

TYRONE GLEANINGS

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First building in Kent City



The first building built in Kent City was a home built and occupied by a black man by the name of John H Vond. Mr. Albee purchased Vond's property

and built an addition to create a hotel which was bought again by a Mr. Bert Taylor who in turn sold it to Mr. J.S.

Bowen who continued as the proprietor until the famous fire of April 22, 1907- when it burned down. The Kent City Hotel sat toward the back of the present location of the Dental Office Building that used to be owned by George & Chris Brown. (Several years ago, this building was White's IGA & eventually Houseman's.) When he rebuilt, John Bowen constructed the new hotel building that we all remember fondly- located where Star Customs parking lot is currently- on the northwest corner of North Main and Muskegon Street.



Why settle in this area?

Villages of pioneer days began to make their appearance soon after the arrival of the first settlers and in most cases, these grew up around a sawmill- as was the case with Kent City- or a trading post or river ford which made a natural gathering place for scattered settlers. Speculating on the location of Casnovia, we find settlers favored a good elevation with no rivers to overflow and flood them out, and for health they shunned the low land and its swamps and malaria or ague. Here the light sandy pine land merged with the rich loam of the hardwood and was considered best for farming with plenty of tall straight pine for building purposes and a good farm with a stout log cabin was their goal.

Probably the deciding factor with Lot Fulkerson, who was the first settler to the village of Casnovia, was the new state road (presently Kenowa Ave.). He was a carpenter and joiner by trade and had served two terms as Sheriff of Hillsdale County. He had traded his farm there for a tavern in Moscow which he operated for some time. He saw his opportunity here (at Casnovia) and built his cabin on the present site of the Old Casnovia School building. He soon opened a tavern for travelers. This became a popular place for teamsters and home seekers. It is said there were often 50 guests and at night the sleeping rooms were crowded to the doors.

Source: Mrs. Lottie Hersey. April 20, 1948.

"Nita's Recipe Corner"

Now that Fall is here- I think a good apple pie is in order. Back in the late 1980's there used to be a fall pie & dessert baking contest held every year. The requirement to enter was that your dessert or pie had to be made with locally grown fruits (apples, peaches, blueberries, etc.) I entered my peach pie one year and my apple pie another and was lucky enough to get first place for both pies. For this issue I'm using my apple pie recipe called: **Perfect Apple Pie**.



My favorite apples to use are yellow delicious. They bake up well and are not too sweet. To have a good apple pie, you need to use an apple that is not too sweet. Often I like to mix apples with the yellow delicious and usually use Spys or Ida Reds. I always get my apples from Barth & Janice Freeland and Janice bags up a nice mixture for baking & applesauce. Here are the recipes for apple pie and the flaky pastry recipe that I have used for over fifty years.

Perfect Apple Pie

6-8 apples peeled & sliced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 cup sugar
2-3 Tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon
Pastry for a 2-crust pie

Combine sugar, flour & cinnamon.
Mix with apples. Line pie plate with pastry & fill with the apple mixture. Top with more pastry.
Make slits for steam. Bake at 400 for 45-50 minutes or until done.

Flaky Pastry

4 cups flour
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups shortening
1 Tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 Tablespoon vinegar
1 egg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water

Mix flour, sugar & salt in a large bowl. Cut in shortening mashing with a fork until mixture resembles small crumbs. Mix vinegar, water & beaten egg in small bowl then stir into flour mixture with fork or large spoon until a nice doughball forms & all dry ingredients are mixed in. Chill about one hour before rolling.

Note: use lots of flour on surface when rolling out. I have found this to be the best pie crust recipe ever. It's always flaky & can be rolled more than once if necessary. I sprinkle a teaspoon of granulated sugar on top of all my fruit pies before baking. This pastry recipe makes 2 double-crust pies. You can freeze the extra crust for another time or just make two!!



Meetings are cancelled & museum is closed for now -due to Covid concerns

Editor's note: The museum has in its files this newspaper clipping which details the arrival of the Austin family to Chester Township. Some of the earliest settlers to the state of Michigan. We find this very interesting and hope you do also. Birth and death dates as well as who some of the women married have been added.

Austin Family History

1923

The Austin Family Reunion was held at North Park, Saturday, August 25th (1923) with one hundred and four members present. The family are among the first settlers in Chester Township. The following history was written and read at the meeting by Mrs. H. J. Austin – one of the oldest members of the family now living.

Sometime in the year 1841, in what was at that time far away Ireland, two young people, John Austin (about 1813 - 1889) and his wife, Elizabeth Forsythe Austin (1815 - 1873), left behind all that was dear to them: home, loved ones, friends and started for America, the land of promise, to establish a new home, make new friends and begin a life history that reaches down to us today, and to unborn generations yet to come. John and Elizabeth were eleven weeks coming across the ocean. The voyage was treacherous, and no friend to greet them when they landed in the new world.



They stayed in the state of New York for a few years. While there two of their children were born, Thomas (1840 - 1885) and Mary (1844 - 1891. Married William McCune). Then they came to the southern part of this state, stopping in Oakland County. While there, Joseph (1845 - 1910) and Henry (1847 - 1914) were born. In the year 1848, they came to what is now Chester Township, Ottawa County, where they made their permanent home. It was here that their youngest child, Nancy was born.

Soon after coming to Chester three brothers of John came and settled near them, David (1801 - 1872), Henry (1814 - 1888) and Samuel. The three brothers were single and the two oldest never married. Samuel married and had four children, Mary (1866 - 1915), John (1867- 1937), Henry (1868 - 1929) and Maggie (1874 - 1931). The two that did not marry made and left good homes out of the wilderness.

In the year 1851, ten years after John left Ireland, Thomas (1799 - 1882) and his wife Sarah (1819 - 1910) came and settled near the others. They had three children, Henry (1847 - 1914), Mary Ann (1845 - 1907 married David McIlveen) and Joseph (1850 - 1938). Afterward six others were added to their family: Samuel 1852 - 1916), Sarah, Malinda (1857 - 1933, married Robert MaGaw), David (1853 - 1932), Thomas (1861 - 1948) and John (1867 - 1900).

Five brothers were now here, but there was one more, a sister, Nancy (1803 - 1885) yet to come. After a short time, she and her husband, John McEllvene came and settled near the others. They had three children when they came, Nancy, Mary, and Elizabeth.

Five brothers and one sister – there are some here today and that can remember all of them, especially the sister, Aunt Nancy, as everyone called her. It was said when she first came, one of her brothers objected to her using so much tea, (you all know that tea is an Irish beverage) because it was so hard to get at that time. She said that if she could not have her tea she would go back to Old Ireland. She said it warmed her heart, and certainly she had a warm heart, a cheerful smile and a pleasant word for everyone. Not one of us that knew her will ever forget her. It has truly been said

that the one who brings a gleam of joy into another life, cannot keep it from their own. We do not know how far a kind deed may reach. It goes on and on touching lives and its magic and we all feel that our lives are better for knowing Aunt Nancy McEllveen.

They are gone. They are of the past. The past – a memory destined to become dim and faded as time flies swiftly by. The six of the first generation have passed on. Their work is done. The homes they made in the wilderness are ours. Their memories are ours to cherish that knew them, and they are pleasant memories. We cannot forget. Let us pass the memories of these sturdy pioneers down to the children so that they will not forget what they owe these six, the first generation of Austin's to come from Ireland to this country.

The present, today, is here and before us we have the fourth generation. There were six of the first, twenty of the second, and eleven of the twenty who have passed on and nine of the others are the white-haired ones here today. A few more such gatherings and we will be but a memory too. The present is always so full with just living. Do not let it slip away just uselessly, give it to the best that is in you, and take the best it offers you.

It is easy to say, "Make the most of today." That is our opportunity, our brief chance. Do not let it leave you with your task unfinished. Do not put off until tomorrow what you should do today. Oh it is easy to say such things, but it is hard to live up to them because today seems to come with a rush and is gone before we realize it has been here. Just stop and think what it meant when the first family of Austin's came here. The nearest town was Grand Rapids, twenty miles away. It took them two to three days to go and come with an ox team through the woods. Think of the difference between the past and present.

Now you can have a late dinner, get ready for Grand Rapids, from their old home do a lot of business, and get home for an early supper. Think of the difference in crossing the ocean now and 80 years ago. The difference between one week and eleven, and soon you will be going through the air in as many hours. Think of sending a small boy to hunt the cows in the woods and while he was gone, he heard a pack of wolves yelping not far away in another section of woods. Think of staying alone with little children while the father was gone to Grand Rapids for necessities for the home; always one and mostly two days and nights, to say nothing about once in a while an Indian that was a little inquisitive coming in. I think there was one family that had cause to remember their crossing the ocean, - Thomas and his wife. They discovered when it was too late to go back that in the confusion of getting their things on the ship and each supposing the other had the children, two little tots were left behind. There was no radio at this time, no cable, no way to know, just simply to wait until the next ship sailed, hoping they would be sent. It would be nearly three months at least, before the next ship would land in New York. Life was not all sunshine in those days.

But, last of all comes this future tomorrow that never seems to come. It is always something to look forward to. Just common home makers were those old pioneers, but remember it is just these common home makers that make these United States, that make it a mighty nation. There are four generations represented here today. Who can tell what the future may bring forth? All the high places of the nation are yours if you strive for them. And may you as you strive remember that God who studies each separated soul out of commonplace lives makes his beautiful whole. Little did those pioneers ever think of a gathering like this today is, as we might say, in their honor. Let us never forget to honor their memories.