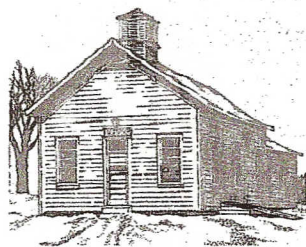


The White Lake Historical Society Presents
The Grand Opening of
The Thompson One-Room School



May 16, 2004 3:30-5:30

Kelley-Fisk Farm
9180 Highland Road
White Lake, Michigan

Program

3:30 Visit the house, barn and school

4:00 Presentation in the school

- Invocation by Charles Hopkins, *Member, Schoolhouse Committee*
- Welcome by Marie Hewitt, *Member, Schoolhouse Committee*
- Pledge of Allegiance-Ron Voorheis, *President White Lake Historical Society*
- Presentation by Marge Sawruk, *Schoolhouse Committee Chairperson*
- Comments by Guests
- School Days by Katie Johnson
- "Dismissal"

4:30-5:30 Join us for refreshments in the school addition and tour the school

White Lake One Room School Lives Again or How to Rescue a Blackboard!

Thanks to many volunteers, the township officials, the support of local businesses and trades people donating much time and talent, the Thompson One-Room School will once again be home to students. Only this time, instead of students living in 1876, it will host students from the 21st century. The school was originally built on the Thompson Farm on Bogie Lake Rd. near Cedar Island Rd. It was used from 1876 until 1943 at that location. When the last teacher joined the Waves during World War II and school consolidation took place, it was moved to Milford on the grounds of then Milford High School on Hickory St. It lived on and was used as a band room until 1960. After this it was boarded up and used as storage for the school district.

In 1989 the White Lake Historical Society, which had just formed two years prior, learned that the school was available for the asking. It was investigated and determined that it was cost prohibitive to move it for the fledgling organization.

On October 25th 1995 Marge Sawruk read in the Spinal Column newspaper that the Huron Valley Cultural Council, which was hoping to re-use the school, could not find the funds to move the school either. Therefore, the school board announced that the Adamo Demolition Company would be arriving on October 30th to take down both schools.

On Thursday October 26th Marge called Randy Westerman of the Huron Valley Schools, to see if they could rescue the original slate blackboards before demolition to use in a possible future replica. He agreed to meet her Friday October 27th and she asked fellow members Jim Thompson and Bill Garvey to join her.

The last time any historical society members were in the school it was empty, but when they arrived it was full of beautiful wood that had been stripped from the high school. They asked what would happen to it and the answer was, "It goes with the wrecking ball on Monday". It broke their hearts to see such beautiful oak go to waste so they asked Mr. Westerman if he could get permission to move it in addition to the slate blackboards. The answer was yes, so on Saturday morning October 28th at 9:00 Jim Thompson, Charlie Spoor, Phil Woledge and Jeff Sawruk met and worked on loading Jim Thompson's trailer truck.

Every once in awhile on Friday and Saturday Jim muttered; "You know we could just take the whole school. All we have to do is cut off the roof and fold the walls down." Marge kept saying, "Jim, as much as I would love to do that we just don't have the time or manpower, remember you are supposed to leave for vacation on Monday."

The idea of rescuing the entire school must have overwhelmed Jim (several relatives had attended the school, so that might have helped his decision) because Sunday night at 6:15 he called Marge and said, "I will take the school down and Jay Brendel is willing to help; can you get permission and additional help?" Marge proceeded to call Mr. Westerman at home and he asked her to call Pat Donahue, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Marge left a message for Mr. Donahue and proceeded to call for approval and help from society members. In the meantime permission was received and they were told that Mr. Westerman would meet them on Monday and help them with the demolition company so they didn't get in each other's way.

Marge spent hours on the phone explaining to members or member's spouses what they were doing and trying to recruit help on Monday. Unfortunately, almost all said, "No" and understandably, based on previous commitments etc.. Bill Garvey, said, "Yes, but I can only stay a couple of hours because I have to work in the afternoon." Another member, Marie Hewitt called several contractors to see if they knew of available men, but to no avail.

Marge arrived at 7:55 a.m. October 30th to make sure the demolition team did not decide to take the one room school first (they had not been informed of the attempt to save it). Jim already had his flatbed in place, but there was no sign of a demolition team. Jim arrived with his sons, Dale and Mike, and friend, Phil Woledge around 8:30; Bill arrived a little after 9 and things were underway. Marge played unofficial photographer for the day, runner for nuts and bolts, met with Darlene Waldrop, township building official, and Pat Donahue. Ron Hinman joined the historical society demolition team later to take video and help where possible; people wandered in throughout the day including neighbors, a Milford Times photographer and an Oakland County Weighmaster.

After three sides were down at 5:45 Marge said good-bye as light was ebbing; she did not believe it when they told her they weren't going to quit until they had all four walls down.

Tuesday morning 8:15, October 31st Ron Hinman and Marge arrived in a drizzling rain and Jim and Mike were

already at work; Bill Garvey arrived as did Ron Voorheis. This time they dismantled the end piece, cut the floor in thirds and loaded the truck.

Around noon Mr. Westerman came by and mentioned that there might be good wood flooring left in the high school. Curiosity got the best of them so they had to check it out and Jim said, "Gee, wouldn't this maple make a great floor for the old school?"

A boarded up window on the second floor of the old high school had to be knocked out and they had to see if Jim's "cherry picker" would fit on the sidewalk in front of the school, it did, but just barely.

Bill had to leave as he had to go to work since he had taken off the day before (his couple hours on Monday turned into all day). They started ripping up the flooring, bundled it, and hauled it out the window, into the cherry picker and into Jim's van. It was quite a "bucket brigade".

Ron Hinman and Marge left about 3:00 in search of the former one-room school foundation on Cedar Island Rd. just about the time the demolition team was arriving.

November 2nd arrived bright and beautiful and Marge met Jay Brendel (who was going to use his truck to tow the flatbed trailer) at the site just before 9:00 to photograph the departure from Milford back to its home in White Lake.

The White Lake police escorted it down Commerce Rd. to Bogie Lake to M-59 and to the Kelley-Fisk Farm; it arrived about 9:40 a.m. Before it arrived Marge managed to snap a photo of it traveling past two other White Lake one-room schoolhouses; now connected and converted to a dentist's office.

A Schoolhouse Committee was formed consisting of Barbara Fitzpatrick, Marie Hewitt, Ron Hinman (Lyn Van Overberg has taken over this position), Charlie Hopkins, Jim Thompson and Marge Sawruk. By the time the site plan and architectural drawings were approved it was ready for a "school raising" about a year after the dismantling. This was accomplished after much preliminary work by Jim Thompson and friends. On October 12, 1996 we held the school raising and with Charlie Spoor's guidance and many volunteers, we placed the school on a new foundation. and ever since then the restoration has been taking place. An addition was necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition to the restrooms the remaining space will be used for the research and storage of archival materials.

The "blackboard rescue" obviously became much more and it is sincerely hoped that future generations will appreciate the preservation of the past and in so doing will carry on the memories in the future.

The school is currently located on the grounds of the historic Kelley-Fisk Farm at 9180 Highland Rd. in White Lake Township, just south of the Home Depot/Walmart complex. The school should be ready to accept students for field trips beginning with the 2004/05 school year.

The community is invited to attend a grand opening ceremony on Sun. May 16 from 3:30-5:30. The society would especially like to invite anyone who ever attended a one-room school. They would like to hear your recollections so they can share them with today's children. They would also like to invite anyone who worked on the restoration of the school so they can inscribe their name in a memory book.

The White Lake Historical Society would like to thank everyone in the community who helped to turn a dream into a reality so that generations to come can experience history firsthand. They hope all will enjoy this piece of local history that was near and dear to many a youngster who walked two miles, and up hill both ways (if you know what we mean!)

Special Thanks for Today

Refreshments-Cobblestone Questers

Table and house flowers-Susie Thompson

Pencil souvenirs-Mike and Eileen Kowall

Photography-Harvey Hedlund

Members & friends who came to do final preparation for this day:

Greg & Marilyn Baroni, Bonnie Elliott, Barb Fitzpatrick, Shirley Glentz, Harvey Hedlund, Marie Hewitt, Ron Hinman, Charlie & Anne Hopkins, Terry Houston, Marge Loula, Marge Mosser, Buzz Newton, Marge Sawruk, Jim & Susie Thompson, Lyn Van Overberg, Ron & Mary Voorheis, and Sally Witt