

# Omena Timelines



## Let's Celebrate! In this issue:

OHS turns 20!  
Celebrating a twenty  
year journey to collect,  
preserve and display  
Omena's past

Profiling Omena's long  
list of distinguished  
authors

20th Anniversary Edition

A publication of the Omena Historical Society

2014 Edition

# President's Letter

by Doni Lystra

## *Celebrating our 20th Anniversary Year!*

**GREETINGS TO OHS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS** from your president to all caretaker members and congratulations as we begin our 20th Anniversary Year! In this landmark year in OHS's history, it is rewarding to pause for a moment and consider the major impact OHS has had in furthering the historical interest of the members of our community and beyond. The success of our museum continues to grow, and it is exciting to report that membership has grown 12% over the last fiscal year, indicating strong enthusiasm for what we are offering. It is comforting to know that we are fiscally sound and prepared to face the future as a strong, vital organization dedicated to our mission to gather, preserve and display historical documents, information and artifacts relating to the Omena area, and to present educational programs of historical interest for the members and the public. Please read the article titled "Celebrating 20 Years" - it chronicles our impressive accomplishments with a short history, including the names of OHS members who contributed their creativity and dedication to our successful two-decade historical journey; our award winning publication; proud ownership of a Museum that is now the cornerstone of the community, including a survey that served Omena at

» Cont. on page 26

## CONTENTS

<b>President's Letter .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Celebrating 20 Years .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Timelines 2014 Inspiration .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Clara Dillingham Pierson, Author .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Omena's Authors of the Past .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A Journey Through Time .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>From Manse to Manor .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>My Life as a Small Boy .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Solle's Bookshop .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Milestones .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Mystery Object Found! .....</b>	<b>27</b>



## TIMELINES

*Editor:* Jacquie Johnson

*Historical Advisor:* Joey Bensley

*Editorial Staff:*

Bruce Balas, Larry Bensley, Joan Blount,

Debby Disch, Alice Littlefield,

Doni Lystra, Kanda McKee, Jim Miller,

Kathy Miller, Edward Oberndorf,

Mary Tonneberger

*Photographer:* Jim Miller

*Mailing address:*

P.O. Box 75

Omena, Michigan 49674

[www.omenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.omenahistoricalsociety.org)

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE OMENA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 2013-2014

### Officers

*President:* Doni Lystra

*Vice President:* Helen P. Bradley

*Secretary:* Alice Littlefield

*Treasurer:* John Ray

### Directors

Laurie Adelson

Keith Disselkoen

Judy Fowler

Bob Gelakoski

Linda Kemper

Kris Mampe

Kanda McKee

Robert Smart

Lynn Spitznagel Sutton

Ellie Stephenson

*Honorary Trustee:* Ed Oberndorf

## TIMELINES MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to showcase Omena's past as we chronicle the present, with an understanding that today's news becomes tomorrow's history.

## COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS

All color photos except page 16 by Jim Miller.

## COVER PHOTO

Thanks to Marsha Buehler for lending her Clara Pierson books, to Jim and Kathy Miller for the use of their books, and to Jim, the photographer.







# Celebrating 20 Years

by Ed Oberndorf

**NO ONE DREAMED** our two-decade historical journey would include an award-winning book, a museum, and extraordinary exhibits and programs created by many dedicated members. Join us in reviewing the highlights.

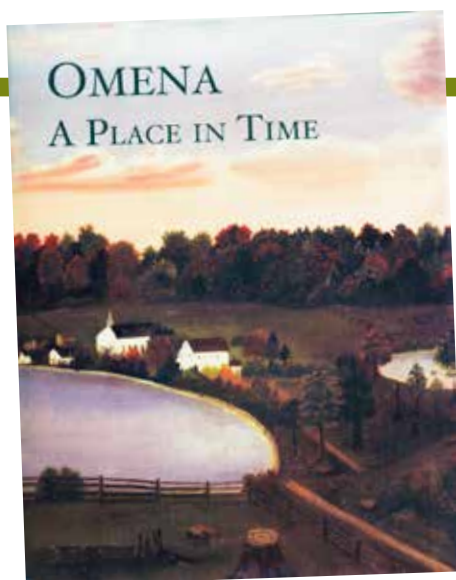
In the mid-80s an idea was conceived to archive and record Omena's interesting history. It began by taping older residents in the community and collecting memorabilia. The pioneers of the program were Dan Bradley, Jack Kemble, Vernon Key, Bill Marbach, Vin Moore, Ed Oberndorf, and Mary Helen Ray.

In June of 1994 the Omena Historical Society was officially organized. Meetings were held monthly at the Community Center (Omena Fire Hall) until 2006. Bill Marbach established the IRS designation as well as serving as our first archivist and treasurer.



Community Center





Using our collection of 35 tape recordings, documents and historical data from various publications, Amanda Holmes wrote the award-winning 300 page book, *Omena A Place in Time*, selling over 500 copies. Dale Blount served as Editor and both deserve a trillion accolades for the book that brings our history alive for present and future generations to enjoy.

In early 2004 Mary Stanton learned that the Jesuits, who own Villa Marquette, were planning to demolish the Putnam-Cloud Tower House (originally a farm house built in 1876) that served as living quarters for some of the Jesuits who came in the summer. The house had been gifted to the Jesuits by the Cloud family in 1936. OHS agreed to move the house to Omena village on property owned by the Omena Village Preservation Association (OVPA) located next door to the Tamarack Gallery. In June 2004 the house landed on site to become the future home of our museum.

OVPA graciously donated the land on a 40-year lease at \$1.00 per year. OHS raised \$215,000 from donors, businesses, and foundations. It took 4000 volunteer man-hours to restore the dilapidated structure. The restoration project would not have been possible without the daily eight-hour supervision by Larry Bensley. To maintain the historic integrity of the house, the contractors were most fortunate in finding replacement glass and bricks from the period. The Grand Opening took place Summer, 2006. The OHS Museum has become a cornerstone of the Omena community with over 200 visitors annually and 160 member families enjoying the special exhibits and educational programs.

There is nothing like a "Surrey with a Fringe on Top" to grab attention. In 2006 the surrey was on loan to the museum and in 2011 our pride and joy was purchased for \$5000. It has become our most popular and photographed artifact. At the turn of the century this historic mobile served the Sunset Lodge, meeting hotel guests at the steamboat dock and trains at the Omena depot.

Who would ever believe Omena would have a canine mayor? Well, it happened July, 2009 when Tucker Joyce owned by Bob and Diane Joyce (daughter of Sunny Colling proprietor of Omena Bay Country Store) was voted our first mayor competing against 22 canines, 2 cats, 1 horse and 1 snail. The event was big news in the media, making the front page of the *Traverse City Record Eagle* and also covered by the *Leelanau Enterprise*.



# Some Exhibit Highlights

**Emily Nash Smith Exhibit**—featuring her magnificent history and art collection.

**It's all about Farming**—covering the history of agriculture in the Omena area.

**Rails, Trails and Sails**—highlighting pictures and stories of trains, steamboats and early automobile travel to Omena.

**Aghosatown**—focusing upon Native Americans in the Omena area.

**Omena Resorts**—serving as major summer vacation destinations before the turn of the century to the mid-30s, with the Sunset Lodge still in business today.

**An Omena School Room in the Early 1900s**—displaying a vintage classroom and listing the rigid rules to qualify to be a teacher.

**An Omena Kitchen in 1860**—replicating a compact and well-equipped kitchen that served as a gathering room of the house including cooking and bathing. Housewives spent hours throughout the day keeping the stoves stoked with wood. God bless these dedicated women!

**HATS OFF and ACCOLADES** to Joey and Larry Bensley, Jim Miller, Amanda Holmes, Alice Littlefield, and Bob Smart, who spent many days creating the exhibits that have graced the museum since its opening in 2006. Dennis Armbruster joined the group in 2013; Sally Viskochil donated a great deal of time and expertise mounting our first two exhibits.



## Some Program Highlights

**Visit to Leelanau Hotel on Omena Heights**—Mary Smith brought to life the hotel activities during its grand years at the turn of the century. Amanda Holmes covered its early years when it was an Indian Mission.

**Bus Tour of Major Sites**—led by famed lecturer, Professor Larry Bensley.

**A Period Dinner at Sunset Lodge**—a delectable dinner and warm hospitality extended by hosts Linda and David Jacobs.

**John Mitchell**—introduced his new book, *Grand Traverse, the Civil War Era*.

**Boat Tour**—visiting offshore views of famous hotel sites of the past led by Captains DeVries and Miller. Kathy Miller organized this tour following with a reception in the Miller front yard.

**Cemeteries of Leelanau Township**—presented by George Anderson.

**Remembrances of Vin Moore**—presenting tape recorded reminisces of Vin's glorious years in Omena.

**Tour of Cottages Built in Late 1890s**—a walking tour to the Abbot, Goldman, Oberndorf and Woolford cottages led by Kathy Miller.

**Tour of Downtown Buildings**—each building hosted by an OHS member giving its historical background and origins. (George Anderson hosted at the yellow house where his father and uncles lived.)

## Additional Highlights

**Our Website**—One of the best-kept secrets is our informative Website that went online 2009. Viewership was 755 and has escalated to 2200 visitors from the US and around the world. You will be impressed by the sophistication and informative historical material communicated by our internet connection. CHECK IT OUT! [www.omenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.omenahistoricalsociety.org).

**Timelines**—another major asset to our program highlights is our annual OHS magazine that has evolved from a bulletin to a full-blown publication with color, covering current and past events, and interesting articles on the people and life in Omena.

In closing, you can readily discern that the village at the bend in the road has had a remarkable historical past that your Omena Historical Society has preserved for present and future generations to enjoy.

**VISIT THE MUSEUM THIS SUMMER -  
YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!!**



# Timelines 2014 Inspiration

by Joey Bensley

**CLARA PIERSON'S** great granddaughter, Susan King, contacted Joey Bensley last spring and indicated she had a large collection of items pertaining to Clara and wondered if OHS would like to have it to preserve for future generations. Of course Joey was excited. Larry and Joey arranged to meet Susan King at her home in Frankfort. They spent a few hours going through many pictures, documents and objects, which she was willing to donate to OHS. Also she kindly offered to make copies of photos, etc. that she wanted to keep. Sue and her husband Bob were most gracious and a lovely couple. We were thrilled with the collection. When Joey had inventoried everything she realized there were 104 items added to OHS archives, which is very impressive. The collection included photo albums, diaries, letters, baby shoes, a fan, mirror, purse, handkerchief, and other mementos.

Our *Timelines* staff wanted to write about Clara Pierson, but also wanted to write about the other authors with ties to Omena. OHS has a display in the upstairs of the museum with pictures of authors and a copy of at least one of their books. That was our starting point. Clara Pierson was our inspiration. This year we are focusing on past authors, and in future issues we will highlight present authors with ties to Omena.

Joey Bensley will present a program about Clara Pierson and the collection on Tuesday, August 5th at 4:00pm.



Pencroft

Clara Pierson's Cottage, currently the Oberndorf Cottage on Omena Point.

# Clara Dillingham Pierson, Author

by Mary Tonneberger

**CLARA DILLINGHAM PIERSON**, a prolific author, had a very rich life from the time she was born of talented parents in 1868. Her father was a retired Civil War captain and her mother was a teacher of math and also a pianist and organist. Her father manufactured buggies in Coldwater, MI in Branch County, near the Indiana border. While she was a child in ill health for a number of years, she was taught at home by her mother. Her father in particular exposed her to the beauty of nature, the woods and its inhabitants. Some of her early recollections put one in mind of a budding Beatrix Potter.

Clara wanted to become a doctor or an architect; she interned for an elderly architect in Coldwater and helped in the design of the Branch county courthouse of which she was very proud. However, by chance, a New England minister encouraged her to write children's books after reading some of her early writings. Although her first story was about slums in Chicago, she turned to children's stories about the countryside based on stories that her father had told her. After getting her education, she taught kindergarten training at Alma College.

In 1894, she married John W.S. Pierson, a merchant from Stanton where they made their home built from one of Clara's designs. While in Stanton, she was very active in church work, sometimes even preaching. She also was a member of the Ladies Literary and Scribblers societies in Grand Rapids, a larger town southwest of Stanton. In 1930, the

Piersons moved to Grand Rapids where she died in 1952. Several of Clara's books were donated to the Coldwater Library by her son, John Howard Pierson.

(From *The Coldwater Daily Reporter*, 1961.)

How did Clara and John arrive in Omena? In the summer of 1896, a long delayed vacation brought them by train to Traverse City. That August, the heat was suffocating and they met an old friend in

the hotel who recommended they travel north by steamer to Omena. They were met by a developer who was selling lots in Omena. Clara took out the right of refusal on the lot where she built her cottage two years later. It was financed from her book royalties. On the return steamer ride, they met Dr. Dan F. Bradley who was the pastor of Park Congregational Church in Grand Rapids. His "sane appraisal of the advantages of Omena summers .... clinched the sale". Very soon she drew a sketch of "my ideal cottage" and the cottage was completed in the summer of 1898; she would characterize this effort as the "wisest expenditure of a lifetime."



Clara Pierson

Clara and her mother came in June of 1898 before the cottage was ready. They started to take their meals at the hotel, but a summer storm came up that forced them to camp out in the unfinished home. The Sunday morning after the storm passed, all was calm and "Grand Traverse Bay was a gently dimpling sheet of blue and gold." Since the Omena church was a two mile hike and the two women had spent a harrowing night, "it was a bit too much just then" to walk to church. The "beautiful Omena forest has still great stretches



**"It appears that her Pencroft series of four books about the Millers was based upon Clara's reflections of living in Omena and her imagining about a family settling in the area. Other children's books were written over the years, leading to a very successful career."**



Young Clara Pierson



Clara Pierson

of cathedral quiet."

The cottage that we know today as Pencroft was originally called the Cedar Lodge, then was rechristened Under the Linden (named for a huge basswood on the front lawn). The tree fell during WWI so Pencroft became the new name since it was built with her pen's royalties. In her diary (Chapter XVIII) Clara describes the early ways of maintaining a remote home. She mentions rowing out to get pails of drinking water or standing on a dock to do so. Meat was delivered by wagon by a singing Bohemian and milk from a nine-year-old boy's cart. Her summers evolved into a pattern. Her parents came for many years for their vacations; she opened the cottage and wrote for two weeks, then her husband came for two weeks, then she closed up the cottage during the final two weeks. Her right hand man for 35 years was the Indian chief's son, David O-ge-mah-ge-ge-do.

(The above quotes were from Clara Pierson's diary.)

It appears that her Pencroft series of four books about the Millers was based upon Clara's reflections of living in Omena and her imagining about a family settling in the area. Clara Pierson wrote more than 30 essays and articles, as well as numerous poems. Other children's books were written over the years, leading to a very successful career.

The current Pencroft home is owned by Caroline and Ed Oberndorf who inherited it from Caroline's mother Mary Louise Vail. As a child, Mrs. Vail knew Clara Pierson when Mrs. Vail visited her aunt at a log cabin on Omena Point. She performed in one of the Pierson plays in 1912.

(From Pierson Family Papers 1821-1996 Michigan Historical Collection)

### Clara Dillingham Pierson's books:

*Among the Meadow People*, 1897  
*Among the Forest People*, 1898  
*Among the Farmyard People*, 1899  
*Among the Pond People*, 1901  
*Three Little Millers*, 1901  
*Among the Night People*, 1902  
*Dooryard Stories*, 1903  
*Tales of a Poultry Farm*, 1904  
*The Millers and Their Playmates*, 1907

*The Millers at Pencroft*, 1908  
*Living With Our Children*, 1923  
*Plow Stories*, 1923  
*The Plunky Aliens*, 1923  
*The Millers and Their New Home*, 1926  
*The Aliens and Aunt Hannah*, 1927  
*Notebook of an Adopted Mother* (undated)  
*Dr. Miss Doctor* (undated)

# Omena's Authors of the Past

by Joan Blount

**MUCH OF OMENA'S HISTORY** involves people and families, past and present, who have been summer or full time residents. Their many talents and contributions have helped make Omena the special place it is today.

With this in mind, the museum committee wanted to give recognition to a group of Omena residents who have become notable authors of books, both fiction and non fiction, as well as biographical.

Omena is fortunate to have had authors from all walks of life, including teachers, Civil War generals, movie and TV stars, historians, environmentalists, diet and nutrition specialists, etc.

It should be noted that in addition to the authors selected at this time, several other residents of Omena have published in the academic realm, including textbooks, manuals, theses, etc.

In this issue of *Timelines*, we will be discussing only Omena authors of the past. Future issues will highlight present day authors.

**BYRON CUTCHEON**, born in 1836 in Pembroke, New Hampshire, ventured westward in 1852 to continue his education in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861 and returned to Ypsilanti to teach ancient languages at a high school.

When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in the Union Army and advanced to the rank of Brevet General. On June 29, 1891, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor for "Distinguished Gallantry".

Following the war, Cutcheon returned to the University of Michigan to obtain his law degree, practicing law in Manistee and Grand Rapids, as well as serving as a U.S. Congressman. In 1890, he submitted a bill to Congress to create Gettysburg National Military Park. When he ended his political career, he moved back to Grand Rapids where he resumed his law practice. Here Cutcheon likely made his Omena connection through Rev.

Dan Freeman Bradley, pastor of the Park Congregational Church. The Cutcheons fittingly built their cottage next to the Grierson cottage in Omena.

Among his many publications is *A History of Michigan as a State from its Admission to the Union to the Close of the Civil War*.

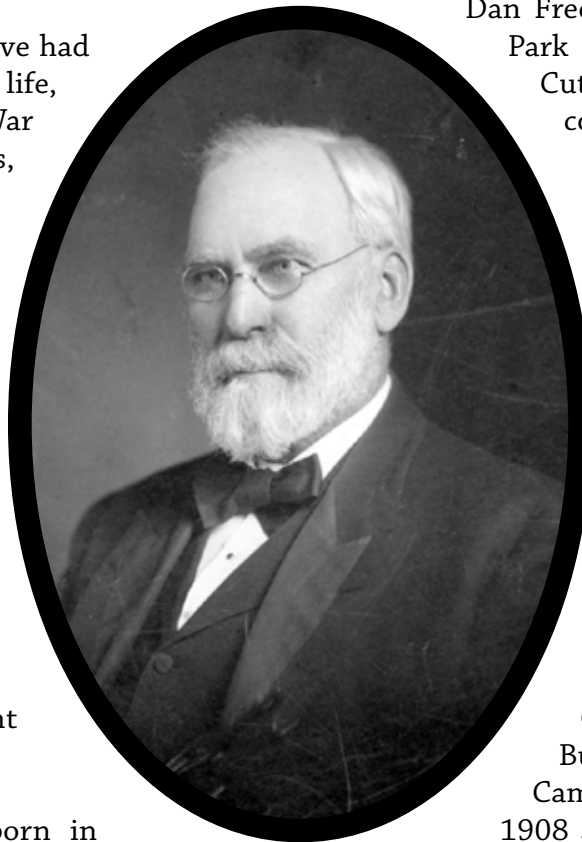
In 1904 he published *The Story of the Twentieth Michigan Infantry*. He

is credited with many articles and speeches, such as, "Smokeless Powder, the Facts Stated",

"A Tribute to the Life and Character of James Abram Garfield", "Recollections of

Burnside's East Tennessee Campaign of 1863". He died in

1908 and was buried in Ypsilanti, Michigan.



Byron Cutcheon

**RUTH FREELAND CARMONDY** grew up in Omena and attended Omena's one room school. She graduated from Northport and attended Michigan State College. Her major was Home Economics, which she taught in secondary schools in Michigan. In her book, *Omena*, she tells of her family's experience in running one of Omena's nine resorts. In addition, she writes about other experiences growing up in Omena from 1909.





Ruth Craker

**RUTH CRAKER**, granddaughter of George A. Craker, an early pioneer, was born in 1894. She graduated from Alma College, followed by enrollment in nurse's training. When illness kept her from completing nurse's training, she became an orchard manager and owner of Craker farm located south of her grandfather's farm on Craker Road.

Ruth was passionate about local history and contributed many of the accounts of Omena history as well as the history of Native Americans. Ruth's book, *The First Protestant Mission in the Grand Traverse Region* is based on her experiences as well as the experiences of her grandfather and uncle, William Delbert Craker. All three served in the church for a combined total of 118 years. After her death in 1986, the Craker family continued the commitment to the Omena church.

**JOHN HASKELL KEMBLE** first came to Omena in 1914 with his family when he was only two years old. They returned to their Ingalls Bay cottage every summer until the fall of 1920 when the Kemble family moved to Eagle Rock and later to Pasadena, CA, and did not return to Omena until the

summer of 1923. Because it was such a long trip, the family sold the cottage to Louis Anderson. In 1939 John Kemble returned with his life-long friend and fellow cottager, Clemwell Lay, and then came as a regular visitor until he built a new cottage on Ingalls Bay in 1964, returning annually from California, where he was a history professor at Pomona College. John published and edited many books on maritime history, among them *The Panama Route, 1848-1869* (1943) and *San Francisco Bay: A Pictorial Maritime History* (1957). When he retired he reflected on his career as a maritime and naval historian and realized that he had a large debt to Omena.

The earliest impetus to tape record early residents' recollections, appears to have come from Kemble, between 1978 and 1980. As a respected historian, in his retirement years, Kemble began to record some of the earliest cottagers' stories and to pen a few of his own memories, which can be found in his book, *Personal Recollections*.



John Haskel Kemble

**BARBARA FOLTZ SCHNEIDEWIND** was born in 1916 and grew up in Omena. She moved to Detroit and received her bachelors degree from Wayne State University. In 1943 she married Henry C. Schneidewind. Barbara was a teacher, a published author of children's books about fantasy and magic, a speech writer, composer and poet. She and her husband retired to their cedar and glass Omena home in 1980. Her publications are, *Mali Lelani and Bo: Of Tweedle-Dee-Dees* and *Rocks Called Joe and Hi, I'm Cy*. Barbara died February 13, 2008.

(Sources: "Milestones" *Omena Timelines*, Fall, 2007, and *Omena A Place in Time* by Amanda Holmes)



# A Journey Through TIME

The new exhibit in the large room of the Putnam-Cloud Tower house is concentrating again on the village of Omena. However, this summer it will include the evolution of the village from 1869 to the present. Some of the buildings from last year remain with the added attraction once again of the surrey. Come and join us at this summer's exhibit, "Omena Then and Now, A Journey Through Time." Discover what changes have taken place over the past 145 years.

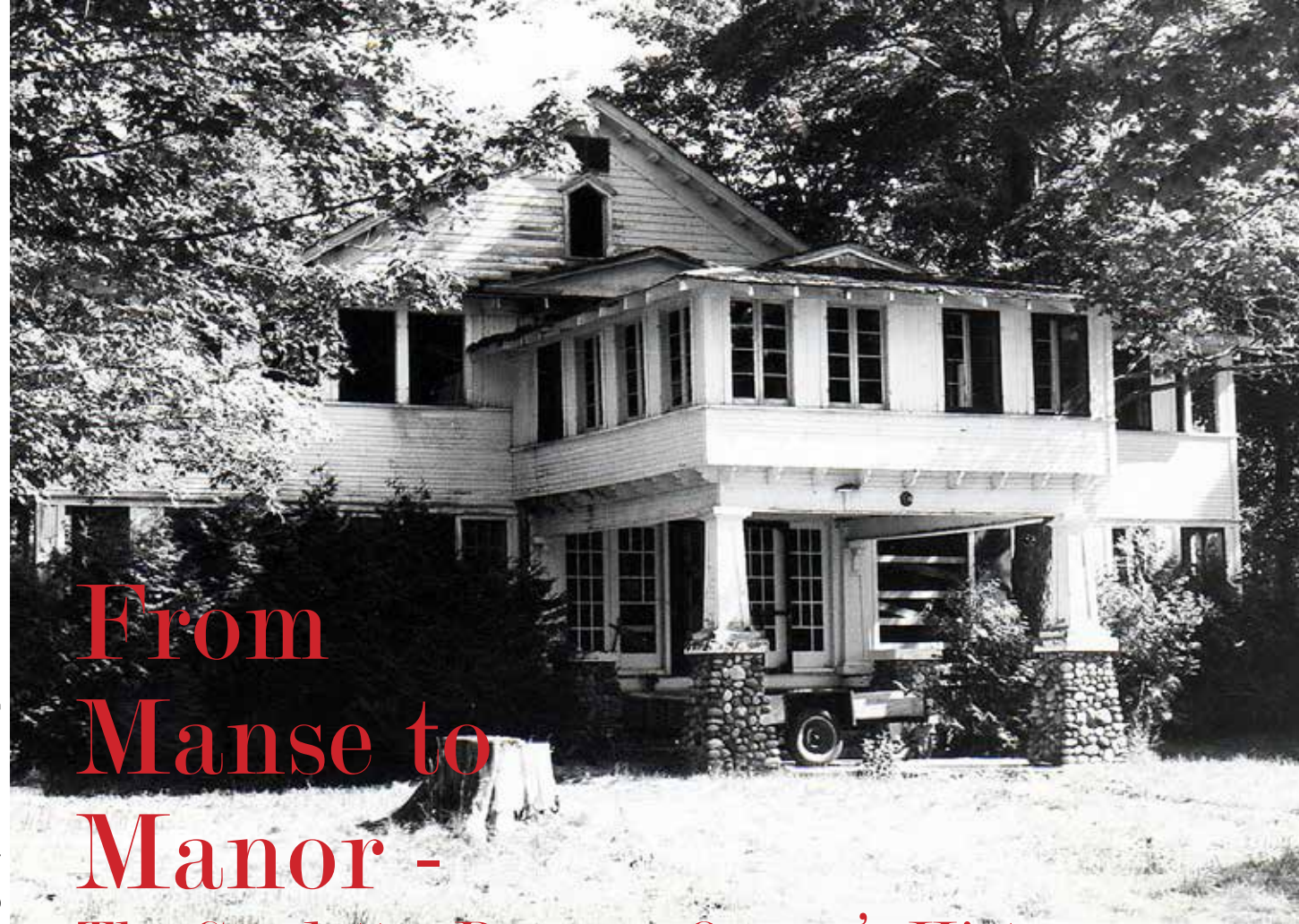
## Docents and Volunteers Needed

The museum is looking for docents to provide tours. We provide the training and support for our great volunteers who lead tours for visitors and special groups. Please contact docent chair, Ellie Stephenson at [E.B.Stephenson@valley.net](mailto:E.B.Stephenson@valley.net) or 231-386-5576(summer), 603-727-9592(winter). Museum hours: June-September, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00–4:00pm.

For those of you who are busy with family and guests during the prime summer months, you still have an opportunity to serve as a docent. We are particularly interested in docents willing to serve in the spring and fall.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Doni Lystra at 734-657-1897 or [donilystra@gmail.com](mailto:donilystra@gmail.com). We are looking for members to serve on the hospitality committee and people to work on exhibits.





# From Manse to Manor - The Gaudettes Preserve Omena's History

by Jim Miller

**IN WRITING THIS STORY** of an historical building's salvation, it became clear early on that the Gaudettes are Americana personified. Here is a retired couple that raised their children, worked hard on the job, and in the home, with the goal of building a small retirement cottage somewhere near the water in Northern Michigan. If only it were so simple.

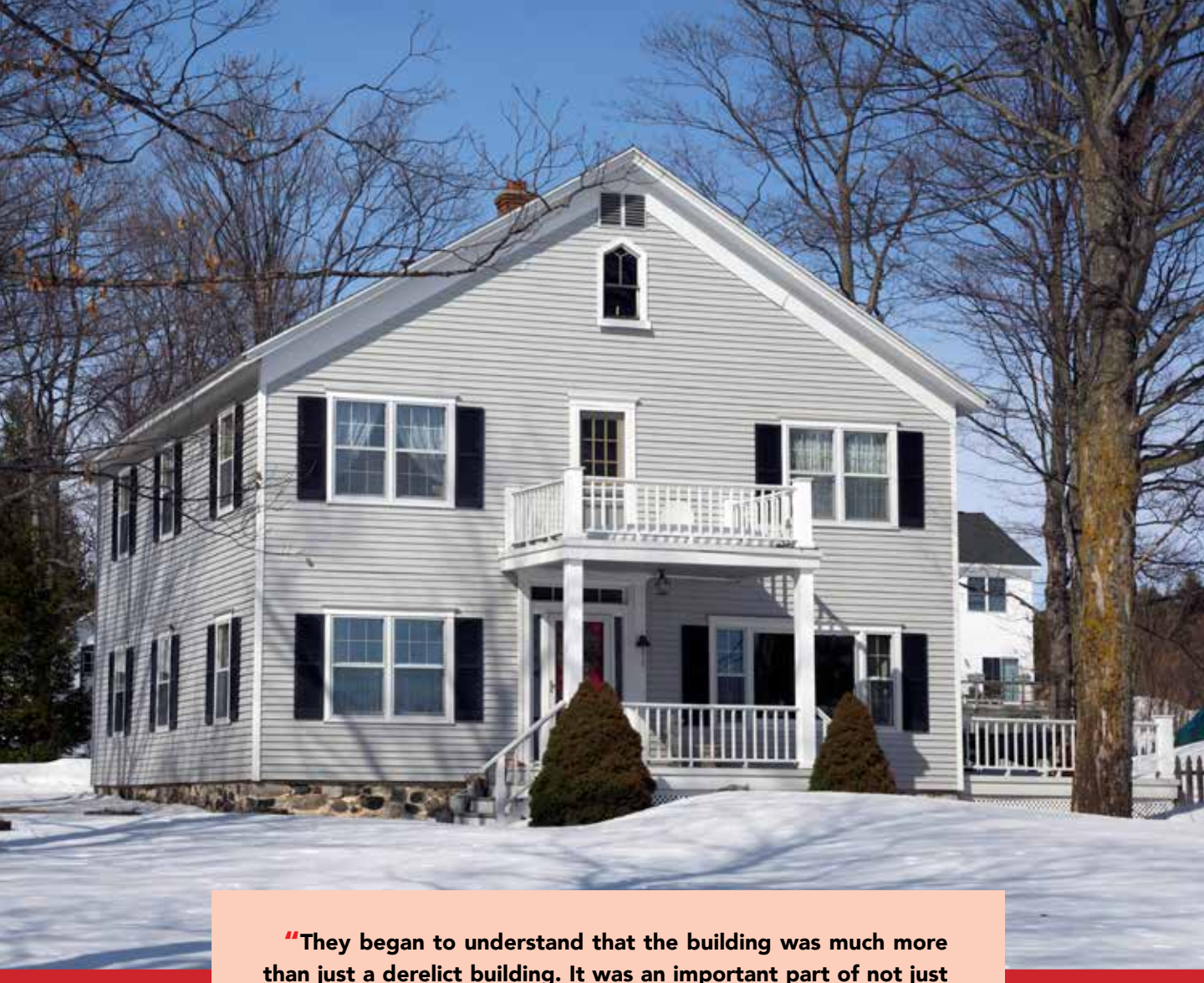
It was midway through 1978 when Walter Gaudette's brother, Charlie, who lived in Traverse City at the time, suggested they take a little road trip on the scenic Leelanau Peninsula. Walter and Beverly had been thinking about eventually having a little place near the water, so what harm would there be in looking around. Walter was still working as an electrical engineer for General Motors. He and Beverly were starting to plan for their retirement years.

They drove along M22 to Omena and headed east along Omena Bay. Like many before them,

the Gaudettes were immediately smitten with the beauty and serenity of the area. The south-facing beach on a small bay was a bonus as Walter loved to sail. They spotted an old dilapidated building that sat in total disrepair with broken windows and weeds growing where beds of spring flowers once bloomed. Upon entering, they noticed the sloping floors and oddly tilted walls. It was obvious that the building would have to come down, but at least the location had promise. At one point, upon seeing the old Inn, Walter's mother said "The only solution would be a dark night and a willing match!"

Curious about the property's availability, they began a journey that would change their lives. Through a realtor, Walter and Beverly were able to locate the owner and made an offer to purchase. Their offer was accepted and the waterfront property was sold for \$27,000 to a couple with a vision. Now all they had to do was come up with a plan to get rid of the old behemoth of a broken down building





The Dougherty Home, Restored

**"They began to understand that the building was much more than just a derelict building. It was an important part of not just Omena's history, but also of the entire region's history."**

and build their small, dream cottage.

Their pioneer spirit and can-do attitude, coupled with Walter's talent for "fixing" things gave them the confidence they needed to complete the daunting task of building a new home. As fate would have it, their newly developed plans were already in jeopardy.

Soon after buying the property, Betty Armstrong, from the Northport Historical Society, dropped by for a visit. They sat and talked for a while and during the conversation she asked if they knew whose home they had bought. Not knowing the building's history, they were curious and willing to listen to what Betty had to say. They felt the building's condition dictated its demolition but they were still interested in its historical significance.

Betty said, "This is Reverend Dougherty's home".

Walter remembers her being adamant about the importance of some guy named Dougherty and this old building he constructed back in the mid 1800s. When she heard of their plan to take the building down she repeated, "But this is the Reverend Dougherty's home. It will always be the Reverend Dougherty's home." They began to understand that the building was much more than just a derelict building. It was an important part of not just Omena's history, but also of the entire region's history.

According to an article published by the Leelanau Township Historical Writers Group (date unknown), the Dougherty manse, originally known as the New Mission manse, played a key role in the development of Leelanau County. It states, "The



county of Leelanau is hereby erected into a township by the name of Leelanau, and the first township meeting therein shall be held at the house of Peter Dougherty.” This infers that business in the manse was not limited to just religious activities, but included civil affairs as well.

Betty Armstrong persisted, emphasizing the historical significance of the building. What seemed such a simple thing had just gotten much more complex and they hadn’t even driven the first nail. In the end, the teardown became a restoration. The visualized little cottage on the bay would be replaced by a restored building that belonged there all along. Reverend Dougherty’s manse would live again.

Thus began a six-year odyssey to resurrect the building as it was configured in 1858. To do that, they would have to remove all remnants of what was at one time, one of Omena’s prime resorts: The Omena Inn. It was actually the second Omena Inn as the original Omena Inn had burned down many years prior in its original location out on the point. The Gaudettes found the building was in such bad shape that most of it could not be salvaged. The wings that had been added in 1920 by John and Frances Santo would be removed. The porte cochere over the front entry, as well as all of the windows, the lath and plaster, the wiring and the lead-piped plumbing all had to be replaced.

Of course, as with any old structure, it required some fine-tuning to get it back to square. To do that, it required tweaking here and there. Walter would man the jack while Charlie would yell, “Keep going!” Slowly and methodically, they moved the walls back to their original plumb and level positions of 120 years prior. The old building protested audibly with pops, creaking, and other sounds of stress. Not unlike a chiropractor aligning a spine, the building’s framework was straight again.

An example of the Gaudette ingenuity came with the demolition of the port cochere on the front of the building. The old structure was supported by four tapered, stone columns, each about five feet tall. They supported a room whose floor was the ceiling of the porte cochere. Not being a part of the



Walter and Beverly Gaudette

original manse, it had to come down. Walter rounded up some friends and his neighbor, Bob DeVries, who cut away the old structure with a chain saw.

Like a scene from a silent movie, a rope was thrown around the front posts and secured to the trailer hitch of a station wagon. Yes, a station wagon. Beverly gave the go sign and away Walter drove, towards Omena Bay, porte cochere in tow. The two-room structure came crashing down in a cloud of dust and debris, landing in the middle of Gaudette’s front yard. The four columns were salvaged and now handsomely decorate their driveway entrance.

Conforming a 120 year-old home to contemporary building codes was a daunting task. Building inspectors can be a builder’s nemesis and the Gaudettes were not exempt. Walter recalled the inspector questioning his selection of wire size, after he had completed wiring the house. Looking at Walter’s wiring, he said, “You know, you should have used #12 wire.” (a heavier gage and more expensive wire) Walter countered that the #14 wire was to code. The unrelenting inspector again said, “Yes, but you should have used the #12 wire”. The reality sunk in and Walter accepted his fate. He rewired the house with the #12 wire.

Once completed, he called the inspector back for a re-inspection. A new inspector showed up and explained that the other inspector had retired. He

promptly looked at Walter's great wiring job and said, "You know, you could have saved money had you used a #14 wire," and so it went for eight years. They lived in the home the last two years that they worked on it.

The building and property the Gaudettes paid \$27,000 for became their five-plus bedroom, waterfront home on beautiful Omena Bay. For sure, the cost to restore would have been much higher had they not done the work themselves. After seven years, their dream came true. Beverly still boasts of the 35 gallons of primer she applied, not to mention the final coats of paint. Walter did most of the structural work and the mechanical infrastructure as well, including electrical and plumbing. Beverly was not comfortable with Walter on the roof so they hired that out.

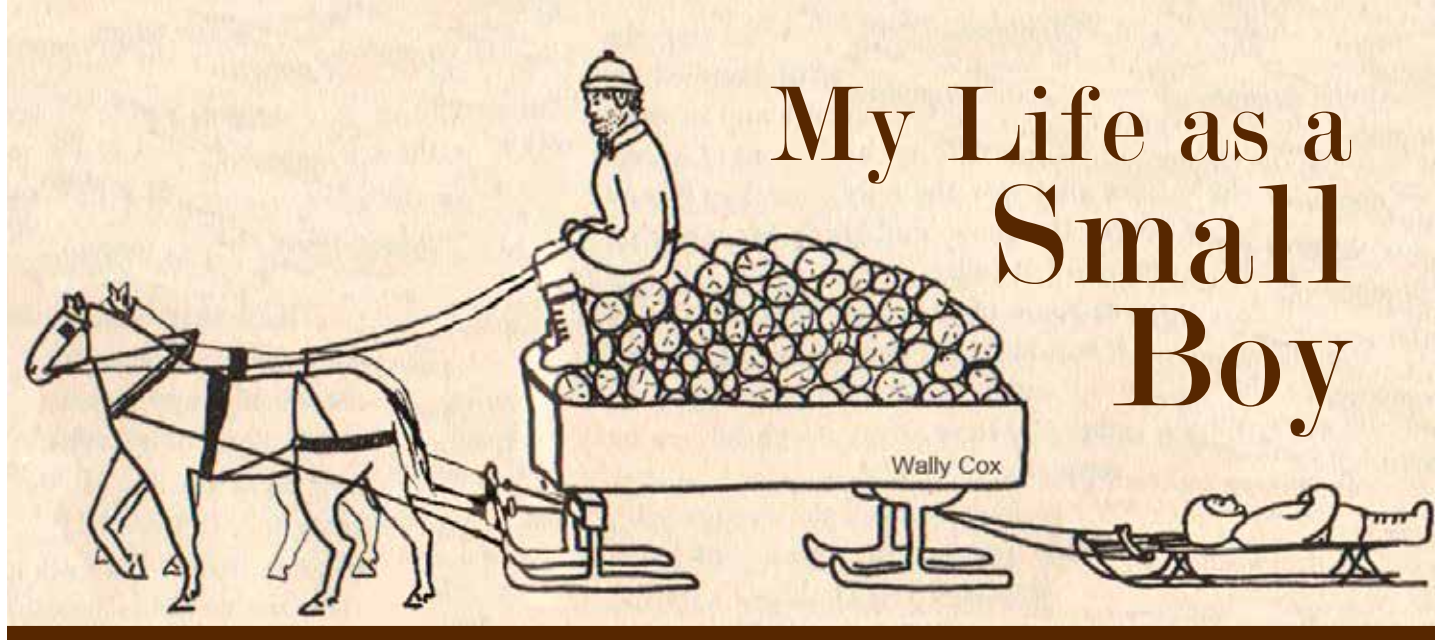
In the end, were it not for the intervention of a single caring historian, Betty Armstrong, the historically significant building the Gaudettes now live in would have been burned beyond a trace in 1978. Were it not for the Gaudettes' willingness to listen to Betty and alter their retirement plans accordingly, the once famous Omena Inn and Dougherty manse would merely be a memory preserved in a few photographs and postcards. We owe them all a debt of gratitude.

We salute the Gaudettes and their determination to help us preserve our heritage. Theirs is the kind of American spirit upon which our great nation was built and is so lacking today in this age of impatience and immediacy. If you want to make the Gaudettes smile, just ask them if they like living in Reverend Dougherty's manse on Omena Bay.



The port cochere coming down.





# My Life as a Small Boy

by Kathy Miller

**WALLY COX**, comedian and actor, particularly associated with early television, was also an Omena author. *My Life as a Small Boy* is a delightful memoir of growing up and spending his early years in the Omena area. Wally was born in Detroit in 1924 and with his mother and sister, they came north when he was quite young. His antics and adventures led to vivid memories, many of which are noted in his book. Those of us who were in Omena this past winter can take to heart these words that Wally wrote back in 1961....

I come from many places, but the only place I like to think of myself as coming from is a northerly part of Michigan, itself a northerly state, where snow that fell in the middle of winter fell upon snow that was already there, so that the depth of it merely varied and never ended until spring showed up one day.

Wally also has memories of the bay freezing over EVERY year. His many stories of local personalities, sledding behind wagons or trucks, walking down the road with the snow banks extending high above him, venturing out on the mystical, frozen bay, and digging caves in the drifts convinces you that he loved his

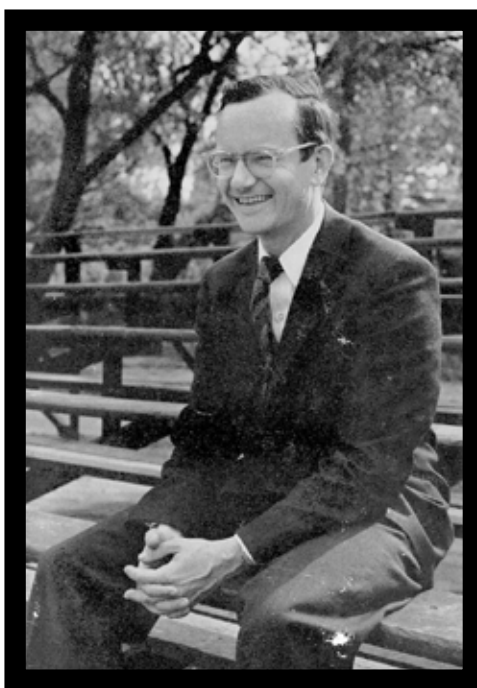
winters in Omena.

In the entertainment world, Wally Cox was portrayed as a milquetoast and he became frustrated by his being typecast as a polite bookworm, a birdwatcher, or an accountant. In reality, he was quite athletic and was a military veteran. Viewers did get to

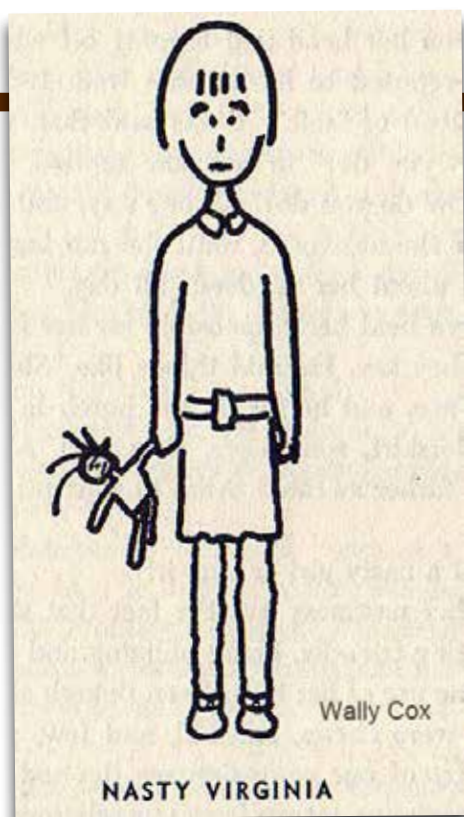
see his athleticism in an episode of "I've Got a Secret" with Garry Moore in 1960 when he ran around the stage, moving and rearranging set furniture while the panelists were blindfolded and firing questions at him, trying to guess his identity.

My personal favorite is a movie he was in with Henry Fonda and Maureen O'Hara called "Spencer's Mountain" where he plays a Baptist preacher who unknowingly accepts a welcome gift to his new home in the form of moonshine from the character that Fonda plays. He shows up to his first meeting with his new congregation and makes his debut, totally drunk. Priceless.

Wally also wrote *Mr. Peepers*, a novel created by adapting several scripts from his popular TV series of the same name in the 1950s. A parody and modernized version of Horatio Alger in *Ralph Makes Good* was another of Wally's books. He also wrote a children's book called, *The Tenth Life of Osiris Oakes*.



Wally Cox



When I was gathering information for this story, I called Harold Landis, a former owner of the Omena Inn (see Gaudette article). I remembered Harold telling me about a visit he'd once had from Wally back in the days when he ran the inn and I wanted to refresh my memory. Harold just passed away in March at the age of 89 so I am fortunate to have had this last talk with him. Whenever Harold spoke of Omena he would get so animated you could hear it in his voice. He remembered Wally and his new wife, Marilyn Gennaro, being on their honeymoon and showing up without a reservation one summer day in 1954. Wally wanted to show his new wife a place that must have held a special spot in his heart. With Wally's help, Harold and his wife, Wyn, prepared a room for their stay. He said they dined at the inn but wanted to remain incognito and didn't want any extra attention. Harold remembered them fondly after all these years.

Wally came from a family of writers, who are also featured in our museum library. Eleanor Stackhorn Atkinson, his grandmother, is noted for several books, especially *Johnny*

*Appleseed* and *Greyfriar's Bobby*, which was made into a Disney movie. Wally's mother, who used the pseudonym Eleanor Blake, wrote at least three books in the 1930s and 1940s.

When Wally was ten, he moved with his divorced mother and sister to Evanston, Illinois, where he became close friends with a neighbor, a young Marlon Brando, who was about the same age as Wally. This began a lifelong friendship.

After World War II, Cox and his family moved to New York City where he studied metalworking, becoming a master craftsman. He supported his sister and invalid mother by making and selling jewelry in shops and at private parties, where he also started honing his skills as a comedian with his quirky monologues. He went on to do clubs, Broadway, television, and movies. In New York, he met up again with Brando, and the two rekindled their friendship and became roommates. Brando interested Cox in acting and he studied with Brando's mentor.

In 1973, Wally Cox died of a heart attack in his Hollywood home. Marlon Brando appeared unannounced at his wake. A later report indicated that Brando kept his ashes, and both of their ashes were scattered in Death Valley and Tahiti when Brando died. Wally Cox was survived by his third wife and two children.

Please consider checking out *My Life as a Small Boy* from our museum. You will be charmed when you read about Wally's memories of Omena and going to school in Northport. He even tells a story in a chapter called "Nasty Virginia", which hits on a current topic in our schools today—that of bullying—and the regrets that he had even into his adulthood. It speaks volumes to the character of Wally Cox.



Eleanor Atkinson



# Solle's Bookshop

**"All the World Buys  
Books by Mail  
From  
Solle's Bookshop  
Omena, Michigan"**

**by Alice Littlefield**

**SUCH WAS THE CLAIM** made by William H. Solle, proprietor of one of the most unique businesses to operate in Omena in the last century. From this outpost in Northern Michigan, Solle developed an international business selling books, many carrying a small sticker on the inside cover with the above slogan. Among his customers he counted visitors to Omena from near and far, as well as a far-flung mail-order clientele in both the U. S. and abroad.

Will Solle got his start in the book business in Chicago, joining the staff at Adolph Kroch's store around the end of World War I. There he was well-known among the literary public for his breadth of knowledge of books, and eventually became the head salesman, buyer, and vice president. (Kroch's later became Kroch's and Brentano's, a large national chain of bookstores.) Solle's success came with a price. His health began to suffer from long hours and the stress of his responsibilities. Following his doctor's advice he took a year off from Kroch's in

1932 to spend time in the country recuperating.

Solle chose Omena on the advice of his customer and friend, Eleanor Blake Atkinson, an author who wrote mysteries under the pen name "Eleanor Blake." Atkinson had spent time in Omena during the summers with her son Wally Cox, who later became the star of the 1950s sitcom "Mr. Peepers." (Cox is remembered in Omena for having burned down a barn as a child – but that's another story.)

Solle, his wife Carrie, and his son Gordon settled in a house just north of the village on Mougey Lake, bringing with them 2,000 volumes from his personal library. As the year passed Solle's health improved, but his personal finances did not. Not wanting to return to the high-pressure book business in Chicago, he conceived the idea of selling prize volumes from his own library – first editions, autographed copies, specially-bound volumes – to put food on the table.

Notices were sent to a few friends and former customers in Chicago, and as the word spread orders

began to come in. Customers not only requested volumes from his collection, but asked him to help them find others. In November of 1933 he sent his circular to 500 people, offering most of the remaining books in his library. Gradually, he resumed his life as a full-time bookseller, expanding the business beyond his own collection and communicating with a far-flung clientele. Within two years he was filling 150 orders a month, many for several titles.

A March, 1935 circular offered forty-four titles, all in “firm, fine, used condition,” by such well-known authors as Willa Cather, Joseph Conrad, Thomas Hardy, and W. D. Howells. The price? One dollar each, or six volumes for \$5.00. Solle also sold new books, as well as jigsaw puzzles and Christmas cards that he crafted himself.

For several years, Solle’s Bookshop was housed in his living room. A sign over the porch proclaimed “Solle’s Bookshop, Drive In.” Curious tourists stopped by in the summer, and this became the basis for an ever-growing mailing list. Once back home, the tourists began to make requests from Chicago and Detroit, Dallas and Miami, London and Berlin. Eleanor Blake published a laudatory piece in *Publisher’s Weekly* describing Solle’s unusual business, selling books in a village with a year-round population of seven families:

“Surprising as is the fact of his success in this remote and isolated small community, it is explainable in the terms in which most successes are: adequate basic knowledge of the business, hard work, persistent advertising, and SERVICE” (“A Wilderness Bookshop,” March 16, 1935).

Over the years the “service” she highlighted came to include not only help in finding particular titles but a kind of book-of-the-month service. Rather than sending the same title to everyone, clients got books suited to their personal tastes and needs. One woman living in South America had a standing order for four books to be sent each month. There were other far-flung clients living in South Africa, Australia, and Bulgaria. During World War II Solle sent books *gratis* at Christmas to servicemen from the area serving in distant lands.

By 1938 Solle was sending his circular (printed on his own small press) to 2,000 customers and needed more space than was available in the house on Mougey Lake (known informally for many years as Solle’s Lake). In July of that year he opened a new bookshop on M-22 just south of the village. He found many loyal followers among those who spent their summers in Omena’s cottages and resorts. The shop also attracted summer visitors from other parts of Leelanau County and from Traverse City. Lyn Anderson, Annette Deibel, and Mary Helen



Will Solle with his customers and books, 1941.





SOLLE'S BOOKSHOP  
BOOKS BY MAIL  
OMENA, MICHIGAN

This is Maude. She has just delivered your order for which I  
send you my thanks. The order has had prompt attention from,  
Yours Sincerely,

Ray remember that a stop at Solle's was a must for their families during their summer stays in the area. Summer residents not only bought the latest titles, some of them sent their Christmas lists to Solle for him to fill. A card sent to clients during this period stated:

"Please note and *long remember* that this is a mail-order business depending on your winter support as well as your summer patronage. Read with kindly eyes our winter bulletins knowing that orders and inquiries receive prompt and efficient attention."

With mail orders coming in and packages going out, Solle's Bookshop provided a large part of the business of the Omena Post Office. Area resident Betty Craker Armstrong recalls that Solle could be seen almost every day pulling a red wagon piled with packages, heading to the post office. The success of Solle's business strategy depended not only on reliable mail service, but on rail transportation – the steam train known locally as "Maude" that travelled between Northport and Traverse City, carrying both mail and passengers. Solle included a drawing of Maude on some of his correspondence.

Will Solle is remembered as a man who was not only enthusiastic about books, but as someone who loved to discuss them with all who stopped by. A 1946 article in *Saturday Review* provides this description of a winter afternoon at Solle's:

The talk ranged from local history to Senator Taft, from atomic energy to Plato; it touched on

labor trouble, India, the United Nations ... Farmers and country storekeepers argued and expounded, quoted statesmen, radio commentators, preachers, economists ("Solle's Salon by the Road," April 27, 1946).

Local residents George Anderson and Annette Deibel both recall buying books at Solle's as teenagers. In spite of their youth, Solle was as eager to discuss literature with them as with any other customer.

Solle's Bookshop flourished until Will Solle's death in 1949 at the age of sixty. His son Gordon kept the shop going for a while longer, but the business closed in the 1950s. Will's wife Carrie, fondly remembered by several as a wonderful person, continued living in Omena for some time. She and Will are buried side-by-side in the Omena cemetery, and their son Gordon's grave is nearby.

What lives on are memories of an intellectual haven and remarkable business that

flourished in Omena for two decades.

(Sources: In addition to those mentioned in the text and interviews with area residents, this article draws on *Omena A Place in Time* by Amanda Holmes; "Failure Story: Once a Man Masters a Craft, It's Likely to Follow Him Even into the Wilderness," *Coronet*, April 1939; "Omena Omens," *Cherryland Review*, Jan. 19, 1939; "Book Sleuth Finds Quiet but No Rest in Omena," *Detroit Free Press*, Nov. 23, 1941.)

**"The success of Solle's business strategy depended not only on reliable mail service, but on rail transportation – the steam train known locally as "Maude" that travelled between Northport and Traverse City, carrying both mail and passengers. Solle included a drawing of Maude on some of his correspondence."**

# Milestones



## **Howard Kalchik**

March 15, 1928 - July 31, 2013

Howard was born to Frank and Lydia (Tatch) Kalchik. He married Leona Walters of Suttons Bay and they had six children. Howard was a Korean War veteran. Howard lived all his life on the beautiful site by Bass Lake. He was a conservationist, outdoorsman, family man, and active church member at St. Wenceslaus. He was dedicated to the revival of the American Chestnut Tree. He is survived by his wife, Leona; his children, Lorraine McCurdy, Kenneth (Judey) Kalchik, Marcia (David) Lewandowski, Barbara (Chuck) Bean, Thomas Kalchik and Wayne (Brenda) Kalchik; sisters, Alice Thrun; sisters-in-law, Joy Kalchik and Veleta Kalchik; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

## **Robert “Bob” Weiss Jr.**

December 24, 1959 - August, 2013

Bob spent all of his childhood summers in Omena since the mid sixties. His parents, Robert Sr. (deceased) and his mother, Nancy, inherited the cottage his grandfather built on Fire Lane 6 ( site of Mark and Amanda Bosco’s home). His great grandfather Frederick Weiss bought the site and was involved in laying out the fire lanes. He is survived by his mother, Nancy Weiss Gregory, his brother and sister, Tim and Meg, and family.

## **Jeannette “Jonnie” Rule Hodgson**

August 21, 1929 - September 27, 2013

Jonnie’s family started coming to Omena in the summer when Jonnie was six years old, and she spent almost every summer after that in Omena. Jonnie was a long time member of the Omena Presbyterian Church, the Omena Traverse Yacht Club, and the Omena Historical Society. Jonnie met her husband Hank Hodgson at the University of Cincinnati. They lived in Chappaqua, NY where she had her own day care and pre-school, and later she worked as a special education teacher. She then worked for the Headstart program. Jonnie was preceded in death by her husband, Hank, and a brother and five sisters. She is survived by her son Geof, daughter Sarah, sister Alis Robinson, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, her niece and nephew, Debby Disch and Rink Smith, both from Omena, and many more nieces and nephews.

## **George W. Anderson**

January 22, 1929 - November 7, 2013

George was born to Louis and Murial (Wrisley) Anderson in Northport, MI. George served our nation in the Korean War. He married Carolyn “Lyn” Travis in 1960. She and their two sons, Charles “Riz” and Andrew Anderson; two grandchildren, Rachel and Jared; great-granddaughter, Lyla, cousins, Annette Deibel and Albert Wrisley; and brother-in-law, George



Basta survive. George's great and great-great grandfathers were two of the early businessmen in Omena. George was always interested in the history of Omena and Leelanau Township, serving for many years on the board of the Omena Historical Society. He was a businessman and community volunteer. He owned Anderson Store and Anderson Insurance. He was one of the founders of the Northport/Omena Chamber of Commerce. He was a long-time member of the Leelanau Township Community Foundation. George started the Northport Farmer's Market, donating his time and the use of his property. He was the force behind the Memorial Day ceremony at the Leelanau Cemetery.

#### **Andrew Fisher, MD**

April 3, 1978 - December 8, 2013

Andrew was killed on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in an accident when as a physician, he got out of his car to try to help. He was struck by a car and killed. He leaves a wife, Elly, and two children, Peter, 5, and Estelle, 3. Andrew is the son of Joel Fisher who has a cottage on Ingalls Bay Road. He was baptized in the Omena Presbyterian Church in the summer of 1978. Joel spent his summers at his grandparent's cottage on Fire Lane 6, and Andrew spent summer vacations at the Rule Cottage, and later at his parents' cottage. He met

his wife when they were Peace Corps volunteer in Jamaica.

#### **Regina A. Stearns**

September, 1956 - January 17, 2014

Jeannie battled cancer for nine years. She and her husband, Richard, have owned Sunrise Landing Motel for over 20 years. Jeannie maintained beautiful gardens on the property. Jeannie was a nurse at Leelanau Memorial Hospital until its closing and then worked at Tendercare. She is survived by Richard; their children, Noah (Salina Olmstead) Stearns and Rachel (Dan) Tompkins; her 10 siblings and nieces and nephews. Her parents, Henry and Angelina (Poletto) Borths preceded her in death.

#### **Nancy Jo Wheeler Kohlberg**

June 21, 1928 - February 8, 2014

Nancy Jo was born to Florence and Horace Wheeler. Horace's aunt and uncle had built what became Sunset Lodge. Horace met his wife when her parents, Homer and Myrtle Fouts, moved to Omena and worked at Sunset Lodge. In the early 1940s, the running of Sunset Lodge fell to Horace; he and his family moved to Omena year-around. Nancy Jo attended high school at Northport Public School. During her college years, she taught painting lessons in a little building at



Sunset Lodge. The sign “Nancy Jo’s Paint Box” hung there for many years. She continued to paint oil paintings of Leelanau Peninsula. Nancy Jo graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in architecture and design. She married John Kolhlberg in 1954 in Omena. She was an accomplished artist, and was an art director at J.L. Hudson Company. She lived in Grosse Pointe. She is survived by her husband, John, and sister-in-law, Susan Lavan.

### **Patricia T. Kulick**

May 28, 1923 - February 20, 2014

Pat was born to Edward H. and Hazel C. Taylor. She has been coming to Omena almost every summer since she was born. Her mother was also a regular summer resident in Omena and was a year-around resident in her later years. Pat and her sons, Chris Verdery, and Bill and David Kulick, came to Omena every summer. Pat married Joseph Verdery in 1945 and Robert Kulick in 1954. Pat graduated from Randolph Macon College and New York University, working in aeronautical engineering. She was the first woman to be admitted to the program and the only woman in her class. Pat worked for the

U.S. Navy on nuclear submarines and nuclear destroyers. She worked for aviation and space programs in southern California. She is survived by her sons and one grandson.

### **Shirley Agosa**

June, 1920 - February 23, 2014

Shirley was born to Oliver Edmund Behymer and Mae Letice Person Behymer. Her father was a professor at Franklin College in Indiana and later a farmer in Leelanau County. She had resided in Leelanau County since at least 1940 and was active in promoting and preserving the Leelanau County heritage with the Leelanau Historical Society and land conservation efforts with the Leelanau Conservancy. Shirley was also interested in all the arts. Her longtime partner, Don Agosa was a descendant of both Chief Agosa and Chief Peter Waukazoo, co-founder of Northport. Don passed away in 1988. For years after Don died, she lived on the Agosa homestead on Johnson Road in Leelanau Township. Most recently she lived at the Concannon home in Lake Leelanau.







### **John H. “Stu” Mulligan**

November 10, 1932 - March 10, 2014

Stu was born to Forrest Dryden Mulligan and Ethel Tuttle Mulligan in Gloversville, NY. He married H. Suzanne Jones in 1956 in Birmingham, Michigan. Stu and Suzie moved to Omena year-around over 25 years ago after his retirement as a commercial pilot for United Airlines. His great love was family and sailing. He was a big part of the annual remote controlled sailboat races, laying out the course in Omena Bay. He is survived by his wife, Suzie; his sons, Dan, Scott (Karen) and Robert (Natalia); brother, Richard (Nancy); as well as six grandsons, Tim, Cavan, Kyle, Jack, Ian, and Connor.

### **Harold Landis**

June 23, 1924 - March 13, 2014

Harold Landis, along with his mother Lillian and wife Wynn Landis, who passed away in 2011, ran the Omena Inn from the late 40s to mid 50s. Harold was a veteran of World War II. While serving his country, his mother surprised him in a letter, telling him she had purchased the Inn. Together, they ran it from 1943 to 1955 when they handed it over to the Cornells. Harold oversaw the creation and construction of the Omena Inn Playhouse (now the garage and wood shop at the back of Jim and Kathy Miller’s property), which opened in 1952 and could seat up to 150 people. Harold would direct the plays performed on

weekends which included *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *South Pacific* among other classics. Guests of the Inn were often called upon to participate as cast members. All shows were offered to the public for free. In 2008, fifty-three years after their last performance in Omena, Harold and Wyn, along with their sons David and Lenny, returned for one last encore performance. After 53 years, they still shined. Harold passed away, surrounded by his family.

### **Marion Jones**

May 2, 1921 - April 4, 2014

Marion was a long-time summer resident of Omena. She was the wife of Austin Jones, and sister-in-law of Suzie Mulligan. Marion was Professor Emeritus of Dance at Arizona State University and also taught at Cornell University, Purdue University, and the University of Rochester. She was the artistic director of Desert Dance Theatre from 1988 to 2006. In 2013 she was awarded the Arizona Governor’s “Arts in Education – Individual” award. She gave her last professional dance performance at the age of 84. Marion and Austin Jones started coming to Omena in 1967. She is survived by her husband, Austin, daughter and son, Elizabeth Ettinger and Cleve Jones; sister-in-law Suzie Mulligan and family.

# » President's Letter

the turn of the century; and two unique fundraiser/elections of our canine mayors.

In this anniversary year we have added a new venture to further our efforts in expanding our educational programs. Co-Directors Lynn Spitznagel and your president will introduce our first summer program where students of all ages will have fun exploring arts and crafts projects and discover their creativity while building skills as they take artistic ideas from concept to creation. The primary focus of the class offerings will feature arts and crafts that were popular in times past; some will be offered in a one-day workshop, others over several sessions. Some instructors are willing to add a section for the very popular classes. The classes are open to young people ages 8 and over as well as adults living in Leelanau County environs. The schedule will be offered to you as a 'Caretaker Member' ahead of the general public so that you will have a first come, first served advantage and a discounted class fee as a reward. Classes will begin on July 7, and will offer an exciting learning experience. Flyers and class schedules will be placed in libraries, schools, visitors centers, and galleries around the county, as well as in *The Leelanau Enterprise*. This exposure will also serve as a wonderful public relations vehicle for those who have not yet been introduced to our museum. Hopefully this effort will attract new Caretaker Members, docents, and possibly future board members. You will notice some familiar instructors' names on the class schedule – Armbruster, Bensley, Chenault, Johnson, Loveless, McKee, McMenamy, and not just one, but two "Smart" people – all OHS caretakers and all very "crafty" along with some well known community artists.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. NRHP's mission is to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. There is a possibility that Omena will be designated as a national historic place. On March 16 and again on April 5, OHS hosted Dr. Ted J. Ligibel, Director of the Historic Preservation Program at Eastern Michigan University, along with the graduate students in his *Preservation Research Techniques* class. The students did their research in the Putnam-Cloud Tower House archives and in the village. They researched individual properties in the village with a goal of developing a National Register of Historic Places *Determination of Eli-*

*gibility* form for a potential National Register historic district in Omena. Omena already has two National Register listed properties – Sunset Lodge, and the Omena Presbyterian Church. Special thanks to Marsha Buehler for proposing this project to Dr. Ligibel and for archivist Joey Bensley's enthusiastic support in behalf of OHS. On June 4, OHS hosted Dr. Ligibel and selected students to report on their study of Omena and its historic potential.

It is the perfect time to offer OHS's gratitude to our extraordinarily dedicated board and committee members, to those members who contribute their volunteer time to serve as docents, who orchestrate special programs and summer classes, the publication of *Timelines*, membership campaigning, publicity, fundraising activities, website updating, graphics, and so much more. Your gift of giving generously of your resources and time today will change tomorrow for so many. ***It takes a village!***

Now it's time to celebrate OHS's success! Plan to attend our 20th Anniversary Celebration kick-off, the **Opening of the New Exhibit** "Omena Then and Now, A Journey Through Time" on Sunday, June 29 at 4 pm. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join you for the **Tour of the Villa Marquette**, led by Bob Joyce, on Thursday, July 3 at 4 pm, **A Visit to the Empire Historical Museum** on Thursday, July 24 (details TBD), and the **Program about the Author Clara Dillingham Pier-son** on Tuesday, August 5 at 4 pm.

As always, thank you for your continued support. We couldn't do what we do without you. One of the most important aspects of OHS is its members! I am grateful that the Presidency of OHS offered me an opportunity to be involved with so many dedicated volunteers. Thank you for the friendship and kindness you have given me during my tenure as your president. Please join us for a very special **Annual Meeting** on Sunday, August 10, it promises to be a grand closing celebration highlighted by a special program. This is the year we will be electing a new slate of officers. Serving the Omena Historical Society, whether as a committee member or board member is not only an honor but also a privilege. I look forward to seeing you at our 20th Anniversary Kick Off Celebration.

With warmest regards,

*Domi Lystra*  
President





# MYSTERY OBJECT FOUND!

by Joey Bensley



**AT SOME POINT IN THE 1900s** a person dropped an object near the cemetery at the Omena Church and over the years it disappeared into the earth. Fast forward to the summer of 2013 during an OHS program on the history of the Omena Church and its cemetery. As attendees of the event made their way down a path toward the beach, Nana Kennedy spotted a bit of silver peeking out of the ground. She bent down, brushed the dirt off and lifted the object up. “What is it?” someone asked. “Looks like an early pocket watch,” another person exclaimed. It did indeed appear to be a watch but on further investigation that theory was disclaimed. It actually is a camera designed in 1904 and manufactured by the Expo Camera Co. New York. It was a camera that could be carried in a vest pocket and resemble the form of a watchcase. The camera is only 2 ¼ inches in diameter and fits in the palm of a hand. It took 25 exposures from a single drop-in roll film cassette.

Who would have guessed that during one of the historical programs OHS would end up with an artifact that is now on display at the museum?





## ***Your Bouquet is Ready!***

*Visit our Tasting Room and experience the aromas and tasting of award winning wine. We are open year round, and...as always, free tasting!*



**LEELANAU CELLARS TASTING ROOM**  
5019 North West Bay Shore Drive (M22) | Omena, MI | 231-386-5201

[WWW.LEELANAUCELLARS.COM](http://WWW.LEELANAUCELLARS.COM)