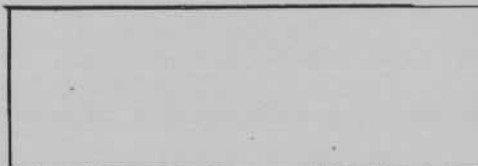


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EGBERT ALBRIGHT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN EARLY BRIGHTON

Egbert F. Albright, b. 1823 in New York (Allbright) was 13 when he came to Michigan with his father Amos and Amos's wife, Harriet. (Egbert's mother was Olive Wheeler. Amos eventually had four wives.) Amos had been a millwright and miller in New York state, milling flour during the War of 1812. A millwright builds mills and 'dresses' mill stones. He built several mills in the Milford area. Many farmers with the Albright name arrived in the county during the 1840s. Settlers often, for their journey to Michigan, came as a group; brothers, uncles, nephews, etc.

In 1848 Egbert is working at Everet Woodruff's mill on Pleasant Valley Road in Brighton Township, as a millwright as is his cousin, Chester Thompson. There is the story that Chester and Egbert both fell in love with the miller's daughter, Sarah Cornelia Woodruff. Egbert was the one she chose; they married in 1852. There was no sign of animosity between the men even tho' they lived in close quarters. The first of five daughters is born to Sarah c. 1854. By then they were living in the village of Brighton within a block of the Brighton Grist and Flouring Mill. In 1856 Egbert and cousin Chester purchased the mill which stood on the NW corner of S. West and W. North Streets on Ore Creek from Lyman Judson. (Judson had bought it from Woodruff earlier, who had bought it from Orson Quackenbush, the builder/miller.)

They ran the mill until May of 1883, making various improvements including a steam engine for when the stream was low, and new stones, when they sold the mill to the Hyne Brothers for \$175.00. Chester lived in rooms in the mill. In addition to his work at the mill he was noted for his garden and the bees he kept. Fishing and hunting kept the family supplied with meat. Grain, eggs, butter, pork, etc., which farmers traded for grinding their wheat, in addition to Chester's vegetables and honey, kept the pantry full. The food was well preserved with ice from the mill pond.

The steady supply of food allowed Egbert and Sarah to care not only for their own family but for the many half-siblings his father sent to live with them. Any elderly person who had no one to care for them came to their open door as did young girls who had no place to have their baby. The Albrights were well known for their generosity.

Egbert enjoyed playing the 'cornopean' in Milford's first band and later in the Brighton Cornet Band. He loved music and taught his daughters to enjoy it and to dance. Their home is remembered as abounding in hospitality and music.

Egbert took an active roll in the life of the village. When a grade/high school was considered in 1863, he chaired the site/construction committee. The building was completed at a cost of \$10,877.50. He also served on the school board.

Sarah died in 1888 and is buried in the Village Cemetery. Upon his death Egbert ordered he was to be cremated and his ashes strewn over her grave. (Compiled by Marianna Bair from census records; Bill Pless' supplement to the DAR Records of the Old Village Cemetery; 'From Settlement to City - 1832-1945' by Carol McMacken; obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau; and reminiscings by Leila Dorothea York. Corrections/additions? 810/229-6402 please.)