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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 1834, THE W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ AND E $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ 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 #8; 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 BARN-YARD 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 FIREY RED AND FLAMING. THE NEARBY BARN SOON WAS ENGULFED IN THE CONFLAGRATION. IT WAS OBVIOUS TO GERALD BAUER THAT HIS THRESHER 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 1930 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 UNAMBITIOUS PERSON BE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING. HENRY WAS A SUPPORTIVE FATHER TO SON KENNETH WHO BECAME AN ATTORNEY. LYDIA WAS CONFINED TO A WHEEL CHAIR AND TRIED HER BEST TO BE A HOME MAKER AND MOTHER. JIM AND VICKI VICHICH HAVE OWNED THE HOMESITE 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 MARIEANNA BAIR, FROM EARLY ATLASSES; "EARLY LANDOWNERS AND SETTLERS IN LIVINSTON COUNTY" AND EARLY OBITUARIES COPIED BY MILTON CHARBONEAU; AND A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH HERB WARNER. ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS WELCOMED.)