

# 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.*

## The History of the Bissell Family

*From Dutchess County, New York to Bay City, Michigan, via Union Street, Milford, MI*

When purchasing a new home, most people will have an inspection performed on the house; they will check the neighborhood and the school district, but what about the history of the home? When MHS members Kim and Scott Kish were looking to purchase a home in Milford, they found an 1880's historical home on Union Street. Soon after taking a tour of the home, Kim made a trip to the Historical Museum and began researching the house and the family that built it.



The house Kim and Scott were looking at happened to be a favorite home in the downtown Milford area. The Bissell – Jacobs house located at 334 Union Street and was featured on last year's home tour. Although Kim and Scott's attempt to purchase the home wasn't successful, Kim has continued to research the family including meeting relatives of and recording their oral histories. At our May meeting Kim will acquaint us with the story of the Bissell family and how they made their way to Milford, Michigan and the fascinating story behind the Edward and Carrie Bissell home on Union Street.

Our evening will begin with a scrumptious potluck dinner at 6:30 pm at the Milford Methodist Church located at 1200 Atlantic Street. A brief business meeting will begin at 7:30 pm followed immediately by our program. Please feel free to invite a guest. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. You don't have to be a member to enjoy this Thursday evening with people who like history. Bring your own table service and a dish to pass based on the first letter of your last name as shown below. **Letters have been updated!**

## From Your President

Happy Holiday to all



Memorial Day is always an important date and I hope you all attend the Milford Memorial Day Parade. We should be thankful for all the sacrifices our veterans have made for this Country. We in Milford are doubly fortunate to not only live in or near the best Village in the world, but this quaint Village is also in the best Country in the world. I always get goose bumps when I watch the group of WWII planes fly over and then one plane starts smoking and falls back from the rest.

We need everyone to think of ways the Historical Society can make money to pay for bills related to the Museum, the Mary Jackson House and the upkeep on our rental home. Some members were upset about the possibility of having a millionaires gambling party. I do understand both sides. We are having a Tea Party at the Mary Jackson House and Mary Lou Gharrity gave a lecture on Milford's history at Acorn Farms. Granny's Attic and the Home Tour are all good ways to make money, but it is not enough. If you have any suggestions, please let us know?

Bill Schimmel, Dave Chase and Moi have been performing at a few local nursing homes once a month. We call ourselves the Milford Historical Society International Symphony.

*Russ Rheume, President*



### Potluck Dinner

Thursday, May 21, 2009

6:30 p.m.

United Methodist Church

1200 Atlantic, Milford

A-F

Main Dish

G-Q

Salad

R-Z

Dessert

Everyone: table service & beverage

## Michigan State Questers to the Rescue

About six years ago MHS Board members discovered tree roots were breaking through the floor of the basement's northern room. Even though the tree had been removed many years earlier, the damage became more pronounced with each passing year and the stability of the foundation came into question. It also became clear that the concrete slab supporting the stairwell was breaking up exposing dirt. The Board began to seek solutions in 2007. The estimates to fix the problem made it clear that the cost was more than the MHS budget could afford.

To the rescue! In the fall of 2007 a local member of The Questers, Maria Moore #432, contacted the historical society. They were establishing a list of preservation and restoration projects that needed assistance. The Questers is an international nonprofit organization which was incorporated for the purposes of supporting education by research and study and to donate funds to the preservation of memorials and historical buildings. In the spring of 2008, Maria Moore #432, contacted the MHS Board and gave us wonderful news. They were going to dedicate funds for the restoration of the museum foundation and apply for a Michigan State Organization of The Questers grant to fund the project. In October of 2008 the MHS Board received the news that The State Organization of The Questers was proud to recognize and congratulate the members of Maria Moore #432 as a 2008 grant winner of \$5,000 for their project at the MHS Museum to stabilize the foundation.

Thanks to this generous support the MHS Board moved quickly to accomplish the foundation stabilization. During October and November 2008 the previous estimates were reviewed with the companies, the MHS Board and Maria Moore #432. In December 2008 and January 2009 the references for the companies were checked and Pro-Crete, Ltd. was selected for the job. In February and March, Village of Milford officials approved the work and arrangements were made for clearing the room. The Board would like to thank Duane Freitag, Brook Qualman, Brian Mooney, Jeff Spoor, Bill Crawford and Sue Gumpfer for clearing the room and breaking down the existing shelving.

In April, Pro-Crete, Ltd. went to work. First, under the direction of Doug Bohn, they poured a footing for a new foundation support pole. With the new support in place, they removed the tree roots, old concrete floor and dirt using a conveyor belt system. Next they poured a new concrete floor and stairwell foundation.



The final step was creating new stairs that met code requirements. Pro-Crete, Ltd. did a wonderful job. Their respect for the preservation of an 1853 foundation, effective and efficient performance and high quality results are to be commended.

On behalf of the Milford Historical Society, the Board would like to thank Maria Moore #432 and the Michigan State Organization of The Questers for providing the grant funds to stabilize the museum foundation. Their gift has not only helped to preserve a historical building, it enables MHS to continue our goals of historical education and bringing together those people who are interested in history, especially the history of the Village of Milford and Milford Township. We want them to know that their generous gift will keep on giving because it enables MHS to continue the preservation of local history and to share it with our community.

## Elizabeth Frances Clark 1922-2009

We were sad to learn that Fran passed away on March 6, 2009. She was a member of the Milford Historical Society and a darn good docent at our Museum. According to the family, Fran was born on Christmas Day, 1922 near Clarksville TN. After her Dad's untimely death, the family moved to Prescott, Michigan



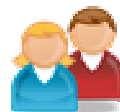
where Fran graduated from Prescott High School in 1942. As a young woman, Fran left Prescott to live and work in Detroit. She was employed with the Detroit to Cleveland Boat Company (where Cobo Hall is located).

She married Dewayne Clark (a former high school interest) in 1947 and with their daughter, Lois, moved to Milford in 1950. Fran was thrilled to be near her best friend and only sister, Irene. Fran worked several years as a nursery school teacher. Later, she became the Treasurer for the Village of Milford serving in that position until DeWayne's health required warm winter weather. Sadly, Dewayne passed away in 1999.

Fran was a active member of West highland Baptist Church for over 40 years serving in many different areas of ministry. In addition to the Milford Historical Society, Fran was also active in Zonta of Milford and the Milford YMCA. We at the Milford Historical Society all express our sympathy to Fran's family and friends. She will be missed.

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## Welcome New Members



We are pleased to welcome Mark Sacher  
As our newest member.

## Museum News



The museum opened for the season on Sat. May 2<sup>nd</sup> and we've already had a couple of visitors. I want to thank everyone who helped to clean the museum before we opened. We worked on two Saturdays and two Wednesdays and a little more. Sue

Gumpper, Mary Lou Gharrity, Brook Qualman, Sue Bullard, Judy Waara, Marlene Gomez and Russ Rheaume all lent a hand with everything from washing windows to cleaning up the yard along with vacuuming and dusting everything. Also, two of our student docents, Jessica Powers and Stephanie Thorpe came in one Saturday to help out. We took down the military display that we've had up for a couple of years and are in the process of displaying authentic "Milford" items. It's amazing how many items we're finding – Sue G., Brook, and Mary Lou have been working hard on that. Again, thanks to everyone who helped out – it's really appreciated!!! So be sure to stop in and see the sparkling museum and our new display.



Submitted by Marlene Gomez.

## Spring Tea at the Mary Jackson House

On Saturday, May 16, 2009, The Milford Historical Society will be hosting a Spring Tea fundraiser to benefit the Mary Jackson House and will be held at the childhood home of Mary Jackson. Guest can choose from two settings to attend, 11am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm. Each guest will enjoy savories and sandwiches, scones with lemon curd, jam or cream, assorted desserts and tea, coffee and punch. A Vintage fashion show will take place during each tea along with entertainment from Waives of Harmony singing group.



Tickets for the Spring Tea are \$25.00 and can be purchased at The Acorn Farms (367 N. Main St), Main Street Art (432 N. Main St) or at the Milford Historical Society Museum (124 E. Commerce St). All proceeds will go directly to the preservation of The Mary Jackson House.



For more information please call 248-685-7308 or visit the Historical Society web site at [www.milfordhistory.org](http://www.milfordhistory.org)

## FYI

### Business Expo

The Milford Historical Society had a chance to participate in this year's Business Expo that was held on Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at Milford High School. The Business Expo is sponsored by the Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce and gives the opportunity for local businesses and organization like the Historical Society a chance to promote our organization and to publicize upcoming events. Special thanks to Sue Gumpper who helped set up our booth on Saturday and for helping greet visitors. Also on hand welcoming guests were Joyce Clark and Lee Johnson.

### Blacksmith Demo

Jeff Spoor will doing his first Blacksmithing demonstration of the year at the Wixom founders day festival, it is free entrance, free parking, tractor show and small car show. Date: May 17th time 1 to 4 pm corner of Pontiac Trail and Wixom Road, Gibson House.



### Community Flea Market



- Saturday, June 13th - 10:00-4:00
- Join us at the **Kelley-Fisk Farm** (9180 Highland Rd, in front of Wal-Mart) for this FREE event to sellers and buyers.

The **White Lake Historical Society** wants to assist those experiencing financial difficulty by opening the grounds for you to sell Your Stuff or Buy Their Stuff!

Spaces will be outside and limited to the first 150 people who reserve a space by calling Greg or Marilyn 248-360-0180.

You must bring your own shelter, tables, chairs, etc. however, a limited number of tables will be available at a rental fee of \$5 each on a reservation only basis.

## Thanks to our Home Tour Sponsors

The Milford Historical Society is especially appreciative this year for the donations of our Home Tour sponsors. We are pleased to welcome the Detroit Medical Center's Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital as a Platinum sponsor in addition to the Milford Times. With the support of these businesses, as well as your important individual contributions, we are able to continue working to preserve Milford's long and rich history.

### Platinum Sponsors

- **DMC– Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital (1st year)**
- **Milford Times (5th year)**

**Milford Times**

**DMC**  
Huron Valley-Sinai  
Hospital

### Gold Sponsor

- **Milford Downtown Development Authority (4th year)**

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# WHAT'S HOT

**Tea At Mary Jackson  
 House  
 May 16th  
 General Meeting  
 May 21st**

# DON'T MISS OUT!

## Upcoming 2009 Events

**May 16...**Tea At Mary Jackson House  
**May 21...**General Meeting and Program:  
The Bissell Family  
**July 19...** Picnic hosted by Bill and  
 Nancy Schimmel  
**July 10th & 11th...** Granny's Attic Sale

## Board of Directors

Russ Rheume	President
Sue Bullard	Vice-President
Sue Gumper	Vice-President
Judy Waara	Treasurer
Judith Reiter	Corresponding Secretary
Kathy Rheume	Recording Secretary
Bill Schimmel	Director
Bill Crawford	Director
Norm Werner	Director
Jim Gabel	Director
Brian Mooney	Director
Carol Watkins	Director

## Milford Museum Staff

Marlene Gomez      Assistant Director      685-7308

## The Milford Historian

–  
 Newsletter of the Milford  
 Historical Society  
 published bimonthly  
 (six times per year)

–  
**Editor:** Brook Qualman  
 248-676-0234

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Submission deadlines:  
 Last day of February,  
 April, June, August,  
 October & 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