

THE HAWLEY FAMILY (PORTER)

The Hawleys of Porter Township came to Van Buren County in 1854, purchased 160 acres of land and built a two-story house on the Lawton-Schoolcraft road. John (II) and Jerusha Hawley came by train from Springfield, Pennsylvania where they had lived the previous 14 years of marriage. One reason for embarking on this adventure was land ownership, land that a man could put his heart and soul into and which in turn would yield back a bountiful living for him and his family. Perhaps, too, it was in keeping with what the rest of their families were doing, migrating even further west into land ownership in Iowa. The Hawleys were parents of seven children: Martin, Atwell, Eugene,

Amelia, Sophronia, John (III) and Cleveland.

John Hawley (II) was born in Lyons, New York on April 17, 1817 to John and Betsy Milhous Hawley. (This line of the Hawleys had been in America since 1628. John's grandfather, Samuel Stowe Hawley, and his great-uncle, Captain David Hawley, fought in the American Revolution, capturing a Tory Judge and holding him prisoner until ransomed for imprisoned American officers.) A farmer by occupation, John was a devout Christian, active in church work, serving as steward and leader in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Porter Township. He died June 9, 1897 at 80 years of age after 57 years of marriage.

Jerusha Bushnell Cleveland Hawley was born near Troy, New York on March 3, 1819 to Daniel and Clarissa Ely Cleveland. Jerusha was raised by the Bushnell family, her paternal grandmother's family, and received a more than average education for a girl of her day. She was an intellectual who read a great deal as she felt the mind must have food as well as the body. She was an active participant in the early struggle for the women's suffrage movement. She wrote speeches by day and delivered these speeches at rallies held in schoolhouses, and halls in the Lawton area at night. She was accompanied by her husband who sup-

ported her in this work. Jerusha nonetheless was a devoted wife, mother and homemaker, very circumspect in her views on the conduct of a lady. She did not believe in dancing or card playing as she held them to be non-Christian pastimes. Jerusha was a cousin of U.S. President Grover Cleveland. However, she refused to support him in his political endeavors. The relationship was down played and her children and grandchildren were aware of the bloodline connection in a very minimal way. Jerusha died January 25, 1899, aged 79 years, at the home of her son, Rev. Atwell Hawley, in North Muskegon, Michigan. Atwell was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Today, the original house and barn built by John Hawley (II) near Lawton is still standing with the handhewn pegs, and square nails of pioneer construction. Jerusha's hickory tree which shaded her kitchen in summer and flooded the room with golden light in autumn is still flourishing after more than a hundred years. None of the family live in Van Buren County now with the exception of one great-great-granddaughter, Randi Dent Shaff (Mrs. Dennis Shaff) who with her husband and three children lives near Mattawan, about 10 miles distant from the Hawley homestead.

The Hawleys were only one of many families who came, lived and died but by their coming and living left a mark on Van Buren County that is still remembered today, people who believed in the integrity of the individual and the right of each man or woman to work hard for

what they acquired and their right to have what that work accomplished.