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AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARM AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, THEIR BACKGROUND AND LOCATION CONTINUES. W. S. SMITH'S OAK GROVE FRUIT FARM IS THIS ISSUE'S SUBJECT.

AS CAN BE ASSUMED, THE NAME OF SMITH IS NOT UNCOMMON. IT IS FOUND IN THE AREA AS EARLY AS 1831. FIRST LAND OWNERS LISTS 42 WITH SEVEN IN GREEN OAK TOWNSHIP. HOWEVER W. (WINFIELD) S. IS NOT AMONG THEM.

HIS OBITUARY IN THE MARCH 7, 1923, ISSUE OF THE ARGUS RECORDS HIS DEATH AT AGE 77, MARCH 4, 1923. HE HAD BEEN BORN IN KENSINGTON IN 1845. THIS LIKELY WAS OAKLAND CO.

W.S. OAK GROVE FRUIT FARM WAS IN THE NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ (40 ACRE) OF SECTION 15 IN GREEN OAK ON McCABE ROAD. THIS WAS PART OF 80 ACRES BOUGHT BY PETER McNAMEE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MAY 12, 1834. IT REMAINED IN THE McNAMEE FAMILY UNTIL SMITH BOUGHT IT C. 1891. AFTER HIS DEATH CHILDREN FLORA AND HOWARD LIVED THERE UNTIL MOVING TO CALIFORNIA IN 1932. AMERICAN AGGREGATES OWNS IT IN 1935. BY 1961 THE ISLAND LAKE RECREATION AREA IS NOTED AS THE OWNER.

SMITH' OBITUARY RECORDS: "IN YOUNG MANHOOD HE WENT TO EATON COUNTY TO MAKE HIS HOME ON A FARM AND HERE HE MARRIED AMANDA CHAMPLIN WHO PRECEDED HIM TO THE GREAT BEYOND BY NEARLY 20 YEARS. AFTER 15 YEARS SPENT IN EATON, HE RETURNED TO LIVINGSTON COUNTY AND SETTLED ON A PART OF THE OLD GOV. BINGHAM FARM AT GREEN OAK STATION. AFTER 11 YEARS HE MOVED TO THE PETER McNAMEE FARM, TWO MILES SOUTHWEST....AND HERE HE SPENT THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE. HE FOLLOWED THE THRESHING BUSINESS FOR 40 YEARS AND MADE LIFE LONG FRIENDS WHEREVER HE WENT....HE WAS THE FATHER OF THREE CHILDREN. ONE DAUGHTER DIED IN INFANCY, ANOTHER DAUGHTER FLORA AND SON HOWARD, BOTH AT HOME.."

TO HAVE BEEN IN THE THRESHING BUSINESS MEANT SEVERAL MONTHS EACH SUMMER OF INTENSE LABOR. NEAR THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY FARMERS GREW MORE WHEAT, OATS, ETC. THIS BECAME A CASH CROP SINCE TRANSPORTATION OF A PRODUCT TO MARKET HAD IMPROVED WITH THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD IN 1870. IF HE WERE THE OWNER/OPERATOR HE'D HAVE HAD SEVERAL LARGE PIECES OF EQUIPMENT INCLUDING THE ENORMOUS STEAM ENGINE AND THE THRESHER ITSELF. THE EQUIPMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN THE FARMER'S YARD AND THE BUNDLES OF GRAIN TOSSED ONTO THE CONVEYER BELT. THE CHAFF WAS BLOWN INTO AN EVER GROWING PILE AND THE GRAIN FELL INTO WAITING BAGS OR WAGONS. IT WAS NOT RARE FOR A SPARK FROM THE STEAM ENGINE TO CAUSE A FIRE IN THE DRY STRAW WHICH COULD CONSUME THE THRESHING MACHINE AND EVEN THE FARMER'S BARN. AS GRAIN RIPENED IN THE SOUTH THE THRESHER FOLLOWED NORTH AT SCHEDULED STOPS AT FARMS. (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR FROM EARLY CENSUS RECORDS AND ATLASES, AND "FIRST LANDOWNERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY" AND "EARLY LAND OWNERS AND SETTLERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY" AND OBITUARIES COPIED BY MILTON CHARBONEAU.)