
LIVING HISTORY

Second Quarter 2011

April-June

Save these Dates-New Lecture Series and Walking Tour

A series of special guest speakers has been scheduled for this year, offering a fascinating insight into little-known or forgotten aspects of local history. "Ghosts of the Past," will feature three lectures at the Blair Memorial Library, culminating with a "ghost walk" of downtown Clawson. Be sure to mark your calendar!

"Ghost Rivers" Bob Muller, naturalist, Royal Oak Nature Society, will discuss Red Run, a river that used to run through our area. Between 1920 and the mid-1960s, it was buried. It is now a ghost river, but if you know what to look for, you can still see signs of it. Along with Red Run, ghosts of old farm woodlots and ridges left by the glaciers will open your eyes to the past everywhere you look. Monday, May 16th, 6:30p.m.

"Detroit Legends and Mysteries" Paul Vachon, author of *Forgotten Detroit* and other books on local history, will present fascinating local lore, including the Snake Goddess of Belle Isle, the knock-knock legends and the Red Dwarf (Nain Rouge). Monday, September 19th, 6:30p.m.

***Lost Villages of Oakland and Macomb
Counties,*** Pat McKay, historian with the Rochester Hills Historical Museum, will discuss the towns and

Continued on page 2

Honoring our Veterans

Michigan Vietnam Veteran's Traveling Memorial to visit Clawson Sunday, June 12th

The Historical Museum is sponsoring the Michigan Vietnam Veteran's Traveling Memorial at our memorial Park across from City Hall, from 11 a.m. to 3p.m. In case of rain this will be held across the street in the Community Room at City Hall.

This Memorial to the men and women from MICHIGAN who lost their lives in the Vietnam War contains over 2600 names of veterans who were killed in action. Sponsored by Pat Daniels, past president, and the officers and members of Chapter #154 Vietnam Veterans of America, Roseville, Michigan.

Like the National War Memorial in Washington DC., which honors all members of the US Armed Forces who fought in the Vietnam War and who

Continued on page 2

Inside This Issue

- 2 Museum gets new sign
- 3 American Legion Post #167
Bits and Scraps-Clawson Class of '39 & Detroit
- 4 From the Archives – David Cleary and the
American Legion Post #167;
Museum hours and information; policies
- 5 Still Standing-Downtown's Oldest Building
- 6 Clawson Family File-The Reid Family; Artifact
Care Guides; Clawson Genealogy
- 7 Old House Update-The Reid Farmhouse
From the curator's desk

Vietnam Veterans Memorial, continued...

died in service, or were unaccounted for, the Michigan Vietnam Veterans Traveling Memorial honors the Veterans from throughout the State of Michigan.

The Moving Wall is the creation of Kurt Damrow, a retired Michigan Air National Guard Staff Sergeant from Port Austin, Michigan. He first conceived of the wall in memory of his cousin, Navy GMG3 Oliver Damrow of Kinde, Michigan, who was killed shortly after his return to Vietnam for his second tour of duty. Kurt dedicated his efforts to the memory of his cousin and those who lost their lives throughout the state.

SSGT Damrow was assisted in creating the Michigan Wall by friend and co-worker John Swanson, who transformed the vision and provided the technical expertise that created the five panels of names that you will be seeing. John is also a Vietnam Veteran who has taken great pride in creating the Memorial to his fellow soldiers and their families.



Ruth Babcock, also from the Vietnam Veterans of America, has created scrapbooks of every soldier with personal information about each of the individuals whose names appear on the wall, complete with photographs, military history, etc.

Clawson had five servicemen who were killed in the war. Their names are inscribed on a bronze plaque on the war memorial in the park. They are James Ray Laudicina, Sidney McArthur Rasnick, John Robert Miller, Harold James Sotzen, and David Franklin Vandercook. The Clawson museum is still looking for information on James Laudicina and Sidney Rasnick to complete our posters for the event. If anyone has information, please contact Melodie Nichols.

By Tim Burns

Save these Dates, continued...

villages that once dotted the countryside of our counties, and have since been swallowed up by larger city, or have simply disappeared. A fascinating look into our local history. October, date TBA, 6:30 p.m. All talks held at the Blair Memorial Library.

Ghost Walk of Downtown Clawson,

Thursday, October 20th, 6:30 p.m. Take a stroll through Clawson's past and visit with citizens of yesteryear. Meet at the Library parking lot; tour leaves promptly at 6:30. Approximately 1 ½ hours. Appropriate for all ages.

There is no charge for the lectures; suggested donation for the ghost walk \$2 per person. Reservations are requested. Please call 248-588-9169 to register for any of the presentation or the walking tour.



The Clawson Historical Society has purchased a new sign for the museum exterior, to replace the aging wooden sign. The colorful new sign, which is being made by Sign-A-Rama, should be installed the first week in April. The photo above shows the primed sign awaiting its final paint colors.

Bits and Scraps...

A tattered old scrapbook from 1939 holds mementos of a senior year at Clawson High School.

Among them are several items collected during the graduates' 3-day boat trip from Detroit to Mackinac Island on the *SS South American*. Eveline Johnson, who compiled the scrapbook, included a receipt for \$15, which presumably covered the cost of the trip, her ticket stub, table reservation card, the daily printed menus from the ship, and a *Daily Radio News* book published and sold by the ship's wireless operators.



Clawson Class of '39, aboard the South American

The news book, printed on a regular typewriter but with a professional paper cover, included the passenger list, a program for the daily entertainment, tidbits of gossip about the passengers, and advertisements for the ship's barber and various shops on Mackinac, including the ubiquitous fudge shops.

Also included was this interesting article on Detroit:

“Dynamic Detroit, which has the peculiar distinction of being the only city in the United State which lies directly north of Canada, has more than one claim to fame. For one thing it is the fastest growing large city in the country. In 1900 Detroit was just an overgrown village, with wooden sidewalks, hitching posts, and trees along the main street. The automobile changed all that. By 1930, Detroit had a population of nearly two million, and was still growing.

More than any other great city, Detroit has come to represent the tremendous expansion of heavy industry that has created our modern America. That has been at once a source of strength and a misfortune. The automobile has given Detroit its wealth and its power. It has also tied its prosperity closely to the ups and downs of an industry that responds with extreme sensitivity to every beat of the nation's economic pulse.”

Clawson American Legion David Cleary Post #167

Celebrating their 75th Anniversary last year, the Clawson American Legion Post continues to offer support for homeless Veterans as well as reaching out to the community in general. Membership to the American Legion is open to all Veterans.

Each year they provide Christmas baskets to needy vets, as well as collecting coats and hats to help the homeless. The Post also has a baseball team.

Money raised from fundraisers, including the annual Poppy Day sale, is used to help many other charitable organizations in the area.

Each year a Memorial Day Parade is organized by the Post, with a gathering at the gazebo in Memorial Park to pay tribute to all fallen veterans. An open house follows.

Two scholarships are given to local students yearly. If you would like more information about the baseball team or scholarships, or if you know of a veteran in need of assistance, contact the Post at 248-588-6626.

Help for veterans can also be attained from the Veteran's Services Division of Oakland County, 1151 Crooks Road, Troy. You can reach them at 248-655-1250.

More history of the Post can be found on page 4 of this newsletter. Poppy Day Sale will be May 12th, with May 13th as a rain date. Be sure to buy a poppy to show your support of our veterans.



CLAWSON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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MUSEUM OPEN WEDNESDAY AND SUNDAY, 1-4 P.M., EXCEPT HOLIDAYS. ADMISSION IS FREE

GROUP TOURS BY APPOINTMENT



PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

Clawson Historical Museum Purposes and Policies

The Clawson Historical Museum is owned by the City of Clawson It is governed by a Historical Commission of five members appointed by the Clawson City Council. It is managed by a curator appointed by the City Manager. Its operating budget is funded through the City of Clawson and augmented by generous donations from the Clawson Historical Society.

Museum Purpose: The Clawson Historical Museum exists to collect, preserve and encourage the use of documents, photographs and artifacts related to the early history of Clawson, from its settlement in 1823 to the present, focusing especially on the decade of the 1920s, when Clawson Incorporated as a Home Rule Village.

Collections: Historical records include those related to area public and civic organizations, as well as personal oral histories of residents, property abstracts, school and business records and thousands of photographs documenting Clawson's buildings, homes, streets, and the changes they have undergone through the decades. Also included in the collection are maps, almanacs, and contemporary published materials such as newspapers, books, magazines and periodicals that reflect the culture of the 1920s.

These materials are available to the public for research on genealogy, property history, environmental investigations and other personal interests. Student research is especially encouraged. ❖

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DAVID CLEARY POST #167

The Clawson American Legion Post is named in honor of David Edward Cleary, one of the seven local men who fought in World War I as part of the 32nd Red Arrow Division. Made up entirely of men from Wisconsin and Michigan, the Red Arrow Division saw combat across France, including the Argonne, the Marne, and Alsace.

While there was only one wartime casualty, that of Earl Mattimore, several of the Clawson soldiers suffered from their experiences, especially the lasting effects of mustard gas. Sidney Dunmore, was unable to work for several years. His wife, Bernice Measel Dunmore, was allowed to work his job at Ford Motor Company, since she was not taking the job from another man, but merely filling in for her ailing husband. Fred Squires reputedly suffered a head injury from which he never fully recovered. He

made a living best he could doing odd jobs.

A lieutenant-colonel in the Army and commanding officer of the 120th machine gun battalion, Cleary opened a haberdashery shop in Clawson on his return and later started Clawson's first newspaper, the Clawson Journal. At the time of his death, he was acting Village President and President of the School Board. He was founder of the first Boy Scout troop in Clawson. He was also Postmaster for Clawson until 1925, and after his death his wife, Marian, took over the job as Postmistress until 1951.

David died in March 1927 at the age of 39. 2,000 people attended the dedication of a memorial boulder to honor Cleary. General Guy Wilson, head of the Michigan National Guard and Cleary's former commanding officer, praised Cleary for his coolness in battle and his collected

and calm private life, stating "He became a success because he lived with a purpose, that was to prepare himself in time of peace, to defend his country in time of war. He loved his country and his country loved him."

After his death, his wife Marian was instrumental in the organization of the American Legion Post in 1935, and was first President of the Auxiliary. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Post worked with others to pressure the government to restore Veteran's Administration funding.

Since that time, the Legion has continued to offer support to Veterans in numerous ways, and continues to honor our heroes, both past and present.

The Legion Hall is located at 655 S. Main Street. If you are aware of a Veteran in need of assistance, please contact the Post at 248-588-6626.

Still Standing... the oldest building downtown

Most of the downtown area of Clawson consists of buildings that were constructed in the 1920s. This provides Clawson with a unique and attractive downtown setting, full of interesting early 20th century architecture. Although most of the buildings have been renovated numerous times through the decades, many retain or have had restored their unique details, including interior tin ceilings, hardwood and tile flooring, exterior crenellation and stone lintels, and attractive brick facades.

While a majority of the buildings were constructed as the village grew in the 1920s and roads were widened and paved, the oldest building still standing dates from at least 1915. Recently renovated, it stands between Main Street and Church Streets at 30 East 14 Mile Road.

Originally it was home to the Clawson Grocery Company, which offered fruits, vegetables and meats. Clawson Permanent Wave shop occupied the site in the 1930s, and in the 1950s, Pratt's Feeds, shown at right, which offered a variety of animal feeds, including fresh horse meat.



This building, on East 14 Mile Road, is currently the oldest still standing in the downtown area. Below, the interior of the building when it was Pratt's feeds in the 1950s.



East 14 Mile Road, 1924. The Lincoln Theatre can be seen in the left foreground; the next building is the oldest still standing downtown. In this photo, it is the Clawson Grocery Company. Red Crown Gas is on the right, and Main Street can be seen in the distance.

Did you know...

The oldest building in Clawson is the Gramer Funeral Home. Built by Joshua Fay from oak trees on the property about 1827-29, it was the first house in Clawson to have a bathtub, as well as the first to have gas lighting.

It was a private residence until it became a funeral home in the 1940s.

Clawson Family File The Reid Family

Brothers Adam and Peter Reid came to the United States from Ireland in 1846 or '47, first settling in Southfield Township. About 1875, Peter purchased the farm of Israel Bickford. The Bickford property, approx 206 acres, spanned 14 Mile Road, stretch West to Crooks Road, East approximately to Bywood, and north to where Selfridge begins today.



Samuel and Jennie Bell Reid

Peter Reid married Jane Howe in 1846, and they had four children, Adam, Samuel, Eliza and Molly. Tracing the Reid family is sometimes difficult, due to the family penchant for reusing the same names in every generation; Brothers Peter, Adam and Samuel emigrated from Ireland; their father was also named Peter. Adam stayed in Southfield; (his sons were also named Peter, David and Adam.) Peter, who moved to Clawson, also had sons named Samuel and Adam. These sons eventually took over the farmland on 14 Mile Road, each building their own house, and they farmed the land into the 1920s.

Peter Reid's farm was mentioned in the *Portrait and biographical Album of Oakland County* in 1891. The

continued on page 8

Artifact Care Guides Now Available on the Web

Photographs and textiles are two types of artifacts that are most susceptible to deterioration and destruction due to the ravages of time and poor storage conditions. Ultraviolet light, moisture, heat, acid and dirt all take their toll in destroying our treasured heirlooms.

The Historical Society Website now has information on caring for your textiles and photographs. A collection of best practices for your personal collections has been compiled by Deloris Kumler, and is now available in pdf format. You can access these guidelines on our website at www.clawsonhistoricalsociety.org.



Visit us at
www.clawsonhistoricalsociety.org

Clawson Genealogy

The Clawson area genealogy group meets at the Blair Memorial Library the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 2:30. The next meeting will be April 19th.

Old House Update

Decoding the past of a house.

As a lover of old homes, I find that sometimes there is just “something” about the façade of a house that catches my eye. I find myself driving out of my way to pass the house and catch a glimpse of it again, and it crops up in my mind in quiet moments.

I am what you would call slightly obsessed with houses. Take for instance a farmhouse on the southwest side of town. It sits in a neighborhood of mostly 1920s to 1950s homes, and is clad in vinyl siding. It rests on a relatively modern cement block foundation. But there was something that bothered me. The windows are “wrong” for a 20th century house. Tall and narrow, way up under the eaves, and extending almost to the floor. The house itself was tall and narrow, like a colonial I-house. Everything about its proportion suggested a 19th century Greek Revival farmhouse, even under its vinyl siding!

Needless to say, it bothered me. Had I asked, the answers were right there in front of me. All I needed to do was ask the right person-Deloris Kumler-who, when I finally did, told me it was one of the farmhouses built by the Reid family.

The Reids owned two farms on W 14 Mile Road, then known as the Clawson Road. Two brothers, Samuel and Adam Reid, each had a farm, one on the north and the other on the south side of the road. Their father, Peter, had once farmed 206 acres, known as Maplecrest. The house on the southern farm can be easily identified in the engraving printed in the 1891 *Portrait and Biographical Album of Oakland County, Michigan*. Even the bay window is still intact, although the house has been turned 180 degrees.

Proportion, window placement, quirky floor plan...it's the little details that give the biggest clues to a house's history.

There was the answer to that old house “mystery,” that wasn't really a mystery at all. All I had to do was ask. You can find more about the Reid family on page 8 of this newsletter.



If you compare this photo to the house at the left of the lithograph shown on page 8, you will see it is the same house, turned 180 degrees. A porch has been added to the façade that was originally the side of the house. Clawson's rural past is ever near!

From the Curator's Desk

Spring is finally here, and it couldn't come soon enough for me! I know summer is just around the corner, and I suspect it will be a hot one, once again, making working in the museum difficult or impossible on many afternoons. Because of that, beginning after Easter I will be working “summer hours”. You can find me Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon. Open hours Sundays and Wednesdays will remain from 1-4p.m.

We are offering more events this year, and I hope you will spread the word on our lecture series; I know these speakers personally and I am sure you will thoroughly enjoy their talks. And be sure not to miss the downtown Ghost Walk in October. On June 12th the Michigan Vietnam Veteran's Traveling Memorial will be paying us a visit. This memorial is dedicated solely to those from Michigan who lost their lives in the war. A special exhibit dedicated to Clawson men will be presented, as well. And of course, the 4th of July is really just around the corner – we have great things in store for that fun day.

Just a reminder that if you would like to receive the newsletter via email only, drop me a line at historicalmuseum@cityofclawson.com. Otherwise, you'll continue to receive the paper version. Please pass it on to a friend or neighbor when you are finished with it.

Check us out of Facebook, as well. Information on events and museum exhibits is updated frequently.

Until next time,

Melodie Nichols

Continued from page 6
farm and the farmer were praised for their attractiveness and efficiency:

“Almost the entire acreage is under cultivation and the owner keeps nineteen head of cows and other stock in proportionate numbers. The land is well tilled and various crops are raised, the amount per acre being generally satisfactory and the quality A No. 1. The buildings that have been put up are substantial,

The Reids later lived in a house on North Main Street. Son Fred, a doctor, built a house on Broadacre. (That house was featured in a previous edition of this newsletter.)

At least one of the Reid’s barns still stood on West 14 Mile near Webik Avenue during the 1920s when Clawson began paving roads and installing water and sewer services. This photograph is 14 Mile Road, looking east, when L.P. Cookingham, first Village President, arrived in 1927.



conveniently arranged, and sufficient to answer every need...The prosperous condition in which Mr. Reid now finds himself is due to his having worked hard and given his close attention to his business affairs and when necessary exercising frugality and self-denial.”

Maurice Blair, who knew the Reid family, recalled that 14 Mile Road, or the Townline Road as it was then known, did not extend through their farm as far as Crooks Road. In his recollections, he states, “a ridge ran between the two forks of the Johnson Creek, and it was covered with Beech and Elm trees. Finally the road was ordered opened. The farmers held bees to do the work, for the poll-tax would not Produce enough labor to complete the work. They cut down the trees and sawed them into stove wood, and corded it along the sides of the highway. They then graded a winding road, which twisted through the stumps, which would permit travel by careful driving.”



Cookingham, who stated he “could not tolerate dirt roads” was instrumental in starting the paving project in the late 1920s. Finally deemed an unsafe structure, the last barn was demolished in 1951.

***Clawson Historical Museum
VISIT US SOON!***