G. B. RATZ & SON HARDWARE

C. 1884, Henry Ratz moved his family (three sons and a daughter) from Canada to Michigan coming to Brighton shortly after. Henry, a blacksmith, worked in the Henry Herbst Blacksmith shop. (south side of W. Main, one block east of Hyne St.) In 1974 Henry purchased land from Jacob Euler in Section 16 of Genoa Township; 55 NA's and the NE1/4, a total of 240 acres. The Grand River Trail cuts on a slant through the north edge of the property; the Ratz School is on the north side at the corner of Euler Road. The Family Fit well into the house Euler built c. 1835. In the 1890s Ratz sold the farm to William Risch and Francis Rhodes and moved into town. There son George B., also worked, as a wagon maker.

William Pipp, carpenter, and John Becker, blacksmith, built a hardware store on the SE corner of Hyne and W. Main soon after Smith & McPerson plated and sold lots west of Ore Creek when the railroad came through Brighton in 1871. The business opened February 14, 1872.

George B. married neighbor Mary Behrens, August 5, 1878. Their first child, George H., 5, August 9, 1881, had an eye damaged by a piece of steel when he was three. However, after passing the civil service exam, he worked in the Treasury department in Washington, D.C. After two years he returned to go into business with his father, George B., who had bought the Pipp and Becker hardware store. During a remodeling a verse written by Pipp on the underside of a wide board from the counter was found. Translated from German it read: Pipp was just a poor hardworking man who kept his nose out of other peoples' business, enjoyed his food and his liquor, and slept well.

The store was a gathering place for men around the pot-bellied stove, discussing politics, agriculture, weather, taxes and the changes taking place in the area and the country. In the 1930s, probably earlier, youngsters could put on ice skates by the stove prior to skating on the mill pond or warm up later. Skates were sharpened, straps fixed, skate keys found, etc., at no change.

WW II veteran stagman Dean Selzman came into the business in 1946. "We modernized it in 1955 but we're still selling the same type of products we did in the old days," he said in an interview in 1972, on the occasion of the store's 100th anniversary. He noted, also, that George H. had the first Ford dealership in Brighton, selling Model T's like 'hot cakes' in 1917.

In June, 1977, George Schrader assumed ownership. Later a variety of businesses were in the building. When it burned in July, 1999, the 'Music Man' occupied the site. It is being replaced by a two-story structure in 2005 and will house CM Interiors. (Compiled by Marleanna Bair from Census records; and the writings of William Pipp, c. 1955. Additions/corrections welcomed. 810/229-6402.)

September 2005
Vol. XXIV No. 9

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Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116

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

SAVING WHAT CANNOT BE REPLACED

In November the Society will be 24 years old. During that time it has worked to preserve the irreplaceable - the memory of the Brighton area - and make it available to others.

Because of generous support and commitment of society members, and others who care about the society's mission, many in the area realize the aesthetic and economical assets of safe guarding older buildings, open space, etc. Many are acknowledging that renovation and adaptation are preferable to demolition. Preservation is one means of retaining the sense of place so important to each of us.

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY BICENTENNIAL

Starting early September 1, 1805, led by Old Toby, the Corps began the trek over the steep mountains. There followed 14 days of severe lack of food; song with cold, wet snow and rain, mixed in with horses falling off the narrow trail. "Set in to raining hard at dark, so we lay down and slept, wet, hungry, and cold." SGT. Ordway. The lack of food was so severe several colts were killed during the trek. In desperation it was decided Clerk and six hunters would go ahead and hunt for food to send back.

The 22nd, Pvt. Reuben Field, from Clark's party, brought dried fish and game meat from the Nez Perce Indians they'd met. In their starved condition, the men overate and became violently ill for a week. The Indians considered killing these whites for their weapons and goods. A woman, Watakiels, who'd been treated well by white traders after escaping from the Blackfeet Indians, dissuaded them.

Clark moved the Corps on to make dupuats of pine on the Clearwater River. Finally they're headed downstream - two years after starting up the Missouri.

Dates to Remember:
Sept. 94: 1-4 p.m. Lyon School Open House.
Hwy. 15, 22, 39: 1-3 p.m. Archives Filling. Welcome.
810/229-6402 to confirm.
10: 8-1 p.m. Booth at Farmers' Market.
24: 7 p.m. Lyon School maintenance.
36: 10-2 p.m. Harvest Days booth, Main St.

4: Lyon School, 11455 Buno Rd., Brighton.
PRESERVATION/RESTORATION

ARCHIVES: With the help of Christine Bonner, a new Archives is being transferred into the new files. The Archives can be visited most Thursdays, 1-3. Call 810/229-8402 to confirm or set another date.

LYON SCHOOL: Each month more visitors are received at the Open House, 1-4 p.m. the first Sunday. Thanks to the Frank Road Chapter of Questers who help host. September 4, is the next Open House. You can ring the bell too.

HISTORY BOOK: 'From Settlement to City' by Carol McMeekin is available at Parent-Teacher Tech, 117 E. Grand River or call 810/229-8402. Carol graciously autographed books at the Fair.

FRIENDS OF LYON SCHOOL RECOGNITION DAY

October 2, 2005, 1-4 p.m.

Friends are those who've made a contribution to the ongoing restoration/preservation of this historic site. Alumni, and educators who believe this project has validity will be recognized at the Open House. The Friends hopes this early structure will be protected in order to give others a chance to touch a part of local history. Friends of Lyon School are excellent examples of people who care about the welfare of others and protect the knowledge of the area's past. You can also be a Friend.

The sincere sympathies of the Society are extended to the family of

AUDREY LEITH

She was a long-time member and generous benefactor.

NEEDED

...a tree needs to be cut, wood pulled and wind washed at the school.
...business(s) to stock Society sale, items: covers, tiles, pillows, etc.
...helpers for Harvest Days booth September 24, 8-1 p.m.
...people to serve on the board to promote needed projects.
...a coordinator for scheduling students' visits to Lyon School.
810/229-8402 for information

MEMBERSHIPS

LIFE: William and Lenore Harris.
COUPLES/DUO: Charles A. Xeitell (AZ), Deborah Anthony, Pam Currey, Therese Heinonen, James Maidby, John K. Hawken, Esther Jarvis, Bill S. Barbara McConnaughey, Norma Jean Pease (Moscowan), Tom S. Sue Pound, Dick S. Barbara Smith (Howell).

A sincere welcome to Charles, Deborah, Pam, Therese, Lynnette, James, William and Lenore and Tom S. Sue Pound.

The support and confidence expressed by new and renewing members is received with a sense of sustained progress. It is assumed all members realize their responsibility to the Society and will respond to the best of their ability.

The Society has a number of projects underway--there are more which need to be undertaken.

THANKS

...Ada Bair and John S Janice Field for their help in preparing the August issue for the mail.
...Esther Jarvis for her donation with dues.
...Norma Jean Pease and Dick and Barbara Smith for their donation to Friends of Lyon School with their dues.
...Bill S. Jackie Armstrong, Ann Bolin, Marjorie Bowland, Lisa Cave, Cathy Doughty, Nancy Freeman, Mindy Aimey, Carol McMeekin, Bud & Lucy Finke, Pauline Scharer, Peg Siford, Anne Struttos, Jim Violett and Dick Wege for fine help at the society booth at the Art Fair.
...Lucille Weire for the above at the society booth. Also Cindy Evergreen for making sites arrangements.
...Rudy Marcinkowski for helping embrolder signatures on the signature quilt.
...John Park, Flint, for post cards with pictures West Main c. 1900.
...N. Harry Davis for photos of the first and second M.E. church buildings.
...Jeanne Fuller for 1950-50 Boy Scout memorabilia and many photos of Tiny Tots Twirlers from that time.
...Joyce Powers for a sampler and two books relating to country schools.
...Jeanette Johnson and Shirley Macleirfor helping host August Open House.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

New ( ) Renew ( ) Send Membership Card yes ( ) no ( ) (Please include Zip + 4 digit)

Dues: ( ) $5.00 Sustaining Member ( ) $25.00 Individual ( ) $50.00 Patron ( ) $100.00 $250.00.

DONATION: ( ) $10.00 ( ) $20.00 ( ) $50.00 ( ) $100.00 ( ) Other $________

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

$$$ FUND RAISING PROJECTS $$$


TIRES: 6" x 12", ceramic tiles. 13 local scenes in black/white. $6.00, 3/$12.00.

1875 TOWNSHIP Plat MAPS: Brighton, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Hamburg, Hartland, Isoco, Newell and Doole $1.00. 1915 city maps of Brighton and Howell.

LYON SCHOOL T-SHIRTS, S/X, $12.00.

WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Sep. 10-11, 9-5. 20th Annual Kelly-Fisk Farm Festival, 9100 Highland Rd (1.5 miles west of Williams Lake Rd). 1955 Farmhouse, barn and one room school. Rides, crafts, bake sale, dancing, old cars, tractors, apple pie/ice cream, etc.

Sep. 17: Hartland Heritage Day, includes cerantory tour, hay wagon tour, concerts, etc. 810/746-2150 or hartlandhistory.org.

Sep. 21: Rochester Hills, Preserving Your Past - Caring For Photographs/Documents. $5.00. 248/656-4653 For Info.

Oct. 5: Oral History For Michiganders: A Conference, 817/371-1748 or e-mail gishekeman@msn.com

Oct. 24: 10-4 p.m. Winder Hswenexx

Explore the county's historic attractions. 734/692-9032 or E-mail when-500@ameritech.net. Fourteen sites.

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Advance Draft Housebuilders, Inc. William P. Haral, 2052, 4 Lawrence Auto-body; Carol McConnaughey; Scheunert Associates; Bill Varrone, Inc. 

LIFE MEMBERS

SIGNED Quilt

This quilt has dozens of names embroidered on it. Sending your signature is an easy way to make a donation. From early taxpayers, school and government contracts, etc. copies of early residents' signatures are in Society files as well. Please mail to: Ann Nellon, 26 West Main St., 48116.

"I steer my bark with hope ahead and fear astern."

-Thomas Jefferson-
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