



Inside Michigan History

Sponsored by "Friends of Michigan History"
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Volume 3 Issue 1- (Oct-Nov-Dec-Jan) 2010

FRIENDS VETERAN'S DAY PROGRAM 2010 GUEST SPEAKER

**Lt. Colonel Alexander Jefferson, USAF Retired,
Tuskegee Airman, WWII**

On **November 7th**, 2010, at the **Michigan Historical Museum Auditorium** beginning at **2:00 p.m. Sunday** afternoon, the Friends of Michigan History will recognize the famed Tuskegee Airmen, & Army Air Force Veterans from WWII.

Speaker will be **Lt. Colonel Alexander Jefferson, USAF Retired Tuskegee Airman, WWII**.

Large assemblies of *Color Guards* are expected to attend, along with special music by the **Jackson Northwest High School Choir, "Vocal Dimensions"**.

Refreshments will be served following the program. All Veterans, members, friends, and interested guests are most cordially invited to attend this Honored 12th Annual Event, free of charge.

This colorful program will involve members of the Army, Air Force, & Naval Reserve, and will honor Veterans from WWII, Korea, and the Iraq war.



Massing of the Colors:
Color Guards please **RSVP** by **October 29**, so that your group may be recognized in the program.

Contact Paul M. Tarr at:

(517) 319-2580, or pmtarr@aol.com. We hope to have 25 Units represented.

SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

Paul M. Tarr, Co-Chairman

GUEST SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER JEFFERSON, Lt. Col. USAF Ret., born Detroit, MI. 15 November 1921. Graduate: Chadsey H.S. Detroit. Graduated B.S. Degree, Clark College, Atlanta, GA: Graduate Work in Chemistry, Howard University, Washington, D.C.



In January, 1944, he graduated from a pilot training course at Tuskegee Army Air Field followed by three months of Combat Training at Selfridge Field, MI. He served as a P-51 fighter pilot with the Red Tail, 332nd Fighter Group, 301st Fighter Squadron in Ramitelli, Italy. In the course of providing protection from enemy aircraft, he flew 18 long range escort missions for B-17 and B-24 bombers. On Aug 12, 1944, three days prior to the invasion of Southern France, he was shot down by ground fire while strafing radar stations on the coast. Captured by German troops and interned for nine months as a prisoner of war, he spent five months in Stalag Luft III, 80 miles east of Berlin on the Oder River.

On January 29, 1945, when the Russians started their offensive, the prisoners, American, British and French, were transferred to Stalag VIA, Mooseburg, approximately 20 miles north of Dachau. Liberated by American forces on the 29th of April, 1945, he visited Dachau to witness the results of the atrocities committed by the Nazis.

He was discharged from active duty in 1947 and retired from the reserves in 1969 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Following the war, he became an elementary school science teacher in the city of Detroit. He retired as an assistant principal in 1979. He is an active member of various church, educational and alumni organizations.

He is one of the founders of the Detroit Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen and is a member of the Tuskegee Airmen Speakers Bureau. As a Life Member of the Silver Falcon Assn., he serves on a voluntary basis as an Admissions Counselor for the United States Air Force Academy and the Air Force ROTC. He is a Life Member of American Ex-Prisoner of War and is a Perpetual Member of the Military Order of the World Wars. On October 14, 1995, he was enshrined into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame.

Annual Jackson, Michigan Civil War Muster

The 26th Annual Jackson, Michigan, Cascades Civil War Muster was held on August 28-29, 2010, at Cascades Park in Jackson, Michigan. The Cascades Civil War Muster is the largest, longest running Civil War Event in the Midwest with over 2,000 reenactors participating. The Muster, which takes place each year at the beautiful Cascade Falls Park in Jackson, Michigan, offers free historical education and fun for the whole family. As with previous years, the schedule included a battle reenactment on Saturday and Sunday, infantry, cavalry, and artillery demonstrations, a military ball, a sutler (Civil War merchant) row, and authentic military and civilian camps, and a period Civil War community, Harrisonville Landing, which included a barbershop, saloon, post office, bathhouse, general store, and courthouse. This year's battles were part of General Sherman's Atlanta Campaign and included the battle of Pickett's Mill (May 27, 1864) and Jonesboro (August 31, 1864). Over 30,000 spectators attended the two-day sun-filled event. The event is hosted annually by the 7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Company B Inc.; 14th South Carolina Volunteers; 1st Michigan Light Artillery Battery D; USS



Michigan Marine Guard, Cascades Inc.; Jackson County Parks, and Tripp's Autoshop & Collision Center. The Friends of Michigan History, Inc, have helped to promote this statewide historical event for the last four years by providing battleflag streamers for each military and special impression unit that participates in the reenactment.



Civil war re-enactors' Michigan 5th Infantry band, playing period instruments.

Photograph taken by P.M. Tarr, 2010 Jackson Muster



Welcome to Our Renewing Friends

Louise and Thomas Alderson
Roland Andersen
Lisa Bolton
David and Patricia Brogan
David Craun
John and Judy Dunn
Marianne and Charles Endicott
Michael and Anna Flanagan
Edward and Lynne Francis
Larry and Roslin Griffin

Keith and Jean Harrison
Norman Jamieson
Mark Jenness
Richard Johnson
Keweenaw National Historical Park
Janet Kreger
William and Janet Lee
Richard and Phyllis Leith
Helen and John McLaughlin
Richard McLellan

James Page
Constance Reik
Jack and Phyllis Relyea
Benjamin and Claire Schwendener
Francis and Carol Spaniola
Henrik and Jane Stafseth
Betty Steen
Louise and George Stilwill
Thomas and Joyce Truscott
Geneva Wiskemann
Ronald and Julie Zaremba

Rethinking How We Teach History

by Larry Griffin

We need to train a group of young people starting in elementary school to appreciate and love history. Instead most people, if they ever learn to appreciate history, it happens when they are older. By that time, they don't have the energy or inclination to do a whole lot about this new found love. History is the cornerstone of how we organize our lives, and those important events and occasions in our lives. Most of the time we don't even think about it, we just do it because in its simplest form, history deals with a chronological look or ordering of events in a time sequence.

A museum professional and a colleague of mine knew the importance of personalizing history more than thirty years ago. She developed a project that focused on getting young people to study and learn their own history first and then the family history, history of Michigan, the history of the United States, a foreign country or the world. Genealogists have employed this concept as they focus on their own family history. A dedicated genealogist will spend hours pouring over microfilm and other

historical records looking for a tidbit to verify a fact only to realize that the information you found only shot holes in that line of thinking you were following.

Maybe we need to refocus our thinking on the way we teach history in this country. Today we look at Social Studies, then history and genealogy is rarely taught to our young people. Maybe we need to reverse the order of how history is taught. This would involve starting with family history, moving towards social studies and then history (Michigan, United States and world history). Another thing to consider when teaching history is to use what is the backbone of museums, three dimensional objects or artifacts. If history is to be appreciated by future generations and not have to take a back seat to other disciplines, we are going to have to make history come alive to those students. Something is sorely missing from our educational system when our young people can be turned off when learning about themselves.

Friends of Michigan History New President BIO

- 1) **Larry Griffin** born in Boca Raton, Florida
- 2) Graduated from Boca Raton High School
- 3) Graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a BA in History in 1972
- 4) Post graduate work at Florida Atlantic University (History) and Michigan State University (Geography)
- 5) Michigan Historical Museum (Historian) 1979-2002
- 6) Taught History at Broward [Community](#) College, Florida Atlantic University and Saginaw Valley State University and taught Cultural Diversity in Housing at Lansing [Community](#) College.
- 7) Married 40 years, Roslin Griffin with one daughter Danyelle.



Larry Griffin, New President of the Friends of Michigan History

Music at the Museum

Sunday

October 3, 2010

1:30 p.m.

Michigan Historical Museum, Lansing

Sunday afternoons don't get any better than this!

The Michigan Historical Museum presents the Music at the Museum series in conjunction with the Michigan State University College of Music. The series features a variety of student chamber music groups in an hour-long performance at the museum.

Today's performance features the MSU Klezmer Ensemble.

After the concert, student musicians will talk about their music selections and the composers. And, our museum galleries will be open for you to discover Michigan's past.

Look for other Music at the Museum concerts in November, December, February and April.

Admission to this event is free of charge. For more information, please send us an e-mail or telephone (517) 373-3559. "Music at the Museum" is sponsored by: Friends of Michigan History

From Michigan To Prague: *Your Story and Mine: A Community of Hope*

By Martha Aladjem Bloomfield



Encouraged by Geneva Wiskemann, Founder and Secretary of the Michigan Oral History Association, and board member of the Friends of Michigan History, I gave a paper at the Michigan Oral History Conference a year ago about a special project created by the Michigan Historical Museum and Advent House Ministries: ***Your Story and Mine: A Community of Hope***. Geneva then recommended I give a paper at the national Oral History Association (ORA) meeting. While googling the national organization, I landed on the website of the International Oral History Association and had two days to apply to present a paper in Prague, the Czech Republic in July 2010. My paper was accepted and I was ecstatic! I had always heard that Prague was the most beautiful city in the world and my husband, Alan, and I discovered it truly is.

Your Story and Mine: A Community of Hope is a multi-faceted, innovative project designed to give voice to current and formerly transitional homeless adults through oral history stories, art, poetry, photography and song. Advent House Ministries, a day-shelter, partnered with the Michigan Historical Museum to create a multi-dimensional

traveling exhibit using literacy as a tool for those struggling with homelessness and most at-risk of losing their identity in the community. In assisting these people to develop a deeper knowledge of personal history and heritage and reinforce an understanding of their value within the community, this project's goal, at its foundation, was to empower them and create a more inclusive society—using the building blocks of history—oral and personal history, artifacts, historic documents and family photographs. The opportunity for them to explore family history is often lost in the chaos of life without traditional consistent resources—education, food, shelter, medical care and employment. For the most at-risk, hope found in knowing their 'roots' may be their greatest asset.

Attending the 16th international Oral History Conference "**Between Past and Future: Oral History, Memory and Meaning**" was fascinating. Over 500 people participated from 58 different countries. My session was eclectic and inspirational. It included three other participants working on museum oral history projects: Poonam Chaudhary (India) talked about her project with the northern-most rural, mountainous peoples of India; Cadill Pantaleon, (Spain), had interviewed people who had experienced repression during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s; and Silva Rolim (Brazil) who has been living in Qatar has been interviewing sports pioneers for a new sports museum to open in Qatar in 2011.

While planning my trip for the conference, I realized I also wanted to learn about homelessness in Prague. I googled the web and discovered Ilya Hradecký, the founder of *Nadeje*, the first homeless shelter in Prague, and his colleague, Aftab Hladikova, who had worked for the Czech Ministry of Interior. We corresponded for several months and organized a day-long workshop which the American Embassy hosted. Two street social workers who worked for *Nadeje* also gave my Alan and me a fascinating tour of a homeless shelter and medical clinic.

Following the departure of the Communists from the Czech Republic in 1989, Mr. Hradecky began feeding homeless gypsies from Rumania at the Prague railroad station and eventually other homeless Czechs and Slovaks. Until then, the Czech Republic did not have 'homeless.' If they did not work, the Communist government put them in prison or mental institutions. Mr. Hradecky has also founded numerous institutions to help the elderly, orphans and people with disabilities throughout the Czech Republic.

Homelessness in Prague continues to be a significant issue as it is throughout the world today. The current Czech government wants to build the homeless people a 'camp' outside the center of the city. In a recent article in the ***Prague Post*** (8-25-10), Mr. Hradecky said the plans would either see homeless people leaving the camp each day after being taken there against their will, or homeless people being 'interned' at the center, something that he termed a violation of human rights. He said, 'Neither outcome leads toward integration, but represents segregation.'

I am very grateful to the Friends of Michigan History for their generous grant to help me with my travels and their contributions to the Michigan Historical Museum's education outreach programs with Advent House Ministries during the past three years. They have all been true friends! The ***Your Story and Mine: A Community of Hope*** exhibit funded by the Michigan Humanities Council will be displayed in the Rotunda at the Michigan Historical Museum October 10-31, 2010.

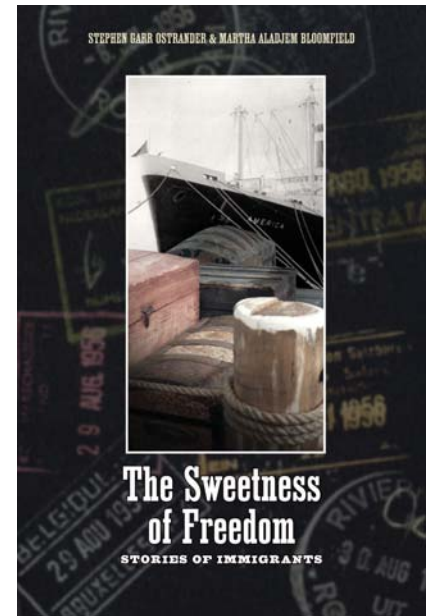


News Notes

Schuler Books in Okemos will host a book signing for *The Sweetness of Freedom, Stories of Immigrants* by, Stephen Garr Ostrander and Martha Aladjem Bloomfield
Published by Michigan State University Press

THURSDAY, October 21, at 6 p.m.

The Sweetness of Freedom. Stories of Immigrants presents an eclectic grouping of late nineteenth and twentieth-century immigrants' narratives and the personal artifacts, historical documents, and photographs these travelers brought on their journeys to Michigan. Most of the oral histories in this volume are based on interviews conducted with the immigrants themselves. Some of the immigrants presented here hoped to gain better education and jobs. Others—refugees—fled their homelands because of war, poverty, repression, religious persecution, or ethnic discrimination. All dreamt of freedom and opportunity. They tell why they left their homelands, why they chose to settle in Michigan, and what they brought or left behind. Some wanted to preserve their heritage, religious customs, traditions, and ethnic identity. Others wanted to forget past conflicts and lost family members. Their stories reveal how they established new lives far away from home, how they endured homesickness and separation, what they gave up and what they gained.



For more information contact: Martha Bloomfield: (517) 332-1321 or (517) 373-7441
bloomfieldm@michigan.gov or MarthaBloomfield@gmail.com

Join Us!

Become a partner with the Michigan Historical Center in protecting, preserving and interpreting Michigan's rich heritage.

Your membership benefits include:

- A one-year subscription to *Michigan History* magazine
- A 10% discount at the Michigan Historical Museum stores
- Discounts on museum classes and workshops
- Nationwide museum discounts through "Time Travelers"
- *Inside Michigan History* 3 times a year newsletter
- Special invitations to exhibit openings
- Membership card
- Tax benefits when you itemize your IRS tax return

For more information:
(517) 241-3099.

www.michigan.gov/friendsofmichiganhistory

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Thank You to Our New Friends

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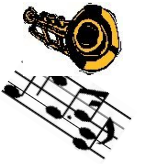
David Johnson

Here are the **dates for the next Friends meeting** in the Commission Room on the 5th floor of the Museum side at 10 am to Noon. Friends meet the 2nd Monday of every month.

2010 Meeting Schedule

October 11
November 8
December 13

News Notes - **How to submit copy:**



We will not accept camera ready (pasted down) copy or film. We will accept PDF files, photos and electronic files in Word.

To submit any articles, the **deadline** for the **next issue** is **January 14, 2011**, for Vol. 4, Issue 2 - February, March, April & May 2011. Also, to submit any articles for **Vol. 4 Issue 3** is due **May 13, 2011** for June, July, August & September 2010.

Files can be emailed to pmtarr@aol.com Photos may be emailed or mailed to: Inside Michigan History

118 W. Lenawee
Lansing, MI 48933



Board president Larry Griffin, presenting thanks to Keith G. Harrison for his years of service as secretary for the Friends Board.



Board president Larry Griffin, presenting a gift on behalf of the Friends Board, to Jennifer Sochor for her dedicated service.



Larry Griffin, presenting to Bus Spaniola the distinguished service award from the Board of Directors for years of service as President of the Friends Board.

Next Friends meeting: Monday, October 11, 2010

*Lansing, MI 48901
P.O. Box 17035
Friends of Michigan History*