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THE DEAN SETTLEMENT

Abram Dean, and wife Catherine, bought the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, section 29 and the N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ section 20 in Brighton Township in 1838. Their son, William Henry Harrison, b. 1836 in New York was with them. As was often the case they traveled with friends for mutual support: Timothy Warner, Cyrenus Morgan and E.G. Durfee, among them. The Deans built a home north of present day I-96 on the east side of Flint Road and commenced clearing land for farming. (Flint Road was the road one took to Flint.) The 1859 Brighton Township atlas notes a 'hotel' on the site. At that time the Brighton House (NE corner Grand River/Main Street) was on the stage coach route between Detroit and Lansing. Those heading north might have stayed with the Deans. The area was still a wilderness as testified as follows:

August 21, 22, 1907, hundreds attended the Brighton Homecoming. The two day event included a program in the Opera House (east side Grand River between North and Main) in which several early settlers recalled incidents/events of the Brighton area. The son of Malcom Fitch, who built the first frame house in Brighton, c. 1837, Henry S. Fitch, came from Chicago, having been gone 57 years and spoke of his boyhood days. "In the winter of 1844 and 1845, my father went to Pine Run (Flint) for lumber with a pair of horses and a democrat sleigh, taking me with him." They started back to Brighton about noon. "The snow was deep and the weather cold. There was not a house for many miles. Just before dark we were surrounded by a pack of wolves, one or two on each side of us jumping in the snow. Gradually the number increased and it became dark. There were about twenty of them, and as they were getting very familiar with the horses and too near for comfort, the horses were put into a run, and the last mile from what was known as the Dean Settlement to our house the horses were on a dead run, the wolves keeping close company until within fifty rods of the house." He also recalled that children were not allowed out after dark because of wolves, bears and panthers.

Besides Abram, the years 1835/37 saw several families by the name of Dean, from New York, settling in Brighton, Genoa, Green oak and Hamburg Townships: John b. 1794, PA; Daniel b. c. 1800 England; Joseph b. c. 1800 N.Y.; Daniel b. 1824, N.Y.; Peter b. 1830 N.Y. Family relationships have not been positively identified but often family groups made the journey. Many Deans were farmers, some blacksmiths, millers, cobblers, weavers, etc.

In 'lower town' (the Main Street/Grand River intersection) John Dean built a two story frame tavern (later a blacksmith shop, 115-121 W. Grand River) where Miss Mary B. Pratt taught 'select' school on the second floor c. 1845. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; 1891 Portrait/Biographic Album; 1880 History of Livingston County; Early Landowners and Settlers and early obituaries compiled by Milton Charbonrau. Additions/corrections appreciated. 810/229-6402.)