

"If Only The Walls Could Talk"

BAY PORT STATE BANK CELEBRATES 125 YEARS!



The Wallace & Morley General Store and office building in 1953. Current location of Bay Port State Bank.

By Anne Simon, Bay Port State Bank, Bad Axe

In 1896, William Henry Wallace, partnering with William J. Orr, opened Bay Port State Bank to meet the needs of the growing community of Bay Port.

Just who is William H. Wallace?

William Henry Wallace, (b. 1862) — was also known as William H. Wallace; W. H. Wallace of Bay Port, Huron County, Michigan. He was born in Port Hope, Huron County, Michigan, September 12, 1862. He was a Republican, Banker; delegate to Republican National Convention from Michigan, 1908, 1916, 1924; member of Michigan state board of



First Bay Port State Bank building.

agriculture; elected 1909, 1915. Of Scotch-Irish ancestry. Burial location is unknown.

History on Robert Wallace

In 1865, the Grindstone quarries (2) were purchased by Wallace's father and his brothers who purchased the quarry from Captain Peer, the first white child born in the wilderness of the thumb at Wild Fowl Bay in 1813. These two companies were



William H. Wallace of Bay Port, MI.

called Wallace & Prentiss' Lake Huron Grindstone Quarry.

Side note:

Robert Wallace was 15 when we started working as a laborer in the quarry from 1854 until 1864. He then secured the position as manager and finally became the chief proprietor in 1868. His family have evinced the same traits of industry,

ability and are well known throughout the state today for their active work in business, political and social life. In 1888, the Cleveland Stone Company purchased all the property owned by the Lake Huron Stone Company and became sole proprietors of the quarry property at Grindstone City employing 150 men at that time.

During this time, Bay Port was a thriving fishing community which boasted itself as the largest fresh water fisheries in the world.

The Gillingham Fishery was established in 1886, and Bay Port Fish Company in 1895. Names associated with the industry were Wallace, Ballard, Dutcher, Engelhard, Sprague, Deming and Gillingham, who had four generations connected to the fishery.

Commercial fishing was first established off Bay Port on North Island in 1868 by R.J. Gillingham. He expanded his fishery to the mainland in Bay Port in 1886.

W.J. Orr and W.H. Wallace established the Bay Port Fish Co. in 1895, which still keeps many of the early traditions alive today.

In 1896, William H Wallace of Bay Port, Michigan joined with William J. Orr to

See **BPSB** on Page 3

PIGEON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 523 • Pigeon, Michigan 48755
989-453-3242

Denny Esch, President
Ardra Schaaf, Vice President
Paul Schuette, Secretary
David Eichler, Treasurer

~: Trustees ~:

Jim Leinbach • Steven Schulze
Tim Voss • Joyce Kretzschmer

Six Regular Meetings:

Second Monday of the month
May - July - Sept. -

Oct. - Nov. - Jan. - Mar. 3:30 p.m.

Board Meetings:

Fourth Monday of the month
All meetings at 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Location:

Woelke Historical Research Center.

WANTED –

The Pigeon Historical Society would like to have a complete set of Laker High School yearbooks. These yearbooks are available for research at the Woelke Center.

We are missing the following years: 1986, 1987, 1993, 1996, 1997, and 2015.

We would greatly appreciate anyone who would be willing to donate a yearbook to help us complete our yearbook set!

Thank you for your consideration!





Excerpted from A HISTORY OF MY LIFE

- By Florence Gwinn Schluchter
My Conversion . . .

Mother told us many Bible stories and I had always gone to Sunday School in the school house where they had a large chart to which they fastened the Sunday School lesson into place. It always had a picture to illustrate the story.

One night, when I was almost four years old, I went to bed, as usual, after I had said my prayers. I lay there thinking about how much Jesus must have loved us to give his life to save us. I also thought about the verse, "The gift of God is eternal through Jesus Christ Our Lord."

I had received gifts before, so I realized that I needed to accept the gift to have it. So I said, "I will be glad to have Your gift. Thank you." Then I added, "I love you. I'll serve you all the days of my life." And again added, "When I can earn money, I'll tithe." A quiet peace came over me and I knew I was a child of the King.

I then went to sleep.

I've kept my promises all my life and am so glad I have! Not in my own strength, but because of His keeping powers.

In those days, at revival meetings, they often asked the Christians to stand just before the altar call, so from that time on I always stood with the other Christians. I suppose older folk thought I did not understand. Then, at later revivals, I began to wonder about things. I had never had the joy some had. So, I went forward, I was surely disappointed! I had no great joy. It was some time later when I discovered I could have and did have great joy, even in the midst of sorrow.

Later I had worked with a friend for over a month, trying to win her for the Lord. When she finally accepted the Lord's blessings, that great wave of joy flooded my soul so I could not speak. I just said, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" From then on Satan didn't

bother me, and I have proven that "The Joy of the Lord is my strength."

Christmas at Grandma Gwinn's . .

Another Christmas that I recall was spent at Grandma Gwinn's. The family and grandchildren were all there. Grandma had taken her horse hair sofa out of the northeast corner of her living room and put a nice balsam tree in its place. She had it decorated with the things we trimmed the trees with in those days.

Uncle Joe stood beside the tree when we entered the room. Immediately a brightly dressed little monkey began to run up the tree. We could hardly believe our eyes. In a few moments the monkey backed down the tree. Was that a mystery!! To this day I don't know how it worked, but it did!

All day we asked Uncle Joe over and over to make the monkey climb the tree.

Over the River And Through the Woods...

One Thanksgiving, Grandma Gwinn asked the family for Thanksgiving Dinner. That was fine, but a few days before Thanksgiving it turned cold and had snowed. The snow was quite deep and we had no sleigh of any kind. So how were we going to get to Grandma's? I was so afraid we wouldn't get there!

Papa (that's what we called him at that age) said, "Don't worry! I will get you there," but it still seemed impossible to me.

Thanksgiving morning Papa said, "Get on your good clothes, we're going to Grandma's." I gladly obeyed, but still felt skeptical.

A little later, here came Papa with our horses hitched to something. As they came closer, I saw what it was.

He had gone to Caseville some time before and found a big wooden box they used to ship supplies. The box would fit on the jumper between the big pegs, I think that's what they called them.

Mother and Vera climbed in the box, but Papa had to lift Dick and me in. We could see by standing up, as we all did, or otherwise there would not have been room to get in. Father had to stand behind the box with one foot on each runner. He somehow managed to balance himself. Taking hold of the reins, away we went up north, over the white and glistening snow, through the field, into our woods, and down the embankment to the river. Across the embankment, we entered into Grandpa's woods, on through his pasture, up the lane past the barn to the house.

Grandma came out wearing her long

white apron and a white cap on her head. After a good dinner we, of course, had to have a "hymn sing" with Aunt Maria at the organ.

All too soon it was time to get back into our box for another delightful ride home.

Even as a child, that ride increased my faith in my Heavenly Father. If Papa could supply a means of getting to Grandma's, how much more was our Heavenly Father able to supply to our needs.

The Jumper . . .

In "Over the River and Through the Woods," I mention a 'jumper.' I guess most folk now day wouldn't know what that is, so I decided to add a description of one.

To make a jumper you had to go into the woods and find a tree with a little curve in it. Next, you cut down the tree and cut the log off a little above the curve. From the log you cut two runners about five or six inches in width and depth.

You then take a big awl and bored three holes in each runner. Sturdy pieces of tree limbs are then driven into the holes.

Next you place boards across the bottom of the jumper, which holds the runners in place, so that the front ends are curved up. The jumper was then ready to place short logs on. The pegs kept the logs from rolling off.

The jumper could be used instead of the log boat and logging chain, which were used to haul long logs up to the wood yard or, as we called it, the chip yard, where the woodbees were held.

School . . .

I was about 5½ years old when I went to school. I went with my big sister to protect me.

My seat mate was Ida White. My sister Vera and Alma White sat in the seat in front of Ida and I. We were in the back seat. We both knew how to play Authors, so we used our seat as a table while we sat on the floor and played the game. We thought the teacher, Mr. J.W. Wilson, couldn't see us.

In those days, there wasn't much to entertain the chart class, so I used to listen to the other classes, especially the reading classes. To my amazement, one day I heard the class read "Over the River and Through the Woods." Was I puzzled!! Who could have known about our ride? Why they even knew the color of our horses. I remained puzzled over that for some time.

The next year, Mr. W.N. Turner was our teacher. He said he would like to have me write the County Examination for the

first grade. That was rarely done, but I did it. Lo and behold, when the marks came back from the commissioner, I had the highest marks in the school! I kept that diploma until just very recently.



BPSB from page 1



Wallace and Morley Company then operated a general store in Bay Port with their corporate offices located on the second floor.

'engage' in the banking industry to meet the demands of the Bay Port area which included his general store, fishing and quarry businesses. Thus the Bay Port Bank of Wallace and Orr was born.

The Bank of Vestaburg was started as a private bank on January 4, 1909 by the Wallace & Orr Company of Bay Port, Michigan as the organizers. The stockholders at that time were William J. Orr, of Bay Port, Michigan; William H. Wallace, of Saginaw, Michigan; George Billbrough of Remus, Michigan. Ed C. Cramer at that time was the cashier and remained as such until February 1, 1914.

The state Bank of Vestaburg took over the holdings of the bank of Vestaburg and their charter was granted on May 2, 1911. The capitol stock was \$20,000. The first officers for the present organization were – William J. Orr, President; William H. Wallace, Vice President, Ed C. Cramer cashier. Directors were George Billbrough, Edward Cramer, Andrew W. Orr, and E.J. Orr. The present capital stock of \$20,000 with a surplus of \$3,300.

The present officers are as follows: William J. Orr, President; George Billbrough, Vice President; Thomas G. Meddick, Cashier. Directors are Andrew W. Orr, E.J. Orr, W.J. Orr, George Billbrough and Thomas Meddick.

In August of 1915, Wallace and Orr divided their interest in the partnership. W.H. Wallace took all of the Huron County operations including the bank, fish company, elevators and the stone company, W. J. Orr acquired the banks in Western Michigan at Remus, Vestaburg, Six Lakes, Edmore and Brimley and the

elevator at Vestaburg and Owendale. Today only Bay Port State Bank is still operating as an independent bank.

After the sale of the Bank, renamed initially the Bay Port Bank, W.H. Wallace and John H. Fahrner divided and owned the bank interests equally.

In September 1915, the Bay Port Fish Company offices were moved to the dock, the telephone exchange was moved to a new building and the post office was later moved to another location – leaving the entire store for the Wallace & Morley Company which was incorporated and the bank for which a new building had been started.

The bank building was completed in February 1916 (W.H. Wallace & Company responsibility \$500,000). The officers at this time were: W.H. Wallace, President - John H. Fahrner, Cashier - Otto Schmidt, Assistant Cashier.

William J. Orr died in June 1921 at 57 years old due to declining health. At that time, he was still in banking.

William H. Wallace died from injuries sustained in a tragic car accident in Sebewaing on July 28th, 1933. He was 71 years old and left a legacy in the thumb.

His entrepreneurial spirit lives on today.

In 1938, the Wallace family formed the Bay Port State Bank. The Charter

was granted on March 3, 1938 and the officers were:

John H. Fahrner, President/Director
W.H. Wallace, Director
H.E. Henne, Director
Frank Eisengruber, Director
John Gillingham, Director
Lloyd T. Crane, Director
Otto Schmidt, Director

1940 - After John Fahrner's death, Otto Schmidt was elected President.

1945 - Warren McIntyre resigned as cashier and Peter F. Richards was elected cashier on April 1st.

1966 - Peter Richards was elected Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer. The Board of Directors was increased to include the election A.G. Spaeth, Chairman of the Board.

1967 - Harry Lombard was elected Vice-President due to the continued growth.

1970's A.G. (Al) Spaeth, continued with Bay Port State Bank, assuming control in the 1970's.

SIDE NOTE: Al Spaeth, quite the coin dealer, or professional numismatist, leased out the old Bay Port State Bank building as a coin shop called the Numismatist!

1982-83 James Foster was named President and Chief Executive Officer, taking control of the bank.

1988 - Executive Vice President asked Edwin Eichler to join the bank's Board of Directors.

1991 - Edwin Eicher was named Board Chairman and C.E.O. and assumed control of the Bank with his brother Neal Eichler.

If you want eggs, you must make your poultry exercise.
It may also be said that homeliness is only skin deep.

THE PIGEON PROGRESS.

PROGRESS PRINTING & PUB. Co.

PIGEON, - - MICHIGAN.

Entered at the postoffice at Pigeon, Michigan, for transmission through the mails at second-class rates of postage.

Ads, or changes of same, must be in by Tuesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock, to insure insertion same week.

One Dollar Per Year in Advance.

\$1.50 if not paid within six months.



Bay Port Office



Pigeon Office



Bad Axe Office

- 1991** - Harold Robinson was named Bank President.
- 1992** - Robert J. Main, Senior Lending Officer started with the bank.
- 1995** - Robert J. Main was named bank President.
- 2017** - Teresa R. Snider was named bank President.

Edwin H. Eichler
1988 – Present

- Ed Eichler, a native of Pigeon and Laker graduate. Favorite activity – football
- Went to college in Illinois, North Central College
- At North Central, he met his future wife Wanda
- Received his teaching certificate, and taught school for three years before returning to his home town to help out the family business, Pigeon Telephone Company.
- Eichler's currently operate Agri-Valley Services, Pigeon Telephone, Thumb Cellular, The Quilt Shop, Main Street Café and Har-Jo's. Additionally, they renovated many of the downtown

buildings.

- Major supporter of Michigan State University
- Major supporter of Huron Community Fair and the JLA sale, along with the Sanilac and Tuscola JLA/4-H sale.
- Major contributor of the Huron County Ice Hockey Rink.
- This year, 2021, named Outstanding North Central College Alumni.

2015 - Named #28, under \$500 million with \$89 million in assets, Asset Size, Best Bank, Overall Lending! Only one other Michigan bank made the list!

2016-2019 - Number one Agricultural lender in the country per asset size.

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, One hundred ten years ago, December 1, 1911:

John Doecker, Pigeon, and his brother, George of Ohio, purchased the implement business of Heasty & Harder, Pigeon.

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, One hundred years ago, December 1, 1916:

Dr. Robert McGregor, 42, the Ugly physician who was sentenced to life imprisonment in Jackson prison four years ago for the alleged murder of Cyril Sparling in Huron county, was pardoned by Governor W.N. Ferris on Nov. 28.

New Road to the Thumb

G.R. Lovejoy, of Lenox, is working up a scheme for a steam railroad, north and west through the "thumb" to Bay City, and has applied to the Detroit Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade for assistance. Mr. Lovejoy says the road will certainly be built from Emmett through Sanilac Center to Bay City, whether he gets any help from Detroit or not, as bonuses have been donated, but if Detroit will give a \$100,000 bonus or float that amount of bonds he will bring the road to Lenox, 39 miles from Detroit, where the connection can be made with this city over the Grand Trunk.

If the road stops at Emmett it will connect there with the Chicago & Grand Trunk, and trade that would otherwise come to Detroit will be diverted.

From The Pigeon Progress, January 1, 1903.

CHEAP EXCURSIONS TO NEBRASKA

October 5 and 19

On these dates round-trip tickets, good for 21 days, will be sold by all Burlington Route agents and by those of many eastern railroads at **HALF FARE** Plus \$2.00.

The undersigned will send you free on application a handsome illustrated pamphlet describing Nebraska, with a large sectional map of the State.

**A Dry, Healthy Climate.
A Soil Unsurpassed for Richness,
easy to cultivate, and yielding
all varieties of crops.**

That is what Nebraska offers to the homeseeker. Ask your nearest ticket agent about the cheap rates, or write to P. S. Eustis, General Passenger Agent, C. B. & Q. R. R., Chicago, Ill.

White House Reception.

President Roosevelt's New Year's reception was one of the most brilliant events in Washington's recent social history. All callers were afforded the opportunity of greeting the president and Mrs. Roosevelt and exchanging with them the compliments of the new year.

No distinctions were made except such as were rendered necessary in the preservation of order; and the greetings extended to all high and low, rich and poor—were alike cordial and sincere.

The general public, for the first time, had an opportunity to see the widely heralded improvements in the White House—improvements which when completed will have cost about \$600,000. To many familiar with the interior of the mansion as it was a year ago the changes made were a revelation.

From The Pigeon Progress, January 1, 1903.

ALL AROUND US

Wheat is worth one dollar a bushel and almost everything else seems to be "as good as wheat."

The saying "as good as wheat" has regained all its old-time popularity with those who have it to sell.

From The Pigeon Progress, September 10, 1897

RECOLLECTIONS OF BY-GONE DAYS

A Collection of Writings by local writer
GEORGE KEIM

SITTING IN THE DUTCH KETTLE -

Several of us men were sitting in the Dutch Kettle talking about old times and what we use to do. We started to talk about what we used to wear. I know we wore a lot warmer clothes than we do now.

Most of us senior citizens will tell you

that the winters were always a lot colder and we didn't have heaters in the cars like they do now.

One thing we used to wear was fleece-lined underwear and we always had long-johns on even the girls. Some girls hated them.

I remember one of my sisters told my mother she wouldn't wear long-johns anymore except for a few times during the winter, but she soon started wearing

them during winter time.

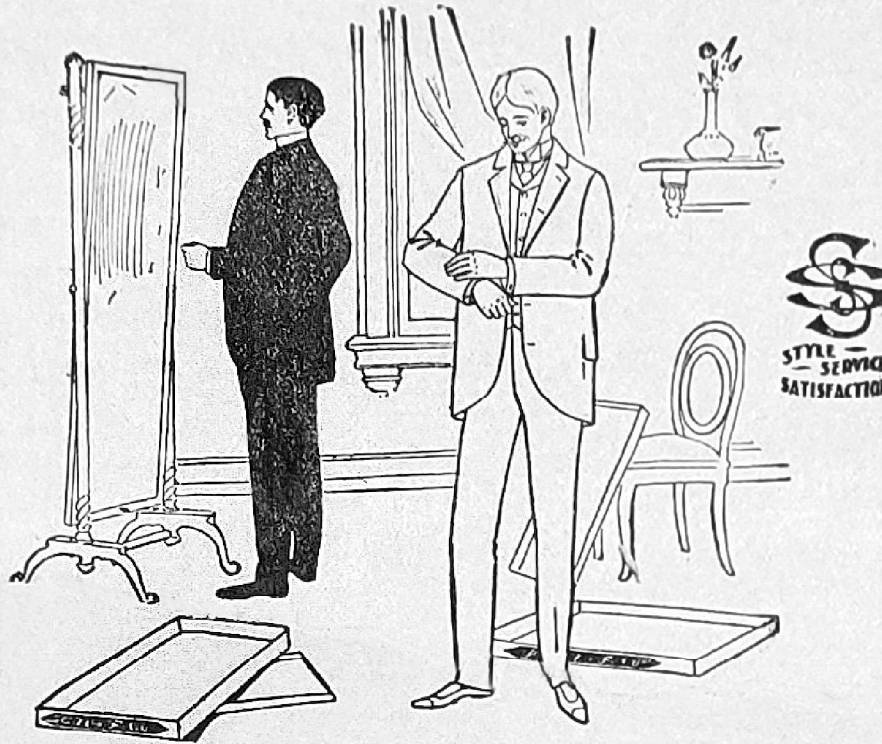
One thing the boys had to wear, at least to school and church, were knee pants or britches and we always had to wear long black stockings. Of course we had to use a suspender belt to hold them up.

When I was a little boy, the boys had to wear a blouse that buttoned on one side and they were so big that they hung out over those short pants. I called them "belly pants" and boys always had to wear those short pants until they were at least 14 years old. I used to wear overalls to the country school in the winter time.

Then when I was 14, I got a Sunday suit with long pants and a lot of boys told me I thought myself smart. A lot of boys older than I still had their short pants, but I was big for my age so I got by with it.

One girl in our school had very nice long blond hair and she had her hair bobbed. She cried all night and took her cut off hair and pinned it to her head. She did a good job of it and unless you knew it, she looked as if she still had her hair.

Well, times have changed and you don't see boys with short pants or girls with high overshoes sometimes I wonder how people will dress 50 years from now.



Looks Handsome— Feels Good!

And to complete the link of satisfaction, it wears just the way you figured on it to. Keeps its shape because it's made right; keeps the customer because it's sold right.

THIS IS
THE MAKE



A GUARANTEE TICKET
WITH EVERY GARMENT.

We want our customers to remember that we are here to sell our goods at the lowest price and give you the most goods for your money, and stand back of every article sold in our store, if not satisfactory represented, your money back. This is the way we do business.

REGULAR MENS	\$12	TO	\$15	SUITS	AT	\$9.50	BARGAINS
"	"	7.50	"	10	"	6.50	IN
"	"	6	"	OVERCOATS	"	4	CLOTHES.
"	"	7.50	"	"	"	5.50	
"	"	10	"	"	"	7.50	

REMEMBER THESE PRICES TO DEC. 25.
A. HIRSHBERG, Pigeon.



Pinnebog, Feb. 15,—Bean pickers who started a sit-down strike in the Pinnebog elevator Friday, were at work today while Joseph Stinson, operator of the elevator, and Joseph Block, Uibly elevator operator, who has consented to act as mediator, were in Detroit seeking further information looking toward a settlement of the dispute.

The pickers, who have been getting five cents a pound, asked an increase to six cents. Sixteen employees are involved.

Later—The dispute was settled Tuesday by an agreement which calls for the continuation of the old rate of five cents a pound until the stock on hand has been taken care of and a rate of six cents a pound for any beans purchased from this date.

Pigeon Progress
February 19, 1937



GO TO
CAMPBELL'S
DRUG STORE
 TABLETS,
 Note Paper,
BOOKS,
 School Supplies,
CANDIES,
 Pure Drugs and
 Patent Medicines
FOR YOUR
PIGEON, MICHIGAN.

THE WOELKE RESEARCH CENTER

The Woelke Research Center is a "Library of Local History" within itself. Years of reaching Pigeon and the surrounding Area has been compiled and documented. It is the work of the late local historian, Arthur Woelke. We have thousands of pages of documentations of our heritage all in books of three ring binders. The collection of scanned photos, including past businesses, local families, churches, schools, newspaper articles and more is a dream come true for any history buff. This Historical Library is also the home of the Pigeon Progress - Advance dating back to 1897. We now have included thousands of pictures that have been scanned and can be seen on a large TV screen. If anyone has any pictures they wouldn't mind being scanned, they can be scanned in a matter of seconds.

Spring and Summer Hours as follows:

May - Friday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

June through August - Thursday and Friday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00p.m.

Appointments for groups and individuals can be made by calling Ardra at 989-553-1944.

BERNE JUNCTION

Michigan Made/ Locally Made Gifts

A Division of Pigeon Historical Society. We invite everyone to visit the Berne Junction. It includes a unique gift shop of locally made gifts plus exhibits unique to our community.

Tentative opening is the 1st weekend in April. Hope to see you there...

PIGEON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

During 2021 the Pigeon Historical Museum will be open starting in June through end of August.

The Museum hours are:

Thursday & Friday - 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. by Appointment Only.

To plan a special tour or event, call 989-453-2558.

The New York prohibitionists will try a new method of distributing their campaign literature, by giving it away at public meetings wrapped around cakes of toilet soap. This wide distribution of free soap ought to result in additional cleanliness, even if it doesn't increase the prohibitionist vote.

The Pigeon Progress

October 1, 1897



W. J. Stevens moved into his new harness shop this week and is now quite comfortably located. The building is not altogether finished, but when completed will be a very neat affair, and a large improvement to the business portion of town. Mr. Stevens enjoys a good trade, and day by day adds to his already large stock.

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, September 15, 1922: The grocery department of Black's Big Store will give you 18 bars laundry soap, five bars toilet soap, two pkg. Mity Fine, two pkg. Jiffy Jell, five dozen can rubbers, three pkgs. spices if you buy \$1 worth of goods, also 15 yards percale for \$1 if you buy a dollar's worth of goods.

From The Progress Advance, September 9, 1897

Muriel—"And how are you getting on with that Boston girl?" Jack—"Swimmingly. I've succeeded in breaking the ice."

Fall Sense

If you are going to bicycle, bicycle now—don't put off healthful pleasure—'tis a long time to spring—months of the best of riding days—Columbia riders wheel on certainty.

1897 Columbias, \$75 TO ALL ALIKE.

Hartford Bicycles, \$50, \$45, \$40.

If Columbias are not properly represented in your vicinity, let us know. POPE MFG. CO., Hartford, Conn.

PIGEON MARKETS

Corrected every Thursday by Jos. Schluchter General Grain and Produce Dealers.

Wheat - No 1 Red, bu., 83 cts.
 Wheat - No. 1 White, per bushel 85 cts.
 Oats, per bushel, 21 to 25 cents.
 Peas, per bushel, 35 to 40 cents.
 Rye, per bushel, 40 cents.
 Corn, in ear, per bushel, 15 cents,
 Potatoes, per bushel, 45 to 56 cents
 Beans, per bushel, 60 cents.
 Onions, per bushel, 60 cents.
 Butter, per pound, 12 cents.
 Eggs. Per dozen, 16 cents.
 Honey, per pound, 08½ cents.
 Lard per pound 6 to 7 cents.
 Hay, per ton, \$5.50 to \$7.00
 Clover seed, per bushel \$2.90
The Pigeon Progress
 January 7, 1898

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, September 12, 1902: A petition has been signed by a large number of citizens asking that the village of Pigeon be incorporated, for improvements to the town.

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, September 29, 1922: Electric juice on the new line from Pigeon to Caseville was turned on Monday and all those connected up are now using juice. The street lights are not connected yet.

We'd love to see you on our Team!

An individual or business can become a member by contracting any active member or by sending your tax deductible cash or check to Pigeon Historical Society, 59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523, Pigeon, MI 48755. Dues are renewed at the annual meeting each year.

Individual Membership: \$20.00 (active member with voting privileges)

Life Membership: \$120.00 (active voting member with lifetime privileges)

Supporting Membership: \$15.00 (non-active supporting member)

Business Membership: \$20.00 or more (contributing member non-voting)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Be our guest and become a member!