

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**Crippen’s Barn and Woodland Lake — Conclusion**

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 2855 Hacker Road, stands the Ernest Crippen farmhouse which his parents, Ansel and Marilla Crippen, built after arriving in Brighton Township c. 1837.

In 1904, Ernest and Helen retired from farming, moving into town. Crippen sold the farm and its huge barn to Wallace Meyer in 1922, who farmed before selling to Good & Spitzley, developers who converted the barn for dancing.

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



Tim Doolittle’s Pine Lodge, in September, 1946, 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. Thomas & McQuivey, in March, 1949, then owners of Pine Lodge Dance Hall, were moving to Florida; an auction was held to sell all furniture and equipment.

The property was back in Wallace Meyers hands in 1951, when George Almashy, Sr., bought the Pine Lodge Ranch. The Pine Lodge Riding academy was in business at the site that

November. Also large parties could be "...catered with fishing, swimming and boating for your pleasure" at the resort, the Pine Lodge Inn which, in March 1952, specialized in "Ranch Style Dinners."

Almashy leased the structure to Lee Caron of Milford in the late 1950s. Caron had great plans to revive the Lodge and" bring back the gay times which were enjoyed in the log lodge in past years." However, December 22, 1958, 30 years and two weeks after its grand opening, a fire of undetermined source completely destroyed the old landmark leaving two tall stone fireplaces standing over the ashes.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Bill Pless writings; the Historical Society’s Historic Resource Survey File. Additions/ corrections requested. 810-229-6402)