

Whitman, Morton J.; Collection

Memoirs
1948-1949

FOLDER 4
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NO. OF ITEMS IN FOLDER: 21

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STAFF PERSON: AS

29750 Hickory Island Feb. 10-48
Grosse Ile Mich

Dear Pauline

Received your letter last week and to put in a little time will start an answer to it today it may take me a day or to as my hands will not allow me to write very long at a time, And as Phil Phyllis went home yesterday she will tell you all of the news think I will write you a little story about ~~when~~ my life when I first met your Grand mother, I met her for the first time in November of 1888 had just arrived home from Springport where I had been working for the summer had a sick head ache & a very sore throat on my right hand, My mother introduced me to the school morn I was so sick could hardly sit up my first impression of her was that she was a big girl with rosy cheeks and a good looking she had a complexion

that was natural did not have to paint
like so many girls do to day.

The next day was Sat. when I got up
in the morning my head ache had
~~let~~ left me but my thumb was terrible
painful. The first thing she did was
to fix up my thumb she made a bread
& milk poultice & put some cat nip tea
it and it relieved me right away. I
thought then that she was a mighty good
nurse and I never changed my mind
about that I stayed around home until
my thumb got so that I could work
which was about two weeks during that
time we used to play Pedro in the evening
as there was nothing else we could do
and I got quite well acquainted at that
time she did not mean any more to me
than any other girl. The fall before I
had bought eighty acres of land on a
contract it was the forty where you now
live and the forty where our building are
when my hand got so I could work
took one of Father's team of horses and
an old wagon & went to the trees to cut

and skid some logs, went by the way
of Maple Ridge and Ormer at that time
it was all woods from my Father's place
on the Plains to Au Gres with the exception
of two or three ^{miles} at Maple Ridge and a clearing
between Ormer & Au Gres of about 30 acres
near where the rock ~~shows~~ crushing plant
now is from the Plains to Ormer the
roads were just Fote road through the
woods with the exception of through Maple
Ridge there the road was cut out and
were worked some from Ormer to Au Gres
it was the old state road and that was
crooked around in every direction between
the Plain where my Father lived and
Maple Ridge went through five or six miles
of a pine forest which was beautiful to
see nothing but pine tree two feet through
at the stump and the tree were 100 ft high
wish you could see such a forest it
would be worth going miles to see.

I have described the ~~some~~ country that I went
through now for the trip I got up about
three O'clock in the morning and went to
the barn and got the team ready. When

I got in the house my mother had been up
and started my breakfast but was sick &
had to go back to bed she told me that I
would have to put some more water in the
coffee pot so I took the coffee pot to the
pump & filled it up with cold water well
that coffee was not very good this is to
show how smart I was about getting my
own meals started out long before day
light as it was quite a trip to take in one
day with a team of horses & a lumber wagon,
while I was going through Maple Ridge
one of the tires came off happened to be
near a Black Smith shop, so I unhitched
the team and tied them to a tree & fed
them a good big feed of Rye and took the
wheel to the ~~Back~~ Black Smith shop
and had tire set then hitched up the
team and was on my way again every
thing went along until I got about half
way between Ormer & Lin Tree, then one of
the horses was taken sick with the belly ^{ache}
every little ways he would lay down and

and would have to unhitch him a let him
roll and it was that way until I struck
the Turkey Road + then he got all right
I had fed him to big a feed of Rye
we went in to the wood at the Bessinger
place and believe me it was woods at that
time by this time it was dark,

It did not get in to the wood over one
half mile and one of the front wheels
on the old wagon broke down, so I had
to unhitch and go in the rest of the way
afoot it was nine O'clock when I arrived
at Day Corright at that time there was
only three families living in the
settlement. Day Corright he lived where
Jos Gungersich lives Bill Davis he live
where Bill Shotwell + Mr Deland lived
where the school house is,

The next morning we went + got the old wagon
what there was left of it, then we ran the
lines around the eighty acres that I
had bought and when we got clear
around we were just about where your
house now stands and Land was
covered with small hemlock and little

clearing just as thick as they could I
stand I set down a log and said to
Day I will never live long enough to
clear this land but it so happened that
the corner where your house stand was
the thickest there was on the place and
after a fire went through was easier to
clear than where the woods were more
open. We looked around and decided what
we wanted to cut on my place & as Day
found ~~some~~ some down pine on mine
the rest was hemlock Basswood & ash
On Day we cut mostly Hemlocks some
maple cut one curly maple on Day's
about three feet through that was the prettiest
piece of timber I ever saw in my life if
your father had it now to work up he
could make a lot of pretty furniture out
it we cut this tree right where Jotting's
front yard now is

We cut & piled up logs as long as my
money lasted was paying Day &
Belt \$2.50 per week for my board & had to
pay \$20.00 per ton for hay for the horses
Day had know money at only what
I paid him for my board. He expected

every time that he went to town that the store would shut down on him and would not let him have any more until he paid up so we decide that I would go home and come back when the snow came.

Mr. Heland found out what we were agoin^g to do, he said that he had a little job on the River that we could ^{do} & maybe by the time ~~we~~ ¹ we got that done that snow would come so took his job it amounted to about \$200 & still know came & I had to go home, As I have told you had broken one of the front wheels to the wagon so we built a box and put it on the rear axle and put a tongue in it and started for home, The horses needed to have their shoes sharpened as the road were very icy but my money was so near gone could not have it done got along all right until I got to Maple Ridge there it was hilly and very sleppery, could hardly get up & down them went down one steep hill that the horses stiffened their legs and slid from the top of the hill to the bottom it make my hair stand up if one of them had fell

down it would likely killed one or both of
them & perhaps myself when I got a little
way past Maple Ridge found about a foot
of snow then the horses could travel all right
when I got home found out that they had
sleighing for two weeks & were hauling log
to the Rifle River so I took the team & hauled
logs for my father until I could get word
that they had snow in the Green
hell when I got home they told ^{me} that one
of the neighbor boys that lived about one half
mile away was at our house every night
to see the school man & that he always
had to leave the school man for a
partoner. Well we kidded her about Joe
his name was Joe Burlingame,
Well one night I got home a little late from
work, the rest of the folk had been to
supper. Father hired a man was to the farm
taking care of his team & I was eating
supper & your Grand mother was standing
in the sitting room door talking to me
all at once we heard some sheep bells

looked out & it was Joe driving into the
yard with a horse & cutter. Knew right away
that Joe had come to take the school
mam for a sleigh ride. Your Grand Mother
went to her bed room to get ready and I
went out of the back door as Joe came
in the house. Now I will have to leave
my story and go back a couple of years to
make a little ~~exploratory~~ explanation, there
was a girl that taught school there on the
Plains by the name a Clara Vaughan that
I ran around with for two or three years
& the little dancier that we had and once
in a while would go over and see her on
a Sunday nothing wrong in that was there
she boarded with Mr. Heland about two
miles from our place & going to Mr.
Heland we had a foot path that went
right Joe Father yard & there was a little
creek about two feet wide that a narrow
board walk over it. Well one Sunday
Joe & a couple of other boys stretched a wire
across this Bridge & crawled into the hay
mow expecting to see one trip on this

wire and get a ducking, it so happened
that when I came home that I just ticked
my toe on the wire and it did not throw
off from my balance. Joe never said anything
about it but one of the other boys told me
about it well then my explanation now on
my story. As I went out the door the thought
came to me that it was a good time to get back
at Joe for the trick he had tried to play on
me I went to the barn & got the hired man
Joe had driven his horse & cutter right in
front of the house did not tie the horse just
stood ^{where} we crawl around the house with out
any one see us unhitched the tugs from
the cutter unbuckled the bella band to the
harness and left hold back straps fastened
th to the chills of the cutter the horse had
an over check on so when that horse started
if he drew the cutter at all he would have
to draw it by his bit we got all of this
done a know one saw us & we went around
to the side of the house to see the fun.
They came out of the house & got in the
cutter took the blanket around them
and Joe picked up the lines and said get
up kid but started up but she could not

do any thing but pull her head up Joe
said git up Kit again but she ^{could} not do a
thing but pull her head higher then Joe
said Whore something must be the matter
and he got out & it took him ten minutes
to find out what was the matter it makes
laugh to this day when I think of it
Your Grand Mother allways said she never
saw a madder boy in life I presume
your Mother has heard me tell about this
many times, A short time after that there
was a teacher institute at West Branch and
Joe took her to West Branch but Joe
was so attentive they your Grand Mother got
sick of him and she made arrangements
for some one else to come after her & we
were not bother any more with Joe
hanging around the school man.

After a while I got word that they had
snow in Au Gres and went down and
drew our Logs to the River that was the
winter that were getting material together
for the ~~Methodist~~ Methodist Church in Au Gres
I remember Mr E. G. Cole wanted us to
donate some of our Logs for it,
After we got our Logs sold went back

to the Plain and went back to Springport
to work bid your Grand Mother good Bye
not dreaming that I would ever see her
again she was just another girl to me
Well Psseline I think this is enough for
this time if this does not make you
sick maybe I will write an other chapter
on the same subject some time;

Phyllis Aunt Tessie & Mother arrived
last night about 8 P^m

Good Bye my own Grand Father

M. J. Whitman

29755 Hickory Island Mar 2-78
Greece Isle Mich

Dear Pauline

I have written a letter to Aunt Lessie & shoveled
the snow off from the walk & had my dinner
and now think I will start a letter to you, which
I received about a week ago you compose a very good
letter & write very plain when you write with a
pen if I were you I would make it a practice
to write with a pen get yourself a good pen &
if you get in the habit of writing with a pen you
will not think of writing with any thing else
and will to get to be a better & better writer it bothers
me a lot to read writing with a pencil

Phyllis arrived home all right all though I had to
worry about her as she did not arrive until
after we had all gone to bed. Faith Phyllis & Mabel
have gone down town to day to get Phyllis pictures
it seem that they are in a hurry for them at the
school now Pauline for another chapter of my story
of first acquaintance with your Great Grand brother
as I told you I was going back to Springfield
to work on a farm that summer & your Grand mother

²
went back to Kenton to be with her folks that summer
as far as I can remember never gave your Grand
mother ^{any} thought ^{that summer} that was my first summer at
Crawfords that you have ^{heard} one speak of so after
I got \$18.75 per month that summer & that was
75c more than the going wage. Lot of men
could hardly find any work at all we allways
hired out for eight month period. When my time
was out about the last of Nov. I went back
as was my custom to ~~work~~ work for my Father
either getting out saw logs or working in the
cedar swamp. My Father had been down to
Springport that fall and bought a horse and
the man he bought it from was to deliver it
to him hired an old school mate of mine to
deliver that horse by the name of Arthur Harte
and Arthur rode that horse all of the way
from Springport to my Father place a distance
of 120 miles. Now ^{you} would like to ride a horse
that distance after he got to ~~his~~ our place
Arthur ⁺ took a horse & buggy & went over to

what we now call Selkirk a distance of
about twenty miles mine miles of it was right
through wood to see and old neighbors that the
both used to know from Springfield. Your
Grand Mother was teaching school there at this
time and boarded with this friend of our and
of course I renewed my acquaintance with her at
that time, not long after that my Father &
myself went to West Branch one Sat—
and Father & I were walking along the streets
of West Branch not thinking of any one in
particular and we saw your Grand Mother a
little distance away & she saw us at the same
time & she came rushing towards us with both
hands extended & shook hands with both of us
at the same time such a greeting one does not
often get in life you see she was a stranger where
she was teaching and was glad to see some one
she knew my Father went into a store &
left us walking around the streets when
Father went into the Store the clerk said
to him that was a greeting for you he walked

around town for a while then we went to a
Photo Graf Gallery & I had my picture taken
the one that is in our marriage Certificate
will prove soon that she was with me when that
picture was taken. At Xmas time my mother made
a big Xmas dinner turkey & all of the ~~fixin~~ ^{fixin} that goes
with ^{it} she invited your Grand Mother & another Gent. by the
name of Jeannett Swift she was a Fenton girl &
had taught there on the Plains and boarded with
your ^{my mother} ~~Grand~~ ^{mother} brother Xmas was on a ~~sunday~~
friday Jeannett stayed until Sat. & then went to
West Branch she was teaching there & your Grand
mother stayed until Sunday. We celebrated that
Xmas all day Friday & all day Sat. in the
after noon your Grand Mother & I went for a short
walk down to the River it was a short walk only
four miles down to the River & four miles back
on a Sunday I was to take her back to Selkirk
to go by West Branch it was twenty miles but
to go by the old Fote Road up the River it was
about 12 miles so we decided to go the River way
the buggy was broke so I took the lumber wagon
the spring seat was broken to & I worked two
hours to fix that and we did not get as far
as the River before the damned thing broke again

There⁵ was three or four houses between our place
and the River the rest of the way there was
not a house until we got within on half mile
of where she boarded we had four or five
miles of dry pine to go through that had been killed
by fire. It was our custom on such a trip to
always take an ax along as we never knew when
we would find a tree across the road and so
enough it was our luck to find a tree across
the road about a foot & a half through had to
cut that off twice to get it out of the way
as we got pretty near to our destination we
could see black clouds coming up and by
the time we got ~~there~~^{there} wind began to blow like
a hurricane was afraid the road would
be full of logs so I turned right around and
started right back when I got to the stretch
of dry pine trees were falling in every direction
one tree one hundred feet long fell right along
side of me it made my hair stand up
but could not turn back as there was know
place to turn around I had not got in to this
dry pine more than one half mile & there was
a tree across the road it was getting dark
and was afraid if I stopped a tree would

fall on one did not know whether the team
could haul the wagon over the tree or not so
decide to try & if they could not haul the wagon
over would unhitch from the wagon and go on
a foot but the horses pulled the wagon over
they were a big team they seemed as anxious
to get out of there as I did I did not have
urge them one bit they went just as fast as
they could go until we got through that dry
timber never was so scared in my life would
not go through it again for love or money
your Grand Mother & the man where she boarded were
worried as they could see that it was an uncommon
wind storm there was no Telephone those days so
they just had to wait until they could hear from
one in some way it so happened that the next
day Mr Brock went to West Branch and one
of our neighbors was out there to & Mr Brock asked
him if he knew whether I got home or not he
told him that he heard a wagon go by & that
he guess I got home all right so they did not
have to worry only about twenty four hours

Later that winter went over to see her one Sunday with
a horse & cutter that went by the way of West Branch
it was twenty miles that way some miles of it
right through the wood from West Branch out to
where she lived it was pretty well cleared up

all of the way & govt sleighing all of the way
the other way there was very little travel, it took
as long to make that trip as it would take
to go to Flint and back now

we started to write but we had ^{daily mail then} letters did well
if our letters reached us in two weeks you see there
was no Rural mail delivery those days every one
had to go to the Post Office to get their mail

we got our mail at Steel Branch & would only
get our mail when some one would go to Town

One day I got a letter stating that she had
the grip and was going home said she would
be at the Abbot Hotel on a certain date and
would like to see me I happened to get the
letter in time and went to West Branch, with
her & sister, when I got to the Hotel she was not
there but she had left a word that I could
find her at Mrs Abbot's private home so I went
there she had a high fever, we went back to
the Hotel we had the sitting room & our rooms
and we visited as most young folk do and
finally I well I. C. Hem proposed the question right
there in that Hotel have never told any one before
she did not say yes nor did she say no
but that she would write and give me a

8

Definite answer. She wrote all right enough
but not a definite answer told me to come and
see her on my way to Springfield that she
thought it would be all right; When the time came
for me to go to Springfield wrote her when I
would arrive, never had been to Fenton did not
know a soul there only your Grand Mother and
of course expected her to meet me at the train
When I got off the train looked around and
no body was there to meet me I stood around
until every one else had left the Depot and
had about decided to go to a Hotel for the night
thought I had come on a Tomfool's errand
all at once I saw a man coming walking
as fast as he could he had not shaved in
four weeks he asked me if my name was
Whitman I told him yes he said that his
name was Herrington and that your
Grand Mother was in Potluc taking a teachers
examination They live out of Fenton about one
mile on top of a big Hill. I never saw any one
fly around any more to beat tidly themselves
up than your Grand Mother Father & Mother did that
after noon I was dressed pretty well for those days
in fact for any days I think they thought your
Grand Mother had picked up a Lumber Jack any
how they told me years afterward that one of the
girls that went from Fenton to teach school in

Ogden to marry a fellow that always
came down there dressed in Timber Jack style.
Well I got a favorable answer + went on my way referring
went back to Springfield that summer I and
got the unheard of wage of \$2.00 per month did
not draw one cent of my pay until my time was
out + did not lose one minute of time.

After my time was out went home by the way
of Fenton to see your Grand mother + we set the
date to get married in the following June
and we were intending at that time to go right
on to the land I had bought in Oregon to
work that winter for my Father in the wood during
that winter went down to Lin Tree and bought some
lumber to build a log house with the rest of my
^{bought} but that lumber at Shetbyville there was a
quite a large sawmill there then this mill
was located near where E. H. Sims Collages are
now. About the first of April I was taken
very sick in fact every one was sick in those parts
several died. After I got strength enough to travel
went to Fenton to see your Grand mother.
My sickness had used up my money so we
decided not to get married until fall that I could
work out that summer + that your Grand mother
would teach school that summer.

I worked ¹⁰ that summer until June peeling Telegraph
poles for my father beside the M. C. ~~and~~ rail road
track five miles south of West Branch. When we
got those poles peeled I was out of a job the first
and only time in my life but was not out of a
job long. The Bank in West Branch had a large
farm & they wanted a man to be foreman during
their haying & I had been recommended to them
for the job. Went to West Branch to see about it
before I went to see them went to the Post Office
after the mail and I got a letter from Crawford
wanting me to come and work for them during
haying & harvest the offered \$26 ⁰⁰ per month or
\$1 ⁰⁰ a day for common work & \$1.50 per day for
haying & harvest I took their offer by the day and
did not go to see the Bankers as I had a job
again. I worked there until the last of Aug. &
did not lose a bit of time so made a quite a
bit by working by the day. On my way home
went by the way of Fenton to see your Grand Mother.
While was working for Mr. Crawford that summer
he wanted I should work 120 acres of his land. I
was undecided what to do for some time as we
had made all preparation to build a log home

on my land and make our first start there
but we finally decide to go to Springfield and
we decided to get married on the 3rd of Dec. 1891
went home & got a job helping to lay the
great Branch race track there was about 20 men
worked at that job & I was fortunate to hold
my job about a week longer than any other
man the men that had the contract of
laying the race track over the property
of the great Branch Hotel and of course I boarded
at this Hotel while working on the track just
a few days before we got through on the track
they called me into the Office and offered
me a job in the Hotel I write this to show
you that where ever I worked that I gave
~~satisfaction~~ satisfaction I did not take the job as ~~and~~
was going to get married & had other plans
have often thought perhaps if I had taken that
job in that Hotel perhaps it would of led
up to something much better than I ever had
When I got through on the track it was near
the fatal date had to get my marriage
License got that in the Agnew Court House
In those days when one was going to get
married it was kept a secret every body but

12
know it far & near my Father & Mother &
~~your~~ your Grand Mother Father & Mother knew
but the rest of the folks had to guess at it
to give you an example will tell you about
a letter that your Grand Mother wrote me
my oldest Brother went to West Branch and I
was expecting quite an important letter from
your Grand Mother, He said there was know
letter for me it ran along a few days and I
did not get this letter so I wrote to her about
it she had mail it several days before
and just before we were married a party
that lived along the rail road track found
this letter & in this letter was information
about our getting married this party that
found this letter read it as it had been
opened and they wanted to hire us to go on to
a farm as a foreman in Germany so that is
way that I always knew that my Brother
Milt opened & lost that letter on purpose
the night before we were married stayed in the
West Branch hotel as I had to take the train for
Fenton about two o'clock in the morning
We were married about the middle of the after noon

Oct 3rd 1891. They invited in a few of the
neighbors and gave us a fine supper. Then we had
a bus from the village come & get us when I
say bus I mean a vehicle that they had those
days to meet the train & take people to the Hotel
they would hold about six people & were drawn
by a pair of horses you see this was long before
the Automobile day. We spent our morning
by going to ~~Cross~~ Cross & staying at a Hotel all
night intending to take the first train for
West Branch. I had been going back and forth
on the M.C. Railroad a couple of times a year
& thought I knew about what time the train
went through Cross. We did not get ^{up} as very
early and did not make any enquiry about
the train until we had our breakfast then
I asked the Clerk what time the train left
for Bay City he said it had gone & that
there would not be another one before midnight.
It happened that my Grand Mother had
an Uncle that lived in Cross but did not know
where we hunted around & found out where
they lived & went & stayed with them until
the train came at about midnight then we took
the train for West Branch. The fair was on

and my folks were there & were there the
day before expecting us and wondering all of
the time what happened to us. We stayed on the
Plains for three or four days then Mr & my Father
Mother took a double buggy & went to the
Settlement there was four families around
the school house & three families down in
the Sibley neighborhood then they had started
some road then but we had $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile
cross way with out a bit of dirt on it my
Grand Mother & I walked over this cross way
and when we went out my Mother was not
very well & Will Davis took a drag & hauled
my Mother across this cross way so that
it would not hurt her so much. He went back
to the Plains & from there we went to
Fenton and stayed few days and from there
we went to Springfield we had our furniture
to buy yet. We bought our furniture in Eaton Rapids
it consisted of a stove & cooking utensil a bed
room suite & chair a rocking chair and
a table & a center table & it cost us an even
\$100.00 your Grand Mother folks had given
her a bed & a rag carpet & my Father had
given us a heating stove so now we

were ready to begin life
My Pauline could write & write about my
life with your Grand Mother but I know
doubt by this time you are thinking that
Grand Dad is getting sicker every day
so will call this the end remember though
this is a copy right story and you have
known right to copy after it or to sell it
to any one with out my consent
So will say Good Bye Your Grand Dad

M. J. Whitman

1

Hickory Island Jan 18-49

Grosse Ile Mich

Dear Elsie,
Will start an answer to your letter it will
likely take me two days will not attempt
to write much news just confine myself
to my story. As well as common the
only thing that is the matter with me is
my nerves + the Eczema My nerves do not
bother me as I sit writing but let me relax
and nothing to call my attention and my
nerves will play tag all over me nothing
painful just aggravates me + when the Eczema
flares up it some times nearly drive me
nuts + that to is not painful so guess
that I will live through it for some time
Got a letter from your Mother + Pauline
yesterday Pauline said Phyllis had sent me
some writing paper thought until then
that Aunt Hattie had sent the paper
as I had mentioned in my last letter to
her that I was about out to show her how
much I was writing think that I mention

2 that Faith had a supply now. Tell Phyllis
many Thanks for the Stationary, did not
discover that you girls had written a letter
until I opened the box to start writing this
morning. Hope you get through your sewing
ideal O. K. and that you make as good
a mother as your Grand Mother was.
Well Elsie here goes for my story of how
Delano settlement got started & when ^{also} ~~also~~
my first trip there. Mr. Delano lived in
Mills Twp Ogema Co. where my folk live for
about five years before he moved to Ar. Pres
he was know farmer never would of made
a farmer he came from Maine and was
a Salt water fisherman but evidently was
looking for cheap land as he homesteaded
the land in Ogema Co. while he was know
farmer it did not take him long to find out
that the land on the Plains was know good
and did not have the grit to stick to it
like my Father did my Father shot in about
all he had before he gave up about \$600

3 He did not know how he located the land in
Deland but think he located it through
some one in Au Gres as there was three or
four families in Au Gres that he knew back
in Maine he ~~new~~ knew O. G. Cole. Fred
Twining & some others back in Maine that
were living there at that time. Mr. Deland
had a son about my age. And about 1883
Mr. Deland went to Au Gres & bought 160
acres. Mr. Deland bought the eighty acres where
the school house & store stands & the son
bought the 80 acres on the opposite side of the
road and chopped down an acre or two
where the school house now stands & built
a small log stable & a small log house
intending to move right on to it but the
son was taken sick & died (this boy is
buried in the West Branch Cemetery) so that
he changed his mind and did not move
until Feb. 1887. The fall before my Brother Law
William Davis moved there & bought the
eighty that Mr. Shattuck now owns, &
they lived that winter in the little log house
that Mr. Deland built so they were really

& the first settler to really live there but it was always called the Deland Settlement and right fully so as Mr Deland was the first to locate there. When Mr Deland got ready to move he knew that I intended to go and see my Sister Kate before I went to Springfield to work in the Spring he came to see me and said if that I would go then that he would pay my expenses down there & back so I went with him Mr Deland made a long wooden sled do not think there was one bit of iron in the sleigh and piled every bit of house hold goods & other personal belongings he had in the world on to that sleigh. He had a yoke of three year old steers for a team & one cow. He hired a man with a pair of horses to haul the load as far as Omer as he thought it would be to long a trip for the Oxen the whole distance he drove the oxen on the empty sled that the man went back home with Mr. Deland live about two miles from the Rafe River & from his place to the River the highway was cut out

5 on the section line & there was two house
between his place and the river after he
crossed the river it was all Jote road clear
to Maple Ridge and one house the whole distance
saw a couple of Lumber Camps & went through
four or five miles of solid Pine ^{forest} ~~forest~~
nothing but pine two & three feet through
at the butt and one hundred ft high
know under bush what ever it was beautiful
to look at. if that block of Pine was standing
today there would be a continual stream
of tourist going there to see it. At Maple
Ridge there was a quite a little settlement
& cut out highways for a distance of about
three miles & three or four of the farms were
all cleared up & stumps all out there was a
hotel & feed barn at Maple Ridge & a couple
of stores. After we left Maple Ridge about
three miles we took the Jote road again
& that was all of the road we had clear to
Omer. We got to Omer about dark Omer

6 Was the County Seat of Arunac at that
time the Court House was the building that
the Masonic Lodge uses now there was no
Rail Road in Omer at that time the
nearest Rail Road was Standish so you
can see that all of the supply that the
lumbermen used had to be hauled by
horses from Standish clear through to
Alpena except what could be shipped by
boat in the summer time & the only
road was the old State road up the
Shore. At that time Omer was just
a hole in the woods there was two
quite large Hotels & each Hotel had
a large feed barn in connection as
there was so much teaming & people coming
along to stay all night that Hotel &
feed barn were a mighty good business
do not remember how many stores
there was in Omer at that time but
there was a small flour mill and a small

7 small saw mill they used water power
there was a large Dam across the River
about where the Bridge is on M. 23 now
this Dam was built by the Lumberman
so they could flood the River to drive the
logs out to the Boom at one time every
body thought Omer would be quite a town
on the account of the water power.

The night ~~at~~ that we stayed in Omer
there was a real lumberman dance at
the Hotel & I never saw so many drunk
in my life. In the morning we hitched the
Open to the Sleigh tied the cow behind
and started for An Gre. We went out of
Omer on the same road we travel now
about one half mile there we struck the
Old State road & the State road was
know different than a Jole road only
there was lots of travel on it but it was
all woods or cut over land did not see a
house from Omer until we got out to about

& where the Stone & crusher is now
there was a clearing there of 40 or 50 acres
and two houses on it after we cross this
clearing we went in to the Au Gres swamp
and we did not see another house again
until we came in sight of Au Gres the
first place we passed was Ed Crawford's
Father he had a stable & a house and
a small clearing a little farther along
there was a white frame house & quite a
clearing & a small Orchard there was a
few more houses do not remember how many
but there only a few then down near where
Christos Graguse now is was quite a large
clearing on the sand & a fair sized Barn
& house on it & belonged to a Mr Day
The quarter line road crossed the State road
at that time but was not open any farther
north than Bot Brouly I do not think but
think it was open at that time out to

9 Henry Selle but that is just a guess
Henry Reid had a store on the south side
of the old State Road. E. G. Cole had
a Store just West of where Harry Marsh
Store is now & James Gammon had
a Store near the River Alex Hillebrun own
that property there was know side road
in Au Gres at that time, The town line road
between Au Gres & Sima (at that time
it was Whitney instead of Sima) was
open down to the Boom, The bridge across
the River there in Au Gres was the only
Bridge across the Au Gres river any where
in the three Twp unless there might of been
a wooden Bridge across the River across where
what I call the Armstrong house there was
a wooden Bridge across at this point for
several years the + might of been there at
the time I am writing about the Bridge
that is there now was built in 1911
after we cross the Bridge on the State
road in Au Gres We took the town line road
and as we turned this corner on the right

10 corner was the Hannan House it was quite a big hotel with a large Feed Barn in connection and always did a big business until it was burned down which was several years after moved there have forgotten just what year that it burned. To the east along the State Road there was a Black Smith shop and a few houses but not many on the corner on the north side of the State Road stood the old Whitney Tuf Hall. in the lower part was the Post Office and some kind of a Store do not remember what but think it was some kind of Drug Store. I do not get confused by my saying Whitney Tuf Hall as it was Whitney at that time clear to the Boom as we went north on the turn line it was cleared on both sides of the road on the east side Mr Jas McPhail owned the farm at that time & the house that you see every time you go out the pavement is the house he lived in & this house is a log house whether you believe it or not, kept to the River belong to the Boom Co the Road that goes past Peter Mosser House was not there at all and

11 and the land was covered with Popple about like your Father eighty, where John Heinrich now live was owned by Joe Mattinson with a large Barn & a big square house on it & I believe that place was all cleared or nearly so after we passed the Mattinson place we did not see any more cleared land to speak of we followed along the River to the Town Line between Whitney and ^{Siding}~~Buena Vista~~ there was a mile or two of cut out road down as far as what is now the Bessinger place at this point we took the Dote road again. There was a set of lumber camp - there & a man by the Geo Smith lived in them our road took ^{us between} the mine camp & the Horse stable, The road as far as the Bessinger place was traveled a grub a bit & the sleighing was good the snow was three ft deep & from there on in there had not been only one team in & out all winter & the loose snow would shove up in front of that long sleigh & we would have to tramp the snow so that the oxen could pull the load, And believe me

12 it was some job, it was a dense forest the rest of the way in with the exception of a small burning near where both Kinsey now live we went across the place that Presley Ashley now ^{has} & the place that Joe Gengerich has & we were at our destination We started from Au Gres about One O'clock in the afternoon & did not get there until 9 O'clock it was so dark had know no idea what the country look liked but knew that we were in the woods when I got up in the morning found out that I was in the prettiest piece of maple woods that I had ever seen but had know idea that I would ~~can~~ spend the greater part of my life in that vicinity. Stayed with my sister a couple of days & then started on my return trip to West Branch there was a few small clearing along the Turkey road the Turkey road at that time did not go any farther north than where the German Church now is this was before any of the McLeans lived on that road

13, and the Donkey road from the German Church to the shore was all of the highway - there was in what is now Whitney & Lima. Just of course the old State road went clear across both just along the shore in what is now Whitney just these was know highway what ever just took road to the Lumber Camps, At El Guis I took the Stage to Omer the stage made the trip daily, At Omer I changed & took a Stage for Standish there was two stages that made the trip from Omer to Standish between Omer & Standish we had a cleared out highway some grub clearing but much of the way the wood came right up to the Highway. At Standish took the train to West Branch. At that time there was five stops between Standish & west Branch but most of them were just long siding - put in to load forest products but they all had a signal that one could put up and stop the train and get on just the same as one can stop a bus now well

14 Elsie this my trip but as I have a little space left will make a few explanations about condition at that time

Through the Au Gres swamp there was know drainage what ever in fact know drainage in the whole country, And in the winter time & spring when there would be a big thaw the swamp would flood & then when it would freeze the rear roads would be all ice for a long time after we moved there if we had to make a trip to Omer would have to be sure that the horses were sharp shod. Another thing I do not get the impression that Oxen were used at that time so very much as they were not it was nothing uncommon at that time to see & use teams but never drove an Ox team very much myself & never knew of any one to make as long a trip as we did with a yoke of Oxen

Well I hope this will interest you I know that I have enjoyed writing it.

Good Bye Your Grand Father M. J. Whitman