

Michigan Historical Commission
Special Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2018

Michigan History Center
702 W. Kalamazoo Street, Lansing
Commission Room

Commissioners in attendance: Laura Ashlee, Joe Calvaruso (by phone), Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez, Susan Safford (by phone), Thomas Truscott, and Larry Wagenaar (by phone).

Excused Absence: Timothy Chester and Eric Hemenway

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis and Heather Lehman (by phone)

President Egen called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

The special meeting was called to discuss marker items only.

Marker Program:

- **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided on nine new marker applications. (Appendix A)
 - ◆ **Broughton House, Franklin, Oakland County**
 - ◆ **Charter Township of Plymouth, Plymouth, Wayne County**
 - ◆ **Martin Luther King Jr. in Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe, Wayne County**
 - ◆ **Marshall's Medicine Men, Marshall, Calhoun County**
 - ◆ **Mount Evergreen Cemetery, Jackson, Jackson County**
 - ◆ **Paint Creek Cider Mill, Oakland Township, Oakland County**
 - ◆ **Patent Medicine Men, Marshall, Calhoun County**
 - ◆ **Territorial Road, Canton, Wayne County**
 - ◆ **Wolverine Rangers/James Pratt, Marshall, Calhoun County**

Safford moved to approve the Broughton House, Charter Township of Plymouth, Martin Luther King Jr. in Grosse Pointe, Marshall's Medicine Men, Mount Evergreen Cemetery, Paint Creek Cider Mill, and Patent Medicine Men marker applications taking into consideration the following comments:

- Make clear the distinction between Plymouth and Plymouth Township.
- That the phrase "Marshall's Medicine Men" not be used and that more information about the Stuart Building be included on that marker.
- The Paint Creek Cider Mill marker text not be completed until the National Register Nomination is accepted or rejected.

Ashlee seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

Calvaruso moved to table Territorial Road and Wolverine Rangers/James Pratt marker applications in order to allow staff time to provide additional information; Wagenaar seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

- **Approval of Marker Text** – Three new marker texts were presented to the Commission for review and approval.
 - ◆ **Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary, Ira, St. Clair County**
 - ◆ **Tau Beta Community House, Hamtramck, Wayne County**
 - ◆ **Birthplace of Alfred Day Hershey/Alfred Day Hershey, Owosso, Shiawassee County**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso, and the text was unanimously approved. Calvaruso moved to approve the Tau Beta Community House marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Safford, and the text was unanimously approved. Wagenaar moved to approve the marker for the Birthplace of Alfred Day Hershey/Alfred Day Hershey text; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso, and the text was unanimously approved.

Safford reported that she and Hemenway met with Phil Porter of Mackinaw Island State Park and had a good conversation on moving forward with the committee's recommendations.

Safford moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso, and the meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.


Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses

Michigan Historical Commission

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Broughton House

Applicant: Bill and Ann Lamott

Marker Location: Corner of Franklin Road and Carol Streets, Franklin, Oakland County

Requested Marker Type: Small, 1-post marker, different text on each side.

The Broughton House has expanded, passed through many owners and served as a home, a business, a restaurant and the Franklin Village Hall since its original portion was built.

Architectural evidence indicates that the central, Greek Revival portion was constructed in the 1830s when Benjamin and Charlotte Worthington owned the land. Style and the lack of alignment between the second stories are evidence that the north wing was added later and may have been a separate building moved from another location. The south shed-roof addition, west wing and porches came still later.

Daniel Broughton, who made buggies and carriages across the road, owned the building from 1866 to 1885 and probably added the north wing.

The Broughton House is part of the National Register listed Franklin Historic District. Franklin Village became the first historic district under Michigan law in 1968. Its refusal to allow a developer to demolish the Broughton House in 1969 resulted in a constitutional challenge to Michigan's law in 1971. The court upheld the law, but ruled that the village had rezoned the property residential without an explanation to the property owner. The matter was resolved when the village purchased the property in 1973 and renovated it as the Franklin Village Hall.

The sponsor has provided the research of an EMU graduate student with citations to the Oakland County Register of Deeds, but not copies of the relevant pages. The only documentation provided on the owners is from Ancestry or a secondary source. If we proceed with this marker, staff recommends that we require copies of the actual primary sources (we have asked and been told what we have is sufficient). We also need the SHPO to confirm the 1st Michigan historic district claim and the importance of the court case (which the sponsors did not include in their application.)

Charter Township of Plymouth

Applicant: Jack Dempsey

Marker Location: In front of and on the premises of Town Hall

Requested Marker Type: Large, 2-post, different text on each side

In 1825, New England settlers developed a community in what is now Plymouth Township. One of the earliest of these settlers, Abram B. Markham, built the first mill in the area. As the town grew, settlers held "raising bees" to help new arrivals build their log homes.

In February 1827, at the home of John Tibbits, the City Council chose the name for their newly formed town. While “LeRoy” was the citizens’ popular vote, the council decided on “Plymouth” for its patriotic implications. On April 12, 1827, Plymouth Township was officially incorporated under an act signed by Territorial Governor Lewis Cass. At its founding, the township encompassed the regions of Northville, Canton, and the small town of Waterford.

In 1834, Canton split from Plymouth and formed its own township. Waterford, located between Northville and Plymouth, was an industrial hub in the 1840s. But both of its large flour mills burned down, and the village was deserted by the late nineteenth century. In 1898, Northville became an independent township, separate from Plymouth.

Plymouth saw several transportation improvements over the following century. In 1837, the Detroit, Plymouth and Ann Arbor Turnpike Company incorporated and began to build plank roads. Plymouth’s main plank road was completed around 1850. By 1871, plank roads were outdated, and Plymouth residents could ride the new railroad lines to Detroit, Monroe, and Lansing. In 1898, a trolley system known as “The Dinky” took passengers back and forth between the towns of Plymouth and Northville. Plymouth Road, which had once been a plank road, traded gravel for pavement in 1918.

In 1927, The Detroit House of Corrections began constructing a prison in Plymouth Township. Albert Kahn designed the administration building. In 1938, the Burroughs adding machine company opened a plant on Plymouth Road, which was also designed by Kahn. Both of these new developments, along with the addition of many subdivisions, contributed to a population increase of more than 117.8% between 1940 and 1950. Plymouth became a charter township in 1977.

Martin Luther King Jr. in Grosse Pointe

Applicant: Bob Taylor, Grosse Pointe Public School System

Marker Location: In front of school, 96 Fisher Rd.

Requested Marker Type: Large, 2-post, different text on each side

Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Grosse Pointe High School’s gymnasium on March 14, 1968. In the days preceding, two members of the school board opposed hosting King. They referred to concerns of safety for their school and community, since King was a controversial figure. The school board voted to allow King to visit and assured any dissenters that the police would be present on the day of the speech.

On March 14, King spoke to a sold-out gymnasium filled with more than 2,000 people. King’s speech, entitled “The Other America,” took on the issue of two different worlds within the nation—one where white people could flourish under privilege, and another where black families struggled under oppression. King received a standing ovation.

Although he was given a good deal of support, King’s appearance was also met with conflict. Donald Lobsinger, founder of the anti-communist group “Breakthrough,” organized a group of

nearly 200 protestors who picketed outside the building. They were enraged by King's opposition to the Vietnam War. Lobsinger pressed the issue by coming into the gymnasium and heckling King. King faced several interruptions during his speech, but he handled them patiently and even told the objecting crowd to let the hecklers "have their say." Just three weeks after King visited Grosse Pointe, he was assassinated by James Earl Ray in Memphis, Tennessee.

Note: There is already a marker at this site (2-post, same text on each side) which focuses on the school itself but not on MLK. The applicant wishes to add another large marker (2-post, different text) that contains a historical text about MLK's visit on one side and excerpts from his speech on the other.

Marshall's Medicine Men

Applicant: Marshall Historical Society/Robert Lowman

Marker Location: On the right front side of the Stuart building

Requested Marker Type: Small, wall-mounted, one side

Two of the most successful medicine businesses in Marshall were run by charitable community leaders. Frank A. Stuart founded the Stuart Chemical Company in 1893. Stuart and his brother-in-law, Dr. William F. Church, developed "Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets," which became their most popular product. The company officially incorporated in 1898 as the F.A. Stuart Company. In 1926, Stuart's products were available through mail order in Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs. Stuart's success allowed him to donate to the City of Marshall in many ways, including the funding of Stuart Road. Frank A. Stuart died in 1931, and in 1956, his wife dismantled the company.

Charles E. Brooks founded Brooks Rupture Appliance Company in 1880, after he created an appliance to help soothe his own hernia. He initially operated the company out of his home, but in 1898 the business moved to downtown Marshall. Charles' son, Harold C. Brooks, skillfully managed the company's advertising and caused business to thrive. Brooks Rupture Appliance Company had branches in eight cities, both nationally and internationally. Harold C. Brooks donated Brooks Memorial Fountain in 1929. He also bought historic homes in the city to protect them from demolition.

Recommend Approval with the following caveats:

- The Stuart Building, the location of the markers, is historic and that should be noted.
- The commission may wish to recommend a different title due to the connotations of "Medicine Men."
- There is already a marker about Harold C. Brooks in front of the Fitch-Gorham-Brooks house on Kalamazoo Ave. The text is as follows—"Harold C. Brooks (1885-1978) was Marshall's mayor from 1925 to 1931, patron, and philanthropist. His interest in city beautification set a standard for preservation and adaptive use as early as 1921. He owned and protected more than a dozen Marshall buildings. Brooks is responsible for the design of the Marshall Post Office, the conversion of the Old Stone Barn into Town Hall, and presentation of the Brooks Memorial Fountain to the city. He donated land for veterans,

the airport, recreational uses and funds for education and hospital facilities." Therefore this marker should only deal with Brooks' company.

Mount Evergreen Cemetery

Applicant: Linda Hass

Marker Location: Entrance to the cemetery off of Greenwood Avenue, Jackson MI

Requested Marker Type: Small, 1-post, different text on each side

Mount Evergreen Cemetery was established in 1843 on eleven acres of land bought from Eunice Dygert. In 1863, fourteen more acres were bought from James McNeil. During the Civil War, the City of Jackson dedicated a portion of the cemetery to war veterans. The Greenwood Wall surrounding the cemetery was first built in 1873. In 1980, it was rebuilt using the wall's original stones.

There are at least seven Underground Railroad agents buried in the cemetery. The agents include Norman Allen, a tavern owner and insurance agent; Lonson Wilcox, a shoe salesman; Abel Fitch, a postman; and Seymour Treadwell, a leader in Michigan's antislavery movement who wrote a book on the subject. William and Mary DeLand, along with their son, Charles, share a family memorial here. The DeLand family befriended Quakers upon moving to Jackson, and the antislavery sentiment of their friends encouraged them to open their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Emma Nichols, a former slave who achieved her freedom with the help of the Underground Railroad, is also buried in the cemetery. Emma lived on Biddle Street in Jackson with her husband, Richard, who used the Underground Railroad on his way north to freedom as well.

Paint Creek Cider Mill

Applicant: Barbara Barber

Marker Location: In front of Paint Creek Cider Mill, 4480 Orion Rd in Oakland Township

Requested Marker Type: Large, 2-post, different text on each side

In 1835, Needham Hemingway built a gristmill on the land that is now the site of Paint Creek Cider Mill. Hemingway dug a one-half-mile-long millrace and powered the mill with water from Paint Creek. The mill operated continuously under various owners until 1941. In 1945, Dale Miller purchased the property and recognized a need for renovation and modernization. Miller hoped to preserve the original mill, but the building did not have adequate structural support. The gristmill was dismantled by 1953, but Miller salvaged the original timbers.

Miller hired architectural firm Giffels & Vallet Inc. and L. Rossetti Associates to design Paint Creek Cider Mill. The firm designed the mill using a blend of Modern and Swiss Chalet styles. The wide gable roof, large windows, and exterior balconies are all examples of Swiss Chalet. The building was constructed in stages between 1958 and 1968. The wheel room was built first, followed by the cider mill. In 1968, the gallery was completed to connect the two structures. The builders used Miller's salvaged timbers as supporting corner beams for the cider mill.

Paint Creek Cider Mill has operated as a tourist attraction since its construction. The water wheel was restored in 1993. In 2005, Oakland Township acquired the building by donation. John Dzuirman Architects Ltd. added an elevator shaft to the northwest side of the building in 2008.

Note: There is already a marker (large, same text on either side) on the property about the Paint Creek Millrace. The text is as follows—“Paint Creek begins in a Brandon Township wetland and flows southeast to Rochester where it empties into the Clinton River. Today a thriving trout stream, the creek was important for waterpower in the nineteenth century. Needham Hemingway dammed the creek dug a one-half-mile-long millrace and built a gristmill in 1835. Edward Demerall owned a sawmill just west of here from 1840 to 1872, when the Detroit and Bay City Railroad laid track that disrupted production. By 1876, William Goodison had bought Hemingway's mill, enlarged it and installed modern machinery. The mill operated until 1941. The abandoned railroad bed became the Paint Creek Trail in 1981.”

Recommend Approval.

Patent Medicine Town

Applicant: Marshall Historical Society/Robert Lowman

Marker Location: On the left front side of the Stuart Building, 121 W Michigan Ave.

Requested Marker Type: Small, wall-mounted, one side

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the patent medicine industry thrived due to minimal regulation of medicines by the United States government. Marshall had more than fifty medicine companies during this time, many of which made egregious claims about their products. The companies ran numerous and outlandish advertisements for “miraculous” cures, such as electric “magic belts,” “liver invigorators,” and pills to “restore lost manhood.” Marshall’s newspapers prospered thanks to a demand for ad space, and the growing post office handled countless mail orders of medicine. Though Marshall became known as a “patent medicine town,” most of these products were created and sold without patents. The industry slowed down significantly after 1906, when Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act.

Territorial Road

Applicant: Canton Historical Society (David Curtis)

Marker Location: On the north side of Geddes Rd, 300 feet west of Sheldon Rd, immediately outside the road right of way.

Requested Marker Type: Large, 2-post, different text on each side (Recommend small marker)

In 1829, Michigan’s Territorial Legislative Council moved to survey land that would create a road from the east side of Michigan Territory to the west. They decided the road would start at “Sheldon’s Inn,” an establishment that was located at the present day intersection of Michigan Avenue and Geddes Road. The road would end at the mouth of the St. Joseph River at Lake Michigan. After the survey was completed in 1830, an 1831 act officially declared that the road would be a public highway which closely followed the St. Joseph Indian Trail’s path.

After its construction, the completed highway became commonly known as “Territorial Road.” The road contributed to a substantial population increase for Michigan—between 1830 and 1840, the population grew from 31,639 to 212,267. The road played a large role in the growth of Michigan’s “second-tier” territories, including Wayne, Washtenaw, Jackson, and Kalamazoo counties.

After 1930, South Territorial Road in Canton was renamed “Geddes Road” for the Geddes brothers, who were early and influential settlers in Washtenaw County. Today, the route of I-94 parallels the original South Territorial Road.

Notes there is already a marker for Territorial Road, in Van Buren County. It reads:

One of the three great east-west routes of pioneer days, the Territorial Road from Detroit to St. Joe tapped the rich lands of the second “tier” of counties. Approved in 1829, the road was not surveyed through Van Buren County until 1835. Although at first it was only a “blaze and a name,” the route soon was teeming with emigrants and travelers. The Dodge Tavern in Paw Paw, a famed stopping point, was so crowded at times that some weary persons, old-timers said, “offered a dollar for a post to lean against.”

Wolverine Rangers/James Pratt

Applicant: Marshall Historical Society/Robert Lowman

Marker Location: Fountain Traffic Circle, Marshall

Requested Marker Type: Small, 1-post, different text on each side

The Gold Rush began in 1848 after a carpenter discovered gold flakes in California’s American River. In the spring of 1849, sixty-five hopefuls from Marshall and other parts of Calhoun County formed a group of fortune-seeking men called the “Wolverine Rangers.” The men headed west from Independence, Missouri, in late May. In September, the Rangers decided to leave the established trail they had been following to pursue a promising cut-off trail. The supposed short cut led them several hundred miles out of their way through the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Because of the path’s difficulty, the Rangers voted to split apart into smaller groups. They did not reach their destination, Lassen’s Ranch, until November. None of the Wolverine Rangers made a fortune in California, and about half of them returned home to Michigan.

James Pratt, editor of the *Marshall Statesman* newspaper, organized the Wolverine Rangers. Pratt’s initial reports on the Gold Rush enticed readers to join his expedition. As a 30-year-old bachelor with nothing to lose, Pratt quit his job as editor and became one of the lead agents for the Rangers. Before the Rangers began their journey, Pratt traveled to Independence, Missouri, to purchase supplies and explore route options. While traveling west, Pratt sent updates to the *Marshall Statesman* so the community could keep up with the Wolverine Rangers’ journey. When Pratt reached California, he had little success in gold mining. He opened a law office in San Francisco and lived in California until his death at age 45.

Location Note: There is a small, one-post, two-sided marker at the Fountain Circle Park for Marshall’s first courthouse and the Brooks Memorial Fountain. There is also a “Marshall” marker at the Fountain Circle that describes the town’s establishment.