AREA FARMS C. 1900

Research of local farms and farmers, their background and location as listed in the Brighton Argus, continues. Henry Weber's WILLOW BROOK FARM is this issue's subject.

Originally purchased by Richard J. and Martha Lyons in 1854, the W4 SE1 and E4 SW of Section 22, Brighton Township, was in the hands of Henry Weber c. 1900. At that time the original 120 acres totaled 118.5 acres. In 1842 Richard and Martha had set aside land for use as a school for the lads and lassies of District #9. That is, so long as the site was used for this purpose. Bounded on the south side by Buno Road it is well watered by Mann Creek on its way to Woodruff Creek on its way to the Huron River.

In 1935 the school district purchased the school site from Henry and Lydia Weber. By then Henry has been farming his Willow Brook Farm in a manner similar to his neighbors. Hay and grain is raised, also pigs, sheep, cattle, horses and probably the usual barnyard fowl. He shipped milk for some time and then cream, which would hopefully be more profitable.

Henry was not known for his patience. He paid dearly for that. In 1920, while harvesting grain, he was pushing the bundles into the machine to hurry the process. He lost four fingers on his left hand (and was lucky to escape with his life).

It was 1928. During the threshing procedure, when a stone must have struck a spark and within minutes the adjacent straw stack, golden and dry, was fiery red and flaming. The nearby barn soon was engulfed in the conflagration. It was obvious to Gerald Bauer that his threshing would also go up in smoke. He literally pulled the huge machine out of harm's way by the long, wide belt which normally transferred power from the steam engine placed some distance away. This is not the normal manner in which the thresher is moved. It was 1950 before the new barn was built.

Herb Warner remembers working for Henry and remembers also the player piano in the front room, and the music it performed automatically.

Being a farmer is not an easy job nor will an ambitious person be able to make a living. Henry was a supportive father to son Kenneth who became an attorney. Lydia was confined to a wheelchair and tried her best to be a home maker and mother. Jim and Vicki Vickich have owned the homestead since 1977. Their preservation/restoration abilities have been put to good use. The old house will enjoy more years. The 1859 map would indicate the house is over 140 years old. It is one of the lessening number of early homes still standing in the Brighton area. (Compiled by Marianna Sain, from early atlases: "Early Landowners and Settlers in Livingston County" and early obituaries by Milton Charbonneau and a short interview with Herb Warner. Additions and corrections welcomed.)

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Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116
http://community.mlive.com/cc/SAHS

Trail Tales

Preserve, Advance and Disseminate Knowledge of the History of the Brighton Area
LYONS SCHOOL RESTORATION PROJECT

BLITZ BUILD, OCTOBER 28 AND 29, 2000

Piet Lindhout and Associates, who have been a major support of the Society's restoration of Lyons School, have determined, with the full cooperation of the Brighton Rotary Club, to bring this project to a conclusion. October 28 and 29 have been selected as a "Blitz Build".

Work will commence at dawn and continue 'till dark each day. Volunteer workers on all shifts are needed.

Rotary members are dedicating their complete efforts to assist the Society in the fulfillment of this project. (Read—dream)

Child care will be available and plenty of food.

The interior carpentry, final plumbing, final electrical service, exterior porch and sidewalks are on the 'to do' list.

"The Brighton Area Historical Society's long term project is close to completion. This opportunity to complete the building this fall and to open the classroom to elementary students and teachers is wonderful", said Piet.

Donations of funds and materials will be Income Tax deductible. Funds may be sent to the Society, P.O. Box 481, Brighton, 48116.

Contact Piet, 227-5568, 8:50/5:50, to offer your services or to donate building materials.

Dates to Remember
Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28, 1-3 P.M. ARCHIVE FILING.
Call 810/229-6402 to confirm. Welcome.
* 13, 5-8 P.M. and 26, 1-5 P.M. for genealogical help. 810/227-1760 to confirm.
* 25, 7-9 P.M. SOCIETY BOARD MEETING.
Welcome!

*Brighton District Library, 200 Ondorf Dr.