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Recollections of SE Michigan 1810-1885, Part 2 of 3

BY Ephraim S. Williams, of Flint

EDITORS NOTE: This is the second part of an article which gives quite a bit of Fur Trader history in Midland. We intend to reprint four articles from the Michigan Pioneer Society collections. These give some family and southeast Michigan history. Since these are lengthy, they will be given in several installments.

««««O»»» ««««o»»» ««««O»»»»

In the fall of 1822, Mr. Rufus Stevens, his brother A.C. Stevens, and myself went from Silver Lake to Saginaw on horseback, following the Indian trail. We found the two companies of United States troops in their tents, hard at work building the stockade and their winter quarters. We remained a day and returned. There was not a house from Waterford to Saginaw. In the winter of 1822-3, Colonel John Hamilton, Harvey Williams and myself each took a team and load of supplies and provisions for the troops. Mr. Schuyler Hodges accompanying us to see the country. The soldiers had cut a road through the woods and pine windfalls for sleigh track. Going out we put all three teams on each load to draw it across Flint River and up its banks. We slept on the Cass River, between two large fallen pine trees. In the morning we were under about four or five inches of snow. It snowed all day. We arrived at Saginaw and crossed the river not until after dark, having traveled only about twelve miles. The soldiers took charge of our teams and put them in warm stables and we were ushered

into good warm quarters and fared sumptuously. We left next afternoon and slept that night at Cass River, where we found a vacant log house. We got our horses into it and with rails we built a big fire in the fireplace and camped for the night. Our horses and ourselves suffered severely. Of that company I am the only survivor, the Messers. Stevens, Hamilton, Williams and Hodges all have crossed the river, where we must all follow ere long. My sister Caroline married Mr. Rufus Stevens and moved to Grand Blanc, Genesee county in 1823, they being the first settlers in that town. In the fall of 1824, a party of eight young men and girls visited my sister. Stevens, traveling on horseback, there being no road, but only an Indian trail. Next morning we rode to Flint River, seven miles, (where the city now is), crossed the river on the rapids where the dam and mills now are; explored the surroundings, which were beautiful, being an open oak forest like an orchard. We could see for miles around, the area having been burned over, and could see the wild deer feeding on the acorns in from two to droves of often a dozen. You may think this an exaggeration but it is not, for they were as plenty as sheep. It was not unusual to see in the fall of the year, droves of twenty and even more. In those days we could not ride through the oak openings without seeing deer feeding on the rolling hills, in all

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directions. The oak openings were perfectly beautiful, being from June a perfect flower garden.

In the year 1821 a militia company was formed in Pontiac and vicinity, Calvin Hotchkiss was the captain. I hold a commission, as ensign, under Lewis Cass, Governor of the Territory, dated June 13, 1821. A regiment was afterwards formed, and I hold a commission as its adjutant, dated the 11th day of August, 1824. I think the above was the first company and regiment formed in the Territory. We were well uniformed and equipped. Had a grand regimental parade every fall in Pontiac. To have a parade ground, I engaged men and mowed off the brush and cleaned off the ground from Pike street to the river, on the west side of Main street, in Pontiac, where the Hodges House stands; Calvin Hotchkiss, colonel; David Steward, lieutenant colonel; Henry C. Brunson, major. We soon had three or four rifle companies, in full uniform, commanded by John Hamilton, Captain Archibald Philips, Captain John Hamlin, and so on. We used to have fine parades and any amount of fun. We also had one company of horse, about thirty strong, commanded by Captain Daniel Lyon.

Father and mother were married in 1796, in Concord, Mass. Mother's name was Mary Lee. They had a family of fourteen, ten boys and four girls. Father died in 1834. Mother died April 1, 1860, and in January, 1884, seven of those children were alive, six being of the eight that came to Detroit in 1815. Two died in California during the summer of 1885. March 13, 1825 I married Miss Hannah Melissa Gates, on her Grandfather James Harington's farm, near the village of Auburn, Oakland county. I built a log house on part of the old homestead, and lived there until I moved to Saginaw. My daughter Mary (afterwards Mrs. Hiram Walker of Detroit) was born September 25, 1826. We had a family of seven, of whom four are still living. In 1829 I moved to Saginaw, our party going on horseback, I carrying my daughter before me on a pillow. My wife's sister and several others accompanied us. The first night we camped out at Pine Run. The next day we arrived at Saginaw, and made our home in the officers' quarters — a very comfortable place, inside the stockade, until I built on the corner of Mackinaw and Washington streets. In 1828 my brother and myself commenced the Indian trade under the firm name of G.D. and E.S. Williams, which we continued about twelve years, under the auspices of the American Fur Company, of which James Abbott, of Detroit, was agent. There were no roads. We had, with others then at Saginaw, to go on horses (or ponies) from Saginaw to

Grand Blanc, some forty odd miles, and not a house or white family the entire distance, carrying our children before us. Often, from high water and bad roads to get through, we were obliged to camp out for the night, and so always went prepared for the emergency. Over bad places, swamps, etc., we crossed on fallen trees, old logs, etc., carrying our wives and children on our backs, while the men took the ponies through or around places almost impassable. We usually traveled in companies of a dozen or more, for mutual protection and assistance. My oldest children, May and Olive, had only Indian children for playmates. The chiefs gave them Indian names, in token of their friendship. The wives and daughters of the chiefs, would take them to the pay grounds, and, under the direction of the chiefs, they would draw their share of money the same as, and with the Indian children. We bought our goods for the Indian trade, and also for what little white trade there was of the American Fur Company, and sold them our furs in the spring.

Perhaps it is well to give a short sketch of the city of Saginaw at this time. The government made it a military reservation, and troops were sent there in the summer of 1822, being part of the third regiment, U.S. Troops. They were ordered there from Green Bay, for the protection of the frontier. They were under the command of Major Daniel Baker, and remained at this point about fourteen months. Here they lost some valuable officers, Lieutenant Baker, the major's brother, and Lieutenant Allen, and about a dozen men. This discouraged the major and they were ordered by the war department to Detroit. The venerable and beloved Dr. Pitcher, of Detroit, who was then assistant surgeon in the regular army, and had reported to Major Baker at this time, was in attendance upon the garrison. The event of withdrawing the troops tended to draw away attention from the Saginaw Valley, and retarded immigration. The military reserve was purchased of the government by Samuel Dexter, of Dexter, Mich., for seven or eight thousand dollars. We rented the property of Mr. Dexter, and occupied it until we built up town, in Mackinaw street. Mr. Dexter often urged my brother and myself to purchase the property, which at one time he offered to us for seven thousand dollars. He afterwards sold it to Dr. Millington, of Ypsilanti, for \$11,000, who, in turn, sold it to Mr. Norman Little, for himself, Mackie, Oakley and Jennison, of New York city, for \$55,000 — a nice little speculation in a short time for the doctor.

Then commenced the building of Saginaw City. In 1836 Mr. Norman Little came from Detroit, with

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Governor Mason, by the steamboat "Governor Marcy," the first steamboat that ever plowed the waters of the Saginaw River. The citizens all took a ride on the "Marcy" up the Tittabawassee River, above Green Point (which is the head of the Saginaw River), a mile or two, got aground and were most of the day getting off and back to the city, being a hard day's work instead of a day of pleasure. The expenditures of the firm of Mackie & Co., of which Mr. Little was a member, in their efforts to build up Saginaw City, by the erection of various expensive structures, some of which still stand as monuments of their enterprise, amounted to a very large sum, and, followed by the financial crisis of 1837-1838, it is not to be wondered at that trouble and embarrassment ensued, causing further active effort on their part, at that time, to build up Saginaw City almost entirely to cease. Disappointed but not discouraged, Mr. Norman Little turned his attention to the east side of the river, and in 1850 induced Mr. James M. Hoyt, of the old firm of Eli Hoyt & Co., of New York city, and his son, Mr. Jesse Hoyt, to become interested with himself, each one-third, in the site and business of East Saginaw. In the year 1834-1835 my brother and I (G.D. & E.S. Williams) built the first steam mill, with one saw, ever built in the Saginaw valley; and I think, the first in the state. Harvey Williams owning one third, he furnishing the engine and boilers. In after years it was burned down. My brother G.D. Williams, built a fine mill afterwards, on the point opposite the first one. That was burned down. Then his sons built a first-class modern mill on the river, and it, with salt block and fixtures, still runs.

When G.D. & E.S. Williams commenced the Indian trade in 1828 we occupied the sutler's store, outside the stockade; and, as I have said, lived inside the stockade in the officer's quarters. We built the red store and occupied it as long as we continued trade. Reaume, a Frenchman and an Indian trader (who was at that time, 1828, and at that point the agent of the American Fur Company, and was trading under them), and the Messrs. Campau had had personal difficulties of long standing, which had become an inveterate feud, creating unprofitable divisions with the Indians, amounting to fierce partisan hatred. The current becoming turned against Reaume, and his personal safety endangered, his store was kept closed too much of the time for him to continue a profitable agent of trade for the company at that post. Judge Abbott, the company's superintendent at Detroit, selected the Messrs. Williams as the successors of Reaume, who became the owners of his entire interests in his Indian trade. The

hatred had become so strong against Reaume by the opposition traders that they endeavored to and did set the Indians against the outposts. Dequindre, an active young Frenchman, clerk of the store at the forks of the Tittabawassee, was driven out of his store, by a very ugly Indian called *White Devil* or *Wah-be-man-e-too*. White Devil taking possession with his friends, of the store, drinking and enjoying themselves until the employees came home from the woods. The clerk fled to Saginaw, got lost, and was frozen badly before he got in. This was the state of things we found when we commenced trade in 1828. The traders had become savage toward the Indians and often abused them for little or no cause, which we had to put a stop to, putting in their written agreements if anything of the kind was done, without good provocation, they would be discharged.

In arranging for our winter trade, in the fall of 1828, we considered it very important to reestablish and open trade at the *Forks* where the store had been broken up, that being a good business point, and it was thought best that I go to that post. I consequently prepared to do so, with a good stock of goods for the trade. I chose for my assistants, interpreter and runners, Jacob Gravenrod [Graverod], one of the best interpreters in the whole country, and the two younger Rays. Prudent friends endeavored to persuade me not to embark on an enterprise so evidently fraught with danger, but my own and the company's interest required the venture, and I, with my assistants soon arrived at the post. The opposition store, with three men, was about sixty rods from mine. The Indians in this section were, at this time considered the worst and most dangerous in all the country, but almost the best hunters and trappers of valuable furs, and it was a very important post to be maintained. I was successful in taking in a large lot of valuable furs, such as beaver, otter, martin, mink, fisher, bear, coon, and muskrat and doeskin. My men were absent from home most of the time gathering furs from the Indians; therefore I was alone and experienced many unpleasant affairs, a few of which I will relate. I soon gained the friendship of the Indians and they behaved well toward me and my men, only when put up to mischief by the opposition, who were half-breeds, and being jealous of our success, could with a little whiskey, cause the ugly ones to give us serious trouble. but always, when sober afterwards, say they were sorry and ask forgiveness. It was necessary to have an Indian guide who understood where the hunters and trappers were in the interior. The opposition house had a very good one, who had been their guide for years and not good for much else. During the

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winter Gravenrod and myself, when about retiring one cold and snowy night, heard a "bang" on our outer door; soon again, another. We asked who was there; "bang" again, harder than before. We told him to go away or he would get hurt. "Let me in;" "bang" again. I picked up a hickory sapling about three feet long we had been using and crept carefully to the door, unfastened the inner door, unlocked the outer door (having double doors), and when the "bang" came again, threw open the door and sprang out.

He ran, I after him, down toward his home, the snow being about a feet deep. I came up to him in about twenty rods, struck him over the head with my hickory, and he fell in the snow. I gave him one or two good cuts across his thighs and left him. The next morning I left for Saginaw, on business, on an Indian pony, and as I was about starting, the fellow came in, painted black; said he was drunk and was sorry; said he was put up to it. I told him we wanted nothing to do with him, to go home and keep away from us, or he would get worse punished. I left for Saginaw, and when twelve or fifteen miles on my way, I heard a slight noise, and, looking around, this fellow, with a shotgun on his shoulder, was trotting along behind me, looking black and ugly as possible. It gave me a little start, yet I knew he was a coward. I asked him what he was following me for. He said the clerk had sent down for some goods. I told him to take the front and trot ahead, and I kept him in the front the rest of the way to Saginaw. On my return he came to the store, said he was sorry and ashamed of what he had done, wished me to forgive him, and if I wanted him for a guide, he would leave the opposition and join us. Good guides were very scarce, and he being an excellent one, we took him. We found him very useful and he remained with us ever after.

Indians are peculiar. If they feel they have been abused or punished unreservedly, they never forget it, and sometime will retaliate on you or your property; but when they deserve punishment for doing wrong, if partially drunk, they know it, and will invariably, when sober, come and say you did right; that they were wrong, and ask to be forgiven and to be friends, and they will ever after be good friends and do anything for you. This very thing is the cause of much of the trouble with the Indians in the western portion of our country. Government officers and traders misuse them, rob them of their reservations, their game, and often of their wives and daughters, at which they feel injured and abused. I often think they are not so much to blame, after all. During this winter two parties of

Indians came to the store from different sections, and of different totems, between whom a feud existed, of long standing. After trading their furs, they had a drink together, and began to talk up the old feud. Gravenrod and myself made up our minds there would be trouble, and we must guard against it as much as possible. There were about twenty, and they were outside the store. I proposed they should not come into the store, unless they gave me their knives at the door. Only one refused. I stood on the outside of the door, which being low, one had to stoop a little. This one said he would come in, and I said he should not, unless he gave up his knife. He lowered his head to rush in, and I met him between the eyes with my fist, and he went to the ground. He jumped up and handed me his knife. This man's brother was a chief, and a powerful man, called Chee-a-min-nee (Big Man). The leading man from the other party was called As-see-nee-wee, one of the finest built men I ever saw. These two leading ones became the contestants, the rest of each party trying to prevent hostilities, and Gravenrod was doing his best to separate the two, as they had clinched each other. I stood by the door, in the rear of Big Man. Gravenrod called to me at the top of his voice to pull Big Man back. for he had a knife and would kill As-see-nee-wee. I sprang and caught Big Man by the shoulders, and sprang back with all my strength, separating them, and we all came down upon the floor. Old Man, his brother and two or three more all had hold of the old man, his brother and myself holding him down, and it was all we could do, the old fellow roaring and frothing at the mouth with rage. He had dropped his knife. We got the advantage of him, so his brother could hold him. They told me to get a rope and we would tie him. Hearing this he begged us not to tie him, and he would give up and be quiet. Tying is something an Indian fears and looks upon as degrading. While this was going on, Gravenrod got the others out of the store and started them off to their camps. It was now getting dusk. I spread some deer skins beside the chimney, in a corner, and his brother got the old man to lie down, and he soon got to sleep, and his brother watched him all night. During the night As-see-nee-wee came to the store and asked Gravenrod to let him in, which he did. He was almost sober. He came to my bed and said if I would let him have a knife, he would fix the old man so he would never trouble us again; if I would do so he would give me a big beaver skin, then worth about \$15. I said, "No, ain't you ashamed of yourself, you coward, to take the life of that good old man while asleep." He shook my hand and said, "You are right; let me out and I will

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go home." In the morning they all met friendly, and soon left for their several homes. I have often thought how we barely escaped being injured. It was a terrible fight, bloodless, however.

The winter passed without any more excitement. One pleasant day in the spring, while alone, I saw Mr. White Devil coming up from the other trading house, apparently a little "set up" and I thought he would probably give me a call. I had not seen him all winter. I had kept a good hickory cane, about an inch in diameter, in the store in case of necessity, which I took in hand. White Devil came in, threw off his pack of traps and fixtures for his spring trapping, seated himself on a stool, looked ugly and about half tight. He raised his head and says, "*Mis-shay-way*," (my Indian name, meaning Big Elk), with an insolent and defiant bearing, which a half-drunken Indian only can assume, "give me some whiskey." I refused. He placed his hand upon the handle of his tomahawk, drew his knife, and repeated their demand more fiercely than as first, and was met with another refusal as defiant as his last demand. He then sprang for me (I was standing beside the door) with uplifted tomahawk and knife, aiming a blow at me which, if I had not warded it off, would have proved fatal. With my hickory cane, and keen eye on his movements, I took him on the side of his head and felled him to the floor, and being about to repeat the blow, the discomfited hero begged for mercy. Getting up, after recovering from the stunning effects of the blow, I ordered him to leave the store, which he did and sat down in front of it in apparently deep thought, his head in his hands and blood flowing from his nose and mouth. After a little he called me to come to him, and expressed great mortification at the outrage he had attempted, and, to confirm his sincerity, promised that on his return from his trappings, if he had good luck, I should have all his furs except enough to pay his debts at the other store. I told him never to attempt anything again on me, for he would not escape as easily. I had no confidence he would keep his promise, for he had always been a fast friend of the opposition. But he did, faithfully, and became my fast friend, and would stand by my side in case of any trouble with the Indians as long as he lived. I got about fifty dollars' trade on his return and all future trade. He was a desperate fellow,

and all the Indians stood in fear of him. He was finally killed. He and another hard case sat down opposite each other with a bottle of whiskey between them and commenced talking over their exploits, which was the best man, etc., exchanging drinks, until they drew their knives and commenced striking for each other's hearts, and White Devil was killed and the other nearly so. White Devil is the same man who I have said broke up and took possession of the store the winter before I went in charge. This winter settled the question of quietly holding the Forks trading post during remaining years of trade. During this winter's trade of mine at this post, my wife and daughter were with my father on the old homestead at Silver Lake.

We established stores at River Au Sable, with a clerk and two men; one on Cass river, clerk and two men; one at Sebewaing, clerk and two men. We also commissioned several Indian women with goods to trade for us. Many were very good traders and collected many furs, and were usually very trusty and would render just account for every dollar. My brother and I owned a small sloop of about thirty tons burden called the "Savage," which plied constantly between Saginaw and Detroit, and many a time she was looked for with much anxiety, as often not a barrel of flour could be gathered in the valley. One spring, cranberries were very high in Detroit and Buffalo, and that spring there were any quantity on the Shiawassee lowlands. We told the Indians we would buy all they would bring us. They went to picking, and we took the "Savage" and filled her full in bulk, after filling all our barrels and boxed. I think we had one thousand five hundred or two thousand bushels. She left for Detroit, I went overland. Mr. Abbott told me there was a man from Buffalo buying all the cranberries he could. We sold him the entire cargo, delivering by the "Savage," at Buffalo, at two dollars and fifty cents per bushel. We bought about one hundred bushels of other traders at eight shillings per bushel. We thought this a very good little operation.

Editor's Note: Ephraim Williams' personal recollections will be concluded in the April Issue of the Pioneer Record

GENEALOGICAL ONE-LINERS — From "The Downriver Seeker," Aug. 1998.

My family came on the Mayflower — or was it Allied?
 My family tree must have been used for firewood.
 My hobby is genealogy and I raise dust bunnies for pets.

PAUL BUNYAN, FAMOUS GIANT LOGGER

Research of Stevens, Bunyan Author, Shows Paul Lived in Region

Take Steps to Claim Greatest Figure in American Folk Lore, Urges Authority.

Midland Republican, July 16, 1931 - Midland is logically and in truth the home of Paul Bunyan.

This is the conclusion to be reached after an afternoon's interview with James Stevens, author and collector of the Paul Bunyan lore, whose second volume dealing with the Olympian fears of the mighty muscled, bellicose, bearded giant "boss-logger" of the pine forests will appear this winter as a Knopf publication.

"I am calling the book 'Paul Bunyan of the Saginaw,'" said Stevens last week to a Republican reporter on the porch of his cottage at Portage Lake, near Grayling, "because as a result of my careful investigation of the tales, I have come to the conclusion that the real Paul Bunyan originated in the pine forests of the Saginaw Valley. Although I am a westerner myself, I am compelled to admit this."

The fact that Paul Bunyan never came to town, says this authority, and hence was little known in commercial lumbering centers like Bay City and Saginaw, but was rather to be found in the deep woods and around the camboose fires of the bunkhouses, places his real home in the actual lumbering activities capital of the Saginaw watershed. In other words, in Midland.

The significance of this revelation becomes apparent, when it is recognized that by the most fortunate of accidental circumstances, Midland may claim what Stevens terms "the greatest creation" of American folk lore, which he declares "embodies the souls of millions of American camp men who have always done the hard and perilous pioneer labor of this country."

With the Bunyan tales told from coast to coast, handed down from timber-jack father to son, accumulating by telling like the sages of Roland and Beowulf and now like them, collected in University libraries, the universal significance of the local claim may be estimated.

Asked upon what evidence he stakes his faith in this locality as to old stomping ground of the mighty logger and his Blue Ox, the author answers that the tales were first told here about the time of 1850.

"About that time," he explains, "the big lumbering traffic here started. At the same time there was a famine in Ireland and vast numbers of Irish Immigrants came to Michigan to work in the lumber woods. Ever since 1850 there has been a Corktown in Detroit. There still is. Lee Smith writes in his "Sidewalks of Detroit" column about the "Mayor of Corktown." These Irish lumberjacks and, the French predominated in the

Saginaw valley. Authentic sources establish the fact that the Paul Bunyan stories started here, first, and at about that time.

Had real Origin

"They were a combination of French braggadocio with Irish fancy and sly humor. The terms so inextricably connected with Paul Bunyan lore namely "the Winter of the Blue Snow" and the "Year of the two Winters" are typically Irish. The Detroit Free Press old radio hour has brought together many of the old ballads of the same time, "The Flat River Girl," for instance, that are Irish beyond a doubt. The "Come all Ye," so typically a national strain, appears in many of them.

"It was these Irish loggers and their French Contemporaries who began to tell the Paul Bunyan stories (or Paul Bunyon as he spelled it in the French), who really figured in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837. This was a revolt of the French-Canadians against Queen Victoria. In the Two Mountains country at St. Eustache, loggers armed with mattocks, axes and wooden forks, stormed into battle. Among them was the bearded giant named Paul Bunyan, who with a mattock in one hand and a fork in the other, raged among the Queen's troops, like Samson among the Philistines. He came out of the rebellion with great fame among his kind. His slaughters got the grandeur of legend."

Down from Canada

Among the camboose fires in the bunk houses at "16", at Red Keg (now Averill), all up and down the Tittabawassee, the Chippewa, the Saginaw and over on the Au Sable as the tales spread, loggers sat about in the long winter evenings and invented new Herculean achievements for the giant logger, brought him down over the Canadian border, told how as he crossed the line, with his great Blue Ox, who was forty-two ax handles and a plug of tobacco wide between the horns, Paul lifted his hands and spoke in the language of Real America. In his first Paul Bunyan book, Stevens tells that Paul said: "In becoming a Real American I became Paul Bunyan, I am Paul Bunyon no more. Even so shall my Blue Ox calf be called Babe, and Bebe no longer. We are real Americans both heart, souls and hides.

"And I'm glad of it! By the holy old mackinaw, and by the hell-jumping high-tailed, fuzzy-eared, whistling old jeem cris and the seventeen slippery saints. I'm proud of it, too!"

Western Material Foreign

Then as a Life Work, the lumber jacks explained with simplicity, Paul invented logging, and

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Paul Bunyan, Famous Giant Logger

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made it the greatest industry of all time.

"The stories go on, of course," says Stevens, "to tell how Paul lumbered off North Dakota, and relate his experiences in the Bad Lands, but those are not the real old stuff. The West has its tales about him, of his prowess as a rancher. The Paul Bunyan legend has been invaded and distorted by material foreign to its native type. But although the last that is seen of Paul as he was going West as the lumbering receded from this region, I shall never write Mississippi, because the western yarns get into the machine stuff, and Paul was really a pine woods man. I have seen pictures of him out West, showing the true legend always told how he kept his beard brushed with a pine tree, which he kept in his shift pocket when not in use.

"I came here to Michigan to talk with the old-timers, because I wanted to get in touch with old loggers who didn't know much about the modern developments in lumbering, and who consequently would have the virgin lore."

Should Appreciate Value

The West has its own lore, says Stevens, and has other figures such as Jim Bridger, who discovered Great Salt Lake and the Yellowstone, and much of that lore has got mixed with the Paul Bunyan stuff. One is permitted to add to the Bunyan cycles, he explains, but rightfully the additions should be governed by the laws of type, in order that the saga should not be corrupted. The West has failed to observe this rule he deplures.

"I spent the winter in Bay City talking to old lumber men and working in the library among old files in search for this stuff," he explains. "But Bay City is not in the right frame of mind to appreciate the lore. All the people there can remember are the 'terrible things' that went on in the saloons on Water Street.

"As far at that goes, the West had exactly the same thing among the miners and ranchers, but that is past, and they can now see the romantic figure the miner or the rancher was. They've idealized it and built legends around it. I hope the people in the Saginaw

Valley will wake up to what they have, and will take steps to realize on its possibilities. They should impress it on the school children by telling the tales to them as a reward for work well done, as one of the school heads in Saginaw has already been doing. It's a priceless mine of lore right at their very doors.

"The superb pageantry of the old days on the rivers in that valley — of the river man, the French voyageur, the first land-lookers, should be capitalized, not commercialized, but used as an enrichment of the present life by the reconstruction of the romanticism of the old."

Tamed Tittabawasse

A tale of how Paul Bunyan tamed the wild young rivers in Michigan so he might drive logs down them is told by this author in the July issue of the Woman's Home Companion. The Twin Rivers, says this yarn flowed always side by side and were always wishing they were lakes so that they'd stop flowing if Paul took his eyes off them. Old Contrary would never flow along peaceably in its bed, but was always flowing up and down the hills. Another river caused trouble by flowing along for a time a mile wide and a foot deep and then turning over on its side and flowing a mile deep and a foot wide. Of his greatest struggle of all, that with the Big Auger, which impudently spat seventy-seven barrels of water in his eye when he spoke of driving logs down it, the story treats mainly Paul finally got his legs twisted about the Big Auger and broke it in two, making Niagara Falls, as they are now called, where the break came. One can imagine how he tamed the Tittabawasse too, and made it the peaceful stream it is excepting in the spring when the spirit of the spring brings back youthful urges and causes trouble for the countryside.

Yes, Paul Bunyan for whom Jack Fathey, Paul's best top-loader, loaded the logs so high that the moon couldn't go over, made his home here in Midland in the roaring '50s and '60s and 70s. World famous, nay cosmic, he belonged to this valley first, and Midland claims him.

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Frank Pritchard Obituary

Midland Sun, Aug. 12, 1920 - Frank Pritchard died at a hospital in Ann Arbor Aug. 9, he having been at this institution for some time for treatment.

The remains were brought to Midland Aug. 13,

with funeral from Wilson's funeral home and interment in Midland Cemetery.

He is survived by several small children and one married daughter, Mrs. Charles Post.

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THE REARDON DESCENDANTS' PILGRIMAGE

It was not merely a Pilgrimage, but a Round-up and a Reunion at the Old Birch Run Home.

MORE THAN 50 GO FROM MIDLAND

Midland Republican - July 5, 1917. Sixty-three years ago, in 1854, John Reardon migrated from Canada and went out into the woods where the little village of Birch Run in Saginaw county now is. There was no village there then; there was not even a bridge at Saginaw.

John was the father of 11 children, including those who were added after the removal, and from these have descended a numerous and vigorous race to whom by marriage have been added many more. In the big old home, built there in the new land, the "tribe" gathered July 4th for the second reunion.

John, Thomas and William and some of the sisters came to Midland in those early days and besides Reardons there are here Thompsons, Prices, Nehils, Cotes, O'Briens, who are closely related to the Reardon families. There is a sister, Mrs. Dexter, in Saginaw, and two sisters in the far west.

It was ox-teaming in those days. Nine rushing auto-cars took more than 55 to the spot last Wednesday from Midland. They made the 45-mile trip in from an hour and a half to two hours, whizzing across iron bridges at Saginaw and along stone roads and meeting at the old place, now occupied by Charles Wolohan, one of the family, with 100 others coming from all directions — the Reardon Reunion.

At a hall in the village 150 sat down to a banquet suitable to the happy occasion, and after this, business matters were attended to. Each had to stand and give name, location, occupation, etc. A great many

O'Briens were in evidence, among them William O'Brien of Midland and Patrick O'Brien of Kansas, who made the longest trip. William Reardon was so overcome with the O'Brien name that he stood up and said: "I am William O'Brien!" He amended his record, however. There was music and dancing and a jolly time generally.

Robert Clancey of Detroit was elected president. He is U.S. Appraiser at Detroit. Thomas Clancey of Detroit, secretary and treasurer. Their mother was a cousin of the Reardon Brothers.

The meeting next year will be at Belle Isle July 24, and it is intended to charter an interurban car at Bay City to make the trip to Detroit.

Additional comments from Midland Sun. July 5, 1917 - At high noon an elegant four course "Irish Stew" was served in which Irish potatoes played an important part and it is intimated that the pig was Irish also.

The oldest person present was John Reardon of this city. W.L. Wood of Ann Arbor was the only member to be removed by death during the year.

The Reardon reunion was inaugurated at a get-together meeting of the family in this city last year, when they met at the spacious home of Wm. Reardon, Sr., and it was voted to make the reunion a permanent affair and (hold the) 1917 meeting on the old homestead at Birch Run. This farm was homesteaded in 1855 by John Reardon, father of John and William Reardon of this city, he coming from Blackwater, Ireland.

AN OLD TRADITION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

An old idea with a new twist appeals to genealogists who want to record family information the old-fashioned way - in a diary. A new diary for the *entire* family urges you to document family history as you live it.

Record family events as you live them, and keep the family's collective memories forever in **Our Family Diary: A Keepsake Diary for the Entire Family**. This diary urges participation from all family members. It has space so that even young children can draw or doodle, contributing to memories that will be cherished for generations to come. At the end of each year, events and names are custom indexed so you can quickly see when Grandpa and Grandma last visited, or what you did on Jimmy's birthday.

Our Family Diary was published by Russell

D. Earnest Associates. Printed on acid-free paper so it will last for generations, the 128-page **Our Family Diary** includes dozens of suggestions that every family can record such as family recipes, little Jennie's favorite song, your teenager's special camping trip, the family reunion and other events, family traditions, and family memories. The softcover **Our Family Diary** costs \$24.95, plus \$3 shipping. It is being offered to readers for \$19.95 plus \$3 shipping or \$5.00 off the catalog price. **Our Family Diary** is available from Russell D. Earnest Associates, P.O. Box 1007, East Berlin, PA 17316.

Also see additional interesting books in flyer on Michigan Room bulletin board in G.A. Dow Library, Midland.

President's Letter

Our computer users group is making a start - by the time you read this there will have been a beginning meeting and I expect that a steering committee will have been selected to make some definitive decisions. For those who are interested in the computers themselves there are, of course, both MacIntosh and PC computer clubs meeting regularly in Midland - Kathy Bohl and Bill Kocher are members of the PC group, and Ron Snyder and Sheldon Levy are members of the Mac club. If you are interested, ask. For those with genealogical interests the MGS group that is starting up is the place to be - but it is a large group and there is not much chance that it can meet in somebody's home. This will bring up the first decisions to be made: where and when????? This promises to be an exciting development. More later. In the meantime, if you are interested and you haven't responded to Ron Snyder/Doug Applegath about your interest please do so.

I am a member of a mailing list from the Luzerne County, PA GenWeb site and I get a fair amount of mail, most of which has no bearing on my personal studies. A lot of it is deleted before reading, some is interesting general information, and a few items are of general interest - and here are some of them:

Ancestry.com - I hear that they are having a free 30-day subscription to look through their hundreds of databases. This was reported on 30 Dec so it may not be available now - but Ancestry.com may have some data for you, and it might be worth subscribing. I Bill haven't tried it yet.

Jewishgen.org - JewishGen family finder (over 90,000 surnames and towns), ShtetlSeeker, a Poland database, and others

Rootsweb.com/~srgp/jmtindex.htm - Tioga County Pa, Bradford County Pa, Chemung County NY - 7000 online obits, 400 cemeteries, 1850 census of Tioga County - This one is interesting because it shows some of what is being done with electronic publishing, which may be in the future of the Midland Genealogical Society.

By the way, Rootsweb is a private, volunteer organization that provides internet services and databases of great interest to many people, including USGenWeb and the Midland County GenWeb site. There is a sponsor, which pays some of the bills, and the group is trying to get people who use the databases to send in a subscription. I have used the Rootsweb surname index, and found a researcher looking at my family.

Nara.gov has some information about immigration and naturalization; the site **nara.gov:80/immigration/immigrat.html#nothave** is a section about what NARA does NOT have. This "also tells you how to get naturalization records via mail from NARA."

Funeralnet.com/search.html - a listing all funeral homes with addresses and phone numbers.

Do you feel overwhelmed about all this information? I do. But it is an exciting time. Jump in.

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Epitaphs from Real Tombstones

A widow wrote this epitaph in a Vermont cemetery:

Sacred to the memory of
my husband John Barnes
who died January 3, 1803
His comely young widow, aged 23, has
many qualifications of a good wife, and
yearns to be comforted.

A lawyer's epitaph in England:

Sir John Strange
Here lies an honest lawyer,
And that is Strange.

Someone determined to be anonymous in Stowe, Vermont:

I was somebody.
Who, is no business
Of yours.

Lester Moore was a Wells, Fargo Co. station agent for Naco, Arizona in the cowboy days of the 1880s. He's buried in the Boot Hill Cemetery in Tombstone, Arizona:

Here lies Lester Moore
Four slugs from a .44
No Les No More.

MIDLAND MEN VOLUNTEER FOR THE BAY CITY CO.

**Large Gathering on Main Street Friday Evening,
Patriotic addresses, Patriotic Signers**

Midland Republican, July 5, 1917 - As announced last week, recruiting officers were here Friday evening to receive the enlistments of young men who were ready to go with company B of the 33rd to help make up its membership to the required number.

As the Band marched down the street to the corner of Main and Rodd streets, a large number quickly gathered, six to eight hundred, and climbing an improvised stand, Will E. Reardon with a few remarks upon the demands of the times, introduced Hon. G.A. Currie, whose presence in Midland was a surprise to many.

Mr. Currie spoke very earnestly of the seriousness of the conflict in which our Country finds itself involved, the treacheries that have confronted us and the absolute need now of stretching every nerve to make the great result so decisive that we may have the right to hope for peace and justice in the future.

Rev. V.V. Nicholas was introduced as a man of peace. He was one of the kind that while loving realized that there are times when there can be no peace until the enemy of peace is subdued.

Veteran Thomas B. Main spoke briefly of the men of the 60's and knowing the horrors of war and of as its sometime necessity.

While the addresses were being made the still more patriotic act of signing the pledge of a soldier was going on, until 16 names had been enrolled.

THOSE ENLISTING

Charles H. Short, Edmund Schemerhorn, George Bates, George C. Smith, Albert L. Carmon, Floyd W. Braley, David C. Whipple, Paul Mapes, John C. Price, Charles E. Herrell, Glenn H. Hayett, Russell O. Beamish, Herman Lemenberger, Emil L. Phillips, John Anger, Ralph Finn.

Three were examined at Bay City Saturday and two were not able to pass the physical examination. They were Schemerhorn and Bates.

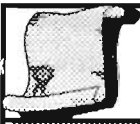
**Sixteen Responded Friday Evening to the
Call of the 33rd Infantry — Four Others Join
Ambulance Corps**

Additional notes from Midland Sun. July 5, 1917 - For the first time since the Spanish-American War, Midland young men were urged to volunteer for service last Friday evening. Sergeants Harris and Witt, corporals White and Christian and private Schmidt of Co. B, 33rd Michigan comprised the recruiting corps, and at their invitation, W.E. Reardon, veteran of the war of 1898 acted as chairman of the rally and addresses were made by Congressman G.A. Currie, Rev. V.V. Nicholas, and G.A.R./ Veteran Thomas B. Main.

Sixteen young men volunteered (See names above.)

Midland also during the past week has had four young men enter the Second Ambulance Corps, 33rd Michigan at Bay City: Keith Johnston, Rollin Closs, John D. Murphy and Cassius H. Rice, the latter a valued employee of the SUN force for several years.

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Midland County Deeds

interest. Here and in future newsletters we will summarize some of them. The following are from 1882.

The Midland Genealogical Society has been given a box of several hundred ORIGINAL legal papers, mostly deeds, but also a few wills or mortgages. The deeds are to land transactions in the county or by county residents. The time period covered is from 1857 to the 1930's. A number are completely hand written and some are original land grants. Many of the papers are of more than passing

- 1) Warrantee deed from William D. Gordon & his wife Lizzie to Celia A. Ross all of Midland Co. \$600 for Lots 14-15, block 149, Hines addition, Village of Midland dated 14th July 1882.
- 2) Quit Claim Deed dated 7th February 1882 from Gustavus Stevens and Lydia M. Stevens, his wife to Michael W. Ryan for 1 dollar for all that parcel of land situated in Hope Twp. described as NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 Sec. 24 T16N R1E.

GENEALOGICAL ONE-LINERS — From "The Downriver Seeker," Aug. 1998.

Any family tree produces lemons, nuts and a few bad apples.
 Every family has some sap in it.
 Genealogists are time travelers.
 Everybody believes in heredity until their children act like fools.
 It's hard to believe that someday I'LL be an ancestor.
 My ancestors must have been in the government witness protection program.

MGS PROGRAMS FOR 1998 - 1999

Programs will be held as usual, at 7:00 P.M. on the third Wednesday of the month in the lounge of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. Be sure to mark your calendars. The schedule for the coming year is as follows:

February 17, 1999:

Ralph Hillman will speak on, "Identifying Wives' Maiden Names."

March 17, 1999:

Annual "Computers, the Internet and Genealogy Research" meeting.

April 21, 1999:

Two accounts of personal research brick walls and how they were overcome.

May 19, 1999:

Panel discussion (questions taken in March and April)

UPCOMING SEMINARS

Whenever any brochures are available for any of these meetings, they will be posted on the bulletin board (now partially obscured by the census index table) or on the genealogy desk.

LINEAGE RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Saturday April 17, 1999:

A Lineage Research workshop sponsored by John Alden Chapter, NSDAR will be held from 10:00 AM -2:00 PM in the Grace A. Dow Library Lounge. FREE and open to the public, this workshop is for anyone who wishes to research their genealogy. Reservations are not necessary. Members of the DAR Michigan Lineage Research Team and chapter Members will be on hand to give assistance with research on a one-to-one basis.

Call Kathy Bohl (839-9016) for more information.

BOOKS FOR SALE

The following books, published by the society, are still available.

MIDLAND COUNTY OBITUARY INDEX - 1872-1927. The book consists of abstractions from the *Midland Times* (1872-1875), the *Midland Sun* (1892-1924) and the *Midland Republican* (1881-1927). From the 55 years covered, we have about 16,000 records of deaths from those publications. The book is 8 1/2 by 11 inches, softbound, and is 238 pages in length.

The Price is \$20.00 at any MGS meeting or by mail plus \$3.00 postage & handling.

MIDLAND COUNTY CENSUSES - 1850-1894. 450 PAGES, SOFTBOUND. \$20 plus \$2 postage. (ONLY 20 COPIES LEFT).

To ORDER A BOOK write:

Midland Genealogical Society BOOK
 G.A. Dow Memorial Library
 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr.
 Midland, MI 48640

WEB SITE ADDRESS OF THE MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY HOME PAGE:
<http://members.mdn.net/billword/mgs.htm>



MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
 Grace A. Dow Memorial Library
 1710 W. St. Andrews Drive
 Midland, Michigan

Pioneer Record

PIIONEER RECORD is published quarterly (Sep., Nov., Feb., and Apr., by the Midland Genealogical Society. Queries are free to members and should be sent to: PIONEER RECORD, Midland Genealogical Society, G.A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. We welcome genealogical material which would be of interest to the general membership. Articles to be included in PR should be submitted to the above address by the 15th of Aug., Oct. Jan., and Mar.

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INFORMATION about MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Our society meets on the 3rd Wed. of Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May at 7:00 P. M. in the lounge of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. Visitors are always welcome. Watch the Midland Daily News or, local Midland MCTV, channel 5, for upcoming speakers, dates, and times.

Membership dues are \$10.00 for single and \$12.50 for a couple and can be paid after July 1, but must be paid by Sep. 30 to continue receiving the Pioneer Record. Dues may be paid at any meeting or may be sent to the Membership Chairman, Midland Genealogical Soc. at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.