

Creative Living

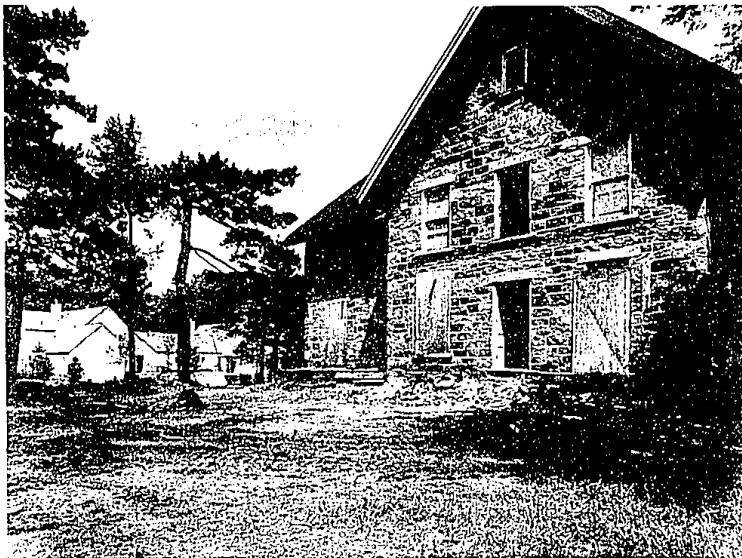
classified real estate and homes

Corinne Abatt editor/644-1100



Thursday, July 10, 1985 O&E

(P)1E



The stone house on the corner of Lahser and 14 Mile, Bloomfield Township, subject of controversy for several years, is now on the road to a new life. It stood vacant and uncared for after its last occupant died.

The bay window which faces Lahser, with its mid-19th century exterior moldings, is in the living room of the historic house. The stone work, attributed to Irish stone mason Hugh Purdy, is the original.

Stone house saved from demolition

The historic, stone house at the corner of Lahser and Fourteen Mile, Bloomfield Township, close to destruction just two years ago, is now being restored as a picturesque private residence.

Developer John Shekerjian said he bought the house and surrounding land in Bloomfield Township two years ago "because I liked the house."

With the architectural firm of Luckenbach/Ziegelman, Shekerjian said his development of 12-cluster homes, "Pinehurst," on the adjoining land was designed to complement the line and look of the historic house.

Pinehurst, with steep gabled, cedar shake roofs, fieldstone trim and aggregate stone drives and sidewalks has a delightful timeless look.

THE BASSETT home's rocky past was about to end with previous owners, a group of doctors who hoped to put a tennis complex on the property. Even after Shekerjian bought it, the township was eager to have it demolished.

Shekerjian said the township considered the neglected, vacant house, with the boarded-up windows and overgrown shrubbery, an eyesore and "really wanted it down."

Several neighbors were opposed to its destruction. Leslie Kowitz of Birmingham wrote a letter to the Economic Development Commission. Paul and Anne Klepper of neighboring Beverly Hills and Sue Smith — daughter of the late Kay Smith, author of "Bloomfield Blossoms," who researched the history of

the house — strongly supported saving the house.

Sometimes dubbed the "stone house" because of its native stone masonry construction, it was built in 1873 for Daniel Bassett, with construction attributed to Irish stone mason, Hugh Purdy.

The Bassett family has a colorful heritage. Samuel Bassett, 1784-1873, was one of the original Bloomfield Township settlers.

A descendant of Henry I of England, he was born in Litchfield, Conn. One of his ancestors came to Plymouth Colony in 1621 on the second Pilgrim ship, "Fortune," participated in the Boston Tea Party and fought in the Revolutionary War.

SAMUEL Bassett brought his wife and sons to Michigan in 1832.

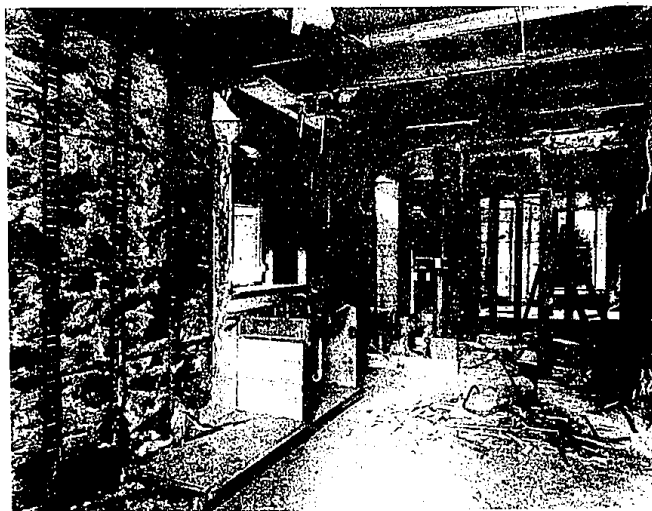
Daniel was born in 1835 in a log home built by his father on 1,320 heavily wooded acres which he bought for \$1.25 per acre.

In 1861 Bassett deeded 160 acres to Daniel and the house was built 12 years later.

It has a post and beam framing system developed in England and used widely in this country prior to 1900.

Daniel Bassett died in 1904 and his wife remained in the house until just before her death in 1909.

The renovation project is scheduled to be completed by fall and the new owners are following the daily progress closely.



The interior renovation, as evidenced by the photo at right of the kitchen area, is extensive. The estimated cost for completely updating the old house kept several of the house's defenders from plunging into the project. The new kitchen will have oak cabinets and moldings and modern conveniences.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Etching titled, "The Suffering of Jeremiah," tells the story with sensitivity and pathos.

Chagall met Bible's challenge

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Artist Marc Chagall, who died last year in Southern France at age 97, did many monumental works during his long lifetime.

One rarely seen in total, the 105 etchings illustrating the Old Testament, is on display at Park West Galleries of Southfield through July. This is one of a very few places locally where the space and light are adequate for displaying the entire portfolio.

These works, signed in the plate and done over a 22 year period, 1934-1956, were originally commissioned by Ambroise Vollard, French art dealer.

Chagall, born in Vitebsk, Russia, of Jewish parents in 1897, drew on this heritage for much of his work, particularly the Old Testament etchings.

Chagall's work has a kind of ethereal or mystical quality about it. His subjects may be traditional or Biblical, but people and animals float somewhere between earth and sky, heaven and earth — attributable to his interest in the ballet and opera as well as his inherent pleasure in fantasy.

HIS WORKS convey a delight with the beauty of life and its simple pleasures. Even with subjects in

the midst of tragedy, Chagall frequently adds a detail to suggest that life continues and adversity is part of the scheme of things. At times he is light and playful, with a single incident as a metaphor for the grand plan.

The sense of wonder is always there whether Chagall is telling the story of creation or depicting a single moment in the life of a person or animal.

Chagall approached his overwhelming Old Testament commission in an organized way. The etchings are concerned with three areas — the great patriarchs of the Jewish people, the building of a strong community and the prophets.

And while, as expected, much is left out, there is a vital thread running through the series that stresses the close relationship to God, the resilience of the Jewish people and the strength and dignity of their purpose.

The figures, often of solid build with lined faces, hands used to heavy work, faces somehow old, but innocent, reflect the people of Chagall's life in Russia.

There is an earthiness about them, a lack of sophistication seen in people who have lived close to the soil, raised animals, planted, harvested, endured adversity and enjoyed brief moments of hap-

piness — above all, people with dignity and awareness of themselves as the children of God.

A PLAYFUL young, confident David meets the lion. In Isaiah's vision, the angel has the face of an endearing small child. The three angels in "Abraham and the Three Angels," could double for youngsters in a religious pageant. Bathsheba has fresh, subtle innocence and the Queen of Sheba is unaccountably demure.

No need to see Abraham's face in "Abraham Mourning Isaac," the hands say it all and Jeremiah's suffering is almost audible.

In the etchings where crowds are shown, the people fleeing from Jerusalem and the departure from Egypt, for example, each face is individual, each has a special quality.

There aren't as complete in form and detail as the works on the same subjects by the great artists of the past, such as Rembrandt, but somehow these capture the sometimes elusive, mystical and poetic quality of the Bible as few others have done.

They are within the price range of the average collector and in the viewing range of everyone.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, until 9 p.m. Thursday — Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, 29449 Northwestern, Southfield.