Local Resources for Local History

Developing a Local Historical Perspective

By the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society
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Introduction

Not long ago I sent a newspaper article to my mother that identified me as the local historian. After reading the article she called asking how I could be the local historian in Michigan when I was born and raised in Ohio. The comment prompted me to ponder the relevance of local history. After touring places like Gettysburg, Washington D.C., or much older places in Europe, I questioned how the comparatively minor events of West Bloomfield could warrant so much of my attention.

In our multi-cultural classrooms today, few of our students may claim West Bloomfield as their heritage. In our highly mobile society, few of our students may remain in West Bloomfield. Our intention is to teach students the skills to research a local history and write their own interpretations through stories; wherever that may be.

Objectives

When I started this project, I had in mind a handful of books and documents in the Orchard Lake Museum that could be used by students for local historical research. I soon realized that I had significantly underestimated the quantity of resources available. I started maintaining this growing list of documents in a database. Included in this course manual are several cross-referenced lists from this database; for more information about the resources available see, "Appendix II – Local Resources" on page 25

Social Studies is one of the core curriculum areas in the Michigan Framework. This framework details the entire public school curriculum of K-12 education in the State of Michigan. The idea of understanding the past through historical perspective is one of the most difficult concepts to teach.[1] My expectation is that this course material will make that task easier and more enjoyable.

The objectives of this workshop are to:

- identify the purposes for studying local history

- provide resources for developing a local historical perspective (DLHP)

- suggest ways to utilize these resources in the classroom

- identify problems with using local historical resources

- assist teachers in stimulating students to write their own stories based on research they have done on local history

Context

Throughout this manual I will use the term local history. The term can refer generically to the study of history that is close by. When used geographically, the term will refer specifically to West Bloomfield Township. I am not trying to duplicate the efforts of others who are documenting resources for State and County history. My intention is to pick up the slack for West Bloomfield

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[1] Author's Interview with Dr. Paul Lipson, December 3, 2004.

Township specifically and the Township's connections to its neighbors including the townships of Bloomfield, Waterford, and Farmington.

In this workbook, the name West Bloomfield Township will refer to the historic definition of the township that today incorporates the City of Keego Harbor, the City of Orchard Lake Village, the City of Sylvan Lake as well as the Charter Township of West Bloomfield.

Why Study Local History?

It is ironic that The Henry Ford Museum is one of the world's most popular history museums. I say ironic because Henry Ford was quoted as saying, "History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's dam is the history we make today."[2] "Ford was ignorant, even contemptuous, of traditional 'history,' but he instinctively knew that what had happened nearby, to himself, his ancestors, his neighbors, and other ordinary people, had shaped their lives."[3]

Ford went on to collect things that mattered to him; sometimes in a very sloppy way. "He mistook the phony for the real, removed objects from the setting that gave them meaning, and failed to organize his vast collections so that the process of development over time could be appreciated." The millions of people who visit the museum of The Henry Ford illustrate the importance of the commonplace past. "An iron sign at the entrance bears his conclusion: 'The farther you look back, the farther you can see ahead.'"[4]

Actually, a local issue may generate more veracity than a topic of global importance. "An executive order from Washington D.C., may affect the world, while a decision made in a small town may only affect one neighborhood; but the local event may nevertheless have great and lasting influence on a community, a family, or an individual."[5] We can appreciate the passion with which residents view their community by attending a local government meeting. It is sometimes difficult to get students to study past events from locales that have no relevance, but reading text that refers to local landmarks can spawn enthusiasm.

History is Made

Repeated studies have shown that students find history the least relevant and the least engaging of courses taught in school. This is not to say that students are not interested in the past. We can certainly find cases where students have been motivated by dedicated teachers to discover history. It is the traditional method of teaching history that is coming under fire. We can no longer "present historical information as a finished story with one correct version."[6]

Students want to be active participants in making history. The current trend in teaching history is to encourage students to write their own historical stories

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[2] *Chicago Tribune* interview, May 16, 1916.
[3] David E. Kyvig and Myron Marty, 1.
[4] David E. Kyvig and Myron Marty, 5.
[5] David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, 7.
[6] M. Elaine Davis, 25.

based on their understanding of past events.[7] "Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school. This is no accident. Before they went to school they marked up walls, pavements, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens or pencils…anything that makes a mark. The child's marks say, 'I am.'"[8]

Our objective is to encourage students to write their stories about local history. "History is made. It is made by historians, by archaeologists, by museums, by filmmakers and writers, by senior citizens, and by small children."[9] The Creek Poet Joy Harjo wrote, "It's true the landscape forms the mind." Just as Pooh knew the importance of place in deciding what to do, our students can create from place.

How Students Understand the Past

M. Elaine Davis in *How Students Understand the Past*, questioned her project participants as to how they preferred learning about the past. Although this is only one sample, it does gives us an idea how students view different learning experiences.[10]

	Instructional Method	Responses
1	Living History and Hands-on Experiences	46
2	Museum Visits	28
3	Video of the Way People Lived in the Past	25
4	Computers and Special Software	24
5	Artifact Analysis and Interpretation	16
6	Historic Fiction	15
7	Historic or Archaeological Site Visits	14
8	Board Games or Simulation	12
9	Storytelling	9
10	Informational Book	6

Davis continues with her summary of critical points:

- Historical knowledge can be structured in at least two ways: narrative understanding and logical-scientific understanding

- History should be viewed as all of the human past, not just the written past

- Knowledge of the past is constructed and learners enter into studies of the past with preconceptions.

- Meaningful learning requires active engagement in the construction of knowledge

- Multiple modes of instruction, particularly visual information, help students make meaning of the past

- The context or setting in which instruction takes place is an important and powerful part of the instruction

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[7] M. Elaine Davis, 25.
[8] Donald H. Graves, 1.
[9] M. Elaine Davis, 1.
[10] M. Elaine Davis, 117.

- Objects contribute to a learner's understanding of life in the past in a way that words alone cannot convey

- If learners are to make meaning of the past, it must have relevance for them

- Learners become more engaged in studies of the past when they are actively involved in constructing it[11]

Michigan Benchmarks for K-12 Social Studies

Our schools have another reason for studying local history; it is mandated by the State of Michigan. We will refer to two sets of guidelines to help us develop our database of local historical resources. The first is provided by the Michigan Department of Education.

The Michigan Benchmarks for K-12 Social Studies instruction list four areas of comprehension for Strand 1-Historical Perspective:

1. Time and Chronology
2. Comprehending the Past
3. Analyzing and Interpreting the Past
4. Judging Decisions from the Past

The later elementary guidelines specifically refer to local community and history, for more information about the Michigan Benchmarks see, "Appendix I – Michigan Social Studies Benchmarks" on page 24.

Purpose for Studying History

Providing us with our second set of guidelines is Kyvig and Marty writing in *Nearby History* of the purposes for studying history. "Basically, historical questions seek answers that will help fulfill three purposes:

1. Description of the past
2. Measurement of change over time
3. Analysis of cause and consequence"[12]

Description of the Past

"At Keego Harbor you can keep horses, cows, pigs and chickens. We have no local government. You can spit on the ground if you want to."[13] Joseph E. Sawyer, real estate developer in the early 1900's, provided this description of what would become the City of Keego Harbor. In 2005, Keego Harbor celebrated its 50th anniversary as an incorporated city. The successful vote to become a city took place in the spring of 1955. There was at least one previously unsuccessful attempt to incorporate as a city.

> The people of Keego Harbor and Cass Lake have shown very plainly where they stand on voting to raise their own taxes. The movement to incorporate was defeated by 83 per cent of the votes cast and rightly so, as the people could hope for no advantages from incorporation.[14]

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[11] M. Elaine Davis, 119-120.
[12] David E. Kyvig and Myron Marty, 17.
[13] Sawyer, Joseph E*., Keep Your Eye on Keego Harbor*, 5.
[14] *The Pontiac Independent*, 1928, 2.

Knowing current trends toward developing town centers, it might seem odd that the 1928 residents of Keego Harbor would turn down the opportunity to become a city. To fulfill the Michigan Benchmark of Judging Decisions from the Past, we need a better understanding of the residents living at the time of the unsuccessful vote in 1928. Perhaps this excerpt from a local newspaper could provide a hint for the voters' decision.

> "My opposition to incorporation," says F.B. Tucker, "is based on the fact that it will be an obstacle to future annexation to Pontiac which is our most feasible avenue of escape from the ills that now bother us."[15]

The annexation of Keego Harbor by the City of Pontiac does not appear on today's "radar screen." The 1928 residents however were willing to delay their incorporation as a city due to their hopes of becoming part of Pontiac. Today, the city of Keego Harbor has the potential of developing into the town center that West Bloomfield Township so dearly would like to have. How different would things have been if the city had taken a different path?

Measurement of Change over Time

Few buildings in West Bloomfield Township have more history behind them than the old campus of the Michigan Military Academy (MMA, today referred to as Orchard Lake St. Mary's). From 1858 to the present, the grounds and its original building, The Castle, served as a Native American encampment, a private residence, a popular resort hotel, the office for the MMA, and now a residence for the St. Mary's campus. In his book *Them Was the Days*, Brian Bohnett captures the surprise and finality of one of these changes:

> The school's closing was apparently unexpected by both cadets and staff. In a January 4, 1909 article in the Pontiac Press Gazette, Professor Hull was quoted as saying, "The notice of the discontinuance of the work came as a complete surprise to us all." Following the winter break, students had to return to the school to pick up their personal effects. It was generally known that the school and the property were for sale – as such information had been printed in the newspapers just a few weeks previous – but the actual school closing may never have been discussed.[16]

The *Pontiac Post Gazette* article describes the closure of the Michigan Military Academy. If we backup an additional thirty-five years we can imagine the same Orchard Lake property during a happier transition.

> By the by the program for the opening day is dinner at two, drives & excursions on the lake. At six I think a light tea. At nine strawberries ice cream etc. Then dancing until twelve then <u>oph</u> [sic] to <u>bed</u>.[17]

The above passage was taken from a noteworthy letter, dated May 28th, 1872, believed to be written by Agnes "Aggie" Copeland. She is describing the opening of the Orchard Lake Hotel. Aggie's father, General Copeland, was converting his private residence known as The Castle into a hotel referred to as *The Saratoga of the Midwest*. Local historians are blessed to have so many

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[15] Unidentified local paper.

[16] Bohnett, Brian*, Them Was the Days*, 118.

[17] Letter written by Agnes "Aggie" Copeland from the private collection of Buzz Brown.

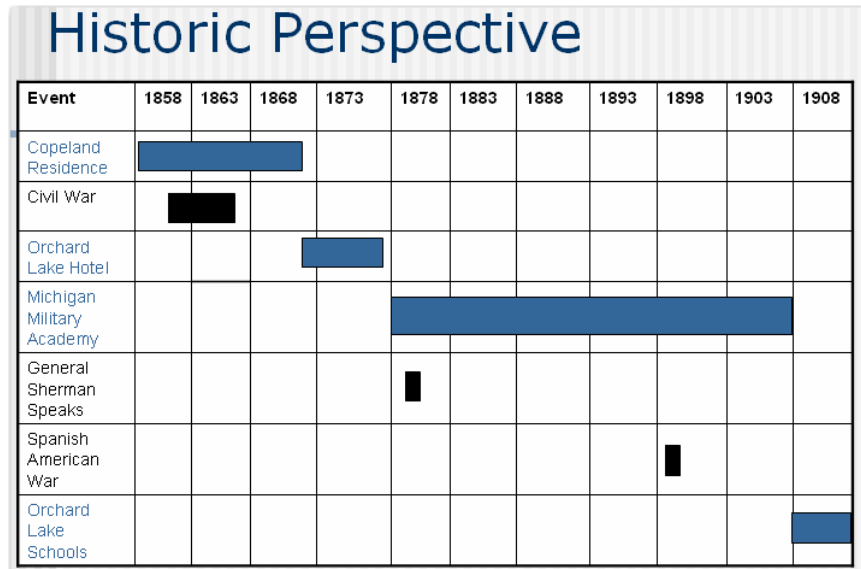traces to analyze the metamorphosis through time of this remarkable building and grounds.

Historic Perspective

Event	1858	1863	1868	1873	1878	1883	1888	1893	1898	1903	1908
Copeland Residence	███	███	███								
Civil War		██									
Orchard Lake Hotel				██							
Michigan Military Academy					███	███	███	███	███	███	
General Sherman Speaks					█						
Spanish American War									█		
Orchard Lake Schools											██

Figure 1 - chronology of uses for the grounds of today's Orchard Lake St. Mary's

Analysis of Cause and Consequence

The State of Michigan prides itself on its collection of fine State and local parks for public use. "In 1917 a system of state parks began to be established, enlarging the opportunities of enjoying Michigan's lakes and other natural attractions that had previously been out of reach of most people who could not afford the expense of resort hotels."[18] Locally we can see an example of this development in Dodge Park on Cass Lake and the public marina on Orchard Lake. The question, what caused the creation of these parks, brings us to Kyvig and Marty's third purpose for studying history, cause and consequence. A possible answer can be found in a revealing document written in 1936 by Gail Smith. Titled *History of the Countryside Improvement Association of Orchard and Pine Lake, Oakland County*, the document is a synopsis of meeting minutes for this local property owners association.

> The automobile brought many new problems to the Association owing to the utter lack of laws covering self propelled vehicles. The open road belonged to the people and the shores of an azure lake nearby were irresistible. There were times when one had only to raise one's eyes to see on the lawn several generations disporting themselves while still others refreshed themselves in the cooling waters which beat upon the shores of privately owned property. Legal action needed to be speeded up. The Association called a meeting at the Pine Lake Country Club for members and their husbands to discuss the feasibility of securing through the Supervisor a Public Park, including a lake, that the week-end crowd might be directed to a definite place. At this meeting Messrs. Pelletier, Frederick Strong, Howard Bloomer, Frank Callender and Charles Lohrman were asked to petition the Supervisor to

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[18] Dunbar, Willis F. & May, George S., Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, 628.

consider the purchase of land in Oakland County to be used as a public park.[19]

The draw of the lakes in West Bloomfield Township brought many vacationers to the area. More and more however, these vacationers decided to stay and purchase property on the shores of the lakes. This started the transition from a vacationing life style to a residential life style and also began a conflict that exists to this day; residential use versus public use. The decisions by the Countryside Improvement Association to provide public spaces solved the problem of trespassers on private lakefront property and were indicative of a trend for public parks in Michigan.

Looking Ahead

The farther you look back, the farther you can see ahead.

　　The Henry Ford Museum

Whether we refer to Michigan's Benchmarks or we refer to Kyvig and Marty's Reasons for Studying History, we cannot loose sight of the overarching reason for historical research; looking ahead. The sign over the entrance of The Henry Ford Museum succinctly expresses the idea.

Our second President of the United States, John Adams, must have had this in mind when he wrote *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*. Finding himself stationed in England at a time when his colleagues back home were considering a more centralized form of government, Adams put his pen in motion. He felt compelled to be part of the discussion of building the future government. He knew to look ahead he first had to look back. Adams surrounded himself with books to study various forms of government. The result was a document that helped define our form of government with checks and balances.[20]

A better understanding of our local history can be essential in building a better community. Our ultimate objective is that students, when asked to comment on a current issue, will surround themselves with traces of history as they begin to compile their own stories and responses.

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[19] Smith, Gail, *History of the Countryside Improvement Association of Orchard and Pine Lake, Oakland County*, xx.

[20] McCullough, David, *John Adams*, Touchstone, New York, 2001, 373-378.

Traces

The student of history must rely on "traces" that people and events have left behind. Historical traces may be divided into four types: immaterial, material, written, and representational. Immaterial traces are intangible remnants found in institutions, legends, superstitions, customs, and language. Material traces are easier to understand because they are things that we can touch. They are the product of the past. Signs, farm implements, paintings and furniture are some examples of material traces. Written traces can be a published book or a handwritten diary. Finally, representational traces include photographs, folksongs, and stories. Representational traces are immaterial in one sense, but they are perceived sensorily, capable of being written down or captured on tape or disc recordings.[21]

Immaterial

Possibly the most prolific immaterial trace of past events in the Township would be the legends of Chief Pontiac. There is one piece of "historical" information that seems to be in the psyche of area residents; that Chief Pontiac is buried on Apple Island. We have no material trace that the Chief is buried on the island. Most scholarly research on the subject places his burial around St. Louis. However the legend persists. Our students will soon learn one of the challenges of historical research; the temptation to perpetuate a good myth without documentation.

Material

West Bloomfield Township has a colorful past that includes an era of hotels, resorts, and inns for vacationers. The GWBHS museum has several material items from this era. Included in the collection are signs from the Wilkins Corner and Charley's Crab restaurants, keys from the Orchard Lake Hotel, porch posts from the Orchard Lake House, and a signed guest book from the Apple Branch Boarding House.

Written

We have in our library and museum published books on the history of West Bloomfield Township. Charles Martinez's *Song of the Heron* and Brian Bohnett's *Them Was the Days* are excellent examples of this written local history. Of special interest to the research historian is a collection of original memoirs stored at the main branch of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library. Students interested in using a primary source will find these memoirs interesting reading; for more information see, "West Bloomfield Township Public Library" on page 19.

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[21] David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, 46.

Representational

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains all the cops have wooden legs

And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth and the hens lay soft boiled eggs

The farmer's trees are full of fruit and the barns are full of hay

Oh, I'm bound to go where there ain't no snow

Where the rain don't fall and the wind don't blow

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

Imagine listening to *Big Rock Candy Mountains* without an understanding of the Depression Era and the plight of *hobos*. A cute song it is and one can appreciate its catchy melody and have fun with its message. On the other hand, look how the song enhances our understanding of life during that time in our history. *Big Rock Candy Mountains* is a representational trace of the 1920s.

Unfortunately we have no known folksongs written specifically about West Bloomfield Township. We do have several instrumental compositions that have their traces back to the Township. The most interesting composition is the *Orchard Lake Polka* written to commemorate the opening of the Orchard Lake Hotel. Even without lyrics, we can still glean insight title pages and melodies alone; for more information about local music see, "Music" on page 20.

We cannot fail to mention the large collection of photographs that are available of the Township at various stages of its development. These photographs can be viewed from the GWBHS's website; for more information see, "Virtual Exhibit" on page 19.

Figure 2 - title page from the Orchard Lake Polka sheet music

Local Resources for Local History Developing a Local Historical Perspective

Township Transitions

Four Distinct Life Styles

When talking with visitors at the Orchard Lake Museum, I have found it helpful to describe four distinct life styles that have taken place in the recorded history of our community. The four life styles are:

1. Native Americans

2. Farming by European pioneers and settlers

3. Vacationers

4. Suburbanites

The categorization of these life styles offers the researcher two opportunities for interpretation of local history:

1. Each item, or trace, in the museum or surrounding landscape can be categorized into one or more of the four life styles. This is especially helpful when working with early and later elementary students.

2. Understanding the conflicts and changes that have occurred during the transition from one life style to another often has relevancy to conflicts that exist in our communities today. An example of this relevancy can be found in the GWBHS Winter 2008 Newsletter article titled, *Today's battle over Cass Lake's sand bar.* This article can be found on the accompanying CD.

Figure 3 - timeline illustrating the four phases of Township occupants

Native Americans

We have already discussed the myth about Chief Pontiac's burial on Apple Island. We cannot however let that dismiss the overwhelming traces of Native American culture in West Bloomfield Township. The best source for researching this presence is Charles H. Martinez's book, *Song of the Heron; Reflections on the History of West Bloomfield*. Through text and illustrations, Martinez paints a rich Native American history. Of particular note is Figure 2, prepared by local archeologist Rick Zurel that identifies the many artifacts officially uncovered in the immediate area. Martinez's Figure 5 is a map drawn by Sam Carpenter, Jr. in 1817 and identifies the Indian encampment at the junction of Commerce Road and the now Old Indian Trail. Finally, his Figure 7 identifies the trails that existed in 1826 and mirrors Commerce, Orchard Lake, and Cass Lake roads.

One of the best first person accounts we have of Native Americans in the Township is found in Caroline "Tina" Campbell's collection titled, *Island Rembrances* (included on the course CD). Consider this excerpt from her presentation to the Oakland Pioneers and Historical Society in 1917:

> About 1885, the caretaker on the Island was ploughing, and pierced a small mound. Here was seated a skeleton with a pewter pan in his lap, this pan filled with wampum. It also contained a knife rusted almost beyond recognition. The ploughshare went through the pan, but I still have it, although someone unkindly robbed me of the wampum. There was a great deal of it, so this was probably a chief.

Although much has been written about Native Americans in Michigan, we don't have many written traces about the Native American history of our township. Historical education tends to be document-based. This form of education favors those who were privileged to be able to write and be published. Therefore, the stories of Native Americans, African Americans, and women tend to be lost in the discussion. This is an area of local resources that is the most difficult to catalog but could be the most rewarding. With this lack of evidence in mind, the GWBHS continues to search for additional traces. One of the on-going initiatives for further research includes archeology. Apple Island is registered with the State of Michigan as an archaeological site. Two formal digs have occurred on the Island between 2000 and 2003 delivering some significant artifacts. It is hoped that further digs will shed light on this undocumented part of the Township's history.

Farming

As West Bloomfield Township became more populated, farming became the way of supporting a family. Although the farms of West Bloomfield were very diverse, two types would rise to prominence; apples and sheep. The first would leave an indelible mark on the township's history and the second would be all but forgotten.[22]

Many of the personal memoirs stored at the West Bloomfield Township Public Library contain comments about life on family farms in the Township.

Apples

There are many traces today of the township's rich apple heritage. First of all you can see many apple trees still standing from the remnants of the orchards. Secondly, many community names that we take for granted can be traced back

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[22] Brown, Buzz, *Education Day Study Guide, Island of Time*, 29-20.

to the apple-growing farmers; Orchard Lake, Apple Island, Green Lake (from the Green family orchards), Green School, etc.

The early settlers copied the apple-growing tradition started by the Native American Indians who lived in the area. Some of the settlers recorded transferring "fancy apple trees from the old Indian orchard" on Apple Island. Word spread about the quality and hardiness of the apple trees from the island. "In 1826 John Ellenwood, with the help of neighbors, cleared four acres of his property along the eastern shore of Pine Lake and planted trees, many of which he obtained from 'Orchard Island.' Between the rows of trees the thrifty and energetic Ellenwood is said to have sown wheat. Orchard Island was a nickname given the site by many early residents and one that vied in popularity with its official designation until after the middle of the nineteenth century."[23]

The local research historian will enjoy reading two written traces available for their use. The first is the *History of the Green Homestead*. This handwritten manuscript describes the history of one of the Township's apple farming families. The second is a children's book written by Mary Moore Green titled *All About Apples*. Green's book was published in 1960. "In this true account of the growing, picking, and marketing of apples, the author writes of the apple orchard in Michigan which has been in her family for over one hundred years and is now run by her husband. Describes how to raise apples and prepare them for distribution."[24]

Sheep

Sheep represented a success story for West Bloomfield Township. "...census records show that just about all farmers here participated to one degree or another in sheep raising. Between 1850 and 1880 the number of sheep in West Bloomfield nearly tripled, reaching a total of 14,494..." Sheep furnished wool and meat as well as grease and tallow. The West Bloomfield farmers kept up with the latest breeds of sheep including Cotswold, Spanish Merino, and Rambouillet (French Merino). Two of the foremost United States breeders of Rambouillet Sheep were Thomas Wyckoff and Henry Grinnell of West Bloomfield. The township's favorable terrain and climatic conditions, coupled with the ability of its breeders, whose English-Scotch ancestry were well acquainted with these animals, made Oakland County the major Michigan producer of sheep and wool during much of the nineteenth century.[25]

The GWBHS museum has an informative handwritten letter dated 1940 from Walter Oliver to Tommey Lawton, a student at the University of Michigan. In the letter, Oliver describes his family's farm, located on Greer Road. "Boy we sure have been bissey [sic] this winter with all our chores and wood to cut. Write now we have got 54 head of cattle 21 sheep 5 horses 180 chickens. By the time one of us get the morning chores done it is time to start the night chores. We have got a nice big wood pile cut to keep us warm another winter."

Vacationers

I enjoy asking elementary students who visit the museum where they stay overnight when they go on vacation. Their answers include a variety of lodgings but I can usually count on the standard response of hotels and motels. I then like to ask the students where a visitor to their house would stay overnight if they wanted to stay in a hotel or motel. Rarely can the students name a single hotel or motel in the area.

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[23] Charles H. Martinez, 83.
[24] Library Journal, circa 1960.
[25] Ibid, 117.

There was a time however when West Bloomfield Township had a plethora of hotels, motels, cabins and inns. Most of these establishments were located along the Interurban rail line and the shores of the various lakes. This era represented the beginnings of the transition from a farming community to a vacationing community.
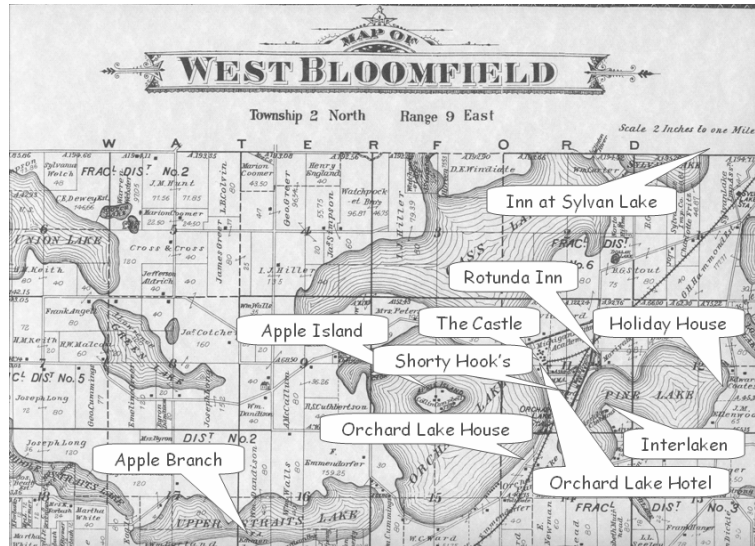

Figure 4 - illustration from the Cows to Cars PowerPoint file on the accompanying CD

Included in your course resource CD is a PowerPoint presentation titled *Cows to Cars*. This presentation will provide an overview of the transition from farming to vacationing to residential life styles.

Suburbanites

Local teens complain there is no place "to go" in West Bloomfield and flock to town centers like Royal Oak and Birmingham. Upon graduation they move to *Cool Cities* like Chicago and Naples, Florida. At the same time, West Bloomfield Township leaders contemplate the lack of a downtown and look for ways to create a town center. A similar concern is evident in the City of Keego Harbor where some community leaders are striving for recognition in the Main Street program. One might ask why a township as large as West Bloomfield could have developed without a town center like its neighbors Farmington and Bloomfield townships. Again we turn to the *Song of the Heron* for an answer. Martinez identifies five reasons that kept West Bloomfield Township from developing a city center.

- No major Indian trails – just connectors

- Local sawmills & grist mills failed

- Farmers turned to Franklin, Pontiac, Farmington, and Commerce

- 20% of township is water but not harnessed

- Early leaders were farmers not merchants[26]

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[26] Charles H. Martinez, 108-109.

Lacking an established town center, the Township developed as a purely residential community. One must travel outside the Township just to see a move or stay in a motel room.

Conflicts During Transitions

Perhaps the word transition is too subtle to represent the changes that took place during these movements from one life style to another.

Fur Trading to Farming

The local area's first transformation began with a struggle between newly arriving Europeans and Native Americans. To nurture the fur trade, it was in the best interests of the French to keep Michigan wooded and maintain a symbiotic relationship with the Native Americans. The English interest was to acquire the land from the Native Americans, remove the trees, and prepare the land for farming. This dispute was so contentious that a war was fought. Referred to locally as the French and Indian War the conflict was actually part of what the rest of the world knew as The Seven Years' War. The English won and eventually displaced the Native Americans as well as the French and the area grew with a rich history in farming.

The museum offers an interesting resource to study the transition from the French to the British. Civic Center TV15 recorded a presentation given by Troy-resident Tony Schad. This recording titled *Revenge of a Lost Empire-Detroit History through Street Names*, analyzes this period of Michigan history using the location and names of streets in Southeast Michigan. A short version of the presentation is also available on YouTube.

Farming to Vacationing

Drawn by the beauty of the lakes and improvements in transportation during the 1800s, vacationers started visiting the area. Lakeside property was converted to hotels, cabins, inns and restaurants. The Orchard Lake Museum has in its collection two particularly relevant documents that describe the conflicts arising from the clash between vacationers and local residents. The first of these is the *History of the Countryside Improvement Association*. The second titled, *What's It All About? Thoughts from the Nineties*, is authored by the late General Frederick Strong, Junior and attributes the beginnings of the City of Orchard Lake Village as a direct result of this conflict.

Vacationers to Suburbanites

Many of the vacationers appreciated the beauty of the area and decided to make West Bloomfield their home. As more people starting moving permanently to the Township the inevitable clash for lake access with weekend and summer vacationers erupted. Except for a few public parks, the permanent residents won.

Our museum has many traces of previous establishments from this era. One special item is the sign from the first Charley's Crab restaurant. This restaurant was the former Rotunda Inn on Pine Lake. The building included several dining rooms and overnight lodging. This particular business is interesting because it also signals the transition to a residential community.

Charley's Crab was destroyed by fire at a time when individuals, in significant numbers, had purchased property to live along the shores of the lakes. The residents no longer wanted a restaurant, hotel, and bar located in their residential community. The building was never rebuilt as a commercial establishment and thus signaled the end to the commercial vacationing era of West Bloomfield Township.

Utilizing Local Resources

Checklist for Choosing Resources

Peg Sudol and Caryn M. King created a five point checklist for choosing nonfiction trade books. The purpose of the checklist is to guide teachers in their selection of appropriate content-related material. Their list includes:

- Accuracy
- Organization and Layout
- Cohesion of Ideas
- Specialized Vocabulary
- Reader Interest[27]

Upon successful passage of the checklist, materials can be added to the teacher's database of appropriate nonfiction material. Obviously Sudol and King are looking for material that could pass the scrutiny of academics. Except for a few exceptions, research historians don't have the luxury of picking and choosing. We must rely on the traces that have been left for us.

Before discussing local resources we need to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources. "A primary source is any material created contemporaneously to an event being studied. A secondary source, on the other hand, is an account created subsequently, usually by a historian or other scholar using a number of primary sources."[28] The museum's database of local resources will contain both primary and secondary sources.

Authors of primary documents from decades past were probably not concerned about the organization, layout, or cohesion of ideas when they wrote their memoirs or journals. Even accuracy can be a problem. One might think that a family member writing about their farm in the 1800's would be indisputable. Family members however may have inaccurate memories of things that had occurred. Worse yet, they may have motives for hiding embarrassing events or rewriting history to make their family look more important.

Teachers will need to prepare their students for the effort and excitement of searching historic documents. In one sense the documents may not be organized very well and the writing style may be difficult to read. Sudol and King's checklist doesn't account for issues like the anti-Semitic content of *Orchard Lake and its Island* or the difficulty of reading a handwritten letter from 1872. On the other hand, students will find interest in reading first-person references to Scotch School, Apple Island, Orchard Lake Road, and Native Americans swimming in Orchard Lake.

Included on your CD is a PDF file showing two versions of a primary document. On the right is a scan of the original letter showing its conversational style of writing. On the left is my transcription. This format may help young students who are interested in utilizing local primary sources.

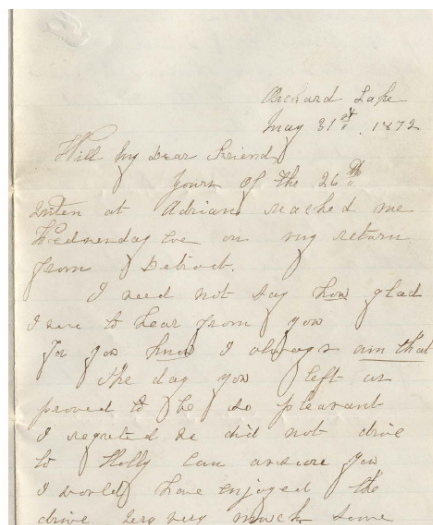[27] Rasinski, Timothy V., *Developing Reading-Writing Connections*, 4-7.
[28] Butchart, Ronald E., *Local Schools: Exploring Their History*, 35.

Orchard Lake
May 31st, 1872

Will my dear friend
Yours of the 26th
written at Adrian reached me
Wednesday eve on my return from
Detroit.
I need not say _how_ glad I
were [was?] to hear from you for
you _know_ I always _am that_.
The day you left us
proved to be so pleasant. I
regretted we did not drive to
Holly [?]. I can assure you I would
have enjoyed the drive very very
much. Some other time when you
have to there perhaps I can go
with you. After you left me I

Museums & Libraries

OCPHS

The Oakland County Pioneers and Historical Society (OCPHS) is located at 405 Oakland Avenue, one half mile north of the city of Pontiac, just south of the Wisner School and stadium.

The OCPHS can trace it beginnings back to 1874. Since the 1960's, the OCPHS has continued to devote itself to the preservation of the history and culture of Oakland County, and to maintaining the Pine Grove estate. The Society does not limit itself strictly to the Pine Grove museum, but has developed various programs and events to promote the history of our region, and volunteers work hard to make your visit to Pine Grove enjoyable and informative. In September of 1999, the OCPHS completed an 800 square foot addition to the Carriage House, which houses the library and office. Library hours are Tuesday - Thursday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Group tours of the Wisner house and Drayton Plains school may be arranged by appointment.

Collections

The OCPHS has a large collection of early newspapers, primarily up through 1900. These are the original, hardbound volumes, and, as such, cannot be photocopied. The earliest paper in the collection is The Oakland Chronicle (1830-1831). The library has some volumes of Pontiac papers post 1900. It also has the Royal Oak Daily Tribune (1924-1942), and some miscellaneous issues of local area newspapers.

Wisner Mansion

One of the main attractions for visitors to Pine Grove is the Greek Revival-Style mansion of former Governor Moses Wisner. Wisner came to Oakland County from New York, as many early settlers did, and in 1845, moved, with his family, onto a parcel of land on what was then known as the "Saginaw Trail." The property contained a small brick house, built ca 1845, a grove full of stately old pine trees, and plenty of land for a stable and orchards. Moses Wisner fondly dubbed the property "Pine Grove."

The Wisner Mansion will be open for walk-in tours the second Saturday of the month from 10am-2pm (March through October). Visitors may also tour the facilities during the August Ice Cream Social, the October Harvesting History Festival, and the December Victorian Open House please check for dates and times. Tours for additional dates or large groups are by appointment only.

Please contact the office at 248-338-6732.   Fees are $5 for adults and $3 for children under 12. There is no charge for walk-in tours for members with their membership card.

GWBHS

The Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) maintains a museum at Long Lake and Orchard Lake roads. The museum is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM. The museum is also available by appointment.

Maps

The GWBHS museum maintains a collection of historic Township maps. The collection includes the 1896, 1917, and 1936 maps. The township maps identify the land owners at the time. Small dots are placed where buildings exist. The maps measure 17 1/2" x 23".

West Bloomfield Township Public Library

Of particular interest to the local historian is the collection of original manuscripts stored at the main branch of the West Bloomfield Township Public library. Many of these documents were created for the sesquicentennial year in 1984 and contain some fascinating descriptions of life in the early days of the Township. These documents are great for students looking to use primary source material for their projects. The documents are stored in a non-circulating reference file and must be accessed through the Information Desk.

Websites

Obviously I do not need to mention the wealth of information available on the Internet. I do want to highlight some specific sites for local research.

GWBHS.COM

Where possible, the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society makes its collections available for search on the Internet. Two specific links are the virtual exhibit of photographs and the virtual bibliography database of local written traces.

Virtual Exhibit

In 2003 the GWBHS purchased a copy of the museum software package called PastPerfect. An intern was hired during the summer to digitize and catalog all the photos in the GWBHS collection. The software package was then used to automatically generate several virtual exhibits for Internet publication. You can now search over 1,500 photographs on the Web from the GWBHS collection. Many of these photographs include captions taken from written traces available at the museum or the library. The virtual exhibits include: Apple Island, Fire Department, Restaurants, Pine Lake, Sailboats, Farming, etc.

Virtual Bibliography

The GWBHS has begun the process of building a database of local resources for researching local history. Printouts from this database are included in the Appendices of this manual. The information is also made available on the GWBHS website. Students will be able to identify sources by Titles, Topics, or Characters.


Figure 5 - main menu of the GWBHS web-based database of local resources

YouTube

To enhance the GWBHS outreach efforts the society has begun posting short video vignettes on the YouTube website. You can access the content using the URL: http://www.youtube.com/GWBHS.

Geocaching

Another form of outreach is the historical geocaches that the society has begun placing around the community. These sites can be located on the Geocaching.com website at: http://www.geocaching.com/.
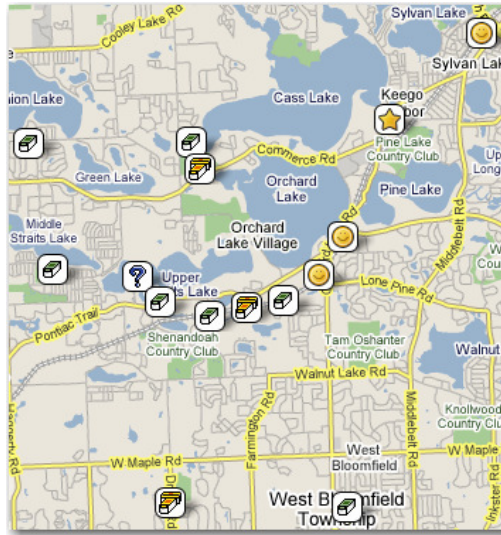
Course CD

Where available, I wanted to provide you with digital versions of a few of the documents discussed in this course manual. For this reason, a CD has been included. Of particular note is the entire text for the *Song of the Heron* in PDF format. This book contains a wealth of information about the history of the Township and Southeast Michigan. The ability to search the text electronically is invaluable—every word is indexed.

Figure 6 - file directory for the course CD

I also included the text for Win Hamlin's memoirs. Not all of the documents are available in PDF format—some of the fun with primary documents is the disappointment and excitement associated with exploring these yourself.

Music

I have included some original music that can be traced back to the grounds of Orchard Lake St. Mary's. The files on your CD are all MIDI files that can be played on your computer.

The first, titled the *Orchard Lake Polka* (OrchPolk.mid), was written to commemorate the opening of the Orchard Lake Hotel in 1872. Copies of the sheet music can be purchased at the GWBHS museum.

The next two compositions provide an interesting comparison. The first is titled *Orchard Lake Cadets March* (OrchMrch.mid) and was written by the Music Director at the MMA, a member of the faculty. The second piece titled, *March M.M.A. Adjutant* was written by one his students and a cadet at the MMA in

1903. The Director's *Cadets March* is a melody very characteristic of military marches of the time and is readily forgotten. His student's music is different. It may be the student had heard the music of Scott Joplin; music that was not considered appropriate for someone like this cadet to enjoy. The *March M.M.A. Adjutant* seems based on a military march theme but borders on ragtime rhythms.

Finally, I have included three pieces composed by MMA cadet Harry Archer (GumChewers.mid, ILoveYou.mid, and WhitesSails.mid). Archer's mother taught him music, and he worked his way through the MMA playing the trombone in theater and pop music orchestras. He had advanced musical studies at Knox College in Galesburg, IL, and at Princeton University.

After schooling, Archer settled in Chicago, IL and formed his own band. His first Broadway score was written in 1912, the *Pearl Maiden*. He continued writing for Broadway shows, revues, etc., until, when in 1923, he had a huge success with his score for the show *Little Jesse James*. His song, *I Love You*, was written for this show.
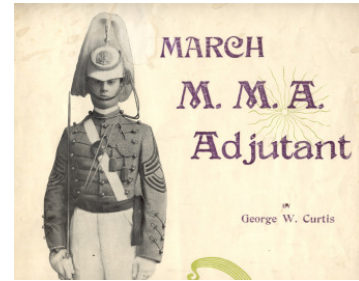
PowerPoint

The CD includes two PowerPoint presentations from previous GWBHS events. The first is a self-running kiosk with traces from Apple Island (AppleIslandKiosk.ppt). The second file is from the Cows to Cars presentation during the 2004 Michigan Events (Cows to Cars.ppt).

Written Traces

Several documents referred to in this course material have been saved as a PDF file for your reference. To open these files your computer will need the Adobe acrobat Reader which can be downloaded at no charge from the Internet. This format permits quick searching of documents for topics of interest to the researcher.

Sample Exercises

Draw some of the boats that would have been on West Bloomfield's lakes in 1900.

> GWBHS.com Virtual Exhibit #2 – Sailboats and Iceboats
> Willis Ward's *Orchard Lake and its Island*

If you were to conduct an archaeological dig on Apple Island, what types of artifacts might you find?

> *Song of the Heron* Figure 2 and Plate 2 and Pages 51-53.
> Caroline Campbell's Island Remembrances
> Island of Time Study Guide: Apple Island History

Imagine it's 1850 and you've just immigrated to West Bloomfield to become an apple farmer. Create a "shopping list" of the supplies you will need for your new farm.

> *All About Apples*
> *Song of the Heron*
> History of the Green Homestead

You've just traveled from New York to vacation in West Bloomfield at the Interlaken Hotel or the Orchard Lake Hotel. Create a journal for your one-week stay at the resort. How did you travel from New York, and what was the trip like? What types of activities were available at the hotel? What do you see?

> *Song of the Heron*

You've just completed your first week as a brand-new cadet at the Michigan Military Academy. Write a letter home to your family detailing what you've experienced in the last week.

> MMA Diary of Wilmer C. Harris
> *Them Was the Days* (Chapters 4 and 5)
> Autobiography of Robert Baum

Using the blank map of West Bloomfield Township, add an arrow pointing to the north. Label the lakes. Label the major roads.

References

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Appendices

Appendix I – Michigan Social Studies Benchmarks

Strand I. Historical Perspective
       1.1 Time and Chronology
       1.2 Comprehending the Past
       1.3 Analyzing and Interpreting the Past
       1.4 Judging Decisions from the Past

Strand II. Geographic Perspective
       II.1 Diversity of People, Places, and Cultures
       II.2 Human/Environnent Interaction
       II.3 Location, Movement, and Connections
       II.4 Regions, Patterns, and Processes
       II.5 Global Issues and Events

Strand III. Civic Perspective
       III.1 Purpose of Government
       III.2 Ideals of American Democracy
       III.3 Democracy in Action
       III.4 American Government and Politics
       III.5 American Government and World Affairs

Strand IV. Economic Perspective
       IV.1 Individual and Household Choices
       IV.2 Business Choices
       IV.3 Role of Government
       IV.4 Economic Systems
       IV.5 Trade

Strand V. Inquiry
       V.1 Information Processing
       V.2 Conducting Investigations

Strand VI. Public Discourse and Decision Making
       VI.1 Identifying and Analyzing Issues
       VI.2 Group Discussion
       VI.3 Persuasive Writing

Strand VII. Citizen Involvement
       VII.1 Responsible Personal Conflict

Appendix II – Local Resources

Appendix III - People and Sources

Appendix IV – Keywords and Sources

Appendix V - Resource Timeline

Glossary of Terms

DLHP the acronym for Developing a Local Historical Perspective

GWBHS Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

immaterial traces intangible remnants found in institutions, legends, superstitions, customs, and language

local history will refer specifically to Greater West Bloomfield Township

material traces things that we can touch

primary source any material created contemporaneously to an event being studied

representational traces are immaterial in one sense, but they are perceived sensorily, capable of being written down or captured on tape or disc recordings. They include photographs, folksongs, and stories

secondary source an account created subsequently, usually by a historian or other scholar using a number of primary sources

traces items that people or events have left behind

West Bloomfield Township will refer to the historic definition of the township that today incorporates the cities of Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake as well as the Charter Township of West Bloomfield

written traces a published book or a handwritten diary

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