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THE ROSSES SETTLE IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Following the War of 1812, many easterners migrated west over the Allegheny Mountains, via the Erie Canal. We find a Marvin Ross, b. 1809, Thomas b. 1810, and Charles b. 1811, all farmers born in New York and all in the county before 1850. Henry T. b. 1816, in Ohio, was in northern Brighton Township, married to Alma Andrews (1839), when daughter Eliza A. was born in 1841. (She died before her 11th year, and son, Elmer, b. 1843, who died before his 9th year). Son, Esbon, b. 1844, married Martha Carter, daughter of John Carter, another early settler. The two families lived on Pleasant Valley Road about a mile apart, both with substantial acreage. As a farmer, Henry T. found wolves were a special enemy of early settlers, regularly carrying off precious livestock. However by 1872 his 50 thoroughbred sheep and a number of fine high grade sheep were of special significance in the agricultural community. Ross was also a skillful hunter and bee keeper.

Henry T.'s grandson and namesake was born November 5, 1883, and grew up on the family farm. He attended the rural school (Ross School) to the 8th grade. After passing the entrance exam, he graduated from Michigan Agricultural College (MSU) in 1904. He helped his father operate the large farm, continuing the sheep raising tradition.

In 1953, the local press reported the retirement of Henry T. Ross from the position of Brighton Township supervisor, a job he'd held the previous four years. In all, he'd held that position for 28 years. Since 1911, his honor had been a government official including serving as Justice of the Peace, Supervisor and State Representative (6 years) and Senator (4 years). At that time Ross noted that for over 60 years only six men had been supervisors of the township. Their names are involved with any history of early rural Brighton Township settlers: Hicks (who "...covered the township each year walking and carrying the assessment roll in a tin box."), Beach, Hilton, Bidwell, Judson and Buck. Several have descendants still living in the area.

In 1915, Mary Ann Brown, of Ludington, became his wife for 44 years. After her death he married Madge Merchant of St. Clair. After selling the farm in 1969, they moved to E. Lansing. October 19, 1973, Mr. Ross died. He's buried at Oak Grove Cemetery. The Ross family farm, cleared by grandfather and father, is now part of the General Motors Proving Ground. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; 1880 History of Livingston County; a scrapbook of clippings by Mrs. Myron West; Early Landowners and Settlers of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau and obituaries collected by Charboneau. Additions, corrections welcome. 810/229-6402)