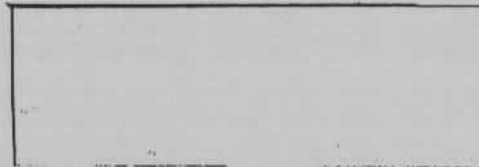


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STEPHEN LEE, GREEN OAK TOWNSHIP'S FIRST SETTLER

In 1830, Stephen Lee, wife Lydia (Emmons), and nine children arrived in Green Oak Township, at that time still a part of Washtenaw County, from New York State. They purchased the E½ NW¼ of Section 20, recorded October 6, 1830. (West side of U.S. 23, from Winans 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. (Pioneers 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 shelter built, north 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 Winans 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 which was 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 Plains (Holden) Cemetery on Maltby 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 6, 1868. He is buried in the Plains 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 as are sister Sarah and husband, 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 them needs more research. However his arrival was the earliest. Perhaps that prompted the other Lees to also head west to Michigan Territory. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Ellis' 1880 History of Livingston County; McMacken's From Settlement to City; Yesteryears in Green Oak; census records; obituaries and cemetery transcriptions by Milton Charboneau and John & Janice Field. Additions/corrections welcomed. 810/229-6402.)