

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept 8**—General membership meeting and potluck dinner at the Milford United Methodist Church at 1200 Atlantic St in Milford. The Pot Luck starts at 6:30 and the meeting at 7 PM. The program is on Woodlawn Cemetery (see below)

Pot luck assignments—

A—F— Main Dish G—Q—Salads or sides, R—Z— Desserts

**Sept 17-18** the 40th Annual Milford Home tour

**Oct 20**—General membership meeting and potluck dinner at the Milford United Methodist Church (see above) st 6:30 PM Program - Indian storyteller and beadwork expert (see page 3)

Pot luck assignments—

A—F— Desserts G—Q—Main Dish, R—Z— Salads or sides

## Programs Past and Future...

### We Opted for Plan B

Well our July Picnic was a great success even without the Picnic part. Plan B at the church was a better choice most said. Less wet, no bugs or sticky weather.

No matter, we still grilled hot dogs, had great picnic food and a visit from Ben Franklin himself. I liked how he talked about his life, adventures and what to see in present day Philadelphia. I'm going my first time in September and going to throw my pennies on his grave site .

Interestingly I read that Ben Franklin did not say "A penny saved is a penny earned". Supposedly he said "A penny saved is two pence dear " Meaning if you save a penny It's worth two cents. I like the misquote one better. I asked him back next year but said he would be to busy. Probably off with his buddies Thomas and John doing something patriotic.

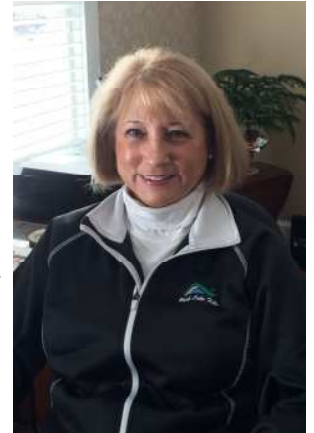
Thanks to Elaine for getting the hot dogs and buns, Sue Gumper for buying the hot dogs and Charlie Cardinale for grilling the hot dogs and burning some just the way I like them.. And to all who attended the evening festivities.

(Continued on page 3)

## From Our President, *Rena Valentine*

It's hard to believe that the summer has come to end and the kids are going back to school next week! I guess it seems like the summer has flown by so fast since many of us have been busy with yard work and projects that were put off until nice weather.

Many of us on the Board have been especially busy putting the 40th Home Tour together. It seems like it's all coming together thanks to so many dedicated people that are committed to make our tour a special one this year. We have five beautiful homes to show off and are quite excited for everyone to see them.



Our privy diggers, Nic and John are working hard to find one at the Ruggles/Ziembroski home, so time will tell. The Home Tour booklet will be coming out soon and will be found as an insert in the Milford Times, so please look for it. You will find much more information on the homes and the other events for the tour in the booklet. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 248-514-9124 or the museum at 248-685-7308.

I would also like to thank the local companies, homeowners, and organizations that have supported the home tour by becoming sponsors this year. At the highest level, the Milford Times is at the Platinum level and has been for many years. Also returning at the Platinum level is Veterinary Care Specialists/VCS Pets First. We do have a new sponsor at the Platinum level which is Robertson Brothers Homes and Flagstar Bank, who are partnering for the Union Square development at the old Baker School site. At the Gold level, we once again have Milford DDA and MediLodge of Milford. At the Silver level, we have four new sponsors which are the Law Office of Jack Bolling, Heinsight Eye Care, Primerica and Community Choice Credit Union. Again, thank you so much for your patronage!

I hope to see many of you at the General Membership meeting on the 8th and at the Home Tour this year! The General Membership meeting is early this month so as not to interfere with the Home Tour preparations.

***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—

The hot humid days of summer are soon past, hopefully bringing the cool brisk days of Fall. For the Milford Historical Society this Fall brings the Fourtieth Home Tour. This wonderful tradition has some great homes on tour and of course a chance to visit the Milford Historical Society Museum.

We have many visitors that come in and say "I have never been here-always meant to come." Repeat visitors always find some little treasure they missed the first time. So when you get your ticket for the home tour be sure and save some time for a tour of the museum.

To celebrate the Fall season we will have a new display in the main room as you enter. It will feature "Ladies Fancy Work". Ladies never sat with idle hands. So among the many things to occupy their time was "hand work". Besides sewing and mending, there was quilting, bobbin lace making, crocheting, knitting, needle point and embroidery. Many learned these skills at an early age and became quite proficient, using these items not only to decorate their homes but also to decorate their clothing. In this age of mass produced/throw away merchandise we have many examples both large and small of lovely, unique pieces that are both useable and of keepsake quality.



During the home tour there will be "hand work ladies" demonstrating their skills at several of the houses. Their will also be a demonstration of bobbin lace making on

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Fall Tea at the Mary Jackson House

Spend an enjoyable afternoon as the Milford Historical Society will once again host a Fall Tea at the childhood home of Mary Jackson at 642 Canal St.



Ms. Jackson was born and raised in Milford. A graduate of Milford High School class of 1927, Ms. Jackson went on star in theater productions, television programs and several motion pictures. Her most prominent role was of Ms. Emily Baldwin of the 1970's program The Walton's.

Mary Jackson loved the fall season in Milford and often brought her Hollywood friends back to enjoy the fall season. The date of this year's Fall Tea is

Saturday, November 12, 2016.

Two tea settings will be offered, the first from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the second from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Each guest will enjoy savories and sandwiches, scones and assorted desserts along with tea, coffee and punch. Guest will also enjoy a fashion show of vintage clothing modeled by local High School Students.

Tickets for the Fall Tea are \$25.00 and may be purchased at the Milford Historical Museum, 124 E. Commerce Street beginning Home Tour Weekend. Beginning September 20<sup>th</sup> tickets can be purchased at Acorn Farms located at 367 N. Main Street and Main Street Art located at 432 N. Main Street.

Seating is limited for this popular event, so reserve your space now. For more information, please call 248-685-7308 or visit [www.milfordhistory.org](http://www.milfordhistory.org) or visit our Facebook page.

## Woodlawn Cemetery A 20th Century Museum

September 8th Thursday Potluck General Meeting at 6:30 at the Methodist Church in Milford will feature Russ Rheames and Woodlawn Cemetery. A graveyard like you have never encountered before and no doubt you ever will even in Europe.

Woodlawn Cemetery on Woodward between 7 and 8 Mile is a Who's Who rest in peace kinda place. It encompasses 140 acres and the first burial was in 1896. Over 17,000 deceased are laid to rest at this over the top Forever Home..It has the most mausoleums in the world right here in the "D".

Russ Rheames father Lawrence used to be employed there full time and became a Crematorian and Russ worked the summer of 1963. Russ knows his way around the grave sites. Rumor has it to always walk in back of the grave so you will not step on the deceased's head. Makes sense to me. I wish you could witness the video Russ took recently of all the beautiful structures. I have to go and see for myself.

Just to name a few people you would recognize are Albert Cobo (Cobo Hall), James Couzens (Street, Mayor and Senator), Edsel and Eleanor Ford (Ford Family), Rosa Parks and the family with the biggest and they say the "gaudiest" structure : the Dodge family. Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross have mausoleums waiting for their departure from this world. Her mother is buried there.

Russ will describe to us the beautiful, engraved tombstones, mausoleums and stunning stained glass windows this cemetery has to offer. Since they are on acres of land gardeners attend their landscaping around the burial sights. He will talk a bit about a few of Michigan's finest who lived in these mini homes. The DVD was recorded by someone else who appreciated it's beauty. Cemetery Tours are popular all the world. My favorite is Bonaventure in Savannah, Ga.

So come to our September 8th General Meeting and see where the A-List reside now. It won't be "Grave" I promise. P.S. I still love our charming wrought iron fenced Oak Grove Cemetery on the river. We have our own Milford A-List residences there.

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## Anishinaabe Native Indian Storyteller and Bead Work Master

Our November 17th Speaker will now speak October 20th due to hunting season in November. Our October 20th Thursday Potluck General Meeting at 6:30 at the Methodist Church at 1200 Atlantic Street, Milford should be one you will not want to miss.

Mile Jewel a retired Science Teacher who is legally blind will bring his amazing bead work articles for us to admire and tell us Indian stories until we kick him out.. Mike is a

native Anishinaabe and professional storyteller. A tribe from the U.P. from the Bay Mills Reservation. He belongs to the Crane Clan. Passing along traditional skills and stories is very important to him and him people.

He teaches bead work at the Camp Pontiac Living Village at Kensington and camps during Maple Sugar Days in Kensington Park. Bead work Mike explains has many deeper meanings than just the visual presence your eyes view. You can go and visit him and ask questions at both locations.

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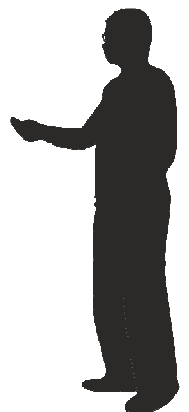
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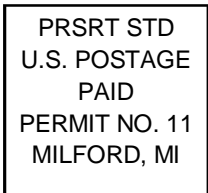
the porch at the museum. Bobbin lace making began in Europe and is truly a dying art. Just keeping the bobbins from becoming tangled is more than I could handle. We have three lace making "pillows" at the museum. To get them ready for display we had to call in the experts from the Lacemakers Guild in Ypsilanti to untangle them. Well worth the effort as you will see and they made it look so easy.

We will also have the stained glass window from the "Old stone church" moved to its permanent home at the top of the stairs. It certainly gives the landing a lot of WOW factor before you enter our Victorian rooms. The church was built in 1907. It is very interesting to see changes time and weather has on the glass and lead work. Our window is unrepaired, an expensive project for another time. It is still lovely to look at and imagine the history it could tell.

As director of the museum, one of the most difficult tasks is staffing. We currently have twelve volunteer student docents, one paid adult docent and too few adult volunteer docents. To keep the museum open as it has been-Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00pm to 4:00pm we need more volunteers. The students are unavailable on Wednesdays once school is back in session and many of the students also have school activities on Saturdays that prevent them from working then.

Anyone who would like to do something for the community and at the same time help the Historical Society-please consider becoming a volunteer docent. There are always at least two people present when the museum is open. Giving a tour is easy, using the fact sheets in each room as reference. You meet really nice people. You learn alot more about the history of your community and its founding families. If you are interested please contact me - Elaine Hunter at de-tah101@aol.com You will be glad you did and so will we!!





**THE BEGINNINGS OF MILFORD TOWNSHIP**

*ED.—We hear more often about the founding of the Village Of Milford, but the township came first.. This account was published in the Milford Times in July of 1932.*

First land Entry in 1827. First Settlers came in '32

The year 1932 has been looked on as properly the centennial year, because it was in that year the firstsettlers appeared to dispute the possession of land with the aborigines, although entries of land had been made previous to that time. The first entry of land in the present township, then a part of Novi Township, was made by Lyman Petti-

bone Aug. 27, 1827 and by Amos Mead in 1830. There are records of a number of entries by 1831 and tradition has it that Elizur Ruggles and his brother, Stanley, walked through this section in the fall of '31 looking for a likely mill site. This they found on the Huron river near what is now River Drive near East Huron street. In the spring of '32 they returned and built on this site the first saw mill. The name, "Milford," is supposed to have arisen from the ford at this mill site on the Huron.

A few other settlers came in '32 and in 1833 the tide of immigration brought many others from the eastern states.

*Ed.—And the rest, as they say, is history.*

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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.

## Two Men And A Mill

If it's September it's Milford Home Tour time of year. Every third September weekend guests are invited to tour some of Milford's finest historic homes and hear history, get decorating ideas or just ooohhh and aaaahhh the day away.

As fate has it, I was asked to be a House Captain on Home Tour Sunday at the Ruggles-Ziembroski Home at 1018 Atlantic St. And this month of all months I was going to introduce you to our founding brothers Stanley and Elizur Ruggles and tell their story, or rather their great adventure.

It started far far away in 1831 in a place called Colesville, New York. Stanley and Elizur shared a dream of building a saw mill. They packed their gear and starting walking (yes walked!) to Detroit then to Chicago and back to Michigan where they finally found a place on the beautiful Huron River later to be named Milford.

The brothers gazed upon our river valley drew a circle on the map around the Milford Territory and decided to call it home. Their dream of building a sawmill using the Huron River as their source of power was becoming a reality. With trees abundant on the edge of the river to feed their mill they hit the jackpot.

One June evening in 1831 they spread their bedrolls next to the Huron banks with only Mother Nature for a bed. At that moment they became the first residents of Milford Township.

The very next morning they were so excited they broke camp and set out walking (again) to Detroit to file a claim for their land. Records show Elizur bought 80 acres at \$1.25 per acre. Their property would be approximately near the Atlantic Street to Commerce Rd to the Huron River. They walked back to the Milford Territory and hunkered down in a crudely built shelter for their first Michigan winter. They never saw another soul the whole winter.

When Spring came they made tracks back to New York to gather their belongings and family. Stanley was 29 years old, a widower and brought his two children and new wife Julia. Elizur was 25 years old and a eligible bachelor. They bid their family farewell and headed back to Michigan. Brothers Henry and Noble arrived later.

In 1832 on the return trip back to Michigan they traveled on a flat boat, then boarded a steamboat across Lake Erie. The steamboat sadly sank with all their belongings near Detroit. Thankfully no one was injured. Only one piece was recovered after laying on the lake bottom for a few weeks. A chest of drawers. But that did not discourage the rugged Ruggles boys. A family named Parks lost all their belongings also and headed to Milford with the Ruggles clan to help with chores.

Today that recued Ruggles chest of drawers resides in the Milford Historical Society Museum for all to see, along with many other awesome treasures. Check it out for yourself.

The men got to work to build a small cabin near the river by the now Huron Street Bridge for the women and children.

The men did not have it so good. A wagon box chest and wooden boxes for walls would be their not so cozy home.

Next came their dream. With skillful hands and willing hearts they set out to build the Ruggles saw mill. I look out everyday and get to see the Historic Marker telling the Brothers story and picture the mill next to the river thriving.

Elizur and Stanley ran their mill until 1834. Elizur sold it to Stanley and in 1836 was bought by the Armstrongs who later also built a grist mill on that location.

Elizur remained and lived his life out on his farm tending his fruit trees and farming his land. He married Laura Servis and had a son. Laura only lived two years. He then married Mehetabel Stratton and had nine more children of whom only five survived. His four daughters married and raised their families in Milford. He built his log cabin somewhere near the Senior Center. In 1843 he erected the original part of the Greek Revival on Atlantic Street and in 1928 it was completely remodeled by his grandson Ben Phillips. It was in the Ruggles family for about 152 years. Elizur died 1876 and is buried in our Oak Grove Cemetery with many other Ruggles family members.

Brenda and Michael Ziembroski have lived in this historic home since 1993. They were also on the Home Tour in 1994.

Stanley a widower remarried wife number two Julia in New York before he returned with her and his two children. She died in 1834 and his only son Lawrence died in 1839. He packed up his only child Ellen Elizabeth and moved to DeKalb, Illinois before 1841. There he married wife number three, Martha, and had five children. Eventually, he packed up his brood and headed West again. Martha died before they arrive in Salt Lake City for the winter and was buried on the Oregon Trail. Upon reaching Utah he married wife number four Lovina, his housekeeper and nanny to his children.

Then, guess what? As the old saying goes "Go West Young Man". Stanley must of taken it seriously. Off he went, the pioneer he was, again with family and belongings in tow, he heading to Oregon. In 1851 he decided he couldn't go any further West and there established a nursery and cattle ranch. He died in 1869 and was certified by the State of Oregon as a pioneer settler in that state.

Well now you have it. The adventures of Stanley and Elizur Ruggles our founding brothers. There are still Ruggles decedents alive in the area today. I figured it was time to tell their tale. You can find out more about Milford history in our book *Ten Minutes Ahead Of The Rest Of The World* or visit our MHS Museum on Commerce and Union. I'll see you at the Ruggles-

(Continued on Insert page 2)

Ziembroski home on Sunday September 18th. I'll be on the porch waiting for you.

I could not of done this article if not for the knowledge and patience of a Ruggle descendant :Linda Dagenhardt. From all the phone calls and going crazy with all the wives and children to Linda directing me to Elizurs grave site in Oak Grove Cemetery. THANK YOU Linda.

Sandi Muirhead  
Historian

### Do you want to be a history detective?

The Milford Historical Society “Home Tour” is the main fund raiser for the Historical Society. The funds raised by the Home Tour make it possible to operate & maintain the Museum. The docent scholarship program, improvements and repairs to the building, postage and office supplies, utilities, cleaning supplies, computer upgrades, archival storages supplies, Past perfect archival computer program and the 4th. Of July Parade, just to name a few expenses that need to be covered to provide the community with an insight into the past.

The Board of Directors and many members work very hard every year to produce the Home Tour and make it a success.

Even with all their planning, this event is at Risk! We need researchers.

There are many homes in Milford that are still without a history. Each year at least five homes are placed on tour with only a couple of months to delve into the facts about the homes.

Doing the research is tedious, time consuming and a continuous search for fact and applying common sense and knowledge of the time period to what you find.

Research is also exciting, rewarding and a real thrill when you figure it out.

I will be happy to show how this is done, the steps to follow and where to find information.

Do you think you would make a good detective?

I will train and work with anyone who would like to learn

how to research these homes.

Please call me, Linda Dagenhardt 248-807-1204.

### The Tractor Show

The 18th annual Milford Home Tour Tractor Show will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 18, in the parking lot of the Huron Valley State Bank, 130 S. Milford Road. All tractors and tractor enthusiasts are welcome.



You can find restored and un-restored tractors, lawn tractors, garden tractors, as well as hit-or-miss engines. Previous shows had a 1935 John Deere tractor and an old steam engine. Set-up time for tractors begins at 9 a.m.

Bill Crawford is a sixth generation local farmer on land homesteaded in 1833, 183 years ago, by his great-great-grandfather Robert Crawford. Farming was a big part of Milford’s early years as the Milford area drew pioneers to its fertile soil. The settlers made the area flourish with their hard work. You can see some of the types of machinery that made this farming possible and talk with exhibitors who know the history of their machines.

As part of your Milford Home Tour visit, be sure to stop by the Tractor Show and visit with the owners. They love to talk about

### The Milford Car Show

Home Tour Weekend in Milford is about more than one event and on Sunday it’s also about the Milford Car Show. On Sunday, September 18th, 2016 the Milford Business Association



will host the 32nd Annual Milford Car Show from 8:00AM-3:00PM. Main Street will be filled with some of the finest examples of automotive history ever made. These are the cars that made our auto industry, our country, and our community great.

They will have on display, classic muscle cars, antiques, original un-restored cars, trucks, sports cars, motorcycles, present-day cruisers, special interest vehicles, etc.

It will be a great mix of exciting automotive “Eye Candy” for enthusiasts and casual observers alike. Here’s the best part, it’s absolutely free for spectators.

People can enjoy our Historic Home Tour, great restaurants and shops while taking in one of the best car shows in Michigan.