

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Crippen’s Barn and Woodland Lake — Part 1

For about 100 years the Brighton area has been a destination for those seeking recreation. The many lakes still are an enticing draw. The paving of Grand River in 1924, promoted the already growing entertainment opportunities in the area.

At the traffic signal at Grand River and Hacker Road, it appears that Hacker veers off to the east. However, at that location it is Grand River which is heading westerly. Until 1924, Grand River Avenue followed today's Hacker and Bendix

Roads and turned sharply west to go around the tall hill. To ease the acute west-bound turn the curve now begins at the traffic signal.

At 2855 Hacker Road, stands the Ernest Crippen farmhouse which his parents, Ansel and Marilla Crippen, built after arriving in Brighton Township c. 1837. Following his service in the Civil War, along with his four brothers, Ernest and Helen Luce were married and moved into the house. A large barn was built to house the livestock Ernest raised. At that time the farmstead stood upon a steep hill below which flowed Ore Creek. One night, after an unusually heavy downpour, an enormous gully formed from which a large spring flowed. The spring ran strongly furnishing an abundant, good water supply for cattle and to cool cans of milk for shipment by rail to market.

In 1904, Ernest and Helen retired from farming, moving into town. Crippen sold the farm and its huge barn to Wallace Meyer



ing Woodland Lake. The barn now became the framework of a large club house, known as Woodland Lodge. During the years spacious additions were made to the Crippen barn. In the December 12, 1928, issue, the Brighton Argus reporter waxed rhapsodic in his description of the interior, which included two huge stone fireplaces, in his write-up of the grand opening of Pine Lodge. "...the lodge is a castle of medieval times,"

During the years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the property returned to Wallace Meyer several times from various speculators. Many local groups and schools held special parties and proms at the barn during the 1940s. A December, 1943 ad promoted "...Al and His Pals from Lansing, also Ray Wright sensational square dance caller", at Pine Lodge Ranch.

To be continued...

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er in 1922, who farmed before selling to Good & Spitzley, developers who converted the barn for dancing.

In September 1926, Tim Doolittle's Pine Lodge hosted Larry Schultz and His Boys for dancing to modern and square dancing. Four months later a special attraction was Ford's Original Band, Men About Town of WJR.

In 1927, the Capitol Land Company of Detroit dammed Ore Creek near Hilton Road, forming