



Clinton County Historical Society

JANUARY 1981

HISTORY IS OUR BUSINESS

"One of the finest historically restored buildings I've seen...."

That was the comment of Tom Jones, director of the Historical Society of Michigan, when he spoke at our December meeting at the Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum.

Garbed in Christmas-past trims the museum provided a festive atmosphere.

Jones said the state group was founded by Lewis Cass in 1928. It's office is in a home owned by the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He said the group would like to take responsibility for the house and added many small groups have, or are, turning houses into museums.

"We who labor in the vineyards of local history are beleaguered," he said.

An exception, he added, is the Alger County Historical Society at Munising with over 850 members.

"They are evangelists. They go right out onto the streets and say 'are you a member?' and they collect dues right there on the sidewalk," he said.

(continued on next page)

By comparison, CCHS has about 200 members.

"Establish a goal right now - that next year you will have one-tenth of the population of St. Johns paying dues," he said.

(That would give us 600-plus members. If we applied the 1/10th formula county-wide it would be about 5,000 members. Quite a goal to shoot for.)

"We (state group) make no bones about the fact that everything we do is done to make money. We have to compete," he said.

Referring to CCHS projects, Jones urged us to "get out, be evangelistic, spread the word about what you have here. You've done all this (museum) since 1978. That is great. But you must remember you are in the business of history," he said.

COMING UP

- JAN. 21, 7:30 p.m. CCHS meeting at Capital Savings and Loan, St. Johns, with program by genealogy committee
- FEB. 18, 7:30 p.m. CCHS meeting at Capital Savings and Loan, St. Johns, with program on Zachariah Chandler

BUD QUIZ

HOW'S YOUR BUD IQ? Bud-watching can be an interesting winter pastime with leaf and flower buds swelling in anticipation of spring. Can you identify the buds on these pages? The answers are on page 8.

THANKS...to Laurita Allison who made 90 jumping-Santas from a 1900 pattern. They sold quickly at \$1.25....and to Pasqua Warstler who sketched the Museum and some of the displays that show how we lived years ago. Those were made into a "My Long Ago Color Book" and also sold fast for \$1 each. Both items made great stocking stuffers.

THANKS to Bob Walling who made frames for the storm windows for the front of the building..and to the local staff of the Clinton County News for the new rug they donated for the front room.

COMING UP AT THE PAINE - GILLAM - SCOTT MUSEUM.....

JANUARY: A special exhibit "Estate Gifts of Fred and Florence Dengler, former Ovid residents, which includes china and other housewares, starts in January.

TOWNSHIP ROOM: Dallas Township exhibit opens in Jan.

FEBRUARY: "Celebration of George Washington's 250th Birthday" includes programs on Wednesdays sponsored by the River Wabwaysin Chapter of DAR.

LATER events will include a "Trash 'n Treasure Sale in May during Magnolia Week. Members are asked to set out things to donate for that fund raiser.

HOURS at the Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum on Maple Street across from the courthouse in St. Johns are WEDNESDAYS, 2-8 p.m. and Sundays, 2-5 p.m. Special tours are also arranged. Call John & Kathryn Rumbaugh, co-directors.



Moving may be a chore but the genealogists had lots of help when they moved from their downtown St. Johns office to the south wing of the historic old Salt Box house on U.S. 27 four miles north of the city.

Hila Bross, owner, made a huge room, well windowed with southern exposure, available, and in one afternoon the group moved, lock, stock and filing cabinets.

The genealogists have an archives overflowing with research & other materials.

Members have compiled thousands of names and indexed old records, microfilms and papers. A compilation was made of all tombstones in Clinton in 1939 and that was borrowed and indexed as were early marriage records from 1834-67. All census data from 1840-1900 has been indexed and also all records about people who served in the War of 1812 who later settled or died in Clinton. (Clinton wasn't a county in 1812 but some soldiers settled here later and the group has about names in the index now.

Family Bibles have been indexed (some loaned and some received as gifts) as were the records of an early Maple Rapids dentist.

"Her records were very complete. (continued on page 5)



When patients died she stapled newspaper clippings of their obituary to their cards so we have quite a big index of names," Arlan Gantz, a genealogist, said.

Also indexed were old school records, telephone books, yearbooks, atlases, histories, scrapbooks and church records.

The genealogists meet the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the archives. Anyone interested is invited to attend. (Take U. S. 27 north to French Road, turn into the southbound lane and go back south just a few hundred feet to the driveway of the Salt Box house. Enter through the door facing the highway.)

Hours at the archives are: TUESDAYS, noon to 8 p.m.; THURSDAYS, 3 - 8 p.m.; and SATURDAYS, noon to 4 p.m.

Janet Snyder, president of the Genealogy Committee, said the group is still looking for materials to index, either as loaned items or gifts.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"I and my family, wish to say to all -
'A Happy New Year.'

If we are to increase our membership as Tom Jones has challenged us, then we need to work together, helping where we can, and working for membership."

...Ford Ceasar

NEWSLETTER

Members who have information they feel should be included in the CCHS newsletter should send it to Betty Jane Minsky, Rt. 3, St. Johns, 48879 by the 25th of the month for use in the next month's newsletter.



Hila Bross, chairperson of the 1980 Book Committee came to the December CCHS meeting bearing a gift \$4,500 generated from the sale of history books. She reported only nine books are left to sell. The money will be used to fund various CCHS projects.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOK ABOUT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS PAST.

Dec. 25, 1879...Merry Christmas Mr. Editor, to you and all! Such is the greeting which we received as we passed along the streets this morning. Good sleighing & a lively team made the bells jingle as we rode along amid the flying snowflakes.

1885...Christmas was a lively day in the whiskey trade, quite a few drunks and one fight.

1889...The old and young men alike are out today with their best girls, trying the snow with shining cutters, jingling bells and fast horses.

1891...Forty-one couples attended the Christmas party at the Steel (hotel) last Friday, and it was one of the most pleasant and successful gatherings of its kind ever held in St. Johns.

1892...For Christmas the Hicks Store in St. Johns suggests; handkerchiefs, mufflers, silk umbrellas, cloaks, dry goods and blankets.

1900...Hurrah for 1900! All sorts of resolutions are usually adopted Jan. 1 but if the people would make an effort to pay up little accounts that have dragged along for months or years, it would do more toward putting the world in good humor than anything else. And it would be a good way to begin the new century.

Happy New Year -

HISTORY ON THE TUBE...Egyptians and England PAGE 8
will be featured in two Public Broadcasting Service
(PBS) programs as follows:

- EGYPT: Quest For Eternity, Feb. 3 at 8 p.m. explores one of the longest-lasting civilizations, focusing on life from the time of the pharaohs to presentday Nile villages. PBS publicity noted Egypt has monuments built to last through eternity but now they are threatened by rising water, tourism, vandalism & other pressures of modern-day living.

- THE THAMES, April 7 at 8 p.m. will focus on the role the river played in England's history, including old time events and sites.

BUD ANSWERS: Page 1, Willow; Page 2, Alder; Page 4, Basswood and Page 5, White Ash.

by Betty Jane Minsky,

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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NEWSLETTER

St. Johns, MI.
Permit
No.104
Non-Profit Org.

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