

Trail Tales

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

May 2007
Vol. XXVI No. 5

REUSE OF AN OLD BUILDING

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Numerous reasons exist for the conservation of older buildings. These reasons constitute social, cultural and economic factors. An older building contributes to the aesthetic quality of the locale in which we live. As tangible reminders of our heritage, they speak to us of our past.

The historic structure, such as the Western House, is important in reinforcing local identity and sense of place. A sense of continuity is perceived. It is verifiable evidence of an earlier life style to which has been given the patina of nostalgia, nobility and virtue. An historic structure communicates information about earlier technologies, values, cultures and ways of life.

The Western House is not obsolete. It is a significant renewable resource if we but create the many possible viable uses. This Brighton area has many specialists who are most capable of determining these uses. They can deliberate creatively to propose the most expedient applications to which it can be put; culturally, socially and economically.

Constructed shortly after the railroad reached Brighton, the Western House is a visible reminder of the changes that came to both rural and urban economies. How the area changed from a subsistence form to a more affluent, independent way of life; from strictly agrarian to a more urban style.

The Western House has long made an economic contribution to Brighton; it was built to survive, not to be dumped into a landfill, a most profligate decision. It can still be of economic benefit to Brighton's Main Street.



Dates to Remember

- May
- *3, 10, 24, 31: 9-noon: Archives filing. Your are needed. Call 810/229-6402 to confirm.
 - *13: 1-4 P.M. Open House at Lyon School. Mothers' Day Tea and collection display.
 - *29: 6:30 P.M. Society Board meets. Welcome.

*Lyon School, 11455 Buno Rd., Brighton Twp

MEMBERSHIPS

COUPLES/INDIV: Ed & Pat Convery, Bill & Jackie Damm, Carolina Deluca (Howell), Stephen & Kathy Lowry (South Lyon), Dick & Lucille Weaire and John & Pyillis Wenzel.

A 'Complementary Copy' stamp on the address page of the newsletter indicates 2007 dues have not been received. The many who respond to this reminder is gratifying. Unreported changes of address cause .39¢ charges for each issue returned. It is good to notify the Society in order to avoid these charges. Minor but they do add up. Thanks.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

..... **Ida Bair, Judy Coebly, John & Janice Field, Sue Skwarski** for help with mailing the April issue of the newsletter.

..... **Lee Garcia**, Secretary of Brighton Masons, for copies of several deeds, history of early members, etc., for placing in Society Archives.

..... **Sue Garcia**, for reformatting the newsletter. Many favorable comments have been received.

..... **Friends of Lyon School**, '07, Bill and Jackie Damm.

..... **Parent Teacher-Tech**, 117 E. Grand River for stocking the Society history book, 'Settlement to City - Brighton, Michigan, 1832-1945'. Members \$60.00, non-members \$65.00 plus shipping and handling. Second edition.

..... **Cub Scout Den Pack #343** under Den Mother, Valerie Spence, for their spring-cleaning of the yard at Lyon School.

..... **Charlene Huget**, retiring Brighton District Library Director. Her support has been constant through the years. May 23, 3-6 P.M. ceremony at the library.

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

PRESERVATION / RESTORATION

ARCHIVES: Eliminating newsprint from the archives continues. Properly filing for electronic retrieval of the many items donated is ongoing. There will be four opportunities for you to help in May: 2nd, 10th, 24th, 31st, 9-noon. 810/229/6402 to confirm or if other dates are more convenient.

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY: Continued filing and recording of addresses, especially businesses, including dates.

HISTORY BOOK: 'From Settlement to City, Brighton, MI, 1832/1945', is available at Parent-Teacher Tech, 117 E. Grand River, or call 810/229-6402. Sales of this 2nd edition are going well.

LYON SCHOOL: Sue Coebly and Sue Skwarski have contacted all elementary, middle and high schools, encouraging a visit to this restored one-room school. An attendance certificate is prepared for each student. April 30/May 4 - Hornung 3rd grades are participating.

OPEN HOUSE, MAY 13, 1-4

Calling all mothers to have a cup of tea and a cookie at 11455 Buno Road. Marieanna Bair's 30+ collection of inexpensive framed illustrations in praise of one's mother will be displayed. During the 1920-30s, these were given for Mother's Day. Usually included was a charming verse and an equally charming drawing, sketch or design. The endearing qualities of motherhood were confirmed, promising eternal love and the donor's gratitude.

Sympathies of the Society are extended
To the family of
WILLIAM COMISKEY

A long-time resident and member

May Board Meeting Date
Due to Memorial Day,
the Board will meet May 29, 6:30.
Your presence is welcomed.

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

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(Include Zip and 4 digit)

New () Renew () Send Membership Card yes () no ()

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, plus shipping. Second edition.

TILES: 6" sq. ceramic tiles, black/white. 13 local scenes. \$8, 2 for \$21.

LYON SCHOOL T-SHIRTS: S / XL - \$12.

TOWNSHIP PLAT MAPS: \$1.00 - 1875 maps of 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. All designed with the Old Town Hall and millpond.

WOVEN AFGHAN: \$49 - red, green, blue with nine local sites. Washable.

TAPESTRY PILLOW: \$14 - shows Pere Marquette depot and engine, ca. 1910.

SIGNATURE QUILT: \$10 - Your signature, or another's, to be embroidered on the quilt to remain in Society archives.

2004 CALENDAR: \$4 with local scenes.

For more information, call 810/229-6402

WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

May 19. - Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association Annual Conference, Marshall, MI. Celebrate the heritage of one-room schools. 248/477-7375.

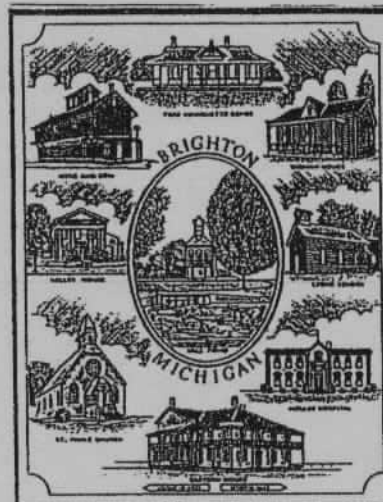
May 23, 6 P.M. - Author of 'The Purple Gang: Organized Crime in Detroit 1910-1945'. 734/427-8722.

Thru May 29 - Plymouth Historical Society exhibit of Underground Railroad Quilts. 155 S. Main. <http://www.plymouthhistory.org> or 734/455-8940.

June 2, 10-5. - Indian Village Home/Garden Tour. www.HistoricalIndianVillage.org.

June 7, 7 P.M. - Liv. Co. Genealogical Soc. Kim Harrison - Organizing - you may have more info than you think. LDS Church, 1041 W. Grand River, Howell.

November 10 - Oral History for Michiganians 2007 Conference.



Woven cotton afghan with 9 historic local sights centered with the mill pond and Old Town Hall c. 1920. Navy blue, hunter green, cranberry red. Washable. Fine for one-self or a gift.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

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WILLIAM R. COBB, AN EARLY BRIGHTON MERCHANT

William R. Cobb, whose father was from England and his mother, Ireland, was born in Vermont in 1820. By 1837, he was married to 15-year-old Lucy E. That year, son, Realdes was born to be followed by Charles L. in 1838. Realdes lived to the age of five, his younger brother died when eight years old. Both are memorialized with markers in the Old Village Cemetery. The family arrived in Brighton in 1838, and immediately set to work building a store in 'Upper Town' on the west side of Grand River, next to Truman Worden's home, north of Hamburg Road (it would be c. 80 years before Brighton Lake was formed). The growing community was in need of a general store. It is probable the family lived on that site, at least for a time. Cobb's trade is listed as a mason.

A building on the east side of Grand River Trail, between Fitch (Main) Street and North Street, in 'Lower Town' was moved and in its place John D. Appleton had built a three-story, two-store wide building by 1839. Used as a hotel, it became known as the Appleton Block. Not much later, it became the W.R. Cobb and Company Store. He was one of four merchants in 1843. The 1863 Brighton Business/professional 'list' includes him also. Dr. William McHench purchased an interest in the building c. 1850, and it became the Cobb & McHench Block. A fire, May 1934, damaged the c. 85-year-old building, and it was demolished. Shortly two two-story stores were built, which are still in place.

Cobb recognized his responsibility to the community; when the village area was part of Brighton Township, he served as clerk, 1845. When the Village was organized, 1867, he served as trustee in 1869 and 1874 and as assessor, 1869. He also participated in county government in a variety of positions: judge in 1849, clerk, 1862, coroner, 1877/79. The first Brighton Fair had his services as Chief Marshall. The local school system also benefited; he was on the board in 1867-68 when the Union School plans were formulated. He was a steward in the Masonic Lodge in 1879. Although not Catholic, he (among others) donated generously to the construction of the first Catholic Church on the Ann Arbor Road (Rickett Road).

The Cobb's home was on the north side of Mill Street (St. Paul's) between Grand River and East Street. The 1875 map of the village indicates W.R. owned four blocks just north of their home and 24 acres east. He and Lucy had five more children: Ellen 1850, May E. 1852, William R. Jr. 1855, Charles H. 1858 and Elmer 1862. In 1882, a grandchild fell into a cistern and drowned. Lucy died June 1, 1879, William August 7, 1882, Grandson, Harry, was the last in Brighton to bear the Cobb name. He died in 1971. Some of the children are buried in Fairview Cemetery. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; from Settlement to city - Brighton, Michigan - 1832-1945; William Pless' Village Cemetery Supplement; censuses; obituaries compiled by Milton Charboneau. Additions and corrections requested. 810/229-6402.)