Brighton's first electric lighting plant was built in 1897 by Carl Conrad. He installed wiring in local homes virtually free of charge to encourage the use of electricity for lighting and operating small appliances. On all but moonlit nights, the streets of downtown Brighton were soon illuminated by arched strings of light bulbs. The Brighton Electric and Power Company provided service only from sundown to midnight, after which time the plant was shut down for the night.

The building that housed this first power plant was used in succeeding years as an activity center for clubs and community groups and also served as a local library for several years. (S. of City Hall, N. of D.G. Store.)

According to the Detroit Edison Company, the electric plant was incorporated in 1903, under a state law that took effect that year and the name was changed to the Brighton Light and Power Company. By 1915, the Eastern Michigan Edison Company gained controlling interest in the plant through its vice president, Alfred C. Marshall. Later that year, directors of the local utility sold the plant to Eastern Michigan Edison for just under $20,000, merging, in 1916 with Detroit Edison Co.

Turn-of-the-century Brighton also witnessed a roller skating craze, then sweeping the nation. A rink was built on E. Grand River (E. side, between Main and North Streets), a barn like structure with an excellent, hard maple floor. Having previously been lit with kerosene lamps, electricity was installed in 1910, and at that time was only used for basketball games.

Brighton's first moving pictures were shown at what was, until last year, the Rebecca Hall, 422 W. Main. Admission was .05¢; local girls played piano to accompany the films and others displayed their singing talents during intermissions and reel changes. The town's second theater (opened 4-2-19, mgr. Cliff Roberts), was built at 307 W. Main. The Rialto later became a bowling alley and was finally torn down. (Coit Park Agency is located there now.) A larger movie house (the Washington, mgr. Walter Carmack) was opened later on W. Grand River in the block north of E. St. Paul St. During the Depression years, the business received heavy competition from nearby movie houses shown outdoors on the sides of buildings. These free movies were sponsored by local merchants trying to get people to come downtown and trade.

In the town, schools, churches, businesses, etc., made use of this new invention at the first opportunity. It was the mid 1930s before electrical power was common in the surrounding township. (Compiled and edited by Marianne Bair.)

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1990 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE
By checking the number on the corner of the address label on this issue you can determine if you are up to date with your membership dues.

If you find a "09", it would be sincerely appreciated if 1990 dues could be paid soon.

If you find an "89", your support by paying 89 and 90 dues would encourage those actively involved in achieving the goals of the Society; they'd have you stand with them.

If you find no number, it is hoped you will care enough about what the Society is doing and will demonstrate your concern by paying 1990 dues.

Within the next month a review will be made of the Trail Tales mailing list. It seems unfair that members should subsidize those neglectful of their responsibility. Please respond with dues payments so you can continue receiving information about the Society.

The Board of Directors is convinced it is vital to send Trail Tales to everyone who cares, or should care, about the Society's goals. All administration expenses are covered by dues payments. Therefore all donations can go to accomplish the goals of the Society. It is assumed one would want to carry a fair share of the load.

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