

DR. ERNEST ADOLPH BUEK, A BRIGHTON PIONEER (cont.)

In the early 1840s, there were less than thirty families in the whole township of Hamburg; roads were mere trails through the woods, Indians begged at the door, bears carried off the little pigs, and the distant howling of wolves at night was a familiar sound. On one occasion, when the Doctor had gone to Brighton, a dreadful cry was heard by those at home from across the lake. They felt certain it was a panther or Indians on the war path. Mother and children sought shelter and refuge in the rootcellar, back in the hillside, and cowered in fear until a familiar and reassuring whistle announced that the head of the household had returned unharmed. The hidden came forth from their sanctuary and learned the maniacal clamor that had sent them scurrying for safety had been made by a harmless waterfowl, a loon.

Autumn days brought crops to harvest and nuts to gather. When storms sent the white-caps racing across the lake (present day Winans Lake) or when the north wind piled snow deep around the little cabin, they all gathered before the great fireplace and listened enthralled while their scholarly father read aloud of the fearsome ride of the Erl Konig, pages from King Lear or appropriately enough, chapters from the Last of the Mohicans.

Within a few years his devoted "Lizette" died in childbirth, 1846, leaving the three hour old baby and its older siblings entirely in his care. She was buried on "Holy Hill" overlooking the lake. (Later to be reinterred in St. George Churchyard in Genoa Township in April, 1850.) The Doctor and Lizette had nine children, of which the first five were born in Germany and the last four in Hamburg Township in the cabin on the lake.

In 1833, Michigan's first Lutheran pastor, Rev. Friedrich Schmid, from Basel, Switzerland, preached his first sermon in Michigan. Riding his horse, using his axe to clear a path, and carrying his blanket roll, Rev. Schmid preached his first sermon in Genoa Township in 1842. Due to the shortage of pastors in the wilderness, Rev. Schmid pressed into service every professional person he found in the area, of which Dr. Buek was one. By 1845, St. George Ev. Lutheran Church was organized with Dr. Buek as Secretary of the vestry. That year, he returned to Germany and solicited donations from classmates, friends and Lutherans for the construction of a building to house the new congregation. Along with \$600 in cash, he also brought back a communion set, baptismal font, church seal, offering plate and a register book. In April, 1849, the church was built. The several children were confirmed there and several of the girls married other German pioneers who located in the nearby townships. Dr. Buek served as Pastor (except for two years in Detroit) until he died July 2, 1860 on the farm in Section 28 in Genoa Township on land to which he had moved in 1850, now a part of Burroughs Farms. He and his Lizette are buried in the St. George cemetery in Genoa Township, where once stood the little church to which he gave his life's devotion. (Condensed and edited from "A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Ernst Adolph Buek, compiled by Robert Lee Watson".)

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