

# PIONEER RECORD

MIDLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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April 1986

SAMUEL O. ODELL, MRS. IDA COONS COUNTY'S OLDEST

by Marjorie Lefler

Midland Daily News

8 June 1950

"The Midland Chamber of Commerce today announced Samuel O. Odell, 92, Midland, and Mrs. Ida Coons, 85, Coleman, have been selected as Honorary King and Queen of Midland County's Centennial.

"The Chamber has carried on a countywide search for the oldest living man and woman who were born in Midland County and who are still living in Midland County.

"Mr. Odell and Mrs. Coons will receive special honor during the Centennial and will also receive special gifts from businessmen and the Chamber.

Saturday afternoon, they will be honored in a special place in the huge parade. The Chamber committee was debating today whether to offer them a ride in a 1950 convertible or a 1923 Studebaker touring that Trombly Motor Sales is shining up for the parade.

"On Sunday afternoon, as a part of the 1p.m. Old Timers Club Meeting at the band shell, the Honorary King and Queen will come in for special recognition.

"SAMUEL O. ODELL - The new little settlement of Midland was scarcely out of swaddling clothes in the year 1857 when November 1 marked the birth of a lusty young son called Samuel at the pioneer home of Loren and Hannah Odell, located on Bullock Creek.

"In this year of its 100th birthday celebration, Midland is proud to honor this alert and still active native born son, Samuel O. Odell, 108 West Buttles street as oldest resident and still is dwelling within the boundary lines of the county.

"Odell, now in his 93rd summer has clear-cut recollections back to the days of his childhood on the banks of Bullock Creek where Indians camped and roamed through the territory, and when settlers were few and far between. His parents, who came from New York, he says, purchased their acres through 'Eddy and Ave--' in Saginaw, and moved on it 1848. They found just four settlers about at that time, according to record, and the only connection with civilization was via the Tittabawassee river to Saginaw.

"Odell recalls when the Belle Seymour was the latest mode of travel, and very vivid in his memory is the very first time the Pere Marquette as a 'passenger' came up the newly-established line into Midland. She had a big old bellshaped stack on her, her fireman stoked in the wood, and she was a mighty impressive sight as all the folks watched her come in' says Odell, with a far-away look back on those days still in the 1860's.

"Another vivid recollection he carried from his childhood was the witnessing of the Indian burial customs.

"'There was a little hemlock ridge, a pleasant sort of place, located just about where the Dow pond off Poseyville road now is,' he says. 'It was Chippewa burying ground, and at that time all their graves were made there. At the close of their mourning chants and ceremony, and the covering of the body in the grave, stakes were placed at the head and foot and a canopy carefully woven between to cover the resting place.'

"'Many's the time I've seen them as a child and I can still see it in my mind's eye.'

"At the age of 'going on 15' Odell left home to seek his fortune, and 'from that day until now' he has always made his own way, he says proudly. His first real job, he recalls, was when as a young man he made his way to Ludington, and there was employed at a mill.

"'You know what they fed us for breakfast every single morning?' says he, 'Whitefish! Boiled whitefish, every morning. Oh, of course, we'd get bread to go with it, but whitefish was plentiful there on the lake, and so every morning they'd cook up a boilerful for the crew. I can taste them yet.'

"From Ludington, he went on to Baldwin, and up the Pere Marquette river to the logging locations of Dempsee and Carter. 'Camps were located about every six miles all along the river; one crew would take the drive on down to the next, and so on down to the lake,' he explains.

"'The camp I went into was run by Dempsee's nephew.' 'Who sen you here,' he whipped out at me first thing. Dempsee sent me, I answered. (I'd never seen Dempsee' he adds with a sly twinkle, 'but I sure needed that job.') 'My uncle sen you, did he?' blustered the nephew, 'He's always sen some dom logger for me to hire. Well, get you dinner, he finally decided, and I tell you where to go.'

"'After I'd eaten a square' continues Odell, 'I felt a little better in spite of the fact that I'd found that every man jack of that crew were Frenchmen, even the cook! They couldn't talk English and I couldn't talk French, but Dempsee put me to work keeping a river-bend clear on down the line. One day after I'd worked there some time, Dempsee spied Bowerfield, his boss of the next crew on the river. 'You wan a man?' he asks this Bowerfield. 'Why yes, I could use a good man,' Bowerfield replied. 'Well, take theese one, then,' said Dempsee. 'He dom good man, but he sure not French.'

"'The \$40 per month I got was top wages in those days, and the 140-some dollars I drew at the end of the season was the biggest pile of money I'd ever seen up till then,' says Odell, who traveled a good deal for those days, and says he had experienced every kind of work from 'cutting wood and digging ditches on up' in those roving young active years.

"It was in 1881 that he returned to settle in Midland Township, and married Sarah Gowan who was mother of his two now living children. His first-born was a son, Oscar, who now lives in Bay City. A daughter, Maude, who later became Mrs. James Hepinstall, was next born. She died in 1932. Mrs. Kenyon Wixson, Sr., well known resident of Midland, is his second daughter.

"Sarah Gowan Odell died in 1888 and two years later he married Liza Sass, who bore him a son, Roy, now also deceased. His second wife died shortly thereafter.

"His wife of more than 55 years who died this past April, was Christina Ross before her marriage, and they had resided in his Buttles street home for well over half a century. They had no children. He has now 11 grandchildren, and 29 great-grandchildren, in all.

"Odell is remembered by older residents of Midland as having operated a successful cigar factory here from 1903 to 1916. Later business ventures dealt a good deal in real estate, and he is said to have platted and sold much of the land where Dow Chemical buildings now stand.

"His one hobby has been collecting coins, and a rare old-time 'copper' or one-cent piece given to him at the age of 10 by his grandmother, he still carries. 'So I was never completely broke,' he recalls with a chuckle, 'although badly bent at times.'

"His longevity and still good health he attributes to 'good hard work all of my life, not having time to complain, and keeping away from doctors.'

"'I dare say, in all of my life I've never spent over \$25 on doctor bills for my own self,' he declares, and adds, 'folks nowadays have it too easy. They make too much money with too little actual effort, and have too much time to complain about what a terrible time they're having.'

"Too many youngsters now get money doled out to them by the week without ever having to dig in for it,' he observes, concerning the modern generation. 'They never have the chance to know the actual value of a dollar, and never learn how to care for what they do get.'

"'But,' adds this philosophical, proud, and admirable gentleman, who is nearly as old as Midland herself, 'centennial celebration or no, I guess we can't bring back the old days, the old ways, or the people as they were then.'"

(Samuel Odell is an acestor of Marilyn Watkins who has shared the above with us.)

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50 YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE, from the Midland Republican July 10, 1913 - "Charles Hubbell and Angeline Yerton were wedded at Holly 50 years ago July 2nd.

"38 family members were present at their home on Ashman Street, including sons Fay Hubbell of Albion, with his family; daughter Lena (Mrs. Adam) Winkler; daughter Nora (Mrs. James) LaMay and their family. They have 13 grandchildren, of whom 10 were present, and one great-grandchild, son of Harry Teal, who was there. A daughter Anna (Mrs. Fred) Morden of St. Louis could not come. A son, Myron Hubbell, died nine years ago." -

## QUERIES

- MILLINER/  
MILNER  
FARNUM  
ELDRED  
MEADE  
SCHOONERER  
PALMER
- My ancestor DANIEL MILLINER (MILNER) married (2) Miss ELETHERA FARNUM in Van Wert County, OH 1 Jul 1852. Daniel apparently died in Illinois ca 1866. His widow moved in 1867 to Newaygo County, MI with their three children: CHARLES MARION b. 1853, ROSE MARY b. 1856 and SABRA IRENE b. 1862. Two sons from first marriage remained in Illinois. Daniel's daughter MARGARET b. 1847, accompanied her stepmother. Margaret m. 1869 EDWARD W. ELDRED. Charles m. (1) in 1878 CLARINELLE MEADE, (2) ELSIE SCHOONERER. ROSE m. 1872 AMOS PALMER. SABRA IRENE m. 1876 CLARENCE A. MEADE. Part of family was in Newaygo County as late as 1920. I would appreciate information on descendants of this group.
- (Wilma Milliner Diesen, 5802 Flaxmoor, Midland, MI. 48640, Ph. (517) 832-8485)
- CHURCH  
BOWMAN  
VIBBER
- Need information on HENRY BOND CHURCH b. 1823 in Vermont. Also information on HENRY CHURCH m. 1st. EST(H)ER BOWMAN before coming to Midland County. Married 2nd. HARRIETT VIBBER. She is listed in 1880 census living in poor house with son SHERIDAN, age 2. What happened to these people?
- (Esme Gehoski, 4964 S. Carter, Auburn, MI. 48611)
- AUSTIN  
BRACKETT  
PRESTON  
SHEPHERD  
JOHNSON  
FEASTER
- Parents wanted of DANIEL AUSTIN b. ca.1773, marr. 9 Nov. 1795 in Bridg(e)ton, Cumberland Co., ME. He was of Foster's Gore (Oxford Co.), wife MARY (POLLY) BRACKETT b. ca.1780-85, prob. dau/DANIEL BRACKETT, SR. of Falmouth, Cumberland Co., ME. Son, DANIEL BRACKETT AUSTIN b. 1800 ME, marr. 1821, NY, DELIGHT PRESTON. He d. 20 Apr.1884, Ingham Twp., Ingham Co., MI. Other issue: WILLIAM NORRIS, NATHANIEL C., & SHADRACH AUSTIN, and prob. JAMES AUSTIN, who d. 1869, bur. Dansville Cem. near Daniel.
- Parents wanted MARVIN AUSTIN & wife, VIOLA SHEPHERD, both b. MI, dau PHYLURIA b. ca.23 Jun 1860 MI, marr. (1) DAVID DANIEL JOHNSON ca.1876, res. White Oak, Ingham Co., Ithaca, Gratiot Co. She then marr. (2) FEASTER. She died 1934, Buckeye Twp., Gladwin Co., MI. Phyluria had a sister, ELLA AUSTIN, who res. in Owosso, MI (Shiawassee Co.).
- Parents wanted of OSCAR JOHNSON b. ca.1827/8 NY, marr. 1851 Tyrone, Livingston Co., MI MALISSA AUSTIN, dau/DANIEL BRACKETT AUSTIN & DELIGHT PRESTON. They later resided in Ingham Co., MI. Siblings of Oscar were: WILLIAM JOHNSON b. ca.1823, NY, & WILBERFOUSE JOHNSON b. ca.1835, NY, both of Ingham Co.
- (Diana Butcher, 660 E. Olson Rd., Rt. 9, Midland 48640)

MURRAY Would like name of parents of JAMES MURRAY 1890-1970 buried in St. Patrick Cem., Griot\*Co. His wife is ELLEN J. 1888-1966. Would like obituary info on JENNIE MURRAY. She was living with son JOHN in Midland in 1946 but not in 1949 directory. Also, any info on John. (Bernice Kindel, Rt. 2, Box 228-C, Forest Grove, OR 97116)

YOUNG Jo Brines is doing some research for a woman in New Hampshire involving the names of CHARLES BUTMAN YOUNG, BOUGHNER MAUDE (BOUGHNER) YOUNG, (2) DALEY, JOHN WESLEY BOUGHNER, DALEY MAUDE (BOUGHNER) YOUNG, (2) DALEY, JOHN WESLEY BOUGHNER, FROST, CONE LEONARD & EUNICE (-) FROST, HARRIETT (FROST) BOUGHNER, GODFREY (2) CONE, (3) GODFREY, NANCY (IRVIN) GATES, CHARLES F. IRVIN & MARGARET (GATES) YOUNG. Places of residence are GATES Isabella, Midland, Gladwin and Saginaw counties, and Ontario, time span 1850's to 1930's. If these names mean something to you, please call Jo, 832-8312.

\*probably Gratiot Co.

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**TOO MEAN FOR DESCRIPTION**

A Midland lady, whose son was, not long ago, laid away in the Midland cemetery, went recently to visit the spot, where she had, a few days before, left a number of vases with flowers upon the grave, in remembrance of the departed one.

What was her surprise to find that every vase had been stolen and carried away!

We have been trying to think of some word or words that would fitly characterize the creature who would and could do such an act, and which would at the same time be printable.

The perpetrator may not be a Midland county resident. It is hoped that such is the case. We're not willing to think that any citizen of this county could be so base—and so basely little. It must have been some outsider, or possibly some very young child—but no, we will not accuse any child just old enough to walk of having wandered, in so short a time, so far from the standard of right and right feeling.

It is a source of shame and grief to know that anyone in human form—for it's only the form that's human—could do it. The grave and all about it is held sacred by all right minded persons, and even by all who are half right minded.



Date and source unknown.

**FORTY DAYS FOR STEAL**

William Snyder, Who Stole From of Ralph Price Sentenced by Justice Rice Wednesday.

William Snyder of the first was brought before Justice E. P. Rice Wednesday, October 23, charging with stealing property from the grave of Ralph Price. He admitted taking vases from the grave and taking them home with him. He afterwards broke them up and buried them. Justice Rice sentenced him to forty days in the county jail and, as the Midland county jail is condemned, he will be taken to the Isabella county jail in Mt. Pleasant to serve his sentence.

## COMING EVENTS:

- April 16 - MGS Meeting, 7:15, Library Lounge, "Ellis, the Island of Hope; A Proud Lady; Migration, Passage to a New Home." Audrey Pomranky and Esme Gehoski have prepared a fine program for us on a timely subject.
- May 21 - MGS Potluck & Election of Officers, 6:15, Library Lounge. Bring a dish to pass, your own beverage and table service.
- May 28-31 - National Genealogical Society's Annual Conference in the States, Columbus, OH.
- June 4 - MGS Board Meeting, 7:30, Willie Diesen, 5802 Flaxmoor
- Oct. 16-18 - Michigan Genealogical Council's Sesquicentennial Seminar, "From Canoes to Computers," Lansing, MI.

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## OLD AND NEW BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY

by Marion Berry

The following are books that can help the genealogist flesh out the family tree:

"Historical Atlas of the U.S." by Clifford & Elizabeth Lord, revised ed., 1955, 238 pp., indexed. Over 300 maps deal with the historical, social, political aspects of America from Colonial days to the present. Maps especially interesting to genealogists: Federal Circuit & District courts locations in 1873; Newspapers in 1800; Main Post Roads 1834; Federal Land Grants for Railroad & Wagon Road Construction. Easy to use; interesting.

"We Americans," published by National Geographic Soc. in 1975, 456 pp., indexed. A large, picture filled book that covers the development of America from its beginnings to the space age. Excellent presentation of our history.

Genealogy Collection, Downstairs in the Library:

"County of a Thousand Lakes," edited by Brian Rollason, 572 pp. The history of the county of Frontenac completed by extracts from deeds, documents, diaries and letters along with 250 photographs and prints telling of the life from 1673-1973. A large, in-depth book, but of great value if your ancestors are from this area of Canada.

"An Index to Marriage & Death Notices" in the Marion (IN) Chronicle from 1867-1882, 126 pp. Listed alphabetically by surname with the date of the issue.

"Rock Family History," by Margaret Wagner, 299 pp., indexed. A brand new book telling of the Martin & Mary McCabe Rock family that left Ireland in 1846 for America. Many settled in Iowa Co., IA. Other names include McDonnell & McManamna, and covers from 1807 to 1969. Names and address of the family lines are included.

Donated by former member Jane Paver who has moved to Arizona, with many thanks:

"Scioto County, Ohio, Federal Census Index 1870," pub. by the Scioto Co. Genealogical Society, 50 pp. Lists just heads of house found in this census.

Misc. copies of The Ohio Genealogical Society Report, Ohio Records & Pioneer Families, and a few issues of the North Carolina Genealogical Society's Journal.

BEWARE: The latest genealogy fraud is now the genealogy chain letter. Recipients are invited to make five lists of every name they are researching and to send the list and \$2.00 to five people listed in the letter and also make 100 copies of the letter and mail them. The letter states that chain letters are illegal, but this one is merely selling a service. IT IS STILL ILLEGAL. DO NOT PARTICIPATE. IF YOU RECEIVE SUCH A LETTER, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE. (from the LEXICON, Jackson County Genealogical Society, Vol.8, No.3)

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ALL MGS MEMBERS, PLEASE NOTE:

Even though our Society's year runs July 1 - June 30, the Membership Chairman and Treasurer will be collecting dues for the 1986-7 year at the May meeting. By doing this before we adjourn for the summer, the September task becomes much easier. Our by-laws state that all dues shall be collected by September 30 or the member is dropped from the current list. Why not bring your checkbook or cash to the May meeting? We value your continued interest and support in the Society and in helping to make the collection of dues as easy as possible for the Treasurer. Single membership is \$7.00 and couple, \$10.50.

Please fill out form below, clip and give to Jo Brines along with your money.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_  
Individual.....\$ 7.00  
Family..... 10.50

MEMBERSHIP MAILING ADDRESS:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help Midland Genealogical Society by:

Telephoning \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Typing \_\_\_\_\_ Library \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in: Genealogical computing \_\_\_\_\_ Library trips \_\_\_\_\_

Researching for others \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP & DUES

Annual dues shall be \$7 (seven dollars) for the initial member in a family (with only these members receiving the PIONEER RECORD) and \$3.50 (three dollars and fifty cents) for each additional membership in that family.

Annual dues become due for the ensuing year on July 1. Members who have not paid their dues by September 30 shall be dropped. After January 1, dues for new members shall be one-half the above amount. Those new members joining after April 1 shall pay full dues which shall also apply to the ensuing year.

PIONEER RECORD is published quarterly, September, November, February and April, by the Midland Genealogical Society.

MGS meets the third Wednesday of each month, September through May (except December) at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 West St. Andrews Drive, Midland, MI., 7:15 p.m., in the Library Lounge.

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Articles, queries and genealogical items of interest should be sent to MRS. PAT WORDEN, 1201 GLENDALE, MIDLAND, MI. 48640, Editor.

Grace A. Dow Memorial Library  
1710 West St. Andrews Drive  
Midland, MI. 48640

