

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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#### DOCTORS FISHER AND BINGHAM ARRIVE IN THE AREA

The arrival of medical doctors to a community helped assure the very early settlers that this enterprise in the wilderness would survive. (The arrival of blacksmiths, millers, sawyers, merchants, saloon and hotel keepers, etc., also helped confirm its staying power.)

Dr. Wilbur Fisher arrived in Ore Creek (Brighton) in 1836 from Ann Arbor. He was the county's first physician. Fisher has his office in Kensington, just east of the county line on the Grand River Trail. In the 1880 History of Livingston County John LaRowe of Livingston Center (Howell) notes his appreciation for not having to go to Oakland or Washtenaw County for medical attention now.

Edward F. Gay, on his way from Ann Arbor to Livingston Center in the fall of 1836, lost the trail but finally arrived at Ben Cushing's hotel on the hill (corner of Grand River/Spencer) in 'Upper Town'. Attempting to follow Ben's directions he met two friends from Ann Arbor along the trail. One was Dr. Fisher to whom Gay had lent a wedding suit for Fisher's marriage to Jane. (It took Gay several more days to reach Livingston Center. Either the trail was very poorly marked or Gay had difficulty in following directions.)

Fisher was joined in 1841, by Dr. Ira Bingham of New York. Bingham's practice continued for 41 years as the primary doctor of the Ore Creek area. A business card reading "Ira W. Bingham and Wilbur Fisher, Physicians and Surgeons" was among those pledging donations to Rev. Jonathon Post who was organizing the first Bible Society in the county, January, 1843.

The 1850 census records Bingham as a boarder at the new hotel and livery (NE corner Grand River/Main) the Brighton House, also built by Ben Cushing. When his brother, Senator Kinsley S. Bingham died, Ira purchased 240 acres from the estate, in Sections 11 and 12 in Green Oak Township.

In addition to his medical practice Bingham found time to serve as Brighton Township School Inspector four terms, Village School Moderator four terms and Livingston County Judge of Probate 1857/1864. Whether asked or not he was always willing to give an opinion. "What are you doing?" he asked a merchant who was destroying a smoothed and marked off circle outside his entrance. "I'm getting rid of these boys playing here." Bingham answered, "If you have to be mean to someone, pick an old man, he'll soon be dead and gone. These boys will outlive you and hate you as long as you live." Ira, who never married, died 1881, is buried, with his brother's family, in the Old Village Cemetery. We've been unable to determine when Dr. Fisher died or where he's buried. (compiled by Marieanna Bair from the 1880 History of Livingston County; 1891 Portrait and Biographical Album; and William Pless' Old Village Cemetery Supplement. Corrections, additions, questions? contact Bair at 810/229-6402.)