

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Our current exhibit at the CoBACH Center, located on Main Street in Brighton next to the Millpond is entitled, "Let's Go Camping — Recreational Camps of the Area." This is an extensive display of the many camps around the Brighton area. Below is just a sample of what is on display. If you want to learn the "rest of the story," please plan to visit the CoBACH Center. The display runs through mid-September.

"Let's Go Camping" — Recreational Camps of the Area

Dibrova: Land for the Dibrova Camp was purchased from the estate of John A. Busquette on Thomas Lake, which was named after the original settler, Ebenezer Thomas, who bought the land in 1838. The 120 acres of land was sold on September 24, 1954 to Ukrainians for \$50,000. The lake name became Dibrova Lake. Initially set up by adult members of Plast, the Ukrainian Scouting Organization set it up as a plastuny campsite for the scouts. To cover costs of the purchase, the camp was divided into 2 sides. One side was for the public, of which a membership was needed. The other side was portioned into 85 lots and sold to individuals for cottage sites. Both sides had access to the lake...*(This is still an active camp, and you can learn more about it by visiting our display at the CoBACH Center.)*

Brighton Recreational Camp: Located off Chilson Road. In 1944 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources bought land at Chilson and Bishop Lake Roads. Rustic camping, as well as modern camping were available. From a 1948 brochure, "Access to fishing waters is available at Appleton, Bishop, Murray, Long and Lime Lakes." By the 1950's Bishop Lake Beach was developed. In the early 1960's Bishop Lake Campground was started and a second swimming area was added in 1970, Chilson Beach...*(You can find out more about this camp. Plan a visit to our display at CoBACH Center.)*

St. Vincent's Villa - Camp for Girls: Located on approximately 375 acres with a 40-acre lake known as Pickerel Lake. In 1921 St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was projected to be built as a summer resort for orphaned or homeless girls. The St. Vincent de Paul organization purchased land known as the Decker/old Van Leovan farm. The farmhouse and old barns became sleeping quarters. St. Vincent later became the "summer" quarters of the Sarah Fisher Home for orphaned girls... *(To learn more about this camp, visit our display at the CoBACH Center.)*

"Fresh Air Camp": Opened June 26, 1927 on Blaine Lake, became Camp Tamarack in 1963. Land originally owned by Benjamin Blaine, an early pioneer of the area in 1833. The "fresh air camp" was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Edwin M. Rosenthal to the Detroit Jewish community for its youth to

enjoy "fresh air" away from the city. It started out with 4 large dormitories each housing 50 children and 4 counselors, a hospital and a dining hall. It closed in 1994 and the land is now under ownership of an individual... *(Visit the display at CoBACH Center to find out the rest of the story.)*

Brighton Gardens Lake Colony: In 1919 Birney Walker Smith had a dream of finding land not far from Detroit where African-Americans could leave the city and enjoy the old fashioned country fun of picnicking, swimming, dancing and... a peaceful environment. He found 80 acres, south of Lyons Lake previously owned by Nelson Gould, and purchased the land from Mrs. Ella Postiff. The Gardens boasted boat rides, swimming and fishing. A pavilion was also built. Families enjoyed trips to Brighton Gardens and began to buy property for summer homes... *(You can learn more about this unique camp by visiting the display at CoBACH Center.)*



Dibrova Camp



Camp Tamarack

(This is a fascinating display of camps in and around the Brighton area. We hope you will stop by the CoBACH Center and find out more information and view the current display. Thanks to Mindy Kinsey for compiling this information from the Society's archives.)