

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2021
Mackinac State Historic Parks
Mackinac Island
Post Hospital Board Room

Commissioners in attendance: Laura Ashlee, Joseph Calvaruso (by phone), Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez, Eric Hemenway, Robin Terry (by phone), Tom Truscott and Larry Wagenaar.

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis and Troy Masserant (by phone).

President Egen called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Egen thanked Steve Brisson and his staff for their hospitality and support in making the meeting location possible. Egen also thanked Phil Porter for the previous years of allowing the commission to meet and stay on Mackinac Island. Clark thanked commissioners for taking the time to attend.

Approval of Agenda: Wagenaar moved to approve the agenda as presented; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Chester moved to approve the June 10, 2021, meeting minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Fernandez and was unanimously adopted.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Marker Project – Troy Masserant, the Center’s Eastern Michigan University graduate marker assistant, drafted a grant to do the Ypsilanti marker audit work as part of a class assignment. Clark asked for commissioner input on the summary of the project. Commissioners suggested including a reference to out-of-state markers and to recruiting diverse members of local communities. Clark noted the need to hire a facilitator and a project manager to oversee the work. Commissioners added the need to have diverse scholarly input along with diverse community input to identify gaps and authenticate information. It may be beneficial to seek outside advice about structuring the project: establishing a timeline, making geographical breakdowns and staffing needs. A firm that already has a community research and engagement arm, such as the Johnson Center of Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University, might be able to manage the project under contract. Commissioners discussed having a scholarly project advisory board and felt this route should be considered moving forward. Clark noted the need/ability to fund the first few marker(s) in a community/area as part of the overall project.

Clark agreed to move forward by conducting exploratory conversations with firms about the larger audit project, as well as moving forward with the case statement for Ypsilanti. There was discussion again about the possibility of approaching the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Meijer Foundation.

Marker Program

- **Sewah Studios Contract – Pricing Update** – Clark reported that a new contract has been negotiated with Sewah Studios, the historical marker manufacturer. It includes a 10 percent price increase effective February 1, 2022. Clark asked how the commission would like to proceed with updates to the administrative fees. After discussion, Wagenaar moved to approve adding a 15 percent administrative fee to the fee charged by Sewah Studios; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved.
- **Marker Text Error – Felt Mansion** – After discussion, Ashlee moved to approve using undesignated marker funds to order a replacement marker that corrects the errors about the order of nuns and the date of their arrival with the understanding that the removal of the old marker and erection of the new marker will be the responsibility of the sponsor or other local groups; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved. It was also noted that this amount will not affect the repair fund formula previously established by the commission.
- **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided for three new marker applications. (Appendix A)
 - ◆ **Sanderson House, Battle Creek, Calhoun County**
 - ◆ **Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot, Jackson, Jackson County**
 - ◆ **Guardian Angels Church, Manistee, Manistee County**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Sanderson House marker application as presented; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved.

Chester moved to approve the Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot application provided that the text include information on the adjacent, current depot; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

Chester moved to approve the Guardian Angels Church with clarification about the “twelve-bell chime;” the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

- **Approval of Marker Text** – Marker texts were provided for:
 - ◆ **Integrating East Lansing, East Lansing, Ingham County**
 - ◆ **Ulysses S. Grant Elementary School, Ferndale, Oakland County**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Integrating East Lansing marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Truscott and was unanimously approved.

Truscott moved to approve the Ulysses S. Grant Elementary School marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved.

- **Reports**
 - ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Ashlee asked for an update on the Burt Lake Band marker. Clark stated there is a concern with the text and she will focus on working with the tribal chair to find wording that is satisfactory to all involved.
 - ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Clark reported on the commission's recommendation that the Covington School historical marker wooden posts be altered to appear more uniform. After several months of trying to work with the sponsor, an internal decision was made to allow the Covington School marker to be left as is.

- **Marker Dedication Talking Points** – Ashlee suggested adding a note that a commissioner should talk for no more than three minutes. Commissioners agreed that the document will be a helpful tool.

Director's Report

- **Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Justice "Intents"**
Clark reported that over the past year Center staff have been working on an action plan for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Justice. The meetings have been facilitated by staff members who are currently focusing on gathering input from focus group meetings, an online anonymous survey and one-on-one conversations. It was suggested that the action plan be shared with the Michigan History Foundation.
- **Looking ahead five years** – Clark shared that Suzanne Fischer, the Center's museum director, has resigned effective October 1, 2021. The management team is looking at priorities before filling the museum director position. In discussing the core mission of the center, commissioners emphasized the collections and sharing them with school children and the public through inclusive, engaging exhibits and online materials. Question posed: Is it possible to restructure the management positions to help relieve some of the Management Team's administrative responsibilities? This is an opportunity to recast positions and focus. Commissioners noted that making the Center more accessible, especially as it related to education and resource materials, is important to its future success. Online accessibility is an important step in achieving this goal – this might include smaller virtual tours, digitization projects, virtual classroom projects, and online collection resources. They urged establishing strong partnerships with other museums, archives and their foundations in order to make information accessible and available to the general public. It is also important to identify what is driving the gate to assist with finding a balance between permanent exhibits and rotating special exhibits. It is important to have fresh new content along with anchor pieces that set the background.

Local Historic District Committee Report

- **Wayne County Community College/Detroit Underground Railroad Site Historic District, Detroit, Wayne County**

Wagenaar moved to accept the report as written; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and it was unanimously accepted.

Business Updates – Due to time concern, the commission agreed to discuss the Awards Update at the November 2021 meeting.

Commissioner Comments – There were no comments.

Wagenaar moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso; and the meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'C'.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses
Michigan Historical Commission
September 9, 2021

Sanderson House

Applicant: Hans and Alicia Stark

Location Address: 651 Capital Ave NE, Battle Creek, Calhoun County

Requested Marker Type: Large marker with different text on each side.

Born in Vermont in 1812, Frederick M. Sanderson emigrated to Battle Creek in 1838 and entered business as a wagon maker. In 1840 he married Hulda Rogers. Before the incorporation of the Village of Battle Creek, Sanderson was supervisor of the Town of Emmett. He later served as supervisor, assessor, trustee, or alderman to Battle Creek for most of his life. In the capacity of his official duties, Sanderson was “never known to swerve from the line of strictest integrity.” In 1869 Sanderson purchased a rural plot of land in Emmett Township and built this Italianate style house circa 1871. On September 21, 1872, Sanderson suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed, leaving him homebound until his death in 1876. His funeral service was held at the home.

After Frederick’s death, Hulda and their daughter, Ida, sold the home to a Canadian banker on a land contract. The banker made some modifications to the home, but he died a year after moving in. The banker’s family left the home and returned to Canada. The sale was never completed, and the title never transferred to the new family. Huldah and Ida decided to return to the home. In the 1880s the city of Battle Creek annexed this area of Emmett Township. The rural farmland that initially characterized the area gave way to an increasingly residential, middle-class neighborhood as Battle Creek expanded and its population grew.

Ida married William R. Phillips, a druggist who owned a store in Battle Creek, on September 29, 1881. William moved in with Ida and Hulda. Together Ida and William had three children, Frederick, Effa, and Arthur. Ida divorced William on July 13, 1897, and he moved out of the home. The children remained with Ida and Hulda.

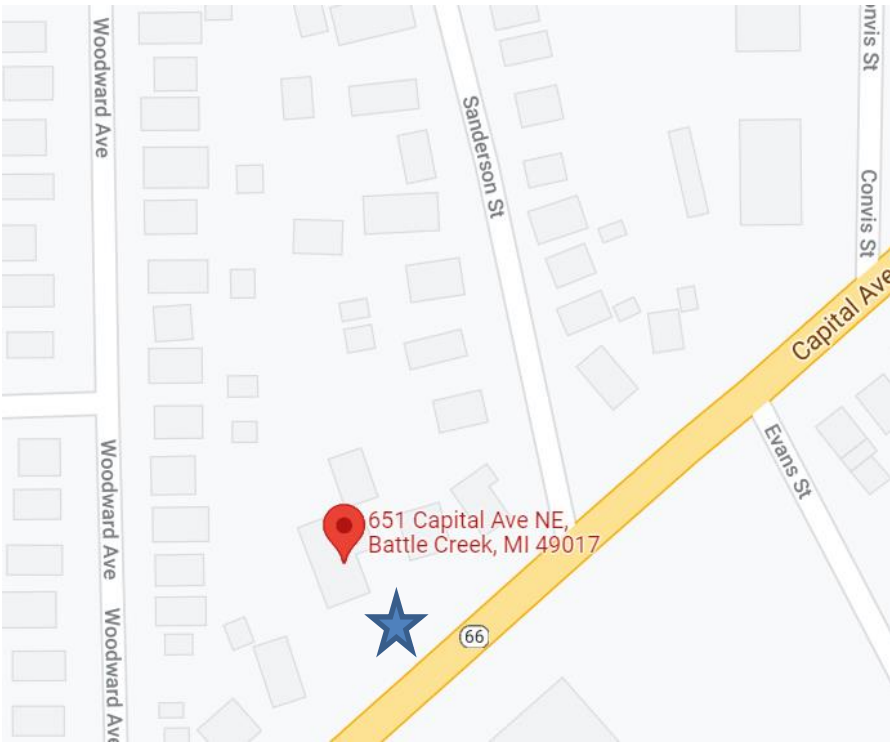
Hulda died on September 9, 1900. The family held her funeral service at the home. Nine years later, Ida died on May 26, 1909. Her funeral was also held at their home. Ida’s children continued to live at the home and occasionally rented out several rooms. Between 1911 and 1915, Arthur and Frederick left the home.

In 1915 Effa, married Ancil Hoyt, a prominent Battle Creek businessman, realtor, and administrator. Hoyt joined Effa in her home that same year, and they had three children. Throughout the mid-1910s Hoyt served as secretary and manager of the Business Men’s Credit Association, a local organization that educated Calhoun County residents on the importance of credit and recorded a person’s credit rating. Hoyt developed and published a credit experience directory recording the credit rating of approximately 29,000 people throughout Calhoun County. At the time, the guide was said to be “the most complete ever published” in Battle Creek. The *Battle Creek Enquirer* later credited him with developing “the first crisscross directory in Battle Creek,” which “was thought to be the first one in the country.”

During his time in Battle Creek, Hoyt engaged in numerous business ventures. In 1918 Hoyt founded the Battle Creek Dog Food Company with P. E. Miller. Hoyt sold his stake in the company two years later and entered the real estate business, which became his primary interest. Hoyt made several entries into Calhoun County’s oil mining and refining industry during the late 1920s and into the early 1940s. He served as secretary of the St. Clair Oil and Gas Corporation, director of the Verona Crude Oil and Gas Company, and manager of the Precision Refining company. Hoyt died at 651 Capital Ave NE in 1950 after a prolonged period of illness. After Hoyt’s death, Effa remained in the home until her death on April 8, 1977. The family sold the home after her death.

Recommendation: Approval.

Proposed Marker Location: The marker will be placed on the Southeast side of the front lawn.





Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot

Applicant: Linda Hass

Location Address: 501 E. Michigan Ave, Jackson, Jackson County

Requested Marker Type: Large marker with different text on each side.

The Michigan Central Railroad reached Jackson in 1841. Circa 1850, the property at 501 East Michigan Ave, now the Jackson Amtrak Station, was the location of Michigan Central Railroad's freight station in Jackson. The 1841 Michigan Central Railroad passenger station was located a block-and-a-half to the northwest of the freight station. In 1873, the freight station was demolished. A new, larger Michigan Central Railroad passenger depot was constructed in its place. The original 1841 passenger station was demolished in 1959.

The Michigan Central Railroad was an asset to the Underground Railroad in Michigan. It offered a direct route through the interior of the state from Chicago to Detroit. There, a short ferry or boat ride facilitated escape to Canada. There are several documented cases where people escaping from slavery used the Michigan Central Railroad. In 1854, fifteen self-liberating people evaded a city-wide manhunt in Chicago and used the Michigan Central Railroad to escape to Canada.

On January 27, 1847, in Marshall, Michigan, Francis Troutman and three other Kentuckians forcibly entered the home of Adam Crosswhite and his family to return them to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. A crowd of several hundred people sympathetic to the Crosswhites gathered around the home. Troutman drew his pistol on the first person who tried to intervene, but the presence of the crowd stopped any further attempt to forcibly abduct the Crosswhites. The Kentuckians and the crowd argued the legality of the abduction until the sheriff arrested Troutman for breaking and entering and drawing a deadly weapon.

After the Kentuckians were arrested, George Ingersoll hid the Crosswhites. That night, Ingersoll brought them to Jackson and helped them board the morning Michigan Central train bound for Detroit. The Crosswhites successfully fled to Canada while the slave catchers were in court.

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location:

The marker would be placed on the lawn of the Jackson Amtrak Station, which was built in 1873 as a Michigan Central Railroad passenger station. Before 1873, this was the location of the freight depot. Jackson's original 1841 Michigan Central Railroad passenger station was a block-and-a-half to the northwest.



Location of original passenger station.



Location of original freight station

Guardian Angels Church

Applicant: The Niles Family

Location Address: 371-375 Fifth Street, Manistee, Manistee County

Requested Marker Type: Large marker with different text on each side.

The Church of the Guardian Angels' congregation was founded on January 24, 1888, after the congregation of St. Mary's Church had outgrown the capacity of that church. The Reverend H. W. Grimme took charge of the predominantly Irish and German congregation on May 1, 1888. Property for the church was purchased on June 23, 1888. The congregation laid the church's cornerstone on September 2, 1888. Bishop H. J. Richter blessed the church under "the name and protection of the Guardian Angels" and formally opened the church on December 21, 1890.

The prolific, German-born church architect Adolphus Druiding designed the brick church in the Romanesque style. The church's many rounded arches suggest a German variation of the Romanesque style known as *Rundbogenstil*, meaning literally, "round arch style." Church history states that the three Celtic crosses on the North façade represent the Irish founding families of the congregation. The church's 170-foot-tall steeple made it the tallest structure currently in Manistee.

On September 20, 1909, Mrs. Carrie Filer, who was not a member of the congregation, gifted a large sum of money to the congregation to purchase a twelve-bell chime forged by the Meneely Company in Watervliet, New York. The *Manistee Daily Advocate* reported that Filer had initially offered the gift elsewhere, but the party had not been eager enough to make the necessary arrangements to install the gift. The twelve bells, each inscribed with the name of a saint, were installed in April 1910. The church's three original bells were also implemented into the new chime. In 1911, the Dempsey family donated \$5,000 in memory of Mary T. Dempsey for the church's pipe organ. Built by the Henry Reinisch Company from Battle Creek, the organ features more than sixteen hundred pipes. Both the chime and the organ are still utilized by the congregation.

Recommendation: Approval.

Proposed Marker Location:

