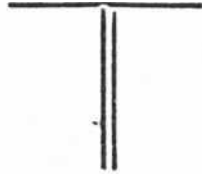


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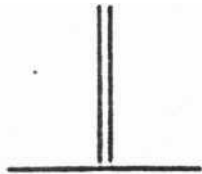
Widner Township

Knox County, Ind.



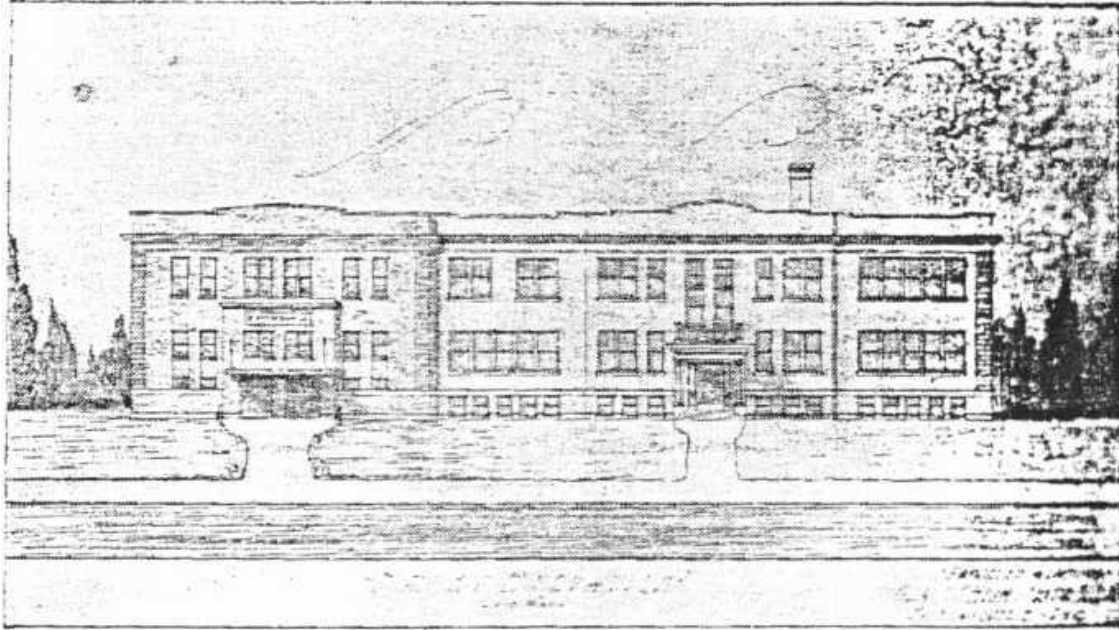
Written by the Senior Class of Freelandville High School as a project in English Composition under the supervision of the principal of the school and instructor in Senior English, R. R. Miller.

Because of their interest in the matter, and because of their efforts to have this work done, we dedicate this volume to the Widner Township Farmer's Organization.



Freelandville, Ind.

...1926...



Although the class of '26 will be gone forth before this new building will become a reality, yet they are proud that the development in educational equipment which they have traced in this history will find such an excellent consummation as this school plant of which the community may well be proud.

PREFACE.

For those who have truly done their best, there is no need to offer apologies. Yet we realize that this work has its short-comings and crave the indulgence of those who may be inclined to criticise. It has been difficult to get accurate data concerning many events; the human memory is often undependable and even the written records which we have consulted, in many places, are at variance. Upon some topics, it has been impossible to get accurate data. For these reasons, we are especially grateful to those who have been kind enough to give us the information necessary for such a work as this.

Space does not permit us to express individual appreciation to the host of people who have gladly answered to the best of their ability our numberless questions, and have volunteered valuable information. However, we do wish to make individual mention of some of the out-of-town people who have placed valuable documents at our disposal.

Mrs. C. B. (Martie) Robbins now living in Oaktown for a number of years with painstaking care, has been gathering data for a work of similar scope. She had not planned to publish it, but was planning to have it bound, and placed in the school library. However, after we interviewed her, she most unselfishly gave to us the fruit of her labors, even though the indentity of its authorship would be obscured in this history. We are especially indebted to her for the greater part of our material on the early settlers especially regarding Dr. Freeland, her esteemed father.

Miss Florence Polk of Oaktown placed at our disposal a most interesting document. It is a collection of interesting information compiled and bound by James Polke in 1886. It is entitled "The Lost Labors of an Old Pioneer."

Spiker and Hedden of Vincennes were most accommodating, looking up data regarding the early surveys and giving us the use of old atlases.

We appreciate the courtesy of our County Surveyor, Recorder, and other county officials in helping us look over old records.

Mrs. C. B. McDonald of Vincennes was most kind in giving us the use of some valuable records which she possessed.

Besides these many Widner Township citizens were most helpful and accommodating by giving us information, permitting us to have access to prized records and newspapers, and many by contributing written articles on various organizations whose history appear in this record.

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1926



Anna Ruth Yocum

Gordon Chambers

Esther Bobe



Laura Finke

Lawrence Harting

Pauline Sickmeier

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1926



Gladys Mauck

Roy Richmond

Kathryn Douthitt



Gerald Brooks

Hazel Carrico

Hogo Farise

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Dortha Schaefer

Raymond Meier

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Helen Heidenreich

Willard Stoelting



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TWP. Trustee

Flora Richardson
Class Sponsor

R. R. Miler
Principal

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GEOGRAPHY OF WIDNER TOWNSHIP

CHAPTER I.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES. Widner Township is located in the northern part of Knox County, Indiana, on the uplands between the Wabash and White rivers. It lies between 38°48' and 38°52' north latitude, and between 87°16' and 87°24' west longitude.

The township is bounded on the north by Sullivan County, on the west by Busseron Township, on the east by Vigo Township, and on the south by Washington Township and a portion of Vigo.

Widner Township has a uniform length from north to south of six miles and an average breadth from east to west of about six and one-half miles, although the extreme breadth is seven and one-half miles. The area of Widner is approximately forty square miles.

The elevation of the township is approximately 700 feet above sea level.

GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY. Widner Township, in common with the entire Mississippi valley, was for ages covered by the sea. This was for such a long period of time that the corals and many other smaller animals living in this ocean, built up beds of limestone hundreds of feet thick. The sands brought to this ocean were slowly built into great beds of sandstone; and the fine clay, like that which makes the river water muddy, settled in the ocean and made the great beds of shale. On the swampy ocean shores great ferns and other plants grew so plentifully that, after falling into the water, they have produced the immense coal beds of southwestern Indiana, including those of Widner Township. Then came the glacier, which passed over the whole of the township, leaving its drift of deep and mellow soil.

The effect of this deep soil is to render the land more productive, because of the large number of elements of fertility it contains and because it will withstand drouth better than soil which is closely underlaid with rock. The topsoil of the township is mostly clay, which will make excellent brick. Sand and loam is found in the western portion, though, and in a few places fine muck, ideal for tile-making, is present in large quantities.

The glacier, or glaciers, which passed over the township left it, on the whole, fairly level. The land is gently rolling and there are no large hills or valleys.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM. The Maria Creek, with its tributaries, furnishes drainage for most of the township. This creek enters the township on the Sullivan County line near Arthur Wiseman's place and leaves it in the southwest corner of the township, forming a portion of the boundary between Busseron Township and Widner. It then flows southwest and west, emptying into the Wabash River. The extreme western portion of the township drains into the Marsh Ditch, which almost completely forms the western boundry. The Marsh Ditch joins the Maria Creek near the southwest corner of the township. The extreme eastern portion is drained by the Pollard Ditch (commonly called the Marsh Ditch), whose waters flow into the White River. The divide between the White and Wabash rivers runs through Freelandville, coming

nearest the center of town at Thomas Berry's.

CLIMATE. The average temperature of Widner Township ranges from about thirty degrees Fahrenheit in January to seventy-seven degrees in July. The extremes range from about one hundred degrees above zero to fifteen below. There is usually an abundant rainfall, but the snowfall during the winter months is fairly light compared to that of northern Indiana. The rainfall in inches is from forty to forty-five per year. There are, however, two or three dry years out of every eleven to thirteen years. During these dry years, the total rainfall is often not more than two-thirds that of normal years. This causes shortage in crops when the dry months occur during the growing season.

In Indiana, the prevailing winds are from the west. Widner Township lies in this belt of westerly winds. West and southwest winds are common over the township at all seasons and during the winter months northwest and west winds are the rule. The storms that pass over the township, and over all of Indiana, are great whirls of air which often change the direction of the wind, so that at one time it comes from one direction, and at another time from another. Thunderstorms are common, especially during the summer months. They are usually accompanied by rain. Widner Township has what is called a continental climate, for its climate is not influenced by the presence of large bodies of water. So at all seasons the temperature is subject to rapid changes and storms occur frequently.

CROPS AND PLANT LIFE. The land of this township is largely under cultivation. The staple crops are corn, wheat, oats, potatoes, and hay. Other crops raised are cowpeas, cane, rye; cherries, peaches, apples and other fruits; vegetables of all kinds; etc.

Among the trees, the oak is the most abundant, while hickory, maple, poplar, ash, birch, elm, walnut, and sycamore are found in large numbers. In the shrubs, there are the blackberry, raspberry, gooseberry, and elderberry. Besides these, many wild flowers flourish in spring, summer, and autumn.

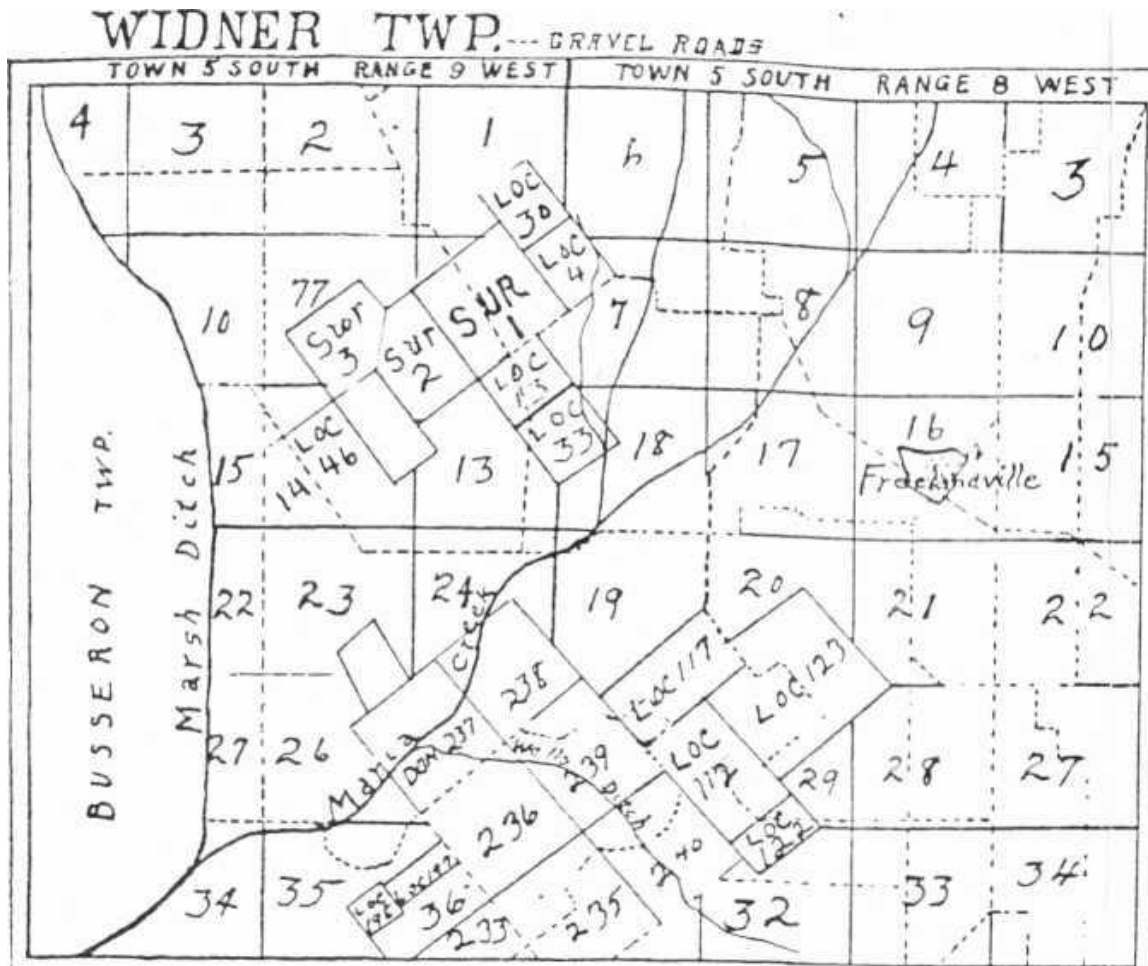
Considerable quantities of livestock are also raised, including horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, and poultry.

OCCUPATIONS. Agriculture is the principal occupation of the people of this locality, while soft-coal mining ranks second. Storekeeping, carpentry, tile making, road-building, flour-milling, black-smithing, car-repairing, saw milling, teaching, preaching and home-making are also of importance.

POPULATION. In 1900 the population of Widner Township was 1719; in 1910, 1767; and in 1920, 1745.

The population of Freelandville alone is about 706. The number of adults is 452; the number of children is 254. Including the hotel, there are 211 houses in Freelandville.

Most of the population is of German descent, though many of the inhabitants are English and Irish, and a few, Scotch-Irish.



CHAPTER II.

THE LAYING OUT OF WIDNER TOWNSHIP

In 1804 Francis Vigo and John Widner came up from Vincennes and to use the expression of the early settlers, "Cut out of the world," survey one, of what later became Widner Township. This survey followed the plan of the French Surveys by running on a forty-five degree angle. The land now owned by Theodore Osborne is included in this survey, and that now owned by Harry Pierson is the northwest corner of survey one. As the map will show, there are several adjoining surveys which follow this same plan. It was not till 1807 that the North and South surveys, which include the greater part of the Township, were laid out. On account of the disappearance of documents, the exact date of the establishment of Widner Township is not known, but it is believed to be about 1812. Widner Township first included the larger part of Vigo Township, but was later reduced to its present size of approximately forty square miles.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAYING OUT OF FREELANDVILLE.

People were steadily gathering on the Cross Roads, as the settlement which later became Freelandville, was formerly called. Due to this fact, there was a need of a Postoffice. In 1856 Dr. Freeland, a leading citizen of that time, sent in an application to the Government for a Postoffice. Since it had to have some name, it was called Freelandsville. The land around Freelandsville was owned by just a few of the people. As the town grew more and more there was need of more lots. In 1866, Dr. Freeland had part of Freelandville surveyed and laid off in lots by John Ritterskamp. The plans were drawn and discussed in Dr. Freeland's home. The survey was started from an iron bolt on the corner of lot No. 1, which is the lot Kixmiller's store is now on. The lots are all laid off in chains and links except lots No. 4 and 5 which are laid off in feet.

In January 1870, C. Baker's addition was added, Henry Heideckers addition March 16, 1870, Chamber's addition July 21 1871. sub-division of Christian Church property addition of town December 25, 1871, Baker's second addition March 1872, Ritterskamp's addition November 14, 1871.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLIEST EXPLORERS AND SETTLERS

Old records show us that explorations were made in the territory of Indiana as early as 1664. It is believed that the explorers first followed the Indian trails. The main trail from the Wabash to the Ohio passed through Widner Township, crossing through the southern corner of Old Chamber's farm where James McCormick now lives. Since this trail came through here it is a good reason for believing that this part of the country was explored early.

In 1804, Colonel Francis Vigo, Commander of the Fort at Vincennes, and Samuel Small who was the Government Gunsmith, came into this part of the country, on a deer hunt. They noticed the great number of walnut trees and other evidences of fine land. On their return home they spoke of this in the presence of John Widner, who was engaged in making shingles for governor Harrison's House. When this work was finished, he obtained permission from the Governor to make a location of land. He selected the land now known as the Osborn farm, where Frank Singleton is living. He soon had a little space cleared and a small cabin ready for his family. They came in the Fall of 1804. Widner was the first white settler in the township; therefore this township was named Widner.

With the Widner family came Andrew Wilkins, a brother-in-law, who made a location directly across the road from Widners, which is known as Location No. 2 he soon married and moved onto his land. In this year 1804 two families were added to the little band, William Taylor, took up the land where Vernor Scanling lives and a Mr. Carrico and his family settled on the land afterward owned by James Polk. In

1805 Jacob Widner, son of John Widner, was born, and a child of William Taylor died. This was the first birth and the first death in this Township. In 1809, Samuel Ledgerwood was married to Nancy Lemon, this being the first wedding in the Township. In 1805, several families were added to the community. A family named Ransford and a man named Harrington who was a school master. In 1806 Captain Charles Polk came from Kentucky with his large family. He was a Revolutionary soldier. He died in 1823, and was laid to rest in the grave yard by the first little church. His grave is described in the chapter on Churches and Cemeteries.

William Polk, son of Captain Charles was the first Justice of the Peace. He was a prominent man in many ways, having been in command of a Company at the Battle of Tippecanoe. He also served as assistant to Isaac McCoy in establishing an Indian Mission School at Fort Wayne. He was a member from Knox County of the Constitutional Convention. In 1838 he was placed in charge of the Indians who were moved from Indiana to Indian Territory. He was also a surveyor, doing some work for the government.

In 1806, John Lemon and Peter Hansbrough came over with the Polke family from Kentucky. John Lemon lived on the land now owned by Mrs. Charles Polk.

In 1808 Alex Chambers from the Territory of Ohio located on the land which has continued in the Chambers family. It is now owned by his great grand daughter, Mrs. Flora Chambers Mumaw.

Joseph Chambers, the son of Alex Chambers, was for many years Justice of the Peace, and was the first Postmaster. The mail was brought by Post riders from Vincennes to his home where it was sorted; that going to the settlement at Edwardsport was carried by his young son Joseph, who was known as "Uncle Joe."

The mail going to the west was sent to the home of Nathan Hinkle who lived on the farm recently owned by Will Walker, on the Oak-town road. The next week the mail which had accumulated at these two places, was sent to Mr. Chambers, and carried to Vincennes by the Post rider.

The Indians found East of the Mississippi River by the first explorers were the different divisions of the great tribe of Algonquins. One of these divisions, the Miamis was divided again into smaller tribes, one of these, the Piankashaws occupied the territory which is now Knox County. The Indians living in Widner Township were a part of this tribe.

For protection against these Indians several Forts were built, one on John Widner's place. This Fort covered three-fourths of an acre and had high towers on each corner. Another Fort was on the Old Charles Polk place which now belongs to J. P. Polk. They began to build this Fort about 1808, then the war of 1812 broke out and the building of the Fort was not finished until after the war. The third fort was on William Polk's place, and the other three on the farms of William Taylor, John Lemon, and Carrico.

Joseph Chambers with his brother John were in several expetitions against the

Indians. John was a Lieutenant under Zachary Taylor. During 1810 and 1811 the Indians were very troublesome, stealing horses and stock and otherwise annoying and frightening the settlers.

Joseph Chambers, father of Joe and Albeit Chambers who spent their life near the Chambers school once had his horses stolen by the Indians, he kept his horses in a log stable and to make sure the horses would be safe, he locked the door on the inside of the stable and had a piece of a log sawed out in the back of the building, so that it would fit back in so as not to be noticed. After their feeding was done, they would crawl out through this hole and place the log back into position. This worked well for some time until the Indians saw him crawl out and replace the log.

Late one night Mr. Chambers was aroused by the continued barking of his dog — so he aroused the boys and they went to the horselot as quickly as they could to see what was the matter.

The red men had taken two of the horses and had left some bark haiters lying on the ground showing they had meant to take more of the horses if Mr. Chambers and sons had not been aroused.

The next thing then was to trail them and get the horses back. In the community was a man that was an expert in running down the Indians. Mr. Chambers and this man were ready early next morning and they, with some others in the neighborhood, started in pursuit. The Indian trailer took the lead, watching every turned leaf, blades of grass and weeds, the bending brush and all soft places in the ground for tracks that might be seen. They kept going until they came upon the horses but the Indians had disappeared. They brought their horses home and never did have any more taken.

In 1812, young Daniel Hollingsworth and a companion started on a hunting trip. In their excitement they lost each other but decided to go on hunting, thinking that they would run across each other in a short time. Daniel's companion saw a couple of Indians but did not try to kill them, because he knew the Indians did not see him and he did not want to cause any more trouble. It was getting dark and he began feeling uneasy about Daniel. He started to look for him and finally ran across him lying on the ground dead. He had been scalped by the Indians and left to die.

Young Daniel Hollingsworth was killed about a mile down the Creek from the Maria Creek Christian Church. He was buried on his fathers farm in the first grave in the Hollingsworth grave yard, which is just across the southern line of Widner Township.

The "Red Men" were quite cunning at times. In those early days there were no fences and the cows were left to wander through the woods as they pleased. On one cow they would fasten a bell so they could find them more easily at night fall. Cadgen Bicknell, who lived on the old Wagner place where Walter Jones now lives, turned his cows out into the woods one morning. That night he failed to find the one cow which had the bell about its neck, so he went farther into the deep woods until he heard the tinkling of the cow bell. He thought it would be easy to find his cow, but at that very

minute he noticed an Indian up in a tree ringing the bell. He sprang behind a tree just as a tomahawk flew past him. Fleeing as fast as possible, he returned home safely.

Early in 1810, Joseph Chambers and John Haddon went to some Indian towns on the Wabash to discover if possible the intentions of the Indians. They were received kindly to all appearances and were given the "Pipe of Peace" to smoke. As night approached they noticed that the Indian Men were leaving, a few at a time, until all had disappeared. Fearing some kind of treachery, they started on their way towards home, not taking time to get their horses. Reaching the river, they built a raft on which they floated below the mouth of Honey Creek, where they landed and made their way home on foot.

During the unsettled conditions preceding the war of 1812, there was no additions to the settlements in the township. Soon after the war closed, a number of people came from Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky.

In 1814, Mitchel Starner came from Pennsylvania. He brought a soldiers right to take up the land now owned by his grandchildren. This land is still known as the Starner land.

Thomas Piety also came in 1814. He selected land near the Maria Creek Christian Church. He was born near St. Louis. His father, Austin Piety was a British officer, who had married Sallie Polk. The son Thomas was the first white child born West of the Ohio river.

In 1815, John Keith made a location south west of Freelandville on the land now known as the Will Koch farm. He came directly from the Battle of New Orleans where he had assisted in driving back the British under General Packingham. He was a man of broad views and strong mental ability.

In 1815, Dr. Johnathan Cox came from Kentucky. He was a man of extensive learning and a kind hearted Christian gentleman. He brought with him about forty slaves, to whom he gave their freedom. Cox settled near Emisons Mill in Busseron Township. Dr. Cox was an uncle of Jonathan, Gabriel and Benjamin Cox.

In 1815 John Robbins came from Kentucky. He and his wife rode horseback, each with a child riding behind. They had one pack horse on which was carried all their earthly possessions. They settled two miles west of Freelandville where they remained till the close of their lives.

The McArthur family came about this time and settled on the land recently owned by Willis Smith. The room on the South and East is the original log cabin. One room with a loft, was built by the McArthurs. For many years, it has been weather boarded out side and plastered inside so that the logs are entirely covered. The graves of several of this family were to be seen until a few years ago, south of the present house, near the road and opposite a large maple tree, which stands south of the road. There were no established grave yards and the dead were buried on the home farms. Around some of these have grown our "Cities of the dead." "They served

their country in its time of need and tho' remembered not in name or deed, their resting place, altho' their souls have fled should sacred to us be."

Abraham Miller came from Jefferson County Kentucky in 1818 He settled on a tract of land bought from William Taylor. Mr. Miller was unswerving in his principals. At a time when whiskey was used most freely at all public gatherings, he refused to furnish it at his log rollings and in his harvest fields. To make up for this lack of refreshment, he paid the men an extra amount on the days wage. In 1817, William and James Jarrel from South Carolina settled in the Chambers neighborhood. They soon moved to a different locality. They were men of energy and thrift, such as were needed to endure the difficulties of making a home in a wilderness, and were unusually "well to do" for those times.

In 1820, the brothers Johnathan and Gabriel Cox, arrived from Kentucky. Johnathan was a member of the Baptist Church. He was a man of some education and filled the offices of Justice of the Peace and County Commissioner and also represented the County of Knox in the state Legislature. He was a professor of religion and as he grew in years, he more closely followed the Master. His death was caused by a fall from a wagon, while returning from church. The brother Gabriel lived for a few years in that first little church on the banks of Maria Creek. While living in that little church Austin Cox was born; he grew to young manhood, went through the Civil War, came home to live in Freelandville where he was Postmaster for some years. Gabriel Cox died at middle age, leaving a widow and eleven children. "Aunt Nancy", as she was always known, struggled lovingly and faithfully to keep and rear her children. This she accomplished well and lived to be very old, and was held in great respect by all who knew her.

Dr. John Freeland was born in Maryland in 1813. He was four years old when his father brought the family to Indiana. He remembered, with what great delight, he and a brother two years older planned to gather Maple sugar, when they reached Indiana. The brother was to climb the trees and shake it down while he, too little to climb, would gather it up.

The father bought land near Bloomington, where they lived until 1820, then they moved into the town. The children attended the school, two miles from their country home, having to walk through a dense dark woods. As this woods was infested with wild hogs it was necessary to have a man and a dog to take them to and from school. This was done by an old colored man who had come with the family from Maryland.

After a few years, the young man entered Indiana University. A few years later he attended the Louisville Medical School.

The first Freeland in America, Dr. Robert, came from England to Maryland in 1697. There has been doctors and surgeons in each generation since that time. Dr. Edward Freeland was a surgeon on the famous old ship Consitution.

While at the Medical School in Louisville he received a letter from Dr. Maxwell, who has been called the "Father of Indiana University." In this letter Dr. Maxwell said, "You will never be rich, John. You have too much of the milk of human

Kindness”.

Time and change finally brought Dr. Freeland to Widner Township, where he was an old time Country Doctor. At that time, it was greater to be an educated Country Doctor than to be a King.

He went through the country day and night without the least regard for the weather, for hardships or for pay, with his great heart full of devotion to suffering humanity whom he secured at the sacrifice of his own health and income. He denied himself of many comforts in order to give help to the unfortunate. In 1850, he was elected to the State Legislature where he served several terms. In 1862 he went into the Civil War as Captain of Company B 33 Regiment. On his return home he moved to Oaktown and resumed the practice of medicine.

Freeland was a member of the Methodist Church, a charter member of the Tri State Medical Society, a charter member of the Vincennes Commandery of Knights Templar, and a 33rd Degree Mason.

Dr. Freeland was one of whom it may be said, “he loved and served his fellowman, and his works follow him.”

CHAPTER V.

EARLIER INDUSTRIES

HOME INDUSTRIES. The pioneer women were the first manufacturers to be found within the boundaries of Indiana. They made all the clothing needed for their own family, and often did some weaving for their neighbors who could not afford a wheel.

A wheel wright was regarded as a public benefactor, as the “little wheel” and “big wheel,” made by him for spinning, were essential articles of household equipment and were operated with great skill by each pioneer mother and oldest daughter.

The only furniture which the early settlers had was made by the men. A rude bed was built in one corner of the room, on which were piled brush, corn husks, and animal skins, for bed clothes. The first table was usually a large chest, soon replaced by a rude table built in another corner of the room. It was built in another corner of the room. It was made something on the order of the bed. The top was made of thick boards made as smooth as possible with an ax. Logs and later three legged stools or rough four legged benches served as seats. A third corner of the room was occupied by two or more clapboards, placed one above the other on wooden pegs. In this primitive china cupboard were displayed pewter plates and a few china dishes, the hollow gourd forming the ordinary drinking cup. or dipper. The “little wheel,” used for spinning flax and the “big wheel” used for spinning wool filled the fourth corner.

The pioneers also made all of their own shoes, baskets, buckets and things like that. Henry Keith, an early settler of Freelandville was a cooper. He lived in the house where C. F. Volle now lives. The pioneers often made their own shoes out of cow hide which they tanned themselves. The children went barefoot most of the year to keep down the cost of shoes. Later on, every fall a person would go around through

the neighborhood and make shoes for each of the family.

One of the first stores known to have been in Freelandville was owned by Mr. Bierhaus in 1857. In 1886, Mr. Bierhaus sold half share to Mr. Baker. A few years later Mr. Baker sold out to Mr. Ritterskamp. The first building was made of logs and weather boarding. It stood on the east corner of the cross-roads. They also owned several warehouses on the same square. Later Mr. Ritterskamp bought the share of Mr. Bierhaus and built a clothing store near his grocery store. About this time Mr. Freeland owned what was then known as the Orphan's Home, but really was an old peoples home where several old people lived.

This "Orphan's Home" however did not last long.

The next growth to the town was the Hotel built by Mr. Wagner. This was the first hotel in Freelandville. This building is now the home of Mr. Sam Kixmiller. Mr. Wagner soon gave up the business of hotel keeper and Mr. Neal started one where J. M. Coffman's store now stands. The old town pump stood on the north side of this building and a new pump that has taken the place of the old one still stands on the same spot.

The first hardware dealer was Mr. H. L. Begeman. He had his store on the corner where Mr. Kirchoff now has his blacksmith shop. Mr. Begeman was also an undertaker and handled coffins and vaults, He also owned a hearse. His place of business burned down and never was rebuilt. The first meat market was owned by Mr. Mesh. It stood opposite Mr. C. Brook's Hotel. Mr. Tailor Lau owned the first barber and tailor shop. Both shops were in the same building but in different rooms. This building stood next to Mr. Ritterskamp's clothing store. In 1864, Mr. Ritterskamp and Mr. Baker built the first grist mill. It got its name (grist mill) because it was only used to grind corn which the people used for corn bread. On Sundays or on some special occasion they would buy wheat flour for wheat bread which was brought in from Vincennes and the larger places.

At one time Freelandville had a canning factory. It was owned by the farmers and business men. The factory was on a lot back of where Louis Kirchoff now lives: Here they canned tomatoes, corn and other vegetables. This factory ran for but a few years because of the lack of trade and great expense. We have also had two cheese factories. One owned by Mr. Fred Krueger stood one and one eight miles east of town. On account of the few ways to ship their cream and milk the farmers generally hauled it to the cheese factories. The other factory was located in town on the lot now owned by Mr. Criss Struckmeier. Both factories made different kinds of cheese and butter which were in return sold to the farmers and business men of the township. After the Bierhaus and Baker store burned down, another building was expected and owned by Meyer and Kirchoff. This was a general store and had many patrons. This second building burned down and later, a new building owned by Kirchoff and Dettering took its place.

BLACKSMITH SHOPS. One of the early blacksmith shops was owned by Mr. "Bill" Wagner, and one by Henry Lau. Henry Lau was also a gunsmith, and made guns for

most of the people of the community.

Curt M. Batt was the only man by trade to make and mend chairs. He made reed chairs and some of his chairs are still in existence.

There was a piano factory here for a year or two. It stood where Will Kirchoff now lives.

C. M. Coffman and F. Schmiedeskamp were two of our early contractors and builders. They did most of the carpentering done thirty or forty years ago. Mr. Schmiedeskamp is still in the business.

About the year of 1887, J. Ritterskamp & Son owned a general store where Mr. Kixmiller now has his store. A few years later Mr. Kixmiller bought the store and still is under the name of "S. H. Kixmiller."

In the past seventy or seventy-five years, Freelandville has been the home of five doctors. They are: Dr. Sinns, Dr. Alsop, Dr. McCauley who had his office where the Postoffice now stands, Dr. McDowel who practiced medicine here until his death a few years ago and Dr. R. H. Fox who still has his office here.

THE WIDNER STAR. The Widner Star was a paper published by E. C. Miller of Freelandville. The paper was printed in Freelandville and issued every Thursday. The subscription rates were \$1.00 per year paid in advance.

THE FREELANDVILLE COURANT. Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Freelandville Courant was issued June 28th, 1899. There were fifty-two issues of the publication, and then the publication was suspended June 20th, 1900.

The Courant was printed at Carlisle, Indiana, on the Carlisle News Press, and was sponsored by the members of the Freelandville M. E. church.

Ernest W. Heithecker was the editor.

For some time, a cabinet shop was run by horse power. They used an old blind horse named John, who walked round and round day after day.

There was a pottery here where they made all kinds of crocks, jars, jugs, and things like that. It was run by Martin Miller. He used the same kind of a potter's wheel that is mentioned in the Bible and is in use today in the largest factories.

SAW-MILLS. There was a sawmill located in the hollow behind the Christian church. Almost everyone around here had their sawing done there. One morning, as the engineer was getting up steam, the boiler bursted, and he was killed. His body was blown up against a pile of lumber, and was all torn to pieces.

There were many more sawmills started up around here but they ran for but awhile and then were shut down or moved to some other place.

GREEN-HOUSE. John Hummerich had a green-house where he lived. He kept all kinds of garden plants, flowers and vegetables. Mr. Hummerich was known for miles around as a good gardener. He ran his green-house until about 1910, when he became too old to take the proper care of it. No one else seemed to want to take it, so

they had it torn down.

BRICK YARD. One of the main things Freelandville used to be noted for, was the production of brick. Brick from here were sold all over the Southern part of Indiana. The yard was owned by Charles Meyer and was located on his farm, which is on the Freelandville-Edwardsport road, about one mile from town. He started the brick yard about 1875 and ran it until 1912.

In the past years Freelandville has had many restaurants. Before the prohibition law was passed the restaurants were generally connected with the saloons. Mr. John Wolf built the building where A. M. Berry's drug store now stands and started one of the first restaurants. A sign board put up by Mr. Wolf is still above the door of the drug store. Mr. Wolf sold out to Mr. John Deppe who in turn sold out to Mr. Baker. After Baker had it a year or two, Mr. Berry moved his drugs into the building where he still carries on business.

Mr. Alsop opened a restaurant where the pool room now stands. He did business for but a year or two and sold out to Oscar Harding and Maurice Fox. They moved the restaurant to where Mr. E. Wagner now has his tire and battery shop. After a few months of business they sold out to Mr. Albert McArthur and moved to the present place.

Mr. Burris owned a butcher shop for about six months and then moved to another town. His shop was in the lower half of the livery barn where the Allen electrical shop stood later.

Mr. French started the Peoples Bank October, 1917. It was a private bank with a capital of \$10,000. Mr. French bought up about \$30,000 or \$35,000 worth of Liberty Bonds. He had this bank where Wagner's Battery Station now is. Mr. French ran it until April 1921, when it was taken over by the Freelandville State Bank.

CHAPTER VI.

LATER INDUSTRIES

In a former chapter we discussed the early industries which have died cut. This chapter deals with the later industries. This takes in only the industries which now exist.

The greatest industry in Widner Township is farming which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Around Freelandville there are beds of clay which are especially well suited for the manufacture of soft brick and field tile. In fact, it was the manufacture of these articles which gave Freelandville considerable fame in the early days and the Freelandville field tile are still regarded as the best obtainable for miles around. The first kilns for the factory which now stands were built on the Old Ben Hummerich place with Mr. Hummerich as owner. At first this was a combination of tile and brick factory and was operated by horse power. Later steam power was installed and the

manufacture of brick was dropped. In 1914 Mr. Hummerich sold half interest to Mr. Henry Schuckman and the plant was moved to the present site which is near the western edge of town. A few years later, Mr. Schuckman bought full interest. He sold it to George Morford, John Koenig and John Wolfe. Mr. Morford and Mr. Koenig bought Wolfe out. Later Mr. Morford sold to Herschel Greene. In 1925 Mr. Greene bought Koenig out, now owning it by himself.

The first flour mill was built in 1880. This building burned down in July 1890. It was rebuilt in the fall of the same year. The owners as far back as can be traced were Mr. Dryman and Mr. Smitman. Later it went through the hands of the following: William Ritterskamp, Willis Robbins, George Winkler. Later several men bought it together. They were: S. H. Kixmiller, E. Berry, G. F. Osterhage, Fred Tellegman, and Fred Deepe. It went by the name of "Freelandville Milling Co." William Schulte bought it about 1915 and has owned it ever since. In 1922 electric power took the place of the steam power formerly used.

There are two cane presses in Widner Township. One is owned by Mr. Gotlieb Koenig and one by Mr. Henry Kixmiller. The one owned by Gotlieb Koenig is still operated by horse-power and was first owned by Albert Grabbe, Mr. Koenig bought it in 1918.

Three saw mills still exist here. One owned by Alfred Brock-smith. It started in 1906 and is still at the same place at the edge of town. Another belongs to Albert Grabbe which is moved from woods to woods. The third belongs to Ed. Mengedoht.

Two "chicken hatcheries" have grown up. One is owned by John Harting with a capacity of 2,200 eggs. The other is owned by C. F. Tiek with a capacity of 2,500 eggs.

THRESHING MACHINES. There are ten threshing machines in Widner Township. They are owned by: Ed. Mengedoht, Ben Brooks, Fred Begemen together with Henry Volle, Albert Grabbe, John Koenig, Wm. Brocksmith, Henry Trabant, Hagemeyer Bros., Alfred Brocksmith and one owned by the community in the northern part of the township.

GENERAL MERCHANDISE. S. H. Kixmiller, Heidenreich & Buescher and Schaefer Bros, own General merchandise stores in town.

Mr. Kixmiller has a good business with clothing, dry goods, shoes, and groceries. He has run it for a long time with the help of his son and several other clerks.

The store now owned by Heidenreich & Buescher was owned by Heidenreich Bros, for a while. Then in 1924 Mr. Buescher bought John Heidenreich's share of the store.

Alfred and Charles Schaefer own what is known as Schaefer Bros. Store. They have owned the store for many years, and run a good business.

Chas Pielemeier owns a grocery store started about a year ago.

GARAGES. J. C. Schuckman and W. C. Stoughton own garages in Freelandville.

Mr. Schuckman deals with Fords, Fordson's and Lincolns. He also has a good

general repair shop.

Mr. Stoughton, deals with Willys-Knight and Overlands. He also has storage room for cars and a repair shop.

BARBER SHOPS. There are three barber shops in town now.

They are owned by: P. H. Bluhm, Harry Clinkenbeard and R. S. Sickmeier.

RESTAURANT. There is one restaurant owned by Mr. McArthur.

BATTERY STATION. E. L. Wagner recently opened a battery station here. He also handles tires and accessories.

DRUG STORES. The drug store is owned by A. M. Berry & Co.

HARDWARE STORE. The following own Hardware stores, H. S. Pielemier, H. Buckthal's son and E. W. Pielemier.

POOL ROOM. A pool room is now owned by Bud Taylor.

JEWELRY STORE. A jewelry store and novelty shop is owned by J. M. Coffman who also has school supplies.

TAILOR. R. A. Weber is now the Freelandville tailor who has been here for many years.

MEAT MARKET. A meat market is owned by Robert Schlussler. Mr. Buescher also handles meat in Heidenreich and Buescher's store.

SHOE SHOPS. Mr. Marutz owns an electric shoe shop.

FREELANDVILLE BANK. The bank is operated by Mr. William Buescher, president, and Mr. Wandtke, Cashier.

THE THEATRE. The theatre was put up in 1925 by Mr. August Bohmeier and Mr. Pielemeier and goes by the name of the Knox theatre.

GREEN HOUSE. In 1924, Mr. William Bohmeier erected the first green house in Freelandville.

LUMBER YARD. The Lumber Yard was started in 1900 by G. F. Osterage. He first bought one car load of lumber, and stored it in the basement of his house, where Chas. Kirchoff now lives. Later he built the buildings which now stand and runs a very good business.

BLACKSMITH SHOPS. There are two blacksmith shops in town, owned by Walter Kirchoff and John Brandt. Both have been at the trade for many years.

There is one drilling outfit in Widner Township. It is owned by Alfred Brocksmith. He started to drill about 35 years ago.

DOCTORS. Dr. R. H. Fox has been practicing medicine here ever since his graduation from Medical College in 1900. Dr. E. W. Kirchoff has a dental office here

and is open for business on Monday and Tuesday.

DR. H. H. Yocum came here a few years ago and is our present veterinary.

MISCELLANEOUS. There are several paper hangers and painters some carpenters and quite a few who work in the coal mines.

COAL MINES. There is one coal mine in Widner Township. It is two and one half miles south of Freelandville. The mine is owned by Mrs. Sanders of Sandborn. C. J. Richardson is general manager.

CHAPTER VII.

WIDNER TOWNSHIP IN THE CIVIL WAR

There were no companies formed from Widner Township alone. However, approximately two hundred men enlisted from Widner Township. They joined at Edwardsport, Bicknell, Bruceville, or Vincennes. Some of the companies that the Widner Township men joined were: Company H. 51st Ind., Company G 120th Ind., and Company B 33rd Ind. At first each company elected its own Captain. Later on, captains were appointed by the Governor. Thomas F. Chambers of Freelandville was captain of Company H 51st Ind. Dr. John Freelands was captain of Company B 33rd Ind. The last draft was issued in 1864, but the effect was slight on the men from Knox County because any one who did not care to go might hire a substitute for \$402.

Although Morgan and his men didn't get this far, there was a constant fear of him and his men, who were raiding lower Indiana. Home Guards were organized under the leaderships of Captain Samuel McCormick. They made several arrests. Most of those who were arrested were deserters.

We were unable to get a complete record of Widner Township Civil War Veterans, but the following names were given to us. Some of these were residents of Widner Township at the time of the war; others moved in after the war; James Watson, Charles Meyrs, John Yocum, Matt. McArthur, C. Hamke, W. Richardson, A. Osterhage, W. Robbins, Sam Bowen, Joe Morford, Fred Telligman, W. McArthur, Horace Polk, Dr. John Freelands, and Thomas F. Chambers.

CHAPTER VIII.

WIDNER TOWNSHIP IN THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

But few men from Knox County were engaged in this war. Of those who did go, a far larger number suffered or died from disease than from enemy bullets. The war was not fought in an up-to-date way. The Spaniards called "Morroes" fought in a barbarous fashion. Most of their fighting, was done from behind bushes and trees, generally after night fall. These Morroes used nature's colors in their fighting. They oft times disguised themselves with leaves, grass and fought from the foliage of the trees.

As students of history know, not all the fighting of this war was done in Cuba, but in the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands as well as in others of the West Indies.

As far as we can determine, the following Widner Township boys were engaged in this war:

William Farise fought in the Philippines. Here he experienced the treachery mentioned above, when one of the enemy “sneaked up” on him while on guard and badly wounded him in the jaw with one of their ugly knives.

August Zurhide and Henry Crusey also served in this war. Mr. Crusey became a captain in the World War.

CHAPTER IX.

WIDNER TOWNSHIP IN THE WORLD WAR

War was declared by the United States against Germany, April 6, 1917. A few days later President Wilson called for volunteers for the period of war. The lighting spirit was aroused immediately throughout the township. A large flag pole about 75 feet long was placed on the west side of the St. Charles Hotel. A large silk flag was purchased which was raised each morning by Wayne Smith until his enlistment in the army. Directly after the call for volunteers, DeWitt Cummings, Milton Barlett, Dwight McCormick and Ben. Schroeder offered their services. These were among the first enlistments of the county. From that time on, man after man quit his work, left his wife, children, parents and home, to help fight a war of defense. Our rights were to be held sacred, for the President had declared our country neutral but on Feb. 1st Germany announced that she was going to start a world-wide submarine campaign. This we could not tolerate. Every effort that man could possibly extend was bent toward winning the war, toward comforting and encouraging our soldier boys. Those left at home, purchased loans and bonds from the government, worked every spot of land available and sacrificed many pleasures of living so that “Old Glory” might be preserved.

The following are the soldiers of the World War that went from Widner township:

John Pielemeier, Albert E. Pepmeier, Julius Peiper, Godfrey H. Ritterskamp, deceased, Fred Roy T. Robbins, Gus Sager, Henry Sager, Benjamin Schroeder, Arnold Schroeder, Walter Schuckman, Wayne H. Smith, deceased, Wilbur E. Strate, Wesley Toney, Paul Trabant, Wm. C. Unverferth, Benson Watson, Clarence J. Wagner. Edwin Brandt, Frank Brandt, Carl Struckmeyer Paul Jarrel, Goldie Jarrel, Paul H. Humbaugh, Louis Kixmiller, Jr., Albert McArthur, Ernest Limper, Henry Limper, deceased, Landville Mengedoht, Louis H. Papenloehr, Barney Orndorff, Thomas E. Orndorif, Kenneth Robbins, Walter Ritterskamp, Henry F. Snyder, John Schuckman, Louis W. Schaefer, Carl Albrecht, Otto Albrecht, D. T. Cummings, Felix Emmons, Emil Freyhoff, Wm. Dickman, Henry Finke, Edward C. Deppe, John F. Harting, Milton Barlett, Lewis Baker, Fred Held, Edward Held, Floyd E. Jackson. Carl Kixmiller, Lewis Kroeger, Edwin J. Kroeger, Theodore Koenig, Dwight

McCormick, Julius S. Meyers, Ernest L. Osterhage, Wm. Niewald, Welker Robbins, John Trabant, Emil Rinsch, August Boberg, Ernest Tilly, Roscoe McArthur, Harry Clinkenbeard, Fred Struckmeier, William Berger, Louis Grabbe, William Hart, Julius Koenig and Gottlieb Volle. This list is as nearly complete as we could possible make it.

Mr. Charles A. Pielemeier was appointed to fill out Questionnaires by the County Questionnaire committee. Mr. Pielemeier filled out ninety or more Questionnaires. A questionnaire is a list of questions which every man who desired to enlist or was drafted had to answer.

LIBERTY BONDS. When we entered the war, the government was very poorly equipped for war; there were few ships to carry American products to foreign ports; so they piled up at our ports and there was a scant supply of ammunition to make a start in war. In short, the United States was not ready for war. Directly after war was declared, President Wilson called for loans from the citizens. The first issue of Liberty loans did not reach Widner township. Most of these bonds were bought by large banks. The second issue of bonds did not touch the individuals of the district. However, the Freelandville Bank through a mere accident was able to purchase two thousand dollars worth.

The third call for Liberty loans was the first to reach the citizens of this township. The Widner township quota was \$30,000.00. Of this issue the Freelandville Bank bought approximately \$7,000.00 worth.

The fourth Liberty Loan went several thousand dollars over the top. This was the largest amount secured in loans. It is estimated that \$56,000.00 worth of bonds were sold here. The Freelandville Bank bought nearly \$6,000.00 worth.

The last issue was called Victory Bonds. Of this issue, the Freelandville Bank purchased ten thousand dollars worth. The amount of bonds sold in the township totaled nearly \$40,000.

The selling of the bonds during the World War was done in a very systematic way. The township was divided into sections, and enough men were authorized to sell loans so that within a days time, the township could be solicited. The following men were appointed to sell bonds: John Wolfe, H. J. Schroeder, J. C. Shuckman, H. S. Pielemeier, H. F. Volle, Ed. Brocksmith, J. F. Osterhage, A. M. Berry, J. P. Meier, Alfred Reel, Dr. McCammon, Riley Hall, H. H. Hickmon, George Surip, Henry Telligman.

This list might not be accurate but it is the best possible list that could be secured.

It was estimated that the Peoples' Bank, which was then managed by Mr. Joe French handled \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00 worth of loans. This bank was merged with the Freelandville Bank April, 1921.

We, as people of Widner township should be very grateful to the local banks for the part they took in helping win the war. All loans and bonds which were purchased went through the hands of one of the banks which caused them a great deal of extra

work. The bankers had to work the greater part of many nights to keep up with their work and keep records in shape.

Red Cross meetings were held at different times and the town was canvassed for donations. At one meeting \$790 was donated. Much interest was manifested in the Red Cross work throughout the war.

THE WAR MOTHERS. The organization known as the "War Mothers" of Widner township was formed in the spring of 1918. Any woman who had a son or husband in the service was eligible to membership.

The meeting's were held monthly; knitting for the boys was the principle line of work, but other lines of work were also carried on, such as writing letters of encouragement and cheer to boys who had no near relatives.

The mothers made a service flag which contained seventy-six stars, each star representing a boy in service. On it were two gold stars, representing the boys who made the supreme sacrifice, Wayne Smith and Henry Limper. Two silver stars which represented the boys who were wounded, Henry A. Sager and Dwight McCormick. This flag was hung in the Public School building in Freelandville. The mothers also presented a large American flag to the Legion boys.

In June, 1918, the War Mothers were organized into the Legion Auxiliary with Mrs. James Watson, Mrs. John Osterhage, Mrs. Ernest Tilly, Mrs. Louisa Ritterskamp, Mrs. Lillie McCormick, Miss Ruth Cummins, Miss Mabel Cummins, Mrs. Will Wagner, Mrs. John Harting and Miss Agnes Watson as charter members.

EFFECTS OF WAR ON THIS COMMUNITY. The Federal Food Administrator of Indiana issued rules and regulations to all food dealers. The restrictions became more stringent as the war progressed. On July 1, 1918, orders were issued that only two pounds of sugar per month could be allotted to each person. Each dealer was ordered to compile a record of each customer and the members of that family and to keep record of each pound of sugar sold. The dealers were compelled to secure sugar certificates before they could purchase sugar from wholesale houses. Application blanks for purchasers of sugar were secured at C. C. Winkler's office at Vincennes. Mr. Winkler was the Federal Food Administrator of Knox county.

All constant users of wheat flour had a hard time adapting themselves to corn bread, rye and other substitutes which were sold

with each pound of wheat flour. The allowance of wheat flour was 1 1/2 pounds per week per capita, and not more than 30 days supply at one time could be secured. The substitutes were: Corn meal, Barley Flour, Buckwheat Flour, Rice. Potato Flour, Hominy, Oat Meal, Soja Bean Flour, Corn Grits, Rolled Oats and Feterita Flours and Meals.

All dealers who handled eggs had to secure licenses.

Regulations concerning the use of beef and by-products were as follows:

1. Hot or cold beef to be served only on each Monday at the mid-day meal.
2. Boiled or stewed beef or corned beef hash, to be served only on each Wednesday and Saturday, at the mid-day meal.
3. Beef steaks in any form, including hamburger steak to be served only on each Thursday at the mid-day meal.
4. By-products of beef, such as ox tails, liver, tongues, sweet breads, hearts, kidneys, beans and tripe may be served any time.

Any licensed dealer who did not comply with this order had his license revoked. Notice was given to the public and all supplies were to be stopped.

Householders were asked, not under any circumstances, to buy more than one and one quarter pound of clear beef weekly, or one and one-half pounds including the bone, per person in the household.

Beef was not supplied for threshing dinners.

A direct war tax was imposed upon the people on many articles and pleasures. On all fountain drinks was placed a tax varying from 2 to 5 cents. A tax was placed on shows, gasoline and others.

A gasoline ban existed for a time, owners of automobiles were only allotted so much and no gasoline could be purchased on Sundays.

THE ARMISTICE. The news that the Armistice was signed, bringing a stop to fighting for the time, flashed over the nation like lightning. About four A. M. November the twelfth the steam whistles of the town were blown, the church bells were rung, echoing their peals of victory over the country wide and all hearts rejoiced. That day a large celebration was staged. Guns were shot, flags were waved, speeches delivered and patriotic songs were sung, and the hostile spirit held against our enemy was on the decline.

Then followed the grand reception on the return of our soldiers. It is sad that we must record that two of our young Americans did not return. Wayne Smith and Henry Limper were the "Braves" of Widner who gave their lives for the preservation of "Old Glory" and her rights.

Some months after the war closed the remains of our deceased soldier boy, Wayne were taken from Flanders Fields and was laid to rest under the Stars and Stripes. He was buried in the family lot of the Christian cemetery. Our other "hero," Henry is still resting in France. However, a military funeral was given at the Bethel Evangelical church and a cross was placed in the Bethel Burial grounds to his honor.

THE AMERICAN LEGION. The American Legion was founded in 1919. Most of the principles of the organization were drawn from the French Legion. The American Legion exists to care for all disabled soldiers and their dependents; to protect all American citizens, their interests here and abroad, to see that care is taken of the graves of the boys buried over there, and help make better and more loyal citizens.

A state convention is held annually. Each "Post," as the local organizations are called may send two delegates. At these conventions, committees are appointed to go before the state legislature and various boards to promote reform measures which the convention has sponsored.

At times of disaster or social unrest, the Legion is often called upon for aid. At the time of the terrible cyclone that struck lower Indiana, Illinois and other states, the Legion was asked to keep order, to sponsor the soliciting of donations and to help in the rescue work.

The Local Post, 176, has been the most active organization of the town. These boys purchased the old "Ben Hur" hall in which meetings were held regularly. It was necessary that money should be secured to keep up payments on the hall and equipment; so the Legion boys sponsored dances and a box supper or two. They also presented a play called the "Gold Bug." Within three years, the Post 176 was out of debt and was enjoying the pleasures of a independent organization.

Each Post annually elects the Post Commander, the Vice-Commander, the Adjutant and the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is composed of three members who settle all matters that can not be agreed upon by the members. The Commanders of Post 176 have been, Basil Byrne, D. T. Cummings, Edward Deppe, Albert McArthur, Walter Ritterskamp, Earnest Wagner, Theodore Koenig and Henry Snyder.

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

WAYNE HILL SMITH. Son of Charles and Alice Smith; born June 3, 1899 at Freelandville, Knox County, Indiana; graduate of Freelandville High School; clerk in a general merchandise store; enlisted in Medical Corps, June 11, 1918, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.; sailed for France September 4, 1918; taken to American Hospital at Noyers, France, where he died of spinal meningitis October 15, 1918 ; buried in the American cemetery, Noyers, France; brought to Freelandville November 7, 1920; re-buried in Christian church cemetery November 9, 1920.

HENRY LIMPER. Son of Rev. H. and Anna Limper; born November 30, 1894 Salina, Kans.; moved to Knox County, Indiana in 1912; entered service in June, 1918, Junction City, Kans.; overseas in August, 1918; died of pneumonia October 3, 1918, Belfort, France.

CHAPTER X.

CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

By the fall of 1805, there had settled in Widner Township several families. As there were no churches here at that time, a Methodist minister named Winans, who lived at Vincennes came to the home of John Widner and held church services in his house. The services were held once a month for several years. When the Rev. Mr. Winans was unable to continue in these services, he was followed by the Rev. Mr. Walles, also of Vincennes.

Before any of the churches were built, the bodies of the dead were laid to rest in family cemeteries. Many of these cemeteries are scattered over the township and some of the inscriptions on the tombstones can still be read.

THE MARIA CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH. The Maria Creek Baptist Church is one of the oldest Baptist Churches in the state of Indiana, is the oldest Protestant church in Knox county, and is now the oldest Baptist church in the state that has continuous existence.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the hardy pioneers began to push their way from Kentucky and the Eastern States into this part of the Indiana Territory, there were among them a number of Baptist people. As these people had been accustomed to attending church, they decided to organize one of their own. On the 20th day of May 1809, they, with the assistance of Elder Alexander Diven, from Columbia a little village on the Patoka river, and Elder James McQuaid, from Kentucky, organized the Maria Creek Church in the home of John Lemon.

There were thirteen members that entered into that organization, namely: Samuel Allison, Phoebe Allison, Charles Polke, Sr., Charles Polke, Jr., Margaret Polke, Achsah Polke, William Polke, Sally Polke, John Lemon, Polly Lemon, William Bruce, Sally Bruce and John Morris (colored).

Samuel Allison, Phoebe Allison and John Morris lived on the west side of the Wabash River, in Illinois Territory.

In the year 1810, they erected a small log church, 20x24, along Maria Creek, on a farm which was then owned by Charles Polke. They had school as well as church in this building.

At the third meeting of the church Isaac McCoy, then a member of the Silver Creek church, Clark County, who held a license to preach, was invited to visit and preach for the members. Sometime in the latter part of the year 1809, he removed to Maria Creek and became pastor of the Maria Creek church. In January 1810, he united by letter with the church.

During the meeting in October 1810, the church received her first convert, Elizabeth Chambers. She was not baptized at that time. In the same, meeting Joseph Listen and his wife were received and baptized into the church.

By the year of 1821, the church had become too small to accommodate the members and a new brick church was built on the Charles Polke, Jr., place. They held services in this church until the year of 1841, when the Edwardsport church was organized. The Maria Creek Church was then moved to the present site.

The first Maria Creek Baptist cemetery was located near the site of the first church house. There are no remains of the first log church, and all the grave stones have disappeared save those marking the grave of Charles Polke, Sr. These stones were rearranged and a concrete slab was placed over the grave by the Horace Polk of Oaktown. The slab bears the following inscription:

Sacred to the Memory of
CAPT. CHARLES POLKE
Died Oct. 11th 1823
78 yrs., 8 mo., 9 days,

He died in the hope of a Happy
Immortality

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord
A charter member of the Maria Creek Baptist Church
Organized May 20th 1809
Erected 1810 Near This Spot
1924

The Chambers Cemetery is the present burying ground of the Maria Creek Church. The ground on which the cemetery is located was given to the church by Joseph Chambers and that is how it got its name.

THE METHOD ST CHURCH. The Methodist Church was the fourth church to be organized in Widner Township. The conditions under which it was organized were about like those of the other churches in the Township. There were Methodist people who were living away from their home churches and thought it best to organize one in Freelandville.

The church was organized in June 1875, and the meetings were held in the homes for a short time. A few months later, Dr. Freeland purchased the old frame school building and the ground belonging to it, and gave it to the Trustees of the church.

There were twelve members who entered into this organization, namely: Shelton Johnson, John Johnson, Elvera Johnson, Mrs. Lake and her daughter Kit Lake, Mrs. Emmiline Smith, Dr. Freeland and his family, and Mrs. Ann Robbins, Mrs. Brentlinger and her family joined a few months later.

The Rev. J. B. Asbury became the minister when the church was organized, and preached for one year as a supply minister. In 1876, their first regular minister came. He was the Rev. J. Murphy, a very young man who had this church as his first work.

In 1902, as the membership of the church had grown so much, it was decided to erect a new brick building, which would be much larger than the old school building. The old school was torn down, and while the new church was being built, the meetings were held in the school building where the present school stands.

The church was dedicated in the latter part of the year 1902, and they are holding services in it at the present time.

The Methodist Church has no cemetery.

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH. The Bethel Evangelical Church was organized in the fall of 1847, when the Rev. H. Toelke came up from Evansville to organize a church for a number of German families, who had a few years previously, settled in the wild woods and around the swamps of Northern Knox County. These settlers

dissatisfied with living conditions had come from Germany hoping to enjoy the fruits of their labors in the New World. Some had come from very comfortable circumstances and were much disappointed when they arrived.

The charter members of this organization were H. Viehe, Chas. Schaefer, J. Hammelman, C. Detering, H. Wagner, C. Mesch, W. Kirchoff, Wm. Niewald, Chas. Meier, Brother Grote and H. Silger.

In the year of 1848, H. Wagner gave one-half of an acre of land to the members of the church. A small log church 20x25 was built on this plot of ground and was given the name of "Bethlehem."

Gradually, the number of settlers grew and the log church became too small for their gatherings. In 1851 a finer and more commodious church was built. After the log parsonage had been destroyed by fire, a new brick parsonage was added.

In 1858, the congregation was again visited by misfortune, and the new church was consumed by flames. A still larger and better church was built in 1859. Twice afterwards the steeple on the church was struck by lightning and the second time required rebuilding.

In 1878, the congregation erected the present brick parsonage. At the beginning of the new century, 1900-1901, the present church was erected, equiped with a pipe organ and a large bell. The bell is about six feet high and about four feet in diameter. It has a wonderful tone and can be heard many miles away.

Twenty-four persons have gone out from this church as Teachers, Preachers and Missionaries.

Many years ago a large sun dial stood across the road from the Evangelical church. The dial was about two feet in diameter and stood on a pedestal about four feet high. As there were only a few clocks at that time, many people made several trips daily out to the dial to get the correct time.

At the time the church was organized, a plot of ground was purchased from Mr. Volle, for the cemetery. This ground is back of the parsonage. At first, all were buried in rows and all had the same kind of wooden markers. The newer part of the cemetery is divided into family lots.

THE UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH. By the year 1878, there had collected in and about Freelandville several German families, whose religious ideas were somewhat different from those of the members of the Evangelical church. After several months of careful study, it was decided to organize a new church.

About that time, there happened to be in Freelandville a book agent from Indianapolis, who was very much interested in the affairs of the United Brethern church of that place. In talking to some of the people, it was decided that he should send one of his friends, the Rev. J. Ernst, of Indianapolis, down to Freelandville to organize a church.

The ground which is the present church site, was purchased in the same year

1878, from Dr. John T. Freeland. It was purchased by a few men who were interested in organizing a church.

When the Rev. J. Ernst arrived it was decided to organize the church and to give it the name of United Brethren. That was in the latter part of the year 1878. There were twelve charter members, namely: Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Dreiman, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Dreiman, Mr. and Mrs. John Yocum, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Albert, Mrs. H. F. Albert, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lane and Mr. and Mrs. William Droste.

The Rev. J. Ernst became the minister and the regular Sunday services were held in the afternoon, at the Methodist Church one Sunday and at the Christian church the next.

At the beginning of the new year 1879, it was decided that they build a church on the lot they had purchased from Dr. Freeland. The present church is the one which was erected at that time .

The United Brethren cemetery is located a short distance from the church, on Indiana Street. Quite a number of Methodist families have lots in this cemetery.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The Christian Church was organized in the old School Building which stood where the Methodist Church now is, December 19, 1869. It, like most of the other churches was organized by a band of people who were living away from their home churches.

The church was organized by the Rev. Joseph W. Wolfe, of Shaker Prarie, and James A. Chowning. The meetings were held for about three years in the old School Building.

There were sixty-two charter members of this church. Some of them were, Mr. and Mrs. James Blevins, Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Begeman, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Cox, Mr. A. J. Conley, Felix Faught, Jacob Faught, William and Elizabeth Hooper, August Begeman, T. M. Bicknell, Samuel H. and Mary Benett, Jacob Shake, Samuel French, James A. Chowning and Margaret and Mary Faught.

The ground on which the church is built was given to the members by Joseph W. Wolfe in the year 1871. In 1872 a new brick church was built. The church was dedicated in the latter part of the year and at the present time they are holding services in that building.

The lot adjoining the church, which is now the cemetery, contains about one and one-half acres. It was given to the church by Mr. H. L. Begeman and Mr. A. P. Cox. Samuel L. Faught was the first person to be buried in this cemetery.

THE FAIRVIEW CHURCH. The Fairview Church is a small United Bretheren church located about seven miles northwest of Freelandville.

This church was organized in the year 1898 by some people who lived too far from town to attend all of the church services. As they had no church building, the meetings were held in the neighborhood School house.

There were twenty-five people who entered this church at the time of the organization. Among those twenty-five members were Mr. and Mrs. William A. Phillippe, Mr. and Mrs. James Orndorff, Flora Harbor and Charles Ridgway.

The ground on which the church is built, was given to the members of the church by Mr. William A. Phillippe in 1899, and the church, a frame structure, was erected at that time.

Up to the present date, there has never been a time since the church was built that there has not been Sunday School, Prayer Meeting, and Preaching Services at the regular time.

This church has no cemetery.

THE MORRIS CHAPEL CHURCH. The Morris Chapel Church is a small Methodist church located about six miles northwest of Freelandville on the Freelandville and Oaktown road.

According to the best available information, this church was organized by Abraham Miller in the year 1818. Mr. Miller came from Jefferson county, Kentucky and settled on a tract of land which he bought from William Taylor. Most of the people in that neighborhood were Methodists and they thought it best to organize the "Methodist Society," as it was then called.

The first members of the Methodist Society were Abraham Miller, Martha Miller, Samuel Miller, Maria Miller, Anna Miller, Warren Pierce, Mary Coughman, Nicolas Davis and Lavina Davis. The Rev. Aron Wood became the first minister and the meetings were held in the homes for many years.

Many years after the organization of the Methodist Society, (the exact date could not be found) a church was built and it was given the name of Morris Chapel. The church was built on the ground which was purchased from Mr. Robert Miller. The fund for the building of the church was started by the Rev. Mr. Teverbaugh, a local Methodist minister, when on his deathbed, he willed one hundred dollars as a starter for a Methodist Church. The present church, a frame structure, was erected in 1894.

The cemetery, which is located back of the church, was given to the members by Mr. Robert Miller before the church was built.

THE MARIA CREEK CHRISTIAN CHURCH. About the year of 1818, or 1819, a Missionary Controversy came up in the Maria Creek Baptist Church, and the Anti-Missionary people withdrew from the church. Sometime between that year and the year 1833, (the exact date was not found) these people organized a new church and called it the Maria Creek Christian Church.

There were about twelve members who entered into this organization. Mr. Jim Polke was one of the charter members and took a great interest in the church work.

The church prospered for many years and then the members began to dwindle away. When there were only a few left it was decided to reorganize the church. This was done January the 28th, 1870. At this time there were about fifty enrolled

members.

In the fall of 1876, the church was destroyed by fire. It was supposed to have been the work of an incendiary. A new church was built in the latter part of the year 1879, and was dedicated February 29, 1880. This building was also destroyed by fire October 8, 1899. It was on a Sunday morning and the fire was beyond control when the members arrived for the service. They immediately went to work, and amid the smoking ruins, money was pledged and plans were made for a new building. The new church was dedicated April 29, 1900.

The Maria Creek Christian Church, commonly known as the "Frame Church," is located on Maria Creek a short distance from the point where the Oaktown and Bicknell road crosses the creek.

A well-kept cemetery adjoins the church lot. Here rests the mortal remains of Thomas Piety whom some of the old records state, was the first white child born west of the Alleghainies in the Northwest Territory. Others make a more modest claim; that he was the first white child born west of the Mississippi river.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS. From the year 1873 to the time the Christian Church was built, there was a Union Sunday School held at the old school house, where the Methodist Church now stands. After the Christian Church was established, their Sunday School was a separate organization, but all the Young People went to both.

They attended the Christian Sunday School in the morning and the Union in the afternoon. During the winter when the roads were impassable the Baptist members attended the Union.

MISSIONARIES AND MISSIONARY SOCIETIES. The earliest Foreign Missionaries to go out from Widner Township were "Tom Jeff" Keith, who went from the Baptist Church, and Morton Adams, from the Maria Creek Christian Church.

Many home Missionaries have also been sent out from Widner.

Isaac McCoy, a member of the Baptist church, was a missionary to the Indians. He established an Indian Industrial School where the girls were taught to keep house, cook, sew, weave and spin, and the boys were taught to farm.

Before any of the Missionary Societies were organized, there was a "Mite Society" organized by Mrs. T. Bicknell. This society was a union of all of the churches. It met once a month in the different homes and the members spent the time in music and playing games. Each member gave a small amount of money which was divided equally among the churches.

Most of the churches now have separate missionary societies and the members of the Township are doing a great work in that field.

CHAPTER XI.

SCHOOLS AND ALUMNI

The first school in Widner Township was taught in 1808 on the land of John

Widner. One of the rooms of the home of John Widner was used as a school room. The first teachers that taught here were Joseph Ramsford and Joseph Heldt.

In the year 1810, when the Maria Creek church was built, the church was immediately used as a school also, and the pupils which had previously attended school at the John Widner home now went to school at the Maria Creek church.

Some years later a one room log school building was built. This building stood about a half mile south of Freelandville on the ground where the present electric light sub-station is located. This school building had no windows of glass but long sheets of greased paper were nailed over the openings and this was the only means of light that these log schools had. At one end of the room was a large open fire place in front of which was a large log upon which the scholars would sit in order to keep warm. As it would be impossible for them all to get to the fireplace and warm at the same time, they would take turns. In these early days the scholars had no desks but some rough heavy boards were placed upon some projections which extended from the log wall, and they would sit upon small chunks of wood. For writing they used pens made of goose quills, and their ink was made from poke berries. The first teacher in this school was Mr. Mayfield, Mr. Jacob Smith was trustee at this time. When this school was torn down the logs were used to build the barn on the old Weitzel place now belonging to the Charles Meier farm.

The first school building that was built in Freelandville was a frame school located where the Methodist church now stands. Mr. William Bowen was the first teacher and Mrs. Lottie Bicknell also taught school here for quite a number of years. In 1874, Dr. Freeland, the first resident of Freelandville, bought this school building used as a church.

In 1874 a three roomed two story brick building was erected where the present school is located. There were two rooms on the first floor and one large room on the second floor. Mr. Thomas Chambers was trustee when this building was built. The grades were taught by three teachers. One teacher teaching the first and second called the primary grades; the second teacher taught the third and fourth called the intermediate grades; and the third teacher teaching the remaining grades in the large room on the second floor.

In 1901 an annex was built in front of the old building by Henry Detering who was trustee at the time. Six rooms were added to the old building. In 1910 this building was condemned for the reason that the furnace was just beneath the stairway causing it to be very dangerous. In 1912 the present building was erected, supervised by R. H. Fox who was trustee. This building is now becoming too small and a new building is necessary.

The new building will be built this summer. Although Freelandville schools had been housed in a very good building, they have gradually become more and more crowded until it has become necessary to provide more room. When the building we now use was built in 1912, few of the people could foresee that it would ever become overcrowded. But the times have changed. One by one, the old fashioned one room

schools were abandoned, and the pupils were brought in to become a part of Widner Township Consolidated Schools. At first, but three rooms were necessary to house the grade pupils, then nine. Then the seventh and eighth, grades became too large to be handled properly in one room for each grade, so they were departmentalized.

All this time the High School was steadily growing. With the raising of the compulsory school age from fourteen to sixteen a large number of pupils were required to remain in school and with the growing popularity of the high school, a larger number contrived to remain after they had reached sixteen and completed the course.

Perhaps it is not generally known that in recent years Freelandville has had the largest high school, with the exception of Bicknell and Vincennes, in the county. In the last few years it has been a great problem to provide for all the classes in the building. In fact, it was thought that it would be necessary to rent a room outside of the building in which to house a part of the school for the present school year. But, by ingenious shifting and crowding, we have managed to get along for this year.

Realizing his responsibility, our trustee, Mr. C. F. Smith, has planned for some time to relieve the situation. But with his characteristic careful forethought, he has not acted until the needs and possibilities had been considered from every angle. At first, it was thought advisable to build a separate building for the High School. However, this would not be the best economy, for the present building, though to small for the whole system, does contain more room than would be needed for the grades. Then too, a system of this size operating under one head, can be administered more efficiently and more economically in one building. One heating plant is sufficient. One janitor with some help in sweeping and cleaning is enough. Much of the equipment can be used by both grades and High School. And finally one principal can administer a school much better in one building than in two buildings.

In addition to more class room space the plans of the new building call for a gym-auditorium both of which are much needed. The new auditorium will be ample large for all occasions.

During the past year, athletics have been existing under difficulties. A basketball team, practicing and playing away from home has been kept alive, and has made a record which is really remarkable considering the difficulties under which the boys have had to work. With the completion of a new gym, all the students of the school will have an opportunity to share the benefit of physical culture, which should have its place in a well rounded course of study.

In the year of 1874 there were ten schools in Widner Township, and they were known by numbers or district. These schools were taught by twelve teachers. All of these country schools have been abandoned except three. They are the "Frame School," "Chambers School," and "San Hedrin" School.

The schools were numbered in the following order:

No.	1	“Starner” School.
No.	2	“Light” School.
No.	3	“Frame” School.
No.	4	“Chambers” School.
No.	5	“Shake Rag” School.
No.	6	“Brocksmitth” School.
No.	7	“Freelandville” School.
No.	8	“Ruble” School.
No.	9	“San Hedrin” School.
No.	10	“Risley” School afterward “Strate” School was known as No. 10.

No 1. **STARNER SCHOOL.** The Starner school was built on the Freelandville and Oaktown road on a corner of John Starner’s place. The school was named after John Starner because it was built on his land. The first building was a brick building and was built in 1861. This building burned down in the year 1901 and a frame building was erected on the same site. In 1914 this school was abandoned, and the pupils attending school here were transfered to Freelandville. After the school was abandoned, the building was sold and made into a dwelling house.

Some of the teachers of this school were: Ira Baker, Horatio.Baker, Hattie Polk, Irene Bartley, Mollie Starner, Flora (Warber) McArthur, Cora Scott, Lizzie Scott, Maggie Scott, Mary Scott, Elizabeth Ashley, Doc. Leveroning, Frank Shepherd, Joe French, Robert McClung, Agnes Chambers, and Ruth Smith.

School attendance in the earlier days was as high as forty and later on it dropped down to a dozen.

No. 2. LIGHT SCHOOL. The Light School was located on the Light farm from whence it received its name. The farm is now known as the B. L. Dunkerly farm. There were two buildings one of which is still standing. The first was a frame structure which was built about seventy-five years ago, the latter a brick building was built on a different site about one-fourth of a mile north of the site of the first building. This school was abandoned about eighteen or twenty years ago. The pupils were transferred to Oaktown and the remaining to the Freelandville school. Some of the earliest teachers of this school were: Print Polk, Flora Faught, Ben Scott, W. C. Bowen, J. F. Nicoson, Alvira Walker, Joseph French, Walter Buckthal, Ed Koch, Nettie Hill, Louis Koch, Lillie Willis, Ora McArthur, Dee Polk, Mollie Starner, Nettie Bartley, George Cleveland,

Elvin Bowen, Ora Robbins, Lizzie Ashley, Mary Scott, and Ed. Deppe.

No. 3. FRAME SCHOOL. The very first building was one constructed of brick on the same site as the present building. In 1886 the second brick building was built but after a number of years this building became too small and in 1907 this brick building was torn down and the present frame building was erected. Alex Berry was trustee at the time. Mr. Carl F. Volle and Mr. Herman Schroeder were the contractors, two men who assisted them in building the school were Minor Bartlett and August Papenlohr. Otto C. Meier did the painting. This building was completed the same year and school was opened in the fall. This is a large one room building 24x40 with a six foot entry.

This is one of the schools that has not as yet been abandoned. A list of the different people who have taught at this school are: Helen (Ritterskamp) Osborne, Lula Horton, Myrtle (Smith) Kirchoff, Viora Morford, Daisy Standley, Orrie Robbins, Will Unverferth, Mable Bowen, John Pielemeier, Harry Smith. Ruth Risley, Vera Hurst, Lena (Kirk) Fore, Hershel Green, Vina Hollingsworth, Sam Ross, Hannah Wolfe, Ed Lemon, Nellie McArthur, Mort Cox, Albert Rinsch, Amanda (Pepmeier) Berry, Helen Kirchoff—who is teaching there at present.

No. 4. THE CHAMBERS SCHOOL. The Chambers school received its name from the people who donated the ground for the building. The first school house of this community stood between where Emil Deppe and Walter Jones now live, just half way between these two farms. This was a log school which burned later. Some of the early scholars of this school were Joseph, Albert, Eli, and Alex Chambers, Warren, Benjamin, John and Henry Keith, and some of the Polks. One of the teachers of this school was Uncle Jimmie Polk, the father of Horace Polk. An interesting little story in connection with this little school house was told by Mrs. Lilly McCormick:

“While I was living there, Mr. B. F. Kieth and J. H. Chambers were visiting at my house, and they pointed out the spot where their first school days were spent. Dr. B. F. Keith, then an old man said, When I was a boy, my father owned what is now the Walter Koch farm, and I had to go alone through the brush and rose brier thickets back to this little school house. One morning, on my way to school a wolf gave me a chase, while running, I lost the lid of my dinner bucket. So at noon, all the boys and myself aimed ourselves with clubs and set out to hunt the lid of the dinner bucket. We found the lid but saw nothing of the wolf.”

The next school building stood near where the Maria Creek Baptist church now stands. This was also a log school which burned later. Some of the scholars who attended this school are still living. They are: Winfield Kieth, Maggie Kieth and Newt. Chambers.

The third building was more centrally located by placing it where the present building now stands. Before the brick building was erected, Belle Lilly taught school in a vacant dwelling where Mrs. Louisa Pepmeier now lives. This building, made of brick, was built in 1857. In 1900, the second brick building was erected because there was great need of a new school building. It was built by G. F. Osterhage. Henry Detering supervised the building of this school as he was trustee at that time. Some

years later, this building was burned by fire, so it was petitioned to build a new building. This was built in 1920 and is the present building. The builders of this school were John Schaefer and William Grabbe. Charles Smith supervised the work since he was trustee at that time. Some of the earliest teachers were: Jane Webber, Milas Hooper, John P. Robinson, Mrs. Lottie Bicknell, and Mrs. Sallie Bicknell,

Helen Kirchoff and Leona Schaefer also taught here. At present, Irvin Marutz is teaching at Chambers school.

No. 5. "SHAKE RAG" SCHOOL. The Shake Rag school was located on the farm of Moses Robbins about two miles west of Freelandville. The first building erected was a log cabin. The ground upon which the school was built, was given to Widner Township by Mr. Moses Robbins. The school received the name of Shake Rag from a very peculiar incident. In those days the people had no telephones so they had no means of leaving the people know when they wished to commence school. There happened to be a very tall tree close to the school, a large rag was tied in the top of this tree, this designated that there would be school. When the log school was completed this large rag was placed at the top of a high pole which had been planted especially for that purpose. In this way it happened to be called Shake Rag. Some years later a new brick building was erected and after that grew too small the second brick building was built.

The school was called Shake Rag for many years, but one year this school had an enrollment of thirty-live pupils, twenty-eight of which were "Robbins" and from that time forth it was called the Robbins school. This was one of the first schools of Widner Township which was abandoned. It has been abandoned about twenty- five or thirty years. Some of the teachers were: Angeline Woods, Bill Starner, William. Bowen, John Linn, Dr. John Freeland now living in Bedford, Dr. John Berry, Joe French, John Rogers, Josie Hammock, Dee (Polk) Walker, Joe French, Lydia Kahre, Ruth Siminon.

No. 6. "BROCKSMITH" SCHOOL. The Brocksmith school or Tweeta school as it was first called was built on the Tweeta farm and received its name from that. The first building was a one room log cabin. Here they had school for many years until a new frame building was erected. This frame building had a bell on the roof. After this building grew too small to meet the requirements, they built a large one room brick building. The old frame building was sold to Otto Brocksmith who moved it to his home and made a room of it, using it for a kitchen. The school building is still used by Otto Brocksmith and the old bell is still above the room. The brick building was sold to Henry F. Volle, when the school was abandoned, who used the material to build a new room to his home. The school was abandoned between the years of 1915 and 1917. Some of the teachers of this school were: Tom Allsup, Louis Meyer, Frank Shepherd, Simon Schroeder, Alvira Walker, Iva Begeman, Iona Robbins, Henry Pielemeier, Alvin Robbins, Mort Cox, Jim McDowell, Mathilda Brocksmith, Mabel Bowen, Lydia Schulte, and Bessie Watson.

No. 8. "RUBLE" SCHOOL. The first school building was built in about 1865 on the

Ruble farm from whence it received its name. This building was constructed of logs. In about 1880 a brick building was erected, but not on the same site as the log building, it was placed right across the road on the present site. In 1905 the second brick building was built on the same site. Henry Schroeder was the carpenter and Lawrence Rinsch was the brick layer. When the last building was built William Ritterskamp was trustee of Widner Township. The Ruble school was abandoned in 1923. The teachers of Ruble School were: J. Smith, Jim McDowell, Walter Pielemeier, Willie Richardson, Carry Wells, Minnie Robbins, Lydia Nolting, Esther Schaefer, Emil Rinsch, Doris McCormick, Leona Sierp, Gertrude Ritterskamp, and Helen Wandtke.

No. 9. **“SANHEDRIN” School.** This school is located on a corner of the old George Sproatt place. We are told that it got its name from the fact that it is located on a sandy hill. There have been two different buildings erected; both were made of brick. The first brick building burned down and the present building was erected in about the year 1880. This school is about seven miles northwest of Freelandville. It was abandoned some years ago and the pupils were transferred to Oaktown. About five years ago, a petition was circulated to reopen the school. This petition was successful and Mildred Ellis was the first teacher after it was re-opened. Some of the very earliest teachers were: Will Bowen, Sophia Winkler, Vina Hollingsworth. Others who taught here were: Henry Pielemeier, Mildred Ellis, Amanda Pepmeier, and Charles Threlkeld. At present Norma Deppe is teaching there.

No. 10. **THE “RISLEY SCHOOL.** The Risley school building is located on the Charles E. Bland farm about seven miles west of Freelandville. There was but one building erected; this was a frame building which is still standing. It was built between the years of 1873 or 1874. Some of the men that built this school were Mr. Harrod Risley, Isaac Risley, and George Sartor. The school was abandoned in 1888 and the pupils attending school here divided, part of them being transferred to the “Light” School and part to the “Frame” or Diekman School. At this time they did not demand transfers and a greater paid of the people attending school here were from Busseron Township. Some of the teachers were: Jessie Taylor, W. C. Bowen, Mrs. Hettie Bartley, Alvira Walker, Ben Scott, John Faught, Sophia Winkler, Viora Morford. The year this school was abandoned, the “Strate” school was built and it then became known as District 10.

“STRATE” SCHOOL. The Strate School was located along the lower Oaktown road about one and one-fourth miles west of Freelandville. It received the name of “Strate” School by being located next to the Fred Strate farm. There never was more than one building. This was a brick building which was built in 1888 by the Rinsch brothers who were the contractors. William Ritterskamp was trustee at this time. They taught no higher than the seventh grade. Any one who wished to finish the eight year would have to finish it at Freelandville. The years enrollment usually averaged from eighteen to twenty pupils. This school was abandoned in 1913. Teachers of this school were: Dee Polk, Lizzie Scott, Mary Scott, Mort Cox, Ura Robbins, Mathilda Brocksmith, Lydia Nolting, Lydia Grabbe, Lydia Schulte, Mamie Meyer, Eva

Hollingsworth, Agnes Chambers.

In the year 1880-1881 there were seven hundred and sixty-two pupils enrolled in the Widner Township schools, while at present there are only about five hundred and fifty-two. This tends to show that there is a general decrease in the population of Widner Township.

Up until the year 1884 there was not such a thing as a uniform course of study. Each teacher had the responsibility of planning his or her own work. The Uniform Course of Study for the schools of Indiana was adopted by the Indiana County Superintendents Association. In convention at Indianapolis June 10, 11, 12, 1884. From this time on the teachers have had a uniform course of study. Professor Gentle was principal of the schools at Freelandville when the Uniform Course of Study was started.

In 1885-1886 John Starner was trustee. Teachers of the school at Freelandville were: Joe French, principal, Maggie Dant, Ura Smith. In this year they had the first eighth grade graduation. Members of this class were: Eva Polk, Samuel Risley, Eva Walker, Hester Polk, Lafe Scott, Ella Shepherd, Lulie French, Allie Parker, Nellie Ashley, Frank Scanling, Myrtle Smith, Effie Patterson, Orrie Elliott, John W. Hammock, Sophia Winkler, Winfield Scott, Charlie Stanley, Roscoe Hammock, and Mort Cox.

The averages of this class ranked from $92 \frac{1}{4}$ to $72 \frac{3}{8}$, one person failing. He however, did not give up but tried again, and is at present one of the best teachers in Florida. At this time, the diplomas were sent to the township trustee who either sent them to the graduates or gave them to them personally.

Joe French served as principal of Widner Township schools again in 1893.

Teachers institute was held regularly once a month, but the teachers received no pay as they do now. School opened at 8:45 and closed at 4:00 p. m. The pay of the earliest teachers averaged from \$1.40 to \$2.50 a day. The best teacher or principal would never get more than \$2.50 a day. In these early days teachers were elected by the voters.

New subjects have been brought forth in the Widner Township schools. The Vocational Department of Freelandville High school was established in 1924, upon the recommendation of Mr. Miller who became principal in that year, and through the cooperation of the trustee Mr. Charles Smith. Miss Agnes Watson was given charge of Vocational Home Economics and E. W. Grossman was in charge of Vocational Agriculture.

In the Home Economics Department there was an enrollment of thirty-four girls. The subjects taught were Foods and Cookery; Garment Making and Textiles; Hygiene and Home Nursing; Biology and Design, Dressmaking and Millinery.

Fourteen boys were enrolled in the Agricultural Department. The subjects taught were Poultry, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, and Farm Shop.

Club work has been carried on in the summer time under the supervision of Miss Watson and Mr. Grossman. There were seventy-five boys and girls enrolled in this work the first year. Clubs were formed in sewing, baking, canning, and health for the girls. The boys clubs were corn, pig, poultry and potatoes.

Widner Township proved herself a worthy competitor at the Boys and Girls Country Club Exhibit. Thirteen of the nineteen exhibitors in the Girls Club Work brought home their share of the biggest prizes, and all of the Widner Club boys that had exhibits at the County Round-Up received a prize.

WABASH VALLEY TOURNAMENT

Perhaps, the thing that has given Freelandville more publicity over the state than any thing else that ever happened here, was the winning of the Wabash Valley Basketball Tournament by Freelandville High School in 1922.

Freelandville played Robinson, Illinois at Sullivan January 28 in the eliminations for the Wabash Valley Tourney. As a result of winning from Robinson F. H. S. went to Terre Haute the following week and met Staunton and literally swamped them. In the next game, Freelandville played Normal. Normal fought valiantly, but to no avail, for they were defeated. In the semi-finals, Freelandville played Sullivan. This was also a victory for Freelandville and won the tourney.

GRADUATES OF FREELANDVILLE HIGH SCHOOL.

MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1904.

Carrie Bartlett (Homemaker)
 Mabel Bowen (Homemaker) Taught
 James McDowell Taught
 Mamie Meier (Homemaker) Taught
 Carrie Wells (Homemaker)
 Curtis Polk

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1905.

Imo Ashley Teaching
 Lillian Ernest (Homemaker)
 Henry Klutey Ministry
 Myrtle McArthur (Homemaker)
 Sophia Meier (Homemaker)
 Daniel Nolting Dentistry D. D. S.
 Flora McDowell (Homemaker) Taught
 Karl Robbins Dentistiy D. D. S.

Ruth Simison (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Lydia Kahre (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Tillie (Telligman) Stoughton (Homemaker).

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1906

Paul Buckthal Farming
 Pauline Hummerich (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Leah McCormick (Homemaker) Taught
 Henry Nolting. M. D.
 Julia Ritterskamp (Homemaker)
 Agnes Watson Teaching

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1907.

Walter Albert Iron Works
 Agnes Cox (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Herman Detering
 John Heidenrieck.....Dentistry
 Rolla Hurst.....Blacksmith
 Walter Pielemeier College Professor
 Ed. Stoelting..... Dentist

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1908.

Arthur Anderson
 Dot Howard (Homemaker)
 Frieda Meier (Homemaker)
 Paul Nolting..... Dentist
 Bessie Polk (Homemaker)
 Will Unverferth..... Teacher
 Alta Watson (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1910.

This was the first year that Freelandville had the Commissioned High School.

Albert McCormick..... Teacher
 Ruth Smith (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Otto Stoelting..... D. D. S. Dentist

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1911.

Bessie Booker (Homemaker)
Edward Deppe..... Taught, Now Farming
Anna Klutey Teaching
Hilda Schulte (Homemaker)..... Taught
Harry Smith..... Taught, Mining
Clarence Wagner..... Teaching

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1912.

Agnes Chambers (Homemaker) Taught
Roscoe Leveron Dentist
John Pielemeier Professor at Ann Arbor, Michigan

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1913.

Fay Bartlett (Homemaker)..... Taught
Arla Begeman (Homemaker)
Dewitt Cummings
Arthur Limper Ministry
Nellie McArthur..... Taught
Reinhard Kixmiller..... Business
Phillip Pielemeier
Flora Richardson..... Teaching
Esther Schaefer (Homemaker)
Kenneth Robins..... Salesman
Albert Unverferth Teacher

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1914.

Susie Allen (Homemaker)..... Taught
Ruth Berry (Homemaker)..... Taught
Rosae Hamke (Homemaker)
Lillian Heidenrich (Homemaker)..... Taught
Bernice Hurst (Homemaker)
Cora Kixmiller (Homemaker)
Carl Kixmiller Dentist
Esther Krueger (Homemaker)

Gilbert Lucas..... Salesman
 Pearl McArthur (Homemaker)
 Alma Klutey (Homemaker) Business
 Henry Limper..... Deceased
 Sarah Richardson Commercial
 Iima Strate (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1915.

Frank Brandt Electric Engineer
 Ruth Cummings..... Teaching
 Edward Hamke Agriculture
 Walter Marutz Electrician
 Emil Rinsch..... Teacher
 Arnold Schroeder Commercial Salesman

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1916.

Milton Marthett Cashier
 Oscar Borgemeier Accountant
 Frieda Buescher (Homemaker) Taught
 Darvy Gallager..... Dentist
 Louise Limper Nurse
 Harriet Smith (Homemaker)..... Taught
 Ben Schroeder Rubber Factory Worker
 Robert Pielemeier Chauffeur
 Dwight McCormick Dentist
 Lanville Menedoht. Salesman
 Oscar Osterhage Business
 Frieda Schaefer Teaching
 Welker Robbins Dentist

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1917.

Hugo Albrecht Farmer
 Wright Bartlett Cashier
 Helen Buescher (Homemaker) Taught

Edwin Brandt.....Blacksmith
 Gilbert Bluhm Miner
 Helen Deppe (Homemaker)
 Verna Meier Teaching
 Vesta Jackson (Homemaker)
 Delvin Mengedoth Lena Kirk (Homemaker)
 Roscoe McArthur Mechanic
 Ernest Osterhage
 Laura Schulte (Homemaker)
 Marvin Bubenzer Barber
 Wayne Smith..... Deceased
 Pansy Robbins (Homemaker).....Taught
 Sophia SchroederCommercial
 Bessie Richardson (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1918.

Harry Clinkenbeard..... Teacher
 Maurice Fox Phormacy
 Ernest Limper..... Mechanical Engineer
 Doris McCormick Teaching
 Blanche McClung (Homemaker)
 Esther Schroeder (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1919.

Helen Ashley Teaching
 Dwight Berry Farmer
 Minnie Bluhm (Homemaker)
 Mildred Ellis Teaching
 Leona Grabbe (Homemaker)
 Elmer Humbaugh Salesman
 Margaret Kirk (Homemaker)
 Elnora Strate Teaching
 Hilda Stoelting (Homemaker)
 Elsie Schaefer College

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1920.

Robert Bowen..... Miner
Ewing Clinkenbeard..... Dentist
Oscar Hailing..... Salesman
John Held.....Mechanic
Helen Marutz (Homemaker)
Bonnie Meier (Homemaker)
Raymond Meier..... Farmer
Myrtle Morris (Homemaker)
Alma Papenlohr
Albert Rinsch Teaching
Oscar Ritterskamp..... Electrician
Paul Ritterskamp..... Teaching
Leona Sierp (Homemaker). Taught
Aline Sickmeier..... Teaching
Jewel Weitzel (Homemaker) Nurse
Elise Yocum (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1921.

Hedwig Pielemeier..... Teaching
Leona Schaefer (Homemaker)..... Teaching
Dorothy WinklerCommercial
Wilbur Ashley Farmer
Walter Brandt.....Mechanic
Paul Borgemeier.Accountant
Mildred Brooks Nurse
Gladys Brown (Homemaker)
Walter BuescherAccountant
Daisy Coffman (Homemaker)
Thelma Dellinger (Homemaker)
Helen Dusenburg (Homemaker)
Katherine Fox Teaching
Fred Limper Bookkeeper

Almeda Mengedoth (Homemaker)
 Thelma Mesch
 Merle McCormick..... Farmer
 Paul Meier..... Teacher
 Homer Mesch Electrician
 Arthur McClung..... Bookkeeper
 Hilda Kixmiller (Homemaker)
 Amanda Pepmeier (Homemaker) Taught
 Paul Strate Mechanic
 Edith Stinnett (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1922.

Doris Albert..... Deceased
 Margaret Limper Doctor of Medicine
 Herman Hamke Plumber
 Theran Hankins..... Salesman
 Helen Harting Commercial
 Helen Kirchoff..... Teaching
 Harold Mabes..... Farmer
 Pauline Meier..... Deceased
 Harold Pielemeier..... Aviator
 Irene Pielemeier..... College-Taught
 Wilhelminie Pruesner (Homemaker)
 Pauline Schaefer..... Teaching
 Harold Schroeder Telegrapher
 Harold Schulte College
 Walter Synder Photographer U. S.
 Vilas French..... Bookkeeper
 Alvin Stoelting Mason
 Goldie Trabant..... Bookkeeper
 Helen Wandtke Teaching

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1923.

Nellie Albrecht (Homemaker)

Francis Ashley (Homemaker)

William Albrecht..... Farmer

Carl Bluhm

Phillipe Bobe Commercial

Loran Berry Commercial

Gardner Brocksmith Farmer

Mamie Heidenreich (Homemaker)

Emma Kloke (Homemaker)

Paul Koenig..... Commercial

Herman Limper Ministry

Courtney Mesch

Hulda Johanningsmeier Commercial

Lowell Dickman Farmer

Paula Nolting (Homemaker)

Helen Pepmeier (Homemaker)

Helen Ritterskamp Clerk

Irene Sierp (Homemaker)

Arnold Synder U. S. Marine

Aline Trabant (Homemaker)

Lillian Volle (Homemaker)

Margaret Volle (Homemaker)

Edward Volle. -----Ministry

Olga Volle (Homemaker)

Mathilda Stoelting (Homemaker)

Norma Deppe Teaching

Thelma Ellis

Raymond Heidenreich Lawyer

Aline Leveron..... At Home

Irvin Marutz..... Teaching

Qwinyth McCormick..... Nurse

Viora Morford (Homemaker)

Inez Pepmeier Commercial

Paul Kuhn Farming
 Sheldon Robbins
 Albert Tiek. Mechanic Engineer College
 Lorene Sickmeier College
 Doris Swaby (Homemaker)
 Jess WarnerMining
 Thelma Yocum Working at Freelandville
 Clyde Warner Farming
 Theodore Snyder U. S. Marine

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1925.

Ruth Ashley.....Attending College to Teach
 Ruth Brooks.... Commercial
 Harold BuescherStudying Accountancy
 Lillian Bluhm (Homemaker)
 Waldemar Chambers Undertaker
 Dora Jones..... Studying Bookkeeping
 Frank Heidenreich..... Studying Accounting
 Arnold Meier Pharmacy
 Naomi PielemeierAttending College to teach
 Paul Rinsch Farming
 Harold Stoelting..... Civil Engineer Purdue University
 Irvin Telligman Agriculture at Purdue
 Paul VolleAttending College at Elmhurst
 Mae Yocum (Homemaker)

MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 1926 are shown in the front of this volume.

GENERAL SUMMARY. In a survey of the occupations of girls graduating from F. H. S., the following statistics are shown.

In the years 1904-1925, the total number of girls graduated is 126.

Ninety three are engaged in homemaking, twenty two of whom have taught.

Others are engaged as follows.:

Teaching, 18; studying to be nurses, 3; studying for the medical profession, 1; other miscellaneous occupations, 8; three are deceased.

The number of boys graduated from F. H. S. is 115. They are engaged as follows: Ministers or studying for the ministry, 5; College Professors, 2; teaching, 10; the number practicing or studying dentistry, 12; Farming, 11; Mining, 3; studying medicine, 1; Accountants, 5; In Commercial occupations, 11; Salesmen, 7; Electricians, 4; Business, 3; those taking engineering, 2; Pharmacy, 3; Aviators, 1; Blacksmiths, 2; studying agriculture, 2; Cashiers, 2; Civil Engineer, 1; Mechanics, 4; Barber, 1; Bookkeeper, 4; Plumber, 1; Chauffeur, 1; Miscellaneous Occupations, 14.

CHAPTER XII.

FRATERNAL ORDERS

In the history of Freelandville, there has been a number of lodges. Six of them will be taken up in this chapter. They are: Oddfellows, Masonic, Knights of Pythias, Ben Hur, Myrtle Rebekah, and Woodman. There are a few other lodges which organized here at one time, but disbanded soon afterwards, so there is little of importance to record.

GOOD TEMPLARS. This organization was organized in 1868 and was brought about on account of the saloons and conditions of the time. The members worked together to create a feeling against saloons of which there were always two and some times three. They met in the city hall which was over Henry Albert's first Drug store. The Good Templar organization was managed by Mrs. Bicknell.

This organization disbanded after a few years.

Two of the charter members were Mrs. Begeman and Mr. Frank Polk.

ODDFELLOWS. Realizing the benefits to a **community** of a fraternal order and desiring a lodge nearer to their homes five members of Freelandville made application for a charter. Those five Oddfellows were: B. F. Polk, S. W. Simmonson, C. H. Baker, D. M. Kisley, and H. S. Woods. On May 19, 1869 a charter was issued to Widner Lodge No. 326, Independent Order of Oddfellows.

At that time, due mostly to a lack of understanding of the principles of secret orders, there was an undercurrent of hostility to the order; but despite opposition the order grew, and as understanding of its principles of friendship, love and truth and knowledge of its good works came, hostility gradually disappeared.

The lodge flourished until the hall together with the charter was destroyed by fire. A "duplicate in lieu" of the charter was issued Nov. 12, 1883. With loss of the hall, interest flagged and the charter was allowed to lapse, most of the members transferring to Whiteriver Lodge at Edwardsport.

in 1903 the charter was renewed and the present hall was purchased, twelve members advancing \$100 each to make the purchase possible. Since then the lodge has purchased an additional room joining the hall and is steadily decreasing its indebtedness, while at the same time it is keeping its obligation to sick brothers, burying its dead, helping maintain the Oddfellows home at Green- burg and many other benevolent acts outside of the order.

MASONIC LODGE. The Masonic lodge No. 494 was chartered on May 25, 1875.

The first officers of the Lodge were John T. Freeland, Master, - James McDowell, Senior Warden, Fredrick W. Brocksmith, Junior Warden.

At that time many church athorities were hostile to lodges, and when a number of people had come into the lodge, it was made plain to them that they might drop church or lodge membership. Most of the members dropped out of the lodge. The charter was revoked on May 25, 1886.

Since that time a large number of people have joined the Edwardsport lodge No. 429. A number of people in the western part of the township belong to the Oaktown lodge.

Uncle Jim Curry, the oldest member of the Edwardsport lodge remembers of visiting the lodge at Freelandville.

A number of ladies belong to the Eastern Star at Edwardsport and Oaktown.

KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS. This lodge was organized in Freelandville about 1892. Some of the charter members were: Alfred Brocksmith, A. M. Berry, John T. Scott, Edward Mengedote, Carl Begeman, H. H. Dettering and Julian Bensinger. This lodge held its meetings over Albert's Drug Store. The high officer is called the Chancellor Commander.

In 1897, the local lodge was disbanded, and the charter was transferred to Pleasantville where it still remains.

This organization has no insurance, but has sick benefits like the Odd Fellows.

BEN HUR. The Freelandville Court number 91 of the Tribe of Ben Hur was instituted July 11, 1896. The following is a list of the first officers who were installed.

Chief	A. M. Berry
Judge	James Numan
Teacher.....	Mrs. J. A. Delay
Scribe.....	Chas. F. Unverferth
Past Chief.....	Louis Kirchoff
Keeper of Tribute.....	G. W. Hollingsworth
Captain.....	Chas. Koch
Keeper of Inner Gate	Dr. L. C. McDowell
Keeper of Outer Gate.....	Neely Cleveland

The lodge was popular, and grew very fast and at one time had a total membership of about two hundred.

For many years meetings were held regularly every week. The Lodge has an

excellent fraternal side, the sick are visited and helped and where necessary, nurses are employed. In addition to the fraternal side of the Lodge, the Tribe of Ben Hur issues Insurance policies at a very reasonable rate.

Since the institution of the Freelandville Lodge about \$18,000.00 has been paid to beneficiaries of members of Freelandville Court No. 91. The Court still has a membership of sixty. The present officers are H. J. Schroeder Chief. A. M. Berry, Keeper of Tribute. Chas A. Pielemeier, Local Scribe.

The office of Scribe, who receives all local payments, and remits the monthly dues to the Supreme office of the Tribe of Ben Hur at Crawfordsville, Indiana has been taken care of for the past nineteen years by Charles A. Pielemeier. Although the Lodge was instituted nearly thirty years ago, several charter members are still active members.

MYRTHLE REBEKAH. The Rebekah lodge. **No. 663** was organized Feb. 6, 1904 by Brother A. Rosman. The first officers were as follows:

Noble Grand.....Mrs. Lizzie Patterson
Vice GrandMrs. Nellie Fox
Secretary R. C. Shepherd
Financial Secretary..... Ale Robbins
Treasurer.....Dr. H. Fox

Following were charter members:

Mrs. Lizzie Patterson, Mrs. Nellie Fox, Mrs. R. C. Shepherd, Mrs. A. M. Robbins, Mrs. R. H. Fox, Miss Vina Hollingsworth, Miss Hannah Wolfe, Miss Nora Robbins, Miss Ida Robbins, Miss Iona Robbins, Mrs. Flora Coffman, Mrs. Ed. Brocksmith, Mrs. Thomas Robbins.

Owing to the lack of interest, in 1911 the charter was given up, but in Februray 15, 1922, the lodge was reorganized under the directions of brother and sister T. M. Walker with the following

officers:

Noble Grand.....Mrs. Nora McArthur
Vice GrandMrs. Martie Morford
Secretary Mrs. Emil Deppe
Treasurer.....Mrs. William Schulte

The officers at the present time are:

Noble Grand.....Miss Bessie Richardson
Vice Grand Mrs. Viola Clinkenbeard
SecretaryMrs. Clara Berry

Financial Secretary.....Mrs. Dorothy Bluhm
Treasurer.....Mrs. Nellie Fox

WOODMAN. The Woodman Lodge is an organization to cultivate higher standards of living and to relieve distress. This lodge was organized in Freelandville, June 1907. The first officers were: Counselor, William Winkler; Clerk, Harry Yocum; Adviser, William Bowen, Banker, John Osterhage. Through lack of interest in this lodge by its members, it disbanded in 1914. Most of the members went to Edwardsport.

This lodge issues insurance. The dues are paid monthly, the amount corresponding to the amount of insurance taken out.

There is also a ladies organization connected with the lodge, the "Royal Neighbors."

CHAPTER XIII.

VARIOUS CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

THE TWENTY-TWO CLUB. This club was organized about 1910 by Dr. Harry Yocum. It originally consisted of twenty-two members, and the membership has been restricted to that number. This club was organized for the sole purpose of benefitting its members. Should a member become ill or have an accident he was paid ten dollars a week from the very first until he was able to work again. Several men who were members of this club have been financially assisted by the money they had paid into the treasury. Some of the most prominent men of this community have belonged to this very promising organization.

THE BOYS BAND. The idea of having a boys band in Freelandville originated in the mind of Mr. Carl P. Volle, in the spring of 1923, when a few friends of his asked him if he would be willing to teach their boys how to play the cornet. Since the bandmaster had been a member for years of a band under the capable leadership of Mr. Mord F. Cox. and knew the pleasure derived from being able to play in a good band, the able leader of this juvenile organization immediately made up his mind to start a boys band; not only for the purpose of doing something for the boys but for the benefit of the town and community as well. In making plans to best conduct this band to insure a band for Freelandville and community in the future, it was decided that the only way to make it successful was to begin in the same way as a private music school, by giving special training to each individual. This plan was followed and proved successful.

The first time the boys played before the public was at the Fourth of July picnic in 1923. Twenty-three boys played "My Country 'Tis of Thee" on that day and the applause they received greatly encouraged them to continue their efforts.

The year following their first public appearance they were hired by the Odd Fellows Lodge to play at their Fourth of July celebration. This time they wore their neat white uniforms with which they had been furnished.

They have since played on several occasions and at several of the neighboring towns. At three different times they have played before the public at the county seat, always under the careful leadership of their most capable bandmaster. There are only twenty-five members of the band at the present time, but there are several others who will be eligible to play in the near future.

THE BOY SCOUTS. The local unit of the Boy Scout organization was officially chartered in December, 1923, although it was organized a few months before this time. There are at the present three patrols, the Eagle, Wolf and Silver Fox, which make troop number one. A. A. Susott is Scout Master of the Freelandville unit. Most of the boys of the community who are over twelve years of age belong to this organization.

The aim of the Boy Scouts is to supplement the various educational agencies and to promote the ability in boys to do things for themselves and others. All Scouts must have instruction in Safety First methods, First Aid, Life saving, Tracking, Signaling, Cycling, Nature Study, Seamanship, Camp Craft, Woodcraft, Chivalry, Patriotism, and various other subjects.

Their motto is "Be Prepared." This means that a Scout is always ready in mind and body to do his duty. The badge, the trefoil is used as a mark of brotherhood, good citizenship, and friendliness, and refers to the three points in the Scout oath or promise, which says: "On my honor I will do my best:"

1. To do my duty to God and country, and to obey the scout law.
2. To help other people at all times.
3. To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

There are twelve laws relating to the Boy Scouts.

1. A scout is trustworthy. His word and honor are to be trusted.
2. A scout is loyal to all to whom loyalty is due: to his scout leader, his home, his parents, and to his country.
4. A scout is helpful. He must be prepared to save life, help injured persons, and share the home duties. He must do at least one good turn to somebody everyday.
3. A scout is friendly. He is a friend to all and a brother to every other scout.
4. A scout is courteous. He is polite to all. He does not take pay for being helpful or courteous.
5. A scout is kind. He is a friend to animals.
6. A scout is obedient. He obeys his parents, and all other constituted authorities.
7. A scout is cheerful. He smiles when ever he can.
8. A scout is thrifty. He does not destroy property. He works faithfully, wastes nothing, and makes the best use of his opportunities.

9. A scout is brave. He has the courage to face danger and to stand up for the right against the coaxings of his friends or the jeers and threats of his enemies.
10. A scout is clean in body and thought, stands for clean speech, clean sport, clean habits and associates with clean companions.
11. A scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties, and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion.

Since the local unit received its official charter some of the members have been present at three different summer camps. The first was on the banks of the Wabash in Illinois, the next two were in Washington Park, Washington, Indiana.

THE GIRL SCOUTS. The local unite of this organization was formed October, 30, 1924, when a few girls met with Miss Vina Brocksmith and Irene Pielemeier for that purpose. It was decided to hold meetings regularly every Thursday night.

The first regular meeting was held on Thursday evening, No- er 6, 1924 at the school building with Miss Vina Brocksmith as general and Miss Irene Pielemeier as lieutenant. There were enough girls present to form two patrols of eight members each. The troop was called the "Arbutus" and the two patrols Hawk and Bob White respectively.

The first members of the local unit were Miss Vina Brocksmith, Miss Irene Pielemeier, Naomi Pielemeier, Hilda Volle, Blanche Stoughton, Helen Micky, Ruth Johanningsmier, Dorothea Schaefer, Louise Ritterskamp. Anna Ruth Yocum, Lillian Hampke Edna Klutey and Julia Volle.

Principles of the Girl Scouts: The motto: "Be Prepared," A

Girl Scout must learn how to swim. She must pass tests in child care and home nursing and household efficiency. She must know all the important facts of health.

The Slogan: "Do a Good Turn Daily." This slogan means exactly what it says. The girls must do some act of kindness for somebody everyday.

The Pledge: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

This pledge is not original with the Girl Scouts but it expresses their principles and practice.

The Promise: "On My Honor I Will Try:

To do my duty to God and my country.

To help other people at all times.

To obey the Scout Laws.

The symbol of the Girl Scouts is the Trefoil: To indicate three-fold promise.

The laws of the Girl Scouts:

1. A Girl Scout's Honor Is to Be Trusted.

2. A Girl Scout Is Loyal.
3. A Girl Scout's Duty Is to Be Useful and Help Others.
4. A Girl Scout Is a Friend to All, and a Sister to Every Other Girl Scout.
5. A Girl Scout Is Courteous.
6. A Girl Scout is a Friend to Animals.
7. A Girl Scout Obeys Orders.
8. A Girl Scout Is Cheerful.
9. 9 A Girl Scout Is Thrifty.
10. A Girl Scout Is Clean in Thought, Word and Deed.

THE HOME ECONOMIC CLUB. The Home Economic Club of Freeville was organized January 14, 1926, at the home of Mrs. Earnest Wagner. This is the first Federated Club organized in Freelandville. The club was organized by Mrs. Rhinehart Kixmiller and Mrs. Earnest Wagner. Mrs. Rhinehart Kixmiller was elected president, Mrs. Edwin Pielemeier Vice-President, Mrs. Dwight Berry Recording Secretary, Mrs. Edwin Brandt Corresponding Secretary and Mrs. Walter Ritterskamp Treasurer.

The purpose of this club is: to maintain the highest ideals of home life, to count children the most important of crops; to so mother them that their bodies may be sound, their minds clear, their spirits happy and their characters generous; to place service above comfort; to let loyalty to high purposes silence discordant notes; to be discouraged never; to lose self generous enthusiasm; to let neighborliness supplant hatred ; to extend to the less fortunate a helping hand; to believe one's own community may become the best of communities; and to co-operate with others for the common ends of a more abundant home and community life.

The charter members of this club are: Mrs. Gilbert Bhuhm, Mrs. Dwight Berry, Mrs. Paul Bluhm, Mrs. Lewis Baker, Mrs. Edwin Brandt, Mrs. Jack Clinkenbeard, Mrs. Harry Clinkenbeard, Mrs. John Held, Mrs. Julius Kirchoff, Mrs. W. R. Kixmiller, Mr. Albert McArthur, Mrs. R. R. Miller, Mrs. Henry Pepmeier, Mrs. Edwin Pielemeier, Mrs. Walter Ritterskamp, Mrs. Earnest Tilly, Mrs. Earnest Wagner, Mrs. Oscar Snyder, and Mrs. W. G. Schuckman.

CHAPTER XIV.

ROADS

The first explorers and settlers of Indiana arrived at their temporary camps and places of abode by the way of the narrow Indian trails. When the destination of the Indians tallied with that reached by the buffalo traces, they were followed. The bison beards seemed to have had an unerring sense of the line of least resistance, as they passed to their feeding grounds and salt licks; for they ever sought the driest ground,

generally the highest ground, lying along the ridges of the western wilderness. In much the same manner the roads of Widner Township were laid out, following Indian trails, the higher grounds and the line of least resistance. Various routes were followed as the dry or wet season prevailed. Fallen trees often made necessary a detour, the zigzag way being used after the obstruction had rotted or been removed. While the pack horses climbed many of the Indian trails the oxcart could not be dragged up all of them; though very rough roads and steep inclines were traversed. Some of our roads today are the results of the drivers of oxcarts choosing low ground in dry weather. These facts account for the peculiarity of the lay out of the roads and the disregard of the section lines.

The narrow Indian trails often sunk to a depth of ten or twelve inches as they were beaten down and hardened by the passing of many feet. Ribbon wads marked the beginning of the pack pony period when each of the pack ponies dragged behind, it two poles joined by a cross bar. Upon this rude contrivance was placed such freight as could be loaded and thus two tracks were made. As the freight loads become heavier, more and more were the bushes torn away and the trails widened and trampled.

Sometimes deep ruts became sloughs in which animals and carts were stalled. To avoid this miry condition when the bottom appeared to drop out of the roadway, logs were rolled together to cover the worst places. This marked the beginning of improved roads. Increase of travel and better wagons called for longer stretches of log roads, or corduroy roads, as they were called. Traces of such a corduroy road will be found on the marsh road about one mile from Gottlieb Volle's farm.

William Polk and Co. were the first to bring wagons into Widner Township. The wagons were brought through from the Falls on the Ohio, through the wilderness to the "Old Post Vincennes," by the way of Corydon, French Lick down the Patoka River crossing White River below the forks at Wright's Old Ferry to Vincennes.

There have been very few changes made in the course of the roads of this township. The Vincennes, Bicknell, Carlisle and Edwardsport roads run practically the same as when they were first opened. Sam Medly blazed the Carlisle and Edwardsport road, taking the highest ground and disregarding section lines. The only note worthy change in the course of any of the roads is the changing of the road north of Freelandville. It previously ran on an angle through the Richter Brothers farm, but was moved to the section line. The late Mr. Joe Kirchoff was one of the viewers who advised this change.

The controversy of road improvement was great and of much importance, because with the increase of travel better roads were in demand. Some people thought the plan of burying the road material to keep it from spreading would be wise, so this experiment was tried out and found to be a great mistake. Then the plan was suggested of building a grade and keeping open side ditches. Good roads were thus constructed of crushed stone with a coating of wash gravel. Such a road must be petitioned, with fifty signers before commissioners will act upon it. Three men are

appointed to over look the roads petitioned for. Then the contract is put to the bidders, and is let to the lowest bidder who can furnish a good bond. When the road is rocked and finished the commissioners accept or reject it. After a road is accepted it is placed on county record.

All repair work is done by an overseer with gravel furnished by the county.

All dirt roads are kept up by Trustee. Any bridge costing over one hundred dollars is put in by the county.

Gravel and rock roads are usually named after the person whose name heads the petition. Sometimes they bear the name of the overseer and sometimes the name of the person who owns the land through which they pass.

The records of a number of the improved roads are as follows:

H. S. Polk, Nov 7, 1903; Fred Trabant, Sept. 7, 1904; Linneweber, 1905; Tom Robbins, May 30, 1907; William Stoelting, May 31, 1909; Fred Lickte, April 25, 1910; T. E. Stoelting, June 21, 1910; David Ashley, May 26, 1911; Henry F. Volle, May 26, 1911; Jas. Willis, May 1913; August Otterman, March 23, 1917; H. Dickman, July 6, 1920; C. W. Wildman, August 3, 1920; H. H. Grabbe, November 8, 1921; Chas. Mengedoht, August 7, 1923; Henry Grabbe, (county line) 1908.

Quite recently the Township has taken advantage of the county unite plan of road building. Under it, the following roads have been built.

Chas. Schaefer road, 1925-26; Charleston road. 1924-25; Seirp road or Borgineier road, 1925-26.

CHAPTER XV.

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS

During the past years, Freelandville has been making various improvements for the public.

SIDEWALKS. The first **sidewalks** in the town were from Berry's Drug Store to the place where the Methodist church now stands. They were made from the logs of Mr. Freeland's log barn. They also had planks laid from the Methodist church to the Evangelical church.

Before the Christian church building was erected, a revival meeting was held in a tent on that site. The mud road was quite disagreeable to the crowds of people who attended the meeting. So, inspired with the enthusiasm, of the revivals, the members contributed a plank walk from town out to the church. Where the walk passed over the hollow, it was like a bridge. One of our old inhabitants remembers that on a very dark, stormy night he was going to the revival, it was so dark and slippery, that he had to crawl on his hands and knees over a part of the journey.

When the planks were worn out, for a while they had dirt sidewalks. Then they made sawdust walks. In a few places, in front of the stores, they had brick walks. Now many places have concrete walks.

LIGHTS. The first lights in the town were the **large** coal oil lamps. They then had carbide lights in various business places and in the school. The gas for their lights was generated at a central plant owned and operated by H. J. Schroeder.

With the building and the development of the Edwardsport Light Plant, there was a desire that we have electric lights in Freelandville. However there was no high tension line running this way, but the Power Company agreed to build one provided the Freelandville people would subscribe for \$10,000 worth of stock in the company. This was done and in addition enough money was subscribed to pay for street lights on the most important corners in the town. On August 28, 1922, the business shops, homes, and the streets were lighted with electricity. This has also made possible many other conveniences in the homes.

WATER SYSTEM. Although the Freelandville water works is privately owned, being the property of Mr. Chas. Brooks. Yet because of the nature of its service, it has a place in this chapter. Mr. Brocks started in the year of 1903, having three wells, also drew from an open well. He had two drill wells inside the building, seven feet apart, and they were both one hundred and eighteen feet deep. One being a six inch hole, the other eight inch. The open well was connected with the drill wells, the open well was sixty one feet deep. The water is pumped into a large wooden standpipe, about fifty feet high. A gasoline engine is used for power.

When he began he served from ten to fifteen families, he now serves forty families.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM. The first telephone line was established in the year of 1881 by a man named Johnson from Vincennes, Indiana. The line ran from Vincennes through Bruceville, Bicknell and Edwardsport to Freelandville.

The first telephone in Freelandville was owned by Johnson. It was placed in the rear part of Mr. Heithecker's store where J. C. Schuckman's garage now stands. It had a grounded line with one wire.

The second telephone in Freelandville, owned by the Central Union was installed in the year of 1881. It had a substantial line. The telephone was placed in Mr. Chas Ohning's Drug Store. One wire fell down and was never built up, and for a while there was no telephone.

Mr. H. J. Schroeder and Chas. Stein built the first line in the Freelandville system.

Mr. G. F. Osterhage and Lee McCarther then went into partnership, and bought it from Stein and Schroeder for fourteen hundred dollars. In 1904 Mr. Schroeder bought Mr. Osterhages share for one hundred and fifty dollars leaving Mr. Schroeder and Mr. McCarther partners. After a short time Mr. Schroeder bought out Mr. McCarther for fifteen hundred dollars. Mr. Schroeder bought property from Mrs. Lou Lester. The switch board was put in the front part of the house up stairs, and a telephone booth. Mrs. Lou Lester and her family living in the other part of the house.

The old building was then torn down and a new one built equipped with two

switch boards, which are still owned by Mr. Schroeder. The telephones used are the megneto telephones designed by Starr. The first underground cables that Mr. Schroeder had were laid in 1924. Mr. Schroeder now serves three hundred and ninety people.

HOTELS. In the spring of 1900, Hr. Chas. Brooks bought the dwelling house of Dr. McGahy, built an addition to it, and converted it into a hotel. It was a three storied building with thirty- one rooms. For about twenty years, Mr. Brooks had two waiters to help his wife, until his children were grown.

January 9, 1924, the hotel was destroyed by fire. It was then rebuilt, having fourteen rooms. In nine months the family returned to their new home and continued to keep the hotel.

CITY HALL. Some years ago, Freelandville had a city hall. It was a large room over the drug store of Mr. Henry Albert. The building stood where Mr. H. J. Schroeder's home and telephone exchange now is.

In the year of 1925, the old livery barn was torn down, and a new gasoline filling station was installed. The approach has been neatly landscaped, and the appearance of this part of town is greatly improved.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FARMERS ORGANIZATION

One of the greatest opportunities which the modern farmer has is through organization called the Farm Bureau.

There are three main reasons why this organization was formed ; they are financial, educational and social.

Financially, the farmers are benefitted by cooperative buying and selling. The live stock is sold through the live stock shipping Association. They also buy co-operatively feeds, binder twine, oil, gas, and other farm necessities. Health is regarded; every year a man is sent to test the cows for tuberculosis. If the cow is found; to have the disease, the owner must get rid of it within thirty days.

Educationally, the organization helps the community by promoting- different kinds of club work between boys and girls. It promotes the use of projects through the county agent, such as treating seed wheat, testing seed corn, keeping egg records and a number of other things.

Socially, the men bring their families to the farm meetings and are entertained by different units each month. They meet their neighbors and discuss problems with different people.

The local Widner Unit of Knox County Farmers Association was formed August 27, 1919 in the Ruble School House. W. L. Brocksmith arranged the meeting.

E. C. Wharf, President of Knox County Farmers Association was present and enlightened the farmers the purpose and manner of this organization. At the close of

the discussion Widner Township Unit was organized with twenty charter members:

W. L. Brocksmith, Ernest Groteguth, John Mabes, Henry Tiek, H. H. Grabbe, Henry Richter, George Seirp, Henry Pepmeier, Henry Borgemeier, Henry Kloke, August Strate, Godfrey Ritterskamp, George Fiddler, Victor Brocksmith, August Boberg, Frank Mabes, J. P. Grabbe, Carl Borgemeier, Will Grabbe.

Temporary officers were elected:

President W. L. Brocksmith
Vice President Henry Grabbe
Secretary Henry Pepmeier
Treasurer..... Frank Mabes

The second meeting was held in the Ben Hur Hall at Freelandville, September 3, 1919. New members were taken in and officers were elected as follows:

President W. L. Brocksmith
Vice President Harry Pierson
Secretary Henry Pepmeier

Directors: Victor Brocksmith, John Mabes, Dave Ellis, George Seirp, and Godfrey Ritterskamp.

The rest of the meetings were held in the school building at Freelandville. The present membership is 135 with the following officers:

President George Seirp
Vice President W. L. Brocksmith
Secretary and Treasurer Henry Kloke

Widner Unit is the third largest organization and the best shipping association in the county.

The farmers held their first annual banquet April 7, 1926 in the Odd Fellows Hall. Covers were laid for two hundred and forty people, and the banquet was a success in every way.

The original paper copy of this document was provided by Tom Held of Freelandville, Indiana. Tom obtained it from his great uncle Pete Buescher, who was a 1926 FHS senior, and did much research on the composition. The document was scanned and converted to PDF format by Steven Schuckman, a former Freelandville resident. 05-Jan-2015. The source for this document can be found at www.freelandville.us/history/History_of_Widner_Township.pdf