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 Reicoff Bros. (jewelers). The building on the corner (next to N. 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 Flitch (Main) Street, west of Grand River Trail on a lot owned by John Beckor. 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 Rats 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 Marianna Bahr from writings of Mr. Pless, Seth B. Jacobs, 1880 History of Livingston County and Foxfire 5.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116

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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 227-7448 to volunteer your time
July 18 - Monthly meeting of the Lyons School Restoration committee at the Lyons School. All members are urged to attend.

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.

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 may want to 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 Hackett
Brighton

* * * * * * *

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