



Grand River Trail

TRAIL TALES

Brighton Area Preservation News

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 this purpose is worthwhile and should be promoted.

P.O. Box 481 Brighton, Mi. 48116
Vol. VIII, No. 7 July, 1989

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

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| | | |
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| Lyons School | Herb. L. Warner | 229-6504 |
| Old Town Hall | Shelagh Klein | 229-6571 |
| Penny Szczechowski | editor | 229-7324 |
| Cathy Qualls | editor | 229-8656 |

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Calendar of Summer Events

- July 21 - deadline for donations for Antique Sale
call Ethel Gebben-227-5375
or Janet Schopp 227-6824
- 29 - Brighton Historical Antique Sale at the Chamber of Commerce Parking Lot
- August 12 - Brighton Arts and Craft Fair
Historical Society booth
call Rae Lynne Lerner
227-1148 to
volunteer your time
- July 18 - Monthly meeting of the Lyons School Restoration committee at the Lyons School. All members are urged to attend.

People Along the Trail

Every once in a while we hear of something that makes us realize that Brighton is made up of some very special people, one of them being Blanche Esper.

We received this letter and thought it would be nice to share it with you.

June 3, 1989

Dear Editors,

I have a bit of info you maybe could add to the Thank you column of the Trail Tales. Thanks to Blanche Esper for her donation by purchasing several tickets for the home tour and giving them to people who would not have made the tour otherwise. A very noble way to donate.

Sincerely,
Nancy Hackney
Brighton

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Congratulations

to Jack and Ethel Gebben on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. Many more of them to these two who do so much "quiet" work for the Society.

to Shelagh Klein and Dick Davis. Everyone sends their best wishes for you on your up and coming wedding.

Thanks...thanks...thanks

...Cars & Concepts for their donation to the Old Town Hall Restoration project.

... Old Kent Bank, Singer Press, Puritan Machine Co. for providing financing for the printing of Trail Tales

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Old Town Hall Restoration Committee
Shelagh Klein, chairman 229-8494

The erection of the bell tower reproduction is still "on hold". There have been a number of delays with regard to transporting it from the City's D.P.W. to the Old Town Hall. However, it should be up sometime in July. (We hope). Check the Argus for details.

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Finance Committee
Dick Davis, chairman 229-8356

The Antique Sale is being chaired by Lillian Davis, 227-7610. (Thank you Lillian). Call her if you have items to donate, or Marge White 227-3968, if you can help with the sale. The Antique Sale is July 29, from 10-4, at the Chamber of Commerce parking lot, during the Brighton Sidewalk Sale Days.

This sale will take place only if enough antiques and collectibles are donated. Give your old furniture, books, tools, toys, dishes, jewelry, linens, etc. the once-over. Then call Ehtel Gebben 227-5375, or Janet Schopp 227-6824 by July 21. If each of us could donate one item a successful sale could be held.

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Nominating Committee
Bill Amrhein, 227-7282, is chairman this year. Officers' and directors' positions are to be filled at the November Annual Meeting, to take office in January, 1990. Call him and offer your services.

Membership 1989

The following have paid dues since the last issue:

Patrons: Dr. & Mrs. Gerald Whalen, Ed & Connie Sherman, Patrick & Marlene Fonseca, Rae Carmack (Calif.), Elizabeth Herbst, John & Win Allen, Harold Jr. & Esther Jarvis, Alice Wilson

Bus./Prof.: Thomas & Williams builders

Couple/Ind.: Libby Eisenhardt, Dorothy Musch, Celia Schaffer, John & Mari Lynn Korte (OH), Mr. & Mrs. John Linahan, Robert & Ruth Watson, Bob & Marie Carr, Mr. & Mrs. Dan Schmidt, Dorothy R. Foster (Calif.), Eleanor Hornung, Don & Shirley Jenks, Richard & Helen Leitz, Fred A. Schiller, Barton Hellmuth, Margaret Muir, Arlene Jacob, Lois Clark, Randy & Lyle Wilson, Frances Clore, Charles & Janice Beach, Doris Fay, Kathryn Hodgkin, Edwin & Sherry Nyhus, Christina Oehl, Mary Pearsall, Hal & Val Potts, Larry & Rita Schlinninger, Frank & Alice Seger, Rev. & Mrs. John Park, Don & Lois Cole, Whitney & June Kimble, A.J. & Helen Southwell, Joe & Irene Ellis, Mildred Bender, Bill & Betty Amrhein, Bud & Janet Schopp, David Barton, Alice Anderson.

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Annual Christmas Raffle

Quilt

The Rail Fence version of the Log Cabin pattern has been selected. Fabric purchases are in the works and soon people to cut and sew will be needed. A quilting expert you need not be. Can you wield a pair of scissors? Can you machine stitch a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam? Do you want to donate toward the cost of the fabric? You're the one needed.

Call 229-6402, with your offer to help.

Lyons School

The Lyons School has been listed as a Michigan Historical Site by the Michigan Historical Commission.

Educators, once again are discovering the inherent virtues of the one-room schools educational process: individualized instruction, learning by repetition, a deliberate mingling of grades, all resulting in one of the greatest learning mechanisms ever devised.

The Brighton Area School System is interested in the restoration of this building to a living, working, one-room school for the enlightenment of present and future pupils.

A new roof has been applied, foundation work has been done, and a new sub-floor installed. The preservation of this one (of very few) remaining link with our past is imperative.

The Lyons School Restoration Committee must have financial and personal support to continue restoration. The most pressing needs are to replace the windows and doors. Construction of a new belfry and the erection of an historical site marker will be visible proof of the committee's progress.

Yes, I would like to help preserve our heritage! I enclose:

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 Other

I would like to pledge \$_____ per month quarter.

My donation is to go toward restoration of the Lyons School.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

Your donation is greatly appreciated!

Make checks payable to: Brighton Area Historical Society.

Mail to: Brighton Area Historical Society, P. O. Box 481, Brighton, MI 48116

----- 1989 ----- BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM ----- 1989 -----

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

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

Activities in which I'd like to participate:

- () Bake Sale () Help with spec. events () Newsletter Pub., etc. () Research
- () Board Member () Hospitality () Oral History () Restoration
- () Fund Raising () Meeting Programs () Photography () Video Taping
- () Genealogy () Membership Committee () Publicity () Other work I'd

be willing to do: _____

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|
| Dues: \$25. Patron | Send to: | Brighton Area Historical Society |
| 25. Business/Professional | | P.O. Box 481 |
| 8. Couple | | Brighton, Mi. 48116 |
| 5. Individual | | |

BLACKSMITHING IN THE BRIGHTON AREA (cont.)

Andrew Sharp, Jr., only 12 years old, came from Bennington, Genesee County, New York, with his father, Andrew Sharp, Sr., in the fall of 1837. After stopping for one week in Pontiac, they then moved into Genoa Township and settled on the west line of town. A blacksmith by trade, Sharp, Sr., built a shop on his place and used it a number of years. The son learned the same trade and operated a shop two years in Howell.

In "A Brief History of Brighton" by Seth Jacobs, 1907, we learn that "One Warren Hill came to the village in an early day and built ...two buildings on Grand River Street, (one) occupied by C.L. Reed (a blacksmith) and Reickoff Bros. (jewelers). The building on the corner (next to W. North Street) was occupied as a residence..."

In 1847, Orlando A. Fuller bought the building which was the first school house in the village, built in 1837, on Grand River Trail (third house east of Hope Street). The structure was moved to the south side of Fitch (Main) Street, west of Grand River Trail on a lot owned by John Becker. It was used as a blacksmith shop until 1878, when it was moved again, to the rear of the lot and used as a barn.

Lewis Dorr, Sr., was a very early settler in the area (Genoa Township). He operated a tavern and stage coach stop on Grand River Trail northwest of Brighton at Kellogg Road. Dorr also had a blacksmith shop there to cater to the needs of stage coach and freight wagon operators, et al. John Becker (probably born in Germany) worked for Dorr (c. 1850-60) as a blacksmith, wagon maker and tin smith. He and Louisa Dorr, Lewis' daughter (born in Genoa Township) were married. (Both are buried in the Village Cemetery in Brighton along with their two year old child.)

In 1874, Henry Ratz, bought Lewis Dorr's farm and tavern including the blacksmith shop. Henry's son, George B., finished his growing up years in that location and learned some about the blacksmith trade in that shop.

Anticipating the expansion of the west side of Brighton with the coming of the railroad shortly after the Civil War, Main Street was extended westward across the south end of the millpond. The street was low and muddy most of the time, so a footbridge was built next to the pond, over the water, for pedestrians. It spanned a distance of about 300', from the village hall (Old Town Hall) to where the D. & C. Store is now located (314 W. Main). At that time a livery barn and a blacksmith shop stood on wood pilings with the millpond water beneath the buildings. (To be continued. Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair from writings of Wm. Pless, Seth B. Jacobs, 1880 History of Livingston County and Foxfire 5.)

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