

**Final
Historic District Study Committee Report**

**Thayer's Corners Historic District
Northville Township, Michigan**



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Submitted to the Northville Township Board of Trustees
March 17, 2011

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Introduction:

Northville Township, located between the cities of Plymouth and Northville in northwestern Wayne County, has an important and proud historical background. The township decided to preserve this important history in 2005 when the Board of Trustees established a Historical Commission. Not long after the initial phase of organization and basic research was under way, the Historical Commission asked to be re-formed as the Historic District Commission, with new by-laws and a new preservation ordinance, in order to properly safeguard historic resources that might otherwise be unprotected from development or demolition. The newly formed Historic District Commission was approved in May of 2006. Currently, there are no historic districts in Northville Township. This report lays the groundwork for establishing the first historic district and for educating the local public to the important economic and social benefits that local historic districts can have on small communities.

Charge of the Historic District Committee:

The Northville Township Historic District Study Committee was established by the Northville Township Board of Trustees on June 18, 2009, pursuant to the Northville Township code of ordinances, chapter 91 “Historic District Ordinance”, as adopted in 2006. The committee was charged with investigating two potential historical sites within the township and originally contained seven members, two of which resigned their positions after approximately six months of service with the committee. After a slight delay, one of the vacant positions was re-appointed on May, 2010. The study committee is a standing committee, and acting as designated by Michigan Public Act 169 of 1970, as amended, is charged with conducting the duties as established in the ordinance: Conduct photographic surveys and basic research, evaluate the significance of historic resources, prepare preliminary historic district study reports, holding a public meeting to review any proposed districts, and to transmit copies of study reports to the appropriate agencies for review.

Study Committee Members:

Patricia Allen is a retired administrative assistant. She is a retired board member and active member of the Northville Historical Society, which manages historical Mill Race Village. Pat continues to volunteer in the Northville Historical Society Archives, coordinates research requests for archival information, and has researched and published data for the 175 year old Northville Methodist Church.

Joseph Oldenburg is a retired Director of the Main Detroit Public Library, where he also served as a Librarian and as the Curator of Manuscripts for the Burton Historical Collection. Joe has a Master’s of Library Science from the University of Michigan and a Master’s of American History from Wayne State University. He has authored numerous articles on genealogy, local history, the Ford Homes, the Burton Historical Collection, and chaired the Ford Homes Historic District Study Committee in Dearborn.

Daniel Schneider, AIA, Chairman of the study committee, is a Michigan registered architect and meets the requirements of 36CFR61 for historic architect. Dan is a historical architect with the State Historic Preservation Office in Lansing. He has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Lawrence Technological University, serves as Vice-Chair of the Northville Township Historic District Commission, and is a former board member of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.

Frederick Shadko, P.E. is a professional engineer and an automotive industry project manager. He has created living history videos, online photo galleries, and has acted in and photographed the Northville Historical Society’s annual cemetery walk. Fred has a Bachelors of Science in Engineering and Masters of Business Administration from the University of Michigan and is an active member of the Northville

Historic Society and participates in historical events in both the City and Township of Northville.

William Sivy, is retired from engineering and purchasing positions at Ford Motor Company. Bill has a BSE in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan and a MBA from Eastern Michigan University. He has a longtime interest in architecture and Michigan history. He is a member of the Northville Historic District Commission and the Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association.

Bradley Werner is a real estate broker with an interest in architecture and history. Brad is a former member of both the Northville Township Board of Trustees and the Historic District Commission. He spent two years studying architecture in college, and has 34 years of experience of residential and commercial real estate sales. Brad worked closely with the local Thayer's Barn relocation and restoration project, and coordinated the donation of a 150 year old home to Northville Township.

Photographic Inventory and Site Survey:

A photographic inventory and site survey of the proposed Thayer's Corners district was conducted by the study committee on November 11, 2009. Copies of the photographs, survey cards, and preliminary maps are located at the Northville Township Offices and copies are available upon request. Overall photographs of the proposed district and the architectural survey cards have been included in the appendix of this report.

Description of the District:

The proposed Thayer's Corners historic district is located on the northeast corner of 6 Mile and Napier Roads on the western edge of Northville Township in northern Wayne County, Michigan. The proposed district and the area surrounding the subject property are mostly rural areas, with nearby single family residential development, wooded areas, and with farmlands and open fields to the south and east. The property to the north of the proposed district is heavily wooded and has recently been designated as a passive nature area by Northville Township. The land to the west, directly across Napier Road, is mostly open field with sparse residential development and is a portion of adjacent Salem Township. Property to the east is open farmland and is partially wooded. Property diagonally to the west and south of the proposed district is also in Salem Township and is an active landfill operation. Both 6 Mile Road and Napier Road are un-paved, gravel surfaces.

The proposed district contains two separate parcels of land: a rectangle shaped property directly on the corner of 6 Mile and Napier Roads which contains the 1877 Thayer Schoolhouse and which has an entry drive off of 6 Mile Road; and a "L" shaped property which wraps around the north and east sides of the schoolhouse property and contains Thayer Cemetery and a circa 1950 equipment shed. The cemetery is surrounded by chain link fencing and has entry drives off both Napier and 6 Mile Roads. The schoolhouse property land is mostly level. The cemetery property land has a gentle slope to the north and east of the site and contains many natural landscape features.

While a portion of the surrounding area has experienced much residential growth in recent times, both parcels of land have retained a rural character that is reminiscent of the timeframe of the original township settlers from the 1830's. The schoolhouse is the only remaining one-room schoolhouse in the township, and one of a few one-room schoolhouses in the local area remaining in their original location. The cemetery is the largest of three original burying grounds that remain in the township.

Description of the Resources:

Thayer Schoolhouse:

“The Thayer School, located near the border of Washtenaw County, does not look like the standard one-room schoolhouse. A great deal of creativity went into the details and choice of building materials.”

- Quote from *Michigan's One-Room Schoolhouses*

One-story, hip and gable roof, T-shaped plan, masonry one-room schoolhouse built in 1877. Dressed stone foundation/water table with painted brick walls, corner pilasters, architraves, and brick coursing under eaves. There are three window openings on the south, west, and east elevations. There are no window openings on the north elevation. Window openings have decorative brick segmented arches. No original windows are assumed to remain. Plan is mostly rectangular with small vestibule wing facing south and which contains two side-facing entry doors. Roof eaves have extended overhangs with decorative tin-clad brackets. Main roof is hip shaped with central gables at both sides and at the front and back of the building. Roofing material is asphalt shingles. There is a small brick chimney at the west elevation which projects above the roof eave. Additions include a single-story masonry bathroom addition with asphalt shingled hip roof on north elevation (date unknown, but more than likely circa 1940) and a concrete block porch slab along the east and south elevations of the building. Monolithic concrete steps on the west side of the vestibule are also assumed to be anachronistic.

Thayer Cemetery:

The cemetery is a mostly natural landscaped area with grass-covered, slightly rolling terrain and numerous mature trees and ground coverings. The “L” shaped property is composed of the original cemetery, fronting Napier Road and the 1931 addition, fronting 6 Mile Road. A line of maple tree, likely planted in the 1930's, runs along the northern and eastern boundaries, separating the cemetery from the adjacent farm fields. A “two-track” vehicle road roughly bisects both sections, running east from a Napier Road entrance, then turning south to the 6 Mile Road entrance. There are approximately 300 graves in the original section and 150 in the addition. Graves are arranged in fairly regular rows that run north-south parallel to Napier Road. Graves date from 1830, with the majority of interments associated with the founding and early development of Northville Township and surrounding area.

Cemetery Arches and fencing:

The cemetery is enclosed on all sides, mostly along the property lines, by 36” tall modern chain link fencing. The fencing is mostly intact but does indicate wear and vandalism along the west and north property lines. The fencing is not determined to be original or significant to the property. There are two breaks in the fencing, one at the south along 6 Mile Road, and the other on the west along Napier Road, for vehicle access. These openings are framed by identical arched gateways. These gateways are fabricated primarily from steel pipe, bar stock and fittings. The arches that span the entrances carry the name “Thayer Cemetery” out of letters cut from sheet metal and affixed to a background of fencing material. This fencing, typically known as “double loop ornamental fence”, was produced from 1873 into the 1940's, and has been recently reintroduced. This would suggest that the gateways were installed in the early forties or earlier. The study committee considers these arches important aspects of the cemetery and significant to the history of the district.

Cemetery Monuments:

The cemetery monuments are all made of stone, but there are a variety of types, including lawn markers, simple headstones, die on base, die base and cap, pulpit markers and pedestals. There are no above surface tombs. The original section of the cemetery has approximately 50 larger or high style markers, out of the 300. This proportion seems somewhat unusual for a country graveyard. Photos of some of these more elaborate monuments are included in the appendix.

Cemetery Shed:

Small, one-story wood framed building with simple asphalt shingled gable roof, horizontal wood clapboard siding, and one entry door on the west elevation and two wood windows which have been boarded over. Assumed built circa 1950, and having no historical or architectural significance.

Count of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources:

Total number of resources: 4 contributing: 3 non-contributing: 1 percentage: 75% historic

Contributing resources:

Thayer Schoolhouse	Built 1877	Significance: Architecture/ social history
Thayer Cemetery	Begun 1830	Significance: Social history
Cemetery Gates	Circa 1940	Significance: Cultural landscape

Non-contributing resources:

Cemetery Shed	Circa 1950
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Boundary Justification:

The boundary for the proposed district simply follows the established perimeter property lines for both the schoolhouse property and the cemetery property as one combined area. Both properties have been documented as being owned and occupied by members of the Thayer family from the early 19th century and both mostly contain historical natural and cultural features that remain to this day.

Preliminary research for this district did reveal potential resources related to the Thayer Family that may have been located on adjacent properties: to the south, across 6 Mile Road, it was reported that a barn and silo owned by the family once stood (no known architectural evidence remains); to the north, a 19th century rubble stone foundation was found that is “rumored” to be a portion of the original Thayer farmhouse; and to the west, across Napier Road in Salem Township, has been reported as land also owned by the Thayer Family but contains no known historic resources. Adjacent property to the east is farmland and contains no known historical resources. The study committee surveyed these adjacent properties, and performed research into these additional resources, but unfortunately inadequate information was found in order to tie these adjacent properties to the proposed district at this time with this report.

Boundary Description:

Schoolhouse property: Commonly known as 51370 6 Mile Road, land situated in the Township of Northville, Wayne County, Michigan.

07M THAT PART OF THE SW 1/4 OF SEC 7 DES AS BEG AT THE SW COR OF SEC 7 AND PROCEEDING TH NORTH ALONG THE W LINE OF SAID SECTION 166.46 FT. TH N 89D

59M 40SEC E 177.03 FT. TH S 0D 38M 10SEC W 169.50 FT TO THE S LINE OF SEC 7 TH N 89D 00M 50 SEC W ALONG SAID LINE 175.18 FT. TO THE POB 0.68 ACRES

Cemetery property: land situated in the Township of Northville, Wayne County, Michigan.

07L THAT PART OF THE SW 1/4 OF SEC 7 DES AS BEG AT A PONT ON THE W LINE OF SAID SECTION DISTANT NORTH 166.46 FT FROM THE SW COR OF SEC 7 AND PROCEEDING TH NORTH ALONG SAID W LINE 186.20 FT TH S 89D 52M 10S E 309.83 FT TH S 0D 38M W 357.24 FT TO THE S LINE OF SEC 7 TH N 89D 00M 50S W ALONG SAID S LINE 130.75 FT TH N 0D 38M 10S E 169.50 FT TH S 89D 59M 40S W 177.03 Ft TO THE POB 1.83 ACRES

Historical Background:

History of Northville Township:

Northville Township, which was originally part of Plymouth Township, was created in 1827 and is located in the northwest corner of Wayne County. It is the highest elevation in Wayne County and the Middle Rouge River runs through the eastern part of the township. It was once heavily timbered with a number of swampy areas. Although Native Americans undoubtedly traveled through the area, there appear to be no settlements or popular trails, perhaps because of the hilly terrain. In 1815, an east-west base line was established from which surveyors mapped out Michigan townships. This base line (8 Mile Road) is the northern boundary of the township. Napier Road is the western boundary.

The opening of a government land office in Detroit in 1818 allowed people to purchase land in the area, and the first parcel of 240 acres went to Gideon P. Benton of New York in 1823. Benton later became the first postmaster in Michigan west of Detroit. The first settlers arrived in 1825. One of the first pioneers to settle in this area that year was Rufus Thayer Jr. who purchased 322 acres in Section 18. Most of the early settlers traveled from New York, across Lake Erie, by steamship and then up the Detroit River, although some came across land through Canada. A three day wagon trip brought them the approx. 20 miles from Detroit. These early settlers were farmers and by the late 1800's the land of the township was mostly utilized, predominately for farming. Along the Rouge River, several villages arose. Northville in the north, Waterford further south and Plymouth still further south. These villages featured some industry like saw mills, grist mills and small foundries. Waterford was once home to the largest flour mill in the state but all industry and commerce in that village essentially disappeared by the late 1800's.

In 1878 the Township of Plymouth divided into two voting precincts. The northern half of the township voted in the village of Northville and the southern half in the village of Plymouth. In 1897 the Township was split into two along those lines. Thus Northville Township comprises only 18 square miles instead of the usual 36.

The first school in Northville Township is variously reported as the Barton School of 1826 or the Benton School of 1832. One-room schools were built throughout the township in the late 1800's and the first high school was built in the village of Northville in 1865. Prior to school district consolidation in the early 1950's, there were approximately three dozen one-room schoolhouses in Northville, Plymouth and the surrounding area.

During much of the twentieth century, Northville Township was home to many institutional facilities. The William H. Maybury Sanatorium for TB patients (1921 until the 1960's) and the Wayne County Training School (1926 until 1974) owed their existence to William H. Maybury. Maybury was head of

the Detroit Board of Health and a cousin of the Mayor of Detroit. Other institutions included Hawthorn Children's Psychiatric Hospital (1956 to present), Northville State Psychiatric Hospital (1952 to 2003), Plymouth Center for Human Development (1960 to 1984), Detroit House of Corrections (1927 to 1980's) and several state prisons. The nation's first federal fish hatchery operated in Northville from 1880 to the late 1930's.

By mid-century, farms began to be replaced by subdivisions. The village of Northville became a chartered city in 1955, removing it from the township. The township is largely residential today. Only one working farm remains. Today's major employers are research and development facilities of automotive suppliers. Modern development is occurring throughout the township and remaining rural and wooded properties are becoming scarcer.

History of Thayer's Corners:

In the late 19th and early 20th century the area around the intersection of Napier Road and Six Mile Road in Northville Township, Wayne County, Michigan and Salem Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan was known as Thayer's Corners. The land east of Napier Road is Northville Township and the land west of Napier Road is Salem Township. The main reason for the name was that Rufus Thayer Jr. (1799-1887) of Vermont had purchased land in the 1820's and 1830's that comprised the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of Napier Road and Six Mile Road. Mr. Thayer and his family occupied and farmed the land and a portion of that land remained in the Thayer family into the 20th century.

Additionally, by the early 1890's, Thayer's Corners was such a fixed designation that the local newspaper, the Northville Record, had a column labeled "Thayer's Corners", which reported the activities and comings and goings of Thayer's Corners residents.

Thayer's Corners was a rural farming community. There was no business district or cluster of residences. The closest villages were Salem, one and a half miles to the west, in Washtenaw County and Northville, four and a half miles to the northeast. The Thayer School and adjacent cemetery, were the closest thing to a center for the community. The school likely served as a convenient meeting place, as it did in 1909, when interested residents were invited to attend a meeting there, for the purpose of organizing a cemetery association under the state law.

From its beginnings, well into the twentieth century, Thayer's Corners citizens were predominantly farmers, apparently very successful ones. This is evidenced by the 40 some stone monuments, in the older part of the cemetery (pre 1930). These appear somewhat elaborate for a typical rural cemetery. Further evidence is the ability of residents to travel for pleasure. A group of families, including the Coldrens, Riders and Smiths, were able to travel to Philadelphia in 1876 to see the fair. Later, in 1893, the local newspaper (The Northville Record) published frequent accounts of residents (Thayers, Van Sickles, Terrills, Wheelers, Coldrens, Riders, etc.) journeying to Chicago for one to two-week World's Fair visits. These must have been fairly expensive trips in the 1800s and, as farmers, they would need hired help, to manage the farms, in their absence. Reports of resident's deaths in the Northville Record spoke specifically to their prosperity. Martin Van Sickle, who died in 1892, was called "a well-to-do farmer" and Henry Toucey, who died in 1893, was referred to as "a wealthy farmer".

Some farmers did have allied businesses. William Van Sickle, for example, had a blacksmith shop on his farm. Henry Doane and two Van Sickle brothers opened a sawmill in 1892 and added a gristmill the following year. There was a community dairy, operated by Arthur Wheeler. Hiram Thayer sold insurance. Some invested their earnings in nearby enterprises. George Whipple was an original investor in Northville's first telephone company of 1897. Peter Coldren was an original investor in Northville's

Michigan School Furniture Company, the world's largest manufacturer of school furniture in the late 1800s. A few entered into commerce in the surrounding villages. George Wheeler and Charles Utley had a general store in Salem, where George also acted as Postmaster. The Whipples had a lumberyard and the Merritts, a book and jewelry store in Northville.

Many men found time to participate in local politics. Rufus Thayer was elected a township commissioner at the first Plymouth Township meeting in 1827. Hiram Thayer served as Plymouth Township Supervisor, Deputy Wayne County Clerk, Wayne County Auditor and Drain Commissioner. Philo Taylor was a Justice of Peace. Francis Terrill was elected to the township board of review in the first Northville Township election, in 1898. George Whipple was elected Pathmaster at the first township meeting that year.

Thayer's Corners residents were active in area churches and fraternal organizations. Rufus Thayer hosted quarterly conferences of the Methodist Church in his barn, in the 1830s. George Whipple built a Congregational Church on his farm in the 1880s. David Rathbun, Calvin Wheeler and John Lewis were founding members of Salem's Baptist Church in the 1890s. Francis Terrill was a founding member of Northville's Masonic Lodge in 1865 and Arthur Van Sickle was an officer of Salem's Knights of Pythias Lodge in the 1890s.

Several women from local families taught at Thayer School, Hilda Merritt in 1909 and Luella Kherl in the 1920s. A number of the community's young men went off to fight in the Civil War and later the World Wars, as noted on some of their gravestones.

Social activities were those common for a rural community around the turn of the last century, church functions, ice cream socials and the like. Decoration Day was always well observed at the cemetery. The women of the community would make evergreen wreaths for the graves of veterans. A typical ceremony in 1893 drew a large crowd. A detail from the G. A. R. post in Northville laid the wreaths at the graves, the cornet band from Salem played music for the occasion and several Thayer's Corners residents made appropriate remarks.

History of Thayer School:

The Thayer School is a one room brick and stone schoolhouse built in 1877 by the Fractional School District No.1 in Plymouth & Salem at the northeast corner of Napier Road and 6 Mile Road in Northville Township. Fractional school districts were districts that contained land from two or more areas when a homogeneous community crossed village or township boundaries.

The land that the Thayer School occupies, the southwest quarter of Section 7, in Northville Township, was part of 80.29 acres purchased by Rufus Thayer Jr. from Samuel T. Barr of Cattaraugus County, New York on June 24, 1830. On August 1, 1854 Rufus Thayer Jr. sold to the Fractional School District No.1 in Plymouth & Salem property with the following description:

“The following described parcel of land being in length eight rods north and south and in breadth five and a half rods- east and west- lying on the southwest corner of Section Seven in Township No. One South, of Range No. Eight East in the State of Michigan for a school house site for said District.”

Although the school district was initially designated Fractional School District No.1 in Plymouth and Salem, by the early 1900's it was formally Northville District No. 10 fr –Thayer School.

A one room school, probably built of wood, was on the land by at least 1860 because “S.H. No.1” (school house no.1) appears on the property on an 1860 map of Wayne County, Michigan. This school was torn down in spring 1877 so that the current school building could be built. The current school house was built in the summer of 1877 with money from the District’s Primary School Fund, loans from the Town of Plymouth, the 1st National bank of Plymouth, and Irving Starkweather. Local citizens also provided small sums as donations for various building materials such as bricks, shingles, rope, and nails.

According to a ledger kept by the Fractional School District No.1 of the Building Fund, the District began acquiring building materials on March 29, 1877 with the purchase of bricks for \$108 from Conrad Clippert, a Detroit brick manufacturer. The lumber, the largest building material purchase, was for \$179.99 from Berden of Plymouth. The cut stone over the door designating the school house “Fractl School Dist No.1 Plymouth & Salem 1877” (still there today) cost \$6.50. The largest labor costs were for the stonemason at \$255 and the carpenter at \$191.50. Local labor was used to construct the building with John Callahan being paid the most at \$64.42. The last entry in the ledger for the Building Fund is \$42.00 for two outhouses. The final cost of the school was \$2030.62.

The study committee has been able to interview several former students who attended the Thayer School from 1927 to 1952. Those interviews have given the study committee a good idea of an average school day during the above period plus one of the former students (Willard Wilson) has drawn a floor plan of the school in approximately 1934. Students entered the building from two doors at the south end of the building. There were rows of desks on the east and west sides of the building for older children and a set of book shelves for the library on the east wall. A raised platform for the teacher occupied the north end of the building with little desks in front of it for the smaller children.

The school was heated by a round wood stove located at the south end of the school in the 1930’s. The school district bought the wood and it was stored in a wood shed north of the school and the older boys were responsible for bringing in wood daily. According to one of the former students, Willard Wilson, the teacher would bank the stove every night but “on Monday mornings, it was colder than Hades, as the fire had gone out over the weekend.” The school day was 9-4 with three recess periods, two in the morning, lunch, then one in the afternoon. Each grade was taught in order with one to three students per grade. When students were not being taught they did homework or could read books from the library.

Up to at least 1934, according to Willard Wilson, there was no running water in the school and the older boys were sent to a local farm with a two wheel cart for water on a daily basis. There were no inside bathrooms, again up to at least 1934. Separate outhouses for girls and boys were north of the building and “you did what you had to and got the heck back into the schoolroom where it was warm” (Willard Wilson). A bathroom addition was built on the north side of the building which still exists today.

The Thayer School existed as a separate school district from at least 1854-1952, first as Fractional School District No.1 in Plymouth & Salem, and later as Northville District No. 10fr- Thayer School. The school was used as a school building until 1952 when on May 5, 1952 Northville District No.10fr was annexed to the Northville Public Schools and the school was formally closed June 2, 1952 by the Northville Public Schools. When Thayer School closed in 1952 it remained vacant for one year until it was sold July 28, 1953 to Louise Thayer Bryan, a great granddaughter of Rufus Thayer Jr.

Louise Thayer Bryan held the school until July 29, 1970 when she sold it to August and Chieko Prince. The Prince’s rented out the school as a private home until they sold it on September 7, 1972 to Richard and Lucina Svatora. The Svatora’s lived in the school until October 17, 1986 when Lucina sold the building (Richard having died earlier) to Daniel P. Loudin. Mr. Loudin lived on the property until October 28, 1992 when he sold it to Browning- Ferris Industries (BFI) a waste management company.

The current owner of the property, Superior Arbor Hills Landfill, purchased the property on March 31, 2000.

History of Thayer Cemetery:

The cemetery land was originally purchased by Rufus Thayer Jr. from Samuel T. Barr of Cattaraugus County, New York as part of 80.29 acres on June 24, 1830. The Thayer family allowed a portion of the land to be used as a cemetery from the 1830's until the Thayer Cemetery Association was formed in 1914 and took over the perpetual care of the cemetery. The remaining portions were added in 1931 when the Thayer Cemetery Association purchased those areas from the Thayer family. The name of the cemetery derives from the Thayer family being the original landowners and the general description of the area as Thayer's Corners.

The oldest tombstone in the cemetery is Tryphena Turrel 'wife of Lyman Feb. 27, 1830, Age 21 yrs. This tombstone would indicate that there were burials in the Thayer Cemetery before Rufus Thayer Jr. purchased the land on June 24, 1830. A possible explanation for this discrepancy has been offered by a local historian, Fred Shadko. Mr. Shadko explains that once a cemetery had been established in the 19th century, local people were sometimes encouraged to move the remains of their loved ones from burial places on family farms into the 'new' cemetery.

When the study committee looked at the tombstones in Thayer Cemetery we found a tombstone for 'George Thayer, son of Rufus Jr & Hersilora, b. 1836, d. 1838'. With the burial of their son George Thayer, Rufus Jr. and Hersilora may have invited their neighbors to bury their own loved ones at the "new" Thayer Cemetery including those who had died before 1838. In support of this theory a review of the tombstones reveals that of the eight tombstones with death dates 1830-1838 four of those had death dates in 1838 indicating local people may have begun burying their loved ones as they died in Thayer Cemetery in 1838. The four tombstones with death dates before 1838 (1830, 1831, 1833, 1835) may have been reburials by neighbors of Rufus Jr. and Hersilora Thayer. The cemetery is still open for burials.

Prominent individuals and Original Land Patentees buried at Thayer Cemetery include:

- John Dickerson: Sept. 12, 1795- April 30, 1882. Held patent for 81.29 acres of E ½ SW of Section 7 issued April 1, 1826.
- Hiram B. Thayer: 1832-1902. Son of Rufus Thayer Jr. and owner of land at Thayer's Corners 1871-1902. Elected Plymouth Township Supervisor eight times 1866-1882. Deputy County Clerk, Wayne County, 1875-76. Wayne County Auditor, 1877-79.
- Rufus Thayer Jr.: 1799-1887. First purchased land at Thayer's Corner which eventually became Thayer School and Thayer Cemetery. Held patent for 80.29 acres West half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 7 issued June 24, 1830.
- Philo Taylor: 1793- August 13, 1844. Held Patent for 80 acres W ½ SE of Section 18 issued February 22, 1826.
- Lyman Turrel: March 13, 1802- April 13, 1877. 80 acres E ½ NE of Section 7 issued October 1, 1827.
- John Van Sickle: September 15, 1787- September 24, 1881. 78.52 acres W1/2 NW of Section 5 issued January 5, 1831.
- Arnold Whipple: August 12, 1801- November 24, 1868 80 acres E ½ NE of Section 7 issued February 1, 1826.

Veterans buried at Thayer cemetery include:

Freeman C. Bryant: May 25, 1893- April 18, 1960 Co.A Pioneer Infantry, World War I
Albert R. Berger: October 1, 1893- March 10, 1977 Corporal. U.S. Army World War I
Gordon V. Burks: 1927- 1978 Private U.S. Army World War II
Warner R. Corey: September 11, 1893- January 23, 1959 Lt. Colonel World War I
Warner L. Corey: May 19, 1917- May 31, 1943 Corporal, Army Air Force, World War II
Robert J. Fraser: August 5, 1930-August 11, 1976 U.S. Navy
William Albert Griffin: March 8, 1918- April 5, 1944 Private, 1604 Service Unit, World War II

William A. Herendeen: Born 1834. Enlisted at Plymouth in Company C 24th Michigan Infantry on August 8, 1862. Died of disease at Washington, D.C. February 6, 1865.

Walter P. Holmes: 1846- 1927 Company G 8th Michigan Infantry

O. B. Ledyard: Co D 5th Michigan Cavalry

John Lewis: 1845-1941 Private Co. C 102 Regiment 1864-1865

Samuel W. Morrison: August 6, 1888- November 8, 1953. Pennsylvania, Private Co. A Pioneer Unit, World War I

Chauncey G. Rathbun: Born 1834. Lived in Plymouth but enlisted at Northville in Company D 5th Michigan Cavalry on August 22, 1862. Killed on June 30, 1863 at Littletown, Pennsylvania.

Stephen Rider: 1834-1864. Enlisted in Co. D 5th Michigan Cavalry August 27, 1862. Wounded. Mustered out at Washington, D.C. June 19, 1864.

Henry Van House: March 31, 1907- August 27, 1968. Michigan Tech 5, 37 General Hospital World War II

George S. Wheeler: April 22, 1830- March 4, 1903 1st Lt. Co. D 5th Michigan Cavalry

Mordaunt Williams: Born 1844 and lived in Plymouth but enlisted at Detroit in Company F 24th Michigan Infantry on December 15, 1862. Mustered out July 3, 1865 at Philadelphia, PA.

Significance of the District:

Michigan's *Local Historic Districts Act*, PA 169 of 1970, as amended, requires local historic district study committees to be guided by the evaluation criteria for the National Register of Historic Places in evaluating the significance of historic resources. These criteria are used throughout the country to evaluate the significance of potential resources at the local, state, and national levels.

In accordance with these legal guidelines, the Northville Township historic district study committee has determined that the Thayer's Corners historic district is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with a pattern of historical events that have contributed significantly to Northville Township's history as follows:

- The boundaries of the district are directly associated with the initial settling of this area by the Thayer Family and the founding of the cemetery and the schoolhouse.
- The general character of the area, and the rural setting of both the cemetery and the schoolhouse are directly associated with the early settlement of this portion of the township.
- Thayer's Schoolhouse, named after Rufus Thayer Jr., was built in 1877 on land purchased from the Thayer Family in 1854 and stands today as an important reminder of the early educational history of the township.

The study committee has also determined that the Thayer's Corners historic district is significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant to Northville Township's history as follows:

- Thayer's Corners represents four generations of the Thayer Family, who trace their presence in the Township back to the 1820's and who owned title to the land until 1970.
- In addition to the Thayer Family, many persons, including early settlers, veterans, community leaders, and business owners who were also significant to the history of the township are interred in Thayer's Cemetery.

Recommendation:

The Northville Township historic district study committee finds that the proposed Thayer's Corners historic district is significant as tangible evidence to the Thayer Family's important impact on the founding and early development of Northville Township. The existing schoolhouse and cemetery characterize an era that is important to the history of the township and serve as a reminder of one family's long history in the community. The study committee recommends that Thayer's Corners be designated as a local historic district.

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July 28, 1953
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Register of Deeds. Wayne County, Michigan. *Warranty Deed*. Rufus Thayer and his wife Thesilora to Fractional School District No.1- Plymouth & Salem. Southwest corner of Section 7, Town 1 South, Range 8 East. August 1, 1854.

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Register of Deeds. Wayne County, Michigan. *Warranty Deed*. August Prince and Chieko Prince to Richard Svatora and Lucina Svatora. Southwest corner of Section 7, Town 1 South, Range 8 East. September 1, 1972.

Register of Deeds. Wayne County, Michigan. *Warranty Deed*. Lucina Svatora to Daniel P. Loudin. Southwest corner of Section 7, Town 1 South, Range 8 East. October 17, 1986.

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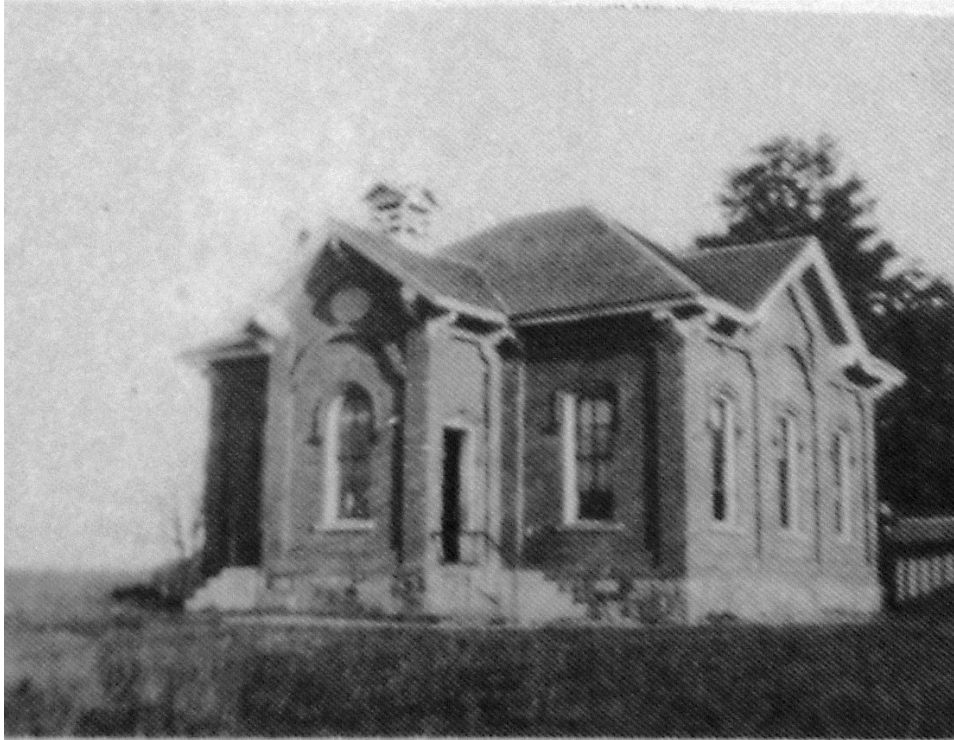
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The proposed Thayer's Corners Historic District from the air, ca. 2009. Camera facing north. Retrieved from www.bing.com December, 2010





Earliest photo found by the Study Committee, ca. 1927. Note school bell housing over entry. Photo from *History of Salem Township, Washtenaw, County, Michigan*. Salem Historical Society, 1976



Photographer facing northeast, November, 2009. Photo by Fred Shadko



View looking due west. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009



View looking due east November, 2009. Photo by Fred Shadko,



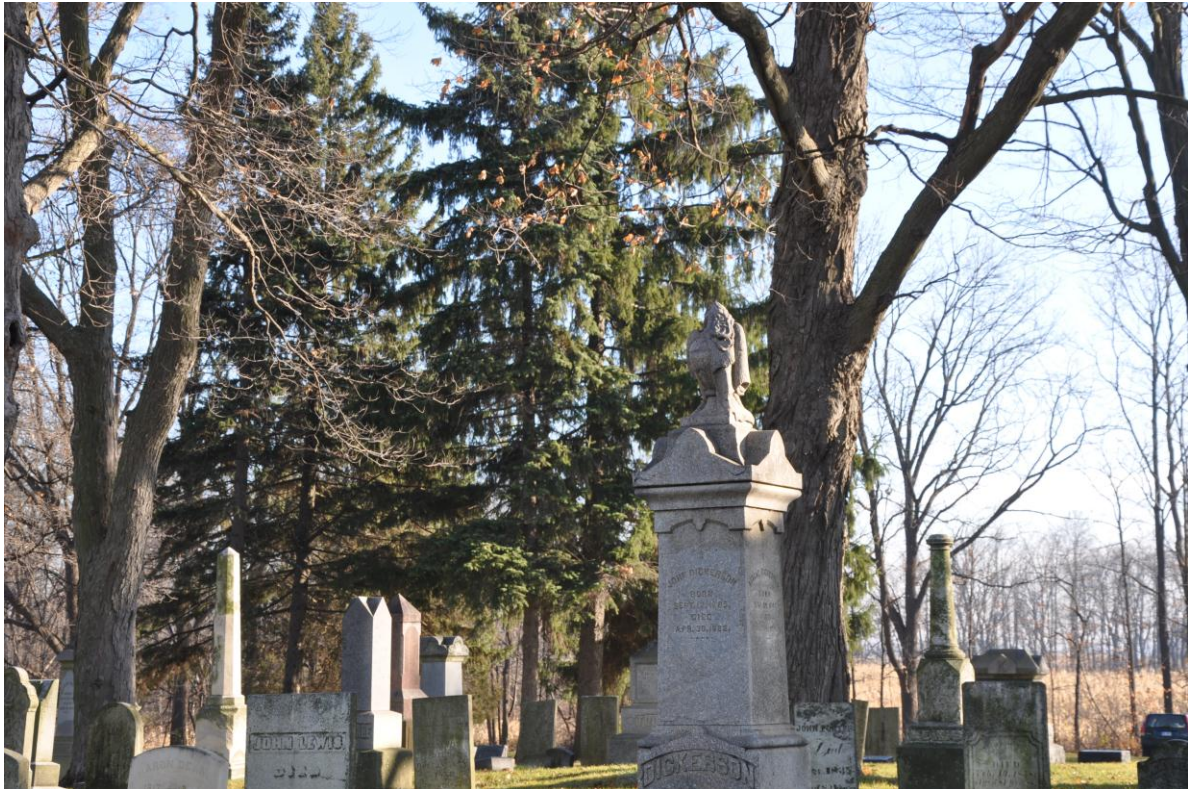
Looking to the southeast from Napier Road. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009



Looking to the southeast from inside Napier Road gate. Note rear bathroom building addition at left. Photo by Fred Shadko, November 2009.



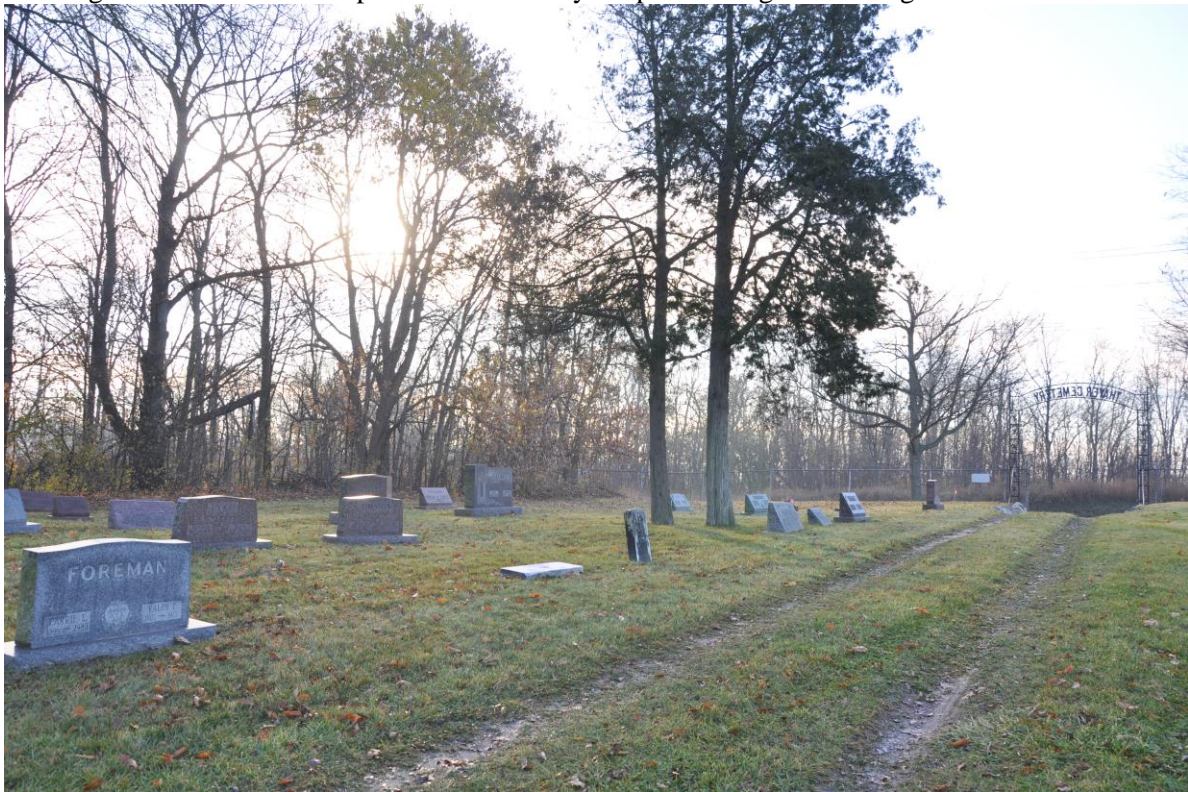
Looking to the northeast, this is the west end of cemetery with Napier Road gate. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009.



Looking to the northeast from inside the Napier Road gate. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009.



Looking to west from eastern portion of cemetery. Napier Road gate in background. Fred Shadko 11/09



Eastern portion of cemetery, looking to southeast. Six Mile Road gate at end of two-track road. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009.



Looking northwest from inside Six Mile Road gate. Photo by Fred Shadko, November, 2009



Looking to the northeast at Six Mile Road cemetery gate. Photo by Fred Shadko, November 2009

Monument Photos

All monuments shown are located in the original section of the cemetery.

Captions indicate family name, year of first burial, monument material and monument style.

All photos by Bill Sivy. February 2011.



Coldren, 1874, sandstone, pedestal



Wheeler, 1882, sandstone, pedestal-vaulted roof



Lewis, 1852, marble, pedestal-column



Thayer, 1900, granite, die on base



Kehrl, 1915, granite, die base & cap



Van Sickle, 1896, granite, die on base



Cooling, 1905, granite, die base & cap



Toucey, 1893, granite, pedestal-vaulted roof



Whipple, 1900, granite, die on base



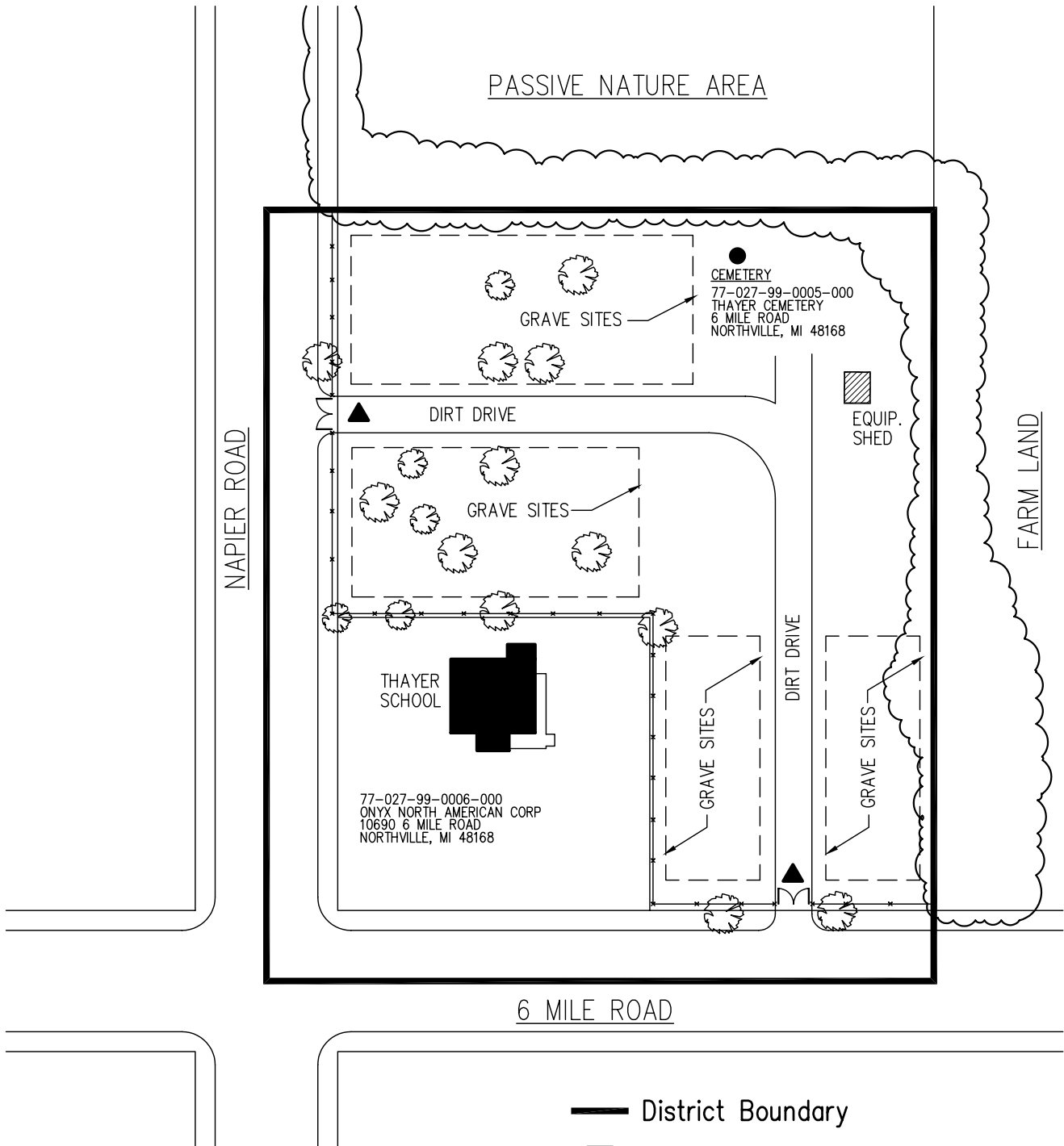
Rider, 1884, sandstone, pedestal-vaulted roof



Doane, 1899, granite, pulpit



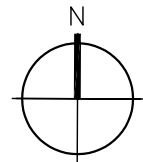
Larkins, 1881, marble, pedestal-urn



- District Boundary
- Contributing Resource
- ▨ Non-Contributing Resource
- Historic Site
- ▲ Historic Structure/ Object

Northville Township Historic District Survey

Charter Township of Northville
Wayne County
Thayer's Corners Historic District



March 2011
not to scale

Historic Name: THAYER SCHOOL

USGC Map Title

Common Name: (SAME)

Area Map Name:

District Name: PROPOSED THAYERS CORNERS

Address:

Street and Number: 6 MILE RD.

Block Number:

Sub-Unit:

Municipal Unit: NORTHVILLE TWP

County: WAYNE

Original Use: 1 ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

Present Use: VACANT

Ownership: CORPORATION (LAND FILL)

Survey/ Date: NOV. 11, 2009

Surveyor: D SCHNEIDER

Recorder/ Date:

Date Built: 1877

Source of Date: KEYSTONE

Style: ITALIANITE

Property Type:

Architect/ Builder: N/A

Description.



Materials.

Foundation: DRESSED STONE

Walls: PAINTED BRICK W/ DECORATIVE ARCHES

Roof: MODERN ASPHALT ROOF

Comments:

NO WINDOWS REMAIN

HOLES IN ROOF

1940 +/- BATHROOM ADDITION

Photo Info:

File Name:

Frame No.

Roll No.

Photographer:

ON FILE @ TWP. OFFICES

Historic Name: THAYER CEMETERY

Common Name: (SAME)

District Name: PROPOSED THAYER'S
CORNERS

Address:

Street and Number: 6 MILE RD

Block Number:

Sub-Unit:

Municipal Unit: NORTHVILLE TWP

County: WAYNE

Original Use: CEMETERY

Present Use: (SAME)

Ownership: NON-PROFIT ORGAN.

Survey/ Date: NOV. 11, 2009

Surveyor: D SCHNEIDER

Recorder/ Date:

Date Built: BEGUN 1830

Source of Date: DEED

Style:

Property Type: RURAL LANDSCAPE

Architect/ Builder: N/A

Description

USGC Map Title
Area Map Name:



Materials: N/A

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof

Comments:

Photo Info:

File Name:

Frame No.

Roll No.

Photographer: ON FILE @ TWP OFFICES

Historic Name: THAYER CEMETERY GATES

USGC Map Title

Common Name: (SAME)

Area Map Name:

District Name: PROPOSED THAYERS
CORNERS

Address:

Street and Number: 6 MILE RD

Block Number:

Sub-Unit:

Municipal Unit: NORTHVILLE TWP

County: WAYNE

Original Use: CEMETERY

Present Use: (SAME)

Ownership: NON-PROFIT ORGAN.

Survey/ Date: NOV. 11, 2009

Surveyor: D. SCHNEIDER

Recorder/ Date:

Date Built: 1940 CIRCA

Source of Date: ASSUMED FROM MATERIALS

Style:

Property Type:

Architect/ Builder: N/A

Description

STEEL BAR STOCK / SHEET METAL LETTERING
WELDED & MECHANICALLY FASTENED JOINTS

Materials: N/A

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Comments:

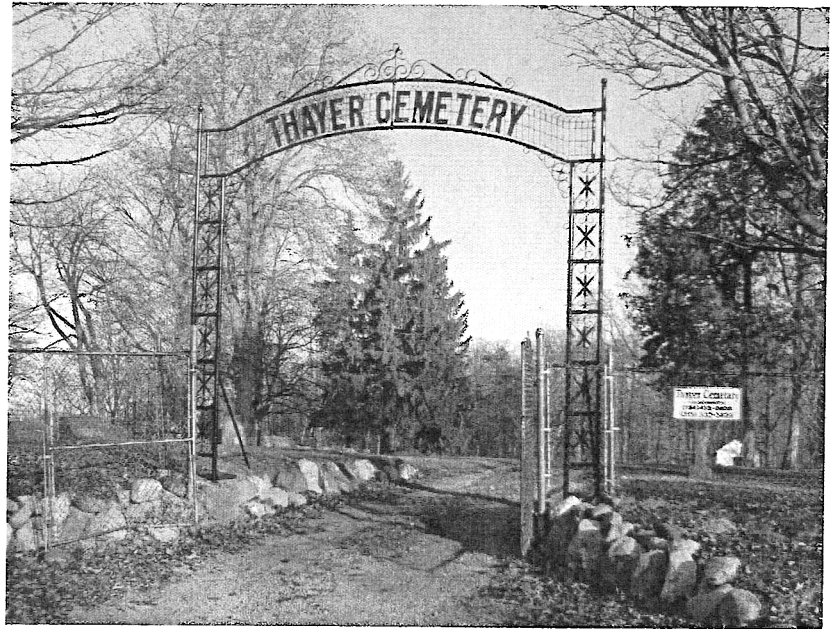


Photo Info:

File Name:

Frame No.

Roll No.

Photographer:

ON FILE @ TWP OFFICES

Historic Name: NONE

Common Name: EQUIPMENT SHED

District Name: PROPOSED TRAYERS
CORNERS

Address:

Street and Number: 6 MILE RD.

Block Number:

Sub-Unit:

Municipal Unit: NORTHVILLE TWP

County: WAYNE

Original Use: STORAGE

Present Use: (SAME)

Ownership: NON-PROFIT ORGAN.

Survey/ Date: NOV 11, 2009

Surveyor: D. SCHNEIDER

Recorder/ Date:

Date Built: CIRCA 1950

Source of Date: ASSUMED FROM TYPE

Style:

Property Type:

Architect/ Builder: N/A

Description:

WOOD-FRAME, WOOD SIDING (GOOD)
ASPHALT SHINGLES (WORN)
SLAB ON GRADE

Materials:

Foundation: SLAB

Walls: WOOD CLAPBOARD

Roof: ASPHALT (MODERN)

Comments:

USGC Map Title

Area Map Name:

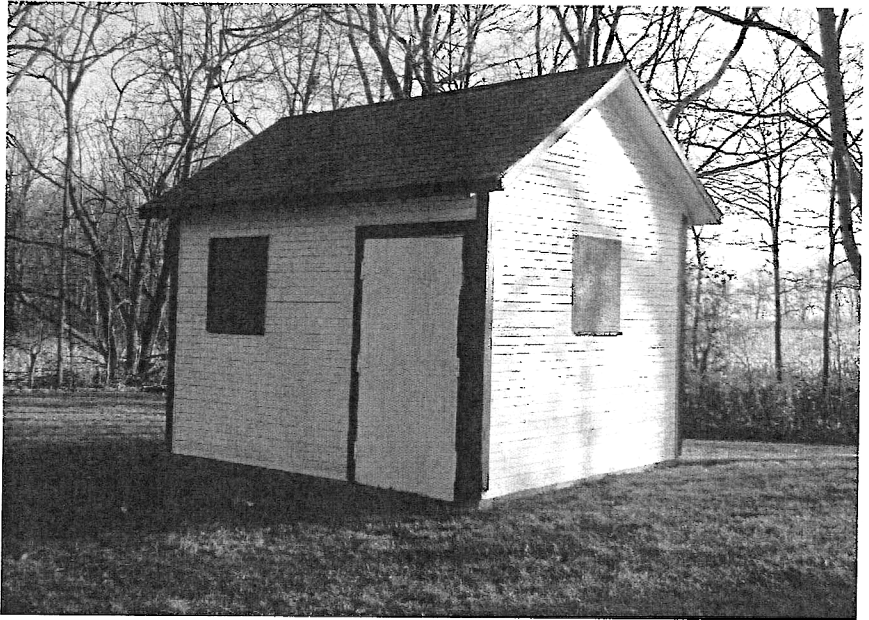


Photo Info:

File Name:

Frame No.

Roll No.

Photographer:

ON FILE @ TWP OFFICES

THAYER CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

551 Karmada St.
Plymouth, MI 48170-1207
734 453-0608

Russell Merritt, President
Carol Merritt, Secretary
Kathleen McFarland, Treasurer
Ralph Hollis, Trustee
Tillie Van Sickle, Trustee

June 20, 2010

Dan Schneider, Chair
Thayer Study Committee
Northville Twp. Historic Commission
44405 Six Mile Rd.
Northville, MI. 48168

Dear Dan,

Thank you for attending our annual business meeting and making your presentation to our Board. We believe that protecting and preserving the heritage of Northville Township is very important.

The Board of Directors of Thayer Cemetery Association is unanimously in favor of becoming part of the Thayer Corner Historic District. We are committed to maintaining the cemetery and making the necessary improvements to keep up the appearance and historic look.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to help the Commission with this.

Sincerely,



Russell Merritt, President