

# Goodridge Family



The Goodridge name came to this area through the brothers Wallace L., William A., and GlenAlvin Goodridge. Wallace and William were born in York, Pennsylvania. Their father, William C. Goodridge, was born in 1805, the son of a slave mother and a white father, in Baltimore, Maryland. William was an indentured laborer at age six, studying the leather tanning trade in York, Pennsylvania. His indenture ended at age 16. He went on to try a variety of trades- barber, candy maker, and package shipper. During all this time he worked with the Underground Railroad to help escaped slaves find freedom. William married Emily Carrollton from Virginia. The family had to flee their home when the Confederate Army invaded York, Pennsylvania in 1862. The three brothers came to East Saginaw where their sister resided in 1863. They brought their photography skills with them, but GlenAlvin died shortly after they settled into their work.

Wallace L. was born September 4, 1840 and William A. was born in 1846. They opened their shop at Genesee and Washington Streets, in the village of East Saginaw. When a fire destroyed their building in the 1870's, they moved to a new studio at 220 South Washington.

In an article from the Michigan History magazine, dated Sunday, October 26, 1969, the following paragraphs are quoted:

*"The Goodridges were the first of their race to come to Saginaw with any intent to make their home here. They were handsome young fellows, personable, and equipped with superior photographic skills equal to those of Matthew Brady who, in the same era, was earning fame for his Civil War battlefield pictures.*

*They fitted themselves into a waiting niche in the Saginaw community, and quickly demonstrated their skill with the camera. Specializing first in daguerreotypes*

*(photographs on silver or silver-colored copper plates) and later in ambrotypes (positive photographs on glass), they soon became renowned for their landscape and portrait work. By 1866, the Goodridge brothers were advertising 'The Largest and Best Sky-light in the State' and had become prominent members of the Negro community. When the Colored Debating Society was organized in February 1866, both GlenAlvin and William were elected officers of the organization. They not only took many pictures of the growing Saginaw, but spent much time in the pine forests that extended north to the Straits of Mackinac and beyond. Their pictures of pine logs heaped high on river shores at 'banking grounds' on the shores of the Cass River (including the Frankenmuth area), the Shiawassee, and northern tributaries of the Saginaw, are classics in the history of Michigan lumbering. Others in the same category show the sorting stations where the logs were sorted and tied together for the journey to downstream mills; of river men riding the logs in the rivers' spring freshets, and many others."*

The Goodridges earned their respected places in the Saginaw community, and over the years, as other Negro families came here, were leaders among their people, often officers in social and community organizations. In 1900, Wallace Goodridge was elected president of an organization to work for the betterment of Negroes, and in 1901, he headed a general committee for Saginaw Negroes celebration of Emancipation Day. A member of the East Star Lodge No.6 (Negro Masons), and of the Unitarian Church, he was an officer of the Saginaw Professional Photographers Association. Wallace Goodridge married Rhoda C. Goodridge in 1890. She was born in 1840 in Pennsylvania. They had a child, Glensdon. Rhoda died in 1915 and Wallace died on March 3, 1922. William's date of death is unknown. We do know that his wife's name was Allie.



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