

Washtenaw Historical Society News

September - 1973

looking ahead - -

September 27, 1973 at the Platt Road Branch of Ann Arbor Federal Savings,
8:00 P. M. 2400 Huron Parkway (at Platt Road), Ann Arbor.
Nineteen-seventy-four, The 150th anniversary of the founding of
Ann Arbor.

Speaker: Douglas Cracy, Chairman, Ann Arbor Sesquicentennial
Commission.

Everybody come.

October 25, 1973 at the Main Office of Ann Arbor Federal Savings,
8:00 P. M. 401 East Liberty, Ann Arbor.
Antique Cars - speaker to be announced. Do you remember the
Ann Arbor Car, the Chelsea Car, or others?

November 15, 1973, place to be announced.
8:00 P. M.

Michigan Artists - Speaker Michael Church.

December ? Christman Party, time and place to be announced.
Any suggestions? let David Pollock, Program Chairman, know.
his telephone is 971-6847.

still looking ahead

The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has voted to establish a County Historical Commission. Its function will be to encourage, promote and coordinate historical projects and activities within the county. The museum committee of the Washtenaw Historical Society has been endeavoring to have such a commission established for the past several years. In March, this year, Linda Eberbach, Eileen Harrison, Hazel Proctor and Lydia Muncy appeared before the Education and Social Services Committee of the Board of Commissioners to make a formal request for a County Historical Commission. It proved to be a stimulating meeting as the Commissioners quizzed the members of the society on the purposes, the scope of such a historical commission and how the Washtenaw Historical Society would fit into such an organization. The Ann Arbor News published an article early in August in which the announcement was made that the Board of Commissioners had voted to establish such a commission. The part which the Washtenaw Historical Society played in obtaining a County Historical Commission was not mentioned by the Ann Arbor News.

looking still further ahead

The 99th annual meeting of the Historical Society of Michigan will be held at Niles, Michigan, October 19 and 20, 1973. For information, telephone 769-1828.

and still further ahead

A number of communities in Washtenaw County and adjoining counties have celebrated or are about to celebrate one hundred fifty years since they were settled. Interest in and attention to these celebrations may tend to conceal the two-hundredth anniversary of the United States of America, 1976.

A Bi-centennial Commission was established by the Federal Government in 1966. The Commission announced three themes for the celebration: Heritage '76, Festival USA and Horizons '76. The three theme areas relate to past, present and the future.

The National Commission has proved to have been very cumbersome and has had difficulty developing an imaginative program, according to Howard Lancour, Executive Director of the Michigan BiCentennial Commission. A bill has been past by the Congressional House of Representatives and is now before the Senate to reorganize the U. S. BiCentennial Commission. The number of Commissioners will be reduced from 50 to 25. It is hoped that this reorganization will afford more direction at the national level. A major obstacle to action by the National Commission is that the measure before the Congress does not provide adequate funding for the commemoration.

A Michigan BiCentennial Commission was organized a year ago. This commission has funded two guide books. One is a Bicentennial Guide to the writing of Local History. The other is a Guide to Historical Preservation.

The Michigan Commission has adopted two state-wide themes: Transportation and (2) Government. The latter theme is to consider the adequacy of the present form of government to the conditions of the 20th century which did not exist in 1776.

The Michigan Commission has also provided funds for the publication of an Atlas of Maps of the American Revolution. The Atlas is to be published by Clements Library from original manuscript maps which are in the possession of the library. There are 60 maps of which 15 are in color. Each map will be accompanied by descriptive material on the facing page.

mystery person - if you guessed the mystery person described in the last news-letter as Lela Duff - you were right. Several people have asked why she was called Miss Forest. Foresters refer to the covering on the forest floor, leaves, twigs, etc., as duff. Our dictionary gives the same meaning. It seemed to us that "Miss Forest" would be a clue rather than an additional mystery. Look for another "mystery person" next month. Have you suggestions? Why not write one, yourself, and send it to the secretary of the society?

not quite so far ahead - we hope

Do your interests run specifically to family history? It is fun, it is instructive.

You might like to identify and record inscriptions on grave markers or monuments of previously unresearched cemeteries in the county. Or, it might be interesting to classify and to file birth notices, marriage notices or obituaries of persons who have been residents of the county. Or, your field might be tracing the occupations and migrations of families who came to Washtenaw. Or, even, to find out who your ancestors were, where they came from, why they moved, why they settled where they did and what influenced their choices of occupations. There are several such ongoing projects. Mrs. Harold Sias (Margaret) has done research in cemeteries and elsewhere and has traced a number of Washtenaw families. She is also interested in country stores which are still in operation. Mrs. Margaret Lambert has been recording obituaries from early papers in the county. Mrs. Joseph McAllister (Norma) of Dexter has a project of cemetery searches in addition to other interests. She has introduced some young people of Dexter to the art of "rubbings" in order to learn cemetery inscriptions which otherwise are not legible. An interesting article on the subject of rubbings appeared in the Tri-State Trader of August 4. (Published weekly at Knightstown, Indiana). Harold Jones of Chelsea and Ralph Muncy of Ann Arbor are others who find such activities instructive and historically beneficial.

If you want to join a group interested in such activities, let us hear from you. Where would you like to meet? On what day and hour of the week? How often? What are your particular interests or what would you like to know more about?

an unheralded researcher

His daughters call him a "cool Ghoul", but many historians and genealogists think of him as a benevolent benefactor. Because of his wife's interest in her ancestors, Harold Jones started a search for his own forebears, hoping to unearth some scalawag with a juicy past - to paraphrase his words. Instead, he has deposited in the Chelsea Library a file of 3800 cards each bearing a cemetery record or, often, an obituary.

To date, he has copied the inscriptions from the cemeteries in four townships, Sylvan, Freedom, Sharon and Lima. The Oak Grove Cemetery in Chelsea has 2800 inscriptions. Here, Mr. Jones worked with one other person. A book has been published of this undertaking. It is indeed a useful publication. There is a map in the front. Names are arranged both alphabetically and by location in the cemetery. The card index in the Chelsea Library has been "xeroxed" and placed in the State Library.

more about an unheralded researcher

The file in the Chelsea Library is used several times a month, not always for historical research. Sometime ago, a Chelsea greenhouse operator received an order to "put flowers on aunt Mary's grave." There was no clue as to who aunt Mary might be. By a careful search of Mr. Jones' file, the florist was able to learn the identity of aunt Mary and to place the flowers on the correct grave.

Over the years, Mr. Jones has clipped the obituaries from both the Chelsea and Ann Arbor Newspapers. Lately, he has been doing the same thing with obituaries from the Jackson paper. Obituaries are generally a good source of genealogical information since they often give the names of parents, brothers sisters and children of the deceased. Mr. Jones has found that the Jackson paper seldom names the parents of a wife who dies, thereby giving no clues to her maiden name or family connections.

It had long been Mr. Jones wish to copy the inscriptions in Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor. However, he found that the cemetery had such excellent records that this was not necessary.

Harold Jones is a native of Chelsea and the son of a Congregational minister. A graduate of Charlotte High School, he attended Olivet College for a time and finished his law training at the University of Michigan. He practised law in Detroit for a while. At the request of an executive of Central Fiber Products Company, he returned to Chelsea where he became an executive of the firm and remained there until a recent retirement. He lives in an historic house on the shore of Cavanaugh Lake pursuing his hobbies of bridge and historical research. Few communities of any size have such records of their citizens as that which Mr. Jones has provided Chelsea and the surrounding area. He has provided support to maintain the project at the Chelsea Library in his will so that it may be maintained after he is no longer able to continue the project. What a wonderful gift to a community!

looking back

Our society was one hundred years old on August 16. An evening pot-luck picnic was held at Hudson Mills Metropolitan Park near the Huron River. Entertainment was by a group of Sweet Adeline "barbershop" singers, the Tune Tenders. State Senator Gilbert Bursley wished the society well and spoke of a number of historic events which had occurred on the 16th of August. In what direction will society move in the next one hundred years? Will we now be able to harness industrial knowhow and capability to provide abundant and wholesome living for each member of society?

the next few lines belong to you for your notes, the future
to all of us