

**Serving Calhoun County, Michigan, family history researchers since 1988**

**NO REGULAR Tuesday night MEETING in March, instead** the Society will be taking a Field Trip on Saturday, March 25th to Lansing, State of Michigan Library.

**Library of Michigan,      Lansing, Michigan**  
**Field Trip Sign Up**

When: Saturday, March 25, 2006

Pick up points and times:

Battle Creek K-Mart, Bleckly Road parking lot  
8:00 a.m.

Marshall K-Mart parking lot      8:20 a.m.

Cost: \$20.00 for members, \$22.00 for non-members

NAME:

**\*NOTE:** you may want to bring a sack lunch. There will not be a food court open in the Library. There are vending machines and also several dining spots within 10 minute walking.

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** the Library will have someone available to our group to give anyone interested in a tour of the Library's Special Collections.

Contact Judy Groat (269) 781-4568 or  
jgroat2800@aol.com      for reservations.

**April 25 meeting** features **Chuck Hartly**, Principle Research Writer of **"Ties To Homer,"** a recently published book project of the Homer Historical Society. Chuck has been involved in genealogy since he was a teenager when his paternal grandmother provided him with the information she had on the Harthy family. It has been an "on again, off again" pursuit for Chuck while he was spending 38 years in Human Resources and raising a family of five. He has shared his research with his family, the Library of Michigan and Allen County Public Library. Separate booklets on the Otis, Harthy, Bidelman, Tassell, Wellman/Bump, White, Reid, and Golden families have been published.

In 1971, Chuck was the chair and editor of the Centennial History of Hastings (Michigan). When he retired in 1999 and moved to Homer, he became involved in the Homer Historical Society. He was asked by then Society President John Kinney about putting together a history of Homer. The last comprehensive history had been published in 1888. Biographies of prominent businessmen were published in 1894. A Committee was assembled and in April, 2002, research assignments were made. Chuck's original commitment to research the many organizations in Homer turned into researching the Village and Township. He committed to spending one year on the project and wrote 160 articles during that time.

**"Ties To Homer"** features the people who "made" Homer. Chuck's discussion will detail the research methods used to gather the information.

**May 23 meeting**

**\*NOTE....**this month's meeting starts at 7:30, not the normal 7:00 time.

Know your family health history. This program will focus on incorporating health into a family history and the risk factors to be aware of for the prevention of chronic disease. Mary Teachout, MAT, the Genomics Educator for the Michigan Department of Community Health's Genomics Program will be presenting the family history side of chronic diseases and tips on recording a family health history.

**Did your ancestors come to a specific locale** because they could pursue an occupation they already had or did they find a new occupation based upon what they found when they arrived? My maternal ancestors were among the very first settlers in Kent County, Michigan, arriving in 1835. Chauncy Sawyer came with his parents, Ransom Sawyer and Sarah Lott, probably from the border area of New York and Vermont, but originally from Canada. By the early 1840s, Chauncy had married Alvira Powell, daughter of Silas and Asenath Powell, all from New York. Since both Ransom and Silas were farmers most of their lives in Kent County, it is reasonable to assume that was their training and the work they expected to do when they settled near present day Grandville, Michigan. It appears that both of these Generation 1 ancestors came to Michigan to pursue an occupation they already had.

Father Ransom had Land Patent Certificate No. 5684 issued to him on 10 Sept 1838 for 160 acres @ \$1.25 per acre. According to an 1855 plat map, this land was divided equally between Ransom and Chauncy. Which was considered the best piece of land to support a family I couldn't begin to surmise. What I do know is that on Chauncy's 80 acres was a lime factory. Chauncy's occupation became based upon what he found when he arrived.

I've read through every history of Kent County and West Michigan that I can find and except for mentions of Ransom's early arrival, I have found nothing that suggests Chauncy's lime factory was significant. In fact, subtract brief mentions of gypsum mining which did attract some entrepreneurs to Kent County, I haven't found anything that lends any consequence or importance to lime. Chauncy died in 1857 so perhaps one could assume that he never had the chance to grow the business. Then I asked myself, just what is a lime factory?

Lime is a general term used for various forms of a basic chemical produced from calcium carbonate rocks such as limestone and dolomite. The oldest uses of lime makes use of its ability to react with carbon dioxide to regenerate calcium carbonate, which is an educated way of saying when you mix lime with water and sand, the result is mortar. Mortar is used in construction to secure bricks, blocks, and stones together.

But in 1850, in Kent County, Michigan or just about any county in Michigan, cementing stones together wasn't considered a major growth industry. One thing I have noticed reading early histories of Calhoun County or Kent County was the importance these authors put on when the first lumber built home went up instead of sod or log homes.

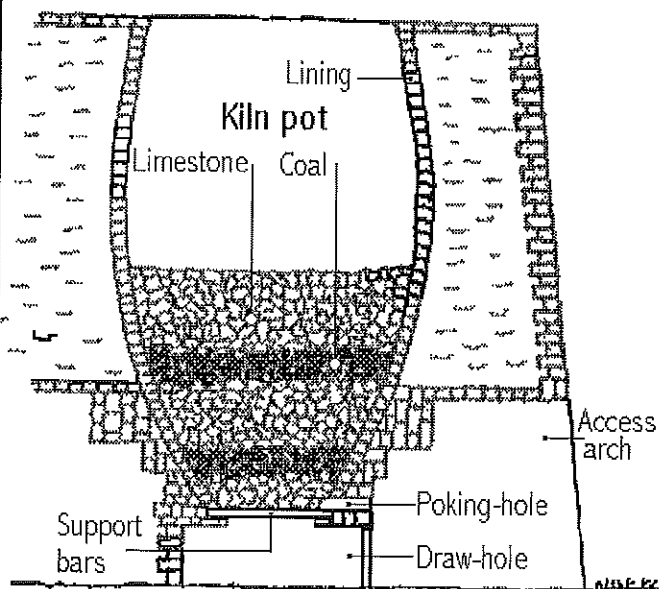
At that point in my family research, I just left it as a curious bit a trivia that my ancestor once had a lime factory. It was while researching another ancestor I ran across information that shed new light to this lime factory business. One of the discoveries of the early part of the nineteenth century was that burnt limestone was a good dressing for impoverished soil. Farmers needed it. Being a city boy myself, there are some things that one doesn't think about often, such as what farmers do during the winter. I know there is plenty to keep them busy, but in 1850 one thing many did during the winter months was to take quarried limestone, haul it to their farms where they burned the lime-stone which they spread on their fields in the spring. Or they could purchase their burnt limestone dressing from someone like Chauncy Sawyer who had a lime factory.

One last question. I know what a quarry is. But what is a lime "factory". Limestone is a sedimentary rock composed principally of calcium carbonate and it can be *calcined* by heating it in a kiln. The early production of lime employed pots or kilns. It took six to seven days to complete the cycle of filling, burning, cooling and emptying.

Without limestone life as we know it would not exist. Limestone is a naturally occurring mineral that shapes all our lives. Without it, and the raw materials derived from it, we would have no buildings because there would be no mortar to hold the bricks and stone together, nor windows to look through. Crops would fail because the soil would become too acid for them to grow properly. We could not wash ourselves or our clothes because there would be no soap.

#### **Figure to left: A typical continuous draw kiln**

It shows a partly loaded pot with limestone and coal in alternate layers. The profile varied in shape, but it usually curved in at the top. The lining was either hard stone or firebrick to allow the kiln to be continuously fired for several years.



**Excerpt from THE YEARS** cont. from p. 4      The distress on her face made me think she might not punish me after all so I called softly "Here I am". Needless to say it was not many minutes before I was rescued, and yes, I also escaped the much deserved punishment. I remember too of one dark, cloudy, sultry night in summertime. The katydids and crickets were chirping, the frogs croaking, when Father called us to the window and as we looked down across the field, we saw (fire-flies) "will of the wisp" lights moving along on a piece of low marsh land. A few days before I had heard a superstitious old man tell weird tales about them. So father had called us so that we might see what they looked like. Nevertheless Brother and I insisted on being rocked to sleep that night. One of my most vivid recollections was of the death of little brother, Freddie, who was born Jan. 6, 1879, and only lived about three months. I was again sent to Grandmother's because I was ill with a cold. Diphtheria and pneumonia were so prevalent that bitter, cold winter and deep snow covered the ground most of the time. After I was all bundled up ready to go, one of the ladies took me to the room where Baby Brother was lying. To me he looked just as he always did when he was asleep. I couldn't understand why they all cried. They said I wouldn't see him again for a long, long time. So I didn't want to go away with Grandma if that would keep me from seeing him any more. The little grave is beside Father's in the Oakridge Cemetery, Marshall, Michigan, North half of Lot 165. Early in the winter of the next year (1880) Father received letters from his Sister and Brother-in-law in Nebraska, telling of the possibilities that might lie in the vast acres of prairie land that could be bought cheaply. It seemed the "Call of the West" could not be resisted. Then came the bidding of home and loved ones good bye and the long journey from Michigan and the first lonely nights in Nebraska with the silence broken only by the howl of the coyote and occasional barking dog.

*Submitted by Shirley Reese Siltala, [blueshighway@msn.com](mailto:blueshighway@msn.com)*

**Copied from the secretary's record book of the Carpenter-Pierce Reunions:**

Athens, September 29, 1893  
 Met at Abner Carpenter to have a reunion of the Carpenter family. After a bountiful dinner, we were called to order by H. L. Carpenter. Rial Carpenter was elected chairman. E. P. Simmons, Secretary (temporary). H. C. Carpenter was then elected President.  
 H. A. Carpenter, Vice President  
 Mrs. Jennie Brownell, Secretary  
 Committee of arrangements:  
 Mrs. Melvina Carpenter  
 Mrs. Lillie Woodruff  
 Mr. Abner Carpenter  
 Mr. Mortimer Jones  
 Mr. Carlton Davis  
 Mrs. Otisca Simmons  
 A collection of \$1.10 was taken to buy books and for other expenses, 65 cents was paid for books. Since our last reunion two of our number have been taken from us by death, a brother and an Aunt. There being no further business we closed by singing God Be With You Till We Meet Again.  
 /s/      Phoebe J. Brownell  
             Secretary  
 Thank you to Elma E. Carpenter

**How important do you think knowledge of your family's health history is to your personal health?**

Know your family health history. This program will focus on incorporating health into a family history and the risk factors to be aware of for the prevention of chronic disease.

Mary Teachout, MAT is the Genomics Educator for the Michigan Department of Community Health's Genomics Program. Mary received a Master's in Education from Aquinas College with certification in elementary education and middle school biology. In her role as Genomics Educator she frequently gives presentations and workshops on the use of family history and chronic disease prevention. She has also worked developing a curriculum and giving workshops around the state with an education consultant for high school biology and health science teachers to transition to teaching genomics and prevention in their classrooms. Mary posts a quarterly newsletter entitled "Family History and Your Health" that highlights the family history side of chronic diseases and tips on recording a family health history. The newsletter can be found at

<http://www.migeneticsconnection.org/staticfh.html> or you can go to [www.MIGeneticsConnection.org](http://www.MIGeneticsConnection.org)

**Old Time Diseases**

Bladder in the throat = Diphtheria  
 Bloody flux = Bloody stools  
 Bloody sweat = Sweating sickness  
 Bone shave = Sciatica  
 Bronze John = Yellow Fever

Bule = Boil, tumor or swelling  
 Cachexy = Malnutrition  
 Cacospysy = Irregular pulse  
 Caduceus = Subject to falling sickness or epilepsy  
 Camp fever = Typhus; aka Camp diarrhea  
 Canine madness = Rabies, hydrophobia

The **Calhoun County Genealogical Society** has received a transcription of a diary written by Susan Errington in 1880. Like most diaries, it is a "day in the life of" this young girl living in Muskegon, Michigan. While not exactly Calhoun County, it is none the less an interesting look at what life was like in our area at that time. *GENERATIONS* will print excerpts as space permits. We wish to thank Myra Herron for the time and effort she has given in transcribing this diary and for giving it to us. *Thank you, Myra.*

**THE YEAR 1880 FOR  
SUSIE ERRINGTON  
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN**

**INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A DIARY GIVEN  
TO SUSIE ERRINGTON, WITH THE INSCRIPTION**

**"SUSIE ERRINGTON, A CHRISTMAS GIFT,  
1879, MUSKEGON"**

**Saturday, February 28, 1880** Worked at housework until (sic) 4 P. M. M went to the church. I studied till I went to sleep. Mrs. Collier called. Rained nearly all the afternoon.

**Sunday, February 29, 1880** Cold & Stormy. Went to church. Text 1 Tim(othy). I did not enjoy the sermon much. This has been a quiet and to me a good day. I wish I knew some ('thing' crossed out) one here that could tell just how feel. But I must go to Jesus as a little child.

**Thursday, March 4, 1880** Stormy. I have had such a nice beautiful letter from Georgie today, it makes me feel so much better. She wrote that I had made her a better girl. Can I ever murmur again. Father help me!

**Sunday March 7, 1880** Cold and windy. Writing at Cousin Nelia's enjoy it ever so much. The babies are ever so nice. Cousin N. is so nice and motherly I feel at home there and I like to talk of sacred things with her.

**Monday, March 8, 1880** A most wonderful day. Bright though windy. I went to school as usual. Mattie has been nearly sick, is better tonight. I've got a school, begin next Monday. It is all so sudden, quite took my breath away. Cousin Nelia did it all. I hope I shall succeed.

**Tuesday, March 9, 1880** Windy, squally, washed this morning. Clarence went downtown, after dinner I wanted to go to, but didn't go. I think I am making some advancement. Went to school. Got excused and said good bye. It is as if I had been to a funeral.

**Sunday, March 14, 1880** I have not been to church today. Cousin K. came for me this morning. Spent the day with them. Mr. B. came for me tonight. All promises well for my school. I am forgetting my God.

**Monday, March 15, 1880** I have taught one day of school and am still alive. I think the scholars like me pretty well. I shall have a broad field of labor and pray God for grace to perform that labor.

**Tuesday, March 16, 1880** School did not go as well today as it did yesterday but I guess it will be better tomorrow. Had two visitors. I don't really like Mr. C. I don't know if he is a Christian or not. I must be careful.

**Friday, March 19, 1880** Written 22. School was horrid. I was completely discouraged. I walked to Cousin Kit's. Was very tired before got there. The babies are better and are real nice. I was so tired I could scarcely sleep.

**Saturday, March 20, 1880** Written 22. Cousin K took me to Muskegon. Mattie & I visited all the time and Ph. How we did enjoy it. Went down town after dinner. Went to exhibition in the ??? Had a very nice time.

**Sunday, March 21, 1880** Written 22. It has not seemed much like Sunday to me. Walked out to Cousin K's with enjoyed the walk much. Cousin K. took me over to my school. I like him much but think him most too good.

**Monday, March 22, 1880** The first day of second week. I had to whip a boy today. I don't like to do it but I know it wasn't wrong. Am only going to pay \$2.50 for board when I go away Tuesday night.

**Wednesday, March 24, 1880** I am almost discouraged tonight, my school has gone so poorly today yet I think I shall succeed in the end. Went to Dr. Bartholomew's tonight. Miss Hendrick called on me tonight. I like her. Had a letter from home this morning. E. is not getting along very well I am afraid.

**Thursday, March 25, 1880** Another letter. Edith is surely better, letter from mother. Her letters are so nice. Been to the Big Lake, it is beautiful. I wish I could go there and stay an hour or more all alone.

**Friday, March 26, 1880** School has been very nice today, the (more than) it has been any day. The Robarges are going to move tomorrow and I shall (lose) 4 scholars. I am going to a party tonight at Mr. Hendricks. Expect a nice time. Examination tomorrow. **Saturday, March 27, 1880** It has rained nearly all day. I couldn't go to be inspected so I spent the day at Mr. B's, had a nice time. I expect to go to Sunday School tomorrow. I wonder how the dear ones at home are tonight.

**Sunday, March 28, 1880** A beautiful Easter Sunday and to me a profitable one. I have been to S. S and enjoyed it much. Wrote two letters and a card. Studied my S. S. lesson for next Sunday. Had a card from Mattie.

**Monday, March 29, 1880** A beautiful day. School has not been as nice as it is some times. Was exam. tonight. Got my certificate and stood ten. Had a nice ride on the lake, like Mrs. Fielder very much. It is a delightful evening.

**Tuesday, March 30, 1880** A most beautiful day. Two new scholars. Maggie Gothersman and Miss Teboul. Miss T. is 30 years old and real nice. Edna has been just horrid today. Went to see her mother about her tonight. I think them very nice.

**Thursday, April 1, 1880** A lovely day. Whipped my boys. Went to Mr. B's, had a nice time. Mr H. H. came home with me. He is very pleasant. They are going to move the church.

**Friday, April 2, 1880** Rainy. Had to whip Louie again and Frank M. Mattie did not come, how I do want to see her. Perhaps it is better as it is but it is hard work to be patient. God help me.

**Saturday, April 3, 1880** It rained this morning but was pleasant after. I have finished my draw. Am sick today. We have been studying the Bible. I don't like to talk with them, but I pray God that I may help them some. **Wednesday, April 7, 1880** School went well. It is Edith's birthday, she is ten years old. I would so like to see her. Went to Mr. Bartholomew's after school. He was gone, so it did me no good.

**Thursday, April 8, 1880** This noon I went with the scholars to the big bluff and I enjoyed it so much. I saw Muskegon and tomorrow I expect to be there or at Black Lake.