

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF
BRANCH COUNTY, MICHIGAN
(1933)

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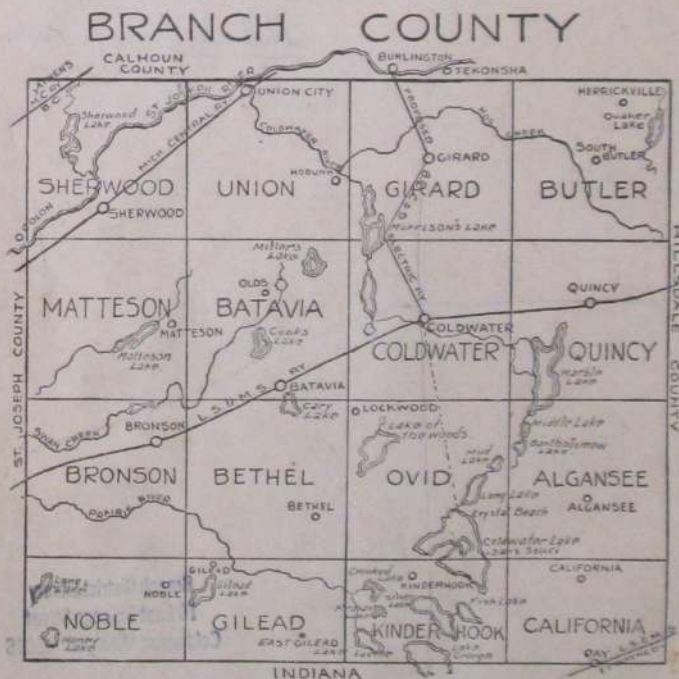
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HISTORY OF BRANCH COUNTY, MICHIGAN



History is community memory, without memory, without history, there would be no progress. Were these facts not so, mankind would be no higher than brute creation. Since the world began, man has ever learned from the experience of those before him, and learning, he better appreciates his present surroundings and views with admiration those earlier pioneers whose trials and privations make for our comfort today.

The history of Branch County has some unusual thrills in the early records. In the days gone by County Atlases were published but in the early 90's this practice was stopped. Unfortunately our girls and boys today seldom have access to the few old histories that may have survived. Several school teachers and students have brought this to our attention and as far as space will permit we have given a brief outline of each township. The sources of our information have been carefully checked and we believe facts given are correct. We owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. George N. Fuller of the Michigan Historical Society and State Library and many, many others for the information supplied us. We surely thank you.

Prehistoric man inhabited lower Michigan. In this county were found peculiar mound formations and flints that are unique in shape and, recently similar flints were found in Guatemala and British Honduras made by the Mayan race. A resident of Girard has a wonderful collection of prehistoric

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BRANCH COUNTY (Continued)

and Indian flints picked up in that locality. Of this early man we can only conjecture.

From the early traces of log buildings and stone fire places, symmetrical rows of orchard trees that were aged when the first settlers arrived we know that in more remote times explorers dwelled here, at least temporarily.

Michigan and territory of the "great northwest" has been under four flags. The Spanish explorers who eventually surrendered to the French flag. Then England took the country away from France, and in time, the colonies showed England that America could take care of herself.

The early French Jesuits and citizens deserve credit for their teachings of religion and thrift to the Indians. But to that noble band of pioneers who dared to leave home and loved ones, with the surrounding luxuries, to travel highways that were only blazed tree Indian trails with wild animals, sickness and none too friendly Indians and just the bare necessities of life, select a home in the wilderness and erect a rude log hut, clear the land and try to raise their own food their loneliness only increased by the howls of wolves—those people deserve our greatest gratitude for generations to come.

A surveying party from Detroit about 1826, headed by a man named John Fletcher, returned to Detroit and told of the wonderful beauties of the St. Joseph Valley which included several of our present southern counties. Mr. Fletcher returned to White Pigeon and persuaded others of his friends to follow the Chicago Road or Indian trail and they settled at various points. This was the start of emigration in southern Michigan.

True, there were a few daring white men scattered here and there in the great forests trading with the Indians but the real pioneer settler was to come.

Under the various townships we have taken up each community as fully as space permits so we will only mention a few of the major things here.

As highways were almost unknown in the early days traffic had to depend upon water navigation. Union City in this county was especially fortun-

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ate in that respect. In the 30's boats ran as far up the St. Joseph river as Union City. In fact the Government recognizing Union City as the head of navigation on this river appropriated \$50,000 to "clean out" the river for navigation purposes to the Indiana state line. Boats would come up as far as Union City with crackers or "hard tack" from Niles, Michigan, sugar, salt and the things the pioneers needed taking back iron, wool, grain, hides, furs and whiskey. This was a wonderful help to the pioneer. Gradually, as the railroads came in the waterways, having outlived their usefulness, were suspended as a means of transportation. The last steamers quit in 1903. The "May Graham" carried fruit in the summer from Berrien Springs to St. Joseph and the other "Ben Hamilton" made excursion trips at the Studebaker Park in South Bend, Indiana.

Today, Michigan is about the largest iron producing state in the union. In only one other state, Alabama, has as much iron been found and that comparatively recent. The largest iron mine in the world is in the upper peninsula, yet it remained for Union City, Branch county to discover the first iron and "run" the first pig iron in the state in 1840. It was used locally for several years and in 1847 the old Union City Iron Foundry began operations. The ore used was Bog or Kidney iron found on swamps and along the river. It was not a high grade iron ore but when annealed and tempered was as good as the best. Its location supplied the settlers for many miles away. This is a fact that Branch county may well be proud of.

We have not dwelled very much upon the record of this community in the Civil War but Branch county responded nobly. Neither have we attempted to bring it completely up to 1933 in history. The record of events for the past fifty years are well known and there are plenty of older citizens who can relate the main events. Rather it has been our purpose to make this a mirror of pioneer life in Branch County up to 1840, the removal of the Indians, and then the rapid settling and cultivation of the soil up to the Civil War days.

The task has been a big one, but we have done our best. If some of you who read this are amused and brought to value local history and appreciate the rugged lives of those earlier inhabitants, then our efforts have not been entirely in vain.

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History of Algansee

Algansee Township is situated upon the eastern border of Branch county. Its surface is rolling and well drained by numerous small creeks. In the early days it was well timbered with the exception of several hundred acres in the southwest corner which consisted of Burr Oak openings. It has three large and several small lakes. Marble, only the southern end in this township, Middle and Bartholomew lying in the northwest part. The two main creeks were originally known as Hanchett and Bickford.

A few of the first land entries were: Jedediah Jessup of New York state in 1835, Charles Butler of New York City in 1835, Asahel Brown, Nathan Austin, Luther Styles, Ludovicus Robbins all in 1836. Others who entered about this period were, Allen Hubbard, Summer and Clark, Jason Ransom, Geo. Smith, Mose, Jesse and Elijah Hill, and Nelson Sprague.

From the most reliable sources now obtainable it is believed Luther Styles and Ludovicus Robbins were the first settlers in the territory now known as Algansee township. Styles purchased 240 acres and Robbins 560 acres upon which they each erected a log cabin. By coincidence both families, altho strangers, moved into the township on the same day. Robbins, a Presbyterian minister, with his wife and five sons, following their oxen teams, after leaving Chicago road became stalled in a marsh and Styles and his family passed around them and arrived at their farm first.

Luther Styles and Morris Crater built a sawmill in 1837. This was the first mill and it was located on the site of the old Thompkins sawmill. Asahel Brown was the first supervisor and held the position for twenty-one years.

Abraham Ackerman and Katy Ackerman, his adopted sister, were the first couple to be married in the township. They were married in the year of 1837 by Samuel Beach.

Dr. James A. Williams of Conquest, New York, located in the township in 1854 and was the first physician. He was a supervisor for ten years, county school superintendent and later served the county in the State Legislature.

Isaac George built the first frame house. Frederick T. Gallup built the first brick house. Aaron Hall opened the first store in 1878. John Wakeman and son Eli built the first steam sawmill in 1854. Eli Wakeman and son built a \$5000 grist mill in 1878. The early millers of the county could get more for grinding grain to be shipped away so by common agreement ground the local settlers' grain last. This at one time caused considerable hardship.

In April 1848 the state Legislature formed the township of Algansee from Quincy township. The settlers had asked it to be designated as Carlton but for some unknown reason this was not granted. The significance of the name Algansee is not known. The first township meeting was held in 1838 at the home of Horace Purdy. The first township officers were: Asahel Brown, supervisor; Jasper Underhill, Clerk; George Monlux, Treasurer. A town hall costing \$600 was erected in 1877.

In 1838, Miss Jane Woodard taught the first school in a log shanty. A substantial log school house was built in 1843. Ezra S. E. Brainard, Miss Sarah Beach, Arvilla H. Clark, Silena Hard, Mary L. Beach and Eliza Ann Bryant were the first school teachers. Benjamin Hobbs was the first school "inspector." The Village of Algansee was a post office station. The first churches were Methodist and Baptists and Baptist Society, the last named disbanded after 12 years existence.

While the township has no villages of any size it is a thriving agricultural community. Safford's General Store is serving the needs of the township.

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Bethel, Michigan

History of Bethel

Bethel Township is in the south central part of the county, its surface is level and constitutes about the only prairie land in the county.

The Chicago and Lake Shore railroad cut across the north west corner of the township and the Prairie River runs across the south west corner. A large portion of Carey Lake lies in the north east corner.

As late as 1830 the township was a wilderness and the records show Eleazer Snow, of New England, as the first to locate here. Mr. Snow was a great trapper and hunter. He broke the first ground in the township and planted corn and potatoes. Eventually he built a log cabin and the vicinity became known as "Snow Prairie." In the fall of 1831, the "Roving Fever" became too strong and Snow sold his land to Moses Olmstead, and after years of roaming, returned in his old age and died in Branch county.

The Olmsteads, also of New England, was the only family in the township for some time, but about 1834 other families began to arrive. There were the Youngs, Isaac Freeman, Albert Dudley, Milton Beesmer, John Richardson, Moses Paine and David M. Clark families and many others. Mr. Olmstead was known as a good farmer and his stock was the best in the county. He erected the first frame building in the township, a large barn. He died in 1837. The first death in the township was probably that of Mr. Olmstead's son, Gidion and the first marriage was that of his son Lyman to Sarah Ann Cummings. The groom was 19 years old and the bride 15.

David Clark was the first town clerk, Justice of the Peace, school-teacher and surveyor. Mr. Paine planted the first orchard of apple trees. The early settlers suffered many privations but the fertile land, and hogs which ran wild and fattened on acorns soon relieved this condition. In 1835 the settlers clubbed together and made up the price of a wagon of salt, some of the members made the trip to Detroit after it. Salt cost \$10.00 a barrel in those days. In 1835-36 a scarcity of wheat sent the price up from 37c to \$2.00 per bushel.

The village of Bethel was first named "Elizabeth" by Moses Olmstead from a town in New Jersey. In the year 1837-38 the village raised \$75.00 for taxes of which \$50.37 $\frac{1}{2}$ was used. The first general election was held in Nov. 1837, with the polls open for 2 days. In 1839 the Legislature changed the name to Bethel. Several taverns were licensed to do business but "not to sell ardent spirits." The dry sentiment was changed to wet in 1847. In 1857, \$200 was voted to build a town hall. A road was laid out from Marshall to Fort Wayne that passed through the village. In 1838 the population was 177 and in 1874 had increased to 1,248.

Miss Abigail Perrine was one of the first school teachers, school being held in a log cabin of the Young family. In 1839 a log school house was built, the bricks for the chimney were hauled from Coldwater. William T. Ammerman was the first village postmaster. Benjamin Pettingill built the first sawmill in 1851-52. In 1862 it burned and was rebuilt a year later. In 1868, L. E. Van Valkenburgh started a store. A blacksmith shop and two sawmills were located in the township. In 1856 a steam sawmill owned by Dart and Ayres blew up, injuring five men. Another village called Bethel was started by Benj. Rolf along the State Road. The vicinity furnished many soldiers during the Civil War. The township had several churches, namely: North Bethel Free-Will Baptist, Snow Prairie Methodist, Bethel Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Evangelical Association, Baptist of Snow Prairie and Baptist of South Bethel.



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Coldwater

History of Butler

Butler township, consisting of 22,642 acres, lies in the northeast corner of the county, its surface is rolling upland and with the exception of 300 acres, called Shook's Prairie in the old days, was heavily timbered. The state made Butler twp., March 6, 1838, from Girard, many of the early settlers were from or near Butler, New York.

Some who made the first land entries (not necessarily the first settlers) were: Jonathan Hart, Lyman Rogers, Solander Rossman, Levi Manley, Ambrose J. Nicholson, Jeremiah Bennett, Robert Wood, Jacob Shook, Jr., and Benjamin McVey and many others.

The first to settle here was Caleb Wilcox, locating on sec. 2, and two years later he sold out to Charles C. Hayes. Jacob Shook, Jr., and Robert Wood came immediately after Wilcox and settled in sections 26 and 27. Jacob Shook was one of the prominent citizens of the community, being highway commissioner, assessor, supervisor and county judge. He owned at one time 800 acres of land. His father was killed accidentally by a rifle he had set in a trap to kill a deer. His death in 1837 was the first death in the county. Henry S. Lampman who settled here in 1836 was a brick-maker and mason, he told of making brick for the first brick house in Chicago in the spring of 1833, in a village of three houses.

John T. Wisner, was the first township clerk and his marriage to Miss Emily Bills, (the only marriageable young lady in the community then) was the first in the township. Merrill Morehouse built the first frame house and Alvin Bowen the first brick house. Solander Rossman built the first frame barn. In 1849 Nathaniel Knowles built the first sawmill. Lyman Calkins built a saw and grist mill in 1858. David Lindsay kept the first store at Whig Centre, in 1843.

One of the first public acts was the raising of \$9.00 to pay bounties on wolves heads and an assessment of 50c a head was made on every child from 4 to 18 years for school purposes. The first log school house was built on "Shook's prairie" and taught by Charles T. Wisner.

Butler Lodge, No. 88, F. & A. M., was organized in 1855. Gardner Herrick was the first Worshipful Master. Herricksville became the name of Butler village in honor of Mr. Herrick. Butler Grange, Patrons of Husbandry was organized in 1873, with Thester H. Cook as the first Master.

The Methodists held services as early as 1838 and John H. Pitzel was the first minister. Rev. Ira Bonner is claimed to be the first protestant minister in the township. In 1858 the First Free Will Baptists were organized.

Butler Township, like other townships of Branch Co., is known for its agricultural thrift.

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History of Bronson

In 1829 Bronson township was known as a part of that vast territory called Greene township. This included what is now Branch, Calhoun and Eaton Counties. On June 29, 1832, it was named Prairie township. Just when the name was changed to Bronson in honor of the first settler is not known definitely. It has two creeks, one named Prairie River, originally called Hog Creek, the other is known as Swan Creek. Because Prairie river caused bad overflows when dammed it was little used for power but Swan Creek had several grist and saw mills.

The surface of the township is quite level with a sandy ridge running diagonally from northeast to southwest. The township consisted mostly of Burr Oak openings rather than real prairie land.

The village of Bronson is located on level land between the two creeks of the township. The old "Chicago road" is the main street of Bronson. Through it passed hundreds of the prairie schooners and stage coaches. For years all the traffic of emigrants from New York and the New England states passed through this village. Railroad facilities were very poor and grain had to be hauled to Adrian and Hillsdale. Transportation was so expensive that little more farm produce and grain were raised than locally consumed. The railroads later changed these conditions.

The first permanent settler in Branch County as well as Bronson township and village was Jabe Bronson, coming in the spring of 1828. He was a man about fifty years old, small in stature but walked with a firm and measured step. He was born in the state of Connecticut and received only a very meagre education. He was apprenticed as a ship carpenter and later worked in the New York Ship Yards. Being a bachelor and wishing to travel he traveled a great lot. Finally, in Canada, he met a widow with four sons and married her. They came to Brownstown, Michigan, and finally located in Bronson, Branch county. He was appointed the first Justice of the Peace and took his office seriously but declined the knowledge of his law book but rather depended upon his own judgment. He made many humorous decisions. As the early settlers came in he was quite busy as the new comers were quick to quarrel over trivial things and the Justice Court furnished a large amount of amusement for them. Although the law prevents a tavern-keeper to be a

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HISTORY OF BRONSON (Continued)

justice or the holding of court in a barroom, Jabe Bronson evaded the law on both issues. Abiel Potter, his step son, claimed to be the tavern owner. When court was about to convene all liquors would be removed to the kitchen then in a strong but dignified voice he would ask his step-son Potter if this room was a bar-room. Being assured it was not, court would proceed. When court was closed, with lightning rapidity it became a bar-room. For many years Bronson was the "seat of Justice" and many famous early cases were tried here. It is said that altho Jabe Bronson was stern and logical in his decisions, sometimes a little money from one of the parties at suit would favorably change his judgment. Jabe Bronson and Benaiah Jones of Jonesville, Hillsdale county, both being Justices of the Peace, argued many times over the legality of marriages performed by the other outside his territory. Several times the couples being married would have two ceremonies, paying each justice \$10 to make sure the marriage was legal.

Dr. Alvah Randall was the first physician in the township, coming in 1835. He was a very intelligent man and sincere in his duties. He died in 1851 from overwork, traveling for miles around the village to administer to the sick.

Some of the early settlers were: Michael Smith, Levi Calhoun, Nelson Russel, Enos Gregg, David Taggart, Jonathan Holmes, Isaac Holbrook, Ephriam Lindley, J. E. Pulman, J. H. Green and many others.

Willard Pierce and Wales Adams built the first grist and saw mill. Mr. Pierce later selling his interest to Wm. A. Kent. This location is believed to be near the Bronson Country Club. Later a tavern and bar-room were built on the north side of the road opposite the mill. These last named places became notorious because of the crimes committed there or near there by some of the occupants. The buildings were located at the entrance on Chicago road across the great marsh. This strip of corduroy road was known as "the narrows" and at least fifteen persons disappeared here. Legend says that the bodies were placed in an old well behind the tavern but a descendent of one of the former owners states that family tradition states that the bodies were carried south just across the Indiana state line and deposited in a large marsh.

The first marriage in the county and township was Polly Waterman and Wales Adams. The next two were Abiel Potter and Clarissa J. Booth, and Joseph D. Fields and Eliza Streeter.

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BRONSON, MICH.

HISTORY OF BRONSON (Continued)

A man named Judson who came to Bronson with his wife and children died of cholera and was buried near the Adams-Pierce saw mill but as the grave was not marked the exact location is not known. This death and that of a Crawford child were the first white settlers to die in the township.

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Richardson, in 1829, were the parents of the first white child.

The Driggs saw and grist mill on Swan creek, afterwards owned by the Holmes Brothers was extensively patronized from many miles around. Afterwards it was turned into a planing, turning mill and chair factory.

Solomon Haight in 1842 operated a hotel and farm one and one-half miles west of Bronson.

The early records of Prairie River township and Bronson up to 1867 were burned in a fire that destroyed Powers and Gillams store. Gillams was township clerk.

The first school in the township as well as Branch county or between Clinton, Michigan and White Pigeon, Michigan, was in Bronson, in 1830-31, taught by Columbia Lancaster. The school was a log cabin and had 15 students. The instructor was a lawyer, physician and preacher. In 1831 he removed to St. Joseph county and built the first log house in Centreville. The first summer school was taught by Mrs. David Waterman. Mr. Waterman owned the first frame house here in 1836. The union school of Bronson was organized in 1858. Today the village has two fine schools, a public school and a parochial school.

The first store was built and operated by David and Alonzo Waterman in 1833. The Watermans laid out the first village and called it 'York.' Additions to the village were made by E. G. Bennett, C. G. Randall, S. C. Rose and Mrs. Holbrook, changing the village name to Bronson, (Kalamazoo being settled by a brother of Jabe Bronson, was originally called Bronson but later changed to Kalamazoo.) E. L. Rose built the first brick hotel on the main four corners of the village in 1836.

The Indians had a camp north of the village and used to come into town and after indulging in too much "fire-water," frightened the women and children with their demoniac yells.

In 1837 James Ruggles built a frame Tavern. The material was brought from Detroit by oxen teams. The round trip for a load took two weeks. Elijah

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HISTORY OF BRONSON (Continued)

Hanks bought out Jabe Bronson in 1835. Milo Clark, an early settler, collected a wonderful group of stone and copper implements used by the Indians in this township and around Matteson lake.

Samuel Keyes operated a tavern here in 1848 in the old village of York.

In the fall of 1829 a government post office located in Jabe Bronson's tavern, he being the first postmaster. In 1832 a post office was established at Prairie River at the Adams-Pierce mill site. Mr. Judson was the first postmaster there. After the building of the railroad this office was discontinued.

David F. Gates operated one of the first stores in the village. Bronson was incorporated as a village in the fall of 1866, being one mile square. The first President was Warren Byrns; clerk, Andrew S. Parrish; treasurer, Joseph E. Earl. The by-laws of the village of Burr Oak near by in St. Joseph county were adopted with slight changes. A new charter was received in 1873.

In 1852-53 a Mr. Foster built a hotel on the site of the old Bronson hotel. Later it was burned down. The "Exchange Hotel" was built by James Bennie in the early '60s. Both were near the depot in the north part of town. In 1858-59 Ranson Compton built the first steam grist mill, later operated by Mr. Crippen.

Shortly after the close of the Civil War Mr. Van Every built an iron foundry. In 1863 a tannery was built by Charles R. Garrison. Afterwards, while owned by Williams and Whittaker it burned down. The village had two lodges, the Masonic, organized in 1862 and the Odd Fellows, started April 14, 1874. In 1877 the first cornet band was organized and ever since Bronson has been noted for its wonderful bands.

The first religious organization was formed by the Methodists in 1836 and reorganized in 1857. In 1860 a Baptist church was organized and in 1878 owned the first pipe organ. May 7, 1868 a Congregational church was started.

In 1877, during the pastorate of Rev. Father C. Corst, of Coldwater, the first St. Mary's Catholic church was built. Since then a fine brick church and parochial school have been built to care for the catholic families in and near Bronson.

Bronson of today has several busy factories, a neat brick business section and many fine homes. The many fine country homes bespeak the fertility of the surrounding farm lands.

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History of Coldwater Township

Coldwater township is in the central part of the county. The surface is undulating prairie land being varied occasionally by declivities. It had about equal parts of heavy timber and burr oak openings. Two lakes lie within its borders, Long Lake and Coldwater lake. The latter with all its connecting bodies of water is quite expansive. Both lakes are great summer resorts.

The soil is gravelly loam with occasional outcroppings of clay. Like adjoining townships its soil was very rich and highly productive.

About 1822 Joseph Godfrey established an Indian trading post in Coldwater. A little later Patrick Marantette, an 18 year old Frenchman from Detroit, had a trading post on the Oak Grove Cemetery hill top. He left a written record of his experiences with the Indians here and it is still in the possession of his descendants at Mendon, Michigan, where he subsequently established a trading post on the St. Joseph river. The old trading post site and home with the antique French furniture is still owned by the Marantette family. This young Frenchman traced his ancestry back to the Navarre line of Kings.

In 1825 the government ordered a 100 foot military highway from Detroit to Chicago but the expense was found to be too great so the old blazed tree Indian trail with its windings and curves were selected and improved. This opened the gate to land emigration westward.

Hugh Campbell came in 1830 and built a log house where the Masonic Temple, in Coldwater, now stands.

Next came Abram F. Boltin and John Morse, whose wives were sisters, in 1830. Boltin, the year previous had bought a tract of land just east of the Coldwater river where the Chicago Road crosses it. Later Masonville was located on this ground. Buying land on section 23 east of Coldwater along Chicago Road, they built two log cabins a few feet apart and roofed the intervening space, later enclosing it. Here they conducted the first tavern for weary travelers of Chicago Road. It became famous for its excellent food, quick service and the clarinet playing of Mr. Morse. This was the only tavern between "Reed's House" at Marble Springs, ten miles east and "Jabe Bronsons House" ten miles west.

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COLDWATER (Continued)

In the spring of 1831, Abram F. Boltin and his wife, leaving the Morse family at the tavern, located on their land at Masonville.

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Morse in 1830, was the first white child born to a settler family. However, a little previous to this, a Welsh family by the name of Bonner, had a child born while temporarily staying near the Indian village north of town.

As early as 1831, Masonville contained the main business enterprises and emigration centered there. James B. Stuart and Roland Root ran a store, trading mostly with the Indians.

In 1830 a commission appointed by the governor to locate a county seat selected Masonville but it developed later that they had failed to take their oath of office so the selection was invalid. After a protest to their action, a new commission was appointed by the governor and Branch was selected as the county seat.

In 1832, Elisha Warren located at Branch and erected a small dwelling. He brought a stock of merchandise from the east and started a store in his home. In 1833, Seth Dunham, the county treasurer moved to Branch from Pocahontas Mills, one mile south. At this time Branch had the following families: Elisha Warren, Seth Dunham, and Harvey Warner, with their families. E. T. Paxton came in 1833 and established a small store. The postmaster was Harvey Warner who had served in that capacity in Masonville and followed the county seat to Branch. In 1835 the following new residents came to the village: Joel Burlingame, David Pond, Charles P. West and Louis Pollay. Robert and William Lind built a distillery soon after arriving. Several new merchants and tradesmen soon located here. A school house was built and a teacher employed. Church services were held in the school house. In 1842 the Legislature decreed Coldwater as the county seat because some parties over-exploited the price of land at Branch. This caused Branch to join Masonville as ghost cities of the county.

During the year of 1836 the second road was built in the township and county. It ran from Coldwater north through Girard and Union City to Battle Creek.

The year of 1836 was a banner one for Branch county and this township as so many new settlers arrived and began clearing the land. We find the following names: C. B. Peckham, Joseph Zeluff, James Haynes and sons, Hart

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PHONE 190

COLDWATER

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COLDWATER (Continued)

Warner, Wilson J. Cooley, John Canright, Isaac Middaugh, Rice Arnold, Abram C. Fisk, Detman Tinkham, Lemuel Bingham, Christopher Hartsough, Curtis Prentice, James Fisk, Timothy Phelps, Reuben Whitehead, William Scovill, Robert Waggott, Clark H. Williams, Kimball Parish, Daniel N. Wilson, James R. Cox and Francis Roberts and sons John and Stephen. John Roberts planted the first orchards and operated the first nursery.

During this time the tribe of Pottawattamie Indians lived in a village near by and were trading and begging food of the white people. They did not interfere much with the whites but had some dissention among themselves. Chief Sau-au-quet, an Ottawa who had forced his leadership upon the Pottawattamies, because of the childishness of their aged chief and his weakling sons, was stern and arrogant in his management of the tribe. This made the Indian subjects hate him. He sold the lands of his adopted tribe, all the vast St. Joseph valley, to the government for the sum of \$10,000. It was paid for in blankets, knives, trinkets and whiskey with a small amount of cash. He also agreed to the removal of the Indians by the government to a place west of the Mississippi River. So incensed were his people that Kakotoms crept into his wigwam and stabbed him to death with his own knife. The murderer was arrested but because of the vigorous protest of the Indians he was released. It was the governments policy not to interfere in Indian matters unless they directly affected the whites. The murderer, according to Indian custom, gave the chiefs family a pony and some trinkets which always "Squared things" in an Indian Murder. Dr. I. P. Alger, a pioneer physician of Coldwater, for a number of years had the murder-knife and some other implements of Sau-au-quet.

The year of 1856 was remembered as the smoky season because of vast forest fires in the pine tree section north of here.

A county farm was built in the north central portion of the township, on 140 acres of land.

The old Lake Shore (New York Central) railroad ran through the southern part of the township. Another railroad was planned, bonds sold and graded for Mansfield to Coldwater, but it was never completed.

At the first township election in 1833, the following officers were elected: Silas A. Holbrook, Supervisor; Joseph C. Corbus, Clerk; Allen Tibbets, John Corbus, Seth Dunham, Assessors; Robert J. Cross, Justice of the Peace;

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COLDWATER (Continued)

James B. Tompkins, Martin Barnhart, Lemuel Bingham, Highway Commissioners; Seymour L. Bingham, Collector and Constable; William Cross, Seth Dunham, Allen Tibbetts, Enoch Chase, James B. Tompkins and Martin Barnhart, School Inspectors; Lemuel Bingham, Director of the Poor; Robert J. Cross, Treasurer.

CITY OF COLDWATER

Coldwater, the county seat, is located a little northeast of the center of the county. The name was the English adaption of the Indian name "Chuch-serv-ya-bish" meaning "place of cold water." The water of Coldwater was always cold from the numerous cold springs. The city proper was named "Lyons" by one of the first settlers after his native city in New York state. This was soon changed to the present Coldwater. James B. Tompkins, of Girard, surveyed the plat of the village.

Allen Tibbetts, a minister, with three companies traveling across lower Michigan became lost and took a trail that led to Coldwater where he decided to stay. He occupied the log house of Hugh Campbell. Mr. Hanchett, another pioneer, lived with him.

Silas Holbrook was appointed the first postmaster here in 1833.

A school was established in July, 1832 with Cynthia Gloyd as teacher. In 1834 the first public school was erected on the corner of Hudson and Pearl streets.

Peter Martin built a saw mill in 1832. Previously lumber had been secured from the Pocahontas Mill a mile south of Branch. The only grist mills were located at Constantine and Tecumseh. The great distance caused the use of home made mills, usually consisting of a hollowed stump or short log chopped and burned out bowl shaped with an oblong stone fastened to a springy tree limb.

Early in 1832 great excitement prevailed for a time. It was reported that Chief Black Hawk and his followers were on the war path, had massacred Fort Dearborn (Chicago) and was coming this way. The stage coach driver next day proved this untrue.

A two year old child of Allen Tibbetts was the first death. It was buried on his farm and later removed to the new cemetery. On June 11, 1832 a daugh-

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PHONE 173

COLDWATER (Continued)

ter, Harriett Maria was the first white child born in the village.

The first marriage was that of Dr. Enoch Chase and Miss Ellsworth.

Dr. William Henry, who came from New York state in 1830, was the first village physician.

John Wilson and wife came in 1832. Silas Holbrook opened a store in 1831. A settler of that time stated that the village had only a few scattering log houses and where the business district is now was mostly corn and wheat fields.

The emigrants of the year of 1835 brought new life to the community and helped in its future growth. This same year Allen Tibbets built a frame house as did S. S. Holbrook and Dr. Chase. Homes and business places could not be built fast enough.

Parley Stockwell bought and butchered cattle for the inhabitants. He started on \$700 borrowed money from Mr. Hanchett who refused to take security.

Between 1836 and 1840 there was much sickness, as many as 25 to 30 dying in one month. The sickness was attributed to the mill dam south of town which a mob destroyed.

L. D. Halsted of New York state opened a tailoring shop with a thimble as his only equipment.

In 1837 the village was organized. In 1838 the Methodist church was built and the Baptist one year later.

Porter and Wendell erected the first brick building in the business district.

The wheat crop of 1842 was destroyed by insects but the following year gave a bumper crop. The Presbyterians built a church in 1843.

Bradley Plato established a brick yard at Branch and this stimulated the building of brick houses.

There were two newspapers, the Coldwater Sentinel and Branch County Journal.

In 1850 the business district on the south side of Chicago Road burned and one year later the north side burned. It was rebuilt rapidly.

In the year of 1847 a Masonic Lodge was organized.

A brick court house was built in 1852. The safe in the county Treasurers

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COLDWATER (Continued)

office was robbed and a large sum of money taken.

The operation of the railroad brought new prosperity to the community in the way of cheaper and quicker transportation. The telegraph lines was completed in 1849. The Catholic church was built in 1859.

In 1861 a city charter was obtained. The Episcopal Church was built in 1862. A Library Association was formed in 1865.

Two thirds of the volunteers from Coldwater in the Civil War were killed.

Residents in the northern part of the city were driven to their second stories by flood waters in 1866. The Coldwater female seminary was opened in 1864. J. S. Conovers Business College was established. Several business places and factories were burned during this time.

In 1870 the government distributed \$3,320.73 to members of the 4th Michigan Cavalry for helping capture Jeff. Davis. Lewis Art Gallery was opened and attracted visitors for twenty five years.

The temperature on January 29, 1873 was 31 degrees below zero. The State Public School was opened in 1874. The north part of the city was flooded again in 1881.

The Tibbets opera house was opened and a new post office built in 1882.

In 1886 the first earthquake was noticed. Coldwater Public Library was dedicated in December, 1886. A gift of \$10,000 from Hon. E. R. Clarke made it possible. In 1888 a New Court House was built. 1890, the Central School building burned with a \$30,000 loss.

Allen Tibbitts who had aided the growth of the city so much, died December 12, 1891, at the age of 87 years. The wonderful waterworks system was built in 1890 at a cost of \$70,000.

1892 the city voted "dry", Coldwater Bank was robbed of \$60,000 in cash, and free city mail delivery was started.

September 1, 1900 the first free rural delivery was started out of Coldwater.

In April 1904 the telephone company started to serve the community. March 18, 1905 Ex-Governor Cyrus G. Luce died at his home here, aged 81.

The new post office opened in 1910.

Hon. Albert A. Dorrance died, age 87. He was one of the founders of the Republican party "under the oaks" at Jackson.

On July 24, 1917, Company A., National Guards were mustered into the

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COLDWATER,

MICHIGAN

COLDWATER (Continued)

World War. New \$45,000 Armory opened.

January 18, 1918, factories were closed because of fuel shortage. Clyde Clinefelter was the first soldier from Coldwater to be killed. May 23, 1919, Company A returned from the world war.

On November 6, 1922, Dr. Wade provided a much needed institution in the way of a Memorial Hospital.

Coldwater has several good factories and an unusually large business district whose stores draw trade from miles around. It serves the agricultural community well.

History of California

California, a fractional township, is located in the southeast corner of Branch county. It was first a part of Greene township, then in 1832 Coldwater township, 1836 Quincy, 1838 Algansee and in 1846 became California township.

In December 1835, Samuel Beach and son, William, and a brother-in-law, James Lawrence, of Washtenaw Co., Mich., arrived here late one afternoon to settle on their land, immediately on arrival, one started supper, one fed the horses and the other started felling trees for their house. The house they slept in that night was three logs high. Before bedtime Ashael Brown and Nathan Austin of Coldwater came up and surprised them and stayed overnight. Brown and Austin located on farms nearby. So many land seekers came in the year of 1836 that each of the few homes became almost hotels.

Ira Purdy located on section three and built a log house. He was later joined by his brothers Azam and Horace Purdy. Next, Stillman Elwell located on section ten. Ira Purdy had the only team of horses and made trips to the grist mill for the entire neighborhood. The year of 1837 was long remembered because so many newcomers caused a serious scarcity of food, especially flour. On one trip which Mr. Purdy made in search of flour, he went to English Prairie, Pretty Prairie, Ox-Bow, Lima (Howe, Ind.), White Pigeon, Constantine, Three Rivers, Schoolcraft, Mottville, Bristol, Ind., Eikhart and finally at Mishawaka on Saturday evening, he found a miller who had wheat but no flour and he refused to work on Sundays regardless of Mr. Purdy's

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CALIFORNIA (Continued)

starving neighbors. But, by bribing an employee he got the wheat ground and at dawn Sunday morning, he received a ton of flour for \$100. He paid \$2 for a peck of oats. On the way home he stayed at the hotel in Mottville. The hotel stables had no feed so he walked out to a farm and bought some hay. His hotel bill was \$1 for barn, \$1 for supper and breakfast and 25c for a room.

James Craig built the first frame house in 1839. Ira Adams built the first brick house. The first marriage was between Abraham Ackerson and his adopted sister, Katy. The first birth was the son of Ira Cass. The first death was that of Mrs. Israel R. Hall. At the first election George Monlux was selected Supervisor and William Beach, Clerk.

The old Fort Wayne, Jackson and Saginaw railroad ran through the southeast corner of the township and had a station at Ray.

In the early days California was quite a village, today it is a prosperous rural community.

History of Batavia

Batavia township is located in the west central part of the county, its surface is generally flat with slightly rolling sections. It had two chains of marshes running diagonally across the township with a beautiful growth of Burr Oaks and White Wood trees. Away from this low land was a dense growth of hard woods with maple, beech and black walnut. In section 22 were found ridges and paths, what they were we can only conjecture, but they were evidently gardens or fortifications of the Mound Builders or Pre-historic man.

The first settler any record is made of was Timothy R. Wallace, in 1832, on section 25. In 1833, Jeremiah Tillotson located on Chicago road. Both ran taverns as did most of the settlers along this famous road. The same year the family of Perkins Shay settled nearby, his death in 1834 was the first in the community. Abel Olds and his brother Martin located here in 1834. Martin Olds built a tavern on the present Colon-Coldwater road, in the early days this was the stop for the stage coach line. G. D. Baggerly was one of the first postmasters in the Old's Tavern vicinity. Martin Olds, in 1836 was elected first Probate Judge of the county, he was benefactor of many poor people and a friend to all. Mr. Olds was interested in the first bank in the county and the first newspaper, "The Eastern Star."

The township was noted for its crops of strawberries, blackberries, cran-

(Continued under Kinderhook)

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PHONE 77

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History of Girard

The entire county of Branch, containing about 32,562 acres, was known as Greene Township until 1832, when it was divided into two sections, Coldwater township on the east and Prairie Township on the west side. In 1834, by an act of the Legislative Council of the territory of Michigan, Girard township was formed from Coldwater and Prairie townships.

The village of Girard was first settled in the spring of 1829 by Richard W. Corbus, a young unmarried man, his mother and a niece, Sarah Ann Corbus, a child of 7 years, all from Detroit. At this time a Pottawatomie Indian Village, consisting of 20 some bark huts and wigwams, was located $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the main four corners. One of the empty wigwams was the Corbus home until they had built their log cabin. The Indians were friendly and had it not been for their generosity in sharing food with the Corbus family, the white people would have fared badly. The Corbus house was built on section 22. In 1831 John Parkinson, Benjamin H. Smith and two brothers, Samuel and James Craig, Joseph and John Corbus and John Cornish, located here.

Some of the first white children born were Sophronia, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benj. H. Smith, Samuel, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Craig, and Rhoda, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. Corbus, all born in 1831.

There wasn't a grist-mill nearer than White Pigeon and many families used coffee mills to make "samp," which with hominy and wild meat were the main foods.

Mr. Craig built the first log barn in 1833, and Benj. H. Smith built the first frame house. Besides those already mentioned, Martin Barnhart and Henry Van Hyning came to the "west prairie." Edward S. Hanchett and the Corbus and Cornish families occupied the "East Prairie."

James B. Thompkins, who came to Girard in 1831, took up some land near the Indian village, and was the first supervisor from his township in 1834, and was state representative for Branch County in 1854.

Others who located here in the early days were Wm. McCarty (Branch County's first sheriff), Joseph Fowler, Abram and Asa Aldrich, Chauncy Barnes, Stephen Hickox, Samuel and Christian Estlow, John Worden, John B. Mason, Lyman Fox, Stephen Birdsall, David Staunton, Timothy Robinson, Allen Cobb, John Moore, Serno B. Ames, David B. Ogden, Thomas Brewer, Wm. D. Rose, Beal H. Randall and John Strong.

The first land entries were made in 1830 by Rob't Clark, Jr., Edward Hanchett, Abram F. Boltin, Martin Barnhart, Henry Van Hyning, John Corbus and Hugh Campbell.

The first election was held in April 1835. The first school house was of logs built in 1832-33 and was taught by Miss Laura Tibbetts, Ames and John B. Mason. The building was 18 by 20 feet and cost all of \$67.00. The village had three churches, Methodist, Baptist and Free Will Baptist, 3 general stores and a postoffice and school house, several small machine or blacksmith shops and 150 inhabitants. Dr. Chauncey was the first physician.

In the early days a water well was dug in the middle of the main four corners of the village and many a weary traveler quenched his thirst and that of his oxen. This well was filled up when the pavement of U. S. 27 went through here. A bronze plate marks the spot in the intersection. Many who could not remember the name of Girard, recalled the village with the well in the center of the road. Girard today is not any larger than it was years ago, the inhabitants are industrious and farming is still the main occupation.

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History of Gilead

Gilead is a fractional township six miles east to west and three and one half miles from north to south, located in the lower part of the county, and was approved by the legislature in 1836.

There are several fortification mounds, found especially near Gilead Lake. The Indians did not know the origin of them. The soil in these usually circular ridges is made up of decayed shells. In places the usual Indian Mounds or graves were found in which relics of flint, copper and pottery were dug up. These mounds were heaps of earth made by the later Indians. An Indian trail ran from Kinderhook east to the Indian village at English Prairie, Indiana. For years after the first settler came this trail was used by the Indians and for some time by the whites. A peculiar feature of this locality was a circular grove of Maple trees only, at one time covering sections 17, 7, 8, and 18, and seemed to have been planted. Their age was estimated at 100 to 150 years. Each spring the Indians came and made maple syrup.

In 1835 a mill was built on Prairie River, (formerly called Hog Creek) in section 3 but was torn down in 1879.

In the early days there was much "fever and ague" so creeks were deepened and ditches were dug to drain the low land. This added much valuable land and lessened sickness.

The first settler was John Croy in the spring of 1831. He built a rude shanty and before the year was over had a log house. The daughter, Mary, was born about three weeks after their arrival and was the first birth in Gilead township. He moved away in 1834. Bishop Chase, an Episcopalian Rector and teacher from the Mt. Gilead, Ohio, college, came that spring and had a great influence over the community for several years. He took up between 800 and 1000 acres of land which he named Gilead and hoped to build his own college and village. He engaged Amasa Miller, Hiram Humphrey and Thomas Thurber of White Pigeon to build his house, the first frame house, in 1831, on the southwest quarter of section 9. He brought his wife and four children in the first carriage ever seen around here. He had built a tenant house for James Glass in the center of section 8, then had a larger "Mansion" built for his own family. He grew the first 40 acres of wheat in Branch county. A school house or "college" was built in 1833 and was taught by his nephew, Samuel Chase, whose marriage to a distant relative, Sarah Chase, was the first here. He built a saw-mill on Prairie River in 1834-35.

The first township meeting was held in April 1837. Abishai Sanders was elected supervisor and Albert W. Glass, clerk.

Some of the first settlers were, Abishai Sanders, Mr. Downer, Benj. Booth, James Kelly, John McKinley a blacksmith, James Benny, Francis Bull, Widow Marsh and children, Lyman Lyon, a one-legged shoemaker, Wm. Sweeting, Jeremiah Borgardus, Ezekiel Fuller, Wm. Purdy, Job Williams, Benj. S. Wilkins, Samuel Arnold, Obed Dickerson, Peter Keeslar, Don C. Mather a millwright, Burr D. Gray a carpenter, and Rev. Jehiel H. Hard, a Methodist minister arrived in 1840. Emerson Marsh opened the first store and Horace B. Williams brought the first threshing machine. Rev. Chase and Emerson Marsh were the first postmasters. In the fall of 1837-38 James McKinley taught the first Public School.

Joshua Callum, a great hunter and woods-craftsman, located here.

Hon. Cyrus G. Luce, afterward a great politician, came in 1849.

In the 70's East Gilead contained a school, church, 12 houses, sawmill, blacksmith shop, wagon shop, and two stores.

While the smallest township in the county it was a very important one and is rich in agricultural production.

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PHONE 40-F 13

H. M. WILMARTH, Prop.

History of Kinderhook

Kinderhook township was originally a part of Ovid, being approved in 1842. It was the birthplace of President Martin Van Buren. It has several small lakes and was not as heavily timbered as the other townships. There were no roads, only blazed trails. No record of a hotel or tavern can be found. Coldwater being near and the roads good, most of the mercantile business went there.

George Tripp, of New York state, was an early settler who came here about 1838. He was soon followed by his brother, David. Joshua Baker, Sheldon Williams, and Boaz Lampson were also early arrivals. John Waterhouse, of New York state, came in 1836 and became very prominent. A small village grew up around him called "Waterhouse Corners." A post office and school house were established. Samuel Arnold was the first school teacher. Later this village became known as Kinderhook. Baptist and Methodist churches were built. Dr. B. D. Jocelyn and Dr. David Fox (who soon engaged in the mercantile business) were the first physicians. Osborn and Jones had a general store with Osborn as postmaster. John D. Carnell opened a blacksmith shop. There were a shoe maker shop, wagon shop, machine shop and cider mill.

The first death was either Ann Lock, a seventeen year old girl, or a child of Lucas Withington. Facts are conflicting. First marriage was June 1837, between David Sines and Miss Craft, George Tripp Esq. officiating.

Joseph S. Hawks, of New York state, came in 1836 and located at the center of the county on Silver Lake. Stayed four years and went east for ten years and then came back. A. W. Case came to Kinderhook from New York state and being a carpenter was engaged to build both the Methodist and Baptist churches, Silas Eret, John Chase, Samuel N. Whitcomb, Henry Huyck, Charles D. Brown, John Boyd, Calvin Strong, John Bradley, A. Mosher, Hiram Canright, Ira Bonner, William Johnson, Timothy Clark, Jacob Mineer, William Lewis, Abram Walters, Oliver D. Colvin and Hiram McNall were some of the early settlers.

Oliver Burdick bought the Waterhouse saw mill and remodeled it in 1845.

The first election, April 4, 1842, Oliver D. Colvin, Supervisor; George Tripp, Clerk; Almeron W. Case, Treasurer; William Chase, Ira Bonner, David Tripp, Justices of the Peace; Ellery Paterson and George Tripp, School Inspectors; Isaac Eslow, John Depue, Arba L. Lampson, Highway Commissioners; Bentley Reynolds, and Lathrop, Directors of the Poor; Ira Bonner, Jr., Hiram Canright, David Tripp, John Waterhouse, Jr., John Bradley, L. G. Fish, O. D. Colvin, Overseers of Highways; were the officers elected.

Considering the area covered by the lakes this is the smallest township in the county but its rich soil offsets its limited territory.

HISTORY OF BATAVIA, (Continued)

berries, crab-apples, wild cherries and plums and frost grapes. These with the abundance of fish and game afforded a goodly menu to the settlers. Maple sugar was quite an industry in the spring. There was much sickness and many deaths from the "shakes" in the fall 1838. The winter of 1843-44 was especially hard because of its severity and a crop failure.

In 1835 a rude log school house was built and Mr. Southworth was the first teacher. Webster's speller was the only text book and the supply was so limited two pupils used one book.

The first white child born here was Nancy B. Olds, daughter of Martin Olds, Sr. In the fall of 1835, Melissa Olds, sister of Martin, Sr., married Israel Mudge, the first wedding in the community.

The village of Lawtonville was platted but never materialized. Batavia Center was quite a village, later Batavia was built on the railroad line. The two villages have gradually dwindled away until the township is practically a rural community.

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History of Matteson

March 6, 1838, the legislature approved the township of Matteson. Its surface is rolling and the soil sandy. Many nice farms are located here. The Air-Line Railroad and the St. Joseph River cross the northwestern corner.

There is some marsh land around the inlet and outlet (Swan Creek) of Matteson Lake, with high ground on the east side where a popular summer resort is located. Many mounds were found around the lake, telling the mute story of a prehistoric settler. Many tall skeletons along with stone and copper instruments have been dug up.

Amos Matteson, one of the first settlers, after whom the township was named, came here in 1836 from Rhode Island. He was a former Justice of the Peace in New York. It is presumed Robert Watson was the first settler in 1834. The old Kalamazoo Indian Trail passed by Mr. Watson's farm. He cleared his land and planted the first crops in the spring of 1836.

Nathaniel Turner and Abiather Culver were the next settlers. Mr. Watson was a carpenter and cabinet maker and manufactured furniture for the first settlers. In 1835 Leroy Turner was the first white child to be born. Jonathan H. Culver and Mary Celinda Matteson are believed to be the first couple married in this township. The first death was a daughter of James K. Bennett, about 1840.

The first road was built in 1837 by Road Commissioner Charles C. Ferrin. It ran from a point three miles west of Coldwater to Constantine in St. Joseph county. The Pottawattomie Indians who resided in this vicinity were very peaceful and were ruled by Chief Sau-quette, a friend of the whites.

Some other early settlers were Hiram Gardner, John Carson, Isaac Gilson and James K. Bennett.

The townships first officers were: Joseph Rudd, Supervisor; Robert Watson, Clerk; Ephriam Cline and John Vaughn, Assessors; Lazarus Everhart, John Stailey, Robert Watson, Commissioners of Highways; Robert Watson and others (names too dim to decipher) Justices of the Peace; Chas. F. Jackson, Collector; Chas. F. Jackson, Ashley Turner, Constables; Thomas B. Watson, Hiram Gardner, James L. Gillis, Overseers of the Poor; Abiather Culver, Fence-Viewer; Lazarus Everhart, Poundmaster; John Vaughn and Nelson Washburn, Pathmasters.

In 1838-39 a log school house was built. The school was taught by Jonathan H. Culver and was supported by private subscription.

Matteson post office was established in 1854 at the home of Postmaster Edwin Faxon.

In 1852 a sawmill was built at Matteson Corners by Nichols & Shepard of Battle Creek. It was destroyed by fire and a second one was built by Amos Matteson, Esq. This too was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. A general store was built in 1865 by Daniel Orcutt. Later W. H. Bennett built a store. The settlement contained a post office, saw mill, two stores, school house, blacksmith and wagon shop, besides several dwellings.

Before 1855 burials were made on individual farms but that year a very pretty cemetery was laid out.

Today the community is a thriving agricultural township.

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Coldwater Quincy

History of Quincy

Quincy township is in the eastern part of the county. Its surface is level and heavily timbered. Around the village of Quincy was several acres of prairie land with the usual burr oak openings. The stories of the early settlers traveling on the old "Chicago turnpike" and camping on the prairie ground runs back so far that they are lost in antiquity. The soil was sandy, gravelly loam with occasional clay pockets. Very prolific for hay, corn, potatoes, vegetables, various cereals, livestock and wool.

Coldwater river and Prairie river are the two main streams. Southwest of Quincy village are three lakes, namely, Marble, Berry and Quincy.

In June 1830, Horris Willson, a scotchman, entered the first 320 acres. This was along the Chicago turnpike. Willson, a carpenter, a veteran of the war of 1812, from New York State, with the aid of a hired man, George Boltin, built a house of hewn logs on section 14 and opened it as a tavern.

James G. Corbus came in the summer of 1832. He was a contractor and built the section of Chicago Road across Bronson Prairie. In October he bought government owned land in section 13, upon which he built the first completed frame house. Carpenters here secured from Ypsilanti and the lumber hauled from Orangeville (Hodunk). This too, was opened as a tavern and did a very prosperous business then and later when the railroad was built in the early fifties.

John Cornish of Girard, settled here in 1834 upon land which is now the site of Quincy. His log house was erected on the site of the Quincy hotel. Later he built the first frame house and barn in the village. Cornish kept a tavern and the first town meeting was held there in 1836.

Some of the early settlers were: Henry Van Hynning, James Ransom, Alanson Harger, John S. Belote, Walter Loomis, David Newell, Peter Shook, David W. Baker, William Laughlin, Alva Burlison, Bart Hewett, James Clizbe, Pearson Anson, Griswold Burnham, Jos. T. Burnham, Silas Hamilton, Conrad Rapp, Alpheus Williams, Philander and Hiram Corliss, Thad. E. Ball, Russell Darwin, E. L. Donahue, Ansel Nichols, Peter M. Newberry, Caleb Burlingame, J. E. Whelan, James Ashton, L. G. Rice, John Sinclair, David Blood, George, H. F. and Simon Babcock, C. E. Whitney and many others that space will

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HISTORY OF QUINCY, (Continued)

not permit to list.

James Burdick of New York state walked all the way here in the winter with a 28 lb. knapsack. Selecting land, he had to fell a tree and hew a snow shovel to clear the ground for his cabin. His father, Ichabod joined him in 1836.

Samuel H. Berry and sons, Joseph, Enos and Ezra, settled on land along Chicago road which is now the village of Quincy. Joseph became a village merchant and at various times one of his brothers, Wm. J. Briggs, G. O. Bailey and Mr. Ludlam were associated with him. Enos Berry became the village doctor and general counsellor of the people while Ezra became a minister and later took up law, had interests as a merchant and manufacturer. Dr. Enos Berry was the first supervisor, first postmaster and resident physician.

The township was approved in 1836, having been a part of Coldwater township. The name of Springfield or Springville were asked for but because of a duplication in the state the name of Quincy, suggested by Dr. Hiram Alden in honor of his birthplace, Quincy, Massachusetts, was selected.

At first township election held April 4, 1836, at John Cornish's tavern, Dr. Enos G. Berry was elected Supervisor and David W. Baker, clerk.

Chicago turnpike becoming a United States Military road, was improved in 1833.

The Lake Shore railroad was not going to have a station at Quincy but the untiring efforts of Lucas Joseph and the building of a station and freight house at the inhabitants' expense, overcame their plan.

The first log school house was erected in 1837 at the village of Quincy on what is now railroad land. Miss Anna Roberts was the first teacher. That fall a frame school house was built in the "Hog Creek" district. In 1838, a log school house was built two miles west of Quincy.

In 1840 a cemetery of 1 acre was established on Joseph Berry's farm.

As late as 1842 there were few stores and homes and the post office was

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HISTORY OF QUINCY, (Continued)

located 1 mile west of the village. The railroad helped some, but even then there were only twelve houses. In 1855 the first brick store was erected by Chas. Caswell and Daniel Varnum. At the close of the Civil War the village began to grow rapidly.

Incorporated as a village, Oct. 14, 1858, the first election was held Nov. 15, 1858, at which Ebenezer Mudge was made president, Moses A. Hewett, clerk, Alden Gregory, treasurer.

In 1878 there were five churches: Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Adventist, and Disciples. Two hotels, "Quincy" and "Fayette" Houses. Three newspapers, Times, Herald and Literary Reporter. One stove and heading factory, one sash and blind factory, and one flour mill, 1 saw and planing mill, 1 exclusive sawmill, 1 foundry, 1 wire bed spring factory, 1 broom factory, 2 carriage factories, 2 banks, 4 drygoods stores, 4 drug stores, 1 picture frame and moulding store, 2 commercial agencies, 1 bakery, 2 meat markets, 1 marble cutter, 1 news stand, 5 groceries, 3 hardware, 1 furniture, 1 clothing, stores, 2 pump shops, 2 photographic "galleries," 2 livery stables, 3 paint shops, 5 blacksmith shops, 2 tailor shops, express office, dentist, 3 lawyers, undertaker, 4 physicians and 4 ministers, fine fire department and nice homes along tree lined streets. The two hotel registers showed 6700 guests that year and the factories employed 117 people and the stores about the same number. The second iron foundry in the state was located about three miles north of town.

Dr. F. E. Marsh had a national reputation for successfully treating the opium habit. C. W. Bennett's Literary Reporter was mailed to 500 different post offices. At this time the new brick Quincy house was built.

In 1878, James Donovan conceived the idea of having an inland water course twenty miles long by cutting channels between the chain of lakes south of the village. A company was formed and contracts secured. This would make Quincy a great market place. It was completed in 1879 and ships launched. Evidently it was not the success anticipated. The chain of lakes had a 500

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HISTORY OF QUINCY, (Continued)

foot elevation above Lake Erie. Boats operated for a time.

Mt. Vernon Lodge, No. 166, F. & A. M. was organized Dec. 1864, later an order of the Eastern Star and at the close of the Civil War, a G. A. R. Post. Sharon Rose-Croix Chapter No. 36, A. L. 5878, A. D. 1878, Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis Lodge was organized.

The village of Quincy is about centrally located in the township. The old Lake Shore, now called New York Central, railroad runs through the village as does the Chicago-Detroit highway, forming the main street of the village. It is one of the best townships in Branch County.

History of Ovid

In 1834 the township of Ovid was a vast uncleared wilderness. The settlers, few and far between. The heavy rainfall and winter snow storms caused plenty of "fever and ague." The township records from the first, 1838 to 1869, were lost and these facts were only found by diligent search.

Wild game, including deer and turkey, was plentiful but wolves were a menace. One early settler told of leaving his oxen harness in the field, where he was plowing, while he went to dinner and on returning found the wolves had eaten it. Settlers frequently got lost while going from one neighbor to another because the woods were so dense.

Just who the first settler was, no one knows but the three first of any record are Howard Bradley, Richard and Nelson Salisbury, and Parley Stockwell. Howard Bradley became disgusted with conditions and sold out to Uriah Lockwood. Lockwood in 1835 owned 560 acres here and had built a log house and a log barn. The first settlers' living conditions were very primitive. One couple, after building their own log cabin in three days and making rude furniture were given two cups and saucers with two knives and two forks and were said to be one of the happiest couples in the community.

There was no grist mill close so corn was crudely ground with bowl and pestle. Because of expensive hauling to mills, little wheat was then grown.

In 1836 Jared Brooks, Samuel Treat and Stuart Davis of New York state

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History of Ovid (continued)

came and took up 160, 40, and 160, respectively. Gardner Scofield, an early pioneer, built a sawmill. Treats brick house was built in 1857 of brick made at Branch.

Some of the early pioneers were: Jeremiah Lockwood, Alex Marshal, Stephen Bates, Joshua Clark, Daniel and Levi Wilson, Benjamin I. Willets.

Elisha Spencer and Mr. Hutchinson were two more early settlers. The first church services were held at the home of Mr. Spencer by a traveling minister, a Rev. Wm. B. Brown. The first school house was built on the northwest corner of section 6, and taught by Caroline Greene followed by Harriett Brooks.

Parley Stockwell established a kind of store at his home on the corner of section 16. It soon became known as Parley's Corners and he was appointed first postmaster. The postoffice was his coat pocket. Mail in those days was sent postage collect and due to a scarcity of money he had to call with mail several times before it was accepted. Mr. Stockwell built an ashery for the making of potash. He also built a temporary schoolhouse and donated the first stove. Miss Allen, of Coldwater, was the first teacher. The next year Mr. Stockwell taught it.

Today this community is largely agricultural and raises fine crops.

History of Noble

Noble Township was approved by the legislature in 1845, separating it from Bronson township. Most of the records of Noble township previous to that date are missing and it is with great difficulty that its early history be obtained. As to its name, there are several versions, one that an early settler remarked that "It was a noble country" another that James Anderson of Noble county, Indiana, suggested the name to William Rippey, an early pioneer. Its surface is undulating and has many small lakes and a few marshes. The soil is a sandy loam, with some gravel and clay. It is well adapted to the raising of grains and fruits. It was not covered with heavy timber but had beautiful Burr Oak openings and lots of hazel brush and was not hard to clear. Being off the main highways and with the nearest railroad station located at Bronson or Orland, Indiana, it was not settled as early as the other townships.

David Foster passed through here on his way to Chicago or points west in 1830, but on being told at LaPorte, Indiana, that Chicago consisted of only 13 houses and a fort and that the inhabitants were mostly half breeds, came back and located here.

William Robinson and a Mr. Dusenberry made the first land entries in 1835. William Rippey settled here in 1836, followed by John Grove, Wm. Butts and Darwin Wilson. The last named had a store in Bronson and operated merchandise wagons throughout the territory.

Among the list of early pioneers we find the names of Sidney Mathews, Stewarts, Robert Burnside, Wm. H. Weaver, S. S. Bushnell, Benj. Depue, Jesse Brooks, C. R. Smith and Ambrose Hale, Esq. Peter Mallow in 1841 bought lumber of Aldous and Kent saw-mill in Bronson for his house, he owned 860 acres of land. John H. Lane, a stage coach driver settled here the same year. Wm. Butts ran a blacksmith shop and was the first postmaster. James Anderson was a "fast" printer when type was set by hand and had worked on the New York City Herald before locating here. Daniel Himebaugh was one of the first "Pennsylvania Dutch" (Germans) who established a colony here. The Germans soon formed a Mennonite Society and built a church.

A log school house was built at "Hickory Corners" but no record of the school or teachers can be found.

The first officers elected were: Thomas Shane (who refused and Ambrose Hale was appointed) Supervisor; William Rippey, Clerk; John Grove, Elijah Craig, Cyrus Beardsley and Jared Fuller, Justices of the Peace; S. S. Bushnell, Treasurer; Sidney Marble and William Shane, School Inspectors; I. H. Foust and S. S. Bushnell, Commissioners of Highways; William Millman, S. S. Mathews, John Curtis and James Anderson, Constables; Ambrose Hale (Benj. E. Road later appointed in his place) and S. S. Bushnell, Overseer of the Poor; David Foster, Levi M. Curtis, Andrews Watling, Walter Smith, Moses Strong and I. D. Hart, Pathmasters; William Butts, Poundmaster.

Today the township, like others of Branch county, is agricultural and contains many fine farms.

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History of Sherwood

The township of Sherwood is located in the extreme northwest corner of Branch county. It was surveyed by John Mullett in 1826. A valley running diagonally from northeast to southwest is traversed by the historic St. Joseph river. A heavy growth of timber covered this area and the soil was rich black loam in the lowlands and sandy in the higher places. The township was created by the legislature in 1836 and until late 1837 included Union township.

Alexander E. Tomlinson, the first white settler, named the community for Sherwood Forest in England. He arrived in March, 1832, and built the first log house. The cholera in the surrounding territory took a heavy toll that year. Lot Whitcomb from "Dry Prairie" or Athens where cholera was so prevalent, soon followed Tomlinson and erected a log house. Some of the settlers who began to locate here were: Joseph D. Lane, Clement Russell, Robert Waldron, Wm. Minor, Thomas West, Sr., Benjamin Blossom, John Giltner, Thomas Lee, John and Nahum Sargent, David Keys, David R. Cooley, Sr., and Ira Palmer. F. C. Watkins ran the "Log Tavern" in the northeast part of the county. The wolves were particularly vicious and gave many a scare to the settlers. Although there is no record of their killing any white people, a young Indian brave was killed by the wolves as were many young hogs and cattle.

The first road was known as the "territorial road" running from Union City to Leonidas.

John Onderdonk was the first white settler on the south side of the St. Joseph river in this township and built the first frame house. Jabin Hazen, who came to the state in 1836, located here in 1841 and his descendants still live in the community. The first white child born in the township was a daughter of Robert Waldron. She died in infancy. The first death was that of Joseph D. Lane's father. Mr. Lane erected the first log school house on Joseph Russell's land in the south west corner of section 5. No record can be found as to who the first school teacher was. Dr. A. P. Mitchell was the first physician.

When the talk of the Air-Line Railway began it was suggested that a village called Hazenville be laid out. The village name was in honor of one of the platters upon whose land it was to be located. The name finally selected was Sherwood. It grew rapidly. In 1870 Frank M. Warner built a hotel and opened a grocery. Ezra Boswick of Union City opened a drug store. J. W. Spencer was another early merchant. J. W. French and Son had the first steam grist and saw mill erected.

The first post office was at Newstead with Jared M. Rowell, postmaster. In 1871 the office was established at Sherwood and Jerome J. Studley was the first postmaster. Dr. Mason Spencer was the first resident physician.

In 1838 a Methodist class was organized and was the forerunner of the M. E. Church here. In 1877 a portion of this church withdrew and formed the "Sherwood Church." The Free Methodist Society was organized in 1867.

The village today is a thriving rural village with several stores

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History of Union Township UNION CITY — HODUNK

Union City and Hodunk, located in Union township is in the northern tier of townships. The land is mostly level and the heavy growth of timber rather retarded the early settlement. A few marshes were soon drained. The St. Joseph river crosses the northwest corner flowing in a south westerly direction. The Coldwater river joins the St. Joseph at Union City. Around Union City were found mounds of a prehistoric race with peculiar round mounds along the Coldwater river. The Indians did not know the origin of these. It is a well known fact that Spanish and French explorers traveled all through the southern part of Michigan long before the first settlers. One fortification mound on a high bluff along the St. Joseph river north of Union City suggests it might have been made by some of these early explorers. History states that an Indian trading post operated by a Frenchman was located at Union City at the conjunction of the rivers.

John Clawson of LaGrange County, Indiana, was the first settler locating an Indian trading post near the Frenchman's post.

The original survey of the township was made by Robert Clark and Edward Tiffin in 1826. Most of the first settlers located at Union City which was then called Goodwinsville about 1833. Some of these early settlers were: Alpheus Saunders, Lewis Hawley, David Kilbourn, A. Mitchell, W. M. Mitchell, Young, Buell, Judd, Zimmerman, Hammond, Hurd, McCamley, Lincoln, Parsons, Olmstead, Warren, Leonard, Chaffee, Burnett, Dunks and Morrill. Lincolns and Buells brought horses but soon sold them for half their value because feed was so high. Oxen were less expensive to buy or feed. Salt was \$11 per barrel.

Wolves, bear, deer, and smaller animals were very plentiful. The first marriage was that of Charles A. Lincoln and Mary Ann Saunders, the ceremony being performed by Rev. Charles W. Gurney in November 1838. The first birth was a son born to Mr. and Mrs. Isaiah W. Bennett at Union City.

A settlement at the junction of the Coldwater river and Hog creek was called Orangeville. A Quaker by the name of Abram Aldrich of New York state, in 1833, was the first settler. He built a saw and grist-mill in 1834. The mill became known as the "Cocoosh Mill" from the Indian name of the adjacent prairie. The name means pork or hog and was so called because the settlers let their hogs "run wild" The mill was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1847 by Roland Root. It stands today and is a wonderful old building manufacturing Peerless flour and feeds.

Lewis Merrifield was another early settler at Hodunk. The village had a post office, Mr. Parkinson being the postmaster. H. Kelso built a hotel.

The first township meeting was held April 3, 1837, having been approved by the legislature just a month before.

In 1840 a great amount of sickness occurred and was attributed to mill race's back flow at Union City. The first school was established at Union City and taught by Miss Ellen Hammond. It was started in the summer of 1838, the building having been built in the fall of 1837 by Chas. Lincoln and Briant Bartlett. Because it was painted red it was known far and wide as the "Red School House." It was used on alternate Sundays by the Methodist and Congregational Churches.

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UNION TOWNSHIP (Continued)

Isiah Bennett of New York state passed through Union City in 1831, looking for a location, he returned to settle in 1834. Mr. Bennett was commonly called "Jackson" Bennett because of his great love for President Jackson, whom he continually praised. Bennett is given the honor of founding Jacksonville, later known as Jackson. He formerly operated a hotel in Ann Arbor and Jackson and operated the Union City House for a time.

In 1833 a settler who was to mean much to the upbuilding of the community was Justus Goodwin, of Massachusetts. His 568 acre farm included the site of Union City. He built a saw-mill and platted the town, and was the first postmaster and lawyer and later became noted in politics throughout the state. In 1836, a group from New York state, consisting of Isrial Clark, Lyman Gilbert, Isaac Diamond and others bought 200 acres where the city now is and after widening the streets, began to improve the mill race and power site. They erected a saw and grist mill. It is said the streets were sprinkled with pine stumps. The New York company operated a company store. Soon John Stickney, a clerk of the above company opened a store of his own and a man by the name of Marsh operated a small store. The company owned store was a handsome, hand hewn frame building with a large room on the second floor which served as a school room, church and court room. A scarcity of money in 1837 revived the old barter system of trade.

John Zimmerman built the first blacksmith shop, he also was a self appointed "station master" on the famous "underground railway" for the smuggling of slaves into the north. In 1835 a bridge was built across the river. The first death was an Olmstead child, drowned in the mill race.

The soil, water for power and transportation, clay for brick, limestone for building and marl for cement and paint manufacturing all contributed to the rapid growth of Union City. Prices were sometimes low, and at one time salt pork was \$40.00 a barrel, wheat 35c per bushel, wool from 15c to \$1.05. A trip by oxen to Detroit consumed two weeks.

Dr. Theodore C. Hurd was the first physician, locating here in 1834. For sometime it was planned to build a canal from Ohio to the junction of the rivers in Union City, the idea was finally abandoned. Steamers from the time of the first settlers until the late '40s ran up the St. Joe River.

The first pig iron ever run in Michigan was made by the old Union City Foundry. The Peerless Portland Cement Co. built a plant here and made cement from the marl for many years, but is now abandoned.

In the fall of 1870 the first mixed train ran on the Air-Line Railroad. There were several hotels in the early days, one still standing along the river is the old "Steamboat Hotel." Union City has had several newspapers, in 1867 there was the City Independent, U. C. Register, U. C. Local and Robinson's Weekly, now consolidated into the Register Weekly.

A Masonic F. & A. M. Lodge, No. 28, was organized in 1848. The Union City Chapter, R. A. M. was organized in 1867 and Council in 1870. I. O. O. F. Lodge was organized in 1848.

Today Union City has a beautiful park, homes, wide pavements, fire department, City owned light and power system, fine churches and schools with progressive merchants.

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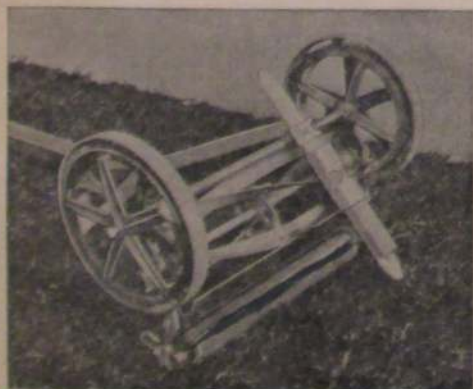
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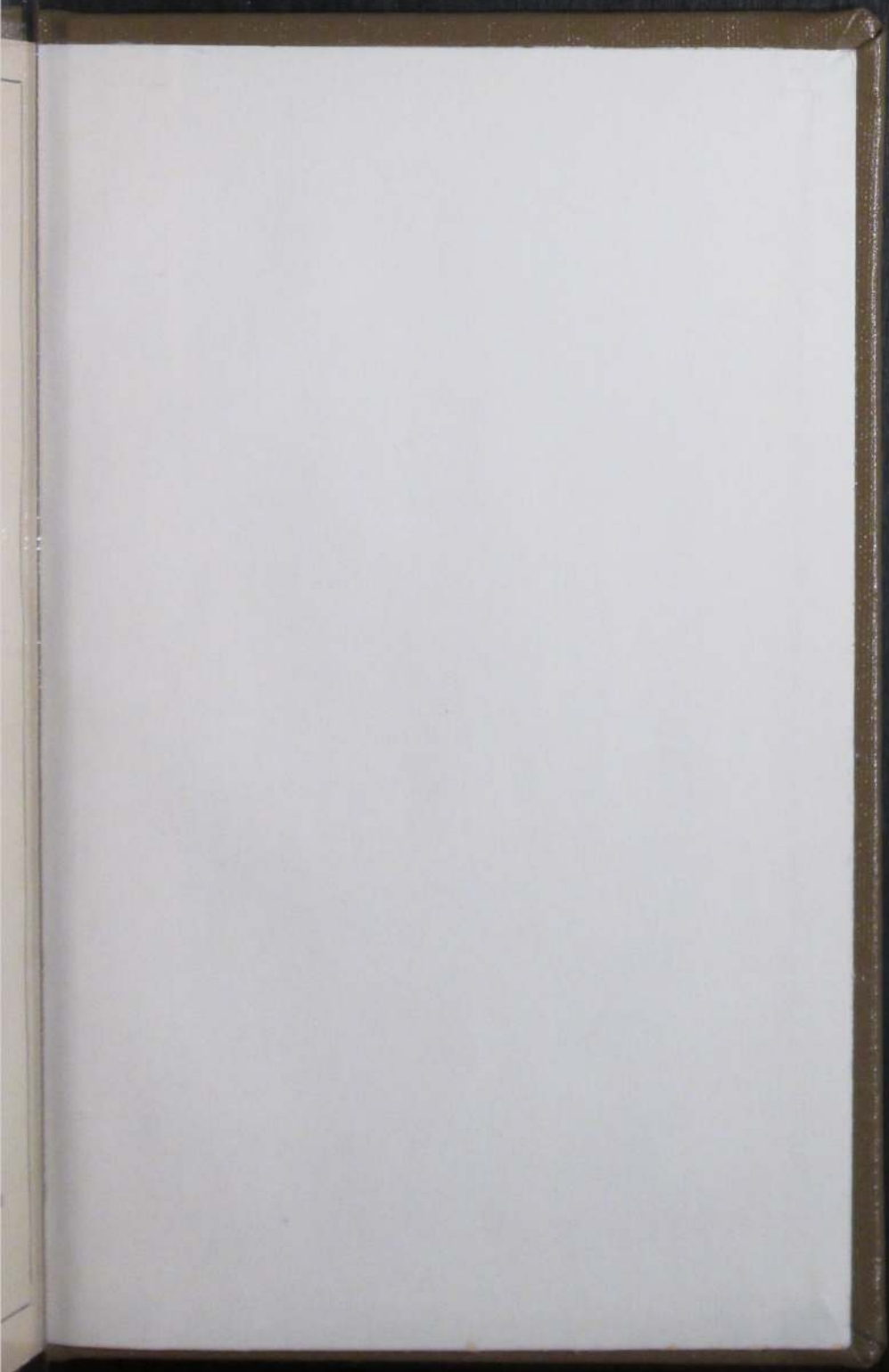
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