

Harrison Estate reaches bicentennial milestone

(AP) - Grouseland, once the home of former President William Henry Harrison, is celebrating its 200th birthday this year.

If Harrison were to see it now, he would find the house he built in a grove of Walnut trees much the same as when he left it.

And you can see it, too, in the southwest Indiana town of Vincennes, a not-too-strenuous weekend trip from the Detroit suburbs.

Two high-back gentleman's chairs sit arranged in front of the fireplace in the "council room" where Harrison, then Indiana Territory Governor, awaited Shawnee Chief Tecumseh for treaty talks.

And although the two men ended up having their famous meeting outside on the lawn, Grouseland was the historic scene for the signing of five treaties with area Indian tribes. In the basement "dependencies," where the servants cooked and worked, the spinning wheel and loom await skilled hands to weave rugs and finish quilts.

And in the front hall, where varnished wood floors and antique carpets lead to the

grand staircase, portraits of the governor and his wife, Anna Symes, hang on opposite walls, framing the door.

Built in 1803, Harrison's 300-acre estate was home for his growing family and a refuge against attack.

A bullet hole in the immense dining room where Harrison once entertained guests and visiting dignitaries such as Zachary Taylor serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of frontier living.

A historic Vincennes treasure, Grouseland, named for the abundant game birds once found in the area, will be the focus of a bicentennial celebration and several events - including a banquet and tea - planned by the Grouseland Foundation, a non-profit organization started in 1999.

"We treat this home like a museum because it is a museum," said Donna Klein, house administrator. "This will be the first time we've allowed food to actually be served in the mansion."

And later during the Rendezvous in May, a Saturday evening candlelight tour of the home will be presented by foundation volunteers.

Other events, including a lecture series about Harrison, the ninth president of the United States, will be announced later. Harrison was president for only 30 days. He died of pneumonia on April 4, 1841.

Once threatened with demolition, the home was saved in 1909 when the Vigo Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution raised money to buy the home from the water company.

The women began restoration of the home, which had been used at one time for grain storage. They opened it to the public in 1911 and restoration projects have been ongoing since.

The DAR has maintained the building, but after the non-profit foundation was established, members could apply for preservation grants, member Paula Nossett said.

The first brick house built in Indiana, Grouseland was referred to by many as the "White House of the West."

According to DAR records, bricks used in the home were originally painted white. Time eroded much of the paint, with the rest removed during restoration projects.

Last year, foundation grants enabled the mortar made bricks to be replaced. Although original to the home, the mortar had turned caustic with age.

Klein, Nossett and other volunteers guide visitors through the home, which is adorned with original pieces of furniture owned by Harrison and his friend, Francis Vigo.

Many rooms have been refurbished with hand-screened, period wallpaper. But Klein points out an upstairs bedroom is in need of wallpaper and repair and said she hopes a membership drive encouraging others to join "Friends of Grouseland" will help with fund-raising.

Though all rooms are blocked with railings to protect quilts, furnishings and fixtures, the tall windows permit a view of the area that was once part of the estate.

"Look out there," said Nossett, pointing out an upstairs window. "You can almost imagine Tecumseh standing there waiting for Harrison to come outside and talk to him in the Walnut grove."

Higher density, mixed-use zoning key Smart Growth

Every family needs a home. The U.S. population will grow by some 37 million over the next 15 years and 1.3 to 1.5 million new households will be formed each year through 2020.

In southeastern Michigan alone, 400,000 additional homes will be needed by 2030. Builders are attempting to keep up with this growing demand to provide homes in which these families can live.

Yet, severe restrictions on growth, often disguised as ways to relieve traffic congestion, are driving up the cost of housing beyond the reach of millions of Americans. Even now, millions are paying more than half their income on housing.

Why is this? One needs to understand the economics of development and the market forces driving the demand for new homes.

If the inventory of land that can be developed is reduced because of restrictions in use, such as large lot sizes, or the creation of growth boundaries, then the value and cost of all remaining land available for development increases.

This can add thousands and thousands of dollars to the cost of a new home. Likewise, if job growth is a priority in a community, then equal priority needs to be given to the demand for housing that is affordable to families across the entire economic spectrum. You can't have one without the other.

The answer is Smart Growth. Ways that will bring the cost



Dan MacLeish

of housing down to affordable levels include higher lot densities per acre, mixed-use zoning, and municipality infrastructure improvements that are forward thinking and anticipate future growth.

By using these strategies, our children will be able to live in the same communities in which they grew up rather than moving further outward where housing is more affordable.

Advocates of "no-growth" policies pay lip service to affordability, but they offer no solution to the housing crisis at all levels of affordability created by restrictive growth policies.

Instead, we should emphasize Smart Growth - the right of Americans to live where they want in a house they can afford. It is inevitable that America, and Michigan in particular, will continue to grow. If we deny that fact and fail to plan for it, then we will continue to see growth-related problems.

Every citizen will be able to achieve "the Great American Dream."

Dan MacLeish is the immediate past president of the Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan in Farmington Hills. He's also president of MacLeish Building in Troy and has been a master builder for 39 years.

What they lack in size, tiny towns make up in character

BY SHIRLEY DOWNING
AP CORRESPONDENT

Sneeze and you've missed this city.

Silerton, about 20 miles south of Jackson and the smallest incorporated hamlet in Tennessee, doesn't have a store or a gas station. The public school closed in 1966, and the sawmills have been gone longer than anyone can remember.

What Silerton has is 60 residents who would rather hear mourning doves than morning radio.

"We don't want a big General Motors plant sitting next to Silerton," said city alderman Robert ("Just call me Bobby") Naylor. "Everybody likes the quiet, and everybody knows everybody," said Naylor, 63.

In Silerton, friendships are forged at church suppers or over dominoes. It's where Phyllis Naylor, Bobby's wife, ran a post office from her kitchen until three years ago. Both are descendants of the city's founding Siler family.

Similar tiny cities are found across West Tennessee, with many dating to the first half of the 1800s.

"A lot of them started off as farm communities, especially in West Tennessee, which is flat and has more wide open spaces," said Jim Finane of the state's Municipal Technical Advisory Service in Knoxville.

At one time, Silerton had several hundred residents, as well as a half-dozen stores, a bank and cotton gin, a gristmill, train depot and a jewelry store.

Such communities thrived until the mid-1900s, when farms became more mechanized, rail service dwindled and interstate highways beckoned rural residents to city shopping and jobs.

Today, 17 of the state's 30 smallest cities are in West Tennessee. Some have antebellum homes, or the remnant of a country store or sawmill.

In Hickory Valley, population 136, the boiler from an old sassafras root mill sits next door to City Hall. From the 1920s to the 1950s, residents dug sassafras roots and sold them to the mill for pennies on the pound. The mill sold the oil for use in flavorings and medicines, said Robert Haralson, a retired school principal and historian of the town 50 miles east of Memphis.

By the 1950s, "there were no jobs left for young people and they left," said city bookkeeper Rosemary Bishop.

Haralson, 80, said while Hickory Valley has lost population within its city limits, surrounding land draws suburban dwellers to estate-size lots.

It's a trend seen in counties just outside metropolitan areas, Finane said.

Such an influx has yet to hit Silerton, which sits along Tennessee 125, about 3 miles east of Chickasaw State Park. Most townsfolk are related by blood or marriage

and seldom sell to outsiders, Naylor said. Naylor's mother, another former city postmaster, lives next door, and his aunt lives across the road. Cousins are nearby.

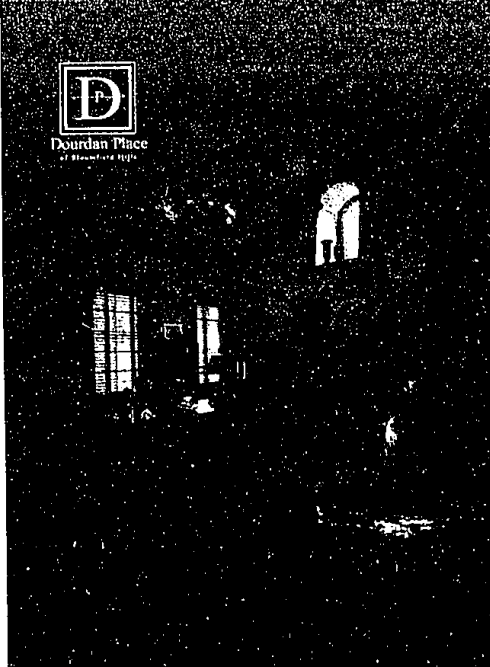
Only two churches remain: one Methodist and one Baptist, and things are so slow that the city's governing board meets only when there's business to conduct.

Phyllis Naylor, now 59, grew up in

Silerton when no one locked their doors, and when a big treat was a hand-dipped ice cream cone.

Today, it's still a safe place where a barbecue fund-raiser brings out the community.

"Everybody in Silerton is kin to me," said resident Pat Young, 64. "It's peaceful and everybody helps you out if you need it, and otherwise they leave you alone."



Dourdan Place
at Blountville, TN

ARCHITECTURE Transformed

1-800-245-9401
BY APPOINTMENT

BRODY
BRODY CONDOMINIUMS

Attention: Homeowners

1 Year Fixed 2.15% 30 YEARS	15 Year Fixed 5.125% 30 YEARS	30 Year Fixed 5.875% 30 YEARS	ARM Fixed 1.25% 30 YEARS
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------

100% Financing & Free Amortization Report
We Can Work With You Regardless of Credit
No Cash Out Needed - 100% Cash Out - 100% Equity PM
Down Payment Assistance • No Income Verification

Full Approvals in Minutes
24 hours a day
7 days a week
Rates are subject to change
Based on credit score of 680-720

1st Metropolitan Mortgage
(810) 844-0411
Toll Free (866) 932-0832
www.1stmortgage.com

BANKERS SQUARE CONDOMINIUMS

A Downtown Lifestyle Awaits You in Historic Howell.

Tucked into the center of charming downtown Howell, Banker's Square combines the enchanting flavor of turn of the century rooftop gardens with the timeless appeal of New York style row houses.

PREMIUM DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE FROM \$187,900

Located within two blocks of:

- 7 RESTAURANTS
- 2 DELIS
- 1 GROCERY STORE
- 2 BANKS
- 1 TRAVEL BUREAU
- 3 CHURCHES
- THE POST OFFICE
- THE HISTORIC CARNEGIE LIBRARY

(517) 552-8000

HOWELL

On Michigan Avenue, one block north of Grand River

www.BankersSquareOnline.com

Follow your favorite high school team each week in the Eccentric