

EARLY SAWMILLS OF THE BRIGHTON AREA

Prior to the advent of sawmills in the area lumber, glass, sash, etc., was drawn by ox team from Ann Arbor or Detroit. A case in point being that of Lewis B. Fonda who, in 1832, entered the $W\frac{1}{4}$ of the $SW\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32. In 1834 he erected on it a framehouse, said to have been the first in the county and at that time was regarded as a dwelling of considerable pretension. The timber with which it was built was drawn from Ann Arbor, a distance of 20+ miles, with ox teams. The family did not move into it until 1837.

Altho' brothers Almon and Maynard Maltby arrived in Brighton Township in the summer of 1832 and Maynard bought 63 acres of land in section 31 (Brighton City), it was 1834 before the brothers built the dam across Ore Creek in the vicinity of Third Street. This supplied power for the Maltby sawmill. One of their customers was Chester Hazard of Genoa Township. During the winter of 1836-37, Mr. Hazard drew whitewood (tulip) tree logs, cut on his own farm, to Maltby's mill below Brighton and had them sawed into lumber. It was principally of this lumber that the house was built. This was probably the first frame house erected in Genoa.

Aaron H. Kelly, entered 63 acres in Section 6 and 208 acres in Section 7, Brighton Township, in 1833. He soon built a substantial house and then a sawmill in 1837. This mill, operated by water power (upper Ore Creek), was known far and wide in those early days and furnished lumber for many of the first buildings erected in the county. About the last work done by this pioneer mill was sawing a quantity of plank for the Detroit and Howell Plank Road. Further upstream, in Section 5, Rev. Wm. A. Clark, by 1839, had also erected a sawmill.

In early spring of 1833, in Brighton Township, Evert (and Ruby) Woodruff entered 160 acres of Section 34, and by the last day of May he and his family took residence (probably a log cabin). During the summer an earthen dam was built approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the north section line. That fall he built a sawmill by the dam from which ran a sluice about one mile long. A three story gristmill, with an undershot wheel, was erected the next year near the end of the sluice. Both mills were supplied with water power from the stream known generally as Woodruff's Creek on what is now Pleasant Valley Road about four miles east of town. By 1835, the sawmill was producing lumber for boards to lay two floors in Benjamin Blain's cabin in the northwest corner of the Township. (This writer has not learned what happened to the sawmill.) Describing Woodruff's business acumen and reliability, the 1880 History of Livingston County states: "To Mr. Woodruff the township is largely a debtor for the enterprise he manifested in the erection of mills, which aided greatly in its development." (cont. on page 3.)

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