

Lansing Pioneers

SR 3-2-1901

Homer L Thayer, 916 Washington ave north, was born in Livingston county, Michigan, Oct. 31, 1837. He came to Lansing in 1848 with his father who built a cabin in the woods at the corner of Capitol ave and Maple st. He attended the old district school on Cedar st until he was 15, when he entered the general store of W.A. Dyer. Leaving Dyer's store he spent a few months in Ann Arbor, then returned to Lansing and entered the service of Wright & Holmes. When J.C. Bailey opened his bank, Mr. Thayer was installed at bookkeeper, teller, and janitor, boarding with his employer in the house now occupied by Bailey Buck. He was now fairly started in business life, and in an occupation similar to that which a young man of the present day might enter. The boys in the late forties, however, did not earn their money by selling newspapers or shining shoes. Mr. Thayer says:

“The spending money for us boys for tent shows, Sunday school, singing school, sleigh rides, books, traps and fishing tackle was earned by gathering ginseng and boneset for Drs. Newbro and Godner, trapping mink, coon, and muskrats which Lederer Brothers bought at good prices, and when frozen cranberries were thawed out in the spring the boys, and girls too, were there on time.”

When the first republican state officers were elected Mr. Thayer entered the capitol as a clerk under S.M. Holmes, state treasure. At that time about 25 persons constituted the

entire force at the capitol. Of these Major Thayer and E.H. Whitney are the only ones known to be living.

In 1857 Major Thayer married Julia, daughter of Mr. And Mrs. Thomas W. Greene, who had come to Lansing from New York two years before. The wedding journey was taken in a double sleigh, and accompanied by 14 young people drove to Howell, where all were entertained at the "tavern."

May 13, 1861, he enlisted as a private in Capt. John R. Price's Co. G., 3rd Mich. Inf. During his long service in the army he was constantly advanced, and held many positions of trust. In 1863 and '64 he was aide-de-camp to Gens. Berry, de Trobriand, Egan, Poe and Hayes. In the spring of 1865 he was sent from Washington with important dispatches to General Sherman, then on his famous march to the sea. Returning from this expedition, he arrived at Washington in June, and attended Ford's theater on the night President Lincoln's assassination. A trip to Leavenworth followed, where he was entrusted with the auditing and paying of a large accumulation of indebtedness incurred by the soldiers during the Indian campaign. Space does not permit a detailed account of Major Thayer's six years of continuous active service. He is famous for his war time stories, which are interesting and often exciting in the extreme.



3rd Michigan Infantry (AoM)

After leaving the service Major Thayer remained in the west until 1884, engaged in various pursuits. One year was spent in the south, this time upon a mission of peace., following which came eight years in the office of the state board of health.

He was at Mackinac island for two years as superintendent of the state park. The last three years he has lived again in Lansing “looking out,” he says, “for profitable places in which to invest my \$6 per month pension.