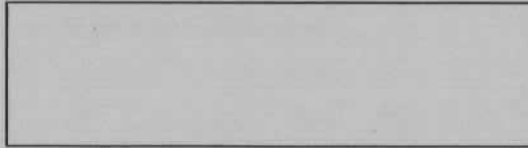


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GREEN OAK TOWNSHIP WELCOMES THE FIELD FAMILY

Eldad Spencer Field, with brother-in-law Norton Wait, came to Michigan within ten years of the completion of the Erie Canal. (The convenient and economical route over the Appalachian Mountains in New York opened the way for settlers to pioneer in Michigan Territory. Early Livingston County census records indicate a family of Fields in each township.)

Even before coming to Michigan, Eldad (born in 1798) and wife Betsy (born in 1797) registered land in Section 29 of Green Oak Township; later buying land in Sections 31 and 32. Field and Wait cleared some of the land and built a log cabin about one mile northwest of Whitmore Lake on Nine Mile (M-36) Road before returning to Detroit for the winter. The following spring, 1836, Betsy and the six children were met at the dock in Detroit by her husband and her brother. With a team of oxen, pulling a wagon with their belongings and supplies (no local grocer or merchant), a tedious journey of two days brought them to Green Oak Township after struggling over a dirt trail, fording rivers and streams, dragging through mud and swamps.

When Eldad and Betsy arrived, they were almost 40; not considered young at the time. The six children ranged in age from 1-12 years; four boys (James b. 1824, Ira b. 1826, George b. 1832, Milton b. 1833) and two girls (Anna b. 1830 and Eliza b. 1835). Eldad R. was born after their arrival in Michigan. The boys often found work with neighbors as they grew up; when their dad didn't need their help.

Research indicates several of the Field men were active in forming local governments (no women's suffrage yet) and held responsible positions throughout the years – all the while continuing agricultural and economic pursuits. The Michigan Pioneer Society, agricultural improvement organizations and churches benefited from their active participation. When School District #1 was established in Green Oak Township, settler Eldad Spencer provided a site; Field School. Eldad died in 1865, Betsy lived to 96 years of age. Both are interred in the Hamburg Cemetery as are a number of others of the Field family.

Son George married Harriet E. Ela on December 3, 1854. The Field, Wait and Ela families were already acquainted in New York. George and Harriet had six children; four girls, two boys. By 1875, George has built a fine home on Ann Arbor Road about one mile northeast of father Eldad's. (In 2003 this home was moved and shortly after demolished.) George died at 90 and with Harriet is also in Hamburg Cemetery.

George's son, Ela Milton, b. July 7, 1861, married Carrie Ann Fisher on January 13, 1885, the daughter of neighbor Frank Fisher. In a not heavily populated area, and transportation difficult, neighbor often married neighbor. Of their six children, Irving married Alta Emma Chamberlain; they had four children. Of them, John Mark (great, great, grandson of Eldad S) married local girl Janice Sutton and lives in Green Oak Township continuing the tradition of responsible citizenship.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from census records; cemetery transcriptions; 1880 History of Livingston County; Yesteryears of Green Oak; Early Landowners and Settlers of Livingston County and obituaries collected by Milton Charbonnet. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.)