

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**FARMINGTON: 1824 - 1908**  
**BRIEF HISTORIES & BIOGRAPHIES**

**by**

**NATHAN H. POWER**

## **Introduction**

Nathan H. Power, in collaboration with his good friend Governor Fred Maltby Warner, wrote seven brief histories helpful to Farmington historians. In addition to early Farmington, Power also wrote brief biographies of P. D. Warner, Fred Warner, and Dr. Wixom. The writer mentions the current date of 1921 in this collection of papers, just two years before the death of the former governor.

These articles were found pasted in an "Order Book" that also contained newspaper clippings written by P. D. Warner of early Farmington. Power's handwritten copy was transcribed, with the typed copy shown at the bottom of each page.

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electd and ~~again~~ reelectd in 1902. In June 1904 he was the nominee of his party for the office of governor. Was electd by a good majority and re-electd in 1906 and 1908. He was the first and only governor of Michigan to receive three consecutive terms. He was also the youngest governor since 1859. Previous to the election of Mr Warner to the office of Chief executive of the State the use of large sums of money to secure nomination to office had become a grave abuse. Mr Warner realized this and in the face of most bitter and desperate opposition succeeded in having enacted ~~into~~ ~~the~~ the present excellent and satisfactory primary law of the State. He could ask for no better monument.

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The first doctor to settle in the town was Doctor Ezekiel Webb. He came in 1824. and built his house on land now occupied by the dwelling of Constantine Collins. The next year 1825 the doctor succeeded in having a Post office established and became the first Post Master.

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P. Dean Warner the author of the greater part of this work was born in New York State in the year 1822. He came with his parents to Michigan in the year 1825. They came by the way of Dearborn to Farmington and settled on Sec. 15 in the Northwest quarter. His childhood was spent upon his father's farm. He felt the privations and endured the hardships incident to the pioneer life of his time. As a boy he was studious industrious and easy to learn. The training that he received at the simple country school added to his intense application with the soundness of his judgment.

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Temperate in his habits he hated the liquor traffic and waged an unceasing warfare for its overthrow and was an active member of many of the temperance organizations of his time. In the fight against intemperance as in the fight against slavery he was an effective public speaker. His addresses on important occasions were unwritten and in some cases could not have been prepared yet in vigor of thought consistency and accuracy of diction could not be surpassed. He was a versatile man. He

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the deeds mortgages wills and legal papers of the town. When inspected by those whose duty it was to examine them carefully they would be found without a flaw so careful and painstaking had he been in their preparation.

He believed in God and had implicit faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. A loyal follower of the Master he ever advocated his cause and the extension of his Kingdom. His was a well spent life and the world was made better because he lived in it.

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On his reaching Buffalo the family and a very small quantity of household goods were on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April put aboard a Schooner bound for Detroit at which port it arrived in safety after a few days contest with the wind and waves of Lake Erie. After arriving in Detroit word was sent by my father to a brother-in-law already located in the south part of Oakland County.

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## Doctor Wixom

1

One of the first Physicians in the town was Doctor Wixom. He came from New York about 1829. He was a man of great Courage and Skill, with a rough exterior but a kind heart. It was a time of considerable Sickness. Day and Night he went on Horseback through the woods where there were no roads and often no trail to guide him. Many are the stories told of his practice and of his surgical operations which were performed often under the most difficult circumstances in the log Cabins of the Pioneers. He lost few patients and was trusted implicitly by the people he served so well. One one

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## The toll road.

One of the things indispensable to the progress of a country are good roads. Farmington because of its situation geographically on almost a direct line between Detroit and Lansing was early favored by the building of a Toll road known as the Detroit and Howell Plank Road. It was built in the years 1851 & 52. A great portion of it between Detroit and Farmington was constructed of Oak Plank. The travel required two four-horse stages daily each way with frequent extra's as far as Howell. 24 Passengers were carried by each coach and they were usually loaded to capacity. It was not uncommon to see passengers riding on

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the top so great was the travel at the time. To accommodate this travel taverns were built at a distance of a few miles from each other at convenient places along this road. They furnished food and lodging to man and beast and did a thriving business. The road opened a fertile farming country and it was crowded most of the time by farmers wagons hauling produce to Detroit. With the building of what was known as the Detroit Lansing and Northern R.R. and also the Flint and Pere Marquette R.R. this traffic ceased almost entirely. With its business gone the road fell in to decay

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And after a time surrendered its charter to the state and ceased to collect toll. The Old Substantial taverns with one exception are gone. The one built at Clarenceville in 1836 by Stephen Jennings and in later years widely known as the Botsford Hotel is still standing at this writing 1921 a reminder of the pioneer days that are gone never to return. With the coming of the Automobile came the necessity for better roads. Wayne and Oakland Co.'s led the way in cement construction. A few miles were built at a time until the year 1919. Saw the completion of one of the best roads in the State extending from Detroit to a mile west of Farmington Village

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of Doctor Woodman. The Masonic Lodge room, and a millinery store owned by a Miss Pierman. The stores of Selby and Smith were erected in 1850 by Selby and Joshua Simmons. An irreparable loss was the destruction of all of the township records previous to 1872.

Mr Warner at once rebuilt upon his lots the substantial brick building now occupied by Fred Cook as a general store and Dickson and Hatten as a hardware store. For a number of years the village made slow growth, but with the building of the Electric Road in <sup>1900</sup> ~~1898~~ it began to show a substantial increase in the number of its inhabitants. This road coming

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from Detroit branches at Farmington junction one branch going to Pontiac by the way of Orchard Lake and the other branch going to Northville. Hourly service is given during most of the 24 hours. The frequency of this service together with its nearness to Detroit makes it an ideal suburban town. Its banks do a substantial business under a safe conservative management. When its new building is completed the Farmington State Savings Bank will have a home second to none for beauty utility and convenience. Hon. Fred M. Warner and his associates have spared no pains or expense in the construction of this building and when completed it will

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night of Feb. 7, 1920. The Society at once leased the Baptist Church which was not in use. Here they have continued their worship and will do so until the completion of their new church on Grand River Ave. which is located on the lot so long occupied by Jacob Drake with his dwelling house and shop.

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