

LANDMARKS OF LENAWEE COUNTY¹

BY MRS. FRANK P. DODGE

This little paper will be neither logical nor statistical, but what one of my good pioneer neighbors used to call, "Little Reminiscences of a Back Past."

The first mention of the laying out, naming and defining the boundaries of Lenawee County is to be found in a proclamation of Gen. Cass, dated September 10, 1822. Several new counties were laid out at this time, and until they should be properly organized, each was attached to some county already organized, and it fell to the lot of Lenawee² to be attached to Monroe. That first description included within the boundaries of Lenawee, the present counties of Hillsdale, Branch, St. Joseph, Cass and Berrien. The present boundaries of Lenawee were defined in 1829, I think. It is rather interesting to note that in a proclamation of 1826, mention is made of land to be attached to Lenawee County, as being territory to which the Indian title was extinguished by the treaty of Chicago,³ and in a later legislative act, 1829, Indian country, newly acquired by treaty held at the Cary Mission, was attached to Lenawee County. Thus we see that much of our fair county came to us directly from the Indians, and it seems singularly appropriate that its name, Lenawee,⁴ a Shawnee word, should signify *Indian*.

The United States Land Office for the sale of Lenawee County lands was opened at Monroe in 1823, and the first land taken up was by Austin E. Wing of Monroe. Musgrove Evans,⁵ a surveyor, came to Michigan from New York State that year, intending to engage in the

¹Read at annual meeting, June 8, 1910.

²Lenawee County was detached from Monroe, Dec. 31, 1826.

³Chicago Treaty, August 29th, 1821.

⁴Lenawee meaning. See paper by Mr. Jenks on the origin of names of counties of Michigan, this volume.

⁵The first settlement was made at Tecumseh, May 21, 1824. The first settlers were Musgrove Evans, wife and five children, Joseph W. Brown, Ezra F. Blood, Nathan Rathburn, Peter Lowe, Peter Benson and wife, Simon Sloate, John Borland, Capt. Peter Ingals, John Fulsom, James Young, George Spofford, Curtis Page and Levi Baxter. Turner Stetson and his wife who had come from Boston joined the party at Detroit. See *Illustrated History and Biographical Record of Lenawee County* by Knapp and Bonner, p. 11.

survey of public lands then being made and to look for a suitable location. At Detroit he met Mr. Wing who told him of the fine water power and beautiful country in southern Michigan. They accordingly explored the valley of the River Raisin, and selected the spot where Tecumseh now stands. The location was ideal, fine water power, and a beautiful open prairie country with fertile soil, timber within easy reach was abundant. All that remained was to find a miller and a farmer.

Mr. Wing had political ambitions and wished to go to Congress. Even in those days, politicians were not wholly disinterested, and Mr. Wing is credited with the following remark: "If we go into milling and farming, and establish a mill, settlers will know that I am interested, and will vote to send me to Congress. If I am elected, with the aid of Gen. Jacob Brown (Commander-in-chief of the U. S. Army), you can be appointed government surveyor." It was then decided to go back to New York and interest Joseph W. Brown (a brother of Gen. Brown) who was both a miller and a farmer. Mr. Brown looked with favor upon the enterprise and the co-partnership of Wing, Evans and Brown was formed for the enterprise. It is interesting to note in passing, that Mr. Wing's political ambitions were fulfilled to the letter, he went to Congress and Mr. Evans was made a government surveyor.

Early in the spring of 1824, Musgrove Evans with his wife and five children, Joseph W. Brown, and thirteen others, started from Jefferson County, New York, for Detroit. They passed up Lake Ontario and Niagara River to Black Rock, there joined a party from Buffalo and chartered the schooner Erie, ascended Lake Erie and reached Detroit in April, 1824. Here the families were left while the men with a French guide and a pony to carry luggage started through the woods on foot, following an Indian trail. The desirable water power before mentioned, determined the location at Tecumseh and here Musgrove Evans brought his family June 2, 1824. The people of Tecumseh, holding in loving remembrance the founders of their town, last year, June 2, (1909), placed a boulder on the site of that first house in Lenawee County. That boulder bears not only the name of the man who built that first house, but also that of the woman who made of that first house a home, and surely this pioneer mother had no small share in the settlement of Lenawee County. The first hastily constructed log-house had no chimney nor fireplace. The cooking fire was built upon the ground in the center of the house, the smoke going out of a hole in the roof, wind and weather permitting. With this primitive fire and a bake kettle for an oven, Mrs. Evans prepared food for her own family, the workmen in her husband's employ and chance comers and goers,

an average family of fifteen or twenty persons.⁶ Mr. Brown brought his wife and five children in the autumn and they were also joined by Mr. and Mrs. George Spofford. A bedroom, chimney and fireplace were added to the original house, and there these nineteen people spent the winter together. Even amidst the hardships of that first winter, the education of the children was not forgotten. A building of tanbark and poles was erected for a schoolhouse, and Mrs. George Spofford taught that winter, being the first to teach in the county. The next year Mr. Brown built the first frame house. It was an edifice with some pretensions to size and style, and besides the family apartments, had others for the use of transients. Thus was opened the first and only public house in the Territory west of Monroe.

In the meantime Tecumseh had been platted as a village, named and made the county seat.⁷ A sawmill⁸ was built and a store opened. Mr. Evans called the settlement Tecumseh, after the famous Shawnese chief, of that name, who, tradition says often visited that locality and sat in council around the fires of the resident tribes. An objection was raised on the ground that Tecumseh was a British Indian, and fought for the British. Friend Musgrove Evans replied, "Thou is mistaken, Tecumseh fought on his own account, and for his own people, Tecumseh was Nature's Indian," and thus the matter was settled. Historians describe this great chief Tecumseh as possessed of a noble figure, a countenance expressive of magnanimity and of moral traits far above his race, a warrior in the broadest Indian sense. He disdained to wear the personal adornments affected by his people, and although holding rank as brigadier-general in the British service adhered to his Indian dress of deerskin coat and leggins. I have stood in Tecumseh Park, Chatham, Ont., and gazed upon the spot where this great chief fell, dying; on the walls of one of Tecumseh's beautiful homes in the place of honor I have looked upon the British flag in which he was wrapped and have been taken in a canoe up the Thames River to his last resting place. These monuments to his memory have stirred within me emotions of veneration and awe. Here was a noble red man, his name and fame have outlived those of many a white man, who came into the new country, made for himself a home, and then passed on leaving no record of his life and work.

I must not pass on without making some special mention of Gen. Joseph W. Brown. He seems to have been a man of initiative and a

⁶See *Early Hist. of Lenawee County*, by Alfred L. Millard, 1876, as by recommendation of President and Governors for Centennial Anniversary, p. 9.

⁷When Tecumseh was chosen as the county seat by legislative act, June 30, 1824, Mr. Wing swung his hat with such vigor that nothing remained of it but a piece of the brim about the size of a dollar.

⁸A gristmill was built in 1836 and the stones were made by Sylvester Blackmar, a miller, from a rock found near the mill site.

natural leader of men. He built the first gristmill and sawmill in the county, established the first stage mail route between Detroit and Chicago; did the first farming, and ground the first wheat, built the first frame house, and ploughed the first furrow in Lenawee County. Although of Quaker descent, he had a natural aptitude and taste for military life and tactics, and was appointed by President Jackson, first a colonel and later a brigadier-general⁹ of Michigan militia and by virtue of these commissions acted as commander-in-chief of the Michigan troops called out in the Black Hawk War, 1832, and the Toledo War 1835.

A second settlement was made in Lenawee County by Harvey Bliss, at Blissfield, the year following the settlement of Tecumseh. (His picture can be seen in the portraits of pioneers in the museum at Lansing.) In the same year, Darius Comstock, whose son Addison J. afterward became the founder of Adrian, came from New York State, and took up quite a tract of land south of Tecumseh. In the winter following, Gen. Brown writing back to his mother in the old home said, "The D. Comstock that I mention, is a Friend of a large fortune, and much of a gentleman. His place he calls 'Pleasant Valley.' It is four miles south of us through an open country where you may drive a post coach without cutting a tree. He has a large fine family. A Friend has bought near him, and they bid fair to have a large Friend's settlement." This prophecy was fulfilled, a Quaker Church was built, and that valley to this day is known as the Quaker Valley. As a child I remember seeing the fair of the sect who clung to the Quaker garb, drive into Adrian on a Saturday in the quaint old carry-alls, the elder women in the soft dove-colored gowns and shawls, the quaint bonnet, framing the sweetly placid faces. This Quaker Valley has always held a fascination for me as I drive past its prosperous farms. I always think of it as the "*Peaceful Valley*," it seems so remote from the strife of the busy world. I love to wander through its grass-grown burying ground. In the older part all were buried in rows, no separation into family groups, no pretentious monuments, only a wee moss-covered marker; all here were equal, all were Friends. In one of these old time rows, I found the resting place of my own Quaker ancestress from the Neuer family home in Hillsdale County. She came to visit among the Friends of the Valley, and spent her last days enjoying the privileges of her church. Indeed they tell me that she was quite gifted in speech, and was often moved by the spirit to bear witness to the

⁹See *Illustrated History and Biographical Record of Lenawee Co.* by Knapp and Bonner, pp. 66-8. Brown had been commissioned April 21, 1831, brigadier-general of the Third Brigade of Michigan. During the Black Hawk war John R. Williams was major-general of the troops in Michigan. See Vol. XXXI, this series.

glory of God. In this peaceful spot also rests the earthly body of a noble woman whose good works extended beyond Lenawee County and beyond Michigan, Aunt Laura Haviland.¹⁰ I do not need to tell you of her work as a nurse in the Civil War, or as a conductor of the Underground Railroad. Many freedmen were brought to the Quaker Valley, many more found refuge in Canada. Nor did her good work end with the abolition of slavery. In her home in the Valley, she established a freedman's home and school. Gradually were gathered all homeless waifs who came to her knowledge, irrespective of color, and from this Haviland Home, and largely through her influence grew our own State Public School at Coldwater. It has been the privilege of the people of Lenawee County to erect at Adrian in her memory a drinking fountain and over this fountain presides the effigy of the quaint little Quaker lady herself, seated in state, clad in bonnet and shawl, her benign countenance keeps guard over all.

Addison J. Comstock,¹¹ the son of Darius Comstock, built the first house in Adrian, and thither brought his bride, August, 1826. The house stood in a beautiful oak grove on the bank of the River Raisin. Nearby Mr. Comstock had already built a sawmill. Two years later he laid out and platted the village of Adrian. The plot contained forty-nine lots which seemed to the founders, sufficient for all time to come. The locality had previously been called Logan, but Mrs. Comstock now christened it Adrian for the Roman Emperor. Their son born August, 1827, was the first white child born in Adrian and the infant's death the following October was the first death. The child was buried in a plat of ground subsequently given by Mr. Comstock to the city for a burying ground, but as the city grew up around it, its use was discontinued and some years ago it was converted into a park; but I can still remember the fearsome awe with which we, as children, would on a bright sunshiny day, venture to wander through the tangled grass and wild flowers and decipher the quaint old epitaphs upon the crumbling stones.

These early days were not without their days of relaxation—one came

¹⁰Aunt Laura Haviland, daughter of Daniel and Sene Smith, was born at Kitley, Ontario, Canada, Dec. 20, 1808. Her father, a native of New York State, was an approved minister in the Society of the Friends. She married Charles Haviland, Jr., in 1825 and came with two children to Lenawee County in 1829. She was one of the organizers of the Abolition Society in the 30's and was so active in her work that slave interests in the south offered a reward of \$3,000 for her dead or alive. She died at the home of her brother, Rev. Samuel B. Smith of Grand Rapids, Mich., April 20, 1898. See sketch in *Illustrated History and Biographical Record of Lenawee Co., Mich.*, by Knapp and Bonner, pp. 70-2.

¹¹Mr. Comstock was the first postmaster at Adrian, his salary consisting of the revenue coming from the route from Adrian to Monroe. The first quarter's receipts were \$8.60% and netted the postmaster over office expenses 90% cents. Even then the postmaster took advantage of ox teams which took five days for the trip. *Hist. of Lenawee County*, by A. L. Millard, pp. 13, 14.

with the first 4th of July celebration in 1828. A large crowd of thirty or forty persons was assembled amid the roar of an anvil. Mr. Comstock read the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Ormsby, the first doctor in Adrian, delivered an oration, then the marshal of the day led the procession through the principal streets, overgrown with hazel brush to Mr. Comstock's house where the ladies of the village served dinner. Bonfires and a dance ended the festivities of the day. Another great day for Adrian was the celebration in honor of the completion of the Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad¹² to Adrian in 1836. Great was the rejoicing of the people for at last a market was opened direct with Lake Erie and the East. An event long remembered in the little settlement of Palmyra, a few miles east of Adrian, was a visit from Governor Stevens T. Mason; to be sure the visit was accidental, but an event, nevertheless. In 1837, Gov. Mason and party were obliged to spend a Sunday at Palmyra, having missed a connection with the Palmyra and Jacksonburg road, Saturday night. A copy of the Michigan Whig, an Adrian publication, dated August 26, 1840, gives a description of a mass meeting in the Harrison & Tyler presidential campaign with an account of raising the campaign log cabin, the logs for which were drawn from all parts of the county, each township coming with ox team. The township of Fairfield came with the most unique pageant, to quote from the paper, "A Harrison Buggy" constructed in true log cabin style. The first two or three logs mounted on wheels twenty-six feet long. On these a rustic vehicle was constructed which held forty or fifty persons; the whole was drawn by thirty-four yoke of oxen.

The other parts of the county were rapidly settled, but from the time of the settlement of Adrian, a strife grew up between that place and Tecumseh for the first location of the county seat. Tecumseh had to her advantage, two years growth, a larger population, and the possession of the county seat, but the geographical position of Adrian, nearer the center of the county and the completion of the Erie and Kalamazoo River Railroad, decided the question in favor of Adrian and the change took place in 1838. A story is told of a conversation which took place during that time of rivalry, between Darius Comstock and Gen. Brown. Said Mr. Comstock, "Does thee really think, Joseph, that thee has a better place at Tecumseh for the county seat, than we have at Adrian?" "No" said the General "but we have a much better water-power, and we will keep the county seat also, if we can."

One great factor in the settling of the county, particularly the Northern portion, was the opening of the government, or the Chicago Road, or as the old settlers always called it, the Chicago turnpike from Detroit

¹²In 1837 these trains were advertised to run daily between Toledo and Adrian and to connect with stage lines for Michigan, Chicago and Wisconsin Territory. See paper following on location of boulder.

to Chicago, some one who remembered the old days said that during the 30's wagon loads of settlers were constantly passing along the turnpike. This great highway with its stagecoaches was the great link with the outer world, and along it grew up the prosperous farms and substantial buildings. At Clinton one of the old stage houses is still standing on the old Chicago Road. The Woman's Club of Clinton has marked a boulder with the date of the surveying of the road, 1827, and the name of the surveyor. A little later a government road was surveyed from Monroe through Tecumseh to Cambridge township where it joined the Chicago Road. The new road was known as the Monroe Turnpike. In the spring of 1830, the first stage went west from Tecumseh along an independent line from that place to White Pigeon.

The early association of Lenawee County with Monroe County makes the following letter, written from Monroe in February, 1819, of especial interest to us. It was loaned me by a relative of the writer. Its quaint and rather stilted phraseology bears witness of a more leisurely age than ours.

Michigan Territory, Feb. 7th, 1819.

Dear Uncle and Friends:

With pleasure I now improve a few of the fleeting moments allotted me by divine Providence in writing to far distant friends, through the goodness of God we are at present enjoying a tolerable degree of good health, and I hope that these few lines will find you all enjoying the same Blessing.

Our removal to this country was somewhat sudden, therefore we had no opportunity of visiting you before we came. We have a very pleasant country. Although the ways of the inhabitants are not so agreeable, being chiefly French, yet there are many English People daily moving in and the prospect is that many more will move here as soon as the lands are surveyed. The River Raisin on which we live is a beautiful stream of water, about as large again as Mud Creek and abounds with fish of almost every kind. This River lies South of Detroit, about thirty miles, and is navigable at all seasons, about eight miles from its mouth for vessels of about forty Tons Burthen, in the spring and fall it is navigable fifty miles up it. The face of the country is very level for twelve miles up the River, and the timber is chiefly oak and hickory. Above that the land is very different being a great deal higher though not hilly, it is covered with all kinds of timber, such as sugar maple, white maple, white wood, basswood, ash, oak, hickory, black walnut, butternut, Balm of Gilead, mulberry, sycamore and

paupau (paw-paw).¹² There are growing on the bottom lands of the river, five kinds of ash (to-wit) white, black, blue, hoop and prickley ash. The soil of the uplands is of a dark snuff colored loam and that of the bottom land is a black sand and covered with rushes from two to four feet in length, they are uncommonly thick.

The winters are very light, we have not had more than an inch in depth of snow here this winter, and at present there is no frost in the ground. People are all busy about their ploughing. I think I never saw so fine a country for to raise stock, in my life. I imagine there are more than two or three hundred head of cattle in this place that have not seen a lock of hay or a kernel of grain this winter, and they are now good beef. The old inhabitants are a very indolent set of people, the lower class of which depend almost wholly on hunting for their living. Those of a higher class make good dependence on the fur trade with the Indians which is tolerable good at present. Many of the old French settlers have beautiful orchards in which they raise abundance of apples, pears and cherries which fruit is very natural to this country. There are many inconveniences attending new comers into this country, considering the time it has been settled. The French being very jealous of their rights and, likewise very cautious of their dealings with the Yankies, as they call all English people, having been many times cheated by many of them. It is expected that their land will be surveyed and ready for sale in the course of a year. The state price is two dollars per acre. There is no society here at present, except the Roman Catholic. We are in hopes to have a lodge established here shortly, and we have some small hopes of having a minister here next summer. In short if any man has a few extry Dollars by him I think that he cannot do better than to lay them out in this country.

I have nothing more to write at present. Mother, Sally and my wife wishes to be remembered to you all. I should be very happy to receive a letter from any one of you, and I hope that after you receive this that you will oblige us with a line—

Yours

JOSEPH BRADISH.

Addressed to Wm. John Bradish,
Palmyra,

Ontarie Co., New York.

Post Mark New Salem Hills 2/8 (second month, eighth day).

¹²This is variously spelled pa-paw, claiming preference by Webster. paw-paw, better known to us and from which originated the name of the county-seat of Van Buren from the Indian fruit found along the banks of the rivers. See Vol. III, p. 635, this series. The fruit is scientifically called pa-pa-ya.

Eliza Calvert Hall, in her charming, "Aunt Jane of Kentucky," has said of the pioneers, "Did you ever think, how curious it was for them men to leave their homes and risk their own and the lives of their little children and their wives, just to git to a new country? It appears to me they must have been led, just like Columbus was when he crossed the big ocean in his little ships. I reckon of the women and children had had their way about it, the bears and the wildcats and the Indians would be here yet. But a man goes where he pleases and a woman's got to follow." I have often thought the same thing. What could our pioneers ancestors have hoped for. They were prosperous farmers in their pleasant New York state homes, for it was from New York that most of the Lenawee County settlers came, and they could only hope to be prosperous farmers in the new country after years of hardship and toil. Perhaps they *were* "led," as Aunt Jane says, and that this our beautiful Michigan was the promised land; and their star of hope was the long looking into the future, the building of a new state for their children, with the privileges of broader education, and a nobler manhood, and then if the women were loath to come, they had promised to obey and followed where their lords led, not as a clog in the wheel of progress but as a sturdy helpmate. It always brings a tear to my eye when I think of my own pioneer grandmother, who unwilling to overtax the precious teams, walked the five miles through the Black Swamp west of Toledo, and carried her year-old babe in her arms. I don't know how many other miles she walked, but the story of that journey to the promised land says that only "granny," and the three-year-old rode all of the way.

I have as my heritage, many stories of that eventful journey which began in Niagara County, New York, on "May Day," 1835. Twenty-one days later the little caravan reached Madison township, Lenawee county. There were several families in the little company and we can bring to our fancy the pleasure of the first of these twenty-one days together through the older settled Ohio, the out-of-door life, for they drove all the way, in the beautiful spring weather, the stopping at night at the wayside taverns. But as the journey neared its end, the country grew rougher, the roads at times almost impassable, often through that dreadful swamp must the teams be put together to draw a wagon from the mire; the forest grew more dense. The thought of founding a home in that wilderness weighed heavily upon the heart of the mother, but it was "granny," the blessed Quaker grandmother who turning her back upon kindred and friends had joined her fortunes with her children. It was "granny" who was the patron saint of that journey; her placid Quaker calm met all the trials of that journey with a cheerful spirit that gave courage to all. I am not telling this pioneer story because it

is unique, but because it is the pioneer story that I know best of all, and it is really not a Lenawee County story after all, for my grandfather, William Weaver, stayed only one year in Lenawee County, and then went on to the newer Hillsdale County, where government land was still to be had. Hillsdale had only just been separated from Lenawee County, and the pioneer experiences were all pretty much alike. The founding of that new home in the wilderness, is a veritable romance. Tinged with the sentiment of declining years I have often heard its incidents, from first my grandfather and then my father. The latter was but three years old when he made that memorable journey but to his last day he retained a very vivid recollection of it all, and only the charm and fascination of his boyhood life in that new country remained. If there were hardships, time had softened them into pleasures. Nature had provided bountifully for the new comer, but he must help himself. There were whole forests of building material oak, hickory, pine, black-walnut, and the first thought was shelter for the family and the faithful horses. That first house was built without one board or one nail; logs chinked with mud, slabs for flooring, bark for the roof; the chimney built up of stones and topped with sticks. The crowning glory of the house was the fireplace, in the warmest corner of which was granny's chair. That fireplace was the center of social and domestic family life. At night all gathering before its cheerful blaze to hear the news of the day's events. Before that cheerful blaze too, was prepared the family food. Oh, the stores of the good things cooked upon that swinging crane, in that bake kettle; of the bread toasted upon the loaf before the blaze; the potatoes roasted in the ashes; the spareribs dripping in the pan. Often would the stick chimney catch on fire and frighten the children, if father were too far away to be called, but as the last survivor of that memorable migration tells me, "Mother was nimble and could climb pretty well and tear off the top sticks when needed. She was full of resources and so brave always; we children expected she could care for us no matter what happened." As soon as the family was sheltered, ground must be cleared and crops put in. But nature helped to feed the pioneer, the wild strawberry, the whortleberry, the grape, the sap of the maple, and it was a land literally flowing with honey for the youngest lad one day followed a honey bee and all that was necessary was to saw off the tree and carry home the bee hive, and thenceforth was the family supplied with honey.

For neighbors there were the original owners of the soil a tribe of gentle, friendly Potawatomie Indians. Old Baw Bese, the chief had his summer camp near the new home, and his winter camp on the shore of Bawbese Lake. Old Baw Bese had two wives, the young new wife rode behind him on his pony, the old wife walked and carried the burdens.

The twelve-year-old lad played daily with the Indian boys riding their ponies and playing their games. Besides Baw Bese were Metean, Ne-Magin-a-swot. Metean was called the Peace chief from his mild disposition. My grandfather always lived in harmony with the Indians. He treated them with kindness and justice; they looked up to him with respect and veneration, and often brought him gifts; wild turkey, duck, fish or honey. If the honey were strained, grandmother would not touch it, her New England housewifery spirit bringing forth the query, "Who knows how clean their hands were when they strained it." One day grandmother and grandfather were gathering huckleberries when an Indian from the other side of the swamp called, "Weber, Weber, come ober," after repeated calls grandfather went over, and there found with the young Indian and his squaw, a young pappoose strapped to a board in the usual way. The young father as proud as any other young father. Grandfather, whose love for the little ones had not been dimmed, and by the struggle to care for his own small brood of seven, admired the baby, and then began calling, "Mother," the Indian took up the word and called "Muder, Muder, come ober." So mother came over to admire the newcomer. This is only to illustrate the friendliness of this gentle tribe, which a mistaken government not long after, sent away from their pleasant camping grounds to a new home beyond the Mississippi.¹⁴

A very important member of the pioneer family was old Spank, the farm dog. He came all the way from the old home in York State. On the journey he was guard, police, surveyor, and when the new home was reached, constituted himself the special body-guard of granny and the children, forcing and leading them home one day when they lost their way coming through the woods from a distant neighbor's. For social relaxation on the long winter evenings, grandfather and grandmother would sometimes visit the neighbor's. One night returning from such a visit, they were chased by wolves. Grandmother was seated in the rear of the primitive sledge, her back supported by a log chain. Grandfather stood and lashed the horses into a run, but faithful old Spank kept the wolves at bay, striking at them when they came too close, and always returning to run by grandmother's side. Do you not think he was worthy of the place he has kept in the family history?

Just one more personal story. When the year-old babe reached the new home she cried for the cradle that perforce was left behind, and refused to be comforted until her father one day brought home an Indian sap-trough he had found in the woods. In this improvised cradle no happier child ever slept the dewey sleep of youth. We hear much now-

¹⁴By treaty at Chicago, Sept. 26, 1833, the Chippewas, Ottawas and Potawatomies ceded to the U. S. most of their reservation south of the Grand River.

a-days of the perniciousness of rocking our babies, but I am sure this child's brain was not addled by the process, for with womanhood she attained great intellectual strength and in later years in a Wisconsin seminary, had among her pupils a lad whose subsequent career is familiar to you all, Senator Robert La Follette. Only recently this dear old lady said to me, "So I've always said I felt that having been rocked in an Indian sap-trough for a cradle, my first moccasins the gift of an Indian, having been fed on sassafras roots, wintergreen berries, thorn apples, ground cherries and wild things generally, I could very reasonably be considered indigenous to Michigan soil."

I have in my hand two original letters which are of interest to us at this particular time when the whole nation is paying tribute to the memory of a Michigan soldier, Gen. George A. Custer. I have selected these from several more personal in the possession of the family of Capt. Charles M. Walker, late of Adrian. The first is a letter written by Gen. Custer from headquarters at City Point, Va., July 3, 1864, and addressed to Senator Zachariah Chandler.

The second letter is one addressed to Mr. Walker and written by Gen. W. R. Shafter, Nov. 24, 1867:

Camp Michigan Cavalry Brigade
Headquarters 1st. Brig., 1st. Sis. C. C.
City Point, Va., July 3, 1864.

Hon. Z. Chandler, U. S. A.:

Dear Sir:—I hope you will pardon me for again calling your attention to the case of Mr. Chas. M. Walker of Lapeer, Michigan, whom I desire to have appointed Captain in the Commissary or Quartermaster's Department. He has been with this Brigade since the Army crossed the Rapidan on the commencement of the present campaign. Although holding no appointment or official position under the Government, he has served on my staff as Volunteer Aide-de-Camp, and has participated in every engagement in which the Michigan Cavalry Brigade has borne a part. And he has throughout shown himself to be a brave, gallant and thoroughly patriotic officer, having particularly distinguished himself by his courage and energy in every one of the thirteen encounters. He had his horse twice shot under him at Cold Harbor, and two horses shot under him at Trevillion Station while serving on my staff. He has most fearlessly and heroically exposed himself at all times.

He would prefer to receive the appointment of Captain C. S., and this would be my preference also, could it be arranged, as he would be enabled to take the field with me. There will soon be a vacancy in that Department in this Brigade, the officer now holding the position, having been ordered elsewhere. If this appointment cannot be secured,

Mr. Walker would rather obtain one as Capt and A. Q. M., than return home. In this department there is now a vacancy in the Brigade. I assure you that the appointment of Mr. Walker would produce most universal satisfaction, both amongst the officers and men of the Brigade.

As for myself I shall esteem it a great personal favor if you would use your influence to assist him in obtaining the place.

I am very respectfully,

Your sincere friend,

G. A. CUSTER,

Brig. Genl., U. S. Vols., Comdg. Mich. Cavalry Brig.

Ringgold Barracks, Texas,

November 24, 1867.

My Dear Charles:—The Spirit moveth me to write you to-day and I obey its dictates. 1st, Because I want to hear from you, and again because I want to know something of the officers of the old 7th.

Where is Bob Curtis, Col. Grosvenor, the Adj. Tom Hunt, Genl. Baxter, Amos Hicock and last but not least, how are you. I am the Lt. Col., 41st Infty. Bat., Col. U. S. A., and am now and expect to be for a long time in command of this Post. There are but two companies here now; will eventually have four. It is a fearful place to live in, the entire population being Mexicans. - You can go a hundred miles on this frontier and not meet a person that can speak English. In the town here, of four hundred people there are but two or three Americans. You remember the tales Bob Knaggs used to tell of Texas. I thought he used to stretch the truth. *He didn't.*

We have been having the fever here fearfully (in Texas), although among the officers and men of the post we have had but little. Two Actg. Asst. Surgs. have died here with it and the Q. M. Clerk. I had it, but got along after a while. In the town, however it had been different, not far from two hundred have died (about half).

Are you getting ready for war again and what view do you take of the situation? From what I recollect of your political opinions I judge you to sustain Congress.

I say nothing of myself as I cannot well sustain the policy of the President without denouncing Congress and Vice Verse. My mind is however fully made up as to the rights of the questions that are before the country, and should blood again flow, I hope to be able to do my duty to my country. Could I see you I should have no hesitancy in giving you my views, but I do not like to write them. I am going over to New Orleans next week to meet and bring my wife and little girl across the Gulf.

There is some prospect of my going North next spring to stay a year,

as Supt. Regtl. Rectg. Service. If I do I hope to see some of my old and valued companions in arms. You recollect Hinks of the 19th Mass.? He is Lt. Col., 40th, and I *rank* him. By an act of the last Congress where officers had the same *date* of appt., their rank was to be determined by the length of time they had served as *Commissioned* officers either in the Regular Army or since the 19th day of April, 1861, in the Volunteers. The object of the bill was to make the eleven Cols., and eleven Lt. Cols. appointed *from* the Regular army, rank the appts. from the Volunteer, eleven of each grade being from the Volunteers. It done it, as almost *every* one of the appts. from the Regular Army had served for a long time.

It was the *junior* officer of Vols. appt. Lt. Col., but I shall rank every other Vol. Appt., as my service was *continuous* in the U. S. Service from August 22nd, '61, to the date of my appt. July 28th, '66, which was a longer period than any one of the other appts. served, and consequently I rank the party.

Remember me kindly to any and all the 7th. Believe me,

Very truly, your friend,

W. K. SHAFTER.