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WASHTENAW HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Founded December 19, 1857



Washtenaw Impressions

OCTOBER 1975

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION SURVEY OF OLD BUILDINGS STARTS IN SOUTHEAST TOWNSHIPS

The Washtenaw County Historical Commission has started a survey of old buildings in the county with help from the County Parks and Recreation Commission according to Stuart Thayer, chairman.

A park department employe, hired under a federal grant program, has been assigned to locate and photograph old buildings, schools, churches, cemeteries and the like in Augusta, York, Ypsilanti and Pittsfield townships.

The commission hopes funds will be available to survey the

whole county. They also hope eventually to locate all pre-World War II records.



Besides Thayer, the commission members are Natalie Edmunds of Ypsilanti, Kenneth Gates of the park department, Harold Jones of Chelsea, Lydia Muncy and Dave Osler of Ann Arbor and Iver Schmidt of Dexter.

GENEALOGY SECTION BEGINS PUBLISHING MATERIALS FOR RESEARCHERS: RE-ELECTS RALPH MUNCY CHAIRMAN

The Genealogy Section of WCHS has issued the first publication in what it hopes will be a series of helps for persons tracing family history.

That is but one of the activities of a busy summer and fall for the group.

Ralph Muncy of Ann Arbor was re-elected chairman of the Section and as chairman will automatically serve on the WCHS board of directors. Mrs. William F. Bender of Ann Arbor is secretary and Miss Flora Burt of Chelsea is treasurer.

Directors are Dr. Bender of Ann Arbor and Harold Jones and Mrs. Harold Sias, both of Chelsea.

Mr. Muncy and Dr. Bender are delegates to the Michigan Genealogical Council, while their wives, Lydia and Polly, respectively, are alternates. Dr. Bender is chairman of the Bicentennial pioneer certificate committee and Mr. Muncy is on the education committee.

Besides the plants she grew for the WCHS sale, Mrs. Muncy raised other slips of her own and other plants which were sold early in September for a net profit of \$214 which will go into the publication fund.

The first publication is "Suggestions for Dating Old Photographs" by Arnold R. Pilling. Dr. Pilling of Wayne State University spoke to the Section last May on that topic. The ten-page booklet will be available at the next WCHS meeting for \$1 a copy or inquiries may be made to Mrs. Bender at 668-6925.

The Section met through the summer. In August they met with the Milan Historical Society and Mrs. Muncy talked about how to do oral history interviews.

In September the group "read" Botsford Cemetery on Earhart Rd. They expect to publish their record and send copies to the State Library to add to its collection.

SUNDAY, OCT. 19, THE DATE OLD OBSERVATORY, IS PLACE FOR WCHS MEETING, TOUR

The October meeting of the Washtenaw County Historical Society will feature a tour of the old University Observatory on Observatory St.

The Society will convene there at 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 19. Prof. Albert Hiltner, chairman of the U-M Astronomy Department, will lead the tour and talk about plans for restoration of the oldest parts of the building, which is known as the Detroit Observatory.

The Observatory is near University Hospital. Parking will be available in a nearby parking structure.



BADGE, INDIAN ARTIFACTS, ADDED TO WCHS COLLECTION

Stuart Thayer, curator of the WCHS collection of artifacts, reports two new additions this month.

Miss Florence M. Ambruster of Tower Plaza, Ann Arbor, has given her father's collection of Indian artifacts to the Society. Her father, Fred, found them on the family farm in Scio township. There are about twenty pieces including an axe head, chipping stones and arrowheads of various sizes.

Fred Bauer, of Ann Arbor, a plumbing inspector for the city for many years, has retired and given us his badge.

COBBLESTONE FARM

IT'S A MOVIE LOCATION, SITE OF 'DIG'

A movie, "Cobblestone and Memories", was one of the features of Mary Schieve-Achenbaum's report on progress of the Cobblestone Farm restoration at the September meeting of the Washenaw County Historical Society.

She also showed some of the artifacts unearthed in last summer's archeological "dig" at Cobblestone Farm, the Ticknor-Campbell house on Packard Rd. adjoining Buhr Park. Wystan Stevens, local historian, showed slides of the "dig" in progress.

Ms. Schieve-Achenbaum is president of the association which is seeking to restore the house built in 1844 by Dr. Benajah Ticknor, a U.S. naval surgeon. The house is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

The 12-minute film, produced by two University of Michigan students during the past year, has been entered in the annual collegiate film contest of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

During scenes in and around the house, the voices of George and Mary Campbell, brother and sister, are heard recounting memories of their life there. Their grandfather, William Campbell, an Ypsilanti merchant, bought the farm in 1881. The Campbells lived there until they sold it to the city in 1972.

Interspersed with scenes of the house are other scenes of destruction of buildings by the wrecker's ball and new construction. The voice of Nan Hodges presents a case for saving and recycling historic buildings before it is too late. Mrs. Hodges is past chairman of the Cobblestone committee and an active member of the association. She is doing extensive research on the life of Dr. Ticknor.

Dr. Ticknor had bought the

farm in 1835 and sent his brother, Hemon, to settle and manage it. Hemon and his family had lived in the older wooden portion of the house behind the main stone structure.

It is assumed that the stones for the house came from the farm which was originally 183 acres. It is believed that Steven Mills, a local mason, built the house. He was trained as a brick mason in a section of New York famous for cobblestone architecture.

(Regarding stones, Wystan Stevens noted that many were left in the area by glaciers and were used for basements. In fact, he said, in 1885 the city fathers realized the supply was running low and held an emergency meeting to consider how the city could grow without stones for new basements. However the problem was averted by the development of cinder blocks.)

It wasn't until the summer of 1851 that Dr. Ticknor, then 63 years old, came to live at the farm, Mrs. Hodges related in the movie. His arrival was saddened by the imminent death of Hemon's daughter, Caroline, with tuberculosis. There was little he could do for her but try to make her comfortable. They carried her to the west side of the house where she could look out over the fields, according to Dr. Ticknor's journal.



The Campbells recalled their life there at a later period. They spoke of neighbors "changing

work" at threshing time, of how older children always had to look after the younger ones, and especially how cold the house was on windy days. The furnace heat circulated only by gravity.

There had been several out-buildings in the farm yard until they were destroyed by fire in 1924.

The purpose of the archeological dig was to locate foundations of those buildings with a view to possible future restoration. They found the ice house, smoke house, carriage house, chicken coop, horse barn and corn crib.

They also found a number of artifacts--broken china, an 1891 Indianhead penny, two pre-1900 dimes, bottles, buttons, an arrowhead and fragments of a kaolin clay pipe used in trading with Indians.

Most numerous of all were nails--5,000 of them, both round and square. Analysis of the number and type of nails around the foundations enabled U-M archeologist Michael E. Whalen, who directed the dig, to draw some conclusions about the age and use of the buildings.

A greater proportion of earlier square nails would suggest the building was older and perhaps less repaired. Square nails outnumbered round ones 10 to 1 in the ice house but only 4 to 1 in the carriage house.

Student volunteers from the University, Community High, Earthworks (an alternate high school) and Huron High helped with the dig.

While this dig was shallow and comparatively simple compared to some archeological digs, there was nothing haphazard about it.

The site was precisely measured and mapped. It was divided into a metric grid of one meter

squares from a base line.

The base line was a magnetic north-south line which passed through the iron wellhead where the windmill had stood, just south of the horse barn.

Within each square meter the exact location of each artifact had to be mapped and depth indicated from an arbitrary line strung above ground.

Artifacts from each square meter were placed in a labeled bag and are now stored. There are more than 200 bags.

They dug carefully, first ten centimeters, then two centimeters at a time to the original soil base. To be sure they didn't miss anything they sifted the dirt through a screen.

While a shovel could be used to remove the top layer, a six-inch bricklayer's trowel was used for more careful work.

Ms. Schieve-Achenbaum said a lot has been done, but a lot remains to be done.

The Association has re-roofed the stone house and put a temporary roof on the wood section. The main floor has been rewired and a new furnace and duct work installed so the first floor can be heated. The city ran water and sewer lines in.

The Association has found someone to live in the house to prevent vandalism.

They want to replace the front porch lost in the December 1 snow storm last year. They are now replacing window putty. Only two panes of glass are missing, she noted.

The Association is most concerned about stabilizing the rear wooden part which is oldest and perhaps has the richest potential, she said.

It will virtually have to be restored from the ground up and can't be done in dibs and dabs by volunteer labor, she said. The Association is now

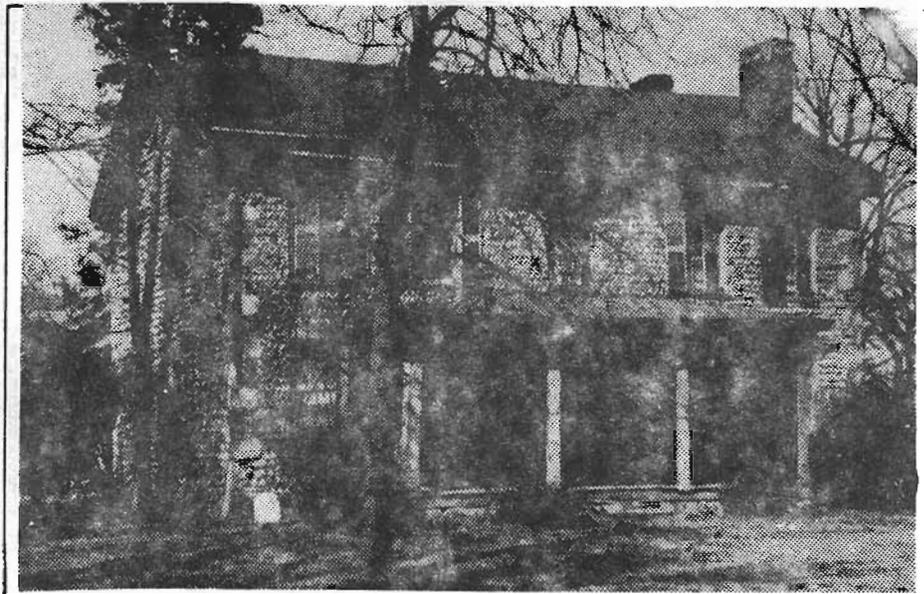


Photo by Herb Pfabe

TICKNOR-CAMPBELL HOUSE

taking bids for architects drawings of the back section.

Finding the money to do the necessary repairs is a chronic problem. It was estimated a year ago that restoring the back would probably cost \$50,000, she noted. It might be ten percent more now, she added.

The National Park Service tentatively awarded the Association grants totaling \$20,000 but they must first be matched. Earlier there was basis for hope that Cobblestone Farm would receive \$20,000 from the city's Community Development Revenue Sharing grant (CDRS) but that is now doubtful.

Meanwhile the association plans its own fund-raising activities which it tries to combine with fun activities. A benefit garage sale last summer netted \$322. A fall festival and sale was held Sept. 28 at the farm.

They had such activities as a quilting demonstration, bobbing for apples, and horseshoe throwing and corn husking contests, along with a sale of antiques, collectibles, baked goods, plants and refreshments.

Such fun activities are in keeping with the association's future hopes for the museum as

a place with something going on all the time. They also plan to have a couple of rooms open for meetings of civic groups.

Much work on the project has been done by adult and student volunteers. Another special project besides the movie and the dig is a model of the house as it should look when restored, done by U-M landscape architecture students. To find tiny stones for the model, the students had to sift through dirt.

The model was recently on display at Ann Arbor Federal Savings and Loan and is available for display elsewhere.

The movie was produced by two U-M students, Clay Bauske and Lisa Varnier. It included pictures by Eck Stanger and Herb Pfabe as well as Campbell family pictures.

THANK YOU, MRS. COLE

It has come to our attention that the Society's thanks for storage of its artifacts several years should be extended not only to the Milton Pools but also to his grandmother, Mrs. Harry Cole of Waters Rd. Mrs. Cole is a WCHS member and her late husband was a life member.

**'THE OTHER GEORGE' TO BE
WCHS NOVEMBER TOPIC**

Dr. C. Howard Ross will speak on "The Other George" at the November meeting of the Society.

It will be at 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, the week before Thanksgiving, in Liberty Hall at Ann Arbor Federal Savings & Loan.

Dave Pollock, vice-president and program chairman, says this will be another in our intermittent series on the Bicentennial.

**GENEALOGY GROUP TO MEET
OCT. 26 AT LIMA TOWN HALL**

The October meeting of the Genealogy Section of WCHS has been changed to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 26, at the Lima Township Hall on Jackson Rd. at Lima Center Rd. to avoid conflict with the WCHS meeting.

The topic will be "Tracing Immigrant Ancestors in Germany" The speakers will include Dr. James Wolfe of Ann Arbor and Margaret Sias of Chelsea.

**INFORMATION SOUGHT ABOUT
LOCAL WOMEN IN HISTORY**

Do you know of women of historical significance, especially in Washtenaw County?

The local committee for

International Women's Year has asked for assistance in identifying such women. They plan to use the information for spots on radio station WAAM in the coming year.

They ask that you write-up information you have about specific women on a 3 x 5 card and send it to Jane Zale, 1139 Martin Pl., or Dave Pollock, Dean of Administration, Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, 48106.

**YPSI MUSEUM FEATURING
STATE GOVERNORS EXHIBIT**

A traveling exhibit, "The Michigan Governors, Personal Glimpses," will be on display at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum during October.

The museum is open from 2 to 4 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Extended hours may be announced later. For information telephone the museum, 482-4990.

The 24-foot long exhibit consists of individual cases with pictures and memorabilia of 12 of the governors from 1835 to the present. It includes such things as Gov. Austin Blair's tall silk hat, china and glassware used by the governors and copies of documents they signed into law.

It was prepared by the Michigan History Division of the Michigan Department of State.

COUNTY CALENDAR

Chelsea Area Historical Society -- 8 p.m. second Monday of month at First Congregational Church. Mrs. Wendell Beckwith, president of the Waterloo Historical Society, will speak at the November 10th meeting.

Milan Historical Society -- 7:30 p.m. Third Wednesday of month at Milan Community House.

Saline Area Historical Society -- 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 21 at the U-M's Bentley Historical Library on North Campus.

Ypsilanti Historical Society -- Business meeting 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 19, at museum.

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**Washtenaw
Historical Society
Meeting
SUNDAY OCT. 19, 1975
3:00 P.M.
UNIVERSITY
OBSERVATORY**

M/M Lawrence W. Ziegler
537 Riverview Drive
Ann Arbor, Mi. 48104