

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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The CoBACH Display for March and April is entitled: **“Brighton Area Churches.”** On display will be approximately 30 churches throughout the Brighton area along with photos and a brief history on each. We hope you will plan a trip to CoBACH to see the part churches have played in the history of Brighton.

“Brighton Area Churches”

As early as 1826, before there was any sign of settlement at Ore Creek, spiritual needs were being addressed in the southern portion of Livingston County. Quarterly visits to Green Oak were being made to celebrate the Catholic Mass by a circuit priest, the Reverend Father Morrissey. The Reverend Moses Gleason, a Protestant preacher, led a service for three families at the home of Stephen Lee in Green Oak in 1831. By 1837, in the emerging village of Brighton, Episcopal services were conducted in the orchard on the property of the Reverend William A. Clark, west of the millpond. Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal denomination resided for intermittent periods to administer to those who had committed to their doctrine. Mary McNamee, a devout Catholic, in 1838 offered land located on McCabe and Silver Lake Roads, an area known as Paddy Town, where a log church, St. Joseph’s, was built. It was from this early Catholic presence that the parish of St. Patrick at Brighton later resulted. Somewhat later, in 1845, under the leadership of Pastor Frederick Schmidt, approximately twenty-five families held an organizational meeting to found a German Lutheran Church in Genoa.

Despite the religious activity that had been occurring during this twenty-year period, the Reverend Mr. Hollister of Green Oak, in a letter written in 1847, expressed sorrowfully that, “Brighton...is important for laying the foundation of the Church. In it are no houses of worship for any denomination: and except what I render, they have no preaching at all, but that from the Methodist preachers, or one sermon once a fortnight. Religion is greatly neglected here, and it is a sad discouragement at pre-

sent to find no gentlemen of influence to interest themselves in promoting a church.” (The Spirit of Missions-January 1847)

It cannot be said with certainty if it was Mr. Hollister’s mournful commentary on the disappointing state of religious life in the village, or if it was the essential role that faith played in the lives of those who founded the churches in Brighton, that prompted the development of the religious community in the village. However, a wave of church construction took place over the next twenty-seven years. Beginning in 1854 and ending in 1881, one Catholic and six Protestant churches were constructed.

(The above was an excerpt from the book “Settlement to City Brighton, MI — 1832—1945” written by Carol McMacken. This book is available for purchase at CoBACH. \$60 for BAHS members and \$65 for non-members.)

