**From Stable to Garage: 1810 (formerly 733) N. Wells is a Story of Transportation**

On March 15, 1883, George Quitman pulled permit #272 to build a livery stable at 733 N. Wells, today’s 1810 N. Wells. Steps away from well-traveled Clark Street and lovely Lincoln Park, the site was perfect for a horse barn. The next year veterinarian Dr. Philip Quitman moved in Quitman Stable.

Born in 1849 in Berlin, Philip Quitman arrived in Chicago in 1856. At age 13 when the Civil War commenced, Quitman wanted to enlist; but he was too young. His obituary revealed that he served as a special messenger for General Grant until he turned 16. The war soon ended and Private Quitman’s mustering out papers described him as 5’ 2” tall with brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. He resided in Mississippi and Louisiana where he honed his vet skills and married. A few years after the Fire, he returned to Chicago and within ten years was practicing veterinary medicine at 733 Wells.

But one year after he moved into Quitman’s, he advertised for a hostler to run the stable. Quitman moved down Wells a few blocks and later he settled on Dearborn Parkway.

Although Quitman continued to own the structure, Fred Heide took over in 1885 when it was renamed Heide’s Livery. In 1891 one Heide stable occupant was advertised for sale as “a gentle family horse.” In 1893 the stable was selling a used wheeled cart “good as new” and a “second-hand phaeton for $50.”

In 1900 two society women witnessed a horse being abused at Clark and Wisconsin. The horse was brought to Dr. Young, a vet located at the nearby Wells St. stable. He diagnosed the injury as an earlier broken leg. Sadly the horse didn’t make it, and its owner was charged in court by the two dismayed women who would surely be PETA members today.

The stable was put up for rent in 1908 and 1909 when one ad described it as having 30 stalls and 2 seven-room flats. By then part housed a taxi company. A calamity occurred in 1910 when Ross Vanderkohl, a chauffeur and strikebreaker for the Auto Taxicab Company at 1810 Wells, was taking his first taxi driving lesson. Under duress, he ran over an elderly ill man who was unable to move away from the slow moving vehicle.

By 1928 the stable became the Michigan Motor Repair Shop. In 1940 it underwent a major renovation with a portion of the stable demolished. Its front and rear parts had originally been two brick floors with a center wooden one-story section. The building was re-roofed as a high single story; the center clapboard section became masonry. A skylight with bow truss roof was added. The stable’s envelope remained with original bricks visible in the side and rear walls.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s it served as Janu Brothers Automotive; then until about 2000 Ono Brothers operated their auto repair shop. Today it’s event and employee parking for the New Leaf floral shop.

From veterinarian Dr. Quitman and all the hostlers who cared for its resident horses to auto repairmen including Tad and Mits Ono who serviced thousands of Triangle cars, 1810 Wells facilitated transportation in Old Town. Sitting proudly at Lincoln and Wells, the stable-garage has changed physically, but transport has been its heart.

Diane Gonzalez, Chicago House Histories, 11/22/19



***Ono Brothers Automotive was housed in the stable from about 1973- 2000. Photo from 1970’s***

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***1810 Wells or 733 Wells in this 1892 fire insurance atlas. The x represents stable and the pink color denotes brick. The structure was 28 feet high at each end and 14 feet tall in the center.***