

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Brighton Area Settlers Valued Education — Part 6 — Conclusion

The population in School District 5 continued increasing. To keep abreast of the need for elementary education facilities a school was built in 1960, at 8900 Lee Road. It was named for H. Gordon Hawkins, Superintendent at the time. Significant additions were constructed in 1969 and 1987.

Major construction, dedicated to elementary grades, was made to the 125 N. Church Street School which by 1966, was named the Robert L. Scranton Middle School.

Even with the building of elementary schools, the increased growth in population in the Church Street High School, 9-12, a new high school was obviously needed in 1966. A site at the south end of 7th Street, in Genoa Township was selected. More recently, in 2012, additional classrooms, a theater, a swimming pool, athletic facilities, etc., have been built to continue the high level of educational opportunities in Brighton District 5.

In 1973, population growth deemed necessary the construction of Spencer Road Elementary, 10639 Spencer. In Brighton Township, it was named for John G. Spencer, an early settler.

In 1977, the Maltby Middle School, 4740 Bauer Road, and the Hornung Elementary, 4680 Bauer, were erected. The middle school was named for the Maltby family which receives credit for the construction of a school in Brighton in 1837. In 1952, Eleanor Hornung began teaching in Brighton District 5. These schools are in Genoa Township.

In 1991, Hilton Elementary, 9600 Hilton Road, Brighton Township was built on land settled in 1856 by Thomas Hilton.

To properly educate middle school age students, the Robert S. Scranton Middle School, 8415 Maltby Road, Green Oak Township, was constructed in 1993. At that time, the Community

Education Office (from the high school) and the Board of Education Offices (from Maltby Middle School) were relocated to the 125 N. Church Street building which became the BECC Building. (Brighton Education and Community Center)

Area residents continue the centuries-old tradition of exemplary educational opportunities for all students. District 5 students are encouraged to develop their talents as discovered to continue to fulfill the goals, hopes, dreams of district taxpayers.

What happened to the closed rural schools? Some fell down, some were torn down. Several became homes, businesses, or township halls. Their local and historical settings prompted local preservationists to offer them as sites for possible reuse. The Brighton Area Historical Society has converted the Lyon School (donated by Brighton Township Board in 1984) at 11455 Buno Road, Brighton Township, into an archival facility and to host local elementary classes, etc. The country school continues to be a powerful cultural symbol to many Americans as it confirms the importance the United States places on education.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from writings of Bill Pless; "Michigan—History of the Wolverine State" by Willis F. Dunbar and George S. May; "Brighton Schools — Then and Now, 1992" by Jean Petersburg; Bruce Ritter; Brighton Area Centennial Committee 1967; "From Settlement to City—Brighton 1832-1945" by Carol McMacken. Additions/corrections requested 810-229-6402.)