprived of many familiar comforts, yet willing to endure privations and hardships for the sake of an idea and to make life better worth living for their children, still they belonged to their time, were firmly established in their inherited political and religious opinions, and did not think the thoughts that women and men think today. Transplanted to the west with its broader horizons, even they slowly yet steadily outgrew themselves and their New England prejudices. In after years, as they went back to make their old Vermont homes a visit, they lost all desire to return. The old life and environments they had forsaken seemed pinched and narrower to them. Thus the west has uniformly brought an expansion and liberalization of American ideas. Men cannot separate themselves wholly from the traditions grow weaker with the lapse of time. They were fully up to their time, but it was a slow-moving era, and thoughts ran in wagon ruts instead of along electric wires.

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By wagon road, canal and lake, and such horrid highways as Michigan then afforded, guided through the woods by blazed trees, it took three weeks to make the journey from Vermont to Vermontville if no time was lost, now made in thirty hours, yet fewer making it now than then; the postage on a letter was twenty-five cents; telegraphs and telephones were not invented; railroads were just beginning to revolutionize industrial and social conditions; nevertheless life, for the sake of home, family, virtue, morality, intelligence, kindness and love, and the refining influence of society, was no less worth living then than it is now; although, knowing the present, humanity could find but little external satisfaction 19 in the past of our immediate ancestors. Words cannot convey an accurate impression of the labor of the days that antedate reapers and mowers, when the sickle and the grain cradle, the scythe and the handrake were the implements of the harvest and hay fields—the days that antedate railroads, telegraphs and telephones, before steam and electricity became agencies for doing the world's work. To those of us who knew something of that early period it seems like a dream. Wherefore the changes? Because of the changes in the thoughts of men. Every new thing under the sun was a first a thought before it became a fact. And thought is still moulding different conditions than those that now exist. The chief economic problem of the past was production; now, though men who cling to old thoughts are slow to see it, it is production and distribution. The present is no more stable than was the past. All human conditions are undergoing change. History is a record of the changes brought about by the thoughts and actions of men. Thought is best when there is the most of it, when it is freest, and refuses to run in established channels. All valuable history is a record of the doings of the people. Emerson asks: "What is all history but the work of ideas, a record of the incomputible energy which his infinite aspirations infuse into man? Has anything grand and lasting been done? Who did it? Plainly not any man, but all men; it was the prevalence and inundation of an idea." Thus the Vermontville colony was planted.

GETTING IN AND OUT.

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Roads were horrible; sometimes impassable; when not raised eighteen inches to two feet above the surface by hauling logs across the driveway and rolling them close together, called corduroy, they were two feet below the surface in the mire, and even then not very solid. Often, as "In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travelers walked through the bye-ways." From Bellevue, through the woods for fourteen miles to the earnest postoffice, the road was of such a character as to make the last installment of the journey from New England to the colony the hardest part of the trip. It was merely underbrushed, trees on each side blazed with an axed to guide the traveler, and passing many low and wet places, they soon became quagmires by being cut up by passing teams. A mile an hour was good time over them. Some families, when moving in, were compelled to camp out in the woods over night, and to accommodate them a shanty was built near a brook for shelter. From this fact the stream got the name of Shanty Brook, by which it is still known. In October, 1839, when my father, Edward H. Barber, moved in, with his wife, four boys, an ox team, wagon and cow, we left Bellevue a clear and frosty morning, before the sun was up, stopped long enough in the woods to eat a lunch, feed 20 the oxen and extract some milk from the brindle cow, and about nine o'clock in the evening arrived at the top of the hill in Vermontville, a rain storm having set in after dark at the close of the day and of Indian summer. The first log house at the top of the hill was owned by Sidney B. Gates, and he came out with a old-fashioned tin lantern and tallow dip to light and guide us to our destination, the house of Oren Dickinson, three-quarters of a mile distant. For a mile or two north of Bellevue the road had been chopped out four rods wide, and also for half a mile or so south of Vermontville. The rest of the way the track was through the woods, and sometimes hard to find on account of the fallen leaves. But we made a mile an hour that last one of eight days from Detroit, and three weeks from Benson, Vermont, and reached our stumpy Canaan at last.

In the spring the Thornapple river about a mile south of the village overflowed its broad bottom land, rendering it impassable for teams. In April, 1837, W. J. Squier arrived at

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the south bank of the river with his family just at night. The water was so high they could not cross. Learning of their arrival and knowing the situation, R. W. Griswold and W. S. Fairfield waded across with provisions and took them to an Indian wigwam not far away, where they stayed overnight. The next morning Mr. Griswold ferried Mrs. Squier and their youngest child across in a small dugout, or log canoe, a distance of about eight rods. During the day the team and household goods were got over. To go to Bellevue to mill and return always required two days.

A WOLFISH SERENADE.

Wolves were plentiful, and it was an easy matter by giving a long human howl in the evening to start a wolfish serenade. In the fall of 1836 Oren Dickinson came to the colony with a horse team, his family not arriving until the spring of 1838, a year and a half later. The road then was but little more than a trail, just enough underbrush having been cut out to allow a team to pass. None of the mucky places had been corduroyed and the mudholes were deep. To drive a team through by daylight was oftener tried than accomplished. R. W. Griswold started from Vermontville early one morning to drive through to Bellevue. Night over-took him while yet in the woods, and in the darkness he could not follow the track, over which but few wagons had previously passed. He stopped the team and endeavored to find the roadway by getting down upon his knees and feeling with his hands for old wagon tracks, but in vain. It was as dark, he once said, "as a stack of black cats." Thinking that he might be within hailing distance of Bellevue he gave a loud halloo, and was answered by a prowling wolf. Again he shouted, and other wolves responded in different directions. They were cowardly whelps and seldom attacked a person, yet none the less these voices of the night were unwelcome music to a lone traveler with a team in the dense woods and darkness. He unhitched the team, tied them to the wagon, seated himself in it, gun in hand, talked to the horses for company, and through the long night watches listened to his serenaders, whose performances

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culminated in a thrilling wolf chorus in the wilderness. When daylight came the next day the blazed trees on either side of the pioneer highway indicated the route out of the woods.

Such incidents, not being able to make fourteen miles by daylight with a pair of horses and a wagon, show better than words can describe the character of the roads the first settlers traveled over. In a few years they were improved so that the trip to Marshall, where most of the settlers sold their products and did their trading, could be made comfortably in a day, going there one day and returning the next, though when goods were to be purchased for the winter outfit for the family the trip and trade would consume three days. While Michigan roads are not the best in the world all the year round, the soil being too good and the frost sinking too deep to permit making firm and solid roadbeds at a cost rural communities can stand, yet they have improved greatly and should be improved more. The first settlers did a great deal of gratuitous work on them in the way of chopping to cut down the timber for the four rods width of the highways and letting the sun in to dry out the soil. Even then the wagon track was a line of curves to avoid big stumps for several years. A vast amount of labor was involved in making them passable evidences of civilization, for, as Dr. Bushnell says: "The road is the physical sign or symbol by which you will best understand any age or people. If they have no roads they are savages, for the road is a creation of man and a type of civilization."

Almost every year during the spring freshets the low lands along the Thornapple overflowed and were impassable. The river channel run close to the high bank on the south side, and north of it to high land again, towards the village, wa about eighty rods of bottom and in some places almost bottomless. Sometimes cattle would wade to the bridge and cross over to the south side to feed during the day, returning at night. One morning they went across, among them a cow belonging to W. S. Fairfield. Towards night they crossed the bridge, homeward bound, and commenced traveling in single file over the log causeway. The water had risen so much during the day that some of the logs were afloat. As the cattle stepped on them they were easily displaced and those in the rear found it difficult to make the passage. The last one was Fairfield's milch cow. She struggled along,

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plunging into the water, swimming in deep places and here and there finding logs that had not floated, succeeded in making slow progress, until she was nearly exhausted. About half way 22 across were two big oak logs, nearly four feet in diameter, in the causeway, which were higher than the others and did float. The cow gained a position on these logs and would go no further. Poles were placed around her to keep her from falling off, feed and bedding were taken to her in a boat, she was milked twice a day and remained on these logs for several days until the water subsided.

THE PIONEER SPIRIT.

The Vermontville settlers inherited the pioneer spirit. With two or three exceptions they were Vermonters, and all were Yankees in fact and name. It has never been the habit of enterprising Yankees to wait for a region to get very old before leaving it. They did not wait until all of New England was settled before they commenced pushing west, and hence their influence has been large in all of the western country. The name New England was first given to the northeast corner of the United States by Captain John Smith, the daring navigator who explored the coast, and was subsequently adopted in the patent of King James, which created a council "for the planting, ordering and governing of New England." Of its six states, Massachusetts was first settled by Pilgrim and Puritan refugees of English stock. Rhode Island was founded by a young Baptist minister, Roger Williams, who fled there in 1636, only sixteen years after the first settlement was made at Plymouth, to escape persecution at the hands of the Puritans, who, though themselves religious refugees, had little toleration for anything except their own forms of belief and methods of government. Connecticut was settled by the English and Dutch almost simultaneously, but the former were the first to enter the cultivate the rich valley of the Connecticut river, and they held control. The earliest settlers of New Hampshire were fishermen, who, being once rebuked by a traveling minister for neglecting religion, answered: "Sir, you are mistaken; you think you are speaking to the people of Massachusetts Bay. Our main object in coming here was to catch fish." Name was for a long time a mere hunting ground, and remained a part of Massachusetts until after the Revolution. Vermont was first explored

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by Champlain, the great Frenchman who founded Quebec and was the first governor of Michigan, was claimed by New York, for independence from which province the Ethan Allen Vermonters were ready to fight it necessary, and was not recognized as a separate colony until after the Revolutionary war.

The Champlain valley of Vermont was settled largely by men from Massachusetts and Connecticut. My grandfather, Daniel Barber, was the first permanent settler in the town Benson, in 1783, and my grandmother, when they moved, carried her first babe, a daughter, in her arms on horseback from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, to their home in a 23 dense wilderness. That daughter became the wife of Isaac Griswold of Benson and the mother of Roger W. Griswold and Daniel B. Griswold of Vermontville. So we trace the movements of our pioneers.

New England has grown the fastest in the west. Although two-fifths larger than Old England it contains only about six million inhabitants, and only those parts where mills and factories are engaged in money-spinning are densely populated. Connecticut and Massachusetts men, under the pioneership of Israel Putnam, crossed the Alleghenies into the Ohio valley and founded Marietta more than a hundred years ago, and mainly the sons of Connecticut planted new towns in the Western Reserve of Ohio early in the century. Vermonters moved up the Mohawk into western New York soon after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1826, pushed westward into this great lake region, scattered themselves over northern Ohio, moved into Michigan and occupied northern Illinois at an early date. Such prominent United States Senators as Jacob M. Howard, Stephen A. Douglas and Matthew H. Carpenter were Vermonters by birth. But in no instance, so far as known, was a New England colony organized on the plan of the one that located in Vermontville.

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH.

Although much isolated from the rest of the world, these colonists had the advantage of good society and they provided themselves with religious privileges and a school for their

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children from the start. In February, 1837, a Congregational church with sixteen members was organized by Rev. S. Cochrane, its first pastor, and his duties extended over a period of five years. It would have been slim picking for the minister, no doubt, but for his working the land as did all the rest and some aid from the Home Missionary Society. We have an original subscription paper, dated Sept. 24, 1838, which says: "We, the subscribers, being desirous to sustain the preached gospel in this place, agree to pay the several sums annexed to our names respectively to the support of the Rev'd S. Cochrane as our minister. Said sums to be paid in labor in chopping or clearing off his land, in cash or produce, as may best suit the subscribers, and as they may agree with the said Mr Cochrane, two-thirds of said subscription to be paid by the fifteenth day of May next, and the third by the first day of October, 1839."

The names, conditions of payment, and amounts in this paper are: S. S. Church, paid, \$10; Warren Gray, in labor and team work, \$6; H. J. Mears, in labor, \$6; Jay Hawkins, in labor with team, \$6; Jacob Fuller, in labor or cooperage, \$5; Wait J. Squier in labor and team work, \$10; S. D. Scovell, \$10; Reuben Sanford, in produce, \$5; Alexander and William Clark, \$5; Martin & Robinson, in goods, \$15; William P. Wilkinson, \$1; M. S. Norton, \$5; Sidney B. Gates, \$5; George S. Browning, 24 \$8; Oren Dickinson, \$10; Levi Merrill, \$5; Oliver J. Stiles, \$10; Samuel S. Hoyt, \$5; Roger W. Griswold, \$5; W. S. Fairfield, \$5; Charles Imus, in shoemaking, \$5; F. Hawkins, \$1; Wm. B. Fuller, \$1.25; Joshua Blake, in work, \$1; Peter Kinney, \$1; E. O. Smith, \$1.

Of these subscribers Samuel S. Hoyt and E. O. Smith resided in what afterwards became the town of Sunfield. Mr. Hoyt lived six miles north and his nearest neighbors in 1837 were in Vermontville. S. S. Church, in a sketch of the early settlements, says: "During this season, Samuel S. Hoyt, who lived six miles from any white inhabitant, and whose wife had not seen a white woman for several months at a time, brought his wife on an ox-sled to the colony, and after two or three weeks returned home, rejoicing in the possession of a fine daughter to cheer the loneliness of his forest home. Nor was this an isolated case.

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One from Chester occurred the same season, and not long after one from a remote part of our town.”

THE SCHOOL AND ACADEMY.

In the summer of 1838 the first school was taught in a private house. In the fall of that year a log school house was erected on the northwest quarter of the public square, in which schools were regularly taught and the scholars uniformly whipped from three to four months in summer by a female teacher, and for three months in the winter by a male teacher. A rate bill was prepared by the school officers to raise the money to pay the teacher, and the wood was furnished pro rata by the patrons of the school. The teachers boarded around at the homes of the pupils, the length of time at each place determined by the number of scholars in the family. When there were but two rooms in a log house, one down stairs and the other up stairs, with hardly a spare corner, sleeping a teacher was more difficult than feeding him or her. An aristocratic log house would have two rooms on the ground floor, and that made matters pleasanter. However, all got along very well, and the petty annoyances were soon forgotten.

In 1843 an academical association was formed, the money raised by subscription and the materials procured to build an academy, the building to answer the double purpose of a school and meeting house. Finding it best to have a legal existence, the Vermontville Academical Association, with W. U. Benedict, Oren Dickinson, S. S. Church, Daniel Barber, W. J. Squier, M. S. Norton, D. H. Robinson and Levi Merrill for the first board of trustees, was incorporated by act of the State legislature April 28, 1846, and vested with “power to establish at or near the village of Vermontville, in the county of Eaton, an institution for the instruction and education of young persons.” Nine trustees were provided for and the capital stock of ten thousand dollars was divided into one thousand shares of ten dollars each.

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Prior to this act of incorporation, in the fall of 1844, the upper story of the academy building was completed, and Rev. W. U. Benedict, pastor of the church, taught for four months of the winter of 1844-5 the higher English branches and the languages. Mr. Benedict continued to teach in the academy for several successive winters and gave general satisfaction. The district school was also continued summer and winter until both were merged into a union school with two departments. In 1870 the present union school building was erected at a cost of about \$12,000. The old academy was a well conducted and popular institution while under charge of Mr. Benedict, and scholars attended it from various parts of Eaton county and from Battle Creek for several winters.

A handbill for the winter term of 1849 has been preserved and is worth reproducing entire: "VERMONTVILLE ACADEMY!!—The Winter term of this Institution will commence October 9th, 1849, and continue 20 weeks under the superintendence of Rev. W. U. BENEDICT. Mr. B's success as a Teacher hitherto, and the location of this Institution, removed from everything that tends to divert the student's mind and draw off his attention from his studies, renders this a desirable Institution for those who wish to make improvement. The terms of tuition are:

For common English branches \$2.50 per quarter

do Higher do do 3.00 do

do Languages 3.00 do

With a small charge for incidental expenses. Board can be obtained at from \$1 to \$1.25 a week. By order of the Trustees. S. S. CHURCH, Clerk.

Vermontville, Aug. 10, '49."

In the winter of 1846-7 George N. Potter of the town of Benton, sheriff of the county for four years and recently State Senator, was one of the scholars, and he paid his board

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by slashing down the timber on several acres of land just north of the academy for W. S. Fairfield.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNSHIP.

Sixty years ago, January 26, 1837, Michigan became a state. The political finessing of that period was devoted to the preservation of an equilibrium in the national government, so far as possible, between free and slave states, slavery having been one of the sacred compromises of the constitution. Arkansas, therefore, was admitted at the same time, statesmanship failing to discover until twenty years later that this Union could not exist half slave and half free.

The first census in which Eaton county and Vermontville appear was taken by the state in October, 1837, which disclosed a total population in Michigan of 175,025, Eaton county having 913 in three organized towns—Bellevue 413, Eaton, 330, and Vermontville 145. Each 26 of these town organizations at that time contained more than a single surveyed township. At the national census of 1840 the state had 212,216 inhabitants, Eaton county 2,379, and Vermontville. The county was laid out by act of the territorial legislature October 29, 1829, and at the same time organized into a single town named Green. The town of Bellevue, which at first embraced the entire county, was organized as “Belleville” in 1835. A subsequent act of the legislature, approved March 11, 1837, provided that “all that portion of the county of Eaton, designated in the United States survey as townships 3 and 4 north of range 6 west, and 3 and 4 north of range 5 west, be, and the same is, hereby set off and organized into a separate township by the name of Vermontville, and the first township meeting therein shall be held in said township.” The last few words indicate that an election might be legally held in any one of the four surveyed towns that were organized into a township, for all were Vermontville. From this territory were afterwards formed the towns of Chester, March 21, 1839; Sun-field, February 16, 1842; and Roxand, March 13, 1843, thus leaving at the last named date town 3 north of range 6 west as the sole possessor of the name Vermontville.

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The first election was held on the first Monday of April 1837. The record of that meeting of the electors, with the names of the officers chosen to set the wheels of local government in motion, are worth transcribing, as it shows the mode of coming into existence of a new civic entity when time was young in Michigan, namely:

“Agreeable to an act of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, passed Feb. 14, 1837, and approved March 11, 1837, organizing surveyed townships Nos. 3 and 4 north of range 6 west, and townships Nos. 3 and 4 north, of range 5 west, in Eaton county, in said State, a town, with township privileges, under the name of Vermontville, the electors met at the town-house in said Vermontville, agreeably to previous notice, on the first Monday in April, and organized said meeting by choosing Samuel Selden, Esq., moderator and S. S. Church township clerk, who administered the oath prescribed by law to each other, when proclamation was made of the organization of said meeting.

“2d. The ballots being taken for supervisor, Oren Dickinson was duly elected.

“3d. S. S. Church was then chosen township clerk.

“4th. S. S. Church, Samuel Selden, and John Hart were elected assessors.

“5th. Walter S. Fairfield was elected collector and constable.

“6th. Elected S. S. Church and Bazaleel Taft directors of the poor

“7th. Elected Oren Dickinson, Jay Hawkins, and Bazaleel Taft road commissioners.

“8th. Elected Franklin Hawkins poormaster.

“9th. Elected Reuben Sanford, Levi Merrill, Jr., and Sidney B. Gates fence viewers.

“10th. Elected Jacob Fuller, Harvey Williams and Samuel S. Hoyt overseers of highways.

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"11th. Elected Oren Dickinson, John Hart and Levi Merrill school inspectors.

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"12th. Elected Samuel Selden, S. S. Church, Samuel S. Hoyt and Oren Dickinson justices of the peace.

"13th. Oren Dickinson for the term of one year, S. S. Church for two years, Samuel S. Hoyt for three years, and Samuel Selden for four years.

"14th. Voted, To raise the sum of two hundred dollars on the taxable property in said township, to be appropriated to building bridges and making roads in said township.

"15th. Voted, To raise the sum of two hundred dollars on the taxable property of said township for defraying the town expenses for the current year.

"16th. Voted, That cattle and horses be permitted to run at large in said town, but the owner to be liable for damages when they shall break over a decent fence, in which case the fence-viewers shall decide whether the fence is decent or not.

"17th. Voted, That hogs be permitted to run at large.

"18th. Voted, That Jay Hawkins, Jacob Fuller, S. S. Church and Samuel Selden be the board of inspectors of election.

"19th. Voted, To dissolve the meeting.

"The foregoing is a true record of the township meeting held on the first Monday in April, 1837, and the doings of said meeting. Attest. S. S. CHURCH, Township Clerk."

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Thus Vermontville was born. A memorandum shows that at a special election held April 3 and 4, 1837, to fill a vacancy in the legislature caused by the death of Ezra Convis, twelve votes were polled, all for Sands McCamly.

On the foregoing town officers, Samuel S. Hoyt lived in Sunfield and Harvey Williams in Chester; the rest in Vermontville. Mr. Hoyt cleared up a large farm, sold out and moved away in a few years. Mr. Williams was county treasurer for several successive terms and state senator, residing in Charlotte, where he died. He was one of the best known and most reliable citizens of the county, and one of the earliest settlers in Chester.

IMMIGRATION.

As heretofore stated, the first settlement by members of the colony was made in 1836, but most of them came in 1837 and 1838, and my father, the last one to arrive, moved in with his family in October, 1839. For a number of years immigration was insignificant, the hard times that followed of panic of 1837 rendering real estate unsalable at any price, as there was no speculative interest in Michigan lands. The marvelous resources of the state were unavailable for human needs. Probably many of the settlers would have left but for the fact that all their previous savings were invested in wild lands and these would not bring anything in the market. In 1844, as appears by the assessment roll for that year, there were only fifty-one resident taxpayers in the town and village, namely: A. L. Armstrong, W. U. Benedict, George S. Browning, Daniel Barber, Edward H. Barber, Levi Brundage, John Barrett, Joshua Blake, Dudley F. Bullock, S. S. Church, William Clark, Nathan 28 Clifford, Oren Dickinson, Jonas Davis, Willard Davis, Lucy H. Dwight, W. S. Fairfield, Jacob Fuller, William B. Fuller, James A. Fuller, Hamilton Folger, Warren Gray, Sidney B. Gates, Roger W. Griswold, Jay Hawkins, Henry Haner, Aman Hooker, David Henderson, Isaac Hager, James Hager, W. F. Hawkins, Wells R. Martin, Hiram J. Mears, Simeon McCotter, Levi Merrill, Martin S. Norton, Dewey H. Robinson, Henry Robinson, Truman W. Rogers, Artemus Smith, Cephas Smith, Lovina Smith, Jason Smith, Philetus Sprague, Stephen D. Scoville, Lemuel Standish, Reuben Sanford, William B. Sherman, Wait J. Squier, Asa B.

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Warner and William W. Warner. Of this number five went away during the next three of four years.

Already the names of several of the pioneer settlers had disappeared, while others had taken their places. A. L. Armstrong made the first clearing in the town, east of the village, on the road to Charlotte; Mrs. Lucy H. Dwight, Jonas Davis, Henry Haner, W. f. Hawkins, William Clark, S. D. Scoville and W. W. Warner on the northeasterly sections; the Hagers in the extreme northwest corner; Artemas and Cephas Smith near the west line on the road to Hastings; Levi Brundage and William B. Sherman in the southwest, while Dudley F. Bullock was the first and at that time the only settler in the southeast part of the town. He lived on the farm where he located in the spring of 1840 for fiftyseven years, until he passed away in March, 1897, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

It has been my purpose, although it has somewhat lengthened this historical sketch, to put on record, for preservation in the permanent "Collections" of the State Pioneer and Historical Society, the names of the first settlers of the village and town of Vermontville—those who were chiefly instrumental in the transformation from a dense wilderness to a region of fruitful fields civilized homes. The history of the people, of their labors and trials it is our effort to preserve. Our civilization is largely the product of the humble toilers whose names would otherwise be forgotten in the onrush of events. It required sturdy and continuous blows for years to fell and clear away the forests, and to change a savage wilderness into pleasant homes and fruitful fields.

"Cheerily, on the axe of labor, Let the sunbeams dance, Better than the flash of saber Or the gleam of lance! Strike! With every blow is given Freer sun and sky, And the long-hid earth to heaven Looks, with wondering eye!"

Two generations of workers have entirely changed the physical, social and moral conditions. Even religious opinions have broadened to keep in touch with the forward movement of the age. The people were too intelligent not to be progressive and keep

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abreast of the best thought of the time. To satisfy a Vermontville audience was a credit to any speaker. Among the counties of the state there is scarcely one that, in all respects, is better than Eaton. Heavily timbered, it was hard to subdue, but rewarded the effort. The beech and maple forests that still remain remind one of the study labor of the past. Hills with far reaching views, fertile intervals, boulders of northern granite dropped here and there by the ice-sheet of a far away geologic period, flora and fauna the same as those of Vermont, show that the Vermonters were guided by what they knew, as well as by circumstances they could not control, in selecting a site for new homes in the wilderness. Above all else they wanted timber, and wore themselves out getting rid of it. No other spot in the state, by topography, soil, timber and products, is better entitled to the name Vermontville.

REMINISCENT.

It may be after years have passed that the names of these pioneers, though permanently preserved in the "Collections" of this Society, will cease to awaken interest, but so long as wood grows and water runs the results of their work will last. In a small village and town they played the drama of life, as it has been played under varying conditions in all the rural towns of Michigan. Great changes, like those hastened by steam and electricity are linked with names that will be long remembered; but the many minor changes which, day by day and blow by blow, transform a wilderness from a savage to a civilized state, are not associated with a few immortal names; for the work is done by hosts of earnest men and women in the humbler walks of life; yet without the work of the humble toilers in forest and mine, in field and factory, the men at the top would be like castles in the air—no foundation to rest upon.

Life, to these early settlers, was externally primitive; the log cabin sheltered its joys and sorrows; yet it was not, though rude, unrefined. They were intelligent, representing the best of New England rural stock. The women were of superior quality, excellent housekeepers, and though into their lives came but little of outward beauty, they made

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the most of their meager opportunities. Heroic souls! with the single exception of Mrs. Browning Griswold they are all gone, and angelic mother-love still watches over and protects their children.

It was an isolated life. In the village of Bellevue, fourteen miles distant, were the nearest stores, the postoffice and grist-mill. With but little to sell not much could be bought. At first, coon skins and black 30 salts were the principal cash products. George S. Browning gathered together all his marketable products one full, took them to Marshall, sold them for fourteen dollars, and he was one of the thriftiest of the settlers. They lived on what the few acres of cleared land produced, bought tea, tobacco, spices and saleratus, the forests furnishing common pasturage for cattle from the time the snow melted in the spring until it fell again the next winter. Leeks came first, and by June the woods were carpeted with wild flowers. All the sugar came from the maples.

The village stretched out a mile long from east to west, with two rows of log houses fronting the street—one frame house built by W. J. Squier breaking the monotony—located from ten to forty rods apart, small structures, unadorned, low ceilings, bare walls, little space for furniture, often going up stairs on a ladder through a hole in one corner, a trapdoor in the floor to get down cellar; but probably, as much contentment as usually falls to the lot of humankind, for there was hope ahead. The inside illumination of winter evenings radiated from huge fireplaces made of stone and clay, and the smoke passed up chimneys made of sticks that were plastered with mud on the inside. The floors were seldom sawed boards, but split out of white ash and spotted with axe and adz where laying on the round stringers with a hewed upper surface to make them as smooth as possible. The earliest shanties were roofed with peeled basswood bark, but the more aristocratic log houses which succeeded them were shingled with rived oak “shakes,” and warping under the influence of the summer sun, while they shed a plain rain fairly well, they let the wind-driven snow sift in freely during the winter, which falling on beds and floor, made stepping out into it with bare feet in the morning a chilly experience. Doors were seldom fastened or buttoned on the inside; civilization not being so advanced as

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now, and education away from manual labor not having been the practice of the time, life and property were safe without bolts and bars. With a wooden ketch and latch on the inside and a buckskin string, fastened to the latch and passing through a hole in the door to the outside, where a wooden handle served the purpose of a knob, when the string was out” night and day. Summers the boys went barefoot, and chasing cattle in the woods when nettles were abundant left many a sting; while for winter one pair of cowhide boots was all that could be afforded; overcoats for them were garments of the future; and woolen underwear unthought of. Sometimes babies were rocked in an unpainted wooden cradle made by the village carpenter, and sometimes in a sap trough, which was thus made to do double duty in sweetening the home. Woolen yarn was spun and socks and mittens knit by the mother in the evenings by fire-light, tallow-light or lard-light, as the case might be. Shirts with linen bosoms and starched collars were not worn. The cloth for common wear was 31 called “hard times,” and was rightly named. Summer hats were braided out of wheat or oat straw, and the braids sewed together and fashioned into hat-shape in the household, and caps for winter made out of heavy cloth by some seamstress who worked for fifty cents a day. Boys learned to help their mothers at housework, washing dishes, pounding clothes, getting vegetables ready for cooking, and being useful in various ways. Before tallow candles could be had, a strip of cotton flannel, put into an open dish of lard and resting on the edge of the dish, was lighted by a wisp of paper and furnished artificial light for unplastered walls and ceilings. Sometimes, however, the walls were papered with Weekly New York Tribunes, or the New York Express, or the Albany Evening Journal, depending upon what eastern sheet was the favorite of the head of the family. When beef cattle were raised and fattened, the tallow was carefully saved for candles, and preparing and dipping the wicks by hand into the melted fat, time and again until they reached the right size for use, was as regular an autumnal bit of work as making soap or maple sugar in the spring, or putting in a supply of potatoes and pork for winter. It was quite a trick to go into the woods and find the crotch of a tree of the right shape and size for a harrow and with axe and sugar prepare it for use, while hunting a white oak knot for a beetle was an education in woodcraft, and making an axe-helve the acme of mechanical genius. Using

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the axe was the first thing to be learned, and then the handspike in the logging field. After the first few acres of land were cleared, so fertile and productive was the soil that food was abundant, but money was scarce and dear, and in all respects the home-life was of the strictest economy.

THE INDIANS.

With the Thornapple river for canoeing and fishing, and the forests for game and maple sugar, this had long been a favorite and favorable region for the Indians, and their bark shanties and pole and brush wigwams were quite common upon the high lands adjacent to that stream. They were never troublesome, though when the matter of moving the Pottawatomies to the Indian Territory came up there was something of an Indian scare, as they dislike to leave their old hunting grounds and were quite ugly in their talk and actions. The possibility of a raid on the settlement was discussed and the idea of building a block-house for defense was suggested. There was, however, no occasion for alarm.

Every season the settlers obtained venison and fish of the Indians, giving them in exchange salt pork, corn meal and wheat flour. Some of them remained in the vicinity for a number of years, making occasional visits to the village to sell furs and obtain supplies, until about 1860. One of them in particular liked to get trusted at the store, and was very punctual in coming around to make payment and get trusted again. A noted Indian, who called himself a chief of the Pottawatomies in that part of the State, went by the name of Sawby, or Saaba, was very shrewd and was well known by all the settlers. Probably there was not a house he did not visit. He picked up all the slang and vulgarity that was in circulation and often used the unseemly words and phrases in the presence of ladies. All English seemed to be the same to him wherever picked up and whatever the meaning, and he did not improve on acquaintance. As he was in Vermontville often he became enamored with a bright young lady, Naomi Dickinson, and made proposals of marriage to her father, but rather after the manner of the politician than the lover. He proposed to buy rather than woo, and offered to give four ponies and twenty-five dollars for her, or

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five ponies and no money. When she objected to any such a deal, he said with disgust: "You no think me handsome." He was, however, very much in earnest and fears were expressed that he might attempt an abduction, but they were groundless. As the "white maiden" still lives and is unmarried it cannot be said by way of excuse that she never had an offer.

Besides the native Pottawatomies, several Indian families came from Canada and remained in the town for about a year. They were much more civilized than the natives, and in dress and habits imitated the whites. In addition to hunting and trapping, they took jobs of chopping and cut down many acres of timber. They talked good English. The squaws dressed neatly, and displayed much skill in needlework. They held religious meetings on Sunday, and frequently attended the regular Congregational services in the village. During their stay one of the squaws sickened and died. An Indian made a coffin for her and they desired for her a Christian burial. Rev. Mr. Day, a Methodist clergyman who had been a missionary in the northern part of the State, was in the vicinity at the time. He was sent for, and he came to the village meeting house and preached a funeral sermon through an interpreter. Several native Indians also attended the services. Vermontville people went with sleighs to their wigwams, brought the corpse and Indians to the place where the services were held, and after the sermon carried the remains with the Indian attendants to the burial plot and assisted at the final obsequies. An account of this incident, written by S. S. Church, says: "The corpse was clothed in a very nice white shroud, handsomely worked with scalloped edges."

Under all circumstances the Pottawatomies were friendly. One night, after dark, having been hunting cattle two or three miles southwest of the village, three of us, boys, arrived at the bank of the river where a band of Indians was encamped. The cattle had been started homeward, and the Indians told us they had crossed the river near by. The water was high and they rowed us across in a canoe. Darkness was intense, 33 but there was a cattle

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path that could be followed about a mile to the nearest clearing. When accustomed to the woods, getting through them in the night is not so difficult a task as it seems.

Once in a while an afternoon was spent at an Indian camp, practicing the bow and arrow with the young red-skins. On high land north of the Thornapple were a number of sunken graves, and the hackings on the trees suggested that it had been an old burial place. In the spring of 1841, while fishing or hunting cattle, on the south bank of the river, a beech tree was discovered that showed fresh cuttings in the smooth bark. An examination disclosed the outline of a canoe, in it an Indian with arm lifted and a fish spear in his hand pointing down the stream, as if to inform others that one or more of the band had gone down the river on a fishing trip. At all events, that was the interpretation we gave to the picture-writing at the time. The only domesticated animals the red men had were wolfish-looking dogs and the hardy French Canadian ponies, used mainly for packing and carrying their blankets and few cooking utensils on their journeyings from place to place.

WILD GAME AND A BEAR HUNT.

Wolves were plenty, but seldom committed any depredations. Like politicians, they were great howlers. Hunters rarely saw one in the woods, and they were caught in traps for the sake of the bounty of five dollars on each one that was killed. Deer and wild turkeys were abundant. In the fall coon-hunting was a common pastime, and the coon-dog that did not get his nose and mouth full of porcupine quills by attacking the wrong animal was a fortunate brute. The only early settler who ate coon meat was one Jason Smith, a bachelor or widower, who shantied by himself and lived a hermit's life. About almost every log house could be seen during the months numerous coon skins tacked onto a board, or box, or barn door, the inside exposed to the air and sunshine for drying and preparing for the purchaser who was sure to come around and gather up all the deer skins, coon skins, and an occasional mink skin for the market. Of the emblems of the presidential campaign of 1840, log cabins and coon skins were plenty, but the hard cider was missing. Fifty cents for a coon skin was a good price. The wild turkey was the proudest and most aristocratic

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denizen of the forest, and with partridges and wild pigeons constituted the principal game birds. Pickerel, suckers, mullet, perch and bream were the fish in the rivers and lakes.

Of all the wild animals the bear was the boldest and most troublesome. The most toothsome morsel for Bruin was a young porker, and to steal a pig from a pen he would take great risks from dogs and rifles. From time to time pigs disappeared, and the tracks showed that taking them away must be the work of a bear. Forays were made on the pig pen of 34 R. W. Griswold, who lived nearly half a mile north of the east end of the village, his house facing miles of unbroken forest of the eastward. In these woods and a swamp not far away this depredator seemed to have his lair. One day, in 1839, he came out of the woods in to the main street at the east end of the village. Mrs. Cochrane, the minister's wife, saw him passing down the hill in the road near where the old cheese factory now stands, and going towards the log house in which W. R. Martin then lived. Out in the road in front of the house she saw Henry J. Martin, a young boy, playing by himself as unconcernedly as if there were no bears in Vermontville. The bear was making towards him and Henry thought it was a dog. Mrs. Cochrane screamed, which startled the beast, and Mrs. Martin, looking out of the door, saw the impending danger to her boy, ran out into the road, caught him up in her arms and carried him into the house. For boy or man this was the closest known call among the first settlers.

The depredations of this animal were so frequent and numerous that finally a bear-hunt was organized for his capture. Rev. S. Cochrane was selected for captain, and all the men, boys, dogs and guns of the colony were mustered into the service. This was the most exciting of any early incident. A night or two before the hunt was determined upon the bear had made a successful raid upon R. W. Griswold's pig-pen. It was known where he crossed the road and plunged into the woods. About a section of land was surrounded, men with dogs and guns stationed at nearly uniform distances apart, and at a given signal, which was passed along the line, all were to march towards a common center. Soon the bear broke through the line and men and boys and dogs gave chase. W. J. Squier's big mastiff, Bonaparte—called "Bone" for brevity —was one of the first to overtake the fleeing

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bear and give fight. Smaller dogs would snap at his hind legs, but "Bone" tackled him at close quarters. When John Wager and Arthur W. Squier arrived the dog was getting the worst of the battle. Wager and W. S. Fairfield's musket, of the revolutionary pattern, and he jammed the butt of it into the bear's mouth to loosen his hold on the dog. The marks of the bear's teeth in the stock of the musket were evidence of the closeness of the conflict. The dogs were so excited that getting a sage shot at the bear was difficult, but finally Reuben Sanford gave him a bullet from a rifle, and two more shots ended his career. Loaded on poles, a procession was formed, and the hunters marched to the public square, about a mile, where the bear was dressed, the carcass cut into as many pieces as there were families, and Daniel Barber, being blindfolded in the name of Justice, as each piece of meat was touched by the minister called out the name of the person who should have it.

The bear had fed well and the meat was good. It had the flavor of the forest. The skin was sold, but the authorities do not agree as to the price. One says four dollars, another seven dollars, and Mrs. Browning-Griswold of Battle Creek, the only surviving head of a family at that time now living in Michigan who was present, says the skin sold for eight dollars. All agree, however, that the money, probably seven dollars, was used to purchase the first installment of Sunday school books that was brought into the village. Back to this bear the Sunday school library of Vermontville can trace its financial origin.

An account of this bear hunt was written by Captain and Reverend Sylvester Cochrane, and printed in the Marshall (Mich.) Statesman, Seth Lewis editor and proprietor, of January 2, 1840, and a copy thereof has been kindly furnished by W. R. Lewis, son of the original founder, editor and proprietor, which is herewith given in full. Fortunately for the writer of early history the files of that paper have been carefully preserved, and this enables me to give the original description as written nearly fifty-eight years ago.

A BEAR HUNT.

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“For a number of days, during the month of October, the inhabitants of Vermontville were annoyed by the visits of a bear. Almost every day he had the presumption to come out of the forest and present himself in the streets, and in one or two instances he even took the liberty to parade himself in an erect position in front of the houses, as if desirous to see what was going on within. The women and children were of course sufficiently alarmed. Those who were particularly exposed to his depredations began to feel that his visits were becoming quite too common—especially as he seldom left without seizing and carrying off one or more swine. Several attempts were made to capture him, but without success. It was seen that some more direct and efficient efforts must be made. Accordingly about 30 men and boys assembled, with all the dogs and guns that could be collected. The necessary arrangements were soon made, a circle was formed, including nearly a section of land, within which it was evident his bearship was lurking. At about 11 o'clock the watchword went around—‘ALL READY’—and the hunters began to gather in. Long before the center was made, however, bruin was discovered. Fortunately at the point where he was first seen, his assailants had become considerably numerous. Supposing himself surrounded he immediately broke through the line and commenced a retreat; just at this moment the dogs were let loose, and a hot pursuit of dogs, men and boys commenced. He was, however, so harrassed and his progress so impeded by the dogs, that escape was impossible. After running about 100 rods he was overtaken by some of the gunners, when two or three rifle balls soon dispatched him. The conflict was now ended, and the forest echoed with the sound of victory—a procession was formed—the captured and slain enemy was taken up on the shoulders of his conquerors and borne in triumph to the village, where, after having been sufficiently viewed and admired by the ladies and children, he was dressed and cut into pieces; a portion of the meat was then distributed to each family in the village, and a resolution was passed that the avails of the skin should be appropriated to replenish the Sabbath School library. After this disposal of bruin the inhabitants returned to their homes, well satisfied with their day's work.

C.”

OTHER BEAR INCIDENTS.

Another authentic bear adventure, in which Dudley F. Bullock, the earliest settler in the southeast quarter of the township, was an active participant, is worth relating. Mr. Bullock and his young wife lived about four miles from the village of Vermontville, where their nearest neighbors resided. The tramp of wild animals around their rude cabin, and the dolorous howling of wolves, after they had retired for the night, were not uncommon sounds. These were solemn serenades. Mrs. Bullock's father, Horace Howell, one of the pioneers of Calhoun county, desiring to know how his daughter and son-in-law were getting along in their forest home, made them a visit. He went out hunting one day and killed a deer within hailing distance of the log cabin. Wanting assistance he halloed for Mr. Bullock to come to his aid. While on the way, in answer to the call, he saw three bears descending a large leaning tree. Mr. Bullock tried to stop them by pounding on the trunk with a club, at the same time calling to Mr. Howell to come with his rifle. One of the bears, as if realizing the urgency of the situation, loosed his hold on the tree, and dropped like a big ball, nearly prostrating Mr. Bullock by hitting him as he fell. Acting promptly, for he was always cool in every situation, in spite of the surprise, Bullock dealt the bear such a heavy blow with the club he had in his hand that it broke, and losing his balance he fell upon the bear. Then it was a surprise party on both sides, and the scrambling, shouting and growling showed that neither man nor beast desired further or closer acquaintance. The frightened bear got out of the melee and made tracks into the forest, and Mr. Howell coming up the men turned their attention to the two spectators that were still up the tree and succeeded in killing both of them.

In the way of stirring adventure in hunting and killing a bear, Jonas Davis, an early settler in the village and town, a man who was always cool and deliberate, heads the list. In company with a number of Chester men, among them Amasa L. Jordan, a prominent citizen, a bear was surrounded in a swamp. It was a rainy day, and by the time the

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bear was discovered the powder in all the guns was wet and not one of them could be discharged. Apparently the bear was master of the situation. The guns would not go off, and there seemed nothing to prevent him from doing so. Letting him get away, however, without an attempt to capture him, was out of the question. The emergency required prompt action at close quarters. While the rest of the hunters attracted his attention in front and held him at bay, Mr. Davis quietly approached him from the rear, and with an axe struck him a stunning blow on the head that killed him. Later this same Mr. Jordan was shot and killed by one of his sons while they were out hunting together. They separated 37 and after a while the son saw a dark object moving in the bushes and thinking it was a bear fired the fatal shot that killed his father.

On one occasion, early in the forties, my brother, John Carlos Barber, now of Battle Creek, was carrying through the woods to workmen on the sawmill their dinner, a portion of which was a big tin pail of steaming hot pork and beans. The road had been merely underbrushed, and when near some big oak trees about a hundred rods from the mill, he saw an old she bear cross the road some four rods ahead of him. Passing along he stopped a moment to see her tracks, when four cubs came along on her trail. One of them stopped a few feet distant from him, raised its head and snuffed the wafted odor of the pork and beans. Taking off his chip hat he swung it at the cub, halloed like a loon, and started on a keen run for the mill. The smelling cub, together with the other three cubs, started off on a lope into the woods. When he got to the mill he was so out of breath that he could hardly tell the men that he had seen five bears. Hiram Gridley of Kalamo, a millwright, who was at work on the mill, had a dog and gun, said his dog would follow them, and without stopping to eat dinner the men started to find the bears. On arriving at the place where they crossed the road, the tracks being plainly visible, the dog stuck his tail between his legs, run around yelping for about ten rods, and would go no further. Gridley was disgusted, saying, "D—n the dog, he is more scared than the boy was," when the prospective bear hunt was abandoned, and the men went back to the mill to save the

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pork and beans, and to talk over bear adventures and what might have happened if the dog had followed the trail.

Six miles south of Vermontville, on the road to Bellevué in the town of Kalamo, was the well-known tavern kept by Samuel Herring, a farmer as well as a landlord, a sturdy pioneer, better known in the west half of Eaton county than is any member of congress at the present time. His wife, "Aunt Debby," was equally well known in all the region roundabout. They came to Kalamo in 1838, lived together as husband and wife for seventy years. She died about six years before he did, and he passed away September 8, 1895, aged 98 years, 6 months and 6 days— probably the oldest living person in the county previous to his death. No man who lived outside of their town was better known by the Vermontville pioneers. Early one Sunday morning there was a great commotion and loud squealing in the log hog-pen near the house. Louis Herring, a son and hunter of wide repute, guessing rightly as to the cause of the disturbance, seized a rifle and rushed out of the door just as a full-grown bear was climbing out of the pen with a pig in his possession, when a bullet through his head, the result of Lou. Herring's quick and steady aim, put a stop to his pig-stealing career.

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A WONDERFUL CHANGE.

One passing through that region now would not dream that less than sixty years ago it was a dense wilderness, inhabited by Indians, bears, wolves and deer. But Indians, bears, wolves, and deer have disappeared with the forests. They belonged to the untamed wilderness that the pioneers came to subdue and civilize. Most of the hunting that is done now is for votes. The fauna and flora of the country change with the change of its inhabitants. Still the hunter's life and the wildness of nature have charms for white men as well as for the Indian. There were expert riflemen among the early settlers. One of the best single shots was made by W. F. Hawkins. Two deer were standing side by side. He saw but one of them, drew a bead on that one with his long, old-fashioned, heavy,

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hand-made rifle, and the ball passed through and killed both of them. The last of the large game to disappear was the wild turkeys. They were lordly and wary birds. How much more appropriate for a national emblem than the savage eagle. No reminders of the early days are left. Generally but small tracts of the original forest remain in anything like their primitive condition. Probably the three hundred acres in nearly a square form, owned by my brother, Homer G. Barber, and myself, part of the land located by our father, Edward H. Barber, in 1836, and which the axe has never ravaged, or in which it has never been used except to save fallen timber, is one of the largest tracts of original forest in a solid body that can be found in Southern Michigan. One can go into that native woodland, and out of sight of a clearing in any direction, and does not have to draw upon imagination to realize how every acre in Vermontville appeared in the spring of 1836, before the sound of the axe and the crash of falling trees awakened to new life a savage wilderness for unnumbered centuries.

There were men with strong arms as well as stout hearts among the pioneers. The most stalwart wielder of the axe was a champion among men, and got himself much talked about. Perhaps William F. Hawkins was the foremost chopper. He could slash down an acre of average timber in a day. With long arms and tremendous sweep he made every stroke count. He would fell a tree with wonderful accuracy, seldom failing to hit the desired spot. Bore a hole with an auger in the trunk of a fallen tree, stick a wooden pin in the hole, and he would fell another tree, standing thirty to forty feet away, and hit the pin almost every time. His education was that of the eye and muscle. John Wager was another expert chopper. One winter, in the month of February, he chopped down into winrows ten acres of very heavy beech and maple timber for Jonas Davis in nineteen days. He was a slasher. When a boy got so that, chopping down a tree with his father, he could take the heart away from him, he was proud of his achievement, but did not dare to say much about it in the presence of his hard-headed Vermont ancestor. The boy's place was to dig in, do the best he could, and say but little. A common maxim was—"A workman should be known by his chips." Axes were much discussed, the best weight for efficient use, the

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proper length of helve, and of the kinds used those made by Isaiah Blood of Hoosac Falls, New York, were a prime favorite. The axe followed the tomahawk, as the horse succeeded the deer, the dog the wolf, the swine the bear, and the cattle and sheep on the hills the many native denizens of the forest; and then, even the axe was supplanted by the saw for felling timber. The wild game of sixty years ago is gone forever, and if there be any happy hunting ground for the Indian it is in another sphere. It is my purpose to give the reader some idea of the conditions that existed in this region three score years ago, and this done, my purpose in presenting these details is accomplished.

THE LOST BOY INCIDENT.

One of the early incidents that caused great excitement anxiety was a lost boy and the search for him in the early forties. Truman W. Rogers, an early settler, went with his wife and young children to visit relatives a few miles northeast of the village. It was through woods all the way. The next day he started back to Vermontville with his horse and wagon. Soon after he started his young son, Frank Rogers, not five years old, slipped out of the house and into the road unbeknown to his mother, evidently with the intention of finding his father and going back with him. As soon as he was missed search was made for him by the family, but he could not be found, nor any trace of him discovered. Night came on and he was still missing. The father was notified and he hastened back to his family. The few inhabitants then living in the neighborhood collected the next morning and searched the woods for him all through the day. Another night came and no trace of the lost boy had been discovered. News was sent to the colony and with each passing hour the excitement and anxiety grew more intense. Men and women gathered in knots and talked over the probabilities of his having been stolen by Indians or devoured by bears or wolves. All volunteered to prosecute the search. Women cooked victuals so that the men could take rations with them and lose no time. On the morning of the third day after his disappearance, the search was renewed systematically, and during the day traces of him were found, as where he had picked red raspberries along the edge of a swamps, and his cap where he had apparently laid down in the night. On arriving at the

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Ionia road, three to four miles from the house he had left his tracks were discovered, and the conclusion was reached that he had passed to the west of it. For the third day's quest the plan agreed upon was to rendezvous along the line of the road, from two to three miles north 40 of the village, early in the morning and march through the woods to the west near enough together so that no object could escape discovery. Deer were seen, but not a gun was fired. If the boy was found by any of the party one gun was to be fired, and if alive a second discharge was to follow. As daylight dawned the people began to gather. Reuben Sanford lived about three miles northwest of the village, by the highway, and a mile west of the Ionia road. He started early through the woods to the place for the search to begin. In the gloaming, before the sun was up, as he was passing through the dense forest, and the silence was as solemn as the occasion, he heard a faint noise like a child's voice. He stopped, listened intently, and heard these words: "Hoo-ah! Hoo-ah! You seen my pa?" Turning his eyes in the direction the voice came from, he saw the capless white head of the lost boy in the tall grass at the edge of a swamp. The boy was not afraid, and when spoken to said: "I've been to grandma's; where's my pa?" The idea of finding his father occupied his mind. When asked, later, if he had seen any of the men who were looking for him, he replied: "Yeth, but I didn't see my pa?" Sanford at once fired his rifle, and quickly loaded it and fired it again. The noise rang through the forest, and the father of the boy heard the reports, though nearly a mile away, and started on the run towards the point from which they came. The second report assured him and all who heard it that the boy was alive. Truman Rogers was but a few minutes in reaching the spot where Sanford and the boy were moving towards the place of rendezvous, a halloo and an answer informing him just where they were. As soon as Rogers reached them and grasped the lost boy in his arms the latter said to Sanford: "I've found my pa." It was a thrilling episode. Through the woods, as swiftly as a man could run, Rogers, with the boy in his arms, bore him to his sorrowing mother, and the three days of agony were ended. Leisurely men and boys scattered to their homes and labor, and Reuben Sanford was the proudest man in all that region. During the years that have passed since then there has been no greater joy for all

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the people than on the day the lost boy was found. For many years, grown to manhood, he lived in the town, married the daughter of Curtis Chappel and raised a family.

POLITICS OF THE COLONISTS.

Of the first settlers, all who came from Rutland and Addison counties, Vermont, were conservative whigs, while those who came from Bennington county were rock-rooted democrats. It would be a curious study to ascertain for how many generations the ancestors of the whigs had been whigs, and also for how long the ancestors of the democrats had been democrats. While there have been a few individual changes from one party to another, yet Vermonters have adhered to party names with wonderful tenacity from generation to generation. Heredity in politics was stronger 41 even than in religion. Later comers, early in the forties, like Artemas and Cephas Smith from Orwell, Rutland county, were whigs, and both Samuel and Henry Robinson, the latter the father of Sam. Robinson of Charlotte, who came from Bennington, were democrats. Still all were inoculated with the democratic idea, and every man in the village felt himself to be the equal, in the possession of all essential rights and privileges, of every other white man in the world. All were positive and assertive. It was expected as a matter of course that partisan politics would descend from sires to sons with unbroken regularity. Before a store was opened in 1853, and until he moved away, which included the first ten years of the village life, Norton's blacksmith shop was the place for general discussion. Politics, in their season, they talked with a good deal of heat; at other times the crops, planting, cultivating, harvesting, the merits and demerits of different tools and implements and methods, whose oxen had hauled the biggest logs, the latest letters from Vermont, the weather-signs and how they differed from those of New England, for every man then was his own weather bureau, and the last baby born in the colony. Theology was not much discussed as all had inherited the same kind, and so nearly all the friction and fire was about party history, policy and leaders.

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Dividing, as they did, according to the counties in Vermont they came from, the Barbers, Dickinson, Griswold, Fairfield, Squier, Mears, McCotter and others were dyed-in-the-wool whigs, admired Daniel Webster and worshiped Henry Clay; while Martin, the Robinsons, Norton, Browning, the Fullers, and a majority of the settlers on land outside of the colony purchase, were staunch democrats, swore by Andrew Jackson, later on loved Silas Wright and hated Tippecanoe and Tyler too intensely. At first the solitary abolitionist was Willard Davis, and though one of the best educated and best read men in the town he was a political outcast. The head of each family took some favorite eastern weekly paper, like the New York Tribune or Express, the Albany Journal or Argus; but when it came to the religious weekly the New York Observer was the favorite and only paper, as it was true-blue in its orthodoxy and its application of religion to politics, and more especially to the ominous slavery question.

No magazines were taken—indeed, the magazine age had not arrived—but the papers were read thoroughly, then exchanged for the ones taken by the nearest neighbors, and so all were well informed as to public men and measures, as well as in regard to the larger world movements and events which the age of steam and electricity was then inaugurating. The early hope of the construction of the Clinton and Kalamazoo canal along the bottom land of the Thornapple river, where, it is said, the surveyors had found an eighty-mile stretch without a lock and the only question was feeders, was blasted by the collapse of all western enterprises which 42 followed the panic of 1837, and yet how often the relative advantages of railroads and canals were discussed, with the conclusion always in favor of the canal. The canal boat was conservative and did not jerk everything through and out of a country like the railway locomotive, but the horses and mules used to propel the boats would consume coarse grain and help to furnish a home market. This economic idea cropped out in politics, the broader concept of free and open markets with unrestricted exchange of products not finding general acceptance in Yankee land, and so the majority were whigs and protectionists and the minority democrats and free traders.

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Before the slavery question came to the front as the dominant issue the colonists divided on the economic question, according to hereditary influence upon thought and party association, and many and hot were the discussions, generally held at Norton's blacksmith shop, on the paltry politics of the time. During a presidential campaign, the first one coming in 1840, the discussions were heated, and sometimes abusive epithets were indulged in by the brethren, which were sure to be condoned at a subsequent church meeting, when the apologies made to each other and the forgiveness asked were sincere; but the next partisan round was as hot as ever. Wells R. Martin and Martin S. Norton, the foremost upholders of the democratic cause, were fluent talkers, and Edward H. Barber was one of the most valiant and ready defenders of the whig party. The log-cabin, coon-skin and hard cider campaign of 1840 gave the whigs their first and only innings in Michigan, when they carried the state for "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" and for "Woodbridge and Reform." Log cabins and coon-skins were familiar things, but the hard cider was merely a reminiscence of bygone days in New England.

In the presidential campaigns of 1844, 1848 and 1852 the whigs voted the whig ticket and the democrats voted the democratic ticket with undeviating regularity, although vital issues growing out of slavery and its aggressions were forming in the public mind, and the only thing they agreed upon was the dislike of the abolitionists. The last appearance of the whig party in a national campaign was in 1852. Already the anti-slavery movement was gathering force, though generally condemned. In 1844 the abolition vote for James G. Birney defeated Henry Clay in the state of New York and lost him the presidency. He was the favorite leader of the whigs; they were downcast over his defeat; and their hatred of the abolitionists was more intense than ever. In Vermontville, prior to 1852, there were but three abolitionists: Willard Davis, Alvah L. Armstrong and William B. Hopkins; but that year, by the arrival of Dr. Robert C. Kedzie, in February, they numbered four, all told. Soon thereafter came the great political upheaval of this century; the republican party was organized in 1854; and all the whigs, the free-soil democrats and the abolitionists became republicans.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY BIBLE.

The year 1852 witnessed the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." At that time, Norton and the Robinsons having moved away, nearly all of the voters in the village were silver gray whigs; they did not believe in slavery but adhered tenaciously to the compromises of the constitution; they read the New York Observer, and repeated with something skin to solemn awe, as if it was applicable to our time and conditions, the old saying, "Cursed are Canaan." When Dr. Kedzie came an aggressive abolitionist was introduced into society and the church. Willard Davis was strong and firm; Dr. Kedzie was sharp and incisive; together they made a full team. When it became known that Kedzie had voted for John P. Hale for president there was a good deal of feeling manifested. Here was a firebrand, and one on which the fire did not go out. A leading whig said to him one day: "Doc., *do you believe a nigger is as good as a white man?*" "That depends on how the white man behaves himself," was the prompt reply. No one, unfamiliar with the feelings and thoughts of that time, can realize how strong and antagonistic they were.

Soon after the Kedzie family had settled in the village, Mrs. Nancy H. Fairchild of Oberlin, Ohio, visited Mrs. Kedzie, in 1852, and brought with her the first copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that came into Vermontville. From a perspective of forty-five years we can form a tolerably accurate estimate of the influence of that wonderful book. Every great movement has its bible—is voiced in literature. Some one gives utterance to the formative sentiment of the time when great historic upheavals come and hastens their culmination. Thus Harriet Beecher Stowe's undying story, weaving the actual incidents of life among the lowly and the oppressed into the attractive form of a novel, became at once, on its appearance in a book, the gospel of the anti-slavery dispensation. It stirred the hearts of men and women to their depths, and profound convictions of the moral wrong and political degradation of slavery broke the crust of conservatism and destroyed that reverence for

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the compromises of the constitution upon which man-hunting and man-stealing securely rested for more than half a century.

Of the reception given to that epoch-making book in an isolated and intelligent community, where really strong moral natures slumbered underneath the crust of traditional politics—a book that still lives because in portraying a great wrong it appealed to the moral natures of men and women at a crucial period of American history and is as perennial as the desire for liberty and immortal as human rights—Prof. Kedzie, in a personal note to the writer, says: “Food and sleep and earthly cares had little hold on us till wife and I, in tears and choking sobs, had read that wonderful book. Before we had read much it leaked out that we had a book of wonderful pathos, and Frances A. Mears”—now Mrs. Fitz Stebins 44 of Vermontville—“filed her application to read the book next, but before she got it seven other applications were on file, and before she had read it there were thirty who spoke for the book. After it left our hands we saw no more of it for two years, and it came back the most worn and tattered book I ever saw.” But it performed its mission and hastened the fusion of silver-gray whigs, free-soil democrats and abolitionists into a solid organization to resist and prevent the further aggressions and the extension of slavery.

Wherever read it had the same or a similar effect, though nowhere was it more marked than upon the conservative minds of these Vermonters. Of course there were political pachyderms who could not be reached and influenced. It may not be out of place for me to say in this connection that at the time “Uncle Tom's Cabin” was performing missionary work at Vermontville I was living in Detroit, working in a printing office, and boarding at Martin W. Burpee's on Fifth street, near Grand River avenue, and during the leisure evening hours read the book aloud to members of the family. One of the listeners was Miss Minerva Ellis, afterwards the wife of Dr. E. E. Ellis of Detroit. Often some pathetic incident brought tears to all eyes. Truth possesses power and pathos to overcome wrong, even when intrenched in precedent and law.

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No other book of this century had so remarkable an influence in moulding public opinion and in controlling the thoughts and actions of all classes of people. It is related of President Lincoln that the first time he met Mrs. Stowe—it was in Washington during the civil war—he grasped her hand when introduced and in his big-hearted and spontaneous way said to her: “Is this the little woman who brought on the great war?” Leaving affairs of state to take care of themselves for the time, and unmindful of others present, he accompanied her to a seat in an alcove of the White House, and that hour’s conversation between these two great and congenial souls, whose names are forever associated with the most eventful period of American history, is recorded only in that invisible realm where thought never dies.

In Vermontville, where each man and woman knew every other man and woman, and human foibles, failing and idiosyncrasies were much talked about, vastly more than they are now in this age of daily newspapers, the missionary work of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was very effective. Conservatism forgot about Canaan and its unhappy lot. The book became the gospel of a new political dispensation. Nevertheless, conservatism never surrenders gracefully. Memory of the flesh-pots lingers. One day a leading citizen came to Dr. Kedzie in great glee with copies of the New York Observer, which contained criticism of Mrs. Stowe’s book, and among the pious witticisms was this conundrum: “Which would you rather kiss, the Pope’s toe or Harriet Beecher Stowe?” Some days later the Doctor was asked if he had looked over the papers and noticed what they said. ⁴⁵ He replied, with more twinkles than usual in his eye: “I cannot forget them, for wife complained about dreadful smell coming from a certain cubby—it smelled awful nicey—would I open it and see what was the matter? I opened it and found those New York Observers!” His questioner said nothing in reply, but the Doctor thought that the look on his face spelled “blasphemy.” Such incidents indicate the sentiment of the time. It was like molten lava.

But events moved swiftly. Feeling was at fever heat. “Coming events cast their shadows before.” Early in 1856, after nearly ten years’ absence, I went back to Vermontville to

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reside. The political contest of that year opened early and in earnest. It was a part of my experience, in company with Willard Davis, a strong debater, and Doctor Kedzie, a sharp and incisive talker, to visit every schoolhouse in Vermontville, and many in Castleton, Woodland, Sunfield, Rexand, Chester and Kalamo, to take part in evening meetings for the discussion of the slavery question during the Fremont campaign. We went without thought of pay in money. The schoolhouse would be lighted and warmed, some farmer who lived close by would put out and feed the team, and often the good wife would have a lunch ready after the meeting, before we started for a drive home, sometimes ten to fourteen miles. A paid speaker was unknown. A principle stirred the heart of the people, and the question of compensation in dollars and cents did not enter into the campaign. Politics bud not become a profession. So rapid was the progress of events that, in 1856, Willard Davis, the despised abolitionist of 1852, was nominated for representative of the Western district of Eaton, count and Henry A. Shaw of Eaton Rapids for the eastern district. Both were elected, and both voted to make Zachariah Chandler United States senator at the session of 1857. In town, county and state the political transformation was complete, not until 1860, however, did the nation declare that freedom was national and slavery sectional by the election of Abraham Lincoln.

THE CIVIL WAR.

The civil war came. Never were people more determined. Slavery was the aggressor. The first gun fired on Fort Sumter woke the nation from along dream of peace and compromise with wrong. The first battle of Bull Run occurred. Holiday soldiers then began to change to veterans. Men of the North began to realize that it would be no mere child's play to conquer the men of the South. They, too, were Americans. One beautiful day in July, writes Prof. Kedzie, while he was looking over his beloved fruit trees in his amateur orchard, Mrs. Kedzie came out of the house and with tear in her eyes, said to him: "O Robert! our army is destroyed and the rebels are going into Washington!" This was the first news of that raw battle, which congressmen and other civilians went out 46 to see. The whole village was at once in a tumult of excitement. Seldom does it come to one's

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experience to see an entire community so profoundly stirred. The people gathered in groups to hear Ed. Hunter read the first wild rumors from the battlefield. A great deal was left for imagination and conjecture; but soon men realized that the nation was involved in a bloody and fratricidal conflict, and that no holiday excursion to the South, with military pomp and display, would settle the grave problem slavery had prepared for solution.

During the exciting events of 1861, getting the news as quickly as possible was a serious question. There was a horseback mail twice a week from Bellevue, which arrived quite regularly unless the Thornapple river was in flood; also a mail from Lansing by pony express along the "State Road," subject to the same conditions of weather. From Bellevue to Marshall was a daily stage and mail, and likewise from Charlotte to Jackson, but both terminals were fourteen miles distant. The great outside world was crowded with stirring events, and the people longed for daily communication with the news centers, and for the daily papers the same day that they were printed. A revolution had come which was one of the world's great heart-beats of progress. How to get the news from the seat of war was the problem to be solved. A daily mail none dreamed of as possible to obtain. What then? The Michigan Central railroad brought the Detroit dailies to Jackson and Humphrey & Hibbard's stage line delivered them in Charlotte late every afternoon, but then they were fourteen miles from the little village where all were hungry for war news. Finally a purse was made up and a boy hired to ride a pony to Charlotte and bring the Detroit morning papers with their precious burden of intelligence from the seat of war—whether the rebellion was being crushed and the Union safe from all assaults—and no one thought of retiring until the last item of war news was read aloud in the store at nine to twelve o'clock in the evening. Sometimes the stage was late in arriving at Charlotte and the hours for waiting seemed long until the boy came with the papers. Dr. Kedzie relates an incident which shows the intense eagerness for news that prevailed. He was walking up and down the street at midnight, listening for the patter of the pony's feet, when he met Edward H. Barber, who lived three-quarters of a mile away, treading the same beat and waiting for the boy to arrive. He asked: "Has the paper come?" "Not yet," the Doctor

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replied. "Well," was the disappointed response, "I believe I am the biggest old fool in the county, but I cannot sleep until I know how the war goes." There was a whole community of just such fools abroad that summer night, for the store always remained open until the papers arrived, and yet the extra anxiety that stirred the blood on that occasion was caused by rumors of Gen. Butler's skirmish at Big Bethel, where Major Theodore Winthrop, a young American author of great brilliancy and promise, then Butler's military secretary, was killed 47 while leading an assault on the Confederate line, June 10, 1861. The Atlantic Monthly, for which he wrote, was taken in Vermontville and hence his name was well known in that community.

Who that knew of them can forget the emotions that stirred the hearts of the people during the civil war? The spirit of patriotism came to them clothed in resurrectional brightness, like unto that which lights the footsteps of men along the pathway to the radiant realm of perfection and peace. Manhood broke the fetters of party and stood proudly erect, as in the early days of the Republic, and gave sublimity to American character. The price paid was great, sorrow and sacrifice in almost every household, yet ere the era of greed came with its blighting influence, great were the compensatory results. How the events of that crucial period, among a generation of men and women nearly all of whom have passed away, crowd upon the mind! War waves swept through the little village, then isolated from the electric pulse-beats of the time, though it was the center of trade for all of the surrounding towns, and its influence extended far beyond its territorial area. From almost every family there were one or more enlistments in the military service. The regiments that received the largest number of able-bodied soldiers from the town were the Second Michigan Cavalry and the Sixth and Twelfth Infantry, though in the Fifth Cavalry and Thirteenth Infantry the town was also represented. In many states of the South soldiers from Vermontville were buried, stretching from Maryland to Texas, and not one of them was charged with cowardice or desertion.

The year 1861 was the last year of my residence in the town, an election as clerk of Eaton county in 1860, as clerk of the house of representatives in the State legislature in 1861

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and 1863, the appointment as Reading Clerk of the national house of representatives in 1864, as Supervisor of Internal Revenue for Michigan and Wisconsin in 1869 and as Third Assistant Postmaster General in 1873, taking me away permanently; still it is the one place on earth that has the associations and charms of home. But the stirring events of politics and of the civil war, among its positive and independent citizens, each one of whom possessed a strongly outlined individuality, are ended. The pioneers have made their last argument. Like them, the great leaders they argued for and against are also dead. In the greater issues of life and destiny, in the contemplation of which all the differences and prejudices of this mortal state seem inconsequential, they are reaping results of the lives lived here—reaping as they have sown.

FIRST STORE AND MERCHANTS.

The advent of a mercantile firm, with a general stock of dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, hardware, patent medicines, etc., was an important event in the economic life of the community. Until this occurred 48 in 1853 the trading had been done almost wholly in Bellevue, Marshall and Battle Creek. Hale & Frink—Warren S. Hale and William S. Frink—opened the store. Some years later, two or three years after the war, when looking over the Thornapple Valley, with reference to a line for the Grand River Valley railroad, in company with Amos Boot of Jackson, we met Hale at Alaska, Kent county, where he was in the same business. He was a smooth and fluent talker. Frink was active and energetic, with a large endowment of hope and courage. He built a large store, modeled somewhat after the pictures of Noah's Ark, purchased big stocks of goods for the time, bought wild land on the school section and commenced improving it, and was financially swamped in a few years. Had the inflation of the war period come while he was in trade he would have become wealthy. From Michigan he went to Iowa, and thence to the far West, where “rolls the Oregon.” A son born in 1856 he named Fremont, and a second one born in 1860 he called Lincoln. The firm of Frink & Barber came next—Homer G. Barber succeeding Hale in 1855—and were followed by D. F. Barber & Co. This firm did a prosperous business until 1863, when D. F. Barber sold out and moved away. The firm of Barber & Martin—

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Homer G. Barber and Henry J. Martin—was organized May 15, 1863, and conducted a prosperous business for ten years. On the dissolution of this firm Martin continued business with Mr. Downing for five years, under the firm name of Martin & Downing, and after that by himself to 1890. The old business, established in 1853, was continued by the firm of Barber, Hull & Ambrose, both Fred A. Hull and Chester A. Ambrose having been clerks in the old store. In 1883 Hull sold his interest to Sidney S. Rockwell, the firm of Barber, Ambrose & Rockwell was organized and still continues the business. Last year Chester A. Ambrose was elected treasurer of Eaton county on the silver ticket and has moved to Charlotte, the county seat.

For forty-two years Homer G. Barber has been in trade, and is the oldest merchant in continuous service in the county. In 1872 he started a private bank, which has been successfully managed ever since, W. C. Alsover, a son-in-law, looking after the details as cashier. In company with his son, Edward D. Barber, a hardware store is carried on, and he is a director in the Merchants National Bank at Charlotte. In the course of business several farms have fallen into their hands; he has the general care and supervision of three that he now owns, and looks after a large one of 525 acres owned in connection with E. W. Barber, land purchased of the government by their father, Edward H. Barber, in May, 1836. Though engaged in active business all his life, going to California in 1849, making the trip from New York around Cape Horn in the packet ship Sheridan, gathering gold enough to make a start in a successful business career, H. G. Barber has not neglected the larger fields of thought and literature, and has one of the best private libraries in that section of country. In 1870 he was 49 elected State senator from the Twentieth district, composed of Eaton and Barry counties. An independent thinker belonging to no church and tied to no party, he has been and still is the foremost person of the second generation in promoting the welfare and giving tone and character to the religious life, social condition and business interests of the village and town. He has served officially in many capacities, as town clerk, justice of the peace, member of the township board, school inspector, postmaster, president and trustee of the village, school director and

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trustee of the Congregational society—making, all in all, probably the most active life of any citizen of the town or county.

Another general store was started in June, 1854, Wells R. Martin of Vermontville and John F. Hinman of Battle Creek being co-partners under the firm name of W. R. Martin & Co. In about a year Mr. Hinman was succeeded by Adonijah H. Proctor for two years, when the business of W. R. Martin & Co. passed, in 1850, to the new firm of Benedict & Martin—William H. Benedict and Henry J. Martin. Benedict's interest was purchased by Martin and the business continued by the latter until 1863, when the firm of Barber & Martin was organized and the stocks of the two stores consolidated. W. H. Benedict, son of Rev. W. U. Benedict, second pastor of the Congregational Church, acquired a knowledge of trade in the store of Chauncey M. Brewer at Marshall. After the dissolution of the firm of Benedict & Martin he engaged in the grocery business, and for over thirty years has been the leading grocer, grain, wool and provision dealer. He served one term as sheriff of the county, making an excellent record. Henry J. Martin is now a farmer. For thirty years he has been the leader of the Congregational choir, and for the lifetime of a generation has been active in matters relating to the religious, social and business interests of the community. Other merchants and traders were not identified with the early settlers, or makers of Vermontville. James Fleming, a Scotchman, opened a shoe shop in 1857, and still runs a boot and shoe store.

Until the country was cut up by railroads, Vermontville was the center of a large trade in a naturally rich agricultural region. In the leading store sales sometimes reached a thousand dollars a day. During the forty-four years since the first general store was opened, there have been fewer changes among the merchants than in most villages. At first, Hale & Frink talked of placing their stock in a board shanty on the hill opposite the residence of Daniel Barber. Naomi Dickinson, who lived near, said that would suit her exactly, as she could take the tongs and draw out the goods she wanted through the cracks and not bother the salesmen at all. But the firm occupied by common consent the lower story of the Academy instead of the shanty, and the small stock of staples then needed has grown

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to a business that requires a general assortment on hand worth at least twenty thousand dollars to keep pace with the demands of the community. 50 The old Academy served the educational, religious, political, patriotic, civil and mercantile needs of the village for many years, and is now used as a chapel by the Congregational society, having entered the second half century in a good state of preservation. An excellent town hall, built of brick, one of the best for a village of its size in the State, with a lock-up for offenders to meet the requirements of a progressive civilization, now serves the secular purposes of the town, and there is no longer a mixture of religion, education, merchandise, and politics under the same roof.

PHYSICIANS.

Among the colonists were two physicians, Dewey H. Robinson from Bennington, Vermont, and Oliver J. Stiles from the State of New York. Dr. Stiles first settled in Bellevue, Michigan, and was admitted to membership by a formal vote at a meeting held in Vermontville, January 26, 1838, and was the earliest resident physician. He remained but a year or two, then moved back to New York, and was lost sight of. Dr. Robinson was an original member of the colony, signing the compact in Vermont, and became a resident of the village in 1838. He was a very bright man, witty and sociable, quick tempered, a college graduate and a good physician. His wife, Olive Rigelow, was a daughter of Dr. William Bigelow of Bennington, well educated, and both were great favorites, especially with the young people of the settlement. Three children were born to them in Vermontville: William, the oldest, who married and died many years ago; Edmund Albert, at present living in Memphis, Tennessee, and an enthusiastic musician; and George Stephen Robinson, a bachelor, and a successful collar and cuff manufacturer at Troy, New York. He supports his mother, who is one of the three surviving pioneer women of the Colony, has educated one of the daughters of his oldest brother, and assisted the other brother in his musical career. The family remained in Vermontville until 1846, then moved to Marshall, Michigan, resided there about a year, and then went back to Bennington, Vermont. The Doctor was much broken in health from long rides through the woods over

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rough roads in all sorts of weather, with irregular sleep and meals, and died a few years later.

Obliged to furnish medicines, as there was no place where they were sold within a dozen to twenty-eight miles, quinine for chills and fever and calomel with jalap or heroic work, and epsom salts and castor oil for constant duty, his outfit was a trusty Canadian pony, with saddlebags to carry the drugs and instruments needed for a day on the road. Often the ride would take the entire day and extend well into the night. Particular about his food, the Doctor would not eat until he reached home, perhaps after an absence of twelve to fifteen hours, and his table was one of the most inviting of the village. Tired and hungry, the kind of life, 51 with its irregular habits, was not calculated to promote health and longevity. The minister could preach old sermons, but the doctor must be on hand with fresh prescriptions in every emergency, and his ride extended many miles in all directions. Of the pony it was said that he could thrive on maple browse and a nubbin of corn.

In 1840, when the mail route from Marshall to Ionia was established. Doctor Robinson was appointed the first postmaster, and his log house was more frequently visited than any other residence in the village. Prior to that year Bellevue was the nearest postoffice. The mail was not large, as the postage on a letter from Vermont was twenty-five cents, and sometimes raising the quarter of a dollar to pay Uncle Sam for bringing it was a difficult matter. Towards night, of the day the mail arrived from Bellevue, a representative from nearly every family in the village could be met at the postoffice, and every one knew who had received a message from the old New England home. These details are mentioned so that the reader of this narrative may realize the marked contrasts of the past with the present. A weekly mail, when not interrupted by the spring flood of the Thornapple river, with a paper or two for each family and an occasional letter, was the only connection with the outside world, and yet that was vastly better than for the first four years, with the postoffice fourteen miles distant.

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Dr. Robinson and his wife were very popular with the young people. He had more books than any other settler. Among them were Walter Scott's novels and poems. In reading portions of the "Lady of the Lake" to young listeners he took great pleasure. "Ivanhoe" was a revelation of the age of romance and chivalry, of knights and ladies and tournaments, and was more attractive than Baxter's "Saints' Best" or his "Call to the Unconverted," which were staple household literature of that time. With this books and brightness, his ready wit, and talk about men and events, Dr. Robinson had a marked influence upon the young people of the colony.

After he left in 1846, his successor was Dr. J. H. Palmer. He remained about three years. In 1849, on the discovery of gold in California, he caught the Argonaut fever, set out with a party to make the overland trip, and died of cholera at Independence, Missouri.

Then for nearly three years no physician resided in the village, the nearest one being at Hyde's Mill in Kalamo, seven miles distant. The next resident physician was Dr. Robert C. Kedzie, now Professor of Chemistry at the State of Agricultural College. The family name is also associated with Kedzie's Grove in Lenawee county, which I find was an established postoffice in 1839, when there were but five other postoffices in that county. In February, 1852, he moved from Kalamazoo to Vermontville. His real wealth then consisted of pluck, character, education, profession, wife, and a seven-months-old baby, his perishable wealth, two wagon loads 52 of household furniture, a small stock of medicine, a saddle-horse, and three dollars in cash. The family found shelter in the hospitable log house of Daniel Barber, until he could fit up and make habitable, the vacated log structure of Lemnel Standish, who had moved away, and one-half of his cash was invested in 7 by 9 window glass to keep out the weather. One day, hungering for "the meat that perisheth," he went to R. W. Griswold and asked him: "Can you land me Noah's second son?" The reply came promptly: "Shem, Ham—by thunder, yes!—you shall have Noah's second son." Then in his whole-souled way he handed the Doctor a nice fat ham.

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Looking backward, it seems clear that Dr. Kedzie added more to the life and character of the village than any other one person. He was born at Delhi, New York, January 28, 1823; came to Michigan in 1826 with his father, William Kedzie, after whom the Kedzie's Grove postoffice was named, and of which he was the first postmaster. The name of the office was afterward changed to Deerfield. His wife, Harriet Eliza Fairchild, was born at Brownhelm, Ohio, May 31, 1828, graduated at Oberlin college in the same class with the Doctor in 1847, and died December 17, 1891. They were married at Brownhelm, May 20, 1850. Their children: William Knowlton Kedzie, born in Kalamazoo, Mich., July 5, 1851, graduated at the Michigan Agricultural College in 1870, was assistant in chemistry there 1870-73; professor of chemistry in Kansas Agricultural College, 1873-78; resigned to accept the position of professor of chemistry in Oberlin College, Ohio, which he held for two years, when he returned home in poor health and died April 14, 1880. Robert Fairchild Kedzie, born in Vermontville, December 9, 1852, graduated from Michigan Agricultural College in 1871; assistant in chemistry there 1873-80; appointed professor of chemistry in the Mississippi Agricultural College in 1880, and died there in February 13, 1882. Frank Stewart Kedzie, born in Vermontville, May 12, 1857, graduated at the Michigan Agricultural College in 1877; assistant in chemistry 1880-87; assistant professor 1887-90, and adjunct professor since 1890.

In 1852, when Dr. Kedzie came to Vermontville, most of the settlers lived in log house, there being only six frame dwellings. The first one was built by Wait J. Squier in 1838; the second by W. S. Fairfield, which was a long time getting finished; the others by S. S. Church, Oren Dickinson, Rev. W. U. Benedict, and Simeon McCotter, with a shanty-like frame on the Cochrane village lot occupied by Rev. Seth Hardy, the Congregational minister. None of the other inhabitants lived in "ceiled houses," but in tabernacles built of rough logs.

Nine years of practice by Dr. Kedzie when the war came and with it the question, who shall go? The first call for seventy-five thousand three months' men, and the unfavorable

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results, opened optimistic eyes to the 53 fact that a tremendous struggle had begun. When the call for more soldiers came Dr. Kedzie felt that duty to an imperiled country was stronger than to the home circle. When the decision to go was reached no wife was more brave and faithful in helping her husband to get ready for service in camp and on battlefield than Mrs. Kedzie. He enlisted about thirty men for the Twelfth Michigan Infantry, who joined Company G, Captain Isaac M. Cravath of Lansing. Humorous incidents occurred. Dr. Kedzie asked Bob Hope to enlist, and he promised a reply in the evening, when he said: "I guess I won't go; Milo Deuel told me that when I went into battle I would have to wear two plow points hung in front and two in the rear, and if that's the way they rig soldiers I don't want to enlist." Commissioned assistant surgeon of the regiment January 15, 1862, Dr. Kedzie was promoted to surgeon April 25, 1862, after the battle of Shiloh, which occurred April 6 and 7; where he was taken prisoner while attending to the wounded, and resigned October 8, 1862. In January, 1863, he was appointed professor of chemistry in the Michigan Agricultural College, a position he still holds and honors. He was elected a representative in the state legislature for the first district of Ingham country in 1866, his object in taking the office being to promote the welfare of the Agricultural College.

The eleven years of Dr. Kedzie's residence in Vermontville were the best years in the intellectual life. An intelligent physician is brought every lay into close associates with the people. In organizing "The Antediluvian Society" he took the lead. Meetings were held at the houses of members, original papers read, and much interest aroused. It was like many of the clubs in villages and cities today. His library had a number of readable volumes. In selecting books for the Township Library, at that time as excellent institution, his knowledge and advice were of great value. Positive and keen, a lover of liberty and hater of shams, true to his friends and fond of the sports of the forest, no man had a stronger and better influence in moulding public opinion and in giving a healthy and manly tone to society during the decade that preceded the civil war.

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In 1858, Almon A. Thompson, son of Uriah Thompson, born in Vermont and educated at Oberlin and Ann Arbor, came to Vermontville from Olivet, and for the first year was in partnership with Dr. Kedzie in practicing medicine. He made the village his home for nearly twelve years, and took a leading part in its social and intellectual life. He was a first-class man. September 24, 1862, he was commissioned assistant surgeon of the Twelfth Michigan Infantry; resigned January 28, 1863; was made assistant surgeon of the Eleventh Michigan Cavalry December 13, 1863, and was mustered out the service August 10, 1865. He resumed practice in Vermontville; was elected representative in the State legislature in 1868; was appointed United States consul at Goderich, Canada, 54 in 1871, through the influence of Senator Zachariah Chandler, and remained there until 1876; was consular agent at Stratford, Canada, for a short time; then settled in Flint, Michigan, where he recommended and continued the practice of medicine until his death in 1893.

Albert Thompson, a brother of Almon A., began his career as a physician in Vermontville just before the civil war. He was appointed assistant surgeon of the Third Michigan Cavalry March 3, 1864; was promoted to surgeon October 4, 1864; and was mustered out February 12, 1866. After the war he resumed practice in Vermontville, then wisely turned his face westward; now resides in Colton, California, where he is practicing medicine and politics, and owns and edits a newspaper.

Vermontville, though a small village, furnished, with Dr. Joseph B. Griswold, now of Grand Rapids, Mich., four surgeons and assistant surgeons for the military service. While not a practicing physician in the town, he is entitled to honorable mention in this connection. September 2, 1861, when 19 years old, he enlisted in the Second Michigan Cavalry, and was discharged August 21, 1862, after having been in hospital for three months, on surgeon's certificate of disability. Recovering his health and studying medicine, he was commissioned assistant surgeon of the Fourth Michigan Infantry November 5, 1864; surgeon in January, 1866; and mustered out in the regiment June 12, 1866, at the age of 23 years. Near the close of the war the regiment was ordered to Texas, and Surgeon

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Griswold was appointed medical inspector of the Department of San Antonio, having charge of the military prison at that place in 1865-66, until mustered out of the service. Few, if any, volunteer regiments had so long a term of service for the government.

Since the war Dr. Griswold has been a prominent member of the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Loyal Legion for Michigan. For fifteen years he has been a pension examiner; is a member and ex-president of the Grand Rapids Academy of Medicine; is now president of the Michigan State Medical Society; is a member of the National Association of Railway Surgeons; is also a member of the American Medical Association; an honorary member of the Minnesota State Medical Society, and consulting physician for the Alma Sanitarium. Born and educated in Vermontville, Dr. Joseph Bascom Griswold is entitled to honorable mention among its physicians, though his practice has been at Taylor's Falls, Minnesota, and Grand Rapids in this State.

William Parmenter, a well-educated physician, settled in Vermontville in 1864. Born in Tully, New York, he was educated at the Michigan University in Ann Arbor, practiced medicine in Iowa for four years and in Olive, Michigan, for one year before he moved to the village where he now resides, having been in continuous practice for a third of a century, a much longer time than any other physician.

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Phillip H. Green came to Vermontville as a boy with his father, Amos Green, and began life there on a wild farm in the northeast part of the town, obtained a good medical education by his own efforts, began practice in the village in 1870, and is still in the harness. Not having practiced anywhere else he is Vermontville's sole indigenous physician.

Charles J. Lane, of the eclectic school, came to Vermontville in 1871, was a successful practitioner for a number of years, and had many friends. He moved to Iowa and then returned to Michigan. His brother, W. H. Lane, is Judge of Probate for Calhoun county. His father was a pioneer of that county, living on a farm and keeping a hotel about half way

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between Bellevue and Marshall, on the principal highway from Vermontville out into the world for trade and markets. But new men were better known to the early settlers, outside of Vermontville, than was Mr. Lane.

In 1876, Charles S. Snell, a skillful homeopath, settled in the village, and has built up a fine practice.

From the planting of the Colony, Vermontville has been fortunate in the character and ability of its physicians. Mingling with the people in times of trial and sickness, of pain and sorrow, birth and death, the good physician is a potent factor in moulding public sentiment and in giving direction to the thoughts of those for whom he is called upon to minister. More than any other class, even the clergymen, he knows the life of the people.

We talk about the hardships of pioneer life, and yet these so-called hardships do not kill people half so fast as do the vices and luxuries of civilization. The pace that kills the quickest is born of wealth and idleness. The early necrology of Vermontville, young and old, was very small. S. S. Church kept a memorandum of the deaths in the town from its first settlement in 1836 to 1846, a period of ten years, which is worth transcribing, as it shows that pioneer life is conducive to health and life rather than to disease and death.

The first death, that of Mrs. Maria S. Mead, the young wife of Elijah Mead, one of the earliest colonists, occurred March 24, 1837, at the age of 22 years.

July 26, 1839, Eliza Hewitt Browning, aged one year.

August, 1839, Mary J. Gray.

In 1840, Alexander Clark, an old gentleman.

July 9, 1842, William Warner, another old man and settler in a shanty in the northeast part of the town.

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July 6, 1842, Marietta Knapp, a beautiful girl, aged 15 years.

January 7, 1843, Ellen Mears, aged three years.

November 12, 1843, Mrs. David Henderson, aged 75 years.

In 1844, Mrs. Laura Gray, wife of Warren Gray.

August 9, 1844, Mrs. Maria Davis, wife of Jonas Davis.

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May 9, 1845, Catherine Norton, daughter of Martin S. and Mary A. Norton.

August 22, 1845, Camilla Barber, daughter of Daniel Barber, and sister of Julius S. Barber of Coldwater, Michigan.

Deaths and funerals were rare during the first ten years of the Colony, and weddings were still rarer, but of births there were many, children coming to every family. The deaths of the three young and beautiful girls—Marietta Knapp, Catherine Norton and Camilla Barber—who were great favorites, caused profound sorrow. Half a century has not erased them from memory. Not the events of yesterday, but those of the long ago, leave the most durable impressions.

THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTERS.

Religion and education were the ideals of the Vermontville colonists. The Congregational polity was as natural to them as was the town meeting as the basis of civil government. Both were government by the people and suited their notions of independence and responsibility. The first minister and father of the Colony was Rev. Sylvester Cochrane, from Poultney, Vermont. The first meeting that was held in the wilderness he opened with prayer before the settlers drew lots for the choice of village locations and farms. Though they believed in Divine Guidance, they were none the less anxious for a good

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selection. On February 27, 1838, the First Congregational Church was organized with Mr. Cochrane as the pioneer pastor. He was a man of stalwart frame, of large and vigorous mental capacity, thoroughly imbued with the New England theology of sixty years ago and earlier, and in religious doctrine and thought as firm as the granite hills of his native State. He remained from 1837 to 1842, and afterwards for many years was pastor of a church at Northville, Michigan. The last part of his stay was not all "sweetness and light;" difficulties arose connected with building the Academy, and he never returned to visit the Colony he was instrumental in organizing. Still, after the troubles ended, he was always mentioned with great respect. The early meetings on Sunday in the log schoolhouse were peculiar to the time. In the summer came barefooted men, in shirt sleeves; wives and mothers in calico dresses, wearing shaker sun-bonnets, with babies in arms; children of all ages, with clean clothes and bare feet, smiling and happy; all assembling to hear the gospel preached twice and to attend Sunday school, and during the intermission to talk over various matters of interest to the young community, or if any one was absent to ascertain the reason. The stalwart minister offered prayer, read the Scriptures, gave out the hymn and all joined in singing, those who could keep time and tune as well as those who could not. Martin S. Norton or Willard Davis used the tuning fork to get the right pitch, and then the solid sermon of an hour, as stern and uncompromising as the decrees of fate. While earnest in his ministerial work, Mr. Cochrane did his full share in clearing the forest and raising crops for a living; making maple sugar in the spring, planting corn and potatoes, and doing whatsoever his hands found to do with all his might. I recall an amusing incident. In the spring of 1839, just as the sap was beginning to flow, having ordered a barrel for gathering it, of Jacob Fuller, the cooper, who lived at the west end of the village, nearly a mile away, Mr. Cochrane got up very early one morning, went for the barrel, found it outside of the log shop, and the cooper's family being still abed, put a stick into the bunghole, shouldered the barrel and marched home. On his arrival Mrs. Cochrane was getting breakfast, and was surprised to see him walk up to the house with a new barrel on his shoulders. She asked him where he had been. He told her. "Why, Sylvester, don't you know it is Sunday?" Then for the first time it dawned upon his mind

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that he had violated the third commandment, and his sorrow was intense. He went to the log schoolhouse as usual at meeting time, and with tears streaming from his eyes, confessed his fault. Somehow he had lost a day in counting time, and his reckoning, not his intention, was wrong. Of Mrs. Cochrane we remember but little. She was a gentle woman and accepted the privations of pioneer life cheerfully. It was an uphill struggle for the pioneer minister, and his Vermont dream of a rapidly-growing Colony in Michigan failed to materialize. They had two children; Lyman Cochrane became a well-known lawyer in Detroit, where he died several years ago, and of Sarah, the daughter, nothing is known. With the organization of the Colony and the early settlement of Vermontville, the name of Rev. Sylvester Cochrane, in all good works for the promotion of religion and education, is closely interwoven.

In 1842 Rev. William U. Benedict became pastor of the church and the first principal of the Academy, continuing his preaching and teaching for eight years. To him the children of the pioneer colonists are indebted for their education. He always took a great deal of pride in his scholars in after life. He was an excellent teacher, active and useful in every sphere in life, and as minister, teacher and citizen he filled every place assigned him with marked conscientiousness and ability. After he left the pastorate and became a successful farmer, he would go on Sunday to Oneida or to some other place to hold religious services. Until the close of his mortal life he never rested from his labors. To the Academy, where he taught for eight winters, he gave learning, enthusiasm and devotion. More than all others, he was the teacher of the children of the pioneers. To the church he brought a high type of Calvinistic theology, thoroughly in harmony with New England orthodoxy of that time. Without doubt religion and education are more largely indebted to Mr. Benedict because of his learning and energy, than 58 to any other occupant of the Congregational pulpit in Vermontville; certainly no other man is held in more grateful remembrance by those of the second generation who received most of their schooling under his tuition. He was born September, 1808, and died at Vermontville in October, 1875. His wife, Almira A. Benedict, one of the noblest and gentlest of the pioneer women, was born January, 1811, and died

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July, 1890. Children: William H. Benedict, born in 1835; Edwin Ellis Benedict, born in 1838; Sarah A. Benedict, born in 1841, and Anna M. Benedict, born in 1845, are living, married and have families; and Orville E. Benedict, born in 1851, is dead. These details are given here to perpetuate the names of the members of one of the worthiest pioneer families.

Rev. Seth Hardy was the next minister, and his pastorate lasted for three years. He was a man of fair ability, possessed a kindly spirit and good social qualities, and gave his best efforts to the work.

Rev. Charles Temple was the next pastor, filling the pulpit from 1854 to 1861. Born in Smyrna, Asia Minor, of missionary parents, he was a man of rare spirituality, as unlike the practical Yankee as a man could be; a preacher who found his themes in the New Testament rather than in the older Hebrew Bible; and he impressed everybody with the conviction of his sincerity of purpose and goodness of heart. He was without guile.

Rev. Orange H. Spoor came to the pastorate in 1861 and remained in charge until 1872. He graduated at Oberlin and was less conservative than the usual run of ministers of that date. It was during the stormy period of the civil war and of the reconstruction of the Union after the abolition of chattel slavery. He was active in social and civil life; an all-around pastor as well as a liberal thinker and preacher; loyal and patriotic to the core; and a sermonizer of great force and ability. Under his pastorate the society made rapid growth, and gave indications of breaking away from its earlier Calvinistic moorings and traditions. A commodious church edifice was built during the early part of his service, and he pushed forward the work with business tact and energy. Mr. Spoor now resides at Redlands, California, where he has become wealthy from the rise in value of orange lands and the cultivation of fruit.

Rev. J. Homer Parker was the seventh minister in the changeable order of succession, and this was his first pastorate. It lasted only a year and a quarter. He was young, bright, vivacious, entertaining, liked to play croquet, and possessed fine pulpit ability; was liberal

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in his views, persuasive in his speech, and gifted with considerable eloquence; but his new ways were not quite to the liking of the old heads with their fixed New England notions.

Rev. R. C. Bedford, another young man, followed, and occupied the pulpit for a year. Possessing a brilliant imagination and a fluent flow of words he gilded his sermons with poetic ideas, and was a religious optimist—always finding good in the world.

Rev. T. Lincoln Brown succeeded, but for only a year. He, too, was a young man, but either the pulpit was too small for him, or he was too large for the pulpit, and so his stay was brief. The records show his service.

Rev. F. W. Dickinson occupied the pulpit from 1877 to 1880. He was a man of superior ability, pleasant in manner, an attractive speaker, and liberal in thought and utterance.

Rev. H. R. Williams was pastor from 1880 to 1886, and brought to the service of the church fair ability, was strictly orthodox in his views, never deviating therefrom, but was genial in his intercourse with all, and was an excellent pastor. The people liked him as a man, and that was the secret of his success.

Rev. David Beaton, now of Lincoln Park Church, Chicago, brought larger gifts of learning, thought and eloquence to the pulpit than perhaps any of his predecessors. His theology was broad and catholic; he led rather than followed the thought of the members of the church; and exalted good character and right conduct above the observance of stereotyped forms and adherence to dogmatic beliefs. He filled the pulpit with marked ability for one year.

Rev. S. L. Smith was pastor for two years. His social qualities were his most striking characteristics; always genial and pleasant; and a preacher of fair ability. He is remembered as an agreeable minister on all occasions.

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Rev. A. O. Cossar, a Scotchman by birth, education and character, occupied the pulpit for five years, from 1889 to 1894. He was an unusually deep thinker, very variable in the quality of his sermons, and might without injustice be called a professional preacher.

Rev. W. H. Spence was minister for about a year, when he left the pulpit temporarily to pursue a course of collegiate study with the idea of fitting himself for greater usefulness.

Rev. Frank J. Estabrook, son of an eminent professor at Olivet College and a former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, is now the pastor of this pioneer Congregational Church of Eaton county.

It is a problem, however, how long such a church, with the decadence of village life, business and wealth, can be self-supporting. Our farming population, upon which villages are wholly dependent, find in recent years the struggle to get ahead growing more and more severe, on account of unfavorable economic conditions, and villages become less thrifty and prosperous. There is a business side to religious societies and the support of the minister, as there is to marriage, the family, and all social and civil relations. The financial pressure is severely felt in small villages, and it is more difficult to raise money enough to pay the 60 minister and meet running expenses than it was thirty to forty years ago. Already the minister's pay is down to a hard times' limit. It cannot go much lower. The change is not an agreeable one to contemplate. Probably the school costs too much for the service it renders to society and the teacher is driving out the preacher.

Another thing: For men in the pulpit and on the rostrum audiences are growing more exacting. Once what the preacher said was accepted without much dissent, and more fault was found with his manner than matter. The time has come, however, when it is no idle work to so expound religious truth and set forth the hidden things that pertain to human life and destiny, as to meet and satisfy the demands of the hungry and progressive thought of the present and still more of the coming time. Not forms of belief, not the rigid creeds of a darker age, not stereotyped dogmas, do pews ask of pulpits, but rather simple goodness

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and truth that exalt, ennoble and purify human character. The village cannot afford to do without the church. Its abandonment would be followed by social and moral retrogression. And yet the question comes up, in view of the general decline of village prosperity under existing financial conditions, can the village much longer support the church and the minister? Already this is a serious problem.

From what has been said it may be superfluous to remark that the ministers had a marked influence, not only in the organization of the Vermontville Colony, but in the subsequent development and character of the village. The schoolhouse and the church—education and religion—were its corner stones, and right nobly, in spite of all conflicts and contentions, has their mission been fulfilled, and many helpful intellectual and moral influences been strengthened and preserved.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND TRIALS.

The records of church meetings and trials, kept by S. S. Church, clerk for over thirty years, are very full and accurate. He was a model scribe. An examination of these records shows that the Congregational Church was a prominent factor in the life of the young community. Of the heads of families all but two of the original colonists—Edward H. Barber and Jay Hawkins—were or became members. To a greater extent, probably, than any other village settlement in Michigan, the Vermontville Colony was composed of members of the church.

Citations and trials for unbrotherly remarks and conduct were of frequent occurrence, though a more orderly community could not be found. When complaint was made for some alleged offense, a committee was uniformly appointed to endeavor to reconcile the militant members. To give an idea of the character of these proceedings a transcript of the record in a case between Martin S. Norton and Wells R. Martin is worth reproducing. The specifications in detail at a church meeting held January 18, 1847, are:

“1st. Br. Norton charges Br. Martin with lying or prevarication with regard to Mrs. Martin's mother's coming to Vermontville.

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“2d. With prevarication in regard to a statement made to Br. Robinson, coming from Br. W. J. Squier.

“3d. Charges him with a lie in a statement made to Br's Browning and Norton respecting Doct. Robinson's father, and his, Doct. Robinson's, two uncles.

“4th. Charges him with making a statement in the presence of Doct. Robinson, Br. Norton, and his son, respecting his wife's feelings concerning a certain piece of property—and afterward denying statement.

“5th. Charges him with prevarication in a statement he made to Br. Browning in regard to the opinions of his neighbors, touching the matter of Br. Browning's acting as umpire or referee in the case of Br's Church and Norton.”

The last specification refers to another difficulty that came before the church for adjudication and settlement. These matters seem strangely trivial now, but they stirred the little isolated society to its depths and provoked much earnest discussion. With a daily mail and newspapers to keep in touch with the live and throbbing outside world it is not probable they would have received any attention. They are only important now as showing the relation of the church to the social gossip and feeling of fifty years ago. The details were talked over and stirred the community as much as an embalmed beef court of inquiry stirs the people of a great nation today. None of these things, or the decision in regard to any of them, affected the social standing or business character of any of the parties an iota. They often grew out of unfounded suspicions or family misunderstandings and temporary quarrel. The period of fighting with blows had evolved into the period of fighting with words.

Mr. Martin, the defendant, was acquitted on the first, second, third and fifth specifications and convicted on the fourth. Then the clerk was ordered to furnish Bro. Martin with the decision in his case, and to inform him that the church will require a written confession on

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the next Sabbath. But the storm blew over. Explanations took the place of criminations. The sky cleared. March 26, 1847, W. R. Martin was chosen one of the delegates to represent the church at the Marshall conference.

The extent of these internal troubles is indicated by the proceedings of a single church meeting held May 4, 1847, when committees were appointed to adjust difficulties between brethren, if possible. First, Brothers Sprague and Merrill were appointed to visit Brothers Norton and Church on a mission of peace; second, Brothers Scovell and Merrill were instructed to wait upon Brothers Norton and Martin and their families in the interest of peace and reconciliation; third, Brothers Dickinson and Fairfield were commissioned to call upon Brothers D. H. Robinson and W. R. Martin and try to bring about a settlement of their difficulties; fourth, Brothers W. Davis and Gray were selected to visit Brothers D. H. Robinson and Daniel Barber and the family of the latter, also Bro. Norton and family, in order to restore good fellowship; fifth, Brothers Porter and Merrill were designated to inquire into an alleged offense with which Bro. W. W. Warner was publicly charged; sixth, Brother Scovell was directed to ascertain the religious standing or state of Bro. Fonger; seventh, Bro. W. Gray was instructed to visit Bro. W. F. Hawkins and ascertain his spiritual state, and report to the church.

This seems to have been a general house-cleaning, or rather church-cleaning occasion. Scarcely a male member escaped during the first twenty years. Generally a winter revival would bring discordant members together again, after the confession of some wrong and asking pardon of each other. The organized church was always for peace and good will.

All sorts of questions were brought before the church for adjustment. As an example, under date of January 28, 1847, is a minute of charges preferred by Bro. Armstrong, "against Brethren Church, Norton, Martin, Barber, W. J. Squier, Dickinson and Robinson, that said brethren have wrongfully and unlawfully used their influence to retain and have retained money belonging to school district No. 2 of Vermontville." Besides the appointment of

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an investigating committee nothing came of this groundless charge, and later it was dismissed. Nowadays it would be a proper case for the civil court.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

Even political questions were not ignored. Slavery came to the front to vex the souls of silver-gray whigs and dyed-in-the-wool democrats. In the minutes of a meeting held January 2, 1847, Alvah L. Armstrong, one of the first three abolitionists in the town, made application for a letter of dismissal from the church on the ground "that he could no longer fellowship or commune with church members who took no action on the subject of slavery." His purpose was to unite with the Wesleyan Methodists, who proposed to organize an anti-slavery church in the town. There was hesitancy about granting him a letter of dismissal and recommendation to the Methodist body, but finally a letter was voted him to the Wesleyan Methodist Church to be organized in the township of Vermontville, after amending the motion so as to include, "or to the Congregational Church of Olivet." The Olivet church, being an off-shoot of Oberlin, Ohio, was then thoroughly anti-slavery in sentiment.

This action caused much discussion. It was a new departure, granting 63 a member of the church a letter of dismissal and recommendation to the Wesleyan Methodists because the Vermontville church had taken no action in opposition to slavery, and so at a meeting held March 26, 1847, the church voted to send the following overture to the Marshall Conference, namely: "Resolved, that Marshall Conference be requested to give their advice and opinion for the benefit of the churches under its care, whether it is proper and right for churches to grant letters of dismissal to members residing among us, for disaffection of any kind (say on the subject of slavery or any other cause), or whether it is proper to grant letters of full recommendation to churches not in correspondence with us."

At a subsequent meeting, held on Sunday, May 2, 1847, the church gave its first official expression on the slavery question by unanimously adopting the following: "Resolved,

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that as individuals and as a church, we regard the system of slavery, now existing in these United States, as a system of unrighteousness, alike opposed to the law of God and to the gospel of his Son, decidedly detrimental to the true interests of our country, and to the best interests of humanity; and that we do sincerely desire its speedy abandonment in every land under heaven." The offensive word "abolition" was carefully avoided, and the word "abandonment," which implied voluntary action on the part of the slaveholders, was used, and upon this "whipping of the devil around the stump" all could agree.

This presentation of the methods of church discipline, of the trial of members for unbrotherly remarks and conduct, of the constant watch over the sheep in the fold lest any of them go astray, of the action taken on the burning question of slavery that finally plunged this nation into a terrible civil war, is necessary in order to give an idea of the agitations and discussions in an isolated colony, made up of men with strong political and religious prejudices, as well as personal idiosyncrasies, in which the church was the dominant factor.

AN ENOCH ARDEN CASE.

Life and experience in a rural town often repeat the tragedies and comedies that help to make up the world's literature and history. The Pathos of Tennyson's "Enoch Arden" has brought tears to many eyes, though it is read as a romance, and yet its counterpart is found in the history of Vermontville.

Among its pioneer settlers were three old men—Alexander Clark, William Warner and Daniel Hager. Some of their children were grown men and women when they settled in the wilderness. William Warner was the father of William Willis Warner, who married Harriet Bascom of Benson, Vermont, both of whom passed away several years since, and one of their sons, Charles J. Warner, is now a prosperous farmer in 64 the town. Another son of the elder Warner, Asa B. Warner, left about 1847, going to Buffalo, New York, to carve out

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for himself a different career than pioneer life and a home on a farm afforded. He also died many years ago.

Alexander Clark, who died and was buried in the village in 1840, before a cemetery had been located, was the father of William Clark, a life-long resident, but none of the family now reside there.

Daniel Hager settled in the extreme northwest corner of the town, on section six, in the year 1836. He was old and feeble in 1856, when Roger W. Griswold drove out to his farm and brought him to the village so that he might vote for John C. Fremont for President, and after dinner took him home again. Mr. Hager was born in Somerset county, Pennsylvania, and was the only settler in the town from that State.

The Daniel Hager family was a large one, seven sons and three daughters; the sons were John, Joseph, William, Daniel, James, Samuel and Isaac; and the three daughters were Mary, who married Joseph Cupp; Sarah, who married Josiah Wickum; and Joanna, who became the wife of Charles Galloway. John died soon after the family settled in the wilderness. They were of the solid type of Pennsylvania Germans, and at the present time there are several descendants who are thrifty farmers in Vermontville and Sunfield.

Jacob H. Hager, son of Henry Hager and nephew of Daniel Hager, senior, was best known as "Little Jake." In due time he married and settled on a piece of land of his own. Along in the fifties he left home for the West, and during the next few years was heard from occasionally in the Black Hills region, now a part of South Dakota. His wife, Anna Hager, a little and patient woman, remained on the forty-acre farm and did the best she could. It was a hard struggle. Every few weeks she would walk to the store in the village, about five miles, bring a little butter and a few dozen eggs, buy some tea and other necessaries, rest a while, and then walk back to the lonely home again. It was a life of self-denial and patient waiting, with an occasional ray of hope when a letter from Jacob was received. He had been away some eight years when the last one came. In it he stated that he would return

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as soon as he could close a business transaction that involved the collection of several thousand dollars. Nothing more was heard from him. Anna believed that he was dead; she married again, to a Mr. King, by whom she had one son, who, in 1897, is twenty-four years old.

More than thirty years passed after Jacob Hager was heard from the last time; both Mr. and Mrs. King were dead; but one day, in 1897, a letter came to Vermontville from the West inquiring if any persons by the name of Hager lived there. Nelson Hager, a son of Jacob and Anna, and a good farmer, lived near the village, and the letter informed him that his father was alive, but had lost all memory of the past, and could give no information concerning his family or where he had formerly resided. By some means it had been ascertained that he once lived in Vermontville, Michigan, and would like to go back there and spend the rest of his days. Nelson sent the necessary funds to pay his fare and other expenses, and the first week in July, 1897, Jacob H. Hager returned, after an absence of thirty-eight years.

But Anna King, the wife who had been faithful so long as there seemed to be a hope that Jacob was living, has passed away, and so by the kindness of death escaped the tragedy of his return. If he had come back before her death the Enoch Arden parallel would have been nearly perfect; and Tennyson's pathetic poem, the scene of which was an English seaport village and the ocean in which unnumbered loves and hopes are buried, would have found an almost complete counterpart in the real life of Vermontville—the chief variation being an absent husband in the wilder regions farther west.

Jacob H. Hager had lost all his property, and his memory was so impaired that he could not recall the names of wife, children or relatives, or his former place of residence; but, at last, he found a home with his children, two sons of Anna Hager, born before he left them to go west. How often is real life as strange and pathetic as the most touching narrations of song and story!

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NEWSPAPERS.

A Michigan village without a weekly paper to let some portion of the outside world know of its existence, and to peddle the local news for a dollar a year would be very unpretentious. Patent insides render this practicable. The first venture was made in 1879, when J. C. Worcester started the Vermontville Enterprise, which he conducted for a short time. He sold the office to J. C. Hoskins, who carried it on for two to three years, and disposed of it to Kendall Kittredge, previously the owner and editor of the Charlotte Republican. In about a year Kittredge sold the paper to F. M. Potter, who changed its name to the Vermontville Hawk, and continued its publication until 1885. The name and character were quite in harmony under Potter's management. He sold the paper to W. E. Holt and James H. Knox, who changed the name to the more civilized one of the Vermontville Echo. In 1887, Knox sold his interest to J. C. Sherman, and the firm name became Holt & Sherman. In 1892 Holt transferred his interest to his partner, J. C. Sherman, who took his youngest son, H. B. Sherman, into partnership, and the plant is now operated, mechanically and mentally, by J. C. Sherman & Son.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The Thornapple Valley was not a land flowing with milk and honey when these pioneers entered it in the last week of May, 1836, sixty-one 66 years ago. They found no figs and pomegranates ready to be plucked, nor the blossoms on any trees that bore edible fruit save the wild plum, though wild grapes grew along the river bottoms and ripened and sweetened with the autumnal frosts, and there was no milk, but occasional bee-trees, the hollow spaces of which near the tops were laden with honey. Finding a bee-tree and felling it so as to save the sweetness was quite an event in the young community. There were no prairies or marshes where natural grasses grew for the cattle. All the acres were covered with dense and heavy forests. In the spring and early summer the woods were carpeted with flowers; it was dark shade below; but there was sunshine above. When they settled down to the work of a lifetime, clearing the savage woods away, making

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homes for themselves and their children, and realized how far they were from railroads, the newlyforming highways of the world's activity, with markets for their products nearly thirty miles distant, as they were all thrifty Yankees and wanted to gather in their share of western wealth from the rise in land values and the products of the soil, the prospect was not hopeful an cheerful.

Still, with few exceptions, this little bond of men and women, in the heart of a dense wilderness, kept steadily at work until better and brighter days came to them ere they left the scene of their earthly labors and trials and passed to their final rest. They lived closed to nature, and this of itself is an education. A home in the country is the best starting point in life. Nature herself decides against those who forsake her for the more artificial modes of society. Those who do so generally become puny and helpless, unless they can hire others to work and fight for them. It is a sagacious remark of President Eliot of Harvard that the survival of particular families in the United States—families so strong in character as to give them in some measure a natural leadership in the community—depends upon the maintenance of a home in the country. On its healthy hills best brain and brawn of a nation are born and nurtured. But the old days cannot be reproduced or their experience repeated. There cannot be another Vermontville. A general characteristic of all its early settlers was their intense individuality. To leave New England, canal it to Buffalo, risk the lake voyage to Detroit, and then ox-team it to Eaton county, was not the work of effeminate men and women. It required real grit and the stiffest backbone. A man who had the stamina to settle in the wilderness of Central Michigan and hew out the surroundings of a new life possessed the qualities of both pioneership and leadership. Every individual Yankee who located there was capable of being a directing spirit in larger enterprises. But the greater opportunities, who then could discern them? Chicago was little else than a mudhole, and the modern Northwest was not even a dream. Being all leaders, there was a constant locking of horns, and the court of last resort, from which there was no appeal, was the discipline 67 of the church. It was oftener resorted to than the civil tribunal of justice and jury. But if at times they were hot-tempered, they were sincere and just, and

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they helped to lay the foundations of a great State. Their work is ended. Their influence lives. For the preservation of our institutions their children's children will have more serious problems to solve than did those who assisted in their creation. It may be a dream, but none the less it seems a clear perception, that in the rural village, with intelligent co-operation in the cultivation of the soil, using the masterful forces of nature applied to machinery—each working for all and all for each—the practical Christianity of the Master of Nazareth will find complete exemplification, and the noblest types of American manhood and womanhood will be developed. Each higher stage of civilization is an ideal before it becomes real—an aspiration before a realization.

PERSONAL.

Pardon a few final words of a personal nature. For well-nigh fifty-eight years—fifty-eight next October—Michigan has been my home and Vermontville its Mecca. For farmers, upon whom prosperity rests, I know of no better county than Eaton. There, in the quiet village, with the kindred and friends of youth and manhood, this abandoned physical tenement of mine will be buried. It is the one place, more than any other, than has the charm of home. From boyhood I have been familiar with the growth of the State, with its forests and farms, its towns and cities, its magnificent lakes and prolific mines, and from newness and original fertility have noted its passage to oldness and that economic condition wherein the law of diminishing returns for labor and capital expended has become cooperative. At first it needed muscle to subdue it; now it needs applied science to insure prosperity. The successful farmer must know more things accurately and apply his knowledge, than is necessary to get along in any other occupation. Situated in the heart of a continent, surrounded by great waterways that furnish cheap transportation, the State has unsurpassed natural advantages for agriculture, manufactures and commerce when trade shall be unvexed by tolls and extortions in its passage from oceans to these inland seas.

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What changes have already taken place! We who take note of its history have witnessed the disappearance of the Indian trail, the entrance and the exit of the stage-coach, the development of railways, and the advent of electricity. Forty-nine years ago this summer, I saw workmen stretching telegraph wires upon the new cross-sticks of the world along the line of the Michigan Central railroad at Marshall, when learning my trade in the Expounder printing office, and wondered how they could carry messages across continents, for then the idea of transmitting them under oceans was still in the womb of thought. Marvelous has been the progress since then, and more wonderful revelations are yet to be made, especially in the control and discipline by the mind of genius of the hitherto wasted forces of nature.

But what else? I have noted an increase in population of the State from less than two hundred thousand, in scattered settlements of the southern portion of this beautiful peninsula, to nearly two and a half million, overspreading its entire area. I have beheld a complete economic revolution caused by labor-saving machinery—for I remember when only the sickle and cradle and scythe were used for cutting grain and hay—labor-saving machinery which should render getting a good living easier for all, and is forcing to the front for consideration the problem of equitable distribution, so as to prevent want and misery, pinched lives and starved souls, from invading the homes of wage-workers; and I realize that vaster are the responsibilities resting upon those who must solve the new problems, in the interest of social and industrial peace, of the welfare and happiness of all, and of the stability of blood-bought institutions, than ever came to our ancestors.

Even a State like ours, incalculably rich in natural resources, cannot yield comfort and happiness for all, under economic conditions, born of the spirit of the time when might made right, though changed from selfish force to selfish law, whereby people seek to live upon each other and not for each other. A change must come, or want, misery and crime will increase. The pioneers laid the foundation, the superstructure is the care of their successors. The required social and industrial change is of an altruistic character; equal

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rights to natural opportunities for all; government taken care of by a self-reliant people, and not a dependent people taken care of by the government; no special privileges and no monopolies, and the application to every phase of public and private life and conduct of the ethical principles and political economy of the Golden Rule.

At its inception Vermontville was a co-operative colony in religion and education, as well as by purchase. For many years voluntary and cheerful aid and assistance of others was the rule, but more than this the time was not ripe. Permanent industrial co-operation had at that period no place in human thought. Hand labor was aided only by hand-worked tools and implements. Steam-power was born, but society looked to water-power to operate mills and factories. Mind hand not yet triumphed over muscle. Grain was cut with a cradle and the sheaves bound by hand; meadows were mown with the scythe and the hay gathered into winrows by the hand-rake; cornfields were cultivated with the hoe, and the ox-yoke was used to make animal power contribute to human welfare.

Narrating the history of Vermontville is for me a pleasure and not a task. Of the work of the earliest pioneers none can fully know except from experience. Living it over again is impossible. Nature's school 69 was a good one in which to gain a practical education. There has been great progress in Michigan. Will it continue? That depends upon the character of the people. Society moves forward or backward. It is never stationary. It is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized; or, sometimes, it ripens and rots, especially when its customs and covenants serve the few and oppress the many whose labor bears its burdens, and it does not bring emelioration for all its honest and willing workers. The settlement of a country, useful and honorable as the work may be, settles no social questions. As society becomes more complex the questions that arise become more difficult to solve. As yet, great as is the progress that has been made, but few questions touching inalienable human rights have been considered from the standpoint of equal rights for all. In the village community, among thoughtful, conscientious, intelligent people, the problem is most likely to find a righteous solution, and to this end the early settlement of Vermontville contributes an important lesson. But the present is an era of

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new conditions, and “New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth; They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast of Truth; Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! We ourselves must pilgrims be, Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea, Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.”

PERSONAL SKETCHES OF THE COLONISTS.

EDWARD HINMAN BARBER.

A “Genealogy of George H. Barbour” of Detroit—1636 to 1897—prepared by Fred Carlisle, supplemented by other information of a reliable character, shows that Thomas Barber, a pioneer settler of Windsor, Connecticut, was the American ancestor of the Vermontville Barbers. In 1634, an English expedition was fitted out, under the patronage of Sir Richard Salstonstall, to take possession of a grant of land made to him by the Massachusetts Bay Company in the Connecticut Valley. Says she Genealogy: “He placed the expedition in charge of Mr. Francis Stiles, a master carpenter of London, who, with twenty others, took passage on the ship ‘Christian de Lo,’ (Joseph White, master), March 16, 1634, which reached Boston Harbor the 20th of June following. Among the names appearing in the London Passenger Register was that of Thomas Barber, age 21.”

June 16, 1635, after nearly a year's delay, caused by trouble with the established church of Massachusetts Bay, the Stiles party went up the 70 Connecticut River, and the early records of Windsor show that Thomas Barber was one of the settlers there in 1635. In 1637 he was enrolled as a sergeant under Major Stoughton and took part in seven fights with the Pequot Indians. Later, under John Mason, he participated in an attack on the Pequot for—known in history as the “Pequot massacre”—in which 77 white soldiers and 100 Nyantic and Naragansett warriors defeated 700 Pequots, captured and destroyed their fort, and only five or six escaped. Mason's account of this battle, published at Boston in 1737, refers to the part taken by Thomas Barber as follows: “He had entered the fort,

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and in going out of a wigwam encountered seven Indians. They fled, and we pursued to the end of a lane, but before we could reach them, they were met by Thomas Barber and Edward Pattison, who slew the entire seven—their muskets having been discharged.”

In 1640 Thomas Barber married. His wife's surname does not appear in the church records of Windsor. Her given name was Jane or Joan, and there is some evidence that she was the daughter of a Dutch settler at Saybrook. One authority says: “The wife of, or she who became the wife of Thomas Barber, was the first white woman to land in Connecticut.”

Second generation: Thomas Barber, second son of Thomas the immigrant, born in Windsor, July 14, 1644, and married Mary Phelps.

Third generation: John Barber, born in Windsor, November 1, 1664; married Mary Holcomb; settled in or near Worcester, Mass. According to the Worcester Antique Society's History, “John Barber was granted 10 acres of land near Worcester in 1686.”

Fourth generation: Matthew Barber of Pittsfield, Mass., deacon of the Congregational church there as late as 1784. One account says he was “deacon of the church for forty years.”

Fifth generation: Daniel Barber, born in Pittsfield, Mass., married Ruth Hinman; moved to Benson, Vermont, in 1783; his family being the first one to settle in that town.

Sixth generation: Edward H. Barber, the subject of this sketch, and Daniel Barber, his brother, pioneers of Vermontville, Eaton county, Michigan.

Edward H. Barber was born in Benson, Vermont, January 4, 1794. He was a man of slender build, fine mental organization, a nervous temperament, and a great reader. His integrity was never questioned. Better than any sermon ever preached was the remark made to me by Michael Monks, an Irishman of Vermontville, one day: “Edward, I hope you

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will be as honest a man as your father.” Before coming to Michigan he was under-sheriff of Rutland county, Vermont. Business was brisk, as imprisonment for debt was a cruel law of the time, and Benson was a common runway to and across Lake Champlain for hard-pressed debtors. Many a good citizen of Michigan left New England between Saturday 71 night and Monday morning because he could not pay his debts. The debtor's cell was part of every county jail. The whipping post stood in every village for the punishment of petty offenders. In Benson it stood in front of the schoolhouse. I have a souvenir of that time in a cedar cane made of a portion of that by-gone genal institution.

Mr. Barber first came west on a prospecting trip in 1836, and purchased about 1,200 acres of land from the government, mostly in Vermontville. Among his ancestors Thomas Barber the second built the first saw-mill in Simsbury, Conn., Daniel Barber, his father, did the same thing in Benson, Vermont, and he put up the first saw-mill in Vermontville. In 1840 he was elected supervisor and held the office for six successive years.

Of the colonists he and Jay Hawkins were the only heads of families who did not belong to the Congregational church. They may have had more comfort and peace in life for this reason, as they escaped the possibility of church trials. Neither of them, however, was skeptical in regard to the truths of Christianity, but my father could not get religion in the usual way. Thoroughly conscientious and with a high ideal of what genuine religion required, he was “a Christian on the silent list” all his life. During a revival, when Rev. Mr. Lord was personally urging him to come out and profess to be a Christian, he said: “I wish with all my heart I was one. If I could only just swamp sides.” He was too honest to profess more than he saw was attained in practical life, and so never could “swamp sides” by merely becoming a member of the church.

In politics a conservative whig, when the civil war came and the first gun was fired on Fort Sumter, all his conservatism disappeared, and he was earnestly in favor of putting down the rebellion and the abolition of slavery. He lived until the struggle ended in the triumph of the cause of national unity and freedom. This was for him a great gratification.

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In 1826 he married Rebecca Griswold of Benson, Vermont, whose ancestry has been traced back to the time of the Norman conquest of England. She died in 1838. Four children were born to them in Benson; Edward W. Barber of Jackson, Homer G. Barber of Vermontville, and John Carlos Barber of Battle Creek; another son, Noel A. Barber, died in Marshall, Michigan in 1851. By a second marriage, in 1839, with Laura E. Root of Orwell, Vermont, there were five children, all born in Vermontville: Parthena E. Barber, widow of Willard H. Dickinson, of Vermontville, Albert M. Barber of Charlotte, Josiah W. Barber, deceased, Marshall F. Barber of Biwabick, Minnesota, and Vernon N. Barber, deceased. Josiah W. was member of Company H, Sixth Michigan Infantry, in the civil war. He died in hospital and was buried at Carrolton, Louisiana.

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DANIEL BARBER.

Youngest of the seven children of Daniel Barber and Ruth (Hinman) Barber, the first family to settle in Benson, Vermont, the subject of this sketch was born in that New England town December 16, 1799. The last male survivor of the Vermontville colony, he passed from earth at the home of his daughter, Mrs. William H. Benedict, in that village, April 12, 1897, at the advanced age of 97 years, 3 months and 27 days. He moved to Vermontville in 1838; and his genealogy is the same as that of Edward H. Barber.

Daniel Barber was one of the sturdiest of the pioneers. Of medium size, strong and active, always in good health, and very energetic, he was well adapted to pioneer life. His log house was among the best and his frame barn one of the first in the town. The raising was a progressive event in the colony. He was an active and efficient promoter of the religious and educational plans the "Union Colony" was organized to carry into effect in the wilderness. Calvinistic in his earlier belief, he grew broad and liberal in sentiment during his later years. Religion and education were twin ideals of New England faith and intelligence. The first log schoolhouse was also the place of worship, and after the

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“Academy” was built, church services, schools and town meetings were all held in the same building for more than twenty years.

Daniel Barber was the first citizen of Eaton county elected to the State Legislature, and the representative district was composed of Allegan, Barry and Eaton counties. The files of the Marshall Statesman show that the whig convention that nominated him was held at Yankee Springs, Barry county, October 2, 1839, and at the November election following he was chosen over Hon. Flavius J. Littlejohn of Allegan, the “Woodbridge and Reform” cry giving to the whigs their first and only Governor and Legislature in the State. The main traveled route to Detroit then was by private conveyance to Marshall, by stage from there to the west end of the Michigan Central railroad at Ann Arbor, and by strap rail and pigmy locomotive and cars the rest of the way. Of the members of that Legislature there were but two survivors on Mr. Barber's death—Col. Andrew T. McReynolds of Grand Rapids and Judge Dewitt C. Walker of Capac, St. Clair county.

During his long life Mr. Barber resided in but two places—thirty-nine years in Benson, Vermont, and fifty-nine years in Vermontville, Michigan. In 1883 he attended and took part in the centennial celebration of the settlement of his native town.

A few months before his death he attended the funeral of a fellow-pioneer of the Vermontville colony, and, standing alone, leaning on his staff, at the bier of Simeon McCotter, the last one of his made contemporaries, he gazed intently into the open coffin, lingered there more than a moment, dropped a silent tear as the thoughts of three score 73 years of friendly association passed in quick review, then in seeming loneliness sat down. He was then only one left of the earliest pioneers. It was the final meeting of two venerable men who had witnessed the passage of two and had outlived three more generations—one barely on the other shore, and the other barely on this.

So far as known, Daniel Barber was the oldest Mason in the United States at the time of his death. He became member in Vermont soon after his twenty-first birthday, in 1820, so that

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his membership covered a period of seventy-six years; and as an honorary member of the Vermontville lodge he took a deep interest in its meetings.

By his first marriage with Cynthia Dyer he had three children, Julius S. Barber of Coldwater, Mich., Daniel F. Barber of Chicago, and Camilla Barber who died in Vermontville—all born in Benson; and by a second marriage with Laura Dickinson two daughters, Mrs. William H. Benedict and Mrs. Isaac C. Griswold, who were born and still reside in Vermontville.

GEORGE SHEFFIELD BROWNING.

The records of the Union Colony show that at a duly called meeting of its members, held at the Colony House in Vermontville, January 26, 1838, it was voted to receive as members George S. Browning, Willard Davis and Oliver J. Stiles, upon their signing the articles of said colony. These were the last formal admissions to membership.

Mr. Browning was born January 8, 1811, in the town of Griswold, New London county, Connecticut, and married Frances Eliza Hewitt, born at North Stonington, same county and state, September 6, 1816, on the 24th of February, 1836. They left their eastern home for Michigan May 6, 1836, and were four weeks and one day making the journey to Bellevue, Eaton county, where they first located, and remained there about a year and a half before moving to Vermontville.

Locating first on a village lot, now part of the farm of C. J. Kroger, then on a farm south of and adjoining the original village plat, their home was always an attractive one for young people. Of the members of the colony who were heads of families, Mrs. Browning, now Mrs. Roger W. Griswold of Battle Creek, is the sole survivor living in Michigan. The kindest of neighbors, active in all religious and social work, they deserved and enjoyed the confidence and respect of the entire community.

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Mr. Browning was a democrat, but not in any sense a politician, and was often elected to some local office by his whig fellow-citizens. He was literal and exact, though quite unconventional, in keeping his accounts. Among the early settlers in the town was an old man by the name of Whitney, who, with his aged wife, had to be aided by the town, as they were unable to work. Mr. Browning was poormaster, and Mrs. Whitney bothered him a great deal, and sometimes until his patience was 74 exhausted. When his account was presented to the town board for allowance it contained this item, which expressed his disgust as well as his claim: "Fussing with old mother Whitney one-half day, 50 cents." Of course it was allowed, after affording R. W. Griswold and others lots of fun, while the minister, Rev. W. U. Benedict, who was a member of the board, nearly split his sides with laughter.

Innovations he did not like, but what he was accustomed to accepted as a matter of course. After the civil war broke out and almost everything was taxed, he was assessed one dollar on his new carriage. No American had heard of such a tax before. It seemed to him like a penalty. Receiving notice from John Morris, deputy collector, to pay the tax at Charlotte before a certain date or suffer a penalty of fifty cents, he was quite warm over the annoyance and apparent injustice, saying: "I can stand it as long as the republicans can." Still, though liking the new ways of getting money, though he always paid his share to support the church and the schools, he was a loyal and patriotic citizen. While all of the colonists were Yankees, it is not at all derogatory to Mr. Browning to say that he was a genuine Connecticut Yankee, and in all respects an excellent citizen.

Mr. and Mrs. Browning's children were all born in Vermontville. Martha F. Browning married Daniel R. Griswold, and resides in Battle Creek, Mich.; Charles H. Browning married Louisa Rude of Stonington, Conn., and is in business at Westerly, Rhode Island; Abbie S. Browning married Dr. C. A. Hamilton and her home is in Washington, D. C.; George W. Browning married Frances E. Luscomb of Bellevue, Mich., and is a furniture

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manufacturer at Holland, Mich. After Mr. Browning's death, Mrs. Browning married Roger W. Griswold of Vermontville.

SIMON SMITH CHURCH.

The members of the Vermontville colony possessed strongly marked individualities. Among them not one was more prominent and useful in local affairs, both civic and religious, than Deacon S. S. Church. He had the faculty of getting information from those with whom he came in contact. Slenderly built, with a light and fair complexion, a sensitive and nervous temperament, clean in thought and conduct, intelligent and conscientious, a ready conversationalist, a man of peace in the church and society, and apt in the discharge of clerical duties, most of the early records of the colony, without which this history could not have been so fully written, are in his plain and neat penmanship.

Born at Salisbury, Vermont, January 13, 1794, he received a good common school education, and taught in the rural districts of his native state for twenty terms. At one time he was teller of a bank in Middlebury, Vermont. March 11, 1819, he married Eliza Hall, sister of the late Tolman W. Hall and Moses Hall of Battle Creek, Michigan. About two 75 years after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Church went to Georgia, Hervey Hall, a brother of Mrs. Church, being a prominent business man at Columbus in that state. While there Mr. Church was engaged in the tin and hardware business. During his southern residence he obtained very full and accurate knowledge of the leading public men of that section, among them William Crawford, an eminent Georgian and a prominent candidate for president in Andrew Jackson's time. After a stay of four or five years in the South the family returned to Vermont, where for a number of years he followed different kinds of business, including farming, until he was appointed an agent in the Union Colony, organized in 1835-6 to locate in the Territory of Michigan. The prominent part he took in locating the colony is alluded to in foregoing pages of this history. In the winter of 1837, with his wife and six children, he moved to Vermontville; three more children were born there; and the time nine reached mature life. One child, the first born, died in Georgia.

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Active in the organization of the Congregational church, he was chosen one of the deacons at the formation of the society, and held the position until the close of his earthly life. He was also its clerk for about forty years. In all educational movements he took an active part, and was prominent in obtaining goods schools. He was a charter member of the board of trustees of the Vermontville Academy, an institution that had a strong formative influence on the lives and characters of the first generation of young people of the village and surrounding country, giving them an impulse and inspiration that affected their subsequent careers.

Deacon Church was a man of strict integrity in his dealings with others; it seemed natural for him to be honest; while rather grave and serious in manner, he was not devoid of humor, or lacking in appreciation of wit and merriment; yet disliking coarseness and vulgarity; and he gave much time and unselfish devotion to the promotion of every good cause. His face was an index of clean thoughts and his language chaste and fluent. He was a good man, and Mrs. Church was a refined helpmeet for her husband and family, possessing those graces of character that exalt a wife and mother, and win the undying love and reverence of children.

The names of the nine children who lived in Vermontville are Frederick A. Church, born in Eatonton, Georgia, January 28, 1824, and died July 13, 1862, in Alabama, a soldier of the Union Army; Leroy Harvey Church, born in Sudbury, Vt., January 10, 1826, and died in Vermontville, October 11, 1854; Moses H. Church, born June 17, 1828, and died September 17, 1879; Daniel W. Church, born in Sudbury, Vt., November 21, 1830, now living in the State of Washington; Marian Church, born in Sudbury, Vt., May 6, 1833, and died at Vermontville, May 5, 1881; Edward P. Church, born in Orwell, Vt., December 12, 1835, now superintendent of the State School for the Blind at Lansing, Michigan; Mary Lois Church, 76 born in Vermontville, January 4, 1839, now Mrs. J. G. Cowles of Cleveland, Ohio; George Oscar Church, born May 16, 1841, now living in Nevada; Eliza Church, born January 21, 1843, now Mrs. Chilson of Vermontville.

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Surely, in the minds of the surviving children linger many memories of a pleasant and sacred character. In all the relations of life Deacon Church was a model man and a worthy descendant of Captain Benjamin Church of early colonial times in New England, and always firm and orthodox in his adherence to the faith and principles of the Pilgrim fathers.

WILLARD DAVIS.

Under the subhead of "The Politics of the Colonists" reference is made to Mr. Davis. He was a persistent abolitionist, and always ready to debate the slavery question with whigs or democrats. With him the moral aspect of the great issue outweighed all legal compromises and obligations. A native of Princeton, Worcester county, Massachusetts, when he joined the colony he was in Bellevue, Michigan. With the religious ideas of the colonists he was in harmony, but he differed with them all in politics, and stood alone. Well educated, a great reader, a strong debater, he liked in vigorous rather than flowery literature, and withal did his own thinking. Of florid, complexion, and strongly built, he was a typical son of the land of steady habits. His ancestors might have been of the same blood as the Roundheads who fought under Cromwell.

Mr. Davis was a positive character in the setting of as unique a personality as could be found in the region where he lived. Nature moulded him of granite, and made him rugged, unyielding and uncompromising on any point that involved principle or conviction. Slavery was strong, and that was enough to control his political action. He had no rounded corners, and all his angles were salient.

Naturally, such a man, in a community of hardheaded Vermonters, whose politics were as orthodox as their religion, encountered opposition, and the friction was often sharp, yet all respected him as honest and conscientious; but he was an innovator, a firebrand, and the local prophet of a new time. As an outspoken abolitionist, in a community made up mostly of silvery-gray whigs, who read the New York Observer and revered all ancient compromises, he had stormy sailing over the political sea for many years. The fathers

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recognized slavery, and an abolitionist would destroy their work. Next to his pictured majesty with cloven hoofs and horns, he was an enemy of society. But, finally, after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, followed by the border-ruffian effort to force slavery into free territory, the conscience of the North was aroused, and Willard Davis found political sympathy. In 1854 he was 77 the only man in Vermontville who attended the meeting "under the oaks" in Jackson, where the republican party was formed to resist the aggressions of slavery. I met him on the highway as he was walking home from Charlotte, fourteen miles, and leaning on a fence rail listened to his narration of the events of that great fusion meeting. He was full of its spirit and purpose. In 1856 he was elected as representative in the State Legislature, and during the session of 1857 took a prominent position as a logical and forcible debater.

When the annual subscription paper for the minister came around, it uniformly received his signature, "W. Davis, \$16," in a very precise handwriting, and always in ink. He made up his mind what was his fair proportion and adhered to it. Six hundred dollars was considered a fair sum for the minister. Incomes were small and accumulations slow, but life's satisfactions were many. It was a period of steady material progress, and there was much intellectual vigor in that isolated community.

Mr. Davis was a good friend and sturdy foe. His Puritanism was of the kind that "feared God, and feared nothing else." His wife, whose maiden name was Lydia P. Sutton, was a woman of unusual intelligence. Two sons were born in Vermontville. The eldest, George Davis, enlisted in the Union Army and died in the service. Frank P. Davis studied civil engineering, was employed on the Denver and Rio Grande railroads, surveyed the Rocky Mountain division of the Canadian Pacific, was employed in the engineering department of the Nicaragua canal, and now resides in Washington, D. C. Willard Davis died in Vermontville.

OREN DICKINSON.

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A man of rugged nature, slow of speech, of great physical endurance, and a persistent worker. In physical strength he surpassed any other colonist. Early and late, all his life, he was at work, and then would carefully read his newspapers far into the night. In Vermont he lived for years at Stony Point on Lake Champlain, and was engaged in transporting produce to and bringing back salt, flour and merchandise from Albany, New York, by the Champlain lake and canal. It is said of him that he would take a barrel of flour by the chimes and carry it up a steep hill from the boat landing to the warehouse. Later he was a farmer and lime manufacturer at West Haven, Vermont. In 1836 he left those stony acres and came to Vermontville, bringing with him Roger W. Griswold and William P. Wilkinson, both young men. The latter was a famous bass drummer at June trainings in Vermont, and he brought his drum with him. Settling in Castleton, Barry county, four miles west of Vermontville village, many a clear and still evening we could hear his stalwart drum-beats, laid on with all the old zest, as they were wafted over the tree-tops on vibrations of air he set in motion. To all who 78 heard them those drum-waves awakened New England memories; but both drum and drummer have passed away.

Mr. Dickinson brought the first span of horses to the colony, the same ones that R. W. Griswold drove to Bellevue the night he received a wolfish serenade, and also to Climax, Kalamazoo county, for the first load of provisions. For the first winter marsh grass was cut on a small upland swamp in the woods about a mile south of the Thornapple river. The first work was clearing a few acres of land and building a log house and a log barn, the family coming in 1838.

In several respects Oren Dickinson was a pioneer. He brought the first appleseeds, planted them in nursery rows, and set out the first orchard of any size in the town. At the first election, held on the first Monday of April, 1837, he was chosen supervisor and one of three highway commissioners. After that he held various town offices, was trustee of the Academy and of the church, and did his full share in supporting church and school, making no fuss, and going about the performance of every duty in a grave and taciturn manner.

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The woods afforded summer pasturage for stock, and often, at nine o'clock in the evening, he could be heard driving the cows home to be milked, after having done a hard day's work at chopping, logging, making fences, or cultivating crops. One winter he took two double-team sleighloads of dressed hogs to Detroit, 130 miles, and sold them there for \$2.50 per hundred pounds. His day's work done, he would sit down to read his favorite newspaper, the Albany Journal, by the light of a tallow-dip, as the single candle-power of that period of dim illumination was called, then go to bed and be up again by day-light to resume the steady round of labor. There was no "inglorious case." It was a household of toil and progress, yet one of the jolliest places in the town for an evening's visit or a Thanksgiving dinner. Mrs. Dickinson, whose maiden name was Salome Barber, a sister of Edward H and Daniel Barber, probably did more hard work than any other woman in all that region of hard workers. Born in Benson, Vermont, in 1790, moving to Vermontville in 1838, always at home, using Sunday for rest, she lived on until time seemed to amount to nothing, and finally dropped into the final sleep at 95 years of age, painless and peaceful. Mr. Dickinson passed away a few years earlier.

Four children, born in Benson, Vermont, came with their parents to Vermontville—Naomi Barber Dickinson, the oldest pioneer of the second generation, still lives in the village; Marshall J. Dickinson served gallantly as major of the Second Michigan Cavalry during the civil war and died 1885; Hinman S. Dickinson is a leading farmer of Vermontville, and Williard H. Dickinson, the youngest, was born December 28, 1831, and died September 30, 1889. When the family record is closed all, no doubt, will be buried in the Vermontville cemetery.

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ROGER W. GRISWOLD.

A young man, forceful, energetic, self-reliant and hopeful, coming to Vermontville in 1836, purchasing a wild 160 acres adjoining the north line of the village plat, building a log house and commencing to clear off the surrounding heavy timber at once, in the fall of 1838

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Roger W. Griswold returned to Benson, Vermont, where he was born March 10, 1812, married Abigail Star Bascom, September 3, 1838, who was born in the same town October 11, 1816, and both left soon thereafter for their new home in Michigan.

A striking characteristic of the pioneers was an intense personality, no educational or other influences having reduced them to a "pale unanimity," and R. W. Griswold was one of the intensest. He was a natural leader, at the logging bee, in the church, at town meeting, in society—positive, prompt, decisive and aggressive—true as steel and full of grit; honest and plain-spoken; often locking horns with others, not in malice, but from positiveness of character; self-reliant in all emergencies; of sound practical judgment; generous and hospitable; proud of his wife and devoted to his family; his home especially attractive to young people who like his off-hands ways—Vermontville would have been less a genuine Yankee village, transplanted in Michigan, without him.

An early impression of a Vermontville home was given by a small painting made by Mrs. Griswold and sent back to Benson early in 1839, with the log house, stumps, pole fence—all very realistic, as experience proved. She was a woman of superior mental and moral culture, as gentle and womanly without being passive and inert, as her husband was forceful and manly. Her influence was second to that of no other woman of the colony. She made the log house pleasant, and had the qualities to adorn a palace. She added refinement to pioneer life.

When there was something to be done Mr. Griswold took the lead. He did not wait for some one else to go ahead, but started himself. He had no theories to work out, for his was the practical Yankee genius of pushing ahead by energetic labor. If he did not like the Sunday sermon the minister was sure to be the first one told of it in an off-hand way. His likes and dislikes were openly expressed, and his welcome to his friends was cordial, outspoken and thoroughly unconventional. In 1839 he was a delegate to the whig convention at Yankee Springs to name a candidate for representative in the State Legislature, his object being the nomination of his uncle, Daniel Barber. When the

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convention was organized he set the movement going by saying: "I nominate Uncle Dan, for representative"—and Uncle Dan, was nominated and elected.

Reciprocity was a conspicuous element in Mr. Griswold's nature. He would take special pains to return a favor, and if denied a reasonable request did not forget it. On one occasion he went to a store in Marshall, asked credit for a pair of shoes for his wife, and was refused. 80 Thoroughly honest, the refusal nettled him. A few months later he received a draft for \$100 from Vermont, and he took pains to go to the same store and inquire if any one wanted to buy a New York draft. In those wild-cat banking times such a piece of paper found a ready market. The storekeeper said he would take it. "No, sir; you can't have it. You would not trust me for a pair of shoes to keep my wife's feet off the ground, and you are too poor to buy my draft." Thus he got even, something he was quite sure to do sooner or later. No doubt this was the first and only time that credit was denied him in Michigan. He cleared a large farm in a few years, built the first brick residence in the town; and in all matters pertaining to the schools, the church, society, improvements, was a leader. As a man of action his name is thoroughly identified with the early history of the village and town. He was often called upon to fill local offices, and served as supervisor for several years. His first wife died June 26, 1871; several years later he married Mrs. Frances E. Browning, widow of George S. Browning, and died in Vermontville, May 31, 1886.

Six children by the first marriage were born in Vermontville: Harriet J. Griswold, widow of Albert W. Bacon, born May 9, 1840; Dr. Joseph B. Griswold, born June 21, 1842, a prominent physician in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Isaac S. Griswold, born October 14, 1846, a teacher in Hiawatha, Kansas; William M. Griswold, born June 27, 1848, a farmer on the old homestead in Vermontville; Carrie Adella Griswold, born February 11, 1854, married Rev. Joseph Homer Parker and resides in Kingfisher, Oklahoma; Mary Naomi Griswold, born May 17, 1856; died April 30, 1857.

JAY HAWKINS.

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Whether of the same family or from the same place, the personality of each member of the colony was clear and distinct, but no one was more easily distinguishable in all respects from the rest than was Jay Hawkins. He was calm and unexcitable in speech and action, yet at times somewhat petulant, and always heeded the Scripture injunction to have moderation in all things, but he was an attentive reader and observer, and had clear views of men and events. He was careful and painstaking, and an agreeable man to talk with. During the latter part of his life, when his health was poor, he was always ready to converse in his quiet and intelligent way with man or boy, at shop or store, or by the roadside. If he failed to return home at night there was no worry as to his whereabouts, as he was sure to be at some house where well known, perhaps from there to five miles away. He always had his thinking cap on, whether walking leisurely to the village from his farm, or to a neighbor's house. Time seemed to be a convenience rather than a burden, and he was a slave to no necessity. Economy made his burden easy and yoke light.

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A whig in politics, as were all the other settlers from Rutland county, Vermont, his convictions of what was right made him an opponent of slavery, but his natural conservatism held him to his party as long as it lived; still, his talks with Henry Hooker, son of Aman Hooker, a neighboring farmer, made Henry an abolitionist—probably the first one after the original four abolitionists mentioned under the subhead “Politics of the Colonists.”

When Mr. Hawkins came to Vermontville he brought apple seeds, planted his own nursery, and from it set out an orchard on his farm east of the village. With a flock of sheep he took great pains, and was the first farmer to bring the average weight of fleeces up to seven pounds, increasing the weight from year to year. Never in a hurry, he did his own thinking, cared little for authority, was a good citizen in his own way, was a natural non-conformist in all respects, and did not belong to the church. So far as can be ascertained, his religious views were not known by any person, in or out of his family. Still, he was a careful observer of Sunday. His anti-slavery sentiments made him a republican on the

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dissolution of the whig party, and he was among the first to openly identify himself with the new political movement.

Jay Hawkins was born in Castleton, Vermont, June 27, 1802, and died in Vermontville, August 19, 1866. He married Lodica Plumley in 1831, and they moved to Vermontville the year the colony was located, arriving September 27, 1836. Mrs. Hawkins was born in New Haven, Connecticut, May 13, 1807, and went with her parents to Vermont when five years old and died in Vermontville, in 1886. She was an excellent woman, a good housekeeper, and taught the first school in what is now district No. 5 of Vermontville. They first settled in the village, and the elms in front of Dr. William Parmenter's residence were set out by Mr. Hawkins, but early he moved to the farm of 160 acres east of the village.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins had three children. Horace Hawkins, the oldest, was born in Vermont, May 6, 1832, and lives on a farm in Vermontville, part of which his father bought of the government. He has been a resident of the town the longest of any person now living, nearly sixty-one years. The second son, Daniel Webster Hawkins, came to Vermontville October 18, 1837, and was the first child born to a member of the colony in the village. He died October 5, 1858. Duane Hawkins was born in Vermontville, February 17, 1840, and resides on the farm that was owned and occupied by his father. He enlisted as a private soldier in Company B, Second Regiment of Michigan Cavalry, during the civil war; has held a number of local offices, and in 1880 was elected a representative in the State Legislature by the voters of the Second district of Eaton county.

The Jay Hawkins family have been identified with the village and 82 township from the first year that a settlement was made, and for a longer period than any other family members of which are now living. At the first election held on the first Monday of April, 1837, he was chosen one of the highway commissioners. Duane Hawkins was the pioneer child of the colony, and the first and only native-born citizen of the town elected a member of the State Legislature. From first to last, it can be truly said, the influence of the family has been exerted in behalf of temperance, morality and good citizenship.

WELLS ROE MARTIN.

His ancestral line antedates the revolutionary war. His grandfather was a soldier in Washington's army during the terrible winter at Valley Forge, and was a member of the garrison at West Point, the surrender of which to the British general, Sir Henry Clinton, was plotted by Benedict Arnold. Mr. Martin was born at Hoosac, New York, March 18, 1811, but lived in Bennington, Vermont, until 1838, when he moved to Vermontville, and resided there until his death in April, 1892.

In 1835 Wells R. Martin and Emily Robinson were married. She was born in Bennington, Vermont, March 31, 1816, and was a direct descendant of Samuel Robinson, who was born in Bristol, England, in 1668, and came to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1703. His son, Samuel Robinson, was born at Cambridge in 1705; removed to Bennington, Vermont, in 1761, and was the first magistrate in that part of the Green Mountain state. Her grandfather and his brothers were revolutionary soldiers. Mrs. Martin died at Vermontville in December, 1885.

In the civil, educational, and religious affairs of the colony, Mr. Martin always took a prominent part. He was a fluent talker, and when on his feet could follow his line of thought clearly and give it a very accurate expression in words; but could not sit down and write it out afterwards in a manner at all satisfactory. Thoughts came to him more freely while making an extemporized speech than under any other condition. Though a democrat in politics, in a town with whig and republican majorities, and unswerving in his party allegiance, he served the people in various official positions, as supervisor, treasurer, clerk, justice of the peace, etc., holding the latter place at the time of his death. He was the first hotel-keeper in the village, entertaining travelers in the comfortable log-house he occupied as a dwelling, and licenses as a landlord are recorded as having been issued to him in the years 1846 and 1847 at two dollars per annum. The first small stock of goods

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offered for sale in the village was brought from Bellevue by W. R. Martin and S. D. Scovell, but that earliest experiment in merchandising was not repeated.

The village of Vermontville was incorporated by act of the legislature March 11, 1871, and at the second election, Mr. Martin was chosen president. Up to date party politics have not entered into the choice of village officers. The spoils are meager. At the general election of 1848, he was chosen to represent Eaton county in the State Legislature, his competitor, on the whig ticket, having been Edward D. Lacey of Kalamo, father of Hon. E. S. Lacey, president of the Bankers' National Bank of Chicago. By a legislative act of March 16, 1847, the seat of government was removed from Detroit to Lansing, and as annual sessions were held prior to the adoption of the present constitution in 1850, Mr. Martin was a representative during the second session held in the new State capital. For many years he was a deacon of the Congregational church. As a pioneer, hotel-keeper, merchant, public officer, and private citizen, he lived an active life for the fifty-four years of his residence in Vermontville. At the time of his death, by the appointment of Governor Winans, he was agent for Eaton county of the State Public School at Coldwater, Michigan.

Mr. Martin was a natural leader in local affairs and in party politics. He was always ready to do his part in all matters that related to public interests and the general welfare. At religious meetings, caucuses, conventions, he was a regular attendant. Being well-informed and gifted with readiness of speech, he was the leading debater of all subjects that came up for action and decision. Of medium height and wiry frame, he had great endurance and was seldom laid up from sickness. The contour of his face and head reminded one of the portraits of Oliver Wendell Holmes. With both young and old he could talk entertainingly, and though he often encountered sharp antagonists and harsh things were said in the off-hand debates in the country store, he never lost his popularity or the respect of his fellowmen. From his occupations as landlord and merchant, his service for several terms as justice of the peace, and his excellent conversational powers, he was oftener seen on the street than any other one of the original settlers. At church meetings and revivals his fluency of speech, doing his best thinking on his feet and never hesitating

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for appropriate words, he was the same natural leader as in secular affairs. With him left out, Vermontville would have been without one of its worthiest spokesmen on all public occasions, and his services were always given without expectation of fee or reward. One of his sayings was: "If a man earns fifty cents a day and salts it down he will finally become rich." And yet he never tried the salting process.

Of Mr. and Mrs. Martin's three children, Henry J. Martin was born in Bennington, Vermont, January 6, 1837, came to Vermontville with his parents in 1838, and is still a resident of the village. In 1867 he married Martha E. Jones, a native of Virginia. Minnie R. Martin was born in Vermontville, March 27, 1839, and married Horace L. Curtis in 1858. Mr. Curtis is a native of Genesee county, New York, came to Vermontville in 1854, and both himself and wife still reside there. Harriet P. 84 Martin, born in Vermontville, May 4, 1841, married Dr. Almon A. Thompson, now deceased; is a resident of Flint, Michigan.

SIMEON McCOTTER.

With the exception of Daniel Barber, Simeon McCotter was the last male survivor of the Vermontville colonists, and was an excellent citizen. Physically he was a stubbed man, short in statute, with a quick movement, a cabinet-maker by trade, and the workman who did all kinds of woodwork for the first settlers, from making a cradle for the newcomer into this life through the gateway of birth, to making a coffin for those who passed from this life through the gateway of death into the unseen world. His was the first work and the last for many, young and old, whose bodies lie in the rural cemetery. Indeed, he was a general utility man for all; working on houses and barns; on the schoolhouse; the first sawmill; the academy and the church; very useful at raisings, as he knew how to put things together; was active to lend a helping hand on all occasions; and among the pioneer was a thoroughly useful citizen. How they would have got along without him, or some one else like him, is not clear. People always get along in some way, however, while they stay on earth; but the rendering of mutual services, for which compensation is given, makes life more comfortable and better worth living; and they would have got along in some

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manner of their own devising, as ingenious and inventive people always do, without such conveniences and utilities as Simeon McCotter's hands and tools put together.

While he owned an outside farm lot—a wild and heavily timbered eighty acres—he always lived in the village, on one of the ten-acre lots which fell to him in the raffle, when, after prayer by the minister, the colonists present cast lots for a choice among them; and later, added three more adjacent lots of the same size, the forty acres constituting his farm and home during a married life of fifty-three years. Thoroughly honest, he never suspected or expected dishonesty in others, and so sometimes was victimized by sharp traders and unscrupulous buyers of articles he had to sell. As character endures, surely he is better off now than are those who cheated him. If time sometimes fails, eternity never does, to make things even.

Though born in Vermont, Mr. McCotter was the least of a Yankee in worldly shrewdness, or in driving a bargain, of any of the settlers. If he ever wronged another it was unintentional. He was a good man—a little too good to gather much of the spoils of this world from the labor of others—but he lived comfortably, worked faithfully, and filled out the eighty-seven years of his life as a useful citizen, an exemplary member of society and of the church, and an honest man, leaving pleasant memories only with those who knew him. He left his home free from debt; none of the family now reside in the town; and Simeon McCotter took with him the only permanent wealth a man can have when he leaves this world—a good character.

Still he had peculiarities. In walking he stepped quickly, did not raise his feet far from the ground, and frequently stubbed his toes in the rough and new country. One evening, carrying home with a neckyoke across his shoulders two pails of maple syrup from a sugar bush a mile away—sweetness that represented one or more days of hard labor—he stubbed his toe in the darkness on some plaguey root or other obstacle to smooth transit, fell down and spilled the precious stuff, which he intended to have sugared off at home. Rising to his feet and contemplating the extent of the disaster, he groaned in spirit so that

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a passer-by, D. F. Barber, could hear him, and said to himself in a deprecatory manner: "Well, stub your toe, McCotter, if you don't know any better;" and then went home a sadder man than when he left in the morning, though with a lighter burden; but patiently resumed sugar-making the next day. "Stub your toe, McCotter," became one of the sayings in the colony for several years, whenever any similar occurrence justified its use.

Simeon McCotter was born in Benson, Rutland county, Vermont, August 30, 1806; came to Vermontville as one of the original colonists, lived there until his death, November 15, 1893. He married Lucy Minerva Leveredge at Vermontville, April 1, 1840. She was born at Camillus, New York, April 20, 1819, and died in Vermontville, August 4, 1895. She was a model wife, homekeeper and mother.

They had four children, all born in Vermontville. Mary Jennette McCotter, born April 13, 1841; married Oscar Hadley July 4, 1857; died at Malvern Junction, Arkansas, in 1887. James Howard McCotter, born January 3, 1845; married Florence Baker in March, 1874; resides at Pontiac, Mich, where he is superintendent of D. M. Ferry & Company's seed farm, having fitted himself for the position as a student and graduate of the Michigan Agricultural College. Eliza McCotter, born October 20, 1849; married Fits Hughes Gage of Olivet, Mich., October 20, 1886, and resides there at the present time, where her husband is a dealer in general merchandise. George Samuel McCotter, born May 30, 1851; married Caroline De Planta in 1875, and resides at Hudson, Mich.

HIRAM J. MEARS.

Here was a man with as few prongs or salient points of character and conduct, as any of the pioneers of Vermontville. He was even tempered, faithful in the performance of duty, fond of home and friends, in all respects an exemplary citizen, and willing to take events as they occurred, with very little outside fret or worry over the inevitable. He came 86 from Poultry, Vermont, and with his family moved to Vermontville in 1837. Of peaceable disposition and quiet ways, he seldom if ever engaged in strife and contention with others.

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He was the first wagon-maker. At that time it was common for each village to have its own blacksmith, shoemaker, cabinet-maker, cooper, tailor or tailoress, wagon-maker, etc., as well as doctor and minister, but the lawyer was a later need of litigant civilization; and to those engaged in the mechanical industries the farmers would give such jobs of work as they needed, paying partly at least in produce, chipping in cash enough to pay for the material used, and keeping running accounts each with the other, which would be looked over and settled once a year, unless procrastination let them run longer, especially if there was not much difference between debits and credits. Occasionally the settlements of these accounts caused sharp controversies, and unbrotherly remarks were made, which were apt result in a church trial, as bringing suits before a justice of the peace was of rare occurrence; but Mr. Mears was a man of such quiet manner and proverbial fairness that disputes over his charges seldom if ever happened, though he had dealings with all of his fellow-colonists. He was a Christian on the peaceable list.

Mr. Mears' penmanship was good. He never sought for an office, but in 1838-40, and again in 1843, he served as town clerk. While he owned a farm, which he cultivated, he lived in the village from 1837 until his death in 1883, built a comfortable house chiefly by his own labor, set out in front along the twenty rods of street a row of sugar maples, now large trees; and those whose see them and know the fact think kindly of him for this thoughtfulness of the future. While all were necessarily tree destroyers, he was also a tree conserver, and this beneficent work lives after him. His record is that of the quiet citizen, the good neighbor, and the upright man.

Mrs. Rhoda Mears, his wife, was a native of Vermont, a bright and active woman, a good conversationalist, and was well liked for her social qualities. She made the home, first a log house and then comfortable frame dwelling, unusually attractive to young people. The oldest daughter, Mrs. Frances A. Stebbins, was a native of Vermont, and was a general favorite in the early days, of a community where girls were scarce and boys were plenty. The other children—Wallace C. Mears, Ellen Mears, Julia Mears, the second wife of

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George W. Squier, and Alice Mears—were born in Vermontville, and with the exception of Mrs. Stebbins and Eugene Mears, have passed from earth.

WAIT J. SQUIRE.

The letter “J.” in the name of this stalwart pioneer stood for junior, and the interpolation by himself, when a young man, to distinguish him from his father, Wait Squier, senior, was characteristic of the original 87 methods of the man, and was a labor-saving as well as a convenient designation. The tallest and largest-framed of the colonists, he was in all respects the least modified Yankee, physically and mentally, among them. He was a typical pioneer. Born in Lanesboro, Massachusetts, when a young man he went with his father to New Haven, Vermont, and was a pioneer of two states—Vermont and Michigan. He married Abigail Powell, a native of the same western Massachusetts town, and the idea of a mismatch or a misfit never entered the mind of a person who knew them both. They lived in New Haven, where all their children were born, until they came to Michigan in the spring of 1837, and they added a larger number of inhabitants to the census of Vermontville in 1840 than any other family arrival. Physically the most conspicuous Yankee in the colony, he was also the most unique specimen of the genus home among them. Kindness of heart and common sense ways, with many a remark that savored of nature rather than of grace, made him a favorite with the younger boys, and his wife was equally a favorite with all classes. Rugged New England qualities were prominent. Older persons of the second generation remember them well because of their points and angles of character and speech. The only legible records of this largest family that came from Vermont are found in some early justice of the peace docket and town books, or of the part taken in the church and academy work, and in the cemetery, as all of the name have disappeared from Vermontville in less than sixty years.

Mr. Squier was a member of the committee to select a location for the colony, and was on the ground when the first blow was struck in May, 1836. He was a surveyor, and having his instruments with him when it was determined where the colony should be planted, he

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at once surveyed the village plat in the woods, as preliminary to carrying into effect the plan of settlement agreed upon at Castleton, Vermont. Being present when the scriptural casting of lots took place for the choice of village lots, he selected one of the most central locations, adjoining the public square on the east, and built the first frame house in the town, hauling the lumber through the woods from Hyde's mill, seven miles distant, in Kalamo. This sawmill was built by Oliver M. Hyde, afterwards a prominent citizen and mayor of Detroit, who was a large land-owner in the towns of Vermontville and Kalamo. Mr. Squier was not present when the town was organized and the first election was held in 1837, having returned to Vermont for his family, but in 1840 he was elected supervisor, and in 1848, 1849 and 1853 was chosen a justice of the peace.

One of the notable peculiarities of the early time was the general belief that, when a person became a justice of the peace he was qualified, as if some divine afflatus rested upon him and gave him wisdom to perform all the duties in the office, and some more, such as conveyancing, as well as taking the acknowledgment of deeds and mortgages, and even the granting of a divorce. Could not the authority that performed the marriage ceremony do the unmarrying also? Justice Squier acted upon the theory that the power which makes can unmake—a theory which, if it had been adopted by the higher courts of this country, would have prevented many a hard exaction and grinding monopoly. While serving as justice of the peace, a Vermontville couple came before him to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony, and the ceremony was duly performed according to the statute in such cases made and provided. After trying the married relation—probably not wedded bliss—for a time, the parties concluded, and no doubt wisely, that separation from bed and board was the best course for them to take. So they appeared before Justice Squier again and stated their desire to separate. He had no guiding precedent. He was a court, had made them husband and wife, and the authority to annul his own marital function seemed right and proper. Ascertaining that the wife, at the date of the marriage, was under the lawful age for making the contract, he had an affidavit made to that effect, and declared the marriage null and void. A more effective divorce was never granted in

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Michigan. Nathaniel Lamb, the divorced husband, enlisted later in the volunteer army as a Union soldier, and was as honest, faithful and patriotic as if he had received a divorce from a court having jurisdiction. He died in the service, while the divorced wife is married for the third time and is in good circumstances. The legal right to a pension as a soldier's widow has not been raised. This divorce case is worth mentioning as a case of original jurisdiction, with the result as final and conclusive with all parties as any divorce ever granted by ecclesiastical, legislative or judicial authority. Had Justice Squier lived in the time of Henry VIII, he might have saved that erratic monarch a great deal of trouble in getting dematrimonialized.

Mrs. Squier died in Vermontville in 1860, at the age of 65 years, and Mr. Squier in 1869, aged 78 years. In naming their children, especially the boys, they selected the names of prominent persons. Dr. Arthur Wellesley Squier, the oldest, died at Whitehall, Michigan, in 1888, at the age of 73; the second; Manly Wallace Squier, died at Ionia, Michigan, at the age of 65; Catherine Helen died in Vermontville in 1888, at the age of 56; George Washington Squier resides in Charlotte, Michigan, to which place he moved on being elected treasurer of Eaton county; Cornelius Hamilton Squier died at Fort Laramie on the overland route to California, in 1850, at the age of 24; Henry Clay Squier, at one time a prosperous merchant in the island of Mauritius and well known in mercantile circles of London, England, died in Vermontville in 1881, about 54 years of age; Martin Luther Squier died in Lisbon, Dakota, in 1888, at the age of 61; Mrs. Clara Aurelia Vanghan resides in Charlotte, Michigan, with her brother, John Howard Squier, the youngest member of this typical pioneer family. When they were all at home they made a house full of 89 physically stalwart persons, the father and all the boys, with one exception, being six feet tall or over. But they scattered widely with the years, and none of the original family that came to Vermontville in 1837, or any of their descendants, now reside in the town. In the colony archives, the town and church records, and the cemetery, the family name is preserved.

LUCY HAMILTON DWIGHT.

Though not a member of the original Vermontville Colony, yet a pioneer, as an instance of a widow with a family of six children, three girls and three boys, the oldest twenty years of age, moving into the wilderness, settling upon a wild 160 acres of land, making an attractive home, and exercising a good influence upon the community in which they lived, Mrs. Dwight is worthy of special mention. Her management shows what a woman can do. Her husband, Peregrine Dwight, belonged to one of the most notable families of New England and of the United States, having been a direct descendant, of the sixth generation, of John Dwight, who came from Dedham, England, and was one of the first settlers in Dedham, Massachusetts, in the year 1629 or 1630. She was a daughter of Dr. Chauncey Hamilton of Brookfield, who married Mary Hubbard of Amherst, both in Massachusetts, and was born August 21, 1796. Peregrine Dwight was a farmer at Belchertown, Massachusetts, from 1815 to 1828, and from 1828 to 1842 at Niagara Falls, New York, where he died August 21 of the last named year. He was an earnest, austere, intelligent and religious man, a great reader, and well informed upon political and religious subjects. He had but moderate means; at Niagara Falls he worked a farm owned by Gen. Augustus S. Porter; and at his death left a widow and six children to be provided for, the oldest nineteen years of age, and the youngest an infant. An unimproved quarter section of land he owned in Barry county was traded for 160 acres in Vermontville, in which not a tree had been cut. In September, 1843, Mrs. Dwight moved to Vermontville with her family, to make in the unbroken wilderness a home for her household. The first dwelling, like those of the other first settlers, was built of unhewn logs, trees enough having been chopped down for a building place. By good management, prudence and economy, there was steady prosperity under her care, and no family in the town was more highly esteemed. But few among the new-comers got along any better. Many men, as the heads of families, failed to do as well. The first rude home was made attractive by good words and works. In the true sense of the term Mrs. Dwight was a Christian woman. No one ever heard her complain of or find fault with others. "The Dwight girls," as the three daughters

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were familiarly called, were great favorites. In 1880, after eighty-three ripened years, at the residence 90 of her son, George C. Dwight, in Vermontville, she passed quietly away of the infirmities of old age. During her life she had charity and kindness for all, and death was like going to sleep. There was no pain to indicate its coming. At night she passed into an easy slumber, which continued peacefully and quietly through the following day and another night until daybreak came, and then without a struggle awoke to “another more than ours,”

Three of her children were born in Belchertown, Massachusetts, namely; Martha Adelia Dwight, July 15, 1823, married Edward W. Barber, December 24, 1853, and now resides in Jackson, Michigan; Chauncey Hamilton Dwight, born September 25, 1825, married Rebecca De Graff March 31, 1856, and lives on a farm in Vermontville; Clarissa Ann Dwight, born January 14, 1828, now the wife of Sidney Seymour Rockwell, a member of the mercantile firm of Barber, Ambrose & Rockwell Vermontville, to whom she was married February 19, 1856. The other three children were born at Niagara Falls, New York, as follows: George Clinton Dwight, July 14, 1831, married Margaret Gregg of Castleton, Michigan, February 14, 1860, now living on a farm in Vermontville; Lucy Clarissa Dwight, born February 10, 1834, married Homer G. Barber, a merchant and banker at Vermontville, March 23, 1853, and died at their home in that village May 1, 1893; and Edward Peregrine Dwight, born January 1, 1840, enlisted as a private soldier in Company G, Séventh Michigan Infantry, early during the war of the rebellion, and was killed in battle at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, August 5, 1862. His body lies with other unknown heroes of the war, and memorial stone adorns the Vermontville cemetery.

OTHER COLONISTS.

Of other members of the colony, concerning whom there is insufficient obtainable data, for accurate personal and family sketches, only brief mention can be made. Walter S. Fairfield, one of the earliest settlers, was a printer, and before coming to Michigan owned and edited a newspaper at Castleton, Vermont. He anchored at the outset of pioneerage

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in the village of Bellevue, and was the first register of deeds for Eaton county. He copied from the Calhoun county records the deeds and mortgages covering lands in Eaton county that had been placed on record there during the time that Eaton was a part of Calhoun for all civic and legal purposes. He was a well informed man, an easy talker on familiar subjects, strong in his prejudices, and unjust in his antagonisms. He died in Vermontville, February 15, 1860.

Stephen Decatur Scovell was one of the youngest members of the colony, a son of Josiah B. Scovell, one of its original promoters, and may be described as a energetic and erratic member of society and the 91 church. He figured considerably in church trails, and was as ready to forgive as he was to complain of the faults of others. He was not given to using a mental mirror that he might see himself as others saw him. He wanted others to toe the mark according to the gospel standard and the church discipline. He was a vigorous worker, and in a short time slashed down the timber and cleared off the large farm now owned by Ernest Sprague, in the northeast part of the town. He seldom missed church services or prayer meetings, as he liked to mix with people on all sorts of occasions. His widow, Mrs. Argalus Sprague, still lives in Vermontville, and is one of the worthiest of the pioneer wives and mothers. Mr. Scovell died in Vermontville.

Other settlers, who signed the original articles of association and came to Vermontville, but moved away and died in other places, were: Jacob Fuller, Sidney B. Gates, Charles Imus, Elijah S. Mead, Levi Merrill, Martin S. Norton, Dewey H. Robinson and Bazaleel Taft. Some of them remained only a year or two, while others, like Messrs. Fuller, Gates, Merrill, Norton and Robinson, were identified with the village and town for a number of years. Mrs. Fuller moved to the town of Sunfield, Mr. Merrill to the town of Chester, Mr. Gates to the town of Roxand, and Mr. Taft to the town of Kalamo—all in Eaton country. About 1846, Mr. Norton moved to Marshall, Michigan, where he resumed work as a black-smith, in partnership with Jacob Tanner, who afterwards became a farmer in the town of Carmel, Eaton county. In 1849, Mr. Norton went overland to California, settled in Grass Valley, was appointed postmaster there during Lincoln's first administration and held the office

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for twelve years. He died in Grass Valley several years since. His widow, whose maiden name was Mary Ann Sears, of Bennington, Vermont, still resides there. Dr. Robinson moved to Marshall, Michigan, in 1846, remained there a year or two, then returned to Bennington, his native town, and died a few years later.

None of the colonists—those who remained unto the last or those who moved away—ever realized their early hopes, desires, or dreams; for hewing out new homes in the wilderness was the hard work of a lifetime; yet they lived up to their ideals, embracing religion and education, as well as making homes for themselves and their children in a new country, with larger opportunities than existed in New England, more fully and completely than falls to the most pioneers.

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THE MICHIGAN PIONEERS.

Lo! each grateful generation never tires Weaving the past into prose and rhyme; Praising the greater wisdom of the sires— Yet the world grows wiser all the time.

The world grows better with the flight of years, Not long since our fair and fruitful land Was one vast wilderness, begirt with fears— Said to be a waste of swamp and sand.

In the dark forests, meaning as the wind Swept by, where reamed the wolf and hear, now Grazes in the pastures, sweet with clover blooms, The kind, soft-eyed, and gentle Jersey cow.

Look o'er the fertile fields, the orchards see, Where once was maught but forest drear, And ask whence these? This will the answer be: These crown the labor of the pioneer.

Each home the monument of some stont heart. That braved the perils of the savage wild, Bore a noble, though a humble part— Unceasing effort until fortune smiled.

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Not man alone the work and danger dared, To found a State on Michigan soil; Mothers the sickness and the hardship shared— A weary round of unremitting toil.

And oft, from out the gloomy wilderness, Their thoughts to the eastern hill-homes turned; And then resumed their cares with faithfulness, While for brighter scenes their true hearts yearned.

These mothers toiled from dawn until the west Was crimson with sunset's parting glow; And so moved on unto the final rest, With hopes and dreams they alone could know.

Let others sing the deeds of fighting men; Of saints and martyrs in ages sere; A humbler theme best suits my thought and pen— The life and work of the pioneer.

For he who clears the land and makes it bloom, Underneath the summer's rain and sun, Much better serves his country and his home Than heroes who have great battles won.

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Large wealth than builds the palace to be seen Of men, doth but please the passer-by; While those who built the schoolhouse have wiser been— Op'ning a fountain that will never dry.

Who builds a church in which to worship God, Though lacking lofty arch and frescoed wall, Hath placed a blessing on the lonely sod; But the home-builder buildeth best of all.

Men of today, for pleasant homes and farms, Towns where sense of thrift and comfort cheers, For all the wealth, for all the many charms, For all the progress, thank the pioneers!