

Future of historic house uncertain

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By David Litogot
special writer

Don't cry for me, As houses go, I've had a good life. I am probably the oldest surviving frame building in Farmington. I remember when Arthur Power and some friends built me in 1826. The timbers and floors came from the

footprints in history

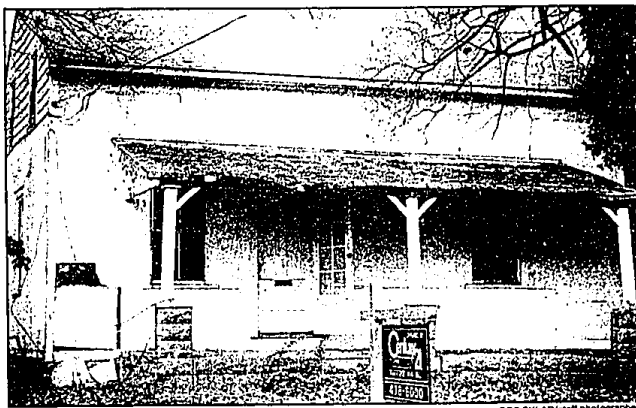
saw mill that was located right down the hill behind me. Farmington was just beginning to blossom in 1826. Shiawassee, the street in front of me, was just a widened Indian trail. The hamlet of Powerville had a few buildings — all

log cabins except me. Shiawassee would become the main street of this town, and I saw many people pass by on their way to Michigan's interior.

I was first used as a store and several people owned me, including John Power, the grandson of Arthur. John fought with Farragut in the Civil War under the alias of John Wilcox. It seems his father, Abram, would not let him enlist at 17, so he ran away to New York and enlisted in the Navy. I lost track of him for awhile, but the word is he traveled the country in a theatrical troupe before returning to Farmington and becoming an outstanding citizen.

HERE IT is, more than 100 years later. Some of my windows are broken and my historical sign — that called me the Carpenter House — is gone. Most recently, I have been a "haunted house," scaring youngsters around Halloween time. That's why one room sports large purple dots and the remaining windows are painted black.

My most prized architectural element is perhaps my wood staircase and railing. The floors are still sturdy and my frame is still strong and square. But even Bob Vila, of This Old House, would shake his head. My rooms are too small, the layers of paint and wallpaper are rapidly peeling off and the second-story ceiling shows evidence of a roof fire. That young, noble Hartford Real Estate agent John Leitch claims that



BOB SKLAR/staff photographer

The Carpenter House is on the north side of Shiawassee, just west of Farmington Road.

If you want me, the price is right. But you must move off this lot, bring me up to code and put some money into me — maybe more than I am worth. I guess there have been hundreds of phone calls, but you will notice that I am still here.

Some of my parts are salvageable. My sturdy floor boards my "quirkily" glass, my doors, my banister. But as a house, a home? My life as a viable building is over.

My present owner, the Baptist Church, has used me for meeting facilities and storage. Now it needs

more room, for buildings and parking. The church has done the right thing: It has offered me to the community.

MY TOWN of Farmington has changed. The streets are crowded with cars, the offices and apartments are covering land that was once fields and farmland. The Farmington area has seen many old buildings preserved as homes and offices. Some were moved to be saved. Some were of no historical or intrinsic value and were torn down.

In keeping with that delicate balance of heritage and progress, buildings of value should be preserved. Other than being the oldest frame building in Farmington, I have not provided shelter to anyone for more than 20 years.

I have no unique architectural characteristics, no niche in Farmington history. My destiny is in question.

Unless you have the money, a piece of land and a handyman's patience, don't worry about me and don't cry for me.

Newspaper is honored

The Detroit Teacher newspaper, edited by Lois Vagozzi of Farmington Hills, won three awards in the 1987 International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) Journalism Awards Contest.

The awards were for best original photograph, best editorial column and unique performance, a special issue devoted to the writing and drawings of students on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Detroit Teacher, official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, competes in the ILCA contest in the local union category

against publications of all AFL-CIO unions.

In this year's competition, there were 1,159 entries from 160 publications with 130 entries winning awards.

Judges in this year's contest were: Dorothy Gilliam, Washington Post; Murray Seeger, Radio Free Europe; Rick Valliere, Bureau of National Affairs; Lee White, Communications Workers of America; Kim Feller, National Writers Union; and Joseph Poole, writer and journalism lecturer.

City man on Lotto show

Jack Lambath Sr. will be a statewide television star on Saturday, Nov. 7, when he appears on the half-hour "Michigan Super Lotto Second Chance Sweepstakes" special, set to air at 7:30 p.m.

Lambath, a retired truck driver and father of two, is one of six contestants competing for a top prize of \$50,000. Other prizes will range from \$10,000 to \$2,500.

The six became contestants by being one of two million players who entered the Super Lotto Second Chance Sweepstakes between Aug. 26 and Oct. 3. During that time, Super Lotto tickets with five non-winning plays for a single drawing served as sweepstakes entries. A series of random drawings were used to select the six contestants.

Lambath believes something good will happen the night of the television special. He is a regular Lottery game player and has won twice in the Daily 3 game.

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