

Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society Newsletter

Web: oceanahistory.org

March, 2026

Email: info@oceanahistory.org

A Note from President Paul Erickson



A Frigid February was Ripe in the Land of Mears.....

We survived the cold and snow. Record snowfalls, and low temperatures made for many fires in the fireplace. What seemed to never end is now on the run, as warm winds from the south are melting the snow-cover. Our snowbirds were lucky to be in the warmth of the south, but it was a beautiful winter for those who enjoy the scenery.....

We have fantastic news to share with the Society's Membership. This past year, we were given a gift. We have been entrusted to be the fiduciary of a magical little park, in the exact center of Oceana County. Camp Houk, is how the Society knows this little park.

Our Society published a book, and held a Civil War Reenactment there in 1984.



Sincerely,

Paul

For more information on the Camp Houk acquisition, see page 6.

The Pedal Project in Pentwater, Michigan

- Visit the official Pedal Project website for detailed information.
- Use Google Maps to search for "Pedal Project, Pentwater, MI."
- Check local tourism websites for maps and directions.
- Look for signage in downtown Pentwater directing to the project.
- Contact the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce for assistance.
- Explore social media pages for updates and community posts about the project.

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WELCOME

Open Wednesdays
10-5

If you would like to do research
at the Chadwick-Munger House,
We will be happy to assist you.

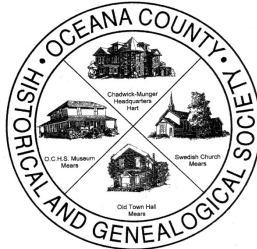


OCEANA COUNTY HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Nomination Committee 2026

- Paul Erickson
- Dean Gentel
- Carmen Osborne
- Ron Rash
- Jan Lathers

If you are interested in serving
on the Nomination Committee
in the future,
please contact a board member.



March, 2026



Photo by
Paul Erickson

CURRENT OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

Current Officers

President: Paul Erickson (2024-2026)
Vice President—Carl Wiegand (2023-2025)
Rec. Sec.—Sharon Hallack (2024-2026)
Cor. Secretary—Claire Marshall (2024-2026)
Treasurer—Dennis Gale (2023-2025)
Past President—Walt Urick

Board of Directors

Georgia Dennison (2025-2028)
Larry Osborne (2025-2028)
Ron Rash (2025-2028)

Karen Urick (2024-27)
Mort Wiegand (2024-27)
Brad Moul (2024-27)

Tina Kinsley (2023-2026)
Dean Gentel (2023-2026)
Jeff Lathers (2023-2026)

STATISTICS

QUERIES: 10
GUESTS: SEPT.—FEB.-- 83

NEW MEMBERS

Dr. & Mrs. David Carlson, Gainesville, FL
Mathew Chandler, Welston, MI

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, July 19, 2026

**Transportation Museum
1981 Mears Street
Mears, Michigan**

4 p.m.

**Election of Officers, Board Members, &
Nominating Committee
Will Take Place**

MISSION
STATEMENT
Oceana County
Historical &
Genealogical Society

THE BUSINESS AND
PURPOSE OF THIS
CORPORATION SHALL BE:

TO COLLECT, PRESERVE
AND DISSEMINATE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE
HISTORY OF OCEANA
COUNTY.

Quiz Question: *When and where did the stagecoach run in Oceana County?*
Answer: See page 6

OCEANA COUNTY HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 3	HART 4th GRADE TOURS	[AM & PM]
June 12	NATIONAL ASPARAGUS FESTIVAL [PARADE]	[2 P.M.]
June 20-August 23	MEARS MUSEUM OPEN WEEKENDS FOR VISITORS	[1-4 P.M.]
July 1	MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE	
July 19	ANNUAL MEETING	[4 P.M.]
August 16	PLEASANT AFTERNOON	[1-4 P.M.]
August 24-29	OCEANA COUNTY FAIR	
October 2	GOLDEN FAIR PARADE	[1 P.M.]

Visitors are welcome to visit the Mears Historical Complex (free) beginning weekends from June 20 between the hours of 1-4 p.m.

**We still need greeters/docents.
If you are interested in donating some time, please call the society**

Wednesday at 231-873-2600

Regular Board Meetings

**The third Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m.
Chadwick/Munger House**

**Does anyone have a picture of
the Elbridge School
when it was still the school?**

**Please let us know
231-873-2600**

**We are in only on
Wednesdays.**

March has been recognized as

Irish Heritage Month

Since 1991,

Providing an opportunity
to celebrate the

Irish-American community.

Proclamation by Gov. Whitmer

OCEANA COUNTY HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Explore more stories of our state with *Michigan History*



SAVE NEARLY 60%

Save nearly 60% off the cover price by calling (800) 692-1828, visiting www.hsm.pub/subscribe, or scanning the QR code to the right.



Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society Need YOU!

There are so many ways in which our volunteers add to the society, using their individual talents!



Filing!
Gardening! Caretaking! Auto Mechanics!
Cleaning!
Scrapbooking!
Organizing!
Cutting and Pasting!
Sharing Memories!
Setting Up Displays!
Helping Visitors! Researching!
Taking Pictures!
Taking Care of Donated Historical Items!
Thinking of ways to improve!
Coming up with new ideas!
Volunteering as a Docent at the Mears Museum!

OCEANA COUNTY HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

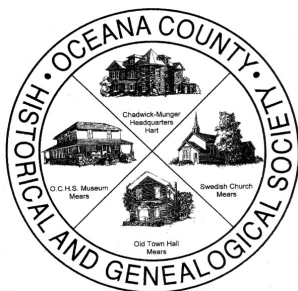
Rental of Buildings
Mears Museum Complex
Call
231-873-2600

THE STORY TELLERS

We are the chosen. In each family, there is one who seems to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the story tellers of the tribe.

(Author Unknown)

Please Consider Joining
Our Team of Volunteers
Whatever your interest is,
we invite you to come and enjoy our group
to share and to learn more
about Oceana County history.



Address

114 Dryden Street
Hart, MI 49420

Phone

231-873-2600

Email

info@oceanahistory.org

MEMBERSHIP

The lifeblood of our organization is the retention of our current members and the recruitment of new members. We could not provide all of the wonderful services and opportunities without your support! THANK YOU!!

In reviewing our current membership list there are five levels of membership available: Regular Annual Membership (\$20), Family Annual Membership (\$30), Senior Annual Membership (\$15), Life Membership (\$250) and Corporate Sponsor Annual (\$75).

We are reaching out today to challenge everyone to think of one person, business or family you might ask to join us. We are also challenging our regular membership if it fits their budget and giving goals if they might consider becoming Life Members. If you are unsure what membership you currently have, please contact the Society at 231-873-2600 or info@oceanahistory.org

So many exciting things are happening at the "Society" all the time! Interesting discoveries are made, new people join, people generously donate their time, treasure and talents and as a result our Oceana County history is preserved. Right now we are getting ready to renew our Guide By Cell audio tour subscription and working on a complete redesign of the Society's website - stay tuned!!

As funds allow we are keeping the everyday operations going while working to add new features and installations. Therefore we are challenging each of you, if you haven't renewed, please do so today. If you are not already Life Members please consider making your membership permanent. If you are so inclined and able, we would gratefully accept any donations over and above your regular membership (Regular, Senior, Family, Life, Corporate), and forward this email to others who may be interested in joining us!

This email is not being sent in desperation. Our organization's finances are holding and we intend to keep our mission going long into the future. We are simply reminding you we are here and this is truly an organization worth supporting.

Members receive our email newsletter with news and updates. We are working to bring more benefits to Members, but even that takes more members. Please consider renewing today!

THE OCEANA COUNTY HISTORICAL
& GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

See page 7 for Membership information.

THE STORY OF CAMP HOUK

1882-1917

After several sales of the property after World War 1, as the Civil War Veterans had all died, the property was given to the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America by Eugene Kuhne of Forestry Associates. The Ford Council sought to reduce its real estate holdings and contacted Billy Fitz, President of the Oceana Bank for an appraisal. Billy, in turn, contacted their appraiser, LeRoy Don Peterson to place a value on it. Subsequently Don and his wife Marjorie purchased the site from the Boy Scouts. The original parcel was part of the land grant by President Ulysses S. Grant to the Native Americans of the Flat River Band where it meets the Grand River at Lowell, Michigan. Chief Cobmoosa's band inhabited this part of Elbridge, and the parcel was the Reunion Grounds for the Indians as well as their burial grounds. The treasure of the property is the flowing well, fresh, clean water bubbling up from the ground. Water is all important.

LeRoy Don was Earl Peterson's father, and Marjorie is Paul Erickson's mother. With the blessing of Marjorie, Earl and Linda Peterson purchased the property from Marjorie's Trust. Earl and Linda's goal was, and is, to tell the historical story of the property, have it become a Michigan Historical Site, and then through hard work and a major build project, develop and make the site accessible to all.

The site would then be gifted to the Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society. Paul is the current President of the Society and will be tasked to bring Camp Houk back to life.

In the years before the use of Camp Houk by the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), as a yearly encampment, the Natives had used it as Reunion Grounds. Local Native Americans will be included to tell the complete story of the site. The OCH&G Society will utilize the "Indian Room" and all the resources they have to give an accurate account of the site and its important role in Oceana County's history.

The eventual goal of Earl, Linda, and Paul is to make the site available to history enthusiasts and visitors from local areas as well as across the U.S. In the early 2000's the site was used for Civil War Re-enactments. At these events, Civil War enthusiasts wore period costumes, fired muskets and cannons, told stories, sang songs, and even "Abe Lincoln" was on site to give his Gettysburg Address. Earl was there with his grandson Christian, and warmly remembers the best experience the two of them ever had.

The "new" Camp Houk will be surrounded by a split rail fence, have a larger parking lot, rest rooms, a large picnic-educational area, and a visitor's center with handicap accessible trails and bridges. The story of the Reunion Grounds will be told on informational signs guiding visitors through park. The grounds are wooded, and the Reunions Creek runs the entire length of the Park.

Once the site is completed, Erickson and Peterson plan on meeting with the Oceana County School Superintendents, with the hope that one elementary class from each school will come to Camp Houk, on the same day in May each year, to witness their own Civil War reenactment.

Answer to question on p. 2

The stagecoach line operated in the mid-19th century.

It primarily ran between the towns of Hart and Pentwater.

The service connected local communities to larger trade routes.

It facilitated travel and commerce in the region.

The line was an essential mode of transportation before the advent of railroads.

Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

____ New Member ____ Renewal

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

SEASONAL ADDRESS IF APPLICABLE AND DATES USED:

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

____ ANNUAL: \$20

____ SENIOR: \$15

____ FAMILY: \$30

____ LIFE: \$250

____ CORPORATE/ ORGANIZATION: \$75 (ANNUALLY)

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: OCHGS

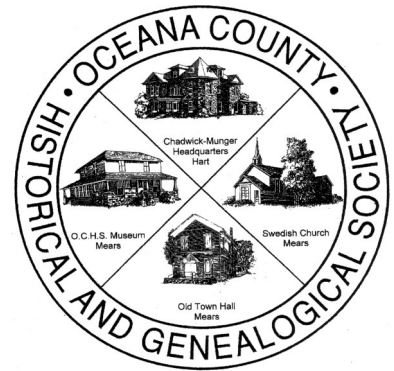
OCHGS

114 DRYDEN ST

HART, MI 49420

NEWSLETTER WILL BE MAILED ELECTRONICALLY UNLESS

OTHERWISE STIPULATED.

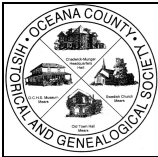


MEMBERSHIP

We appreciate your membership!
It helps to support this
completely volunteer, non-profit organization.

DUE: JULY 1, 2025





OCHGS
114 DRYDEN STREET
HART MI 49420

METHOD OF DELIVERY/MAILINGS

If you wish to receive your newsletter electronically, please let us know by contacting us at
info@oceanahistory.org

By receiving the newsletter electronically, you will receive it more quickly, and the images will be clearer.
Those of you who wish to continue receiving the newsletter as a hard copy
will still be receiving your letter in the mail as usual.

Take care! Be safe!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us if you have a change of address.
Some members' newsletters have been returned to the Society.
If you are not receiving the newsletter, please contact us!

info@oceanahistory.org