

# The Piper Family Move to Michigan 3.

I, William H. Piper<sup>1</sup>, was born April 24, 1881 in Goderich, Ontario, Canada- being the fourth child - I had two elder brothers and a sister.

A short time after my birth my parents moved to a small place about six miles east of Goderich named Benmiller on the Maitland River. My father operated a grist mill there - operated by the power furnished by the river. Spent about three years of my life there (early childhood, of course) and can remember some of the things there; such as the river, when the flood came in the spring, recall seeing the logs floating down stream, also the tavern across the road run by a big man by the name of Jonathan Miller, and the big hill leading down to the river and the mill. My father was in poor health and was ordered to give up the mill and get out into the open.

In June 1884 we moved to Michigan; boarded a boat named the Saginaw Valley and sailed direct across Lake Huron to a place called Sand Beach, since the name has been changed to Harbor Beach. My uncle and father had been over and purchased an eighty acre farm each, seven miles south on Elm Creek in Sherman Township. I can remember the trip across the lake and the first place we stayed overnight; I can remember seeing the lake from the window in the morning; also the trip down to the farm, the wagon loaded with furniture and my uncle carrying me on his shoulder some of the way.

There were no roads past our farm; we came in on a lumber road which run along the top of the hill. The place was a complete wilderness, just enough cleared to build a house on. The house was a frame - one part two stories and an abuilt-to kitchen. For insulation the space between the studding was filled with saw-dust. It was quite a long time before we had plastered walls and smooth floors. The paper on the walls consisted of news-papers pasted on the rough boards. I do not remember any special events; just played around and did not get out very much. There were no churches or Sunday school nearer than Sand Beach, so we did not go.

My parents were very strict and we could not do anything on Sunday. Shoes had to be polished on Saturday afternoon. My father had family worship morning and evening; should he be away my mother would take over the responsibility. I spent a good deal of my time around the creek, which was a beautiful stream - ran in its original course to the lake. In the spring the water would run high for quite a period of time, as there were drains into it which we dug by man. In the springtime hordes of suckers would come up and furnish food for the settlers. We would catch them in nets or traps. To catch them we would drive stakes close together across the stream, leaving a space in the center to place the trap. We would also spear them mostly at night. The outfit consisted of a wire basket about half-bushel in size called a torch, a spear, an axe and a couple of sacks. It took a crew of about five - one to carry the torch, the spear, the chips and axe, and another to carry the fish if we got any. There was considerable work in connection with this- the chips would have to be cut from pine stumps to fill the sacks - sometimes if the crew was large enough we would cut two or more sacks of chips, and it was quite an honor to be able to make chips faster than the other fellows. Often if the fishing was not good we would build a fire and tell yarns around

1. This Will Piper is our grandfather Samuel's younger brother.