

## THE TEN CENT BARN

Valet parking has been around for a long time. Leo J. McQuade was doing it around the turn of the century. In an article written for "The Good Old Days" (Brighton Argus?) in 1975, he reminisced about his Saturday job as a youngster in Brighton. He worked at the Eastern House, n.e. corner Grand River and Main Street, helping collect the 10¢ charged to people using the Ten Cent Barn. Leo's pay was the tip given him by those whose horse he brought to the hotel entrance. For female customers this was, of course, the usual procedure.

The barn was located behind and east of the hotel. A large structure, it could house 15 rigs at one time plus individual horses. For their dime, owners of horses knew their animals would also be fed. Before they left for the drive home Leo made sure the horses had a long drink from the large water tank located outside the barn door.

During good weather the shopper usually tied up to the hitching rail running between the dirt street and the board sidewalk. However during fall, winter and spring local customers didn't want their animals and rigs waiting, during inclement weather, without shelter. So Saturdays, when everyone did their week's shopping, the 10¢ barn was an especially busy place if it was cold or wet.

Milady, as her purchases accumulated, had the packages delivered to the rig at the barn, or she drove to the various stores and retrieved them from the shopkeeper who had put them aside (in lay away?). Not too many items were of the perishable variety; the farmer usually grew sufficient meat, dairy products and produce to supply the table.

More often than we like to admit the farmer came to town Saturday a.m., left the team and wagon at the barn and completed his shopping. After storing these items safely in the rig he would walk to the saloon (one of several in town). Several hours later the horse and wagon were delivered to the saloon, where the bar keeper bundled the tippler into the wagon or sleigh, cover him with the buffalo robe and, heading the horse for home, got him on his way. The horse knew the route and after stopping at the kitchen door the inebriated farmer was helped inside by his patient wife.

On week days during the school year the barn was occupied by the horses and buggies of high school students who lived outside the limits of the Brighton School District. (Female students usually boarded with a family friend or relative who lived in town and went home to the farm on weekends.) Each morning the student rode to town, left the horse at the barn and walked up the hill to Union School. (Located on Rickett Road across from St. Patrick's Catholic Church north of the railroad.)

Following the burning of the Brighton House in 1926 and with the advent of the Model T the barn was torn down. Its usefulness at an end. (By Marieanna Bair from Bill Pless' "Michigan Memorabilia")

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