

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."

ERGO: By 1906, 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 Oceola. Expanding enrollment forced the use of other facilities for several years. (Compiled and edited by Marieanna Bair. To be continued.)

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