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By Michele Lehman

Liveries an important part of residents' transportation needs

From the time of Eureka's incorporation in 1859 to around 1915, the primary mode of short-distance personal transportation was the horse and buggy. Hundreds of companies produced buggies, which sold for as little as \$25. The conveyances also could be rented at liveries, and Eureka had several that served local residents or out-of-town travelers who had come here by train and needed to get around for business or personal visits.

A 1904 Souvenir Edition of the Woodford County Republican newspaper sheds light on the role of liveries in an article introducing one that L.R. Culp and G. Capron had recently purchased from Dan Bedinger.

"The barn already has eight head of horses," the article states, "and in the list are some of the best drivers in the city. The rigs are all nobby and present a fine appearance. It is all in knowing how to make a horse look well, and it is all in keeping the rigs looking swell.

“The firm makes a specialty of driving the traveling public. Both members of the firm know the county from one end to the other, and if one wants to get over the ground speedily they will always find it to their advantage to consult this firm and let them make the drive.”

Besides providing transportation, liveries boarded and sold horses and sold feed.

Through the years, liveries were located on West Center Street, where the Farm Bureau Building now stands; Court Street just east of the United Methodist Church; East Center Street just south of the courthouse; and on North Main Street near the railroad station.

Eureka sesquicentennial carriage rides

Horse and carriage rides will be offered from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Aug. 22 in the lower park at Lake Eureka as part of the sesquicentennial celebration. Cost will be \$2 per carriage-full, according to organizer Carolyn Kenagy.

The reproduction six-person vis-à-vis carriage that will be used for the rides is typical of ones owned by the well-to-do at the turn of the 20th century, said carriage owner Wayne Berger of Buckingham. “These coachman-driven carriages could be seen out and about as the more prominent, wealthy families took their drives, often on Sunday afternoons,” he said.

Berger and Randy Clapp of Kempton own a business that rents old-time vehicles, including trolleys, wagons, sleighs and a stagecoach. “Young people today don’t know what a stagecoach is,” said Berger, who noted he’s happy to be able to show people what transportation was like for our forebears more than a century ago.

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