

Chapter 1 : City of Ionia - Home Page

The Ionia County Courthouse was designed by Claire Allen, a prominent southern Michigan architect. Ionia County comprises the Ionia, MI Micropolitan Statistical Area, which is also included in the Grand Rapids - Wyoming - Muskegon, MI Combined Statistical Area.

Besides having a rich agricultural region, Portland derives from the Looking-Glass and Grand Rivers, at Portland village, valuable manufacturing power, and in these substantial and enduring elements of prosperity the township is rightly to be considered as fortunate beyond many of its neighbors. The Grand River flows from south to north in a sinuous course, entering the town at section 33, and leaving it at the line between sections 4 and 5. On section 33 - or, more properly, on the line between sections 28 and 33 - it receives the waters of the Looking-Glass, which comes from section 36 in a northwesterly course. Towards the construction of the Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railway, which traverses the township and has stations at Portland and Collins villages, " Portland has contributed liberally not only by voted subscription, but by individual assistance as well. The road-bed is, however, graded, and it is likely that the enterprise may before long be carried to successful issue. The soil of Portland is especially adapted to the cultivation of wheat, of which it yields large returns. On the openings it is a gravelly loam, and on the timber-lands heavier, but still highly productive. Portland Village Portland village, covering a tract of territory that measures just one mile and a half square, lies upon the Grand and Looking-Glass Rivers, and at about the centre of the village the two streams make a junction. Each river possesses at this point a power of no small value, and this consideration was naturally the motive that actuated the founders of the village in making a start where they did. During the past decade Portland has made a pronounced advancement alike in population, business, and enterprise. In the population of the village was one thousand and ten and in it was one thousand seven hundred and ninety, or a gain of nearly eighty per cent. The increase in enterprise is shown in the erection of numerous fine business-blocks such as few similar towns can boast. The Pioneers of Portland Although Elisha Newman made the first land-entry in the township of Portland June, , he did not become a settler until three years later, by which time a few settlers had located in the town. One of the company Joseph Wood remarked that he had been out with the party sent to survey Ionia and other counties, and that the surveyors were struck by the valuable water-power at the mouth of the Looking Glass River, saying there would surely be a village there someday. Newman was at once taken with the idea of locating lands at the mouth of the Looking-Glass. Following up his impulse, he made ready to start at once, and, accompanied by James Newman and Joseph Wood, went out to the Looking-Glass on a tour of inspection. Being satisfied with the location, he returned Eastward with his companions, and at White Pigeon made his land-entry. Newman did not return for a permanent settlement until the spring of , and meanwhile, in November, , Philo Rogue bought a piece of land on section 28, in the bend of the Grand River, where he proposed to set up a trading-post. He brought a small load of pork, flour, and whisky with him, put up a tent, and opened traffic with the savages in short order. Bogue was an Indian trader he was a land-owner and bona fide settler, and he may therefore be rightly considered the first actual settler in Portland township, as well as in what is now Portland village. He was, moreover, the pioneer storekeeper in the village, for as the white settlers came he enlarged his place of business, and for a time his establishment was considered, by settlers as well as Indians, a base of supplies. He built in a framed store to replace his log shanty. That building, it is said, was the first framed structure erected in the township. Bogue died in , and was buried just west of his store, where other burials had been made, and where it was proposed to lay out a cemetery, but the project was shortly afterwards abandoned. In the party were Elisha Newman, Samuel B. Almeron and James Newman and Lyman Bennett were accompanied by their families. Bennett brought two yokes of oxen and a wagon, and James Newman a pair of horses and a wagon. A few supplies had been brought out at the same time, but the major portion of. In a sketch of Portland pioneer life, Almeron Newman says: Bogue followed this occupation with good success until the summer of , when he sickened, and died on the 25th of July. The Indians had their burying-ground on the point of ground formed by the intersection of the Grand and Looking-Glass Rivers where the foundry now stands. They had no

buildings except one very nice wigwam, which afforded temporary shelter for our women at night while we were building houses, which we were not long about. We heard nothing of our goods, and it was therefore determined that Lyman Bennett and myself should take a trip to the mouth of the river to see what we could learn and lay in some supplies if necessary. The river was high, and with a strong current. With a little exertion on our part we made very good head-way, and in due course of time arrived at Grand Haven. There we found a man who was running a vessel on Lake Michigan, from whom we learned that he had seen in Chicago some goods answering the description we gave of ours, and he thought, too, the goods were likely to stay in Chicago some time unless sent for. I instructed him to get them and forward them to Lyons, and then Bennett and I started for home. I poled and Bennett pulled - that is, he walked in the river or on shore ahead of the boat and towed with a rope, while I remained on board and poled. By the time we reached Ionia we were both utterly exhausted, and, leaving our craft there, we put off overland for Portland, whence we dispatched fresh recruits to bring the vessel up. It was a good deal of a job, and an expensive one, but it was put through without a halt, as was the building of a saw-mill. The latter was started December, , and in January, , a small run of stone with a bolt attached was put in. The first flour made in that mill is supposed to have been the first bolted flour made west of Pontiac. The mill did all the grinding for that section of the country until , when James Newman and Peter M. Events in In the spring of , William R. Churchill, still living in Portland, came to the village intending to locate as a farmer. There were also on the ground William Dinsmore, a shoemaker, and a man named Cogswell, who was probably an employee in the Newman mill. Philo Bogue then had a store lower down on the Grand River. Instead of clearing a farm as he intended, Churchill concluded that, as there was likely to be a village in that neighborhood in a little time, he would put up a building which he might use as a tavern or store as circumstances should direct. He bought some land, and on the lot now occupied by W. At this juncture along came David Sturgis, a Canadian, looking for an opening; he at once bought a half-interest with Churchill in the building then going up, the agreement being that when finished they should, as partners, open it as a store. When they had finished it, however, they were besought by Joshua Boyer a comer to the township in to rent it to him for a tavern-stand. Boyer opened his tavern, and called it the "Mansion House. Wadsworth appeared upon the scene and determined to make the waters of the Grand River serve him a similarly useful purpose. He purchased some land on the west side of the stream, threw a dam across it, and began at once to build a saw-mill and grist-mill near where R. Although Wadsworth displayed an extraordinary amount of zeal and energy in his undertakings and promised great things, he accomplished little or nothing. His mills he never finished, and his dam was twice carried away by floods. He continued elsewhere, however, to fail in his enterprises, just as he had failed at Portland. His energy was something remarkable, but his judgment was the rock upon which he invariably went to pieces. On one occasion, however, his energy and judgment combined to put him in the way of a paying speculation. Despite his repeated failures, he was a sanguine person, and he found, moreover, plenty of people who gladly manifested confidence in him. To some of these people, resident in Portland, he proposed, in the year , the scheme of locating mining-lands in the Lake Superior region, there being at that time a high fever abroad in favor of mining-land speculations in that newly-developed country. The confiding Portlandites were carried away with enthusiastic and golden anticipations touching the tempting bait held out by Wadsworth, and with one accord they entered into the project with open purses. Wadsworth built his vessel at Portland, rigged it sloop fashion, named it the "North Star," loaded it with provisions, and set sail one day amid the general hurrahs and wild enthusiasm of the villagers, who to forcibly express their delight improvised an old mill-crank as a cannon and made the welkin fairly ring. Wadsworth poled down the river and out into the blue waters of Lake Michigan, but how he progressed thereafter and what happened to him and his gallant bark and crew are not matters of such certain elucidation. In a general way it may, however, be narrated that neither he nor his gallant crew, nor yet his gallant bark, returned to Portland to cheer and sustain the hearts and hopes of the trustful capitalists who had sent the noble Wadsworth forth upon his voyage of discovery. In short, the noble Wadsworth, rightly estimating that he might wait a long while before having so bright an opportunity for the gathering in of a handsome supply of shekels, sold his gallant bark and her load to the first man who would buy, and, leaving the question of discovering iron-mines to be solved by other brains than his, made off with his booty, and, so

far as heard from, lived a life of shady seclusion ever, after. His life was a failure, and in poverty he closed it. Village Plats April 8, , E. Johnson, deputy register, recorded the plat of the village of Portland, west of the river, laid out by Abram S. Wadsworth [Wadsworth laid out the village in , but recorded no plat until] and Junius H. Hatch, and thus described: Wadsworth laid out the village of Portland east of the Grand River. Van Horn recorded an addition on the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 28, west of the Grand River, and Nov. Stringham, and others platted D. On the northeast fractional quarter also of section 33 James Newman recorded an addition June 30, , R. Smith an addition Oct. Green an addition Dec. Maynard and Orville S. Satterlee platted an addition, in May, , on the north half of the southeast quarter of section The last plat appears to have been made Sept. I said their burying-ground was on the spot where the foundry stands now. We made a cow-yard at that point, and Elisha Newman fenced the grave-yard, so the cattle could not injure the graves. When the Indians found out what had been done they seemed utterly unable to express their gratitude for the kindness, and they were ever afterwards our fast friends. They came every year as long as they remained in the country, burned whisky on the graves, and performed other equally strange ceremonies. The Indians were greatly of service to us in bringing to us venison, fish, etc. Curious investigators claim to have penetrated these mounds, and report says they found numerous skeletons of people seemingly of far greater stature than the average modern man. Whatever the mounds may have been, or whatever the stories about them, they were doubtless only a few of the many similar constructions alleged to have been observed all along the shores of the river in the Grand River valley by the early comers into Michigan. About this time a bridge was built across the Grand River, near where the upper bridge is now located. Before that, however, Daniel and James Nicholson had opened a store on the west side of the river. Newman was by trade a clothier, and his little factory at Portland was the first establishment of the kind put into operation west of Pontiac. The story goes that when Wadsworth saw Newman make a "go" of his carding-machine, he exclaimed with perhaps some bitterness of thought at his own failures , "Well, that is the first thing that ever succeeded in Portland! Parker, and David Smith. There were also the families of A. Beers the village doctor , William H. The building is the one now used by F. As to other early Portland merchants, there were Chas. Speaking about taverns, Portland must have done a brisk business in selling ardent spirits during the year Dickinson, while licenses as retailers of spirits were granted to Hezekiah Smith, William R. Fox, and William Wilkinson.

Chapter 2 : Ionia County, Michigan: Genealogy, Census, Vital Records

History of Ionia County, Michigan: her people, industries and institutions, with biographical sketches of representative citizens, and genealogical records of many of the old families by Branch, Elam E.,

The surface of the country is undulating and the soil mainly a sandy loam. The town is agriculturally a fruitful region and contains but little, if any, waste-land. The Grand River flows through it in a very eccentric course, dividing the town into two nearly equal parts, and touching sections 24, 25, 26, 23, 27, 22, 15, 16, 21, 28, 20, 17, 18, 8, 9, 4, and 5. Although there is mill-power on the stream within Danby it has not yet been utilized. The Looking-Glass River cuts across the northeast corner, and Sebewa Creek through sections 30 and 31, to re-enter on section 19 and empty into the Grand River. There is on the west town-line a small hamlet known as Cornell. Beyond that the town is given over exclusively to farming interests. The Pioneers of Danby The first settler in Danby was probably Chancellor Barringer, who is said to have located as early as in section 5, upon a piece of land owned by A. Whether the statement is strictly true or not is now scarcely capable of demonstration, since neither Barringer nor any of his kin having certain knowledge of the circumstances attendant upon his coming are within reach. It is, however, certain that Barringer lived in on the north bank of the Grand River, in section 22, upon what is now known as the J. Horner place, and that at a later day say or thereabouts he kept a house of entertainment at that point. How much of a tavern he kept does not appear, but it had a special name at all events, and in the town records several town-meetings are noted as having been held at "the Barringer House. In the same year - that is to say, - the first commencement was made on the south side of the Grand River by William and John Cronkrite, who made purchases of considerable land along the river, and in the summer of put up a cabin on section 21 where J. Rice lives and made a chopping. In the fall the brothers Cronkrite returned Eastward, and, in spring of , William came back to Danby with his family, for the purpose of making a permanent settlement, while John, his brother, concluding that he did not want to become a Michigan pioneer after all, went to Texas, where he had formerly lived, and where he was subsequently killed. Gleason became afterwards a settler himself, but in Portland town. Compton was out on a land-looking expedition, and while making a selection lived with Cronkrite and Gleason in the rude shanty put up the summer before by William and John Cronkrite. The quarters were of the narrowest, and when all hands - men, women-folks, and children - assembled in the one room boasted by the hut, they were about as thickly lodged as bees in a hive. Compton picked out some land on section 33 where he now lives , and after waiting four weeks to get a chance to enter it at the Ionia land-office, he went East to prepare for the removal of his family and possessions to the backwoods of Michigan. He hired Benjamin Silsbee to convey family and goods overland by horses and wagon to Michigan, and, as Silsbee wanted to see the country and sell his horses, the arrangement was a satisfactory one all around. They were four weeks en route from Western New York to Eagle township, in Clinton County, and at the locality known as the Niles settlement came to the end of the road, and from that point Compton "backed" goods, provisions, etc. He reached the spot in the fall of the year, and as he had, when out in the summer, hired a man named Allen to chop five acres and sow them to wheat, he expected to find himself with a nice little start. Allen had indeed made the chopping, but failed to sow the wheat, and so the promise of a crop for the next year was a faded hope. However, Compton was glad to have a beginning of five acres laid out for him, and set himself to work with a cheery spirit and stout heart. When he raised his cabin he had the help of Cronkrite and Gleason, and of a far-off neighbor, Asher Kilburn, who came from section 8 to take part in the exercises. By February, , Compton had everything in readiness, and then went to fetch in his family from the Niles settlement, where they had tarried while he prepared a home for them. From that orchard went out afterwards supplies for many an orchard round about. He claims also that his framed house, put up in , was the first one of the kind built in Danby. Compton grew to be a man of considerable consequence in the settlement, and, besides being the moving spirit in the pioneer religious organization, the first post-master, and a preacher and teacher among the Indians in Danby, was recognized as a man of medicine among the whites, who, especially during the fever-and-ague seasons, besieged him by night and by day with calls for medical help, and thus, owing to the exigencies of the times, he became a

doctor in spite of himself. Not that he had studied medicine, but when he came out he brought a medicine chest for family use, and when fever and ague played havoc he was naturally called upon by sufferers for such simple remedies as would meet demands. From that he drifted into prescribing, and almost before he knew it he was a country doctor with a practice that left him scarcely any time to attend to his own pressing affairs, while, as to pay for his doctoring, he probably never thought of asking for any. He doctored three or four years, and then decided that he must give up practicing or abandon pioneering. As pioneering was likely to pay him better, he threw physic to the dogs, and pushed on as a practical subduer of forests and tiller of the soil. In the spring of the northern portion of the township received also further additions to its settlement in the families of Charles G. Brooks, who settled on section 3. They journeyed with W. Churchill and family from Jackson, via the Grand River, in a scow, and before they reached their destination they met with many a mishap and more than once came within an ace of coming to a sudden end in the murky waters of the rapidly rolling stream. Running upon hidden rocks, snags, etc. Frost, still remaining in Danby as a venerated survivor of the days of , came to the town with his family on the 14th of July in that year and located a home in the woods on section 11, where he now lives upon a handsome farm of one hundred and sixty acres. Brooks on section 3, and Asher Kilburn on section 8. Schoff came in doubtless sometime early in Abbey, on the southeast quarter of section 1. Davis, now a farmer on section 3 and one of the early comers to Portland, where he took a hand in the pioneer saw-mill business. He traveled over the so-called Grand River turnpike, but so vague a highway was it that he could not always trace its course and frequently lost his way. Potter, and the Barnards. For about ten years after the arrival of Mr. Frost there were, however, but few additions to the settlement in his vicinity. They lived long in the wilderness, and saw few faces except those of Indians or heard few sounds save the howls of hungry wolves. Frost has lived in Danby from to the present time, except for the space of four years, when, from to , he was county treasurer. Among the early settlers south of the river were John D. Brown and Nathan H. Wyman who came in from Indiana with ox-teams , James D. Off in the northwest corner of the town the first settlement was made in by Reuben Hopkins, who remarks that he found things "pretty wild" thereabout at that particular period, and, indeed, for some time afterwards. His first neighbors in that part of the town were William Hogle, Orrin Merchant, and Edward Sanborn, who were not long after Hopkins in making their clearings. Those living in the north were especially fortunate in being able to get to mill without much trouble, and, what made matters still more agreeable in that direction, Willard Brooks and A. Bell laid a road about from Portland up by the Brooks settlement, and so on to the river. Settlers on the south side of the stream had, however, to take the river as their highway to mill, and not infrequently would hitch a pair of oxen to a canoe and drive overland through the woods with a grist. The first birth in Danby was that of Jane E. She was born April 30, , and lives now in Eaton County as Mrs. The second birth appears to have been that of Charles Brooks, Aug. It is, however, strongly probable that the first death was that of Martha, daughter of William Cronkrite. The date of Mrs. She was but five years of age, and was burned to death at a flaming brush-heap near which she was playing. It is related that the first man buried in the town was William Cummings, and that when he was lowered into the grave whither he was conveyed on an ox-sled the only halter the settlement owned was brought into requisition as the best substitute for a needed rope. The town records show that the cemetery on section 28 was bought of Horace F. Peake, March 7, , and that the first sexton appointed was John Rice. The first post-office established in Danby was Danby post-office, about John Compton was appointed the first postmaster, and remained in charge for about twenty years thereafter, except for the space of two years, when John T. Cahoon, living a mile east of Compton, was the incumbent. David, John Hovey, and Samuel F. David, the present incumbent. Mail is now received tri-weekly from Portland. They raised corn and were particularly busy in the spring at sugar-making, but beyond those pursuits they cared not to pursue the subject of labor. Their tom-tom dances lasted generally two or three days, and as they succeeded in making a good deal of noise, and grew noisier and drunker as the ceremonies progressed, the whites used to get just a little nervous for fear the drunken orgies might result in a desire for a quarrel with the settlers. Happily the savages confined their demonstrations to the limits of their village, and at no time manifested an inclination to harm their pale-faced neighbors. There was a graveyard at the village on section 22, and until a few years ago traces of the burial-places could be seen, but now no sign

marks the spot. The Indians cultivated quite a patch of land on the river bottom in section 22, and got along, after Indian fashion, until about , when Manasseh Hickey, a Methodist missionary, ventured among them in the hope that he might do something towards converting them to Christianity. At the time of his coming the savages were passing through one of their periodical drunken carousals, and were at first inclined to resent his appearance with violence. Seeing that it would not be policy to press himself upon them at that time, Hickey retired, leaving with them, however, the interpreters he brought with him, Joseph and Mary his wife. The interpreters so mollified the Indians that they consented to have Hickey preach to them, and he, returning at summons, delivered, through his interpreter, a sermon that pleased his dusky auditors so well they besought him to come again. Thus the missionary work among the Indians was begun with a promise of encouragement. John Compton took a hand also in the work and assisted Hickey in preaching, while the interpreters Mary and Joseph inaugurated school-teaching among them. Seed being thus sown and a harvest promised, Hickey persuaded the Indians to make an effort to become bona fide settlers and husbandmen, in imitation of the white people; in other words, he proposed to civilize them. They therefore empowered Hickey to buy land for them, and he made at once a purchase of Mr. Fitch, of Portland, of one hundred and eight acres in the bend of the river on section 21, the property now known as the Ingalls farm. The land was laid out into twenty lots and the Indians applied themselves forthwith to the business of making clearings, building log houses, and tilling the soil. The village took on the name of Mishshiminecon, in remembrance of the old village on section 22, and as time passed by the savages gravitated slowly into a civilized existence, dressed and lived like white folks, and followed the pursuits of agriculture with considerable zeal and a remarkable industry. Shortly after locating them in their new village, Hickey who exhibited, by the way, a remarkable spirit in converting the Indians obtained some financial assistance from a benevolent lady living in New York for the purpose of erecting a mission-house. For this house John Compton selected the logs and hauled the first load of lumber, the sawing being done at the Sebewa mill. The house was divided into two apartments, in one of which school and church services were held, while the other served as the residence of the teacher or the missionary. The first school in the mission-house was taught by John Compton, who was also their preacher from time to time during their stay there, and came to be regarded by them eventually as their spiritual leader. They took kindly to school and church, and betrayed upon frequent occasions a religious fervor and enthusiasm seldom equaled by white people. Compton taught for them in early spring, and although he had to cross the river every day to teach, and once when the river was full of running ice, he was so prompt in his attendance that the Indians bestowed upon him the name of Te-cum-a-gaw-shee meaning "wade through the river". After a while Manasseh Hickey, being called to newer fields of labor, was succeeded as missionary by Rev. White, who during his residence there lived in the mission-house. While he lived there his wife died, and he married a young lady then engaged as Indian teacher. Her name cannot be recalled. Presently there was more demand for church and school room, and so a new school-building and church-edifice were erected. Shaw preached the dedicatory sermon in the new church, and of that circumstance it is related that, in the glow of enthusiasm, he made too wide a swing with his left arm and knocked one of the pulpit lamps from its place to the floor.

Chapter 3 : History of Ionia County, Michigan

The Ionia County Historical Society was formed in with the primary purpose of purchasing, restoring, and preserving the John C. Blanchard House, but the charter for the organization also included the broader mission to preserve artifacts and documents that represented the general history of the wider community.

In presenting this work to the large number of citizens who have subscribed for it throughout the county, the publisher confesses to a certain degree of pride in the short space of time in which so extensive a work has been compiled, the great amount of information which it contains, its neat typographical appearance, and substantial binding. Still, he is by no means, blind to its defects. In gathering and arranging nearly seven thousand and five hundred proper names, there have doubtless been some mistakes and omissions, incident to all works of this character. In collecting the historical matter, great pains was taken to obtain the most reliable information, yet the compilers were of course restricted in most cases to the facts furnished them by the early settlers still living, and may have been misled in some instances. The history of Ionia was written by Mason Hearsey, Esq. Jones Lafayette, physician, Pewamo Oscar, general agency, Ionia Representative, 1st District, Representative, 2d District, Sheriff, HIS county was organized in , and the first election was held in April of that year. The total number of votes cast at this election was , and the following named officers were elected: Morrison; Judge of Probate-Wm. Mann; Coroners-Philo Bogue and Thaddeus O. The county at that time comprised but two townships: Ionia and Maple; the latter now divided into several townships and the name no longer retained. In there were three additional townships organized: Portland, Boston, and Otisco. The total number of votes cast was In there were votes cast, and in , According to the census of , Ionia County numbered 7, inhabitants, and ranked as the twentieth county in the State in population. In it had 16, inhabitants and ranked as the nineteenth. In it had 27, inhabitants, and ranked as the sixteenth. A short branch extends from the D. There are five weekly newspapers published in tie county: The last named is printed at Muir. The Ionia County Agricultural Society has held sixteen annual fairs. Its grounds are located adjoining the village of Ionia, and comprise 20 acres of land on the bank of the Grand River. The race-track, half a mile in length, is one of the best in the State. The officers in are: Kelsey of Berlin, President; W. Arnold of Ionia, Secretary; and James W. Loomis of Berlin, Treasurer. The company has issued 3, policies, and its present membership is 2, The company is restricted in its field of operations to this county, where each member may exercise his right in the election of officers, determining all expenditures, auditing accounts, and correcting any imperfections in its charter and by-laws. The present officers of the company are: Stannard, Jerry Spaulding, Willard Iawley. On section twenty-three in the township of Ionia is a ledge of red sandstone which has been worked for several years. It is of large extent and virtually inexhaustible. The only quarry now opened is owned and operated by K. Woodward, who is selling large quantities in all parts of the State. It is unsurpassed in beauty by any sandstone in the west, as will be acknowledged by all who have seen the two Methodist churches, the Congregational church, the new Baptist church, Mr. In the autumn of the previous year Hon. Samuel Dexter, then a resident of Herkimer County, N. Being pleased with the northwest quartr of section nineteen, town seven north, range six west, in Ionia County, he entered the same at the land office, then at Kalamazoo, and returning to Herkimer County, devoted the winter to preparing himself and family for emigration in the spring, and in persuading others to join in the enterprise. The company consisted of sixty-two persons. In this manner they left the vicinity of Little Falls at the opening of navigation, bound for an unbroken wilderness more than a hundred miles beyond the extreme western border of civilization. To many of their old neighbors and friends such an undertaking seemed like one of not only extreme folly, but of great danger to health and life, and a sure precursor to financial ruin! But the subject had been well considered, the toils, privations and dangers all contemplated, and the resolution deliberately taken; and although the breaking up of old associations, the parting with neighbors and friends and the abandoning of old homesteads were severe trials, they were bravely met. Dexter, but several of the other men of his company were well known for many miles along the canal, and their enterprise had become known for a considerable distance, so that for the first day or two they found the villages and landing-places along their route in many places crowded with friends and acquaintances who

had come to take a last look and say a last parting word, and among them many strangers whose curiosity had been excited to have a look at a company who possessed the hardihood to actually enter upon such an undertaking. For a while the song of " Michigania " answered the curiosity of the crowds along the canal, but the excitement of the occasion and the labor of singing becoming too wearisome, our musical friend procured a long board, upon which he wrote with chalk the burden of his song, and attached it to the side of the boat. In this way the colony proceeded to Buffalo, where they dismissed their canal boat, transferring themselves and goods to a steamboat, and arrived without accident at Detroit. But now the real hardships were to begin. Their progress was necessarily slow, and to the women and children, unaccustomed to such hard fare, wild scenes, and severe fatigues, the labors were almost overwhelming. But with very few exceptions their courage and resolution kept them to their work, if not with cheerfulness, at least without murmuring. Nearly two weeks were consumed in the journey from Detroit; and when within about thirty miles of their destination, a child of Mr. During the day the child died. Its remains could not well be carried along, and so a funeral had to be improvised in the wilderness. Among the company a wooden trunk of suitable size was found, which being emptied of its contents, served for a coffin, and there beneath the overshadowing forest, far from human habitation, this child of Christian parents, amidst the prayers and tears of sympathizing friends, was consigned to its last resting-place. I The company moved on, and on the second day arrived at their destination. Yes; but what a home! The earth was there, the grass, the trees, but not a sign of civilization! One hundred and thirty miles from the last house of civilization, six families including more than thirty women and children had found their home! Those who are familiar with the village of Ionia will understand me when I say that an Indian plantation occupied an acre or two of ground on the spot now occupied by the machine shops, and south of there to the border of the prairie. The Indians also had several pretty good wigwams. As they were occupying these grounds only by sufferance, having sold them several years before to the United States Government, they understood it would be necessary to leave whenever the land was wanted for settlement. Although they had planted their grounds to corn, beans, pumpkins, melons, etc. It was the middle of June: Besides, the first care was to prepare more comfortable shelter. The women and children were lodged in the wigwams. The men made shift to occupy the tents, wagons, and such other shelter for sleeping as circumstances and the musquitoes, then very abundant, would permit. I The colony consisted of Mr. Lincoln, then recently commenced practice; one or two unmarried brothers of Mr. Dexter, and several other men whose names are not now recollected. Oliver Arnold, with their families, and Dr. Lincoln remained permanently here; and those of them now living are among the most respectable and respected people of this place. The first thing to be provided for was shelter. Two log houses were immediately commenced; one for Mr. Dexter stood on the spot now occupied by J. Winsor, in the eastern part of the village near the present residence of D. As soon as Mr. Ycomans could go to Kalamazoo and take up the necessary land, a house was commenced for him. This difficulty was remedied, however, the next season, II. Libhart completing a saw-mill near Lyons the next summer, and Mr. Dexter building another about two and a half miles west of the settlement the same year. But the supply of food during the winter and spring following became a serious question. In November of the same year a considerable accession to the settlement was made by the arrival of the Cornell family, consisting of four men, six women, and two children. The scarcity of accommodations and the lateness of the season prompted the men of the place to immediate action, and as soon as the land could be secured they all turned out to help, and in two weeks a house for the accommodation of the new comers was as far completed as it could be without sawed lumber. It was occupied by the family about the first of December, bed-quilts and blankets supplying the place of doors and windows. Late in the autumn a man who had just made a settlement at Lyons, came to Ionia and proposed to supply the people with pork, flour, and such other articles of provision as were indispensable, to be brought in from Detroit early in the winter. To this proposition the people readily assented, as many of them had neither time nor means of transportation to procure such articles themselves. The Cornells had brought with them as far as Detroit a considerable stock of supplies, but had not sufficient means of transportation to bring through any more than a temporary supply. Except a little cold, rough weather in the middle and latter part of November, the fall and winter was remarkably mild. As soon as the Cornell family got settled and a shelter, they commenced preparations for getting their supplies from

Detroit. A couple of ox-sleds were constructed, and such other preparations made as were deemed necessary, and the cold weather and snow, so necessary to their use, were eagerly looked for. But they did not come. Day after day and week after week passed by, and still the mild Indian summer continued. At length, about the middle of January, it became a little colder; it froze nights. The river, which must be crossed at the very outset, became frozen across, but so thin a sheet as scarcely to bear a man. Night after night for nearly two weeks the men walked about four miles to a suitable place, and labored several hours in carrying water in pails and pouring it on the ice that it might freeze and strengthen it for crossing. At length Providence favored them with a fall of snow, and the journey was commenced.

Chapter 4 : Research - Ionia County Historical Society

The First Settlement of Ionia: Article by Palmer H. Taylor from City of Ionia History [pdf] Article from The Settlement of Ionia, Mich. by Samuel Dexter: Full text of book available. History and directory of Ionia County, Michigan () Full text of book available. History of Ionia and Montcalm counties, Michigan () Full text of book available.

Kellogg Foundation engaged in an effort to: The result of that collaborative effort was the Kellogg Challenge. For every two dollars raised by a community foundation for its permanent endowment, the Kellogg Foundation would match it with one dollar for a permanently endowed Youth fund. Funding recommendations for grants made from this Youth Fund were to be made by young people from the community; these became known as Youth Advisory Committees, or YACs. The youth involved are referred to as YACers. The Kellogg Challenge took place between and and was administered by the Council of Michigan foundations. More than a decade later, these four goals still describe what a YAC does: Assess youth needs and priorities: YACs identify key issues and priorities for youth in the community. Using knowledge of youth needs and priorities, YACs make funding recommendations for distributing grant funds from the endowed Youth Fund. YACers raise funds to increase the endowed Youth Fund. Involve others in leadership, volunteerism and philanthropy: As appropriate in each community, YACs advocate for local youth, promote positive youth action or do community service. What Makes YAC unique? At the core of the YAC experience is youth self-determination. High school students are just beginning to make important decisions independently. They have very limited experience calling the shots in their own lives. A whole new world is opening up to them and the opportunities are seemingly endless. They are stretching their wings for the first timeâ€but they are inexperienced. But that is what YAC is all about â€ giving young people an opportunity to experience giving, so they will know how to do it for the rest of their lives. YAC also helps youth learn to prioritize, budget, think critically and follow committee processes. Get Social With Us!

Chapter 5 : Ionia: Prison History – Michigan History

Town 5 north, in range 5 west, known as Danby, occupies the southeast corner of Ionia County, having Portland township on the north, Eaton County on the south, Clinton County on the east, and Sebewa township on the west. The surface of the country is undulating and the soil mainly a sandy loam. The.

Branch pages Township 8 north, in range 7 west, was included within Ionia township until March 25, , when it was organized by the Legislature as the township of Orleans and the first meeting ordered to be held at the house of Ira Wheeler. The meeting called for the purpose of naming the town was held at the house of E. Post, and among the names proposed those of Wheatland and Dover appeared to meet with the most favor, the former especially. It would have been adopted, but the discovery that there was another Wheatland in the state caused it to be set aside by the legislative representative of the district, and the substitution by him or somebody else of Orleans, doubtless from Orleans, New York. It seems that some of the folks in the western portion of the town thought Wheatland ought to be the name because they raised buckwheat, and indeed did call it Wheatland before the town was organized. When they gave their reasons for wanting that name adopted, Daniel Hoyt, always keenly alive to a sense of the ridiculous, exclaimed "What not call it Buckwheatland? King and Jessie Wood, justices of the peace, were present as inspectors of election, and they with Milo K. Cody, David Courter and Garrett Snediker constituted the board of inspectors. Jesse Wood was chosen moderator and Albert Dorr. Forty-one votes were cast and officials were chosen as follows: King; clerk, Seneca H. Green; constables, Samuel T. Kidd and Isaac Harwood; overseers of the poor, Joel C. Green and Jesse Wood; pathmaster, Milo K. Upon the license question, the vote against the license was twenty-six to thirteen; at the next annual township meeting, the vote was in favor by twenty-eight to fifteen. In common with the lands of Keen and Otisco townships, those in Orleans were not put upon the market until August, , but lands were preempted and settlements effected more than a year before that date. Whatever distinction can attach to the first settler in the town is due now, by the way of remembrance, to Guy Webster, of Ohio, who, then living on a farm in Lorain county, came out to Ionia county in the winter of on a tour of inspection, and fancying the lay of the land upon section 36 in Orleans township preempted a tract, returned to Ohio and at once began preparations for the removal of his family and goods to Michigan. He hired a young man by the name of William Henry Harrison Sutcliffe to help him over the journey, and all hands set out with two pairs of oxen, one horse and a lumber wagon packed with goods. Loren Sprague of Ronald. Webster raised his log cabin he had besides that of Sutcliffe the assistance of Joshua S. Hall and Stephen Starks, two young men then just making a start in the woods in Ionia township near the northern township line. The floor of that cabin was not what in this latter day would be called a stylish affair. It was in short a "split" floor, and when Mr. Webster got enough of it laid to put a bedstead on he sent for his wife, who had thus far remained in Ionia in attendance upon her sick daughter, to come and help them keep house. When Webster came to Orleans he brought a barrel of appleseed and planted the first orchard in the town, from which he was ultimately enabled to supply his neighbors with the stock for the foundation of other orchards. Guy Webster died in , and his widow who lived with her daughter, Mrs. Loren Sprague, during the latter years of her life, died in at the age of eighty-four. As to Sutcliffe, who worked for Mr. After a stay of ten years he left the community. Joseph Collins, the second settler in Orleans township, settled on the northwest quarter of section 18 in May, , but did not appear to make much of an effort towards improving the place. The very good reason for such lack of effort was that Collins was too poor to buy any land, and he knew that what improvements he might make he would have to give up just as soon as the land was sold. So he lived in a log shanty, raised barely enough to live on and made up his mind to live there until the purchaser of the land should put him off. He did not have to wait very long for that performance to take place, and then, like a philosopher, he went somewhere else. By some good fortune he got somebody to help him to a small tract of land in Otisco and there he lived until his death in Collins was not especially distinguished for his pioneer performances in Orleans, his log shanty in that town became the locale of two interesting historic events-the first wedding and the first death known in that town. The wedding was a double marriage in which the brides were Lois and Sallie, daughters of Joseph

Collins, and the bridegrooms William G. Bradish and Hiram Baxter, of Otisco. Squire Thomas Cornell, of Ionia, tied the knots, and of course there was a generally happy time although the Collins mansion was not precisely of the kind adapted to a very brilliant display in the way of marriage festivities. The weddings took place in the summer of , and late that year Joseph Collins, Jr. He was buried at Otisco. Broas pushed on and eventually located at the place now called Belding in Otisco. Higbee decided to locate in Orleans and preempted four lots of eighty acres each in section 36, where his son John later lived. The next arrival in that neighborhood was the Rev. Archibald Sangster, an alleged Baptist clergyman. He had but recently come to America from England, preached a year at Ionia and in After assuming the role of pioneer he preached occasionally here and there, but as a minister of the gospel did not cut much of a figure. His religious belief was a little shaky at times, and for that reason possibly his influence was not quite so powerful as it might or should have been. John Higbee said he called on him one day and found the parson apparently disturbed in his mind: Higbee happened at a meeting where Sangster preached, and after service asked him whether he had satisfied himself as to the future. After he left Orleans he returned to California. To him is ascribed the honor of having built, in , the first frame house in Orleans, the lumber having been obtained at the Dickinson mill in Otisco. The first frame barn in the town was built shortly afterwards by Guy Webster. Speaking about John Higbee it may be remarked that in his day he was a famous hunter. Hundreds of deer had fallen beneath his unerring aim, and when he could not kill four a day he concluded the day was a bad one for deer hunting. He was likewise a sharp one after wolves, for the bounty, which at one time was as high as eighty dollars, was a big inducement. It was said that while Higbee was in the wolf-catching business he made money faster than any man in the town. In Daniel Hoyt came to Michigan from New York state, and settling upon section 21 in Otisco, made a clearing and put in a crop of wheat. He made no attempt at a settlement there however, living meanwhile at the house of Philo Bates near Ionia. As he journeyed from time to time between his Otisco clearing and Ionia he passed by the land on which he later lived, and despite the fact that there seemed to be a general desire on the part of everybody coming out that way to settle near the Flat river, he made up his mind to buy some land in the town of Belding. He selected eighty acres on section 21, and at the land sale August 5, , he bought the tract, that being the first land in Orleans sold at that sale. Hoyt bought his land and announced his intention to occupy it, at once those at the land sale already living in that part of Orleans fairly shouted with joy at the prospect of getting a new neighbor. The persons referred to as already living in that vicinity were Asa Palmer, Lorenzo D. Bates and Joseph Collins. Palmer moved to section 21, and there resided until his death. In he joined with his brother Charles in the erection of the first saw-mill in the town, on Long Lake creek, in section 5, and before completing the enterprise added also as partners, Hiram Hall and Robert Howe. Spencer bought the property and added a gristmill. Among the settlers of was Chester Scofield, who, coming from Ohio near where Guy Webster had lived, bought some land of Webster in Orleans township, as did also John Frost, who came about the same time. Nathan Redington and Deacon Pierce came from Lorain county, Ohio, in , with a pair of horses and a yoke of oxen and settled in Ionia county Redington on section 24 in Orleans and Pierce on section 30 in Ronald. Before that John Ditmars, son-in-law of Erastus Higbee, located on section 25, where he lived about twenty years and then removed to Kansas, where he died. On section 25 Joseph Carev also located in , and about a year after Marvil Haight occupied some land in section 36 that belonged to his son-in-law Joshua Hall. Jesse Wood came from New York state about , and after living a brief period with his son William, in Ronald, settled on a farm in Orleans, on section In he came back to Ionia county with D. Hurd and the two made land purchases on section 15 in Orleans. Buzzard worked for Hurd a year and then occupied his own land. Buzzard had a narrow escape from death in , as did his companion on that occasion, E. Post, both of them having gone out on Long lake on a fishing excursion, Long lake being at that time a famous place for fish. While they were out a storm of violent fury came upon them, and before they fairly knew what had happened their canoe capsized and they were thrown into the water. Although the wind blew almost a hurricane and the waves dashed about madly, the unfortunate fishermen managed by heroic and desperate efforts to cling to the bottom of their upturned craft, and half dead with cold and exertion reached shore at last in safety. It was a terrible experience, however, and one that neither forgot to his dying day. In James Kidd located four hundred and forty, acres of land in Orleans township for his father, William R. In the

Orleans settlers included Edmund B. Green, to section Richard Hill, to section 3; Isaac Harwood. Cody, to the Face farm, on section David Courter, to section 17, and Richard Hale, to section Gould, section 16; James C. Beach, section 28; Seneca H. King, section 20; Lewis J. Holcomb, section 19; Charles Chadwick, section 8, and Hiram Hall, section Elder Robert Howe, Frank Olmstead and Erastus Sherwood were likewise among the comers of , the last selling out in two years to Joseph Baldwin and returning to Oakland county. In the northwestern corner of the town there was a community of English or Canadian settlers among whom were the Bradleys, Neeps, Chadwicks and Autcliffs. Near Long lake, where Hiram Hall and T. Heald built a saw-mill in , the early settlers were Theodore Leach, J. Among other early settlers in the Southwestern corner of the town were Samuel Woolridge, E. Benedict, Gilbert King, A. Smith and Abraham Alderman. The last mentioned settled in North Plains in Lambertson; , Loren C. Hall, ; Alfred A.

Chapter 6 : Welcome - Become a Member | Ionia County Historical Society

History of Ionia County, Michigan: Her People, Industries and Institutions, with Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens, and Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families, Volume 1 History of Ionia County, Michigan: Her People, Industries and Institutions, with Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens, and Genealogical.

A province in Greece Set Off: Navigational buttons are located only at the end of the list. Be sure to check with us for any additional items we may now have either by contacting the library or by pressing the "Centra-Libraries Catalog" link to the left. Indians, Saw Mills, and Danes: June 14, June 12, March 18, December 31, Silk Culture, and Manufacturing Shown Progressively. June 19, May 4, February 2, December 26, History of Ionia County, Michigan: Her People, Industries and Institutions. Broken Ties, the Scrapbooks of Bessie Townsend. Star Job Print, Centennial of the Village of Pewamo, Michigan. July 25, to July 24, Pewamo Centennial Committee, []. City of Ionia, Michigan. Hubbardston Anniversary Committee,]. History and Directory of Ionia County, Michigan: Containing a History of Each Township. Memorials of the Grand River Valley. Chicago Legal News Company, History and Directory, Village of Saranac, October 2, July 20, January 2, April 14, Ionia, Michigan Centennial, April 17, December 31, ; January 2, December 31, March 13, January 28, ; January 1, December 27, January 4-December 27, June 10, December 24, July 26, December 25, ; September 9, December 29, January 7, September 2, What, Why, and When. CMU Term Paper, One of the Beauty Spots of Michigan. Portland Area Centennial,]. History of the Church of Christ, Ionia, Saranac Area Centennial, History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties, Michigan. The Settlement of Ionia, Michigan. Souvenir, City of Belding, Michigan. Souvenir, City of Ionia, Michigan, Early History of South Boston.

Chapter 7 : Ionia, Michigan - Wikipedia

Town 6 north, range 5 west, in the government survey, is now known as Portland township, having as boundaries Lyons township on the north, Danby on the south, Clinton County on the east, and Orange township on the west.

Chapter 8 : Ionia County | Central Michigan University

Book digitized by Google from the library of the University of Michigan and uploaded to the Internet Archive by user tpb.

Chapter 9 : Ionia County MIGenWeb Ionia History

Native American Indians In Michigan School records, census data, church records, land claims, annuities, history, etc. Durant Roll Chippewa and Ottawa of Michigan & Towns, villages, etc. in Ionia County: Townships in Ionia County: Michigan Men on the Sultana Many Michigan men were on the Sultana when it exploded in April