

EVOLUTION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA - FROM WILDERNESS TO SUBDIVISIONS

The Indians were the first to feel the effects of the migration of people into the Brighton area, the first to be displaced by an influx of newcomers. Most who have lived here for the past 50 years are very aware of the changes which have taken place more recently. The flood of people moving to the Brighton area since the 1950s is not the first time its population has fluctuated since its formation in 1837.

When the Grand River Plank Road was completed in 1850, between Detroit and the new Capitol in Lansing, travel was made easier for new settlers. The Civil War and the post bellum depression slowed the pace somewhat. The coming of the railroad in 1871 caused another shortlived boom. The village, especially, benefited from the houses being built by retiring pioneer farmers. More stores, the Western Hotel and churches were built. The Panic of 1893, the Spanish/American War, WW I and the great depression all had an impact on the area's economic growth and progress. (These events caused an exodus of young people who sought work in more industrialized areas.) Following the Spanish/American War the auto and improved roads made it possible for people from the 'big city' to buy property on the area's many lakes for summer homes.

By the turn of the century, farmers produced crops which brought money into the economy from outside the area. Businesses, professionals, and tradesmen were almost entirely dependent upon the farmers' efforts for their livelihood. The white farm houses, red barns; plowed, fields; crops of corn, beans and potatoes in straight rows; waving wheat and oat fields, meadows of red clover and timothy hay; gardens, orchards, woodlots and pastures with fat black and white cattle all combined to give a picture book appearance of a prosperous community, of which anyone would like to be a part.

Today the era of the family farm in the area is about over. Woodlots and fields are becoming homesites for the many who want to be a part of this bucolic lifestyle (as it appears to the newcomer). Greenfield Shores #1, 2, 3 and 4 was one of the early subdivisions, being platted in 1958 by Lowell Marvin. How it came to be called by its popular name of Lake of the Pines is still a puzzle to this writer. Located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28 and the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 33, this area was first taken up by Wm. T. Tunis and Wm. S. Conely in 1834 and B.B. Kirchival and J.L. Briggs in 1836. By 1857 Cyrenus Morgan owned 104 acres in the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 28. In 1859 Eli L. Sowles owned 160 acres in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 33 and W.S. Conely and A. Reiner owned 80 acres each on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 28. In 1875 W.W. Wheedon and S. Grant owned 80 acres each in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 33 and N.G. Morgan and Geo. W. Warner owned 80 acres each in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 28. By 1915 C.B. Grant (a descendant of S. Grant?) owned all of the area of Lake of the Pines except that owned by Warner and Joe Leiski. Grant farmed the area which was low, moist, mucky soil, with celery, onions and other products which would grow well in those conditions. The lake which is there now was probably formed by springs in the area. (Condensed and edited from 1880 History of Liv. Co., "Michigan Memorabilia" by Wm. Pless and with the help of Joe Ellis, Livingston County Clerk. To be cont.)

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