

EDUCATION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA PRE 1900 (cont.)

Lest we believe that school in that distant day was all 'nose to the grindstone', we should be aware that during recess times the pupils found many ways to amuse themselves. Games such as Anti-I-Over, Pom-Pom Pull Away, Fox and Geese, Hide and Seek, Drop the Handkerchief, Winkum, Crack the Whip, Statue, Fruit Basket, etc., provided physical exercise in both good weather and bad. The really good teachers, then as now, included activities which kept school from being monotonous. Christmas trees and programs (asking the biggest, toughest boy to play Santa), spring picnics, spelling and deciphering contests, memorization, oral recitation, etc., were all in a caring teacher's bag of tricks.

Perhaps the fact there was more visiting of friends and relatives at which times religious, political, social, and local problems were emphatically debated with the children listening, that a more rounded education was achieved (than might be expected) with the exception perhaps, of math and science. Music, singing and drama groups organized. Farmers' clubs, Sunday School, family reunions, Memorial Day speakers, etc., all combined to broaden the outlook of the one room school pupil of the day.

The Lyons School, 11455 Buno Road, is one of the first rural schools in the area. The primitive log school was built on part of the original tract of land sold by President Andrew Jackson to Richard Lyons of New York City in 1835. In 1842, Lyons and wife, Martha, donated the site to the school officers of District 8, as a site for a school house for the use of the district, so long as it was used for that purpose. School records indicate construction took place that year. The log building was used as a school and a church until 1885, when the present frame building was constructed.

In the last quarter of the 19th century most farmers began to realize there would not be enough land for all the children to be farmers. They needed to learn other ways to make a living. But it must not be assumed that all parents felt the same compunction as to the necessity of an education. There was the occasional parent who needed the child at home to help with farm work: spring planting, fall harvesting, food preservation, wood cutting, etc. (This practice, in varying degrees, continued well into the 20th century.) The value of knowing how to read, write and cipher; the value of knowledge of a world beyond the surrounding corn and potato fields was not always realized. Of the fortunate children, many continued their education to become successful in political, professional and commercial endeavors. A test, given upon the conclusion of the eight grades, often enabled the student to pass university entrance exams. It cannot be denied that many who received their education in a one room school were well prepared; but one must assume there was an unacceptable rate of illiteracy also. (Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair. To be continued.)

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