Brighton's Main Four Corners
After the destruction of the Eastern House on the northeastern corner of Main and Grand River in 1926, a variety of enterprises attempted to establish themselves. Among the earliest were a brick store, a restaurant and gas station hoping to continue serving the local and traveling public. These failed during the Depression of the 1930s and were torn down.

The resulting clearing seemed an ideal location for a car sales business. Walker Chevrolet appeared in 1935. This was followed by Leech Motor Sales around 1940. Bev Smith Motors (1944-1947) later became John Weise Ford, the last car dealership before the site was cleared. A strip mall with A&P grocery was constructed in 1960.

Uber's Drugs located there from their West Main location in 1963, staying 33 years until 1996. A Farmer Jack store succeeded the A&P in 1971, to be followed in 1977 by Sera's Grocery. Sera's had moved from 9810 E. Grand River. They had been in that location since 1962. Their business was open for 20 years before closing in 1997.

The site then became the Brighton Shopping Plaza in June 1997. After Sera's closed, Arbor Drugs opened in 1997. Others in the Plaza included a laundry, photo shop, computer shop, etc. Most recently, tenants include CVS Pharmacy, O'Reilly Murray's Auto Parts and Sushi Zen.

The 1967 Brighton Centennial issue of the Brighton Argus records Malcolm Fitch as the first timer in town with a tin shop in a two-story building on the corner. By 1893 it was described as the Conley Tin Shop. When brothers Will R. Fred Stuhberg owned the Eastern House, this site across E. Main was used as a storage house for carriages. They likely also stored other horse-drawn conveyances and equipment there. Our archives hold a photo of George Smith and his team in front of the building in 1906. Another photo shows the north side of the building. An exterior staircase indicates apartments were rented there. An 1898 ad publicizes that C.E. Cushing, with Oscar W. Babcock and Henry Bowle, made and sold harnesses here.

Research has not so far revealed when the frame building was displaced. A 1921 reference, including a photo, tells us E.L. Iolalle sold meats at the store in a one-story building. At some time, the Stuhberg's also had meat available there. A February 1931 clipping states "K.J. Lehman took over the Stuhberg meat market on the 4th". In April 1931, it states "Lawrence Navarro became a partner of K.J. Lehman in the meat business."

During the 1930s, a Partry Shop and Watson & O'Leary Dairy sold dairy, eggs, etc. In the early 1940s, Mabel Herbst opened a Malt Shop. Lunches and hamburgers were a specialty that many high schoolers Doppef from the school on Church Street to enjoy. Mabel's daughters often helped her mother; maybe that had something to do with the many male customers.

By 1950, the sign outside read Walker's Grill & Malt Shop. By 1955, it was Haller's Grill, followed by the Brass Lantern in 1969. In 1973, the Brass Lantern acquired a liquor license, transferred from 132 E. Grand River. By 1994, it became the Cap & Cork Liquor store. In 2007, this site was cleared and a new building now houses Rottemmond Jewelry.

Compiled by Marilou Full from Brighton Argus clippings. Additions/corrections requested. (810) 229-6402.

Brighton Area Historical Society - brightonareahistorical.com

Second Annual Old Village Cemetery Spring Cleanup

Cemetery Clean-up: Saturday, May 1st, 9 am - 2 pm

In Old Village Cemetery, headstones of brighton leaders and residents peer down over their city as if to observe the changes through the years. Please join community members for a civic pride event working inside the beautiful ornamental fence under the canopy of mature trees honoring those buried there. You will find the names of both prominent and ordinary citizens from Brighton's earliest days who endured hardships that can only be imagined as they settled these Michigan frontier villages.

One of our goals for this spring clean up event is to have Old Village Cemetery in respectful condition in time for May 31st Memorial Day commemoration. Veterans of the Blackhawk War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II are interred here. Their lives and final place of rest are an important part of Brighton's rich history. Memorial Day activities will include the American Legion/ VFW Parade and the rededication of Old Village Cemetery, which includes a memorial performance by the 5th Michigan Regiment Band, a Civil War reenactment band.

The BAMS recognizes the contributions that service men and women have made to preserving the freedoms we experience. Please join the volunteer teams as we work to revitalize these grounds and provide a more respectful setting. Volunteers of all ages with work gloves are needed to use steel rakes, leaf rakes, shovels, axes, branch/brush shears, all of which will be provided. For the removal of small weed trees, we need adult volunteers who can bring chain saws.

We are guaranteed a spring day that will provide fellowship to all participants while experiencing the beauty of Old Village Cemetery. Everyone will leave with a good feeling, emanating deep from within their hearts that their donation of five hours is one small thank you to our veterans that have served this great country.

Please contact us at (810) 250-7276 to sign up so that I can plan work accordingly. Everyone is needed! Thank you in advance.

Jim Vichich

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