The first schoolhouse in Brighton was built on the Grand River Trail in 1837. This building was used for about ten years and during that time the Brighton-Genoa Fractional District No. 5 was formed. The village grew, the citizens became dissatisfied with the old building and it was sold. A house on what is now E. Main Street was rented for use as a school until 1850, when a new schoolhouse was built on the northeast corner of Spencer and East Streets. This building served through the Civil War years.

A triangular site located west of what was then Ann Arbor Road (now Rickett) just south of the Grand River Trail, was purchased from Isaac W. and Spaullding N. Case in 1867, for the sum of $487.50. Property tax millage and state authorized bonds allowed the construction of the Union School which was occupied in December, 1868.

By 1879 there were 267 children in the district between 5 and 20 years of age. The number of teachers increased from one to two to five in 1879. By the late 1800's the school became graded and provided for a 10th grade education. An enrollment increased and grades 1-12 were taught it became necessary to rent vacant stores in the downtown area for grades 1-4. The buildings were not in good repair; some had saloons, wool storage and grocery stores. The parents were not satisfied but times were not good and the children were educated, even under those conditions, to succeed in institutions of higher education.

Around 1900 surrounding townships were paying tuition for students from their districts to attend the high school. By 1907, an elementary schoolhouse for grades 1-4 was built just north of the Union School. Its most recent use has been as the Brighton Senior Citizen's Center. It is now known as Rickett School.

In 1928, a new high school was built on Church Street at E. Main. In 1947, St. Patrick's Church bought the Union School and in 1952 it was torn down to provide a playground on the parochial school site. During the 1950's the area's country schools consolidated into the Brighton Area Schools. Since then seven elementary school buildings and a new high school on Brighton Road just west of town have been built, and enlarged. A recent decline in enrollment has caused the closing of one elementary school.

As the story goes, the 'old high school' (Union School) bell was rescued from a scrap heap by Richard Clark and it now hangs in the St. Paul Episcopal Church bell tower. (Above condensed from "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by William Plass.)

---

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 481
BRIGHTON, MI. 48116

---

BRIGHTON'S SCHOOLS

---

General Meeting, January 8, 1985

Emma Easterton from Howell has a collection showing the various styles of architecture in the area. We'll meet upstairs in the Old Town Hall (formerly Library), 202 W. Main, at 7:30 for a short business meeting and viewing of these slides. Anyone having pictures of older homes is welcome to bring them for the rest of us to enjoy.

---

November 13, Meeting Recap

Following a great potluck dinner at St. Paul's fellowship hall, the business meeting included the presentation of annual reports and the election of directors. Serving for the next two years will be Maie Schmidtke (welcome Maie) and Gary Cole (thanks for serving again, Gary). Judy Forsman's program on campaign memorabilia was eagerly received. Some of the group also brought several fine examples.

Names of those who might find this newsletter of interest may be given to any member of the board...we'll add them to the mailing list.

---

Brighton Area Historical Society

---

ISSUE NO. 15

December, 1984

The purpose of the Brighton Area Historical Society is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of the Brighton Area.

The membership is composed of people who feel the above purpose is worthwhile and should be promoted.

---

Editorial

Support of the Society in the form of memberships, donations of pictures and artifacts, raffle prizes, labor and merchandise is most heartening and these contributors are to be commended.

Everyone should be aware that this continued support is needed and that it most assuredly must increase.

The railroad depot is gone, the Union School is gone. Many old barns and homes have been dismantled. The Kalamazoo Theater is gone. Al- most all one room school houses have disappeared. Does anyone remember the Grand (Washington) Theater? Will the Rickett School go also? The Lyon School will not be restored with help from the Society. Lack of response has caused the Brighton City Council to believe the community doesn't really care if the Old Town Hall (Library) is restored.

Yes, more people have to expend some energy in order to accomplish our goals. (E. M. Bair)

++ + + + + + + +

Memberships 1985

Persons paying their dues after October 1, will be considered as having paid for the following year.

At present these are Bert & Marieanna Bair, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Boylan, Sue Cappell, Dr. Robert Cheshka, Citizen's Trust, Robert Clark, George Hacker, Barton & Catherine Hellmuth, Kathryn Hodglin, Don & Shirley Jenkins, Ray & Jean Lanning, L. Mark Linquist, Leota Mason, Fred & Mary Messerschmidt, Judith Peck, Norma & Charles Pless, Gerald & Judy Forman, Ed & Connie Sherman, Bill & June Tomlinson and John & Virginia Zureke. WELCOME.

If you'd like to help with the Society's goals please use the form you'll find in this newsletter. Your membership is essential.