

# **THE OLD SETTLERS**

## **Bingen Michigan Homesteaders**



**O. S. R. W. EDITORIAL BOARD**



**FIRST EDITION  
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# **The Old Settlers Bingen Michigan Homesteaders**

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**P. O. Box 275**

**Remus, Michigan 49340**

# Introduction

## Bingen/Buckshoey Becomes Remus

**It must be noted that the Old Settlers had a permanent residence in this territory before there was a Wheatland or Remus. The only Settlement known at that time was Bingen/Buckshoey.**

Located at the intersection of M-20 and M-66, Remus is an unincorporated community near the center of Wheatland Township at 43°35'48"N 85°08'41" W. Initially, Remus was called Bingen and/or Buckshoey and located about three miles (5 km) west of the current site where there was a sawmill and several other buildings. Bingen was established on July 20, 1877, with Christian W. Wernette as the first postmaster.

The office was renamed Remus on March 15, 1880, after William John Remus, a landowner who surveyed the area. Remus serves most of Wheatland Township, as well as a large portion of Sheridan Township to the north, a small area of Millbrook Township to the south, and portions of Sherman Township, Broomfield Township, and Fremont Township to the east in Isabella County.

Bingen was in Morton Township Section 13 and Wheatland Township Section 18. Jim Guy, Thomas Cross, Gabriel and Harvey Green, Dan Pointer, Charles Rice, Harrison Harding, and the Gingrich Family came and settled together in Bingen/Buckshoey.

The first birth of a white child was Joseph Minkel (1863-1934), in the summer of 1863. The first death was that of John Norman on September 28, 1864 who was an Old Settler. Catherine McCloud, was solemnized by Solon Hass, as a Justice of the Peace in 1866. Others say that Isaac Harvey and Marisa Blood were the first couple married. The first frame building was a dwelling erected by John D. Clement in September 1865. The first mill was a water power sawmill erected by Frederick D. Miller in June 1875. The first schoolhouse was a log building erected on Section 26, in December 1864. The first school was taught by Lydia Allen, in the winter of 1864-5. Others say that Adaline Aldrich taught the first school in the winter of 1865.

# Millbrook, MI 1860 (Older than Bingen)

## Beggie Hollow

The Township of Millbrook lies in Mecosta County bounded by Isabella County on the east and Montcalm on the South. It is watered by Black Creek in the southwestern half and two branches of the Pine River in the northeastern half. It contains 3 or 4 small lakes. The Village of Millbrook lies mostly in Millbrook Township. Millbrook was also called Beggie Hollow from 1860 until 1867

Millbrook includes four townships which are Millbrook, Wheatland, Rolland and Broomfield. All four townships divide at the town of Millbrook. Millbrook was organized into a civil township in October, 1865. The first schoolhouse was a log building erected on Section 11 in 1863. The first store was opened by W. S. Howd in 1865, and the first post office opened in 1867.

The history and information in the counties and the townships that surround Millbrook, Mecosta, Isabella, and Montcalm have continued to leave out names of the African Americans who settled in the area between the early 1860's and 1880's when local state history books started appearing in-print. That way it appears that Black settlements never existed. Oral history has been shared with the Black community but never recorded within those townships or counties until 1988 when a compilation of deeds, properties, and genealogical history was recorded in the archives. In *The Old Settlers: A Nation Within Itself*.

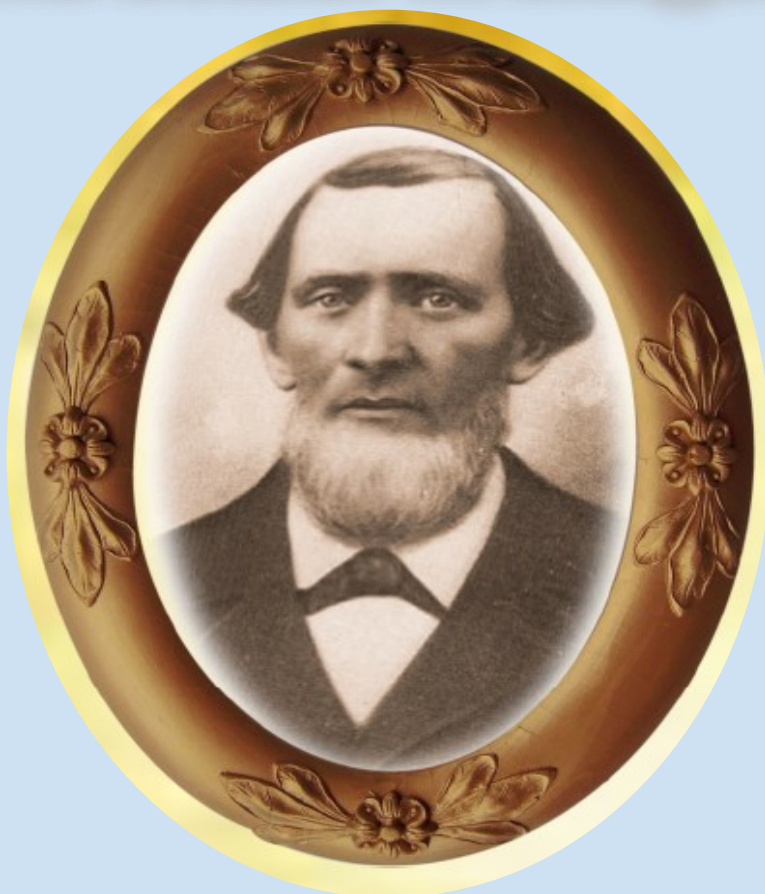
The African American pioneers contributed much to this community. They built schools, churches and served as teachers, preachers, midwives, farmers, and Justice of the Peace. They helped clear the land, pulled stumps, built roads and railroads, were blacksmiths, owned lumber camps, and served in the military just to mention a few of the many contributions. In both Mecosta and Isabella Counties, the Cross and Norman Schools were erected to educate students. In Remus, the Wheatland Church of Christ still stands and was founded in 1870. Eldridge Flowers, Isaac Cook, Stephen Todd, Louis Gross, Solomon Harding, Ezekiel Harris, Charles Lett, James Porter, Elisha Reed, John Nelson, Henry Thompson, Michael Norman, Aquilla Lett, Elijah Guy, Benjamin Guy, Thomas Cross, Samuel Lett, and Thomas Harris served in the Civil War.

In the *Portrait Biographical Album* published by Chapman Brothers in 1894, they list Grandison Norman as 1 of 8 settlers in Rolland Township, Millbrook, MI in 1863. Referenced statements tell the story about Grandison applying for a homestead grant. At the time, 60 Colored families lived in and around Millbrook from 1861—1880. The families were industrious, enterprising and among our best citizens.

Irene Sanderson wrote an essay, *The Story of My Community Millbrook, Mecosta Co. Michigan*. She stated that many Negroes lived in Millbrook, and there were never any feelings of intolerance between the two groups. My father taught us that we must be courteous and friendly to everyone. Many references are made to Negroes being in and around Millbrook, but the names of the families have not been mentioned until now.



## **JIM GUY - 1861 First Old Settler in Bingen**



Jim Guy was married twice. His first wife was Ann Mariah (Caliman) Guy, whom he married in Ohio. To this union five children were born: Oran 1846-1872; Benjamin Franklin 1848; Martha 1851-1925; Minerva Ann 1856; Douglas 1860, and Leander 1864. Ann Mariah died not too long after the birth of her last child, and Jim remarried.

His new wife Frances Norman, daughter of Granderson and Susan (Cook) Norman. He and Frances had Leonard 1866-1938; Catherine 1868-1947; James Granderson 1870-1949; Arthur 1871-1875; George Washington 1872-1950; John William 1874-1949; Susan Emily, 1876-1963, Emmet 1876-1877 Amelia 1878, Ellen, Elizabeth, and twins Mary and Ann. He died October 17, 1896, in Mecosta County, Michigan. According to his obituary, he had just read Chapter 5, of the Letter of Paul to the Romans and fell asleep. The same letter was used at his funeral. His second wife, Frances (Norman) Guy died February 12, 1927.

Jim Guy (1822-1896) fought in the Civil War and was the assignee of Mary Robinson, widow of Simon Robinson. He served as a Private for Simon Robertson, Captain Thorp's Company, 35 Regiment, U.S. Infantry, (Ohio) (USCT). Jim Guy came to Mecosta County, Michigan, in 1861 and is the first Colored Settler in Wheatland Township. Jim Guy is buried at Morgan West Wheatland Cemetery in Remus, Michigan. The Old Settler Cemetery is on the National Register of Historical Places.

# Thomas W. Cross Family (1869)



Thomas W. Cross was born on February 1, 1826, in Loudon County, Virginia. His father--Mr. Lee (first name unknown), came to America from England and settled in Loudon County, Virginia, where he became a plantation owner. His mother, Ms. Cross (first name unknown) was a slave on the Lee Plantation. In 1851 at the age of 25, Thomas moved to Hocking County, Ohio. It was said, that his father took him there to give him his freedom.

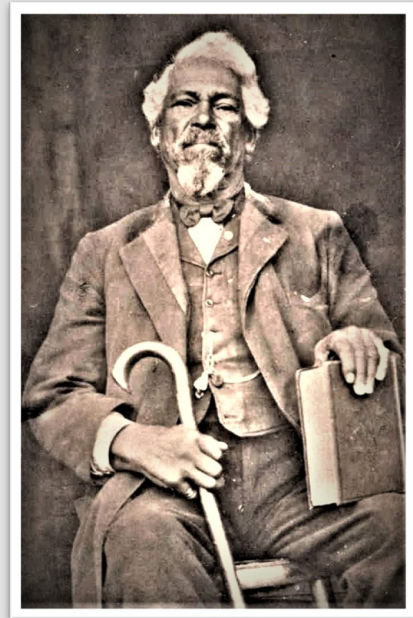
On October 7, 1852, Thomas was united in marriage to Catherine Harper. Catherine and Thomas had 12 children, eight born in Ohio and the youngest in Michigan. Their names were: Elizabeth, John, Joseph, Mary, Ellsworth, Thomas, Edward, Catherine Jane, Amos, Ida, Priscilla, and James W. On June 22, 1863, at the age of 37, Thomas enlisted in the Army, in Athens, Ohio. He spent three years with the Wagner Co. C5 Reg. United States Colored Infantry of the Civil War, serving with the Ambulance Detail in Virginia and the Carolina's. He, as a Negro, received one-half the pay rate of a White soldier. Thomas mustered out of the Army on September 20, 1865. He returned to Ohio.

Thomas bought homestead land in Bingen in 1869 two miles north of Remus, MI. Because it was inexpensive to buy the land, he was able to purchase 40 acres for the price of a horse. He owned a total of 160 acres. Their son Amos was born in 1870. Amos married Mary Mumford in 1893. To this union, six children were born: Homer, Arthur, Anna, Roscoe, Evelyn, and Clifford. They stayed on the family farm. Amos Cross died in 1957 at the age of 87 and Mary died in 1960 at the age of 84. He is buried in the Morgan West Wheatland Cemetery which is on the National Register of Historic Places in Remus, Michigan.



## **Gabriel Green (1874)**

### **Harvey H. & Elydia-Cummings Green (1880)**



**Gabriel Green**



**Harv & Elydia-Cummings Green**

Gabriel Green was born in 1780, in Virginia. He was married two times. His first wife's name is unknown. His second wife was Lucinda Reasoner, born 1807, in Virginia. Gabriel's children were: Samuel born in 1810, Gabriel 1820, James 1826, Harvey 1828, Ann 1830 and Julia 1831. Samuel Green, the first child of Gabriel married Elizabeth (Unknown). Their children were: James born in 1838, Robert 1839, Samuel 1842, Daniel 1844, Henry 1846, and Gabriel 1850.

Gabriel Green, son of Samuel and Elizabeth, came to Michigan in 1874 and as a small child he was raised by Daniel Pointer. Gabriel married Anna Cook, daughter of Nelson and Helen Cook. Their children were: Elmer, Clyde, William, Cal, Effie, Mable, Florence and Margaret. The Justice of the Peace was Peter B. Gingrich who officiated the ceremony.

Clyde Green, son of Gabriel and Anna. Their children were Josephine and Clyde. Effie Green, daughter of Gabriel and Anna married John Alexander and later James Johnson. Their children were: Ruth and Anna (Mildred). Florence (Flossie) Green, daughter of Gabriel and Anna married Jim Bannister. Gabriel Green, the second child of Gabriel was married two times.

His first wife was Amanda (Unknown). Their children were: Harvey H. born in 1853, Mary L. 1854, Charles 1855, and Lucinda 1857. Lucinda Green married James Ward. Their children were: Sarah, Ida and Seredelt. Harvey came to the Remus area in the 1880 and was united in marriage to Elydia Cummings (The daughter of William and Harriet Cummings). Born to this union were two sons and two daughters: Arthur (Jack), Alpha, Ada, and Lester. Harvey and his family lived in the northeast rural Remus area. He was in the logging business and owned and operated a farm. He is buried in the Wombolt Cemetery. Elydia died in 1942 and was buried beside Harvey at Wombolt Cemetery.

# Harrison Harding (1870)



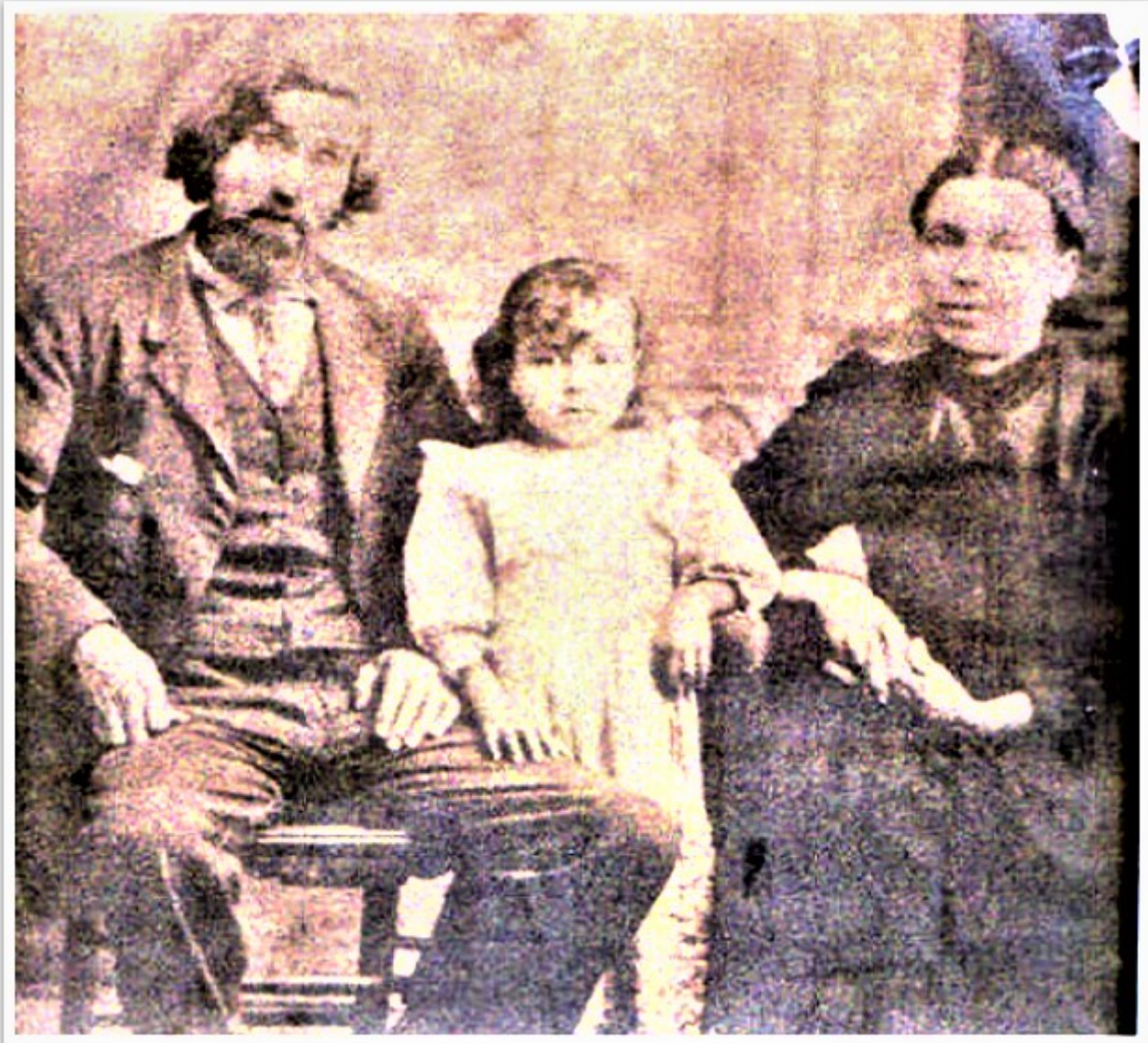
Harrison Harding (1845-1913) was a First Cousin to the 29th President of the United States of America, Warren G. Harding, and uncle to Emma (Norman) Todd. We know that Barack Obama was NOT the first Black President. He served in the Civil War in the 81 St Regiment OH (USCT) and mustered in Nov. 1863. He is buried in Decker Cemetery, Millbrook, MI.

Harrison lived in Bingen, Wheatland Township just east of Mecosta next door to Dan and Millie Cummings Pointer.

John Harding was married twice. Children by the first marriage were: Harrison (Hank) and Annie. His second marriage was to Mahala Lett, the daughter of Charles and Kettora Lett. Their children were: Solomon and Mary, also listed were Charles, Lucinda, and Hess Lett. Solomon was born in 1840 and spent his early life in Maryland. He later moved to Hocking County, Ohio. Sometime in the early 1870s, he moved to Montcalm County, Michigan. He married Elizabeth Jessie Smith in Stanton, Michigan. They had one daughter, Ada Jane. They resided in the area until their death and both are buried at the McBride's Cemetery, McBride, Michigan. (OSRA (1988)) (Old Settlers Reunion Website (2004)).



# Aaron Morgan (1867)



Aaron Morgan was born on June 1, 1844, in Nelsonville, Ohio. Aaron married Johanna Lett at Greenville, Michigan, in 1867. The Dan Pointer Farm was left to Aaron. It became a popular gathering place for friends and was known as the "Morgan Farm." Aaron and Johanna had 12 children. Aaron helped to construct the A. M. E. Zion Church in Mecosta, Michigan and served as one of its trustees for many years. A portion of the Morgan Farm was set aside for a burying ground that is known today as West Wheatland Cemetery. Johanna was the daughter of Ely Lett. She was born August 2, 1855, and died January 30, 1906. Aaron and Johanna's children were: Mary J., Edward, Susanna, Jane M., Derrick "Doc," Daniel, Aaron E., Ida, Elijah, Emma, Viola, and Catherine.

Both Aaron and Johanna are buried in the Morgan West Wheatland Cemetery which is on the National Register of Historic Places in Remus, Michigan.

# **Daniel & Millie Cummings Pointer (1861)**



Daniel was born in Ohio in 1820. He married Millie Jane Cummings on October 10, 1843, in Nelsonville, Ohio. Millie was born on September 28, 1825, in Ohio. She died on November 4, 1889. She was the daughter of Susann and John Cummings of Nelsonville, Ohio. In 1861, the family arrived in Mecosta County, Michigan.

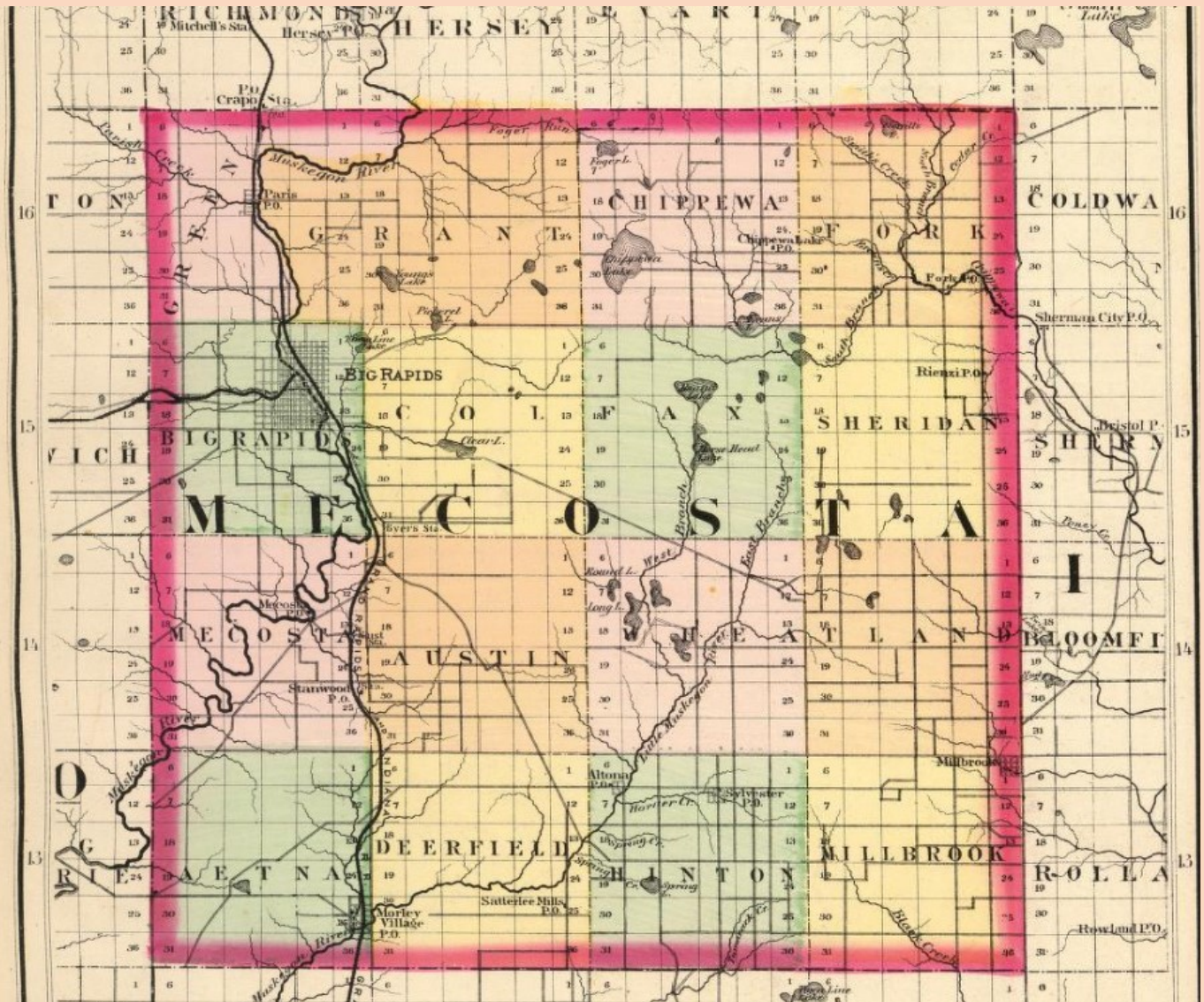
They purchased 120 acres of homestead land in Bingen, Wheatland Township just east of Mecosta. Dan owned the property where Wheatland Cemetery is located. Dan and Millie left the property to their foster son, Aaron Morgan. Their children were: Aaron Morgan, Gabriel Green, and Isaiah Melvin. They later adopted Elizabeth Brown, who was born in Canada according to census records of Mecosta County, Morton Township. Daniel died on October 10, 1878. Both are buried in the Morgan West Wheatland Cemetery which is on the National Register of Historic Places in Remus, Michigan.

## **John Rice (1880) (No Photo Available)**

Charles Rice was born in Ohio in 1817. His father was from Germany and his mother was from Virginia. He had a son, John Rice, born in 1852 in Ohio. Cynthia A. Bird was born in Ohio in 1830. Charles, a farmer, married Cynthia on March 14, 1869. He was 52 years old, and she was 39 years old. This marriage was witnessed by Joseph Cummings. Cynthia brought 2 children to the marriage: James Bird, born in 1855; and Mary E. Bird, born in 1866. Although everyone in this family was born in Ohio, the United States Census indicates they were living in Bingen, Wheatland Township in 1880. Charles and Cynthia are buried at the West Wheatland Cemetery in Remus, Michigan which is on the National Register of Historic Places in Remus, Michigan.



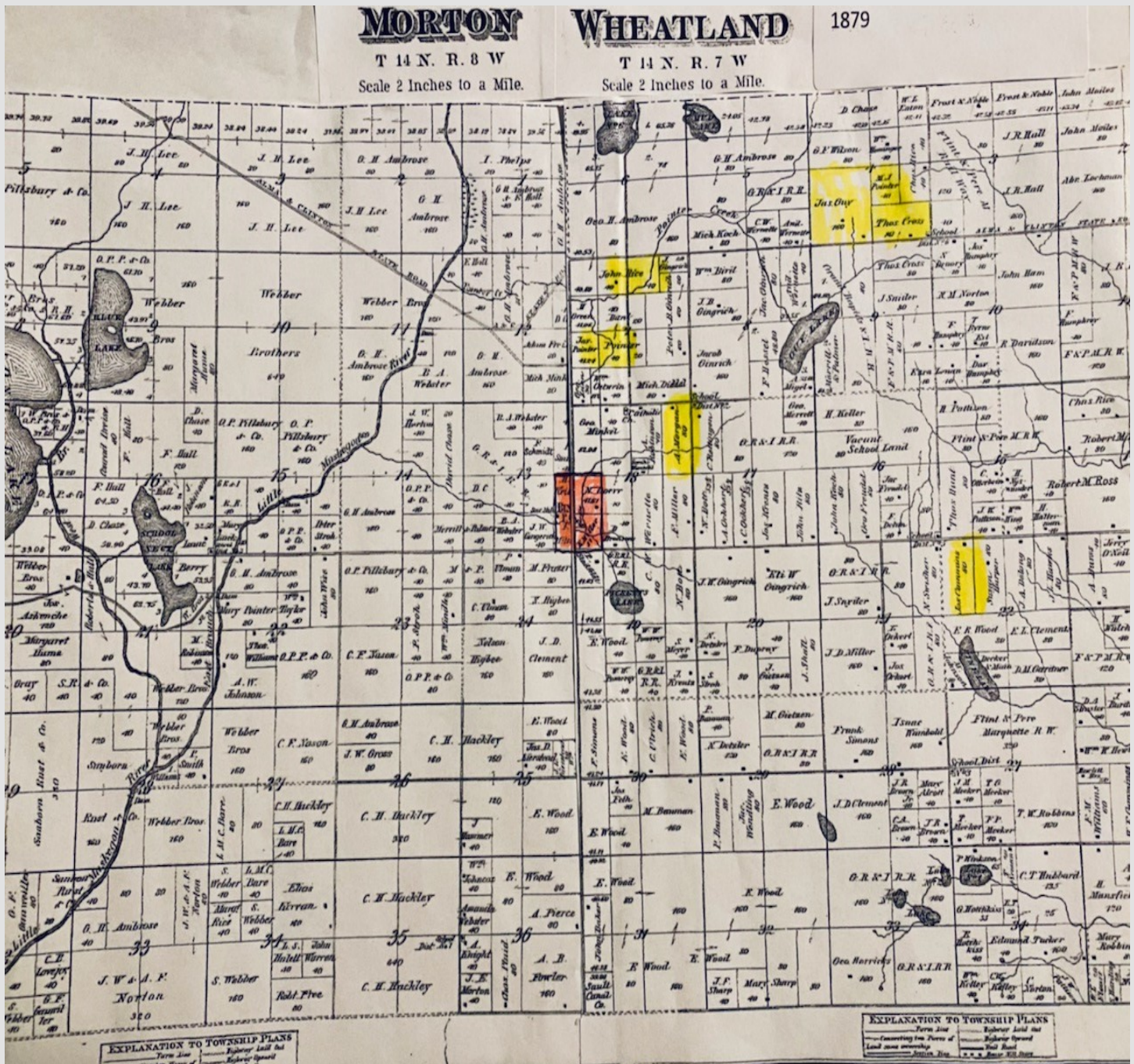
# Mecosta County - Wheatland Plat Map - Townships - 1873





# Morton & Wheatland Townships - 1879

## Pink Highlights Bingen & Yellow Highlights Old Settler Settlements





# HOMESTEAD ACT 1862

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act on May 20, 1862. On January 1, 1863, Daniel Freeman made the first claim under the Act, which gave citizens or future citizens up to 160 acres of public land provided they live on it, improve it, and pay a small registration fee. The Government granted more than 270 million acres of land while the law was in effect.

The draw to Michigan was homestead land made available through the Homestead Act of 1862 allotting pioneers 160 acres. The Underground Railroad was the most dramatic non-violent protest against slavery in the United States beginning in the Colonial Era and reaching its peak between 1830 and 1865. An estimated 30,000 to 100,000 slaves used the "Railroad" fleeing to Canada and Mexico. A large settlement stayed in Buxton, Ontario, Canada.

The families arrived in Michigan from different places. Some came as "free" people like the Norman and Lett families whose ancestors were once indentured. Others came from Canada through "The Underground Railroad," and from Payne's Crossing in Hocking County, Ohio. Payne's Crossing was said to be a final stop on the Underground after leaving Virginia.

The Old Settlers are descended from families who arrived in the early 1800s to Ohio. The Normans and Stevens were in the Marietta area by 1810. The Caliman and Guy families settled in Morgan and Muskingum Counties between 1815 and 1820. The Letts arrived in Belmont County between 1815-1819 and later in Muskingum County.

The Old Settler Community produced soldiers who fought in the U.S. Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and also prisoned in the notorious Confederate Civil War Andersonville Prison. The pioneers came from humble beginnings as scholars, ministers, businessmen, musicians, professional baseball players, farmers, a U.S. Attorney, and 2 judges. Share the joy and blessings extended to the great and great-great grandchildren for many honors coming their way in every walk of life.

There were 32 Old Settlers and sons of Michigan Pioneers who served in the Civil War. Among them 5 settled in Bingen and were: Thomas W. Cross, Jim Guy, Harrison Harding, Grandison Norman, and Charles Rice buried In Wheatland Cemetery.

# **Old Settler Log House Owned by Cummings Family Near Bingen (1878)**



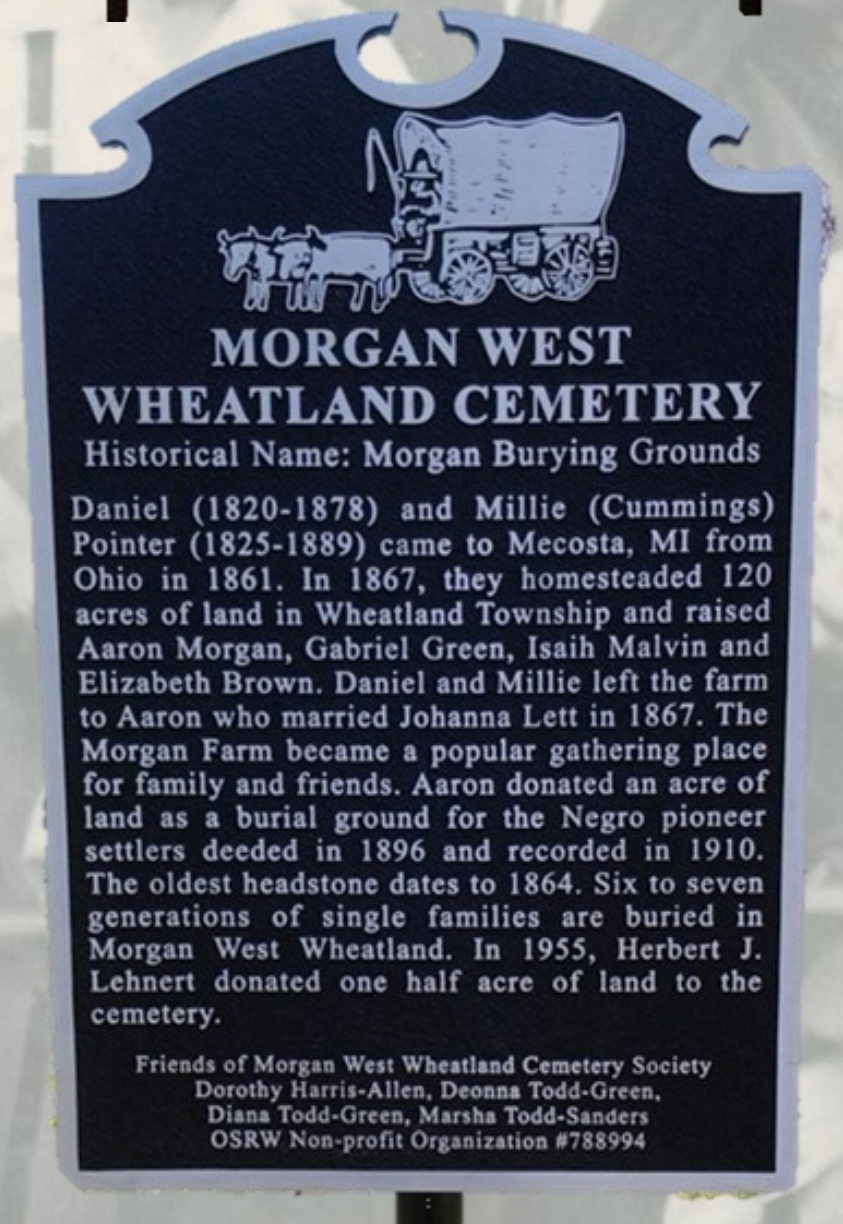
Joseph Cummings' Log Cabin House—One of the first homes in Remus, MI (1878)  
L - R Standing: Corner of House is Ida. Front is Esther with daughter Sophia. Sitting on the right is daughter Marinda. On the far right is Joseph, Sr. Boy with dog is Joseph, Jr.



# Morgan West Wheatland Cemetery (1864)



The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the United States historic buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. The award was established as part of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is overseen by the National Park Service.



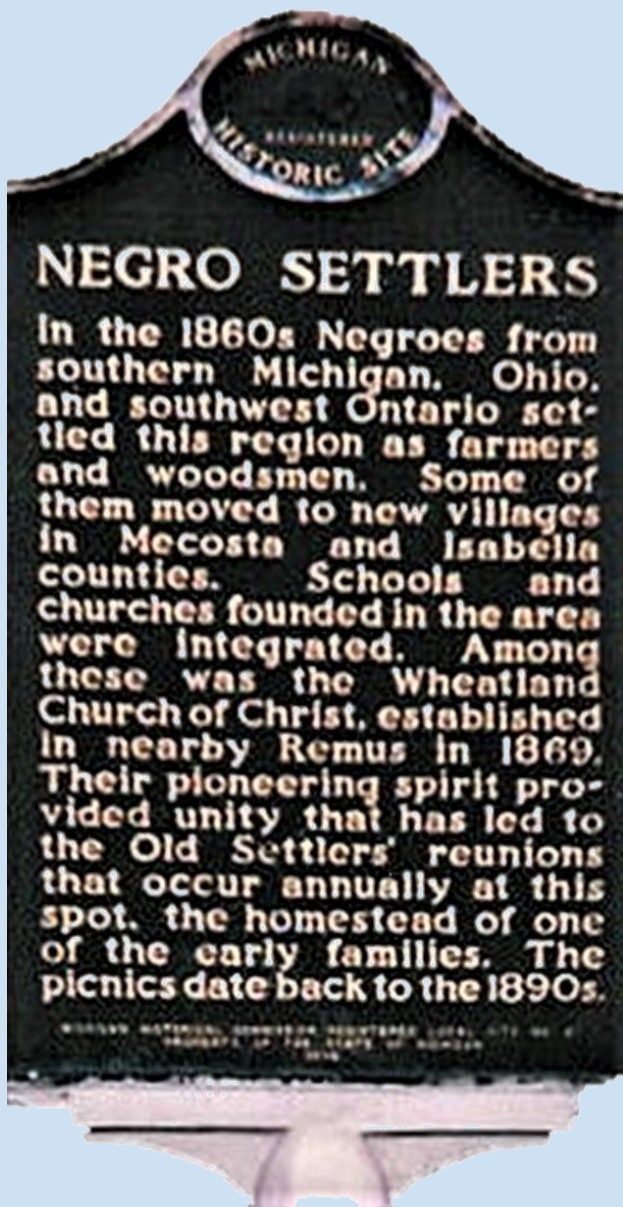


# THE OLD SETTLERS

## 4 Michigan Historical Plaques within a 10-Mile Radius

### First Settlers

Marguerite Berry-Jackson was instrumental in acquiring the Plaque through the Michigan Historical Society

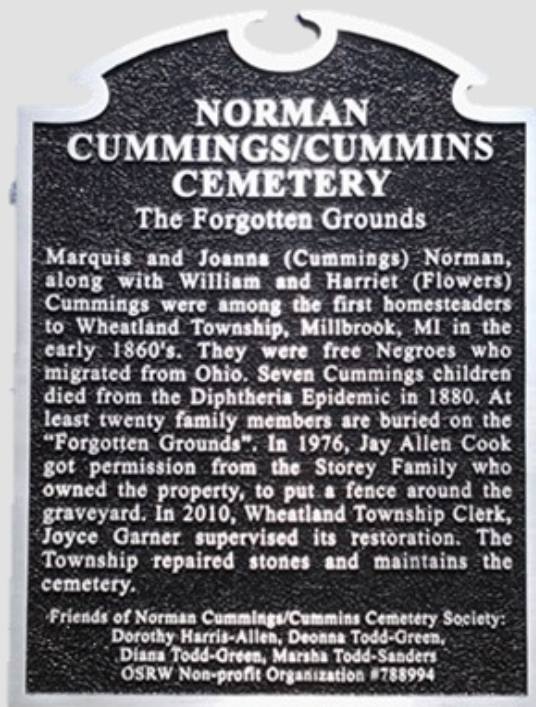


### Wheatland Church of Christ (1869)

Marvin Lett & Waylon Lynn acquired the Wheatland Church of Christ Plaque through the Michigan Historical Society

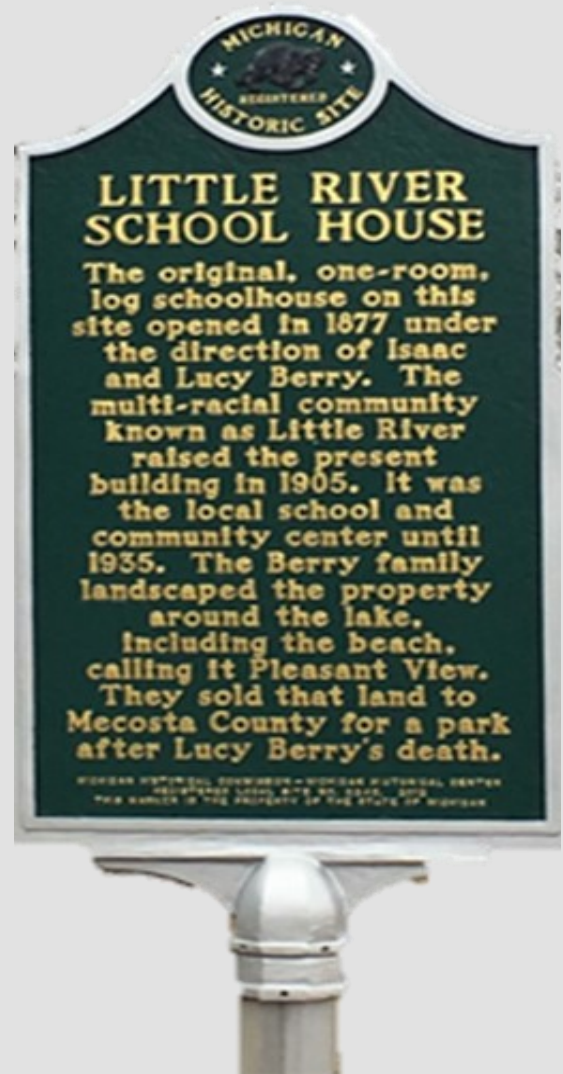


# State of Michigan Historical Old Settler Plaques



## Norman/Cummings Cemetery

Dorothy Norman-Allen &  
Jay Allen Cook acquired  
the plaque through the  
Michigan Historical Society

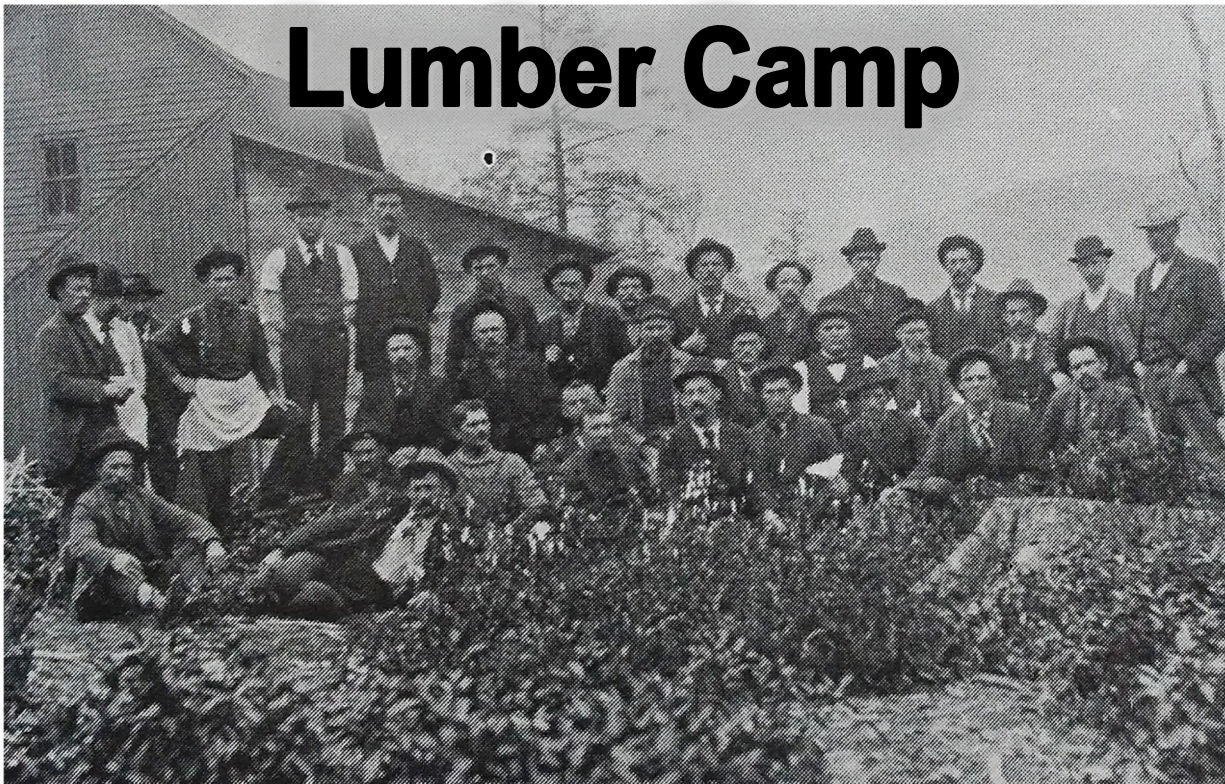


## Little River Schoolhouse

Jimmy Cross, Raymond  
Pointer, Sr. & Raymond Point-  
er, Jr. acquired the Little Riv-  
er Schoolhouse Plaque  
through the Michigan Histori-  
cal Society



# Wheatland Church of Christ (Founded 1869)



Lumber Camp near Remus. Harrison Harding thought to be in the back row 5th from the left and Harvey Green in the back row on the right.



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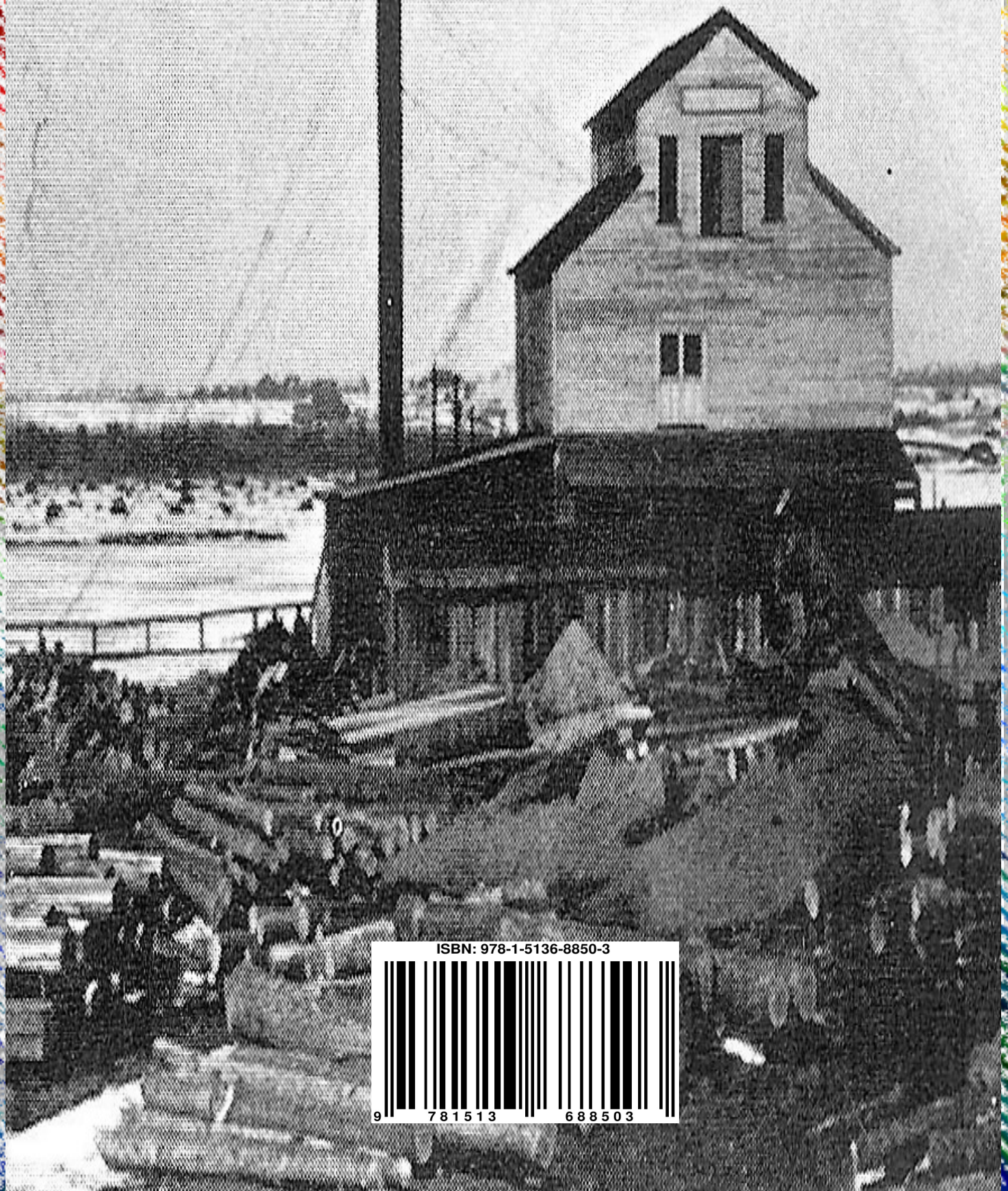
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# 1879



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