

April – June 2026



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 holidays)

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Marissa Warren	Archivist
Cindi Willard	Exhibits & Education Coordinator

Newsletter Editor

Elizabeth Kerstens, director@plymouthhistory.org

The Newsletter is printed four times a year.

Monthly Drawing

Volunteers Emily Robertson, Jim Balgooyen, and Jerry Wargo are the respective winners of the drawings for a \$25 gift certificate for April, May, and June.

Nostalgia Sale

August 28-29

The Plymouth Historical Museum will be conducting a Nostalgia Sale on Friday and Saturday, August 28 & 29, 9 AM - 4 PM! If your interests are antique items and yard sales and any place where you might find a bargain, then this is your place.

This huge sale will be located in the lower level of the Plymouth Historical Museum at 155 S. Main Street, Plymouth.

There will be hundreds of interesting items to explore that have been donated to the Museum over the years that we unfortunately are unable to use. Many items are duplicates or triplicates that we only need one of. Also, we are frequently gifted items that have nothing to do with Plymouth or Plymouth history. We have to regularly evaluate our collections to ensure they are serving our mission and fit within our storage spaces. Because of the incredible generosity of people through the years, we have the luxury of being selective of what we keep. Our donors are informed of the possibility that donated items may be offered for sale to benefit the needs of the Museum.

If you're interested in donating items for the sale, please keep in mind that we don't accept boxes of miscellaneous goods that you didn't sell at your garage sale. Rather, we're looking for more meaningful and/or historic items. Please call our Administrative Assistant Laura Elder with any questions, 734-455-8940 x0.

Come shopping and find your new treasures!

Welcome New Members!

Ryan Burdette, Plymouth
Florence Erzen, Plymouth
Scott Grace, Livonia
Sandy Hanson, Plymouth
David Jakubiec, Livonia
Dorothy Moreno, Plymouth
Brett Phillips, Northville
Plymouth Township Firefighter Charities
Randy Webb, Plymouth
Jason Willard, Livonia

Bits 'n Pieces

We opened our all-new special exhibit, “America 250 Part II: 1900-2026” on Wednesday, July 1. Pictures from the members-only preview are on the front page of the newsletter. Please come experience Plymouth’s history over the past 125 years. We try to offer new information with each exhibit, so there’s plenty here for you to enjoy!

Technology Challenges

The Plymouth Historical Museum is working hard to bring new technology experiences to visitors. Over the past few years we’ve added “windows” into our past with animated historic videos in both the upgraded train depot and the new Victorian house. This year we introduced our permanent George Jackson exhibit where George comes to life through the magic of artificial intelligence (AI). Over the next months, we will be introducing more AI experiences within the former coat room on our main floor, thanks to a grant from the America250MI project.

Meantime, we’re fumbling with updating the software we use to keep track of our collections and members, *PastPerfect*. The desktop version we’re using was last overhauled in 2010. There have been updates to the software, but it’s basically an outmoded way to track our important information.

This year we changed IT providers to Smart Ass Nerds, a company more in tune with our needs. One of the major suggestions was that we transition to the online version of *PastPerfect*, which is up-to-date and takes advantage of the best technology. We are in the middle of that transition, which has been painful. Since we have had multiple people inputting data over the past 30 years, there are many inconsistencies. It was recommended that we clean up those inconsistencies before we go online.

So, please be patient with us as we try to modernize the software critical to our mission.



Museum sponsor Joe Grima (r) helped get the Museum’s message out in the 4th of July Parade. His son Robby drove, while Cindi Willard and Liz Kerstens enjoyed the ride.



Wilcox House Tour

See the insides of this beautifully renovated historic home!
Meet William (Phil) Markham & Blanche Shortman!
Sunday, August 16
Tours start at 1 PM, 2 PM, 3 PM, and 4 PM
Tickets are \$25 per person and are on sale now.
Space is limited, so act now!



Sponsored by:
First Financial Strategies

Tickets available at
Plymouth Historical Museum
155 S. Main Street
Plymouth
734-455-8940 x0
or online:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/wilcox-house-tour-2>

Ticket Sale Dates for Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Members	Public
August 16	Wilcox House Tour	Now	Now
September 19	The Disco Experience	July 20	August 3
September 20	Wilcox House Tour	July 20	August 3
October 10	Plymouth Ghosts Cemetery Walk	August 10	August 24

Collection Treasures

By Marissa Warren, Archivist

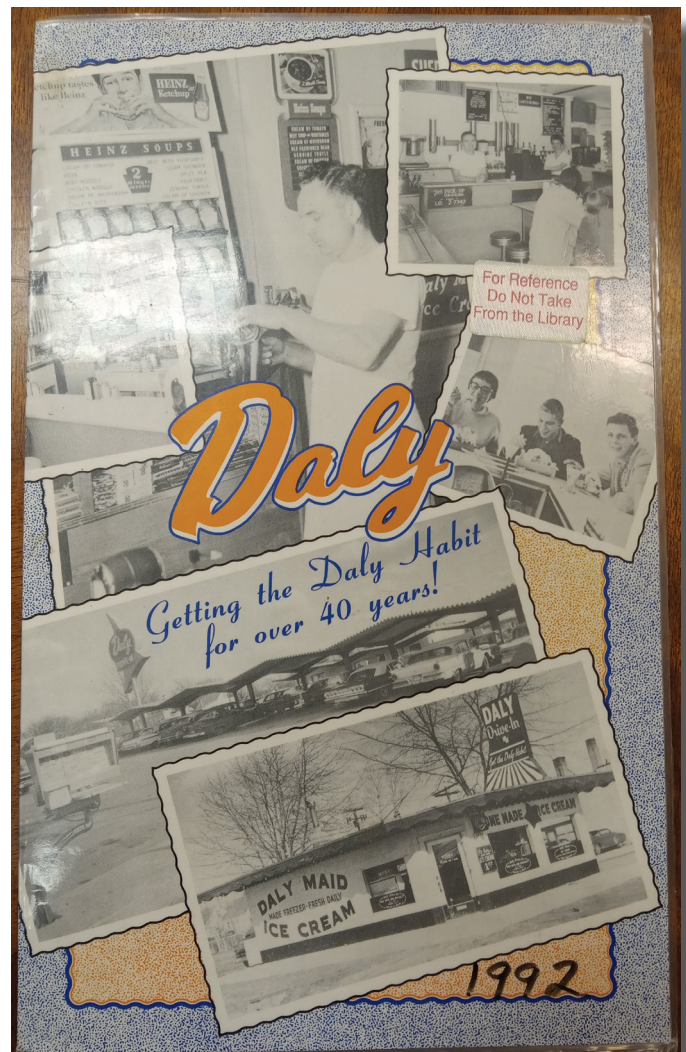
Kenmore Tabletop Washing Machine

For those with limited space, or who need to wash clothes while away from home, this portable washing machine handled what would be harder to do by hand. Made by Kenmore in the 1940s, this small machine with a removable agitator and optional wringer attachment could be plugged in anywhere and had a dial for selecting timers and cycles based on material. While only a small load could be washed at a time, it would still inspire the evolution of modern tabletop washers, which share the same characteristics and have become more efficient over time.



Daly Drive-in Menu

While drive-in restaurants are no longer as common as they were in the 1950s and 1960s, there are a few that outlasted the popular trend. The Daly Drive-in franchise started in 1948 and expanded to many locations throughout southeast Michigan. This menu is from the Plymouth location and shows off the dining options as they were in 1992. Some popular items like the Dalyburger and Dalydog have remained on the menu since the opening of the franchise, while other items were adjusted over the years until the drive-in's eventual closing in 1998. The last remaining location is set to close this year; however pieces of the iconic restaurant chain remain, including the recently restored sign in the Museum's Timeline of Plymouth exhibit.





A Familiar Plymouth Landmark Shines Again!

By Laura Elder, Marketing Specialist

The iconic Daly Drive-In sign in the Museum's Timeline of Plymouth has been renovated with neon-style lighting, bringing new life to a popular symbol of Plymouth's past, thanks to generous donations from Scott Grace, owner of the Livonia Daly's, and former Plymouth resident Mary Smith. Visitors can once again enjoy the warm glow that made the sign a local landmark for generations.

In 1949 Maple Lawn Dairy of Canton expanded into a popular drive-in restaurant at Main Street and Ann Arbor Road. Bud and Doris Grace purchased the business in 1962 and reopened it as Daly Drive-In a couple months later after remodeling.

The Daly journey began in 1948 when Bill Ihnfeldt opened Bill's Drive-In on Jim Daly (now Beech Daly) Road in Dearborn Heights. Soon he renamed the restaurant "Daly Drive-In" after the road it was on. Over the next 16 years, 17 additional Daly locations opened under the stewardship of Ihnfeldt and other family members, including the Plymouth Daly's.

For 36 years, the Daly Drive-In at Main Street and Ann Arbor Road served food and made memories for generations of fans. When that location closed in 1998, one side of the sign found a permanent home at the Museum thanks to Restoration Station owner Patrick Gallagher. Today, as the last remaining Daly restaurant in Livonia prepares to close, preserving this piece of local history is more meaningful than ever.

Be sure to stop by, learn more, and see it shining once again in our Timeline of Plymouth exhibit!



Electricians from O'Donnell Electric sourced the "faux neon" flexible lighting and skillfully installed it during June 2026.

HISTORY

How We Began

Plymouth Historical Museum recounts its start

By Elizabeth Kerstens and Ellen Elliott

BEFORE there was a Plymouth Historical Society, city leaders were talking about the need for a museum as early as 1943.

William Powell, a local resident, may have been the trigger for a museum in Plymouth. Powell visited the office of City Manager Clarence Elliott to offer some artifacts that he felt should be preserved. Elliott was happy to accept the items but had nowhere to properly store or display them.

"You know, I think we should have a museum here in Plymouth. There are many things in the city which should be preserved for all time in a museum of some kind. I'm not just sure whether it should be a city museum or whether the idea shouldn't be taken up by some of the patriotic organizations who might take over one of the old early American houses here in the city as the permanent location of a Plymouth museum," said Elliott in the *Plymouth Mail* of October 1, 1943.

Five years later, the Plymouth Historical Society was formed. Members received and stored donations from Plymouth's past in their attics and basements. As the years went on, the society saw the need to bring the collections together under one roof, where they could be properly preserved.

In 1961 the City of Plymouth leased the Orson Polley house to the Plymouth Historical Society to be used as a museum. The first Plymouth Historical Museum opened to the public in May 1962. Meantime, the society was fundraising for a permanent museum building.

Two large grants allowed for the purchase of land adjacent to the Polley house and for the construction of a purpose-built museum. One grant for \$33,870 was from the Edward C. Hough-Mary Hough Kimble



Foundation; the second grant of \$100,000 was from Plymouth resident Margaret Dunning.

ESTABLISHED 1948
PLYMOUTH
HISTORICAL MUSEUM

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 10, 1972, using a three-handled shovel wielded by Society President George Burr, Dunning, and Clarence Moore, a museum volunteer. A year later, the museum building was dedicated but the inside was not complete.

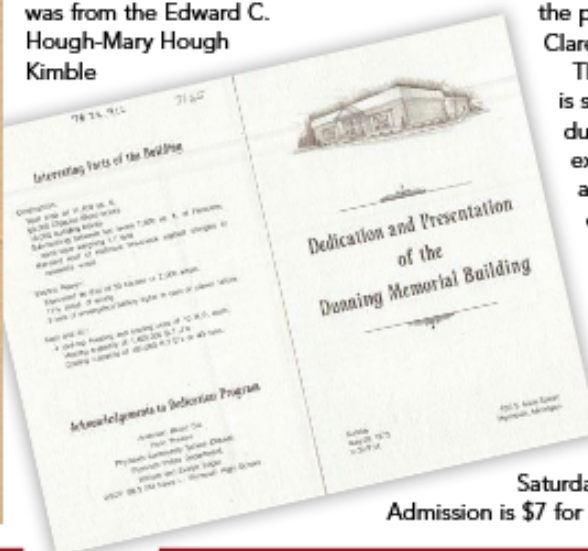
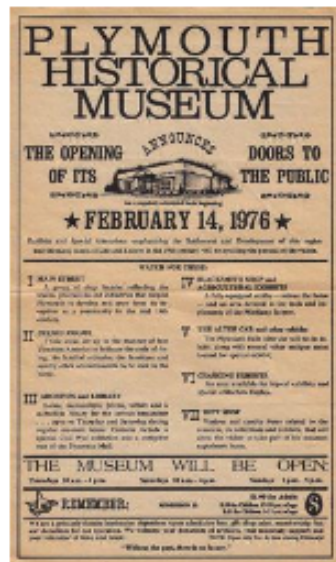
The new Plymouth Historical Museum – dubbed the Dunning Memorial Building in honor of Margaret Dunning's parents – opened to the public on Saturday, February 14, 1976.

The first sight that visitors would have encountered when they entered the new museum was a re-creation of Main Street Plymouth circa 1900. Facades of familiar businesses allowed a peek into the past, showcasing the massive collections donated for generations, thus paving the way for the preservation of our local history.

Clarence Elliott would be proud.

The Plymouth Historical Museum is spotlighting Michigan history during 2026, with two special exhibits celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. The first highlights the years 1776 to 1900 and runs through June 7; the second will focus on the years 1900 to 2026 and runs July 1-November 1. The Museum is located at 155 S. Main Street in Plymouth and is open Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 1-4 p.m.

Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for children 6-17.



Donations Received

March – May 2026

Thank you for the following generous donations that were received between March and May 2026:

The Dunning (\$2,500 or more)

BCS Property Management

The Lincoln (\$1,000–\$2,499)

Robert Gotro

Richard Kaylor

The Kellogg (\$100–\$249)

Dianne Basto

Blackbaud Giving Fund

Janis Campbell

Cynthia & John Hartsig

Hayley Hoffman

Geraldine Kilsdonk

Sue Marie Klimek

Carolyn Lebeau

Dan & Marge LeBlond

Marilyn Norgrove

Sharon Rucinski

Leslie Ryder

Gerald Sabatini

Carl Solak

Webb's Engraving

Under \$100

Holly Borrusch

Margaret Harris

Cheryl Harvey

James & Joanne Keefer

Stephen Marulis

Sean Moriarty

Dorothy Mulroy

Sponsorships

Hamilton (\$600)

First Financial Strategies

Mayflower (\$500)

Kiwanis Club of Colonial Plymouth

Plymouth-Canton Civitan Club

Plymouth-Canton Optimist International

Plymouth Lions Club/Foundation

Plymouth Rotary Foundation

Plymouth Ghosts (\$500)

Genuine Toy Company

Re/Max Home Sale Services

Family Fun (\$300)

Artistry Dance

Premier Auto Glass Group

Re/Max Classic Plymouth

Calling All Volunteers and Educators!

Do you love local history, storytelling, or working with people of all ages? Our museum is looking for friendly volunteers and passionate teachers to help bring history to life. Opportunities include greeting visitors, assisting with events, leading educational programs, and supporting behind-the-scenes projects. Whether you have a few hours a month or more time to share, your talents can make a meaningful impact. Join us in preserving the past and inspiring future generations.

Please contact Janet Burns, volunteer coordinator, at 734-455-8940 x6 or bookkeeper@plymouthhistory.org.

Friends of the Plymouth Historical Museum
155 S. Main Street
Plymouth, MI 48170

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Calendar of Events

Tickets can be found at <http://plymouthhistory.org/events/>.

July

18, 25—**Free Summer Saturdays**, sponsored by
Blackwell Ford.

August

1, 8, 15, 22, 29—**Free Summer Saturdays**, sponsored
by anonymous donors.

16—**Wilcox House Tour**, 1-4 PM. Tours start on the
hour and last about 50 minutes. Tickets on sale now.
\$25 each.

28 & 29—**Nostalgia Sale**, 9 AM-4 PM.

September

19—**“The Disco Experience”** 1-4 PM. Join us for an
immersive evening of Disco entertainment, and wear
your 1970s best outfit! Tickets on sale to members July
20; on sale to public August 3. \$30 for members.

20—**Wilcox House Tour**, 1-4 PM. Tours start on the
hour and last about 50 minutes. Tickets on sale to
members July 20; on sale to public August 3. \$25 each.