

BRIGHTON 1907 HOMECOMING

The Brighton Argus, August 28, 1907, reported: "The 1907 Homecoming Was The Biggest Time We Ever Had" & "Friends Who Had Not See Each Other For Years Were Brought Together to Laugh and Weep For Joy".

Visitors arrived each day by railroad, by horse and buggy and by horse and wagon. Many had not been back for years and came from as far as California on the West, New York on the East, and from several states in between.

They reminisced in small groups, at a picnic, at gatherings in churches and at family reunions. The latter were scheduled so visitors could attend other reunions where they had relatives. Residents in the village and surrounding area provided food and lodging for their visiting relatives and friends. Even total strangers were treated in a hospitable manner.

The 'Old Opera House' couldn't begin to hold anywhere near the more than 600 visitors plus the residents who wanted to attend the mass meeting. (This building was located on the east side of Grand River between Main and North Streets. A one story building, with a fine dance floor, in which school plays and commencement activities were held. The big stage had a large canvas curtain which Ansel Townsend, by hand, rolled up and down at the appropriate time.) In addition to a prepared program, several old timers were called upon to recall incidents and events of early days in Brighton.

Among those who spoke was Henry S. Fitch of Chicago, who had been away fifty-seven years. His father built the first frame house in Brighton. (Where the Canopy is now located.) Henry spoke of his boyhood days in the area and of the emotion that came over him when he clasped the hands of the few of his boyhood friends who remained and were in attendance. Henry said, "My mother's death occurred March 4, 1844, and in September, 1846, my father married Julia Hess, of Hamburg, who was a charming and beautiful woman. While I lived with her only four years, she was all that a mother could be to me. In 1850 my father went to California, via the Isthmus of Panama, and died at sea within a few day's sail of San Francisco.

"That summer I lived with a man named Jasper Buck, who had been a cooper in Brighton; and then I lived on a farm near Bogue Lake. The memory of my lonesomeness and homesickness is still fresh. I cried myself to sleep to music of crickets, treetoads, and Whippoorwills. Next I went to live with my cousin, Adolphus Williams, in Lansing. Spaulding M. Case of Brighton and Ralph Fowler of Fowlerville were members of the Legislature and were instrumental in my appointment by Lieutenant Gov. Wm. M. Fenton, as a messenger in the Senate. (To be cont. Edited from "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by Wm. Pless with contributions from Jessie McDonnell.)

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

Printed courtesy:
OLD KENT BANK
300 W. North St.
Brighton, Mi. 48116