



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. XI No. 8 August, 1990

Brighton Area Historical Society  
Board of Directors

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Old Town Hall, Shelagh Davis	229-8494
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GENERAL MEETING

The Brighton Area Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Tuesday, September 11. The meeting will be held at Scranton Middle School.

A potluck dinner is scheduled for 6:30. The meeting will begin at 7:30.

Donald Schwark, a school teacher in the South Lyon school district, will be the speaker at this meeting. His topic will be The Life and Times of General George Custer.

Mr. Schwark has done an in depth study of General Custer.

We look forward to seeing you there. Bring a friend.

The public is cordially welcome.

If you can not make it to the potluck dinner, we hope to see you at the meeting.

Your support of the society is appreciated but we would like to see more of you at our meetings. They are an important part of our Society and need to be supported.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Board meeting: Thursday, August 9, 7:00

September 13,

Brighton Folk Art Fair 7:00

Society Book at Old Town Hall

August 11, 12

General Meeting: September 11, 6:30 potluck  
7:30 meeting

Baghetti Supper: September 14, 5:00 p.m.

JULY MEMBERSHIP

PATRON AND BUSINESS DUES:

Tom and Audrey Leith

INDIVIDUAL DUES:

Elmina Ellis, Rudy and  
Virginia Herrmann, Jennifer  
and Michael Hill, Brenda  
McCarty, Joe and Irene Mike,  
Frances Potter, Bruce and  
Janet Owens, Arloa Washburn.

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ANN ARBOR AREA PRESERVATION  
ALLIANCE

1990 Second Sunday  
Old House Clinic Calendar

August 12: Wallpapering by  
Roland Frey; will discuss  
selecting reproduction  
wallpapers and how to mix  
colors and patterns. Cindy  
Mallery will share tricks  
of the trade in wall  
preparation and how to  
measure and hang  
wallpaper.

September 9: Windows by  
Patrick Owen, will cover  
the history and types of  
windows and the techniques  
of getting windows back into  
working conditions and keeping  
them that way. He will  
demonstrate re-roping windows  
and opening windows that  
have been painted shut.

Tickets are \$4.00. To order:  
send check or money order with a  
stamped, self-addressed envelope  
to: A3PA, 616 Brooks St., Ann Arbor,  
48103.

Include work or home phone number.  
Call Mary Jo Wholihan, 665-2112  
for more information.

Brighton Folk Art Fair

The Brighton Area  
Historical Society will be  
participating in the Folk  
Art Fair in downtown Brighton,  
August 11 and 12.

The Society will have a  
booth set up outside the  
Old Town Hall. It will sell  
cookies and lemonade, tiles,  
postcards, and will have  
information about the  
society.

Your help is needed. If you  
can volunteer your time,  
please call Michael Cuthbert,  
229-4550.

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SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Tom and Audrey Leith-  
chairpersons, 229-6165

The Brighton Area Historical  
Society will be holding a  
spaghetti supper on Friday,  
September 14, from 5:00 p.m.  
until 7:00 p.m.

They need your help. If  
you can donate your time, or  
items for the supper, please  
contact Tom or Audrey and let  
them know.

The success of this fund  
raiser depends on having  
volunteers and publicity.  
Mark your calendar so you  
can enjoy some delicious  
spaghetti and give some of  
your time as well.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sympathies are extended to  
the families of Mildred Jarvis  
and Marie Borst.

OLD TOWN HALL

Shelagh Davis - chairman  
229-8494

The committee has changed its name to TOWN HALL RESTORATION PROJECT.

Plans are progressing for the annual Dinner-Dance, October 27. If you would like to help, please call Shelagh or Dick Davis - 229-8494. We are also looking for five or six door prizes. Please let us know if you have any donations or suggestions.

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With the September issue of Trail Tales, the article on the history of Brighton Area Schools will conclude. The compiler is always glad to receive corrections or additions to this and any other columns.

Years ago Brighton was the site of a fair ground with a race track. Research is beginning for an article. PLEASE get in touch with Marieanna Bair, 229-6402, and help her with this. She'd be very grateful.

Dorothy Eichner of Richmond, VA inquires whether the names of Wisner, Shull, Cravath, Merrill, Gamble, or Moe (Meaux), who were in Michigan in the early 1900s are familiar to any of our readers. She has a picture which needs identification.

Contact Marieanna Bair, 229-6402, if you can help.

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The South Lyon Area Historical Society is presenting a benefit luncheon, Saturday, August 18, 1990, 1-4 p.m. It will be at the newly restored South Lyon Hotel, 201 N. Lafayette.

Besides the ole' fashion chicken luncheon, a tour of the 1880s hotel, door prizes, entertainment are on the schedule.

The price is \$8.50 per person. RSVP by August 5. Call 437-3257 or 437-9650.

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BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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  
25. Business/Professional  
8. Couple  
5. Individual

Send to:

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

## EDUCATION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA POST 1900

By the late 1920s it became necessary to consider the construction of another building in which to educate the children of the area, which now included high school pupils from outlying districts. The story is told that a dispute arose as to the location of this school. To settle the argument, Thomas S. Leith, school board Trustee and later Mayor of Brighton, donated the land for the school. Construction cost of the brick, two story building was \$140,000. In 1928, this school, 125 S. Church Street, opened its doors with grades K-4 on the first level and grades 5-12 upstairs.

In the first graduating class at the 'new' school, 1929, thirteen received their diplomas. This class was the first to take a Senior trip; to Washington, D.C. By 1931, the number had increased to 20. Then the Great Depression shut down the country. The closing of the banks by President Roosevelt, and subsequent freezing of all funds, forced the school board to dismiss classes for the year on April 21, 1933, almost six weeks early.

The old Union School was commonly the scene of teen dances during the 1930s and 40s. By 1947 it was used by St. Patrick's Catholic Church as a parochial school. The building was razed August 12, 1957.

Following WW II, the advent of better highways allowed many families to move to the area. The land, which for 100 years has grown grains and pasture, now had crops of new homes and families. With the ensuing baby boom, the population of school age children rose in the surrounding townships. The one room elementary school districts in the townships found it increasingly difficult to keep up. A high school diploma quickly became the accepted norm. The charge for tuition for children to attend high school in town was not sufficient to cover the cost of the new facilities which became necessary to handle the increased number of pupils who wished to attend. This, understandably, did not sit too well with city taxpayers. It was not a reasonable decision to build a high school in each township, so the wisest alternative seemed to be consolidation with the district which had the building available and the shouldering of increased school taxes. Not all districts were enthusiastic about the idea. Occasionally one can still be aware of ill feelings engendered almost 40 years ago.

Space needs forced the reopening of the 'Little' school on Rickett Road and the remodeling and enlarging of the 1928 school in 1950 and again in 1957 and 1970. Now called the Robert S. Scranton Middle School it is named for its long time teacher and principal. (Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair. To be continued.)

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