



Spreading the.....

Farm Museum Newsletter

ST. CLAIR COUNTY FARM MUSEUM
 "PRESERVING A BIT OF YESTERDAY FOR TOMORROW"

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- General Membership Meetings: Please check the website for updates.
- Remembering FHD 2021

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Meeting Minutes	1
Member Spotlight	1
Volunteer Thank You	2
Our Collection	2
Upcoming Events	2
Remembering FHD	3-4
Interesting Finds	4
Remembering the Past	5
Board Members & Contacts	6

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

A recap of the general membership meeting of the farm museum held on October 19, 2021 seems appropriate for this time of year. It seems our membership is dwindling, and it seems many volunteer organizations are suffering likewise. There were approximately 15 members in attendance of which nine were board members. The usual agenda was submitted along with the treasure's report and it was shown that the museum has a healthy fund balance to start the upcoming year. Information was presented on the December Breakfast with Santa event, the 2022 show feature tractor which is John Deere, and the golf cart which was purchased for the 2022 harvest day's raffle. In the farming report, wheat harvested this fall was replanted, and has sprouted. Repairs

to the steam tractor's water tanks are underway including the removal of the tanks for replacement. There were no new nominations for the Board of Directors and all existing members will remain on the board, therefore, there will not be an election in November. In new business, it was suggested the farm museum purchase a golf cart for the use of members to move about the museum grounds as needed and to lend assistance to people with physical impairments. Discussion was held regarding gas or electric powered, with members checking prices to present at the November meeting.

As was stated, attendance at the membership meetings was slim so we as a group need to encourage other members to get involved and do their part for the good of the

museum. We are all here for some good reasons and we need to help grow the organization or it will be, as Ernie Harwell said, "it's long gone". We need to keep the museum alive and we each need to do our part.

Some of the ways to help are simply a matter of attending meetings and finding a project that suits your interest. Whether it be helping on restoration of equipment, staffing the museum during open times, helping fund raise or helping plan our future. There is something for everyone. One quick way is to contact member Dianne Peasley to help out with the raffle baskets or the bake sale at the Breakfast with Santa. It's a start in the right direction rather than the "long gone" of another organization that could have been a gem in our community.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT -

DENNIS VANNUCK

If you have attended events hosted by the farm museum you probably have seen a familiar face constantly helping out where ever needed. That would be museum member Dennis VanNuck who has enjoyed being a member for a "long time". Dennis lives in Columbus, MI where he enjoys crop and hay farming, and the fabrication of wood and or metal projects. Being employed at Richmond Millwork as a cabinet maker, it is only natural that Dennis enjoys working in the museum sawmill and building and repairing many of the projects at the museum. Dennis often sees a problem or something that needs to be repaired and just takes it upon himself to develop a solution for the betterment of the museum. He has constructed

many projects at his home, such as a new people mover wagon, and brought them to the museum to use for special events. Keeping the farm museum alive for others is why he became a member, along with "helping with many different projects and seeing visiting families happy with the things we offer". As a member, Dennis likes meeting new members and learning from them, finding out and enjoying their interests. Dennis especially likes helping out at the Christmas and Easter events and the October pumpkin fest for nothing more than meeting other people and making kids happy. Dennis remains open minded to all tractors large or small, red or green and tries to see the difference in each.

The farm museum is privileged to have Dennis as a member, not only because of the many projects that he has completed, the help he generously provides, or the venison salami that never seems to run out, but as a friend to all who meet him. Thank you Dennis, for ALL you do.



Photo by Mike Sexton

HELPING US ACHIEVE OUR MISSION

The St. Clair County Farm Museum can not exist without the many volunteers and sponsors that donate either time or money to help us accomplish our mission. We would like to thank the many that help us through out the year.

Event Sponsors

Steiner Tractors

AIS Construction Equipment

Star of the West Milling

Dick Huvaeres Chrysler

Cargill Salt

JRT Thumb Auctioneers & Realty

Foster Oil

Goodells Mini Storage

Lixey's Storage

Foam All

Hammars Contraction LLC

24th Street Pizza

And everyone else who helps make the Fall Harvest Days possible.

The farm museum has always been operated by volunteers and like many other organizations, is suffering from a lack of help. The museum has many opportunities to volunteer. No particular skill is needed as members are always willing to share their knowledge and help others learn. If you do have a skill that you are willing to share, members are always willing to learn. If you are interested in helping out in some way, please contact one of the members for information on how to get involved.

OUR COLLECTION -

<http://www.towerbells.org/HillsboroFoundry.html>

GRIST MILL AND POOR FARM BELL



C. S. Bell Grist Mill ca. 1869

While starting to set up activities for this years pumpkin fest, I was told of a corn cracker stored in the mechanics barn. While cleaning it up for use in our event I wondered about the

maker of the machine. Lying inside the hopper of the grinder was an old cloth sack with the original directions for use. Unfortunately there was nothing identifying the manufacturer. Internet research lead me to an identical machine which listed the C. S. Bell Company as the maker. It seems as this business was started in 1858 by Charles Singleton Bell in Hillsboro, Ohio and is still in operation today. Ironically, Mr. Bell manufactured dinner bells and was a major producer of a steel alloy called

"chrysal metal" and shipped bells around the world. During the late 1860's, the company branched into the casting of other items one being the grist mill. It appears that our grist mill has a replaced original has the C. S. Bell company name cast into the side.

Curiously, I looked at the Poor Farm bell located on the first floor of the Museum only to find the inscription "The C. S. Bell Co." which dated the bell after 1894. Interesting to find two items

in our museum made by the same company from the same chrysal metal.

The alloy used, developed by Charles Bell, was novel because it allowed the company to "tune" the cast bells to a certain tone. The same metal was used for the "burrs" (grinding cones) in the grist mill.



St. Clair County Poor Farm Bell

UPCOMING & PAST EVENTS

Membership Meetings

November 16, 2021

January 18, 2022

Reminder, no meeting in December

With this Covid pandemic that has consumed our lives, we must be able to change directions as quickly as driving a narrow front end tractor. Our ability to hold events may change direction so please check the museum website, facebook, or call to confirm the events you are interested in attending.

Breakfast with Santa

Sunday December 5, 2021

10am -1pm

Sleigh Days

TBD

Late January to Late February
Depending on snow conditions
Check the Web or Facebook

Easter Bunny Breakfast

Sunday, April 10, 2022

9am-1pm

Pumpkin Fest

Despite all odds, this years pumpkin fest was considered a success. Between the drought, the pesky deer, and torrential rainy periods, many people came out to take a wagon ride and grab a pumpkin. Thanks to Bob Sullivan and Fred Peasley for their farming skills to produce the pumpkins for the event.



REMEMBERING FALL HARVEST DAYS 2021

PHOTOS BY KARL SCHWAB & MIKE SEXTON



REMEMBERING FALL HARVEST DAYS 2021



INTERESTING FINDS -

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

A recent trip out East ended with a visit to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania where we had the pleasure of attending the Steel Weekend and Steelworkers Reunion held at the site of the over 100 year old Bethlehem Steel facility. We strolled through the museum which houses four galleries which showcase the history of Bethlehem Steel, steel production, a variety of machinery and Bethlehem's far

reaching impact on the construction of American structures. For example, it was noted that 80% of New York City was built with Bethlehem steel as was over 1100 naval and merchant ships.

We were led on a tour of the now vacant buildings, once numbering over 100 and stretching close to five miles. The buildings housed the entire operation of steel production but now look like the

Roman ruins, many of which are owned by a local casino. We then walked along the Hoover Mason Trestle which once supported railroad tracks for carrying the coke, limestone and iron ore needed to make the iron from the ore yard to the five blast furnaces which the walkway passes.

This is definitely a trip for anyone interested in old Iron and machinery.



Bethlehem Steels Five Blast Furnaces

REMEMBERING THE PAST

A CORN SHELLER,

AN OLD WRINGER WASHING MACHINE,

AND WALNUTS

Fall is a special time of year and as I get older, I look back and wonder just what it was that made it so special. I remember the evening burning of the leaves, out on the edge of the street with the aroma that can only be found with this type of fire. But it was the marshmallows that mom provided, to place on the stick found in the yard, that made the raking chore rewarding. If we were lucky the sugary treat wouldn't catch fire but would become golden brown just prior to ignition. Then there was the trip to the apple orchard to purchase the winter's supply of apples and gallon of fresh apple cider drawn right out of the oak wooden barrel where it was stored in the bottom of the barn to keep it cool. Returning to school was always welcomed, not so much for the lessons in math and geography but for the thought of arriving home to find dad waiting to take me squirrel hunting at "buddy boy's" farm. Me, with my trusty BB gun and dad with his 12 ga. Winchester, always managed to bag a few for the following days dinner, mostly due to my job of walking on the opposite side of the tree to chase the squirrel to its ultimate death. All were good times and created fond memories, except for the stained fingers.

Going to school with stained fingers was slightly embarrassing but quickly explained. You see, for us, a corn sheller, an old wringer washing machine and walnuts always seemed to go together in the fall. It all started back at "buddy boy's" farm, where we drove down to the lane

where the three walnut trees stood alongside the hay field. There we would pick up the walnuts which had fallen to the ground, place them in buckets and then empty the green and brown spheres into a large trailer. When all of the nuts were harvested, we would take the treasures to dad's shop where we would systematically prepare them for the cleaning process. I say process because dad was very skilled at minimizing the effort it took to do any task, much like an engineer develops solutions to problems. The old corn sheller was the tool of choice for removing the husks from the walnuts. Dad had crafted a wooden chute in which the walnuts were fed into the corn sheller which, of course, was powered by an electric motor. No hand cranking for the engineer. The walnuts were stripped of their husks but the ensuing discharge of the walnuts from the sheller was not entirely a finished product. It seems the really ripe walnuts gummed up the process and required a long stick to be inserted into the sheller to get the stream flowing again. The gooey mess ejected from the sheller spilled onto a custom made half pipe trough which was engineered to have just the right size openings between the long rods of which it was made. Now the fun began. It seems as the gooey mess which came out of the sheller contained the round hard walnuts that was the goal of the whole process. The problem was to remove as much of the hull from the mess so that the next step in

the process would be less messy. This was accomplished by using our hands to push down on the nuts to force the goo through the openings while directing the walnuts on their path to an awaiting crate. Thus the embarrassing stain on our hands as the brown stain was quick to color our fingers. Dad's limited supply of rubber gloves only spared the wearer of the staining action. Next, on to the washing machine.

You might think that the washing machine was to help remove the walnut colored stain from our clothes and hands but we weren't that lucky. The old wringer washing machine was used to clean the nuts. It seemed that this was the best use for an obsolete washing machine as the agitation of the washer was just what was needed to remove the remaining debris and stain from the nut shells and prepare them for drying. After several changes of water and the removal of the floating nuts, as these were void of a usable nut meat, the nuts were laid out on screens to dry. People said these were the cleanest walnuts they had ever seen and made the next process of removing the nut meat a much cleaner job and just before Christmas they would be ready for consumption.

After cracking and picking out the "meats", the nuts were used by mom for a huge variety of tasty morsels. Cookies and cakes always seemed to have a great flavor when the nuts were added to the recipes. Well worth the embarrassment of the stained fingers.

WE'RE ON THE WEB
STCLAIRCOUNTYFARMMUSEUM.ORG



Find us on Facebook



ST. CLAIR COUNTY FARM MUSEUM

8310 County Park Drive
Goodells, MI 48027

810-325-1737
sccfarmmuseum@gmail.com

Museum Board

Garry Spencer, Pres.	Bob Sullivan
Yvonne Markel, V. Pres	Terry Dunn
Lisa Thacker, Sec.	Kim Schultz
Bill Schultz, Treas.	Fred Peasley
	Wayne Coon
	Bill Zegelian

The mission of the St. Clair County Farm Museum is to provide an understanding of our heritage, add to our areas cultural base and enhance regional tourism. This is achieved by acquiring, preserving and presenting agricultural and domestic equipment and related artifacts in structures and settings which will portray the origin and evolution of farming and rural living from when the area was first settled until about 1960.

The museum is a 501c3 charitable non profit organization which is operated entirely by volunteers. The museum always welcomes new volunteers to join us in achieving our mission. An agricultural background is not a requirement to become a member. Please join us at our meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 pm in the Community Building at Goodells County Park.

St. Clair County Farm Museum
P.O. Box 202
Goodells, MI 48027

