

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 19th** General Membership Meeting at the Milford Library at 6:30. This is a special meeting that will have **NO POTLUCK DINNER**, but you do need to sign up because seating is limited—call the library to sign up. See below for program details.

**JULY—Annual Picnic**— this year in the old Fairgrounds Park at Huron and Mont Eagle.

## Programs Past and Future...

### Mrs. Lincoln's Visit



I was speaking to Mrs. Lincoln recently and she told me what a lovely evening she had with us on St. Paddy's Day. She said we were a attentive crowd and asked her

very interesting questions. She said she would love to visit us next year if her busy schedule allows and talk about her not so happy years.

If more of our regulars would have been there our attendance record would have been broken. Sixty one guests attended to hear Mrs. Lincoln tell her story growing up and meeting Abe. Everyone in the room did not take their eyes off her. Hope you enjoyed her also.

### Frankly My Dear I don't Give A D---!!



But we do !! That famous line will live forever. I'm talking about Rhett Butler at the end of the Gone With The Wind movie saying that to darling Scarlett.

Kathleen Marcaccio will be  
(Continued on page 2)

## From Our President, *Rena Valentine*

Well, I think spring is finally here and it's great to see the trees and flowers blooming around town. With Commerce Road under repairs, it might be hard to get around; but it is a much needed 'fix'. One of the reasons that Milford is such a wonderful place to live is because of the richness of history and all that the Village has to offer. This has been true since the 1872 when the train station was built. We need to pay attention to the possibility of it and other historic buildings being torn down.



The original Milford Train Station on the site of the old Iverson's Lumber location in Milford is scheduled to be demolished if we, as local citizens don't try to



save it and move it elsewhere. There is a special interest Milford citizens group that is getting involved (Save the Depot) to try to raise funds to do just that. The Milford Historical Society is working with that group to assist them in their fund raising efforts. There are a few places that the building might be moved to and those locations and the costs and feasibility of the move are also being studied; however, there is not much time for extensive study, since the move must be accomplished by July in order to save the structure.

This depot was a gateway to Milford for businesses in 1871 when the Pere Marquette Railway came into Milford and it changed life in the Village. In addition to Milford being able to receive goods, we were able to send our farmer's crops out to other areas; thus, our farmers were able to make money. People also were finally able to travel easier from Milford and many locals made day trips into Detroit for shopping. The list goes on and on. It would be wonderful to save this great reminder of Milford's railroad past. If you are interested in getting involved, please go to the 'Save the Depot Group' on Facebook or you can call the museum for further information once it opens this month.

We would like to thank the owners of the Bell Towers LLC for donating one of the beautiful stained glass windows from the old stone church on E. Commerce to our museum! We are not sure where to hang it yet; but we will find a place. The rest of the windows were donated to St. Mary's

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**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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## The Milford Historian

Newsletter of the

**Milford Historical Society**

published bimonthly (six times per year)



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## Museum Report—

Do you know what a numismatist is? Come find out at the Museum opening on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Our new display in the main room features many items from Milford businesses past sponsored by the Huron Valley Numismatic Society. We also have a wonderful new acquisition thanks to the work of John Robinson and the generosity of developer Steve Varilone, a beautiful

stained glass window from the bell tower of Saint Mary's stone church now graces our Museum.

It is hard to imagine how many hours and the amount of work it took to take the idea of a Milford Historical Museum from a dream to a reality. The founders, many of whom are still active in the Historical Society deserve our respect and thanks for creating this little gem.

In honor of the Museum's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary refreshments will be served on opening weekend Sat. and Sun. May 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>. We will have the same hours this season, Wed., Sat. and Sun. 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Private/group tours are available by appointment.

We have many gift items available for sale at the Museum. The book "Ten Minutes Ahead of the Rest of the World" recently quoted in the "Milford Times" is an interesting, well written history of Milford complete with many vintage pictures is available. We offer many of those pictures as well as a selection of others from our archives. These quality reproductions vary in price according to the size. Our cookbook "Tea at the Mary Jackson House" provides all of the recipes for the delicious items served at the Spring and Fall teas.

The Museum is funded entirely by the Milford Historical Society and it's fund raising efforts. The Granny's Attic Sale and the Historic Home Tour are two major events. The Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers, both adults and students.

Milford is a great place to live, with a Main Street and an historic residential area that is a delight to walk. Walk into the past at the corner of Commerce and Union for a lesson in the history of the village and the people who founded it. We hope to see you soon.

(Programs —Continued from page 1)

speaking at our Thursday May 19th Meeting at the Milford Library at 6:30.. There will be NO POTLUCK . Kathleen will be discussing Margaret Mitchell and her book and will have a extensive collection of GWTW memorabilia to drool over.

Kathleen is nationally known and has put on Theater Premieres of GWTW complete with living cast members. I recommend watching the movie before you come ( five hours long) or read the 1000 page book in your spare time. Just kidding...

If you love either one of those please

come and share with us how Margaret Mitchell created one of the greatest love stories ever. Or as Scarlett would say "Oh Fiddle-Dee-Dee." Love the Lady don't you?



There is no June Meeting and our annual Picnic will be in July at Fairgrounds Park with Ben Franklin himself. More to come on that. Plan on bringing your own chair. We'll have some tables there, but

you're on your own for seating and for your table setting and drinks. Plan on bringing something picnic-y to share. We hope to see many from our general membership at the picnic.

Church, which has plans to use them in an upcoming addition.

Work at the museum is underway for our opening on May 14<sup>th</sup>. We will be cleaning and sprucing it up next week so if you're in town and would like to volunteer time, we would love to have you. Elaine Hunter has just had more carpet laid down in the foyer going up the stairs and in our small office when you come in. More painting is in the works. We also will have the local Numismatist group bring in their coins to exhibit throughout the summer.

In addition, we have 5 great homes that are already set up to be viewed in our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Home Tour this year. We are so excited to show them off! We do, however; need more docents to work at these homes. If you would like to work a 3 hour shift on either the Saturday or Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in September, please contact me at [valentiner66@gmail.com](mailto:valentiner66@gmail.com) or call 248-514-9124.

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### Celebrating our Freedoms – Fourth of July Parade

That's the theme for this year's Independence Day Parade, which will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July this year. Board member Richard Harrison is in charge of the Parade Committee this year.

We have put the parade application and the parade rules and guidelines on the Milford Historical Society web site – [www.milfordhistory.org](http://www.milfordhistory.org). You can also call Richard at 248-935-5556 or email him at [harrison.rich@comcast.net](mailto:harrison.rich@comcast.net) to have him send you an application to be in the parade. Norm Werner will be helping Rich and you can call him at 2480-763-2497 or email him at [normwerner@comcast.net](mailto:normwerner@comcast.net).

Even though E. Commerce Road will still be torn up on July 4<sup>th</sup> we are assured that there will still be access to Commerce from Union, Hickory and East Streets where groups line up. The parade steps off at 11:00 AM, so parade participants should plan on getting in line at least ½ hour ahead of that time.

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### Bob Milne Redux—

Great News! After many requests, MHS is excited to announce the world famous pianist Bob Milne will be coming back! For your long range planning, the concert will be held at the Milford Presbyterian Church on Friday, March 24, 2017.

For those not familiar, Bob Milne is 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. The MHS hosted a concert by Bob Milne in 2015 that was a huge success. Many people expressed disappointment at not being able to get to that concert, so this will give them a second chance to see and hear one of America's musical treasures.

### All ABOARD !!!!! By Sandi Muirhead

Unless the local effort to save it is successful, the Milford Train Depot will be razed late this Summer along with the rest of the old Iverson's Lumber buildings, to make way for the recently approved Loft Apartments.

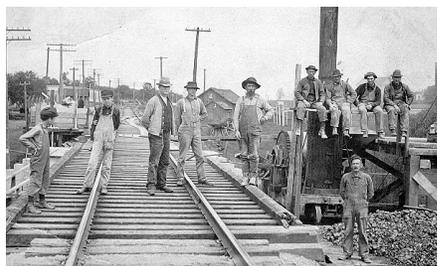
There is a group of Milford residents who are trying desperately to save the Depot (see the President's article for more on that).

My Quester Group—Maria Moore #432—is in the process of getting a historical marker exactly like the others around town to put where the Depot was built. We'll be selling commemorative stickers of the old train station as a fund raiser at the Museum and other locations around the Village this summer.

So I dedicate this history article to our little Milford Depot built in 1872.

My research shows that in March 1871 the Milford Times ran an ad "WANTED" "500 men and 100 teams of horses to work the rails on the Holly, Wayne and Monroe Railroad." It was later called the Pere Marquette Railroad. Men would earn \$1.50 a day and teams \$3.00 a day.

Irish, Italian and German Americans sweated in the hot steamy summer of 1871. One crew laid iron through corn fields from Plymouth and Northville. Another crew filled in marshes, drove piles for bridges and built cattle crossings under the tracks. The railroad was advanced an astonishing one mile a day.



After 6 months of back breaking and muscle straining hard labor, in October 1871, the last spike was driven at the bridge over the Huron River in the small Hamlet of Milford.

At 1:00 o'clock one day in September it was estimated 3500 curious onlookers came to watch the Iron Horse emerge from the corn fields with whistles blowing and smoke bellowing with the Milford Cornet Band playing to beat the band. A grand picnic was laid out in the Oak Grove complete with elected Officials giving speeches to commemorate the occasion.

The railroad brought prosperity to Milford, but also death, grief and losses. Noisy engines spooked horses pulling buggies and wagons. They would run away injuring or killing their drivers and passengers. Animals of all kinds wandered on to the tracks and were mowed down like blades of grass. Milford residents were also not used to these iron death traps. In 1875 Gustave Hoffman lost an arm when he tried to jump from the train with baggage in hand. He thought the train was not going to stop at the Milford stop. He jumped and fell beneath the tracks. Many others met their maker climbing, jumping or standing between

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# Milford Historical Society

124 East Commerce

Milford, Michigan 48381

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the rail cars.



The original timber bridge over the Huron River was replaced in the 1890's with the stone arch bridge that still stands today and is the oldest stone arch bridge still standing in the entire state. In 1920 the arch was the site of a horrific train derailment of 14 cars; but not one rail car fell in to the Huron River; although some of the

cargo managed to make it there. There are pictures from the Milford Times and other sources of "the Great Train Wreck" of Mil-

ford in the upstairs hallway of the Milford Historical Museum. Also on display at the museum is an example of the "treasure" that could be recovered from the Huron River following the wreck—truck axles that were bound from a foundry to an automotive company somewhere to the south.

Many small towns did not survive if the train did not pass through them. Some towns were known to literally pick up and move right next to the railroad tracks. In 1871 Milford got what they called "Railroad Fever" and it never was cured.

For all you Railroad Buffs; you have to visit Jay and Brook Qualman's Railroad Open House. They open their basement three times a year to the public to see their nationally known HO Model Railroad Lay-out. Milford and surrounding towns of the 1950's are on display complete with stores, depots, houses, trains and everything else a small town has to offer.

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**P**lease 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.

## Milford Times 1871

### Milford, Michigan in 1871

(Ed.—This article was originally published in the Milford Times and was researched and edited by Barbara Young for the Milford Historical Society. It describes what Milford was like in 1871, just weeks before the railroad came through and forever changed things.)

To the outside world the little village of Milford is hardly known, it being only one of the many villages which dot our fair state. The village is very pleasantly situated on both sides of the Huron River, which is here a stream of about two or three rods in width, and which furnishes several excellent mill sites. The Pettibone Creek also passes through the village and is the outlet of several small lakes which lay to the north of the village. Coming into the village from the south, it appears to be located within an amphitheater of hills, and the first impression of a stranger is one of surprise at the beauty of its location.

The first settlement of the village was on the south side of the river, and for a number of years all the business was transacted on that side. As the water power afforded by the Pettibone Creek became improved, the business naturally followed, and at the present time a large share of the business is transacted upon the north side of the Huron. Before the Detroit and Milwaukee railroad was extended beyond Pontiac, Milford was a place of considerable importance as a trading point, and a large amount of business in the mercantile line was transacted. Upon the completion of that road, however, this trade was drawn to other points and from that time until quite recently Milford has made no progress.

The great want of the village has been an outlet by which the surplus products of the rich farming country which surrounds it might be carried to market, a want which has retarded its growth and completely paralyzed its energies. This want is now about to be supplied by the Holly Wayne and Monroe railroad which was commenced some five or six years since and which has been dragging slowly along until within the past year, when its franchises passed into the hands of the Flint and Pere Marquette company, by whom it has been built, and which in a few weeks will be in active operation.

The village numbers about one thousand inhabitants. It has four churches—Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Catholic. The Methodist church is the oldest in the place, hav-

ing been built some 27 or 28 years ago. The Presbyterian and Baptist are of more modern date. The Catholic church is a new edifice and being situated upon a high hill is a conspicuous object and can be seen at a great distance.

The educational interests of the village are represented by a Union School of which Prof. P.M. Parker is Principal, assisted by a corps of talented and efficient teachers. Under the Principalship of Prof. Parker this school has attained a high reputation and is second to none in the state. The school building occupies a splendid location in the northeast part of the village and overlooking the town, and is surrounded by a pleasant grove of native oaks. The building has recently been enlarged and thoroughly renovated, and the grounds improved by grading and building an ornamental fence on the south and west sides. With rapid growth of the village which will follow the advent of the locomotive, the present school accommodations will soon be found inadequate to meet the wants of the rising generation, and our citizens will soon be called upon to afford the means to supply the want. A primary school building is even now urgently needed on the south side of the river to accommodate that portion of the village, and in justice to that section it should be built at once.

The literary wants of the village are supplied by two Newspapers, the Milford Times and the Milford Weekly Era, the latter of which has just started. The various branches of mercantile business are also well represented, the village containing six general stores, three drug stores, two hardware stores, one merchant tailor and clothing store, seven grocery stores, one bakery, two millinery stores, two meat shops, one hotel, four wagon shops, four blacksmith shops, two harness shops, two jewelry stores, one photograph gallery, besides six physicians, and one lawyer.

Messrs. Tenny and Grieg carry on an extensive business in the manufacture of cabinet ware. They also manufacture sash, doors and blinds. The firm is composed of young men, of great energy and perseverance. It was their misfortune nearly two years ago to lose their factory by fire, entailing upon them severe loss, it being uninsured; but undaunted by their misfortune, they at once commenced rebuilding their factory, and now have a building better suited to their wants, and affording greater facilities for carrying on their large and increasing business. The power by which their machinery is propelled is derived by

the chain of small lakes extending some four or five miles north, the water of which is brought to the factory by a race, and which also drives the machinery of the large Woolen Factory owned by Mr. Geo. Davis. The goods made at this factory have a high reputation and none better are made in the state. The factory has one set of machinery, but the water power is sufficient to drive a much larger amount.

The large flouring mill of Hon. J.L. Andrews is located but a few rods from the factory of Mr. Davis. This mill has lately undergone extensive repairs, and has been enlarged. Its milling capacity is about one hundred and twenty barrels per day. The flour manufactured at this mill has a very high reputation. The power which drives the machinery of this mill is obtained by damming the Pettibone creek, which gives a fall here of twenty six feet. Near the above mill is the Hall of Messrs. Tenny and Grieg, who use the lower floor as a furniture ware room. The second story is used as a public Hall, and the third is devoted to the use of the Masonic fraternity.

Fifty or sixty rods below the flouring mill, the Pettibone is again dammed, and another mill site is obtained equal in all respects to the one above. The fall here is somewhere near twenty feet, and the power is but partially used to drive the machinery of a saw mill. From this point to where the creek empties into the Huron, the fall is several feet, and would afford another site for manufacturing purposes. The Pettibone creek being the outlet of several small lakes which are fed by springs, is not affected by drouths, and the volume of water is constant and uniform.

At the point where Main street crosses the Huron, the river is raised by a dam, and the power gained is used by the Wells Brothers to drive the machinery of their Foundry. A large amount of work is turned out at this place during the year. Castings of various kinds are here furnished, suited to the wants of the farming community. They also manufacture plows in large numbers, which find a ready sale in the surrounding country. The Wells Bros. also manufacture the celebrated Vowles cultivator, a large number of which are made and sold at this establishment. These cultivators have an extended reputation and are rapidly succeeding all others.

Some distance below the foundry of Wells bros. is located the extensive Flouring mill and Woolen factory of Mr. Jacob Peters. The mill has been remodelled and renovat-

ed throughout within the last two years, and is now one of the finest mills in this part of the state. The flour made at this mill is of the best quality and has a high reputation, always bringing the highest market price. The flouring capacity of the mill is over one hundred barrels a day. A few rods north of the mill stands the woolen factory. Here a large business is done in carding and spinning for the farmers of the surrounding country. A large amount of wool is also yearly made up into cloth which finds a ready sale. A short distance below the mill and factory of Mr. Peters is another mill site equal in all respects to that which drives the machinery of the mill and factory and which at present is entirely unimproved.

On the north side of the river and near the Railroad crossing is located the Pump Factory of Mr. A. Phillips who makes an endless quantity of pumps and water drawers of various kinds, which find market in the surrounding country. A few rods north is also located the factory of Mr. I. Tower, who has conferred a lasting benefit upon the wives and daughters of Oakland County by introducing and manufacturing for their use the "Ladies Friend" washing machine, designed to relieve them of the hard work and drudgery of washing day. That he has succeeded in doing so, the large number of these useful machines which he has disposed of fully attests.

Milford also does quite a large business in the manufacture of farm wagons, carriages, etc. At P.C. Slougher's shop buggies and light wagons are mostly made and the large number turned out and disposed of at this shop is the best guarantee of the quality of the work. The shop of Mr. Joseph Vowles is located on Commerce st. where all kinds of light and heavy farm wagons are made. Mr. Vowles is also inventor and proprietor of the Celebrated Vowles Cultivator, which he also manufactures, and if the number of these machines sold is any criterion to judge by they must be superseding the use of all other cultivators. The Stephens brothers are also engaged in the business of wagon making and repairing, their shop being on Liberty street. A. Wakelee, on the south side of the river also carries on this branch of business, turning out all kinds of work in his line.

We have thus given a sketch of the business and manufactures of Milford, and may have inadvertently omitted some. That our village is destined to be a place of considerable importance, as a manufacturing point, does not admit of a doubt. With the splendid water power a portion only of which is improved and the magnificent farming country which surrounds, the future of our beautiful village cannot but be a bright and prosperous one.