

BANKING IN THE BRIGHTON AREA (Cont.)

The high esteem in which Gustave J. Baetcke (who purchased Lawson's banking business in February, 1891) was held is well documented in various references. One of these, the "Portrait and Biographical Album of Ingham and Livingston Counties", November, 1891, states the bank "...is now conducted as a private institution and under the present management merits the confidence that it enjoys. It is operated under the firm name of G.J. Baetcke & Co., and although in its infancy, under the present regime it has already acquired a high standing, not only in the immediate locality, but throughout the surrounding country and especially among the agricultural class with whom our subject has been associated for years."

Baetcke was a Civil War veteran serving with the 22nd Michigan Infantry from January 1, 1864 through September 20, 1865. He marched with Sherman into Atlanta. He was Supervisor of Genoa Township for five terms and served in the capacity of Treasurer for two terms. At the time of the 1907 Brighton Homecoming celebration he was Village President. An ad in the Argus of that day includes an advertisement stating he was also an insurance agent for several companies.

Gus married Amelia Gartner (d. 1904) in 1874 and in 1905 he married Mrs. F. L. Smith (nee Jennie Placeway). When Baetcke died suddenly March 5, 1913 his obituary states, "At the time of his death he was commander of the D.C. Russell Post GAR of this place....He was a prominent Republican....All business places were closed from 1-4 p.m. and the (local) business men attended in a body." during the hours of the funeral.

As stated earlier Baetcke's bank was a private institution. Because of lack of information the writer must assume the bank went into receivership following his death. (It is hoped a reader will have more data and will give the Society a more complete record of these proceedings following Baetcke's death.)

Established April 7, 1910, as a commercial and savings bank, the Brighton State Bank had 22 shareholders, all of whom lived in the county. The President was W. P. VanWinkle, Vice President was Wm. T. Fry and the Cashier was L.R. Manning (at \$1000. annual salary). Other shareholders were: F. M. Bergin, B.I. Case, Clio S. Case, K.V. Clark, James Collett, Mary A. Collett, A.M. Davis, Arthur Garland, T.G. Hennessey, F.F. Hubbell, A.A. Montague, J.A. Nelson, H.A. Nichols, C.E. Placeway, G.L. Pitkin, C.C. Schafer, John Schoenhals, A.L. Smith, and H.M. Tunis. It is thought some descendants may still hold shares.

Originally located in a building at 334 W. Main (since then occupied by Strick's Department Store, the Country Cupboard and the Golden Gallery), in 1911 the bank directors selected a building site at 306 W. Main. At the time a footbridge carried pedestrian traffic across Ore Creek, which was then replaced by a concrete sidewalk. Because of the low, wet land by the creek, a coffer dam was built and the terrain built up. May 11, 1911, C.C. Schafer received the contract to build the bank for \$5100. This was a two story brick structure. Construction to include floor and counters, to be completed by September, 1911. (By Marieanna Bair. To be continued.)

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