

RIVER RAISIN NEWS & DISPATCH

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

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10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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

Contents

From the Director	1
Old News	2
Brigadier General George W. Spaulding	3
ABOARD THE NIAGARA	4
Silent Hero of Monroe	4
“Good Morning Vietnam”	5
The Battle of Lake Erie	6
Bronco Takes the Gloves Off	7
Eye on Education	9
Calendar	10

From the Director

by John Gibney

May and June were packed with excitement from beginning to end. We began May by presenting programs to an estimated 1,500 students at Ag Day at the County Fair Grounds. By the end of our Colonial History Weekend at the Trading Post on June 24th, our staff covered roughly three times as many events as we normally do and gave out more folders, talked to more visitors, gave more tours, and promoted more events, than we ever have before. What follows are just a few of the highlights.

On May 7th, hometown boy Paul W. Smith brought his WJR show to Monroe Community College to help promote tourism in Michigan. He did a great job of highlighting the Floral City to the largest listening audience in the Great Lakes area. He mentioned our Fife & Drum Muster, the Niagara visit, and gave me a chance to talk about the museum and our many programs. Tourism is Michigan’s second largest industry and Monroe is an untapped resource that we all need to promote.

On May 19th, the Vietnam Veterans Museum opened for the season. As of June 16th, they are already way ahead of their last year’s all time attendance figures. We have been working on getting an 81mm mortar from a museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The mortar arrived last week and it will soon be featured in an outdoor sandbag bunker already constructed at the museum. Don Reed, one of the vets managing the museum, has graciously written an article on the “Silent Hero” of Heck Park, which I proudly include in this month’s issue.

On May 22nd, we joined our friends at the Monroe Intermediate School District for a curriculum roundtable with social studies professionals from around the county. We showed a video of the virtual field trip we did with Jeremy Potter classes in Ida, and Dave Ingall did a live feed from the Museum. We will be offering a series of workshops on the technology for teachers this summer and hope to expand our programs for the fall.

On May 24th, several staff members and I attended the Minute Man Awards Banquet for the county. We were all pleased that Judy Yokom won the award for her work at the museum. For those of you who don’t know her, Judy is an indispensable member of our crew. She organizes and helps run our events, participates in everything from sewing to firing cannons, and does it all with an incredible sense of humor and love of history. We are all proud of her winning this honor.



Judy Yokom receiving the Minute Man Award from Monroe County Commissioner Floreine Mentel

On May 25th, Jerry Wittkop, retired MAECO Engineer and Historian, opened his MAECO Indy Car exhibit. Mr. Wittkop organized the material, contacted the donors, arranged the transportation, and was the Jack-of-all-trades for this project. With the generous help of Mr. Charles McIntyre, the exhibit came off without a hitch. We would like to acknowledge Jerry, the McIntyre and Meyer families, as well as all of the MAECO employees who donated so much of their time and effort to make this exhibit such a major success.



Director John Gibney shaking hands with Jerry Wittkop at the museum

During the Memorial Day weekend, Dave Ingall, the Mazurs, and my family presented programs on battle flags and battlefield preservation at Greenfield Village. On what was purported to be the busiest day in the history of the Henry Ford, we gave away all of the pamphlets and brochures we had promoting the museum and our programs.

On June 9th, Scott Lonsdale brought together the first major living history event of the Bicentennial, our first annual Fife & Drum Muster. Scott put on a fabulous show that left the audience asking for more. And that is exactly what will happen next year when the world famous F&D corps out of Williamsburg joins us.

Even before we had a chance to catch our breath, the Niagara sailed into port and we put together an awesome living history display for the people who were visiting the ship. Reenactors from across the Great Lakes area showed up and provided educational programs for the public. The highlight of the weekend for me came when my wife was given the honor of firing the signal cannon that began the fireworks display.

All in all, there is an incredible amount of history happening here in Monroe County. With the County Fair, Custer Week, and Lantern Tours just around the corner, make sure you stop in and join in the fun. Or as we in the museum always say, "Come to Monroe, where the Past is Present!"

OLD NEWS
by Jim Ryland

If current plans move ahead, as they look like they are going to, Monroe will lose another landmark. Plans are ready to demolish the façade of Eichbauer/ Monroe Trophy building. This building is basically original with the exception of the brown panels on the lower part of the front windows. It is of a simple Art Deco style.



The current building was rebuilt and enlarged in 1923 & 1924 with an advertisement for their new showroom in the February 26, 1924 edition of the Monroe Evening News. There was an earlier building on part of the property that

would have been built circa 1870 and may have been remodeled in the early 20th century.

The new façade is to be a pseudo Georgian Style similar to the former Post Office, current Monroe County Historical Museum. The new owner actually said that he was copying the Museum. So instead of a unique Monroe building we will gain a modern building that could be in Detroit, Newark, Billings or Biloxi.

Brigadier General George W. Spalding

by David Ingall



George W. Spalding was born on November 9, 1836 in Scotland. His family came to America in 1843 settling in Buffalo, New York. In 1853 they moved to a farm on the River Raisin in Monroe, Michigan. George taught school and was elected Frenchtown Township Clerk as a Democrat when the Civil War began.

He enlisted in May of 1861 as a private in the “Smith Guards”, Company A, 4th Michigan Infantry and on June 20th was promoted to first sergeant. He was commissioned first lieutenant in Company B on August 5th and captain on January 13, 1862. George fought in the many battles of the Peninsular Campaign. He was wounded in the left shoulder at Yorktown, Virginia, but refused to leave the field. At New Bridge, a Louisiana Tiger shot him at point blank range, tearing off his belt and pistol; surprisingly George was not seriously injured. On July 1, 1862 at Malvern Hill, he was seriously wounded in the neck, left on the field, and thought to have been killed.

During his recuperation in Michigan, he was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the newly organized 18th Michigan Infantry on July 18, 1862. The 18th spent the spring of 1863 skirmishing with the rebels in Central Kentucky. He served as Provost Marshall of Nashville from June 1863 to January 1864 and was promoted to colonel of the 12th Tennessee Cavalry on February 21, 1864 by Governor Andrew Johnson. The 12th took part in numerous skirmishes against Wheeler and Forrest's Confederate Cavalry in Tennessee and Alabama.

In November of 1864 the regiment participated in the battles of Spring Hill and Franklin, Tennessee. On December 16th at the Battle of Nashville, the 12th clashed with Chalmer's Confederate Cavalry. Even though Chalmer's men were behind barricades, the 12th managed to break through and continue their pursuit of Hood's defeated Confederate Army. George was severely wounded in the left knee. He was brevetted Brigadier General U.S. Volunteers on March 21, 1865 for valuable services in the Battle of Nashville. The regiment later was assigned to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where it was involved in scouting parts of Northern Kansas and Southern Nebraska, and he was assigned command of the sub-district of Northern Kansas. General Spalding was honorably discharged on October 24, 1865.

He was offered a field officer's commission in the regular army as the major of the 7th U.S. Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer. After much thought however, he decided not to accept the offer and went back to private life.

When General Spalding returned to Monroe he began a very distinguished career serving his hometown, state and country, as well as being a much sought after patriotic speaker. From 1866 to 1871 he was appointed Postmaster of Monroe. In 1871 he was a special agent of the Treasury Department where he reported on commerce between Mexico and the U.S. In 1876 he was elected Mayor of Monroe. In 1877 he became the President of the First National Bank and was affiliated with it until his death. From 1895 to 1899 he was elected as a Republican to the U.S. Congress, serving two terms. Then in 1899 until 1907 he served as postmaster again. He died on September 17, 1915 at the age of 79. His funeral was reported to be one of the largest in Monroe's history. He is buried at the Historic Woodland Cemetery, Monroe.

His son George R. Spalding graduated from The United States Military Academy at West Point in 1901 and served in the Philippines, World War I & II. He advanced to Brigadier General in the regular army and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.

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ABOARD THE NIAGARA

by Chris Kull, Archivist

I took advantage of the day sail on the U.S. Brig Niagara offered by the Monroe County Historical Society on Monday, June 18th. Realizing this would probably be a once in a lifetime opportunity I signed up my 15 year-old son, Isaac Merman, too. The day started out cloudy and when all of the day sailors gathered around Captain Wesley Heersean, at about 9:30 a.m., he told us to expect a thunderstorm before we would head out. The group was divided in half and we were assigned to either the port or starboard side of the brig. Isaac and I were on the port (left) side and then the rain came. Some went below, some went to their cars and some donned ponchos and raincoats and waited out the storm on deck. Once the rain passed, we were ready to sail.

Instruction on wearing life vests (personal flotation devices) and total emersion suits were demonstrated before we cast off. The total emersion suit was something I'd never seen before. It is a one-piece hooded outfit that would probably take some time getting into for a novice. Your feet are covered along with your hands in sort of a mitten-like part of the suit. It was quite cumbersome and help was needed to zip it up and then just your eyes peeked out. Apparently when you went in the water with this on, the suit stuck to your body and you were kept warm.

We motored out of the port of Monroe into Lake Erie. Crewmembers set some of the sails, the motor was cut and all was quiet and peaceful. The day sailors that wanted to participate were instructed in a "walk around". We grabbed a line and pulled to get a sail into position. Then holding onto the line we walked around the deck, raising the sail.

One of the first impressions I had on board was the number of lines. Ropes were everywhere, along the sides, on deck, hanging from the masts, etc. I could easily see why it takes so many crewmembers to sail her. Isaac's first impression was nowhere to sit! There were a few storage boxes here and there to sit on but this craft wasn't built for a pleasure cruise, it is used to train sailors, not for sightseeing.

The wind was pretty light so our speed wasn't very fast but it was a very enjoyable experience. Periodically Captain Heersean would explain various maneuvers the ship would take using a crude model of the brig with 2 masts, the

tiller (there isn't a wheel), and the jib. He also brought out Lake Erie charts and gave us a brief history lesson on the Battle of Lake Erie.

There weren't many boats out on Lake Erie that day and the waters were quite calm. Occasionally a motorboat would get close and check out the tall ship, a replica of the one that gave the United States a great naval victory over the British in September, 1813.

Although the temperature was in the 90's that day, it didn't feel that hot out on the lake. The breeze was sufficient and the sails provided shade in places along the deck. The last hour on the lake did seem rather warm because the wind had died down a bit, but plenty of drinking water was available to keep yourself hydrated.

A tour below deck showed us the sleeping and eating quarters of the crew. Hammocks are strung at night for the crewmembers not on watch to sleep in. At night the crew, divided into divisions, take turns while the ship is under sail. They get to sleep for 4 hours and are on watch for 2 hours. A classmate of mine, Steve Ryder, signed up to crew back to Erie, Pennsylvania. He said he knew he wouldn't have any trouble sleeping that night. He also mentioned that the next day muscles he forgot about would remind him of their existence!

The Frog Leg Inn provided a tasty lunch so we didn't go hungry. I knew the sail was ending when Detroit Edison's coal burning plant came into view. It could be seen quite a ways out and was the only thing in sight for some time on the hazy horizon. We motored back into the port and went ashore about 3 p.m. It was really a worthwhile excursion.

The Silent Hero of Monroe

by Don Reed

While most Monroe area residents are familiar with the helicopter flying high over Heck Park, most are not aware that this ship, like most Vietnam Veterans, is a silent hero. So I will briefly speak for her and tell you her story.

The helicopter is a Bell UH1, or as the Vietnam Veteran knew her, a "Huey" or a Charlie Model Gunship. Known by her tail number, her official designation is 66-00632. 632 was completed in 1966 at the Bell factory in Texas. After initial testing by Bell and the Army, 632 was assigned to the 134th Aviation Company at Fort Bragg, NC. That unit picked up 632 in early 1967, first flying her to Atlanta for armament. The small rocket tubes and miniguns were the same as displayed at her present site. Crew served door mounted M60 machine guns were also mounted.

From there the unit returned to Ft. Bragg for combat training with the 57th Aviation Company. When the unit was ordered to Vietnam, the unit flew cross country fully armed, refueling at small airports and collecting Green Stamps

(redeemed in California for equipment to take overseas) as they went. Interestingly, 632 had an engine failure in New Mexico and had to land near the Mexican border. The crew, while looking for help, managed to cross the border and was promptly ordered back by Mexican authorities. Help finally arrived from a base 150 miles away, the engine replaced finally arriving in California two weeks later. Loaded on a ship, 632 arrived in Vietnam on Thanksgiving Day, 1967.

The unit would now be known as the 134th Assault Helicopter Company and became part of the 1st Aviation Brigade. The unit chose the nickname “The Demons” with the gunship platoon being called “The Devils”. The unit was then based at a small airfield called Phu Hiep, a few miles south of Tuy Hoa. 632 flew missions throughout the central part of Vietnam, Known as III Corps, supporting American, Korean, and Vietnamese forces.

Walt Chroback (from Erie, MI) related a story to me of some of the action that 632 saw during the Tet Offensive of 1968. As part of a heavy fire team (3 gunships together) 1,000 enemy troops were killed in two days of combat. Later 632 supported American troops in the Battle for Hamburger Hill. Late in 1969, when another engine failed, 632 was damaged badly when she was being slung carried by another helicopter, and had to be returned to the states in early 1970, for a complete overhaul.

In October of 1970, 632 was returned to Vietnam and sent to the 57th Assault Helicopter Company, the same unit that she initially trained with. This unit, known as “The Gladiators”, called their gun platoon “The Cougars”. A great story also comes with the gunship platoon’s name. When the unit decided on the name “cougar” in 1967, someone thought they should get Ford Motor Company’s permission as the Mercury Cougar had just been introduced. Ford not only enthusiastically supported the idea, they designed and manufactured the pocket patches for the unit. 632 again flew missions through II Corps with the 57th until April 1971, when the unit was returned to the United States as part of the overall troop reduction that was taking place at that time.

632 had to stay behind and in May of 1971, the 129th Assault Helicopter Company took control of her. This unit was known as “The Bulldogs” and called their gun platoon “The Cobras” (no reference to the helicopter of the same name). The Cobra Gunship had taken over most of the attack roles, so 632 ended her Vietnam tour flying primarily convoy protection between the coast and Pleiku. She finally returned to the United States in December 1971. Altogether 632 had flown 1831 hours in the skies over Vietnam.

After assignments to Fort Eustis, Virginia, and with the National Guard, 632 came to Heck Park in 1991, becoming its centerpiece. 632 has other connections to the Monroe area. Joe Sotille of Monroe, was a pilot with the 57th and Dick Stack from nearby Hillsdale, designed the nose art for the 57th ships. Most notable of the connections is that Melvin Dye, Monroe County’s only MIA, was lost in Laos while flying with the 57th. So you can see that the 632 truly belongs at the Vietnam Memorial Park.

The Vietnam Memorial Park and Museum was started in 1984 with the goal of “HELPING HEAL THE WOUNDS” left by the war. Silently 832 does her part. Next time you are near the park stop in. Look at 632 carefully and you will find 6 patched bullet holes painted in white. Silently 632, with her wounds, asks you to remember that ALL GAVE SOME – SOME GAVE ALL.

“Good Morning Vietnam”

by Glenn Podhola

The Vietnam Veterans Museum at Heck Park broke its previous head count record on the last tour taken Friday morning, May 18th. There were 104 students from Hurd Road Elementary School led by four third grade teachers, Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Johns, Mrs. McCloskey and Mrs. Linkfield. The newly elected President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Monroe County Chapter 142, Donald Cannon, took the tour through, which started at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial before going into the museum. A history of Heck Park was explained to them while showing them the 25 foot tall pedestal mounted Huey and base platform mounted Cobra helicopters while describing the integral part both helicopters played in the Vietnam War. The third graders were especially interested in one of the newest memorials dedicated last year, the replicated, stacked C-Ration boxes - Chaplains Memorial. From there, they viewed the static display of the 81mm Mortar pit and then on to the very first memorial built there, the Captain Norman W. Heck Memorial.

The kids also enjoyed seeing all the various displays inside the museum and a few actually got to wear the original flack jacket and helmet from that war. All the time during the museum tour, music of the times were playing on the sound system. I’m sure the original taping of “Good Morning Vietnam” was on the repertoire.



Vietnam Veterans President Don Cannon with tour group inside Visitor Center. Student Mark Smith is wearing the helmet. Photo by Kim Brent and courtesy of the Monroe Evening News.



Hurd Road school student Lauren Faulhaber examines the Chaplain's Memorial (stacked C-rations) as part of the tour. Photo by Kim Brent and courtesy of the Monroe Evening News.

The Battle of Lake Erie

submitted by Sgt. Don Burzynski, Brooks' Marines

With the fall of 3 American forts – Chicago, Detroit and Mackinac in the summer of 1812, President Madison and his war council decided that supremacy of the Great Lakes especially Lake Ontario and Lake Erie was paramount to stem the British onslaught. If British domination over the lakes could be stopped, by capturing Montreal and even Lower Canada (Quebec), then supplies, war material and troops would not be able to reach the Western frontier and British incursions would cease.

The American base at Sacket's Harbor in upstate New York on Lake Ontario was picked to become the main base for American operations. A large naval and marine base was hurriedly built, several forts erected and preparations were made to attack the British fleet at Kingston, 35 miles due north.

The dilemma for the American commander, Commodore Chauncey was how to fight on 2 lakes separated by Niagara Falls, with 2 fleets just now being built, few officers and shipbuilders and not enough sailors and marines to form detachments on all ships. He thought that the Lake Ontario fleet had priority because the main British harbor were in an arms race building ships also. The Lake Erie squadron under Commodore Perry and marine Lt. John Brooks would have to wait and get crews and marines after Sackets was first supplied and secured. After all, the Corps was just newly formed in 1795 and numbered only about 1200 officers and men.

Lt. John Brooks, was the son of Governor Brooks of Massachusetts. He was considered a firebrand and a good officer. He was shipped west to cool off from a potential duel with another Marine officer over gambling. Dueling and its subsequent loss was strictly forbidden by the Corps. He brought 18 marines with him from the Washington Navy Yard. Hundreds more marines were expected from Chauncey but as it turned out Gen. Harrison's army especially the 137th

and 147th Pennsylvania regiments supplied men to fight as marines. These frontiersmen were expert marksmen with their Pennsylvania long rifle and would add devastating fire power to the marine detachments. The British soldier feared the American long rifle and called it, "the best widow maker in North America".

Brooks' plan for the 9 American ships was to have full marine units on the 2 brigs - the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* and marine NCO's on the other ships directing the militia marksmen. Normally a ship would have 50 marines on board including an officer, a fifer and a drummer.

Marine duties on board were: to provide fire-power during battles. They would fight as 6 men squads on the "tops" (platforms on the mast) with 1 marksman firing and 5 loading and passing the loaded rifle forward. They were also trained to replace cannon crews that were disabled and lead boarding and landing parties. They acted as guards on the ships sleeping between the ship's officers and the crew to deter mutiny.

Marines were equipped with a .75 caliber sea service musket. The captured arm was a 3rd India pattern British "Brown Bess" musket shortened for easier loading among the rigging. They also carried a 16" bayonet and a battle-ax. They also carried grenades to the tops that would be thrown not just at the enemy but aimed at their open magazine hatches. Quite a few ships were blown sky high by that well lobbed grenade. A marine was expected to load, ram and fire 3 rounds a minute. Unlike the British, they kept their eyes open on firing.

So the saws and the axes and the hammers clanging on the forges made both lake fleets in record time. The Sackets squadron played cat and mouse with the British fleet but did some damage like burning York (Toronto) twice. Cannons cast in Pittsburgh, 120 miles south of Erie, PA Perry's base were carried overland by sledges. Perry's fleet when finished amounted to 54 guns able to throw 900 pounds of iron per broadside against the enemy. The *Lawrence* and the brig *Niagara* each had 20 cannons, the *Caledonia* 3, the schooner *Ariel* 4, *Scorpion* 2, *Somers* 2, sloop *Tripe* 1 and *Porcupine* 1. Most of these cannons were newly invented carronades or "smashers" which were devastating but only at close range. The Americans positioned their ships at Put-in bay, OH. Long Point, Ontario was fast becoming a British base so the Americans could intercept any traffic between Malden and Long Point.

When the British fleet out of Malden appeared northeast of Put-in bay, they had the *Detroit* 19 guns, *Queen Charlotte* 17, *Lady Prevost* 13, the brig *Hunter* 10, the sloop *Little Belt* 3, and the schooner *Chippewa* 1 for a total of 63 guns, 460 pounds of iron power but very few carronades. Their crews and provincial marines were hastily assembled and had no gunnery practice. The American gun crews were experienced some had fought on the *Constitution* and others were from Newport, RI ships.

When the 2 fleets closed for battle on Sept. 10, 1812 every American ship in line knew the ship they were to attack.

The British battle line also had their strategy. And at that the 2 deadly lines approached each other. The British pounced on the *Lawrence* first since they wanted to destroy the largest ship. This was where Lt. Brooks and most of the marines were stationed. Three ships, the *Detroit*, *Queen Charlotte* and *Hunter* formed a crescent around the *Lawrence* with the *Hunter* getting behind the *Lawrence* and proceeded to rake her (broadside fired across the length of the ship smashing everything in its path). The carnage was awful.

Lt. Brooks, commander of the marine detachment was talking next to Perry when he was hit by a 32-pounder cannonball taking away his hip. He was hurled across the deck and asked Perry to kill him for the pain was excruciating. Perry refused and ordered the marines to carry him below. He held on and died later but only after he learned the outcome of the battle. The cockpit where the wounded were served was above the waterline allowing broadsides to wreck more havoc on the already wounded. One Narragansett Indian wounded in the arm had both of his legs taken off by a cannonball.

Anyone that stood next to Perry was killed - he attracted so much fire. The *Lawrence* was a wreck in 2 hours. Perry asked the surgeon for walking wounded to work the guns whose crews were already mangled. Eventually only one gun was left and Perry helped aim her. The brig *Niagara* lagging behind untouched finally came up to relieve the *Lawrence*. Lt. Elliott captained the brig and Perry immediately transferred the battle flag, "Don't give up the ship" in a jolly boat to the *Niagara*. Every British ship poured fire on her : round shot, grape, cannister (1" musket balls), and musket shot. It was the bravest thing imaginable and the American ships cheered like hell. Perry's little boat was hit by a cannon ball and Perry plugged the hole with his coat. Elliott had an attitude problem because he was passed over for command. When meeting Perry all he could say was, "How goes the day"! Perry, if looks could kill, ordered him in the jolly boat to bring the other American ships up fast. Perry ordered the *Lawrence* to haul down her colors to ease the killing of his men. The smaller American craft now closed in on the British.

The *Niagara* fresh with full cannons and marines now broke the British line and fired at 2 ships on larboard and 3 on starboard. The *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte* got their bowsprits tangled and Perry raked them unmercifully. One broadside from the *Niagara* literally tore the *Lady Prevost* to pieces. Meanwhile the marine marksmen poured volleys and grenades at the British. The battle was a horrific fight of ear-shattering broadsides, crashing timber, torn canvas and the screams of dying men.

Lt. Buchan on the *Lady Prevost* was shot in the face by an American marine. Perry told the marines to cease fire on that ship as her resistance was over.

The *Niagara's* bold example brought all the American ships into the heat of the battle. Fortunately 2 British commanders were struck down earlier and the *Lady Prevost's* rudder was disabled. In 8 minutes, 4 ships surrendered and 2 tried to flee but were overtaken. Victory was complete. This was the first time in history that an entire

British fleet was captured and by a new 30-year old country at that.

Perry fired off a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, "Sir- it has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake. The British squadron, consisting of 2 ships, 2 brigs, 1 schooner and 1 sloop, have this moment surrendered to the force under my command after a sharp conflict. I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant, "Oliver Hazard Perry."

The Americans lost 123, 27 killed. The British lost 135, 41 killed. Perry on returning to the *Lawrence* told Purser Hambleton, "The prayers of my wife have prevailed in saving me." Perry accepted the British surrender from 9 defeated officers on the blood strewn deck of the *Lawrence*. Perry sick all this time with fever, laid down and slept among the dead for hours.

The next day they buried the dead at sea and all 15 ships shoved off to Put-in Bay. After repairs, 6 dead officers including Lt. Brooks, USMC were buried on South Bass Island. The Perry Victory Monument enshrines them today and Congress posthumously awarded Lt. Brooks a silver medal. The first marine in history to receive a Congressional medal.

The 6 British ships were sold for \$ 242,250.00. The prize money was divided by 596 officers, seamen, and marines in proportion to their rank. Perry received \$ 7,140.00 (a fortune at that time) and a marine received \$ 214.59. The slain men's shares were given to their parents.

The 300 captured British officers and seamen (including 14 officer wives and 28 children) were transported to Camp Bull in Chillicothe, the capital of Ohio. They were soon joined by 601 captured British infantry and several Indians from the battle of the Thames. The British officers were allowed to retain their servants and the men lived in fine style attending many town functions including observing the execution of 6 American deserters. The following year they were all exchanged and paroled.

Bronco Takes The Gloves Off **An Interview with Bronco McKart** by Shawna Mazur

The Monroe County Historical Museum is pleased to present a new display featuring the boxing memorabilia of the former WBO world titleholder Bronco McKart. The boxing champ has been kind enough to let the museum showcase items from his long successful career as a boxer. Items such as his boxing trunks, belts, gloves, robe, shoes, posters, awards, etc. which will be up for public viewing.

Bronco Banyon McKart was born March 20, 1971 in Monroe, MI. He turned professional in 1992. He fought in the super welterweight division (154 lb) and also in the

middleweight (160 lbs div). In 1996 he captured the WBO Light Middleweight Title by beating Santos Cardona by TKO. He lost the title in his first defense against Winky Ronald Wright in Monroe on May 17, 1996. To date he has won 50 fights, (31 ko's), lost 7, he has fought a total of 57 fights. His most recent bout was on March 15, 2007 in which he was the winner. And as you will see Bronco candidly reveals, "Its not over yet!" I thought it would be nice to sit down with Bronco and talk about where he has come from, where he is now, and where he is going.

1) The first question I asked Bronco and probably one of the foremost on people's minds is just how did he get into this career? Bronco explains:

"I got into boxing cause I hit the point in my life, 13, 14 years old, where I was running around with guys that were pretty bad getting into a lot of trouble and my dad knew the road I was headed down... He sat me down and told me, 'I know the kind of people your running with, I know what they're doing I know what your doing and I'm stepping in and I am going to change your life Bronco. Every day when you get home from school... your going to spend time with your Dad.' He got me away from those guys and I started going to the boxing gym because my dad was training fightersI started boxing and I figured I'm at the gym I mise well start training and I enjoyed it and it was natural for me...boxing kinda got me on the right path through my dad...he was right in what he was saying. The most important thing you can give a child is time more than anything else it doesn't matter if its just one hour out of the day, if you can just take some time to have with your children. "

Incidentally, Bronco has three children: an 18 year old daughter named WhitLeigh, a 9 year old son named Banyon, and a 7 year old daughter named Brooklyn. So I asked Bronco if any of his children are interested in a career in boxing? He responded:

"No, Banyon he likes sports...but boxing is not his thing and I don't push him. Whatever he wants to do he's got my support 100% and that's with all my children."

2) I asked Bronco who was the most inspirational person in his life? He answered:

"Well, it would be my dad and my grandpa Smith, I was real tight with my grandpa Smith, he was like my 2nd dad. ...My dad he's my best friend, he's not just my dad. I often rely on him and count on him for anything.... That's the kind of love that I have for my kids, the kind of love my dad has for me. You would do anything to better your children, family is the most important thing that you have."

3) So Bronco, I asked, who would be the boxer that you most admire that you have met/or haven't met? Bronco responded:

"I got to meet every boxer that I grew up admiring accept one-Marvin Hagler. I've got to meet Muhammad Ali, [who] I grew up watching, but the guys that I guess I really got captured in by was Tommy Hearn, Sugar Ray Leonard,

and Marvin Hagler. That was really the era of boxing right there. That was the best era in boxing. Tommy Hearn and I are buddies....I grew up watching these guys on TV, just admiring them thinking 'Oh my gosh some day I want to be like them' and here I am....Sugar Ray Leonard was my manager for a year and I had him here in Monroe and we went out and played golf...that was a neat experience. I've met all the moderns like Mike Tyson....So its just neat...these guys as far as boxing goes are going down in history. And I tell my kids, 'you know you met all these guys.' This is the stuff to me that is neat for them. I'm just a small town Monroe guy and in my sport I have been blessed enough to excel and be able to meet all these neat people it's a very neat experience and its not over yet."

4) I asked Bronco who was your toughest opponent? He explained:

"I've had a few, well of course Winky Ronald Wright was my most frustrating opponent. I fought this guy Kelly Pavlik who is the number one middleweight in the world right now, that guy was a real strong hard punching guy. Aaron Davis, he was another guy that I had a brutal fight with...I won the fight, but it was just a brutal tough fight. There was a guy named Alain Bonnamie who was probably the most just rugged flat out tough guy... that I have ever been in there with."

5) So the next question I had to ask was, what was your most memorable fight, good and bad? Bronco answered:

"They go back to back. My most memorable good fight would be when I won my first world title in India, California. I had a picture of my grandpa at ringside in a seat and his hat in it, and when I won the fight I held his picture up and my world title belt. I brought the belt back and laid it on his headstone and told him 'I kept good on my promise,' cause I always told him 'if you weren't here to see me win it, I'd bring it out to you when I won it.' Then the next one was when I lost that title to Winky Wright in a fight which I felt I won....I just couldn't believe it. But it was what it was and I just had to move on and deal with it...you know the saying if it doesn't kill you, it'll make you stronger."

6) This led me to the next question I wanted to ask Bronco, what are some of the positive and negative things about being a boxer?

TO BE CONTINUED.....

TO FIND OUT THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION AND WHAT BRONCO HAS PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE PLEASE WATCH FOR THE SEPT/OCT NEWSLETTER



EYE on EDUCATION

by Lynn W. Reaume

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to help host the Eby Log Cabin on **Friday, August 3 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** There are free day-passes for volunteers. There have simple duties: greet & count visitors or direct traffic flow in and out of the building. This year's emphasis is on hand-crafts: quilting, embroidery, cross stitch, basket making, weaving, spinning, rug braiding, etc.- so if you want to help, and show off your craft during the week, let me know.

Visit the cabin during the 2007 Fair Week, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily and be counted as a supporter of local history.

The Country Store/Trading Post will be open Monday through Friday 1-5 p.m. during Fair Week, hosted by volunteers and staff. Buy some nickel candy during the week.

It's been a busy year so far at the Museum...



Open House at the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center in May- lots of quality living history, but little public. Reenactors feasted royally on homemade and fire-cooked foods, while demonstrating cooking techniques including how to cook the little muskrat.



Uber-volunteer **Judy Yokom** was honored at the May Michigan Week Luncheon and was presented with a Minuteman Award from County Commissioner Floreine Mentel.

The showpiece of the **MAECO Indy Race Car** exhibit is an actual Indy car that came into the Museum through the loading



dock doors- with inches to spare! MAECO Retiree Jerry Wittkop has filled the back gallery space with MAECO racing memorabilia, photographs, and much, much more! Be sure to come in and see their exhibit- the car and exhibit leaves at Labor Day.

The **Brig Niagara** coming into the Port of Monroe. About 10,000 visitors came and toured the Niagara and the cutter



Neah Bay docked at the Port. Music was provided on Saturday, and the Madame Cadillac dancers entertained the crowds. Visitors were able to

buy 1812 Bicentennial merchandise to help support upcoming events, and sponsor Monroe County Historical Society held a gala dinner at the Port on Saturday.

June also saw the premier of a new event- the 1st **River Raisin Fife & Drum Muster**, organized by Battlefield Interpreter Scott Lonsdale. Several musical corps from multiple states



came to Monroe to perform in a downtown parade, and muster gathering on part of the Battlefield at North Dixie

and East Elm Avenue, near the Monroe Sports Complex. This photo shows some of the mixed corps drumming onto the field.

Don't forget to check the internet for more photographs and Museum related information and upcoming events:

The Monroe County government website: co.monroe.mi.us
Emonroe (www.emonroe.com; select groups, then Historical Museum)

TravelMichigan (www.michigan.org; type "Monroe County Historical Museum" in Search box on top right)

Promote our History! 1812 Bicentennial logo merchandise available for sale at the main Museum or Battlefield Visitor Center: t-shirts (NEW- kid sizes), sweatshirts, ball caps, clothing patches, paperweights; NEW- ceramic mugs, key chain flashlights and harmonicas. For the Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield: Battles of the River Raisin DVD or VHS,

small Kentucky flags and flag stands. Come in for selection and prices.

NEW for purchase: a Battlefield Driving Tour compiled by recent Director Ralph Naveaux, printed in neat booklet form, for only \$5. Ralph's tour takes you throughout Monroe, following troop movements, noting key sites from the battle on the modern landscape, and reading the 1812 historical markers along the way. A must-have for battle interpretation, written by one of the most knowledgeable of 1812 historians. Available at the Battlefield Visitor Center or the main Museum. Get yours now!

VOLUNTEERS

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

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:

John Gibney
Monroe County Historical Museum
126 S. Monroe St
Monroe, MI 48161
(734) 240-7780 Phone
john_gibney@monroemi.org

Articles to be included in the Sep/Oct 2007 RIVER RAISIN NEWS & DISPATCH should be submitted to John Gibney for his review by Aug 1, 2007.

2007 Calendar of Events

June

1 **Battlefield Visitors Center Begins Summer Hours (Fri-Tues, June-August) 10am-5pm**

July

2-4 River Raisin Independence Festival
21 Battlefield Saturday at RRBVC 1:00pm
29 – 30 Fair Week: Eby Cabin
30 Fair Week: Trading Post Open 1pm-5pm

August

1-4 Fair Week: Eby Cabin
1-3 Fair Week: Trading Post Open 1pm-5pm
18 Battlefield Saturday at RRBVC 1:00pm

September

1 River Raisin Battlefield Visitors Center Begins Fall Hours (Weekends Only, through Oct.) 10am-5pm
15 Battlefield Saturday at RRBVC 1:00pm
15-16 Dundee Living History Event at Old Mill Museum
22 Scout merit Badge Day at Trading Post 10am-5pm
29-30 Custer Week: Civil War Reenactment at Trading Post 10am-5pm

October

1-6 Custer Week throughout Monroe
19-20 Lantern Tours at Trading Post 7:00pm
26-27 Lantern Tours at Trading Post 7:00pm
27 Battlefield Saturday at RRBVC 1:00pm
27 **River Raisin Battlefield Visitors Center Closes For Winter**

December

All Month Christmas Tree Festival at Historical Museum
1 Christmas Tree Festival Open House at Historical Museum
