

Hess Village now ghost town

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[Written with the cooperation of Bob Thompson, Newaygo Historian, and articles from the Newaygo Republican]

Situated on the west end of Hess Lake on part of the property now owned by Mr. and Mrs. W. Pendergast was the once thriving village of Hess. The settlement was established years before summer cottages were built on Hess Lake. The village built around the 1860's was owned by Mr. Hess of Grand Rapids. The village was comprised of a saw mill, where logs were cut from the surrounding area and transported to Muskegon. The saw mill burned down once and then

was rebuilt. But when it was burned for the second time it was left to ashes. The Ackerman's cottage now stands about where the saw mill was.

In 1912 a reporter for the Newaygo Republican commented that landmarks could still be seen where buildings once stood. Besides the sawmill a boarding house owned and operated by Amos Sharp thrived. A school house was also part of the village. The school house served as a church on Sundays and later was transformed into a blacksmith shop. Residents of the village included John Sippy, Mr. Hewes, George Warren

and Chas. Hammer. Mr. Hewes owned a general store in the village.

The sawmill did not prove profitable for Mr. Hess so he sold the property to Mary Baldwin around 1869 for \$10,000. Nine years later she sold it to Lorenzo and Polly Pierce. Mr. Pierce died in 1902 and left his property to his son Ezra Pierce. The frame buildings that were left standing from Hess Village were incorporated into the Pierce Farm. Mr. Bob Thompson remembers visiting the Pierce Farm. And on one particular visit some men were trying to get a glider airborne. Unfortun-

ately, the glider left the ground only for a few minutes, and came crashing down to its total destruction.

Today Mr. and Mrs. Pendergast live on the property that was once part of Hess Village. Nothing can be seen of what existed in the mid 1860's and Mr. Thompson, historian, does not have any pictures of this village. People only remark at how hard it was to lay a permanent road on the west end of Hess Lake due to all the sawdust. And at times logs are brought up from the bottom of Hess Lake that give evidence to a once thriving sawmill and village.