

The John F. and Margaret Lawson family arrived in Livingston County in 1836 from New York with four children under 10 years of age. Eighty acres in Genoa Township, Section 9, were recorded July 9, 1836. In Section 4, 120 acres were recorded September 22, 1836. The first order of business would have been the construction of a log home in that wilderness. The 200 acres were located on both sides of the Grand River Trail, to the west end of Long (Chemung) Lake.

John F. died in 1857, at which time the property was inherited by his remaining children. George A., b. 1828, died earlier than his father; as one recorder wrote “. . . in early manhood.” Those remaining were Benjamin Howard, b. 1831; Margaret, b. 1833; Serena, b. 1835; Catherine, b. 1837 and John W. b. 1840 (A daughter, Sarah, had died in infancy.) All but Catherine and John were born in New York.

Benjamin Howard owned a hardware store in Howell c. 1860. At some period he became a doctor. He married Maria Holling of New York., c. 1857. In April, 1871, he organized the B.H. Lawson & Company Bank in Brighton at 140 W. Main. He sold to Gustav J. Baetcke in February, 1891. After the organization of Brighton Village, 1867, B. H. held several positions on the village council. Also in the Livingston County Agricultural Society. After moving to Detroit, he established the Union Trust Co. in 1889 and practiced at Grace Hospital. His obituary states “. . . Was one of Brighton’s premier citizens.”

Margaret married George Younglove c. 1857 and had one child, Burl. By 1870 Younglove has remarried and Burl is still with him. It would appear Margaret died in the early 1860s.

Serena was a rural schoolteacher, later becoming Spaulding M. Case’s third wife. They had two sons. After Spaulding’s death she married Thomas Tunis in 1871 and they lived in Brighton Village.

In 1860 Catherine E. is with her mother on the farm in Genoa.

John W. married Adelaide Barnard. They farmed the original acreage. Of their five children, Ernest continued farming after buying out the heirs, upon the death of his father, John W. Ernest and J.G. Hays formed the Howell Co-op in 1917. He organized the First National Bank of Howell. In 1923, his Sunrise Park Subdivision was platted. His son Harold formed the Lawson Candy Company in Brighton in the late 1940s.

It appears John F. and Margaret would have had reason to be proud of all their descendants. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from : census records; ‘ Early Landowners and Settler’, ‘ First Landowners’ and obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau; writings of Bill Pless; and family history from Colby Thompson of California.