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AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARMS AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, THEIR BACKGROUND AND LOCATION CONTINUES. LEONARD L. MORGAN'S LILAC LAWN FARM IS THIS ISSUE'S SUBJECT.

LEONARD LEWIS MORGAN, c. 1900, IS OWNER OF 71 ACRES ON THE NORTH SIDE OF SPENCER ROAD WEST OF VAN AMBERG, LILAC LAWN. THIS WAS A PART OF SOME OF THE ACREAGE HIS FATHER, NATHANIEL G., SR., OWNED IN 1859, ABOUT THE TIME LEONARD WAS BORN.

CYRENUS AND NATHANIEL G., SR., MORGAN, WITH TIM WARNER, ABRAM DEAN, E. G. DURFEE, WILLIAM TUNIS AND OTHERS CAME FROM NEW YORK c. 1835-37. AS STATED IN TUNIS' OBITUARY THEY "...CAME TO THIS COMMUNITY (BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP) WHEN IT WAS ALL A WILDERNESS." THESE MEN ACQUIRED SIZEABLE ACREAGE IN SECTIONS 22, 27, 28, AND 29 AND CLEARED IT FOR FARMING. ONE CAN ASSUME THEIR FRIENDSHIP CONTINUED AND THAT THEY SUPPORTED ONE ANOTHER IN TIMES OF NEED.

BY 1875, THE HOLDINGS OF NATHANIEL G. AND WIFE, ELIZA JANE, HAD INCREASED TO ALMOST 80 ACRES PLUS 80 MORE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF SPENCER ROAD. NATHANIEL WAS A BUTCHER, AS WERE SOME OF HIS BROTHERS, AND A DROVER. CATTLE WERE PURCHASED FROM AREA FARMERS AND HERDED, DOWN THE GRAND RIVER ROAD TO THE DETROIT STOCK YARD, BY HORSE AND BUGGY. THE RETURN JOURNEY AFTER SUCH A TRIP WAS FRAUGHT WITH PERIL. RACING HOME WITH THE CASH, THROWING THE HORSE'S REINS TO HIS WIFE, HE HURRIED TO CONCEAL THE MONEY. IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR ROBBERS TO MAKE THEMSELVES COGNIZANT OF WHICH DROVER WAS CARRYING MUCH CURRENCY. WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD, AND LEARNING THAT A BETTER PRICE COULD BE HAD BY SELLING IN BUFFALO, N.Y., HE SHIPPED A HERD ON THE TRAIN. HOWEVER, THE MAN IN CHARGE DID NOT COME BACK WITH THE CASH. ANOTHER WAS SENT TO RETRIEVE HIM BUT HE DIDN'T RETURN EITHER. NATHANIEL'S 80 ACRES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF SPENCER WAS LOST IN THE DEAL.

AS WITH MANY OF THE EARLY PIONEERS, THE MORGANS (THOSE WHO HADN'T BROUGHT SPOUSES WITH THEM FROM THE EAST) MARRIED NEIGHBORING OFFSPRING; THEIR ANCESTORS HAVING BEEN ACQUAINTED FOR MANY YEARS. NATHANIEL G. AND ELIZA HAD ELEVEN CHILDREN. SOME OF THE BOYS, AS TEENAGERS, WORKED FOR NEIGHBORING FARMERS. THEIR SON, LEONARD, FOLLOWED THE PROFESSION OF BUTCHER AND LIVED ON THE HOMESTEAD ON SPENCER ROAD. HE AND WIFE, ELLA, HAD ONE CHILD WHOM THEY NAMED NATHANIEL. HE MARRIED KATHERINE PYLE AND ALSO HAD ONE SON, ROBERT. ROBERT AND MAXINE RAISED A FAMILY OF FOUR BEFORE SELLING 20 ACRES TO THE BRIGHTON SCHOOL DISTRICT.

UNTIL 1973, THE OLD HOUSE AND BARNs STOOD ON THE SITE NOW OCCUPIED BY SPENCER ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. ROBERT AND HIS FAMILY WERE THE LAST OF THE MORGANS IN THE OLD HOUSE. (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR AND LISA PALERMO; FROM FIRST LANDOWNERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, LAND OWNERS AND SETTLERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY AND EARLY OBITUARIES COMPILED BY MILTON CHARBONEAU. ALSO 1880 HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY AND EARLY ATLASSES. THANKS ALSO TO ROBERT MORGAN FOR HIS ASSISTANCE. CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED.)