

IT'S FAIR TIME!!! (conc.)

WE CONTINUE WITH BILL PLESS' WRITINGS IN HIS MICHIGAN MEMORABILIA, AS HE REMINISCES ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN AN ANNUAL FAIR WAS HELD IN BRIGHTON. "OF COURSE, THERE WERE THE USUAL SIDE SHOWS AND GAMES OF CHANCE ON THE MIDWAY....A LOCAL MAN HAD A TENT AT THE BRIGHTON FAIR WITH A SIGN OVER THE ENTRANCE READING, "FOR MEN ONLY". HE HAD A GOOD LOOKING GIRL SELL TICKETS, AND DIRECTING CUSTOMERS TO MOVE THROUGH THE TENT SINGLE FILE AND LEAVE AT THE SIDE EXIT. ALL HE HAD INSIDE WAS A PAIR OF MEN'S SUSPENDERS DRAPED OVER A SAW HORSE AND A SIGN READING: 'NOW DON'T GET MAD. BE A GOOD SPORT. GO OUT AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO COME IN, SO THEY WILL GET STUNG LIKE YOU DID.'"

ANOTHER ANECDOTE: "A CON MAN HAD A LARGE BASKET FULL OF BARS OF SOAP AT THE OLD BRIGHTON FAIR. HE STOOD THERE UNWRAPPING THE SOAP AND APPARENTLY REWRAPPING WITH A DOLLAR OR FIVE DOLLAR BILL INSIDE WITH THE BARS. THEN HE OFFERED EVERYONE A CHOICE TO PICK OUT A BAR FOR A DOLLAR. AN OLD MAN WATCHED CLOSELY AND SELECTED SEVERAL BARS WITHOUT SUCCESS. THEN HE GOT MAD, AND HE AND HIS FRIENDS TOOK THE CON MAN TO OLD BILL PIPP, THE PRESIDENT OF THE FAIR ASSOCIATION THAT YEAR. THE OLD MAN TOLD MR. PIPP THAT THE MAN HAD CHEATED HIM. MR. PIPP ASKED THE CON MAN FOR HIS STORY. 'UNCLE, THIS MAN PLAYED MY GAME AND HE LOST.' MR. PIPP LAUGHED AND SAID, 'SOUNDS FAIR ENOUGH TO ME, BUT I'LL GIVE YOU JUST FIVE MINUTES TO TAKE YOUR BASKET AND GET OUT OF TOWN, AND DON'T EVER COME BACK.'"

ON THE MIDWAY ONE FOUND SEVERAL RIDES. A MERRY-GO-ROUND, A RIDE CALLED THE 'OCEAN WAVE', AND A FOUR SEAT FERRIS WHEEL OPERATED BY JOHN TANNER OF BRIGHTON. THEY WERE EACH DRIVEN BY A SMALL HORSE RUNNING AROUND IN A CIRCLE TO TURN THE POWER MECHANISM.

THE FAIR GROUNDS WERE USED FOR MORE THAN THE COUNTY FAIR. PLESS TELLS US "FROM AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER TO ABOUT 1907, THE CHILDREN IN OUR COUNTRY SCHOOL LOOKED FORWARD EVERY SPRING TO SEE A HERD OF AS MANY AS 25-40 MUSTANGS BEING DRIVEN, LOOSE, BY FIVE OR SIX WRANGLERS TO AN AUCTION AT THE FAIRGROUNDS IN BRIGHTON. THE MUSTANGS WERE FINE LOOKING SPECIMENS; SOUND, SPIRITED AND TOUGH ANIMALS. EACH ONE HAD BEEN BRANDED WITH A HOT IRON. NONE HAD EVER HAD A STRAP ON THEM, BUT HAD BEEN LASSED WHEN CAPTURED, AND SEVERAL TIMES AFTER. THESE WOULD GIVE UP AND STAND 'COWED' WHEN THEY HAD A ROPE AROUND THEIR NECK." LOCAL YOUNG FARMERS BOUGHT THEM AND FOUND THEM TO BE QUITE AMENABLE TO WORKING IN THE HARNESS. (BY MARIEANNA BAIR. TO INCREASE THE SOCIETY'S KNOWLEDGE OF THIS SUBJECT, OR ANY OTHERS, PLEASE CONTACT HER, 810/229-6402, OR ANY MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY BOARD.)

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