

BRIGHTON BEACH SURVEY

Brighton Beach, Aldershot P.O. first appeared on the maps of East Flamboro Township in 1912, when Daniel (Sandy) Harrison sold a portion of his farm on the North Shore of the bay to W.D. Flatt for \$20,000. Mr. Flatt promptly had it surveyed into building lots and named it Brighton Beach, the new suburban residential development on the shores of Hamilton Bay. The 22½ acres that Sandy sold was bounded on the south by Hamilton Bay, on the north by Plains Road, on the east by Holy Sepulchre cemetery, and on the west by what eventually was to become Lawnwood Cemetery.

With the survey sandwiched in between two cemeteries it was easy to imagine it degenerating into a dead-end corner of the township. But the opposite happened. From the start Brighton Beach took the lead in the community in social activities and in sports, and the reason for this leadership was because they were organized. The Brighton Beach owners association gave them a tight little unity of their own. Not that the association had any legal authority, since it was simply a voluntary agreement among themselves. It was based on the understanding that every lot owner automatically became a member along with the purchase of his property. There was no initiation or fees; no agreement to abide by the rules of the majority. He could take it or leave it. But the fact that it was voluntary made it more individually binding than any legal penalties could have done. It had a complete staff of officers, all serving without pay, who reported at the annual meeting where each member had one vote only, regardless

whether he owned one lot or twenty.

The purpose of the association was simply the improvement of Brighton Beach, and the manner in which they carried out their purpose is interesting. Whenever a member suggested an idea that would benefit the membership as a whole the President would appoint a committee of three to look into the matter, and if their report was favorable, a call was immediately sent out for volunteers who carried it to completion. To mention a few; a power pumping system for their water supply, electric lighting for their main streets; widening of the streets and name signs posted; organized baseball team and a tennis club; postal delivery and pickup and establishing the status of the survey as an electoral sub-division. Due to the fact that the members of the association constituted a sizable voting block, holding the balance of power in the elections they were able to place members of the Brighton Beach Survey on the township council and the high school and public school boards. The fact that the entire membership could be counted on to vote as the bloc either for or against a candidate gave them a balance of power in the eyes of aspiring politicians, and the association was not slow to avail itself of this position of authority. On one occasion when the association was seeking some privileges, the entire Council journeyed to Brighton Beach and held its regular meeting in one of the homes.