

# Grosse Pointe Encampment: On the Shores of Lake St. Clair, 1700-1820

*September 24 and 25  
Neff Park, City of Grosse Pointe*

Step back in time during the free Grosse Pointe Encampment: "On the Shores of Lake St. Clair: 1700-1820," Saturday, September 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, September 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Neff Park in the City of Grosse Pointe, 17350 E. Jefferson Avenue.

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society and the City of Grosse Pointe are co-sponsoring this interactive portrayal of frontier life on the Great Lakes. Re-enactors dressed in period attire offer authentic depictions of French voyageurs, Native Americans, British military personnel traders, and French and British settlers.

These historic figures will delight children and adults alike with tall tales and a variety of demonstrations including muzzle loading, cannon fire, and military life in the 1700s.

Guests are invited to browse and buy quality wares at the Encampment's "Sutlers" Tent or select from a variety of Grosse Pointe historical books, videotapes, and other informative videos.

"This is a chance for the citizens of this area to learn about the early settlements and how our ancestors lived among the natives and survived in a harsh, unforgiving environment," said Dale Canapini, co-chair of the event.

For additional information, call Encampment Co-Chair Debbie Graffius, (313) 882-4062, or the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, (313) 884-7010, or visit the website at [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org).



*Published by the*

**Grosse Pointe Historical Society**

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**e-mail:** [GPHistorical@aol.com](mailto:GPHistorical@aol.com)

**Web site:** [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org)

**Hours:** Tues. & Wed: 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.,  
1:30–4 p.m.

**Curator:** Suzy Berschback

**Administrator:** Linda Johnson

**Editor:** Ann Marie Aliotta

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# the Moorings

Grosse Pointe  
Historical Society  
established 1945

FALL 2005  
Vol. 22, No.2

## Grosse Pointe Historical Society Celebrates 60 Years in a Grand Style!



*Dorothy Renaud, Kay MacKay, Marilyn Wade, and  
Chris Wardwell*



*60-year-old Birthday Celebrants*



*Hosts Victoria and Robert Liggett with Lisa Mower  
Gandelot, Society President*



*Tish and Gary Collett and Leontine Cadieux*



*Frank Sladen*



*A "Jewett" automobile owned Robert Liggett*

## Letter from the Presidents

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society has had a wonderful year of celebrating its 60th anniversary. New members and cherished “veteran” members, new programs, a special birthday gala at Robert and Victoria Liggett’s on June 17th, the anticipated opening of The Society’s one room school-house on September 9th and our second Encampment on the Shores of Lake St. Clair co-sponsored with the City of Grosse Pointe on September 24th and 25th are a few of the highlights.

None of these successes would be possible without the dedication of our trustees, Curator Suzy Berschback, our cadre of volunteers and you, our members and donors. All have worked with enthusiasm, dedication and interest on the various projects. Thank you!

During this 60th anniversary year, we lost two long-time and cherished former Board members, Honorary Trustee Alfred Moran (preceded by his beloved wife and dedicated Society volunteer, Ruth in late January) in early February and Janice Wenzel Rehmann in late June. Both were devoted to The Society and helped The Society grow and develop into what it is today.

On September 2nd, The Society hosted a reception for Sarah Moran Martin, Jeff Moran, their children and friends of Al and Ruth Moran. At that time, Sarah and Jeff presented a substantial Legacy gift to The Society from their parent’s charitable remainder trust to be added to the Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Endowment Fund for the Resource Center of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society. The Grosse Pointe Farms Foundation and Grosse Pointe Memorial Church also received Legacy gifts from the Moran’s trust. The generosity of Al and Ruth Moran will continue to benefit the Grosse Pointe community for generations to come. We are, indeed fortunate, to be the recipient of one of their Legacy gifts.

We would like to thank Mary Kay DuCharme for almost two years of dedicated service to The Society as administrator. She did a superb job. Enjoy your retirement, Mary Kay!! We are pleased to announce that Linda Johnson started the same week that Mary Kay retired so that we did not miss one beat. Come in and introduce yourself to Linda and see how great the Resource Center looks—thanks to our Curator Suzy and The Society’s volunteers.

As we look forward to the next 60 years as we cherish our past, we thank you for your support and interest in the Grosse Pointe Historical Society. You make a difference.

*Lisa Mower Gandelot and Michael Skinner, Co-Presidents*

### Provencal-Weir House Docents



*Please welcome our three new docents: Russell Peebles, Nancy Pacitto, and John Wilson. These wonderful volunteers will conduct the tours of the Provencal-Weir House on the second Saturday of each month from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Anyone interested in serving as a docent may call 884-7010.*

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The Grosse Pointe Historical Society Headquarters, Provencal-Weir House, c. 1823, 376 Kercheval Ave., is open the second Saturday of each month, 1:00-4:00 p.m., during special events, and by appointment. The Resource Center, 381 Kercheval Ave., is open Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30-4:00 p.m. Phone: (313) 884-7010 Fax: (313) 884-7699 E-mail: [GPHistorical@aol.com](mailto:GPHistorical@aol.com) Website: [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org).

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# Grosse Pointe Historical Society: Bringing the Past to Life for 60 Years



*Tom Singelyn and Al Moran check out what needs to be done to the Provencal-Weir House in 1993.*

On a spring evening in 1945, a handful of history buffs got together to share stories about the old families and properties of Grosse Pointe and to try to establish an organization that would make sure these memories lived on for future generations. Sixty years later, they would surely be delighted at how the Grosse Pointe Historical Society has grown into a thriving, dynamic part of the community. Today, the Society sponsors frequent activities for all ages, from black-tie galas to children's workshops to historic lectures to family festivals. The Society owns and maintains two historic structures and helped preserve a third building in the community. Its Resource Center houses a permanent collection of artifacts and memorabilia that is available to the public.

"Grosse Pointe has a fascinating history and discovering its past is a rewarding experience for people of all ages," said curator Suzy Berschback. "It's a very important way to connect to our community and feel a part of it."

"The stories of this place one, two, or three hundred years ago capture our imagination. It's a lot of fun to envision what it was like here for past generations," she said. "The layers of generations are so intriguing: the Native Americans, the French habitants, the pioneers, farmers, and fishermen, the summer people, the auto barons. All these different groups of residents give Grosse Pointe so much character."

## The first 50 years

The Society celebrated its Golden Anniversary ten years ago with a party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Donald M.D. Thurber on Rathbone Place. Members marveled at how far the Society had come since its inception in May 1945 as a small group of loosely organized history enthusiasts with a fervent interest in Grosse Pointe. For the first 30 years or so, the group was quietly active, accepting donations of historical artifacts, presenting lectures, and even collaborating with the Detroit Historical Museum on its 1956 series, "Salute to Suburban Detroit." The Society moved around a lot, residing in libraries, schools, and the Grosse Pointe War Memorial over the years. At one point, the Society was actually incorporated into the Friends of the Grosse Pointe Public Library.



*Leon Mandel, Mike Farley and Lisa Moxer Gandelot burn the mortgage to the Provencal-Weir House after raising funds to pay it off in 2001.*

In 1978, committed citizens, led by James Gram, Mrs. William Ledyard, and Mrs. Robert Hamilton, decided to reactivate the Grosse Pointe Historical Society as an independent organization. In the following two years, bylaws were prepared by Charles Wright III, incorporation papers were filed, and the first set of officers were elected on February 5, 1980. George Zinn was an important part of the reorganization.

The next 15 years saw much growth and change. The Society hired a curator, Jean Dodenhoff, to catalogue the collection and help the public during open hours. The collection expanded tremendously and membership grew from 64 in 1980 to more than 600 in 1995. The culmination of these years was moving the Resource Center in July 1995 to its current permanent quarters at 381 Kercheval Avenue in Grosse Pointe Farms.

The next 15 years saw much growth and change. The Society

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# Log on to New Website: [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org)

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society has taken a decidedly modern approach to history with the launch of its new website, [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org). History buffs and interested residents are invited to log-on to find a wide variety of information about the history of this region and about activities sponsored by the Society.



The website features a contemporary design by Jay Hunter that is easy to navigate. Visitors have access to many photos and drawings from the archives, articles and other information about Grosse Pointe, a list of current

Society events which is regularly updated, details on how to become a member, and even a copy of the quarterly newsletter, the Moorings.

“The new website is a way to give people unlimited access to the resources of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society at their convenience,” said curator Suzy Berschback. “We have been collecting materials for 60 years and now we have a channel to share them with the community while continuing to preserve the originals.”

## Highlights of the site include:

- Selections from the 1886 publication *Grosse Pointe on Lake Sainte Claire* by Silas Farmer (one of the Society’s most valuable documents), with text and many photographs.
- Legends of Grosse Pointe including werewolves and goblins that haunted the lakeshore.

The new design is the first of a three-phase project. The Society hopes to expand the website even further with interactive maps, a historical scavenger hunt, an on-line grade school curriculum developed with the one-room schoolhouse project, and more photographs. Anyone interested in supporting this project can earmark a donation for “Website Development.”

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*Correction from the last Moorings: Our apologies to Mrs. John Hendrie for our error.*



# One-room Schoolhouse to Open September 9



*Gary Colett paints a bench for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society's One-Room Schoolhouse.*

Beginning this September, modern children will be able to turn back the clock and experience the classroom as local predecessors did. The second floor of the Provencal-Weir House is being transformed into a one-room schoolhouse, circa 1900, complete with benches, individual chalkboards, and McGuffey Readers. They will even be able to dress-up in old-fashioned costumes to complete the experience.

“The one-room schoolhouse will bring history to life for children and give them an experience, not just a lec-

ture. We hope it will get kids excited about history,” said curator Suzy Berschback. “We want people to touch, taste, smell and feel a part of history. Taking people back in time, especially children, gives them a new sense of appreciation for the luxuries of life we enjoy everyday. There is nothing like laying down on a horse hair mattress to help you appreciate your own bed, or explaining the outhouse to help you appreciate indoor plumbing, or cooking dinner from scratch to help you appreciate the microwave, or doing your homework on a chalk slate to help you appreciate the computer.”

The one-room schoolhouse will also feature a display of photographs from old schoolrooms including the 1890 Cook School and the early Kerby and Trombley schools and artifacts like 1900 classroom rules and day plans. The Society is looking for donations of Grosse Pointe School memorabilia to enhance the exhibit.

A curriculum is being developed for the second through fifth grades that will replicate what lessons were taught at the turn of the century and show how they are different—



*The second floor of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society's Provencal-Weir House.*

and the same—from lessons taught today. Teachers are welcome to follow this curriculum, but are not limited to it.

The project has been funded mainly by a \$2,500 grant from the Grosse Pointe Questers. Many members of the group are former teachers and they were very excited about the idea. “We are pleased to support the one-room schoolhouse and interested in making learning about history fun for local children,” said Carol Stephenson, president of the chapter.

## Can You Help?

We need the following items: Ladle/scooper for serving water at lunchtime; 2-4 old-fashioned coatracks; c. 1900 toys for showcases (marbles, jacks, for ages 7-11 to compare to today); an old-fashioned compass; an old wood stool; a dunce cap; a hickory stick; a c. 1880 teacher's desk.

For more information about visiting with a class or to donate items, please call (313) 884-7010 or visit the Grosse Pointe Historical Society website at [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org).



## High School Seniors Awarded Clayton Walker Evans Educational Scholarship

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society awarded three high school seniors the Clayton Walker Evans Educational Scholarship. The students are selected each year by consulting the History Departments of their high schools. Pictured are GPHS board members Patti Schollenberger (back row, left) and Danielle DeFauw with recipients Maria Salciccioli (front row, left), Grosse Pointe North; Paul Leahy, University Liggett School; and Jennifer Paone, Grosse Pointe South High School. The scholarship was founded in 1993 in memory of Evans who had been a president of the Society.

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## Grosse Pointe Historical Society: Bringing the Past to Life for 60 Years

*continued from page 3*

### Tremendous growth in the last decade

Since its 50th Anniversary, the Society has continued to expand and progress. Probably the most significant accomplishment since the 50th Anniversary was the complete restoration of the Provencal-Weir house.

“The Provencal-Weir House is a symbol of The Society and our dedication to the community. It is living history and a tremendous resource for learning,” said Lisa Mower Gandelot, co-president of the Society and leader of the Provencal-Weir House restoration efforts.



*Taking down the Log Cabin, piece by piece, to move it to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society in 1997.*

Purchased in 1988 to eventually become the Society’s headquarters, the white clapboard Greek Revival farmhouse is one of Grosse Pointe’s oldest surviving homes. Built in 1823, it was originally located on the lakeshore near where Provencal Rd. is now. It was moved to its present site, 376 Kercheval, in 1914. The Society has spent 14 years and many tens of thousands of dollars renovating and furnishing the home to be historically accurate. In 2001, they held a Mortgage Burning Party, after raising funds to pay off the mortgage balance on the house. Today, the Provencal-Weir House regularly hosts events and programs. Tours are given once a month.

The Society acquired a second historical building in 1995, a log cabin from the mid-1800s that was located on the grounds of Christ Church Grosse Pointe. Between May 1997 and January 1999, the cabin was taken apart, transported to its current location behind the Provencal-Weir House, where the logs were treated with insecticide, and then reassembled log by log. It took 77 hours to take the cabin down and more than 700 hours to reassemble, re-roof, and chink it. Today, the public can visit the cabin as part of the Provencal-Weir House tour.

“With the acquisition of these buildings, we made the commitment to be here to stay and to be a vital, energetic, proactive force in the community,” said Gandelot.

The Society has shown it really knows how to party in recent years. The Great Gatsby Gala of 1997 and last year’s Rumrunners Rendezvous were wildly successful fun and fund-raisers. This year’s Party for Posterity 60th Anniversary Celebration on June 17 was another fabulous festivity. Bastille Day has been celebrated several times by the Society as a nod to Grosse Pointe’s French heritage.

### The best is yet come

“Great plans are in store for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society,” according to Mike Skinner, Society co-president. “Our board is committed to getting more people of all ages excited about history. Suzy Berschback became our new curator in 2004 and has been instrumental in helping us achieve this.

A new website, [gphistorical.org](http://gphistorical.org), was launched this spring with a modern look and updated information designed to make the Society’s archives available to anyone with access to a computer. “We have thousands of beautiful photographs and unique documents to share with the community,” said Skinner. “Our current website is just laying the foundation to continue to build for years to come. We are excited about adding on-line exhibits.”

Numerous programs have been developed for families to experience the past together and to get kids interested in history. Last year’s summer program for children, “Life on a Ribbon Farm,” was a big success and will be held again this summer. An Encampment at the Grosse Pointe City Park is planned for September 24 and 25 with costumed re-enactors demonstrating what life was like along the shores of Lake St. Clair in the 1700s.

“One of the most exciting of our new programs is the One Room Schoolhouse which will open in September,” according to Skinner. The Society has transformed the second floor of the Provencal-Weir house into a classroom from the 1900s, complete with benches, individual chalkboards, and McGuffey readers. Kids in the second through fifth grades will be able to experience what it would have been like to go to school in Grosse Pointe one hundred years ago. Funding for this was provided by the Grosse Pointe Questers.

Today the Society stays true to its mission of preserving and promoting the history of Grosse Pointe with exciting programs and resources for all ages. The programs are supported mainly by private contributions from individuals, business, and foundations. To join the Society or for more information, call (313) 884-7010 or visit the website at [gphistorical.org](http://gphistorical.org).



*A Lovely Evening*



*A Sell-out Crowd*



*Former curator Jean Dodenhoff with Lisa Mower Gandelot*



*Mr. and Mrs. Elliott and Mrs. John Danaher*

## **60th Anniversary Celebration Biggest Fundraiser Ever for Society Party for Posterity Raises Almost \$35,000 for Community Programs**

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society hosted its largest fundraiser yet, The Party for Posterity, held on June 17 at the gracious home of Robert and Victoria Liggett. The party was a sell out at 225 people and raised about \$35,000 to help the Society forge ahead with an ambitious series of educational offerings and community programs.

The strolling supper was held in the Liggett's 1909 mansion, the former home of auto magnate Harry Jewett. The Liggetts spent 10 years restoring the Lakeshore Road home and even had a Jewett automobile, built by Jewett's company, on the grounds that night.

Another highlight of the evening was celebrating the 60th birthdays not only of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, but of several of its members and friends, including Board President Lisa Mower Gandelot, Tom Cliff, Dick Allison, and Marilyn Magreta. Frank Sladen was also honored that night for his invaluable service to the Society for the past 25 years. He was given the Society's Bronze Historic Marker for his historic importance both to the community and the organization.

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Robert and Victoria Liggett

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*Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If a mistake has been made, please accept our apology. Please call (313) 884-7010 with any corrections.*

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## New Board Members Elected



*Six new members were elected to the Board of Trustees at the May meeting: (left to right) Maud Lyon, Carolyn Candler, Khristi Zimmeth, Gail Zymsłowski, James Conway, and Valerie Dodenhoff.*

**Carolyn Candler** has been in the real estate business for more than 22 years. She and her family share a great interest in the ongoing history and preservation of homes. Her ancestors emigrated from England in the 1840s and worked as shipbuilders and then the developers of the sub-division now known as Highland Park. They lived in the Wayne State University area and then Indian Village.

**James Conway** recently retired from his position as the chief curator for the Detroit Historical Museums, where he has worked since graduating from Wayne State University with a degree in anthropology and archeology in 1971. While working at the branch facility, Historical Fort Wayne, he coordinated the renovation of the 1880 Commanding Officer's House, the Spanish American War Guardhouse, and the Tuskegee Airmen's Museum. He is the American Vice President of the International Algonquin Club. He has consulted on many local historic preservation and renovation projects, including the Provencal-Weir House.

**Valerie Dodenhoff** was born in London, Ontario, and moved to Grosse Pointe 37 years ago after marrying Dr. Peter Dodenhoff. Since 1995, she has worked on convention registration staffs and on special projects for the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Maud Lyon** came to Detroit in 1987 to be the chief curator of the Detroit Historical Museums. She served as director from 1990-1999. In 1999, working with Chairman Edsel B. Ford II, she founded Detroit 300, the non-profit organization created to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Detroit in 2001. From 2002-2003, she was Senior Vice President for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and now has her own consulting company, Maud Lyon & Associates, assisting non-profits in strategic development and fundraising.

**Kristi Zimmeth** is an award-winning writer and editor who has most recently worked for Signature magazine and Meredith Publications, owner of titles such as Better Homes & Gardens, Traditional Home, and Country Home. A former editor of Travel & Leisure magazine in New York City, she has also freelanced for Bride's, the Chicago Tribune, and the Los Angeles Times.

**Gail Zymsłowski** is a life-long Grosse Pointe resident who is involved in many community organizations. She is a board member of her sorority alumnae association, Kappa Kappa Gamma, and also serves on many boards associated with Lochmoor Club, including golf and swimming. She lives in Grosse Pointe Shores with her husband, Mark, and their three children, Bryan, 18, Kara, 11, and Lisa, 9.



***The purpose of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society is to preserve and promote the history of the Grosse Pointe Community.***

## Legends of the Fall, October 7

Celebrate the delights of Autumn at the Grosse Pointe Historical Society's third annual Legends of the Fall, October 7, 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Provencal-Weir House. Tales of the early days of Grosse Pointe will be acted out by renowned storyteller Genot Picor. Enjoy apple bobbing, pumpkin decorating, corn roasts and donuts and cider. Admission is \$5.00 per person, \$20.00 per family.



## The Past for the Future

A Simple Way to Give a Legacy  
Gift to the Society

"I give, devise, and bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_% percent) of my net estate, as finally determined for estate tax purposes, to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society (GPHS), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization located in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, to be used in furtherance of its charitable purposes."

We are indebted to our donors who have included the Grosse Pointe Historical Society in their wills or trusts. Insurance policies, IRAs, or annuities are an easy way to leave money to the Society. Future residents of Grosse Pointe will benefit tremendously from these thoughtful gifts to continue to preserve our heritage.

If you would like to leave a restricted gift or would like to discuss other gift planning ideas, please call the Society at (313) 884-7010.



## Dr. Frank Bicknell Educational Lecture

*Mark McPherson as  
"Charles Dickens"*

Wednesday, November 30

7:30 p.m.

Grosse Pointe South  
Auditorium

11 Grosse Pointe Blvd.

Call 884-7010 for information

