

UNADILLA TOWNSHIP
LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN
EARLY SETTLEMENT

The following items in the history of this township are extracts from an address delivered by T. R. Shields before the County Pioneer Association, at Howell, June 20, 1877:

"Previous to 1833 the land comprising this township was an unbroken wilderness, inhabited by a few half-civilized Indians, who had their camping-grounds on the north shore of the Sutherland Lake, a beautiful little sheet of water situated in the north part of the township, and named after Judge Sutherland, who located land near it, and who was a leading man in the town for a good many years. Those Indians held communication with a tribe in Washtenaw County, and the old trail which they used, together with a peculiar cedar bridge which they built over the Portage River, were objects of interest long after they had disappeared. . . . The tide of emigration from the East was moving slowly but steadily westward. So favored a spot as Unadilla could not long be neglected, and on the 20th day of June, 1833, one Eli Ruggles, of Brookfield, Conn., became owner of the first farm ever purchased in Unadilla, consisting of 40* acres of land, on which he reared his log hut and commenced his pioneer life. But this life did not agree with him. He sickened, went back to Connecticut, and died. His brother-in-law, Mr. Williams, after whom the village of Williamsville was named, became owner of the land.

307.Others followed in rapid succession. On August 1, 1833, James Craig, Archibald Marshall, and David Holmes, all from Hartford Co., Conn., made for themselves home, in Unadilla. David C. Edson located land on the 2d of August, 1833. Francis Lincoln and Henry Angel were the next to come. They located Aug. 24, 1833. They were followed by Jeremiah Bullock, Aug. 29, 1833. The next was Stephen Cornell, Sept. 23, 1833; David M. Hard, October 17th; Patrick Hubbard, November 14th; Richard M. Guggins, November 15th; Mary Winans, November 27th; and Curtis Noble, December 20th; all in 1833, Stephen B. Sales, who was for many years supervisor of the town, and who died a few years ago at Lansing, located Sept. 24, 1834; Levi and George Westfall, June 18, 1834; William Woodburn, of Wayne Co., N.Y., Aug. 23, 1834; David D. Bird, June 13, 1834; James McIntyre, July 10, 1834; Cyrus Jackson, June 24, 1834; and George W. Noble, July 22, 1834. In 1835 the locations increased. **One of the first to locate in that year was Luke Montague, from Cayuga Co., N.Y.** He was followed by Charles Bullis, Oct. 26, 1835; James Livermore, June 3, 1835; Abner B. Wood, March 5, 1835; John Shields, May 28, 1835; and William H. Dunn, June 4, 1835. Some of the leading settlers in 1836 were the Sutherland boys, four in number, who located Sept. 21, 1836. Emery Beale located on the same day of the same year; David Dutton, May 27, 1836; Philip Dyer, June 7, 1836; Samuel Townsend, of Niagara Co., N.Y., April 22, 1836; John Cool, June 19, 1836; Levi Clausen, Feb. 15, 1836; **Luther Chipman**, May 24, 1836; **A. S. Montague** and Patrick Keenan, in 1837.

"The first town-meeting was held on the first Monday of April, 1835, at the residence of Baxter Collins, and the following -named gentlemen were elected; Supervisor, John Drake; Town Clerk, Peter N. Hard; Justice of the Peace, Elnathan Noble; Treasurer, James McIntyre;

Commissioners, Selah B. Collins, Elnathan Noble, and Francis Lincoln. The township election Ƴ followed, taking two days,--the first Monday and Tuesday of October, of the same year. The opposing candidates for Governor were Stephen T. Mason, who received seven votes, and Edward Mundy, who received one vote. Seven votes were cast in favor of the adoption of the constitution, and three against it. It will be remembered that the town had been connected with Washtenaw County for political purposes, but was changed into Livingston in the year 1837.** The places of holding the election were changed to suit the convenience of the people. At one time it was held in Mr. Lincoln's barn, in the west part of the town, again at the residence of Mr. Noble, in the southern part, and still again at Mr. Martindale's, in the north part. **Mr. L, S. Montague**, now a partner in the law-firm of Waddell & Montague, in this village (Howell), was born while his father was attending the election at the last-named place, in 1847.

"The first store started in town was owned by John Drake. It afterwards became the property of one Dibble; it was situated where John Dunning's store now stands, in fact, part of the building occupied by Mr. Drake is, now used by Mr. Dunning. The first hotel was kept by Mr. Noble, near the place where Unadilla village now stands. The church and school-house were considered extremely ornamental, as they were the first brick buildings in the village.

"The first physician in the town was Dr. Field, a man of good ability, but very eccentric in his ways. Mr. A. Montague tells a very amusing story about the old doctor. A wager was made by the boys that they could make the old man believe he was sick, although in perfect health. They arranged so as to meet him one at a time, each one telling him that he looked very sick, and should go to bed at once. The plan worked admirably. The doctor went home and went to bed, and it was several days afterwards before he discovered the joke.

"The first child born in the town was Minerva Briggs, a granddaughter of Mr. Williams, who is now married and residing in the city of Ypsilanti. The first blacksmith in town was Abner B. Wood, who died a few years ago at the age of eighty-three. His shop was situated in the north part of the town, where his son William now resides. The first work which he was called on to do was for a man from Ingham County, who was on his way to Dexter to get some machinery mended, but found that the work could be done by Mr. Wood, and so went no farther. The first land cleared up in town was fourteen acres, now owned by **Mr. Montague**, on which one of his orchards is situated. It was cleared by Mr. Isaac Ray, who now resides in an adjoining town. It will be seen that I mentioned the names of fourteen persons who located land in Unadilla in the year 1833. It is a sad fact that eleven of the fourteen have been 'gathered to their fathers.' Three still remain, one of whom, Mr. James Craig, now lives in the town, and is the proprietor of the Unadilla House. He held the office of township clerk for a great many years, and is still enjoying that honor. The second, David Holmes, or Deacon Holmes, as he is usually called, is now residing in St. Johns, while the third, Mr. Francis Lincoln, who held the office of township treasurer for a number of years, is now living in Chelsea, and is still healthy and vigorous, with faculties unimpaired.

"Many are the pleasing anecdotes I have heard my father relate of Col. George Bennett, of Unadilla, while out with the 'boys,' among whom were Peter Morgan, A. S. Montague, Selah B. Fitch, Henry Cassady, Emery Beale, Judge Sutherland, and others. Old boys they are now, and widely scattered. Some in their graves and others waiting patiently their time,--happy in

the knowledge that life's great work has been well done, and the reward will surely come. One dark tragedy must be recorded. In the year 1845 the community was startled by the report that one Green was shot and instantly killed by a man named Cole, while in the woods near his house. Cole admitted the shooting, but claimed that he mistook Green for a deer and shot him accidentally. This story, however, was not generally believed, and Cole was looked upon as a murderer, although no positive proof was brought against him on the trial. Morally speaking, the town has always had a good standing; litigations are few and far between, while it is a fact worthy of particular notice that intoxicating liquors of any description have not been retailed in the town for the last twenty years, until quite recently.

"In the year 1845 the property in the township was valued at \$62,241; in 1846, only one year later, it was valued at \$65,647; and thus the increase kept on from year to year, until it reached the sum of \$520,275, according to the valuation in 1876, making an average of nearly \$500 for every man, woman, and child in the town. From the eight men who cast their ballots in 1835 have grown 285 voters.

"The sons of Unadilla have not been backward in winning for themselves positions of honor and trust. Gen. George Hartsuff was a Unadilla boy, and drew in with its fresh, pure air those dreams of greatness which led him on step by step along the rugged pathway of success. Being appointed to West Point, he graduated with honor, entered the service, was in the Florida war, remained hid in a marsh with nothing but his head above water for four days, without food, to escape from the Indians. He entered the war of the Rebellion, and won a reputation as wide as the nation itself. His brother William is postmaster at Port Huron, while another brother is a leading physician in a distant State. S. L. Bignall, one of the leading business men of Chicago, was a Unadilla man, and the Glenn Brothers, who are doing such an extensive business at Fowlerville, were for many years leading men in the town, while J. C. Shields, of Lansing, and E. M. Joslin, of Saginaw, are two more of her sons winning honors in the legal profession."

Mr. Shields mentions others who are yet residents of the county, and taking a prominent part in her general affairs, who look back to Unadilla as the home of their earlier years, and remember it when its forests were yet almost unbroken and its inhabitants were very few in number.

308. In connection with the history of Williamsville, to be found on a succeeding page, will be found various additional facts regarding the first settlement in the township, which was made at that place. The following interesting narrative concerning the early settlement of the township was prepared by James Craig, of Unadilla, and read before the Pioneer Society of Livingston County. After telling of a preliminary visit made to Unadilla in 1833 with David Holmes, in which they came by way of Ann Arbor to Dexter to find Mr. Nathaniel Noble, to whom they had a letter of introduction, and from thence to where Pinckney village now is, where they found a solitary family residing, Mr. Craig proceeds as follows:

"Alexander Pyper came out in 1835, and built a log house and got a piece broken up. My brother William came in the spring of 1836, and built the first frame house in that section. Rev. James Pyper, D.D., Deacon Holmes, and James McLearn, with part of his family, came in 1837. Archibald Marshall and family, and my mother and I, came in 1838. We had to go to

Dexter or Ann Arbor to do our trading, and pay \$1 for a bushel of potatoes, 20 cents per pound for salt pork, \$1 for a hen, and the same for a dozen of eggs, and \$10 for a barrel of flour; these were 'Wild Cat' times. The first wheat I had to sell was in 1842, which I took to Reeves' mill, and sold it for 40 cents, per bushel, and had to go three times before I got my pay. I thought then farming was a poor business.

"We have had the very best of neighbors; never had a quarrel in either school or road district. A pettifogger came to settle among us over twenty years ago, and tried his best to get us at loggerheads, but he could not come it, so he pulled up stakes and went to California. We used to have very sociable times in the long winter evenings, Charles Dunkin, Philander Gregory, S. B. Sales, Benjamin Sales, Archibald Marshall, my brother William, myself, and others, with our families, would meet at some one's house and spend a happy evening, and after enjoying the good things of this life, and before we parted, would settle at whose house we would meet next, generally about two weeks hence, I believe Unadilla has cost the county less for the support of paupers and the prosecution of criminals than any township in it, and that it has been effected through the influence of religion and temperance.

"On the 4th of February, 1837, the following-named persons united and organized a church, to be known as the First Presbyterian Church of Unadilla, viz.: **Luke Montague, Eunice Montague, Alexander S. Montague**, William Craig, Christiene Craig, William Pyper, Agnes Pyper, John Brewyn, Junius L. Field, Maria B. Field, and John Drake. William Craig and **Luke Montague** were elected ruling elders and acting deacons, **A. S. Montague**, Mrs. C. Craig, and Mrs. M. B. Field are all that are left of the original members. When I came on in 1838, I brought a trunk full of Sunday-school books, which I got from the school that I was connected with in Connecticut and other schools in the neighborhood, which served the school here and at Williamsville and Losco for eight or ten years. The Methodists and Baptists soon after organized churches, and now there are two Presbyterian one Baptist, and three Methodist churches in town. The church members were not generally the richest in this world's goods, and had sometimes to solicit outsiders to help,--those whose worldly interests were most benefited by good society.

"The temperance cause always flourished in our town, at first as Sons of Temperance, then as Good Templars, and now as the Reform Club, The first lodge of Good Templars in Michigan was organized in Unadilla, and named Pioneer Lodge, No. 1 over thirty years ago."

James Craig, the author of the foregoing, is a native of Scotland. In 1831 he came to this country