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WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

VOLUME 1

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January 1948



February 2021

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Message from the Prez~

As we ring in the new year we think of new opportunities, goals and dreams we hope to achieve this year. Every decision that we make today effects the future for us tomorrow. Even small decisions that might not seem like a big deal could make the largest impact on our lives.

In 1967, 2610 Biddle Avenue hit the market. The building had been run down, bats were living in the rafters and mink coats were stuffed in the fireplace. Yvonne Latta saw the potential of the Queen Anne styled home and purchased it. People would come and help her paint and her children would remove the weights from the windows and string clothes lines in them so they could open. Yvonne worked hard to make sure the wrought iron fence in the front of the home was saved and most importantly she poured her heart and soul into the property. Yvonne saw the potential in the property and after ten years of renovations, it was complete.

Yvonne’s decision to purchase 2610 Biddle Avenue has impacted all our lives! If you are reading this newsletter, then you have probably spent some time in the museum. Staff, volunteers, board members and history lovers can step back in time and see the Victorian charm of the beautiful museum and we can thank Yvonne’s hard work and love of history for that.



MacNichol Home in 1967



Yvonne Latta in 1993



MacNichol Home in 2020

SANTA PROGRAM

For the first time since COVID, the Historical Society presented our community centered Santa program. We welcomed 115 children and their families to visit Santa, hear a story from Mrs. Claus, do a Christmas craft and shop for their families at a very low-cost Christmas shop.

It takes many volunteers to offer this program. A special thank you to Santa and Mrs. Claus for joining us; and I can’t forget our special Elf Lucy. The Bacon Library staff very generously opened and decorated the historic home for our use and provided a craft for the children to enjoy. All our generous volunteers who set up, pack up, assist shoppers and wrap the gifts deserve a huge round of applause. I can’t forget all of the Roosevelt High School students that volunteered their time to bring down all the supplies and gift items from the third floor AND helped pack up and return items to the third floor – a huge help. Many RHS students also assisted in a variety of places throughout this event. THANK YOU everyone. You are most appreciated.

The list doesn’t end there. A special thank you to the many shoppers who left us with donations to help support this event next year.

A wonderful time was had by all! See you next year.

Beth Labadie

FORD MACNICHOLS

In 1896, plate glass founder of the “Edward Ford Plate Glass Company” Edward Ford commissioned Malcomson and Higginbotham to design the home that would sit at 2610 Biddle Avenue. The home was going to be a wedding present for Edwards daughter Laura Blaine Ford and her husband George Pope MacNichol. Laura and George lived in the home for about seven years and during that time, I often wonder what happened to them after leaving Wyandotte.



Unlike most Wyandotte residents today, George and Laura were not originally from Wyandotte. George was born on November 6, 1869, he was the son of Delia Burrall and Archibald MacNichol of Calais, Maine. Archibald was a lawyer and Delia took care of the home and children.

Laura Blaine Ford was born on November 27, 1874, in Columbus, Ohio. She was the daughter of Caroline Ross and Edward Ford. Laura’s family history book makes a mention of her being the great-great granddaughter to Isaac Stone. Isaac Stone was “enlisted from Norton at the age of twelve and was detailed as surgeon’s assistant”. Laura would be an active member of the daughter of the American Revolution.

On June 6, 1894, George MacNichol married Miss. Laura Ford in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. By 1900 George was working as the treasurer for the Michigan Alkali company and Laura had given birth to three boys Edward (1895-1972), Archibald (1896-1983), and George (1899-1989). Less than three years later the MacNichol’s would have one more child, Laura Ford MacNichol La Forge-Webb. Unlike the boys Laura would be born in Toledo, Ohio.

At the time of Laura’s birth, the MacNichols were living at 2131 Collingwood Blvd. in Toledo, Ohio. The MacNichol family lived there for a while and in 1917 and 1918 George attended the University of Michigan so he could become a doctor. By 1920 George and Laura moved to Sarasota, Florida. Their household consisted of them, a nurse, one servant, and three maids.



On July 30, 1930, George passed away at the age of 60. He is buried with his parents in Calais Cemetery in Calais, Maine. In 1935 Laura moved to Darien, Connecticut. Laura lived in Darien for over fifteen years. Eventually she would move to New Brunswick, Canada and on August 31, 1964, she died at the age of 89. Laura and George are not buried together, Georges remains are with his family in Maine and Laura is next to her parents at Woodlawn Cemetery in Toledo, Ohio.

While the MacNichols didn’t live in Wyandotte for a very long time, Edwards decision to commission Malcomson and Higginbotham has impacted all our lives. His one decision provides us with two beautiful homes in Wyandotte, the Wyandotte Museum, and the Bacon Memorial Library.

(George MacNichol and Laura Ford—1925)

REST IN PEACE



It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Charles Bucska on Dec. 5. Charles was preceded in death by his wife Rosemary earlier this year. Both have been long time members of the society. Chuck also server many years on the Library Board.

IN MEMORY OF THE GEORGE GOUTH THAT I KNEW

It did not take long after meeting George to realize that he was master of many crafts and trades, and always ready to volunteer his time in using these skills in helping others. Just to list a few, there was carpentry, wood burning, wood carving, engraving, program speaking, author, and the best popcorn maker we had.

In the carpentry field he constructed all the display cases in the basement of the MacNichol Home. In the first case he displayed his wood burning skill as he burned into a wooden panel the travel route of Wyandot Indians from their home in Quebec to their future village now known as Wyandotte. The other cases presented the historical, commercial and industrial development of Wyandotte.

The engraving skills are displayed on the Volunteer Award Plaques on the first floor of the MacNichol on the wall opposite the basement stairs. Each name was engraved by George.

His wood carving may be seen on the wooden display case holding the Society's Memorial books below the Award Plaques.

As an author he produced the book "Booze and Bad Times," a history of bootlegging in Wyandotte during prohibition. He also collaborated with others in producing the "Pictorial History of Wyandotte," and the "Brothers in Arms," a civil war history on the Goodell Brothers.

As a volunteer, he accumulated over 15,000 hours from the time that we began accumulating them.

As a presenter of programs, he was always ready to step in when a guest speaker was needed. Who can forget the Laurel and Hardy movies or the popular program of his famous "Outhouses?"

With the loss of George, we have lost another Wyandotte Historian. The list grows shorter. We have lost a good true friend. Your memory will be with us a long, long time.

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1932—2022

KEN NAVARRE

Is This House Haunted?

Recently, I was contacted by an acquaintance from grade school who asked if I could find out who the previous residents of their Wyandotte home were. They were told by a medium that the spirit of a woman named Fran who used to live there was present in the house and wanted to get their attention (not necessarily in a bad way). This acquaintance wanted my help to see if this Fran spirit was possibly real - the only information I had was an address and a time-frame (the 1930s).

The house was built in 1924 and the first owner on record was William Clouston. William was born in Canada in 1887, moved to the United States in 1925, and became a citizen in 1929. He married Catherine Simons on Christmas Eve of 1927. Both had children from previous relationships: Catherine had James, Donald, and Kathleen from her first marriage, and William had Stewart and Gerald from an unknown mother. They then had a son, Daniel, together in 1929. William worked as a pipefitter at the Michigan Alkali Company. The family had moved out by 1933 and the house sat vacant for a year. Sadly, William's life was cut short due to a car crash and he died at Wyandotte General Hospital at the age of 48 – him and his family were living on 21st Street at the time.

After the Clouston's, the Niefert family lived in the house for the next twenty-four years. Vern, Blanch, and Paul Niefert lived in the house between at least 1936 and 1950. Vern was born in 1905 in Wayne, married Blanch Cullison in 1925 and had their son Paul in 1928. Vern was a World War II veteran and after the war, he worked as an oiler at an unknown company. Paul married a woman named Margaret in 1948 and the couple lived with his parents for a couple years. Paul was also a World War II veteran and worked as a clerk at Wyandotte Chemicals after the war. Paul died at the age of 50 in 1978 and it is unknown if he and Margaret had children.

The Nareski's moved into the home by 1953. Casimir (also seen spelled as Kazimir) Nareski was born and raised in Wyandotte but sadly, he lost his mother when he was an infant. He dropped out of Roosevelt to serve in the US Army in the European Theater during World War II. During his time in Germany, he was captured and held as a POW, which he later received a Purple Heart for. He married Irene Bzura in 1945 right after he returned home and they had a son, Dennis, in 1946. Irene died in January of 2000 in Wyandotte and Casimir died in December of 2006 in Marquette. Their son still lives in Marquette. The Nareski's lived in the home until at least 1962 and then the Lisicki's moved in. Not much is known about them but Thaddeus Lisicki was born in 1908 and died in 1972. He was also a World War II veteran and he and his wife, Laura, had one daughter, Teresa.

To answer the question, "Is this house haunted?" - the answer could very well be yes... but is it haunted by a spirit named Fran? According to what our records have to say, it is likely a no. Regardless, this house has a lot of history to it!



Blanch & Vern Niefert



Vern Niefert



Irene & Casimir Nareski



Casimir Nareski



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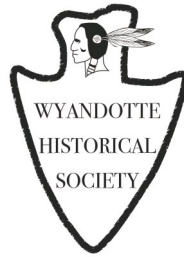
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May 2023 be filled with peace, love and laughter.

*** There will be no society programs for January or February 2023 ***

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