FALL 2012: ORIENTATION

THE POST AND LINTIEL

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This issue produced by the 2012-2013 PE Board, and edited by Amara Jayne Frontczak.

CALL FOR HELP
Interested in helping craft our next newsletter? Then PE needs you! Contact Amara.

THE WELCOME ISSUE

-GREETINGS TO ALL NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS!
-PE’s FIRST GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, Thursday September 13th.

The Congress finds and declares that
(a) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;
(b) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people;…

- Preamble to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Greetings!

Welcome to EMU’s Historic Preservation program. As Director of Preservation Eastern I genuinely look forward to getting to know you during this upcoming year. I would highly recommend joining Preservation Eastern (PE). PE is the student lead 501(c)3 affiliated with the preservation program.

We are dedicated to providing unique experiences, access to professional opportunities, peer networking, and a good dose of fun to our members. This year we have an excellent speaker series lined up, a number of preservation site visits, and plenty of socials. I can honestly say that being a part of PE this last year has fostered close friendships that have made my graduate school experience special. You will hear a phrase around here: “you’re going to know these people for the rest of your life;” and from what I can gather, it is very true. Now is the time to build a network of peers and mentors, and I encourage you to begin with Preservation Eastern. Follow our Monday Messages or talk to a current PE member to learn how you can get involved. As always our board is here to serve you, our colleagues and members.

I look forward to meeting you.
Scott Slagor
PE Director
DR. TED’S CORNER

Welcome to the Historic Preservation Program’s 33rd year!
2012-13 will be another demanding and dynamic year with a wide range of courses, activities, and events planned. We remain the largest graduate program in historic preservation in the United States (90+ students currently), and the only such program in Michigan, with over 500 Alumni spread all across the nation...and the world for that matter.

NEW STUDENTS FOR FALL 2012
To this point, we have admitted 31 new students into the Historic Preservation Program for the Fall term!

Join me in welcoming, Stefanie Bozinoski, Jeffrey Brown, Erin Berger, Jeremy Bontemps, Nathaniel Burt, Colleen Clinton, Virginia Davis, Sara Flintoft, Megan Gilbert, Chelsea Grossmann, Katherine Jeffries, Alec Jerome, Ashley Johnson, Katherine Kirby, Alexandra Kosik, Sara Kucharski, Joel Lipscomb, Samantha Malott, Allison McGeagh, Cristy Meck, Linda Montgomery, Jaroslava Pallas, Melanie Parker, Mario Passera, Melanie Pinard, Allison Savoy, Virginia Schomisch, Christopher Smallwood, Melissa Somero, Rebecca Todak, and Richard Wiener. (And there are still a couple more applications pending!)

ORIENTATION
New and familiar faces will gather for an extraordinary New Student Orientation on September 7th at historic Sherzer Hall, hosted by our new Preservation Eastern Board! This will be followed immediately by the annual Evening-Under-the-Stars soiree, a long-standing tradition held atop Sherzer Hall and sponsored by our Alumni Chapter.

GRADUATING STUDENTS
Also, please congratulate our summer 2012 term graduates: Virginia Davis (Gini), Kelly Johnston, Hannah Loncharich, Anna Kindt, Laura Mayer, Geoff Mayer, Katie Remensnyder, and Diane VanBuren.

DR. McLENNAN HEADS WEST
It was a bittersweet evening for those who attended the going away celebration for Dr. Marshall McLennan and his wife Janet on May 18th at the EMU Foundation. Many, many Alumni, current students, faculty and friends turned out to wish Marshall and Janet a fond farewell as they embarked on the journey to their new home in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Marshall and Janet we all wish you well, and thank you for all you’ve done for the HP Program over the years...not the least of which was getting it all started.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS
The Historic Preservation Departmental Graduate Assistants (GAs) this year are Kim Long and Amanda Wetzel. We also have two other GAs this year, including Melinda Ortiz, and Ginny Schomisch who was awarded our first HP Challenge scholarship made possible by the Bund Challenge. A number of students hold agency-sponsored GAs or Internships, including MDOT (Melinda Ortiz), the City of Ypsilanti (Connie Locker’s replacement), two positions with the Ypsilanti Historical Society one of which is supported by the EMU President’s Office (Deidre Fortino and Lauren Carpenter), and lastly, Matthew Siegfried who is our GA with the Michigan Historical Center for the Michigan Historic Marker program.

NATIONAL TRUST for HISTORIC PRESERVATION and ASSOCIATION FOR PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY (APT) CONFERENCES
This year Melinda Ortiz was awarded a Diversity Scholarship to attend the National Trust Annual Conference in Spokane, Washington. And, Dawn Bilbran has been selected by APT for a Student Scholarship to attend the APT Annual Conference in Charleston, South Carolina...congratulations to both students on receiving these national scholarships as they are very, very competitive. Sarah Marsom has also been selected as a student speaker at the Southeast Museums Conference in Williamsburg this November. We know you will all represent EMU and the HP Program very well.

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Look for some interesting changes in whom and what is where this term!

Should you have any questions, concerns, comments, etc., please contact me, Professors Dan Bonenberger or Nancy Byk....or adjuncts Jeff Weatherford or Jeff Green.

Here's looking ahead to another great year...our 33rd year of exceptional preservation education!!

Dr. Ted
This summer I had the opportunity to help create an interpretation plan at the Campbell-DeYoung Farmstead in Leeland, Michigan. My work was part of a grant that was awarded to our program from the Michigan Humanities Council to work on that plan. The Leelanau Conservancy currently owns the Campbell-DeYoung Farmstead and maintains the site, but their focus is mostly on nature and wildlife. The grant allowed for the Conservancy to develop other aspects of the site’s interpretation, namely the historic farmstead.

My work started in Field School, first with a tour of the site, which was intense to say the least. We hiked over the entire perimeter of the property, which gave an overall view of the property that was not apparent from where the main farm structures are located. Besides the tour, the main focus of the work at Field School in Leelanau was working with the Conservancy to determine the needs of the site. The week flew by and we were able to accomplish many of our goals. One thing that was needed right away was training for the docents the Conservancy employs as volunteers to give regular tours to members of the community. Other tasks at hand were to create signage, a webpage, and a docent training guide.

Once home from Field School, the first step in developing the interpretation was to place the farm into context; to figure out how the site fits in the broader range in farming in America. Online searches turned up little information, so it was off to the library. Luckily for me, Eastern’s library has a way to search online databases, as well as the holdings of other libraries. Our library here at Eastern was easy and quick to navigate, but the University of Michigan’s Graduate Library, was another monster altogether. After finding the locations of a few books that pertained to farming there (8 to be exact), I drove to Ann Arbor expecting to be in and out in no time flat. Boy was I wrong. The Grad, as it is called, is separated not only into floors, but also directions - i.e. North, South, East, and West. It sounds easy enough going in, but once you make it to the basement - which is where all of my books were - finding North with the correct corresponding stacks was quite difficult. About halfway through my library escapade, I was able to finally figure out the floor plan. All 8 books took 2.5 hours to find. Those half floors will get you each and every time!

After finding a good amount of information, I was able to sit down and copy relevant pages to create binders (yes that’s plural) full of resources. As time consuming as it was my online and library research is only the beginning. More research remains to be done, along with the signage, and docent training manual before the work of the grant will be finished. Though this is just the beginning, my work truly opened my eyes into to the real world of interpretation (and the hard work that goes into crafting an interpretation plan). I can’t wait to see the end result and hear feedback from the Conservancy and Leelanau community.
IN THE ARCHIVES, I STUMBLED DOWN THE RIGHT PATH
BY AMARA JAYNE FRONTCZAK

When I stumbled upon some primary resources last semester that didn’t end up working out for my GIS (geographic information systems) class project, I was left with interest and even a bit of personal concern for a collection of resources that were in no imminent danger, but danger all the less. The collection was a set of historic resource surveys that were carried out by the Historic Preservation Program at EMU in its early days. Historic resource surveys involve "in-the-field" data collection and often include pictures, site plan sketches, and critical information about the materials and architectural expression of (most often) a residential house, or local building. Cities need surveys to alert them to the location of historic resources that are not already known, resources that have recently become "historic" (the too often 50+ year rule), the condition of previously known historic resources (is it still extant?), and vernacular trends in the built development of the area (can identify areas of likely historic districts and built heritage). This allows for the planning of roads and other infrastructure without negatively impacting valuable assets, and it can often positively impact the vibrancy of a neighborhood when these resources are highlighted.

This particular historic resource survey recorded rural buildings in Washtenaw County, and was led by Dr. Marshall McLennan. Other professors helped as well, but the bulk of the surveying was carried out by various graduate students in the historic preservation program. It was a broad-brush survey done mostly windshield style, and was funded by the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission and the Michigan History Division of the Michigan Department of State. The specifics of the original survey are detailed in McLennan’s Report, “Washtenaw County Rural Building Survey” written in 1982 (and now found Box 8, Folder 3 of collection #018.WCHP). While there was certainly still some semblance of order to the collection, it had been processed by many people, multiple times and through several offices. Many of the surveys had even already been scanned, and linked to parcel data in the cutting edge, and award winning, eWashtenaw HistWeb- - a public GIS site first published in 2001. This normal wear from processing and scanning documents that were not really designed to be kept was one of the reasons why the collection was in danger.

Another reason for the danger was the fact that the survey pictures had been glued directly onto the old carbon copy paper, or other acidic cardstock. The acid was affecting the pictures, and making the carbon paper turn brittle and yellow. The pictures themselves had never really been treated well, since they were just for reference, and relatively small—generally around 2” x 3” rectangle. While the acid problems cannot be completely stopped without the extensive care of a photographic conservator, which the surveys do not warrant, the problems with the condition could be mitigated by proper archival storage. As well, a digital backup could be made to insure against future degradation damaging the materials to the point of information loss.

This was my first step, to arrange for the archival care of these materials back here at EMU. Working with the University Archivist, Alexis Braun-Marks, and the Washtenaw County Economic Development & Historic Preservation Officer, Melissa Milton-Pung, I was able to arrange for the materials to be donated back to EMU. They are now housed in the EMU University Archive under Special Collections. This special collection designation allows for materials that do not fall under the specific mission of the University Archive to be collected and housed because they pertain to the HP program and the fact that we are the official depository for the National Council for Preservation Education.

Once the materials were transferred here, and the acquisition paperwork completed, one danger had abated; the materials would no longer be subject to the limits of county storage space. I then surveyed the collection to better understand exactly what was in these three large boxes. One of the boxes even said
“MYSTERIES,” and I thought, “What exactly have I gotten myself into?” It turns out I got myself into a whole lot of work. First I discovered several different types of survey cards (there were five), then figured out how the surveys were sorted (by location and parcel number), and finally understood exactly what the surveys were mostly about (vernacular farmsteads). This whole process, from resource discovery to survey, took around three months.

With just a month or so left of the semester, Alexis helped me craft a processing plan, and I officially started a practicum at the library over summer. I spent my first week physically processing the materials and moving them into archival folders and boxes. I continued to discover more about the surveys as I sorted, and had to alter my arrangement several times. Finally I was satisfied that everything was in its original/as received order, as well as an order that made intellectual sense of the materials.

It turned out that order was by geographic location, specifically by the township the surveys had been done for, and then by whether or not the survey had been successfully matched to a parcel number. This preserved the arrangement as I had received the materials. And that scary “MYSTERY” box had really just been properties whose parcel numbers could not yet be identified and linked. Other materials turned out to be survey notes, old database printouts (connected paper with the holes on the margin...I know you remember it), and even some handrawn maps. There were also several subsequent student projects that had been included with the original surveys from 1981, done in similar format. These were all given separate folders.

After sorting the materials, I created a finding aid in a software program called Archivist's Toolkit or "AT." This will generate the actual catalog record for the materials, xml so that these resources can be found, and even keeps track of the boxes barcode for retrieval in an automated system know at the Library as the ARC.

As well, part of my work with this collection will be to digitize the individual surveys, and provide metadata that will make them highly searchable. The physical surveys are already available in the archives, and soon the first phase of my digitization, the bulk scans of each folder in the collection, will be available on the University’s Digital Commons. In addition, this next semester I will be using the cataloguing software LUNA to digitize the individual surveys and display and publish their metadata to the web. This will make the pictures and the surveys searchable in a way that they have never been before.

While most of the surveys were scanned and digitized before, ten years is a long time in terms of digital standards and storage capacities. These most recent scans (there are around 4,000 total) were done by me to current ISO standards (600dpi TIFF). This will allow these files not only to be accessible, but hopefully to be accessible for years to come in a digital format that is both rich and large enough to also serve the archival record. Digital files are not all created equal, and while the standards for best practices in digital archiving have matured over the past ten years, they still do not represent consensus or widespread adoption. This can be a challenging environment for digital collections to stay up to date, and interoperable. I believe the scanned images I have created will meet both these requirements for at least 20 years.

Hopefully my digitization project will continue to go well over the next few months, and I will be done entering all my metadata before the end of this semester. I have learned so much over the past few months about processing a collection, designing a metadata schema, and just using my computer. I am also now way too familiar with the challenges of scanning and wrangling so many files and generating so much metadata. I hope to use my experiences with this collection to help the University Archive develop future digital collections, specifically those with images and geographic data.

I will be speaking and writing more about my experiences working with these materials, and hope to share the fully digitized and searchable collection with you soon. It represents a rich store of vernacular information about original farmsteads in Washtenaw County, and also shows the development of Marshall McLennan’s vernacular system for house types and styles. It has been a pleasure to work in the archive with materials and topics that stimulate me to constantly think and problem solve, and has introduced me to the entire world of digital humanities. What a good fit for me, and all from a GIS project that never really got off the ground!
“Remember the what?.....”

When Sarah Marsom applied to the Historic Preservation program here at EMU, she never dreamed she would be immersed in the War of 1812 and an obscure battle that has only recently begun gaining national recognition and attention. When adjunct professor Jeff Green began the HP program as a student, he couldn't imagine that his studies would not include something related to the War of 1812.

Why was Professor Green so sure? He grew-up in Monroe, Michigan – the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the War of 1812. Monroe is bisected by the River Raisin (the name is anglicized French and non-residents are easily identified through their unwitting references to the Raisin River) and sits just off the western edge of Lake Erie. And, of course, in the Old Northwest Territory of the 18th century, water access was crucial, making the point where the river and the lake come together an ideal spot to settle. This was true for the Native Americans who had traveled throughout the area for centuries, and also for the French who had more recently come to the area. In fact, current day Monroe was then known as Frenchtown.

By 1812, the settlement at the River Raisin had become a crossroads for many factions, who included the British, their Native American allies, the American Army, and French habitants caught in the middle. On January 19th, 1813, these factions clashed resulting in the greatest loss for the American Army during the course of the war. Close to 400 causalities were reported, with over 500 of American General James Winchester’s soldiers taken prisoner. This engagement and its aftermath would decimate Frenchtown – making it quite literally into a ghost town. And it would also launch the battle cry “Remember the Raisin!” which electrified and galvanized the soldiers at the frontier of our fledgling nation. The settlement would not recover until well after the war – and when it did, it was much less “French” and much more “English” in its feel, culture, and development.

The River Raisin Battlefield and Eastern Michigan University’s Historic Preservation Program have had a very close relationship, as the HP program has been involved in almost all of the key projects and successes of the battlefield over the past 15 years. From archaeological digs (in conjunction with Heidelberg College) to class projects researching the history of the site to Dr. Ted and Professor Green serving on a “Blue Ribbon” committee commissioned to investigate and prepare a National Landmark application (which actually helped lead to the battlefield’s designation as the 393rd unit of the National Park Service in 2010). Even Eastern Michigan’s President Martin was nominated to the River Raisin Battlefield Foundation.

Today, Sarah and Professor Green continue that relationship. Late last year, Professor Green was tapped by the National Park Service and the Monroe County
Historical Society to coordinate and prepare a cultural landscape inventory and cultural landscape report for the River Raisin National Battlefield Park (the battlefield’s new official NPS title). As the Monroe City Planner and Historic Preservation Officer, Green has had a pivotal role in the city’s efforts to protect its historic and cultural resources.

And due to the sheer scope of the project, this was an ideal opportunity for an internship. When Dr. Ted and Professor Green were able to secure funding for this opportunity through the university and the Monroe County Historical Society, Sarah was an eager applicant. Sarah and Professor Green have been working on the project since early 2012.

During her first semester at Eastern Michigan University, Sarah was enrolled in the Historic Preservation graduate program’s “Documenting Cultural Landscapes” as an elective course. She enjoyed the content of the course and it furthered her understanding of how the landscape can be used to better interpret a site. Because of her work in this course, Sarah was interested in the opportunity to work on a cultural landscape report in the real world, and the River Raisin National Battlefield Park for was natural fit. This internship has allowed Sarah to hone in on her specific interests in site interpretation and visitor experience.

Dr. Ted facilitated initial correspondence between Sarah and Jeffrey Green. Since joining the project, Marsom has been awarded a McLennan fund scholarship to provide transportation funds to facilitate research at archives in Southeastern Michigan and Canada; she has also been awarded a graduate fellowship to help fund her research while she works on the cultural landscape report. This November, Sarah will travel to Williamsburg, Virginia, to participate at the Southeastern Museum Conference and present “Remember the Raisin: Re-imagining a Historic Landscape”.

While researching the site took up several early months, they are now moving into the writing stage of the inventory and report – both of which are crucial to the future development and management of the site. Professor Green said that he expects the project to be completed early in 2013.

So far, Sarah’s research into the history of the site has relied heavily on resources at the River Raisin National Battlefield Park visitor center, as well as the Monroe Historical Museum, the Detroit Public Library, and several other research facilities. Since 1812, the site’s historic integrity has been compromised due to the construction and subsequent demolition of a paper mill. Here Professor Green’s vast insider knowledge of Monroe’s development and familiarity with old city maps has been important in developing the historical narratives that lend crucial understanding about how the site should be developed in the future. Together, the two are working towards a cohesive landscape proposal that will help the park interpret the past for generations to come.

Sarah Marsom came to Eastern from Northern Arizona University, where she received her undergraduate degree in Parks and Recreation Management. As an undergraduate, Sarah completed two internships: one at Riondian Mansion State Historic Park (Flagstaff, AZ) and the other at Old Salem Museum and Gardens (Winston-Salem, NC).

Professor Jeff Green holds an undergraduate degree from Eastern Michigan in History and Political Science, as well as a Master’s degree in Historic Preservation. He is currently enrolled in the American Culture Studies PhD program at Bowling Green State University and has also been taking graduate courses in the History Department here at EMU. Green has been teaching as an adjunct in the HP Program since 2002. This fall his class offerings include Preservation and Planning, Law and Preservation Research Techniques. He also has a day job—as the Historic Preservation Officer and City Planner for the City of Monroe, Michigan.
Think about your hometown. When you left, did you love it? When you go back, do you love it? Many of our colleagues come from a variety of different places, and no matter where you call home I bet there is something special, culturally diverse, and unique that makes your heart sing.

In June, I took some of my pals on a fun-filled weekend to the Cleveland, Ohio area- where my heart lies. When I lived there, I was not impressed, often bored, and always looking for some place new to go. I know, this is not really encouraging you to go on vacation there. I must say though, that once I moved three hours away to go to school at Eastern Michigan University, my entire perspective changed. There was so much to do, so much to see, so many cool things to try I had missed- how could I have been so blind?

So I planned a series of adventures to take my friends on, and it was pretty fun and awesome. I had the obligatory tour stops to edify my past existence, "this is my high school, this is where my first job was" etc, but I also was able to show them what college country is like. There are almost a dozen universities in the 40 mile radius of Northeast Ohio. Then we toured Cleveland proper, which is not what some call "the Mistake by the Lake" but much more! We toured the Cleveland Polka Hall of Fame- yes, there really is such a place, and it is chock full of accordions. Next it was on to the Westside Market, which is the local indoor market, and currently celebrating its centennial. We also toured the Great Lakes Brewery and learned about their business’s push for eco-friendly products and materials. We also learned about their annual festival that commemorates the Cuyahoga River burning, as well as current building solutions that fight pollution.

I'm not done yet! Next we visited the majestic buildings of the Arcade and Tower City, the house the movie 'A Christmas Story' was filmed (legit), the oldest building in Cleveland (in its original site) called Dunham Tavern, saw Frank Gehry’s work on the
Case Western Reserve’s campus, stopped at the Cultural Gardens, drove through Little Italy, Cleveland Heights, and I'm sure I'm forgetting another attraction.... Finally, we watched the sun set on Lake Erie. All of this was over just TWO days, and we still did not do everything on my Cleveland cultural fun list! (This is where I do a shameless plug for Cleveland tourism-check it out, you will have so much fun!)

If you haven’t gotten the gist, there was so much to do, and I shined playing host in my hometown. I was able to share my favorite haunts and all the coolest places that I love- plus I discovered many more! If you are looking for a fun and different approach to learning about tourism, be a tourist in YOUR hometown! Plan a trip, invite some friends, map out what you want to do. You'll find things you've never done before, and share places with an enthusiasm that is sure to make the trip a hit. Step up and show everyone why YOUR hometown is the best place they have never heard of.

ALL PHOTOS, Scott Slagor

Frank Yankovic's Accordion at the Polka Hall of Fame.

Westside Indoor Market.

"BE A TOUR GUIDE"

PE would like to make this section a regular column. Submit your content about your favorite hometown haunts, places to visit, and other insider knowledge that might never make it to a travel guide. Your nerdy fellow students will love it, and it will inspire more fun filled trips.

BE A CHAMPION FOR LOCAL TOURISM!
CONVERSATIONS WITH A SHRINKING CITY: INTERNING IN SAGINAW, MI

As preservationists we are taught to look critically at our urban fabric and judge it based on "significance" which is determined by the "criteria" for the National Register. Significance can be a planning tool and a planning challenge. Many shrinking rustbelt cities are losing population in core historic neighborhoods; neighborhoods that are often imbued with significance. When funding for "blight removal" is funneled down the pipe to the local level, how does a city determine the "most significant" properties, and demolish other areas?

During a nine month internship in Saginaw, I worked with Brenna Moloney; the National Trust’s Rightsizing Coordinator, to discover what rightsizing means to residents of shrinking neighborhoods. “Rightsizing,” is the buzzword for reducing a city’s size and infrastructure to better serve its population. With Ms. Moloney, I attended community meetings, documented resources, and conducted an oral history project where I interviewed local residents. The interviews recorded where these residents found significance and sense of place, especially important in a time when the city must reinvent itself.

The Upper East Side of the City of Saginaw has been designated the “Green Zone.” This zone is planned to be returned to nature, used for some type of urban agriculture, or other green industry. The ultimate goal of this designation is to reduce infrastructure. However, the Green Zone contains two National Register districts, and multiple properties that are likely eligible for designation or inclusion. The neighborhood is also largely African American and low income. While there are advocacy groups for the East Side, disinvestment continues. Structures are left to rot for weeks after they are demolished, the schools in the area are closed, and some less traveled roads have been blocked from main arteries. In interviews, nearly all residents labeled the East Side as having historical significance and beauty. They listed the Potter Street Station, the Potter Street commercial district, the old General Motors plants, and the neighborhood surrounding N. Jefferson and N. Franklin Avenues specifically. One resident living in the Green Zone said, “They are restoring houses on the West Side of the city, why can’t they do that here?”

This statement stuck with me every time I explored the city,
watching its development and investment patterns unfold. What about this community makes its “significance” disposable, while other areas are finding new investment partners? Are population loss and the inability to maintain the infrastructure and safety reason enough to erase a neighborhood?

Truthfully, I cannot answer these questions in this short article. What I have learned from the challenges that face Saginaw is how to look at all aspects of a community and its history, outside its architectural importance. Every resident finds their sense of place in different resources, and thus significance is not as simple as physical or architectural value. Preservation is more than just history and material; it is building on a relationship between the current population and cultural resources.

Rightsizing is a planning approach being considered by cities across the Midwest. The idea of shrinking a city may be practical, but the minute an area is targeted as disposable it also marginalizes the population. How then, as preservationists and planners, do we assess the cities’ needs and at the same time be adequately sensitive to the significant history of those living in affected neighborhoods?

This internship took me out of the classroom and allowed me to engage in a dialogue about community with real residents. Not all of this dialogue was positive, but all of it was authentic. These interviews and encounters have fostered a perspective of how I view significance. Everyone everywhere has a history to share, and I have come away from this experience feeling very inspired by the resilience of Saginaw citizens. They have the ability to find a sense of place even in challenging times, and we as preservationists should not ignore that.

East Saginaw, Michigan, 1867. Chicago: Ruger, A.

Library of Congress Geography and Map Division
Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA dcu
g4114e pm003731
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114e.pm003731
At the 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival (AAFF) this last spring, a film was shown entitled “Amos Fortune Road.” The short, twenty minute film was screened before “As Above, So Below,” itself an interesting film about impermanence, recycling, and the transformation of matter—including from human ashes to diamond. “Amos Fortune Road” was directed by Mathew Buckingham and debuted at the AAFF in 1996, but was shown again for this year’s historical anniversary theme. The film was bizarre but engaging. Shot in black and white the film has sound but no dialogue—instead narrative text appears between scenes like that in a silent movie.

Briefly the film introduces Sharon, a young teacher form New York City, visiting rural New Hampshire for the summer to teach theatre to school children. Sharon is also the carpool driver for one of her students, Mary Anne. Every day as they are driving, they pass a historical marker on the side of the road, whose subject becomes the background obsession of the main character. Amos Fortune Road, the title of the marker, is all Sharon can read as they drive by. Since Sharon is an outsider, she consults locals for more information about Amos Fortune, including her student, Mary Anne. Sharon learns quite a lot from Mary Anne, since the young girl read two biographies about Amos Fortune in school, including the “grown-up” one. Sharon learns that Amos Fortune was a slave who in 1769, at the age of 70, bought his freedom and moved to the area to become a prominent business man.

But Amos Fortune is not really the star of the film—the star of the film is definitely the old backwoods that they are driving along. While events are introduced throughout the film, the persistent sound and visual is that of the car traveling along the roads. There are a few other shots from outside the car that provide a little perspective, but otherwise the film aims to be experiential for the viewer, who is made to feel like the driver of the car, silently thinking about the
information we have silently been given in the dialogue cards.

At the end of the film, you learn that the biographies where Sharon learned secondhand (from Mary Ann) about Amos Fortune were really fictionalized accounts, and the only pieces of historical evidence about Amos are 17 tattered receipts on display in the local Quaker meetinghouse. Sharon sees these receipts herself in a display case when the children perform a play at the meeting house. The oldest receipt was for Amos himself, when he purchased his freedom. Sharon also realizes that the roads they drove on every day date back to the time when Amos Fortune lived, and for her this provides the personal link to history that is the main subject of the film, and the connection that is destroyed when she finds out the history about Amos was mostly fictionalized.

The film raises many questions about local histories and the authenticity of historical markers that were installed more to encourage tourism than promote historic accuracy. The Jaffrey Chamber of Commerce is certainly still perpetuating the fictionalized (but well selling) biography by Elizabeth Yates McGreel, Amos Fortune Free Man, as fact. (http://www.jaffreychamber.com/visitors/) The fact that Amos is buried with his wife in the Old Burying Ground is certainly true. In the film we learn that Willa Cather is also buried in this cemetery with her partner—also true. And there are those seventeen receipts which confirm some details about Amos’s life, but they are brief at best.

Since the film's debut, the Historical Society of Cheshire County has created a more researched historical packet, more broadly contextualizing the receipts to local history. (http://www.hseccnh.org/educationhp/hp10.cfm) In addition, a local group who run a summer lecture series at the Quaker meeting house every summer, known as the Amos Fortune Forum, has also contributed to Amos’s history with the publication Amos Fortune, The Man and His Legacy, in 2000. It is aimed at teachers to foster discussion about the difference between the historical record and fictional accounts, but perhaps also published because the Forum does not want to lose the legitimacy regarding the man who is their namesake. (http://www.amosfortune.com/life.html)

Local people who are invested in
history often have different perspectives about what is fact and fiction, and “Amos Fortune Road” raises awareness about how fictionalized histories are created and perpetuated. These fictionalized histories are just as important to preserve and document, perhaps more important even to the local people who are invested in such ideals. It is nice to make history fit the romanticized way one might want to view the past, perhaps just as these locals would like to imagine their benevolent Quaker ancestors as people who treated a former slave as an equal. There is a good chance that some of them did, but these intangible ideals we have about the past are so interwoven into what become the "facts" of history that it can inform how we perceive and publicize our past.

These intangibles also leave an imagination of, and even a desire for, a personal connection to history. Everyone fills in gaps, makes connections and appropriations, until a story speaks to their own personal narrative. Thus it is very fitting in the film that the outsider is able to identify with history, and find belonging in place, through the tangible act of driving on the same roads that Amos traveled. But Sharon feeds this imagined past with fiction at the beginning. Not knowing something, or rather knowing just a name or just one fact, can lend itself to imagining, as we see and experience the film. In the end, Sharon’s imagined ideal is shattered with more facts, as she is inspired to do more research about Amos Fortune. This realization concerning historical "fact" in the film mirrors Sharon’s own discovery that what she thinks she knows about her personal life, specifically her relationship with her partner may have been just as imagined. In the end though, she does more research, which is also what the viewer, another outsider, is also inspired to do. (Or at least this viewer.)

The viewer in fact has a mirrored experience to Sharon’s because of the lack of dialogue in the film. Dialogue cards supply the viewer with brief facts (just like Amos’s receipts) and the audience is left to imagine what Sharon is thinking (seeing only brief parts of Sharon in mirrors as the film is shot from her perspective). And it works rather well. Without dialogue, just the noise of driving a truck on back woods roads, the experience is so like driving and thinking to yourself that it leads the viewer to find their own imagined narrative-a narrative that is shattered itself at the film's end.

The first person documentary perspective of this film is fittingly a biographical fiction (the actors played themselves), and a clever vehicle to portray the blurry line between fact and fiction in issues of identity and history. Historical markers are often a very impersonal form of interpretation, but in the film “Amos Fortune Road,” the marker provides an opportunity to examine our personal connection to the past. More of us history “viewers” should be aware of the personal and imagined connections to the historical record we make, and be inspired to do more research.

**MHPN**

Looking for networking opportunities? Interested in building your resume with volunteer work? Then you should check out the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. For a $20 annual student membership, you will receive discounted pricing for our annual conference, fall benefit, and other programs, and be instantly connected to a network of hundreds of preservation professionals. Visit the website, http://mhpn.org/, or drop us an email at mhpnvols@gmail.com to find out more & to join today!

**Michigan Historical Society Conference**

138th Annual Meeting and State History Conference
September 28-30, 2012
Monroe, MI

2012 will commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812

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Historic Sherzer

A bit more about the building, the fire, the rebuild, and the telescopes.

Sherzer was built in 1903 for $55,000 and was designed by E. W. Arnold, with input from Dr. William H. Sherzer. It is named for the same Dr. Sherzer, then the head of the Natural Science's Department. It is located in Eastern's Historic District, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Sherzer Observatory is actually older than the building, and was moved when the building was constructed, but only later received its iconic rooftop refractor telescope in 1922. The building has survived two fires—a minor burn in 1973, and a large fire on March 9th, 1989 that destroyed over 50% of the structure. (See middle photo series for a before, during, and after of that fire.) The building was rebuilt under the guidance of architectural firm, Quinn Evans, where adjunct professor Ilene Tyler is a principal. The rebuild received recognition from the Masonry Institute for its reproduction of the original brickwork. The new version of the building also included the addition of concrete slab floors and an elevator, bringing the hundred year-old building up to modern code requirements.

The Sherzer observatory is open on clear Thursday evenings from September through April during the academic year following Astronomy Club meetings, and at select times during spring/summer terms (May through August). The observatory is operated by Physics & Astronomy staff and student volunteers from the EMU Astronomy Club.

To the right is the Meade LX200 SCT on its roof deck mount.

Today the art department occupies most of the building, but the Sherzer Observatory, located on the roof, still speaks to the building's natural science origins.
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**NEW THIS SEMESTER: AN HP GA IS ALWAYS AROUND THE BUILDING MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY FROM 9 AM -5 PM, AND MANY DAYS TILL 7 PM!**

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This past summer I had the amazing opportunity to work at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, in Alpena, MI. I received a fellowship through GLERL (Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory), NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and CILER (Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystem Research) as an Education and Outreach specialist. Now while all of this sounds like a lot more science than historic preservation or museum studies let me explain a bit more about the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is one of thirteen other marine sanctuaries in our country. It is the only sanctuary located in fresh water, and one of two that were created to protect cultural resources. This sanctuary was specifically designated to protect about 200 known shipwrecks in the 448 square mile area known as Shipwreck Alley.

As an Education and Outreach Specialist I was in charge of a variety of different tasks. I conducted visitors inside the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, lead Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) builds within the community, and tours on the glass bottom boat the Lady Michigan to show shallow shipwrecks (multiple times a week!). I also helped in major outreach events with the community like the Alpena Block Party, the Maritime Festival, and the Nautical Festival.

In addition I had side projects that I worked on individually. The biggest project I completed involved the help of a variety of NOAA’s archaeologists (including our State Maritime Archaeologist, Wayne Lusardi) as well as the Education and Outreach Coordinator, Sarah Waters. With their help I created an “artifact of the month” for the next two years. These twenty-four artifacts will highlight a variety of topics about shipwrecks and will hopefully facilitate visitor connections. I had to conduct all the research on the shipwrecks and the artifacts that I chose, but I had a great variety of artifacts to choose from, as the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is the state repository for maritime artifacts. As well I had access to Pat Labadie, the Historian and Exhibit Coordinator at Thunder Bay.

You can access all of these resources at http://thunderbay.noaa.gov/welcome.html. You can also learn a little bit more about Michigan’s maritime history along with the work of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the State of Michigan’s. Both work to protect our maritime cultural resources right here in Michigan. If anyone has any questions, let me know. I would love to share some more details about my time at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.
Anyone who has been to Paradise, Michigan will agree that it is one of the most beautiful places to visit in our great state. After having lived here for three months I can confirm that the naming of this town was not a means of roping people in – this place IS paradise! My internship was at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point. Overall I was able to assist in many aspects of the museum’s operation: I worked as a historical interpreter in the Lighthouse Keeper’s Quarters and the Surfboat House, I created and conducted a visitor study survey, went out and searched for shipwrecks in Lake Superior, handled artifacts from the Edmund Fitzgerald with my own hands, dressed up as a lighthouse keeper’s daughter from the 1920s for special events and even got paid to take people into Lake Superior’s oldest operating lighthouse and soak in the beautiful views all day!

My main mission this summer was to begin my final project work – to nominate two shipwrecks for the National Register of Historic Places. The Jupiter and Saturn were built in 1872 by Eber Brock Ward of Detroit and were purpose-built schooner barges. They both sank that same year on November 27th along with two other vessels during an intense winter storm. Not only were both ships lost along with all of their cargo (the Saturn still holds all of her iron ore!) but fifteen people lost their lives as well. Their sinking prompted Eber Brock Ward to contact the Secretary of Treasury Benjamin Bristow about establishing US Lifesaving Stations on Lake Superior. The state of Michigan had been given funding from the US Lifesaving Service to construct stations on the Great Lakes but they were all being built on Lake Michigan. After Ward’s prompting, four US Lifesaving Stations were established that covered forty miles of Lake Superior’s Shipwreck Coast. All four stations were built in 1875 and housed approximately eight Surfmen and one Keeper who would physically watch for ships in distress and row out in surfboats to rescue sailors in peril.

My goal with the nomination of the Jupiter and Saturn includes applying for a Michigan Historic Marker to be placed on the beach that will help raise awareness of the location of the Saturn. It is a quick swim or kayak from the shore and is less than twenty feet deep. This makes the wreck highly accessible because it can be seen by anyone with a mask and snorkel. I think it is important that the public be aware of the shallow wrecks that can be seen without a diving certification. Shipwrecks are a mysterious, tragic and exciting part of our
history on the Great Lakes and the more people that can learn about them and experience them first hand the better.

This has been the greatest summer of my life. Not only have I learned more than I expected to but I’ve also met some amazing people and made great connections. Noah Webster defines paradise as an intermediate place or state where the souls of the righteous await resurrection and the final judgment. If this is true I hope the resurrection never occurs. I have already found Paradise.

Dressed up as a lightkeeper's daughter for 1920s interpretation.

GALLERY

The Vermilion Point US Lifesaving Station – built 1875.

Some Lovely Lady Preservationists, at the Winter Networking Mixer!

The Old Board and the New Board at the End of the Year Event, May 2012.

For Next Issue, Enter your fall photos in a contest to win PE schwag!
Membership Counts, Join Preservation Eastern!

Preservation Eastern is the best way to keep up on historic preservation activities both within the department and throughout the area.

We’re planning guest speakers, a lecture series, activities, events, and trips for the upcoming year. So, join now and get involved!

We are excited to have you join us; your membership and involvement will ensure the future growth and success of the organization!

**Membership Options** (check one):

- Semester Membership - **$12**
  (valid September 2012- December 2012/January 2013-May 2013)

- One Year Membership - **$20**
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**Membership Benefits:**

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- Rewards for attendance (up to two rewards a semester)
- If you are renewing your membership you will receive a t-shirt or a water bottle (your choice; circle which one you want, while supplies last).

Name: __________________________________ Program of Study: _______________________________

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Please send this completed form with a check or money order to:

Cash should be given directly to Sarah Marsom, or another PE Board Member.

Preservation Eastern
Eastern Michigan University
Department of Geography and Geology
Historic Preservation Program
Strong Hall
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

(to be completed by PE Board Member)

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THANK YOU READERS

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It is freely distributed electronically by contacting preservationeastern@gmail.com.

Support Preservation Eastern

To make a gift to the Historic Preservation program at EMU, please go to www.emufoundation.org, or send your checks to:

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Eastern Michigan University
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The EMU Foundation is an institutionally related 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that solicits and manages funds on behalf of Eastern Michigan University. Its primary mission is to provide additional support to students, programs, services and educational community of EMU. The EMU Foundation was created in 1989 by the EMU Regents, and is governed by an independent Board of Trustees that elects its own officers. All trustees serve as volunteers.

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Lina Stephens
Is Coming to EMU!

Come hear the Director of the Motown Museum speak about her experiences in the museum world, her career path, and what its like to work at Hitsville, USA.

**Saturday**
**September 22nd**
**1 PM**
**EMU HALLE LIBRARY**

More details to come, stay tuned by following PE's Monday Messages.

*Sponsored by Preservation Eastern.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>September:</strong></th>
<th><strong>General Meeting</strong></th>
<th><strong>RM 239 Strong Hall</strong></th>
<th>Thu, Sep 13</th>
<th>9:15 PM – 10:15 PM</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social at Putterz Mini-Golf</td>
<td>Sat, Sep 15</td>
<td>4:00 PM – 6:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cranbrook/ Saarinen House Tour</td>
<td>Fri, Sep 21</td>
<td>5:30 PM – 10:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Speaker Series: Lina Stephens</td>
<td>Sat, Sep 22</td>
<td>10:00 AM – 6:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social at Tower Inn</td>
<td>Wed, Sep 26</td>
<td>8:00 PM – 11:00 PM</td>
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<td>Thu, Sep 27</td>
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<td><strong>October:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social at Zap Zone Ypsilanti (Laser Tag)</strong></td>
<td>Sat, Oct 06</td>
<td>4:00 PM – 7:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>General Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>RM 239 Strong Hall</strong></td>
<td>Thu, Oct 11</td>
<td>8:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social at Sticks in Depot Town</td>
<td>Wed, Oct 17</td>
<td>8:00 PM – 11:00 PM</td>
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<td>Dexter Cider Mill &amp; Corn Maize at Blast Farms</td>
<td>Sat, Oct 20</td>
<td>3:00 PM – 8:00 PM</td>
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<td>Thu, Oct 25</td>
<td>9:15 PM – 10:15 PM</td>
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<td><strong>Movie Night</strong></td>
<td>Fri, Oct 26</td>
<td>7:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>November:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pewabic Tile Tour/ Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Sat, Nov 03</td>
<td>2:00 PM – 4:00 PM</td>
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<td>Social at Tap Room Downtown</td>
<td>Wed, Nov 07</td>
<td>8:00 PM – 11:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>General Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>RM 239 Strong Hall</strong></td>
<td>Thu, Nov 08</td>
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<td><strong>PE Potluck Thanksgiving</strong></td>
<td>Sun, Nov 11</td>
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<td><strong>Roller Skating at Skatin Station in Canton</strong></td>
<td>Sat, Nov 17</td>
<td>6:45 PM – 10:00 PM</td>
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MORE TO COME...

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