

The Chester Township of Yesterday

The following information was obtained from a clipping of Orin Wolters. This clipping along with 4 maps of Sparta, Wright, and 2 from Chester Townships are hanging in his shop at Gooding.

Chester Township extends its full length farther north than the general north line of the county, and is

thus bounded west and north by Muskegon, east by Kent and south by Wright Township, Ottawa County. The town center is about 28 miles north of east from Grand Haven and about 18 miles northwest of Grand Rapids.

Settlement Origin—The first settlement of the township seems to have been in 1845, although the

township was surveyed in 1837 and was on market as early as 1839. In the year 1845 there was quite an influx to the township. Phillip Fahling, Jacob Brown, Otis Irish, Wm. A. Irish, O. J. Merrick, Henry Austin, Samuel Austin and several others coming in. 1846 we find Adam Lachman, A. D. Batson, James Rowllion, Conrad Kritzer, John Pin-

ter, Ed Gardner, Geo. Irish, Daniel Thurston, and others. The Bennett family was among the pioneers and so were John Kies, and Samuel H. Averill. The first child was born to Phillip Fahling.

The first school house was of logs and stood on section 25 the building was also used as the first church in the town. The town was organized as part of Waksadgen in 1938 and was a part of Wright Township in 1848 and was made an independent township in 1848. The first meeting was ordered by the legislator to be held in the home of John McLande, who was chosen supervisor; O. H. Merrick, clerk, and also one of the justices, while Geo. Irish was made assessor. There were 9 voters present and 2 years later the vote for governor was 53, Mr. McLande was still supervisor.

Oil Resources, Etc.—This is one of the very best townships in the county, although exclusively rural, and unaffected by proximity to "corner lots". Its farm land rates higher than others in the county except Wright. For taxation the lands are estimated at \$21.07 per acre. Some of the highest land in the county is found in Chester Township at the head waters of Sand Creek and 1 rockery Creek.

The timber is mostly hardwood Beech, Maple, and Oak prevailing. There are 18,146 acres of taxable land of which 7,174 acres have been improved. The farms average 80 acres each, and the real estate at \$395,097, and the total assessed value at \$429,207 or about \$306 per capita.

This township produced in 1873 21,327 bu. of wheat; 24,00 bu. of corn; 30,380 bu. of other grains; over 16,000 bu. of potatoes; and more than 2,200 tons of hay. It also produced 8,430 lbs. of wool; 18,250 lbs. of butter; 45,081 lbs. of maple sugar; while its orchards and garden products at over \$6,000. The livestock of the township was shown in 1874 to be: horses, 446; oxen, 106; milch cows, 599; other cattle, 754; and sheep, 2,456.

4-H "Royal Riders"

By JEAN STAFFEN
The "Royal Riders" 4-H Club from Comstock Park and Cedar Springs had another successful week at the Kent County 4-H Fair. Our members all received "A" grouping on Monday, August 15, the first day of the Fair. This "A" grouping means the judge felt the members were all very knowledgeable about their horse project and that their animals and tack were very clean. The members also placed in many of the other classes offered during the week.

Our members this year were: Kalyne Brookens,

Terri Brookens, Linda Debski, Karen Noor, Beth Peasley, Kris Peasley, Margy Rasch, Cindy Russell, Darcy Staffen, Lynn Updike, Julie Van Allsburg and Stacy Van Allsburg.

We celebrated our tenth year as a growing active club. If anyone in our area is interested in joining (along with their horse or pony) you may contact Jean Staffen, 784-1354, Marlene Peasley, 696-1482, or Lynda Van Allsburg, 361-8961. We always welcome new members who want to learn.

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