

*There is currently a vacancy on the
Portage Historic District*

*Commission. If you are aware of
anyone who may enjoy serving on
the HDC, please ask them to submit
an application to the office of the City
Clerk. Applications are available at
the office of the City Clerk (329-4412)
or on the city website
([www.portagemi.gov/government/
boards_and_commissions.asp](http://www.portagemi.gov/government/boards_and_commissions.asp)).*

PICKET FENCES

FROM:

PORTAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT
COMMISSION
Portage City Hall
7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, MI 49002
(269) 329-4400

Fall 2010

Building History

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MAIL TO:

Mark Reile	Chairperson
Ann Marie Kreuzer	Secretary
Jeanette Field	Secretary
Katie vanLonkhuyzen	Commissioner
Kathy Fosmoe	Commissioner
Rose Mary Higginbottom	Commissioner
Susan Woerner	Commissioner
Michelle Dunlap	Commissioner
Dorie Ehrig	Commissioner
Phillip Ellison	Commissioner
Mary Beth Block	City Liaison
Tyler Harper	PCHS Youth Participant

Where the Trails Crossed

Now Available

The official guidebook to the Portage Historic District is now available at the Portage Senior Center and City Hall for \$7. The guidebook includes photos and written histories of the properties in the district and is a must have for anyone with an interest in local history.

Please call the Portage City Hall at (269) 329-4400 to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness before starting any projects to your historical home.

Portage Historic District Commission

PICKET FENCES

Fall 2010

Volume Seven No. Two

"OLD IS THE
NEW GREEN"
NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
2010 THEME

ELEVENTH ANNUAL MAY GATHERING CELEBRATES HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PORTAGE

District homeowners, city officials, commissioners and citizens met on May 20 the Portage District Library to raise community awareness about properties in Portage with an older story to tell. The annual event coincides with Preservation Month of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The 2010 theme, "Old is the New Green," promotes the concept that preserving and reusing existing buildings reduces waste and the demand for new materials as viable means to preserve natural resources.

Keynote speaker, Linda Whitlock, Consumer Horticulturist at the MSU Extension Service in Kalamazoo County, built on the theme through her presentation titled, "Historic Gardens in the 21st Century." Through engaging narration Ms. Whitlock explained how landscaping with native plants likely enhanced original houses.

JERRY AND BEVERLY LOVE RECEIVE PRESERVATION AWARD

When the Loves bought the house in December of 1991, they made a commitment together to maintain the property in keeping with its historic nature. The attractive house and gardens strongly reflect the criteria of the award. Bev is also a past PHDC commissioner and chairperson. Their combined effort in preserving their home and serving their community makes the Loves most deserving to be recognized by the Commission. Mayor Peter Strazdas presented the award and plaque. The Loves' names were also added to the community plaque noting the award winners.

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE PHDC PRESERVATION AWARD:

Mick and Lisa Lynch
Judy Shehigian
Steve Rossio
Craig Vestal
Seth Giem



Congratulations to Jerry and Beverly Love,
recipients of the 2010 Preservation Award!

Please look for
more information
about our 2011
event in our Spring
newsletter

Special thanks to the
Library for providing
our venue and
beverages for our
annual event.





Some of the examples of the Italianate style in the Portage Historic District include 9426 South Westnedge (right), 6638 Angling Road (center) and 2112 Vanderbilt (left).

THE ITALIANATE STYLE

The Italianate style was one of the most popular architectural styles during the Victorian era. It was utilized in both residential and commercial structures from 1840 to 1890, with its peak in popularity occurring between 1850 and 1875. It was first popularized in England, but an American version quickly followed. The style was inspired by the villas of the Italian countryside. However, most American architects during that time had not traveled abroad, so their interpretation was based on pictures and descriptions.

CHARACTERISTICS

The Italianate style has several key distinguishing features. The roof was usually a low pitched hipped style. Molded window caps and bay windows are also common of the style. Windows are usually tall and narrow, often with a arched top. Cornices were usually wide and highly decorative with detailed brackets. Italianate homes were usually tall. Most were two stories, but three and four are also common. The overall structure was usually balanced

and symmetrical. The shape was generally rectangular. Exterior materials can include wood, brick, brownstone and even stucco. Other popular features include a tower, cupola, porches and balconies. Italianate homes can feature all or few of these features. Simpler Italianate homes were more popular in rural areas. This large amount of variation also allowed this style to have a wider range of affordability.

ITALIANATE HOMES IN THE PORTAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The homes in the Portage Historic District that fit into the specifications for the Italianate style are:

- The Brownell homestead at 5029 Angling Road
- The Brooks homestead at 6638 Angling Road
- The Cady homestead at 2112 Vanderbilt
- The Matteson homestead at 9426 South Westnedge
- The Ofield homestead at 10209 Portage Road

Italianate homes in the Portage Historic District

“Barn Again” Program Offers Resources and Support for Historic Barn Owners

THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION BEHIND THE EFFORT

Agricultural structures and outbuildings play a major role in our architectural heritage. Especially as a former farming town, barns and other farming oriented structures are often part of our historic home sites. Although they are key to maintaining an accurate setting and offer great insight to the lives of our predecessors, they are slowly disappearing from the landscape as small scale farming is becoming more rare. For home sites in the Portage Historic District, all outbuildings and barns are part of the regulated exterior of the site, and require approval for any modifications. Historically accurate exteriors to these structures will enhance the entire property.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has created the Barn

Again program as part of their initiative to preserve our national rural heritage. Their site offers information regarding the preservation of barns and agricultural outbuildings and adaption for new uses at preservationnation.org/issues/rural-heritage/ and preservationnation.org/barnagain. There are examples of finished projects, advice and tips for building owners, links to online resources including other support networks and information on locating local and state specific organizations.

Although Barn Again is in favor of the continued use of agricultural buildings for their original intended usage, they recognize that

the changing economic forces and much fewer small scale farming operations results in many under or unutilized structures. Using historic barns, whether for agricultural or other



uses, offers a great solution to honor our local heritage and is a green option for the current owner's needs.

Above: Horseback riding at the Ames Farm on Forest Drive in the 1920's.



Left: The barn on the Isaac Brooks property at 3221 West Milham is believed to date from the 1850's, and was moved closer to the house by teams of horses in the 1900's. Above: The Henry Brooks home (Issac's son) at 6638 Angling Road has many well preserved historic outbuildings. Right: The property at 3821 West Milham also offers some original barns.