

with the older residents, resulted in an atmosphere of culture which lasted for many years and was frequently recognized by passing visitors or transient residents.

Olivet College was founded in 1844 and its courses of higher study attracted Vermontville students along with those from other places, and its special events, concerts, commencements were often attended, tho the round trip of thirty-six miles was accomplished often with difficulty.

The year of 1852 witnessed the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin", the volume which stirred the whole country and exerted a supreme influence on the trend of national events, leading eventually to the civil war and freeing of the slaves.

The first copy of the book was given to the wife of Dr. Robert Kedzie a short time after its publication, by an Oberlin friend, and after its perusal by the family, was started on a loan-trip that lasted more than two years. Its poignant, heart-breaking pages won men to the Anti-Slavery movement everywhere and it has been called the "gospel" of that dispensation.

The diary of Henry J. Martin kept in extreme detail from 1859 to 1870, is a veritable local history of those critical, stirring years, covering as it does records of a widely varied character.

By this time Vermontville had become a trading point for a large territory, so general business was good. Roads were improved, a local postoffice gave closer communication with the outside world, and population showed a large increase.

Vermontville has always been known as a "musical town" and a genuine love of music based the early singing schools, kept a large choir rehearsing under the direction of Dr. Almon Thompson a successful physician of the community and a fine tenor singer, and organized a band with such a favorable reputation that it was engaged one year, for the sum of \$30.00, to furnish the music for a joint Fourth of July celebration held by Lyons and Muir. The journey, made by horses and lumber wagon, took three days: July 3, to go, July 4, to help in the celebration and July 5, to return. This is a considerable contrast to present day travel by automobile when one can drive to Lyons and back in two hours on a Sunday afternoon.

Little groups of young music lovers met often in the evening for a "sing" and to judge by an oft repeated statement in the diary there was but one portable musical instrument of any size in the village - a melodeon kept in the home of Willard Davis. This officiated at funerals, church services and "exercises". Took the melodeon home to Davises, are frequent diary entries. It may be of interest to state that this instrument, so long in later years doing duty in the Chapel was, at last, sent to Dakota for the use of a little group who moved there in the 80's and was destroyed in a fire which took the home where it was stored.

In 1870 the Grand River Valley Railroad from Jackson to Grand Rapids, was built through Vermontville and opened for traffic. This was a mile-stone in our local history and may perhaps be called the beginning of a more modern chronicle. The previous thirty-four years had seen a gradual transformation of the village.