One of the many who crossed the mountains on the Erie Canal and sailed across Lake Erie, Benjamin, age 28, arrived in 1833. From Detroit he found his way to the cabin of his older brother, Amon, October 21. Amon (27) and wife Lucy had arrived a year earlier, and had taken up land in what would later be Green Oak Township, Section 15, August 23, 1832. (The following year, 50 acres on the north side of Silver Lake.) Benjamin was one of eleven children of Joseph and Sarah of Orleans County, New York.

Several years before Livingston County was organized, March 24, 1836, the lower two tiers of townships (of four tiers) were part of Washtenaw County. Benjamin bought 60 acres each in Sections 5 and 6 of what was to be Bright Township, a total of 120 acres, November 11, 1833. (North side of Mc Clements Road.) Three years later, January 16, 1836, one mile north, he bought 40 more acres in Section 5.

That first winter Benjamin lived with his brother in his log cabin. In 1834, with his friend Seth Bidwell, a small log cabin with a dirt floor, in which they lived for a year or two in Bright Township was built. Ben, who enjoyed hunting and fishing (a trap and hunter all his life), kept the food supply in good shape. That first year he is reputed to have bagged 80 deer. (These could be sold/traded to other settlers.) During that period he also worked for Kinsley Bingman and Robert Warden of Green Oak for 15 years.

In 1838 he returned east, married Emily Watrous, and brought her to the cabin in Michigan. Seven children were born to them in the wilderness. (A daughter, Mary, married a son of friend Seth Bidwell, George Alfred.) A c. 1850 photograph shows Ben and Emily's son, James, driving a mow drawn by oxen on the Grand River Trail. When Bright Township was organized he served the board as assessor in 1836. November 15, 1854, 60 acres of Hamlett Township Section 32 were purchased from the U.S. government. The south 20 acres contained a lake now known as Blais Lake. A cabin was built on the west side of the lake. To arrive at the cabin a two-track lane over the neighbor's property was followed. The story goes that Emily always washed dishes in the lake, the many fish cleaning up the debris, preserving a silver fork Emily was bitten by a pike,Woman her hand badly.

Ben is reputed to have been a peculiar fellow known for always going without shoes. When helping put hay in a Farmer's barn the snakes, which were caught up in the hay, would be kicked out by Ben with his bare feet. Local historian, Bill Pless, suggests that because of Benjamin's extensive travels while trapping, he ascareded the route of the creek with its origins in the very northern edge of Bright Township; and noticed its high Iron content, Pless therefore credits his with naming One Creek which flows through Bright City, exits into Hungo township, into Ore Lake and finally the Huron River.

A photo c. 1850, includes Thomas, Willmont, Amon, Benjamin and Joseph Blaine, all of Orleans County, New York. One concludes that at some time these five of seven brothers reunited at least for a photo. Ben 44, Emily 47 and son Truman 29, are buried at Hartland Village Cemetery. (Compiled by Marianna Blair from 1980 History of Livingston County; Fill Pless writings; censuses; Early Land Owners and Settlers and obituaries compiled by Milton Charbonneau. Additions/corrections welcomed. 810/229-6403.)
MEMBERSHIPS

PATRON: Richard Park (IL)
STUDENT: Cheryl Chlister
COUPLES/INDIVIDUALS: Steve & Kathy Davis (D7) and Rosemary Ullman.

Welcome to new member Richard Park. His early family connections run deeply. The support of renewing members is always welcome. The Society is nearing 100% of renewing members.

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Nancy Frenchen for her continued updating of the Society web site.

Sue Walters-Stempker and Tom Bolka for arranging the refinishing exhibit, and Mindy Kinney and Dick Silver for serving as greeters.

Lottery Wagner for a copy of her research of the Lobdell Family for Oma L. Ross.

HISTORICAL JOKE

Where was the Declaration of Independence signed? At the bottom!

Why did the pioneers cross the plains in covered wagons? They didn’t want to wait 40 years for a train.

Where did the Pilgrims land when they came to America? On their feet.

Was tennis played in ancient Egypt? Yes. You’ve heard how Joseph served in Pharaoh’s court.

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A local business to stock tiles, or coverslets, or pewter plates or pillows or post cards or note paper or Lyon School T-shirts.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

P O BOX 481, BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481
www.brightonareshistoricals.com

NAME

ADDRESS

No(s) ( ) Renew ( ) Send Membership Card yes ( ) no ( ) (Please include Zip and 4 digit)

Dues: ( ) $100.00 Life ( ) $25.00 Couple ( ) $50.00 Patron ( ) $10.00 Individual ( ) $2.00 Student

Friend of Lyon: School: ( ) $10.00 ( ) $20.00 ( ) $25.00 ( ) Other $____

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

$ $ $ FUND RAISING PROJECTS $ $ $


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By the evening of the same day the "Great White Father" in Washington was all in readiness to continue the journey. The remainder of the party, while riding the Missouri, downstream they were greeted by Indians who remembered them from 1804.

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Advance Craft Homebuilders, Inc.; Ameri-Construction; William P. Haral; DQS;
Lawrence Automotive; Livingston County Woodcraft Guild; Matthew Matzkee; DQS; PC; Carol McCarrie & Associates; Lindhout Associates; Promaxx, Inc.; The Fiance Spot. Be sure to patronize these local, independent sustainer of the Society.
Life Member

WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

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1875 TOWNSHIP MAPS: Brighton, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Homer, Hartland, Iosco, Howell and Ypsilanti. $1.00. 1893 city maps of Brighton and Howell.

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Trail Tales

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

SOCIETY'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Organized by Mary Meeussenbruch (a new resident) and others who felt local history was not recorded in an accessible manner nor was it properly archived; the Brighton Area Historical Society is nearing completion of its 25th year. (And they said it wouldn't last.)

The possible loss of several early structures was an energizing force. Preservation and restoration emerged as a dominant goal. Fund raising became a necessary adjunct. The Chamber of Commerce, Citizen's Bank and Brighton School District, among others, provided early meeting sites. Convincing of the rightness of restoration of the town hall, local government, area businesses, caring individuals and Society members contributed time, muscle and funds. The same is true for preservation/ restoration of the Lyon one room school. The restoration of the Old Village Cemetery and its listing on the Michigan Historic Site Register is another example of local support of the Society's mission. The recent publication of a history of Brighton is a superb example of dedication to the principle of respect of a vibrant past to learn from it.

A special celebration is in the planning stage. Watch for further details.

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY BICENTENNIAL

By early August, 1806, Captain William Clark had reached the planned rendezvous site, the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri down which his party would travel, about a week before Captain Meriwether Lewis arrived.

Notes attached to trees and bushes explained Clark had not found any food but lots of "muskatoles", so had proceeded on. August 1, still not meeting Clark, Lewis decided to take a break and give the men time to make themselves some clothes from the skins of buffalo, deer and antelope. They would also await the arrival of the two men who'd stayed behind to repair (cont. p. 3)

Dates to Remember:

August 4: 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Archives open. Welcome.
August 22: 6:30 p.m. P.O. Box 481, Brighton, MI 48116
August 26: 1-4 p.m. Open House at Lyon School.
August 30: 10-3 p.m. Lyon 1:00 p.m. Art Fair. Help at Society booth, 2-7 p.m.
September 20: 6-10 p.m. Lyon School, 11455 Duno Road, Brighton Township.