

# Michigan Historical Commission Special Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022

Michigan History Center

Morris Learning Center

**Commissioners in attendance:** Laura Ashlee, Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez, Robin Terry, Tom Truscott and Larry Wagenaar.

**Excused Absence:** Joe Calvaruso and Eric Hemenway

**Staff:** Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis and Troy Masserant.

**Public:** State Representative Sarah Anthony (District 68), Michigan House of Representatives; Brandon Camarillo, Photographer with WILX News 10 (who filmed the meeting through agenda item X).

At 11:04 a.m. President Egen called to order the special meeting held to take action on items that could not be acted on at the regular February 3, 2022, meeting due to a lack of an in-person quorum.

(Notes from the February 3, 2022, meeting are attached as Appendix A.)

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

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Chester moved to approve the November 4, 2021, meeting minutes as presented; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously adopted.

**Public Comment on Items Not Related to an Existing Agenda Item:** There were no public comments during this time.

## Marker Program

- **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided for three new marker applications. (Appendix B)
  - ◆ **Orlin Douglass Farm, Lowell, Kent County**
  - ◆ **Phelps-Laing Homestead, Laingsburg, Shiawassee County**
  - ◆ **Jarvis Stone School & Dickerson Barn, Plymouth, Washtenaw County**

Ashlee moved to decline the Orlin Douglass Farm marker application stating that the house information did not represent a significant addition to the history that is already shared on the various markers in the area; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved. The commission suggested that the Historical Society of Michigan's Michigan Heritage Home Program may be a better option for this site.

Wagenaar moved to decline the Phelps-Laing Homestead marker application stating that the alterations that have been made to the structure do not meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to a historical structure. The commission also noted that there did not seem to be evidence of a significant contribution to state or local history by

people or events connected to the property. The motion was seconded by Terry and was unanimously approved. The commission suggested that the Historical Society of Michigan's Michigan Heritage Home Program may be a better option for this site.

Chester moved to approve The Jarvis Stone School portion of the marker application that also included the Dickerson Barn. He noted that the barn had been moved and was not of architectural significance. Little of the original fabric of the barn remains. The motion was seconded by Fernandez and was unanimously approved.

- **Approval of Marker Text** – Draft Marker texts were provided for:
  - ◆ **Sanderson House, Battle Creek, Calhoun County**
  - ◆ **Michigan Central Railroad Depots, Jackson, Jackson County**
  - ◆ **French-Allen House, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County**
  - ◆ **Fort Wilkins, Copper Harbor, Keweenaw County**
  - ◆ **Camp Arcadia, Arcadia, Manistee County**
  - ◆ **The Spiritual Israel Church and Its Army, Detroit, Wayne County**

As these texts had been reviewed and changes made at the prior meeting where no formal action could be taken due to a lack of an in-person quorum, Fernandez moved to approve the six marker texts as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

- **Approval of New Marker Text** – Draft Marker texts were provided for:
  - ◆ **Little Family Homesite/Malcolm X, Lansing, Ingham County**
  - ◆ **Rackham Golf Course, Huntington Woods, Oakland County**

Clark stated that the Little Family Homesite/Malcolm X marker text is a revision of the original Malcolm X Homesite marker erected in 1975. After the original marker was damaged, members of the family, community members and center staff determined the marker language required updating to better reflect Malcolm X's direct ties to Lansing.

Representative Sarah Anthony thanked the commission for considering the update to the text. She noted, that as a child, she lived in the apartments now located on the marker site. She stated that what damaged the original marker remains unclear. However, instead of seeing the damage as a problem, she and others decided to see it as an opportunity to revisit and possibly update the marker. They desired a marker that would share the important details of Malcolm X's life while including his ties to the Lansing community. They hope to spark conversation about how his childhood helped shape him.

Representative Anthony noted that after the social unrest happening throughout Michigan as well as the rest of the country, it is important for the community to use this marker as a reset of Malcolm X's legacy here in Lansing. She would like to celebrate the unveiling of the marker on Malcolm X's birthday, May 19, 2022. Representative Anthony has been in contact with the property owner and the City of Lansing, both are on board with helping make this event happen. She hoped the new marker would be a learning tool for children and a destination focused on Malcolm X's formative years.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Little Family Homesite/Malcolm X marker text with further minor edits by Clark and Anthony; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

The marker text for Rackham Golf Course was originally approved in 2012. A marker was not ordered at that time due to funding issues. The sponsor recently contacted Davis about the possibility of purchasing a marker now. After reviewing the text, Clark determined a few minor revisions were needed, due to the death of Ben Davis in 2013. Terry moved to approve the Rackham Golf Course marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Fernandez and was unanimously approved.

- **Approval of New Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided for three new marker applications. (Appendix C)
  - ◆ **1899 Fire Bell and Nashville Volunteer Fire Department, Nashville, Barry County**
  - ◆ **Algiers Motel and Manor House, Detroit, Wayne County**
  - ◆ **Tejano Music and Culture in Southwest Detroit, Detroit, Wayne County**

Chester moved to approve the 1899 Fire Bell and Nashville Volunteer Fire Department marker application; the motion was seconded by Truscott and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Algiers Motel and Manor House marker application; the motion was seconded by Terry and was unanimously approved.

After discussion, the commission decided to table the Tejano Music and Culture in Southwest Detroit marker application. The commission asked Masserant to work with the sponsor on a revised application that would focus on the broader story of Tejano culture and music in Detroit. Referring to its policy on not doing markers focused on individuals until 20 years after their death, the commission agreed that Martin Solis, Jr. could still be mentioned as part of the broader story.

- **Marker Relocation Request**
  - ◆ **Motown, Detroit, Wayne County, Site No. L1447C** (Appendix D) – A request was received asking permission to relocate the Motown historical marker. The Motown Museum is currently expanding its campus and wishes to relocate the historic marker from its current location to a more advantageous point slightly closer to the house and more aligned with the structure of the building itself. The marker will be placed in storage until construction is completed. Wagenaar moved to approve the request to relocate the Motown marker; the motion was seconded by Fernandez and was unanimously approved with Terry recusing herself.

### **Local Historic District Committee Report**

- **Delist 54 E. Square Lake Road, Troy, Oakland County**

Fernandez moved to accept the comments provided by Ashlee as written; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously accepted.

### **Business Updates**

- **Awards Update** (Appendix E) – Egen shared an Award’s Update document.
  - Ashlee moved to adopt the plan; the motion was seconded by Fernandez, and it was unanimously accepted.

Ashlee moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Fernandez and the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.



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Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

## Michigan Historical Commission Informational Notes

February 3, 2022

Zoom Meeting

**Commissioners in attendance (all via Zoom):** Laura Ashlee, Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez, Eric Hemenway, Robin Terry, and Larry Wagenaar.

**Excused Absence:** Joe Calvaruso and Tom Truscott

**Staff:** Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, Sheri Giffin and Troy Masserant.

Due to inclement weather, the meeting did not meet the in-person quorum that is required by the Open Meetings Act. Therefore, the meeting, which was open to the public, was for discussion purposes only and no official action was taken.

President Egen convened the group at 10:00 a.m.

**Review of Meeting Minutes:** Ashlee suggested two changes to the November 4, 2021, meeting minutes.

**Public Comment:** There were no public comments.

### Marker Project

- Clark reported that the NEH Grant search to find a candidate to work one year on the marker audit and Grant House was not successful. The decision has been made to split this into two part-time contract positions and leave each component separate. Clark agreed to share the job descriptions with the commission, and asked commissioners to share the information with their contacts. She stated that anyone interested in either position should contact her immediately.
- Clark noted that she has met with the three University of Michigan students working with the center on their capstone project. Clark is trying to set up a meeting between the students and the Black Historic Sites Committee to assist with the marker audit project.
- Clark and Hemenway continue to work on marker updates for Mackinac Island and the Great Lakes. Ashlee noted that Mackinac Island has recently become a Certified Local Government, which may provide a good contact for the proposed Mackinac Island changes.

### Marker Program

- **Role and Value of Michigan Historical Markers**  
Clark stated that as she continues to move forward with seeking support for the marker audit, now is good time to seek commissioner input on what they believe is the role and value of the marker program.
  - ◆ Terry noted that markers not only tell stories for communities and help a community understand how it has evolved over time, but they also help Michigan tell a greater story of the many contributions that people and places have made to our nation's history and even world history in some instances. The stories are an inspiration to those who are reading them.

- ◆ Egen agreed that relevancy and illumination are key features of the markers. Egen shared that he has always viewed the markers as connective tissue – each one can tell an individual story, but the sum of all of them is the shared experience of all Michiganders. A marker can also bring a community together.
- ◆ Hemenway noted that the stories markers tell are often incorporated into public education and used as points of reference for guided tours, field trips, and conversations. Markers also give a voice to populations that have not had that opportunity before. Moving forward with the marker audit will prove to those populations that Michigan is serious about equity in education and history.
- ◆ Wagenaar stated that markers give people a sense of place and a sense of community. Markers allow us the opportunity to share history. Some of those stories may be uncomfortable, but they still need to be shared in order to provide people with a sense of place. Wagenaar also noted how far the commission has come over the years and that diversity is now apparent in the members and the voices being shared.
- ◆ Chester focused on markers and the sense of place: An individual happens to be visiting a particular place and encounters a marker by chance. This makes the place special. It helps a person understand that they are standing in a place that has a past, and it shares history that needs to be shared to understand a place.
- ◆ Fernandez shared that the markers tell what a community values and that what we think as a community is important.
- ◆ Masserant expressed that for him, stories serve as the primary avenues on how people connect to places, people and things, and markers do just that. A marker allows people to connect with their community and to learn about people, places and things that may not be known by everyone. Marker stories have a fundamental impact on the cultural landscape around them allowing people to see what that community values and the history of that community.
- ◆ Ashlee expressed gratitude and an awe for how the commissioners have been talking about the marker program. In the past, Ashlee believes that the commission did not view the marker program in such broad terms. She said that historically the marker program was very application driven, and the markers tended to focus on only what the applicants wanted the marker to say. Ashlee wants to make sure the commission avoids making those same mistakes. Ultimately the commission has the final say on what the markers say, and it is very important to remember that the whole story needs to be shared.
- ◆ Clark noted the importance for a marker to share “how this story builds the state’s story.” The marker text should contribute to the bigger story and inspire history in a public way.
- ◆ Egen mentioned that the marker program may be a good topic for a future article in the *Michigan History* magazine. Wagenaar noted that if someone was willing to write the article it may fit well in the “Remembering our Heritage” section of the magazine.
- ◆ There was a discussion about the possibility of pursuing a marker about the LGBTQ community. Laura mentioned that Saugatuck has a current exhibit related to this topic, and she will be visiting it soon. Ann Arbor was mentioned as another possible location.

➤ **Marker Revisions**

- ◆ Clark stated that she was recently approached by a staff member who was concerned with the use of the words “mentally retarded” on the Van Buren County Poorhouse marker.
- ◆ Staff are currently working on a marker application to be used for markers that need replacing. As historians we need to keep record of what and how changes are being made.
- ◆ Clark asked the commission for clear direction as to which markers needing text revisions should be presented for approval. For example, does the commission want to see minor revisions or only those requiring large revisions? Ashlee noted it is beneficial for the commission to see all marker changes even if it does not require commission approval. Clark agreed to share all text revisions with the commission and will seek approval for those requiring larger revisions.

➤ **Review of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided for three new marker applications.

- ◆ **Orlin Douglass Farm, Lowell, Kent County**
- ◆ **Phelps-Laing Homestead, Laingsburg, Shiawassee County**
- ◆ **Jarvis Stone School & Dickerson Barn, Plymouth, Washtenaw County**

The Orlin Douglass Farm marker application was discussed. The site was listed on the State Register of Historic Sites on May 10, 1990, however, it was not marked at that time. The commission noted that the house did not add to the history that is already shared on the various markers in the area. The Historical Society of Michigan’s Michigan Heritage Home Program may be a better option for this site or some type of local signage.

The Phelps-Laing Homestead marker application was discussed. The commission noted that since the house has aluminum siding, and the story does not appear to have a significant connection to the town’s history this likely is not a good candidate for a marker. The Historical Society of Michigan’s Michigan Heritage Home Program may be a better option for this site or some type of local signage.

The Jarvis Stone School and Dickerson Barn marker application was discussed. The commission noted that a fieldstone school structure is uncommon and makes this more historically significant. The barn does not seem to play an important role in the history. Ashlee suggested asking for a picture of the front of the school for the next commission meeting, when the application will formally be reviewed by the commission.

➤ **Review of Marker Text** – Draft Marker texts were provided for:

- ◆ **Sanderson House, Battle Creek, Calhoun County**
- ◆ **Michigan Central Railroad Depots, Jackson, Jackson County**
- ◆ **French Allen House, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County**
- ◆ **Fort Wilkins, Copper Harbor, Keweenaw County**
- ◆ **Camp Arcadia, Arcadia, Manistee County**
- ◆ **The Spiritual Israel Church and Its Army, Detroit, Wayne County**

Commissioners suggested changes in the text to be made before the makers are presented for approval at the next meeting.

## **Reports**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting.
- ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

## **Director's Report**

Director Clark shared that the Governor's proposed FY2023 state budget has not been finalized, but should be soon.

She noted that the center's partnership with Virtual Michigan has been very successful. A new program based on the Governor's decision room approach is now available as an online course focused on the Flint Sit-Down Strike, negotiation and compromise. The center is looking forward to working with Virtual Michigan on future projects. Merging their expertise in virtual education with the center's history expertise is a winning combination.

Wagenaar asked for further explanation of what is meant by the history enthusiast in the director's report and about the plans to syndicate it? Clark stated that it is an effort to take the stories that various staff encounter in their work and syndicate them in MHC blogs, social media, newsletters, education and exhibits. This is more of an internal reorganization working to better share the history expertise of all staff.

## **Local Historic District Committee Report**

- **Franklin Village, Franklin, Oakland County**  
Egen thanked Ashlee for her review of the report.

## **Business Updates**

- **Awards Update** – Clark and Egen met prior to this meeting and discussed reinstating the Swainson and MAC awards. This would mean creating an online application and the having a webpage that clearly outlines the timetable and process. Wagenaar stated that it may be necessary to increase the brief award description and explanation word limits to allow the applicants to build a strong case. Wagenaar and Ashlee both volunteered to review the award applications along with Egen and Clark. Chester noted that this information should be shared with the Michigan History Foundation once it has been finalized.

## **Commissioner Comments**

Wagenaar shared that Ed Bradley, Assistant Editor for the Michigan Historical Review, had a massive stroke and passed away the previous week.

The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses  
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## Orlin Douglass Farm

**Applicant:** Fallasburg Historical Society

**Location Address:** 13923 Covered Bridge Rd, Lowell, Kent County.

**Historic Resources:** c1850 Vernacular Farmhouse

**Requested Marker Type:** Small marker, different text on each side.

### Historical Summary:

Orlin Douglass (1803-1873), a New York Native, arrived in Michigan in 1854 and settled in the vicinity of Fallasburg. He purchased 150 acres from John W. Fallas, the founder of the town, when he arrived. Several others may have owned the farm prior to 1854. A fire at the county clerk's office in 1860 has left an imperfect record of property ownership prior to that date. When Douglass died in 1873, his son Orrin inherited the farm. In 1894, the Tower-Steketee family acquired the property.

While the Orlin Douglass Farmhouse appears to be a gabled ell house, the house is believed to be combined from two separate dwellings. The first component is an upright-and-wing house erected circa 1850. The second component is an I-house type structure thought to be constructed during the same period due to the methods and materials used. It is unknown if the I-house was located on the 150-acre parcel or if it was on a parcel nearby. The original 1896 newspaper article that indicates the houses were combined in 1896 could not be found. It is said that the houses were combined to allow Minnie Tower and Eva Steketee, who were sisters, to live together.

In 1910 the Steketee's deeded their interest in the property to the Tower family and moved to Grand Rapids. They operated a drug store there. Bruce Tower, descendant of James and Minnie Tower, and his wife Leonora moved into the property in the mid-1900s and lived there until 1972. Leonora founded the West Central Michigan Historical Society in 1965, which became the Fallasburg Historical Society in 1990.

### Summary of Integrity:

A rehabilitation project began in 2010. In 2011, the previous shingles were replaced with "weathered wood" color CertainTeed shingles. In 2014 the windows were replaced with 1-over-1 casement windows. In 2017, the asphalt siding applied by the tower family in the mid-1900s was removed to uncover the original wood cladding. In 2020 a concrete block porch added in the mid-1900s was removed, and a new entry porch was constructed. A rear chimney was also removed during this time. The cedar siding has been repaired and replaced as needed and painted.

**Recommendation:** Discussion on whether Orlin Douglas and the structure are significant enough to receive additional historic recognition with a historical marker. The site was listed in the State Register of Historic Sites in 1990. It is also a contributing property to the Fallsburg Historic District recognized in the National Register in 1999. Additional information would be needed to meet the program’s standard of documentation.

**Proposed Marker Location:**



Figure 1. South Elevation



*Figure 2. Porch Constructed in 2020*



*Figure 3. Oblique view-Southwest*



*Figure 4. Oblique view-east and north elevations*



*Figure 5. Oblique view-south and east elevations*



Figure 6. Oblique view- north and west elevations



Figure 7. North elevation



Figure 8. South elevation and porch circa 1910.



*Figure 9. South elevation-2018-with removed porch and unpainted siding.*

# Phelps-Laing Homestead

**Applicant:** Mary Scott.

**Location Address:** 7750 East Grand River Road, Laingsburg, Shiawassee County.

**Historic Resource:** Greek Revival Style home built in the late 1830s or early 1840s.

**Requested Marker Type:** Small marker, different text on each side.

## Historical Summary:

Mason Phelps (1815-1879) and his family were among of the initial settlers who founded Laingsburg in 1836. Mason married Laura Jane Laing (1813-1891), the daughter of Peter Laing, on October 5, 1835, in Washtenaw County. The following year, Mason and Laura moved to Shiawassee County with Peter Laing and his son William. Mason's father, James, and his twin brother Milton accompanied them. County histories state that Mason Phelps and the Laings settled at the site of Laingsburg. After building a temporary log cabin, Mason helped Peter Laing build "Laing's Tavern," which the Village of Laingsburg slowly grew around. In December 1836, after the tavern's completion, Mason and Laura moved several miles to the east and settled here on 120-acre plot of land in Woodhull Township.

Given the prominence of the Greek Revival Style in Michigan from the 1830s to early 1850s, the establishment of nearby sawmills as early as 1836, and the home's brace frame construction, it is likely that Mason Phelps constructed this Greek Revival home in the late 1830s or early 1840s.

From 1839 until 1841, Mason Phelps served as one of Woodhull Township's highway commissioners. On February 16, 1842, Sciota Township was created from the western portion of Woodhull Township. Mason Phelps was elected as supervisor in 1843, treasurer in 1844, and justice of the peace in 1847 and 1859.

Mason Phelps enlisted in the army on December 4, 1861. He served in Company K, Fourteenth Michigan infantry, for a ten-month period. During that time, the Fourteenth Michigan participated in the siege of Corinth, Mississippi. While in active service, Mason suffered an affliction that rendered him blind. He was medically discharged on September 16, 1862. Phelps returned to his home in Sciota Township and lived for another seventeen years. He died on May 28, 1879. Sometime after Mason's death, Laura moved to Laingsburg. she died on January 6, 1891.

### Summary of Integrity:

Several additions have been constructed since the home's completion. The two-story addition on the east side of the house is thought to have been completed soon after the home's construction. Two additions have been constructed on the north side; the first was completed in the 1920s, and the second was completed in the 1970s. When the house is viewed from the road, only the original construction and the early addition are visible. The owner replaced the home's original wood cladding with aluminum siding in the 1970s. The siding was manufactured to match the dimensions and appearance of the original wood cladding. White storm windows have been placed over wooden double-hung windows. Many of the windows retain hand-blown glass panes.

**Recommendation:** Discussion of importance of Phelps and conditions of building.

**Proposed Marker Location:** The sponsor proposes to place the marker in front of the two-story addition.



*Figure 10. Aerial view of the property*



*Figure 11. Oblique view of the south and east elevations*



*Figure 3. South elevation viewed from the road*



*Figure 4. Photograph circa 1920.*



*Figure 5. West elevation of the rear additions*

# Jarvis Stone School & Dickerson Barn

**Applicant:** Salem Area Historical Society.

**Location Address:** 7991 North Territorial Rd, Plymouth, Washtenaw County

**Historic Resources:** 1857 Stone Schoolhouse. 1830 Post and Beam Barn moved from its original location.

**Requested Marker Type:** Large Marker, different text on each side.

## Historical Summary:

**Jarvis Stone School:** Jarvis Stone School was built circa 1857 to replace a one-room log schoolhouse built circa 1832 known as the Bullock Schoolhouse. Jarvis Stone School is a one-room schoolhouse likely built from local fieldstones. It allegedly takes its name from William Jarvis, a former schoolboard member of the district during the early settlement of Salem Township. Once William Jarvis moved from the township, the name of the school changed to South Salem Stone School. Welcome J. Partelo deeded the land that both schools were built on to School District No. 8 of Panama Township—the original name of Salem Township before it was changed in 1833—so that a schoolhouse could be constructed there. Jarvis Stone School is an example of early education practices in Michigan. The stone construction is uncommon among one-room schoolhouses built during the period.

The schoolhouse operated until 1967. In 1964, Public Act 289 initiated a school district reorganization program to consolidate primary school districts with k-12 districts. The Plymouth Community School District annexed the South Salem Stone School District No.3 in 1965. Within three years of the annexation, the board of the Plymouth Community Schools District retired the one-room school from use. A decline in students and the retirement of faculty who worked at Jarvis likely led to this decision. At the time of its closing, it was believed to be among the oldest schools operating in Washtenaw County.

The vacant property remained in possession of the school district until 1978, when the Salem Area Historical Society (SAHS) acquired it. The district deeded the building to SAHS upon agreement that SAHS would renovate and preserve the building. SAHS began renovation efforts in 1995. The schoolhouse has since been used for meetings and events.

**Dickerson Barn:** John Dickerson (1795-1882) was claimed to be the first American settler of Salem Township by county histories. Born in New Jersey, Dickerson settled here circa 1825 with his cousin Joseph. John was granted patents for three tracts of land in the township in 1826. Circa 1830, he built this barn, which county histories label as the township's first frame barn. In 1834, Dickerson was elected as one of Salem's first assessors. He held the role again in 1835 and 1838. He was elected as supervisor of Salem in 1838. By 1880 he had accumulated approximately 270 acres of land in the township and was regarded as a prosperous farmer.

The Dickerson barn is an English style post-and-beam construction that is prominent in New England. These barns were often used for grain storage. Common features include vertical siding and wagon doors on the broad side.

The barn was deeded to SAHS in 1999 and was deconstructed that same year. The owner planned to demolish the structure but agreed to allow SAHS to move it. The barn was stored and later reconstructed in 2006 and 2007 at the site of the Jarvis Stone School.

### Summary of Integrity:

**Jarvis Stone School:** The school retains its fieldstone exterior walls. The roof is original except for replacement cedar shingles. The school’s small belltower was removed during the late nineteenth century. A brick entryway was built in the 1940s. The rear window was replaced by an addition and door in the 1940s. The interior has been entirely modernized. A shed was constructed in 2005 near the rear of the building based on a 1949 image of a similar structure that had been demolished. The current windows are replications of the original twelve-over-twelve double hung windows. The trim on the eaves are replications. An ADA compliant ramp was installed at the rear entry in 2010.

**Dickerson Barn:** The barn has been moved from its original location. The foundation is concrete with a fieldstone veneer. The original chestnut swing beam was replaced with white oak. Several of the tamarack rafters were replaced. The original wood cladding had been replaced with metal siding. The metal siding was replaced with replication wood cladding when SAHS rebuilt the barn. Battens have been added between the joints of the cladding. Battens were not originally used. A side door has been added. The roof was redone with cedar shingles. The barn door hinges were reconstructed using “era appropriate design and material.”

Note: The property was designated a local historic district in 2013.

**Recommendation:** Discussion on the integrity of the structures and their importance.

### **Proposed Marker Location:**





*Figure 12. Stone School-oblique view-southeast*



*Figure 13. Stone School-east elevation*



*Figure 14. Stone School-west elevation*



*Figure 15. Stone School-north elevation*



*Figure 16. Dickerson Barn-east elevation*



*Figure 17. Dickerson Barn- oblique view-northeast*



*Figure 18. Dickerson Barn-oblique view-southwest*

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses  
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## 1899 Fire Bell and Nashville Volunteer Fire Department

**Applicant:** Nashville Historical Society, Kermit Douse.

**Location Address:** 324 North Main Street, Nashville, Barry Co.

**Historic Resource:** Historic object and events.

**Requested Marker Type:** Small marker, different text on each side.

### Historical Summary:

On March 18, 1882, a chimney fire broke out in Nashville. Awareness of the fire spread first through word of mouth, and then through the ringing of the local church bells. A bucket brigade formed to fight the fire. They attempted control the fire but were unsuccessful until a rainstorm helped extinguish the fire. An article in the *Nashville News* reflected on the event, noting that “should such a thing happen again we fear the consequences.” Following the fire, the village council approved the purchase of a No.1 piano-style Rumsey fire engine on April 10, 1882, and the organization of the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department on May 5, 1882.

Another, more destructive, fire occurred on December 6, 1898. The fire started at Walter Burd’s music store and grew rapidly. The people of Nashville were unable to raise the alarm before the building was almost entirely consumed. The *Nashville News* recounts that “someone ran to the Methodist church to ring the bell, but succeeded only in turning it upside down, where it stuck,” leaving only word of mouth to spread alarm. It took some time for members of the fire department and willing volunteers to assemble the needed number of people operate the fire engine. The fire destroyed the music store and a barber shop and damaged several other buildings before the fire department extinguished it.

After the fire an article in the *Nashville News* declared that a better fire alarm system was needed. At a village council meeting on December 19, 1898, F. J. Brattin and F. W. Knoll were appointed to a committee to “investigate and report on some adequate fire alarm for the village.” On February 24, 1899, the council approved the committee’s request to construct a steel tower on Maple Street to house an alarm bell. The thirty-five-foot tower was completed on May 26, 1899. The tower was designed with clappers that would ring the bell—rendering it impossible for the bell to become stuck.

Modern sirens and alarm systems eventually rendered the fire bell obsolete. The tower was dismantled, and the bell was turned into a memorial for Nashville’s deceased firefighters and placed on the lawn of the Putnam District library in 1954. In 1990 the bell was moved across the street to its present location in front of the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department.

## Summary of Integrity:

The original steel tower is nonextant. The bell was moved approximately two blocks to the north of its original location in 1954. The bell was painted red sometime in the 1980s. In 1990 it was moved across Main Street to its present location in front of the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department.

**Recommendation:** Approval. The events associated with the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department and the 1899 fire bell provide an endearing local story that demonstrates the importance of small-town fire departments in rural areas.

## **Proposed Marker Location:**



*Figure 19. The present location and condition of the bell.*



*Figure 20. The steel tower and fire alarm bell circa 1906.*



*Figure 21. The 1899 bell at its 1954 location.*

# Algiers Motel and Manor House

**Applicant:** Representative Abraham Aiyash

**Location Address:** 8301 Woodward Ave, Detroit, Wayne County

**Historic Resources:** Historic event and site.

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

## Historical Summary:

During the 1967 Detroit Uprising, a contingent of Detroit city police, state troopers, and national guardsmen stormed the Black-owned Algiers Motel and Manor House on July 26. Searching for an alleged sniper they believed to have fired at them from the hotel, the officers and guardsmen beat and terrorized the twelve hotel guests, resulting in the deaths of three Black teenagers: Carl Cooper, Auburey Pollard, and Fred Temple.

Initial reports claimed that the three had been killed in a gun battle that occurred before the police entered the building. On July 31 the *Detroit Free Press* published the results of its independent investigation of the incident, which found that, contrary to police reports, the three had been killed inside the hotel at close range.

Witnesses identified the principal actors in the abuse and murders as Detroit Police Officers Robert Paille, David Senak, and Ronald August, who were charged with murder by the Wayne County prosecutor. The federal government charged the three officers and Black security guard Melvin Dismukes with conspiracy to violate the guests' civil rights. Melvin Dismukes was also charged with felonious assault.

Distrust of the judicial system resulted in civil rights activists and Black Power leaders convening a "People's Tribunal" on August 30, 1967, at the Reverend Albert Cleage's Central United Church of Christ. Some two thousand people, including Rosa Parks, attended the mock trial that convicted the Detroit Police Officers and Dismukes of the murders.

In 1968, John Hersey published the *Algiers Motel Incident*, a book recounting the night's events through interviews with survivors, witnesses, and the accused policemen. Defense attorney Norman Lippitt argued that the book made a fair hearing in Detroit impossible for the officers. This resulted in the trial for the murder of Auburey Pollard being moved to the predominantly White town of Mason.

An all-white jury acquitted Ronald August at the state murder trial. The murder charges against Senak and Paille were dismissed during pre-trial or eventually dropped. An all-white jury acquitted the officers and Melvin Dismukes at the federal civil rights trial in Flint.

Summary of Integrity:

The motel and manor house were demolished in 1979 during an urban renewal project. The site is now a grass-covered lot.

**Recommendation:** Approval.  
**Proposed Marker Location:**

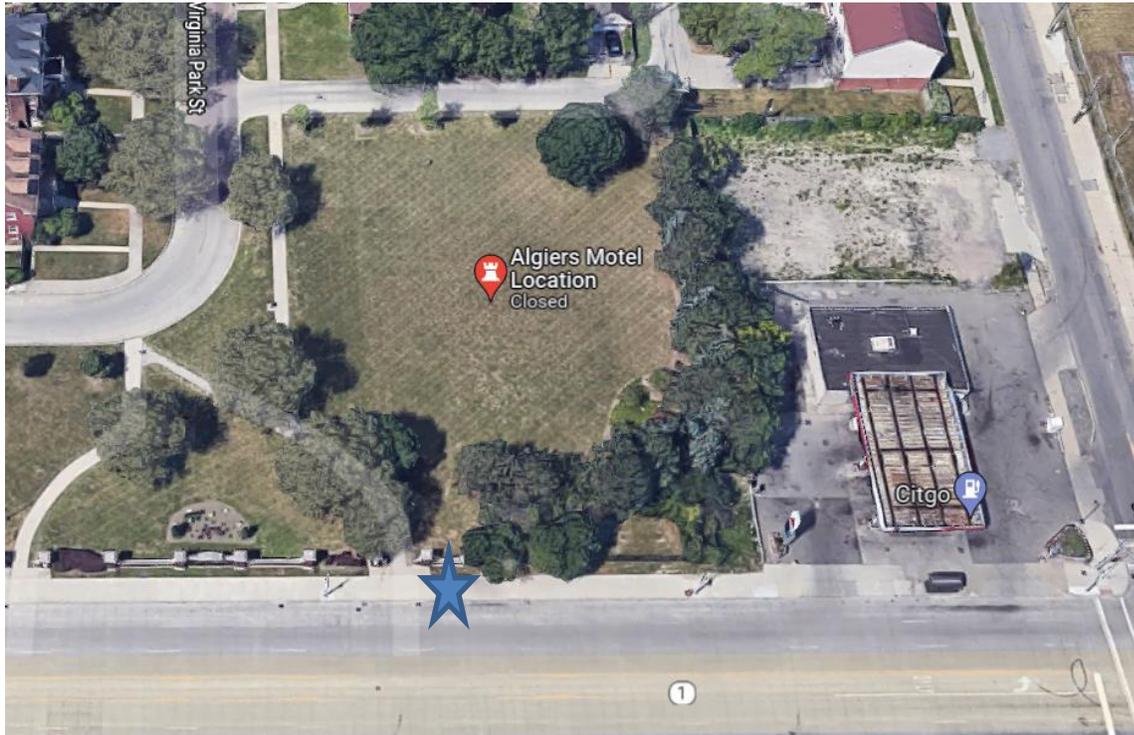
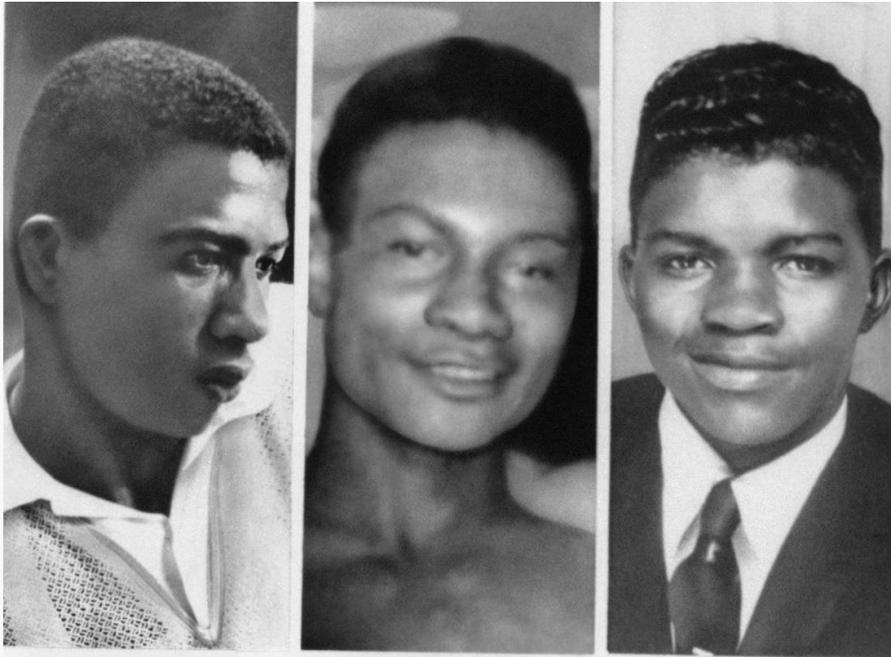


Figure 22. Present condition of the site.



*Figure 23. From left to right, Fred Temple, Aubrey Pollard, and Carl Cooper.*



*Figure 24. From left to right, David Senak, Ronald August, Robert Paille, and Melvin Dismukes at the 1970 federal conspiracy trial.*

# Tejano Music and Culture in Southwest Detroit

**Applicant:** Michigan Music Hall of Fame, Inc.

**Location Address:** 2826 Bagley Street, Detroit, Wayne County.

**Historic Resources:** Historic events and people associated with Tejano culture in southwest Detroit.

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

## Historical Summary:

Martin Solis, Jr., was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1929. In 1942 he and his family moved to Coleman, Michigan, to work in the beet fields of the Bay City Area. They moved to Detroit in 1944. They were part of a wider migration of Tejanos—Mexican Americans from Texas—to northern states to find work.

Tejano traditionally describes the “Spanish and Mexican colonial settlers of Texas and their descendants,” especially those living in southern Texas. The term has become more expansive and includes many Tejano migrants that settled throughout the northern United States in the twentieth century. These migrants continue to identify as Tejanos and maintain their cultural values, traditions, and sense of connection to Texas.

In 1953 Solis, after initially performing in the vocal group, Trio Los Primos, began performing *conjunto*—a Tejano musical style that emerged in the 1940s. It was known for pairing the accordion and the *bajo sexto*, a twelve-string bass guitar, and European musical styles like the waltz, mazurka, and polka.

Solis and accordionist Manuel Rivera played for tips at local bars until 1957, when Solis began his own *conjunto*, Los Primos, with his cousin, William Huron, along with Cassimiro Zamora, and Rudolf and Joe Martinez. Los Primos was among the first *conjuntos* established in the Detroit area. Solis played the *bajo sexto* and sang lead vocals for the group. He built his repertoire of songs by listening to the latest *conjunto* music from Texas on the jukeboxes of local Detroit bars. Solis balanced working full-time and performing with Los Primos. On weekends Los Primos traveled, playing venues in southeast Michigan, Saginaw, Lansing, and northern Ohio. Solis and other *conjunto* musicians often performed on WSAM radio station live from the Las Vegas Bar, now El Zocalo, in Mexican Town, Detroit.

Solis performed with Texas based Tejano musicians including Henry Zimmerle and Flaco Jimenez. He brought *conjunto* to Oklahoma City while he and his cousin lived there from 1961 to 1964. The Tejano R.O.O.T.S Hall of fame in Alice, Texas, inducted Solis in 2018. He was the first Michigan resident to be included. Solis died on August 26, 2019.

**Recommendation:** Discussion on waiving the twenty-year rule for Martin Solis, Jr. The sponsor would like the commission to know that it is not the intention of this application to create the “Martin Solis, Jr., Memorial Marker,” but to highlight the growth of Tejano culture in southwest Detroit by focusing on Mr. Solis. If Solis remains ineligible, they are willing tailor their application to focus on the wider growth of Tejano culture in Southwest Detroit, which can be reviewed by the commission at a later meeting.

**Proposed Marker Location:** Mexican Town, Mercado Plaza





February 22, 2022

To: Michelle Davis  
Marker  
Coordinator  
Michigan History Center  
Re: Motown Museum Historic Marker  
Request for Relocation  
Dear: Michelle,

Please accept this letter as a formal request from Motown Historical Museum Inc. to the State of Michigan Historic Commission to relocate the historic marker as described.

Motown Museum and the Hitsville U.S.A. house are a State of Michigan Historic Site located at 2648 West Grand Boulevard in the City of Detroit. The historic marker indicating this designation is located at that address on the front lawn, approximately ten (10) feet north of the Hitsville house.

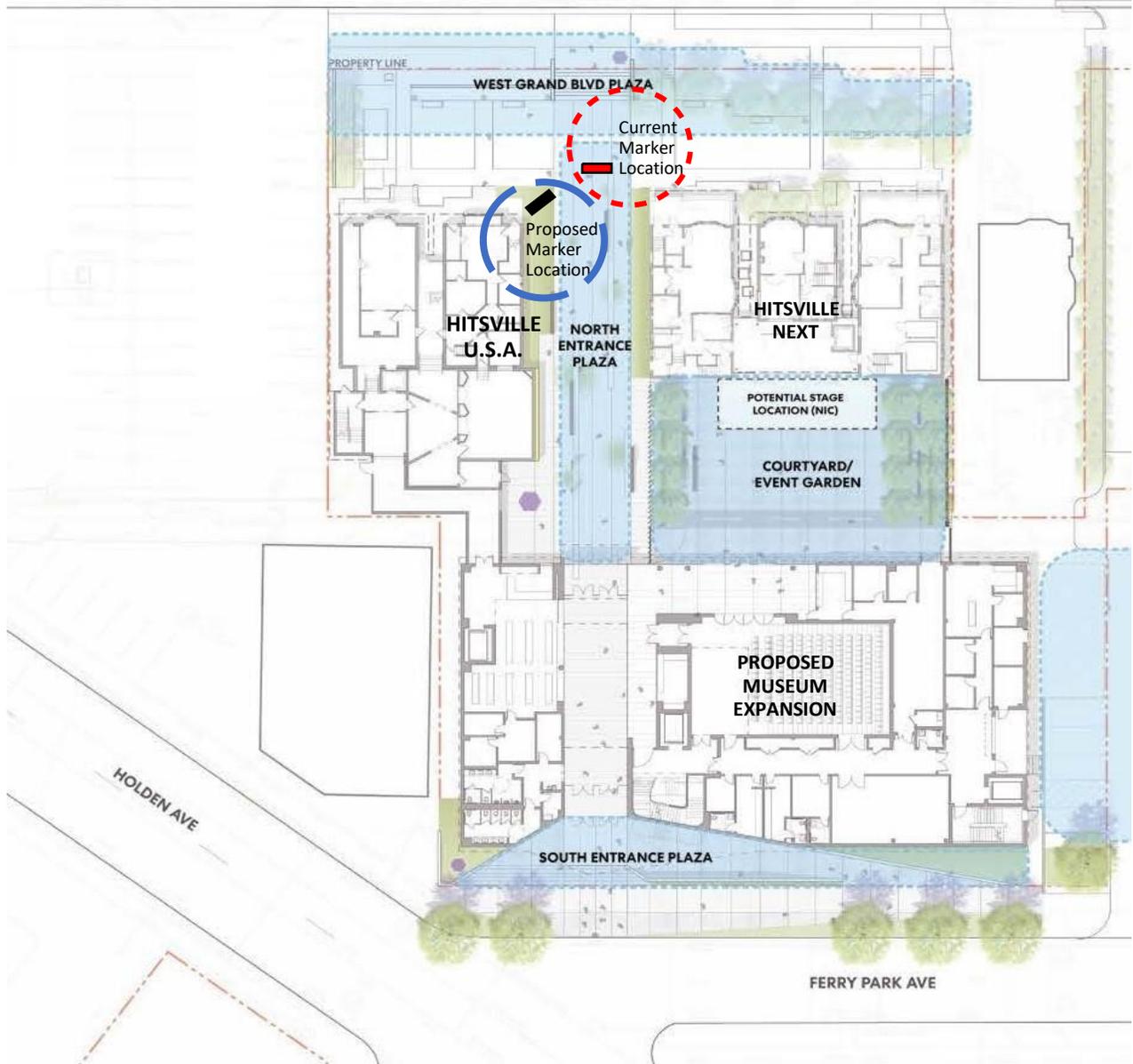
The Museum is currently engaged in an expansion of its campus which includes the landscaping of the frontage along West Grand Boulevard and the creation of a plaza and other site amenities that will enhance the enjoyment of visitors to our institution. As part of this project, we wish to relocate the historic marker from its current location to a more advantageous point slightly closer to the house and more aligned with the structure of the building itself. The sign will continue to have an equally significant location adjacent to the house while allowing it to also be amid a field of granite paved surface that is considerably easier to maintain.

Attached is a site plan indicating the current and proposed site of the historic marker for your review and approval. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Robin R. Terry  
Chairwoman and CEO

WEST GRAND BOULEVARD



HITSVILLE U.S.A.

HITSVILLE NEXT

PROPOSED MUSEUM EXPANSION

HOLDEN AVE

FERRY PARK AVE

WEST GRAND BLVD PLAZA

NORTH ENTRANCE PLAZA

SOUTH ENTRANCE PLAZA

POTENTIAL STAGE LOCATION (NIC)

COURTYARD/ EVENT GARDEN

Current Marker Location

Proposed Marker Location

PROPERTY LINE



## State of Michigan History Awards Program Overview

The Michigan History Center and Michigan Historical Commission have two awards that celebrate and recognize Michiganders who have contributed to the stewardship, preservation, and awareness of our state's history. Their contributions to helping Michiganders develop a shared understanding of our collective past is vital to our ability to create a shared vision for our future.

### Awards

#### *Governor John B. Swainson Award*

The Michigan Historical Commission established the Governor John B. Swainson Award in 1996 to honor him for his commitment to history and as one of the few public officials to have served in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government. The commission presents the award to state, county, or municipal employees who have contributed to the preservation of Michigan history even though such activities are not part of their primary job responsibility.

#### *MAK Award*

The MAK award was created in 2014. The purpose of the William G. Milliken/Elizabeth S. Adams/Frank J. Kelley Award is to recognize significant contributions to the preservation, understanding and/or promotion of Michigan's history by individuals through lengthy and/or visionary service.

### Eligibility & Criteria

- Individual resident of the State of Michigan. Posthumous awards will not be considered.
- Groups/organizations must be based in the State of Michigan.
- Qualifies under the Swainson or MAK description.
- Awards honor local, state or national contributions to history.
- Could be a single project or on-going work for the Swainson Award.
- May be individuals, groups, or organizations.
- Application and supporting documents must be complete and submitted by the submission deadlines.
- Eligible person can be nominated more than once but can only be awarded a single time
- Candidates/groups must be in good standing.
- Current serving Michigan Historical Commissioners are not eligible.

### Nomination Evaluation

- Strength of how the action(s) of the candidate supports the respective award.
- Overall impact of activities to identify, preserve, interpret, and promote the history of Michigan.
- Strength and thoroughness of application, supporting materials and letters of support.
- Demonstrates genuine passion, commitment, and effort for Michigan history.

## Additional Information

- Application and supporting materials will be submitted electronically through the Michigan Historical Center dedicated Awards webpage.
- Only one MAK award will be given annually; multiple Swainson Awards may be given.
- Award winners must provide a short bio and photo to be used for press releases, social media postings, and the awards web page.
- Nominees and award winners are encouraged to attend the awards presentation ceremony held at the State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan.

## Award Schedule

### May 31:

Application period opens.

### December 31:

Application period closes.

### January 31:

Michigan History Center Director (or appointee), Michigan Historical Commission President, and a committee of two MHC Commissioners will have reviewed applications.

### First MHC Meeting of Year (February):

Award committee recommends candidates for each award for approval.

### Post Approval:

- ✓ Within two weeks of approval, the Michigan Historical Center will contact the award recipients.
- ✓ Award recipients will submit a short bio and picture to the MHC by March 15.

### May:

Award Ceremony set based on availability of the State Capitol.

## Award Application Materials

Application to be located and fillable online that will include:

- Nominator name and contact information
- Nominee name and contact information
- Indication of what award.
- Brief description (not less than 500 words) about the candidate's works or projects.
- Brief explanation (not less than 500 words) how the candidate has positively advanced and impacted Michigan history awareness, stewardship, preservation, and inspiration.

## Supporting Materials

- 2-5 supporting documents that could include but not limited to: news articles, pictures, publications, programs, promotions, websites, presentations.
- 2-3 single page letters of support.