



FLAT RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FRHS LogMark

MARCH, 2025

Board of Directors:

Keith Hudson, President; Robin Walter, Vice President & School Liaison; Jean Hudson, Secretary; Lee Beard, Treasurer;
Trustees: Judy Gager/Logmark, Larry Alman, Steve Kemp, Cory Smith, Susan McDonnell, Ryan Schlehuber, Bo Stephenson



The museum opens April 26th and 27th for its 2025 season of discoveries but YOU, our
FLAT RIVER SOCIETY MEMBERS are invited to join us for a
MEMBERS ONLY PREVIEW OPEN HOUSE
Friday night, April 25th from 6:30-8 pm

Come and get a sneak peek at our new displays and . . .

- *Celebrate the 175th Anniversary of Montcalm County and its lumbering history on the Flat River;
- *Share local Girl Scout history through a guest exhibit by a Junior High Scout earning a special badge;
- *View some exciting new artifacts that have been added to our main floor Danish display;
- *Use your phone upstairs to snap the QR codes on the period rooms to read/hear about exhibits;
- *Check out the chicken exhibit in the lower level to see what's been added. HOPE YOU'LL COME!



Congratulations to Peter Hansen of Gowen for earning his second Montcalm County Pioneer Certificate in honor of ancestors living in the county prior to 1900. We invited him to share his story of researching these families and the surprises he learned in doing so. ***His story is on the next page of this newsletter.***

If YOUR ancestors lived in Montcalm County before 1900 - and you can prove it – request an application for a Montcalm County Pioneer Certificate. Applicants must be a direct descendant of an individual who can be documented as living in Montcalm County prior to December 31, 1899. To get your application, just send us an email at frhsmuseum@gmail.com

Family History Secrets Revealed Through Pioneer Certificate Research by Peter Hansen of Gowen, MI

Stories about family ancestors related to me by my mother Margarette Heinze-Hansen (1911- 1994) are primarily responsible for my interest in genealogy. It seems that as the years went by, the interest became more and more intense.

My cousin, Roger Olsen, also helped develop my interest by sharing his research on our common great-grandparents, Christen Hansen (1851-1941) and his wife Maren Kirstine Poulsen (1854-1932). These Danish immigrants first lived near Gowen, then on a farm in Pine Township, and then later in Trufant. Roger's research was the basis for my **first** application for a Montcalm County Pioneer certificate in 2017.

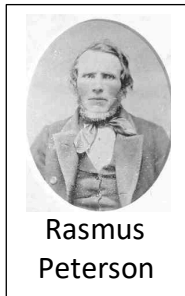
Several years went by before I bought a subscription to Ancestry.com to learn more about my mother's side of the family. This also widened my search for other ancestors on my father's side.

Aided by early plat maps with property owner's names, census records, old family papers, photos and letters, I began to research my other paternal great-grandparents, Rasmus Hansen (1844-1923) and Caroline Maria Peterson-Hansen (1852-1913).

On an 1875 Montcalm Township map I found 60 acres of land belonging to Rasmus Hansen at the

corner of today's Pakes and West County Line Roads. The 1880 census further supported this find.

Knowing that Rasmus Hansen immigrated from Denmark in 1866 I thought I would look at the 1870 census to see if he was on the 60 acres ten years earlier. I was astounded to find that the 60 acres was owned by Rasmus Peterson (1816-1873), Caroline's father and my great-great-grandfather.

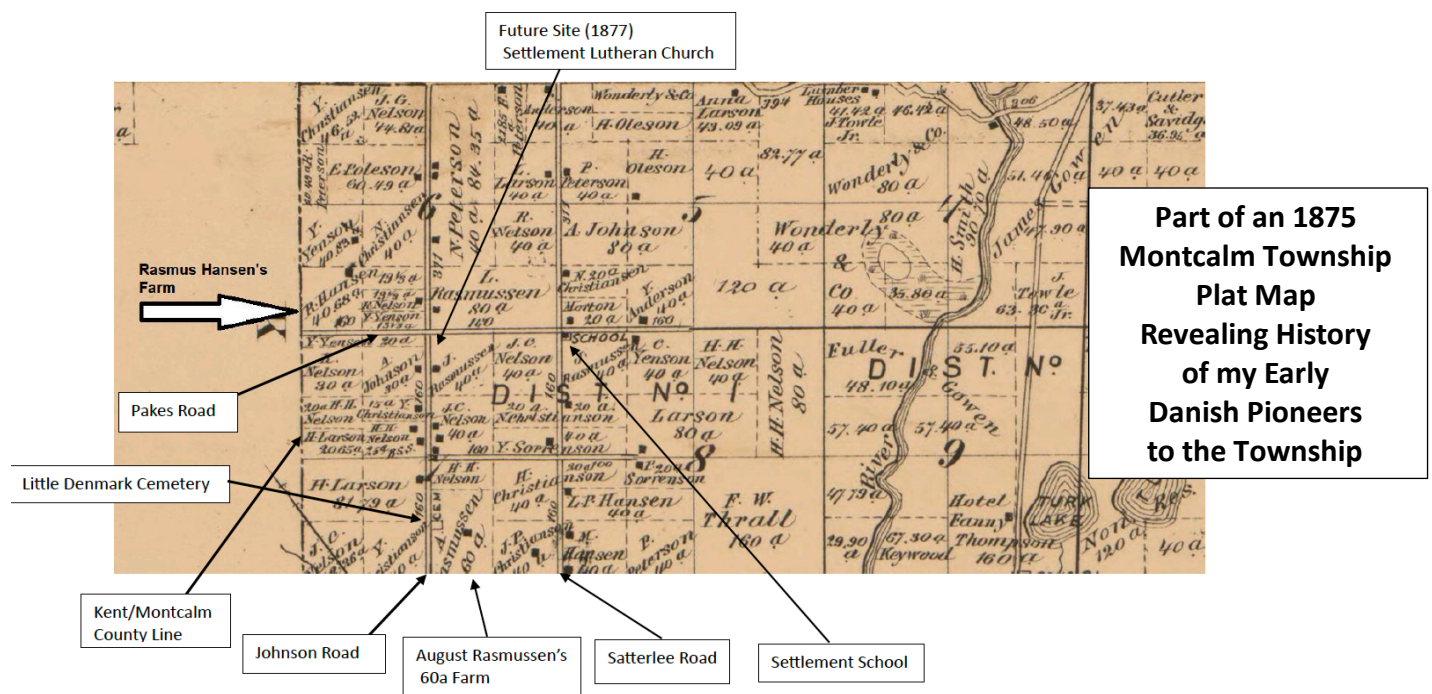


Rasmus Peterson

The 1870 census revealed that Rasmus Peterson (53) was living with his son-in-law Rasmus Hansen (26), his daughter Caroline Peterson-Hansen (18) keeping house, Caroline's daughter Augusta Hansen (2) and his daughter Matilda Peterson (14). With this find, I made a **second** application and recently received a Montcalm County Pioneer certificate for Rasmus Peterson.

The initial search for my great grandparents turned into a pleasant and surprising find of the Montcalm Township homestead of my great-great grandfather just a mile from where we live on our Centennial farm in Spencer Township. I have been driving by the wooded 60 acres frequently on trips to Gowen not realizing that at one time it was Rasmus Peterson's piece of America!

Peter Hansen- January, 2025



TRI-RIVER
HISTORICAL
MUSEUM NETWORK

TRACING OUR ROUTES

• Roads • Rivers • Rails • Trails •

2025-2026 Spring Into The Past

The Tri-River Museum Network will celebrate America250 with the theme **“Tracing our Routes – Roads, Rivers, Rails and Trails”** during the annual “Spring Into the Past” tour of small museums. In 2025, Greenville’s Flat River, Fighting Falcon and Oakfield museums of the North group (north of 5-Mile Road) will be featured along with museums in Edmore, Vestaburg, Lakeview, Sand Lake, Cedar Springs, Rockford, Belding and Plainfield. **Museums will be open Saturday, May 3rd from 11 to 5 and Sunday, May 4th 1-5 pm. Spread the word and plan to visit!** (In 2026, the South group of museums will participate and be featured on the same theme.)

Stumping for Farm Land



(Daily News photo, 1976)

When the early settlers came to Michigan in the midst of the lumbering era, much of the available land was full of stumps which had to be pulled out so the land could be successfully farmed. Some of the stumps were enormous and digging them out was arduous work so they had to find a better way. Using their knowledge of levers and pulleys and actual horse power, they devised a tripod stump puller, which proved to be a very essential tool, making possible the agricultural era that followed. The photo at left shows a stump puller being erected next to the museum in 1976. Owner Phillip Johnson of Stanton said it was made in Cedar Springs and was last used in the 1920s northeast of Stanton.

When the Eureka Township Hall was moved to the museum property in 1980, the stump puller was moved across the street to Tower Riverside Park. It was recently refurbished with a new stump and landscaping, thanks to city workers. Area 4th graders are intrigued by the apparatus when they visit the museum in the fall for education about the lumbering era.

Stumps were often hauled to property lines or fields to form a fence to contain cattle and also provided an excellent refuge for small wild life. Nearby Trufant is noted for its stump fences!

(Any mathematicians, artists or engineers want to draw a diagram for us to show how this stump puller works?)



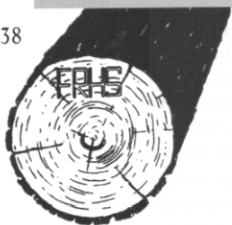
APRIL IS VOLUNTEER MONTH! We couldn’t do what we do without our volunteers and donors! **THANK YOU!** We recently hosted area third graders for three mornings and it takes at least 12 volunteers to give of their time to share information and activities about Native Americans and Fur Trading – and repeat it about 12 times per morning! Thank you all for what you do so students can learn outside the classroom. During the year when the museum is open, volunteers are needed as docents to make visitors feel welcome. Several times during the year, our Victorian Garden needs some TLC, and no green thumb is needed! Donations are always welcome, whether for sponsorships, special projects, memorials or “just because”. And of course, your membership is important to us because it shows you care about community history! **We hope you will participate in our activities and share information with family and friends! Thank you!**

LOGMARK

FLAT RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 188

Greenville, MI 48838



Museum will open

April 26/27

for the season.

Check out our website

flatrivermuseum.org

for a video tour!

Flat River Historical Society

P. O. Box 188 • Greenville, MI 48838 • 616-754-5296

APPLICATION FOR NEW or RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Dues payable at the beginning of the calendar year – pay online at flatrivermuseum.org – click “donate”

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

Email address _____ Logmarks will be emailed unless checked: _____
(***Emailed newsletters come sooner and are in color and save postage costs***)

___ Single - \$15.00 ___ Family - \$25.00 ___ Annual Business - \$50.00

___ New ___ Renewal Date _____ Additional Donation _____

Would you like to be a volunteer? _____ The Flat River Historical Society needs you!

Fill in this membership form and return it with your check to the above address or pay online at flatrivermuseum.org.
Dues are payable at the beginning of the calendar year. If you have already paid your membership dues for the year 2025,
we **thank you** and want you to know that your membership is the lifeblood of the society.