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WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2021

VOLUME 10



HALLOWEEN AT THE FORD MACNICHOL MUSEUM

Autumn in Michigan offers up a wide spectrum of opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The humidity levels finally drop and cooler air sets in. The changing leaves spark awe. Pumpkin spice becomes the most popular taste and scent. And, the holidays begin to creep ever so closely upon us all. At the Ford-MacNichol Home during the month of October, one can experience a feast for the eyes and mind as the Wyandotte Museum's staff and volunteers seek to educate visitors on two occurrences: Halloween and funerary and mourning processes. *(continued on page 3)*

MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

Dear Members of the Historical Society,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that two very special members, dedicated to our historical society have been honored by Daughters of the American Revolution.

Daughters of the American Revolution is a service organization with its members descended from persons involved in efforts toward our independence. It is rich in history and service with over 930,000 members since its founding 125 years ago.

Periodically, Chapters are allowed to grant two Community Service Awards to persons involved in continuous service to their community during the last five years. This year, nominations by Nancy Chascsa were accepted by the chapter with written recommendations by Jesse Rose, myself Chris Stieler, and Wally Hayden.

Surprised recipients, George Gouth and Ken Navarre, received their awards on August 14th, for their contribution and service to the Wyandotte Historical Society.

Congratulations to both Ken and George for a job well done. Your society is proud of you!

Sincerely,
Christopher Stieler, President

What are you doing October 8th?

Do you like stories about booze, cars, cops and crimes? Then come to the **Bacon Memorial Library, 45 Vinewood at 7:00 pm on Friday, October 8th**. Join Joe Boggs, the author of the new book *Prohibition's Proving Ground*, as he shares how prohibition enforcement and automobile culture collided on the Toledo-Detroit-Windsor corridor.

With a special emphasis on Wyandotte, the presentation will focus on how our region's automobile boom significantly aided local rumrunners but challenged those responsible for enforcing dry laws.

After the presentation, Joe will have autographed copies of his new book *Prohibition's Proving Ground* available for sale.

It should be a fun, interesting evening!

Please Welcome Our New Members!

- Stephanus Barbee
- Echo Grinstern
- Zachary Jackson
- Dylan Wroblewski

REST IN PEACE

Andrew (Andy) Swiecki

Andy will indeed be missed by so many. His smile and good nature were his hallmark. For so many years, he was the City Treasurer who often cared for people at the counter in person. If you did not like your bill and were complaining, you rarely left without thanking him for the bill. That was Andy. We are going to miss him at the Lion's Flea Market too.

He was not only a friend but my close by neighbor. Andy and two of his siblings were born above the last bar. His two older siblings were born above their earlier location where we were also their next door neighbor. There are a wonderful family to know. It is a difficult time for his wife, Pat, her family, and Andy's sisters. Our prayers and condolences are extended to each of them.

Ken Navarre

Historic October Birthdays

- **October 6** - Engineer and inventor George Westinghouse was born in 1846. He developed air brakes for trains and was later responsible for the adoption of alternating current (AC) systems for electric power transmission in the U.S. He was also the first employer to give his employees paid vacations.
- **October 11** - Eleanor Roosevelt was born in 1884. In 1933, she became the first wife of a president to give her own news conference in the White House. She was affectionately called "First Lady of the world." She served as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations for many years and helped write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **October 13** - Molly Pitcher was born as Mary Ludwig in 1754. During the American Revolution, she was a water carrier at the Battle of Monmouth in 1778. After her husband, artilleryman John Hays, collapsed, she took his place at his cannon.
- **October 16** - American teacher and journalist Noah Webster was born in 1758. His name became synonymous with "dictionary" after he compiled the first American dictionaries of the English language.

HALLOWEEN AT THE FORD MACNICHOL MUSEUM

(continued from the cover page)

So, what may a visitor learn by visiting the Wyandotte Museum during the month of October? Many things! Here is a small sampling:

- Initially more of an adult holiday, folks would host elaborate parties where they would dress up and attempt to reach those beyond the grave by way of such equipment as a spirit book or crystal ball. Divinity was popular at the turn of the 20th Century and “mediums” and “seers” could be hired in all parts of the world to help party goers “locate” departed loved ones.
- Before pumpkins became the norm, turnips were carved into jack-o-lanterns. Though much smaller than their modern counterparts, they became popular due to the way their “face” would curl up as the turnip aged.
- Widespread embalming practices grew during the Civil War when the need to preserve the massive number of fatalities became evident. This was because many soldiers died far from home and the sentimentality towards mourning the dead was growing.
- Utilizing the hair of a loved one in jewelry was a common occurrence during the Victorian and Edwardian Eras. For mourning purposes, the dearly departed would be commemorated in various ways such as by simply placing locks of hair in a locket or creating intricately-patterned watch bands, bracelets, necklaces or earrings.
- The Thon family began building caskets and attending to the dead of the City of Wyandotte in 1857. This is considered to be the first in this industry in Wyandotte. Much of the embalming equipment on display in the Library comes from and was actually used by the Thon Funeral Home.

We hope you and anyone you know can make time to come down to tour the Ford-MacNichol Home during the month of October where you can learn more about the above, as well as many other educational tidbits.

The first floor of the home will be decorated and the Biddle Shop will be adorned with autumn décor and favorites for purchase.

-Jesse Rose, Museum Director



Halloween Foods?

Halloween is one of the very few holidays that we generally do not associate with a big family dinner or any “real” food, except for candy, apples, and pumpkins (in all of their amazing forms). In my own life, I usually order pizza or other restaurant takeout so I can focus on passing out candy (while also eating it), but the other day I was thinking – Why don’t we have a “Halloween dinner”? If there was a dinner way back when, what kinds of savory foods and sweets did they make? What is the history of Halloween and food?

Halloween, or All-Hallows’ Eve, is rooted in ancient Irish pagan traditions, specifically the Gaelic festival of Samhain. The holiday gradually worked its way into Christianity starting around 600 Common Era (CE) during the reign of Pope Gregory I, which cemented the holiday in Catholic history.

Historically Halloween was more about the transition from summer to fall, rituals and superstition around the harvests, and caring for the spirits of the dead rather than the community-centric holiday we know it as today. People believed that Halloween night was a time when the boundaries between the spiritual and physical worlds were blurred and since spirits could roam the earth, it was important to appease the dead. An important element for appeasing the dead was food.

Before the 19th century, All-Hallows Eve was scarcely celebrated in America. Few pilgrim families celebrated the holiday because of its root in the Catholic church, but those that did, would eat, drink, and

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Halloween Foods?

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wear spirit costumes on October 31st and November 1st (All Saints Day). The pilgrims made their ancestor's favorite dinners and included a spot at the table for them to honor their spirit and memory. To try and gain favor with their ancestor's spirit and make them feel at home, people would wear spirit costumes. They would also make large bonfires and a cow would be killed and cooked for the celebration. It is not known what they ate on Halloween specifically, but it is safe to assume they used whatever was seasonal such as corn, cabbage, onion, spinach, pumpkin (and other squash), bread, fish, and meat.

In the mid-to-late 19th century, Irish immigrants flocked to the United States during the Potato Famine and brought their Catholic Halloween traditions with them. For centuries in Ireland, people would bake soul cakes and give them out to visitors and the homeless if they promised to say a prayer for their deceased relatives; the Irish continued this tradition in the U.S. Traditionally soul cakes are little cookies/biscuits, made with dried fruits in the shape of a cross across the middle. In the 1890s, candy began to be heavily manufactured in the U.S. and became the Halloween favorite by the early 1900s as children started to adopt the practice of trick-or-treating from the Irish, and would go door-to-door, dressed as saints or spirits, to ask for food or money (and sometimes play pranks).

Apples and pumpkins were a part of a normal autumn diet in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, so naturally, fall fruits and squash became popular for Halloween get-togethers. Apples began being used for apple cider and candied and caramel apples, while bobbing for apples became popular. Large pumpkins were used for carving (in addition to turnips) and smaller pumpkins were used for pies, cakes, soups, and bread.



By 1900, Halloween parties were all the rage amongst the middle and upper classes. Like today, early 20th century parties mainly included different hors d'oeuvres and desserts, but nothing like a full, plated meal unless they wanted to be extra fancy. According to the *Blue Ribbon Cookbook* published in 1901, Halloween parties should include: "Bouillon, de Jolly Boys, Celery, Kindergarten Crackers, Turtle Sandwiches, Little Pigs in Blankets, Orange Jelly, Olives a la Natural History, Sugar Off, with maple syrup, Nut Cartoons, lemonade." In the 1905 book *Bright Ideas of Entertaining*, the author, Mrs. Herbert Linscott, states that "Browning nuts, popping corn, roasting apples, and toasting marshmallows will add a great deal to the pleasure of the evening."

According to cookbooks of the 1930s and 1940s, a proper "Halloween Supper" included foods such as: various kinds of sandwiches (hot ham, spiced ginger, chestnut, cinnamon, cream cheese, and club sandwiches) crab or fish cakes, sloppy joes, dill pickles, shrimp and pea wiggles, potato salad, and Hallowe'en Salad - a gelatin mold or lettuce salad made with orange juice or sliced oranges, tomato, celery, lettuce, walnuts, apples, mayonnaise dyed green, and carrots. Witch's soup pops up quite a bit in cookbooks, which is a black bean-based soup. The heartiest item I came across in the cookbooks for a Halloween dinner was a meat pie.



HALLOWEEN SALAD (Page 250)

In almost every early 20th century cookbook I read, the sweet Halloween recipes vastly outnumbered savory Halloween foods. The list is almost never-ending and includes popcorn balls, tarts, taffy, cupcakes, nut and fruit mix, cookies, chocolates, candies, pies, cakes, doughnuts, and wafers. Witch's cakes, sweet loaves of cinnamon, nutmeg, pumpkin, walnuts, and raisins, were a popular homemade item. Essentially, anything sweet that people could get their hands on and wanted to make, they served to their families and friends on Halloween! There are also Halloween cocktail and punch recipes, such as a Witch's Brew Cocktail from 1914, which was a glass of iced brandy, another alcohol of the drinker's choosing, and juice from an orange around the rim to be lit on fire (like a flaming tequila shot).

After taking a look at these early 20th century cookbooks, it's easy to tell why we serve what we do during Halloween today: light savory foods to start, but an extra emphasis on the sweets! A large, formal dinner was never a part of modern Halloween because Halloween has been a party holiday in the U.S. since the 19th century. What do you think: Should we have a formal Halloween dinner?

Audrey Wicklander, Museum Assistant

Wandering Oakwood

Learning about the Clark Family

Andrew and Faith (Ingalls) Allen were the original founders of Andover Massachusetts. In about 1653 Andrew and Faith gave birth to a baby girl named Martha. Martha lived a typical life but fell in love with a servant and became pregnant with his child. She married Thomas Carrier in 1674 and the two went on to have five children. Martha was considered to be a very strong willed person and it has been noted that she was also very outspoken. In 1690 Martha and her family moved in with her mother after the passing of her father Andrew. On their journey they would bring smallpox with them and it would wipe out nine people from the Allen family. Martha, Thomas and their five children all had smallpox but complexly healed from the disease. People began to question if Martha had some kind of power, could she be the reason her husband and kids lived?

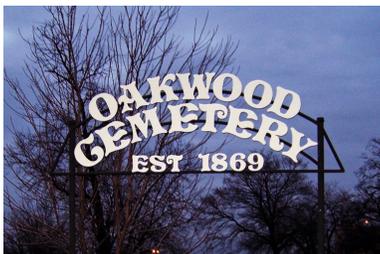
On May 28, 1692 a warrant was signed for the arrest of Martha and she would be the first person to be accused of witchcraft in Andover.

Not many people know this but there were more people accused and arrested of witchcraft from Andover than any other New England town. Not only was Martha the first to be accused she was also labeled the “Queen of Hell” by Cotton Mather. Martha maintained the fact that she was innocent even when three of her five children were brought to jail Andrew (18), Richard (15), and Sarah (7). Martha often said “I would rather die then confess a falsehood so filthy”



On August 19, 1692 Martha would be taken to the gallows in Salem Massachusetts and would be the hung in the Witch Trials. Fortunately her children would be released and go on to do many great things, as well as their descendants. Martha is the second great-grandmother of John Clark.

John Clark was Captain of the Saugerties Rangers during the War of 1812, in which he was wounded. After his family’s town, home and business were burned down, the family moved and rented a large section of land in Ecorse Township. In 1826 his daughter Catherine Clark, passed away at the age of 11 and the family buried her on the plot of land that they were renting. The following year John Clark passed away, and was buried right next to Catherine.



In 1869 John’s son, John P. Clark, dedicated several acres of land including the graves of his father and sister to become Oakwood Cemetery. Today Oakwood is the final resting place for more than 1,700 people.

Mary-Johna Wein, President
Wyandotte Oakwood Cemetery Association

Curious about who is buried at Oakwood Cemetery?

Go to Wyandotte Historical Society’s website at: <http://www.wyandottehistory.org>. To see maps of the cemetery and a detailed work-in-progress survey of monuments of people buried there, select “Explore” from the menu and then “Document Center”. You’ll find all kinds of information about Oakwood Cemetery under “Cemeteries of Wyandotte”. ”

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Wyandotte Historical Society

Burns Home

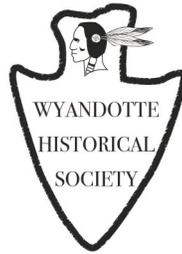
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UPCOMING EVENTS!

- **October 8** — Presentation on *Prohibition's Proving Ground* at 7:00 pm at the Bacon Library
- **October 22**— Halloween Open House 5:00 to 8:00 pm (free admission) at the Ford MacNichol Museum
- **November 6 & 7**—125th Anniversary of the Ford MacNichol Home, Open House noon to 4 pm each day
- **December 3**— Festive Friday at the Ford MacNichol Museum
- **December 6 & 7** — Santa Program
- **December 10 & 17**— Festive Fridays at the Ford MacNichol Museum

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