



# Clinton County Historical Society

Museum & Archives

## Newsletter



Volume 3 Issue 3

April 2026

# RBW High School Spring Program

## Meet the Volunteers

Jim Parr

Jim Parr was born in St. Johns in 1951. He attended St. Johns Public Schools and was in the last class to graduate from Rodney B. Wilson High School in 1969. Jim is descended from one of the earliest residents of St. Johns, George Washington Estes, his 2nd great-grandfather. George W. Estes was credited with nailing the first St. Johns sign on a tree near the railroad as well as being the first postmaster, a member of the first fire department, a clerk in a general store and the first Marshall.



Jim has been volunteering at the museum since May 2025 and more recently became a CCHS Board member. With the resignation of Mike Morey, Jim has assumed the office of President of the CCHS Board.

Jim became interested in local history and genealogy mostly through the influence of his father, Raymond Parr. His grandfather, Dart Parr began Parr's Pharmacy in downtown St. Johns in 1913 and they operated it as a family business for 3 generations until January of 1999 when it was sold to Atlas Drugs.

Jim met his wife Linda (Hasse) in college. Linda is from Traverse City, Michigan. They were married in 1973, and have 4 children and 8 grandchildren. Jim graduated from the Ferris State College of Pharmacy in 1974. They currently reside in Bingham township.

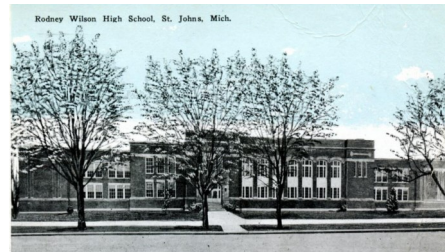
Jim serves as the Historian at the CCHS museum.

## Kroger Rewards

One easy way to help the CCHS is to shop at Kroger. This is at no cost to you! Please choose us by signing up for [Kroger Community Rewards](#).

Register your Kroger Card for #DQ655 Clinton County Historical Society.

Our RBW High School program originally scheduled for last December will be held on Thursday, May 7th at 6:30pm at the Bingham Township Hall. The hall is located at 2057 N. Lansing St., St. Johns.



The program will feature a panel discussion with RBW alumni and an update on the Wilson Center.

Light refreshments will be provided.

This program is free for CCHS members and \$5 for non-members.

## Museum Opening in May

Hello from the Clinton County Historical Museum. Our opening date for 2026 is Wednesday, May 20th and we will be open from 2-5pm.



As a reminder, our doors are open to the public on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays every month from 2-5pm and every Saturday from 9-12pm beginning June 13th to coincide with the St. Johns Farmers Market.

We are busy preparing for our 47th season as we continue to share our main exhibit of *100 years of Rodney B. Wilson High School: 1925-1969*. We are working to complete a brand-new exhibit that will highlight St. Johns and the history of the railroad and interurban. Please stay tuned for updates on those projects.

For more information about the Museum and the Clinton County Historical Society including the Archives Center in DeWitt, please visit our website [cchsmichigan.org](http://cchsmichigan.org).

## CCHS Online Shop

Did you know the CCHS has an online shop? Just click on [CCHS Online Shop](#) or visit our website.

You can order any book or other merchandise we currently have available and pay with a credit card.

There is a \$5 mailing charge for all orders.



## Digitized Newspapers

The CCHS 2025 newspaper digitization project has been completed with the additional of many county newspapers outside of St. Johns to be searched for free.

The additions include : *DeWitt Bath Review*, *DeWitt Weekly Advertiser*, *Elsie Leader*, *Elsie Sun*, *Fowler Post*, *Maple Rapids Dispatch*, *Maple Rapids Press*, *Ovid Register*, *Ovid Register Union*, and *Ovid Weekly Register*.

The *DeWitt Weekly Advertiser* is available through the [Clarke Historical Library](#).

The other newspapers listed are available on the [Clinton County Site](#) along with all available St. Johns historic newspapers up to 1987. (Due to an upload issue, the additional newspapers may not appear for a few days on the county site. They are working on it.)

## Other Historical Societies

The Westphalia Historical Society's special exhibit for 2026 will continue their Our Farming Heritage series with a focus on the farm home. They are currently collecting artifacts including those related to kitchens, food, crafts, farm animals, and farmhouse photos. See [their website](#) for more information.

The Bath School Museum is continuing to fundraise for their proposed new building. You can read about it and donate on [their website](#).

The Elsie Historical Society's archive/museum attached to the Elsie Public Library at 145 W. Main St. will be open April 8 & 15 from 2-5pm for research and checking out their exhibits.

Check out the Ovid Historical Society [Facebook](#) page for information on their meetings and activities.

The Archives of Michigan has death certificates up to 1952, maps, naturalization records, and more on [michiganology.org](#) and it's all free.

## Mt. Rest Tree Fund

Peter Motz, a member of the Mt. Rest Cemetery Association Board is forming a tree fund to help with the costs of keeping the cemetery's trees healthy.

Peter explains it this way: "Last week I got a call from member Dan Zuker regarding a particular tree at the cemetery. The red oak (*quercus rubra*) that shades the Civil War statue and graves...has a diameter of 72" and a circumference of 18'. The spread of the crown is 75' Formulas estimate her age around 280 years."

Ferralls Tree Co. took some weight off the large branches and removed some dead wood in early March.

Peter continues, "Mount Rest Cemetery is run by a volunteer board with a finite amount of funds...Planting new trees and upkeep of existing trees becomes an afterthought when times are tough. That's why I'm heading up a fund raising project for a tree fund for Mt. Rest Cemetery. This money would be put in a separate fund for new tree planting and maintenance."

Donations of any size would be appreciated and may be sent to the Cemetery Office earmarked for the tree fund. The address is 706 E. Steel Street, St. Johns. If you have any questions you can email the cemetery at [mtrestcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:mtrestcemetery@gmail.com) or call (989) 224-3160.



Mt Rest Civil War Statue

## Check Out Our New Website

If you haven't had the chance yet, you are invited to check out our new website at [cchsmichigan.org](http://cchsmichigan.org).

Here you will find information on the society, museum and archives all in one place.

You can read about the history of our museum complex and get information on our current and past exhibits.

There are links to the many resources we have available online. These include hundreds of photos, newsletters, vital records, older *Clinton County Trails*, teacher lesson plans, historical tour guides, and much more.

It is also a place where you can become a member, shop, or volunteer from your cellphone or computer.



## MONTHLY REPORT OF ACQUISITIONS & RESEARCH

**FEBRUARY 2026**

**Meeting: March 10, 2026**

February was a winter month with 5 visitors and one week we were closed because a new furnace was being installed in the building. Thank you DeWitt Township.

### CHURCHES:

- 1978 Salem, Greenbush & Lowe United Methodist Church Directory [CH 206]
- 1992 Salem, Greenbush & Lowe United Methodist Church Directory [CH 207]
- ca2016 Lowe United Methodist Church Directory
- 2004 Redeemer United Methodist Church Directory
- 1998 Greenbush United Methodist Church History

### DIRECTORIES:

- DT 100, 1953 St. Johns, Elsie, Ovid, Fowler, Maple Rapids telephone director

### HISTORIES:

- Elsie Centennial Program 1857-1957

### MAPS:

- 1874 Village Plat of St. Johns

### ORGANIZATIONS:

- St. Johns Rotary Club Handbooks 1950-1960
- Lions Club Old Time Minstrel Shows fliers: 1955 - 1963

### PHOTOS:

- Nelda Rhines, Helen Light, Irene Light; Back Row: Susie Yuircso, Ginnie Peck 1943
- Leola Rhynard, Arola Rhynard, May 13, 1938
- Robert Bennett, Jetta Finch, Dean Wilkie, Helen Wolf Operetta May 13, 1938
- Mr. Pocius - Chemistry Teacher, SJ High School
- Helen Light 1943
- Irene Light 1943
- Ellen Matter 1943
- Class of 1943 group photo, RBW High School; First Row: William Coffman, Sanford Oyer, Vincent Vitek, Francis Branard, Arthur Voss, Arthur Spafford, Bill Rambaugh; Second Row: Edward Spicer, Richard Millman, Nelda Rhines, Brunetta Mazzolini, Donald Davis, Gertrude (Trudy) Henning, Doris Kline, Robert Bradley, Jetta Finch, Jean Rice; 3rd Row: Patricia Coffman, Arlene VanElls, Helen Light, Irene Light, Beth Ellinger, Jean Birdsley, Jacqueline Munger, Barbara Kuhns, Jack Jacobs, Dean Pope; 4th Row: Wayne Allen, Jack Rice, Dorothy Loux, Virginia Peck, Emily Mazur, Ilene Ordiway, Jane

- Danley, Grace Hainer, Betty Gardner, Joyce Barnes, Onley Estes; 5th Row: John Anderson, Mildred Cole, Suzanne Yurcso, Donna Hardman, Ethelyn Jones, Gwen Carrol, Louisa Neller, Virginia Smith, Ruth Parks, Olive Moinet, Annette Ridenour; 6th Row: John Speerbrecker, Virginia Black, Ellen Matter, Patricia Rose, Betty Haviland, Luella Warner, Barbara Cleland; 7th Row: Henry Mason, Richard Schmidtman, Joan Ballentine, Lois Francis, Betty Frayer, Melvin Gibson, Joe Hopko; 8th Row: Don Ott, Ivan Harlow, Donald Swagart, Edna Bunge, Eugene Heibeck, Dale Plowman, Kathleen O-Conner, LaRue Spitler, Darcy Cramer, Dale Bancroft, Thera B rewer, Lester Sperry, Eugene Larson, Jack Estes. Compiled by Nelda Rhines Orr, Nov. 2003
- 1" x 2" approx: Donald Mazzolini, Brunetta Mazzolini, Katherine Norris, Dick Gilson, Wilbur Worrall (2), Suzy Yhurcso (2), Jane Gibson, Barbara Cleland, Ruth Duprez, Barbara Jean LaRowe, Barbara Bennett (2), Ellen Matter (2), Mary Donna Laurence, Roselle Baker, Corrina Wallace, Betty Bashore, Eva Pope, Agnes Miller, Joyce Parker, Mildred Irene Cole (2), Bob Bennett, Mary Lou Graham, Opal Nicklas, Charlotte Webster, Jetta Finch, Nelda Rhines, June Brase?, Ray Peck, Ted Bradd?, Gifford (2 girls)
  - 10 tin photos, unidentified
  - Myrl King Stoll baby photo
  - Myrl King Stoll young child
  - Myrl King Stoll young child
  - Ethel Dayton McCleery
  - Walter Easton
  - Frank Easton b. 1870 d. 1902
  - Josephine Easton b. 8Oct1863 & Marion Dayton, daughter Bernice b.12Oct1886
  - Ora Easton Scott
  - Carrie Brown Nourse
  - Lura & Charlie Easton
  - Schrader Reunion 1938 Potter Park, Lansing, MI
  - 1800's St. Johns Main St

#### SCHOOLS:

- SJH The Torch newsletter June 1993
- SJH The Torch Mar, Apr; May, Dec 1994 newsletters
- SJH The Torch Feb, Oct, Nov 1995 newsletters
- SJH The Torch Mar, June 1996 newsletters
- SJH The Torch Oct 1998 newsletter
- SJH The Torch May 2003 newsletter
- ca2016 Lowe United Methodist Church Directory
- 1954 RBW The Wilson Torch Feb 10, May 6, May 27 , Oct22, Dec 3, 22 newsletters [S 189B]
- 1955 RBW The Wilson Torch Jan 7, Mar 4, Apr 25, May 26, Dec 9 newsletters [S 189C]
- The Union News, St. Johns High School newspapers, Oct 1922-May 1926; miscellaneous dates
- The Wilsonian, RBW High School, April 17, 128, May 29, 1928 newsletter
- 1932 Baccalaureate Service Program

TAX BOOKS:

- Eagle Township Assessment Books for years: 1920, 1926-1928, 1931-1941, 1943-1950
- 1898 Ovid Tax Assessment Records
- 1911 Ovid Tax Assessment Records

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Peters, Director  
CCHS Archives

