



Manchester Area  
Historical Society  
PO Box 56  
Manchester, Michigan 48158

Meetings: 7:30 pm  
Second Thursday each Month,  
September through June  
Village Room, 912 City Rd.



**2007-2008 Officers**

Carl Curtis, President  
Jim Wilson,  
First Vice-President  
Jerry Swartout  
Second Vice-President

Betty Cummings, Secretary  
Sharon Curtis, Treasurer  
Don Limpert, Imm.Past Pres.  
Reno Feldkamp, Trustee  
Doug Howell, Trustee  
Howard Parr, Trustee

**May, 2008**

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May, 2008

**M A N C H E S T E R**

**March, 2008 Meeting - Surviving the Holocaust,  
A Non-Jewish Experience**

*From the meeting minutes*

Jim Wilson introduced the speaker for the evening, Zofia Sibinski, who presented a program entitled “Surviving the Holocaust: A Non-Jewish Experience.”

While over 6 million Jews died in the Holocaust, over 6 million Poles also died in concentration camps. One of Hitler’s goals was to wipe Poland off the map. Zofia’s father was part of the underground and he hid Jews in their cellar and helped get them out of the country.



*Displaced by walking and  
railroad travel from home to  
Oldenberg, Germany*

Her father also went into the woods at night with other men to cause trouble for the Nazis. His brother wanted her father’s land so the brother turned Zofia’s father in. In April of 1943, when Zofia was three years old, the Gestapo came in the middle of the night and arrested them. They were given only a few minutes to gather some things together and put them on a wagon then they walked four days and four nights (84 kilometers) to Lodz. They waited in a factory between seven and ten days, with no room to lie down, then they walked across town to a railroad station. The train took more than ten days to get to Oldenberg, Germany.

Continued on page 2

## May, 2008 Meeting continued



*People were transported in railroad cars like this, which were designed for livestock*

There was standing room only and the only food they had was a little bread that people along the way threw into the cars as the train went by. One-third of the occupants on the train died during the trip.

After that, they were taken to a tent city and were told that they were all to have showers. The men and boys disrobed and went into one room and the women and girls, into another. The room was empty except for a lot of water spigots but nothing happened and after two hours the doors were opened. It was not a shower, it was a gassing room, and they found out later that the British had bombed the rail line so the cyanide did not arrive.

After two days of sleeping on the ground in a camp, they were marched across town where they were given numbers and sold at auction, like slaves, to local farmers

who needed farmhands. They traveled six or eight hours to the farm and were there until early Spring 1945 when the Canadians liberated them. Life on the farm was hard and they got little food. One of the farmer's daughters, in particular, was cruel and kicked little Zofia and her sisters every chance she could.



*A picture of Zofia's family, among various momentos and artifacts of holocaust years*



*Zofia's mother and father at the lower left in the frame*

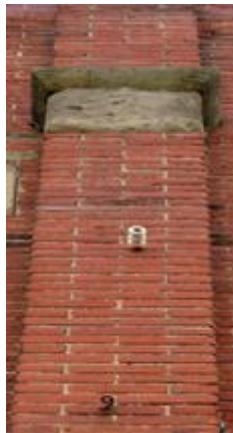
Following liberation, the family spent the next six years moving from camp to camp. They moved about every six months until they finally got sponsorship to come to the United States. Zofia and her family arrived in New York by ship then came to Detroit by train. They arrived on April 26, 1951.



*Zofia answers questions while MAHS members and visitors look at various items she brought to display*

# Whatzit and Wherzit

Here are the clue pictures from the February, 2008 Whatzit & Wherzit along with a view of the building.



See the *Recent Acquisitions* article on page 5 for information about the two pictures below.



Whatzit and Wherzit continued

Here are four clue pictures for this month's Whatzit & Wherzit



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See the *Recent Acquisitions* article on page 5 for information about the picture below.



## **MAHS gives up Luminaria Sponsorship**

For nearly thirty years Manchester residents and visitors have seen the Christmas Eve Luminaria in the village. Started modestly by Karen Hinkley, and originally displayed along Ann Arbor Hill, the project grew and spread throughout the village. Karen handled the distribution of Luminaria supplies for a few years then the Manchester Art Guild assumed sponsorship for six years. The Art Guild handed the project to the Historical Society which has distributed supplies from the Blacksmith Shop for the past eighteen years, the first ten of those years under the leadership of Forest Walz and the last eight by Carl Curtis. As our active membership has aged and decreased in numbers it became a formidable task for a small number of MAHS volunteers to coordinate and handle the sale of Luminaria supplies.

And so, with a successful run behind us, the MAHS is handing the Sponsorship of the Luminaria to the recently formed Manchester Lions Club. The Lions Club is enthusiastic about assuming the project and hopes to incorporate other organizations in the village to continue the fine Christmas Eve tradition. The Historical Society has transferred the remaining supply of candles and bags, along with the tanks, barrels and cans to handle the sand, to the Lions Club and will make the Blacksmith Shop available for the 2008 Luminaria sales. We wish the Lions Club much success with the Luminaria project.

## **Recent Acquisitions**

Four signs were donated to the MAHS by Don Limpert. The signs were found by Don at various times when he was renovating buildings in Manchester's commercial district and the MAHS extends its thanks to Don for the donation and the preservation of some of Manchester's business artifacts.

The first two items (see bottom of page 3) were not true signs in the form of advertising messages which would have been hung on a wall or mounted on a post but were messages printed on window shades so the messages could be read from the street when the shades were drawn down. The shades were found in the store occupied by Widmayer Hardware when it was located just east of the current post office. Don found the signs in the basement of the building in 1964 and mounted the message sections of the shades on wooden frames for ease of display.

The third item (see bottom of page 4) is a true sign to be mounted on a building and was found at a later date. Dresselhouse & Davidter, dealers in harnesses, hardware and eventually tractors, occupied a store which is now the empty space just west of the current Comerica Bank.

The fourth item (see below), also a true sign made of porcelain on metal, had two faces and was illuminated from within. The sign was found in the basement of the current Manchester Pharmacy building and Don believes the sign to be of the 1930s era. The sign would have been connected to the building at one end and suspended so it stuck out over the sidewalk. The illuminated letters advertised the type of business. The sign which was donated to the MAHS is only one face and it does not have any lights but the nature of the business is still clearly seen.



## June Meeting, The Annual Picnic

Darrel and Betty Suhre will host the June potluck picnic at their house at 8897 Smythe Rd. In honor of Darrel and Betty's 50th wedding anniversary, the theme of the picnic will be weddings so, in addition to your potluck offering, bring photos of your wedding or garments or other items from your wedding which you have retained and would like to show others attending the picnic.

Following is a list of potluck dishes for which people have signed up to bring to the picnic. Use the list as a guide if you plan to attend and have not signed onto the list. If you want to bring more than one food item to the picnic, please do so.

Please note, the picnic starts at 6:30 PM.

Main Dish	3 signed up	Bread/Rolls	2 signed up
Salad	4 signed up	Desserts	2 signed up
Vegetable	2 signed up	Beverage	1 signed up

## The Shed Behind The Shop

For several years the Board has occasionally discussed the condition and fate of the shed which is located directly behind the blacksmith shop. The shed is a storage building for various and sundry things but the years have taken their toll on the building: the foundation is crumbling, the sills are rotting away, some siding is missing, the windows do not have glass, the roof is long overdue for new shingles, woodchucks burrow under it, and to further complicate matters, a maple tree is encroaching on the west side so it could be a matter of choosing between the shed and the tree.

On a short term basis the Board has moved to reroof the shed and investigate three possibilities for the shed itself. Under consideration are: rebuilding the existing shed and foundation where it now stands, moving the existing shed to a new foundation further back on the lot or replacing the shed completely with a new foundation and building that matches the current architecture and outward appearance, again further back on the lot. The Board has consulted the Village Zoning Officer and the Village Building Authority to learn the legal requirements for the various options and will continue to discuss the ultimate fate of the shed. The shed does have character but it needs some help, as shown by the the pictures below.

