Clinton County Historical Society
CELEBRATING
50 Years
CCHS 50th Anniversary News

Volume 1 Issue 5 June 2024

CCHS Prepares for Summer Events

DeWitt History Walk

The CCHS is partnering with the DeWitt District Library to offer a historic walking tour of downtown DeWitt on June 6th with a rain date of June 13th. An additional 1 pm walk was added as the 10 am one is full. If both are filled you can be added to a waitlist.

Online registration for this event is available at this link: DeWitt District Library. Or call 517-669-3156.

Sowle Cemetery Talk

Here is a link to the talk Rex Ferguson made to Cub Scout pack 516 at the Sowle Cemetery of Essex Township on May 18th to commemorate the restoration of the 1884 Civil War monument.

Upcoming Events

June 6—DeWitt History Walk

July 11— The Enduring Farmers of Clinton County
Scott Piggott will be the featured speaker. A themed basket auction will also take place. Event will be held at AgroLiquid, St. Johns.

July 14—Tornado Walk
Alice and Pete Murphy will give a history of the 1920 tornado as participants walk from the museum to the St. Johns depot. The 45 minute tour begins at 2 pm.

August 9-11 — Mint Festival

September — Museums and Archive Tours
The CCHS will sponsor bus tours to visit our county's local museums and the CCHS archives.

October 13—Mount Rest Cemetery Tour

Additional Events to be Announced

After the CCHS regular board meeting at the St. Johns depot on May 1st, about 30 CCHS members set to work packing hand-out kits for several events later in the year. In assembly-line fashion, much was accomplished in less than an hour and then a potluck dinner was enjoyed by all.



Preparing separate packets for kids and adults



Myrna VanEpps

On April 30th Myrna VanEpps stepped down after 30 years of service on the CCHS board. In addition to serving on the board she was also head of the archives for many years.

Myrna plans to continue volunteering regularly at the archives, serve on the oral history committee, write for the *Clinton County Trails*, and serve as co-editor of this newsletter.

On May 1st the CCHS recognized her years of service with a gift and cake.



Oral History Update

Sharon Worrall and Gerri Wyble were interviewed by Wayne Summers on April 30th chiefly regarding their long association with the CCHS Museum. Sharon helped in the original building on Oakland St. in 1976, as well as at those structures on the current campus. Gerri has volunteered her services since at least 1992.

Clem Sohn, the bat-winged parachutist from Fowler, was the subject of the interview which took place on May 3rd when Dean Feldpausch sat down with Wayne Summers. Feldpausch recounted his research for his 2018 book, *The Batman and the Ballerina.: The Amazing Life and Love of Clem Sohn and Margot Fonteyn.* He was instrumental in placing a monument in Sohn's memory next to the depot in Fowler on Apr. 25th.

Both interviews are on the CCHS website.

Meet the Volunteers



Alice and Pete Murphy

Alice was born in Washington DC and grew up in Durham, NC. Pete was born and raised in Queens, NY. They met at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and now have 3 married daughters and 7 grandchildren.

They are retired from MSU where Alice was a research and diagnostic technician in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Pete was a professor in the Dept. of Plant Biology.

Alice enjoys gardening, reading, raising Monarch butterflies and collecting St. Johns postcards; Pete is a Michigan Sand Dunes advocate and collects railroad and aviation memorabilia. They both enjoy researching and writing articles for *Michigan History* magazine, the *Central States Archaeological Journal* and the *Clinton County Trails* newsletter.

Mike Morey to CCHS Board

At its May 1st meeting the CCHS Board elected Mike Morey to fill the unexpired term of Myrna VanEpps.

Mike is a retired Detective Sergeant with the Michigan State Police.

He has been a valued volunteer with the CCHS archives and 50th Anniversary Committee.

Mike has written on local history and recently published a history of Redeemer Church of DeWitt and St. Johns.

He is also a talented caricature artist and will be showcasing his skills at various CCHS events this year.

Mike is an excellent addition to the CCHS governing board.

CCHS ARCHIVES

16101 Brook Road, Lansing 48906
https://opennet.us/cchs

Archives Expansion

The process has started for moving all the old (HEAVY) tax books into the new room. We had to empty the shelves and stack the books in the new room so the shelves can be unattached from this wall. They will then be attached to the north wall in the new room and restacked. Thanks to Chuck Peters and Mike Morey for their help. Casey Eisler is installing the window tint to protect the books from the sun. More to come.

The expansion into a 3rd room is made possible through the generosity of DeWitt Charter Township which provides space for the archives at no cost.





Historical Road Trips

Would you like to take a Clinton County history road trip? We are in the process of preparing a number of road trips which you can take to visit important Clinton County historical sites.

The first trip is a Clinton County Highlights route which can be downloaded from our website.

The Highlights tour starts in St. Johns and takes you to 20 historic sites throughout the county ending in Victor Township at the Old Dennison School and Reed Church.

Along the way are stops at all Michigan Historical markers and Clinton County's towns.

Additional historic routes for DeWitt, St. Johns, and each of the 16 townships are also planned to be added later this year.



Cupola at site of the Bath School Disaster

May-June CCHS Birthdays

Rowland Smith , CCHS Treasurer - May 12;
Chuck Peters , Volunteer- May 14;
Kelly Jurman , Museum Director - May 28
Alice Murphy, Volunteer — May 29
Wayne Summers, CCHS Secretary — June 23

Jan Dunn

Jan Dunn, who volunteered at the Archives from 1989 to 2019, now resides at Grace Haven, 1507 Glastonbury Dr, St. Johns. .