

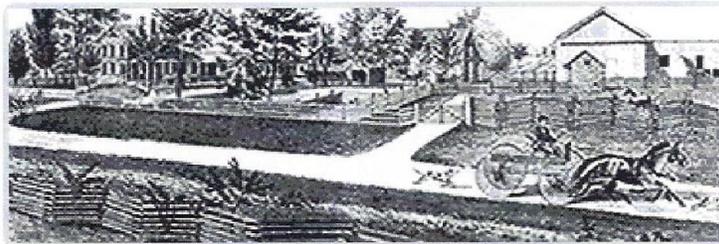
# LEGACY

— A Newsletter of the —

2006

Volume 1, Issue 1

## Bloomfield Historical Society



Serving Bloomfield Hills & Bloomfield Township, Michigan

[www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org)

## Little Log House: A Survivor's Story

It's a Bloomfield real estate soap opera. It's the story of a humble log house destined for demolition numerous times then rescued at the last minute by someone who valued it.

It's been sitting on the north side of Lone Pine, between Franklin and Wing Lake roads since it was erected sometime in the 1830s, about the time Michigan achieved statehood.

As you drive by today you may find it hard to believe that within its single 16- by 22-foot room a family reared 13 children.

The house, with its simple round-log construction, has managed to survive by adapting to changing circum-



Photo by Al Eicher

stances— a witness to the history of our area from the arrival of the early pioneer settlers.

Records show that in 1834 when government sale of land in the Bloomfield area was generally \$1.64 an acre, Abraham Soden and his wife Betsey bought 40 acres.

About 10 years later they sold the land and its appurtenances (perhaps including the log house) for \$200 or \$5 an acre to Irish immigrant William Craig. Craig and his wife Sarah reared their children and farmed the land. One son kept the farm until 1897.

*Continued on page 3*

“To some people, the log cabin is just an old building. But part of understanding history is to be put in physical contact, in a way, with those who came before us. That log cabin... is made up of the stories of people's lives. They are reflections of the people who helped shape our communities and the way we live today.”

Saving this building “is important for us. It's important for the future.”

—Greg Kowalski, editor, *Birmingham Eccentric*.

## From the President

Hello,

On behalf of the Board of the Bloomfield Historical Society I would like to welcome you to our first issue of *Legacy*, our Society's newsletter.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines legacy as, “Anything handed down

from an ancestor to a descendant.”

The Bloomfield area shares a rich and dynamic history. The best that we or any generation can do is to capture and share that history to ensure that future generations understand their roots to build a better tomorrow.

Thanks to our dedicated and generous Charter Members we're off to a very positive start and have met the goals we outlined at last year's Annual Meeting. We:

- Continued the Local History/Local Resources series with three well-received lectures,

*Continued on page 2*

## What's Inside

2 — Chicago curator to discuss paper, photo preservation

2 — Help wanted; volunteers needed

2 — Annual Meeting set

3 — What's in a name?

4 — Library expansion makes space for local history room

4 — Mission Statement

## Chicago Curator to Discuss Paper, Photo Preservation

Whether you are professionally responsible for preserving a library or historical society archives, or are an individual who wishes to protect precious family records, you don't want to miss our April program.

On Sunday, April 23 Carol Turchan, Conservator of the Chicago History Museum will discuss "Preservation of Paper and Photographic Documents." The program will run from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Cranbrook House Library on the grounds of Cranbrook Educational Community.

The program is part of the Local History/Local Resources Series sponsored

by the society and Bloomfield Township Public Library (BTPL).

This program will be held at the Cranbrook House because of the library's ongoing construction. Mark Coir, director of the Cranbrook Archivist and Society Board Member, will host the program. Cranbrook House is at 380 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Ms. Turchan has more than 20 years experience preserving the extensive, historically significant collections of her organization. She will have resources available at the meeting for archival storage, and will be happy to

discuss some of your photographs and documents that have special problems. Admission is free. For more information call BTPL, (248) 642-5800.



Conservator Carol Turchan will speak in April.

## Help Wanted Sign Is Out: Board Members, Volunteers Needed

This is a perfect time to get involved with our Society either as a board member, committee chair or committee volunteer.

The Board of Directors is responsible for the direction, budget and policies of the Society. If this sounds like an interesting volunteer opportunity we'll be glad to tell you more.

Several new committees are seeking additional support. The committees and chairs are: Historic Preservation Committee, (no Chair yet); Membership, Dwight Diener/Katie Kiyoy; Nominations, Dorm Dickerson; Programs, John Marshall; and Publicity, Steve Raphael.

If you are interested in joining a committee or serving on our board, please call Steve Raphael, (248) 932-8375. Please introduce yourself to one of the Directors at the Annual Meeting or you can leave a note for us at the library reception desk at anytime.

### From the President (Continued from page 1)

- Launched the popular Bloomfield Historical Society website,
- Hosted our first area photo call to capture images of our past,
- Published this, our first Newsletter.

As a new Society, we are delighted to have the support and encouragement of our local governments. Bloomfield Township, and the City of Bloomfield Hills each send liaisons to our Board. The Bloomfield Township Public Library, its Board,

its Director (and our liaison) and staff all have contributed to the success of this past year. The local media have been great in helping tell our story.

As we look forward to our next year we encourage you to read the story about the historic log house on Lone Pine Road. There'll be more in the Local History/Local Resources series. We also want to hear from you, everything from program ideas to historical anecdotes about our community. Respectfully,

Steve Raphael, President

### Annual Meeting Set

Our annual meeting will take place Wednesday, April 26 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Gary Doyle Center, 7275 Wing Lake Road. The Center is between Maple and 14 Mile roads on the east side of the street.

Currently we have 61 memberships, representing 100 members since more than half our members are families with at least two people in the household.

Dues are \$30 for families, \$20 for individuals and \$10 for students. An application form is available on our web site, [www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org).

# Little Log House: A Survivor (Continued from page 1)

In 1917 Gustavus D. Pope, a successful Detroit pharmaceutical company owner, bought property, including the log house, to establish a country estate for his young family.

The log house was for awhile a rustic hunting lodge for the Popes; then during the Depression, renters happy to have a home, modernized it with plumbing and electricity. The property remained in the Pope family until it was sold during the Korean War.

Returning from the war John Vander Veen, a long-time admirer of the still-simple log house, found that the Pope property had been subdivided. When he inquired about buying the house, luck intervened.

A visiting architect told the real estate agent that back East, "They'd be going out of their way to save a historic treasure like this." Vander Veen was then able to talk the reluctant agent into selling the house to him just for the price of the two-and-one-half acre parcel on which it stood.

The house was remodeled in 1936 and today boasts a dominant brick fireplace on its west wall. The floor and interior walls are made of pine boards. A ladder is in the loft and a trap door is in the floor, leading to a subterranean area under the cabin.



Photo by Al Eicher



Photo by Matt Carmichael

The most recent residential owners were Mark and Rebecca Stewart, owners of the property from approximately 1984 to 1994.

The log house was the topic of occasional newspaper feature stories as it became more of a rarity. In Kay Smith's 1976 history, *Bloomfield Blossoms*, the log house was identified as one of the three oldest homes in the area. Ten years later, again under new ownership, the log house made its biggest adaptation yet and was joined at the north wall to a completely new and modern home that echoed the lines of the original in a simple way.

### Now it's facing its greatest challenge.

The Society learned in November that a local developer bought the property and said he might be willing to donate the log house as long as it was moved to a new location. The Society now found itself in the role of catalyst as we sought to gather the necessary resources to make it possible for the log house to survive once again.

We enlisted the help of The Henry Ford and its chief collections manager Jim McCabe who inspected the log house and pronounced it not only worth saving but also savable even after all these years.

Bloomfield Township Supervisor Dave Payne took an interest in the

log house and has offered Township encouragement about its removal and restoration.

One challenge is to find the right people to advise us on moving the log house to a temporary location on Township property. Another challenge is to find the log house a permanent home and a new role in life.

Over the coming weeks the Society will need to determine a course of action. Most of all, we have to find the money to pay for this. One family foundation has expressed interest and we are talking to other interested parties.

### What's In a Name?

Log house or log cabin? That's the question the Society faces in trying to describe the Craig home.

We know two things: It is a home and it is made from logs.

By calling it a cabin we 21<sup>st</sup> Century folks may be making a condescending judgment about the home. The word "cabin" sounds oh so pejorative and implies a tiny dwelling.

They may be cabins to us but they were very much typical homes of the day. Just ask William and Sarah Craig and their 13 children.

What do you think?

Our thanks to Board Member John Marshall who spent hours uncovering and compiling the history of the log house and its owners. Thanks, too, to one of those owners, Roberta Stewart, who generously shared her archives on the little log house. - PC

## Bloomfield Historical Society

### Officers:

Steve Raphael, President  
Marilyn Tuchow, Vice President  
Chuck Kirkpatrick, Treasurer  
Katie Kiyo, Secretary

### Members at Large:

Pam Carmichael  
Mark Coir  
Wilma Cotton  
Rebecca DeBruin  
Dorm Dickerson  
Dwight Diener  
Al Eicher  
Barbara L. Keller  
John Marshall  
Vicky Ross

### Liaison Members:

Karen Kotulis-Carter, Director,  
Bloomfield Township Public Library,  
Jan Roncelli, Clerk, Township of  
Bloomfield  
Paul Zelenak, City of Bloomfield  
Hills.

We meet the first Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Bloomfield Township Public Library conference board room

Our Society web site is loaded with historical tidbits, information and updates about current and coming events. Please visit us at [www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org)

For more information please call Bloomfield Township Public Library (248) 642-5800

Editor: Steve Raphael  
Writer: Pam Carmichael  
Designer: Donna Raphael

## Library Expansion Making Space for Local History Room

The Bloomfield Township Public Library is devoting 1,500 square feet of its 37,585-square-foot expansion to a Local History Room.

The Room will feature the latest in on-line resources to ensure that library patrons have the best access to the most records, documents and artifacts available on the community's past.

"The Local History Room in our expanded facility will be an exciting addition to our services," said BTPL Director Karen Kotulis-Carter.

"We are looking forward to having one location to house our Local History Collection for patron convenience. It will be an expanded space that will allow us to bring many items previously stored in our lower level or off site to the library," she added.

Materials unique to the Bloomfield area will also have ~ at last ~ an environmentally engineered storage room to preserve our past, one-of-a-kind special materials such as original minutes, documents, property

deeds, photographs and other unique primary sources, Kotulis-Carter said.

Access to archived records will be available by appointment only. Some records may be available in digital format.

It will be located adjacent to the Adult Services area for direct public access to many materials, such as yearbooks, histories, directories, maps, indexes and software resources.

For user convenience the Local History Room will include a spacious table, a special library artifact from 1968, for spreading out research; microfilmed and digitized materials with microfilm reader and printer; photocopier, computer/scanner workstation and display cases to feature special materials. The table was used by the first library board of trustees.

The Local History Room will open in October 2008 when total library expansion is complete.

Bloomfield Historical Society Annual Meeting  
April 26, 7 p.m., 7275 Wing Lake Road

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to encourage and create a fuller awareness and understanding of the rich histories of Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township.

Identifying, promoting and conserving our heritage is our goal; awareness is our major task.

We support and advance local research and make these findings available to the general public.

We sponsor programs and events that illustrate and emphasize our dynamic past.

We seek the greatest possible community participation and support to make our historical society the area's finest.