



Leonard - McGlone House

Old News

Watrousville-Caro Area Historical Society

PO Box 15 Caro MI, 48723

Our 38th year of Preserving Local History

June 2010

Editors, JoAnn Gray & Esther Gorashko

Published by Dave Celani

FRUSTRATIONS OF OWNING A HOUSE!

By Cathy Celani

Statistics show that the average American owns at least one house in their lifetime. I am sure most of you can identify with the problems that we are facing trying to replace windows in the Leonard House. We had a contractor lined up last year, but he backed out. We found another contractor in January, but since business has picked up for him, he has delayed our small order of five windows. The sad part is we have the cash in hand and you would think that in this economy someone would be hungry enough to take our money. I don't know why I am excited, because when they come in, I am the one who has to paint them. Cal Jewett will be installing the glass and we will have a contractor install the windows. It would be nice if we could just call Pella or Anderson Windows, we know that they would be happy to take our money, unfortunately we want handmade windows and antique glass (Wavy and with Bubbles).

ON A LIGHTER NOTE, (Forgive the Pun) We now have electricity in the Leonard-McGlone House. Patrick McGlone settled in the area in the early 1850s and probably built the house about that time. Marguerite Leonard passed away in 1986. The electricity has been disconnected since then. Assuming the house is about 150 years old, it more than likely, has only had electricity for half its life. The electricity is needed to clean up the property and for power tools.

HISTORIC MARKER

Paper work is almost finished for the Historic Marker for the Leonard-McGlone House. It will cost just under \$2000 to have the marker made. We will install it ourselves. (That means that Cal Jewett and Bob Gray will install it.) It will be two sided, the same size as the marker at the Museum. "The Old McGlone Homestead" will be on the front and the "Leonard's Homestead" will be on the back of the marker. That will be three Historic Markers in Watrousville. The "Watrou General Store" the "Watrousville United Methodist Church" and now the Leonard-McGlone House. That is a lot for a city this size!

Library Display



For the month of June, the Historical Society will have a display at the Caro Library. The "Hair Wreath" shown here, will be part of the display in the lobby showcase.

We Mark the Passing of Our Fellow Members

Rose Maurine Gornick - Maurine was born October 26, 1909 in Watrousville to Claude and Mary Elizabeth (Bess) Robinson Cole. She passed away on March 6, 2010 at her home in Grosse Pointe Woods, at the age of 100. Her life occupation was to be a registered nurse, which she enjoyed through her later years. On June 25, 1938, she married John Gornick. He preceded her in death in 2005. She is survived by her son, John and daughter, Roberta. She was predeceased by three brothers, Neil, Clarence and John (Jack) and a sister, Geraldine Glaspie.

Joseph D. Bassford - Passed away Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009 at Covenant Health Care-Harrison in Saginaw, at the age of 88. Joe was born April 29, 1921 in East Aurora, NY. He graduated from high school in 1939 from Pittsburgh, PA. Following graduation, he came to Caro to live with his grandmother, starting work at the Caro Regional Center as an attendant nurse. Joe enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in August of 1942 and was honorably discharged in October of 1945. Joe continued his employment at Caro Regional Center until his retirement in the early 1980s.

Shirley A. Ryndress - Passed away April 13, 2009. Shirley was born July 31, 1929 in Caro, MI. She married Robert Ryndress on August 11, 1951. The loves of her life were her children and her grandchildren. Prior to retiring to Florida, she founded and was director of Northbrook Preschool. Shirley was a bargain hunter, a crafter, and loved to entertain. She was active in Free Spirits, china painting, needlework clubs, and the Women's Resource Center. She touched the life of everyone she met and was loved by many.

Dorcas Vaughan - Dorcas Vaughan, age 82, passed away in Florida on Dec. 1, 2009. She was born on April 5, 1927 in Caro to the late W. Avis and Loa Ann Dorman, and was a lifelong resident of Caro. Dorcas married Charles "Chuck" Vaughan on July 6, 1947, and together they have celebrated 62 years of marriage. She had received her teaching degree from Central Michigan University and taught in rural schools for five years. Dorcas loved to entertain and enjoyed being surrounded by family and friends. Dorcas will be sadly missed by family and friends.

Richard W. Dicks - Passed away on March 8, 2010 at St. Mary's of Michigan in Saginaw, at the age of 81. He was born on April 13, 1928 in Ypsilanti. In his youth, Richard and his family moved from a farm in Ypsilanti to a farm near Deford where he and his siblings were raised. He graduated from Caro High School. Upon graduation he joined the U.S. Navy Reserve and later attended Eastern Michigan University. Richard worked as a wire tester for General Cable until his retirement. Richard was involved with the Watrousville-Caro Historical Society.

Lloyd E. Hughes - Passed away on March 18, 2010 at Covenant Health Care in Saginaw, at the age of 90. He was born on Feb. 29, 1920 in Juniata Township to the late Guinn and Mary Hughes and was a lifelong resident of the township. Lloyd was a Vassar High School graduate and worked on the family farm. In addition to his work and family, his life revolved around the activities of the Masonic Lodge. Lloyd had visited every Civil War Battleground east of the Mississippi and had participated in many Civil War reenactments with the 1st Michigan Regiment.

Paul and Doris Nagy

Members Paul and Doris Nagy
Celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary at the
Fairgrove United Methodist Church on April 24, 2010.



At our April meeting, Kristy Anderson, Program Coordinator for Thumb Volunteer Alliance (TVA), shared with us how the TVA provides volunteers the opportunity to build a stronger community.



At our May meeting, Joyce Anderson and Vickie Vader performed on the Hammered Dulcimer, Mountain Dulcimer, and Irish Whistle for the Historical Society. They played a variety of music from Celtic to Calypso.



At our March meeting, Fairgrove residents, Roma Lee Campbell and Alan Latimer, reminisced about the "County Poor Farm" that was and still is located in Indianfields Township and is now known as the Tuscola County Medical Facility. Upper right is a 1920s postcard showing the "County Poorhouse".

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The Historical Society meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month (with a few exceptions) at 7:30 p.m. at the Juniata Township Hall, 1971 S. Ringle Road in Watrousville. The Township Hall is a red brick one-room schoolhouse dating back to the 1890s. The Historical Society has the Museum at 4607 W. Caro Road in Watrousville and is currently restoring the Leonard - McGlone House at 4592 W. Caro Road, also in Watrousville.

Additional information is available from -
JoAnn Gray, 989-823-3638 or
Esther Gorashko, 989-823-2360



visit us on the web

www.watrousville.com

**We are collecting
cash register receipts
(Community Share Points)
from VG's Supermarket
Be sure to turn them in to Esther.**



The **Watrousville Museum** at
4607 W. Caro Road
in Watrousville,
is open June thru September
on Thursday's from 1-4 pm
and by appointment

A Detailed History of
Watrousville, Michigan
And Western Tuscola County

Part Three - From a paper compiled by Al Gorashko from several sources. - June 2010

Mail came from Saginaw via Bridgeport, Frankenmuth, Tuscola, and Vassar. Prior to 1856, the people of Watrousville and vicinity had their mail delivered by private conveyance from Vassar. Uniting for that purpose, they employed a messenger who came on foot or horseback once a week, usually on Saturday or Sunday, and was paid one-dollar for the trip. Chauncy Furman was the carrier most of the time. In 1856, a mail route was established from Vassar to Sebewaing by way of Watrousville. Mr. Furman being the contractor and a post office was established in Watrousville with Aaron Watrous as postmaster. In 1861, B.A. Wood became postmaster. The following persons have held the office, Henry Wilber; R.C. Burtis; Geo. Rogers; B.A. Wood, a second term; John Walton; J.A. Hamilton; Richard S. Weaver, and again, B.A. Wood. The last post office was attached to the E.W. Leonard store. Mr. Leonard was the last postmaster. The post office closed September 14, 1935.

FROM *HISTORY OF TUSCOLA COUNTY* BY H. R. PAGE, 1883

About the year 1856, a class of the United Methodist Church was organized at Watrousville. Services were held regularly at the schoolhouse until the building of their house of worship. At the quarterly conference held at Vassar, February 18, 1865, the following persons were elected trustees of the church at Watrousville, William King, James Simonds, Elisha Kenyon, Farris Stillson, and Philip Davis; the corporation to be described and known as the trustees of the First Methodist Society of Watrousville. In 1871, a church building was erected under the pastorate of Rev. J.B. Russell. It is a convenient and commodious structure and built with excellent taste. Its dimensions on the ground are 36x60 feet, and its seating capacity about 100.

It was dedicated in October of 1873. The present membership of the church is thirty-eight. The pastor at the present time is Rev. W.J. Bailey. The trustees of the society are: E. Higgins, G. Kile, E.B. Rose, R.S. Weaver, Wm. Eckley, A. Stafford, and W. Walton. A prosperous Sunday School numbering eighty-members is connected with the church. In addition, a class meets at the Belknap schoolhouse in the southwest part of the town, supplied by Rev. Mr. White, of Vassar, services being held every Sunday. (It burned in 1937 and was rebuilt in 1938.)

In 1857, the name of the township was changed by act of the legislature, from Rogers to Juniata.

In 1878, a Michigan Central railroad track was laid running between Vassar and Caro. It bypassed Watrousville. It is said that the Watrousville citizens didn't want the railroad to go through their town, so a citizen who lived almost one-mile south of town gave the right of way to the railroad company. The small community of Wahjamega, a few miles up the road, also had a station.

Note: seeing that Watrousville is on a meandering ridge, if there were a train station in the village, the train would have to climb a grade each time it passed through Watrousville, requiring extra steam. My guess is that the Michigan Central Railroad preferred their tracks on level ground. Al Gorashko.

At the Station site was also an elevator, a log loading dock and some houses. With the railroad depot nearby, many of the wealthier citizens occasionally traveled to Saginaw, Bay City and Detroit for shopping

Another fellow who worked for Aaron Watrous at his saw and grain mill was George Robinson. He also homesteaded 100 acres three and one-half miles south of Watrousville in 1884. He possibly operated the Robinson General Store on the northwest corner of the Watrousville Main-Mill street intersection in the early 1900s. One of his children, Mary E. Robinson (Bessie) (1881-1986) began her education at the Tappen School, a first through seventh grade facility near the intersection of Dixon and Kirk roads. She began the eighth grade walking each day to the Watrousville School. In 1898, she was one of three students to graduate from the school. For a while, she lived in Bay City and returned in 1904 to marry Claude Cole, a grandson of early pioneer John M. Cole. They settled on a farm one-mile north of Watrousville where they lived a life of farming.

Between 1860 and January 25, 1864 Aaron Watrous built a structure on lot 1 of block 8. That is now the ground floor of the Watrous General store on the Southwest corner of Main and Second Streets. He sold it to David Philbrick for \$300. It was originally built as a one-floor building. It is suggested that the Philbricks added a west wing, a second story to the main structure and remodeled the front of the main building in the Greek Revival style. Such a hypothesis receives support from the fact that Philbrick's name written in pencil along with the correct dates is still visible in several places in the interior upstairs. The Philbricks operated it as a general store. Mr. Philbrick had been a postmaster while operating the store. He died December 10, 1867. By 1875, the store became a furniture store operated by Mrs. Philbrick. In 1882, the Juniata Township bought the building to use as a township hall. They used the old Watrous store building until 1960 when they moved the Township offices to the red-brick school house on Ringle Road, after the school closed, due to students now being bused to Caro schools.

At about the same time that Aaron Watrous built the store, he also built a house on the

Southeast corner of 2nd and Main Streets. It is not known if he lived in it, but the 1875 map of Watrousville shows Mrs. Philbrick owning it.

The Watrousville cemetery was platted in 1859. It may have been platted when the village was platted. The land was bought from Patrick McGlone. He passed away on June 20, 1865, he was 84 years old. Aaron Watrous died on February 1, 1868 they are both buried in the cemetery. Many early Watrousville settlers are buried there including two from the war of 1812, 13 Civil War Veterans and some from later wars.

FROM *HISTORY OF TUSCOLA COUNTY* BY H. R. PAGE, 1883

The 7th Day Adventist Church was organized in fall of 1865 by Elders L.D. Van Horn and D.M. Canright with thirty-seven members. It was formally organized for incorporation February 27, 1866, when at a meeting of persons who had signed articles of association for the purpose of forming a religious society to be known as the Society of Seventh Day Adventists of Watrousville. The following persons were elected trustees, viz: Zephanisin Wilber, Andrew J. Rogers and John Walton. Services were held in the schoolhouse until 1869, when a neat, plain church edifice was erected in the village of Watrousville, with a seating capacity of about one-hundred. Services are held every Saturday, with occasional preaching by Elder Wm. Ostrander and others. The present membership is about thirty-two. The Sabbath school has about twenty-seven members. The trustees of the church are A. Hatch, C.W. Hartson and Calvin Jewett.

The church was located at the end of Third Street. When it was no longer used as a church building, it was used for making brooms. Eventually the building was moved to Fairgrove.

This is the third part of a series by Al Gorashko. Watch for the next installment in upcoming issues of "Old News"