

# The TELEGRAPH

VOLUME XLVIII Issue 3

JUNE 2022

## Harry Edward Stoflet:

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”

by Lila Fedokovitz

The Land Act of 1820 opened the Michigan Territory to a flood of new settlers. Land could be purchased for \$1.25 per acre with a one hundred deposit, for a minimum parcel of 80 acres. In 1825, the Erie Canal was opened, connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes, bringing families from New York moved to the Michigan Territory. This was frontier land and Michael Vreeland, founder of Flat Rock applied for land from the federal government. Michael's sons, Elias Vreeland was married to Nancy Stoflet and Daniel was married to Mary Stoflet.

In 1847 the Ludowick Stoflet family moved from Seneca County, New York (Finger Lakes area in Northern New York) to Flat Rock. Ludowick purchased 300 acres in section 27 of Huron Township, this is the land that currently contains Michigan Memorial Cemetery. The Wyandot Indians had been forcibly removed from this area and their Huron Reservation in 1843. The Wyandots were farming natives and the lands they left behind were prime farmland. In 1879, Ludowick's son Charles E. Stoflet is listed in a Flat Rock business directory as having a Saloon and Billiards hall. Charles married Mary Reading and they had a son, Frank Stoflet. There was also a Weltha Stoflet, a life-time Church member and Church clerk who later built a house on Church Street where the Church parsonage used to be.

On June 23, 1900, Harry Edward Stoflet was born to Frank Stoflet (1877-1961) and Anna Ott (1881-1971).

They had a daughter Josephine who was born in 1911 and another daughter Mrs. Barnham (according to Edward's obituary). The family lived at 30064 W. Huron River Drive in Huron Township (second house on the North side before the railroad tracks near Cemetery). Harry's great-grandfather, Ludowick passed away at the ripe age of 86 in 1905, so it is likely that Harry knew him as a child.

On Sunday, June 9, 1914, young Harry and his neighbor George Newington (who lived on Van Horn Road just north of the Stoflet's) decided to go swimming. George was about 12 feet from the shore in 13 feet of water when he called for help. Harry went into the water to try to save his friend, but both boys disappeared under the water. Both boys were from lifelong families in the area and when the news got out, many local residents drove to the shore and shined their headlights into the river in hopes of finding the boys alive. Their bodies were not recovered for hours.

The families did stay friends and in the 1920 Census George's sister Delphine Newington is living with Harry Stoflet family as a servant.

A stained glass window in Flat Rock's Congregational Church was commissioned in honor of Harry Edward Stoflet. When new stained glass windows were put in the Sunday School room the local Boy Scout Troop raised money to dedicate the window to Harry. The window is on the North side of the Church – now part of the handicapped bathroom.

The church is celebrating a milestone and Pastor Robin Honaker is having a short history talk on Sunday, July 3rd at 10am. The public is welcome.



FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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FLAT ROCK, MICHIGAN 48134  
734.782.5220



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# FLAT ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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.*

# 2022 CALENDAR

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	SEPTEMBER 24TH 4-10PM
CEMETERY WALK	
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
HALLOWEEN PARTY'	OCTOBER 29TH
EVENING OPEN HOUSE	NOVEMBER 17TH 5-8PM
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE	DECEMBER 2ND 5-8PM
MEMBERSHIP HOLIDAY DINNER	DECEMBER 15TH 5PM

## Museum Hours / Society Schedule

### Sunday Afternoon Open Houses 1 - 4 pm

June 26<sup>th</sup> ☞ September 25<sup>th</sup>

### Thursday, Evening Open Houses 5 - 8 pm

July 21<sup>st</sup> ☞ August 18<sup>th</sup>

☞ October 20<sup>th</sup> ☞ November 17<sup>th</sup> ☞

☞ Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

*Please know that the Society calendar is subject to change. Unfortunately, the programs and museum hours are directly tied to the availability of volunteers. Without volunteers, we cannot open the buildings as frequently as we would like nor offer museum events and programs.*

Hello fellow members:

The last several months have been very productive for the society. We have received several donations of artifacts from local residents and members. Most notable were donations from Sandy Head, sister of Dawn Bartok of her late sister's furniture and china and Evelyn Matthes' donation of Vreeland family silverware.

We participated in the Memorial Day parade and placed a wreath at the Veteran's memorial in front of city hall.

We assisted a local Boy Scout in completing his Eagle scout requirement by building much needed shelving on the second floor of the stable. This will be covered in a article in the Monroe News.

We are making plans for our annual cemetery walk/tour in late September. (Volunteers are much needed and appreciated.)

We have found storage site for the fire truck. For those of you who are unaware, the city donated the original Flat Rock fire truck, a 1927 American-LaFrance, to the society. Hopefully you will be seeing it in future parades in Flat Rock and surrounding communities.

Bruce Chapin, President



## GRATITUDE

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

To all our Member Bakers who donated baked goods to the Country Store.

To Lila, Dawn, Heather B. Mary, Bruce & Patty, and all the folks that helped out at the Spring Flea Market Country Store. It was a great success!

Thank you to the Exhibit Committee for helping to sort out the many boxes of hurricane lamps, irons, cameras & accessories and extra artifacts.

To Professor Bob Pettit for the awesome presentation on Birding in April. We hope to have you back!

To Steve Sassak for his assistance to storing the firetruck.

To Sharon Newton for the new batch of newspaper clippings.

Thanks to Bruce Chapin and Jim Polce for fixing our new sign.

Thanks to Bruce Chapin for taking on and supervising the Eagle Scout Project.

Thanks to Lila for all the extra yard help and cleaning out some of the flower beds.

To the Exhibit Ladies for helping to move some of the heavy furniture around in the hotel. The Lobby looks much more spacious!

## SAVE THE DATE!

# FALL FLEA MARKET - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>

**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 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*

**XII**

We had about come to the conclusion to add nothing further to our recollections of the early history of Flat Rock and vicinity, believing that we were worrying the patience of our readers and of the publisher, when a few other matters came to mind. Knowing that it was the intention of our parents when we started from the East and came to Michigan to purchase a piece of land and become farmers, soon after our arrival we bought 80 acres of heavy timberland lying two miles south of the village and about one and a half miles from the Huron River in the then Township of Ash, Monroe County, the same 80 acres of land now owned and occupied by Frank Lautenslager. On this we put up a small log house, which was built entirely of maple logs, with a place cleared off large enough to set the building. Into this the family moved.

It was a dense forest of heavy timber, the higher land covered with whitewood, white oak, beech, and maple the lower ground with elm, cottonwood, and various other timber. Several hundred maple trees stood upon the five acres surrounding the dwelling, from which we made several hundred pounds of maple sugar the following spring. Our nearest neighbors were nearly half a mile away—Henry Peters, Benjamin Woodruff, and Sands Northrup, who settled there about the same time. There were no roads to get in or out, and to get our household goods into the settlement we had to underbrush and chop out a road. Every settler found sugar making his principal employment in the early spring, and the whole of that township was then a vast sugar bush with thousands of hard maple trees on every 80 acres of land.

Another settlement was made about this time, one mile east on what is now known as the Chapman Road. Here had been built a log schoolhouse, which was afterwards called the Swallow Schoolhouse. On the road running up

and down the river, near the present village of South Rockwood, then lived the families of Samuel Pierson, Benjamin Thorp and Mahlon Reading, father of A. R. Reading of this place. A number of us youngsters attended school in the log schoolhouse for a short time and John H. Peters, who lives on a farm half a mile below this village, was our teacher.

The Chapman family had started a settlement about one and a half miles south of us, and a road was partly cut and a continuous logway laid nearly the whole distance through the low swampy land. A narrow road or cowpath ran up and down what is now known as the River Road, and half a mile below the schoolhouse was the spot where many years afterwards the pleasant little village of South Rockwood came into existence. Here us boys of the neighborhood found the best grounds for hunting and fishing. A small log house stood on the bank of the river about the spot where Strong's flouring mills are now situated. The house was occupied by one Gideon Thomas, who was the Justice of the peace for that part of the neighborhood. He had a couple of boys of our age who generally joined us in our sports.

The surrounding country was a dense forest, full of game both large and small, and the big marsh which empties into the river back of Strong's store was always full of fine pickerel from two to three feet in length during the high water of the spring freshets. These could easily be caught by shooting over them when they would turn over and come to the top of the water. We would then wade in and get the fish before they came to consciousness. The only persons now living to our remembrance who attended the school at that place were Joseph Pierson, now at St. Paul, Minnesota, Charles G. Peters, still living in that neighborhood in Berlin, William Northrup of Detroit, Mrs. Maria Loveridge, Mrs. Helen Lamb

*(continued)*

and Mrs. Elizabeth Richards, who now live at Flat Rock, and the writer of these articles. And now we are led to wonder where the Rockwood correspondent of this paper found a basis for giving a history of the twin villages of North and South Rockwood 60 years ago which he promised to give to our readers? At that time the location of these pleasant little villages was only in its primitive state, seldom visited by anyone except the native Indians or an occasional Frenchman who had made settlements along the shores of Lake Erie a few miles below. We will next week take our readers to the north side of the river, where North Rockwood is now situated.

### XIII

It was nearly 20 years after the time mentioned last week, In 1854 or 1855, that the Detroit, Monroe and Toledo Railroad was proposed and the ground surveyed crossing the Huron River at Rockwood. A small saw mill was erected on the south side of the river by a Mr. Buck and two or three sons. The mill was run by them during the time the railroad was being built. The property was shortly after sold out to John Strong, who with his sons built up the present town of South Rockwood. On the north side of the river where the present railroad depot now stands was only a huge swamp, which the company was compelled to fill up before the buildings could be erected. The low ground was covered with logs and cripple brush so thick that a dog could not chase a squirrel or rabbit through the underbrush. A small log house on the hill was occupied by John Burton and family, a farm half a mile below belonging to Daniel C. Vreeland of Flat Rock was occupied by his son, Clinton Vreeland, and there was a tenant house on this farm in which lived Joseph Viles.

These parties owned the lands through which the new road was to be run. The north village was named Huron Station, and a large number of village lots were laid out and soon sold. The sale of lots and the passing of a railroad through their land was so encouraging to the farmers that their small farming benefits were soon thrown aside and visions of wealth and luxury in the future were the helght

of their ambition. All these parties who were prominent in the early days of North Rockwood have long since passed away.

This, Mr. Editor, is a true statement of the situation of the places which your Rockwood correspondent would give a history of 60 years ago. The thought probably sprang up in his youthful Imagination and which had laid in embryo for so many years.

Although this was the condition of the country where the present beautiful village of Rockwood now stands, it furnished the only path or road by which we could send our loaded teams with produce to the Detroit markets. This road went by way of the River Road around(over the Maunusau Ridge to the Turnpike and on to the village of Gibraltar, which was then the halfway or changing place on the mall route between Detroit and Monroe. A trip of this kind with a team generally took three or four days, according to the state of the roads.

The next point on the route was Trenton# then called Truago. Here at this early date the village had one or two small stores, the principal article of trade being cordwood to supply a few small river boats and scows in hauling the same to Detroit and a short distance above Truago, where many travelers and emigrants were kept overnight. The old building is still standing.

Wyandotte was unknown. The old Biddle House stood in the dense oak forest on the turnpike road and there was a small tavern kept by a Frenchman named Tenette a half mile below. Almond Peabody and Lewis Northrup were stage drivers and mail carriers on the old stage route between Detroit and Monroe in those early days, well known in this vicinity in after years. The former still lives in Detroit and the latter died in this village a few years ago.

*(Look for Section XIV in the next issue)*

### Did You Know?

Many organizations meet in the Historic Smith Hotel. However, Society Members can also rent the Smith Hotel for small gatherings such as wedding showers and anniversary parties. Call the museum for more information on rentals.

## Eagle Scout Project at the Flat Rock Museum

by Bruce Chapin

Jacob Marsh, an eleventh grade student at Flat Rock High School is finalizing his Eagle Scout Project. Jacob and his father, Tom Marsh, approached the Flat Rock Historical Society, a non-profit, to find a project to fulfill his requirements. They had an interest in restoring the Caboose in Community Park; unfortunately, there have been severe delays getting the supplies and that did not work out. However, the Society had great need for artifact storage shelving in the Bobcean Stable. Jacob saw an opportunity to build shelving for his Eagle Scout Project. Additionally, Jacob solicited donations to finance his project.



As President of the Flat Rock Historical Society, I set out the requirements for the shelving to be completed. It entailed building a wall of shelves on the second floor of our Bobcean Stable. The Bobcean Stable was built about 1860 and had been disassembled, moved across town, rebuilt on the museum campus and restored by the Society in 1997.

There were many structural deficiencies to overcome. One such stumbling block, was a dangerously narrow staircase that is the only access to the second level of the building. Jacob built a safety railing around the stairwell to the second floor to make accessing the upper level safer.

The project was a resounding success and was completed over a five day period by Jacob, his father and several scouts who he supervised as they assisted him in the work. My goal for the project was not only to help Jacob build the much needed shelving, but to showcase the Museum Campus and improve the Flat Rock Historical Society's visibility in the community.

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## 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!

Listed below are the years we are missing:

### 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 • 1981 • 1985 • 1986 • 1987 • 1988 • 1989 • 1990 • 1991  
 1992 • 1993 • 1994 • 1995 • 1996 • 1997 • 1998 • 1999 • 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 • 1929 • 1947 • 1950 • 1952 •  
 1953 • 1954 • 1955 • 1958 • 1968 • 1969 • 1970 • 1971  
 • 1972 • 1974 • 1975 • 1976 • 1977 • 1978 • 1979

*It's That Time  
of Year Again...*

*Annual  
Membership Dues  
are due by June 30th*

***Thank you to our  
Renewing Members!***

*Roberta Gonyea  
Betty Whisler  
Dan & Marcia Whisler  
Kevin & Jean Walker  
Nancy Young  
Richard & Maria Snyder*

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Annual membership dues are due for the 2022-2023 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!!!

**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

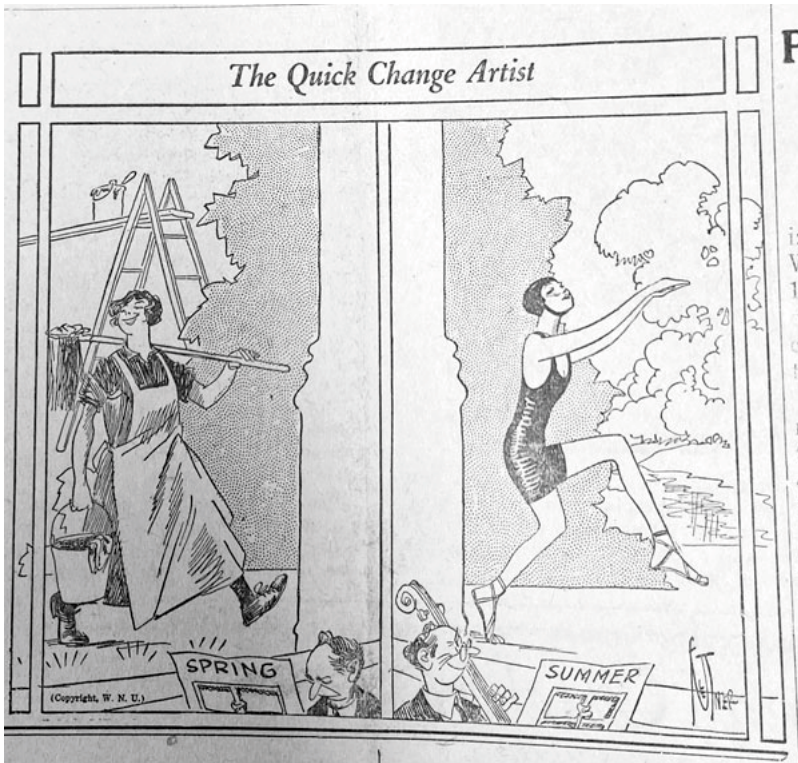
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## *The Last Laugh: Vintage Cartoons from the Hometown Paper*



“The Quick Change Artist” *The Huron Valley Sentinel*  
(Flat Rock), 29 June 1930, p. 1.

### MUSEUM UPDATES

Our Museum Office is located on the lower level of the Munger Store and 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.

