Amazingly, on May 2, 1958, the day after Daisy shut down production in preparation for the company’s move to Rogers, Arkansas, a fire swept through a warehouse building that housed air rifles specially ordered by Sears and Montgomery Ward. It was determined the cause of the fire was due to drifting ashes from a burning rubbish pile several yards away from the warehouse. During the fire, employees let local boys walk away with large quantities of air rifles. Two weeks later, the city commission was considering an air rifle ordinance to address the unsafe proliferation of misguided BB gun firings.

Daisy Executive VP Cass Hough, (middle of photo) shown inspecting the fire damage, estimated at a loss of $200,000 to the warehouse structure and stored air rifles; equal today to a loss of $2.1 million.
Plymouth Historical Museum
155 South Main Street
Plymouth, Michigan 48170
http://www.plymouthhistory.org
http://www.facebook.com/plymouthhistory
734-455-8940 Fax: 734-455-7797

Hours
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
1-4 PM all days
Open year round (except some holidays)

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Stephanie Hoff Vice President
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Maryanne Zavagnin Museum Store Manager

Museum Memo Editor
Gerry Sabatini sabatini983@att.net
Proofreader—Elizabeth Kerstens

The Museum Memo is printed four times a year.

Kroger Plus Card Donations

Thank you to those who have added the Plymouth Historical Society to their Kroger Plus Card. The Museum receives a small percentage from any purchases made by those who have an up-to-date registration on their cards.

To participate in the program, visit www.krogercommunityrewards.com. Click on “Michigan” and click on “Enroll.”

You must have a valid online account at Kroger.com to participate. If you need help, give us a call at 734-455-8940 ext. 9. We’ll be happy to help you get enrolled.

1958 Advertisement

New Members—Welcome!

Laura Bleecker, Plymouth
Chuck Dykhouse, Peoria, Illinois
Andrew Gyurscik, Allen Park
Ben Hodge, Plymouth
Michele Kisabeth, Plymouth
Laird Glass & Upholstery, Plymouth
Larry Moraca, Plymouth
Alicia Rowe, Plymouth
James Taylor, Northville
Cindi Willard, Plymouth

We appreciate your support!

The Plymouth Historical Museum is a privately funded 501(c)3 charitable organization. We receive no government funding. We always have a “wish list” of things that help us as we work to preserve and share the history of Plymouth.

Here are some of our common purchases to provide inspiration:
• 1 Roll Postage Stamps $63 per
• IT/Network support $500
• ½ month heating bill $375
• ½ month electric bill $475
• 1 month employee salary $600

To donate, make your check payable to the Plymouth Historical Museum.

Monthly Drawing
Suzanne Curtiss, John Wilson, and BJ Haire are the respective winners of the April, May, and June drawings for a $25 gift certificate.
Bits ‘n Pieces
By Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, executive director

The 2023-2024 Museum Board elections were successfully completed in May. Thank you to everyone who mailed in a ballot! The full Board is listed on page 2. Returning board members elected were Jeff Ashton, Steve Beltran and Kathy Sullivan. We would like to thank Ernie Hughes, outgoing Board member, who served for six years. The new Board officers are:

President  Tim Tingstad
Vice President  Stephanie Hoff
Secretary  Kathy Sullivan
Treasurer  Jim Burroughs

Free Summer Saturdays are in full swing at the Museum and we’ve been getting plenty of visitors! Please keep in mind that the Museum will be closed June 26-July 18. A Big Thank You goes to our Free Summer Saturdays sponsors:

June  Blackwell Ford
July  Growth Works
August  Bill Brown Ford

In June Stella Contracting replaced the external stairwell cover with a more modern, protective covering (see photo). The previous roof was more than 50 years old and was falling apart.

Exhibit Upgrades
The train depot upgrade, funded primarily by the Dunning Foundation, opened in February. At the end of April, when everything in the upgrade was completed, we had a very successful grand opening. Visitors even received a treat of baked goods when they departed, complements of our Master Baker Ellen Elliott!

Spurred on by the popularity of this recent exhibit upgrade, we are looking at the next area to remake. Keep in mind that most of the exhibit spaces on the Museum’s main floor were created more than 50 years ago!

Visit the Museum Store!
The store features an assortment of gifts and books pertaining to Plymouth’s history. Museum admission is not required to visit the store. Museum Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, & Sunday, 1-4 pm. 155 S. Main Street, Plymouth, 734-455-8940.

Wanted: 3-ring binders for the archives. We prefer 2- or 3-inch binders, but 1-inch binders are also welcome!

Ticket Sale Dates for Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 13</td>
<td>Abracadabra Ice Cream Social</td>
<td>Now</td>
<td>June 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Things That Go Bump in the Night</td>
<td>Aug. 21</td>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Plymouth Ghosts Cemetery Walk</td>
<td>Aug. 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Winter Wonderland Murder Mystery</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
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</table>

We are planning to enclose the Victorian rooms while allowing visitors to walk through the home. We also want to take advantage of the high ceiling in the area, and add a second floor there for more exhibit storage space. We are in desperate need of additional space!

Plans are moving forward and a lot of funds are needed to make this a reality. Please consider making a targeted donation for this exhibit enhancement, in honor of the 75th anniversary of the Plymouth Historical Society! Thank you!!!
Thank you for the following generous donations that were received between March and May 2023:

**The Starkweather ($500–$999)**
Gary Gray

**The Penniman ($250–$499)**
Hugh Hales
Debra Jordan
Jean LaPointe
Ron Lowe
Dale Rogers

**The Kellogg ($100–$249)**
Luan Brownlee
Joe Grima
Cynthia Hartsig
Judith Morgan
Roy Pilkington
Plymouth Antiquarians

**Under $100**
Lynn Ader
Dick Anderson
William Brooks
James Keefer

Geraldine Kilsdonk
Sue Marie Klimek
David Norman
Geraldine Pritchard
Cindy Reinhart
Veralou Scott
Steven Vincent
Takeda Yoshido

**Sponsorships**

**Plymouth Fair ($2,000)**
Bill Brown Ford

**Plymouth Fair half ($1,000)**
Growth Works

**Hamilton ($600)**
First Financial Strategies
Homecraft Real Estate
Kone Americas
Laird Glass
Woods Tax Consulting Services

**Archives Upgrade**

**Under $100**
Roger Biernat

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**Letters To Editor**

*Where Were The Flags?*

"Dear Editor:

It was my lot to be visiting Plymouth on Memorial Day, and I am sure it was with gratification that observance chairmen in some of your neighboring communities let Plymouth have more than its share of gremlins. Where else was the business area virtually devoid of flags? (Certainly not Northville, Livonia or Farmington!)

Where else did the public address system break down just before the day’s principal speaker was to deliver the traditional Memorial Day address?

Where else did the master of ceremonies introduce a distinguished veteran who wasn’t even present?

Really, though, it was that matter of the flags that prompted this brief letter. All I could see were those at the City Hall, the Secretary of State’s office, a funeral home and one business office facing the park on Ann Arbor Trail. Why weren’t flags flying in front of all other downtown business houses?

I hope your people cooperate better when they put on that big Centennial. Undoubtedly, you have plenty of committees already set up for that affair, but maybe you also should add an anti-gremlin chairman.

A Visitor"
A Slice of History, courtesy of Plymouth Today magazine, issue Second Quarter 2023

By Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens and Ellen Elliott

On the Wrong Track?

A history of railroading in Plymouth reveals mishaps, interesting rules

The Plymouth Historical Museum has been the repository for the Pere Marquette Historical Society archives since September 2021. The company-wide records contain an eclectic mix of photos, operational documents, maps, manuals, and other ephemera. In December 2022, the collection grew by 90 banker's boxes of personnel and organizational records that are still being processed. The importance of these additional records to genealogical research cannot be overstated.

The Pere Marquette Railroad (PMRR) was formed in 1900 as a result of the consolidation of four Michigan-based railroads. By 1947, Chesapeake & Ohio Railway had acquired PMRR, therefore these records represent PMRR and its predecessors.

Many of the personnel records contain only an employment application with one or two documents.

To give a taste for what you might find in this collection here are a few examples.

Roy Harris Ruxford applied in Plymouth on April 6, 1920, to be a brakeman. His address is listed as Flint, where his wife and daughter were living. His mother was living in Minneapolis. He was 24, 140 pounds, five foot, six inches tall, with light-colored hair and gray eyes. His work history is listed, including his service in the Army during WWI. Ruxford resigned April 21, 1920, returning all of the railroad property he was issued.

While his employment was short, he left behind a valuable genealogical document.

John E. Spaulding applied in Saginaw on November 30, 1906, to be a brakeman and switchman. He resigned from his previous employment after some difficulties that seemed to follow him to his new employment. By March 1907, he was dismissed from PMRR for his handling of a large load of potatoes in Plymouth. Under his direction, the potato cars ran amuck and struck other cars so hard that a stove was overturned, resulting in a fire and major damage.

William Scott Kelly applied in Flint on July 2, 1920, to be a switchman. The comprehensive application asks the question, “Do you use intoxicating liquors of any kind or to any extent?” Kelly's response was “No sir.” On September 10, 1920, Kelly was at Pierce's Restaurant adjacent to the Plymouth depot when he was discovered to be drunk and disorderly and behaving unreasonably. He was arraigned before Justice Phoebe Patterson, who sentenced him to 30 days in the Detroit House of Corrections. As a result, he was dismissed from duty for violating “Rule G.” According to Rules for the Government of Employees [sic] of the Pere Marquette Railway Co., reissued September 1, 1920, Rule G reads, “The use of intoxicants by employees is prohibited. Their use or the frequenting of places where they are sold is sufficient cause for dismissal.”
D-Day Still Vivid in Mike’s Mind

The chance that Mike Bodak will forget the date of June 6 is as slight as the possibility he will ever walk again.

Neither is likely to happen.

He landed at Normandy swinging from the shroud lines of a parachute. He left France on a stretcher.

Mortar shrapnel deeply imbedded in his neck will see to that, as relentlessly as time itself would otherwise try to wash the memories from his mind.

And this Thursday — June 6, 1963 — will be the 19th ‘anniversary’ for Bodak and the hundreds of thousands of other GI’s who unleashed the greatest land-sea combat invasion in man’s history.

It is the day, 19 years ago, of the Normandy landings, a day of fear, gallantry and death. Mike nearly tasted them all. Only his indomitable strength averted the last one.

Born in Verona, Mich., in the Upper Peninsula, Mike enlisted in the Army in 1941, took officer candidate school at Ft. Benning and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1942.

In 1963, disabled veteran Army Captain and Paratrooper, Mike Bodak, resided at 346 Sheldon Road in Plymouth, in a house designed for a person confined to a wheelchair. Photo 1942.

On June 4, 1963, to commemorate the 19th anniversary of D-Day, the Plymouth Mail featured Plymouth resident and disabled veteran, Army Captain Mike Bodak. Captain Bodak bravely served as a member of the famed 82nd Airborne Division that parachuted into the Normandy region of northern France, during the pre-dawn hours of June 6, 1944. He was severely wounded during the invasion and was permanently confined to a wheelchair. Captain Bodak was awarded the purple heart and bronze star medals.

60 Years Ago
June 1963
Plymouth Mail

With thanks to the authors and publishers for the content.

Sunday, August 13, 2023, 2 - 4 pm

Children must be at least 4 years old, no exceptions. Limit of 30 children, so don’t hesitate to purchase your tickets! Tickets are $30 for one adult and one child; tickets are $15 for additional attendees.

The ice cream social is sponsored by Greko Printing and Imaging. Meet Magician Dan Jones! Learn magic tricks and enjoy ice cream and cookies.

Plymouth Historical Museum 155 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI 48170

Abracadabra
Ice Cream Social

Our Time, Our History.
Please welcome one of our newest volunteers, Jim Balgooyen, who just started as a Museum guide at the beginning of May. Volunteering is certainly part of Jim’s family as his wife, Carol (Strayer), has also volunteered in the Museum archives. Both are longtime Plymouth residents, living in the area for more than 35 years. Jim and Carol have two daughters, a veterinarian in California and an environmental chemist in Duluth, Minnesota.

Jim was born and raised in Muskegon. He graduated from Mona Shores High School and attended the University of Michigan, receiving a BA in economics. He then attended Michigan State University and earned his MBA and at the same time met his future wife, Carol. I asked Jim where his allegiance was during football season. Jim took the safe road and said “I like them both…until they play each other.” After a little arm bending, he admitted he leaned more to the maize and blue.

That is not surprising, since Jim spent most of his career at U of M. He worked for 33 years in the U of M Athletic Department, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Bo Schembechler, Lloyd Carr and Jim Harbaugh. Jim began his career there as the business manager and retired from U of M with the position of chief financial officer.

It was interesting to note that Jim vacations every year on Mackinac Island. His family inherited a home from his parents north of the airport and shares the home with his brothers and sisters every summer. Jim explained it is a great time for family fun; walking and biking around the island.

Jim admits he has always had an affection for history, being an avid reader of history books. Besides his desire to do volunteer work in his retirement years, Jim felt helping at the Plymouth Historical Museum was the perfect choice. During his time volunteering at the Museum, Jim has been impressed with the passion for history shown by his fellow volunteers and Museum visitors.

We heartily wish Jim the best of luck in his new venture!

—Written by Mike Woloszyk, Museum marketing director

Thank You Volunteers! Volunteers Make a Difference!
Service With A Smile; That’s Motto Of Mayor

December 1962
Plymouth Mail

Robert Sincock, father of Plymouth’s current city manager, Paul Sincock, served on the Plymouth City Commission for 14 years, 1954-63 & 1968-73, serving two years as mayor—1961-63. Sincock was born in Calumet and moved to Plymouth in 1943, when he joined Burroughs Corporation as a supervisor for war production work. He was a Plymouth Rotarian for 33 years, and served as its president 1976-77. Sincock’s diverse career included owning the Standard Oil service station on Main Street at Ann Arbor Trail, and working as a realtor for the J.L. Hudson Real Estate Company. In addition to Rotary, Sincock’s 40 years of volunteer leadership with the Plymouth community included service on the board of directors of the Community Fund, the Plymouth Symphony Society, and the Council on Aging, and chairman of the Fall Festival. He is credited with raising funds to build the present day City Hall, and promoting the construction of the Cultural Center and ice arena.
Denny McLain, former star pitcher for the Detroit Tigers, (1963-70), won 20 games in 1966. It was a prelude to his 31 win season in 1968 and 24 win season in 1969. In addition to his talent as a baseball player, he was an accomplished organist; a musical skill he learned from his father. During the 1966 offseason, McLain was the featured entertainer at the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth, when he was hired to play the organ every Saturday night in the hotel’s Champagne Room. McLain’s in-demand musical talent led to performances in Las Vegas, and television appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show and the Steve Allen Show.

In 1913, William Blunk purchased 40 acres of land in Plymouth, and developed the Blunk subdivision. Blunk Street in Plymouth is one of several streets named for Blunk family members; including Irvin, Arthur, Blanche, William, and Ann Streets. Blunk’s first home was built in 1907 at 1012 William Street.
Conner Hardware built this building in 1884, replacing the original 1857 structure. Photo circa late 1880s. The building was a two-story wooden frame structure and faced Main Street in almost the same location as the present Conner Building. It served as a hardware & lumber company during the early days of Plymouth when the village was an agricultural town. The wooden building was replaced in 1898 with the present brick structure. Conner Hardware closed in the mid 1940s.

A 1963 architectural drawing of the proposed renovation for the Conner Building.
The Plymouth Library was established as a branch of the Wayne County library system in June of 1923, funded in part by a baseball game between the businessmen of Plymouth and neighboring Northville – a community kick-off if ever there was one!

The local Women’s Club was instrumental in the establishment of the library, with humble beginnings of two shelves and 319 books. From its onset, it was a place to explore and connect, both with other locals and with the world wide. Over the years, eager attendance and demand for titles prompted growth from the Village Hall to the “Burgess house” on Main, which was later expanded upon and then replaced by a brick colonial building and eventually replaced again with the 72,000-square-foot building patrons now enjoy.

Plymouth citizens love their library and it’s not hard to see why: our library is committed to service. Early records paint the picture of the many ways the library anticipated and met the information needs of the community, from microfiche ceiling-projected books for bedridden polio patients to non-fiction titles to help locals learn about the countries where their soldiers were stationed. The commitment to serve is strong still today and our library continues to adapt to meet community needs.

In addition to being dedicated to serving the community, our library exists due to the generosity of that same community. The archives tell stories of residents who stepped up to ensure that the library was comfortable and well-equipped. From Scouts who helped move books across Main Street, to Garden Club members who baked cookies for a building dedication to one anonymous patron – cross at being unable to find an easy chair comfortable for reading – who consequently had delivered “two of the easiest library chairs one could hope to find anywhere.”

Never-ending gestures of care-taking such as these are of course shadowed by the generosity of those whose significant contributions provided for the library buildings themselves. These include those for whom the building is named: Besie Dunning and her daughter Margaret, who in 1944 purchased and donated the Burgess House; and Edward C. Hough and his late sister Mary Hough Kimble, whose foundation funded the replacement of that building in 1958.

Ralph Lorenz Joins U.S. Navy to Fight Country Where He Was Born

On May 24, Lieutenant (junior grade) Ralph Lorenz, United States Navy, reports to the Harvard school of business administration for a brief course, to be followed later by a course of study at Babson Institute.

Lorenz, who has been manager of the Mayflower hotel for the past four years, will be assigned to the division of supply of the navy, where his training in hotel and restaurant management will be utilized.

Lorenz as a young soldier, went through the first world war at his home on a farm near Galicia, Austria. That portion of the country after the first war was divided, and his home town became a part of Poland, near the city of Krakow.

In 1921, Ralph and his mother joined his father, who had established a home in Plymouth. Ralph could speak nothing but German, and school became hard for him. But not for long. He worked diligently and long, and was graduated in 1930 from the high school.

Under his management, the hotel has prospered, said Fred Schrader, president of the hotel company. The board of the hotel granted Lorenz a leave of absence to assume his commission in the navy.

Ralph’s parents still live here at their home on Harvey street, and they are extremely proud of their son, who goes to war to fight for an adopted land.

Relatives of Lorenz, still residing in Poland, are now in a concentration camp in Prussia, Ralph said.

Mayflower Crystal Dining Hall May Be Converted Into Sleeping Dorm.

So critical has become the rooming situation in Plymouth that the directors of the Mayflower hotel have under consideration the question of closing the Crystal dining room and making it into a living room dormitory.

Manager Ralph Lorenz has already converted the popular President’s room into sleeping quarters and at the board of directors meeting Tuesday noon he asked the directors to give consideration to the possibility of conversion of the Crystal room into sleeping quarters.

“We turn away every night from a half dozen to 25 or more people who come here seeking a place to sleep. There have been times when we have permitted people to remain in the lobby over night. No one outside of the hotel business knows just how serious is the situation in Plymouth,” stated Manager Lorenz yesterday.

“We have any number of army men stationed near here who cannot find sleeping quarters. Men who come here for the government in connection with affairs at the Kelsey-Hayes or at some of the Ford plants, just cannot find places to sleep,” he stated.
Calendar of Events

Events are at the Museum unless otherwise specified. Tickets can be found at http://plymouthhistory.org/events/.

**June**
24—Death By Chocolate Murder Mystery—Sold Out
25—Last day for “Snapshots of Plymouth.”

**June 26-July 18**—Museum closed

**July**
19—Special Exhibit “Hidden Plymouth” opens.
22-29—Free Summer Saturdays, sponsored by Growth Works

**August**
5-26—Free Summer Saturdays, sponsored by Bill Brown Ford.
13—Abracadabra Ice Cream Social, 2-4 pm.
   Tickets on sale now to members; on sale to public June 26.

“Hidden Plymouth”
Sponsored by Joe & Ellen Elliott and Jim Burroughs

**New Special Exhibit opens Wednesday July 19, 2023**