

The Docket

Berrien County Historical Association, Inc.

March, 1978

The Old Courthouse

Berrien Springs, Michigan

MORE FILMS

Things probably went wrong now and then in colonial Williamsburg because our ancestors must have been as prone to human error now and then as we are today. At any rate, things went slightly awry in modern Colonial Williamsburg this winter when the films for the third performance of Pillow Theatre somehow missed being shipped.

The result was some disappointed gun fanciers who had hoped to see "Gunsmith of Williamsburg" at the February showing. Rather an interesting substitute program quickly arranged by Director David Mohrhardt adequately filled the bill.

But, with reassurances from Williamsburg, David Mohrhardt will show "Gunsmith of Williamsburg" on March 15 together with an equally interesting "The Cooper's Craft".

Pillow Theatre is a monthly free showing of Colonial Williamsburg films in the old courtroom during which the audience sits on cushions and pillows (which they bring) to ease the rigors of the straight wooden benches.

"Gunsmith of Williamsburg" is a classic movie about the making of colonial firearms. It was described in detail in the "Docket".

"The Cooper's Craft" depicts the fascinating steps in the making of a barrel...from felling an oak tree in the woods to applying the craftsman's mark to the finished product. The camera brilliant-

ly records the work of cooper George Pettengell, formerly of London, as he reenacts the activity of a small colonial cooperage in eighteenth century Williamsburg.

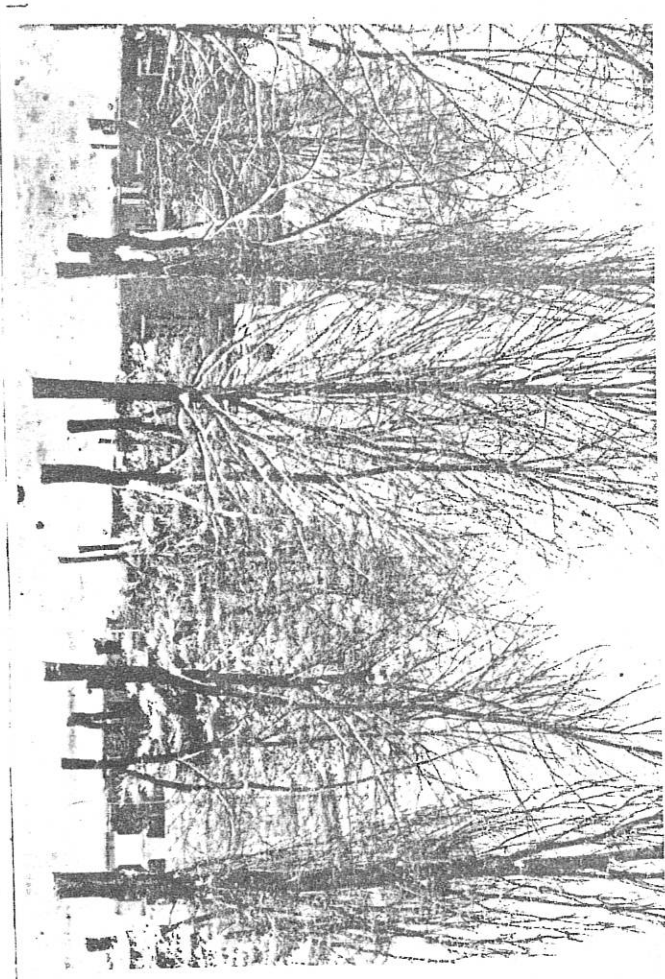
The total program which begins at 7:30 P.M. provides an entertaining and informing hour and a half and is equally interesting to adults and children. Admission is free.

SPRING HERITAGE

An expanded schedule of events promised for this spring's Spring Heritage Celebration to be held on the Old Courthouse grounds on Mother's Day, May 14. A variety of craft demonstrations and folk activities will take place under sunny spring skies or under canvas if the skies aren't so sunny.

While a bagpipe group plays and a team of draft horses pull an old wagon a blacksmith will work at the newly built Bennett's Forge. Meanwhile there will be potters, quilters, spinners, weavers, tatters, chair caners and stencilers at work. There will be demonstrations in candle dipping, muzzle loader firing, marquetry, natural dyeing, wood carving and rug hooking. And an antique fire engine will be on hand, but not to dampen the excitement.

Other events will be added as this second annual event draws nearer.



It snowed in the old days too. This winter scene was photographed some time around the turn of the century when the square was full of trees. Notice the Lombardy poplars, always a poplar variety there in spite of their short life. Some landscaping historians say that Lombardies were frequently set around Greek Revival public buildings in the 1830's to accent their classic style.

MEETING HELD

The annual meeting of the Society was postponed because of the Great Blizzard of 1978 but held on February 15 during the intermission between films at Pillow Theatre in the courtroom of the Old Courthouse. During the brief meeting the incumbent trustees were re-elected and a new trustee Sarah Grathwohl of Niles was elected to the board.

At a trustees' meeting following the evenings films the officers for the year were elected. They are William Beverly of Watervliet, Chairman; Marlin Marguart of Coloma, Vice Chairman; Jean (Mrs. John) Spelman of St. Joseph, Secretary; Lee Auble of Berrien Springs, Treasurer.

HOURS

The Old Courthouse museum is closed every winter during January and February. The normal re-opening in March with Saturday and Sunday afternoon hours will be delayed a few weeks this year until the weather eases some and the courthouse emerges from the snowdrifts.

Restoration work on the Sheriff's house has continued through the winter with a promise of more things to see during visits to the old square this summer.