

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 19th (Milford Library) An Evening with Mark Twain—No potluck for this meeting which is being held in conjunction with the Milford Library and at the Library. Come hear the fascinating stories by a Samuel Langhorne Clemens reenactor. Langhorne was better known by his pen name Mark Twain.

March 25th—Board Meeting—7 pm at the Mary Jackson house on Canal Street

April 16th—General Membership Meeting (Potluck) Mary Lou the Main Street Brat—listen to stories of Milford's History from our Museum Director Emeritus, Mary Lou Gharrity

Pot Luck Assignments - A—F— Salad or Side Dish

G—Q Main Dish R—Z— Desserts

April 22—Board Meeting—7 pm at the Mary Jackson House on Canal St.

Do you want to share some history?

We are always looking for ideas for displays at the museum and for programs that will make the Society and the Museum more attractive and relevant to the community. If you have some thoughts or suggestions, please contact Elaine Hunter, the Museum Director (see page 2 for contact info).

This winter we are putting in a display of an original post office window like those that might have been located in the old Milford Post Office on Main Street downtown. If you happen to be a collector of post office memorabilia or even of old stamps or postcards with Milford postmarks, we'd love to add your stuff to the display. Contact Elaine about that, too.

We also own and operate the Mary Jackson House on Canal St in the Village. We have used it for meetings, for wedding showers, for reunions and for a variety of other one-time events, but your suggestions for it would be welcomed, too. Contact Sue Bullard about that. Talk to us and become a part of the display of our local history.

From Your President, Norm Werner

Winter can be a slow time of the year; but, apparently no one told our new museum director and her Museum Committee crew. Rather than slow down they've been executing their plans to renovate the first floor display areas of the museum. See Elaine Hunter's report on the next page. At least we don't have to post "Pardon our Dust" signs for visitors, since the Museum is closed until May.



And speaking of being busy; the new Huron Valley History Initiative got busy in late January writing and addressing post cards for the Central Michigan History Library's grant contest and the hard work paid off. The Milford/Highland/White Lake/Commerce consortium of history groups and libraries won the contest in a run-away, based mainly on the over 5,000 postcards that were submitted. Out next closest competitor was the Alpena group who actually beat us on Twitter Tweets, but had no where near the community support with postcards. Great job everyone!

A special congratulations and thank you to Carol Watkins, who represented the Milford Historical Society in the consortium and spearheaded the postcard drive. Carol has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to this project and continues to head up much of the work that remains to be done. The grant from The Clarke Historical Library will cover only a portion of the digitization work that the group hopes to accomplish in their efforts to put the history of the Huron Valley into a searchable database. There is much work to be done and funds to be raised; so, your help would be appreciated. Contact Carol if you would like to help.

I would like to make a personal appeal to our membership to get involved in the activities and events of the upcoming year. In particular, we need another volunteer to be a board member. We try to maintain a balance between male and female board members and it would be helpful if we could find a male volunteer for this position. Long time Milfordite and well-known Village resident Linda Dagenhardt joined our board last month and is already making an impact with her offer to provide the renovation labor for the museum (see Elaine's article for that, too). The board of directors, like the leadership of a small church, often ends up running most of the programs and projects that the organization takes on, so we need working board members, not just figureheads. Contact me if you are interested.

***Our Mission Statement:** We are organized exclusively for educational purposes. We bring together people who are interested in history, especially the history of the village of Milford & Milford Township.*

MILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Linda Dagenhardt 248-807-1204

MUSEUM DIRECTOR—ELAINE HUNTER
248-685-7308



From the Museum Director

It may be frigid outside but all the energy inside the museum is keeping it warm and sunny. The museum committee, comprised of Elaine Hunter, Director, Norm Werner, MHS President, Marylou Gharrity, Marlene Gomez, Carol Watkins, MHS Vice President and Rena Valentine MHS Vice President,

has met several times and come up with a plan to redecorate several spaces in the museum. The main display room is getting fresh paint, new wall paper, a new ceiling and new lighting. Also getting fresh paint and new lighting are the log cabin hallway and the foyer which will also have the restored post office display and will get new flooring, too.

All of this work takes time, labor and of course, funding. There are lots of us with time who are willing to work. However, money is another issue all together. We are able to accomplish these lofty goals because of two very generous donations.

New Milford Historical Society board member and long time Milford resident and supporter Linda Dagenhardt has donated her time and expertise in construction and electrical work to remove the old/install the new ceiling and lighting in the main display room. She will also be removing the old wallpaper, repairing the walls and painting that room.

The second donation comes from the Sherwin-Williams Paint Store on Lyon Center Drive, East in New Hudson. The store manager, Ryan Kukoyi, generously donated approximately \$500 worth of paint for this renovation project. I would hope if you are doing any redecorating of your own home that you would consider stopping there for your painting needs. Be sure to thank him when you are there.

At this point I would also like to thank Carol Watkins, Rena Valentine and Marlene Gomez. They are the best strippers--wallpaper that is--I have ever seen. (Ed. I'm glad that Elaine clarified that point, otherwise we'd have had to determine whether stripping falls under the heading of an event or a display or maybe both.)

We also have new carpet for the foyer, purchased at cost from Perfect Floors in South Lyon. They are contributors to the Home Tour booklet every year. The carpet was picked up by Rena Valentine and Elaine Hunter. We drove home with it hanging 3 feet out the back of Rena's SUV. We then accosted a gentleman in the parking lot by the museum to help us carry it in. Never say we are not creative in getting things done. That is one good deed we have to pay forward. You are going to love our new/old museum.

By the beginning of March we will have a definite timetable for the work that needs to be done. Anyone interested in helping can contact me at de-tah101@aol.com or by phone 248 529-3393. Remember you will get dirty but, you will be giving positive support to our organization and its goal of preserving and presenting history to our community.

Museum Needs: roller skates-metal wheels that clamp onto shoes, rotary dial phone, ideas for future displays you would be interested in seeing.

- Elaine Hunter

The Milford Historian

Newsletter of the

Milford Historical Society

published bimonthly (six times per year)



Editor: Norm Werner

Email: Historian@milfordhistory.org

Upcoming General Membership Meeting Programs

An Evening With Mark Twain

Our Thursday March 19th General Meeting will be held at the Milford Library at 6:30 p.m. Of course that means no Potluck Dinner that evening. Instead we will be listening to those famous stories told by the man himself Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) in his own parlor.



The name Mark Twain comes from a nautical term used by riverboat pilots on the Mississippi. Mark Twain indicated a water depth of 12 feet, the minimum for riverboats to navigate safely. How many MHS Members knew that? Mark trained for two years to become a steamboat pilot and earned \$200.00 a month. He served in the American Civil War and formed a Confederate group known as the Marion Rangers which disbanded after a short two weeks.

Clemens was married to Olivia Langdon for 34 years. They had four children. Son Langdon died at 19 months with diphtheria, and daughters Suzy and Jean both died in their twenties. Clara, the only surviving daughter lived until 1962. Clemens wrote under several different names. My favorite was W. Epaminondas Adrastus Blab. Now that is a mouth full! Clemens published over 30 books in his lifetime. Huckleberry Finn is one of the most frequent targets for removal from public libraries. I guess you have to see the movie. He had a keen interest in science and was a close friend of Nikola Tesla.

Last.. Twain was a cat lover and his boyhood home had as many as 19 cats. As an adult Twain always had two cats milling around. Didn't Hemingway have a house full of cats in Key West?

Mark Twain will be portrayed by Patrick Tucker, a member of the Livingston Players. His Presentation was written and performed by him. It is based upon the writings and performances of the master storyteller and humorist Mark Twain. It was first performed as part of the History Alive series of Brighton's Own Livingston Players in 2013. Mr. Tucker has been bringing the humor of Mark Twain to audiences throughout Southwestern Michigan ever since.

Mr. Tucker has been involved in the Community Theater across Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana for over 35 years. He and his family have been residents of the Brighton area for 20 years. Pat is retired from Johnson Controls and very active in the local chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism, a Medieval reenactment group. Pat brings his own parlor set-up and dresses exactly like Mr. Twain to get you in the mood.

We picked this Program to partner with the library due to the interest in reading and history. A perfect match for both. I hope to see you in his Parlor enjoying those humorous stories on March 19th at 6:30 p.m.. Look for the man who looks like Colonel Sanders (Ed.—or maybe a lot like our own Will Young).

Sandi Muirhead

MHS Programs

Meet Mrs. Milford

Our Thursday April 16th General Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Milford Methodist Church on Atlantic St will be a Potluck. Please see chart on Page 2 for what to bring.

The Guest Speaker that night will be our own Mary Lou Gharrierty. This is a Meeting you will want to attend for sure. If Wilber Johnson is "Mr. Milford," then many would agree Mary Lou Gharrierty would hold the honor of "Mrs. Milford." Any time there is a question about Milford history, everyone had the same quote: "Ask Mary Lou; she will know." And not only will she know, she can tell you the date, place and people who were there. She has corrected me a few times in the past.

I grew up knowing Mary Lou, she being a friend of my mom's for many years and my mother-in-law Barb. In fact everyone knew Mary Lou. She's as busy and active as a 40 year old and has a memory of a twenty year old. No wait, make that two twenty year olds.

Growing up on Main Street Milford, Mary Lou has many memories which go back as far as 1935. Her family owned Ye Olde Hotel on Main Street which now is Milford Auto Parking Lot. She and her mother also operated the Milford Theater next store which is now The Hamburger Joint.



Mary Lou (shown at the left with recently retired Museum Assistant Director Marlene Gomez) was a Founding Member of the Milford Historical Society, serving as President for the first three years, was the Museum Director for many years after that, and has done anything and everything else that makes MHS tick. She has been a Rock Star at the Museum. The Museum opened in 1976 and in the 1980's she helped with the Milford Mill

Race Days which included a Milford History Play and a Craft Show. Today you would know it as Milford's claim to fame "Milford Memories".

Working on Main St. for 20 years at different Banks, Mary Lou got to see a whole lot of change and meet many Milfordites. Her husband Robert's family owned our local newspaper The Milford Times for 25 years which she also helped run.

The MHS Museum is no doubt Mary Lou's Legacy and everyone respects this as we should. When you visit the Museum no doubt you will find Mary Lou talking to a visitor, friend or MHS member about Milford's past. Marlene Gomez, our former Asst. Museum Director, loved the "old sayings" that Mary Lou always came up with. Marlene will be missed and we hope that she does not become a stranger now that she is retired for good.

Main Street Brat will be Mary Lou's topic for the evening. We are looking forward to hearing Mrs. Milford's Main Street Memories. Wear something that says "Milford" on it if you have it and you might win a prize.

Sandi Muirhead



Spring Tea at the Mary Jackson House

Spend an enjoyable afternoon with family and friends at the annual Spring Tea at the Mary Jackson House. Volunteers are busy planning a traditional Victorian Tea including a Fashion Show. The date of this year's Spring Tea will be Saturday, April 25, 2015. Guests can choose to attend either an 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. sitting or the 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. sitting.

Tickets are \$25.00 and can be purchased at Acorn Farm or Main Street Art. Proceeds from the tea will go directly towards the upkeep and preservation of the home built in 1873. The tea will feature a variety of sandwiches, savories, and scones with jam and an assortment of deserts. This year's Spring Fashion Tea features a lovely collection of historical wedding dresses donated to the Historical Society. Young women from the Milford area will model the wedding attire and provide a brief history of the dress they are wearing.

The Spring Tea provides an opportunity for guests to enjoy the home Mary Jackson loved so much. It also provides a great opportunity for young and old alike to enjoy some wonderful food and warm conversation. Seating is limited, advance ticket purchase is recommended. For more information, please visit our web site at www.milfordhistory.org or email milfordhistory@hotmail.com

Pictures are from a prior year's Holiday Tea.

- Sue Bullard



What was all of that old stuff?

Our January 15th General Meeting was well attended. Members brought some very unusual, unique and ugly items which we enjoyed and admired. A few were Turkish sheep bells from Elaine Hunter and an antique Monk pitcher from Rich Harrison. Norm Werner had an old lock that he picked up in Iran and pictures of various car dealerships that existed at one time in Milford and the surrounding area. A good time was had by all. And of course the Potluck was delicious as always. Thanks to all who came out that cold evening and shared their items.

Welcome New Members

A special welcome to our new members

- o Ralph & Janet Emmons of Milford
- o Robert & Dianne Ervin of Milford

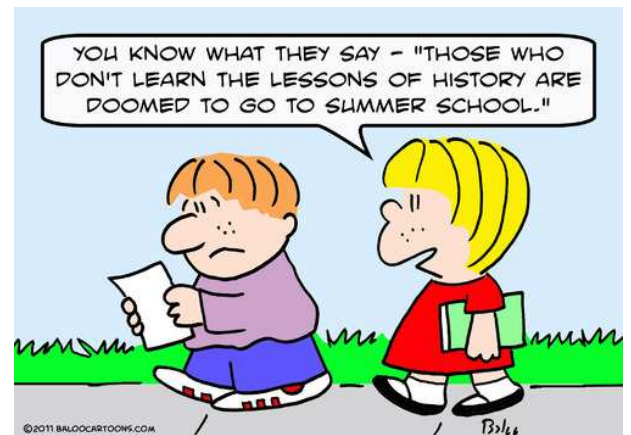
We are so pleased that you joined our Society and look forward to meeting you at an upcoming event.

A Thank You Note from Nancy Degenfelder

While this THANK YOU is long overdue it is deeply heartfelt. I will always be grateful to the many members and board members for the care, compassion, understanding and support during my hip surgeries. Thank you all for making it possible for me to work during the Home Tour.

It helped lift me up during a stressful time. We have so many kind hearts in the Milford Historical Society, Again Thank You.

A very special thanks to Carol Watkins for the beautiful dress that she made for me to wear & it was a perfect fit..



Homeless in Milford – the Story of “Joe”

From 1932 Milford Times files.

Tradition has it that every village must have its “town character”. If such tradition holds true the mantle of that office would by popular acclaim have unequivocally been draped upon the shoulders of “Little Joe” or “Old Joe” as he was called by the younger generation of Milfordites.

The familiar figure of Joe Ribbelman will be readily recalled by all who in the past fifty years have called Milford home. While not many, especially of the younger folk, were acquainted with his family history or his coming to Milford (to the boys he always seemed a mysterious figure who must have just sprung up from nowhere in particular) the notice at the time of his death on April 27, 1931 stated he was born in Germany and came to a farm near Milford with his parents when he was a lad of 12. Subsequently, he came to the village, which he called home for the remainder of his years. He was 81 at the time of his death.

Joe’s places of abode were numerous and sundry, but did not vary much as to attractiveness or modern facilities. Now a room in a long deserted building, now a corner of a basement, here or there or anywhere until forced out by the march of progress. An old mattress, a few ragged blankets, an old chair or two and a few dishes furnished his earthly habitation yet withal it might be truly said of him he was more contented than a millionaire in a mansion.

Joe’s staunch friend, companion, and said by some to be on cold, wintry evenings, his bedfellow was his dog “Himbee”, the name supposing to have originated in a consequence of a remark, “Him be a damn good dog.” The last might well have been true had it applied to his master or his courage in a fight, of which he was veteran of many, but as to appearance most doubted if a more forlorn and sorry specimen of the canine race ever presented appearance within the limits of the town. He was a dirty brown color with equally dirty patches of white, flea bitten and battle scarred with one eye usually closed as a result of the latest encounter. However, let it not be assumed that “Himbee” was quarrelsome. Most usually he would be lagging closely at the heels of Joe, head and tail drooping or lying along the side-



walk or in the corner of a doorway awaiting the appearance of his master.

Many as were his eccentricities, Joe had one unfailing virtue in that he minded his own business and expected others to respect his rights. One never became too familiar with “Old Joe”. He was gruff, but not discourteous and not often the butt of the jokester and never of the children.

Joe possessed the happy faculty of never appearing any older, and many who remember him over the last 25 or 30 years, he was the same tattered figure on the occasion of his first entry into memory as he was to the day of his last appearance on the street.

The picture of Little Joe will ever remain vivid in the minds of many and will long be associated with days in Milford. On a sunny afternoon, or most any day he could be seen shuffling slowly down the Main Street, a little, short, weazened figure clad in tattered garments or an ill-fitting suit, shoes run down at the heel and toes out, a shirt scarcely better than the suit and plainly dirtier, and the whole outfit crowned by a faded and rundown straw hat and a few strands of hair finding a way through the holes. Joe’s eyes looked out upon a not unfriendly world from a visage concealed by a wealth of whiskers and from his lips extended the stump of a pipe with occasionally a small puff of smoke, which encircled his head like a wreath. Close at his heels followed “Himbee”.

Suddenly a great uproar and commotion rends the air of the otherwise peaceful street. Roars, growls, and snarls inform the bystanders that “Himbee” is in trouble again. Joe instantly taking in the situation moves swiftly to the nearest rig, removes the buggy whip and brings it down upon the beligerents with tremendous energy. “Himbee” falls into his accustomed place, Joe resumes shuffling stroll and peace and order return, for the time at least.

END

Researched and Submitted by Carol Watkins

(Ed.—Each issue we try to feature an article from Milford’s History. These articles are researched by members and submitted. Carol Watkins has been very good about doing the research and submitting articles and she submitted this one. Thanks Carol, it’s an interesting story. Carol did want me to point out that many of the grammatical or spelling anomalies are verbatim from the Milford Times issue and not an indication of her writing skills. The picture that I’ve used here is not of Old Joe and Himbee, but it just seemed to fit.)

Milford Historical Society

124 East Commerce

Milford, Michigan 48381

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Renew Your Membership Now

Our Membership drive is in full swing and if you haven't renewed your membership yet, there is still time to do so. Clip and fill out the form on the back page and either bring it to the March General Membership Meeting or drop it in the mail, along with your dues.

The Milford Historical Society is largely depended on the support that we received from our membership. Your participation helps ensure that our treasures are carefully preserved and that our schoolchildren learn about the early

history of our community. Your membership dues will be good until December of 2015 and will ensure that you remain on our mailing list. We appreciate your support in the past and we hope that you will choice to continue your membership in 2015. We have so much going on you don't want you to miss out!

Know someone that might be interested in becoming a member? Our membership is affordable and makes a great gift.

 Please enroll me/us as a member (s) of the Milford Historical Society:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mail to: Milford Historical Society, 124 East Commerce, Milford MI 48381

Phone: 248-685-7308

Annual Member Dues:

Student	\$5	Family	\$25
Senior	\$10	Lifetime	\$250
Individual	\$15	Small Business	\$50
Corporation	\$250+		

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