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EDWIN B. WINANS - SETTLER, 1834; MICHIGAN GOVERNOR, 1891

It is a given that early settlers in Livingston County were an adventurous, hardy lot. (Of course, those that returned to their former homes in the east are rarely noted in local history resources. "This life did not agree with him," is the statement made.) Among them is found the John C. and Eliza Winans family from New York. John was of German ancestry and Eliza was of Puritan background. With them came son, Edwin B. Winans (b. May 16, 1826, Livingston County, New York) at the age of eight. By 1836 John has built a log house in Unadilla Township and commenced farming. In later years Edwin would write nostalgically of the "...one room log house of my father in Unadilla" where he slept listening to wolves at night, birds in the morning and rain drops on the wood shingles above his head.

His early education was obtained in the local district school until his 18th year. A year after the death of his father he settled in Pettysville with his mother in 1844. There he contracted with Seth Pettys to work in his woolen mill for three years (April, 1845/April '48) for \$10.00 a month and board with Pettys' family. When he and his mother later moved into their own log home in Hamburg Township he was paid \$14.00 a month minus room/board. In 1846 and '47 he taught school in the Hamburg district. During this period he attended Albion College from which he graduated in 1850.

Perhaps caught up in the gold fever, which was still strong, Winans traveled to California to try his hand that year. Leaving in March, 1850, it was a four month overland trip to Placerville. Perhaps he panned sufficient gold, or had funds with him, he was soon one of the owners of the Randolph Hill Mining Company at Rough and Ready, California. Shortly he is principal stockholder in the Rough and Ready Ditch Company. Following his marriage to Elizabeth Galloway in 1855, daughter of one of the first settlers in Hamburg Township, they both returned to California, probably by coach or wagon; a brave young bride of 19. In 1858, they sold out and came back to Hamburg, with their son George, and bought a total of 400 acres, much of it on the south shore of Pleasant (Winans) Lake.

A perception of one's obligation to the community in which one lives impelled him to public service. Altho' a Democrat in a staunchly Republican community he served in the State Legislature from 1860-65. In 1867 he was a member of the constitutional convention. He was the state's representative to the 48th and 49th Congress. In 1891 he became Michigan's 19th governor. Locally he was Supervisor of Hamburg Township in 1872-73; President of the Livingston County Agriculture Society, 1873-74; Livingston County Probate Judge, 1876-80. As a charter member of the county Pioneer Association he prepared his memories of early Hamburg for inclusion in the 1880 History of the county. Edwin B. Winans died July 4, 1894. He is buried in the Hamburg Cemetery. A state historic site marker is erected at the cemetery. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Ellis' 1880 History of Livingston County; Early Land Owners and Settlers and obituaries copied by Milton Charboneau; 1891 Portrait and Biographical Album; and census records. 810/229-6402 to correct or add to the above.)