

June 2004 THE RIDERS- FROM HOLLAND, T NEW YORK, TO PENNSYLVANIA, TO MICHIGAN

The long relationship of the Rider family and the Fishbeck family in Holland was maintained as they sailed the Atlantic to New York in the late 17th century. Joseph Rider, Sr. was a child when Washington was inaugurated as president. His parents died when he was very young; his only education was as a shoemaker. After serving in the War of 1812, he became a farmer. The two families and a relative, David Pierce, moved to Pennsylvania and then on the Michigan in 1833, settling for two years in Milford Township. (His wife, Sara Peck, had died earlier.) Joseph, Jr. 15, was with the party.

In 1835, 18 year old Joe 'took up' 120 acres of government land in Genoa Township, Section 17 NE/SE and W ½ SE ¼ (The early arrival in America of these two families enabled them to become fluent in the English language, a distinct advantage over more recent immigrant families coming to Genoa from Germany.) Joe traded one horse for a yoke of oxen. To purchase the second yoke, he worked for his neighbors. At the time he arrived there were three houses (log) in the township. He built his cabin on an Indian trail, which approximated Chilson Road. He was able to communicate with the Indians who traded venison for items he could furnish. At the time it took five days, with the ox team, to make the round trip to Detroit for supplies.

In 1838, Joseph was elected assessor, and later clerk, of newly formed (March 11, 1837) Genoa Township. For a number of years he served as Justice of the Peace. He held offices in the Genoa Grange of which he was a charter member. He raised a large number of stock, especially shorthorn cattle (for which acres had to be cultivated to raise feed.) In October 1858, at the Livingston County Agriculture Fair he received recognition as owner of the best-cultivated farm in the county. An intense interest in the cultivation of trees was evident in the grove of oaks and along Crooked Lake Road, the many maples. (Are any still there?) Before 1850 his holdings amounted to 560 acres, much of it purchased at tax sales, all in close proximity.

March 19, 1840, Isabella Maria Fishbeck, not yet 16, and Joseph were married. She came from a family of 14 children. (Joseph's sister, Jemina, was the wife of Isabella's brother, Freeman.) The 1850 census records Joseph, Sr. and Elsie (Isabella's mother) living with them. The log house, in which seven children were born, was replaced with a frame house in 1853. (North side Crooked Lake Road, east of Nixon.) In the next nine years three more were born. Two of the children died when about two years old. The oldest, George, died before he was 17 following an accident at school. By the time she was 38 Isabella had born ten children. She died in 1894, at age 70. Joseph sold his farm in 1903 and went to live with his daughter in Greenville. February 14, 1908 he died. Both are buried in Lakeview Cemetery in Howell. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County, a drawing of the farm is on page 302; 1891 Portrait and Biographical Album; Settlement of Germans in Genoa by William Pless; atlases; Early Landowners and Settlers of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau.