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DAVIS COLLECTION

July 21, 2005

**BOX NUMBER ONE: AISLE A-5, SECTION 9, SHELF 6**

*ARCHIVAL MATERIALS (MISCELLANEOUS) :*

Davis family: photographs, article's, poems. Family used to own land on corner of Davis/Pierce roads beginning of SVSC building.

Maps: Topographic map's of the Ausable river (7). Mainly covering the county's of Iosco and Alcona

Iosco & Au Sable: History of, contains a number of maps of the area including maps of the Huron National Forest.

Iosco County, recreation-industry etc., guidebook Iosco County's hospitality guide. Books include HOW THE POWER DEVELOPMENT CAME TO OSCODA AND AU SABLE, HOME COMING WEEK ON THE SABLE and THEIR YESTERDAYS: AUSABLE AND OSCODA 1848-1948. Newspaper accounts: Tawas Herald Centennial Edition, 1962;

Wabun, Summer & Fall 1974; and the Oscoda Press, 1961. Also some newspaper articles on the AuSable River Boat's.

Detroit and Mackinac Railroad: Two(2) maps.

Wurtsmith Air Force Base: Book, blubs, and some photographs.

**BUILDER, SPARE THAT PINE...IT'S MY FAMILY TREE**

**BY DOROTHEA DAVIS STOWE**

Here come some more students from the Saginaw Valley College walking up Davis road. They are pointing toward our big pine tree on the knoll. But they can't see there what I see. The students continue up the road, and I pick my way across the ditch and head toward the old tree. My brother and I used to jump the ditch and run up this path. It was long ago when we hunted arrowheads and picked spring flowers here. Now I find myself reminiscing about a spring day not quite warm enough to shed tan-colored cotton stockings which unsuccessfully hid lumpy, long underwear. For Grandma had set Easter as the earliest one could shed even one layer of winter clothing, and so it was -- like an unwritten law.

Still, in those days, I was queen, tan stockings and all--with a garland of apple blossoms for a crown and a handful of violets . . . that is, until Grandpa caught us and sent us scurrying back to our hoeing. And, if we ever thought we were going to "amount to something," he sure set us straight. What a vocabulary that man had! It was composed of ninetenths cuss words and he could really

tell a person where to go. He made quite a sight with his coattails straight out, plowing a mighty fast furrow, for he worked the fields with race horses. We would follow along as he ducked out around the pine tree, and he would look back and yell, "Stay out from under that pine!! There's Indian graves underneath it, and I don't want you kids tramping 'round her. Now git!"

Grandpa wasn't afraid of hurting a person's feelings. Nor was he afraid of anything. One season was the same as the next to him, for he always worked from sunup until sundown, everyday except Sunday. He kept the Sabbath unless he was racing his plow horses at the fairgrounds. He was not a church-going man.

Work was his life. And, his land was his reason for living. With a little help from his Uncle John, he had cleared every acre of it. They had cut trees into railroad ties and sold enough to pay for the place. In a short time, he had a cabin built on the corner of Davis and Pierce roads which, when done, measured twelve feet by twenty. His next undertaking was a log barn in front of the spot where the present barn now stands. It was about twenty feet square with a grass roof.

All of this was finished in the 1870s, and on March 10, 1881, he set up housekeeping with his nineteen-year-old bride, Elizabeth Martin Davis. At that time, Grandpa owned one horse, while Grandma's parents gave her six hens and a rooster, plus a quilt.

It all makes Grandpa sound like a very powerful fellow, and I guess he was for such a small person. He had a fame of a sort and was considered quite "well to do" after he had paid for 160 acres of good farm land. Not many others were tough enough to stick it out in the wilderness.

The Ottawas had pretty much disappeared at that time but there were a few. Also some bear and deer. Old Indian Jim, his wife, and son still camped on the knoll near the pine tree during warm weather. His squaw wove baskets, and he walked to Saginaw occasionally, sold the baskets, and spent most of the money on liquor before returning. In passing, he often would say, "Dick Davis, this was my land before you white men came." But he did not frighten Grandpa.

The main reason for the scarcity of settlers in the area was pretty obvious. As one old Frenchman put it, after working half a day to get his wagon a quarter of a mile through the mud on Davis road, "It sure takes a hard-scrabble to get through." And, thus, was introduced a nickname for that part of Kochville Township which still stands. Oldsters all know where "Hardscrabble" is.

The first six of Grandpa's 11 children were born in the one-room cabin, the rest after the house was enlarged. Some did not survive infancy, not unusual in those days. The remaining nine showed a smidgen of pioneering spirit now and then. there were four who managed to homestead nearly 500 acres of seemingly worthless land. they were hunters, and quickly turned into traders and trappers. Soon, they had made enough off the sale of muskrat pelts to buy more land.

But, according to Grandpa, they were all pretty shiftless, had no feelings for Mother Earth. That's why he had to keep working. Most of the children left the farm early in life. The homesteading bunch stayed put quite awhile. Two of them were girls. I will never forget the tales we grew up hearing about the two winters Aunt Nellie and Aunt Stella spent in the marsh. They lived in the black shanty and survived on what they could catch or kill for food. It didn't seem unusual to them. Why, what else should they do except something Pa told them they could never accomplish?

And, Frisco... he set out to rebuild a town on the West Coast after the famous earthquake in California. He had a talent with his hands for carpentry and masonry. He wasn't much on farming.

Shorty, being the runt of the group, never strayed a great deal. He could have made a pretty good farmer if he had picked out a better piece of land. Somehow, he was always attracted to sandy ground "fit only to grow Poplars and crab grass." Finally he had to develop a completely new strain of strawberries just to prove he could grow something on a sandstill.

Then, there was Zike... Grandpa signed to let him join the army when he was only 17, back in 1914. Perhaps the army could "make a man of him." Seems he could never settle down to anything. All Zike wanted to do was follow the ball games. He was baseball crazy, and got pretty famous around the sand-lots. "A lot of folks think I can make it in the big leagues," Zike argued. But, Grandpa couldn't see it, "Imagine playing baseball for a living!"

Anyway, he got some of the wildness out of him in the cavalry. He knew horses and loved to ride. Did border patrol with the Seventh Cavalry along the Mexican Border for 18 months. Never did catch Pancho villa, and came home with a lot of new-fangled ideas about cars and working in Detroit. but, the Depression soon brought him back to the farm with his wife and two babies. And, If Uncle Sam hadn't come through with a bonus in the thirties for World War I Veterans, he would never have been able to start in business.

The grandchildren followed true to form - still hunted and trapped and