

May 1998 AREA FARMS c 1900- "OLD HOMESTEAD"

The "Old Homestead", owned by S. Bert Appleton, was located in Section 2, Hamburg Township on the south side of Cunningham Lake Road.

Among the very first settlers in the area were Isaac W. and Lydia (Brower) Appleton. He and brother Daniel, both from Tompkins, N.Y., scouted land in the SE ¼ of Livingston County in 1830 (when it was yet a part of Washtenaw County). By 1831 both are listed as original owners in Green Oak Township. Altho' they began at once to clear land and build a log cabin, neither moved in. The perceived threat of Indian attack because of the Black Hawk War prompted them and many others in the area to move to Northfield Township for a time where they hoped to find safety in numbers.

In the spring of 1845 Isaac was a first land owner in Hamburg, Township, Section 2. By 1854 his holdings had grown to 140 acre. Altho' much of the area was hilly and swampy, an orchard was planted and farming commenced. He is listed as a charter member of Livingston County Agricultural Society, formed February 24, 1853.

Isaac and Lydia had five children. The first, Sarah Elizabeth, 1833, was the first white girl born in Green Oak Township. Within the next 12 years two more daughters and two sons were born. Samuel B. enlisted in Co. E. 26th Mich. Inf. and was killed May 16, 1865 at Spottsylvania. Brother Henry B. (18), enlisted in Co. K, 9th Inf. several months before his brother's death. After being mustered out, September 15, 1865, Henry undertook . . . "the management of his father's farm on share and soon purchased 40 acres and afterward the remainder of the farm, and made a home for his parents from that time on". (Upon his death December 29, 1937 he was the last remaining Civil War veteran in Brighton.)

January 1, 1868, Henry and Delia Babcock (17) were married. To them were born four children: Carrie, Frankie, S. Bert and Earl who died an infant. Bert joined his father making a living on the farm. He married neighbor Grace Nash and raised three children on the farm (H.B., James F. and Lawrence) which, by 1915 has grown to 251 acres. In 1935, we find Cunninghams are owners. In 1961, a subdivision comprises 30 of the 200 acres owned by Evelyn Cunningham.

Today the hilly terrain has been recognized, as had Isaac, Henry and Bert, as a fine scenic and restful site for raising families. A tour through Stonegate Development proves many others appreciate this attribute also. With such a long history, it's easy to understand why S. Bert's farm is named the "Old Homestead." (by Marieanna Bair. Compiled from Atlases, 1880 History of Livingston County, 1891 Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston & Ingham County, Milton Charboneau's "First Landowners: Fairview Cemetery Transcription and copies of obituaries and thanks to Jim Appleton.)