



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

President's Thoughts

We are beginning to get back to normal after two years of dealing with the pandemic. We are back to having in-person Board meetings and have had several in-person monthly meetings. We have lost two longtime member, Delores Burkhart in 2021 and this year Joanne Bourez. They were both members of our Board and Officers of OTHS. They will be missed.



As our organization moves forward we have a major issue to address. Our list of members numbers 85 but at our meetings we usually see less than twenty people. We need more members. How can we increase our membership? Do you have a friend or neighbor who would like to learn more about our Township - perhaps you could bring them to one of our meetings. You could share this newsletter with your acquaintances.

Do you think OTHS should provide some special benefit to new members? Why did you join the Society? What would make the organization more useful to its members? How can OTHS better serve the Township? The Board of Directors would be very interested in your answers to these questions. You can pass your thoughts on by email (othsmember@comcast.net or Jekro1@comcast.net) or in person to any member of the Board. Another thing you can do is put a comment on our Facebook page.

Bill Kroger, OTHS President

Jeanne Phillips Retires from OTHS Board of Directors

Jeanne Phillips has been a member of the Oakland Township Historical Society since its earliest days in 1974. She was a member of its Board of Directors in 1979 when it filed its incorporation papers with the State of Michigan. Jeanne intends to continue to be an active member of the Society, but at age 91 she has decided its time for someone else to serve on the Board.

Jeanne Alice Hoffman was born at home in September of 1931. Her mother passed away when she was two and she and her older sister went to live with a grandmother in Petersburg, Michigan. After her father remarried two years later the girls moved to Hazel Park, Michigan where they went to school and graduated in the late 1940's.



Arthur Phillips was a football standout at Hazel Park high school and a very good friend of Jeanne Hoffman. In 1951 they were married and began a long and exciting life together. They lived in Hazel Park, Ferndale and Detroit in their early years. Jeanne worked at various jobs including at a jewelry store and a five and dime. She went to work for S.S. Kresge Company at their main office building in midtown Detroit. Among several jobs she had in her eight years at Kresge, her favorite was in the mail room where she had a daily mail delivery route that enabled her to meet and greet many people every

(Continued on page 3)

STORIES FROM THE 30's *(Continued from Fall 2021 OTHS Newsletter; From a Nov. 20, 1999 interview with Marion Czechowski (MC), 809 Stoney Creek Rd. and Louis Spezia (LS), 1220 Stoney Creek Rd.)*

...
(LS) We used to catch sparrows - 200-300 a night. With some fellows from Detroit we said lets go over to Armada 'cause they've got lot of 'em. We kept drivin' and drivin'. They said we thought we were going to your neighbors. I said we are! Them sparrows, them drumsticks. Mmm.



(MC) The bones are brittle just like frog legs. When I used to go out and herd cattle when I was about 8 years old, nobody brought me a lunch. I had to grab it on my own. When the cows were peaceful and laid down, I'd go out and get so many frogs and skin 'em. I had about 3 places where I could make a fire with stones laid around and the grass cut out and I'd fry a bunch of frog legs. I brought 'em home one time. The clouds were stormy and the cows wouldn't behave. I had a frying pan full of frog legs but didn't have time to eat 'em. I left 'em on the kitchen table because I had to go out and milk the cows. The folks went to market on Saturday and came home and hadn't had anything to eat all day so they ate 'em. They was good. They asked my sister what they were - she didn't know. So I said "Frog legs, of course". Just to think of it for them was something awful. There were some of those sugar pears on Hopkins'. I'd fill up. That was my lunch.

(LS) Years ago we wouldn't come in the house and say we didn't have anything to do 'cause they'd put you to work. We made up our own games. I liked to fish, sometimes in the creek, sometimes back in the lake. That Mud Lake was a good lake. It was a run-off of Long Lake and there was always good fishing, we'd get pike out of there. I got a lot of 10 pounders out of there.



I've lived here all my life. My dad started building this house in 1930, to '42. He started digging the basement and at that time my brother got out of the service because he was needed for farm work. We come up here with horses. There weren't any tractors - came up with a team of horses and a slip scraper, a scoop with 2 handles, and that's how we dug the basement. The walls were made of cement - no mixer. He thought it was better mixed by hand. All poured by hand, a little at a time depending on how many workers would show up. Stones were put into it.

(MC) The basement of the township hall was all dug by hand, all donated.

(LS) In 1918-32, the township was dry as a bone. Folks would make wine and tried to make a brew. But they did make some moonshine. If we'd have a cough, Mom always soaked a great big grape with that moonshine and you had to eat one of those.

(MC) You were lucky. I used to get turpentine rubbed into my chest and we'd be covered up with blankets, and it would heat up so that it was painful. Then she'd come with some lard and rub it in. The folks couldn't speak English so they couldn't go to a doctor here. Anytime they had to go to a doctor, they had to go to Detroit and take the streetcar for a quarter down to 6 Mile and Woodward. They had European remedies: herb tea made with balsam blossoms, wild mint, raspberry blossoms. Dried that. It was a cure all. And nettles was for infection. We had a hired man that was in WWI and veterans hospital in Detroit had given him 6 months to live. A friend brought him out and he wanted to stay. He pulled up a pant leg and the flesh was rotting- smelled awful. He was wounded in France, then it froze and the doctors couldn't do anything with it. She got some hot nettles and boiling water, and got him to soak it for a half hour. She let the dog lick it. Three weeks later it scabbed over.



Thornetta and Louis Spezia

(LS) Thanksgiving. My folks had a lot of friends and relatives in Detroit. We were farmers and had to stay here, so they came out. We had 6 kids across one bed. We always had turkey. One time we had a 49 pound gobbler. That made a big tub of meat, but it all went with all the people that were there. And when they made pies they made 9-10-12.

(Continued on page 3)

STORIES FROM THE 30's *(Continued from page 2)*

Just like a thrashing crew ate.

That used to be fun. You'd get friends and neighbors for a thrashing crew and silo fill. Thrash beans. You guys raised a lot of beans.

(MC) My family said "if you're old enough to walk, you're old enough to work."

(LS) With all my brothers and sister I had it easy. I was the baby.

(MC) I was the only son. I told my dad (I was 28 years old when I got married) – I will not leave you until you have the house paid for, so you have a roof over your head. How could a man go to another country and not speak the language and try to make a living. They couldn't speak a word and when they died they could hardly speak 10 words. I started getting bigger and I worked on 2 farms - Mrs. Smith's farm, and Old Acres on Predmore where the township now has a park.

(LS) That was a good place to work. I helped fill silo and you'd sit down to eat, and, oh boy there was food!

(MC) I used to chop their oats for them 2½ bucks and my dinner. All day long 2½ bucks. I planted potatoes for Ed Thomas. Had to plant 30 bushels of potatoes, carry them on your shoulders and plant 2 acres in one day. We grew mostly garden stuff. Took it to Western Market at Michigan Ave. and 18th St. There were wholesalers. Eastern Market was cutthroat. Western Market, you had to be a producer or you couldn't be there. We raised a lot of fryers. We had incubators in the basement from about March first to July. Every 3 weeks a new batch from 500 to 600 chicks. We had it in the basement because if there was a heavy thunder and vibration, we could lose a whole set of 500-600 eggs at one time. Had to keep them very still, but eggs had to be turned every day. We had 600 layers plus fryers. Then they grew a lot of garden stuff. They'd go Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I used to hate that. You'd work till midnight and then have to get up at 3 o'clock to drive to market.

Look for the final installment of this interview in a future newsletter.



Marion Czechowski and Great Grandson Connor



Jeanne Phillips Retires ... *(Continued from page 1)*

day. Then and now Jeanne loves to meet and greet friends, old friends and new friends. Jeanne is an expert at making you glad you met her, every time you see her.



In 1959 Jeanne and Art were joined by son David who came very early and weighed in at 2 LB 12 OZ. In 1961 the family of three moved to Europe and lived in Italy and Turkey for a year and a half. The young family traveled when Arthur's job permitted and they saw much of western Europe. During this time the Cuban missile crisis caused activity in Arthur's job dealing with missile batteries.

Following the return to the USA Jeanne gave birth to Amy in 1965 and the family was living in a suburb of New Orleans where Art worked for NASA. Another job transfer brought them back to the Detroit area. They rented for awhile and bought property on Sheldon road in Oakland Township. They moved into their newly built home in 1968.

Jeanne was keeping busy with her two young children, new home and new friends and neighbors. However, she continued to work as opportunities presented themselves. One job was collecting outdated cheese at

(Continued on page 5)



Congratulations to Gayle Kowalchick, who has recently been elected to the OTHS Board of Directors.

PDF versions of the Oakland Township Historical Society's newsletters are available online at www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org under NEWS.

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

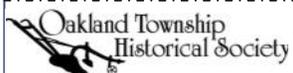
David Phillips, Director

Gayle Kowalchick, 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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail: _____

Membership Category:

Individual \$18 _____

Family \$25 _____

Patron \$50 _____

Business \$100 _____

Additional Donation:

\$ _____

Total Enclosed

\$ _____

New ___ Renewal ___

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.

PROGRAMS THIS SPRING

Come and join us at the Fork N' Pint in Lake Orion (51 N Broadway) on Wednesday, **April 6 at 6:00 pm** for drinks and dinner (cash bar, separate tabs) and program at 7:00 PM. The program will be a discussion of the impact of the Electric motor on the auto industry by Marc Trahan. We have a private room so be sure to come early and have dinner and a beverage!



On Saturday and Sunday, **May 28 – 29** we will have a display and plant sale at the Greater Rochester Heritage Days festival. The festival will be in the Rochester municipal park off Ludlow Street in Rochester. If you have plants to donate you can deliver them to the area behind the Community House beginning Friday afternoon after 1PM. If you need to have plants picked up or delivered at a different time call Bill Kroger at 248-515-3067. If you would like to help with the sale come to the park anytime Saturday or Sunday.

On Wednesday, **June 1** we will have our annual meeting and potluck at the Barn Cranberry Lake Farm. The meeting will start at 7:00 PM dinner at 6:30PM.



POTLUCK DINNER

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



Meadow Brook

OTHS and Rochester Avon Historical Society are working on a tour of Meadowbrook for sometime in **May**.

Jeanne Phillips Retires ... *(Continued from page 3)*

food markets. She was to dispose of the cheese however, she always seemed to have cheese in her trunk and with strategic trimming it tasted just fine. So, not all of it got disposed of as her employer wished.



In 1978 Jeanne, Joan Fogler and Gail Palmer were asked by Reuther Middle School Principal, Gary Doyle to bring order to the lunchroom at the school. They enjoyed volunteering as Lunchroom mothers and the students were impressed when Joan arrived on her motorcycle. Eventually Jeanne was hired as the secretary at the school and followed Principal Gary Doyle to Rochester High and then to Bloomfield Hills school administration. She retired after a long career as a Michigan school employee.



From the Spring of 1974 until January 2022 Jeanne has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Oakland Township Historical Society. She has been an active participant in all of the Society's activities such as the Goodison and Reuther exhibits at the Paint Creek Cider Mill, the antique appraisal days, the Barn Survey and Heritage Days. At one of the early Heritage Days festivals Jeanne took several extra plants from her yard to the Society's display at the festival. Someone bought the plants and ever since that event; each year Jeanne has overseen a perennial plant sale at the Heritage Days festival for the Society. This event has become the largest fundraiser for the Oakland Township Historical Society.

Jeanne has been a longtime participant in exercise activities at the OPC. She says she intends to continue to make use of this great facility and its helpful employees and volunteers. We will miss her at our Board meetings and are thankful for her efforts to make the Society a vital part of our Township.



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



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

Oakland Township Historical Society is on Facebook

You can follow us on Facebook to learn all the latest about our activities and programs. You will also find information about present and past events that shape our area. Go to facebook.com and search for Oakland Township Historical Society.

OTHs is getting more interactive with our Facebook page and we would love for you to check out our posts. Follow us to get updates on our latest activities and lectures. As well as learn about people, businesses and history in our Township. Just search Facebook for us under Oakland Township Historical Society.



This year OTHS will host a summer **Flumerfelt Flea Market**.

Stay tuned for the date - to be announced soon!

Contact Colleen Barkham to donate or with any questions:

248- 652-0712 or thsbarkham@hotmail.com

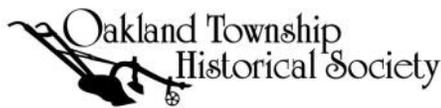
Antiques • Curios • Collectibles • Household

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.

YOU
SHOP
OTHs
WINS!



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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