

Pioneer buildings, Naturalists' topic

by DOROTHEA ARTHUR

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Chittendon were the welcome guests of the Midland-Penetang Field Naturalist's Club on Nov. 18. Mr. Chittendon has been the speaker for the club on several previous occasions and many members and friends came out to hear him again.

His topic for the evening was "Pioneer Buildings in Ontario."

As a child Roger lived in a house built in 1619. This sparked a continued interest in old buildings. The program was divided into two parts, the first being "Domestic Architecture in England", the second "Wooden Houses in Ontario".

The first slide was of Salisbury Cathedral built in the 1600's.

Next was a picture of Hangleton Cottage built in 1338, which was made of small stones with a thatched roof. Winkhurst built in 1400 used arched construction. This resembled an upside down ship when viewed from the interior. The curly oak tree which grows in England makes a natural arch.

Because these early houses had no chimney but simply a fire laid on the dirt floor in the center of the room their ceilings were quite high to enable the smoke to get out. The people had to use materials close at hand so they plastered their walls with a mixture of chalk and cow dung, there were no nails so everything was pegged together with wood.

By Elizabethan time houses had

fireplaces with chimneys, and timber was cut in a saw pit, but their early plumbing was still quite primitive.

Log cabins were widely used in Europe, especially in Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Swedish settlers built log cabins when they came to Delaware in 1638.

Log cabins were the safest and most practical of buildings for the early settlers. They could absorb bullets and flaming arrows, and were warmer than dwellings of different construction. The pioneer had only an axe, adz and auger for tools, because there were no nails, the logs were fastened with notched ends or with wooden pegs.

The roof was made of overlapping rows of short boards. The cabin floor

might be of half logs or planks, but more often it was packed dirt. Windows and doors were cut out after the cabin had been completed.

By 1840 square log homes with two full stories were being built. A heavy beam was put above the first story windows running the length of the house to keep the house from spreading apart. These houses had stone chimneys, glassed windows and inner walls of board. As time went on people living in log houses did not want it to be known that they lived in log homes and proceeded to cover the logs with planks, plaster or bricks. An example of this is a church built in Norfolk County made to resemble cement blocks.

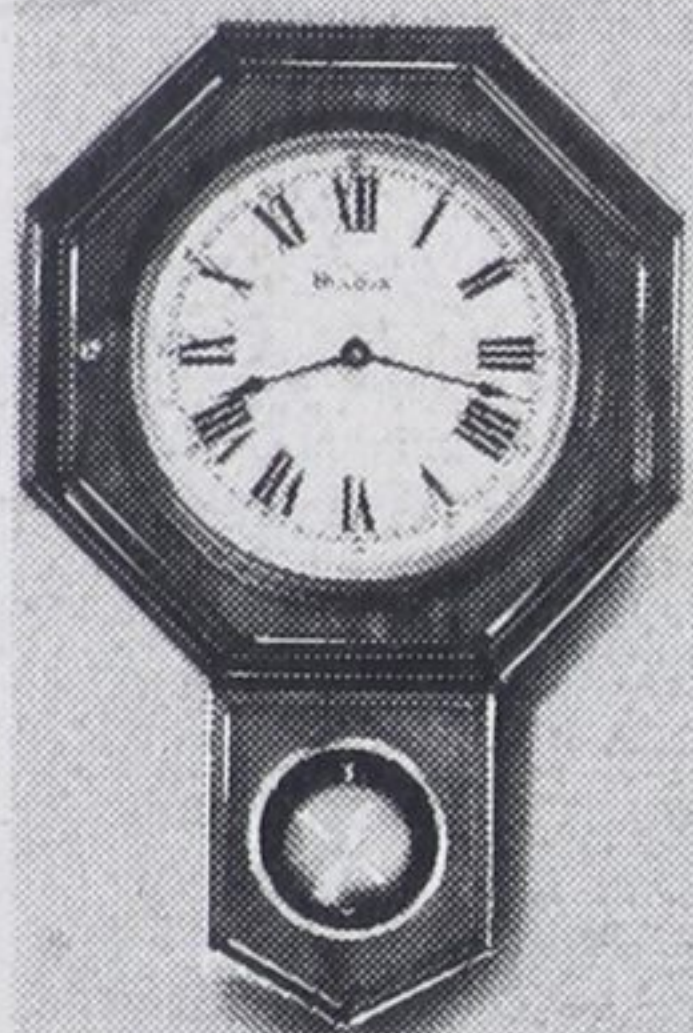
Another session Monday

Midland law-makers, having been officially sworn into office Monday night, will get down to brass tacks next Monday when they meet for a 7:30 p.m. session at town hall.

One of the items on the agenda for next week will be the appointments to various boards and committees that come under council's wings.

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