

**THE STORY OF  
GRAND RAPIDS,  
MICH., PP. 1-77**

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The Story of Grand Rapids, Mich., pp. 1-77 by Carol Mary Holt & Charles W. Garfield

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Grand Rapids in 1881, showing Baptist Mission buildings and Noon-Day's house on west side, and Mr. Campau's trading post on the east side of the river. X shows where the Panchind Hotel now stands.

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GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.*

*By*  
*CAROL MARY HOLT*

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*INTRODUCTION*  
*By*  
*CHARLES W. GARFIELD*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.  
1915

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C. M. H.

## INTRODUCTION

A little girl sat at the Thanksgiving dinner with a lot of grown-ups. The host waited upon all, leaving his little daughter for the last. She watched every movement with anxious interest, but kept herself under pretty good control. Toward the last she became uneasy, wriggled in her chair and heaved long sighs. So when her papa said, "Now what will my precious daughter have?" she threw up her arms, nodded her head with vigor and said, "Oh, I want things and things and things!" This is the attitude of childhood toward the world of information about it. It is the period of easy and wonderful acquirement. Children want to know things and things and things. The problem of the educator is to maintain this as a period of joy rather than of tasks; to keep up the eager desire for knowledge and satisfy it without awakening the feeling that the school period is one to be endured with such fortitude as one can muster.

To this end the gaining of knowledge of the things nearest at hand and reaching towards wider fields is the natural method.

Charles Wagner somewhere in "The Simple Life" says: "First, then, be of your own country, your own city, your own home, your own



church, your own workshop. Then if you can, set out from this to go beyond it."

This is the spirit which should inspire our school methods, and as I have read this contribution by Miss Carol Holt to our school literature, I have been impressed with its value in awakening a joy in historical research which will open the vision of boys and girls to the value of history as a part of their equipment for a life of service.

The known life of the Grand River Valley extends over so brief a period that there is still opportunity for research at original sources and this attractive, even though condensed record, should stimulate the school children to inquiry which will bring out many other interesting facts and incidents not generally known.

I recall with vividness my boyhood talks with "Uncle" Louis Campau, and the exquisite joy of telling my parents and teachers things they did not know which I had found out.

There is nothing quite like the joy of what we think is original discovery in any field of investigation.

A chamber in my house is finished in black walnut which has grown darker with the years until it has reached almost an ebony in color. The lumber was sawed from a walnut tree on the highest ground of the first farmstead in Kent County, occupied by Barney and Harriet Burton. The tree had over two hundred rings of growth, thus recording its two centuries from

the sprouting seed to the harvest. It was a great wonder to the early settlers that this lone walnut should have grown on this high land when no others were to be found except on the river bottom. An aged Indian who came each year to receive his stipend from the Government explained to me when a young lad, that this high ground was chosen by a band of Ottawas from time immemorial as a winter camp, and the underbrush was regularly burned for miles in each direction so an enemy could not approach without being detected. Here children brought walnuts from the river bottom and cracked them to eat with their parched corn during the long winters. It was natural that an occasional nut should slip from the little fingers and become imbedded in the soil. One evidently survived the rough treatment given to most saplings and grew into the tree which marked the camp ground of the savages.

I predict for the children of our schools many happy experiences of this kind as a result of studying this booklet of local history.

How appropriate that a granddaughter of Henry Holt, one of the best known and loved of our pioneers, should have assumed the pleasant task of preparing this history. I recall his self-sacrificing efforts in bringing before the country the advantages of the Grand River Valley as a fruit-growing section, the reward of which we are now reaping in full measure.

The record of the pioneer efforts with its pri-

vations and sacrifices, threaded with kindly service, all devoted to the development of a wilderness into a beautiful and productive domain is an inspiring one, and must arouse in the boys and girls of today a desire to carry on the early effort to even a more pronounced fruition.

Charles W. Garfield.

Pasadena, California,

March 15, 1915.