

## Coming to Oakland County – Jonathan Pixley 1823

History of Oakland County, Michigan, L.H. Everts & Co. Philadelphia, 1877, Pages 133 - 134

*'I was born A.D. 1799, in the township and county of Tioga, in the State of New York. I lived there until March, 1823, when, with my family, I moved to Monroe County, western New York. I lived there eight years, when, in company with my late brother David, I emigrated to Michigan. We started from Brockport, on the Erie canal, on Thursday, the 12th day of May, 1831, and arrived in Buffalo the Saturday following. We stayed there until Monday morning, when we shipped on board the steamer ' William Penn.' After a very rough voyage, we arrived at Detroit on the 20th, at about four o'clock p.m. We put up at the 'Old Yankee Boarding-House.' After getting my family stowed away, I went down to the dock to see to my ' old traps.' This done, I came to the tavern about twelve, midnight. I had some trouble to find my family, but after a while found one of my children in a ' field bed' on the floor. I asked where the rest of them were, and they told me they did not know, but they were there somewhere. As I did not wish to disturb them further, I camped down on the floor, with my clothes on, and lay quiet until morning. There was then a general rush. The house was jammed full of emigrants, and such snarling among the children I never heard before. After breakfast I put out to find a yoke of oxen. I soon found some for sixty-five dollars. Went to a shop, and bought a yoke for them, and driving down to the dock, hitched them to my wagon ; put on a few things, drove up to the tavern, put my family on board, and started for Oakland.*

*"The mud was hub deep, and I had to walk by my oxen's heads, for I did not know what caper they might cut up. We came to what is now called ' Four-Mile House' the first night. Just before reaching this place we had to drive over a large whitewood tree that had fallen across the road. I knew that my oxen could not jump over the log while they were hitched to the wagon, so, driving as near as I could, I unhitched them and made them jump over ; then hitching the chain to the end of the tongue of the wagon, soon pulled it over. We stayed here all night, and but little sleep did we get, for the mosquitoes were determined to have one fill. The next morning the landlord came to my room and told me that there was a man who wished to see me ; I hurried out, and behold it was Linus Cone. He came there some time in the night, on his way to Detroit. The landlord told him that there was an immigrant there who was moving to Rochester. He wished to bring back a load of goods, and wanted fifty cents per hundred. I thought this a big price ; he said I would not think so by the time I got there. I gave him an order for my goods, and made up my mind it was cheap enough. We started for this place soon after breakfast, with two or three other teams in company, for Royal Oak. At noon we arrived at a place then called ' Mother Handsome's;' took dinner there, but had nothing for my oxen, I told the old lady that we were not very hungry, but wanted a good cup of tea. She said, 'By G— you shall have it!' We got it, and so strong I did not know whether it was herb tea or what. After dinner we started from there, and farther on came to Chase's Corners, on the Crooks road, where, seeing a good bite of grass in Mr. Chase's garden, he let me turn my oxen in to bait. They ate up what there was in a hurry. I bought a*

*bushel of potatoes, and started on.' Our next stopping-place was at Mrs. Guy Phelps', in Troy. It being Saturday night we stayed there until Monday morning, when we took an early start for our home. Got as far as Benjamin Horton's by noon, where we took dinner, after which we resumed our journey and arrived at our present home, on the northeast quarter of section 23, then the township of Oakland, now Avon, on the 23d day of May.*

*Nothing occurred during the summer worthy of note until the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, when all but myself were taken sick with typhoid fever. This was a great drawback for us, but I had good and kind neighbors, for which I shall always be thankful...*

*"In conclusion I would say, besides being very homesick the first season I had to work out by day for bread for myself and family of eight. My exertions to get out of debt were in vain, for at the end of the first year I was fifty dollars in debt. This debt I contrived to pay the following year. Now I have a good farm of one hundred and fifty acres, free from debt."*

- Jonathan Pixley, of Avon

