

# History Matters



Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield

Newsletter of Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

SPRING 2023 | NEW MUSEUM EXHIBITS | CITY HISTORY PRESENTATION | IN MEMORIAM REV. JACK FREED | SOCIETY PROGRAMS & NEWS

## Apple Island Open House

Apple Island Tours are postponed due to logistic issues.

Please check [GWBHS.org](http://GWBHS.org) for updates.

An Apple Island themed Open House will be held on June 11, 1-4 pm, highlighting the Island's

history with a presentation at 2 pm and 3 pm. Newly loaned Cranbrook Institute of Science 2002 Island artifacts will be exhibited.



Volunteer Docents on Apple Island in 2021

## New Museum Exhibits!

New permanent exhibits debuted April 23 at the Orchard Lake Museum Grand Open House. GWBHS members and community leaders were invited to see permanent exhibits highlighting the history of each municipality, Albert Kahn, schools, and first responders!



New Sylvan Lake & Orchard Lake Exhibit Panels

## Bruce McIntyre Shares City of Orchard Lake Village History



David Ward

Mayor Pro-Tem Bruce McIntyre gave a presentation at the City of Orchard Lake Village (COLV) Council meeting in February 2023. McIntyre's presentation follows, edited for space considerations.

This year City of Orchard Lake Village marks 95 years as a municipality and 94 years since we bought municipal property. How we got here starts with one family.

David Ward, died here in 1900. His family is responsible for developing most of Orchard Lake, and specifically for how we got the land where we sit. Orchard Lake might not exist as a city except for the Wards.

His obituary says he was the richest man in Michigan. He was first a surveyor, then medical doctor. In 1857, he bought Northern Michigan land starting when it was cheap, and accumulating 100,000 acres of timber, plus land in West Virginia and California. He was one of Michigan's lumber barons. He bought 200 acres in West Bloomfield in 1863 surrounding Orchard, Cass, and Pine Lakes and built a 37 room home, he later called too large and costly. Willis Ward, David's son took over the Orchard Lake property and is the leading developer of our city. He sold the largest pieces of land that became our neighborhoods.



David Ward's house, 37 rooms



Willis Ward

Ward owned a three-story boathouse on Pontiac Trail. He didn't live there but at one time he lived on Apple Island. His real estate office was in the small brick building you can see on the St. Mary's property at Commerce and Indian Trail.



Willis Ward's Three-Story Boat House

Brig. Gen. Frederick Strong, Jr. graduated from the Michigan Military Academy [St. Mary's Preparatory today] and from West Point, where he is buried. [He married Marjorie Ward, Willis' sister.] He served in WWI and WWII. Between the wars he was deeply involved in making Orchard Lake a municipality. Their house still stands on the hill above Cherry Hill Drive in the Woodlands.

Orchard Lake became a highly desirable summer entertainment area in the 1920s as more people had cars and when you could get here by interurban trolley. Strong wrote about "cars parked along the shores, the undressing and swimming at all hours of the day and night, the unsanitary conditions resulting from such large crowds and the Monday morning litter." To keep this under control you needed police and to get police you needed a municipality. A village was created in 1927. Strong was on the first village commission. But the village had no property at first.



Frederick Strong, Jr.

The Orchard Lake Hotel is where the Museum is now. The property across the street with steps down to the lake, became city property, and still is today. The hotel had been built in 1857 as a stagecoach stop. *Continued on next page...*



Lake View and Street View Postcards of the Orchard Lake Hotel



## From the Desk of President Gina Gregory

I am fortunate to see members and people in the community actively sharing our history with an organization whose mission is to enrich our communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing history. **GWBHS is a community resource with free online archives!** Recently at GWBHS:

- **Open Houses:** Presenter Neil Hepburn shared his research about West Bloomfield 1870 Black resident Eli Crockett and his descendants ([GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com](http://GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com)). Brian Golden presented Interurban history to over 35 guests and docents assisted guests in utilizing tax records.



Neil Hepburn presenting his research on Eli Crockett



Paul Wilbur presenting at the WB Library

- **Presentations:** Judy Muhn on genealogy; Mikwhandan Jewell on Native people stories; and Paul Wilbur on his 2690 Pine Lake Rd. home restoration (Paul's presentation can be watched online at [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com)).
- **New Gift Shop Items:** Christy Forhan's Apple Island Apple Island Explorer's Journal and Apple Island Artifact Notebook are now available at the Museum and at [GWBHS.org](http://GWBHS.org).
- **Grant Received:** \$2,500 Bridging Michigan Grant underwriting themed open houses/Apple Island Tours.
- **History Hero Award:** West Bloomfield resident Chuck Stokes received a History Hero Award from the Historical Society of Michigan for his 20 years involvement.



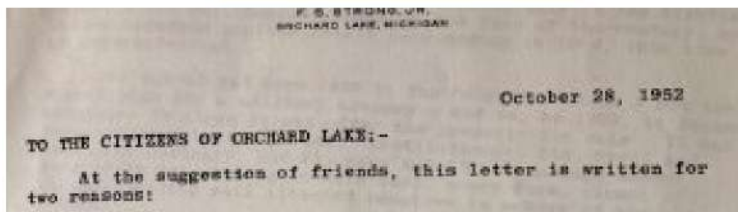
Chuck Stokes, Gina Gregory, and Larry Wagenaar (HSM CEO)

## Connection to the Collection

A letter written by Frederick Strong, Jr. to the citizens of Orchard Lake (1952) begins with, "At the suggestion of friends, this letter is written for two reasons:

1. To recall to the "old timers", and bring before the newer residents, why and how Orchard Lake Village was formed.
2. To present accurate information about some important events that helped shape the residential character of the community."

View full letter at [GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com](http://GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com)



## Updates from Shelby Nelsen Museum & Communications Assistant



Database Archive Project Orientation

I led database archive project volunteer training with Lucy & Lynn Barber, Sarah Cwiek, and Melissa Gilbert. Lana LaFortune observed.

See newly entered school photos at [GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com](http://GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com)

## Advocacy Day

I had the pleasure of representing Michigan museums alongside Lisa Craig Brisson of the Michigan Museums Association, and George Moroz of The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation and Greenfield Village, at Museums Advocacy Day, February 28, 2023.

This was a unique opportunity organized by the American Alliance of Museums - the only national association for all types of museums. Monday we learned to make the most of our conversations with Members of Congress about this year's concerns for top museums. Tuesday, we went to Capitol Hill

and met with the legislators of our home state and urged Congress to increase funding for Institute of Museum and Library Services and enact legislation to increase charitable giving. This was my fourth year attending Museums Advocacy Day and I can't wait to do it again next year! If you are interested in helping museums, you can also reach out to your representatives and let them know you support increased funding for museums.



Shelby Nelsen outside the US Capitol Building

## Bruce McIntyre continued

This Hotel photo with building to the right of the hotel is not identified, but based on the age of the picture it is not the current DPW building. The owner, Mrs. Woodward, was running an amusement park and this may have been a skating rink. The village wanted to buy the old hotel but Mrs. Woodward wanted too much money.



Postcard of the Orchard Lake Hotel

Willis Ward had founded the Orchard Land Co., a sort of nonprofit for civic improvement. The land company, which was run by Harold Ward and Strong, got the price down to \$137,500. The village agreed to sell bonds for \$70,000 and the land company paid the rest, after which the land became the village's.

The property deed was signed by Harold Ward and Strong, as officers of the land company, which means Strong was on both sides of the transaction.

# 2023 Programs

## May - August



Greater  
West Bloomfield  
Historical Society

Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society hosts and sponsors programs covering a wide variety of history topics throughout the year. Visit [GWBHS.org](http://GWBHS.org) for more information and final event details.

### The 51st Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast

Friday, May 12, 7 am

Attend the breakfast highlighting community volunteerism. GWBHS is a proud sponsor of this event. More details at [MichiganWeek.org](http://MichiganWeek.org)



### Food & Farming Open House

Sunday, May 14, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

This was a farming community until the 1940s! Try manual farming tools and activities and watch informative video.

### 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 1:30 pm | Orchard Lake Museum

2024 marks the 50th anniversary of GWBHS! Help us decide how will we mark the occasion honoring our past! We are looking for volunteers to make and carry out plans for the GWBHS 50th Anniversary Celebration. Contact [snelsen@gwbhs.org](mailto:snelsen@gwbhs.org) for more information.

### Data Entry Volunteer Orientation

Thursday, May 25, 6-7 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

This orientation is for a paid volunteering opportunity. Help us enter data for photographs related to local school history! You will learn how to upload pictures and enter data into our digital collections database (stipend provided). Time commitment includes attending the orientation and a minimum of 5 hours monthly until September 2023. If you are interested in volunteering, please email [snelsen@gwbhs.org](mailto:snelsen@gwbhs.org).



### Join GWBHS in Memorial Day Parades

Monday, May 29, 9 am-12 pm

Join the parades! Walk, bike, or drive your classic car in the Memorial Day parades! Do you have a golf cart, with a hitch, to pull the GWBHS carriage? To volunteer or for more information contact [duannesonneville@hotmail.com](mailto:duannesonneville@hotmail.com).



### National Trails Day Open House

Saturday, June 3, 9 am-12 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

The Museum will be open during the trail walk in partnership with West Bloomfield Parks. Learn more at [WBParks.org](http://WBParks.org).

**Open House Dates** 1-4 pm (closed holiday weekends). Come see new permanent exhibits interpreting local history and culture!  
*Free Admission, Donations Appreciated.*

#### May

Sunday: 5/7, 5/14  
Friday: 5/19

#### June

Sunday: 6/4, 6/11, 6/25  
Friday: 6/16

#### July

Sunday: 7/2, 7/9, 7/23  
Friday: 7/21

#### August

Sunday: 8/6, 8/13, 8/27  
Friday: 8/18



### Apple Island Open House

Sunday, June 11, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

Apple Island Tours have been postponed due to logistic issues. See [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org) for updates. Open House highlights Island history with a presentation at 2 pm and 3 pm. Newly loaned Cranbrook Institute of Science 2002 Island artifacts will be exhibited.

### Juneteenth in the WB

Saturday, June 17, 10 am-2 pm | West Bloomfield High School

"Juneteenth in the WB" is a community event to honor National Freedom Day. Free and open to the public, with food, music, arts, and vendors. Visit the GWBHS table. Learn more at [Juneteenth in the WB on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/juneteenthinthewb).



### Resorts Open House

Sunday, July 9, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

Resorts, summer cottages, and camps were plentiful in this area! Come learn more about them and see postcards of the era.



### Appreciation Reception

Wednesday, July 12, 6-8 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

Members, supporters, and volunteers are invited for refreshments with one complimentary ticket per person for a raffle with terrific prizes.

RSVP appreciated, but not required, by July 7 to [snelsen@gwbhs.org](mailto:snelsen@gwbhs.org).

### Orchard Lake Fine Art Show

Saturday, July 29, & Sunday, July 30

Come visit us at this year's Orchard Lake Fine Art Show!

Learn more at [ArtsAndEducationInc.org](http://ArtsAndEducationInc.org)



### Pine Lake Marina Tour

Wednesday, August 9, 7 pm

3955 Orchard Lake Road

Gather at Pine Lake Marina for historical information about the longtime marina, water taxis, and trolley transportation. We'll walk to the nearby Interurban railway bed. Park on Seminary Road. Limited space. Register at [WBParks.org](http://WBParks.org)



### Classic Cars Open House & Presentation

Sunday, August 13, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

All are welcome to showcase their classic cars in the parking lot. "Significant Buildings of Auto Pioneers in Greater West Bloomfield" presentation by Tim Pawl at 2 pm & 3 pm. Voters Choice winner receives "West Bloomfield & the Tri-Cities." Reserve your space at [snelsen@gwbhs.org](mailto:snelsen@gwbhs.org). See GWBHS.org for parking information.

# Thank You for Supporting GWBHS!

GWBHS could not do so much good work without the help of our wonderful volunteers. Thank you to those who have recently given their time and helped out.

## EVENT & OPEN HOUSE PRESENTERS

Diane Eanes, Carol Fink, Brian Golden, Rob Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Mikwahndan "Mike" Jewell, Judy Muhn, Paul B. Wilbur, & Susan K. Williams

## OPEN HOUSE DOCENTS

Tom Bjorklund, Christy Forhan, Rob Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Kathy Peltier, & Helen Peters

## MUSEUM SUPPORT

City of Orchard Lake Village

## PUBLICITY AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

Civic Center TV

## PROGRAM PARTNERS

WB Parks  
West Bloomfield Library

## SILVER LEVEL DONOR

Jackie Beach

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Pat and Glen King, 2021  
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## HISTORY MATTERS 2023 SPONSOR

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## OPEN HOUSE 2023 SPONSORS

Gino's Italian Restaurant  
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## TRIBUTE FUND DONORS

*for Christian Sonnevile's Birthday:* Courtney Roberts, Kirsten Sonnevile-Douglass, & Kendrin Sonnevile

## West Bloomfield Schools Building Changes



West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) opened the new West Bloomfield Middle School in fall of 2022, at the site of the former Orchard Lake Middle School (OLMS), 6000 Orchard Lake Road. All middle school students, from both OLMS and Abbott Middle School, are now at one location.



Roosevelt Elementary School, 2065 Cass Lake Road was built in 1920. The school closed when a piece of the original plaster ceiling fell in an empty classroom on June 2, 2022. Students learned remotely for the remainder of the semester.



3380 Orchard Lake Road was built in 1955 as Abbott School. During summer 2022, playground and school improvements were made appropriate for elementary students. The building opened for the 2022-23 school year as Roosevelt Elementary School.

# In Memoriam: Reflecting on My Friend Pastor Jack Freed



Pastor Jack Freed

The Reverend Jack Freed, 1927-2022, known as Pastor Jack, maintained an attitude of loving care whereby all residents live in harmony. This was Jack's gift of pastorage across the greater West Bloomfield "Community." To Jack, communication was everything and throughout his engagements you knew it and understood that great wisdom would be shared. Whether he addressed others at his own church congregation - Holy Spirit Lutheran Church or anywhere within greater West Bloomfield - he led with a vision of creating a Community of LOVE.

I met Jack in 2009, when my life was mainly focused on family, church, career, and the narrow community of those at work. Jack taught me that these interactions were good, yet **great interactions** come from truly being engaged within Community Action. This is why today I serve our residents on the WB Parks Commission and previously on the township Environmental Commission. As a community connector and visionary, Jack learned all he could about my experiences, and before I even knew it, he put me to work as one of his many community disciples.

Active listening was one of his treasured skills. I learned from him that to have a Lifetime of Community, you must Love the Community where you serve and exist. His action of Love was exhibited every weekday in His Winning Words blog and email distribution. It was written for more than 5,000 days and changed the perspectives of so many. My favorite WW was sent on March 11, 2022 and it read: "Your life becomes a masterpiece when you learn to master peace." What can you do today to help master peace for either you or for others?



Reverend Jack Freed & West Bloomfield Supervisor John Doherty, 1976

Another area of his love for this community was seen in his actions to shape his community. He left nothing untouched from serving as chaplain to Police/Fire, organizing Pine Lake Cemetery Memorial Day programs, serving on the Township Planning Commission, and supporting business leaders and WBSD and adjacent communities school administrators. Pastor Jack will remain a legend among those who knew him well because of his mode of operation and inspiration. Let us continue to celebrate this very special Life of Community together!

**Robert V. Brooks**  
West Bloomfield Parks Commission Chair, 2023



Robert Brooks & Crystal Brooks, Paul Lipson, Joan Thralow-Freed, Ken Ungerecht (Joan's brother), Jack Freed at Sunny's Café WB, 2019



Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast, 2019  
Left to Right: Cherie VanVliet, West Bloomfield Township Treasurer Teri Weingarden, Pastor Jack Freed, Greater West Bloomfield Cable Commission Deb Macon, West Bloomfield Township Clerk Debbie Binder, Michigan Week Committee Carol Hack, Police Chief Michael Patton, Michigan Week Committee Barbara Moretsky, State Senator Ryan Berman, West Bloomfield Parks Superintendent Jennifer Tucker

Pastor Jack:

- Founded Greater West Bloomfield Clergy Association and Community Forum, c. 1972
- Co- founded Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast with Jeff Leib, 1972
- Was a founding member of the Optimist Club of West Bloomfield, 1972

Watch Reverend Jack Freed: A Lifetime of Community at [CivicCenterTV.com](http://CivicCenterTV.com) or listen for rebroadcast at 89.3fm, where the Greater West Bloomfield community reminisced about the life and legacy of Reverend Jack Freed on January 19, 2023.

Search [GWBHS.PastPerfect.org](http://GWBHS.PastPerfect.org) for photos donated in memory of Pastor Jack.



Pastor Jack Freed receives WBT board recognition, 2017  
Left to Right: State Representative Clint Kesto, West Bloomfield Township Supervisor Steve Kaplan, West Bloomfield Assistant Fire Chief Andy Bezenah, West Bloomfield Police Chief Michael Patton, West Bloomfield Township Clerk Debbie Binder, West Bloomfield Township Trustee Jonathan Warshay, Pastor Jack Freed, West Bloomfield Township Treasurer Teri Weingarden, former West Bloomfield Township Trustee Allen Adelberg, former West Bloomfield Township Trustee Deb Macon



**Orchard Lake Museum**  
**3951 Orchard Lake Road**  
**Orchard Lake, MI 48323**

**Non-Profit Org.**  
**U.S. Postage**  
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**Permit # 164**

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Linda Kidd	Recording Secretary
Carol Fink	Corresponding Secretary
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Hannah Dagg	Communications, Exhibits
Karen Pushie	Membership database

**Committee Chairs**

Christy Forhan	WBSD Liaison
Sue Grifor	Membership
Neil Hepburn	Community Relations
Don Newman	Group Programs
Christian Sonnevile	Development/Fundraising

**Mission: enriching our communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing history.**  
**GWBHS is a 501(c)3 organization open to all and has served**  
**Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake, Orchard Lake, and West Bloomfield since 1974.**

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**GWBHS Membership & Donation Form**

New Membership     Renew Membership     GiftMembership\*     Donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about volunteering with GWBHS.

Make checks payable to GWBHS. Credit card payments are accepted through PayPal at gwbhs.org.  
 GWBHS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible according to IRS regulations.  
 Membership includes access to Time Travelers reciprocal membership network.  
 Please ask your employer if they match employee charitable donations and remember the Society in your wills, living trusts, and estate plans.

**Membership • Jan. 1 to Dec. 31**

- Individual            \$20 \$40
- Family                \$50
- Premier               \$100
- Patron/Business    \$600
- Life

**Donation**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

This donation is in honor of:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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TotalAmount        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

