

Dundee Township

This township was organized in 1838 and the first election was held at the house of Samuel Barber in the spring of that year. It was formed out of the adjoining township of Summerfield. The first settler in the new township was Riley Ingersoll, who removed to Michigan territory in 1824 from the state of New York, and bought what was a portion of the Potter farm, but remained with his wife for a few months at the home of Richard Peters, during the building of the log house on his recently purchased land. Captain Richard P. Ingersoll, now living as a highly respected and prominent citizen of the township, son of Riley Ingersoll, was the first white child born in the township. For a few years he resided at Monroe, conducting a boy's school, afterwards entering commercial pursuits, finally retiring to his farm where he now resides.

In the fall of 1827 the construction of the dam across the Raisin at Dundee village was commenced, and a saw mill was finished in 1828 and 1829. At the raising, help had to be got at Monroe, Petersburg and Blissfield. The only houses at Dundee were those of Ingersoll and Wilcox. In 1825 the only road from Monroe to what was afterwards Dundee, was up the south side of the Raisin, the same as to Petersburg, where it touched the Raisin opposite Dundee, was a canoe, with which the river was crossed. On this road the settlers' houses passed were Gale, Bliss, Burchard, Farewell, Sorter, Dives, Mettez, and several Frenchmen, whose names were not recalled. The turnpike from LaPlaisance to and through Dundee was laid out in 1832, and the bridge timber across the river at the latter place was got out prior to that as work of private individuals.

A valuable limestone for building material and lime is found in Dundee, an extensive quarry once owned by the late Senator Christiancy having been operated for many years. Its marked geological formations have been noted in the geological reports by Hon. W. H. Sherzer to the state department. The thickness of the formation is particularly mentioned. In Ohio the total thickness is six hundred feet; at the Dundee borings it is one thousand feet. Prof. Sherzer says: "In Michigan the Dundee forms the base of the great Devonian system, sharply separated by its fossil contents from the uppermost Silurian beds. One characteristic is noted, in that there are no traces in the Dundee limestones of a vertebrate, whereas in the quarries of the Silby location the spines and teeth of fishes are not infrequently found."

[In our chapter on the "Geology of Monroe County" much interesting data and information may be obtained which is entirely reliable, being based upon the exhaustive reports published by the Geological Survey of Michigan, Alfred C. Lane, state geologist.]

The records show that the first land entry for a homestead, by one William H. Remington, on the 23rd day of July, 1823, who settled there in that year. The other well-known pioneers into this hardwood forest wilderness were Samuel Jenner, Nat. Richmond, Geo. Wilcox, Samuel Barber, Riley Ingersoll, Mart. Smith, Heman Spaulding, Justus and Charles Jermain, Enos Kent, Ira Irons, Geo. Pettingill, William Verdon, Sam Rankin and Walter Burgess.

The first post office of which there is any record was named Winfield and its postmaster was William Montgomery, who also furnished the accommodations for transacting the postal business of the government at that point in his own dwelling. It is to be presumed that Mr. Montgomery was not obliged to work overtime nor on holidays in the discharge of his duties.

Alonzo Curtis was the next incumbent, who resided in the village and who promptly removed the office thither, and gave it the name it has since carried. In the state coach days the mail was supposed to arrive weekly, but the residents found themselves fortunate if it reached them as often as that, especially in the spring, when the turnpike and less traveled roads were practically impassable. The completion of railroads has changed this and regular daily mails keep them in touch with the world, besides which, telegraph and telephone lines complete the facilities enjoyed.

The early schools were primitive, as they were everywhere in those far-away times. The schoolhouses were built of logs, and the first one in Dundee was built in 1834 or '35, where the Pulver wagon shop afterwards was erected. A frame building replaced the log structure after its destruction by fire, and better facilities were enjoyed by the children of the village and adjacent neighborhoods. An old resident remembers the names of some of the pedagogues and kindly furnishes them, as follows: Doctor Bassford, John Montgomery, Wm. Parker, Junius Tilden, H. Townsend, H. Watling, interspersed with those of such competent women as Rebecca Whitman, Emily Jenney and Mrs. Jas. White. Such is the substantial growth of this intelligent community that there are not upwards of sixteen hundred children attending the schools in the township, which number more than a dozen commodious buildings.

The churches are mentioned in a separate chapter. The Ann Arbor Railroad affords favorable transportation facilities, which will soon be supplemented by an electric line from Toledo to Lansing. A water power in Dundee is utilized for flour mills, beet sugar factory and smaller enterprises, supported by a rich and thriving farming population. The village is well paved and electrically lighted.

Taken from:

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