

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF HOPKINS
By Mrs. Adah Baird
For the 1952 Hopkins Centennial Celebration

First, Hopkins, the location. Township 3, range 12. It is bounded on the north by Dorr, east by Wayland, south by Watson, and west by Monterey. Johnathan Olin Round, a native of Vermont, came to Kalamazoo Co., and later in 1837 came to Hopkins and located on the SE quarter of Sec 26. He made a small clearing and erected a log cabin and in the spring of 1838 he brought his family to their new home.

Hopkins at this time was mostly a dense forest of beech, maple, oak, basswood, elm and a little pine. His first crop was corn raised among the stumps and fallen trees. To clear the land the trees were cut and burned to make room for crops.

In this year, Sara Round was born, the first white child in Hopkins. In later years she married William Kenfield. This was a very lonely and isolated year as the nearest neighbor was five miles away through the woods.

The Round farm was east and south of Hopkinsburg where the Boulters now live. The next year this family was saddened by the death of their 2 ½ year old son, Oziel Hopkins Round. This was the first death in the township. It was after this little boy that Hopkins was named.

Erastus Congdon came in the fall of 1838 and erected a log cabin on the N.W. quarter of this section and the next year moved his family to Hopkins. He also came from Vermont. Mr. Congdon had two sons Albert and Erastus. The Congdon farm was the first one east of Hopkinsburg and both sons lived there until their deaths.

Mr. Congdon was the first postmaster in the township.

Among the early pioneers of Hopkins was Esek Baker and two sons Harry and Jason. He located on Sec 26 west of Lanis corners. You have all heard of how the six year old daughter of Harvey Baker was lost in the woods for two nights and three days.

The first wedding in the township was at the home of Esek Baker when their daughter Hilda married John Lardner. They afterwards settled in Kalamazoo Co.

Jason Baker was a carpenter and he also helped erecting some of the buildings in the township (School built in 1844). He had the contract for the building of the first school house at the sum of \$26.50. This was on the Round farm and was known as the Round School. It was also used for church services.

Jason Baker was the father of Clara Wolfinger and grandfather of Pearl Gannon, father of Martha Carrol, Mayron and Allie Baker. Among the early settlers were Dr. George Baker, Dr. Wait and Robert A. Baird from Ohio.

They erected a steam saw mill and many of the early settlers worked in the mill in the winter and cleared the land in the summer. Robert A. Baird owned the first farm west of Hopkinsburg and was the father of Lucy Baird and Ella Overhiser, grandfather of May Simpson. Dr Wait erected a building and conducted a store for several years. He then sold and went back to Ohio.

The Baird family came in a few years. John and Philander and their two sisters. Hannah married Dr. Wait and Olive married Newell Upson. She was the mother of Clara Upson, well known to some of you. A man by the name of Blake erected and conducted a small grocery store about a half mile north of Hopkinsburg and it was here that the first barrel of whiskey was brought into the township. This so angered the people of the community that they went one night, broke in the head of the barrel with an axe and let the whiskey out onto the ground. William Richmond bought the store of Dr. Wait and later erected a flour mill. The grain was ground between two huge stones run by water power. At one time Hopkinsburg boasted of three doctors, Drs. Wait, Peters and Darling. After five years Dr. Darling's health failed. He then erected a store building and put in a line of groceries and drugs. This is the same store now standing and being used. We afterwards had Dr. Fox and Dr. Stuck. Dr. Wicks began his practice there and afterwards moved here to Hopkins. Others began coming, Robert Edgells, who had a wagon shop for many years. Thomas Hicks a blacksmith shop. Hopkinsburg was quite a flourishing little town until the railroad came to Hopkins and the trend was this way.

Others began to come, most of them from Ohio. The Parmalee's, Linsley's, the Button's, Buskirk's, Atwater's. They settled on or near four corners which gave the name Ohio corners.

People in these days didn't have much for amusement, an occasional husking bee or picnic in the woods.

On July 4th, 1876 the neighborhood turned out for a picnic and big celebration in the Parmalee woods across from the cemetery. A liberty pole was raised, a cannon purchased to complete the celebration. It was here while loading that the cannon was accidentally fired and Billy Linsley lost both of his arms.

Hopkins. Hopkins is built on Section 19. Among the leading citizens of German decent in the township are the Hoffmaster's, John, Gottlieb, and Joseph. Coming in 1838 John Hoffmaster erected the first log cabin in the village of Hopkins. He is closely associated with the development and upbuilding of Hopkins. He was a native of Ohio.

Gottlieb Hoffmaster was a weaver by trade. His brother John came to Allegan county and purchased 160 acres where the village of Hopkins now stands. Gottlieb came the same year and bought the east half of the same quarter section. He built a log cabin in the midst of the forest. His brother had a log cabin on the present site of the home and a small clearing where the present village now stands. Gottlieb lived on his farm until the death of his wife and then went to live with his daughter Mrs. Nicolai, west of Hopkins. He eventually sold his farm to John and Phillip, his brothers.

John was indentified with the business interests of the town and county until 1864 when he enlisted for service in the Civil War, a recruit for Co. C 13th Michigan volunteer infantry.

He joined the regiment at Lookout Mr. and later went with Sherman on his march to the sea. He remained in service until the end of the war. At home he joined his brother Phillip in a partnership which continued for 30 years.

In 1860 the Lake Shore railroad was built and they sold 11 acres to S. A. Buck who platted the original town site. Since that time John Hoffmaster has platted two or three more sites until it covers about 29 acres. He erected a fine dwelling and lived there many years. The building is now the Klinesteker-Switek Funeral Home.

He had two children. Floy, the wife of John McKinnon, died three months after marriage and Claude who was a beloved and respected citizen of the village.

Others who might be mentioned as contributing to the upbuilding of the village are Dr. Leighton. He studied medicine at the University of Michigan and other medical schools, graduating from Long Island Hospital at Brooklyn, New York with the class of 1881. He began the practice of medicine in Hopkins. They had one son, Bruce, who graduated with a degree of Bachelor of Philosophy in the class of 1906 from Kalamazoo College. He was a promising young doctor but died at an early age.

Some of the earlier enterprises were a saw mill operated by Robert Konkle which became a saw and planing mill and cabinet factory operated by L. C. Walter.

Elmer Wolfinger and Tom Gilligan had a drug store and held the post office for many years. W. H. Dendel who operated a general store here for many years sold it a few years ago to the Weick brothers and he and his wife spent the time among the flowers they so loved. S. B. Lovall who conducted a furniture store and undertaking business erected a two story building. The upper story was used as an opera house and for other public meetings.

Frank Watkins operated the store at Hopkinsburg as a young man. After he married Ella, daughter of John Goodall, he and his father-in-law built and operated a general store until the fire of 1920 destroyed it as it did many other buildings of the village.

Furber and Kidder owned a general store for many years and also owned the first bank in Hopkins. McKinnon operated a slaughter yards and buying and selling livestock. Gerald and Robert Nash had the lumber yard.

Dr. Campbell was here for many years. Dr. VanderKolk, who was endeared to the whole community, practiced here. W. W. Hicks from Canada, operated a cheese factory for many years which was of great value to the farmers. It was replaced by the Creamery. Aaron Shafer, contractor and builder, erected the cement block building now owned by

the Hugh's Mfg. Co., in addition to helping build several other buildings. William Nicolai owned and operated an elevator in Hopkins, buying grain and hay and handling flour and feed.

Amos Wait, brother of Dr. Wait, was numbered among those who aided in the clearing of the forests and suffered the hardships of frontier life. He lived for some time in Hopkins.

Gottfried Knuth came to America from Germany in 1871. His parents followed in a few years with his brothers, August, William, and Edward all locating in Hopkins.

William McClintock came to Michigan at the age of ten. At the age of 15 he started out on his own driving a stage coach from Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids over what was known as the plank road with stops at Wayside inns or taverns to let passengers eat and change horses. His farm was west of Bradley.

Of the early settlers one who remembers more of the early life and settlement of Hopkins Township is Aunt Lois Baker, mother of Nellie Vandenberg and Gertrude McLaine. She will be 101 years old in August.

In August of 1875 a society under the auspices of the Congregational Church was formed with 13 members. It met at the Round School house. On this occasion the Rev. Edward Taylor of Kalamazoo delivered the sermon. John Parsons and William Parmalee were chosen deacons. In 1860 the 1st Congregational Church was erected one half mile north of Hopkinsburg costing \$700.00 and raised by subscription. Rev. J. S. Kidder, grandfather of Sumner Kidder was the pastor for many years.

The 2nd Congregational church was erected here in Hopkins Station and was dedicated August 22, 1886. the Congregational Church of Hilliards was dedicated December 4, 1892.

One minister served all three churches. Going with horse and buggy. Many of the people walked for miles to church, some came with tattered clothes and barefoot. Their main diet was Johnny cake and maple syrup.

Hopkins is now one of the leading townships in the manufacture of maple syrup and sugar, also fruit and grain. Hopkins Township boasts of sending two of their citizens to the state legislature, Henry Buskirk and Gaylord Baldwin.