

TOWNSHIP HISTORIES.

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WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP.

Washington is one of the tier of townships forming the eastern boundary of Kosciusko County. It has an area of 36 square miles, or 23,040 acres, which, like other portions of the county, were originally covered by a dense growth of timber. It is watered by Deeds' Creek and Willow Creek, the latter being an outlet of Mud Lake. Its surface is characterized by undulating land, but low and flat in a few localities. Its farms of to-day are uniformly fine and productive, and are of themselves, substantial monuments to the memory of those of whom we shall speak hereafter—the advance guard of the pioneer army, and the forerunners of an era of prosperity; men who braved the hardships of the forest, and labored year by year to transform it to a fertile region, and earn from the kindly earth a livelihood and a competence. Some sank down in the struggle and died, their life-work but half completed; some have survived the shock of time, and, in their declining years, enjoy the fruits of their labors, and tell to younger generations the tale of their trials, during the years of pioneer life. To these we are indebted for the facts which go to make up the history of the township, and by which we are enabled to assign to their proper places, the names of those who took part in the struggle.

EARLY SETTLEMENT.

In the fall of 1835, the first white settlers entered the township, with the view of making it their home. Their names were John and Vincent Makemson. They came from Logan County, Ohio, and settled on Section 3. It was John Makemson's ax that first awoke the echoes of the forest with the key-note of a struggle, destined to culminate in the downfall of that mighty barrier, and under his well-directed strokes, the first giant fell. For an entire year, the Makemsons were the only white occupants of the township. In the fall of 1836, they were joined by John McNeal and Henry Hoover, from Ohio; George and Henry Sommerville, from Virginia; Samuel Firestone and William Moore, from Logan County, Ohio; Alexander Graham and William Beasley, also from Ohio. Mr. Graham returned to Ohio shortly after, where he remained about two years; then returning to the scene of his former labors, he made his home in the township until death called him from earth.

During the year 1837, came John Hoover, William Stephenson, Jehu Dunham and Robert McNeal, from Ohio. Mr. Stephenson died in 1838. Robert McNeal still lives, and is now located at Warsaw, in the service of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad Company. John Duke came from Logan County, Ohio, in 1837, and for many years was identified with the interests of the township; but a few years ago, he removed to Iowa, of which State he is now a resident. James Crouch came in the same year, and resided in the township until his decease. In 1838, came James Chaplin, from New York, and Charles Chapman, from the same State. Jesse Little came in the same year, and still lives in the township. Lewis Keith, James Stinson and John Elder also came in 1838. Later in the same year, came James T. Stinson, who was distinguished from James Stinson only by the middle initial of his name. In the fall of that year, George W. Ryerson came from Turkey Creek Prairie, and erected a cabin, to which he moved his family in the following spring. In the same year, came Martin Braysted, John Bratt and Asa Pratt. There were many others who came within the next few years and took an active part in the development and improvement of the township. Among this number were George Wagner, William O'Brien, Abe K. Leedy, James Humphreys, Thomas Logan, John McDaniel, Samuel Elder, Absalom Brown, John O. Crutcher, Henry Phillips, Jacob Phillips and James Clinger. For several years after immigration to the township first began, each new arrival was known and hailed with joy by the little community; but, by the year 1839-40, the population had grown so that the arrival of new settlers ceased to be regarded as an event of more than a casual interest, and thus many names have passed from memory. All were stimulated by a common purpose, and each applied his individual energy for its accomplishment. The years have borne their fruit, and the survivors of that community have reaped the reward of their toils.

The First House.—The first house in the township was erected by John Makemson, in 1836. In the labor of building it, he was assisted by his two brothers and a hired man; and after its completion, all united in assisting his brother, Vincent, to erect the second house in the township. The first hewed log house was erected in 1833, by Lewis Keith. It was used as a tavern, and stood on what is now Lot No. 1, Block 15, in the original plat of Piercetown. It was removed in 1875 or 1876.

The First Store.—It was removed in 1850, by Nathan Chapman at the village of Fairview. He kept a stock of general merchandise, and conducted a profitable trade.

The First Blacksmith.—In 1839 or 1840, Lewis Keith opened the first blacksmith shop in the township, and carried on his trade in connection with farming.

The First Mill.—This was built by Lewis Keith in 1839, on Deeds' Creek. It was a grist-mill, and received its motive power from that stream. Several years after, Alexander Minzie erected the first steam saw-mill in the township.

The First Physician.—The township was Dr. Banta, who remained a number of years, administering to the ills of its people, and also served in the capacity of Postmaster at Piercetown.

The First Orchard.—This was set out by George W. Ryerson in 1841. The trees were raised from seed brought from Fort Wayne, Ind. In the next year, James Chaplin set out the second orchard.

The First Road.—This was the route over which the mail was carried on horseback, to and from the first post office in the township. This post office was kept at the house of G. W. Ryerson. Mr. Ryerson was Postmaster, and his son, Ira J., was deputy. In the next year (1838), the second road was surveyed, from Warsaw to Wolf Lake.

The First Tavern.—This was established in 1839, at the Ryerson homestead, by G. W. Ryerson. The house was near the Fort Wayne & Chicago Road, and although not built for a tavern, it was, nevertheless, a favorite stopping-place for travelers on that thoroughfare, who found there the comforts of home, as well as cheerful company.

The First School.—In 1840, a log building was erected on the farm of William Moore, to be used as a schoolhouse. The funds for maintaining it were raised by subscription, and the first term was taught in the winter of that year, by Adam Laing. Among its surviving pupils are Rev. Alfred Laing, a minister of the Gospel, and Andrew and Abner Makemson, who are respected farmers. The second schoolhouse was erected near the home of G. W. Ryerson, and was known as the "Ryerson Schoolhouse." Like the "Moore Schoolhouse," it was a private institution, and sustained by subscription. Among its surviving pupils are Mrs. William H. Spayde and Ira J. Ryerson.

The free-school system was introduced in 1851, and, after a few years, each district in the township was supplied by public munificence, with the means of offering to its residents a free education. There are now 11 substantial school-buildings, having a total of 506 scholars enrolled.

The First Religious Meeting.—This was held at the house of John Bratt in 1838, by William Deviney, a missionary of the M. E. Church. The occasion was the funeral of Mr. Bratt's daughter. The second religious meeting was held by Revs. Denman and French, of the Baptist Church, at the house of William Moore, in 1839. An organization was subsequently effected by this denomination, and, after several years, a church was built, which, for awhile, was prosperous; but for reasons not now known, it began to wane, and the congregation finally disbanded, and sold their house of worship to the German Baptist denomination, by whom it is now occupied.

After the funeral sermon at the house of Mr. Bratt, Robert McNeal requested Mr. Deviney to hold meetings thereafter at his (McNeal's) house, which proposition was accepted; and two weeks later, the first of a series of regular meetings was held there. At the third meeting, the first Methodist congregation in the township was organized, with twelve members. The society was placed under the pastoral care of Thomas Owen, also a missionary of the M. E. Church, and Mr. McNeal's house was the regular place of holding meetings for five years thereafter. They then rented a house which had formerly been occupied as a residence, and in this building they held services for several months, after which they removed to a neighborhood schoolhouse. One year later, John McNeal donated to the society a lot upon which to build a church, and preparations were at once begun to accomplish that object. In 1839, a frame house of worship, 40x50 feet, was erected on the land thus set apart for that purpose. For a number of years it was very prosperous, and its membership increased; but after the organization of the M. E. Church at Piercetown, some of its members united with that body, and some moved away; and in 1854, the congregation disbanded, and the building was sold.

EARLY DEATHS AND MARRIAGES.

The First Death. in the township was that of a young daughter of John Bratt. She died in 1838.

In 1839, Abner McQuigg died and was the first corpse interred in the Ryerson Cemetery.

The First Marriage. was celebrated in 1840, Morris P. Chaplin and Miss Sarah A. Morris being the contracting parties. In the same year, Adam Laing was united in marriage with Miss Mary Chaplin.

The First Cemetery. was laid out on a tract of land donated for the purpose by George W. Ryerson, in 1839. It is the last resting-place of many pioneers of the township—among the number, its founder.

The First Election.—The township was organized at the March term of the Board of County Commissioners, 1838; and, in April following, the first election was held at the house of Martin Braysted, resulting in the choice of Lewis Keith as Justice of the Peace.

The First Railroad.—In the fall of 1856, the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad was completed to Piercetown. That day marked an event in the history of the town and township, and was observed with appropriate ceremonies. It opened to them a means of communication with the outside world, and a mode of transport for their wealth of produce.

On the day of its completion to this point, a grand dinner was prepared by the citizens, for the officers and employes of the road, and the day was hailed as an omen of prosperity.

That this expectation was realized is well known, and the benefits derived from the road have redounded to the interest of every citizen of the township.

PIERCETOWN.

With the exception of Warsaw, Piercetown is the largest town in the county. It was laid out by Lewis Keith and John B. Chapman, on the north part of the northwest quarter of Section 27, December 6, 1852. Founded during the administration of Franklin Pierce, it was christened Piercetown, in honor of the President.

The First Store. was opened by John B. Chapman in 1852, in a little log cabin, north of the corporate limits of the town, on the farm now owned by J. A. Shorb. He conveyed his merchandise from Fort Wayne by means of ox teams. The medium of trade was skins of animals, furs and "wild-cat currency."

The First Frame House.—three in number—were built, one where Dr. William Hayes now resides, on the corner of Market and Second streets; one on First street, where the Citizens' Bank is now located, and one on the lot now occupied by Foster & Brother's drug store.

The First Post Office. at Piercetown was established in 1854, and was kept in the frame building on the lot now occupied by the Citizens' Bank.

O. P. Smith was appointed Postmaster, and served one year. He was succeeded, in 1855, by Dr. William Hayes, who continued in office until the beginning of Buchanan's administration, when he was succeeded by Dr. Banta; and between that time and the present, the following gentlemen have served in the capacity of Postmaster: Mr. Skinner, David Binkley, James Gately, Henry Ruth, S. M. Hayes, John Justice, Mr. Justice served until his decease, and was succeeded by David H. Connell, the present incumbent.

TOWN OFFICERS.

Piercetown was incorporated May 10, 1866, and on that day the Trustees held their first meeting, when the following officers filed their certificates

of election: Trustees, John Moore, First District; Adam Simmons, Second District; Alexander Daugherty, Third District. E. T. Marshall filled the offices of Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor and Marshal.

On the 12th day of May, at an adjourned meeting, the organization was completed by electing Adam Simmons President of the Board. John Moore and Alexander Daugherty was appointed a committee to draft a Constitution and By-Laws, which they reported at a meeting on the 23d of May, when they were adopted.

At a meeting of the Board, on the 5th day of November, 1866, the first School Board was appointed, consisting of Michael Murray, John A. Shorb and John Shaffer.

E. T. Marshall resigned before the expiration of his term, and J. B. Roberds was appointed Clerk and Assessor, John Minnich, Treasurer, and John G. Waldo, Marshal. The total amount of taxes collected for the first year was \$355.18.

The following is a list of the town officers from the organization to the present time:

Date.	TRUSTEES.			CLERK.	TREASURER.	MARSHAL.	SCHOOL TRUSTEES.		
1866	John Moore.....	Adam Simmons.	A. Daugherty...	E. T. Marshall... J. B. Roberds...	John Minnich.....	J. G. Waldo.....	Michael Murray...	J. A. Shorb.....	John Shaffer.....
1867	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	A. A. Westfall... L. Lamson.....	Michael Murray...	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....
1868	J. W. Shaffer....	" ".....	M. Murray.....	" ".....	W. C. Harvuot....	E. G. Eddy.....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....
1869	Wm. Snyder.....	F. G. Frary.....	" ".....	W. N. Graves.... Wm. H. Spayde...	F. V. B. Minnich..	" ".....	A. Simmons.....	S. M. Hayes.....	Levi Snyder.....
1870	" ".....	" ".....	Wm. N. Graves... N. B. Morland....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....
1871	A. Simmons.....	G. B. Lesh.....	F. H. Foster.....	N. B. Morland....	" ".....	" ".....	J. A. Shorb... N. B. Morland... Wm. Streiby... L. C. Smith...	Wm. M. O'Brien..	D. Koffel..... G. B. Lesh.....
1872	" ".....	N. B. Morland..	D. P. Nichols... F. H. Foster.....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....
1873	Wm. H. Spayde..	" ".....	John Moore.....	D. Kaylor.....	" ".....	" ".....	E. G. Eddy.....	F. V. B. Minnich..	D. J. Bowman... J. D. Gestice...
1874	" ".....	P. Conrad.....	John Froehly...	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	Wm. H. Ridenour..	D. Koffel.....	" "..... F. H. Foster.....
1875	D. P. Nichols...	John Moore.....	N. B. Morland..	F. H. Foster.....	" ".....	" ".....	E. G. Eddy.....	" ".....	" "..... D. J. Bowman...
1876	G. Basset.....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	Alfred Ale.....
1877	Wm. Snyder.....	J. H. Taylor...	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	Benj. Wooden...	" ".....	" "..... J. W. Miller.....
1878	" ".....	Wm. N. Graves..	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	" ".....	J. G. Waldo.....	A. Simmons.....	" ".....
1879	Gus. Froehly...	W. H. Cornell...	L. C. Smith.....	J. A. McGonagle..	" ".....	" ".....	E. G. Eddy.....	" ".....	" ".....

Since the incorporation of the town, sidewalks have been constructed, and the streets graded and kept in repair; and to the visitor, it presents the appearance of a miniature city.

INDUSTRIES.

Manufacture Factory.—In 1864, Dr. Baker and W. C. Conant erected a frame building north of the P. Ft. W. & C. R. R., for the manufacture of doors and sash. The main building is 40x80 feet, 2½ stories high, with an "L" of the same dimensions. The boiler-room is detached from the main building, the steam being conveyed through pipes (a distance of 125 feet) to the engine, which is situated on the ground-floor of the main building. There are also two dry-houses, with a capacity of 22,000 feet each; and two warehouses—one 35x75 feet, 2½ stories high, and one 22x100 feet, 1 story.

It was operated as a sash and door factory for two years, at the end of which time it was supplied with the necessary machinery for the manufacture of furniture. Before the close of 1864, Dr. Baker retired from the firm, and was succeeded by John Moore. It was then conducted by Moore & Conant until 1872, when Mr. Conant disposed of his interest to Mr. Moore, who is the present proprietor. Until the financial crisis of