



Swartz Creek Area Historical Society

Pub # 95

swartzcreekhistory.com

March–April 2018

March 14 - Railroad Safety/ Hobo & Tramps - Curtis Stewart

April 11 - Michigan Civil War Battle Flags - Matt Vanacker

Regular meetings are held every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Swartz Creek City Hall, 8083 Civic Drive, Swartz Creek, MI 48473.

Please join us.

"It is the mission of the Swartz Creek Area Historical Society to keep alive the chronicle of our community's yesterdays, today's, and tomorrows in the hearts and minds of those around us."

Please note that occasionally our meetings are relocated from City Hall to a different location and time. Those changes will be mentioned in this newsletter and posted on the door at city hall.

If we have your email address, you will receive an email as well!

Notes from the President



After a winter with more than 65 inches of snow, it is refreshing to see bare ground again. Do we dare hope we have seen the last of snow? I know...it's only March and anything can happen, but I can wish can't I?

Have you started your spring cleaning? Are you clearing out Grandma's attic? If you find items that relate to our area; photographs from long ago, scrapbooks, or advertising memora-

bilia and the like, please think of the Historical Society before disposing of them. It is our duty and purpose to retain the history of our community.

Recently, while sorting through old family photos, I found a small envelope with a note and several tiny photos of my Dad as a high school student, posing with the Varsity Club (all in their letter sweaters), a male chorus from 1939, my father with his two best friends, (still in their letter sweaters) and one of him posing as if dribbling a basketball (that's what he lettered in). The note explained that the sender had received the photos from a gentleman who found an album in someone's trash with the name of the high school on the front. He saved it and later saw an ad in the local newspaper for the 1940 Class Reunion. He called the number and subsequently mailed the album to the chairman of the committee, who in turn mailed these few precious photos to my mother, long after my father's passing. I will be forever grateful to both the man who thoughtfully rescued the album and the lady who kindly took the time to forward the photos to someone who would treasure them.

Please don't send your family mementos to the curb; someone, somewhere will treasure them, too.

Susan Swan,
President



January 10th Meeting

American Polar Bears - Mike Grobbel

In the summer of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson, at the urging of Britain and France, sent an infantry regiment to north Russia to fight the Bolsheviks in hopes of persuading Russia



Scott Roy & Mike Grobbel

to rejoin the war against Germany. The 339th Infantry Regiment, with the first battalion of the 310th Engineers and the 337th Ambulance and Hospital Companies, arrived at Archangel, Russia, on September 4, 1918. about 75 percent of the 5,500 Americans who made up the North Russian Expeditionary Forces were from Michigan; of those, a majority were from Detroit. The newspapers called them "Detroit's Own,"; they called themselves "Polar Bears." They marched on Belle Isle on July 4, 1919. Ninety-four of them were killed in action after the United States decided to withdraw from Russia but before Archangel's harbor thawed.



We thank Mike Grobbel for bringing us this part of history that many of us did not know happened.



The Polar Bear Monument (above) is located within White Chapel Cemetery, Troy, MI. It was dedicated on May 30, 1930.

February 14 Meeting

Passion Play - Jan Wilson

In 1633, the residents of Oberammergau, Bavaria, Germany, vowed



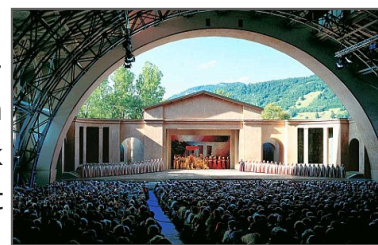
that if God spared them from the bubonic plague ravaging the region, they would produce a play thereafter for all time depicting the life and death of Jesus. The death rate among adults rose from one person per 1000

per year in October 1632 to twenty in the month of March 1633. The adult death rate slowly subsided to one in the month of July 1633. The villagers believed they had been spared and they kept their part of the vow when the play was first performed in 1634.

The play is now performed repeatedly over the course of five months during every year ending in zero.

From May 15 until October 3, 2010, 102 performances took place and the same number is next scheduled for 2020. The production involves over 2,000 performers, musicians and stage technicians, all residents of the village.

Jan Wilson attended the play in 2010 and we thank her for sharing that experience with us.



George Washington Portrait Dedication

On Thursday, February 22, 2018, the Paul Emery Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution held a ceremony in the front hallway of Swartz Creek High School. There were about 40 people in attendance, some of the

SAR men in reproduction uniforms from the Revolutionary War.

The Rembrandt Peale gift portrait of General George Washington was the focus of the celebration. Swartz Creek High School is now the proud recipient of one of about



Photo by Lania Rocha
Swartz Creek View

10,000 of these portraits donated to schools across our nation by the Sons of the American Revolution chapters, so our high school should consider this a great honor. The donation of the portraits all began years ago with the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association from the home of George Washington in Virginia, as a fund-raiser.

Robert Hawcroft, organizer of the event stated "It is the hope our gift of the famous Peale reproduction portrait of General George Washington will inspire new interest in all things historical, as well as enhance the learning experiences already in progress." The large framed portrait now hangs in the front hallway of the high school, near the main office entrance.

The Genesee Career Institute Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Battalion was in charge of the presentation of our national flag. The Swartz Creek Madrigals sang a lovely rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner. SAR Vice President Norman Palmer spoke about the SAR and the significance of this ceremony. The organization presented an award to longtime member, Dr. Robert Sprague who was behind the purchase of the portrait gift. and refreshments were provided by the high school history club.

Submitted by Len Thomas

Upcoming Events

- March 14 - **Railroad Safety/ Hobo & Tramps** - Curtis Stewart
- April 11 - **Michigan Civil War Battle Flags** - Matt Vanacker



These are two meetings you won't want to miss. Both of these gentlemen are great speakers with very interesting topics. Please join us in welcoming them to our next two meeting!

Social Media

All of our publications are listed with prices on our website: swartzcreekhistory.com



Watch for our posts on Facebook!

Pease note that all of our speakers are tentative and sometimes do get changed. We will do our best to inform you of any last minute changes by email or newspaper and they are always posted at the door of the mini museum in City Hall!

2018

- March 14 - **Railroad Safety/ Hobo & Tramps** - Curtis Stewart
- April 11 - **Michigan Civil War Battle Flags** - Matt Vanacker
- May 9 - **Show & Tell** - Election of the Board of Trustees
- June 13 -
- July 11 - **Ice Cream Social**
- August - No Meeting

Remember our meetings are cancelled if the SC Community Schools are closed due to bad weather!

Donations

- **Brad Kusky** - 2 Gaines Township Porter Drain Maps (1951) in memory of **David Persyn** .
- **Leslie Wollard** - 10 copies of Pictures of the W. L. & F. B. Miller Store located in Swartz Creek, early 1900's.
- **Len & Sharon Thomas** - 30 draw oak card catalog cabinet.
- **Jan Wilson** - Monetary Donation
- **Martial Viens** - Monetary Donation

New Members

We welcome new members **Jan Wilson** of Grand Blanc, and **Bill Salgat** of Swartz Creek.

SC Area Obituary Index

Len Thomas is continuing to update area obituaries for the file located at the Perkins Library in Swartz Creek. With people contributing and the current obituary search each day in the Flint Journal as of November, 2017 there are 3,885 obituaries on file.

If you haven't looked at the obituary file, check it out; you will be amazed! Board trustee, Chris Campbell has volunteered to continue clipping current obituaries from local newspapers. SCAHS member, Paul Williams has been scouting the internet for any very old obituaries he can find. All of this help is truly appreciated as we continue our mission of serving our own communities. If you have family obituaries not on the current list, please mail them to:

**Len Thomas 4267 Springbrook Drive,
Swartz Creek, MI 48473**

Membership Information

Dues

Dues have been coming in very slowly, so please help us out by sending them to the address shown below and your new membership card will be sent with the next newsletter. A big thanks to those of you that have paid. ***Please let us know of any address changes so our newsletters get to you in a timely manner.*** We are a **501 C-3** non profit group and all of your contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Contributions and memorials are always welcome.

Membership dues levels:

Seniors: (60 and up) and **Students** (18 and under) \$5.00

Individuals: under 60 years of age \$10.00

Family: (all related persons in the same household) \$20.00

Patron: \$50

Send all payments or correspondence to:

S.C.A.H.S.

11353 Cook Rd.

Gaines, Michigan 48436 – 9742

Email: tbuda@shianet.org or

abuda@shianet.org - **Phone: 989-271-9193**

OFFICERS

President.....	Susan Swan - 2020
Vice-President.....	Christine Campbell - 2018
Secretary.....	Angie Buda - 2018
Treasurer.....	Tim Buda - 2019
Trustees.....	Bill Miller - 2020
Dave Spillane - 2019	Lisa Spillane - 2018
Len Thomas - 2019	Carolyn West - 2019
Alternates.....	Scott Roy - 2020
	Ron West - 2020