

# MUSEUM NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

**Volume 2 Issue 4**  
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**Monroe County  
Historical Museum**  
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**Museum Hours**  
Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat., & Sun.  
all year long  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Archives Hours**  
Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sat.  
all year long  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

by Ralph Naveaux

**MICHIGAN WEEK:** 10,000 copies of a special edition of the Monroe Journal were brought to the museum where Maria and the red shirt inmates sorted, inserted, and bundled them for distribution to the schools. Lynn Reaume, Jeanne Micka, Ralph Naveaux, Judy Yokom, Dave Stahl provided an 1812 Bicentennial Fashion Show at the awards luncheon at LaRoy's Hall.

**PERSONNEL:** Nobody in the other departments requested transfer into Museum Secretary position, so it became possible to promote from within. Part-timers received a raise. Lynn Reaume applied for the Secretary position and will be combining those duties with her education programs. That leaves Chris the sole archivist, so I am appointing Dave Ingall to assist her and will request that her position be made full time.

**COUNTRY STORE & TRADING POST:** At the beginning of May, volunteers set up the framework for a wigwam. Mike fired up the tractor to cut grass at the trading post where Bill Saul applied roundup in preparation for plowing and planting a cornfield. Unfortunately our plowing day was rained out. On May 23, we rebuilt the raised garden beds and on May 26 John Gibney & Dave Ingall helped Alisha Cooley put in another small garden near the Navarre-Morris cabin. With a reduced staff, interpretation of this site has not been very high on our list of priorities, although we have completed some major construction projects there, such as installing a retaining wall along the riverbank and repairing the foot bridge.



**RIVER RAISIN TIMELINE**  
**A DIARY OF LOCAL NEWS & EVENTS OF**  
**1806**  
by Ralph Naveaux

Last year, we got a grant to produce an ox cart. It was completed on time, although the wheels were actually based on Civil War cannon wheels. On Memorial Day, Matt Switlik and Loomis Battery complete a set of larger wheels at Greenfield Village that will be used to replace the cannon wheels. At this time, we seem poised to make some positive long-term plans for the future use of the site.

We can't predict staffing levels or volunteer commitment, but the changing neighborhood will definitely provide us with some challenges and opportunities. The area is fast losing its rural appeal, with a 450-house subdivision going up across the street, for which the main entrance onto North Custer Road will be directly opposite our barn. In addition, the farm occupying the corner next to the Country Store is up for sale and will also probably be developed. Traffic congestion will no doubt increase, and I can imagine the road being widened and a traffic light being installed at Raisinville & N. Custer.

Our "ribbon farm" will thus exist as a tiny oasis in an urban, or suburban, milieu. This bodes ill for tourism, although we might catch some 1812 buff who wanders over from the Battlefield to see what a real building of the period looked like. It also may inhibit our living history programs, such as the Lantern Tours, which might disturb the new neighbors or whose historic atmosphere might be compromised by more lights and traffic noise. As a suburban park, the grounds might need to be kept more open and better manicured? a far cry from the prevailing historical conditions prior to the War of 1812. Such a situation might also require greater and more frequent attention from the Museum staff for maintenance and security. There are, however, some potential benefits.

The site may become much more important to the neighboring residents, who may resort to it for fishing, recreation, and other non-history oriented activities. The Country Store could stand to benefit as the focal point for these people, offering restrooms and refreshments, especially to the neighborhood kids. Visitation and sales could be further augmented by families using the proposed bike trail from Munson Park to the Country Store, from where it would cross over the river and back to town or over to the Community College.

Periodic small events like the Sugarbush we held in March might also attract more people living in our general vicinity. Ideally, the burden of staffing these events, as well as selling candy at the Country Store, would mainly fall on the shoulders of our volunteers.

As far as the Trading Post buildings are concerned, their mission will remain primarily educational. School tours will bring in the greatest numbers, but there are also groups like college archaeology students, boy & girl scouts, gardeners, re-enactment groups, and others who are interested in conducting activities at our site.

Near Lasselle's gristmill at the River Raisin, Sunday, June 8, 1806:

It was 4 o'clock on a hot Sunday in June. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Michigan Territorial Militia was on parade, as ordered. Due to the recent series of alarms, the militia was required to assemble for drill and training at this time every Sunday.

Many of the men were still without uniforms. Although their officers had been ordered to make prototypes for the men to copy, they were reluctant to comply. Governor Hull had returned to Detroit a couple days earlier, bringing with him a quantity of blue cloth, along with swords, epaulets, and other items which he required his Michigan militiamen to purchase on their own. The supplies were shipped at government expense, but Hull intended to make a profit from selling them to his troops.

Since blue cloth was scarce among the traders, the governor had a monopoly on the required type of blue wool. Unfortunately, it was expensive, and most of the cash-poor River Raisin *habitants* considered the militia uniform regulations to be no more than a frivolity designed to enrich the coffers of their territorial commander-in-chief.

About the only items uniformly sported by the majority of the militia were the feathers and eagles worn on the men's hats. On June 6, the officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment had resolved "...that every true hearted citizen of the United States residing in this settlement...wear an eagle, be it of lead or silver, on his hat during the present troubles...in addition thereto, to wear daily the feathers enjoined them in the General Order given out by our worthy Governor & Commander in Chief last Fall, prior to his departure..." (1)

As far as the need for drill, most militiamen thought the dangers were exaggerated, but the authorities were taking no chances. In the case of an Indian uprising, they well knew it was impossible to predict when and where the Natives would strike. Every militiaman throughout the territory was expected to stock weapons and ammunition in his home and be ready to report to an assigned defensive post at a moment's notice.

The location for the militia drill was well chosen. Antoine Lasselle, Jr., had purchased this 3 by 40 *arpent* tract of land just last March 25 from Jacques and François Lasselle. In addition to the gristmill, there were several houses, a barn, some outbuildings, a sawmill, and even a distillery containing four *alembiques*, or stills. (2)

A number of Raisin *habitants* had become used to meeting there, bringing their grain to be ground and lumber to be sawn. In addition, a dam to power the gristmill had been built across the River Raisin by Jacques Lasselle in 1802, using local labor. Neighbors were frequently called upon to help maintain and repair the dam.(3) The men practiced marching, wheeling into a battle line, and several other maneuvers.(4) After an hour and a half of drill, they were dismissed. Some would return tomorrow, however, to work

on the stockade Governor Hull had ordered them to build as near as possible to Lasselle's gristmill.(5)

Not everyone would be involved in this military labor. Even those assigned to the *corvée* could get out of doing the work, provided they could find another volunteer or pay someone to take their place.

The following Monday, however, militia duty would be more difficult to avoid, since every militiaman was expected to appear for a territory-wide military exercise. The entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was to appear at the River Raisin for a grand inspection to be held on June 16. Companies would be arriving from Stony Creek, from Otter Creek, and maybe from as far as Maumee Bay. They were to bring all their arms and equipment, as well as food for dining in the field.

Despite the warlike preparations, the *habitants* could take some comfort in the fact that the Governor had given strict instructions that no one should take any offensive action against the Indians. There was still ample hope for peace.(6)

Much of this hope resided on the attitude of the British in Canada, who were the only foreign power which had the means and a possible incentive to stir up the Indians of the Great Lakes.

After abandoning Detroit in 1796, the British had built a naval yard and fortifications at Amherstburg, opposite Bois Blanc (Bob-Lo) Island, near the mouth of the Detroit River.

The naval yard was quite extensive, with block houses and storage buildings, a long wharf, a large wood yard. There were even some low, 350'-long, open sided sheds where local hemp was twisted and "walked" into ropes and lines for the ships.(7)

Indians were constantly seen traveling through the River Raisin country on their way to and from this British base. What meaning it had for future relations between the native and European inhabitants of Michigan Territory could only be conjectured, with possibly a certain amount of apprehension.

Relations with the British had become increasingly strained since January 25, when James Madison reported on British interference and impressment of sailors. In June, the British would commence a new blockade of France, and American ships would be caught in right in the middle. By August, American minister James Monroe and envoy William Pinkney will conclude they cannot resolve the major problems between the British and Americans concerning commercial shipping and impressment.

June 17, 1806:

It had finally come true, the vision of the Shawnee Prophet. This thirty-something, one-eyed, boastful, alcoholic brother of Tecumseh had formerly been known as Lalawethika, or "He who makes a loud noise." A year ago, however, he had undergone a traumatic vision, revealing to him what the Master of Life now required of his Red children.

Changing his name to Tenskwatawa, "the Open Door," he dropped his intemperate habits and tried to earn the respect of his people as he dabbled in medicine and preached a return to the cultural ways of their ancestors.

Back in April of 1806, in an effort to stifle Tenskwatawa's growing influence, Governor William Henry Harrison of Indiana Territory had written a scathing letter to

the Shawnee people, in which Harrison denigrated the Prophet and urged them not to turn away from the friendship of the 17 fires, the 17 states of the United States. (8)

*"Demand of him some proofs at least of his being the messenger of the Deity...,"* wrote Harrison. *"If he is really a prophet, ask him to cause the sun to stand still or the moon to alter its course..."*

After consulting with his brother, Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa had taken Harrison up on his challenge, predicting that within 50 days *"...there will be no cloud in the sky. Yet, when the sun has reached its highest point, at that moment will the Great Spirit take it into Her hand and hide it from us. The darkness of night will thereupon cover us... Then you will know, beyond further doubt, as the white chief Harrison has said, that your prophet has been sent to you from Maneto."*

It was now 50 days later. At high noon, the gathering of Native Americans looked up into the sky to see the sun disappear in an eclipse. For many, there was no longer any doubt. They would follow the brothers Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh.(9)

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(1)Minutes of a Council of Officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Militia, 6 June, 1806, McDougall Papers, Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library.

(2)Tucker, Pat. "River Raisin Mill Sites," unpublished report, citing a deed in French dated March 25, 1806, in the American State Papers (1832), cl. 8, vol. 1: 313.

(3)Supreme Court Records of the Territory of Michigan, 1805-1836, Box 10 – Folder 730, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor – copies courtesy of Pat Tucker.

In 1819, Antoine's upstream neighbor, Jean-Baptiste Lasselle, sued him for damages to his property, some of which was reduced to swampland by the waters backed up by the dam. He further argued that the water behind the dam had become stagnate and was injurious to his health. Moreover, the dam blocked watercraft from using what was recognized as a public thoroughfare. Judgment was for the plaintiff for 358 dollars and 9 ½ cents, but Antoine appealed the case.

At the death of Jean-Baptiste in 1820, his son and estate administrator, Jean-Baptiste, Jr., agreed with Antoine to submit the case to arbitration. Both parties postponed the arbitration, and the Supreme Court was asked to make a determination on the facts. The Supreme Court found that for want of mills in the community, Jean-Baptiste Lasselle had been among those asking for and assisting Jacques Lasselle in building the mill and dam in 1802, and, with one exception, did not complain of any inconvenience until 1819. They also found, however, that the damages were real.

(4)It is uncertain to what extent the troops were drilled in English. About 90% of the River Raisin men were French-speaking. There is an apocryphal legend about a Captain Jean Cecire in Detroit, who, in 1805 or 1807, was so impressed with the crisp drill performed in English by the American regular troops that he decided to switch from French to English commands. Unfortunately, his grasp of English, as well as his militiamen's understanding of military drill, was limited to such an extent that his efforts merely provoked a comedy of errors. See: Hamlin, Marie Carolyn Watson.

Legends of Le Detroit. Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884, Chapter 11, "Captain Jean," p 197-204.

It is quite possible for soldiers to learn to drill in an unfamiliar language. Many 20<sup>th</sup> century re-enactors have done so. Beyond a certain point, however, there will still be some recourse to bilingual operations. In the legend cited above, the stressful conditions of the Battle of Monguagon caused Captain Jean to forget how to give his commands in English.

(5) "General Orders," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol.37, p.47-50.

(6) "General Orders," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol.37, p 50: *"These orders are to be considered strictly as defensive: and if any person, or body of men, should attack offensively any Indian, or Indians, without good evidence first had of the design of such Indian, or Indians to attack him, or them; or should be concerned in raising and propagating a report that war is intended on our part upon the Indians; upon proof thereof, such person or persons shall be vigorously punished. And the truth and honor of the Government are hereby solemnly pledged, that our preparations are designed strictly as measures of defense, that they will never with permission be made use of to disturb offensively the quiet of the Indians, and that it is our earnest wish and prayer to God to live in perpetual peace and friendship with all our Indian brethren."* – General Orders, June 2, 1806.

(7) Garcia, Bob. The Provincial Marine at Amherstburg, 1796-1813. Posted at <http://www.warof1812.ca/provmarine.htm>, Sept. 27, 2003. This article provided some very interesting statistics on the organization of the Provincial Marine in Canada at this time. Of the 189 seamen enrolled between 1794 and 1801, 40% were English, 20% Irish, 20% French-Canadian, with smaller numbers of Scotsmen and foreigners. Desertion was high, except among the French-Canadians, who apparently were serving near home and thus had no where else to go. The lack of retention could partially be blamed on the army, which was responsible for the welfare and maintenance of the establishment. Rations were not freely supplied until 1804, pay was low and regularly held back 3 months in arrears until 1807, and enlistment bounties were less than generous.

(8) There were then just 17 states in the union, Ohio having become the 17<sup>th</sup> in 1803. The U.S. flag, however, still carried just 15 stars, along with 15 stripes. This arrangement would remain through the War of 1812 and gain fame as the design for the "Star Spangled Banner."

(9) This information is taken from a series of on-line articles on the Shawnee's Reservation Web Site at <http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Cove/8286/Tenskwisio.html?200627>, copyright 1997. There was some discussion on how Tecumseh or Tenskwatawa could have learned of the impending eclipse, whether from the Quakers or from an almanac published at the time. The brothers were apparently at Buckangehela's Town on the White River, far from their homes where they might have been able to research their response to Harrison's surprising challenge.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

by Ralph Naveaux

Seventeen people enjoyed the program on Jamestown archaeology presented by Laurel Heymann at the River Raisin Chapter's meeting on May 10th in the upstairs Museum gallery. A great deal of planning is being done in regards to hosting archaeology teaching projects at our Trading Post & Battlefield.

A recent article in the ALHFAM Bulletin called archaeology the "cool" form of history, thanks to fictional characters like Indiana Jones. On site archaeological workshops, programs, & projects can build collaborations with students, children, volunteers, academics, and granting organizations, giving more people incentives to volunteer or make return visits to your location.

The Museum received a request from the Terry McQuown, Associate Director of the Midwestern Region for The Archaeological Conservancy. He had met with Barbara Mead last week at the Office of the State Archaeologist, and she suggested that he contact us regarding archaeological sites in Monroe County that might be of interest. We updated him on the Battlefield and put him in contact with local River Raisin Chapter members who are familiar with endangered prehistoric sites.

The Archaeological Conservancy is a national non-profit organization that preserves archaeological sites that are located on private property. Generally speaking, they acquire title to the property on which an archaeological site is located, and then manage the property as an "archaeological preserve."

They have been around for over 25 years, and, to date, have helped to preserve more than 320 archaeological sites across the nation, including over 60 in the Midwest. They also publish a magazine entitled American Archaeology.

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## Wigwam Day at NATP

by John Gibney

All of our discussions and planning came to a head on May 6<sup>th</sup> when we finally constructed a frame for our first wigwam. It was a surprisingly beautiful day with wonderful sunshine and a slight breeze. We had a great many laughs and chuckles provided by the temperamental saplings that snapped as often as they bent. It was a learning experience for all and resulted in the following pictures that attest to our engineering (lack of) experience.

The wigwam committee will be meeting several times this summer to plan further frames and covering materials, as well as the removal of the ash trees and the possible construction of several blockhouses and the replication of the "Wayne Stockade". Call me for more details. 240-7781



Left to right: Derek Grassley, Bob Wittersheim, Rick Grassley, Beth Kern



Left to right: Derek Grassley, Bob Wittersheim, Beth Kern, Judy Yokam, Rick Grassley



Left to right: Judy Yokam, Rick Grassley, Beth Kern, Bob Wittersheim, Derek Grassley



Left to right: Rick Grassley, Derek Grassley, Bob Wittersheim

**NAVARRE-ANDERSON TRADING POST**  
**Celebrates Log Cabin Day!"**

by John Gibney



For the past twenty years, the State of Michigan has celebrated "Log Cabin Day" on the fourth weekend of June. Although the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post is listed as a log structure on the Michigan Log Cabin Day website, we have yet to participate in any major activities. Hoping to duplicate our success from March's Sugar Bush maple syrup fest, we put together a few volunteers, several signs, and a press release, and showed up on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> to see what would happen.

The early afternoon was fairly uneventful although things began to pick up as a steady stream of guests stopped in to take a peak at our favorite log structure, the barn, our Red River cart, and our new wigwam. Our visitors got to talk to first time reenactors Beth and Angel Kern weeding in our raised bed gardens. Veteran volunteer Judy Yokom greeted guests in the barn. Our newest interpreter Scott Lonsdale ran the country store with Sara Schultz, a Public History student from Western Michigan University.

While all of us were basking in the dusty afterglow of evening, Scott declared that he had counted 105 visitors to the country store alone! Combined with a late arriving wedding

party that took multiple group shots in the barn, we figure we had well over 125 participants in our “minor” event. Next year we plan to also open the Ebby Cabin at the Fair Grounds and let Monroe County residents compare and contrast French and German log cabin construction.

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## **OLD NEWS**

by Jim Ryland

April 11, 1930

### **NEW STORE OPENING IS ONE OF SERIES**

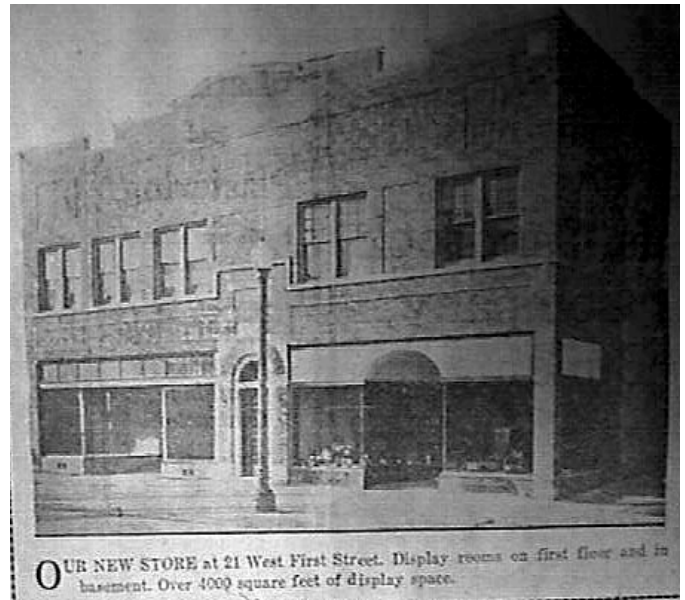
**Many Imposing Business Houses Have Been Erected Within the Past 5 Months**

The opening of the Weis, Sandrock and Company’s new home on West Fifth Street tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock recalls the numerous other new store buildings which have been opened in Monroe during the past five months. The new Hardware Store is the latest in a series that has added much to the commercial development of downtown Monroe. The firm is opening the west half of a two story variegated color faced brick building with a central stairway dividing the business places on the first floor and leading to a series of office suites on one side and four apartments on the other. Joseph Brothers, confectioners, are the owners of the other half, and will occupy the building within a few weeks. Their removal from East Front will release space which, with the Reisig Shop, will be occupied by the second unit of the Kresge Stores.

Buildings opened in the past 5 months include the Stadelman Furniture Store on November first, the Finzel & Scribner building occupied by the hardware store of that name, shortly after, the Bloom Auto Sales Building, the Detroit Edison Building on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the new Standard Oil unit, the remodeled City Hall, the Reisig Building on East Front St., the Kresge Store and Office Building, and several extensive remodelings.

The Reisig Building on Monroe Street near the Monroe Street Bridge will have a place for five stores and will be open within a month. The Peoples Savings and Loan Company are now working on plans for the extensive remodeling of the old City Building on Washington Street which they will use for a new home. The second Kresge unit will be started some time this summer according to present plans.

All of the new buildings from the Buckeye Furniture Store and the Long Building, which were the first in the series of new structures in Monroe incident upon the announcement of the Newton Steel Company decision to locate here.



“OUR NEW STORE at 21 West First Street. Display rooms on first floor in basement. Over 4000 square feet of display space.”

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## **SAWYERS OF THE HOMESTEAD**

by Chris Kull

Dr. Alfred Isaac Sawyer was born in Lyme, Ohio on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1828. His parents came to the U. S. from England in 1819, first settling in Connecticut. In 1827 the family settled in what was known as the “Connecticut Fire Lands,” more commonly known as the “Western Reserve” in Ohio.

Alfred was the 11<sup>th</sup> child and 8<sup>th</sup> son. Of all the children, he did not follow in his father’s footsteps and farm. At the age of 17 he sought to improve his education because he felt his calling was to do something other than “follow a plow.” His father was not happy.

He taught school in the winter and attended the Newark Academy in the spring and fall. At the age of 24 he attended the “Western College of Homeopathy” in Cleveland. In 1854 he received the degree of Medical Doctor. For two years he practiced medicine in Marieta and Zanesville, Ohio.

In the fall of 1856, Sawyer went to New York City and entered the medical department of New York University. After leaving the university he pursued studies to become a specialist of the eye.

After about 3 months of study with some New York doctors, he received a diploma for ophthalmic surgery but lack of finances forced him to leave New York and find a position that would bring him a livelihood.

After visiting various places, he chose to settle and set up practice in Monroe. He was very active with the

Masonic Lodge here, holding numerous positions at both the local and state level.

He was elected mayor of Monroe in 1869, 1870 and 1878. He was also a member of the school board for nine years.

He was very active in the efforts to introduce homeopathy at the University of Michigan. Homeopathy uses minute doses of a remedy that in large doses would produce the effects similar to the disease being treated. It is a holistic approach, dealing with the whole body and spirit. Remedies are meant to stimulate the immune system, helping cure the illness. He repeatedly appeared before the State Medical Society, State Legislature, State courts and Board of Regents of U of M. Apparently in 1847, a bill was introduced in the State legislature making it illegal to practice homeopathic medicine. The bill failed to pass but the stage was set for the non-acceptance of homeopathic medicine at the University of Michigan. Finally in 1875, he successfully nominated the first homeopathic professors to the Board of Regents at U of M. This resulted in homeopathic graduates getting the title M. D. on their diplomas. He was also appointed to the Homeopathic Chairs of obstetrics and surgery at U of M.

He was very active in this field of medicine. He held offices in state, national societies and was delegate to an international convention in 1881. Dr. Sawyer passed away in 1891.

Dr. Sawyer married Sarah G. Toll in Monroe on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1859. Rev. Addison K. Strong of the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church performed the ceremony.

Sarah Gazena Toll was the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Ryley Toll. When she was a young girl, she attended the Young Ladies Seminary here and soon her whole family moved to Monroe.

Not long after graduation she married Dr. Sawyer. She was described as “a favorite in the most refined and cultivated society, a dutiful and affectionate daughter and sister and a devout and conscientious Christian, she could not fail to develop into a devoted and loving wife and mother, smoothing the rough places that the feet of her loved ones trod, and sustaining and encouraging them by example and loving words.”

She was the mother of three children, a daughter, Jenny, and two sons, both named Alfred Isaac Sawyer. The first son died at the age of 7 months in 1870.

Church work was important to Mrs. Sawyer. A member of the Episcopal Church, she lived by the motto “freely ye have received, freely give.”

Six years before she died, in 1906, she went blind. Apparently she suffered greatly in her last years.

Jenny Toll Sawyer was born in 1862. She was quite the debutante and socially very popular. She attended the

Young Ladies Seminary and she finished her schooling in Dixon, Illinois.

She was quite skilled at oil painting, china painting and playing the piano.

The charitable influence of her mother is evident by noting some of the organizations and activities of Jenny.

Some of her accomplishments were charter member of the local D. A. R. chapter (named after her grandmother, Nancy DeGraff Toll), Friends in Council, and Monroe Home for Blind Babies. She was active in the formation of the first hospital in the city, she helped found the Monroe Humane Society and she was a founding member of the Monroe County Historical Society.

Jenny deeded her house to the city years before her death in 1948. She wanted it to be a center for the improvement of the city. Realizing the potential positive role women could play and knowing the difficulties of women and women’s groups in the city, she spelled out in the deed of gift to the city that the house be opened to women and women’s groups.

Like her mother, Jenny Sawyer became blind in her later years. However, this did not slow her down. She attended a school in Nebraska to learn to read Braille. She also had friends and high school students visit her daily and they read to her. Jenny Sawyer was 86 when she died in 1948.

Alfred Isaac Sawyer was born in the Francis Navarre cabin in 1871. His family had acquired the site and gathered material for the construction of the present day homestead. However, they delayed construction because they wanted their son born in the historic log house.

Alfred attended Monroe public schools, graduating from MHS. He then attended the Episcopal High School near Alexandria, Virginia before enrolling at U of M where he studied to become a mechanical engineer. In 1892 he received a request from his instructor in mechanical drawing to save his plates for exhibition at the World’s Fair in Chicago.

He was employed by the Alamo Co. at Hillsdale, manufacturer of gas engines. He married Florence Hoyt in 1902. They moved to Monroe during World War I and he was employed by the Van Blerck Motor Company. During World War II he was a draftsman at Monroe Auto Equipment Co. to help with war work.

Like his father, he was active in local Masonic circles.

He died in 1955 at the age of 83.

The Sawyers lived in this splendid house, which was built on the site of Colonel Francois Navarre’s home. Colonel Navarre was the first permanent white settler in the area.

The Sawyer Homestead was constructed in 1872 and 1873. The Sawyers moved in on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1873. The walnut stair railings were from the timbers of the Navarre Cabin. The cupola gave Dr. Sawyer a view of Lake Erie. When the house was built, it was piped for gas.

In 1938, Jenny Sawyer deeded the house to the city of Monroe. The property is to serve the cultural, historical, educational, civic and social service needs of the community. Jenny Sawyer lived here rent-free for about the remainder of her life. She didn't pay any utilities or for maintenance of the house. These costs were paid by the city. She also received \$75 a month "for the necessities of life." She lived in the back of the house.

As for fulfilling the deed requirements, the building housed the Monroe Chapter of the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and the Monroe County Historical Museum. And, here we are today, the Sawyer Homestead.

I would say this historic structure serves the social, cultural, historical, educational and civic needs of Monroe. Let's hope it continues for years to come.

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## **EYE ON EDUCATION**

by Lynn Reaume

School is out- kits and tours are resting. So I have time to produce these educational

WANT ADS:



NEEDED: EBY LOG CABIN Volunteers to host the cabin during Fair Week. This year shifts are in 3-hour timeslots. New groups/families/service clubs are welcomed and needed. Can you help? The cabin is open ONLY with our volunteers' help! Hosts greet (and count) visitors, help them move through the cabin, and answer questions if needed (information sheets are available there). This year's theme is "Always Cooking" (though we won't be able to do real cooking) and I am looking for French or German recipes that have been handed down through Monroe county families. Contact Lynn Reaume at the main Museum 734-240-7784 or [lynn\\_reaume@monroemi.org](mailto:lynn_reaume@monroemi.org).

AND VISIT the cabin during Fair Week. Boost our numbers and say 'hi' to the volunteers. See a survivor of Monroe county pioneer history- a real log home. Stop at the Martha Barker Country Store on your way home from the Fair (it's not just for nickel candy) and the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post, too. These buildings will be staffed and open to visitors Monday through Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 4<sup>th</sup> during Fair Week, 1-5:00 p.m.

(ADVERTISEMENT): The Martha Barker Country Store and Navarre-Anderson Trading Post will be also open on WEDNESDAYS in July and August, 1-5:00 p.m.

USUAL WANT: DO YOU HAVE SPARE TIME DURING THE DAY? Do you like children and believe in education? Would you consider being a tour guide to school groups? We could use you at the main Museum, or at the Country Store and Trading Post. Many schools visit these sites in multiple classes, and I need additional tour guides to easily handle the larger numbers. Information and training on the sites are provided. The usual commitment is about 1 ½ hours per tour. I work with your schedule and availability. Contact Lynn at the main Museum.

MORE WISH LIST: MORE TEACHER PARTICIPATION in Museum activities. Do you know a teacher who instructs social studies or history? Tell them about us. Bring them to our Museum sites and let them know we offer educational opportunities for their classroom. Word of mouth is a good way for good news to travel. And a big THANKS! to those who already know us as friends in education, through tours, free educational kits, programs, the Christmas Tree Festival, etc.

A SMALL WANT: Donation of an electric pencil sharpener. We have a manual one (in a closet), but I wish for something more for my overused pencils. (Did you know Staff have a "Wish List" board in the office). Donations are welcome- ask us.

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## **OUR 1812 SEWING PROJECT**

### **"United We Stand"**

The State of Michigan recently awarded a Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs grant to the Monroe County Museum and Monroe County Historical Commission. Matching funds were provided by local Monroe County groups and organizations, such as Monroe Bank and Trust, La-Z-Boy, Holcim, Inc., the Monroe County Historical Society, Loomis' Battery of Michigan Light Artillery, and the Frenchtown Chapter, French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan. The title of the grant is "United We Stand: Footsteps to the Bicentennial of the War of 1812". A partnership has been developed with Monroe County 4-H and the Perfect Stitch Vocational school in Monroe, which has provided the use of sewing machines for students. The grant will pay for all costs for the materials, instructors and related costs with the goal of producing re-enactment clothing for the War of 1812 period.

This is a unique combination of resources- adults, youth, historians, re-enactors and organizations all coming together to provide an equally unique opportunity to young boys and girls to learn about 1812 history in a new way- through clothing study. Being taught the skill of sewing can open up a new world of activity- sewing teaches many self discipline skills, reading and visual skills, and pride upon the successful completion of the garment. Sewing is a craft that a student can use through their lifetime- even in its rudimentary form of clothing repair, up to design and construction of modern clothes.



Currently 8 students are sewing in this program, and are members of the "Frenchtown Tailors" 4-H club. They are now learning the different steps of sewing: how to thread correctly and sew straight seams with the sewing machine; how to read a pattern and to correctly lay out and pin the pattern pieces onto the fabric; precise cutting of the pattern pieces and continue assembling the garment step by step. Though the use of modern materials and a sewing machine will not give a perfect replica- in this case a man's Kentucky rifle frock coat- the use of the reproduction will give a very good image of the original when worn in future 1812 commemorative events. Original coats would have been entirely hand-stitched. The frock coat is made of a black linen modern blend of fabric for durability and ease of wear, and is trimmed in handmade red linen fringe, in the style of the period. The coat is slightly fitted in the sleeves and back, with a stand-up collar and knee-length. The coats will be further outfitted when in use by black felt hats and leather accoutrements.

This is the first activity set in place for youth leading up to the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. Classes are held at the Monroe County Historical Museum back gallery.

Here is a photo of a class in progress:



Here is Project artist Dave Stahl wearing one of the newly completed frock coats, with hat and Museum Director Ralph Naveaux as a River Raisin habitant.



## VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to volunteer at the Monroe County Historical Museum, please call:

Ralph Naveaux  
John Gibney  
Lynn Reaume

Monroe County  
Historical Museum  
126 S. Monroe St  
Monroe, MI 48161  
(734) 240-7780 Phone

We need greeters, tour guides, interpreters, craftspeople, demonstrators, gardeners, and more.

## ARTICLES FOR THE MUSEUM NEWS

The Monroe County Historical Museum Staff would like to invite anyone who is interested in the history of the Monroe area to submit an article for possible publication in the MUSEUM NEWS.

Send articles to:

Ralph Naveaux  
Monroe County Historical Museum  
126 S. Monroe St  
Monroe, MI 48161  
(734) 240-7780 Phone

Articles to be included in the September/October 2006 MUSEUM NEWS should be submitted to Ralph Naveaux for his review by August 1, 2006.

## COMING EVENTS

- July/August**  
July 8-9 Campeau Company Event at Navarre-Anderson
- July 28 to August 5 Monroe County Fair Week, Eby Log Cabin & Martha Barker Country Store Open
- September**  
Sept. 9-10 Civil War Event at Navarre-Anderson
- October**  
Oct. 1-7 Custer Week in Monroe County