

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Press Locates in Brighton

The first issue of Livingston County’s first newspaper, the Livingston Courier, was dated January 10, 1843. It was published in Brighton, by Nicolas Sullivan. The editor was Frederick C. Whipple. News of the death, January 4, 1843, of Michigan’s first governor Stevens T. Mason at the age of 31, was included. One also read notices of marriages, deaths of others, and ads of local professionals and businesses.

Sullivan moved the Courier to Howell, where it became the first newspaper to be published, October 11, 1843; with Lewis H. Hewett as the editor. In ensuing years several other newspapers followed in Howell, the County seat.

In September, 1871, A. G. Blood & Company began publication of the Brighton Bulletin in the Howell office of the Howell Independent.

The Brighton Bulletin was bought by George W. Axtell, a printer from New Jersey, later that year. January 2, 1872, Axtell published the first edition of the Brighton Citizen in Brighton. He enlarged it from a seven column folio to a five column quarto. November, 1877, Axtell sold the Citizen to W. H. Bowman of Howell and J. D. Ellenwood of Brighton.

At 18, Brighton native Charles E. Placeway had begun working for Axtell. Placeway then began the South Lyon Herald and also the Pinckney Gazette, those towns’ first newspapers. Two years later (at 20) he started the Brighton Argus in a small room at the rear of Maltby’s store (S.W. corner Main and Hyne Streets) in Brighton competing with Axtell’s Brighton Citizen. One source relates that “Placeway has an attractive personality and is the kind of man people like to converse with — unless they get into a dispute with him. In that case....”

In 1897, E. W. Town and Seth B. Jacobs bought the Brighton Argus from Placeway. In 1924, Jacobs bought out Town and moved the

Argus to 415 W. Main. From there it was located at 401 W. Main from 1932-1949.

Frank Seger and Robert Rowe bought the Argus in 1938. In 1943, 1945 and 1947, the Argus was recognized nationally as a premier weekly newspaper winning general excellence awards. In 1947, Seger sold the Argus to Russell LaCombe and Wallace Scotten. From 1949-1954 it was lodged at 440 W. Main.

Paul Champion and Glenn Young became owners in 1955. By then the Brighton Argus had moved to 107 E. Grand River.

In 1980, The Brighton Argus and the Livingston County Press merged and continued publishing two weekly papers.

The Livingston County Daily Press and the Argus , also daily, began publishing September 7, 2000.

July 1, 1997, the Brighton office moved to the Old Town Hall at 202 W. Main; moving to Howell in 2008.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; “From Settlement to City” by Carol McMacken; news clippings and Brighton Area Historical Society archives. Additions / corrections requested. 810-229-6402.)

The BAHS is looking for your story!
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