

December 11, 1984

The house at 416 N. Broad Street currently owned by my wife Sarah J. Vaillancourt and myself was built in 1849 by Marvin M. Thompson and his wife Martha M. Buell Thompson.

Marvin was born in 1820 in Phelps, Ontario County, New York. He came to Livingston County, Michigan, in 1837, where he clerked for three years. In 1840 he moved back to New York. In 1845, he came to Adrian, where he lived the rest of his life. This and other biographical information in this letter came from Marvin's obituary in the Monday, October 11, 1897 edition of the *Adrian Times*.

In 1845 Marvin and his brother Thomas started a masonry and contracting business. Thomas died before his brother, and Marvin ran this business until 1896.

In 1847, Marvin married Martha M. Buell of Madison, Michigan. They had two sons, William B. and Charles M. William was living in Denver, Colorado at the time of his father's death. Charles died at the age of two.

The Assessment Rolls of 1848 list J. H. Cleveland as owner of lot 239. The lot was valued at \$50.00. The 1849 Rolls list Marvin Thompson as owner of lot 239 and house valued at \$200.00.

The 1859 *Adrian City Directory* lists M. Thompson living on the east side of Broad Street between Butler and Railroad streets. This house is listed in the 1885 and subsequent directories as 50 Broad Street. I am not sure when the first numbering system was implemented or when the address of the house was changed to 416 N. Broad Street.

The 1859 *Adrian City Directory* also lists a Miss E. J. Thompson, a teacher at the Select School on Finch Street, boarding at our house. I suspect she was a niece of Marvin.

Various city directories between 1885 and 1910 list Milo L. Mitchell as owner of a wallpaper and paint store at 79 Main Street. He would be the person who wrote the notes on the wall in the middle bedroom about papering the room in 1892, 1903, and 1905.

Marvin is not listed in various gazetteers, atlases, and business directories in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. This means that he did not patronize those publications. There are also no references to Marvin in the *Portraits of Lenawee County in 1879* by Whitney, by Chapman in 1888 or by Bonner in 1909. One could conclude that he was a minor figure in the community or that he saw no reason to promote himself.

Marvin's death is recorded as October 9, 1897 in *Births and Deaths in Lenawee County from the Beginning to 1879*. His death is also recorded in Lieber B., 260.

The *Adrian Times* of Monday, October 11, 1897, says that Marvin died on Saturday, October 9, 1897, at 8:40 pm, at his home. He had been suffering from cancer of the mouth for a year. His obituary says that he served two years as alderman of the Second Ward, one year as City Marshal, and two years as Fire Department Chief. His son, William, arrived in Adrian by train from Denver on Monday, October 11, 1897, for his father's funeral.

The 1900 *Adrian City Directory* lists Martha Thompson, a widow of M. Thompson as living at 50 Broad. The 1903 *Adrian City Directory* no longer lists Martha as living in the city. I was not able to

find a reference to Martha Thompson's death in *Births and Deaths in Lenawee County*, so I assume she moved out the county.

Thus, the house at 416 N. Broad Street was built and occupied not by pioneers of Adrian but by second generation settlers. Marvin and Martha Thompson lived in the house for almost 59 years as husband and wife. Since their son William had moved to Denver by the time of his father's death and because Martha apparently left the county between 1900 and 1903, the history of the Thompson family in Adrian ends about the turn of the century.

Robert W. Gordon