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THE CLINTON INDEPENDENT

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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DISTRICT SCHOOLS OF CLINTON COUNTY

Particularly Mentioned by Superintendent
Hammond in his Annual Report

District No. 2, Watertown Township (Grove, Sec. 36) This building is a type of the substantial country school house usually found in a region of fertile farms. It is located on the southeast corner of a cross road, its grounds comprising about eleven acres. The district fathers were wise enough to preserve a large portion of the maple grove in the midst of which it was built, and over 200 fine trees temper the sun's rays and beautify the landscape.

The interior view displays a room with seating capacity of over fifty, lighted from the sides, with blackboard opposite the entrance, good pictures on the walls, all necessary appendages including a good organ purchased by the school. And yet this commodious and otherwise comfortable building was constructed without any provision for ventilation in which regard we fear it is also typical of a large number.

District No. 5, Watertown Township (Starr, Section 28) About five miles northeast of Grand Ledge is a finely located, commodious brick building seating 16 pupils, with windows on sides and back shaded by green blinds, as also by good new shades on rollers, a necessary provision inasmuch as the only shade trees are twenty or thirty young maples. Had "Arbor Day" been sooner observed this otherwise fine school ground might have been exceptionally attractive.

The interior, with its hardwood wainscoting and terra cotta walls is cosy and cheerful. There are pictures on the walls and all the "necessary appendages", which since the law of 1893, are no longer regarded as luxuries, while a new bookcase contains the nucleus of a good district library and there is a good organ.

The house is furnished with good modern desks; in the arrangement of furniture with the guiding hand of the county commissioner has again been felt and a change effected by closing up the windows in rear and covering with blackboard, so that the pupils now face a darkened wall that furnishes sufficient blackboard space, the light coming from only the sides of the room. But again, we must refer to the imperfect means of ventilation, a foul air register being near the ceiling, so that the warm, pure air escapes and the cooler foul air remains. An iron sink with a good drain is a commendable feature, unfortunately seldom used.

District No. 7, Essex Township (Hammond, Section 33) This building, though somewhat smaller than the preceding is also of brick, and of the same style of architecture prevailing throughout the township, with a good sized yard surrounding it and 15 or 20 small maples, giving promise of future shade.

The two interior views show that the teacher's desk is opposite the entrance, thus giving blackboard space in front of the pupils and light from the sides. The "round oak" stove standing near entrance. Though this is the best possible arrangement for these buildings, it is still open to the objection that the chimney is back of the teacher, so that the stove pipe must traverse entire length of the room. The interior walls and ceilings are in excellent condition, and the well painted flag staff is supplied with a good rope which,

is not always found to be true.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 15, 1988 The regular meeting of the Clinton County Historical Society will meet at the Payne, Gillam, Scott Museum at 7:30pm. Program will consist of speaker John Logie, president of the Historical Society of Michigan. Also music provided by Ernie Block on his dulcimer. Everyone is invited to come early and tour the Museum decked out in its best Christmas finery.

JANUARY 2, 1989 The regular meeting of the Genealogists of Clinton County will meet at the Capitol Federal Savings Bank at 7:30pm. Janet Snyder will talk on Preparing for a Trip to Your Research Library.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

How do you do?

Some pay their dues before they are due.

Some pay them when they are due.

Some pay them when they are past due.

Some never do.

How do you do?

Schools Continued

The district also owns an Encyclopedia of History

The school is well supplied with apparatus, and in general give evidence of a commendable interest on the part of patrons. In this district is situated the large farm of Hon. F. W. Redfern who, as chairman of the Committee on Education in the Legislature of 1893 and 1895, was so instrumental in bringing about the passage of laws regarding necessary appendages, compulsory education and the higher qualifications of teachers. It is not much to say that he has accomplished more than any other legislator of recent times for the general advancement of education.

Please send any material for your newsletters to Catherine Reed, 581 W. State Rd., Lansing, Mich. 48906. Thanks again for your help!



Clinton County Historical Society

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Saint Johns, Michigan 48879

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CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

by Monica Perez

Whether your ancestors landed at Plymouth Rock or Ellis Island, chances are the traditions of another culture call to you-- especially during the holiday season. The best way to experience the Christmas of another country is to visit it. Your memories of eating iced plum pudding at a beach in Australia or of feasting, dancing, and games at an English country inn will last a lifetime.

The next best way to bring the homeland home for the holidays is to decorate with tradition in mind.

Check your bookstore and local library for descriptions of Christmas customs. Other sources of inspiration include import shops, antique stores and Christmas specialty shops. Experience the best of New World Christmas traditions--both past and present--at special city and community celebrations throughout America.

Be sure to share with your children how their great-grandparents might have celebrated the holidays. They will enjoy imagining what it was like to live in the "old country" and they will realize that Christmas has meaning beyond their own community.

In Ireland a big, thick candle is placed on the sill of the most conspicuous window of the house. The youngest child usually lights it, and it stands as a beacon of welcome to any travelers who, like Joseph and Mary, may be in need of shelter.

In Scotland, the first person to enter a house on New Year's Day brings either good or bad luck. All women are presumed to bring bad luck (this tradition is not for feminists,) as are flat footed and people or people who squint. The best "first foot" is a handsome dark-haired stranger who surely brings good luck.

In Germany, where Christmas trees and the melodic "O, Tannenbaum" originated, Christmas presents are supposed to be from the Christ Child himself, usually dressed in long, white robes with golden wings.

In Austria, people throw molten lead into the snow on New Year's Eve, the future can supposedly be foretold in the shapes the lead assumes.

In Italy, Christmas includes the Feast of St. Nicholas on Dec. 6th and culminates in Twelfth Night, the Feast of the Epiphany. Families set up presepio or manger, some are incredibly elaborate and have hundreds of figures. All the churches display them as well and vie with each other for the grandest.

France, also is noted for its beautiful creches filled with exquisite figurines that tell the Christmas story. French children put out their shoes to be filled with goodies by Father Christmas. In Alsace, there is goose, In Brittany, buckwheat pancakes and sour cream, in Paris, oysters are popular.

In the Scandinavian countries, there is the saying, "Christmas lasts a month." Here Christmas begins on St. Lucia's Day, when the youngest daughter, dressed as Lucia, the patron saint of the blind, opens her parents bedroom door at dawn wearing in her hair a wreath with burning candles. She brings them breakfast in bed, a warm assortment of special St. Lucia's buns and cakes.

In Sweden, the main family meal begins with a smorgasbord, followed by sun-dried cod in cream sauce. Then there is ham, and finally a rice pudding inside of which is hidden a whole almond. Whoever gets the almond will be married before the end to the year.

In Mexico, families travel to each other's homes. They are welcomed by prayers and then a party with a pinata for blindfolded children to break.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Your Archives is in great need of some heavy-duty- steel shelving. Just a few sections would fit the bill. Maybe someone would like to play Kriss Kringle?

Reminder- the Archives current hours are Monday and Tuesday from 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. We are still interested in expanding those limited hours to include more day or evening operating time. If you are interested in committing yourself to one day, morning, afternoon or evening a week, please call Ken Coin (669-9448) or just stop by at the Archives and see what its all about.

In just one all too short month, Clinton county will begin celebrating its sesquicentennial (150 years as an independent county). Were your ancestors here in 1839? If you know so or you think so, get out your genealogy tracing pencils. Our society will soon be announcing its 1989 CLINTON COUNTY PIONEER CERTIFICATE project. If you missed the boat for a Michigan Sesquicentennial Certificate, this will be an even better substitute. But get a jump on things and start your research now! And what better way to get started than by ordering the Archives' new publication: 1840 Federal Census, Clinton Co., Mi. A bulk mailing of information packets is due to go out in late December to all society members. If you know of someone else who might like to receive a packet please send their names & addresses to the Archives A.S.A.P.

1840 CENSUS AVAILABLE

AT LONG LAST, an 1840 census of Clinton County that is both readable and accurate!

If you have ever tried using the microfilmed federal census of Clinton county for 1840, or tried using the index to Michigan for that year, you know what a mess it is; omissions and more misspelled names than you can shake your family tree at (let alone just a stick!).

Well, the CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY- ARCHIVES is more than pleased to offer you a new publication in the form of a small (18 pages) booklet: a transcript of the 1840 federal census of Clinton county.

Long-time Society researchers, Janet Snyder and Ken Coin have spent many hours of HARD LABOR on this project and we now offer it to you for the mere pittance of \$5.00. All proceeds from this publication go back towards the operating costs of the archives so you had better buy one even if you don't need it. It has a very handsome cover (if we do say so ourselves), its completely alphabetized, and Janet & Ken will never speak to you again if you don't buy one.

YES, I give up! I have clipped the coupon and enclosed a check of \$ _____, for _____ copy(ies), made payable to: CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY-ARCHIVES and I know that I should also mail it to: P.O. Box 80

DeWitt, Mich. 48820

and I know that Janet & Ken will still speak to me and say "Thank you" when next we meet.

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