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AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARMS AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, THEIR BACKGROUND AND LOCATION CONTINUES. L.R. BIRD'S VALLEY VIEW FARM AND ADELINE BIRD'S BLUFF VIEW ARE THE SUBJECTS OF THIS ISSUE. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE WELCOME.

IN 1833, GARDNER BIRD CAME WITH HIS FAMILY FROM ONTARIO COUNTY, N.Y., TO THE 240 ACRES PURCHASED IN SECTIONS 11 AND 14, BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP; PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD RUNNING DOWN THE MIDDLE. (GENERAL MOTORS BOUGHT 120 ACRES C. 1925 FOR USE AS THE PROVING GROUND.)

GARDNER AND ELIZA HAD A LARGE FAMILY OF SEVEN CHILDREN, SEVERAL OF WHICH THEY LOST AT A YOUNG AGE. ELIZA, FIRST MARRIED LADY IN THE TOWNSHIP, DIED IN 1857. ONE CAN ASSUME SHE WAS PROBABLY BARELY 60 YEARS OLD. THAT SHE WAS CAPABLE OF PHYSICAL LABOR IS PROVEN IN THE 1880 HISTORY: "WHILE MR. BIRD WAS BREAKING UP HIS LAND THE LAD HE EMPLOYED TO DRIVE THE OX TEAM WAS CONFINED TO THE HOUSE BY ILLNESS, BUT THE WORK WAS NOT IMPEDED, FOR MRS. BIRD HERSELF WENT INTO THE FIELD WITH THE OXEN AND ASSISTED TO PLOW FOUR ACRES."

THEIR SON, JOSEPH, WAS AMONG THE FIRST WHITE CHILDREN BORN IN THE TOWNSHIP - OCTOBER, 1834. ELIZA WAS A STURDY WOMAN. ANOTHER SON, ALBERT, PURCHASED THE FARM IN 1876. BY 1900 ALBERT'S SON, LEBERT R., OWNS THE LAND. WE FIND HIM AS OWNER OF VALLEY VIEW FARM. GENTLY ROLLING FIELDS WITH MANN CREEK FLOWING THROUGH SURELY DID PROVIDE A FINE VIEW. WITH MUCH LEVEL LAND ONE CAN ASSUME GRAINS, HAY, POTATOES, ETC., WERE THE MAJOR CROPS.

IN 1834, MELZER BIRD, GARDNER'S NEPHEW, ALSO FROM NEW YORK, IS BRINGING HIS WIFE, LORA (WENTWORTH) AND SEVERAL CHILDREN TO SECTION 14 ALSO. HE HAD PURCHASED 160 ACRES A YEAR EARLIER. HE IS TRANSPORTING THEM BY OX AND WAGON ON THE FOUR DAY JOURNEY FROM DETROIT, TO UNCLE GARDNER'S LOG HOME; PLEASANT VALLEY AND KENSINGTON ROADS. WITHIN THE YEAR HIS OWN HOUSE IS BUILT; PLEASANT VALLEY AND NEWMAN ROADS. MELZER AND LORA HAD EIGHT CHILDREN, AT LEAST THREE OF WHICH DID NOT SEE THEIR 5TH BIRTHDAY. THE 1859 ATLAS INDICATES A GRAVE YARD ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE ROAD, THE BIRD CEMETERY. A CHILD'S DEATH IS A HEAVY BURDEN BUT FOR THE FAMILY TO SURVIVE ALL MUST WORK TOGETHER. LORA DIED IN 1869 AT 62. OF THEIR CHILDREN, DAUGHTER, ADELINE, BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST WHITE GIRL BORN, MAY 30, 1835, IN THE TOWNSHIP, BOUGHT THE 160 ACRE FARM FROM HER FATHER IN 1879. SHE HAD ATTENDED THE LOG BIRD SCHOOL (DIST. #4) ON PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD. (GARDNER GAVE LAND FOR THIS FIRST LOG SCHOOL IN THE TOWNSHIP IN 1834.) SHE ALSO ATTENDED STATE NORMAL.

ADELINE NEVER MARRIED BUT SHE WAS A CAPABLE, HARD WORKING WOMAN WHO, IN LATER YEARS PROVIDED A HOME FOR WIDOWED SISTERS FRANCES STEVENSON AND CATHERINE FONDA. HER 160 ACRES WERE QUITE ROLLING AND/OR WET. WE WILL ASSUME SHE RAISED CATTLE HORSES AND SHEEP. BLUFF VIEW IS THE NAME CHOSEN FOR HER FARM, C.1900. THE HOUSE LOOKED OUT ON "BINDER-NAGEL HEIGHTS" OR THE 'BLUFFS' ON WHICH GENERAL MOTORS CORP. BUILT THE PROVING GROUND.

SOME DESCENDANTS OF THE BIRD FAMILIES ARE STILL IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY. (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR FROM EARLY ATLASSES; 1880 HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY; OBITUARIES AND EARLY LAND OWNERS AND SETTLERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MILTON CHARBONEAU.)