

The History of the Green Homestead

The family of Zepheniah Ripley and Zerilla Green and their three small children arrived in Detroit in 1832 after spending fourteen days traveling by stage coach through Canada from New York state. The eldest child (who was 4 ¼ yrs. at the time) told his descendents that he recalled playing in the sand in the road in Detroit which is now the foot of Woodward Avenue.

The original land grant was taken up from the government and signed by Andrew Jackson in July, 1832. The log cabin was immediately built. It was a rough cabin with a hard dirt floor and was located between the large spruce and walnut trees, which are now fairly close to the present Fourteen Mile Rd.

Between 1832 and 1838 Zepheniah built their permanent home. It was built on a basement foundation directly in back (or north) of the cabin. Michigan became a state (1837) at the time the house was being built. In those days, it took several years to complete a house. The rough lumber used for the frame all came from the farm wood lot. The beams all had to be cut and shaped by hand-many of them being 12"X12." Then the finished lumber (siding, windows, doors etc.) were all brought by wagons and oxen from Lapeer. All this had to be accomplished while clearing land, farming, making a living and feeding a family.



Levi and Asenath Green (Zepheniah's parents) came to live with Zepheniah and Zerilla in 1838-Asenath dying here in 1847 and Levi in 1851. Zepheniah and Zerilla spent the rest of their lives here-Zepheniah dying in 1879 and Zerilla in 1895.

At this time Horace (Zepheniah's son) inherited the farm and gave it to Arthur (his son) for a wedding gift to Arthur and Nelli Green in 1903. They moved it from its original site to its present site and built a victorian home on the original foundation.

The house was moved in 1903 by placing it on logs which rolled as four teams of horses pulled on log chains which were fastened around heavy floor beams under the main part of the house. There are sill sawed floor boards which were put back in place in the dining room floor.

The house was used to house hired help. Later it was used for storage of lumber etc.. What was the living room was converted into a wood shop by the men.

In 1938, when Alden (second son of Arthur) was to be married, he and his bride-to-be (Bernadine) cleaned out the house-papered, painted, and once again made it livable.

There are many of the original windows, doors and hard ware still in evidence. At one time there were four "L" shaped hooks in the dining room ceiling-there are two left. There were used to place a pole across from which fruits and

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herbs were hung to dry to preserve them. In this same room was the big fireplace which was used for cooking as well as heating.

There is a small alcove off the dining room which the family called a "bed sink." I remember Dad Green (Arthur) telling of visiting his Grandmother Green and sleeping in there on a spool(?) cot with a corn husk mattress.

Mary S. Green (Arthur's cousin) recalled having been given the job when a youngster of watching her Grandmother Green (Zerilla) as she was dozing in front of the fireplace, that the burning ash from her pipe (which she enjoyed in her old age) didn't fall from the pipe and burn holes in her grandmother's apron and clothes.

In 1958 Alden and his family added three rooms to the back of the house. It was purposely done this way so the front of the structure of the house would remain unchanged.

Of course, over the years there have been several roofs, additional siding, weather stripping and insulation; but, fundamentally, it stands as built.

Memories! Memories! There have been many enclosed in the walls of our old home-it has lasted through six wars; has witnessed many men to become President of the U.S.; has watched Death steal in and take dear ones; has heard the lusty wail of new babies; has watched small boys become old men and weathered many storms-but to use it is plain and simply "home."

6/27/83 Bernadine J. Green

