

Brighton Area Historical Society - The Boylans Move West

Written by Marieanna Bair
Tuesday, 14-Jun-2011

Early censuses record a number of settlers to Michigan Territory by the name of Boylan.

Several came from Pennsylvania, including Moses M. Boylan. Born November 30, 1805, Moses brought his family to the Territory at an early date. He must have bought a substantial number of acres in Washtenaw County. It is believed he donated land in Ann Arbor as a site for the first courthouse and is noted as serving as the first sheriff of that county. A photo shows a thin face, and wide, white goatee. Moses died July 11, 1876; his wife in May, 1888 in Ann Arbor. A son, Charles, who was born in 1832, in Ann Arbor when it was a small cluster of cabins, seems to have lived most of his life in Ann Arbor, dying there in 1903.

Moses' second son, Arthur E., was born in Ann Arbor, August 4, 1835. Growing up in Ann Arbor it was logical for Arthur E. to 'learn' medicine at the University of Michigan. During the Civil War, at age 29, he served as a teamster with the 2M Department; March 26/ October 12, 1864, 7 months, 13 days. He probably served out of Washtenaw County; he is not found in Livingston County Civil War records. However, he does appear with other Brighton area veterans in pictures of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Arthur met Katie Norton, who had been born December 23, 1837, in Madison, Hamilton County, New York. She had moved to Hamburg in 1864. They married in 1865, moving to Brighton shortly after. Doc, in 1873, served a term as trustee in the six-year old Village of Brighton. A daughter, Mary Louise, was born to them in 1866. She married William R. Bitten, April 11, 1888, a local boy who had a variety of occupations: among them- saloon keeper, butcher and well digger. A photo of their children, Bernice, Thelma and Arthur Burchard with Grandfather Arthur E. in a buggy with the horse ' Faithful John; is winsome.

A son, Arthur M. born December 2, 1868, married local girl Lydia Avis. They had a son Arthur J. in 1916. Arthur M. and Frank Cline had a men's clothing store at the corner of W. Main and First Street, which appears to have been started in the early 1920s. Their partnership continued until 1934, when Cline had the business himself. (Cline was murdered in his store by the Andrus brothers, April, 1949.)

Doc Boyland died April 19, 1907. Katie came to a tragic end February 2, 1913. Son, Arthur M., with her since Doc died, ". . . was away for a short time and on returning found his mother on the kitchen floor dead. Her clothing and hair nearly all burned off. She had managed to get a paper afire. . . It is probable death was a result of suffocation." (obituary) Both Doc and Katie are buried in Fairview Cemetery.

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Compiled by Marieanna Bair from obituaries copied from the Brighton Argus and the Fairview Cemetery transcription by Milton Charboneau; the 1880 History of Livingston County and census records.