



Manchester Area
Historical Society
☞
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2003-2004 Officers

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First Vice-President

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M A N C H E S T E R

FALL

MEETINGS

Summer is almost over and it's time for fall activities to start once again. Jim Wilson, Vice-President in charge of programs, has some interesting and exciting meetings planned.

The year will kick off with a meeting on September 9th at the home and new blacksmith shop of member Bob Mottice, 20830 Pleasant Lake Road (about 1 mile east of M-52 on the North side of the road). Bob will talk about the history of blacksmithing and demonstrate his skills in this subject.

The October meeting will be held October 14th at Bob Anzalone's auto restoration shop at 8720 Sharon Hollow Road, the former George Macomber farm. Bob will talk on restoring antique autos and will show some examples.

November 11th will be the second annual "Bring an antique to share" meeting. Attendees are invited to bring an antique to display. It may be something you hope to get information on or to share your knowledge with the group. This meeting will be held in the Village Room in the lower level of Manchester Village Hall.

Reminder!

The September and October
meetings
will be held outside the village

The meetings are at 7:30 and the public is welcome at all meetings. Please note the September and October meetings are not in our usual location. For more information, call Jim at 428-0407.

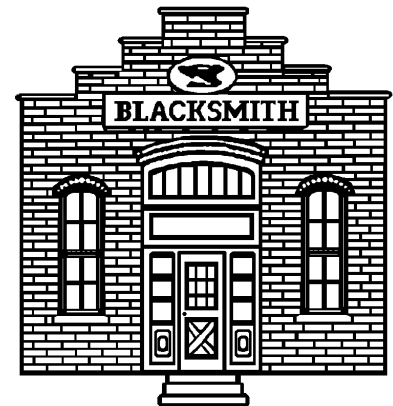
Around the Shop

Our thanks go to the docents and blacksmiths that served on Chicken Broil day. The shop was open during the afternoon and evening to give visitors a chance to drop by, and about 35 did. Tootie and Tod Armentrout were docents and Tim Armentrout, Dave Goodrich, and Al Gleeson kept the forge going.

Work continues on the conversion of the shop area back to the times of wagon manufacture and blacksmithing. A carpenter's bench has been added to demonstrate the woodworking aspects of wagons. The wheels of the wagons were made of wood and much of the body was also. We are looking for old carpenter tools for this display. Tod Armentrout donated the bench which his grandmother, Edna Knauss, had stashed in her garage. Thanks to them both for this addition.

The padded chairs formerly used for meetings have been moved to storage in the old cooper factory building near the Village Hall. Civic groups like ours are permitted to use part of this building for storage without charge.

Exterior painting has been put on hold until other up-
grading has been completed. Bids are out for new front doors. The present door was not new when it was installed 25 years ago and it needs replacement. While we are at it, we are planning to restore the entrance with two doors as it was originally. Buggies, sleighs, and other large items will then be able to be brought into the building without taking them apart. The proposed doors will completely fill the six-foot opening and will have glass in them. They will not be as tall as the original, but should appear like them. These new doors need to be insulated because we now heat the building, which wasn't the case originally. Some other trim and sill repair should be completed before we paint.



MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

Sept. 9, 7:30. 20830 Pleasant
Lake Road. **Bob Mottice**,
history of blacksmithing

October 14, 7:30. 8720 Sharon
Hollow Road. **Bob Anzalone**
restoring antique autos.

November 11, 7:30. Village
Room. Bring an antique to share.

Howard Parr, House Committee

Scale Model Buildings

The Manchester Area Historical Society met on May 13, at the Village Hall. Following a short business meeting, Program Chair Jim Wilson introduced the speaker for the evening.

Jerry Waters presented a program on the scale model buildings he makes from scratch. He has been making these miniature buildings for seven to eight years to different scales. One inch or 1/12th scale is called dollhouse scale. The farm buildings he makes are 1/16th scale. He builds the houses, barns, and stores so the roofs can be removed to see the detail inside including lights, rafters, furniture, clocks, feed bags, goods for sale, round bales, barrels, rolls of fence and even a moose head mounted on the wall.

He also decorates the buildings on the outside by placing park benches, people, bicycles, and piles of wood around them.

Waters builds his buildings out of old, weathered wood and Styrofoam made to look like old wood. The sides and roofs of the barns look like they are



made of galvanized steel, but are actually laminated cardboard. He made a machine that puts crinkles in the cardboard and then he paints it silver and sprinkles on cinnamon to give it a rustic look.

He makes rivets using a pencil to push out the paper. He collects scale model bull-



dozers and farm tractors and puts them in his buildings. He prefers creating dioramas instead of lining up his scale models on shelves.

Waters also described growing up in Manchester in the 1950s, using the cement plant as a fort and bringing home treasures from the village dump on Ann Arbor Hill. He still has some of the antiques he scavenged.



County Presents Historic Preservation Award to Don Limpert



Leah Gunn, Chairperson of the County Board of Commissioners, presents Don Limpert with the County Preservation Award

Don Limpert was selected for a county preservation award this year by the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission. This was in recognition of his work preserving the unique Italianate architecture of Manchester's downtown buildings.

Don moved his family to the Village of Manchester in the 1960's to satisfy his vision of "rehabilitating" her. His belief was that renovation works for museums, but keeping historic buildings viable requires practical and financially sound planning. Rehabilitate ... in Don's plan meant to bring the buildings back to their original beauty outside, while remodeling inside to be practical for current businesses.

In one sense his timing couldn't have been worse. The 1960's were a time of "Urban Renewal." Communities tore down historic buildings to replace them with steel and glass boxes, a situation Manchester's downtown building owners acknowledged because many buildings were unoccupied and most were in dire condition. Don invested in his rehabilitation plan by purchasing ten historic buildings on Main Street. Combining his love of history with his learned skills as a journeyman carpenter and building designer, he began the revitalization of Manchester's downtown district.

FOR SALE



115-117 E. Main
111 E. Main
109 E. Main



110 E. Main
118-120 E. Main
120 E. Main

This Complete Package Includes All Leases

\$370,000.00

Exclusive Sales Agent

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*The north side of
Main Street.*

Those who favored urban renewal found Don to be a worthy opponent or as some may say, "very hard headed."

The John Schneider Blacksmith shop was another of Don's projects. He renovated this building to be historically functional, then sold it at cost to the Manchester Area Historical Society. It is believed to be the oldest operating Blacksmith Shop in Michigan and continues to be the Society's home.

The Mill in the 1970s, before conversion



*More photos and history
will be included in future
newsletters.*

Farming in the Early 1900s

Editor's Note: This continues and concludes the commentary of Howard Parr about the farmer's work in the early 1900s - in a world powered by man and his horses.

Harvesting

Most of our hay was cut twice each season and about the time we finished with the second cutting, wheat was ready to be harvested. We used the same flat racks and wagon for harvesting but had different implements. Ours was a Deering five-foot grain binder. It took three good horses to pull this machine and make it work right. We usually worked the heavy team all day long and one of the light team mornings and the other afternoons.

The cut grain came out of the binder in bundles tied with binder twine. A bundle carrier was used by the operator to collect a few bundles and periodically drop them in windrows for easier shocking. The rattlesnakes on our farm made it wise for us to shock the bundles as they were cut rather than allowing them to remain on the ground overnight. When that had to be done it was prudent to move each bundle with a fork to locate any snakes which might have crawled under them to stay warm at night.

Our farm was blessed with marshes and creeks, but that habitat attracted rattlesnakes more than higher ground might have. We killed several rattlesnakes each year and learned early on to avoid them. One of our horses seemed to have a sixth sense and could either hear or smell them. Her response was to simply balk and refuse to move as she normally did. In a way she was a help to us even though it might be frustrating as far as getting our work done. Dad would routinely spear a snake with the middle tine of this three-tined hay fork. He sometimes would let the snake strike the end of the fork handle before it was killed so we could see how tiny the two drops of amber poison were. Then after the snake was dead he would show us the fangs and demonstrate how they worked to eject the poison.

After the wheat and rye were harvested we worked on the oats. When it had dried enough in shocks, the bundled grain was loaded on the wagon, hauled to the farmyard and stacked until threshing time. Other farmers left the shocks in the field until threshing. We felt it saved the labor of the teams it took to thresh from the field. The stacks of bundles shed water and remained

dryer than shocks in the field. Therefore, we could often thresh from the dry stacks when it was too wet to thresh from the field. There was added insurance that our grain wouldn't get so wet that it might sprout and be ruined, which did happen to shocks in the fields during periods of unusually wet, warm weather.

Cutting Corn

The first corn harvested was for the silo—ensilage or just plain silage we called it. We had a one-row Milwaukee corn binder to cut corn with the horses, but pulling this machine on the soft cultivated ground was some of the hardest work done by the horses. Fortunately during the fall season the cool weather helped. Men could cut corn by hand with corn knives, but this was too slow for silo filling and the bundles tied with twine were easier to handle than loose stalks of corn. We liked to fill the silo before the first frost while the corn was rank and green, yet mature. After the silo was filled, the rest of the corn was cut either by hand or with the binder and left in shocks to cure and dry.



Cutting corn by hand was slow, tedious work. First three rooted stalks of corn were picked far enough apart in two rows so they could be tied together to form a triangle. Then enough stalks of corn were cut and piled around the base triangle to build a shock of corn. When the shock was big enough it was bound with two stalks of corn twisted together like a rope. Some shocks were taken down and husked.

The ears of corn were put in crates to be hauled to the corncrib by wagon. Then the stalks were tied in bundles with recycled twine from the strawstack and reshocked. Some shocks of corn and corn stalks were hauled to the farmyard and stacked for winter feed. About 100 shocks were left in the field and fed to the sheep there on winter days. This saved hauling the shocks in and hauling the manure and residue from them back out from the barn. We used all of the corn fodder

except the stalk itself to feed our animals. Corn fodder cured in a shock remained almost as green as it was when it was cut and was excellent feed for the animals.

Fall Planting

We planted our new crop of wheat in the fall. Sometimes it was planted before all the corn was cut and at others it was planted on the corn ground after the harvest. Thus we completed the cycle from March through the growing season. It should be easier now to realize why farms were rented from March 1st to March 1st.

Winter

During the winter months we hauled manure almost daily and put a wood rack on the wagon or sleigh to haul buzz wood from the woods. Buzz wood was in long pieces which could be lifted and piled on the wagon. All of us went to the woods on Saturday and cut at least one load and sometimes two. By spring we had cut 100 cords for firewood which produced a large wigwam under the apricot tree in the dooryard where it stood until the buzz saw made it into a year's supply of firewood for the range, the Round Oak heating stove, and the furnace. The range was built to take 16 inch wood and some farmers measured to be sure each piece was that length. The furnace and the heating stove could accommodate

longer pieces, but we never measured exactly and managed to burn it all up one way or another. We were mystified at the stories of farmers who literally threw away the pieces of firewood which were shorter than 16 inches. It seemed a gross waste to us.

All of our work was done with these implements and four horses. Some of the heavier work was done with three or four horses, but most of it was done with a team, either heavy or light, depending on the work to be done. Mowing, raking, cultivating and some wagon pulling was best done by a smaller, faster team. We did not have fancy horses or equipment for them, but we did take good care of them to be sure we could get our work done on time. Hoofs were kept trimmed, but we didn't put horseshoes on our teams. We kept some ointments around the barn to treat sores which might develop under the harness collars. Also at times we put powder under the collars to keep sores from breaking open. A brush or currycomb might be used occasionally. Every day a horse was expected to work it was fed a few quarts of oats at noon and again at night. Horses got fed hay three times daily and were kept in straw bedding to keep them clean in their stalls. Since they were needed almost every day they were not turned out to pasture regularly as were cows and sheep. Periodically they were turned out to pasture where they could frolic and roll to clean their hides.

Picnic

Don Limpert graciously hosted the annual end of season picnic again this summer. It's always a treat to tour through his vast collection, both in his home and museum. And of course, the food provided by our members was outstanding.

This year we were also treated to a program on GAR Civil War memorabilia by Don's guests, Roger and Fran Heiple of South Lyon. Don was instrumental in helping Roger start his collection over 40 years ago and Roger is now considered to be one of the leading authorities on GAR memorabilia.

Roger had boxes of display cases filled with GAR reunion ribbons and badges which he showed and described to us, with many comments about how he had acquired them. A wonderful collection - and a wonderful treat!

Lemonade

As promised, Lenora Parr has provided the recipe for the lemonade that she and Howard have provided at Society picnics for at least 12 years. Lenora reports that they didn't invent the recipe but their records don't show who did.

In each gallon jug put 2 sliced oranges and 1 sliced lemon. Add 1/2 cup sugar and let it stand a bit. Gently mashing the mixture creates added flavor.

Add 1 tall call frozen lemonade, 1/2 tall can frozen orange juice and 4 1/2 tall cups of water. Add ice to fill.

Exhibits and Acquisitions

The 60th Community Fair

We were asked to furnish this year's Society exhibit space as a tribute to the Manchester Community Fair's 60th anniversary. Doug Howell made computer copies of early fair pictures which were provided by Susan Timmerman, Yvonne Huber, Betty Benedict, Vicky Eisele and Alice Rossettie. These photos featured parades, fair queens, exhibits, games, tractor pulls and food tents and were arranged in a space the size of a couple of large bulletin boards. Aerial shots of the grounds were enlarged and gave added perspective and some Main Street scenes of 60 years ago were added for variety. Nondus Buss furnished sets of earlier ribbons to round out the display.

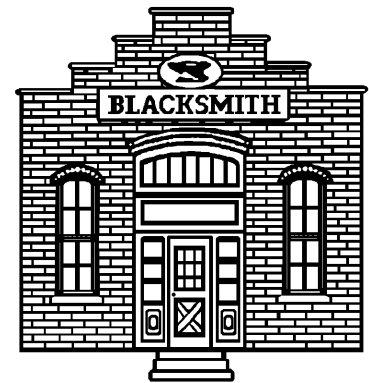
It is reassuring to hear that many things combined this year to make the 60th fair a great success. The Society has filled the same space in the exhibit building for many years, concentrating on a variety of themes.

The John B. Swainson Room

The John B. Swainson Room is being de-activated because of lack of public interest and use. Contacts with John's family have indicated their desire for help in closing out this exhibit which has been in place for ten years.

Knowledgeable auctioneers have been called in to give appraisals and suggestions for disposal of items not retained by the family or by the Society. Formal action by our Board will complete the process of closing out this room. It will then become our office area and meeting room for the Board and other small groups. Our computers are already installed there.

It is an emotional time for John's family and for those of us who knew and worked so long with John as he gave so much of his time to the work of the Society. But, we need to recognize the realities of today and move along. Time does dim our memories and 45 years have gone by since John served as Governor of the State of Michigan, 1960-1962.



ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers will be elected at the September meeting. The Nominating Committee has a slate of officers and nominations will be open from the floor prior to the election.

The membership year for the Manchester Area Historical Society is from January 1st through December 31st.

Individual membership is \$5.00, while family membership is \$10.00

Additional membership information and forms will be included in the November newsletter.