

HISTORY NOTES - MEMORIAL DAY IN BRIGHTON

THE DATE: May 30, 1884 - THE PLACE: the Brighton Village Cemetery alive with the flutter of small American flags placed at each veteran's grave. THE PEOPLE: school children standing quietly, dressed in their finest; soldiers and veterans, hats in hand, heads bowed; and other residents of the area, all in reverent attention as the newly formed Samuel B. Appleton Post #179 of the Grand Army of the Republic conducts memorial services for their comrades who have fallen in battle during the Civil War.

Altho' it is almost two decades since that deadly event most of those in attendance remember or are aware of the missing family members. Every one has been planning for days to be involved in some manner in this most sacred of our national holidays.

All have just come from the street in front of the town hall where the children, soldiers and veterans had marched from the school to the music of the local band playing patriotic airs. Several of the local dignitaries had publicly expressed their hope that never again would brother fight brother. A reading of the Gettysberg Address was followed by more music and the march to the graveyard by the mill pond. Here a prayer for peace was said, a rifle volley fired and the children placed flowers on each soldier's grave.

Decoration Day originated in 1868, under an order issued by General John A. Logan, Commander in Chief of the G.A.R., to decorate the soldiers' graves and hold memorial services. Since that time that custom has been extended to include graves of all soldiers, and also the graves of relations and friends. It has become a day of personal and family commemoration.

With the passage of time, members of the G.A.R. Post No. 179 found it difficult to conduct these memorial services. The Jesse B. Cooley Post No. 235 (chartered in 1920) of the American Legion proudly accepted the responsibility to continue the tradition of a memorial service which now includes those who have fallen in succeeding conflicts.

THE DATE: May 26, 1986 - THE PLACE: the Brighton Village Cemetery. THE PEOPLE: Again ~~The~~ parade, the music, the children, the veterans (members of the American Legion, Post #235, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4357 and the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #110 of Livingston County), the flags, the grateful people, the memories.

The featured speaker of this day will be Robert Scranton, a WW II veteran and former prisoner of war. The parade will begin at the High School at 10 a.m., marching east on Main Street, to the Mill Pond Memorial. This year floats in the theme of showing honor to the Veteran, and political candidates for public office will be included. Those interested in participating should contact Harry Jenson, 229-9800. (Condensed and edited from "Chase's Annual Events, 1986," "Anniversaries and Holidays" and Harry Jenson of the American Legion Post #235. Editor, M. Bair)

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

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