ENTREPRENEURS: JOHN WEIMELSTER AND FAMILY

Why make the perilous G-S week journey over the Atlantic to an unfamiliar country, to a remote area in Livingston County in the early 1860s? Military conscription, political unrest and the hope of owning one's own land prompted many from Germany to begin new in America; even to the extent of leaving family ties behind.

How did one, living in Europe, become aware of this possibility? The 1860 Livingston County census indicates Henry W. Weimelster, Sr. and sons John and Henry, Jr., and neighbors in Genoa Township. With mother Elizabeth and John's wife, Catherine, all have come from Hanover, Germany by the mid 1850s. Henry, Jr.'s wife is Fanny Elizabeth Buek, who was born in America after the Buek arrived in 1839. (Dr. Erwin Adolf Buek returned to Hamburg, Germany, in 1845, to solicit funds for the construction of a church for the newly formed St. George Lutheran congregation in Genoa. Is it possible Dr. Buek encouraged the Weimelster's decision even as he had been by Ferdinand Grissom who settled in Hamburg Township?) The Weimelsters are listed with those first members of the church. Henry Sr.'s wife, Elizabeth, is interred in that church cemetery. We've not determined where Sr. is buried.

In that census both Henrys are listed as farmers; son John as a merchant. Shortly after settling John had bought a mill and store, including the post office, in Oak Grove c. 1858 and built many additions. He also is the 2nd owner of the old Dutch Grocery on the Grand River Trail at EILER road. Built by Lawrence Euler c. 1836, it was one of several between Brighton and Howell which offered groceries, household and other items needed by travelers and the settlers. Assistance and advice could be gleaned from John's wife, Catherine, and his mother, Elizabeth, both of whom could empathize with the young women. One could also count on help from the regulars who patronized the grocery. One of the many stories which enlivened a world of hard work is related: About to close one cold, stormy night John admitted a young man who came in for a spool of thread. "Your mother does a lot of sewing!"

"No, it's for my wife. Mother wouldn't send me out on a night like this." Before long John also assumed the job of post master from Chester Hazzard.

Well educated, as were many German immigrants, John prepared legal documents such as deeds, notes and contracts. An astute business man he started a bank in Howell October 19, 1868. Within a year he had built the Weimelster block to which he moved the bank. By 1979 the bank was in the south side of the National Hotel (opposite the courthouse), which he'd built. John and Catherine had two children: Alva and Albert, Henry, Jr. and Helene. Fours: John, Alma, Nelle and Henry C. A number of the Weimelster family are buried in View Cemetery in Howell, and others are found in the St. George Church Cemetery in Genoa Township. (Compiled by Marianne Bair from: Bill Pless writings; 1890 History of Livingston County; Bob Watson's work re: Buek; local obituaries collected by Milton Charboneau; and various cemetery records. Additions/corrections welcomed. 810/229-6402.)

December 2005

Vol. XXIV No. 12

Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116
www.brightonareahistorical.com

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VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY BICENTENNIAL

The camp on the north shore of the Columbia River was very unsatisfactory. Much too exposed to the continual high wind and steady rain and mist, it was decided to find a more sheltered site and one with the possibility of more food and hides. The humid conditions were rotting moccasins, robes and clothing. Any game shot quickly became rancid. Meriwether Lewis explored the stream (Lewis and Clark River) for several miles finding a site "...in a thick growth of pine... on a rise about 30 feet higher than the high tides level."

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Dates to Remember:
Dec. 25: A safe, healthy and happy holiday.
Jan. 1: NO Open House at Lyon School.
Feb. 5: NO Open House at Lyon School.
Lyon School, 11435 Buno Road, Brighton Twp.

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MEMBERSHIPS

BUS/PROF: Ameri Construction.

COUPLES/INDIV: Joe Collins, Gerald & Kathryn Fuller, Bill & Helen Hyne (Chester), Grace Kaye (TX), Bill & Jane Templeton, John & Warner (MFD), and Don S Alice Wyland.

A heartfelt welcome to the new members listed above. All members give assurance to renewing members that the Society is still vital and growing.

The annual review of the mailing list is on. A 'Complimentary Copy' stamp on this issue tells the committee you are probably not interested in continuing receiving Trail Tales. However much they would like to continue mailing it the financial impact must be considered. Members expect the Society to use dues wisely. Mailing to uninterested ones is not good policy.

The non profits rate used for mailing does not forward. Changes of address must be sent in. A returned piece costs the Society .376.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

...John & Janice Field and Jane Riddle for their help during the November issue of Trail Tales.

...Joe Collins and Bill S Jane Tows line as they join Friends of Lyon School.

...Grace Kaye (TX)for her donation with her class.

...American Legion #235 for its donation. 

...Stephen Leith for a copy of his 95 page 'Some Descendants of John Leith, Sr.' another of his fine research efforts of early area families.

...Judy Mann McDonald and Virginia Miller who donated needlepoint kits for sale.

...Heidi Clauser and Marilyn Petlak for displaying their hooked rugs and samplers, respectively; and members of Plain® Road #358 Quilters for helping at the November Open House at Lyon School.

...Nancy Fredenburg for her steadfast efforts in developing a website for the Society.

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2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Publishing 'From Settlement to City - 1838-1945' - Brighton, Michigan, early this year has markedly increased the visibility of the Society in the community. It has been well received with a second edition planned. The Society thanks Carol McMeekin, George Moses and Parent-Teacher Tech for their support. Membership renewals are affirmation of 'We'll help you keep up the good work'. Thanks also to those who have otherwise donated to the Society financially and physically.

A number of organizations and individuals have benefited from assistance the Society provided. Several local third grade classes and also private schools, have been hosted at the Lyon School. A number of programs, related to local history, have been presented to local organizations. Donations of memorials, early pictures, etc., are more fully developing the Archives and the Historic Resource Survey. Each Lyon School First Sunday Open House, instituted in 2005, has seen increased attendance based on these efforts.

Lyon School, Society headquarters, is the site of continuing care and needed maintenance. Contributions and Friends of Lyon School members keep this evidence of local support in a "return to the community" mode.

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE BRIGHTON AREA WOMEN'S ROLL OF HONOR

You can nominate an area woman who's made a contribution to the well-being of the area, the world, for recognition.

Forms are available at the Chamber of Commerce, the Brighton Library or 810-229-2149 or cell 810-399-5552.


SHOPIING WITH THE SOCIETY

In the variety of items noted above, one can probably find just the thing as a gift, at Christmas, birthdays, house warming, going away, etc.

Almost anyone who's perused the history book has probably bought it. The plat maps are printed on an acid/gold paper. Many purchasers have framed them.

The tote bag is well designed, sturdy and popular.

The red, blue green woven Afghan has always been a favorite item. That it wears and washes well is a real plus to its beauty.

The pewter plate is one of a kind - distinctly Brighton.

Yes, the 2004 calendar is still for sale. The c. 1940s sketches are worth the price.
MEMBERSHIPS

BUS/PROF: Ameri-Construction.

COUPLES/MIDY: Joe Collins, Gerald & Kathryn Fuller, Bill & Helen Hyne (Chelsea), Grace Kaye (TX), Bill & Jane Tomlinson, Bill & Paula Warner (Mfd), and Don & Alice Wyland.

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Thanks to those who helped at the Fair's Star Market Art Fair and Autumn Faire booths sponsored by the Society. All the activities have resulted in a membership increase. Membership increases are a result of the Society's financial and physical support.

A number of programs and individuals have benefited from assistance the Society provided. Several local third grade classes, and also private schools, have been hosted at the Lyne School. A number of programs, related to local history, have been presented to local organizations. Donations of memorabilia, early pictures, etc., are more fully developing the Archives and the Historical Research Survey. Each Lyne School First Sunday Open House, instituted in 2005, has seen increased attendance by local organizations.

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In that census both Henrys are listed as farmers; son John as a merchant. Shortly after settling John had bought a mill and store, including the post office, in Oak Grove c. 1858 and built many additions. He also is the 2nd owner of the old Dutch Grocery on the Grand River Trail at Euler road. Built by Lawrence Euler c. 1835, it was one of several between Brighton and Howell which offered groceries, household and other items needed by travelers and the settlers. Assistance and advice could be gleaned from John’s wife, Catherine, and his mother, Elizabeth, both of whom could empathize with the young women. One could also count on help from the newcomers who patronized the grocery. One of the many stories which enlivened a world of hard work is related: About to close one cold, stormy night John admitted a young man who case in for a spool of thread. “Your mother does a lot of sewing.” “No, it’s for my wife. Mother wouldn’t send me out on a night like this.” Before long John also assumed the job of post master from Chester Hazzard.

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

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