

October 1998- AREA FARMS C. 1900 MAPLE LAWN FARMS

Research of local farms and farmers, listed in the Brighton Argus continues. MAPLE LAWN FARM in Frank Prosser's name is the subject of this issue.

Among the very early families' names recorded in the Village Cemetery records and whose farms were also listed in the c. 1900 Argus, one finds the name of Prosser. Joining the many who were streaming into Michigan and Brighton Township, in the mid 1830s, where Charles and Elmina Prosser from Genesee County, New York. Lydia Prosser, who perhaps was his sister, came with them or shortly after. Records indicate she owned land, SW ½ SE ¼, Section 18, on June 18, 1852. She is listed in the 1850 and 1860 census of the township. Lydia, who died September 17, 1869, Charles, December 30, 1893 and Elmina, June 13, 1890, are buried in the Village Cemetery. Also a daughter, Lovisa, a three year old granddaughter and other relatives.

Charles and Elmina are noted as original purchasers of 120 acres in the SE ¼ of Section 16, October 1841, bounded by Van Amburg and Sietz (formerly Skeman) Roads. By 1859 J. Christian owns the south 80 acres with house, which later burned, indicated on the map. The remaining 40 acres are owned by J. Stanfield, with a house, which is still standing.

In March, 1846, Charles also located along both sides of the Grand River Trail (Sections 19 and 30) with Challis Road on the Section line, from Elder George Post, a Baptist Society minister, from Allegheny County New York. Just NE of the Davis Medical Center, perhaps under Cinema Drive, Charles set up a brickyard. "Here he made the first bricks made in the township." These were designated to be used for chimneys. ". . . no resident at the time having aspired to the luxury of a brick dwelling." (1880 History) The Brighton Mall occupies the remainder of that site.

In 1846 Charles also owns 160 acres in SE ¼ Section 18 and built a brick house on the west side of Hunter Road about ¾ miles south of Hyne. In 1895 the name of son-in law, John Hunter, is noted on the east half of this piece with son Frank's name on the west 80. Frank also owned 60 acres in the SW ¼ of Section 90, on Hyne Road east of Old 23 (Hartland/Flint Road). We believe MAPLE LAWN FARM is the name given this site. A principle source of income is from his custom threshing business. Normally set up in a farmer's barnyard, the huge threshing machine was probably steam driven. The grain would have already been cut, bundled and brought to the yard for threshing. The grain was funneled into waiting bags, the straw forming an immense golden stack. A second piece of equipment, a portable saw mill, was another means of providing for his family. This was probably steam powered early on and later by a gasoline engine. Frank's seven children, three of which were boys, must have been a significant source of support for the labor entailed with running a farm and a business. (compiled by Marieanna Bair from Early Atlases; Bill Pless' supplement to Village Cemetery Records; 1880 History of Livingston County; obituaries and Early Land Owners and Settlers of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau.)