

SEPTEMBER 2, 2015

After many weeks of hard work making repairs and prepping the exterior walls, rehabilitation progress on the house has certainly turned a corner. Nearly all of the major repairs to the siding and trim have now been completed. The west wall has been completely primed as well as part of the front. Other walls have been prepped to receive primer and paint very soon. Another milestone (both physically and psychologically) has been achieved. Not seen in nearly century, two square columns have been reinstalled on the front porch. Historic photos suggest that the columns were removed between 1924 and 1933, likely to remove deteriorating planks on the porch. Addition of the columns now makes the house a true to form Greek Revival. It has been interesting to see how a series of steady improvements have added up to make a big overall impact in the house's transformation. We certainly appreciate the assistance of my two uncles, Chuck and Elroy, who have been instrumental in keeping the progress moving forward.

My wife, Kerry and our twin daughters, hosted a tea party with other family members last week. They used authentic tea service from our 19th century ceramics comparative collection, in this case a pattern called "Sydenham" that dates to the 1850s. Sherds of "Sydenham" in both blue and brown have been recovered archaeologically at the site representing a number of different vessels. The setting was perfect, complete with handleless cups & saucers on a candlelit antique table. They enjoyed "biscuits" (actually cookies) from England and other treats brought by my mom's cousin Donna Warner who recently visited family there.

The farmstead was the recipient of several generous donations last month. My cousin, Velvet Garver, donated a teapot in the "Classical Antiquities" pattern. This pattern was registered by Joseph Clementson in 1849 and features a reverse transferware design with Greek figures from Homer's Odyssey. The greenware form matches those used in his "Siam" (registered in 1850) as well as "Sydenham" patterns. This teapot will make a great addition to the comparative collection. Donna Warner donated a set of silver spoons to be used with the tea service as well as two that compliment the personal glass salt containers. Another family member, Shirley Warner, donated a wood three tier table that was once owned by my great grandmother, Laura Fuller-Warner. The table is seen in the parlor from photos dating to the late 1940s and has been placed in that room in its former location. Dr. Ruth Ann Armitage donated a number of items from her family located in PA including a marble top dresser with large mirror, a marble top washstand, several quilts, a cruet set, an oil lamp, several pieces of glassware, and a silver tea set among other items. We are planning to locate the dresser and washstand in the bedroom of the south wing once we get it painted. Also received was a Queen treadle sewing machine donated by fellow MAS member Ken Kosidlo. Many thanks again to the donors of period items that will have a great home at the Warner house!

Thirteen samples of wood from around the house and former barn have been shipped to Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. The samples are in process of being evaluated for analysis.

Furthering our plans of featuring traditional arts at the Warner house, we recently purchased a Union #36 loom at an estate sale in Saginaw. The sale featured a large collection of spinning wheels, looms, and other items related to textiles owned by a 97 year old woman with a lifelong interest in the textile arts. The loom dates from around 1915 to the 1930s and is used to make rag rugs. Both our girls have shown interest in spinning and weaving and we hope to produce a few rugs by later this year.

On a couple of side notes, we went to Crossroads Village in Flint earlier this month for a book signing by Melissa Gilbert. She has recently written a cookbook and has moved to Brighton in the past year. I gave her a copy of the Michigan History magazine that had the article on the archaeological research at the Warner site, which she seemed to enjoy. We attended a Michigan Historical Marker dedication organized by our friend Beth Carr. The dedication was attended by over 120 people including a VFW color guard, a band, a state senator, etc. The marker was placed at the Argentine Cemetery that has the remains of veterans from seven different wars. After the dedication there was a large display of artifacts from the area. Also, Archaeology Day at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing is on October 10th. Given all of the other activities that need to be done, we are going to sit out having a display this year but I highly encourage those that haven't attended in the past to consider going to the event.