

Marjorie Findlay
618 Detroit Avenue
Lake Orion, MI 48362

Provenance of the Howarth School bell to be presented to the Orion Township Board, Monday, May 2, 2016, 7 p.m.



Howarth School and Bell

Howarth School History

John Howarth provided the land on which this Greek Revival one-room schoolhouse was built in **1859**. The building served the community as an Oakland County school and a place of worship for the Howarth United Methodist Church. The Methodists moved to a new building across the street in **1898** and the building continued to be used as an educational facility until **1955** when the Orion Township school system was consolidated and became known as the Lake Orion Community Schools. The church then reacquired the building and, for several more years, used the school for its vacation Bible school and its annual Christmas bazaar. Howarth School received designation as a Michigan Historical Site in **1988** (marker #1059).

In **2010**, the Lake Orion Historical society and various groups and organizations in the area raised money to have the historical Howarth School relocated from its original site at Silver Bell Road and Bald Mountain Road to Friendship Park on Clarkston Road at Baldwin Road in Orion Township (original coordinates: 42.72325 -83.23475).

<http://www.howarthumc.net/menu/id/13/About%20Us>

Howarth School Bell History

In approximately **2009**, the Howarth/Fiebelkorn adult grandchildren sold many of their family's Lake Orion-related items at public auction through "Dennis Beales Auctioneering Service" located at 1477 Haslett Road, Haslett, MI 48840. Representatives of the Howarth/Fiebelkorn family were present at the auction.

The provenance of the school bell was stated by the auctioneer before the bidding began. The bid was won by Marjorie Findlay, who had attended the auction due to her particular interest in Lake Orion memorabilia. This interest was due to fond memories of her childhood summers at Lake Orion and the fact that her mother, grandparents, and two aunts had all owned cottages on Bellevue Avenue between the 1920's and 1980's. Marjorie is currently managing a property on Detroit Avenue, Bellevue Island, which is owned by an out-of-state relative of hers.

While at the auction, after purchasing the Howarth School bell, Marjorie had a 10-15 minute conversation with the Howarth/Fiebelkorn family in order to gather more information about why the school bell had been separated from the school building.

According to Howarth/Fiebelkorn family members, Helen Lucille (nee Howarth) Fiebelkorn (**1896-1955**), was the great-granddaughter of John Howarth (**1813-1892**), one of the original settlers in Orion Township in **1836** and he donated the land for the Howarth School in 1859. Helen was a long-time teacher at Howarth School.

When Orion Township consolidated its school system circa **1955**, teacher Helen (Howarth) Fiebelkorn retired. The Howarth School bell was presented to her as a gift since her family played such a large role in the school's history. The bell was then moved to Helen's farm on Clarkston Road, and, after her death, was kept with the family until it was auctioned. The family

also mentioned that “the Lake Orion middle school library was named after Helen Howarth Fiebelkorn.”

The Howarth school bell is heavy, cast iron, and measures approximately 16” in diameter. The cradle, or frame, of the bell was not with the bell at the time of the auction, but may still be attached in the school’s cupola. The bell reads, “Fredericktown, Ohio,” which was a major mid-western manufacturer of school, church, fire, farm, sheep, team & stock, and hand bells. A similar cast iron bell from a 1940 Fredericktown advertisement lists the price at \$ 33.90.

Helen Lucille Howarth bloodline:

Helen Lucille **Howarth** (1896-1955) married 1921 to Earnest/Ernest Charles Fiebelkorn (1892-1936)

Helen’s parents:

Jennie Eliz. Clark (1869-1961) married 1895 to John Rice **Howarth** (1873-1938)

Helen’s grandparents:

Mary Eliza Rice (1853-1920) married 1872 to Charles Henry **Howarth** (1849 – 1914)

Helen’s great-grandparents (original settlers, 1836, donated land for Howarth School):

Loretta Margaret Clark (1819-1863) married 1842 to John **Howarth** (1813-1892), who was born in England, came to U.S. (NY, NY) in April 1834 (ship name: Powhatan) at the age of 21, moved to Detroit in 1835, and to Orion Township in 1836.

Interesting note:

Helen Howarth Fiebelkorn’s son, Ernest “Red” Charles Fiebelkorn, Jr. (01/12/1922-06/07/1950), Airborne Major, ace flyer, shot down the famed German ace, Major Walter Nowotny. Red was killed in action and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was born in Lake Orion and a website honoring him (<http://ww2gravestone.com/people/felber-hans-gustav-2/>) includes the following regarding his mother, “...was the first born son of Ernest and Helen (Howarth) Fiebelkorn. His father died from injuries received in a fall from a roof in 1936, leaving his mother, a teacher in the Lake Orion School System, to raise Ernest, Jr. and his four siblings, Betty, Roger, Jack, and Lucille.” Helen’s son, Roger, also died in action in Eastern France, 1944.