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AREA FARMS C. 1900

RESEARCH OF LOCAL FARMS AND FARMERS, LISTED IN THE BRIGHTON ARGUS, CONTINUES. ROBERT LONGTHORN'S HILLCREST FARM IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ISSUE.

THE 80 ACRE HILLCREST FARM OF ROBERT LONGTHORN WAS LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE OF FLINT ROAD, SOUTH OF HILTON ROAD; E½ SE SECTION 19, BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP. PRIOR TO HIS PURCHASE IT HAD BEEN OWNED BY HENRY J. WARNER. IT WAS ORIGINALLY BOUGHT FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NOVEMBER 16, 1836, BY JOHN DEAN (PENNSYLVANIA) AND WIFE SALLY, (NEW HAMPSHIRE). THEY WERE AMONG THE LARGE NUMBER OF SETTLERS WITH THAT SURNAME WHO CAME AT AN EARLY DATE FROM THE EAST AS THE ROUTE BECAME MORE ACCESSIBLE. IT IS LIKELY THEY CAME BY WAY OF THE NEWLY OPENED ERIE CANAL.

ROBERT, HIS PARENTS HENRY AND ANNE (WOULDS) LONGTHORN, TWO BROTHERS (GEORGE AND JAMES) AND A SISTER (BETSEY) CAME FROM ENGLAND C. 1860 AND TO MICHIGAN SHORTLY AFTER. ANNE'S BROTHER, THOMAS (B. 1823 IN ENGLAND) WAS A COLLEAGUE OF TIM WARNER (B. 1820 IN NEW YORK) WHO CAME TO THE AREA IN 1837. BOTH WERE YOUNG, EARLY SETTLERS IN THE AREA. THOMAS ARRIVED HERE IN 1855. ROBERT'S SISTER, BETSEY, IS WITH HER UNCLE TOM WOULDS AND HIS WIFE, IN 1870, ON PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD.

PIONEERS, AS THE LONGTHORNS AND THE WOULDS, OFTEN CAME IN INFORMAL FAMILY GROUPS. THIS WAY THEY COULD SUPPORT EACH OTHER FINANCIALLY, SOCIALLY AND SHARE THE LABOR. IT'S DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE TODAY INTO WHAT A WILDERNESS THEY WERE MOVING. AS LATE AS 1845 WOLVES PLAGUED A SLEIGH LOAD OF LUMBER MALCOM FITCH AND HIS NINE YEAR OLD SON, HENRY, WERE BRINGING FROM A MILL IN FLINT. AT THE 1907 BRIGHTON HOMECOMING HENRY RECOUNTS THE DARKNESS THAT OVERCAME THEM ON FLINT ROAD AND HOW THE PURSUING WOLVES BECAME BOLDER UNTIL THE RACING HORSES AND SLEIGH CAME WITHIN A BLOCK OF GRAND RIVER ROAD. CAN WE POSSIBLY IMAGINE HOW DARK A CLOUDY JANUARY SKY COULD BE?

IT IS LIKELY LONGTHORN RAISED SHEEP ON HIS LAND. A LARGE PORTION IS COMPOSED OF HILLS, NOT CONDUCTIVE TO BEING PLOWED.

AN 1859 MAP INDICATES A GRAVEYARD IN THE FAR NW¼ NW¼ OF SECTION 29, JUST SOUTHEAST OF ROBERT'S PROPERTY. THIS WAS A PART OF THE EXTENSIVE ACREAGE OWNED BY THE DEANS. AS LATE AS 1935, THE SMALL CEMETERY IS NOTED ON THE PLAT MAP. PERHAPS SOMEONE CAN TELL US WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO IT. (COMPILED BY MARIEANNA BAIR FROM FIRST LANDOWNERS AND EARLY SETTLERS AND LANDOWNERS BY MILTON CHARBONEAU; CENSUS RECORDS AND PLAT MAPS. ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS ARE WELCOMED.)