

CHAPTER XII.

LOCKE IN 1863.

Locke in 1863; general history by Dr. F. N. Turner; Memorial Day 1869.

MICHIGAN STATE GAZETTEER.

Locke—a township and postoffice of Ingham county, 70 miles northwest of Detroit. The township has within its limits four churches, representing the Second Adventists, Wesleyan Methodist, Universalists and Methodist Episcopal denominations, one steam saw mill, and several mechanical shops.

The surface of this township is gently rolling, and mostly covered with heavy forest. Soil peculiarly rich, and crops very heavy. A large quantity of maple sugar is made annually. Population, 900, Postmaster, **Moses P. Crowell**.

TOWNSHIP OFFICERS.

Supervisor—John C. Martin.
Clerk—George Fisher, Jr.
Treasurer—William H. Wallace.

LIST OF PROFESSIONS AND TRADES.

Atkins Harmon, physician.
Brewer, Orlando S.—carpenter.
Brotin, —, Rev.—Methodist.
Brown, Thomas T.—justice of the peace.
Camp, John J.—boot and shoe maker.
Chalker, —blacksmith.
Climer, Ben—blacksmith.
Crowell, Moses P.—justice of the peace.
Dunckel, George—carpenter.
Duncke, O. G.—carpenter.
Fisher, George, Jr.—lumber dealer.
Fisher, James—cooper.

Frederick, ———gunsmith.
Gates, —physician.
Hill, Alonzo—cooper.
Lower, —mason.
Lum, William I.—mason.
Murphy, William W., Rev.—Methodist.
Rowley, Levi—justice of the peace.
Spencer & Fisher (Truman Spencer and George Fisher, Jr.)—
saw mill.
Watkins, Joseph, Rev.—Methodist.
Wheeler, Elijah B.—cooper.
Wright, C.—mason.

LOCKE TOWNSHIP.

Locke Township is in the northeast corner of Ingham county. From its location, tucked away in a corner, away from the great highways and railroads, those arteries of travel and traffic, with no minerals or great commercial woodlands to be exploited, it will always be an agricultural community; have nothing but a rural delivery, small country stores, blacksmith shops, etc.

From its fertile soil fine farms will be made, and prosperous farmers will exist, whose prosperity will be noticeable in good farm houses, large barns and other convenient outbuildings.

Its intellectuality is shown by the numerous school houses, and its morality by its country churches. The pioneers were mostly from New York and Ohio, with a sprinkling of Scotch and Irish from Canada. Its inhabitants were able to purchase land and homesteads, had some means to make improvements and build their houses, so did not endure the hardships and struggles of pioneer life as did their less fortunate neighbors.

Among those I became acquainted with were the Wrights, Rowleys, Spencers, Williams, McKees, Lings, Coles, Browns and McCrearys. My first journey into Locke Township was in the winter of 1875-6. I was teaching school in the Alehin district in Leroy Township when I heard that a school friend had charge of the Belle Oak school. I hiked over to see him, walking the distance between Webberville and Belle Oak. I noticed the bridge

across the Cedar river was built on piles and knew, from its shape and structure, that it was constructed by that noted bridge builder, Smith Tooker, of Lansing.

My friend, Elmer Carrier, took me to his boarding place to dinner, and I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Atkin's family. The doctor was away and I missed seeing him and forming his acquaintance.

From 1876 until 1888 I never traveled in this township and knew nothing of its inhabitants only as I came in contact with them at Williamston, their market town, or attended meetings held in other townships by preachers from Locke. In 1888 I commenced the practice of medicine in Webberville and my country rides took me into Locke Township nearly every day for twenty-two years. From this long acquaintance I can recall many lasting friendships and tell something about the people of this rural township.

Some of the early pioneers worked hard to improve their farms, also to improve the moral and intellectual tone of their neighborhood. In speaking of the people it seems natural to divide them into groups. They were intensely religious, and the largest group was the Methodist and United Brethren denominations. Another group was the irregulars, non-believers or free-thinkers, while the third group were those who believed in muscular Christianity and pleasures not marked by sobriety.

The leader of the religious group was Elder Hodgkins and his co-workers, Elders Martin and Cunningham. Elder Hodgkins had been a chaplain in the army during the Civil War, afterward occupying the same position in the Jackson Prison. I always wondered how a man of his learning, eloquence and logic could content himself in a purely farming community. He was a second Henry Ward Beecher except his ambition to speak to a cultured audience. He was content to commune with nature, to walk in the quiet paths of rural life and give his message to those that followed the plow. The first time I met him he wore the army blue overcoat, his armor of military service, the chaplain's hat, his badge of office. His great heart went out in pity to the sorrowing, so was always invited to say the comforting words at pioneer funerals and to speak at Decoration Day exercises,

His co-worker, Elder Martin, was a quiet, unassuming book-

worm. I have stood in his library and wondered how he ever found a book from his jumbled, overcrowded shelves. When I recall his short figure, smooth face and long hair, I am reminded of the character of that preacher in "Felix Holt the Radical." The likeness was similar. The other man in the group was Elder Cunningham, the United Brethren minister. He is living today and could relate some interesting experiences. Some of the early Methodists in the seventies seceded from the mother church and formed a society under the leadership of a young red-headed preacher named Golden. Under his leadership they went to extremes in their form of worship, became fanatical, brought discredit upon themselves, and were disbanded and scattered. Some of their proselytes joined a band of Salvation Army workers, who drilled them in the saner forms of God's worship.

The muscular Christianity group had a leader, "Big George Tuttle." His assistants were his brothers and other minor lights who were enrolled under his banner. Their usual meeting place was Williamston on Saturday afternoons. After a visit to the saloons and coming in contact with similar bands from White Dog Corners, Wheatfield Township, and also from Lee's Corners, then the fun commenced. In the contests which followed, wrestling, running, jumping, or boxing, every man tried to wear the victor's crown.

Big George wore the fighter's belt for several years, or until he was cowardly assaulted and nearly killed in a brawl at Fowlerville.

After the influx of law and order men from Dansville the bands were scattered and the Saturday nights were quiet and peaceful. The village marshal's work was not so strenuous and he could retire after, locking the jail, to his unbroken slumber after twelve o'clock. Most of Big George's band experienced religion, became good church men, used their surplus energy in breaking new land, instead of heads, chopping cord wood, etc.

The unbelievers, free-thinkers and irregulars were small in numbers, could not agree among themselves, so never were able to combine or form a society, and for that reason left no lasting impressions upon the neighborhood where they lived.

Among the medical men who lived in this township was one who chose the new country instead of the crowded city for his life work. I never was personally acquainted with him but many of

his friends were always ready to relate something of Dr. Atkins and his practice. He was an old style doctor, went horseback, had his saddle bags, and believed in bleeding and blistering. From necessity he was forced to use barks and herbs. His great knowledge of medical botany enabled him to gather from woods and fields. He made a decoction of white popple bark to take the place of quinine in chills and fever. Many of his old patrons told me how he cured them of the "shakes" by using this decoction. Dr. Atkins was 'a naturalist and his hobby was ornithology. He was a second John Burroughs in keenness of observation. He always noticed the flight of our migratory birds and would often stop when going to visit the sick to study the habits and appearances of any. strange bird. His articles on birds often appeared in the local newspapers, and his "Book on Birds" appeared and was published with Dr. Cook's work issued by M. A. C. Dr. Atkin's studies took a practical trend as he showed the farmers that the birds were great insect destroyers and should be protected instead of destroyed.

The prominent politicians of the township were George Dunkle and John Cole. Dunkle was a republican and his right hand man was George Chamberlain, who voted for John C. Fremont. John Cole was a Democrat of the Jeffersonian type and believed in hard cider and states sovereignty. He had construed the latter into township sovereignty and always stood upon that right, especially to speak in political meetings. No threats to corral him or silence him had any effect.

John McCreary was born a farmer, but his love for mathematics made him a surveyor, and his artistic inclinations a worker in woods instead of soils, so he became a cabinet and pattern maker. He was a great reader, a student in history and astronomy. At one time when confined to the house with a broken leg a neighbor visited him to cheer him up and offer assistance. He found him in his usual cheerful state, patiently waiting for his leg to mend. In the chat that followed he said, "Harvey, if I had a telescope I could, on my sleepless nights, point it out of the window and count the rings on Saturn." Harvey did not have the 'scope, so the hint was lost.

In the western part of the township was another pioneer named John Grimes. He came with the first immigrants, cleared his

farm, prospered, and added to the original tract until he was the largest land holder in the neighborhood. A few years before his death he branched out, went into the grist mill at Williamston. His associates in that business exploited and expanded this enterprise, incurred debts he had to pay until he lost everything. With the loss of property he lost his health and in a few years died. He, in his prosperous days, was a prominent figure in western Locke.

The descendents of these early pioneers are, with few exceptions, fine men, and will take care of the future development and reputation of this township. Will they cherish and keep this good heritage of fine Farms, rich soil, country school houses and churches, or will they be attracted by the glitter and glamor of city life and squander it for a mess of pottage, remains to be seen.

Locke, May 25, 1869.

The time assigned for decoration of the soldiers graves by strewing flowers on them, accompanied by other appropriate testimonials of honor and affection, is at hand. The latter part of the flowery month of May is a most fitting season for this testimonial.

Of those who went from our town and died while in the service, I recollect but one whose body was brought home for interment—Guy Scofield. I see, however, in some places appropriate monumental inscriptions to their memory. I should be glad to see this in all cases. I do not hear of any public demonstrations in our vicinity this year.

Will you permit me, Messrs. Editors, to call the roll of those honored names of soldiers who went from Locke and died for the maintenance of the liberty we enjoy?

Noah Porter-Died of sickness at Castle Pickney, while a prisoner.

Samuel Atkins-Killed.

Charles B. Rowley-Died of sickness.

Corydon Wright-Killed.

William Sullivan-Died of sickness.

Benjamin F. Hammond-Died of sickness.

Charles Cole-Died of sickness.

Henry Cole-Died of sickness.

William Shaw-Killed.