

The Milford Historian

Mission Statement: We are organized exclusively for educational purposes. We bring together those people who are interested in history, especially the history of the Village of Milford and Milford Township.



Show and Tell

For the January 20th General Membership Meeting, we are reaching into our history and bringing back a favorite program: "Show & Tell." Since our last such meeting was eight years ago, many current members may not be familiar with the Show & Tell program. Well, just like show and tell in school, we ask that you bring something to share with your fellow Historical Society members. It could be something you inherited from your grandmother and are puzzled about, or maybe it's something you found at last year's Granny's Attic Sale. It could be old or new, large or small. It might be an object you want us to guess about as to its identity and function. Or, maybe it's a picture of something or someone with an interesting story. It could also be a person you know who has a story that could be shared with our group. There are no rules, the sky's the limit.

In addition, as mentioned in Judith Reiter's fine remembrance of Barbara Young on page 2, you might wish to include a favorite memory or story about Barbara during this time of sharing.

Our evening starts with a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. The general meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m., followed by our Show & Tell program at 8:00 p.m.

Remember, you need not be a member to attend our meetings. Please invite a guest. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

January 2005 General Meeting

Thursday, January 20, 2005

From Your President

Looking Forward, Looking Back

It is now January 2005 and this means a new fiscal year is beginning for the Milford Historical Society. As our two-year term limit rule kicks in, your president will be looking for another job on the Board of Directors in 2005. At this month's general meeting we will be sharing our ideas and setting priorities for the Society's future activities. As we look ahead, let's also look back with pride at the services we provided and the commitments we fulfilled during 2004:

Funding: Dedicated members oversaw several highly successful projects: *Granny's Attic*; *historic photo sales*; *Home Tour*; *business sponsorships*.

Membership: Welcomed fourteen new members; presented six speaker programs at General Membership Meetings.

Museum: Established an *ad hoc* Museum Council to oversee museum operations and maintenance issues; hired (for the first time in 30 years) a part-time museum director and assistant to the director; purchased a new computer and software to accommodate planned cataloging of artifacts; selected and trained student docents from area high schools; conducted school/scout tours; decorated for the Christmas holiday.

Community Outreach: Chautauqua; 4th of July Parade; historic walking tours; Museum open during Milford Memories; Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station groundbreaking event; oral history taking in conjunction with Questers.

Publicity/Publishing: Published six newsletters with new format; expanded, enhanced and updated website.

Restoration/Preservation: Preservation/Restoration Award; Powerhouse site cleared of scrub trees; Village Council formalized construction contract for *Powerhouse* restoration.

Judith Reiter

6:30 p.m.

United Methodist Church
1200 Atlantic Street



Pot Luck Dinner Assignments

A-G

Salad Dessert

H-N

Main Dish

O-Z

Everyone: table service & beverage (coffee provided)

well done!

Professional Consultation for Museum

Good News! We have learned that Michigan Historical Museum Director will allow Society member Tami Averill to serve as a consultant to our Museum Council on a *pro bono* basis. Sue Gumper, chair of the Museum Council, says Tami is looking forward to leading the council through a strategic planning process that will bring our Museum's services into the 21st century. Museum-specific input from the Society's overall goal-setting activity will be comprehended. Sue advises that the Council will be seeking MHS members to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee.

Barbara Young 1928-2004



With a sense of great loss we mark the passing of Barbara Young, a founding member of the Milford Historical Society and abundant contributor to our community's sense of itself as a historic treasure. Barbara's meticulous research has contributed immensely to the Historical Society's stature and relevance. For many years to come, we and those who come after us will be referring to Barbara's work, Barbara's notes, Barbara's research. We are also blessed to have the fruits of her labors of love: historic walking tours, cemetery walks,

Rare Opportunity: Statehood Day

Member Sue Bullard advises that on Sunday, January 23, 2005, the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing is celebrating Statehood Day. When Michigan entered the Union in 1837, it was the country's fastest-growing territory.



Find out what life was like in the 26th state before the Civil War. The Museum's second floor will be busy with music and handicraft demonstrations oriented toward families with hands-on projects for children. Sue has taken her nieces the last two years, and they've loved it. For more information go to "search" on the internet, type in "Michigan Historical Museum," and select the one in Lansing.

co-authorship of *Ten Minutes Ahead of the Rest of the World*, author of the successful nomination of North Milford Village National Historic district, research on the build dates of over 400 homes in the township, overseeing the annual Preservation/Restoration award process, pages and pages of notes taken from *Milford Times* articles, and more that we will discover as we cull through her material that will be reside in the Museum.

Barbara is our 21st Century star in a very tiny inner circle of historians who have studied and lived in Milford over the past 170 years. As January's general meeting has been designated a "sharing" session, this would be a good time to share our stories and appreciation of Barbara's work. Please also bring your thoughts on how we can appropriately recognize Barbara's contributions to our community.

To view examples of Barbara's work, visit the [Barbara Young Archive](#) on this site

Grannies Attic



When you get the urge to "clean sweep" your home, you have a place to donate your treasures. Let our Granny's Attic serve as your attic to store the still good furniture and other items you no longer want. The Milford Historical Society receives the money from the sale of your donation. You receive a deduction on your 2005 taxes. For more information contact David Chase at 248-421- 3637.

Visit the [Huber Tractor Museum](#)

Home Tour Thank You....Continued



I've heard it said that it takes a village, but Home Tour 2004 took not only a village, but two townships and other communities as well. A few people were inadvertently left out of my "thank you" in the November/December newsletter.

I apologize and again thank everyone for their help, adding the following: The Parlor Players (Wanda Kackley, Katie Johnson and Nancy Hood) for your charming entertainment; Marianne Murphy and Carolyn Graves for graciously stepping in to replace *Milford Memories*, you were both wonderful; also to Carolyn Graves and Kim Purcell for docent procurement; to Mary Lou Gharrity and Sue Gumper for the beautiful vintage dress display (Duane Freitag for procuring extra mannequins), and also to Mary Lou Gharrity and Marlene Gomez for staffing the museum for the weekend.

Judy Waara— Chair

Rare Tractor Photo

For our tractor aficionados, member Dave Chase provides this photograph of a Huber tractor. It was manufactured around the turn-of-the-century (1896-1900) in Marion, Ohio. Perhaps they were used on farms in the Milford Area. If you know, let us know.



This is what the Tractor on the opposite page likely looked like when brand new. It appears to be a 1914 18 HP Steam Traction Engine.



THE LABADIES OF KENSINGTON

Following up our July/August 2004 history feature, “the Ghost Town of Kensington,” you’ll learn in this issue about the Labadie family and their “Bubbling Waters” summer compound in today’s Kensington Metropark. Our thanks to Mr. Bob Hotaling, Supervising Interpretive Naturalist, Kensington Nature Center who contributed the story and photos. –ed.

Those who venture out along Kensington’s Aspen Trail are often intrigued by the discovery of stone foundations, ruins of a fireplace, steps and other evidence that people once dwelt there. Until fairly recently, we didn’t know who lived there or when. Then, in 1983, a chance encounter with a visitor led to the realization that this was once the summer home of a prominent Detroit.

Charles Joseph Antoine Labadie (1850-1933) was of French-Native American ancestry. Jo, as he was known, became a labor leader, printer, journalist, poet, and social reformer. He was called the “gentle anarchist” due to his liking of people but not government. Jo believed strongly in individual freedom. Violence was condemned.

Jo died in 1933. In 1945, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority acquired the property. The buildings have long since vanished, but there’s enough left to allow you to use your imagination to picture what “Bubbling Waters” was once like.

Jo had three brothers – Francis, Oliver, and Hubert – who were actors. Hubert and Oliver produced silent movies on what is now Labadie Island, located in nearby Kent Lake. Beginning in 1913 and continuing into the early 1920’s, their films simulated a desert and a western mining town, among other subjects. Eventually, Francis and Oliver moved to California while Hubert remained in the Brighton area.

In 1912, Jo and his wife, Sophie, acquired a 40-acre tract of land in what is now part of Kensington Metropark. The site was named “Bubbling Waters” after a nearby brook. Numerous buildings were constructed, most of which lacked foundations. Among them were a house, barn and cabins. A footbridge, flagpole and fences were added. The best-known individual structure was “the Den,” a building in which Jo printed poetry, pamphlets and other materials. Look for the fireplace.

What was it like to live there? After all, they had no electricity, no natural gas, no telephone, and no water pipes. Also, no utility bills! The Labadies apparently managed quite well without “necessities” that we take for granted. Water could be carried in buckets. Some farming was practiced, including raising chickens, growing corn and beans, and harvesting watercress. Local wildlife often ended up in the cooking pot, especially rabbits, woodchucks and muskrats.

Flower gardens were planted, with some of the plants still in evidence today. Perhaps you can locate vinca (myrtle), domestic lily-of-the-valley, domestic iris and yellow daylilies. The site has changed a great deal of course, with grassy clearings having reverted to woodland.



*Left to Right: Oliver, Hubert and Jo Labadie in 1923
(A fourth brother, Francis, is not shown)*

We know much about Jo and his family because his granddaughter, Carlotta Anderson, researched her family history. Copies of original photographs have been obtained from her for the Nature Center. Jo is featured in many books regarding Michigan history. In addition, he donated his library and personal papers to the University of Michigan.

If you have Photographs, letters, maps or memories relating to the Labradies, please share them by getting in touch with Bob Hotaling at the Kensington Nature Center.



“The Den” where Jo printed his written materials (1926).

[For more on Jo Labadie’s life and legacy Click Here](#)

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Board of Directors

Judith Reiter	President
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WHAT'S HOT

General Meeting
&
Potluck
(Program: "Show & Tell")

DON'T MISS OUT!

Upcoming 2005 Events

- Jan 20...General Meeting and Program
("Show & Tell")
Jan 26...Board of Directors Meeting
Feb 23...Board of Directors Meeting
Mar 17...General Meeting and Program
("Milford: The Way We Were")
Mar 23...Board of Directors Meeting
Apr 27...Board of Directors Meeting
May 19..General Meeting and Program
("Ghost Town of Kensington")

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Milford Museum Staff 685-7308
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The Milford Historian

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