A dance program dated 1890 lists the Labadie Ice Co on Island Lake, which had acquired the Beauharn Ice Co. some time prior to that date. Edwin Labadie's father, from Boora, with horses and a crew of men had large ice houses. The one at Island Lake was located near the present bath house and beach in the Island Lake Recreation Area. A railroad siding was built to run the box cars into place for filling. The workers and the Labadie family lived in two houses nearby. The Labadie Ice Co. also harvested ice from the Detroit River. The Island Lake facility was sold in 1918. The Crystal McFadden Ice Co., also at Island Lake hired 30-40 laborers each year. Wages of $1.50 per ten hour day were paid in 1900. This was increased to $4.00 per day by 1920. The men worked hard during the few months ice cutting was in full swing. The ice house was on the north side of the Detroit, Lansing and Northern railroad crossing of Academy Drive, where the Michigan National Guard Camp was located. The Guard already was making use of the ice by 1884.

When ice was a minimum 8-10" thick, which some years was in December, that was the signal for work to begin. A winter early snow was cause for concern since it would delay the freezing of the water. Some companies kept the snow cleaned off the ice to ensure deep freezing and others left it on since it was thick to lessen the chance of melting during a January thaw. Some considered ice free of snow to be more pure. When horses were used on the ice they were 'sharp shod' to help prevent slipping while cleaning the snow from the ice with a plow.

Cutting the ice in long straight rows to within an inch of the water allowed the men to work and not fall through. A second row was cut which, when the ice (cut in blocks) was removed, formed a channel through which blocks cut farther out on the lake were pushed to the shore. Water filled the channel to the top of the ice and as each block was cut it bobbed up and could be moved by means of spuds and tongs along the channel.

Commercial markets spurred improvement of the process: going from a man powered saw, to one worked by a horse (who had a rope tied around its neck to pull it out of the water if necessary), to a saw powered by a gas engine. The saw also had a 'bobbin' attached for retrieval from the water if necessary. This saw moved so quickly extra care was required by the worker to avoid injury.

The large ice companies built chutes and conveyors, run by a steam engine, up which the ice was raised onto the mounting layers in the ice house. There it was packed with saw dust and marsh hay. Working from dawn to dark tons of ice were harvested each day. During the night one worker periodically pushed a block along the channel to keep it from freezing shut by the next morning. Those who harvested only for themselves tagged and hauled the large blocks onto a stone boat and with much gruntling and puffing put each block in place in the family ice house. (Prepared by Marianna Bair. To be continued. Comments, corrections, additions desired. 229-6402)

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**Brighton Area Historical Society**

P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116

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**BOARD MEETING, May 14**

The Board of Directors' next meeting will be Thursday, May 14, beginning at 7 p.m. Meeting are held upstairs in the Old Town Hall, 202 W. Main. Open to the public, members are especially encouraged to attend. The Board regularly meets the second Thursday of the month.

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**Winter Activities of an Earlier Time in the Area**

**Ice Harvesting (continued)**

**Brighton Area Historical Society**

**Board of Directors**

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V.P. | Cathy Qualls 229-8656
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Doris Petersen - Oral History 960-1723
Penny Szczepkowski - Editor 229-7324
Ethel Geben - Cir. Mgr. 227-5375
Nancy Fredenburg - Membership 229-9100

**General Meeting, April 14**

Beginning with a pot luck at 6:30 for those who wish, the General Meeting of the Society will be Thursday, April 14, at the Miller Intergenerational Center, 850 Spencer Rd. (Entrance at the far end of the parking lot.)

At 7:30 Lyle Harkert will give a short talk on how Brighton got its name, etc. Lyle has been a lifelong resident of the area and has a good memory. The meeting is open to the public. Bring a friend.

**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.

**Editorial**

Support of the Society's goals and projects comes in many forms. Pictures and artifacts are donated or loaned. Raffle prizes, labor and merchant contributions are also encouraging signs that the community cares.

All in the area should be aware that this continued support is needed and that it must assuredly increase.

The railroad depot is gone, the Union School is gone. Many old barns and homes have been dismantled or remodeled without regard for architectural integrity.

Little by little the Society is gaining in credibility and visibility. And little by little the history of the area is being revealed because many are willing to help.

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**Brightness Historical Societies to Meet**

The spring meeting will be hosted by the Plymouth Historical Society, Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 at the Museum, 155 S. Main St., Plymouth. The program will include a speaker on organizing genealogical materials in archives and libraries of local historical societies.

This 'Cluster' meeting takes place twice a year and gives societies an opportunity to compare notes and learn from each other. Contact a member to attend with us.

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We have to accept a certain amount of old age; we're not all beautiful forever.