

House #11 Will Turner House, 2099 Hamilton Rd. →

This house was built before 1874 by Will Turner (son of William H. Turner who built the brick Heathman-Herre house). Turner lived in the original two-story upright portion of the building until his death in 1924. Subsequent owners added two bedrooms upstairs with a porch below, and a den and upstairs studio.



The Will Turner House was a recognized historic home built by Will Turner before 1874. The above picture and caption is taken from the “Old Okemos Tour: Village of Hamilton” on September 11, 2017 by the Friends of Historic Meridian.



A close look at the 1874 Meridian Township Plat map shows the above property owned by W. Turner.



This picture was taken November 4, 2015 by Rod Ellis (OHS Class of 1965) and Bill Breckenfeld (OHS Class of 1965). The photo project was undertaken to memorialize the family homes of the Okemos Class of 1965 for the occasion of their 50th Anniversary of graduation.

We haven't seen a history of the house since Will Turner died in 1924, but we understand from Phyllis Piper '48 that it was at one time the residence of Ida and Agnis Strayer. I am familiar with the Jones family occupying the house in the 1950's to 1970's. Gomer Jones was a revered professor of Music at Michigan State University. His wife, Helen, ran the Guidance office at Okemos High School. They had three children that went to Okemos, including the ever-lovely Beth (class of '65) that I had the great fortune to date as a freshman at OHS for a few months (darn, if that handsome Mike

Baker didn't sweep her off her feet). Their youngest was David (class of 1973) who became a legend in Okemos history, by researching, petitioning and proposing the renaming of Okemos-Haslett Rd. to Marsh Rd. in honor of the early Okemos settler, Sanford Marsh...at about age 10. The episode was retold to me by Jack Whitmyer '51 who was on the Meridian Township Board when David presented his petition. "No one else was present, when this lad walked into the Board meeting. He had submitted his request earlier, so was on the agenda. We welcomed him to speak and this little guy gave us the history of Sanford Marsh and the signed petition supporting his proposal...which was unanimously accepted."

So, there it is, another landmark wiped from Okemos history...with only the scar to remind us times past.



Rod Ellis, Class of 1965

August 10, 2019