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## A PAIR OF OLD TIMERS

### ROCHESTER MEN RECALL OAKLAND'S PIONEER DAYS

Rochester, Mich., Aug 18 –

Rochester boasts two distinctive figures – the oldest blacksmith in Oakland County and the only living son of one of the four first white men to settle in the county.

Richard J. Bennett, 84 years old, is the blacksmith and he swings a hammer every day at his forge in a garage. The other is William Graham, 91, who also is active and swings a scythe lustily as he works to keep the grounds about his home in trim. Both ascribe their longevity to hard work.

Graham's grandfather, James Graham, his father, Benjamin Graham, and Alexander Graham, Benjamin's brother, with Christopher Hartsuf, were the first white settlers in Oakland County. He was born in the oldest house in the county, but later moved into the village of Rochester. The land on which the old farmhouse stood was bought for \$1.25 an acre. Only recently it was sold for \$200 an acre.

Graham's first teacher was the grandfather of Robert M. Toms, Wayne County prosecuting attorney.

Bennett was born in Rochester. He has lived the greater part of his life there with the exception of some years spent in the West, and at Flint. For more than half century he has been a blacksmith and horse trainer. His father also was a blacksmith and Graham has said of Bennett that he was one of the finest edged toolmakers in the country.

Pitching horseshoes is a hobby of the veteran smith. A few years ago, he and 'Jake' Hadley were able to defeat all comers at distances from 15 to 54 feet.

During the days of the old stagecoach line from Detroit to Saginaw, Rochester was a junction point, and Bennett recalls vividly the manner in which the horses were changed. His father shod many of these animals, and one in particular made a deep impression on him.

"His name was Pat," Bennett recalled. "He was the meanest cuss of a horse you ever saw. Old Pat never was tied when he was brought to the shop for shoes. He'd tear the building down. No one could touch his legs, so my father used to sit up beside him, squat down and stick out his knee. Then he'd grab Old Pat's hoof and lift it gingerly on the knee and go ahead with the job. That hoss'd kick the daylights out of anyone who tried to pick up his leg and he kicked with all four feet."

Old Jacob Tipsico, noted Indian athlete and strong man, a friend of the Rochester whites, was well known to both Bennett and Graham.

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