



MILL RACE QUARTERLY

57
Years

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A Publication of the Northville Historical Society

Winter 2021

Martha's Musings

by Martha Michalak, President

Winter has arrived and the Village has never been more beautiful! Except maybe in the fall, when the changing leaves make it a magical place. Or in the spring, when the birds return and sing from the budding branches. Or in the summer, when the flowers are in full bloom and the sun shines off of every window. Okay... it's beautiful all the time, but there is something special about the way the snow adds a degree of tranquility to an already peaceful place.

The decorations from Christmas in the Village have been taken down and packed away for next year. What a fun event that was! We hope to make it bigger and better in 2021. And our first annual Festival of Trees was a success, with 14 area groups, organizations and individuals decorating themed Christmas trees. They added a holiday charm to the lane that was commented on by many visitors. As it was a juried event, we had two Best of Show winners: The Candy Cane Book Club and NPS Early Childhood Learning. Each group received \$50 cash for their wonderful holiday creations.

Now we are into Lecture Series season! The first Lecture of the series was presented on January 27th and featured Ellen Elliott discussing the Spanish Flu of 1918 and comparisons to our current pandemic. It was different than in the past, because it was held virtually on Zoom, but it was really interesting and very well presented. The next installment will be held on February 24th and will be hosted by Rochelle Danquah. The subject is The Anti-Slavery Movement in Northville and Surrounding Communities and will start at 7:00 pm. Check our website for more information: www.millracenorthville.org.

The coldest days of the winter are here and that, of course, makes us long for spring. We are planning to continue holding safe and socially-distanced events until such time as we can all gather comfortably again. So keep an eye on our website and our Facebook page (Northville Historical Society and Mill Race Village) for news of upcoming events. And stay warm!



Executive Director's Dispatch

by Leanie Bayly, Executive Director

As we take our first hopeful steps into 2021 the Northville Historical Society will be mindful of the changing environment that Covid 19 has superimposed on our everyday lives. Nearly a year ago from this publication we altered our business model to conform with the best scientific thinking and government regulations to defeat this pandemic. Vaccines have been developed and many administered, but it may still be some time before unrestricted interactions between members of different households will be deemed safe.

Addressing how we gather has been challenging for us. Almost all our activities, and certainly our most cherished, have been those where the mingling of families and the laughter of children enrich us as members of a common and vibrant community. We've adapted with virtual events like October's video Cemetery Walk and the launch of our Virtual Lecture Series. Onsite offerings have included modified and highly successful events like the Halloween Walk, Christmas in the Village, and the Festival of Trees. While promoting social distancing and restricting access to the inside of our buildings we were able to provide our community with a positive seasonal experience. Please follow our website and social media messages for updated information regarding future events and activities of the Northville Historical Society. We hope to see you all soon!

The History of Ford Field—Part 1

by Ellen Elliott

A few months ago, the NHS Archive was approached by Northville councilwoman Barbara Moroski-Brown who had a research request. She wanted to discover whether Ford Field, the park adjacent to Mill Race Village, had the historic background to qualify as a contributing property to be included in our Historic District.

Volunteer archivist Ellen Elliott took on this challenge and a few weeks later presented a comprehensive report on the history of Ford Field. The report and her subsequent appearances at Northville Historic District meetings have placed the beloved property in consideration. Ellen has graciously allowed her report to be divided into four sections to appear as a running story throughout this year's Quarterly publications. The original footnoted copy is available upon request. We hope you enjoy them all.

Henry Ford was enamored with Northville. As early as 1888 proof of his interest in the area was shown when he brought his bride, Clara, by horse and buggy on their honeymoon trip. As a result of his early connection to the area, he chose Northville as one of the sites for his village industries and purchased property in 1919. The parcel now known as Ford Field was part of Henry Ford's property acquisition.

Henry Ford liked to beautify the properties that he owned for the enjoyment of the entire community. An editorial by Richard T. Baldwin described Henry Ford's commitment to Northville: "Not only has he given us a marvelous industrial plant, helping to bring prosperity to hundreds of our community, but he has given us a vision of beauty and the spiritual values of life which will endure long after he is gone. Probably the sum spent in beautification of the Ford properties here would run into an amazing figure."

The open field, west of Griswold Street across from the Ford Valve Plant, was an asset to the community and served as a hub for recreation and social activity. In the early 1940s Fourth of July celebrations were held there and hundreds attended. These celebrations included concerts, games, and sporting events for people of all ages.

By July 1946 the Village Commission, led by President Forrest Doren, had officially secured the use of the property from the Ford Motor Company. Efforts to improve the field and develop it into a site for school and community recreation began in earnest with the Exchange Club sponsoring the project. The vision was to "improve and light Ford Field for a Community Recreation Center. A No. 1 ball diamond and a gridiron will be laid out...and many other items necessary to turn this natural amphitheater into a



Ford Field—courtesy of patch.com

beautiful and useful contribution to the civic pride of the village." Ford Motor Company was proud of its involvement in "providing an opportunity for civic cooperation."

A recreation committee was formed and was responsible for raising money to fund the project and coordinate the contracts necessary to develop the vision. The committee's goal was to be ready in time for the start of the high school football season. Prior to this time the Northville high school football team did not have a home field.

On Friday, November 15, 1946 Henry Ford Field was officially dedicated. An estimated 3500 people were in attendance. The program began with a performance of the National Anthem by Charles Strautz accompanied by the Northville and Plymouth bands. The invocation was delivered by Methodist minister Rev. W. Leslie Williams – "we dedicate this Henry Ford Field as a memorial to those who have been benefactors to our surrounding community for several decades. And we also dedicate this field to those who will use it, that it may be the instrument to help build good clean recreational opportunities for our people, so that they may grow strong in body, mind and spirit. May the use of this field bring to us more clearly the lessons and rules of the game of life...May this field be a credit and a real benefit to this community."

Although the Northville football team lost their game to Plymouth that night those in attendance witnessed an historic event which "put Northville's athletic facilities in the class with big cities." The village was entering a new era as their recreation committee was now developing into something more substantial as "high school and community recreation takes a new and more significant place in the village. As added improvements are brought into the picture, townspeople will realize the great value of this project to our community."

Wedding Rentals Continue During COVID

By Jennifer Luikart



Have you or someone you know had their wedding plans cancelled or postponed due to COVID? We are still having wedding rentals at Mill Race Village. They are limited in size and masks must be worn, but you can still be married in our beautiful Village.

We've had many gazebo weddings this winter and have only recently been able to once again hold small, distanced weddings in the Church.

We're hopeful that we may be able to start having party rentals in the Cady Inn later this year. We'll give an update in the next issue of the Quarterly.

We do have several people who have opted to rent the grounds for a socially distanced safe outdoor party. Grounds rentals include exclusive use of the grounds during your rental.

Please email for more information!

rentals@millracenorthville.org

Artifacts for Sale! - Phase 2

by Marti Murdock

As reported in November's issue of the Mill Race Quarterly, Town Peddler Antiques in Livonia has been helping us divest ourselves of excess inventory.

Phase 2 of that effort will take place on Thursday, March 25, at the Cady Inn. We will be offering many items too large to show successfully on-line, and others that must be seen in person to be appreciated.

As we get closer to the sale date, more information will be provided. We hope you will come out and support us, wearing your mask of course!



Marti Murdock during π Day 2019

Double Pi Day

by Marti Murdock

Two years ago, on March 14, 2019 we held our first π (pi) Day at Mill Race Village. A grand time was had by all, not only enjoying the delicious pies baked by our friends and neighbors but also relaxing in.

In 2020, COVID hit two days Pi Day and we canceled the event. This year, it appears that COVID will preclude a March 14th Pi Day.

However, we will not be defeated! Plans are afoot for Double Pi Day on June 28, when we will be able to again meet and eat out-of-doors. More information will follow, but get your appetites ready!

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Marti Murdock at mmurdock@millracenorthville.org



Selected items from the Artifact Sale

Village Valentines a Sweet Success

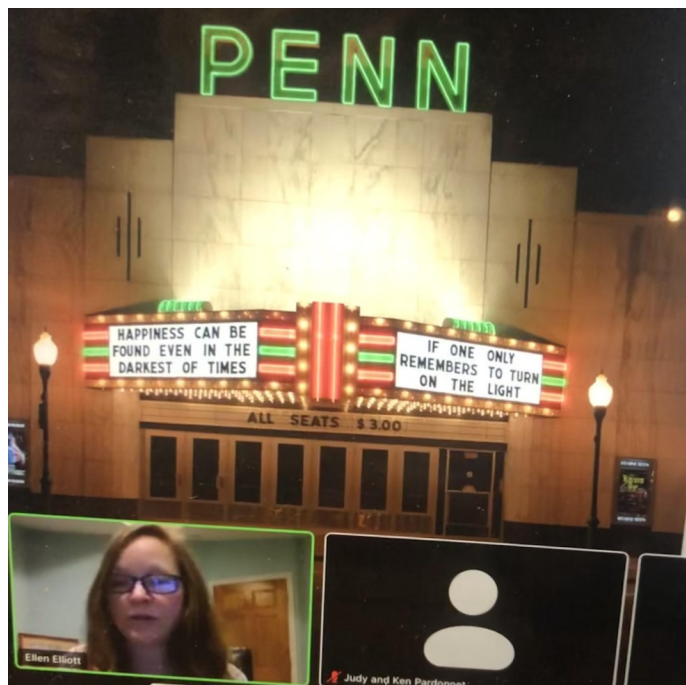
by Martha Michalek



Love was in the air this past weekend, as we celebrated Valentine's Day at Mill Race Village with an unique opportunity. The event was called Village Valentines, and participants ordered bottles with a variety of designs and a variety of candy fillers.

Husbands ordered them for wives, moms ordered them for kids and grandmas ordered them for grandbabies and were available for pickup in the Gazebo.

The Gazebo was decorated in red and white, with plenty of hearts. A bench was set up in the gazebo, with blankets and pillows for photo ops. It was fun way to say 'I Love You' on a snowy weekend.



Ellen Elliott's Virtual Lecture on Spanish Flu

2021 Virtual Lecture Series Update

By Paul Snyder

This year the familiar warmth of the New School Church as you settle in from the chill walk from the parking lot will be missing from this year's lecture series. As those of you who have previously attended our series this year is being conducted virtually using Zoom. We will be sending email blasts to members and upcoming presentations will be featured on our website and on Facebook.

Our first Lecture about the Spanish Flu of 1918 given by Ellen Elliott was well received.

The second about the Antislavery Movement in Northville and Surrounding Communities given by Rochelle Danquah while, at this writing is days away, the sign ups are brisk.

The March lecture is by our friend Don Lacombe presenting; The Ford Model T: How it Changed the World on March 31 at 7pm.

April's Lecture has Ellen Elliott returning on April 28 at 7pm to discuss her book on the Railroads and local history.

Please watch our website, Facebook and for email blasts announcing future lectures.



*Professor
Rochelle Danquah*

Good Tidings and Cheer at Christmas in The Village

By Maria Simonte

The spirit of the holiday season came to Mill Race Village on December 11 and 12 at Christmas in the Village. Held entirely outdoors, socially-distanced groups entered in 30 minute timed blocks. The event featured Santa and Mrs. Claus in the Juliet Balcony of the Yerkes, a candy chute at the Weavers Cottage garden, the First Annual Festival of Trees, all the buildings decorated in different holiday themes, the blacksmiths working in the Hirsch and a Christmas Market.

Many thanks to the many, many volunteers who made this event possible, particularly the Stone Gang, the wonderful Northville Historical Society volunteers, high school students and many members of the community. All the hard work was rewarded by the happy faces of the children talking to Santa and Mrs. Claus and the kind words from event attendees who were appreciative to have a holiday celebration in the beautiful Village.



2021 Membership Opportunities

By Maria Simonte



Thank you to all of our Northville Historical Society Members for your support as members during the past year. The NHS and Mill Race Village rely on memberships, donations, events and grants for

100% of our funding. 2020 was challenging, but the grounds of Mill Race remained open and we hosted numerous virtual and live events. Your generous support enables NHS and Mill Race Village to preserve Northville's history and provide valuable community programming.

2021 Membership renewal is still available. Please renew your membership by using the 2021 Membership Form on this page, or by going online to:

www.millracenorthville.org/join-give and submitting the form and paying online with PayPal.

Member benefits include member-only events, exclusive presale on ticketed events, the Mill Race Quarterly newsletter and a 10% discount at the Village store.

Annual Memberships are the same as 2020:

- \$25 for Individuals
- \$35 for Families (2 or more people)
- \$75 for Organizations/Businesses

2021 Membership Drive Recruitment Winners



Congratulations to Bill and Carole Jean Stockhausen, the winners of the 2021 Membership Drive Family and Friends Recruitment Program.

They invited a record setting 45 people to join the Northville Historical Society during the drive.

They were entered 45 times in the drawing and won a \$50 gift card to Center Street Grille.

2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill out and detach this panel and mail to:
Northville Historical Society
215 Griswold St.
Northville, MI 48167-1664

First Name(s): _____

Last Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

If you wish to receive A PAPER COPY of the Mill Race Quarterly, initial here: _____

2021 Membership Dues: (Circle One)
\$25 Individual / \$35 Family / \$75 Organization

Unrestricted Gift Amount: _____

Restricted Gift Amount: _____

Restricted Gift Instructions: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Check here if you do not wish to have your gift posted in our communications _____

Payment Method
(Circle One)

Cash

Check (Payable to Northville Historical Society)

Online (via PayPal) www.millracenorthville.org

Visa / MasterCard / Discover

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: (MM/YYYY) _____

Security Code: (located on reverse of card) _____

Signature: _____

Gifts to the Northville Historical Society are tax deductible to the greatest extent of the law. EIN 36-4092509.

New Member and Donation Recognition is on Page 7

Notes:

- **We are sending 2020 Members one final copy of the Quarterly—Please Renew!**
- **Going forward, we are only using 1 email address per membership. Please forward to family members as needed!**



*Thank you to all of our
volunteers and guests
during Village Valentines!*

Welcome New Members!

Sheila & Aaron Andring
Tarlochan & Rajwant Bhullar
Cathryn Blanck
J.Paul & Susan Conway
Gina Esposito
Janet & Mark Ferstle
Janie Flitsos
Christine Green
Alva Norman Hamlin
Marisha Krok
Kathleen LaPointe
Vicki Leone
MaryBeth & Arayan Lias
John & Vicki Mazur
Tricia Mirtes
Elizabeth Morris
Toulla & Jeff Palazeti
Ethan Pickett
Christopher & Colette Rizek
Fuad Saba
Dan & Colleen Sygar
Mary Ware
Scott Warren
Lois Wendt

Thank You to our Donors!

\$100 & Above

Bob & Cathy Anthony
Art & Barb Bakewell
J.Paul & Susan Conway
Ellen & Joe Elliott
Phyllis Ely
David & Amy Field
Dale & Jacqueline Haskin
Kathy & Edward Huyck
Jim & Carol Koster
Kathleen LaPointe
John & Vicki Mazur
Orin Jewelers - Orin & Tina Mazzoni
Martha & Jeff Michalak
Barbara Moroski-Browne
Donna Tinburg & Jim Pallas
George & Joelle Sarkozy
Charles & Karen Smith
Jeff & Terry Snyder
Sue & Dave Woodsum

Up to \$99

Elaine Brennan
Kevin & Linda Clark
Gina Esposito
Mary Louise Lee
Toulla & Jeff Palazeti
Bill & Berti Rice
John Roby
Bill & Karen Schaumann
Lisa & Mike Weiskopf
Dale Zahm

Ruth Whitmyer Memorials

Ann Carey
Joan Darnell
Mill Race Weavers

Other Memorials

Lucia Danes—In Memory of David R. Danes

Honorariums

Jim & Suzy Bone—for Stone Gang
Tarlochan & Rajwant Bhullar—for Anup & Sam's
Marriage
Sally Flayer—for Ed Flayer

Northville Historical Society 2021 Calendar of Events

- February 24 - Zoom Lecture: The Antislavery Movement in Northville & Surrounding Communities by Rochelle Danquah - 7 PM
- March 25 - Pop Up Antique Sale in Cady Inn 1-5 PM
- March 31 - Zoom Lecture: Model T by Don LaCombe - 7 PM
- April 18 - Patriot's Day on the Grounds of MRV 10 AM - 4 PM
- April 28 - Zoom Lecture: Railroads of Plymouth by Ellen Elliott - 7 PM
- May 26 - Zoom Lecture: -TBD - 7 PM
- June 4 - Wine Tasting Fundraiser 6 to 9 PM Tickets available online soon
- June 6-12 - Annual Garage Sale, 218 W. Dunlap St, 9 AM to 9 PM
- (Tentative) - June 13 thru October 3 Village Buildings Open, Sundays, 1 to 4 PM
- June 28 - Double Pi Day, 1-4 PM Pre Ordered & Curbside Pick Up Only

President

Martha Michalak

Vice President

Bill Stockhausen

Treasurer

Scott Lowery

Secretary

Jen Mihalich

Directors

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Mike DeFrancesco

Paul Hinz

Kirt Holder

Andrea Johanson

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