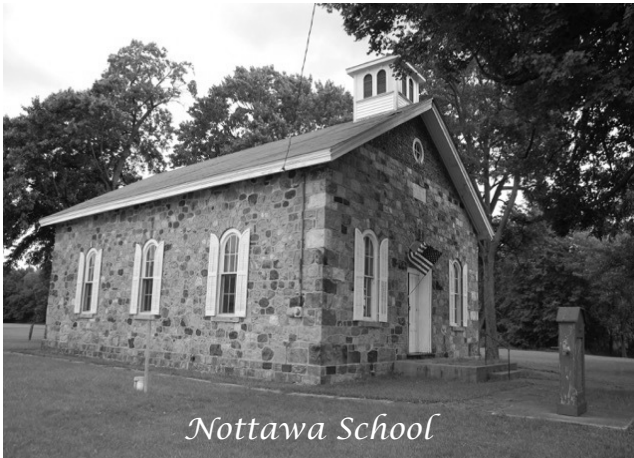


The

Slate

Vol. XXIII, Issue 1

Spring Issue 2017



Nottawa School

*MORSA to Meet in Historic
St. Joseph County
by Rochelle Balkam*

The 2017 Michigan One-room Schoolhouse Association conference will hold registration and the introductory session in the St. Joseph County Historical Society's headquarters in downtown Three Rivers, the center of nineteenth century Michigan history. Their archives contain the meticulously researched history of all of the one-room schools in the county. Walking through the community one can appreciate the vibrant restorations that have brought the past into the twenty-first century.

Conference attendees will board a bus for a tour of several one-room schools on the way to historic stone Nottawa School built in 1870. It was originally a frame building. The school's

(Continued on page 2)

Chairman's Column

By Tom M. Johnson

I have recently assumed responsibility for answering the inquiries to MORSA, especially those involving the list of one-room schoolhouses in Michigan on our website that was developed as a long labor of love by board member Sue Daniel.

There were approximately 15 to 20 inquiries that had not been answered. I was going to answer these when I arrived home early in March from a family sojourn in the south, but much to my chagrin, all of the emails in our Inbox had been deleted. We contacted our provider and found there was nothing that could be done about it.

For those of you who have requested information and have not had a response, please "re-request." Many of the requests are worded as follows: *Do you have a picture of my school? Do you know the name of the school in which my aunt taught in 1933-1936? You have the location of my school in the wrong place. Do you know what happened to the _____ school?*

Sadly, except in rare instances, we do not have any information except that contained in the list.

Board member Larry Schlack is putting together a roadmap for how to find information about specific one room schoolhouses. It will be on our website for your

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MORSA to Meet

(Continued from page 1)

unique appearance draws photographers from all over the country. Authenticity is preserved with original artifacts both in the school and in the annex. There they will be introduced to a typical day in the one-room school taught by a “school marm,” and entertained with stories by Warren Lawrence. The annual William Winger award will be presented to the Schoolhouse of the Year-2017.

Nearby historic sites include: the community of White Pigeon, named for the Native American chief whom legend has it, sacrificed his life to warn residents of impending disaster. Other historic sites to visit are the Langley Covered Bridge, the home of Madame Marantette, equestrienne extraordinaire, the James Bonine House which played a significant role on the Underground Railroad, and the Old New York Central Railroad Depot.

Join us for this unique experience!

**THE MICHIGAN ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND :**

MORSA 2017 Annual Conference

Saturday May 6, 2017

**See information and registration form
pgs 5-6 this issue**

Chairman’s Column

(Continued from page 1)

convenience. It should be noted that there are several counties which have outlined in detail every school that existed in that county.

Before I left for vacation I was in email conversations with several people regarding a specific school in their locale. I asked them to provide us with any information about that school that would be useful to someone in the future. By doing this, we can start to build a repository of stories and information about one room schools which will be housed at Eastern Michigan University archives.

In the future when I answer an inquiry, I will encourage people to respond with any information they have regarding their school of interest.

As noted above, this one room school list was a labor of love by a single individual, one of the original board members – Suzanne Daniel. I cannot believe the hours and miles she put in to compile this gargantuan list. Yes, it is incomplete and yes, there are errors, but please help us to correct them. Sue is no longer able to continue with the list, but must be recognized for what she has accomplished, which is a framework on which to build. Sue was a professional school librarian and after retirement was on the board and greatly involved in Greenmead, which is Livonia’s outstanding historic site. While compiling the list of schools, she has also become a recognized expert on one room schoolhouse furniture.

On behalf of the board, we celebrate the work that Suzanne Daniel, Board Member Emeritus, has accomplished – the compilation of one room schoolhouses, those that once existed in Michigan and those that are still standing. Thank you Suzanne!

Please keep those inquiries coming – we all learn from them!

Walking to School for Eight Years

By George Harold Bonney

We lived about one mile south of the Rhoads School in Floyd Township, Sanborn County, South Dakota. It was expected that the six Bonney kids would walk to school an back. What else? Not all six were there at any one time, but to see three or four of us marching along the graveled (dusty, muddy) road to and from school was the scene. Once in a while we' get a ride, part-way at least.

Lunch boxes in hand other necessities rounded up, the procession would start—either through the south west enclosed porch, or the east closed porch, or north-east through the yard past the brushy Russian Olive trees, through a gap in the fence with the mailboxes on the right and we head north toward school.

Moods might vary widely. Small, unfinished quarrels might linger—we might be a few minutes late—weather nasty. Or a good breakfast, homework done, bright spring sun—all is well. If the road was dry, the occasional auto would cascade us in brown dust or a pebble spun out by a tire. The Olson boys from a mile east might join us, riding along on their old horse. The horse was sheltered at the Rhoads farm near the school.

The mile of road was quite level, almost no hills. On our left was our pasture; right was one of Dad's fields. At the half-way mark, the field had an area for one of our two potato patches. Very important food producer. On the west at the half mile was the cemetery...Bonney cemetery, some said, perhaps because Grandpa Bonney gave the land out of his pasture. But a varied group of families have some members buried there—maybe 50-75 groves including our baby sister Doris May, whom we never knew. There grew the miniature iris we dubbed "Doris May" iris.

Half-mile fences ran east and west, proclaiming that we were now passing Rhoads acres—pasture west and large field east. At that fence stood a large Cottonwood tree—the only tree we passed between our homestead and Rhoads homestead. Prairie!

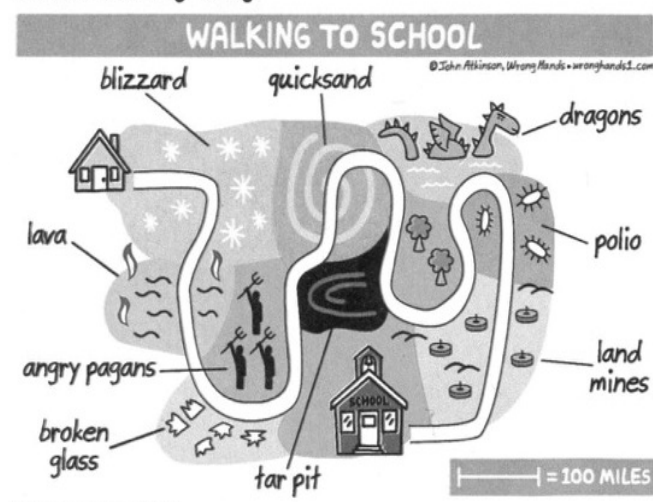
We arrived at school just beyond the east and west mile road—gravel or course. If it was nice, early kids might play around outside for a few minutes. If it was cold, or we were late or on-time, we would go into the sheltered but unheated ante room, get off our boots, caps, coats, deposit lunch buckets and go on into the (hopefully) warm school room. Hopefully, because it was the teacher's job to start the fire each morning. If she/he was late, or it the fire didn't start well, the room could be cool in the corners. Of course a little of this heat seeped into the ante room—water and lunches didn't freeze there.

After school we would repeat the walk, only things were in reverse. Sometimes we might find things of interest along the road. Once we saw a playing card or two. We felt they were so wicked we hardly dared touch them. So, the walks to school. Some calculations suggest perhaps 2,850 miles in the eight years! Helped keep us healthy, wealthy and wise—maybe.

~Excerpted from *An Agrarian Life* by George Harold Bonney



CHARTOON
'Back in my day'



JOHN ATKINSON, WRONG HANDS

BIDEN: JIM BENNETT—GETTY IMAGES

Black History Month Showcased In One-Room Schoolhouse

by Cheryl Vatcher Martin, M.A.

One doesn't automatically presume that tours related to Black History Month would transpire in a one room school house. But, on February 11th, 2017, the City of Romulus, in conjunction with the museum director, Pearl Varner, organized a tour of our historic buildings, including District No. 1 School, in Romulus, Michigan (circa 1839). The opportunity to learn about local history, or even their own history, presented itself as visitors stepped into the one room school.

This tour, the third event in three years, was held on a Saturday, early in the day so that the attendees who visited were able to see everything during daylight hours.

Some individuals who participated in this event wore a type of period dress reflecting their ancestors or the 1800's time frame, and into the 1900's.

A program was put together in a booklet/pamphlet for the attendees to read before and along the travel route. Each stop on the tour lasted approximately a half an hour. Besides the schoolhouse and the historic Samuel Kingsley House, they could also see the historic windmill next to the Kingsley House. Behind and adjacent to the school house stands the Pavilion, the restored Caboose, and the original Freight House.

The Samuel Kingsley House, circa 1855, sits across the road from the District No. 1 school house in its present location. This Civil War home was presumed to be a stop on the Underground railroad, when that house was located elsewhere in the City. Also, of relevance, is the fact that these two buildings were moved to the present location on Hunt Street as part of Romulus' Historic Park in downtown Romulus, Mi.

One relic inside of the showcase at the Historic Kingsley House is a pair of shackles or handcuffs which adds a sacred realism to what some of our own members of society perpetuated upon the slaves. It's a sobering moment for all to see such period artifacts. In the District School House,



*Visitors inside of the District No. 1 School.
Lady dressed in period clothing with her son*

the showcase promoting Black History Month has a variety of items inside it including an old photocopy of the White Church, a Methodist Church that also had a secret room in the dirt cellar which hid escaped slaves on their way to Canada. This dirt room was discovered in 1955 when the Church was moved a few feet to begin work on a basement. A few individuals saw this dugout under the church which was large enough to hold several people. At the time some eating utensils, broken pottery, and hand carvings made out of wood were found there. Unfortunately these artifacts no longer exist, however, one gentleman did a photo documentary with Pearl Varner. His story is a part of Romulus' historical collection.

The one room school house museum is an educational facility. The archives contain one room school house history, and more. Romulus' extensive archives begin in the school house, and the rest are in the Kingsley House. Scholars, researchers, history buffs, and the general public locally and from all over the country have visited to research about the City, their ancestors, and the many one room schools that served the area's populace. Normal hours are held on Sunday from 1:00pm-4:00pm, and during events such as Black History Month docent tours.

Some of Romulus' history is in the author's recent book, One Room Schools-Vanishing One Room Schools, for \$23.00. Her other book that includes Romulus history is Haiku For You: With Some One Room School House History, for \$32.00. Contact her at peroinc5@gmail.com for further mailing information.

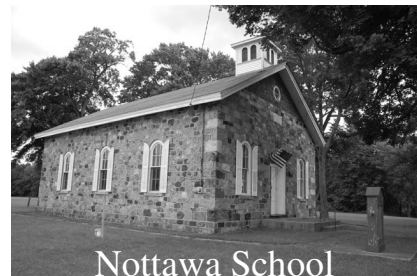
**THE MICHIGAN ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND :**

MORSA 2017 Annual Conference

**Saturday May 6, 2017
Sessions from 9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.**

8:30 Registration will be at the St. Joseph Historical Museum
34 N. Main Street
Three Rivers, Michigan 49093

—
The annual conference is an open and friendly opportunity for all participants to see – talk - learn – eat – reminisce as we celebrate the heritage of Michigan’s one-room schools



Conference attendees will:

- Board a bus for a tour of several one-room schools on the way to historic stone Nottawa School built in 1870.
- Enjoy a typical day in the one-room school taught by a “school marm,”
- Be entertained with schoolhouse stories by Warren Lawrence

The annual William Winglar award will presented to the Schoolhouse of the Year-2017.

For information contact
Rochelle Balkam, MORSA Vice-Chairman
222 Wildwood
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
Phone: 734/668-6294 Email: Balkamhp@gmail.com

Please register now as our exciting event is fast approaching (*next page*)

MORSA SPRING CONFERENCE 2017

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Registration Fee: () Person(s) @\$35Each \$ _____
(Includes: Coffee, lunch, and bus tour of additional
St. Joseph County one-room schools)

2017-2018 Membership Dues \$ _____
Retiree/Student \$10.
Individual \$15.
Organization \$25
Life-Time \$100

Total \$ _____

Please make check payable to MORSA and mail to:

Larry Schlack, MORSA Treasurer
2906 Woodgate Lane
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Places to Stay Three Rivers MI

B&B's:

Voyagers Inn. 0.3 miles from City Center
210 East St.
Voyagers-inn.com 269/279-9260

T&R Inn Between the Lakes
6.0 miles from city center
in between the lakes.com 269/244-5620

Hotels:

Holiday Inn Express Hotel
1207 W. Broadway 800/465-4329

Americas Best Value Inn
1211 W. Broadway 269/273-8100

Super 8
689 Super 8 Way 269/279-8888

For further information: www.rivercountry.com



The Juddville School (Shiawassee Co.) was one of the earliest schools built in Hazelton Township. It was built in 1854 on the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of section 34 (the southeast corner of Durand and Juddville Rd.) It was a log school and Miss Jane Judd was the first teacher. School had been held previous to this in a log cabin in section 22.

John Judd had moved to Hazelton in 1853, purchasing 400 acres in the area. He was instrumental in starting the school and it was named in honor of him. He also started church services in the log school.

The log school was used until 1884 when it was replaced by a brick building which has been re-sided with white siding. The school was closed in the early 1960s and the district was annexed to the New Lothrop and Corunna School Districts. The school stands today (1989) and is owned by Irene Turk.

~"Schools of Yesteryears, Our Heritage," presented by The Shiawassee County Historical Society.

Schoolhouse Stamps for Sale

MORSA continues to offer schoolhouse stamps for sale. The most recent stamp is of the Nottawa School, St. Joseph Co., MI. The cost is \$25 for a sheet of 20 stamps.

Contact **Larry Schlack:**

Email: lawr@net-link.net

Phone: 269-388-9136;

Mail: 2906 Woodgate Lane
Kalamazoo, MI
49008



Haiku For You *By Cheryl Vatcher-Martin*

School bell rings now
Historic one room school house
Red brick structure there



Three students on bench
A solid wood seat for them
Part of the school house.

Herding Cats



Trying to find a time when all MORSA board members can meet to carry on business is ever a challenge for MORSA Chairman, Tom M. Johnson. The following note arrived one day in our email inboxes from our excellent leader:

“Well, it turned out that some could come one week and some could come the other. Then some could come anytime and there were some who could come one day and not the next. There were even people who couldn't come any day...”

*~Tom M. Johnson,
Chair of MORSA*

And that was inspiration for this poem that follows:

Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association 2016/2017

Officers:

Dr. Tom M. Johnson, Chair
Rochelle Balkam, Vice-Chair
Larry Schlack, Treasurer
Hannah Geddes Wright,
Secretary

Board Members:

Suzanne Daniel, Emeritus
Dana Deimel
Tamara Gady
Myrna Grove
Dr. Thomas Gwaltney
Yvonne Hafner
Judy Shehigian
Cheryl Vatcher-Martin

The Slate Newsletter:

Hannah Geddes Wright, Editor

Membership Dues:

\$10 Senior (62+) or Student
\$15 Individual,
\$25 Organizations
\$100 Life

Website Address:

<<http://www.one-roomschool.org>

The Meeting Time

*It was time to have a meeting,
The date, it must be set.
But try to find a date for all—
It's not been settled yet!*

*For some, they could come one day—
And no other day would do.
But then others said that anytime
Would work—sky gray or blue.*

*Then there were some who couldn't
Come to any get-together.
So Chairman Tom, forever calm,
Announced his whither-whether:*

*“We'll have to meet another time,”
Said he—“It shan't be long!”
But like herding cats, he'll find that
They'll scatter and be gone.*

~Hannah Geddes Wright

*Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association
c/o Tom M. Johnson
4815 Barton Rd.
Williamston, MI 488895*