

from A Step back in Time  
R.J. Brown Esq., 1991

## Tibbe Families

Having left from a small town in Drenthe near the German border in 1882, the family of Albert J. and Jantje Tibbe arrived in Graafschap, Michigan with others from their community hoping to improve their circumstances in America.

The Tibbe family consisted of five sons, four of whom were married and one unmarried daughter. The sons and their wives were:

Gerrit Jan and Hendrika and two children under five

• Jan and Hendrikje and three children under five

Ralph and Fannie recently married

Harm and his wife (name not known)

Jacob, Roelofje both single

Not long after they arrived in Graafschap the parents located and became members of the Reformed Church there. This church soon changed to the Christian Reformed denomination. It was the Tibbe's choice to belong to the Reformed Church, but they remained where they were.

Three babies were born in Allegan County between 1883 and 1885 and Roelofje married Herbert De Ridder. She stayed in Graafschap with her husband.

The next record is from the Moddersville Cemetery where the death of John's wife Hendrikje is recorded in April 1887 along with that of four more Tibbe babies between 1887 and 1891. Thus the family had come to Moddersville sometime in 1886 or early 1887. John quickly returns to Allegan Co. and marries Dena and they return to Moddersville as he has been left with five children one of which is a new baby.

The Tibbe's found a primitive settlement with no school, church or store and not even a cemetery when they arrived, but things soon changed. First was the need for housing. The people of Moddersville and the Tibbes who were carpenters, quickly built four substantial homes of sawn lumber (all still standing in 1991 though they have mostly been remodeled). Then John was elected to the school board and the board immediately directed Erastus Durkee to finish the log school and Ralph Tibbe was hired to put a fence around it. School was ready to open in Sept. of 1888.

It is not known if the Tibbes attended the Modders home worship services, however, it is likely that they did as that was the only witness within the area, and there were no Reformed Churches in the county.