

- EST. 1958 -

# WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

VOLUME 5



## In Honor of Our Heroes

As Memorial Day approaches this year we want to pay homage to our veterans of all the wars, to our healthcare workers through the years, and to our family members who have gone before us.

To all our heroes who gave of themselves to make our lives better, thank you.

**MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ**

Dear Members of the Historical Society,

Memorial Day is a special holiday to many of us here in Wyandotte. We celebrate this National Holiday to recognize our great veterans for all they gave to our nation, America, the land of the free. For many of us, we visit our local cemeteries; we enjoy giving special honor and love to those that rest in peace. An American flag may be placed on their graves by family members or local veteran groups. Others of us may attend a parade and some may gather for a barbeque for a fun day.

Cemeteries are hallowed ground, given for those who died before us. Wyandotte is lucky to have two historic cemeteries, Mount Carmel Cemetery established in 1865 and Oakwood Cemetery established in 1869.

Since the early 1980's, Historical Society members have shown great interest trying to clean up and preserve our old cemetery. Today, Mary-Johna Wein, the President of the Oakwood Cemetery Association, leads volunteers and local groups, to restore what time has destroyed.

Even back in 1880, our local newspaper wrote: "What a pity that the cemetery at the north end of the city, we have not learned its name, should be so neglected. Situated as it is on the banks of the Detroit River in a beautiful grove, nature had done all she could to constitute it a lovely spot and man has done but very little to improve its appearance. Someone was wise in selecting the spot for a cemetery and it would be a mark of equal wisdom to go on and improve it."

Today Oakwood is looking so much better, but there is much to be done. Water lies in the lower areas of the cemetery, leaving graves sunken in many areas. Markers need to be raised and many need to be replaced.

Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery is our only functioning cemetery today. It is kept beautiful and is still burying many Wyandotte families.

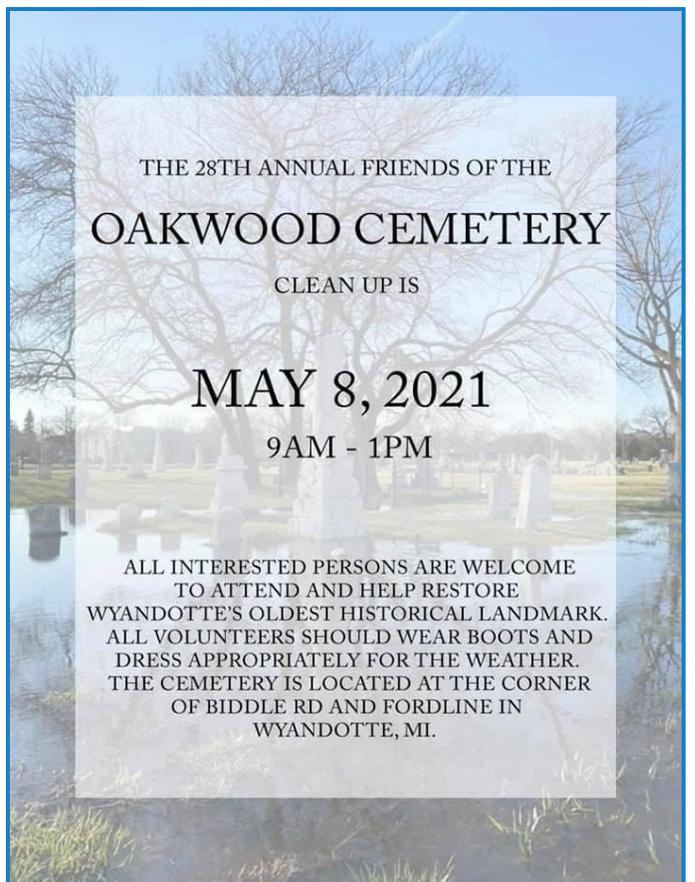
As you walk through these two cemeteries you can notice many deaths very close in time within many family lots. They too had pandemics that destroyed many families, just like us today. May they rest in peace, resting in the arms of Jesus.

Best Regards,  
Christopher Stieler



**MEMORIAL IN BISHOP PARK**

"IN MEMORIAM  
DEDICATED BY THE CITIZENS OF WYANDOTTE  
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF THOSE  
OF THIS COMMUNITY WHO GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE  
OF DEVOTION IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM"



The community is coming together to restore Oakwood Cemetery! Lowes has donated plants and mulch. The City of Wyandotte is cutting down rotten trees. If you are not able to help May 8th, you can help other ways by contacting Mary-Johna Wein via email at [mmwein@umich.edu](mailto:mmwein@umich.edu) or via U.S. Mail at: PO Box 553, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

**ALMOSE FAMILY TRAGEDY**

The welcomed consistency of warmer weather, beautiful flowering plants, Mother’s Day – all are cherished aspects which the month of May brings. The end of the month also provides Americans with one of our most traditional and patriotic holidays, Memorial Day. As we celebrate those who have served in the various conflicts, let’s remember and pay tribute to the family of Michael Almoose – a serviceman, devoted to his country, whose family suffered a devastating tragedy.



Michael Peter Almoose was born October 13, 1921 in Wyandotte and the family lived at 630 Poplar. A June 1940 graduate of Roosevelt High School, Michael enlisted in the United States Army in 1942. He married Madeline Hilbert in 1948 and the couple would have three daughters and one son.

In 1963, Michael Almoose was stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. His family made the trip from Michigan to Washington state to catch a connecting flight to the base on June 3<sup>rd</sup> of that year. Madeline and the four children, who were between the ages of seven and twelve, were undoubtedly excited to see and spend time with their father. The plane, a DC-7 of the famed Douglas line, took off shortly before 8 am that morning, carrying 95 passengers and six crew members. Just after 10 am, the crew radioed flight control to request a change in altitude. When controllers responded immediately afterward, they never received another word from the pilot of Flight 293.

Not receiving any responses from the pilot or crew, the Coast Guard was alerted roughly an hour after the last interaction was made. A large-scale search went on throughout the day, and by nightfall, a swath of debris was located about 180 miles southwest of Annette Island in the Dixon Entrance. Many items, including seats, padding, inflatables, personal items, as well as menus and such were recovered, along with some bodies. While the fate of the exact plane and those on board was unknown at that time, hope was not lost.

In the immediate days that followed the events of June 3, 1963, local and national newspapers throughout the United States blasted the possible fate of Flight 293 on page one of their respective periodicals. At the same time, investigations continued. Based on the condition of items recovered, as well as the interactions with flight control, popular theory is something caused the jet to careen into the ocean at almost full-speed, fully inverted.

Unfortunately, as the wreckage was roughly 8,000 feet below the water’s surface, it would be difficult to pinpoint any official causes or continue the investigation.

Almost a full fifty-eight years after the tragedy of Flight 293, no real answers have ever been found or provided. Though the crash occurred in the waters off the coast of Alaska, it was devastating for the state of Michigan. Fourteen of the ninety-five passengers were from this state. This includes, not only Michael Almoose’s wife and four children, but also airman from the Bay City area, Ronald Scott’s wife and four daughters. Most experts count this as one of the most mysterious air calamities of all-time. There will likely never be answers.

Although their bodies were never recovered, Madeline Almoose and her children, Barbara, Madeline, Joseph and GERALYN, share a plot inside the gates of Michigan Memorial Cemetery in Flat Rock. Michael came back to Michigan, residing later in life in Romulus. One can only wonder how difficult it must have been for him to move on after such a loss. Passing away at age 83 in 2005, Michael Almoose was interred in the family plot at Michigan Memorial. A large monument with all of the names listed is a solemn reminder of that fateful day in June 1963 when an entire family lost their lives.



Let’s all keep the Almoose family in our thoughts this Memorial Day.

-Jesse Rose, Museum Director, April 12, 2021

**DID YOU KNOW?**

On May 31, 1977  
the trans-Alaska pipeline was completed.

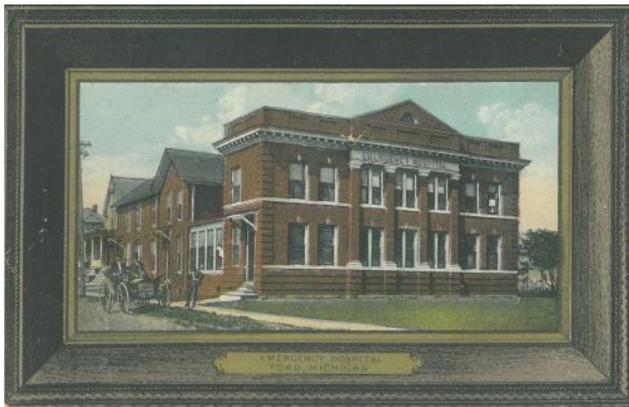
## Wyandotte Hospitals Throughout the Years

Hospitals have a long history in Wyandotte – starting in the late 1890s. In 1899, the Wyandotte Sanatorium opened on Front Street (now Van Alstyne) between Oak and Chestnut. Formerly the “Schuffert’s Gambling House,” the two-story townhouse was primarily for emergencies, usually from the various accidents that happened at factories around town, although they did offer private care as well. The Sanatorium moved locations and continued in a house on First Street, and then moved again to another house on Biddle between Oak and Elm in November 1900.



**Wyandotte Sanatorium**

In 1900, doctors from around the Downriver area decided that a dedicated and professional hospital was necessary and it would be better if it was close to the factories, so Wyandotte became the site for a new medical facility. In September, the new Emergency Hospital of Ford City opened and was located at the Peter Labadie House in the Michigan Alkali Company complex.



The Wyandotte Sanatorium ceased operations shortly after the opening of the new hospital. The Emergency Hospital advertised that a “competent nurse will be at the hospital at all times.” Well, that was reassuring!

On April 15, 1913, Mary Ginzler gifted her home at 86 Elm Street to the city for the purpose of opening either

a library or hospital there in memory of her son John, a Wyandotte grocer who died of typhoid fever at the age of 36 on February 10, 1913. In 1915, the John F. Eilbert Memorial Hospital opened. Both the Eilbert Memorial Hospital and Emergency Hospital closed in 1926 with the opening of Wyandotte General Hospital. The site of the Eilbert Memorial Hospital then became the Oddfellows Temple on Elm, but was later demolished and is now apartments.

Wyandotte General Hospital opened its doors on February 28, 1926 and was dedicated on June 25, 1926. The newly-built \$500,000 hospital was donated to the city by Edward Ford, the son of J.B. Ford and the original owner of the Ford-Bacon Home. The original building was four-stories and 200 feet long by 70 feet wide. It was donated to the city with the very latest in medical technology, including a portable x-ray! By 1928, the hospital was already experiencing overcrowding: 50 to 55 patients were expected a day, but they received over 70 patients a day. Plans for expansion were already being discussed only a few years after the hospital was built.

In 1929, a \$260,000 expansion was added thanks to the J.B. Ford family and the Wyandotte Municipal Service Commission. This expansion upped the number of beds to 150 with the addition of a new two-story building, as well as a nurses’ residence and the famous stone sign at the front of the building with an Indian head that reads “Wyandotte General Hospital”. The addition was dedicated on November 17, 1931. Patients increased drastically as Wyandotte and Downriver grew in population. By 1954, the emergency room treated 9,580 patients a year (compared to the 2,321 E.R. patients in 1941).

Another addition was added to the hospital in 1957, which increased the number of stories on the 1929 addition from two to five. This brought the hospital up to 225 beds. By 1960, it was already apparent another addition was required to keep up with the room needed for the newest in medical technology and to provide care for patients who needed long-term rehabilitative treatment. A four-story \$870,500 expansion was added in June 1964 and named W.H. Honor Rehabilitation Center in honor of Dr. William H. Honor, who helped found the hospital’s surgery program in 1925.

*(continued on page 5)*

## Wyandotte Hospitals Throughout the Years

*(continued from page 4)*

Almost immediately after, it was apparent that the original building was becoming outdated. An eight-story addition was planned to alleviate the burden of the original building. The new building went through many designs, but was eventually selected to look like the letter "Y" from above. Ground broke on the new building on July 4, 1969 and it was completed in December 1972.



Original Design for the 1972  
Expansion of the Hospital

The new building connected the original building (which was now the Administration building) and the rehabilitation center to form one, cohesive unit. The building brought the number of beds up to 360 and opened numerous new programs, which made Wyandotte General Hospital the largest and most modern hospital in Downriver.

In 1987, a lease agreement was signed between the City of Wyandotte and Henry Ford Health Systems and changed the name to Wyandotte Hospital and Medical Center. In 1988, Henry Ford Health Systems bought the hospital outright from the city for \$18.5 million and changed the name to Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital. In 1996, a \$40 million expansion was added to the front of the 1972 addition, which included a new birthing-center, ambulance center, and surgical suites. This brings it up to what the hospital looks like today!

The hospital currently has 360 beds, 2,300 employees, and it still dedicated to serving its community as it did in 1926.

Audrey Wicklander

## ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL



### *The Mystery of the Time Capsule*

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the cornerstone being laid for the construction of Roosevelt High School. On the corner of Eureka and 5th, you can clearly read the date 1921 for when construction started.

One of the mysteries involved with the cornerstone was that of a time capsule that was supposedly put into the cornerstone when it was laid.

One hundred years later, the current Class of 2021 thought it would be as good of a time as ever to possibly open the capsule. The biggest issue though was finding if the capsule actually existed. I began to work with the class officers to see if we could find proof.

We found nothing marking that the capsule exists anywhere near the cornerstone. We began to call various groups and even tried to look through old yearbooks to see if we could find some information. We seemed to have reached a dead end and could not find anything about the capsule. It was starting to become a Wyandotte myth — until at the last Wyandotte Historical Society meeting I asked Keith Steffke and George Gouth about the existence of the capsule. They both said that it does in fact exist inside the actual cornerstone. Mr. Gouth even said he has done programs about it.

The goal now is to use their knowledge to see how the current class can retrieve it. I will give updates as we get more information, so stay tuned.

George Purdu

Return Service Requested

**Wyandotte Historical Society**

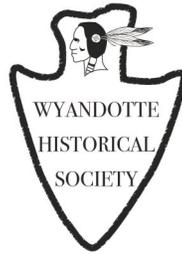
Burns Home

2624 Biddle Ave.

Wyandotte, MI 48192-5208

**Phone:** (734) 324-7299

**Email:** wyandottehistory@gmail.com



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**UPCOMING HERITAGE SERIES EVENTS**

**Spring City-Wide Garage Sale - May 14, 15, 16**

It's that time of year again! Sale maps will be available for purchase (\$1.00 per map) behind the Ford-MacNichol Home on those days. The museum storage unit, lovingly called, "Schlepps" at 1100 Biddle (at Goodell) will also be open (closed Sunday) and all proceeds from items purchased therein will go directly to the museum fund.

**Pie and Ice Cream Social - June 27**

Details are to be announced.

**Wyandotte Historical Society Board of Directors**

- \* **President:** Chris Stieler
- \* **Vice-President:** Beth Labadie
- \* **Secretary:** Ken Munson
- \* **Treasurer:** Ken Navarre
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  - ◇ Dan Galeski
  - ◇ George Gouth
  - ◇ Kenneth Shepherd
  - ◇ Keith Steffke
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- \* **Past President:** George Purdu

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- \* **Museum Director:** Jesse Rose
- \* **Museum Assistant:** Audrey Wicklander