

# PIONEER RECORD

MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol V No. 4

September 1985

## *The President Speaks*

The start of a new program year is a good time for reflection on what we are and what makes us tick. It occurred to me as I thought about it, that genealogists are probably busier on our "off" season than we are during the regular schedule. Summer is a great time for traveling to far places, attending family reunions, prowling about unfamiliar courthouses and cemeteries, etc.

Our society is a collection of individuals at all experience levels from beginning genealogists to collectors of 15-generation pedigrees, but we share common goals and reactions from frustration to triumph (and sometimes the other way around!). All of us are convinced, of course, that pursuing genealogy and family history is the most fascinating leisure time activity anyone can take up.

We have some fine programs lined up for the year ahead. I hope all of you will be there on the 3rd Wednesday night of each month. Bring along a friend---introduce someone new to the joys of genealogy.

*Willie*

## *New Officers*

President.....	Wilma Diesen
1st Vice Pres./Program.....	Audrey Pomranky
2nd Vice Pres./Membership.....	Esme Gehoski
Secretary/Corresponding and Recording.....	Evelyn Fagley
Treasurer.....	Jo Brines
Historian.....	Lucille King
State Delegates.....	Carolyn Bacon and Nancy Lackie
Library Volunteers....	Jo Brines, Nancy Lackie, Maxine McCullen and Esme Gehoski

### Chairpersons

Book Committee:.....	Ed Birkhimer
Surnames: Local & State:.....	Norma Furlo

Program Committee.....Ruth Ann Casadonte, Rose Marie Anderson and Marion Berry

## Editorial Notes

Summer is over and with it we will remember the miles we put on visiting relatives, going to reunions, court houses, cemeteries and the new friends we met along the way.

This year I can add land records to my list of vacation accomplishments, thanks to our spring seminar. Land records are the only proof I have that two of my ancestors were in the middle west as early as I previously had thought they were. The land records I found show they were here even earlier than I had supposed and that one was very wealthy. I also learned the proper name of one maternal ancestor. Her name in her husband's will was her nick name.

Thanks Les, Ed and Ralph for the superb lessons you taught at the seminar. That was the most I've ever gotten out of a lowly dollar bill. I promise to check on land records early on in every search I make.

*Norma*

### LOAN CHARGE STUDY

As part of a grant-funded study of inter-library loans, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin will experiment with charging out-of-state libraries a \$5.00 fee for each request for materials, beginning this July. The Board of Curators will review the results in 1986 before deciding whether to make the fee permanent. Many similar institutions are charging up to \$15 for such loans. Note that this service applies only to Interlibrary Loan to out-of-state libraries. (Individuals may not order microfilm/microfiche from the SHSW.)

## Census Films

Nancy Lackie informs us that all census films will come from the American Genealogical Lending Library, in Utah. The rental fee will be \$2.75 per roll and renewals at 50¢ per week. You can buy a roll of film for \$11.00 and if you have lots of relatives or heavy research in an area, this might be the way to go.

## Program

September - Summer Experiences Plus Tips  
 October - Ask the Panel\*  
 November - Pilgrim

September 18 - Summer Experiences Plus Tips  
 October 16 - Questions for the Panel\*  
 November 2 - Member Book Exchange  
 November 20 - Thanksgiving Pilgrim Program  
 December - No meeting  
 January 15 - Civil War Night - Gary Van Riper  
 February 19 - Organizing Family Reunions - Panel

\* Questions may pertain to any segment of genealogy. They must be sent to Audrey Pomranky, 857 E. Olson Rd, Midland, 48640, by October 1.

A Day in Salt Lake City  
by Bari Birkhimer

The first thing to be said is that a day is not long enough to spend in the genealogical library in Salt Lake City. However, we had one day to spend there, and made the most of it. We read in the guidebook that the hours were 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays and we managed to arrive in the city late on Monday afternoon, find a campground, and have some dinner and a shower and make a quick trip to survey the parking situation in the area of the library. It did open at 8:00 so we arranged to get there close to the opening on Tuesday morning.

After looking at their slide show which explains the use of the facility, we were given a brief, but very helpful guided tour during which we were told that most people find the place to begin research is in the "family group" section. Along one long room there are files and files of family groups which have been submitted by members doing research on their families. There are two sections; one contains the old sheets and the other sheets submitted more recently. All of these are also found on microfilm and the ones submitted since 1978 are only on film. They are filed alphabetically in binders and patrons find the sheets in which they are interested and take them to the librarians who remove them from the binder, make copies and return them to the binder which the patron is asked to replace on the shelf.

After working feverishly in this section for a while I began to realize I was beginning to feel a little hungry, but imagine my surprise when I looked at my watch and found it was already 3:30 PM! I took a little while to finish what I was started on, but really wanted to see a little more of the available material, so I reluctantly moved to another floor. There was far more there than I could possibly look into in a day! We did discover that the guidebook had been remiss--on Tuesday through Thursday they are open till 10:00 PM, but we did need to take time out for a break and a meal.

Other things available there are family histories in book form and on film, town and county records on film, IGI on microfiche, and many people willing to assist you in finding what you need to continue your search. There are over 180,000 volumes to use in the library and over 1,400,000 rolls of film. Copies are reasonably priced and copy machines are available on all floors.

One feature which was unusual was on the floor for foreign research. They claim to have there people from the various countries who can translate records written in foreign languages. I did not use this area, but it would seem that this could be very useful for someone doing research in another country.

We both enjoyed our day there and we do hope to get back another time when we have a few more days to spend.

## *Queries*

If anyone is researching COON(S), KOON(S), ROON(S), Please contact:  
Esme Gehoski, 4964 S. Carter Rd, Auburn, MI 48611

Need help finding Olive Augusta SCOTT, b. 1848, NY, d. 1922, Evert, Osceola Co., MI. Need 1st husband \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ VOORHEES. Believed to have married in Midland County, 1865-1871.

Note: Olive SCOTT's parents were Charles and Carlina Maine SCOTT. They lived in Wayne Co. N.Y. until coming to MI in 1860's. Olive married Mr. VOORHEES and had two children by him. One was John Austin VOORHEES, b. 1874 Osceola Co., MI. Jodi Voorhees, P.O. Box 683, Arbuckle, Ca 95912

# 87 Letters

The following is a letter written to A. H. Stoddard, Kalamazoo, Michigan. It is postmarked Hope, Mi Sept 4, 1894 and is from Carrie Quain.

There are several of these letters at the library, and they give an idea of what life was like for the early settlers in Midland County. There is also a letter that tells who all the names are and how they are related to Carrie.

Edenville, Sept 2nd 1894

Dear Brother

As usual I have been very negligent about answering your letter which I recieved and read with pleasure. For awhile after we settled down to our life on a farm (or in the woods I had better say) the weather was so extremely hot I did not feel like doing anything I was not obliged to and with cooler weather came the blackberries, then I was too busy to write to anybody. I helped to pick and canned 44 qts beside drying a lot. the men were too busy with their work to pick any more and I got tired out so I did not get as many as I would have liked. I never saw such large berries grow wild or such long vines as they grow on. I often stood up on a big log and picked over my head. the red raspberries were also very nice and plenty. We are all well as usual and getting along quite as well as we could expect. our garden all or nearly all dried up but our corn and potatoes have stood the drought extremely well considering how late they were planted. We have had no rain worth mentioning in a long time and the fires are raging all around us. our place is nearly all burned over but Lou thinks it has done more good than harm. the place has been lumbered over so many times that the woods were full of tree tops. the smoke is very disagreeable and has been for over two weeks. Last tuesday night we were surrounded by fire except the river bank on one side. we did not sleep very much but excaped without losing anything. Lou and Elvin kept the roof of the house wet and I as usual did nothing but look on and see the rest work. the fires are still burning around us and the smoke makes my eyes smart. we have a horse and cart now and Elvin has a dog. so he is quite happy. I can not say that I like it here but when it gets cleared up and neighbors near I think it will be very pleasant. I am trying to coax toland to come out and get him some land near us but hardly think he will for awhile any way. I intend to go out there Fair time and did intend to go to the State Fair but have given that up. I have tried the third pen since I began this letter and am making poor work with them all so I will close for this time. Kind regards to all especially yourself and Jane. write soon as convenient for I would like to hear from you.

As ever your Sister Carrie

*Welcome, New Members!*

631-1439	83. BURD, Nancy	1007 Trinity Court, Midland	48640
631-4353	84. DRAVES, Fenton & Jo	5807 Sturgeon Rd, Midland	48640

JAMES WHITMAN DEATH RECALLS FACT THAT FATHER WAS  
COUNTY'S FIRST PERMANENT WHITE SETTLER

With the passing of James Whitman of Lee township Midlanders were recalling this week how closely his life had been knit into the early history of the county. From his birth until death--86 years--Mr. Whitman lived within the environs of the county and saw a timbered wilderness converted into a farming and industrial center. He was credited with being the oldest native resident, his father John A. Whitman having carved a clearing in the wilderness near Smith's Crossing in 1836, to become the first permanent white settler.

It was May 31, 1843 that James Whitman came into the world in a log cabin in the little clearing near Smith's Crossing, then in Saginaw County, but today in Midland County. The present city of Midland was known as "The Forks" and three homes had been thrown up from rough logs. Joseph Townsend lived in one, having arrived in 1842 and Charles Fitzhugh built the other while a third was constructed by a man named Alma according to the story related by Mr. Whitman a few months before his death.

Lack of neighbors in those days meant that the young lad had to depend chiefly upon Indians for his playmates. He became as proficient in the art of arrow making and use of bow and arrow as the redskin youngsters. "They were good neighbors", said the aged pioneer of the Chippewa tribes living here at that time. He delighted in relating how Chief Shanabasee and his braves came to their house, when everyone was sick with fever and ague, cut the wood, husked corn and helped dig potatoes during the emergency and then refused to take any pay from his father.

The rivers and forests teemed with fish and game and he could sit by the hour and tell of the hunting, fishing, canoeing and playing with Indian lads. For several years Mr. Whitman worked for the Tittabawassee Boom Company and he often said he rode down the stream on the first raft of logs ever dumped into the turbulent waters. The raft was of "crib" design and was sent down stream from the territory near Smith's Crossing known as "the Bluffs".

In an early day there was a large Indian settlement near the present city and Mr. Whitman often recalled seeing as many as 100 birch bark canoes on the river at one time. Deer travelled in large droves, as many as 100 together not being unusual here. The great sturgeon was present in the river in great numbers and Mr. Whitman often told of seeing an 100 lb. fish traded for a plug of tobacco. The Indians caught and dried and smoked the fish for winter use when they came up the river to spawn about June 1.

Charles Rodd operated the first store in Midland and it was located west of the present Dow Chemical plant. The first saw mill was on Snake Creek. Ryanell Chaffee brought the first mail to Midland from Saginaw by pony in 1857 and Mr. Whitman said this was one of the big events in that early day.

For many years he was a prosperous farmer and owned a business block in Midland.

89

On New Years day at Trail, a little town in Holmes county, Ohio, four brothers, sons of John Somers, married four sisters, daughters of James Hockstettler. The proposition that if two brothers can marry two sisters, why can't four brothers marry four sisters was settled. All the neighbors were invited, and it took the minister one hour to perform the Episcopal service for the four couples.

120 YEARS AGO

from Vevay Indiana Newspaper - May 24, 1984

Nearly all the young men in Vevay, who had not previously enlisted, have gone into the 100 days service.

A little of the wood, boxes and trash cleaned from the streets and sidewalk wouldn't injure the appearance of our town in the least.

Craig and Cotton townships have furnished nearly all the men for the company from this county in the 100 day service.

Last Sunday afternoon a lady named Mrs. Mary L. Burton, was drowned at Florence. She was stepping from a skiff to eht wharfboat, when one of her feet slipped and she fell in the river, her head striking the wharfboat, when she sunk and was not seen to rise again. She had a child in her arms at the time but threw it on the wharfboat and it was saved.

The rebel prisoners captured within the past four days, are quartered in an open field about 5 miles south of Fredericksburg. They are so numerous that at a distance they have the appearance of a division of soldiers, ready to move forward into action. A strong guard surrounds them.

MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
Grace A. Dow Memorial Library  
1710 W. St. Andrews Drive  
Midland, Michigan 48640



All meetings of MGS are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise specified...SEE YOU THERE!