

WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN, TO RELAX, TO HAVE FUN: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

## ARTIFACT ARCHIVE

A Civil War cavalry sword, featured in *The Reminder* July 7th, was recently donated to Historic Charlton Park, and although the Park holds several swords in trust, this one has a very detailed background.

The sword belonged to Thomas Ara Covey, born in 1841 in Batavia, New York, who settled in Hastings during his twenties. He enlisted in Co. L of the 7th Michigan Cavalry on February 28th, 1865 in Battle Creek at the age of 23 as a Private. According to enlistment records Covey was a blacksmith with blue eyes and light hair and complexion, standing 5' 7" tall. Locating Covey in the historical record was challenging due to his preferred appellation; rather than going by his given name "Thomas", he preferred "Ary", a shortened version of his middle name that appears on his enlistment papers and almost all other records. Covey served for approximately a year before being discharged at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in December 1865. After returning home he married his wife Melissa Howe in 1873, worked on the railroads (1880 Census), and fathered 4 children: Claude Francis, George Wesley, Arthur Leone and Flossie Elena.

Although there is no mention of injuries suffered in his service records, a later document owned by the donor's family indicates that Covey died in 1888 of

wounds received "in the service of the U.S." He is buried in the Hastings Township Cemetery where his tombstone reads "T.A. Covey Co. L. 7 Mich. Cav." His wife Melissa passed a year later, leaving their 4 young children without parents; They were put under the guardianship of a first cousin, Samuel Howe.



US G.W.C. 1865 near hilt

The cavalry sword passed from Covey to his children, ending up in his son Arthur's hands (donor's grandfather), then passed to his daughter Viola (Covey) White (donor's mother), and finally to the donor Kenneth White of Grand Rapids, MI. Engraved on the base of the sword's blade is "US G.W.C . 1865", which helps to not only date the artifact, but also provides manufacture and inspector information. "GWC" stands for George W. Chapin, an inspector for Ames Mfg. Co. of Chicopee, MA. The sword is in wonderful condition, with very little damage incurred through the last 150 years. The sword and additional materials can be viewed in Historic Charlton Park's Upjohn House during regular business hours (M-F, 8 am – 5 pm) until the end of July.

## DIRECTOR'S SPOT

Summer fun all around! Yes, it is that time of year when tens of thousands of people from all walks of life take a little time out of their busy schedules to enjoy Historic Charlton Park and all our wonderful events. This summer has proven once again to be a "destination location" for many to enjoy the sights and sounds of yesteryear and today. With our event season in full swing we hope you will take a little time and revel in all that Historic Charlton Park has to offer.

Thank you all for making Historic Charlton Park such a wonderful place to visit and enjoy.

Visit Us Soon,  
Dan Patton, Director

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The mission of Charlton Park is to provide educational and recreational opportunities, through the collection, preservation and demonstration of early rural Michigan life, artifacts and buildings, and the maintenance of natural and recreation areas.



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## EVENT NEWS

Spring Into The Past: Tri-Rivers Museum Tour was held on May 5th and 6th. 60+ visitors toured the historic village and visited the 22 other participating museums over the weekend. All of the small museums in the network reported excellent attendance.

May 19th the 6th Annual Charlton Park Day was attended by 700 visitors. Live music was provided by Nighthawk in Walnut Grove, Doug Brinks played the



Doug Brinks in the Church

banjo in the Church, and other various local groups. Face painting and games were available to kids on the village green and the bounce houses and Barry County Sheriff's Posse were

behind Mainstreet. Keith Murphy and Rob Garrett cooked the hotdogs. Jeff VanNortwick, Jan Lydy, Pat Graham, Ben Geiger, Robert & Marian Houtman, Craig Stolsonberg, Josh Graham, Wes Robinson and Laurie Cheeseman all volunteered their time in the snack bar, at the condiment tables and water tables or popped popcorn and handed out balloons. Andy Johnston, John Foley, Lois Bremer and Ellen Bassett provided interpretation in various village buildings. Carol Foley and Linda Antonini baked cookies in



the Sixberry House, while Sheila and Emily Iszler and Carissa White baked bread and made butter in the Bristol Inn. Pam Tobias, Georgia Robinson, and Emma Seif helped children make buttons on a string in the school. Elaine Drury, Marie Morgan and Anna Bursley made a new craft with visitors – fans! Demonstrations were provided by Elspeth Inglis, Judith Kidder, John Barany, Chris Pillars, Jon Merrick and the Gas and Steam Club, which ran the Sawmill. Lloyd Merchant and Rick Moore ran the trams for

visitors. Zach Pinkster served as the event MC, Lloyd Kilmer and Brian Reynolds kept an eye on the Exhibition Hall, Troy Bass and Kerri Steward manned the games on the



Photo by Andrew Freemire

village green and Mary Brinks floated assisting volunteers with breaks and handing out waters. Nancy Bitterling also ran the gift shop in the Upjohn House. Children could also have their faces painted thanks to Sara Carroll, Karen Markley, Erin Merritt and Melissa Patton. The event was a great success thanks to the many volunteers that gave their time and energy for the day. The 7th Annual Charlton Park Day will be held Memorial Day weekend in 2013.

The 31st Annual Father's Day Car Show went well on Sunday, June 17th despite the rain and a power



outage late in the day. Although it did rain early, the sprinkles helped to keep the dust and temperature in check! 3,200 visitors were

able to peruse approximately 600 show cars throughout the day and visit 106 swap meet vendors. Special thanks to Lois Bremer, Jamie Bowman, Jon Merrick, Joe Medendorp, Dan Harrow, Judith Kidder, Marie Morgan, Keith Murphy and Herb McPeake for manning the buildings during this busy event!

## PARK HAPPENINGS



On June 27th, the Barry County Road Commission seal coated (tar and pea gravel) both of the paved drives into the Park. Weak spots in the asphalt were filled a couple of weeks before and the seal coat was completed in a matter of hours. The roads look wonderful!



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## VOLUNTEERS' CORNER



Many volunteers have been busy in the gardens around the village this warm summer season. David Decker and Nick Barlow have been keeping the Bristol Inn vegetable

garden looking wonderful. Mary Brinks has taken on the care of the Hall House gardens and brought them up to snuff. Roberta Meeker has continued to maintain the gardens around the Upjohn House. All of the gardens look great and we so appreciate their help!

**Mark your calendars!** This year's fall Volunteer Appreciation Picnic will be held on the evening of September 13th before the Walk-In-The-Spirit Pow Wow. Invitations will be in the mail sometime in August. These special invitations will be printed in the Park's print shop, the Thornapple Press!

## EDUCATION/COLLECTIONS

Whew. Time flies when you are having fun! The Spring 2012 education season has come to a close, and what a successful season it was! We had 40 programs, serving 2103 students and adults. The weather was all over the place with rain and temperature, but there were smiles all around from the students, teachers, and our interpreters!! Thanks to Shirley Barnum, Lois Bremer, Nancy Bitterling, Ruby Cairns, Bonnie David, Elaine Drury, Steve Evans, Bess Gross, Herb McPeake, Marie Morgan, Georgia Robinson, Wes Robinson, Kerri Steward, and Barb Turkal for all their help.

Even though school is out, we are keeping busy – Be sure to mark your calendars for our program in the “No Family Left Indoors” series entitled “Tree-rific!” on July 24, 6:30-8 p.m. We'll take a walk on one of the trails, learn about the trees and plants of the Park, and then return to the village for games and refreshments. You will need to register for the program ahead of time at [www.barryoutdoorfun.com](http://www.barryoutdoorfun.com).

Call Shannon Ritzer at 269-945-3775 if you have any questions.

Space is still open for groups interested in visiting for the Fall 2012 education season. Don't forget! Schools in Barry County can come to the park for FREE during this time – except for transportation. If you are or know a teacher that would be interested, be sure to contact Shannon Ritzer to learn more, or to book your program.

The inventory of the Farmhouse Barn is again underway. Volunteers are assisting with moving, inventory and photography of the various items housed in the building. Thank you to Sharon Zebrowski, Roberta Meeker, Dave Chase, Jack Boarts and Anne Cole for assisting with the project.

Mary Brinks and Sharon Zebrowski are cataloging the music collection housed at the Park. The collection is broad with piano rolls, records and many instruments. Rebecca Kyes has continued working with the ethnographic collection, while Judy Mudge works on data entry for the archives. Our intern, Marie Morgan is busily cataloging the Park's clothing collection and Jack and Grace Neubecker are helping to identify and date the many American pocket watches in our collection. Without almost weekly help by all of the individuals mentioned above, we would not have almost 14,500 items entered into the database!

## OPERATIONS UPDATE

The maintenance department has been working on various projects throughout the Park, besides prepping for Charlton Park Day and the Father's Day Car Show. New sand was put on the beach, the area was



tidied and new signs went up at the beach and boat launch. The renovation of the 1st floor of the museum is progressing and almost ready for light installation and all of the boardwalks around the village were power washed and the door on the Barber Shop was repaired (photo).

## **Contact Information**

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www.charltonpark.org  
(269) 945-3775 - fax (269) 945-0390

Hours of Operation:  
Open 7 days a week, 8 am - 9 pm

A portion of the historic village is open everyday.  
The beach and boat launch are open until  
8:30 pm.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>July 13 &amp; 14</b> | <b>Gas &amp; Steam Show</b><br><b>8 am - Dusk, both days</b><br><b>\$5/Adults, \$3/Children</b><br><b>FREE 4 and under.</b>       |
| <b>July 21 &amp; 22</b> | <b>Civil War Muster</b><br><b>Sat. 9am-10pm, Sun. 9am-3:30 pm.</b><br><b>\$5/Adults, \$3/Children, 4 and under</b><br><b>FREE</b> |
| <b>July 28</b>          | <b>County Wide Yard Sale &amp; Antique Outboard Motor Show</b><br><b>9 am - 3 pm, FREE</b>  |
| <b>Aug. 10-12</b>       | <b>Longbow Invitational</b><br><b>\$5/Adult, 16 &amp; under</b><br><b>FREE</b>  |