

LOOKING BACKWARD NEARLY 97 YEARS

Mrs. Janet Loree Was Born Just Over The Line in Highland Township

The oldest person born near Milford and now residing here is Mrs. Janet McCall Loree. Some of the intervening years have been passed a few miles away in Livingston County and recently in Ann Arbor, but never so far but that she could frequently come back to visit.

Time has dealt with Mrs. Loree kindly, and though she is a bit lame, she is fairly well, memory good for one of that age, and she delights to talk about the olden days. She is xxenly anticipating the pleasure of riding in Henry Ford's barouche in the centennial procession.

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx following a visit with Mrs. Loree on Sunday, a xxxnotype report being taken by Miss xxxth Rowe.

I was born on the farm near the south end of Pettibone Lake and have never lived very far from it. xxxxxxxxxxxx the road used to run by Pettibone Lake? I could go and show you where the tracks were. You xxxxxxxx was a house there called the Theron Armstrong house and the road went between the Pettibone hill and the level ground.

Yes, there was an old cemetery up there on that side of the road. My grandfather was buried there. There was also a young girl by the name of Sessions buried there. There were quite a number of graves when they took up the ground and laid the cemetery out in Highland.

The first school I went to was where the George Potts place is—a log cabin. That was the school before the Excelsior school. The cemetery was near there. There was a little piece of woods near by and we children used to think we must run over to the cemetery before school to play. We'd be afraid we'd see something there and we'd imagine we'd hear panthers yelling in the woods.

Our folks afterwards built another house over on what we call now the xxxxx farm and we heard them say, "now this road has got to be cleared out, it has got to be chopped out." Rob got an axe and I got an axe and went in the road to chop it out and the first thing I did was to slash my knee. There is a mark there now. Rob ran to the house to tell mother that I had cut my knee and I was bleeding. She came running out and said that I would have bled to death in a little while but because he had presence of mind to tell her about it, I was saved. I wouldn't have gone to the house for all I was thinking about was to get out of sight so I wouldn't get scolded. That was the way we used to be educated.

I remember going visiting with an ox team drawing a sled. People did not have any wagons at that time and they used a sled in winter and summer. It was called a pung and consisted of logs with boards across them and this they would just drag along the ground. Our folks used to go over to Muir's but I can't remember names of those in the family.

I can remember once when we went to church in Stratton's barn and some mischievous boys fixed a hay mow so when a fellow stepped on it he would go down—and they did, too. I did know who it was that fell down, but I can't remember now. We had some mischievous boys those days. We used to go over to the Beach farm in the evenings—a whole load of us—in a wagon drawn by oxen and the mother would go to work and make fried cakes and get a warm supper for us. We didn't go home until we had had supper. She generally had one of the boys to help her. I can see her now standing over the kettles. Yes, they did have good times then. We also used to go way up to Brush street. There were orchards there that had more apples than we had and they had paring bees. We would go way up there a-foot. They used to dry apples on boards.

The Beach farm was just east of the Buck farm. We lived down near the lake—that was where the road was in those days. The first house was on the bank of the lake and that was where I was born. There used to be a long hill which we had to go down to get water and I used to hate to carry water up that hill from the springs at the Pettibone lake. Once in a while we could see frogs jumping in it, but we had to drink it just the same.

There was a Dr. Foote that I remember and there were two Dr. Cowans, brothers. The elder one used to go around with a little horse and wagon and collect corn or oats or any such thing to feed his hogs. Then his brother came and they called him young Dr. Cowan. The Cowans were here before the Doctors Browne.

I was living with my brother, Robert McCall, when all the boys went to the army. Xxxxxxxxxxx pick up potatoes and pull beans. Charlie (Lovejoy) was two or three years old. He stayed with me while all of them were gone. Four brothers and my first husband were in the army. Stephen McCall went the first of any of them and died in the army. He had the measles and when the call came for the regiment to march they didn't want him to go but he hated to leave the regiment so went with them. It was before the battle of Richmond and he was taken sick on the battlefield and they were sending him off but he died on the way. You couldn't send for your friends then as they did

not have any way of getting them.

I had four brothers, a husband and three brothers-in-law in the army at the same time so I think I deserve a pension. They were Stephen, Alex, Samuel and Tom McCall, my husband, Jerome Cogsdill, my brothers-in-law were Gideon Cogsdill, Chalon Cogsdill and John Ruggles so I had quite a good many to think of. My husband came home and he lived for a little over a year and a half. He was never able to walk or wait on himself after that.

Did we used to see any wild animals? We used to hear them but we didn't see them except bears and deer.

I remember one time our folks were threshing and we saw a bear coming across the creek and there used to be xxxxxxxxxxxx.

There were a lot of Indians but they were peaceable and quiet. They used to come along in tribes, you know, and they would go to Canada after presents and would stop and beg for bread. They had a word for it that sounded like "quash-shon." Sometimes they would have little baskets to sell.

We went after flour to Dexter. It would generally take three days with an ox team.

We used to go to Detroit quite a good deal and also to Pontiac. I remember the old stage-coach that went through here, drawn by a four-horse team. The driver would sit up on top and look as big as if he was worth millions. It was an honored position. I don't remember whether I ever rode in it or not. That cost money in those days.

We had hard times and we had good times in the early days and people enjoyed each other's society. We youngsters didn't think anything of going to Milford and back a-foot.

I remember the first elephant I ever xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx It was when I was about twelve years old. There was a show here and a lot of people were sick afterwards but I remember best about the elephant. They gave people the privilege to ride it if they wanted to. They had a seat on his back, you know, and I remember Clarissa Phelps got up on his back and had a ride but the rest of us were afraid. Her family used to live in a little house somewhere near the mill race.

Yes, I remember that there was a factory up near the Harry Andrews brick house. There was a turning mill there and I remember that they made wooden bowls. You know there is a bridge across the creek? The mill was on the north side of that and was run by a man by the name of Mike Emerson. He had a little factory and made brooms. Those were the first brooms made in Milford.

I remember Wellington Burnett who was a lieutenant in the army during the Mexican war. The Burnett farm joined the Beach farm on the west side. All the young people stopped to see mother and when Wellington came home I remember when he came in. There were some birds sitting on the fence and he shot some of them so we could see how well he could shoot. After that he went to California and was appointed the first governor of California. It wasn't a state then. It was nothing but a territory when he went there.

I can remember our folks telling about how they came here. They had to come from Detroit with an ox team. They had never driven oxen and didn't know anything about them so Uncle Sandy Finlay went on one side and father (Duncan McCall) on the other side and grandfather Alexander Finlay went ahead to coax the oxen along.

We made all our own cloth. I can remember a wool dress that I had—and I earned it too. The Leek family lived near. Mrs. Leek thought I should tend her baby so I agreed to and she gave me a pound of wool a week for it. I took the wool and had it spun. I was going to have a flannel dress, one red stripe, another yellow, and a kind of brown stripe. There was a family by the name of Smith that lived up on Brush street. He wove, so of course he was engaged to weave that piece of goods. I used to go up there every day on foot to see if he had got it done yet. I was so anxious to see how it looked. It was nicer in my eyes than silk or velvet. I wish sometimes these cold days I had it now. It was all wool.

The Ribblemans, who brought Joe up, lived on the east bank of the Pettibone creek. I used to go over that way to tend the children and when I'd come back I'd have to come up that hill and I'd just see awful things there, wildcats 'n everything. I'd get up that hill in a hurry.

The people were happy. They had clothing to keep them warm, victuals to eat and they didn't want or expect anything more.

Father used to get pamphlets of books of the Bible and he had them bound into a book. It has lots of engravings and is still in the family.

In those days the bride and groom would each carry a Bible instead of a bouquet as they do now.