

## Orland, Indiana

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The first white settler at Orland, in Steuben County, Indiana, was John Stocker of Vermont in 1834. In 1835 many other settlers arrived from the state of Vermont and built their log cabins along Crooked Creek, now called "Fawn River." Those most prominent, with their families, were Benjamin Pierce, the Parmenters, the Wards, the Coes, Captain Barry and others. The Cabin of John Stocker was the third erected in Steuben County, and Orland, then known as the "Vermont Settlement," was the first settlement in Steuben County. The first white child born in Steuben County was Sarah L. Pierce who afterwards became the wife of Alsinus Townsend. Miss Eliza Eaton was the first school teacher (1836). She afterwards married Augustus Kimball and was the first bride of the settlement. The wedding ceremony was conducted by J. M. Hall, a Baptist minister.

These early settlers came to Indiana over the Vistula Highway which was to northern Indiana what the National Road was to central Indiana. The Vistula Highway is in the program of improved highways and in a short time will be paved across the state. The Vermont Settlement prospered from the start and developed many industries, such as a pump factory, a woolen mill, a carriage factory, a flour and corn mill, a brick factory, a crockery factory and a chair factory. At that time, Coldwater, Michigan, twenty miles away had but one log cabin. The post office was established in 1837 and Alexander Chapin was the first postmaster. The people of this community have always been an honest, hospitable, thrifty, religious and God-fearing people. Yes, the Vermont community was one of culture and from the first established churches and schools. In 1850, an academy was established at Orland known as the North Eastern Literary Institute. It was prominent for several years as one of the outstanding educational institutions of the state.

This country was then, and is now, a part of the finest hunting and fishing area of Indiana and here the Pottawatomie Indians under their Chieftain Baw Beese roamed the country at will. Wall Lake, one and one-half miles west of Orland, where the writer has a summer home, was named

after a wall erected by the Indians on its west shore and where their main camp was located. The author has many arrow heads and Indian trinkets that have been picked up in that neighborhood. Pottawatomie Inn at Pokagon Park was named after the Indian tribe of that name. When the post office was established it was named "Millgrove" but it was discovered that there was another post office in the state by the same name, and it was agreed at a "Singing-School" that the teacher should open the song-book, and that the first tune which should greet his eyes would become the name of the town. Lo and behold! The first tune was that old, old hymn, "Orland"; and that became the name of the village, believe it or not!

Another matter of historical interest is the attitude of Orland in the Civil War. The people living there were always anti-slavery and had one of the most noted Underground Railroad stations in the North. It is too long a story to go into here, but there is a tradition that Eliza Harris of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fame was kept over night in Orland on her way to Canada.

A further item of history relating to Orland is its record holding postmaster by the name of Christian Schneider. He was postmaster under the following national administrations, namely: those of Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison. Is not that one for the "Book"? Mr. Schneider was a tailor by trade, and, for more than forty-five years, had more to do with the life of the community than any other person who ever lived there. At his home on Vistula Street, he had a sun-dial and a bell, and, in all that period of years, Postmaster Schneider never missed ringing that bell at six in the morning and at noon. He rang curfew at eight in the evening and the people set their timepieces accordingly. That old bell is in the City Library at Orland now and highly treasured. The historical facts of this wonderful section of Indiana have been skimmed over lightly, but the community and surrounding country are surely worth visiting.