

HISTORY REVEALED IN EARLY BIRTH RECORDS

One of the duties of early township clerks was registering local births. These records, from 1888 to 1940, usually listed the parents' birthplaces and, less frequently, the mother's maiden name. Before 1900, when infant mortality was relatively high, some children are included on both township birth and death records. Several transient families, not listed in any local censuses, also had children here. The township birth records were sent to the county clerk who entered the names in a large ledger, which is still used as a reference for the oldest records.

Until 1900 Canosia was a small community with several dozen families. Parents were often in their mid-to-late twenties, some much older, when they began a family and most had three or four children. Most parents were farmers and their households sometimes included a hired man. Among immigrant families, some of the older children had been born in various midwestern states before the family settled in Canosia Township.

From 1888 through 1900, when 18 children were born in the township, a slight majority of their parents were American born citizens. Birthplaces of other parents included Canada, Norway, Poland, England, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Ireland. From the turn of the century until 1920, when 86 children were born here, about half their parents were American citizens, including a few descendents of township pioneers, and the rest were immigrants.

The logging railroad through the township had brought many single people here and, in 1910, the population included the lumbermen, laborers, carpenters, hotel keepers, railroad workers and four men who claimed the occupation of "fishermen." During these years the number of families remained constant and in the 1910 population of 242 there were 88 children eighteen and under.

After the railroad was discontinued, the population increased gradually to 311 in 1920. Canosia's registered births averaged six to eight per year and then gradually declined. From 1935 to 1939, during the worst years of the Depression, only one birth was recorded by the town clerk. At the same time, some of the elderly town pioneers were dying and, for a few years, township deaths exceeded births. But some new families had moved here by then and in 1940 there were 432 people in the township.

