

BOWNE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARCH 1, 2013

SPRINGING AHEAD

SAD BEGINNING

2013 Started out on a sad note with the loss of two of our members.

On January 8, 2013, we lost Mary Wenger. Mary was a member of the Historical Society from the day we first organized. She had a "Lifetime Membership" and was an active member until her accident several years ago. Many of the items in the museum were donations or loans from the Wenger family and helped to fill our museums with wonderful remembrances of our past.. Even though she could no longer attend meetings she was always interested in what we were doing. Mary was an inspiration to us all and we will all miss her. However, her presence will always be with us. Each time we see an item with her name on it, we will be remembering.



On February 18, 2013, we lost Jeanne Kinsey.

Jeanne and her husband were a couple of our newer members but have been very active since joining us.

Jeanne always had a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eye and was always fun to work with.



Jeanne Kinsey, Grace Neubecker, Kim Culbertson.

Jeanne will be missed and will be remembered by us all.

Memorials were sent to Hospice and the Alto Methodist church respectively in memory of these two beautiful ladies.

They will be missed but not forgotten.

SPRING INTO THE PAST

It is once again time to prepare for the annual "Spring Into the Past" historical museum tour.

This year it will be on May 4 and 5. This will be the 11th annual tour. Sponsored by the Tri River Historical Museum Network we have 24 museums participating in this years event.

The museum, school and carriage shed will be open from 11am to 8pm and Saturday and 11am to 5pm on Sunday.

Admission is free (donations appreciated) on these two days.

You can pick up one of our booklets at the museum or access it at CommonCorners.com or you can find us on Facebook under Tri River Historical Museum Network.

If you can help on either of these two days, it would be appreciated. Just contact Sally Johnson and let me know what time you would like to help.

The Bowne Center Methodist church has dinner on Saturday night on this weekend in May.

Come join us and see our newest acquisitions.

OFFICERS FOR THE COMING YEAR

Because we did not have a meeting in January, election of officers for 2013 were held at the February meeting.

The following were elected:

Sally Johnson, President

Janet VanWyck, Treasurer

Mary Minich-Carwell, Secretary

Members at large: Robert (Bill) Kinsey, Jack Neubecker

ALTO THIRD GRADERS TO VISIT THE MUSEUM

Once again the Alto third grade classes will be spending an afternoon at the museum.

On May 24th, three third grade classes will be coming to tour the school house, museum, carriage shed and cemetery.

There will be approximately 90 children coming and we need all the help we can get. **Please check your calendars and let us know if you can help us on that afternoon.**

It is always a lot of fun but we need at least two to three people for each venue.

SUMMER HOURS: June, July and August we open the museum buildings on the first Sunday of each of these months from 2-4 in the afternoon. If you can spare two hours on any of these three Sundays, let us know.

DUES

See the following fee list for the annual dues rates.

Thank you for becoming or continuing as a member of the Bowne Township Historical Commission.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

(DUES ARE PAYABLE THE FIRST OF EACH YEAR.)

- () Individual.....\$12.00 per year.
- () Family (husband/wife and children under 18 years of age).....\$25.00 per year
- () Student/full time.....\$10.00 per year
- () Business/Professional.....\$100.00 per year
- () Lifetime, individual.....\$250.00
- () Lifetime, couple.....\$400.00
- Memorials..... \$ _____
In memory of _____

Pleas make checks payable to :

Bowne Township Historical Commission

PO Box 35, Alto MI 49302

Thanks to all our membership for your participation in the Historical Commission. Whether it is the payment of your annual dues, donations, or hands on work. Without you we could not keep the museums running.

2013 dues are now due and payable

OPEN BY APPOINTMENT

Remember you can always call one of the contact people to see about making an appointment to tour our three museum buildings. This is a nice event for a club, family or church group.

There is no charge for doing this.

We do accept and appreciate donations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sally Johnson (616) 868-6424 e-mail: srjohnson4@charter.net

Janet VanWyck (616) 868-7197 e-mail: jancvanw@2farmconnect.net

Township Hall (Sandy) (616) 868-6846 e-mail: clerk@bownetwp.org

WEBSITE: bownetwp.org click on Museum and you will find us.

MEETING HOURS

ALL MEETINGS OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION ARE HELD ON THE SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH.

Our meetings are held in the museum unless otherwise posted. If you have any questions call any of the people on the contact list in this newsletter.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Bowne Township Historical Commission is to preserve the agricultural, residential, and commercial history and integrity of our community. To bring together those people interested in the history of our community in order to educate the present generations so that we might forever leave a historical legacy to those who come after.

MEMORIAL STONE

Our project for 2013 is to fund and erect a memorial to the first four families who settled here in 1836. The names of Israel Graves, Jonathan Thomas, Frederick Thompson and William Wooley will be engraved on a plaque commemorating this event.. The cost for this plaque is approx. \$1000.00.

The Timpson family donated the boulder that sat by the drive of property they owned on Timpson Avenue. It has been moved, with help from Steve Yonker, to a place near the museum where it will be permanently installed this spring.

We are asking for monetary donations to help us with this project. The list of donors will be included in our Historical Commission records as a permanent acknowledgment of those who helped us with this project.

If you would like to help, your donation can be sent to: Bowne Township Historical Commission, PO Box 35, Alto, MI 49302.



Picture of boulder that will become our memorial. It is lying down in this picture but will be standing with the flat surface facing with the sidewalk when it is permanently set.

The engraved plaque will be placed on the boulder after it is permanently set.

We would like to be able to have this done by the "Spring Into the Past" event on May.

A tribute to those who came here 177 years ago and planted the first seeds of what would become our present day community.

BARNS, BARNS, BARNS A DISAPPEARING ICON

The big red, wooden barns (some were white and others unpainted) that once dotted the country side are disappearing one by one from our township. This is not something that is happening just in Bowne, it is happening everywhere.

There are a few that have been preserved and still stand proud and strong, defying destruction. We understand why the old barns are no longer practical. Still it is another piece of history that is changing with the times and slowly disappearing.

We have tried to preserve these icons in picture form and have succeeded to a certain extent. In the museum we have books with pictures of those that are still standing, some in disrepair and others that are still in use. However, since we started this project several have either been torn down, fallen down, or burned.

Anyone who has a picture of a barn that no longer stands in our township, we would love to have you share it with us along with any information you may have (date built, builder, dates it was in use, etc.).



SOUTH LOWELL GRANGE (LOCATED ON KIRBY STREET IN ALTO)

October, 1948, the Grange held it's Diamond Jubilee. Pictures of Charter Members (all that could be gathered) were on display in the Grange.

Miss Ann Clark Merriman of Deckerville was the only one of the Charter Members still living. She was 90 years old and still played the organ. Mrs. Ida Clark was the oldest member to attend the Jubilee.

Antiques and costumes from the ladies of the Grange were on display for all to see which showed the charm of styles of the past years.

The history of the Grange was written and read by Mrs. Claud Silcox. It told of the events and accomplishments of the past 75 years.

Music was performed by Mrs. Keith Bowman and her daughter, Helen, who play old tunes with music by the Dygert String Trio of Grand Rapids. The Kitchenaire Quartette of South Boston sang.

Mrs. Emerson Stauffer, chairman, and the Home Economic Committee served a dinner of coffee, sandwiches, cake and ice cream to the 100 members and guests who attended this celebration.

(taken from: Journal of a Small Town, Alto, Michigan, by Linda Ruesink)

BOWNE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

84th and Alden Nash (M-50)
P.O. Box 35
Alto, MI a49302

MUSEUM STORE

We have several items in the museum that would make nice gifts or maybe a little something for yourself.

We have perpetual calendars featuring old school pictures. \$12.00

A reprint of an old cookbook by the ladies of the Methodist Church. \$8.00

History book written by Henry Johnson (circa 1956). \$5.00

Plat maps, note cards, post cards.

These items can be mailed. Just add \$3.00 for postage and packaging.

GENEALOGY

Come to the museum and do some research on your ancestors.

We have several sources that you can research and we will be glad to help you locate any information that we have available to us.

If you have some family history or a family tree that you would like to share with us, we would be glad to add it to our archives.

If you want help getting started or researching, contact Janet VanWyck and ask her about her genealogy class. You can find her in our contact info on page 2 of this newsletter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Current Officers:

President: Sally Johnson

Treasurer: Janet VanWyck

Secretary: Sandra Kowalczyk

Members at Large: Jack Neubecker,

Bill Kinsey

RECAP:

APRIL 8 & 29— SPRING CLEANING—NO BUS. MTG. (9-12)

MAY 4 & 5—SPRING INTO THE PAST MUSEUM TOUR

MAY 13— MEETING IN MUSEUM AT 10 AM

MAY 21—HOST TRI RIVER HIST. MUSEUM NTWK MEETING

MAY 24— ALTO THIRD GRADERS TOUR MUSEUM

JUNE 10—MEETING IN MUSEUM AT 10 AM

MAY 4TH AND 5TH ARE THE
DATES FOR THIS YEARS:

SPRING INTO THE PAST

MUSEUM TOUR.

You can pick up a booklet at the museum, the library, or the township hall with a listing of all the participating museums.

You can find the listings for 24 of West Michigan's finest small museums in one of these booklets. They are all members of the Tri-River Historical Museum Network.

These small treasures are a good source of entertainment and most charge a very small fee or are free. Good family entertainment with a lot of educational information about each of the 24 communities represented.

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Sally Johnson

Contributors: If you would like to submit an item or an article to the newsletter please contact me. You can find my contact info on page 2 of this newsletter.

Newsletters are mailed or e-mailed: Jan., Apr., July, and Oct. of each year.

We prefer to e-mail the newsletter to those who have access to a computer. If you are not receiving this newsletter via e-mail and would like to, just send me your e-mail address and I will add it to the list.