

# BOWNE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

JANUARY 1, 2020

## JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH

### 2019 IS NOW HISTORY

Looking back at this past year it seems to have passed by rather quickly. However, my own life seems to be doing the same thing. I guess as we get older and wish for time to slow down it seems to do just the opposite.

Our first event of 2019 was our annual Spring Into the Past event the first weekend in May. Transportation was the theme and we enjoyed sharing our displays with those who visited us.

The end of May we entertained the Alto third graders. This year we had to have a shortened visit because of the weather. Mother Nature threatened us with thunder and lightening and lots of rain. We were still able to do some fun things with the students. Students, teachers, parents and museum helpers numbered nearly 100 people for the day.

June, July and August were the months when we open our doors on the first Sunday of the month to visitors.

September we set up at the Alto Fall Harvest Festival and Car show. We were in the gazebo in Veteran's Park and had many people stop by and visit and look over our display.

On into Fall- we are still working with the Township trying to get the addition on our museum building. We also welcomed new members to our Historical Commission.

December was our annual open house. In the school, children could write letters to Santa and leave them in our mailbox and get sleigh bells to hang on their Christmas trees. In the museum we had cookies and warm drinks. The live Nativity the Bowne Center Methodist Church was set up next to the school museum with live animals (camels, sheep, cows, and a baby Yak). We had

approximately 75-100 people attend our event.

Now we are looking forward to 2020. Looking for a healthier and happier new year and lots of new and exciting things to bring to you.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR -2020

One of the new things we have added to our museum is a large flat screen TV. It was installed and ready for use at our Christmas open house. At the open house it was set up to look like a nice fire burning in a fireplace. Gave a nice warm glow to our event.

We plan on having our Alto history that we did available to be seen on the tv and some other programs we are working on. We also would like to have the upper floor of the museum photographed and put on a dvd so that those who cannot climb the stairs to the upper floor can see what we have by watching the tv on the main floor. Just the beginning of some fun things we have planned for the coming years.

When we get our addition on the museum building we will have a better and more organized place to put all of our research materials. This will make it more convenient for those who are doing genealogy research and looking for other information about our community.

We are also looking forward to welcoming lots of visitors coming to see all the great items we have in our buildings.

### CHRISTMAS IN THE SCHOOL MUSEUM DECEMBER 2019



*From Bowne HC Research Materials***MARTIN ALLEN HOLCOMB**

Martin Allen Holcomb was born in Ravenna, Ohio, January 25, 1826., to Jarvin and Candace Holcomb.

At age 18 he learned the wagon/carriage making trade. He married Philancia M. Patehen (2-7-1849). In 1850 he went to California to make a swifter fortune in the gold fields. 1854(5) he returned home and bought 160 acres in section 26 in Bowne Township.

Martin and Philancia had four children. George B. (who died in 1874 age 17), David Denman., Emily C. and Candace C.

In 1862 he enlisted in Company I, 26 Michigan Infantry Vol. He enlisted at Bowne for 3 years at age 36. He served until he was wounded at the Battle of Spottsylvania on May 12, 1864. His wounds disabled him from further service and he returned to his property in Bowne Township and the acreage he owned.

*Note: In the Battle of the Wilderness Mr. Holcomb performed a deed of great valor. Single-handedly he stopped a Confederate battery that was pulling a number of artillery pieces into position. He shot the lead horse, thus checking the advance, then held the artillery at bayonet point until help arrived. Martin was described at 5 feet 6 inches tall, of light complexion with blue eyes and dark hair and weighing 120 lbs., proving that heroes do not necessarily have heroic proportions.*

Besides farming his land he also served as Bowne Township Treasurer for two terms, Commissioner of Highways and was Census Enumerator in 1880. He was also a member of the G.A.R. of Freeport

He resided in Bowne until his death on November 7, 1914, at age 89.

Mr. Holcomb was a member of the Masons and was the only Knight Templar in Bowne. He was a member of Hooker Chapter and of the Ionia Commandry No. 11. He was made a Mason by Lowell Lodge in 1871.

A funeral was held from his home conducted by Rev. F.E. Chamberlain, assisted by Rev. Freeman of Grand Rapids and Rev. Howell. The internment was in Bowne Cemetery and conducted by the Masonic members of Lowell. Dr. C.H. Anderson, W.M., delivered the burial address, attended by forty of the brethren.

Mr. Holcombs property was located on the land across the road from what is now Tyler Creek Golf Course.

*(The next few newsletters will be dedicating this page to the story or stories of some of the pioneers who ventured to Bowne Township in the early years and were instrumental in the development of this agricultural community)*

**BECOME A MEMBER**

**TIME TO PAY YOUR 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Our annual membership rate—see the following list

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to

Bowne Township Historical Commission

P O 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.

**Do you or someone you know have an interest in history?**

**We need old/young/energetic/history loving/ people who would like to help us with our collections and materials. We need new members who would like to help us keep our artifacts and research materials in good condition and properly stored and filed. If you would like to join us, contact any of the board members listed on this page.**

**THE SUFFRAGETTES**

Our April Newsletter will have info on how we will be celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the suffragettes and women’s right to vote.

August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified, enfranchising all American women and declaring for the first time that they, like men, deserve all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

**OPEN BY APPOINTMENT**

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

There is no charge for doing this.

We do accept and appreciate donations

**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 is this newsletter

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

Janet VanWyck (616) 868-7008 e-mail: [jancvanw@gmail.com](mailto:jancvanw@gmail.com)

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

**WEBSITE:** [bownetwp.org](http://bownetwp.org) (click on Museum and you will find us.)

**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 generation so that we might forever leave a historical legacy to those who come after.*

## 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 contact info on page 3 of this newsletter.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Current Officers:

President: Richard Johnson

Treasurer: Sally Johnson

Secretary: Mary Minch-Carwell

Members at Large: Jack Neubecker  
Kim Culbertson

Historian: Janet VanWyck

## NEWSLETTER

Editor: Sally Johnson

Contributions: 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 3 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 you to the list.

### MEETING TIMES:

**JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WE DO NOT MEET. FIRST MEETING OF 2020:**

March 9 at 10am in the museum.

This meeting is time to elect officers for the coming year.

**If you are a member or know someone who is interested in becoming a member or learning more about us, our meetings are open to all who wish to attend.**

**Our door is always open.**

**Come and visit us.**

**Attend a meeting.**

**Become a member.**

**Give a donation.**

**Share your family history.**

**Do some research.**

**Volunteer.**

## BOWNE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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