

1995

## Preservation Eastern Newsletter, September-October 1995

Preservation Eastern  
*Eastern Michigan University*

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## "The Drive-Ins of Washtenaw County"

By Kerrington Adams

*Editor's Note: Kerry Adams a graduate student in the EMU historic preservation program surveyed and wrote a paper on Drive-Ins in Washtenaw County for Marshall McLennan's class, American Folk Architecture. Following are some excerpts from that paper. Since this issue of the newsletter focuses on twentieth century cultural resources we have also included graphics from Kerry's paper throughout the newsletter. Enjoy!*

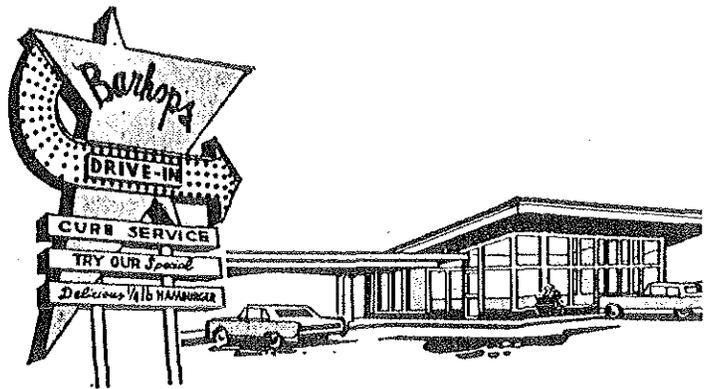
Since the fast-food landscape in America is one of constant change due to remodelings, demolitions, and the like, it is important to have both a written and visual record of the early locally operated establishments that gave rise to later designs.

Drive-ins were largely a product of the Roaring Twenties, when individual mobility increased as a direct result of mass-produced automobiles. Therefore, the necessity for roadside stands multiplied as statewide and national travel began to dominate the American leisure scene.

Morphologically the early drive-ins of the 1920's consisted of a small square roadside structure with a counter or screened windows that were oriented towards the road. In subsequent years, the drive-in embraced the streamlined, sophisticated aura of Art Moderne and Art Deco architecture. As a direct result, buildings such as the drive-in, which were associated with the car, received "aerodynamic" treatments. The circular drive-in flowed with the cars' pathways and allowed for increased patronage. It was not uncommon that this type of drive-in would become a core that was surrounded by concentric rings of hungry travelers in autos. The resulting emphasis on design, traffic flow, and signage all point to the maturation of this cultural resource in the American landscape.

World War II interrupted the evolving maturity of the drive-in since rationed gas, and parts and rubber shortages minimized the average time spent on leisure driving. However, America's love affair with the automobile was resurrected in 1946, and the design of drive-ins started moving from Art Deco to the International style. Both indoor and outdoor services became standard features. Exterior improvements usually included the use of a canopy or large overhang. Square, rectangular, or irregular footprints were often the outcome of such a diverse scope of meeting the needs of customers

In the late 1960's, the popularity of the drive-in began to decline due to increased competition from national franchise restaurants and a tarnished image. A Detroit Planning Study conducted in 1963 equated the drive-in with noise, litter, excess lighting, alcohol, violence, and loss of property values. Ordinances against these icons of the American roadway became prevalent in the 1960's and 1970's, when the use of fences, landscaping, and police supervision were sought by outraged homeowners living nearby.



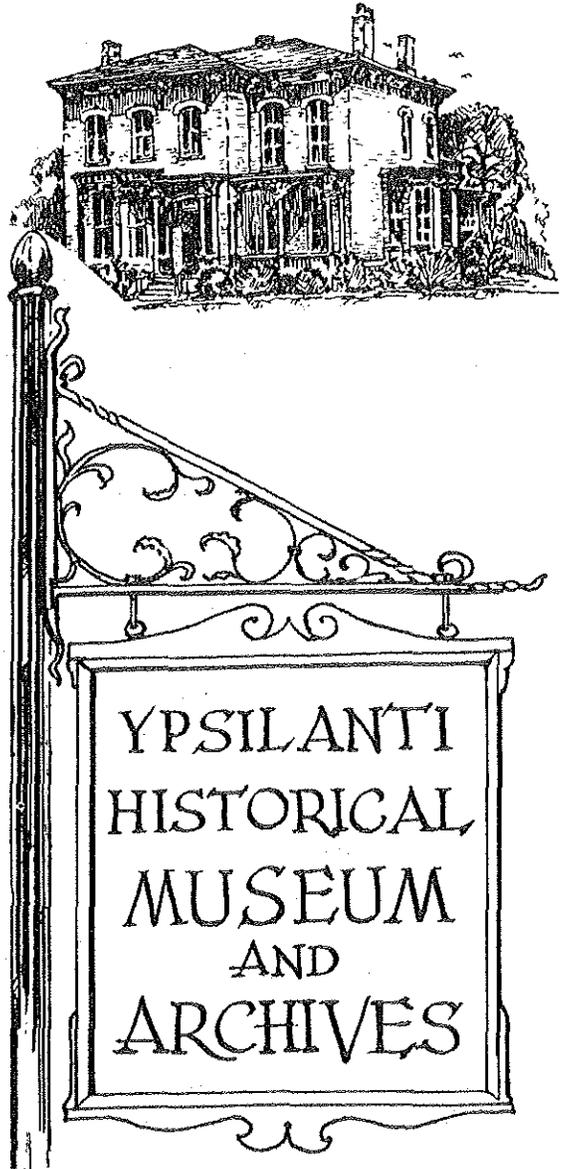
This drive-in survey began in Ypsilanti, Michigan due to the conspicuous examples such as Kluck's, Bill's Drive-In, and of the course, the Chick Inn. The most logical system that could be developed to search out the drive-ins was to consult the Ypsilanti City Directories. Twenty-nine structures were identified, of which thirteen have since been demolished. Five of the sixteen which still exist in Ypsilanti serve their original purpose. As a result, Ypsilanti contains the highest number of working drive-ins in the county.

The same sources were consulted for the rest of the county along with a windshield survey. Another twenty-nine structures were identified. Ann Arbor contains the second highest concentration of drive-ins; seven of the original twelve are still existing. Only three serve the function prescribed by their initial construction though.

## In Partnership with the City of Ypsilanti: Preservation Eastern Rehabilitates "Tool Room" at Ypsilanti Historical Museum

By Jim Gabbert

Inroads were made over the summer in Preservation Eastern's partnership with the Ypsilanti Historical Museum. The Museum, housed in an 1860 Italianate home on North Huron Street, is also the home of the city archives, and as such is a valuable asset for research by EMU students. Our first project with the Museum, begun near the end of last year's winter term, involved rehabilitating one of the small display rooms, the "Tool Room" on the second floor. Work was completed this summer under the leadership of Amy Arnold. Amy, along with Kerry Adams, Rob Berg, Kirk Bunke, Laura Manker, Kirsten Merriman, Tracey Miller, and Mark St. John all pitched in to paint walls, repair, strip, sand, and finish the floor, and re-arrange the tool display. The Museum and City officials are excited by the work done and eagerly anticipate more involvement by Preservation Eastern students.



Next on the agenda for the Museum is a similar refurbishing of the archives store room and repair of the front porch railing and posts. Volunteers are always welcome; this is a good chance for students in the program to acquaint themselves with some of the people and history of Ypsilanti. There is a lot of work left to be done, and not all of it involves physical maintenance, so if you are interested in helping to sustain this partnership, contact Jim Gabbert for more information, 482-6504.

*Editor's Note: Preservation Eastern recently learned that Kevin Walker, Ypsilanti Community Development Director, and the initial city contact for this partnership will be leaving his position at the City of Ypsilanti. We would like to thank him for his enthusiasm and energy over the past months in nurturing this partnership. For those of you who heard Kevin speak about the success and potential of this partnership at the EMU HP Orientation on Saturday, September 9, 1995, it is obvious that he is excited to see Preservation Eastern involved with the City of Ypsilanti....and we are too!*

### PRESERVATION EASTERN OFFICERS FOR FALL 1995

Director - Heather Richards

Treasurer - Tracey Miller

Activites - Kirk Bunke and Laura Manker

Public Relations - Amy Arnold and Heather Aldridge

Newsletter Editor - Heather Richards

**REMEMBER:** *Preservation Eastern meetings will be every first and third Monday of the month, 5:30 - 7:00 PM, Room 239, Strong Hall, Eastern Michigan University. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.*

## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CUTS FUNDING TO NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Rumors are flying around the historic preservation community about the National Trust for Historic Preservation losing its federal funding appropriations in the current political climate. To set the record straight - On July 14, 1995, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut National Trust funding from \$7 million to \$3.5 million effective October 1, 1995, and to zero dollars effective October 1, 1996. What this means to the Trust is still unclear, but staff positions at headquarters and regional offices have been eliminated and several positions that were vacant have been dismissed. Nancy Sizer, a Field Representative for the Midwest Regional Office, lost her position effective August 31, 1995. In addition, the Preservation Press has been turned over to a private publishing house, John Wiley & Sons. The press will still operate under its own name and the Trust will still have significant input into the publications, but certainly the latitude that the Preservation Press enjoyed in the past is in jeopardy. Clearly, the National Trust now finds itself in a position where it needs to rethink its strategy. The organization's budget is not comprised entirely of federal appropriations, and has in recent years always been vulnerable to federal funding cuts. Due to this position, the Trust has strengthened its other funding sources, and will probably position itself to utilize these other sources more efficiently.

## **TIM TURNER SPEAKS AT FALL ORIENTATION ABOUT NEW DIRECTION OF NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Tim Turner, Director of the Midwest Regional National Trust for Historic Preservation Office, was the featured guest speaker at the Historic Preservation Program's Fall Orientation held this year at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor on Saturday, September 9, 1995. Everyone who attended agreed that Tim Turner's talk was very exciting and uplifting, especially in light of the current political climate and recent federal funding cuts directed at the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). Mr. Turner chose to adopt the positive vision of such funding cuts, emphasizing the potential power of the NTHP if the organization separates itself entirely from the federal government and operates strictly as a self-supporting non-profit entity. Within this scenario the NTHP will be free to pursue its interests and agenda without any restrictions.

About forty-five people turned out for the morning of guest speakers in the lobby of the Michigan Theater.

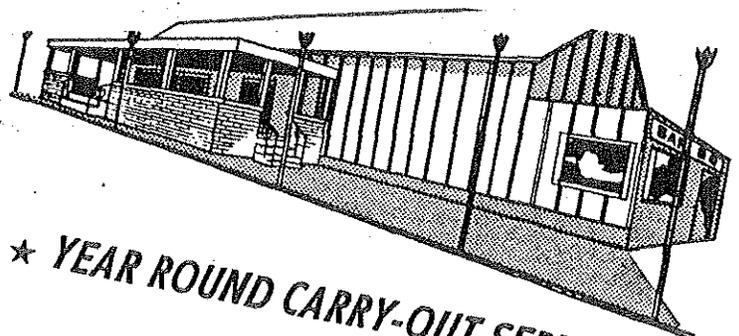
Kathryn Eckert, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer spoke about the different programs at the re-named Michigan Historical Center and the different ways that EMU students can get involved with SHPO activities.

In addition, a panel of speakers from local organizations introduced their respective programs.

*Editor's Note: We would like to thank all the speakers who graciously donated a Saturday morning to our program to talk about their organizations. We would also like to thank all of the people who worked so hard to organize these fete. And we would especially like to thank the Michigan Theater for opening their doors to our program.*

If you are interested in learning more about National Trust funding from the federal level please call the National Trust for Historic Preservation Legislative Information Hotline Number at 1-800-765-NTHP.

in YPSILANTI  
**Short Stop**  
DRIVE-IN



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## PRESERVING THE RECENT PAST: by Darrin Von Stein

*Are we tearing apart our recent heritage in order to create a perceived heritage of yesteryear?*

As I read through much of the literature in preservation magazines and texts, disturbing trends and attitudes toward post-World War II architecture and American culture become prevalent. Preferences toward the eighteenth and nineteenth century and issues of taste and style remain at the fore while much of architecture from the recent past is discarded. This often translates into the destruction of newer buildings or the removal of additions that record historical progression. Change is inevitable and must be celebrated in the preservation process.

The 1950's, 60's, and 70's represent a dynamic period in world history as America rose to a world power not only militarily, but culturally and artistically. Buildings from the latter part of the twentieth century stand as the most visible part of the American urban and suburban landscape, yet it is the period most easily dismissed. As I watch the downtown areas of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Saline, and Milan slowly evolve away from their recent past (represented by aluminum storefronts, large graphics and neon advertisements) toward a more distant past with heavy cornices, hood moldings and terra cotta, I have to wonder why we have this need to wipe away the achievements of our parents and grandparents. All too often I hear the cry of aesthetics and taste. These issues should be secondary in our understanding of history. Forms and styles throughout our built environment hold symbols and meanings that remind and teach us of our past. This is true for any period of in history. We must understand all periods represented in a given environment before we chose to remodel certain aspects into oblivion.

The architecture of the twentieth century presents many challenges for preservationists. Many buildings from the post World War II period are dismissed as non-contributing under the rhetoric that they do not meet the sacred fifty year criteria. Reasons for this are numerous, but unfortunately, one of those reasons is that we do not have the critical understanding that these buildings require. Architecture from earlier generations is imbued with literal historic associations, giving us the ability to analyze through their style. Greek Revival buildings of the 1840's and 1850's have a cultural content that speaks of democratic values and Jeffersonian America. This content reveals specific experiences and ideologies representing American culture during that period. Twentieth century buildings also express the culture that produced them, but rather than style, it is their function, form, and materials that reveal their cultural clues.

During the twentieth century, architects developed new ways of designing. Developments in modern physics, psychology, and medicine as well as artistic theories gave rise to a highly abstracted, formal, and sometimes impersonal architecture that seems to bear little relationship to the past. Just as people are inextricably linked to their past, it only follows that our creations are too. All modern architecture has roots deeply embedded in history, and as historians it is our responsibility to expose its link with history. It is because of this responsibility that I find it quite appalling that preservationists are often the first to disregard the twentieth century as non-conforming, ugly, and/or lacking the integrity of earlier generations. Architecture must evolve and change with humans. Architecture without those changes fails to serve any purpose beyond a kind of museum relic from a bygone era. This understanding must apply to larger contexts such as neighborhoods and especially downtowns. These areas must represent the entire spectrum of history, or they become as homogenous as Levittown.

Post-Modernism is the attempt to re-integrate a more distant and eclectic taste back into our culture as a way to re-establish the historic continuum that was broken as a result of the nineteenth century romantic movements, thus accounting for the poor attempts at recreating the vernacular and the over zealous use of an eclectic, ironic classicism. Whether one views this aspect of contemporary culture as positive or negative is not the issue here, rather, it is the fact that it exists. Contemporary society has a need for conflict and diversity while much of the modern period did not. Preservationists need to address this issue because it is a guiding factor in the restoration and rehabilitation of our towns and cities. We do not need all of the fabric from any given period in order to understand its lessons, but a sufficient amount must remain.

*Darrin Von Stein is a student in the EMU historic preservation program working on his final project about twentieth century architecture and its place in historic preservation.*

**Food for Thought:** Recently the "contemporary" envelope of the Ypsilanti City Hall was removed to reveal what once was a beautiful Romanesque facade. However most of that original facade was destroyed when the sheathing was initially applied. The question needs to be asked - was the natural evolution of the building destroyed in order to recreate another era? Didn't that "contemporary" envelope have its own story to tell?

**Researching the Ghosts of the Oliver House** by  
Laura Manker

*(Oliver House Development Company, Toledo, Ohio)*

As an intern for the Oliver House Development Company in Toledo Ohio, I had the opportunity to work on several different projects. Built in 1859, by the noted pre-civil war architect Isiah Rogers, the Oliver House was the most elegant and advanced hotel in Toledo. It was one of the first of its kind to offer running water, a fire place, and gas lighting in each of its 171 rooms. Today, after over one hundred years of wear and tear, the hotel is being renovated to house fifteen townhouses, a restaurant, and a microbrewery.

One of the most satisfying projects that I conducted involved surveying, cataloging, and photographing over one hundred artifacts from various Toledo structures that were being stored in the Oliver House. Other projects included writing a historical brochure on the building and researching the history of Toledo breweries. Smaller projects included writing biographies of local historic figures and gathering Toledo artifacts to be displayed for the opening of the brew pub.

The internship helped build my research and writing skills while allowing me to be a part of an ongoing restoration project. It is my opinion that this was one of the greatest benefits of internship, because it enabled me to see not only the rewards of taking such an ambitious project, but also some of the problems that are encountered.

**Sweating Out a Survey in Knox County, Indiana** by Jim Gabbert

*(Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana)*

Dirt roads, abandoned cemeteries, collapsed bridges—such was the venue for my summer internship. I was hired by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana to participate in their state-wide architectural survey program along with students from Ball State, Savannah College of Art and Design, and Depauw. We were split-off into teams and assigned counties to survey; the counties participating in 1995 were Clay, Clinton, and Knox.

I was relegated to the team charged with surveying Knox County in southwestern Indiana. The county seat is Vincennes, originally a French trading post on the

Wabash River. Vincennes' storied history includes the capture of Fort Sackville from the British by George Rogers Clark, a stint as capital of the old Northwest Territory under William Henry Harrison, and being the iron and steel manufacturing center of the Wabash Valley. In my capacity as a surveyor for HLF, I was assigned four townships and a part of the city of Vincennes to survey.

Our assignment was to drive every road, track, and path in the county and document the built environment. Our cutoff date for inclusion in the survey as a contributing resource was 1945; beyond that, resources were to be documented if they met with the usual criteria concerning integrity and context. Drainage ditches, cemeteries, bridges, levees, and dams were included as well as individual buildings, homes, and farmsteads. Each item was photographed and a survey form was completed using the available information. Upon completion of the survey, we composed short histories of the county, the townships, and the towns which will be compiled and published jointly by HLF and the sponsoring counties. The Knox County Interim Report is scheduled to hit the bookstores in September, 1996.

Surveys of this nature lead to many interesting discoveries that make what can be a tedious job worthwhile: a lock built along a riffle in the Wabash River in 1885 in a failed attempt to make Vincennes accessible to the Ohio River by steamboat; a Greek Revival mansion built in the "southern plantation style" by a man wishing to please his new bride; a single room log cabin expanded over the years to a nine room farmhouse; and a collective farm built by FDR's Resettlement Administration and dubbed by the locals "Little Russia." Surveys of this type also put you in touch with the people, the stories they tell, their reminiscences, and their dogs: Heidi, the cow-happy dog, Slimmin' Simon, Mookie the Mighty Mut, and Dog.

All in all, the experience was worthwhile (albeit a bit hard on my automobile), the organization (HLF) supportive, the project important, and the people interesting. I hope it was a stepping stone to a more active role in preservation in the future.

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westward explorations. Many significant routes such as Braddock Road between Alexandria and Centreville, VA, had to be eliminated from consideration as the integrity of the historic landscape had been overwhelmingly compromised by recent commercial and residential development.

Other roads had to be rejected because they lacked good directional signing, were a confusion of circuitous county roads, and/or had undesirable road geometrics. Although a central linear route was generally employed, at some points convenience was sacrificed for approximating the Washington experience.

After a review of 7,000 miles worth of inventory and field work, a system of tours was designed to satisfy a variety of potential tourist requirements, while at the same time attempt to thematically link major heritage resources, explore under-recognized landscapes, and give cohesion to regional heritage development(s).

Ten tours were developed as the Westward Travels of George Washington. The types of tours range from single theme tours (Washington's mission to Fort Le Boeuf 1753), to circular tours that connect several regions within one state. The Westward Travels of George Washington, as a system of heritage tours operates on the principle of corridor travel between anchor and hub cities. By definition, an anchor city (Alexandria and Pittsburgh), would serve as the motivational starting point and terminus of the tour. The anchor city provides a convenient location with already established George Washington interpretive sites, major heritage attractions, and visitor/transportation services. Hub cities within the system, serve as the primary clusters of heritage resources and visitor services found along the tour route. Physically, hub cities act as recognized overnight destinations and function as central points to radiate onto other tours.

George Washington during his early westward explorations as a land surveyor, military leader, and private land speculator traveled a good part of Virginia, Maryland, western Pennsylvania and present-day Ohio, and West Virginia. Organizing a system of tours based on his early travels provides a conceptual framework for linking diverse heritage developments with a larger national story. Should Congress choose to address a national program of transportation-based heritage development regions, The Westward Travels of George Washington has the potential of becoming a national heritage route demonstration project.

The iconic value of George Washington, as one of the most recognized founding fathers of our country, has the possibility of directing perhaps the largest and most diverse pool of tourists on a system of heritage tours across the Mid-Atlantic region. With a coordinated system of uniform/directional signage and well-paced interpretative centers, the system of tours has the capability of attracting both national and international tourists to discover the first "west" with the ready icon of George Washington as their most venerated tour leader.

The Westward Travels of George Washington pilot study was made possible by the Accokeek Foundation and the Richard Hubbard Howland Fellowship awarded to T. Allan Comp, Ph.D.; the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission, and the support and proposals submitted by T. Allan Comp, Alvin Rosenbaum, Randall, Sally Trumbower, and Hugh Miller.

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***Working With The US Air Force In Europe: Cultural Resources on Overseas Military Installations*** by Heather Richards

*(National Council for Preservation Education)*

This summer I had the opportunity to work with the Environmental Protection Program of the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. (Yes, this was an internship that I found posted on the board at Strong Hall.) Through the Department's Defense's Legacy Resources Management Program I was sent to Germany to wrestle with compliance issues governing cultural resources on overseas military installations. I had absolutely no idea what to expect of my ten-week experience in Europe dabbling in military cultural resources management.

When I arrived at Ramstein I slowly discovered that the Air Force's Environmental Protection Program in Europe was very young and concerned itself mainly with environmental health and safety concerns such as hazardous waste management, pollution prevention, etc. The conservation pillar of this program was undeveloped and the cultural resources side of conservation was nearly non-existent. My first day at the base, I was presented with a list of tasks to accomplish for the summer ranging from investigating the plausibility of national register nominations on overseas military installations to drafting management plans for historic structures recognized by host nations as significant that were located on US Air Force bases.

proposal for funding to further research the possibility of this cultural resource and potential solutions for managing such a resource on the base.

At the end of the summer I had drafted and reviewed a US Air Force Overseas Cultural Resources Management Policy and two Cultural Resources Management Plans. I also generated seven grant proposals for \$1.6 million in Legacy funding to help fill current funding gaps in cultural and natural resources programs at USAFE in light of the environmental clean-up emphasis of the environmental protection program.

This Legacy Resources Management internship was a very valuable experience for me. In order to understand overseas cultural resources management on military installations, I was forced to thoroughly learn and understand US cultural resources management legislation and concerns, and then apply that knowledge to the tenuous realm of the international community.

## EMU IS WELL REPRESENTED AT PIONEER AMERICA SOCIETY'S ANNUAL MEETING

Once again, several students/alumni will be presenting papers at this year's Pioneer America Society Conference in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Historically, EMU has been well-represented at past conferences. This year, *Session II: Cabin, Basement, and Ranch House in Developmental Perspective* will be dominated by EMU presenters.

Jeffrey Greene, THE NAVARRE CABIN: A STUDY IN "PIECE SUR PIECE" CONSTRUCTION

Lawrence L. Darling, THE MICHIGAN BASEMENT

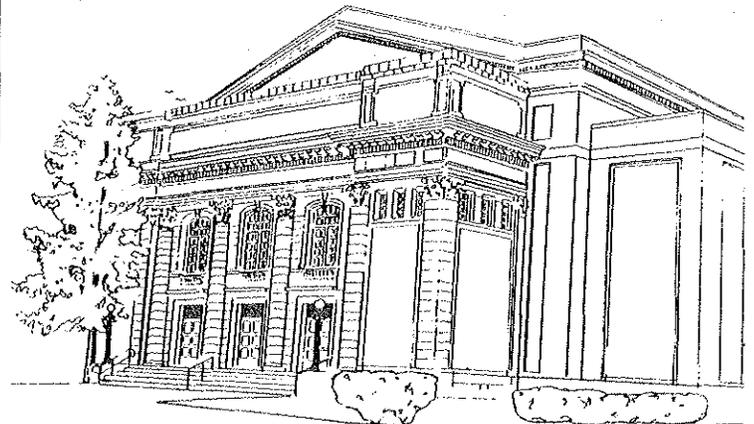
Kevin Coleman, THE RANCH HOUSE

The Pioneer America Society is an excellent forum to share your original research with other scholars. This year's conference will be October 12 - October 14, and Session II will be conducted on Friday, October 13.

### *Pease Auditorium is Once Again Open!*

The once-condemned Pease Auditorium is preparing to open its doors once again after a five year, \$5.7 million major renovation project. Pease has been a symbol of positive preservation efforts in Michigan. Opening night is October 17 featuring Maureen McGovern and The Duke Ellington Orchestra. Contact Program Coordinator Jennifer Bucklin at 487-3045 for more information.

Preservation Eastern is in the process of trying to arrange a behind-the-scenes tour of the restoration of Pease Auditorium. Contact Heather Richards for more information.



News of Alumni:

Weddings and Babies: Lauren and Jordan Cohen welcomed Melanie Jill to their family on August 30, 1995.

Lisa Lussier and Mark Carey married July 8, 1995.

Alumni Surveys: From the 100 surveys we sent out, we received approximately 40% back. If you still have one sitting around your house, please send it back to us, we would love to hear from you. If you "accidentally" tossed the survey into the garbage, contact us and we will send you another one! Here is what some of you said:

Sharon Alterman is working as an archivist in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. (1984)

Rochelle Balkam teaches at Ypsilanti High School and lectures at Eastern Michigan University. (1983)

Gerald J. Brauer is the Museum Director at a large historic site in Dekalb, Illinois. (1982)

Kevin Coleman is an architectural historian in Columbus, Ohio. (1993)

Linda Harvey-Opiteck is a cultural resource specialist in Albany, New York. (1983)

Evan Lafer is working with the National Trust in the Midwest Office. (1993)

Barry Loveland is Chief of Architecture and Conservation for a commision in Pennsylvania. (1980 - the first official graduate of the Historic Preservation Program).

Lydia McDonald is working at a museum in Chicago. (1982)

Melanie Meyers is working for an Office of Archaeological Research in Ohio.

James Ryland works as a curator in a museum in Michigan. (1993)

Thomas Shaw lists his occupation as "Bureaucrat" at a historic site in Minnesota. (1985)

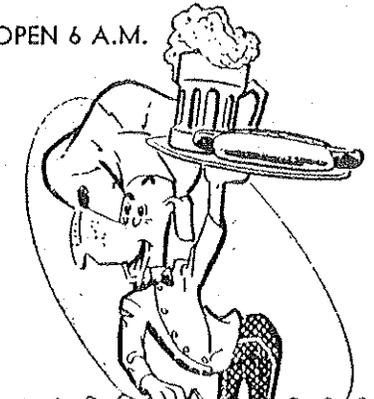
Beth Stewart works as an Executive Director of a museum in Michigan. (1982)

Susan Storwick is a planner in the state of Washington.

Jennifer Tucker is working as a historic preservation assistant in Memphis. (1993)

Jeffrey Winstel works with the National Park Service in Ohio. (1989)

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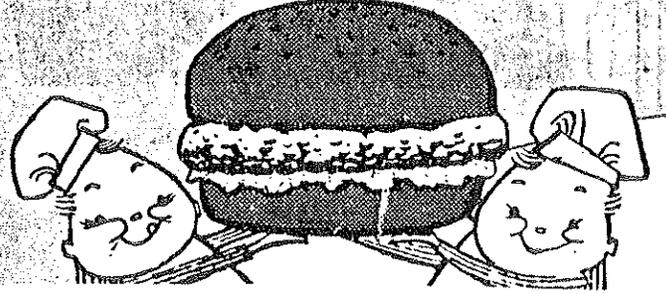
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