



The Oakland Township Historical Society (OTHS) Newsletter
www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org Oakland County, Michigan

President's Thoughts

This issue is labeled Spring 2017. As I look out my window at the snow and rain that seems like wishful labeling. However, our glass is more than half-full and soon there will be blue sky and daffodils.



Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see that Colleen Barkham has been very busy and we have a great group of programs coming up for the Society. I hope you will be able to participate in all these events.

For many years several of our members have gathered verbal histories from longtime Township residents. These recordings are available in the Society Archive at Cranberry Lake Farm. Mary Tischler has transcribed some of them and we will be publishing them in the Society Newsletter from time to time. The first one starts on page 2 of this issue and is an edited version of a conversation Carolyn Dulin recorded with Grant Chamberlin and his daughter Terry Nowels in 2003.

In the fall we had a successful flea market. We still have many interesting and desirable items in storage in the CLF barn, so we are planning another event for the weekend of April 29th and 30th. See the next article for more information on this event.

A heads up --- Heritage Days' plant sale is one week earlier this year -- May 20 and 21.

Please note the March 1 meeting and program is at the Paint Creek Cider Mill.

Bill Kroger, OTHS President

FLEA MARKET

Flumerfelt Flea at Barn Sale 2017

We had a very successful barn sale/flea market last October 1st at the Flumerfelt barn at Cranberry Lake Farm. It was so successful, that we have decided to do it again this spring on April 29th and 30th! You can help by volunteering to work a few hours at the sale and by donating items. We need collectables, vintage, antiques and household items to sell. As you clean out that closet, cupboard or basement, please keep us in mind! Contact Colleen Barkham, 248-652-0712 if you have items to donate.



GRANT CHAMBERLIN and TERRY NOWELS HIS DAUGHTER—Interview Transcript

March 16, 2003, Interviewer, Carolyn Dulin

Grant Chamberlin:

My family came from England. I was born here. We were 5 brothers and sister - Dorothy Duncan, Wallace, Cass, Harold and me. My father was a farmer all his life. I was a farmer, but I left the farm for a while when I worked for Ford Motor Company on Fisher Road near Romeo, at the Proving Grounds after I graduated from high school. I was a guard there for many years. Our farm was 320 acres. We've sold off parts of it in recent years. We have 10 acres on the lake still- one of the Twin Lakes, and there's 10 acres here at the house on Rush Road.

June 26, 1923 was when I was born in the big brick house on Letts road. All of us went to Romeo High School. We drove ourselves. I graduated in '41. I wasn't drafted because I was working on the farm. Stuart Braid, myself, Louis Spezia, we worked on the farm. I had one brother working with me. Two brothers were in the service. I was the youngest. We raised cattle and grain. We had an apple orchard and a peach orchard, about 13 acres of apples and 7 of peaches. We had a couple of Jamaicans who helped pick the fruit. We sold most of the apples in Detroit down at Eastern Market. The cattle were feeder cattle, and we raised corn, wheat and oats. The winter wheat was for pastry flour. Oats, people bought for their horses.

We had a yellow buggy. A fellow in Goodison painted it and got it looking pretty nice. We had horses, but when I was old enough we didn't use them for the buggy. We just used them for working. In the early days we were using teams. I think we got our first tractor about 1939. Oh yes, we went to the Field Days in the '40s. That was a day off. I didn't participate in the contests, but my wife made a pumpkin pie that she won a first prize with. Norma did a lot of canning, a lot of peaches. We didn't have a big garden though. We grew our own potatoes. This was good soil for potatoes - sandy.

I went to Kline School at the corner of Rochester Road and Stoney Creek. In winter we did a lot of skating at noontime. There were 2 or 3 ponds right close to Kline School. We walked to school, a mile and a half. Harold and I went together. My friends were the Spezia boys, Czechowski and his sister, Eleanor.

My jobs at home were to feed the chickens and take care of the eggs. We didn't have a lot of chickens -just enough for the family.

Our first car was a 1923 Ford. I used to drive a 1929 Ford to high school. It had a canvas top and the dog used to sleep up there. We drove it out into the orchard to pick peaches.

In the wintertime we got around with a horse and sleigh. For years, at Christmas, my dad brought home the Christmas tree from the Upper Peninsula when they went deer hunting. They had their own private railroad car with a lot of Pontiac men. I hunted around here. I had to stay here and do chores. We didn't have electric lights on the tree. I think we got electricity in 1934.



We cut ice in the winter. We had an icehouse, and then it became an apple house after electricity came. It had wire on the floor so the mice couldn't get in. And it had a lot of insulation

(Continued on page 4)



Grant and Norma Chamberlin



OTHS Schedule of Events Spring 2017

March 1

Program: Documentary film- *On Van Hoosen Farms*

Presented by Michelle Dunham.

The story of 4 generations of family who ran the Van Hoosen Farm.

Time: 7:00 pm at Paint Creek Cider Mill



April 5

Program: The Sultana Tragedy

Presented by Bill Grandstaff.

The tragic story of the paddle boat Sultana which sank in 1865 with over 1000 Union soldiers headed home after the Civil War.

Time: 7:00 pm at Cranberry Lake Farm- Main House



April 29-30

Flumerfelt Flea Market:

Please *Donate, Volunteer* to work, and *Shop* at our barn sale!

See details on page 1. Contact Chairperson Colleen Barkham for details.



May

Field Trip to Flint: Applewood Estate

We are planning a trip to Applewood Estate which was the Flint home of C.S. Mott, one of the founders of the General Motors Corporation.

Date to be announced.



May 20-21

Greater Rochester Heritage Days*: Annual Plant Sale

Join us at Rochester Municipal Park for our annual perennial plant sale.

See details on page 6. Contact Chairperson Jeanne Phillips for details.

**Please note that this year's event is moved up to one week before Memorial Day weekend.*



June 7

Program: Our Island Jewel: Detroit's Belle Isle Park

Presented by **Brendan Roney**, Senior Digitization Technician, Detroit Historical Society

Picnic: Bring a dish to pass for our annual picnic at the Flumerfelt Barn.

Time: 6:30 pm



Society News and Information

OAKLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES ROOM

Located on the second floor of the Cranberry Lake Farm Main House, 384 W. Predmore Rd., the Archive Room is open every Wednesday from 1 to 4 pm. If another day works better for you, make an appointment with Sue Fox at 248-342-7464 or othsmember@comcast.net. We welcome you to come by for a chat and see what resources we have.



Our collection is growing with donated photos and items from far and wide. We have a large Barn Survey that was started in 2002. It features photos as well as property details of all the barns located in the township. Maybe you would like to find information on your township property. It can be very interesting to know who the pioneer was that settled your area over 150 years ago!

We continually gather and preserve what was left by our ancestors, to protect these documents and educate future generations on how important these pioneers were to the Township.

Please think of us if you or anyone you know has anything that relates to the Township history that you would like to share by donating or allowing us to make copies so you can keep your original pieces. Contact Sue Fox at 248-342-7464 or othsmember@comcast.net.

CHAMBERLIN -Interview Transcript *(Continued from page 2)*

on the floor, so it was a good cold storage house. It smelled so good. We got our ice from one of the Twin Lakes with a spud and saw. We cut about 2 ½' squares. We used a team and sleigh to get it back to the icehouse. We used sawdust as insulation.

We had kerosene for heating and cooking. Norma had a wringer washer.

Shopping. We went to Romeo, Rochester, and Pontiac's Sears. Grandma would go to Mt. Clemens in the horse and wagon. She remembers fires all the way of people clearing land and burning the wood.



The Schuette Oak across the road from our house has a lot of history. Grandma used to play in that tree. It used to be hollow and she had a dollhouse in there. It grew back in. We've found a lot of arrowheads around here.



When we went swimming it was usually at Cranberry Lake. Twin Lake was very deep and you couldn't just jump in. The sides were all mucky. Later they built a dock. Henry Axford built a big raft so his boys that worked for him could come down after work and swim. Eventually it fell apart, probably in the '60s.

We did square dancing at the township hall. We had an accordion player and a fiddler. I wasn't much for cards. My dad didn't think much of cards.

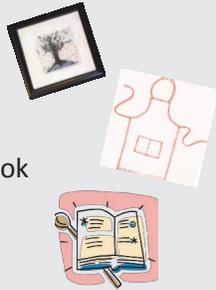
After high school I went to work on the farm. After doing chores all day we'd drive down to Eastern Market at 3 AM. We hired a boy to ride along to help keep me awake. One time I found myself driving down the streetcar tracks and both of us were asleep. Another time, Terry says, he was white as a ghost because he had seen a shooting at Eastern Market after a bunch of gamblers got into a fight. We were selling apples and peaches and potatoes. Our grain was sold to the elevator at Clifton Mills about 4 miles away.

More from Terry in our next newsletter.



Don't forget that the **OTHS store** has many great gift items for sale - there is something of interest for everyone. A few of our popular items:

Ed Noble prints
Lyn Seiffert large color prints
Lyn Seiffert note cards
It's the Berries Cranberry Recipe Book
Carolyn Dulin ceramic art
Mill sack dish towels and aprons
and many other items!



Any would make a great gift. Look for them on display at our programs or contact Sue Fox.

DONATIONS TO OTHS

Our Society has been fortunate to receive many wonderful donations of artifacts for our museum from members and friends. Furniture, linens, books, photos, artwork, vintage clothes, farm equipment, etc. are reviewed by our Collections Committee before accepting. Donations forms are given for your tax purposes. Our preference is items from our township, but we have received and benefited from other community offers. We can copy any photo or family records to place in our Archives and return your originals. Please contact Diana Borrusch (248-693-8660) to donate your treasures for the benefit of our residents.



OTHS BOARD

Wishing you a wonderful spring and looking forward to sharing our time together!

Your OTHS Board:

Bill Kroger,
President

Colleen Barkham,
Past President

Diana Borrusch,
Vice President

Sue Fox, Treasurer

Mary Tischler,
Recording Secretary

Tom Asmus, Director

Barbara Barber, Director

Bonnie Mackley, Director

Gail Palmer, Director

David Phillips, Director

Jeanne Phillips, Director

OTHS Membership News

We have had a delightful year enjoying activities, speakers and learning new things about the history of Oakland Township and surrounding communities. We have new activities planned for this year, wonderful archives to explore and much to do to continue protecting, collecting and preserving our history.

Will you join us? Come to our programs, be a docent at Cranberry Lake Farm, contribute historical items and information and assist us in other ways.

Board and membership meetings are held at Cranberry Lake Farm, 384 West Predmore Road. Check online at <http://oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org> for program details.

Monthly Membership Meetings are the first Wednesday at 7:00 pm at CLF

Monthly Board Meetings are the third Tuesday at 6:30 pm at CLF

Please complete this form and mail with payment for dues to:

OTHS, Oakland Township Historical Society
c/o Membership, 384 West Predmore Road, Oakland, MI 48363
Phone: 248-342-7464

Annual Dues: Individual-\$18.00, Family-\$25.00, Patron-\$50.00, Business- \$100.

Special two-year pricing: Individual- \$32 instead of \$36, and Family- \$45 instead of \$50.

Note: Dues cover the fiscal year from July 1 to June 30.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number (s): _____ Email: _____

SUPPORT OAKLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY WITH EASY REWARDS!

OTHS is registered for community rewards with both Kroger and Amazon. You can support OTHS with the donations given by these companies whenever you shop with them. It's very easy to sign up. Online, go to Kroger.com, click on 'Community' and in drop down, click 'community rewards'. Click 'create account', follow instructions (enter card number on back) and enter who you want your rewards to go to. Our number is '62713', or enter our name. This does not affect your fuel points. They do require that you renew this each April. A number of people have already signed up, and we are receiving rewards quarterly. For Amazon, go to <http://smile.amazon.com> and select a charitable organization to support. We are registered as Oakland Township Historical Society. It's that easy.



YOU SHOP - OTHS WINS!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL PLANT SALE AT GREATER ROCHESTER HERITAGE DAYS* SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 20 & MAY 21, 11- 5:00

The "Floatable Boatables" (Saturday), is returning along with great entertainment, crafts, animals, reenactors, history displays and demonstrators, food, cars, fire trucks, plant sales, Pioneer Playground and more! at the Rochester Municipal Park, a family event.

Our Society welcomes your plant donations and helps for our famous fund raising perennial plant sale. Call Jeanne Phillips (248-651-2940) to donate plants and/or to help.



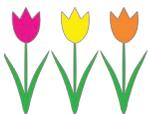
Jeanne Phillips assists shoppers at past Heritage Days' plant sale.

**Please note that this year's event is moved up to one week before Memorial Day weekend.*

Mission Statement: OTHS is dedicated to gathering, interpreting and preserving the history of Oakland Township. It's your memory, it's our history, it's worth preserving!



384 West Predmore Road
Oakland, Michigan 48363



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www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org