FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WORKING IN THE PRESENT
TO PRESERVE THE PAST
ESTABLISHED 1974

The TELEGRAPH

VOLUME XLVIII Issue 1 February 2022

Change of Scenery

by Mary Washko

I don't know if we said this enough but, again we'd like to recognize and give many thanks to the many people who had a vision to form our Historical Society. Back in 1974, with nothing but an empty field they had the Munger General Store, Langs-Wagar House, Smith Hotel and the Stoeflet Barn moved to its current location. Through their dedication and teamwork our museum campus took shape. Most of the furniture pieces were re-furbished, donated and over the years we have collected an assortment of artifacts. Now as we move forward we would like to work towards having each room period-correct.

We are rearranging a few rooms in the hotel to showcase what rooms might have looked like in different time periods during the many decades that the hotel serviced the community. We have built a mini school room in the hotel to showcase artifacts found in early school settings. A music room exhibit is being planned as well.

New Early Brownstown Exhibit

The Munger Store has been completely reimagined and will be opening soon to the public. During the downtime, we have taken everything down, catalogued it and set-up in a more compartmentalized fashion. A new children's section has been designed to appeal to our many young families that come peering into the windows. A new local history section with a community timeline is under construction. The rear portion of the building has a new post office display and a new veterans exhibit.

We need to keep the museum exhibits fresh so the community continues to have an interest. To keep things fresh we like to change the "scenes" every so often and we have made real progress. We rely on our volunteers to set up the exhibits, chair event programs and act as docents during the open houses. We would really like to offer more programs, speed up the exhibit changeover and be open more often, however, it takes volunteers to make this happen and we are struggling with a volunteer shortage.

New Grocer's Exhibit

New Sewing Exhibit

FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 337
FLAT ROCK, MICHIGAN 48134
734.782.5220

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Flat Rock Historical Society

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2021- 2022
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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 future.

Curator's Message

Our volunteers are in the process of cataloguing, photographing and evaluating many of the larger furnishings in the buildings into our PastPerfect database. This process includes looking at early donation records of the society. We have a card catalogue style index and about 800 donor forms with various information to sort out which takes time to reconcile the record with the actual artifact. Please consider the following statement from the museum standards manual:

"When a historical organization accepts a donation, it makes itself responsible for the object's care and preservation in the public trust in perpetuity."

Some of the artifacts have been well documented and photographed providing us with a solid provenance. There are a few artifacts where the donor gives a clear plan for what should happen to the artifacts should the Society cease to exist, and for those we are thankful.

Other artifacts have very vague descriptions and no photographs. An example of this might be a donor slip description of "Jane Doe donated three hurricane lamps." Preliminary inventories indicate we have about fifty hurricane lamps in various sizes and styles sitewide. So which "three hurricane lamps" came from "Jane Doe?"

It may seem trivial, but as we work through the cataloguing process, we are evaluating the artifacts because we don't need fifty hurricane lamps!

However, we might keep the 1900 lamp from the Munger store, while putting other lamps that are reproductions from the 1970s into the Museum Sale. So many wonderful artifacts never get put on display, simply because we have too many!

By culling our collection, we can take better care of the artifacts entrusted to us, put them on display and make space for when someone offers us a lamp with connections to Flat Rock or is of a rarity not represented in our collection.

Additionally, we have found that the Society has a large number of furnishings that are "on loan." However, those "loans" have been in the museum for thirty years. Some of the folks who have artifacts "on loan" have since passed away. Without a clear "deed of gift" to the artifact, there is nothing to stop an heir from coming to the museum and reclaiming it. The City of Flat Rock insures our buildings including the contents, items that the Society does not own may present a problem.

The only scenario where the Society accepts a specific artifact "on loan" is for a temporary exhibit and has a finite date when the loan is to be collected by the donor.

We are working through each artifact, and contacting folks that have artifacts on loan or incomplete info, so that we can update our records and properly document the artifact. Currently we are evaluating the furnishings in the upper level of the hotel, if you have items that you loaned to the society many years ago, it would help us if you could call the office to be sure the documentation is complete. We are generally in the office on weekdays (734)782-5220.

SAVE THE DATE! SPRING FLEA MARKET - SUNDAY, MAY 1ST

Our Bi-Annual Flat Rock Historical Society Spring Flea Market will be held on May 1st at the Flat Rock Speedway. As always we need your help! So please mark your calendar!

Book Sale

at the Museum

- History
- Genealogy
- Non-Fiction
- Fiction
- Sheet Music
- Antique Books
- Textbooks
- Childrens

Thursday, March 17th 5 - 8pm

Saturday, March19th 10am - 4pm

Please Note
If you have any books that you would like to donate, call the museum for available drop-off dates.

Museum Hours / Society Schedule

Thursday, Evening Open Houses 5 - 8 pm	Sunday Afternoon Open Houses 1 - 4 pm
March 17, 2022	*April 24, 2022*
May 19, 2022	*June 26, 2022*
July 21, 2022	*September 25, 2022*
August 18, 2022	
October 20, 2022	
November 17, 2022	

See 2022 Calendar insert for additional scheduling info. Please know that the Society calendar is subject to change. Unfortunately, the programs and musuem hours are directly tied to the availability of volunteers. Without volunteers, we cannot open the buildings as frequently as we would like and offer museum programs.

GRATITUDE

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

To all the volunteers that helped make the Winterfest Weekend a great success: Dawn Bartok, Nancy Young, Laura Polce, Bruce and Patty Chapin, Lila Fedokovitz, Kaitlyn Wrobel, Jean Walker, and Mary Washko.

To all the volunteers who put up and took down all the holiday decorations across the musuem campus.

To Bruce and Patty Chapin for organizing the holiday catering, for diving into our pond after the airstone, for working on the new sign, and for hauling the hotel radiators to get them sandblasted. They look beautiful!

To Jim and Laura Polce for helping Bruce restore our new sign on Gibraltar Road.

To Kurt Kersten for donating the 1937 yearbook.

To Denise Springmeyer for the Stromberg-Carlson Wall Telephone (ca 1900). We plan to place it in the Langs-Wagar House.

To Katie Chiles, for the Vasher library table and monetary donation.

To Guy Younglove for the 1976 and 1977 yearbooks.

To Jean Walker for organizing our book sale.

Next Membership Meeting Date
Thursday, April 21st
5 pm Members Fellowship Supper
6 pm Members Meeting
7 pm History Talk TBD

Flat Rock School Photos & Yearbooks Wanted

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

If you have a class photo, yearbook or Green & Gold Magazine from any of these years, we would appreciate if you could lend it to the museum to be scanned. All photos and yearbooks will be scanned and returned back to their owner!

Yearbooks Wanted

1925 • 1926 • 1927 • 1929 • 1930 • 1931 • 1932 • 1933 • 1934 • 1935 • 1939 • 1940 • 1941 • 1942 • 1943 • 1944 • 1945 • 1946 • 1947 • 1948 • 1949 • 1962 • 1963 • 1967 • 1968 • 1973 • 1974 • 1976 • 1979 • 1980 • 1981 • 1985 • 1986• 1987 • 1988 • 1989 • 1990 • 1991 • 1992 •1993 • 1994 • 1995 • 1996 • 1997 • 1998 • 1999 • 2001 • 2002 • 2004 • 2005 • 2007 • 2008 • 2013 • 2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018 • 2019

Class Photos Wanted

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

CONTINUATION OF

THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF FLAT ROCK

COMPILED BY LOUIS BECKLEY (1951)

Introduction by Lesley Gilliland Harkai

Last year we had republished sections of this compilation, this is a continuation. We have 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 historcial context preserved complete with anitquated 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

VIII

Although these reminiscences of many years ago, as now being published in the News, have already extended beyond our expectations when we first began our history, we are occasionally reminded that some names of prominent citizens have been overlooked or neglected. Among these we find the name of William Munger, whose death occurred in this village in May 1884 at the age of 74 years. A statement has been presented by one of the daughters now living here, Mrs. Almeda Hosmer, from which we find that William Munger was born in Lewis County, New York, and with a widowed mother and elder brother reached the banks of the Huron River In the town of Huron, Wayne County, in the early part of June 1824. After shipping aboard a schooner at Oswego, and by way of Lewiston, Niagara Falls, and Buffalo, he reached here after a 27 days' voyage. He came to Flat Rock In 1825, which remained his permanent home up to the time of his death. In 1835 he married Maria Springstead. The family lived on the farm one mile northeast of the village in the year 1837 and therefore consider him one of the very first settlers of this vicinity. He served several terms In the Michigan Legislature; and in connection with Gen. Saunders and Col. Charles F. Irwin, who were also among the early residents of this neighborhood, the state militia organization was formed, and he was one of the officers.

In these early days very few horses or teams were owned in this vicinity. Some of the settlers had brought their families and household furniture from the east by land in covered wagons, and with their teams were ready to do some farming as they cleared up their land. Here and there a more thrifty farmer had secured a yoke of oxen. These were usually brought to service for the whole neighborhood in breaking up small patches of new ground or logging up the timber. We remember old Buck and Brown, a yoke of fine black oxen owned by Mr. Benjamin Woodruff. These were In almost constant use by some of the neighbors in hauling up firewood in wintertime or assisting in pulling logs together and clearing land in summer. Several large white ash and hickory trees were cut down and the limbs trimmed the whole length of the tree. These were brought in by the oxen by hitching a log chain around them and hauling them through the snow to the door, where they were cut up as wanted for the winter fires. The oxen were sometimes brought into requisition for carrying the neighbors' families to church on the ox sleigh in wintertime. John Chamberlin on Port Creek lost one of his pair of oxen, so he rigged up a single wooden yoke with rope traces and his small stone boat. With these and his single ox team, It answered every purpose for use upon the place or carrying grist to mill.

IX

At the time of the commencement of this history, Alexander M. Arzeno was a resident of the town of Ash, Monroe County, though much of his time was spent in this village. His life during these years was an eventful one. He was a native of Italy but came to New York City when yet a young man. Bright and intelligent, he soon secured a situation in a banking house; he also studied law for a time. His appetite for strong drink, or some other cause, drove him from the city; and to get away from his old friends we next find him on a piece of land in the wild forests of the

FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WORKING IN THE PRESENT

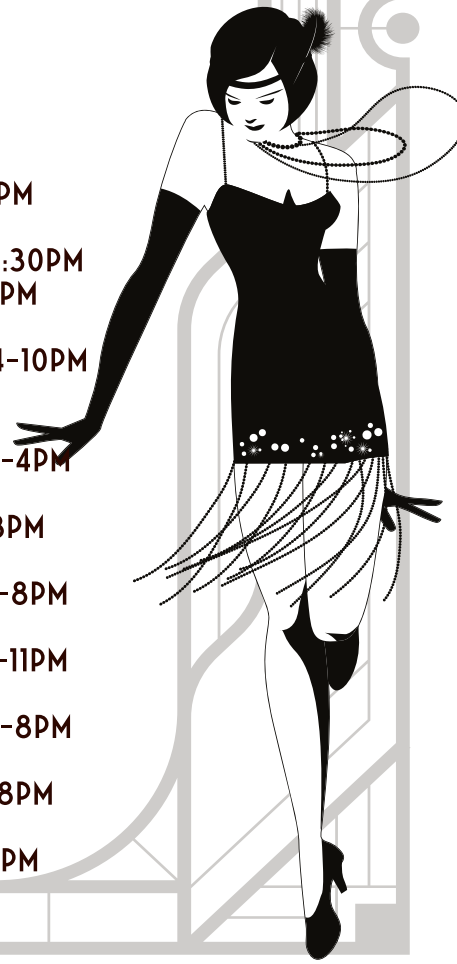
C.G.MUNGER'S GENERAL STORE

TO PRESERVE THE PAST

ESTABLISHED 1974

2022

EVENING OPEN HOUSE & BOOK SALE	MARCH 17TH 5-8PM
BOOK SALE	MARCH 19TH 10-4PM
MEMBERSHIP DINNER	APRIL 21ST 5:30PM
HISTORY TALK	APRIL 21ST 7PM
AFTERNOON OPEN HOUSE	APRIL 24TH 1-4PM
SPRING FLEA MARKET	MAY 1ST 7-3PM
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	MAY 19TH 5-8PM
RUMMAGE SALE	MAY 19TH MAY 20TH 10-4PM MAY 21ST 10-4PM
MEMBERSHIP PICNIC	JUNE 16TH 5-8PM
SOCIETY ELECTION	JUNE 16TH 6PM
AFTERNOON OPEN HOUSE	JUNE 26TH 1-4PM
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	JULY 21ST 5-8PM
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	AUGUST 18TH 5-8PM
MEMBERSHIP DINNER	SEPTEMBER 15TH 5:30PM
HISTORY TALK	SEPTEMBER 15TH 7PM
DIGGIN' UP LOCAL HISTORY CEMETERYWALK	SEPTEMBER 24TH 4-10PM
HALLOWEEN OPEN HOUSE	SEPTEMBER 25TH 1-4PM
FALL FLEA MARKET	OCTOBER 2TH 7-3PM
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	OCTOBER 20TH 5-8PM
MUSEUM GHOST HUNT'	OCTOBER 22ND 7-11PM
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	NOVEMBER 17TH 5-8PM
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE	DECEMBER 2ND 5-8PM
MEMBERSHIP HOLIDAY DINNER	DECEMBER 15TH 5PM



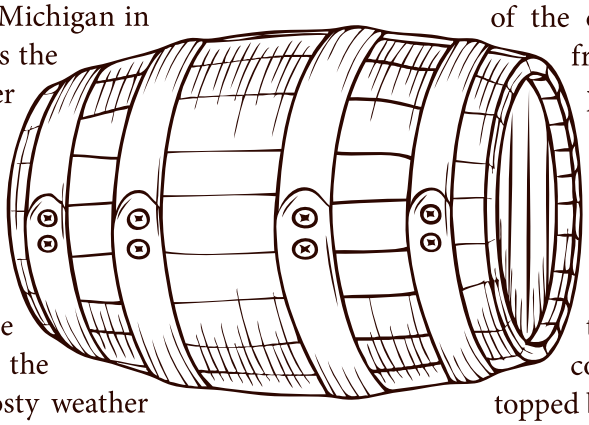
(continued)

town of Ash, far removed from any settlements. Here he had built a house for himself and aged mother. Notwithstanding his drinking habits, his superior intelligence assisted him in forming the acquaintance of such men as Governor Morris and ex-Governor Robert McClelland and others of Monroe County. He was one of the committee who organized the Michigan Territory into a state in 1836, and he was several times elected as Representative and Senator in the State Legislature. His knowledge of law brought him many cases in the Justice courts of the vicinity, and his reputation as a pettifogger was soon established for miles around, for his fees were not so extravagant as those of a regular lawyer.

We remember away back in the '40's quite an important civil suit was brought before Squire Ranson, a Justice of this village. Mr. Arzeno was the attorney on one side and the late George V. N. Lothrope, then a young attorney of Detroit, was on the other. The trial was before a Jury, who after hearing the evidence and the arguments by the counsel decided the case for the Arzeno side of the suit, to the great surprise of those present, though it was known that the old pettifogger had imbibed quite freely at the neighboring tavern before he entered the courtroom.

Having so many calls to this place, he moved his family here a few years afterwards and established a home on the lot where L. T. Longprey now lives. He had carried his drinking habits for many years to such an extent that he now saw his error and resolved to reform, which resolution he bound himself by oath and to which he adhered to the end of his days.

Through his business ability, he was appointed state agent for some of the large stave companies of Michigan in the purchase and sale of staves. [A stave is the wooden rib of a barrel] When timber became scarce in this part of the State, he was sent to Memphis, Tennessee, where he was employed in the same business. He usually returned to his home here during the sickly season in the South; and when the yellow fever reached Memphis he brought his family north to remain until the fever had passed away. The cool and frosty weather coming on in the fall, he was advised that all danger had passed and he could safely return. He listened to the advice, returned to the South with his family, and after they reached there a warm spell of weather immediately came on. The fever again broke forth and within two weeks after they had left their home here the whole family - father, mother, and daughter--were dead and buried, striken down with yellow fever.



As we said last week, in the early days neighbors would join together in sending small grists to the mill by some one having a team. These could not all be ground at once, and the miller's custom of first-come-first-served had to go after it, and when ground the load was often too heavy for them to carry. At this time an old black lop-earred pony called "Delaware" was usually feeding around the mill door. The customers' grist was placed in a bag, with the flour tied to one end and the bran in the other. The old pony was brought to the door, the heavy grist was swung over his back, part on each side, a rope was placed around the pony's neck, and in this way he was led with his load to the home in the woods some miles away, where as soon as he was unloaded and kindly thanked by a gentle pat upon his head for his kindness, he quietly returned home to take his place at the mill yard and wait for another customer.

Heavy wagons and sleighs were very scarce, buggies and cutters were unknown. The first buggy that appeared in the place was an outrageous concern and needed a stepladder to climb into it.

Several items more could be enumerated and placed in our history similar to the following. Several young men of this place were arranged before a justice on a charge of entering a watermelon patch in the nighttime and stealing the fruit. A number of witnesses were sworn and gave their evidence. The jury found the prisoners guilty and a fine was imposed by the court, which was paid and the defendants were released. The verdict caused much dissatisfaction. After a few days it was found that the wife of the complainant and some of her friends had taken the stolen property but were afraid to appear at the trial and own to the offence. Considerable excitement was caused in the neighborhood, and a few evenings later every picket of the fence in front of the complainant's residence was topped by a nice watermelon which had been left on the patch, and the whole patch destroyed and vines scattered over the yard. The boys were afterwards paid back their fines, but much hard feeling existed over the circumstances.

(Look for Section X in the next issue)

In Memoriam

Sandra Lee Head

(September 8, 1937 - December 28, 2021)

SANDY HEAD – Age 84 Sandy was a resident of Southgate but was a member of our society because her sister Dawn Beitler Bartok has been a member since we started in 1975. Sandy was unable to attend many of our events but was one of the biggest supporters and bakers for the Flea Market Country Store, even the last few years when her health was failing. She attended most of our Christmas Parties and would lead the opening prayer and was always one of the first to be ready to sing Christmas carols later in the evening.

Beloved wife of the late Robert Head. Loving mother of Robert (Michele Deluge) Head, Andrea (Mark) Pawlowski and the late Scott Head. Dearest grandmother of Shayne Anne (Robert) Stuck, Shiloh Head, Ian (Tina) Head, Robert Pawlowski and Olivia Pawlowski. Great grandmother of Cooper, Riley, Dmitri and Mikah. Dear sister of Lynn Porath, Dawn (Jack) Bartok, Rodney Higdon and the late Willard Higdon. Sister-in-law of Marge Higdon. Preceded in death by her parents Willard and Dolores Higdon.

Family Tribute

(reprinted with the permission of her family)

How do you write a tribute about an outstanding, selfless, woman, and capture the essence of someone's being in a space limited to one or two paragraphs and make it not sound like an obituary? Stories. Remembrances. What we remember about people the most, especially after they are gone, is how they made us feel. There is no doubt that everyone that knew Sandy Head would say the exact same thing, loved. She had become an expert at it. Long before she had a family of her own, she was helping to care for all four of her younger brothers and sisters. Not much more than a child herself, she helped change Rod's diapers, and get Dawn ready for the day, cleaned Jay's face from one of the scraps he would get into, or take out one hair curler before bed so that Lynn would have something to curl her fingers around so she could fall asleep in the bed they shared.

Even after she married Bobby in 1958 and they bought their first and only house together on Castle two blocks away from the family house, she never stopped caring for the family, only now she started to add in a few of her own. The most joy in her life came from her kids Scott, Todd, and Andrea, and the greatest gift they gave her was all the grandkids and great-grandkids that she loved to love on any chance she could. Even if you weren't one of her children or grandchildren she couldn't love you any less. She had just as much love for her nieces and nephews and her friends. She never forgot birthdays or anniversaries, and would make it a point to have a card sent out on time or call you on your special day, and whether you knew it or not she was always praying for you. You didn't have to ask she just always did it. Probably because she knew we always needed it, and because she loved each and every one of us in such a special way that she always wanted us to be remembered by God, as if God would forget, but if he did, Sandy would be there with her constant prayers to remind him. I don't think many of us know anyone more devout, other than an actual person of the cloth, than Sandy. Saint Sandy as we like to call her. It was only recently that I found out she had thought about becoming a nun. Even though that never became her journey, she was dedicated to the church and daily services, and involved in the Blue Army and Rosary Altar Confraternity.

She also loved to travel. While her kids were young, the family would pack up the van and drive to dozens of places around the country, but when she got older and traveled abroad she always had a goal in mind, seeing the most holy lands. She traveled to the Holy City in Rome, Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, the Catholic half of Ireland - I'm sure she probably visited the protestant side as well but only seeing the Catholic side does sound like something she would do, and Lady of Fatima in Portugal. While 84 years sounds like a long time, when the time comes it doesn't feel like it's at all long enough. The comfort we can take is now knowing that she is taking care of us from above.

Larry Young

(December 31, 1946 - December 23, 2021)

LARRY YOUNG – Age 74 Larry and his wife Sharon (Freitag) were active for many years until he retired from DTE and they moved up north. Larry researched and labeled all the items in the stable when we moved it to the campus in the late 70s. He also worked with Rich Porath on the restoration of the DTI Caboose.

Tracy Cooper

(April 18, 1958 to January 26, 2022)

Tracy was the husband of Margaretann, our Society Treasurer. They live in the Mettler home on the corner of Seneca and Atwater – the blue house behind the Bobcean Funeral Home. They are the parents of seven children and sixteen grandchildren. Tracy volunteered for the Cemetery Walk and often held down the fort so Margaretann could go to the museum for meetings or just to work on her Treasurer's job. He was the type of guy who stood back and saw what might be needed and took care of it. He did, just this, when filling the lamps along the local history walk path. Or when he came to drop stuff off at the museum for Margaret, he did so with a contagious smile. He loved hunting and fishing and going to the Upper Peninsula and had a great sense of humor. He will be greatly missed.

Christmas Membership Party Recap
December 16, 2021
Food, Friends, Fun and More Food!!

A fun time was had by all! Thanks to everyone who came to our annual Christmas membership gala. And to those who could not be there, sorry we to missed you. The Smith Hotel was decorated with historic ornaments and greenery. As guests were arriving the excitement was growing! It was nice to see people we haven't seen in awhile and glad they're doing well.

Thanks to Crystal Gardens for catering our event with their delicious menu options. The selection of appetizers and desserts were astounding. In fact, we had so much food guests were able to have carry-outs and still we were able to donate dinner to the Flat Rock Police Department. We wouldn't be able to continue without all of your support. Thank you!

And, it wouldn't be polite if we didn't give a shout-out to our clean-up crew so THANK YOU goes out to Patty, Bruce, Laura, Jim, Lesley, Chris, Jean, Kevin, Dawn and Mary.

Flat Rock Historical Society
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

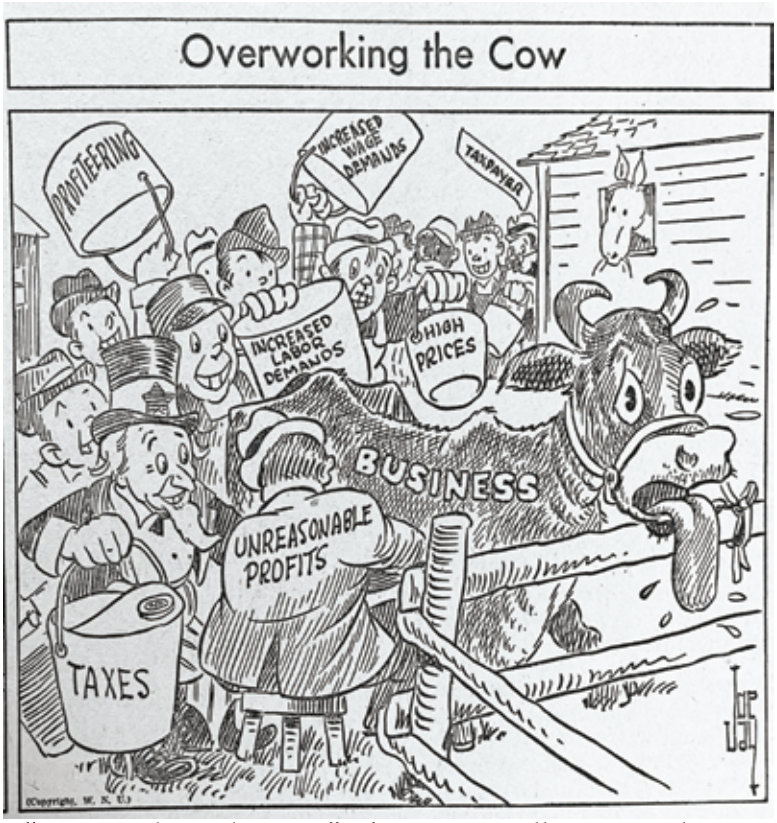
For Office Use Only:
☐Scan ☐ PastPerfect ☐ MailChimp

FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WORKING IN THE PRESENT
TO PRESERVE THE PAST
C.G.MUNGER'S GENERAL STORE
P.O. BOX 337 FLAT ROCK, MICHIGAN 48134

Postage Here

The Last Laugh:

Vintage Cartoons from the Hometown Paper



"Overworking the Cow" *The Huron Valley Sentinel (Flat Rock),* 24 Feb 1939, 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!!!