

PIONEER RECORD

Newsletter for the Midland Genealogical Society

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MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS FOR 2004 - 2005

Meetings are scheduled at 7:00 PM on the third Wednesday of the month in the Lounge of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. Programs for the meetings are as follows.

September 15

"Identifying Dates of Photos by Women's Clothing" by Laressa Northrup

(You can bring a photo for the Q and A period.)

October 20

"Postal History of Midland County" by Earl Ebach, Chuck and Jan McFarlane (Bring any very old Midland postcard.)

November 17

"Midland, the Way We Were" by Virginia Flory and Leona Seamster

January 19

"Case Studies in Genealogical Research" by Jo Brines and members of our society (needed are members to relate insights on how they made progress in difficult cases)

February 16

"Post Street Archives" by Tawny Nelb

March, April, and May programs are not yet finalized.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SAGINAW VALLEY FIFTY TWO YEARS AGO [1840]

by E.L. Wentz

[From the Michigan Pioneer Collections
Vol. 17, Pages 440-446]

Bay City, Michigan

October 9, 1889.

Judge Albert Miller:

My Dear Sir

In compliance with your request, I give you some of my recollections of the Saginaw valley, about the time you and I first became acquainted; together with a few of the incidents that occurred during my residence in the valley fifty two years ago.

I left Binghamton, New York, my Native town, in company with Alfred Hovey, on the 19th day of June, 1837, with the view of finding employment in the west. We traveled by stage to Olean, New York, and there purchased a skiff, and rowed down the Alleghany [sic] river to Warren, Pennsylvania, where we took stage again and went to Dunkirk, New York where we expected to get a steamer up the lake. But on our arrival at Dunkirk, we learned that steamboats did not land there, so we took passage on a schooner to Cleveland, Ohio, and there changed to a steamboat going to Monroe, Michigan. There we changed to another steamboat, and finally reached Detroit on the first day of July, making the journey from Binghamton, New York, to Detroit, Mich., in twelve days.

At Detroit we saw some flaming posters advertising very low fare to Saginaw City, by the steamer Governor Marcy. On account of the depleted condition of our finances, the low fare was a temptation, and we took passage on the Governor Marcy, and arrived at Saginaw City July 3, 1837. When we saw Saginaw City we were disappointed. We had not known before what might constitute a western city. Where we expected to find a city of at least ten thousand inhabitants we found a little hamlet of about fifteen buildings and not over one hundred white people. The prospect for finding employment was not very flattering. I went to an old log tavern and engaged board for us at two dollars and fifty cents per day each. The sleeping rooms were all in one, and contained about thirty single beds with the numbers chalked on 'the logs at the head. The entrance to this bed chamber was up a ladder through a hole in the floor.

We got our baggage to the hotel and stowed away under our beds, and then took a walk to the river and up along the bank to an old sawmill, and sat down on a saw log to talk over the situation. Mr. Hovey counted his money and found he had just two dollars and fifty cents. I had no money to count. We were perplexed to know what to do. I suggested that we could
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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT
August 2004

It seems to be customary for the president of MGS to have an article ready for each issue of PIONEER RECORD — so here goes with the first attempt...

In spite of the fact that I did not make the May meeting of the Society when elections were held, the procedure of making transfers to a new administration has been progressing well. Jo Brines and I put our heads together and called what we hoped would be a joint meeting of the old and new Boards, for June 16. Up to about 24 hours before the meeting, we weren't sure we were going to pull it off, but with a few phone calls, we managed to gather ten people together at the appointed time.

Along with transferring files and making sure we were on track for next season, we worked on a few matters of urgency:

- 1 We authorized Bob Mass to order a minimum of 50 sets of Volume 3 of our Obituary Index or to order twenty sets more than any advance orders we might receive (Vol. 3, because of its sheer size, will be published in a set of two books.) Cost of the two volume set will be \$40.00 plus an additional \$5.00 for shipping out of town orders. The new volume should be ready this fall.
- 2 Bob Mass reported that the program committee for 2004-2005 will be meeting soon to set up the schedule for the year.
- 3 Max Schneider, our Web Site coordinator had his laptop with him, and demonstrated the remodeled site he had prepared. We voted to authorize him to proceed with the changes, most of which have been implemented. Check in on the site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~mimg/> We have some material still to add, but the new look is quite impressive. Our thanks to Max for his work.

Perhaps the most important on-going work we do as a Society is in our support of the Genealogical research collection at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library in Midland.

We regularly make donations of research materials to the collection, and we provide weekday volunteers to staff the room from 1-4 each day. That work is coordinated with the library through infrequent meetings between the volunteers and the library staff.

One such meeting was held June 24 in the Library Board room and we covered quite a bit of territory in that discussion. Several concerns focus on the computer in the Local History/ Genealogy Room:

- 1 As a gift to the library, the computer was never compatible with the rest of the computers in the library in part because it uses a different operating system (Windows vs. NT), which creates a problem with its connection to the library catalogue network, giving us error messages on a regular basis.
- 2 Because it is connected to the library network, it does, indeed, have the capability of going "on-line" to Genealogy.com if someone uses that link in Family Tree Maker. When that link is used, it freezes up the CD-ROM in the com(Computer, making it inoperable. At least one of our patrons does this to the machine with some frequency.

The present plan is to resolve these immediate problems by taking the library catalogue off the genealogy computer and disconnecting the computer from the network. That will stop the on-line intruder, and should put an end to the error messages. We have also proposed to the staff that the Society be permitted to use our own volunteer folks to service that computer when it is needed. Presently, there is no one authorized to do service on the machine in the event of a real breakdown. The Information and Communication department of the City of Midland, which has consistently refused jurisdiction over our machine, services the rest of the library's computers.

As you can tell, much is in the hopper for Midland Genealogical Society. I sincerely hope you'll take advantage of the Society's presence in Midland to advance the cause of

genealogical research in our community. Please let us know your thoughts concerning ways in which the Society can move toward that goal.

—Robert C. Snyder
President

Recollections (cont. from page 1)

cut wood. as there was plenty of it in the country. Hovey said, "Yes, but there are no people here to burn it." While we were canvassing the matter, we saw a large canoe-like craft coming down the river, propelled by twelve oars, and when it got nearly opposite us it turned in and landed directly in front of where we were sitting, and the first man to step out of it was Charles F. Smith, the chief engineer of the Saginaw and Grand River canal. (1 [See Appendix]) Mr. Smith had come down from the woods at Bad River, bringing his whole corps of engineers and camp equipage to Saginaw to celebrate the fourth of July. I had worked with Smith for some time on the New York and Erie railroad in New York, and knew him intimately. He soon told me that he had work for both of us, and we took hold with a will and helped to pitch the tents on the bank near the northeast corner of the old government stockade, and the first night in Saginaw I spent in a tent with the engineer corps of the Saginaw and Grand River canal. What was projected as the Saginaw and Grand River canal, is better known at the present time as the "Bad River canal." Smith held the party in Saginaw several days to allow some of them to sober up from their celebration, and then sent us to the woods at Bad River, he remaining in Saginaw City.

Saginaw City

When I first saw Saginaw City, it contained not over fifteen buildings all told. At the extreme south end of the

Continued on page3

Recollections (Cont)

town, on the bank of the river was a steam saw mill, with one upright saw, that if closely tended, might have cut one thousand feet of lumber in twenty four hours. A short distance from the mill and a hundred yards from the river, was a red building where Judge Miller and Dr. Miller kept store. Gardner Williams had a residence about a thousand feet back from the river at the extreme south end of the town. Near the red store were two or three small buildings, in one of which was the post office, and many a lark we had at that old post office while waiting for the mail that came to Saginaw but once a week on horseback by way of Flint and the old Indian trail. About a thousand feet from the post office down the river and immediately on the bank was a warehouse, directly back of which at the foot of the bluff, was a small building, in which some one kept a stock of Indian goods, and still further back on the top of the bluff was an old government stockade. Two hundred feet north of the stockade was the old log tavern kept by an English man by the name of Malden. Six to eight hundred feet further north and a hundred feet further back from the river was a small building where Henry Pratt kept a shoe shop and still further north was Richman and Lyon's store, a little north of which and immediately on the bluff was a dwelling, but I have forgotten the name of the family who occupied it. At the extreme north end of the town, Mr. Jewett had a nice residence in which he kept a hotel. There was also a very nice residence in the southwest part of the town occupied by a Mr. Little. There might have been two or three other buildings in Saginaw City but I think I have named and located all of importance.

When in Saginaw City I made my home at Malden's log tavern for the

first year, and then the Webster house was built and opened by Mr. Harring after which I made that my stopping place, often assisting Mr. Harring in the hotel office when there. I have a vivid recollection of a high lark that Henry Pratt and I had at the Webster house a short time after it was opened. There was some doings that brought all of the people of the country into town, and they all stopped at the Webster house. I was assisting in the office. The country guests all took off their boots, shoes and stockings in the office and left them there, going upstairs barefooted to bed. After all were in bed and the house quiet, Pratt and I went to his shop, got some shoe brushes and blacking, returned to the hotel and blacked one of every pair of boots and shoes we could find in the house. We worked at it until daylight, then blacked one of our own in the same way, and went to bed for about an hour. I came into the office early to see the effect of our night's work. When the people began to come down the fun commenced. Everyone tried to get a pair of polished boots or shoes, some didn't know their shoes and looked half an hour for them, some accepted the joke and laughed, while others cursed a blue streak, threatening to kill the person who blacked their shoes if they could find out who did it. During the day nearly every man to be met on the streets had on one polished boot or shoe, and that was evidence that they were guests of the Webster house.¹ Pratt and I kept very still and had our laugh all to ourselves. Saginaw was at that time very dull, and anything that created a little excitement was enjoyable.

In 1837, Saginaw was quite isolated, there was no communication with rest of the world, except by the Saginaw river, the bay and lakes, or by the old Indian trail to Flint. I have

¹. Built in 1836.

walked the old trail several times, it was a wet and dreary road, all the way through a dense forest with no improvements of any kind along it. My first journey over the trail was on the 18th day of September, 1838. I was on my way home for a visit. On my return I walked by the trail from Flint to Saginaw, carrying my trunk on my back. Again about the 25th of December, 1838, I walked over it on my way to Detroit to settle with the auditor of the State. Among my duties as assistant engineer was that of commissary of subsistence, and necessitated my expending some money for the State. In settling my accounts on the first clay of January, 1839, the auditor disputed an item of six boxes of soap in my bill, and insisted upon my taking the item out, saying that soap was a "luxury" that the State could not allow. I told him that we were "allowed brandy, whiskey and stock ale," and that I thought soap just as necessary as liquors, and then occasionally when we forgot what was on our tin dishes last, we washed them, we also washed our own clothing and required soap for these purposes. He finally audited my account and I returned by stage to Flint and then walked the old trail to Saginaw. During the fall of 1837 and the winter of 1837 and 1838, the line of the canal was located, and early in 1838 the contract for building the entire work was let to Smock h Little, and Byron Smock, son of the contractor, came from Detroit and went onto the work as superintendent for the contractors. The work of construction went along finely, until October, 1839, when all of the timber for the locks was out and on the ground, and about one mile of the earth work completed. Financial embarrassment of the State stopped the work, the laborers were discharged without pay and threatened to mob all

**PROGRAM – MGS ANNUAL
MEETING – MAY 19, 2004
Faye Ebach**

Speaker for the evening was Shirley J. Hodges, professional genealogist. She presented a very interesting program titled "Wither Thou Goest", concerning the challenges genealogists face in researching female ancestors. She discussed some of the experiences she has had searching for information regarding her female ancestors. She recommended examining the times and places in which female ancestors lived. For example, in previous centuries women frequently married and in essence lost whatever personal identity they had when they assumed their husbands surname.

She talked about the importance of historical perspectives, e.g. legal status, social customs, relationships, family naming patterns, vital records, land and tax records, wills and probate records. She also discussed the importance of census records, church records, family bibles, family heirlooms, journals, and so forth. As an example, sometimes baptismal and marriage records provide the maiden names of female godparents or witnesses which can be a boon to a genealogist. The task may be difficult but with persistence and sometimes a little bit of luck answers can be found.

**MGS Trip to Salt Lake City
by Faye Ebach**

Several members have requested that the MGS plan another trip to the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City (SLC). After several discussions with Jo Brines, chair of the April 2002 MGS trip to SLC, we would like to schedule a trip during the Spring of 2005.

During our recent brief stop in SLC (while driving back from California) we talked with the Sales Director for the Best Western Plaza Hotel. This hotel is located approximately 100 yards from the entrance to the Family History Library and across the street from the Mormon Square. To avoid conflict with the April MGS meeting, a Mormon Church convocation and Easter weekend, we are proposing the week of April 26 to May 4. The hotel will

set aside rooms for that time period.

For those of us who have traveled to SLC before, we totally agree that it is a fruitful week of focused research. Microfilms, census records, textbook references, microfiche – all are readily available and waiting to be accessed. Professional genealogists along with able volunteers are available to answer questions as well as provide assistance

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**DAUGHTERS OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION
LINEAGE RESEARCH
WORKSHOP**

Saturday November 6, 2004

2:00 - 4:00 PM

**Grace A. Dow Memorial
Library Lounge**

A LINEAGE RESEARCH WORKSHOP sponsored by the JOHN ALDEN CHAPTER, NSDAR will be held Saturday November 6, 2004 in the Library Lounge. This workshop is FREE and open to prospective members and ALL others who wish to research their genealogy. Reservations are not necessary. Chapter members will be available to help with genealogy questions and provide information and assistance with research.

Bring in any useful data about your family, such as birth, marriage and death certificates; Bible records; newspaper articles and obituaries; land, will and probate records; census records and pension records.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) was chartered by act of Congress on May 5, 1896 creating a corporate body for patriotic, historical and educational purposes, perpetuating the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence. John Alden Chapter of the NSDAR was organized April 3, 1922 with Mrs. H.H. (Grace Ball) Dow as the organizing regent. The name for John Alden Chapter was chosen to honor Dr. Herbert H. Dow who was a direct descendent of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. Today the chapter numbers 46 members. The Regent for 2004 is Carolyn Croel Graham. Additional information about the workshop can be obtained by contacting Kathy Bohl at 989-839-9016.

Books Recently Added to Library
History of Tuscola and Bay Counties, Michigan
Portrait & Biographical Record of Saginaw and Bay Counties, MI Vol. I & II
History of Ingham & Eaton Counties, MI
History of Genesee County, MI, Vol I & II
History of St. Clair County, MI
St. Clair County, MI Vol I & II.

Of Interest

The Elgin County, Ontario has transcribed all the inscriptions on all known gravestones in Elgin County. These records are indexed, printed and on deposit at the OGS library in New York. A copy is also available at the George Thorman Room at St. Thomas Public Library in St. Thomas, Ontario. The Elgin branch of the OGS is posting all of the transcriptions at the Elgin County web site. Go to www.elginogs.ca/cemeterytranscriptions for links that have been posted to date. This is a wonderful resource!

The society has volunteers who will answer specific research questions and conduct limited research requests in the published Elgin County sources to the best of their ability. They accept research requests either by postal service or e-mail. To help process e-mail queries, please indicate in the mail subject line the name you are inquiring about

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2004-2005

The collection of MGS membership dues for 2004-2005 will conclude at the September 15th MGS meeting. The MGS treasurer and Membership chairs have been collecting dues since last May, 2004, although there has been no specific request. If your dues are not paid by the end of September, this may be the last Pioneer Record you will receive. Dues may also be paid by mail to: Membership Chair, Midland Genealogical Society, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. Dues for an individual are \$14.00; for a family they are \$17.50.

The Latest Obituary Book is Ready for Printing - Reserve Yours Now

"Midland County Michigan Obituary Index 1951-1982"

We are gathering a list of purchasers by way of fliers to libraries and genealogical societies. In order to minimize overstock we will plan to limit printing based on the number of promised customers. We also are making a list of Midland area people who want to buy the set. The price has been set by the MGS Board at \$40 for the set of two books.

This index includes all of the obituaries extracted from Midland Daily Newspaper of Midland, Michigan for the years 1951 through 1982. Due to the number of entries the list had to be printed as a two volume set. The first volume contains last names from A to L and the second volume contains last names M to Z. There are 30,908 total entries.

Virginia Parsons did the bulk of the work for this book by extracting the obituary data from 28 years of the Midland Daily News. Nancy Lackie extracted the obituary data from clippings for the last four years.

The typing of the data into the computer was accomplished by Marge Anger, Janet Crozier, Fran Longsdorf, Marcia Brandle, Kathy Bohl, Walt Rupprecht, Mary Grace Lenz, Bob Mass, Sheldon Levy, Gloria Kunding, and Nancy Lackie.

Proofreaders were Joanne Rupprecht, Mary Grace Lenz, Jo Brines, Doug Applegath, Niki Hoyle, Elva Blymyer, Ester Peters, Keith Mead, Barbara Fox, Ron Snyder, and Walter G Bennett.

Most of the obituaries entries in this book are in the form: last name, first name with initials and titles, month and day, year, and page in the Midland Daily News. When given in the obituary, the maiden names were enclosed in parenthesis and listed after the first name. The maiden names were electronically extracted and converted to a maiden name, "see also", married last name format and alphabetized with the primary entries. There were 3,893 maiden names that were electronically extracted.

Earlier the Midland Genealogical Society published the books: "Midland County Michigan Obituary Index 1872-1927" (1994) and "Midland County Michigan Obituary Index 1928-1950" (2001).

Reserve your copy at the Genealogy desk at Grace A. Dow Memorial Library in Midland, Michigan. - Bob Mass, editor

UPCOMING SEMINARS

"Search & Research" - September 11, 2004 10a.m. - 4p.m. Sponsored by the Berrian County Genealogical Society and the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Southwest Michigan Chapter. The seminar will be located at the Stevensville United Methodist Church - Faith Hall at 5506 Ridge

October is Family History Month

The Library of Michigan and the Michigan Genealogical Council is sponsoring a genealogical seminar to be held at the Michigan Library and Historical Center in Lansing on Saturday, October 26, 2004. Included is a tour of the library. Activities run from 9a.m. until 4p.m. Pre-Registration is required by October 2nd due to a capacity limit of 225 persons. You must pre-register for any sessions you plan to attend. For additional information see MGC website at www.rootsweb.com/~mimgc/

SLC trip 2005 continued with research. Library hours are designed to allow for research from dawn until dusk with a day of R & R on Sunday.

To quote Jo Brines, "It is a great week to be with genealogy friends - to share successes, failures and dead-ends, and also gain new ideas on how to approach a problem." As an added bonus, the hotel provides complimentary genealogy seminars for groups larger than 12 staying at the Plaza.

So check your calendar and set aside the last week in April 2005 for an exciting trip to SLC.

BOOKS FOR SALE

The following books, published by the Midland Genealogical Society, are available for sale at any meeting, at the Midland Genealogy Room, Grace A. Dow Public Library or by mail. Price of each book is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling.

Midland County Obituary Index (#1) - 1872-1927. The book consists of 16,000 abstractions covering 55 years from the Midland Times (1872 -1875), The Midland Sun (1892 -1924) and the Midland Republican (1881-1927). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches.

Midland County Obituary Index (#2) - 1928-1950. The book consists of 16,000 abstractions covering 22 years from the Midland Republican (1928 - 1937) and the Midland Daily News (1937 - 1950). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches. Note: Both Obituary Books (#1 & #2) are available as a package of \$35.00.

Midland Pioneers, edited by Ora Flaningham. This book is a compilation of the most interesting genealogical, historical and humorous reprints from newspapers published in the Pioneer Record. The book is 6 by 9 inches, soft bound, 259 pages. (Out of print, but orders being compiled at Genealogy desk.)

To ORDER A BOOK write: Midland Genealogical Society BOOK: Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.

Great-grandpa Came Through Ellis Island?

Several months ago, I found an interesting family website. Their immigrant ancestors had settled in the same county as mine, and we shared some of the same distant cousins. Their family's history was fascinating and seemed to be well researched. It even included a family pie recipe! Yet, as I read through it, one line seemed to bother me—"After their quarantine period on Ellis Island..."

It told of two ancestors who had come from Germany and worked four years in New York to pay for their tickets and those of several others who came later. I checked their date of arrival and found it was in 1880—too early to have come through Ellis Island, which opened in 1892. Where were they processed?

As North America's busiest seaport, New York City became the country's most famous port for immigration during the 1800s and early 1900s. Immigrants coming to America before August 1855 were released onto the docks of Manhattan, which covered a three or four mile stretch along the banks of the East and Hudson Rivers. Since this was a large area to cover, it was difficult for protection to be provided for them. These new arrivals became the victims of robbers, prostitutes, and swindlers.

The boarding house runners were the worst of the thieves. They lured immigrants to dilapidated establishments—sometimes by snatching something of value or a child if the family resisted their pitch. They were forced into following them and overcharged for lodging and baggage storage. If the family could not or would not pay, they were turned empty-handed into the street while their possessions were held as security.

The German and Irish Emigrant Societies were formed by some of the very earliest immigrants living in

New York City to protect newcomers of their nationality. These organizations convinced the New York State Legislature to create the Board of Commissioners of Emigration in 1847. State and city politicians, as well as members of both societies, served on the board.

The board was responsible for establishing the Emigrant's Hospital and Refuge on Ward's Island. With the increase in immigration and problems on the docks, the Commission of Emigration decided to establish a single receiving station where immigrants could be properly inspected and also protected from thieves. At this period in time, immigration was handled by the state instead of the federal government.

Originally built as a fort between 1808 and 1811, Castle Garden was chosen as the location for the new immigrant receiving station. It was part of a chain of forts built to defend New York harbor during the War of 1812 but never saw action. In 1817, it was renamed Castle Clinton in honor of the mayor of New York City, Dewitt Clinton. Later it was used as a restaurant and named Castle Garden. A roof was added in 1840, and it became an opera house and theater until it was closed in 1854.

Castle Garden was situated on an island reached by a timber causeway and drawbridge at the tip of lower Manhattan in Battery Park, and opened August 1, 1855, as the first receiving center in the U.S. On August 3, 1855, the first immigrants released from three quarantined ships were processed. During its thirty-five years of operation, continuous changes occurred there.

Immigrant processing began with a health inspector who checked for illness aboard a quarantined ship. After the inspection, the ship was allowed to dock at Castle Garden. Once inside, a medical officer again examined the immigrants for anyone ill the health inspector might have missed during quarantine. Their baggage was also checked. Anyone

sick was transferred to the hospital on Ward's Island.

Next the immigrants went to the rotunda for registration where the name, nationality, former residence, and intended destination were recorded for each person.

Afterwards they were directed to agents of railroad companies. There they could buy tickets to their destinations without being defrauded or subjected to extortion.

Immigrants staying in the New York City vicinity arranged for baggage delivery in another department. At another area, those with gold or silver could have it exchanged for U.S. currency by three exchange brokers closely supervised by the Commission of Emigration.

Afterwards the immigrants gathered in the rotunda, and those who had friends or relatives waiting for them at the entrance to Castle Garden were notified and directed to them. Those with letters of funds waiting for them were also notified. Another department included clerks who were able to write letters in foreign languages for immigrants wishing to send one to someone at a distance. The immigrant, if destitute, could find temporary housing in the buildings on Ward's Island.

Properly licensed and certified boarding house keepers were allowed in the rotunda to solicit immigrants planning to stay in New York City for some time. These places were regulated and closely supervised to prevent earlier abuses. A building near the entrance was built in 1868 as a labor exchange to assist immigrants at no charge in finding employment.

In 1876 a fire destroyed much of Castle Garden, but it was quickly rebuilt and remained in operation. As time went on and more immigrants began to arrive, the site proved inadequate. Swindlers routinely exploited immigrants upon leaving by selling them phony tickets to various destinations, taking their

Continued on page 7

Great-Grandpa (Cont)

money for non-existent jobs, or using other ways to part them from their money. Castle Garden was closed on April 18, 1890.

The examination of immigrants was transferred to the Barge Office where the federal government took over control of immigration. From April 19, 1890, until January 1, 1892, the Barge Office located in the southeast corner of Battery Park served as the temporary station until the new station at Ellis Island was opened. Castle Garden became a national monument in August 1946 and was, once again, renamed Castle Clinton.

The new station at Ellis Island was three stories high and made of wood. It was capable of handling ten thousand immigrants a day.

However, a fire broke out, and it burnt to the ground just before midnight on June 14, 1897. No records were destroyed since they were kept elsewhere. All other administrative records for 1855-1890 were lost. Once again the old Barge Office was used as a processing center for three and a half years until the new Ellis Island building was constructed.

In 1924 the National Origins Act went into effect, which greatly reduced the number of immigrants arriving in the United States. Those who did come had to apply for visas at the U.S. Consulate in their own countries and present them upon arrival. They also received a medical inspection there. After 1924 the only people who were detained at Ellis Island were those who had paperwork problems. Ellis Island

closed in 1954.

Since New York City used several locations as receiving stations in the 1800s, anyone planning to write a family history should pay attention to the chart below and not automatically assume their relatives came through Ellis Island.

Processing Areas for the Port of New York City

Dates of Operation
Place of Processing

Before Aug. 1855
Docks of Manhattan

Aug. 1, 1855 – April 18, 1890
Castle Garden

April 19, 1890 – Dec. 31, 1891
Barge Office

Jan. 1, 1892 – June 13, 1897
Ellis Island

June 14, 1897 – December 16, 1900
Barge Office

December 17, 1900 – 1924 - Closed
in 1954

Ellis Island
Main Sources:
www.immigrantships.net and
www.ancestry.com
Contributed by Gloria Kunding

Web Sites of Interest

<http://www.Moytura.com/grosse-ile.htm> - contains information on Irish family who may have immigrated to Canada during the famine years.

<http://users.skynet.be/sky60754/genealbe> - Belgian Ancestry

www.genealogienetz.de/misc/geoserv.html - German Town Locator

www.familychronicle.com/dating.htm - Website on Photographs
Excellent information on dating photographs

<http://www.arkivverket.no/english/about.html> - National Archives of Norway

<http://www.my-ged.com> - A free Site that allows a search of over 7

<http://www.hu.umich.edu/m/micounty/>

The Michigan County Histories collection is a collaborative effort of Michigan Council of Library Directors. The collection is projected to provide access to 192 histories dating from 1866 to 1926. There are 172 volumes in 146 titles currently online. The collection is made possible, in part, through a generous Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/tcrhtml/tcrhome.html>

Library of Congress has posted a new digital collection of Civil War documents on its American Memory Web site.

Arizona Records Online

Arizona State Library Archives department and the Mesa Regional Family History Center teamed up to put 400,000 birth and death records online - a free searchable database, including images of certificates compatible with Adobe Acrobat. Births from 1887-1928 and deaths from 1878-1953. Arizona seals birth certificates for 75 years after issue and death certificates for 50 years. Site: <http://genealogy.az.gov>.

From the Editor

Welcome to a new year of the Pioneer Record. The PR has a new look and articles that you should find very informative. The focus of the newsletter is to provide genealogical and historical information about and surrounding Midland county. I am looking for contributions from our readers. If you have a story that you would like to contribute, please e-mail them to wgbennett@chartermi.net or mail to: PIONEER RECORD, Midland Genealogical Society, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640

Recollections (cont)

parties connected with the contract. They finally left after a big scare of the people of Saginaw, which was the end of the Saginaw and Grand River canal. The canal as projected was twenty miles long with ninety feet width and nine feet depth of water. In traveling between Saginaw and our canal work we were compelled to use canoes, there being no roads or trails and the country was low, flat and wet, with numerous streams and bayous to cross that made it almost impossible to get there excepting by the rivers.

When I returned to Saginaw after my visit home in the fall of 1838, I found two of our engineering party there, shaking with the ague, and the following day I began shaking too. After a few days we concluded to go to our camp in the woods at Bad River. We started from Saginaw in a canoe early in the morning and by noon got to the mouth of Bad river, where we found the river so full of ice and snow that we couldn't force the canoe through it. We drew the canoe out on the bank and started to walk. The bayous forced us back from the river and it being cloudy and dark, we soon lost our points of compass, and traveled until dark without finding our camp. We lay down on the ground for the night and to add to our discomforts, it soon began raining, and rained all night. It was the latter part of November and quite cold. The next morning, wet, cold and nearly starved, we started at daylight and traveled the whole day until dark, and found no camp. After an hour's work we succeeded in getting a fire with flint and punk. We gathered a lot of wood and had a comfortable fire through the night. In the morning we started again at daylight and traveled hard until nearly dark. when Winthrop, one of our party said, "If you take us back to where we sat down on the log to rest, I can

go to the fire where we stayed last night." I objected, but they both insisted upon going back. Feeling a little democratic at the time, I allowed the majority to rule, and soon took the party to the place Winthrop had designated, and then turned the lead over to Winthrop going some way behind, to see the course he would take. We traveled for an hour and came to the fire, I went about two hundred feet away from the fire, and found the place where I had given Winthrop the lead. Our third night out was just before us, we were wet, cold and hungry, three days had passed since we tasted food. I didn't sleep any that night, for I began to think that possibly we were lost, and I felt a little uneasy about the situation. It was the longest night that I ever experienced. About an hour before daylight I was standing by the fire trying to dry my clothes and warm myself. I noticed a red appearance in the horizon and thought it was caused by the sun coming up. I called the other boys and we all felt certain that it was in the east. We knew that if we could travel east we would come to the Shiawassee marshes and could then find our way back to Saginaw. I selected three trees in range with the red appearance in the horizon, and ran a line by keeping three trees in range, determined that we should not stay a third night by that fire. About noon we found a thorn apple tree loaded with fruit. We stripped the tree. filling our pockets and hats with the fruit, and went on our way rejoicing. A little before night I discovered that the ground fell off to our left, and I left the boys to watch our line, and went down about three hundred feet and came to the bank of Bad River. I called the boys and we examined the surrounding closely to be certain that we were right, for things were rather mixed. There was a large tree turned up at the roots, laying across the river that we had

drawn a canoe over a hundred times, and we felt certain that we could not be mistaken in the tree, but as it now appeared to us the roots were on the wrong side of the river. and we wondered if some fellow had been there and changed ends with it. We were about two miles from where we left our canoe, and seven miles from our camp. There was no current in the stream, and we had some discussion as to which way was up the river and which down. We concluded that the tree was just as we had always known it, the roots on the north side of the stream, and knowing that the river flowed easterly, we started up it. We soon came to a branch of Bad River that we had to cross, and found it frozen over, the ice about half an inch thick. I took a club and went in, swimming against the ice, and breaking it with the club. I got about half way across and the cold water forced me out. Winthrop then went in and succeeded in getting across. "Jimmie" a little Irishman of our party could not swim, so I helped him to get some long poles and we laid them out on the ice and "Jimmie" . crawled out on his hands and knees on the poles. And by hitching first one pole then the other, he succeeded in getting about two thirds of the way over, when his poles slipped, apart and "Jimmie" went in through the ice. Winthrop and I helped him out, and we went on to another branch of Bad River that we crossed in the same way, only that "Jimmie" got safely over. We now had five miles before us to camp, with a good dry Indian trail on top of a high sandy ridge all the way. The joy at getting in satisfied all hunger, and we all went to bed with out eating.

During the winter of 1837 and 1838 I made a survey of the Saginaw River from deep water in the bay to the head of the Saginaw, thence up the Shiawassee and Bad River to the canal,

Continued on page 9

Recollections (Cont)

cutting holes in the ice and taking soundings, showing the channel and depth of water at all points. There were no residences along the Saginaw, Shiawassee or Bad River at that time, excepting at Saginaw City and one or two along the Saginaw, one, an old, dilapidated shanty, located, I think, where Bay City now is. There was no East Saginaw, or Bay City, or West Bay City then, and but one saw mill on the river below Saginaw City, located I think in what is now south Bay City. The people had hardly learned of the millions of wealth in the pine timber of the Saginaw valley, and no one thought of the salt that lay only a few feet under the surface, waiting the enterprise and energy of the people to develop into millions of wealth.

I was never more surprised in my life than on my return to the Saginaw valley in 1882, after forty three years' absence found Saginaw City grown from a little hamlet to a beautiful city; East Saginaw transformed from a swamp in a wilderness to a large city, and Bay City built up from nothing to a beautiful and populous city. All of them with their fine public buildings substantial business blocks of stone and brick, their water works paved streets and beautiful flagged walks, their street railways, commodious school buildings and palatial residences, and the Saginaw River spanned with a score of substantial iron bridges and the river's bank lined with mills, piles of lumber, salt blocks and manufactories, all of this together with the four or five railroads, taxed to their utmost capacity in transporting to market the lumber, salt and

manufactured goods together with the products of the rich and well cultivated farms that abound in and surround the Saginaw valley. This was beyond my conception, and when I saw it I could hardly credit my eyes. The clearing the of the wilderness into well cultivated farms, and system of drainage tending to the improvement of health of the country, makes the Saginaw valley of today as desirable a place to reside in, either for health, pleasure or business, as America affords.

With high regards, yours very truly


E.L. Wentz

MGS 2004-05 Budget & 2003-04 Financial Status

	Income				Expenses		
	Actual 03-04	Budget 03-04	BUDGET 04-05		Actual 03-04	Budget 03-04	BUDGET 04-05
Dues	\$1,247.00	\$1,647.00	\$1,630.00	Membership			
Interest				Rent	\$175.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Interest-CD	22.74	75.00	25.00	Program Expense	75.00	200.00	200.00
Interest-Chk	2.41	12.00	5.00	Hospitality	6.62	10.00	15.00
Interest-MM	14.72	40.00	20.00	Membership Committee	160.29	148.00	50.00
Total Interest	39.87	127.00	50.00	Officers Expenses	35.00	35.00	
Projects				Books for the Library	600.00	600.00	600.00
Research	182.00	250.00	150.00	Member Memorials	28.00	25.00	25.00
First Family	105.00	50.00	100.00	Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	
Obit Books 1 & 2	164.00	300.00	150.00	State Fees	10.00	10.00	10.00
Obit Book 3 Vol. 1 & 2	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	Michigan Genealogical Council			
NARA	54.00	100.00	100.00	Dues	28.00	28.00	
Misc/Donations	55.00	177.00	50.00	Council Meeting Mileage	56.50	130.00	129.00
Stamp Donations	387.88	300.00	380.00	Board Meeting Mileage	49.50	120.00	99.00
Pins	125.00	600.00	100.00	Projects			
Total Projects	560.00	877.00	1,550.00	Research	20.00	20.00	
Subscriptions				Obituary Book 2	0.00	0.00	
Pioneer Record	12.00	12.00	14.00	Obituary Books Shipping		20.00	10.00
Total Income	\$2,371.75	\$3,563.00	\$3,724.00	Abrams Gene Collection		0.00	200.00
Assets				NARA	100.00	100.00	
Checking Acct Balance	1,208.89	797.00 (6/8/04)		Midland Co. Twp. Hist Records			250.00
Money Market Balance	3,881.47	4,629.23 (5/31/04)		SLC Trip Planning		50.00	
Certificate of Deposit	2,500.00	2,500.00		Pins	556.50	600.00	0.00
Total Assets	7,590.00	7,926.23		New Obit Book #3, Vol. 1 & 2			1,521.00
				Pioneer Record			
				Printing	746.19	810.00	750.00
				Postage	387.88	350.00	380.00
				Other	100.00	100.00	
				Total Expenses	\$2,851.48	\$3,506.00	\$4,772.00

Pioneer Record

Midland, MI 48640
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Grace A. Dow Memorial Library
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Information about Midland Genealogical Society

The MGS meets on the 3rd Wednesday of Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr. & May at 7:00 PM 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 \$14.00 for single and \$17.50 for a couple and can be paid after July 1, but must be paid by Nov. 25, to continue receiving the Pioneer Record. Dues may be paid at any MGS meeting or may be sent to the Membership Chair, Midland Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr.,