

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A Story About Island Lake — Conclusion

Indians, settlers, farmers, ice harvesters, the railroad and depot, the Michigan Militia, Spiritualists, the Michigan Military Academy, hotel/resort owners, dance hall and roller skating rink owners, land developers, homeowners, the state park; all have benefitted by making use of the unique alliance of water, real estate, transportation, commerce and entertainment to be found at Island Lake. All played their part in "A Story About Island Lake".



From a gravel road to being paved, the road named Grand River has given over much of the task to I-96 to arrive at Island Lake. However, paved roads can be slick in cold weather. "Bottled Water Available for Salt Water Residents. Well water in the Fonda Lake area has allegedly been exposed to road salt..." read the January 3, 1979 Brighton Argus headline. The story indicated salt from the nearby MDOT storage facility was the source. A Fonda Lake salt study began which resulted in a state water system for Fonda, Island and Briggs Lakes residents.

Before the railroad made its way across Green Oak Township, merchandise, produce, cattle and people walked, rode horses or horse-drawn conveyances to get to the market in Detroit. (This may be considered a mini-look at how change is continuous and life goes on.)

By 1875, the Detroit, Howell & Lansing Railroad entered the eastern border of Green Oak Township. After a stop at the Green Oak

Station on Silver Lake Road it crossed the Huron and skirted the south end of Island Lake with a station at Academy Drive, the Island Lake Station. Brighton Village became a stop in 1873. For 20+ years the D.H.&L RR carried freight and passengers through the township. The Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad used the track in 1895. July 12, 1899, Island Lake became a flag station for all except the two fast trains. By 1910, the Grand Trunk Railroad stopped at Rushton, Island Lake,

Brighton and beyond. By 1915, it was the Pere Marquette. In 1954/59, it was the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. By 2001 the map indicates it's CSX. These same tracks still carry freight, even as they rumble several miles through the Island Lake Recreation Area. However, Academy Drive no longer takes one over the tracks to Bishop Road.

Although this is the last part of this Story of Island Lake, the documentation of its history must go on. Readers who have information or a story, fact or fiction, to add to the Story of Island Lake are encouraged to contact the Brighton Area Historical Society.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: writings of Bill Pless, interviews of Norma Jean Pless and Nancy Cardle; "Yesteryears of Green Oak" 1830-1930"; "From Settlement to City, Brighton, Michigan 1830-1945" by Carol McMacken; clippings; donated photographs and post cards; Island Lake Recreation Area Manager, Andres Haapala. Additions/corrections requested 810-229-6402.)