Stephen Lee, Green Oak Township's First Settler

In 1830, Stephen Lee, his wife Lydia (Emmons), and nine children arrived in Green Oak Township, at that time still a part of Nashotah County, from New York State. They purchased the ES NW of Section 20, recorded October 6, 1830. (West side of U.S. 23, from Winona Lake Road north to the Huron River.)

The three sons, Hannibal, b. 1812, Solomon, b. 1813 and Charles, b. 1823, and the female contingent of the family also, put up a log house and cleared several acres which were planted to winter wheat to assure sustenance the next year. (Plamann brought various supplies with them to tide them over until the crop was harvested.) Game was plentiful as were fish in the nearby Huron.

The following year Lee hosted the Lewis B. Fonda family until they got their 1840-built house, of the Grand River Trail, east of U.S. 23 (the Ann Arbor Road at that time). Many firsts can be attributed to the Lees: the first log house in the county and wheat sowed; the first worship service was held in the Lee cabin when an itinerant preacher visited (three families in attendance). Daughter Hannah conducted the first school in a house built by an uncle, a brother of her mother, on the bank of the Huron north of the Lee Farm. In 1837, School District 4 was organized and Stephen was hired to build a school on Winona Lake Road and 23, the following year. It was to be a frame, not log, building, 22 x 25, with ten 12-light windows, he built the students' desks and the teacher's desk on a raised platform. The school was to have a brick chimney and a portico at the front entrance. All this for $250.00. Sadly, the first death occurred in the township when daughter Eliza, who had married Albert Norton, died March 3, 1833 at age 23; a son survived her. She was buried on family property but at some time was transferred to the Plaine (Holden) Cemetery on Malotby Road.

A year later son Hannibal married Mary Hubbard, daughter of a neighbor a few miles north. The double wedding also united her brother with one of Hannibal's sisters. Which sister: perhaps Hannah, Catherine or Elizabeth? Of the other daughters, Sarah Lydia married Carrol Woods and Lucy, a Mr. Brown.

Stephen Lee died December 8, 1869. He is buried in the Plaine Cemetery beside Lydia. There is no information as to when she was born or died, only that she was 31 years old.

The sons stayed in the area and farmed. Solomon and Charles are with their parents and sister Sarah in the cemetery, and Carrol Wood, Hannibal and Mary are buried in Fairview Cemetery. The other three daughters seem to have left the area.

Many Lees are recorded in county census records. Stephen's connection to their needs my research. However his arrival was the earliest. Perhaps that prompted the other Lees to also head west to Michigan Territory. (Compiled by Marieanne Bair from Ellis' 1880 History of Livingston County; McMacken's From Settlement to City; Yester years in Green Oak; census records; obituaries and cemetery transcriptions by Milton Charbonneau and John G. Janice Field. Additions/corrections welcomed. 810/229-6402.)

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

July 2005
Vol. XXIV No. 7

LEAVING OUR 'MARKS'

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(cont. p.3)
MEMBERSHIPS

COUPLES/HOTY: Jim DeJohn, Nallyne Small, Bill & Rosemary Ulmer and Willis H. Wolfe (CA).

Welcome to Nallyne Small. With each new member the Society becomes more stable and proficient in its dedication to the preservation/restoration mission it has set for itself. Member renewals support the Foundation on which this organization can build and grow. Paying dues is a vital necessity. To promote success warm bodies are also needed. Check out the needs column and the various projects. If the mission of the organization is important you will find some means to help.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

...Jade Bair, John & Janiece Field and June Kimber For help in mailings of the June issue of Trail Tales.

...Judy Marzinski and Virginia Miller, Quarters, for hosting the June 5, Lyon School Open House.

...Tom Reineke and Lucille Weare For hoisting the Society booth at the June 11 Farmers' Market, Brighton.

...Bruce Dens For painting the sign announcing the Lyon School Open House.

...Ann Arbor News, Brighton Argus and WMTL For publicizing the Open House.

...Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency For the two fire proof file cabinets.

...Bert Bair, Jim DeJohn and Jim Vishol For transporting the above files.

...Pam and Quarters and Richard and Barbara Smith For donations to the purchase of a copier for the Archives.

...Willis Wolfe (CA) and Jim DeJohn For their donations to Friends of Lyon School with their dues.

...Carol McGirr & Associates For her discount in preparation of a review of Society financial records. Her generosity is much appreciated.

...Charles Axtell (AZ) For the Family History. His great grand uncle George W. Axtell is past president and editor of The Brighton Citizen in 1874.

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Researching the Lyon Lake area; Brighton Hospital Chapel; location of John Park's uncle's store on W. Main; one room Plainfield School records; Willis Wolfe's (AZ) and Grace Kay's (TX) local connections. Continuing indexing, filing, and recording area history. Show up at Lyon School each Thursday, 1-3 and you can help. Many photos need sorting. Installed two fire proof files donated by OLSRA. This will help relieve bulging cabinets.

LYON SCHOOL: Need another sign re: Open House for continuous display on the front fence. Next Open House is first Sunday in August, 1-4 p.m.


FUND RAISING PROJECTS


For more information - 810/229-6402 (cont. from p. 1)

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July 19, 1803 depending on cliffs force the river into a 100-150' wide, deep funnel. Although the current is strong, the paddlers must get through since there is no beach for respite along its 5 3/4 mile length; the Gates of the Rocky Mountains.

July 27, the junction of the three rivers which form the Missouri, the Gallatin, the Madison and the Jefferson was reached. Meanwhile Capt. Mer. Clark is on foot desperately searching for the Shoshone and the horses needed to get over the mountains. Sacagawees assures them she recognizes these forks site but where are the Shoshone (and their horses)?

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

July 23: 11-4, Salina Historical Society celebrating the 100th year of the Depot Museum. Many tours, exhibits, activities and ice cream. 734/4250-3821 or bookoo50earthlink.net.
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1875 PLAT MAPS $1.00, of Brighton, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Hamburg, Homer, Howell, Isoclo and Oscola Townships. 1915 maps of Brighton and Howell cities.

For more information - 810/283-8482

(cont. from p. 1)

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Nothing is more responsible for the good old days than a bad memory.

- Robert Benchley

LIFE MEMBERS: Lawrence Autobody and Associates, Inc.


The support and confidence these companies exhibit is much appreciated. Give them your consideration please. Others in the business/professional community are welcome.
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