Ore Creek (Part 3)

At the time the Village built the trestle bridge on West Main over Ore Creek in 1873, the marsh and water of the pond extended farther west and north, almost to First Street, as shown on early maps. A blacksmith shop at 314 W. Main and a livery at 324 W. Main stood on pilings with water visible between cracks of the floor. Little by little the wetland was replaced with drier soil. When Brighton State Bank was built at 308 W. Main, in 1911, the fill was extended even further.

Pictures from 1910 show a walkway and cyclone fence bordering the edge on the north side of West Main Street, which was lined with weeping willows. A bandstand was built over the water at the edge of the walk. A conduit had replaced the trestle bridge and W. Main transformed from a trail into a dirt road. By the mid-1920s, the willows are gone, the cyclone fence still protects pedestrians from the bordering pond, and W. Main became a paved thoroughfare.

The 1930s brought financial difficulties to those living along Ore Creek as well as the entire country. However, the courage of those living along this stream, buoyed by the Brighton Fire Department, conducted Independence Day celebrations featuring parades and fireworks over the pond at dusk. Reflections from the water made it twice as memorable. This annual event gave encouragement to people who needed it. Occasional Homecoming festivities near the flowing water bestowed a feeling of faith and hope for the future, as dim as it seemed at times.

Various activities in support of the troops during WWII, such as scrap metal drives, blackout practices, war bond sales, were held on Main Street by the millpond.

In 1953 the Quakembush mill at the NW corner of W. North Street and S. West Street was still standing when the dam failed. Ore Creek reverted to being a creek again as it coursed through the town. The trees in the valley on the south side of Main came crashing down. A new dam was constructed on the north side of Main for the following year; much of the labor provided by local businessmen and Fire Department members.

To raise funds and encourage shoppers to patronize downtown businesses, the Kiwanis Club, in March 1959, placed four nickeled canisters filled with corn as feed for local wild life (i.e.: ducks) along the cyclone fence. This venture was discontinued in 1976, a victim of its own success. The community gained statewide notoriety for the large brace of ducks which occasionally stopped vehicular traffic while crossing Main.

Millpond Park with trees, grass, swans, etc., was established on the west shore of the pond in 1972. On August 6, the Livingston Band performed at 3 p.m. at the park.

A more aesthetically pleasing dam was built nearer the pond, through which the stream flows under Main Street in 1973. The addition of more fill expanded the area for pedestrian comfort and recreation. The cyclone fence was removed. About that same time a concrete walk and seawall were built providing a pleasant path for relaxation and exercise.

Compiled by Marianne Baur from the BAHIS Historic Resource Survey, clippings "Bill Plas' writings and Carol Mckee's book 'From Settlement to City'." Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.

In Memorial

The BAHIS extends our deepest sympathy to the family of:

Bill and Helen Hyme

Brighton Area Historical Society members

and long time Brighton area residents.