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REMINDER: Please make sure we have the most upto-date email and mailing address for you. Thanks!

THE PERFECT SUMMER:

GATHERING WITH FRIENDS, WITH JUST A HINT OF MYSTERY

By Wayne Gannaway, Executive Director

No Mystery Here

Museum conservation can be complicated—just ask any archivist or curator trying to maintain relative humidity and temperature in the optimal zone (45% and 65 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively). Finding the ideal light levels is another challenge, particularly with textiles. And don't even ask me about off-gassing (but you can ask Jenna Collins, our collections manager). In short, all of these factors can make preservation and conservation a bit mystifying.

But what isn't a mystery is the importance of your generosity as we work to preserve Olmsted County's most treasured artifacts, buildings, and archival materials. That is what this year's History Mystery appeal has been about—telling the story about how the History Center preserves the chairs, trunks, jackets, books, and photos that make up our history. Our curators and archivists (with the help of volunteers and interns) could not do their work without your financial support.

Do you want to learn more about preservation and museum conservation? Check out our latest History Mystery video series on our YouTube page, featuring staff members showcasing specific preservation challenges with textiles, books, and photo negatives.

THE PERFECT SUMMER - continued on page 2

THE PERFECT SUMMER - continued

We are Gathered Together

With the restoration of the smokehouse, ringing that bell for the first time in decades had me wondering who Maria Stoppel was summoning when she rang it back in the 1870s and 1880s. She was probably calling in her husband and the hired hands to gather for lunch or supper. You've probably heard or perhaps rung our Hadley Valley School bell. You can imagine the school children gathering for class or their parents for community meetings or celebrations. And gathering together is so important to what we do here at the History Center.

We were thrilled to have 65 members gather together last month for our members-only ice cream social and preview of our new exhibit, "Life and Death in Olmsted County," celebrating the 160th anniversary of Oakwood Cemetery. As difficult as some milestones are, especially the passing of a loved one, gathering together is an opportunity to remember and celebrate life. As the exhibit points out, it wasn't at all unusual or strange for our ancestors to have family picnics in cemeteries. Folks in the late-19th and early-20th centuries considered them natural, picturesque gathering places.

What kind of gathering does a steam-powered whistle signal? Around here, it can only mean the Days of Yesteryear, a two-day event organized by the Mechanical History Roundtable. This year was the 48th annual threshing show, so it's nearly as old as our History Center building. It attracts old-timers trading notes on early 20th-century hay bailers, but also youngsters intrigued by the intricate, steam-powered belts powering the saw mill or the rock crusher (my favorites). This time-honored event still gathers people together.





What better place to gather and celebrate shared memories than at a museum exhibit? In June, we teamed up with Rochester Recordings, a grassroots archival project documenting Rochester's music scene in the late 1990s and early 2000s, to create the exhibit "Moshpits and Memories." The exhibit opening was a hit, with around 150 musicians, fans, and family members who were part of that special scene checking out the memorabilia on display. Long lost friends reconnected; children got to learn how their mom or dad got in a band; and now-retired parents, who 25 years ago may have groaned when the drums and guitar blasted up from the basement, proudly point out the flyer or photograph of their child's band. As one participant put it: "This exhibit is giving us the reunion that high school never could."

And speaking of gathering together to share memories and celebrate, what a thrill to host KTTC's exhibit commemorating their 70th anniversary and their reunion party for past and present employees. While there are a lot of cool things to see and do at the exhibit, one highlight is a ceremonial torch from the 1996 Olympics that made its way through Rochester as it traveled to Atlanta. Be sure to gather your friends and family and come to the History Center to see this and all of our terrific exhibits.

Paul Scanlon President





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

End of Summer and transition into Fall are here, ready or not!

The board continues to monitor our financial health, which is good, maintaining a cash reserve equal to 8 to 9 months of operating expenses. Our staff, under Wayne Gannaway's leadership, continues to run a lean operation and to continually refine its work-flows to optimize efficiency. We have finished the restoration of the Stoppel smokehouse and are working on plans and funding for the barn followed by the house.

The History Mystery Fundraiser exceeded its \$20,000 goal to match the pledge from an anonymous donor. In fact, it exceeded the previous year's total dollars contributed as well as the number of donors. Many thanks to all our contributors, including our anonymous donor. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CONTRIBUTE!

Our exhibit area has several new exhibits to check out including a new display on the Marriage Equality Movement in Minnesota, one on the local evolution of the music scene in the '90s and '00s, and a new exhibit related to Oakwood Cemetery. On your way in or out, be sure to browse through the Museum Shop for local history books and other historical items. They make excellent gifts for the holidays! It is also nearing the time to plan holiday season Mayowood tours with friends and visitors.

The Mechanical History Round Table (MHRT) hosted the annual Days of Yesteryear show on August 12th and 13th. The whole campus was activated for the weekend with demonstrations of essential agricultural methods, processing of materials, trades, and nearly continuous baseball play by the Roosters and volunteer teams. We had a large attendance in the museum and outbuildings (Dee Cabin, schoolhouse, tin shop, etc.) as well. Lots of young folks were exposed to Rochester's and Olmsted's agricultural history.

Speaking of agriculture, we have had further expansion of gardens with several participating groups, including the Village Agricultural Co-op and others.

We are in discussions among board and staff, as well as with representatives from SPARK Children's Museum, in response to a proposal to lease a 3-acre site on the grounds of the History Center for construction of a new facility for SPARK, currently located at Apache Mall. The potential benefits of having SPARK as a neighbor are being discussed along with the impact on other collaborative groups, including MHRT.

Stay current by clicking on the e-newsletter delivered right to your inbox!

ARCHIVES SPOTLIGHT: A LETTER HOME

By Krista Lewis, Archivist, CA

Fall is the time of year when we begin to see bits of life fade as plants go dormant and animals migrate or burrow away for the winter, and in conjunction with one of our newer exhibits, "Life and Death in Olmsted County", it seems fitting to highlight a recent donation to the Archives that speaks to this subject. It's a letter written to Francis J. Paine from Robert C. Ranfranz in the midst of World War I. Paine was the proprietor of the F. J. Paine Co., which dealt in furniture and funerals (a common combination at the time), and Ranfranz, who studied the funeral business under Paine, went on to found the Ranfranz Funeral Home in 1929. In the letter Ranfranz talks about the life and death of William T. McCoy, whose name was given to American Legion Post #92 in Rochester. It's an interesting and moving letter detailing experiences that may seem remote to modern readers but are nonetheless universal, so we've transcribed it for you here.

Somewhere in France Oct. 21st 1918.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE Lomewhere in France Oct 2/21 Sear Mr Paine: list week over here

My Dear Mr Paine;

Promised to write you when I left. Thought of you all at the store many times, but somehow never wrote.

Sent you some papers from our embarkation camp, which I hope you receive O.K.

Have been "Over Here" for about six weeks. Like it fine and dandy. We get good eats and have a pretty good place to sleep. The Government issues us smoking tobacco about once a week.

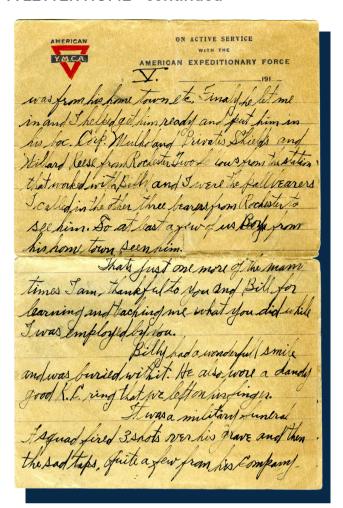
The trip over the Atlantic was fine with the exception of about three days when we had a big storm. Am pleased to say that I didn't get a bit sea sick.

Our first week over here was the hardest. They packed us fourty in a box car about half as big as those back in the states, and it seemed as though they rode us all over France & Switzerland that week.

We landed in our present quarters just four weeks ago last night. All soaked and tired out. At that time we were in the danger zone. Had to carry our gas mask with us every minute. Were guite near the front. The shooting & bombing jarred our quarters. We seen the battles in the air. It was very interesting and exciting. Seen some wonderful sights in the air nights. Is pretty quiet here now. They drove the damnable Hun's back so far that we can only hear the largest guns once in a while. We sure have the German's on the run, and are making them evacuate ground without any armistice. Everyone here seems to think it wont last untill Christmas. The fellows I talked with that just came from the front say it will be over by Thanksgiving. All making bets on it. The French soldiers sure are happy. They have been in it for so long. We are in some Frenchmen's quarters. You will hear the cheers of joy clear across the Atlantic when its all over. We unload munitions from cars onto auto trucks for the front at a little station where Corp McCoy worked. Our nearest place to get water is at this little station about 1/2 mile from our quarters. We have school every afternoon when it dont rain. Get instruction's with our rifle's and bayonets etc.

Billy McCoy worked at this same station for over a year. We met him the first night just 4 weeks ago yesterday. He was the first fellow we met "Over Here" from "The Capitol of the World.' Talk about happy. Wish you could of a seen him. He sure looked good. A picture of health. He certainly was a strong and healthy looking soldier if ever I saw one.

A LETTER HOME - continued



Since that night I seen him nearly every day. Sometimes 2 & 3 times a day. He used to come up to see us. Then we used to go down to the station and read the Rochester papers he received from home. We had some dandy little parties.

Then when he started working day's, Chas. Shields, Howard Mulholand, Billy and I hiked to a little town several nights. He showed us some good times. Told us about his trip over also the times he had at London and many of his experiences "Over Here." About 10 days ago he caught a cold, couple days after he went to bed and started vomiting, Then they took him to the Hosp. in an ambulance. Suppose the Lieut, wrote his folks and you heard all about it so will not write any more. Anyway Saturday night we got the sad news that Corp. McCoy had passed away. We found out from the station Lieutenant when and where the funeral would be. He told us at 10 A.M. Sunday in a town about 15 miles from here. Ten of us fellows from Rochester and a couple fellows from the station started out in the rain yesterday at 7 A.M. We caught a ride part of the way down and part way back. Had to hike it about 6 miles alltogether. When we arrived there they told us they could not get the K. C. Chaplain so it was postponed until 2:30 P.M. which pleased me very much.

In the mean time I started inquireing about where the remains were and if we could see him. Was told no one was allowed to see him. Then I went to the Lieutenant, He said positively no. Well I did not give up. but found out where the morgue was and told the head man a nice young fellow, that I had some experience in that line and was a licensed embalmer etc. Told him in a nice way that I was from his home town etc. Finally he let me in and I helped get him ready and put him in his box. Corp. Mulholand, Privates Shields and Willard Reese from Rochester Two fellows from the station that worked with Billy and I were the pallbearers. I called in the other three bearers from Rochester too see him. So at least a few of us Bovs from his home town seen him.

That's just one more of the many times I am thankful to you and Bill for learning and teaching me what you did while I was employed by you.

Billy had a wonderful smile and was buried with it. He also wore a dandy good K. C. ring that we left on his finger.

It was a military funeral. A squad fired 3 shots over his grave and then the sad taps. Quite a few from his company were there. The Captain of his company read the obituary. In the morgue I stood and looked at Billy for a long time. He looked very natural. He was only dead, not disfigured. His friends would have known him, but we must all die. Death - just death - to be down and forget the trenches and "No Mans Land" is the least of all the horrors of war.

Yesterday it occurred to me for the first time that giving one's life for one's country, if one could just lay it down in that peaceful way, is the very easiest and smallest gift that he might give in a time of war. Yet life is a great gift. We sure miss Billy. The station dont look right and has no attraction for us anymore. It was dark and still raining a little when we got back last night. When I thought of the short but very impressive sermon at the grave I layed down on my bunck and cryed, as hard a nut as I am. Would like to write Billys Mother, but suppose all the fellows from his station will write her. I seen a letter at the station yesterday A. M. for him from his folks. He was among the first Americans that came over here.

A LETTER HOME - continued

His Mother, should cheer her heart and dry her tears, Be proud that she gave birth to one who lived to enter such a fight. Billys death reminds me of a little poetry I learned along with the undertaking profession; For health or wealth or love you seek. You win or lose - no matter which. The goal's the same for strong or weak; The end's the same for poor or rich; You strive for knowledge. With a spoon you try to bail the ocean dry. Hope says, you'll do it pretty soon!

And then you die.

Well Mr Paine I'll try and have something more pleasant to write about next time. This is not a very cheerful letter, but we have lots of good times over here along with the hard one. Yesterday was the first full day I had off since I've been in the service.

How are you and the rest of the store? How is business? Fine I hope. Suppose Albert is quite a soldier by now. Tell him hello for me. Give my Regards to Mrs Paine, Bill & Louise, Albert Ruth Enoch and the young lady bookkeeper, dont remember her name. Suppose you are getting ready for Xmas. Hope you have exceptionally good business. Would like to be there with you.

Hoping this finds you all happy and enjoying the best of health. With Best Wishes and kindest regards to you all, I am

Sincerely yours Corp. Robt. C. Ranfranz Co. B. 3rd Pioneer Inf. American Exp. Forces Via New York



Corp. William T. McCoy

MAYOWOOD: MUSIC IS IN THE AIR

By Dan Nowakowski, Mayowood Site Manager



Music of Mayowood

If you have been to Mayowood and learned about the family history, then you know music is synonymous with the house. A piece to highlight this is the Aeolian Pipe Organ installed in 1913 by the family. The family story is they purchased the organ because Dr. Charles Mayo knew how to play and wanted his family to enjoy music. When initially discussing the purchase, Edith made sure that the organ they purchased was a player organ. They settled on purchasing the organ from Aeolian-American Piano Corporation based in New York. The company manufactured automated reed organs. If you are interested in more about the music at Mayowood, please join us on tour.

Sing a Song of the Holidays

The Mayo's had a passion for music, and this year's Christmas tours will highlight that with the theme "Sing a Song of the Holidays." Each decorator has picked a unique song to interpret. Tours start November 4th and run until December 17th. If interested, please go to our website www.olmstedhistory.com/mayowood to purchase tickets.

SPECIAL THANKS: HCOC CAMPUS LOOKING FRESH

The History Center has seen a ton of hard work and wonderful donations from a wide array of folks that we need to take a moment to acknowledge!

Thank you to Doc Louie, John, Gordon, Karen, Gary, Ken, Doug, Lou, Jim, and Tim (amongst others) of the Build Crew for helping us with so many projects around the History Center!

If you've popped into the History Center during the week, you might have seen the crew hard at work fixing up the entry area, but they've helped with so much more! From restoring the entrance to working on the door of the Dee Cabin and fixing the drainage system near the offices, this crew has done so much hard work in oppressive heat, and we're grateful for all you have done!

Thanks is also due to Kenneth Mueller and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters-1382 and apprentices for supplying the building materials and labor for the smokehouse stairs! These stairs are such a valuable addition to the smokehouse and make the second-floor a safe and more accessible space.

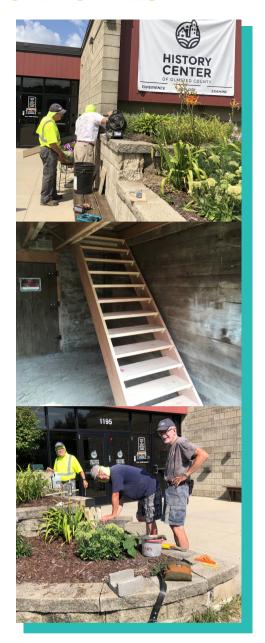
We'd also like to thank the Rochester Garden & Flower Club for volunteering their time to clean out and plant a section of our front gardens which had become guite overgrown over the summer. Thanks to plants donated by Family Tree and the hard work of the Garden Club, the front looks much better now!

As a small non-profit, so much of our mission depends on the generosity of our community, and assistance like this provides invaluable benefits for our organization. Thank you!



Rochester Garden & Flower Club





ANOTHER HISTORY MYSTERY SUCCESS: SUPPORTERS HELPED UNLOCK \$10,000 DONATION



Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to this year's History Mystery! We met the Mystery Donor's challenge and unlocked the \$10,000 donation, meaning we raised over \$27,000 for the preservation of our collection through HVAC repairs and upgrades. It means the world to us that the community could come out and help us to protect our collections for future generations!

ROCKIN' THE PLA-MOR

By Lee Hilgendorf

In the summer of 1964, the youth of America was in the grips of what seemed like a global epidemic called "Beatlemania."The four mop-topped lads from Liverpool made young women swoon and inspired young men to buy electric guitars and learn to play.

That raised the question, how could an enterprising promoter from Rochester, Minnesota cash in on a global phenomenon? Enter Hoot Gibson and his Pla-Mor Ballroom.

Long before the words event and center were merged together, there were ballrooms. The Pla-Mor, originally known as Recreation Park, was constructed in 1926 and featured old-time dance bands like The Jolly Brewers, The Polka Dots, The Swiss Girls, and Fezz Fritsche and his Goosetown Band.

Hoot Gibson wanted to attract a more youthful dance crowd. To help with his new direction, Gibson enlisted the help of a popular Minneapolis disc jockey, WDGY's Bill Diehl. Diehl was familiar with the Twin Cities based bands and was emcee for many of their showcases. With school on summer break, Gibson hired Diehl to emcee a series of Thursday night dances at the Pla-Mor featuring "young people's" music.

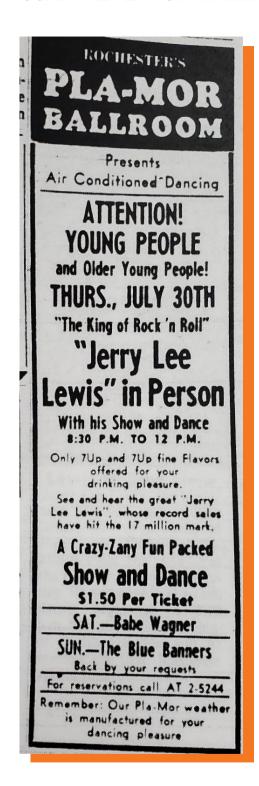
The week of June 15, 1964, a small ad appeared in the Post Bulletin's movie section announcing, "Rochester's Pla-Mor Ballroom Presents a Young Peoples' Dance Thursday June 18th Featuring the Famous Trashmen." The summer before, the Minneapolis based Trashmen had a national hit with their song Surfin' Bird. That Thursday night, a crowd of over 800 youths paid \$1.50 for a ticket. The Post Bulletin's Charles McKeen reviewed the show saying that the Trashmen bombarded the Pla-Mor with music - depending on your interpretation of the word.

"How could an enterprising promoter from Rochester. Minnesota cash in on a global phenomenon? **Enter Hoot Gibson** and his Pla-Mor **Ballroom**"

Buoyed by their initial success, Gibson and Diehl booked Little Caesar and the Conspirators for the following week. Then came the news that the Beatles were coming to America. After Gibson learned that The Beatles were going to play in Chicago on September 5, the focus of his plans changed.

Gibson called his friend Don Dickman, owner of Suburban Motors, Rochester's local Rambler-Dodge dealer and persuaded him to sponsor two all-expense paid trips, one for a girl and one for a boy, to see the Beatles at Chicago's International Amphitheater. Of course, the trips would be given away at the Pla-Mor Ballroom.

In the weeks that followed, Bill Diehl personally emceed the Thursday night dances featuring bands such as national recording artist Gregory Dee and The Avanties. There were battle of the bands programs featuring The Furys vs. Little Caesar. favorites The Jades were paired against Rochester's own The Mustangs. Every dance provided another chance to sign up for the Beatles trip.



On July 30, Jerry Lee Lewis brought his show to the Pla-Mor. In his review, the PB's McKeen reported that "Lewis couldn't sing." but emitted some form of loud, long noise, more often than not unintelligible, and if his piano were a person, he would be guilty of murder."

Jerry Lee Lewis would become a member of the first class inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

Beatlemania in Rochester reached full boil on August 13, when Louise Harrison Caldwell, sister of Beatle George Harrison, appeared at the Pla-Mor with Minneapolis band, The Underbeats. More than 800 people paid \$1 for a ticket to ask questions of the Beatle's sibling such as,

"Is it true that John Lennon is writing the script for the next Beatle's movie?"

Caldwell's reply, "Yes, in it, John, Paul and George will try selling Ringo to a circus."

Meanwhile, The Beatle's first movie "A Hard Day's Night" played sold-out shows at the Lawler Theater.

Finally, on August 27, at 10:30 pm, after weeks of hype, dancing and rock and roll, Don Dickman stepped onto the Pla-Mor stage.Flanked by WDGY's Bill Diehl, Rochester's own Henry Pryor from KWEB and Pla-Mor owners Hoot and Dorothy Gibson, the Pla-Mor crowd would finally know who would take that memorable trip to Chicago to see the Beatles in person.

Unfortunately, a record of the names that Don drew that night has yet to be found.

Wayne Gannaway Executive Director ✓ Darla Buss Member Services

Coordinator

Ashlev Evans Rental and Special **Events Coordinator**

Madeleine Lawler Education Coordinator Mayowood Site Krista Lewis **Archivist** Caleb Baumgartner Collections Manager Communications

Coordinator

Dan Nowakowski Manager Jenna Collins **Barb Whipple** Accountant

Paul Scanlon President **Mark Warner Vice President** Linda Willihnganz Secretary **Kyle Benish Treasurer**

Dave Senjem Samuel Wick **Christine Rule Kerry Olsen** Jordan Cepress Jim Suk **Ben King Jean Marvin Dan Penz** Josefina Pozas

A BUSY SUMMER AND A HUGE FALL AHEAD!

By Madeleine Lawler, Education Coordinator

My first summer at the History Center was busy with field trips from local schools and clubs! We gave students tours of the History Center, George Stoppel Farmstead, Schoolhouse, and Dee Cabin. The Mechanical History Roundtable also hosted around 20 kids for a trip. When students weren't engaged with hands-on activities in the museum, schoolhouse, or cabin, they enjoyed the open green space on which the History Center sits. None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers. Thank vou!

I have been planning our annual Fall Fest (10.19.23) between field trips. Having spent the summer watching students engage with our grounds and educational offerings, I have a renewed excitement for planning for this program. There will be some familiar favorite activities (base ball, crafts, yard games), along with some new ones (baked goods in front of the Dee Cabin)! We are excited to see everyone for some fall fun!

If Fall Fest doesn't sound up your alley, we still have our lecture series, exhibits, and many other events—there's something for everyone!



2023 EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Please check our website and Facebook regularly as the schedule is subject to change, olmstedhistory.com/events.

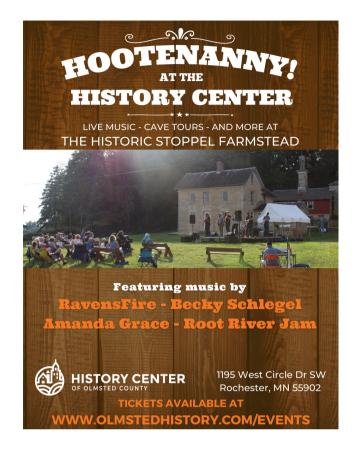
September 16	0	4th Annual Hootenanny! at the History Center
September 21	00	"Shaped by Water" lecture with local author Andrew Pruett
October 13	00	4th Annual Creepy Doll Masquerade Ball
October 19	00	Fall Fest
November	00	Mayowood Christmas Tours, Wednesdays through Sundays
November 16	00	"Mapping Racial Covenants in Rochester" lecture with Phil Wheeler
December	00	Mayowood Christmas Tours, Wednesdays through Sundays
December	olo	Mayowood Candlelight Tours, Saturdays and Sundays

EVENT UPDATES: HOOTENANNY, CREEPY DOLLS, SPACE RENTALS, WEDDINGS, AND MORE!

By Ashley Evans, Rental and Special Events Coordinator

As the air turns chilly and leaves change to lovely shades of red, orange, and yellow, myself and the rest of the HCOC staff are preparing for our fun fall events including our 4th Annual Hootenanny, Creepy Doll Exhibit and 4th Annual Creepy Doll Party, and more! These are the same events you know and love but with some added elements to bring them to the next level.

Our 4th Annual Hootenanny will take place on Saturday, September 16th, 12PM to 6PM, on the historic George Stoppel Farmstead and will include musical stylings from Root River Jam, Amanda Grace, Becky Schlegel, and The RavensFire Band along with between-set fiddle tunes and folk songs with Teresa Walter and Joe Bly. Not only do we have amazing musical talent joining us this year, but we are widening the scope of what the Hootenanny can be. Along with music and farm tours, you will be able to try great food from Forager Brewery, Taco Lab, and more, kids can enjoy games, and we have an all new artisan market featuring hand-crafted goods as an homage to the way the Stoppel family built the farmstead. Come down in September to listen to music, dance, eat good food, see beautiful craftsmanship, and have a wonderful day!



The Creepy Doll Exhibit and Party are just around the corner. This year we have some frightening news – the winner of last year's Creepy Doll Contest has been murdered! She was found in her mansion early this morning. Sources say that she hosted a party last night, but police have given no information on how she died. Who could have done such a thing? Make sure to stay up to date on social media and our website for information about the exhibit - coming to you in October! - and the 4th Annual Creepy Doll Party on the evening of Friday, October 13th. This year, to match the murder mystery theme, the event will be a Creepy Doll Masquerade Ball! Come dressed to the nines with your mask affixed and have a wicked good time.

Don't forget to check our website for all event dates, times, and to buy your tickets and follow us on social media to see updates and teasers of things to come!

You're up to date on our events, but don't forget that the History Center grounds are available for event rentals! Inside and out, we have space for your needs, and in a huge bit of news, weddings are back at the History Center! Now booking for 2024 and 2025.

If you or a loved one are looking for a venue for a ceremony, reception, or whole wedding, look no further than the gorgeous grounds our museum sits on. We have premade packages for easy planning but we can adjust as needed to ensure everything is magical for your big day. If you have any questions on rentals (weddings or otherwise), give us a call, and don't forget to spread the word!



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