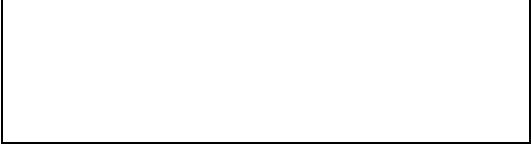


**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**Evolution of Area Roads (Part 3—Conclusion)**

Following WW I, the Federal government had become acutely aware that better roads were a military necessity. In 1924, the U.S. Highway System was established. Michigan was included in this system the following year. The first five-year plan of this Highway System, which would include hard surfaces, began July 1, 1925. (The final stretch of paving of M-16, Grand River Road, was completed to the west side of the state, August 11, 1926.) West Main Street in Brighton was still not a hard surfaced street. Taking advantage of possible savings, Brighton determined to pave Main Street at the same time Grand River, through town, was being paved, in 1924.

In late 1927, the Ann Arbor-Flint Road, routed through Brighton, is known as U.S. 23. A Brighton Argus clipping December 21, 1927, announced the planned paving of U.S. 23 the next year. Included in the plan by the Federal War Department, U.S. 23 was to be a "Federal Aid Road" which would run from Grand River to Spencer Road, one mile north, bypassing Brighton City.

Another clipping, February 29, 1928, describes the dismay with which this news was received by business and professional men in Brighton with the headline reading "Business Men Meet To Discuss U.S. 23". About 50 people "... met at the Weiss Barbecue Monday evening, to discuss the proposed change which is likely to take place in the rerouting of U.S. 23, which it is understood will be paved this year." As soon as a hearing could be scheduled with Governor Green most of this group planned to present him with their strong recommendations for a route which would continue U.S. 3 through Brighton.

As is now evident the highway was constructed as planned. As U.S. 23 passed Bunon Road it curved west to connect with Hilton just south of Skeman, removing a sharp corner. The route then curved around Indian Hill on the west shore of School Lake. Other sharp turns were restructured to become more easily and safely

negotiated curves; all necessary because of the speed at which vehicles traveled. At Hyne Road, U.S. 23 veered east to go through Hartland Village.

Another clipping, October, 1931 (beginning of the Great Depression) reads, "It was decided to widen Grand River from Farmington to Howell during the 1932 season and to start work on the grading at once." During the Great Depression much construction was contracted by the Federal government to provide jobs for the hundreds of thousands out of work" dams, roads, bridges and structures. The brick building on the northwest corner of Grand River and 23 was built as a state police post. One finds a few of these structures still in existence in Michigan — all in the same architectural style.

Again, after WW II, the U.S. government determined a more efficient, more dependable road system was necessary for the country's proper defense. The interstates came into being. Selection of routes in the Interstate Highway System was initiated in Michigan July 1, 1945. By the 1950s/60s, "internal improvements" were promoted by President Dwight Eisenhower designating I-94, I-96, I-75. March 4, 1959, I-96 was officially renamed from U.S. 16. April 10, 1961, the I-96/US 23 interchange, one of the world's largest at 175 acres, with eight overpasses was underway. A recent bulletin — new express lanes are to be built on I-96 at the interchange with US 23 in 2014.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from "From Settlement to City— Brighton"; news clippings. Additions/corrections requested. 810-229-6402.)