

# A Eureka Moment, Maybe Until Further Notice

Inbox x



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

10:56 PM (19 hours ago)

to nick

Hi Nick, again....

Here's a thought....If the Hansen House building won't give up its age easily, perhaps the environment in which it stands might be more compliant. Specifically, while I have only one photo of the Hansen House building when it was a private residence, I have many of the old Ponds Church over the years that are closely dated. In this case, the trees and the condition of the church building give solid clues.

The first pic below is the Pond Church in about 1870. It has 2 doors and no trees. The pic directly below it shows the future Hansen House, the Ponds Church with 1 door and...planted, evenly spaced trees. The two doors to the church were replaced by one door in 1889. But who would have planted the trees and when? I think that it's clear that the builder of the future Hansen House would have planted them when the house was first built. The trees are maples which grow 1-2 feet/yr. Their size suggest an age of about 30-35 years. Subtract A from B and one gets a date of 1875 +/- for the house.

The last pic in the lower right corner was taken in about 1930 shortly before it was demolished. A close examination of the photo shows that it was already abandoned as the Ponds congregation had already moved North on RVR by about 1 mile to the 'Workhouse of God'. Additionally, the trees are larger and fully matures. And note the partial view of the future hansen House. By this time the Boone family owned it since 1919.

The net is that one can reasonably date the building to about 1870-1875 without too much concern of being contradicted. It all fits. So, one has to simply find out who owned the property at that time and we have the owner/builder. Your thoughts?

Kevin



nick antaga

5:29 PM (39 minutes ago)

to me

Hi Kevin,

Eureka, indeed. You have done your homework well and then pursued new leads when old evidence was scant. Brilliant work to analyze the trees and their spacing.

My guess is the structure was built around 1880 as a commercial property. The nearby properties were probably commercial and zoned as such if zoning even existed. A personal residence like a farmhouse would have been one or two stories. A mansion for a wealthy owner would be more ornate with Victorian trims and constructed of masonry, not lumber.

A summer home for a wealthy New Yorker is also a possibility. You could look for other structures from that era to compare construction materials and design. Also, the distance from the road since residences are usually built further back, especially on an acreage. In 1880, the home would have no electricity, no automobiles, few bathrooms, multiple fireplaces and perhaps central heating/water heating by coal. The front and rear porches were likely constructed in 1880 as well. The well water was essential to this property.

So what type of commerce? I suppose a hotel, boarding house, rooming house, tavern, retirement home, or sanitorium. Lilac Manor Sanitarium was across the street, but was it there in 1880 or was the HH an earlier and smaller version? The HH frescos and stained glass fit with the idea of a commercial property.

Sonya recalls that her own bedroom had a number on the door as did all the sleeping rooms in the Hansen House. Hans wouldn't have numbered his family's bedrooms, would he?

Brad's father could have added the room numbers and maybe Candlelight House had tenants like his project in May's Landing.

I wonder if the local Building dept. has any records from prior blueprints and surveys. The fire dept. would have concerns about a 3-story balloon framed home so perhaps they have records.

Such records are rarely digital and often microfilmed on reels or slides.

Oakland Coal and Lumber delivered fuel oil to my boyhood home and we had an account with them. Do you think Oakland Coal customer records exist from the early 1900's?

WPA researched Pond's Church before constructing the community building and I wonder if they kept records of the old church and it's surrounds.

Those are my thoughts for whatever they are worth. Good luck.

Best,  
Nick