Ore Creek (Part 2)

During the late 1920s, a booming time in real estate, several dams were built to provide lakefront property to investors and homebuilders. On its way south through Brighton Township, Ore Creek forms the first of several local lakes. In August 1927, a dam was installed on the north side of Hilton Road of Ore Creek forming Woodland Lake.

A drain tile now directs Ore Creek beneath I-96, between the Spencer and Grand River Road exits. The stream then flows behind the brighton Mall and past Fairview Cemetery. W. Grand River travelers cross Ore Creek just south of Cross Street where it forms the Brighton Mill Pond. Slowed by the dam built by Orson Quackenbush to power his mill in 1840, Ore Creek becomes a pond on the north side of Main Street (earlier named Fifth Street) in Brighton.

A small pond is formed on the south side of Main Street, above Orson's dam. John Thompson (a later owner of the mill), built an industrous person, built and sold row boats during down times.

The Mill Pond soon became a site for quiet relaxation and various activities. Summer days meant fishing and swimming. Much ice was cut and stored for future use when the water froze in the winter. When the ice was thick, members of the community cleared an area of snow for skating and hockey games. George Ratz allowed young skaters to put on their skates in his hardware store at 333 W. Main. Later one could warm stiff fingers and toes around the glowing wooden stove in the middle of the store. The circle of men who often sat around discussing affairs made room for the skaters and sled riders. During the 1930s, a 35-20 feet tall structure was built on the east side of the pond. The steeple made for a thrilling sled ride across the ice.

Not until Hiram Smith (President of the Detroit, Lansing and Lake Michigan Railroad) and Edward and William Jr., McPherson (members of the DLM board) platted their property west of the stream, was there any need for an easy way over the creek instead of by foot, horse or buggy. These three had purchased land west of Ore Creek in Brighton in March 1871.

On July 4, the railroad came to Brighton. Astute businessmen, Smith and the McPhersons soon petitioned the Village to build a truss bridge to encourage shoppers to patronize the shops developing on the west side, rather than having to ford the stream. This was later replaced with a tunnel for the stream with fill providing a base for a street.

March 22, 1872, Daniel Marsh, Smith and the McPhersons sent another petition to the Council. This time they requested a bridge over the creek where it crossed Third Street. The Village allowed them to build it in abatement of their highway taxes. September 13, 1872 saw the first dry-footed pedestrian crossing the bridge on the way to Hamburg Road (Brighton Lake Road). To be continued...


Brighton Area Principals and Teachers

Welcome back to the classroom after your nonstop summer of planning new lessons and updating your education credentials. You may not be aware that a 19th century one-room schoolhouse awaits your visit. This is a great opportunity to provide a unique educational setting to enrich students' knowledge of how families lived and worked in our communities.

The Lyon School owns and operates the historic Lyon One-Room Schoolhouse in Brighton Township. This 1885 building has been totally restored and furnished in a 1900 setting. It is also barrier-free. Students sit in beautiful maple top desks with an inkwell hole and a slot that folds out of the way.

Several local public and private schools have made annual excursions to the Lyon School for many years. Usually each teacher and their students spend one day at the rural school. Sessions are available for spring or fall and costs are minimal.

A curriculum has been created by several retired teachers for your use. The curriculum addresses benchmarks that are required by the State of Michigan. We invite your 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade teams to partake in the Lyon School Visit Program, which begins this September.

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Please feel free to contact either of our following education liaisons:

Suzanne Sikarski: (810) 225-0930; sikarskiw@gmail.com
Judith Coebly: (810) 229-4608; greutter@comcast.net

The Lyon Schoolhouse is located on Buno Rd between Pleasant Valley and Van Amberg Roads.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Jim Vichich

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Web Site Help Needed

We are currently seeking a volunteer intern to help managing our web site updates, planning content changes, and developing our social media campaign.

The intern will need a computer with high-speed Internet access. They are also required to be reasonably proficient with a computer, the Internet, and MS Office. Prior experience with HTML or graphic design is helpful, but not required. Training will be provided.

This position would be a good fit for a student interested in gaining work experience for their resume or college application.