

The Early History of Wacousta

By Mrs. Cornelia Hazard, Eldest Daughter of Nathaniel I. Daniells

Written through 1918

Mrs. Hazard died May 24, 1919 at the age of 85

It having been discovered by the many sharp curves and circuitous flowing of the Looking Glass River at this point and for some distance above, that the development of a mill power was possible; an association was formed in July 1837, with the avowed purpose of organizing a company, to be known as the Waterloo Joint Stock Company. The Stockholders were Alexander Goodell, Charles Hubbell, Orson E. Hall, Reuben R. Gibson, Thomas O. Hill and Charles A. Trowbridge.

They purchased a tract of land in Watertown described as "lying upon the Looking Glass River, and embracing the southeast fraction of the northeast quarter of section 17, township 5 north of range 3, 1 west, also the east half of the southeast quarter of section 7, the same township, also the east fraction of the northeast quarter of section 18; also the northwest fraction of the southwest quarter of section 8; also the northwest fraction of the southwest quarter of section 8; also the west fraction of the northwest quarter of section 17, in the same township." The object of this purchase, as stated in the Articles of Agreement, was the improvement of the real estate, and the laying out of a town therein, and the disposal of lots for building purposes.

The company appointed Charles R. Spicer as their resident agent, and at once began a system of improvements that eventually involved an expenditure of twelve thousand dollars. A sawmill was first erected, and soon after a gristmill, a dwelling having meanwhile been constructed for the accommodation of the men employed on the works, and superintended by William Cryderman. A store was also opened by the company and operated by Charles Hubbell.

But it soon became evident that the outlay and improvements were on a much more elaborated scale than the population in the country could support, and so was doomed to a sad failure financially. At a meeting of the stockholders (the date of which is not obtainable now, no record of it being available or known to be kept), a lease of the property, including four hundred and thirty-four acres of land and the mills and dwelling, was secured by Charles R. Spicer for the

sum of eight hundred dollars to be paid annually. Spicer then took possession of the property, but failed to make any payments on the lease, and finally left for New York State. The property was ultimately sold at auction in the city of Detroit, and was purchased by Cornelius O'Flynn and William K. Coyle, each owning the undivided half of the whole.

The earlier history of Clinton County published in connection with that of Shiawassee County records that they reorganized the company after obtaining the title, but the present historian whose personal knowledge extends back to 1848, has no knowledge of that fact, and is fully confident that that assertion is erroneous. The prevailing report was to the effect that Messrs. Benj. Silsbee and Harvey Hunter had several years before leased the property and that the term of the lease had expired already some years, and the property was not being used, developed, or even kept up to normal conditions, and the men who had bidden it off were very anxious to dispose of it. Then it was that Nathaniel I. Daniells, then residing in Detroit, had made the acquaintance of William K. Coyle, who having learned of Mr. Daniells' decision to again take up farming, told him of the Wacousta property and proposed to him to buy it, or at least his half of it. And, after considering the matter and examining the records as to title and all the pros and cons, Mr. Daniells decided to buy Mr. Coyle's undivided half of the whole property, which he did, and leased the other half to Judge O'Flynn. Messrs. Silsbee and Hunter had previous to entering into partnership, been engaged as peddlers throughout the country, and meeting casually agreed to establish themselves at Wacousta in trade. Much of the business was done on a credit basis, which was generally prevalent in those days, especially with country merchants, and many of the new settlers having little to dispose of besides maintaining their families were indebted to the merchant firm.

The name Waterloo was first decided upon for the village, but it was learned that there was already a post office in the state by that name, and some early settler having an admiration for the character of the historic Indian maiden, Wacousta, suggested the name as a substitute, and it was at once adopted.

By reason of peculiar circumstances and as later events proved, the coming to Wacousta of Nathaniel I. Daniells marked a sort of epoch in the history of the township, as well as in the village itself. To make clear the conditions that led up to his removal here will require a short history of his previous life. He was born in the town of Scipio, Cayuga County, New York on

May 4, 1808, and on February 9, 1832, was married to Miss Lucinda Reed, of the same township, and together on May 1 of the same year, they started with their frugal outfit for housekeeping in West Bloomfield, Michigan, twenty-four miles west of Detroit, four miles north of Farmington Village, and four miles west of Franklin. They came by way of the Erie Canal to Buffalo, from whence they took passage on one of the two small steamers, then plying on Lake Erie to Detroit, and from thence to the home of a cousin of Mr. Daniells, Joseph M. Irish, two miles west of Franklin, and one and a half miles from a tract of two hundred and forty acres of land Mr. Daniells had purchased two years previously on a journey he had made to this state, and at which time he had hired ten acres to be cleared and sowed to wheat the previous fall (1831). He built a substantial log house and made other improvements upon it, and in six years had one hundred and forty (*unknown*).

Active into the interests of his community, making himself useful in many directions. Active in mind, he had acquired a fair education for those times, and being a born teacher, his services were sought in that direction and he taught three winter terms during their residence there. He was also a gifted penman, and spent two winters in writing schools, making the first winter all his pupils quill pens, but the second winter he introduced the then wonderful newly invented Joseph Gillott's steel pens, a great accomplishment and convenience. But before some of these enterprises, in about 1835, there seemed to be need of a store in the vicinity and he entered into partnership with a neighbor, Joshua M. Coonley, and together they engaged in general merchandise, purchasing their goods in Detroit. They did a flourishing business, but after a year or two were caught in the "Wild Cat Panic" of those years and were ruined by it. His partner put his property into the hands of his wife and sons and left Mr. Daniells to pay the indebtedness. And after struggling along for a few years, he found he was not going to be able to extricate himself, and in the fall of 1846 sold his fine farm, with barns and orchards and moved his family of seven children and wife to Detroit, hoping to find some employment there, sufficient to support his family and be able to take advantage of the better facilities to educate his children.

But after a couple of years he found the effort was too great, and becoming acquainted with William K. Coyle, as previously related, he decided to buy the undivided half of the Wacousta property, and also leased the other half to Judge O'Flynn. Mr. Daniells had previous knowledge of the organization of the Waterloo Joint Stock Company as an older brother, Elias Daniells,

then living in Troy, Oakland County, and their father, William Daniells of Scipio, Cayuga County, New York, had been through Wacousta to Grand Rapids in the spring of 1836, and had noted and admired the fine forests and the native fertility of the soil of all this section of the country. But Elias Daniells, becoming dissatisfied with the extensive improvements the company decided to undertake, objected to them, and they offered to buy him out; and he accepted their terms and withdrew from the association. So after examining the title to the property, and becoming convinced that it was perfect and as Mr. Coyle represented it, Mr. Daniells decided to come and look it over. Mr. Coyle had told him that two men, Benjamin Silsbee and Harvey Hunter, had held a three year lease of the property, but the lease had expired some time previous and had not been renewed, and the men had become disaffected towards one another, and the property was being allowed to run down, but that the title was perfect and clear.

Mr. Daniells was no doubt favorably impressed in his decision by the fact that the capital had, the previous winter, been removed from Detroit to Lansing, making the prospect good for the more rapid development of the surrounding territory than would otherwise have been probable. So, in the summer of 1848, he took one of his two horse teams and a wagon, brought some articles on the way to pay his expenses, and came by the way of the Grand River Turnpike to Wacousta. He returned eight or ten days later, having sold his goods, and team and wagon, and reported that Messrs. Silsbee and Hunter had said if he came on here they would fight him, which astonished Coyle and O'Flynn, they insisting that it could not be possible for them to sustain any such action in a court, as the two men had no possible showing for a title, and finally judge O'Flynn assured him, that if they fought him, he would come out and defend him. So, Mr. Daniells decided to buy Mr. Coyle's undivided half of the property, and lease the other half of Judge Cornelius O'Flynn, and on Monday, October 1, 1848, left Detroit, with household goods, wife and six of his seven children (the oldest daughter having remained in Detroit to complete a course in dressmaking, and did not come on until early in January, 1849). They were obliged to proceed slowly, as he drove his six half-blood Durham cows that he had retained since leaving his farm in Oakland County. Preparations had been made for them to take their noon meal from a lunchbox accompanied by the milk from the cows, and nights they were able to be entertained at hotels, or some ample farm house; and on Saturday, October 6, they arrived about noon at the home of a cousin resident here, Ezra P. Daniells, who owned the farm at that time which was known to the later generation as the Edwin K. Corson farm. He secured a fairly comfortable

house for the place and those times, situated on the southwest corner of section 8, and moved his family into it.

A few weeks later, his youngest brother, Nelson Daniells, who had been in the mercantile business for a year with his nephew, William D. Clark, in Niles, Michigan, decided to dissolve the partnership and divide the goods, and as there was an opening here, to bring his goods and open a store. There was no building possibly available for such a purpose except the one into which Mr. Daniells had moved his family, so he procured another building, open and uncomfortable, and not only placed his family into it, but boarded his brother and two carpenters for several weeks until the first building could be made ready to open the store and accommodate Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Daniells for a dwelling. And during that first very cold winter, Mr. N.I. Daniells kept a thirty-inch box stove red hot much of the time, and used to remark facetiously to those sitting about, that if they could not keep warm inside, perhaps they could if they would go out the east side of the house and catch the hot air as it came out.

In the meantime, what had become of the threat of Silsbee and Hunter, that they would fight him from obtaining the possession of the property? When Mr. Daniells, soon after arriving here, turned his cows into the only cleared field on the premises to pasture, Mr. Silsbee set his savage dog on them and chased them about the field, compelling them to jump the fence without its being lowered, and caused the ruin of one valuable cow. And besides, he took Mr. Daniells on a warrant for trespass to DeWitt, then the county seat. When Mr. Daniells looked about for a lawyer to defend him, he found that Silsbee and Hunter had fee'd every lawyer in the county but one – a Mr. Hollister – probably Issac Hollister, spoken of as being one of the attorneys in the first lawsuit held in the township before Justice of the Peace, Josiah Lowell, in 1848. Mr. Hollister was a keen lawyer and loved the right and to see fair play, and he said he wouldn't be fee'd, and if Mr. Daniells wanted him to defend him, he would do so; which he did, through all the following suits which upon one pretext or another, and with adjournments and all the hindering and devious devices of the law resorted to by a lawless and loosely organized community, were continued until the next July, nine months after he had come here and too late to put in important spring or summer crops. But he cleared off a small tract that had been nearly cut off for wood and planted it to corn; and when they took him to DeWitt for trespass, he answered to the summons and left his hired man to plant the corn. Judge O'Flynn came out from Detroit early in the winter and spent a week, but could not withstand the law's delays and

adjournments of the lawless community and officers, and felt obliged to go back to his duties and leave them to fight it out alone, and Mr. Daniells said he had not the heart to ask it.

The men in possession had, some time previous (I am not aware whether or not after they learned Mr. Daniells had bought the half of the property and leased the rest), taken all the machinery out of the gristmill, and taken it to DeWitt and stored it, and no attempt was ever made to get it back, but the sawmill was in shape, that it could be, with some repairs, made to do fairly good work; but in order to do it the dam needed some repairs and to be built up to a higher level. Men about the country were anxious to getting logs and have lumber sawed. And, too, there was a call in Lansing for all the lumber that could be manufactured in the surrounding country. So the first fall, soon after arriving here in 1848, Mr. Daniells, as it was getting late in the season, and what was done must be done quickly, made a "bee" and invited the men within reach to come and draw gravel, and otherwise assist to raise the dam and increase the head of water and power. But Messrs. Sillsbee and Hunter had been in trade and business here for many years, and many men still owed them. So they said to their debtors, "If you come to Daniells' bee I'll tax your ox, or steer, or whatever they had which could be taken by a pretense or process of law, which threat restrained many who wished to come. But a few, who were not indebted to the business partners, came with ox teams, wagons and shovels, prepared to work. Mr. Deitz, in his gruff manner and speech in monotone, which all will remember who ever knew him, said "I don't owe 'em anything. I'll come!"

There came also a man of noted fighting propensities, currently reported and never denied, hired to forcibly, if necessary, prevent any work being done on the dam. So, when a wagon, owned by Elder William Wood, and drawn by his young steers that he had raised and just broken to drive, was loaded and had come to the race bridge to cross, this bully stepped in front of the young steers and struck one of them across the face with a shovel and blood spurted immediately from its nose, and Elder Wood, angered at the dastardly act to his young team rushed up and struck the bully on the back of the head with his shovel and Mr. Daniells stepped between the two to protect the Elder Wood, but the bully, William Ransom, jerked him to the ground and kicked him in the face, tearing one side of his nose loose and otherwise injuring him so he had to go to Dewitt to a doctor for repairs.

Mr. Daniells was no believer in mobs or mob-law; he preferred to settle his differences through the orderly processes of the law, and he upheld and maintained the dignity of the law in all his transactions. If the wholesome conditions of a law-abiding community had prevailed here he would have instituted a suit for assault and battery; but with the prevailing sentiment he decided to ignore the matter and disregard it.

But Mr. Daniells continued his struggles, often being taken to DeWitt on a warrant or a summons, to which he always answered, but left men to continue the work, and towards spring, after much vicissitude and many struggles, got the sawmill in condition to turn out tolerable product, hiring a sawyer to do the sawing and mechanical work. He often was hailed to court on one trumped up charge or another, and all the suits were tried in DeWitt, many of them though I am not sure whether all, before Justice Van Scoy, and they always attracted great crowds from all the surrounding country, and many were the legal battles and exciting occurrences that took place on those occasions. And it would be a matter of profound interest if any boy of sufficient age, to realize the gravity of the issues that attended those lawsuits, could relate them today as they occurred then. But, as has already been stated, the possession of the property finally came into Mr. Daniells' hands in the mid-summer of 1849, and for a time all went comparatively well. But, as will easily be believed, factions were created in the community, some favoring one side or some the other. But Mr. Daniells upheld the law strictly, committing no breaches of law or order, and permitting no one to do any disorderly act in retaliation for the many petty and vexatious acts of lawlessness he was compelled to endure. These last sometimes were of one form and sometimes another; if an axe or crowbar was left outside, it might be missing, and later a rumor would be afloat that they might be reposing in the bed of the river.

In the summer of 1849, Elias Daniells, then residing near Perry, New York, but who still owned several tracts of land in this vicinity, and had ever since his first acquaintance with the country taken a great interest in it, and admired its beautiful forests of valuable timber and rich agricultural possibilities, came and spent several weeks with his brothers here, and in the spring of 1850, he sold his fine farm in the New York State and took as partial payment a stock of goods of several thousand dollars value and brought them on here, and formed a co-partnership with his brother Nelson, in trade. Late in 1850 or early in 1851, word coming to the ears of the brothers, that Mr. Silsbee was going to Detroit to buy the other undivided half of the mill

property, the brothers, Elias and N.I. Daniells, left early the next morning for Detroit. Elias Daniells bought the property of Judge Cornelius O'Flynn and had only just finished making the transfer and exchanged papers when Mr. Silsbee appeared prepared to carry out his rumored threat. Foiled in this, he soon after bought the land on Section 8, on the south side, and in the bend of the river between the two bridges and placed an injunction on raising the mill dam, claiming that the mill pond overflowed more land than allowed in the meandering of the river in the original survey. The issue was drawn and suit brought in Chancery, and though the brothers paid no attention to the injunction, and kept the dam raised and sawmill running whenever logs were supplied, they would not risk to build a gristmill, as they wished to do, until the injunction was removed.

In the meantime, another brother, David I. Daniells, who had several years before been admitted to the bar following his graduation at Hamilton College, New York, and subsequent preparation therefore, and had several years previous settled in Janesville, Wisconsin, came on in the spring of 1852, and concluded to join the partnership with the two brothers, Elias and Nelson; the original land of the mill company, after Elias bought the second half from Judge O'Flynn, having been divided, Nathaniel I. taking his half of the property in land on the east side of the main street, and relinquishing his claim to the mill site proper with thirty-four acres belonging to the latter site. Later, David I. Daniells bought the fractional west one-half of northeast, one-fourth of section 18, containing 110 acres, and situated adjacent to the land belonging to the mill company.

In the spring of 1852, the company moved the body of the old gristmill to the southeast corner of section 7, and added twenty feet in length to it, the same size and height as the original, and of the whole constructed a hotel which was opened in the spring of 1853, and the first public ball was held in it on July 4th of that year.

In about the spring of 1854, after much litigation and all the vexatious delays and adjournments that lawyers could continue, Judge George Martin, a lawyer of a strict integrity and regard of equity, but who had not been long in the office of judge, becoming convinced that the whole litigation was instigated and continued for malice, rendered his decision against the plaintiff, and in favor of the mill company.

And then they proceeded in their preparation to erect a gristmill, which was completed, and began work in the early fall of 1855, and supplied a great want to the then growing country. But all surplus flour manufactured had to be freighted by team and wagon to Detroit, and goods bought were brought in on return trips.

But in the summer of 1856, the Owosso branch of the Grand Trunk Railroad having come through as far as Bath, much of the freighting was transferred to that route.

In all the business of the mill company, Nelson Daniells was the business head, merchant, bookkeeper and general manager, the others helping in general way, but deferring to Nelson's management.

The Daniells brothers were all men to take an active interest in public affairs, and though somewhat aggressive in their views, were all of uncompromising integrity, upholding and maintaining the law and rights of others in all respects, and so made themselves a force in the community, and also advocating a high standard in educational matters, and seeking and selecting the best teachers for their schools. Benjamin Macomber taught the school in the winter of 1848-1849; Burtis H. Beers in the winter of 1849-1850; and James W. McMillan in the winter of 1850-1851. The summer schools were also of the same high order.

Watertown Township, as finally set off and organized by itself, evidently suffered in the early days from having been connected first with all the west half of Clinton County, and more especially later in its union with Eagle, the latter having a more varied surface and not only the Looking Glass River running across it from east to west, but the Grand River runs across the southwest corner of it, and also what was known as the Beers' Creek, which was quite a stream before the country on it was cleared and gave the water power for Mr. Beers' sawmill.

All these natural facilities made it attractive to settlers who intended to follow farming and depend on the products of the soil for a living. (*Sentence about Eagle Township, unreadable*) It follows as a logical supposition that most of the local improvement of highways, etc., should be made in that part of the township making it a more attractive location for new arrivals seeking a home.

South of Wacousta after going three-fourths of a mile, although the road had been cut out and cleared four rods wide and some causeways laid, there was not a cleared space or house to the county line, four miles, and the whole four rods in width, except a bare wagon track that was rarely travelled, was a solid mass of blackberry brush as high as a man's head for several years. On the north line of the township, David R. Cutler, from Massachusetts; settled early on the east line, Samuel Forman and Mr. Roberts, already mentioned in this history. And a very few scattered clearings and houses had been started along the Grand River Turnpike through this township. But Eagle seemed, even so early, already like an old settled country, with well-cleared fields and productive, although, most of the settlers still lived in log houses.

The industries here had mostly been going to decay for some time, although Harvey Hunter was still in trade here, but soon after, Mr. Daniells won his suit for the possession of the mill property. Mr. Hunter sold out his store and moved to his farm on the southeast quarter of section 9, where he became a prosperous farmer.

In the spring of 1854, Benjamin Silsbee sold his property here to Charles M. Derbyshire, from near Clarkston, Oakland County, and moved to a tract of land he had bought in Eagle, and erected a fine brick house and surrounding buildings. His niece, Mrs. Mary Esther Silsbee Reynolds, and family occupied it and made a home for him, until his death in 1880, as he had never married. Late in the year of 1858, Daniells sold his share in the company to the other brothers, David I. and Nelson, and moved back to New York State.

(6 unreadable words) Bissell came with his large family from Lyons, and settled on the northeast corner of section 7 and erected a blacksmith shop here in the village, which was a great acquisition for the new community, he being a skilled mechanic and versed in all the intricacies of home mechanics known in those days and of perfect integrity in his trade; and all the blacksmith work had, for some time before, to be taken to Dennis Macomber or Mr. Philo Beers, in Eagle, three and a half miles respectively distant. He continued in the village for several years, but finding the half mile distance between his home and shop too great, he finally moved his shop to the southeast corner of his farm, where he continued business in his trade. In the spring of 1864, Alexander J. Haggert came from Lorain County, Ohio, and established a blacksmith shop in the village and did an excellent business; but, two years later, sold out his home and business to John Force, who came with his family from Pennsylvania, and a son of his wife,

Alonzo Waldron, and a fine mechanic, took his mantle ten or twelve years later, and carried on the business here almost down to the present date and still, at about three score years and ten, does some home work for the farm necessities about two miles from his old stand here.

Benjamin Niles came on in the spring of 1849, with his family of wife and two sons, and settled on the fractional west one-half of the southwest quarter of Section 18. He was an active and earnest Christian and excellent citizen, and pursued his business as a farmer until his rather early death in 1860.

Stanton E. Hazard of Farmington, Oakland County, whose preceptor was Dr. Alansom Hudson, of that town, and his medical education was acquired at the State University at Ann Arbor, a man possessing in high degree the special characteristics necessary to a successful physician, of dignified demeanor, a bout of sympathetic and courteous address, sincere and candid and not deceived by shams, he won the confidence of all who came in contact with him, and twenty-seven years of successful practice in his profession, enduring the sacrifices and inconveniences of the pioneer physician's life then passed away, beloved and nearly idolized and greatly mourned by a very large constituency. In the spring of 1861, Dr. Stokes came from Westphalia and remained a year.

About 1872 came Dr. Samuel Manzer, of Sanilac County, a recent graduate of the State Medical Department of the University at Ann Arbor, who remained eight years, going from here to Tawas City, but returned in the spring of 1889, and remained until his death in the autumn of 1891.

In about 1873, Dr. Richardson, of Canada, came and remained two years, going from here to Carson City, where he had a successful practice for several years.

In the autumn of 1879, came Dr. A.L. Hyatt, of New York State, and a graduate of New York City University, but whose preceptor had been the elder Dr. Shank, of Lansing, and who on the death of Dr. Hazard in April 1880, succeeded to his practice and occupied his office. He proved a man of much strength, not only in his profession, but in public matter and was greatly regretted when on the death (*unknown words*). In April 1889, he decided to remove to Lansing; and was called back in many cases during the rest of his life, his death occurring in January 1899.

Following the removal of Dr. Hyatt to Lansing, in 1889, Dr. Perley Pearsall, of Grand Rapids, came here and succeeded in establishing a very good practice, but remained only about two years, finally going to Kalkaska, where he has maintained an extensive practice and excellent reputation.

Dr. Hiram Manzer and his son Charles came to Wacousta from Homer, Michigan, about 1891 and erected a store building in 1893, and sold drugs and groceries in addition to the practice of his profession, but sold out in 1895 and went to Georgia to join a colony of Civil War Soldiers, but later returned to Homer, Michigan, where he died some years since.

Dr. Artz, graduate of a Cleveland Medical College, came here in 1892 and took up a practice and remained five years.

Dr. J.E. Hinkson, graduate of M.A.C. and of the Medical Department of the State University at Ann Arbor, came here in the spring of 1896 doing quite an extensive practice for some years. He removed to Lansing in 1913, but is still employed by some of his former patrons.

In the autumn of 1898, Dr. Samuel Wilson came here from Shelby, Michigan, and three years later sold out his business to Dr. R.D. Boxx, of Washington D.C., who is still here and enjoying the confidence of a large constituency in his profession.

In the spring of 1849, Nelson Daniells was elected township clerk, and it developing on assuming the office, that the town treasurer, up to that time had been required to give bonds, the irregularity was corrected. Fifty-five voters were polled, and other officers elected were:

Supervisor	Elihu P. Ingersoll
Justice of the Peace	Henry Houghtaling
Treasurer	George W. West
Comm. of Highways	Asahel R. Marvin
Assessor	David R. Cutler
Assessor	Eliel Ingersoll
Constable	Daniel Shirman
Constable	Ray G. Tifft

Constable	George W. Kinney
Constable	Benjamin F. Hamil
Overseer of the Poor	Benjamin Silsbee
Overseer of the Poor	Ezra P. Daniells

In the spring of 1852, Nathaniel I. Daniells was elected Justice of the Peace to fill the vacancy caused by the removal of Henry Houghtaling from the township, and he was elected thereafter four consecutive terms, making seventeen consecutive years service in the capacity. During this time it was after asserted that he did more business than all other Justices within the reach of jurisdiction; and the county treasurer of the time said that he paid more fees into the treasury than any other justice in the county. In his session of court, he maintained the dignity of a judge, and members of the legal profession who came before him soon learned that they could not trifle with or ignore his decisions of propriety, or deal too largely in invective without coming to grief. On one occasion, one of the profession, more venturesome than the others, and who considered himself well versed in legal lore, essayed to ignore a decision, and was fined for contempt, and left the court room precipitately, without coat or hat, to avoid the payment of his fine. But when he came into the same court some three years later, Justice Daniells reminded him that he was under conviction in that court for contempt, and could not plead in that court under those conditions, and he drew forth the amount of fine, handed it to the court, and was then allowed to proceed. This attitude created a respect for the law in all the community that would not otherwise have been produced. His hobby was for equity, to learn the facts and find where true justice lay and decide accordingly, and he never allowed the technicalities or any pleadings of the legal profession to bias his judgment; and he never had a judgment reversed in the higher court. He also had to make out many of his papers himself, the blank forms not being so universal then as now, and not always procurable. This was especially true of warrants, and he never had a legal paper broken down in any court. After the seventeen years of service in that office, he made no effort for re-election, and was out of the office for a few years, but was then elected without his solicitation and served eight years, when he found the trying of lawsuits worried him too much and having reached the age of eighty-five years, refused to run again.

David I. Daniells practiced law to some extent while living, but passed away in April, 1874, at the age of fifty-seven, leaving his wife and daughter; the wife dying in about 1905 or 1906, and the

daughter is the wife of a prominent Methodist Episcopal Minister, Rev. W.E. Doty, at the present time pastor of a Lansing church.

Langdon Daniells, a cousin of the Brothers Daniells, came here from Chenango County, New York, in the spring of 1861, and practiced law some, but the first lawyer to establish and maintain a law office here was Henry J. Patterson, who after having served through the Civil War, returned and took up the study of the law under Randolph Strickland, of St. Johns, and admitted to the bar in 1888. In the fall of 1890, he was elected to the office of Prosecuting Attorney for Clinton County, and removed to St. Johns, making that city his home until 1916, when he removed to Grand Ledge, his present residence.

In the summer of 1850, Nathaniel I. Daniells was appointed Census Enumerator for four counties: Clinton, Gratiot, Isabella and Clare; but at that time there were only a few small settlements in Gratiot County, less than a dozen families on the south line of Isabella County, situated adjacent to Gratiot County, and no inhabitants at all in Clare. Later, in the same year, he was appointed Deputy Marshall to go to the western shore of Michigan to prosecute the trespassers on the public lands, men having gone there and bought comparatively small tracts of land, erected sawmills, great gang saws in many of them, and then after cutting the pine trees on their own land, had cut the trees on adjoining lands, going up to the great rivers and floating the logs down to the mills. And they found a ready market in the prairie states on the opposite side of Lake Michigan which had practically no timber. This had proceeded until it had become a great evil and robbery, and the United States, to which much of our western land still belonged, finally became awakened to the true state of affairs. He made three trips, two of three weeks each, and one of four weeks, and they were more perilous than he realized until some time later. Once he went alone, on horseback, traversing the dense woods for long distances without seeing a house or human soul; once he took a man with him and once, two men. On one of the trips, a mob gathered at one place, and it was with great trouble and only with integrity and good sense, the proprietor of the log hostelry where he was being entertained overnight, and by much argument and explanation that they were finally convinced of the danger and folly of harming a United States officer, that they were induced to cease their threats and disperse to their homes.

In the summer of 1870, Mr. N.I. Daniells was appointed Census Enumerator of the east half of Clinton County, which he performed satisfactorily.

The Indians, who were often here and encamped in quite large numbers, sometimes for weeks at a time in different places along the river and engaged in hunting and fishing, as well as lounging about camp, were from the reservation in the township of Danby, Ionia County, called Shimenecon, and were peaceable; and although inclined to beg some, were not thieving or disorderly, and the settlers soon became accustomed to them and did not fear them; and many of the settlers sons played with the Indian boys and learned to understand many words in their language. But occasionally, there would occur an incident well calculated to get on one's nerves. At one time, during the first few weeks after their arrival in the place, when Mr. Daniells was absent from the house, the big, powerful Indian, "Shant-Come-Again" went into their home and asked Mrs. Daniells for whiskey, he having evidently had some from some source already and was visibly under its influence. On being told by Mrs. Daniells "Cog-a-go" (all gone), he picked up a hammer that lay on a windowsill near him and swinging it threateningly, said, in a loud tone, "Kinnaboo," which means kill. Mrs. Daniells calmly reached out her hand as though she thought he meant to hand it to her, and he, laughing to see that he could not frighten her gave her the hammer; and no Indian ever tried to frighten her afterward. But when they found they could frighten the settlers, more especially the women, they would occasionally do so, and then laugh immoderately over the trick. Their mode of entering a house is doubtless well known; they would open the door as still as possible, thrust their head in and look all around without saying a word, and if one accosted them with a "bi-jon," would sometimes respond, but usually quite indistinctly and sometimes not at all. But it was quite apt to startle one when they would sometimes come up slyly and lay their face against a windowpane, where one was sitting at work, within a few inches of the window. The writer well remembers one such occasion, although not being really afraid of them, yet was inclined to hasten her pace somewhat when meeting them on a lonely road when alone. Most of them evidently understood the settlers when they talked to them, but nothing could induce them to talk except in their own circumscribed words and speech. They brought their furs and the products of their labor or hunting to the stores and bartered them for goods, and their trade was much sought by the merchants, a good Indian day's trade being one to take not of. But at the reservation, they had a preacher named Joseph, of the Methodist denomination, and it was said religious services were held regularly on Sundays. Joseph preached once in the schoolhouse and the writer well remembers attending the services.

One of the industries of the early days was the making (*unknown words*) for much a tall price was always obtainable, and occasionally some man would burn a charcoal pit. These served two purposes: to add to the revenue, and at the same time clear the land, a prime necessity to be accomplished before crops could be raised for the sustenance of the family. And of the sayings of the country, in the very early days, was that the only way to get money was by the sale of coonskins and black salts. Another extensive industry during the spring of that year was the manufacture of maple sugar, on which many families depended for their supply for the whole year, and the man who had no sugar bush on his farm was considered very unfortunate. But its manufacture was carried on in a very laborious manner, evaporators, or even the large sap-pans of a later date not having been invented. The sap was caught in the sap troughs and gathered with two pails and a neck yoke over the shoulders, and the sap boiled down in large kettles, caldron kettles or large brass kettles. Later, pine buckets were to be had and were a great improvement; and storage capacity and sap pans, and still later the evaporators, which facilitated greatly the labors, always arduous and fatiguing.

In the early days, before much land was cleared, and it was a problem how to feed the cattle through the long winters, and many had to depend partly on "browsing" them, which consisted of cutting down small trees and allowing the cattle to eat the buds and the tender branches, Mr. Daniells, coming in the fall and finding very little hay or straw to be bought, found a man who agreed to keep one of his cows through the winter for a certain sum; but going for her in the spring, found her too weak and poor to be driven home, so was compelled to give her up and left her to pay for her winter's keeping.

As he had not yet come into possession of his land and could only keep those he had left, those he kept mostly by browsing, which though they were not accustomed to, they soon learned. There were localities where beds of wild leeks grew, acres in extent, and they started to grow and become green very early in the spring, and the native cows, nearly raving from hunger, would eat them with avidity, and though it rendered their milk very offensive, it was a great blessing, providing them with green food and helping greatly to tide them over until other forage became available.

But the first spring, in 1849, when Mr. Daniells drove his cows to the beds, two or three miles away, through the forest, at the first sniff of them they scoffed at them, and would have none of

them; and tossing their heads in scorn at such uncivilized food, some of them arrived home sooner than their owner did. So other means had still to be provided until other green food came, much of it consisting of occasional plats of wild grasses.

Occasionally would occur some incident or experience to discourage almost beyond endurance. In the fall of 1857, the forests abounded with squirrels, both black and gray, but mostly black, the previous winter having been very mild, which was supposedly the cause. Mr. Daniells had a ten acre lot of a very heavy crop of corn, a part of which is now the east part of the present cemetery, and finding that there were many squirrels in it, went with his gun to see what he could do about it. After a few days spent in it, he found it must be a fight to the finish, or he would harvest no corn; and for several weeks, he and one of his sons, and sometimes both sons, spent every day from earliest dawn to dark, and though it sounds utterly incredible and ridiculous, the writer can vouch for the fact that they killed, by actual count, over a thousand squirrels in that ten acres of corn, and by that means saved most of their crop.

No early history of Watertown would be complete without an account of the labor, hopes and bitter disappointment that the businessmen underwent to secure the Lansing and Ionia Railroad to pass through Wacousta. This place is situated in a direct line from Portland to Lansing, and a survey was made in the early autumn of 1866; the Directors from Ionia, Lyons and Lansing having seen the Brothers Daniells, and after conferring together, several of them favored this route, but finally left the matter in the care of the Lansing Director, James Turner, Sr. The Brothers Daniells opened a subscription book for subscriptions, which were all made provisional that the railroad must be built within a certain distance of Wacousta.

Nelson Daniells took most charge of the book and writing, but all contributed to the great labor for a month of convincing men living within a distance of several miles of the incalculable benefit a railroad would be to them personally, to their farms and to the county, the value of their property, for a nearby market, etc., and by their efforts secured in subscriptions several thousand dollars, of which it was confidently asserted by competent judges that ninety percent would have been collectible. They also agitated the matter of bonding the townships and succeeded in carrying the proposition to raise \$8,500.00. Several of the directors from the western end of the line were in favor of bringing it this way, as this was in the direct line between Lansing and Portland, and the Lansing Director pledged his word to the men here that,

if they raised the aid, he would give this line his support and the road would surely come this way; but when the last meeting was held to decide the matter, he gave the casting vote to take it by Grand Ledge. Reports were current that a bonus was paid, but as there had been no request or hint for anything of the kind, it did not occur to the men to suggest such a thing. For their training had led them to consider a secret offer of money, for doing what they believed for the best, to be a bribe which they regarded as a crime, and they would have considered it an insult to a man of upright character. The ones interested in having the management of the road have many times asserted that it was a great mistake, that the extra cost of building the about five extra miles of road, the extra upkeep, wear and tear of rolling stock, had been too great for reasonable profit.

The first religious services were held at the house of Ebenezer Smith, by Rev. Mr. Hatfield, an itinerant minister who came several times a year and held prayer services and preached; and after the school house was built, services were held regularly every Sunday, probably from the arrival of Rev. William Wood, an ordained Baptist minister originally from England, but who had remained in New York City a few years before coming here. A Free-Will Baptist itinerant minister, Rev. Mr. Carrier also came through the country a few times in the very early days and preached here on those few widely separated occasions.

Preaching services were also conducted at times by Rev. Elihu P. Ingersoll, but if for any reason the minister failed his appointment, Elder Wood would be called upon and would occupy the pulpit, and so services would be maintained with dignity and decorum. And on looking back through the vista of years, it is evident that the atmosphere of reverence for religious ceremonies and the growth and maintenance of the churches here are largely due to the influence of those early and regularly held services, crude as they might seem to us now. Of the character of the pioneer preachers of that day it would be appropriate to assert, as has recently been written of those of Nebraska, that "the early pioneer preacher was usually a sturdy, fearless and admirable type, unlearned and narrow about ruffled sheets and jewelry, but with a practical, spiritual sense and rugged manliness and moral sanctity, which added great vigor to the higher life of the people." In this connection, it would seem ungrateful not to speak of Josiah Hogle, a resident of the eastern edge of Eagle, but tributary here both in business relation, who was a passionate lover of music, and led the singing during all those years for the mere love of it, without thought

or apparent wish for compensation. His voice was a fine tenor, but he was equally competent in soprano, so made an excellent leader.

There was quite a contingent of Baptist people here and in the surrounding country, and in the summer of 1854, Rev. Mr. Chase, of Detroit, was secured to hold evangelical meetings here for two weeks and a goodly number of parsons professed conversion, and at the close a Baptist church was organized and Rev. John Cundeman called as its pastor, who remained two years, when Rev. David A. Davis, was called as pastor. The church flourished well for a time and rose in numbers to fifty-five members. But sinister influences crept in and factions arose and the interest declined, and the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Call, of six months in the first half of the year 1860, was the last regular pastorate maintained, and few years later the church was disbanded.

The office of pastor was not a lucrative position in those days, and the sacrifices of those who held it were many; the struggles of the few settlers to clear the heavily timbered land were many; but they divided of their stores, and in the winter gave a so-called donation party, when much provision and some money would be raised to supply the wants of their family. And most of them had to use some land to help out a none too liberal subsistence. But they accepted their condition meekly, considering that to be their duty as the Lord's servants, though in the light of present day ideals, their lot was really a hard one.

In February 1862, came Rev. Joseph D. Millard, a Congregational minister, graduate of Oberlin College and recent graduate of Oberlin Theological Seminary a most godly, earnest Christian gentleman, and after looking the ground over, making acquaintances among the people, etc., decided to settle at Delta and supply Wacousta, the two communities deciding to join to maintain regular services, the preaching in the morning at one place, and in the evening at the other, and alternating each Sunday. He was, as might be expected from his associations at Oberlin, uncompromising in his belief that slavery, as it then existed in the southern states, was one of the greatest crimes possible, as well as a deep disgrace to the nation, and was also greatly demoralizing to the people who practiced it, and as it was only a year after the beginning of our Civil War, feeling ran very high, the political factions being divided into pro-war and anti-war, which in reality meant pro-slavery and anti-slavery. When his congregation, of which as usual only a small minority were professed Christians, and which all classes were represented, were asked to pledge a sum towards his salary, those opposed to the war and fawning the pro-slavery

faction said they would pay liberally if he did not preach his abolition doctrine, but would not if he did. He made no promises, but on reflection decided that he must “deliver the message as he had received it, whether they would hear or forbear,” and that if he waited until they had given their support, it would look as though he had deferred it especially for money, which he looked upon in the nature of a bribe, and dishonorable. So a few weeks later, he delivered a most thrilling sermon, of which only a small part were his own thoughts, the rest made up of extracts and quotations taken directly from different parts of the Bible, and which, though spoken and written thousands of years before, seemed directed against that very sin and for those times, and those who had made the threat went out of the house very angry, and the timid ones feared he had not been wise, but he only said in his quiet but decided way, that he must deliver the message that was given to him, and went his way as usual, fearing not for his support, and though those few deserted him for a time, his congregation steadily increased.

In July of the same year, 1862, he called a council of Congregational ministers and organized a church of six members, to which others were added later on. Mr. Millard remained here until the fall of 1867, when his health failing, removed to Pleasanton, Manistee County, and took up a tract of land, but preached to the different communities and churches within his reach; he passed away a few years ago, more than seventy years of age, having done a good work and done it well.

The next pastorate of the church here was filled by Rev. J.M. Ashley, who settled at Grand Ledge; and the Wacousta church was united with the Grand Ledge church to sustain services, remaining two years; and was followed by Rev. N.D. Glidden, who also resided in Grand Ledge.

In the year 1870, preparations were begun for the erection of a church building, the cornerstone being laid in the autumn of that year, and the next year was so far advanced towards completion as to be occupied for services, but was not finally completed and ready for dedication until January, 1875, Rev. N.D. Glidden remained two years, and was succeeded a few months later by Rev. W.H. Skentlebury, later arrived from England, who remained until the fall of 1881. Several short pastorates followed, and in June of 1884, Rev. John M. Ashbey, an arrival directly from England, began a pastorate which both for the church and community was most acceptable, and remained until the autumn of 1889, when he accepted a call to Armada. But removals and deaths had already begun a depletion in their number and had continued; the church, meanwhile,

struggling along, maintaining a pastor and services for a time, but two years ago decided they were too weak to longer continue the struggle and so disbanded.

A Methodist Episcopal class was first formed here in the late fifties, and for several years was supplied by two ministers on what was called a circuit, each preaching on alternate Sundays and serving several other stations besides. Through their conference they were able to maintain steady series, and though not very strong in numbers, they succeeded by the help of the community in erecting a church building in about 1867, which was occupied and used by both congregations until the Congregational Church was so far completed as to be occupied in the autumn of 1872. In the winter of 1870, Rev. Jordan, then the M.E. pastor, held a series of meetings on several weeks duration, during which there were a large number of conversions, adding much strength to both churches.

As said above, they have been able to maintain steady services ever since, and though the changing currents and conditions of the community, they are now the only church holding services here and have become a strong body, numbering above one hundred members, and supporting a pastor of strength commanding a good salary. They have also a large and flourishing Sunday School and sustain the religious and moral life of the community with strength and vigor. There are also two classes of Bible, its history, great characters, lives, etc. who meet at the homes of the members. These, of course, include many non-church members.

In 1848, when the Brothers Daniells arriving here, a weekly mail was carried by a boy on horseback from Wacousta to Eagle and return, but they began soon to agitate the matter of a more frequent mail, and succeeded in getting a semi-weekly, and still later, a tri-weekly mail.

But in the spring of 1856, the daily four-horse stage playing between Lansing and Ionia, which closed the gap for a continuous thoroughfare from Detroit to Grand Rapids, and which went by the way of the Grand River Turnpike, was prevailed upon to change its route and go from Lansing to DeWitt and so make Wacousta on the road to Portland, thus giving the people here a daily mail, and though that arrangement did not continue very long, perhaps one or two years, a daily mail was maintained ever afterward, later by the Star-Route with the terminal on same railroad until the Rural Free Delivery was established in the year 1857, this county being among one of the earliest established in the states. For one term during the Civil War, Benjamin E.

Barnes, living here and having the contract to carry the mail, left here at 7:00am, went to Grand Ledge, from there to Delta and Lansing, and to DeWitt, and back here at night. And when one can realize the sparsely settled country, the poorly kept up roads, and the fact that even Lansing, the capital of the state, was almost completely isolated, the only railroad entering it until the spring of 1866, being the branch of the Grand Trunk from Owosso, early dubbed the "Rams Horn" and on which it was said the passengers had often to get out in the spring and autumn in places and pry the cars up to get through, the men here felt they had occasion to realized that a daily mail was in itself a great achievement.

And even this way twenty years after the perpetration of that huge joke of setting the state capital down in the midst of a region of dense forest. N.I. Daniells used often to remark that "to settle up a new wooded country took the people back a generation towards barbarism" and the event in this case, at least in some respects, very nearly proved it.

But the Civil War, which gave us all so much anxiety and sorrow, and caused the pouring out of so much treasure, gave this country such an impetus forward toward development that had not received before. And most nobly did Watertown respond to extensive calls to arms from the government, forty or more going out from the township to assist in putting down the rebellion. Robert Hamilton was selected in the one draft that was made, but his father, feeling he could not spare him paid the necessary money to hire a substitute. And Watertown, similarly to other townships, voted to pay the families of those enlisting a monthly allowance toward their support, and also paid the alter volunteers a bounty beside, which was raised by bonds voted by the township. The list of the names of volunteers will be found elsewhere, and although the time was considerably past the first settlement of the country, but it had not yet emerged from a pioneer condition. But during the last years of the war and for some time after its close, when so many of the producers had become consumers and their ranks had been depleted by death and disability, prices including products rose to unprecedented figures. And this country having gradually been opening up and cleared and in a state of general development received a stimulus that set it going forward at rapid strides which it has ever since, to a large degree maintained. A few of the prices of commodities are recalled; butter that sold for six to twelve cents per pound rose to eighteen cents a pound.