

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

Struggling through the wet area in the south east corner of Genoa Township (at that time the north half of Hamburg Township) around the lake (Lime Lake), it was with relief Henry Earl arrived on higher ground. But what a steep hill to climb! Not only was it higher ground in Section 26, it was very high and very rolling. Henry Earl examined the 160 acres he had purchased from the U.S. government for \$400 in July, 1836.

Henry and his wife, Nancy, lived in Saline, as did Nathaniel and Abigail Carr, who purchased an adjoining 120 acres. Within three years, Carr had acquired Earl's interest and by 1844, the tax records indicate John & Nellie Weichers paid taxes on 233 acres purchased from the Carrs.

The Weichers built a small house (log?) on the very top of the hill on the section line along which most roads were eventually built. To add to the difficulties of life, the well was located at the bottom of the hill for many years. Most settlers did not build on the low ground because of the "Michigan fever" or ague which was prevalent among the settlers. It was thought to be caused and spread by the miasma and vapors of the lakes and low lands.

The Weichers were one of the many German families which early settled in Genoa Township. These diligent pioneers soon felt a need to resume the corporate worship they had known in their homeland. John Weichers is listed as a charter member of the "Evangelical Congregation of St. George in Genoa," organized in 1845.

By 1859, John Weichers was also a merchant, owning a building and business on the southwest corner of Grand River and Main in town. This building was torn down after WW II.

In 1905 Emil Bauer owned the Weichers property which, by then, had a typical farmhouse of two floors with slanting ceilings in the upstairs bedrooms. That same year Henry Webber appeared on the records to be followed within a few months by Henry Herbst and, in turn in 1907, John Herbst. The property was in the Herbst family for almost 80 years. Can one imagine the changes which, until 1986, when Weichers' Hill was made less steep, the huge oak trees along Brighton Road must have had pass beneath them? The settlers' oxen gave way to horses. The Model T could be put into neutral and one could coast all the way around Lime Lake. The advent of electricity created an entirely different world. Presently there is not a cow, sheep, chicken or barn (or the old house) on Weichers' Hill.

Within the past 2-3 years, Rolling Meadows subdivision has made good use of those hills on Brighton Road, west of Bauer Road. When standing on top of Weichers' Hill one sees many fine homes being built for the industrious 1980 settlers of the Brighton area. (Compiled and edited from "Michigan Memorabilia" by Bill Pless; County Register of Deeds Office; conversation with Helen Herbst Rau.)

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