WINTER ACTIVITIES OF AN EARLIER TIME IN THE AREA

Ice Harvesting (continued)

The harvesting of ice was a substantial business before the age of mechanical refrigeration. Transportation of fruit and other perishables called for lots of ice during warm months. Dozens of laborers were employed during the winter and many had work all year long at the ice houses filling railroad cars. Care had to be taken in moving the ice in order to keep the cakes undamaged. It often was a significant part of the local economy.

Sources which serviced local businesses and homes especially were the mill pond in town, Silver Lake in Green Oak Township and Lime Lake in Genoa Township. In these instances hand saws and later gas powered saws were used. Resorters living on Silver Lake were the main customers, rowing their boats to the Peach Ice House on Silver Side Drive. The Peaches preferred marsh hay to saw dust for insulation. Local farmers sold marsh hay to all ice companies (a spin-off industry?)

Lime Lake was considered to be an especially pure source of ice. Charlie Priestly was probably among the first to harvest ice commercially, beginning about 1915. However many others had cut ice there for years. In 1926, Don Leith, Sr. bought the ice business on Lime Lake from Ed Standlick and Floyd Chamberlin. Foreman Bill Holderness and mechanics Carl and Bill Wollenhaup kept equipment and trucks in running order. Four huge ice houses on the east shore were filled to capacity, approximately 2000 tons, each year. These ice houses were built and owned by the people leasing the property. Pulled by teams of horses, properly shod, a large gasoline powered circular saw on runners cut the ice into blocks approximately 36" square by 12" deep Each weighed 150-175 lb. The Leith children were introduced to the ice business when very young, usually by helping with the marsh hay insulating process. Don Leith, Sr., is reported to have said, "They cut their teeth on ice tongs." As each boy turned 14 he was given his own delivery route.

Until WW II, the population of the area multiplied many times each summer by the cottages and resorters, each of which had an ice box in need of ice. Deliveries were also made to taverns, markets and camp grounds. High school boys had a job all summer long. The winter of 1934 was very mild and little ice formed. To be sure of an adequate supply for his customers Leith contracted with the Detroit based City Ice and Fuel Co. A small ice house had been built in town about two years earlier, on S. West Street behind present day Singer Press. The ice was brought to Brighton, from Detroit, in semi trucks holding 133 chunks at 3000 each. (Prepared by Marianna Bair. To be continued. To make a more complete record for Society files comments, corrections, additions gratefully accepted. 229-6402)

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

RECAP OF APRIL GENERAL MEETING
Those who attended April 14, had lots of pictures and other memorabilia of earlier Brighton to examine. The speaker, Lyle Herbst, also brought many fascinating facts of information regarding the area’s past. Everyone was glad to be in attendance. Many thanks, Lyle.

There are others among us who have a story to tell. Please contact a Board member with your offer to help with a General Meeting program.

BOARD MEETING, May 14
The Board of Directors will meet Thursday, May 14, 7 p.m. The meetings are held upstairs in the Old Town Hall, 202 W. Main. Open to the public, members are especially encouraged to attend.

GRAND SILVER 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.

EDITORIAL
Originally a part of Brighton Township, the residents of portions of Sections 30 and 31 decided to become a village March 7, 1867. Daniel C Marsh, Brighton’s first attorney, was named president, and Benjamin T. O. Clark, clerk.

August 20-26, 1967, the City of Brighton celebrated its centennial with the theme "At The Cross Roads". The week long event included everyone who wished to participate: service clubs, churches, businesses and industries. A time capsule was placed, a pageant presented for four nights during the week and the car display was featured. There were contests galore (everything from beauty to board game to watermelon eating), fireworks, a giant parade, music/dancing, old car exhibit, etc., etc., etc.

Dr. W. W. Hadden was Mayor and Harold Jarvis, Jr. was chairman of the jubilee.

In 1992 Brighton City is 125 years old. Not perfect but still trying. It would be appropriate to note this anniversary in some fitting manner.

ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP, MAY 9
"Echoes From The Attic", an Oral History workshop teaching the techniques of the tape-recorded interview will be held Saturday, May 9, 10-3. It is offered by the Michigan Oral History Council. The $25 registration fee includes lunch, materials, etc. Contact Anne Stratigos, 229-5689, and join us in Novi.

GREEN OAK TWP. HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The General Meeting will be held Sunday, May 17, 4-6 p.m. Green Oak Township Hall, 10789 Green Oak Lake Rd. Gary Klonsey, antique appraiser will speak and appraise one item per family.