

OAKLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

— MINUTES —

REGULAR MEETING September 6, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:11pm.

Roll call: Stephanie Suszek, Dave Walls, Dave Decker, Rosie Richardson, Jim Craft, Richard Stamps.

Motion made to approve the minutes from Aug. 2, 2022, **unanimously approved**. Suszek will submit them for publication on the website.

Old Business

- **Replacement for Melinda**

Still looking for a new OCHC member. Ruth Dufresne has been approached. **Rich will reach out to Kathy Bilger.**

Still looking for a new OCHC treasurer. No volunteers yet; tabled for now.

- **Meeting time change!**

OCHC meeting date will switch from the first Tuesday of every month to the **second Monday of every month starting in October.**

- **Certificates of thanks to Melissa and Melinda**

Certificates have been signed by the County Executive and Rich hand-delivered Melinda's to her. Rich still trying to get a hold of Melissa to schedule a drop-off.

- **At-Risk properties** - no new updates.

- **Tax millage proposal, SB 653** – no new updates.

- **1857 Oakland County Land Ownership Map – Hess**

The map that was donated to OCHC is now in the Archaeology Lab at Oakland University for safekeeping while we decide what to do with it. It is 5'x6' but can still be out even now that classes have resumed. Rich removed the wooden dowels.

Rich and Steph visited the 1857 Hess map displayed inside Poppleton School at the Troy Historic Village. Rich notes that these maps were advertised as "Land Ownership Maps," so **we might refer to them as "1857 Land Ownership Map – Hess" going forward.** This 1857 Hess map was also Oakland County's first land ownership map.

Dave D. made a map cheat sheet – there are 18 confirmed maps, including the one at Oakland County Executive Office (which no one on the OCHC has seen yet).

"Map 19," if it exists, could have hung at Botsford Inn or the general store at Botsford and Warner – **someone needs to check.** Kathy Bilger and John Marshall have done research to find where a lot of these maps are. **See Map Assessment report.**

What should be done with the OCHC copy, post-restoration? Maybe gift it to a local library as an incentive. Oakland University Archives might be a candidate for this map – especially if they will agree to display at Kresge Library. Display should be a condition of OCHC gifting the map, should not just go into storage.

High priority: get photographs of each township, Clarkston's probably has the best set-up, lighting, and condition for us to photograph. The Holly map is also in good shape, but yellowed and stored in a dimly lit room.

We have verified that the maps are not all exactly alike – there are three known versions in coloration AND some of the landowners are not consistent on all the maps. It has been suggested that these maps (the coloring, the lithos on the border) have some link to antislavery activity, but this has not been verified.

Next steps:

- consider getting an assessment and restoration estimate from the map preservation company that preserved Clarkston's map, ask the County to fund its restoration and repair, and then make this process available to other orgs seeking to preserve their maps.

- photograph individual townships from each map (when possible) so that they can be compared – Dave W. to ask brother-in-law if he'd be available to help us with the photography.
- OCPHS has high-res scans of the 1872 map already; it would be beneficial to put a booklet together of the 1857 and 1872 map scans for comparison and to gift. **Dave D. to talk to Clarkston Library about taking theirs out of the frame so we can photograph it. Dave D. will also come up with a set of recommendations for historical societies and libraries how to care for their 1857 Land Ownership Maps. Dave D. will send OCHC the cheat sheet.**

Committee reports

- **Website - Jim, Tec Dave, Stephanie**

Thumbnails have been updated, we just need to add a Brief History of Oakland County (Jim has written one that takes us up to the 1960s). Links and 1877 booklet, Lewis Cass proclamation with transcript, and the bicentennial book could go up there **(Dave D. to send it to Jim).**

OCHC members have the rest of the week to get any edits for the Brief History to Jim, otherwise he will send this to Haley to go up on the website.

We can submit Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society events list to populate the events calendar on the OCHC website – **Dave D. will forward this list to Jim.**

- **Local History as a subset of American History - Jim, Stephanie, Rosie**

Poster budget of about \$4000 looks like it will be approved; we will get the posters framed. **Look into other frame options that will be more durable, hard to tamper with.**

Oakland County and the Arsenal of Democracy poster is complete and will be the first one we distribute. **Next topics to make into posters could be westward migration (Jim) or the Great Migration (Rosie).** Jim has put together a template for posters.

Next steps: identify where they will go – the goal is to put posters in 50 venues scattered around the county; libraries could account for half, but we also want these to go into retail/public spaces like Emagine theaters and hospital waiting rooms. Every three months, they'll have to swap out the poster for the new version.

Jim will put together info for participating sites. Rosie to reach out to local news stations to see if we can get some press coverage for installation.

Dave D. will create Oakland County Historical Commission business cards for OCHC members to give out when distributing posters/poster information at local businesses. It will include the OCHC website, but we need to decide what contact info can go on the card. **Dave D. will reach out to County IT** about setting up an email address that we can access (or that JoAnn could access and forward messages to OCHC, if only County employees can have county email addresses).

- **Observatory** - no update; Mike McGuiness is taking initiative though
- **Finding Guide** - Tec Dave and Dave – no update
- **Historic house research guide** - Carol, Tec Dave – can be added as a resource to OCHC website
- **African American history update - Rosie**
Freedom Seekers in Oakland County - Leslie Pielack submitted the Grant with Rosie as a consultant; Rosie is looking into similar grants that OCHC could apply for.
- **Essay contest and time capsule update - Rosie**
Rosie has drafted a flyer to advertise the essay contest; **Rosie will resend the letter to OCHC** for final approval before sending to schools about the time capsule project; perhaps a wood barrel with a plaque for the time capsule.
- **History Coalition - update – Dave D.**
Dave D. asked members for 1857 Land Ownership Maps and got a great response. Next History Coalition meeting will be held in October, date TBD

New Business

- Rich has meeting scheduled with County Executive Dave Coulter to discuss taking the proclamation and putting it in the County Executive building, maybe in his office or in the conference room for greater visibility. Some concern re: Lewis Cass, possibly because of his stance on states determining whether or not to allow slavery; proclamation isn't actually signed by Cass, but rather his secretary. **Rich will follow up and see what the concerns are. Rich will follow up on the dead millage**





















and plant the seed for a future Oakland County history millage. Heber County, UT gets their millage from the hotel tax – perhaps something like that could be a source for us?

- Rosie suggests planning a trolley tour of Oakland County history, maybe with alcohol? Similar multi-city tour of DUR trolley route took place years ago in Clawson, Troy, Birmingham, Rochester. There has been a Civil War one, too. Bloomfield organized one based on the 1818 expedition. Could be a passport program, a la Macomb History Alliance, with a prize at the end. A golf cart tour on the path of the interurban? **Dave D. to bring these ideas up to the History Coalition.**

Next meeting: Monday Oct. 10, 2022, 7:00pm

- Nov 14 Jim will lead meeting while Rich is out of town
- Dec 12 meeting will be held at Rich's house

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Richardson, seconded by Walls, adjourned at 8:46pm.

Map No.	Location	Status	Style	Photo	Comments
1	OCPHS Carriage House, Pontiac	On display behind glass	3		Dowels missing, damage to borders and minor damage in townships.
2	County Executive Office Building, Pontiac	On display			
3	County Courthouse, Office of Pam Worthington, Pontiac	On display	2		Incorrect date on plaque (1864), very dark, shellacked.
4	Clarkston Library Community Room, Clarkston	On display behind glass, in mylar sleeve	1		Restored 1992 (per Mollie Lynch). On original dowels. Great condition.
5	Clarkston Historical Society, Clarkston	In storage			Dirty, flaking, fragments missing. On original dowels. Donated in 1992 by Bill & Mary Beth Huttenlocher.
6	Troy Historic Village, Poppleton School, Troy	On display behind glass	2		Dowels missing. Good to excellent condition.
7	Birmingham Museum, Birmingham	In storage			
8	Baldwin Public Library, Allen House hallway, Birmingham (JM)	On display			From John Marshall research: "Donated by Walter R. Graves, OCS, 1972" "1857" handwritten near publisher name.
9	Warner Mansion, Farmington	On display behind plastic			Kathy Bilger researching, in place since 1992.
10	Hadley House Museum, Holly	On display	2		On original dowels, slight damage, yellowed. Good to excellent condition. Possibly one of the original Hadley House artifacts.
11	Northville Mill Race Park, Wash Oak Schoolhouse, Northville	On display, partially rolled	2		Could be on original dowels.
12	OCHC, Oakland University Arch. Lab, Rochester	In storage	3		Donated 2022, dirty, flaking, fragments missing. Dowels removed and retained.
13	Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (from catalog)	In storage			From John Marshall research: "Roll map stored in a tube. It been shellacked and is very dark."
14	Bentley Historical Library map #2, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	In storage			From John Marshall research: "Is in four pieces and not very good condition"
15	Library of Michigan, State Archives, Lansing (from catalog)	In storage			In 4 pieces.
16	South Oakland County Health Division Office	On display behind glass			From John Marshall research, restored 1999/2000
17	Detroit Public Library SSER department, main branch/Burton Collection (JM)	In storage	3		From John Marshall research. In three pieces.
18	Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm	In storage			Fair to poor condition (per Pat McKay).
19	OCPHS Archives	In storage	2		Donated September 2022. Very poor condition and flaking. Missing top dowel and part of bottom dowel, repaired with scotch tape in places.
20?	Botsford Inn? Botsford and Warner Store? Same map as #9?				Possibly still in place. See Kathy Bilger research.

1 – OCPHS Carriage House



3 – County Courthouse



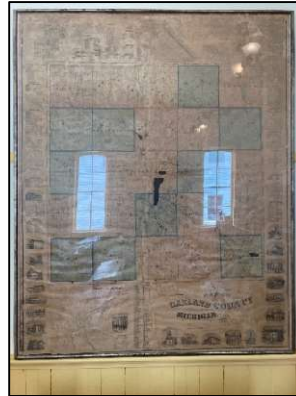
4 – Clarkston Library Community Room



5 – Clarkston Historical Society



6 – Troy Historic Village



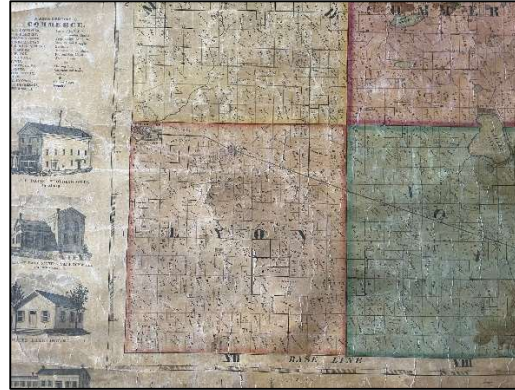
10 – Hadley House Museum



11 – Northville Mill Race Park



12 – OCHC OU Lab – partial image (in storage)



17 – DPL/Burton Collection (in storage)



Map Shading

Every map has certain townships shaded in blue, and which townships are shaded appear to follow three styles. Some maps have townships shaded in colors, while other maps have the townships outlined in those colors. Unsure if these colors have any significance, and if that information needs to be recorded for each map.

Map Shading - townships in blue:

Style 1: Oxford, Oakland, Springfield, Highland, Pontiac, West Bloomfield, Novi, Royal Oak

Style 2: Oxford, Rose, Springfield, Oakland, Highland, Pontiac, West Bloomfield, Lyon, Novi, Royal Oak

Style 3: Oxford, Rose, Springfield, Oakland, Highland, Pontiac, West Bloomfield, Novi, Royal Oak

1857 First Landowner Map of Oakland County: Map Information

References

- “The First Printed Map of Oakland County” – LeRoy Barnett, 1992, OCPHS Oakland Gazette Vol 25 No. 3, appended herein.
- The research conducted by John Marshall of Bloomfield Hills into the locations and condition of the maps known to him in 2009 – 2010. I have copies of his research notes.

Map Characteristics

The map is a cadastral (plat) map of Oakland County scaled to 1-1/2” to 1 mile scale. Landowners, lakes, rivers, roads, schools, churches, cemeteries and mills are recorded on the map field. Town plats are shown on the top third of the map; the bottom third is bordered by vignettes of buildings, which are listed on page 7 of this document.

It is five feet wide by six feet tall, constructed of 4 pieces glued to a linen or muslin backing. The maps were originally mounted to two wooden dowels, one at the top and one at the bottom. Some of the existing maps are still mounted to these dowels while others have had them removed.

The map pieces are lithographs in black ink on white. The colored townships or boundaries were hand-colored after printing but likely before the pieces were assembled into a whole map. After a complete map was assembled, a varnish or shellac was applied to the map surface.

The coloring or shading of the townships is variable to each map piece, but appears to follow at least 3 styles, with townships shaded blue being consistent within each style. The cause for these differences (or for the shading of these townships) is unknown.

Research by Jo Pate and Ruth Kennedy on behalf of the Oakland County Genealogical Society established that different landowners appear on different maps – a section or township on one map has different landowners than the same section or township on a different map. The maps have not been analyzed for these differences.

There are 22 vignettes – listed later in this document – surrounding the body of the map, along with 22 business directories or town plats surrounding the top half. These appear to be consistent across all versions of the map.

Map History

The maps were originally contracted for in 1855 and made available to the public in December, 1857. Some may have been released to map endorsers earlier.

The publisher is S. H. Burhans (Soloman Hasbrouck Burhans) of Chicago, Illinois with F. Hess credited as surveyor. The lithographer was Klauprech & Menzel of Cincinnati, Ohio. A quick search reveals this firm created several maps throughout the Midwest.

Per the Barnett article and his referenced Oakland Gazette articles about the map, the surveys were conducted by Colonel William Zawadill of Chicago. Why F. Hess is credited as the surveyor is unknown.

1857 First Landowner Map of Oakland County: Map Information

The Barnett article indicates there were 285 subscribers to the map, and around 14 endorsers, who likely got a free copy as a payment for the endorsement. Likely then, about 300 maps may have been made.

Copies of the map were sold for \$6.00 each, or about \$205.00 in 2022, adjusted for inflation.

To have a vignette of your home or business placed along its border cost \$40.00, or about \$1,362 today. There are 22 of these vignettes around the border of the map.

Map Research Efforts to Date

The Oakland County Genealogical Society published a transcription of the Burton Collection map in 1993 and reprinted in 2012. The transcription was completed by Jo Pate and Ruth Kennedy. It is available as a digital download from the OCGS website (paid) and in printed form at the OCPHS research library.

Professor LeRoy Barnett of the State Archives of Michigan wrote a comprehensive history of the map and published it as an article in the Winter 1992 edition of the OCPHS newsletter.

John Marshall of the Bloomfield Historical Society undertook to document known locations of the map and their condition as of May 2010, and to photograph the map stored at the Burton Collection at the Detroit Public Library.

Some individual map owners (such as historical societies and libraries) have researched their copies of the map; these research efforts are known but their results are generally unpublished.

Map Locations

When LeRoy Barnett researched his article in 1991 and 1992, he postulated that less than a dozen copies of the map remained. Efforts were undertaken in 2010 by John Marshall and in 2022 by the OCHC to locate as many copies as possible – John Marshall located and recorded about ten, and the 2022 effort added an additional 9 or possibly ten copies. To date, there are 19 known maps.

Photographs and Availability

At various times, versions of the map have been professionally or semi-professionally photographed and of course many photographs of the maps exist in private ownership.

In 1994, the map currently displayed in the office of Pam Worthington at the Oakland County Courthouse was photographed at the behest of the Oakland County Historical Commission, with Xerox copies of the photographs put in a 3 ring binder. The location of these original photographs is unknown.

This binder was in the possession of the Oakland County Research Library until its dissolution – at that time the book was given to the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

This binder has been digitally scanned and the images published on the OCPHS website.

There are no known very-high resolution digital versions of the map.

1857 First Landowner Map of Oakland County: Map Information

Restoration Efforts

The copy on display in the OCPHS Carriage House was restored under the direction of Gretchen Adler and reported as “completed” in the July 1981 Oakland Gazette. It had been restored by Mary Frederickson of the Panhandle Plains Museum in Texas.

The copy in the Clarkston/Independence Library Community room was restored in 1992 under the direction of Mollie Lynch, the then-director of the library.

Opinions and Recommendations

In my entirely subjective opinion, here are my thoughts on “what’s next”.

1. OCHC should choose the best version of the map – likely the copy at Clarkston Library – and have it professionally photographed under ideal conditions. The photographs should be taken township by township for use as a reference and for restoration efforts of other maps.
2. OCHC should, if possible and if funding can be obtained, have its copy of the map restored under the auspices of a professional document restoration firm. To do this, the map should be sent to the restoration firm for assessment and a cost/time estimate. The map at Clarkston was restored by Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts (www.nedcc.org). I recommend sending the map there for assessment.
3. OCHC should investigate the appropriate methods for storing archival copies of the map and publish guidelines to protect stored copies.
4. OCHC should make recommendations to organizations that have the map on display to ensure that display conditions are optimal. For example, several have their maps hanging from the original dowels with the bottom dowel unsupported. This is very likely causing strain on the upper binding of the map – the dowels should be attached to a frame of some sort that will properly support it. In addition, some are exposed and not under glass or plastic.
5. OCHC should maintain and publish a list of known map locations for the public to view.

1857 First Landowner Map of Oakland County: Map Information

Town Plats, Business Listings and Vignettes

Using the Burton Collection map as a reference and starting at the top left and working around the map clockwise, here are the plats, business listings and vignettes:

Beginning at the top left corner, proceeding left to right

1. Village of Davisburgh
2. Plat of the village of Birmingham
3. Business Directory of Birmingham
4. Business directory of Gardnersville
5. Business directory of Buckhorn Village
6. Business directory of Auburn
7. Business directory of Austin
8. Niles Corners Township of Troy
9. Business directory of Springfield
10. Business directory of Novi Centre
11. Business directory of Clarkston
12. Plat of the village of Clarkston
13. Business directory of Franklin
14. Business directory of White Lake
15. Business directory of Oxford
16. Table of distances in miles and tens to & from each village in the county
17. Village of Rochester Avon Township
18. Plat of the village of Kensington
19. Business directory of Milford
20. Business directory of Rochester
21. Plat of North and South Milford
22. Business directory of Holly Village

Proceeding down the right side

1. Algers Addition of Holly Village
2. Royal Oak Village
3. Business directory of Royal Oak
4. Plat of Lakeville
5. Business directory of Lakeville
6. Village plat of Stony Creek
7. New Hudson
8. Plat of Orion Village
9. Business directory of Orionville
10. Baptist Church, Pontiac
11. New Store, Geo. H. Emmons, Proprietor
12. O.C. & R.B. Morris, Hardware
13. Parke Farm, Residence of M.W. Kelsey
14. Pontiac Flouring Mill
15. Residence of Joel Loomis, Pontiac

Proceeding along the bottom, right to left

16. Hodges House by Mrs. M.A. Hodges, Pontiac
17. Episcopal Church, Pontiac
18. Residence of E.C. Myrick, Pontiac
19. Paddacks Mills
20. Residence of M. Wisner, Pontiac, Michigan
21. Court House of Oakland Co.
22. Business directory of Pontiac
23. McConnell & Bacon

24. Map of Pontiac

Proceeding up the left edge from the bottom

25. Residence of John Thomas, Oxford, Oakland Co. Mich.
26. Hotel of Seaman Davis, Oxford, Oakland Co. Mich.
27. Residence of N.W. Clark, Clarkston, Oakland Co.
28. Robert Garner's Residence
29. John Garner's Residence, White Lake
30. White Lake Church
31. Res. Of David Smith & A.B. Rockwell, Farmington
32. J.C. Davis Flouring Mills, Davisburg
33. Business directory of Commerce
34. Map of the village of Commerce
35. Walled Lake Hotel by E.K. Childs
36. Business directory of Walled Lake
37. Town Plat of Walled Lake, Commerce Township
38. Waterford Village, Township of Waterford & Independence
39. Clinton Ville, Town of Waterford
40. Business directory of Farmington
41. Business directory of Oakwood
42. Plat of Oakwood

1857 First Landowner Map of Oakland County: Map Information

Vignettes / Buildings

1. Baptist Church, Pontiac
2. New Store, Geo. H. Emmons, Proprietor
3. O.C. & R.B. Morris, Hardware
4. Parke Farm, Residence of M.W. Kelsey
5. Pontiac Flouring Mill
6. Residence of Joel Loomis, Pontiac
7. Hodges House by Mrs. M.A. Hodges, Pontiac
8. Episcopal Church, Pontiac
9. Residence of E.C. Myrick, Pontiac
10. Paddacks Mills
11. Residence of M. Wisner, Pontiac, Michigan
12. Court House of Oakland Co.
13. Business directory of Pontiac
14. McConnell & Bacon
15. Residence of John Thomas, Oxford, Oakland Co. Mich.
16. Hotel of Seaman Davis, Oxford, Oakland Co. Mich.
17. Residence of N.W. Clark, Clarkston, Oakland Co.
18. Robert Garner's Residence
19. John Garner's Residence, White Lake
20. White Lake Church
21. Res. Of David Smith & A.B. Rockwell, Farmington
22. J.C. Davis Flouring Mills, Davisburg

Map Legend

Map of Oakland County, Michigan
Surveyed, compiled & drawn by F. HESS,
Surveyor
Published by S.H. Burhans
Klauprech & Menzel's Lith. Cincinnati
Scale 1-1/2 inch to one mile

Explanations

Railroad
Plank Road
County Road
C Church
D.S. District School
S.M. Saw Mill
G.M. Grist Mill

Known Map Locations

1. OCPHS, on display behind glass, Pontiac
2. County Campus, Executive Office Building, on display, Pontiac
3. County Campus, Office of Pam Worthington, on display, Pontiac
4. Clarkston Library Community Room, on display behind glass, restored 1992, Clarkston
5. Clarkston Historical Society, in storage, Clarkston
6. Troy Historic Village, Poppleton School, on display behind glass, Troy
7. Birmingham Museum, in storage, Birmingham
8. Baldwin Public Library, Allen House hallway, on display, Birmingham (JM)
9. Warner Mansion, on display, Farmington
10. Hadley House Museum, on display, Holly
11. Northville Mill Race Park, Wash Oak Schoolhouse, on display, Northville
12. Oakland University, Arch. Lab, in storage, Rochester
13. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (from catalog)
14. Bentley Historical Library map #2, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (JM)
15. Library of Michigan, State Archives, Lansing (in 4 pieces) (from catalog)
16. South Oakland County Health Division Office, restored 1999/2000, on display behind glass
17. Detroit Public Library SSER department, main branch, in 3 pieces, in storage (JM)
18. Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm
19. OCPHS Archives
20. Former Botsford Inn? Botsford and Warner Store?