

LYMAN AND JULIA JUDSON BEGIN LIFE TOGETHER IN MICHIAN

The 1859 map of Brighton Township shows Lyman Judson owning 160 acres; the NW ¼ of Section 32 (east of Brighton settlement). This is now bounded on the south by Grand River and on the east by Old 23. His home was in the southwest corner of the tract on the north side of the Grand River Trail, both sides of which were farmland.

At age 25, in 1839, he came from New York with his wife Julia Little. Daughter Amelia was born, 1839, on Pleasant Valley Road, Section 14. She, and three more daughters -- Adelaide (1843), Diantha (1846), and Matilda (1849) -- preceded sons Charles F. (1855) and Frank E. (1857). Little Ella, January 1860, lived only 18 days.

Lyman's profession was as a miller. In 1849 he bought the mill in town from Everett Woodruff. A French turbine wheel was installed, and he enlarged the mill. The mill, built by Orsor Quackenbush in 1849, was at the northwest corner of North and West Streets. Lyman was the local miller until he sold it to Albright and Thompson in 1856.

As a responsible citizen of the township, Lyman held the supervisor's office in 1851/53, 1860/62 and 1874. In 1864, he was one of the local businessmen who contributed to the construction of the St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church on Rickett Road. He was dedicated to all children's education. In 1852, he served as moderator of the school and as director in 1865 and 1872. Amelia (music) and Adelaide both went into the teaching profession. Lyman also farmed his 160 acres. As a progressive agriculturist, he joined the Brighton Grange and was a charter member of the Livingston County Agricultural Society, serving as secretary in 1859-60. At the first fair, October 6, 1853, in Howell, he exhibited a variety of "domestic manufactures." At the first meeting of the Livingston County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, May 10, 1863, he was appointed director. By 1872, he was president of the company. To promote economic growth, he realized the need for better transportation for the local rural economy. He became a director of the Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad June 15, 1864. Lyman was a charter member of the Livingston County Pioneer Society, formed prior to the country's centennial.

Daughter Amelia married George Smith, one of Brighton's early businessmen. In the mid 19th century he was a hardware dealer. At one time, he owned the Brighton Mill and later was in the lumber business with S. H. Conely, with a yard by the tracks. About 1880, he and Amelia moved to Aberdeen, South Dakota, to 'grow up with the city' and raise their family of five.

Adelaide was the second wife of Charles Holdridge and lived in the area. Diantha died in 1861 at 15. Matilda married businessman Augustus Reiner, living in the home he built on Rickett Road. Six children were born. Charles married local girl, Florence Carpenter. Daughter Marjorie married Earl McBratner, living in Davison. Daughter Heidi married Joseph Brady, who had a store in Chilson -- then a meat market on W. Main, in business until 1951. Several of their descendents live in the area. Frank, a pharmacist, was in business with Charles for 20 years. The 'Judson Bros' store was at Main and Grand River (Lu & Carl's). The first public phone in town was located in the store in 1882. Frank and Zella Morris had three daughters.

With Lyman and Julia are four more Judsons at rest in the Old Village Cemetery. Eight of the Holdridge family and five of the Reiner family joined them. The old farm was sold for a thoroughbred stock farm in 1925. By 1935, it is the 'Brighton Country Club'.