

Howell Area Historical Society

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Presidents Message - As this season comes to a close, we hope you were able to visit the Depot Museum and Caboose complex this year. Hundreds of visitors attended "Railroad days" on the depot grounds during Melon Fest, and every trip on the Pere Marquette 1225 Steam Locomotive was sold out during her 75th Anniversary Year.

Under the watchful eye of our museum Curator Ed Vitez, our Museum has undergone a wonderful transformation this summer. He has been utilizing his experience from his business career to give our exhibits a fresh new look and symmetry. With the help of our new secretary, Mary Shaughessy and her husband, Don, inventories continue in preparation of future exhibits.

I am excited about our 2017 WWI Exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of the United States' involvement in World War One. Our exhibit will detail the vitally important role the Ann Arbor and Pere Marquette Railroads played in both our local and the national war effort. (see page 5 for more details).

Also in 2017, we will be starting our fundraising campaign for a new Heating and Cooling system. Many of our exhibit pieces are fragile and require controlled environment for preservation. We have items that are over 250 years old in this building, and our current system is fast approaching the end of its life. Partnering with local businesses, residents, and of course, our ever-resourceful members, we will raise the estimated \$6- 7 thousand needed, because THIS PLACE MATTERS.

Interestingly, I was lucky enough to capture a double rainbow over our museum complex this summer which is considered a symbol of transformation and is a sign of good fortune. I am proud to be involved this this great organization, and most importantly, our great members.

Call me anytime with questions or comments.

James "Rudy" Rudolph, President

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Kroger Community Rewards brought over \$452.00 in donations to the Historical Society this year!



C A B O O S E N E W S



The HAHS GTW Caboose has made significant progress over the spring and summer of 2016.

The crew was able to finish most of the exterior of Caboose with trim paint and window placement. Local artist, Stacy Karnes donated his time to place the GTW logo to the south side of the caboose and weather permitting will have the caboose number applied before our annual meeting in mid-October otherwise it will be one of the finishing touches applied to the exterior in the spring. Work also continues to the interior of the 1888 caboose with new paint applied to the walls, the cabinet doors and storage areas.

Even though the Museum will officially close for the season on October 23rd, work will continue this fall with resurfacing of the caboose floor and painting and sealing done in the cupola area!

We now begin to start the shopping for some of the interior artifacts such as lamps, chairs, a bed, desk and hardware that the caboose would be outfitted with back in the early 1900's.

HAHS wants to thank all of the volunteers that have help this year along with the financial help from donations received at this year's Railroad days and Melon fest!

Mike Mason, Vice President, Caboose committee chair.



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RAILROAD DAYS AT MELON FESTIVAL



1225 getting ready to leave the station. Above right: Original Melon Maid outfit made by Norma Baldwin.



Congratulations to our Car Show Peoples Choice Winners!
(pictured) Randy Tucker 1st place - 1965 Chevrolet Impala SS,
2nd place - Randy Nekola - 1958 Chevrolet DelRay
3rd place - Mike Gold- 1964 Volkswagen Beetle



OUR FIRST WEDDING AT THE DEPOT



Countless photographers have chosen our property for family photos, graduation photos and wedding portraits and we are grateful for their generous donations for use of our property so we can maintain the grounds for many years to come.

On Saturday, October 1st, the outdoor wedding ceremony of David Allred and Laura Fergusson was preformed at the Museum complex.

Congratulations to the happy couple.

Civil war wedding

Our museum curator Ed Vitez and his wife Joyce renewed their vows on their 25th wedding anniversary. While the first ceremony 25 years ago took place in Las Vegas, Ed always wanted a military wedding.

Pictured at the right is the happy couple leaving the church after renewing their vows. The ceremony was part of the 17th Michigan Infantry Regiment's two day Civil War Reenactment Event that was held at Livonia's *Historic Greenmead Village* in September. Dressed in clothes of the Civil War period, Joyce is wearing an exact reproduction of an 1861 wedding dress, and Ed is wearing the uniform of a Union Infantry Regimental Quartermaster of the 1860s.



EXHIBIT COMING IN 2017



Howell & World War One

Coming in 2017, the focus is to present to our “guests” the

impact WWI had on the citizens of Howell, both - *Civilian & Military*, showcasing the role the *Ann Arbor Railroad Depot*, and *Pere Marquette Railroad Station* played during the war.

On the eve of World War I, America's railroads were afloat in a sea of dramatic contrasts. The railroad's influence could still be felt in the towns and cities of America, and long-distance travel was still almost exclusively the domain of the passenger train.



And yet, in contrast to these healthy signs, wooden passenger cars were still in use on many railroads, as were outdated and underpowered locomotives.

Conductors and brakemen on freight and passenger trains once relied exclusively on hand and lamp signals to communicate with each other, the engine crew, and station agents.

We are excited about sharing the rest of the Howell WWI story with you in 2017.

If you have memorabilia to share, please contact the museum.



A F R E S H N E W L O O K

If you have not visited the HAHS's Depot Museum in the past four months, you're in for a surprise!

Display cases have been moved to give a more open or spacious feeling throughout the museum. Artifacts are displayed a little differently than before to include a few items previously in storage. Pictures have been moved to different locations with some being regrouped to create a visual theme.

This effort to give the Depot a *new look* is only the beginning of the plan to provide our museum visitors a fresh view of the artifacts that are a part of Howell's history. Additional changes will be made as new opportunities to improve our presentation occur.

Another part of the plan is for the museum to highlight a different aspect of Howell's history each year. By showcasing different artifacts to tell that story of Howell's history, the museum will always be fresh. Come visit in the Spring! Open Sundays from 10am - 2pm May - October.

You're Ann Arbor Railroad Engineer Docent and Museum curator, Ed

R E C O L L E C T I O N S O F H O W E L L B Y W . H . (B U D) E R W I N



In the early 1920's garbage collection was not the best, and Howell became infested with rats. The City Council enacted a bounty of 10 cents for each rat killed and turned into the City Clerk's office. All the boys got out their .22 rifles, bought a box of .22 shorts for 50 cents, and went rat hunting. The best place to kill rats was the city dump which was on the west side of Pinckney Road about where the I-96 expressway crosses. Some of the rats turned into the City Clerk's Office for 10 cents each might have been from Marion Township. However, the City Clerk could not tell the true citizenship of a dead rat.

The City Clerk would receive the bag of dead rats, count them, pay out 10 cents each, and then deposit the rats in the garbage can in the alley back of the Clerk's office. It was discovered eventually by the City Clerk that some of the rat hunters would retrieve the rats from the city garbage can, hold them overnight, and sell them to the City Clerk again the next day. This was 100% profit - you only had to kill the rat once. The rat bounty only lasted a year or so. Nobody likes bounty hunters anyway.

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Special Thanks to the Business Supporters of the Howell Area Historical Society

A LOOK BACK - HOWELL OPERA HOUSE - 1895

The Howell Opera House then was the only auditorium in town large enough with a stage to seat three - four hundred persons. For these affairs as well as the Memorial Day program and school commencement, promotional day exercises, it was packed often with chairs placed in the aisles (until the local fire restrictions forbade it).

Jessie Bonstelle made one of her first appearances at the Howell Opera House. Road shows came often and were well advertised in advance and drew large audiences. The Parker children could go, as Mr. O. J. Parker had sales of tickets in his drug store and "comps" as Harry called them were always available. I remember well the big board which stood on the southwest corner of the present site of the Carnegie Library park and of watching Bert Snedikor paste up the big play bills - lithographed-gaily colored scenes from the coming attractions. We children studied them avidly. Ione and Harry Parker saw many of the plays, but most of them were too risqué in the opinion of my parents for me to see. However, I do know when Porter White brought "Faust" to Howell, originally for one night only, it was so popular the stay was lengthened. I went and saw that play 5 times - never tiring of Mestophis and the lovely Marguerite. Once Father took Ione and me to "Uncle Tom's Cabin". When Little Eva died with the angel hovering (on wires) above her, Ione buried her face in father's coat and wept. I, being 4 years older, knew she would come out at the grand finale with the cast and take a bow.

Another outstanding memory of the Opera House was the Junior Exercises of Howell High School class of 1895. Three children were chosen to have small parts in the "Weddings of the World" or some similar title. The class enacted the marriage customs of different nations and world periods. Beginning with the primitive man capturing his bride in the wild forest by clubbing a maiden and dragging her to his lair by her long hair. Charles Gilmore was the brute and his sister Lulu was the lovely captive maiden. The final scene was the American wedding with Rose Taft as the beautiful bride; who the groom was, I do not remember, but Emil Bode was the clergyman. We three children, Matilda Wells, Harry Elliot and I, had parts in several scenes and as attendants in the grand finale of the American Wedding tableau with its red calcium powder light and its suffocating after-smoke. I do remember for ten days we were excused from school for rehearsals with the Juniors and how we loved it. Especially the day the huge trunks of rented costumes arrived. We waited as the garments for each scene were distributed. The only costume I remember distinctly was the leopard skin Charly Gilmore wore and the grass skirt for his sister Lou. This must have been the year 1894 for it was called Junior Exercises and Rose Taft, the American Bride, was of the class of HHS 1895.

I do not now recall all the times the Opera House figured into my life, but it stands out vividly with its dusty, dirty stage and much worn scenery. The three "scenes" for the stage setting which I recall were a bleak bare room, probably for "poor" scenes, the more elaborate drawing room and the nicest one, the deep dark forest. This one had "flies" of huge trees with cut out edges so with a good imagination one could feel the breezes blowing through the leaves. But most of all, I remember the scent of the Opera House, a combination of odor of manufactured gas (the only public building so illuminated), the dusty shut-up smell, and perhaps the "atmosphere of the Arts". What ever it was, once inside the building either as a part of a show or as audience, it was my greatest joy.

From the journal of Nellie Lansing Glenn



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The Howell Area Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Your donation is a tax deductible contribution.

Our updated website gives us the opportunity to share more history, our current projects,
and to preserve memories shared with the society.

You can even renew your membership, purchase a "This Place Matters" brick, drop us a email,
sign up as a volunteer or make a donation online.

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