

- EST. 1958 -

WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023

VOLUME 10



1950s



1966



2022



2013

October in Wyandotte



FROM THE PREZ~

I wanted to thank all of those who attended the Wyandotte Historical Societies 65th anniversary. It was a great time with amazing people. During the event we honored Ken Navarre with a lifetime achievement award. Ken has spent thousands of hours volunteering with the historical society to help preserve local history.

OBITUARY

Southgate historian Jerri Pesci passed away the other day. He had a passion for local history and was a member of the Wyandotte Historical Society for many years. Jerry was also a very active member of the Southgate Historical Foundation.

Join us on Friday, November 10, 2023 at 7pm to listen to former detective Dan Galeski speak about some of the crimes he encountered including the famous DeLisle case.

Help Wanted!

Our Society Consultant will be retiring from the bookkeeping portion of her job at the end of the year. We are looking for someone to take on this part time position - approximately 7-10 hours per month. No degree required. Must have bookkeeping experience and be comfortable with Excel. For additional information call Beth at 734-934-6693. Send resumes to Beth Labadie, Wyandotte Historical Society, 2624 Biddle Ave., Wyandotte, MI 48192.

TOURING THE WYANDOTTE MUSEUM

A series by Jesse Rose

The Buddy Lee Doll - Nursery

Whether you love them or hate them, dolls have been an important part of the fabric of our lives for centuries. For children, these inane creatures have served many roles. They brought comfort in times of need or quieted a crying child down just by being held. Dolls have been the best friends or imaginary sibling to a youngster otherwise void of such persons in their lives. Children have suckled and used dolls to help with teething. There are so many reasons dolls have been important to children. For adults, they are simply a piece of history we forget about as we age, or do not give any care to; unless writers and producers use the fear of dolls some humans have (called pediophobia) to scare us in film and on television!

There are plenty of dolls on display in the Ford-MacNichol Home. Unsurprisingly, most of them reside in the nursery on the second floor. Inside the cabinet on the west wall, you will find a Buddy Lee doll peering out, as he attempts to grab your attention. The Buddy Lee doll was originally produced by Lee Jeans to advertise their products, in 1920. At that time, each toy was made of composition and stood about a foot in height. Over the years, this would change, as they would not only get a bit taller, but they would also switch to being made of hard plastic in the 1940s.

The Buddy Lee doll was donated by Wyandotter, Virginia Allan (1916-1999), in 1973, along with over one hundred other items, of which many had a direct line from her family, well-known in Wyandotte from the 1910s onward. A graduate of Theodore Roosevelt High School, class of January 1935, Virginia was the daughter of Clare and Leta Benedict Allan (many times, the surname of the family was spelled, "Allen"). Both of her parents hailed from central Michigan cities where they married and eventually settled in Wyandotte. A pharmacist by trade, Clare Allan became the president and manager of the Cahalan Drug Stores in 1916, a position that brought him great notoriety and civic status. Seven years later, in 1923, Mr. Allan was a founding member of the Wyandotte Kiwanis Club, a service organization still in existence today. Clare Allan passed away in 1954 at the age of sixty-one. At the time of his death, he was still the manager of Cahalan's and was still a member of the Kiwanis Club.

Both Virginia and her mother would become school teachers and would also be integral in the operations of Cahalan Drug Stores for many decades. Virginia possessed both Bachelors and Masters degrees, and was reportedly awarded two Doctorates later in life. She held many esteemed positions throughout her life, including being named the national president of the Michigan Business & Professional Women's Association (BPW), as well as serving as the Chair of President Nixon's Taskforce on Women's Rights and Responsibilities in 1969. A celebrated advocate of women's rights in the workforce, in 1984, Virginia was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame. Founded in 1983, she was a member of the second class inducted, joining other celebrated women such as Rosa Parks.

The donation paperwork which accompanied the Buddy Lee doll cites Virginia Allan's great-grandmother as the person who created the doll. It states she made it and painted it herself. It is more probable, however, if this doll was made by a grandmother of Virginia's, it was likely one of her first-generation grandmothers, Almira Hagle Allan or Hattie Jones Benedict, as they would have still been living past 1920. In fact, when donated in 1973, the registrar who accepted the pieces and completed the paperwork was "Proudly We Record" author, Edwina DeWindt. At that time, Edwina actually placed a question mark next to the "great-grandmother" listing. Perhaps there is a doll expert among our readers who can help shed light on this.

Regardless of who created our Buddy Lee doll, it is an iconic piece of American history and one befitting showcase in our little museum. The provenance of the toy and the family with which it belonged, reminds us how even the inanest piece could possess an extraordinary story. And that story, could provide comfort or fear to future generations of museum-goers!



Throughout my lifetime, I have spent countless hours wandering around cemeteries. I have visited some of the oldest cemeteries in New England, stumbled upon a dozen presidents final resting places, and have gone to some of the largest cemeteries in America. Not only are cemeteries peaceful places to visit but they can teach you about the region and people buried there. Symbolism on headstones can reveal information about who lies there. Some symbols are easy to understand and others you might not know what they represent. Here are a couple of my favorite symbols that you can find walking in Mt. Carmel or Oakwood Cemetery.

Doves: typically mean a soul heading to heaven. However, you might stumble upon a dead dove meaning a life cut short or a dove carrying an olive branch, meaning the soul has reached heaven.

Draped Urn - the urn represents the dust in which a body will turn to over time and the cloth represents what we leave behind in this world.

Finger - often we see one finger pointing, this is supposed to represent God reaching down to us.

Tree Trunk - most of the time the trunk represents a life cut short.

Woodman of the World - is an insurance company that has been operating since 1890. These headstones often have some kind of woodworking on them, such as stump, log or an axe. I don't believe any of the woodman stones in Wyandotte have the phrase on them but occasionally you can find a woodman stone that says "Dum Tacet Clamat." The phrase means "though silent he speaks."

~Mary-Johna Wein



Photos taken at Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio

TRICK OR TREAT!



Detroit Free Press, November 1, 1945

Halloween Was a Night for Kids



THIS FAMILIAR SCENE was repeated all over Detroit as groups of youngsters indulged in the traditional custom of door to door begging. Mrs.

Free Press Photo
Robert Searing, of 5432 Trumbull, is one of thousands of Detroiters who responded to the cry of "help the poor" with generous handouts.

Return Service Requested

Wyandotte Historical Society

Burns Home

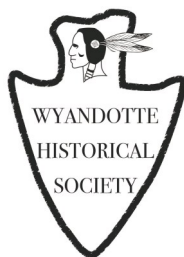
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