

DR. ERNEST ADOLPH BUEK, A BRIGHTON PIONEER

While not a famous man, nor a great one, nevertheless Ernest A. Buek typified the dedicated, devout (his family were members of St. Michael's in Hamburg, Germany), often forgotten common people whose sturdy leadership gave our rural areas the strength to grow and flourish.

The eighth of eleven children, born October 28, 1802, to Kaspar Henrich Buek (a gardner, florist and insurance agent) and Friederike (Voight) in Hamburg, Germany, Ernest received a complete education in history and law. Beginning secondary school at the age of 15 in 1817, his diligent, continued efforts resulted in the conferring of honors in Canon and Civil Laws, together with the degree Doctor of Law, on May 21, 1826.

On October 28, 1829, he married Elizabeth Henrietta Knauth. In the 1800s many Germans immigrated to America because of compulsory military service, lack of available land and political reasons. Dr. Buek and his family were among them. By mid-June, 1838, the Plymouth was anchored off Sandy Hook, the approach to New York Harbor. On board were Ernest, Elizabeth and their five children, the eldest eight years old, along with prospective pioneers and soldiers of fortune.

Besides household belongings, Ernest brought along his law library, the works of Shakespeare, Schiller and Goethe, and his Heidelberg degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence. All these were loaded on a boat, floated up the Hudson, transferred to a barge, towed on the Erie Canal (during which time the children learned their first words of English, "Low Bridge") and by boat again from Buffalo to Detroit. A stagecoach from Detroit finally brought them to their destination - Hamburg in Livingston County.

Already many from Germany had settled in Hamburg and Genoa townships, which was perhaps an inducement to buy 40 acres in Section 15 of Hamburg Township in the 5800 area of present day Cowell Road on August 2, 1838. On the 40 acres of woodland running back into the high hills on the shore of beautiful Pleasant (Winans) Lake, a typical log house was built with the little family moving in on October 26. Over the fireplace, the German pioneer set a board in which he had carved "Frölich in Hoffnung, Geduldig in Trübsal, Haltaeam Gebete" (Be joyful in hope, patient in suffering, constant in prayer.) (During the years to come, he would have full need of this philosophic admonition.)

Dr. Buek knew both French and Italian in addition to his native German, but lacked a speaking command of the English language. He had come to America to practice his profession but found no law business for such as he. (Condensed and edited from "A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Ernst Adolph Buek, Compiled by Robert Lee Watson". To be continued.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, Mi. 48116

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OLD KENT BANK
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Brighton, Mi. 48116