

APRIL 1, 2016

As many of you know, we spent the better part of 2015 dedicated to the exterior restoration of the 1855 Greek Revival Warner house. The restoration required a substantial amount of time and effort to complete but yielded what some describe as stunning results. In mid February the restoration project was nominated to the Michigan Historic Preservation Network for consideration for one of their annual awards. Just recently I was notified that the project will be presented with the 2016 Special Jury award "to recognize outstanding projects that have made a significant contribution to the preservation of Michigan's heritage...". Needless to say, everyone involved in the restoration project is extremely pleased to receive recognition from the MHPN for their efforts. The award will be presented at the MHPN annual meeting in mid May.

We are also grateful for continued donations to the Warner house. My mom donated two photos that once hung in the house. A crazy quilt was also donated by a family member, Judy Odell. Many thanks again!

Another interesting discovery has been made from an item found in the attic of the house. This item, at first glance, appears to be a narrow tri-fold table top but with a puzzling variation. It is about 4' long and has several hinges on one side. The two side panels, running its length, fold toward each other. Two other smaller panels within the center panel, fold upward in between the long ones. Several notches appear at the ends of the short panels. In addition, spring-like pieces of metal appear on each of the long panels. Quarter-circular wear patterns appear in the area where the short panels "flip" up. Attached are two pictures of the item - any guesses? The answer, courtesy of my uncle, Chuck Warner, is in the attached text file.

After a two year hiatus, we are back to major excavation at the Warner site. With the help of current and former students from U of M-Flint, EMU, and Ball State, we made impressive headway in excavating part of the footprint of the Hicks school during the latter part of March with a total of 22 quarter units excavated. We recovered a number of interesting items including sherds of pottery (one blue transferware sherd from the 1840s/1850s, several pieces from the 1880s/1890s, pieces of salt glazed crock), sections of medicine bottles, cut bone, a button, part of a glass lightning rod wire insulator, a pig's tooth, among other items. Construction of the foundation is just a couple of weeks away and we intend to further excavate the area to recover as many artifacts as possible.

Work on the Hicks school in preparation for the move has been progressing nicely. The restoration team has removed the sagging wood panel ceiling and has made repairs to the bowed wall. Lam beams were installed besides two hand hewn beams in the ceiling. One had sagged nearly 4" and the other was cracked in two places. The original beams will remain intact. Interestingly enough, an "A" frame structure over both beams suggests that efforts to mitigate

the sag had been attempted over the years. I was curious to find out if the 1849 structure was constructed with machine cut or hand forged nails. The 1855 Warner house only used machine cut square nails despite the recovery of two hand forged nails archaeologically. The restoration team saved a pile of square nails at my request to inspect. Like the house, all of the nails from the 1849 structure are machine cut. It would seem that the two hand forged nails at the Warner site appear likely to be part of the 1841 log cabin with machine cut nails becoming available in the area between then and 1849.

Several local residents have come forward with items originally from the school. I enjoyed talking with one long time resident, Bud Witters (96 years young), who was a former member of the area historical society. He donated six of the original ceiling light globes that were in the school. Another man, George Roberts, has agreed to donate the potbelly stove that was also formerly in the school. These will make for great additions to return the school much to the way many remember it.

I want to also note the passing of my great uncle, Robert Warner, in February. He grew up at the Warner farm and was a great source of information. More importantly, he was just really fun to be around and was always the life of any family gathering. He had many interesting stories to tell and shared several of them with me. In the spirit of April Fool's day, one includes a prank he and several others pulled on a neighbor. During the night they took apart a neighbor's horse drawn wagon and reassembled it on the top of his barn. My understanding is that my grandfather served as the 'lookout'. That must have been quite a surprise for the owner the next morning! Robert was a WWII combat veteran and saw action in the Battle of the Bulge. He was captured and survived for several months as a German POW. The entire story is quite interesting but too lengthy to elaborate here. He kindly donated a bell that will be installed in his honor at the south corner of the Warner house where one was used in the past to call in the family and farm hands from the fields.

This year marks the 180th anniversary of the Warner farm that began with the purchase of 40 acres via land patent in November 1836, just a couple of months before Michigan statehood. We will be celebrating the 175th anniversary of the parcel on which the Greek Revival homestead sits that was purchased in October 1841 for \$384. In honor of the homestead's NRHP status and the anniversary, a bronze NRHP plaque has been ordered and will be unveiled later this summer.