

FEBRUARY 9, 2016

Much has developed at the Warner site since my last update in December.

The Warner house continues to be the focus of restoration efforts. New half round gutters have now been installed. The gutters are made of steel with an aluminum coating (galvalume) that should last for many years. Decades ago half round gutters were installed on various sections of the house with some of them used to direct water to the cistern. At the end of December many members of the family gathered at the house for a Christmas party and were able to see the restoration results first hand. Also, a bronze NRHP plaque has been ordered and will be placed on the front column below the house numbers this summer. Several front yard pine trees planted in the 1980s/1990s were removed to reduce competition with the 100+ year old black locust trees and provide a clearer view of the house. Many thanks to all who helped with the tree removal.

We have also been the recipients of several more donations of family items. A square, quartersawn oak table was donated by family member Donna Warner. The table was formerly at the Warner house and is now placed in the center of the parlor where it was likely used historically. One of my cousins, Tina Sanderlin, donated a framed cross stitch that had hung on the wall near the kitchen for years. Another family member, Judy O'Dell, also donated several family items including a cut glass platter, a personal glass salt server, and three pieces of embroidered fabric that were owned by my great grandmother Laura Fuller-Warner. More family items were received from yet another family member, Sharon Prieskorn. Sharon donated an antique china cabinet, a wood table, and a nickel-plated patent 1895 table lamp made by Bradley and Hubbard (now sitting on the parlor table). Interestingly enough, the maker of the table lamp matches the chandelier that hung in the kitchen. Many thanks again for all of the donations!

Preparations are underway to move the Hicks one room school to the Warner farm. A route has been pre-selected pending approval from M-DOT. This will be quite an event and may require a police escort. The mover has been selected, Hoffer Structural Lifting, based in St. Johns. We are currently soliciting bids for the foundation work. We have been pleasantly surprised to receive a number of offers of donations sent through the news reporter who wrote the article on moving the school. Most of the offers included donations of school desks and bells. The search for the original bell has ended as an employee at Pinckney schools has exhausted all options but to no avail. A couple of old school desks will come in handy for some of our outreach programs but as mentioned in the article we are intending to use the building for traditional arts. A generous donation by Gilann Vail-Boisvenue certainly was in line with this direction. Gilann donated an electric potter's wheel as well as an electric kiln. These will be of great use to use for making pottery in the future at the school. She formerly made raku pottery and we hope to use the same firing technique at the farm. In

addition, we were also able to acquire a Bernard Leach treadle wheel from a woman that purchased a couple of pieces of my pottery at a craft show. Mr. Leach is fairly well known for beginning the studio pottery movement in Britain that spread across many parts of the world. The treadle wheel is completely human powered, utilizing a wood extension to move the flywheel. This wheel will be great for showing traditional throwing techniques.

As you might recall, we recovered a section of fabric from within the faux lintel above the back porch during restoration work last fall. The fabric section was found in conjunction with a timber member presumed to be from a barn loom. A photo of the 12" x 21" fabric has been examined by two textile specialists who were kind enough to provide comments including: "Without looking at the actual fabric, my opinion is that it is handwoven in a coarse 2/1 twill. I think it is not a commercial fabric owing to the difference in grist in the warp vs the weft and the looseness of the weave. The finer yarn would be the warp as it is tightly twisted. The weft looks like a looser spun wool which accounts for the pulling and pilling on the surface." It is important to note that the specialists have not examined the fabric in hand and are giving their best assessment based on a photo I provided via email. This is certainly an exciting development as it leaves open the possibility that the fabric is the handiwork of my great, great, great grandmother Lucretia Jones-Warner.

Another interesting development at the farm surrounds dendrochronology (tree ring) analysis. As mentioned previously, thirteen wood samples were sent to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville laboratory of tree-ring science. Under the direction of Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer, a chronology (from 1718 to 1898) was developed from eight of the samples (6 from the house and 2 from the barn) with determined harvest dates. The analysis was performed to determine the year the Warner house was constructed as well as if sections were added on at a later date. We also wanted to know if the barns were built before or after the house and when. Family stories indicate that the house was built in 1855 after a fire destroyed the log cabin. The story also indicated that they lived in one of the barns while the house was being built. After several months of preparation by sanding and inspection under a microscope as well as statistical comparison to a known chronology of a 402 year old white oak at Cranbrook Institute of Science, the results are in.

Analysis of five samples from the house indicates a harvest date between the fall of 1853 and spring 1855. The harvest dates match well with the family story of an 1855 construction date and fits with archaeological research. The samples were from three main sections of the house that also indicate that it was built during a single event. The south wing, therefore, was not an addition as we might have suspected based on lower ceiling heights and minor differences in trim application. However, one sample from the south wing did date to 1899. This sample was from the area of the back room from a dividing wall that was likely a later renovation. Fragments of newspaper used as wallpaper mentioning

President McKinley and the Panama Canal match well with the turn of the century harvest date.

Two samples from the previously destroyed 28 x 80 barn were also analyzed. Somewhat to my surprise, the harvest date of these samples dated to the fall of 1876 and spring of 1877. This makes sense from the view of the progressive farm model, however, it seems fairly late given the amount of property accumulated by the original pioneer even by the 1850s. What is certain is that the family didn't live in the large barn on the property as it post-dates the house. Although there were several small outbuildings (wood shed, chicken coop, and blacksmith shop) that may date to the 1840s/1850s, it is hard to imagine any of these serving as a type of extended domicile. Perhaps another structure existed yet unknown to the family.

Many thanks to Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer as well to his students Maegen Rochner, Hudson Kelley, and Christopher Wilson for a job well done. Details of the analysis and results are slated to be published in a peer reviewed journal, *Tree-Ring Research*, in 2017. A presentation on the dendrochronological results and our restoration activities was given at the Saginaw Valley chapter of the Michigan Archaeological Society during the February meeting.