

CHESANING TOWNSHIP

Pioneer Life in the Wilderness—Log Cabins of Pioneers Disappear — Early Settlement of Chesaning — Necessities of Life Cost Much — Nature of the Soil — The Real Pioneers — Difficulties of Travel — Organization of the Township — Incorporation of the Village — Present Officers — The Big Rock—George Washington Chapman— Wellington Chapman — Rufus Putnam Mason — William Smith — James C. Fuller — Representative Business Houses — Biographies of Prominent Men.

LIKE other towns of Saginaw County and, indeed, of most of Michigan, settlement of Chesaning began with the breaking of the forest, the building of log cabins, and the planting of corn and a few vegetables. The first white men to penetrate the forest wilderness were fur traders, for the most part renegade French-Canadians, who came and went with the seasons, traded with the Indians, and carried away such furs as they might gather. They had no home except the forest domain and acknowledged no authority but their own. They were the forerunners of primitive settlements, but had little part in making them permanent. They were opposed to the advancing wave of civilization, for it was to their advantage to preserve the wilderness in all its natural wild state, with its abundant supply of wild animals, and thus continue their profitable trade with the savages.

The obstacles and difficulties encountered by the early settlers were many, not the least of which was the journey from civilization through a rough, wild country. There were numerous swamps to be crossed with great exertion, rivers to be forded with danger, and nights passed in the damp, miasmatic air of the forest, with only Mother Earth for a couch and trees and foliage for shelter. But their hearts were gladdened by the work of homemaking, even against terrific odds, and they almost invariably made themselves contented with a log cabin, which furnished them comfort and cheer.

Log Cabins of the Pioneers Disappear

As years passed these rude habitations gave way to frame or brick houses, but it was often with tearful eyes that the pioneers watched these old landmarks disappear. Every log cabin in those days had its own history, for within it had been witnessed the birth or death of children ; the religious services held there when no church was yet built in the neighborhood; or the merry-makings at which settlers for miles around attended. Then there were the house-raising in which logs were rolled and a dance given in the evening, the whole affair concluding with a supper, the delicacies of which consisted chiefly of venison, maple sugar and corn bread.

One by one these old cabins have fallen into decay, and it seemed almost a sacrilege to destroy them, so intimately have they been connected with the lives of the early pioneers. Although the few pioneers that now remain are comparatively wealthy and possess comforts and luxuries that money can purchase, the days and years spent in their primeval cabins are not forgotten.



BROAD STREET IN 1872

The close intimacy and kindness which everywhere prevailed among neighbors, brought more real happiness than is enjoyed today, even though their pockets are filled with money, their barns with grain, hay and fodder, and their lands dotted with herds of cattle, sheep and hogs.

The Early Settlement of Chesaning

The actual beginning of any settlement in Chesaning followed a treaty with the Chippewa Indians, by which the land in this part of the county was offered for sale by the government at five dollars an acre. A previous treaty had been made in 1819 (see Vol. 1, pp. 50-65) by General Cass with the Chippewas, granting to the Indians, among other reservations, "one tract of ten thousand acres on the Shiawassee River, at a place called the 'Big Rock.' " This is the first mention in history of the large boulder in the eastern part of the village, and from which it is said Chesaning derived its name. The Indian name, Ches-an-ong, means "lone rock" or "big stone." In the sale of the land at auction or private deal the expenses of same were deducted from the receipts, and the balance of the money was turned over to the savages.

About 1826 the first pioneers came to the Big Rock; and were followed at long intervals by others attracted by the beauties of the country. They were men and women who were bold, fearless, self-reliant and industrious, and to their thrift and energy is very largely due the prosperity now enjoyed by the inhabitants of this township. With these pioneers such matters as nationality, religion, education, and often previous character, of individuals, were disregarded or ignored, for the lot of the settlers was identical and served as a cord to bind them into common unity.

Necessities of Life Cost Much

It is a common remark that living in those times was good and cheap. Fish and game were plentiful, but such a necessary article of food as flour was a luxury. It had to be brought one hundred miles through the wilderness from Detroit; and not until 1835 was a grist mill established in the county. Even then it was necessary to go more than twenty-five miles through the dense woods with grist. Other articles of food obtained in trade with the fur companies, that are now staples, were expensive in proportion. After general stores supplanted the trading post in supplying the needs of the settlers, when one could buy everything necessary to comfort and convenience then known, prices were enormously high.

Among the difficulties with which the pioneers had to contend were forest fires which often raged over the county. Each fire cleared a large tract of land, but the pioneers felt much of the suffering and devastation it left in its path. While millions of dollars worth of valuable timber

was thus consumed, some of the forest fires were regarded as blessings, from the fact that many years of hard labor were saved which otherwise would have been required to clear up the land and bring it into a state of cultivation.

Nature of the Soil

Most of the land in Chesaning Township is very fertile and well adapted to the raising of small grains, corn, potatoes, fruit, etc. The soil in most parts is a gravelly, sandy loam, with some patches of clayey loam scattered here and there. Root crops also afford good returns and some of the more progressive farmers have recently made records in raising chicory and sugar beets. The land is undulating and well drained by the Shiawassee River, a beautiful stream which passes through the township from south to north. This river has been valuable in providing water power privileges at several points along its course; but it has never been navigable, even for boats of moderate size, above the mouth of Bad River.

Previous to its settlement by white men, the lands of this township were densely covered with timber of various kinds, such as beach, maple, oak, black walnut and butternut on the bottom lands, while on higher ground and along the margin of streams were clusters of the stately pine. Some open ground along the water courses was cultivated by the Indians for raising maize, and it was a familiar sight to the settlers to see squaws laboring in the fields to secure a living for themselves and their bucks. In one place a thrifty apple orchard of nearly fifty trees was found which, according to ancient tradition, was planted by an old squaw eighty or more years before. She made holes in the ground, it was said, and then dropped in the entire core of the apple containing the seeds. The trees grew in clusters which seemed to confirm the tradition. The second year after the land was purchased by a white settler these trees bore more than three hundred bushels of apples, sixty-two and a half bushels being harvested from one tree.



THE FIRST BRIDGE ACROSS THE SHIAWASSEE

Sites of ancient Indian villages were frequently found in favored places, the soil of which, including the mounds raised by repeated burials of their dead, always contained weapons, utensils and relics of different character peculiar to the aborigines. For an authentic account of the ancient mound builders and of relics recovered in Saginaw County, see Volume 1, Chapter 1.

The Real Pioneers

When the first white settlers, George W. Chapman and his brother, Wellington Chapman, came down the Shiawassee River in October, 1841, they found on reaching the Big Rock reservation, a white man by the name of Thomas Wright, living there with his wife and two children. He

lived in a rude log cabin which stood on the exact spot afterward occupied by the residence of Wellington Chapman. Thomas Wright gained a livelihood for himself and family by trapping, hunting, fishing and bartering with the Indians. He was only a "squatter" on the land, which was so far from any settlement that for two years his wife had not seen a white woman. A few years after he purchased the southeast fractional part of Section 16, upon which he lived until his death. It was supposed he was a native of Pennsylvania, but little is known of his early history or why he came to the Michigan wilderness to live. Mr. Wright was the first postmaster of Chesaning.

The first settlers to file claims to lands within the limits of what is now Chesaning Township, after the treaty with the Indians in 1841, were George W. Chapman, Wellington Chapman and Rufus P. Mason. In October, 1841, the Chapmans filed their claims to lands in Sections 9, 16, 18 and 21; and Mr. Mason made his entry in November of the same year on Sections 9, 21 and 28. In 1842 the little settlement consisted of George W. Chapman, wife and three children; Wellington Chapman and one child; William Smith, wife and seven children, and Rufus P. Mason—all from Massachusetts; Thomas Wright and family from Pennsylvania; and Benjamin North, John M. Watkins and John Ferguson. In the latter part of that year other settlers added gradually to the little colony.

The first saw mill in Chesaning was built and operated in 1842 by John Watkins. In 1846 it passed to other ownership which added grinding machinery, thus making it the first grist mill in the township.

The first frame building was a one-story dwelling owned by Marion Secord. It was never completed though it was boarded up and occupied. That house was the scene of the first wedding, the happy couple being John Pitts and Miss Sarah Ann Fridig.

The first child born in the township was a daughter unto Mr. and Mrs. Silas Parks, in May, 1842. Albert Chapman, the first male child born in the community, was born on August 28, 1842.

The first death was a Mr. Sawyer. His remains were buried on the southeast quarter of Section 16.

The first white man to hold the plow and thus prepare the ground for seeding was Wellington Chapman, in 1842, on his own land which formed a part of the old Indian corn field. Here he and his brother, George W. Chapman, planted seven acres to corn and two acres to potatoes.

Along the road on this land the first board fence was built in 1843, and was still standing in good preservation forty years after.

The first frame barn in the township was put up in 1842 by North & Watkins, on the bank of the river in the village of Chesaning.

This building was afterward occupied by Rufus P. Mason, where he opened the first store and stock of goods kept in the settlement.



RUFUS P. MASON



GEORGE WASHINGTON CHAPMAN

The first school taught in this section of the county was by Miss Eliza Ann Smith, daughter of William Smith. This was in 1844, eleven scholars attending, and the sessions were held in a rough board shanty. In 1846 Rufus P. Mason and George W. Chapman built a small frame house on lot 2, block 18, Chesaning village, and presented it to the district for school purposes. The first teacher in the new school was Caroline Barnes.

The second frame dwelling was built by Wellington Chapman in the southeast quarter of Section 9. Extensive additions were made to it from time to time, and it was still occupied nearly fifty years after. Adjoining this house was the second frame barn erected in the township.

Difficulties of Travel

During certain seasons of the year, especially in Spring, the only means by which the settlers could reach the outside world was by canoe or boat on the Shiawassee River. One day was required to go to Saginaw City, the county-seat, and two days to return, while to go to Owosso they were obliged to use the same means of conveyance. They made frequent trips to these places for supplies, and to have their grain ground into flour and meal. William Smith, the first supervisor was obliged to use a boat in making his official trips to the county-seat.

Game was abundant in the thick forest and consisted of deer, bear, wild fowl of various kinds, wolves, panthers, wild cats, foxes, etc. Bear meat and venison were then the most common food on the pioneer's table. Wild animals at length became very scarce and finally entirely disappeared in this section, the last bear being killed within the limits of the village in 1876 by William Smith, Junior.

Organization of the Township

In 1847 a large tract of land, including the little settlement which had been known as "Big Rock," was set off in Saginaw County as a township, and given the name of Northhampton, after the old home in England of some of



ON SHIAWASSEE RIVER

the early pioneers. It was township 9 North, ranges 1, 2, 3 and 4, East. In April of that year the first town election was held resulting in the choice of William Smith for supervisor and justice of the peace; Rufus P. Mason, clerk; and L. Stevens, treasurer. In 1853 the name was changed to Chesaning, its original and more appropriate name. The township remained its original size until 1856, when ranges 1 and 2 were set off and called Brady Township; and in the following year range 4 was made Maple Grove Township, thus leaving Chesaning Township as it is today, about six miles square.

Incorporation of the Village

In 1851 the survey for the first village plat was made by Andrew Huggins, surveyor, and made a matter of record. The land was owned by Rufus P. Mason and O. S. Chapman, the former being the resident manager of the firm's business. The site was a beautiful one, near the center of the township, twenty-six miles from Saginaw and sixteen miles from Owosso. It was situated on the Shiawassee River, whose high prominent banks (in some places more than thirty feet high) added to the beauty of the scenery, while the flowing stream furnished power for the grist mill.

Chesaning was incorporated as a village in the early part of 1869. the land, nineteen hundred and twenty acres, including parts of Sections 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17. The first village election was held on April 12, 1869, Rufus P. Mason being elected president, and Henry P. Bentley, Henry McCormick, James C. Goodale, N. R. Jersey, O. F. Walker and James L. Helm constituted the first board of trustees. A week later the board held its first meeting and selected T. L. Green, clerk; J. B. Griswold, treasurer; Anson Sheldon, assessor; S. C. Goodale, marshal, and Andrew Crofoot and J. J. Austin, fire wardens.

From this beginning has developed the prosperous Chesaning of today, with abundant evidences of all the comforts that induce health and happiness. It is a village that merits the admiration of every visitor, its attractive streets and beautiful homes with well kept lawns, shrubbery and beds of flowers being favorably commented on. Its religious and educational development has kept pace with its material prosperity, as is witnessed by the maintenance of seven churches and two schools. Among the fraternal orders are the Blue and Chapter lodges of Masons; Eastern Star, Maccabees, Woodmen and Royal Neighbors, Forresters, Loyal Guards and Ladies Auxiliary, G. R. R., W., and American Boy. The Elks of Saginaw Lodge No. 47 have more than fifty members here, and there are also a number of the I. O. O. F.

Among the many comforts to be found in the village are electric lights, both streets and buildings being brilliantly illuminated, and water works which furnish excellent water in unlimited supply. There is an opera house, a brass band, two banks, three hotels, village hall, two flour mills, a planing mill, stave mill, two grain elevators, and a diversity of business houses. There is also a fire department of which every villager is justly proud.

In 1918 the township officers were: Charles E. Stuart, supervisor; Charles W. Cheney, clerk; Charles F. Gortzen, treasurer, and June Johnson, highway commissioner.

The village officers were: A. L. Bailey, president; Roy T. Smith, clerk; George L. Kinch, treasurer, and B. G. Corvell, assessor.

The Big Rock

From the earliest days of settlement the distinguishing features of this region were two large rocks, one of which lay in the woods in what is now the east side of the village and may yet be seen, while the other was in the bed of the river opposite the residence of Wellington Chapman. In 1838 this locality was visited by Dr. Douglas Houghton, then State geologist, and from his examination of these specimens it was determined that the stone in the woods had been conveyed there by ice from Lake Superior when this section of the lower peninsula was submerged. He was equally sure that the one in the river was from Thunder Bay, as a microscopic examination showed that it was a fossil limestone. This rock was long ago blasted in pieces by the early white settlers and burned into lime.



THE "BIG ROCK" AT CHEBANING

The name of the village and township was undoubtedly derived from the "lone rock" in the woods, for the reason that the name was not applied until after the stone in the river had entirely disappeared, though "Totush," an Indian who died in the neighborhood about 1840, declared that the latter should have the honor.

The old landmark, the big rock in the woods, still bears the names of persons of several generations who have visited it and cut their names into its surface. It is gradually wearing away, however, leaving some of the inscriptions very indistinct. In recent years a tree has grown out of the fissures in the rock, and as the roots have extended downward the cracks have spread, and it is likely that in time the rock will be sundered. Years ago a ladder was needed to reach the top of the boulder, but within the present generation the surface of the ground has apparently risen, for one may now easily clamber up its sides. The old landmark is one of the curious freaks of Nature in this section of Michigan.

George Washington Chapman

A pioneer, the memory of whom should be held in reverence by present and future generations, is George W. Chapman. He was born at Belchestown, Massachusetts. November 15, 1812, his parents being Daniel and Nancy Smith Chapman. The father was a direct descendant of Ralph Chapman, born in England in 1615, and who emigrated to America in his twentieth year.

The boyhood of George was passed in his native town, where at an early age he learned from his father the trade of wheelwright, and soon became a skilled workman. He obtained much practical information which enabled him in after years to apply his mechanical mind so successfully to his chosen vocation of construction engineer, and to devise and invent many improvements in implements and machinery. Nearly every State east of the Mississippi and north of the Potomac bear the imprint of his work in building railroads. His first experience was gained in 1835 on the Boston & Providence road, near Canton, Massachusetts.

In the autumn of 1841 in company with his younger brother, Wellington, he travelled through Ohio and Michigan, and while stopping at Owosso the brothers were induced by A. L. and B. O. Williams to visit the Big Rock reservation. Riding on horseback through the forests along the banks of the beautiful Shiawassee River, they at length came upon the cleared fields of the Indian reservation, and were so charmed with the location that they both concluded to purchase lands there. George chose the northern portion of Section 21. on the east side of the river, and his brother chose the land directly opposite. This was the first sale of land by the government in the township of Chesaning.

Mr. Chapman's farm was the favorite resort of the aborigines. Nearly all the flats and bottom lands had been planted with corn by the Indians, and on the dry sandy upland may still be seen some of the holes where they buried their winters' store. On the upper side of the flats and near the river bank was a large mound, which was the burying place of many generations of aboriginal inhabitants of the land.

In October, 1842, Mr. Chapman moved his family to the new home in the wilderness, and they occupied the house the first night without either door or windows, and the roof only partly covered. The family were lulled to



BROAD STREET LOOKING EAST

sleep by the hooting of owls and the howling of wolves, a strange and terrifying experience to Mrs. Chapman who, before her marriage on November 3, 1836, was Miss Abigail J. Whipple,

daughter of Joseph Whipple, a near relative of Commodore Whipple of Revolutionary War fame.

The succeeding winter was what has since been known as a hard winter in Michigan, and in common with all pioneer settlers he browsed his cattle on the bottom lands. Neither hay nor fodder of any kind could be obtained, and his horse ran with the Indian ponies, and subsisted by pawing away the snow with his feet and eating the long grass on the flats.

After a residence of about five years in Michigan, Mr. Chapman became weary of life in the wilderness, and seeing his children growing up without the advantages of education, returned with his family in August, 1847, to the New England States. He soon took up his old occupation of railroad construction, and continued in this work for twelve years. At one time he was engaged on a large contract with the Great Western Railroad in Ontario, Canada, using steam excavators which he had improved and perfected to meet the requirements of road grading.

In the Spring of 1859 Mr. Chapman returned to his Michigan farm, where his family continued to reside. He continued at intervals in railroad engineering, his last contract being with the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad, near Cincinnati, which involved an expenditure of more than two million dollars.

At length Mrs. Chapman's health failed, and he being somewhat advanced in years, he abandoned contracting about 1866 and settled on his farm to pass the remainder of his life. His business activities were not ended, however, for in 1866-8 he was interested in the lumber business, in association with his son-in-law, George W. Hipple, owning timber lands and a saw mill in Albee Township, Saginaw County.

In 1867, when the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw Railroad was being built through the township, the line was laid out to pass three miles west of Chesaning village. Realizing the benefit that would accrue to the village and township by having the depot in Chesaning, Mr. Chapman immediately took active measures to secure it. His knowledge of railroads and railroad men stood him in good stead, and he secured an agreement with the road by which upon the payment of a bonus of eighteen thousand dollars, the line would be changed to run through the village. Mr. Chapman then took up the matter of raising the bonus, the money was soon secured, and the railroad was built through the village limits.

Mr. Chapman was of a sanguine temperament and happy disposition, fond of jokes and an adept at repartee, and woe to the adversary who sought discussion with him, for Mr. Chapman invariably came out victorious. In politics he was an earnest, uncompromising Republican, and in days prior to the organization of that party was an avowed Abolitionist of the Garrisonian type. He died suddenly on the morning of February 17, 1881, in his sixtyninth year.

Wellington Chapman

As will be seen by the early history of Chesaning, Wellington Chapman was identified with its earliest settlement, dating from the autumn of 1841. He was a native of Hampshire County, Massachusetts, born on September 20, 1814. Following in the footsteps of his brother, he learned the trade of wheelwright, and assisted his father until he reached the age of twenty

years. He then went to Worcester and worked at car building, and in 1835 was employed on the construction of the Boston & Albany Railroad. Afterward Mr. Chapman was largely interested in the construction of railroads in the middle and eastern states—at times as superintendent for other parties and at other times as contractor.

In 1841 Mr. Chapman came to Chesaning with his brother, George W. Chapman, and entered land on what was then called the Big Rock Indian Reservation. He remained on his farm until 1847, and assisted in the organization of the township. In that year he returned with his family to New England, and resumed his former occupation of railroad building, being one of the firm of Boody, Dillon & Company. Nine years after he returned to Chesaning and settled on his farm, which consisted of three hundred and forty acres on Sections 9 and 10. He lived there for the remainder of his life, but was interested at times in the construction of railroads, as well as other business enterprises.

He was married in 1838 to Miss Sarah Gray, who bore him two children. She died in 1848, and the year following he was married to Sarah Ann Dickman. By this union there were also two children.



THE CHESANING HIGH SCHOOL



DAM AND MILL AT CHESANING

Rufus Putnam Mason

Another of those pioneers who first entered land in Chesaning Township was Rufus P. Mason, who was afterward the first clerk of the township. He was born in Chester County, New York, October 25, 1813, his parents being natives of Connecticut and moved to New Hampshire soon after the close of the Revolutionary War. His father, Joseph Mason, served as sergeant throughout the struggle for independence.

Rufus was the youngest of fourteen children. He passed his boyhood on a farm, meanwhile receiving a good common school education. His first experience was as a clerk in a store, and a

few years later opened a general store at Durhamville, New York. On May 17, 1840, he was united in marriage with Miss Caroline Otis, whose father was a prominent merchant of Philadelphia and New York City.

For several years Mr. Mason was engaged in railroad building, and afterwards was a conductor on the Boston & Albany Railroad in Western Massachusetts. It was in 1841 that he came to Chesaning, and on November 26 purchased lands in the township. Three years after he removed his family to what is now Chesaning village, and with the exception of five years spent in lumbering in Western New York, and one and a half years in the Lake Superior country, Mr. Mason was a constant resident of Chesaning.

He was the first township clerk and held the offices for ten years; and served as highway commissioner for twenty years and as justice of the peace for four years. He opened the first store in the township, which he conducted for a long period. When the village of Chesaning was organized he was elected its first president; and during all the years of its growth and prosperity was constantly identified with its business interests.

In his younger days Mr Mason was noted for his energy and endurance, and as a pedestrian was seldom excelled. He once walked from Pontiac to Chesaning in fifteen hours; and at another time from Bay City to Chesaning in one day. He was very fond of music and took much delight in singing. For many years he and his daughters constituted the larger part of the choir



JAMES C. FULLER



JUDGE WILLIAM SMITH

of the Methodist church, of which he was an earnest member. During the Civil War he was a staunch Union man, a pronounced temperance advocate; and was always distinguished for his strict integrity of character. He died June 10, 1888, in his seventy-fifth year.

William Smith

Judge William Smith was one of the earliest settlers of Chesaning, and during a useful life, the greater portion of which was passed in this village, he held public office with honor to himself and advantage to the community. He was born in Worcester County, Massachusetts, April 28, 1800, a son of William and Hannah Smith, who were natives of Norfolk County, Massachusetts.

The boyhood of William Smith was passed on a farm, and at quite an early age he learned the trade of stone mason. He soon after turned his footsteps southward, intending to locate in North Carolina, but afterward returned to New England, walking the entire distance. In 1820 and 1821 he was employed at his trade in the construction of the Erie Canal; and then clerked in a store at Pelham, Massachusetts, followed by the same occupation at Cape Cod and Walpole, Massachusetts. He engaged in burning coal at Hopkinton and Princington for six years, and then returned to farming in the town of Leicester, Massachusetts.

In 1842 Mr. Smith came to Chesaning, where he immediately entered two hundred acres of land on Section 21, on which he erected a log shanty. From that time until his death he was a resident of this township, sharing all the hardships incident to a pioneer life in the wilderness, and for nearly half a century was identified with the best interests of the community. He was active in politics and filled various offices of honor and trust, including that of supervisor for three years. In 1845 he was chosen county judge, serving four years, and later was elected and filled the office of justice of the peace for four years. He was one of the early postmasters, and for a number of years the mails were distributed and dispatched from his house. He also acted as mail carrier between Corunna and Saginaw City in those early days.

On February 2, 1826, Mr. Smith was united in marriage with Miss Eliza Boyden, who was born in Hillsboro County, New Hampshire. After an unbroken married life of nearly half a century, Judge Smith and his life partner were separated by the hand of death, his estimable wife dying on May 17, 1875. Judge Smith resided on his farm at the time of his death some years after.

James C. Fuller

In 1843 James C. Fuller came to Chesaning and soon after purchased a farm and erected a log cabin in which he lived alone during the Winter of 1843-4. In the following Spring he was employed by George W. Chapman and lived on his farm for about two years. In the Summer of 1845 he built a house on the river bank on the east side of the village, and about the time it was finished the first show ever exhibiting in Chesaning came to the village. It was in his house that the few settlers assembled to view the magic lantern show, after which a fiddler from Owosso furnished music for a dance.

On January 17, 1846, Mr. Fuller was married to Miss Sarah H. Whipple, youngest sister of Mrs. Chapman ; and the newly-weds commenced housekeeping in the house the groom had recently completed. In the Spring of 1848 the couple removed to the farm where Mr. Smith had lived the first winter after he came to Chesaning. Four years after he returned to the village and opened the first public house or hotel, on the site of the Central House. For seven years this was the only tavern in the place, the latter part of that period being owned by a Mr. Cogswell. About 1859 Mr. Fuller removed to his farm, where he passed the remainder of his life. During 1854 he built a saw mill on the east side of the river, directly opposite the Chesaning Roller Mills; and it was generally known as the "little mill" to distinguish it from the older and larger mill.



Mr. Fuller was one of Chesaning's earliest supervisors, and was an exemplary citizen of great activity and energy, and withal kind and obliging, though possessed of a firmness that always commanded attention and respect. He was very patriotic and was arranging his business and family affairs with a view of enlisting in the Union Army, when his death came suddenly on November 27, 1861.

BLANCHE D. INGALLS

To what extent pluck, energy and perseverance will promote success in business is well exemplified in the career of Blanche D. Ingalls, editor and proprietor of the Chesaning Monitor. From a small beginning, in

reviving a defunct paper, the Chesaning News, when everybody predicted failure as had followed the course of that sheet, by an indomitable will and rare ability she, and her associate, Carrie M. Ische, brought the paper to a plane where it is recognized as one of the permanent institutions of Chesaning.

Blanche Ingalls is a native of Michigan, having been born in Flint where her mother, brothers and sister still reside. Her parents were Alfred and Tryphenia Lamberton Ingalls. The father was born at Burton, Genesee County, Michigan, in 1840, and lived many years in Flint where he was a city official and public contractor, being highly regarded for his sterling qualities. The mother was born in New York State in 1844, and in infancy came to Michigan with her parents, who settled at Flint BLANCHE D. INGALLS in early pioneer days.

The childhood of Miss Ingalls was spent in Flint, and there she received her education, passing through eleven grades of the public schools. During her later school days she evinced a liking for the activities of business, doing all the writing and accounting for her father, who was a paving contractor and shipper of live stock. She also helped her brother who was engaged in the meat business in Flint. Later she entered the office of the Bidwell Bean Thresher Company, having charge of the correspondence and general office work, at the same time looking after the affairs of her father and brother.

With a fondness for the printed page and a strong desire to be a printer, she started newspaper work, in 1899, in the offices of the Journal and the News, of Flint, and wrote special feature articles for Detroit papers. On January 17, 1900. she came to Chesaning and, in

association with Miss Ische, took over the equipment of the News, most of which was scattered around the room which had once been used as a printing office. Miss Ische was a rapid compositor, and they had the determination to make a success against all odds. The printing material had been in disuse for almost two years, and was in such condition that they worked a month before attempting to get out the paper. In spite of many discouragements they toiled on, often not seeing their way to success. No one can realize what they experienced. Any one with less genuine pluck would have been driven to despair. But overcoming all difficulties they built up the printing plant, added considerable new material from time to time, until their present equipment is more complete than of many country newspaper offices. The Chesaning Monitor, to which name the paper was changed, is issued weekly, and gives general satisfaction in the community, as is evidenced by a growing list of readers, while the office has established an enviable reputation for good job work. In 1916 Miss Ingalls purchased the interest of her associate, Miss Ische, and has since conducted the paper along the same broad policy that brought success to their efforts.



Besides her active duties in the printing office, Miss Ingalls devotes much time to public affairs, being village marshall of Chesaning, an office which she administers with ability, and attended with many interesting incidents and some strenuous experiences. She is very popular in social circles, and has passed all chairs in Chesaning Rebekah's Lodge No. 404.

FARMERS EXCHANGE BANK

Byron G. Coryell, founder of the Farmers Exchange Bank, is the pioneer banker of Chesaning and, indeed, was the first to open a bank in the county outside of the City of Saginaw. His banking experience covers a period of forty-two years, all of which, excepting six and one-half years of training in the Second National Bank of Lansing, has been acquired in Chesaning.

He came to the village in 1881, and on September 8 opened a banking office in a small wooden building, doing a very moderate amount of business at the start. There was then only one brick building in the village, and the population could not have exceeded four hundred. He carried a line of fire insurance companies, did his own printing on a small hand press, and built up a successful business with the growth of the town. In the years following 1888 Frank T. Sheldon, C. W. Hopkins and Frank A. Greenfelder were associated with him in the Chesaning Bank.



INTERIOR OF FARMERS EXCHANGE BANK
(Showing Head of Moose Shot by Mr. Coryell)

On July 1, 1901, the private bank was reorganized as a chartered State bank, with a capital of twenty-five thousand dollars; and Byron G. Coryell was its first president. Four years later he withdrew from the State bank and opened a private bank in the town, under the title of Farmers Exchange Bank. As the pioneer banker he was well and favorably known to everyone in this section of the county, and gradually built up a profitable business. This bank transacts a general banking business, including a savings department paying four per cent, interest; and makes loans on approved real estate at exceptionally favorable rates.

Mr. Coryell also conducts a fire and life insurance department, having six fire insurance companies, one large life company, and two bonding companies. His transactions in this line amount to a considerable amount annually. He is actively identified with private and public institutions of Chesaning, and is president of the Grand-Saginaw Valleys Deep Waterway Association, which advocates the construction of a ship canal across the State from Grand Haven to Saginaw Bay. Mr. Coryell is a member of the school board which in 1917-18 erected a new brick school at a cost of fiftythree thousand dollars.

CHARLES W. CHEENEY

Charles W. Cheeney, an energetic and successful attorney of Chesaning, is a townsman whom his fellow men delight to honor and entrust with public office. He was born at St. Johns, Michigan, on May 4, 1873, his parents being George and Mary Berry Cheeney, both of whom were natives of New York State. They came to Michigan in the late sixties, and settled at St. Johns, but in the infancy of our subject they removed to Lansing, where the father followed the occupation of building contractor. He died in 1879.

In boyhood Charles W. attended the public schools of Lansing, and applied himself with such diligence that he went to night school to gain still more knowledge. His entry into business, at the age of fifteen years, was as office boy for the local telephone company, but he soon found more



CHARLES W. CHEENEY

lucrative employment as billing clerk with the American Express Company, in Lansing, Marshall, Bay City, Battle Creek and Detroit, at length serving the company as cashier. The training and experience he there received had much to do with his success in life.

It was in Detroit that Mr. Cheeney began the study of law, and continued it in the office of Chandler and Richards, of Corunna, Michigan. After a successful examination he was admitted to the bar in June, 1897, and soon after came to Chesaning and began the practice of his profession in which he has become well known. As village attorney he drew up an ordinance fixing the liquor license fee at one thousand dollars, which was adopted by the council. Later it was attacked by a saloonist who had paid his license and afterward ousted from his place of business. This case, which was of far reaching importance and attracted wide attention, was defended in the circuit Court by Mr. Cheeney, decided in favor of the village and carried to the Supreme Court. The case was finally decided in favor of the defendant—the Village of Chesaning, (See Michigan Reports, 188, p 17). Mr. Cheeney has also filled the offices of village clerk, circuit court commissioner, and clerk of Chesaning Township, which office he now holds.

On November 21, 1900, Mr. Cheeney was married in Saginaw to Miss Mildred I. Church, who was born in this State in 1880. By this union there were two children, Warren S. and Ruth I. Cheeney. Mrs. Cheeney died on May 13, 1907. Mr. Cheeney was again married on August 28, 1909, to Miss Merta E. Pray, of Dimondale, Michigan. Their home at Pine and Lincoln Streets is soon to be replaced by a new modern residence, with all late improvements and conveniences.

Mr. Cheeney is a member of the Episcopal Church at Chesaning; and his fraternal affiliations are with the Masonic orders, of which he is Past Master of Chesaning Lodge No. 194, F. & A. M.; Past High Priest of Chesaning Chapter No. 67, R. A. M.; member of Corunna Council No. 38, R. & S. M.; Chesaning Lodge No. 103, I. O. O. F. and Chesaning Chapter No. 153, O. E. S.