

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE CANOPY

The Hotel was built in 1925 by Tom Leith and opened New Year’s Day, 1926 at 130 W. Grand River.

It was originally the “Lincoln Hotel” and the 1st National Bank of Brighton, then “Graham Hotel,” the “Monk Hotel,” then became the “CANOPY HOTEL,” then just “THE CANOPY.” The building started to be called the CANOPY when in early 1955, three businessmen assumed ownership over the hotel from Ralph Monk. Their vision was to install canopies from the ceiling of the restaurant to create a warmer feeling inside and place a canopy on the outside entrance.

In May 1955, Mrs. Sargent of Brighton was hired to paint murals on the walls in the banquet room. Russell and Joyce Yetier from Clare, MI became the managers for the hotel. But by Thanksgiving 1955, Bill Clemens is the manager. The Wrights were managers and part owners by 1957, along with two other businessmen from Ann Arbor.

The Canopy had four primary areas. Three dining rooms (the Main Dining room which held up to 100 people, the Walnut Room, the Gaslight Room for private parties, and the 4th was the bar, known as the “Vault” due to the bank vault from the 1st National Bank still being part of the building. The vault is still in the building of Preview Properties.

The Canopy was not just a stopping point for travelers, it was a destination for many. It drew the elite, the politicians, the high profile criminals and show people and was sought out for many occasions by locals. Or for that Sunday brunch or dinner. Don’t forget the sticky buns!

The high points were not just the food (which Bill Brown and his crew made delicious) and the great service, it was all the wonderful people that worked there. **Earl Williams**, the piano player, who played for

over 30 years there, made the experience very special. There was also the wait staff and hostess’, such as **Jenny Fredenburg** and **Nanette Edwards** and various others. We would love to know all their names.

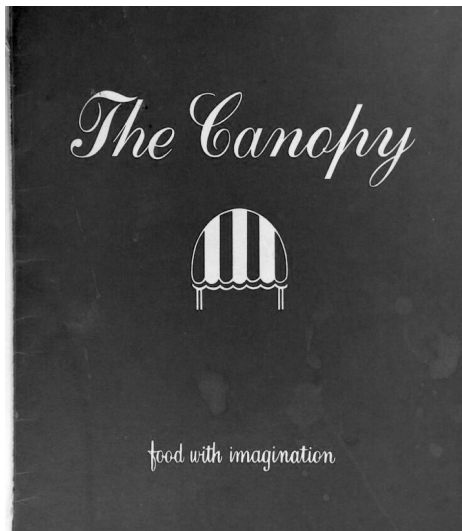
They also acquired some very interesting paintings. Some nudes for the bar, as well as a 7’ x 3.25’ velvet painting of a bartender that hung over the bar (currently owned by a private individual in Brighton). Also a large molded painting, “The Lady and the Lion,” which currently hangs over a fireplace at Stout’s Restaurant.

By 1984, Jack Wright retires from managing the Canopy and Bill Davis becomes manager. Bill was the assistant manager for 20 years before becoming the manager.

By 1985, Doug and Suzie Wood become new owners, and at that time, “The Canopy received a timely new renovation.”

The last meal was served in June 1989. Much speculation occurred on why it closed. The moving in of fast food places, times changing, trouble with the IRS, etc. Because of the wonderful reputation of the restaurant, very few people understood why it closed.

It sat vacant for 2-1/2 years until Preview Properties saw the wonderful potential of the classic building.



The CANOPY will live on in the memories of all that were able to go there. You can’t say the CANOPY without someone saying, “Oh I loved that place and I miss it. Especially the Sticky Buns!”

(Compiled and submitted by Mindy Kinsey from sources in the BAHS Archival files and articles from the Brighton Argus.)