

MEMORIALS

OF THE

GRAND RIVER VALLEY,

BY

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*Has Oblivion a right to the Past?*

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The journey from Detroit was one of fearful hardships—cutting roads, fording streams, building bridges, etc. The “mosquitoes were awful,” bloodthirsty and unrelenting. Lebhart, fearing his wife and child could not endure much longer, left, as before said, and pushed on, leaving the rest of the men to endure the hardships of the journey, and to fight the irreligious, uncircumcised mosquitoes as best they could. But they got through in a few days—a set of as tired sinners as ever welcomed an Indian camp, or launched their curses at “skeeters.”

The child spoken of above is now Mrs. Ed. B. Armstrong, of Saranac.

The first birth at Lyons was in 1834—a son of Mrs. Lebhart, which died in a few days.

Lebhart and family lived in a tent until he had got up the saw-mill, and sawed boards for a house. The Indians were very kind, bringing provisions, etc. They had only scant clothing; bringing only what they wore, sending the rest around the lakes. Such clothes as they wore they got of the Indians; their own did not come for two years, and then all spoiled. Their other goods came all right.

During the first year, Mrs. L. was chased by a big gray wolf.

Mr. Lebhart was always a prominent man at Lyons. He was the pioneer Fourth of July orator of the West; at least west of Pontiac. How the historian's pen would delight to linger over the scenes of that day. From the woods and clearings the settlers had come in, in their best array, with their wives and lassies, drawn by ox teams. The Indians, knowing that the white people were going to have their big “pow-wow,” came out in all their paint and feathers to witness the scene. And, if we may credit mythology, the gods of the sky and regions below were looking on in gaping expectancy. Jupiter, in form of a big owl, was perched in the top of a tree. Pluto, as an Indian, sat on a log near by; Neptune, in the form of a big bull-frog, was in the edge of the meadow, peeping out of a bog; and anon he would lift his voice and say “big thing!” Mercury, in guise of a pigeon,

Indians cloath  
settlers

sat on a tree, ready to carry the report to the assembled council on Olympus. Venus, as a young squaw, was squatted on the ground, with Cupid, her fat pappoose on her back; and Mars, as a red-headed wood-pecker, was lazily clinging to the side of a tree. The day wore on; and this is (from memory), the report of the next Olympian Chronicle: "The morning sun was auspicious of a beautiful day for the celebration of the anniversary of a nation's birth. Coincident with the first glancing of the beams of the rising sun on the trees in the east, the booming of an extemporized cannon (a bellows nose) announced the sunrise of the glorious morning. The flag (six bandanna handkerchiefs) was floating in the wind. A barrel of whisky was rolled out on the green. At ten o'clock the meadow was alive with the denizens of the forest, who had come to do honor to the occasion and the day. At eleven, the procession was formed, marshaled by Bell, and headed by the pioneer band—a fife and a jews-harp. Arrived at the stand, the orator took up his glowing theme. Report, if you please, the chain-lightning. It is reported by the crashing thunder. But on this occasion the celestial reporter was obliged to throw down his pen, and, with the rest, join in the hand-clapping, and the shouting, "Bully!" Then followed the feast and the social hilarity, when men and gods forgot all distinction, and on equal terms commingled. Jupiter, an owl no longer, but an Indian chief, tripped lightly in the dance with Mrs. Lebhart on the green; Mercury, in the form of A. F. Bell, cavorted with the young Indians, to the infinite delight of Venus, who at the time was playing the agreeable to Coccoosh. But why particularize? When all were jovial, who was the jolliest? As the sun, which, cloudless during the day, had admiringly looked on the scene, was slowly and reluctantly descending to the west, the crowd dispersed to their several homes. They mounted their ox-wagons, cracked their whips, and shouted "Ge-lang!" while the bellows-nose exploded in a farewell peal, which seemed to be liberty's shout, "Long live America! long live Lyons!" The accuracy of the above cannot be attested. Old Mercury, the reporter, was given to story-telling, and had no more truth in him than a modern reporter. This report is to be taken, as