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Hudson in the 1840's by Mrs. Curtis H. Boies

I have often been requested to write a history of my early life in Hudson, but the various scenes and occurrences which have transpired during the past 65 years have made me feel rather inadequate for the task.

Since reading the history as given by Messrs. Ames and Wood, the correctness of their statements as given on that period, which I can vouch for, has invited me to take a retrospect of the now "City of Hudson" at a few years prior to their history.

If my memories of these days is correct, I wish I was an artist that I could sketch upon paper as it then was. Not a dwelling or hut but I could clearly define. In thinking of those who were then residents, heads of families, I mean, I do not think of one survivor but myself. Many of their descendents are living there, but I allude particularly to the old people.

In making my statements I confine myself entirely to the West side of the village of Lanesville, dating back to June 1840. There was then no Hudson City or even Hudson on Bean Creek. It was simply Lanesville. My first recollections of approaching the place which was to be my future home for over half a century, was the descent of the hill from the East side, which then was so steep and the road so narrow as to render it necessary to block the wheels of the wagon and use caution lest we be precipitated down the bank.

A rude structure of a bridge spanned Bean Creek. We alighted at a little house kept by D. P. Hannah as a sort of stopping place for travelers, which stood upon the northwest corner of Main and Market Streets, where Lawrence's grocery now is. It consisted of one main room which constituted a sitting room, lodging room and diningroom, with portable stairs to the upper loft—not of the elevator style of the present day, but an ordinary moveable ladder. On the west side of the room was another one used as a bar-room. Back of the sitting room was a kitchen and outside the Dutch oven, as was common in those days.

This was the only building on the north side of the street till we came to the original store that C. H. Boies owned and occupied, which from the deeds I think was about where Boies Bank now stands. This was a one-story frame building about 20 feet wide and 60 long, the front occupied as a store and the rear as a dwelling.

Next west of us and standing a little back from the highway was a large two-story building with large columns reaching to the roof. This was a fine building for the days and painted, but like every other house in the village, only partly finished inside. This was owned and occupied by Augustus Finney and family.

The next house west of this was one built and occupied by Beriah H. Lane and father, both widowers, at this time—both married later, the father to Harvey Andersons mother, the son to her daughter and sister to Mrs. Silas Eaton. Mr. Lane's house was the only one on the north side of the street till you passed Cole's swamp.

At the head of Market Street, near the west end of the railroad bridge, stood a log house owned by Reuben Davis, formerly by Mr. Lane.

South of this, on the bank of the Creek, was the sawmill, then owned and run by Mr. Finney. From the brow of the hill to Main Street was a large pile of logs. South of this and west of the bridge was a small frame house where Silas Orcutt lived.

Next west, near the vicinity where the Fair Store is (N.E. corner of Main and Market Streets) lived a man and his wife, DeForest by name. On the corner south (Market and Fayette Streets) Martin H. Webb lived, then later Mrs. Hepzibah Loomis and Ancil Coates lived. I think he was a mason by trade, but he did not remain there long.

A little south and on the west side, Simeon Van Akin lived. That was the southern limit of habitation. On the corner where Oren Howe's store now is (S.W. corner Main and Market Streets) Franklin Smith kept a small store, purchasing his supplies of Boies, Ashley and Col, while they were in Business in Adrian.

Two or three years later the Larned Brothers went into the mercantile business, occupying the same building. No other building obstructed the view till we came to the corner of Main and Church Sts. There was a rough board blacksmith shop, owned and operated by John Conery. The front was used for horse-shoeing and other blacksmithing, while his family, consisting of himself and several children, lived in the back part.

James Sample's house, where Dan Brown's store building now stands (west side of S. Church Street, just south of Main) was the only dwelling south until we reached

Sylvester Kenyon's. It was swamp from the hill where J.K. Boies' house stands to the ashery (corner S. Church and Seward Sts.)

David Pratt's house stood where Dr. Nix's does now on Main Street. Just a few rods west of this was a frame dwelling occupied by Mr. Loomis who had three sons and one daughter. I think John, the youngest son, became a cripple and may be living yet.

The last house west on Main Street was Harvey Cobb's house. Beyond to Cole's Hill was one miry swamp.

About 1841 or 42 John Conery sold out to Frederick Duryea, who had a small frame building moved from Keene in sections, that he used for a dwelling, setting it a little east of his shop.

A little north and back of C. H. Boies store (on E. side No. Church Street) was a house in which a man and his wife lived by name of Bidwell. Further north, on west side Church Street, where Ed. Randall now lives, a rough board house stood, where William Sherwood and wife lived. I think he was a son of Father Van Fleet's wife who lived somewhere in the vicinity of Wheatland.

At this time there was neither schoolhouse nor place of worship and no preaching except as some traveling minister on his circuit chanced to reach here Saturday night and hold services Sunday. The first time I attended meeting there, it was announced that a minister would preach that day, but where was a question with us. We followed the direction others took and found it was to be in Mr. Cobb's barn. Through the bars and across the barnyard the barn.

C. H. and M. M. Boies took seats in the manger, while I sat upon a board placed upon blocks on the barn door—"middle aisle." The preacher had a fanning mill for his desk. Soon after service commenced, some little barefoot urchins who had sought refuge in the haymow, disturbed the fowls on their nests and such a cackling that it awaited mirth, and I rather forgot the sacredness of the day in the novelty of the surroundings.

My next experience at church-going was to hear Rev. Mr. Sabin, who was to preach in the log house owned by Reuben Davis at the head of Market Street. There were benches for seats as I think at some time previous a short term of school had been taught there.

Next to me sat Mrs. Griswold and daughter. Mrs. G. was large and somewhat weighty, for service had barely commenced before there seemed to be a crackling and trembling of the floor, when suddenly the timber gave way and I, seeing the catastrophe and being somewhat more sprightly than I now am, gave a bound and leaped the chasm, while Mrs. G. and daughter went to the cellar bottom. I didn't wait to hear the doxology sung. I find this very scene recorded in the "History of Bean Creek Valley," but the author wasn't there and I was.

In the winter of 1840 meetings were held on the log house on Cole's hill, and Theron Childs and wife, living out of town, used to come with ox team and sled and favor us with a ride on Sunday. The fall and winter of which I write there were scarcely well ones enough to care for the sick. Everyone was shaking with the ague. While we were suffering with it and unable to go out, our infant daughter died and was buried by kind neighbors somewhere near where Hulburd's mill once stood in the woods—I never knew where. There was no place then located for a cemetery.

The only physician then was Dr. S. M. Wirts, who lived where Mr. N.O. Cady has since lived on Tiffin St., East side, just north of railroad, and nearly south of him, near the railroad as it now is, was a small brown house where John Davenport lived. He was the mail carrier, coming through once a week with the mail on horseback. Beriah H. Lane was postmaster. The postage on the letters was 25 cents—few and far between in those days.

Bawbeese and his tribe of Indians had their camping grounds a few miles out, called Squawfield. I had never seen Indians until I lived in Adrian. In the winter of '39 they came to Adrian to trade with Mr. Boies. The firm was Boies, Ashley and Co. My curiosity induced me to go into the store the back way and get behind the counter, that I might have a good view of them. The old chief saw me and he brought me his squaw to look at me. Then he pointed at me and Mr. Boies and said: "alike, alike," meaning I belonged to him. For a joke Mr. A. stepped up and claimed me as his. This irritated the chief, and he raised his hand and said: "She not your squaw; you have no squaw."

After we came to Lanesville they came to trade at our store and were much pleased as they recognized us and were very friendly, often coming to the house to see me. I well recollect when Col. Brady's troops came from Ohio and surrounded their camp to remove them to some western reservation. That night they were having

a pow-pow and the day before some of the Indians came for whiskey, bringing a fresh calfskin to carry it in. They had not gone far with it when it slipped its fastenings and they had to return and borrow a jug and have a new supply.

I once had a history of the tribe which was very interesting and I have often regretted that I lost it. I think it was published some 50 years ago or so by a man in Hillsdale. If I am not mistaken it was by a man named Alvord or some name similar. It gives an account of Negisbqua, a daughter of Bawbeese. She married Feggertin, the doctor of the tribe. Her father made her a bridal present of a pony. Feggertin took it and went off on a spree and pawned it. Before his return, she heard of it and was so enraged that when he came back she killed him. This made Bawbeese vary sad, for he loved his daughter and, according to the laws of the tribe, she must be killed by her next of kin. Her brother was chosen as her executioner.

Bawbeese's wife died and was buried at Jonesville as they were driven west. He returned there years afterward and visited her grave and passed through our village on his way to Monroe.

In reading the "History of Bean Creek Valley" I find very much of interest to me, as it takes me back to those early days and, although it is written not so much from personal knowledge of the author as from memoranda and statements by others, yet to those who lived in those days it is to be prized.

In reading of Mr. Finney's (Augustus Finney 1796-1857) meeting in convention at Monroe in '27 (1837), with reference to the projected railroad from Adrian to Hillsdale, his energy in impressing upon the minds of those interested in the fine country, excellent farming land, and great water power which should be an inducement to accept this route instead of north through Keene, as then talked of, Mr. F. was a man we all knew well, and when particularly interested, his enthusiasm knew no bounds, and he had the faculty of emphasizing his meaning until it was convincing. Why was it that he expatiated so strongly upon the desirability of the route as it now is? Did he feel an inspiration to put forth his power of eloquence and energies for a coming generation, for he could not have expected to live to see the City of Hudson as it now is in 1896.

In viewing its nice churches, beautiful residences and fine lawns, its large business blocks and manufacturing establishments, with its seven bored wells, with water mains supplying the whole city, and its electric lights, where 56 years ago it was

only the tallow candle or the lard lamp, I can but say to me it seems prophetic.
Although he has long since passed from earthly scenes 'tis well to pay a tribute of
respect to his memory.
