

CCGS REFERENCE ONLY

# A Father's Legacy

*By Marlene Fabbro*

*Editor's Note: The second winner of the "Beyond Genealogy Contest" was Marlene Fabbro. By using county histories, assessment rolls, Michigan State Agricultural census records, probate records, newspaper excerpts and city directories, Marlene was able to determine Adam Weidenfeller's success as a farmer in Allegan County. She began with the questions, "What can be learned from the land transactions in Allegan County, Michigan involving Adam Weidenfeller. What type of farming did Adam do? Was he successful?"*

Adam (42) and Anna (32) Weidenfeller with Johann (11), Joseph (9), Anna (7), Adam (3) and Catherina (1), arrived in New York June 15, 1878 from Germany. They traveled soon after to Allegan County, Michigan where Anna's brother had settled in 1867<sup>1</sup>. It is apparent that the Weidenfellers did not arrive penniless in America. Within two months (August 23, 1878), Adam purchased 40 acres in Dorr Township,<sup>2</sup> Allegan

County. Over the next thirty-one years, Adam farmed the land, and he and Anna raised a family of ten children. From a study of the land transactions and the Allegan County living conditions of 1878-1909, I have concluded that owning land and farming were very important to Adam, but that he was not a successful farmer, due in part to the type of land he purchased and in part to the times in which he lived. I base my conclusions on the following:

The nature of the farming Adam Weidenfeller did in Allegan County can be determined in several ways. Driving around the area today one can see fields of corn, but in general this does not appear to be the lush open farming area that is seen a little farther north in the Byron Center area. The section in which Adam farmed is wooded and hilly. The tax records of 1879 give a value of \$150 to the original 40 acres for which Adam paid \$350<sup>3</sup>. The 1894 Agricultural Census of Michigan lists Adam as owning 120 acres of land. However, only 38 acres are tilled; another 12 acres are in woodland, and the remaining 70 acres are unimproved.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that wheat and rye were the principal crops Adam would have raised. In a deed to land purchased by Joseph Weidenfeller, Adam's son, in 1899 in the same section 29 as his father's, there is a reservation of the "two-thirds interest in standing wheat and rye now growing in the ground"<sup>5</sup>. A discussion with the current resident of the farm on which Adam first raised crops reveals that wheat is the principal crop there.<sup>6</sup> The probate record for Adam includes among his assets 37 bushels of rye and four bushels of wheat.<sup>7</sup>



Adam Weidenfeller, photo in possession of Marlene Fabbro

The page illustrated on the left, is a copy of Edma's record from the Veteran's Home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It provides enlistment and military discharge dates, the name of his company and regiment, a physical description, the names of his nearest relatives, his record of admittance and discharge to the Soldier's Home and his death date. Record number 3173.

### *End Notes*

- 1 Cheboygan County Index book of Births, Cheboygan County Michigan - 1890 through 1894.
- 2 Cheboygan County Index book of Births, Cheboygan County Michigan - 1885 through 1889
- 3 Cheboygan County Death Index, Cheboygan County Michigan - page 24, no. 46, 3/18/1882
- 4 Land patent Certificate No. 3421 recorded in the General Land Office in Marquette, Michigan, 6/25/1891
- 5 Mackinaw Witness, 2/12/1892,
- 6 Mackinaw Witness, 2/12/1892,
- 7 Board of health Meeting Notes, Village/ of Mackinaw City, 5/31/1894 currently found in the Mackinaw City Library private files.
- 8 Personal notebook of Edma Henry Blackmer, currently in the possession of Karen Blumenshine
- 9 Personal notebook of Edma Henry Blackmer, currently in the possession of Karen Blumenshine.
- 10 Oral history given to Karen Blurnenshine by Dr. Grebe, son of the man who bought the original Blackmer farm, and current owner. Mackinaw City, 2001
- 11 Chattel Mortgage on 10 acres of potatoes from Edma Blackmer, 11/1/1885, original document currently in the personal collection of Karen Blurnenshine
- 12 Mackinaw Township Meeting Notes, 6/1892, currently found in the Mackinaw City library private files.
- 13 Oral history given to Karen Blurnenshine by Doris Blackmer, 2001.
- 14 Mackinaw Township Meeting Notes, 12/1892, currently found in the Mackinaw City library private files.
- 15 Deed from Edma and Rosa Blackmer to Charles Stimpson, recorded 10/19/1909 Liber 45, page 97, Cheboygan County Records.
- 16 Cheboygan County Index of Births vol. 2, page 260, Cheboygan Michigan.
- 17 Cheboygan County Index of Births vol. 2 page 223, Cheboygan Michigan
- 18 Mackinaw Township Meeting Minutes, 1/21/1896, currently in the private collection of the Mackinaw City Public Library.
- 19 Michigan Soldiers Home Hospital Patient History, page 3173.

NOTE: all weather references are from *Mackinaw City Settlers and the Savage Straits*, Edna M. Coffinan, 1976, Voyager Press, Grand Marais, Michigan., reprints and excerpts from *The Mackinaw Witness*.

# MILITARY HISTORY

Time and Place of Birth	Rank	Company and Regiment	Time and Place of Discharge	Cause of Discharge
May 6, 1863 Plattburgh N.Y.	Private	1st Michigan Cavalry	June 1, 1865 Washington D.C.	close of the war Discharged

# DOMESTIC HISTORY

Wives Born	Age	Height	Complexion	Color of Eyes	Color of Hair	Build	Religion	Occupation	Residence Subsequent to Discharge	Married or Single	Name and Address of Nearest Relative
M. A.	52	58	Dark	Blue	Black	Slender	Methodist	Teacher	10, St. Pleasant Grand Rapids Mich.	Married	Blackman 10, St. Pleasant Grand Rapids Mich.

# HOME HISTORY

Rate of Pardon	Date of Admission and Re-Admission	Conditions of Re-Admission	Date of Discharge	Cause of Discharge	Date of Death	Cause of Death
6 <sup>th</sup>	June 2, 1897		Sept 30, 1899	Own Request	July 13, 1919	Chronic hypertension
7 <sup>th</sup>	July 10, 1900		Oct 2, 1900	"		
8 <sup>th</sup>	April 1, 1901		March 6, 1901	"		
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sept 21, 1902		Oct 10, 1902	"		
10 <sup>th</sup>	April 23, 1902		June 6, 1902	"		
11 <sup>th</sup>	April 11, 1903		July 8, 1904	"		
12 <sup>th</sup>	April 11, 1904		March 8, 1904	"		
13 <sup>th</sup>	April 9, 1905		Nov 27, 1905	"		
14 <sup>th</sup>	July 9, 1906		March 26, 1907	"		
15 <sup>th</sup>	April 10, 1908		Nov 12, 1908	Died		
16 <sup>th</sup>	July 24, 1909		Apr 24, 1911	Own Request		
17 <sup>th</sup>	July 10, 1911		July 1, 1914	"		
18 <sup>th</sup>	Nov 20, 1914		May 9, 1919	"		

# GENERAL REMARKS:

<p>Admission Paper</p> <p>Army Discharge Certificate of Service</p> <p>Pension Certificate 867 465</p> <p><b>EFFECTS.</b></p> <p>Labor Money \$</p> <p>Pension Money \$</p> <p>Personal, appraised at sold \$</p> <p>Total \$</p> <p>How disposed of</p>	<p>Discharged at Mich Soldiers Home Hosp July 13<sup>th</sup> 1919. Oct 10<sup>th</sup> 1915 Am</p> <p>Funeral services were held in Grand Rapids by Rev. W. H. B. Burial was in Home Cemetery July 14, 1919</p>
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cause to be paid said money one Hundred and fifty  
as the same shall fall due, then this mortgage to be void, otherwise in  
force. And it is further agreed that in case any default shall be made in the payment at the time afore-  
said of the whole or any part of said money

it shall and may be lawful for said  
Geo George E. Brown  
or he assigns, immediately thereafter, to enter and take possession of said goods and chattels,  
wherever the same may be found, and sell and dispose of the same at public or private sale for the best  
price he can obtain, and out of the money arising from such sale to retain and pay all the  
indebtedness hereby secured and said interest and all the expenses of the sale

and taking care of and removing said property, and from  
dollars as an attorney fee, should any proceedings be taken to foreclose this Indenture,  
rendering the surplus, if any, to said Edna A. Blackmer

or he assigns. And until default, as aforesaid, is made in said payment the said  
potatoes shall  
the possession of said goods and chattels may remain with said Edna A. Blackmer  
unless said

George E. Brown  
and assigns shall consider it necessary for his security to take the same into his own  
possession, in which case he shall have the right to do so, and hold the same until the  
power to foreclose hereinbefore given shall take effect.

In Witness Whereof, the said Edna A. Blackmer

22 hath hereunto set her hand and seal this  
day of June A. D. 1895

Sealed and Delivered in Presence of

Benjamin H. Hordida

Edna A. Blackmer  
L. S.

The document shown on these two pages lists the mortgage of \$150 of potatoes for Edna's land.

Know all Men by these Presents, That Edna H. Blackmer  
of The Township of Mackinac Cheboygan  
County Michigan

in consideration of one Hundred and fifty  
dollars to the paid by

George E. Brown of Mackinac City  
Cheboygan County and State Mich

do hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey unto George E. Brown  
and he assigns, all the following mentioned

goods and chattels, to-wit: one half interest in

now planted on the  
farm or parcel of Land situated in  
the Township of Mackinac Cheboygan  
County Mich and divided as

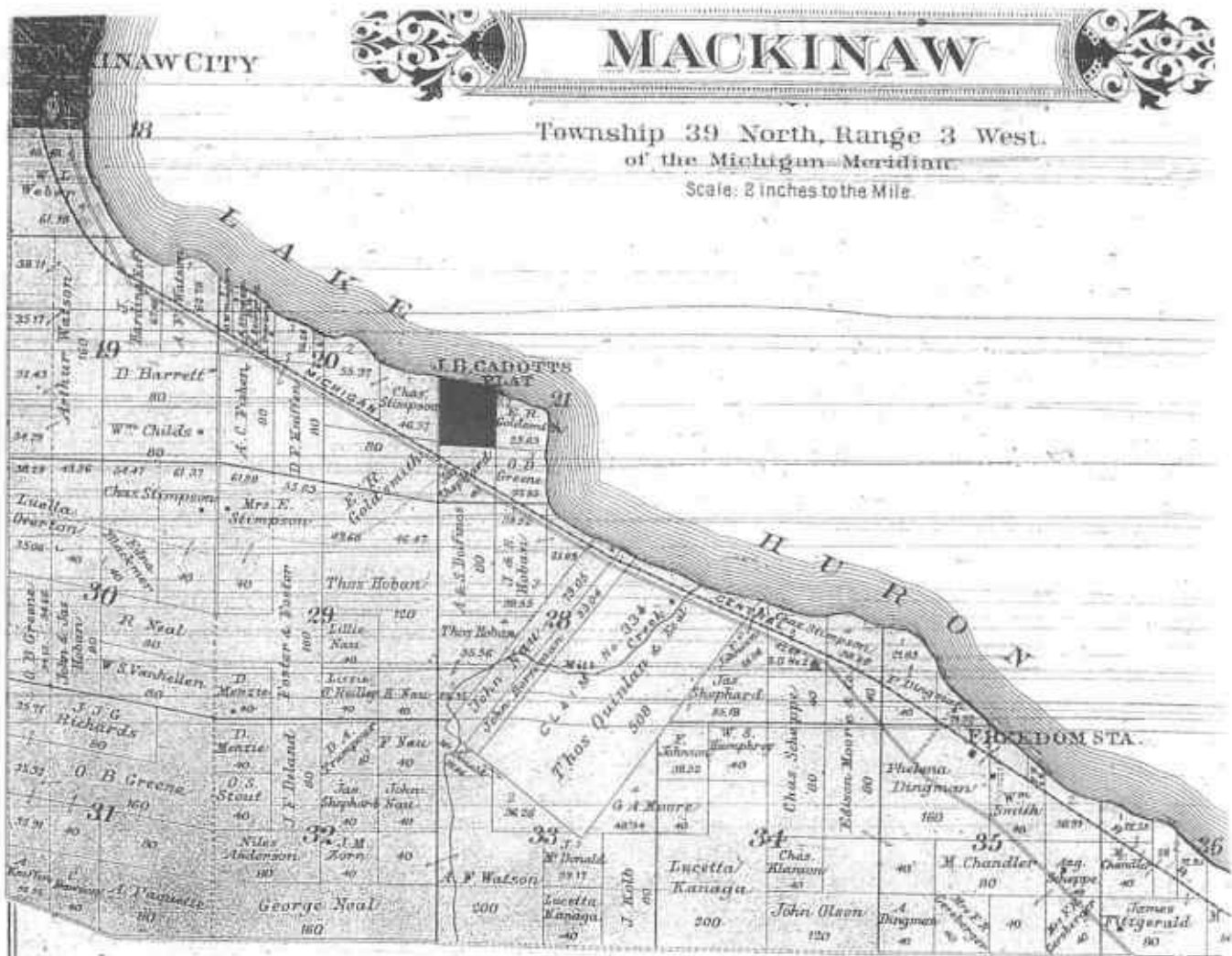
ten acres of Potatoes now planted  
and is situated on the S 1/4 of

N 1/4 of Section 30 town 39 north  
of Range 3 West and this means

acres and is upon the one  
half interest of the said party

Edna H. Blackmer the said potato  
are undivided and in mortgage

over Edna H. Blackmer separate  
one half of the undivided



Section map showing Blackmer Farm dated 1915, from the Mackinaw County Plat Book. Ema's farm is the black square near the center of the map on the edge of Lake Huron.



# The United States of America,

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Homestead Certificate No. 2471

Application 9703

WHEREAS, there has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a CERTIFICATE of the Register of the Land Office at Marquette, Michigan, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Edma H. Blackmer

has been established and duly consummated in conformity to law for the South West quarter of the North East quarter of Section thirty, in Township thirty nine North, of Range three West of Michigan Meridian in Michigan, containing forty acres.

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL.

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES, unto the said Edma H. Blackmer the tract of Land above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Edma H. Blackmer and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony whereof, J. William M. Kinley, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, has caused these letters to be made Patent, and the SEAL OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the twenty-fifth day of June, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and one, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred & twenty-fifth.

By the President: William M. Kinley

By J. M. McKean, Sec'y.

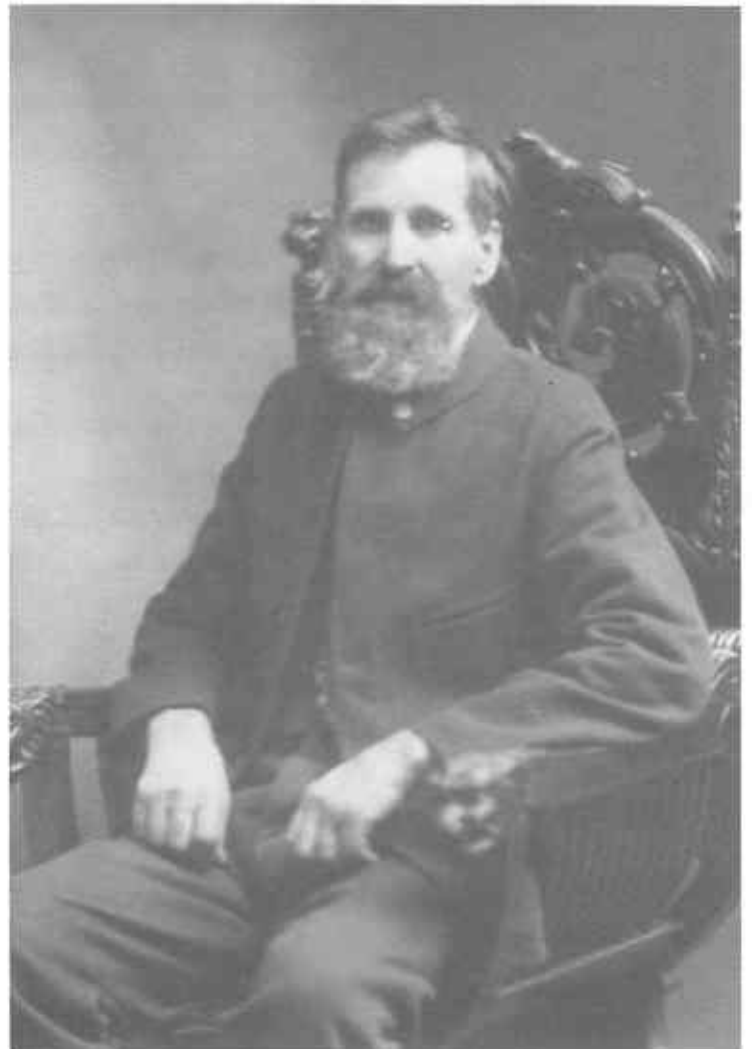
G. H. Brush, Recorder of the General Land Office.

Copy of the original Land Patent given to Edma Blackmer for his property in Macinaw County.



Rosa and the house in the "City",  
from the personal collection of  
Karen Blumenshine

Left: Pages from the personal Notebook of Edma Henry Blackmer, currently in the possession of Karen Blumenshine. Comments include his notes on building roads.



Edma Henry Blackmer,  
Photograph form the collection of  
Karen Blumenshine



## Epilogue

Edma and Rosa lived on the farm with their children until 1909.<sup>15</sup> Rosa had two more children, a daughter, named LuLu Grace, born 12/9/1896<sup>16</sup> and a son named George, born 1/3/1894.<sup>17</sup> The family lived through a Diphtheria Epidemic, while Edma was still Highway Supervisor.<sup>18</sup> He resigned that position in 1907. Edma entered the Soldiers hospital in Grand Rapids for the first time on September 30, 1899, still fighting the demons of the war and was re-admitted numerous times until he died there on July 13, 1919.<sup>19</sup> He was 52 years old. Rosa lived in Mackinaw City with her daughter Cynthia until her death in 1955. She was 92

*Editor's Note: This article is one of the two winners of Michiganana's "Beyond Genealogy" contest. It is an example of combining social history resources and primary and secondary research to create a new way to see how our ancestors lived.*

S B C Shovel	75	May 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> on ice	
C Simpson Scrap	1 00	Fred Wallen 1 day team	8 00
April 30 fixing up	1 75	D. Anahie 2 days team	8 00
small creek bridge		H. Kernis 2 days	2 00
T. Glover	3 00	H. Carwood 2 days	2 00
Wm Garfield	2 00	E. H. Blackman 2 days	5 00
C Johnson	4 35		<u>25 00</u>
E H Blackman	2 50	May 5 on State Road fishing -	
	<u>13 85</u>	cut stones and tarrens out old	
metres end of May 1 <sup>st</sup>		road by H. Kernis	2 00
D. Anahie	6 25	E. H. Blackman	<u>2 50</u>
C Simpson	2 75		4 50
H. Carwood	5 00	J. Palfonics team	<u>6 00</u>
D. Garfield	5 00		
H. Kernis	12 00	May 13 on State Road cutting	
E. H. Blackman	1 20	brush H. Kernis 2 days	7 00
	<u>43 70</u>	E. H. Blackman 2 days	1 00
		on State Road lot of cut	2 00
		H. Kernis 2 1/2 days	9 00
		E. H. B	4 00
			<u>75 00</u>

May 30, 1892

*Diphtheria broke out at the Rawden House but all have been cured and the guests are returning. I worry about the children. Edma is still doing more drinking than I like him too, but he says it blocks out things he does not want to remember.*

June 4, 1892

*Dr. Raycraft was called to Canada last week. His brother's wife suddenly died. He had to wait for the steamer, City of Alpena, to arrive. Mrs. Fox delivered her baby while he was gone. I was up all night to be with her. She had a beautiful baby boy, born just after midnight.<sup>13</sup>*

*The children and I are taking the train to Petoskey soon to see my sister.*

July 1, 1892

*Went to Petoskey last Wednesday, and all along the way saw the effects of the dry weather we have been having. Mary is doing well, her husband Joseph, along with their two daughters, are farming 40 acres just outside of Petoskey. She and I had a nice talk. I miss her very much, Mama too.*

*The train travels over fifty miles an hour in some places. The trip is quite fast and the cars were crowded with passengers going north. The Stimpson House dining hall is filled every day.*

August 6, 1892

*The new lighthouse is almost done. I took the children down to the lake yesterday and watched as the workers hustled about. Mrs. Schultz died early Monday morning, and her children were attacked by diphtheria. Dr. Rayburn was called in time and he thinks they will recover.*

October 29, 1892

*The lighthouse began operations last Tuesday night. Edma, the children and I went down to the lake to watch. An Indian came by today selling fish. I bought enough for dinner and to put up for later.*

*I do wish I could stay in the city. We will be moving out to the farm soon.*

November 3, 1892

*We live 3 miles outside of town, but still we heard the fog whistle on Thursday. The gale was the severest in this part of the country for years. It blew down trees and broke in windows all about town, several chimneys were also leveled. We are protected in the woods. I am glad Edma built the house next to the trees.*

December 3, 1892

*Edma has been appointed Highway Commissioner.<sup>14</sup> He ran a four-horse snowplow out as far as Bowen's early this week. Took him all day. He came home cold and tired, but said that the plow was much worse for wear. The snow is three to four feet deep in the woods behind the house.*

*The children have been sledding since before Thanksgiving, but I do not let them stay out so long in the cold weather. The temperature this week was 16 degrees below zero although Mrs. Davenport says it was 22 degrees below at their place.*



**Rosa Johnson Blackmer, unknown date, personal collection of Karen Blumenshine, Cedar Springs, Michigan.**

## The title page reads:

*History of the German Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Parish U. A. C. in Grand Rapids, Michigan*  
In honor of the parish's celebration of our 50th Jubilee  
on the 27th of May 1906  
published by the Jubilee Committee Grand Rapids, Mich.  
printed by Martin & Wuerzburg 1906

The book is written in German and is 77 pages in length. A large number of group and individual photographs are included. If you would like additional information about the church you may visit its website at:  
<http://www.immanuellutheranchurchgr.org/>

## Forward

Wie es im Leben jedes einzelnen Menschen gewisse Ereignisse gibt, bei welchen er, wenn er ein Kind Gottes ist, gern mit dem alten Propheten Samuel ein "Ebenezer" errichtet, (1 Sam. 7,12) so ist es auch für eine christliche Kirchengemeinde nur recht und billig, daß sie solche Zeitabschnitte in ihrem Gemeindeleben nicht unberücksichtigt lasse, sondern mit fröhlichem und dankerfüllten Herzen dann und wann solche Marksteine ausfrichte um sich und ihre Nachkommen allezeit an die empfangenen Wohlthaten Gottes dankbar zu erinnern. Das ist auch der Zweck dieses Büchleins, welches uns die Geschichte unserer Gemeinde und ihrer Schule in kurzen Umrissen vor Augen führt. Möge das Lesen dieses Büchleins, liebe Gemeinde, Dir die Erkenntnis bringen, daß der Herr Großes an Dir gethan hat und Dich bewegen, Seine Gnade und Treue zu preisen und mit dankbarem Herzen zu rühmen:

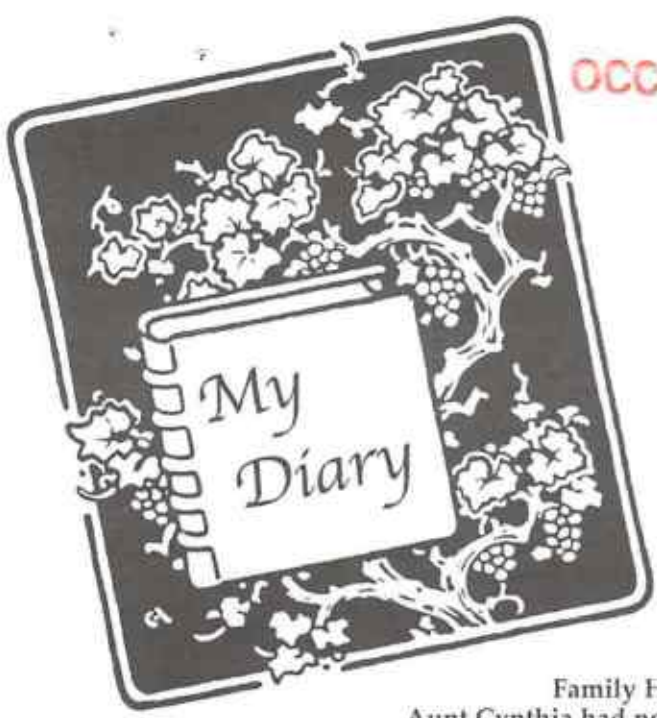
"Bis hierher hat der Herr geholfen!"

*To be Continued in the May/June Issue*



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Blackmer  
Family

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY



# A Diary

One year in the life of Rosa Johnson  
Blackmer,  
a Michigan Pioneer Wife

By Karen Blumenshine

My great grandfather, Edma, died long before I was born, but his wife Rosa, my great grandmother, died when I was nine. I loved her and loved talking to her. My great grandfather's farm is still undeveloped. The apple trees he planted are still there. The barbed wire, although now lying on the ground or hanging from rotting fence posts, is still there. The family well, cobblestones hand set all the way to the bottom, is still there. Even the foundation of the farmhouse is still there, now overgrown with trees and obstructed from view with the last 100 years growth of trees.

How I wish I had known then, how I would feel about Family History now. No one is left who can answer the questions I have. Aunt Cynthia had no children. Aunt Gertie had no children. John, my Dad's father, is gone, and my father didn't even know that his grandfather had been married three times. Folks just didn't talk much about those things back then.

Everyday I search for answers, every once in a while I find one.  
If Rosa had kept a diary, this is how I think it might have read.

### Introduction

*Edma and I have been married six years. We have a daughter, Cynthia Ann, born May 24, last year,<sup>1</sup> and a son, John Almon, born April 9, 1894.<sup>2</sup> We have an adopted daughter, Gertrude, born in 1884. Edma fought in the War of the Rebellion when he was very young and has been fighting demons since then. He has buried one wife<sup>3</sup> and lost another. He was 38 when we married and I was 21. Edma lost a son to the scarlet fever that also took his first wife. Edma is a farmer and we have 40 acres just outside Mackinaw City, Michigan.<sup>4</sup>*

*I was born in New York, but lived with my mother and father in Charlevoix. I moved to Mackinaw when Edma and I married.*

January 22, 1892

*Most days I work all day cleaning and mending for the children. On New Year's day the temperature fell from 55 degrees to 25 degrees. Gertrude had a perfect lesson in Arithmetic today.<sup>5</sup> We are proud of her.*

February 12, 1892

*Ten degrees below zero this morning. We lived through the biggest blizzard of the season last Sunday. Edma is cutting and packing ice.*

*I was down with the grippe last week, along with Mrs. Stimpson and about 4 other ladies in town.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Raycraft charges \$6.00<sup>7</sup> every time he has to come to the house. It left me with a terrible headache, but a cold cloth on my forehead stopped the throbbing.*

March 25, 1892

*Edma is still working at, clearing and building roads.<sup>8</sup> He is also cutting and delivering wood at \$1.80 for two cord.<sup>9</sup> The apple trees are planted and the fences are up. Most stones are gathered and piled under the maple tree, but every time the field is turned over, more stones come to the surface.<sup>10</sup> Edma plans to plant at least 10 acres of potatoes.<sup>11</sup>*

April 15 1892

*I am going to work for the Stimpson Hotel. They are about to enlarge it. Mackinaw City is planning a large building boom this spring. They are expecting a large number of workers to arrive to help build new houses and a new lighthouse. They are also expecting tourists because of the railroad. We are expecting to have a full house all summer.*

*Edma is now supervisor of Mackinaw Township.<sup>12</sup>*

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

