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AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARMS AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, CONTINUES. SHADELAND, THE FARM OF GEORGE E. PLESS, IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ISSUE.

IT WAS 1841, WHEN GEORGE E. PLESS' GRANDFATHER, HENRY ANDREW (FREDERICH HEINRICH ANDREAS) PLESS PURCHASED 240 SEMI IMPROVED (SOMEWHAT CLEARED) ACRES ON THE GRAND RIVER INDIAN TRAIL, WEST OF BRIGHTON IN GENOA TOWNSHIP. (SECTION 11, SW NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NORTH OF HUGHES ROAD; SECT. 12, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, EULER ROAD; SECT. 13, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, STRADDLED THE GRAND RIVER TRAIL; SECT. 14, NE SE $\frac{1}{4}$, BAUER ROAD [HUBERT ROAD]).

FREIGHT WAGONS AND STAGES WERE OPERATING ON THE RECENTLY GRADED ROAD BETWEEN DETROIT AND HOWELL. HENRY AND MARIA (KLESSON), WHO HAD ARRIVED IN THE U.S. IN 1839) MOVED THEIR LARGE, YOUNG, FAMILY INTO A FRAME HOUSE BUILT IN 1838 BY TOM PINCKNEY. ALSO ON THE PROPERTY WAS AN 1834 LOG HOUSE, TWO FRAME BARNs AND A BLACK-SMITH SHOP. HE WAS THE FOURTH OWNER OF THIS PROPERTY. THE DEPRESSION OF 1837 FORCED THE EARLIER OWNERS TO SELL. IT APPEARS THAT ONLY THE YOUNGEST OF THEIR 10 CHILDREN WAS BORN IN MICHIGAN. THE OTHERS WERE BORN IN RUSSIA AND GERMANY.

THE PLESSSES WEREN'T FARMERS BY TRADE. HOWEVER THEY ADJUSTED WELL. THE BOYS LEARNED TO CLEAR LAND, DEVELOP IT AND PLANT CROPS WHICH GREW PLENTIFULLY IN THE VIRGIN SOIL. BY 1850, THE INDIAN RAIL HAD BEEN PLANKED AND EXCESS PRODUCE AND LIVESTOCK COULD BE TRANSPORTED TO CITIES ALONG THE TRAIL. THE GIRLS, AS WAS THE CUSTOM, COULD CARD AND SPIN WOOL, KNITTING MANY GARMENTS, BESIDES SEEING TO THE PRESERVATION OF FOOD AND THE GENERAL WELFARE OF THE FAMILY.

CHILDREN OF NEARBY NEIGHBORS WERE THE LOGICAL FUTURE SPOUSES OF ANDREW AND MARIA'S CHILDREN: DINGLER, EULER, FISH, GEORGE, GROSTIC, HAZARD, TO NOTE A FEW. AS WILLIAM, PLESS, FROM WHOSE WRITINGS MUCH OF THIS RESEARCH WAS GLEANED, WRITES "...IN THOSE HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS YOUNG MEN DIDN'T TRAVEL FAR TO FIND A WIFE." THE FATHER OF OUR SUBJECT, ANDREW CHRISTIAN (BORN AUGUST 14, 1830, IN MOSCOW, RUSSIA) MARRIED MARGARET EULER, MAY 8, 1860. IN 1861, HE AND BROTHER LEWIS BOUGHT THEIR PARENTS' FARM PROPERTY WITH ANDREW ACQUIRING THE ACREAGE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE GRAND RIVER TRAIL.

ACQUISITION OF MORE ACREAGE INCREASED THE TOTAL OF LEWIS AND ANDREW'S PROPERTY TO 560 ACRES BY 1890. AT THAT TIME THE BROTHERS DIVIDED THEIR RESPECTIVE PROPERTIES TO THEIR SONS. (LEWIS' SON, FRED, AND GRANDSON, HARLOW, DEVELOPED THE PLESSLAND DAIRY.) ANDREW, IN TURN, DIVIDED HIS PROPERTY BETWEEN HIS SONS, CHARLES H. AND GEORGE E. GEORGE E. PRODUCED FRUIT, POTATOES, GRAINS, HAY, CATTLE, SHEEP AND PIGS ON SHADELAND. (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR FROM THE WRITINGS OF WILLIAM PLESS AND MILTON CHARBONEAU'S EARLY LAND OWNERS AND SETTLERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS MOST WELCOME. 810/229-6402.)