

# Noel's Souvenir of the Fortieth Annual Picnic

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Berrien County Old Settlers Association





The Rose of Berrien

1899  
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Picnic at the Indian Fields, 1899

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SEP 15 1914

## Personal Preface

On the occasion of the fortieth annual celebration of Old Settlers Day at Indian Field, 1914, I was privileged to listen to an address delivered by Mr. R. W. Reese, of Sunnybrook Farm, Eau Claire, which so impressed me that I arose from my seat and addressed the president in substance as follows:

“Mr. President: This has been the grandest talk ever delivered on these grounds, and one of which we are all proud, and if you will procure for me a copy, I will have it published in pamphlet form and have it sent to every old settler who will request a copy.

Mr. S. M. Clawson, of Pipestone, moved that the request be complied with,

and the vast audience voted unanimously in its favor, thus expressing their appreciation of the most generous offer.

Mr. John Johnson, ex-sheriff, secured a copy of the address and it has been printed in a neat souvenir edition, illustrated with scenes of some of the most beautiful spots found in the world of nature.

This souvenir is dedicated to the Pioneers of Berrien County, living and dead. It has for its chief object the building up of a sentiment in the hearts of the people that will stimulate them to greater reverence in memory of those who were foremost in carving from a wilderness the banner county of the state.

They were great benefactors whose ser-

vices were so transcendently great that we honor ourselves by remembering to honor them.

They were as grand and noble as any souls that ever wore the clay of earth about them, and to rightly estimate the superb dimensions and nobility of their characters we ought to study their lives in connection with the times in which they lived.

With supreme courage, and an unfaltering faith in the Right, they became public benefactors and bathed their names in immortality.

Every age has her great characters, every land her great heroes.

Backward across the centuries of the past we can see a few sunken mountain peaks jut out from oblivion's sea. The telescope of time, as it sweeps the historic heavens,

still shows the greatest souls of all history—those who have defied fate, and all that fortune, death and danger dare—hitched their chariots to the star of hope and transformed a wilderness into a land of homes, a garden spot of the world.

Berrien County is the home of my birth. She holds in her history a gentle memory of many, who long ago became weary of life's burden and fell asleep by the wayside and entered into eternal rest.

I am forcibly reminded that I am growing old, and shall soon pass on to my reward, and with me the memory of all the grand past of Berrien County's old settlers, who in my esteem shall live in song and story as long as the noble race lives to inhabit God's globe.

I desire to perpetuate in everlasting re-



gard those who by birthright or adoption identified themselves with the creation, development and permanency of all the institutions of which we, as good citizens, are justly proud.

Let us rehabilitate the organization of Old Settlers Day; reorganize and re-establish it on its original plan. Let common interest guide in conducting the exercises of that day, so that good fellowship will reign supreme, and that the memory of those gone before may be exalted.

I am sending this little souvenir to those who are loyal to the traditions of our history as a county and with the firm belief that it will exercise a potent influence in

observing one day in each year when fitting services will be held in honor of our pioneers—both living and dead.

Let it not be degraded to the level of common things, but elevated always to that plane where noble ideas, elevating influences and uplifting sentiments shall prevail.

With ardent hopes for a most inspiring future, I am,

Yours for success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theophilus Noel". The signature is written in dark ink and features a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1914.





## Foreword

Pioneers' Day belongs to the people. It is essentially a day when we revive and renew the memories of our illustrious sires—the pioneers of Berrien County.

Pioneer Day should be a day when all the people of the county, regardless of political affiliations, religious enthusiasm or secular interests, should meet on a common level, divested of all personal interests, or pecuniary gains, and celebrate by fitting ceremony the real object for which Pioneer Day was instituted, namely, to perpetuate the memory of the pioneer fathers and mothers of Berrien County and to instill into the minds of the rising generation a spirit of patriotic pride in fostering and

maintaining a reverence for the memory of them.

It is impossible in the space allotted to mention the names of those who were largely instrumental in reclaiming Berrien County from its primeval wilderness and making it the banner county of Michigan; yet we, of this generation, must see to it that what they gained by their labors and determination shall be emblazoned upon the scroll of progress and illumined by a spirit of loyalty on the part of those who are to-day enjoying the fruits of their conquest.

*Green be their memory, and verdant to the judgment day.*

Pioneer Day belongs to all the people of Berrien County; the old, the middle-aged

and the young. The interests of those who must soon assume the reins of government must not be forgotten, and they should prove the objects of special attention.

Those in charge should make special inducement to have the youth in attendance in the celebration of Pioneers' Day, and those who speak should make special preparation to interest and instruct them in the great work of good government and social reform.

The Great Creator has given us a common interest in the things of this earth life;

in the air, the water, and the land. Indian Field is a grand park fashioned by the hand of the Great Architect, and in that delightful spot we should all feel at home. There let us gather on the second Wednesday of each June, with our children and our neighbors, and spend the entire day.

Let us take our dinners, and under the leafy canopy, and cooled by the refreshing breeze from Lake Chapin, regale ourselves and be glad we live in grand old Berrien County.

R. W. R.



R. W. REESE  
SUNNY BROOK FARM  
EAU CLAIRE, MICH.

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## The Address by Mr. R. W. Reese

Mr. President and Fellow Countrymen:

This day we meet to indulge in our annual greeting of old friends, pioneers and neighbors. This is a day on which we recount our manifold blessings, and also pass in quiet review the forty years which have gone into history since "Old Settlers" day came into existence. This custom of gathering once each year in this beautiful grove should always be inspiring and clothe us with greater zeal to foster and encourage it.

It is well that we stop in the mad rush through life and live once more in the days that are gone forever from us.

Not long ago, as I sat by the open window looking out into the moonlight, there came borne upon the still night air the sound of voices, of boys and girls. They were singing:

"Where are the friends  
That we knew in our youth,  
Long, long ago, long ago?  
Gone to their homes  
In the mansions of truth,  
Long, long ago, long ago.  
Homes that were brightest  
Were shrouded in gloom,  
Hearts that were lightest  
Were laid in the tomb,  
Long, long ago, long ago."

This old and familiar song was repeated over and over again, and the music was harmonious. Yet it carried me back so many years that it seemed like a song my mother sang in my infancy, when it was not easy to separate dreams from realities.

That song carried me back to a time before those young voices had an existence, and it impressed me that the heart of those youthful singers contained the principle of a faith that is as old as the everlasting hills. It is the primal force that lies at the bottom of every venture and is an exponent of

strength in the world today. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and its truth is verified in every department of life.

Go with me back to those childhood days and we can see the result of labor accomplished with faith as a guiding star. Our pioneer fathers and mothers entered the wilderness away out on the frontier. The soil was rich, but to make it subservient to the needs of the husbandman, mighty labors were performed, and they were rewarded by seeing the forests give way to cultivated fields, and the primeval cabin replaced by modern homes. Thus they continued from year to year, and you who have long since left the paternal roof can look back upon a scene that is dearer to you than any other place.

There is where you first saw the light of life. There is where your youthful days were passed. You can remember the old

school house with its ancient furniture, and your first teacher to give you instruction. You can remember the creek which flowed by back of the school house, and the hill where you coasted. You can look back and see the many changes made since you left home. The fathers and mothers who laid the foundation for the old home, and who brought it to a stage of perfection, may have long since been gathered to their fathers, and are enjoying their well-earned reward.

Our pioneer fathers and mothers were progressive, and, in a large measure, they transmitted that virtue to their posterity, yet faith was the magic touchstone that led to success.

That same potent factor guided the inventor to success; led the mariner in quest of fame and fortune; gave vigor to the arms, nerves and hearts of the soldier boys on the field of battle; induces the husband-



Power House, Dam,  
Lake Chapin in the  
distance

Berrien Springs, Mich.

Showing the Indian Fields on the opposite side of the river

man to sow the grain, and spurs the student to other conquests in the fields of lore.

As often as we wander back to those early days, and, in imagination, try to live again as we lived then, to think as we thought then, and to revel in all those youthful sports as we revelled then, memory carves a heaven on earth out of the sweet remembrances which come trooping forth to greet us,

“And forever and forever,  
As long as the river flows,  
As long as the heart has passions,  
As long as life has woes,”

such memories will bring to us a picture of the sunny days of youth where we recognize the old-time simplicity and the old-time virtues that gave strength and vigor to the early settlers of our country. I seem to hear the old-time songs, and in a spirit of exuberant joy join in the chorus which rounds out in hosannas of glad acclaim.

The old-time religion and the old-time

faith are in evidence, and no man or woman was ashamed of his profession. Just notice the contrast between the early customs and religious zeal with modern usages and advanced thought. I was reading in a metropolitan paper recently that one of the fashionable churches had adopted a rule that at each Sunday evening service all the worshippers must appear in full evening dress, and at a recent Congress of Religions a Chicago minister made this statement: “I believe in dancing and card playing. I would turn the church vestry into a hall for dancing. I’d have billiard and pool tables, and I’d have card playing under the auspices and supervision of the church.” This Chicago clergyman heralds a new dispensation, and we need not be surprised if some other exponent of modern religion will advocate a saloon in the basement and a poker table in the attic as valuable adjuncts to a modern church.



Dean's Bluff, overlooking St. Joseph Valley, Berrien Springs in distance



There is a world of difference between the theology of today and the theology of fifty years ago, and a conviction is steadily working in the hearts of the people of today that the account of the Creation is a myth, and the gospel of the Evangelists a superstition. I am glad, however, that these tendencies and their influences have little hold as yet on our country people.

The hope of the nation and of society and of religion lies in the vigor and honor of the great medial classes, and these are found in our country homes; around the family hearthstone away from influences of modern social conditions; away from the hypocrisy and snobbery of modern society; where every woman is a queen, every man a king; bubbling over with sturdy, robust manhood, ready to die for his honor, his home and his country.

I have many times read with wonder and awe of the hanging gardens of Babylon which Nebuchadnezzar reared in graceful

terraces high above the brazen gates of the city to remind his Medean wife of her mountain home, but to me the sight was grander when I looked through youthful eyes and saw the garden spot of the world right here in the valley of the old St. Joe, with its sun-kissed banks, and its gentle undulations of field and forest. Right here in majestic Michigan, with her blue sky, pellucid streams, her balmy air, silvery lakes, gorgeous sunsets and most productive soil.

And now after a half century has passed into history, and I have many times gazed on the masterpieces of Raphael, Rembrandt, Angelo, Reynolds and Van Dyke, I have come to the conclusion that no painter's brush ever has or ever can produce on canvas half the glory and majesty and sublimity of an autumn sunset as the great orb of day sinks slowly to the west and is lost in the waters of Lake Michigan, and the fading sunlight gilding the forest-



Fairfield Farm, Erastus Murphy, Proprietor, near Berrien Centre, Michigan

girted banks of the winding St. Joe and throwing over the variegated foliage its soft and mellow radiance.

We talk about music and know that it is grand and inspiring. We know that Mozart, Mendelssohn, Handel and Wagner have poured forth a flood of melody and harmony which will delight the musical ear of mankind while civilization lasts, but it can never inspire that feeling of buoyancy and exhilaration, that bubbling joy and gladness which is felt by the barefoot boy as he listens to the morning song of the mocking bird and the robin as they flit from limb to limb while the sunlight glistens on the dew and the very air is full of life and gladness.

A thousand fond associations throng upon us, roused by the spirit of the hour. In this delightful grove rest, like sweet dews of the morning, the gentle recollection of our early life; around these hills and

gentle undulations cling, like gathering mists, the mighty memories of other days, and far away on the horizon of the past gleam, like our own northern lights, the gentle virtues and heroic characters of our pioneer fathers and mothers.

Mr. President, the true history of our county is told in the lives of our citizens who lived and struggled, wrought and suffered to create it. We revere them for what they did; we love them for the sacrifices they made. They braved the perils of forest and flood, and made it possible for us to enjoy today's blessings. Their's was not an age of speculation, but an age of action; simplicity marked each effort, and broad-gauged honesty circumscribed each life. Then, too, the children of those early days were inured to toil and attained their prime embellished with strength of mind and body, brain and muscle, so necessary for a useful and happy life. The food was plain



Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson at their residence at Berrien Centre, Michigan

but palatable. In my own experience, our family used no sugar, except from the sap of the maple tree, and we knew nothing of the dainty breakfast foods and rich pastry of the present day. Our clothes were extremely modest. Our mothers spun the wool of the sheep into yarn, and wove it into cloth, from which she fashioned the garments we wore. Blue jeans cloth for our pants was considered something fine.

Fine soft underwear was not known, and when the winter time came, if one pair of pants was not enough to keep us warm, another pair was added, and another and another, if necessary.

In those days the people were happy. Neighbors were separated from each other by long distance, but they were neighbors in the broadest sense. They chose for their motto, "Be right and stand together." "All for one, one for all and all for all." It was the spirit which made Berrien County forge

to the front in all matters. It was the spirit which has made Berrien County equal to every emergency in its history. It was the spirit which created the ambition and progress which are born and bred in the bone of her people.

In the battle of life we have all faced life's mistakes with manly courage. Mistakes are the inevitable accompaniment of the greatest gift given to man—individual freedom of action. If man were only a pawn in the fingers of omnipotence, with no self-moving power, he would never make a mistake, but would be degraded to the ranks of the lower animals and plants. An oyster never makes a mistake. Mistakes are the pains of wisdom, the raw material of error that we transform into higher living. Without them there would be no growth, no progress, no conquest. Mistakes of men and women are the knots and tangles, the broken threads and the dropped stitches in

the web of their living. They are the misdeals in judgment, the unwise investment in morals, the profit and loss account of wisdom and the misleading by-paths from the road to truth. Mistakes are always a part of learning, and life is simply given us that we may learn how to live. A man or a woman who never made a mistake never accomplished anything else worthy of mention. Men and women become great not by making mistakes, but by profiting by those they do make; by getting from them the courage of a new regenerating influence and inspiration with no irritating sting of useless regret; by building a glorious today on the ruins of a yesterday. When a captain finds his vessel is out of the right course, he wastes no time in bemoaning his fate, but at the first sunburst takes new bearings, changes his course, and with renewed courage heads toward the harbor and endeavors to make up the time he has lost.

Musing over the dreams of youth is a dangerous mental dissipation. "It might have been" is the lullaby of regret which often puts to sleep the best efforts of men. We need tonics in life more often than we need narcotics.

We may go back in memory to some fork in the road of life and imagine what would have happened and how much better off we would be, if we had only taken the other road. We sigh and wish we had done differently and say: "If I had only learned some other business!" "If I had married some other woman!" "If I had bought telephone stock at 30!" and in this manner run our empty train of thought over the slippery "Ifs." Even if these courses had been wiser, it is as impossible to change them now as for the human race to return to the original bit of protoplasm from which science declares we are evolved. The past does not belong to us; it is only the



S. M. Clawson's Residence

golden present that is ours to transform into a new past that will be a joy to look back to in the years to come.

The other road always looks attractive. Distant sails are always white; far-off hills seem always greenest. The other road might have meant wealth with no happiness; fame might have filled our ears with the sweet melody of praise, but the dearer things of earth might have been denied us. What the other road might have meant for us, no eternity of thought can reveal. If we were impatient yesterday it should inspire us to be more patient today. Our unfairness to one may open our eyes to greater fairness to others.

The world may condemn us for not making a success in life. What does the silly, babbling world know about our lives? What does it matter what others think, if we have done our best? The past is gone, the present only is ours.

In every heart is a secret chamber where the walls are covered with the drapery and memorials of the past. Rare treasures fill the cabinet of ebony. Sweet faces long ago forgotten by the world smile tranquilly from golden encasements, and voices are heard whose musical cadences were sweet to our ears long years ago. A drawer yields to the impulse of a mother's hand, and there lies a tiny stocking, a little shoe, a white plume nodding on a snowy hat, or a broken toy, and the secret door opens. A mother's eyes are looking. She is living again in the buried years that have no resurrection except this. As it is with the mother, so it is with all. There is not a mortal who does not, at times, enter and stand among the broken images, dethroned idols and buried hopes of years gone by and gaze upon the relics of other days.

This world is made up of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Yesterday contains all





LOVE CREEK  
Berrien Springs  
Mich.

the battlefields on which we fought and won a victory, or suffered defeat; yesterday holds in gentle memory all the pioneers who, with hopes high and faith strong, settled in the wilderness of Berrien County and built up their homes. This day is ours. Memory holds before us the fragrance of the past which is reflected from a multitude of noble characters to whom we of the present generation owe a debt of gratitude. Cicero calls gratitude the mother of all virtues, and we as grateful children must show to the world the affection and reverence we owe to our pioneer fathers and mothers of Berrien county. Gratitude is not only the memory we carry in mind, but the homage of the heart.

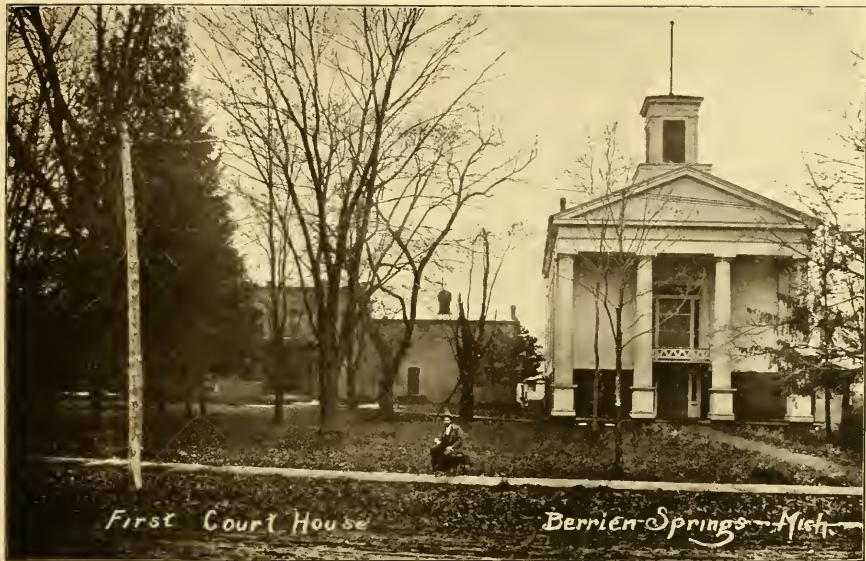
It is our supreme duty to preserve inviolate the inheritance won for us by our illustrious sires. The children of today should be taught to appreciate the privileges they enjoy, made possible by those who have long since been gathered to their fathers.

They should be taught that the reins of government must soon pass from the hands of the fathers and mothers into their hands and the true dignity and value of good government made a part of their education.

The world is now going at too great a pace, and love of good government is being smothered under an avalanche of money madness.

William J. Bryan, as Secretary of State, declares that he cannot live on his \$12,000 salary and he must resort to the lecture platform to raise more money. It is not the *high cost* of living, but the cost of *high* living. Bryan's predecessors did the same thing. So it goes, and for what? Just to make a show of royalty like European countries. Just to satisfy the cravings of a lot of society parasites who demand expensive functions that they may show off their wealth and make the boast of *knowing* public men.

If our public men spent their salaries in



First Court House

Berrien Springs Mich.

studying questions that would be beneficial to their constituents it would be a demonstration of patriotism, but as long as it is squandered in wining and dining, and making a display for social reasons only it shows a tendency to create a government by wealth instead of by brains and ability.

I do not care where a man comes from or what his ancestry may have been, if he rises as near to the perfection of that divine standard as his human foibles and weaknesses will permit, then he is as good as anybody who does not acquire greater perfection.

American manhood has always stood

for the recognition of the standard of right and it is our duty and privilege to attain to that perfection every day.

But I must hasten to a close. This day is yours to enjoy. This day is yours to bring back from the distant shadows those whose voices are hushed forever in eternal sleep. We have all pondered on the life that lies beyond the walls and windows of our world; the life into which our friends have entered. Their lives were beautiful and in their death was left a gentle memory to those who survive them.

I thank you for your patience in listening, and bid you hail and farewell.

*Oldest steamboat  
on the Old St Joe*





Noel Range, Berrien Springs, Michigan



## A Count of Losses

Life is a count of losses,  
Every year;  
For the weak are heavier crosses,  
Every year;  
Lost Springs with sobs replying  
Unto weary Autumns' sighing,  
While those we love are dying,  
Every year.

The days have less of gladness,  
Every year;  
The nights more weight of sadness,  
Every year;  
Fair Springs no longer charm us,  
The winds and weather harm us,  
The threats of death alarm us,  
Every year.

There come new cares and sorrows,  
Every year;  
Dark days and darker morrows,  
Every year;

The ghosts of dead loves haunt us,  
The ghosts of changed friends taunt us,  
And disappointments daunt us,  
    Every year.

To the Past go more dead faces,  
    Every year;  
As the loved leave vacant places,  
    Every year;  
Everywhere the sad eyes meet us,  
In the evening's dusk they greet us,  
And to come to them entreat us,  
    Every year.

"You are growing old," they tell us,  
    Every year;  
"You are more alone," they tell us,  
    Every year;  
"You can win no new affection,"  
"You have only recollection,"  
"Deeper sorrow and dejection,"  
    "Every year."

Too true, Life's shores are shifting,  
    Every year;  
And we are seaward drifting,  
    Every year,  
Old places, changing, fret us,  
The living more forget us,  
There are fewer to regret us,  
    Every year.

But the truer life draws nigher,  
    Every year;  
And its Morning-star climbs higher,  
    Every year;  
Earth's hold on us grows slighter,  
And the heavy burden lighter,  
And the Dawn immortal brighter,  
    Every year.









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