



**Meeting of the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission
Thursday, April 22, 2021 - 7 p.m.**

Next Meeting date June 17, 2021

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83253041305?pwd=V2g4bnRRSEFwUjhpRW1DNkRJaU5EZz09>

Meeting ID: 832 5304 1305

Passcode: 32267054

Or call:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) or +1 646 518 9805 US (New York)

1) CALL TO ORDER

a) Roll Call

2) APPROVAL OF THE April 22, 2021 CONSENT AGENDA

3) ENACTMENT OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

a) Approval of the February 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes

4) BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

4) NEW BUSINESS

a) Meeting times are all 7pm. Dates for 2021 are as follows:

February 25

April 22

June 17

August 12

October 28* (I missed this date on the last agenda, sorry -Wendy)

December 16

b) The history of the Farwell House – 39505 Ann Arbor Trail –*Jack Dempsey*

c) The Pursell House update-*Jack Dempsey*



6) OLD BUSINESS

- a) Shearer Cemetery – *Wendy Harless*
 - 1. Dead tree has been removed
 - 2. The removal resulted in some damage to the path. It will need to be fixed.
 - 3. Possible Spring clean up? Let's discuss possible dates. Darrin Silvester says that Sundays are best.
- b) The Pursell House update-*Jack Dempsey and Dennis Cebulski*
- c) Rockwell Sculptures update – *Wendy*
 - 1. Review of the draft layout/design of the Township historic marker
 - 2. Next steps, we need to send a draft to Lisa Howard and Supervisor Heise for review
- d) Historic Sites Brochure 1st Draft – *Jack Dempsey*
 - 1. Review text
- e) Plymouth Township History factoids for the Township Newsletter—*Wendy Harless*
 - 1. We need more factoids
- f) Logo approved by Supervisor Heise—*Wendy Harless*
- g) Zoom meeting presentation Speakers for 2021 –*Wendy Harless*
 - 1. Richard Cox said that they would be willing to give a Zoom presentation about Phoenix Mill
 - 2. I need to ask them for dates that are good with them and then coordinate with the library.

7) ADJOURNMENT



**Meeting of the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission
Thursday, February 25, 2021 - 7 p.m.**

Next Meeting date April 22 , 2021

MINUTES

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87341823228?pwd=SENPanUvbXBZeGgxUlF2RVdXNmQwZz09>

Meeting ID: 873 4182 3228

Passcode: 74666180

Dial-in number: 1-929-205-6099

1) CALL TO ORDER at 7:00 p.m. by W. Harless, Chair.

a) Roll Call

| | | |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| PRESENT: | Colleen Azimi | Dennis Cebulski |
| | Jack Dempsey | Kevin Gurtowsky |
| | Wendy Harless | Sybil Hunter |
| | Carol Souchock | |

ALSO PRESENT: Natalie Bond, Asst. Planner, McKenna
Alice Geletzke, Recording Secretary

2) APPROVAL OF THE February 25, 2021 CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by S. Hunter and supported by K. Gurtowsky to approve agenda for the regular meeting of February 25, 2021. Ayes all.

3) ENACTMENT OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

a) Approval of the December 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Moved by S. Hunter and supported by C. Azimi to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 4, 2020. Ayes all.

4) BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – There were none.

5) NEW BUSINESS

a) Meeting times are all 7pm. Dates for 2021 are as follows:

February 25

April 22

June 17

August 12

December 16

It was agreed to check the date of October 28, 2021 for a possible meeting.



b) Review of goals and objectives for 2021

Possible goals include completing a tourism brochure, getting Shearer cemetery to become a historic district, obtaining an historic marker for the Rockwell sculptures, completing the photo inventory, and compiling factoids for the newsletter.

c) The Pursell house update-*Jack Dempsey*

J. Dempsey noted the concerns of residents affected regarding density, buffering and drainage when the developer appeared before the Planning Commission on January 20 to seek approval for a cluster housing option on the property. His concern was for historical recognition of the property since Mr. Pursell had held many offices, including that of long-time state representative. A plaque was suggested for recognition. The matter was postponed until the May meeting. There was also discussion to research whether the house was part of a larger piece of property originally owned by the Eaton family.

6) OLD BUSINESS

a) Shearer Cemetery – *Wendy*

1. Dead tree removal update
2. Possible Spring clean up

W. Harless noted that Supervisor Heise is attempting to get the large tree removed and volunteers such as members of the National Honor Society and Eagle Scouts will be sought for safe, sectioned spring clean-up.

b) Historic Plaques – *Wendy*

1. Review for Malek plaque estimated cost

Prices received for 18"x18" with 486 letters were received from Franklin Bronze works at \$999 with no post, and \$1,287 from Paul Zimmerman Foundries, with a 3' post. Also discussed was checking for a company on Main Street who might make them and the cost of Serene Landscaping installation.

Seeking funds from the Dunning Foundation was also discussed as a possibility.

c) Historic Resources Survey – *Wendy Harless*

1. Letter to home owners update –*Colleen Azimi*



C. Azimi reviewed her working with the Supervisor's office to have the letter to homeowners asking for permission to photograph their property signed by Commissioners and sent from the Township on their letterhead.

d) Rockwell Sculptures historic marker update

1. Review first draft of text
2. Discuss photos

The text and photos were reviewed, prior to further review of the text by Supervisor Heise and Lisa Howard of the Arts Council. It was noted that a portion of one of the sculptures now at the Arts Council would be returned to Township Park.

e) Plymouth Township History factoids for the Township Newsletter—*Wendy Harless*

1. We need more factoids

Additional factoids were discussed, as well as the possibility of presenting more virtual presentations.

f) Review new logo mock ups—*Wendy Harless*

Moved by S. Hunter and supported by K. Gurtowsky to select Logo No. 3 as the official logo of the Historic District Commission to be forwarded to the Township for approval. Ayes all.

7) ADJOURNMENT

Moved by S. Hunter and supported by C. Souchock to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Ayes all.

Wendy Harless, Chair
Historic District Commission

MAP

Map of Wayne Co., Michigan

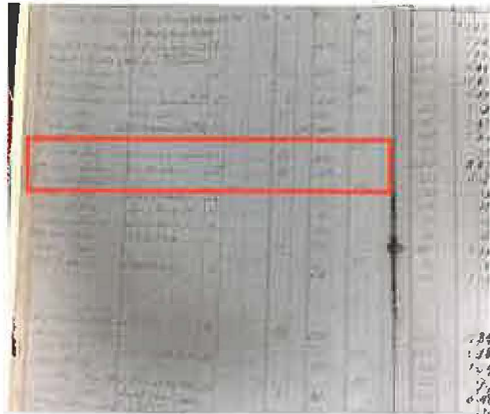
• Annotate this item



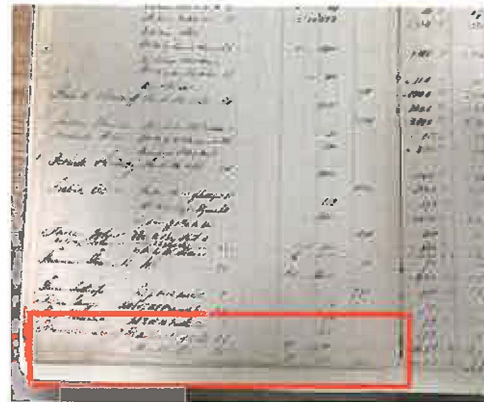
Download | JPEG (215kb) 2025.png



1860 Map of Plymouth Showing the land and house of Leroy Farwell.



Property rolls from 1857 showing that Leroy Farwell owned the property.



Property rolls from 1859 showing that Leroy Farwell owned the property.

"Leroy Fairwell" in the 1860 United States Federal Census:

Age: 50
Birth Year: abt 1810
Gender: Male
Birth Place: New York
Home in 1860:
 Plymouth, Wayne, Michigan
Post Office: Plymouth
Dwelling Number: 313
Family Number: 296
Occupation: Farmer
Real Estate Value: 10000
Personal Estate Value: 1300

Household Members, all born in NY, males listed all as "farmer"

Leroy Fairwell 50
Olive Fairwell 48 "Keeper"
Joseph Fairwell 23
Rubben Fairwell 21
Crawford Fairwell 19
Jerome Fairwell 17
James Fairwell 12
Wm Fairwell 15
Hary Fairwell 13

In 1840 Leroy and family live in Arcadia, Wayne, New York

"Reuben Farwell"

| | |
|--|---|
| Name | Reuben Farwell |
| Regiment | Union |
| Organization | Ct. H. First Michigan Cavalry |
| Dates of Service | 8/16/61 - 8/24/64 |
| Rank | Private |
| Discharged at | Plymouth, MI |
| Marital Status at Discharge | Single |
| Occupation at Discharge | Farmer |
| Physical Description at 1st Enlistment | |
| Height | 5' 5" |
| Complexion | Light |
| Eyes Color | Black |
| Hair Color | Brown |
| Age | 22 |
| Hospitalization | |
| Place | Trinity R.C., Georgetown, DC |
| Date | 8/20/62 - 9/14/62 |
| Diagnosis | Gunshot wound, left breast, upper right arm, back of Second Shell Box (Michigan), VA, 8/20/62 |
| Place | Armory Square, Washington, DC |
| Date | 10/12/63 - 4/18/64 |
| Diagnosis | Gunshot wound, left foot, Sandy Station, VA, 10/11/63 |
| Place | Reynolds, Manassas, VA |
| Date | 6/1/64 - 6/14/64 |
| Diagnosis | Dysentery |
| Prisoner of War | |

Reuben is injured in the foot and taken to Armory Hospital in Washington D.C.

NOTES

"I KNEW REUBEN FARWELL AS A FIRST-CLASS SOLDIER": AN UNPUBLISHED WHITMAN LETTER

While researching a presentation for The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., on Walt Whitman's hospital service, I came across a previously unpublished letter from Whitman in the pension file of Whitman's soldier-friend and Civil War veteran Reuben Farwell (see back cover).¹ Written at the request of Reuben's widow Ann, the 1884 letter is addressed to the Commissioner of Pensions in support of Mrs. Farwell's application for survivor benefits. The letter is written entirely in Whitman's hand, on both sides of a single sheet of unlined white paper, 8 by 10½ inches, folded vertically in thirds, and horizontally in half. On one side, in the middle fold, the letter is addressed:

To the
Commissioner of Pensions
Washington DC

On the opposite side, is written:

328 Mickle street
Camden New Jersey
October 5 1884

I knew Reuben Farwell as a first-class soldier (it was in 1863 or '64) of a Michigan Regiment—he was in Ward A, Armory Square Hospital, Dr Elias Superintendent—I was with him off & on for some months & remember the case perfectly well. He had a very bad foot wound, & I should judge it something that would deteriorate his health & more or less incapacitate him through life afterward—till his death—& even tend toward that event—which as I understand occurred about a year ago.

I strongly recommend the granting a pension to his widow Ann E. Farwell.

Very respectfully
Walt Whitman

Armed with Whitman's testimony and other supporting documentation, Mrs. Farwell was awarded a government pension for herself and her daughter Nettie.²

Saluted in Whitman's *Memoranda During the War* as a "military soldier,"³ Reuben Farwell served with the 1st Michigan Cavalry. A fit Michigan, before the war,⁴ Farwell enlisted as a private or at the age of twenty-two.⁵ His military papers described him tall, with a light complexion offset by black eyes and brow soldier of the American Civil War participated in many including Second Bull Run (August 30, 1862), Gettysburg

and U. S. Grant's Forty Days Campaign (Spring 1864). While serving with the Michigan Brigade under General George Armstrong Custer at Brandy Station, Virginia, on October 11, 1863, Farwell received a shell wound in his left foot. It landed him in Armory Square Hospital, where Farwell met Walt Whitman.⁶

Reuben Farwell was one of the scores of soldiers whose recuperation was fostered by the "ordinary cheer and magnetism" of Whitman's personality, dispensed as a form of medicine by that unique hospital visitor (*MDW*, 18). Indeed, the poet's claim in "The Wound-Dresser," that "Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips," was literally true in the case of Farwell. Years after his release from the military hospital, Reuben longingly remembered Whitman's bedside visits: "Walt my dear old Friend = how I would like [sic] to grasp your hand and give you a kiss as I did in the days of yore, what a satisfaction it would be to me."⁷

The hospital in which Farwell was a patient received high marks from Whitman. "The Wards are very comfortable, with new floors and plaster walls, and models of neatness. I am not sure but this is a model hospital, after all, in important respects" (*MDW*, 38). Armory Square's location on the Mall at 7th Street, S.W. (the current site of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum), provided ready access for the wounded arriving from the Potomac River wharves situated a few blocks south. Dr. David Willard Bliss, the hospital's surgeon-in-charge, was lauded by Whitman as "one of the best surgeons in the army" (*MDW*, 50). Like Farwell, Bliss had been a Michigan Volunteer who served originally with that state's 3d Infantry, and later as a surgeon in the U.S. Volunteers.⁸

Farwell was released from Armory Square hospital on April 18, 1864. He served the remaining four months of his tour and was mustered out of the 1st Michigan Cavalry on August 22.

As his military career had been "typical" of a generation of American young men, so Farwell's post-War life followed a familiar path. Returning home to farm, Farwell soon married, and raised a daughter.⁹ Like that of so many War veterans, his life was marked by ill health. Farwell's wife recalled that, "Reuben . . . served three years in the Civil War came home almost a cripple never able to work. I took care of him. We got along as best we could."¹⁰ Sinking spells, bouts of chronic diarrhea, and a debilitating stroke eventually forced Farwell to lease out his 35-acre Nankin, Michigan, farm to tenants and rely on a veteran's disability pension.

As with many of the soldier patients he befriended, Whitman corresponded intermittently with Farwell. A spate of letters between them in 1864 was followed by a ten-year silence. Whitman's preparation in 1875 of his *Memoranda During the War* apparently caused him to seek out several soldier friends, including Farwell.¹¹ A February 5th postcard from Whitman elicited an immediate response from Farwell on the 11th: "But you have not forgotten your little Michigan friend yet—Well i have not forgotten my Hospital Friend yet and I hope that I never will" (Shively, 141). Whitman returned this heartfelt sympathy: "O how I should like to see you, every day, dear Mitch—my own dear boy and comrade of the war—the hospital—I have to sit here alone much of the time, and think of those old times" (*Corr.*, 2:328).

Reuben Farwell died on May 19, 1883. Whitman was able to provide one last service to his "little Mitch," as the poet called Reuben (*MDW*, 59), by helping Farwell's widow and daughter obtain a pension. Ann Farwell survived her husband by 49 years, and never re-married. She joined Reuben in death on December 29, 1932, on the couple's 68th wedding anniversary.

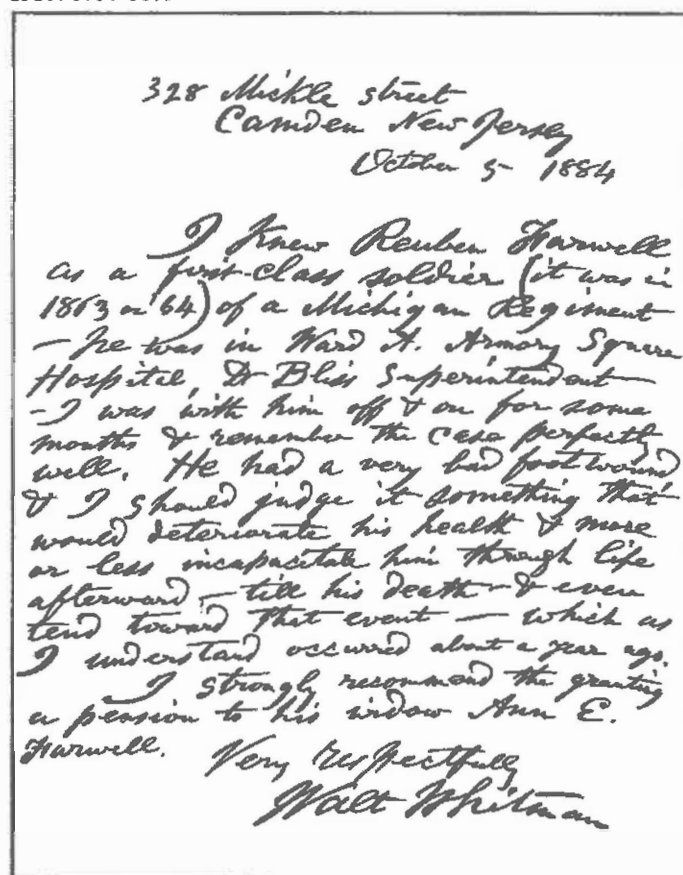
The Washington Friends of Walt Whitman

MARTIN G. MURRAY

NOTES

- 1 See "Pension Record for Reuben Farwell, Company H, 1st Michigan, 1864," Record Group Number 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as Farwell's Pension Record). This letter does not appear in Edwin Haviland Miller, ed., *Walt Whitman: A Collection of His Letters* (New York: New York University Press, 1961, 1964, 1969, 1971).
- 2 Although there is no extant letter from Mrs. Farwell to Whitman, the fact that Whitman in September 1884 wrote down her address indicates that she had written to him around that time (Walt Whitman *Notebooks*, ed. William White [New York: New York University Press, 1971]).
- 3 Walt Whitman, *Memoranda During the War* (Camden: 1875-1876).
- 4 Farwell was born in Lyons, Wayne County, New York, one of seven boys) born to Leroy and Olive Farwell. Some time before 1860, the Plymouth, Michigan. (Data based on Census Records, National Archives.)
- 5 See "Compiled Military Service Record of Reuben Farwell, Company H, 1st Michigan Cavalry, 1861-1864," Record Group Number 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives (hereafter referred to as Farwell's Military Service Record).
- 6 Farwell was admitted to Armory Square Hospital in Washington, D.C., on January 12, 1863, and given Bed Number 33, in Ward A. He remained in the hospital until January 28, 1864, when he was furloughed home for a month, returning on February 27. (See Farwell's Military Service Record.)
- 7 Charley Shively, *Drum Beats* (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1971). The extant letters from Farwell to Whitman are included in Shively's book.
- 8 Bliss was thirty-five when he enlisted in the 3rd Michigan Infantry on June 10, 1861. For Bliss's military career, see "Compiled Military Service Record of D. W. Bliss, Companies F and S, 3rd Michigan Infantry, 1861," and also "Personal Papers of Medical Officers and Physicians, Medical Officers Files, for D. W. Bliss, Surgeon, U.S. Volunteers, 1861-1865," Record Group Number 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives.
- 9 Farwell married Ann Knickerbocker, a 22-year-old woman from Livonia, Michigan, on December 29, 1864. Ann Farwell gave birth to the couple's first and only child, a daughter they named Nettie, on March 28, 1870. (See Farwell's Pension Record.)
- 10 See September 18, 1916, letter in Farwell's Pension Record.
- 11 In 1874 and 1875, Whitman corresponded with Benton Wilson, Marvill Winterstein, and Bethuel Smith. With Farwell, they were in the list of typical soldiers in *MDW*, 59.

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An unpublished Whitman letter in support of a soldier's pension. See pp. 159-161.

PETER ROCKWELL SCUPLTURES

IN PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP PARK



Peter Rockwell stands in front of his creations.

In 1986, the Plymouth Community Arts Council raised the funds to bring sculptor Peter Rockwell to our community for three months to create a series of sculptures right here in Plymouth Township Park. Rockwell, the son of famed American illustrator Norman Rockwell, was a world renowned sculptor in his own right, with his work gracing the National

Cathedral in Washington D.C., The National Portrait Gallery, St. Paul's Church in Rome, a convent in Chioggia, Italy and numerous public park installations around the world, just as we see here.

One of the major objectives of this project was for Rockwell to not only demonstrate his sculpting techniques for the public, but to also have members of the public partake in the sculpting work themselves. In a newspaper article from the time, Rockwell revealed that this was a lifelong dream of his, "to create a work of art with his audience." Rockwell went on to say "One of the biggest problems of an artist is a lack of contact with your audience. Here I can explain why I'm doing what I'm doing and even revise if I need to." We know from photos and newspaper articles of the time that the members of the Plymouth-Canton community did actually help out with the sculpting, taking tools in hand and working under the eye of Rockwell himself.

Rockwell developed a reputation for his whimsical "monsters" with elongated features and playful expressions. These features can be clearly seen in the sculptures on display here. In a Detroit Free Press article from the time, Rockwell is quoted as saying "I guess I have always done monsters because they relate to earth and stone. They're a fantasy. And for something like this, they provide a playful element."



Members of the community were invited to help with the work.



Site of the Rockwell sculptures under construction.



The Drooling Monster (shown above) was a fountain that stood for only a few years before it toppled to the ground.

DROOLING MONSTER

The sculptures we have on display in Plymouth Township Park are sculpted of Italian limestone. Rockwell intended for this installation to be a place for children to play, and so they did for several years. The smaller pieces were intended to be climbed upon by small park visitors for what Rockwell thought would be thousands of years. "This is the same stone that the Colosseum in Rome is made of, and it has stood for 1,800 years." Rockwell is quoted as saying about his work in Plymouth Township Park. This was not to be, however, as sometime in the 1990s, the tallest of Rockwell's sculptures described as a "tall fountain with water spilling from a 'crying monster'" toppled over, breaking some of the smaller stone parts of the sculpture. Luckily, the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department collected all of the parts of the sculpture and put them in storage for safe keeping.

The largest part of the "drooling monster" sculpture (as Rockwell described it) is now back on display here at Township Park. The other parts of what was once this fountain are on display at the Plymouth Community Arts Council offices on Sheldon Rd.

Fold 1

Historic District Commission

presents

Plymouth Township

Routes to History

Free Map
&
Self-Guided Tour

Investigate two centuries of history within the Township of Plymouth on the far western edge of Wayne County, Michigan. Discover where democracy was born, the once-hidden final resting place of early settlers, and other sites of distinction. Begin uncovering the township's heritage anywhere on the map and be fascinated. Sites are letter designated for easy reference.

For more information
contact

?
?
?

Sponsors

X
Y
Z

Fold 2

Plymouth Township, Michigan Founded 1825

A Township Hall *9955 N Haggerty Rd*

One of Michigan's nearly two thousand State Historical Markers, installed in 2020, tells the story of one of the earliest political subdivisions in either peninsula, dating back before statehood. In 1824, the U.S. Government sold off the first piece of property for settlement. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had declared that Michigan would always be "free" – non-slave – and the opening of the Erie Canal in 1821 began the flow of settlers here. Step into the [date built] administration building to find a beautiful mosaic [describe] across from the "Town Hall" with a message inscribed to the power of grass roots democracy.

B Farwell House *39505 E. Ann Arbor Trail*

Once a 150-acre farm, the house may date as early as [1847]. Three sons of farmer Leroy Farwell served during the Civil War in the 2nd Michigan Infantry and 1st and 4th Michigan Cavalry regiments. One of them, wounded in action, became a friend of famed poet Walt Whitman while convalescing in a medical ward where the National Mall is today. Later it was known as Hope Farm. You can still see the "bones" of the early structure in this "house of heroes."

C Hines Park & Drive *between Newburgh and Five Mile Roads*

[etc]

D Burroughs Building *41000 Plymouth Road*

[etc]

Fold 3

E First Responder Memorial *Hines Drive at Haggerty Road*

Established in 2013, the “Heroes on Hines” memorial honors First Responders of Police, Fire, and EMS personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty within Wayne County. On six five-ton granite walls are inscribed the names of over four hundred fallen public servants.

F Haggerty Comfort Station *41181 Edward N Hines Drive*

Built in 1937, this was one of the early public comfort rest stops and a prototype for roadside development. When originally constructed, this station had a full-time attendant, an information booth, and concession stand.

G Gunsolly Mills *Gunsolly Drive in Hines Park*

Located now in historic Greenfield Village at the Henry Ford in Dearborn, John Gunsolly operated a water-powered carding mill as well as a saw and cider mill on the Middle Rouge River here beginning in the 1850s. Area farmers brought their wool to this mill to have it carded (combed) so it could be spun into thread.

H Phoenix Mill *14977 Northville Road*

[etc]

Fold 4

I City of Plymouth

Old Village, located between Wilcox and Plymouth Roads, and several blocks east and west of Starkweather Street (named for an early Township settler) – and Downtown Plymouth, centered at Main Street and Ann Arbor Trail, was once known as Plymouth Corners, the earliest grouping of homes and businesses that formed the central community for the 1825 [?]-square mile jurisdiction.

J Shearer Cemetery ? N. Territorial Road

[etc]

K Carl Pursell Home 46200 N. Territorial Road

[etc]

L Tibbets House and Barn 46225 N. Territorial Road

[etc]

additional notes

mention Museum and Library

mention North Territorial Road's historical roots

Fold 5

M Township Park *46640 W. Ann Arbor Trail*

[Native American/Tonquish Creek; farm and one-room school heritage; Rockwells; nearby FLW house/s; ?]

N Peacock House *47420 W. Ann Arbor Trail*

[built in 1928 etc]

O McClumpha/Hulse House *9275 MClumpha Road*

[built circa 1869 etc]

P Colony Farm *Colony Farm Drive*

[info from <http://www.colonyfarmssub.com/history>]

Fold 6

[info on Township? On HDC and its meetings?]

[PT LOGO]