

**CENTENNIAL
HISTORY OF ALPENA
COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649455980

Centennial History of Alpena County, Michigan by David D. Oliver

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

DAVID D. OLIVER

**CENTENNIAL
HISTORY OF ALPENA
COUNTY, MICHIGAN**



DAVID D. OLIVER.

AUTHOR.

*ONE OF THE FIRST WHITE MEN TO SETTLE IN ALPENA COUNTY, AND
THE FIRST TO ENGAGE IN LUMBERING.*

CENTENNIAL HISTORY

— OF —

ALPENA COUNTY,

MICHIGAN.

—
GIVING SKETCH OF MICHIGAN FROM ITS EARLY
SETTLEMENT, FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES
OF FIRST SETTLERS.

—
THE SURVEY, SETTLEMENT AND GROWTH OF
ALPENA COUNTY, FROM 1837 TO 1876.

—
BY DAVID D. OLIVER.

—
ALPENA, MICH.
ARGUS PRINTING HOUSE.
1903.

CENTENNIAL HISTORY
— OF —
ALPENA COUNTY,
MICHIGAN.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In order to show the progress and development of Alpena county, it will be necessary to go back to the earliest days of its settlement by white people, and to show the circumstances, conditions and influences by which they were surrounded at the time of such settlement, as these have much to do with their future prosperity and happiness, and determines in no small degree the character of their popular institutions. And hence this work would be incomplete without referring to the History of the State of Michigan—at the time and since its admission into the Sisterhood of States.

An act was passed by Congress, on the 15th day of June, 1836, for the admission of Michigan as one of the States of the Union; but with the then humiliating condition, that it would relinquish its claim to the southern boundry, (which was a narrow strip or land extending from Lake Michigan to Lake Erie, and claimed by Indiana and Ohio,) and accept instead thereof, the Upper Peninsula, which was then an unexplored region, and considered of no probable value. In December, of the same year, a *packed* convention met and agreed to the con-

ditions imposed by Congress; and Michigan was admitted as one of the States of the Union, on the 26th of January, 1837. In the winter of the same year, Canada became involved in a *quasi* rebellion, and the country becoming too warm politically for the healthful exercise of the writer's American proclivities, he resolves to quit the Queen's Dominions, (as he was only a visitor,) and he crossed the dividing line, at Port Horon, into the State of Michigan, which was then undergoing some material changes, financially and politically.

Steven T. Mason was elected first Governor. He was a young man, of more than ordinary ability,—had been Secretary and acting Governor of the Territory while in his minority; and now, with the young State, was merging into manhood and freedom, with many wants and ambitions to satisfy; and the young State and its young Governor, without experience, launched out into many extravagances, and committed many errors, which resulted in financial ruin to the State and its inhabitants. There was some question at the time, as to who got the money; but there was no disputing the fact that the State got the experience. At this time, (1836), when we have railroads and telegraph lines traversing the State in every direction, it is impossible for the present generation to fully comprehend the situation or feelings of the people of our State in those days. Then there was no railway communication with the east; nor was there any convenient way of traveling by land between Detroit and Chicago.

A large portion of the State of Michigan, at this time, (1838,) was an immense forest, the most of which was unsurveyed, and but little known. It was, therefore, not only desirable, but necessary, that the lands should be surveyed and explored; and that certain improvements should be carried into effect, in order to develop the resources of the country. Uncle Sam was doing his part. The public lands were being surveyed by Deputy United States Surveyors, who done the work under contracts,

at a certain price per mile. In the fall of 1838, the writer hired with Messrs. Alvin and Austin Burt, who had a contract for surveying lands on the Aubetsies river, in the northwestern part of the Southern Peninsula. We started—fourteen in number, and four pack horses—from Washington, in Macomb county, and traveled west through the counties of Oakland, Shiawassee, Livingston, Ionia and Kent, to Grand Rapids. Sometimes we traveled in a road, and other times in an Indian trail; and much of the way through wood and marsh, without trail or road.

The first night out, we camped where Fenton now is. This was the first time that the writer had ever camped out in a tent, but not the last. Here was a log house and a small clearing. The next day we passed through Shiawassee county, near the village of Owosso, where there was a clearing in the oak woods, and a small cluster of buildings; but the people were in excellent spirits and good working order, for the survey of a railroad had been made through their town only a short time before, and they felt confident that it would be made in a very short time.

We struck another clearing near the Lookingglass river, but clearings were "few and far between" on our line of march. In passing through Livingston county, we were terrorized by snakes. In the marshes and low lands we found in profusion a species of rattlesnake called the massasauga, many of which we killed, and which kept us in constant dread. On the plains we had some experience with the blue racer. One day, one of the advanced party saw a large snake of this kind, and gave chase, but the snake kept at a safe distance ahead of the man, running with his head high above the ground and small bushes. Finding he could not overtake the snake, he gave up the chase and started to return, when, to his astonishment and terror, he found the snake returning also, and with a loud yell, he started on double quick to reach the rest of the party. When, almost

breathless, he came to a halt among us, *there* was his snakeship at a respectful distance, his head above the bushes, his tongue flashing derision at the whole party. He looked immensely good natured, and as though he was king of snakes, and was out on a reconnoiter. Capt. Darins Cole was one of the party and one of the packers, and who proposed to unpack one of the horses and surround and capture the snake, as it was a very large one, or run it down with the horse. But his snakeship seemed to understand what was transpiring, as well as the ancient one in the Garden of Eden, and before we were ready to surround and take him in, he respectfully withdrew, and could not be found.

In Ionia county, we met Douglass Houghton, the then State Geologist. He was on one of the early geological surveys. He had an Indian for a packer, and his pack-horse was a coal-black one, and his camp tins were new and bright and were hung on both sides of the animal, making a singular appearance, and rattling when he traveled, as though he belonged to a charivari party. In due time we reached Lyons, which we found quite a lively little town in the woods, containing about five hundred inhabitants, who were hoping for and expecting a railroad in a very few years. From this place to Grand Rapids we traveled in a very passable road for a wagon, and saw some settlements, placed at long intervals. We halted at Grand Rapids a short time, to make some purchases and recruit our provisions, as this was the last village we would see for many months. Grand Rapids, at this time, (1838,) had the appearance of a growing little village, with say fifteen hundred inhabitants. It had water communication, by boats on the river, to Grand Haven. It had a bank, a sawmill and two painted buildings, which were used as stores. It was the center of considerable trade in general merchandise and peltry. From this place to Aubensies river, a little over one hundred miles north, was a howling wilderness, with only an Indian trader at