

CHAPTER V.

AURELIUS TOWNSHIP HISTORY.

Historical notes; R. J. Bullen's North Aurelius history; debating societies of other days; 'When The Wolves Song,' Township history by school districts; stories by W. M. Webb; life of a centenarian, Mrs. Collins.

MICHIGAN STATE GAZETTEER.

Aurelius, a township and flourishing village of Ingham county, on the stage route from Mason to Onondaga, 100 miles northwest of Detroit—fare \$3.50. The township was settled in 1837, and now has 280 voters, and a population of 1,200. Population of the village, 300.

The soil is well adapted to agriculture, and is well watered by Grand river, which crosses the northwest corner of the town, and by numerous small streams tributary to that river. The village contains four churches, representing the United Brethren, Congregational, Baptist and Methodist denominations, one hotel, two shingle mills, two saw mills, several good schools, and three stores.

Four mails are received each week.. Detroit merchants ship goods to Aurelius by the Michigan Central R. R. via Jackson. Postmaster, Robert Hayward.

TOWNSHIP OFFICERS.

Supervisor—Barney G. Davis.
Clerk—C. Marion Jennings.
Treasurer—Enos Blanchard.

LIST OF PROFESSIONS, TRADES, ETC.

Barnes, John A., justice of the peace.
Chase, O. E., Rev., Methodist.
Coughy, William P., blacksmith.

Gilmore, Smith B., carriage maker.
Hayward, Abner, physician.
Hayward, Robert, general store.
Hazelton, Alice, milliner.
Hazelton, Ellen, milliner.
Hazelton, William, saw mill.
Heath, Linden A., hotel.
Holley, Alfred J., justice of the pence.
Huntley, George, carpenter.
Jennings, Charles, justice of the pence.
McIntyre, Arthur, carpenter.
Marshall, Solomon, carpenter,
Nelson, Hiram, blacksmith.
Norton, Hiram, saw mill.
Potter, David, saw mill.
Pratt, Darius, carpenter.
Sawtell, Benjamin E., physician.
Shaw, Rev., Congregational.
Shepard, Rev., Baptist.
Stark, Byron W., general store.
Swarthout, George W., physician.
Toles, Jehial W., saw mill.
Torbush, William, carpenter,
White, James, justice of the peace.
Youngs, Charles, mason.

Written by R. J. Bullen and placed in the cornerstone of the North Aurelius church on June 10, 1919.

EARLY SETTLERS AND THE SECOND GENERATION.

Reuben R. Bullen, wife Elizabeth and brother Joseph, came to Mich. Sept. 27, 1836. Landed in Detroit, came from there to Ingham county, and took up land from the Government. The N. E. ¼ of Sec. 4, T 2 N, R 2 W, afterward known as Aurelius. They built a log house in which the only board was one brought from Dexter and used as a door. The floor was made of basswood logs, split in the middle and laid bark side down. Into this they moved in Nov., 1836. Here were born Geo. W., Rich&d J.,

James T., Phebe A., Susan. Joseph, John and Samuel, who died in infancy. Three, R. J., J. T. and Susan are still living.

Some time in 1837 Geo. B. Webb, wife Maria and son John H., 3 yrs old, came to Aurelius and settled on N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 9.

In this home were born W. M., Lucy, Martha and Lewis C., all still living.

During the same year, in Nov., came Joseph Wilson, with his wife Maria, and built a log house on W $\frac{1}{2}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 33, T. 3, N. R 2 W, afterwards known as Delhi. Here were born Geo. W., Henry, Mary Ann, and Harvey. Geo. and Harvey still survive. John Norris was another early settler, who came about the same time with Iris wife and son Edward. He located on E $\frac{1}{2}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 33 and here were born Eliza Jane, Benton, Hiram P., Helen and John, Hiram P. is still alive.

Another early settler was John Dunn, who settled on W $\frac{1}{2}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 34, of Delhi. The children were Joel, Sally Ann, Ezra William, Hannah, George and James. Joel still alive.

William and Margaret Witter came about that time and settled on N $\frac{1}{2}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 3, Aurelius. Their children, Asa, George, Malinda, Charles and Lilly, the last three still living.

John and Mary Wright built a home on N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 10, Aurelius, and the children were Mary 'Elizabeth, Philp, Etta Lodema, Silas, Martha, Scott, and Hosmer. Harlow and Scott alive at last accounts.

Winslow Turner soon followed and located on W $\frac{1}{2}$ of S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 4, Aurelius. Children, William, George, Frederick, Charles H., Judson, Annette and David. William and Charles living.

John Dunn, Sr., and wife, Chester Holley and wife, Stephen Dunn and wife, William Dunn and wife, and Samuel Dunn were among the early settlers. Mrs. John Dunn, Sr., passed away before my recollection but I have been told that she and her son Samuel were among the charter members of the Baptist church of Mason.

Among the early settlers whose stay was short were Lewis Butters and wife, in 1837, then came John Niles, who soon departed, and Abram Wilson and wife Mary bought the place, the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 3. Mrs. Wilson had a large family of Smith children by her first husband, and were Martha (who taught the first school), Thomas, George, Oscar, Joseph, Hannah and John. Only Hannah is living.

To Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were born two sons, William, who died in the Civil War, and Charles S., who lives' on the old farm.

Among the quite early settlers were grandfather and grandmother Webb with their sons William and David, who built on the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 9, also grandfather and grandmother Wright with their children Henry, Jane, Mary Ann, William, James and Isabel]. William Webb married Jane Wright, and Matilda., David and Mary Ann were their children.

Spencer and Amanda Markham located land on Sec. 32 in Delhi in 1836, but did not move onto it until the late forties. They had no children, but adopted William P. Brown, Sarah B. Blanchard, C. B. Gilbert, and Charles Rich, and were zealous members of the Baptist church in Mason.

Thomas Smith married Mary Ann Wright, children, Mary, William, Lansing, Fanny, Mnttic, Jennic and Caleb. Mary and Mattie are dead.

Comparatively early came the Holley's, Isaac and wife, with sons Orlando, Joseph, Alfred J., Benjamin, John T., and their daughter, Neoma (Mrs. Mark Williams). About the same time came Hiram and Margaret Smith with their children, William, Charles, George, Lewis, Hector, Lyman and Sally (now Mrs. Austin Doolittle). Anson J. Calkins and wife Lyda and their family were early comers.

The most important events that have occurred since the early settlement is the organization of schools and religious societies. School district No. 4, as near as can be learned, was organized in the early part of 1843. A log school house built on N. W. corner of E $\frac{1}{2}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 9, being near where W. M. Webb now lives. Martha Smith taught the first school, in the summer of 1843. She was Maud Bullen's grandmother, The first winter school was taught by George Gallery of Eaton Rapids. In 1849 the school house site was changed to where it now stands. The first winter school here was taught by Horace Hobert, who believed in moral suasion, but enforced it by bringing with him every Monday morning a big bundle of switches to be used as persuaders. A log house belonging to John Wright was used for the school until 1851 when a frame building was erected, and the first teacher was Bird Norton of Eaton Rapids. The school had a number of big boys, and had the name of being a "hard school."

(Reuben Bullen was director, and hearing of Bird Norton having killed a bear by clubbing it to death he declared there was the man for the school, and hired him forthwith.)

The date of the first religious society in the neighborhood is hard to fix, but from my earliest recollection I can recall hearing the Webbs, the Wilsons, the Wrights, and the Bullens talk in religious gatherings.

The first M. E. preacher I can remember was Elder Glass, who drove a pair of small ponies, and I as a boy thought he was quite liberal in feeding them for it didn't seem as though such small horses needed such a large amount of feed. The first Baptist preachers I can remember were Rev. Hendee and Rev. Fuller. Rev. Fuller was grandfather to Mrs. J. H. Shafer.

The first meeting to organize the N. Aurelius Union church, (M. E. and Baptist.) was held on Feb. 17, 1880. The first trustees were W. M. Webb, James Doolittle, A. J. Holley, Harvey Wilson and O. F. Leffingwell. A subscription of \$1,862.50 was obtained. The trustees were a building committee to build a church. S. A. Paddock of Mason drew the plans, and Alpha Douglas of Holt secured the job of building it, for the sum of \$1,375.00. It was dedicated Oct. 21, 1880. This is all I know, and perhaps some things I don't know, concerning the early settlement of the community.

THE THOMAS SMITH FAMILY.

Thomas Smith was the oldest son of David and Mary Smith and was born in England, Apr. 27, 1822. At the age of 12 he went to live with his uncle, William Shaw, where he learned the stone cutting trade, building bridges. At the age of 21 he came to America with his parents. Dec. 25, 1846, he married Mary Ann Wright. Ten children, David, John and Thomas died in infancy. The others, Mary, Lansing, William W., Mattie, and Jennie (twins) and Caleb. Mary, wife of Edward Isham, died at the age of 26.

A great share of Thos. Smith's married life was spent in Detroit, but his last years were spent on a farm $\frac{1}{4}$ mi E. and 1 mi N. of the N. Aurelius church.

He thought the country a better place to bring up children than in the city. With the money that came as bounty for her soldier

son who died in the army, a sandstone was bought from the contractors in charge of building the State Capitol, where Mr. Smith was following his trade as stone cutter. From this stone he carved a monument which now stands in the N. Aurelius cemetery as a memorial to his mother, stepfather and brother who are buried there.

SKETCHES OF HISTORY BY WM. M. WEBB.

In years past, and also in the near, the various wars have demanded of us some sacrifices in both lives and money, and if measured up with other localities we can feel proud that we have done as well as others, and better than most places. Those who went from within a radius of two square miles of here, and who gave their all, would give us six golden stars. Union boys in the Civil War, the Span-Am. and the World War.

The six Union soldiers who paid the supreme sacrifice were, W. N. Wilson, captured after being wounded in the battle of Chickamauga, and died in Andersonville prison. Ezra Dunn, died in Andersonville prison. Wm. Webb, died in hospital Nashville, Tenn. George Mutton, died in Missouri. Jas. Wright died in hospital Alexandria, Va. Henry Holley, died from wounds received at Spottsylvania. Within a radius of three miles 26 boys fought for the Union. Four of the six who gave their lives lie in National cemeteries.

Aurelius furnished 94 soldiers for the Civil War, for the World War 37.

The loss of life for the Twp. in the Civil War was 20, for World War 2.

DEBATING SOCIETIES. WM. M. WEBB.

One of the past experiences of the long ago, and one that furnished both amusement and much of good thought that remains with us still, was the Literary and Debating Clubs formed in the sixties and running through the years into the eighties. In the winter we would meet at the schoolhouse once a week and discuss some subject, thereby gathering many a gem of thought and historical data because of our ambition to present the sharp points of our side of the question in undisputable form that would down the other fellow.

It was a pleasant and profitable experience; a good school, and remains a pleasant memory. Here are a few of the subjects discussed :

Resolved :

That the mental faculties of the sexes are equal.

That Geology strengthens our faith in the Bible.

That the Capitol of the U. S. be removed to the interior.

That many enemies are a higher proof of merit than many friends,

That a laborers wage should be fixed **by law**.

That the veto power of the President be repealed,

That women be granted the right of suffrage throughout the nation.

That a lie is sometimes justifiable.

That excessive **prosperity** is more detrimental to the people than excessive adversity.

That the warrior is of more service to his country than the statesman.

That capital punishment ought **to** be established in the State,

That the resumption act should be repealed.

TO THE MEMORY OF MARY WILSON. W. **M.** WEBB.

In every community there are forces prevailing that tend to lift people to a higher level, to better thought and understanding, that results in a better citizenship, a higher 'civilization and of the moral and Christian standards, Then again there are forces that would bring about a lower level. Of the former such an one was Mrs. Mary Wilson, to whom this community owes much for through her efforts were started the first religious services here. She organized the first Sunday school in 1846, and did all she could to advance other religious services. She was one who spoke, prayed and acted so it all harmonized, For many years she was superintendent of the Sunday school. There are many **descend-**ents of Mrs. Wilson in the neighborhood down to the **4th** and 5th generations, so that it will be a long, long time before the line becomes extinct,

So when fifty years from now this writing comes to the sunshine there will be some to recall, maybe not from memory but from the story handed down, **the** history of this good woman and her work,

and they will catch the thought that to her 'we owe the good environment that surrounds us and has tended to lift us to something better and higher.

THE FIRST MUSICAL CONCERT WHEN WOLVES **SANG THE** CHORUS.

W. M. WEBB,

Written in **1840**, read at the Corner Stone meeting June **19, 1919**.

As sweet as the strains of Auld Lang Syne

Come **back** to me memories of my boyhood time.

Scenes and incidents many remembered so well,

But tonight it is only of one I had thought to tell.

One through the long years remains so fresh and so bright,

'Twas the Christmas songs I heard fifty years ago tonight.

So different now from then in so many things,

Changes great and all around us that half a century brings.

To see us as then to most of you would be an imaginary scene.

Here and there a little log cabin, a clearing, and all was wild forest between.

In one family were six young men and maidens, all gone.

Martha, and Hannah, and Tom, and Joseph, and George and John,

Who had come from a land where a custom was known,

For singers to sing Christmas songs round their neighbor's homes.

And Hannah suggested that in a country so new, with pleasures so few,

Wouldn't it be nice that old custom to renew.

No sooner said than done,

And they were up and bundled and ready in a **trice**,

And nine year old John shouted, "won't it be fun."

There was Witters, Dunns, **Bullens**, Wilsons, Turners and two families of Webbs and Wrights,

And around each forest home they sang their merry Christmas songs just fifty years ago tonight.

When they came to my father's home 'twas midnight and all was still.

In a moment there was music and song all round the house, **I** never shall forget,

How it woke us and **charmed us**, and as for me, I listened with both ears, you bet.

I remember well though so many years have come and gone,

Those young men and maidens could sing in those days, I tell you,
 especially John.
 Then on they went, with good will intent, journeying along,
 Making the forest ring and echo with their merry song.
 When, O, what was that?
 And they stopped and stood and listened to the wolves howling
 din.
 "Ho, ho," said Tom, "just let 'em come, and I'll give a tune on
 my violin."
 But the wolves had been listening to their merry songs
 And guessed perhaps it must be a genuine St. Nick,
 So concluded it would be wise to remain where they were
 Down on Willow Creek.
 Then on they went those young men and maidens
 To the end of their long circuitous route,
 Coming back to their homes in the early Christmas morn
 Weary no doubt,
 But acknowledging they had had a splendid good time.
 Leave is all to John in the performance of that cheering act,
 And SO had all the rest Of us
 That listened to that merry song in fact.

Part of a letter which came to W. M. Webb, containing inter-
 esting facts, The writer's name is not given.
 Dexter, Dec. 10, 1886.

Mr. Webb,

Dear Friend,-Your letter was received duly. The questions
 that you ask me carries me back to days more than forty years
 ago, days that I think of with some pleasure but with many
 regrets,

I remember the time, very well, when we as brothers and sisters
 went from house to house singing Christmas songs, You know
 that is an English custom and, as many of the neighbors were
 English, we tho't it would remind them of home.

I shall never forget how alarmed your dear Mother was. She
 said, "George, what on earth is to pny?" We soon assured her
 there was nothing to fear. In a few minutes they were up and had
 a bright fire, and insisting that we should come in, We did and
 your Mother treated us to some very nice fried cakes and popcorn.

The first sermon was preached at the house of Mr. Dunn by
 Rev. Finch. It was the funeral sermon of a child of Mr. Chester
 Holley's, whose wife was n daughter of Mr. Dunn.

We had no regular prayer meetings but occasionally we had one;
 sometimes at your grandfather's and sometimes at my Mother's.
 Mother was always expected to lead when the meeting was at our
 house.

There was no Sunday school organized while I remnined in the
 neighborhood, but in the summer of '45 they had regular preach-
 ing every two weeks, and a prayer meeting the nternatc Sunday.

The first district school was taught in the summer of '45, in a
 new log school house near your father's, There were 17 scholars
 enrolled, nmcly: Mnry Elizabeth Wright, Polly Niles and her
 two brothers, William Turner, George Turner, Gcorgc Bullen,
 Richard Bullen, John Henry Webb, Mary Ann Webb, Lucy Webb,
 Wm. Wilson, nnd the nmes of the others I hve forgotten. I
 taught five days in the week besides every other Saturday, boarded
 round the district and rccived \$1.00 per week.

There were two young married couples living in the neighbor-
 hood when WC first moved there. Mr. Chester Holley and wife,
 and Mr. Wm. Webb and wife, but the first wedding that I know
 anything about was my own.

I was mnrricd on the 10 day of Sept. 1846 by Rev. Thos. Wake-
 lin, M. E. minister. My brother Thomas was married on Christ-
 mas day of the same year, by the M. E. minister, whose name
 was Fox.

(The rest of the letter is gone, but with this a sketch of Wm. W.
 Wilson which was apparently, accompanied by a poem, though
 that does not appear with the letter. Am sorry because it was
 said he and his brother always curried on their correspondence in
 r h y m e .)

This is the sketch:

"Composed in Prison No. 3, Danville, Virginia, by Wm. W.
 Wilson, n private of Co. I, 11th Mich. Inf., Jan 31, 1864.

This poem was written with pencil on half the cover of an old
 religious monthly published in Richmond, Va., in July, 1856, and
 was addressed to one of the members of Congress from Mich. It
 came by way of a "Flag of truce boat," and was endorsed, "Pris-
 oner's Letter," and bore the postmark Old Point Comfort, Va.,
 Feb. 23, 1864. It was published first in the Detroit Tribune."

HIRAM SMITH.

Hiram Smith and wife Margaret came from Cortland Co., N. Y., in 1851. There **were** no roads from Detroit and they had to cut their way through the woods. Settled on their farm on Columbia road 1 mile east of N. Aurelius church. There they opened and kept the first Post Office during the Civil War and after. Used to walk to Mason to church through the woods, just a narrow path. Had eight children, and their **descendents** in Aurelius, and at this date, 1919, there are 30 of their great grandchildren living.

Renewed interest in local history is **seen** in Ingham county, and it is very gratifying to the officers of the Ingham County Pioneer and Historical Society, as each year carries the events of the past into greater obscurity, and now is the time, if **ever**, to gather and **preserve** the priceless records and **stories** of the past. The township meetings introduced in 1920 are bringing much into the treasure box of memories concerning the long ago, and at the meeting **held** in Aurelius on September 16, 1921, much valuable information was gathered, as its history was given by school districts. W. M. Webb was chairman and conducted the meeting, and although he is **well** into the 80's, and has the **record** of being the oldest native born Ingham county resident, the vim he showed in conducting the meeting gave evidence that age had not affected his **efficiency** in that line.

At the noon hour **the** old tin dinner horn that awoke the echoes seventy years ago was "tooted" by Mrs. Lucy Jennings, the first white girl born in the township, and as of old this call to dinner received a ready response.

The program opened with old time music by local talent, followed by **prayer** by Rev. W. B. Hartzog.

By the side of a regulation silk flag which graced the platform was one of **unique** appearance, over seventy years old. In these days when **the American flag** is in **evidence everywhere**, it is **interesting** to **learn** the devices resorted to by the **women** of the early forties in their efforts to **bring** before the public a banner to symbolize their patriotism.

A flag for **some** patriotic demonstration in the Sunday school at Aurelius was greatly **desired**—and Mrs. Fowler (whose two gray

haired sons **were** present at the meeting and brought this precious old time relic) set her wits to work, after **efforts** to procure a flag at Jackson and other trading posts had failed. Without a flag to copy from, she took a **piece** of **unbleached muslin** about two by three feet in size, and in the **upper left hand corner** constructed a field of **alternate** red and white **stripes** of **figured** red and blue calico, with large stars of the **same** material **sewed** at intervals on the remaining space. This was the first church flag **ever** used in Ingham county, and its peculiar formation is proof of the old saying that "necessity is the **mother** of **invention**."

The history of District No. 1 was **given** by Mrs. Theron Grinnell, as follows:

District No. 1 was organized in 1841. The first school house was built in that year, one-half mile east from where the present school house stands. It was a long building rolled up with timbers cut from the spot where it was built by the following settlers: Benjamin Hazelton, Cyrus Austin, Joshua Bump, Linden Heath, Rurton Robinson, Joseph Robinson, Leonard Pratt, John Barnes and Alexander Waggoner.

Joseph Robinson built a stone fireplace in one corner of the building and topped it with a stick chimney. Both were plastered inside with clay. The roof was of shakes. The seats were planks hewn out of basswood logs. Julia Smith was the first teacher, and received \$1.00 per week. Her brother John Smith taught the second term for \$10.00 per month.

Luther Horton taught a number of **terms** in this school house. At this time the district extended over a wide scope of country. Aside from the settlers clearings and the open plains at the west, known as the Montgomery Plains, the country was one unbroken **forest**. The following were the first scholars who **attended** school in the log school house: Rosanna, Nancy and James Hazelton, Sarah and Harriet Austin, **Mary** Elizabeth and Harriet Bump, Elizabeth, Catherine, Harrison and Lafayette Robinson, **Sarah**, Lemuel and Darius Pratt, Zaccheus, Miranda, O. M., **Cordelia** and John Barnes, Rebecca and Catherine Waggoner.

J. W. Freeman is the oldest **person** living who **attended** school in the old log school house, and is present here today.

A few years later a second school house was built at a cost of **\$100**, in the southeast corner of the yard where the **present** school

house stands. At this time the school became known as the Barnes School, being built on the farm which John Barnes took up from the government. Those living in the district at the present time who attended their first term of school in this building are Dell Barnes, George Disenroth, **Theron** Grinnell, Page Sanders, John and Ed Edgar.

It was in this little red school house that **the Baptist** church was organized on May 1, 1847, and was known as the First Baptist Conference of Aurelius.

The present school house was built in 1871.

John Barnes, or Deacon Barnes, as all knew him, **was the** first settler in this district. He came here from the State of New York and located his farm in **1836**, his family coming one year later.

Mr. and Mrs. Barnes were the parents of eleven children. Nine of them taught school. Although Deacon Barnes went to his reward many years ago, the memory of his deeds of **kindness** and the influence of his Christian character still lives. He was always ready to minister to the sick and counsel and aid those in need. It was **Mr.** Barnes who gave to the township the name of Aurelius.

In 1836 Joshua Freeman took from the government the farm now known as the Josiah **Hadden** farm.

Alexander Waggoner, father of J. D. Waggoner, took from the government the farm now owned by George Disenroth, and his brother, Henry Waggoner, also located on government land now owned by Ed **Freer** and Carl Warner. After a few years he sold his land and returned to New York. An incident relating to Henry Waggoner is told, which always brings a smile to the faces of the women. When he started back to his old home, his wife wanted him to let her carry the money he had received from his farm, but as usually is the case he thought he was as capable of looking after it as she was. While they were at Niagara Falls he had his pockets picked of all he had. Mrs. Waggoner happened to have enough money in her purse to carry them to their destination, but history omits the information as to whether she revenged herself by saying "I told you so" or not.

Joseph Robinson, father of Lafayette Robinson, had an ashery across the road from the old log school house, where for many

years he made potash and black salts, two articles used largely in trade in early days.

Leonard Pratt owned **160** acres across the road from the ashery now owned by Elmer Ellsworth.

E. M. Sanders, better known as Deacon Sanders, bought his farm in 1857 of Mr. **Hobert**. He lived there until his death in **1902**.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Edgar came from Ohio in 1862, and bought the farm where they have since lived. Thomas Cook took this land from the government. **Mr.** Edgar died in **1915**, and Mrs. Edgar lives on the old homestead **with** her youngest son Claude and family.

Two of the pioneers of this district had large families; Mr. and Mrs. Barnes had eleven children, and Mr. and Mrs. Slaght eighteen.

It seems appropriate here to mention those of this district who fought in the Civil War: Orrin Converse, Henry Converse, Myron Davis, Corvis McIntyre, David Waggoner, **Chauncy** Slaght, Rose11 Sanders, Wm. Austin.

David Waggoner and Henry Converse died on a Southern battlefield. Orrin Converse dropped dead in his door **yard** while home on a furlough.

Two boys from this district entered service in the World War, Lynn **Grinnell** enlisted in an aviation corps, and was at **Rockway** Beach, New York City, when the armistice was signed.

Lucius Warner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Warner, entered service June **25, 1918**, and made the supreme sacrifice, being killed in action in the Argonne Forest, France, on Oct. 14, 1918. His body was sent to his home where he was given a military funeral in the fall of 1921, and buried in Maple Grove Cemetery at Mason.

Along the first mile of the highway running west from the present school house there has not been a real estate transfer outside some members of the families residing there in 64 years.

Nearly all the early settlers of this district are now lying in the Aurelius Cemetery.

DISTRICT NO. 2, AURELIUS.

MRS. A. B. GRETTON, Isham or Gretton School.

The first man to cast his lot in the wilds of what was destined to be District No. 2, Aurelius, was a young man from Ohio, one **Wm. Isham**. While looking about for a location he chanced to meet in the woods Mr. John Barnes. Perhaps this had something to do with his choosing, for he made his choice 160 acres to the west of a portion of the Barnes's holdings. Later relations of the two families were more closely connected, as this enterprising young pioneer married Amanda Barnes, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Barnes. In a log cabin, with doors and windows yet to be, this young couple set up **housekeeping**. Hero Nelson **Isham** was born, the first child in the future District No. 2. As Mr. **Isham** felled and burned the trees the ashes by crude means were converted into potash, then drawn to Jackson by oxen. In this way he provided for his family until crops could be **procured** from the land.

In 184- Michael Mattison with his wife and family came from the East, purchased the rights of J. Hammond, an early land speculator, in 160 acres of timbered land. To Michael Mattison belongs the credit for the first orchard, and also of killing the biggest **bear ever** seen in that locality.

Jacob Parish, with wife and babe, was the next to find in the forest the prospect of a home.

At about the same date, 1844 or 1845, one mile east from the site of the present school house, John Cook with his family came to a halt. Theirs had **been** a journey o'er land and sea, and England their former home. Of their children one son, Wm., was killed by a falling tree, and one daughter passed away at an early **a g e**.

The **Cooks** were soon **followed** by Wm. Sear and family, also Rev. Robert Hamp. They were all of English birth.

Peter Parish came from New York and found a home with his brother Jacob until a home could be erected on the newly acquired homestead.

Amos Mattison, **eldest** son of Michael, had followed his parents from the East, and obtained title to 80 acres east of his father's property.

To the north a family by the name of **Weldon** obtained first claim to 80 acres, but soon sold to Mr. Willoughby, who with his family had just crossed over from Canada. In the barter for this land a gun and a clock, the latter a treasured possession of the Willoughby family, changed hands as first payment.

To the south the home of John Osborn was found. Mr. Osborn engaged in making shingles, and gave employment to several **helpers** that lived in cabins near by. The product of this industry found a market in Jackson, transported there by **oxen**.

David Potter saw a future 'for a saw mill, so obtained **title** to 400 acres of land and erected a saw mill near its center. All the early frame buildings of that region were made from lumber sawed in that mill. David Potter was a Knight **Templar**, one of **nine** of that order then residing in the State. Mr. Potter took a **keen** interest in the affairs of the township, as the records of those days tell. The early township meetings were held at his home, though sometimes this honor fell to Jacob Parrish, and later to John **VanWert**, whose home was in the center of the township.

The burning of a huge pile of logs was a rite always celebrated on these occasions.

Other names that can be mentioned in connection with the settlement and development of the pioneer community are **Bohannon, Miles, Haskell, Near** and **Spaulding**.

Something like seventy-five years ago the first school was established. Mr. John Barnes gave permission, and a small clearing was made on the northwest corner of his land, **some** ten or twelve feet back from the road, and a small log structure erected. It is said to have been a very primitive affair. Basswood, because of being easy to work, was the timber chosen.

The first teacher to guide the destinies of the children gathered there was **Ann Barnes**. This, her first school, commenced on her sixteenth birthday, with a salary of \$1.00 per week.

The log cabin school house served its purpose in a few years, and in 1851 a frame building took its place. The names of **Ellen Austin, Mary Barnes, Abbie Stokes, Ruth Batcman** appear as early teachers,

With Abbie Stokes as teacher, the pupils at the **Isham** School, as it was then called, were not slow to sense a romance. A new house took shape on Amos Mattison's eighty. A wonderful house for those days. The porches ~~enclosed~~ with lattice work, each gable decorated with a quaint design in wood work. It boasted of porcelain door knobs brought **up** from Ohio, the first seen in this part of the country. There were two white ones for the front **door and** two brown ones for the side door. In the year 1855, at the close of school, Miss Abbie Stokes went to the new house to dwell, as **Mrs.** Amos Mattison.

Of the old red school house and the activities of its patrons, brief mention at least needs be made of the, Sabbath school, the devout men who preached there, **men** who labored, not for compensation or praise, but for the privilege that they deemed greater, that of pointing the way to the higher life.

Among these men the names of Gucber, Swift and **Tallman** stand prominent. One lady of the community relates how her mother used to tell of attending a watch meeting, and how, when the old year was all but past and all was still as death, as the hour of midnight passed, one young man sprung to his feet, then to the top of a desk, and shouted, "Happy New Year **all!**" This young man was **J. W.** Freeman, and the happening more than sixty years ago.

In **1855** there still remained **government land** in plenty. Wm. Hopkins with his wife **and** a family of five children came up from Ohio, made choice of 80 acres of land at **\$1.25** an acre. He proceeded to make a clearing and build the traditional log house. As soon as possible a small patch of corn was growing among the stumps, Then came trying times. There was no flour, no meal and no money in the log cabin, and the appetites of five husky boys and girls growing keener as the supply of flour and meal grew less, Mr. Hopkins was equal to the situation. He procured a length of stovepipe and by aid of a hammer and nails, a grater was soon constructed. Each morning he would rise before the sun and gather a quantity of the ripening corn, then grate, grate, grate until enough meal was made for the day's needs. Then he would commence the real labor of the day, that of making barrel hoops. In the course of time enough hoops were made to purchase a barrel of flour when **they** were taken to Jackson, the nearest **mar-**

ket, and the exchange made. Such is a small part of the history **of those** who blazed the way for the settlement of District No. **2**, Aurelius.

To the list that have carried on, when the first named pioneers must **of** need lay their work down, may be added those of Davis, **Scutt, Bateman, Craft and Fanson**, who have done for their day and **times** much to make District No. **2** a commendable and progressive part of our great commonwealth.

DISTRICT NO. **3**, WILCOX SCHOOL.

By **MISS SARAH JENNINGS.**

One warm summer day as the sun was sinking below the horizon I chanced to be passing the Wilcox school house. **The** door standing ajar, I decided to enter and sat down in one of the old seats to see how it would seem. As I sat there my mind began to recall the happenings of by-gone days. The day was sultry, and very unintentionally I fell asleep. I awoke with a start finding the room dark, save for the light of the moon which cast its silvery **beams** across the floor, and the night **wind** **gently** blowing in at the door through which I had entered. A voice very soft and low and with the tremor of age, seeming to proceed from the front walls of the room said, "I am the voice of the school and I have much of importance that I have long waited an opportunity to relate. Many years I have resided here and I claim first place as historian, for throughout the years have I not had daily representatives from nearly every home in this little community, and how better could one know the life of the homes than through the children?"

"My story dates back a to a time **85** years ago, in 1836, before this **school** existed here, to a time when the spot on which I now stand, and all around, was part of a vast wilderness. Far away to the east, on the shores of Lake Ontario in Orleans county, N. **Y.**, two young men, Demetrius Olmstead and Elijah Wilcox, were seeing visions and dreaming dreams of a land far away to the west, a land of opportunity where they might make a home. With the hope and buoyancy of youth, Demetrius and his young wife

Philema, and Elijah and his wife Alvira, gathered together the articles most necessary for home keeping, and bidding their relatives and friends farewell, each with ox-team and covered wagon started out on their long journey.

"After crossing Lake Ontario they slowly made their way through Canada to Detroit river, which they crossed on a ferry boat. From there they wended their way through the dense Michigan forests by means of a blazed trail, until they reached what is now Onondaga. From there they had to cut their own road through, coming to a halt, after many long weeks of travel, at a spot near where the school house now stands. Mr. Olmstead took from the government the land now owned by Daniel DeCamp, and just a little south of George Smith's home built a little log cabin. Mr. Wilcox took up the land that was afterward for many years owned by John Slaughter, building his log house near the Elkins home.

"At about this time came Geo. Wilcox from the old home in Orleans county, and settled on what was later the Floyd Rorabeck farm.

"It was very new, as I have before stated. Indians roamed through the forests, and often frequented their cabins, and through the quiet of the night could be heard the howling of wolves, or the breaking of branches as the deer sprang through the thickets pressed by their wild enemies. This lonely life and the call of the homeland led Demetrius back over the same trail by which he had come back to the old home in York State. Demetrius traded his south 80 to one of his neighbors, Chas. Jennings, a young man, who with his wife Evelin and his two sons Dar and Marion, followed the same trail. Mr. Olmstead had taken to the West, and at last reached the land they had purchased. They erected a log house near where Daniel DeCamp's house now stands. Again the call of the wild and the desire to grasp the opportunity offered by the new country led Demetrius to come back to the cabin and land he had left.

"In 1839 came Timothy Strong. Up from the East he traveled with his wife Sarah, then a girl of eighteen years, and settled on the farm now owned by his son Dave. At the same time with Timothy came his brother David, and settled across from Geo. Smith's home. The solitude of the vast forest is now broken.

Now one hears the report of a gun, the barking of a dog, the sound of the ax, the crashing of the mighty forest trees, the tinkling of the cow bells in the distance, and the joyous shouts and laughter of the boys and girls as they echo and re-echo through the forest.

"Neighbors were very friendly in those days, and as Philome Olmstead, Alvira Wilcox, Sarah Strong, Evelin Jennings and others made their rounds of afternoon and evening visits the ever recurring topic of conversation was a school for the boys and girls. So the men at last called a meeting and planned the building of a school house, which was erected on a plot of ground donated by Elijah Olmstead and just a little north of the present school building. Thus in the year 1840 this school came into existence in this community. How well I remember how this little log school house in which I resided looked. It was a rough log structure with a stick chimney on one end, and within the building a large fireplace. Up and down the room ran rows of slab seats. How interested everyone was in the process of building, and how proud they were when it was completed.

"Yes, and those early teachers, how well I remember them. There was Mariah Howlan, Kate Wilcox, Mrs. Tom Montgomery, Mary Barnes, John French, Hannah Fowler, Helen and Lucelia Toles and others. Mrs. Tom Montgomery brought her baby to school, often laying it on the broad mantel above the fireplace. What salary did they get? Well, that depended on circumstances. They had in those early days a rate bill, so much a pupil, and it was no great sum either. Many of those teachers were soul developed men and women, and great and lasting were the impressions they made on the young life of those early times. Yes, it is true that many were the obstacles they encountered, but as one has said, "Tis the set of the sail and not the gale that determines the way we go." The older boys, John and Free Wilcox, Dar and Marion Jennings and others, used to chop and draw up the big logs for the fireplace. There was no fuel famine in those days, I tell you. My, how those logs used to crackle and burn.

"One day, in 1842, the children were telling at school how new neighbors by the name of Fowler had arrived the day before. The man's name was Linus, and besides his wife there was a little girl named Bashy, a smaller one named Ann and a baby boy named Luman. They, like most of the other settlers in this

neighborhood, had come from Orleans county, N. Y., and from what I heard I knew they received a very hearty welcome. Soon their log house located just south of Ira Eckhart's was ready for them to **move into**, In 1849 came Josiah Fowler, Linus' father, and he settled just south of where Dan Slaughter now lives.

"About this time came Alexander Henry and settled on the place now owned by John Stimer. Naturally much news from this little settlement drifted back **east** and another young man was fired with the desire to come West, so in 1844 from Ontario county, N. Y., came Jas. Jennings with his wife Malvina, and settled in a log house just east of where his grandson, Jas. Jennings, now lives. Each year the red roses blooming by the roadside mark the site of what was then their little home. After living there a number of years they went back East, but in 1851 they returned bringing with them their three year old son Isaac. Next to come from the old home community was Lins **Brown**, who settled on what was afterward the Mix farm.

"Were not these early settlers often overcome by the hardships that they were obliged to endure in this new country, and did they not often long for their old homes? Yes, they had a hard struggle, but as the tree growing amid the rocks on the mountain side and exposed to the fierce blasts develops strength and toughness of fiber, they in like manner became strong. I think they were often lonely. I remember feeling very much that way myself at times, especially one cold winter night when the wind was whistling through the trees and these lines from Lowell **began** to run through my mind, 'Within thy walls thou **sittest** alone, alone, alone, ah, woe, alone.' 'The world is happy, the world is wide, Hind hearts are beating on every side,' I began to look about me. From every **side** I could see the lights shining forth from those little homes; Only candles or the flickering light **from the** fire-place, but they seemed just as bright as the lights of today. Perhaps that is **because** I am getting old, but how cheery and comfortable they looked, Yes, there was a great deal of happiness in this little community,

"Demetrius Olmstead and Elijah Wilcox raised the first wheat in this little settlement, and started bright and early one morning with their ox teams to market their crop, The trail being very muddy it took several days to go and come. They received fifty

cents for a seventy pound bushel and on returning home found themselves a number of dollars in debt as the trip proved so expensive.

"This small settlement lacked now but one of the three most important institutions of the **State-tha** church, Soon a Sunday school was started with Linus Fowler as superintendent, My seats were more than filled, because you know in those days every one went to Sunday school. A number who were' especially helpful in the services at this time and later were Linus and Josiah Fowler, **Chas.** Jennings and Elder Ranney. The township meetings were sometimes held here too, so that it gave me a chance to learn something of the political news of that time.

"About 1840 I left my abode in the old log school house and came to live in the present one which was then completed. Other families were now fast coming in, In 1849 Charles, Simpson and wife settled on the farm now owned by their son Ed. Geo. Simpson and wife Margaret settled on the farm now owned by Miles Norris, Then there was Andrew Fowler and his wife Sally, where they lived for many years. Joseph Dixon on the farm later owned by Floyd' Rorabeck. In 1855 Almond Parks settled where Ira **Eckhart** lives. In 1861 Cornelius Handy came to the farm later owned by his son Marion. How familiar these names all sound! 'It seems but yesterday,' said the voice, 'when they were here, but this only goes to remind one of the swift flight of years,' Yes, and there was Lewis **Eckhart**, came in 1864, settling where his grandson Ira now lives, the Sabins family, where Ray **DeCamp** lives, Elder Ranney, on what is now the Weeks farm, Joseph Howe, where his son Grant later lived, John Slaughter in 1861, and Humphry and Mary Sherman on the place now owned by John Hodgiboom. Those whose names I have given you are all gone, They have finished their journey here, but like the brook their influence goes on and on forever,

" 'I could tell you much more,' said the voice, 'but I must not now. I just wanted you to know something of those stirring times of '61. War was declared and that was the only topic of conversation. Out from our little community went Henry and Morris Olmstead, Jas. Jennings and Harrison Dixon. Those were very anxious days, and well I remember when the **news** reached us that Morris Olmstead had fallen on the battlefield, It

was a very sad day in our little settlement, and then came the news, only a few days after he left home, that **Harrison** Dixon was the first man to fall in his regiment. We could hardly believe the news. Harrison's body was sent home by his **comrades**. Those were truly sad days.' The voice, faltered and then **tremblingly** continued, 'You know they were my boys for had they not for many years sat within my walls? Since then year on year hath flown forever, but over their graves

"The sun still shines and the flowers bloom
And the gentle winds still whisper low,
And the stars have them in their keeping."

"The voice ceased and all was still, but as I crept from the moonlit room, I felt that I had truly **communed** with the distant past."

DISTRICT NO. 4, WEBB SCHOOL.

By W. M. WEBB.

I know not when the school commissioners formed the district and **established** its bounds, but **it was** some time in 1842. On the 19th day of November, 1842, the organization took place at my father's home, it being a central part of the district. It was then district officers were elected for the first.

Jonathan Snyder was made moderator, **Winslow** Turner director and Reuben R. Bullen **assessor**. **They** also voted to build a school house; this was to be of logs, with a room twenty feet square, and also voted to raise the sum of \$100 for said purpose. They then adjourned to meet in January, 1843.

Meantime between times the residents were discussing the house and the \$100, and many of them thought to raise this sum would be more of a burden than they could bear, but after much discussion it was left **as** voted, only it was arranged that the house should be built by individual labor as far as possible, each to receive fifty cents a day for his labor. **When** the house was up and enclosed 134 days of labor had been performed, amounting to **\$67**, leaving \$33 with which to finish the inside. This was done by Joseph **Bullen**, the only mechanic in the neighborhood at that time.

I can recall most of the teachers who taught in that log school house. **It** was our school house for four years, and during that time there were eight teachers employed, **only one** of them of the masculine gender.

In 1849 the school center was moved **one mile** to the east, and school was held in a log residence for two years.

In 1851 a new and large frame building was erected, 24 x 30 feet in size. The school attendance had increased from 17 to 50, and in 1858 the roll call was 72. That was the largest number that attended at any **one** time, and the pupils were under the tuition of Hon. **S. L. Kilborne, of Lansing**.

Great and entertaining were the gatherings held in that school house; spelling schools, writing schools, singing schools and debating schools. Let me **take** a minute to **tell** you of those debates. For **entertainment** and information **they** were only **second** to the instruction we received in the day school. Through a part of the winters of the sixties and seventies and up into the eighties we had our weekly discussions. Some relating to local affairs, some scientific, moral, national, in fact all **the live** topics of the day, and many of them you will **see**, for there were meetings once a week for at least a dozen years. We had our constitution and by-laws and aimed to conduct our discussions with as much dignity and propriety as would **be** in any legislative body. Some of the questions we discussed forty and fifty years ago have been in recent times handled by the nation and solved, as for instance: "Resolved, that women **be** granted the right of suffrage **throughout the nation**." Here is **another** the State and nation will handle **twenty years** from now, and that will be only sixty **years behind** our pioneer movement: "Resolved, that a breach of the marriage promise **be** punishable by imprisonment as well as pecuniary **fines**." We also tried our wits and knowledge on the following: "Resolved, the resumption act **be** passed by Congress;" "that the mental faculties of the **sexes** are equal;" "that necessity is the mother of invention;" "that a lie is sometimes justifiable;" "that the mind always thinks;" "that conscience is man's proper guide;" "that gambling **be suppressed** by law;" "that it requires **more** skill and ability to **be** a successful agriculturist **than** for any other calling;" "that a congress of nations **be** encouraged" (forty years behind us but will catch up soon) "that the signs of the times

indicate the downfall of this Republic" (this was during the reconstruction period after the Civil War;) "that the warrior benefits his country more than the statesman." This also followed closely the Civil War. Without going further into details will say that those years were a very interesting period in the history of the district.

Will mention the teachers who taught here before 1860 and resided in the township: Martha Smith, Benjamin Holley, James Williams, **Horace Hobart**, Kate Wilcox, Bashia **Fowler**, Mary Bump. Those were early day teachers, and many taught here later.

The **years** of the Civil War mark an interesting period in the life of the district. From **three square miles in the neighborhood** there went into the Union army during that four year's struggle **26** boys. A pretty good quota for a rural neighborhood. But few places did as well, and none better. There were four Turner brothers, three Baldwin, three Holley, three Dunn, two Wright, three from the Webb families, and one each from the Smith, Watkins, Gunn, Jewett, Mutton, Wilson, Norris and Williams, and were divided among nine organizations. But what became of them, and where are they now? Five met Confederate bullets, **five** died in the southland, one was wounded on the battlefield at Chickamauga, captured and died in Andersonville prison, and another was wounded and captured on the **Stoneman** raid and died in Andersonville. One sickened on the Franklin and Nashville campaign and died in the hospital; one died in camp in Missouri, and one in a hospital at Alexandria, Va.; one was severely wounded at the battle of Bull Run; one died ten years after the war from wounds he received at Spottsylvania; one was killed by a premature discharge of a cannon at the village of Onondaga during the presidential campaign of **1878**.

Four lie in national cemeteries, four in North Aurelius Cemetery, one in the **Leeke** Cemetery, Alaiedon, one in **Maple Grove**, Mason, one in Rose Hill, Eaton Rapids, one at Atlanta, Iowa, and one at Logansport, Indiana. Thirteen are still living, **almost** a wonder that fifty per **cent** of the North Aurelius boys should be living while there is but a trifle over ten per cent of the entire Union forces now alive. But they are old men, with the **exception** of myself (am **83**). One is **85**, one **88**, three are **80**, one **79**, one

78, one 77, one 76, and three are younger. Two live in Texas, two in California, and nine in Michigan. I am the only one still tenting on the old camp ground.

'Of those who located and settled **here** in a very early day all were of a class that came to stay and stayed to build a home in **the** wilderness, and built it, to compel the forest to give **way** to cultured field, and compelled it, and here they lived their remaining days. Of the **32** pioneers that came very early, **30** lie in the North Aurelius Cemetery, while one died in New York and one in Ohio. The first marriage in the neighborhood was performed by Rev. Thomas Wakelin; the contracting parties Thomas Presley and Martha Smith, Sept. 10, 1846. The second was on the following Christmas eve., when **occurred** the marriage of Thomas and Mary Ann Wright.

DISTRICT NO. 6 (FRACTIONAL), IN TOWNSHIPS OF
AURELIUS, ONONDAGA, IN INGHAM COUNTY AND
HAMLIN AND EATON RAPIDS, EATON COUNTY,

By MRS. **ALFRED** PARKER, Aurelius.

This fractional district is known as the Plains District. The **first** record I found of actual settlement was in **1835**, made by Col. Robert Montgomery and wife and their **five** sons, Col. John, Johnson, Robert, **Wm.** and Alexander.

They obtained their land from the government, and settled on the Onondaga Township corner, and later obtaining more land for the boys upon which they settled. Hence the name Montgomery Plains,

To John M., who built the stone house on the Hamlin Township corner, was born three sons, Robert, Scott and Albert, also one daughter, Alvira Montgomery Miller. The sons were all farmers.

To Johnson was born a large family of children: Lieut. **Dudley**, who after the Civil War went to Kansas; **Amanda Huntington**; Helen Baldwin, now living in Minnesota; Charles, who was accidentally killed in early childhood; Jack, a farmer; Ezra, who was **killed while serving in the Civil War**; **Caroline Shaw**, **Celestia Miller**, and Judge Morris Robert, who died at his home in Eaton

Rapids in 1020, having moved there but a short time before from Washington, D. C., where he had been Judge of Customs Court of Appeals. He had served as circuit judge in Grand Rapids, and was a member of the supreme court in Ingham county. His name was well known, not only in Michigan, but through the United States.

To Robert was born Alonzo, Clifford, Fred, Frank, Almerion and Sarah Dunham,

To Wm. was born Wm., Jr., Martin, Richard, Louisa Haff, and Mallie Medkiff Eisenbiss,

Alexander had no issue.

All of these children were born on the Plains, The original Montgomery homestead on the Onondaga Township corner was later owned by the Schimmerhorn's, Waller's, Hewett's, Henry Olmstead, who built the house that now stands there, and others.

In 1837 the Robt. Haywood family settled on the corner one mile east of the school house. Their children were Robert, Dr. Abner, Henry and Harriet, who married a son of Rev. Crane.

The school district was organized in 1837, and the first school in the township was taught in the Plains' school house in the summer of that year. It was a small log building and the Huntington family occupied it for a residence the next spring until they could build themselves a home. However, school had been held in this building before this, supported by families without public aid.

The brick structure which now stands there was built in 1865, Marcella Parker taught the last term in the old school and went to school to a male teacher in the new school during the first term taught there, and this was Dudley Bateman.

The site for the school house was bought of John Montgomery, \$70 being paid for a square acre. Almeron Parks was the carpenter and the building cost \$2,000.

In 1877 the district voted money for the ornamental pine trees along the Plains road. In the early days the stage coach passed along this road from Eaton Rapids to Mason, It was a fine-road and horseback riding was much indulged in, making of this road a rather famous race track.

In 1838 John French obtained three or four hundred acres from the government, east of the school house, The later owners were Wm. Miller, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Mull and Richard Blair.

About 1839 Erastus Ranney settled east of the Hayward farm.

In the early forties Zeno Terry obtained from the government 360 acres in the part of the district lying in Eaton Rapids Township. He built the large barns on what is now the Pierce place. In 1840 he sold to his son-in-law, Wheeler Miller, who built the brick house. One son, Morris Miller, is now living in Jackson at the advanced age of 97 years. His daughter (Wheeler Miller), Millie Miller French, was a successful teacher, and she and her husband were teaching in Mason at the time of her death, and Nancy Miller Jopp, still living, aged 87 years. Nancy Miller Jopp and Harriet Hayward Crane were married at a double wedding at seven o'clock in the morning. Another son, Chas. Miller, held the office of sheriff in Eaton county for many years. The homestead passed out of the Miller family in 1892.

The Plains' church was built in 1845, and cost \$300. Later it was remodeled, It was maintained by people of various religious beliefs, and pastors of different denominations held services there. Present indications are that it will in time be used as a community house.

The first, burial in the cemetery was the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Erastus Ranney, and the second Mrs. Caroline French Hamlin.

The Parker farm, obtained from the government by a Mr. Scofield, the date unknown. He built the large barn on the west side of the road, and Alfred Parker bought the farm in 1840 and built the grout, house, and is still owned by Alfred Parker, Jr.

In the early days of the district, each pupil was called upon to furnish his quota of four foot wood for heating purposes, The building was accepted in 1866, but it was some years later when a bell was purchased for \$8.35 and its clarion tones called the youth of the district to this place of learning.

In 1860 there was \$60 raised by tax for fences and to grade and pay for ornamental trees, and in 1870 \$30 was raised for more trees and their care for one year. In 1880 the plan of using forest trees to replace those that died was adopted, and the trees cared for by the residents.

A singing school held at the school house was one of the events of 1860. In 1876 the building was closed to the public except for educational purposes.

Other residents of the district were Willis Bush and family, a family named Brooks, the Whites, Seth Harmon, John Gale, Hiram and Harmon Gibbs.

An amusing story is told, which contains a unique hint as to the first aid remedies used in early times. Miller and Bush were working swamp land when Bush was bitten by a mssasauga. He was addicted to the use of tobacco, so clapped his quid onto the wound and was carried to the house. While waiting for a physician to come Mr. Miller milked a cow and immersed the wounded foot in the warm fluid, then killed a chicken, opened it and bound the warm carcass on the foot. Before the doctor arrived three chickens had been used, and the physician declared this treatment saved the man's life.

The only descendants of the earlier pioneers now living in the district are Mrs. Ransom Bush, Mrs. Rena Gale Corbin, and Alfred Parker.

NO. 7, AURELIUS CENTER SCHOOL.

By MRS. EVELIN.

In the year 1836 Joshua and Henry Freeman came from Oneida county, N. Y., to what is known as District No. 7, Aurelius Center. The government had surveyed land and divided it into sections. Joshua Freeman took land on section 25 and Henry Freeman on section 34. The Freeman's cut the road through the forest from Jackson, building a bridge over Grand river, and this is known as the Freeman bridge to this day. J. W. Freeman, son of Henry Freeman, is the oldest man in District No. 7, being 85 years old, and still lives on part of the farm his father took from the government when he was but six months old.

J. H. Covert is another old resident of District No. 7. He came with his parents, J. S. Covert and wife, to this place from Seneca county, N. Y. They drove overland to Lake Eric, then their team and wagon were put on a boat and they sailed to Detroit, as so many of the pioneers did, and from there they drove across the State to Aurelius. This was in 1842, and Mr. Covert was only four months old,

Mrs. Covert's father, Jeremiah Foucks, had come here at a still earlier day and taken up land on section 35. J. S. Covert bought his land of Mr. Loucks and paid \$1.25 per acre giving gold in exchange. Mr. Covert told this story: His father having business in another part of the township was on his way home through the woods when he saw a little fawn. He took it home to his little son and it grew to be a great pet. They put three bells on it, to distinguish it from the cows that roamed at large with bells on, and so had no trouble keeping track of it. On moonlight nights it often wandered off into the woods and later return to the clearing with other deer. One day it went over on the farm now owned by Dave Strong and on its way home some one shot it, thinking it a wild deer. Mr. Covert is now 78 years old.

J. C. Bond, Sr., is the oldest man who was born in this district and has lived here all his life. His father, Samuel Bond, was one of the very early settlers in District No. 7, and J. C. Bond still lives on the farm where he was born 77 years ago.

The first school was held in a log house, with only one room, and this was occupied by a family named Stewart. They had two little boys who slept in the trundlebed, which during the day was kept under the big bed and pulled out at night for their use. In the morning to make room for the boys and girls that came this was pushed back in place, and then Mrs. Stewart would proceed to teach the pupils in her home.

Some time later a log school house was built just north of the Aurelius Cemetery. Jane Rolfe was one of the first teachers in the log school house, teaching six days a week and receiving 75 cents for each week's work. The seats were made of logs with pegs driven in for legs; the desks ran round the room, the pupils facing the wall with their backs to the teacher.

Later another school house was built just south of the old one, and Sarah Pratt Cook was the first teacher.

In 1867 the present building was erected, with Mattie Cochran Strong (Dr. Strong, who practiced medicine for many years in Jackson) as teacher.

DISTRICT NO. 10, TOLES SCHOOL.

By MRS. O. M. ROBERTSON.

District No. 10, known as the Toles School, was organized in the spring of 1856, and the first school was taught by Mary Jane Kiper, now widow of the late Dr. Hyde, of Eaton Rapids. The building was a shanty in the Toles mill yard. It stood about where the Chas. Klink granary now stands. The children who attended school were from the families of Jehial Toles, Joseph Moreau, Linus H. Fowler and Elisha Cruson. Ten children in all. The first school house was built on the northwest corner of section 29, the same year the district was organized. The winter term was taught by Amanda Montgomery.

In the early seventies this school house burned. The district disorganized, and the territory was set off into the adjoining districts for a short time. This not proving satisfactory, the district was reorganized, and a school house built in the fall of 1876. "Gully College" as it was called from the time the first house was built produced seventeen teachers, one minister, one lawyer, two physicians and one dentist, and we know not how many successful tradesmen and farmers. Ten stalwart sons took their places in the army during the Civil War. Some served three years and got home just in time to help pay the tax to clear Aurelius Township from the draft. L. A. Fowler recalls the fact that he got out timber for scythe snaths which he delivered to the State Prison at Jackson to pay his share, which amounted to \$86.

S o m e b o n u s !

There are left of those early residents who have lived all their lives in District No. 10 Mrs. Tillie Clark Markley, Olin Fowler and son Glen, Roy Buckingham and Frank Robertson. Of those who were here 60 years ago only four are left, Olin Fowler, Rena Fowler Klink, Tillie Clark Markley, and Lucy Webb Robertson.

Luman A. Fowler, of Aromas, Calif., lived in District No. 10 since before it was organized until 1894, when he and his family moved to their present home.

Mr. Fowler was present at the Aurelius meeting, and gave an interesting talk on the early days and their events,

Dudley Bateman, an early day teacher, and a veteran of the Civil War, related some of his experiences along both lines.

Wm. McGuire gave an original poem "which pleased all. In this he pleaded for worth while memorials for those who fought in the wars of our country.

Before the meeting closed Mr. Webb called all the Civil War veterans to the platform, and as they held high the colors all joined in singing "Rally Round the Flag,"

THE WEBB FAMILY OF AURELIUS,

Taken from "The Past and Proscnt of Ingham County," With Consent of the Writers,

George B. Webb was born in Summersetshire, England, in 1803 and before coming to America he saw the effects of the Battle of Waterloo and had experiences in its aftermath which he never forgot. When a boy of thirteen he was compelled to take his father's team and carry wounded French prisoners, who had been captured in this battle, to various places of safety in England,

Believing that he could better himself in America, he came to this country when he was twenty-two years old and settled in Syracuse, N. Y., where he engaged in the butcher and dairy business. When twenty-eight years of age he married Miss Anna M. Cately, of Syracuse, and to them five children were horn, and in 1921 three of them are living in Ingham county and numbered among its best known pioneers. George B. Webb came to Michigan in 1886 and settled in Aurelius Township, where he purchased eighty acres of land from the government.

When he selected this tract upon which to found his home it was necessary for him to go to Ionia to the land office to make his entry. He started out on an Indian trail, and expected when he reached Grand river 'to find some'friedly Indian to ferry him across, but in this he was disappointed. He began building a raft, his only tool being his jack knife, but by using flood wood he finally had a raft which he thought-and hoped-might carry him across the river safely. The water was deep and the current strong, and the frail craft upon which he had ventured out soon fell

to pieces, and he, unable to swim, was caught in the swift flowing water. Had not a **friendly** Indian fortunately appeared at this time his life would have been lost, but instead he **was** able to reach the land office, make his entry and return home safely,

This eighty acres secured at that time he added to until he owned 840 acres of **fine** farming land, which some years later had become one of the best known farms in the county, Indians frequently camped on or near his farm, but being amicably disposed the relations with **the Webb** family were always friendly,

After the death of **Mr. Webb's first** wife he married Mrs. Lucy **Harty**, of Bunkerhill Township, and one child, Lewis C. Webb, now of Mason, was born to them,

Mr. Webb **died** in **1800**, aged eighty-six **years**, his wife having preceded him in **1883**.

W. M. (Mac) Webb has written many things regarding early life in Aurelius Township, on which he is **an** authority, but there was never **a more** interesting account given than the following,, which with **Mr. Webb's** consent is taken from "The Past and Present of Ingham County," compiled by the late Albert E. Cowles, of Lansing.

I was born on section nine in the township of Aurelius on the **21st** day of May, **1838**, under better conditions and with more favorable surroundings than many an Ingham county pioneer boy who was born about the same period,

They **were probably** born in log shanties under a trough roof, while I was born in a board shanty under a bark roof. The corners of the house were three small trees, standing in about the right position, and at the fourth corner a post was set. The trees were cut off at the proper height, boards were nailed round forming an enclosure which was covered with great slabs of elm bark laid on poles. There were beautiful and extensive groves of beech and maple on four sides of the house, and all the lawns were covered in spring with a very luxuriant growth of verdure known to the early settlers as leeks.

I was the fourth child born in the township, so that being born in Aurelius had passed the **experimental** period and had become an established industry; George **W. Bullen**, born **August 18, 1837**; Freeman Wilcox, born **August 20, 1837**; Charles Ranney, born **April 20, 1838**. We **made** a big team to help clear the forests in an **early** day,

I was **not** born with an axe in my hand, but with a disposition to grasp one as soon as opportunity offered: My life would not vary greatly on the whole from that of the average man who has seen Ingham county grow from the time of the "blazed" trail that marked the way in so many directions through the forest so dense and lone, and who **has** listened to the tinkle of the cow **bell** through the woodland pasture, and who in those early days sat around the cheery fireside within the old log cabin.

The first thing I **remember** was the burning of the broom. It was the spring I was three years old. It had been used to sweep up the coals on the hearth in front of the fireplace, then stood brush end up in the corner of the house, and **a** coal that had lodged in the splints soon blazed and consumed **the** broom.

I was five years old when I saw a **horse** for the first time; a wonderful sight for a little boy who had never seen any beast of burden except oxen. I also remember the same year of hearing much talk among my elders **of** what was believed by many as the **coming** of the end of the world in April. It was a sect called Millerites who prophesied this. My father got one of the believers, a cooper by trade, to make him a pork barrel during the previous winter, and he would take no pay, saying he had plenty to last him until the great 'day came. Some went so far as to make **their ascension** robes. It must have been a great disappointment to them.

That spring I remember the snow was two feet deep at the time of the spring election. The town meeting was held at the home of Michael Mattison, on section fifteen. Those going from our neighborhood took the shortest route, one man going ahead a few rods to break the way, then falling to the rear, the next in line leading, until each had served his turn.

By the next spring the little log cabins were fast filling up with boys and girls, and the great question in the community was the one of schooling. A meeting was called at my father's house early in 1844 to consider the matter. It was voted that a school house should be built 100 rods east of the northwest corner of section nine, and that \$100 should be raised by direct tax for the purpose. After giving the subject more thought another meeting was called at my father's house to reconsider the vote on the amount to be raised, several being of the opinion that the sum was too burdensome to be borne. After much discussion it was left at the same

figure but agreed that each resident could give labor toward the erection of the building at fifty cents a day, no charge to be made for team work.

Logs were cut and hauled by some, scored and hewed by others. One man got out material and built a stick chimney for his share, while another got out shakes for the roof, and so on. The labor amounted in all to \$67, leaving ~~\$33~~ to be raised by tax, which was quite sufficient for sash doors, glass, nails, **lumber and** the inside mechanic **work which** was hired done. This house stood directly **across** the road from where I now live, and here at the age of six years I first attended school.

The building stood for many years a monument **to** the enlightenment and intelligence of the neighborhood. **My** mother had taught me my letters, so I was quite a scholar at the start. I had my first primer full of pictures with words underneath descriptive of **the same. These** I must **spell** and **pronounce**. I went at it with a will. There was the word "**gate**" beneath the picture and I spelled g-a-t-e-bars, the word "spade" s-p-a-d-e-shovel. I had seen bars and shovel, but never a gate nor a spade, yet to me they were the same. So I surprised **the** teacher by my ability to pronounce such words so readily, and the rest of her life she laughed as she recalled that incident.

The summer I was seven years old a band **of Indians** encamped across the road from my father's for a short time. I remember a little red who was doing some quite fine target practice with bows and arrows. "I had a penny, no inconsiderable sum for a small boy at that time. In some way it was arranged by our elders that I should put up my penny as **a** target for the little redskin to shoot at, and if he hit it the first trial he won it. The distance as arranged was so great that my father thought my money was safe. **It** was put in a slit in the top of a stake and the stake set in the ground. The little Indian won with the first shot hitting the target square. I was sad for many a day from the loss of my fortune, but in time it became a golden memory.

I remember Chief Okemos well. He visited my father's home a number of times during my boyhood. One time he offered to exchange a pony for me, telling father he would teach me to fish and hunt like an Indian. I was in my teens when **the last** Indian located in the forest close by us, **Game** was still **plenty**. His was

quite a peaceable family, but someone didn't like him or didn't want him to be killing off all the wild game, so he with a jack knife carved the portrait of an Indian in the bark of a tree where the Indian would be likely to see it, then he fired two or three bullets into the picture. This was a suggestion that an Indian always understood, so he soon left for other parts. Some of us were sorry to see him go for we liked him, at least **I did**.

The spring that I was eight years old two neighbors were going through a piece of woods and came **across** a bear and three cubs. They managed to secure two of the cubs, My father bought one of them so then I had a playmate, but he played rough and so did I. He was chained to a post that was about ten feet in height and wore a light chain about the same length. He would travel all day going one way until his chain was wound up, then the other way until it was unwound and wound up again. Sometimes he would climb to the top of the post and stay for awhile. He was always ready for a scrap and many were the **cuffs I received when I** got near enough to be reached by him. Although still a little fellow, sometimes I would grab him both sides of the neck when he was eating and shake him thoroughly to get even with him. We had much respect for each other. When just out of reach it used to please me greatly to induce some playmate to go near enough to get him cuffed over by bruin. Once he got hold of a little fellow and tore his clothes nearly off from him. The neighbors found so much fault because their children got so roughly treated that father sold him.

I was nine years old the year the Capitol was **located** at Lansing. There was to be a big Fourth of July celebration in the new city, and everybody from **our** neighborhood was going, **so** father permitted myself and older brother to go. We went on foot. It was only twenty-four miles there and back. I had the time of my life. I listened to an oration by George W. Peck, a prominent democratic politician. The exercises were held in a grove near what was later known? as the **Benton** House. My brother and I had a shilling to spend on that occasion, twelve and **one-half** cents. There was a coin of that denomination in circulation at that time, **It** answered our purpose well, We **blowed** ourselves and came home financially busted, but **all my** life I felt that it was one **of** my big days.

My first gunning was done with a flint lock gun and my first game secured was a black squirrel. As soon as I had fired I dropped my gun and ran home as fast as I could to exhibit my game and boast of my markmanship. In my enthusiasm my gun was forgotten for the time and left nearly a half mile from home.

In those early days before the time of lucifer matches the problem that required constant solving was to keep or secure a fire. A big log or a dry stub in the forest was kept burning. If those failed we would resort to flint and steel. These failing, we would use a gun, putting in a light charge of powder and a little tow in the muzzle, then fire the gun which would set the tow burning, and so with proper materials at hand we would soon have a blazing fire.

One neighbor whittled out brooms for several families. Another gauged the sap yokes, and another made ox yokes. There was a good sized mortar made in a good sized stump in nearly every yard where with a pestle corn was made into meal.

The Fourth of July when I was six years old the whole family, in fact the entire neighborhood, went to Mason to celebrate. A big long sled, such as was common for both winter and summer use at that time, had been shod for the day. Four yoke of oxen were hitched to the sled, and perhaps a score or more women and children climbed on while the men walked and drove the teams. When we had crossed the stilt bridge, which was near the southeast corner of Maple Grove Cemetery, the road led directly up to Steel's tavern. A boy was put on each nigh ox and the procession entered the town with colors flying. Chauncey Osborne was marshal of the day, a great man in our estimation, and the admiration of all boys.

In an early day we sought anything that would furnish amusement for boys. My father had a section cut from a large hollow tree about five feet in length and with a hollow perhaps four feet across. This we often used to roll down hill in when it was not being used for a smoke house. We would get inside and standing bend the head forward so the shoulders would brace onto one side and the feet on the other. Someone would start the thing rolling, and if it started rightly it would go flying down the grade for twenty or thirty rods. It was a novel way to ride and produced a novel sensation while riding. One day a young fellow came

along and after seeing us perform wanted to try it. We wanted he should. So we placed him inside with proper caution to keep his bracing and then cut her loose. Three or four stones got in the way and the log jumping and bounding over them broke his bracing. His feet were dangling out of one end, arms out of the other, and he was making two hundred revolutions a minute when he reached the bottom of the hill. He was considerably dazed, slightly bruised, but not much hurt. If we could have gotten him to take another trip we would have given him a square deal. All persuasion, however, failed. The poor fellow never caught on to the kinks of the game. For us boys those days were happy and full of fun.

Those old school days! How many pleasant memories go back to them. We usually got three months schooling during the year. The rest of the time was put on the farm at hard work. Valuable lessons were interspersed.

I recall how one time an Indian came into the school room unannounced, uninvited. Squatting down on the hearth stone he proceeded to sharpen his big hunting knife on a whetstone. The teacher, a young lady, went on with her duties just as if nothing strange was taking place. That was pioneer nerve on her part.

One teacher, I remember, opened school each morning with devotional exercises, then carried a ferule or whip in his hand all day. At the slightest provocation he would use them freely. We took delight in keeping him busy in that branch of his business. Another teacher, I call to mind, didn't try to govern us, yet we were thoroughly governed. We obeyed every rule we had ever heard of and some good ones no one had ever heard of before. We had a practical demonstration every day in our copy books and I have had it in mind ever since. It ran: "The best government is that which governs least."

Among our teachers were Judge George M. Huntington, Judge M. V. Montgomery, Hon. S. L. Kilborne, and many others who later came into prominence in the affairs of the State. So many recollections come trooping along the lines of the past bringing memories of the long ago. There were apple-paring bees, singing and spelling schools. The latter in which we took much pride in trying to outdo the best foreign spellers fired our ambition.

The best year of my life, or the one to which I look back with the most **satisfaction**, was the one I spent in the Union army during the Civil War.

I was a member of Co. C, 8th Michigan Cavalry. My command was on the move most of the time, which suited me. We had an occasional brush with the enemy, which suited **me** also. I was on duty every day during my term of service. I never reported at sick call, had no occasion to, **I** did not see the inside of a hospital, field or elsewhere, while in the army, there being no occasion **I** for that either. I obeyed every order given 'me, as far as **I know**, except one. Conditions at a certain time became very much mixed, Union soldiers and rebels were 'everywhere. A **Confederate** colonel rode up and in a stentorian voice ordered several of us to surrender. This was a new command and one in which we had not drilled. We simply put the spurs to our horses. The prompt action of a nearby comrade prevented the officer from giving further orders to Union soldiers.

I enlisted on the 26th day of **August**, 1864, was discharged the 6th of June, **1865**. There were eight young men from this and nearby neighborhoods who enlisted at the same time. A short time and two had found a resting place in Southern cemeteries. Most of the duties I **had** to perform were pleasant ones, but being detailed to march with trailing arms and to fire a volley over the 'grave of a departed comrade, -was to me extremely **sad**.

PIONEER NOTES.

By W. M. **WEBB**, Aurelius, 1920.

The historic page with scenes and events of other days recorded gives one a chance to **compare** present conditions with those of long ago, and the longer the space lying between the more **interesting** the **comparison**, and to look back through three-fourths of a century there are but, a few things that do not mark so **great** a change that they **seem** 'wonderful when compared with 'present conditions.

Oft in my musing from **memory** I recall things of long ago and **place** by the side of the new, as splint broom with carpet sweeper;

tin bake oven with **fireless cooker**; **goose** quill pen with typewriter; **flint** lock with machine gun; ox cart and linchpin wagon with auto; flail with tractor thresher; sickle with twine binder; the dash churn, spinning wheel, pod augur, sap neck-yoke, the crotch-tree harrow, the, bake kettle, the swinging crane and the old oaken basket, these and a hundred other things that played so prominent a part in early days, and soon it will only be the historic page that will recall them.

LETTER POSTAGE.

Just to catch an idea of what a few changes can bring about. Take for instance United States postage on letters for the **seventy-five** years just past. In **1843** we had to pay as follows: when we received a letter, if it had come thirty miles or less, the postage was **6¼** cents (six pence); if it had come a distance of between thirty and eighty miles it was **10** cents; if from eighty to one hundred fifty miles then **12½** cents (one shilling), if from one hundred fifty to four hundred miles it would require **18 3-4** cents to secure your letter, and if fodr hundred miles and more, a quarter of a dollar paid postage and the letter was yours.

If the letter contained an extra piece of paper or weighed more **than one-half** ounce, then it would be four times the above rates for like distances. Postage laws at that time were such that the postage could be paid at the mailing or delivery station, but mostly at the delivering station,

The prevailing silver coins at that time were of **the** value of **6¼** and **12½** cents. Perhaps Congress took into consideration the value of the coins we would pay postage with and fixed the rates accordingly. How many letters can we now send through the mails for our **twenty-five** cents for four hundred miles? Suppose for. a little pastime we solve it as a mathematical problem, taking distance twenty times as far, 'ten times as much inclosed, **one-twelfth** **the** postage, **2,400** letters; nothing in it of course, only **as it** may give one an idea of the better conditions that have been brought about through seventy-five **years** of postal service. Again, if we should consider the ease with **which** we can secure twenty-five cents as compared with the effort required in **1843**, the number would be very much greater, twice as many sure,

TAXES,

In the fall of 1845 as tax time was approaching the question with many of the early settlers was how **they** were going to meet them. The Seymour dam in Lansing was being built at that time and laborers were wanted. Some Aurelius-ites went to Lansing and were employed. It required one-half day to go the fourteen miles, and likewise to return, so they got credit for five days during the week at 50 cents per day, \$2.50, which would pay the postage on ten letters coming from New York. Now the laboring man demands \$4.00 per day, \$24.00 per week, paying the postage on 1,200 letters. So thus by comparing we see the difference in the effort required to pay postage in 1848 and 1920.

AURELIUS.

The first permanent settler in the township of Aurelius when it was the "big town," comprising the west half of Ingham county, was Elijah Woodworth, who came here in 1835 or 1836 and settled in what was later Leslie Township. He came from the township of Aurelius, Cayuga county, N. Y., and pleased to bring something of his old home to the new gave the west half of the county the name of Aurelius. He sent his request to the Legislature at Detroit, giving name and bounds, and it was duly honored, and thus Aurelius got its name.

I learn of six places in the United States called Aurelius, mainly townships. Perhaps the name first was given to honor a noted Roman historian, soldier and emperor in the early centuries.

The first Aurelius became a township on the 11th day of March, 1837. The present one, a Congressional township, the 10th day of March, 1838.

The first township election was held on April 10, 1838, at the residence of Robert Hayward on section 32, where thirteen electors cast their ballots. The names of the first voters were as follows: John Barnes, Zacchius Barnes, R. R. Bullen, Joseph Bullen, W. Isham, Elijah Wilcox, George Wilcox, Erastus Ranney, Robert Hayward, Franklin Hayward, D. D. Olmstead, O. C. Robinson and G. B. Webb.

Zacchius Barnes being a fine penman it fell to him to write out the ballots, which was done in fine style. Supervisor, Clerk,

Treasurer, four justices of the peace, three highway commissioners, three school commissioners, three fence viewers, four constables and a poundmaster, twenty-one offices to be divided among thirteen voters. Each could have a political plum, and then some.

The ballot box on that occasion was a cigar box and it is said to be in the hands of the Hayward's yet. At this time the nominating was done at the same time and place as the election, and at this meeting the very best men in the township were put in nomination.

For eight years men in Aurelius were nominated for official positions without regard to party, then it was Democrat and Whig. The spring elections were held at various residences throughout the township for twenty-five years, since then they have been held at Aurelius Center.

Of those first voters there are still in the township three generations of the Barnes', four of the Webbs', three of the Bullens', three of the Ishams' and some descendants of others.

Sometimes, perhaps, someone will wonder what were the duties of a poundmaster, as a township officer? In an early day all stock owned by the first settlers ran as they pleased through the forests, feeding wherever they could find pasture; sometimes they would mingle with other herds and stray away. Anyone finding such a stray with his cattle was expected to take it to the poundmaster, where it was kept in pound until the owner was located.

This was not very difficult as most of the settlers had their individual ear-mark on their stock, which was on record in the clerk's office. In many clips, slits, notches and holes, nearly twenty marks could be placed upon one ear and a like number on the other. When stray was found the record was consulted, and the owner located. Then someone would grab a gun, go on a hunt, and while on the way carry tidings to the owner. Very seldom was there a fee asked, for everyone felt an interest in every other one, and would go far out of his way to do a neighborly act. There was very much of the Samaritan spirit prevailing among the settlers in the early days.

AURELIUS FOLKS WILL WANT TO READ THIS.

A **CIGAR** BOX WAS **USED** FOR **BALLOT** BOX **FIRST** ELECTION,

W. M. Webb Used to Steer an Ox **Team** at the Rate of Two Miles
an Hour-Now Hits "Forty,"

The Ingham County Historical and Pioneer Society is nearing its fiftieth anniversary, and W. M. Webb, who was born in Aurelius Township in May, 1837, and has never resided outside its boundaries, thinks it high time to ascertain if there is any native born resident of the county **older** than he, or if any came into the county and has been a continuous **resident** longer than he. Mr. Webb issues what he calls a challenge to anyone in the county to write a history of its early days, as he or his **forefathers** experienced it, and send to the **secretary** of the County Historical **Society**, Mrs. Franc **L.** Adams, Mason.

At the recent **township** historical meeting held in Aurelius, Mr Webb had prepared a paper on "Old Days, Old Times, Old Scenes and Old Folks of Aurelius," which was omitted for lack of time. This cannot **fail to** be of interest to anyone who desires to see the history of Ingham county gathered and preserved, but would be doubly interesting and valuable should Mr. Webb write the stories to which he refers and present them to the public. This is his paper, told in his own inimitable manner:

"**How** wonderful were those good old days of the long ago, but not more so than the glad new days of the present! Yet, to go back into the far past and bring forward, only in memory, those old days, old ways, old scenes and times, and compare them with our surroundings today, presents a picture both pleasing and instructive. We grasp the present much better by knowing as much of the past as we may, and this meeting today is for the purpose of calling to mind the doings of the past.

"**The** township of Aurelius is two months and three days older than I, so practically we have touched elbows all of my years and the years of the township's development, from log shanties, **under-**brushed roads, blazed trails, the yearly, I might say almost daily, picture is before **me** of the constant changing of the wild and the

new, to the now. I see, though only in memory, who were here, how they did and what they had to do with.

"Let us for a few minutes get away from the hurrying, rushing, throbbing, pulsing present, and go back to pod auger days, to tin oven days, bake kettle, swinging crane, oaken bucket, **ox cart**, linchpin wagons, flint lock guns, goosequill pens, the old **tin dinner** horn, the crotch tree harrow, the **swingle** flail, the **harvesting sickle** and a hundred other things that had their day; these were reckoned as conveniences **and** answered their time well, for we knew not of aught that was better.

"**We** were satisfied, happy and contented to ride in an ox cart at two miles an hour, while now to whiz along in an auto at forty miles an hour marks the change along one line in my day. ^{To} follow each of the things I **have mentioned** would mark a change almost as wonderful, but I will take only one, the harvesting of grain. Until I was seven years old the sickle cut all the grain in the neighborhood; then the turkey-wing' cradle, the grape-vine, the mully, the man rake-off reaper, the self raking reaper, the dropper, the marsh harvester, the wire binder, then the twine binder-ten jumps, or **to** make the term more modern, we'll call them improvements instead of 'jumps.'

"Mr. Reuben R. **Bullen** was the first man to settle in Aurelius. He came in November, 1836. At that time there was no resident west of Mason, and only two there. The Wilcox brothers and A. D. Olmstead came a few days later. The Hayward brothers came in March, 1837, and my father, **G. B.** Webb, in April, 1837. The Barnes' and Wm, **Isham** in June, 1837, also **Erastus** Ranney. These and many others, 88 in all, located their land in 1836, and settled on it later. In 1837 there were **48** more who located land in Aurelius. The first man to take up land in the township was Nathaniel Silsby, in October, 1835, and the next Col. John Montgomery in December of the same year.

"The first township meeting was held at the home of the Hayward brothers on section 31, on the **20th** day of April, 1838, when 16 votes were cast, and **21** officers elected. I can follow the career of all of them except F. Robinson and Sanford D. Morse.

"The ballots were all written by **Zaccheus Barnes**, with a cigar box for a ballot box, and this was still in existence a few years ago. The township meetings were held for some **25** years at different

homes in the township, or at David Potter's saw mill near the center of the township, but for many years have been held at Aurelius Center.

"Late in 1837 and during 1838, there was a village started on the banks of the Grand river in Aurelius, called Columbia, and in 1838-39 there were 13 families located in this village; a saw mill was built and was run for some time. It had the appearance at that time of becoming a city some day, only to be completely abandoned within three years. Eighty acres of land had been surveyed into village lots and a plat made, though it was never recorded. It doesn't look now as though it had seen better days.

"I had thought to tell of those first settlers who organized the township, and what became of them, especially those 19 first voters: Reuben R. Bullen, G. W. Webb, Elijah and Geo. Wilcox, the Hayward brothers, Ernst-us Ranney, John Barnes, Wm. Isham lived their day and died in the township, A. D. Olmstead went just across the line into Onondaga, Joseph Bullen to New York, Zaccheus Barnes to Lansing, the others I cannot follow.

"There were many scenes, incidents and accidents I might recall, and will mention a few: pike pole barn raisings with hair raising incidents and accidents; bull push log raising with many happenings; how the Indians got honey from the top of a high tree without cutting it down; the shooting matches just before Thanksgiving; the big days when we washed sheep; the political campaigns with big gatherings, pole raisings and torch light processions; chopping and logging bees; jockey baseball games; about the man who dodged under a beech tree in a thunder storm with the remark that lightning didn't dare strike a beech tree-lightning won; when two political nominees drank out of the same campaign jug, and what happened; when 12 Aurelius boys were drowning in Grand river at the same time, a story attached; about when a man got into the top of a tree, 50 feet from the ground, and couldn't get down-another story; about the big trees in Aurelius in the old days, some 11 feet in diameter one foot above the ground, Then there was tremendous excitement prevailed over a large section of southern Michigan when the Capitol was located in Ingham county. How much I can recall of the doings of that excited period, and without referring to any recorded history might be more lengthy than interesting."

Mr. Webb goes on to say that at the township meeting recently held at Aurelius there were three present who attended the first school taught in the north one-half of the township 77 years ago; also, of the 94 boys of Aurelius who responded to Lincoln's call, all the survivors were present, Luman A. Fowler, now of California; Dudley N. Bateman and Wm. M. Webb, all past 80 years of age.

To Wm. M. Webb, of Aurelius Township, belongs the honor of being the only octogenarian who was born in Ingham county and has lived continuously on the farm where he was born, at least all the challenges sent out by Mr. Webb regarding this record remain unanswered.

Mr. Webb has had the story of his life put in rhyme, though never published, and it tells the story of his birth in a nutshell:

"A rough board shack set in a primal wood;
 Three corners of it formed by trees that stood
 Cut to the proper height; A post was set
 At the fourth corner. Trees sometimes forget
 To grow four in a square, yet men four-square
 Were born of pioneers and nourished there.
 boards formed the sides, and slabs of bark were laid
 To roof the house thus quickly, strongly made.
 It had few windows; for outlook one could see
 But tan&cd wilderness of bush and tree.
 A wonder house this would seem to you or me,
 To pioneers it was a dream come true.
 'Twas shelter, and meant safety. Here, twenty-first of May,
 In eighteen thirty-eight, I came to stay.
 They little thought who heard my wailing fears
 That I should live to count my four-score years.
 All, all are gone the way of all the earth,
 Who knew me in that shack which saw my birth!"

Wm. M. Webb says, "I was the fourth child, all boys, born in the township, so that being born in Aurelius Township had passed the experimental stage and become an established industry, and we four boys made a strong team in clearing the forests. I was not

born with an axe in my hand, but with a disposition to use one while still very young," and the following from his rhyme story plants a vivid picture in all minds of the life of a real pioneer boy:

"Of one event when I was seven years old
Perhaps you'll pardon here the story told;
A wornout axe of father's fell to me,
So straightway I was moved to fell a tree.
The biggest one by measurement I found,
And started in to bring it to the ground.
For two whole weeks I hacked and cut away,
Unconscious that my father watched me day by day,
He knowing well how dangerous my work,
And that my ignorance would not let me shirk.
As proud as Lucifer I'd planned to say
To my young mates, 'I **felled** a tree today!
Alas, my tree was hollow; when cut through it crashed
Slumping before me, just completely smashed.
I kept the secret well. None ever knew from me
What fond hopes perished with that hollow **tree.**"

After the war Mr. Webb returned to his home in Aurelius, and since then farming has been his life work, and it has proved one of prosperity to him. He is a man of broad understanding, very public spirited, greatly interested in all agricultural matters, and in the pioneer history of his county. He taught school in his early manhood, and knows of the trials and hardships that fall to the lot of pioneer teachers. He was for years connected with the **Ingham** County Agricultural Society and one of its efficient officers.

For fifty years he has been identified with the Ingham County Farmers Club and the Ingham County Pioneer and Historical Society, now serving his thirtieth consecutive year as its treasurer, ever ready to give of his time and his money to carry on the work. He is intensely interested in carrying to a successful finish the "Pioneer History of Ingham County" which the society now has ready for publication,

He is an ardent church worker, and is well known for his philanthropic spirit and work. He is also a charter member of **Phil McKernan** Post, G. A. R.

Mr. Webb has been twice married, but is now a widower and lives alone on his farm homestead, not far from the home of his only son. Although somewhat handicapped by failing sight and hearing, his step is as quick as that of a boy, and his hand and brain still retain their cunning, as one can readily see upon perusal of the pioneer stories he loves to write. It can truly be said of him that, he is 84 years young.

CELEBRATES 102ND ANNIVERSARY AT BUNKER RE- UNION IN MOORES PARK.

The annual reunion of the Bunker family was held at Moores Park Tuesday, and the function brought together a large number of members of the Bunker Family Association, representing Lansing, Mason, Eaton Rapids, Aurelius, Dimondale, Delhi, and other towns. One of the special features of the program was the celebration of the one hundred and second birthday anniversary of Mrs. **Eliza** Collins, who enjoys the distinction of being the oldest person in central Michigan, and very much the oldest member of the association.

Because of her extreme age and her general activity for one of her years, she was the most conspicuous figure at the reunion, the same as when she celebrated her one hundredth anniversary when the Bunker family held its reunion at the State Holiness camp ground in Eaton Rapids in 1015. Many outside of the Bunker **family** called to pay their respects to this venerable pioneer.

Mrs. Collins was born at Scottville, N. Y., Aug. 20, 1815, and is the second daughter of the late John and Annie Bunker. From Scottville she went with her parents to Attica, N. Y., where at the age of 17 years she was united in marriage to James Collins. About three years after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Collins started for Michigan by, the overland route, when the country was so new that one member of the party was obliged to sit up nights to keep the wolves away from the camp of the travelers.

After reaching Michigan Mr. and Mrs. Collins settled near Ann Arbor, where they resided a short time, after which they moved to the Montgomery Plains district, a short distance east of Eaton **Rapids**, where they built them a little cabin without **doors, windows** or shingles, on the site where the Plains school house' now