

## A RAILROAD COMES TO THE BRIGHTON AREA (Conc.)

A July 12, 1899, Brighton Argus article noted that "Island Lake is now a flag station for all except the two fast trains". In the period before and after the Spanish-American War the National Guard Encampment for Infantry and Cavalry units was located just east of Island Lake at the railroad crossing at Academy Dr. (This is now within the Island Lake Recreation Area.) A Michigan Historic Site marker memorializes the site. Excursion trains brought wives and friends out for a Sunday visit with the Guardsmen. A 1915 Atlas still shows an Island Lake Station on the north side of the tracks at that location.

Farmers, especially, had been looking forward to the arrival of the railroad. This meant their grains, livestock, fruits and other produce could be transported to market by a more convenient, certain and quicker means than the plank toll road they'd used. The plank road had done its job for over 20 years but the times and the demands were changing. Land doubled in value (with resultant higher taxes) but with an economy based on agriculture good times were anticipated. Merchants also could enlarge their inventory. Mail would be conveniently sent and received along with newspapers and magazines from all over the world. The entire family could visit friends and relatives oftener and fairs, concerts and other events easily reached. Young people could now find a job in another city, or attend a distant university. Life in Brighton could only get better.

The reverse of the coin revealed another picture. Newspapers told of train accidents, the stage-coach and the livestock drover were put out of business. The lives of many were changed, not always for the better.

We are aware the railroad was not the final word in transportation. Within 40 years the gasoline engine came into its own. Innovations are a fact of life. It is up to us to adjust. The only thing of which one can be sure is change. Ready or not it's continually happening. (By Marieanna Bair. Compiled from 1880 Livingston County History, Yesteryears of Green Oak and Brighton Argus clippings.)



PERE MARQUETTE DEPOT

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