

While the Modders family and the Spitsbergen family(Henry married Margaret Modders in 1880) were almost alone in the western end of the township and Maurice White about two miles away, the families on the eastern end were trying to organize the township.*It is not known how they were able to accomplish this, but in 1881 a Philemon McCracken(family in Clare Co.) and Luther Shumway along with Ephriam Rought and Ralph L. Russell who was boarding at Peter's hotel became the first township board of the newly organized Bradford Township. This board had a traumatic end after getting their settlement from Clam Union. A new board was elected composed of John Creith as Supervisor, Maurice White as Clerk and Wynant, Dick & Martin Modders and Henry Spitsbergen for the year 1882. This board saw the futility of an organization with so few people and dissolved it.

During the years following 1883 the little community on the western end of east Clam Union really began to grow. Elke Talsma came with his young family, Klaas and Renske(Wyma) VanLangen and the Wyma young people, five Tibbe families - Albert, Roelof, John, Gerrit and Hiram - all with children, Bouke(Billy) Ferwerda and his family all Dutch from the Netherlands or from the Holland Kolonie and Evert Vanderwall from Falmouth. The young people married, built homes, cleared their land and became farmers in and around Moddersville.

By 1885 a school district was organized -Clam Union # 4 - and by 1888 a log school was built for about 16 children whose names were Durkee, Medendorp, Modders, Spitsbergen and Tibbe. In a few years there were also Talsma's, Ferwerda's and Wyma's and Vanderwall's.

The first school board was composed of Dick and Martin Modders, John Tibbe, Henry Spitsbergen and Evert Vanderwal. The teachers boarded in the community and school was held for about six months(two terms).

Cornelius Medendorp in his "Yesterday's of Moddersville" states "After 1899 a general merchandise store became available." "In 1889 the mail was brought to Moddersville once a week. In 1892 the mail delivery was speeded up to twice a week. The job went to the lowest bidder. Rex Oldenhouse got the job on the low bid of \$140.00 a year. He made the round trip of 18 miles 104 times for that pay."

"In spite of the hardships and the harshness of living, daily living had its humor and fun - and that in addition to the social gatherings. I can still remember the hearty laughter of the Modders boys; and the genuine but quiet humor of Will Durkee. Everybody got a good laugh when Alec Talsma's oxen refused to cross a bridge on the Clam River, but waded into the stream to drink, and thus caused the wagon to mire in the water. Neighbors had to hitch onto the wagon and haul it out backwards."

"For entertainment we depended on the fine art of conversation and games. Mr. & Mrs. Erastus Durkee always had the welcome mat out for young people at their home. The Durkee's often entertained us with stories about Canada. Sometimes when we were having a good time, Mr. Durkee would set the clock back so we could enjoy ourselves a while longer. We had many a happy time at the Spitsbergen's. Mr. Spitsbergen combined our entertainment with a night school which he taught himself, to augment the poor public schooling offered at that time. The Spitsbergen's, by their unselfish helpfulness, were a splendid example and inspiration to all of us."

"When a preacher was not available, Mr. Modders often served as a layman preacher. He was also an excellent Sunday School Teacher, and served in that capacity for many years. I remember him as a kind and intelligent man with long whiskers. His family, with his help contributed to the spiritual welfare of this community."

In 1891 a Dutch Reformed congregation composed of fifteen persons- Tibbe, Talsma, Jenema, and Vanderwal organized and met in the Log School. If there was no preacher, one of the deacons would read a sermon. Mr. Talsma was one of the deacons. Sometimes the church met in the homes.

* See "How Holland becomes a Township" excerpted from Stout, George.