

RECORDER



Land Where Pigeon Is Located Traded for Shotgun

The Pigeon Progress from Sept. 26, 1947

Where seventy or eighty years ago there was nothing but marsh land, today is Pigeon.

In 1883 there was one building which was located just south of the present depot across the Pere Marquette track. It was torn down about 12 years ago. About 1881 there was also the farm home of Henry Moeller, Sr. and it was located where the former Charles Wittwer cheese factory stood. Another was a little building just east of the home now occupied by Harry Haist. It was erected by John Glosser, an old river driver on the Pigeon river, who owned the forty acres which, is now Main Street and south of Michigan Ave. One story is, that he traded the property for a shotgun and he is reported to have said that while the shotgun wasn't worth a dam, the fellow, he made the trade with was stung.

When the tracks of the Pontiac, Oxford and Northern Railroads were first laid through this section in 1882 there was little belief that a town would ever be built at this point because of the fact that the town of Berne only lay one mile to the north. The coming of the Saginaw, Tuscola & Huron Railroad down through this section in 1861, however, changed the plans and ideas and there were those who believed that the intersection of the two railroads would be a desirable location for a town. Charles Applegate, the first station agent in Pigeon, induced John Nitz, a farmer living south of Pigeon, to plat what is now known as the Nitz & Applegate addition. He erected the first store building in Pigeon, and carried a small stock of merchandise. This was in 1887. He then sold the building which was located where the Gulf (up-town gas station) is now to Leipprandt Bros, of Berne, who opened up a branch store. In 1881 Joseph Schluchter, who was also at Berne, opened up a branch store in a building located about where Schumacher's meat market is now.

Among the early buildings was the Arlington Hotel, erected by Herman Kleinschmidt. Later in 1889 the hotel was sold to George Winter, who conducted the hotel for a number of years until he sold out to Robert McElmurray and Lee Elenbaum.

In 1889 Herman and Albert Kleinschmidt purchased the Schluchter building and put in a line of general merchandise. It was in 1888 that John Diebel built his saw mill; that the union depot built; that



George F. McNiel erected a building, on the lot now occupied by the Gem Theater, and operated a store. In 1889 C. C. Heineman, purchased the building and for about six years conducted a furniture and undertaking business. About this time William Goff opened up the first harness shop in Pigeon on the location of the building now occupied by Lyman Gregory's furniture store.

The post office was located in Pigeon in 1888 with Albert Kleinschmidt as postmaster, which he held with the exception of four years during Cleveland's second administration, when his brother Herman was the postmaster for four years, until George Anklam was appointed under president Wilson's first administration.

The first church, the Catholic, was erected in 1889, on the lot now occupied by Maust's Super Market. The English M. E. and Presbyterian churches were built in 1892, The Masonic Temple is now on the location of the Presbyterian church.

In 1891 a creamery was erected but was destroyed by fire a year later. And for a few years later Charles Wittwer ran a Swiss cheese factory

See Pigeon on Page 4

PIGEON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 523 • Pigeon, Michigan 48755
989-453-3242

Denny Esch, President
Ardra Schaaf, Vice President
Duane Wurst, Secretary
David Eichler, Treasurer

~: Trustees ~:

Jim Leinbach • Randy Ovcen
Dorothy Thuemmel • Joyce Kretschmer

Regular Meetings:

Second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Board Meetings

Fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Location

Woecke Historical Research Center.

Help!

The historical Society is helping to manage the Pigeon Farmers' Market this year. We plan on increasing the number of vendors and have special events on the First Friday of Each month, May through October. The market is held Fridays from 9-4. If you or someone you know would like to be a vendor, please call today for information. Call 989-545-5240 **SEE YOU AT THE MARKET!**

Juniors Stage Class Play

"The Angelle Brats," Junior class play, will be presented Thurs- day and Friday evenings, April 5 and 6, in the auditorium of Pigeon Rural Agricultural School.

Director of the play will be Robert Summerfield, Latin and English instructor, assisted by Miss Marilyn McKinley of the social studies department. Miss McKinley will have charge of staging, lighting, make-up, » and other student activities connected with the presentation.

Cast of the comedy stage production includes Lorraine Schuette, Gary Sweet, Barbara Schafer, Bob Deiming, -Lois Perry, Wilma Smith, Jean Schultz, Lorraine Sturm, Bob Fluegge, Hierman. Schulze, Hilbert Schulze, Shirley Ziel, Bob Leipprandt and Carol Henne. Donna, Shupe is student-director, and Don Whelihan is in charge of scenery.

Tickets are on sale and can be Purchased from. any member of the Junior class.

Local Boxers Compete at Port Huron

Among the amateur boxers to compete for laurels at the National Guard boxing show at Port Huron, were Gerald Jamieson and Willard Kuhl. Both young men gave good accounts of their fistic abilities.

"Gerry," weighing in at 130, gained a unanimous decision over Lincoln Cline, 135.

Willard, who tipped the scales at 136, was not quite so fortunate when he had for an op-

ponent Larry Wooley, 138, last year's state champion. Even though Wooley won the bout, Willard was commended for his good boxing and sportsmanship.. Many fans disagreed with the officials' decision.

Mayor "Clif" Bailey furnished transportation for the boxers and was accompanied by Dave Bailey, Peter Dixon and Kenneth Rathje. Bert Elliott, of Caro, acted as second in the absence of manager Don Hunter.

GEM THEATRE

PIGEON

FRIDAY and SATURDAY
MARCH 16 - 17

"Salt Lake Raiders"
Rocky Lane

— also —

"Gallant Thoroughbred"
Starring
Mabel Paige, John Carven

SUN. - MON. - TUES.
MARCH 18 - 19 - 20



HERBERT J. YATES
presents

John Ford's

RIO GRANDE

starring

JOHN WAYNE • MAUREEN O'HARA

Directed by
JOHN FORD
A REPUBLIC
PICTURE



co-starring

BEN JOHNSON • CLAUDE JARMAN, JR.
HARRY CAREY, JR. • CHILL WILLS

featuring
J. CARROL NAISH • VICTOR MCLAGLEN
GRANT WITHERS • SONS OF THE PIONEERS

Cartoon News
Matinee 3:00 - Evening 6:45-8:45

Brief Case
in Order



Why do some men get ALL THE RAISES? Because they make a swell impression — by keeping both their business in order and their clothes neat, well-pressed. Start now — with our regular dry cleaning and pressing service. Quick. Reliable. Economical.

EICHER'S
Cleaners & Dyers
FREE PICKUP & DELIVERY
PIGEON No. 183 • CASS CITY No. 233

STAR

THEATRE — ELKTON
Show Starts 7:30 p. m.
PHONE 97

FRIDAY and SATURDAY
MARCH 16 - 17

Two Features

Johnny Weissmuller
in

"Tarzan's Triumph"

— also —

James Mason

in

"One Way Street"

Cartoon

SUNDAY AND MONDAY
MARCH 18 - 19

Matinee Sunday 3 P. M. Cont.

GREGORY PECK
as The
Gunfighter
with MILLARD MITCHELL
Directed by HENRY KING • NUNNALLY JOHNSON
Produced by 20th CENTURY-FOX

Dancing every Saturday Night to Ted and his Solovox at the Silver Dollar, Bay Port.

Another Shipment Ladies' and Girl's Easter Dresses, make your selection today. Use our Lay-A-Way Plan. Our store will close from. 12 to 3:00 p. m. Good Friday.

Polewach's.

"If Only The Walls Could Talk" The "Annual Report"

By Denny Esch, Pigeon Historical Society President

March is the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society with the election of officers, committees appointed, projected budgets and projects for the new year ahead, and of course the "Annual Report".

All was going well, I got my committees appointed, election ballot printed, meeting dates set, budget done for board approval . . . and then . . . procrastination sat in. Do I really need to report on how great of a job the members of the Pigeon Historical Society really do?? Do I really need to report that nearly 500 people follow us on Facebook daily?? Doesn't everyone know that we post "Past Local History" nearly 3 times a day?? Do I really need to report that nearly

350 plus adults tour the Museum annually?? Do I really have to explain why we are the "Number One Choice Stop" for school age field trips?? Doesn't everyone already know that we print a quarterly "Recorder" with nearly 450 being circulated?? Hasn't everyone already seen our web site?? Hasn't everyone been in the Woelke Research Center looking through the hundreds of books and records available to them on finding their heritage??

When the procrastination subsided and I took a deep breath, I included in the "Annual Report", what it took to get where we are today. . . "The community support of the Pigeon Historical Society, is the best anywhere in the county. Year after year the Business Membership and Individual Supporters have provided hun-

dreds of dollars annually to help support our summer help and we "Thank you" for that. When a major project was undertaken, the support was always there, and we "Thank you" for that too.

Last November the Village of Pigeon voters supported the passage of millage for the Pigeon Historical Society. The millage supports the purpose of the Society . . . to discover, collect and

preserve the History of Pigeon and the surrounding area , , , and provide accessibility to those who wish to examine it . . .

"Thanks you" voters of Pigeon for your additional support . . . something special is about it happen. . . .

**"If Only the Walls
Could Talk"**

EASTER – Time for a NEW PIECE OF JEWELRY

PEARLS – NECKLACES – BRACELETS
GIVE A FINE WATCH –
Hamilton - Elgin - Gruen - Boulevard
See the New 17-Jewel Elgins at \$33.75
Hallmark Easter and Confirmation Cards

SPENCE BROS.

Silverware Pigeon Ph. 10 Glassware

A Kid Growing Up On Saginaw Bay Rescue In The Rush Lake Quicksand

Part 12 in a final series by Jim Leinbach

The drama unfolding this late summer day on the waters of Rush Lake is historically known as "THE RUSH LAKE TRAGEDY." It received little print coverage in those days but the legend of this horrible event was passed down in the households of many who were directly and indirectly affected by its results.

On that day, shrill screams and cries rose up from the rushes on the west shore where people were being mired in the quicksand in their attempt to rescue the two boys who had gone fishing on foot. Our own crew was perched on the bottom of their overturned boat attempting to cinch the anchor rope to the wrists of two adults who had managed to swim to their craft. The situation had turned desperate and was about to become worse. The old boat the kids used was a 1930's design made completely of wood. It had no modern flotation equipment nor did it contain any life jackets. With the boys clinging to the bottom and the two adults frantically pulling on the rope, the boat tipped to the side allowing the air pocket under the boat to escape rendering it incapable of staying buoyant. In an instant the boat turned upright, immediately filled with water, and slowly disappeared into the limitless depths of Rush Lake pulling the two adults who had their hands tied to the anchor rope with it. The contorted horror on the adult's faces as they sank out of sight was etched into our lad's minds forever, and sensing their own peril, the three kids began swimming madly the hundred yards toward the campground. The relief the boys felt when they could touch the sandy bottom off the campground was immeasurable. Exhausted and in shock themselves, they flopped down on the sandy shore gasping and crying while in the background the yelling and screaming of the adults pierced their ears. Several



moments passed before the kids staggered up toward the makeshift picnic tables where more sobbing adults and children were either yelling instructions, prostrate on the sand in grief, or kneeling and praying.

In the distance the wail of a siren was heard and quickly police and civilian cars were sighted racing wildly through the woods toward the north shore. Several men in hip boots exited the cars and tore madly to the west shore in the direction of the screaming mothers and fathers. Our boys did not join in the chase. They sat white-faced near a camp fire, teeth chattering despite the heat, saying nothing, and wiping tears that continued to flow.

As evening approached the police and rescuers began to trickle back toward the picnic area. Long poles had been cut from the woods to build drags and pull the dead. The bodies of the two boys who had attempted fishing from the west shore were never found. A total of four adults had perished in the rescue attempt and only two of them were returned to the site; the other two were lost as the boat sunk and were never recovered. Courage and love for their fellow man motivated the rescuers and survivors, and it was God's will that decided for the rest. The weeping and sobbing among the folks on that beautiful evening was heartbreaking to hear.

Since the Rush Lake Tragedy, several swimmers, duck hunters, and fishermen have met their end in the lake. It's a place the settlers avoided if possible, and that mentality exists to this day.

Our lads never returned to the lake after that day. To have gone back would have stirred memories that must be put away in order to move on. The boy who had helped tie the adults to the boat with the anchor rope never forgave himself for their deaths and those thoughts haunt him to this day.

Pigeon

In 1890 Pigeon which up to that time had been slow in growth, took a new lease of life, and from that time until the present, development and advancement has been apparent each year.

In 1890 Liken & Bach of Sebewaung purchased the John Diebel saw mill and converted it, into a stove and heading plant which they operated until 1890 on the site of the present Pigeon; Lumber Co. After disposing of his saw mill Mr. Diebel built his planing mill in 1890 on the present site of the Diebel Auto Co. Sometime later the plant was destroyed by fire, but was subsequently rebuilt and for a number of years was conducted by Charles Prast until after the second fire.

In 1895 Joseph Schluchter and Leipprandt Bros. moved their interests to Pigeon, the latter erecting the same year a grain elevator. The S. T. & H. Railroad Company also built an elevator about the same time. It was in 1895, too, that Wallace & Orr Co., of Bay Port, erected a building and put in a stock of general merchandise and one year later they sold the store and property to Joseph Schluchter. This building occupied the site of the present building owned by J. W. Leipprandt & Son.

In 1895 Henry Moeller Sr. platted what is now known as the north

end of town, and the Crawford Est. plat was also recorded about the same time. The Maccabee hall was also erected about the same time. The same building is now used as a hardware store by John Diebel. The Hotel Heasty was also built in 1895 by William Heasty and John A. McLean. McLean occupied what is now the Hotel Vollmer bar room for a grocery and hardware. The third floor addition, on the west of the hotel, was erected in 1914. Following Mr. Heasty, those who conducted the hotel in the early days were George S. Farrar, O. M. Brooks, Laughlin & Bowell, Geo. C. Powell and Charles Schneck.

Frank Hubbard & Co. established the Farmer's Bank in 1895 which was the first bank. F. W. Merrick was the cashier. In 1906 Arnott & Marks of Sanilac county opened up the Pigeon State Bank which was absorbed by Hubbard interests in 1908.

The first Pigeon school was erected in 1896 at a cost of \$5,000. In 1916 the building was destroyed by fire and the present building completed the following year. Eleven years ago the gym was erected.

In the 1880s there were no hard surface, roads in the county and only a very few miles of gravel that were poorly built.

We'd love to see you on our Team!

An individual or business can become a member by contracting any active member or by sending your tax deductible cash or check to Pigeon Historical Society, 59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523, Pigeon, MI 48755. Dues are renewed at the annual meeting each year.

Individual Membership: \$20.00 (active member with voting privileges)

Contributing Members: A Contributing Member supports the Historical Society as an Individual or Business but does not participate in the monthly functions of the Society. Contributing members are not eligible to vote or hold office of the Society.

Contributing Membership Levels per annum

Novice Collector	\$ 50.00\	Artifacts Collector	\$100.00
Heirloom Collector	\$150.00	Archival Recorder	\$ 500.00
True Historian	\$1,000.00		

Contributing Members shall receive a Membership Certificate stating their support to the Pigeon Historical Society.

Junior Member / Junior Historian: Junior Members are those who have reached the age of 12 years, but have not reached the age of 18 years. Junior members are not eligible to vote or hold office. **Dues:** Volunteer 10 hours of service to the Society. Junior Membership Certificate received after volunteer service is completed

Junior Historian: Junior Historians are those in second, third, fourth or fifth grade, have studied Michigan history, local history and has visited a local museum. They are entitled to receive a Junior Historian Certificate upon completion.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Be our guest and become a member!

Local News

Pigeon Progress March 19, 1951

Mrs. Howard Bedford and Mrs. Louise Petzold attended the funeral of Mrs. Dale Tides of Ubyly.

Norman Strieter of Saginaw, visited at the Mrs. Dora Schulze home Sunday. Mrs. Strieter, who had been with her mother since Thursday, returned home with him.

Mrs. Herman Westphal and daughter Beatrice of Port Huron, were weekend guests of Rev. and Mrs. Ernst Henkelmann and family at Bay City General Hospital.

Bob Carpenter of Dearborn, spent the weekend with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Carpenter.

Bob Boyer and Dick Boyd were guests at the Otto Woelke home.

Miss Delores Sturm of Mt. Pleasant, spent the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Sturm.

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Smith and Frank Henke of Saginaw, were Sunday visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Richmond.

Mr. and Mrs. Meldrum Baerwolf spent Thursday in Detroit on business.

Arnold Schumacher and children of Port Austin, visited his mother, Mrs. William, Schumacher Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Maturen and family of Saginaw, were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Willis Yackle and family.

Family Photos - Part Of Community's Heritage

The Pigeon Historical Society has a large collection of historical postcards and photographs. Many of these images have been enlarged, and are on display in the Depot Museum and the Arthur J. Woelke Historical Research Center. We are always on the look-out for other pictures that are not in our collection. It is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, and we are in search of those images.

If you have family photographs which show something that you would consider of interest to the community, please contact a board member. We will be holding scanning events again this summer.

We are always looking for old photographs, negatives or slides, and old postcards like the one shown here. If you have any old boxes or albums of pictures, don't throw them away until we are given the opportunity to view them for potential inclusion into our collection.

Call the museum at: 989-453-3242, Duane Wurst at 989-545-5240, or any board member for more information.

