

# "The Clinton Independent"



1985

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



**Wallace F. "Wally" Watt:**  
Member of the first Boy Scout  
troop formed in America.

## *In Memoriam* Scout W. F. 'Wally' Watt

WACOUSTA — The beacon lighted by the life of Wallace F. "Wally" Watt, America's oldest Boy Scout, continues to shine in the hearts of relatives and friends.

About 150 people who remember Watt attended a "celebration of life" commemorative service for him Sunday afternoon at the Wacousta Community United Methodist Church. Watt died June 26.

The air in the small church was stifling, but it was no discomfort to those celebrating Watt's life.

"On this day that would have been Wally's 90th birthday we celebrate his life," said the church's pastor, the Rev. Eugene A. Lewis.

Watt, born July 14, 1895, was a charter member of the first Boy Scout Troop formed in America — in Barre, Vt., on Oct. 24, 1909 — about four months before the organization was officially founded in New York City.

Friends acknowledged his kind treatment of others as one of Watt's outstanding qualities.

(Story and photo courtesy Lansing State Journal)

**AT OVID** - The bell in the unusual octagonal belfry of the First Congregational Church here rang June 30 for its dedication as a state historic site. It is also on the national register.

It dates to the 1870's and was moved by oxen in 1899 to its present site at High and Park Streets.

## News Spotlight

It was used as a church until 1972 & is now the home of Louis & Saralee Howard- Filler.



# 150 years

## Maple Rapids celebrates



The Petitt Hotel was the gathering place for visitors and residents at Maple Rapids in the late 1800's. Shown above, the building is no longer there.

MAPLE RAPIDS — What was once the only crossing over the Maple River in Central Michigan celebrated its 150th birthday Saturday with a parade that was heavy into patriotism and local history.

"I've seen a lot of parades around here, but nothing to match that one," said Rod Antes. "And I've lived here all my life."

The community of Maple Rapids has been celebrating its Heritage Days sesquicentennial since Thursday and won't quit until 8 p.m. today when the lamplighter turns off the lamp in the park to end the celebration. But Saturday was by far the biggest day.

Crowds estimated at 5,000 lined the parade route that began at Hyde Road, turned down Maple to Adelaide and then along Main Street.

"This has been a super weekend," said Bill Setterington, chairman of the historical committee. "We had 1,000 people on Thursday and we knew it was going to be good then."

Gale Antes, who was born in Maple Rapids 71 years ago, was around for the 100th birthday in 1935, when the population was just over 300.

"This one is a lot different," he said. "It's bigger."

Maple Rapids has grown in the last 50 years. Today the population rests comfortably on the 700 mark.

Members of Mark Daniels VFW Post 1735 and their auxiliary led the 1½-hour parade, carrying the national and state colors. They were followed by hundreds of other flags and marching units that included historical floats and antique cars and tractors, horses and Michigan's oldest living double-wedding couple.

Following the parade, a memorial service for Maple Rapids veterans was held at the community park. Members of Lansing's Vietnam Veterans chapter placed a wreath in memory of Rocky Snyder, the only Maple Rapids youth to be killed in Vietnam. He was 19 when he died on March 30, 1967.

"One of our members was a good friend of Rocky's, and he wanted us to pay our respects," said Richard Simmons, an Ingham County deputy sheriff and Vietnam veteran. "One of our guys came all the way from California."

That was Bob Puterbaugh, a cross-county trucker who was enticed off the road for the memorial service.

"I've got 43,000 pounds of peas that are bound for Maine, but they can wait a while. This is more important," he said.

Rocky Snyder's father rode on the Vietnam Veterans float and received as much admiration as the 1934 state championship basketball team. An American Legion post fired a salute while a bugler played taps. The National Guard flew five helicopters overhead while a Civil War re-enactment cannon boomed a salute.

Some 60 members of the Bannister-Elsie ZCBJ Czechoslovakian folk dancers performed following the parade, including Eddy Fornusek, 10, whose grandfather, Ed Sr., accompanies the troupe.

The park crowd was treated to a free shower depending on where they stood as four fire companies took each other on in a water ball contest.

"This is a great way to cool off," said one drenched youth.

Ithaca Fireman Gary Hill was pleased with his department's first-round win over Fowler. Ithaca has been in waterball competition for 15 years, and furnished the contest equipment.

"Longevity does not necessarily make you good," said Ithaca Fire Chief Dick Lumsden. "We never got very good at it."

Ithaca took home the second place trophy, behind Maple Rapids. St. Johns finished third.

Story courtesy of  
LANSING STATE JOURNAL

# GENEALOGY GAZETTE

The Clinton County Historical Society dedicated a micro-film reader as a memorial to Hila Bross on June 23, at an open house from 2-4 p.m. at the Archives located in the DeWitt Township Office Building.

The "welcome" remarks were made by CCHS president Charles Coletta and the dedication was given by past president Dr. Ford Caesar.

Many friends and guests attended the dedication including special guest Mildred Countryman, Hila's sister.

Hila was honored as a founder, a past president, and for her many years of dedicated service to the society. The dedication was hosted by the Genealogists of the Historical Society.



Story and photo courtesy  
St. Johns Reminder

### AT THE ARCHIVES (DeWitt Town Hall)

Clinton County deaths, 1881-85 are compiled and ready for public use. Cemetery records are now being typed.

We have an interesting scrapbook on the life of Will Rogers.

Thanks to Adele Jones for her program on the history of Maple Rapids last month and to Bertha Crane who brought pictures of the Van Scoys, settlers there, and other mementoes of the town.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GENEALOGY DIVISION: Meets Aug. 5 at Arlene Lounds' home at 1887 Yallop Rd. Potluck at 6:30 p.m.

ARCHIVES: (DeWitt Township Hall) Hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays - Wednesdays.

CCHS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: Aug. 15 at Capital Federal Savings in St. Johns at 7:30 p.m. David Miller will speak on the St. Johns cemetery.

MINT FESTIVAL: St. Johns, Aug 9-11 & CCHS will participate in the parade and with activities on the PGS Museum lawn.

PAINE-GILLAM-SCOTT MUSEUM: Open Wednesdays 2-8 p.m. & Sundays 1-5 p.m.

During Mint Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sat. and 12:30 to 5 p.m. on Sunday Alden Livingston will display a collection of antique mint equipment on PGS lawn and PGS will sell a booklet "Trival Tidbits - Freshly Minted."

PLANNING AHEAD: Oct. 16, 7 p.m. Smith Hall, St. Johns, Martha B. Wetherbee, resident basket-maker at Shaker Museum, Canterbury, N.H. will lecture &

demonstrate Shaker basketmaking. Sponsored by Clinton Co. Arts Council and CCHS/PGS. Order tickets now - \$3 with SASE, from PGS Museum, Box 174, St. Johns, Mi. 48879.. For information call 224-2894 or 224-7402.

## ---NOTICE---

RED ALERT - ABOUT 75 % OF OUR CCHS MEMBERSHIPS ARE DELINQUENT. WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW.

If your newsletter has a red X in the box to the right your dues are past due. Please help us continue our programs by mailing your check to CCHS, Box 174, St. Johns, Mi. 48879. Dues are \$4 for individuals; \$7 for couples; and \$2 for those under age-18.

If unpaid by Sept. 10 those persons will be taken off of our membership and newsletter lists.



## Clinton County Historical Society

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