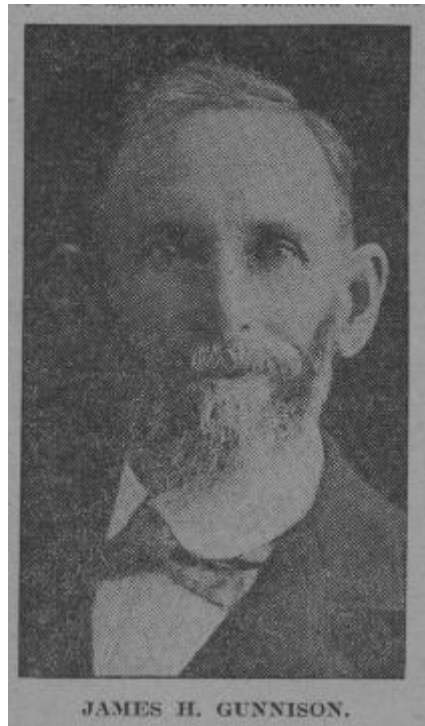


Lansing Pioneers SR 2-2-1901

It was in February of 1836 en Alfred G Gunnison, for whose family Gunnisonville was named a few years ago, came to DeWitt. He was then a baby 6 months old, having been born in June 1835, in Livingston county. There were no roads nor bridges in that year and the family moved in the winter, so they might cross streams on the ice. No city of Lansing existed, but in 1850, when Alfred was 14, a school, with a few stores and house foreshadowed the present capitol city, and his father and mother rented their farm, and came to Lansing to educate their children. Their residence was on Townsend st where A.A. Piatt now lives, and the children attended a one-story wooden school on the site of the present Townsend st school. The teacher was Mr. Barker, brother of J.W. Barker who lives at 613 Capitol ave north. Mr. Gunnison's parents soon returned to their DeWitt farm. He remained in Lansing to attend school, working for his board at Judge Chapman's. the only house standing that he remembers to have been build at that time, is located on the next lot south of the Porter's hack barn. This house then occupied the Hotel Downey corner, and was owned by a Dr. Goucher.



Where now is the center of the city, was then covered with heavy timber through which young Alfred often searched for the Chapman cattle, of which he had care. Wolves sometime howled in the tree shadows at night, and timid inhabitants kept indoors after dark. Mr. Gunnison has been a citizen of Lansing and vicinity since his birth, and now resides at 605 (607) Walnut st north.

The years 1836-37 were known as wild cat times. A distinguished victim of the great land speculations of the day was Washington Irving, who came west with his brother atop look over and purchase lands. Alfred G Gunnison's father purchased 400 acres, 160 of which lay along Lookinglass river. This last purchase was made hopefully for, railroads being undreamed of, it was thought that the canal from Detroit to Grand Rapids, which was considered a certainty, would take advantage of the river channel. This hope vanished in a cloud a steam.

Mr. Gunnison and his brother attended school at Leona, eight miles beyond Jackson, and when vacation came, walked hoe to DeWitt. The lateral glacial moraine lying along the road from Jackson was then called, as it is today, the "hog-back."