

Sidney

SIDNEY TOWNSHIP AND SIDNEY CENTER (SIDNEY)

The Township of Sidney was organized January 5, 1837. The Board of Supervisors chose the name of "Sidney." The first election was held April 6, 1837 at the home of Joshua V. Noah.

In 1836 a terrific tornado swept through portions of the Township and destroyed some of the heavy timber; then frost killed the corn and vegetables, and the leaves changed color early and fell to the ground. Next fire swept through that part of the country, burning for several months and destroying much of the valuable timber. A second growth of timber soon made its appearance everywhere, becoming almost impenetrable.

Smoke hung over the whole area, almost shutting out the sun, and nearly everything belonging to the settlers was destroyed. Fences, stacks of hay, wagons, everything they had prepared for the winter months was destroyed. It was with great difficulty that they kept their cabins from being swept away.

Suffering among the people was intense but food was given them from other sources or they would have starved. The fires continued until late in the fall, when the rains came and winter snow put them out.

The government supplied food to the settlers in west, with Jacob Farris in charge of distribution. He had introduced a bill for that purpose. It was almost impossible to get a day's work anywhere. Abner Hall cleared 10 acres of land, laying up the underbrush, ready to be burned, for 10 shillings an acre.

Since there were also many trunks of pine which had been left unharmed, Sidney ranked very high for many years in the pine lumber industry. Later after the removal of the pine forests, agriculture developed rapidly. The very best lumber brought \$8 a thousand and whole spruce pine trees \$1 standing. In fact, the best tree in the woods was not worth as much then as the stump is now.

Henry Gillmore, (Minnie Brooks' grandfather) a native of New York, came to Sidney Township in the fall of 1834, and entered 80 acres on the southwest quarter of Section 21. He built the first permanent dwelling in the township. He and his sons built a large shingle shop. They planted corn, potatoes, vegetables, flax and wheat.

The first marriage in the township was that of Theodore Gillmore to Eunice Dow, and Homer Miel justice of the peace, in Fairplain, officiated at the ceremony.

Some of the early settlers were: Orin Phelps, John Flake, Calvin Mason, Phineas Swift and Edwin Kittle.

In the fall of 1835 J. V. Noah and his son Joshua H. Noah, and a hired man, James Jewell, came to the township. The following spring Noah brought his family (May 1836). His son William H. Noah also came at this time.



Sidney - Looking South.



Building the cement sidewalk from the depot to the center of town with donated labor.

Other settlers were: Lyman Johnson, his wife and 4 children (1835), George Van Ness, William Fields, Ira Barlow, his wife and 2 children (1836), Spencer Barrett, Calvin Mann, Alanson Snow, West Drake, William Lampman and Watson & Anthony Conner, brothers (1835).

Dr. S. Derby, was the first physician settling near Derby Lake, for whom the Lake was named. He remained here for several years. Dr. John Bradish was another physician in Sidney; also Dr. Chasency E. Shephard. He resided in Fairplain but practiced in Sidney. He usually made his rounds on foot, accompanied by his dog, and carrying a gun.

The first death in Sidney was Mrs. John Ryan. She was buried on land which they settled, on Section 21, but later was removed to the cemetery at Sidney Center. The cemetery at Sidney Center is on land that formerly belonged to Joshua V. Noah's farm.

The nearest postoffice in Sidney township up until 1862 was at Stanton. On September 29 of that year the postmaster general, who was Montgomery Blair, appointed Joshua V. Noah as postmaster at Sidney Center, and the postoffice was kept at his house for the next nine years.

The village of Sidney for many years was known as "Sidney Center" since it was the center of Sidney township. Its beginning dates from the coming of Joshua V. Noah in 1835. The Noahs located land and built a cabin about a half mile west of the present village and when the other members of the Noah family arrived and the Lyndon Johnsons, they all settled around the same territory.

William H. Noah, son of Joshua V. Noah, is stated to be the first citizen of Sidney, for with his wife and two children, he built a cabin in the village, on the site of the property owned later by Lars Peter Hansen.

William H. Noah established the first store in Sidney, in his house, with money saved from being a soldier in the Civil war, and with a hundred dollars he bought groceries at Iowa and brought them to his cabin. He used to walk through the woods, via Indian trails, to Iowa with a gunny sack over his shoulder to get the groceries. Later he built a store for Charles Kent, of Fairplain, who was in business for about a year, when he became discouraged, and the store reverted to Noah, who ran it for several years. This store later became the property of Frank G. Hansen.

Ezekiel Gebbe established the first sawmill at Sidney, across from the cemetery. After his death his son and William H. Noah had charge of the mill. Later William H. Noah bought out the heirs in the business and took his two sons in with him. Still later Noah and his one son, George, ran the mill as long as there was timber or until about 1900.

SCHOOLS

The first Sidney school was one made of logs with donated labor. The work was supervised by Joshua V. Noah. It was a one-room school with four windows on each side. The windowsills were extended about a foot and a half and these served as the students' desks. By each window, or desk, there were benches. Thus the students were sitting facing the light. At the far end of the room was the blackboard and the teacher's desk.

John Noah, the youngest son of J. V. Noah, at the age of 86 made models of the first school and furnished with it a descriptive paper, naming the first teachers and pupils.

The second school house was still a one-room structure. The siding was of boards going up and down. It was built in 1867, and is now used as a workshop at the residence of Lavern Noah east of Sidney Center.

The third school building was a two-room building, and was used until 1960, when it was torn down to make way for the lovely bank building which now stands at this site.

Memories of a Nine year old Boy of the Pioneer School Days of 77 years ago.

A duplicate of the first public school building erected in Sidney township, Michigan, is now a fine museum built by donated labor. The work was supervised by Mr. Nathan, J. V. Noah.

It was built last, one story, covered with a split-shake roof. It was situated on north-west corner of north-west corner square No. 1, Section No. 2.

The first teacher was Mrs. Martha W. Sherry, Michigan township.
The second teacher was Mrs. Lydia Wheeler, Michigan township.
The third teacher was Mrs. Lydia Carter, Cassata.
The fourth teacher was Mr. Brewster.

The organ paid Mrs. Brewster for the services for each week for board and profit.

Her pupils were:

George Noah	John Williams	Robert Taylor
Math Noah	Larry Williams	Henry Taylor
Abner Noah	Abelina Williams	John Taylor
John Noah	Henry Williams	

Four years later (1866) this building was turned over to the use of District No. 1.

Section No. 1 was built on same building at the same time and place. The J. V. Noah also supervised the building of this one. It was located on north-east corner of the north-east corner of the northeast quarter of Section 22, the corner of the township.

One of the earliest blackboards of 1868, Mrs. Nancy Stephens of Sidney township, was the first blackboard in the second school building. The teacher is wagon, harness, and advanced to \$2.00 and board per week.

This model was made by J. V. Noah of Cedar Springs, Michigan, 1935. At the age of 86 he was a member of the school of 1868. One other member of this school, Larry Williams (teacher, teaching in Stanton, Michigan, 1934).



A model of the first Sidney School with the maker, John Noah, the youngest of the eleven children of Joshua V. Noah.



The second one-room Sidney Schoolhouse, built in 1897. It is now used as a workshop at the residence of Lorenz Noah.



This is the third and last Sidney Schoolhouse. The Sidney State Bank is now located at this site. The School was torn down in 1960.



Congregational Church of Sidney, now Sidney Christian Church.

CHURCHES

Sidney had two churches, the Congregational Church and the lutheran Danish Lutheran. Before the Congregational Church of Sidney was organized on June 18, 1890, a Society was founded at the home of Henry Gilmore, and they met in the first log school house for services for about a year. Later the Society was broken up. The Congregational Church of Sidney was organized on June 10, 1890, with fourteen charter members.

William H. Noah was the first deacon and Mrs. Edwin (Dix) Kittle was the first clerk of the church, which position she held for seventeen years. Before the erection of the church, which cost \$1000.00, services were held in the school house. The church was built in 1887. Sheds were along the back of the lot where the horses were tied during the horse-and-buggy days. The cornerstone was laid in June and it was dedicated in January, 1889. The first minister was Rev. A. W. Claffin.

The Sidney Congregational Church later became the Sidney Christian Church. The Ladies Aid Society was organized and has been in operation up until the present day; however, it is now operated under the name of Sidney Christian Ladies Aid.

The Immanuel Danish Lutheran Church was erected in 1903; then on April 23, 1963, it was decided to meet with the St. John's Danish Lutheran Church which was located west and north of Sidney on Grove road. On November 29, 1963 the new church, named Faith Lutheran, was dedicated. It was built on Sidney Road just west of Sidney.

BUSINESSES

The back part of the F. G. Hansen store was the first store building in Sidney. Then later Frank Hansen built on to it facing Derby R.d. Now it has been moved and used as a private dwelling.

Just west of this store is the Nelson Meat Market and Hotel. At one time the Bank of Sidney was located in the front part of this building, first floor. The back portion of the first floor was used as living quarters. Dr. F. O. Teff lived on the second floor. At the present time Ervin Hopkins has a barber shop at this location.

On the west side of Derby road was A. G. Groveson's general store; later Otto Petersen's; then Rudy Jensen's and then William's hardware store. Now it is used as living quarters.

The D. L. Petersen General Store, located on the east side of Derby road across from the Sidney State Bank, is operated now by a third generation. It was first operated by Hans Peter Petersen and his son Peter Luther Petersen under the name of H. Petersen and Son, from 1905 - 1946. After the death of Hans Peter Petersen, the store was operated under the name of H. Petersen's Son. Now it is known as the D. L. Petersen General Store.

On the same side of the road as the Petersen store was the Christofferson Meat Market, later known as the Carl Tyrrell's Meat Market and still later it was Lyndon Noah's grocery store.

On the same side of the street was located a drug store, ice cream parlor, poolroom, postoffice and telephone office. The postoffice and telephone office was owned at one time by N. J. Rozman. Also the Gleason Hall was on this side, and a hat store owned by Mrs. Allen Brigham.

The Adams' were early residents of Sidney, coming in 1878. Andrew Adams ran a day service from the depot. At one time there were two passenger trains.



F. G. Hansen Store (The back part of this building was the first store built in Sidney Center)



A. G. Groveson's General Store, Later Otto Petersen's General Store.



Nelson Meat Market - Hotel.

stopping at Sidney, one in the morning and one in the evening. There was also an afternoon passenger train, called "The Flyer" that passed through without stopping. Alameda Adams ran a boarding house in Sidney.

There were at one time two blacksmith shops. They were operated by James Anderson and Waldemar Thomson.

There was a cheese factory at Sidney which had an output of about 40,000 lbs. of cheese annually. It was a cooperative enterprise. The building is still in existence and is being used as a private residence.

Charles Burgess owned a large elevator and dealt in coal, lime, cement, lumber and tile. On July 17, 1920 the elevator burned. One means of employment for a number of women was that of sorting beans at the elevator.

The Sidney depot with its pot-bellied stove was the place of waiting for the arrival of both the morning and evening trains. Meeting the trains was one of the pastimes for the people of this community.

Near the depot were several potato houses and nearly 300 cartloads of potatoes were shipped from Sidney each year.

The Sidney people know how to get things done as evidenced by the picture of the building of the cement walk. It was built from the depot up to the stores at the center of Sidney, and was built with donated labor.

In the older days people did not have refrigeration so potatoes, apples, etc. were stored in their Michigan cellars. People churned their own butter from their cream. They had cisterns in which to catch the soft rain water for the washing of clothes by hand. They pumped their drinking water from a well and carried the drinking water inside the house.

In the early days instead of going for a ride in an automobile, one would go for a ride with a horse and buggy. Saturday nights were quite an occasion when everyone dressed in their better clothes and congregated at the Center for the purchase of the week's supply of groceries. On many Saturday nights in the summer outdoor free movies were shown on the school grounds where the Sidney State Bank now stands.

A roller-skating rink was in the long back portion of the former drugstore.

Sidney through the years had a fine community spirit. Activities were many at the DRS Hall. Here the Danish Brotherhood Society met for regular meetings, and the Hall was used, too, for dances, wedding receptions, neighborhood plays and political meetings.

The DRS Hall was sold to the Christian Sidney Church, formerly the Sidney Congregational Church, where the Church now holds many activities.

The Gleason Hall in the center of the town hosted the Gleason activities; social dinners, and activities of the former Sidney Congregational Church.

The Gleason Hall was sold to the Danish Statehood Society, who held their activities there for some time. However, at the present time the Sportsman Club has possession of the building.

The Sidney Woman's Club was organized at the

farm home of Helen Cooney in the neighborhood of 1924, by Mrs. Thomas Mussen and Mrs. Dr. Tefft. This organization has been active through the years and is still an active Club.

They bought the first piano in the third and last Sidney School house.

They contributed to the memorial in memory of the World War II veterans, which is located in the baseball park at Sidney. They also helped furnish the park. Sidney has always been very active in baseball.



Sidney Cheese Factory.



Don E. Peterson's General Store - Then.



Don E. Peterson's General Store - Now



*Christofferson's Meat Market -
Isor
Carl Tjost's Meat Market
Isor
Lyndon Nook's Grocery Store.*

*Elevator - Ben Pictor -
Estelle Nook, Myrt Fish, Minnie (Pictor)
Christofferson, Anna Minard, Cary Pictor.*



*Sidney
Bourdeloup.*



The Sidney State Bank was constructed in 1961 on the corner formerly used for the Sidney Schools. It was remodelled in 1973.



Burgess Elevator - Charley Burgess at the far right, Billy Noach with the team and wagon. The Elevator burned on July 17, 1920.



Depot and potato houses, Sidney, Michigan.



Sidney Pure Marquette Station which was torn down a number of years ago.



*Sidney Band -
 (F to r) - Albert Peterson, Harold Burgess, Clarence Noach, Elmer Noach, Art Noach, Earl Noach,
 (back - l to r) - Robert Quarter, Lynn Noach, Charley Burgess, Billy Noach, Carl Krognson, 7 Pows.*