



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

President's Thoughts

The Oakland Township Historical Society maintains a locked display case on the first floor of the Paint Creek Cider Mill. Exhibits in the case have been drawn from artifacts at the Society Museum at Cranberry Lake Farm. The exhibits can be seen during normal business hours, 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday thru Friday.



These small tools were used on farms in Oakland Township

The exhibit of small tools taken from the Barn at Cranberry Lake Farm was installed during February. It replaced a display of tin containers taken from the collection in the kitchen in the Society Museum. In the past, displays have included office items, lanterns and display cases of articles found in the Township by a metal detector.

This summer the display will change to a collection celebrating the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the US Constitution, granting American women the right to vote. The amendment was passed 100 years ago in August of 1920. The display will consist of items women wore during that time and are from the personal collection of one of our members.

If you have a collection you would like to share with the community please contact one of our board members to discuss the possibility of displaying your collection at the Cider Mill.



Volunteers Jean Kroger and Tom Asmus setting up the tool exhibit

Come and have a look --- bring your children and grandchildren to learn how people used to work around the farm and home.

Bill Kroger, OTHS President

Award Presented to Jeanne Phillips

At their February 19, 2020 meeting, the Oakland Township Historic District Commission presented an award to OTHS member Jeanne Phillips.

The award, entitled 'Excellence in Preservation', was presented by the HDC Chairperson, David Phillips.

The award reads as follows:

"In recognition of exemplary commitment to historic preservation in Oakland Township as a Charter member of the Oakland Township Historical Society in 1974. Served with Delta Kelly on the Historic District Commission while developing the township's local historic preservation Ordinance 37A. Contributions include proactive support for the Historic Preservation Millage, building restoration planning at the Cranberry Lake Farm Historic District, moving the Flumerfelt Barn, and chairing the OTHS perennial plant sale annual fundraiser."



Jeanne receives the award from HDC Chairman Dave Phillips.

STORIES FROM GLENWOOD DOBAT

From a November 3, 1999 interview with the Oakland Township Historical Society

Mrs. Dobat is 87 years old, and was born May 8, 1912. She and her husband, Carl, farmed on 124 acres at Dutton and Brewster.

I was born on a farm in northern Michigan and when I was 2 years old my mother died. She had just had a baby, 4 months old. I was shifted from one aunt to another for a little bit. Another couple wanted to adopt me but my father said no. He hoped one day to have his four kids back together. I had a sister who was 14 and a brother, 6, and the baby. One of my father's sisters raised the baby until he was 2 years old. Then my father married again. Talk about stepmothers, I couldn't have had a better one. She taught us manners, how to be clean, how to take care of things, and that's the way we grew up. Then we moved from up north to the Buell farm north of Detroit. The Buell brothers had a big farming outfit in Detroit. My father worked down there - I can't remember just how long.



Glenwood Dobat

From there we moved to Dexter and lived there 3 years, and that's where I finished grade school and started high school. Then from there we moved to where I am, the farm in Oakland Township, and he worked in the schools. And that's where I finished high school. I have my high school ring from 1929.

One summer we spent in Illinois and Carl's older sister was head of the school board, and she came down to take the census. And she said "How old is Beuford, the 16 year old - how old is he?" "That's a she" When she got to me, Glenwood, she said "How old is he?" "That's a she". She came back when I was 16 and she asked me if I would go to Lake Orion and work in that place where the voters came. That's when I started going with Carl. I went with him 2½ years and then we got married. We didn't tell anybody. A brother went with us to Ohio and I remember the preachers name like it was yesterday. When we got home I took off my wedding ring. We were married Nov. 13, 1930. On March 1st we went out to his house for supper. We had a lot of company and we told them we were married.

We kept it a secret because he was only 20 and I was 18 and my folks weren't too happy. I can still remember Dad Dobat sitting in the corner in that big chair, just sulking, and he said there's probably room for one more. And that's when I started to live in that big house. And my folks came around. They found out that things weren't as bad as what they thought. We lived there 3 years before our first baby was born. And that was the first grandchild for them.

And now our first baby is 65 years old. We had 5 children, 4 girls and a son. The oldest is in Rochester Hills and the boy has his pool company here.



We lived in the big house for 4 years. When we got enough money together we found an opportunity. Pontiac Motor in Pontiac was

(Continued on page 4)

2020 Upcoming Programs Schedule

Wednesday, April 1, 2020, 7:00 pm,



Brooks Brewing, Shelby Twp.:

Early Detroit Automotive Pioneers by Steve Johnson.

Field trip TBD

May, Date TBD

Wednesday, June 3, 2020, 6:30 pm,



Cranberry Lake Farm in the Flumerfelt Barn:

June elections, potluck and program by

Mark Manry, history professor at Rochester College.

Wednesday, September 2, 2020, 6:30 pm,

Cranberry Lake Farm in the Flumerfelt Barn:

September potluck and program

'The Good Roads Movement' by Jim Craft.

Field trip TBD

October, Date TBD

Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 7:00 pm

PCUMC,

'100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage'
by Stephanie Suszek.

Wednesday, December 2, 2020, 6:30 pm

PCUMC, Christmas potluck, program by

Marc Trahan, and Christmas carol sing-along.



The public is welcome to our programs. There is no charge for our programs. For program information or to submit program ideas and speaker suggestions, e-mail

Mary Tischler, Program Chairperson, marytischler@comcast.net.

For membership or other information contact Sue Fox, Membership Chairperson, (248) 693-9646.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS.

Visit our Facebook Page @othsmi or our website: www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org

OTHS Annual Plant Sale

The Oakland Township Historical Society is asking if you have extra perennial plants to donate towards our annual Plant Sale. This fundraiser is held during the Greater Rochester Heritage Days in the Rochester Municipal Park on the third weekend in May. The sale is Saturday May 16 and Sunday May 17 this year.



If you have potted plants to donate, they may be delivered to the OTHS tent in the park on Friday, May 15. Let us know if you need a donation form or assistance with digging, potting, delivery, etc. - help is available. Please identify the plants and color, if possible. Thank you. Contact Jeanne Phillips at 248-651-2940 or Bill Kroger 586-752-6154 for assistance or questions.



Stories from Glenwood Dobat *(Continued from page 2)*

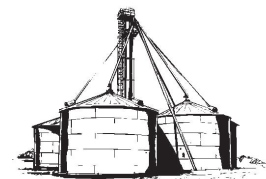
tearing down a whole bunch of houses on Columbia Street. We got a two story house for \$50. We got hold of a man who moved houses. They moved it here in 1934, the year our oldest baby was born. Times were hard in the 30's. We raised melons. We'd sell a bushel of melons for a dollar and a half. We worked some more together till we got enough money to make the downstairs livable for a family, and we moved to that house on Brewster. We lived there for 29 years. All our children graduated, 4 of 'em, from high school down on University and the youngest one graduated from the new Rochester High.

We had a big dairy herd, and when we got rid of the dairy herd in 1962, we went into beef cattle. When we got finished with the dairy cattle, I went to work at the post office. We used to have 350 head of beef cattle.



That big barn still stands out there. We use it for storage. To begin with we had 124 acres. Our neighbor, Mr. Cook, had 44 acres, and we had farmed it for as many years as we were out there. We wanted to buy it. He said no, don't worry about it. When he died he left us that 44 acres. He had no children. After his wife died, and he was 90 years old, he never had a Sunday dinner alone. When he couldn't come anymore, his meal went there. When he was in Avondale (Nursing Home), Carl visited him once or twice a week, and I visited him. We just never forgot him.

Besides beef, we had a regular farm. We raised hay, corn, oats, for sale. We had 4 big silos. We had an elevator that took the corn up out of the silo and into a truck and it went across to the feeding lot into the driveway where he could just drive through and unload into the troughs. While he was doing that I was at the other barn hauling the silage for another kind of cattle - we had another kind of beef cattle. We had the first White Charlettes in the township, or even in the county. People asked how did you ever do it - all the meals, the cooking, the canning and the working in the fields. We occasionally had some help, but it was hard to find good help. John grew up knowing how to work. Even the girls - they'd drive tractors and milk cows. We had a big dairy herd. When we had our sale we had 50 head of Holsteins and 50 head of Drymots.



My son remembers going to Ray Alt's house to get papers signed. (Lucy Alt was township clerk). The township hall wasn't used for offices. Everybody had offices in their homes. I remember going to the hall for dinners. 4 H met there.

This is an excerpt of the transcribed interview to be continued in a future issue. PDF versions of the Oakland Township Historical Society's newsletters are available online at www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org under NEWS.

OTHS BOARD



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Colleen Barkham, Director

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Jeanne Phillips, Director

New Donation to OTHS

Betty Rizzo recently donated a quilting frame to our Society. Betty says that her grandmother who was born in Indiana in 1882 used the frame beginning at the start of the twentieth century. She recalls it being used in her house as she grew up and she began using it with her church group in the 1950s.



The quilting frame is about eight feet long and thirty inches wide. As you can see from this photo it accommodates two quilters working on the quilt at the same time. Many quilts have been made on the frame and Betty gave us one that her grandmother made on the frame.

The donated quilt, a Dresden plate design, and frame are in excellent condition. The Society will display the quilting frame and quilt on special occasions in the future. You will be able to see them in the main house at Down on the Farm on October 3, 2020.

Welcome New Members

Phyllis C. Andrus, Maura Cook, Nancy B. Dakin, Dylan Keyes, Rita Ski, Kay Smith

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.

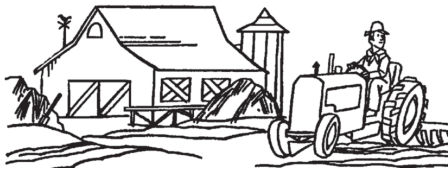
The OTHS is a 501©(3) charitable organization. All contributions and membership fees are tax deductible as provided by law.

A Story to Tell by Colleen Barkham

I've done many oral histories so I should be used to hearing some local history that catches me by surprise! I was finishing some details about Tractor Field Days with Bob and Marion Galler, when I heard Bob mention Mr. Wilson who was the 'top guy' at GM. I questioned who was this Mr. Wilson and what did he have to do with Oakland Township. Well, to my surprise Bob was talking about C. E. Wilson, who became the president of General Motors in 1941. And Bob continued, "He bought five farms in Oakland Township at the beginning of WW II so that his two sons could farm the properties". Evidently they continued farming into the 1950s since they attended the *Tractor Farm Days* in Oakland Township sponsored by the East Orion Farm Bureau.

All of this was before I knew much about the world, so I Googled C. E. Wilson and found out a little more.

This guy not only led GM through the big production effort of the war years but he went on to become Eisenhower's Secretary of Defense in 1953! Wilson was awarded the **Medal of Merit** in 1946 and the **Medal of Freedom** in 1957. You might want to Google and read the entire story!



Thanks again to Bob Galler for telling me a story of Oakland Township that connects us with a greater history of our area!

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.

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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www.oaklandtownshiphistoricalsociety.org