

# SAW GREAT FUTURE

Grosvenor Reed Made Prediction for Grand Rapids.

## CAME ON HORSEBACK

Sturdy Pioneer Anticipated Success for City.

Letter Written by Early Settler Read at Meeting of Local Chapter of D. A. R.

The practice of law in Grand Rapids in 1842 did not lead directly to a royal road of either wealth or glory. The pioneer lawyers did not know the affluence and prestige which is now the heritage of Grand Rapids barristers.

One of the leading law firms in Grand Rapids in 1842 was that of Ball & Reed, John Ball and Grosvenor Reed. Letters written by Grosvenor Reed in 1842 and 1843 to his nephew, Daniel L. Lord of Marshall, Mich., who, at the time of the writing, was visiting in Guilford, Chenango county, N. Y., and who was also a member of the Michigan bar, were discovered by Mrs. James H. Campbell, regent of the Sophie de Marsue Campau chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and portions of these letters were read by her at the D. A. R. meeting Thursday afternoon.

### Came to City on Horseback.

These letters are the property of Grosvenor Reed's daughter, Mrs. Helen Reed Lewis of Marshall, Mich. Grosvenor Reed when a young man came to Grand Rapids on horseback from Oberlin, Ohio, and he later married the daughter of Julius C. Abel, who was Grand Rapids' first lawyer. After his marriage he became a law partner of Mr. Abel. He was a graduate of Oberlin college.

Grosvenor Reed was the first prosecuting attorney for Ottawa county and later when that county was fully organized he removed to Grand Haven, where he practiced his profession. Later he built a fine home on the bank of the Grand river opposite what is now the village of Lamont.

He continued to practice his profession and held many offices. When in 1840 the township in which he resided was organized he named it Allendale, after Allendale, Scotland, as it was settled by many persons of Scottish birth to whom he was partial. Louis Campau was a frequent visitor to the home of Mr. Reed.

The pioneer settlers seemed to realize that Grand Rapids had a future. Grosvenor Reed was one of the pioneers who had great faith in the little village. It was a growing place in 1843 and Mr. Reed endeavored to convince his relatives and friends that the place had a promising future and was a good place in which to locate. In his letters to his nephew in Marshall he said:

### Very Little Business.

"As for myself I must say that I am earnestly engaged in business, sometimes pettifogging and at other times debating or preparing for the same. I had anticipated finding a chance for you to study here, agreeable to your wishes, but I find that all the law offices here are in pretty much the same fix with ours (Ball & Reed)—not enough business to pay it at the present time.

"My partner is a man of much perseverance and one who will soon excel in his profession. He is a man of good, sound character, with the bump of caution strongly developed.

"The law business here this season is not large. I think that I have my share, but that is small. Have one suit a week from next Monday twenty miles north of this place, where I expect to have some sport, as it is a rather singular suit and in a most northern settlement where they have never before had a trial by jury. We live in hope of having a good business in the future and shall undoubtedly as the country is fast settling and the seeds of litigation are well sown.

"I hope that you will come out and see the place notwithstanding the hard times under the Whig administration.

"As to the future prospects of Grand Rapids I hardly need to say that there is no spot in Michigan that can compare with it. It is healthy here and has been so ever since I came. We have the best of pure spring water and that so situated that it can be carried to every man's door.

"Our salt operations are going on. The state well is sunk to the depth of 475 or 480 feet at the present time. The water is very strong and flows over the top with sufficient force to carry it fifty feet or more.

### Plenty of Material.

"Building material is here in abundance; in fact we have every inducement for settlers and we see the effect of them this season, as the people are flocking in here from all parts of the country and are purchasing farms. We have also additional merchants and mechanics; in fact all things work together for good.

"We in this part of the country think that this place in twenty years from now will be the largest of any in the state with the exception of Detroit, and sure Marshall, the city of hard money-makers, will be a minus quantity compared to it. You may consider this vain speculation, but just come out here when you return and we will show you that it is a mathematical demonstration.

"Now, I want you to endeavor to prevail on your father and mother to come here to live and leave that sickly hole, Marshall. When you get home stop over and see them, then come directly here and take a squint at this place."

The following year Mr. Reed became prosecuting attorney for Ottawa county, which was then united to Kent for judicial purposes. In another letter dated 1843 he wrote:

"We have had considerable business this spring, but it is rather on the wane now as people have other things to attend to besides quarreling. I had the pleasure of sending one biped from Ottawa county through your village to Jackson, last court.

### One Man Convicted.

"Our court here lasted for about ten days and was very interesting. One man was tried and convicted of murder in the first degree, but his sentence was put off until the next term of court at which time he will either get a new trial or receive his sentence.

"This village is still growing in popularity and business and settlers are flocking in from all parts of the country. There are now being built a carding and clothing mill, furnace and machine shop, and various other contraptions, such as river boats, dwelling houses, etc."