

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2018

Gerald R. Ford Library

1000 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor

Commissioners in attendance: Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez (by phone), Eric Hemenway, Susan Safford, Thomas Truscott, and Larry Wagenaar.

Excused Absence: Laura Ashlee and Joe Calvaruso

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis and Heather Lehman

President Egen called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda: Wagenaar moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Truscott and was unanimously adopted.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Chester moved to approve the June 13, 2018, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Safford and was unanimously adopted. Wagenaar moved to approve the July 26, 2018, special meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Safford and was unanimously adopted.

Marker Program:

➤ **Approval of Marker Applications –**

At the July 26, 2018, Michigan Historical Commission meeting, the commission agreed to table two marker applications until further information could be presented:

- ◆ Territorial Road, Canton, Wayne County – Lehman stated that the initial concern was that the marker was going to be mitigation for demolition of the Sheldon Inn. Lehman reported this is not the case. She recommends approval of this application.
- ◆ Wolverine Rangers/James Pratt-Editor, Marshall, Calhoun County – Clark noted that she has not received a response back from the sponsor regarding the commission's request to locate the marker someplace other than fountain square. However, Clark believes it is important to reflect the national importance of the historic record created by the Wolverine Rangers and sent some documentation prior to the meeting to support her recommendation of approval of the marker application.

Safford moved to approve the Territorial Road marker application; Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. Wagenaar moved to approve the Wolverine Rangers/James Pratt-Editor marker application conditional upon a different location; Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

Written background information was provided on four new marker applications.
(Appendix A)

- ◆ **Cook Family Cemetery, Saline, Washtenaw County**
- ◆ **Eagle Opera House, Marshall, Calhoun County**

- ◆ **John Taylor, Delhi Township, Ingham County**
- ◆ **Sacred Heart Cemetery, Fair Haven, St. Clair County**

Truscott moved to approve the Cook Family Cemetery marker application; Safford seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. Chester moved to approve the Eagle Opera House marker application; Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. Wagenaar moved to approve the John Taylor marker application; Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. Wagenaar moved to approve the Cook Family Cemetery marker application; Safford seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

- **Approval of Marker Text** – One new marker text was presented to the Commission for review and approval.
 - ◆ **Emory Parady, Nashville, Barry County**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Emory Parady marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Safford, and the text was unanimously approved.

- **Marker Committee Report** – the marker committee report was distributed prior to the meeting.
 - ◆ Commissioner Safford stated that committee members will meet with the City of Mackinac Island to discuss the Mackinac Island and Round Island markers. This will be an important next step in moving forward.
 - ◆ Committee member Safford and Hemenway held a meeting on July 12, 2018, with Phil Porter and Steve Brisson of Mackinaw State Historic Parks. During this meeting, Brisson asked if the Skull Cave marker was a different type of historical marker than most. It has two sentences and is smaller than most historical markers. Clark stated that there was size variation in the early markers. After discussion, the commission decided it should be removed it and not be replaced with a historical marker. A better option may be for the park to use interpretive signage for sites such as this. Markers that have been removed from Mackinac Island are Beaumont Memorial, Early Missionary Bark Chapel, Lake View Hotel and The Biddle House. The committee also discussed the need to have additional markers on the mainland to commemorate stories with historic significance, including the story of Pontiac’s attack on Fort Michilimackinac, Charles Langlade and his role in the War of 1812, and the Indian Removal Act of 1826.

Clark asked for a “first priority” list to establish funding. Safford stated the following would be the committee’s recommendations: Indian Dormitory, Old Agency House, Mackinac Island, Biddle House and Round Island on Mackinac Island. To this the commission added the four Great Lakes markers. After discussion on possible fundraising ideas for this project, Wagenaar moved to initiate a Go-Fund-Me effort to try and fund these markers in a way that is appropriate under Clark’s guidance. The motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously adopted. There will be an important need to promote this effort. Use of social media, newspapers and press releases are all options to explore.

Egen asked if the committee has had the opportunity to identify a group of professionals to begin working on these markers. Safford noted Hemenway and Ashlee will work with the group, but other than that none have been identified yet.

➤ **Reports**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark stated that the War of 1812 replacement marker location is still slightly undetermined. She asked the commission to grant her permission to make the final approval as all options are around the intersection where the current marker is located. The commission granted her this permission. Clark noted she may send need to send out the marker text via email for the Home of Russell Kirk in order to meet a dedication date.
- ◆ The Marker Fund Report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark stated that the request for the transfer of the marker funds from the Foundation to the State was submitted in July 2018.

Historic District Study Reports:

- Commissioners noted receipt of the Northville Local Historic District Study, Wayne County.

Awards Committee: Chester stated that Fernandez recently agreed to serve on this committee. Chester will set up a time to discuss the promotion of Milliken/Adams/Kelley Award with Clark.

Director's Report

- The Director's report was distributed prior to the meeting. The addition of the Whisper Booth has opened the door to possible collaboration with StoryCorps. The Archives staff have done an outstanding job of beginning to implement digital storage of court records using Preservica. They have already begun work with 30 of the 83 counties.

New Business:

- 2019 Meeting Dates – The commission agreed to have five meetings in 2019, with three being held at the Center and two possibly at offsite locations that have Center significance. The commission would like to return to Mackinac Island in June 2019 if it is possible and suggested Mann House as a possible location. Commissioners will send Michelle any scheduling concerns for 2019.
- NEH Grant – Clark reported receiving a \$500,000 challenge grant for the Heart of Turtle Island site. The Center will need to raise \$1.5 million in matching funds. Clark asked for the commission to help with ideas for fundraising. Clark will send the grant narrative or an abstract of the narrative to the commissioners to assist with fundraising efforts. Chester moved to express the commissions congratulations and pleasure at the receipt of the grant and of all the staff work that has been done in particular by Suzanne Fischer and Sandra Clark. Safford seconded the motion and it was adapted unanimously.

Committee Updates: Ashlee will serve as the chair for the nominating committee and Hemenway agreed to serve on this committee. Egen continues to work on wrapping things up with the Sesquicentennial Committee.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Chester moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar, and the meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses

Michigan Historical Commission

August 15, 2018

Cook Family Cemetery

Applicant: David Strickland

Marker Location: Cook Kanouse Cemetery, S. Warner Rd (1/3 mile south of Willis Rd), Saline, Washtenaw County

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

On May 22, 1831, Peter Cook (1776-1861), his son, Jacob, and their families, were among twelve individuals “dismissed” from the Presbyterian Church at Newark, Wayne County, New York. The twelve formed a new church that day and took it with them to Michigan, where it became the First Presbyterian Church of Saline. Peter and Jacob filed their land claims that June. They and their neighbors had begun to use this land as a cemetery by 1837. Most of the people buried here were members of the Cook, Kellogg or Kanouse families. After World War II, a Cook family member added the fence; and in 2000 the family formed a trust to preserve the cemetery.

The Cook Family

Among the four generations of Cook family members buried here are Jacob, Peter B. and Webster. Jacob (1800-1844) was active in the Whig Party. He was York Township’s supervisor 1838-39 and served in the House of Representative in Michigan’s 6th legislature in 1841. His son Peter (1828-1908), a Republican, followed in his father’s footsteps, serving as township supervisor 1865-72 and as a state representative 1873-74. He was also station agent at Urania, a station built on former Cook family land by the Toledo, Ann Arbor and Northern Railroad. Peter’s son, Webster (1854-1908), was the principal of Saginaw High School when he published Michigan: Its History and Government in 1905.

Eagle Opera House

Applicant: Robert Lowman

Marker Location: The Eagle Block, 155 West Michigan Avenue, Marshall, Calhoun County

Requested Marker Type: Small, wall-mounted

The Eagle Opera House operated on the third floor of the Eagle Block Building, which was built in 1867. The first show at the Eagle Opera House took place in April 1870. Marshall citizens enjoyed the theater’s performances until December 1903, when a fire at the Iroquois Theater in Chicago claimed the lives of more than 600 people. This catastrophe led to stricter fire regulations on both local and federal levels. In January 1904, the mayor of Marshall had a building committee inspect the Eagle Opera House. The theater had only one entrance and exit, which took its guests through the second floor. The inspectors decided that this layout was unsafe, and Marshall’s Common Council voted to close the Eagle Opera House. The third floor is no longer in use.

John Taylor

Applicant: Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Commission

Marker Location: John Taylor Memorial Park (formerly known as “Deadman’s Hill”) on Cedar Street, Delhi Township, Ingham County

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

John Taylor was born into slavery in Kentucky and liberated by northern troops from Michigan during the Civil War. He enlisted in the 1st Michigan colored Infantry on August 9, 1864, at Jackson, Michigan. He may also have served in the 121st US Colored Infantry from Kentucky prior to his enlistment in Michigan.

After the war, he worked for farmers in the Lansing region. One of them was John Buck, who lived in Delhi Township. Taylor left Buck’s employ to work elsewhere, and Buck refused to pay him for any of his work. On the night of August 23, 1866, Taylor, then 17 years old, came to the Buck home to collect his wages. Buck was not in the house, and in the dark Taylor encountered his daughter, wife and mother-in-law. He struck them with an axe and fled.

None of the women were seriously injured, but the story of the attack soon grew to be one of “a triple murder.” Taylor was apprehended and placed in the Ingham County Jail in Mason to await trial. On August 27, a mob took Taylor from the jail and brutally lynched him across from the Mason railroad station. He was buried on the “hogsback” (glacial esker) north of town, and according to some accounts later reburied.

The evening of August 28, 1866, Mason citizens passed a resolution condemning the lynching and attributing it to people “from the townships of Delhi, Aurelius, Lansing and Eaton county.” One of the leaders of the mob was tried and acquitted. The lynching was celebrated and condemned by newspapers from Detroit to Chicago.

For decades, Delhi Township lore has held that a Delhi Township (Holt) park called “Deadman’s Hill,” located along the glacial esker, was the place Taylor was first buried. Recent research indicates that this is probably not the case. However, reacting to the Equal Justice Initiative’s National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Commission and a citizen’s committee revisited the story of John Taylor this summer, did more research, and decided to rename the park as a memorial to him. They would like a Michigan Historical Marker to tell his story and to be able to announce the Commission’s approval of their application when they rename and rededicate the park in September.

Though there are still some things to be sorted out given the wildly varying newspaper accounts, I recommend that the marker application be approved.

Sandra

Sacred Heart Cemetery

Applicant: Paul Torney

Marker Location: 6890 Church Rd. At the center point of the cemetery's driveway, Fair Haven, St. Clair County

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

Sacred Heart Cemetery is a part of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church. In 1914 the church's original cemetery, St. Mary's, reached full capacity. The church purchased 2.75 acres of land from Julius Torney, a settler who emigrated to Ira from Switzerland in 1869. The cemetery grew by 1.85 acres in the 1960s.

There are more than 150 veterans buried in the cemetery, including service members who fought in WWI, WWII, The Korean War and the Vietnam War. From 1959 until 1997, Frederick Rose served as sexton for the parish and its cemeteries. He was the great-great-grandson of Etienne (Stephen) Rose, the early Anchorville settler who donated land for the church and for St. Mary's Cemetery in 1849.

Notes: The sponsor has asked to add the following quote from a deceased parish member to the end of the marker—"Be careful who you talk with, they may be your cousins!" They were hoping to highlight the fact that Ira is a tight-knit community.

The sponsor still needs to provide primary source documentation of when the cemetery's chapel was built, when and how the stone columns at the front of the cemetery were built, and the first burial in the cemetery in 1914.

The marker for this site's church, Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary, has just been approved.

There is a 2017 marker right across the street from this site at St. Mary's Cemetery. The text is as follows:

St. Mary's Cemetery

In 1830 Etienne (Stephen) and Mary Rose arrived in Detroit from Montreal. They settled with their children near here. Rose and his sons supported the family by cutting and selling wood at fifty cents a cord. In 1840 the Roses bought about thirty-seven acres of land from the government. On November 30, 1849, they deeded some of the land to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit to build a church and cemetery. Early church histories state that the cemetery's earliest burials were the remains of some of the community's earliest settlers, who had been buried along Anchor Bay but had to be relocated to the cemetery's southeast corner due to rising water levels. The burial ground became the resting place for many of Ira Township's earliest immigrant residents from Switzerland, Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, England and the Netherlands.

St. Mary's Cemetery

Approximately 1,850 people have been buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. Most were members of the nearby Catholic Church. Among them were twelve Civil War veterans, including Stephen Rose, son of Etienne and Mary Rose who donated this land. In 1872 a world-wide smallpox epidemic reached Ira Township and took the lives of twenty-nine people. Almost half of them were buried here. Though some of this cemetery's graves are unmarked, many have markers made of concrete, marble, granite, limestone and sculpted iron. St. Mary's Cemetery and the associated nearby parish church were renamed Immaculate Conception in the early twentieth century. In 1911 the church reaffirmed its commitment to this cemetery, declaring "Make it God's acre, a sacred dormitory where His weary children sleep til the day of the Resurrection."