

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**FROM THE WILDERNESS—BRIGHTON Part 5**

Through the years of the settlement of Livingston County, a number of railroad companies were formed but folded. July 17, 1864, the Detroit, Lansing and Lake Michigan (later Detroit, Lansing and Northern) Railroad was organized. Hiram H. Smith was president and William J. McPherson, Jr., was treasurer. March 10, 1871, these business men, along with Edward G. McPherson, purchased land in Brighton Township, Sections 30 and 31 from Elijah Fitch and Elizabeth Cushing. The DLLM Railroad would bisect this purchase. The Smith-McPherson Addition was formed west of Ore Creek. Lots in the Addition provided sites for homes and businesses. A poster announcing the auction of lots, including the promise of a local brass band providing music, promoted the sale. (This poster is on display in CoBACH Center.) Flags and banners added to the excitement of the day.

Residential lots were purchased by early settlers, living in Genoa Township, who decided to retire to the amenities of village living, leaving the farming to offspring. Frequently more than one lot was purchased in order to build the barn for the necessary horse and buggy.

The trestle bridge allowed safe, convenient crossing of Ore Creek. Pedestrian paths on Main Street were boardwalks. These walks were supported by posts and/or pilings where they were built over the wet land. This swampy area paralleled Main Street on the north to First Street and north to Walnut.

Residents north of Cedar Street had swampy Ore Creek at their back door.

At this writing the City Hall, the 53rd District Court, the Cedar Street parking lot (i.e. Farmer’s Market), Lynn’s Café, the Imagination Station, public rest rooms, the alley and rear entrances to stores are all built on fill. Folks enjoying the Kiwanis Sunday night concerts set up seating on fill.

By 1873, Commercial interests extended west of Ore Creek to the railroad. The Western House (still standing) and the Lansing Railroad Hotel were especially busy when the train arrived. Passengers included sales representatives with merchandise needed by the local merchants. Within a few years, poultry and meat markets, general stores, McPherson’s clothing and fabric shop, Belding’s livery, Pipp and Becker Hardware Store, Weber Brothers carriage and harness makers, blacksmiths, paint and wallpaper store, could be patronized.

The F.T. Hyne and Son grain elevator and ‘plaster’ house (a lime and marl mixture to sweeten land at the time) stood by the tracks. A stock yard, lumber mill, and a planing mill were further north along the track. This part of town began to rival the earlier commercial interests along Grand River.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Bill Pless writings; “From Settlement to City” by Carol McMacken ; and Census records.)

Additions/corrections requested. 810-229-6402

Answers to Trivia Test on page 1

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|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Burroughs          | 6. Lil’ Chef           | 12. Lumber             | 18. Three Towers   |
| 2. Sammy’s Sail Inn   | 7. Western House Hotel | 13. Ice                | 19. Laundromat     |
| 3. Cities Services    | 8. Bill Davidson Ford  | 14. Five and Dime      | 20. Men’s clothing |
| 4. Grand River Avenue | 9. Ford and Chevrolet  | 15. Furniture          |                    |
| 5. Kinsley Bingham    | 10. Air conditioning   | 16. Van Camp Chevrolet |                    |
|                       | 11. Grind grains       | 17. Blacksmith         |                    |