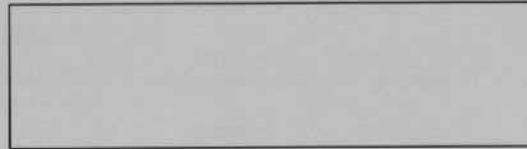


BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #303
Brighton, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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 Fitch 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), being an industrious 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 331 W. Main. Later one could warm stiff fingers and toes around the glowing round stove in the middle of the store. The circle of men who often sat around discussing affairs made room for the skaters and sleds. During the 1930s, a 15-20 feet tall structure was built on the east side of the pond. The slide down 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 DLLM 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 trestle 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...

Compiled by Marieanna Bair from the Society's Historic Resource Survey; archives; Bill Pless' writings and Carol McMacken's book 'From Settlement to City'. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.