

VERMONTVILLE ECHO

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HISTORY OF VERMONTVILLE COLONY 1836-1936 by Juliette L. Gehman and Jennie E. Martin.

Amid the rapidly changing conditions of our present day life, it is wise to take a backward look now and then, and consider beginnings--beginnings which have led, through the passing of many years to what we call "our modern day" with all that term may signify.

When a town like Vermontville has passed through a century of growth and comes to its one hundredth birthday it is especially appropriate to spend a little time with its early history thereby refreshing the memory of those who can, personally, recall days of auld lang syne, and giving those who know not the past, knowledge of the fine and splendid heritage bequeathed us by our fore-fathers.

The settlement of Michigan began little more than one hundred years ago, and except at a few points connected with frontier military activities, the number of Michigan post offices in 1828 was officially listed as nine.

After that year settlement increased so that in 1831 the list had increased to sixty. The first step in opening Michigan to settlers was the extinguishment of the Indian title, and a large tract of land which included all of Eaton County, was ceded to the government in 1819 by the treaty of Saginaw, made with the Chippewas.

The Vermontville Colony

In the autumn of 1835 Rev. Sylvester Cochrane, a Congregational minister of East Poultney, Vermont, came to Michigan with the intention of locating a permanent home.

He learned after his arrival that settlements were so small and families so scattered that no group was large enough to maintain a school or religious organization, therefore he returned to Vermont and spent the winter in an endeavor to interest those who desired removal to the West, meanwhile working out a plan for a colony.

Several meetings were held, Mr. Cochrane's plan approved and steps taken to provide for a group-emigration to the territory of Michigan. On March 27, 1836 the Constitution of the Union Colony was adopted, which document is now on record in the office of the Register of Deeds of Eaton County.

This declaration is unique of its kind for so far as can be learned, no other New England Colony has ever been organized on such a plan or had a similar beginning.