

# Martiny: Lost in history

BY ROSALIE ASHBAUGH

Lumbering was the earliest industry of northern Michigan. Lumbermen entered Mecosta County before the first settlements were established. The Muskegon River became a convenient means for transportation of logs from the interior of the state. By the time of the Civil War the "Big Drives" of logs were passing down the river.

One account of the logging industry's "Big Drives" is given in the Pioneer dated April 30, 1868, it states, "Commodore Pingree passed over the rapids here on Sunday last with the 'Big Drive' of about 60,000,000 feet of logs. The drive is considerably ahead of time this year, and must reach its destination several weeks in advance of former years."

This is the same year that John Martiny came to Mecosta County into the area of the township now named after him. The first supervisor, in 1875, was Nicholas Thieson.

In the same year the township was formed, a settlement gained a post office it was located on the west branch of the Little Muskegon River. First called Martinez, later changed to Martiney and finally to Martiny.

The location of that village was at the junction of the river where the Detroit, Lansing & Northern Railroad crossed. Today the only evidence of a village having existed there is the old railroad bed which is evident one-half mile south of Cleveland on 90th Ave. The land is now privately owned, but if you could walk down the

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Pictured here is the old railroad bed of the Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad that served Martiny, the lost in history village of 1875-1893. Going west from where this photo was taken down the railroad grade would lead you to the west branch of Little Muskegon River and to the site of the village. Photo by Rosalie Ashbaugh.

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railroad bed to the west to where it crosses the west branch of the Little Muskegon River you would be standing on the site of an old historical ghost town.

The post office was established on Oct. 5, 1875. George Shields served as the first Postmaster.

That office operated under the name of Martinez until March 17, 1880 when the name was changed to Martiney and William T. Brink became its first postmaster on May 25, 1888.

But as it was with so many of these villages, once the timbering and shingle mills moved, the people left to find employment elsewhere and businesses closed.

According to the records the Martiny post office operated until July 19, 1893 when its doors were closed and shortly after the village itself disappeared.

However, the lumbering industry had opened up the area and farmers soon started clearing land and settling in to become permanent residents.