

Clinton Independent

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ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN

SPECIAL EDITION

HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOPES TO ACQUIRE HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING AS MUSEUM

The lovely old brick building at 106 Maple Street now serves the Mid-Michigan District Health Department as its Clinton County branch headquarters. This building was once the home of Dr. Scott, whose office was next door. This building has been a landmark since the 1870's when it was built.

The Health Department is moving to new facilities in the new county office building on Elm street. When the department moves, it is the hope of the Clinton County Historical Society to acquire this building as their new Museum.

It is the hope of the Society that the Board of Commissioners, who have already shown their interest in the history of the area by establishing the present Museum, will further the work of the Museum by giving this facility to the Society. The Historical Society has outgrown the present Museum and is bulging at the seams. Every bit of storage space is used, and there is really no room for any donation---even if it were to be a tea cup!

Another reason that the Historical Society is interested in this building is that we do not want to see the historical Courthouse area disturbed by a parking lot where once stood a century old house. The use of this building as a Museum would make a natural focus on the already beautiful churches, Courthouse, stately old homes and the Junior High School.

Community interest is encouraged. On the following pages is a questionnaire about the Museum and the Society in general. We welcome your response.

* A SPECIAL EDITION *

* This issue of the CLINTON *
* INDEPENDENT serves two purposes. *
* It will be the regular monthly *
* newsletter for the membership of *
* the Society, and it will also be *
* given away at the County Awareness Day held February 25 at the *
* St. Johns High School. *

HERE'S THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION JUST WHAT IS AN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Some people assume that because the word "Society" is used in our name, that we are an exclusive group. Nothing could be farther from the reality. The Clinton County Historical Society is a group of people who represent all ages, incomes, religions and political persuasions. We are a real cross section of this area. Our membership newsletters go as far as Georgia and California all places in between. Our common bond is a real interest in preserving the history of Clinton County. We have grown fond of one another and consider ourselves lucky that such fine people share our interests.

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WHAT'S AN HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

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Some of our members come to one meeting a year, others actively promote the Society's activities. Our membership is open to anyone who wants to join. Your participation is up to you. The more you join in, the more fun it is.

We do ask that our members help us out by manning the Museum. This means that about once every two years you and several other members will be asked to "Museum Sit" from 2-5 on Sunday afternoon when we are open to the public. One experiences meeting similarly interested individuals in a pleasant setting. This is an enjoyable way to spend a few hours on a Sunday afternoon.

What does one gain from being a member of the Historical Society? The \$2.00 membership helps promote our many activities such as the Museum, Home Tours, Student Essay contest, Genealogy research, a rapidly growing library of valuable source materials for the genealogists the antique collector and the local historian. We send a monthly newsletter to our members and give discounts on items which we offer for public sale. For \$2.00 a better bargain is hard to find.

Come join us and find that we're a fine congenial group with whom you'll be proud to associate.

**SOCIETY MEETS MARCH 9
AT FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING
WILL ALSO ELECT OFFICERS**

At the annual meeting of the Society on March 9 the election of officers will take place. Names placed in nomination will be Alta Reed, president; Hila Bross, vice-president; Peg Lennen, corresponding Secretary; Nina Waldron, recording Secretary; Sharon Worrall, treasurer; Ken Coin and Catherine Rumbaugh, Board of Directors.

OUR GENEALOGY BRANCH IS AT THE "ROOTS" OF IT ALL

Since man drew pictures of his hunts on his cave walls, his own personal history has been of great interest to him. Genealogists are modern day personal historians. They search for their own beginnings. This personal history brings to the genealogist his ancestors which also informs him of the area and the times in which the ancestor lived. To not consider genealogy a part of history is a mistake. This is the most personal history of man.

Our Genealogy Branch dedicated itself to making ancestor searches to beginners a "possible" project. They also help those who are "stuck" at some point in their search. Often a few clues or references will help. Extensive help is given by these experienced genealogists.

Another phase of the committee's work is the preservation of records. Of course they know that these records will be of help to future "roots" seekers. The group has indexed the three Clinton County Atlases from 1874, 1896, and 1915. They have liter-

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb. 27 Board Meeting at 425 Meadowview Dr., St. Johns 7:30. All welcome.
- Feb. 28 Community Taping Meeting at 7:30. 425 Meadowview Dr.
- March 6 Genealogy Branch meets at 7:30 in the History Room of the Bement Library
- March 7 Museum Committee meets at 7:30 in the Museum
- March 9 8:00 St. Johns Municipal Building Auditorium. Annual Meeting. Program about Philip Parmalee.

worked with magnifying glasses to identify and index each parcel of land in the county. Thousands of cards had to be then alphabetized, checked and typed. This index will soon be ready and will have copies in the State of Michigan Library and also in local area libraries.

At the present time the Genealogy Branch is searching out and identifying every cemetery plot in the county. This was last done in the 1930's and the present update will be of invaluable help to those searching for this type of information.

Each year the Branch also answers inquiries from all over the country. Searchers are usually quickly rewarded with a reply.

The Genealogy Branch meets the first Monday of each month in the History Room, downstairs at the Barent Library in St. Johns. All interested persons are invited to come look for their "roots".

IF SEEING YOUR WRITING IN PRINT
IS YOUR INTEREST-PUBLICATIONS
IS YOUR COMMITTEE CHOICE

We're a busy committee. We have been responsible for the Tour Book published by the Society, the reprinting of the 1880 History and putting out the newsletter. We also sponsor an annual essay contest. Hundreds of essays about the history of Clinton County are written by students from all schools in the county.

This year's essay contest's topic is "What's in a Name?" and concerns itself with how places, buildings, roads and towns got their names. Several hundred entries are expected.

Interested persons should call Betty Moore at 224-2025.

PIONEER AVIATOR, PHILIP PARMALEE
TO BE TOPIC OF MARCH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

On March 9 the annual meeting of the Clinton County Historical Society will be held in the Municipal Building Auditorium in St. Johns at 8:00p.m. This meeting is being held one week earlier than usual.

The program this month will be about Clinton pioneer aviator Philip Parmalee, the early 1900's pilot who first flew with Orville and Wilbur Wright. His work with the Army Aircorps helped develop aerial bombing. His distinguished career was cut short when he was killed in an airplane crash.

Shirley Barber, of our Society and the Secretary of the Clinton County Historical Commission, discovered Parmalee when she was doing research on another project. She became interested in the references to his life and began a study of his life and times. She felt that more people should know about this man and wrote several articles about him for local papers. Her efforts were read by Parmalee's sister and she contacted Shirley. She had collected Philip's trophies, letters and memorabilia. These will be brought to the meeting by Philip's sister. The life and times of Philip Parmalee will be discussed.

Election of officers will also take place. Esther Crosby is in charge of refreshments.

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE

It's that time of year again when the Historical Society dues are due. Membership dues may be mailed with the coupon on the back page or with your name and address to Box 174, St. Johns Michigan. Dues are \$2.00.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE RUNS AN EXTENSIVE PROGRAM AND SHOWS CLINTON COUNTY HISTORY TO HUNDREDS EACH YEAR

The most visible work of the Society is the Museum at 1009 So. Oakland Street in St. Johns next to the Ambulance Headquarters. This brick Victorian cottage is a joint endeavor by the the Clinton County Board of Commissioners and the Society. The purpose is to provide the Clinton area with a permanent repository of Clinton's past. The Board of Commissioners gave to the society the use of the building. The Society maintains the building and is responsible for it. This unique situation occurs because our Board of Commissioners is dedicated to Community service.

Over a thousand individuals and groups including Senior Citizens, Scouts, Y Groups and Extension groups have visited our Museum. In the spring during Michigan Week RV volunteers brought almost 500 students into the Museum from area schools.

Diverse displays from our Indian past, our agricultural heritage and our family orientation are shown in the cottage. Antiques are displayed in room settings. These displays include extensive collections which have been donated to the society as well as a number of items which have been loaned for display purposes.

An active group of Society members are responsible for the upkeep of the Museum. Their work is under the direction of Tom Hollen who is our Museum Director. In this unpaid position, Tom organizes the cataloguing of donations and organizes the displays. He also can be found painting woodwork and hanging wallpaper.

The Museum committee is made up of men and women who keep the museum together with a great deal of work. They meet each month at the Museum at 7:30 on the first Tuesday of each month.

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HISTORIC SITES COMMITTEE
SEARCHES OUT SPECIAL PLACES

Two hundred "I Was Here in 1876" signs dot the countryside of Clinton County. These were made available to owners of qualified property by the Historic Sites committee. This group also is responsible for the selection and the marking of sites designated as county historic sites. These are marked with the green Tri-County Markers used in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties. A map of these historic places is planned.

At the present time this committee is sponsoring a series of articles on historic homes and sites. These are being prepared by Jean Martin, free lance writer and Society member. These will appear in the Clinton County News.

Interested persons should call Catherine Kumbaugh at 224-7402.

COMMUNITY TAPING COMMITTEE
LISTENS TO HISTORY

The newest committee in the Society is the Community Taping Committee. This group works with those in the Community who have experienced the many events of the past years. They record the impressions of these senior members of the county.

Tapes are being gathered from a variety of persons on many different topics. These interviews are gotten to show the impact of life on individuals.

This committee needs persons to interview, catalog and eventually help establish a tape library for use by schools and interested members of the community.

MEMBERSHIP COUPON	
NAME	_____
ADDRESS	_____
TOWNSHIP	PHONE _____
INTERESTED IN	_____

QUESTIONNAIRE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

To determine what areas the Society needs improvement in and which projects you would like to see started, expanded, dropped, or that you would like to work on the Society has developed this questionnaire. Please fill out and return to the Clinton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879 so that we act in the coming year as you the Society would like us to.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOTE: If unable to answer in space provided please answer on back.

1. Would you like to be more involved in the activities and committees of the Society? _____

2. Which ones?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| MUSEUM _____ | HISTORICAL SITES _____ |
| GENEALOGY _____ | PROGRAM _____ |
| PUBLICATIONS _____ | OTHERS _____ |
| HOME TOUR _____ | EXPLAIN _____ |
| ORAL HISTORY _____ | BOARD OF DIRECTORS _____ |

3. Should the Society continue to pursue preservation of the Round Schoolhouse? _____

4. Should the Society pursue obtaining the Mid-Michigan Health Building as a museum? _____

Would you like to work on obtaining it? _____

5. Would you be willing to work on preservation of the building if it is obtainable? _____

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Painting _____ | OTHER _____ |
| Wallpapering _____ | Explain _____ |
| Carpentry _____ | _____ |

6. Would you like to work in the present museum or any new museum, in areas below:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| DISPLAY PREPARATION _____ | OTHER _____ |
|---------------------------|-------------|

GUIDE _____ EXPLAIN _____

CURATOR _____

7. Are there any projects the Society should pursue? _____
8. Are there any projects the Society should drop? _____
9. Are there particular programs you would like to see? _____
10. Is there a place you would like to see the Society meet?
Town, Building? _____ Where? _____
11. Have the meetings in the past been to your liking? _____
12. Have the locations been convenient? _____
12. What areas has the Society failed in? _____
14. What areas need improvement? _____
15. Do you have anything else the Board should know the above questions did not ask? _____

Thank you for your time in answering these questions. Through your answers the Board can work to satisfy your needs.

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR ADDRESS: _____

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MUSEUM WORKERS

The following is a list of the museum workers for the next few weeks. If your name is there, please note it on your calendar so you don't have a conflict. Make arrangements early in the week to pick up a key from Tom Hollen, 224 8173

March 5	Tom Hollen	April 16	Mr. & Mrs. Max Field
12	Johanna Balzer	23	Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Willyoung
19	Mildred Brown	30	Alta Reed
26	Mr. & Mrs. Giesecke	May 7	Mr. & Mrs. Russell Nlein
April 2	Bevera Stevenson	14	Ginger Crosby
9	Joyce Dyer	21	Shirley Karber
		28	Gayabline Workman

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ANTIQUE QUESTION BOX By Thomas Hollen

Beginning this month I will try to answer questions and provide information on items, places, or people. I will also provide information on coming events and will be asking readers for information.

To begin this month we are looking for information on any businesses that operated in Clinton County, particularly in the 1900's. One of interest is the St. Johns Silver Plate Co. This operated for a short time in the 1930-1960's or 1970's. Any information on this company will be appreciated. If you have any catalogs, advertisements, etc. on old Clinton County businesses that you don't want or that we can copy, please let us know.

If you are looking for Antiques Shows, there is one in Grand Rapids - March 2-4 at Breton Village Shopping Center.

If you have any questions or information you would like to ask other readers, write me at Clinton Cty. Hist. Soc., P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, IA