



# THE CLINTON INDEPENDENT

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CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## BATH - 150 YRS.

### 1836 - 1986

*"Come Grow With Us"*

Bath Charter Township kicked off it's Sesquicentennial celebration with a press conference last month and a flurry of upcoming events for the year-long birthday party.

Mary Alice Snider, chairman of the Bath Sesquicentennial Committee said activities are firmed up through July with fall events to be announced later.

Coming up are:

- Feb. 15: Sesquicentennial Sweetheart Ball
- Mar. 29 Easter Egg Hunt
- Apr. 18-20 (Tentative)  
Melodrama "Charity Sweet Charity"
- May 24 10-K race; ZCBJ Dancers and "all school" reunion
- June 21-22 Fireman's Water Ball Contest; Ice cream social
- July 2-6 Weekend of activities  
Parade on July 5  
Community Church Service, July 6

Others on the Sesquicentennial Committee are: Pearl Cowles, Richard Brook, James Garner, Marvin Frayer, Jean Yanna, Elaine Barnard, Jenni Snider, Dean Sweet, James Spagnuolo, and Tricia Wilson.

Frayer is chairman of the July 5 parade and seeks ideas. Call him at 641-6728.

For more information on the event or to help on projects, call Snider at 641-6005 or 349-3760.

Snider said the history of Bath is really "150 years of change."

It all began with the surveying of land in 1826 in what was then called Ossowa Township. By 1936 settlers had migrated to Bath and later railroads were to create tremendous change as did the schools. (At one time there were five in the community).

Prior to the settlers a number of Indian villages dotted the Looking Glass and Red Cedar Rivers and Bath Township

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# GENEALOGY

## Meet the people

### Who Came To Clinton County . . .



#### CAMPAU TRADING POST

Miss Louise A Tuller of Detroit, a member of the ninth generation of the Campau family, one of whom, George Campau, established the first Indian trading post in Clinton county, was in St. Johns this week visiting former friends, and divulged the interesting fact that the land George Campau took up from the government more than 100 years ago, has been the property of the family ever since that early date, and is now in her possession. This is said to be the first land ever owned in Clinton County by a white man. History reveals that Campau began his trading in 1826 on the south bank of Maple river at the western edge of the site now occupied by Maple Rapids. Eight years later he secured 40 acres of land surrounding his trading post, and Miss Tuller treasures the original deed, dated March 24, 1824, and bearing the signature of Andrew Jackson, president of the United States. Another deed, made out to Waba-ca-cake, and Indian, Nov. 10, 1841, and signed by John Tyler, then president, concerns a second parcel of land which later was acquired by the Campau family and was subsequently traded by Miss Tuller's grandparents for a farm now the site of some of the principal buildings in the city of Grand Rapids. One of the most interesting relics owned by Miss Tuller is a picture of the Campau trading post, a 2-story log structure that played an important part in the early history of the county, and served as a commercial and social center during the early days of the Maple Rapids community. The picture is a photograph on glass, and represents a type of photography that antedated the old "tin-types." (From the Clinton County Republican News of September 26, 1935...Abstracted from the collection at Clinton Co. Archives.) jms



Bath - 150 years, continued

Chief Okemos, a Saginaw Chippewa, lived and traversed much of the area. The present township (Ossowa) consisted of what is now Bath and Victor Townships.

Today Bath Township is comprised of 22,222 acres of which 40 percent is lowland. The terrain is rolling and scattered with white and red Oak, hard Maple, Hickory, Pine and Cedar of many varieties. The soil varies from heavy clay, loam, muck to light sand. There are four major lakes in the township - Park Lake, Rose Lake, Potter Lake and Fox Knoll Lake.

The first land patents were applied for in September, 1936 by six people in Ionia at the U. S. Land Patent office. Ira Cushman received the honor of being the first. He had settled at what is now the southeast corner of Clark and Chandler Roads.

In the 150 years since then, many others were to follow and now more than 5,700 people reside in the township on some 2,000 parcels of land.

Through the years the township has been transformed from a wilderness of forest, clearings, swamps and lakes to an agricultural/recreational area with much of its' economic base outside of its' boundaries.

The Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory painted this picture of life in Bath in the early 1880's:

"A thriving village and station on the Saginaw Division Michigan Central Railroad in the township of Bath, Clinton County, 20 miles southeast of St. Johns, 8 northeast of Lansing, 19 southwest of Owosso, and 90 from Detroit. It has steam saw and grist mills, Baptist and Methodist Churches, and a good public school. The surrounding country is somewhat marshy, but produces excellent wheat. (There were 12,000 bushels of wheat shipped out of Bath in 1880.) Land is worth \$30 to \$75 per acre. Population is 320. Telegraph, Western Union Express American. Mail daily."

As an example of how Bath thrived then, there were 25 different business firms there.

About 1890 the beach area on the north shore of Park Lake began to develop into a resort which served people from much of Michigan. About 1913 cabins were added to the campground there and in 1920 construction began on a huge dance hall that was built over the water of Park Lake. It still stands today.

Bath made national headlines in 1927 when a disaster occurred at the school which affected most townsfolk. Then a disgruntled school board member dynamited the school.

In recent years the township has made headlines again but of another sort. It sponsors the annual Bath Tub Races which draw media attention.

In the near future construction of I-69 expressway across the township will effect most residents in one way or another. Officials project it will stimulate development of land where settlers once fished, hunted and strove to make a living for their families.

What began 150 years ago with a handful of settlers has developed into a charter township with a land value of \$45 million.

The future - "it holds a lot of promise" Sesquicentennial officials said.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**BATH SESQUICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES:**  
See page one.

**CCHS MONTHLY MEETING:** Feb. 20 at  
Feb. 20 Capital Savings and  
Loan, St. Johns, 7:30.

**GENEALOGY:** DeWitt Township Hall  
Feb. 3 on Feb. 3 at 7:30  
p.m. David J. Johnson of the State &  
Local Records of  
State Archives will  
speak.

**ARCHIVES** In DeWitt Township  
Hall, 4700 Brook Rd.  
Mon - Wed 8 a.m. -  
3 p.m. (Arlynn  
Gantz will open an  
extra night for  
mint history re-  
search. Call him at  
669-3298.

**PAINE GILLAM SCOTT MUSEUM:** Closed  
for the winter.

(The following is from Catherine  
Rumbaugh, co-director of Paine  
Gillam Scott Museum)

Thanks: To the St. Johns Jaycees  
who painted the PGS Museum trim  
last fall, (Mike Maillette, Gor-  
don Shipley, Henry Van DeVenter,  
Karen & Mike Pease, Vicki & Terry  
Black, and Chris Russell. To Deans  
Hardware for donating paint; and  
St. Johns High School for loan of  
equipment.

To all volunteers who helped make  
our 7th annual Victorian Christmas  
a success.

To St. Johns Reminder, Clinton Bank  
& Trust, Clinton County News, Bee's  
Chevrolet and Betty Jane Minsky for  
advertising/publicity. Herman Baese  
for cedar for roping; Dick DePond  
for our cedar tree; Phillips Cen-  
tennial Orchard for apples; Mary  
Ann Wittenberg for gingerbread  
cookies to sell; Alice Jumper for  
tatted snowflakes and Laurita All-  
ison for tatted bells and quilling  
items. Sharon Ruby for the cake,  
commemorating our 125th birthday.  
Jan Upton's dollhouse; Donald  
Wood's train; Eva Mesh for her  
husband's carvings; Calista Reed  
for dolls of the '20's; Judy Price  
for cards on the tree and

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Bruce & Gladys Irish, Sr. for carn-  
ival glass. Those who provided music  
included St. Johns High School Brass  
Quintet and String Quartet; Cayle  
Beagle and Dan Kusenda, violen duet;  
Bell Choir of Congregational Church.  
Dee Morris for demonstrating bobbin-  
lace making.

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NEWSLETTER

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