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Many interesting stories could come from this home, were it endowed with the power of speech. It has stood on North Woodward for over 100 years. The rear (wooden) section was built in the early 1800's, with the brick section being added in 1834, three years before the railroad came to this section. Now owned by Miss Clara

By Alice E. Morgan

From the soft pad of Indian feet to the powerful roar of fast cars and huge highway trucks. From the vast stillness and solitude of the unbroken wilderness to the hurry and scurry of modern day living.

That is the story of the brick and wood house on Woodward avenue near Lone Pine road in Bloomfield Hills. Now owned by Miss Clara Benedict, 352 N. Woodward, Birmingham, it is believed to be the oldest standing house in Oakland County.

The land was deeded to Elijah S. Fish by the government in 1819. He farmed the 70 acres until 1857, when the farm was purchased by Miss Benedict's grandfather, Eri Benedict, for \$1.25 an acre.

The original part of the present building, made entirely of wood, stood on a knoll just east of the present site. It was here that Chief Pontiac made his last stand while working his way back to Saginaw after several raids to the south.

On Indian Trail

Fish moved the structure to a ridge, overlooking the Indian trail which in later years was a railroad and finally became Woodward avenue.

The structure has a side entrance which opens directly into what is the farm kitchen. Thick wooden planks form the walls. The doors are of southern pine, a full two inches thick.

All building was done with an idea of safety and comfort. Safety to turn away Indian arrows. Comfort to keep out the cold blasts of winter, against which a fireplace had too little influence.

Colonial Housekeeping

The fireplace is flanked on either side by brick ovens. Here, with fireplace cranes and trammels, the family cooking was done in huge kettles of iron or copper.

The baking was done in the ovens flanking the maw of the fireplace. Huge hooks are still in the ceiling. From these meats, vegetables and various fruits were hung for drying. Canning and fast freezing had little part in the life of 130 years ago.

The floors of the kitchen, as the rest of the house, are of thick oak. The mantels over both the kitchen and living room fireplaces are small handmade trunks and treasure boxes, small stands and the like were all made by hand. One, a small stand, sees daily use in Miss Benedict's present home.

"It is delightfully cool, no matter how hot the summer," Miss Benedict smiles.

Many of the other household necessities of those days were to be found in the house until only a few years ago. Spinning wheels, small handmade trunks and treasure boxes, small stands and the like were all made by hand. One, a small stand, sees daily use in Miss Benedict's present home.

History has it that the first Presbyterian meetings in this area were held in a barn, now fallen, at the rear of the Fish house.

The Benedict family, coming here from Saratoga, N. Y., made their purchase in 1857. Eri Benedict later built a house across the trail, which is now part of the Booth property. This house provided quarters for the Bloomfield Territory, long before there was a formally organized Birmingham.

John Benedict's Bride
 John Benedict inherited the farm at his father's death. He brought his bride, Ellen, Celestia Adams, of Birmingham, to the farm on June 19, 1871, where their entire married life was spent.

Mr. Benedict developed the farm and planted the maple grove in which the house stands. The

Benedict of 352 N. Woodward, the property came into her family in 1857 and has witnessed the transition from wilderness to one of the busiest highways in the country. The house is believed to be the oldest dwelling in Oakland county and is a well-known landmark in this section.

(Photo by Joe Wheeler)

had to modernize the house some, but to me it is still the 'Benedict farm'. I've just taken a notion to keep it that way until I can say it's been in the Benedict family for a hundred years.

"People ask me why I keep it. I don't really know, other than sentiment. I just want us to own it a hundred years. I don't really need the money, so why sell it?"

"Anyway, who knows but what some day I may decide to give up this little home and go back there? I want to know that I can return to the house where I was born and lived so many years if I should decide to."

"No, the Old Benedict place isn't for sale at any price."

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Concert Soloist
KATJA ANDY
 Katja Andy, pianist, will appear as soloist at the Dec. 2 concert of the Detroit Little Symphony in the Royal Oak high school auditorium. The performance will feature the music of Bach and Mozart.

Local Youths Are Yale Honor Students
 Milton F. Mallender, II, son of Mr. and Mrs. Milton F. Mallender, 430 Aspen road, has been named Scholar of the First Rank for the freshman year, 1948-49 at Yale university. His average is over 90. Amusement of their scholastic standing was made last week by Norman S. Buck, dean of the freshman year.
 second rank of the freshman year, with an average of over 85. Both young men are graduates of Baldwin high school, and will be in the Class of '53 at Yale. Adams has been on the "Yale Daily News" and is a member of the Political Union there.

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