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 had 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 shuffling of increased school taxes. Not all districts were enthusiastic about the idea. Occasionally one can still be aware of 111 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 Marianna Bair. To be continued.)

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

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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.

Brighton Area Historical Society
Board of Directors

* * * * *

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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 Schwarc, 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. Schwarc 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
Spaghetti Supper: September 14, 5:00 p.m.