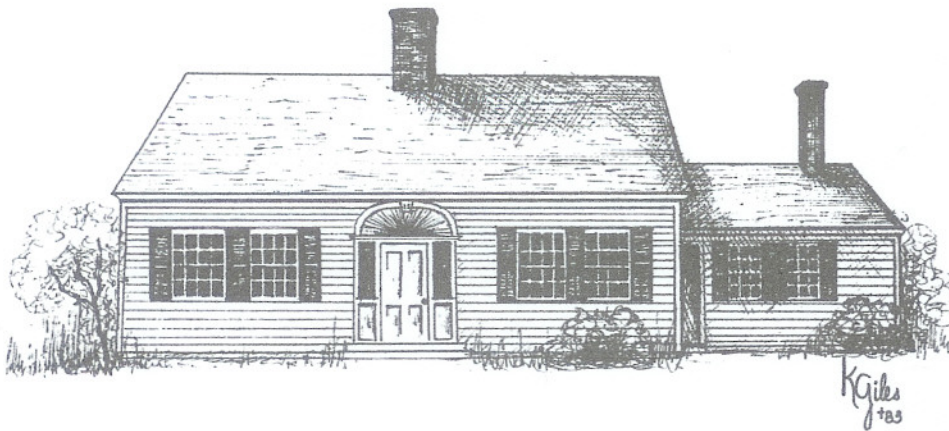


OAKLAND AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents

Oakland Centennial Celebration
1883-1983



MARCH 10, 1983

MESSALONKEE HIGH SCHOOL

OAKLAND from the beginning

In the early 1600's an association of English gentlemen was formed and took the name of "Plymuoth Colony" and was the gem of the Plymouth Council, which was organized in 1620 in Plymouth, England. The purpose of this group was to effect such measures as would cause Kennebec Valley to become populated, as it is today, by a frugal and industrious people.

In 1629 William Bradford, then Governor of the Puritan Colony at Plymouth, received from the "Plymouth Council" a large grant of land in the Kennebec Valley called the "Kennebec Patent" which consisted of that portion lying between the Ocean and the southern line of the town of Anson, encompassing that territory which is now Oakland. The Bradford claim was sold by the colony at Plymouth in 1661 to Antipas Boyes, Edward Twing, Thomas Brattle and John Winslow for \$2,000. This claim later passed into the hands of a company called "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchases".

When the valley up the Kennebec was first explored, it was inhabited by a tribe of Indians known as Kennebis. This tribe was divided into four tribes, one of which was known as the Tacconets, who possessed and occupied the fertile region watered by the Sebasticook, a tributary of the Kennebec - hence Oakland's maiden name . . . Tacconet.

Her first batch of white immigrants, while living under the regime of squatter sovereignty, aspired to the name Kingsfield, later (1771) to be incorporated as Winslow, after Captain John Winslow. After thirty-one years of prosperity and growth, those living west of the Kennebec River effected a peaceful secession and were incorporated in 1802 as Waterville, whose territory was enlarged about 1840, by several square miles from the town of Dearborn when it was divided among its adjacent neighbors and ceased to exist.

When the settlement on the river grew to be more important and the manufactories at West Waterville created another center of activity and trade, questions of taxation produced a feeling of remonstrance in the western section until West Waterville was incorporated as a town on February 26, 1873.

Ten years later on February 22, 1883, a town warrant was issued notifying the inhabitants of West Waterville that a meeting would be held on March 1, 1883 at 2:00 P.M. at Memorial Hall to see if the town would vote to have its name changed and what name the town would vote to recommend to the Legislature in place of West Waterville. At the March 1st meeting 208 voted to change the name and 129 voted against the name change. Two names were suggested, Oakland and Weldon. 169 voted for Oakland and 95 for Weldon. The name was then sent to the Legislature for approval and was approved by the House of Representatives on March 9, 1883 and by the Senate and the Governor on March 10, 1883.

The question remains . . . why Oakland or Weldon ? Whose idea was it and why did they change it ? In a letter to Horace Greeley on March 13, 1883 his brother-in-law writes, "I thought I would drop you a line and congratulate you on the name of the town" . . . does this mean Horace was one of the people who instigated the change ? And in still another letter to Horace from his sister Susie, "is Grandville Pullen going to move out of town now that they have changed the name?" Does this mean that perhaps Mr. Pullen was one of the 129 voters who did not wish to change the name, or one of the 95 voters who wanted to change the name to Weldon ?

We at the Oakland Area Historical Society would like to know the answers to any or all of these questions. If you know the answers please let us know . . . better still join us and help learn more about Oakland's history and help us to preserve it.

UPCOMING CENTENNIAL EVENTS

APRIL 23	Centennial Celebration at the Grange
MAY 7	Centennial Ball
JUNE 21	R.B. Hall Band Concert at McCartney House Museum
JULY 16	Street Dance
AUGUST 4	Historical Society Antique Show
AUGUST 6	Parade and Downtown Celebrations Including, Country Western Music and Barbeque