



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

President's Thoughts



The pandemic continues to significantly impact our ability to meet in person. We continue to have Board meetings monthly by computer. Some of our members have been able to secure vaccination, some have not yet gotten the shot. Our Board will decide in May if the situation has improved enough to permit us to have a pot-luck picnic meeting in June.

The Greater Rochester Heritage Days festival has been cancelled for this year. This has the effect of preventing us from conducting our annual perennial plant sale. This major fund raising activity for the Society will have to wait until next year.

Two of our Board members, Mary and Anthony, have done a great job putting Society information on the web. Check out the article in this newsletter about what they have done and then look at it on your computer. Here we are, a group devoted to the study of old times, old methods and the people who were there, and the internet seems to be the only way to communicate our information today.

Your Board of Directors wishes you continued good health and good fortune.

**Bill Kroger, OTHS
President**

Great Sale Continues

The Flumerfelt Flea is planned for September at Cranberry Lake Farm. Please consider donating items for the sale and asking friends/family if they have items to donate. We are asking for antiques, collectables, vintage, rustic farm and household items. We would be happy to pick up your donations. Please contact Colleen Barkham with your questions or donations: 248-652-0712 or thsbarkham@hotmail.com If Covid rules interfere with our planned event, we will cancel or postpone the sale.



Sale Dates:

September 17th, 2021, 5-8pm

(\$5 pre-sale donation)

September 18th, 10:00 to 5:00

September 19th Noon to 5:00

On the evening of Friday, September 17, 2021 Glen Morningstar and The Ruffwater Stringband will perform at the Flumerfelt Barn from 6:00 to 8:00PM.

A pre-sale for early shopping will be open from 5:00 to 8:00 PM during the performance with a \$5 donation to the OTHS for early shopping.

Ice Cream will be available for purchase. Music has been sponsored by the Oakland Township Historic District Commission. The music will be cancelled if raining or high winds since this is an outdoor performance. The concert is free and open to the public.

Doris Barkham

April, 2001

I am not a native of Oakland Township. I was born and raised in Pontiac. As the better part of my life has been spent in Oakland Township, I feel I belong here.

I came here as the bride of Robert Barkham, son of Florence and Walter Barkham, in December of 1947. We moved into a house on Locust Drive that Bob and Charles Nelson had built that summer. Mr. Nelson and Bob's Dad had developed that property, known as 'Barnel Acres'. Our stay there was brief as Bob's Mother died in January, 1948. We moved in with his Dad to help out. This was on Silver Bell on the 80 acre farm that had been in the family since 1859. Bob's Dad worked at Pontiac Motor but also farmed. They had sheep, a cow, chickens, a couple steer, and a mule named Buster. They also had a good size peach orchard and grew corn and hay for feed, along with a big vegetable garden and a strawberry patch.

I soon adapted to country living and learned to can and freeze, make butter, and render lard. This was in my off-hours from working in Salary Payroll office at Pontiac Motor. Bob had hired in with Michigan Bell in Pontiac that summer of 1947, so we were able to travel to work together. A good thing, as we only had one car.

Neighbors were few and far apart. My first acquaintances were the Harpham family that lived up the road. Their little girls left me a May Basket that first year. I also met Mildred Fischer when she stopped to buy strawberries. We became good friends.

Colleen and Becky were born while we lived with Bob's Dad. In 1950 he gave us three acres to build our present house, as by this time he had decided to re-marry. We started to build that spring. Back then, all you needed was a building permit that cost \$5.00 or \$10.00, depending on the cost of the house. No architect, blueprints, nor site plan were needed, but they did have inspectors. Bob had served in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII and signed up for the Reserves after. He was called back into the service for the Korean War. As our house was not to where I could move in, I moved back to Pontiac with my Mother. Luckily, he was discharged in June, 1951 and we moved into our very unfinished house.



Oakland Township was mostly a farming area with several large orchards. Mr. Gallagher (an attorney in Detroit) owned the apple orchard to the west of us. Mr. Harpham managed the orchard and the family lived in the tenant house across the street from the big house.' The tenant house and a big barn were torn down to make room for 'Goodison Place', but the big house is still there. I understand at one time they maintained a large dairy herd there also. The dairy barn had already been torn down. In the fall, they would bring Jamaicans in to pick the apples.

The big barn that was further to the west on the south side of the road, was where they would sort and store apples. This barn was dismantled and re-constructed by Floyd Warstler on his property on Adams road. The barn is still there, but his lovely home is gone.

Orion road was still a gravel road and the old grist mill was still standing. It was torn down, I believe, in the late 1950's and a completely new one started in the 1960's. Mr. Dale Miller owned the mill, along with the Rochester Gear Works across the street. Frank Voll originally owned that building as a planeing mill and box factory. After he sold to Mr. Miller he built another shop up the road. That building burned down in 1999.

The grocery store that now sits on Territorial road was moved there from Orion road near the Gear Works. Carroll Blair's garage was also on Orion road. It burned late in the year of 1950. Carroll's Mother, Wife, and two boys died in the fire.



Doris Barkham



(Continued on page 5)

The Story of How Our Home Came to Be

By Bill Kroger, March 26, 2021

In 1977 Jean and I stumbled across a home on a dirt road in Oakland Township. The children and we moved in and lived a busy and good life in the house. Today, Jean, our dog, and I still enjoy the home, which, without children, is much less busy and quieter. Now I have time to wonder how this house came to be. So my curiosity took me back to nearly 188 years ago.

In June of 1832 Richard H Benedict of Monroe County New York purchased a portion of Section 11 in Oakland Township. Interestingly, the town of Rochester in New York is located in Monroe County. Many of the original settlers of the Rochester MI area came from Monroe County. Section 11 is the area bisected by Letts Rd between Rochester Rd and Rush Rd. The 160-acre property purchased by Benedict was on both the north and south sides of Letts Rd.

In 1843 Benedict, a Baptist Missionary, passed the property to his sons Archibald and Joel. In 1846 the brothers and their wives sold the property to John S Flumerfelt. Around the time of this sale a four room Greek Revival house was built on the property about 150 feet north of Letts Rd. The home had two rooms at ground level and two rooms on the upper story.



'The Farm' on Letts Road in 2021



The Andersons' 'Twin Lakes Stock Farm', circa 1877

On March 26, 1863 William Anderson Jr married Olive L. Flumerfelt, daughter of John and Elpha Flumerfelt. Mr. Anderson was known as a prosperous farmer in Bruce Township and in 1868 built a residence at 195 W. St Clair Street (32 Mile Rd) in Romeo for \$5,000. Anderson owned a number of racing horses including a trotting horse, Jim Fiske, which brought \$4,500 when sold in 1875.

In May of 1870 Olive's father paid Anderson \$5,500 for the Romeo house and Anderson and his wife purchased the Letts Road farm and named it the Twin Lakes Stock Farm. Anderson, who was born in Oxford, Warren County, New Jersey on July 22, 1836 was the ninth in a family of seven sons and three daughters. His father died when he was twelve and as next to the youngest he remained on the farm helping to run it until he was twenty-six. He and his Mother spent the summer of 1862 looking at property in Illinois and Michigan.

Sometime in the early 1870s the Letts Rd home was significantly enlarged by a two-story Victorian addition built on the South and West sides of the existing Greek revival house. There is a stone basement under most of the addition and the original house. The dirt floor still exists in one of the basement rooms. There have been several small additions on the north side of the original home that were added in the twentieth century. In its current state the home has about 3,700 square feet of living space with five bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, a living room, large parlour, dining room, family room, kitchen and large pantry.

Anderson family members lived in the home thirty-seven years until 1917 when it was sold to Julia Pelzer. In the 1940s Konstanty Chmielewski bought the home and farm. In the 1960s the farm was divided among his eight children each receiving 12.5 acres. About 1970 the house and 2.5 acres was sold to the daughter of a Detroit Auto Dealer. In 1976 the home was purchased by Judy and Robert Duvall and in 1977 by this writer and his wife, Jean.

It is still our home filled with decades of our memories and history, the roof does not leak, the horses, ducks, chickens and rabbits are gone and our grandchildren still think of it as, "the farm."



In Memoriam

The past year has been difficult for our membership. We have lost many good friends and loyal members of OTHS.

It is with a great deal of sadness that we list the names of some of our members that have passed away in 2020-21. We remain grateful for their membership, participation, support and friendship. They will be missed!

- Dick Bourez - March
- William (Scottie) Fordyce – February
- Mary Grace - June
- Bob Mantel - June
- Warren McCabe - May
- Bill Palmer - June
- Bruce Parkinson - March
- Dottie Spitsbergen - August
- Paul Stenborg - November
- Josi Whitson - September

The **OTHS store** has many great gift items for sale - A few 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! Contact Sue Fox.



OTHS Membership

It's membership renewal time, and if you don't know your status, just contact Sue Fox by email at othsmember@comcast.net or call 248-693-9646 to find out. When sending in your membership dues, let us know if you have a change in address, phone or email address. We will be putting dues status information with all future mail, so you will be able to see your expiration date anytime. Thank you for being an Oakland Township Historical Society member.

OTHS BOARD



Bill Kroger, President

*Anthony Kowalchik,
Vice President*

*Sue Fox,
Treasurer and
Membership Chair*

*Mary Tischler,
Recording Secretary and
Program Chair*

Tom Asmus, Director

Barbara Barber, Director

Colleen Barkham, Director

Diana Borrusch, Director

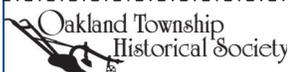
David Phillips, Director

Jeanne Phillips, Director

OTHS Membership

Help us continue to be a Society to be proud of. We welcome new members!

Share the form below with a friend or neighbor.



Membership Application Form

Membership Category:

Additional Donation:

Individual \$18 _____

\$ _____

Family \$25 _____

Total Enclosed

Patron \$50 _____

\$ _____

Business \$100 _____

New _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail: _____

Make checks payable and mail with this form to :
Treasurer, Oakland Township Historical Society
384 Predmore Road, Oakland, MI 48363 (do not send cash)
For more information contact Sue Fox at 248.693.9646 or
e-mail othsmember@comcast.net

We need your help! Consider donating your memories, time, money, or skills to help us preserve our heritage. Do you have a story to share? Do you want to submit a written memoir to our archives or have us tape an interview with you? Do you have a barn more than 50 years old? Have you found any old arrowheads or other ancient artifacts? Do you want to help with the plant sale at Heritage Days, Flumerfelt Flea, Down on the Farm, restoration of Cranberry Lake Farm, or other fun things? Please indicate below. We will contact you!

YES! _____ I have artifacts or historical photos, stories or other information

YES! _____ I would like to Volunteer with an event, committee, program, etc.

The OTHS is a 501©(3) charitable organization. All contributions and membership fees are tax deductible as provided by law.

Doris Barkham

(Continued from page 2)



The Goodison Garage was built by Charles Nelson and he operated it as a gas station. Roy Baker used a portion of it to do iron work. We have a pair of andirons he made and gave us for a wedding gift. He also sold lawnmowers.

The Paint Creek Animal Clinic was originally built as a barber shop by Mr. Jenkins. My son, Tom, bought it in 1975 and remodeled it and added on to what it is today.

Lloyd Blankenburg owned and operated the small cider mill. He had a small orchard and did spraying for other orchards. If you took your own jug, you could buy a gallon of cider for 75¢. He also helped the boy scouts on their fund raiser. He would press the apples, for free, that the boys would pick, also for free. They furnished the jugs. Lloyd ran the mill until he retired in 1979. That's when Tom bought it and operated it until 1988.

Our weekly shopping was done in Rochester. Groceries were at the A&P on second street. The Kroger was at NE corner of Main and Fourth. Mitzelfeld's was only one small store at that time. Nichols Furniture (later Pixley's) and Murray's were in the same block. Carpenter's men store and Lucille Shop for the ladies were also available.

Our kids attended the Baldwin School, the same one their Father attended a generation before. By this time we had consolidated with Rochester and an addition had been added. We had a large PTA group and sponsored square dances, card parties, and summer carnivals. May and Walter Reuther were very active in our group. The nice thing about it was you knew most everyone who attended.



Bob had been in 4-H when he was a kid, so it was only natural that he wanted the same for his kids. He helped organize the "Paint Creek Valley 4h-H Club". We had a lot of kids in the area with horses so we soon had a good size club. Bob and I were both project leaders, and the Club offered a good variety of projects.

Three of our kids had horses, and Colleen got us back into raising sheep. Tom still continues to raise sheep on his farm in Dryden. We held our meetings in the old Township Hall upstairs, and refreshments were served in the basement where there was a kitchen and tables set up.

This was where the Lake Orion Farm Bureau used to serve their famous Ham Dinners.

Our family attends the Methodist Church that was moved to Goodison in 1887 from the corner of Buell and Rochester roads by horse and wagons. According to church records, Bob's Great Grandfather Toms helped to move it and preached the first service as a lay preacher.

Goodison, proper, has not changed too much in the fifty years I've been here, but venture beyond that and you'll see the changes. Monstrous size houses, condominiums, and even a shopping center taking over the once rural landscape. I often wonder what Bob's ancestors would think of it now, as they came when it was still pretty much unsettled area. Joseph Barkham came from England to Canada first, then on to Michigan in 1836. He was a millwright and perhaps helped in the construction of the old mill. His Great Grandfather Toms left England in 1842 and settled here. He first built a log cabin at the corner of Gunn and Orion roads where Nancy and Bill Mickesch now live. Later he built the house on Collins road, now the Goodison Child Care. His wife, who was expecting their second child, did not come until 1849 due to ill health. There are many stories to tell of their hardships traveling to get here, but that would take another volume.

Of our five children only one resides in Oakland Township. That is Colleen, who lives in the house of her Grandparents, where she was born. She teaches school at Troy High School. Tom still has his Veterinary Clinic here, but resides in Dryden. His daughter, Carrie, will soon be joining him in his practice. Becky lives in Oxford, not too far away. She and her husband own Willow Creek Driving Range and miniature Golf on M-24. Bonnie lives in Brooklyn, near Jackson. Her husband is a contractor. Bob, after several changes in career choices, graduated with a Masters degree from MSU in Horticulture and Landscaping and is opening his own business in Haslett, Mich., where he lives.

The Barkham name has been around this area a long time, but as life travels on, I'm afraid the name will travel elsewhere.





<http://www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org/>



<https://www.facebook.com/OTHSMI/>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrQUns6lx5F0t23HjcEvPUw>

Oakland Township Historical Society on the Net

You can find OTHS at three separate places on the internet. Thanks to the efforts of Mary Tischler and Anthony Kowalchick we have a Facebook Page, a YouTube channel and our own homepage on the internet.

The oldest of these three separate locations on the internet is our homepage at www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org. At this site you can find a listing of our Board of Directors, contact information and an archive of all of our Newsletters. In addition, you can find photos of some of our past tours and activities. At the bottom of the homepage you will see the familiar "F" Facebook logo. If you click on the "F" it will take you to the Society's Facebook page.

You can also access our Facebook page by going to Facebook and entering othsmi in the searchbox at the upper left of the page. On the Facebook site you will find a large and growing store of information about the history of Oakland Township and surrounding communities. A feature entitled "Gone But Not Forgotten" contains information and photos of structures which have been lost (burned, torn down or otherwise removed).

The Facebook page also contains a link that will take you to our Society's YouTube Channel. You can also just go to YouTube and enter Oakland Township Historical Society in the searchbox. This channel contains the "Barn on the Move" movie that was produced by Mary Tischler and documents the 2004 move of the Flumerfelt barn to Cranberry Lake Farm. The Society hopes to put some of our member interviews and programs on this site in the future.

These sites are available to you at any time from your internet connected devices. We hope you make use of them and the Society welcomes your suggestions for other items to put on the internet. If you have photos or information you think would be appropriate for our sites please contact any of our Board members.



YOU
SHOP
OTHS
WINS!

Don't forget that your Kroger and Amazon purchases can help support OTHS. Sign up for Kroger 'Community Rewards' and Amazon Smile, choosing Oakland Township Historical Society as your charitable organization.

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



Share this newsletter
with a friend!
Recycle!

The Oakland Township Historical Society Newsletter
www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org