

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P O BOX 481
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #303
BRIGHTON, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARMS AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, THEIR BACKGROUND AND LOCATION CONTINUES. REV. EDWIN P. BRUCE'S ELMHURST IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ISSUE.

IN A REPORT ON RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP IN THE 1880 HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, WRITER JOHN ELLIS NOTES THE EARLY BEGINNINGS OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH IN THE AREA. MARCH 9, 1873, THE PLEASANT VALLEY CONGREGATION WAS ORGANIZED, MEETING IN THE LOG ONE ROOM LYONS SCHOOL HOUSE. IN SPRING, 1874, IT WAS DECIDED TO BUILD A CHURCH ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF PLEASANT VALLEY AND JACOBY ROADS. BY THAT FALL THE 48'x32' STRUCTURE WAS COMPLETED, REPORTED TO BE ABLE TO SEAT 250, AT A COST OF \$1727.50, ALL OF WHICH WAS PAID BY SUBSCRIPTION. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE MEMBERS, LIVING IN TOWN, FORMED ANOTHER SOCIETY. (A FIVE MILE BUGGY RIDE TO ATTEND SERVICES WAS PROBABLY FOUND TO BE TOO DIFFICULT.)

IN SEPTEMBER, 1877, REV. EDWIN W. BRUCE CAME TO SERVE IN BOTH THE VALLEY CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH IN TOWN. TO ADEQUATELY SERVE THE CONGREGATIONS BEING FORMED IN THE COUNTY, PASTORS ALTERNATED SUNDAYS HOLDING SERVICES AT THE VARIOUS SITES.

EDWIN BRUCE HAD MARRIED MARGERY L. KING IN 1870 IN INDIANA. HE HAD BEEN PREACHING THERE SINCE 1871 AND WAS ORDAINED A WESLEYAN METHODIST PREACHER IN 1873. HIS OBITUARY INDICATES HIS PASTORATE IN THIS AREA, 1878-79, WAS FOLLOWED WITH 33 YEARS OF WORK WITH THAT ORGANIZATION. FOR SIX YEARS HE TAUGHT THEOLOGY AT HAIGHTON, NEW YORK. FOR 20 YEARS HE SERVED AS SECRETARY TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE IN MICHIGAN. HE ALSO HAD PARISHES IN HART, JACKSON, OKEMOS AND WILLIAMSTON, MICHIGAN.

PASTOR BRUCE AND MARGERY RETURNED TO BRIGHTON TO SERVE AT THE WESLEYAN CHURCH IN 1912-14. DURING THE SUMMERS HE TENDED A SMALL FRUIT FARM BUSINESS, ELMHURST, CONDUCTING EVANGELISTIC WORK THROUGHOUT THE STATE DURING THE WINTER.

THE 1915 ATLAS INCLUDES PASTOR BRUCE'S NAME ON TWO PIECES OF LAND IN SECTION 19, BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP. ONE OF WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY 60 ACRES ON THE NORTH SIDE OF HILTON ROAD WITH ORE CREEK BISECTING IT. (IT WOULD APPEAR THE DAM WHICH FORMS WOODLAND LAKE WAS LATER LOCATED ON THIS PIECE.) THE OTHER IS 16 ACRES ON GRAND RIVER AT THE END OF HILTON ROAD, WHERE A RESIDENCE IS INDICATED. (IN 1999, A STANDARD SERVICE STATION IS LOCATED ON THE SITE.)

OF THE FIVE CHILDREN BORN TO THE BRUCES ONLY TWO REMAINED AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH IN 1916; SON, RICHARD, LIVING IN CLEVELAND AND DAUGHTER, HATTIE WALDRON, IN LANSING. PERHAPS THERE WAS A SPECIAL AFFINITY FOR BRIGHTON (HIS FIRST CALL) THAT BOTH EDWIN AND MARGERY ARE BURIED AT FAIRVIEW CEMETERY. FOR A TIME THEY LIVED AT 407 E. GRAND RIVER, "...NOW OCCUPIED BY MR. WESTIN" (PER MARGERY'S OBITUARY, 1928).

THE 1915 ATLAS SHOWS THE PLEASANT VALLEY CHURCH. WHEN DID THE LITTLE CHURCH CLOSE, WHEN WAS IT REMOVED, IS IT POSSIBLE THERE IS A PHOTO EXTANT? (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR FROM 1880 HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, EARLY ATLASSES, ASSISTANCE OF JOHN AND JANICE FIELD AND OBITUARIES COMPILED BY MILTON CHARBONEAU. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS ALWAYS WELCOME.)