

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 16—General Membership Meeting at the Milford United Methodist Church at 1200 Atlantic St in Milford. This is a pot luck meeting so see below for your pot luck assignments.

POT LUCK—A—F—Desserts G—Q—Main Dish
R—Z—Salads or Side Dishes

Meetings and Programs

Mary Lou Returns

Our January 19th meeting had a nice crowd to hear Mary Lou finally finish her MHS Museum story. Living here I recognized many names and faces in her pictures. Thank you also Joyce Clark for your part in this and especially bringing her own projector... Nobody does that....

Mike Jewell Repeat

Mike Jewell was our Guest Speaker last fall. Remember he was the humorous storyteller who was also a master bead worker and a native Anishinaabe? That night another event was happening, I think it was the Garden Club and many members could not attend and he made such an impression on the crowd I asked him to come back and tell more of his stories. Also, he has finished the beading on the jacket and is now beading a blanket which he will bring to share.

In March every weekend I believe he will be at Kensington to demonstrate sugaring. This is not making maple syrup (well, kinda). He can be found during the year at schools, pow-wows and historic events. And being Paddy's Day the next day some one will no doubt bring corned beef and cabbage. Wear green, come hungry and bring a clothespin if you don't like the cabbage smell.

Stories and Songs by Stephen Foster

Known as the Father of American Music, Stephen Foster (1826-1864) wrote over 200 songs. Most popular are Oh' Susanna and Beautiful Dreamer. At the April 20th potluck you will get to meet



(Continued on Insert page 1)

From Our President, Rena Valentine

From Your President, Rena Valentine

Greetings from sunny Arizona, everyone!

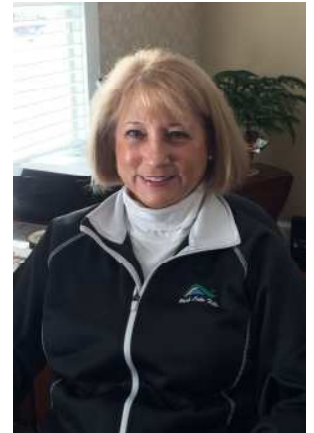
Well, we had a very short lived 'Spring' in Michigan, and now we're back to what the groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, is predicting...six more weeks of winter (now three left). It will eventually get here! It's even chilly here in Arizona, but at least there is lots of sunshine.

Anyway, there are a lot of good things happening with the historical society. You will be reading about many of these events later in the article. The next one coming up in March, (March 24), is the Bob Milne concert. This is the second year we will have the pleasure of listening to his boogie-woogie ragtime music at the Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm that night. There will be an afterglow right after at Hector & Jimmy's. A drink and appetizer will be included with the cost of the ticket, which is \$30.

One of the things I would like to ask of you is for more of your time, if you can spare it. As you know, we do rely on our volunteers to help with the many projects that we have in order to keep our society going. We can never take for granted how much we appreciate all that you do! Please notify me or one of our Board members if you would like to help out in any way. We are still looking for ways to add more members to our general membership group and we do have a Board seat available.

I've started the search for houses to be on this year's Home Tour in September. If you would like to have your home on the Home tour or know of someone who might want to be a part of this wonderful annual event, please contact me.

Now, I'll turn this over to our experts!



Membership News

Our membership year began on January 1st of this year and membership dues have been slowly coming in. If you haven't paid yet, it's not too late. Please make the effort to send your dues in sooner rather than later. You can bring your payment to our March Membership Meeting.

We wish to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the Historical Society.

John and Judy Vincent of Commerce Township
Debra Parker of Milford

Congratulations to The Digital Document Store for your Silver Membership to the Historical Society.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our next General Membership Meeting!

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 HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Milford Historian

Newsletter of the

Milford Historical Society

published bimonthly (six times per year)



Editor: Norm Werner

Email: Historian@milfordhistory.org



Museum Report—

The closed sign may be on the door, but the museum has still been a busy place. Our new computers are being installed by Brad Acker. Brad is our volunteer IT person—he is not even a Historical Society member. We are going to have to work on that.

As always, there are many projects to be done at the museum during the winter months. Also as always, many

helping hands will be needed to accomplish the work. The tentative plan is as follows:

March—continue the “freshening” of the museum. This winter to include painting the parlor ceiling and woodwork and perhaps the upstairs hall if enough help is forthcoming.

April—beginning our spring cleaning dusting the cobwebs, polishing the furniture and re-waxing the main display room/log cabin floor. Begin organizing new displays. Actively interview new student docents from area high schools.

May—setting up the new displays for our opening on May 20th.

This is a rather ambitious schedule, but with historical society members playing an active part I think we can accomplish these goals.

There have been several suggestions for displays in the coming season. Among them—farming artifacts and implements reminiscent of Milford’s beginnings. Ladies clothing from different eras, always popular. Toys and children related items. What to display is always a question. Trying to include things that will interest men, women and children is a challenge. I welcome any and all suggestions for future displays. I would also like to include any collections that members have and would be willing to share for a period of time. The museum has much to offer but I am sure our members also have interesting items.

It is my hope that we will be able to enhance the historical society’s involvement in the community with an increased presence at community events. I think the society should have a group in every parade held. I would like to try and have the museum open during special events in town like “Ladies Night Out” and “Candle, Can and Carol”. To have these ideas be successful will take planning, volunteers and advertising. To that end, I will be attending Chamber of Commerce and DDA meetings. That way the museum can be involved in some of these activities in the planning stages. Any other ideas for increasing our presence and expanding our membership can/should be addressed either to me or any other board member.

Current board members are: Rena Valentine, Norm Werner, John Robinson, Leon Schuler, Sue Gumper, Sue Bullard, Mary lou Gharrity, Rich Harrison. Linda Dagenhardt, Nancy Dagenfelder, Jared Clouse. We are all working together to help the Milford Historical Society grow. We do have an opening right now for an additional Board member, so if you have an interest in helping the MHS, please contact the Board President, Rena Valentine. Remember to tell everyone you meet----you don’t have to be a relic to join.

Anyone who would like to volunteer for any of our projects and anyone who has a suggestion for a display please contact me by phone at 248 529-3393 or email at donr4619@gmail.com I have my list ready to write down your offers of help and suggestions. It will take all of us to have continued success at the museum.

FIRE!! FIRE!

That was Milford's first fire alarm! No cell phones or calling 911 back then. Milford's first fire protection was a bucket brigade in 1860. Their wives raised funds to make their handsome red flannel trousers and jackets.

In 1877 our little village bought their first fire engine dubbed "Little Squirt". In August a group of citizens formed the first volunteer fire company called the Hook and Ladder Company.



Years later the North and South's blazing rivalry raised it's fiery head once more. The North's fire department was the Monitor Fire Co. and the South's was the Pioneer Fire Company.

The rivalry in this case was who would get to the flames first. First company to get water on the blaze scored honors on that day.

Years later in May of 1929 Northside fire department got "burned" by the Detroit Times for their unfiremen-like appearances. Read on...

The men of the fire department were taking part in a mock wedding ceremony in which all the actors were males(including the bride and brides maids). In the middle of the play a hysterical woman crashed in the Milford Auditorium to yell that the downtown garage was in flames. The firemen in their awful white wigs, dresses and high heels high tailed from the stage and off to get their apparatus. One asked "Is this a joke"? Another shouted "Look out the darn window"!!

The firemen, still in wigs and dresses, climbed ladders, roofs and trees to prevent the flames from spreading to other buildings. Our Church and six other residents' roofs were damaged but spared that day by the oddly attired fire fighters.

Spectators stopped with open mouths to see gaily clad old women running up and down ladders while on the ground strong able bodied men with crossed arms just watched while these poor women folk battled this out of control blaze.

The Pontiac fire department made it in record time of 20 minutes driving 19 miles to help their neighboring town. The brave Milford fire department volunteers no doubt got a lot of teasing after the fire was reported in the newspaper the next day. Probably was the hottest talk of the town that week.

In 1912 thirteen horses perished in a fire at the 10 Cent Penny Barn which is ironically the same location of the garage that burned in May 1929. It is where the Pita House is now. The most tragic fire in Milford in my life time was the loss of three volunteer firefighters (two men and a woman who's husband was also a firefighter) while conducting a training exercise that erupted into a flashover.

Our beautiful fire station on Huron Street is located on Milford's original town square in the early 1800's.



Sandi Muirhead, MPC Historian

(Ed. Sandi submitted this article prior to the death of Milford Fire-fighter Ron Savage during a training exercise and she dedicates the article to him and all of our lost First Responders.)

RAGTIMIST BOB MILNE RETURNS TO Milford!!!!

Highly regarded Ragtime pianist Bob Milne will be performing at Historic Milford Presbyterian Church, March 24, 2017 at 7 PM

Tickets, \$30 which includes admission to the After Glow with Bob Milne at Hector & Jimmy Restaurant, any questions, please call 248-343-7772 or 248-685-7308. Tickets may be purchased by cash or check at Acorn Farm, Main Street Art and the Milford Township Offices.

Considered by many to be the best Ragtime/Boogie-Woogie pianist in the world, Bob Milne specializes in this music style that developed in America in the late 1800's and early 1900's.



Although Milne comes from a classical background, having excelled as a French horn virtuoso at the Eastman School of Music, he is completely self-taught as a pianist, playing totally by ear. When he took up saloon piano-playing on the side, he discovered what fun entertaining his listeners could be, and how natural it came to him.

Early on in this new career, Bob became fascinated by the Ragtime music found on nearly all player pianos in bars at the time, and how listeners enjoyed it. His "internship" lasted 25 years; he has even written a book about these experiences, [The Journeyman Piano Player](#).

Bob naturally progressed to the concert stage, acknowledged by many as one of the best pianists of our time. He is now constantly performing across the country (and sometimes beyond) from concert halls to festivals, and everything in between, and still having fun with his audiences exhibiting ballistic speed as well as subtle harmonies.

Known as a "Ragtimist" (a term he coined), Bob Milne quickly made himself a dedicated student and presenter of this true American musical form, having acquired both a vast repertoire of tunes and extensive knowledge of their origins.

These histories and the stories of the piano players who were playing them are anecdotally incorporated into Bob Milne's presentations. (Bob also teaches music history at Florida Atlantic University every winter, and conducts a Music Retreat in Lapeer, MI each September.)

It comes as no surprise that the Library of Congress designated him a "National Treasure" when they documented his expertise for future generations, and that the U.S. State Department has utilized him as a "Musical Ambassador" in Japan and Switzerland.

Bob Milne brings endless enthusiasm, enchanting ease of playing, and an engaging manner while telling stories about Ragtime and Boogie Woogie music with warmth and humor.

Bob is well-known as an outstanding pianist specializing in Ragtime, Boogie-Woogie, the Blues, and the Player Piano styles of the turn of the century. And we hope that you will come see him play on March 24th.

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Spring Tea



Friends and Family are invited to our annual Spring Tea hosted by the ladies of the Historical Society. Bring that special friend and relax in the beautiful childhood home of Mary Jackson. An enjoyable afternoon is guaranteed to all those who attend. The date of this year's tea will be Saturday, April 29, 2017.

Guest can choose to attend ei-

ther the 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. seating or the 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. seating. A scrumptious variety of tea sandwiches, savories and deserts will be served. Guests will also enjoy a fashion show that will feature a selection of wedding gowns that have been donated to the Society. Modeling the wedding gowns will be some of our students from our student docent program.

Tickets are \$25.00 and can be purchased at Acorn Farm and Main Street Art. Tickets will go on sale Saturday, March 11th. 100% of the proceeds will go to the preservation of the childhood home of Mary Jackson. Seating is limited so purchase your tickets soon.

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+		

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive your copy of the bi-monthly Historian via email. It saves us the postage and will get it to you sooner.

Stephen and sing-a-long to some of your favorite melodies.

There is so much to tell about Marcus LaPratt who created Foster at Greenfield Village. I went to hear him every year before we ever became friends.

Here are a few things Marcus has done thus far in his busy lifetime; Artistic Director for the Dearborn Community Choir, started SOUL (Singers of United Lands) fifteen years ago, Guinness Book of Records for singing 75 hours straight (and could have gone longer and might try again). The record was broken 6 months later. But who cares...he still did it. He has sung in over forty countries, and last ,my favorite: he kayaked in a child's 8 ft kayak down the Mississippi River for SEVENTEEN days alone. Again.....nobody does that.

Marcus will be telling Foster's life story in between his songs. You get some great music with some history thrown in. Don't miss this one, folks. Another thing I should mention is Marcus's Dearborn Choir will be performing on May 3rd at the Kennedy Center in Washington. D.C. and he asked me to come with them, since I love history. Rumor has it Pam Dawson (roommate) will portray Mrs. Lincoln and do some readings during the concert. The theme is "Liberty" with all patriotic songs. You know the songs you get chocked up with when you hear them like yours truly? Hop a plane and go hear a free concert.

Sandi Muirhead

Milford Depot Update

There are just a few more weeks available to save the depot. Thanks to everyone who donated to this project and we are still accepting donations.

Plans have changed constantly throughout this endeavor, from finding a site, approvals needed and how the Developer will allow us to proceed.

We had planned on moving the depot in one piece, now that will not be possible, so we will be dismantling the depot and storing it until we raise more funds to locate it in the Southside Park. The cost of moving it is more than we have available and the Developer will not allow us access to more of his property that would be needed to move it in one piece.

Insurance, building permits and scheduling contractors are in the works, along with waiting for CSX entry permits. We hope to start our volunteers working on the depot by March 6.

If you have construction skills let us know, we need lots of volunteers.

Savethedepot@voyager.net or 248-807-1204

From a Widow's Tavern to the Ye Olde Hotel

The history of Milford's hotel on Main Street As researched and reported by Barbra Young (with a few updates by the Editor). Source of some of the early history— A Milford Times article from April 21, 1876

No business in Milford's almost 150 years had a more varied ownership and interesting history than the hotel which used to be located on Main Street on the present site of the parking lot. between the current Method Bar Exercise location and the Sweet Retreats candy store.

From 1935 until the building was torn down in 1967 the hotel was known as the Ye Olde Hotel. However, the three-



story building that was torn down began on a much more modest scale.

In 1836, the Widow Edmunds Tavern, a 20-foot by 30-foot building, was located on the site and continued in operation for some years.

According to information in the March 27, 1907 issue of The Milford Times, the remains of an old log house were unearthed on the site, along with a smoothly laid cellar floor composed of two-inch log planks. The planks were found about nine feet below the (then) present sidewalk grade and the story says this substantiates the site as that of the widow's tavern. The discovery of the house remains and the plank floor came during an excavation in front of the hotel.

Booth House

Little is apparently known about the Widow Edmunds Tavern, but by the 1860's the establishment was owned by a man named Booth who called the hotel, strangely enough, the Booth House. By 1877, the name had changed again, this

time to Central Hotel. The Thornhill Brothers, a prominent business pair in Milford, owned the structure at that time.

In 1892, the hotel was acquired by the Gleeson family who also owned and operated the Oakland Hotel [in South Milford].

A fire on July 4, 1918 destroyed a portion of the third story, the original kitchen and ballroom and the original hotel barn. However, such a calamity did not stop various individuals from continuing the hotel operations.

Although there may have been other owners after the Gleesons, it is known for certain that a James Barnes of Pontiac owned the facility for some time, as did Isabel Schumacher and her mother, Mrs. Meeker. Barnes added steam heat and running water, but the women kept the hotel closed most of the time during the Depression, Apparently, they opened it only in the summer, especially during the popular Oakland County Fair, an event then being held in Milford.

Ye Olde Hotel

In 1935, the structure was christened the Ye Olde Hotel by its new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Fawcett of Pontiac. According to their daughter, Mrs. Robert (Mary Lou) Gharrity, they came to Milford in anticipation of the new Ford carburetor plant.

Mrs. Gharrity says that various facilities were located on the main floor at that time, including private banquet rooms, the main dining room, the lobby, the tap room and what was for a time the ladies bar. Later attorney Bartlett Smith had his office in the former ladies bar and it is now the site of the Sweet Retreats candy store – the only part of the hotel still standing.

The Fawcetts used the second and third floors for bedrooms, but there were no sanitary facilities on the third floor so it was used only in times of overcrowding.

Outside the back door to the tap room was the entrance to the old stone beer cellar. Mrs. Gharrity says that kegs were rolled on planks, using grappling hooks, and stored at an even temperature in the cellar.

Reminiscences

Mary Lou offers a number of personal observations about the hotel, several of which reflect much credit both on the hotel and Milford.

--she remembers seeing the names of at least two prominent Americans on the hotel register:

Lillian Russell and P.T. Barnum;

--many of the men who were responsible for the development of the Ford plant were frequent luncheon guests during the 1930's, often staying after the dining room closed at 2 p.m. to hash out construction problems; one of them was actress Irene Dunne's brother, but on another occasion the men became so involved in their discussions they drew a diagram on a tablecloth which they subsequently had to purchase from Mrs. Fawcett;

--the dining room was closed by the Fawcetts during World War II when help was scarce, but she says it was fashionable to take a Sunday drive to Milford to enjoy the menu of chicken and steak;

--one particularly hectic Sunday Mrs. Fawcett became ill after too much cooking and she closed the dining room the next day.

For some time, the dining room was leased to Hiram and Mary VanLeuven and later to Bill and Ada Keary.

Other Owners

In March, 1948, the hotel was sold to Arnold and Molly Baddis, and they were succeeded by Jim Colegrove and Felix Bucellato and later by Edward Dean.

There is one other reminder of the presence of the hotel which served Milford for so many years—the rear exit from Breen's parking lot. The hotel was rare in that it had access from two streets, Main and Union. When the Fawcetts sold part of the hotel site to the General Telephone Company, they retained the driveway exit to the rear and that driveway is now the rear exit from the parking lot.

There were other hotels in Milford, including the Oakland Hotel at the northwest corner of South Main and Huron Streets on Milford's south side, but none has had as varied and interesting a history as the widow's tavern which had at least the proverbial nine lives.

