Civil War Veterans Resting At Old Village Cemetery (Part 9)

A grave marker was placed in the Old Village Cemetery in the 1880s in memory of Hiram Dennisen by the newly formed Brighton GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) chapter. Hiram, one of the sons of Isaac and Chloe Dennisen (also spelled Dennisen and Denison), enlisted in the Michigan 5th Infantry Regiment, Co. G on January 26, 1864.

Isaac died in a hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 3, 1864 at the age of 40. His body was returned to Michigan and buried in the Old Village Cemetery.

Under the guidance of Mary Messmerschmitt, the group proceeded to organize in a proper manner. They created a charter, appointed the first board of directors, and incorporated the organization with the State of Michigan.

With the support of Brighton Area Schools, the Brighton Chamber of Commerce and the Brighton City Council, monthly meetings were scheduled with programs of interest to the public. A newsletter was created (with support of the Brighton State Bank) and a mailing list compiled. Local residents responded positively to the mission of the BAHS.

The committee held many events to raise funds to safely remove the building’s lead paint, including a breakfast at the fire department, several benefit dinners, etc. Research assured the historically accurate paint color for door, window and balcony trim, after the balcony was replaced (not the color it presently is). A new bell tower was built and installed. The city council granted the BAHS use of the second floor for office and membership meeting space.

The BAHS undertook many historic preservation activities, including microfilming, and publishing the Brighton Argus newspapers, recording oral histories of long time residents, collecting paper ephemera and compiling a historic resource survey.

Weekly compiling and filing of an archive was conducted to document local school, city, merchant, resident, organization, obituary, cemetery, and church information, as was the history of the BAHS.

In 1894, the Brighton Town Hall was completed thanks to the efforts of the BAHS. A sign was made for the BAHS to hang in the Town Hall hallway stating: "This building was erected in 1889 as the Old Town Hall. The Old Town Hall was the site of many historic events, including the reading of the Declaration of Independence, the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the first election of a sitting president. Today, the Town Hall is home to the Brighton Area Historical Society, which continues to preserve and advance disseminate knowledge of the history of the Brighton area."

In 2013, the BAHS Board of Directors, in cooperation with the City of Brighton and the Township of Brighton, purchased the old Town Hall for $1.00. The building was renovated and opened as the Brighton Area Historical Society Museum in 2015.

The museum houses a large collection of artifacts and documents related to the history of the area, including early pioneer life, the Civil War, and the development of the community. It also serves as a community gathering place for events and programs. The museum is open to the public on a regular basis and offers guided tours and educational programs for students and groups.

In addition to the museum, the BAHS maintains a research center and library, providing access to a wide range of resources for those interested in the history of the area.

The BAHS also operates a storefront located at 102 S. State St., Brighton, MI 48116, which serves as a visitor center and meeting space.

Contact the BAHS for more information or to arrange a visit to the museum or research center. The BAHS is a non-profit organization supported by membership dues, donations, and grants. Contributions are tax deductible. Visit the website or call for more information.

Brighton Area Historical Society - brightonareahistorical.com

Points of Interest:
- Read about the 30-year history of the BAHS. See Page 1
- The story of Civil War veterans buried in Old Village Cemetery continues in this issue's historical perspective. See Page 4

"A wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned."

First Inaugural Address (April 30, 1801)

Thomas Jefferson
(1743-1826)

Inside this issue:
- Dates to Remember
- Thanks and Recognition
- BAHS Gift Shop
- BAHS Membership
- Contact BAHS
- Historical Perspective

Preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of the Brighton Area.
Date of Remember
Jan 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 25, 29: 5pm-8pm
Jan 21, 28: 12pm-3pm
BAHS hosts at CoBACH Center
Jan 5, 12, 19, 26: 9am-12pm
Archiving/Open House at Lyon School
Jan 9-16: Setup of Farm Implement and Tool Exhibit at CoBACH
Jan 18: 6pm
Special Meeting at CoBACH: By-Laws and Mission Statement Review Meeting
Jan 25: 6pm
BAHS Board Meeting at CoBACH
This Month at CoBACH
Jan 17 - Feb 29
Tour-Fri, Sun 5pm-8pm / Sat: 9am-3pm
Now through February 29th, experience Brighton Area Historical Society’s Been, Bikes and Bottle Exhibit. You will see farm equipment with livestock and crop displays from decades ago. Every Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon, special presentations will be given. Videos will be shown featuring all aspects of farming. Old time Brighton area farm photos have been enlarged and hung on the walls. Check the Sunday and Wednesday Brighton Argus to learn about more. Admission is free.

30th Anniversary (from page 1)
Ship gift show opened the gift of its former board offices, the 1885 Lyon Schoolhouse on Bunno Road. In addition, the board donated funds and waived building permit fees to help with the building’s restoration. Many volunteers came forward to help rehab the structure, make mechanical repairs, clean up the surrounding landscape, and assist with the site’s historic site designation. The high school building trades class provided excellent labor in stabilizing the structure. The bell tower came later.

The BAHS’s finance committee conducted various fund-raising projects, including the sale of ceramic tiles and afghan depicting local historic sites, and printing post cards and note paper, which were stock and sold by local merchants. During the Michigan Sesquicentennial, flags were sold. (To be cont’d next month)

Thanks and Recognition
Member Renewals / New Members
Thanks to our existing and new members for their annual memberships:
Patron
• Gerald Dameron
• Emil & Joan Engel
• Tom & Kelly Raskauskas*
• Richard & Mary Ray
• Bruce & Betty Schuman
Family / Individual
• John & Debby Armstrong*
• Bert & Marlene Bair
• Mathilda Bitter
• Joe Collins
• Denise Daddino
• Gerald & Ann Dilloway
• Evelyn Enzinger
• Marlene Fonseca (AZ)
• Lawrence Johnson (Lansing 2013)
• Whitney & June Kinzle
• Steve & Kate Lowry
• Renee’ Obert* 
• Rosemarie Olford
• Genal Pratt
• Ralph & Elizabeth Romano
• Wally Small
• Rev. Don & Pat Thomas
• Dick & Lucille Weare

Business / Professional Members
The support of our professional members is deeply appreciated. We encourage you to support these local businesses:
• Acorn Deck Accessoies Inc.
• Advance Craft Home Builders
• Archer-Huntley Financial Services**
• Bagger Dave’s Restaurant
• Davis Multimedia, Inc.
• Dr. Bonnie Or etal & Maxillofacial Surgery
• Susan Doyle, Realtor
• Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce
• Hands on Mind and Body Wellness Center
• Joe Agius / Burroughs Tavern
• Lawrence Autobody **
• Masonic Lodge #247**
• Michigan Commerce Bank
• Patrick Financial Group**
• Promex**
• Refrigeration Research**
• Yum Yum Trees

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

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.

E-Mail:
How would you prefer to receive Trail Tales: □ Email □ US mail
☐ Please check one.
BAHS projects Fund:
☐ New $2 Student $50 Patron
☐ Renew $15 Individual $60 Business/Professional
☐ $25 Family $50 Life
☐ $50 Other

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

From Settlement to City
Brighton, Michigan 1832 - 1945
by Carol Macken
450+ 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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Vice President
Marlena Bair
Secretary
Tammie Sexton
Interim Treasurer
Mindy Kinzle
Trail Tales Editor
Dave Ball

The BAHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please help 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.

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 48116-0481

Lyon School
11455 Bunno 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.
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• John & Debby Armstrong*
• Bert & Marianna Bair
• Monster Batteau
• Joe Collins

Associate
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• Gerald & Ann Dilloway
• Evelyn Ehrhager
• Marlene Fonseca (AZ)

Supporting
• Lawrence Johnson (Lansing 2013)
• Whitney & June Kimble
• Steve & Kate Lewey

Supporter
• Renee’ Obert*
• Rosemarie Olford

Sponsor
• Genal Pratt

Sustaining
• Ralph & Elizabeth Romano
• Wallyne Small

Supporter
• Rev. Don & Pat Thomas
• Dick & Lucille Ware

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
• Davis Multimedia, Inc.
• Dr. Boone Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
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How would you prefer to receive Trail Tales?
• ☐ Email
• ☐ US mail

Membership Plan:

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Co. G endured many harsh conditions during the early months of 1864: wind, cold rain and snow. Many of the new recruits had not been fully equipped for winter with blankets or overcoats before leaving Detroit for Washington D.C. It was several days before they were able to construct huts for shelter. By the end of March, after experiencing severe winter weather, they were in the vicinity of Brandy Station and attached to the Army of the Potomac.

On May 3, 1864, the Michigan 5th had reached the old Chancel lorsville battle field on the way to Orange Court House. "The enemy was met and a desperate battle ensued." It was during this engagement that it is assumed Hiram was captured by the rebels. He was imprisoned at infamous Andersonville Prison known for its very poor humanitarian conditions. He died June 30, 1864, and is buried there. Hiram left a widow, Eliza, whom he had married in 1859. He was farming the property his parents purchased in 1855.

Charles H. Dennison was probably an older brother of Hiram. He was among the first to volunteer in the 5th Michigan, Co. I, commissioned 2nd Lieutenant on August 27, 1861. He was later promoted to 1st Lieutenant on September 4, 1861. Dennison has the dubious distinction of being the first casualty of Co. I, being shot in the face while on scouting expedition at Potlick Church, Virginia in January, 1862. He resigned his commission March 6, 1862. The Dennisons arrived in Michigan, settling in Oakland County, around 1838. Per the 1850 census, Isaac (born 1794) and Chloe (born 1803) had come with sons Henry (and wife, Phebe), Luther and Hiram, all born in New York. Mary Elizabeth, Harvey and Martin were each born in Michigan. They lived on their 40 acre farm in Brighton Township (south side of McClements Road, just west of Hunter Road). The land was purchased from Samuel T. Williams of New York who bought it from the Federal government in 1835.

After Isaac's death on April 12, 1857, this property was purchased by daughter Mary Elizabeth from her sisters in 1863. Isaac, Chloe, William and Charles are each buried in the Old Village Cemetery. Mary married William Goucher, brother of Charles and Homer Goucher (also Civil War veterans) of whom have been written earlier. Both Mary and William are buried in Fairview Cemetery.

Compiled by Marlesona Bair from the 1880 History of Livingston County; Census records; the writings of Bill Pless; the cemetery transcription by John & Janice Field, and the Fairview Cemetery by Milan Charlbone. Corrections/additions, requested. 810-229-6402.

Lyon School Open House

Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus had dozens of visitors at Lyon School December 18, 2011. Children gave Santa their requests and Mrs. Santa's helpers had cocoa, cookies and candy. Many Christmas decorations were made with the help of one of Santa's elves.

Help Wanted

Are you interested in getting involved with the BAHS? We are currently seeking a new editor for our monthly newsletter, Trail Tales, and also a web master for the BAHS web site. Do you have skills in either area? If so, please contact us if you are interested in either position. You are needed!