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PIONEER HISTORY OF CHAMPION HILL.
BY MARY MARSHALL.

Champion Hill was first settled in 1862 by two or three enterprising young men, Mr. H. Hawkins, Mr. E. Wellman and Mr. Tiffany. The latter did not remain, however, and Mr. Hawkins only stayed a short time. Mr. Wellman was, therefore, the first permanent settler. After securing his homestead he proceeded to build his house, which was no easy task, as he was obliged to go to Frankfort for his lumber, have it towed up the river, then hauled with an ox team from Benzonia. His house completed, he proceeded to back it in true pioneer style. The next year Mr. Isaac Maxfield and George Sinclair moved in with their families, and while waiting to build, abode with Mr. Wellman. The only road at that time was made by the first settlers south to the Traverse State road. The nearest neighbor lived three and a half miles away. Other settlers soon followed, so that the woods were soon resounding with the stroke of the axe and the sounds of busy life. Among the earliest settlers will be remembered old Mr. Maxfield who lived alone on what is now Avery Thomas' farm; shortly afterwards came his two sons-in-law, Mann and Sekins, who lived on what is now Nort Thomas' farm. Mrs. Marshall, who came to Benzonia the year before, secured her homestead in 1865, and the next spring moved on, her principal helper being her oldest son, Neil, a mere boy at the time.

Judd Sinclair moved in about this time with his mother and sister. A few years after Elizabeth St. Clair and the Kintner brothers came, also Charles Smith, who lived alone on his homestead. Mr. Kent Anderson and Tye came, also, with their families. Mr. Kent left shortly after, however. The first school was held in Isaac Maxfield's house, Miss Lucy Leigh, afterward Mrs. Barrett, teacher. Soon afterward a log school house was built where the present one is now located. The first teacher was Miss Anna Spencer, afterward Mrs. Thacker. The first church services, also Sunday school, were held in Mrs. Marshall's house. The first preacher was Rev. John Pettitt of Benzonia, whose earnestness and zeal won the love and good will of all. Our church and Sunday school were well attended in those days. The Champion Hillers were famous pedestrians; they thought no more of walking ten miles than we do now less than half the distance; many preferred it even to riding after their oxen, pleasurable though it was.

For excitement there was now and then a spelling school, logging bee or bear story; of the latter a well remembered one comes to mind. Two boys looking for cows some distance from home were startled suddenly by ominous growls in the underbrush near; they immediately started for a tree; Mr. Bear took up his station near. The boys did not know how many hours they were in that tree, but they made good the time by shouting for help. Finally Mr. St. Clair and Mr. Maxfield heard them over two miles away and came to the rescue with lanterns.

Champion Hill sent out some soldiers at the last call for more troops. Mr. Emory Wellman marched away in company with Messrs. Pason, Case, John Hubbell and Isaac Kirkland.

For a long time our settlement was unnamed; various names were suggested and rejected. Andersonville, in honor of our worthy neighbor, Mr. Anderson, was rejected because it was too suggestive of the war prison. Finally, as the place was put on the Methodist circuit, some decision must be made at once and Champion Hill was adopted, which seems very appropriate, as all will agree who have ever mounted the highest hills.