

General History of the Township
By General Abel Kimball
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Central Congregational Church, Madison, Ohio

Fifty years ago today this Church was organized, and it is proposed to commemorate the fact by services appropriate thereto. To the writer has been assigned the duty of preparing a paper relating to the "early settlement of the Township and its growth and progress to the present time." This is a broad field, embracing nearly eighty years since its settlement began. It is but just to say that material relating to its early settlement is exceedingly meager, owing to the fact that all of its early settlers long since passed away and but little fact or incident has been preserved.

Several partially completed attempts have heretofore been made to gather up incidents and reminiscences of its early history by two or three of its early and prominent citizens, but they have been removed from the earth and their papers either lost or destroyed. There is but one person living in the township who resided in it prior to 1812, and only three persons are now living who were residents at that time, hence the sources of information are few and fast fading away. Another reason for the meager amount of material relating to its early settlement is found in the fact that its pioneers had before them a sterner task than the preservation of material for future history; their work was to make history rather than write it. They were daily and constantly confronted with the problem: What shall we eat and drink and wherewithal shall we be clothed, and to its solution they gave every thought and energy. They had exiled themselves from their New England homes as thoroughly and completely in point of time and difficulties to be overcome in compassing the distance that separated them from, as did their fathers, the Pilgrims, from their homes in old England. Like their fathers they had come to stay. This was to be their home and the home of their children's children, hence no looking back to or longing after the comforts of former homes was to be indulged or tolerated, and only before them were they to look for future home comforts, happiness and the blessings of christen civilization. With firm faith for the future, with stout hearts and strong arms they began the work of battling with mighty forests, often under circumstances of pinching privation and want, but before their conquering stroke a vast wilderness of primeval forest has been made to give place to cultivated fields and farms, pleasant homes, schools, churches, and the blessings of a civilization which in many of its material as well as social and religious features resembles that of New England.

After the organization of the Connecticut Land Company a surveying party consisting of fifty persons was fitted out by the Company, and landed at the mouth of Conneaut Creek July 4th, 1796. The survey of that portion of the Reserve east of Cuyahoga River was immediately begun and was finished in October of the same year. Beginning at the south-east corner of the Reserve parallel lines were run north to the lake, five miles apart, and parallel lines west from the west line of Pennsylvania to the Cuyahoga River five miles apart, dividing the territory----- (illegible)-----square. These townships were

numbered from south to north, and their range from east to west. The township of Madison, the territorial name of which was Chapin, was number 11 in the sixth range, its southern boundary the same as at the present, its northern boundary the Middle Ridge. Township No. 12 lying between the Middle Ridge and the lake, not containing the required five miles square of territory was called a gore or fractional township. The township of Madison was one of seven townships in this survey which had been set apart as equalizing townships, by an equalizing committee, to be sold to actual settlers, in order to make an equitable partition of the territory among the share holders of the Lake Company and was surveyed and divided into tracts of 1000 acres each with the exception of a 1200 acre tract owned by General Paine. These tracts were divided into lots and sold to suit purchasers. Township No. 12 was owned in part by Cunningham, Ford, Ely, Cole, Bowles and others and was divided into lots and sold to purchasers.

Settlement

In June 1798, two years after the survey of the eastern portion of the Reserve had been made, Col. Alexander Harper, Wm. McFarland and Ezra Gregory, with their families, from Harpersfield, Delaware County, New York landed at the mouth of Cunningham's Creek in this township. This little colony consisted of about twenty persons; the entire population of the Reserve at that time was less than one hundred and fifty persons. Ten families were at Youngstown, three in Cleveland and two in Mentor; the last two had preceded them but a very few months. This little colony suffered much privation during the following winter; cut short of supplies (for the winter) by the loss of a vessel they had chartered to furnish them, they came near perishing by famine, having at one time been reduce to six kernels of corn to each person; but they were saved by the intrepidity of the sons of Col. Harper, --James, William, and John, Col. Harper himself having died in the fall of 1798. These young men made frequent journeys to Elk Creek, Pa., from which they packed on their backs and in hand sleds bags of corn, which was about all the provisions they had to sustain life during a long and tedious winter. Some of their journeys were performed on the ice of the lake whenever it was sufficiently strong to bear them. On the first occasion of this kind they were progressing finely on the ice when their sled broke through into the water. Some of them exclaimed, "What shall we do?" "Let it go," said James. "No," replied William, who was a different temper, "You go into the woods and strike a fire and I will get the grain." He then with great difficulty secured the grain, by which operation he became completely wet through and a cutting wind soon converted his clothing into a sheet of ice. He then went in search of his companions, and was disappointed in finding they had not built a fire, they had become so intensely cold as to be unable to do so. He soon had a cheerful blaze and then became a nurse for the others, who, on getting warm, became terribly sick. Esq. William Harper was a man of immense physical power and endurance and of great courage and bravery. Numerous incidents illustrative of these qualities might be mentioned. This much of reference is made to the Harpers, for the reason that they were identified with the township from its first settlement, the point at which they first landed is in the limits of the township and was early known as Harper's landing, and a part of No. 12 was known as Harperfield until the organization of the township. They permanently settled in the township of

Harpersfield where their descendants still live. In the year 1800 John A. Harper purchased a farm of 100 acres in township No. 11; this farm now owned by Stephen Warner, of Unionville. In 1802 he married and began the clearing of his farm. He, without a doubt, was the first settler in the township. In 1803 his son, Hon. Rice Harper of Sandusky, Ohio, was born, the first child born in the township. The next settler is supposed to have been James Thompson, who owned a farm on the Middle Ridge. Harper having sold his farm to Judge Abraham Tappan in 1804 or 5, bought the Thompson farm and nothing is known of Thompson after this time. Harper soon sold this farm to Uriah Bartram, who settled upon it in 1809, and bought the farm recently owned by George Hulett. Uriah Bartram settled where Mr. Chaffee now lives, his brothers David and Levi subsequently settled on either side of him, David where Lowell Cram now owns, and Levi where his children, Cortes and Laura, now live. The next settlement, in order of time after Thompson, was made by Ira Blanchard, on the farm now owned by William C. Barnes. This farm he sold to Phineas Mixer in 1811. Nothing further is known of him. Phineas Mixer, Sr. had previous to this purchase settled on a tract of land in No. 12 on the bank of the lake a little above Harper's landing, as early as 1804; the site of his log house was on the bank of the lake on the farm now owned by George Fisher, in 1805. William Miller and his son James settled on one hundred acres of land west of this village in 1807, and erected, just west of James Woodworth's present residence, a log house where he kept a tavern. Asa Turney settled on land now owned by his son Asa I. Turney and Orland Selby, in 1809. Samuel Potter and his brother William settled south of Unionville on the farm now owned by John Donahue, in 1809. Amasa Hill settled where Carlos Turney now resides. Timothy Holcomb on the late Brook's farm. Thomas Montgomery on the farm now owned by widow Rachel Smead, Archibald Harper on the adjoining farm now owned by John Kellogg, John Wood on the farm recently owned by John Thomas, Roland Ellis south of Unionville on lands now owned by Stephen Warner. These fifteen names are those of the settlers of the township who were residents prior to its organization, and these the various settlements made by them.

Organization of Township

At a meeting of the Commissioners of Geauga county on the 13th of March, 1811, it was ordered "that so much of that part of Harpersfield as lies in the county of Geauga and is included in township No. 12 and all that part of township No. 11 which lies north of Grand River, in the sixth range of the original surveyed township be, and the same is hereby incorporated, and erected into a separate township, to be known by the name of Madison, and also that the electors meet at the house of Phineas Mixer in said township, on the first Monday of April next, for the purpose of choosing township officers." In compliance with said order the electors convened. Abraham Tappan was chosen chairman, Samuel Potter and John A Harper judges of election, and Samuel Potter clerk. Fifteen ballots were cast at this election resulting in the choice of the following officers: Uriah Bartram, Asa Turney and Thomas Montgomery, Township Trustees; Roland Ellis and James Miller, Overseers of the Poor; John Wood and Daniel Turney, Fence Viewers; Uriah Bartram and Benjamin Custin, Appraisers; Luke Bonstead, Constable; Abe Chapin, Treasurer. The occurrence of two or three names in the above list of officers that do not

appear among the names of settlers is explained on the theory that they are the names of single men living in some of the families of said settlers; this explanation is known to be correct in two cases and is believed to be in all. After the organization of the township and during the year 1812 and 13 the following additional settlements were made: Lemuel Kimball and brother, west of this village; Nathan Warner where his son Oliver Warner now lives; Judge John Hubbard and Charles Curtis, on Cole Tract; John Cunningham and his sons where William Hulett now resides; Jesse Ladd Jr. on the farm now owned by J. L. Wood; Dea. Horace Ensign where he now resides; Dea. Curtis A Tisdell on the farm now owned by Hezekiah Dewey; Dea. Hanks and sons on lands now owned by Benj. Hanks and Capt. Palmer.

From 1813 to 1815 beyond which date time will not permit further mention, we have a few of its settlers: Silas Newcomb, Cotton Foss, Wm. W. Cady, Justin Cole, John Sherwood, Levi Loveland, Ezra Isham, Edward Bissell, Samuel L. Collins, Josiah Goodrich, David White, Gideon Ormsby, Arthur Waterman, Abel Ely, Joseph Cady. During the war emigration had been somewhat impeded; the surrender of Hull had filled the minds of the settlers with apprehension.

Fears were entertained that the Indians occupying the western portion of the Reserve and the State, who were in alliance with the British, would advance upon the settlements east of the Cuyahoga, consequently some of the younger portion of the settlers volunteered, and moved west as far as the Huron. No disposition on the part of the Indians being discovered to make the apprehended attack, the volunteers in a few months returned.

The writer well remembers an incident illustrative of the general state of alarm. His father and family, when moving to Ohio in 1812, at Walnut Creek, Pa., met the messenger who was carrying the news of Hull's surrender, and also several settlers, who had buried most of their valuables and were returning in haste into Pennsylvania and elsewhere to escape the anticipated attack. He was advised to go no further, but remarked that he had come too far, under too many difficulties, and was too near his destination to turn back then, and would go ahead until he met an Indian.

After the close of the war and the completion of the survey of the portion of the Reserve west of the Cuyahoga, emigration largely increased and settlements were rapidly made throughout the entire Reserve; as many as 150 persons in a single day were known to pass through the town on the South Ridge to various points in the Reserve for settlement, and through hospitalities of Jesse Ladd's Tavern and the civilities of other settlers in the vicinity, many of those whose pilgrimage was leading beyond Madison, were diverted from their original plans and induced to take up their abode here. Special efforts were made in this direction in cases where appearances seemed to indicate the desirableness thereof. This fact suggests practical hint to those of the present time and generation.

Schools and Churches

The settlers recognizing the value and importance of schools and churches made early provision for them. The first school in the township was taught by Mary Crary in a log building near Nathan Warner's settlement, in 1813. The next school was taught by Aaron Wheeler in 1814, at Unionville, then known as the four corners. The first school building erected in the township was located on the northwest corner of the Park in this village, in 1815, and was called the Block School House. The little hamlet of settlers that had gathered about the vicinity of this house was long known as the Block School House neighborhood. This building was occupied for schools, religious and township purposes until 1819 or 20, when the Town House was built on lot No. 1 Cole Tract on the Middle Ridge. It continued to be used for school purposes, however, until about 1830, when it was superseded by a frame school building situated on the east side of the park. The settlers of this part of the township early and wisely conceived and executed the purpose of establishing Public Grounds, upon which to erect in future time houses of public worship; a subscription with 44 signatures affixed, was raised for the purchase of said grounds, a contract was made with the owner of the land selected for the purpose, and an article was given by the owner for its conveyance on payment of the consideration therefore, on April 19, 1816, a deed was executed by Abraham Tappan and wife to Jesse Ladd Jr., Silas Newcomb, Lemuel Kimball, Horace Ensign, and 40 others, of 3 ¼ acres of land, "To be by them held in trust, on the conditions and for the purposes, as follows: To be improved, tenanted, occupied and made use of as a common, and may be occupied and used by any or all religious societies of Christians of the township of Madison, who may associate hereafter to build a meeting house or meeting houses, or other place or places of worship. A part of said common, not exceeding four rods in width and on the east side, may be occupied and improved as a burying ground."

This burial lot was situated where the bank and Mrs. Holbrook's residence now are. It was thought to be un-adapted to the purpose and an exchange was made, by the aforesaid owners in trust, conveying to Silas Newcomb this burial lot, and said Newcomb executing and conveying to them August 19, 1817, one half acre and 28 rods of ground, "To be tenanted, improved and occupied and made use of as a burying ground or deposit for the dead, and may be occupied and made use of by all religious societies of the township of Madison." This lot was situated on the corner of West Main and Eagle Streets. In 1854 a cemetery association was formed which purchased the site of the present Village Cemetery, to which the bodies deposited in the former burying ground were removed. In 1875 this cemetery was conveyed by deed of trust to the incorporation and has since been maintained by it. Captain Newcomb also conveyed to the same parties by deed a piece of land extending from the northeast part of said public grounds east to lands now owned by Elias Strong, along the south line of the highway "To be held in trust for the benefit and accommodation of the public highway." This was subsequently extended to the west line of land owned by John Kellogg, thus showing the generous forecast of the early settlers in providing for the future convenience of the township.

The first frame church building erected was built in 1829, upon the public grounds aforementioned. A subscription was raised signed by nearly all the citizens of this portion

of the township, excepting those who were members of the church worshipping in the Town House at the Middle Ridge, sufficient to erect and enclose the frame, when a proposition was made to those members of the church worshipping at the Middle Ridge who were residents of this vicinity, to complete the building and have the preference in its occupancy but not to the entire exclusion of other denominations. This proposition was accepted and the building was completed and ready for occupancy in 1831. Since that time there have been and are now eight church buildings in the township, two Congregational, four Methodist, one Baptist and one Catholic. This building was occupied for religious purposes until 1842, when the present church building was erected.

When the County of Lake was organized in 1840 in order to enlarge its area that portion of township 11 south of Grand River, which had on the organization of Madison Township been annexed to Thompson, was re-annexed to Madison, thus changing the geographical center from the Middle Ridge to this village and making perhaps the largest township in area in the State, being 9 or 10 miles long on its east line and 7 or 8 on its west line. This village thus becoming the center, the seat of government was transferred to it and here since then the business of the Township has been transacted, and the church building was donated to the town for its purposes. In 1867 it was put into its present condition. Prior to the introduction of saw mills and for some time thereafter, the dwelling of the settlers were entirely built of logs. The first frame house in the Township was built by Josiah Goodrich in 1815 and was situated west of Mrs. H. C. Ensign's residence. It is now standing in the rear of Thos. Green's residence in this village. It is claimed, however, that a frame house was built by John Cunningham which is still standing on the farm of William Hulett, prior to the Goodrich house, Before the building of Grist Mills in this or adjoining townships, the settlers resorted to various contrivances by which to crack or crush their grain for food; one method was to dig out the top of some huge oak stump and adjust an immense wooden pestle thereto, and in this rude mortar crush their grain. It is not many years ago that one of these inventions was said to have been still standing. In 1815 the first saw mill in the Township was built by Joseph Emerson; in 1816 he also erected the first Grist Mill, both upon the mill site now owned by Mr. Rutherford. Since the erection of these mills and including them, there has been built 18 different saw mills and 6 gristmills.

Business Enterprises

The first business enterprise was begun by James R. Ford, who bought a stock of dry goods and groceries and put them into Jesse Ladd's corn house in 1815 or 1816. Other stores were subsequently started in various parts of the township. One near Oliver Smead's, one at Trumbull's mill and at Unionville and in this village, prior to 1830. In 1826 John Kellogg and Caleb Stratton build a sawmill on Grand River on the site recently owned by Cady & Strong, which in 1827 they sold to Col. Luther Trumbull, when he built a gristmill, also a woolen factory, which were destroyed by fire in 1843; the factory was never rebuilt. In 1818 William Brett and James Dayton built at Emerson's mills a carding and cloth-dressing mill, which was subsequently converted into a woolen factory, which was destroyed by flood in 1842 and never rebuilt. After the sale of the

carding and cloth-dressing mill to Roland Moseley, Lonson Brooks and James Dayton built a similar mill west of Madison Village, which was propelled by trend power. In 1849 the Madison Woolen Factory Co. was organized in this village; a building was erected and machinery placed therein, and continued in operation until 1859, when it was abandoned, the machinery taken elsewhere and the building sold to H. A. Roe, who began and continued the manufacture of cheese vats and cheese factory fixtures until his death, since which the business has been conducted by his sons. Prior and subsequent to 1820 four tanneries were erected in the township, two of which are still in operation.

Probably no one enterprise had contributed more to the rapid settlement and development of the township, particularly the northern part of it, than the iron furnaces erected in and adjoining it. Providence, through natural causes, had provided immense deposits of iron or bog ore within its limits; these deposits extended through the township east and west and into a part of the towns adjoining on either side, and south as far as the South Ridge, but were chiefly found north of the North Ridge. On the discovery of the value and extent of these deposits, Philander Raymond, Richard Toot and Samuel Wheeler, in 1825 organized the Erie Furnace Company, and built a blast furnace located on the south side of the North Ridge on Cunningham's creek. They continued to manufacture iron from this ore until 1831, and then they sold to Uri Seeley and Samuel Wilkeson & Bro. of Buffalo. This firm was known as the Arcole Furnace Co. It has been estimated, by one fully competent to judge, that this company manufactured five tons of iron daily. A store was operated in connection with the furnace, which annually inventoried over \$150,000 of stock. An idea of the value and extent of this ore deposit can be gathered from the fact that this furnace continued in operation till 1852, when it was abandoned, and in addition to the ore used by it, immense quantities were sold at the Geauga Furnace in Painesville, the Railroad Furnace at Grand River in Perry, at the Concord Furnace and at the Clyde Furnace on the county line at Grand River. In 1828, Charles Hoyt established a Pocket Furnace on the Dock Road, where iron Plows were made; this foundry long since ceased to be. In 1842, A. A. Genung established another furnace of a similar sort; in 1851 Wm. H. Genung came into possession and to the foundry business added that of machinist. Shortly after the Arcole Furnace Co. was organized an effort was made to develop the mouth of Cunningham's Creek by dredging, docking and otherwise, into a harbor. At that time a sufficient amount of depth of water, it was believed, could be readily found for the purpose and through the instrumentality of Col. Robert Harper and the Furnace Company, an appropriation was obtained from Government sufficient to begin and partially complete the undertaking. A dock, or pier, extending into the lake was built, upon which a lighthouse was erected, but from a failure to secure appropriations, or from a belief that the project was impracticable, it was abandoned. The dock for many years, however, was a point for loading and unloading vessels and steamers with lumber, timber, pig iron, castings, etc.

Shipbuilding was an enterprise early begun at the Dock. In 1823 a little steamer was built and launched, said to have been the first built west of Buffalo, and the third boat propelled by steam on the lake. The last vessel built here was by the Bailey Bros. in 1863.

It is not a pleasant duty to turn from the consideration of those useful and honorable enterprises that have marked the growth of the town, to make mention of those which in this day are considered pernicious and baneful, but truth requires us to say that in the history of the township there have been six distilleries in operation. Unpleasant as this fact seems, if we place ourselves back fifty years or more it will be found that they were universally regarded as legitimate business enterprises, and it should be remembered that temperance in those days signified moderation, while now its signification is abstinence. These distilleries furnished a market for the surplus grain of the farmer, and their distillations were a sort of legal tender for all debts public and private, a kind of circulating medium of the community, and that without which nothing of a public character could be well done or take place. But with the growth of modern temperance opinions and sentiments, these institutions gave way, and it is a matter of profound gratitude that long ago "the Smoke of their torments" ceased to ascend from the township.

The first settlers of the township were men of little wealth; they bought their land on credit of the landowners or their agents, at a cost of about \$2.50 per acre, and as settlements increased and roads were laid out and bridges built the price advanced. In contrast with the wealth and population of the township at its organization, it may be stated that its present valuation for purpose of taxation exceeds one and one-half millions of dollars; its population is estimated at 3,000 or 3,500; its voters 800. The variety and fertility of its soil is unexcelled, its healthfulness proverbial and the source of long life to its citizens and of lament to its physicians. The township Board of Education maintain eighteen school districts and eighteen schools, exclusive of the village schools, at an expenditure in 1878 of \$3693, at a cost per scholar, estimated from the average enrollment, of nearly eleven dollars for 27 weeks of school. The Board of Education of this village, which was incorporated in 1868 for the purpose mainly of maintaining a higher and better grade of schools, expends for the support of the public schools \$2612, at a cost per scholar of nearly fifteen dollars for 40 weeks of school, the full course of which includes a period of ten years. The Madison Seminary on the Middle Ridge, was chartered in 1845, and built in 1847, and has, under various teachers been continued until this time. From within its unpretending walls have gone forth those who have in after years become ministers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, judges, and congressmen.

Of the social life and character of the early settlers, it may be briefly said, that their friendships were genuine and sincere, their hospitalities ungrudging and generous. Common hopes and interests made them all akin and they were prompt and ready to help each other in any time of need. Music had a prominent place in their social life. A singing school was taught by Joseph Talcott or "Uncle Joe" as he was familiarly called, as early as 1815, in the "Block School House." The music was sung to the grand old hymns of Dr. Watts, and ranged from the majestic major to the plaintive minor. A class of music known as fugue was very popular; it was somewhat peculiar in its structure, each part in succession would be required to "boldly wade in" among its fugues, and subter-fugues, when a general melee of voices would ensue, but suddenly and miraculously out of dire confusion there would be ushered in the "welcome day" of concord and peace. There were many sweet voices among those ancient singers, that have long been silent in the

grave, but their sweetness and melody still linger in the memory of their few surviving friends. An instrumental band was formed in 1819, composed of the following members and instruments:

David Bartram, Leader, Clarionet
Dr. Andrews Merriman, Clarionet
Dr. Alex Wheeler, Clarionet
Dr. Storm Rosa, Clarionet
Oliver Pray, Clarionet
Charles Smith, Clarionet

Joseph Cady, Hautboy
Dea. Horace Engisn, Clarion
Dea. Isaac M. Martin, Bassoon
George Turney, Bassoon
Esq. Harlow Bailey, Bass Drum

If the music of this band was in any measure equal to the character and ability of its musicians, it must have been of a high order.

It would have been an agreeable privilege to mention the names of many citizens who have lived in our midst whose useful and worthy lives have been an honor to the community and the Church, whose active interest in and connection with the growth and development of the town has been prominent, but the limitations of this paper forbid. Many facts, incidents, and reminiscences, for the same reason are omitted. The citizens of the township, from its infancy until now, have been of New England origin chiefly, among them have been those claiming descent from the Plymouth Colonists. It is a remarkable fact and worthy of mention, that from the formation of the first church, and from the organization of this church until this time there have been among its members those who were and are directly descended from the illustrious Elder Brewster, upon whom the fortunes of the Plymouth Colony in its early movements more largely depended than upon any other person; and of whom a distinguished English historian says: "If the honor is to be given to any single person, he must be regarded as the father of New England. " Others of Madison's early settlers, who were members of its first church and of this church, find their ancestors among the early colonists of Massachusetts Bay and of Connecticut.

In the foregoing recollections of some of the most prominent events connected with the early settlements, growth, and progress of the township, we believe the statements to be substantially correct, though some slight errors may exist in dates. In closing this paper the writer desires to express the hope that whoever shall write the history of the township for the next half century of time, shall be able to note no decadence of virtue or intelligence in its citizens, that its material prosperity may be abundant and substantial, and its churches largely augmented in membership and power for the upbuilding of the kingdom of our Savior and Lord.