

Ginna's History.....

Points Involved at Brookwood, Which Should Be Remembered in the Years Ahead

By: Alexander M. BeeBee, dated April 24, 1967

The former Field (Ellwanger) Estate known as Brookwood, consisted of some 1700 feet of lake front with 77 acres, a good farm house, a tenant house, and a magnificent Manor House, garage, barns, etc. One night Ethel and I were there for dinner, and were struck with the beauty of the place, and I made some very complimentary remarks, to which Kenneth Field and his wife, Evelyn Ellwanger, suggested that Ethel and I buy it as they were getting old and facing some difficult problems. We told them that we could not afford to keep it up, so the matter dropped. The Field property was the estate of the Ellwanger family, of the "Ellwanger and Barry" firm of nurserymen. The property was suitably laid out as a result of their interest in trees, plants, etc., in which they had made their money.

At that time, the Company was negotiating to buy the Eagle property for a power plant site, which negotiations were subject to constantly rising prices, and so the negotiations fell through when the final price got way out of line (\$400,000.00) for some 200 acres. This property was some two to three miles west of Brookwood.

When these negotiations fell through, I suggested we might consider the Field property, if we could get the Bailey property (some 160 acres), which was just West of the Field property, and which fortunately had property on both sides of Lake Road, and extended South in a narrow strip for nearly a mile, which could be the start of a right of way for the railroad and transmission lines.

It was quite apparent that the Bailey family were along in years and might be anxious to sell. So, it was suggested we see if the Field property could be purchased, as along with the Bailey property, it would be an ideal site.

The Fields were reluctant. They claimed that their foreman (Howard Taillie) had been most faithful throughout over 25 years, and also the same for their gardener, Charles Lanson, and they were anxious that if they sold the property that their future be assured in some manner. They wanted to sell the property to someone who would keep things up and provide a living for Taillie and Lanson.

At that time, the Motley farm to the East was a beautiful estate and when Mrs. Motley died, she left all 20 acres to her faithful foreman Clifford Smith. Mrs. Motley's sister was Mrs. Blanchard, and she owned the beautiful estate some 3½ miles West of Brookwood, which is now the "Hedges Farm" (Stanley Nowrocki), consisting of a beautiful home and considerable acreage.

Mrs. Motley and her sister, Mrs. Blanchard, were very wealthy widows. Originally their money came from the "Mosely and Motley Mills" one of the largest and oldest flour mills on Brown's Race, located where Station #3 is now located. Their money was invested in Kodak, so these two widows had these two beautiful estates. When Mrs. Blanchard died, she left her property to her faithful foreman of years of service, Mr. Hepburn.

The pattern set by Mrs. Motley and Mrs. Blanchard was definitely in the Field's (Ellwanger) mind, and so when I suggested that they consider selling their property to the Rochester Gas and Electric, they said that they might consider it, if we would see that Taillie and Lanson were provided work.

Since Taillie was an ideal man in many ways, and Lanson a skilled gardener needed to keep the property up, I told them that I was sure something could be worked out to keep them occupied. The added provision that I suggested that the Fields could continue to occupy the property for at least five years, clinched the situation. We were able to buy the whole property for \$100,000.00, which was a most favorable price. We then bought the Bailey farm for a similar price.

As a result, we got nearly 240 acres of lake front property, including some excellent buildings for \$200,000.00, including the Ellwanger Manor House, three farm houses, various barns, etc. Today this property could not be bought for three times that price. Lake front property now commands a price for an area 400 feet deep of at least \$100.00 a front foot, so the lake front property on the Bailey and Field property is worth some \$340,000.00. The remaining 200 acres are worth at least another \$200,000.00 for land only. If we add the buildings, it is evident that at least well over \$600,000.00 is the present market value of these pieces of property. Wally Wilson eventually bought the Motley property some time ago and paid some \$225,000.00 for some 70 acres.

The Ginna Site property was originally purchased in the mid 1950s; Mr. BeeBee's comments were recorded some 10 years later. Since then other smaller parcels have been added to the total complement. Today in 1992, lake front property and acreage in the Town of Ontario is valued at a considerably higher rate than RG&E's original investment of \$200,000, 35 years ago.