



# Spreading the..... Farm Museum Newsletter

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

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT -

Who would have ever thought that a chance meeting of a couple of teenagers at a Hank Williams Jr. concert would lead to a long term friendship? In 1998, Kyle and Matt did just that. Not only do they share a fondness of country music but also a love of old engines as they can be found around the Museum either restoring, operating, or demonstrating hit and miss engines. Both were recently placed on the board of directors and are looking forward to serving the Museum. As these two are relatively new to the Museum, both were selected to be in the spotlight as a way to get to know them.



Kyle  
Slifco

Kyle grew up in Armada, attended Armada schools and currently lives near Memphis where he operates his own company, Slifco Equipment Repair and Welding, LLC. He developed his love for old engines many years ago on his grandfather's farm and continues his hobby of repairing antique farm equipment. Kyle became a member of the Museum a few years ago because he is interested in preserving and sharing his knowledge of the long forgotten methods of farming. This is evident in his willingness to mentor younger members of the Museum in the operation and restoration of equipment. Kyle's main interests at the Museum are the hit and miss engines, tractors and steam engines. He, along with Matt, are working to create the engine shed on the West side of the T Barn where the hit and miss engines will be on display along with other artifacts pertaining to engines. Even though his favorite tractors are Allis Chalmers and Oliver's, Kyle would like to eventually see the Port Huron steam engines pulling plows in the field. It would certainly make for an interesting Plow Day.

Matt, born and raised in Riley Township, is also a graduate of Armada Schools and currently lives in the Memphis area with his wife and two sons. Matt's education includes an associates degree in automotive technology from Macomb Community College and has been a Ford Motor Company senior master technician since 2010. He is employed at Imlay City Ford. For as long as Matt can remember, he has been interested in

all types of engines and is interested in helping the Museum get all of the engines and tractors running. Matt's hobbies are many and include old and new cars, trucks, and farm tractors, hunting, fishing, and trapping. Matt became a member a few years ago when his friend Kyle signed him up as a member of the Museum. Favorite tractors include International Harvester, but he is willing to tackle any of the colors. One thing he would like to see at the Museum is a spark show at Fall Harvest Days using the steam engines. Matt is glad to be a member and is looking forward to helping out any way he can.

The Museum is very fortunate to have these two members who are willing to share their expertise and enthusiasm for what we do. It is good for the Museum to encourage younger members and we welcome new and fresh ideas to help the organization grow. Thank you both Kyle and Matt for being a part of this organization.



Matt Ballard

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## THANK YOU

### Corn Crib



Thank you to Bob Sullivan, Mark Taylor, and Kyle Slifco for their hard work constructing the new corn crib. And to Fred Peasley, Terry Dunn, Kyle Slifco, and Tommy Wilson for harvesting the corn that will be used for shelling demonstrations at Fall Harvest Days.



### Concession Chairperson

After many, many years of being in charge of Melanie's Diner, Yvonne Markel has decided it is time to step down. She has always made sure that the wagon was well stocked for all events and that delicious food would always be available. Many of the appliances in the current trailer are the result of Yvonne's forethought and desire to offer a variety of food items to the museum visitors. Thank you Yvonne, for your time spent helping the Museum flourish by providing the funds to keep the organization solvent. We know you are not leaving, but your constant hard work will be missed.

If anyone is interested in helping out with the concession, your assistance is always welcome.

### Engine Work

A huge thank you to Kyle Slifco, Matt Ballard, and Tommy Wilson for all of their efforts restoring the Museum's hit and miss engine collection. Together, they have tackled many of the engines both restoring and making the engines operable. It is nice to see that Kyle and Matt have taken up the task of teaching Tommy the skills needed to restore and operate these engines.



## UPCOMING & PAST EVENTS

### Membership Meetings

April 15, 2025  
May 20, 2025  
June 17, 2025

### Board Meetings

April 2, 2025  
May 7, 2025  
June 4, 2025

Keeping in touch with the Museum happenings has never been easier. Information can be found on the Museum Facebook page or on the Museum's web site. As always, please consider joining us at one of our events.

### Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Now is the time to start scheduling your activities for spring. Breakfast with the Easter Bunny will be held on April 13 and volunteers are needed to help with the many tasks. Please contact Yvonne Markel, Melissa Wilson or Linda Taylor if you are able to help out.

### Earth Fair

Earth Fair at Goodells County Park this year is April 25th & 26th. Although it is not a Museum event Museum volunteers in the past have operated the concession stand and provided people mover and barrel train rides to the Fair visitors. Please consider giving a portion of your time to help out at this fun event.

### Work Days

As the weather warms, the Museum has many projects that need to be attacked. Equipment restoration & repair, deaccessioning the Museum collection, or simply cleaning and organizing the Museum are just a few of the tasks the could use help. Interested in helping out, contact Fred or Terry for details.

### Plow Day

Tentatively scheduled for May 10th, plow day is a chance to bring your tractor and put it to work or just come out and see vintage tractors in use. We have equipment to hook to if needed. Come on out and help prepare the fields for planting.

## A RETURN AFTER 65 YEARS

. On rare occasions we have the opportunity to hear stories from the past. Our sleigh ride Sunday in January was one of those special times. While welcoming a visitor to the Museum event, I had a chance meeting of Mr. Ron Graham from Port Huron Township, who shared a bit of history of the County Medical Center. Mr. Graham stated that he had not had a sleigh ride at the Medical Center, now Goodells County Park, in 65 years. Knowing that the Farm Museum has

not hosted rides for that long, I couldn't resist hearing the story.

Ron was a young boy of 15 around that time and as a Boy Scout with 19 other boys of the same age range visited the center. It was at the Medical Center where Ron and his fellow scouts met George Phetteplace who was the caretaker of the farm animals at the center. George offered a sleigh ride to the 20 teens around the grounds and afterwards all enjoyed a nice warm bonfire. Who would have known that 65 years later, Ron could enjoy a sleigh ride again at the old Medical Center. We hope that this year's sleigh

ride turns out to be as memorable as his last one.



Ron Graham (right) enjoys a sleigh ride with Kim Schultz

## MICHIGAN ENGINES

This years feature tractors are Ford and Michigan made engines and hopefully we will have a good selection of these represented at the Fall Harvest Days. Thanks to Mark Schwab asking the question on the forum *SmokeStak*, I have compiled a list of many of the hit and miss engines that were once made in Michigan. The late 19th to early 20th century was a time of rapid expansion of the use of live power to help with the many industrial and farming activities of the time. Many companies produced these power plants.

Alamo	Ideal
Alma Mfg (McVicker)	Lion
Bates & Edmonds	"Litscher Lite"
Brownwall	Nelson Bros.
Chapman	New Way
Cook	Novo
Detroit Engine Works	Olds
Field Brundage	Peerless
Gray	Regal
Holmes	United

The St. Clair County Farm Museum Presents:



# Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Sunday, April 13th  
9 am - 1 pm

Egg hunt with breakfast

Kids crafts

Raffles

Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs,  
Sausage, Drinks

Location:  
Goodells County Park  
Community Center

Find the Farm Museum at:  
Goodells County Park  
8310 County Park Drive  
Goodells, MI. 48027

[www.stclaircountymuseum.org](http://www.stclaircountymuseum.org) 810-325-1737

The museum is a 501c3 non-profit, charitable organization operated by volunteers.



Please consider joining to help us preserve the heritage of the farming communities of rural St. Clair County



## TWIST DRILLS, PHARMACEUTICAL MACHINES, & HIT AND MISS ENGINES

I spent some time this past week sorting out drill bits for use in the recently donated Canedy Otto drill press. Wanting to have a complete set of sizes, I had to look carefully at the often times worn stamping on the side of each of the drill bits when something interesting caught my eye. The word Detroit stamped on the side of a few of the bits piqued my interests enough to have me do a little research into the history of the manufacture of these bits. The history of the age of industrialization has always been a fascination of mine. Around 150 years ago, we were just beginning to build items in mass to help ease the work we had to do. The building of machines helped to make our lives easier and served as a catalyst to build more machines. Thus was the story of Arthur Colton.

I noticed on a few of the bits the initials "N T D & T Co. Detroit" was stamped around the shank while other bits sported the word "Colton Detroit". Assuming these words indicated the manufacturer, I started researching the terms. N T D & T is the initials for the National Twist Drill and Tool Company, founded around 1903 and closing around 1983. The company is well known for supplying tooling to support the war machines.

Colton, however, is an older story. Arthur Colton was born in 1858, near London, England and immigrated to the United States in 1881 moving to Detroit in 1882. Arthur was married that same year and passed away in 1948. Arthur's skills as a machinist and inventor led him to create a manufacturing company called

the Specialty Machinery Company in 1886. In 1902 the Arthur Colton Co. was founded, located on Brush St. and Jefferson Ave., and was best known for its manufacture of pharmaceutical machines and laboratory equipment and was said to be the nation's largest single manufacturer of pharmaceutical machinery. Colton received many patents for methods of manufacturing compressed medicinal tablets and pill capsules. Other machines included one used to fill collapsible tubes, such as tooth paste tubes, on a small scale and a die filing machine. These innovative machines were highly sought and were distributed both domestically and worldwide. The Eli Lilly & Co. used Colton's automatic capsule machinery and eventually purchased the patents from Colton.

The Arthur Colton Company grew, as did its footprint, between 1913 and 1919 nearly doubling in size to 43560 square feet of floor space. Quality working conditions were enjoyed by highly skilled mechanics to build the intricate pharmaceutical machines. It is unclear how Colton became involved in the manufacture of drill bits but a 1922 advertisement indicates that the manufacture was well underway. Colton - Detroit Twist Drills were said to be forged from "special steel in accurate dies" and not milled and claimed there is no drill value on the market superior to those made by Colton. The advertisement states that when you buy these drills - "you are buying holes-the most holes per dollar of cost."<sup>1</sup>

With the Arthur Colton Company building pharmaceutical machines and drill bits, you might ask where the hit & miss engines come in. In the early 1900's, the company started manufacturing two cycle stationary engines. These were unique as they had a low pressure fuel injection system enabling them to run on a variety of fuels including kerosene, gasoline, alcohol and other types of fuels. These engines were under a patent of 1903 by designer and creator Arthur Frederic Evans of Cambridge, England. It is unknown how Colton acquired the approval to manufacture these patented engines but in 1911, two assignors to the Colton Company, Burton W. Scott and Charles J Schiemer applied for another patent. The patent granted in 1915 was for a simple and efficient method of injecting the fuel charge into the cylinder by using the crankcase pressure in the process and porting in the cylinder to accomplish this task. This indicates that the Colton Engine was a sealed crankcase type engine compared to the other open crank type engines.

In February of 1949, a year after Colton's death, the company was purchased by Snyder Tool and Engineering Co. The Arthur Colton name was retained as a subsidiary of Snyder, the plant and equipment of Colton's company was however liquidated.

1. [http://www.antiquengines.com/Athur\\_Colton\\_Co\\_Literature.htm](http://www.antiquengines.com/Athur_Colton_Co_Literature.htm)

## CHANGES FOR FALL HARVEST DAYS

Museum members and visitors to the 41st. Fall Harvest Days will see a few changes. The FHD committee and Board of Directors each year attempts to make changes in the activities, events and operations to make this event attractive to the many visitors who attend. Past entertainment events have failed to bring in huge crowds of visitors and have been a financial drain on our organization.

One change is the show book, which will not be published this year. The book which we have come to know

for the past several years is costly and very time consuming to lay out and may no longer serve its purpose. Mark Schwab has in the past assumed the task of putting this together but is unable to continue due to time constraints. We thank him for the many years he has given to this task. Instead, the committee is investigating a tri-fold brochure type of "book" as well as the tear off sheet that were published last year.

Advertising will also change a bit as sponsorship will be sought eliminating the small ads

as in the past.

Starting in 2025, there will be no admission fee to FHD. Eliminating the gate workers, the setting up of fences and not having to rent the entire North side of the park are a few of the reasons for this change. With our limited numbers of volunteers to do many of the tasks that need to be accomplished, it is more efficient to cut back on the tasks required.

The camping fee this year is \$25 for the weekend. Starting with the 2026 FHD, the fee will increase to \$25 per night.

Stay tuned for further updates as the event approaches.

### COMMITTEES

The Museum board has created several committees in an effort to streamline operations and help to accomplish the many activities and tasks we are involved in. Below find a list of the current committees as well as the chairpersons of each. If you are interested in helping out, please contact the Museum.

Fall Harvest Days: Fred Peasley (Chair), Aric & Jolee Vantroostenberghe, Melissa Wilson, Dean Butterfield, Yvonne Markel, Kyle Slifco, Linda Taylor

Raffle: Dianne Peasley (Chair), Bob Sullivan, Terry Dunn, Beth Sawdon

Concessions: Yvonne Markel, Melissa Wilson & Linda Taylor (3 Co-Chairs), Kim Schultz, Lori Butterfield, Jolee Vantroostenberghe, Cate Wilson, Talitha Butterfield

Kids Activities/ Community Outreach: Melissa Wilson, Linda Taylor, Jolee Vantroostenberghe, Lori Butterfield, Kim Schultz, Kate Blankenship, Cate Wilson, Talitha Butterfield, Kyle Slifco

Farming: Bob Sullivan, Terry Dunn, Kyle Slifco, Fred Peasley, Mark Taylor

Sawmill: Terry Dunn, Dennis Derby, Bob Sullivan, Fred Peasley, Ray Theut,

The St. Clair County Farm Museum Presents:



# Plow Day

Tentative Date - May 10, 2025

9 am - 2 pm

Weather Permitting, Check the Museum Website or Facebook for date

**AS A SPECTATOR SPORT:**  
Watch as vintage tractors work the fields.

**AS A PARTICIPANT:**  
Bring your tractor and equipment and help prepare the fields for planting. A few plows may be available. We need to plow, disk and drag the fields and remove stones.

**Location:**  
Goodells County Park

**Find the Farm Museum at:**  
Goodells County Park  
8310 County Park Drive  
Goodells, MI. 48027

[www.stclaircountyfarmmuseum.org](http://www.stclaircountyfarmmuseum.org) 810-325-1737

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Please consider joining to help us preserve the heritage of the farming communities of rural St. Clair County




WE'RE ON THE WEB  
STCLAIRCOUNTYFARMMUSEUM.ORG



Find us on Facebook



**S T . C L A I R C O U N T Y  
F A R M M U S E U M**

8310 County Park Drive  
P.O. Box 202  
Goodells, MI 48027

810-325-1737  
sccfarmmuseum@gmail.com

**Museum Board**

Fred Peasley, President  
Terry Dunn, V. President  
Linda Taylor, Secretary  
Melissa Wilson, Treasurer

Keith Barnhart  
Yvonne Markel  
Kyle Slifco  
Matt Ballard

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