The history of Crooked Lake, along with that of all the SE section of Michigan, property begins about 30,000 years ago when the last glacier slowly retreated, leaving a huge heap of enormous amount of material it had scooped off the Laurentian Range in Canada. These heaps left hits or miss over this area, penned up water from the melted ice and formed the hundreds of lakes that dot the entire area of the country.

Thousands of years later these raw, barren heaps of rock material were covered with trees and other vegetation. The Sawk and Onottoway tribes had their permanent villages mostly in the forests of the Saginaw Valley, but came here in the summer to hunt and fish and plant some of their meager crops. Following their attack which completely wiped out these tribes, the Ojibways also came to the area in the summer. Crooked Lake was, as it is today, a summer resort.

In the eyes of early settlers any lake in the sections 'taken up' from the government was just so much worthless acreage. It could grow no wheat and could pasture no cattle or sheep. Its fish were appreciated for a change of diet, but there was little time for fishing and anyhow one could fish anywhere without having to own the waters.

A lake was pretty to look at, but almost none of the early settlers built a home on the shores of a lake. Fever and ague were rife all through the newly settled regions. They believed this sickness came from the mist and vapors of the lakes and marshes, so early homes were built usually on high ground.

Around the turn of the century sparse frame structures called 'camps' began to be built by various owners of land around the lake. The train brought parties of young people for a week or so of camping, duly chaperoned by their elders. By that time the farms of Genoa were owned by second and third generation descendants of the pioneers. Many had married the offspring of the farmer whose land joined theirs. Everyone seemed to be related.

World War I; changing economic conditions; the auto industry; roads being graded to meet the demands of the thousands of new auto owners who wanted to get out of the cities and go places at the breakneck speed of 25-30 mph; all created a tremendous interest in the lake as sites for summer homes. Lake frontage was lotted and soon most of the property was sold at good prices to 'outsiders.' As shore property was sold this meant the end of camping at the old swimming hole.

In 1927 the Burroughs Adding Machine Company purchased the property on Brighton Road as a place of recreation for their employees. This has since been purchased by a group who have continued the recreational appeal of the 'Farm' and are planning construction of facilities which will enable hundreds more to take advantage of the pleasant surroundings of Crooked Lake. (Condensed from "A Scrap Book of Michigan Memories" by Mr. Pless.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
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Printed courtesy OLD KENT BANK

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April 19, 1981

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.

EDITAL

Occasionally the Society is described as the "Membership Society." While that charge cannot not be completely denied (hardtly a good use of time and energy) one must give credit that the Society is trying to work towards its goals: the creation of an awareness of those who have preceded us; of their contribution to the Area (may ours be as valuable); of the attempts to restore a defaced building to its former status; of making visitors to our area aware that we know from where we've come and know where we're going. The stability of neighborhoods will be enhanced, our self-sufficiency reaffirmed and cultural identity reinforced through these efforts.

All of us know of incidents of toppling of still useful structures in the area. Members of the Society are trying to make others aware of the need to preserve the physical, social and human fabric of the community. Members of the Society can be confident we are making an effort to restore, not destroy. (Ed. M. Bair)

MEMBERSHIPS 1985

Since the last issue the following have paid 1985 dues:


WELCOME, WELCOME.

Herrmann Funeral Home and Keen Funeral Home are now corporate members. Many thanks for your support.

TILES OF THE OLD TOWN HALL FOR SALE

Jane Tomlinson, tile sale chairman, has less than 100 tiles remaining to sell. These would make welcome gifts to children or others who have moved from Brighton; parents who still remember the building as it appeared years ago; or use them as decorative and useful items in your own home.

These are available at Jarvis' Men's Store, Senior Citizen's Gift Shop and Citizen's Trust, $1.00 each.

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ARTICLES FOR SALE

The following articles for sale are available by contacting the Brighton Area Historical Society:

- A scrapbook of photographs and information about the history of the Brighton Area
- A biography of a prominent Brighton-area resident
- A selection of historical documents related to the area

The Society is always interested in acquiring new items for its collection. If you have any questions or would like to contribute to the Society's efforts, please contact the Secretary at 229-6451.

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