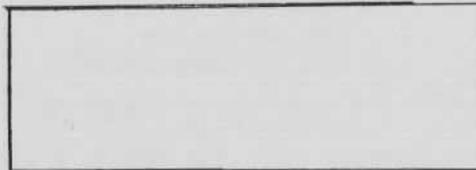


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THE ERIE CANAL IS OPEN - SAMUEL M. CONELY AND FAMILY COME TO MICHIGAN

Samuel m. Conely's ancestors sailed with Lord Baltimore to find new homes in the new world. His father, Jerimiah, was born c. 1766, in Snow Hill, Maryland, and became a seaman. Sam's mother was a Norris, born at the east end of Long Island, New York. Born 9-26-1806, Sam had six siblings: Achseh b. 1797, William S. b. 1790, and four sisters of which only Eleanor has been identified.

Samuel was apprenticed, at 16, (at his father's death) to learn the carver/gilder trade on Fulton St., NYC. Until 1837, he worked at this trade. On March 12, 1829, Rebecca Southard became Sam's bride in NYC. Children, George W. b. 12-25-28, William B. b. 1830, Benjamin F. b. 11-09-32 and John A b. 1835, were all born in New York.

In those days guilds were formed of gold beaters; carvers, tin smiths, silver smiths, etc. Samuel and two dozen other guild members, upon learning of opportunities in the west, now that the Erie Canal was open, entrusted \$8000.00 worth into the care of Richard Lyon, a fellow gilder. Lyon set out to select and register land for them in Livingston County (most specifically Brighton Township.) During 1834-36, Lyon recorded land purchases in the Township for guild members, including Sam and his brother William. About 20,000 acres were purchased by Lyon for fellow guild members. Some bought for speculation, others to live. Some soon realized they were not cut out for husbandry, sold and returned to New York.

The year of Michigan's statehood found Sam, his family, wife, mother-in-law and sister on a life-altering journey. With many of his fellow guild members their trip began on the Erie Canal. A steamer over Lake Erie then deposited them in Detroit with their belongings. By the very nature of their work few guild members were farmers. When Sam and Family got ready to travel the Grand River Trail from Detroit, they bought a yoke of cattle, wagon, a cow and a barrel each of flour and pork. Unfamiliar with driving yoked cattle very slow progress was made, especially through the many swamps and wet land they encountered. Of course there was no shelter, other than the cabin of William H. Valentine. At one time this cabin held 22 settlers until their cabins were built. (Valentine and wife, Addie, both died in 1843, their two young sons taken in by neighbors.)

After settling in their own cabin Sam found it necessary for three winters to return to New York to earn money to support the family. Thomas J. b. 1842, Henry, b. 1847 d. 1873, and Mary E. b. 5-7-1850, married Milo Beach, were born in Michigan. William B. became a portrait painter in Detroit, George W. married Eliza Warner, and Benjamin F. married Maggie E. Platt, local residents. John A. moved to farm in Illinois. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Ellis' 1880 History of Livingston County; William Pless' supplement to the Old Village Cemetery records; and First Landowners and Settlers of Liv. County by Milt Charboneau. Add./corr. welcome. 810/229-6402.)