

JULY 1, 2016

One of the biggest events at the Warner site last month was the relocation of the Hicks school. Planning the move date was problematic as the Livingston County sheriff's department needed four days notice but a stretch of clear weather was also required. Given the unpredictable weather, this wasn't an easy task. Just a day before, the move was nearly scrubbed due to an event at the local Pinckney elementary school. Apparently the superintendent of the school had seen the newspaper article about the proposed move on June 8th that was in conflict with an event at the school at the same time. The superintendent didn't want the roads blocked for the event and had called the county road commission to reschedule the move. Luckily, the mover was able to reassure the superintendent that the school would have moved passed by the end of their event and we were allowed to proceed with the relocation.

Transport of the school along a 21 mile route began shortly after 10:00 AM, escorted by two Livingston County sheriff's deputies. I traveled along in the mini 'parade' just ahead of the school so that I could take pictures and video. The school moved steadily down the road past a number of onlookers lining each side in some areas. The biggest obstacle was diverting oncoming traffic out of the way to the sides of the roads. The deputies did a great job in getting motorists moved and intermittently directed up to 5 or 6 cars to individual resident's driveways. At times, part of the moving crew was out in the road directing the driver to navigate around branches, mailboxes, and motorists. Another member of the crew was literally walking on the temporary roof of the school while it was moving to push low hanging branches aside at times along the route. Another challenge was encountered at the Hamburg road roundabout. Quite a few cars were backed up and the Livingston County Road Commission had to remove a sign for the school to get safely past. After some traffic 'rearrangement' the school chugged passed the roundabout. A reporter and camera crew from NBC 25 news arrived just in time from Clio to tape the school going under the US23 overpass at Silver Lake road. It appeared that it was going to be a tight fit under the overpass especially as the tarp on the top inflated upwards but it made it through without issue. Just as we were in the final stretch on Kensington Road, I noticed a semi coming over the next hill. The semi driver (with full length 53' trailer) had to back up about 1/4 mile onto Spencer Rd. After nearly four hours, the school arrived on schedule at the farm to a welcome party of family, friends, and other onlookers. The school was parked next to the foundation and interviews were given to the Livingston Daily reporter and NBC 25 news. The move of the one story rectangular building wasn't the most complicated job handled by the movers but was certainly one of the longest. Many thanks to Ken Hoffer of Hoffer Structural Lifting in St. Johns, his crew, the Livingston County Sheriff's Department, and the Livingston County Road Commission for a job well done.

The school was moved onto the new foundation and was an interesting process to witness. The school was raised to sit on a set of timber cribbing. Large steel I beams were slid below it through pockets cut in the new foundation. Rollers of Ken Hoffer's design were placed under the school on top of the beams. The school itself was then moved with the assistance of a crawler (a bulldozer like machine) that was pulling the school from a cable. The school rolled along quite easily and smoothly. Once over top of the foundation, additional timber cribbing was installed and the school lowered on it. The steel beams were removed with the help of the crawler that placed them on the flatbed trailer.

Due to the way the front porch was constructed in 1947, the masons had to make part of the new foundation for the porch a few inches crooked to match. However, it was unknown what the journey along 21 miles would do to the structure, particularly one that sat on a boulder foundation that had sagged in places and if it would fit the now existing foundation. The exact position of the school was adjusted by using heavy jacks placed diagonally within the timber cribbing. The school was jacked into place to 1/4 inch precision using this simple but clever method. Luckily, with the use of a few shims here and there, the school and the foundation are a good fit. The next step will be to reinstall the windows on the east side and then the roof.

Below are links to the NBC 25 news broadcast and a series of Livingston Daily articles by Jennifer Eberbach on the school move:

[Clio man gives historic schoolhouse new home](#)

[One-room school saved from demolition](#)

<http://www.livingstondaily.com/story/news/local/community/putnam-township/2016/05/10/class-dismissed-hicks-one-room-schoolhouse-move/84015204/>

[Hicks schoolhouse hits the road](#)

<http://www.livingstondaily.com/story/news/local/community/brighton-township/2016/06/08/hicks-schoolhouse-arrives-safe-new-home/85611928/>

We received several donations particularly for the Hicks school. Gilann Vail-Boisvenue donated a working 1930s GE refrigerator that will be placed in front porch area of the school. We also received the original wood stove that was formerly in the Hicks school from local well driller, George Roberts. The stove is a Round Oak made in Dowagiac, MI and has patent dates of 1872 and 1878. Many thanks to both Gilann and George for their generous donations.

We received an invitation from a local Pinckney resident to conduct archaeological research at a mill site that he owns. The mill dates to 1836 and

was built by William Kirkland. The Kirkland name might be familiar, as William's wife Caroline Kirkland became well known for writing a number of books on her experiences on the frontier in the 19th century (much to the disdain of some of her neighbors). The site is currently in no danger, so perhaps another project for another time.

An article on the restoration of the NRHP listed Warner house was published as the history revealed piece in the *Chronicle*, a publication of the Historical Society of Michigan. The article describes the restoration efforts but also some interesting discoveries. It is the second article on the Warner farm to appear in the *Chronicle*.

I also need to note some sad news. Bob Love, former president of the Huron Valley chapter of the Michigan Archaeological Society, passed away last week. Bob volunteered at the Warner site for a number of years and especially enjoyed working with students that participated in excavation. Bob and my uncle Elroy often worked together at the Warner site and Bob dubbed them "Team ElBob". He had a running inside joke that any artifact with unknown functionality should be declared "ceremonial" (which was immortalized in an photo of him and I with an item that turned out to be a toilet paper hanger). He served two tours in Vietnam earning several purple hearts and a bronze star for heroism and shared some interesting stories on his experiences there. He founded the Michigan Flintknappers Association and was also its president. Bob was a fixture of the annual Archaeology Day event at the Michigan Historical Center patiently teaching attendees about the nuances of flintknapping and other traditional/primitive methods. Many will not soon forget his often biting humor and direct approach. He was always fun to be around and could be depended upon to help out when asked. Bob will certainly be missed.