

July – September 2026



Reporter Terell Bailey, CBS Detroit, covered the opening of our George Jackson exhibit in February, during Black History Month.

Bringing George Jackson to Life

George Jackson was a fixture in the Plymouth community from the late 1850s until his death in 1913. He was born September 19, 1820, in Philadelphia, a free Black child of unknown parents. His early years are undocumented, but we know that he was living in Plymouth by 1860 when he appears on the census for that year. George was married to Mary Conner probably about 1850. In the census, George and his children are listed as Mulatto, while Mary is listed as White. All of their children born before the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 were born in Canada. Their sixth child, William Lafayette Jackson, was born in Plymouth in about 1866.

George worked as a teamster, or drayman, for many years. He worked for Washington Bennett, a Plymouth carriagemaker, transporting lumber, sandbags, machinery, and other provisions on his dray, or flatbed cart. In his later years, George did odd jobs

for the Village of Plymouth and was a janitor at the Methodist Church.

George and his family melded into the Plymouth community, which had a history of being anti-slavery. A number of Plymouth citizens were members of the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society, formed in Ann Arbor in 1836.

George's wife Mary died in Plymouth June 28, 1897. George died March 4, 1913, in Plymouth, at the age of 92. The couple had six children.

We introduced George at the preview for "America 250: Part I—1776-1900." If you haven't yet seen the new exhibit space, it's worth a visit. This was our first foray into AI storytelling. In the monitor, George comes to life and talks about his life in Plymouth.

We're thankful to our treasurer Jim Burroughs for sponsoring the exhibit, as well as the Orsa Foundation for funding some of the technology. *cont. on page 2*

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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Cindi Willard	Exhibits & Education Coordinator

Newsletter Editor

Elizabeth Kerstens, director@plymouthhistory.org

The Newsletter is printed four times a year.

Monthly Drawing

Volunteers Ava Politi, Kathleen Ryan, and Barbara Louie are the respective winners of the drawings for a \$25 gift certificate for July, August, and September.

George Jackson continued

Thanks also to Pete Smith and Jeff Stella of Stella Contracting for putting up the wallpaper and building the cart.

Thank you to Doug Willett and Blair Adams for writing the script and for creating the AI George Jackson.

And finally, thanks to George's descendants Terry and Chad Sesvold for sharing the images of George that we were able to use to bring him to life. What a great story!

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.

Welcome New Members!

Karen Arini, Plymouth
Ellison Franklin, Northville
Ann Greenough, Northville
Franca Jarosz, Plymouth
Smart Ass Nerds, Livonia
Mary Smith, Overland Park, Kansas
Mark Trombetta, Plymouth
Weiss Chiropractic, Novi

Bits 'n Pieces



Mike Hoggard

On August 14, 2026, the Plymouth Historical Museum lost one of our valued employees, Mike Hoggard. Mike was the Museum's facility manager for 12 years.

Mike kept the Museum building in great shape, with the assistance of our wonderful maintenance staff. He spent many

hours rearranging tables in our meeting room to accommodate room rentals and Museum events. Mike didn't like to have his picture taken, so this picture of him from 8 or 9 years ago is the only one we could find.

We miss Mike. We miss hearing about his chickens that he was raising. His whole demeanor changed when he talked about his beloved chickens.

Job Opening

We are currently searching for a replacement for Mike. This is a part-time position perfect for a retiree looking for a little cash and something to keep you busy. If you're interested, please call Liz Kerstens, executive director, at 734-455-8940 x9 for more details.

Maintenance Volunteers

If you're not looking for employment, but want to tinker with things that keep a building going, we're also looking for more maintenance volunteers. They get together on Monday and Wednesday mornings, 9-11:30, and help us with a myriad of tasks. Again,

call Liz Kerstens, executive director, at 734-455-8940 x9 for more details.



Disco Experience

The Museum's meeting room turned into a Disco bar on Saturday, September 19. What a great night! People were dressed in retro outfits and the dance floor was humming the entire time.

Thanks to the following for making the night a success: Brett & Christine Phillips of RE/Max for sponsoring the event; Pete Smith, the PaintSmith, for sponsoring the entertainment; Downtown Pourhouse and owner Kathy Sullivan for providing the alcohol and Jill the bartender; Grima Enterprises and owner Joe Grima for providing the musical entertainment as a DJ; Bodes Corned Beef House for providing the yummy sandwiches; Ellen Elliott for providing the awesome period desserts; Adrienne Croket and Ellen Elliott for hosting our version of "Name That Tune"; Robbie Grima and Sofia Malynowskyj for providing dance lessons; Suemarie Klimek and Cindi Willard for minding the door and selling drink tickets; Marty Kerstens for taking pictures; Janet Burns for running the kitchen; and our fabulous maintenance crew for set up and take down.

Ticket Sale Dates for Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Members	Public
October 10	Plymouth Ghosts Cemetery Walk	Now	Now
November 1	Mad Hatter Tea	Now	Now
November 17	Members-only Preview	Now	
December 5	Murder Mystery	October 5	October 19

Collection Treasures

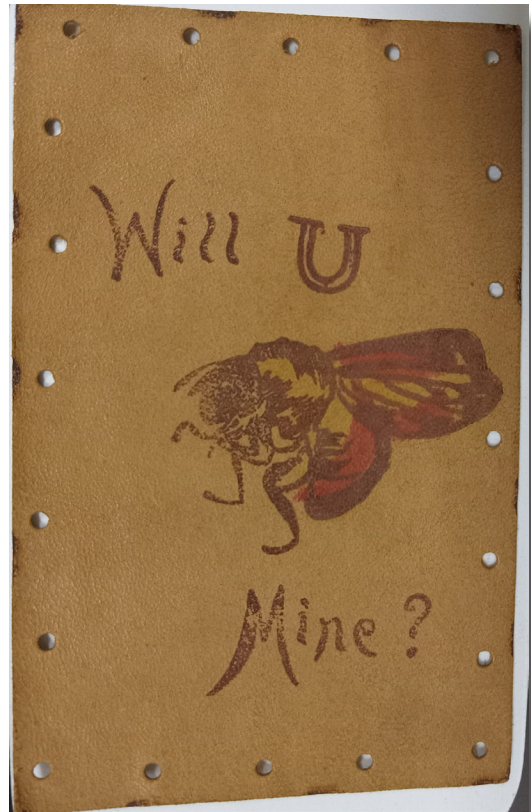
By Marissa Warren, Archivist

Leather Postcards

Paper is what we think of as the main material for postcards and other mailings, however it wasn't always the only option. For the short period from about 1903 to 1910, leather postcards were a popular alternative. Leather may seem like an odd choice, but the durable material could easily be formed into the right shape, was only minimally thicker than other types, and lasted a long time. Even after more than one hundred years, the designs on these postcards are still in excellent condition. Plus they could be reused, as multiple postcards would even be sewn together to make wall decorations or pillowcases.



Often made using deer hide, a version of pyrography was used where the designs were burnt onto the leather, and then inks would be added to give the patterns more color. Many companies mass marketed various designs, though a careful crafter could make their own. Most lacked any space for adding notes because of the large area reserved for the mailing address, but they made up for it with



humorous and heartfelt designs, making them a unique and popular gift, especially for Valentines Day.

Despite their charm, they fell out of popularity in large part because of the ban the post office placed on them in 1907. The reasoning was that the leather would get caught in and damage the mail sorting machines, and it was difficult to keep the stamps stuck on them. While this type of postcard was no longer acceptable to mail, the resulting lack of demand led companies to stop producing them. These leather postcards long outlasted the mostly forgotten fad that tried something different; they would still be great notes to send out to others, as long as you don't try to send them by mail.



Native American Display

Back in January 2026, we were designing the exhibit space that would become an early Native American history display for our “America 250: Part I—1776-1900” exhibit. We reached out to Kevin Harris of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi for assistance. Kevin gave us great advice about the correct historical clothing and how our



display should look. He, along with others from the Potawatomi band, built us a miniature, historically accurate wigwam using bark and hides. We purchased the wigwam to ultimately put in our Native American display in the Timeline of Plymouth.

When the exhibit ended in June, our



intrepid exhibits crew cleaned out the old display area and added in our new wigwam, along with some other more accurate display pieces. They also added “Boo Boo” the black bear, who was a recent donation. The whole display is now more representative of the Plymouth area during



the time period before European settlement.

We are grateful to Kevin Harris and the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi for their guidance and expertise.

HISTORY

Proven Patriots

Plymouth's DAR chapter aptly named, continues to exemplify important values

By Elizabeth Kerstens and Ellen Elliott

THE National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) was founded in Washington, D.C., in October 1890. The society consists of women descendants of proven patriots of the American Revolutionary War.

The DAR came to Plymouth when the Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter was organized here on December 13, 1926, with 24 charter members. Recognizable names among the chapter charter members include Mary Starkweather Hillmer and her two daughters Rose and Gertrude; Harriet Hill Wilcox; and Ruth Shattuck.

When it came to naming the chapter, they were cautioned against selecting any ancestors of members. Under early consideration were Keziah Benjamin Starkweather, Hannah Howard, Rosetta LeGros, and Fort Shelby in Detroit.

Ultimately the chapter chose to be named after Sarah Ann Cochrane for several reasons. Sarah had at least five Revolutionary War patriot ancestors on both sides of her family. After moving with her family to Northville when she was 11, she taught at the Northville Academy founded by her father, Sylvester Cochrane, until the late 1850s. When chapter members visited the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library, staff members recommended Sarah, who had been the second assistant librarian there. Her legacy was the cataloging of the library using the Dewey Decimal System.



Sarah worked at the library from 1883 until 1906 and trained many of the staff. She was described as "a reserved, dignified, resourceful woman with a keen intellect" by contemporary chief of staff Gracie Krumm. Sarah died in 1917.

Chapter members "pay homage to ... patriot ancestors through volunteer work in historic preservation, education, and patriotism," according to its website.

One of their first acts in 1927 was to place a bronze tablet on the new Mayflower Hotel, recognizing it as the location of the first home in the Plymouth settlement. They continued their service by sending boxes of yarn and sewing materials to immigrants detained at Ellis Island in New York and boxes of clothing to southern mountain schools. They also honor patriots and local dignitaries by commemorating their graves with a metal DAR marker.

Sarah Ann Cochrane's grave at Rural Hill Cemetery in Northville was marked by the chapter in May 1949.

A national focus of DAR is on education. Chapters are encouraged to donate to rural schools and to run essay contests for good citizenship and history. The local chapter has a literacy committee that collects new and used books and donates an average of 750 books a year

to low-income pre-school and kindergarten-aged children.

Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter members are "a vibrant and diverse group of women who share a common bond of having an ancestor who helped secure American independence."

For more information, visit <http://www.cochrane.michdar.net/>.



The Plymouth Historical Museum is spotlighting Michigan history during 2026, with two special exhibits celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. The first highlighted the years 1776 to 1900; the second focuses 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.



In 1927 the DAR placed a bronze plaque (circled) on the Mayflower Hotel marking it Plymouth's first home in the settlement.

Donations Received

June – August 2026

Thank you for the following generous donations that were received between June and August 2026:

The Dunning (\$2,500 or more)

Jim Burroughs
Clark Chapin
Scott Grace, Daly's Restaurant
Plymouth Lions Club/Foundation
Mary Smith

The Lincoln (\$1,000–\$2,499)

Linda Manchester

The Penniman (\$250–\$499)

Jeff Ashton

The Kellogg (\$100–\$249)

Lori Hemingway

David Jakubiec

Under \$100

Janis Campbell
Cynthia Hartsig
John Hartsig
Anne Reilly

Sponsorships

Mayflower (\$1,500)

Weiss Chiropractic

Mayflower (\$500)

Plymouth Township Firefighter Charities

Plymouth Ghosts (\$500)

The Paint Smith

PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL MUSEUM
PRESENTS

PLYMOUTH GHOSTS

CEMETERY WALK

STEP INTO THE PAST. HEAR THEIR STORIES.

STARTING LOCATION:
Riverside Cemetery
680 Plymouth Rd
Plymouth, MI 48170

TICKETS PER PERSON:
\$20 in advance
\$15 for groups of 8 or more
\$25 on October 10



VISIT, CALL, OR SCAN:
plymouthhistory.org
734.455-8940 ext 0



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2026
Tours leave every 15 minutes from 4:00 to 8:00 PM.

For more info on our events, please visit:
plymouthhistory.org/events/upcoming-events

SPONSORED BY:


ESTABLISHED 1946




Mad Hatter tea

— plymouth historical museum —

Sunday, November 1
2:00 - 4:00 PM

ENJOY:

- Access to our Museum's special exhibit, "America 250: Part II--1900-2026" before the tea
- Tea delicacies catered by Diann's Catering
- The Museum's own special tea "Mary's Blend"
- Sandy Root's adventure through 150 years of history
- A funny and entertaining look at why people wore hats
- Dressing up and wearing your best hats (not required, but encouraged!)

TICKETS:

- \$35 for members
- \$40 for non-members

VISIT, CALL OR SCAN:
plymouthhistory.org
734.455.8940 ext 0



Let us elevate our posture, our teacups, and our brims!

SPONSORED BY:

 CIVITAN INTERNATIONAL
Plymouth-Canton Civitan Club



155 S. Main St, Plymouth 734.455.8940 ext 0
plymouthhistory.org

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Plymouth, MI 48170

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Calendar of Events

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

October

10—**Plymouth Ghosts Cemetery Walk**, sponsored by Schrader-Howell Funeral Home. Tickets on sale now. \$20 each.

November

1—**Mad Hatter Tea**, 2-4 PM. Sponsored by Plymouth-Canton Civitan Club. Tickets on sale now.

17—**Members-only Preview of “A Red Ryder Christmas Story” exhibit**, 6-8 PM.

18—**“A Red Ryder Christmas Story” exhibit opens.**

28 & 29—**Santa in the Caboose**, 1-4 PM. Multiple sponsors.

December

5—**Murder Mystery**, 6-9 PM. Tickets on sale to members October 5; on sale to public October 19. \$30.

5&6, 12&13, 19&20—**Santa in the Caboose**, 1-4 PM. Multiple sponsors.