



**Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting**

Wednesday, 12 March 2025 @ 7 pm
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of 15 January 2025
5. Public Comment
6. Markers Committee
7. Projects Fund Committee
 1. City of Monroe Extension Request - **Action Needed**
8. Spirit of Service Committee
9. New Business
 1. Staff Reports
 1. Director's Report - America250MI Grants Support - **Action Requested**
 2. Acceptance of Accessions
 3. Approval of Deaccessions
10. Old Business
11. Public Comment
12. Board Comments
13. Adjournment

Next Meeting

Wednesday, 9 April 2025 @ 7 pm
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2025 Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

(All terms expire 31 December 2026)

Officers	Trustees
Chair Brian Egen, County District 6	Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka
Vice Chair Michelle Lavoy, County District 5	Trustee Barbara Roe, County District 1
Secretary Michael Humphries, County District 8	Trustee Thomas Heywood, County District 2
Immediate Past Chair Hobby Nels	Trustee Sue Wagers, County District 3
	Trustee L William Conner, County District 4
	Trustee Anne Noland, County District 7
	Trustee Nick Guthrie, County District 9

2025 Board of Trustees Committees

(Appointed annually by the board chair)

Executive Committee	<i>Board:</i> Brian Egen (Chair), Michelle Lavoy, Michael Humphries, Hobby Nels <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark, JJ Przewozniak
Awards Committee	<i>Board:</i> Michelle Lavoy, Anne Noland <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark
Markers Committee	<i>Board:</i> Nick Guthrie (Chair), Brian Egen, Michael Humphries <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark, JJ Przewozniak
Projects Committee	<i>Board:</i> Michael Humphries (Chair), Bill Conner, Brian Egen, Nick Guthrie <i>Staff:</i> 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 reach 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
January 15th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Monroe County Museum, 126 South Monroe Street, Monroe

Present: Barbara Roe, District 1	(vacant) District 2	Sue Wagers, District 3
Brian Egen, District 6	Anne Noland, District 7	Nick Guthrie, District 9
Richard Micka, Emeritus	Hobby Nels, Past Chairman	

Excused: William Conner, District 4	Michelle LaVoy, District 5	Michael Humphries, District 8
Museum Staff: Director Clark	J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director	Lynn Reaume, Co. Historian
Guests: Robin Miller, clerk	Jeanne Micka, Sawyer Homestead	

At 7:00 the attending trustees were sworn in by clerk Robin Miller.

At 7:04 the Museum Director conducted the start of the meeting with elections.

Elections: Chairperson: B. Egen was nominated by N. Guthrie, seconded by A. Noland, for Chairperson. The vote was unanimous.

Vice-Chairperson: M. Humphries had submitted an endorsement for M. LaVoy. With no other nominations in the call, motion was made by N. Guthrie, seconded by H. Nels and the vote was unanimous.

Secretary: N. Guthrie nominated M. Humphries. There were no other nominations in the call, and the motion was seconded by A. Noland and passed unanimously.

Noted that present trustees abstained from their vote, and those absent had voiced their approval for their nomination.

The Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka and Past Chairman Hobby Nels were reappointed to their positions by unanimous vote, and abstained their vote.

Committee appointments: S. Wagers and B. Roe will consider and will be added to a committee soon. N. Guthrie will chair the Historical Marker Committee- there are many projects to consider.

Approval of the Agenda: Motion was made to accept as written by A. Noland, seconded by N. Guthrie and passed.

Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2024 Meeting: R. Micka made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written, seconded by S. Wagers and passed.

Public Comment #1: none

Committee Updates:

Historical Markers Committee: Director Clark had shared new marker text for the previously damaged Ida Railroad Well marker- one side as it was, and the other side with text on local Ida author Gertrude Crampton. After discussion N. Guthrie made the motion to approve the new text, seconded by S. Wagers and it was unanimously approved.

Director Clark noted that due to the Heritage Trail expansion on North Custer Road, the 'Custer Farm' marker will be removed by staff and put in storage until a later time for reinstallation.

Projects Grant Committee: Director Clark reported that there was only change a 2025 date change from last year's application form. Motion was made to accept the change by A. Noland, seconded by N. Guthrie and this was approved unanimously.

Spirit of Service Award Committee: Director Clark noted that the only change was the 2025 application date change from 2024. Motion was made to accept the change by N. Guthrie, seconded by S. Wagers; approved.

New Business: Staff Reports: N. Guthrie made a motion to accept the reports as presented, seconded by S. Wagers; approved.

New Accessions or Deaccessions: as given in the Local History Division monthly report. No deaccessions.

Old Business: nothing discussed.

Public Comment #2: none

Board Comments: All were looking forward to the work of 2025; there was welcome to new trustee Barbara Roe.

R. Micka announced the River Raisin National Battlefield Annual Commemoration in January. It was suggested that the Museum Strategic Plan be distributed to the new trustees.

Director Clark announced the first 'Third Thursday' event for this year. He also reminded the group that the country's 250th anniversary may promote more history interests.

On the Museum expansion, he said that he is working to get a State of Michigan grant and is exploring Contractors, with approval of the County. Chairman Egen summarized the objectives for the project an its eight million dollar estimate. The city of Monroe is cooperative, grants are important to investigate, and being open to cost-cutting measures will be considered. H. Nels said the momentum must keep up with opportunities and clear focus with communication.

Chairman Egen said the next board meeting is Wednesday, February 12th at 7:00 p.m.

With no other business to discuss, motion was made by A. Noland to adjourn, seconded by N. Guthrie and the meeting was concluded at 7:55 p.m.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
27 January 2025

Agenda Item 7.1

City of Monroe Extension Request



February 27, 2025

Historical Project Fund Committee
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, MI 48161

Historical Project Fund Committee:

The City of Monroe is requesting an extension of the \$20,000 grant that was awarded in November 2023 for the window repair and painting at the Sawyer Homestead.

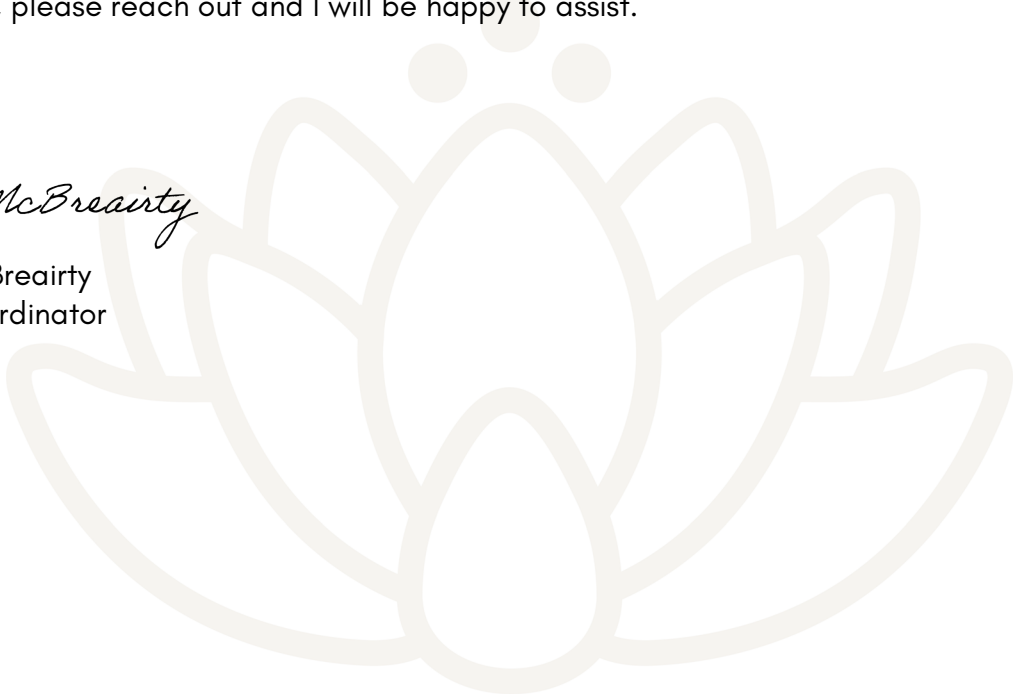
The project has been completed and the City is preparing its final report along with finalizing a proper way to recognize the generosity of the Monroe County Museum System at the Homestead.

Thank you again for your consideration and support. If you have any questions or require additional information, please reach out and I will be happy to assist.

Regards,

Katelyn McBreairty

Katelyn McBreairty
Grants Coordinator



MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, 12 February 2025

Organizational Operations

County Museum

Hours of operation are Sundays through Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm.

County Archives

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

Territorial Park

Planned reopening is for 22 May 2025. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm.

Vietnam Veterans Museum

Planned reopening is for 23 May 2025. Fridays, 10 am to 4 pm.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed Monday, 17 February for the Presidents' Day holiday. Regular operations resume 18 February.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

Elevator had some hiccups in January that resulted in visitors getting stuck, a surprise visit from the fire department, and a service call from the maintenance company.

Territorial Park

No maintenance projects to report.

The mounds of dirt that mysteriously appeared in the Octobernight parking field were removed at the direction of Raisinville Township. I've been reassured that the field will once again be available for our use in October.

Loop Trail construction around Territorial Park begins this week. Currently, the focus of work will be on the bridge over Willow Run with a target date of completion sometime in "July." As July notably has 31 days, and as it has been cited that the work will be done in time for Fair Week, we're estimating closures and detours directly impacting the park through 25 July. For the bulk of the 2025 season, we'll shift visitor service operations to the east lot of the property as that portion of the park will not be in the primary path of construction; Papermill School will be closed until that section of the park reopens and can safely accommodate visitors. As we get closer to opening the

park for the season, we'll be working on informing the public through social media and temporary signage. Presently, it does not appear that there will be any impacts on the execution of Octoburnight.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Service flags outside museum removed until Spring.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Exhibits

Mike completed the new LaZBoy chair platforms. Mike, Robert, JJ, and SMCC job shadow Luke prepped the area, placed the new platforms, moved chairs, and added glass partitions. The finished product looks more deliberately planned than its previous iteration. As the platforms were built to be moved by pallet jack, the chairs can now be easily moved if needed.

Building Program

A \$1,000,000 grant to the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity was submitted at the end of January. Award notifications are supposed to be sent out in the early part of March.

At the 4 February meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Chairman Egen and I gave them a brief presentation about the museum expansion and answered any questions they had about the project. If we are awarded the \$1,000,000 from the state, the county board unanimously pledged a 100% match to the building project.

Markers Program

The Ida marker approved at last month's meeting has been submitted. Nothing yet to report on the timeline.

There is nothing further to report at this time.

Historical Projects Fund

The Historical Project Fund application went live on 31 January.

There is nothing further to report at this time.

Awards Program

The Spirit of Service application went live on 31 January.

There is nothing further to report at this time.

Personnel Updates

Thomas Heywood was reappointed to District 2 Trustee at the end of January.

We currently have three part-time positions open: two part-time presenters and one part-time visitor services specialist.

Hodge Podge

Please join us on Thursday, 20 February at 7 pm for our Third Thursday Lecture, *Maple Sugaring from A to Z*, presented by Deputy Director JJ Przewozniak.

Ric Mixer returns on 20 March at 7 pm for his program, *Howling Winds*.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, 12 March 2025

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Vietnam Veterans Museum

Planned reopening is for 23 May 2025. Fridays, 10 am to 4 pm.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed Friday, 18 April beginning at noon for Good Friday, a county holiday. Regular operations resume 19 April. We then close again for 20 April, Easter Sunday, not a county holiday. Regular operations resume 21 April.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

The county museum and grounds took a bigger hit than usual during the Winter due to the salting by the contractors.

There was a dumpster fire.

Territorial Park

Loop Trail construction is fully underway. The North Custer Road bridge over Willow Run has been removed. Contractors are making full use of the Papermill School parking lot for their equipment.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Nothing to report.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Exhibits

Lynn installed a display of board games; Robert augmented the open storage collection.

Building Program

Award notification for our grant application to the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity has been moved to sometime in May due to the overwhelming number of applications they received; notification was originally scheduled for the first week in March.

Markers Program

Now that the weather is skewing towards Spring, museum staff are beginning marker work for the year. I anticipate the removal and storage of Custer Farm and reinstallation of the Lutherans in Monroe County markers to take place this week. (Custer Farm is temporarily being removed for the Loop Trail work and will be reinstalled once the project is complete.)

Historical Projects Fund

Nothing extensive to report at this time other than some of our local organizations have reached out to discuss ideas.

The City of Monroe is asking for an extension to finish up the Sawyer Homestead project. Extension request is included in the meeting packet for board action.

Awards Program

There is nothing to report at this time.

Personnel Updates

All part-time positions that were open are now filled.

Lily and Drake have started in their presenter roles and Hannah will be starting in visitor services next week.

These new hires should resolve some of the operational coverage issues we had to contend with last year, expand our outreach capacity, and augment museum staff for special events.

America250MI

America250MI recently announced two rounds of grants to support projects to mark the 250th anniversary next year. The first round application is due 15 April and the second round is due 15 January 2026. Max awards each round are \$50,000 with 30% match. I intend to apply each round for smaller projects for the museum not necessarily related to the addition. Due to the timeline for the April deadline and requirement to get it authorized by the County Board of Commissioners for Approval, I would

appreciate a broad resolution of support from the Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees like was done for the building addition to pursue the opportunity with the County of Monroe.

Hodge Podge

Ric Mixter returns on 20 March at 7 pm for his program, *Howling Winds*. This free program will be hosted at the RRCA.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report for January 2025

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak
Thursday, February 6, 2025

Several outreach visits occurred this month, in which Programs Division staff traveled to various places around the community to deliver educational programs. *Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade* is a cornerstone outreach program developed over the last few years that's proved very popular, which incorporates education about the fur trade, the natural history of our region, and environmental stewardship. This month, resources were invested into that program, including incorporation of original artifacts, improved replicas, and refined presentation points/outcomes. More information is included below.

Various organizational work in sculpting the 2025 season took place throughout the month. Developing moving parts, strategies, and networks related to major events, RRTP site improvements, and educational programming are ongoing focus areas. The recent announcement of imminent construction on the bike path project has been a particular point of attention, as the North Custer road closure will severely impact visitation for most of the RRTP 2025 operating season.

As the old saying goes, "Clean ships save lips" (I think). Anyway, I've taken opportunities afforded by winter to organize and clean up basement storage areas. Much like the ancient story of Ubiquitous, doomed to push his chariot up a mountain for all eternity only to have it burn up as it neared the sun, this persistent task remains a necessary monotony that allows rapid deployment of, and easy access to, our wide array of diverse supplies throughout the year.

Finally, Mike and I have been working on some projects aimed at enriching living history programming. Namely, researching and building some reproduction shoulder yokes for the upcoming maple season, and also a replica food safe (*garde-manger*) for the Navarre house, based on an original identified in *Les Meubles Anciens du Canada Français* (1963).

Miscellany:

- *YesterWays* continues to be offered Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. January's activity was WWI-era knitting, and February's is a watercolor painting workshop, inspired by the story of Robert Duncanson.
- Participation in *One Book, One Community of Monroe County* is ongoing. Preparations were made for a thematic twist on *Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade*, incorporating the interactive detective work one would expect from our own "*Remarkably Bright Creatures*" (This year's book, by Shelby Van Pelt).
- Director Clark and I attended the annual commemoration event at the River Raisin National Battlefield Park on Saturday, January 18. Congratulations to the River Raisin National Battlefield Park Foundation and the National Park Service staff on another successful commemoration.
- On Friday, January 31, we participated in a mini job shadow event organized by SMCC. Best of luck to Luke as he prepares for his career in history, and thanks to teacher Kyle McElvaney at SMCC for the invitation to participate in this special program for students.
- Special thanks to Chairman Egen and family for the donation of items to the MCMS, including a collection of reference books, and an assortment of original and reproduction items for use in living history programming.

Museum Outreach for January 2025:

Date	Location	Program	Est. Attendance	Notes
Thursday, January 16	MCM	3rd Thursday: <i>Guardians of Michigan</i> with Jeff Morrison	18	
Thursday, January 23	Triumph Academy 3000 Vivian Rd., Monroe MI 48162	<i>Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade</i>	60	3x 3rd-grade classes
Wednesday, January 29	Cornerstone Baptist Church (HIS Homeschool Co-op) 4000 Lewis Ave., Ida, MI 48140	<i>Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade</i>	35	Variety of elementary-age students and families
Saturdays & Sundays throughout January	MCM	YesterWays: <i>Knit Your Bit!</i> (WWI Knitting)	18	

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report for February 2025

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak
Sunday, March 9, 2025

Due to the construction on N Custer Rd., we determined that a maple sugaring event at RRTP wouldn't be possible, and pursued the possibility of an alternate event at Saint Therese IHM Senior Living. I am pleased to report that the folks at St. Therese IHM have very kindly welcomed the MCMS for a series of maple sugaring events this season! Special thanks to Lori Fischer, Cassie Dillon, and Steve Grigsby for embarking on this cooperative effort with us to cultivate the curiosity of the residents of St. Therese IHM.

Throughout the month, programs division staff and I gathered/cleaned/prepared the diverse assortment of maple sugaring supplies in preparation for our annual seasonal sweet events, and I tapped the beautiful mature maples on the St. Therese IHM campus. Prepping the equipment, assembling cold weather period clothing, and readying a M*A*S*H* (*Mobile Acer Saccharum Headquarters*) unit dominated my focus and time.

Mike and I continued our work in historic reproduction woodsmithery as time allowed. Assorted projects have been advanced following a number of splinters and recitations of "measure once; cut twice." At this time, I'm drawing up a design for a china cabinet for the RRTP kitchen, based on an original identified in *Les Meubles Anciens du Canada Français* (1963).

Outreach visits continued this month, recorded in the attached attendance record.

Working out plans for the summer season is ongoing. This month we've made commitments to participate in the *Lake Erie Water Festival* at St. Therese IHM (Wednesday, May 14), the *Monroe County Earth Day Expo* at MCCC (Saturday, April 12), and *Monroe County Agriculture Day* (Friday, May 2), at the fairgrounds, for which we've also become an event sponsor.

Miscellany:

- *YesterWays* continues to be offered Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. February's activity is a watercolor painting workshop, inspired by the story of Robert Duncanson.
- Participation in *One Book, One Community of Monroe County* is ongoing.
- Several job interviews for openings in Guest Services and Programs were held this month.
- Reproduction gate hinges and latches were purchased and arrived this month for the domestic fence at RRTP. Installation will be done on a TBD date in the near future.
- Lumber was ordered this month for the first phase of a rebuild of the wooden footbridge at RRTP.
- Special thanks to Donna Casaceli, who generously donated time and talent to craft several era-appropriate high quality knit goods to the MCMS, all of which arrived just in time for the sugaring program at St. Therese IHM.

Museum Outreach for February 2025:

Date	Location	Program	Est. Attendance	Notes
Tuesday, February 4	Eyler Elementary 1335 Carleton Rockwood Rd Carleton, MI 48117	<i>Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade</i>	44	
Friday, February 7	Saint Therese IHM Senior Living 610 W Elm Ave, Monroe, MI 48162	<i>Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade</i>	14	Broadcast to 250 rooms
Thursday, February 20	MCM	3rd Thursday: <i>Maple Sugaring from A to Z</i>	4	
Wednesday, February 26	Spiritus Sanctus Academy 10450 Joy Rd, Plymouth, MI 48170	<i>Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade</i>	24	
Saturdays & Sundays throughout February	MCM	YesterWays: <i>Paint Like Rob</i> (Watercolor painting)	28	

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION

For January, 2025

Research Requests By:

Phone 30

Mail 6

Email 60

In-person 30

The framed embroidery sampler (item 71.6.33.1.12) on loan to the I.H.M. Museum came back safe and sound and is back in storage.

We have now passed over 63,000 images in Past Perfect Photographs- over 6,000 of those were new images and negatives from Payette Collection 2023.33.39. I consider this one 'done' but I'm sure there will be some other images added.

Work continues to be done re-examining the Monroe Evening Newspapers for those obituaries that were missed over the years on the front page (and elsewhere.) After checking and verifying, new obits continue to be added by the hundreds and the obit index online reaps the benefits of this. Rick Grassley is working with me on this project. This will continue until the errors and omissions are corrected.

Some GSMC members are working on indexing some of the more important Probate books such as wills, from last year's Probate book transfer.

County Obituary page: 7,772 users; 16,961 total for all events

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian

6 February 2025

Archival and Collections Accessions during January, 2025:

2025.0	Found in Collection (FIC) items	Will be used for miscellaneous items as found
2025.1	Paula Sturn	Photographs and Archival items, some relating to the Monroe Post Office
2025.2	Jerry Sopher	Monroe city property Abstract of Title and a few metal tools
2025.3	Lynn Reaume	Digital photographs of Sterling State Park showing the old pilings visible from the Monroe Yacht Club
2025.4	Brownstown Historical Society	Photographs and Archival items of Monroe Doctor Harry Orvis
2025.5	Micaeli Bogi	Monroe High School photographs and student related items
2025.6	Rene Cavins	Archival items of J. H. Reaper and son William A. Reaper

Recommended deaccessions by staff to the Collections and Exhibition Committee for January, 2025:

None

[illegible]

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION
Archives & Collections
For February, 2025

Research Requests/contacts:

Phone 40

Mail 8 (22 obits)

Email 66

In-person 50

The Archives provided 1943 World War II Monroe Victory Parade images to Airport Middle School teacher Adam Sakel's Advanced History class. He has utilized annually our History Grants in connection with World War II study.

Museum artifacts continue to be transported by staff and picked up to professional conservator Mark Gervasi.

Staff continues to remove and re-house items to improve finding guides and storage. As a result of this, more items are 'Found in Collection' (FIC) and need to be processed.

I am anticipating the soon return of our archaeological artifacts on loan to Dr. John Chenoweth from U-M Dearborn.

The Cousino & Boudrie families were featured on the genealogical television show 'Finding Your Roots' on PBS. Their contact with us utilized some of our archive information and obituaries.

I worked with the Monroe Township Fire Department to determine the address of the old Altenheim, other than the "South Monroe" street entry.

A student was researching for her dissertation 'Influence of Protestantism during the Common School Era.'

Historian and author Sandy Barnard submitted permission to include former photographs of Libbie Custer for his newest upcoming book. He had obtained the images years ago.

The Collections Committee had two meetings in February, and items were discussed and action formulated.

County Obituary page: 5,975 page views, 632 users; 13,107 total for all events

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian

6 March 2025

Archival and Collections Accessions during February, 2025:

2025.7	Monroe County Museum	Programs Dept. 'Letters to Santa' from previous years
2025.8	Tim & Margaret Schilling	Local commercial size lard tin, advertising Schrauder's
2025.9	Monroe Evening News (FIC)	Advertising die plates for printing
2025.10	Myrtle Chapman (FIC)	Two WWII local servicemen newspaper scrapbooks
2025.11	Larry & Diane Metz	Metz family clothing, and hand-tied quilt
2025.12	David Doss	Letters and envelopes of St. Mary Academy student Marian Nightser

Recommended deaccessions by staff to the Collections and Exhibition Committee for February, 2025. Other items are being pursued.

[illegible]