



The TELEGRAPH

VOLUME XLVII Issue 4

October 2021

Wagar Family Heirlooms Donated to the Museum

by Lesley Gilliland Harkai

We were pleased to welcome Dr. Norm Oestrike, Teresa, his wife, and Frank Gerstenecker, his brother-in-law, to the museum in July. They came to donate some very important family heirlooms to the museum.

Albert Wagar had two sons, that survived to adulthood, Henry and Harley. The younger of the two was Henry Wagar, who married Ada Erving and had three children, Irene, Norene and Jeanne. Irene Wagar married Wilfred Oestrike and had three children, Janet, Norm and Henry.

Dr. Norm Oestrike is the great-grandson of Albert Wagar. His sister Janet Wagar married Frank Gerstenecker. Sadly, Janet has recently passed.

On July 22, Dr. Norm drove up from Indiana and donated an handhewn oxen yoke and the rifle carried by his great grandfather in the Civil War. Apparently, his father Wilfred Oestrike found the rifle in the floorboards of the Wagar Family barn many years ago. His initials W.O. are etched into the surface. The rifle is in excellent condition for its age. It is stamped Harper's Ferry 1854 with the U.S. eagle. After some modest research, we think this is a US Model 1842 69 caliber musket. It is one of about 103,000 such muskets made at Harper's Ferry from 1843 to 1854. An additional 172,000 were made at Springfield Armory during the



Brothers-in-Law Frank Gerstenecker and Dr. Norman Oestrike at the Flat Rock Historical Museum on July 22, 2021.



"Harper's Ferry 1854" Detail of Harpers Ferry Rifle carried by Albert Wagar (4th Michigan Volunteers) during the Civil War.

same period. It bears the distinction of being the last smoothbore musket made for general issue to US troops, and is also the first US musket designed and built to have interchangeable parts with muskets made at both Harpers Ferry and Springfield. It was originally a smoothbore, but the gun was one of about 14,000 that were rifled at the armory in years 1856-1859. The long-range rear sight was added to the gun at that time.

The oxen yoke belonged to Henry Wagar, Albert's father and is alleged to have been on the Wagar Family oxen as they traveled the Erie Canal from New York to Michigan.

Irene Wagar spent her life researching the Wagar Family and passed her research on to her daughter Janet. Together they amassed a sizeable genealogical collection. Her husband Frank Gerstenecker would like to donate the lot to the Flat Rock Historical Society since much of the research is about the Wagar Family.



FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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2020 - 2021

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OUR MISSION

The Flat Rock Historical Society seeks to preserve and communicate to residents and visitors the history and spirit of those who have lived in and near the City of Flat Rock from the beginning of human habitation, or its vision, to bring our community together for the enjoyment, discovery, and learning our past to create

OUR 2021 DIGGIN' LOCAL HISTORY

WAS A SUCCESS!

THANK YOU

To everyone involved in this year's Diggin' Up Local History a huge thank you! It could not have been done without you and all your efforts! Our deepest apologies if we missed anyone not listed at the time of this printing.

Our Event Chairladies

Jean Whisler Walker - Character Research, Costumes, Script Help & Props

Mary Washko - Sponsors/Donors Cultivation, Basket Raffles & Props

MargaretAnn Cooper - Craft Services, Refreshments & Master Scheduling

Lesley Harkai - Ticketing, Printed Program, Artwork, Character Research

Our Characters

Dr. Hal C. Wyman - Kyle Rutkowski "Mad" Anthony Wayne - Tyler Moll

Clara Bryant Ford - Kristyn Konal

Katie QuaQua - Tiffany Basinger

Catherine Couture - Hillary Rose

Garrie Nation - Pam Purcell

Libbie Custer - Kylee Murdoch & Stephanie Hawkins

L'Near Rumsey (aka Thomas Hogan) - Chris Harkai

Mary Stoflet Vreeland Hall - Heather Anderson

Our Guides

Melissa Murdoch

Mike Sollars

House of Mourning

Bob Gilbert

Lila Fedokovitz

Photographers

Joe Pagano

Wandering Spirits

Sylvia Jack Devin

Volunteers

Nancy Young

Laura Polce

Kevin Walker

Kaitlyn Wrobel

Rose Chambers

Patty & Bruce Chapin

Michigan Paranormal Society

Ed Moore & Company

Also, Thank you to our

2021 Diggin' Up Local History event sponsors:

Meijer, Crest Ford, Janet's Closet, Bobcean Funeral Home,

Blue Heron, Biggby Coffee, Ruhlig Farm & Gardens,

National Museum of the Great Lakes, Rose Family Construction,

Apple Charlies, Milkins Jewelers, Locktite Storage,

Doris LaBeau - Remax, Wimpy Burgers,

Downriver Genealogical Society, Fiorelli's Restaurant Collection,

Melissa Murdoch's Wreaths, & Inviting Scents.



2021 Calendar

Museum Hours / Society Schedule*

Fall Flea Market - October 3rd

7 am-3 pm @ Speedway

victorian funeral exhibit

Special Evening Hours

5 - 8 pm

- Tuesday, October 5th
- Thursday, October 14th
- Tuesday, October 19th
- Thursday, October 28th

Home Saturday, November 6th
for the Saturday, December 4th
Holidays Special Evening Hours TBD

* Some buildings and exhibits may be closed based on spacing rules and government restrictions. Schedule is subject to change.

Membership Meeting Dates

Thursday,
December 16th 6pm Member's Holiday Party

Thursday,
February 17th 5pm Members Supper
 6pm Members Meeting
 7pm "Prohibition's Proving Ground"
 by Joe Boggs, Author

In Memoriam

Donald "Fuzzy" Caraway
 (October 7, 1939 - September 2, 2021)



Donald "Fuzzy" Caraway, age 81, of Rockwood, passed away on Thursday, September 2, 2021 at Henry Ford Hospital in Wyandotte, Michigan.

Born on October 7, 1939 in Downing Town, Pennsylvania, he was the son of Robert and Christine (Mattson) Caraway. On July 8, 1960 he married Suesan Zlatos in St. John Lutheran Church, Waltz, Michigan.

Donald worked for Great Lakes Steel for 38 years, retiring in 1997. He was a member of the Flat Rock Historical Society and United Steel Workers Union, Local 1299.

Donald was preceded in death by his parents and wife Suesan. He is survived by his daughter Christine (Tracy) Holmes, granddaughter Shannon Gasiewski, grandson Douglas Holmes, great-granddaughters Alyssa, Madison and Tracie.

GRATITUDE

*We would like to thank the following
 (and hope we didn't miss anyone):*

To Sue Langs Davidson, for the 1926 Class Photo.

To Richard Henckel for the 1960 Class Photo.

To Andrea Gray for allowing us to scan her yearbooks for 2001, 2002, & 2004.

To Bruce Chapin:

- For replacing the water heater in Munger Store. We sincerely appreciate having the warm water working again.

- For fixing the subpump in the hotel, it has made a huge difference in the humidity levels.

- For working to fix the windmill.

To everyone who contributed a dish to pass at the last membership meeting on September 16th, it was yummy!

To everyone who has contributed to the Caboose Fund, we are excitedly pricing out supplies and anticipate renovating the Caboose this Spring 2022. Additional donations for this worthy project are always welcome!

To all the pumpkin carvers that helped carve the pumpkins for our history walk. And the seed roasters too!

CONTINUATION OF
THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF FLAT ROCK
 COMPILED BY LOUIS BECKLEY (1951)

Introduction by Lesley Gilliland Harkai

In our July issue, we had republished the first three sections. We had such a positive response from our readers that we are going to continue with this serialization of this compilation. Recall The History of the Village of Flat Rock was compiled by Louis Beckley, a surveyor employed by Wayne County in 1951. This compiled work included multiple source documents and a series of articles authored by Freeland Garretson. These articles had been published by Garretson in the "Flat Rock News" in 1897 and are mostly recollections by one of the areas oldest residents.

FRHS has recently scanned the work in its entirety with Optical Character Recognition and have arrived at this digital version of this historical work. Since it has been seventy years since the original compilation, we thought we would share the sections from Freeland Garretson's articles. Please keep in mind that this was written in 1897 and as such, has its historical context preserved complete with antiquated spelling and grammatical anomalies. There are some transcriber notes set-off by italics in square brackets for clarity and modern context.

FLAT ROCK OF 60 YEARS AGO

Written and Prepared by Freeland Garretson, 1897

IV

We also remember an interesting Incident which happened in the early days of this Village, of which a son of one of the parties now living here allows us to give a statement. A criminal suit was brought before one of the Justices of the place against Ed Mintonye for some offence for which he was found guilty, and a commitment was placed in the hands of an officer to send the prisoner to the county jail. James Vreeland was the officer in charge of the warrant and commitment. The two men started for the City of Detroit. Nearly every house on the way, especially along the river road, was a tavern, and before they arrived in town both parties had got filled up; and the prisoner, who was not quite so much intoxicated as the officer, succeeded in getting the papers out of the hands of the officer, and in this condition the two men entered the jail. Vreeland, the officer, was given over to the jailor; and Mintonye, the prisoner returned home. Vreeland was kept in jail a day or two, and the error was not discovered until the parties got sobered up.

John G. Carson, better known among his neighbors as Uncle Gamber Carson was one of the early settlers, although his residence was a few miles out of the Village. He was a highly respectable and estimable citizen and removed here at an early day from Seneca County, New York. We learned with deep sorrow of his death a few days ago at the age of 76.

In the year 1837 very few settlements had been made within a mile or two of the Village. The Cornelius Van Horn family had put up a small saw mill about three miles east of the Village, run by water power. Remnants of the old dam may be seen as you pass by on the railroad. A few families, mostly from central New York and the East, had started a small settlement on Port Creek two miles west in Monroe County, among whom were Enoch, William, and John Chamberlins, James Thorn, William Walters, John Strong,

Aaron Burgess, and others. A few families had settled on each side of the river where North and South Rockwood are now situated.

From the Huron River south to Swan Creek and Stony Creek, which was then included in the Township of Ash, Monroe County, was a dense and almost impenetrable forest. Wolves, bears, and wildcats reamed at large, and deer, wild turkeys, and other large game were very plentiful. Several trappers and hunters made good livings in those days catching the wild and disposing of the furs. Venison hunting was the principal occupation of many of the early settlers, and the forest yielded large quantities of stave timber which could be sold to the dealers. These together brought good livings for their families, and the clearing up of the land was neglected.

There were then few roads running out from the Village. I remember going out with other boys and men to help cut underbrush and clear out the road from this village to Swan Creek in the old territorial road towards Monroe, part of which, between Port Creek and Swan Creek, was entirely Impassable in spring and fall for man or beast, where now you may find excellent farms.

Another small settlement was made on the old territorial road at the crossing of Swan Creek. Among those living here were the Gravitts, Parish's, Dingmans, Ruchers, Hoopers, and Arzenos. The two latter families afterwards moved to Flat Rock.

The only way to reach Monroe at that time was to go up Port Creek to county line, cross over the ridge to Grafton, down Stony Creek to the old territorial road, and across the openings to Monroe--a trip of two days in going and returning with a team. It was more difficult then to make a trip to Detroit and return than to make it

to New York or Chicago. The easiest route to the city with a team was by way of Dearborn, or semi-occasionally a small steamboat plying between Detroit and Toledo would stop for you at Gibraltar. Although very uncertain, this was generally a three days' trip; and lucky for the small farmers and others that they were not compelled to make it very often.

Citizens of the place often had to undergo many inconveniences. The mails were only brought here once a week on horseback by way of Ypsilanti. About as many letters were received here in a month as now come daily. Only now and then a weekly paper was brought in the mail. Postage on a letter was 2 shillings, or 20 no prepayment of postage required. I remember I went to the post office a few days after we arrived here, found two letters, paid 50 cents, and took them home? • It was found they were sent by our near neighbors in the East, who were merely hoping that we had arrived safely in our new home and asking us to return answers to their letters. The postmaster was frequently taken in by some of his customers, who would get their letters and read the contents and, if the letter did not give sufficient news to pay the postage, would throw it back on his hands.

Although many little difficulties comfort living in their old log houses than some of the present generation and easily supplied. No worms or and when the farmer or gardener or kind to plant but always

The principal setback to the fever and ague and child fever, water. No drains had been made, and the pools caused the sickness of the was no uncommon occurrence some cows lying near the neighbors' doors. The Murrein".



confronted the new settlers, yet many took more and getting along with fewer of the luxuries of life in their extravagant living, for their wants were few Insects destroyed their fruit and vegetables, planted his potatoes he cared not for the sort gathered a good crop with small expense.

new settlers in the early days was the brought on by the use of the surface malaria arising from the stagnant Inhabitants and also of their cattle. It mornings to find two or three dead disease was then called "Bloody

V

The Indian Reservation, covering four miles square of land, was situated in the southeast part of the present Township of Huron and extended down to within half a mile of our village, lying on both sides of the Huron Riv'r, over which were scattered a score or more of Indian dwellings, usually built near the banks of river. Parts of several tribes were Joined together and occupied the reserve on peaceable terms. There were over 100 of the Indians and squaws belonging to this settlement, among whom were the Wyandottes, Hurons, Senecas, and remnants of several other tribes who had been permitted by the Government to occupy the lands, although at the same time they were drawing their yearly presents, rations, and allowances from the British Government in Canada.



Risdon, Orange. 1825. Map of the surveyed part of the territory of Michigan [DETAIL]
by O. Risdon 1825. William L. Clements Library Image Bank.
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/IC-WCL1IC-X-871%5DWCL000965>.

FLAT ROCK OF 60 YEARS AGO *continued from page 5*

[Fort] Malden, on the opposite side of the Detroit River, was a very handy place for them to go and get their yearly pay. There was a regular path running from their reservation down to this village and on to Gibraltar five miles below, where their crossing place to the Canada shore was situated.

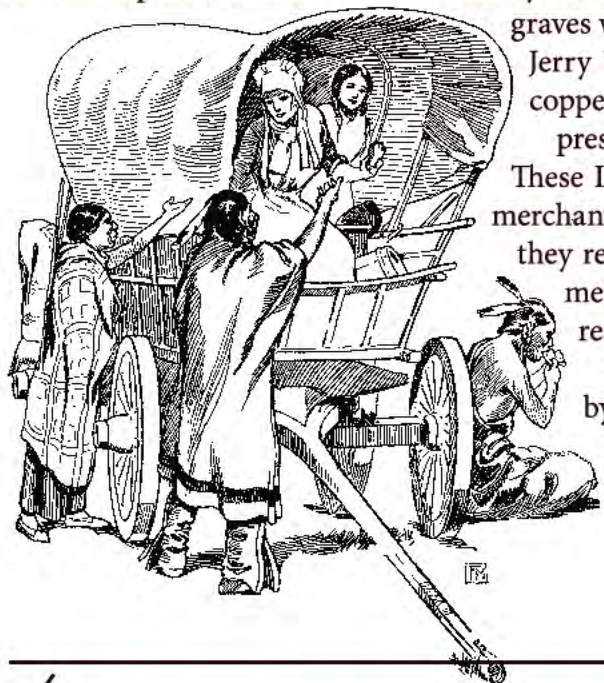
Several chiefs and ex-chiefs were among these tribes. Among them were "Tom Short", a half-breed, son of a British officer in the war of 1812. His residence was on the farm now owned and occupied by Mr. Gladding. "Chewachta" was then the chief. He resided near where Horace Thompson now lives. "Split Log" and "No Fat" were also prominent Indians in these tribes. The young Indians were frequent visitors at our village, showing their skill with bow and arrow, running, jumping, and wrestling with the white boys of the place, in all of which they usually came out ahead. In their games of ball, pitching quoits, and other manly exercises they were far ahead of the whites.

Their principal occupation was hunting, and here they had found a good location for that purpose as the country abounded with all kinds of game, both large and small, in summer and winter. Little attention was paid to farming although they were living on the choicest of land. Only a little corn was raised by them. This, together with the game they killed, supplied all their necessary wants.

Their intelligence was much ahead of the neighboring tribes. Missionaries had been among them. A young Methodist minister named Brockway visited the reservation several times and preached to the Indians at their camp grounds, then situated on the place where Israel Olmstead formerly lived. Here they worshipped in their own language and on their own soil, and excellent singing accompanied the services. This Mr. Brockway returned some years after the Indians left the country—a very old man—to visit his old friends in this neighborhood.

A school was established on the old Indian camp ground, where the Indian children of the vicinity were taught through the week and meetings held on the Sabbath. The old schoolhouse remained standing there for a number of years. A Miss Hall, sister of Edmund and Benjamin Hall, taught this Indian school in those early days.

We were sorry to have the Indians leave the neighborhood. The Government bought them lands and sent them to the other side of the Mississippi where from the change of climate or some other cause most of them wasted away. A few years ago a couple of these Indians came back to see their old home and former associates. They found but one or two of the old inhabitants whom they recollected. These were Jacob Reece Vreeland and brother, who formerly lived here but were then residents of Monguagon. The Indians visited them for a day or two and finally went away to find other friends in Canada. In several places in this



vicinity the settlers have plowed up many Indian relics which had been placed in the graves when Indians were buried; and when a cellar was dug for the house where Jerry Van Riper now lives, half a mile below the village, a large quantity of copper kettles and other Indian ornaments were found in a good state of preservation.

These Indians were usually honest in their deals with their neighbors, and our merchants were not afraid to trust them, for they always paid up their bills when they received their allowances from the Government. It was quite a loss to the merchants here when they left their homes on the reservation, for most of the ready money brought into the neighborhood came through this source.

The lands of the reservation occupied by those tribes since they were sold by the Government have been converted into some of the best farms in this part of Wayne County. Among the prosperous farmers now occupying farms on the Indian reserve are Henry Wagar, Henry and Orville Moses, E. A. Chamberlin, L. Stoflet, and others.

[Section Six to be continued in the next issue]



Flat Rock Yearbooks Wanted

(will scan & return to you)

We are in the process of going through our school yearbook collection to scan for preservation and have discovered that we are missing some years.

Listed below are the years we are missing.

If you have a yearbook or Green & Gold Magazine from these years, we would appreciate if you could lend it to the museum to be scanned.

All yearbooks will be returned back to their owner!
Thank you!

1925	1940	1963	1986	1998	2016
1926	1941	1967	1988	1999	2017
1927	1942	1968	1989	2005	2018
1929	1943	1973	1990	2007	2019
1930	1944	1974	1991	2012	2020
1931	1945	1976	1992	2013	2021
1932	1946	1979	1993	2014	
1933	1947	1980	1994	2015	
1934	1948	1981	1995		
1935	1949	1985	1996		
1939	1962		1997		

Flat Rock Class Composite Photos Wanted

(will scan & return to you)

We are in the process of going through our school class composite collection to scan for preservation and have discovered that we are missing some years.

Listed below are the years for the High School that we are missing.

If you have a Class Composite Photo from these years, we would appreciate if you could lend it to the museum to be scanned. Also, any class photos from Flat Rock Schools would be appreciated to add to the collection.

All Photos will be returned back to their owner!
Thank you!

1900	1912	1928	1969
1901	1913	1929	1970
1902	1914	1947	1971
1903	1915	1950	1972
1904	1917	1952	1974
1905	1920	1953	1975
1906	1921	1954	1976
1907	1922	1955	1977
1908	1925	1958	1978
1909	1927	1968	1979

Flat Rock Historical Society 2021-22 Membership Application

Today's Date _____

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal Membership No. _____

Name

Street Address

City

State

ZIP

@
Email 1 Address

@
Email 2 Address

☐ Landline

☐ Cell

☐ Texting

(____)____-_____
Telephone #

Please tell us a little about your connection to Flat Rock or interests on the line above.

CHOOSE ONE:

☐ \$10 Individual Annual Dues (July-June)

☐ \$15 Family Annual Dues (July-June)

☐ \$5 Student Membership

☐ \$100 Life Membership (per person)

Make checks payable to: "FRHS"
Mail application & check/money order to:

Flat Rock Historical Society
PO Box 337
Flat Rock, MI 48134

For Office Use Only:

☐ Scan

☐ PastPerfect

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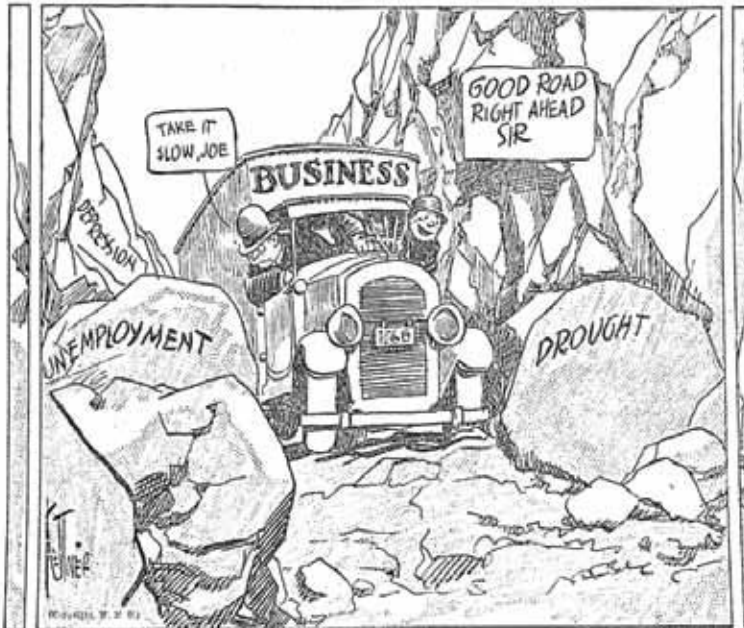


Postage
Here

The Last Laugh:

Vintage Cartoons from the Hometown Paper

Skillful Driving



"Skillful Driving" *The Huron Valley Sentinel*
(Flat Rock), 26 Sep 1930, p. 1.

MUSEUM UPDATES

Our Museum Office is located on the lower level of the Munger Store and (at least at this stage) is open by appointment. We have been given clearance by the city to allow for volunteers to work onsite and we have a number of major exhibit resets that we are working on.

Additionally, we are working on cataloguing items into our new web database system. This is potentially something that could be done from home if anyone has a computer and would like to volunteer their time. Please call the museum for a volunteer application and additional details.

PICTORIAL HISTORY OF FLAT ROCK

The Flat Rock book published by Arcadia Publishing is still available for \$22 from the Museum Gift Shoppe. Books are also available at the Blue Heron Trading Company in downtown Flat Rock or by calling the museum office 734.782.5220.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual membership dues are due for the 2021-2022 membership year. Our membership year mirrors our fiscal year July 1st - June 30th. Dues can be mailed, brought to the museum office, given to any board member. We are working to restore the online link for membership as well. Thanks to you all!!!

EST. 1974



FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents

2021 GHOST HUNT

*at the Flat Rock Historical Museum**

THE EVENING OF
OCTOBER 23RD

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