

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Library in Brighton (Part 3)

In 1976, the Brighton City government and the Brighton Library were growing beyond the capacity of the Old Town Hall to properly continue to conduct affairs in an orderly, responsible manner. Both would soon be in need of (again) space.

The long and short term needs of both the Library and the City government were to be included in a study commissioned by the City Council in 1976.

The Library, with 60,000 circulated items, serving 32,000 residents and as a member of the Huron Valley Library system, additional room for material and services would be needed.

The possibility of construction, adding to the Old Town Hall was considered by the Commission. However, the historical structure would be architecturally compromised. Another solution had to be found.

In 1981, the city offices moved into the new Municipal Building located across the mill pond at 200 N. First Street. Adequate space in the new building, with large windows, was incorporated for the library.

Under Dorothy Demorest’s leadership a Friends of the Library group organized in 1983, to supplement the library’s budget. A laminator for the library was their first purchase. Technology was making some library materials obsolete, i.e. its 16mm film and film strip collection. VHS recordings were becoming available, a welcome addition.

Shelagh Klein Davis became library director in 1984. Development continued: 27,405 books, 125 Periodical subscriptions, six newspapers and 400 audio recordings, marked continued expansion under her direction by the time she retired in 1989.

Mimicking the Library’s growth during the 1990s was that of the area. A clipping dated April 3, 1991, is headlined “Brighton Library is Bursting at the Seams”. A “...long-range planning commission is looking into the possibility of obtaining district status.” Status funding “...would be shared among all the residents of the district — which would include the City of Brighton, Brighton Area Schools, Brighton, Genoa and Green Oak Townships.” District status was acquired August 10, 1992. Supported by residents, it was now the Brighton District Library! The commission’s report continued: the library was “...too small to service the needs of the greater Brighton area and the existing site is limiting...” at 330 square feet instead of the desired 25,000 to 30,000 feet. Also that its collection of items should be at least 49,000. A new structure for the growing Brighton District Library seemed to be the only answer.

Now the major question becomes — where to build the Brighton District Library?

To be continued...

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Newspaper clippings, Society Archives and material compiled by Mark Mullinax, Genealogy and Local History Librarian, Brighton District Library. Additions/corrections requested: 810-229-6402.)