

Hudson Incorporated 100 Years Ago Today

Today, February 12, 1953, has added meaning to Hudsonians this year. True it is also the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, but records show that **the Village of Hudson, Michigan was incorporated by act of the state legislature on Feb. 12, 1853.** The first village president was Caleb C. Cooley and first recorder was Alexander M. Ocobock. The title remained until **Feb. 11, 1893 when the village became a city.**

Two books, *Bean Creek Valley*, published in 1876, and *Chronicle of Hudson's first Century*, published in 1933 provide a vivid record of Hudson's growth down through these hundred years.

The first persons to visit this Bean Creek Valley were Joseph Beal and his son, William, who started out from the Village of Adrian on April 1, 1833, equipped for a land hunt. They took a south-westerly course and reached Bean Creek in the vicinity of where Morenci now stands. They then proceeded up the creek until they reached the bend in the southerly part of town seven south (Hudson), and then taking their bearing from a pocket compass, they proceeded through the wilderness on a straight line as near as possible for Devils Lake, the headquarters of the Bean. They came out on the banks of Round Lake.

One early settler described the Bean Creek Valley as being an Emigrants Eldorado. Gigantic trees seen dressed in their autumn costumes of red, yellow and purple leaves, large bunches of fox grapes pendant from clinging vine and the woods filled with the more valuable species of game, bounding, running or flying away at the approach of a strange visitor.

Organization came in 1835 when Hudson Township was formed and named after Dr. Daniel Hudson of Geneva, N.Y., and who was the senior partner of the company who bought the land. **The first township meeting was held April 4, 1836** and they voted to raise the whole sum of \$50.00 for contingent expenses.

The two settlements in the township were Lanesville (now Hudson) and Keene, two miles north, known as Ames' Hill and site of the present Boy Scout Camp. This rivalry became more keen

after the legislature approved a new railroad to be built between Adrian and Coldwater. The Lanesville route was the longest and most difficult of the three suggested. They won by securing an Augustus Finney to plead their case. Gentlemanly in appearance, pleasant in address, having an eloquent and persuasive tongue, he was just the man to make the worse appear the better reason. Lanesville won the route and Keene began to move buildings and everything to Lanesville.

The name of Lanesville was changed to Hudson in the year 1840. The first bridge was built across Bean Creek in 1840. **The first locomotive known as the Comet arrived in Hudson in 1843.**

The population of Hudson township about this time was 3927 of which 1947 were males and 1981, an excess of females of 35 so the record states. Two hundred and fourteen persons were employed in its manufacturing establishments and the amount of capital invested was \$185,000.00 with its four sawmills turning out about 530,000 feet of lumber a year.

The business places of that day were two banks, four dry goods stores, eleven grocery stores, four hardware stores, four drug stores, two furniture stores, four boot and shoe houses, one hat, one tobacco, one tea and one jewelry house, three clothiers, two bakeries, six millinery, four barber shops, one gun, three copper, five blacksmith, one tailor, two paint shops, one pump, one fanning mill, one tub, two carriage, one wheelbarrow, one machine shop, three planing mills, three lumber yards, two liveries, eight physicians, two dentists, eight lawyers, two artists, two hair dressers, four insurance offices, five saloons, three meat markets, one butter and egg store, four hotels, two book stores and two printing shops.

Produce shipped out of Hudson was 10,432 pounds of sheared wool, 288,020 pounds of pork, 44,945 pounds of cheese, 209,502 pounds of butter, 42,365 bushels of wheat, 96,945 bushels of corn, 21,000 bushels of other grain, 35,525 bushels of apples, 463 bushels of melons, 20,650 pounds of dried fruit, 4380 pounds of maple sugar, 7555 bushels of potatoes, 830 barrels of cider and 2,586 tons of hay.

A hundred years has gone by since then, much water has gone down Bean Creek many trains have come and gone and ancestors of those early pioneers still live here. We enjoy our today because of the planning, the long hours of toil and the courage of these settlers of this past century.

Change has been tremendous. The forests and wild game are gone; trains are giving way to faster transportation, new marvels in communication, mass production, much higher standard of living, and new styles in most everything. Our today would have been almost unexplainable 100 years ago.

People – many people – have made the City of Hudson, and its future is still in the thinking, planning and courage of its people. The spirit of neighborliness, cooperation, honesty, hard toil, concern of our youth, the church of our choice, while not changing as much as our material gadgets, are all as much needed as 100 years ago

One hundred years old, that should call for a big celebration. Rather first, let us as Hudson people, rededicate ourselves to make Hudson's next century just as fruitful for those chosen to be our ancestors.

A birthday present, however big or small, between now and Feb. 12, 1954, which in some way will contribute to a better way of life for those living here in 2053.

A special year of worthwhile service to the life and welfare of this community by our industries, merchants, churches, schools, lodges, social organizations, and our homes, a special year of progress and pride, typical perhaps of any small American city, yet meaning more to us and our children because it is HOME.

Written by Russell Coman and printed in the Hudson Post-Gazette.

Mr. Coman holds the record for consecutive columns regarding Hudson's History, the most memorable being, "40 Years Ago Today".