

Moddersville and its Early Pioneers

The People 1877 - 1897

The community which was to become Moddersville in its first ten years(1875-1885) became home to eight settlers and their families.

- by 1875 Maurice & Mary White and two sons, from Ireland (left early)
1877 Wynant & Dirkje Modders, four sons and four daughters from the Netherlands in 1872, and Grand Rapids, Michigan
1877 Henry Spitsbergen from Zeeland, Michigan, son of a Dutch pioneer(1847) who married Margaret Modders in 1880.
1882 Gould & Elizabeth Durkee and son and Erastus & Louisa Durkee and two sons, brothers from Canada of Scotch descent.
Abblisse Ballard, brother-in-law to the Durkees, Canada, Scotch
1884 Henry & Susie Medendorp, daughter Grace, and four sons; and Klaas and Renske Van Langen and her three sons and two daughters (Wyma) from the Netherlands

These neighbors came to the Modders home for groceries and supplies which were brought in from Clam Lake by his sons, for mail and for worship on Sundays. Wynant Modders had been a lay minister of the Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. The Modders family, along with the neighbors assisted the new families with housing and other essentials as they arrived.

* In the second ten years fourteen or more families came to the area to work in the woods and move on, or to homestead and stay, among them:

- by 1885 Eelke & Sauke Talsma from the Netherlands
1886 Albert & Jantje Tibbe from Graafschap, Michigan, recently from the Netherlands border and their five sons
Roelof & Fannie and one son-Albert
John & Hattie & four children under 10
Gerrit & Henderkien & three children under 10
Harm (who may have been married with no children)
Jacob who married in 1896
Evert Vanderwal who married Johanna Modders in 1887. He was from the Netherlands, a widower in 1891.
1887 Jantje Ferwerda from the Netherlands who married Dick Modders Bouke Ferwerda, his mother and half-brother and sisters, Gerrit, Susie, Gertie, and Bessie DeBoer from the Netherlands.
Jan Jenema, widower and son Klaas and daughter Sadie-Netherlands
1890 Lewis & Catherine Hamel and three sons(moved to Aetna)
John & Mary Julian from Canada-relation to the Hamels
1895 James & Fannie Carlin and son from Ireland
1897 Isaac & Ellen Youngs and Abraham & Lavinia Emery from Canada

In Butterfield Township, on the Township line were the family of Henry & Caroline Leutzinger who came in the late 1880's and became a part of the community in 1893 when their daughter Carrie married Evert Vanderwal. They were from Canada, he was a Presbyterian minister.

1897 Evert Siderius & Gertie(De Boer) and two children. They left in 1907 with the Ferwerda's and George DeJonge & Bessie(DeBoer).

* These dates are estimated, from the census and school records.