



MEMORIALS
OF THE
GRAND RIVER
VALLEY.

ment land; stayed two or three years, and went away. Further it is not known that there were any residents in town when the Wright family came in the fall of 1837.

Two brothers, James and Francis Blood, arrived the same fall, and located themselves near Wright.

Of these pioneers of Alpine, Solomon Wright, 2d, is the only one remaining in the town. In his goodly mansion on the south line of the town; he has long enjoyed the respect of the community, where he has had a leading influence. Adverse fortune has come upon him, but if the good wishes of the people could carry him through, his house will again be one where genial hospitality and good companionship will win and perpetuate good will.

The old gentleman—Solomon, Sr.—was never an active man in the region. He was a scholar rather than a business man. He died at a good old age, August, 1853.

Noadiah C. (Dutch.) Why everybody knows Dutch Wright. We say "Dutch," for he has so long borne that name, that should you say "Noadiah" he would not mistrust he was meant. He signs his name "N. C. Wright," but it is questionable whether he would not have to refresh his memory by looking at the family Bible, before confidentially telling what "N. C." stands for. He lives in a big house, paid for with money which came of his understanding "horse." That beast he *does* understand; and he conceives a most profound respect for a man who can cheat him in a horse trade. As an example: A man in Grand Rapids was in possession of an otherwise good-looking horse, that was *blind*. One day a bright thought came into his head—he would go and put a drive on Dutch Wright. So, fortifying himself, he harnessed his nag into his wagon, and leisurely drove along to the "Wright settlement." At the same time Dutch had a very good-looking horse, that he was anxious to get rid of, for reasons not now known. As the city fellow was leisurely and meditatively driving by Wright's farm, Wright was plowing by the side of the road, with his worthless beauty and a plain, valuable beast for a team. Being slightly acquainted, both stopped, discussed the weather, the last political news, etc. In the meantime, Wright con-

ceived and suggested a horse-trade, to which the city chap seemed entirely indifferent. Wright finally offered him either one of his team; not doubting which he would take. The offer was accepted, and the exchange made, to the infinite chagrin of Wright, when he saw him take the plain horse. Mentally, he soliloquized: "That man is not so green as I supposed; he understands "horse." The city man departed, and the farmer soon found that his new acquisition "though having eyes, saw not." Did he get mad? Not he. He threw up his hat, and shouted himself hoarse; then sat down on a stone, and laughed until tears came into his eyes. Calming himself by degrees, in measured tones he said: "I have found the genius at last; I have found my master; I have found the man who can cheat Dutch Wright in a horse-trade. By the "Hokefenoke and the living Jingoos! I'm his friend forever!!" He sought out the genius, and they consecrated the beginning of the warmest friendship by copious libations at Wright's expense. Speak evil of that man, or intimate that he is not a genius—the king of "horse men," and look out for the "Dutch" of Wright.

James Blood died in Walker, and his brother Francis sold out after a time and moved away.

We learn of no accessions until 1840. This year brought John Coffee from Ohio, with Richard Goding, Jacob Snyder, a German; John Plattee, Turner Hills, and Noel Hopkins.

Turner Hills was a Vermonter. He came with his wife and family to Grand Rapids in 1838. In 1840, he took up forty acres of land, near where now is the hotel in Alpine. That he had slender means is indicated by his taking up so little land. He cut his own road more than two miles. At that time there was no settler in the east part of the town. He died in 1842, after having fairly made a beginning, leaving four sons and a daughter; and one who remained his widow—"Mother Hills"—until her death, in 1873. A word for this noble woman. She united native good sense with great information—was one of the "oracles" of the town; her opinion valued, and her character spoken of as combining in its elements all that is noble and womanly. She was the comm-

selor of the old and young; and she died at a good old age, with the blessings of the community, and the veneration of the family she had reared. *As a matter of course, her family was not a failure.* The time has not come to speak freely of them; as they are living, and not silver-grey with age. Let them work awhile longer, and fulfill the destiny marked out for them by a wise mother.

The individual who pens these lines, always makes his most reverent bow to a *wise mother*. God bless a mother, anyway. But when she is *good* and *wise*, she needs no praying for; she is a fountain of blessings herself; and happy are the children who call her "mother."

The Catholic church first "sainted" and afterwards deified the abstract idea of a good mother, under the name of "Mary;" and it was the best thing that church ever did—it sanctified the holiest idea; and taught people to love, to reverence, and to worship *purity, goodness* and *motherhood* as divine; and when combined, to *deify* that idea.

The writer is no Catholic. But, "heretic" and "sinner" as he is, he does feel that, in advancing the purified idea of "Mary" to the rank of an object of worship, the Catholics have given to religion a purifying influence; they have sanctified virtue, and thrown a charm around it; a charm which will aid in purifying the hearts of the votaries of the church. Not believing the dogma, still we say, "Blessed is its spirit; and with the Catholic idea, blessed is Mary."

We were never made for the pulpit, and therefore think there was wisdom in our not taking to it as a profession. We cannot stick to a text, but are continually flying off in a tangent. An *idea* strikes us, and off we go, until we find ourselves we scarce know where. But we'll come back to Alpine.

The few succeeding years are mingled in the minds of the "old settlers," and they will be here jumbled together.

Thompson Casson is to be noticed, who came in '42, and died in '48. He was a good-hearted, public-spirited, intelligent and moral Scotchman; a natural leader; a good specimen of a man. He had not secured fortune, but he died with the respect of all. When a good man dies, all feel it; but at the death of a human animal tears are scarce.

In 1843, came John Cathcart. In 1850, he was stabbed by a neighbor under the influence of liquor, and died in consequence. The man was sent to prison. About the same time came John Haire, who has since been seen, heard and felt at Georgetown, Ottawa county. Also Stephen Coon, who died in 1850. Three sons of his are now respectable physicians in Lisbon and Casnovia. Coon could not have been a very bad man, or he had a good wife.

Here, too, may be mentioned Henry Church, who still lives in the north of Alpine.

In June, 1844, came "Uncle Edward Wheeler,"—the first supervisor of the town—everybody's "uncle." Wheeler is an old man now, and we will talk about him. He is a great pet. The children hail him, "Uncle Wheeler, ain't you going to give us a kiss?" "Give me the first one!" The genial old soul loves everybody, and everybody loves him. When he dies there will be a big funeral, and many eyes will be dim. God bless your genial old soul, Uncle Ed.

Wheeler, when he came, had a family, and some money. He bought 160 acres of land, which, paying in State scrip, cost him \$104.50. A brother-in-law, Harry Wilder, came with him, who bought 40 acres of land of Wheeler, and paid for it by cutting down eight acres. (Land is not so paid for in Alpine, now.) Wilder died in 1858; a good man and devoted Christian.

At this date we find, also, Baltus Shafter, Joseph Kipler, Casper Cordes, Moses Rumsdell, Sherman M. Pearsall, Harvey Monroe, Francis Greenly, Henry Porter, P. Fox, John Avery, Robert Delmar, Henry and Lorenzo Dennison, Philip Cummings and his sons, and perhaps some more. Greenly was killed by lightning. At this time (1844), Wm. H. Withey had a mill on Mill Creek.

Alpine was long identified with Walker. She was slow to claim to be of age, and lived contentedly as "North Walker" until 1847. Then, in April, she held her first election, at the school-house in the southeast corner of the town.

The first officers were: Supervisor, Edward Wheeler; Clerk, C. D. Schenick; Treasurer, Casper Cordes; Justices, Wm. H. Withey, John Coffee, John Colton, John Tuxbury.