Brighton's Main Four Corners (Part 5)

The Weiss Barbecue, which began business about 1927 at the southwest corner of E. Grand River and West Main, began an extensive remodeling campaign in 1930 to give better cafeteria service. Weiss Barbecue enjoyed a fine reputation for its food. Interviews reveal that this was the place to go following not only high school football games, but also for avid alumni of the University of Michigan. "They had the best."

"Detroit Creamery Velvet Brand, 39c qt, 20c pt. Made Fresh Daily" announced on a large sign on the side of the building. The on-site bakery undoubtedly sent an appetizing and inviting aroma to the public.

A photo [circa 1937] of the corner indicates C.F. Weiss Barbe- can is also dispensing sodas and drugs. In photos prior to the paving of Grand River in 1924, hitching rails are present. At present, research does not date when or how the building came down. However, by 1943, the site was a vacant lot. It was deemed proper to "...erect an honor hall for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces" from the Brighton area.

This was built of seven 4x8 foot Masonite panels, painted white, on which the names were placed. By the end of WW II, only a small area remained bleak. This constant reminder generated a continual appreciation of the upheaval all endured in so very many forms.

Following the war, owner of the corner site, Bob LeBland, used the lot as a parking lot. Within a few years he built and owned a laundromat on the corner - "The Brightest Spot in Brighton. From 1958 - 1960, it was Itself's Restaurant. The Sportsman's Grill was in business there from 1961 - 1964. They opened at 6:00 am, seven days a week. In 1965, Howell Town & Country Real Estate Caldwell Banker moved in. Major changes were made in 1997 when a two-story addition arose on the small parking site south of the building, which included living quarters on the second floor. The portion on the corner was also rebuilt. Howell Caldwell Banker is on that site in 2010.

Compiled by Marianna Bair from references in the BAHS Historic Resource Survey file. To compile a more complete history of this site, and others, our readers are urged to donate, or allow the copying of, articles, photos, clippings and oral histories of memories of this site and others. Contact the BAHS or Marianna Bair, 810/229-6402.

Memorial Day Ceremony at Millpond in Front of the Brighton Old Village Cemetery

Memorial Day 2010 marks the renewal of the public's ability to enter and visit Brighton's historic 1837 Old Village Cemetery. The new walkway allows family friends and community members easy access into the cemetery through the new entrance gate that will be unlocked every day.

On a beautiful Memorial Day, the rededication ceremonies marked a formal process of recognizing the new and revitalized improvements. Many people were responsible for these hallowed grounds being opened to the public once again. Those grounds were closed due to vandalism many years ago.

The Brighton Area Historical Society led the effort to re-open this community burial ground. Now all interested in history can visit the earliest settlers of the Brighton area.

Rolling Thunder, Michigan Chapter 5, also helped with the heavy work of clearing weeds trees and brush so that all veterans of the United States will have a respectful final resting spot.

Donation of the new entrance gate was made by the BAHS and construction of the new walkway was funded by the Downtown Development Authority. There have been a number of requests for a new entrance gate and walkway located above the millpond gazebo and on the west side of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church.

Following the rededication, a unique tour of eight grave-sites was provided. Actors portrayed the lives of early Brighton area residents at their gravestones. The re-enactors wore clothing that was representative of those early days while presenting a historical narrative of their lives.

Thanks to actors Tammy Sexton, Sue and Pat Tucker, Lee Garcia, Cheryl Grochowski, Karen Goss, Ken Jolin, Hunter Gibson and Ailbyn Mieserschmidt for the outstanding job!

When you are next visiting the millpond or local restau-rants in downtown Brighton, take time to include a walk through Old Village Cemetery. You will see the military headstones for many veterans including over 30 Civil War soldiers. Mature trees in this peaceful setting will surround you as you look down over the glittering millpond and observe our wonderful community.

Jim Vichich

Did You Know?

The first soda pop made in the United States, Vernor's ginger ale, was created by accident in 1866 in Detroit.