

(Note: Indeed as a child, I, as granddaughter of a Rutland Co. settler supposed one had to be a Congregationalist and Republican to be exactly orthodox. J.M.G.)

Many of the families were, however, Democrats by heredity, especially those coming from Bennington county, and among them was my collaborator's grandfather, Wells R. Martin. He, and others, were as staunch in their opinions as if original, not inherited.

Indeed, inheriting political party affiliations is not altogether a thing of the past as yet.

But a new issue came into being. Men of keen moral sense and knowledge of national affairs sensed a new national danger. Down in Illinois a tall gaunt young man with the mind and conscience of a moral genius, began to hate slavery. This "Abe" Lincoln led public opinion. Here in our village, Willard Davis was one of the first three abolitionists. As early as 1854 the slave question became a great political issue, and all whigs, free-soil democrats and abolitionists formed the new republican party that later was to elect this same awkward young man with eyes of intense look to our presidency. (One of our present residents, Walter Davis, is a nephew of Willard Davis, and his wife is a daughter of one of Lucy Dwight's six children, a nine year old boy when his mother took up land as an early Colonist).

When Dr. Robert Kedzie came to the village his anti-slavery convictions strengthened those of Willard Davis and his group and political discussions were full of strong feeling.

When our Civil War came on it was regarded as a moral issue, and news each day by pony and rider from Charlotte was eagerly awaited. Midnight often saw men still walking the street awaiting this daily bulletin. Mr. Barber says sorrow came to nearly every household and one present resident says the building of a proper church edifice was postponed because all the money had to go to "our boys" for their needs.

Mercantile life was meanwhile developing. People at first went to Bellevue, Marshall or Battle Creek. The first familiar name to us as Merchant was that of Homer G. Barber in 1855, next in 1863. Barber & Martin until 1873, then Martin & Downing, then Henry J. Martin to 1890. The Barber store, after dissolution of Barber & Martin, survived for many years under Barber, Ambrose & Rockwell.

Mr. Barber mentions the valuable public services of Henry J. Martin, but his moving our present chapel onto a good foundation and renovating its interior is an item that should be added. It but showed Mr. Martin's interest in the village's cultural side.

In that chapel today hangs a fine picture of Beethoven, and looking at it, we can but remember the love of good music this same Henry Martin instilled into those within the influence of his baton and pen.