

DECEMBER 2, 2015

It's been a couple of months since I've sent out an update. As you might have guessed we have been very busy with restoration work on the Warner house for the past two months particularly to get tasks finished before winter. Luckily the extended warm weather has assisted our efforts. Exterior restoration work is complete with the exception of paint on the front and back porches. Attached are some before and after pictures that document quite a compelling transformation that began earlier this year in May. The "before" images show the house when it was still occupied by the renters. During the process of restoration and painting, we noticed quite a few passersby glancing towards the house. We even had a couple of people stop in and compliment us on our efforts to restore the old home. One man asked if we were professional painters as he was in need of someone to care for a house up the road dating to the 1870s. That's quite a compliment but I have to say that I think I'll just keep my day job instead of considering a 2nd career in painting...Many thanks again to my two uncles, Chuck Warner and Elroy Warner, for giving an extraordinary amount of time and effort to the restoration efforts. I have to say that the quality of the entire restoration certainly exceeded expectations. I also want to make note of one of the attached images that focuses on the front door to the parlor. My uncle, Elroy Warner, devised a creative way to symbolize the number of generations that have owned the farm with a line of six evenly spaced stars. Hopefully the addition of new stars will continue as a family tradition as the farm is passed from generation to generation. Half round galvalume gutters (seen on sawhorses in the west side image) are slated to be installed later this week. Photos from the 1940s show sections of galvanized half round gutters on various sides of the house. One family member recalled that the gutters were used to divert water into the cistern, which is still intact.

We continue to receive donations to the museum for which we are grateful. My great uncle, Robert Warner, donated a wagon that was used at the farm for decades. Many thanks to him as well as my uncle, Chuck Warner, who was able to secure a trailer in order to move the wagon. Robert also donated several old bottles including some embossed "Warner Safe". The "Warner Safe" brand, which shows a safe on the front was popularized by H. H. Warner in Rochester, NY. There are no known family connections despite the common last name and the H. H. Warner of Rochester shouldn't be confused with the H. H. Warner also from upstate NY that originally purchased land in Brighton Township in 1836. Robert also donated a water pitcher and dishes dating to the 1890s. We also received several wood chairs from Donna Warner. Her mother, Thelma, donated three school books that she used in the 1920s at a one room school in Brighton. Dr. Ruth Ann Armitage, her husband, and father came to visit and also to assemble the 19th century furniture that they have loaned. The items are now located in the rear bedroom. Her father offered a great idea for easily cleaning painted door hardware such as doorlocks, hinges, pins, etc. He suggested that

we use a sandblaster using walnut shell instead of sand. The crushed walnut shell will easily remove many layers of paint but will not harm the iron hardware. Many thanks to all who have donated/loaned items to the Warner house.

Dendrochronology analysis should be nearing completion and we are hoping to see the final results soon. Seven out of the thirteen samples sent were deemed worthy of analysis. Five of the samples are from the house which should give us a good idea of when it was constructed and if it was built in stages.

As part of our continuing outreach initiatives, I presented to the River Raisin chapter of the Michigan Archaeological Society in Monroe. I also gave presentations to two fifth grade classes at Carter middle school in Clio. The students were excited to hear about our research at the farm and see artifacts first hand.

Another surprising discovery was made. The discovery was made not on the Warner house but on a house built by a fourth generation family member. After serving in WWII as a bomber co-pilot, my great uncle Donald Warner built a single story house in the late 1940s on the southwest corner of the original farm. Recently during the process of re-roofing it was discovered that part of the roof decking was made up of wide boards painted red. After talking about this with a cousin who lives next door, he remembered a story told to him by his father that boards from three outbuildings (blacksmith shop, chicken shed, & wood shed) removed from the original farm site were actually recycled to build his house. Until now, no one had recalled that the buildings that had been thought completely demolished and lost nearly 70 years ago were still around albeit in a different form. An article on various discoveries made at the farm is slated to be written for the spring edition of the Chronicle, a publication of the Historical Society of Michigan.

After considerable research and discussion, we have decided to move forward with moving the 1849 Hicks school to the farm. The school will be moved in the spring. Although it has significant original features, it is not considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to modifications over the past 100+ years. An article on the school is due to appear in the Livingston Press & Argus newspaper this fall and another when the school actually gets moved in the spring. We will keep the school in its original condition to be used for traditional arts such as wheel thrown pottery and weaving.