

Melchia Conrad, born May 30, 1813
Uzetta Whitlock, born May 18, 1812

Their childhood and early life was spent in Tompkins County, New York where they were born.

In the year 1834 they decided to do what men and women have done since Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, to marry and establish a home of their own.

After their marriage they spent several years in New York State. During this time four children were born to them, a son and three daughters. Here father experienced the most important event of his whole life, his conversion and uniting with the church.

In the spring of 1847 they heard the call of the far west, as Michigan was then termed, and saw greater possibilities for themselves and could not resist.

The Erie Canal had just been opened and many people were seeking new fields of action, so taking their four children, Harriet, Henry, Mary and baby Helen, they came by Erie Canal to Buffalo and by Lake Erie to Detroit reaching there at 4 o'clock p.m. Father hired a man with team and wagon and after loading their goods they all boarded the conveyance and started to Birmingham, Oakland County, a distance of eighteen miles where they arrived at midnight. Here they settled and father worked in a saw mill for two years. From here the word went back to the home folk in New York that they had a little wolverine. This was a surprise to the home folks, they thinking it was some sort of a young wolf, but it proved to be another little daughter, Jane. Here they worked hard and their experience was much the same as that of all Michigan pioneers. Soon after this father went to Shiawassee County and bought a farm, a piece of wild land with no buildings. A small house was started and some land cleared for a garden. Here the family moved and here another little wolverine was added to the family, Emma the baby of the family.

The land was low and undrained and the family suffered with malaria fever and shook with the ague which they could not overcome, so father sold the farm and moved back to Oakland County. Here they lived until the spring of 1853 when father visited his brothers, John and Oristes who lived in Gun Plains, Allegan County. While there he bought a fine farm two miles from the village of Plainwell and near his two brothers. Soon the family moved to the new home on Gun Plains, Mother and the girls by train, father and Henry driving through with the household goods and the farm animals.

Kalamazoo was then their nearest R. R. station. Their Uncle O.A. met them at 4 a.m. with team and lumber wagon and took them a distance of 14 miles to his home. Here they built the fine new house which is still standing.

While living here the four older children had married and settled in homes of their own. They lived here 14 years when father sold the farm and bought a fine farm 2 miles north of Galesburg, where father and mother and the two young daughters moved. Here they became identified with the affairs of the community and prominent in the M.E.

church, father giving generously toward the erection of the church which is still standing. Here with the exception of two years spent in Kalamazoo, they lived many years. Here Jennie and Emma Conrad were considered among the most attractive young ladies of the community. They soon attracted the attention of the Sleeper boys, Henry and Esec, whose father's farm joined theirs on the South. These young men who both filled positions in the city, often visited the farm and soon Cupid did his work which resulted in the marriage first of E. W. Sleeper and Emma Conrad and later of Henry Sleeper and Jennie Conrad.

Here they lived, honored and loved by their friends until May 13, 1884, when father aged 71, passed to his reward. Not as we sometimes vaguely sing to the "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere", but to the great reward, his house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Mother Uzetta Conrad passed away May 5, 1890, aged seventy eight years.

After this the 6 children of the 2nd generation lived on for many years. Harriet who married B. Farr passed away in 1919, aged 82. She left 2 sons, Eddie and Ernest, 2 granddaughters Beatrice and Helen and one grandson, Kingsley Edward Joseph Wardell Farr.

Henry A. Conrad who was married in 1883 to Jessie Louise Swaddel passed away Oct. 20, 1920. He left one son with his wife Alletta. He being the only son of an only son is the only one in the direct line to bear the name of Conrad.

Mary Conrad married Julius Farr in 1856 and was the mother of nine children, Luella, Eugene, Dollie, Justin, Frank, Irwin, Jesse, Fred and George. In early life she was left a widow and she reared this large family to useful manhood and womanhood. Surely "She hath done what she could". She was grandmother to 37 and great grandmother to 21 when she passed away October 1925 aged 84 years.

Helen Conrad married Jerry Dugan Dec. 24, 1866. Her children were Lee, Clyde, Edith, Gale, Horace and Bert. Here are also 21 grand children and 5 great grand children. On Sept, 28, 1914 after an illness of 6 years which she bore with wonderful Christian patience, she passed so quietly and peacefully that they thought she was sleeping.

Jennie Conrad Sleeper has lived many years in California. She has near her, her son-in-law and daughter, Ford and Alice Crandall, and grandchildren Robert and Janet Crandall. She has one son, Lewis Sleeper who with his wife lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Emma Conrad Sleeper for several years has been at home to her friends in Galesburg, Michigan. Her son John with his wife Eva and son Jack are residents of Oak Park, Illinois. Her daughter Sarah married Charles Proctor Thomas a native of England. She has spent her married life abroad. Mr. Thomas served with the English in the World War. He died in 1924 in Italy where they were both engaged as teachers. They have 3 children, Patricia, Alleen and Jein. We find that in the second generation there are 6, in the 3rd generation there are 24 and in the fourth 62, and in the 5th 22 making a total of 114.

The oldest living member is Jennie Sleeper of Pasadena, California and the youngest being the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Spencer of South Haven. Of the last 3 generations, but few have been taken by death. Willie Farr died at age 20 and Henry Irwin Farr, after many years of patient suffering passed away Feb. 20, 1928 aged 55. He spent many years in the ministry and was successful in his chosen work.

He left a wife, Hattie, two sons and a daughter. Their oldest child, Gladys died at the age of nine years. Others are Julius, son of Frank and Diena Farr, aged 24 years. Dorothy, the little daughter of Gale and Frederica Dugan and Boyd, the son of Clyde and Sarah Dugan. In the fifth generation, Earl, the darling baby of Herman and Mary Earl Binford.

Among our members we have had many teachers, which are as follows: Mary Farr, Jennie Conrad Sleeper, Edith Spencer, Louis Sleeper, Alice Sleeper Crandall, Sarah Sleeper Thomas, Minnie Farr, Beatrice Farr, Helen Farr, Mable Egelkroud, Mable Dugan and others.

Among our preachers are Frank Farr, Henry Irwin Farr, Jesse Farr all of California. There are also many business men and women, civil engineer, electrician, radio operator, office workers, stenographers, carpenters, mechanics, horticulturists. Many are successful farmers and several are fine musicians. Most of the members of the family are inclined toward the Methodist Episcopal church. Nearly all belong to the grand old Republican party and let us hope that the fall of 1928 every man and every woman will rally to the support of our standard bearer. Herbert Hoover.

Four of our boys have enlisted in the different wars. Sergeant Jerry Dugan was a member of Co. B 19th Regiment Michigan volunteers. Company B was organized in Allegan County Michigan. In 3 years during the fall and winter of 1862 they marched thru Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee guarding property. On March 4, 1863, the brigade 2500 strong started for Columbia where they met the enemy and drove them to Spring Hill. The next day they met the enemy, 20,000 men. After a severe engagement of 6 hours, they were compelled to surrender having exhausted their ammunition. During this encounter, the Regiment captured the battle flag of the enemy. One company was taken March 25th and transported to Richmond Va., where they were confined in the famous Libby prison. The enlisted men were shortly released and were exchanged May 5. Sergeant Dugan served thru the war and at its close was honorably discharged.

John C. Sleeper enlisted in the Spanish American under Pres. McKinley's 1st call and was mustered out 6 months after the armistice. He was with the first volunteer troops to leave the U.S. and with the first troops that landed in Puerto Rico. He was also in the aviation of the war department during the World War with rating of Captain. He wrote the instructions for operating the Liberty engine for army & navy.

Harold Dugan served in the World War, enlisting in March 1918 and served to the end. He was mustered out June 11, 1919. Norman Taylor, son-in-law of Clyde Dugan served also in the National Guard. He enlisted July 1917 and was mustered out June 11, 1919.

We must not forget to mention the many who are not in the direct line, but who have helped to make this reunion a success. Ernest Conrad and wife, Almon and Maggie Farr, Charlie and Ruth Smith, O.A. Conrad, Fannie Farr and Frances Hunt and many others whom we have loved long since and lost for awhile.

As a family, peace, prosperity and good health have been ours to a great degree & as one generation passes and another takes its place we hope the Farr-Conrad reunion will be perpetuated from year to year for many years to come.

Jessie L. Conrad
August 11, 1928