

EVOLUTION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA - FROM WILDERNESS TO SUBDIVISION

Early morning July 4, 1876, finds the neighbors of Lewis Dorr driving past the substantial acreage he owned on the east side of Crooked Lake in Section 22, Genoa Township.

"Papa, I remember Grandpa telling me he knew Herr Dorr already when they lived in Germany." "Ya, many of our friends who have settled in Genoa came, as we did, from the Hessen-Darmstadt locale in the old country." (Many of these early German immigrants who came to the U.S. between 1828-45 were middle class tradesmen, shopkeepers and artisans.)

"Herr Dorr's grandson keeps telling me the first frame house in the township was built by his Opa. Is that right?" "Ya, Lewis was an expert carpenter and joiner. He also was selected to build our church on the land old Richard Behrens donated to the German Society (Evangelical Lutheran St. George's Congregation, Genoa, Michigan) back in '49. Before then the church services and confirmations were held in homes and Dorr's barn at the tavern and store he had on the Grand River Road near your school."

"Papa, let's hurry to get to Brighton in time for the celebration and picnic. The sun is hot here in the surry even with the top on." "Be patient, the horses need a holiday too. We'll be on time for the games and fireworks."

In 1930, a developer by the name of Herndon purchased the old Dorr property intending to develop a golf course. This didn't pan out. Within two years about 100 acres of the land Dorr owned on Crooked lake was purchased by L. Harold Crandall. The Crandalls built a log cabin on the lake patterned after one promoted by Michigan State University. Thousands of pine trees were planted on the rolling, sandy hills. Following the untimely death of Mrs. Crandall, he decided to develop lots for summer cottages - Crandall's Crooked Lake Heights.

Since then, 1945-46, many beautiful homes, with families enjoying the benefits of rural living and access to a large lake also, are testament to Crandall's love of the area and to the hard working initiative of Lewis Dorr and his neighbors. (Compiled and edited from "1880 History of Livingston County", "Michigan Memorabilia" by Wm. Pless, Livingston County Register of Deeds Office and conversation with Mary (Crandall) Griffith.)

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

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300 W. North Street
Brighton, Mi. 48116