



The purpose of the Brighton Area Historical Society is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of the Brighton Area.

The membership is composed of people who feel the above purpose is worthwhile and should be promoted.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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GENERAL MEETING, JANUARY 8, 1985

Emma Casterton from Howell has a collection showing the various styles of architecture in the area. We'll meet upstairs in the Old Town Hall (formerly Library), 202 W. Main, at 7:30 for a short business meeting and viewing of these slides. Anyone having pictures of older homes is welcome to bring them for the rest of us to enjoy also.

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NOVEMBER 13, MEETING RECAP

Following a great pot luck dinner at St. Paul's fellowship hall, the business meeting included the presentation of annual reports and the election of directors. Serving for the next two years will be Mae Schmadtke (welcome Mae) and Gary Cole (thanks for serving again, Gary). Judy Porman's program on campaign memorabilia was eagerly received. Some of the group also brought several fine examples.

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Names of those who might find this newsletter of interest may be given to any member of the board...we'll add them to the mailing list.

EDITORIAL

Support of the Society in the form of memberships, donations of pictures and artifacts, raffle prizes, labor and merchandise is most heartening and these contributors are to be commended.

Everyone should be aware that this continued support is needed and that it most assuredly must increase.

The railroad depot is gone, the Union School is gone. Many old barns and homes have been dismantled. The Rialto Theater is gone. Almost all one room school houses have disappeared. Does anyone remember the Grand (Washington) Theater? Will the Rickett School go also? The Lyons School will not be restored with lip service only. Lack of response has caused the Brighton City Council to believe the community doesn't really care if the Old Town Hall (Library) is restored.

Yes, more people have to expend some energy in order to accomplish our goals. (E. M. Bair)

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MEMBERSHIPS 1985

Persons paying their dues after October 1, will be considered as having paid for the following year.

At present these are Bert & Marieanna Bair, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Boylan, Rae Carmack, Dr. Robert Chesky, Citizen's Trust, Robert Clark, George Hacker, Barton & Catherine Hellmuth, Kathryn Hodgkin, Don & Shirley Jenks, Ray & Jean Lanning, L. Mark Linstid, Leota Mason, Fred & Mary Messerschmidt, Judity Peck, Norma & Charles Pless, Gerald & Judy Porman, Ed & Connie Sherman, Bill & Jane Tomlinson and John & Virginia Zureke. WELCOME

If you'd like to help with the Society's goals please use the form you'll find in this newsletter. Your membership is essential.

THANKS THANKS THANKS THANKS

...Brighton State Bank for the printing of this newsletter. This saves the Society a great deal and allows the funds to be used for restoration, etc. purposes.

...DuQuet Jewelers for the donation of a watch as first prize for the drawing.

...Chamber of Commerce for copying and use of the building for the Christmas Open House.

...Ben Bidwell for the pictures of early residents of Brighton.

...Burger King for framed reproductions of pictures of early Brighton.

...St. Paul's for the use of the hall.

...Bill Pless for his encouragement and contributions of his memories.

...Ethel Gebben and committee for conducting the Open House. And Ethel also for folding and labeling this newsletter.

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AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPS MEET IN NOVI

Three board members attended this recent meeting. The ideas exchanged make this semi-annual meeting very worth while.

Several societies displayed scrapbooks of the activities of their organization. These are very impressive exhibits of which a society can be proud.

It is time for the Brighton Area Historical Society to begin the process of making a scrap book of its activities.

Needed are newspaper clippings, pictures, etc., of what we've been doing. Also very necessary is someone to take on this project. Please don't leave this job up to someone else to do.

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LES AMIE CLUB

The article on Persis Cook in the November issue has prompted long time residents of Brighton to add names to the list of those in the 'Les Amie Club.' Included were Louise Pinney, Zelma Newman, Gladys Clark, Ethel Leith, Jean Edmonds, Carrie Francisco, Majorie Garwood, Lorene Pless, Mildred Mellus, Edith Prosser, Celia Newcomb, Bernice Taylor and ___ Grant.

Now, does anyone have pictures of these members? Can anyone give us more information regarding the Les Amie? When did they begin, Where, why and how often did they meet. Questions. Questions, Questions.

HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP

We need...

...someone to develop a cross stitch kit of a local site. We feel this could be a valuable fund raiser.

...items to include in this newsletter.

...a Publicity Chairman.

...ideas for next year's programs.

...someone to do research on the history of the Old Town Hall, its bell and the Byons Lyons School. Also Brighton High School history. Also other local sites, mills, merchants, medical and legal professions, Mellus Hospital, etc.

...a scrap book chairman.

...someone to open their home for a tour, exhibit a hobby or collection, etc., as a fund raiser.

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RICKETT SCHOOL FOR SALE

With the move to the former Miller Elementary School of the Brighton Senior Citizen's Center, the Rickett School is now for sale by the Brighton Area Schools. (Was it always named 'Rickett School'?)

Not many major changes have been made in its outward architectural design. It seems a fine example of public building construction of the era. It would be unfortunate for the community if this building were to be destroyed or major architectural changes made as has been done to so many of the area's older buildings.

Can we hear from anyone willing to put in some time to preserve this evidence of our past before it's gone also? There are many purposes to which it could be put and remain a community-owned building.

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BOOK OF 100 YEAR OLD BUILDINGS

In the area are a number of homes and buildings which were built over 100 years ago. Would you be interested in a book showing these and giving some detail as to their history?

Would you be willing to take pictures, do research and generally help with a project such as this? Let us know.

THINGS TO DO

At the First United Methodist Church in Howell, Dr. Weldon Petz, a nationally known authority on Abraham Lincoln, will be giving a presentation on his life. The date is February 11, 1985.

The Archives at the Howell Carnegie Library are open from 1-5 on Wednesdays. Special arrangements can be made with a member of the Archives Committee.

In honor of or in memory of a favorite person, it is suggested that reference books be given to the local Library or to the Historical Society.

Take some time this winter to begin or catch up on writing your family's history. Your experiences and your life have validity. They are worth preserving for those who follow.

There is an excellent supply of genealogy material at the Community Newscenter at the Frandor Shopping Center in Lansing.

The Hartland Players will present the musical "Scrooge" December 6, 7, 8 at 8 p.m. and December 9 at 2 p.m. at the Music Hall in Hartland. Reduced prices are available to groups of 15 or more. Call 632-6189, evenings.

FROM THE PRESIDENT....

For the past 10 months the opportunity to serve as President has confirmed the belief that there are a lot of people in the area who care about the preservation and dissemination of the knowledge of the history of the Area. The support is most heartening.

This organization is to be commended for the high level of dedicated service of its Board and Chairmen. It has been very encouraging to work with them in our attempts to reach the goals of the Society. Goals which include the preservation and restoration not only of the material heritage but also the aesthetic and humane values.

1985 is on its way. There will be many opportunities to continue growing. There will be many opportunities for more to join us in our belief that unless we preserve our history there can be no future of which we would want to be a part.

..... Marieanna Bair

CERAMIC TILES TO BE SOLD

The order has been placed with the manufacturer for the tiles with a picture of the Old Town Hall. We hope to have these available in time for Christmas. Several have already placed their orders.

It is planned to develop a series of these. This should be a good source of income.

Also for sale at all General Meetings, or call Ethel Gebben, 227-5375, are Society cards and stationery and the Michigan History Magazine issue relating to the Court House restoration.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

Activities in which I'd like to participate:

- Meeting Programs
- Interior Decoration
- Help with special events
- Board member
- Video taping
- Photography
- Genealogy
- Restoration
- Cleaning
- Other work I'd be willing to do _____
- Newsletter
- Publicity
- Research
- Membership
- Fund Raising
- Bake Sale
- Hospitality
- Oral History

Dues: \$8.00 per couple
 5.00 per individual
 25.00 business/professional
 25.00 patron

Send to: Brighton Area Historical Society
 P.O. Box 481
 Brighton, Mi. 48116

The first schoolhouse in Brighton was built on the Grand River Trail in 1837. This building was used for about ten years and during that time the Brighton-Genoa Fractional District No. 5 was formed. The village grew, the citizens became dissatisfied with the old building and it was sold. A house on what is now E. Main Street was rented for use as a school until 1850, when a new schoolhouse was built on the northeast corner of Spencer and East Streets. This building served through the Civil War years.

A triangular site located west of what was then Ann Arbor Road (now Rickett) just south of the Grand River Trail, was purchased from Ira W. and Spaulding N. Case in 1867, for the sum of \$487.50. Property tax millage and state authorized bonds allowed the construction of the Union School which was occupied in December, 1868.

By 1879 there were 267 children in the district between 5 and 20 years of age. The number of teachers increased from one or two to five in 1879. By the late 1800's the school became graded and provided for a 10th grade education. As enrollment increased and grades 1-12 were taught it became necessary to rent vacant stores in the downtown area for grades 1-4. The buildings were not in good repair; some had been saloons, wool storage and grocery stores. The parents were not satisfied but times were not good and the children were educated, even under those conditions, to succeed in institutions of higher education.

Around 1900 surrounding townships were paying tuition for students from their districts to attend the high school. By 1907, an elementary schoolhouse for grades 1-4 was built just north of the Union School. Its most recent use has been as the Brighton Senior Citizen's Center. It is now known as Rickett School.

In 1928, a new high school was built on Church Street at E. Main. In 1947, St. Patrick's Church bought the Union School and in 1952 it was torn down to provide a playground on the parochial school site. During the 1950's the area's country schools consolidated into the Brighton Area Schools. Since then seven elementary school buildings and a new high school on Brighton Road just west of town have been built, and enlarged. A recent decline in enrollment has caused the closing of one elementary school.

As the story goes, the 'old high school' (Union School) bell was rescued from a scrap heap by Richard Clark and it now hangs in the St. Paul Episcopal Church bell tower. (Above condensed from "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by William Pless.)

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 BRIGHTON, MI. 48116