



"Preserving History for the Next Generation"

Olive Township Historical Society Newsletter

Since 2004

Summer 2009

Olive Township Historical May and June Highlights

Memorial Day 2009

The crowd of Olive Township residents attentively listen as Frank Gort, officer of the day, read the list of veterans interred in Olive and West Olive cemeteries. Tradition had continued as the ceremony of honoring those who had served in their country's service was held on May 25, 2009.

Gort also presented the address talking of veterans sacrifices in the past and specifically sharing his own son's duty in Iraq during several tours of duty.

The service, the first organized by newly elected Township Clerk, Lona Bronkema, had the guard of honor fire a 21 gun salute to those who served and was concluded with the playing of taps by Rev. Ralph Houston of the Holland American Legion band.



Olive Township Historical Society Website

Come and visit our website and find out interesting facts about the society as well as historic accounts of early settlers, historical photographs, minutes of meetings, newsletters and photographs of recent events.

The site address is www.olivetownship.com/OTHS/index.html

Dandelion Parade 2009

After abundant spring rains and cool temperatures, the year's crop of dandelions was indeed bountiful and provided a great backdrop for this year's parade. The historical society had two entries this year.



Kay Headley's convertible had three passengers.- Mr. Ten Brink was a veteran of World War II and Mr. Nagelkirk and Mr. Cherry were veterans of the Korean War.



Vintage Ford – Harvey and Ruth Redder

The parade had more entries this year than in previous years and some long time parade watchers said more people attended the parade this year



Olive Township Historical Society Hosts Group from Holland

On a sultry summer evening a group of 55 members and guests of the Holland Area Historical Society motored from the city to the country to visit the Olive Township Museum. The OTHS hosted the event, which was the final meeting of the Holland group for the spring. A short history of the township was given and several questions were answered such as how the township got its name. The group then toured the museum, many amazed at what we had out here and how professional the museum set ups looked.



Apropos to our area being an agricultural region, with blueberries the main crop, pies from the South Olive Christian Reformed Church were served to the group. Many of the visitors took the historic site brochure with them as they were interested in such places as the pheasant monument, the World War II monument and the pioneer Ottawa Station school





OLIVE'S BLUEBERRY FARMS

Excerpt from *Paging the Days of Olive* by Harold Vander Zwaag

Olive's early residents found an abundance of berries of many sorts on the virgin soil and cranberries among them. The whortleberry, a small ten seeded berry were in abundance on the more acid, grayish soil. They were also called the huckleberry. Ma, Pa, and the kids went out in midsummer to replenish the berry supply even into the early 1920's. Delicious as they were, it was laborious to bend low to strip off the small ripe ones mixed with green ones, so they had to be sorted. Another drawback was the possibility of rattlesnakes being in the area.

To Stanley Johnson from Michigan State University, much credit must be given for the present day blueberry. His experimentation for a better yielding and higher quality berry is appreciated by present day growers. Johnson is also known for his work in the development of the Haven peaches which provided growers a longer season for their crop by having different kinds of Haven peaches mature at a later date than the red Haven.

Around the middle 1930's, some of the first fields were introduced in Olive and Port Sheldon townships. Walter Tongas, a Mr. De Jongh, and Frank Fendt were early growers as well as Paul Brower, at that time a teacher in Hudsonville.

Wisely, a blueberry growers association was formed in the early years to the benefit of the growers. The large increase of acreage in western Michigan brought about the introduction of the mechanical picker, which can be seen slowly moving over Olive's roads during harvest time. Hand picking has not gone out of style however, giving countless people of all ages employment, both from the locality and to migrant workers.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR BLUES FEST

Old Settlers' Picnic and Blues Fest



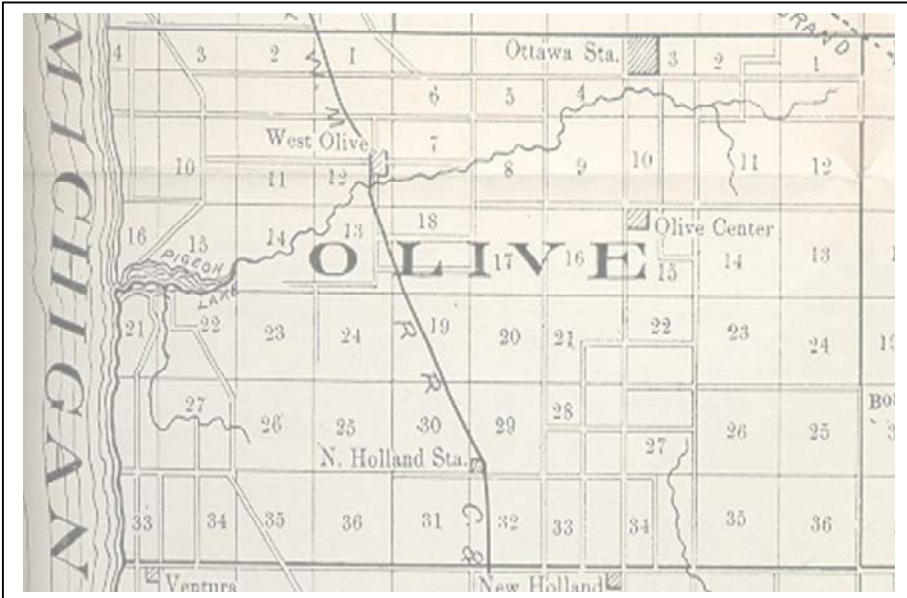
August 15, the Olive Township Historical Society will celebrate the blueberry heritage of our area with an Old Settlers' Picnic at the Harlem Reformed Church on 144th Avenue.

There will be activities for everyone with historic family photo displays, blueberry dessert tasting contest, car/truck/blueberry equipment static display, blueberry bingo, Ottawa County parks display, Michigan State Cooperative Extension display, barn photo contest display, music, children's' activities (including kid tractor pulls) and to end the day an **antique appraisal** program featuring Joan Bunn. Feel free to bring your antiques for appraisal.

The church mission group will have breakfast and lunch available as well as blueberry desserts for sale. The activities begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m.

All residents of Old Olive Township (present day Port Sheldon and Olive Townships) are invited to attend and participate in the day's activities.

**Volunteers are needed to help with setup, manning events, and cleanup.
If you see an event listed above that you would like to help with please call 875-8036.**



“OTHS BARN PHOTO CONTEST”

For Olive and Port Sheldon Townships Barns

The original Olive Township Area

North Border: Stanton St
 South Border: New Holland St
 East Border: 96th Ave
 West Border: Lake Michigan

Rules

1. Photos must be taken after June 1, 2009 of barns in **old Olive Township**
2. All submitted photos become property of Olive Township Historical Society
3. If photo is taken on private property, permission must be obtained from barn owner
4. **History of barn must be included on back of entry sheet.**
5. Photo and entry form must be submitted by October 15, 2009 \$1 fee for each entry
6. Prizes will be awarded to top three entries
7. All photos must be in an 8x10 or larger color or black and white format.
 If your photo is chosen, we will ask for a CD to insure quality
8. Submit photo and entry form to Photo Contest, Olive Township Historical Society,
 12085 Polk Street, Holland Michigan 49424 Phone-616-875-8036
9. Contest open to any age-entry form needed for each photo submitted.



The society encourages anyone to enter.

Our desire is to document the barns of **old Olive Township (includes present day Port Sheldon and Olive Townships)** before they are all gone.

We hope to have a photographic display of the entries at the Country Christmas Home Tour in December of 2009.

First Prize \$50 Second Prize \$35 Third Prize \$15

Olive Township Historical Society

2009 Barn Photo Contest Entry Form

Entry # _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Specific Address of Barn _____

Barn Owner _____ Date Photo Taken _____

History of Barn _____
