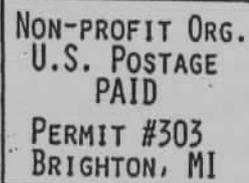


BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P O BOX 481
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A GENOA PIONEER

Lewis Dorr and wife, Elizabeth (Meuller), were born in Germany in the Province of Hesse. About 1834, they, and at least one daughter, Catherine (born in 1833), arrived in Montgomery County, New York, near Albany. While in New York, daughter Elizabeth was born. Lewis had learned the carpenter and pattern maker trades in Germany and was adept at business and banking. The 1850 Census records also list a George Dorr, born in Germany in 1822, who may have been a close relative.

Upon reaching Genoa Township in 1836, Lewis purchased only two acres in Section 24, on the northwest corner of Crooked Lake (Hubert) and Grand River Roads, from Thomas Pinckney. It seems obvious he did not intend to farm. The next year he built a frame house where Louisa and Caroline were born. A frame barn and blacksmith shop were also constructed (instead of log construction).

However by 1840, Dorr sold the two acre site to Ellis Luther, purchasing 80 acres about two miles west on Grand River. He built a large frame house (just across from Kellogg Road) where Lewis, Jr. and Charles were born. Here he operated a tavern to accommodate travelers on the then busy highway. Stagecoach and freight wagon teams were housed in the barn to exchange for tired horses which had been going at full speed for some miles. He also employed a blacksmith to shoe horses and make repairs to equipment. Some crops were undoubtedly raised on the 208 surrounding acres Dorr had acquired by 1859.

The coming of the railroad in 1871 eliminated the need for this kind of accommodations on the Grand River Trail. Dorr sold his property to Henry Ratz from Canada, and retired to live on the east shore of Crooked Lake where sons Lewis, Jr. and Charles each had large farms. (Jr. west of Conrad Road; Charles. north of Brighton Road - Oak Pointe.) In 1874, in the Smith/McPherson Addition, Dorr built a house on the southwest corner of W. Main and Second, as did many of his farming neighbors.

The Dorrs were among the numerous immigrants from Germany who settled in Genoa Township. One can only imagine the extra burden of an unfamiliar language carried by settlers attempting to make a new home in the wilderness for their families. It is not difficult to understand why they felt much more secure with German speaking neighbors. After providing shelter, food and a school, their attention turned to the establishment of religious meetings. By 1845 the St. George Evangelical Lutheran Church, Genoa, Michigan, was formed and a church built on Crooked Lake Road (Hubert). The names of charter members are distinctly German and many are found in the cemetery established where the first church was built.

Lewis and Elizabeth's descendants are numerous and scattered, each pursuing their dreams. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; atlases; the writings of Bill Pless; First Landowners of Livingston County and First Settlers of Livingston County by Milton Charboneau. Corrections and additions invited.)