



"The Clinton Independent" 1984

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



new officers

CAESAR ELECTED

At the May organizational meeting Ford Caesar was elected to succeed Betty Moore as president. A charter member of CCHS, Caesar served as president previously. A former teacher, Caesar is a well known author of historic books on the Mid-Michigan area.

Other officers for the upcoming year include Charles Coletta, vice-president; Randy Phelps, treasurer; Janet Tiedt, secretary; and Janet Snyder, corresponding secretary. Arlen Gantz was elected to the board of directors.

Moore surprised those serving on the board last year with certificates and pins citing their efforts and time spent on CCHS projects.

Wacousta

The number of graduates is shrinking but the Wacousta Alumni Association is alive & well. It held its 81st annual banquet in May with about 100 attending - yet the last graduation was in 1938. Stuart Openlander, president, said to keep the society strong anyone who attended the school has been invited to join in recent years. That has reinforced the dwindling membership.

The former Wacousta School was annexed to Grand Ledge in 1957 & Openlander said that affected the membership of the alumni group. Not a large school.

A MINDER — The cupola is all that remains of the old Bath schoolhouse, blown up 57 years ago

MEMORIES:

Photo Courtesy:
Lansing State Journal

Last month about 250 people gathered at Bath for a CCHS program which featured eight speakers who either survived the Bath School disaster 57 years ago or who were related to people who were killed in it.

We'll read about their recollections later after CCHS-member Arlene Lounds transcribes a tape she made of the program.

The tragedy, which took 45 lives, is still considered by many to have been the worst mass murder in American history.

Then Andrew Kehoe, described often as a crazed man upset with rising taxes, was treasurer of the Bath School Board. A farmer - said to be frugal - and a fix-it man by occupation, he had become upset with townfolk for increasing taxes to buy land for an athletic field and an electrical plant to serve the school.

Considered "a loner" on the board, he had a reputation for advocating thriftiness. That fall he offered to rid the school of some bees that had gotten into a partition in the structure. He was so successful that the next summer his offer to do some wiring work was accepted.

It is believed that he planted the dynamite in the building while doing that work. Various estimates put it at from 500 to 1,500 pounds and reports later stated 1,100 pounds of unexploded dynamite was found in the unwrecked part of the building later.

Much of what is recorded of the event comes from a book written by the late M. J. Ellsworth, a neighbor of Kehoe's and the town butcher. His book noted villagers cleaned up the mess and school reopened the next fall in the township hall and store buildings. Then U.S. Sen. James Couzens donated a large sum of money to rebuild a new school

membership of the alumni group. Not a large school, it only went to 10th grade, there were 300 10th grade graduates from 1895-1939.

They liked to gather annually to recollect with family and friends, he said. History records the

first school, of frame construction, was built in 1844. In 1870 a two-story building was built to hold all 10 grades. It was torn down in 1917 and the lumber used to build a barn nearby. The next building, of brick, burned in 1924. The present building which still stands was built in 1926.

which was named for him.

It noted rumors surfaced around Kehoe earlier when his stepmother died in a tragic explosion of the family cookstove. Neighbors suspected Kehoe was responsible. He was 14 then.

After the school explosion townfolks found his wife's body wired to a milk cart behind a shed on his farm, which he had also detonated. His horses, their front feet wired together, were also killed then.

Graduating seniors were spared because they were rehearsing in a nearby church. After the blast Kehoe drove up to the school in his truck and called several men over. Then the truck exploded killing several men and Kehoe.

For more information about the society call Openlander at (517) 224-7756.

American Scene



RISE — Steel scaffolding rises around the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. The framework is in preparation for a \$30 million renovation project.

Words Worth Repeating

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." — *Aldo Leopold*.

GENEALOGY

... Querries ...

Searching for information on a Frederick Leonard Nichols who was born 24 Feb. 1872 in St. Johns, MI. His wife was a Lucia K. Fry believed to have been married July of 1900 in St. Johns. Barbara Nichols, 721 N. Ninth St. St. Clair, MI 48079
Note: Fred Nichols father Ira D. Nichols was fatally injured at the St. Johns Co-Operative Co. 5th Mar. 1879. His clothing was caught in a shaft of the elevator equipment. He was the manager. pl col 2 The Clinton Independent Mar. 6, 1879 issue.
....J M Snyder

You are a good genealogist when you can take the time to help another, even when you are not even working on the same name. That is true devotion to family history.... Annon.

I'm looking for information on a William J. & Edna (McDowell) Baird & their descendants. Lived in DeWitt 1936. Is anyone Searching Baird or McDowell name...Robert H. McDowell Jr.
1488 Wieneke Rd. Saginaw, MI 48603

names in the news

MICHIGAN SURNAME INDEX, published by Michigan Genealogical Council is an excellent collection of names and abstracts of vital data submitted by over 800 contributors belonging to Michigan genealogical societies. An invaluable aid to those researching ancestors and their descendants.

Contents include: 52,000 one-line entries including surname, given name, vital records (if available) and spouse and/or parents. Also names and addresses of 820 contributors, and names and addresses of 57 Michigan genealogical societies.

750 pages...Pre-publication price \$25 but \$30 after Aug. 1, 1984
Make checks payable to: Michigan Genealogical Council
Send to: Mich. Gen. Council, c/o Ruth Kennedy, Box 57, Birmingham, Michigan 48012. (Above price includes postage and sales tax)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CCHS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

- JUNE 21 Capitol Savings & Loan
St. Johns, 7:30 p.m.
Program "The Grange"
By Dorothy Cressman
- JULY 19 Picnic Maple Rapids Park
6:30 p.m. - Bring Dish to
pass & table service
- AUG. 19 Annual "Babcock" Old Car
Tour at 11 a.m.
Details announced later

GENEALOGY DIVISION OF CCHS

- JUNE 4 Capitol Savings & Loan
St. Johns at 7:30 p.m.
Program undecided

PGS MUSEUM across from Courthouse
at St. Johns open:
Sundays, 1 - 5 p.m.
Wednesdays, 2 - 8 p.m.

GENEALOGY ARCHIVES in DeWitt
Township Hall - Open on
Mondays, Tuesdays and
Wednesdays.

elsewhere

PALATINES TO AMERICA

9th annual conference
June 22-23, Adrian College at
Adrian, Mich. (Evening lecture
included on June 21).
Highlights include: Lectures on
Researching in Germany, Germanic
Geography, Tracing ancestors in
Poland and the German Republic,
Palatine Families of (York,
How to trace 847 Germanic Fami-
lies here and abroad; How to lo-
cate German ancestors in Penn-
sylvania, Corresponding with
Germans, Germans from (ssia,

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FIELDMOUSE PIE

"New England cooks feared not to experiment and their confidence in their culinary prowess is sometimes a little startling to today's less resourceful spoon wielders. A Grafton, Vermont, cookbook gives directions for Fieldmouse Pie. Here's how you do it:

- 5 fat fieldmice+
- 1 cup macaroni
- 1/2 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 medium can tomatoes
- 1 cup cracker crumbs

Boil the macaroni 10 minutes. While it is cooking, fry fieldmice long enough to fry out excess fat. Grease casserole with some of the fat and put a layer of macaroni on it. Add onion and tomato, then salt and pepper it well. Add fieldmice and cover with the remaining macaroni. Sprinkle the top with cracker crumbs seasoned with salt, pepper and butter. Bake at 320 F. for 20 minutes or until mice are well done.

+A note in the directions adds that in cold or rainy weather when fieldmice are hard to find, the cook may substitute sausages.



"We hear so much about the Ford family; don't the Chevrolets ever go out?"

Palatine Families of York, How to trace 847 Germanic Families here and abroad; How to locate German ancestors in Pennsylvania, Corresponding with Germans, Germans from Russia, The Amish, Using the German Record Collection at Salt Lake City. Registration before June 6 is \$70; after June 6, \$80. That includes lectures, some meals and lodging. Lesser fees charged for portions of program. CONTACT: MI Chapter, PAL-AM, c/o George Evans, 868 Beechwood, N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49505 Phone: (616) 361-9292.

GENEALOGY OF THE GREAT LAKES SEMINAR Sept. 28-29 at Kalamazoo Center, Plaza Level, Kalamazoo, Mi. Topics include Draper Papers-on Old Northwest; Sources of immigrant genealogy in Mich.; Research in the Indians Hist.Soc; Mich.State Archive's land records; Research in Ohio; Archival Resources; Research in Illinois. CONTACT: Dorothy Gardner, 703 Regency Square Apts., Kalamazoo, Mi. 49008 for more information.



Clinton County Historical Society

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Saint Johns, Michigan 48879

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