

## EVOLUTION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA - FROM WILDERNESS TO SUBDIVISION

It's late November and the ground already has several inches of frost. Enough to support the horses pulling the large, low-slung wagon. That morning, right after chores, the two early-teenage boys and the hired man had gathered their equipment, some food and coffee and started out to the big woods. Heading west out of town, past Lime Lake, then turning north on the section line road between sections 25 & 26 (Bauer Road) in Genoa Township, they passed the fine farm of Emil Bauer.

During 1836-39, this SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 25 had originally been 'taken up' by Grace Thompson (SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ); Hiram Olds (NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ); Truman B. Worden (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ) and Almon Maltby (SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ). It was Maltby's piece which was acquired by Smith/McPherson when they bought up most of the area on the west side of the railroad in Brighton in 1871. By 1859, Emil Bauer had purchased Hiram Olds' and Grace Thompsons' property. (Mrs. Amelia Bauer owned 75 acres just east, next to several 9-10 acre strips which fronted on Brighton Road, part of the Smith/McPherson Addition.)

Since the hired man and his employer both depended on wood for heating and cooking, many cords had to be cut each year. Not all trees felled were used for fire wood. Many were taken to the local sawmill for cutting into various shapes and sizes for construction (barns, corn cribs, tool sheds, etc.) and general repairs around the farm; such as wagon tongues. When a new tongue was needed two pieces of wood were taken to the blacksmith. One fitted with the necessary hardware, the other serving as payment for the work.

When they got to the shanty in the woods, the horses were stabled and fed, a fire started in the stove and the food placed on the rough table which was surrounded by several old chairs. By the window was a 6' long wooden vice to hold the saw while it was sharpened with a hand file.

Proper use of the axe, crosscut saw, wedges and maul were taught. The hired man would take one end of the saw and the boys the other. "I don't care how much you ride the saw, just don't drag your feet!" Before too long the boys realized the saw would not be 'spoiled' if they rested before the cut was completed.

After determining which way the tree would likely fall a neat wedge was cut out of that side with an axe. Cutting with the saw on the opposite side, iron wedges were driven in to keep the tree from tipping back and binding the saw. At the first sound of cracking wood, the boys sprang back and the hired man pulled out the saw as the gap opened. He liked to set a stake where the tree was to fall and have the tree drive it into the ground - to demonstrate his aim.

Driving home in the early dusk, seated on a pile of firewood, they waved to the Bauers starting evening chores. They would be totally unable to comprehend today's Mt. Brighton skiing facility and the dozens of homes clustered at its west base; the Mt. Brighton Subdivision. (Please turn to page 3, column 1)

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