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# WATERLOO TOWNSHIP IN BRIEF

In 1805, the territory of Michigan was organized by Congress and thirty-two years later, it was granted statehood. Eight years before this, in 1829, Jackson County was organized. It was attached to Dexter township, Washtenaw County for judicial purposes. On July 30, 1830, the entire county was organized as one large township called Jacksonopolis. The following year it was renamed Jacksonburgh. Early in 1832, it was split into three townships: Grass Lake in the east part, Jacksonburgh in the middle and Spring Arbor in the west part. On March 23, 1836, the township of East Portage was set off from the northeastern part of Grass Lake. It consisted of all 36 sections of Town One South, Range Two East plus 12 sections of Town Two South, Range Two East.

The first white settler in this area was Hiram Putnam, who arrived about 1834. He was soon followed by his two brothers, Joseph and Guy. In the spring of 1835, Abram Croman, Sr. came with his family from Scio, Washtenaw County. His son, Abram, drove the first team into the area. Three other families came during this year. They include Earl Pierce, Andrew Correll and Patrick Hubbard. In 1836, many other families arrived in the area, including William Hall, A. Scidmore, Isaac Smith, Slocum Sayles, Charles F. Graber, Michael Reithmiller, Jacob Hudler, William Paddock, Solomon and Erastus Nichols, Abram McMelon, Jeremiah Riggs, Leonard VanHorne, John Schneckenberger, Gilbert H. States, Jacob Harr, Jacob Boyer, Martin Landis, Sr. and his sons, John, Jacob and Martin, and Casper Artz, who was the township's first blacksmith. Many of these men attended the first township meeting, held at the residence of Jeremiah Riggs. Fourteen voters were present for this first election which made Andrew Correl, the supervisor and Earl Pierce, the town clerk. This same year, the first militia company was organized with Abram McMelon chosen as captain. Frederick, son of Jacob Landis, was the first white child born in the township that fall.

1836 was also the year Patrick Hubbard built the first sawmill and in 1837, he hired Samuel Quigley, a millright from New Jersey, to build a gristmill which was completed the following year.

In 1837, Miss Margaret Paddock taught the first school in a newly completed house built just for that purpose. Several more families moved into the township including Lamech Sweet, David Williams, Jackson Simpson, Harmon Marsh, A.T. and Samuel Gorton, Anson Opdyke, Reuben Croman, Garrett and Jacob Brink, George Ingalls, Felix Hess and James Osgood. Soon many more families migrated to the area. The most prominent ethnic groups of settlers were the Irish, who settled in the southeastern part and the Germans, who settled in the northwestern area. By 1874, there were ten schools in the township. Among them were the Palmer, Strobel, Waterloo, Dewey and Mt. Hope schoolhouses, with 19 teachers and 362 students.

During the winter of 1837-38, the first marriage took place in the township uniting Lathrop Hubbard and Miss Christina Croman. In 1838, the first post office was established with Patrick Hubbard as the post master.

In November 1839, death claimed Martin Landes, Sr. as its first victim in the township. He was buried in what later became known as the Landes of Trist Cemetery located on the corner of Trist and Moeckel roads. A Lutheran church was built there the following year. In 1853, this congregation had a disagreement which resulted in a split. Part of the members left and built the present St. Jacob's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Reithmiller Road. Those remaining formed the Zion Methodist Church and were tied with the Salem Grove Methodist Church in Washtenaw County on the "Francisco Circuit". They held services until about 1908/9 when the church was abandoned. Other churches in the area include the present United Brethren Church, which was established in 1849 as the Waterloo Mission with P. Lammon as the elder. The present building was built in 1874. The United Methodist Church was built in



1853 and was abandoned in 1910 when the congregation moved into their present building. There was also a Baptist church in the village of Waterloo and the Mt. Hope Church, which was built in 1896, as a charge of the Leoni Methodist Church.

During the winter of 1846-47, East Portage township was renamed Waterloo through the influence of Patrick Hubbard, being the name of his former hometown in New York. A few years before this, Ralph Updyke began construction of a mill in the south central part of the township. It was followed by a blacksmith shop, built by John Siegrist, around 1850. Soon a buggy shop and two general stores were built along with several other residences. This small community had no formal name at this time but according to one legend; since everyone in the area had at least one cow for milk and probably a calf or two, the people of the community would refer to it as "Calftown". After a few years, the general store, operated by Mr. Weinhold, closed but the community continued to thrive. About 1889, the name was changed to "Trist" and permission was given for the establishment of a post office which was located in Sam Siegrist's general store until 1901. The mill finally closed in 1924 and in the early 1930's, the general store closed.

On May 6, 1858, a group of men held a meeting in the home of Harmon Marsh. They decided to organize a burial corporation. Amzi A. Quigley, John K. Yokum, and John Henry Hubbard were chosen to draft a set of by-laws for the corporation and on June 8th Samuel Quigley was selected president; John K. Yokum, clerk; George Croman, treasurer and Peter Finch, sexton. They began what is known today as the Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Waterloo township also claims the honor of organizing the first successful "Grange" in the state of Michigan. It began in the fractional school district #1 with B.W. Sweet chosen as master. The organization was completed on November 19, 1872 with 27 members present. The following year they moved the headquarters into the village of Waterloo, then a thriving community with a general store, post office, wagon shop, blacksmith shop, gristmill, sawmill, school house, two churches, Methodist and Baptist, and several residences.

Finally, in writing of Waterloo, one must not overlook the Waterloo Band, which was organized in 1878 with 14 members. They often performed at fairs, ice cream socials and other local functions. There were a few years of interrupted activity caused by the two world wars. During the 1930's there were as many as 50 members but on the average there were usually 20 members. Unfortunately, like so many small town bands which had folded 30 years earlier, the Waterloo Band played for the last time in the fall of 1976.

by Bob & Marilyn Hoffman