

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 481

Brighton, MI 48116-0481

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Brighton Facts — Did You Know?

The following were taken from the book entitled, "From Settlement to City, Brighton, Michigan 1832 – 1945 written by Carol McMacken.

This "coffee table" sized book is a wonderful addition to any library and can be purchased at Lawrence Autobody in Brighton or by contacting Jim Vichich at 810-250-7276. The cost is \$60 for BAHS Members and \$65 for non-members. There is a \$10 mailing charge.

- The population of Livingston County in 1840 was 7,430. The census of Brighton Township including the village at Ore Creek was 786.
- The Eastern House (Brighton Hotel) at the corner of Main and Grand River was the location of the election that officially gave Brighton the status of an incorporated village on March 25, 1867.
- May 1926 Kroger & Co. signed a lease for the first chain-retailing store. A&P followed three years later at the corner of Main Street & Grand River in what was formerly known at the Brighton Inn.
- The formal opening of the new-public library was in April of 1928. Twenty-five membership cards were issued. Dr. J.D. Singer was the first person to take a book from the organized library.
- A contest was held in 1936 to determine the best slogan that would represent Brighton. Father Bath, the priest at St. Patrick's, originated the slogan 50 Lakes in 5 Miles Radius – 50 Cities in 50 Mile Radius, which won the contest.
- Brighton's first Bi-Annual Homecoming was August 21-22, 1907.
- In 1909, total residents having cars was eight. Ownership in Brighton by 1912, was approximately one person out of fifteen inhabitants of the village.
- In 1924, General Motors purchase 1075 acres of land to develop a system of roadways representing a variety of conditions to be used for a testing field for automobiles. The area known as the "Proving Ground," was a source of employment for many of the young men from Brighton and surrounding farms.
- During 1900, the Brighton post office was distributing one thousand to three thousand letters and papers each day.
- Three cemeteries were established in Brighton during the 19th century. The Village Cemetery, Calvary and Fairview. The Village Cemetery, adjacent to the millpond consisted of one acre of land which was established by The Reverend Mr. William A. Clark.
- Memorial Day has always been an important holiday to the citizens of Brighton. Fourth of July parades were always popular in Brighton.
- The Rialto Theater was built in 1918. Considered to be of the latest design, it was lighted with incandescent lights and contained a stage with dressing rooms beneath. The grand opening was held in March 1919, with the house filled to capacity.
- Bowling came to Brighton in 1902. This was not a gambling game of any kind, but a harmless amusement. Ladies would be given the use of the alley free of charge any time and Wednesday afternoons would be reserved for ladies only.
- The first paper in Brighton was the Livingston Courier, which consisted of a five-column folio. It was also the first paper in Livingston County and its first issue was distributed on January 10, 1843.
- Charles E. Placeway published the first issue of the Brighton Argus on April 6, 1880.

