

President's Message



Just as the seasons have transitioned and we are rapidly approaching summer, there are some exciting transitions occurring with your Calhoun County Genealogical Society.

We are rapidly approaching our "summer break," where we will not be meeting during our usual 4th Tuesday of the Month. As a reminder, our last scheduled meeting before the break will be on the 26th of June. We will not resume our monthly meetings then until September. I trust that you will use this additional time to further own research, so that we all have more to discuss when we get back together in the Fall!

Your CCGS board is also going to be busy this summer. Even though we get a break from our meeting schedule as well, there is a significant homework assignment that we will be striving to complete. That project is the qualification of the Society for IRS 501

(c)(3) status. 501(c)(3) is the Federal tax code relating to non-profit organizations.

When I met with the board for the first time last fall, I brought a list of potential projects and goals for the CCGS, with 501(c)(3) status being one of those possible projects. More recently, Recording Secretary Anita Stuever attended a non-profits seminar where we were encouraged to learn that we already met many of the qualifications to become a federally-recognized nonprofit organization. The Calhoun County Genealogical Society has existed as a Michigan non-profit organization but has never completed the extra steps required to become a federally-recognized nonprofit group.

It is a natural "next step" for our Society to become a 501(c)(3) group. Our goal now is to apply for IRS recognition as soon as is possible. This recognition

will bring many benefits to the Calhoun County Genealogical Society, of which we will inform you as we get closer to reaching our goal. Hopefully we will be able to include this transition along with our 20th Anniversary Year celebrations as they begin this fall.

Chris Rau, President CCGS

Did you know?

- Calhoun County had a Perrinville?
- Perrinville had a Flour Mill, Merchant Mill, Distillery, Foundry, and Machine Shops?
- Perrinville had 3 HUGE fires? One in 1851, 1854 and again in 1857?
- Perrinville was named after a family with surname Perrin?
- Perrinville was on Rice Creek and Kalamazoo River near/ part of current day Marshall?
- Perrinville had a hydroelectric plant-the second oldest utility system in Michigan?

Highlighted Location—Perrinville

Calhoun County has its share of ghost towns. Existing during the 1800's, Perrinville is one of these. Perrinville is almost totally forgotten now. A search for information on the vast world wide web returns only a couple of responses for Calhoun County's Perrinville.

Located east and south of the junction of the Kalamazoo River and Rice Creek on the south east side of Marshall, Perrinville was a growing town. The completion of the railroad in the area made the area appealing to new businesses and entrepreneurs. One such was a young man from

Rochester, Monroe Co. NY, Horace J. Perrin.

Horace arrived in the area in the 1840's and began investing into area businesses and buying properties. His vision was to make Perrinville a major city.

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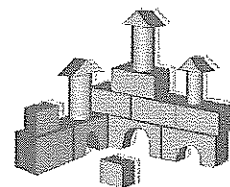
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Perrinville-The Beginnings

- 1831 George Ketchum builds a sawmill.
- 1832 he builds a gristmill
- Boville Shumway operates a store on Rice Creek about 1835.
- 1835 Dexter S. Newton and Benjamin W. Raymond build a sawmill on Rice Creek.
- 1837 Asa B. Cook, Arza Robinson and Sidney
- Ketchum build first Stone Mill.
- 1843 E.W. Lathrop and George S. Wright build a wollen factory.
- 1844 Dr. Joseph Sibley and Horace Perrin build frame floor mill.
- About 1856 General Store setup by Horace Perrin and Dr. Joseph Sibley. Operated by William Holmes.
- Before 1860 Perrin builds a distillery, foundry and machine shops.
- The distillery building became the Rock River Paper Company in 1862.
- 1866 John Adams begins Novelty Iron Works Company.
- Somewhere in this time-frame 1845-1860 the area becomes known as Perrinville.



**Building a town.
One block at a time**

Horace J Perrin

Third son of Hyde and Sally (Scribner) Perrin, Horace J Perrin was born June 16, 1819 in Rochester, Monroe County, New York. His mother died when he was 4 yrs. old. His father remarried in 1825 to Sally's sister, Sylvia. They had 8 children. This made these siblings both half-siblings AND first cousins to Horace.

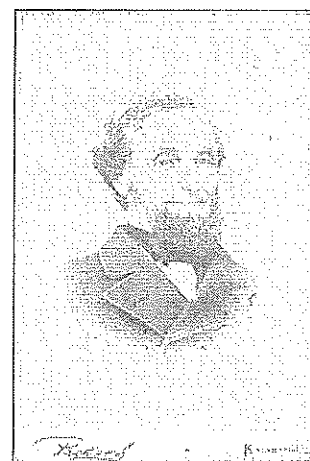
The family moved to Illinois about 1830 and resided there until about 1855. It's possible that Horace found Mar-

shall traveling from Illinois to visit family in New York or returning. Whatever the reason, in the early 1840s Horace stopped off in Marshall and began his businesses dealings.

Horace was a shrewd businessman. He partnered with other area businessmen and family members and owned most of the buildings and property in the Perrinville area. He owned or partially owned the bank, power plant, mills, distillery, machine

shops and other businesses. He became one of the wealthiest men in the Marshall area.

Late in his life Horace suffered from a disease called "Paresis" or general paralysis of the brain. This affected his mental capacity and may have been a factor in his death. He died January 11, 1880. He is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Marshall along with several of his siblings.



**Horace J Perrin
1819-1880**

Dr. Joseph Sibley

Born in Connecticut about 1794, Joseph Sibley came to Marshall in 1837 and setup a medical practice. He was married to the former Hannah Post. They had one son Frank.

Dr. Sibley entered into business with Horace and Darius Perrin and formed the

Horace J. Perrin and Company. As part of this organization until his death, he and Horace developed many of the businesses in Perrinville. Horace ran the business as Dr. Sibley also worked his medical practice.

Dr. Sibley died in 1864 in Marshall. After his death,

his estate was involved in a legal battle with Horace Perrin that out lasted Horace and the initial beneficiary - Dr. Sibley's son Frank. Most of the concern was over the assets of the joint company. The case ended in a settlement where Frank's widow received money.



Along the Kalamazoo and a Railroad, too.

Business was good in Perrinville. Goods could be transported easily via the Kalamazoo River or the Railroad—two major transportation routes through lower Michigan. The river also was a great source of power. It was prime real estate for mills and industry.

Besides powering the area mills, the river was used for one of the first Hydroelectric plants in Michigan and powered all of Marshall. Horace

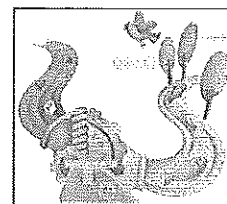
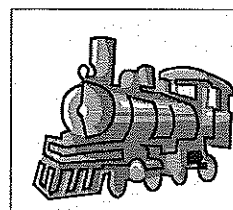
Perrin owned the plant and eventually sold it to the City of Marshall.

Commerce was good in Perrinville. Besides real estate holdings and industry development, Horace Perrin also delved into the financial world. He and partners opened a bank on E Michigan Avenue.

For part of its life cycle, Perrinville included what is called "Capital Hill". Mar-

shall was bidding to become Michigan's Capital and "Capital Hill" was the land expected to be the location for the Capital Building. All this area was prime for the development of a major Michigan City.

BUT, it wasn't to be for Perrinville. Too many fires and bickering partners allowed Marshall to take over the area and for Perrinville to virtually disappear.



(Maria) Jane Perrin Davidson Robinson

I grew up hearing about Grandma Jane from my Grandmother. It took me a long time to realize that she wasn't my direct grandparent. She did have several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

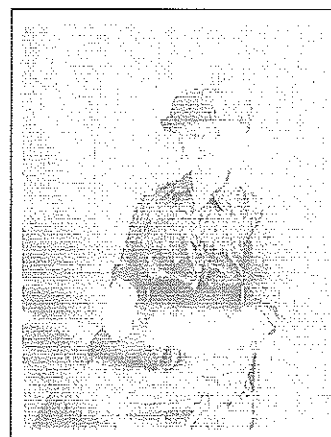
Jane was Horace's niece by full brother Otis. Otis and family resided in Clinton, Indiana. Here she married her first husband Reuben

Davidson and had 2 children. He died in 1882 and she and her children moved to Marshall to help her sisters care for the family bachelors. Horace had died in 1880. Still living at his mansion were some of his brothers.

About 1896 she married Charles Robinson. She continued to care for other members of the family including

my great-grandmother after her mother died and I'm sure that is why we also knew her as Grandma Jane.

Jane was a matriarch not only to her own family, but also to other families in the Marshall area. She was one of those women that even neighborhood children called Grandma.



Jane Perrin Davidson Robinson

CCGS News and Happenings

If you haven't noticed, you have a new editor and I've changed the *Generations* format a little bit. Other than the edition that lists our membership (January-February) all other editions will feature a certain location from Calhoun County. This edition is Perrinville. Next is somewhere around Battle Creek. I've kept the Ancestor Tree feature but tied it to the

theme (location) of the edition. To make all this work, I will need your help. Please submit articles for the area. Also, PLEASE, send me feedback. Do you like it? Is it useful? See page 2 for more information on submitting articles.

COMING SOON: Poor House records to be added to website.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: We NEED a new MGC delegate. Anyone interested?

IN PROCESS: Seeking non-profit status with IRS.

RESEARCH TRIP: Eaton County is sponsoring a research trip to Allen County Public Library (ACPL) Saturday, 3 November 2007, with a pickup in Marshall. More later.

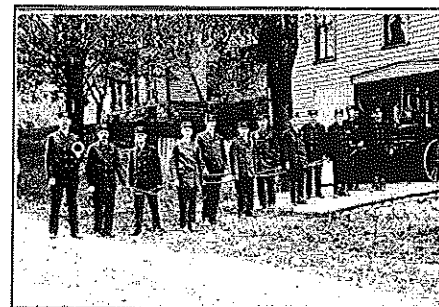
TIP of the Issue:

Check out the Historical Photographs of BC on Willard Library site. Go to link

<http://www2.willard.lib.mi.us/>



The stone mill can be seen at left center in this 1872 photo of the ruins of Perrinville Fire
BELOW: Perrinville Fire Department about 1907



Perrinville Burns

Maybe it was doomed to start, Perrinville (area) suffered a series of fires from 1839-1872.

About 1835 a sawmill was built on Rice Creek. It burned in 1839 and was not rebuilt.

In 1837 Asa Cook, Arza Robinson and Sidney Ketchum built the first stone mill. This burned in 1851. It was re-

built and burned again in 1854. They rebuilt it again and leased it to Chauncey E. Goodrich of Tekonsha.

In 1857 the mill suffered another fire. It was rebuilt again and leased to Watson, Turner, Bradley and Robinson.

Throughout this time other businesses were being built in Perrinville. In 1844

Horace Perrin and Dr. Joseph Sibley built a frame floor mill across from the Stone Mill. Horace and/or partners added a distillery, foundry, machine shops, fire house, general store, and more. Perrinville was booming.

Fire strikes again in 1869 claiming more than just the stone mill. Again they rebuild. Then in 1872 a major

fire destroys most of Perrinville. At this time Horace Perrin owned most of the property and buildings. He was having health issues and was being challenged in court by the widow of Dr. Sibley and her son. Perrinville did not recover. He died in 1880.

Today most of Perrinville area has been incorporated into the City of Marshall and Perrinville forgotten.

NEXT NEWSLETTER FOCUS—Battle Creek Part 1

There is a lot to discuss about Battle Creek people, places and things. It's a big city. So, I'm going to ask YOU to contribute and I'll take a look at what is submitted and specialize the next newsletter—BUT it will be something about Battle Creek.

I can think of a lot of family records I have that pertain to the history of Battle Creek.

Of course there is the Cereal connections. But there is a lot of medical history as well. There is Fort Custer, Urban- dale, Pennfield, Springfield, Lakeville and others. There is Cultural, Educational, Gov- ernment, Religious and Rail Road History. I know that my ancestors and a lot of their descendants were in- volved in several of these areas, AND probably a lot of

your relatives as well.

Send me stories, facts, ideas—I'll take them all. I'm also looking for an Ancestor Tree with Battle Creek con- nections. Please include your contact information so I can follow-up with any ques- tions.

- Ann Heisler, *Generations* Editor



IN SEARCH OF...
Information about Peo-
ple, Places and Things
from Battle Creek.