

# Historical Society ready to show off museum renovations

Laura Colvin, [lcolvin@hometownlife.com](mailto:lcolvin@hometownlife.com) 12:06 a.m. EDT June 3, 2015



(Photo: Hal Gould | Staff Photographer)

Several months of hard work will pay off as a messy renovation project turns into a fresh new look for the Milford Historical Society Museum.

The museum, located at 124 East Commerce Street in downtown Milford, will open for the season 1-4 p.m. this Sunday with entertainment and refreshments for visitors.

The building was last updated some 30 years ago. When Elaine Hunter stepped in recently to serve as the museum's new director, she, along with the Milford Historical Society's board of directors, decided it was time.

"We had people who wanted to change everything and some who wanted to change nothing," Hunter said, adding that she hopes a look into Milford's history – via the museum – will attract new and younger – members to the Historical Society.

"A lot of people don't even know we're here," Hunter said. "The museum is a real gem for the village; the focus is on Milford history, and most of the things we have were donated by local families. That's what makes it special."

The first thing visitors will notice is the addition of a teller's window and brass post boxes from Milford's former post office.

All the parts, Hunter said, have been collecting dust in the basement of the museum since the new post office was built on Atlantic Street.

Recently, the Milford chapter of the Maria Moore Questers, undertook the project, raised money for the restoration and received a matching grant from the state Questers chapter. Restoration and installation was provided by Timbers & Pillars of Brighton.

## **Updates**

During the museum's wintertime restoration project, Historical Society members also stripped and replaced dark wallpaper, added a bright coat of paint and improved lighting to make the space more welcoming.

Volunteers also removed the drop ceiling to reveal the original rough-hewn beams and will replace worn carpet in the foyer.

When finished, the downstairs will feature several collections of local interest in its main display case. The upstairs, furnished like a home from the late Victorian era, will continue to offer visitors a glimpse into Milford's past.

According to the Milford Historical Society, the formal parlor and dining room in the upstairs depict the more gracious aspects of life, while the kitchen, with its period gadgets, and bedroom, with its rope bed and straw tick, remind visitors of the more primitive conditions of the era. A toy room delights children of all ages, and many items on display throughout the museum were manufactured in Milford.

## **Historic home**

The Greek revival structure which houses the Milford Historical Society Museum was built by local cabinet maker John Wood in 1853. **Over the years it served as home to Edwin Hubbell, a local merchant, and later his son, Frank "Trader" Hubbell, a very prominent Milford citizen, according to the Historical society – who lived in the house from 1905-1909. [Frank: ME# 5396]**

The house served as the home and office of Dr. Weisbrod from 1909-1954. In 1959 it was converted so the upstairs could be used as an office for Milford Village and Milford Township, while the police department occupied the downstairs and kept prisoners in a backroom jail.

The home, which is still owned by the Village of Milford, was restored by the historical society and turned into a museum in 1975.

"Milford is a nice quaint town," Hunter said. "If people want it to stay that way, I think they need to know something about its history."

## **Hours and events**

The museum will be open an additional day this year, welcoming visitors on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 1-4 p.m. Additional hours and private tours are available by appointment.

Knowledgeable docents volunteer at the museum to take visitors on a guided tour through Milford history.

Admission is free, but donations help fund the museum's operation and are encouraged.

Beginning the end of June, the museum will also offer a monthly Children's Saturday, where kids can come to learn a bit about local history and life before smart phones and video games, Hunter said.

For more information, call the Milford Historical Society Museum at 248-685-7308 or visit [milfordhistory.org](http://milfordhistory.org).