



# Romeo Perspective

Volume 1, Issue 2 2013



ROMEO, MACOMB COUNTY, MICHIGAN

www.romeohistoricalsociety.org

## Spring Cleaning Comes to RHS Museum



Spring cleaning is underway at the Bancroft-Stranahan museum and we need your help. The Romeo Historical Society's (RHS) Bancroft - Stranahan Museum curator, Joan Beringer, is looking for volunteers to help her with the important tasks

needed to preserve and protect the museum and its many items.

Several community members have stepped forward, but we still need many more. If you have a bit of extra time and would like to help, please stop by the Bancroft - Stranahan Museum Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 or contact the RHS.

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### RHS Board

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## A "Guest" of the Confederacy Comes to RHS

Local authors Cherie and Robert Allen gave a fascinating talk to a packed room at the May General Membership Meeting. The Allen's talk was



based on their book **A "Guest" of the Confederacy**, which is the story of Michigan native Alonzo Keeler's time as a Confederate prisoner. The Allens provided a detailed account of this, Company B, Twenty-second

Michigan Infantry officer's life during his imprisonment. The talk included riveting excerpts from Keeler's diary that underscored his daily struggles.

"Keeler's story is

incredible," said Civil War buff Barb Merryfield "I learned a great deal about the daily life of a Union officer in a Confederate prison."

You can pick up a copy of **A "Guest" of the Confederacy** through the RHS, the Washington Historical Society or at Amazon.com

**Three local museums**

**Romeo Art & Archives Center**

290 N. Main Street.  
( former state police building)

**Bancroft-Stranahan House**

132 Church St.

**Clyde Craig Blacksmith Shop**

301 N. Bailey St.

**General Membership Meeting**

Join us for our General Membership Meeting, election, potluck and plant Exchange on Thursday, June 6 at 7 p.m. at the Clyde Craig Blacksmith Museum. Please help us select the RHS leaders for the upcoming year.

**Flea-n-tique**

The RHS is now accepting donations for the Flea-n-Tique. We welcome all non-clothing donations for this annual fundraiser, which will be held June 8 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at our Arts and Archives Center.

**The President's Letter.....**

Spring is underway and the Romeo Historical Society (RHS) is buzzing with activity.

Joan and Richard Beringer went with me to the 2013 Macomb County Heritage Alliance. That's where we saw longtime RHS friends and members Cherie and Robert Allen receive the Alexander Macomb Award. The Allens were recognized for their tireless dedication to researching and telling the countless untold stories of Macomb County, including their book **A "Guest" of the Confederacy.**

Romeo's 175th will replace the Annual Victori-

an Festival this year. Instead, the RHS will be opening the Bancroft-Stranahan Museum from 12 to 2 p.m. The Clyde Craig Blacksmith Museum will also be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. RHS trustee and blacksmith Stuart Walters will be on hand to answer questions about the museum and smithing in general. We hope you stop by and see all that's on display at both our museums that day.

Big things are happening at the Bancroft-Stranahan Museum. Our new watering system is about to come on line thanks to Judy and Rich Dugger. Spring cleanup is also underway and we're looking for volunteers to

help us make this local treasure shine. If you're interested please contact Joan Beringer or the RHS.

We are collecting donations for our Flea-n-Tique sale in June. Please drop off your non-clothing items at our Arts and Archives Center on Tues. evenings from 7 to 9.

We will be holding our annual election, potluck and plant exchange on June 6. We hope to see you there.

Finally, I am looking forward to fall with great anticipation. That's because we'll be hosting our first Barn Tour on Sept. 21... more information to come.

—Sue Kane, *President*

**Bancroft's Douglas Room Historic Treasures**



Tucked away on the second floor of the Bancroft-Stranahan Museum is a rare glimpse into the history of one Romeo family. Known as "The Douglas Room," it's filled with items, furniture and clothing of this prominent Romeo family. Douglas descendant Jeanne

Forristal not only donated her family treasures to the Museum, but she and her husband delivered them to the RHS from her home in Texas. In addition to this incredible collection, Forristal also

transcribed a copy of the letter Elizabeth Douglas had written describing her journey from England to America. Authored in 1924, Elizabeth recounts her family's harrowing journey across the Atlantic and like many Americans

today, having to start over after losing the family fortune.

Be sure to stop by the Bancroft-Stranahan Museum to read more and see this superb collection.



## News from our Curators

Joan Beringer has found another space in the Bancroft/Stranahan Museum to expand new displays. The closet at the top of the stairs was in bad condition.

Tim Billo found a carpenter and the closet was drywalled. Joan painted the walls and floors and Richard installed new display lighting. It definitely doesn't look like the old closet. Joan cleaned and painted the floor at the top of the stairs next to the closet. Her plan for these two areas is a display called "**Undies of Romeo.**" The museum has a collection of underwear and other unmentionables. These will be displayed in this area. You can bet that when Richard gives a tour, as he sometimes does, he plans to skip this department with visitors. By the way, if you have any historic undies that you don't need, donate them to the RHS.

Joan also painted the back porch area where the chair collection is set up. The carpenter installed a nice hand rail for the rear steps. It is much easier to climb the stairs now.

We sure are indebted to Richard



Daughtery for his assistance in the past 1812 display at the

archives. If you didn't see the 1812 display, you missed a really fine collection of 1812 period furniture, art and china.

The new display at the archives museum is on Michigan lumbering. During the year there will be talks concerning the lumbering past of Michigan by various members.

There is a Victorian living room in one corner and other areas display the tools of the lumberjack and how they worked and lived in the camps. Video is also available. But watch out for the big forest fire of 1881! It was

very bad! Do you know what lumberjack strawberries are? Do you know that a lumberjack only used a muzzleloader in the evening? Do you know that a stack of "flats" would put a smile on a lumberjack's face? Come and see this new display.

The "First Tuesday" curator talk is going to be a bicycle tour of Romeo's architecture. Bring your bike and be

at the archives at 7p.m. on the May 7th.

**Remember:** The Craig Blacksmith Museum is open the second Tuesday from 6-7 p.m. The forge isn't fired up, but you can try your hand at some of the tools. Drill a hole through some steel or jack up the road cart and put skies on it. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, the shop is open from 9-11 a.m. and the forge is fired up with blacksmith demonstrations. Watch for the reminder sign in front of the archives during the month.

### September General Membership Meeting

#### Medicine of the Past 1801-1899

Join us on Thursday, **Sept. 5** for a fascinating talk on 19th Century medicine by Richmond Historical Society member Dr. McClelland. The talk will begin at 7p.m. at the Arts and Archives Center. As always, this General Membership Meeting is open to the public and is free, but donations are welcome. We hope to see you there!



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ADDRESS LABEL

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**Preserve our Heritage!**



**EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT**

**7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

**Archives and House**

**Museums are OPEN!**

**Except when schools close  
for bad weather!**

**Send suggestions,  
ideas and photos!**

**Email addresses....**

We need your email address to add to our membership files! Please, please send us a message with your email address to info@romeohistoricalsociety.org or make sure you write it on your membership renewal.

**Thank you!**

Please don't forget to renew your membership.

**Mark your  
Calendars...**

**May 18**-175th Anniversary  
Join us as we celebrate this  
community milestone.

**RHS Museum Hours**

- Bancroft-Stranahan  
12- 2 p.m.
- Clyde Craig Blacksmith  
Shop  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**June 4**- RHS Historic Sites of  
Romeo Bike Tour 7 p.m.

**June 6**- RHS General Member-  
ship Meeting. Elections and pot  
luck 7 p.m.

**June 8**- *RHS Flea-n-Tique  
Arts and Archives Center  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

**July 13**- *Bancroft-Stranahan  
Museum open from 12 to 2  
p.m.*

**Aug. 29- Sept. 2** - *Romeo  
Peach Festival*

**Sept. 5**- *General Membership  
Meeting- Medicine of the Past  
7 p.m.*

**Sept. 21** - RHS Barn Tour

*Thank You*

Jean Forristal for the donation of the family treasures that have made it possible for us to create the Douglas Room.

Fred Buike for his donations, research and weekly support.

Richard Daugherty for his ongoing support of the Romeo Historical Society.

Rich and Judy Dugger for the watering system at the Bancroft-Stranahan Museum.

The volunteers who are helping (and have signed up to help) with the Bancroft-Stranahan's spring clean up.