Ore Creek (Part 4)

The nation’s Bicentennial celebration was observed in grand style in the Brighton area, and the millpond on Ore Creek took front and center stage. Local service groups (Brighton Fire Department, Garden Club, Jaycees, Jr. Women’s Club, Kiwanis, Livingston Players, Rotary, Senior Citizens, Women’s Club, et al) each put forward an extraordinary effort.

The area west of the millpond and north of the 300 block of W. Main, Millpond Park was the staging area for displays and exhibits of early arts, skills, crafts, games, contests (fishing, stone skipping, frog jumping, tobacco spitting) and clothing fashions.

In the Scout Building (present site of City Hall), one participated in square dances, in addition to the street dances. The Garden Club planted flowers along the edge of the millpond. The Jaycees held a fashion show there. A bazaar took place in the Millpond Theater hosted by the Livingston Players. The need for better care of the Old Village Cemetery east of the pond became evident.

At 2 pm, July 4, 1976, every local bell was rung for two minutes commemorating the hour on which the Liberty Bell was rung following the announcement of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776.

The Brighton Kiwanis built a gazebo on the east side of the pond. The official Michigan Bicentennial Band, Livingston County’s own 5th Regiment Band, inaugurated the first of concerts, which continue to the present day. Their foresight has contributed immeasurably to the “friendly community” atmosphere valued by so many.

A carnival, hosted by the Brighton Fire Department, took place in the North Street parking lot, under which Ore Creek flows. The BFD provided a spectacular display of fireworks, which surpassed all expectations. They also organized the hour-long parade, which proceeded from Church Street, down W. Main past the reviewing stand in front of the Fire Hall at 202 W. Main and the millpond on July 5, 1976.

Throughout the 1990s, volunteers regularly cleaned debris from and around the pond. The Imitation Station, a safety-oriented playground for children was built, by volunteers in 1995, on the west side of the pond. This site is regularly refurbished and enthusiastically enjoyed.

The following year, the Tridge was constructed to give unique access to either side of the pond. The Tridge soon connected to a walkway extending from Main Street to Ore Creek’s passage under Grand River on the north.

Although Ore Creek flows for less than a mile in the southeast corner of Genoa Township, a dam built in 1927 by Charles How-ell as a Boy Scout reservation formed Brighton Lake. Now constituting a quarter section of water, surrounding residences create a valuable addition to the local economy. Benjamin Blaine, Rev. Wm. Clark, Aaron Kelley, Almon and Maynard Maltby all knew a good creek when they saw it.

Compiled by Maricenna Barr from the Society’s Historic Resource Survey; maps and clippings. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.

Web Site Updates
We have been making updates to our web site, including recent BAHS news and more historical articles and maps from our archive. We also now have a Facebook page. In the near future, we will be adding old Brighton area photos and cemetery information. If you haven’t visited our web site, recently, now is a good time!

The former Mollus Hospital building on East Grand River will be the new home of the Chamber of Commerce (CoC). Future use of the CoC building on Hyne St. remains unknown and its longevity maybe in peril. These two historic structures are attractive and appear in sound shape. The BAHS hopes they will be maintained as part of the downtown community.

Dr. Mollus opened his new building in February 1933, and the hospital closed in March 1957. Located down the hill from the First Presbyterian Church, this classic two-story brick Georgian structure provided the residents of Brighton a modern hospital. The CoC will continue the practice of adaptive reuse in their new location. Adaptive reuse is a process of retrofitting old buildings for new uses, while allowing old structures to retain their historic integrity. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has purchased the existing CoC building which has been their home for decades. This same practice by the DDA in the past has resulted in new parking lots for downtown visitors. Because of this action, there is a strong likelihood that this structure will be torn down and removed from the downtown landscape.

The George Ratz family lived in that home as their family hardware business flourished on the property at the southeast corner of Hyne and Main Streets. This home was one of the early homes built at the Brighton community expanded west of Ore Creek. Within the grounds is a “green” pocket park that provides a vibrant manicured appearance with the multitude of various plants. These gardens present a unique setting that helps make our downtown area very desirable. Many a bride and groom have exchanged vows under the trees among the colorful flowers. The volunteers of the Brighton Garden Club have developed and maintained this site for the enjoyment of the community for decades. The BAHS appreciates the Garden Club’s hard-work and effort and we hope it will continue.

This building has been updated, expanded and the adaptive reuse has maintained a attractive exterior that adds to the diversity of downtown facades. The city doesn’t need more parking lots in this vicinity as adjacent public lots on Hyne and Pierce Streets are empty most of the day. This corner property is pretty unique and needs to stay as is. This building and its setting enhance our downtown and its beauty gives downtown its diversity. Please don’t destroy this integral component of the downtown community. Our town charm attracts visitors and residents and it is enjoyed by all!

Joyce A. Rogers Business Center - Home of the Chamber of Commerce

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THE TRAIL TALES
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Special Points of Interest:
THE ORIGIN OF BRIGHTON, FOUNDING AS ONE COMMUNITY IN THIS MONTH’S HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ARTICLE.
SEE PAGE 4

OUR ANNIVERSARIES THEME IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS MONTH. IT IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED.
SEE PAGE 2

“Time ideal historian goes to the mouth of the tomb, cries: ‘Azarcon, come forth!’ and sets him that was dead for ages, blinking and passionate, in the sun.”

Avon O’Malley
(1858-1932)
Author, Keystones of Thought