

# THE HISTORIAN



PORT HOPE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol 1, Issue 2 Aug. 2021

8016 Portland Ave, Box 133, Port Hope, MI 48468

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our first major community event was a huge success. The Port Hope Area Historical Society was invited to host the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July flea market event at our newly developed grounds and buildings. We had a wonderful turnout of volunteer helpers, vendors, and visitors. We were pleased to work together with the tractor and engine show and tractor pull committees at the Hope Community Center, with free transportation between the sites on a Thumb Area Transit bus. We plan to soon have a joint meeting with all the groups who sponsor 4<sup>th</sup> of July events to make next year's celebration even better.

Work by our dedicated volunteers continues as we now focus our attention on the roof of the lumber yard building. It is important that we secure the interior from future damage and continue to acquire and store artifacts that help tell the story of our community's history. It was a delight to see the reaction of our visitors during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event as they viewed many of the unique historical donations that we have received so far.

Other events scheduled for this summer are ABC Day on August 21, a visit by the Model T Ford Club International Thumb Tour on Saturday, August 28, with an ice cream social for the nearly 100 cars expected, and the Huron County Museum Weekend the last weekend of September.

We continue to need financial support for our building restoration project and appreciate any help we may receive. We also invite anyone to come and volunteer for the many tasks related to all our projects. We have fun! Come join us!

Jim Hunter, Society President

## JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> FLEA MARKET & BUILDING TOUR A TOTAL SUCCESS

The Port Hope Area Historical Societies first hosting of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July flea market and open house of our official home facilities (The old Brinker Lumber Building), turned out to be a huge success. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration was attended by hundreds and the weather was perfect.



"A beautiful day in the neighborhood" It turned out to be a beautiful blue-sky day. The newly prepared flea market grounds worked out very well. The flea market vendors provided a variety of items and collectables. The lions club had people standing in line for the hamburgers and hot dogs, and the crowds walked away carrying bags and or boxes of treasures.



Our little town came alive as it always does on July 4<sup>th</sup>. All enjoyed the tractor shows, the flea market, the parade, the food, and other events.

(4<sup>th</sup> of July Cont'd on Page 2)

**Hope to see all on...**  
**ABC Day - Aug 21, 2021**  
**Model T's - Aug 28, 2021**  
**Museum Weekend - Last weekend in Sept.**



The center corridor of the Historical Societies home, known as the "Alley" reflects an architectural beauty with lots of space for future displays. Lots more in the coming month's folks! Stay tuned, or better yet, join the team.

(4<sup>th</sup> of July Cont'd from Page 1)

In addition to our hosting of the flea market, our historical society building was open to the public and the Main Street Diorama was on display in our newly finished reception room. Overall, all expectations were met, and our plan is that next year's celebration will be even better.



Typical display example. GUESS WHO MAY HAVE RIDDEN IN THIS STROLLER?



Our newly finished reception room with the adjacent future genealogy center, currently houses the replica diorama of Port Hope's Main Street, as it was in the 30's and 40's.



A crowd favorite at the parade. Cody Brown's Pandemic-Mobile

# ABC Day Aug 21, 2021

## Port Hope's Hometown Festival

SAVE THE DATE! A FUN DAY IS IN STORE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. VISIT THE TRAIN DEPOT, HAVE SOME BEANS, VISIT OUR HISTORICAL CENTER, SEE THE MINIATURE MAIN STREET DIORAMA, HAVE SOME MORE BEANS, SEE PORT HOPE'S ORIGINAL MAIL BUGGY, HAVE A HOT DOG. SEE THE BEAUTIFUL CARS AT THE CAR SHOW. THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. INCLUDING DONUTS. THE ENTIRE TOWN COMES ALIVE.

**BETHERE!**

- RAILROAD DEPOT & CABOOSE TOURS**
- PORT HOPE HISTORY PRESENTATION BY JIM HUNTER**
- DONUTS**
- PUT-PUT GOLF**
- VINTAGE BASEBALL GAME**
- HISTORICAL SOCIETY BLDG & ARTIFACTS**
- PORT HOPE'S FAMOUS HOT DOGS**
- PETTING ZOO**
- BEAN SOUP**
- 30'S MAIL BUGGY**
- DEPOT MODEL TRAIN LAYOUT**
- PINATA**
- CAR SHOW**
- WAGON RIDES**
- MAIN STREET 30'S DIORAMA DISPLAY**
- BEAN SOUP**
- JAIL TOURS**
- MUSIC**
- VENDORS**

## PORT HOPE'S ORIGINAL MAIL BUGGY RETURNS HOME

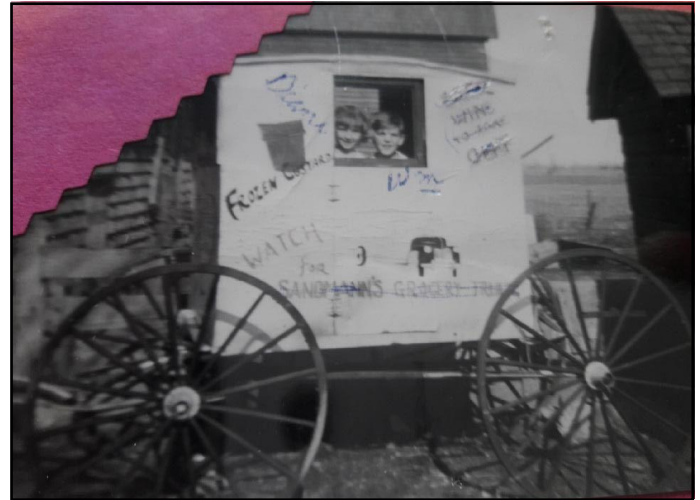
Article written by Alger Rutz

"Neither Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor Dark of Night Shall Stay These Couriers From the Swift Completion of Their Appointed Rounds."

The old horse drawn Port Hope Mail Buggy is a perfect example of the above "Mail Carriers Oath", and has completed its rounds and has returned to its home in Port Hope Mi.

Built approximately ninety years ago by part time mail carrier, Harold W. Finkel, it was able to deliver mail thru the roughest of weather conditions. When the cars of the day could not traverse the heavy winter snow and muddy spring roads, the mail buggy "completed its rounds". Harold, a young man at the time built the buggy out of sheet metal panels, nailed to a wooden framework. The completed box sat on a chassis, no doubt purchased from the Melligan Farm Machinery and Hardware store in town.

The buggy apparently served the community well for several years but like many things in life, it eventually went on to greener pastures and became a long-forgotten memory. That is until seventy years later. Two years ago, in the fall of 2019 while doing genealogy research on my Finkel family, I came across a 1978 Port Huron newspaper article describing an old mail buggy having been build by a Harold Finkel (my uncle) and stored in a local farm museum barn. With much excitement, I contacted the museum, and a visit was planned. Sure enough, the old buggy was displayed in the corner of the barn with a Port Hope plaque. In



*Diane & William Finkel playing in buggy, late forties*

a rather sad state of disrepair, the original wagon wheels had been removed and replaced with car tires. I contacted two of Harold Finkel's daughters, Diane, and Marilyn Finkel, and with much surprise they both remembered the buggy well but had long ago lost track of it. Diane in fact provided a photo of her and William, her brother, taken in the late 40's. Further research uncovered the fact that Art Wilkowski had also been a mail carrier and I was able to obtain an old photo of Art sitting in the wagon loaded with boxes carrying baby ducks ready for delivery along with the mail.

While the remaining history is vague, it was kept on the Finkel farm and was occasionally used in parades and such. Ownership at some point transferred to the Weatherhead family, the Melms family, and eventually around 1971 ended up in the St Clair County Farm Museum in Goodell's MI. There it has sat for the last 50 years, in a corner of the barn, gathering dust. Over the next few months, I pondered putting in a request to the museum that they should consider bringing it back to its original condition. Instead, I contacted them, told them the history, and asked if I could somehow obtain the buggy. much to my surprise, they agreed to loan it to us indefinitely. Arrangements were made and the buggy was trailered back to my shop where refurbishment started almost immediately. The body was lifted off the chassis and the old car tires were replaced with original style wood spoked wheels. The chassis required some repair and replacement of broken parts. The body, showing the original hammer marks, bumps and dents and rather crude construction, was intentionally kept as original but painted the post office green with red trim. The original sliding door windows had long ago disappeared and were re-constructed.



*Art Wilkowski in mail buggy with boxes of baby ducks on back*

Upon completion and with the body set back on the newly refurbished red chassis, the old buggy appeared to be smiling once again. Holding a lot of stories and history from the past. The "Finkel" mail buggy is now back home and on display at the Port Hope Area Historical Society.



*Aug 10, 2021 - Mail buggy arrives back home. Pictured are Alger Rutz, (restorer and nephew of Harold W. Finkel), wife Sharon and two boys, Ken & David Rutz.*

### GLADYS & RB HUNTER HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

Our genealogy library and research center room are nearing completion. With plans for a computer and copy machine, our next construction item on the list will be the counter where the computers will be located, along with the necessary wiring for the computer network.

We will also be constructing the shelving where written and printed documents will be stored. We are accepting some donated file cabinets for additional storage.

The port Hope Area Historical Society is seeking family stories, documents and genealogical information. We plan to organize records by family name and or subject matter. We welcome any old original family records, or copies, and will categorize, organize and add them to the overall collection. We hope to become a viable source for local family history and genealogy. A place to visit and learn the area's history and the families that made it happen. Again, if you have any family pictures, stories, or photos of your homestead, we would be very interested in adding them to the research center.

**Port Hope's Hometown Festival**

# ABC DAY

**August 21, 2021**  
**9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**Car Show 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**



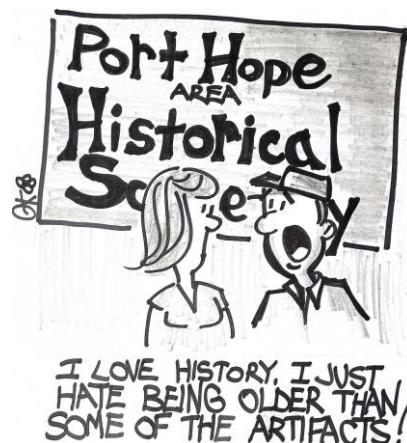
Benefiting Friends of the Port Hope Depot  
a 501(c)(3) organization

STAFFORD COUNTY PARK  
8046 Portland Ave in Port Hope  
♦♦ Overlooking Beautiful Lake Huron ♦♦

★ **Crafts & Food**  
available throughout the town

★ **Authentic Vintage Baseball**

★ **50/50 Drawings** ★



### Membership / Contribution Form

Please fill out this form and mail with your check to:

P.H.A.H.S.  
P.O. Box 133  
Port Hope MI, 48468



**Port Hope Area Historical Society**

8016 Portland Ave.  
Port Hope MI, 48468  
Questions: 989-428-4831

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Yearly Membership: Single** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$25.00) **Family** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$40.00)  
January 1 thru December 31 (must be renewed each calendar year by May 15)

**Life Member** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$500) **Founders/Life Member** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$1,000.00)

All members will receive the quarterly newsletter and member names listed periodically in the newsletter. Founders & Life Members will have a plaque at the Historical Center with their name on it.

### This section is for a contribution that may be made with or without a membership.

I would like to support the Port Hope Area Historical Society to further its development and wish to make a contribution in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to: "Port Hope Area Historical Society").

( Contributions to the PHAHS, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines.