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WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022

VOLUME 3



Many who have volunteered time or visited the Ford-MacNichol Home may be aware of the various nooks and crannies which serve as storage for our artifacts, archives and event or display items. A city as historic as Wyandotte is bound to produce collection items that number into the thousands. It is behind the walls of two of the buildings that are part of its Museum Campus, the Ford-MacNichol Home and Burns Home, where these pieces are housed. Unfortunately, not every space is as organized as others and knowing exactly what is in these areas is an ongoing process the City of Wyandotte Museum staff (along with staffs of many similar institutions) aim to get a better handle on.

There is an area in the basement of the Ford-MacNichol Home which houses a large portion of the collections of the City of Wyandotte's Museum. In this space, one may find any number of items including trunks, model ships, radios, tools, bricks and other architectural pieces. Each item was brought out of the space and staff made an initial assessment as to how to move forward. This is all in an ongoing process to decide which items may be kept in the collection or deaccessioned.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

When we think of March we tend to think of Saint Patrick's Day and all the things that go with it: pots of gold, leprechauns and the food, especially corned beef and cabbage.

When my Grandmother Martha was alive she was always excited to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day because she was proud of her Irish heritage. Unfortunately she passed away on March 17, 2017. She had a great life and died on her favorite day of the year.

This March we get to celebrate another day that my grandma always looked forward to, Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day). My grandma grew up in Newfoundland Canada and Pancake Day was a tradition that she celebrated when she was a child. This has been a tradition passed down through many generations in my family. I look forward to sharing it with my kids and hope one day they will pass the tradition on.

Pancake Day always falls on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (same as Paczki day) and following is a recipe for the day.

Pancake Day Recipe

Make your pancake batter as normal then add the following trinkets (be careful not to eat any of the trinkets)...

- A penny - symbolizes poverty
- A nickel - symbolizes wealth
- A string - symbolizes fisherman/ you will either be one or marry one
- A ring - symbolizes a wedding in your near future
- A button - symbolizes you'll never marry
- A thimble - symbolizes you'll either be a seamstress or tailor

As a reminder we are still collecting recipes and family stories and pictures for a cookbook. Please email them to us at wyandottehistory@gmail.com or mail them to us at:

Wyandotte Historical Society
2624 Biddle Ave.
Wyandotte, MI 48192-5208

Mary-Johna Wein, President

Email to the Editor

In the February Newsletter it mentioned that Daniel Campau graduated from Roosevelt in the class of 1889. The Roosevelt School wasn't dedicated until 1923! I believe Daniel would have graduated from "old Central" which is the current site of the Board of Education building.

Perhaps the Newsletter could earmark a section for corrections, or letters to the Editor? This would be an opportunity for members to add their comments to articles. Just a thought.

Duane Denny

Letter from the Editor Including Corrections!

Duane, thank you very much for pointing out the error in the February Newsletter and for your suggestion! It's a great idea! I would like to encourage members to email their comments, stories, and pictures for the newsletter to: wyandottehistory@gmail.com.

Regarding corrections, the February Newsletter has been corrected and posted to the Document Center on the website at <https://wyandottehistory.com>. The article about Daniel Campau now reads "William would graduate from Wyandotte's first high school, "old Central" on Oak Street, in the Class of 1889."

Also, the typos in the article, "128 North Drive" in the January 2022 issue have been corrected and posted to the Document Center. The article now reads "He is the son of Lena and Harry G. Crassweller" ... and Aaron's name is typed correctly at the end of the article.

Jane (Gies) Rasmussen

REST IN PEACE

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Ed Ronco. He is survived by his wife Anne, son Ed, brothers Douglas and Michael, and sister Dorothy Maynard.

Ed retired in 2003 from the Southgate Community School System. He was an avid golfer and served on the Wyandotte Recreation Commission. His wife Anne, retired school teacher, has also been involved with municipal activities and serves on the Wyandotte Cultural and Historical Commission. Ed will be missed by all who knew him.

To Anne, her family, and many friends, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Ken Navarre

Welcome To Our Newest Members!

Nick Bally
Beryl Gilothwest
Margaret Gruber

Museum Collections Storage Areas Project

(continued from the cover page)

As one can imagine, this is an event that takes a lot of time and thought. Museums hold items in the public trust for which they serve. We care about the items that are donated to us and appreciate the people and stories that go along with them. Museums strive to maintain the confidence of the people by educating them and being transparent about their processes at the same time. At their core, museums are bodies which adhere to a mission, much like other institutions, companies and organizations. Our mission is:

“The Wyandotte Museum is dedicated to inspiring and fostering public awareness, interest, understanding and appreciation of the unique history of the City of Wyandotte and its relationship to the Downriver region. The Museum preserves our mutual heritage through its historic buildings, collections, archives, publications, exhibits, programs and special events using our shared past as a foundation of the future.”

While the mission of the of the City of Wyandotte Museum has not changed in many years, the items in the collections which tell our story may have. But, what does this mean exactly? First and foremost, this project is part of an ongoing process that is integral to the overall collections of the City of Wyandotte Museum. Through this event, staff seek to get a better handle on these items in order to ensure future exhibits are more fruitful, research requests are more easily and concisely conducted, and spaces are safer and more harmonious and organized. The act of handling each individual item and taking it from its current spot to assess it, is important as it helps staff consider the collection piece and its place in our mission and the overall stories we would like to tell. As collections evolve so do the museums which house them. Over time, many of the pieces in the collections may no longer fit our mission for a bevy of reasons, which include relevance, condition and duplication.



Below are a few of the interesting pieces that have been found in the Wyandotte Museum’s collection.

- An upper plate to a pair of false teeth
- An eye examination chair which once resided in the office of Dr. James M. LaBerge
- Three stained glass windows from the First Presbyterian Church of Wyandotte
- A camera used by the Wyandotte Police to take mugshots

Items which may be deaccessioned will be placed in a holding area during each subsequent step, which has been set forth by the City of Wyandotte in the deaccession policy. Staff will research each item, documenting and photographing them. From there, they will be presented to the Cultural and Historical Commission of the City of Wyandotte for final approval.

It is important the public understands the Wyandotte Museum staff and volunteers greatly appreciates all of the pieces it receives from its generous donors. Without all of you, we would not have the robust collection of important pieces with which to tell our story, present our history and relay tales of the wonderful people who made Wyandotte what it is today. While not an easy task, due to the decisions that may need to be made, it is a necessary task all museums face throughout their lifetimes to remain connected to their mission and continue to tell the stories important to the community and history.

We conduct this process ethically and adhere to the deaccession policy created and set forth by the City of Wyandotte. We continually educate all possible donors at the time they make the decision to bequeath their family heirloom, childhood remembrance or piece they found. In this way, we are transparent and they can make the best, informed decision, they can.

To find out more about the Wyandotte Museum collections storage areas project or if you are interested in helping out, contact museum staff at (734) 324-7284 or museum@wyandottemi.gov.

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Museum Collections Storage Areas Project

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If you or anyone you know has questions about the collections policies of the City of Wyandotte or would like further clarification or information about this project, please contact museum staff directly. We will be more than happy to provide you with anything you may need or to meet with you in person, if you'd like. You may also stop by the Ford-MacNichol Home at 2610 Biddle Avenue, on Saturday, March 26, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm to see the spaces and the items that have been rediscovered. Make sure to leave a little room for some light refreshments.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped thus far and to the Wyandotte Cultural and Historical Commission for their help as well as current and future guidance.

-Jesse Rose, Museum Director

Note from the Editor: The article "Museum Collections Storage Areas Project" was abbreviated for this newsletter. To read the full article go to <https://wyandottehistory.org> and select "Museum Projects" under the Document Center.

The Latest Update on George Gouth

George is still at the Applewood (Symphony) Nursing facility in Woodhaven. He extends his thanks to all who sent him cards after our last article. Don't stop sending them, they are a good break from the daily routine. His birthday was February 23 so that is another reason to wish him well.

We spent some time with him recently and he looked and sounded good and boy did we cover a lot with no lack of conversation. I later spoke with someone who reminded me of the carving he did of Lincoln on display at the Lincoln Park Museum. He is one with so many talents.

Also during that conversation, the name of Muriel Lobb came up. She is the first of the four generations of Lobb's Flowers in Lincoln Park and a long time member of the Lincoln Park Museum. We discovered in conversation that we missed something great on Halloween. Muriel had celebrated her 104th birthday.

HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY MURIEL from all at the Wyandotte Historical Society.

See you next month: Ken Navarre

F.K. Thompson Trunk

During our ongoing storage project at the Ford-MacNichol Home Museum, we have found many artifacts of interest to Wyandotte's history that have not been looked at or studied in a while. One of these items that has piqued my interest is a large wooden work trunk. Just off the bat, you would not know that this trunk relates to Wyandotte in any way except for one engraved plaque on the front by the which reads "F.K. Thompson." I am very interested in the lives of craftsmen and blue-collar workers from the 18th to 20th centuries so this item was something that I wanted to look into right away.

F.K. Thompson is Fred Kelly Thompson, born March 28, 1879 in Connecticut to Martha and Fred Thompson. He was the oldest of four children: one other boy and two girls. In 1900 at the age of 21, Fred worked as a carpenter full time in Fenton, MI. In 1904 at the age of 25, Fred married Effie Parrish in Essex, Ontario and the pair moved back to Fenton to start a new life. He then worked at a screen factory, then went back to carpentry until he retired.

From approximately 1921 to 1940, the family lived at 4020 Biddle Avenue, which is now the Riverside Kayak Connection on the corner of Biddle and Grove in the southside. While in that house, they raised four children into adulthood: two girls and two boys. The couple lost a baby, Mariam, at 29 days old in 1928. They had many boarders staying in the house at any given time, from four in 1920 to six in 1940.

By 1942, Fred partially lived in Verdugo City, California as a boarder of Mrs. Stanley Bates during his retirement years. Effie died in 1953 in Wyandotte at the age of 68. Fred died on December 11, 1954 in Los Angeles at the age of 74. They are buried side by side at Bloomdale Cemetery in Trenton.

Looking back at the trunk, it is obviously hand made since there are no manufacturer marks anywhere on the trunk itself. Pieces of wood on the inside are marked "F. J. POOLE, Pontiac, Michigan."



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F.K. Thompson Trunk

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F. J. Poole was a lumber and coal manufacturer, so it is very likely either Fred made the trunk himself or someone he knew made it for him.

It is multi-level with different sized shelves that fit into specific slots which sit on top of each other from the bottom to the top. The shelves are filled with tools and carpentry supplies from the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

Many household names that are still being sold today are present in the trunk, such as a Stanley Hand Tool brand rabbit plane (No 78, the same model is still sold today but is made of metal).



The trunk itself is in rough shape but it was used for many, many years over the course of Fred’s career. This goes to show that an item as simple as a wooden trunk can reveal an entire life that was built behind it!



Audrey Wicklander, Museum Assistant

WANDERING OAKWOOD CEMETERY

The Unknown Headstone

The other day I received a phone call from the Wyandotte Museum staff. While they were cleaning out the storage room they stumbled upon a box labeled “Oakwood Cemetery Stone damaged by city mower”. This headstone is severely damaged and shattered into dozens of pieces. The only thing legible on the stone is a partial death date. It says “ED 23, 1886”.



There were only a handful of known people who died on the 23rd day of 1886 in the Oakwood Cemetery records. I pulled out old photographs from 1974 and was able to find a picture of the stone before it was damaged.

The stone once read “HENRY, SON OF A.& T. FLAISHANS DIED Sept. 23, 1886 3 months old”.

Henry was the son of Albert Henry Flaishans (1861-1937) and Matilda (Tillie) Steinke Flaishans (1865-1910).

There is not much information on Henry because he had such a short life but we do know that his final resting place is somewhere near the Schroeder headstone.



Mary Johna Wein, President of WOCA

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Wyandotte Historical Society

Burns Home

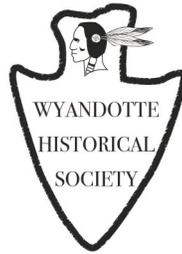
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Website: wyandottehistory.org



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- **MARCH 3:** Ford-MacNichol Home reopens 1:00-5:00 pm every Thursday thru Sunday
- **MARCH 11:** "Untold Stories of Oakwood Cemetery" 7:00 pm at the Marx Home
- **MARCH 26:** "Storage Area Show & Tell" 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the Ford-MacNichol Home
- **APRIL 30 & MAY 1:** Local Artists Show, at the Ford-MacNichol Home
- **MAY 13 thru 15:** Spring City Wide Garage Sale

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