

# The Milford Historian

===== Newsletter of the Milford Historical Society =====

November 2002

*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.*

## Albert Kahn's Architecture

---

### General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, November 21st, 2002 @ 6:15pm**

For our evening's program, Mr. Brian Carter, a professor in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, will present a slide show that reviews the creative genius of Detroit's most famous architect, Albert Kahn. Kahn's influence in architecture spans the globe: from Russia all the way to our own Kahn creation in Milford (the Pettibone Creek Powerhouse on W. Liberty Street). Plan to be there to learn what Professor Carter has to say about this great industrialist and his influence on our world.

Our general membership meetings are open to the public and all are invited. You don't have to be a member to enjoy this good time with people who like history!

Our evening will celebrate Thanksgiving early with a Thanksgiving style turkey potluck dinner. (Set up at 6:15 p.m., eat at 6:30 p.m.) We will have our membership meeting at 7:30 p.m. The featured speaker is at 8:00 p.m. Bring your own table service and a big dish to pass based on the first letter of your last name.

NOTE: See page 3 for important meal info!

**Milford Historical Society 6:15 p.m.**

**Thursday, November 21, 2002**

A-F Hot Vegetables

G-Q Desserts

R-Z Salads

### From the President's desk:

It's never too late...to be grateful for what we have. The hustle and bustle of the Thanksgiving holiday preparations are well underway as you sit down to read our newsletter this month. There's grocery shopping lists, and lists of friends to call, and guests for dinner. Perhaps even the Christmas shopping lists have begun to grow.

I like to take some time out and make another list. It's a list of the things that have occurred this past year for which I am grateful.

In reviewing this past year as president of the MHS, I am very grateful for all of the accomplishments we have seen. We have completed our second year with our student docent program and scholarships. We have had an active membership committee, which has sponsored many activities, and developed some new programs for us. We have had more scout and community groups come visit our museum. We have benefited from the volunteerism of the GM Milford Proving Grounds staff in getting the museum prepped and painted.

Our Board members have put together a great year of programs, and a superb 4th of July Parade, complete with a great float. Home Tour was back, and in a big way, complete with old favorites like the tractor show, and new ones like the Cemetery Walk, Children's Activities and the opening of the log.. *.continued, page 3..*

## Feature Story: "Horsepower"

The term **horsepower** was invented by the British engineer James Watt. Watt lived from 1736 to 1819 and is most famous for his work on improving the performance of steam engines. We are also reminded of him every day when we talk about 60-watt light bulbs.

The story goes that Watt was working with ponies lifting coal at a coal mine, and he wanted a way to talk about the power available from one of these animals. He found that, on average, a mine pony could do 22,000 foot-pounds of work in a minute. He then increased that number by 50 percent and pegged the measurement of horsepower at 33,000 foot-pounds of work in one minute. It is that arbitrary unit of measure that has made its way down through the centuries and now appears on your car, your lawn mower, your chain saw and even in some cases your vacuum cleaner!

Here in Milford, we can make a study of the available modes of horsepower that have affected our community over the years. In the earliest times when Stanley and Elizur Ruggles, founders of Milford, came to choose a site for a sawmill, they were after waterpower. If we knew the rate at which their water wheel turned, and the amount of torque or twisting force the wheel provided, then the "horsepower" of the mill could be calculated using Watt's definition above. But enough with story problems; we may have to revisit that calculation at another time.

The other study of available power in Milford's early years is that of power from the horse itself. In the 1800's, the farms of Milford needed clearing, plowing, tilling, planting, and harvesting. Animals were used to do these tasks that were too huge for man. A picture in our history book Ten Minutes Ahead of the Rest of the World on page 134 shows a team of horses pulling a sled down a snow packed Main Street. The sled is loaded with six big logs destined for the sawmill and the estimated weight of the load is 6,000 pounds.

Other pictures in our history book show the horse providing the power to pull a carriage or

a wagon to transport people or goods as needed.

When looking at these old black and white pictures of horses in our Milford area, it seems like this happened so long ago that only these photos can tell the story. But wait, here's the good part. We have some members of our historical society that used horsepower on the farm that came from a horse. This reporter had the opportunity to discuss "power from the horse" type farming from members Helen Catlin and Carlton Crawford. Both of these individuals worked on their respective farms using teams of horses. This "non-tractor" farming operation occurred for them in the 1920's and 1930's. Of course, they were able to learn the trade from their parents and grandparents who had to use horses as the only source of farm power.

So how does one go about preparing a large field for planting using a horse for the power? This reporter learned that usually two horses were utilized to pull a single bottom plow (a plow that cuts one furrow). However, to increase productivity, a double bottom plow that cuts two furrows was commonly used. This setup requires more power. In this

situation, the horsepower was stepped up. Three, four, and sometimes five horses were used by Carlton to get the job done. With the five-horse arrangement, three horses pulled in front with two horses behind them and Carlton on a riding plow. He controlled the front three horses with reins. The back two horses just followed.

The horses would work until noon and then it was back to the barn for some water and hay to munch on. Then, after lunchtime, it was back to the field. If you got two acres done, it was considered a good day. Carlton mentioned that by the end of the day, you were tired and the horses were tired.

In general, the horses were easy to control and they got used to the repetitive nature of their task. Occasionally, the horse was used for a bareback ride out and back to the field.

In the next installment of this story, we will look at the transition to the tractor as the source of horsepower.

*President's message continued from page 1*  
..... cabin in South Side Park. We have a new 'temporary' exhibit in the museum of Indian artifacts. The Powerhouse committee has diligently worked to bring that project closer to a reality. All that being said, I am eternally grateful to all of the volunteers for their hours of dedication, creativity and energy, for without them, none of these things would have been accomplished. To all of you, I say THANK YOU!

Your president, Sue *Fleming*

### **General Membership Meeting Potluck Dinner for November**

Our "best potluck dinner in town" will be even better for our November 21<sup>st</sup> meal. Like last year, we will have a Thanksgiving style dinner with all the fixin's. Board members have already signed up to bring the turkey, dressing, potatoes and gravy. We will also have ice cream. Members are asked to bring food according to the list on page one.

The potluck and meeting will be held at St. George's Episcopal Church, 801 E. Commerce Street. Tom and Linda Joynt will have the place open at 6:00 p.m. Linda has arranged for table decorations to add a festive touch.

This will be our way of saying thank you to all who have helped make our historical society the success it is. It will be a feast to behold. The pilgrims would be jealous if they could see this spread!

\*\*\*

### **\*\*\*News Updates\*\*\***

#### **New Members**

We would like to introduce new members W. J. Chamberlin, Charles Standhardt, and Jeff Spoor and family. We hope to see these new faces at our November meeting!

\*\*\*

#### **Gift Ideas**

As the holiday season approaches, here are some gift ideas: We have some Powerhouse tee shirts for sale at the museum. These tee shirts are \$10.00 each and come in a variety of sizes. The proceeds help support the

restoration of the Powerhouse on W. Liberty Street. The tee shirt also is a unique way to show you're part of what's happening in Milford!

While we're on the Powerhouse, the other fundraisers will also make super gift ideas. Our Buy-A-Brick and Paint-A-Tile projects will make a memorable gift for any age, any size! Contact Judith Reiter for sign-up information on these worthwhile fundraisers.

And finally, how about a membership to the Milford Historical Society for that person on your list? Since dues are an annual occurrence, a membership works well as a holiday gift. The Board of Directors approved new dues categories and rates effective with 2003. See the back page for our new dues schedule.

\*\*\*

### **Home Tour 2002**

Home Tour 2002 was a bid success. We had good attendance and decent weather for both days of this September classic that serves as our main fundraiser. We sold a total of 676 tickets.

Home Tour chairperson Sue Fleming deserves a big thank you for her many hours of hard work. Thanks goes to Barb Young for organizing the cemetery walk and to Tami Averill for the activities at the log cabin. Thanks, too to all our MHS members who helped make this event a success.

The tractor show that was held on the Sunday of Home Tour weekend was also a success. The new site at Johnson School seemed to work very well. Thanks to Bill Crawford for putting this event together.

\*\*\*

### **Dates to Remember**

November 21<sup>st</sup> - General Membership meeting (Thanksgiving dinner type pot luck for Nov. 1 )  
December 5<sup>th</sup> - Museum open 6-9 p.m. Carol, Can, and Candle. Christmas items for sale.  
January 16, 2003 - General Membership Meeting and election of officers.

\*\*\*