

# Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 481

Brighton, MI 48116

www.brightonareahistorical.com

# Trail Tales

March 2007

Vol. XXVI No. 3

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

BRIGHTON'S ARCHITECTURE

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810/229-6402

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John Ruskin, the English social reformer, respected architecture: "We may live without her, worship without her but we cannot remember without her!" Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, reminds us of the nitty gritty basis, the rationale of the economic benefits resulting from preservation and restoration of good old buildings, assures owners they will derive financial benefit in a building's preservation. Since the Federal Tax Reform Act was passed 30 years ago 1000s of historic buildings have been rehabbed, over 50,000 jobs created and 1000s of housing units gained. Michigan has also adopted state tax incentives to complement the federal credits. Every dollar of tax credit generates a net local and state value of \$1.30 to \$5.00. When both the federal and the state governments see older buildings as assets, local government should give consideration to preserving their good, older buildings.

Brighton is blessed and defined by its historic resources: Rolison Hardware, mill pond, the old Town Hall, Old Village Cemetery, St. Paul's, the Kelly House, Mellus Hospital, the Smith/McPherson Addition, the Lee Addition, etc. all of which have economic value.

Look around - Cities that have live downtowns are those whose downtowns have been preserved. We all know which cities have lost their downtowns. Will Brighton be a victim of amnesia? Will Brighton retain its own distinct heritage or will it not look any different than any place else? Will it lose its character and be a mirror image of every other town along Grand River? Will it be recognizable as a place of special distinction?

Cities are complex: buildings, streets, sidewalks, traffic, people, parks are intertwined/interdependent. Destroying any of these can destroy the balance. A city out of balance will be dull and unliveable. Whether beautiful, historic, or not, buildings give meaning to the community. This entire editorial is based on the premise we believe the economic, cultural and social values of Brighton will be enhanced by the restoration/rehab of the Western House. (cont. p. 3)



## Dates to Remember:

- March \*1,8,11,22,29: 9-noon. Archives filing. Your help is needed. 810/229-6402 to confirm.
- 19: 7 p.m. City Hall. Brighton Planning Comm meeting. Open to the public.
- 20: 7:30 Area societies' Round Table at South Lyon Historical Society.
- \*26: 6:30 Society board meets. Welcome.

\*Lyon School, 11455 Buno Rd., Brighton Twp.

PATRON: Phyllis Kerslake (Grs Pte Fms)

COUPLES/INDIV: Gladys Beckwith (Lns), Joe Chenoweth, Carolina DeLuca (Hwl), John Fillicaro, Dorothy Foster (CA), Bill Franklin (AnnArb), Bob & Shirley Knight, Mark & Carol McMacken, Ralph Miller (RchstrHls), Tom & Sue Pound, Phyllis Schaefer (Fenton), Paul & Carol Spangler, Bill & Rosemary Ulmer, Sue Walters-Steinacker, Bob & Ruth Watson (Hwl), Donna White (AnnArb), Kyle Wilson, Noah Winchell, Henry & MaryLou Winegar, Bill & Charmain Zink.

Membership renewals are vital if the Society is to continue to fulfill its mission. The Society does not manufacture a product; it depends entirely on memberships, donations and fund raising projects. Membership indicates a willingness to take personal responsibility to support the Society in its mission. Every effort is made to accurately record the year for which dues are paid on the mailing label. Contact the Society if an error is found. And thanks for your patience.

THANKS      THANKS      THANKS

...Bert Bair, Ida Bair and John & Janice Field for help in mailing the newsletter.

...Phil & Peggy Gage of Sault Ste. Marie for archival memorabilia.

...Gladys Beckwith, John Fillicaro, Phyllis Kerslake, Ralph Miller, Bob & Ruth Watson and Kyle Wilson for sending a donation with their dues.

...First Presbyterian Church for donation of eight sturdy tables.

NEEDS      NEEDS      NEEDS

...MEMBERS TO HELP GUIDE THE Society by serving on the board or help with a project: oral history, home tour, cemetery tour, summer picnic, newsletter, Lyon School upkeep, contact local businesses to stock fundraising items, archives, Friends of Lyon School. Contact a board member.

ROUNDTABLE AT SOUTH LYON

The South Lyon Historical Society has extended an invitation to a roundtable meeting of area historical societies, March 20, 7:30. Contact a board member if you'd like to attend.

ARCHIVES: Thursdays, 9-noon are set for sorting/filing. Archiving area history is a vital project of the Society. Generous donors provide research material. You can help with this. Confirm the date 810/229-6402. Two 8' Florescent bulbs were installed by Dick Weaire. The malfunctioning refrigerator has been removed by Mindy Kinsey. Jim Vichich has delivered sturdy shelving.

DIGITIZING SOCIETY HOLDINGS: John Fillicaro, Nancy Fredenburg and Tom Reinke have been researching and will be recommending equipment for this project.

HISTORY BOOK: Carol McMacken's 'From Settlement to City-Brighton Mi-1832-1945' is available. Parent-Teacher Tech, 117 E. Grand River is stocking this 2nd edition. Or contact the Society. Members \$60.00; others \$65.00. Shipping \$4.00.

LYON SCHOOL: Preparation are underway to host elementary students for a day at the school. The room will be spic and span, ready to experience early Michigan education.

Second Sunday Open House plans; various programs open to the public at no charge.

MARCH - NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Local Women Recognized

The annual awards program of the Brighton Area Women's Roll of Honor will be held March 13, at the Brighton Community Center at the lunch meeting of the Brighton Rotary.

Honorees are Genevieve (Jenny) Hill Fredenburg, Cheryl Crocker Johnson, Phyllis Fisher Pearsall, Norma Jean Leitz Pless, Patricia Rogers Steele and Doris Pitkin Weber. Margaret Muir is included in memoriam.

Each of these women has a long-time connection to the Brighton area and has made distinctive contributions of an enduring nature by her commitment. Their personal ideals serve as a model for all women.

If you wish to attend call Joyce Powers, 229-2149 to reserve seating before March 9.

2007 BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Advance Craft Home Builders; \*\*Lawrence Autobody; \*\*Patrick Financial Group, LLS; \*\*Promess, Inc. You are encouraged to patronize these local, independent sustainers of the Society.

\*\*Life Member

P O BOX 481, BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

New( ) Renew( ) Send Membership Card yes( ) no( ) (Include Zip and 4 digit)

Dues: ( ) \$500.00 Life ( ) \$25.00 Couple ( ) \$50.00 Bus/Professional  
( ) \$ 50.00 Patron ( ) \$15.00 Individual ( ) \$ 2.00 Student

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

Donation to Society Project Needs ( ) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

## \$\$\$ FUND RAISING PROJECTS \$\$\$

BOOK: 'From Settlement to City-Brighton MI 1832-1945' by Carol McMacken, Brighton's own history. Almost 500 pages, over 300 pictures. Members, \$60.00. Non-members \$65.00, + shpg. Second edition.

TILES: 6" sq, ceramic tiles, black/white. 13 local scenes. \$8.00, 3/\$21.

LYON SCHOOL T-SHIRTS, S/XL \$12.00.

TOWNSHIP PLAT MAPS \$1.00, Brighton, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Hamburg, Hartland, Iosco, Howell and Oceola. 1915 city maps of Brighton and Howell.

NOTE PAPER \$2.50 pkg. TOTE BAG \$15.00, PEWTER PLATE \$35.00. All designed with the Old Town Hall and mill pond.

WOVEN AFGHAN \$49.00, red, green, blue with nine local sites. Washable.

TAPESTRY PILLOW \$14.00, shows Pere Marquette depot and engine c. 1910.

SIGNATURE QUILT \$10.00. Your signature, or another's, to be embroidered on the quilt to remain in Society archives.

2004 CALENDAR \$4.00, with local scenes.

MORE INFO: 810/229-6402

(cont. from p. 1) Members of the Brighton Planning Commission have an obligation to plan a livable community. If we care about what is planned for our community - new construction, destruction, preservation of some portions of our community, they must be made aware of our preferences. One of the best way to do this is to be in attendance at Planning Commission meetings. Next on March 19, 7 p.m., City Hall.

## WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Feb. 10-May 30: Washtenaw Co Hist. Soc. exhibit: One room schools of Washtenaw County, 500 N. Main, Ann Arbor. 735/662-9092.

March 13, noon: Brighton Women's Roll of Honor recognition, Brighton Community Center. 810/229-2149.

March 15, 6:30: Hartland Area Historical Society pot luck dinner, Hartland United Meth. Church. Howard Armstrong on how he is preserving Hartland's history. 810/632-6022.

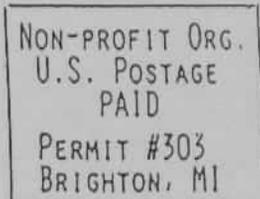
March 17, 2-4: Opening reception, Michigan Women's History Center & Hall of Fame, 213 W Main St., Lansing. Reception (no charge) Women Who Changed the World. 517-484-1880.

March 18, 1-4: Green Oak Township Historical Society pot luck. 1856 Hall, 10987 Silver Lake Rd. A program on Rug hooking. 248/939-2901.

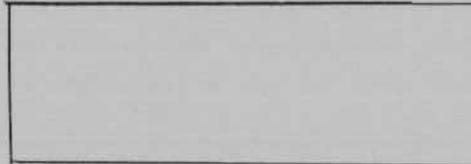
April 20-21: Local History Conference, WSU. 810/229-6402 for reservation information. Connecting, archiving, oral history, genealogy, preservation, etc.

May 4-6: 27th Annual Michigan Historic Preservation Network Conference. Distinctive Destination. Preservation's roll in tourism. Case studies of communities that are making it work. Mackinaw Island. www.mhpn.org.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P O BOX 481  
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### THE SMITH/MC PHERSON ADDITION

March 10, 1871, C. T. Hyne sold land north of Franklin, south of Walnut, east of 7th and west of Ore Creek in Brighton Village to Hiram Smith and Edward and William McPherson, Jr. The portion north of Main Street had been originally purchased from the Federal government by Elizabeth Cushing May 8, 1835; that south of Main Street, by Elijah Fitch, July 29, 1836. There was, of course, no Main Street, merely the surveyor's line between Sections 30 and 31 of Brighton Township. (At that time still part of Green Oak Township.) However, a wagon trail soon did extend west from the Grand River Trail into Genoa Township.

Smith and the McPhersons were instrumental in the drive to promote the development of the Detroit, Lansing and Lake Michigan Railroad Company. Since 1837, the state had commissioned several railroad companies but none resulted in lines as far west as Livingston County. Several consolidations had taken place over the years until July 4, 1871, when a jubilant crowd greeted the first train through Brighton on its way west. As it happened the D.L. & L.M. tracks were located diagonally almost through the center of the newly purchased property.

Early in 1872, with much fanfare, flags waving, bands playing and banners flying the highly promoted opening of the Smith/McPherson Addition occurred. Statewide and national advertising always accompanied a new development. (One is reminded that today's developments are also well promoted.) Hundreds of residential and business lots were platted and sold. Lewis Dorr, Jacob and Henry Euler, Andrew and Lewis Pless, Henry Herbst and the Cooks were among the first purchasers. These were early settlers, who'd retired, decided to live in town and 'take it easy', leaving the farm to their children. Some wanted to engage in a business endeavor in town. Two lots were often bought, a home built on one and a stable on the other. A few of these small barns are still in evidence. Room for a garden, chickens, fruit trees, etc., was also desired. At least ten homes were built within the next three years. Brick makers, masons, carpenters, well diggers, etc., were in high demand. In a shrewd move lots were donated to the Wesleyan Methodist Church at 4th/Washington and to the Baptist Church at 2nd/Madison; plus room for parsonages.

Grain elevators, lumber yards, livestock pens, a planing mill, a depot and a hotel, the Western House, were built within a year or two. Blacksmith shops, general stores, hardware dealers, Lawson's (1871) bank, candy/cigar stores, butcher shops, bakeries, liveries, the Village Hall, professional offices and real estate (of course) offices, etc., were soon all in place east of the tracks. For some time the railroad tracks became the defining border between business and residential structures tho' many business owners lived on the second floor of their establishments. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Bill Pless' writings; 1880 History of Livingston County; the BAHS Historic Resource Survey; the 1867 Centennial History of Brighton. Corrections/additions welcomed. 810/229-6402.)