



SPRING REVIEW!

Although the Bernard Museum has been closed to the public this Spring, board members have been busy planning and researching projects for the upcoming year.

If you've driven by the Museum grounds recently you may have noticed some goings on at the old Brown Schoolhouse. In fact, part of the north wall has been removed for inspection and repair. A special thanks to Board Directors **Nancy Hibiske-Reed** for her effort in locating an experienced team of workers to address what was discovered to be major deterioration of the structure, and to **Jill Marcusse** for keeping Schoolhouse preservation at the forefront of Museum business. As you might imagine, preserving a nearly 150-year-old building is a daunting task and requires significant cash investment. We ask that you consider donating to our Schoolhouse Fund this year so that we can insure this interesting and historically significant structure will remain intact for future generations.

Preserving our local heritage involves not only investing in the preservation of structures and artifacts, but also in tools that will allow us to better record and catalogue the thousands of items in our collection. We want to recognize Board Director **Elsbeth Inglis** for her role in moving us forward in this regard. She is in the process of reviewing software that will allow us to store information on our various artifacts and more easily access this information when visitors and researchers reach out to us. With nearly 70,000 items listed in our hardcopy catalogue, this project will take many man (woman) hours to complete. The Board has approved offering grants to area college students to assist with this endeavor. Again, all of this takes money. Although we do attempt to secure grants from various organizations to help defray our expenses, the competition for these funds is fierce. The Museum is wholly funded through donations, most of which comes from members of the greater southwest Barry County community. Your contributions are vital for our future work at preserving our local history. If you share an interest this effort, or any other of our ongoing projects to preserve and display artifacts relating to your family and/or community history, please consider making a donation to the Bernard Historical Society and Museum.

For an expanded version of this newsletter please visit our website at www.bernardmuseum.org and download the file. Or visit the Delton District Library where

we will have a limited number of hardcopies available.

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BERNARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Our Times

Is it time for you to renew your membership? If so, or if you are just interested in making a donation, take a moment to fill out this form and return it with your payment to: **Bernard Museum, PO Box 307, Delton, MI 49046**

You can also go to our website at: www.bernardmuseum.org and register/pay online.

Annual Family/Individual Membership (\$20) Make check payable to: **Bernard Museum**

Schoolhouse Fund Your Name: _____

Donation (you decide amount) Address: _____

Can we email you our newsletter to save us money on postage?

Email Address: _____

North Pine Lake School (aka Brown School)

By Nancy Hibiske-Reed

The North Pine Lake School (aka Brown School as it was originally built on a farm owned by George Brown) is a one-room schoolhouse at the Bernard Historical Museum. Built in 1873 and originally located on the corner of North Pine Lake Road and Lindsey Road in Barry County, it was used for classes until the 1950s. In 1963 it was moved to the museum grounds.

When he entered the museum store, I could tell he was on a mission.

"I need to buy the book," he announced. "My daughter keeps borrowing mine and I want the grandkids to read it too."

He was referring to "*Years Gone By*," a hard-cover book originally published in 1967 by the Bernard Historical Society to chronicle life in Prairieville, Barry, Hope, and Orangeville Townships in Barry County in the 19th and 20th centuries.

"I need two," he said. "One for my daughter and one for my son."

He paid in cash and we struck up a conversation. He lived in the Delton area his entire 86 years and attended a one-room schoolhouse like the one at the Bernard Historical Museum.

I asked if he ever toured our schoolhouse.

"Oh, yeah. In fact, I watched it go down the street when they moved it here."

He explained that it took two days to move the schoolhouse. Overhead wires and lights were removed in Prairieville to make room for the building to travel down the street. After the first day of progress, the schoolhouse was parked off the road for the night. The next morning it continued its trek to the museum grounds on Crooked Lake.

According to "*Years Gone By*," the schoolhouse was raised and put on wheels the summer of 1963. On October 1st at approximately 10:30 a.m., it started its journey to the museum where, for over 60 years, it is a favorite of visitors, young and old.

Our 62nd Season Begins June 1, 2024

The museum will be open for 2024 on Saturday, June 1st, from 1 to 5 pm. We hope to see you there!

We are looking for volunteers to help with the 2024 season. We can always use people to work as Museum guides on Saturday afternoons. We need folks with basic handyman skills or interest in helping with our collections. Please reach out to us through Facebook, our website, via email or telephone call!

Our **expanded newsletter**, available online via our website, contains more articles. Download and read more about the North Pine Lake School, reprints of articles from older newsletters, and a brief bit about mushroom hunting. Provide us with your email and we will make sure future newsletters are emailed to you.

We have had discussions on how best to utilize the former Bernard house, adjacent to the main Museum grounds and connected to our main building by a tunnel. There is interest in remodeling the house to be used as a residence for a museum caretaker, or student helpers. Also, we have discussed moving some museum displays into the building. We appreciate any suggestions you may have as we begin to better incorporate this structure into our organization moving forward.

Thank you!

Bernard Historical Society & Museum

PO Box 307

Delton, MI 49046

North Pine Lake School (aka Brown School)

Overheard at the Schoolhouse

By Nancy Hibiske-Reed

As a docent at the Bernard Historical Museum, I love opening the one-room schoolhouse and watching visitors as they enter. Many look up at the 20-foot ceiling. Others turn their heads from side to side attempting to take in the desks, books, maps, and old stove.



North Pine Lake School

Memories are resurrected for many senior visitors at the North Pine Lake School (aka Brown School) one-room schoolhouse. Built in 1873 and originally located on the corner of North Pine Lake Road and Lindsey Road in Barry County, it was used for classes until the 1950s. In 1963 it was moved to the museum grounds.

Senior visitors light up when they enter the schoolhouse and one can see memories come flooding back.

A gentleman maneuvered his walker up the ramp and through the back door of the schoolhouse. His stooped shoulders straightened a bit as he pushed his cap back to look up at the lofty ceiling and down the faded green walls.

“I went to a school like this,” he said surveying the room. “Not this big, though.” He pointed a gnarled finger at a wooden desk next to the antique Round Oak stove in the front of the room. “That is the worst seat in the place. Those stoves got so hot!”

“I went to this very school,” a lady said during the Bernard Historical Museum Diamond Jubilee in September 2022. Her eyes were as bright as her floral shirt when she smiled. “I sat in a desk just like this.” She ran her hand over the smooth wood.

“Did you ever ring the school bell?”

“Oh no! I never got to do that.”

I ushered her to the front door and pointed to the heavy rope hanging through an opening in the ceiling. She grinned, grasped the rope like a lifeline, and pulled. The bell rang out loud and clear just as she remembered 72 years ago.



As you can see from the picture to the left, we have begun repairing structural damage to the schoolhouse. Some windows will need to be rebuilt as well as this exposed section of wall. There will be more work that needs to be done as our budget allows. The current work is estimated to be in excess of \$7000.

You can make a difference by donating to our Schoolhouse Fund.

Did you know that the Bernard Museum is home to dozens of antique typewriters?



Kids enjoy learning about old typewriters and discovering the connection between using one's fingers to physically put letters on a page of paper.

We are scheduling a Type-In event for later in the summer that will be open to the public (kids included!)

Stay tuned for an exact date and time.

JEEPS!!



The Willys (or Ford) version of the Jeep



The Bantam version of the Jeep

Everyone can identify a Jeep by its iconic design, notably the vertical grill design. But its early history is mostly lost to all but military buffs.

The name "JEEP" was trademarked by the Willys-Overland Motors in 1950, a company with a strong automotive background. From 1918 to 1922 it was the second largest producer of automobiles in the U.S. next to Ford. John Willys (pronounced Willis) had purchased the Overland company in 1912 and renamed it. When most people think of a WWII era Jeep, they picture the Willys. After all, more than 650,000 of these vehicles were put into service during the war. Willys-Overland shared production with Ford Motor Company and there are slight style differences between the two manufacturers. However, Willys-Overland did not invent the Jeep.

The creation of the Jeep rests with the American Bantam Car Company from Pennsylvania. Following the advice of a former Navy Commander, the company undertook to create a dependable, hardworking general-purpose vehicle for the military and called the BRC or Bantam Reconnaissance Car. After building prototypes and presenting it to the government, the Army purchased the prototypes and design from American Bantam. From 1940 to 1943 around 2,600 vehicles were manufactured with half going to Great Britain, a few to the Soviet Union, and the rest ending up with the U.S. Army. The Army, however, felt that American Bantam lacked the ability to produce the volume of Jeeps needed for military use as WWII expanded. In 1941 it awarded the bulk of the contracts to Willys and Ford which modified the original design.

The **Bernard Museum** is home to one of each of these important historical military vehicles. Be sure to check them out next time you visit!

Most historians believe that the name "Jeep" came about as the result of military slang for the original reference to the vehicle as a General Purpose or "GP" vehicle.

THE "LITTLE HOUSE" PROJECT

Last spring, Mrs. Bernard donated additional land to the museum. There is a small house on the property used in the past by four Doctors who were assisting Dr. Bernard at different times with his medical practice. Later the house was used by the Doctor's parents, his son and others. However, it has not been occupied the past 25 years and has been used for storage. It has always been referred to as the "Little House".

The Board of Directors of the Bernard Historical Museum decided to try to renovate the building and make it habitable again, an ambitious project considering the financial condition of our operating fund. Never-the-less, we started by getting some free help from the Department of Social Services to clean up the outside and empty the building. The well was activated which was a bit costly as we needed a new point and had to replace some parts. Then Richard (Dick) Meindertsma, General Manager of Hdwerd-Huizinga Co. of Grand Rapids arranged to have the plumbing completely renovated including new bathroom fixtures and a check out of the furnace and water heater, all as a donation. Dick is Vice President of the Gun Lake Lions Club and lives at Gun Lake.

Richard Scott and Dutch Houvener, also of the Gun Lake Lions Club, have volunteered to make new window frames, insulate the outside walls in all rooms and panel them. Materials have been provided at a discount by the MC Pole Barn Co. of Delton and the Doster Lumber Co. The Delton Chamber of Commerce has absorbed the cost of the storm windows and organized work crews to clean and paint the interior of the building. All of this is being done with the hope that a couple can be induced to live in this house rent free or for very little rent if they would care for the museum grounds.

MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

The following gifts have been received by the museum since the last listing appeared in Newsletter No. 6:

WW II Uniform, Push toy "rooster", Us Army goggles for use in Aircraft, Photo cutting board, 2-1930 water heaters, shoe stretchers, pancake flipper, 4 medicine bottles, Malt mixer, baby bonnet and man's vest, feed bag, 3-1920 pr. rayon hose, Pr. black nylon gloves, 4 red and blue handkerchiefs, 2 pr 1936 man's socks, necktie, woolen underwear, man's night shirt, work shirt, ladies billfold (the preceding were new but purchased 1920 to 1930), flapper girl powder compact, 1947 Barry County Safety Guide, 1930 light fixture, shoe repair iron, 4 early electric toasters, and a bacon frier which prevents curling. The preceding 30 items were donated by Esther Bernard; 2-200 yr. old napkins donated by Leta Boulter; 2 dolls donated by Anne Richards Collins; Rosewood cigar holder donated by Jean Solomon; 1880 shuttle for hooked rug and photo negatives on glass given by Lewis Swathwood; 10 Misc hand tools given by Elvert Mott; a brick from

the Leonard Brick Co. Delton, a malted milk maker and a camera given by Howard Brown; Doll by Ila Francisco; Stilliard scales donated by Buelah Smith; 3-1909 deer camp photos donated by Lois Flowers, 24 dentist tools with case used ca 1965 and a 1900 hand seeder donated by Mary Simpson; ½ bushel tub given by Sarah Anders; 1923 Hastings yearbook, W M University Yearbook, a subpoena for George Willison, and small spectacles with case donated by Evelyn Martin Willison; Doll with very old head, Doll carriage, doll trunk and a book about old clothes given by Doris Beavan Leonard; two local historical news articles donated by Marie Norwood Williams; 1881 marriage Certificate with pictures of the couple and the preacher (Pennocks) donated by Mrs. P. Edwards; A collection of voter registration books donated by Lois Bromley, Barry Township Clerk.

EPITAPHS

Underneath this pile of stones
Lies all that's left of Sally Jones.
Her name was Briggs, it was not Jones
But Jones was used to rhyme with stones.

Here lies Anne Mann;
She lived an old Maid and
she died an old Mann.

HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM'S FIRST 20 YEARS

People who could remember how the Museum got started put together a 20 page document of its beginning and development.. Much of the data was verified from material in our files. It contains some pictures and a brief biography of the museum's founder, Dr. Prosper Bernard. It may be examined or purchased at the museum. The cost is 50¢ per copy.

MEMBERSHIP

In October, the Bernard Historical Society and Museum will again start recruitment of new members and will be requesting the current members to renew their membership for another year. Life and Patron members will not be contacted.

This year we especially need more operational funds (annual membership fees or grants) because of the "Little House" project... It is very costly to renovate a house that has been vacant for so many years. We also need members who are interested in our local history and wish to see it preserved. If you wish to become a member, the fees are the same as last year:

\$3.00 per person for annual membership

\$40.00 per person for life membership

\$100.00 or more to receive a patron membership. A

Patron Membership can be for a person, a family, an organization, a business or any other entity interested in preserving our local history.

Please send your membership fees to Mrs. P. G. Bernard, Tres., 7175 W. Delton Road, Delton, MI. or to Mrs. Wilbur Solomon, Sect., 11326 Pleasant Lake Road, Delton, MI. Please include the name and address of the person or entity to appear on the certificate or card.

INDEX FOR THE BOOK "YEARS GONE BY" IS AVAILABLE

We finally got this index duplicated and our cost for 100 copies was nearly \$200.00. We have a limited number left at the museum which we are selling for \$2.00 each.

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There's a Morel in this Story

Mushroom hunting goes back a long way. A very long way. Since early man began to forage, hundreds of thousands of years ago, it is likely he sampled various mushrooms Mother Nature had to offer. Morel mushrooms have been a treasured find going back at least into Roman times. Pliny the Elder is believed to have referenced them when referring to a springtime mushroom considered a delicacy by the wealthy. Europeans have used them for centuries, especially in France where it is considered the King of Mushrooms. In the U.S. various species of Morels are found along the West Coast, in the Colorado Rockies, and in the upper Midwest, with Michigan considered a prime location.



Michigan Morel hunting, like so many other things, likely dates back to when our Native Americans took up residency. It is a tradition taken up by European settlers to the region and which continues today. Boyne City is hosting their 64th Annual National Morel Festival May 16th thru the 19th this year. Mesick, Michigan, however, is considered the Mushroom Capital of the U.S.

Barry County is in the heart of southern Michigan's Morel country. With so much protected land available to residents, there is no shortage of places to look. Ah, but where to look exactly?

Everyone knows someone who is an avid Morel hunter and these avid hunters all have tips for finding the tasty fungus, though their favorite hunting locations typically remain secret. As it turns out, Morels grow in a wide variety of habitats. True Morels are fungi in the genus *Morchella*. They are known for their honeycomb-like cap that is hollow all the way through the stem. The cap bottom is fused to the stem, another identifying characteristic. Experts don't agree on how many different species there are of Morels but it is likely there are over a dozen in the U.S. Generally, the darker colored ones arrive first with gray to blond varieties showing up a few weeks later. Old orchards are favorite hunting spots, but Morels can be found in most forest environments, including under pines. Burn areas are another location to look as the change in soil chemistry associated with burns tends to favor Morel spore.

Michigan's DNR encourages people to adopt an ethical approach to hunting these fungal gems. Take only what you need. Do not disturb the surrounding area. And place your harvest in a mesh bag so that any related spores can find a way back to the ground in hopes of germinating for next year's crop.

It is recommended that you only eat cooked Morels, as raw ones can be poisonous. The classic preparation is to sauté in butter with favored herbs. For a more gourmet presentation, consider using them in rich cream sauces, or adding to a risotto dish.



One of the largest Morels ever found measured 14 inches in height and 15 inches in circumference. It weighed over 9 pounds!