

EVOLUTION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA - FROM WILDERNESS TO SUBDIVISIONS

It's Easter morning, 1875; "Dolly" is easily pulling the shiny carriage full of excited children in their best 'bib and tucker.' We're on our way to the new church to celebrate the first Easter within its walls - the Wesleyan Methodist Pleasant Valley Church on the northeast corner of Pleasant Valley and Labadie Roads across from the cemetery in Brighton Township.

We've come past the log Lyons School on Buno Road where the children are taught the three Rs. With spring plowing soon to begin the two oldest boys will have to stay home and help Pa. (But they don't really mind.) With the bright oil lamps now available they can study in the evening. Hopefully a frame school can soon be built. The old log cabin, erected in 1842, is small, drafty and not well lighted. (Richard and Martha Lyon donated land for the school 33 years ago.)

"Easy, Dolly," as we drive over a wet spot in the road after crossing the bridge over Mann Creek. Passing through the swampy areas often makes one remember the November day in 1841, when five year old Mortimer Doyen got lost in the woods and swamps. Altho' his cries were heard, in the early darkness it was impossible to find him. Three days later his body was found. It makes us all the more careful with the little ones even now that forests are cleared and roads laid.

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Since that Easter Sunday over 100 years ago, the 160 acres owned by Willard Beach in Section 22 (which was first taken up by Smith Beach from Ontario, New York, in 1833) and that owned by John Hacker in Section 15 (which was taken up by Cyrus Jackson from Wayne, New York, in 1836) has passed through several other hands. In 1958, a plat was prepared by an attorney from Farmington, Percy Guardhouse, who purchased the property from Al and Madge Dunk and from Bert and Minnie Newman.

He put in the dam that formed the lake and has quieted the stream which rises from the northeast out of Oakland County; supported by overflow from Beach Lake. The undulating land, having been left by the retreating glaciers many centuries ago, today has been tamed by roads on which one finds many beautiful homes. Oak, hickory and walnut stands had been replaced by hay fields, corn fields, pastures and orchards, which, in turn, have given way to those searching for the place they call home - Lake Moraine. (Edited from: "First Land Owners, Livingston County" by Milton Charboneau, "Livingston County History 1880" and assistance from Livingston County Register of Deeds Office.)

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