

Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 481

Brighton, MI 48116

www.brightonareahistorical.com

Trail Tales

August 2008
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Preserve, Advance and Disseminate Knowledge of the History of the Brighton Area

DO YOU HAVE SEVERAL HOURS AVAILABLE? WE NEED YOU!

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The Society has several projects where additional help is needed. The work is not hard, nor is it complicated. In fact, those community members that are helping actually enjoy sitting in the air-conditioned Lyon School, and being a partner in these vital history projects of our community.

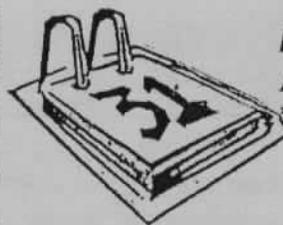
One project is the Early Newspaper Research. In acquiring information from the past, one method is to read early newspapers. Since we have a small community, our earlier newspapers were dominated by local community news. Early news is relevant, whether it is the obituary of a community member, establishment of a new business or the construction associated with a municipal project. This important documentation of our past needs to be compiled before the news is lost due to deterioration of newsprint.

The other project is the Digitizing Project, which involves minor use of the computer and scanner. The historical records in the Lyon School archive room are being digitized using the scanner. Cropping of the borders of the scanned information is done to remove imperfections just as you might do cropping for your photos in your family's scrapbook. It is not difficult, it is actually fun.

Join us at the historic Lyon one-room schoolhouse. Pick up the phone or send me an email. You can find this information at the top left of the front page of this newsletter below my name. I guarantee that you will be smiling or chuckling as you read the information from the past.

It is easy to be an active participant. Time is flexible. Several hours of your time will help preserve the past for others to enjoy! WE NEED YOU!

Jim Vichich



Dates to Remember

August

* 7, 14, 21, 28:- 9-noon. Archives at Lyon School. Your help is Needed. Call 229-6402 to confirm.

9, 10: 10:00 a.m. Art Fair: books, coverlets, etc. will be available.

* 25: 6:30 p.m. Society Board meets. Welcome.

*Lyon School, 11455 Buno Rd., Brighton Twp.
A Michigan Registered Historic Site

MEMBERSHIPS

PATRON: Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Gilluley-Kingsley Camp #120.

COUPLES/INDIV: ***Dave Ball** (Flrvl), **Cheryl Chidester**, **Esther Jarvis**, ***Jack & Shirley Jarvis**, **Bill & Jane Tomlinson**, **Wallyne Smail**, **Paul Weber** (FL), and ***John & Anne Zemke**.

*Welcome to new members Dave, Jack & Shirley and John & Anne. The interest shown by them and the many who renew is vital to the existence of the Society. And the existence of the Society is vital to the well-being of the Brighton area.

The membership list is not sold or shared. Your membership is for Society purposes only. Dues for a year are payable throughout the year. 'Complementary Copy' indicates dues have not been received for the year of 2008.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

..... **Ida Bair** and **Rosemary Ulmer** for help in mailing the July newsletter.

..... **Bruce King** for the reconstruction of the decorative front panel of the organ in the school room.

.... **Esther Jarvis** and **Paul Weber** for their donation to Society projects.

.....**Anne Zemke** for her mother's collection of 1950-90 issues of the Brighton Argus.

.... **Bob Truffo** (our resident metal detector) for two early pennies and a small lock.

.....**Bill & Jane Tomlinson** for their membership in Friends of Lyon School.

.....**Suzanne Conerway** for a photo, 1949-50 of students at Bethel School; all identified!

..... **Phil & Peggy Gage** for a Trail Tale correction re: the Edgar family. Elmira Gage Edgar died in 1910, not 1919. Husband James W. died March 3, 1920, not March 31. It is always good to improve Society records.

..... **Doris Longfellow**, **Stan Schafer**, **Jeremy Jones** and **Dora Lezovich** for help in scanning the archives.

The Society is a 501(c)3 Income Tax deductible organization. Help out the Society and yourself with a contribution

PRESERVATION / RESTORATION

ARCHIVES: Thanks to volunteers, the digitizing of the archives is proceeding well. Anyone willing to spend a few hours at the Lyon School (air conditioned) scanning items of historic value, be sure to contact President Jim Vichich, 227-4840, to schedule. Two external hard drives for back-up of scanned files have been purchased. (Contributions to this expenditure would be appropriate.)

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY: The many small clippings of the history of business sites in the area are being well organized by Sue Garcia. Requests for information of this nature are easily fielded by referring to these binders.

People are needed to review early Brighton Arguses, selecting clippings of businesses, schools, organizations, etc. etc. i.e. "The Pless Bros. Dairy Farm is advertising an auction of farm tools and 60 purebred cows in this week's Argus. Nov. 3, 1943." Please contact Marieanna Bair, 229-6402, to schedule a good time.

LYON SCHOOL: A number of children's early games and toys were available for use; and plenty of ice cream and cookies. Watch for the next Open House, September 14, 1-4 p.m.

FARMER'S MARKET

It is good for the Society to be visible to the public. Jim Vichich will be glad for your offer to help any Saturday a.m.

ART FAIR, AUGUST 9 & 10

The Society booth will be on Main Street again. Two-hour shifts are planned. A minimum of three members at a time is best, according to past experience. Mindy Kinsey, 248/684-0340, is anxious to hear which two-hour shift would be best for you.

2008 BUSINESS / PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

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

** Life Member

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

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

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() \$ 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 : () \$

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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 at Parent-Teacher Tech, 117 E. Grand River, Brighton.

TILES: 6" sq. ceramic tiles, black/white. 13 local scenes. \$8, 3 for \$21.

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

TOWNSHIP PLAT MAPS: \$1.00 - 1875 maps of Brighton, Onway, Genoa, Green Oak, Hamburg, Hartland, Iosco, Howell and Oceola. 1915 city maps of Brighton and Howell.

TRANSCRIPTIONS of the Pleasant Valley Cemetery -- \$15, and the Old Village Cemetery -- \$25 are available.

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 -- Size 48" x 60".

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:

Howell Area Historical Society -

Visit the depot at the end of Wetmore Street, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.; Sundays 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Will celebrate 50th anniversary September 20, 2008.

SYMPATHIES OF THE SOCIETY
To the family of
PHYLLIS JEAN BRADY WENZEL
Phyllis was a native of Brighton
And member of the Society

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



400 WEST MAIN STREET

The 1915 map of Brighton village indicates an A.C. Stewart elevator on the west side of the railroad tracks, across from the depot. Why would one find an elevator in such a location? In 2008 parlance an elevator moves between floors of a multi-story building. In 1915, an elevator also moved items between floors; beans and grains raised by area farmers and brought to the elevator for shipment to market.

Stewart's elevator stood on land leased from the railroad. It was probably built by Henry Hartman after he had served as sheriff of Livingston County during the Civil War and retired from the farm he had cleared in pioneer days. Hartman operated the elevator for several years before Stewart took over. (Stewart, whose ancestors arrived in the area in the mid 19th century, had previously operated a mill a half mile north of Chilson on a stream which drained south out of Crooked Lake.) Farmers drove their full wagons up a dirt ramp next to the elevator and spilled the grain into a chute. From there it was elevated through a fanning mill and screened. It next went up into a large hopper on scales, and into the upper area of the building. The grain could then be directed to flow by gravity to waiting railroad cars for shipment. A horse-driven mechanism supplied the elevating power before the advent of the gasoline engine.

Beans from the farmer's wagon flowed by gravity to a fabric belt and from there to a long balcony at the rear of the building where several women worked picking out the discolored beans and foreign material. Their pay was based on the weight of the material picked out. Not a large income but it was believed they enjoyed the conversations and exchanged gossip while working.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, during harvest and threshing time, wagons delivering grain lined the streets waiting their turn at Stewart's, or the Hyne, elevator on the south side of Main Street. Again, after beans were threshed, the same scenario. Along the side track south of the Stewart elevator, during the apple and potato harvest, farmers unloaded produce directly into freight cars. The economy of the entire area was completely dependent on the 'outside money' farmers received for grain, beans, potatoes, wool, livestock, fruit and dairy products.

Albert Chauncey Stewart operated the elevator and a coal yard until he moved downtown to 400 west Main Street in 1925, where a mill was constructed. Following his move, the old elevator was next operated by the Brighton Farmers' Coop; when they failed, the elevator was torn down. A fire, December 1941, destroyed a number of buildings west of Stewart's. It was extinguished just short of the Coal, Flour and Feed Store.

When area farmers turned to beef and dairy farming, they still raised their own grain. A dump truck, full of corn or other grain, could often be seen well into the 30s and 40s, driving west to First Street, and down the alley to pour grain into a hole along the alley behind Stewart's. Strong, shiny (from the abrasion of the grain) bars placed 4" apart kept children and dogs from falling in. When the grinding equipment was started, the entire building rumbled. Ground grain flowed down chutes into bags hung at the end. A sturdy worker flipped the shut-off lever, gave the cloth bag a shake and tied it with the piece of twine he'd held in his teeth. Then attached the next bag, flipped the lever, and it too was soon full. Often the farmer took the ground grain home, but just as often some might be left to pay for the grinding.

In the mid 1950s, the business became Birdsong's Feed and Seed until he moved across Main Street. A number of entrepreneurs took advantage of the country quaintness of the old mill with its grinding equipment still intact. Among them were 'country' stores, ice cream parlors, restaurants and, most recently, Brighton Bar and Grill.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Historic Resource Survey; 'From Settlement to City, Brighton, Michigan, 1832-1945' and writings of Bill Pless. Additions/corrections requested - 810/229-6402.)