



Podunk Pioneer Papers

News of the Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships

Issue 42

Spring 2005

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LOG ON TO

<http://www.addorio.com/podunk>

for the latest news about Podunk and the Pioneer Association. Our thanks to Webmaster Betsy Davidson of Addorio Global Innovations for creating and maintaining our Web Site.



NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Membership fees are due May 1, 2005. If you have not paid your dues, please send them now. (Check the mailing label on this issue for your current status in our records.) We welcome new members and encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to join us. (A membership form is printed on the back page of this newsletter.)

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 **Fenton Township Hall** (March-October). The next meeting will be April 11.



ANNUAL ELECTIONS

May 9, 2005 is the Annual Election of Officers - 7:00 P.M. at the **Fenton Township Hall**. If you are interested in serving as a trustee or as a member of the Board of Directors please contact Phyllis Yancy or Phyllis Heusted. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting, as decisions regarding the future of our organization will be discussed.



NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT VICTOR MOORE

A TOUGH DECISION

As you will read in Phyllis Heusted's letter, we as an organization had to make the tough decision to cancel our annual spring fundraiser: the Buffalo Dinner. One of my greatest concerns about not holding the dinner is that we will lose some of our visibility within the community. However, it became very apparent that canceling the event was the only choice we had.

CHALLENGE to MEMBERS

Now our goal is to come up with a different event that will support our mission of maintaining the Podunk house and Pioneer Museum for future generations.

At the present time, we are considering hosting an event in mid-summer at the Podunk site.

Our challenge to you: share with us any ideas you have. Come to our meetings; call a member of the board or jot down your suggestions on the "Silent Buffalo Dinner" donation form found in this newsletter. Without all of us working together we will not be able to fulfill our commitment. The April, May and June meetings will be especially important as we make changes. When a decision is finalized, we will send a postcard to our members with details of our summer event.

PLEASE JOIN US!

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

- Pioneer Day 2004 was a great success thanks to the renewed dedication of our diligent volunteers. All the extra effort to increase advertising, the

number of vendors and the number of volunteers paid off. Thanks to the help of our volunteers and generous donations by members and community sponsors, our profit for Pioneer Day 2004 was \$990.11.

- **The Watkins-Warzynski windmill was in full operation.** Thanks again to all who helped on the windmill project. Thanks to Mrs. Esther Warzynski and her family for their generous donations which allowed us to purchase and install the windmill in memory of her parents, William and Lydia Watkins, who donated the Podunk House to the Pioneer Association originally.
- **Two new items were donated in time for display on Pioneer Day: the Pierce Farm Bell and the South Mundy School cupola** donated by the Gillespie family.
- Thanks to **musicians Harland Nye and Lois Bettesworth** and their band (Fiddle, Guitar & Friends), **Brad Wright** (bagpipes), and the **Harmonica Traditions** for sharing their musical talents with us. Thanks to **Ed Whalen** for sharing his knowledge of local Indian lore. Thanks to the Boy Scouts and their leader, **Dennis Weston**, for participating in the opening ceremonies.
- Thanks to **Ramona Green** for her efforts to keep our membership lists up to date.
- Thanks to **Cathy & Chris Worden** and **Wayne & Velma Butts** for securing advertising.
- Thanks to teachers **Wilma Simmons Betts** and **Jenny Judson Wright** for their efforts to encourage attendance by students from Lake Fenton and Fenton schools.

- The money raised on Pioneer Day and at the Buffalo Dinner has been used to preserve our museum site. With money raised, a new roof was installed on the pavilion in 2003. Projects for 2005 include more cement work (sidewalks, handicap ramps, etc.), treating the pavilion floor and upgrading our display areas and facilities. Informational brochures will be updated and reprinted.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Included in this issue is a special letter from long-time member, Loretta Gauthier. For many, many years, she and her husband, Vince (who passed away last summer), devoted a great deal of their time to the Pioneer Association. He did much of our cement work and whenever Loretta asked for his help on one of our projects, he was right there - whether it was fixing some item made of wood, helping with painting or just running errands. We miss his willingness to help out with what was originally "her project". Loretta has always been a vital asset to the Pioneers and we will miss her positive attitude and enthusiasm. We wish her well as she makes the transition to her new home. She has promised to come back and help when she can and we will look forward to her visits.

Special Message from LORETTA GAUTHIER

March 18, 2005

When we purchased our Fenton property in 1953, as we drove out on Torrey Road (U.S. 23 was only a dream at that time), we'd see this forlorn little home on the corner of Torrey and Ray Roads. I'd always say to Vin, "I'd like to get that little place and fix it up." His reply was always, "I've done two homes with updates and upgrades already – now I want to build new."

In 1969, an article appeared in the Fenton paper regarding a group that had formed to move and restore this Greek Revival building. I joined the Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships and have been as active as possible ever since.

What a neat piece of history we have here. Most restorations are homes of the rich. Ours is unique in that it's the home of common folks.

Our Buffalo Dinner in the spring was always our best fundraiser, but with tougher regulations by the Health Department each year, we are allowed to do less to prepare the dinner. For the last two years, we have been lucky to break even for our efforts. This year we are requesting a donation from our members to help with the continued maintenance and improvements to our historic place. We will continue to do our utmost to make the Fall Open House bigger and better each year.

I'm sure everyone knows that you can arrange a tour any time during the summer months with a call to one of our officers.

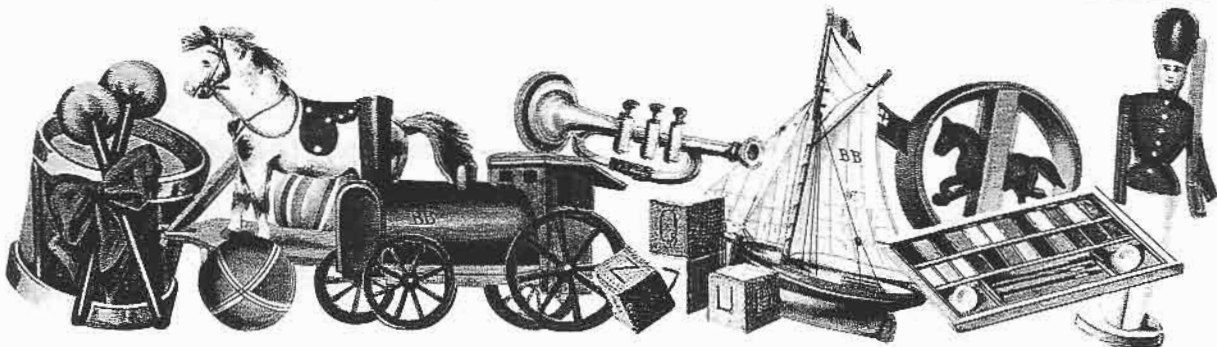
We need more new young active members to pick up where we have had to leave off and to keep our Treasure for the generations yet to come.

It has been a very interesting and fun time with a lot of great people, but with Vin's death, I'm moving to the west side of the state to be nearer our children.

Please take my place and go forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Loretta Gauthier, Treasurer





Mundy Township Pioneer Families Make Donations

The cupola from the South Mundy School has been donated in memory of Keith E. Gillespie by Georgina L. Gillespie and her family. This cupola originally housed the bell located on the roof of the building that is now the Gillespie home, but originally was a one-room schoolhouse. The school was built in the late 1800s-early 1900s on the corner of Baldwin and Linden Roads. (It is kitty-corner to the present South Mundy United Methodist Church.) In time, the cupola was mounted on a platform and placed in Mrs. Gillespie's back yard.

When Pioneer members Phyllis Judson Heusted and Loretta Gauthier drove by the corner and spotted the cupola, both felt it would be a fitting addition to the Pioneer museum setting. When discussing the issue with Mrs. Gillespie, she told them she had been hoping to find a way to preserve the cupola. So arrangements were made and President Victor Moore transported the bell to the museum grounds in time for viewing on Pioneer Day 2004. The cupola is being restored under the direction of Pioneer member Joyce Simmon's grandson this winter.

The Pioneer Association is especially grateful for the donation of this artifact because it comes from one of the original one-room schoolhouses that were once so common in rural areas like Fenton and Mundy Townships. In the Pioneer Museum building there are several photographs of local one-room schoolhouses, which include the pupils and teacher. Most of these photographs were taken in the early 1900s.

The Pierce Farm Bell has been donated to the Pioneer Association in memory of Asa T. Pierce, one of Mundy Township's early settlers, by his great-great granddaughter, Marge Johnson Kelley and all the grandchildren still surviving. She remembers it hanging on the windmill in the lane at the original homestead located at 5343 Baldwin Road. The Pierce farm was awarded Centennial status in 1935 by the State of Michigan. Marge celebrated her 90th birthday on August 11, 2004 and wanted to honor her great-grandfather by donating the bell to the local historical museum.

The bell was painted at one time but it is stamped (as clearly as we can determine) with the following markings:

#1 Yoke 1886

Montgomery Ward & Co., Chicago, Illinois.

The handle has the following markings:

GRYSTA METAL #1 H P R I C N T

The Pioneer Memorial Association is pleased to receive this piece of local history. As Loretta Gauthier states, "our museum is unique in that it's the home of common folks" and it is items such as the bell and cupola that help us understand our local history and allows us to better educate future generations about the past.

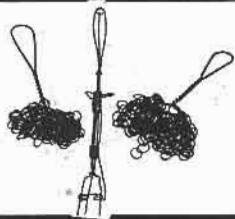
SUMMER 2005

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.

(Members: \$25,
Non-members: \$50)

**PLEASE CALL JOYCE AT
810-629-7748**



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 \$550 so far.

We thank VG's for their continued support over the years. Not only have they let us participate in their Community Support Program but they have been very generous by donating funds to help pay for some of the food products we use on Pioneer Day.

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES



Wire

Kitchenware

Highlights from an article by Jay Mark first published in "The Arizona Republic" column (c.2003)

Antiquing in Arizona

Wire kitchenware is a popular collectible today.

In 1864 Henry Bessemer developed the process of producing steel from iron in the U.S. and as a result, wire could be mechanically extruded quite inexpensively and in great quantity.

By the 1870s, with commercial wire readily available, production of wire goods flourished. American manufacturers created a great variety of wireware, much of it for the kitchen.

Tinning provided some protection from rust, but with frequent use, the wire was easily worn through. With the advent of World War II and the need for wire in the war effort plus improved materials the creation of wireware came to an end.

Many useful wire implements were available: egg beaters, whips and whisks, vegetable skimmers, salad washers, trivets and stands, baskets, meat forks, pot scrubbers and bottle cleaners. Most of these items are now bought for display rather than to use.

FOR PIONEER DAY 2005

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

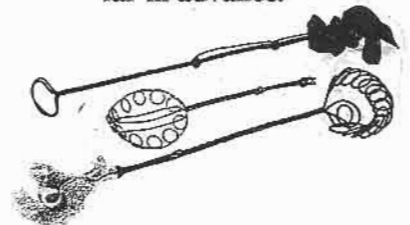
Volunteers are needed to: make phone calls, donate baked goods (especially fruit pies), pickles, jams, etc.; help in the kitchen, work at the gate or parking lot; help with house tours, help out at the Children's Corner, etc.

Items are also needed for: the book sale, door prizes, rummage sale (**NO CLOTHING**, please) and the produce stand. Donations can be dropped off at the home of Joyce Simmons prior to Pioneer Day and are tax deductible. **Please clearly mark prices on items that you are donating for the sale.**

VENDORS and CRAFTERS are needed. Art, jewelry, maps, note cards and stained glass works, embroidery and tatting have been for sale in previous years. Bring your **HOBBIES and special COLLECTIONS** for display.

Examples of what we have enjoyed at previous Pioneer Days include displays of wrought iron pieces, antique jewelry, dolls, a miniature replica of our Podunk House, an antique buggy, wood splitters and other implements and tools. Please share your collection with our guests.

Please call to reserve a booth for yourself or if you know of someone who might like to join us, ask them early as the second Saturday is a popular one for fall festivals and fairs and many vendors are booked far in advance.



2005 BUFFALO DINNER CANCELLED

Letter from the Editor, Phyllis Judson Heusted

After much deliberation, the Board of Directors of the *Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships* voted to cancel the 2005 Buffalo Dinner. The Board's mission for holding the Buffalo Dinner is three-fold:

1. To bring in revenue to pay for maintenance of Podunk House and Pioneer Museum,
2. To provide a visible presence in the community in order to preserve local history
3. To provide an opportunity for community members to gather for an evening with friends and family as they enjoy a special buffalo roast dinner and entertainment

Several obstacles were thrown in our path that ultimately made our decision for us.

***INCREASED COSTS** For several years we, as a non-profit organization, were allowed to hold our Buffalo Dinner in the Lake Fenton High School Gym without charge. This year, due to changes in policy at the old school, a fee of \$400.00 is charged. In recent years, because of changes in Health Department rules, we incurred the extra expense of hiring all food preparation to be done by the school's cooks in their licensed kitchen rather than using our own volunteers. At about the same time, we had to start paying for the services of the school's custodians rather than just doing the work ourselves. As a result, our profits on the Buffalo Dinner have been steadily declining. Last year, at the last minute, we had to change our entire operation from the gym to the cafeteria because of a policy that states school functions have priority over community events. We managed but it was not a simple transition. And even by making our reservations a year in advance, the same would be true this year: if someone from the school needed the use of the gym or cafeteria, they would have priority over us – without regard to the fact that our food is purchased in advance, the cooks are hired, the tickets are sold, etc.

***CHANGES** As an alternate location, we reserved a date in May at the Fenton Township Hall at no charge to us. The hall does not have complete kitchen facilities so we had to hire a caterer. Hiring a caterer meant an increase in the price of meal tickets but we still felt it was important to carry on the Buffalo Dinner tradition. However, a few months later, one of our officers called the Township to get some details only to learn that the date we had reserved had been given to someone else for a wedding and we would have to change our date to the following weekend. How this mix-up occurred is not clear, but the bottom line is that the caterer could not make the change and many of our volunteers already had prior commitments for the new date.

***DIMINISHING PROFITS** Another factor in our decision was that in the last few years, the Buffalo Dinner has not been profitable. Each year, there have been more changes in regulations from the Health Department so nearly everything that used to be done by volunteers now has to be hired out using a licensed kitchen. Paying for custodial help and the new fees charged by the school would have resulted in even more reduction in profits this year. Switching the dinner to the Township Hall (at no charge to us) meant

hiring a caterer. Then, the price of tickets would have to be increased substantially which would prevent some of our loyal patrons from attending. The Board's decision has not been made lightly. We, as an organization dedicated to preserving the history of the Fenton and Mundy Township areas, have searched and searched for ways to make this fundraiser come to fruition. But the stumbling blocks have become too much to fight this year. In light of all that has transpired the Board is contemplating other ways in which to earn money. We are still planning to host the September 10, 2005 Pioneer Day and invite you to encourage your family and friends to come out and support us.

In lieu of coming to the 38th Annual Buffalo Dinner, we would like to host a "Silent Buffalo Dinner". The way it works is this:

Instead of waiting for a call from one of our members (asking you to purchase tickets or to bake a pie or to volunteer your time), please just send us a tax-deductible donation.

Optional form to use when mailing your "Silent Buffalo Dinner Donation" and suggestions. All donations will be gratefully accepted.

"SILENT BUFFALO DINNER" Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Please accept my tax-deductible donation in the amount of _____

MY SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUMMER EVENT

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM BY MAY 1 TO:

Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton & Mundy Townships

P.O. Box 154

Fenton MI 48430

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & DUES PAYING FORM:

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

DATE _____

Check all that apply:

NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

Activities I'd like to participate in:

Board Member

Fund Raising

Genealogy

Meeting Programs

Phone Calling

House & Museum cleaning (Spring Summer Fall)

Other work I'd be willing to help with _____

Membership Committee

Oral History

Photography

Publicity

Mailing Preparation

Research

Restoration

Special Events

Video Taping

Yard work

MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE:

Single.....\$ 3.00 annually

Family.....\$ 5.00 annually

Contributing..\$ 10.00 annually

Sustaining....\$ 25.00 annually

Life.....\$100.00 one time



SEND TO:

The Pioneer Memorial Association
of Fenton and Mundy Townships
P.O. Box 154
Fenton, MI 48430



PIONEER MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
OF
FENTON & MUNDY TOWNSHIPS
P.O. BOX 154
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FENTON, MICHIGAN 48430