AREA FARMS C. 1900

Research of local farms and farmers, listed in the Brighton Argus, their background and location continues. Maple Lawn Farm in Frank Prosser’s name is the subject of this issue. Additional information readers can provide will be welcome.

Among the very early families’ names recorded in the Village Cemetery records, and whose farms were also listed in the C.1900 Argus, one finds the name of Prosser. Joining the many who were streaming into Michigan and Brighton Township, in the mid 1830s, were Charles and Elmina Prosser from Genesee County, New York. Lydia Prosser, who perhaps was his sister, came with them on shortly after. Records indicate she owned land, SW1/4 SE1/4, Section 18, on June 18, 1852. She is listed in the 1850 and 1860 census of the township, Lydia, who died September 17, 1869, Charles, December 30, 1895 and Elmina, June 13, 1890, are buried in the Village Cemetery. Also a daughter, Lois, a year three year old granddaughter and other relatives.

Charles and Elmina are noted as original purchasers of 120 acres in the SE1 of Section 18, October 1841, bounded by Van Anden and Seitz (formerly Skeman) Roads. By 1859 J. Christian owns the south 40 acres with house, which later burned, indicated on the map. The remaining 40 acres are owned by J. Stanfield, with a house, which is still standing.

In March, 1846, Charles also located along both sides of the Grand River Trail (sections 19 and 30) with Chalils Road on the section line, from Elder George Post, a Baptist Society minister, from Allegheny County, New York. Just NE of the Davis Medical Center, perhaps under Cinema Drive, Charles set up a brick yard. “Here he made the first bricks made in the township. These were designated to be used for chimneys,” . . . no resident at the time having assumed to the luxury of a brick dwelling.” (1880 History) The Brighton Hall occupies the remainder of that site.

In 1846 Charles also owns 160 acres in SE1 Section 18 and built a brick house on the west side of Hunter Road about 3/4 miles south of Hyne. In 1895 the name of son-in-law, John Hunter, is noted on the east half of this piece with son Frank’s name on the west 80. Frank also owned 60 acres in the SW1/4 of Section 9, on Hyne Road east of Old 23 (Hartland/Flint Road). We believe Maple Lawn Farm is the name given this site.

A principle source of income is from his custom threshing business. Normally set up in a farmer’s barn yard, the huge threshing machine was probably steam driven. The grain would have already been cut, bundled and brought to the yard for threshing. The grain was funneled into waiting bags, the straw forming an immense golden stack. A second piece of equipment, a portable saw mill, was another means of providing for his family. This was probably steam powered early on and later by a gasoline engine. Frank’s seven children, three of which were boys, must have been a significant source of support for the labor entailed with running a farm and a business. (Compiled by Marianna Bair from early atlases: Bill Fless’ Supplement to Village Cemetery Records: 1880 History of Livingston County; Obituaries and Early Land Owners and Settlers of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau.)

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DATES TO REMEMBER

*Oct. 6-13, 20.27: 1-3 P.M. Archives/Filing Welcome. 810/229-6402 to confirm.


*8: 7 P.M., Lyons School Curriculum/Program Subcommittee, Children’s Activity room, Welcome. 229-7887.

**15: 7 P.M., Lyons School Fund Raising Committee, Welcome. 229-0560.

**22: 7 P.M., Lyons School Steering Committee, Welcome. 810/229-0560.

**26: 7 P.M., General Meeting with Peter McNally, Effects of the stock market ‘Crash’ of 1929. Public welcome.

* At Brighton District Library

**See related article

WILL MORE LOCAL HISTORY BE LOST?

It is after the fact that the community bemoans the loss of each early structure either by a fire department training burn, outright neglect or it is knocked down by developers.

When approached by a developer the various planning/zoning heads are often not aware of the presence of an early structure on a piece of property. And if they were aware there are no directives or guidelines in place to assure the preservation/Restoration of an early site of local history. Nor are there any requirements that an absentee landlord not allow a structure to be condemned by benign neglect.

It seems the several townships and the city should be concerned with setting in place the legal means for the preservation of sites connected with the area’s early history.

Commissions can be formed to conduct historic resource surveys and recommend proper procedures to combat the rapid elimination of the unique local history of the Brighton Area that which gives the area its charm and desirability.

Those who want to actively promote the preservation of early structures - those who want to learn more about preparing a historic resource survey - those who are convinced that must be a means to preserve these structures may contact the Society 810/229-6402. Guidance and direction are available.