



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.3

MARCH, 1989

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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People Along the Trail

Known locally as Brighton's Lindy, Mendal Hodgkin was a highly respected citizen of Brighton. The son of Rev. and Mrs. D.G. Hodgkin, young Mendal enjoyed flying kites and building imaginary planes from orange crates and scrap lumber. He lived on Main Street just a couple of blocks from his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hyne. Grandpa Hyne took Mendal on his first airplane ride and encouraged his love for it. It was at his grandparents home he constructed his homemade aircraft. Knowing he couldn't afford to purchase a plane, he set out to build one himself, inspired by plans found in a magazine. Two and a half years later, he spent \$350 and all of his spare time. At last the plane was ready for its maiden flight. We can only imagine what he must have been thinking that June 26, 1935. He started the reconditioned Ford Model A engine, and started out over the open field on 7th and Main. The plane took off and rose about a foot, when suddenly the propeller struck a fence and crashed. It took six months to reconstruct the tattered plane. On New Year's Eve 1935, Mendal secretly attempted a second flight, using the frozen Lake Brighton for a runway. This time he had a perfect solo flight. He clocked a total of 70 hours in his Pietenpal Sky Scout, painted Cannard-Aire Green. As written in his log book, Mendal noted that on one flight he made a DEAD STICK LANDING from 5000 feet when his fuel line had broken. Kathryn Hodgkin, his wife, shared these memories of Mendal, a truly courageous man. An inspiration that the sky is not the limit.

March General Meeting

The next general meeting will be Tuesday, March 21. A potluck at 6:30 will be followed by a general meeting at 7:00. The meeting will be at Lindbom School. Doris Johnson, a longtime Brighton resident will talk about her life in Brighton since moving here in 1945.

The public is invited.

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1989 Memberships 1989

By Prof; Kline Real Estate, Thomas and Williams Construction, Warner's Orchard & Cider Mill

Patrons: Pat & Marlene Fonseca (Calif.)
Ed & Connie Sherman

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

...Citizens Insurance for printing of membership cards.
 ...Old Kent Bank for printing of Trail Tales.
 ...Bud Schopp for his donation toward the auditing of the Society's financial records.
 ...Ken & Zara Graham for contributing to the Old Town Hall Restoration Fund.
 ...Rae Carmack, Sen. Fred Dillingham, Duane & Thelma Duncan, Pat & Marlene Fonseca, Dr. Gerald Pekley, Charles & Norma Pless, Pyramid Concrete, Norma Smith, and Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Young for contributing to the Lyons School Restoration Fund.
 ...Warner Cider Mill for Lyons School brochure printing expenses.
 ...Paul & Alene Anderson, Alice Clark, Burton & Lillian Davis and Leroy & Allene Tunell for contributions to the Historic Preservation and Restoration Fund.
 ...Nancy Hackney and Emil Engel for Signature Quilt donations.

TREASURER'S REPORT

1-1-89	TOTAL NET WORTH	\$37450.75
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RECEIPTS

Gen Fund: Dues	395.00	
Hist. Pres. & Rest. Fund:		
Finance Comm.:173.24		
Old Tn Hl.	150.00	
Donations	2.00	
Interest	<u>452.51</u>	<u>777.75</u>
		<u>1172.75</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Gen Fund:	94.69	
Hist. Pres. & Rest. Fund:		
Lyons School	10.48	
Other (Photos)	<u>41.40</u>	<u>146.57</u>

1-31-89	TOTAL NET WORTH	\$38476.93
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12-31-88	Sav. Acct.	15695.31	
	Chk. "	2411.62	
	Two C.D.s	<u>20370.00</u>	<u>\$38476.93</u>

General Fund	4094.33	
Old Town Hall Fund	13760.06	
Lyons School Fund	1293.65	
Finance Comm. receipts, Donations, Interest, Etc.	<u>19328.89</u>	<u>\$38476.93</u>

Marge White, Treasurer. For a more detailed report please contact the Treasurer.

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Spaghetti Supper

The seventh annual Spaghetti supper will be held on April 7, 1989, at Brighton's Fire Hall, from 5 to 7 p.m. The Finance Committee is still seeking someone to chair this fundraiser. We also need

Signature Quilt

The Brighton Area Historical Society is planning to complete the Signature Quilt by Labor Day. During the summer, families will be getting together, reunions will take place. This will be a good time to get the signature of those you want to commemorate on this quilt.

Signatures of people who:

- (a. have lived in the area for some time.
- b. who had lived in this area
- c. are now living in the area
- d. have an interest in supporting the projects in which the society is involved)

are being embroidered on the quilt.

Those no longer living can be memorialized. Copy a signature from a check or letters and send it in. The earliest signature embroidered on the quilt is that of Richard Lyons who settled in Brighton Township over 150 years ago. His signature was found on an old document and sent to the Society by a descendant. Signatures of a family can be embroidered en masse. One family has ten signatures.

All proceeds will be placed in the Historic Preservation and Restoration Fund to cover expenses involved in the restoration of the Lyons School and the Old Town Hall.

This quilt will remain in the Society's possession for its archival resource value. Be a part of the Brighton area's history. Send a copy of a signature and a donation of \$10 for each signature to The Society, P.O. Box 481, Brighton. Don't delay and miss out.

Marieanna Bair, 229-6402
Signature Quilt Project
chairman

* * * * *

volunteers to help. Please call Dick Davis, 229-8356 or Shelagh Klein, 229-6571, to volunteer. We will have a sign-up sheet at the next general meeting, March 21. We need people to help serve, and for waitressing, hosting, dishwashing, etc. We need people for two shifts: 5-6 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Thanks to all for your help.

Finance Committee

The 1989 Tile will feature the Eastern House. The Tile Committee is in need of any photographs and written information on the Eastern House. If you have any, please contact either Dick Davis (229-8356) or Shelagh Klein (229-6571). We will return your material as soon as we make copies of them.

The Antique Sale is scheduled for July 29, during Brighton's Sidewalk Sale Days. If you have any items for the sale, please contact either Dick or Shelagh. We do have a storage place, but if you are able to keep them until the sale, we will make arrangements to transport them in time for the sale.

We are still looking for a chairman for the Spaghetti Supper. We have lots of volunteers lined up willing to help on April 7, so please call either Dick or Shelagh if you are able to volunteer to chair this fundraiser.

Signatures for the Signature Quilt should be returned to the Society by September, 1989. The quilt will be displayed during the Spaghetti Supper, so bring your signature, and \$10.00 for each one, along with your appetite to the Spaghetti Supper, April 7.

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(Membership cont.)

Couple/Indiv; Bill & Betty Amrhein, Bill & Jackie Armstrong, Bert & Marieanna Bair, David Barton, Mildred Bender, Don & Lois Cole, Homer & Evelyn Dothager (IL.), Joe & Irene Ellis, Whitney & June Kimble, Rev. John & Sandra Park (Union Lake), Bud & Jan Schopp, A.J. & Helen Southwell

1989 BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM 1989

Old Town Hall Restoration Committee

The bell tower restoration is almost finished. Only the roof shingles, and painting of it remain to be done. The committee is planning for a spring erection of the new tower.

The Third Annual Dinner-Dance has been rescheduled for October 28, 1989. Please change the date on your calendars. (It was originally scheduled for November 4.) It will be held at the Lakeland Country Club. More details to follow.

The Committee welcomes new committee member Gary McCririe

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Help...help...help...help...

The 1989 Home Tour committee needs:

- ...volunteers to serve as guides at each house on the day of the tour.
- ...musicians to play at each house (violin, harp, etc.)
- ...hand crafters to demonstrate at the houses (quilting, chair caning, etc.)

If you can help, please contact Rae-Lynne Lerner.

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: _____

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

EARLY GRISTMILLS OF THE BRIGHTON AREA (cont.)

Lyman Judson sold the Brighton Mill (northwest corner of W. North Street and S. West Street) to Egbert F. Albright and Chester Thomson in 1856. Under their operation for the next 25 years, the turbine water wheel was replaced by three others of improved style and two run of stones were employed. It is thought they were also the builders of a brick addition, complete with a tall chimney, to house a steam boiler to provide power in the dry summer months when Ore Creek's water flow was reduced to a trickle. During those times the pond dried to such a low level the rotting pond lilies and marsh grass caused an objectionable odor in the downtown and adjacent area.

In the mid 1870s mill ownership changed to Charles T. Hyne and sons Will, Fred and Frank. All had large farms in the area and other business interests, including a grain elevator and a coal and lumber yard. "HYNE BROS" was just visible on the sign on the mill's last day.

Along W. Main Street a foot bridge over the stream and its swampy edges was in use until after 1900. At that time low areas were filled, the street improved and a sidewalk laid. It's 1895, imagine traversing that walk: on the south side one sees the mill, its raceway ponds, the dam gate, foaming water in the spillway, the two bridges on North Street; and on the north side one looks out on the mill pond, the little church on the hill in front of the cemetery, homes to the west, and white boats tied here and there along the shore and under the foot bridge.

By 1907, the Galbraith family was advertising 25# sacks of their "Ideal" wheat flour for .55¢ and a like amount of "Gold Seal" flour for .60¢. Those prices included free delivery "to any part of the village."

Following the Galbraiths, Brighton Mills was operated by a partnership of two unrelated men named Thompson. Will, an experienced miller, worked in the mill full time. His partner, John, was an ambitious man following many different pursuits. He was a rural mail carrier by profession, but he also kept and milked a herd of cows in a barn on the north east corner of Grand River and Main Street. He also helped his partner install an electric motor to supplement water power.

Although it had been a favorite of at least two generations of homemakers, the "Ideal Bread and Pastry Flour" produced at the Brighton Mills was faced with stiff competition in the marketplace. Housewives were buying 'baker's bread' made in Detroit and delivered by truck. Prepared and packaged foods such as cookies, muffins and cupcakes were stocked in the local grocery stores. It wasn't long before the tired old mill, along with the tired old millers, was forced to shut its doors. (Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair from: "Michigan Memorabilia", William Pless and the 1880 History of Livingston County. To be cont.)

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