



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, TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1985

A slide presentation showing various styles of architecture in the area will be shown by Emma Casterton from Howell.

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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OPEN HOUSE RECAP

A drizzly November 30 evening, was unable to dampen the spirits of those who attended the Society's Open House held at the Chamber of Commerce building.

Chairmen Ethel Gebben and Ial Fuller arranged for lots of refreshments. Thanks to all who donated.

Thanks also to Kay Flynn, Linda Anderson, Sandee Hudson and the Fred Gruezkas for lending their doll houses for display. Many compliments were received on the detail exhibited.

EDITORIAL

Many opportunities for present and former local residents to help with Society activities are presented each month in this publication. Response is sincerely appreciated. But always the request for more support continues.

Many in the Area commend the Society for its goals and projects. To really become an effective entity, to really accomplish its projects, much more support is needed. Not only verbally but with memberships, buying of raffle tickets and other items, attendance at meetings and helping with activities such as bake sales, Lyons School restoration, research, etc. (See the HELP HELP HELP Column.)

(Ed. 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 Paul, Alene and Thomas Anderson, Bert & Marieanna Bair, M/M Arthur Boylan, Rae Carmack, Citizen's Trust, Dr. Robert Chesky, Ben & Eula Clark, Robert Clark, Frances Clore, Gary & Ruth Ann Cole, Al & Hazel Cole, Don & Lois Cole, Michael Cuthbert, Kay Flynn, Floyd & Ial Fuller, May Gibson, George Hacker, Clara Healy, Barton & Catherine Hellmuth, John & Carol Hills, Kathryn Hodgin, Don & Shirley Jenks, Ray & Jean Lanning, Mark Linstid, Leota Mason, Jessie McDonnell, Fred & Mary Messerschmidt, Isabella Milburn, Margaret Muir, James & Judy Murray, Alice Newcomb, Ken & Billie Oberstaedt, Judith Peck, Doris Petersen, John & Dorothy Pennala, Charles & Norma Pless, Andrew & Lila Robertson, Ina Shannon, Ed & Connie Sherman, Bill & Jane Tomlinson and John & Virginia Zureki. WELCOME

THANKS    THANKS    THANKS    THANKS

..Brighton State Bank for the printing of this newsletter. Administration expenses are greatly reduced.

...Michigan Bank Livingston for the printing of the raffle tickets for the recent drawing.

...Chamber of Commerce for copying and the use of the hall for the Open House.

...Singer Press for the fine printing of this Newsletter.

...those who bought raffle tickets.

...Bonnie Corrigan who will be our Acquisitions Chairman for 1985.

...Virginia Zurecki who will be our Membership Chairman for 1985.

...Janice and Charles Beach for their loyal support as board members in the past.

...Floyd Fuller and Jack Gabben for accepting directorships on the Board.

...Mae Schmadtke who was elected as a director.

...Gary Cole for being willing to serve another term.

...Dick Davis for getting the tiles made.

...Jane Tomlinson for handling the sale of the tiles.

...Clara Healy for serving as Secretary for the past year.

...Judith Peck for accepting the position of Secretary.

...Ethel Gebben and Ial Fuller for serving as Chairmen of the Open House, Novem. 30.

...Brighton Argus for its cooperation.

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ANTIQUÉ SHOW AND SALE  
AS PART OF THE  
BRIGHTON WINTERFEST

The Society, in cooperation with the Brighton Area Senior Citizens, will participate in the Brighton Winterfest by holding an antique show and sale at the Miller School, Saturday, January 19, 1985, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Invormation and invitations have been sent to antique dealers. Support from Society members will be needed that day. When you are asked to dontae two hours of your time that day, please give an affirmative answer. Better yet, please contact the president, 229-6402, and tell her which shift you'd like.

Expenses and proceeds will be shared by the two groups.

HELP    HELP    HELP    HELP    HELP

We need...

...a Publicity Chairman.

...a Program Chairman.

...ideas for next year's programs.

...people to do research to acquire historic site designation to various sites in the Area. (Brighton High School, Lyons School, Rickett School, Woodruff Mills, Maltby Mill, Mellus Hospital, Rialto Theater, etc.)

...a scrap book chairman. It hardly seems proper for a Historical Society to not have a record of its activities.

...an appropriate name for this newsletter.

...people to help with the Antique show January 19.

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TILES FOR SALE

The tiles have arrived. Do you have yours?

These 6" ceramic tiles, picturing the Old Town Hall, black and white, are priced at \$6.00. They can be purchased at Citizen's Trust Bank, the Senior Center Gift Shop at Miller School and from Jane Tomlinson, 229-6435.

The tiles can be displayed on the wall or can be used as hot plate holders. This project can be a profitable fund raiser. It is planned to develope an annual series of these with various local sites. They make very nice gifts.

Any suggestions as to which site should be pictured on the next order.?

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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.

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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.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER FROM RAE CARMACK

We are grateful for a letter from Rae (Morgan) Carmack, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday in California. It contained information regarding the Lyons School and the Grand (formerly Washington) Theatre. (The building just north of the Standard Station - N. E. corner of Grand River and St. Paul's St.)

The boys attended Lyons School with Catherine Hartman as their teacher. A daughter, Marlene, was born in 1933. While only four years old, she was allowed to attend school also when Rae had to answer a call to jury duty. Alice Chabot was the very cooperative teacher at the time.

Rae was born in the farm house on the N. W. corner of Spencer and Pleasant Valley Rd. in Brighton Township, October 8, 1894. The property had been owned by the Morgan family for many years.

Moving to Brighton City in 1938, all three children attended and graduated from Brighton Schools.

She relates she started at the Lyons School in 1900, "my teacher was Miss Greenaway."

Walter became manager of the Washington Theatre, later remodeled and called the Grand Theatre, for 23 years. Rae handled the concession stand for eight years.

In 1904, her family moved from the area but she and her husband Walter (whom she married in 1914) and their two sons, Ted and Ray, moved back to Pleasant Valley to a house they built in 1929 "on an acre of the Morgan farm."

Son Ted and daughter Marlene hosted an Open House in California for their mother's 90th birthday.

Son Ray was "killed in World War II over Nurenburg, Germany, in 1944 and Walter died in 1964.

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RAFFLE

The recent raffle raised over \$180. Many thanks to Michigan Bank Livingston for printing the tickets, to DuQuet Jewelers for donating the watch (won by Yvonne Meyers) and to Joanne Mars for donating the bowl (won by Ray Hoganson).

\* Does anyone have a picture of the Grand (Washington) Theatre? Does anyone have pictures of the Lyons School?  
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FOR SALE

Cards and stationery with the Society logo and the Michigan History Magazine issue relating to the Court House restoration. These items are available at all General Meetings or call Ethel Gebben, 227-5375.

The Finance Chairman, Gary Cole, is anxious to hear from those willing to work on the next fund raising project.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

New ( ) Renewal( )

Activities in which I'd like to participate:

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

Dues: \$ 8.00 per couple                      send to: Brighton Area Historical Society  
           5.00 per individual                      P.O. Box 481  
           25.00 business/professional                      Brighton, Mi. 48116  
           25.00 patron

THE WESTERN HOUSE

Further research will be necessary to determine who built the Western House Hotel, Livery and Carriage Barn in 1873. In 1879, P. D. Skillbeck owned the building and R. M. Filmore was the proprietor.

Prior to the arrival of the railroad to Brighton in 1871, travelers had arrived by stage coach on the planked toll road called the Grand River Road, and had stayed at Ben Cushing's Brighton Hotel (later the Eastern House) on the north east corner of Grand River Road and Main Street. Situated approximately half way between Detroit and Lansing, Brighton became a popular stop for rest and refreshment.

The arrival of the railroad signaled a decline in stage coach travel. Salesmen and agents calling on local merchants used the railroad for transportation. Those villages and crossroads stores not serviced by the railroad made it necessary to rent a livery rig to deliver products and take orders.

A lively competition soon developed between the Western House Hotel and Ben Cushing's Brighton Hotel. Both kept horses and rigs to supply and cater to the travelers' needs.

At the turn of the century, LeRoy King, "the man in shirtsleeves" was the proprietor of the Western House. He met each passenger train coatless in his attempts to "buttonhole" or persuade travelers to select his hotel as the place to stay. The finest foods and liquors were served, each room had a window, beds were clean and comfortable and there was room for elegant parties and banquets.

The horses in his stable, he boasted, were spirited, yet gentle and his rigs among the most stylish. A place where good friends met to become better friends; it was the center of community social activity.

The hotel business was doing well until the early 1900s when the horseless carriage came into common use. More miles could be covered in a day and overnight hotel accommodations were less in demand. The salesmen didn't need Mr. King's rigs to visit the isolated crossroads stores and villages. Local residents often traveled out of town for recreation instead of spending their free time at the Western Hotel. To add the final blow, the county went dry and bootleggers, blind-pigs and saloons in adjacent, wet counties acquired that part of the hotel's business.

Howard Hunter, Nathan Caverly and Ed Standlick were local people who also ran the business but with little success. Since the repeal of the 18th amendment various owners have modernized the building and operate it as a rooming house and a bar. (Above condensed from "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by William Pless.)

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