



# HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

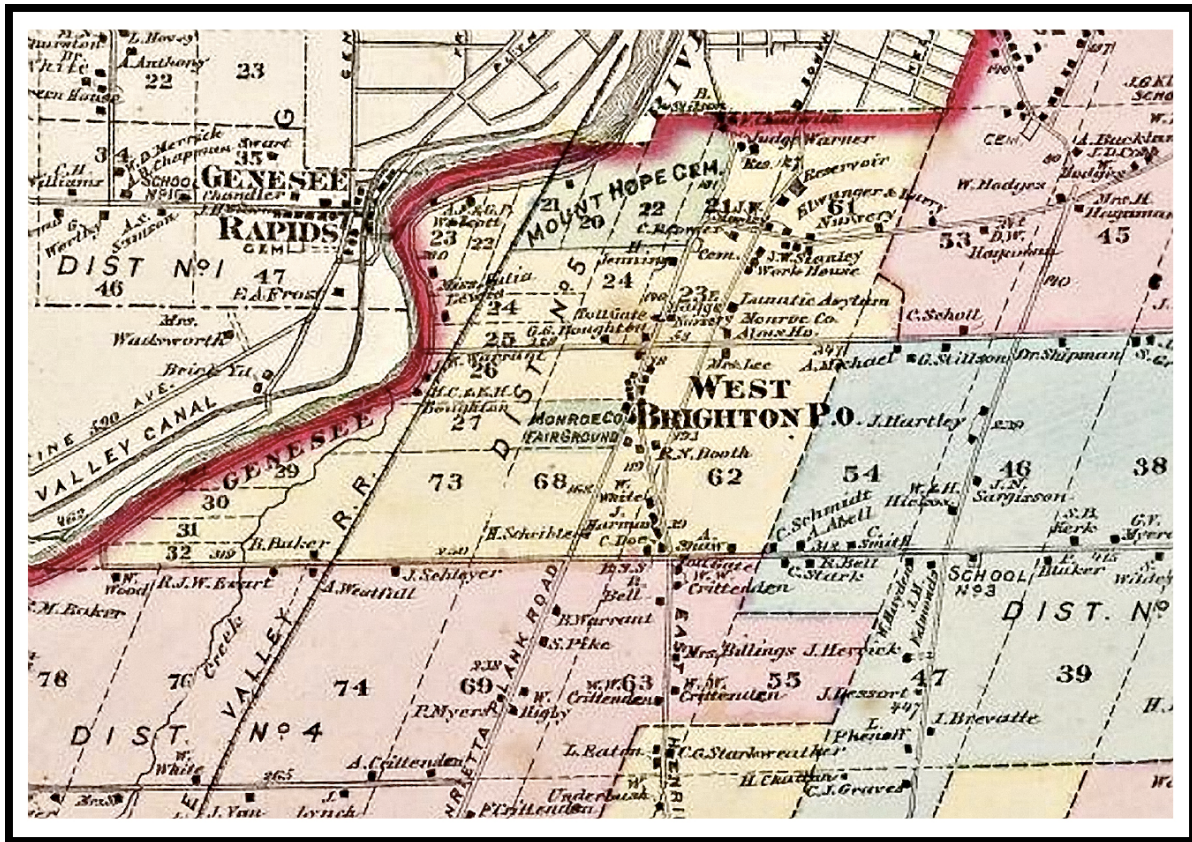
Volume 10

Summer 2009

Number 3

**2009 ANNUAL SUMMER SPECIAL EVENT  
...THIS YEAR HIGHLIGHTING...**

## WEST BRIGHTON



**SATURDAY • JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup> • 11 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.**

Luncheon and lecture to be held at the Monroe Community  
Hospital Auditorium followed by a tour of the facility.

Then, a bus tour of West Brighton led by  
Town Historian Mary Jo Lanphear.

Reservations necessary.

See "Historian's Luncheon and Lecture" on page 2 for details.

# Historian's Luncheon and Lecture

Historian and Archivist Dr. Preston E. Pierce, Ed. D. to speak  
on Underground Railroad in Western NY. —  
Sat. June 27th, Monroe Community Hospital 11AM.



**P**reston E. Pierce, Ed. D., the regional archivist of the New York State Archives is the featured speaker at the annual local history luncheon that Historic Brighton will hold on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**2** His talk, "The Pathway to the Irrepressible Conflict," will concentrate on the Underground Railroad in Western New York.

Dr. Pierce, in addition to being an historian of this area and a lecturer in History at Finger Lakes Community College, is adept at audio-visual coordination, and has graphics that will illuminate the various sites that are recognized stops on the path to freedom.

An author of many biographical and historical articles published in history magazines, Pierce is currently at work on a biography of Sarah. H. Bradford, the Geneva resident who was the original major biographer of Underground Railroad, "conductor" Harriet Tubman. □

- **Events begin at 11AM at Monroe Community Hospital Auditorium with the lecture and a box lunch — Cost: \$15 per person (See insert for food selections.).**
- **A tour of Monroe Community Hospital, a 1931 W.P.A. project, will follow the presentation.**
- **A bus tour of West Brighton will begin at 2:15PM and return at approximately 3:30PM. Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton Town Historian will guide the tour. Seating is limited, reservations required. Cost of bus tour is \$5 per person.**
- **Reservations for both the luncheon and bus tour are required by Fri., June 19th.**
- **Reservation form and check made payable to Historic Brighton, should be mailed to Historic Brighton, P.O. Box 18525, Rochester, NY 14618.**
- **For more information, see Historic Brighton Website, [www.historicbrighton.org](http://www.historicbrighton.org).**

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## West Brighton

By Mary Jo Lanphear

"East is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet" begins Margaret MacNab's 1979 booklet about West Brighton. Mrs. MacNab, the former Town of Brighton historian, used Rudyard Kipling's famous phrase to describe the seeming separation of the area of West Brighton from the larger town. She went on to say that West Brighton *is* a compact community but, for all its low profile, it has exerted a great influence on town government. Indeed, many of the town of Brighton's supervi-

sors, town council, and other officials have come from the west side of town.

Environmentally, the west part of Brighton differs dramatically from the rest of the Town. Lying along the lowland next to the Genesee River, the farmland and residential tracts were subject to the vicissitudes of the river and endured many floods over the years until the completion of the Mount Morris Dam in 1952. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, from 1865 to 1950 a major flood ravaged the Genesee River Valley on an average of every seven years. Dealing with flood damage to crops, houses, and businesses, West Brighton residents developed a resilience and pride in their ability to cope that contributed

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East River Road flooded. Picture taken prior to construction of the Mt. Morris Dam.

to a sense of independence from the rest of the town.

What constitutes West Brighton? The area between the river and East Henrietta Road comes to mind right away but many nineteenth century farmers between Clinton Avenue and Winton Road also considered themselves part of the west side of town. Many of the nineteenth century decennial censuses divide Brighton into two districts: #1 on the east side and #2 on the west side with the area near Winton Road as the separation point.



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

Looking North on West Henrietta Road.

Near the intersection of East and West Henrietta Roads was a small cluster of businesses offering farm services such as blacksmithing and wagon repair. Here's what

the 1869 Monroe County directory says: "West Brighton (postal village) is near the Genesee River, south of Rochester, and contains two hotels, a wagon shop, two blacksmith shops, and about twenty houses. Near this place are located the Monroe County Penitentiary, Alms House, Insane Asylum, Mount Hope Cemetery, and several manufactories. The Monroe County Fairgrounds of twenty acres is located in



Norman Road during a flood.

this vicinity..."

The Fairgrounds included a race track on what is now Crittenden Blvd. Charles Meitzler's West Brighton House was one of the two hotels mentioned. It was often the site of the annual Brighton town meeting. Reflecting society's changed attitude toward the unfortunate, the large brick County buildings along South Avenue were razed in 1966.

The West Brighton Chapel began in 1895. In 1925 the congregation became South Presbyterian and erected a large brick church on the east side of East Henrietta Road. After the congregation moved into the brick church, the former chapel became the Field Awning Company and still later, the Record Archive.

At 1956 West Henrietta Road stands a





The Warrant House: a documented "station" on the Underground Railroad.

**4** documented Underground Railroad site, Thomas Warrant's stately white Italianate farmhouse. Thomas Warrant, an immigrant from England in 1819, was a coppersmith and ardent abolitionist. Sheltered in the loft of the rear section of the house, the escaped slaves were passed along to other safe houses on their way to the Lake and boats that would take them to Canada. The last Warrant to live there was Cora Warrant who saved the house twice from demolition, from canal relocation and super highway construction. Miss Warrant died in 1971.

West Brighton's interesting architecture includes some of the "Bricks of Brighton," as well as landmark houses on Clinton Avenue, Crittenden Road, and West Henrietta Road, and Westfall Road. They will be featured on the bus tour of West Brighton during the Historic Brighton Celebration on June 27. □

## The West Brighton Cemetery

By Nancy Uffindell

**S**ometime prior to the 1821 founding of Monroe County, Jacob Miller, on his own land, laid a relative to rest. Whether it was his young daughter, Cilmena, as stated by Edwin Scrantom many years ago, or a different relative killed by a falling tree per other reports, we will never know. But it is known that in 1821, Jacob Miller laid out a one-half acre

graveyard around that earlier burial. Later that same year, Jacob Miller sold the part of his lot containing the graveyard to a Theodore Backus, who, in turn, transferred the land to three men in 1824. These men, Joseph N. Colwell, Chauncey Crittenden, and Ely Miller, would become the first trustees of the West Brighton Rural Cemetery, and eventually, residents of that cemetery.

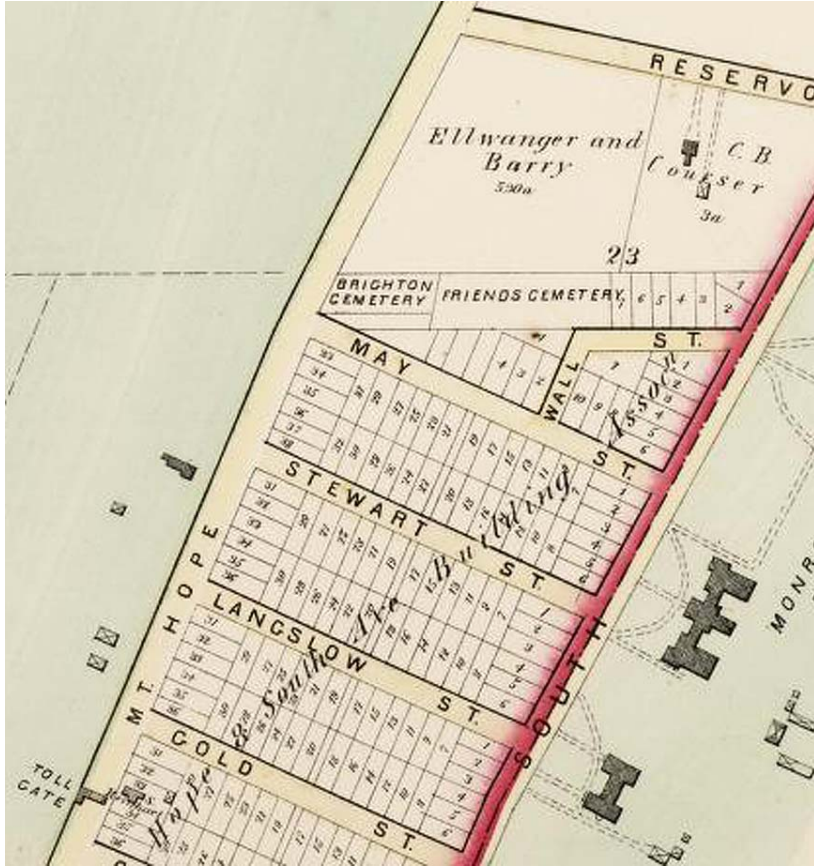
Although the original records are seemingly lost, several attempts have been made over the years to determine the lot owners and burials. Information gleaned from the tax records of August, 1852 and April, 1869 and the list of removals to Mount Hope Cemetery in 1893 were reviewed by several researchers in the 1980 to 1990 time period, including Richard Halsey and Jack McKinney. It is believed there were 82 lots and approximately 200 burials in the West Brighton Rural Cemetery. Many familiar Brighton names were on the documents and monuments. The Buckland, Crittenden, Warrant, and Westfall families all owned plots in the cemetery.

Rochester became a city in 1834. In 1841, The Society of Friends purchased a one acre parcel on the east side of the West Brighton Cemetery for the Quaker Cemetery, which they operated until it was removed to Mount Hope Cemetery in 1892.



Jacob Miller's marker.

In 1852, the West Brighton Cemetery became a formal association, with trustees Orin Barker (Secretary), Charles Colwell (Chairman), Chauncey Crittenden, Luther Eaton, John L. See and Alfred White. In 1874,



A plat map dated 1875, showing the location of the Brighton Cemetery, near present day May Street. Mt. Hope Cemetery is located to the left side of this map.

Brighton Rural Cemetery and arrange for the removal of the bodies, with compensation to the lot owners for the land taken and all removal and re-interment costs. The cost to the city was not to exceed \$1500 for the project. According to an article in *The Union-Advertiser* newspaper dated October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1893, removal of the remaining burials in the West Brighton Rural Cemetery to Mount Hope would be complete by the end of that week. Many lot owners had cooperated with the city and removed their loved ones, with most of the remains moved to Mount Hope and some to other area cemeteries, such as Grove Place, Maplewood, Pine Hill and Ridgeland. The few remaining residents at West Brighton Rural who were not claimed by family, whose descendants could not be found or whose remains could not be identified were removed to a city purchased plot in Section W of Mount Hope under the direction of three city commissioners, Superintendent Morris, William Oliver,

and Henry G. Sauer.

In 1957, sixteen legible markers stood in the Mount Hope Cemetery plot. Today, only about a dozen markers of the West Brighton Rural Cemetery, one of the oldest burial grounds in the area, are in evidence at the north side of Buell just west of Glen in a somewhat remote area of



Mount Hope Cemetery. □

Present day view of remaining markers of the West Brighton Rural Cemetery now located in Mt. Hope Cemetery.



# Contents of Edmunds Diaries

By Leo Dodd

When last we talked, I described the background and

existence of the forty-volume set of Edmunds diaries. I thought today we could talk about what the daily writings in the diary reveal about Brighton farm life in the late



6 1800's. So I planned to pick a topic, like... *transportation*, and to describe the many diary references to types of wagons, buggies, their uses, and the horses that powered them. Thus you would have a detailed account and be able to visualize the farm scene in the 1880's. There were references to wagons, spring wagons, democrat wagons, buggies, sleighs, stone boats, and sleds, all powered by one horse or a team of horses. The vehicles were used for different purposes with various wheels or runners in different seasons.



*Diary entry: Thursday, August 6, 1874, (Clear and hot, SWW)....Took the spring wagon up to the shop to get the tire set*  
*Translation: Went to the closest black-smith shop, less than a mile away from the Westfall Farm, to repair the tire rim. Possibly the curved pieces of iron plate with which carriage wheels were formerly shod were in need of reforming and resetting to the wooden rim. Heating and reforming metal was the black-smith's task.*

You can appreciate that the comments are brief, tersely stated, without emotion or detail. If each of these wagon entries was collected, grouped and linked to a particular topic a more complete story about transportation on the farm in the late 1800's could be developed. But **Transportation** is just one story, one topic, one field into which we gain a glimpse of 1800's Brighton farm life. These forty diaries allow us to talk about many subjects of varied interest.

....Note: Our first diary is written by James Polk Edmunds, aged twenty six, in 1871 while he was living in Michigan. The following three years of diaries tell of his life in the Michigan area. Why he is located and working in Michigan is not revealed. His oldest sister, Julia, (Jule), married a John Quincy Adams. She was living near Kalamazoo, Michigan, as were several relatives, but the diaries do not tell us why. Edmonds returns to Brighton several times for short visits to the Westfall Farm but does not take up permanent residence till 1874. Michigan is where James met, Aderica (Dike) Winches, and married her in 1873.

**Diary entry: Saturday, March 22, 1873,**

**(Warm and snowed, SW W) - Went down in Stillsons woods to get some slippery elm for Father -**

Translation: George Stillson, Superintendent of Mount Hope Cemetery, and wife Charlotte lived on a farm off Elmwood Avenue, at the present location of St. John's Meadows. Within his tract of woods was a slippery elm tree, a tree native to eastern North America. The bark of the tree "...was used by colonists to make pudding, to thicken jelly, to preserve grease, and as a survival food on long trips. It was used medicinally to treat toothaches, skin injuries, gout, arthritis, stomach aches, intestinal worms, and coughs."

Quote reference: "Natural Herbal Remedies, Medicine, and Supplements"



James's sixty-four year old father could have been in need of relief from any of the above ailments and probably had been using the remedy with good results for many years previous. Now that type of entry makes you want to understand more about the medical treatment of the late 1800's, and see how complete a story we can detail from the Edmund's diaries. So, yes! there is a medical story to be compiled.

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Let's review another entry and the topic is related to the natural history of West Brighton.



**Diary entry: Tuesday, May 1, 1883**

**Saw first "Skunk Black Bird"**

Translation: James had sighted the Bobolink returning to breed in the fields of Westfall Road.

...Note: Bobolinks were sighted in the fields off Westfall Road up till the development of the ball fields. Bobolinks winter in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay and it's a long, long flight to the breeding grounds of West Brighton. When was the first bobolink sighted in Brighton? They probably did not migrate here during the Indian occupation but advanced to residency in New York State as farming and pasture land was developed. But how did James identify this bird, using a name not

common to today's birders? What an interesting topic to develop the natural history of West Brighton using the diaries of James Edmunds.

I thought it best to first give you a listing of topics that have been suggested after reviewing the first twenty years of entries.

**Natural History:** James recorded the dates for the arrival of several birds and the flowering of trees. You will really enjoy the variety and names and dates of his written bird list. You have to remember that he had no time to go "birding" as in today's world. This was a very busy farmer, responsible for his family and his father's 110-acre farm. His sightings were made as he plowed the fields in preparation for spring planting.

**Weather:** The wind direction and weather were recorded each day, and sometimes temperature was recorded as well. This could be a great record to support or deny the new considerations of today's theory of global warming.

**Additional topics abound:**

**Land Development:** Land Preparation, Planting, Harvest, Farm Labor

**Orchard Tasks:** Planting, Trimming, Grafting,

**Crops:** Corn, Wheat, Oats, Barley, Hay, Potatoes, Beans

**Marketing:** Wholesale, Retail Sales at the Farmers' Market

**Woods Management, Hunting, House Maintenance, Barn Construction**

**Banking, Schools, Religion, Town Government:** (Voting, Brighton Roads)

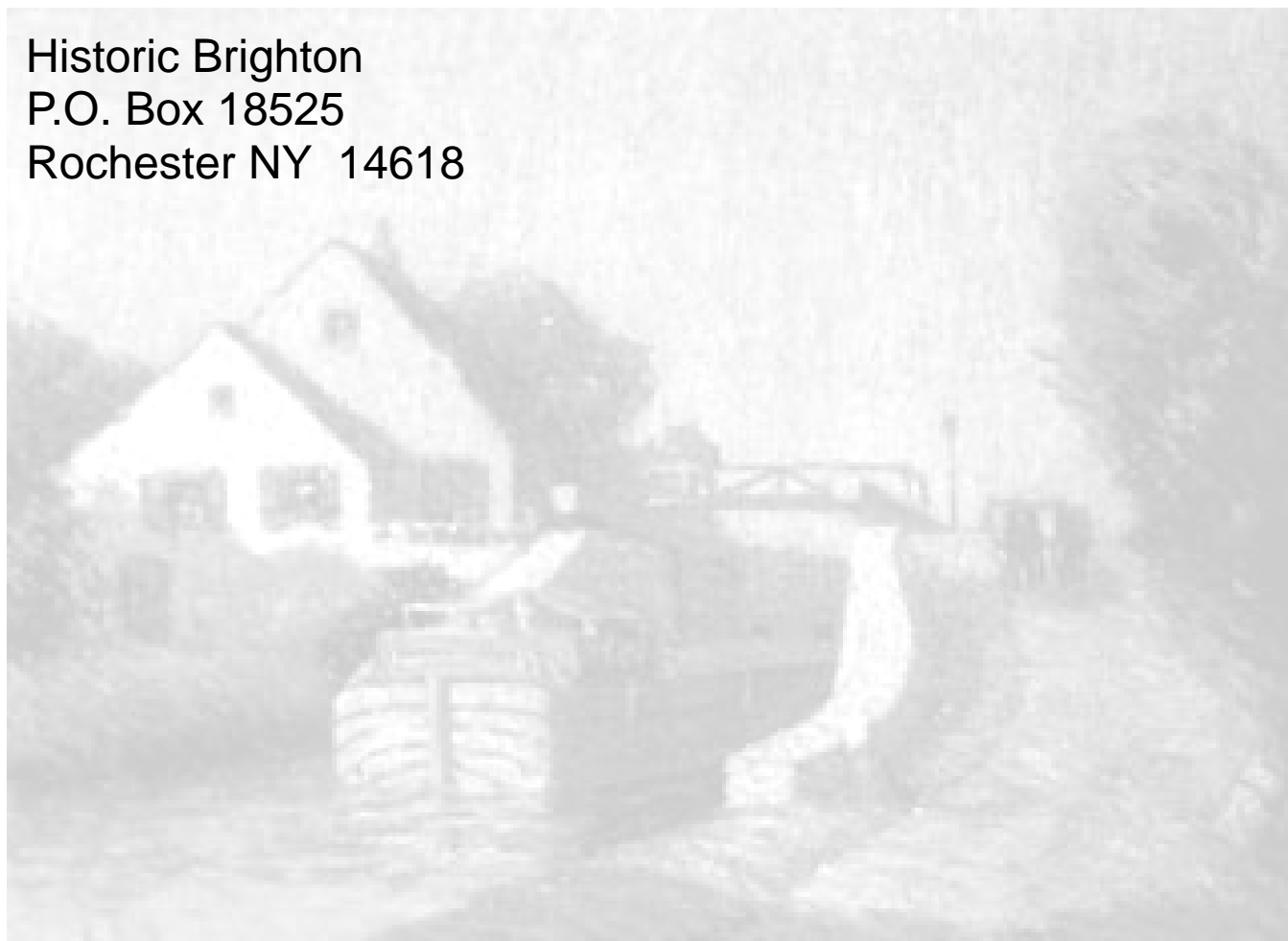
**Friends, Games, Social Activities, Brighton Businesses, Animal Care,**

**Personal Needs:** (Dress, Clothes Washing), **Home Chores, Farm Chores,**

**Fuel, Medical Care, Farm Operational Costs, Funeral Customs, Photos**

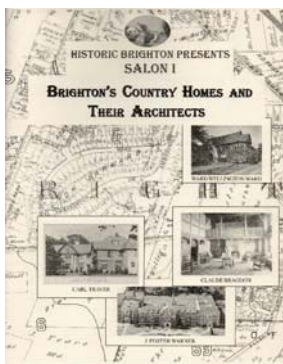
I have been searching for a method to summarize the diary contents so that this unique historical resource can be shared, enjoyed, and used. Hopefully, the "Topic" approach will create an acceptable method. Next time I will stay with one topic. □

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