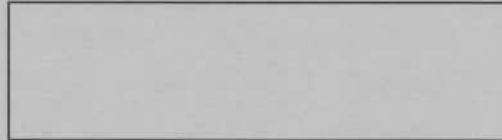


BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #303
Brighton, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Why Did The Pioneers Come To Michigan?

Among the acts of legislation by the new United States government in 1787, was that which formed the Northwest Territory (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin). By 1805, the Territory of Michigan was separated from the Northwest Territory as Ohio, Indiana and Illinois had been earlier.

When General Lewis Cass became governor of the Michigan Territory, he resolved to disprove the reports that the land was all swamp and sterile sand, with malaria, ague, chills and fever awaiting the first settlers. He was successful in his endeavor and soon hordes of eager and determined people from the New England and other eastern states made their way into the area we know as Livingston County.

Surprisingly, very few of the original pioneer purchasers of the newly surveyed government land had any previous experience as farmers. Besides those wanting to acquire virgin land for homesteading were many land speculators. Groups of artisans and guilds of various professions pooled finances and sent representatives to purchase thousands of acres to be divided when they would arrive in the early 1830s. One such trusted representative was Richard Lyon who came to Brighton Township.

Besides the lure of profit from the land, a cholera epidemic in the east gave an extra-added impetus to the rush to Michigan. Traveling in flat boats by way of the Erie Canal, over land by wagon train, on horseback and on foot many were anxious to leave the plague behind.

Besides those newly arrived from the Old World, among the settlers were those whose ancestors had been in the New World prior to the American Revolution. Some were descendants of passengers on the Mayflower, landing in Massachusetts in 1620. Those who originally helped build New Amsterdam (New York City) also had descendants who migrated to the Michigan Territory. Included in the trek were artisans, busi-

nessmen, professionals, skilled tradesmen, the clergy; bringing civilization and Christianity to the wilderness. Making a home for their families, land was cleared and fenced, roads and bridges built, schools and churches erected, pain and sorrow endured, separation borne and joys shared. Many present Livingston County residents are descendants of these brave, eager, resourceful, hardworking, determined (stubborn?) pioneers.

Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair from writings by the late William Pless; a descendant of those early pioneers. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.

♦♦♦♦♦

Congratulations

Following are winners of the Ice Harvesting Coloring Contest:

- Kindergarten: Sarah Wright
- 1st Grade: Caleigh Hurley
- 2nd Grade: Carson Plum
- 3rd Grade: Ellie Larson
- 4th Grade: Dakota Hanson-Meier

CoBACH Exhibit

"Bridal Gowns of an Earlier Day", a collection of vintage bridal gowns and accessories will be on display now through May 15 at CoBACH Center in Downtown Brighton next to the Millpond.

Plank Roads

From 1844 until about 1900, Michigan was home to many private plank roads connecting distant cities, including Detroit to Lansing. They were built from planks set side-by-side in dirt or gravel to form a kind of boardwalk. The planks were also known for not enduring well. Mark Twain, when asked how he liked traveling the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Plank Road, replied, "It would have been good if some unconscionable scoundrel had not now and then dropped a plank across it."

Written by Dave Ball, sourced from DNR web site.