



WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

WCHS WITHDRAWS FROM BARTON POWERHOUSE PROJECT, VOTES TO INVESTIGATE RESTORATION OF LOG CABIN

Washtenaw County Historical Society members voted February 13 to withdraw from the Barton Powerhouse museum project and authorized the Board of Directors to investigate the possibility of restoring an 1836 log cabin at Cobblestone Farm. There were no dissenting voices.

Director Douglas Crary summed up the Board's reasoning, saying that interest in trying to go ahead with the powerhouse museum has waned and the fund drive was so unsuccessful "there is no point in trying to revive it."

Besides the fact that power generation may be restored and the building is not big enough as is, there are other complicating factors such as access, parking and difficulties with Barton Village, he said.

Crary and David Pollock of the Board have been talking with Ann Arbor City Administrator Godfrey Collins about the possibility of recouping money spent on improvements in the building, Crary said, although he does not know how much might be returned, probably only a fraction of the approximately \$30,000 spent on the building.

Before the city would further consider return of money, they asked a letter of intent to withdraw which was sent following the meeting.

"You should know this is not an easy decision for any of us," President Patricia Austin said. "It would have been wonderful if we could have had a museum at last."

The log cabin was moved from Augusta township to Cobblestone Farm in 1980 through the efforts of Dr. Leigh Anderson. It was built in 1836 by Joseph Harris and used until recently, when slated for demolition by the new owner, it was donated for historical purposes by Harris descendants.

Cobblestone Farm Association does not foresee having money to restore the cabin into a pioneer home for a long time because of other priority projects

Dr. John C. Dann of the WCHS board has said that about one-third of the Society's collection of artifacts would be appropriate and sufficient to furnish the cabin, which would also need a fireplace.

Mrs. Austin promised to proceed slowly and carefully and bring the question back to the members for a vote. Mrs. Austin explained she had tried to keep the two issues of withdrawal and the log cabin separate so that each could be judged on its own merits.

WEBSTER TOUR PLANNED SATURDAY, JUNE 11

Washtenaw County's Webster township, named for Daniel Webster and celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, will be the destination of the annual WCHS tour Saturday, June 11.

One of the county's most rural townships, it boasts no shopping centers, no major highways, no large industries. It does boast the circa 1832 Williams/Mast "Cottonwood Farm", the 1834 Webster Church, one of the two oldest in continuous use in Michigan, the 1846 Podunk School and the 1871 township hall. More details next time.



HOW TO JOIN WCHS

To join WCHS send dues to Mrs. Kathleen Sherzer, 2305 Woodside, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Dues are \$8 per person, \$15 per couple; \$6 for senior individuals, \$12 for senior couples; annual sustaining, \$50; and student, \$2. You will receive meeting notices and *The Impressions*. Those who have paid should receive a membership card with this issue.

RICHARD C. FRANK WILL TALK APRIL 10 ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION

His work on the restoration of Fort Michilimackinac at the top of the "mitten" and Fort Mackinac on the island led Architect Richard C. Frank of Ann Arbor to specialize exclusively in historical preservation and planning.

His firm, Preservation Urban Design, Inc., with offices in Ann Arbor and Washington, D.C., has done more than 250 projects ranging from the East Coast to the Mississippi River and from Michigan to Florida.

Frank will speak on historical preservation at the WCHS meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 13, at the American Legion Home, 1035 South Main Street, Ann Arbor. Free parking at the site.

A U-M graduate, Frank worked on forts in New York, Indiana and Wisconsin before broadening his interest to the whole "built environment."

He is a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, past-president of the Historical Society of Michigan, trustee-emeritus of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, past-chairman of the AIA committee on historic resources and past vice-president of the Victorian Society of America.

GSWC WORKSHOP MAY 21

The Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County will conduct its third genealogical workshop in cooperation with the Friends of the Ann Arbor Public Library from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, May 21, at the library.

Workshop fee is \$4.50. Luncheon served by Ann Arbor "Y" for \$2.35 available if reserved by May 10. Reservations may be made to Mrs. Charles Liskow, 5765 Munger Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Questions? Call her at 483-1395 after noon.

A CASE OF FIRST THINGS FIRST

U-M Began As Primary School in Detroit

The University of Michigan or Catholepistemiad "so grandly conceived" by Judge Augustus B. Woodward in 1817 began with a "low level primary school" in Detroit.

The first teaching employe was a teacher of that school who had hardly graduated from eighth grade let alone college, retired Professor Claude Eggertsen of the U-M School of Education told the February WCHS audience.

That first teacher was Lemuel Shattuck who had attended a primary school in Massachusetts and was teaching a district school in Troy, New York, when he became acquainted with the Lancasterian or monitorial system of teaching and trained in it. And the U-M was looking for a Lancasterian teacher.

"Whether we want to say the University of Michigan is the present U-M or not is probably another question but we claim that our origin is 1817 and we now have it on our seal although up until at least 1929 it was not. The last time I went into the old Architecture Building I noticed a seal in the floor with the date 1837."

In any case, the later University of Michigan in Ann Arbor "decided to adopt 1817 and the old building which the trustees erected in Detroit at that time as part of our heritage."

That building at Bates and Congress Streets in Detroit was two stories high, about 80 feet long and 30 or 40 feet wide. The upper floor was rented to a classical academy but the U-M did not hire the teacher as it did for the primary school.

"In his diary for June 10, 1818, the Reverend John Monteith, now often recognized as the first president of the University of Michigan, noted that 'Lemuel Shattuck arrives to take charge of our popular school on the Lancasterian method.'"

The method, named after John Lancaster who founded the system about 1800 in England, "was popular in this country because it was a quick and inexpensive way to train



LEMUEL SHATTUCK, IN HIS LATER YEARS

large numbers of children" and the university "had so little money to do anything at all," Eggertsen said.

"In Lancasterian schools, the master selected the most able pupils to act as assistant teachers or monitors. The teacher would instruct the monitor who would return to his group of children — 10 or 11 — and teach them what he had just been taught.

"One of the most interesting parts of it when you think of the time it became popular, was that there was no corporal punishment. Even these days in English schools there is corporal punishment but the founder of this system was very much opposed to it.

"He said, and I think it was quite remarkable for his day, that the way to motivate was to give prizes or rewards. Both the original London school and the Detroit school gave money prizes."

The first annual U-M report of September 1819 said the Detroit school had been in operation for three months on the Lancasterian plan "with a success equal to the highest expectations of the trustees and visitors."

The report explained the establishment of a primary school and a classical academy instead of a higher school on the grounds that there is "little demand for ex-

tensive literary establishments.

"In other words, there weren't any kids around able to pass entrance exams. They didn't even know how to read and write."

The same sort of thing was done later in 1837-38 when there weren't enough qualified students to attend a university so branch academies or secondary schools were set up around the state.

Shattuck wrote, "During my residence in Troy I had frequently visited the Lancasterian School in that city. That system of instruction was then in high repute."

"It was in high repute," Eggertsen said, "because it was so cheap. In New York City it was claimed you could have children in the Lancasterian School for \$1 a year. You could have 200 or 300 children under one teacher. Some in England had 1,000 under one master.

"It was a time of great stress for United States leaders of that day because they knew we had to have an educational system to have a democratic form of government and they had no machinery for it. The dilemma of 1800, 1810, 1820 was how to set up a system of education to include all the children, even of the people with no money."

Shattuck also had visited the model Lancasterian school in Albany superintended by William A. Tweed Dale who had been sent from England by Lancaster on request from Albany citizens. Shattuck trained under Tweed Dale for two months.

He had earned \$16 a month plus board at Troy, so it is not surprising he accepted the University's munificent offer of \$800 a year, plus board and traveling expenses although he didn't get all of his money promptly.

A description of the school by one of Shattuck's students is in the Burton Collection at the Detroit Public Library.

classes of ten or twelve, facing each other at a double desk. Beginning with the sand scratchers, each class presided over by a scholar taken from a higher class seated at the end of the desks to preserve order and give instruction for the day or week."

Sometimes there were special monitors for spelling or arithmetic or reading, Eggertsen said.

"There were broad aisles on the outsides, in which around half circles the classes recited their lessons to the instructor, standing within the circle with a pointer. The lessons for the juveniles, on placards upon the wall; all the classes reciting at the same time, being a school graded into classes.

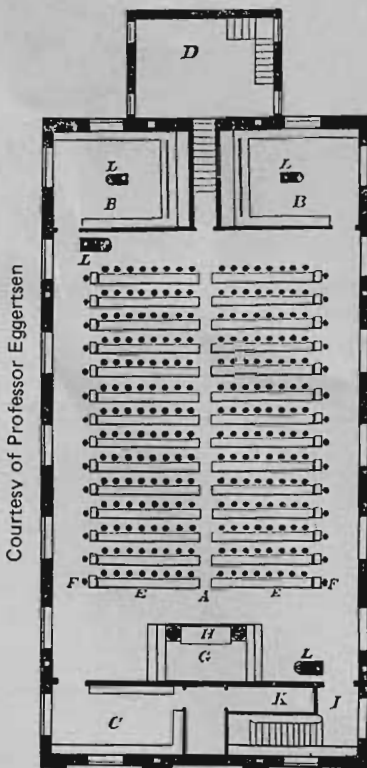
"At the entrance end, between the doors, upon a raised platform, were seated two monitors of order . . . The principal, Mr. Shattuck, over all; quietly entering the room, passing around, giving instruction, sometimes carrying a small rattan or rawhide (cane), but seldom used, except to tap a pupil on the shoulder when found playing or dozing."

Shattuck tried to cut costs. One way was to set up benches in front for small children, "first graders", around a table painted black with an edge around it filled with white sand and the children, instead of using paper or slates, would write in the sand, hence "sand scratchers."

Shattuck's pupil also said "A system of rewards and fines in representatives of federal currency was used, mills, cents, half-dimes, dimes, dollars and eagles. Probably few ever gained a dollar. . . Rewards for good scholarship, and fines for delinquencies, were given and exacted, at the end of the week."

So many kids didn't get any money at all that the teachers took to hanging colorful toys around the room, Eggertsen said. They were supposed to wish they could have them and be motivated. This seemed to work even better than handing out money.

In his journal, Shattuck said, "Never have I had such ecomiums (sic) passed upon me as I had at the end of the first quarter."



MONITORIAL SCHOOL PLAN
Floor plan of U-M's Detroit primary school.

Tuition was set by the board at \$2.50 per quarter for those who had subscribed at least \$10 for the erection of the building. Non-subscribers paid \$3.50.

But the idea that everyone should have an opportunity to go to school affected to some degree the Board of Visitors in Detroit and they resolved that to persons of low circumstances the price of tuition may be reduced as low as \$1 per quarter at the discretion of the directors. One of the great problems with this kind of arrangement was that parents would rather not send their kids to school than ask.

"Another aspect of the Lancasterian schools in this country that distressed a good many people was that it had a kind of charity flavor as it had in England.

"A letter from Shattuck in the *Detroit Gazette* of April 30, 1818 said that, at first, prominent people did not send their children to the school because they had a notion it was charity, but after he had an exhibition to show the kinds of things the children had done the attitude changed. Hereafter, he had the children of Governor Cass, General Macomb and all other distinguished families."

However, Shattuck said that under any other system, the cost would have been \$3,121 a year and they had spent only \$800.

In February 1821, Shattuck accepted a change in salary to \$500 a year plus ten percent of all the money collected in tuition.

"In June 1821, he was unanimously elected secretary of the U-M, a fairly significant position for him to occupy as a non-college graduate among these very distinguished and highly educated men and yet his name never appears in any of the accounts of our present institution.

"I think this is probably due to the fact we didn't decide to take the date and property of the old University over until 1929 and we haven't spent very much time examining the history of that period."

In late 1821, Shattuck decided to return to New England. The trustees of what was by then called the University of Michigan praised Shattuck and asked him to find a successor.

Shattuck went back to Tweed Dale and found a man whose name came down in Detroit history more than Shattuck's — John Farmer.

Gradually criticism mounted of the monitorial system and raged for quite a time through meetings and letters to newspapers.

The University gave up conduct of the primary school in 1827 and turned over the job of educating children to the common schools of the city of Detroit.

While the early University never found any students to study the 13

didaxim—fields of study—that Judge Woodward envisioned, it proceeded to teach what the community needed within the range of its slight resources. It made a partly successful attempt to provide virtually free education for those who could not pay.

"We ought to be proud of what this institution which we now claim did in the early years of trying to build up an education system for this country, Eggertsen concluded.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES 1983-84 SLATE, ELECTION TO BE HELD AT ANNUAL MEETING MAY 19

Present officers have been re-nominated for next year except for long-time Corresponding Secretary Ethelyn Morton who wishes to retire from that job but will stay on as director-at-large. Karen Murphy has been nominated to succeed her.

Nominated to three-year terms on the Board are Nancy Schuon, Galen Wilson, Susan Carbeck Lande and James Parker. Kathleen Sherzer and Kathleen Sutton will fill terms expiring in 1984 from which Iver Schmidt and John Dann resigned. Dann and David Pollock will stay on as directors-at-large. Mary Steffek Blaske and Rosalie Moore will retire.

The slate will be voted on at the annual meeting Thursday, May 19. The nominating committee is composed of Esther Warzynski, chairman, Elizabeth Dusseau (treasurer), Alice Ziegler (recording secretary), and President Patricia Austin, ex officio. Johanna Wiese is vice-president.

Wilson is manuscripts curator at Clements Library. Parker, an executive, **'HAIRLOOM' REPAIRED**

WCHS recently had the shadow-box frame of its hair wreath repaired and returned to Kempf House where it hangs on loan after being shown at February board and member meetings.

The wreath was made in 1864-66 by Miss Jane O. Wheeler of Scio township. Family hair combings were saved and woven into artistic designs in the 19th century. WCHS Director Douglas Cray calls them family "hairlooms".

tive of Ford Motor Company at Wixom, is president of the Webster Historical Society.

Mrs. Schuon, a former medical assistant, and Mrs. Murphy are homemakers. Mrs. Lande is a public school Spanish teacher and Mrs. Sutton, a secretary, is on the Cobblestone Farm board.

WILL HISTORY TROOP FAIL FOR LACK OF LEADERS?

HELP! Members, readers, would any of you help lead a proposed Scout Explorer Troop of 14-20-year-old youths interested in history, anthropology and archeology, especially about local Indians and their dances?

Robert Svoboda, Exploring executive of the Wolverine Council of Boy Scouts, has found 85 interested boys and girls in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. The Grotto Club of Ann Arbor has offered meeting space. They lack only adult leadership.

He has asked WCHS to charter the troop. A similar troop in Monroe has given a great deal of help to the museum there and presumably a local troop would help with WCHS activities such as the proposed log cabin project. Six adults are needed.

For more information call Svoboda at 971-7100, Mrs. Austin at 663-5281 or Mrs. Ziegler at 663-8826.

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HERB BARTLETT, WCHS PAST PRESIDENT, DIES

WCHS Past-President Herbert Bartlett, a retired highway engineer, died March 6 at age 92 in Saline.

Long active in WCHS, he served as president 1962-64 and as a director. He helped organize and was chairman of the Ann Arbor Historical Commission and was a charter member of the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation.

He spent many hours researching the Great Sauk Trail and the old Chicago road, now US-12, which basically follows the trail. He helped find and restore the Chapin piano, Ann Arbor's first, and helped obtain copies of the Dr. Benajah Ticknor papers from Yale University for the Michigan Historical Collections at Bentley Library. Ticknor built Cobblestone Farm house.

KENTUCKY TALK SET

Linda Ramsey Ashley of Romeo, editor of *Kentucky Ancestors* magazine, will speak on "Genealogical Research in Kentucky" at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 24 at the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County meeting at Washtenaw Community College. Beginners class 1 p.m.

IT'S TRUE—VERITY IS HERE!

Congratulations to WCHS Board member Wytan Stevens and wife Catherine on their new daughter, Verity, who weighed in at nine pounds 12½ ounces Saturday, March 12. Her parents agree she looks like daddy.

**WASHTENAW COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEETING**

**2:30 P.M. SUNDAY
APRIL 10, 1983**

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