

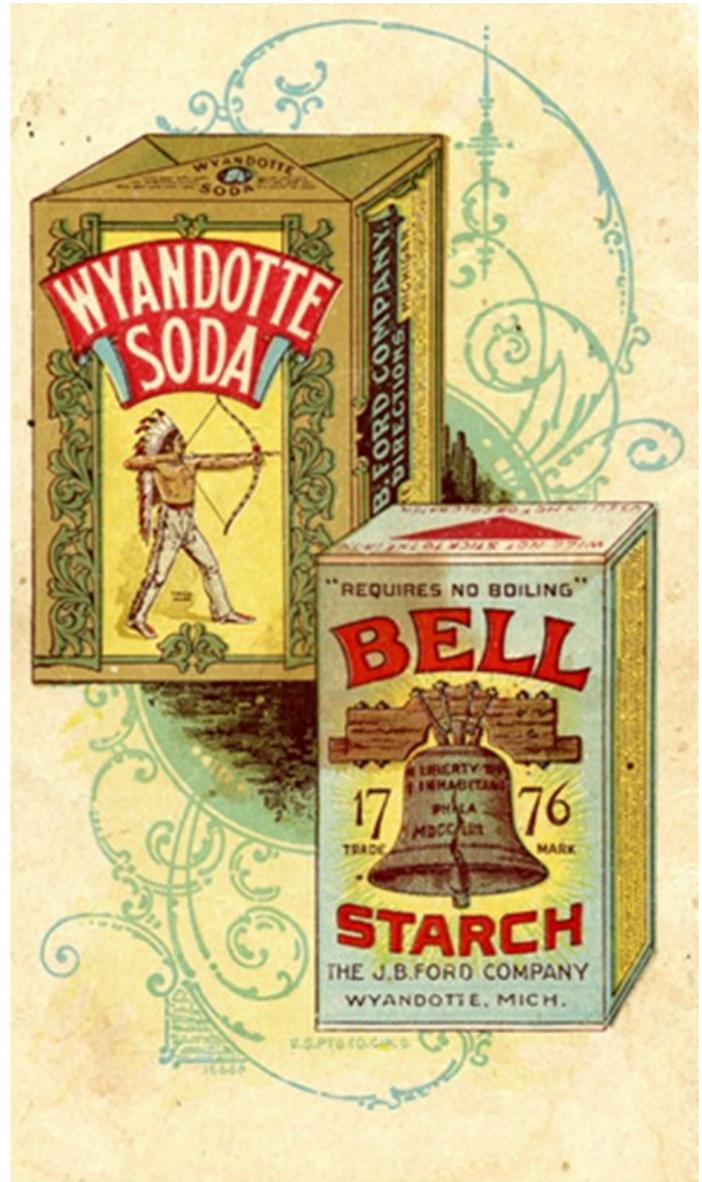
- EST. 1958 -

# WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Someone had fun creating a booklet of nursery rhymes to advertise their products! Above are images of the front and back pages of a 21-page booklet. Look at the colors and artistry. Read the clever front page... Father Gander Sequel To Mother Goose Written By Two Goslings. Who wrote this?

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

Dear Members of the Wyandotte Historical Society;

We are just a couple weeks away from the most meaningful holidays that touches our lives. We start off with Thanksgiving, a day of gratitude and turkey, as we gather with family and friends. Christmas is then just around the corner. The singer Amy Grant quoted " Thanksgiving Day is a good day to recommit our energies to give thanks." This American holiday is rich in legend and symbolism. The holiday is often the busiest of the year as family gather with one another.

Just a couple facts to add to the Thanksgiving table:

**1. FACT OR FICTION: Turkeys are slow moving birds that lack the ability to fly.**

Fiction. (Kind of) *Domesticated turkeys (the type we eat) cannot fly. Their pace is limited to just a slow walk. Female domestic turkeys which are typically smaller and lighter than males can move somewhat faster. Wild turkeys, on the other hand are much smaller and more agile. They can reach speeds of up to 20-25 miles per hour on the ground and fly for a short distance at speeds of 55 miles per hour.*

**2. FACT OR FICTION: Native Americans used cranberries, now a staple of many Thanksgiving dinners, for cooking as well as medicinal purposes.**

Fact. *According to the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association. One of the county's oldest farmer's organizations. Native Americans used cranberries in a variety of foods. Including pemmican, a nourishing high protein combination of crushed berries, dried deer meat and melted fat. They also used it as a medicine to treat arrow punctures and other wounds and as a dye for fabric. The pilgrims adopted these uses for the fruit and gave it a name –"cranberry"- because its drooping pink blossoms in the spring reminded them of a crane.*

**I wish all a great and thankful Thanksgiving from my family to yours.**

**Chris and Melanie Stieler**

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## FRONT COVER

We don't know who the "Two Goslings" were who wrote the nursely rhyme booklet.

We do know that the nursery rhymes were published by The J.B. Company of Wyandotte, Mich.

Looking at the boxes of "Wyandotte Soda" and "Bell Starch" do you wonder what was in those boxes? Baking soda and starch, as we think of them today? Or something else since they were products of Wyandotte's first chemical company? Was the "Soda", soda ash used in the production of plate glass?

Today, "soda" can mean "carbonated water" or "sodium carbonate" or "sodium bicarbonate". The box probably did not contain carbonated water. The Merriam-Webster dictionary online states:

- "sodium carbonate was first used in 1868" meaning "a sodium salt of carbonic acid used especially in making soaps and chemicals, in water softening, in cleaning and bleaching, and in photography: such as  
a: a hygroscopic crystalline anhydrous strongly alkaline salt  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$   
b: the transparent crystalline hydrate  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$  found in nature as natron"
- "sodium bicarbonate was first used in 1885" meaning "a white crystalline weakly alkaline salt  $\text{NaHCO}_3$  used especially in baking powders and fire extinguishers and in medicine as an antacid — called also *baking soda*, *bicarbonate of soda*."

## Page 3

Interesting, I wonder if the nursery rhymes in the booklet provide a clue...  
... oh, here on illustrated pages 4 and 5 it says:

“Mary had a little lamb,  
Its fleece was white as snow;

And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.”

Mother likes the soda,  
Baby likes the box;  
I like the biscuits and hot cakes,  
And papa saves the rocks.”



Ah, on the last page, we have marketing from The J.B. Ford Company:

“ WE HAVE BRIEFLY CALLED your attention to the best brand of Baking Soda on the market, and also the best brand of Starch on the market and now we want to call your special attention to our Wyandotte Washing Soda, which is fast becoming popular with the house-wife, and fills a long-felt want. “

This brand of washing soda does not contain any alkali, that will injure the hands or finest fabrics. By using it in your laundry work you can save one-half your soap bill. It is a desirable article for cleaning varnished and painted wood-work and tile hearths. Can be used in the same way as you have used any washing powders – only you will find it much cheaper and much more desirable. The largest package on the market for five cents (5c.)

Once tried always becomes a favorite in the household. Insist upon having Wyandotte Washing Soda.

The J. B. FORD COMPANY,  
... Wyandotte, Mich. “

While the J.B. Ford Company was providing chemicals for the production of plate glass, they were also providing household items such as baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and washing soda (sodium carbonate) more commonly known today as laundry soap, AND don't forget – nursery rhymes to market their products!

## ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL—100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

If you are like me, you can't wait for 2020 to be over. We have seen a global pandemic consume our everyday life. One of the aspects that was greatly affected was education. Students were sent home in March, and only just recently have returned to their school buildings in Wyandotte. One of the events that I look forward to the most in 2021 is the 100 year anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone at Roosevelt High School. I have been teaching at Roosevelt for over five years now (19 in the district) and it seems that every time I take a walk around the building, I find something new. A recent walk close to my room on the third floor, led me to the discovery of the catwalk above the auditorium. When you enter the catwalk it shows you just how high the ceilings used to be before renovations added drop ceilings. The most interesting aspect of the catwalk is all the previous students that used to work the lights for the various performances throughout the years. Students would write their names in some pretty interesting areas with their graduation year or a saying along with it. The oldest name and graduation year that I could find was from the 1960's. I also had a hard time trying to figure out how some of the students were able to put their names in locations that had no way of being accessible unless they had a ladder. These are just some of the places and stories of RHS that exist in the almost 100 year old history of the building. I hope to include some more stories on future walks that I take around the building over the next year and share with the historical society as we get closer to the 100 year anniversary of the opening of the building in 2023. If you were one of the former students who has their name on the catwalk above the auditorium, don't worry, it looks as though your name will live on for the foreseeable future for all future generations to see.