

CHAPTER VIII

TOWNSHIPS

NORTH BEND TOWNSHIP

A sketch of the several townships would certainly be in order here. North Bend being one of the first townships settled in the county, with the most of her old citizens gone before, the interests are not forgotten by the generations coming on as can be seen by the farms that are opened up and the building that is done from year to year. Also the ditching that has been done during the last twenty or thirty years has brought the lowlands into a state of cultivation where all kinds of grain and fruit are raised. Schoolhouses dot the township all over and miles and miles of good gravel and macadam roads have been built, which make North Bend Township rank with her sister townships in all that is good and useful as a part of Starke County. Each year adds to the list of gravel roads constructed in that township, almost all the main traveled ways having now become fine gravel roads. This is a great benefit to any community, and a thing that was not known of years ago. It is a great pleasure for those now living in this locality to have good roads to travel upon instead of the winding sand roads of several years ago.

This township (North Bend) is located in the southeast corner of the county and is six miles square, containing thirty-six square miles of territory, being six miles east and west by six miles north and south, and contains some of the best soil for farms in the county. Her lakes and rivers all go to make up a township for which the first settlers have had no occasion to regret their choice of location. It was named North Bend Township for the great north bend in the Tippecanoe River, a bend in that river extending and traversing the southern part of the township for a distance of some three miles, thus giving this township a taste of the waters of that fine channel of a pure and healthful stream, shaded by a magnificent body of timber upon its shores.

Attracted to this township by reason of the wonderful Bass Lake, it is no wonder that North Bend Township was one among the first to be settled in Starke County. Upon the cold and frozen shores of this lake the farmers would employ their time at hunting and fishing during the winter months, but as soon as the bright and shining sun began to cast her rays of warmth from above, they would give their attention to farming and raising of crops, which have been improving

ever since the hunter and trapper brushed the icicles off his brow upon the shores of "Cedar," or Bass Lake, so long ago.

William P. Castleman was elected six years ago to serve his township as trustee, a position that he has filled with a credit to the people and an honor to himself. No office in the county is more important than that of the township trustee, as he stands between the people and the finances of his township, and it is to the interest of the people to look well to the matter of electing good men to conduct the affairs of their township. In managing the affairs of North Bend Township, Mr. Castleman has certainly lived up to the highest obligations of his office.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

Washington Township is also six miles square and is the second township from the south lying in the east tier of townships. It has many miles of ditches running through it, and with its gravel roads and schools it is one of the townships that a man might well feel proud to be a citizen of, so enterprising a neighborhood has this township become.

This township has within its boundary the once famous Eagle Lake, spoken of elsewhere in this volume, and which is about the only lake in the township. But the soil is so well cultivated in most parts of the township as to make up for what it may lack in lakes and summer resorts. All are working to the end that Washington Township shall be one among "em," keeping her own with any one of the nine townships in the way of public improvements and public-spirited men all working to make of this township a home and fireside for all who are lucky enough to locate upon its broad expanse of yet untilled acres of fine land. Building, ditching and farming continue to be carried on by those citizens at all times.

The Walker ditch passes clear through this township from east to west and it, with the other dredge ditches in this township, has added greatly towards the upbuilding of Washington Township. The attention so liberally given to the subject of schools and schoolhouses is certainly a matter for which those having in charge those duties to perform should be well and truly remembered by all the citizens of this township.

The first settlers of this township perhaps more so than the first settlers of any one of the nine townships had to meet reverses and privations almost beyond endurance. A class of citizens true as steel but poor in this world's goods, they never complained of their condition, but with willing hands and brave hearts overcame obstacles and came out victorious, establishing themselves upon a pinnacle of fame, there to remain as long as time shall last with them.

Many were the heartaches experienced by the women and children in those long ago days, but they too looked forward to the time when all would be well with them, their lives being more pathetic than romantic, but such is the case with most new countries. Some settled

in this township as far back as 1844, and some of them are living today to tell of the hardship and privations experienced by them six and eight years before the county was organized.

The building of the new high school building in Ober adds another link to the endless chain of improvements in Washington Township. This building is to cost nearly ten thousand dollars. In addition to this, all the brick in the old building and other material that can be used will be put into the new building, which will be heated with a furnace and lighted with electric lights. Those people should be congratulated upon their good fortune in being able to secure those improvements.

Free rural mail service has been extended to all the farmers in the township, a thing never dreamed of by the oldest settlers, a thing that has come to stay with the people. Instead of those good people going once a week for their mail on foot or horseback and sometimes with ox cart once a week, the fast and powerful automobile goes at lightning speed, delivering the mail to the farmers every day. In some instances before the stamps are dry upon the envelopes, the mail is in the hands of the farmer at his door.

L. B. Cochenour was elected trustee of this township at the November election in 1908, and will have served six years the 1st of January, 1915, when his successor will assume the duties of that office.

Mr. Cochenour has well and truly filled that very important office during his incumbency and should the people be successful in electing a man to take his place that will look after the interest of all branches of the township as he has done, they can be assured that the money of the township will be expended in a judicious and honorable way, thus keeping up the business interest of that township from the smallest item to the greatest obligation imposed upon him.

True, this township has met with many reverses and hardship experienced by her first settlers. While this township had perhaps more sand-ridges within its borders, with those Indian trails extending from one grove of timber to another, yet the soil was not as inviting as some other parts of the county, hence a slow improvement for several years. But Washington Township can now claim her reward over the privations and heartaches which she experienced in years gone by.

OREGON TOWNSHIP

Oregon Township lies in the northeast corner of Starke County and is also six miles square, and this township with her beautiful lake, her many miles of gravel roads, her schoolhouses and her wonderful farms dotted all over the country brings Oregon within the notice of all who are seeking new homes, as it is one of the best townships for farm land in the county.

It was in this township that the great and noted "Robbins Ditch" started and runs nearly through the whole township. It has become an outlet for many miles of smaller ditches to empty into, leading into it from both sides, and, as we said before, reclaiming hundreds of acres

of land and bringing them into market, which places this township second to none for farm lands in the county.

Oregon Township has not as yet adopted the centralized system of schools although they have a fine school at Grovertown. They have, as well, good schools all over the township and have the school wagons to haul the children to and from school, giving all a chance to attend school without walking, as the children had to do before this wonderful provision was made for the accommodation of the school children of country districts.

The acres upon acres of onions raised every year in this township have been the means of giving employment to a great many people. A new station located in section 4 named Garden City was established from a matter of necessity as car load after car load of onions are shipped from that station every year. The onions are raised upon some of the land that the Government surveyors mentioned in their reports as being "lost to the world," as they appeared to be at that time.

John Nelson, the present township trustee serving the people of his township for nearly six years, has made a good trustee as all the people of that township will admit, trying at all times to look after the wants of all who are worthy of that notice. He has done well for the people in using the money entrusted to him in a safe and honorable way as is shown by the improvements he has made and the management of the schools in that township.

CALIFORNIA TOWNSHIP

California Township is in the southern part of the county and joins North Bend Township on the west.

This township, like the rest, has gone through many wonderful changes since the wild Indians left it and the white man became monarch of all he surveyed.

The gravel roads that have been and are being constructed, with her brand new schoolhouses recently built in place of the old ones, together with the ditching that has been well looked after and the farmers who have made it a point to show to the world that they can raise anything here that they can raise any place, have brought California Township out of the mire and placed her upon a pedestal where she can be viewed from a standpoint of a first-class township.

This township has several fine gravel beds from which many of the roads are constructed, especially in that part of the county. Perhaps no township in Starke County gives more attention to farming than this township and the raising of onions is no small matter here, as many acres are put out each year. The profits are usually considerable, although this crop or, the prices rather, is some years very discouraging.

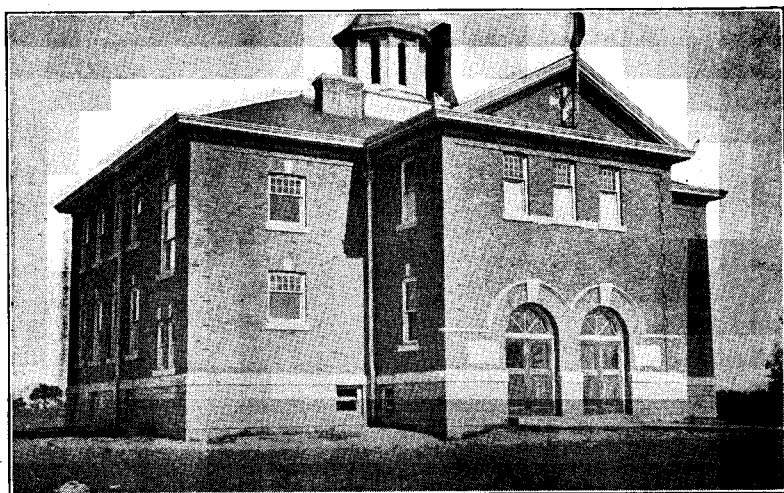
The subject of sheep raising in Starke County is very limited, not many farmers giving any attention to this particular line. This township (California Township) has some very creditable flocks of sheep, but they are very scarce compared with sheep raising in other parts of the state. Just why sheep raising is so much neglected is hard to con-

ceive as the pasture and water privileges are certainly as good here as in other counties of the state.

Six years ago Lewis Raschka was elected township trustee of this township and has served the people with credit to them and with honor to himself, having the great responsibility in having to build nearly a full set of schoolhouses for the township, which are all brick except one that was built before he assumed the duties of that office. Conducting the office honestly and faithfully, he goes out of office the 1st day of January, 1915, with a feeling that he has done well for the township and the people will have no cause to regret that they elected him six years ago.

CENTER TOWNSHIP

Center Township, which contains the county seat, a place where all the citizens visit at least once a year from the other ends of the county, is a township well worthy of all she contains.



CENTER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

The noted and much spoken of Yellow River or Elsbree Ditch, which borders Knox on the north, besides all the other ditches and her stone and gravel roads, bring this township within the notice of all who are seeking new homes.

The very beautiful and magnificent brick centralized school building located in section 21 is intended to accommodate the whole township outside the incorporated Town of Knox. The school children are hauled to and from school in enclosed wagons made and provided for that purpose.

This township elected George Rogers for their township trustee at the November election in 1908. He has served the people well and has made a good trustee as the administration of office will indicate, having worked to the best interest of the township in looking after the ditches, the roads, the schools and all other duties requiring his attention, and no one has ever regretted voting for George Rogers for trustee.

It should not be lost sight of that this township has so far advanced in her agricultural pursuits that the wonderful crops raised by our farmers have caused the price in land to advance to a good round price. Since the land has been ditched and drained, all those changes so common everywhere have been brought about and raised not only the price of land and yield of crops but also the general standards of living and community institutions.

WAYNE TOWNSHIP

Wayne Township is six miles square and lies on the south side of the county. This township is one of the most progressive townships in Starke County. Nothing has ever come up yet to block the efforts made by those people to make of Wayne Township one of the best, if not the best township in the county, as anyone can see from the mile after mile of gravel roads within the boundaries of that township and the miles of ditching, both dredge and shovel ditches, that have been constructed in the last twenty or thirty years, which fully demonstrates the idea that those farmers know what to do to enhance the value of their lands and bring them good returns at the same time.

The good and comfortable schoolhouses within a reasonable distance of every home have helped greatly in making Wayne Township what she is today.

This township has a large foreign population, a people well worthy of the choice they made in locating in Wayne Township, and are citizens both industrious and kind in all their dealings with their neighbors, ever ready to do each other an act of kindness.

Benjamin Weninger has served the people of this township as trustee for six years and has done it well too. No one has ever had occasion to regret that he cast his vote at that November election in 1908 for Ben, who has conducted the affairs of that office in a manner that speaks well for him in managing all the affairs of the office, looking after the ditches, the roads and the schools, never neglecting anything pertaining to the township.

RAIL ROAD TOWNSHIP

Rail Road Township, named as it is from having the first railroad in the county, has made great strides in her advancement since the organization of the county.

It too has many miles of ditches, mostly constructed with dredges, and a wonderful amount of gravel roads, together with fine commodious schoolhouses. The first-class set of farmers, who know full well how to till the soil, have made this township well worthy of the notice of all the county and surrounding country.

This township, like her sister township on the east, is peopled with a class of farmers that have brought this township up from a wet and almost worthless class of land to its present valuable condition. In this

township we find some of the finest farms in the county, a thing brought about by the class of citizens found in this township, all working to the interest of each other, which is the way to make the farmer happy and prosperous, and ere he should pass away he will have accomplished something that future generations can look upon with pride and emulate with advantage.

Electing Owen Daily for township trustee was a thing well done by the voters of this township at the election of six years ago. Big of body as well as heart, he has endeavored at all times to administer the affairs of the office in such a manner that he will not regret or the people will be ashamed of. He has looked well to the interest of all the duties required of him in the township.

• DAVIS TOWNSHIP

Now as to Davis Township, which was in years gone by considered a worthless swamp, the process of ditching and draining the marshes, together with her great amount of gravel roads, her fine public schools, her wonderful improvements in farming, have made of this township a garden spot of the whole world, known by the magnificent corn and wheat crops together with her acres and acres of onions raised each year. This has raised the price of those farms far above the expectations of all who know them.

From the eastern boundary of the township to the Kankakee River we find farms today of great magnitude covered over with a wonderful crop of golden grain as far as the eye can reach, new farms and farm houses with large and commodious barns, corn cribs and silos springing up, thus adding to the taxable properties of the township and showing to her class of citizens a truth that "where there is a will there is a way" to improve and bring those lands into use that have lain so long unbroken and unimproved. Thus the good work of the agriculture is carried on in this township to the credit of all her citizens.

No one has served his township better than George Weissert has served Davis Township as trustee during the last six years nearly past. The affairs of that very important office have been well conducted in all the several branches of the township and when he turns the office over to his successor on the 1st of January, 1915, he will leave the office with a conscience that he has done his duty and served the people who elected him in such a manner that no one can regret that he voted for George Weissert for trustee of that township.

JACKSON TOWNSHIP

Jackson Township, the smallest of all the townships in the county, lies immediately west of Center Township and is composed largely of prairie land bordering upon the Kankakee River, but it has made a wonderful amount of improvement since the Kankakee River has been

dredged. The Yellow River, as we have spoken of before, has been dredged through this township but on account of its filling in by silt and sand and logs coming down stream from the east, the dredging has not as yet proved as profitable in this township as it has farther up stream. But a great deal of good has been done and if the present plans are carried out as contemplated, there is no doubt but what Jackson Township will hold her own with any township in Starke County. A plan is proposed by which the Yellow River is to be diked and re-ditched so as to prevent the water from overflowing the land on either side of that stream, carrying the water direct into the Kankakee River, which is also to be levied on each side for several miles down stream. This accomplished will no doubt result in a complete reclamation of the Kankakee and Yellow River valleys.

The cost of all this is to be borne by the lands affected, a cost, of course, that will represent many thousand dollars, but will so bring back the returns a hundredfold to all those who have to bear the burden of the expense. An act of the Legislature or an amendment to our drainage laws may be necessary to carry out this work, but that is a matter that will solicit the attention of those concerned.

This township has not been neglected in the way of schools and schoolhouses and we also find some of the best gravel roads in this township that have been constructed under the gravel road laws of Indiana, and they are still making more in order that Jackson Township can keep her place with the best improvements in the county.

The wild hay marshes are fast giving way to the raising of tame hay. Many acres in that township are adapted to that industry.

When the people elected Benjamin Flieshman trustee of Jackson Township they made no mistake in their choice as he has looked after the business in his township for the last six years in a manner that gives him credit and gives at the same time a safe and economic administration of all the duties imposed upon a trustee of his township. When he hands the office over to his successor on the first of the year he can do so with the assurance that he has used his best endeavors to conduct all things in his office to the best and most economical interest of the people of his township.