



TRAIL TALES

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.

P.O. Box 481
Vol. V. No. 9

Brighton, Mi. 48116
September, 1986

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: BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY :
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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• Alice Krupa 227-2516
• Mae Schmadtke 227-7969
• Marieanna Bair, Imm. P.Pres. & Editor

GENERAL MEETING THIS MONTH

Beginning with a pot luck at 6:30, the Tuesday, September 9, General Meeting will be held at the Miller Community Center, 850 Spencer Road.

A short business meeting will begin at 7:30. It will be followed with a "Show and Tell" program. Everyone is encouraged to bring an item (or 2) and tell us about it. How about an old report card, a picture, a tool, a household item, an early lighting device, a toy?

The public is invited to this General Meeting. Bring a friend.

The Annual Meeting will be Tuesday, November 11. Mark your calendar. Election of Directors will be on the agenda. Nominating Chairman, Mae Schmadtke, 227-7969, will welcome your offer to serve a two year term as a Director.

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Have a story or item for Trail Tales?
The Editor will be glad to consider it.

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EDITORIAL

The Brighton Area has long been among the fastest growing in the state. Why do people come to this area? What are they seeking?

Besides merely shelter many find the sense of history, the nostalgia connected with an area which has been settled for some time, a desirable entity. The sense of history emanating from the old buildings, natural resources such as lakes, streams, swamps, trees, etc., gives visual evidence of where we've been. It does not make sense to destroy all that in order to build new as so many other communities in the state. Appreciation for our area's historic resources is to be promoted.

If people can be encouraged to read a plaque on a building and take a good long look at it, have we not moved a step away from the throw-away society? How sad to have to read a plaque at a vacant lot describing a place or event which is a part of our Area's history.

While a few citizens can spearhead a historic preservation movement in the Area, they will be successful only if they have open, viable support of the community.

(M. Bair, Editor)

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1986 MEMBERSHIPS 1986

Since the July issue the following have paid 1986 dues: Dr. Robert Cheskey**, Ted & Doris Carmack, and H.B. 'Larry' & Barbara Lorence. **Business/professional membership. WELCOME!

Don't remember if you've paid 1986 dues? If there is an '86' on the mailing label you have paid. All administration expence, including this newsletter, are budgeted to be paid by members' dues. All donations and (page 2, please.)

THANKS....THANKS....THANKS....THANKS

...Brighton Library for donating a copy of the scrap book of May West.
...Old Kent Bank for the printing of this newsletter.
...Chamber of Commerce for copying of minutes, reports, etc.
...George Winters for donating the Preservation News monthly and the Historic Preservation magazine. These are available at General Meetings or by calling the President or Treasurer.
Published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, information on every facet of preservation is included.

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(MEMBERSHIPS, cont. from Page 1)

receipts from fund raising events are budgeted to the Historic Restoration and Preservation projects: the Lyons School restoration; the Old Town Hall restoration; the Historic Resource Survey; and other HPR projects as planned by the Board. If those who receive Trail Tales want to support the Society in its goals the paying of dues would be a most suitable manner.

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MICHIGAN'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

The Michigan Historic Commission is sponsoring Commission Day, Friday, September 12, in Lansing, beginning at 9 a.m., with a closing reception at 5. The keynote address, "From Jefferson to Mason to Cass" by Judge John Feikens will make one aware of Michigan's Sesquicentennial, the Bicentennial of the North West Ordinance and the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

The afternoon session will concentrate on the Sesquicentennial celebration and "Uncovering and Celebrating Michigan History Through Local Historical Societies and Organizations."

The closing reception will be hosted by the Greater Michigan Foundation. Others who will be present will be members of the Michigan Historic Commission of the Bureau of History, Michigan Department of State; and your Editor. Others are welcome, call her.

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Do you know which is the oldest house still in existence in Brighton?

HELP....HELP....HELP....HELP....HELP
we need...

...a Finance Chairman.
...a Program Chairman.
...people to help with the Oral History project.
...BAHS newsletter issues #4 & 5.
...donations to the Lyons School Insurance bill.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

7-1-86 Total Net Worth \$6878.96

RECEIPTS

Dues \$51.00
Donations 8.00
Interest 50.92 99.92
\$8778.88

DISBURSEMENTS

Administration: Misc. 4.88;
Newsletter, 45.87 50.75
Officers: Treas 8.80
Fund Raising: Tiles 948.20
Pres. & Rest: "Hist. Resource Survey, 20.13;
Lyons School, Utilities, 40.53; Plumbing rep., 5.15
65.81 1073.56

7-31-86 Total Net Worth \$7705.32

Sav. Acct. Bal. 7-31-86 8113.66
Chk. Acct. Bal. 7-31-86 91.66 \$7705.32
Treas., M. Bair

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM IN THE WORKS

Today's easy contacts via phone and in person reduces the need for the writing of long letters, diaries, etc. These have always been the means of historic research. Since this is no longer being done, the next best means of recording a way of life of the past is through oral history.

Relaxed conversations, encouraged with well planned questions will help recall to the present the kind of community which existed here in the past.

An Oral History Program is being formed to gather information on the history of the Brighton Area. Several meetings have been held to get organized. Others interested in participating should contact the Society President or Treasurer. Do you know of someone who can help us gather this information?

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Historical Societies of the area meet twice a year in an informal exchange of ideas and happenings. The Plymouth Historical Society will serve as hosts this fall. Beginning at 7 we can tour the Historical Museum, 155 S. Main Street. At 8 the formal meeting will convene. Representatives of the Brighton Society's board will be going. Others may attend also. Contact Pres. Graham by October 1 so we may RSVP in time.

Successful fund raising events, Sesqui-centennial plans and an overview of Plymouth's Education Program are on the agenda.

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AREA SLIDE PRESENTATION

Do you have slides (copies of these could be made) of the Brighton Area which the Society could use to put together a slide presentation? This could be used at meetings of various organizations to educate viewers on the historical resources of the area. Contact President Graham, please.

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LYONS SCHOOL

Phil Walsh, a Scout working for his Eagle badge, is finishing the painting of the outside of the School. The weather has not always cooperated. One more session should complete the job. Having the building all the same color makes it look better until the Restoration committee gets underway with its plans.

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Used for training National Guard Troops since 1882, a historic marker, erected in 1958, provides some recognition to the military encampments held at Island Lake.

Several regiments of the National Guard who were organized and mustered into service during the Spanish-American War were trained at Island Lake.

Research should begin soon on these encampments. Someone, surely, must care sufficiently to gather the available information on this unusual and intriguing site in our locality. A starting place could be the Army or National Guard recruiting offices in Howell. "Yesteryears of Green Oak" by the Green Oak Historical Society also has some information.

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WITH OTHER HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Cobblestone Farm Association is planning a Fall Festival September 28 and an antique show October 5, both to be held at the Farm on Packard in Ann Arbor.

Plymouth Historical Society will be holding its Fall Festival September 6 and 7 and its Second Annual Museum Yard sale September 25, 26, 155 S. Main St., Plymouth.

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The growing interest in recycling and historicism has led to more individual homeowners becoming interested in doing things right; that is, preserving the style and character of a building.

1986

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

1986

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

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

Activities in which I'd like to participate:

- () Bake Sale () Meeting programs () Photography () Help with special events
- () Board Member () Membership Committee () Publicity () Video Taping
- () Fund RAising () Newsletter Publication () Research () Hospitality
- () Genealogy () Oral History () Restoration () Other work I'd

be willing to do _____

Dues: \$ 8.00 per couple
5.00 per individual
25.00 patron
25.00 business/professional

send to: Brighton Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, Mi. 48116

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN BRIGHTON VILLAGE

It's Springtime, 1907. As one approaches the Village from the north on Grand River and comes to the Village limits (at the corner of Grand River and Cross Street), one sees a sign warning: "Speed Limit 8 Miles per hour". Continuing, one passes over a red, wooden bridge spanning Ore Creek and attention is drawn to the residence of James Fulton; a veteran of the Civil War, having served three years in the 26th Infantry. For some time, had been employed as the toll gate keeper for the Detroit-Lansing Plank Road Company. That was before it was moved to the Challis Road corner because travelers had bypassed the toll gate by turning off the Plank Road at Cross Street, coming into town via North Second Street.

Fulton's barn stands at the edge of the Creek. It had long been used by business men as a billboard to advertise their merchandise. This spring day in 1907, one sees across the upper part of the barn "Come One, Come All to Brighton's Home Coming" August 28, 1907. A larger than life size man and his dog, both running at full speed with the man shouting "I'z a Goin' to Come Too" had been painted below. The artist? one Dr. "Greencorn". Not his real name, nor a fully licensed veterinary, he displayed some talent as an artist and had successfully treated enough animals, especially horses, for several farmers to respect his ability. That barn with its message became the area's first bill board.

Continuing into town the road became a low, narrow strip between two swampy ponds for the next three blocks; a sea of mud in wet weather. The ponds and swamps on either side were inhabited by turtles, muskrats and frogs (which were in full 'croak' at this time of year). All day the red wing black birds (a certain assurance of spring) flew from cattails to cattails singing their accompaniment. One was south of Liberty Street before encountering the next building which was on the east side. Not until one was half way past the Village Cemetery, readily visible across the swamp on the west, did one pass another building. After dark the only light available was that of the lightning bugs, which wouldn't be out until summer, or the weak glow from a lamp in a window. High land behind the ponds served as pasture for sheep and cattle who contributed to the sounds of Brighton. Stray dogs occasionally disturbed them and soon the farmer's shouts could be heard putting a temporary end to their marauding.

Sounds too faint to be heard ("Toot and be damned") were responses made by those driving a horsedrawn rig when the driver of an occasional automobile tooted his horn to pass. The shoe was on the other foot when these same horse drivers bought an auto. Then they made sounds intimating horsedrawn rigs should get over to the edge of the road and not be allowed on the road after dark.

The next time you drive Grand River north from Main consider the sights and sounds of Brighton in 1986. (Condensed and edited from writings of W. A. Pless. Ed. M. Bair.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
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