

C o l u m n s

News about the Clarkston Community Historical Society & activities, exhibitions, people & plans for CCHS members.

6495 Clarkston Road Clarkston, MI 48346 248.922.0270

MISSION STATEMENT

The Clarkston Community Historic Society has been created in order to bring together those people interested in the history of our community and area; and, as far as is possible, to collect and preserve such things that are of historic interest, and may collect, care for, and make these items available for scholars, students and the public to use in researching the history of our area.

BOARD MEMBERS

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BOARD MEETINGS
are held the 4th Tuesday of each month from 7 until 9 PM at the *Heritage Museum* in the Independence Township Library.

From The President's Desk

Jennifer Arkwright

Happy almost Spring CCHS members!!! 2005 was good to us and hopefully more good things are in store for 2006. Please visit the *Clarkston Heritage Museum*, if you haven't already, to browse the twelfth and newest exhibit, *Clarkston In Costume: A Century Of Fashion*. See **Toni Smith's** article for more detailed information about this beautiful display. Toni has done a wonderful job of clustering many different and unique fashion pieces from the last one hundred years.

Hopefully you all have noticed our new signage on Clarkston Rd. We are so excited to finally gain the visibility that a sign can provide! We were able to contribute our share of the cost of a new sign with a grant we received from *DaimlerChrysler* several months ago. A street sign has been on our wish list for many years and we are thankful that the township was ready to spruce up the existing signage.

We also were able to use the grant money to do a little construction inside the museum. We were quickly running out of storage space as our collection continues to grow. With some construction advice from the township, we were able to extend and heighten the wall that separates the museum exhibit space from the office space. With the higher wall, we are able to more securely store artifacts and the added length allows for more shelving and an enlarged staging area as Toni prepares for new exhibits. It has made a world of difference in the office and the museum looks so much more finished now.

We are very happy to welcome **Glenida Olafson** to our Board of Directors this year. Glenida is a long time resident of Clarkston having lived on Middle Lake Rd., Main St. and now on nearly 10 acres on Clarkston Rd. She and Bud, her builder husband of 29 years, have



raised their three children here in Clarkston and are now the grandparents of two, with one due any day! Glenida brings many assets to the board, including creative brainstorming, organizational skills and a sense of humor. Also, **Debbie DeVault** celebrated 20 years as a CCHS board member last month. Maybe you caught her picture and article in the Clarkston News? Debbie has spent the last several years chairing the Cider Tent at *Art in the Village* and is involved in some way with all the activities of CCHS. She is a valued member of the Board!

In January, CCHS hosted a Business Over Breakfast Chamber event at the museum. A wonderful turnout of about 40 Clarkston area business professionals enjoyed breakfast, learning about CCHS and the museum and participated in a spirited game of "Guess What This Was Used For" featuring

artifacts over 100 years old! CCHS has been a member of the Chamber for many years and hosting the BOB was an opportunity to share information, discuss connecting opportunities and meet new people.

The 31st Annual Art in the Village was a huge success this year thanks to volunteers (and shoppers) like you!!! A new record for revenues was set this year, totaling more than \$25,000. The second annual Antique Tent was a popular again with the crowds. Sales increased to \$3,000, a \$500 gain over last year. This money is specifically earmarked for those Clarkston artifacts we run across (on Ebay and such) that we choose to purchase. We have been accepting items for the Antique Sale all year and we already have many great donations for the fall sale. The Silent Auction revenues continue

From The Pres . . . continued on next page.



From The Pres . . . continued

to grow as well, with a \$300 increase over last year totaling \$3,035. Merchandise and Cider & Donut sales brought in more than \$7,000 combined and we were grateful for our two corporate sponsors this year, *Rudy's Quality Market* and *The Huttenlocher Insurance Group*.

We are taking a break from the Cemetery Walk this year (it will return, I promise). Instead, we are spending our time developing a Barn Tour which will take place in October. Take a look at **Jim Schultz'** article for details regarding this new CCHS endeavor. The tour will surely be an enjoyable adventure during the height of the fall color in October.

Remember that we are always collecting donations of antiques to use for the Antique Tent at Art in the Village and Clarkston artifacts to display in the Heritage Museum. If you would like to participate in more CCHS activities, please join us at our next Board Meeting Tuesday, February 28th.

This CCHS program idea needs your help

James Schultz

We hope all of our members and friends enjoyed the historic "Christmas in Clarkston" display held in the museum over the holidays. As some of you may know, the majority of this display consisted of the collection of just one Clarkston individual. She has been collecting Christmas items (as well as other things) for many years. This wonderful collection got us to thinking about all the other "collectors" in our membership.

Do you collect something of historical interest? We are thinking about hosting an evening program where individuals could bring a sample of their collection to be shared with others. Would you be willing to show part of your collection and explain some history about it at an informal and open meeting one night? It does not need to be large, just a few of your favorite items and a brief explanation. If we had several people who would do this, it could be a very informative and fun experience for us all.

The CCHS would be happy to coordinate this and supply the refreshments for the evening. If this is something you would be interested in, please contact our office at (248) 922-0270 and let us know what you have. We think this would be a great event and would give our membership the opportunity to get to know others in the historical society. Give us a call!

Coming Soon . . . A CCHS Historical BARN Tour

James Schultz



On Sunday, October 22, 2006, the CCHS will sponsor an area barn tour. The barn that was such an integral part of an early settler's life is now a piece of vanishing America. These working buildings were once essential for housing animals and machinery as well as food and produce. They were an architectural marvel of design and function. How fortunate are the property owners who still have a barn, silo, or original outbuilding on their land. And now you can see them too.

At present we have ten barns lined up that will be on the tour and open to the public. They range from English style carriage barns to large gambrel roof dairy barns used for hay storage as well as livestock. At each stop on the tour, the owners or volunteers will explain the age and known history of the barn, as well as any outstanding architectural features. Also, at certain barns there will be antique tractors and craftspeople demonstrating their skills.

We think this will be a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the community to really get a sense of these few remaining historical structures. The fall date should make this a beautiful time of year to be out in the country (although we certainly have included some stops in town, too). The barn tour will take the place of our cemetery walk this year, something new for a change. But like the cemetery walk, we will need many volunteers to make this fundraiser a success. Please consider helping us that day and give the office a call to sign up as a volunteer, or with any suggestions you might have.

Did you graduate from Clarkston High School?

We are still looking to complete our collection of Clarkston yearbooks. Does anyone have a yearbook they would part with (or even loan to us on a long term basis)? Call the Heritage Museum and we promise not to advertise the year you graduated!

New treasures added to the Heritage Museum collection

Toni Smith

There have been many great donations to the Museum since our last newsletter, and I thought our CCHS members would be interested in hearing about some of them. From **Charles Robinson** came two great candy jars that once stood on the shelves of Frank Walter and Son Dry Goods located at 5 S. Main (where the Clarkston News is now located). As the story goes, Mr. Robinson's mother was Phyllis King Robinson, the daughter of local banker George D. King. As a little girl, she loved to visit the general store and purchase penny candy. Many years later when the store was closing, the candy jars were offered to her as a token of her many sweet purchases. What a great story this is and we are so happy to have the jars in our museum collection.

Items often come to the museum in a very roundabout way and this is a classic example. In the past, antique dealer **Bob Silvis** has supported the museum with Clarkston items he found when attending auctions. Bob and his wife moved to Tennessee last year, but he still keeps in touch and he recently found two books written by local resident Robert Beattie. One was dated 1946 and the other is 1947. They were sent out as Christmas cards to customers of Beattie Motor Sales once located on S. Main. These wonderful little books are full of poems written by Mr. Beattie and are a wonderful "hometown" addition to our collection. Hey Mr. Beattie, we sure hope you're reading this!

From **George Mann** came a box full of wonderful photos, 1940s school items and a nice grouping of papers from the Ford proving grounds on Holcomb Road. This was

officially called Deer Lake Hills Farm and was part of the tractor division. There was over 500 acres of rolling land that stretched all the way back to the shores of Deer Lake.

According to a 1953 pamphlet printed for an employee family open house, "since opening in 1947, more than 2,000 farm equipment sales and service personnel have been trained here. These in turn train dealers, salesmen, and others in the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Cuba and Mexico. Men from many countries of the world such as India, Australia, Argentina, Germany and Greece visit this modern training site during the year." The pamphlet goes on to list the many activities available on family day, such as tractor rides, puppet and magic shows, farm implement demonstrations and even a spot to view the "live deer" held on the private game reserve around the pond. What a rich source of information this is and we are grateful to Mr. Mann for his generous donation.

Once again, a wonderful donation has come to the museum from lifetime resident **Charlotte Maybee**. This time Char brought many things from the Clarkston High School graduating class of 1944. This included the programs from the graduation exercises, as well as a program and photograph from the class play that year (we're not telling which of the "actors" is Charlotte!). She also gave us her class ring and many other historic items. The Maybee family was one of the very first settlers in the Clarkston area and we are proud and grateful to have her continued support.

Of course, there have been many other generous donations, as well as some special purchases by the Museum. Remember, we use the money made at our annual Antique Sale in September to fund our budget for buying Clarkston artifacts. Two of my favorites are both forms of early

advertising. The first is a plate from Alger's Hardware that reads "compliments of J.H. Alger, Clarkston, MI." The artwork depicts a young man and women in a canoe and dates from about the 1920s. It is a wonderful color picture and a perfect example of this type of "giveaway." Many of you will remember that Alger Hardware was located at 6 S. Main from 1904 until 1967. I think it is remarkable that I am able to purchase something like this so many, many years later and I'm so happy to have the budget to do so.



Alger Hardware plate circa 1920

Another terrific find is a Merrick Thread Company card. This card features a wonderful graphic and poem on one side and additional advertising on the flip side, as well as the printed information, "For Sale By Frank Walter, dealer in General Merchandise, Clarkston, Mich." I really love the little poem and illustration of the cat being pulled out of the well with Merrick's thread. You may remember that this is the same general store that used the candy jars mentioned previously in this article. *The postcard is reprinted on the next page.* This is a real treasure and just about made my month when I purchased it on eBay for \$30. It bears repeating... please support the Antique Sale so we can keep on making these wonderful purchases!

A century of fashion and I still have nothing to wear!

Toni Smith

The newest exhibit at the Heritage Museum is now open to visitors and gathering rave reviews. This is our twelfth exhibit and definitely one of the best so far. This time the title is “Clarkston in Costume: A Century of Fashion” and the subject is (of course) ladies fashions from the 1860s up until the 1960s. As you can imagine, that is quite a span and things have changed drastically over that time. We have so many wonderful things on display, there is a Victorian, white garden dress as well as a lipstick red 1920s dress with a wonderful pair of red velvet and rhinestone shoes to match. We have an incredible peach to pink velvet evening dress from the 1910s that has been hand-embroidered with metallic threads and pearls, as well as an ecru wedding dress from 1903.

Now, as every woman knows, it's the accessories that make the outfit, and boy have we got that covered! There are large Victorian hats with all types of feathers and ribbons, beaded purses, fur stoles, demure gloves and beautiful fans meant to keep a gentleman caller from getting too familiar. And since an outfit is never complete without the jewelry, we have cameos, rings and even a chatelaine. If you didn't know, a chatelaine was worn at the waist of the lady of the house and held all her necessary items. This one has a pencil, thin sheets of bone to use as a writing tablet, a thimble, mirror and a small bottle for smelling salts (in case the maid broke the china).

There is a mural photo of the 1903 Clarkston graduating class; the four ladies are each wearing their prettiest white dresses, while the one young gentleman graduate is in his best suit. Be sure to look for this

photo in the museum and read about the two young twin girls also in the picture. Another mural is a long, full length photo of Carrie Beardsley. She is a young woman posed in her finest dress and holding a flower in one hand. Of course, you couldn't have those wonderful Victorian hats without a local millinery shop. In Clarkston it was the Carran sister's millinery and there is a photo and some ribbon flower samples to give you an idea what the inside of this store was like.

This has been a really fun display to work on, and we couldn't have done it without the help of several local ladies who loaned us some of the finer examples. They are *Lucia Wilford*, *Grace Haag*, *Gini Schultz* and *Wendy Hicks*, and we thank them for their support. So please stop by and bring your friends. Ladies, we suggest you visit the museum and then go out to lunch or tea! This is a great exhibit for young and old, and last week I overheard a little girl tell her mom “mommy, you should wear THAT!”

For information on the exhibit or to donate an item to the museum, please call the CCHS office at (248) 922-0270. We would love to hear from you.



Merrick Thread Company card purchased on eBay!



Carrie Beardsley

Did you hear the one about . . . ?

Within the museum there are several collections that have interesting local stories or anecdotes. I thought it might be fun to condense two of them here for some light and interesting reading.

This story takes place at a farm once located on Deer Lake. For the whole summer, the farm owners stacked any weeds and brush they cleared onto one large pile. When the summer days were long and the corn was ripe, they decided to have a big corn roast. Everyone gathered one night and they lit the brush for their bonfire. Apparently, the fire was so tall and the smoke billowed so high that the owners of the movie theatre in Pontiac closed the theatre and told everyone that Clarkston must be burning and to head over there to watch. Soon, people were seen coming up Dixie highway to see the town burn and were surprised just to find a giant corn roast!

At that same farm, they decided to clear a large field of all the rocks within it. Rocks were hauled out by placing them on a stone boat (a large wooden sled pulled by horses). But there was one very large boulder in the middle of the field that defied all the pulling and pushing they could muster. So, a large bonfire was built right around that boulder and with the help of some kerosene an intense fire was started. Once the rock was as hot as it could get, it was doused with icy cold well water. This simple science caused the boulder to crack and then with the help of a sledgehammer, it was broken into smaller pieces and carted away. Now that's American ingenuity!

Did someone mention Spring?

Wishful thinking? Maybe. But along with Spring, comes Spring cleaning, a perfect opportunity to clear out the old and bring it to us! And when we say old we mean *ANTIQUÉ*. We are continuing to collect items for our next *Antique Tent* and already have acquired some wonderful treasures. Last year the *Antique Tent's* sales reached \$3,000, that's a lot of spring cleaning!

Hoping to surpass their success last year, **Ginny** and **James Schultz** have returned to man and woman the tent this fall. The *Antique Tent* again promises to have some great finds and interesting stories to tell as well! The *Schultz's* have a few entertaining anecdotes to relate about some of the more colorful patrons last year. One shopper, who after admiring a vintage frame, labeled *art deco*, asked 'if the handsome man in the photo was *really* Art Deco?'



The Top 10 Things you can do to help the Society

- 10) Work a shift at **ART IN THE VILLAGE**, September 16 or 17. (We can also use help at set-up on Friday from 2 pm – 7 pm or at tear down on Sunday from 5 – 7 pm)
- 9) Help organize and/or work a shift at the *Barn Tour* on Sunday, October 22.
- 8) We have a small number of BETA tapes at the office that we need to copy onto DVD's. They are important oral history tapes completed several years ago. Does anyone have the knowledge or equipment to do this?
- 7) We have acquired a large number of Clarkston Newspapers and they need to be sorted and encased in plastic sleeves, have you got some time that you could offer? It wouldn't be a difficult job and timing would be up to you.
- 6) Do you have an idea for a program or event that you would be willing to follow up on? We would love to have your support.
- 5) The CCHS hosts several groups of schoolchildren each spring. They come to visit the museum and we also offer a hands-on history program in the community room as well. These are often in the morning with a break for lunch and then again in the afternoon. Could you offer some time in the am or pm to help with the kids?
- 4) There is some work in the museum putting paper items from individual collections into sleeves, etc. Got a few hours to spare?
- 3) Write an article for the *Clarkston Columns*. Have you lived in the area for a long time? Know someone who has a colorful past? Or if you have a great idea for a story, let us know, we are always looking for ways to improve our newsletter.
- 2) Write another article for the *Clarkston Columns*!
- 1) None of these things sounds right for you but you are still willing to help? Call us at (248) 922-0270.

T H A N K S



A very striking display of women's dresses welcomes visitors to the current Heritage Museum exhibit entitled *Clarkston in Costume: A Century of Fashion*.

The search goes on . . . and on . . .

We are always searching for additional Clarkston related items to add to the museum collection. Do you have something you would consider letting us care for? We suspect there are still boxes of papers, photos, and all sorts of other treasures just waiting to be brought to the light. Or if you prefer to keep the item, at least let us know what you have so we can make a mental note. Sometimes the piece to a story or the answer to that question is just around the block in someone else's hands. Of course, should you decide to donate something, the value would be tax-deductible. Please give us a call at (248) 922-0270, we would appreciate hearing from you.



6495 CLARKSTON ROAD
CLARKSTON, MI 48346



Think Spring!

<http://www.clarkstonhistorical.org>