

Trail Tales

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

July 2009
Vol. XXVIII No. 7

BRIGHTON'S NEW DOWNTOWN MUSEUM

Changes are in motion for a downtown museum. This museum will be located in the Old Town Hall. What a prime location! Located next to the beautiful Millpond, adjacent to historic Saint Paul Episcopal Church, and within sight of Old Village Cemetery and Imagination Station. There is no better location to house the museum for the Brighton Area Historical Society.

Old Town Hall is the city of Brighton. Built in 1879, this historic building has been home to many vital community services. In the past, one would have found a jail housing individuals sleeping off excess libations or a courtroom examining evidence of a murderer. One could see a library for researching topics and learning about world events through local print, or a firehouse and municipal offices with dedicated workers who kept the city services running day and night. If these walls could speak, one would hear the chattering of individuals sharing their life stories that center on their experiences around the city of Brighton.

The Brighton Area Historical Society is very thankful to the city of Brighton for their generosity and wisdom in providing this wonderful setting for the Society's downtown museum. Old Town Hall will also be home to the Brighton Art Guild and the Livingston Players.

Announcements regarding the grand opening will be in the next several months. All three groups are assessing programming needs and designs for displays. The Historical Society needs items and memorabilia that reflect life at earlier times. Donations, loaning of materials for displays, and people to assist with the daily operation are needed. Please contact me if you can help.

Get ready to welcome the City of Brighton Art, Culture and History Center!

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Dates to Remember

July
*2,9,16,23,30: 9-noon Archiving. Welcome
*2,9,16,23,30: 9-4 p.m. Lyon School is open to public
11,18,25: 8 a.m. Society booth at Farmers' Market
*14,18,27: Lyon School Maintenance
*22 6:30 pm Society Board meets. You are welcome.
Please call 810/229-6402 for more information.

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

MEMBERSHIPS

COUPLES/INDIV: Jim DeJohn, *Mercedes Ferreyre, *Tony Ferreyra, John Fillicaro, Lyla Spelbring (2010).

*Welcome to Tony and daughter Mercedes. New members are vital to the growth of the Society.

Dues are received throughout the year for the year. The date 09, 10, 11, etc., on the mailing label indicates the year for which dues have been received. (Life members are noted as such.) Labels with no date in the upper right corner receive a Complimentary Copy stamp. It is hoped you will support the society's purpose of restoration, preservation, compilation and dissemination of the area's history and will become a paid-up member.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

..... Ida Bair, Judy Coebly, Jackie Damm and Sue Skwarski for help in mailing the June issue of Trail Tales.

..... Sue Garcia and Anne Stratigos for faithfully hand delivering of Trail Tales each month to the many businesses, etc., of the area.

..... Mindy Kinsey, Tom Niemeyer, Jim Miller and Vicki Vichich for helping with the Society booth at the Farmers' Market each Saturday.

..... Brenda Moline who continues to help with scanning of Society archives.

..... Jim DeJohn and Lyla Spelbring for their membership in Friends of Lyon School.

..... Lyla Spelbring for her donation to Society projects.

..... Pat Convery for responding to the request for Brighton memories. She provided the Society with the story of 'Peanut' Cline and the Cline-Boylan Clothing Store.

..... Nancy Fredenburg, Lee & Sue Garcia, Tom & Mindy Kinsey, Jim Vichich and Sue Walters-Steinacker for hosting the special car show at the Lyon School June 21. And thanks, also, to the many who displayed their vehicles, all shiny and spiffed-up.

GREEN ENERGY DAY AT LYON SCHOOL

Sunday, July 19, 1-4 p.m.

Learn how to experience environmentally safe Green Energy using wind and solar power. Self Reliant Energy Co. will demonstrate devices utilizing these technologies. Program shared with Recycle Livingston. Learn how to preserve and protect our environment.

LYON SCHOOL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

One's home always needs maintenance. The Society's home is no different. Cleaning, scraping, painting are planned July 14, 18, 27. Contact President Vichich, 810/227-4840, regarding when and how you can help.

BRIGHTON ART FESTIVAL

August 8-9

Too often is heard, "The historical society? Didn't know it existed." A fun way to spend a few hours and make sure the Society is recognized; and you'll learn too. You'll not be at the booth by yourself. Members of the board will be there too. Leave a message with Mindy Kinsey, 248/684-0304, to schedule your hours.

FILING HELP NEEDED

Thursday mornings, several folks are at the Lyon School filing in the Archives or into the Historic Resource Survey. Many clippings in many categories need chronological filing/copying. You'll be given direction on what's to be done.

2009 BUSINESS / PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

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

*Life Members

P.O. BOX 481, BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

www.brightonareahistorical.com

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

(Include Zip and 4 digit)

New () Renew ()

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 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, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Hamburg, Hartland, Iosco, Lowell 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 -- 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.

For more information, call 810/229-6402

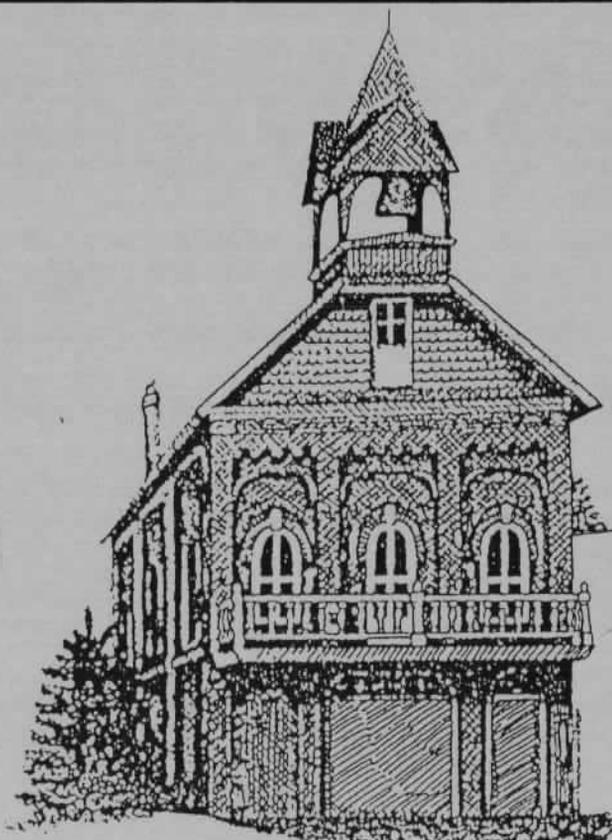
WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

July 9: 7-9 p.m. **Livingston County Genealogical Society.** Presentation of memorable ancestors. LDS Church, Howell
www.rootsweb.com/milege

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT ... NOW

Several have committed to being interviewed for the Oral History project. More interviewers are needed. The Society feels a strong sense of urgency regarding this project. (Longer-time members of the community are leaving us each day.) Training is available. You'll be surprised how enjoyable this project is. Donations can be made toward the purchase of a camcorder for our Oral History Project.

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

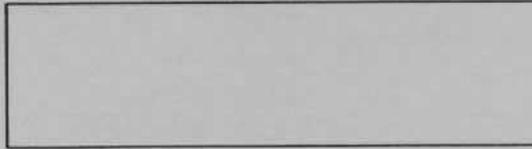


- OLD TOWN HALL -

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Brighton, MI 48116-0481

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BRIGHTON'S ALTRUISTIC FIRE DEPARTMENT

Beginning with the recognition the early community was in need of protection from fire, to organizing annual Independence Day parades, Halloween and Christmas parties, providing Thanksgiving dinner to families during the Great Depression, building fire stations, to sacrificing time and energy, the Brighton fire fighters have been there since 1867.

Brighton Village was incorporated March 25, 1867. Fire wardens were appointed to the "... stern and unrelenting supervision of all heating facilities in the homes and business places ..." In the absence of an organized fire department and fire equipment, they were the only protection against the fearful enemy, fire.

May 19, 1868, the village Council authorized the purchase of hooks and ladders. This equipment was carried by hand when and where needed. Just how the need for this protection was broadcast is not recorded. Nor was there a storage facility for these hooks and ladders. Ned Seger, local historian, in 1944 surmises the men of the department utilized various places in town. He mentions one, the Bierwold Building, located just east of George B. Ratz' Blacksmith Shop on West Main (across from the mill pond).

May 3, 1872, the village Council ordered the purchase of five fire extinguishers from the Babcock Fire Extinguisher Company. The destruction by fire of the home of the village clerk April 8, 1873, and two years later that of Godfrey Westphall's Hardware Store at 202 W. Main, October 28, 1875, piqued the need for a better means of fighting a fire. A month later an aye vote authorized the purchase of a hook and ladder apparatus for no more than \$975.00. January 20, 1876, Babcock Manufacturing Co., Chicago, was given the contract to supply truck, equipped with hooks, ladders, eight patent fire extinguishers (four on each side) and buckets. James Thomson was elected keeper of the chemicals. An extra 26-foot ladder was included. It is recorded this truck and its appurtenances was hand drawn and made "...a very snappy outfit".

At the next council meeting, President Benjamin Howard Lawson was ordered to appoint nine men to the hook and ladder company, to be responsible for the equipment. They enrolled Gilbert Abrams, Lyman W. Birge, George Carpenter, Samuel H. Conely (foreman), Clinton Dewit, A. Giles, Robert Jolly, William W. Lewis (assistant foreman), Richard J. Lyons (secretary) William Mann, George Ratz, A.A. Reed, August Schmidt, George G. Smith, H. Soule, William Sutherland, G.W. Sweet, Ira Thomson and James Van Loon.

The village now has its first fire department, all volunteers. A month later, May 20, these appointees requested exemption from poll taxes as compensation. This practice probably continued for many years.

A uniform was adopted, which consisted of a black silk cap, red shirt, and patent leather belts. On July 4, 1876, the company marched in its first public parade in its new uniform. (Each Independence Day since, the Brighton Fire Department has participated.) The ladies contributed flowers and other decorations to complete the regal appearance. (Today the Brighton Fire Department still parades in the same classy style.)

Not until the town hall was built, 1879, was there storage space for the various fire fighting equipment and uniforms. Two outward opening doors on the first floor allowed for quick response to an emergency. A jail was across the back of the building; the council met on the second floor.

(To be continued. Compiled by Marieanna Bair from press clippings; 1880 History of Livingston County; Ned Seger's 1944 History of the fire department. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.)