

By JUDITH BERNE

Within the placid facade of the recently dedicated Plymouth Historical Society Museum, not yet open to the public, a great deal of activity is taking place.

Members of the Historical Society, led by curator Norma Cassidy, are busy accepting, cataloging and cleaning up the hundreds of antique articles which help to capture the history of Plymouth.

The job is enormous. One side of the large room on the museum's lower level has been set aside for the objects which have been classified and catalogued. On the other side and in the front room are the articles yet to be done . . . and they keep on coming in.

**THE FORMER MUSEUM**, a small house which took up only a section of the area of its grander counterpart, had room to display only a portion of the antiques which the Historical Society had in its possession. The rest were scattered about the city -- in member's attics and basements -- in wait for such a display vehicle as the new museum will be.

Gathering up the articles was a job in itself. Now, as the people of Plymouth visualize the scope and significance of the new museum -- more and more antiques are being donated. Indeed Curator Cassidy requests that would-be donors hold off for a while. "Once we get what we have in order then we will announce specific days for receiving new artifacts."

People are drawing up their wills, leaving whole houses of antiques to the museum. Clarence Moore, president of the Historical Society and project coordinator for the museum, wonderingly revealed, "I can easily foresee the day when we will have to auction off things we have in duplicate and triplicate."

**OLD BEDS**, reversible plows, a wood alcohol stove, a flag case, secretary desks, costumes and bedding from a by-gone era are just a fractional portion of the items yet to be catalogued. A

child's white wicker summer carriage . . . a bag of milbs (predecessors of marbles) . . . a slew of children's rockers . . . reminds one that even in the old there is the young.

Mrs. Cassidy, who was the first curator of the Society's old museum, recalled her earlier, more primitive cataloging efforts. "We wrote everything out in long-hand in a ledger," she said. "Now we know that hand-written items are not permanent enough. They must be printed."

In the process of cataloging for the new museum, Mrs. Cassidy has changed from a three card to a four card system. "I visited local museum curators for advice," she reported. "They said the cataloging was everything. So we developed the best system we could think of. Items are classified according to donor's name, category, catalogue number and association."

"This is a local museum," Mrs. Cassidy stressed. "We are not in competition with museums in Detroit or Ann Arbor. We are interested in artifacts as they relate to us -- Plymouth and environs."

**LOCAL OR NOT**, Solon Weekes, curator of the Detroit Historical Museum rated the old museum as one of the finest for its size in the country. And indeed, no expense has been spared by Margaret Dunning, who has donated the new building in memory of her parents, Charles and Bessie Dunning.

"Whenever there was a question as to cost, she always chose the best," Clarence Moore said admiringly.

"Miss Dunning was the sole contributor to the building proper," Moore reported. This includes the four walls, heating, air conditioning, humidifier, plumbing, electricity, painting and flooring.

The funds which were used to convert the building's first floor into a replica of small town, Main Street, U.S.A. and to landscape the buildings exterior have been raised by the Historical Society, in a drive spearheaded by Moore.

"I was advised that if I could raise \$15,000 for the museum, there would be \$15,000 available in

matching funds," Moore related. "As a kid, I always took a dare. I surely was not about to let this one go."

**A COMBINATION OF MONIES** raised from the sales of the Plymouth Historical Society's "History of Plymouth," individual contributions and a major amount from the Edward C. Hough-Mary Kimble foundation has allowed the Society to function without aid from the city of Plymouth.

"We were very careful so that we would not be obligated to the city in any way," Moore said. "City officials change."

Right now, Moore is involved in getting sponsors for each of the small store fronts in the museum. The only completed room houses the exhibit of the Daisy Air Rifle Co., one of Plymouth's pioneer industries.

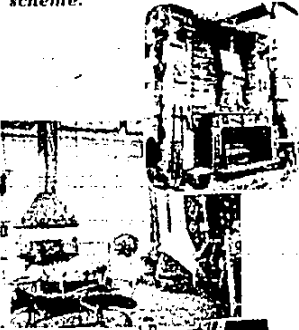
Two others have been spoken for, and possibilities for several others are being discussed. The city of Plymouth will sponsor one; the evening Kiwanis Club, another. Another room will be furnished as a one-room schoolhouse, still another as a Victorian parlor.

Each shop is varied in the styling of its facade including mouldings and roofs. The white wood on what will be the general store was taken from old saw mill planks. The bricks on the Daisy Air Rifle Co., came from an old carriage house at the rear of the original Daisy Shop. They are bricks which the Haggerty family of Plymouth manufactured.

Many of the doors to the storefronts came from old buildings throughout the county. The green stained glass at the front of the building was taken from the old Penniman-Allen Theatre, and redesigned as a focal point of the museum front by Clarence Moore.

This museum is a labor of love for a small core from Plymouth's Historical Society intent on preserving the city's past for its future. As Mrs. Cassidy simply said: "Our little museum was very much appreciated. And if that was, then this surely will be."

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