Civil War Veterans Resting At Old Village Cemetery (Part 2)

William H. Bigham, 46, enlisted in the Union Army on August 26, 1861. He was among the first 75 recruits to enlist in the 5th Michigan Infantry Regiment Co. i, being formed by Captain John Gilfillly of Brighton. The 5th mustered into service on August 27, 1861 for a period of three years. At the time, it was considered unlikely the war would last that long. Since all the recruits came from Livingston County, Company I was known as the Livingston Company and the Livingston Volunteers.

On September 11, 1861, the Regiment received its regimental flag at Fort Wayne in Detroit and boarded the Ocean for Cleveland. They then ..., took the cars for Pittsburgh ... arriving at 9pm on September 12th, where they changed cars arriving in Washington on September 14, 1861. After receiving ..., different Springfield muskets ..., they bivouacked in Arlington, Virginia. On September 22nd, Co. I advanced several miles nearer the front where they heard the crack of hostile rifles and the dread whippings of passing bullets.

Felling timber and constructing earthworks, the winter was spent in tents in "Camp Michigan." April 5, 1862 marked the beginning of the siege of Yorktown; the enemy being defeated after four weeks. Heading to Williamsburg on May 5th, they struggled through rain and mud with the "... thunder of artillery and continual roar of volleys ..." made obvious the war was ahead. Here Captain Gilfillly and Co. I lost 26 men killed, wounded and missing.

Bigham participated in the battles of Glendale (June 30, 1862), Malvern Hill (July 1, 1862), Second Manassas (August 30, 1862) and Chantilly (September 1, 1862), among others. He was discharged for disability on September 24, 1862, at which time he returned to Brighton.

William H. Bigham, born in Pennsylvania in 1816, was the oldest of two sons of Robert Bigham Sr., who was born in Ireland in 1789, emigrated to the United States and established himself in Vermont. It appears Robert Sr., kept heading west as his second son, Robert Jr., was born in Ohio in 1828. Robert Jr. arrived in the Brighton area in 1833 with his wife, Hannah. Together, they built a two-story log house on the southwest corner of the Grand River Trail and Chaliss Road. Call and C, the original name of their tavern, was later called the Bigham House. Many land seekers heading west were glad to see the stopping place, it being the first beyond Power's tavern on Grand River Trail and Spencer Road.

Bigham ("Uncle Robert") is reputed to have helped many pioneers seeking information as to the location of good land for settling. He sold farming equipment including plows and ox yokes. At one time, he owned the Eastern House on the northeast corner of Grand River Trail and Main Street.

In the 1870 census, William is living at his father's hotel, and his occupation is a mason. Although 55 years old, he likely found employment in the area. The 1880 census has him living in the household of sister-in-law Malinda (Robert Jr.'s wife), and her family. Malinda appears to be managing the Brighton House for J.C. Case. William H. Bigham died April 26, 1881. His brother, Robert Jr., had died a month earlier. Both are buried in the Old Village Cemetery with their mother, Hannah (born 1792 in Ireland) who died January 13, 1847. Robert Bigham Sr. died in 1876. It is assumed he is buried with the rest of his family.

Compiled by Marienna Bair from census records; Bill Pless' writings; 1880 History of Livingston County; and Carol McMacken's From Settlement to City, Brighton 1832-1945. Additions, corrections requested. 816-229-6402.

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Member Renewals / New Members
Thanks to our existing and new members for their annual memberships:

Family
• Carol Deluca
• Jonathan Tavos

Business / Professional Members
The support of our professional members is deeply appreciated. We encourage you to support these local businesses.

• Acorn Deck Accessories Inc.
• Advance Craft Home Builders
• Archer-Huntley Financial Services**
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• Lawrence AutoTrader**
• Masonic Lodge 8247**
• Michigan Commerce Bank
• Patrick Financial Group**
• Promes**
• Refrigeration Research **
• The Engravers Journal
• Yum Yum Tree

** Welcome new members
** Special thanks to these Life Members

Thanks to...
The BAHS recognizes the following people for volunteering their time:

• Our fun-loving archivists including Larry Lawrence, Karen Biernan, Marianne Bair, Jerry Damon, Sue Garcia, Tammy Sexton, and Jim Vichich.
• Larry Lawrence for preparing the Military Display at CoBACH Center. This display will be on exhibit until mid-August.

The Beginnings of Michigan's Capital
In 1836, two brothers from New York returned to Lansing, New York, having recently platted “Biddle City” in the area of present day REO Town in Lansing. The land was in a floodplain, useless for a settlement. However, they had a plan to sell it anyways. They told potential buyers that Biddle had an area of 65 blocks, a church and a public square.

Apparently there was interest as sixteen men bought plots in Biddle. But, upon reaching the area, they realized that they had been taken. Some left, but many stayed and founded Lansing Township, in honor of the former home in New York.

The new settlement remained small, with less than twenty inhabitants until late 1847. This is when state legislators met to pick a new capital, per the Michigan Constitution. The current capital, Detroit, was not easily accessible to most of Michigan.

However, it was very accessible to the British in Canada who took advantage of this during the War of 1812 when they easily captured Detroit. The new location was to be centrally located, and positioned safely within Michigan’s interior.

Many cities lobbied to be the capital, including Ann Arbor, Calumet, Jackson, and Marshall. Unable to agree, they chose Lansing, to which many present laughed at when announced. However, within a few years, much activity and development would transform the sleepy hamlet into a bustling city.

Article by Dave Ball, Trail Tales Editor

Date to Remember

Jun 2, 19, 26, 30: 9am-12pm
Archiving/Open House at Lyon School

Jul 16: 4:30 pm
CoBACH Center

Jul 20: 8:30 am
Yum Yum Tree

Aug 3: 7:30 pm
Highway 82nd

Sep 14: 5:30 pm
Lansing School Board

Oct 12: 1:00 pm
CoBACH Center

Nov 9: 2:30 pm
CoBACH Center

Support BAHS: Become a Member or Donate

The BAHS relies on participation of its members and the generosity of its patrons. If you would like to make a donation or become member, please visit our web site at www.brightonareahistorical.com or mail in the following form below.

BAHS Merchandise
We have many great items for sale that help us generate much needed funds to carry on our mission. These include home décor items (pewter items, afghans and pillows, decorative ceramic tiles, etc.), postcards, craft items, and so much more.

To see our full gift shop offering, please contact us, visit CoBACH Center or the Lyon School, or see our web site.

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Vice President
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Dave Ball

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BAHS: How to Contact Us or Find Us

If you would like to contact us, please use the following options:
E-mail: info@brightonareahistorical.com
Phone: (810) 250-7276
US Mail: Brighton Area Historical Society
P. O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48117-0481

Lyon School
11455 Buno Road, west of Pleasant Valley Road. The 1885 Lyon School is a fully restored, barrier-free one-room schoolhouse and serves as our organization headquarters.

CoBACH Center
202 W. Main Street, in downtown Brighton next to the Millpond. CoBACH is formally known as the City of Brighton, Arts, Culture and History Center. It is located in the historic 1879 two story brick building also known as the Old Town Hall.
Thanks and Recognition

Member Renewals / New Members
Thank you to our existing and new members for their annual memberships:

- Family
  - Caroline DeLucca
  - Jonathan Tanker

- Business / Professional Members
  - The support of our professional members is deeply appreciated. We encourage you to support these local businesses.
  - Acorn Deck Accessories Inc.
  - Advance Craft Home Builders
  - Archer-Huntley Financial Services*
  - Bagger Dave's Restaurant
  - Dr. Bonine Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
  - Susan Doyle, Realtor
  - Joe Agius / Burroughs Tavern
  - Lawrence AutoBody**
  - Masonic Lodge 8247**
  - Michigan Commercial Bank
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Date to Remember
Jun 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 29, 30: 5pm-8pm

BAHS hosts at CoBACH Center
Jun 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: 9am-12nn
Archiving/Open House at Lyon School
Jun 19: 1-4 pm
Lyon One-Room School Open House
Jun 22: 6 pm
BAHS Board Meeting at CoBACH Center
Jun 25, Jul 23, Aug 21, Sep 24: 8am
Jul 10, Jul 31, Aug 7: 5:45 pm
Guided Tour of Old Village Cemetery
Meet at Gate above Milford Gazebo Downtown Brighton, Free Admission
Jul 4: 10am Independence Day Parade
Main Street, Downtown Brighton
BAHS Military Display - All Wars
All June at CoBACH Center
Tues: 5pm-8pm
talso Sat: 9am-12nn

Area Organizations

- Carolina DeLucca for her donation to the BAHS Projects Fund.
- Bob & Betty Herbst for donating a Brighton State Bank give-away mending kit.
- Dick Weare for repairing the Lyon School bench chair and installing the new hangar hardware in the alcove of CoBACH Center.
- Shirley Knight and Mindy Kinsey for the takedown of the wedding dress display.
- Carol McMacken for joining Larry Lawrence, Tammy Sexton and Jim Vichich on a "memories" trip around Island Lake.
- Tammy Sexton for research and program development for upcoming guided tours of Old Village Cemetery.

Support BAHS: Become a Member or Donate
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Mail check or money order payable to:
Brighton Area Historical Society
Ph. D. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

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- Secretary
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  - Tammy Sexton
  - Dick Weare
  - Education Liaison
  - Judith Coeby
  - Sue Skwarski

the BAHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please help us fund our mission while also helping yourself with a tax-deductible contribution. The BAHS accepts monetary support and donations of historical artifacts. Please consider supporting us with your generosity.

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From Settlement to City
Brighton, Michigan 1832 - 1945
by Carol McMacken
490+ pages; Over 300 pictures
$65.00

Description: This large volume hardcover book contains a beautifully detailed history of Brighton from its earliest days of wilderness settlement through to the growing community of the mid-1940s. The book also contains over 300 pictures and illustrations and is a must for any book collection on Michigan and its rich history.

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