SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN BRIGHTON VILLAGE

It's July 4, 1971, and lots of celebration is on the schedule. Not only are Brightonites celebrating the 95th anniversary of the United States but also the completion of the railroad to Brighton from Detroit. Farm folks from miles around join the townpeople in their preparations for this long awaited occasion.

For the first time the sound of the locomotive whistle and bell are heard. These signaled an end to the long trips in horse-drawn wagons to Detroit, to sell the produce grown on area farms. The proximity of this vastly improved means of transportation also meant an automatic doubling in the value of an acre.

For seven years, at the intersection of the tracks and Main Street, a crossing guard sat in a small shanty ready to stop traffic at the crossing. In his spare time he cultivated a flower garden between the shanty and the water tank. Passengers on the train and pedestrians on the walk very much enjoyed the sight of a lovely garden in such an improbable setting. Since the crossing guard became well acquainted with the local residents, and with the young telegraph operators at the depot, he often played the role of cupid. It is reported that within a few years at least 10 marriages had been consummated between the local girls and the "depot men".

Each locomotive whistle had its distinctive 'voice' which was soon recognized by the citizens of the entire community. Whether it was the Whistled warning at a crossing, the long, purring, wailing sound of the engine approaching the station or if the train 'balled right' or through the town.

Steam locomotives needed to replenish the water supply regularly. A whole cacophony of sounds emanated from this activity: the constant ringing of the bell; the hissing steam and chugging of water being injected into the boiler; the clanking of the steam water cover, the loud, high-pitched voice of the train crew; sharp toots signaling departure; thudding sounds of freight car couplings being engaged one at a time in a manner similar to dominos falling; all of which resulted in disturbing the peace and quiet of a sleepy neighborhood.

Carts of lumber, coal and other merchandise coming into Brighton had to be switched with cars of grain, potatoes, apples and livestock leaving. All of this activity was accomplished with whistling, humping, screaming of steel wheels on steel rails, and the addition of the howling, bellowing and squealing of farm animals which had been penned in the rail road stockyards nearly all day before being loaded for shipment.

With 'progress' came an end to steam engines which were replaced by the diesels with their air horns. "A bell and horn that are driving me crazy" exclaimed the crossing guard.

Subdivisions superseded productive farm land. As with all other changes we eventually accept them as normal (ready to scream at the next change.) (Edited and condensed from memories of Wm. Pless. The second of his "Sights and Sounds of Brighton Village."

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 481
BRIGHTON, MI 48116

Pristed courtesy OLD KENT BAKK
HELP...HELP...HELP...HELP...we need...

...a picture of the Lyon School. The committee is considering a tile for 1986 of the school but needs a picture of the school too.

...your tale of Sights and Sounds or other reminiscences of the past. (It can be of more recent years.)

...donations of antiques to be sold at the Society's booth at the Antique Show during the January, '86 Brighton Winterfest. Receipts indicating your tax-deductible donation will be given upon request.

...someone to chair the above mentioned booth.

...flea market donations and helpers.

BAKE SALE

The Bake Sale at Farmer's Market June 1 was a great success. Thanks to all of you who donated baked goods that day, as well as those who donated money.

Jane Tomlinson is always there as Co-Chairman and always stays till everything is wrapped up. Her daughter, Mary Jane, also helped us sell. Thanks to Wally Jollitz and Chuck Beach for delivering signs and tables.

Ladies who made calls were Shirley Ritter, Janie Braud, Ida Pullman, Rev. Lackle, Ethel Gebben, Libby Eisenhower, Kay Flynn, Jane Tomlinson, Gloria Spencer and Mary Pat Leyton. We couldn't do it without all of you.

We left market that day with a profit of $189.25. We may be calling on you again during the summer for a couple more bake sales. Thanks again. Janice Beach-Chairman.

SENIOR CENTER -- HUMANITIES PROGRAM

The organizational meeting for a discussion group of Older Americans will take place Wednesday, September 25, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at the Community Room at the Miller Community Center, 850 Spencer, 229-5500, Ext. 127.

A discussion leader will have a topic "Exploring Local History." There is no fee.

This discussion group will be co-sponsored by Brighton City Library, Brighton Area Senior Citizens' Center, Brighton Area Historical Society and Brighton Community Education.

LYON SCHOOL

Work on the Lyon School will begin soon again. Please watch for notices in the Brighton Argus. Lots of willing hands are necessary to begin the restoration process.

The application for registering the Lyon School as an historic site is being prepared. After that we can consider the acquisition of a Michigan Historic Site Marker.

ACTIVITIES OF AREA SOCIETIES

Green Oak, P.O. Box 84, Brighton, is sponsoring a visit to Botsford Inn, Saturday, July 13; lunch at 12:30, $7.25.

Green Oak Day will be Saturday, August 10. A family picnic is planned at the Gage House Museum, 8440 Kensington Rd. The Museum is open Saturdays and Sundays, 1-6 p.m. during the summer.

Milford Historical Society is sponsoring Mill River Days, July 3, 4, 5, 6. The schedule shows something for everyone.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

New ( ) Renewal ( ) Please send a copy of Society Bylaws ( )

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 983 25.00 patron
25.00 business/professional Brighton, Mi. 48116
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BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
BRIGHTON, MI. 48116

Printed courtesy
OLD KENT BANK

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481, Brighton, MI. 48116

EDITORIAL

The Brighton Area is in need of Historical Commissions. The townships and the city need the guidance of such Commissions to answer some of the environmental issues of today. Is there anyone who would argue that growth is inevitable?...that building is necessary?...that development should be guided in a direction that takes into account the resources of the area and considers the generations to come?

How will this growth affect the economy, stability, energy self-sufficiency and cultural identity of the Area? It would seem the appointment of Historic Commissions would be a beginning to answer the questions.

We would urge local governmental bodies to seriously consider such an appointment. We would urge the local citizenry to request such appointments soon. This is a logical means to avoid the toppling of still useful buildings or the destruction of irreplaceable open space.

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MEMBERSHIPS 1985

Since the last issue the following have paid 1985 dues:


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Want to write an editorial or have other comments? Be our guest. All comments are welcome.

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