

## AMUSEMENTS

With no radios, televisions, autos, or movies, entertainment in Vermontville had to be provided by the inhabitants themselves. Young people organized school societies, debating teams, Sunday School and church picnics; birthday parties with a merry round of games; excursions to the woods for flowers or nuts; visits to the "sugar bush" for "sugaring off;" in winter skating on the millpond or on the Thornapple River if the weather had been cold enough to form ice and if one had the necessary transportation to reach these somewhat distant spots. When skating on the mill pond once I had a violent quarrel with the boy whose horse and buggy had conveyed me there--so I walked home alone at midnight over the frozen rough country roads, an eerie experience I shudder to remember.

Once on the Thornapple River I had such a narrow escape from complete disaster that I never went there to skate again. We put on our skates at the bridge where the river was narrow but deep. It wound tortuously along the tree covered banks and was very dark in spots where the thin moonlight couldn't penetrate. On this particular occasion, I felt that I was skating unusually well and decided to try for a record of distance and speed. I skated away from the main group standing around the bonfire and started around a curve up the river, faster and faster, arms swinging, skates cutting long lovely curves on the ice which was the best in years, breath vaporizing on the chill air. I was vaguely conscious of a dark patch on the ice ahead. My feet were working faster than my mind. When I finally realized that the dark patch was open water I was upon it. Too late to check