

# The Milford Historian

**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 and Milford Township.*

## “Life as a Confederate Soldier”

*January 18, 2006 Meeting and Program*

History lists many reasons why the Civil War took place. But all agree that from 1860 to 1865 our young country was torn apart. As the nation had grown in size, so had the opportunities for expansion westward. Disagreements between the northern and southern states escalated during this turbulent time. Eventually both the North and South began recruiting men and forming armies. Each state established regiments and soon volunteers of all ages marched off to the war that killed more Americans than all others combined.

At our January meeting we will meet a Civil War re-enactor who portrays what life was like for these brave young men fighting for their cause. Highland resident Gordon Peterson is part of a growing group of men and woman who spend several weekends a year recreating the battles of the Civil War. Gordon is a member of the Kentucky 9<sup>th</sup>/Company C and will help us understand what the conflict was like from the point of view of a Confederate soldier. Like many re-enactors, Gordon enjoys portraying the life of the average soldier and his day-to-day activities.

The evening will begin with at 6:30 p.m. with “the best potluck in town” at the Milford Methodist Church, located at 1200 Atlantic Street. There will be a brief business meeting at 7:30 p.m. followed by our program. All are welcome. You don't have to be a member to enjoy this Thursday evening with people who like history. Bring a friend, your table service, and a dish to pass based on the first letter of your last name, as shown below.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

### January General Meeting & Potluck Dinner

Thursday, January 18, 2007

6:30 p.m.

Milford United Methodist Church  
1200 Atlantic, Milford

A-G

Dessert

H-R

Hot Side Dish

S-Z

Salad

**Everyone: Table service & beverage (coffee provided)**

## From your President...

People say that Mary Jackson gave the Milford Historical Society her house. But she gave us much more than that. She gave us her **home**. She gave us a special gift that has witnessed 136 years of both good times and challenging times for Mary, her family, and the Village of Milford.

Mary is best known as an accomplished actress who, "don't you know," made “the recipe” on the *Waltons* TV program. She also starred in Broadway shows, movies, and modern theater. But in Milford, she was the always “girl next door” who lived on Canal Street.



In the mid-1970s Mary repurchased her family home at 632 Canal Street and carefully restored it to the way she remembered it as a child. She furnished it with her own beautiful furniture, antiques and memorabilia dating from her childhood.

Mary's memories of her friends in Milford and her special home were so important that she has entrusted her home to us to preserve and share with others. Our challenge now is to fulfill Mary's wish in the best way possible.

Be sure read this issue's special 2-page insert and learn more about Mary Jackson and her generous gifts to our historical society.

*David Chase*

## 2007 Membership Dues

Your dues renewal notice for 2007 should be arriving about the time you receive this issue of the *Milford Historian*. Please give it your prompt attention and you can check off one of the first things on your New Years' to-do list. As you will read, 2007 will be a very robust year for the Society which depends on these dues to maintain the Museum, publish this newsletter and execute several events, such as the Fourth of July Parade and the Home Tour, benefiting the Milford community. Your 2007 dues can be mailed to the Museum at 124 E. Commerce, Milford, MI 48381. Better still, bring them to our January 18th Membership Meeting...and save 39 cents. Thank you.



## Museum News

A big thanks to all who helped decorate the museum for Christmas on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. The usual group showed up: Sue Bullard, Sue Gump-per, Judy Waara and Marlene Gomez.



This year society member Beth Gabel came and we really appreciated her help and talent. Student docents Jon MacDougall and Michelle Hier also helped out.

We closed out the year with several group tours. The Grand River Trail Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) visited on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Cub Scout Pack #382 from Hartland visited on December 9<sup>th</sup> under the leadership of Lisa Maki. Karen Wisniewski's second grade class from Baker Elementary visited on December 13<sup>th</sup>. And a group of kids from the Carl's Family YMCA came for a tour on December 29<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks to all the docents who helped out with these tours: Lee Johnson, Mary Lou Gharrity, Laura Bonhard, Brian Mooney, Duane Freitag, Michelle Hier and, of course, Dave Chase who always seems to show up just when we need him! Our thanks also go out to Kathy & Russ Rheume and Barb & Ed Miller (deceased) and Fran Clark who serve as docents once a month during the year.

We look forward to many more groups visiting in 2007. Happy New Year to all.

*Marlene Gomez*

## Please Support Our Supporters

More than four months have passed since our 2006 Milford Home Tour. Yet, it's important that we remember those that helped make it the outstanding success that it was. These included our two Platinum Sponsors:

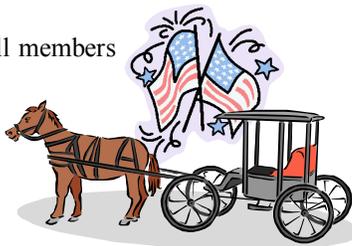
- *The Milford Times (3rd year sponsor)*
- *Tige Reader and the RE/MAX Team (3rd year sponsor)*

In appreciation for their generous contributions, we call upon each of you, our 200-plus members, and your families to return the favor by patronizing these businesses.

## 175th Anniversary Celebration

Our Fourth of July Parade in 2007 will celebrate the 175th anniversary of Milford Township. We are calling this celebration "**Right Place, Right Time,**" inspired by the title of the second chapter in the book *Ten Minutes Ahead of the Rest of the World: A History of Milford*.

Chairman Bob Crawford asks that all members consider becoming involved in the planning and execution of this significant event. He also advises that a horse-drawn carriage is needed for the parade. Bob can be reached at 248-685-2228.



## MHS Website Enhanced

*Check it out at [milfordhistory.org](http://milfordhistory.org)!*

Norm Werner, our talented and hard-working webmaster, has been at it again. This time he's enhanced our homepage with a series of sequencing photos of Milford's early history. It's a very engaging technique that really draws you in and encourages more exploration. The entire site is easier to navigate and has an even richer, more consistent look. Of special significance are the five virtual tours that have been added of 1) Milford (3 tours), 2) the Museum and 3) the Powerhouse. Thank you, Norm, for a historical society website that is now among the best in the country.



## A Statehood Day Celebration

*Saturday, January 27, 2007 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Michigan Historical Museum, Lansing*

Statehood Day 2007 honors the 170th birthday of the Great Lakes State. It was on January 26, 1837, that Michigan joined the Union as the nation's 26th state. This year, they are extending the celebration to mark another milestone in Michigan history—the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. Enjoy these highlights:

- The history of the Mackinac Bridge by a bridge engineer.
- Listen to the tunes popular in 1957 as performed by Frog and the Beeftones.
- A display of Mackinac Bridge-related material from the Archives of Michigan.
- Bridge-building hands-on activities for children.
- Learn how Native Americans and early French explorers traveled the Straits of Mackinac
- View an overview of historic photos of the Mackinac bridge.
- See the 50th anniversary Mackinac Bridge commemorative tokens
- Talk with a maintenance crew member from the Mackinac Bridge and learn what it's like to work hundreds of feet above the Straits of Mackinac.

*The first 100 people arriving at this public celebration of Michigan's birthday will receive a piece of delicious birthday cake!*

## Welcome New Members!

We are pleased to announce that **Steve McKenzie** and **Leslie Whalin** are the newest member of the Milford Historical Society. Welcome Steve and Leslie!

## Mary Jackson and her generous donations to the Milford Historical Society

As most Society members know, Mary Jackson donated her Milford family home to Historical Society. To fund upkeep on the home, she also donated the caretaker's residence next door.

Reprinted below is an excellent *Detroit Free Press* article describing Mary Jackson's affection for Milford, her theatrical and film career, and the Society's plans for these two homes. On page four is our advertisement for the sale of the caretaker's house.

*Detroit Free Press*

October 2, 2006

### Actress wills pair of old homes to her hometown

#### *Milford Historical Society grateful*

By Stan Donaldson

As Emily Baldwin on the 1970's television show "The Waltons," Mary Jackson often invited friends and neighbors to her huge Victorian home nestled in the mountains.

And now after her death, Jackson's home in Oakland County will be shared by friends and strangers as the largest gift ever to the Milford Historical Society.

Jackson, a native of Milford, donated her two houses in the town to the society before she died in Los Angeles from Parkinson's disease in December at age 95.

The residences are on Canal Street, about five blocks from downtown Milford. One is the house she was born in, which date to 1876, the other is a smaller house near the residence that was built for a caretaker in the 1950's.

Mary Lou Gharrity, treasurer of the Milford Historical Society, said the board would



likely sell or rent the smaller house and use the money for the upkeep of the historic residence.

She said even though the group had known about Jackson's wish to donate the property for about 10 years, getting the home was still a surprise.

"You never know what the outcome will be in situations like this," Gharrity said Wednesday. "We are pleased about it, and it will be a challenge for us. It was very generous of her to donate the homes."

Gharrity said the 200-member volunteer society would likely use Jackson's birth home for storage and office space, but the plans are still in the air. Gharrity said the group wants to do some repair work to the house, including replacing windowsills and doors, before a decision is made on its future.

She also said the actress, despite living most of the year in Los Angeles, was a member of the historical society for many years, and donated several items to the group's museum, including a handwoven wool coverlet that dates to the 1840's.

"She is someone who was originally from Milford

*Continued on next page*

and who made a success of her life and remembered their hometown and gave back,” Gharrity said. “Many times, people forget where their roots are, and she did not do that.”

Jackson was best known for her “Waltons” role as one of two elderly Baldwin sisters who lived together and made bootleg whiskey they referred to as “the recipe.”

Before hitting Hollywood, Jackson graduated from Milford High School in 1927 and attended Western Michigan University, where she studied drama and literature and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1933.

Christopher Smith, a Milford attorney representing Jackson’s estate, said Friday that the late actress originally wanted to donate the home to the National Trust for Historic Preservation because she put a large amount of money into restoring it when she bought it in 1974.

Smith said Jackson decided to give the 2,000-square-foot, three-bedroom residence to the local society after the national group said it would eventually sell the home and use the money for other projects.

He said the state-appraised value of her birth home is \$250,000. The smaller house was appraised at \$150,000.



*Living room of Jackson Home*

“Ms. Jackson had no family and no children or siblings to leave her estate to,” Smith said. “It was the home she was born in, so she was pretty attached to it...and it was important for her to keep it in its original condition when she passed.”

Gharrity said the group does not have any plans to remodel the exterior.



*Mary Jackson’s FDR memorabilia collection*

As part of the deal giving the historical society the houses, any exterior changes would have to be approved by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

“This is the largest donation anyone has ever made to the group and we are all very grateful,” she said. “We will do our best to keep it up.”

## A quick look at Mary Jackson’s Filmography



Besides her role in “the Waltons,” Milford native Mary Jackson also appeared in numerous stage productions, television shows and movies. Her credits include:

**1992:** “Leap of Faith,” with actor Steve Martin. Jackson played a woman in a wheelchair healed by a scam artist reverend.

**1990:** “The Exorcist III,” in which she played Mrs. Clelia.

**1988:** “Big Top Pee-wee” with Pee-wee Herman.

**1980’s:** Episodes of TV shows like “L.A. Law,” “Hill Street Blues,” “Magnum P.I.” and “Highway to Heaven.”

## 632 Canal St— Village of Milford



Walk to downtown Milford from this location. Great starter home or investment property! Offered for sale by the Milford Historical Society, 124 E. Commerce St, Milford MI 48381.

This 1038 Sq Ft house has 2 bedrooms and one bath. There is a large living room and the kitchen with eat-in area. Another large room off the side of the kitchen can be used as a family room or converted to another bedroom. The house is heated using gas fired hot-water baseboard heat, which is very clean (no blowing air). There is a whole house attic fan for summertime cooling. There is an extra-deep, extra high (9' door) detached, 2.5-car garage out back. The back yard is fenced.

- 1075 Sq Ft.
- 2 bedrooms & 1 bath
- Walk to downtown
- Extra-deep, detached 2 car garage (9' door)
- Fenced back yard
- Huron Valley Schools
- Offered at \$159,900.

Living Room—16.5' X 11.5' (Coved Ceiling)

Bedroom 1—11 X 11

Bedroom 2—11 X 10

Kitchen—11.5 X 12

Family room—18.5 X 11.5

Laundry/Utility room—11.5 X 7

Appliances—Elec. Stove, refrigerator    Gas fueled heating and hot water    Being sold "as is"

To arrange showings or to make an offer, contact Dave Chase, President of the Milford Historical Society, 248-421-3637 or call the MHS Museum at 248-685-7307.

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Phone: 248-685-7308  
E-mail: milfordhistory@yahoo.com  
Website: www.milfordhistory.org

# WHAT'S HOT

## General Meeting

**Thursday, Jan. 18, 2007**

United Methodist Church  
1200 Atlantic Street

# DON'T MISS OUT!

### Upcoming 2007 Events

- Jan. 18....**General Meeting and Program:  
"Life as a Confederate Soldier"
- Jan. 24.....**Board of Directors Meeting
- Feb. 21.....**Board of Directors Meeting
- Mar. 15...**General Meeting and Program:  
"Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)"
- Mar.22.....**Board of Directors Meeting
- Apr.24....** Board of Directors Meeting
- May 17....**General Meeting and Program:  
"100 Years of Fashion"
- May 25.....**Board of Directors Meeting

### Board of Directors

David Chase	President
Sue Bullard	Vice-President
Sue Gumpfer	Vice-President
Mary Lou Gharrity	Treasurer
Bill Schimmel	R&C Secretary
Jay Qualman	Director/Editor
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Judy Waara	Director
Bob Crawford	Director
Sharon Jensen	Director
Norm Werner	Director

### Milford Museum Staff

Marlene Gomez Assistant Director

685-7308

### The Milford Historian

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Historical Society  
published bimonthly  
(six times per year)

**Editor:** Jay Qualman  
248-676-0234

Submission deadlines:  
Last day of February,  
April, June, August, Oc-  
tober & December

### Annual Member Dues

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City-State-Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Milford Historical Society, 124 E. Commerce, Milford, MI 48381