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# Podunk Pioneer Papers

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Issue 36

Spring 2002

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810-629-7748

**Vice President:**

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810-629-5124

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## NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Membership Dues are due May 1. If you have not paid your dues, please send them now. We welcome new members and encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

**DUES RATES:**

Single: \$ 3.00  
Family: \$ 5.00  
Contributing: \$10.00  
Sustaining: \$25.00  
Life: \$100.00

**Send dues to:**

Ramona Green  
14133 Torrey Rd.  
Fenton, MI 48430-1391

## Meeting Schedule

The Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00P.M. at the Lake Fenton United Methodist Church (March-October).

## ANNUAL ELECTIONS

May 13, 2002 is the Annual Election of Officers, 7:00 P.M., at the church. If you are interested in serving as a trustee or as a member of the Board of Directors please contact Joyce Simmons.

It is time once again for the **Buffalo Dinner**. It will be held, **Saturday, Apr.27, 2002** at **Lake Fenton High School** at **6:00 P.M.** \$9.00 per ticket. Mark your calendar now and get your tickets from Joyce or Ramona.

## From the Editor

This is our first newsletter since “9-11” – the day of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York, the Pentagon and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania. All our lives have been impacted by this tragedy in one way or another.

This issue of the *Podunk Pioneer Papers* is dedicated to the memory of all those who lost their lives on that terrible day in our history.

We as Americans have learned many lessons about security and the value of everyday living. Our patriotic pride is evident wherever we look. America’s Armed Forces are protecting us all as they serve in this time of war against Afghanistan, the Taliban, Al Quaida and terrorists everywhere.

Americans have made many sacrifices in its history. The following excerpt is from Genesys Health Systems’ *In the Know* magazine (May 22, 2001) and it seems appropriate to revisit this topic in light of all that has taken place since September 11, 2001.

### THE TRUE MEANING OF MEMORIAL DAY

**Memorial Day is a day of recognition for the sacrifices many Americans made for our country. It is a day to thank them, appreciate them – and above all else - remember them. Founded after the Civil War as Decoration Day, to remember more than 600,000 Americans who died, Memorial Day is a time to decorate graves of Civil War heroes. Over the years, this special day became a time to honor all those who fought and died in service to the United States.**

**As we gather with our families in peace during this holiday weekend\*, remember that we live in freedom because of the proud men and women who lost their lives, and those who serve to protect us.**

\*MEMORIAL DAY will be celebrated on May 27, 2002. Take time to reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who have served this great land of ours. Let’s celebrate our Veterans and those who fight for our freedom.

As you look back in your own family history, you most likely will discover names of those who served in the Armed Forces.

My uncle, Homer H. Allen, a Korean War Veteran, who passed away on January 9, 2002 was proud of having served his country as a Marine. As he lay in bed a few weeks before he died, he was presented with the Korean War Service Medal by Brown Crossnoe and other veterans from the Burton V.F.W. Post in a special surprise ceremony at his home. He was very honored to know his time of service to his country was appreciated.

Part of the display at the 2001 Buffalo Dinner depicting local history of Mundy Township included items highlighting the designation of the the Homer Allen farm as a State of Michigan Sesquicentennial Farm – meaning the land had been owned by the same family for 150 years. In this issue of the *Podunk Pioneer Papers* is the geneological history of Homer Allen – a descendent of one of the original settlers in Mundy Township. The Allen family continues the tradition of farming still.

**Speaking of farms: in years past the local landscape included large white two-story homes, red barns with big silos and tall windmills with blades spinning in the breeze. The Pioneer Association now has an authentic windmill. Read more about it in this issue.**

## NEWS FROM PRESIDENT JOYCE SIMMONS

Listed below are just a few of the tasks completed in 2001 and the people who helped get them done. **Many thanks to all our dedicated volunteers.**

- The **Buffalo Dinner** in April and **Pioneer Day** in September were well attended and we welcomed many first-time visitors.
- Our **Pioneer Day** profits were up thanks to the dedicated volunteers and generous donations by association members and community sponsors.
- In 2000, **United Way** grant money, obtained by Wilma Betts, was used to make the Pioneer Museum more accessible for the handicapped. Vince Gauthier poured a cement ramp to the entrance of the museum building.
- In 2001, **United Way** grant money was used to upgrade the electrical system. Electrical outlets were installed in the pavilion and by the bandstand. (**Thanks, to Wilma** for her efforts on our behalf and **thanks to the United Way Foundation** for their generous contribution to our community- oriented organization.)
- In 2002, we hope to add a walkway to the pavilion and put in a concrete pad under the kitchen serving window using our United Way funds.
- In 2001, Victor Moore painted the Podunk House. In addition, he and Vince Gauthier repaired outside electrical wires and replaced

rotted boards. **Thanks, Victor and Vince.**

- The kitchen crew really appreciated the new additions to the kitchen: a brand new stove (donated by Ramona Green) and new ceiling fans. **Thanks, Ramona, Vince and crew.**
- **Thanks to Mary Jane and Bill Pinkston** for creating an attractive covering for the unsightly circuit breaker box in the Podunk House dining room!
- A new door was installed in the storage room and a safety grill was installed on the screen door of the museum building.
- **Thanks to Loretta Gauthier** for all the time and energy she spends on behalf of the Pioneer Association. Through her efforts, we now have a windmill. (She even does a great job as the unofficial caretaker of the "Necessary Room"!)
- **Nyla Nye** completed the time-consuming job of removing grass between the bricks in the walkway. **Velma Butts and Phyllis Yancy** also deserve recognition for the time they have spent opening the Podunk house in the spring. Thanks, ladies.

### **BUFFALO DINNER -2002**

- Our first fund raiser of the year is fast approaching. **April 27** is the date for our **Buffalo Dinner**. **Please call right away to volunteer and to reserve tickets for your family and friends. Tickets are \$9.00 per person (the same as last year).**
- Volunteers are needed to help **set-up** the tables and chairs in the gym at **3:30P.M. , Sat., April 27.**

- Call Phyllis Yancy if you are able to donate pies and you have not been contacted yet.

### **FOR PIONEER DAY 2002 :**

Pioneer Day is the Saturday after Labor Day. This year the date is: **Sept. 7, 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.**

**Volunteers are needed to:** make phone calls, donate baked goods (especially pies), pickles, jams, etc.; help in the kitchen, work at the gate or parking lot; help with house tours, help out at the new "**Children's Craft Center**"...

\*Donations for the Children's Craft Center are needed: stamps & pads, markers, crayons, pencils & pens, drawing & tracing paper, beads, glitter, feathers, glue, buttons, scissors, cookie cutters, ribbons, lace, magnets, etc. **These items (new or used) can be dropped off at my house by September 1.** Donations of used children's books, **clean** stuffed animals or toys, baggies, small paper plates, aluminum pie tins, and balloons are also welcome. If you or your teenager would like to assist with our Children's Craft Center, let me know.

**Items are also needed for: the book sale, door prizes, rummage sale (NO CLOTHING, please) and the produce stand.**

Food donations for the Bake Sale can be brought on Pioneer Day from 8:30-10:00 A.M. All other donations can be dropped off at my house prior to Pioneer Day and are tax deductible.\*\*\* **Please clearly mark prices on items that you are donating for the sale .**

We also need: **VENDORS, CRAFTERS ,HOBBY OR COLLECTION displays.**  
**Please call to reserve a booth.**

## Save your VG's Grocery Receipts

As a non-profit organization we earn money for each receipt we turn in. What we earn here with our VG's receipts helps to defray the cost of mailing and publishing our newsletters. We earn \$50 for every \$1500 in receipt totals by participating in the VG's Community Support Program. We have earned over \$300 so far. **(Thanks, VG's).**

As you know we only have two fund raisers each year to help maintain our Museum and Pioneer home. Encourage your family and friends to join us at the Buffalo Dinner and on Pioneer Day 2002.

**SUMMER 2002**  
Visit our Pioneer Museum and Podunk House to learn more about the history of Fenton and Mundy Townships. Maybe you can locate your ancestors in a photograph or newspaper article in our archives.

**SUMMER TOURS AND  
PAVILION RENTAL ARE  
AVAILABLE BY  
APPOINTMENT.**

**PLEASE CALL ME At  
810-629-7748  
IF YOU CAN ASSIST US IN  
ANY WAY WITH OUR  
PROJECTS.**

**SEE YOU APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>**

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## GAUTHIERS SHARE LOCAL HISTORY WITH EUROPEAN FRIENDS

In July, 2001, Loretta and Vince Gauthier entertained special guests, Maisy and Alfred Clemons from Lorentzweiler, Luxembourg. Vince, an American G.I., served in the U.S. Army during World War II. While stationed in Europe, he stayed with Maisy's parents due to housing shortages. The couples have maintained their friendship for over 50 years. The Clemons were treated to a tour of the Podunk House and Pioneer Museum.

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*We would like to extend our condolences to families  
of members who have passed away in the past year.*

*Myrtle Swanebeck Schmid   Glennola Koan   Homer H. Allen*

**Our newest acquisition -  
in Memory of William and Lydia Watkins  
is an  
1876 FELPS & BIGELOW WINDMILL  
manufactured in KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN**

A little background history:

In 2000, Esther Warzynski and her sons, Robert and Michael, approached the Pioneer Association with the idea of wanting to make a donation to the organization in memory of her parents, William and Lydia Watkins.

In the late 1960's, William and Lydia Watkins decided to move an 1837 Greek Revival-style pioneer farm home from their property on the corner of Torrey and Ray Roads in Mundy Township. A group of citizens\* interested in preserving local history, then banded together and formed "The Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships".

Meetings were held in the homes of the various members to discuss how to raise funds to pay for the move. It was decided that a Buffalo Dinner (to be held at the Mundy Township Hall) would be served to raise money. George (Hugh) Judson went to South Dakota to hunt and brought back the buffalo meat. [For several years after that, the meat was shipped from S.D. Today the meat comes from Oleson's Buffalo Ranch in Traverse City, MI. Thus the buffalo has become the mascot of the Pioneers]. Next, it was decided to acquire the property which is located adjacent to the old Indian cemetery near where the original Pioneer Picnics on Lake Fenton were held in the late 1800's-early 1900's.

When enough money was collected to pay for the move, the Watkins donated what is now called the "Podunk House" to the Pioneer Memorial Association. On a sunny, summer day the house was put on skids and towed down Torrey Road to its new home on North Long Lake Road. Soon after, the first Pioneer Day was held and the rest is history, as they say!

The Watkins family has been very generous over the years and this latest donation presented the Pioneer Association with the challenge of finding just the right way in which to honor William and Lydia. The search for a windmill had been in the works for several years but locating one dating to the 1800's was proving difficult.

The other worry was finding the funds to purchase and transport a windmill to the Podunk site. Ironically, in mid-2002, Vince and Loretta Gauthier located a thirty-foot standard windmill in on a farm in Lake Odessa, Michigan which was for sale by Ron and Carolyn Rich. The windmill was manufactured in 1876 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. A call to Mrs. Warzynski generated not only her approval but additional funds to fully cover the cost of purchasing the windmill. So, in September of 2002, Victor and Riley Moore transported the windmill (in pieces) to the Podunk site. On Pioneer Day, children helped paint sections of the windmill (for a small fee which will be used toward the cost of repair and erection of the windmill).

The next phase to be completed in the windmill project is to make the necessary repairs, paint it and then erect the windmill over the existing well pump.

We thank Esther Warzynski and her sons, Robert and Michael, for their generous donation in memory of their loved ones, William and Lydia Watkins. The official list of Charter Members is located on a plaque on the wall in the entryway of the Podunk House.

