  
Lapeer County Historical Society • Lapeer, Michigan  
P.O. Box 72  
Lapeer, MI 48446

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
LAPEER MI  
PERMIT NO 80

---

## KEEPSAKE ORNAMENTS -- WHAT'S NEW



Have you gotten your collectors ornaments yet? Our first two collectible ornaments, the Library and the High School, have been very well received. A limited number of each is available at Gallery 194 for \$20 each.

What historic building would you like to see on our next collectible ornament?  
Leave a message at the museum  
810-245-5808 or  
email [lhs.pobox72@gmail.com](mailto:lhs.pobox72@gmail.com).



# The Lapeer County HISTORIAN



A PUBLICATION OF THE LAPEER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 2021

## LAW AND ORDER, THEN AND NOW

March 4, 1921 Warren Harding was inaugurated as the 29th president of the United States in the first presidential election since women had earned the vote. The Michigan constitution had amended the state constitution in 1918, and in 1919 became the second state to ratify the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution assuring women in every state the right to vote.

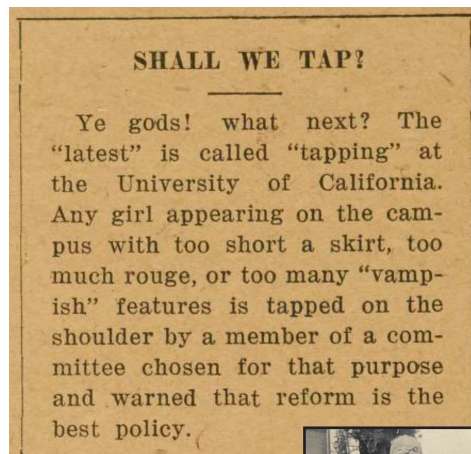
to reform their appearance. A writer at the Michigan Daily questioned the absurd policy.

January 1921, the City of Lapeer passed an ordinance prohibiting the slaughter of cattle, sheep, and swine within one block of Nepessing Street. So far no word back from the City clerk to see if it's still on the books, so behave accordingly.

### BLUE LAWS

One topic buzzing around the county was a proposal by The Lord's Day Alliance, a national organization of protestant denominations, to stop all manual labor on Sundays. Opponents described the suspension of travel including by train, no work for the milkman, shuttered retail stores, no commerce of any kind.

The Alliance claimed travel to and from church would be allowed, and even ball games could be played as long as no admission was charged. An editorial in the County Press stated how decent the citizenry was and how deserving of a day of fresh air after six days of labor. The Press asserted that the enacting of any such blue law locally would be met with hearty protest.



On the side of progress, three women were placed on the jury for the March 1921 court term. Mrs. Lucy Moore, Mrs. Ettie Schanck, and Mrs. James Keith were the first women to ever serve as "juroresses" in Lapeer County.



Election Debate, Norman Rockwell 1920

The vote didn't change life dramatically for women all at once. In 1921 the University of California had enforcers "tapping" women who needed



## D-I-V-O-R-C-E

A Shiawassee County prosecutor proposed criminalizing "theft of love." Prosecutor Roy Matthews claimed 75% of all divorce cases were due to "meddling of a third party." The only redress to the betrayed party was a civil suit against the interloper. Matthews further claimed that 90% of meddlers were incapable of paying the judgment against them, so then they were free to sin again with no consequences.

Matthews' law partner, state senator Byron Hicks, considered introducing a bill that would impose prison time on love thieves.

The 1920 census showed 25,782 residents of Lapeer County. The Circuit Court decided 18 divorce cases.

## PROHIBITION

Prohibition created conflict between neighbors. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) helped police enforce liquor laws. Some groups policed themselves. The Millville Gleaners for instance put all dances on hold stating, "Some insist on coming to dances and indulging too freely in hard cider, and spoil the good time for everyone."

The State Police arrested two moonshiners at a house near Almont. One was Joe Sonen of Kings Mill. The truck was loaded with moonshine likely bound for Detroit. A third man, Arthur Nys,

was fired on by police as he fled. He was not apprehended.

Sheriff Baker found a whiskey still in a barn south of Metamora. A bottle of whiskey was found hidden in the hayloft. The farmer quickly shifted the blame to a Detroit man, but when arraigned pleaded guilty. The judge fined him \$250 and threatened 6 months in Ionia State Prison if the fine wasn't paid within 24 hours. "The fine was paid."



The war on sin was going strong. The temperance people were finding some satisfaction, but drunkenness wasn't the only sinful behavior on notice.

The city of Lapeer passed an ordinance Professor Harold Hill would have been thrilled to sing about. Although The Music Man was set earlier, back in 1912, it warned about the perils of pool halls. The Lapeer ordinance banned card playing, gambling, dice shaking, and trading cards in pool halls.



There was quite a stir involving a raid in Imlay City. The State Police entered guns drawn into the Middleton Hotel. Several prominent Imlay City men were arrested for gambling. When the police searched the hotel for liquor they found none.

The real kerfuffle was within

the police force. The officers who were stationed at Imlay City were not involved in the raid. For some reason others were called in by special request.

This did not go over well with the Imlay City post, and the following day all the aggrieved officers resigned.

## THE MUSEUM

Although the museum has been closed to visitors for the past year, volunteers and our intern, Catherine Fox, continue to spend hours each week preparing for a time when we can again welcome the public.

## 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual membership meeting will be held at the Lapeer Center on May 20. On the agenda will be the annual report and election of board members. Also to be considered will be proposed amendments to update the by-laws. A copy of the current by-laws has been posted on our website at [lapeercountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://lapeercountyhistoricalsociety.com) as well as proposed updates. Other changes may be proposed before that meeting and will be posted on the website.



No Swimming, Norman Rockwell 1921



# SUMMER=ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND BASEBALL

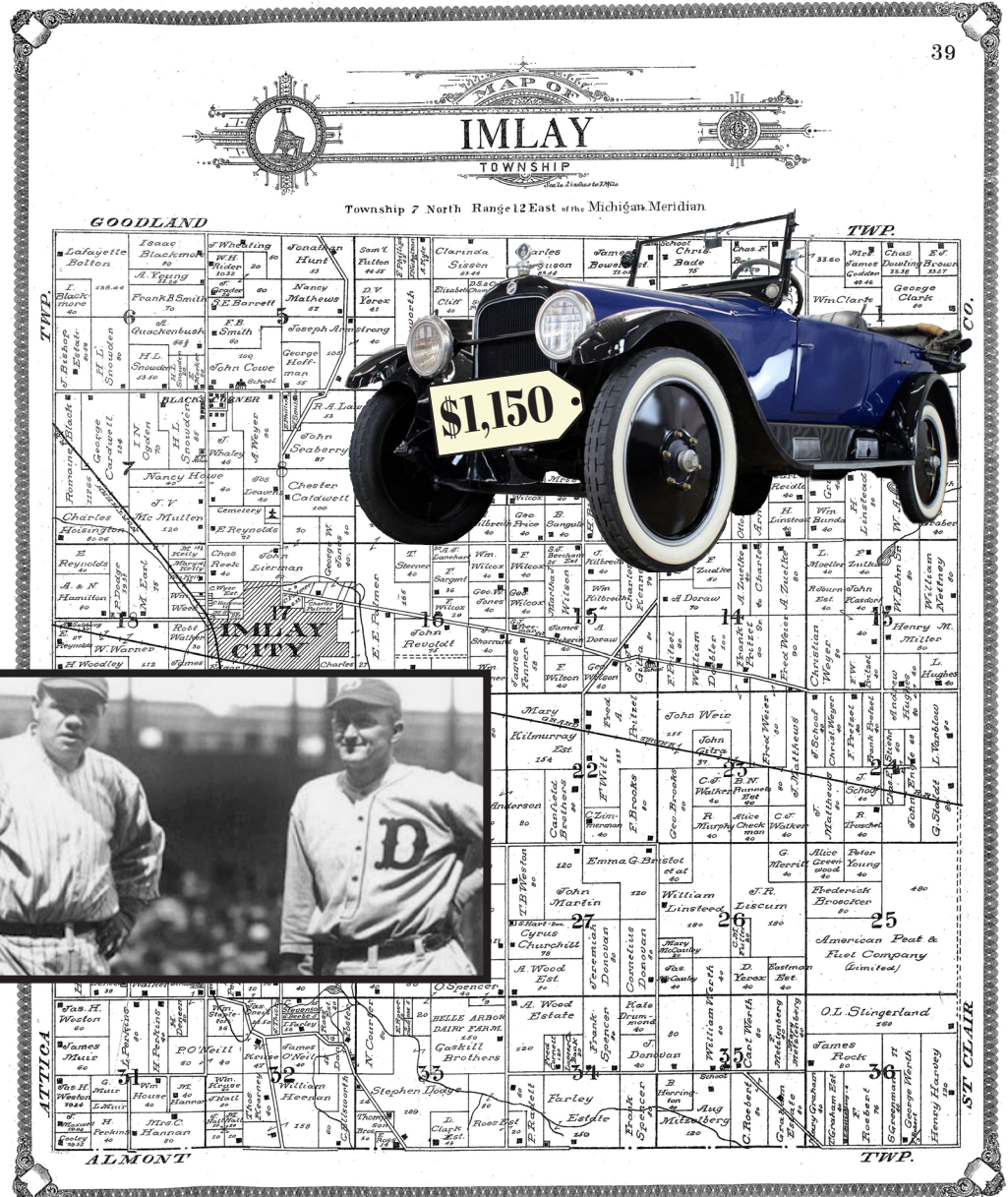
## PAVING THE WAY

In June 1921, a 2 1/2 mile link of road between Almont and Imlay City was completed at a cost of \$29,000. Today, adjusted for inflation that would be just \$436,000. Quite a bargain. And you could get yourself a very nice Studebaker for around \$1,150.

To encourage business and local development, the Lapeer Commercial Club bought 200 road signs to direct travelers to Lapeer. A daily bus began running between Lapeer and Oxford.

Fulfilling many a child's dream, Taylor Churchill, a disabled boy from Imlay City, got to meet his heroes-- Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth.

Ty Cobb had been with the Detroit Tigers since his rookie year in 1905, and in 1921 was signed as a player/manager. His salary of \$32,500 could have paid for that stretch of road from Almont to Imlay City.



## 2020 CONTRIBUTORS ENDOWMENT FUND

John & Gail Biscoe  
Kim & Cindy Brown  
Michael & Laura Burke  
Gaye Butterfield  
Curt Carter  
Eric & Kristen Cassabon  
Gomer Cramton  
Fred Ehman  
John & Phyllis Engelman  
Karen Fitzgerald  
Daniel & Vicki Gerlach  
Jacqueline Germani  
Marty Homan

Alan & Jolane Grossbauer  
Carol Jaeger  
Jessica Kelsch  
James & Jeannene Koprowski  
Leroy & Hazel Mabery  
Mary Ann Mann  
Robert & Laurel Morris  
Tim & Nita Oesch  
Village Printing, Inc.  
Burns & Doris Rolland  
Bill & Karen Rykhus  
Jacquie Wilson

The Lapeer County Road Commission took over Saginaw Street in Lapeer in order to secure state funding to pave it. The city first had to pass a bond issue to cover their 25% share. Without state funding, the city's \$15,000 would only have paid for gravel.





## MUSIC, THEATER, FILM



In April, J.L. Hudson sponsored the Hudson Symphony Orchestra to perform at the Lapeer Opera House, on the third floor of the White Building.

In the 20s, popular music drew a lot of hits from Broadway. "I'm Just Wild About Harry," was opening doors for black actors who previously were limited to one act per show.



Mamie Smith and her Jazz Hounds

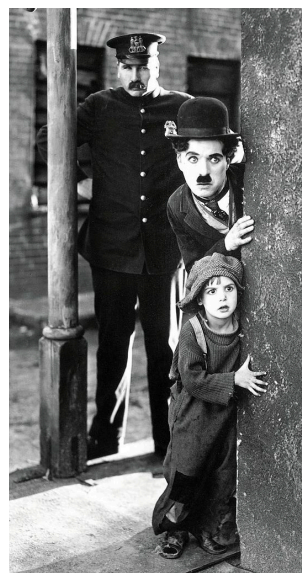
Mamie Smith was the first African-American ever to make a blues recording. When her record "Crazy Blues" was released it was so successful that it encouraged record labels to record more black performers.

Ziegfeld's Follies featured Fanny Brice singing "Second Hand Rose". W.C. Fields joined the Follies in



Fanny Brice, Ziegfeld star

1921 where he developed his most iconic characters which captured the zeitgeist of the 1920s.



Still six years before talkies, George and Vera Smith built The



Rudolph Valentino and Agnes Ayres in "The Sheik" 1921

"When love is more desired than riches, it is the will of Allah, Let another be chosen."

Lyric Theater, their second in Lapeer. When the locals went to the picture show they might have seen "The Kid" starring Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan, or "The Sheik" with Rudolph Valentino and Agnes Ayres.

The popularity of The Sheik inspired the hit song "The Sheik of Araby" which, in today's parlance, is a bit cringe-worthy. The chorus is a rollercoaster from the sheik sneaking uninvited into the lady's tent, to inviting her to rule with him.

"I'm the Sheik of Araby,  
your love belongs to me  
At night when you're asleep,  
into your tent I'll creep  
The stars that shine above,  
will light our way to love  
You'll rule this land with me,  
the Sheik of Araby"

# IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

(check your address label for current status)

1 YEAR \$15 Individuals \$20 Couples	2 YEARS \$25 Individuals \$35 Couples	LIFE MEMBER \$150 Individuals \$175 Couples	\$10 for students or to sponsor our newsletter only.	\$25 for Sustaining Members, businesses, and organizations.
--	---	---	--	---

Life Memberships are deposited into our endowment fund with the Community Foundation to perpetuate the work of the Society.

You may designate additional contributions to our operating expenses, a special project, in memoriam or to our endowment fund.

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Ornaments \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Postage & Packaging \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK  
YOU!**

- Ornaments are \$20 and can be purchased at Gallery 194.
- If you would like us to ship ornaments, add \$5 for S&H for first ornament. \$1 each additional

NAME(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Please mail your check to:  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ LCHS  
PO BOX 72  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ Lapeer 48446  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## GIVING TUESDAY 2020 DONORS

John and Gail Biscoe  
Kim and Cindy Brown  
Gaye Butterfield  
Curt Carter and Marty Homan  
Fred Ehman  
Karen Fitzgerald  
Jessica Kelsch  
Dr. James and Jeannene Koprowski  
LeRoy and Hazel Mabery  
Mary Ann Mann  
Burns and Doris Rolland  
Bill and Karen Rykhus



## PERIODIC BY-LAWS REVIEW

The Board of the LCHS is seeking input from our membership on updating our by-laws which were last reviewed in 2005. If you go to our website <http://www.lapeercountyhistoricalsociety.com/> you will find a link to view each Article with proposed changes.

Members may propose additional changes to be voted on at our Annual Meeting on May 20. Below is an example of the proposed changes viewable on the website.

BY-LAWS OF THE LAPEER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Revised December 2020

ARTICLE I: DESCRIPTION

1.1 Name: The name of the corporation is the Lapeer County Historical Society.

1.2 Place of Business: The Corporation shall have its principal place of business at the Lapeer County Historical Society Museum, in Lapeer County, Michigan.

1.3 Purposes: The purposes for which the corporation is organized are as follows:

A. To bring together those people interested in history, and especially in the history of Lapeer, County, since understanding the history of our community is basic to our democratic way of life, gives us a better understanding of our state and nation, and promotes a better appreciation of our American heritage.

B. To acquire, own, dispose of, and deal with real and personal property and interests therein and to apply gifts, grants, bequests, and devices, and the proceeds thereof in furtherance of the purposes of the corporation.

C. To discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of this area; its exploration, settlement, development, and activities in peace and in war; its progress in population, wealth, education, arts, science, agriculture, manufactures, trade and transportation.

D. To provide for the preservation of such material and for its accessibility, as far as may be feasible, to all who wish to examine or study it, to cooperate with officials in insuring the preservation and accessibility of the records and archives of the county and of buildings, monuments and markers.

add the primary  
place of business  
to be the  
physical location  
of the museum