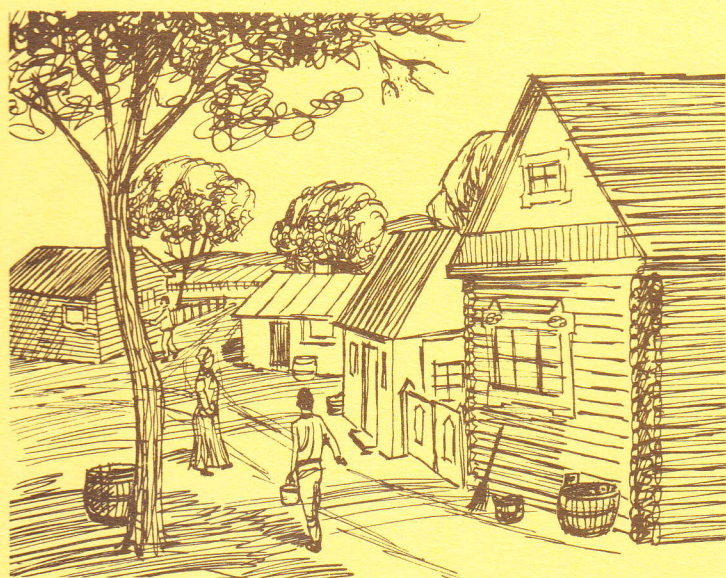# FORGOTTEN COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL MICHIGAN

by
Ford Stevens Ceasar

A study of the counties of Clinton, Ingham, and Gratiot with respect to communities, post-offices, and hamlets as they were identified in the pioneer days of Central Michigan.

An Address delivered by Mr. Ceasar at a meeting of the Greater Lansing Historical Society.

May, 1963

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Best Wishes from Ford S. Ceasar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ford Stevens Ceasar is a native of Michigan: he was born in Lebanon Township, Clinton County. A part of his youth was spent in Gratiot and Ingham Counties. He received his AB degree at Michigan State University in 1951 in education, and his MA degree from the same institution in 1955 in educational administration. He also did undergraduate studies at Ferris Institute and at Central Michigan University.

In 1933 he started his teaching career in a rural school in Essex Township, Clinton County. Except for an interruption in the 1940's, he has continued in the field of education. He has been an elementary school principal in the Lansing Public Schools since 1956. Also, he teaches local history to educators as an in-service activity.

Mr. Ceasar has made several contributions to educational professional magazines. He is Historian for the Michigan Department of Elementary School Principals.

He is a past president of the Greater Lansing Historical Society, and is also a member of the Historical Society of Michigan, Detroit Historical Society, and the American Association for State and Local History.

FORGOTTEN COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL MICHIGAN

INTRODUCTION

Southern Europe, Western Asia, and Northern Africa are rich in ruins. Beautiful cities have risen, prospered, and decayed, and in the march of time have been forgotten except in tradition. The New World, too, has her wonders, her relics of yesteryears, her portentous ruins, and crumpled and empty cities. And all are on a magnificent scale, as developed by the ancients. More modern cities and communities have had a somewhat briefer existence and a faster decay as witnessed by several mining and frontier towns, whose growth and decline were remarkable and rapid.

Central Michigan, with perhaps a spirit of competition in this respect, provided several instances of a similar nature. The names and identities are forgotten, and few residents in the area are aware that like Sodom and Gomorrah, several of the communities are gone forever. Lost to us now, they contributed their part in shaping the characters of the men and women who would go on to build a greater community.

On the other hand some communities thrived after their creation. In so doing, the residents frequently desired to change the identity of the community for several reasons. The change from New Amsterdam to New York is a very common historical fact. The British had captured the thriving Dutch settlement, and after stationing the " Red Coats " there for preserving the peace and tranquility of the young port city, it seemed more appropriate to rename the settlement.

Primitive communities or villages in the new frontiers of Michigan were frequently named after the first pioneer family or the individual to settle in that area. Frequently, these early residents would be fired by the wanderlust to new frontiers or adventure and would move on after only a short stay in the community. As others moved into the hamlet and the settlement grew, the newcomers often desired to change from the original identity first placed upon them. In several instances the identity first placed upon a village caused the residents considerable embarrassment and it took diligent effort and time to make the transition. In other cases it was confusing to properly locate the destination of the mails if two or more communities had the same name, and since this was the case in some instances, changes in identification must necessarily come about.

A look at the succeeding pages will give the reader several instances where areas went through a transition in identification or, never became a reality. In most cases only the local historian or the very elderly will recognize the original names. Time has slowly closed the lid upon this chest of historical knowledge.

The counties of Clinton, Ingham, and Gratiot have many instances of lost identities. Those communities of yesteryears are recreated on the following pages as the romance of each county unfolds.

The first postoffice of Gratiot County was located in the central part of Fulton Township on Section 15. Although it was established on the farm of Warren Hawse, the postoffice was called Springbrook. This was probably due to the nature of a small brook bubbling forth from the rocky soil all about.

There seems to be some disagreement as to whom the first postmaster was. It may have been * Warren Hawse, or perhaps it was ** William L. Sutherland.

Springbrook Postoffice was opened for business on November 16, 1855, and remained at its first location until 1880 when it was transferred to the John Ressiguie store at nearby Fulton Center. Later in 1887, the store and the postoffice was moved to Middleton.

Jacob Rush was the first to have grist ground in a Gratiot County mill. That mill was built along the banks of the Pine River by Ralph Ely, at Elyton, now popularly identified as Alma on the southern boundary of Pine River township.

In the Fall of 1853, General Ralph Ely, along with three other men, walked thirty miles from Ionia by Indian trails along the Pine River and chose a spot to call home. Where the river crosses the southern townline, General Ely platted Elyton and individuals added subdivisions so that within three years after it was first occupied, the settlement became a hamlet and was named Alma.

* Gratiot County Herald, Centennial Edition, Ithaca, Michigan, Aug. 18, 1955, Section J, page 1.

** Gratiot County, Michigan, Willard D. Tucker, Press of Seeman and Peters, Saginaw, Michigan, 1913.

Ely's property was surveyed and laid out by S. S. Hastings, February 9, 10, and 11, 1856. For some time the place was known as Elyton, or Ely's Mills. James Gargett, Esq., platted and named the village of Alma in 1858. Actually this was a subdivision to Elyton, although the name was absorbed by the fast growth of Alma.

During the Spring of 1855, Doctor Abram M. Crawford, then living in Lansing, engaged a surveyor, L. D. Preston, and platted one-hundred-thirty acres of land which he named Pine River. Dr. Crawford was a very ambitious individual for he was also instrumental in securing the passage of an act through the state legislature, calling for the organization of the county.

In 1859, Gilbert E. Pratt and Edward T. Cheesman purchased a tract of land adjacent to Pine River on the south. It was not a part of Pine River, but an original village. It was surveyed and platted, and named "St. Louis."

During the Fall of the year of 1855, Joseph Clapp was successful in securing a postoffice for Pine River. Consequently, he was appointed as the first postmaster. Clapp had come into the country from Sandusky County, Ohio, in 1853. The credit for the first permanent settlement in the area is given to Clapp. He had built a log house for himself and his new bride on the south bank of the river during the summer of 1854.

The two villages of Pine River and St. Louis, though like twin sisters of the same family, retained their individual names until, 1865, when the name Pine River was dropped, as was the name of the postoffice. The whole settlement became St. Louis.

The first postoffice of Gratiot Center, Gratiot County was granted by the authority of the Federal Government in 1855. John Jeffrey had purchased a piece of land at the very geographical center of Gratiot County. He had a survey made of the prospective village, which by common consent was called Gratiot Center.

The village of Ithaca, now Gratiot's county-seat, was occupied by the first settlers as early as 1853. It was identified as "Gratiot Center" until 1857 when it officially got its present name.

Jehu E. Parkinson lived about one mile north of Forest Hill, and at one time he set up for himself and for a short time had a little station at his place called Parkinson. He established a postoffice and was appointed as its first postmaster on March 9, 1887. The office lasted about eight years, and probably was never really needed.

When the first railroad car of the Ann Arbor Railroad crossed the road at Forest Hill, a lad by the name of Fred Creech was aboard. He remembers how a pastime of the boys of his time was to purchase a five-cent ticket at Forest Hill for Parkinson, and then walk home after the ride.

The first postoffice in the Elwell neighborhood was built one mile west of Elwell, and was known as Seville, around 1876 or '77.

The Seville postoffice was started in a log house, and farmers in the area took it upon themselves to build a railroad

depot so that the train would stop to leave the mail. To get the town started in that vicinity was hopeless since the Phelps Brothers had built a store at the present site of Elwell and were successful in getting a postoffice established. The trains would not stop at both places and since Phelps apparently had "more pull" the mail was dropped at their location.

History from the older pioneers reveals an interesting note. On a particular Sunday, the railroad company brought in a couple of flat cars and actually stole the depot building, which the farmers had erected. They say that no action could be taken against the railroad since no injunction could be started as the act took place on Sunday.

Summerton postoffice was located in the northeast corner of Seville Township, on the north county line. Bradley E. Johnson was appointed first postmaster on July 27, 1870. The postoffice was discontinued on November 20, 1960.

The first postoffice in the township of Sumner was established in 1857 at Sumner or "Estella" as it was then named. The residents drew up a petition for the postoffice and the story goes that they were lacking one name of the necessary number, so they waited until the birth of a new child, and his name was attached to the petition.

George S. Bell, Titus Stover, and James Hicks were among the first settlers of the southwestern part of the township. Mr. Bell came to that part of the country from Ohio in 1854 and took up four hundred acres of land. A sawmill and a store soon were started at the present site of Sumner and took the name of "Belltown."

The store was operated by Titus Stover and patrons of his
business called the settlement "Stoverville." Titus Stover and George
Stratton owned and operated the mill. In 1868, the village was laid out
by George and William Stratton, Thomas Harvey, Lawson S. Ferris,
and William Pugsley, and it was given the name of "Estella."

When the postoffice was established in October of 1869, the
name of Sumner was given it. Sumner was of course an illustrious states-
man of Massachusetts.

The only mark left in the village to remind the community
that the town was once called "Estella" was on the school building along
with the date of 1883, but this went up in smoke as the school was consumed
by fire.

However, in 1950, the Rebekah lodge reorganized and the
name selected for the organization was "Estella Lodge."

Records are incomplete, but a Monticello postoffice was
located somewhere in New Haven Township. Henry P. Clark was appointed
postmaster on November 2, 1857. The postoffice was discontinued on
March 23, 1863.

Ocina postoffice was located in southern New Haven and had
Abraham Fredenburgh as its first postmaster. The office was established
on March 8, 1881 and closed its doors on September 7, 1881. All done
within six month's time. It might be called the forerunner of the office at
Sethton, which was begun not far away and during the next summer.

Gardenville, a postoffice in Western New Haven, was a short-lived institution. Robert McFarland was appointed as its first postmaster on March 25, 1895, and the office closed its door on business on December 31, 1902.

A postoffice called North Shade was established in northwestern North Shade Township, August 3, 1854. This postoffice lasted exactly fourteen years, when the office was changed to Carson City, Montcalm County, August 3, 1868.

One of the first settlers to come into the township of North Star was Peter Hoffman. He had traveled from Hillsdale in April, 1854, and had built a log cabin on Section 29. It is said that someone heard him jokingly remark that he had named the place North Star because he thought he had gone as far north as any human being could possibly go. North Star took its name from the township, it being situated in the very exact geographical center.

The Ann Arbor railroad officials, by mistake, had called the station "Douglas" when the railroad was put through. However, the error was corrected and the old name of North Star was replaced.

Stella postoffice was located in southeastern North Star. Addison Hayden was appointed its first postmaster on March 2, 1858. It was discontinued and re-established, and finally discontinued on August 14, 1890.

North Wheeler postoffice lasted about ten years. It served a number of people in southern Midland County as well as of Gratiot. It was also a late office since it closed officially on May 14, 1904.

Ring postoffice was located in eastern Wheeler Township, and had Jabez Phelps as its first postmaster. He was appointed May 3, 1882, and was followed by Eben R. Gould, John Basor, and again he took office on October 30th of that same year.

Lafayette Township also had several postoffices which disappeared with time. Early residents of the area walked or drove the horse to such places as Galloway, Langport, Aldrich, and Lafayette, or Fayette as it was sometimes called. All of these became extinct.

When the Sickles postoffice was established in Hamilton Township, it was one mile north of its present location and gave its name to the surrounding community, the present Edgewood. This settlement was called "Coletar" by several of the old residents because of two business establishments on opposite corners owned by Mr. Cole and Mr. Tar.

Hasty postoffice got its start in southeastern Hamilton, June 7, 1878, to accomodate the lumbering people. The office was discontinued on November 3, 1891.

The southeastern township of Elba also had a postoffice to take care of the lumbermen and the lumbering interests. This particular postoffice was known as Leon. It was established on April 14, 1879, and closed its door to business on February 18, 1887.

Bannister's existence as a village can be attributed to the fact that a postoffice was established February, 1883; and, that a railroad was built through there about a year later.

The village is located in sections 27 and 34 of Elba Township

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on the Maple River. It was the intention of its promotors to have it named "Maple Bend" on account of its proximity to big bend in the river, but the Postoffice Department of the United States objected the the double-geared name.

Almost without question, the shortest-lived postoffice on record was "Luna" in Washington Township. The office lasted from March 2nd, 1858 to June 22, 1858, when it was discontinued. William Carothers was appointed postmaster.

Ola was first founded as a stop on the old Toledo, Saginaw and Muskegon Railroad, which runs east and west through the southern part of Gratiot County. Ola's existence dates from 1887, when the railroad was completed. In December, 1888, Alvin Shaver had a small tract platted and placed on record in Ithaca.

The postoffice closed its door to business in December, 1904. The village had contained a blacksmith shop, a cheese factory, several houses, and a store or two. These have all disappeared with the exception of two or three homes. The hamlet has officially lost its identity. Ola was historically important in that it had the first sugar beet weighing station to be built in Michigan.

Seville Twp.	Pine River Twp.	Bethany Twp.	Wheeler Twp.
		● Pine River (1855)	
	● Elyton (1853)		
Sumner Twp.	Arcada Twp.	Emerson Twp.	Lafayette Twp.
● Belltown (1854)			● Lafayette (1857)
	Gratiot ●enter (1855)		
New Haven Twp.	Newark Twp.	North Star Twp.	Hamilton Twp.
		Stella ● (1858)	
● North Shade (1854)	Springbrook ● (1855)	Washington Twp.	Elba Twp.
North Shade Twp.	Fulton Twp.	Luna ● (1858)	

GRATIOT COUNTY

Communities or postoffices established in the county prior to 1860.

Several villages were platted in the early days of Michigan which proved to be only dreams in the minds of the originators and would usually revert to the state because of the existing tax laws. There were three "paper villages" in the early pioneer history of DeWitt Township.

The first of these was New Albany, platted by Hiram F. Sheldon in 1833. As early as 1838 the plat was lost for taxes and the land was repurchased by George F. Clark, of Albany, New York. He sold some lots but the property was sold for taxes as early as 1840.

Doctor Levi D. Jennisin was the first physician to live in Clinton County. He came into the DeWitt area in the Spring of 1837 and located on the south side of the Looking Glass River. This was the now defunct "paper village" of New Albany.

Sebastian Beckwith, with a group of men in 1836, platted land on both sides of the Looking Glass River where Prairie Creek empties into it. This proposed village of Middleton could not attract any investors, so that in 1842 this land went for unpaid taxes.

The plat for Old DeWitt was originaged by Frederick A. Bowles. This was attempted in 1837, and it adjoined the proposed New Albany. Old DeWitt also failed to develop and it was sold for unpaid taxes dating back to 1842.

Captain David Scott, his wife and two sons, David and Charles, arrived at the site of the present village of DeWitt on October 4, 1833. Scott made himself a home on the Looking Glass River and because of the influx of land-lookers and settlers who followed so rapidly, he built a public house to accommodate them.

David Scott's place was known far and wide in the 30's and 40's as a gathering place. The place was most frequently referred to as Scott's. It was really the beginning of the village of DeWitt.

Clinton County at its beginning had only one township, and that was DeWitt.

On March 6, 1838, the Michigan legislature set off the west half of DeWitt Township as a separate entity known as "Wandaugon." This is Chippeway Indian and means "salt springs." Within one month after passage of the measure, enough pressure was brought about that the name was changed to Lebanon on April 2, 1838.

The village of Wacousta in Watertown Township was first called Waterloo, when in 1837 it was founded. There was another Michigan postoffice with the same name which caused misdirected mails. So the name was called Wacousta, after an Indian princess.

In the very early days of Riley Township, the farmer took anything and everything to Westphalia. There was a market for all. In those pioneer days the hamlet was refered to as "the Settlement"

Later it was called by several "Dutchtown." It was not until after it was incorporated that it was called by the name of Westphalia.

One of the greatest promotions of early Clinton County was the Clinton Salt Works in Lebanon Township. When it flopped, the thud was heard far and near. The company formed after a scientific survey disclosed salt springs along the Maple River in Lebanon. On this information the salt company was formed in 1837 under an enactment by the State Legislature.

From there a village was platted and a bank was formed. The Clinton Salt Works Company erected several frame buildings in 1838. The village was platted in Section 15, and the Clinton County Salt Works Bank was founded. The bank's capital was not to be less than $50,000 and not more than $100,000. There was a rumor that the only specie owned by the company was a bucket-full of silver coins.

Both the bank and the salt company soon failed and several persons lost heavily in the venture. Thus ended wildcat banking and the making of salt in the township of Lebanon.

McMaster's Hotel located eight miles northwest of St. Johns is a picturesque structure slowly deteriorating back to the sand from whence it prospered. Located in Greenbush Township, it was an important stopping place on the old post road from St. Johns to St. Louis. S.L. McMaster, who in 1878 was named postmaster of the Union Home postoffice, was also owner of the tavern.

The town of Eureka in Greenbush Township has had two locations and five different names, one of which - "Swizzletown" - proved

difficult to shed.

Before the platting, the hamlet had been known as Greenbush, Williamsport, Barrington, and Swizzletown. Greenbush became the legal name of the village when the plat was recorded, but it developed that a town in Alcona County along the shores of Lake Huron was called Greenbush. This caused much confusion in the mails, thus the villagers decided to choose a new name. Probably several hoped that the popular name of Swizzletown would be dropped once and for all.

Edward Stark had become postmaster, and he suggested the name Eureka. This is a Latin term and means "I have found it." Stark believed this name most fitting for he had found the opening of his business excellent and with a promise of greater things to come.

*Six years before John Swegles and his pioneer friends sat on a log and christened their new village "St. Johns." Adam Richmond built his house in Greenbush Township at the place now called "French's Corners." He cut native tamarack and white pine logs for the beams, joists, and corner posts, and hewed the timbers out by hand with an adze. He mortised the joints and whittled heavy oak pegs to hold the tenons. He used saplings for uprights and covered the exterior walls with board and batten siding. No log house this, but true "timber frame" construction, built like a barn to last for years.

The two rooms upstairs he floored with thick pine boards, some eighteen inches wide, but downstairs he laid narrow, matched hickory boards which in time were to age into rock-like hardness. He used hand-wrought nails, and cast-iron thumb latches on the paneled doors were the latest thing. When he was finished he brought

a tiny spruce and a young white pine from the great swamp and planted them in the front yard.

A. M. Drake built a brick inn on the north side of the road, and with the coming of the State Road, Floyd Coleman erected a large frame tavern across from that. Nothing but "squatters' shacks" were ever built on the fourth corner, and often legal action was necessary to evict these trespassers on other people's land.

Young Harmon Richmond started a feed mill, fueling the steam engine with wood, and farmers brought grain from miles around. Homesteaders and stage coaches stopped at the two inns. The tap room at Coleman's Tavern often echoed with laughter, but young ladies lowered their eyes and hurried by on their way upstairs to the ballroom which rocked with dancing feet and rang with fiddles and the voice of the "caller." Other houses appeared so that the road began to look like a street and in 1858 the Government decided it was time this thriving community had a postoffice. Buchanan was then in the White House and Coleman's Corners was named "Keystone," honoring Pennsylvania, the President's native state.

But the little community of Keystone died aborning because four miles to the south the railroad had come through and a place called St. Johns had grown from an upstart village into a town to be reckoned with. Major D. M. French bought Coleman's Tavern, finally stopped operating it, and Drake's Hotel burned down.

* Clinton County Republican News, Centennial Edition, St. Johns, Michigan, 1956.

The village of Elsie grew out of another's failure. The first settlement was known as Craven's Mills, or the "Corners."

Three brothers, Joseph, Thomas, and Robert Craven erected a sawmill on the Maple River in 1845. They dreamed that the water-power would attract a town, and so they platted a village at that site.

Alpheus Bebee soon opened a store in the new settlement, but for some reason he sold out in a short time to J. D. Sickles and his brothers, Aaron and William. Bebee then proceeded to set up a wagon shop and in 1856 he built a tavern. Hiram Curtis opened a cabinet shop and Bruce Hunter a blacksmith shop.

But then in 1857, the brothers, J. D. and William Sickles, decided to build a new village on their farm a mile to the east, which is today's location of the town of Elsie. Their plat was recorded as of June 18, 1857.

The new village received its name from a tiny baby, the daughter of Franklin Tillotson, the settlement's first postmaster.

The Rochester Colony community was founded by former residents of Rochester, New York, on February 29, 1836, with the adoption of articles for association, which provided for the raising of funds to purchase land in Michigan. A share in the colony cost $125. This entitled the shareholder to one vote, eighty acres of farm land, and a village lot. There would be a drawing to determine ownership and settlement had to be within eighteen months or the owner would forfeit all rights and interest.

The association selected W. G. Russell, Joseph Sever, and

E. R. Everest as representatives, in April of 1836 to go into Michigan to choose and buy the land. Within a month they had purchased a little more than four thousand acres in what today is Duplain Township for $1.25 an acre.

The first settlers of the colony started out for Michigan in July of 1836. The small group consisted of sixteen persons of which ten were children. They arrived at their new colony on July 28, 1836.

The plat of the colony gave the collection of the village lots the name of Mapleton. Within the village were the mills, a store and a postoffice. By 1852 the village had prospered considerably. During the 50's it is said that within the colony four physicians were doing business at the same time.

In February of 1838, the colony opened its school, one of the first in Clinton County.

For several years in a very remote area of Ovid Township's Section 31, a group of counterfeiters operated a business. History of area discloses that in 1838 as few as ten families were living in the township, and the land was heavily wooded. Therefore, it was speedily chosen as a hideaway place for the making of illegal Mexican silver dollars. The area was unflatteringly designated as the "Bogus Settlement" or "Bogus Corners."

The counterfeiters, a small group of Detroit characters - four men and a woman, were a crafty lot; however, all were caught and sentenced. But the name "Bogus Corners" and "Bogus Settlement" were retained for a long time.

Ovid became a rail station after a tiff over another site.
B. O. Williams had built a sawmill on the old Detroit and Milwaukee
Railraod. The site was called Middlebury and was located a mile and
a quarter east of the present town of Ovid. H. G. Higham, chief engi-
neer of the Detroit and Milwaukee, as well as Amos Gould wanted to
join Williams when he platted the site and began to sell lots. A
disagreement, however, brought about hard words and feelings. For
that reason Higham built the Ovid station on his land, now occupied
by the village.

When the Lansing-DeWitt-St.Johns route became the old
State Road, Myron Wolcott started a tavern in a shanty in Section 17
of Olive Township, and called it the "Halfway House" because it was
located midway between DeWitt and St. Johns. This was probably on
or very near Muskrat Lake.

Both an infant city and a theological seminary on the
southern Clinton County line at what is now Delta Mills fell victim to
the financial panic of 1837.

The city was known as Grand River City and as Orion.
It stretched from the Grand River in Delta Township of Eaton County
to Watertown Township along the Grand River Trail.

The seminary was to be modeled after universities then
flourishing in the East. In June of 1837, three men from Massachu-
setts arrived to be faculty members of the new seminary. They were
the Rev. E. P. Ingersoll, Dr. Isaac Jennings, and Charles W. Gurney.

The school was incorporated by the State Legislature, and Rev. Ingersoll was appointed chairman of a committee to secure funds for the seminary. He obtained enough paper pledges to apparently guarantee the future of the school.

The land for the city and the seminary was owned by Erastus and Elihu P. Ingersoll. After the city was laid out a log house for the Erastus Ingersoll family was put up and a sawmill was built.

But the Panic of 1837 left the paper pledges worthless and plans for the Grand River City and the seminary were abandoned.

Clinton County ●	● Campau's Post (1826)	Swizzletown (1855) ●	Cravens' Mills (1845) ●
Salt Works (1838)	Essex Twp.	Greenbush Twp.	Duplain Twp.
Lebanon Twp.		Keystone (1858) ●	● Mapleton (1837)
			Middlebury (1856) ●
Dallas Twp.	Bengal Twp.	Bingham Twp.	Ovid Twp.
			Bogus Corners (1838) ●
The Settlement ● (1836)			
Westphalia Twp.	Riley Twp.	Olive Twp.	Victor Twp.
	● Waterloo (1837)	● Scott's (1833)	
Eagle Twp.	Watertown Twp.	DeWitt Twp.	Bath Twp.
	Grand River City (1837) ●		

C L I N T O N   C O U N T Y

Communities or settlements established in the county prior to 1860.

On March 8, 1836, Governor Stevens T. Mason appointed three commissioners to locate the county seat of Ingham County.

* On the 15th of June, 1836, the commissioners made the following report:

"To His Excellency, Stevens T. Mason,
    "Governor in and over the State of Michigan.
"The undersigned commissioners appointed to locate the seat of justice in the county of Ingham, have located the seat of justice in said county at the quarter-section post, between sections one and twelve, town two north, range one west.

            (Signed)   "T. Crawford,
                                    "Washington Wing,
                                    "John Bronson.

    "Detroit, April 7, 1836. "

The land described upon which the county-seat was to be located was the property of Charles T. Thayer. He quickly laid out a village and called it Ingham. It is said that Thayer not only had hopes for a county-seat, but also the location for the capitol of the State. These prized ambitions were never realized, for it does not look as if the county ever put up any buildings, or that any county business was ever transacted there.

It never got started except on paper, and the once laid-out village is now under cultivation, with the exception of just a few lots at the cross-roads.

Another "paper city " that never got up off the ground was "Biddle City." This little city located at the junction of the Red Cedar and the Grand Rivers was laid out in sixty-five blocks, with an

* History of Ingham & Eaton Counties, Michigan, With Illustrations, Samuel W. Durant, D. W. Ensign & Co., 1880, p. 99.

academy square, a public square, and a church square.

William and Jerry Ford, enterprising young men with pro-
mising ideas, are probably the first real estate swindlers to operate in
Central Michigan. In the winter of 1835, these two men planned their city,
and then went to New York State to sell the lots. Some sources state that
the land was owned by William H. Townsend, and that the Ford brothers
did not know this. Regardless of the stories, several lots were sold and
then the move was on to locate in the City. Sixteen pioneers cut and
slashed their until they finally reached the site of the present R. E. Olds
residence. The sight was not at all promising: the entire area to the
south was covered with high waters and floating ice cakes. Consequently,
the thought of developing the village was dropped.

Along the Grand River in Lansing Township, three small
settlements were originated and prospered. Today, they are completely
engulfed as a part of the central portion of the City of Lansing.

The first of these little settlements grew up around
Seymour's dam and mill just south of the river's big bend in North Lansing.
This hamlet was actually the beginning of the City in the Forest. It was
known as "Lower Town," because of its location.

The second development originated near the confluence of
the Grand and Cedar Rivers. A log bridge had been constructed over
the Grand in 1847. Bush and Thomas built a frame store building. A
postoffice was established in the store, and in 1848 a public-house
was erected near there. It was known as the National Hotel. This

area became "Upper Town."

Business continued and prospered along Main Street for the next two years, and then began to migrate toward the shining tin roof of the new capitol building. The area along Washington Avenue from Washtenaw Street to Saginaw soon was identified as "Middle Town."

Soon after locating the State Capitol in Lansing Township, the Legislature named the settlement, "Town of Michigan." In less than a year, it was evident that the name was not satisfactory to the early settlers. On April 3, 1848, the Senate and the House of Representatives approved the change to "Lansing."

One of the most noticeable disappointments of the pioneer history of Ingham County was the birth and decay of a village in Alaiedon Township. The hamlet of Jefferson was platted on Section 29, in 1838. However, it was never recorded in Ingham County. As many as thirteen log dwellings were put up; and, a school building as well as a sawmill followed. At one time "Jefferson City" appeared as if to move ahead of Mason in growth. But business refused to be intrigued to the area, and today, one can drive through the once populace village and not see anything that would indicate that a homogeneous group of pioneers had lived there.

At about the same time, a village was platted on the banks of the Grand River on the west county line in Aurelius Township, and it was named "Columbia." It soon had a sawmill and a blacksmith shop. This was all that ever happened. The village plat was never recorded in Ingham County.

Aurelius Center was formerly known as "Howe's Corners,"
with Enoch Howe serving as the first postmaster. The Centre at one
time contained two stores, a hotel, a millinery shop, three blacksmith
shops, a wagon shop, and had two practicing physicians.

At one time Bunker Hill Township was served by three post-
offices: the name of Bunker Hill postoffice, the first in the township, was
known as Bunker Hill Centre. Another in the northwest part of the township
was called "Felt," with Dorman Felt as its postmaster. The third, and the
only one to survive, was Fitchburg.

George Phillips settled on Section 23 of Delhi Township in
1839, and later a tavern and a postoffice were established at his dwelling.
This was known as the "Centre." Delhi Centre was used as an identity
until about 1859, when the name was changed to Holt in honor of Postmaster
General, Holt.

"Delhi Corners" or "Five Corners" as the names were
used alternately was at the intersection of Aurelius and Keller Roads with
US-127 of the present day. A small cluster of buildings existed at that
site. Today, this is a part of the community of Holt.

In the southeast part of Ingham Township is a locality
formerly known as "Meadville," which at one time had aspirations of
becoming a city. A Mr. Mead built and operated a hotel there for several
years, but finally he left the place when he realized his hopes were in
vain.

In the year of 1846, a post-office named Ingham was kept

in the southeastern part of Ingham Township. The office was moved to

Haynes' Corners, south of Dansville, and then finally to Dansville.

For several years prior to 1871 no villages existed in
Leroy Township. However, a post-office was established early on Section
6 and was known as "Phelpstown," "Shackshore," and more familiarly
as "Podunk."

The first plat of the village of present-day Webberville
was known as "McPherson's Plat of the Village of Leroy."

The land was originally entered in the county in 1836 by
Ebenezer Jessup, Jr., and Henry W. Delevan. It was sold to William
M. McPherson, who platted the village then known as Leroy. The
settlement was subsequently called Webberville after the original post-
office in Section 10.

The village of Okemos in Meridian Township was first
called Hamilton, after Alexander Hamilton by suggestion from J. H.
Kilbourne. The settlement was laid out and platted by Freeman Bray.

The State Legislature changed the name to Okemos in 1857.
This name honored the Chippeway Indian Chief, John Okemos, who had
spent much of his life in the area.

The Pine Lake Station and post-office on the Chicago and
Grand Trunk Railway were established where Haslett is today. Pine
Lake has become Lake Lansing. The post-office was in operation in 1879,
one year after the establishment of the station.

The Red Bridge Post Office was started in 1863 at the crossing of the Meridian Line with the Howell Plank Road. The Red Cedar River crossed the toll road just east of this intersection. The postoffice was located a few rods east and was operated by S. Doyle in a house built by J. H. Mullett. The name of the post-office was taken from the bridge, which had been painted red.

The site is now identified by a roadside park and a historical marker. This marker tells about the Red Bridge Post Office and the Grand River Trail.

The first settlement in Vevay Township was located in the southwestern part of the town, and was known as "Rolf's Settlement."

Ephraim, Nathan, Benjamin, Ira, Hazen, and Manasseh Rolf - all brothers, settled in the same neighborhood, in the midst of heavy, dense forest. No village was ever established, but the neighborhood carried the popular name for several years.

"Eden" was at one time called Chapin's Station. Almon M. Chapin, pioneer settler, arrived in Vevay Township on January 1, 1843. The settlement, established on Sections 28 and 33, at one time contained a store, a post-office, two blacksmith shops, a shoe shop, and two grain elevators.

William Hopkins was the first postmaster of the Eden post-office, which had been established in 1844.

On March 22, 1839, the State Legislature divided Ingham Township. The new township was called "Brutus," which now constitutes

the townships of Leroy and Wheatfield. The first town-meeting of Brutus
was held in the Spring of 1840.

The next year, on March 20, 1841, upon petition by David
Gorsline to the Legislature, the name was changed to Wheatfield.

A post-office known as "Alverson" was established in the
north part of the township at about the time that Ulysses S. Grant became
President of the United States. The post-office was first held in the
dwelling of S. D. Alverson, the first postmaster. He lived on Section 3
of the township. Later it was removed to Section 4, to the home of
Phillip DeBarry, the succeeding postmaster.

Kinnyville is a very small settlement on the Grand River,
somewhat below Onondaga. Stephan VanKinney, the original property
owner, had come from Nova Scotia; and, after purchasing a large tract
of land, he laid out a village on June 9, 1849, and called it "Nova
Scotia;" the name by which it is recorded.

Most persons, however; preferred to call it "Kinneyville,"
and the name remained.

The post-office at Kinneyville was called "Winfield," and
was started somewhere around 1860. William Earll was appointed as
the first postmaster.

Elijah Smith was one of the first pioneers to make an
effort to establish a village in Stockbridge Township. He had come
from New York State, and in 1836, he purchased a tract of land on
Section 26, which was platted and named the "Village of Pekin."

Lower Town
(1843)

Lansing Twp. Meridian Twp. Williamston Twp. Locke Twp.

Red Bridge (1863)

Delhi Centre
(1839)

Alaiedon Twp. Wheatfield Twp. Phelpstown (1838)

Delhi Twp.   Leroy Twp.

Jefferson (1838)

Columbia (1838?)   Ingham Twp.

Aurelius Twp. Vevay Twp. Ingham (1846) White Oak Twp.

Chapin's Station
(1843)   Meadville
(18?)

Nova Scotia
(1849)   Stockbridge Twp.

Onondaga Twp. Leslie Twp. Bunkerhill Twp.

Village of
Pekin (1836)

INGHAM COUNTY

Settlements established in the early history of the county.

The plat was never recorded and shortly afterwards it was sold to Silas Bebee, who with Ira Wood - land-owner in Section 27, replatted the settlement.   Today, this community is named Stockbridge.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the previous pages an attempt was made to bring the reader into a close focus of local community identification in the counties of Clinton, Gratiot, and Ingham as it existed in pioneer days of the 1800's.   In no manner should it be assumed that the study is complete.   County histories and atlases were carefully gleaned for the preceding information as were centennial issues of county newspapers. Automobile rides into the communities and conversation with the local inhabitants proved most enjoyable and profitable.   Intimate details and incidents were included in the thesis to help the reader to understand and feel the proximity of pioneer living.

Man never intended to live alone.   The very first settlers in most cases made provisions for others to live near them.   The post-office, whether it was in a family dwelling or the country "general store," was the gathering place for persons to discuss their politics and their crop plantings and harvests.   With the advent of the rural free delivery many of the small post-offices were discontinued.

It is disappointing that communities as well as people have slowly disappeared so that only the ink on the printed page will reveal the pioneer spirit of the early settlers of the area.

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