

Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 481

Brighton, MI 48116

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Trail Tales

Preserve, Advance and Disseminate Knowledge of the History of the Brighton Area

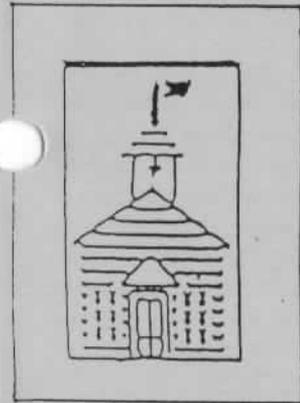
??? HERSTORY ???

What is history? It is HIS story. Not often do we realize there is a HER story also. In the case of the pioneer woman arriving in the Brighton area c. 1833, it usually meant that, when she bid adieu to friends and family in New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, she never expected to see them again.

Days spent on a canal boat on the Erie Canal were probably the least strenuous she would experience in years. Clothing, linens and a spinning wheel, along with knitting needles, straight needles and scissors were probably at the top of the list of essential items packed. In Detroit one could purchase other necessary household needs. Also flour, sugar, meat, plows, wagon and oxen. Oh yes, she was expected to be able to drive oxen, help push the wagon out of the swamp and walk during the four + days it took to get to the land 'taken up' by her husband.

The floorless, windowless cabin, with all the amenities of a stick built fire place and heavy blanket for a door awaited her arrival. Furniture, built by her husband from logs and adzed planks, meant the family didn't have to sleep on the floor. This was reassuring in an area not devoid of the massasauga. The plentiful supply of bears, wolves and mosquitoes also was tolerated. She often wielded the ax and took her turn at the saw...and prepared meals. Plowing was a familiar job (pregnant or not). Parts of her day were devoted to care, feed and clothe the several children.

The loneliness, her nearest neighbor at least a mile away, was one of the more difficult privations endured. She was not the one to go to the grist mill when necessary and thus have opportunity to visit with the miller. A year or two of this and she felt fortunate to be able to share her cabin with the next newly arrived family until their cabin was built; which would be only a half mile away through the forest. Her story has not been considered important. It's what she's always done; what was expected. The recorder of the past was seldom aware of this disparity.



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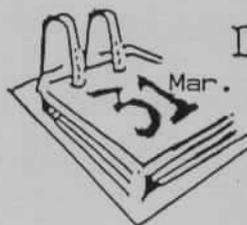
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Dates to Remember:

- Mar. *5,12,19,26: 7 p.m. Lyons School restoration/
maintenance continues. You can help.
*6,13,20,27: 1-3 p.m. Archives filing.
Welcome. 810/229-6402 to confirm.
*27: 7 p.m. Society board meets.
Public welcome.

*Lyons School, 11455 Buno Rd., Brighton.

MEMBERSHIPS

PATRON: Phyllis Kerslake.

BUS/PROF: The Fence Spot.

COUPLES/INDIV.: Lois Clark (Midland), Duane & Thelma Duncan, Barbara Folkman, Mr. & Mrs. Charles McConnell (S.C.), Nora Miller, Tom Reinke, Tom & Bonnie Riutta, Sherrel Rutter (4), Phyllis Schaefer (Holly), Jim & Joanne Swonk, Gary Townsend (Flrvr1), Bob & Ruth Watson (Hwll), Willis Wolfe (CA), *Noah Winchell, Delores Yackley.

*Noah Winchell is welcomed as a new member. It's important the Society continue to grow. If this edition of Trail Tales is a 'Complementary Copy' it would be good for you to consider membership for 2003. We are members because it is believed that what the Society is about is important. The collection, preservation and dissemination of the history of the area ensures all may form a more secure sense of place. The essence of those who have preceded us encourages us as we strive to contribute what we can.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

...Bert Bair, Ida Bair, John and Janice Field for their help in getting the February issue ready for distribution.

...Duane & Thelma Duncan, Mr. & Mrs. C. W. McConnell, Bob & Ruth Watson, and Willis H. Wolfe for their extra contribution with their membership.

...Mindy Kinsey and Tom Reinke for their help with review of the bylaws.

...Dr. Harry Davis for pictures of Scout Camp Newkirk, Dexter, of 60+ years ago. Many local scouts identified. The Society is always pleased to add pictures to its archives.

...Norma Jean Pless for her donation to the overhead projector.

...Bruce Owens for his help in keeping parking area clear at the Lyons School

PRESERVATION/RESTORATION

ARCHIVES: The history of many early businesses is being compiled. Also that of organizations, events, families, etc. The Society is in dire need of pictures to better complete these efforts. Your photos can be copied if you wish. The purchase of an overhead projector (via Norma Jean Pless' donation) makes possible a new project. Programs, c. 30 minutes, will be offered to local organizations. A "Tour of W. Main" is already available. Contact a board member to donate/lend a photo or to schedule a program for your group.

HISTORY BOOK: Editing is continuing and publication being pursued.

LYONS SCHOOL: O-o-o-Ps! the drain is frozen. As with most drains this one is not handy either. Thawing will not be easy. Will we wait for spring or hire a plumber? And a means of reattaching the rope to the bell needs to be devised. During the latest visit from Tiger Cubs, when each gets to try the bell, the rope came loose. Sounds like another spring job. There are no specific visiting hours at the school. Please call 810/229-6402 to schedule a time for you or your group. Someone to prepare displays in the cases is needed. A lot of memorabilia is available.

The Sympathies of the Society
to the Family of

HELEN SCHOENHALS MICHAELS

An area native and
long-time member of the Society

NEEDED

...FARMSTEAD SURVEY PROJECT VOLUNTEERS. 'How to' help is available.

...raffle items as fund raisers.

...POSTAGE STAMPS AND BUSINESS ENVELOPES for administration needs.

...SOMEONE to serve as Fund Raising Chairman.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

P O BOX 481, BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

(Please include Zip + 4 digit)

Send membership card? () Yes () No

() New () Renewal. Your help is needed with: *Historic Preservation Projects, **Fund Raising Projects, ***Administration of the Society. (Please circle your preference)

DUES: () \$50.00 Patron () \$25.00 Couple () \$2.00 Student (K-12, College)
() \$50.00 Bus/Prof. () \$15.00 Individual () \$500.00 Life

DONATION: () \$10.00 () \$20.00 () \$50.00 () \$100.00 () \$ Other.

The Society is a 501(c)3 Income Tax Deductible Organization.

*Historic Preservation Projects: Archives, History Book, Historic Resource Survey, Historic Site Marker/Restoration, Lyons School, Oral History/Video, Photography.

**Fund Raising Projects: Bake Sale, Coverletes, Home Tour, Mugs, Needlepoint Kit, Note and Post Cards, Signature Quilt, Special Events, Tote Bags, Pillows.

***Administration of the Society: Board/Officer/Committee Member, Newsletter, Publicity.

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

POST CARDS with early local scenes, pkg of 6/\$3.; NOTE PAPER @ \$2.50 pkg; MUGS A \$5.; TOTE BAGS @ \$15.; NEEDLEPOINT KITS @ \$8.; all show the Old Town Hall.

FLAT MAPS of Brighton, Genoa, Green Oak and Hamburg Townships, 1875 and a 1915 map of Brighton @ \$1.00. A TAPES-TRY PILLOW, depicting the railroad depot and train @ \$30.00. AFGHANS red, green and blue, with nine local sites woven in @ \$49.00. 810/229-6402 to order any of the above.

For \$10.00 your signature, or that of another of your choice will be embroidered on the SIGNATURE QUILT. A file of signatures of early residents is available. Your donation is an appropriate and simple way to support the Society. This quilt will remain in the Society's archives.

TILES: 13 different local sites are shown on black/white 6" square ceramic tiles. These are all limited editions. Nostalgia Antiques, 116 W. Main and Main Street Cafe 440 W. Main have them in stock. \$8.00 or \$3/\$21.00.

WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

March 15, 9:30/2:30. Basic Archival Skills For Historical Societies, Churches and other Organizations workshop. \$45. Historical Society of Michigan, 1305 Abbott Road, E. Lansing. Fax: 517 /324-4370.

March 16, 2-4 p.m. The Pre-history of Green Oak by Ann Zinn, with slides, etc. 1856 Green Oak Township Hall, 10789 Silver Lake Road. Green Oak Township Historical Society. 248/437-8461 or E-mail JoWilliams 46@MSN.com.

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Advance Craft Home Builders, Inc., Brighton Commerce Bank, First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence Autobody (3), The Fence Spot (3). The support and confidence of these noted is much appreciated. Give them your consideration, please.



TILE DISPLAY IDEA

In the Dick Weaire household they are employed in the kitchen tile surround. They look great!

Send us your suggestions.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

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DOCTORS MC HENCH AND BROWN PRACTICE IN THE AREA

William McHench arrived in Green Oak Township in 1853 from New York, aged 22. He taught school in Green Oak Township for a year and then Brighton Township a year. In 1854 he began "reading medicine" with Dr. Ira P. Bingham. In the fall of 1855 he attended the medical department at the "State University in Ann Arbor", graduating in 1858. He practiced with Bingham 1857-1859. After a short stay in New Hudson, he arrived, September, 1859, in Philadelphia for further study, returning to Brighton in 1860. He never ceased studying medicine. More experience was gained in Baltimore where, July 1, 1864, he became acting assisting surgeon covering four wards in the hospital.

It was back to his practice in Brighton after the Civil War. A local girl, Margaret E. Sowle, became McHench's bride November 18, 1868. Shortly after, we find him in New York to study eye, ear, heart and lung diseases in 1870. Ten years later he left Brighton for New York again to study throat problems. When he came back to Brighton in 1881, he brought his 24 year old nephew, Dr. Willard C. Brown, back with him. When Dr. McHench died January 1, 1910, he was the oldest practitioner in the county - fifty years in one locality. All businesses closed during his funeral. He, his wife, daughter Gertrude, and son-in-law, Dr. A. T. Ward are all interred in Fairview Cemetery.

Dr. Willard C. Brown, son of Rev. Henry Brown and Nancy McHench, was born in New York state July 28, 1857. He began "reading medicine" under Dr. D.M. Leonard of Baroome Center, Schohaire County, New York. Following graduation after a year at University of New York City medical department in 1881, he accompanied his uncle, Dr. McHench, to Brighton to join him in his practice.

A local girl, Louisa Becker, daughter of John Becker of Pipp and Becker Hardware (SE corner W. Main/Hyne St.) became his bride in October, 1882. He and Louisa lived in South Lyon until 1888, where he was the Health Officer responsible for sanitary law and regulations. Conscious of the need for more study, especially in surgery, he spent a year in New York. 1890 saw him back in Brighton until 1903 when he moved to Detroit. Prior to this he had served as post master in Brighton for six years. He attended to his practice in Detroit until 3-4 days before his death, October 18, 1919. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Detroit. Before the end of the year his widow endured the accidental death by fire of their only grandson in November and then their only son died two days after Christmas from pneumonia.

In Brighton Dr. Brown's office was on the second floor over Pipp and Becker's Hardware. As late as 1940, the green window shades of his office still read "Office of W. C. Brown, M.D." (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from the 1880 History of Livingston County, the 1891 Portrait/Biographical Album and Brighton Argus obituaries collected by Milton Charboneau. Corrections/additions are most welcome. 810/229-6402.)