

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Brighton Becomes a Village

January 11, 1805, Michigan territory was carved from the North-west Territory. A governor was appointed and Detroit became the capital. Statehood was bestowed on the Territory by the Federal government in 1837.

Settlers coming to Michigan in the early 1830s found traveling difficult. With only challenging trails over the Appalachian Mountains there were few pioneers from the east.

From 1820--25, 92,000 acres were sold. 1825 saw the construction of the Erie Canal in New York and by 1836, four million plus acres were sold at \$1.25. "Michigan Fever" developed with this easier route west. The Canal terminated at Buffalo. A majority of travelers took a steamboat over Lake Erie to Detroit.

In the spring of 1832, at 22 years, Maynard Maltby and 18 year old brother Almon (a carpenter and joiner) met with a brother-in-law who had property in Northfield Township. (Green Oak and Brighton Townships were part of Washtenaw County until 1838 when they became part of Livingston County.)

Maynard purchased the SW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 31 (40 acres) of Brighton Township in 1832, the first in the township. East of Brighton Lake Road on Ore Creek, south of Third Street, they built a temporary shelter, fenced and planted six acres of wheat. The brothers recognized that Ore Creek (named because of the quantity of iron) could power a much needed saw mill. That fall, the boys returned to New York for the winter and taught school. Maynard married 18 year old Sarah Jeffords that following spring.

On the narrow Indian Grand River Trail from Detroit, bride Sarah perhaps wondered when she would ever see or hear from family and friends left in New York. Maynard had spoken often of the Ore Creek. There would be plenty of raw material and other settlers would need lumber cut for their new homes. The brothers built the dam, and their cabin, in the vicinity of Third Street on the

Creek. Most of the lumber for area settlers was cut at the Maltby Mill.

At the point where Grand River and Main Street intersect, William Noble prepared the first plat of the village, Brighton Township, Section 30, in 1837. Maynard Maltby bought lot 51, Section 2 of Noble's Plat and built the first frame house in the settlement in 1837. (Southeast corner of Grand River and St. Paul Streets.)

Orson Quackenbush also recognized the value of the water power of Ore Creek. His grist mill, 1840, (Northwest corner of North Street and West Street) helped assure the addition of taverns, stables, hotels, churches, blacksmith shops, grocers and other businesses in the settlement.

A "sawmill" town, the settlement was called Ore Creek. When postal service became available it was renamed Brighton. (It was determined there were too many Creeks already.)

Others bought property outside the settlement with the intention of farming. To govern townships, supervisors were elected. Richard Lyon, Section 22, became Brighton Township Supervisor, April 1838. A majority of the board officers lived outside the settlement. Those in the settlement had different goals; roads, police, fire, etc., changes which were often rejected by the township board. To govern themselves in a more representational manner part of Sections 30 and 31 were incorporated as Brighton Village, March 25, 1867. Daniel C. Marsh was elected the Village's first President; Benjamin T.O. Clark was Clerk and Chester Thompson, Treasurer. Wheaton J. Hicks was the Township Supervisor at that time.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; "From Settlement to City" by Carol McMacken; "Early Landowners" by Milton Charboneau; writings of Bill Pless. Additions/corrections requested 810-229-6402.)