

# Huron

## Historical Society

Spring 2013

### Monument Commemorating Huron's War Dead to be Dedicated at Huron Memorial Stadium

The Huron Historical Society and the Huron Athletic Booster Club are collaborating on a project to honor the men who lost their lives while serving their country in wartime. HHS board member Judy Ryan assisted Huron graduate and area history teacher Paul Ward in compiling a list of the 200 men who died in the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean Conflict, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. The planned monument, which will be inscribed with all 200 names, will be located at Huron Memorial Stadium.

Paul and Judy researched back issues of the Erie County Reporter and Sandusky Register, and war monuments at McCormick School and Scott Cemetery to find the names of those who died in action. They then crosschecked the names in government records on Ancestry.com.

More information on the dedication ceremony at Huron Memorial Stadium will be announced later.

### Historical Marker Moved



The historical marker located on North Main Street in the small park adjacent to Huron Bait will soon be moved to Centennial Park located at the newly renovated entrance to the pier. The marker commemorates the three Huron lighthouses and Huron's maritime history. An informal survey conducted by the society revealed that most people do not realize it

is double-sided and the marker itself is often overlooked because of the park's landscaping.

Plans are underway to add additional markers celebrating the pier's history, including one placed at the new viewing platform on the pier, which is the original base of the 1857 lighthouse; another would detail the history of the 1970s spoils site project; and a third would be placed near Willard's Loft, the last remaining fish house located alongside the Huron River.



### Check Out Our New Web Site!

The Huron Historical Society recently had Mark Advertising of Sandusky redesign our website to make it more user-friendly. See the results at [www.thehuronhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.thehuronhistoricalsociety.org)

## Welcome to Bill Scott, Our Newest Board Member

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Please welcome our new board member, Bill Scott. He is the fourth generation of Scotts to live in Huron. His father was one of the last commercial fishermen based on the Huron River, before Urban Renewal altered Huron's downtown. Bill taught school and coached track and cross country for 35 years before retiring from teaching in 2011. Bill and his wife Carol live in one of the oldest houses in Huron, built in 1837. He looks forward to helping keep the history of Huron alive and available.

## Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center Helps Society Catalogue Archives

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This past April Nan Card, Curator of Manuscripts at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont conducted an assessment of the Society's archives. Nan made several recommendations to better organize our archives, with the overall goal of making them more accessible to the public. We will be implementing Nan's recommendations in the coming months.



## Bits of Huron History

### Willard's Loft

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Willard's Loft at 34 Main Street is the only remaining fishing shanty from the era when Huron was the home of several commercial fish houses. The shanties served as places to mend and store nets and other fishing gear. The two story building located on the Huron River and not far from the pier was originally owned by the Zimmerman family. The last owner was Marcus M. Zimmerman, an independent fisherman for 51 years who began working for his father Eli in the 1920s.

Joe, Louella, and their son Dennis (Skinny) Clark purchased the fish house and the building to the north of it when Marcus retired. The Clarks were owners of Joe's Bait, a store directly south of the fish house. Previously the bait store was the site of Paddock's Boat Livery, which rented aluminum boats

to fishermen. The bait store burned down and the fish house became known as Denny's Fix It Shop and Locksmith. Denny's wife, Peggy LaCourse, did a brisk business cleaning fish and gained the reputation as the best in town.

Denny had an alcohol problem and was barred from all Huron Bars. He solved the problem by purchasing products from the local drug stores that were high in alcohol. Drunk one night he shot himself and the legend goes that some townsmen joked, "There goes Denny Clark shooting his mouth off again."

Ronald and Mary Willard purchased the property and the fish shanty houses their canvass business and the other smaller dwelling has been converted into their residence.

### A "Jerk-Water Town"

*Submitted by Steve Meyers*

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If someone called Huron a "Jerk-Water Town," it was not meant as an insult. Huron was one of several track pan installations along the New York Central that enabled high speed trains to take water for the steam locomotives while in motion. The locomotive's fireman would look for a sign along the right-of-way and use a lever to lower a scoop under the tender. The scoop would enter the trough between the rails and would quickly fill the tender, spilling out of a relief valve on top. I recall reading about an incident (it may have happened in Huron) where a hobo, riding behind

the tender on a bitterly cold day was drenched with water. His screams could be heard in the locomotive cab and when they stopped the train, the hobo was dead, frozen to the back of the tender.

The fireman had to be careful to raise the scoop before the end of the trough; or it would either tear off the scoop or the end of the trough. Eventually, a ramp was developed to raise the scoop automatically. Huron had both a water treatment plant for these pans and a boiler room to keep the pans from freezing in the winter.