

History of Our County

By Helene M. Rawling

The Following Article Was Found In The Ruth Hummel-Klippert Collection
Published In An Unknown Newspaper & Unknown Date
Helene M. Rawling Appears To Have Had A Regular Column Called
"The Gong"

We have started a series of articles about the early history of our townships and last week we finished up Belvidere. So this week we will begin the history of Bloomer Township, taken from the history written by John W. Dasef and published in 1916. The books were loaned to me by Mrs. Rex Reed and are the property of her father, Glenn R. Stokes.

Bloomer Township was the first township organized by the supervisors of the newly created county of Montcalm and it was the fifth township established. At the time of the establishment of Bloomer, there were only four supervisors, one from each of the four townships. Their minutes of Jan. 6, 1852 state that a petition was presented with 20 signatures who were freeholders in township 9 north, range 5 west. It was resolved by a unanimous vote of the supervisors that town 9 and 10 north, range 5 west, should be set off from the township of Bushnell and organized into a new township to be called Bloomer.

The first election was held at the house of John A. Miner on the first Monday in April, 1852, with the following persons acting as inspectors of election: Asa H. Hawley, Edward Cole and John Richards.

Upon the erection of Crystal Township, the present boundaries of Bloomer were established. It is situated in the extreme southeastern corner of the county and is bounded on the north by Crystal Township, on the east by Gratiot County, on the south by Ionia County and on the west by Bushnell Township.

The surface of this township is moderately undulating, and is well watered and drained by Fish Creek and its branches. Originally the entire township was covered with a heavy growth of beech and maple timber, which, up to the time of settlement and in fact, many years later, was the retreat of all kinds of wild game peculiar to Michigan. From this source the early settlers secured a large part of their winter provisions, and without it, in some instances, severest want and suffering must have ensued.

Although Epaphroditus Ransom entered the south half of the northeast quarter of section 1 and the south half of the northwest quarter of the same section on the 26th of June, 1835, the largest part of the township remained undisturbed until the year 1849. From that time and during the years 1850-52 the greater part of the land was taken as shown by the records, although there was no permanent settlement until 1850.

After the timber was removed, which in itself was a great natural resource, the settlers turned to farming and the best evidence of their success is merely to take a drive through the township and note the excellent state of cultivation under which the farms are at present and also the excellent farm buildings and homes, where once stood the log shanty.

The incidents which led to adopt the word "Bloomer" for town 9 north, range 5 west, were, as near as can be learned, as follows: At a dance held at the cabin of Isaac Pennington, in the winter of 1851-52, several ladies astonished the good deacons of the Puritanic school (who had stopped there for the night) by appearing in bloomer dresses. When their surprise abated, the dresses were the occasion of some mild jokes, and the term became something of a byword in the infant colony and when in the spring of 1852, a name was needed for the township, this one was adopted. This statement is discredited by some, and it is said that a number of citizens desired the township to be called "Bloomingdale," but as there was a township in Van Buren County by this name, it was named Bloomer.

In the assessment role for 1852 Anderson Minor owned 320 acres; Ira Brooks, 80 acres; Jeremiah Willson, 160 acres; James Covill, 160 acres; Joseph Roop, 160 acres; William Sherman, 80 acres; Hiram Hunt, 80 acres; and S.H. Pennington, 160 acres.

The total valuation of personal property in the township of Bloomer, which at that time comprised also town 10 north, range 5 west, was \$207. The aggregate valuation of real and person property was \$16,327.

And now we'll have to stop for today, for

IT'S TIME FOR THE GONG!