

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 10, 2021 – 7 pm

Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Moment of Silence for Richard Sieb
 - 4.1. Richard Sieb Tribute Film
5. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of September 15, 2021
6. Public Comment
7. Committee Updates
 - 7.1. Executive Committee
 - 7.1.1. Governor's Award for Tourism
 - 7.2. Awards Committee
 - 7.3. Markers Committee
 - 7.4. Projects Committee
8. New Business
 - 8.1. Museum Staff Reports
9. Old Business
10. Public Comment
11. Board Comments
12. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 7 pm

2021 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2021 COMMITTEES
Chair: Brian Egen, District 6 Vice Chair: Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary: Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee: Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee: L William Conner, District 4 Trustee: Richard Micka, District 5 Trustee: Tony Trujillo, District 7 Trustee: Michael Humphries, District 8 Trustee: Nick Guthrie, District 9 Immediate Past Chair: Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus: Richard Sieb	Executive Committee Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Thomas Heywood, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak Awards Committee Chair: Mary Strevel Members: Tony Trujillo, Thomas Heywood, and Andrew Clark Markers Committee Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark Projects Committee Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, Tony Trujillo, and Andrew Clark

Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM
BOARD of TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
September 15th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in-person
at the Monroe County Museum, 126 South Monroe Street, Monroe

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman	Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman	Tom Heywood, Secretary
William Conner, Member	Michael Humphries, Member	Richard Micka, Member
Hobby Nels, Past Chairman	Mary Strevel, Member	Tony Trujillo, Member

Excused: Nick Guthrie, Member	Richard Sieb, Emeritus
Museum Staff: Andy Clark, Director	J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director
Lynn Reaume, County Historian	

Guest: Sue Donovan, Friends of Potter Cemetery

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll was taken; there was a quorum.

Motion was made by J. Potter to accept the meeting agenda, seconded by R. Micka; the motion was passed.

Motion was made by W. Conner to approve the July 14th, 2021 meeting minutes, seconded by M. Humphries; the motion was passed.

Public Comment #1: S. Donovan was pleased to have meeting in-person again and she updated the group on the one fund-raiser they had due to the COVID situation. The 'Friends' had hosted at the Eby Cabin during Fair Week as they had previous years. It was noted that accurate visitor counts have always been difficult to achieve.

Committee Updates: Executive: Chairman Egen said they had met. The Museum's Strategic Plan may need to be updated, and when arranged, the Trustees will again rank the priority of project/topics for the future.

Another discussion was the Custer Symposium event for 2022, which will be based on the need for updating/new content for the Custer Family exhibit, now over 20 years old. The exhibit needs to be refreshed and the speakers will go through a selection process for quality and variety to provide "Voices From All" showing scholarship and a breadth of vision. Good moderators and a clear statement of purpose will be needed. The purpose of the symposium must be guided, and to collect material for updating the museum exhibit. Multiple views will be used to design the content. The role of the Museum staff and Trustees were discussed.

Awards Committee: Chairperson M. Strevel announced the committee's recommendations: Illumination Award (long time service) Mrs. Jeanne Micka; Connection Award: Bill Saul; Exploration Award: River Raisin Centre for the Arts (RRCA) educating youth. Motion was made by M. Humphries, seconded by W. Conner to approve the Connection Award recommendation; passed unanimously. Motion was made by M. Strevel, seconded by W. Conner to approve the Illumination recommendation: passed with R. Micka abstaining. Motion was made by T. Heywood, seconded by J. Potter to approve the Exploration recommendation; passed unanimously.

Discussion was also about moving the Awards celebration to spring, 2022 fall ceremony honoring both 2020 and 2021 recipients, possibly including a mileage celebration, and to use that event to introduce all to the changes at the Territorial Park. Motion was made by J. Potter, seconded by W. Conner to make this change, date TBD; passed unanimously.

Markers Committee: An update was included in the Director's Report. Dundee has yet to install their posts; St. Antoine's reinstalled and the MCCC 'Potters Field' installed. Another completed batch is at Sewah to be picked up. L. Reaume will contact the property owner of the 'Custer Farm' marker to find out his intentions/status.

Projects Committee: Chairman Humphries & Director Clark noted that a second round of grant money will quickly become available for the fall (approx. \$23,000 remaining.) The 2022 Projects grants will be raised to \$60,000 and be back to annually in the spring. W. Conner made motion to approve this; seconded by M. Strevel; passed unanimously. It was suggested that the grant announcement could be also held at the spring awards event.

New Business: Museum Report: Motion was made by W. Conner, seconded by R. Micka to approve as presented; passed.

Deputy Director Prezwozniak gave a short presentation on the 'King Philip' corn harvest at the Territorial Park.

Chairman Egen brought the Awards for the Museum won by the company which produced the videos 'This Is Where' series to promote the museum & mileage. It also won an award from the Historical Society of Michigan in the media category. It was noted that there has been more filming.

Old Business: none

Public Comment #2: at a later time, S. Donovan said that Dave Carter was working to restore Cooney Cemetery in LaSalle. His company has worked on both the Potter and Memorial Place cemeteries.

Commissioner comments: R. Micka remarked on the large areas of blooming lotus beds this year.

J. Potter said that it was 20 years ago that the 'Backyard History' program at Ida Middle School was started to educate the students on their local history. It started on Sept. 11th, 2001.

T. Trujillo said the Downtown Development Authority was looking to work on a project about historic city streets and looking for sponsors of the project.

Director Clark said the museum was voted "Best Monroe County Museum" in the Monroe News contest.

Motion was made by J. Potter, seconded by M. Humphries, to cancel the October meeting; passed unanimously. The next trustee meeting will be the second Wednesday, November 10th at the museum.

With no other business, motion was made by J. Potter to adjourn, seconded by W. Conner and the meeting was ended at 8:39 p.m.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
16 September 2021

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Organizational Operations

County Museum

Public access to the galleries at the County Museum are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm, and Sundays, 12 pm to 5 pm; we are currently only closed on Mondays. We will maintain this schedule for the remainder of 2021.

County Archives

Research by-appointment and via phone, mail, and email.

Territorial Park

Structures have closed for the season; grounds remain open.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Museum is closed for the season; grounds remain open.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds remain open.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

The fall rains have been an ongoing challenge in the basement and to the ceiling of the Archives.

Territorial Park

Work has come to a halt on Papermill School for the year and will be winterized next week.

The new perimeter fence for the Navarre House has been installed. Gates will be installed in the first half of next year.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Exterior exhibit case work continues.

St Antoine's Historic Site

There are no significant maintenance projects to report.

Historical Projects Fund

Fall disbursement cycle ends on November 13th.

Estral Beach and the Berlin Charter Township Historical Society put on a well-attended event on October 23rd – around 100 people in attendance – for the re-dedication of the war memorial/Sherman Tank – a project we provided assistance for

through the HPF. Many kudos to Estral Beach and Berlin Charter Township Historical Society for pulling off such a huge project in a relatively small window of time.

Markers Program

Taking advantage of a break in the rain – or, at least – a less than torrential rainfall, Mike and I reinstalled three historical markers in the Village of Dundee on October 15th. We reinstalled “Macon Indian Reserve”, “Dundee - Hub of the Highways”, and “Dundee’s Old Mill”. Many thanks to the Village of Dundee for assisting us with the project by installing the new aluminum posts.

I anticipate a run to Sewah to pick up our remaining signs and one or two additional reinstallations before the end of the year.

Spirit of Service 2021

No updates at this time.

Personnel Updates

No personnel updates at this time.

Octobernight

I want to commend the staff and thank our volunteers for putting on such a well-received event on October 22nd and 23rd. I truly don’t recall the site being transformed to such a degree for our annual end of operating season/Halloween event at Territorial Park – it was quite ethereal. I have heard repeated praise for the event from a number of individuals.

We also benefitted from a number of community groups and individuals helping us put on the event. Chairman Mark Brant for the use of his property for event parking; 4-H for providing traffic control in our parking lots; the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office for posting a deputy in front of Papermill School; the Gotz family for operating the tractor ride/shuttle to the parking areas; and the Monroe County Road Commission for fabricating signs.

The creativity, enthusiasm, and heavy lifting for the event from staff and volunteers made Octobernight the success it was. Leading up to the event, the online ticket sales and social media campaign piqued the public’s interest, engaged them, and simplified and streamlined the ticket purchasing process. The above and beyond support from board members Egen, Humphries, and Micka is greatly appreciated. It was a truly memorable event and I believe it will reignite the public’s interest in our annual Halloween programming.

Custer Symposium

MCMS division leads and I drafted a statement of purpose for the proposed Custer Symposium. The most important detail for us is that the symposium is strictly to aid and inform in the redevelopment of our Custer exhibit. We are targeting 2025/2026 for the completion of the updated exhibit to correspond with the 160th anniversary of the end of the American Civil War and the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Working under the assumption that the current climate persists until 2023, we have no doubts it will attract some degree of controversy. However, we need to hold a firm line that this is only to assist in the new exhibit. It cannot become a public forum for the airing of opinions nor can it be expected to resolve the ongoing debate within the community about George Armstrong Custer. It must be kept as an academic endeavor to host a variety of scholars with a variety of backgrounds and content expertise to help us shape the exhibit for the coming decades.

Proposed Event Date:
April 2023

Location:
To Be Determined

Event title:
The Custers and Their Legacy: A Monroe County Museum System Symposium

Draft Statement of Purpose:
The Custers and Their Legacy: A Monroe County Museum System Symposium will aid in the redevelopment of *The Custers and Their Legacy* exhibit. It will feature a wide array of recognized scholars in the field covering the life and times of George Armstrong Custer and his wife Elizabeth “Libbie” Bacon Custer. Speakers at the symposium will cover the Civil War, Reconstruction, Indian Wars (with an emphasis on the Battle of the Little Bighorn), and the ongoing reinterpretation of the Custers’ legacy.

Upcoming Closures

The next regularly scheduled holiday closures for the MCMS is Thursday, November 11th for Veterans Day; Thursday, November 25th for Thanksgiving; and Friday, November 26th.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report for September and October 2021

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

Monday, November 8, 2021

Octobernight: A substantial amount of energy was invested into the *Octobernight* program, which, by many accounts, has proven a tremendous success for the institution. All staff, in one way or another, made valuable contributions to the program. *Octobernight* represents an evolution from the traditional Halloween-themed *Lantern Tours event*. The new event differed significantly for several reasons: 1) visitors were allowed to wander freely, unguided, in a find-you-own-adventure format. This allowed visitors to spend more or less time in accordance with their preference at the various vignettes around the park; 2) Increased focus was placed on dramatic presentations and historically-appropriate high quality frights; and 3) the addition of supportive theatrical elements throughout the site. This, combined with meaningful contributions from the MCMS staff and the coordinated efforts of key volunteers, created a signature experience for our community. Special thanks to the programs division for applying tremendous energy to the individual vignettes, and to all staff participants who worked tirelessly to create a meaningful, unforgettable time for our visitors.

Outreach: We welcome increased interaction with our community through field trips, staff visits, and participation in community programs:

- Friday, September 10: Holy Ghost Lutheran School Field Trip to the County Museum and Territorial Park (36 students)
- Friday, September 17: Meadow Montessori Field Trip to Territorial Park (9 students)
- Friday, October 8: Monroe Middle School Field Trip to the County Museum (12 students)
- Saturday, October 9: Programs division participation at the Vibrant Life Senior Living Carnival
- Tuesday, October 12: School visit to Triumph Academy - Presenting the Native American program to 3 separate, consecutive classes of 5th grade students.
- Saturday, October 30: Participation in Downtown Monroe Michigan Business Network's *Downtown Trick or Treat*.

R RTP: The end of September marked the close of the living history season. Despite one or two bouts with uncooperative weather, I'm very pleased to report a successful first year. Recent activities at Territorial Park include:

- The building of new fence, enclosing the domestic area of the 1817 farm. This great development of the site is historically appropriate, and lends a pleasing sense of depth and a layered perspective. Thanks to Gerry, Mike, Andy and intern Olivia Cotterman for the excellent teamwork that allowed this to become a reality!
- The corn harvest has been brought in and hung to dry in the barn. It will be ground for next year's cornmeal.
- A hitch rail was installed on the west side of the Navarre house, making the site a bit more equine-friendly.
- Special thanks to volunteer Geoff Hoerauf for conducting a fishing net workshop on September 18, and for the generous donation of a completed hand-made net for display/use at the farm.
- Wood service: wood cutting continues in preparation for the next season and the "it'll-be-here-before-we-know-it" 2022 Maple sugaring program.

- The installation and filling of 6 raised garden beds is complete. They currently await a bit of compost, and I expect they will serve out needs well next year.

Miscellany:

- Thanks to the following volunteers for their excellent service to the MCMS in support of *Octobernight*: Jessica Anspaugh, Roy Atkins, Aaron Dougherty, Thomas Edwards, Caleb, Kassi, & Henry Gilbert, Darrell & Travis Gotz, Geoff & Owen Hoerauf, Deb & Samantha Humphries, Kurt May, Jeanne Micka, Jeff Mogle, Megan Mullins, Aaron Pawloski, Vicky Phillips, Butch Uhl, and Michael Wight. Additional thanks to the parking volunteers.
- Special thanks to Chairman Egen and Trustees Humphries and Micka for their outstanding volunteer services to the MCMS for the *Octobernight* event. Additional thanks to Chairman Egen for his tremendous investment behind-the-scenes in support of Territorial Park Throughout the month.
- Unfortunately, due to the remarkably accurate interference of rain over the course of no less than 4 attempts, the Poison Ivy will remain untreated until next year, due to end-of-season dormancy.
- Filming took place at RRTP on October 9. Thanks to Jim Johnson, Ken Burghardt, and Geoff Hoerauf for their participation, and thanks to Gerry Wykes for the amazing reproduction fishing spear head originally recovered from the Deloeuil site!
- The Conestoga wagon and ox cart have been moved from 3rd street to the barn for Octobernight, and will remain there temporarily. Thanks to Bob Bashaw, and Gerry, Mike, Robert, and Andy for their help in the big move!

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report
For September, 2021

The research room was open to the general public by appointment; 30 visits plus GSMC members.

Rachel processed obituary requests from 13 individuals, with 30 obits. She handled 5 phone calls and 17 emails. Research requests include surnames Mulligan and Austin. She's been looking up missing obits in the newspapers. She also is on the 'One Book, One Community' committee for this year (5).

Robert handled 15 outside calls and 26 emails, plus contacting & processing potential donors. We have a portable air conditioner and use the dehumidifier in the Stacks Room 202 and we now have normalcy in one room! Robert continues to handle the water on the basement floor, often in multiple rooms not Collections.

September Accessions:

2021.51	(still still pending) Spillson's restaurant outside advertising signs.
2021.74	Catherine Miller for St. Mary Catholic Central Alumni: 56 CC, SMA and SMCC Yearbooks
2021.75	Helen Hudson, & Henry Hudson: Tools and papers on their parents and the Gessner farm
2021.76	Ron Seals: 3 CC and SMA yearbooks
2021.77	Martha Churchill: Milan information on DVDs & LIFE magazine re: Milan Plastics Co.
2021.78	Georgette Velez: papers on the David Noble Family of Monroe
2021.79	Lois Dean: a continuation of family photographs, scanned for our collection and originals returned to her

September projects: Noting the large gap for photographs in PastPerfect, I continue to scan images. I was able to get one bookshelf filled in the 2nd floor hallway and Mike Nelligan topped it with plexi for protection. Two more to go (after my sinuses calm down.)

The multiple Wm. C. Sterling scrapbooks need attention. I scanned one smaller scrapbook and sleeved it for storage. Researchers will use the scanned version unless absolutely necessary. We have many scrapbooks that need help and perhaps that would be a good project for our Collections budget next year.

Research included church records.

I have not heard back from the Deeds dept. on where the missing Indexes/volumes may be. The newspapers and maps are coming back in October.

No Deaccessions organized for this month.

County Google Stats: the Obituary search was at #1 with 9,305 page views (this is down for the last few months by thousands); the Museum was #30 (up) with 784 page views; #62 Octobernight 273; #129 Archives 98.

September Facebook postings for Collections: 3,396 on 2 postings. Tribute to Dick Sieb 20,012.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
October, 2021

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report
For October, 2021

We were open to the general public by appointment; 32 visits + GSMC members per week. Topics identified included the Lajiness, Sancrainte, Valiquet, Frerot (Brown), Keeney, and Foster families; Civil War veterans, D. N. Roberts 'Country Visitor' columns. Also French Heritage in Monroe County. It's been busy.

Rachel processed obituary requests from 6 individuals, with 51 obits. She had 5 phone calls and 26 emails. Research requests include surnames Weier, Weiss, Weipert & Bitz. She's been looking up missing obits in the newspapers, and participated in Octobernight.

Robert handled 30 outside calls and 36 emails, plus contacting, processing potential donors and FIC items. He participated in Octobernight, helped move Third Street wagons to the Territorial Park and continues to help clean out water in the basement when it rains. He traveled to transfer two FIC images to the Ypsilanti Historical Society (no accession numbers).

October Accessions:

2021.51	(still still pending) Spillson's restaurant outside advertising signs.
2021.80	Darling Farms: school desk from Oakville School on Tuttle Hill Road
2021.81	Harold McLean: Victorian bed frame and slats
2021.82	Maxine Kull: Images re: Lincoln school, Monroe and telephone directories
2021.83	FIC Wm. C. Sterling: loose images and papers from scrapbooks in collection
2021.84	Troy Goodnough: Goodnough family farm roofing tools
2021.85	Erin Dewimille: 'Little Brown Bear Learns to Cook' autographed book by E. U. McWebb
2021.86	Charlene Kosino: Monroe High School papers
2021.87	Lennie Alcorn: 3 Ida Twp. School books
2021.88	Lois Dean: additional family (Dean, Harwick, Kreps, Todd) images for scanning
2021.89	Scott Wallinger: G.A.R. medal and inaugural medal of CW vet. George Weiss
2021.90	Sharon Friedline: interview with Jeanne Friedline Cominess

October projects: Noting the large gap of photographs in PastPerfect, I continue to scan images. I did another box of the old Monroe Evening News proof images, bringing the total processed to almost 6,000. I removed original photographs and loose items from the old Wm. C. Sterling scrapbooks and processed them into PastPerfect. I continued to label the storage boxes in Room 202/Stacks.

I have not heard back from the Deeds on where the missing Indexes/volumes may be.

The Monroe Evening News newspapers out for digitization were returned by Director Clark. See at: <https://digmichnews.cmich.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=MonroeMEN&e=-----en-10--1--txt-txIN----->

The second group of maps to be digitized were returned to us on the 8th. Several of the maps were of Dundee, so I shared the digital data with the Dundee Old Mill through representative Barbara Roe.

No Deaccessions organized for this month.

County Google Stats: the Obituary search was at #1 with 9,771 page views (this is down for the last few months by thousands); the Museum was #24 (up) with 1,013 page views; #28 Octobernight 855; #85 Territorial Park 171; #117 Archives 105.

October Facebook postings for Collections: 10,544 on 7 postings. This was Archives month so I posted more.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
November, 2021

Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

October 2021 Museum Exhibits Report

Working from memory many decades after the fact, accomplished author and painter Charles Lanman (born in Monroe 1819) painted an image of the homestead where he spent his childhood. This painting is one few artistic depictions of an original French habitant house and yard from the early period. It serves as the primary guide for the museum's interpretation of the River Raisin Territorial Park. Yet another piece of that interpretation was realized last month with completion of the picket fence surrounding the Navarre house yard.

Over 400 feet of split-picket fencing was installed thanks to the primary labors of Mike Nelligan, and we on the fencing team nurtured sore backs and splintered hands with a sense of accomplishment. Gate and corner post finials were put into place last week and gates will be installed next season. Although contributing just enough physically to achieve the right to complain, my main responsibility was to design the fence to fit the appearance of the Lanman's painting, order the necessary lumber, and semi-direct the installation.

One page is not enough to hold the other events of the past few months, but Octobernight and the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial took up every other spare moment. Octobernight was a team effort in all senses of the term, and the exhibits department contributed all graphic needs from logo design to signage – with a side trip into Turnip heads. It turned into an Octobernight to remember and a new program that promises to age very well indeed.

After a summer of “here and there” work, the refreshing of the Vietnam Veteran's memorial time line wall exhibit and the exterior kiosk was completed. Thanks to the efforts of Emily Phillips and Robert Lutey, several additional names were added to the time line in the process and photos of every single serviceman were located.

Respectfully submitted,
Gerald P. Wykes
Exhibits Coordinator



November 10, 2021

Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees
Guest Services Division Report ♦ September-October 2021

The months of September and October were dominated by planning for Octovernight, though all regular duties were completed accurately and on time (i.e., deposits, requisitions, and claims). Several new vendors were added to the Monroe County Vendor List, most of whom were directly or indirectly tied to Octovernight.

From a logistical standpoint, Octovernight was a massive success. Careful planning resulted in a two day event that experienced very few complications. As a replacement for Lantern Tours, content was not the only new part of this event. For the first time, ticket sales were conducted online only – a resounding success. Allowing people to purchase tickets at their convenience resulted in amazing sales: a total of 369 tickets were purchased for the event, with the majority sold on the first day they were available (September 15). Of the 18 total time slots available, 11 were sold out.

After researching a good amount of possible vendors, we selected Brown Paper Tickets (BPT) for our event. BPT allowed me to build an event page with the capability to list ticket purchases at intervals each night (something that other vendors did not offer). BPT also offered a large number of reporting tools for us to be able to collect guest data for future use.

Total Octovernight visitation was 434.

Planning for Christmas at the museum began in October, with lots of vintage inspired ideas.

Submitted by Heather Piegza, Guest Services Coordinator