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PIONEER DAY EXERCISES.

Ladies'  Library  Association.

SCHOOLCRAFT, MICH.

April 26, 1898.

L. L. A. PIONEER DAY.

At the meeting of the Ladies' Library Association on April 26, the following program was carried out, the papers having been prepared for the occasion by some of the survivors of the early settlers of Schoolcraft and Prairie Ronde:

PROGRAM:

Thanksgiving Hymn	L. L. A. Quartette.
Paper, "The Beginning of Schoolcraft"	E. Lakin Brown.
Paper, "Personal Recollections of the Early Public Schools of Schoolcraft"	Mrs. P. S. Thomas.
Song, "The Young Pioneer"	L. L. A. Quartette.
Paper, "The Transplanting of a Boy"	J. H. Bates.
Paper, "Reminiscences of the Life of a Young Pioneer"	H. P. Smith.
Paper, "Early Days in Prairie Ronde"	O. H. Fellows.
Song, "Michigan, My Michigan"	L. L. A. Quartette.

THANKSGIVING HYMN.

WRITTEN BY E. LAKIN BROWN,

And sung at a Thanksgiving dinner given by James Smith, at his home in Schoolcraft, November,

Again the joyful seasons
 Have run their destined course,
 And borne ten thousand reasons
 Of more than reason's force.
 Why, man, the chief receiver
 Of all their countless joys
 Should raise unto the giver
 A glad and thankful voice.

Yea, every land and nation
 That owns the gladdening sun
 Should render adoration
 To Him, the Holy One:
 To Him, to sing whose praises
 Angelic choirs unite;
 To Him whose goodness raises
 From darkness into light.

But chiefly with thanksgiving
 And songs of honor new,
 As most of all receiving,
 Should we the homage due
 Repay to Him whose bounty
 With overflowing hand,
 Has sent us smiling plenty
 Far from our fatherland.

And when with rich profusion
 We crown the festal board,
 And mirth and gay confusion
 With cheerful health accord,
 Be mindful of His mercies
 Who rules the rolling year,
 Who every doubt disperses
 And dries the falling tear.

THE BEGINNING of SCHOOLCRAFT

Written and read by E. Lakin Brown.

Ladies of the Association:

At the urgent request of your committee, but with much fear of failure of any good result, I have consented to write a brief article upon the early history of Schoolcraft, and the character and peculiarities of its first settlers; and by Schoolcraft, I mean not merely the village, but the township; or rather, Prairie Ronde and Gourdneck prairies. And first, of who constituted the Vermont colony, who first came to Schoolcraft, and how they happened to come here; and I fear this will necessarily be too brief and sketchy to be interesting, and too long for the occasion.

In the winter of 1829-30, I was teaching the district school in Cavendish, Vt., where my brother-in-law, James Smith, Jr., resided. I was to be 21 years old in the spring, and a life to be spent upon a hard, rough farm in the mountainous town of Plymouth, where my father lived, with a large family of boys and girls, did not seem to me to offer very attractive prospects.

My father's brother, Daniel Brown, had removed with his family to the state of New York when I was about four years old, and after various chances and changes, had finally settled at Ann Arbor, Mich., one of the very earliest settlers of that place. Occasional letters from him had set forth in glowing colors the beauty and advantages of that place and vicinity, and in casting about as to what I should do when "of age," I decided that I would go to Michigan as soon as the Erie canal should be open in the spring. I communicated my intention to Smith, and before my school was finished he too, declared his intention of going. When I went home in the spring, I met Hosea B. Huston, a young man who had grown up, a near neighbor of ours, in the family of one John Lakin, and who had not, so far as I know, a living relative in the world. He too, had just finished teaching a winter's school, and learning my intentions, decided at once to become a third member of the party to Michigan. We left on the 18th of April, 1830, our destination Ann Arbor, Michigan. Anything beyond that was an unknown land. Of the incidents of our journey, though tedious and somewhat eventful, this is not the time nor the occasion to relate them. It is only important to say that on arriving at Buffalo, where we were aware that Mr. Thaddeus Smith was

then living, we stopped and looked him up, and remained with him and family two days. Thaddeus Smith was not a relative of the Smith family of Cavendish, Vt., but a neighbor and intimate friend of theirs, and his wife was a cousin of mine, and of course, of my sister Mrs. James Smith. The year before, in 1829, Thaddeus had made a trip to Michigan, looking for a place to locate, and had come to Prairie Ronde, where he found a few settlers, Bazel Harrison and family, who had come to the prairie in the fall of 1828, and several who had come the next year. He described Prairie Ronde in glowing terms, said it was the garden of the world, and we must on no account fail to go there. We arrived at Ann Arbor about the 12th of May, and after a stay of a few days, Smith and Huston started for Prairie Ronde, by way of Tecumseh and White Pigeon, known as the Chicago Trail, the more direct route through Jackson and Calhoun counties not having yet been opened. They bought a pony and "rode and tied," that is, one rode on ahead as far as he thought proper, then dismounted and tied the horse to a tree to be taken in turn by the man on foot when he came up. Arriving at Prairie Ronde, they came to the east side of the "Big Island" as the settlers called it. There the only settler was a man by the name of LaRue, who had squatted and made a pre-emption claim on the 80 acre lot which was afterwards laid out as the village of Schoolcraft. He had built and lived in a little cabin which stood for some years just west of the dwelling built and occupied by Col. Daniels, and afterwards by Judge Dyckman. Smith at once decided that the land on the east side of the Island, being a central point on the prairie was the best point for locating a business establishment, and determined to start a store there. So he bargained with LaRue for his claim, and further, for the erection of a log cabin that would serve for a store, to be done by the time he could go to New York, buy goods and get them here. He paid him ten dollars, and was to pay him fifty more when he took possession. Smith and Huston then returned to Ann Arbor; Smith was to go to New York and buy a few goods, and Huston to remain a while at Ann Arbor and then come back to Prairie Ronde and take charge of the trade under the firm name of Smith & Huston. Smith started for New York, and I for Vermont. On arriving at Buffalo we again called on Thaddeus Smith, and it was agreed upon that when the goods arrived at Buffalo, he and his family should go on the vessel with them as far as Detroit, and thence across the country to Prairie Ronde, Thaddeus to be a partner in the concern.

I went to Vermont and remained until October 1831, when I again started for Michigan. Arriving at Ann Arbor, there was no public conveyance farther west; and my uncle said that he wished to see the western part of the territory, and he would go out with me. With an old Indian pony and a light wagon, and a box of provisions we started, only one of us riding at a time, by way of Jackson, Marshall and Battle Creek, in each of which places there was a log cabin or two, the road being a mere trail from Ann Arbor to Bronson, now Kalamazoo, and not a bridge in the whole distance. At Bronson where we arrived just at sunset on November 5, having left Ann Arbor on the last day of October, there were four log cabins, one of which was occupied by Titus Bronson, the proprietor of the future village, where the county seat had already been located. There was also a small two story framed store, which Smith, Huston & Co. had built in the summer of that year and supplied with goods from the store at Schoolcraft, Huston taking charge of the same. Leaving my uncle at Bronson's where Huston boarded, Huston and I took horses and rode to Prairie Ronde where we arrived about 9 o'clock at night, at the log cabin which served as both store and dwelling for the Big Island branch of the business. My uncle came the next day, and on the day after left for his home. In giving this detail of my own story till my return to Michigan, I have necessarily delayed giving the fortunes of the Big Island venture. The goods sent by James Smith, arrived in due time by canal at Buffalo, and were there transferred to a schooner for St. Joseph. Thaddeus Smith, his wife and son Henry P. took the same schooner as far as Detroit, and from there took the Southern or Chicago road to White Pigeon, and thence to Prairie Ronde. Huston reached Prairie Ronde about the same time from Ann Arbor. There they learned that LaRue, instead of building a cabin on his claim as he had agreed, had re-sold his claim to a man named Bond, and run away; so there was no place to store the goods when they should arrive nor a place for the family to live. It was finally arranged that they should have the occupancy of one-half the little cabin of Abner Calhoun, on the west side of the Prairie for the winter and put up one of their own on the east side of the Island in the spring. Early in the spring this was done. A pretty large log building was erected just west of where my son Addison now lives, and the family and goods were removed to it. In May, James Smith again came from Vermont, accompanied by his brother Addison, who had some cash capital which he invested in the concern, and became a member of the firm of Smith, Huston & Co. and was to remain in charge of the business, while Huston was to go to Bronson, and build a store there—a branch of the business at the Big Island; James Smith going immediately to New York to purchase a stock of goods to supply both stores. This was the condition of things when I arrived at the Big Island store November 5, of that year as I have already related. And from that very day the terms Prairie Ronde and Big Island were dropped as signifying the place of business here, and the name Schoolcraft was used.

Lucius Lyon, a well known government land surveyor, and afterwards one of the first two senators elected to the U. S. senate from the new state of Michigan, had purchased of Mr. Christopher Bair, one of the early settlers on the west side of the prairie, the E. $\frac{1}{2}$ of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 19, and had also become the owner of the E. $\frac{1}{2}$ of the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 18. in this township, and through his agent, Dr. David E. Brown, proceeded to lay out a village, embracing the whole of the last description, and a tier of lots on the north end of the first one. Stephen Vickery, surveyor, Dr. Brown, in honor of the Indian agent and explorer in the north-west, Henry R. Schoolcraft, a friend of Lyon's named it Schoolcraft. The survey of the village was finished on the day I arrived here. The inhabitants of the village on that day consisted of the inmates of the log store and dwelling above mentioned, namely, Thaddeus and Eliza Smith and their children Henry

P., aged 5 years, and Helen, aged six weeks; Mary A. Parker, sister of Mrs. Smith, who came in the summer preceding, J. A. Smith, and a young man from New Hampshire, Edwin M. Fogg, a cabinet maker, who built a shop, occupied for many years for the purpose for which it was built, and afterwards for a dwelling, and recently known as the Strew house. The frame of this shop was also raised the day I arrived. Such was the genesis, birth, and first year of the village of Schoolcraft. It is said that the postscript of a lady's letter is usually longer than the body of it. On the contrary, the preface of this article has been longer than all that will follow it. I could not make it shorter and tell you clearly how the village got born. And here I am strongly tempted to leave it. The program which I indicated at starting frightens me. In a brief continuation, however, I will say that in the following winter I purchased the interest of Thaddeus Smith in the concern and took his place as a member of the firm of Smith, Huston & Co.—that on the arrival for permanent settlement here of James Smith, a settlement and dissolution of the firm was made, Huston taking the property at Bronson, and a new firm formed at Schoolcraft, consisting of James and J. A. Smith and myself, under the firm name of J. and J. A. Smith & Co., which continued in business until January 1, 1836. When I arrived in Schoolcraft, the old firm had commenced the framing of the timbers for a large hotel, which was finished the next summer by the new firm, and Mr. Johnson Patrick was installed as landlord. His administration of affairs was not a success. After about two years occupancy he left the hotel, which was soon after taken by Mr. John Dix, from Cavendish, Vt., and it became a popular and profitable hostelry till he left it at the close of the year 1837. In the summer of 1833, J. and J. A. Smith & Co. built and occupied a very convenient store-house on the south-west corner of Center and Eliza streets which was occupied by James Smith after the dissolution of the firm. So far I have related, briefly as I could, the history of the transactions of these parties, because I could not give an account of the origin and early history of the village otherwise, as they were the origin and main factors in most that was done in the village for some years. I had intended to go farther, and give some of the leading events in the history of the village, mentioning some of the most noted persons who settled not only in the village, but on the prairies—Prairie Ronde and Gourdneck—with some of their characteristics, enlivened with anecdote and story. But this article is already too long for the occasion, and I am appalled at the difficulties of what I had undertaken. At the great age of 89 years, with many infirmities, I find it difficult and painful to remember and compose and write for any considerable time. With the exception of my three sisters, Mrs. Pamela S. Thomas, who came in 1833, Mrs. Lephia O. Brown who came in 1834, and Mrs. Sally E. Dix, who came in 1835, I know of but a single person, man or woman who came to the village or either prairie as early as the latter date, and who had reached maturity at that time, who is now living. The exception is Abner Burson. And the exceptions are very few of those who came before 1840. I know of but one or two, Justin Cooper, of this village being one.

Ladies, excuse me for what I have so imperfectly done as well as for what I have not done at all.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EARLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF SCHOOLCRAFT.

BY PAMELA S. THOMAS.

Read by Miss Ella Thomas.

I have been asked to tell something of the pioneer schools in Schoolcraft; not that I can relate anything of much interest, or of great importance; but because I taught the first public school in this village, in the year 1834, in a small building erected for that purpose on "The public square," now "The park." I had some 25 or 30 pupils. Those recently from New England were well advanced in the studies then taught in district schools, while others, whose parents had lived on the frontier, had never seen the inside of a school room and were unable to read at 10 and 12 years of age; yet their progress was astonishingly rapid.

Sickness in the autumn was so general that it necessitated the closing of the school. As I returned to my home in Vermont in November and was not again in Schoolcraft until the fall of 1839, I can say little of the schools during those five years. I was told of the small school house on "The Common," having been moved off and used for other purposes, that schools had been taught in different rooms, sometimes as private schools; for the Yankee settlers appreciated the advantage of education for their children. Many new settlers had moved here, and some of the frontiersmen had gone farther west.

There were more than 100 scholars in this district at that time, 1839, and a two-story school house had been built on the corner of Grand and Eliza streets, containing two rooms, one on each floor. This was the district schoolhouse, that we all remember and is now used as a barn by Mr. Buss.

On my arrival I was hired to teach in the lower room, and a Mr. Towers in the upper. It is scarcely necessary to say, the present admirable plan of grading schools was then unknown, and these rooms were to be filled, pupils going to the teacher preferred. However, it was expected the gentleman would teach the older scholars in the upper room, while I took the little folks; yet several young ladies chose to go in the lower room. As it was the custom for pupils to study

independently, going through the arithmetic, etc., by themselves, it made little difference in which room their studies were pursued, provided their teacher was competent to render assistance when asked for. My room soon became too full for the pupils to be accommodated, and the director obliged several to go into the upper room.

But few of the scholars of 1834 were among the 60 or 70 in attendance. A few were in Mr. Towers' room. Others, in whom I had felt an interest, had moved to newer regions, probably growing up with little schooling, although endowed with bright intellects. H. P. Smith is the only one, of those earlier pupils, now living in this village. And, indeed, I know of but one or two left on this side of "The Better Land." I can name several of the scholars of 1839, James H. Bates and his three brothers—all passed from earth but himself; six children of James Smith, only two of whom are living, Hannah Kirby, her brother and sisters; H. P. Smith and sister, Helen, etc.

The late Mr. Willis Judson has frequently joked about his fear of chastisement, when, Mr. Towers being sick, I assumed authority in his room for a few days, while another young lady filled my place. Only a few months since, Mr. Archibald Finlay told his recollections of the time I was his teacher. And the year of "The Columbian Exposition" Mr. Oscar Forsythe, who has been a hardware merchant in Bay City for many years, stopped in this place, when returning from the world's fair. He called on me saying: "You may not know me, but I went to school to you 54 years ago." He had not been here for more than 40 years. Therefore it was not to be expected I should recognize the young lad in the prosperous elderly gentleman.

Two young ladies, nieces of Mrs. L. H. Stone, followed Mr. Towers and myself in this school. They were good teachers. Later a few years, our schools were taught, sometimes by competent teachers, and sometimes by those less so. About 1843, Mr. Eaton, a Baptist minister, opened a private school, in one of the school rooms, by permission of the school board. He was a college graduate, and his school was of great benefit to our village. When he left, Mr. Dwinell, a graduate of Yale, took his place, filling it with satisfaction to his pupils.

In 1846, through the generosity of Rev. William Taylor, "Cedar Park Seminary" was opened. For some years that was one of the most popular schools in western Michigan. The rapid growth of Kalamazoo enabled her citizens to establish schools with superior advantages, and Cedar Park Seminary was sold to this district.

The worth of the present high school and of the lower departments are too well known to render any remarks concerning them necessary.

THE YOUNG PIONEER.

BY E. LAKIN BROWN.

Written to be sung at the Pioneer meeting at Kalamazoo, August 31, 1876.

Set to music by Jonas Allen.

Oh, bright were the hopes of the young pioneer,
And sweet was the joy that came o'er him.
For his heart it was brave, and strong was his arm,
And a broad, fertile land lay before him.

And there by his side was his heart's chosen bride,
Who want and privation knew never;
From kindred and home he had borne her away.
To be guarded and cherished for ever.

A drear home for a bride is the wilderness wide,
Her heart to old memories turning,
And lonely and sad and o'er burdened with care,
For kindred and sympathy yearning.

Then stern was the task, and long was the toil,
Vain longing for all that was needed,
Yet bravely their toils and privations were borne,
As the wilderness slowly receded.

But the years rolled away and prosperity came,
Wealth and ease on frugality founded:
Now the husband and wife tread the down hill of life
By brave sons and fair daughters surrounded

And the young pioneer has grown stooping and gray,
And he marvels his limbs are no stronger:
And the cheek of the bride is now sallow and thin.

And her eye beams with brightness no longer.

All honor and praise to the old pioneers:
You never may know all their story:
What they found but a desert a garden became,
And their toil, and success is their glory.

THE TRANSPLANTING OF A BOY.

BY J. H. BATES.

Read by Addison M. Brown.

When I was a few weeks turned of eleven years old, my father, then forty-four years of age, became infected with the western fever then well on its way of depopulating New England, and, selling his rough Vermont farm at a better price than it would fetch now in the same extent and condition, entered upon what at the time was thought not unfairly to be the serious journey to the wilds of Michigan. Accordingly early in September, 1837, we set forth, making altogether an emigration of nineteen persons, one being Miss Julia Hatch, who became Mrs. Hamilton Scott a little later on. Following advice, we took with us our entire household effects, including a large cook-stove of the Woolson patent, one of the very earliest to succeed the huge fire-places over which our mothers and grandmothers back to the Mayflower in unbroken line roasted, baked and stewed themselves along with the meals they prepared. There must have been a Puritan toughness of texture in this stove, for it served right on unremittingly for not less than thirty years, as valiant, irascible and friendly a creature as ever woman had at need. All effects were packed in boxes, and the ingenuity of the Twenty-mile Stream valley was sorely taxed to fit boxes to the furniture, or, more properly, the furniture to the boxes, since there must be a limit to the dimensions of the latter. This difficulty was met by sawing off any contumacious limb or projection from articles of unreasonable size, such as tables and bedsteads,—a rough surgery from which no subsequent care ever quite restored the afflicted members, leaving them rickety and rheumatic ever after.

Conveyance through New England was then by wheel, and so we moved over the Green Mountains to Troy, my uncle Zaccheus Bates driving the wagon wherein jolted my three brothers and myself, a cargo of youngsters irrepressible and volatile to such a degree that when he handed us back to the parental care after two trying days, my uncle must have thanked God and breathed freer.

The passage from Troy to Buffalo was by the Erie Canal, then the great thoroughfare from tide-water to the lakes. It swarmed with two kinds of boats, distinguished as line and packet, the latter drawn by three horses moving at a trot and conveying passengers exclusively, with light luggage. These were for the more exalted and wealthy travelers, who desired speedier transit and better accommodations, while boats of the line, moved by two horses at a walking pace, were suitable for emigrants like ourselves, and crowded to an over fullness with a miscellany of men, women, children and household freight. My recollections of this portion of the journey are of exceeding roughness and discomfort. The youngsters were not greatly regarded in the general disarray and scramble. I remember the coarse, scanty fare of the second table, to which the children were relegated, wherein vile smelling boiled cabbage figured as a steady quantity, and oppressive nights in a stifling berth at the very end of the crowded cabin, the horror of it augmented to my sensitive olfactories by the foul broom which the cabin-maid persistently kept hanging on the partition at the head of my bunk. Among the seniors there was more disregard of annoyances, an heroic determination to make the best of everything, a spirit of good fellowship and kindly mutual helpfulness, and a hearty open air freedom of speech and action. Songs were sung and stories told which infringed the delicacy of the politest circles but were not really offensive to healthy minds, inconveniences were ignored and pleasant trifles magnified, a small joke created large merriment, and the hearty and robust expansiveness of frontier life, in which resides a peculiar charm unceasingly felt by all who have ever fairly come under it, was beginning at the very entrance of a new world of nature and of man. Absurdly prominent stands out my wonder at being called Bub for the first time, followed by conjecture what the word could mean and where it came from. But all light, momentary afflictions passed like distempered dreams when once we were afloat on the blue waters of Lake Erie, in the steamboat Daniel Webster, bound for Toledo. I had not thought there could be anything so grand in all the world as this little, fussy, splashing side-wheeler, to me a veritable floating palace. An event of moment occurred on the passage. On the wide divan under the cabin windows of the stern I noticed a delicate man of refined features, much in contrast with the body of the voyagers. He had several books lying beside him, and, as I approached in shy curiosity, asked me in kindly wise, would I like a book, and tossed apart on the divan a copy of Irving's Sketch Book. I lay there stretched at length, absorbed and lost, until the waning light dulled the bright page of this delightful author. Who can explain why the generation succeeding his own so neglects him?

The red-painted warehouse at the steamboat wharf in Toledo was also a terminal station of a strip of steam railway to Adrian, now a part of the Michigan Southern system. We were

transferred directly to the cars, and, while this magical sort of locomotion must have impressed my boyish fancy, I am unable to recall a single incident until we were undergoing the discomfort of crowded and wretched quarters in Adrian, waiting to engage wagons to transport our party and its effects the remaining distance.

I recall being taken into a room to see a stalwart man undergoing an ague fit. He was fully dressed and seated in an arm-chair, convulsively shivering and writhing. The door of the room stood open, and people came and stared and commented, and went away to make room for fresh arrivals. The scene was so grotesque, and the spectators seemed so amused, that I was not certain the victim was not acting a part for the general entertainment, until he informed us with clattering teeth that we saw what we were all coming to, when a kind of mysterious dread possessed me of what lay in wait in the *terra incognita* before us.

At length, after much searching and haggling, an insufficient caravan was provided, the household goods bestowed, and, the women folk sitting on them as did Rachel in the Old Testament story, we set forth through the oak openings, over the unvarying level, to the music of two or three rifles in the hands of the adventurers attached to our party, who found good and unaccustomed sport in the small game frequent among the glades of the vast continuous forest. We moved slowly, and on the second day were overtaken by Mr. Edwin H. Lathrop, riding alone in a buggy drawn by a pair of free-going horses, on his return from Adrian, where he had left his wife so far on her way to visit eastern friends. Our numerous colony naturally drew his attention, and after much exchange of speech he urged me to ride with him and go on before our party, promising to have me at his house the next morning, and to see that I reached Schoolcraft in good condition. This request was referred to my mother, who felt much misgiving and was disposed to see in the honorable gentleman a sort of brigand on wheels, plotting to carry off the firstling of her flock to his fastness, and there either torture or hold him for ransom; but the object of her distrust having established his claim to be a civil sort of person, and nowise associated with any band of robbers, drove away with me, somewhat to the terror of my brothers and after much excellent advice from my mother, quite as if leaving her for an indefinite period on a risky adventure. Indeed, after getting into the great solitude of the woods, quite out of sight and hearing of the cheerful stir of the caravan, I began to feel not quite at ease as I glanced from time to time at the countenance which all who knew Mr. Lathrop will recall as one in its steady seriousness unprovocative of glee in the heart of childhood; but all discomfort of feeling wore away under the kindness of my host, and there has always remained with me a sense of enjoyment in that long drive over a road unobstructed by rocks and bordered by virgin forests. We lay that night in a room of the unfinished house of Mr. John Smith of Three Rivers, then an exceedingly crude, confused and unfinished hamlet wrapped in malarial airs, where Mr. Smith was engaged in building a flour-mill or saw-mill, I am uncertain which. We were up with the dawn and drove swiftly to the residence of Mr. Lathrop, where we breakfasted, and at my urgent request I was allowed to make my way to Schoolcraft on foot. And so I set out from the southern border of the prairie, with elastic step and quick beating heart, eager for the goal of this long pilgrimage.

The east was flushed with the glory of a perfect Sunday morning, the air crisp and clear, the green of the native grass still lingered in an autumn of unusual mildness, and many flowers still bloomed. A flag flying from the frame-work of the belfry of the recently raised schoolhouse soon became a guide to my course, but I could not then understand why my rapid pace did not consume the distance at a greater rate, so near appeared remote objects in that transparent atmosphere over the level plain. I suppose I am not correct in saying that I did not pass an enclosed spot, nor step on ground ever cultivated by man, but such is my recollection.

The longest way comes to its ending to the most impatient, and well before the sun attained its meridian I stood upon the black road before the village tavern. I had heard that the younger James Smith had the extraordinary habit of throwing up his head and staring upward at quite regular intervals, and there, like a weatherwise little sea-man, actually stood a grave lad winking familiarly at the sun. Making myself known to him I was soon among the friendly faces of his family, where I waited for the slow caravan which arrived the following day. The journey from Vermont occupied fifteen days.

Thus was I transplanted to the soil where I grew to my appointed stature;—a kindly soil and habitat wherein not a few fibers of my affections are left infixd.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LIFE OF A YOUNG PIONEER

BY H. P. SMITH.

Read by Miss Isa Smith.

My earliest recollections of Prairie Ronde date back to the spring of 1830, when, one evening, I was lifted out of a covered wagon and set down upon my short legs, in front of Esquire Duncan's log house. It stood upon a rise of ground, among stately trees; a little stream, with white sand and clear water, running close by, making it a cheerful place, even with no fences or other evidences of civilization. Years afterward, a saw-mill was built a few feet from the site of this log

house, known as Duncan's saw mill. There is no vestige now of log cabin or mill, and very little evidence that a tree ever stood there.

I was tired, hungry and sleepy, and perhaps cross, for this was the end of a long, toilsome journey through swamps and dense forests. While I stood there, scratching my mosquito bites, with no very pleasant countenance, father and mother crawled out and stretched their weary limbs. Mr. Duncan's people welcomed us, as they did all emigrants and travelers, no matter when or how they came. Very soon after, we were gathered into the one square room of the house and I was allowed to absorb a bowl of bread and milk. Father and mother and the teamster also had their supper of corn bread and butter, washed down with sage tea, eating with an appetite, which everybody carried about in those days of scanty fare and hardship. As soon as the sun disappeared, mother prepared to put me to bed, at which I kicked up a small row, because I did not wish to be thus disposed of without my supper, and I dimly remember that, at last, she managed to convince me that bread and milk was supper in that house, after which, very little force was necessary to put my tired frame to rest for the night. Late next morning, when the woods were alive with the songs of birds, mother succeeded in getting my eyes open again, and took me directly from the bed out into the sunshine, sat me down in the middle of the brook, where the sparkling water was hardly knee deep, and then I had a good time, kicking and splashing and allowing the minnows to nibble my toes. Then I was considered washed and ready for dressing and breakfast. I am told we were at Esquire Duncan's about a week, of which I remember nothing further, but afterwards can recall another log house, about two miles north of Mr. Duncan's, in the edge of the prairie, with its vast, open green expanse on the east, and an impenetrable forest on the west. Abner Calhoun, who was the owner of the house, had come, from Ohio, in advance of us a few weeks, and had just completed it, and nearly built a log stable, all but the door and the "chinking." Mr. Calhoun being a very hospitable settler, allowed us, (who were of the tender-foot class,) to occupy his house, while he, with a family of wife and three children, moved into the unfinished barn. Of the Calhoun's, there was one boy about my own age, one younger and one older. Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun were just plowing up a bit of the prairie near the house, for immediate cultivation. The long, wooden mold board plow, with the end of its beam resting upon the axle of a lumber wagon, or rather the front wheels, drawn by two pairs of small oxen and one pair of young heifers, I well remember. In the morning, while Mrs. Calhoun busied herself in washing up the scanty assortment of breakfast dishes, and putting the house in order for the day, Mr. Calhoun would gather his miscellaneous team and hitch them to the plow. By that time his wife was ready for work, and placing herself between the plow handles, the business of the day commenced. I presume our modern plow-men would criticise their work, but it was sufficient to raise mammoth corn and splendid potatoes with which to feed everybody another season. Not long after we were settled, an event occurred, which suspended the plowing for two and a half days. Preparatory to that event, I was turned loose to run with the other children, hedged in by many earnest warnings to keep from the woods and snakes. Mr. Calhoun went to work chinking his stable, and the cattle revelled in the fresh prairie grass and rested. Mother was very busy, both at home and across the way, all the first day. The next day she invited me to go to the other house and see a new baby, probably the first one I was ever introduced to. This was Calhoun No. 4. On the third day Mr. C. gathered up his team again and made an addition of an oblong box, fastened between the wheels of the plow, and at noon the newcomer was neatly packed away in said box, amid a pile of blankets, and business was once more resumed, very carefully and slowly, however. I can remember Mrs. Calhoun's resting, the picture of contentment, while seated upon a stump, nursing No. 4. Soon other experiences were impressed upon my mind, such as the serenades of prairie wolves, who would gather about our doors and make night hideous with their dismal howls and barks. We kept the chickens in a box in the house, otherwise they would have been snatched up in short order by these hungry demons. These concerts were arranged upon a regular program, like our modern entertainments.

As soon as it was dark and the lights extinguished, some old veteran would begin with an opening solo in a minor key, with very little variation, then another would join in, and another and soon the entire pack would make the air tremble with the chorus of from twenty-five to fifty voices. These entertainments scared me, and, at first, kept the old folks awake, but they soon became used to them and could sleep on undisturbed. Occasionally we had other concerts, performed by big grey wolves, which were of a more serious nature. When the "sable curtain of night" closed on one of these celebrations, they savored more of business and sleep was not enjoyable. Men thought of their calves and pigs shut up in log stables, perhaps exposed to the depredations of those bloodthirsty, but cowardly brutes. Generally a rifle ball, shot in their midst, would disperse the pack. One night, before Mr. Calhoun had made his door, and still had a quilt hung up as a substitute, he was aroused from sleep by a scuffle between a grey wolf and his dog, who remonstrated against this invasion of the house. He sat up in bed and shivered (with cold of course,) while the wolf flogged his dog, went into the house, under the bed and ate up all his precious stock of soap grease. He never thought of the loaded rifle hanging within reach. In this case the wolf was probably the greater coward of the two, but poor Abner did not know it.

The Duncans and Calhouns were not our only neighbors. Within a radius of a few miles were other settlers; the Harrisons, Clarks, Barbers, Nesbitts, Hoyts, Knights, Shavers, Wygants, Bairs, Armstrongs and others, all hunters, each and everyone possessing peculiarities of character belonging to himself. Distributed all over the south half of Kalamazoo county, then called Brady, were 100 or more people from almost every state in the union. Hunting and trapping were the chief occupations of the times, with a liberal division of work, farming and house building, thus combining business and fun. Saturdays were always devoted to fun, such as horse-racing, wrestling and jumping, target shooting, etc. Sunday was the visiting day. Game was as common

in the woods and on the prairie as cattle, horses and sheep are now. Whisky was the only luxury and cheaper even and better than it is said to be now. Everyone drank it to keep out cold, heat, pain of every kind; as an antidote against ague and a bond of sociability. And yet in those early days there was apparently less drunkenness than now.

Father received a small stock of goods about this time, belonging to Smith, Huston & Co. How he got them, I do not know, but probably in about the same way the Klondike miners receive their supplies. Some one also lent him a few barrels of whisky to sell on commission. Our one room was then divided in the center by a board partition, leaving the stove-pipe and back part of an ancient cook stove in our living room. Subsequently the stove, in our next and more pretentious house, gave place to a capacious fire place and brick oven. With the advent of this whisky, we became at once the center of attraction for 15 or 20 miles around. The Indians were our most numerous customers and neighbors.

They went once a year to Detroit or some point in that region to receive pay for lands relinquished to the state. When they came back, money was plenty to pay for powder and lead and calicos, and when that was exhausted they obtained their goods by exchanging for them venison and skins. Mother soon became a favorite. They called her "the good white squaw," and took great pains to teach her their language, in which she soon became quite proficient. She could control them as well as their old chief, Sagamaw. They had not taken to whisky then as they did soon afterwards, and, as a rule, were honest and reliable. The chief was a personal friend of the Smith family and used to make its weekly visits with his family, staying from one to two days. He was very strict with his tribe as to any violation of our rights or social privileges. Once mother lost a silver thimble, and, suspecting it was stolen, stated her case to old Sagamaw. He promised to attend to it, and if her suspicions were correct he would know. A few days after a knock was heard at our door, and mother admitted a pretty, meek looking young squaw, with a long tough buck whip in one hand and the missing thimble in the other. The thimble had a hole in it where she had strung it to wear around her neck. She gave it to mother, then the whip, and said. "Sagamaw say, you whip squaw," but being so pretty and amiable, mother relented, thinking she was almost justified in helping herself to ornaments for her comely person, and so the girl went her way rejoicing. One day the chief, very delicately suggested to father that it would be proper for such good friends as they were to exchange wives, and even offered father two of his prettiest squaws for a bona-fide bill of sale of my mother, but somehow the trade was never consummated. I presume, in that event, I would have been thrown in to make a complete exchange of goods, and thus I failed to become an Indian chief, and Sagamaw never owned a white squaw. They were constantly bringing me presents of live birds, fawns, young foxes and wolves, and once when I was on a sick bed, with a high fever, an Indian brought me the half of a dressed deer, to tempt my appetite. They were very kind in sickness, but of little use about a sick bed. There were no wise Indian doctors in those days, such as now come to cure us of every imaginable disease. This first year we had to go 60 miles to a flour mill, consequently had to subsist upon corn, in lieu of wheat bread, and this sometimes made from pounded corn at that. One day Mrs. Calhoun sent mother a pan of flour as a rare treat, but when she learned that it was all she had of the precious stuff, she objected to taking it. Mrs. C. insisted that she must not refuse it, for mother was not used to going without, and she was. We had very little pork or beef, but so much venison and wild game that they soon became a drug. Vegetables and wild fruit being so plenty, we lived as well as we do now taking our healthy, keen appetites into consideration. Small game, such as turkeys, partridges, quail, pigeons, rabbits, squirrels, also fresh fish, were the favorite meat diet of our family.

In the winter and spring of 1831, father built a log house on the south-east side of the Big Island, as it was called, a circular forest, of about a mile in diameter, with prairie all around it. This was known far and wide, and had been, for hundreds of years, the camping ground of Indians, traveling east and west. It was almost impassable from the thickets and windfalls of great trees, and filled with game of all kinds. So, in the spring, we bade adieu to our good host, Calhoun, and moved into a house of our own. This place soon became known as Schoolcraft, and a village plat was surveyed, with streets and a park. It was many years, though, before we knew just where these luxuries were located, without looking on the map. One street, Eliza street, was named after my mother. We soon had neighbors, however, and Schoolcraft and Big Prairie Ronde were known as the garden and grain supply of the state of Michigan.

I must have been about six years old when I attended my first school, which was taught by my aunt, Miss Mary A. Parker, in a log house on the bank of E. L. Brown's marsh; then later in a little frame building near where Thos. Westveer now lives. I became acquainted, as a pupil, with Miss Pamela Brown, now the widow of Dr. N. M. Thomas, and my respect and reverence for her was dated from the time of her flogging a certain bad boy, Archibald Finlay, by name. It was over his shoulders, with nothing but a shirt between and administered with such good effect that, in spite of his determined obstinacy and combativeness, he promised reformation. I was also a bad boy, but was so impressed by this example of thoroughness that my good resolutions were effectually strengthened.

One more Indian story and I am done. In the summer of 1829, father traveled over the southern prairies of the state on foot and alone, to look for a new home. At Ann Arbor, on his way west, he heard of a notorious Indian robber, Shavehead, known as a dangerous customer to lone travelers. Not wishing, just then, to part with his scalp, he made a circuit of 30 miles or more to avoid meeting him. He was reported to have killed and scalped 90 or more white persons, and as being in his war paint, and wearing these scalps, at all times. Father was tired ere noon, and, secure in

the thought that all danger was passed, seated himself on a fallen log and proceeded to eat his dinner of bread and cheese, and make himself comfortable for a noon-tide rest. He was delighted with the fresh woods and prairies, and gave himself up to air-castles, when he could make his home in this western paradise and have his family about him. Suddenly, in the midst of these reveries, a light hand was laid upon his shoulder, and looking up he was confronted by a tall, brawny, fierce looking Indian, in scalp-lock and paint, sharp, keen eyes, divided by a prominent, hawk's beak nose, looked down upon him in stern silence. Father, in describing it afterwards, never said he was scared, but admitted it was a "surprise party" to him, and that he instinctively thrust his hand into his pocket and grasped an old pistol, which would hardly kill at three paces under any circumstances. However it also flashed through his mind that if this bronzed old warrior had intended murder he could have committed it as easily with his wicked looking tomahawk as thus to have laid his hand upon his shoulder, so he smiled on Shavehead and offered his hand, and they shook, but with unbending sternness on the part of Shavehead. Then they sat down together on a log and proceeded to get acquainted as best they could, mostly by signs. Father took out his pipe and tobacco, divided the plug with Mr. Red-man, which pleased him very much, and thus they talked in pantomime with each other for an hour or more, when the interview ended by mutual consent. They again shook hands, this time more cordially, but yet no smile softened the face of old Shavehead. And they parted, the Indian silently melting into the forest, and father sturdily trudging along his trail towards the west, now and then glancing backward at the vacancy made by his strange visitor.

In 1831, a few weeks after we were settled at Big Island, father came into the house, from his work, one day, and there, seated complacently by the stove, watching mother about her cooking, was the veritable Shavehead, still with his head shaved, save the scalp-lock. This time they shook hands as friends indeed, but the stolid face wore no smile as before. From that time he was a frequent visitor and we all learned to like him and respect him. He belonged to no tribe about us; did not associate with other Indians. If he happened to be in the house, with them, when mother was distributing food, as was often the case, they would divide it among themselves, leaving out Shavehead, who received his portion direct from mother, and ate it in stern silence, amid the sociable chattering of the others. Shavehead was very peculiar. He never carried a gun, but was always armed with a powerful bow and arrows and a murderous looking tomahawk and knife, but the 90 scalps at his belt we never saw. He never rode a pony, like the others, and never got drunk, as the others surely did, whenever they could get the fire water of the whites.

So far as we could know, he was without an Indian fault or foible. Long afterwards, when the Potawatomes were gathered up by the government and taken away to a new reservation, in the west, there was one Indian they could never find. They searched the woods diligently for months, but Shavehead mysteriously melted out of all knowledge, leaving only kindly memories of a brave old chief and a steadfast, though silent friend.

EARLY DAYS IN PRAIRIE RONDE.

BY O. H. FELLOWS.

Read by Miss Anna Fellows.

This old story that has been so often told and with so many variations had its beginning for me nearly seventy years ago.

It was October 24, 1829 that I, a lad nine years old, reached what is now Prairie Ronde township. We—my mother, brothers and sisters—were about twenty days on the road not-with-standing we drove horses, three on one wagon and two on another. My father, Col. Abiel Fellows, and two oldest brothers had preceded us and had a home built ready to receive us. The transition though slow from a roomy home of plenty to a temporary house of one room, where six wayfarers had found shelter previous to our arrival, naturally filled the mind of a small boy with consternation, his heart with homesickness. Where was the school-room, the clock-room with its glowing coal grate? Where was the square-room, the bed-rooms, the cheerful kitchen? And where, Oh where, was the buttery? Thoughts of the contents of the one left behind increased in size the big lump in my throat. And the mountains, the hills, the cool spring bubbling from the rocks, where were they? But an extenuating fact, did we not have in this new land the Indian? He lurked in every dark corner, was behind every tree and bush, I fancied. The strangers our humble home already sheltered were William Duncan, two sons and one daughter—William, Delamore, and Eliza Ann—, Lydia Wood and Samuel Hackett.

My father met us at Monroe, and I recall that in Saline township he purchased thirty bushels of wheat the entire output of a small stack, and left it to be ground into flour. Later we had numerous calls for a little wheat flour to make a wedding cake, which was always freely given.

At Strongs Ridge, Ohio, where we staid one night we were told we would see no more peaches after we left there—a strange condition of things I thought—so we bought a goodly supply and saved the stones and on reaching Prairie Ronde planted them in Mr. Guilford's garden, the first garden cultivated by a white man on the prairie. Mr. Guilford had apple trees growing from the seed in this garden. The peach trees grew and thrived and were transplanted to many claims in

the county.

The south-west part of Kalamazoo county was first settled and John Bair, brother to William Bair, of Vicksburg, drove the first stake, or rather blazed the first tree near Harrison's lake June, 1828.

It was in Prairie Ronde that the first school district in the county was organized, and the first school taught in the winter of '30 and '31 by Thomas W. Merrill, founder of what is now Kalamazoo college. Mr. Merrill, my first teacher in Michigan, was followed by Stephen Vickery, and Mr. Vickery by Richard Huyck. The school house was built of split logs and was 20 by 26 feet. It stood near the home of Judson Edmunds, recently sold to Joseph Davis.

The first post-office in the county was in Prairie Ronde, and my father was post-master, receiving his commission from General Jackson. The first frame building in the county, a small barn, was built by Delamore Duncan in 1830. The first grist-mill was built in 1830 by John Vickers on Rocky Creek. Corn only was ground in this primitive mill of small dimensions. In the fall of the same year Mr. Vickers sold the mill to Col. Fellows, who built during the winter the first saw-mill in the county, near where William Maile now lives. In this mill was sawed the lumber to build the first store at Bronson, now Kalamazoo. One other claim I must enter. Prairie Ronde furnished for Cooper the character of "Bee-Hunter" in his novel, "Oak Openings." One Towner Savage disputes the honor with Mr. Harrison. Mr. Beadle, of dime novel fame, told me he helped Cooper lay the plot of the story, and that Mr. Towner Savage was the original "Ben Boden."

One event that occurred during the Black Hawk war excitement took great prominence in my boyish mind, because to me it demonstrated the fearlessness and bravery of my father. It was in the spring of 1832, and Col. Lyman Daniels, whose regiment had been ordered to the front, had important papers and money he wished taken to Detroit. It was thought to be a perilous journey at that time. I distinctly remember Mr. Daniels asking Col. Fellows if he would carry them, saying he had been unable to find a man who dared undertake it. My father, then a man nearly 70 years of age, said he would take them, and the papers and money were transferred to his saddle bags and the trip made in six days. In 1830 he had visited Detroit and purchased apple trees, and some of them are still standing, and promise to bloom in a few weeks in all their pristine glory. While in Detroit he enjoyed the hospitality of Gen. Cases. The hero of the war of 1812 and the whilom boy soldier of the revolution were both members of the ancient order of Masons.

Of the real privations and sufferings of pioneer life that many experienced, I know nothing. With horses the journey to Detroit for supplies was not such an impossible undertaking as it would seem to-day. But inconveniences were abundant. The post-office was a basket and the basket was kept under the bed. There was a bushel and a half of the first mail Col. Fellows, brought from White Pigeon, and for each letter the post-master paid 25 cents. But I suppose the worth of the news from home and from "the girl I left behind me," could not be computed in dollars and cents. It seems but yesterday that a citizen of Schoolcraft would walk in and say, "Is there airry letter here for airry one of the Bonds?" The manner of sending money by mail at that time differed somewhat from the present check, draft and order system. A fifty or one hundred dollar bill would be cut in two and one-half sent at a time.

That necessity is truly the mother of invention was often demonstrated in pioneer days. I recall a novel arrangement for grinding or pounding corn, constructed by Delamore Duncan. A large stump near the house was hollowed out at the top and a spring-board set in place projecting over the top of the house and a pestle at the end completed the mill or stump mortar. With this the meal for bread for the family was prepared.

The Indian burying ground in the north-west part of the township had great interest for the newcomers. I remember visiting it when there were three "cribs" with their occupants, still standing.

My knowledge of farming when I came to Michigan was necessarily limited. But the season following our arrival I was introduced to a pair of oxen and a harrow. With my ball in my pocket I started out to prepare a few acres for the sowing of wheat. But no wheat was sown in that field that season. The oxen were slow and my ball required so much attention that by the time I finished harrowing the volunteer wheat had made such a growth sowing was unnecessary. The yield from the field was forty bushels per acre.

One memorable night November 13, 1833, our household was awakened by Dr. Nathan Thomas who was on a professional visit to the neighborhood and we all left our beds and went out to witness the great meteoric shower never to be forgotten.

The meat supply in the neighborhood sometimes ran low, and thereby hangs a tale. One Harry Smith, came to our home one day to borrow a horse and wagon to drive to Mr. Bishop's, who lived on the north-west side of the prairie. Mr. Smith had a large family, and they were out of meat, and he had heard Mr. Bishop had some to spare. But on reaching there he was told they had no more than would be needed for the family. Mr. Smith, rather crest-fallen, started to return home, but on second thought went back to the house and told Mr. Bishop if he would lend him a bone he would take it home and season some beans and return it. This so greatly pleased Mr. Bishop that he told Mr. Smith he would divide his meat with him, and one meat-hungry family rejoiced that day.

Improved roads, the railway, the telegraph, the telephone, and other Edisonan inventions, have shortened distances since those early days. And yet I fancy were I to walk from the site of the Old Branch in Kalamazoo, to Prairie Ronde, the distance would seem much greater than it did sixty years ago, when I sometimes walked home from school Saturday afternoon.

Although their pioneer experiences retain great interest for those who participated in them, they are not supposed to hold the same interest for these sons and daughters of younger generations that I see before me. Many of you will enter the next century in the prime of life and help solve problems we wot not of. But those who were born in the early morning of the present century and are still living should be content, for in the words of John S. Ingalls, greater progress has been made during their life time than in sixty centuries previous.

NOTE.—Mrs. Mary Frasier and Lyman Guilford, of Schoolcraft, William Bair, of Vicksburg, and O. H. Fellows, of Prairie Ronde, are all who are living who came to Kalamazoo county in 1829.

MICHIGAN MY MICHIGAN.

This song was written by Addison M. Brown in 1893, to be sung at the annual meeting and picnic of the Kalamazoo County Pioneer society, held at Long Lake.

Bride of my youth, I sing of thee,
Michigan, my Michigan.
Thy wave-washed shores, how dear to me,
Michigan, my Michigan.
Thee fondly chose I for my own,
With thee I built my cabin home,
And from thee ne'er had wish to roam,
Michigan, my Michigan.

Ne'er brought a bride such dower as thine,
Michigan, my Michigan.
Such wealth in forest, field and mine,
Michigan, my Michigan.
Thy youthful form how fair to see
Ere thy tall forests spared a tree
Or plow-share harsh had fretted thee,
Michigan, my Michigan.

My heart turns fondly to the day,
Michigan, my Michigan.
When, turning from my weary way,
Michigan, my Michigan.
I gently laid my tired head
On thy soft bosom wide outspread,
With naught but Heaven over head,
Michigan, my Michigan.

Swiftly, since then, the years have run,
Michigan, my Michigan.
The fateful thread is nearly spun,
Michigan, my Michigan.
Again my head shall soon be pressed
Upon the pillow of thy breast
To find with thee unending rest,
Michigan, my Michigan.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Inconsistencies in hyphenation have been retained from the original.

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and are indicated in the text in color and underlined. The correction can be viewed by hovering the mouse over the word.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PIONEER DAY EXERCISES ***

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