FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Stephen Lee arrived in Green Oak Township from New York State in the fall of 1830. Benjamin Curtis and his family also arrived about the same time. In June, 1831, the Curtis family joined with the Lees at the Lee home (just south of town) and were led in a worship service by Rev. Moses Gleason, a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Gleason left the area because of the Black Hawk War but to him goes the distinction of having conducted the first religious service in the Brighton Area. Since there were no regular classes in the area, many Methodist residents attended services when Rev. W.A. Clark, D.D., (of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church fame) who was a resident since 1836, preached.

During the early 1830s the Methodists met in a part of a new store on Grand River owned by W.R. Cobb. By 1843 religious meetings were held at the newly constructed home of Daniel C. Marsh on the corner of Grand River and Ann Arbor Roads (Nickett Road). Worship services were conducted by local residents and circuit riders.

In 1854, the Brighton congregation was separated from the Milford charge and given a separate appointment, the Rev. Wm. Hawver. The Society organized itself under Michigan law as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Brighton. After a school house was erected on Grand River, services were conducted there until subscriptions were secured for a church building which was dedicated in September, 1856. The church contained a balcony and had a handsome steeple containing a bell and one large and four smaller spinkles.

Under the supervision of Wm. Walker Gray, pastor 1902-06, the original church was raised and a new one erected. This was a frame building with a seating capacity of 150. In 1915, approximately, the church was closed for several years and the parsonage rented. Following World War I, new interest arose and by June, 1920, the Ladies Aid Society had raised $400 toward support of a pastor and improvement of the property. The minister served Oak Grove Methodist Church and later Novi Methodist Church in addition to the church in Brighton.

In 1962, the east unit of the present church was built. When completed, the wooden church and parsonage on Grand River in front of the new building was razed. The home and land immediately to the north of the church was purchased in 1963. The most recent addition has been a church school facility to the west which was completed in 1977. Additional property on Brighton Lake Rd., known as the “Green House” was acquired in 1981.

For the past 150 years, the Methodists have been worshipping in Brighton. In 1984, their Christian witness is still evident. (Extracted from "History" of the church.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
BRIGHTON, MI 48116

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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PAID MEMBERS 1984

Since the last issue the following have paid 1984 dues:
- Evangeline Bell, Bill & Marianne Comiskey, Dr. Henry Davis, Harold & Eleanor Davis, Carrie Francisco, Bob & Elizabeth Herbst, Arlene Jacob, Bob & Shirley Knight, Richard & Toni Mullany, Frank & Alice Seger, Robert & Ruth Watson, Gloria Winchel.

If you don't find your name here, please use the form you'll find elsewhere in this newsletter. Your membership is essential. A receipt and membership card will be sent. Contact a board member if you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter.

Apology and correction - In the April issue Dick, instead of David Lehman, was listed. Sorry Dave.

The support of area residents, merchants and others interested in the activities of the Society is sincerely appreciated and most helpful. We assured the board members and chairman are depending on this support continuing.

Responsive to telephone requests is very good. It is most gratifying to have a volunteer contact us.

This causes a board member to begin thinking "...may this Society can fly." But a few volunteers doing a lot of work can become dismaying. Continued encouragement from the area is vital. (Ed. M. Bair)

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CHANGE OF DATE FOR GENERAL MEETING IN JUNE

The next general meeting date has been changed to Tuesday, June 5. We will meet upstairs in the Old Town Hall, 202 W. Main at 7:30 p.m.

Barbara Beckstrom, who specializes in trips to historic places, and is a former Greenfield Village guide, will give a lecture and slide presentation on various short trips of interest to history buffs. Your input and suggestions on other locations will be welcomed.

The Society is exploring the possibility of a group trip to a historical location in the Fall. No date as yet.

Please join us that evening and bring a friend or two. Refreshments following.

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Printing of this newsletter compliments of the BRIGHTON STATE BANK. (Very much appreciated.)

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