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WHY IS FONDA LAKE NAMED FONDA LAKE?

From Plattsburgh, N.Y., Lewis B. Fonda, 25, and his wife Sophia (Cochran), 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, W $\frac{1}{2}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , in Brighton Township. The 1840 census has the Fondas living in the township. Before long land, including Fonda, Island and Briggs Lake, totaling 680 acres is purchased before 1865.

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 speculates 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 neighbors 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 1867 and '68 she was a teacher in the local school. Sons 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 married 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. 8-26-1880, d. 10-18-1880, 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 1858. 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 implement exhibit, October 15, 1853. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; Wm Pless' supplement 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.)