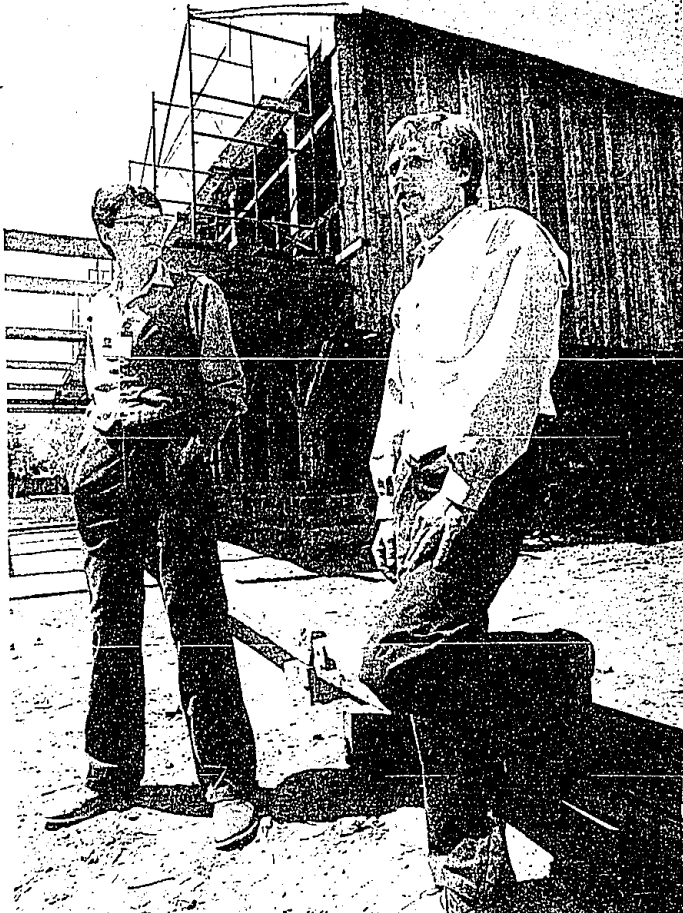


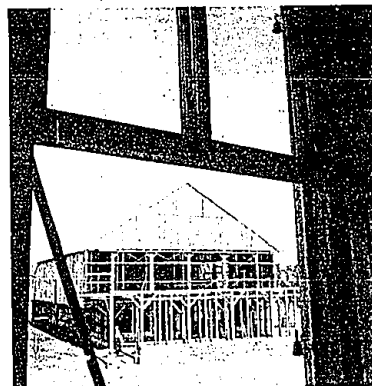
Seven acres of land near the Greenfield Village entrance were cleared to make a home for the birthplace of Harvey Firestone, founder of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. The Edison Insti-

tute's first working farm will let visitors experience what it was like to live on a late 19th century Ohio sheep farm.



Working the farm while presenting "living history" to Greenfield Village visitors are Livonia resident James Johnson (left) and Steve Eastman,

who came to Dearborn from New Hampshire in January.



Details like this door latch are being carefully restored.

Rising behind the farmhouse is the Pennsylvania German Bank Barn, which is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide.

Greenfield Village finally gets a farm

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

MONTHS OF RESEARCH convinced Greenfield Village historians the 1828 Harvey Firestone birthplace was completely remodeled in 1882.

They were very relieved to discover a small note tucked under the plaster of their new acquisition.

Apparently put there by the 14-year-old future tire magnate, it was signed "Harvey Firestone, 1882."

"It was really a delight to find that note. It told us we made the right decision," said Blake Hayes, conservator-historical structures.

OPENED MAY 25, the Firestone Farm is Greenfield Village's first major acquisition since the 1740-1750 Salt Box House was completed in 1978.

It is the largest addition since Henry Ford was busily acquiring birthplaces. At \$1.25 million, it matches the English Cotswold Cottage as most expensive.

But even more important is its significance as the only working farm in the complex of 100 structures.

"Really, the American story starts with the farm and evolves to the factory, town and city," Edison Institute President Harold K. Skramstad Jr. said.

"This allows us to tell stories we haven't been able to tell before with effectiveness."

MOVED FROM Columbiana, Ohio, near Youngstown to seven acres just west of the village entrance, its main feature is the two-story brick farmhouse where the founder of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. grew up.

After he made his fortune, Harvey

Firestone entertained friends such as Henry Ford and Thomas Edison there in the summer.

The house's interior was completely redone in 1882, but rather than reconstruct the house as it was in the early 1800s, researchers decided to preserve the later, remodeled version.

"IT WAS VERY well preserved in its 1882 pattern," Hayes said. Hayes' crew uncovered the well-kept secret that the house had been updated. The building also underwent many changes in the 1890s when it eventually became a dairy farmhouse.

"And there was also a strong desire to interpret the 1882 period as a working farm. Most museums have pioneer farms."

Curators admit the house's decorating may surprise some visitors. One wall carries four colors - all microscopically analyzed so they could be reproduced exactly. The outside trim on the red brick building is green, brown and yellow.

The colors and wallpaper will surprise people, but there was so much good evidence. There's a tendency to assume all houses had green shutters and white trim."

RESTORED THROUGH A \$2 million grant from Firestone Foundation of Akron, Ohio, the farm is more than just another famous person's birthplace.

Instead, it's a working sheep farm complete with a large Pennsylvania Dutch bank barn, pump house, chicken house, and fields full of crops and an orchard.

A half dozen Greenfield Village buildings were moved so that there would be growing space for oats, hay

and corn. Grazing on the farm are several kinds of animals, including the Vermont Merino sheep whose wool and lambs the family relied on for income. Interpreters wearing clothes of the 1880s actually run the farm. Using period farm equipment and household utensils, they will help visitors understand late 1800s agriculture.

LEAD INTERPRETER is Steve Eastman, a New Hampshire resident who came here in January from a small living history farm called Norlands.

While planning to develop some educational programs about the farm, Eastman said his main goal is to "interpret the whole process to people."

"I've always felt it's important to interpret history to people in a living way."

Livonia resident James Johnson, who was lead interpreter at the Saltbox and Edison homes before joining the farm crew, also enjoys "living history."

"Just being able to show this to people," he said. "It's great fun."

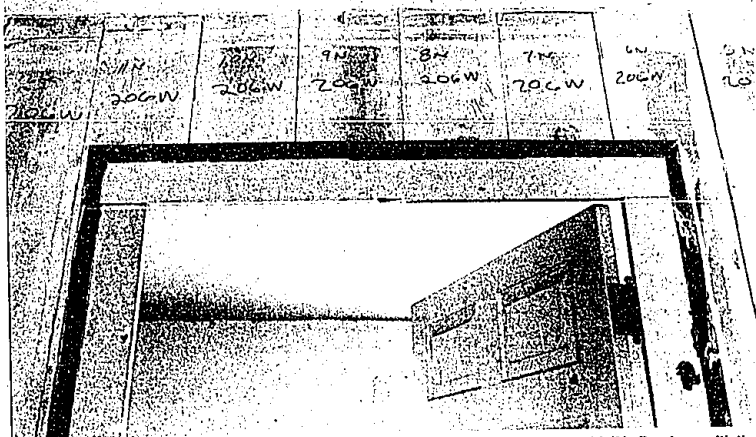
TO BE DEDICATED June 29, the Firestone Farm is expected to attract visitors from all over the world.

That's one reason the Firestone Foundation wanted it moved from its original location - where 75 to 100 people visited it a year.

Skramstad sees the completed project as the end result of "two people looking for a partnership and finding it."

"The American story begins with the farm, but Greenfield Village was lacking one. Firestone had a farm, but not an audience."

"It's a natural fit for the Firestone Farm to be at Greenfield Village."



During several months of studying and dismantling, Edison Institute historians learned as much as possible about the Firestone house. Each piece in the house was gently removed and reassembled in Dearborn with the help of careful numbering.

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