EDUCATION IN THE BRIGHTON AREA PRE 1900

Many historians take the view that one room schools provided the optimum in elementary education. While it is true that children who attended one room schools received the best education their parents could provide, it should be realized that parents with sufficient wealth to be able to afford it, did send their children to academies, business schools, finishing schools, etc.

Sometimes the retrospective eye cannot discern the truth. One account, and there is some validity, suggests that the practice of "boarding around" (teachers living in students' homes) made all concerned (parents, teachers and students) more aware of each other and promoted cooperation on the part of every one involved. But the statement that all the teachers were dedicated, fair, helpful and caring is suspect. This generalization, as most, must be taken with a grain of salt. A review of old school records proves that some who attended the one room school could not read any better than some who attend classes in this age. The present unacceptably high rate of illiteracy is not new to today's generation. As always, the cooperation of parents, teachers and students is vital to the educational process.

When this writer began this series, a lack of awareness (education?) caused it to be titled in a very limiting manner. An attempt will be made to rectify this oversight by including the results of research in post 1900 "Education in the Brighton Area."

EROD: By 1905, within 20 years of its construction, enrollment in the Union School increased to the extent that more space was needed. A few hundred feet to the north, on Rickett Road, a school was built to house the Kindergarten through fourth grades. The basement of the Union School was made into a laboratory and a 12th grade was added.

Continued growth in enrollment at the high school was very likely the result of a state law, enacted early in 1900, which stipulated that outlying school districts, instead of parents, were to pay the high school tuition for graduates from their districts. Students enrolled from surrounding townships, including Hartland and Oscoda. Expanding enrollment forced the use of other facilities for several years. (Compiled and edited by Marianne Bair. To be continued.)

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
August 11, 12 - Brighton Folk Art Fair
Brighton Area Historical Society booth at the Old Town Hall
August 18, 19 - Howell Melon Festival
Antique Market
September 11 - General Meeting of the
Brighton Area Historical Society
September 14 - Brighton Area Historical Society Spaghetti Supper

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 AND PLACES ALONG THE TRAIL
Fenton has two historical museums which are worth viewing this summer.

The Fenton Museum, 310 South Leroy Street, is administered by the Fenton Historical Society. It is on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

Special interest displays include: furniture and utensils from the 19th and early 20th century kitchen; tools of agriculture and woodworking; samples of clothing from the 1930's back to the 1879's; a Victorian room featuring pictures, furniture, and other items of the era; and changing displays highlighting a theme of current interest.

The museum is open from 1:00-4:00 p.m. each Sunday.

The Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships maintains and operates the Podunk House, 11429 Main Road, just off N. Long Lake Road.

The house is maintained as a pioneer museum. It contains displays pertaining to the pioneer life of the area.

It is open Sundays 2:00-5:00 p.m. June through Labor Day.