

# RIVER RAISIN NEWS & DISPATCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM & THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Volume 2 Issue 6**  
**November/December 2006**

---

**Monroe County  
Historical Museum**  
126 S. Monroe Street  
Monroe, MI 48161  
(734) 240-7780 Phone  
(734) 240-7788 FAX

---

**Director**  
Ralph Naveaux

**Assistant Director**  
John Gibney

**Secretary  
& Education**  
Lynn Reaume

**Curator**  
Jim Ryland

**Archivist**  
Chris Kull

**Battlefield**  
David Ingall &  
Scott Lonsdale

**Maintenance**  
Mike Jondro

---

**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.

---

## **Message from the Museum Director**

by Ralph Naveaux

This is the last issue of our newsletter for this year. We hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as we have enjoyed writing it. The Museum staff and volunteers are looking forward to next year's edition. We'll be picking up the bicentennial theme again, following local happenings as they occurred in 1807.

The 2006 Navarre-Anderson Trading Post Lantern Tours were also based on the events of 200 years ago, many of which were taken from the timeline presented in this newsletter. Donations from the 2006 Tours will be applied towards a portion of the Verhoeven Collection, for which we still owe about \$75,000.

In addition, a gala fundraiser for the War of 1812 Steering Committee will be held at the museum on November 20. Plans are still being made, so look for an announcement in the mail.

For 2007, please mark your calendars for the January 20 Commemoration of the Battle of the River Raisin and the February 20 Algonquin Club Muskrat Dinner. Both events will feature speakers dealing with an aspect of the War of 1812. We'll look forward to seeing you there.

---

## **Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War & War of 1812 Sites in the U.S.**

Dear Mr. Smith:

The FRIENDS OF THE RIVER RAISIN BATTLEFIELD appreciate the opportunity to comment on the "Consultation Draft" of the Report to Congress dated July 2006. In response to your request, we offer our thoughts on the historic context of the War of 1812 and opportunities for site preservation as follows:

**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Rallying cries or patriotic symbols hold a special place in the National psyche. Recently, a proposal to commemorate the loss of Flight 93 over Pennsylvania focused on Todd Beamer's rallying cry, "Let's Roll." This graphically illustrates how words born on battlefields or at courageous moments can change the significance of an event. The Report contains a list of historical themes on Page 24 that determine how "thematically

ried" sites contributed to the "Nationally significant events of the two Wars." In our estimation, there was one theme missing -- RALLYING CRIES. There are Principal Sites and events that evoked such a response during the War of 1812, i.e.: WAR ON THE RAISIN ("REMEMBER THE RAISIN") and the Battle of Lake Erie ("Don't Give Up The Ship") ("We Have Met The Enemy And They Are Ours: two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop." O.H. Perry). These rallying cries are PATRIOTIC SYMBOLS that are larger than life. This leaves room in the Report for PRINCIPAL SITES WITH NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT PATRIOTIC SYMBOLS. Historical Themes (Page 24) should include: PATRIOTIC SYMBOLS / BATTLE CRIES OF FREEDOM / VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SITE PRESERVATION -- a good portion of HULL's ROAD still exists. This road opened the Northwest Territory. On Page 55 of the Report, there is a section on Roads, Trails, and Waterways. Hull's Road is not mentioned under the WAR OF 1812. This road is applicable to historic military campaign routes and other linear sites. There are remnant sites and trail segments through northern Kentucky, Ohio and southeastern Michigan. The Principle Sites of Frenchtown, Brownstown and Monguagon on Hull's Road played key roles in the SURRENDER OF DETROIT (8.16.1812).

The FRIENDS OF THE RIVER RAISIN BATTLEFIELD were organized in February 18, 1997; Articles of Incorporation were filed March 13, 2000; IRS 501c3 granted September 6, 2005. The LaCroix Company, 2nd Michigan, is our 1812 Reinactment unit, having participated in the first three Grand Encampments of the War of 1812 (Fort Meigs, Ohio; Fort George, Ontario, Canada; and Mumsford, New York). This unit was here during the War on the Raisin. We are also part of the War of 1812 Bicentennial Steering Committee convened at my request by the Community Foundation of Monroe Committee. We are exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 c 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. We are pleased that the River Raisin (Frenchtown) Battlefield and the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post are designated as Principle Sites in the Report to Congress. HR 5132, RIVER RAISIN NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD STUDY ACT, is before Congress now. The Friends worked for three years to produce a FILM on the River Raisin Battlefield (DVD/VHS Format) entitled "WAR OF 1812 BATTLES OF THE RIVER RAISIN", sent to you under separate cover via U.S. Mail. This effort will help sustain us through the BICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR OF 1812 and beyond. Please keep us in mind during these deliberations and know that we are dedicated to the preservation and education of this site.

REMEMBER THE RAISIN !

Jeanne Micka, President  
Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield  
47 East Elm Avenue  
Monroe, Michigan 48162-2648  
734-242-0909 [rgm@core.com](mailto:rgm@core.com)

Note: Supporting Documents mailed under separate cover:  
"War of 1812 Battles of the River Raisin" DVD  
"Traditions of the War of 1812" Brochure  
"Perry's Victory" Brochure  
"Pursuit of Peace" Brochure  
Monroe Evening News: "Remember the Raisin" Guest Editorial: Sen. Carl Levin  
Letter: Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield dated June 7, 2006  
donation \$1000  
Letter: FRRB to The Honorable Richard Pombo, dated July 10, 2006

### **It Takes a Village...**

by John Gibney, Assistant Director

An old African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child. For the museum staff, it has taken an entire community to raise a village. But it is now done. After months of planning and many hours of toiling in the woods our wigwam village is in place. We now have seven wigwam frames up at the Navarre Anderson Trading Post woodlot and plan to premiere them to the public for our lantern tours. We could not have accomplished this without help from our volunteers who do so much for us with so little recognition. With the completion of this awesome project, I'd like to share with our readers some of these very special supporters.



Our wigwam village is in place

Much credit for the success of this project must go to Wigwam Committee Chair Rick Grassley. He did an exceptional job of organizing and leading this project. He and his family went way beyond the call of duty, even traveling all the way to Alpena to find the right size and shape of saplings used for the framework of the wigwams. He researched and provided detailed plans for the structures, organized work dates, and donated most of the binding material. His ever-present smile and constant good humor drove us well beyond the limits of normal volunteerism. Rick kept us in stitches as he shared his interesting encounters with west county residents who wondered why he was waist deep in muck cutting cattails

in the ditches of several back country roads. Without Rick and his family there would be no village!

Our old friend Bill Saul once again stepped up to the plate when we needed additional poles for our conical wigwams. On a hot and humid Friday, Bill led us on a wild and raucous rampage into the Otter Creek swamps where we cut and dragged additional saplings for our project. Bill and his family have been a constant source of support to the museum in all of our projects.

Laurel Heyman has been an extraordinary supporter on all of our projects. In addition to being our entire archaeology department, she is always there to photograph and document our projects, no matter how weird or strange they might be.

Beth Kern came to us as a volunteer last year for our lantern tours. She did such a remarkable job that we decided to expand out Native American interpretation. Beth's daughter Angel was a musician during the tours last year and Angel's boyfriend Eric Ferguson also have been very much involved with our activities. All of them will be part of our ongoing renovation of the site.

Bob Wittersheim has quickly established himself as a one of our most reliable and hardworking volunteers. During the wigwam project we often found ourselves debating a construction idea or a structural concept until Bob would come forward and demonstrate how to actually accomplish the task. All of the years spent as one of the most accomplished interpreters in the country are certainly paying off for us when Bob is on-site. It was also Mr. Wittersheim who halted all of us in the middle of our labors and pointed skyward to a **bald eagle** soaring over our heads. How much more approval of the project could we ask for?

Our project was almost finished with only three shelters until a young man named Tyler Mazur asked if he could help. Tyler helped make our battlefield dig a success this past summer and had marched with us during the county fair parade back in August. Tyler volunteered his Boy Scout troop for final construction and arrangement of the wigwams on October 8. With his parents and a dozen or so other supporters, Tyler's troop helped build three more shelters and moved all of them into the woods.

Last week I walked in the woods with Dr. Ken Mohney from Monroe Community College. I asked him if he ever could have imagined what we has now been accomplished when we originally met at the NATP site on a snowy morning back in late winter. He just smiled. Ken is like that.

Monroe Community College and Dr. Mohney have been tremendous supporters of bringing the NATP back to life this year. MCCC President, Dr. David Nixon, along with Dr. Bruce Way, and Dr. Jim Devries helped us get a support grant which will allow current and future MCCC students hands-on experience with archaeological activities at the NATP.

Judy Yokom has been to every event and meeting we have had. In addition to providing expert advice and cheerleading, she constantly works behind the scenes looking for new contacts and connections. Her dynamic leadership and dedication to our projects has been invaluable. The question must be asked: Judy, do you know how special you are?

One of our major goals for 2006 was to have at least one major event every month at the NATP. We have accomplished this way beyond our wildest dreams. Please stop by the NATP and see what our community has done.



One of the seven wigwam frames now set up in the woods

---

**Old News**  
by Jim Ryland

Monroe Democrat 13 April 1906

“In many respects the most enticing houses in the city are those built twenty to thirty years ago, for these, comparatively modern in their original plan and having been in many cases kept in such thorough repair and so generously supplied with every convenience suggested by the intervening years, display not alone a certain elegance to their own particular type, but boast also every advantage offered by the latest architecture. Fortunes were sometimes invested in these which were often built with the deliberation and accernings of a lifetime and being constructed of with no speculative objective, but for the comfort of generations to come, were planted in the midst of beautiful grounds, where already huge budding trees and beds of crocuses, tulips hyacinths are beginning to be the envy of the more crowded quarters.

A home of that description is that of Mr. Benjamin Friedenburg, built by the late L. Friedenburg, in 1880, which with its spacious surroundings occupies much of the block on First Street between Macomb and Scott. In fact it is its enormity that at first most impresses the visitor and as this is the largest residence in the city, it is interesting to note that the house measures 64 feet from back to front, is 50 feet wide and

that the rooms on the first floor are eleven feet high and those on the second ten feet. The red brick with gray trimmings, the numerous plate glass windows, high mansard roof and big porches form an exterior of prominence and style, and also encompass a series of rooms, hallways, and apartments whose depth and height are softened with decorations and artistically selected comforts of home that their vastness by no means does away with the coziness of smaller dwellings.”

The article goes on to mention walnut woodwork, mantles of three marbles and coved ceilings. It was modern to whole house heating, bathrooms, and a cistern in the attic to supply “soft water to the bedrooms.”



Home of Mr. Benjamin Friedenborg in 1880s

In the Monroe paper of 9 December 1880 it said that Louis Friedenborg had let the contract to Frank Luce in the Spring of 1880 for his “Model Mansion.” “It is an ornament to the city, and by all odds the finest and best appointed dwelling in the city. It not only speaks well for the thrift and enterprise of the merchant, but it is also a monument of the skill and ability of the contractor, as an architect and builder. It is in every way a model mansion.”

It was later in its life used as the Monroe Club and county offices. It was finally torn down for a parking lot.

**From the Archives**  
by Chris Kull, Archivist

MUSEUM AT MBT

The new Monroe Bank & Trust building in downtown Monroe has offered an exhibit case to the Monroe County Historical Society. The case is on the left when you enter from Front St. Bill Braunlich, president of the society, recently asked me to take charge of this case. I was scrambling for something to put in it for the bank’s opening in mid-October. I talked to museum director, Ralph Naveaux, and we decided an exhibit on the “United We Stand” sewing grant project was the best thing for the time being. After all, the bank was one of the sponsors of the grant and we are able

to showcase the project to a wide range of people that may not visit the museum.

Every couple months the exhibit case will change. Of course, in December we will have a holiday theme to go along with the Christmas Tree Festival at the museum. January will probably showcase the Battle of the River Raisin. I am open to suggestions so, if anyone would like to see a specific aspect of Monroe’s history highlighted, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at the archives 240-7787 or email [chris\\_kull@monroemi.org](mailto:chris_kull@monroemi.org).

Thank you MBT and the Monroe County Historical Society for this opportunity to remind people of Monroe’s rich history and perhaps entice them to visit the museum!

**2006 Custer Week**



President, Mr. Abraham Lincoln, when he visited the Museum for the first time during Custer Week.

**EYE on EDUCATION**  
by Lynn W. Reaume

**“UNITED WE STAND”:**

The sewing machines are now quiet, and justifiably tired. The girls and



myself are going through social sewing withdrawal. The Museum has gone back to its silent self, though it may also miss the laughter and sometimes frustrated sighs of youth in the back gallery for the last 6 months. Forty Kentucky hunter's frock coats have been produced, along with 40 white and natural colored canvas haversacks, and 40 black felt top hats, lined with red linen hatbands and red feather plumes. The ensemble is striking, with the black and red contrast, the haversack off the shoulder hanging at the side, with a smart black hat at the top, which I draped on several body mannequins around the sewing "corral" where the girls labored over their sewing.



Kentucky hunter's frock coats, haversacks, & hats

Though the actual sewing is over, there are several opportunities coming up for the grant committee with the "Frenchtown Tailors"- greeting at the 1812 Bicentennial committee's fund raiser in November and participating in a program the same night; a major discussion of the grant use and promotion also in November; a December 7<sup>th</sup> state program in Lansing where we are highlighting our involvement as a recipient of the Michigan Rural Arts & Culture grant; and at the 2007 January annual River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center commemoration. This has certainly been a unique event in the life of the Museum, and I was very glad to be a part of it.

A big **THANK YOU** to the groups who provided matching funds: Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield, Loomis' Battery of Artillery, the Monroe County Historical Society, Monroe Bank & Trust, La-Z-Boy, the Frenchtown Chapter, French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, and Holcim, Inc. Thanks to Perfect Stitch Vocational school of Monroe for the use of the sewing machines, and to 4-H as sponsor of the "Frenchtown Tailors" club.

**THANK YOU** to the sewers (and their parents) who generously gave of their time and effort: Julia Davis, Claudia Rodriguez, Chloe Kinsey, Hayli Shopshire, Isabella Ingels, Colleen Switlik, Rebecca Mason, Angel Kern, and Kerstin Toro.

**THANK YOU** to our "older" sewers: Pat Griem, Joanie Croy, Judy Yokom, Jean Waybright, Jeanne Micka and Shirley Keehn, who constructed haversacks in old-fashioned sewing "bees".

**THANK YOU** to "major fringers" Maria Abalos and Lyndee Shopshire who produced large quantities of hand-made fringe; to sewing assistants Sue Grassley and Cathy Taylor who offered their sewing expertise; to Museum staff Scott Lonsdale who helped make hat plumes; artist Dave Stahl and Grace Connolly who designed and made the "Frenchtown Tailors" 4-H parade banner; Dave and Laura Davis who painted the large Kentucky state battle flag; the staff and volunteers who marched in the heat of the Fair Parade in black coats and toting the large banner; and Project Coordinator Bill Saul, Museum Director Ralph Naveaux, Assistant Director John Gibney and any other pair of hands or voice who helped us keep on track with our grant goals.

**CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL:**

Holiday trees and wreaths are being accepted for the annual festival held all month during December at the main Museum. Your club or organization can participate- for registration or questions contact the Museum at 734-240-7780. No fee, no admission charge. You provide your own artificial tree or wreath and decorate it your own way for the winter holidays and help make our place festive for all.

\*\*\*\*\***JOIN US**\*\*\*\*\*  
**FOR THE**  
**2006 CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**

**Share the Holiday Spirit at the**  
**Monroe County Historical Museum**

**ALL DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER**

**OPEN WEDNESDAY THROUGH SUNDAY**  
**10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**VIEW TWO FLOORS OF TREES AND**  
**WREATHS**  
**DECORATED BY MONROE COUNTY**  
**ORGANIZATIONS, 4-H CLUBS, CHURCH**  
**GROUPS, CLASSROOMS AND MORE**

**(Closed Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>)**

**AN END OF THE YEAR THANK YOU** to all of our Museum sites volunteers, who conduct tours, give presentations, sell candy and merchandise, man tables, put up

tents, make wigwams, greet visitors, abstract obituaries, cook or clean up, and do the innumerable tasks that it takes to make each and every -day -event -program- a success. Thanks to these people who give hundreds of hours -or three- to help our small staff reach their history goals in the year. Thanks to people we see only once a year- at Lantern Tours, at the Eby Log Cabin, and the Country Store or Trading Post, who reliably come back year after year, and thanks to those new faces who are willing to be placed anywhere, anytime to assist us. Please come back in 2007 and lend us a hand again!

Sincerely, All the Staff

---

## **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**

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 RIVER RAISIN NEWS & DISPATCH.

Send articles to:

Ralph Naveaux  
Monroe County Historical Museum  
126 S. Monroe St  
Monroe, MI 48161  
(734) 240-7780 Phone  
[Ralph\\_Naveaux@monroemi.org](mailto:Ralph_Naveaux@monroemi.org)

Articles to be included in the January/February 2007 RIVER RAISIN NEWS & DISPATCH should be submitted to Ralph Naveaux for his review by December 1, 2006.

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **November**

- Nov. 3-4 Lantern Tour nights continue at Navarre-Anderson Trading Post - reservations necessary
- Nov. 8 River Raisin Chapter, Michigan Archaeological Society at Museum, 7:30pm
- Nov. 11 War of 1812 Roundtable at the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center, 7pm
- Nov. 22 First day for groups to set up Christmas trees at Museum

### **December**

- Entire Month 2006 Christmas Tree Festival

---

## **WAR OF 1812 ROUNDTABLE**

The Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield will host another of their pre-bicentennial War of 1812 Roundtable series of talks at the River Raisin Battlefield Visitors Center at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 11, 2006.

The evening's presentation is entitled "The Unfortunate Massacre of Chicago." The title is taken from Lt. Helm's description of the event in a letter written to Judge Woodward in 1814. Our presenters, Mike Waskul and Dave Washburn, will cover the actions which led to the killing of civilians and soldiers following the evacuation of Fort Dearborn at Chicago on August 15, 1912.

Light refreshments will be provided.