

The Colletts Help Build Brighton

James Collett, b. 1850, came to the area c. 1875 to practice the joiner and carpenter trade. How much his selection of site had to do with his being born near Brighton, England, can only be surmised. That he succeeded is clear. He was the contractor who built the Old Town Hall, 1879, 202 W. Main (with a flat roof) for \$2,300.00; also St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1881, 200 W. St. Paul St. He married Jane, b. 1950, probably in England. They had six children. Edith b. 1873, in Canada, the last five- Mary b. 1874, Lillie b. 1877, l Bertha, Lillian and James H. b. 9/29/1884, all born in Michigan. After Jane's death (1885, shortly after her son's birth) he and his family moved to Detroit in April, 1886. He married Susan Parshall Abram August 18, 1895.

One presumes he moved back to Brighton several years later since he has an ad in the April 11, 1900, Brighton Argus to sell a 14' box hay rack, one wood frame drag and a plow. It is also recorded that James is making improvements to the Philo Phillips' residence near Island Lake. In August, 1904, James and a "... force of carpenters were building a house for Mr. Purdy." He was also given the contract to build an elementary school just north of the Union School on Rickett Road. It was to be "Modern with wall of cement and brick", summer of 1905.

Nephew Caleb Knight Collett, b. 1861 in England (son of John an Anna) arrived in the Brighton area c. 1885. He had been working in the Calumet and Hecla copper mines in the U. P. under an uncle, a Mr. Vivian, Superintendent. He decided to work with Uncle James as a carpenter. He never saw his parents again nor siblings born after he left with his grandmother, Mrs. Knight. Shortly after coming to Brighton he married Alma Hartman b. 1863. Their son, Claude was born 1885 in Genoa Township and two years later, Gliff Knight was born. (Gliff m. Beulah Jolly May 3, 1908. After her death in 1920 he married Mollie Blanke Pike Nov. 24, 1920.) A third son, Ralph b. October, 1898, lived only until the following spring. Caleb and Alma lost two other children as infants. Following his wife's death July 22, 1903, Caleb married Mary Butterfield Blank in 1904.

By 1898, Caleb had a large ad in the Argus- selling roofing material of all kinds. By April, 1900, his inventory included many farming implements. Besides selling building material he also was a builder. B. T. O. Clark had interior improvements done to his home and a large veranda added in April that same year. In July, Caleb was constructing a large silo on the Judge Grant Farm on Culver Rd. Ads in the September 9, 1931 Argus read "Caleb K. Collett- Real Estate Broker. Lots and homes for sale in the city of Brighton." And "I will buy or adjust your accounts or collect them. Caleb K. Collett, bonded collector, Brighton." Caleb, Alma, sons Gliff and Ralph and Grand children Vaughn and Josephine are buried in Fairview Cemetery. Great grandson, Jack V. is in Brighton Hills Memorial. Gliff's 1st wife, Beulah Jolly is in the Old Village Cemetery as is James' 1st wife Jane. Compiles by Marieanna Bair from the Brighton Argus; obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau; "From Settlement to City" by Carol McMacken.