



A DRIVING TOUR OF BRIGHTON

Established in 1814, the Town of Brighton has changed remarkably in 180 years. A prosperous 19th century farming community that stretched from the Henrietta town line to Lake Ontario, and from the Penfield / Pittsford border to the Genesee River, Brighton became the Rochester area's premier suburb in the early 20th century. Brick making, glue production, and flour milling gave way to subdivisions such as Home Acres, Roselawn, and Bel-Air. Well after World War II, farming continued to be a major occupation for Brighton residents. Today, on the brink of its third century, Brighton retains vestiges of its agricultural history in the center part of town, while offering a variety of housing in its residential neighborhoods.

1950s era Cape Cod-style houses sit side by side with substantial brick farmhouses. The area's oldest structure, the 1792 Stone-Tolan house, shares East Avenue with 1960s high-rise apartments. 1990s businesses occupy 19th century buildings. Brighton offers the history buff and the student of architecture an interesting and varied adventure.

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HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS is
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1. Brighton Town Hall: Dedicated to Brighton's war dead and designed by Storrs Barrows, architect for Brighton High School and a number of Brighton residences, the 1953 brick and limestone structure is a contemporary interpretation of 19th century classicism. Lobby murals by G. Lee Trimm, a Camillus artist, depict Brighton's history. A library wing was added in 1960 and a public safety wing in 1990.

Turn right, then first right. Straight to Highland Ave. Turn left onto Highland.



2. John Hagan House: 895 Highland Avenue. In 1814, John Hagan brought his wife to a log cabin near the place

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where in 1826 he had built this Dutch-style brick house. John Hagaman owned most of the property along Highland Avenue and Clinton Avenue which became known as Hagaman's Corners.

Turn left onto Clinton Avenue.



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3. 2169 Clinton Avenue South: The brick house in Greek Revival style built by Timothy Wallace, a farmer from Massachusetts, and his wife Olive, was probably begun in the late 1830s with the center block and north wing. A matching south wing was added in the 1840s. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Turn right onto Westfall Road.

4. Monroe Community Hospital: originally in Brighton. The architect of this 1930 building was Sigmond Firestone, in association with African-American architect Thomas Boyde.

Turn left onto West Henrietta Road.



5. Warrant Homestead: 1956 West Henrietta Road. This house, the only documented Underground Railroad site in Brighton was completed in 1821. Originally L-shaped and lined with brick, a room was added before the Civil War to the first and second floors, making the house square. The homestead was later covered with wood and a cupola placed on top. The Warrant family lived here until 1988.

Turn right onto Crittenden Road.



6. Crittenden House: 1600 Crittenden Road. An exceptional example of the Federal period, this house was built in 1830 for Austin Crittenden and his bride, Sarah Warrant. The house is noted for

A DRIVING TOUR OF BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)

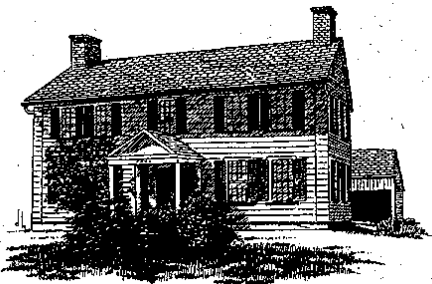
its fine carpentry and the delicacy and balance of its design. Austin's father, Chauncey, built the original homestead which still stands in back of this house.

Turn right onto East River Road.

7. 1564 East River Road: The house, built in 1842, has a foundation built from stones taken from nearby fields. Note the beautiful iron grills in the "lie on your stomach windows" and its placement on the banks of the Genesee River.

Go straight on expressway 390 South to 590 North. Exit at Highland Avenue.

Go straight; follow E. Highland Drive to East Ave. Turn right onto East Ave.



8. Stone-Tolan House: 2370 East Avenue.

The oldest house in Brighton, built in 1790 by Orringh Stone, it was also one of the first taverns in the Genesee Country. Here in 1814 the first town government was formed during its first town meeting. Though a relatively simple wilderness building, the house shows considerable refinements in such things as the wooden quoins at the corners.

Turn left onto Linden Avenue / Route 441.

After crossing expressway (Route 490), turn left and immediately left again onto Glen Road.



9. Corbetts Glen: This stone viaduct was built in 1880 of hand cut dolomite limestone. It replaced a wooden trestle bridge built in 1851 by the New York Central Railroad. Trestle wood, removed to allow for the archway, was used to build the "Corbett" house (through the tunnel). The tunnel served as the only entrance to the popular picnic grounds created by Patrick Corbett in 1892 when he purchased the property.

Go back on Glen Road; turn right onto 441. Go straight across East Avenue onto Elmwood Avenue. Follow Elmwood Avenue to Monroe Avenue.



10. 333 Elmwood Avenue: Originally a wood frame farmhouse with wrap-around porches, this house was given a new look in the 1930s by cementing over the wooden structure, doing extensive renovation, and creating formal gardens in back of the residence.

A DRIVING TOUR OF BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)

Turn left onto Monroe Avenue. Turn right onto Edgewood Avenue.



11. Evershed House: 2005 Westfall Road. Evidence of successive built in 1804, is the small east wing. Purchased in 1882 by John Evershed, the house served as a farmstead for a vast tract of land known as the Evershed Farm.

Turn right onto Westfall Road.

4 **12. Buckland House:** 1551 Winton Road South. Built of brick manufactured on the premises, this house was the first of two houses built by Abner Buckland on Winton Road.

Turn right onto Winton Road.

13. Brickyards: Winton Road school yards. The Rochester Brick & Tile Works, founded in 1856, utilized the substantial vein of clay in central Brighton to produce bricks, paving materials, and drainage tile for building projects in the US and Canada. Occupying both sides of Monroe Avenue from Highland Avenue to near the Telve Corners, the company operated at this site until the clay supply was exhausted in 1919. Leonard Buckland, son of pioneer settler and brickmaker Abner Buckland, operated a brick works that used clay from the area

now occupied by Brighton High School. The Buckland houses, at 1551 and 1037 South Winton Road, were made with bricks produced by the family.

Turn left onto Elmwood Avenue.

14. Temple B'rith Kodesh (Hebrew for Holy Covenant): In 1962, the Reform Jewish congregation moved from its Gibbs Street home to a new building designed by Pietro Belluschi, dean of architecture and planning at MIT. His aims of "clarity and nobility" are most visibly demonstrated by the 65 foot, 12 sided dome, representing the 12 tribes of Israel and, in the words of Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, "Twelve windows to heaven and earth, reminding us that a synagogue should receive and should give great light." The temple's sanctuary, museum, and courtyard contain outstanding examples of Judaic art and historical artifacts.

Text of tour by Mary Jo Lanphear.

HISTORIC BRIGHTON

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FROM SHANK'S MARE TO SUPERHIGHWAY:

GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON

By Leo Dodd

Brighton transportation history, though unique, follows that of other United States nineteenth century villages. Progress was driven by the worldwide discovery and application of new power sources. The great technical advances, and engineering designs from 1800 to 1900 established the pace of changing means in travel. The uniqueness of Brighton transportation history was created by our landscape and location.

During the time before 1800 when the Senecas lived in Brighton, human strength and endurance empowered them to travel quickly and efficiently by foot and boat to camps and villages on and expeditions. The major footpaths that are now Landing Road, Highland Avenue and Ridge Road were cleared and maintained for access to the Genesee River, Irondequoit Bay and Lake Ontario. These waterways and trails used by Indians to access hunting grounds and encampments were also used to deliver white settlers to our area. They were used, modified and exist today as major arteries of transportation. To travel Highland Avenue and be unaware of its historical significance makes for a very dull ride.

This Indian trail allowed the traveler to avoid the dangerous high falls of the Genesee River and reach Irondequoit Bay and Lake Ontario. Brighton was a unique transportation hub for Monroe County. Where else would you find an Indian footpath morphed into a state canal, then an electric subway and now identified as the city's outer loop.

This year, 2003, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' inven-



Interurban Brighton station

tion of the airplane; the Ford Automobile Manufacturing firm is also celebrating their 100th year. The inventions of the 1800's have powered our transportation history into the 21st century. Brighton people contributed to this technical advance, implemented the new designs and made them work to advance the development of our town. Brighton was a transportation hub in upstate New York—a center for rail and waterway routes and, yes, these routes were developed along side of and over the trails established by the engineers of the League of the Iroquois.

Brighton advanced through the 1800's with the use of horsepower, ox power, steam engine, electric motor and the gas engine. Brighton experienced what all others did—a virtual explosion of inventions providing inexpensive means of transportation. Contrast the early 1800s as Gideon Cobb, one of Brighton's pioneers, ran the first "Ox Taxi Service Company" in Upstate New York. For three years in early 1800's he transported people between Rochesterville to the Indian Landing on Irondequoit Bay and to the Port of Charlotte on Lake Ontario. Compare that method to what was available fifty to a hundred years later.

GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)

It was the horse, not the ox that could be bred in varieties of size, power, looks, and style to accommodate the various needs for power. The horse was the main power source used to move people and products throughout our town for more than 130 years. Our farmers raised and trained horses and led with many a prize at the annual agricultural show held on Crittenden Boulevard Fair Grounds in West Brighton. The farmers of our area excelled in developing exceptional animals, and took pride in breeding. Our farmers developed the first engines.

The stage coach enterprise operated in our area until about 1850. The many taverns, or stage stops, such as the Stone Tolan house on East Avenue or Cobb's home on Monroe Avenue, at the corner of Highland Avenue, gave comfort to those traveling within our area. The hotels in Rochesterville were the center of stage coach activity providing transportation in all directions, with many crossing Brighton highways. The horse powered trolley lasted approximately thirty years, 1860-1890.

The major player in the Brighton transportation history was the development of the Erie Canal. The canal development oc-

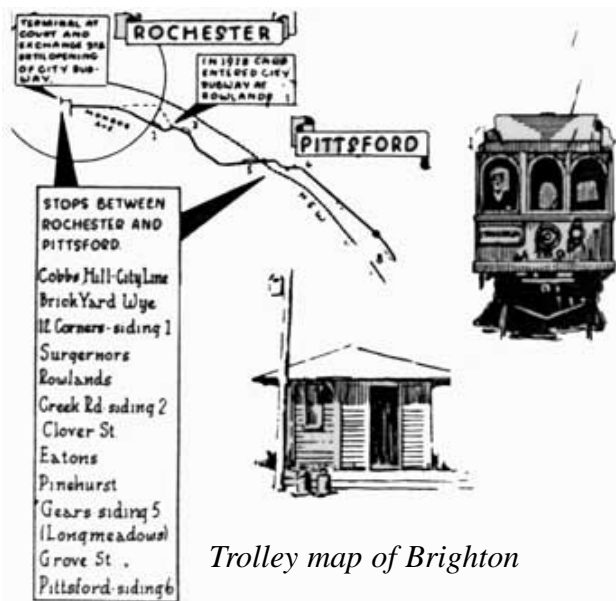


curred so early in our history—1823—just as people were beginning to arrive in the wetland wilderness of central and western New York State. Brighton, a major port town on this new canal system, contributed to the growth of the town and state. Our farm products could reach distant places and as markets grew Brighton prospered. People came here to buy the rich farmland and take advantage of the product delivery system established by New York State. Brighton excelled with its canal access, and contributed to building, engineering and maintaining the canal system, building packet boats, and providing stores and lodging along the canal route. Brighton Centre—at the East Ave. and Winton Rd. intersection—was a bustling center for industry, merchants, hotels, churches, and government, all made possible by the Canal Transportation System. You could view all the Town transportation history in this one mile square area. Stage coach, trolleys, horse and electric, interurban trains, steam trains, bicycles and Automobiles had stations and operations at this Canal Port. Had you lived at the corner of East & Winton and never left the area, you could have seen it all. A true transportation hub, as it is today with the infamous “*Can of Worms*.”

(What a degrading title applied to such



GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)



a rich site of historical importance! Please reclaim in your mind the historical strength of this site, a “*Can of Worms*” it is not ! A prized center of civilization it is!)

The Horse Trolley System that serviced Brighton and Rochester was called “The Rochester City & Brighton Railroad Company” providing service to the Brighton Village and West Brighton. The cars were to drawn by “horses or mules only at a speed not to exceed the rate of seven miles per hour.” Also stated in incorporation was .”It shall be the duty of the company to employ careful, sober and prudent agents, conductors and drivers so far as the same is possible.” Patronage dropped sharply in the winter when sleighs were substituted for horse cars which were unable to make it through the heavy snow. In 1870, the county was swept by an epidemic of hoof and mouth disease which crippled horse car service everywhere. In Rochester only about four out of every hundred horses owned by the Company were fit for use. The emergency inspired a Rochester patent lawyer, George

B. Selden to begin experiments which led to his devising the first successful internal combustion engine and his being given the title of “The Father of the Automobile.”

The Horse Trolley inventory at the time of its demise 1880’s was 183 cars and 849 horses, which gives some scope to the size of the operation.

The bicycle, which seems like it was always part of transportation history, actually arrived in the 1890’s as a practical means for independent individual travel. The development of the “safety bicycle” with pneumatic tires (1880’s), and two and three speed hub gears (1890’s) and derailleur gears (1899) contributed to the bicycle wide and immediate popularity. A vehicle that allowed all but especially women to move freely and become independent. “Ladies, heretofore consigned to riding the heavy adult size tri-cycles that were only practical for taking a turn around the park, now could ride a much more versatile machine and still keep their legs covered with long skirts. The bicycle craze killed the bustle and the corset, instituted “common-sense dressing” for women

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GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)



Rail bridge over Erie Canal

and increased their mobility considerably. In 1896 Susan B. Anthony said that “the bicycle has done more for the emancipation of women than anything else in the world.”

8 Two Electric Interurban Rail systems moved through Brighton. One was the “Rochester Eastern Railway” which operated over a forty one mile route between Rochester and Geneva, ran from 1903 to 1930. This was a well used vehicle for coming and going to the Twelve Corners area. There were no ball parks within the city limits some 100 years ago, so going out to the ball park meant catching an Eastern trolley at Court and Exchange Streets, and a quick ride out to Sheehan’s field at the Twelve Corners. The Maltops, Niagaras, Blue Labels, the Green Bay Packers, the Pottsville Maroons, and Rochester and Eastern were some of the teams that played at Sheehan’s Field.

The second electric Interurban was the Rochester-Syracuse & Eastern Railway. The path of this train was parallel to East Avenue east through East Rochester and on to Syracuse. A trolley station was located at the corner of East and Winton and an elevated bridge carried the train over East Avenue

Road surfacing has been changing since the first Indian trail was paved with a Macadam surface. Brighton constructed four Plank Roads. Monroe Avenue, East Avenue and East and West Henerietta Roads were planked for several miles each to accommodate the transportation of farm products to the Rochester market. These constructions occurred in the 1850-1875 era. The 1880’s saw the first use of asphalt surface to pave roads. Brick paving for roads was popular from 1890s to the 1930s. Concrete would gain popularity in the early 1900s. All means necessary were used to subdue the mud and rutted dirt roads that existed in our community well into the 1950s to facilitate travel. East Avenue, because of the many stables with each home, and the use of horse drawn carriages, resisted the paving of the street surface till the 1920s.

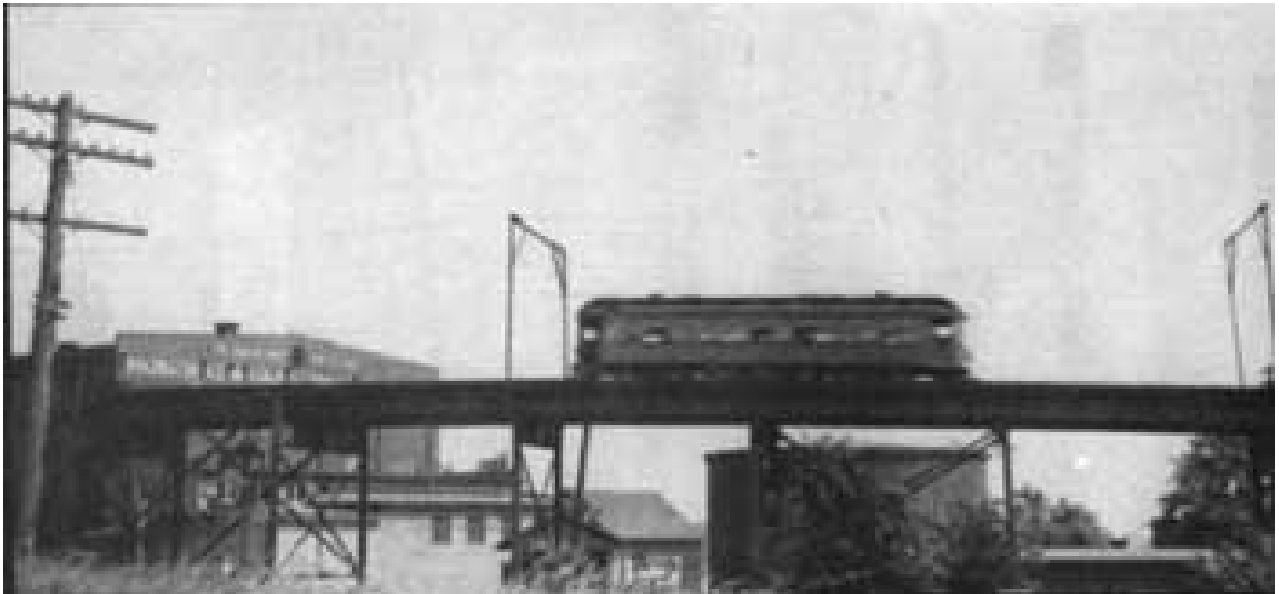
There were five steam railroads that



Brighton depot for the NYCRR Auburn Road by Wallace Bradley, Times Union cartoonist, 1974

crossed our town from 1840 to 1950. The Auburn Road that was directed through Brighton leaving the New York Central track area at East Ave. and Winton Road moving south to Auburn had several stops in Brighton. The railbed has been abandoned

GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)



Trolley bridge over East Avenue in Brighton.

but can be viewed as you travel on Highland Avenue, or Elmwood Avenue. The New York Central & Hudson River Railroad which started in 1853 had a established Train Station in the Brighton Village. This Depot allowed for the access of freight and passengers in Brighton, but was considered a “Flag-Stop” requiring the flag to out to stop the train. The rail bed for the Lehigh Valley Railroad, which had several stops in West Brighton, is today being converted to a trail and bicycle path for recreation.

The subway system that was constructed in Rochester took advantage of the abandoned Erie Canal waterway, and the Erie Canal flowed through Brighton. The Subway operated from 1924 to 1960 in the Rochester area.

The proliferation of the automobile (Rochester auto records: 12,700 in 1915, 82,500 in 1925 and 110,000 in 1929) eventually brought about the end of public transportation in Brighton and America. Trains and trolley could not compete with the flex-

ibility of the auto which could take any road, in any direction at any time.

The aviation history of Brighton was detailed in an earlier story of the 1911 air show held near Cobb’s Hill. So our town has seen it all: we had land for an airport, provided paths for stage coaches and steam trains, built a canal port town, and were connected by interurban and electric trolleys to nearby towns. Our present Brighton road network, built to accommodate that marvelous invention, the automobile, covers many an Indian trail and historical path. Drive slowly through our town and savor the history.

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Brighton train station

GETTING AROUND IN BRIGHTON (CONTINUED)

The following is a timetable review of the major transportation elements and approximate time of their operation. for Brighton residents:

A.....	Stage Coach Operation	1800-1850
B.....	Waterway...Erie Canal	1823-1918
C.....	Steam Railway	1840-1950
D.....	Plank Roads	1847-1875
E.....	Horse Drawn Trolley	1862-1890
F.....	Electric Trolley (Street Car)	1890-1941
G.....	Interurban Electric Trolley	1903-1930
H...	Bicycle	1890-2003
I.....	Rochester Subway	1924-1960
J.....	Automobile	1890-2003

Note: Each of the above listed transportation vehicles, contained certain limits and serviced a particular need. It is not as though they competed with one another. They were unique in their transportation application.

A...The Stage Coach was very adaptive to new routes, but slowed by poor roads and the limited range of horse travel.

10 B...The Erie Canal was a connecting link to the waterways of the Great Lakes to the west and the Hudson River and the port of New York to the East. The primacy of New York City as the chief port and metropolis of the United States was established by the Erie Canal.

C...The steam railway system was rigid in location and the immense power, but not designed for short distance stops. City to City was a more efficient use.

D....Plank Roads were built to accommodate very short distance travel (several miles only) specially suited for Farm to City travel.

G...The Interurban Trolley was designed to connect small towns within short distances from major cities.

H...The Bicycle was designed for “*freedom*” ask any 6 year old!

ERRATA

In the Spring 2003 issue of Historic Brighton News, page 4, the house described as # 648 had burned and been replaced by a new house after “A Walking Tour of Edgewood Avenue” was written. Also on the same, the caption of the picture labeled No. 704 should be 407 as in the text of the tour.



Residence of James M. Edmunds, Town of Brighton, 1888.