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AREA FARMS c. 1900

MAPLE LAWN FARM, ON PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD JUST NORTH OF BUNO ROAD IN BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP STILL HAS MAPLES IN THE LAWN. A c.1900 NEWSPAPER CLIPPING LISTS WM. J. DONALDSON AS THE OWNER. THIS CLIPPING INCLUDES NAMES OF FARMS AND THEIR OWNERS. RESEARCH INTO THE LOCATIONS, TYPES OF FARMS AND FAMILY HISTORY WILL HELP US APPRECIATE THE LIVES THESE PEOPLE LED AND THEIR STRUGGLES.

IN "EARLY LAND OWNERS AND SETTLERS IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY" ONE FINDS SEVERAL ANDREWS MAKING LAND PURCHASES IN THE TOWNSHIP. ONE ABRAM, FROM MONROE COUNTY, N.Y., BOUGHT 80 ACRES IN SECTION 23 IN 1834. HE HAS THE DUBIOUS DISTINCTION OF BEING THE FIRST DEATH IN THE TOWNSHIP. ELLIS' 1880 HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY READS "...27 YEARS OF AGE, HAD BEEN INDUCED, BY THE HOPE OF IMPROVED HEALTH FROM THE ACTIVE EXERCISE THAT THE CLEARING OF A NEW COUNTRY NECESSITATES,HE LIVED BUT THREE WEEKS IN HIS NEW HOME, AND THERE BEING AT THE TIME NO CLERGYMAN TO PERFORM THE FUNERAL RITES, MR. EDGAR (ROBERT EDGAR, WITH WHOM ABRAM HAD BEEN STAYING) OFFICIATED ON THE OCCASION AND DELIVERED AN ADDRESS. MELZER BIRD TOOK FROM HIS BARN THE BOARDS WITH WHICH TO MAKE THE COFFIN." AMONG TRANSACTIONS IN THE ABSTRACT FOR THIS PIECE IS A MORTGAGE TAKEN BY MARGARET WAKELY, 1870, AN INDICATION THE HOUSE WAS PROBABLY ERECTED AT THAT TIME. CONSTRUCTED IN A TYPICAL FARM HOUSE STYLE IT IS TWO STORY WITH TWO ROOMS ON EACH FLOOR WITH A STEEP, NARROW STAIRCASE. DURING THE YEARS OWNERS HAVE ADDED PORCHES AND ROOMS ON ALL SIDES.

DONALDSON MOVED TO MAPLE LAWN FARM WITH WIFE, EDITH BERNICE JACOBS IN 1905. ONLY TWO DAUGHTERS OF THE SEVERAL CHILDREN BORN TO BILL AND BERNICE SURVIVED TO ADULthood.

HE BUILT A LARGE BARN AND SILO SOUTH OF THE HOUSE. FOLLOWING THE USUAL FARM PRACTICE OF THE DAY "WILD BILL" RAISED GRAIN, HAY, POTATOES, SHEEP, PIGS, DAIRY CATTLE AND HORSES. DURING HAYING SEASON IT WAS ESSENTIAL THE HAY BE ALLOWED TO CURE SUFFICIENTLY IN THE FIELD BEFORE STORING IN THE BARN. OCCASIONALLY THE FARMER DID NOT CORRECTLY JUDGE THE CONDITION OF THE HAY. WITHIN A FEW HOURS SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION TOOK PLACE AND THE BARN WAS IN FLAMES. THIS HAPPENED TO DONALDSON IN 1961, AND ENDED HIS FARMING ACTIVITY AS HE HAD KNOWN IT. BEFORE LONG HE SOLD THE 80 HE STILL OWNED AND 5-10 ACRE HOME SITES PLATTED. BERNICE DIED IN 1962 AT 82, BILL IN 1971 AT 95. JERRY AND JUDY PORMAN, IN 1971, BOUGHT THE OLD FARM HOUSE. 1995 SAW NEW OWNERS WHO ARE MAKING THEIR OWN CHANGES TO THE SITE. (COMPILED FROM ATLASES, MILT CHARBONEAU'S FAIRVIEW CEMETERY TRANSCRIPTION, MRS. MYRON WEST'S SCRAPBOOKS AND INTERVIEWS OF HERBERT WARNER AND JUDY PORMAN. COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS, ADDITIONS WILL BE WELCOME. 810/229-6402. MARIE-ANNA BAIR.)