

# Otsego County Historical Society Newsletter

November 2009



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**HELP!** Funds are low at the Museum and we need your help! Please look at the Cookie Sale article and see how you can help us out of these dire circumstances! And you will most certainly enjoy the cookies made from homemade recipes!

We have a new Greeter Coordinator for scheduling Greeters for next season - you may have already met her. She is Roseann Kujawa, a member of OCHS Board of Directors and she volunteered to be the Coordinator. If you liked the day and time you volunteered in the past, please call her now to let her know this. Her phone number is 731-6242.

We are always looking to expand our data base for volunteer greeters. If you would like to join this group, please call Roseann and let her know.

A Happy Thanksgiving to all our friends of the Museum.

*Ginny Brozowski*

## Don't Forget . . .

**Christmas Is coming!** Ideal gifts can be purchased at the Museum until December 1st by calling Ginny at 732-9406 to make arrangements to purchase Gift Shoppe items.

There is a large selection of:

- 2010 Otsego County Calendars • Cookbooks
  - Note Cards featuring the 2009 calendar pictures
  - Note Cards by Tim featuring local birds & flowers
  - Step Back In Time I, II, and III
  - Handmade Log & Stone Banks
  - Handmade Log & Stone indoor Birdhouses and Stone Lighthouses
  - Locally made Maple Syrup and Jams
  - Locally made soy Candles
  - The Early History of Otsego County CD
- All these items are priced from \$3.00 to \$15.00 and these monies help to keep the Museum open.

**CONTACT US AT: 989-732-4568 (Please leave a message)**

## Otsego County Historical Society Presents Grandma's Favorite Christmas Cookies

An assortment of 24 delicious cookies,  
packaged and ready for gift giving.

- Sugar Cookies • Snickerdoodles • Gingersnaps
- Oatmeal Raisin
- Chocolate Mint • English Toffee

Ideal Christmas Present for Family,  
Friends, Employees and Clients

**\$14.00 per container**

**Orders Due with Payment by December 10th**

**Pick-up on Thursday, December 17th, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

**at the Museum - 320 W. Main Street in Gaylord**

**For more information please call the Museum at**

**989-732-4568**

**or call Ann at 231-546-3590**

## COOKIE ORDER FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF CONTAINERS \_\_\_\_\_ AT \$14.00 EACH

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to OCHS and mail with order form to:

OCHS, P.O. Box 1223, Gaylord, MI 49734

Thank you for your order. Not only will you be pleased with the Christmas Cookies, your support will help the OCHS with maintaining our Community's Historical Museum

## Quilt Raffle

The Quilt Raffle drawing was held on Saturday, Oct. 24th at the Museum. The lucky winner was Mike Flinn of Gaylord and he shared how pleased his wife was with the quilt. Doris Shultz, Raffle Ticket Coordinator, assisted Mike with showing off the quilt.



## Web Site Update

by Jackie Skinner

A focus group was held on April 22nd to ask the community what they thought would make a wonderful Historical Society web site. Based upon the group's recommendations, changes have been made to the site. Another focus group will be held at the Otsego County Library, Friday, Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to noon. At this meeting, focus group members will be asked again to give feedback on the new design. Though you may not be a part of the focus group, please take a look at the new page at [www.otsego.org/ochs](http://www.otsego.org/ochs), and let me know what you think of the new site design. I can be reached at [jskinner@otsego.org](mailto:jskinner@otsego.org).

## ANTIQUe APPRAISAL DAY - NUMBER FIVE!

It was time to clean out the attic, find old treasures and come to the 5th Antique Appraisal Day on Saturday, September 19th. Between 9 and 4 we saw 32 customers, some bringing several items, for a total of \$610.00 income. Our heartfelt thanks to Joseph McGee of Joseph's World in Petoskey for generously giving of his time and expertise. For helping publicize the event, Mike Reling of 101.5, the Gaylord Herald Times, Debbie Altman of Independent Bank and Weekly Choice. Thank you to our hostesses, Roseann Kujawa, Marge Williamson, Marilyn Kacznowski, Doris Schulz, Bea Axford, Bettie Manier and Marlene Everett. And for the delicious cookies, Bea Axford, Judi Estelle and Doris Schulz. A special thanks to Ginny Brozowski for her invaluable help and support! Thank you as well to Mark Williamson of Arlene's Diner for generously donating \$1.00 off breakfast or lunch on Appraisal Day to our clients.

## TOP-O-MICHIGAN POTATO SHOW A SUCCESS

By E. J. Leenhouts, Ass't Agr. Agt., N. Y. C. Lines

The 7th, 8th and 9th of November, 1923, will probably go down in the annals of the potato history of northern Michigan as marking the most important event for those engaged in potato culture. Those dates mark the holding of the first "Top-O'-Michigan" Potato Show at Gaylord; a show that seems destined to teach the growers the things that are essential to successful production and marketing of their major crop. Potato shows without number are being held in large consuming centers beyond the reach of the producer, but the "Top-O'-Michigan" Potato Show is held in the center of the producing territory, and it brings the direct benefits to be secured from such a show within easy reach of the greatest number of potato producers instead of taking the educational features to distant out-of-reach points. In fact, the preface of the premium book says that the major object of the show is that "the individual grower will be able to see the types, varieties and quality demanded by the consuming market; the proper methods of grading and care; the results of proper cultivation and fertilization."

The "show" will develop a medium for direct sales contact between buyer and grower of table and certified seed stock. Served north and south by the M. C. R. R., and east and west by the B. C. G. & A., and located squarely in the center of northern Michigan and its producing area, Gaylord was indeed an ideal place for such a show. Incidentally, it also marks the highest point in Lower Michigan, and hence is called "Top-O'-Michigan." From 300 to 400 carloads of potatoes leave this one city every year for the great consuming centers. Here also is the home of the country's choicest seed stock, and many carloads are shipped to all parts of the country. For these reasons it was quite logical that the people there should demand a potato show, and that it should be called the "Top-O'-Michigan Potato Show." Approximately 2,000 producers visited the show. Over 150 entries of northern Michigan's finest potatoes were on exhibition. Many experts who had attended many shows throughout the country admitted that they had never seen such a uniformly excellent collection of entries of spuds. F.C. Gaylord, of Purdue, acting as judge said, "I wish we had these potatoes in Indiana—they are certainly wonderful." *Continued on back*



Top-O'-Michigan Potato Show 1923

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the  
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Society is  
greatly  
appreciated.

## Otsego County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1223  
Gaylord, MI 49735

989-732-4568

Email: ochs@charter.com

Website: www.otsego.org/ochs

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### Potato Show continued -

Some past growers were: Miles Brown, Frank Fox, Michael Sklarczyk, Walter Pettifor, Darrell Fleming, Orville Walker, Jasper Cremeans, Joseph Makarewicz, Albert Kassuba, Art Estelle.

### Potato Warehouses

In the beginning, practically all potatoes were shipped out of Elmira, Vanderbilt and Gaylord in reefers (refrigerated railroad cars). They were stored in warehouses adjoining railroad sidings. The warehouses were usually owned by business men who charged the farmers for unloading the potatoes in the fall, for storage, grading, bagging and loading onto the reefers. They also bought potatoes directly from farmers for resale.

At one time many potato warehouses lined the tracks in Gaylord. Most of the warehouses have been gone for sometime, torn down or victims of fires. However, the Spud Warehouse, one of these buildings, is used today for a retail store and in Elmira, the Frank Polus warehouse which is vacant but can be seen by the railroad tracks in Elmira.

Some of the farmers in Otsego County changed from producing food (table) potatoes to growing certified seed in the 1920's or later when there was a high demand for certified seed. Thomas Buell of Elmira became the largest grower of certified seed in the state around this time. Elmira was declared the Certified Seed Capital of Michigan.

Some of the more recent names associated with certified seed have been Don and Ben Sklarczyk, Ed Estelle, Walter and Ken Burdo, Joseph Ciszewski, Louis Francis, and the Makarewicz and the Casmer Polus families.

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### Just a Reminder

Even though we advertise that the Museum is closed October 24th through May 31st, special arrangements to visit the Museum can be made by calling Ginny Brozowski at 732-9406 during those months.

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for donating our Newsletter

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