

SKETCHES OF COUNTY HISTORY

THE NORTH-WESTERN TRIBUNE

Mt. Pleasant, Friday, Feb. 17, 1888

Mr. Chas. Taylor, of Chippewa, will write a series of articles for the "Tribune."

In looking over what purports to be a Historical Album of Isabella county, I see so many mistakes and erroneous statements, so far from the truth, I am inclined to write up a few things, if you can give me space in your reliable paper, for the benefit of its readers, especially those who remember pioneer days. I have conversed with a number of the early settlers, and they all pronounce the so-called historical album a miserable work, and a gross fraud, not worthy to be considered the correct history of Isabella county.

The doings and trials of pioneers should be on record, and I shall be glad to hear from anyone who has facts worthy of being brought to light and which will be of interest to the community, by mail or otherwise.

Chas. Taylor
P. O. Box 299 Mt. Pleasant

FEBRUARY 24, 1888

COUNTY HISTORY

~~S. C. H.~~ Concerning the Settlement of Isabella County.

Isabella county was opened for settlement by what was called the Act of the fourth of August, 1851, graduating the price of lands, and in September and October following a general rush was made for the cheap lands. So great was the rush that it put one in mind of California days. The writer, William McClintock and Lewis Piper started out to explore the northern country, and getting a few miles from home we turned our course for Gratiot, as the whole country was called at that time. After getting well into Gratiot county we met a company that had been as far north as the Chippewa river, Isabella county, and had a plat of town 14 north, 3 west, which showed all its lands vacant except section one, which was marked to George A. Coe. They offered to sell the plat at half price. We paid them and were assured by the leader of the company, who appeared like an honest man, that if we did not go within about two miles of the river we would find plenty of good farming land. So we took courage and pressed on, arriving at what was called Gould's shanty, seven miles from Alma. Reaching that city next morning we found only one house, but received a hearty welcome from the landlord and his amiable wife, whom we found in after days to be the right persons in the right place. Having rested a short time, we started northward. A few miles out brought us to the end of the road, and it having the appearance of a cold night we concluded to go back to the "city" again and take a fresh start in the morning. We found the place so full we could hardly find shelter for the night.

By that time we had about tired of exploring the country, and we started for the land office at Ionia, reaching there October 18. So great was the excitement it was of but little

use to look the county over. We reached home and made calculations to occupy what we had bought.

Returning in January, 1855, we found a number of settlers north of Alma. Taking the wrong trail, north of the county line, we found ourselves on the south bank of Salt River and at the end of the trail. There being four of us in company, one turned surveyor, two had axes and the other acted as teamster. After cutting two miles, we came to what is now the section line that runs through Shepherd. There was a trail cut north and we were thankful to find signs of civilization. After going a short distance we found a house and a family residing there, it being the first signs of improvement we had seen in the county, and we think the first regular house built. It still stands at this date, it being on the farm of Monroe Kinter. The house was built by Eben Stewart and Willard Stewart, who at that time occupied it, till he could build on his own place. They were glad to see others coming. The men came out and gave us a hearty shake of the hand, and gave us to understand that we had met before in church. It seemed a friendly meeting and a little surprising, too, that the first family we met should be a religious one, which we thought not to be a bad sign. It being Saturday night and we not expecting to get very far, they invited us to come and hold a prayer meeting on the morrow. Getting to a little shelter we made up our minds to stay there until Monday morning, and going back on Sunday afternoon to the house we held service with them. There were enough, according to the promise in the good Book, to claim a blessing, three churches being represented; Methodist, Baptist, and United Brethren. On Monday we had two miles more of trail to cut in order to reach our land. Getting there about noon, we commenced to build a small cabin, about seven by eight, for a place of shelter for our families.

At that time a number of families had moved into the county. Some had come in November and December, 1854, into townships 13 and 14, north of range 3, west, which territory was organized into the township of Coe, in honor of Lieutenant-Governor George A. Coe. The first families that moved into what is Coe township now, were Patrick Roberts, Patrick Fanning, Daniel Brickley and Willard Stewart, and in Chippewa township, Eber Hamilton and Eli Hamilton, single men, came in November, 1854. In February, 1855, William F. Payne, Charles Taylor, William McClintock, Robert Gibbs, Andrew Childs, John Stewart, James Campbell, William Bowen, Patrick Murtha, and others came into Coe, and in the fall of 1855 a good many other settlers came in. But in regard to the time a good many are mistaken. They say they came in 1854, but it was not until 1855.

In February, 1855 the Hursh family came in town 14-4, now Union township, and settled near where Mt. Pleasant is now, and in June Henry Sherman came. The next were A. M. Merrill and Leonard Handy.

Improvements were small, people chopping and burning the brush, planting in many places among the black logs, crops doing well and quite a variety of things were raised and no frost to hurt until the 28th of September. But previous to the corn getting ripe bread was rather scarce with most of the settlers and the supplies that had been brought in were about consumed. It generally required a fresh invoice of provisions frequently, for most of the people had fine appetites and it took a large amount to supply the demand. If there were as much consumed now as then, according to population, I think we would have a good home market and not so much to send away. But at that time it was almost an impossibility to bring anything through Gratiot, for the trails were so cut up that it was

a heavy load for a yoke of cattle to even draw an empty wagon. The writer had a crop of wheat "outside," but could get no one for love or money to undertake to come in with supplies. Ralph Ely, of Alma, had drawn in provisions till he could do it no longer, but to keep people from suffering he built a large boat on Pine river out of two large pines and ran the river to Saginaw. But after the river began to freeze until it got safely bridged, which was not until about the first of January, the supplies were cut off. In the meantime, however, the people were not idle. Some plan must be adopted to make bread, or something to answer in its place, and almost every art was devised to grind the grain. Some brought their coffee-mills into use, others made wooden mortars by hollowing the end of a log, some shaved it up with a jack-plane, others mashed it in a trough. Finally a number bought a hand mill. They did not do the grinding and take toll, but to get their money back charged a shilling a bushel. The writer got it and ground a barrel of meal and felt very thankful.

MARCH 2, 1888

In this week's TRIBUNE Mr. Chas. Taylor gives his second article on the early history of Isabella county. Being written by one of the sturdy settlers who took an active part in the scenes and incidents of pioneer days, the articles are full of interest as well as replete with valuable information concerning the settlement of our county. Mr. Taylor is an honorable representative of those hardy, industrious, persevering pioneers who came to Isabella county when it was a wilderness, endured the hardships and privations of early days, and are now in their declining years, surrounded with comfort and happiness, enjoying the well-merited rewards of their early enterprise, frugality and toil. A perusal of his sketches shows that Mr. Taylor's venerable years and early trials in the forests of Isabella county have not dimmed those brilliant intellectual faculties with which so many of our honored pioneers were liberally endowed. These articles should prove of peculiar interest to the young men of the county, as they give a vivid idea of the hardships endured by their fathers and other honored pioneers who, amid dangers and difficulties, planted the first banners of civilization in the gloomy forests of Isabella. Mr. Taylor's historical sketches will be continued in the TRIBUNE for several weeks.

PIONEER DAYS

TRIALS AND PRIVATIONS OF THE FIRST SETTLERS

Interesting Statistics of Early County History.
Another Valuable Contribution from an Honored Pioneer.

Those hand mills were all made of iron, costing from \$6 to \$7, and were a great improvement over the coffee mills and other devices. We went to Alma for them, as a store had been built there and business carried on by Captain Eley. I carried one of those mills home on my back as well as a few groceries, and forded Salt River which at that time was spread out very wide. There were no bridges and no ferryboats to cross rivers and creeks, and our roads were so crooked that it was a long distance to Alma, that being the nearest point where the least thing could be purchased.

The first store that was built in the county was on section 4, on the Chippewa river, in town 14-3, (Chippewa), carried on by Langdon Bentley. Soon after, goods were brought in and sold by Peleg Wilcox, two miles south and a half mile east of Salt River.

Our nearest post offices were Maple Rapids and Fish Creek. Mail was generally brought in as far as Alma by Mr. Eley, but it was not a daily mail. However, news was generally new, if it did not get to us as rapidly as by the present mode. A post-office was established at St. Louis in 1856 or 1857. Mail was brought up once a week into the Salt River country by those interested. A boy was hired to carry the mail once a week three weeks out of four, the writer volunteering to carry it the fourth week. I went over the route once every four weeks gathering up the mail left at different houses along the route, to accommodate as many as possible. Soon after, the post office was established at Salt River. William R. Robbins, post-master, and then we thought we were highly favored. Shortly after this the Wyota office was established, Joel Drake post-master.

In 1856 the Indian reservation was established, and during the fall of that year the Indians moved into the county in large numbers. In 1857 the Indian mills were built one and a half miles northeast of what is now Mt. Pleasant, but they did not do any business until the spring of 1858. The people of Chippewa turned out and cut a road through the forest to the mills, and as soon as the grist-mill was ready for work, a number of us went up with two wagons, two yokes of cattle to each wagon, it being the first time the writer had been there. We had to leave our teams on this side of the river and carry our grist over on the timbers of the bridge, there being nothing there but the frame of the bridge. It was rather an unpleasant job, to say nothing about the work part of the performance. But we got it over into the mill, and by about nine o'clock next morning we had our first grist into flour. We were ready then to lay the hand-mill away as one of the things of the past, but to carry our loads over the river was not a very pleasant job. The saw-mill had been run a little and plank had been cut for the bridge, so we made up our minds that we would make it a little safer crossing than walking on the string pieces. We called for volunteers to carry the plank on the bridge and we soon made it so that we got over all right. By night we got home from our first trip to mill, it being only about seven miles, yet it consumed two days. This was the first grist-mill in the county. A saw-mill had been built on Salt River previously, but the Indian mills were a great help to all, both Indians and whites.

Soon as lumber could be got buildings began to go up, and it soon became a business place. F. C. Babbit came in with a small stock of goods, but soon had to build a store, as a part of the dwelling had been used for that purpose. The firm did a large business, carrying the whole Indian trade for some time. The Indians had large quantities of furs, besides their annual pay, to barter for goods. They, also, made a home market for some time, for about all the settlers had to sell, for they were not great producers, but great on the chase. The woods were nearly full of wild animals, which made fine living for the red man.

In regard to the first settlement of town 14-3, (Chippewa township), I should have stated that Eber Hamilton and wife and Eli Hamilton, a brother of the former, were the first settlers, instead of being single. During the fall of 1855 and winter of 1856 a large number came in and settled in different parts of the entire township. James Mouzer's was then the furthest family north, being on the west side of section 18. By this time the first

settlers were ready to help those going further north, by aiding to open the roads to their places.

In April 1856 our first township meeting was held at the house of James Campbell. There was a large turn-out, and 66 votes were polled, the following officers having been elected: Supervisor, William B. Bowen; Clerk, P. H. Estee; Treasurer, John Reynolds; Justices of the Peace, one year, Charles Taylor—two years, William Middaugh—three years, John Q. A. Johnson—full term, Willard Stewart; School Inspectors, George Miller and Patrick Murtha.

Charles Taylor was the first justice in the county and his first official act was to marry a couple who had been waiting some time to be made one. They were Eli Hamilton and Elizabeth Sutir and the ceremony took place in April, 1856. The second marriage, also, was performed by Justice Taylor, the parties being Eli Clark and Martha Myers. The third marriage ceremony was by John Q. A. Johnson in 1857, the parties being William F. Payne and Rosana Landon.

The first wolf certificates were made out by Charles Taylor and Supervisor Bowen, in 1856, in favor of Solomon Wolf, who had a number of heads, he being quite a hunter. At that time there were plenty of those animals. We could often hear their howlings by day or night as they were on the chase after deer, and we were glad whenever we could see their heads still in death. In passing through the northern part of Gratiot county one dark night, we thought there was a host of wolves but a short distance away, but we applied a match to a pine stub and soon had a fire. All was still as soon as the light shone, but we decided to stay there until daylight.

As our county was attached to Midland in the fall of 1857, many of us were drawn as jurymen to attend court at that city. The custom then was to have grand and petit juries. Coming into the court room we found the juries composed mostly of Isabella men. Our road to Midland was by the trail on the north bank of the Chippewa river.

I attended the first term of court in this county, held at the center of the county in 1859. Dr. Jeffries and others had purchased land on four corners and built a log house which they called the court house and store, having a few goods to sell. They intended to have a town there and gave us to understand that the State had given them the privilege to stick the stake for the county seat right on those corners. But one trip to that place was enough for most of those who had to go, and the idea originated that business could be done nearer home.

The first school house was built at Salt River, on the east side of the river, and after standing there a while it was moved on the southeast corner of James Campbell's farm. The first school in the county was taught there by Carrie Kilbourn. The second school house was built in town 14-3, (Chippewa), and the first school there was taught by Julia Fraser. Wages paid, one dollar per week and board around the district.

The first white child born in the county was Mary A. Fanning, born May 5, 1855. The happy parents carried the child on foot to Lyons to have it baptised, that being the nearest point where a priest could be reached. Let me ask, how many ladies in the county would undertake such a journey as that at this date, even for such a pious purpose? Our roads are beautiful to travel now, and straight; then they were crooked and winding around on the highest ground, with no bridges over streams, and if you didn't get in the water over waist deep you might be thankful.

March 9, 1888

PIONEER DAYS

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS AND HARDSHIPS
ENDURED BY SETTLERS
Compelled to Eat Ground Nuts and Leeks
to Sustain Like.

Another interesting Article from Mr. Chas. Taylor

Yet, I presume that there are not many, even among pioneers, who would vote in favor of passing through what many endured, for the best farm Uncle Sam could give, even if they could be set back to youthful years again. The incidents and trials that pioneers endured, perhaps will not be believed today by those who enjoy the civilization and privileges of the present times. It was a great undertaking to penetrate an unbroken wilderness, 50 miles from civilization, in the midst of winter, with no well-beaten roads to travel—nothing but wild trails with bushes cut just wide enough for a team to pass, snow deep, goods and provisions unloaded in the snow, with, perhaps, no place of shelter for the dear ones but some rude cabin partly built, and away from all society and privileges, sometimes miles beyond others and all alone with nothing but what had been brought along and no place to get anything. Yet the people were cheerful, and hoped for better things.

But when we heard that the land office was closed and no more land to be sold, it brought sorrow to many hearts. It cut off many of our hopes in regard to the improvement of the county and looked like a black act of the Interior department, for there were plenty of other counties in which there was not a settler, that would have been just as favorable for a reservation for the Indians as this county, and where, perhaps, they would have been saved from many of the evils that have surrounded them here. The department, not satisfied yet, sent out another insult to cause us a good deal of trouble, besides a little cash. That was, that we must all go before some justice of the peace to prove our claims and make oath that we had settled and improved the land. The nearest place to which we could go was St. Louis, taking some of us two days' travel, besides expenses and fees for the scalawag of a justice who, after he had filled his pockets with the funds, left for some more congenial clime, and left his family for others to support. This was all unnecessary, as we had a duplicate receipt from the land office calling for a deed, and those who never made any improvements got their deeds just the same as the rest.

We had plenty of trials to endure, but with all the bitter we enjoyed good health. There was but little sickness, and that mostly among those who came from other parts.

What has been considered the hardest times were during the years of 1858, 1859 and 1860. During the summer of 1858 about one half our crops were destroyed by the

7

What has been considered the hardest times were during the years of 1858, 1859 and 1860. During the summer of 1858 about one half our crops were destroyed by the squirrels and other vermin. Every place was alive with them and it was a sight to see them, so busy carrying away wheat and corn. In many places they even took the potatoes out of the hills and left us the smallest half.

The years 1859 and 1860 were years of frosts. In 1859 the frost extended over a large portion of the Northern States. Here there was frost every month of the year, yet the spring was the most beautiful that we have ever had. Crops were got in early, corn was large, wheat looked fine and everything bid fair for an abundant harvest. The writer was about to visit western New York, where he had once lived, but, before starting, went over the crops to get a proper view of them to see how they would correspond with those he might see on his journey. I saw none that looked better. It was about the 27th of May I got up in the morning about four miles south of Lake Ontario and found the weather very cold. Men were at work with overcoats and mittens on driving their teams in the fields all day. That night there was a heavy frost, something that we had never seen there before at that season. It cut nearly everything to the ground; and when I got back home, I found everything was frozen down—corn was completely killed. After planting the second time and when it was at a fine growth it was again destroyed by frost on the night of the 24th of August, and but very little was raised that season. The year of 1860 was but little better.

Some may inquire, how did the people live at that time? Well, some dug roots, or what may be termed ground nuts, in the pods, and ate leeks and about everything else that could be eaten. There were some who lived that way for months, having but a small portion of bread. It was claimed that leeks were very healthy for stock and they thought they would be for people, also. I never tried a dish but once. Being out from home on a missionary tour, I had been invited to stop some time while passing and take dinner at a certain place. Being a long distance from home and about dinner time I decided to stay, make a short visit and take dinner with the good people. When the dinner came on I was invited to try a dish of those delicious leeks. I thought it would be impolite to refuse, as they stated they were just trying them for once to see how they would relish them. Well, I never wanted to experiment any further on leeks—that one dish satisfied my curiosity as well as my appetite for the leek “luxury.”

Provisions were sent in from outside for some time, so that many got relief that way, but it caused a good deal of trouble. The poor did not get very much. Those who got any had to go to Alma for them and only get a few pounds of different articles at a time. So, those who depended on that source to have their wants supplied fared rather poorly. A good many had moved in among us who had no means to help themselves, and brought nothing with them, expecting to find everything here and it made hard times for all. Those people had to live; we could not see them suffer too much, but we did think some of them ought to have remained outside a few years longer. It would not do to sit down and feast till all was gone. We always found some way to keep a little on hand for a stormy day.

During the years above mentioned there was a good chance to work. I. E. Arnold had the contract to build five school houses and two churches for the Indians, and it made work for men and teams. Logs had to be cut and hauled to mill and lumber drawn to the different localities. The writer found a good job in the business and an easier way to keep

home—their families could not stay alone. I had been sent out to try and get hands to work either in saw-mill or woods, but I had to go back and report that I could not find any who wanted to work.

It made hard times, harder with many on account of buying those things that were worse than nothing. I must give a few incidents to show the folly of indulging in those things that only a depraved appetite requires, at a time when the families were suffering and begging for necessary things to keep soul and body together.

The first case was that of a man who had got out of tobacco, and sent his little boy to the place where they kept the vile stuff. He had but ten cents to buy with, yet the little fellow must go alone a distance of ten miles through the woods. The “store” was out of tobacco, and the boy could get none. The next day he must go miles the other way, the result being the same. By this time the want was almost unendurable and the man about fit for the mad house.

Another man had a large family of small children with nothing to eat only what neighbors gave and his wife out traveling around gathering what she would receive. The husband and father started for Maple Rapids with \$40 that had been sent them from the East to get supplies with, but, being addicted to drink, the funds were all spent for liquor—all he had to show for it was a paper of tobacco.

If it had not been for the use of these things there would not have been as much suffering. It looked hard to see mothers and children crying for something to eat, and we could pity them in their sorrow. By my intercourse with the people I was led to see about as much of their privations as any one and it was often heart-rending to hear their reports of how little they had, but I had but little pity for those who indulged in things that were no help to their needy ones. And I believe that at this time and date there are scores and even hundreds in our county that are made poor because those vile things are used.

The last action to help those who needed help was the issuing of bonds by the county and placing them in the hands of William R. Robbins, of Salt River, to transact the business. People gave their notes for the amount they got, it being the most honorable way and would not encourage idlers. That help carried the people through until the harvest of 1861, which was a good year for crops, and then all would have been prosperous again if it had not been for the demonstration that Jefferson Davis and his followers got up down South. Uncle Sam wanted a little help to assist him in the effort to quell those disturbances, this taking a large number of our best men, and there were apparently but few left. Yet, we are thankful that those times are past, and are forgotten by many.

We behold vast improvements made—fine houses, pleasant homes, cultivated fields and almost a city, with fine streets and walks and large brick blocks with all the modern improvements, with stately churches and the sound of the church-going bells, instead of the terrible howl and song of the wild animals.

MARCH 16, 1888

THE FIRST CHURCH SERVICE HELD IN THE COUNTY

The Difficulties Encountered by the Early Christians

The wild animals roamed at will through the wilderness and even among the towering pines that were so beautiful, where Mt. Pleasant now stands, and all the change to civilization was accomplished in the space of thirty-three years! Little did we expect to see all this done so quickly. To-day our improvements are as good as in places that have been settled for sixty years.

But we must give a little church history, with all the rest, because there are some who think that there was not much done for many years; but we can say of a truth that the first pioneers were a moral people, and had a desire to enjoy the blessings the gospel afforded. Friends had endeavored to persuade me not to think of going into the wilderness so far from Christian privileges; but I thought we could have them here as well as in other places. When a boy I had listened to the stories of pioneers in western New York, and how well they enjoyed themselves, so I had a desire to experiment a little and thought this would be a fine place to go, as I expected to find good people who wanted to enjoy the blessings of life. The first appointment for public service was at the house of Eber Hamilton on section 33, township of Chippewa. I went to the place appointed and found a congregation assembled for the first time, it being the 25th day of March, 1855. From that time the way was open; meetings were held in Chippewa and at the house of William B. Bowen, in Coe. In the winter of 1856 services were held regularly at different places and towards spring we held revival services; part of the time services were held at the house of James Campbell. We had good times and much good was done. Meetings were conducted by Charles Taylor until a minister was sent by the Michigan Conference, and in November T. J. Hill came and took charge of the work. At the conference held in 1856 the Lansing district was formed, Rev. Hiram Law presiding elder. The Gratiot circuit was also formed, to consist of Gratiot and Isabella counties and as much of Midland as the preacher might occupy, with the privilege of going on foot. I traveled with him to all the appointments, where classes were immediately established. The first quarterly meeting was held for this circuit at the Woodin school-house, near Pine River, November 8, 1856, when Charles Taylor received a license as a local preacher. He had previously carried an exhorter's license. The circuit included Gratiot and Isabella counties and twenty-three appointments were made. The quarterly meeting for the second quarter was held in February 1857, at the school house on Salt River.

As the spring opened up, and likewise the streams, the preacher left the work. It was then divided for the balance of the year, by giving the south half to a Brother Sowers and the north half to Charles Taylor, which gave me all the points in Isabella, with St. Louis and Woodin's in Gratiot county. I formed one new appointment, which made me seven. The first class, or church, organized was in Chippewa, at the house of Charles Taylor, formed by the Rev. Theodore J. Hill on November 1, 1856, with John Robinson leader.

At the annual conference of 1857 Calvin D. Holbrook was sent to Gratiot circuit and remained two years, traveling the entire circuit once in four weeks. They were years of profit to the church, and her members greatly increased.

The Indians came in the county in 1856, and their minister was the Rev. L. J. Griffith, with Wm. N. Brockway presiding elder. In 1857 George Bradley was sent in charge of the Indian work and in 1858 a camp-meeting was held. There were gathered many hundreds of Indians, and it was the first time the writer had ever seen an Indian meeting, or such a large gathering of the natives, many of whom were dressed in their native style. Before the meeting closed large numbers of them were led to believe and seek the right

way. As I had been acquainted with Bradley in other parts of the State, and being the only pale-face preacher on the ground besides him I was invited to take part in the exercises. I was led to form a pretty good idea of the Indian manner of worship and found among them many good people. Had they been properly cared for as wards of the government, and saved from the vile politician and his stuff called whiskey, they would have been a people today enjoying the fruits of their labors. At this meeting most of the people of Union township were in attendance, and desired service amongst them. By the advice of Elder Bradley I undertook the work of supplying them and made an appointment at the house of Samuel Loveland. But, as most of the people wanted to open their houses for worship, I went to different places and as far south as the house of A. M. Merrill. I continued the appointment from house to house to favor all as far as possible, at the same time forming a class of 26 members, with Jehiel Gulick as class-leader. I, also, made an appointment at Isabella city, and formed a small class. At the annual conference in 1859 Rev. Urie Mason was appointed to Gratiot circuit and remained one year, preaching a few times at Isabella City. At the last quarterly conference of 1860 I turned over my appointments to the circuit, and presented a motion that Gratiot circuit be divided, and that Chippewa circuit be formed, which motion was adopted by the annual conference. George Bradley was made presiding elder of the Lansing district, and R. T. Sheldon was employed as preacher in charge, traveling the circuit two years.

MARCH 23, 1888

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FIRST CHURCHES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Compelled to take a Bath when in Quest of a Physician

At the annual conference of 1862, Horace Hall presiding elder, R. T. Sheldon was again employed to travel the circuit for one year. Chippewa circuit only embraced a small part of Isabella county, with two appointments in Gratiot county. In 1864 L. M. Garlic was appointed in charge and traveled one year, being followed by D. O. Fox in 1865, J. Webb in 1866-7, and T. J. Spencer in 1868, the latter being the first to occupy the parsonage at Mt. Pleasant. At the annual conference of 1866 B. F. Bangs was appointed presiding elder, and traveled the district four years. At the last quarterly conference of 1870, held at Salt River, a motion was made by the writer that the circuit be divided so that Salt River and Mt. Pleasant would be the central positions, and that Isabella circuit retain all the appointments north of the north line of the township of Coe. W. T. Williams was in charge of the circuit. In 1869 the circuit included Mt. Pleasant and Chippewa and the Gulick appointment, Eli Westlake being the preacher in charge in 1870. This perhaps will be all that is necessary for me to mention in regard to Isabella circuit, and I return to pioneer times again.

The first Sabbath school in the county was organized at the house of William B. Bowen in the spring of 1856, and funds were collected and a library was purchased of the American Sunday School Union. The second school was organized in Chippewa. The first papers subscribed for were by Charles Taylor and William B. Bowen.

The first funeral sermon was delivered by Chas. Taylor at the burial of Mrs. John Robinson, who died September 19, 1856, being the first one in the county who thus

The first funeral sermon was delivered by Chas. Taylor at the burial of Mrs. John Robinson, who died September 19, 1856, being the first one in the county who thus passed away. The first physician who located in the county was Thomas Chatfield, an Indian, who was often employed by the whites to attend them in their illness. It was a pretty long road to go for the doctor, and it generally took from one to two days to get around. The first time I was on the reservation I volunteered to accompany a man from Salt River who was going for the doctor. Our way was through the woods until we struck the Chippewa river, and that we had to ford. As it was an October day, it was not a very warm job to ford the stream twice in one day, but this was what we had to do. It made no difference what the business was—even if it was going for the doctor, or to the store, or to church—we had to wade the river, but then it would not shock anyone's modesty if the preacher took off his coat and hung it up to dry, while delivering his discourse. People were more plain in those days than they are now.

MARCH 30, 1888

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES RELATING TO EARLY SETTLERS

Conclusion of Mr. Taylor's Interesting Articles

In their ways, and manners, and doings, and styles of dress, there were no emporiums of fashions where gentlemen and ladies could go for their fineries. They had to dress very plainly, and some of the best ladies were not ashamed to be seen in company wearing calico dresses, and for common wear blue denims were considered very appropriate. Many of the male sex made use of garments made out of grain sacks, and, to make them a little more stylish, had them colored by steeping up different barks. But, with the lack of many of the comforts of life, they generally enjoyed good health and had the privilege of attending the means of grace offered. It was thought to be all right and proper to go to church, although in rather a homely way—it was sometimes with two yokes of cattle to a lumber wagon. With a full load they would go to St. Louis to quarterly and camp meetings, and to other places, and very often it took from three to four days to go to meeting and get back home, on account of the bad roads we had to travel.

I remember of going to Isabella City to quarterly meeting as early as 1861, which was attended by many from the southern part of the county. Meetings were held in the Indian council house, in Isabella City. This house was built by the government, and it was a lively place on account of the business that was transacted. The City was quite a market place and was often crowded with loaded teams from outside, as almost everything had to come from a distance. When the roads were bad sometimes prices got very high, especially so in war times, when flour was \$22 a barrel, salt \$11, tea \$2.25 per pound, and calico fifty cents a yard, and with everything else at about the same exorbitant prices. Many had to contrive in various ways to get many of the comforts of life. Many made out to furnish their own coffee by roasting corn, peas and other grain; tea was often picked from raspberry bushes, as the sage was gathered. Those substitutes, however, were about as good as the stuff that was on the market, for the very cheapest tea and coffee were brought in and sold at the highest prices. But those who had horse teams

could take advantage of home markets by going outside, and it was a fine thing for St. Johns and other towns, as they had a big trade from Gratiot and Isabella counties. Thousands of dollars were spent in these places for goods by the pioneers of those counties, but we are glad those times have changed and we have markets at home. There were but few settlers in most of the townships till after the war closed.

Isabella county was organized in 1859, there being only three organized townships at that time, namely, Coe, Chippewa and Isabella.

The first house built in Mt. Pleasant was erected by Edwin Burt, M. D. who was the first resident; but on account of the people enjoying good health he found no business and moved back to Saginaw.

The first paper published in the county was the Northern Pioneer, O. B. Church, editor.

The early days in the history of Isabella county are long to be remembered by the pioneers.

With this I close my sketches of county history.

Chas. Taylor