



IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • FOUNDED 1857

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*The Washtenaw County
Historical Society is a
501(c)(3) organization.*

Information

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Museum On Main Street
500 N. Main Street at Beakes Street
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Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

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Web Site:

www.washtenawhistory.org

Annual dues: January-December
individual, \$15; couple/family \$25;
student or senior (60+) \$10; senior
couple \$19; business/association
\$50; patron \$100.

RICHARD L. GALANT, PhD

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Washtenaw County has long been associated with attracting a somewhat transient population due to the scholarly lifestyle of the University of Michigan. However those who have lived here, whether for a short period of time or more permanently, have brought this area many riches to its culture and history. The current exhibit, *Coming to Washtenaw County: 1820 to 2009*, tells the story of immigration and how the ethnic groups have changed over the years. I hope you have the opportunity to come to visit this exhibit at the Museum on Main Street before it is retired on July 1.

Like the current exhibit, happenings at the Washtenaw Historical Society are

recording new changes. The board has been meeting to re-affirm its mission and define a new strategic plan. This activity, along with a change in leadership, promises to bring new and better accomplishments for the Society and its members.

For me, this is the last letter as board president. I wish to thank each board member that I have served with and the many different residents I have met during my tenure on the board. You have enriched my life both historically and personally.

With best wishes to you all,

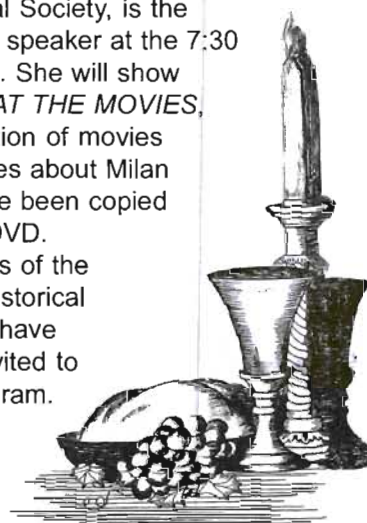
Richard L. Galant
WCHS Board President

WCHS Annual Meeting to be Held in Milan

Wednesday, May 20, 6 to 9 pm

The Washtenaw County Historical Society will hold its 2009 annual meeting and pot luck supper at the Milan Senior and Community Activity Center, 45 Neckel Court, Milan, Michigan. The meeting begins at 6 pm, in the Great Room of the center. Dining is at 6:30 PM. Please bring a dish to pass. Dinnerware and beverages will be supplied. The program, which will be followed by WCHS's business meeting, is scheduled for 7:30 pm. The Great Room has large windows facing the Saline River. Photos can be seen at http://www.ci.milan.mi.us/community_center.shtml

Sara Ford, president of Milan's Historical Society, is the featured speaker at the 7:30 program. She will show *MILAN AT THE MOVIES*, a collection of movies and slides about Milan that have been copied onto a DVD. Members of the Milan Historical Society have been invited to the program.



DON FABER

Michigan and Ohio: Birth of a Rivalry

Don Faber brought the colorful history of Michigan to life as he entertained and enlightened the more than 75 people attending the April 19 meeting of the Washtenaw County Historical Society, held at Glacier Hills. Faber, former editor of the Ann Arbor News, took attendees back to the late 18th century and early 19th century, before Michigan had won statehood, to a controversy over a narrow strip of land that would become known as the "Toledo Strip."



On the "front lines" of the Toledo War, Michigan's "boy governor" Stevens T. Mason, left, and Ohio Gov. Robert Lucas

The 1787 Northwest Ordinance had placed the strip, which was five miles wide at the Indiana border and eight miles wide at Lake Erie, in the area that would become Michigan. The 1818 Fulton Survey agreed. However the Harris Survey, previously done in 1817, agreed with the Ohio Constitution, which had placed the mouth of the Maumee River in Ohio. Since this was within the area in question, the seeds of the Toledo War were planted.

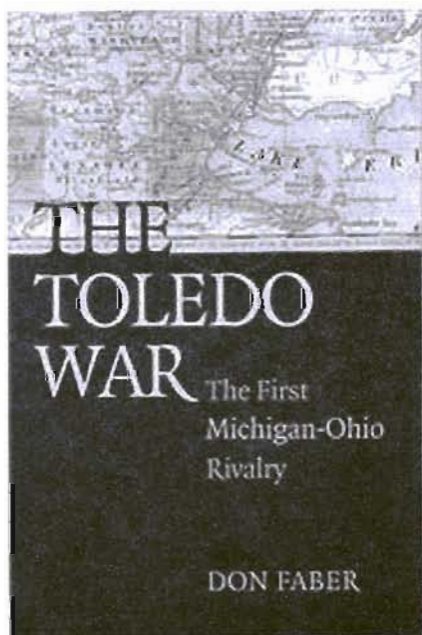
"Thirty years before the War between the states, as the Civil War was referred to in the South, there occurred another war between states,"

says Faber in the preface to his highly acclaimed book *The Toledo War*. "Not a war in the military sense, this conflict between two states had no fatalities, grand battle plans, or five-star generals plotting their places in history. But make no mistake, Michigan and Ohio, eyeball to eyeball, were at serious swords' points in 1835. Statehood and a disputed boundary were the two intertwined issues."

Faber, who served on the staff of the Michigan Constitutional Convention, expertly wove together the story of the Toledo War with accounts of political rivalry between presidents, governors, senators and even a future Civil War general. Well known leaders such as James Monroe, James K. Polk, Andrew Jackson, James Buchanan, John Quincy Adams and Robert E. Lee all had

key roles in the controversy. He illustrated how ownership of the narrow strip of land became intertwined with Michigan's bid for statehood and is an essential part of the state's history. He also provided attendees with stories about the "battles," personalities and chance events that are part of the controversy.

Faber ended his talk by paying tribute to the Northwest Ordinance, which had played such an important role in the Toledo War. The language, he said, still brings an emotional "lump in my throat." In the preface to his book, he called it "one of the most important documents in American history. It called for the orderly development of land and established government on the frontier while providing for the creation of future states. The language of the



Don Faber's book is available at the Museum on Main Street Gift Shop



Don Faber, a former Ann Arbor News editor, served on the staff of the Michigan Constitutional Convention. He won a Ford Foundation Fellowship to work in the Michigan Senate and was a speechwriter for Michigan Governor George Romney. Now retired, he lives in Ann Arbor with his wife Jeannette, and indulges in his love of Michigan history.

Northwest Ordinance still resonates today. It proclaims 'religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.' The need for education to illuminate the darkness is as compelling now as it was in frontier days. It is a timeless message that is still the best hope for humanity in a changing world."

SUSAN NENADIC

We Have Winners!

When you visit the Museum on Main Street to see the current exhibit, *Coming to Washtenaw County: 1820-2009*, you can test your knowledge about Washtenaw County by participating in a unique contest. In March, Vera Sadrann and Cornelius Hempel won \$20 gift certificates for correctly identifying immigration patterns. Prue Heikkinen won a \$10 gift certificate for correctly identifying a local landmark. April winners are Royce Disbrow, who won the sign contest, and Matthew Mejia, a student, won the modern immigration contest.

The exhibit includes stories about the people who came to Washtenaw County: what they brought with them, where they came from and how they lived. The exhibit will be at the museum until July 1. To help visitors research their own roots, Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County will be on hand the first Sunday of May and June.

JAY SNYDER AND CYNTHIA YAO

Report of the Nominating Committee

Proposed Slate

President: Leslie L. Loomans
 Vice President: Ralph P. Beebe
 Treasurer: Patricia W. Creal
 Recording Secretary: Judith M. Chrisman
 Corresponding Secretary: Pauline V. Walters

Directors:

Three-Year term to 2012
 Karen L. Jania *
 Michelle L. McClellan *
 Jay Snyder
 (open / vacant)

Endowment Committee

David LaMoreaux

*The two recently appointed directors filled vacancies made by the resignations of two board members whose terms would have expired this year. Both knew that they would stand for election at this year's annual meeting.

Further nominations will be accepted from the floor.

PAULINE WALTERS

Membership

In the April 2009 issue of *Impressions*, we informed members and donors that IRS rules now allow membership dues to be tax-deductible. Therefore, we will be sending a tax receipt letter for all receipts of donations and membership monies. Our software can generate either a hard copy or an e-mail letter/receipt. Because of the May 11, 2009 increase in first-class postage to 44 cents, WCHS will e-mail letter/receipts to those who have e-mail addresses and mail hard copies to those who do not. To discuss this individually, please call me at 734.662.9092, or e-mail me at wchs-500@ameritech.net

Thank You!

to *The Ann Arbor News* for donating seven months' worth of paper for our newsletter.

U of M Students Experience History at MoMS



U of M History 261 students on assignment at MoMS

"On a bright spring day in early April, some 100 University of Michigan students visited the Museum on Main Street to see the current exhibition, *Coming to Washtenaw County*," says Susan Nenadic, WCHS board member and chair of the exhibition. "Their backpacks piled up in great stacks in the front hall, they represented the more than twice that number who had come to the museum in March."

It all began with a conversation between Nenadic and Karen Jania, also a WCHS board member. Jania provided contact information for Michelle McClellan, PhD, a professor of American history and public history at the University of Michigan.

"I e-mailed her and we met for coffee," continues Nenadic. "Out of that fortuitous networking, not only did I convince Michelle to join the board, but the conversation led us to this 'town and gown' cooperative project involving student visits to the exhibition."

"Many students think of history as something they can learn only from a textbook while sitting in the classroom," says Michelle McClellan. "I tell my students that, on the contrary, history is all around them, in class and out. Moreover, people are trying to 'sell' them historical interpretations—particular conclusions about the meaning of the past—all the time. Politicians and pundits, television and movies, even popular songs often incorporate arguments about the significance of the past as it applies to the present."

McClellan says that in addition to having her students analyze books and essays and write research papers, she tries to craft assignments that will provide students with the skills needed to evaluate the historical interpretations they will encounter beyond the classroom. Believing that museums and historic sites are essential to the learning of history she welcomed the opportunity to assign her students a visit to the immigration exhibition at MoMS.

"The movement of peoples has been fundamentally important in shaping modern America, and I had already planned to spend considerable time on this topic," says McClellan. "I always emphasize that regard-

less of how they may have learned history in high school, now we will be talking about interpretation and analysis, not just the rote memorization of facts. I also tell them that for me, history is about imagination, trying to put oneself in the shoes of someone who lived in very different circumstances in the past but who was just as human and complex as we are today. For these reasons too, having the students visit a museum reinforced the lessons I hope to convey throughout the semester.

"Even though some of these students may not pick up another history book after the semester ends, it is likely that they will go to a museum at some point in the future," continues McClellan. "The evocative power of artifacts can make museum exhibits seem particularly authentic and authoritative. But exhibits too can have a point of view, and I wanted my students to practice using the same analytical skills on a museum exhibit that they would use evaluating a book or essay. *Coming to Washtenaw County* was ideally suited as an assignment for the course I taught this semester, U.S. History since the Civil War."

"While it was an assignment for the U of M students who came to the museum, most were very thorough," adds Nenadic. "They read everything, took notes, listened to the autobiographical tapes and entered our contests. One student later e-mailed that he would like to find some of the materials, so I sent him information. Another young man was on the board of education in Whitmore Lake and we talked at some length. Several planned to teach history. One girl found a typo in one of our exhibits, which

we gratefully fixed.

According to McClellan, the museum visit was an integral part of the course and not an optional field trip. She incorporated the visit into a series of required assignments and to give students background and context, provided lecture material throughout the semester on geographical mobility in the United States, and on immigration patterns, restrictions and policies.

"After consulting with Susan Nenadic, who designed the exhibit, I developed a worksheet that included a question-and-answer format on some specific elements of the exhibit and some guided questions for a written reflection that students would complete after their visit," she says. "That short writing exercise asked students to consider the differences between history presented through artifacts and written about in a book. Then, students wrote a longer paper assessing the significance of mobility in American life. They were required to include two examples from the museum exhibit, as well as drawing on course readings, to complete the paper. Because of the size of the class (250 students), we allowed students to self-schedule and visit on their own during regular museum hours and one extra session during which the museum was open specifically for them. Before the visits began, I met with Docent Rachel Pooley to explain my goals and go over the written assignments. Rachel provided wonderful guidance for the students, as well as logistical oversight in helping everything run smoothly.

"The students enjoyed the chance to get out of the classroom and experience history in a different setting," says McClellan. "Many took copious notes, stayed at the museum for more than an hour, and even returned for

another visit. They reported surprise at some of the things they learned through the artifacts and text of the exhibit. Because the exhibit spanned a longer time period than the class and covered issues that we had not addressed, I hope that it inspired some students to read further on these topics, to take other history courses, to visit more museums—and of course, to return to the Museum on Main Street for the next exhibit!"

McClellan thanks the board and staff of the Museum on Main Street, especially Rachel Pooley, Susan Nenadic and Pauline Walters, for their cooperation. She says, "I consider this collaboration a great success and I hope that it is the first of many such initiatives!"

According to Susan Nenadic, plans are in process for more interactions with the university. She mentions a project with U of M museum studies students for a fall exhibition, for which an undergraduate has helped with research; a survey by U of M School of Information students; and a project with Concordia University. Watch for more information in future issues of *Impressions*.

Volunteer Opportunities Available at the Museum on Main Street

Work in the Museum Shop

This job involves working for one hour per week in the pleasant environment of the museum to maintain the stock of books and items for sale, maintaining the computerized inventory of stock, advising the docents who sell the goods, and depositing sale monies.

Help Maintain the Garden

If you have time to spare and enjoy gardening, please call the MoMS to add your name to those working with the "Garden Ladies" to maintain our beautiful garden, a jewel in the gateway to downtown Ann Arbor. They take pride in keeping the grounds lush and appealing and will welcome your assistance.

To volunteer, please contact the museum at 734.662.9092 or e-mail wchs-500@ameritech.net



Upcoming Events

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission

When: Thursday, May 14, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center, corner of Hogback and Washtenaw. Pass Hogback going east on Washtenaw. Turn left into driveway of St. Luke's church, and proceed northwards to Learning Resource Center.

Details: Scott Hedburg, preservation activist, "Tale of the Delhi Bridge." The presentation includes the history of the sustainable 1836 "Michigan Village" with its Huron River bridges, and continues to the rehabilitation of the most recent iron bridge.

Information: Nancy Snyder at nsnyder@emich.edu

Michigan One-Room School Association Annual Conference

When: Saturday, May 16, 2009, 8:30 am

Where: Woodland School and the Weber-Blaess One-Room School in Saline, MI.

Details: The featured speaker will be Janice Stein, local author of *Schools of Yesteryear, Volume I*, featuring the country schools of Sand Beach & Sherman Townships. A highlight of the conference is a session on the history and renovation of the Weber-Blaess School, an integral part of the Saline Area Schools.

Registration Fee: \$35.00

Information: Jim & Cheryl Hoeft, 734.429.5922.

Sue Daniel, 248.477.3335, or visit the MORSA web site at one-roomschool.org

Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County

Stephen Charter will present "There are no Dumb Questions in Genealogy!" A panel of GSWC experts will follow the lecture.

When: Sunday, May 17, 2009, 1:30 pm

Where: Education Center Auditorium, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Campus, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Admission: Free and open to the public. Visitors are welcome.

Information: GSWC President, Marcia McCrary, 734.483.2799, Marciamccr@aol.com <http://www.hvcn.org/info/gswc/>

University of Michigan Detroit Observatory Tours

When: From 1 to 4 pm on the following dates:

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Sunday, June 28, 2009

Where: 1398 East Ann Street, Ann Arbor, MI

Details: Parking available at street side meters or cashier-attended lots directly across the street at the U of M Cardiovascular Center, or beneath the Life Sciences Institute on Palmer Drive, near the corner of Washtenaw and Huron.

Information: Call the Bentley Historical Library at 734.764.3482 or during open houses, the observatory itself at 734.763.2230. Email to DetroitObservatory@umich.edu. Website is www.bentley.umich.edu - follow the links to the Detroit Observatory.

Historical Society of Michigan Patriots and Presidents Historic Sites Bus Tour

When: Saturday, May 30, 2009, 8 am to 6 pm

Details: Tour stops include: Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center - Speigle Grove in Fremont, Ohio; Fallen Timbers Memorial & Battlefield in Toledo, Ohio; Fort Meigs State Memorial Park in Perrysburg, Ohio; River Raisin Battlefield War of 1812 Visitor Center in Monroe Michigan. Tour includes charter bus transportation, buffet lunch, all admissions and full tour narration. Leaves at 8:00 am from northeast corner of the Northville Meijer parking lot, 20401 Haggerty Rd, Northville, Michigan, 1/4 mile west of I-275.

Registration Fee: \$99 for members and \$125 for non-members (includes one-year HSM membership). Download registration brochure from hsmichigan.org/workshops.php or call 517.342.1828 to register by phone.

Kempf House Museum Open House Tours

When: Sundays through June 14, excluding Memorial Day Weekend, from 1 to 4 pm

Where: 312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, MI

Parking available in large public lot south of Kempf House

Details: See the 1890s life style of the German-American Kempf family, and learn about the early history of Ann Arbor.

Admission: Free. Donations appreciated

Information: 734.994.4898, www.kempfhousemuseum.org

