Further research will be necessary to determine who built the Western House Hotel, Livery and Carriage Barn in 1873. In 1879, P. B. Skillback owned the building and R. M. Fillmore was the proprietor.

Prior to the arrival of the railroad to Brighton in 1871, travelers had arrived by stage coach on the planked toll road called the Grand River Road and had stayed at Ben Cushing’s Brighton Hotel (later the Eastern House) on the north east corner of Grand River Road and Main Street. Situated approximately half way between Detroit and Lansing, Brighton became a popular stop for rest and refreshment.

The arrival of the railroad signaled a decline in stage coach travel. Salesmen and agents calling on local merchants used the railroad for transportation. Those villages and crossroads stores not serviced by the railroad made it necessary to rent a livery rig to deliver products and take orders.

A lively competition soon developed between the Western House Hotel and Ben Cushing’s Brighton Hotel. Both kept horses and rigs to supply and cater to the travelers’ needs.

At the turn of the century, LeRoy King, “the man in shirt sleeves” was the proprietor of the Western House. He set each passenger train coastless in his attempts to “buttonhole” or persuade travelers to select his hotel as the place to stay. The finest foods and liquors were served, each room had a window, beds were clean and comfortable and there was room for elegant parties and banquets.

The horses in his stable, he boasted, were spirited, yet gentle and his rigs among the most stylish. A place where good friends met to become better friends; it was the center of community social activity.

The hotel business was doing well until the early 1900s when the horseless carriage came into common use. More miles could be covered in a day and overnight hotel accommodations were less in demand. The salesmen didn’t need Mr. King’s rigs to visit the isolated crossroads stores and villages. Local residents often traveled out of town for recreation instead of spending their free time at the Western Hotel. To add the final blow, the county went dry and bootleggers, blind-pigs and saloons in adjacent, wet counties acquired that part of the hotel’s business.

Howard Hunter, Nathan Caverly and Ed Standlick were local people who also ran the business but with little success. Since the repeal of the 18th amendment various owners have modernized the building and operate it as a rooming house and a bar.

(above condensed from "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by William Fless.)

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**GENERAL MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1985**

A slide presentation showing various styles of architecture in the area will be shown by Emma Casterston from Howell.

We’ll meet upstairs in the Old Town Hall (formerly Library), 202 W. Main, at 7:30 for a short business meeting and viewing of these slides. Anyone having pictures of older homes is welcomed to bring them for the rest of us to enjoy also.

**OPEN HOUSE RECAP**

A drizzly November 30 evening, was unable to dampen the spirits of those who attended the Society’s Open House held at the Chamber of Commerce building.

Chairman Ethel Gebben and Ial Fuller arranged for lots of refreshments. Thanks to all who donated.

Thanks also to Kay Flynn, Linda Anderson, Sandee Hudson and the Fred Gruenkes for lending their doll houses for display. Many compliments were received on the display exhibited.

**MEMBERSHIPS 1985**

Persons paying their dues after October 1, will be considered as having paid for the following year.

At present these are Paul, Alene and Thomas Anderson, Bert & Marieanna Bair, N/M Arthur Boylan, Rae Carmack, Citizen’s Trust, Dr. Robert Chesky, Ben & Dula Clark, Robert Clark, Frances Stone, Gary & Ruth Ann Cole, Al & Hazel Cole, Don & Lois Cole, Michael Cuthbert, Kay Flynn, Floyd & Ial Fuller, Myr Gibson, George Hacker, Clara Healy, Barton & Catherine Hellmuth, John & Carol Hills, Kathryn Hodgin, Don & Shirley Jenks, Ray & Jean Lanning, Mark Lintzld, leota Mason, Dennis McDannell, Fred & Mary Messerschmidt, Isabella Milburn, Margaret Muir, James & Judy Murray, Alice Newcomb, Ken & Billie Obermatt, Judith Peck, Doris Petersen, John & Dorothy Pennella, Charles & Norma Pless, Andrew & Lila Robertson, Ira Shannon, Ed & Connie Sherman, Bill & Jane Tolinson and John & Virginia Surenki. **Welcome**