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#### O. K. VAN AMBURG

Orange Kellogg VanAmburg saw the light of day December 16, 1803, in the town of Milton, Saratoga County, New York. His place in the order of birth of his 16 siblings has not been ascertained. The family farmed and his services, as well as his brothers, were needed. A few months of school, during the winter, was the extent of any formal education. The fireplace provided light when, as a boy, he studied Adams' Arithmetic long hours into the night. As was the custom, the children of poor families hired out at an early age to support themselves. As 12 he worked for eight months at \$5. per. A year or two later his pay rose to \$6. Self-taught he worked as a teacher when very young.

In 1819, the family of the 16 year old O.K. moved to Jefferson County, New York. He found employment with a syndicate of French men who owned a large tract of land. His duties included the delivery of messages to Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, who had a large plantation in western New York. Through rain, dark, cold, he completed the required task; not an easy job with wolves and bears still plentiful in the area.

With a brother Orange, 21, started for Michigan on foot in February, 1825. The long journey ended in Farmington, Michigan. There they contracted to clear five acres and build a log house. His brother got sick but O.K. completed the job. He worked four days to pay for an ax; five for room and board while working for the ax. Earnings, after clearing another 12 acres, provided him with sufficient funds to buy 80 acres in Novi Township. After clearing and improving, the sale of the 80 enabled him to buy 160 acres four miles west; immediately setting about to clear that piece.

By then O.K. had married Mary Ann Taft March 15, 1829. When she died December 29, 1850, there were two girls (Louise and Harriet) and five boys (Orson, William, Henry, Joseph and Daniel ) for whom he wanted a better education than had been available to him. To do this he sold some land and moved to a farm on the Grand River Plank Road. Seven years after Mary died he traded the remaining 90 acres for 320 in Brighton Township in 1857, sections 10 and 21. By then O.K. had married Amanda M. Brown.

In 1861, 80 acres, across VanAmburg Road from his 160, were acquired. Here he built a comfortable home for his family which now included Albert and Charles, born to Amanda. As often happened, several of the children married neighboring children. Joseph married Mary Jane Paddock in 1860, Daniel married Elvira Morgan in 1868 and Albert married Alice Taylor c. 1883.

An early interviewer relates that even at the advanced age of 77, O.K. retained many vivid memories of his youth. He recalled the troops marching during the War of 1812, while his family lived in Saratoga County. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair From: 1891 Portrait & Biographical Album; census records; early atlases; 1880 History of Livingston County; and Early Settlers/Landowners of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau.