

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Philosophy of “Family”/ The Inspiration for the Farms



three thousand reportedly went on trips each of those years to Tashmoo Park, near Algonac, Michigan, in the St. Clair River, which had a “casino”, beach, sporting fields and picnic grounds. In addition to adult pursuits, activities included *races for the children*.

You see, BAMCo was more than just an employer. They considered their employees as part of a family. There was a Burroughs band, Burroughs baseball teams, Burroughs bowling teams, Burroughs tennis teams, a Burroughs gymnasium and pool to teach employee’s children athletics and more. Athletic teams from BAMCo competed against other manufacturing companies’ teams in the Detroit area such as Ford Motor, Studebaker, Northway Motor, Packard, Grinnell Electric and others.

The inspiration for Burroughs Farms is credited to Burroughs Adding Machine Company (BAMCo) Vice-President Alfred J. Doughty. He is often referred to as the “Founder” of the Farms. Mr. Doughty is said to have proposed the idea of a recreational “center” for BAMCo employees. There may be several reasons for his idea. In the 1983 Burroughs publication, *In Focus*, it was said that the decline in industrial sports teams following World War I was what drove the idea of having a place for employees to recreate. In my opinion, it was more than that.

I believe that at some point in the mid-1920s, A. J. Doughty decided that it would benefit the Company if employees and their families had someplace to swim, dance, play sports and picnic more than just one day a year.

In the decades or more before 1927, when the Farms was created, the Company made it an annual habit of taking all of its employees and their families for a day-long “picnic” excursion, something the Company called “Burroughs Day.”

The evidence is this: when the Farms was born, the first endeavors were to have a beach, picnic groves, a “casino” or dance pavilion, and sports fields. The 4th of July celebrations centered on races and games for the children. It would be like Put-In-Bay or Tashmoo Park everyday.

For Burroughs Day, the company shut down the factory so that all employees could attend. In the summers of 1913–1916, and again in 1918, almost 2,000 Burroughs employees and their families climbed aboard a boat each of those years and went to Put-in-Bay, on South Bass Island in Lake Erie in Ohio, for a day of *picnicking, swimming, games and dancing*. In 1919 and 1920,

My father once told me that BAMCo had looked into buying what would become Kensington Metro Park before they settled on a series of Brighton farms scabbled together to make Burroughs Farms.

Next month... The acquisition of land and the fruition of the dream. (Thanks to Beth Chapman Smith for her submission.)

See CoBACH Exhibit in July-August featuring Burroughs Farms Memorabilia