

AMACHER FARM HISTORY ON ALLEN CREEK

By: Dale and Rena Amacher 2008.

Yes, an Allen did live by Allen Creek.

The first occupants along the creek were Indians. Many arrowheads and tools have been found in the area, including one that an archeologist identified as being 10000 years old. After living here for apparently thousands of years, the Indians were driven from the area in the 1830's and white settlers moved in.

The first white settlers on what is now the Amacher farm were Aaron Allen and his family.

Aaron Allen was born in about 1795 in the state of New York and served in the War of 1812. He enlisted in Captain James H. Adrians Company of the Michigan Militia as a mounted ranger on October 20, 1814 and served for 13 months until his discharge on November 30, 1815. He was stationed in Detroit for his entire enlistment as a private. According to records, he was about 18 years old at the time of his enlistment and was described as being 5ft-5inches tall, a more or less average height for that time and had dark hair, dark complexion and hazel eyes. In a letter from Attorney William Rogers to a pension commissioner in 1878, Rogers stated "Mrs. Allen is unable to tell much about her husband's service as he was a man who never talked about his war experience". He married Eliza Gould in Brownsville, New York in 1820. She was born in Brownsville, New York in 1805 and was about 15 years old when she was married. They lived in Brownsville for about the next 17 years and had nine children, Alvaren born 1822, Moses born 1824, William Quincey born 1829, Alfred born 1831, Lewis born 1834, Angelena(Baldwin) born 1836, Zida or Ida Ann (Bennett) born 1839, Cornelius born 1842 and George Dallas born 1844. Aaron and Eliza came to Fort Atkinson in 1837 with their children and settled on what is now the Amacher farm. The last three of their children were probably born on the farm. Fort Atkinson was only one year old when they came.

Allen bought part of the farm from the U.S. government for \$1.25 an acre and part of it from John Fisher Field, a land speculator. Allen made trips to the land office in Milwaukee in 1839 to purchase 80 acres of land and in 1841 to purchase 120 acres from

the U.S. government for his farm. The receipt for his purchase in 1839 shows that he paid \$150.00 for 80 acres of land that he paid for it with \$87.66 in gold and \$62.34 in silver. It doesn't say how he paid for the 1841 purchase. The land that he purchased included the present Amacher farm, Robert Klement farm, Spacesaver and the City of Fort Atkinson Klement Business Park. This land extended to the Rock River and was on each side of Allen Creek. He built a house on the Amacher property in 1837. According to a sworn affidavit by his son, Moses, the first house "was destroyed by fire on or about December 1, 1838 and the family barely escaped from the house while it was in flames and nothing could be saved". An archeologist doing a dig in 2006 found many burned pieces of wood and glass. She could not pinpoint the exact location of the house.

Perhaps the present house was built on the same site. We think it was built in 1839.

The 1850 census shows that the farm consisted of 240 acres. Aaron and Elizabeth Allen and five of their children lived there. The farm had a cash value of \$3200.00 and had farm implements valued at \$125.00 and livestock valued at \$490.00. In addition it had 2 horses, 7 milk cows, 6 working oxen, 150 pounds of wood, 250 pounds of Irish potatoes, 300 pounds of butter and 300 pounds of cheese.

By 1860 the cash value of the farm is \$4800.00, value of the farm implements \$100.00 and the value of the livestock at \$500.00.

In 1857, the abstract shows that the Allens sold 6.83 acres to the railroad for a right of way for \$1.00. The railroad came through the farm in 1859.

In that same year, Aaron Allen was killed by a bull. The local newspaper at the time, the Fort Atkinson Standard wrote on September 22, 1859: "Fatal Casualty. We record with sadness an occurrence which happened on Saturday afternoon last week 3 miles south of this place, whereby Mr. Aaron Allen, an old and honored resident lost his life. He went into the yard to assist his son in driving out a bull, when the animal rushed upon him and as he was turning to escape and was falling to the ground, struck him a crushing blow to the shoulder. He survived until Sunday evening when death released him from his sufferings. Mr. Allen came into this town with his family in 1837 and endeared him to his neighbors by his kindness of heart and nobleness of character". He was buried in Evergreen cemetery in Fort Atkinson.

Some sort of a dispute seems to have ensued because it took six years to settle the estate. Moses Allen filed a petition stating that his mother was “old and infirm and an unsuitable person to take administration of the estate”. (She was only 54 years old at the time) Moses Allen eventually got possession of the farm. The rest of the family seemed to have scattered. One son, Alvarin moved to St. Paul, Minnesota and became proprietor of the Merchants Hotel. The October 3, 1884 issue of the Fort Atkinson Union mentions him as “a former resident of this town and lived on what is known as the Allen Farm near Allen’s Creek”. Aaron Allen’s widow, Eliza lived on the farm until 1873. The Fort Atkinson newspaper stated on April 11, 1873 that “Mrs Aaron Allen sold her household goods at auction on Saturday. She goes to live with son Alvarin in St. Paul”. Mrs Allen successfully applied for a War of 1812 widow’s pension of \$8.00 a month in 1878. She died in 1888 in St. Paul and was brought back to Fort Atkinson for burial in Evergreen Cemetery.