WHY IS FONDA LAKE NAMED FONDA LAKE?

From Plattsburgh, N.Y., Lewis B. Fonda, 25, and his wife Sophia (Cochren), 19, came to Michigan on the steamboat "Superior" in 1832, landing in Detroit. They walked to Ann Arbor, living there for four years, until they could move to the land purchased in 1832; Section 32, T6, S64; in Brighton Township. The 1850 census has the Fonadas living in the township. Before long land, including Fonda, Iandel and Briggs Lake, totaling 680 acres is purchased before 1869.

Credit for the first frame house in Livingston County is given Lewis B. The lumber used in its construction was brought by ox teams from Ann Arbor. (One speculate on why lumber from the nearby Maltby and Woodruff mills wasn't used. Both were in operation at the time, two miles away in either direction.) The site of that "...dwelling of considerable pretension" is now under the I-96 and U.S. 23 interchange. When they move into their home their nearest neighbours are living in wigwams on the shores of the lakes just south of the Grand River Trail. Other neighbors included Stephen Lee, about four miles south, who was living in a log house in Green Oak Township since 1830.

Daughter Juliette was born in 1831, in New York. In 1857 and '68 she was a teacher in the local school. Some John b. 1833, Lewis B. Jr., 1835, and daughters Sophia, 1837, Elizabeth and Fannie, 1841, were all born in Michigan. John married Catherine Bird (daughter of early settler Melzer). Lewis B. Jr., caught "gold fever" and headed west to Colorado and Utah. One source notes Jr. is buried in Silver City, Nevada or in Colorado. Another indicates he is buried in 1865, but we have no confirmation. Sophia married George English who died not long after in New York, where she also later died. Elizabeth appears in the 1850 census as a nine year old, but then no more record of her. Fannie married Charles A. Holdridge, Jr. Three daughters were born to them. A son, b. 8-26-1680, d. 10-10-1880, preceded in death by his mother, September 3, 1880. The three daughters all lived into the 20th century.

After the organization of Brighton Township in 1837, which included the village of Brighton at the time, Lewis B. is fulfilling his civic duty as school district moderator in 1843 and 1871/74. In 1850 he was Collector of taxes and township supervisor in 1854/55 and 1859. He was a charter member of the Livingston Agricultural Society and received a premium at the county fair in Brighton for his swine exhibit and Farm Implements exhibit, October 15, 1853. (Compiled by Marianne Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; We Pless' supplements to Old Village Cemetery records; census records; Early Land Owners and Settlers of Livingston County and early obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau. Additions/corrections welcome. 810/229-6402.)

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Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116

Trail Tales

Preserve, Advance and Disseminate Knowledge of the History of the Brighton Area

ART FAIR TIME IS HERE AGAIN!

August 14, 15, the Society booth will be in its usual place - W. Main at Hyne Street. Plan to stop by. Tiles, note paper, post cards, maps, afghans (a popular gift), Lyon School T-shirts, mugs, pewter plates, needlepoint kits and memberships will be on hand. A few copies of the 2004 calendar with drawings of early local scenes, are still available.

Society members will be there to help answer questions.

Reservations for the history book will be taken. The 496 pages with 300 photos have gone to the printer. The price is $60.00 to members, $65.00 to others.

Can you devote an hour or two to the booth? Call 810/229-6402 or just come and help.

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY BICENTENNIAL

It must be remembered, the most important purpose of the Voyage to find a way to the Pacific. To succeed, the Indian tribes the Corps would have to be convinced a new "father" would supply and trade with them. No more would they deal with the Spanish or French. The continued influence of the British, with whom they had traded for many years, had to end. The tribes would be given the opportunity to join in a trading system with well-established posts and dependable delivery. More gifts would be coming, peace would result; if these terms were not accepted all trade would be ended.

At each meeting, to properly impress the tribes they represented a mighty nation, Lewis and Clark appeared in full dress, the men were on dress parade, the American Flag flew from a post and often the swivel gun was fired. The gifts had been prepared in 30 weeks.

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Dates to Remember:

Aug. 4-15, 18-26: 1-3 p.m. Archives filling. Welcome. 810/229-4002 to confirm.
Aug. 14, 15: Art Fair booth on Main Street.
Aug. 27: 6:30 p.m. Board meeting. Welcome.
Aug. 29: 6:30 p.m. Board meeting. Welcome.

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From: BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
To: non-profit org.
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