

Twelve Corners Middle School – a Centennial Celebration

When Brighton was a new town in 1814, the founding fathers indicated in the first town meeting minutes that education was very important. They appointed three men to be school commissioners who would oversee the education of children ages 5 to 15 in Brighton and make sure that funds obtained from the Common School Fund of New York State would be used properly. They also kept track of the number of children who attended school and the number of days of instruction. At the first town meeting they established five school districts which, given the size of the town in 1814, meant that pupils had a considerable distance to school.

The school year for most of the 1800s was based on the agricultural calendar so the fall term began in November, after the harvest, and ended in late March so the children could help with the plowing and planting. Formal education was important to most parents. They wanted their sons, and usually their daughters, to be able to read and write and do simple math, enough to understand a property deed or make a purchase.

Even with the steady annexation of Brighton land by the city of Rochester in the 19th century, the population in the town increased sufficiently to warrant additional school districts so by 1831, there were nineteen districts and by 1837, there were twenty-four. These numbers also reflect the desire of parents to decrease the length of the journey from home to school.

By the turn of the twentieth century, there were ten school districts in Brighton, scattered from east to west across the town. District #1 school, located on the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Clover Street and District #8 school on Monroe Avenue joined together in 1925 to form Common School District #1. That same year construction began on an eight room brick building at the Twelve Corners.

Principal Aubrey D. Donley had a staff of eight teachers who included Brighton #1 teacher Ava Mahoney and Brighton #8 teacher Ada Wadsworth. In 1926 they opened the doors to 190 students in a primary class and eight grammar school grades. Mr. Donley predicted rapid growth in the new union school district, saying "we are in the position to give the children everything in the way of educational advantages now enjoyed in the city schools and in addition: wholesome environment, fresh air, and natural beauty, in all of which our community abounds."

Mr. Donley's predictions did come true for the new brick school as additions were made in 1928, 1930, 1933, and 1958. High school was added in 1928 with grade nine. Grade ten followed in 1929. The high school wing had all four grades by 1931 when it was chartered by New York State. In 1938 the high school moved to its own building on Winton Road.

This year the Twelve Corners Middle School celebrated the centennial of its building with an assembly and a Brighton Believes Day of Caring on March 11.

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