

Farm Marketing II: Marketing Session

Tuesday afternoon 2:00 pm

Where: Ballroom A

Moderator: Kay Cummings, MSU Extension, Fremont, MI

- 2:00 pm Displaying Your Farm Heritage to Your Customers
- Matthew Schuld, Summit Tree Sales, Lawrence, MI
- 2:30 pm Farmers: The Unsung Heroes of Michigan Archaeology -- Do you have a coffee can of arrowheads, a windowsill of historic bottles, or maybe even a mastodon tooth on your mantle? Farmers have made some of the most important archaeological discoveries in our state. Hear about some of their amazing finds and learn how to be good stewards of archaeological sites on your land.
- Stacy Tchorzynski, Archaeologist, State Historic Preservation Office & Michigan History Center, Lansing, MI
- 3:00 pm Michigan Agritourism: Growing Your Business and Your State's Agritourism Industry -- Learn how the Michigan Agritourism Association is working to support the agritourism industry and take away ideas that can help you grow your business and help your state
- Beth Hubbard, Michigan Agritourism Association President and Corey Lake Orchards, Three Rivers, MI
 - Janice Benson, Executive Director, Michigan Agritourism, Traverse City, MI
- 3:15 pm A Visit to Vala's Pumpkin Patch: With over 50 Attractions at Their Farm, You Will Learn from Their Story
- Tim and Kelsey Vala, Vala's Pumpkin Patch, Gretna, NE
- 4:00 pm Session Ends

Displaying your Historical Narrative: Resources for Research and Display

Matthew Schuld, Summit Tree Sales
matt@summittreesales.com | 800.424.2765
Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable EXPO 2016

Tips for Displaying Historical Information

Be direct and brief. Conveying historical content in a few sentences, makes it more likely that customers will read it and remember it.

- Opportunities to tell stories about the past are all around you. You have a farm specific history, but your history likely also fits into a genealogical history, the community's history, and the larger history of the region and nation.
- Utilize anniversaries to commemorate the past. Is your farm celebrating 50 years in business? Play a role in commemorating the anniversaries of other local and national historical events.
- Use signage, handouts, or other displays to briefly introduce customers to the history of your farm. Make them a historical actor in an ongoing historical event and place. For example, "The farm your visiting today has been helping to feed the community since 1870."
- Use the skills you have already. Direct farm marketers are already highly creative with signage, interactive displays, and hands on activities. Just add a historical element.

Displaying Your Farm History

- Many of your farm markets or pick-your-own business date back several generations, that's interesting already. You likely have customers who visit because their parents did before. Emphasizing the history of your farm will build on an already existing appreciation for that history.
- Do you have additional products that connect to long standing traditions? For example, making maple syrup or apple butter. Tell customers about these traditions.
- Do you know of fascinating characters from the past connected to your farm or family that you could tell a story about (e.g. someone that started a family tradition or someone that had a special recipe you still make today)?

Are you eligible for any historical designations?

Your farm or individual structures on your farm may be eligible for a variety of local, state, or national historical designations.

National Register of Historic Places: The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Eligibility is determined by examining the property's age, integrity, and significance.

State Register of Historic Places (State Historic Preservation Office): Most states have a Historic Preservation Office, and many offer programs to help you achieve both state and national designation as a historic place. Tax credits may be available depending on your state.

Centennial Farms Program: In Michigan, the Centennial Farms Program recognizes farms that have remained in the same family for 100 years or more. Properties must be a working farm of ten plus acres (<http://www.hsmichigan.org/mcfa/>). Check to see if your state has a program, most Midwestern states do.

State and/or local historical/cultural organizations may offer recognition or designation: For example, Michigan has the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey (<http://michiganbarns.org/>).

Researching the History of Your Farm

Oral History

One of the best resources for uncovering farm history is memory and oral history. Do you have elderly relatives, neighbors, or community members who would have memories of your farm? Interviewing these individuals will uncover information that would never be found in the historical record. Consider checking with a local historical society to find out if other oral histories related to agriculture have already been completed and preserved.

Family and Personal Collections

Private collections are another valuable resource for researching a farm's history. If a farm has remained in the same family for numerous generations, personal collections might date back over a hundred years. Record books, photographs, diaries, letters, and scrapbooks can offer information ranging from crop production to captivating accounts of everyday life.

Photographs

Photographs contain a wealth of information about the people, places, cultural practices, technology, and lifeways of the past. Ask the right questions, and photographs can lead in a multitude of new research directions. What does an individual's clothing tell you about social class? Is there technology (i.e. equipment, automobiles) in the photo that helps identify the date it was taken? Are there visible buildings or features on the natural landscape to help identify where it was taken? Why do you think the photograph was taken/what did the photographer intend to capture?

The best photographs related to farm and family history are often in the property owner's personal collection. Local historical societies, libraries, and local newspaper archives likely also have photographs of specific farms or of agriculture related events in the community (e.g. harvest, special events).

Built and Natural Landscape

Do you have a historic barn, farm house, or other out buildings? Does your farm have an impressive overlook that gives visitors a birds-eye view of the landscape? These sites provide excellent opportunities for discussing the history of both the built and natural landscape.

Architectural history books can offer insight into when buildings were constructed, what architecture certain cultures and ethnic groups preferred, and how building use changed over time. Similarly, examining the natural landscape will provide clues to a farm's history. What natural features made the land ideal for farming? Was the land ditched and drained? Was it heavily lumbered? Are there waterways that may have powered a small mill? Is there a spring that was once used under a cooling house? (See

American Farms: Exploring Their History by R. Douglas Hurt for a bibliography of architectural history books related to agriculture.)

Written Record

This is the broadest historical resource category. It includes unpublished (like diaries and letters) and published material (like newspapers and books). When researching a specific farm or the history of agriculture in a community seek out the following documentary resources:

- *County Histories:* This is a specific type of volume published by private companies in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They provide biographical information and short community histories which are usually organized by township and village/city. They feature historical material about prominent area farmers. These should be read critically as individuals would pay to have their names included in the publication and occasionally even authored their own biography. Let's just say that every individual included in a county history is always said to be, "industrious and upstanding." Despite this, they can be a great research tool.
- *Newspapers and clipping files:* Many libraries and historical societies offer access to historical material from local newspapers. Some historical organizations have had the resources to index old news articles by subject or surname, making them easily searchable. It is also common for historical societies to have file cabinets of clippings (cut from newspapers and magazines) organized by subject or surname.
- *Obituaries:* While obituaries are found in newspapers, they are frequently indexed by historical societies or libraries separately from the entire newspaper. Obituaries range in detail, but they contain useful genealogical and historical information about deceased individuals.
- *Governmental Records:* Local, state, and federal records offer an abundance of historical data. While researching these documents can be tedious, they are one of the best resource for accurate information about who lived on a farm, what they produced, and how a farm changed over time. The agricultural census for example (first taken in 1850), documents property owners, number of laborers, what percentage of the land is used for farming, what is grown, and even more (like how many fences a farmer owned... maybe that isn't too interesting). The census usually includes every farm property, and they are organized by county.
- *Deeds, wills, and tax records:* County or state archives usually retain deeds dating back to the earliest property owners. These records detail who owned land, how land was subdivided, and how much it was valued at. This information will raise new historical questions. For example, if a property increases in value significantly over a short period of time, it's likely that the owner made improvements to the property, such as adding a house or barn. *Wills* are another resource usually found at county offices. Wills may list items of monetary value owned by the deceased, shedding light on farming activities and social class.

Maps

Plat maps or county atlases were published by private companies beginning in the mid-1800s. They contain maps of each township with property lines, acreage, and owners noted in all rural areas. Buildings and natural features are also shown in limited detail (a black square will indicate a building, a schoolhouse drawing indicates a school, a cross will indicate a cemetery). Atlases will include highly detailed (and embellished) drawings of certain properties and short biographies of early settlers and landowners. Since these were published usually every 10-15 years, viewing this resource in chronological order is a great way to document how a property changed hands or was subdivided.

Visit local historical societies, libraries, museums, state and regional archives

Historical Society of Michigan's Local Historical Organizations:

<http://www.hsmichigan.org/resources/local-historical-organizations/>

Indiana Historical Society

<http://www.indianahistory.org/our-services/local-history-services/local-history-contacts>

Wisconsin Historical Society

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/localhistory/directory/>

Ohio History Connection

<https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/local-history-office>

Minnesota Historical Society

<http://www.mnhs.org/localhistory/mho/chsclo.php>

The internet will only take you so far, but it still helps

Library of Congress

<https://loc.gov/collections>

National Archives and Records Administration

<http://www.archives.gov/>

Google Books

<https://books.google.com/>

Museum, university and/or college archives websites

These institutions often offer online photo and document collections. Below are two examples of Grand Rapids based institutions with excellent online offerings:

Grand Rapids Historical Commission: <http://www.historygrandrapids.org/view/collections>

Grand Rapids Public Library: <http://www.grpl.org/history/>

Many of the best collections are housed at institutions found in the nearest major city, and these organizations likely have online collections.

Research Tips

Have a research plan and document specific questions you hope to answer through research.

Bad historical questions: What is the history of my farm (too general)? Is my farmhouse haunted (historical resources cannot answer this)?

Good historical question: What approximate year was the barn and house on my farm built? Who lived on this property? What crops did they grow? From what country of origin were the first settlers on my property?

Understand that many historical societies and libraries have volunteer or part-time staff. They may have limited hours.

Historical documents are rare and easily damaged. Do not be surprised if you are asked to follow strict policies when accessing these items (such as showing an ID, wearing gloves, or storing a backpack in a locker).

Information gleaned from a single historical resource may not seem to reveal a great deal, but when several historical resources are combined, a much fuller history emerges.



Mammoth skull, photo courtesy of Michigan History Center

Farmers: The Unsung Heroes of Michigan Archaeology

Stacy Tchorzynski, Archaeologist
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office & Department of Natural Resources
517-373-6358
tchorzynskis@michigan.gov

The State Archaeological Site File is the official record of archaeological sites reported in Michigan and contains information on nearly 25,000 finds spanning 14,000 years of human history. Using case studies on file, this presentation celebrates the farmers that have made, and continue to make, some of the most important scientific and cultural discoveries in our region.

Do you have a coffee can of arrowheads, a windowsill of historic bottles, or maybe even a mastodon tooth on your mantle?

- Hear about amazing finds
- Learn about site stewardship
- Know your property rights
- Find professional and public partners
- Take away tips on heritage-based marketing



Petroglyph, photo courtesy of SHPO

A PowerPoint presentation will be followed by open Q&A.



Early village site, photo courtesy of SHPO

To learn more about archaeology in Michigan, visit www.michigan.gov/archaeology.

Michigan Agritourism:

Growing your business and your state's agritourism industry

Learn how the Michigan Agritourism Association is working to support the agritourism industry and take away ideas that can help you grow your business and help your state

Beth Hubbard, Michigan Agritourism Association President and Corey Lake Orchards, Three Rivers, MI/
Janice Benson, Executive Director, Michigan Agritourism, Traverse City, MI, www.michiganfarmfun.com

- Field of Dreams
 - Corn field becomes a baseball field in a hit movie, July 1988
 - Split field becomes two competing tourist attractions for a decade
 - August, 2007, one farmer bought out the other and the field was united at last
 - 2010, put up for sale and sold for 3.4 billion to a Chicago land developer
 - They wanted to create All-Star Ballpark heaven
 - The city council approved the zoning changes necessary
 - Farmers and town folks didn't want and held it up in court
- Is this Agritourism?
 - Still there today as one of the top Iowa Tourist attractions with steady stream of cars
 - Signs at the field say:
 - "Affected the public in a way seldom matched in movie history"
 - "So much of the magic is still here today"
- All agritourism entrepreneurs build it and hope they will come
- With the public's strong desire of rural outdoors, returning back to their roots, experiencing farms first hand---no doubt they will come
- But it's a tough business to go it alone
- How to help support building those fields??
 - Review the appropriate agriculture or tourism associations, universities or government agencies in your own state that own parts of this
 - In Michigan, it is the Michigan Agritourism association
 - In other states, it is part of the State agriculture department, the Tourism department, universities or similar associations to ours
- Where those field builders need help?
 - Promotion
 - Marketing pieces
 - Print materials
 - Website and social media
 - Legislation
 - Networking/Collaboration
 - Education
 - Growing partnerships
 - Answering every day questions from someone who has "been there/done that"

How do you get started? What do you need?

- A mission—a goal—a vision of what you are trying to do
- Human resources: Passionate, knowledgeable folks willing to give of their time and talents
- Funding sources
 - Grants
 - Membership dues
 - Sponsorships
 - Bartering/trading
 - Other