

175 YEARS OF TUTHILLS IN GREEN OAK

Thomas Tuthill, with wife Anna LeFivre and four children, arrived in Green Oak Township in the summer of 1833 from Cayuga, New York. They had purchased 146 acres of Section 31, sight unseen, earlier that spring. The children: Carlotta 1823, Solomon 1829, Martha Ann 1832 and Tunis LeFivre 1833, were born in New York. Oscar Lewis was born after their arrival in 1839. In 1850, Solomon is farming with his father. The children probably attended what was known as Field School, on the north side of Nine Mile Road, about a mile west of the Ann Arbor Road (Whitmore Lake Road). Not long after arriving in Green Oak, Thomas and Anna were instrumental in the organization of the Green Oak Presbyterian Church, June 15, 1834. Martha Ann and Tunis LeFivre were baptized at that meeting. In 1836, Thomas served as township treasurer. He waited ten months before expenses of his office were approved to be paid, a total of \$21.00. Expenses included service at elections and marking-out the road at \$1.00 per day. He later served as assessor.

An 1886 will indicates Carlotta married a man by the name of Abenteaux, and Martha Ann a man by the name of Leonard. Tunis LeFivre married Hattie Bostwick c. 1867. They had five children: Blanch 1868 (married Stephen Douglas); Anna 1871 (Knight); Cornelia 1872 (Stevens); Oscar Lewis 1875 (CeLora Purdy); and William 1877 (Mable G.).

Tunis LeFivre, in 1875, is described as a "... General farmer, making a specialty of raising, dealing in graded Durham cattle and good horses." He is one example of how farmers adapted to changing economics. As transportation improved, it allowed specialization, such as his. Farmers turned from supplying only their family's needs to raising various crops: orchards, sheep, cattle, swine, etc., for better returns. Changes in communications were also realized: c. 1937, Oscar paid \$7.80 for three months' phone, including long distance.)

William and Oscar Lewis were both students during the November 1892 / March 1893 winter term at the McDonald (or Maiden) School on Marshall Road. Growing boys often attended school only during the winter term – their labor was needed on the farm during other seasons. Tunis LeFivre farmed about 160 acres in Section 28 at the time, formerly owned by Benjamin Lumbard. A photo of Oscar Lewis tying bundles of grain is in the Green Oak History book.

In 1900-02, William served the township as school inspector and as constable. He and Mabel had two children, Harmon and Charles.

The father of Oscar Lewis' wife, Benjamin Purdy, was instrumental in the organization of the Kensington Baptist Church on Grand River and Kensington Roads. At the observance of the centennial of the church, October 20, 1935, CeLora Purdy Tuthill helped prepare a history of the church. Celora's daughter, Aurelia, born 1907, included a story of her mother's life in the Green Oak History. A life of physical labor, but also of caring and remarkable enthusiasm. Aurelia's siblings were Roy, born 1916 (Eleanor Stuckman) and Lloyd, born 1919 (Ella Green). A photo of Aurelia and Harley Tuthill, attending McDonald School c. 1915, is also in the History book. In 1925, Aurelia graduated from South Lyon High School. She later married Henry Francis.

In 1960, two acres were donated to the Green Oak Free Methodist Church by Lloyd and Ella. She remembers her mother painstakingly drying sliced apples, which she donated to the Woodstock Orphan Home in Illinois – gratefully giving of what she had to lighten life for others. In 1980, the Charles, Harmon, and Lloyd Tuthill families are residents on the property originally purchased by their ancestors. Great, great grandson Jim, and wife Sandy, are farming and conducting a yard waste composting business on the family farm; still adapting to change. Many members of this family are buried in local cemeteries.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; Hamburg and Kensington Cemetery transcriptions; obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau; and "Yesteryears of Green Oak" by the Township Historical Society.. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402)