

In this issue:

President's Message:

"How Committed Are We to Historic Preservation?"

Meet our Membership Director, Janet Potton

Brown Bag and Evening Programs

Read All About It! "Remembering Rochester" Three-Book Bundle

Get Ready for Greater Rochester Heritage Days!

Mark your Calendar for our Upcoming Events



YouTube



Find us on Facebook

This Month in Local History: The Millerites

By Tiffany Dziurman Stozicki

Local farmer was disgraced over end of days prediction in 1800s

In the 1840s, Uriah Adams of Avon Township (now Rochester Hills) became a follower of the Millerites, a fanatical religious group founded by New York farmer William Miller. In his study and interpretation of the Bible, particularly the Book of Daniel, Miller developed a chronology of the world from its birth to its end with the Second Coming of Christ, an event Miller said he could predict to the day and year.



Photo credit:
Tiffany Dziurman Stozicki

Once a civic leader in Avon Township, Adams was so extreme in his religious beliefs that he became a pariah in town. By the 1860s, he sat accused of heinous acts, was sentenced to a year hard labor and eventually died a disgrace to the community.

Rise to cult leader

Uriah Adams was born in East Bloomfield, New York, in 1807. He was one of seven children in a farming family that made its way to the Michigan Territory in 1826. As a young man, Adams was an active participant in local government. He served Avon Township as commissioner of schools, justice

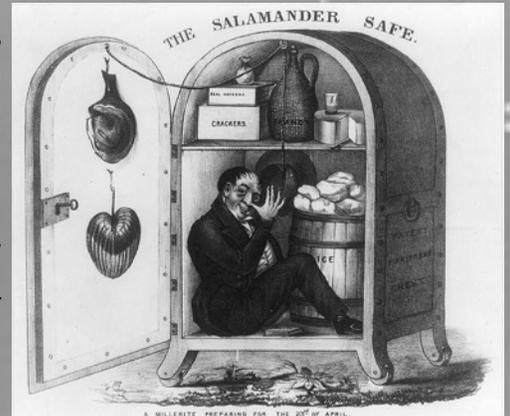


William Miller
Image: Wikimedia

of the peace, inspector of schools and overseer of highways. In his thirties, Adams became swept up in the Millerite movement and its beliefs about the end of the world.

In an online article titled, "Prophetic Belief in the United States: William Miller and the Second Great Awakening," for PBS's Frontline program, L. Michael White notes that a variety of religious sects popped up in the Eastern United States during the two decades following the Revolutionary War. This intense period in American history generated "a number of new developments, especially on the religious front."

By the 1830s, Miller began sharing his message and interpretation of the Bible with the public. While not considered much of a preacher, Miller still managed, with help from assistant preachers, to attract an audience—so much so that by the early 1840s, "approximately 1 million people had attended camp meetings and heard (his) message."¹

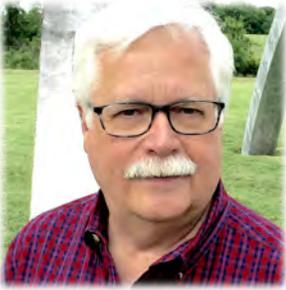


Courtesy of the Library of Congress

¹ Miller biography posted on Ohiohistorycentral.org.

President's Message

How committed are we to historic preservation?



**Brian Dunphy, President
Rochester-Avon
Historical Society**

One of the great things about living in Rochester and Rochester Hills is the rich character of the many historic buildings around us. Sadly, though, some have been lost to development over the years, and more are at risk.

Even today, the city of Rochester faces challenges in creating historic districts downtown. While city council passed a historic preservation ordinance in November 2014, it requires that property owners voluntarily opt in to historic districts. The city's Historic Districts Study Committee and an outside consultant conducted an exhaustive survey of potential historic properties, eventually narrowing the list of potential properties to 54.

The committee presented an update to city council last August, noting that 19 properties had been evaluated by the Michigan State Preservation Office and are eligible to be designated historic districts. So far, only five property owners have opted their properties in to historic districts – just a handful of the city's historic resources.

Things are no better in Rochester Hills. In 2010, a 1900-era house on Rochester Road was demolished after city council voted to delist the property from the historic districts list. Located north of Bordine's, the house occupied property intended for a development project. Over several years, the developer had allowed the house to deteriorate, and in 2007 the city's Historic Districts Commission made a finding of "demolition by neglect" against the developer.



**Photo courtesy of
Swords Family Archive, ca. 1957**

<http://oaklandregionalthistoricsites.org/property/1523300001>

Although the developer claimed to have secured the house at that point, it had already sustained significant damage. A few years later, the developer requested approval from the Historic Districts Study Committee to demolish the building and was turned down. A subsequent request for same from city council resulted in a 4-3 vote in favor of demolition. Nearly seven years later, no construction has taken place on that site.

Could we lose another historic property in Rochester Hills the same way? Absolutely. Many properties suitable for development include designated historic districts. The historic stone house on Adams, north of South Boulevard, <http://oaklandregionalthistoricsites.org/property/1531301011>, was part of another stalled development project, and its future remains uncertain. It appears to be secured for now.



**Photo credit:
Kayce Gifford, Dec., 2011**



Photo credit: John Crissman, 2011

<http://oaklandregionalthistoricsites.org/property/1520428003>

And then there's the farmhouse on Crooks, between Hamlin and Avon. Another designated historic property with an uncertain future, it too, sadly, appears to be deteriorating.

In the meantime, many other historic properties are at risk in Rochester. While a few more may eventually be added as historic districts, progress is slow.

How many of these historic buildings—and how much of our heritage—will we lose in the years to come?

Meet Our Membership Director Janet Potton

By Carol Tough



Janet Potton

While many of our members were born in the Rochester area, Janet Potton was born in Bedfordshire, England, and lived there until she was nine years old. Bedfordshire holds a special place in her heart and is a very historic area with many quaint villages, lanes, mills and manor houses. She remembers having lunch outside the local pubs in the beautiful gardens—she was too young to be allowed to eat inside. She loved all the churches and the relaxed atmosphere of the towns.

But Rochester, Michigan, entered her life when her father was offered a job at Detroit Broach. Janet and her parents left their home and crossed the Atlantic. She remembers feeling everything was so BIG here, starting with the Cadillac convertible that picked them up at the airport. She remarked, “The car seemed as big as a house.”

Janet attended North Hill Elementary but felt very different than the other students her age. It took a while for her to settle in. She joined the Brownies and the Safety Squad. She then attended Central Junior High (now the Rochester Schools Administration Building) and graduated from Rochester High School.

Immediately after graduation, Janet knew she wanted to return to England and catch up with the family that had been left behind. Shortly afterward, her parents also decided to return to England. Staying with her grandmother, Janet first worked as a transcriptionist at a police station and then moved to London for a job with a company working on prototype airplanes. Finally, she returned to her hometown and worked as a parts progress chaser at a manufacturing company.

After a year or two of operating his own business, Janet’s father was again offered a job to return to Detroit Broach. English life had not been what her parents had remembered, and they had become too Americanized to settle fully, so they seized the opportunity to return to the Rochester area once again. Janet, although very happy in her life in England, agreed to return to Michigan for a while to test which side of the ocean was really right for her. There were pros and cons to both lifestyles.

After a couple of years she met George Comps, and her feet were then firmly planted in Michigan. They were together for 38 years before he passed away in 2010.

She worked for three general practitioners and then an allergy practice, bought a house in Rochester and in 1980 became a U.S. citizen.

In 1999, Janet and George volunteered to help with Antique Appraisal Day. It was required that you be a member to work an event, so they joined the historical society and, in their first year, they won the “Gail Kemler Award” for outstanding first-year members. Since then, she has been very active in RAHS, served on many different committees, participated in special events and held positions as recording secretary, member at large, corresponding secretary, 3rd vice president and is currently director of membership.

She also is a member of the Friends of the Library, Historical Society of Michigan, Rochester Hills Museum, Rochester North Oakland Elks #2225, Oakland Township Historical Society, and CORE representative for RAHS.

In her spare time, she loves creating hand-made greeting cards, reading, knitting and traveling. Every year she vacations at the Sand Hills Lighthouse Inn on the shores of Lake Superior. It’s a retreat she enjoys, where there are no TV’s and a much slower pace—maybe like Bedfordshire?

Janet, we are so happy that you moved to Rochester. England’s loss has been our gain!

March Brown Bag and Library Programs

Library Lecture

Thursday, March 2, 7:00 p.m.

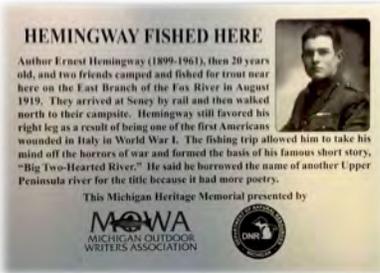
Rochester Hills Public Library
500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC**

“Hemingway’s Homecoming, 1919”

Speaker, John F. Cohassey

Ernest Hemingway was raised in a suburb of Chicago, but his family spent a great deal of time in northern Michigan where they had a cabin. The young Ernest learned to hunt, fish and appreciate the outdoors. His love of adventure followed him all his colorful life.



Hemingway became a novelist, short story writer, and journalist. His understated style had a strong influence on 20th century fiction. Publication of *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* immediately established him as one of the greatest literary lights. As a journalist, he covered the Spanish Civil War, portraying it in his brilliant novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. His classic novella, *The Old Man and the Sea*, won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954.

Brown Bag Meeting

Tuesday, March 7, Noon

Rochester Community House
816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

Bring your lunch! Free coffee, tea and cookies provided.

Bob Milne Ragtime Pianist

A graduate of Rochester High School, and a member of the school band, Bob Milne is considered by many to be the best ragtime/boogie-woogie pianist in the world.

Known as a “ragtimester” (a term he coined), Bob has played for functions attended by numerous statesmen, senators and congressmen, with command performances for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D.C.



(Bob Milne promotional photo)

President Bush, Sr., has invited Bob to perform for his family and circle of friends.

The Library of Congress designated Bob a “National Treasure” when they documented his expertise for future generations, and the U.S. State Department has utilized him as a “musical ambassador” overseas.

2017 Greater Rochester Heritage Days

Liz Golding, Publicity

Greater Rochester Heritage Days will be held a week earlier this year—Saturday, May 20, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 21, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All activities will be family friendly, and the food will be abundant—including a modestly priced pancake breakfast served at the Community House both days.

Highlights of this annual event include the Heritage Rod and Custom Car Show on Saturday, and the Annual Festival of Cars on Sunday; Children’s Pioneer Playground; Civil War reenactors from the Michigan 10th Volunteer Infantry; Jaycee’s climbing wall; camel rides and a petting zoo. The Heritage area will offer demonstrations of spinning, weaving, quilting, caning and other crafts of long ago. The Oakland Township Historical Society, once again, will be selling their beautiful plants. An exciting activity will return after a long absence: the “Floatable Boatables” contest, a very popular activity that added much fun to the festival, will be held on Saturday.

Attention, men! A beard and mustache-growing contest has been added this year. Judging will be held both Saturday and Sunday based on the most original “growths.” Take a break from the blade, and get creative!

The wearing of costumes is encouraged to enhance the historical feel throughout the park. There will be music to entertain and food to tempt attendees.

For more information, contact sue@dinosaurhill.org

April Brown Bag and Library Programs

Brown Bag Meeting
Tuesday, April 4, Noon
Rochester Community House
816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

Bring your lunch! Free coffee,
tea and cookies provided.

“Rochester Garden Club”



The officers of the Rochester Garden Club, a branch of the Woman’s National Farm and Garden Association, will discuss the history, current projects, and future plans of the organization. The Rochester Garden Club is a non-profit service organization whose purpose is to stimulate interest in environmental stewardship, horticulture and agriculture through education and programs to contribute to the beauty of our community. Established in 1935, the club counts among its past members Matilda Dodge Wilson and the Van Hoosens.

This garden club conducts an annual Greens Market in December to fund projects, and a garden tour in conjunction with the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm in June. They also plant flowers each year around the War Memorial in Rochester City Park.

Presenters will be President Marilee Shortreed, Vice-President Cathy Ford, Ways and Means Chair Ethel Stepnitz, and past president and current Van Hoosen Farm Committee Chair Pat Hambleton. Shortreed and Hambleton are master gardeners; Stepnitz serves on the Rochester City Beautiful Commission.

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society (RAHS)
was founded in 1969
to help preserve, collect and interpret
the history of the greater Rochester area
for present and future generations.

For more information,
including a list of upcoming events,
visit online at:

www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org

Library Lecture
Thursday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.
Rochester Hills Public Library
1500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC**

“The Michigan Homefront: Stories from World War I”



Photo courtesy of
Dennis Skupinski

The American entry into World War I came in 1917, after two and a half years of efforts by President Woodrow Wilson to keep the United States neutral. Although American public opinion went along with neutrality at first, citizens came to see the German Empire as the villain after news of atrocities in Belgium in 1914 and the sinking of the passenger liner, RMS Lusitania, in May 1915. Wilson allowed banks to make large-scale loans to Britain and France and enlarged the U.S. Navy, but he kept the U.S. Army on its small peacetime basis. When German U-boats started sinking American ships in the North Atlantic, Wilson asked Congress for “a war to end all wars” that would “make the world safe for democracy.” Congress voted to declare war on Germany on April 6, 1917, and on Austria-Hungary on Dec. 7, 1917.

Dennis Skupinski will give an overview of the important people, events and organizations during World War I and the Michigan connection. He is involved with Michigan’s WWI Centennial, the WWI Historical Society, the Association of Military Uniform Collectors and the Yankee Air Museum. He also manages the nonprofit digital advertising grants for these organizations and the WWI Inventory Project, and the National WWI Museum at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. He has published articles in the Michigan History Magazine and has been involved in videos on WWI.

With a B.S. from Michigan State University, Skupinski worked in sales/marketing for over 30 years. He is a military uniform collector with focus on Western Front junior offices and ordinary ranks. He manages a private military museum and library with over 60 mannequins on display, more than 100 WWI unit histories, newspaper accounts and battlefield maps.

Read All About it! "Remembering Rochester" Three-Book Bundle

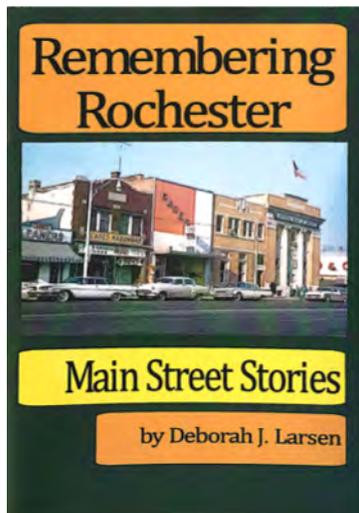
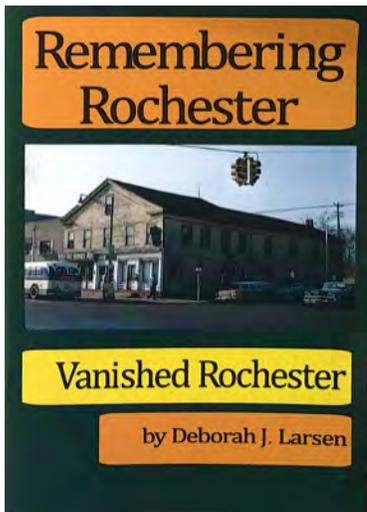
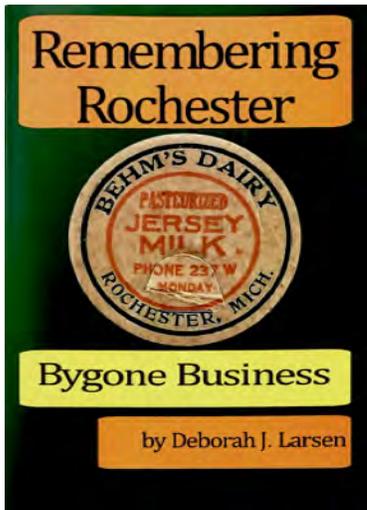
Why not relive Rochester's rich history to the fullest with this three-book "Remembering Rochester" bundle, full of entertaining and enlightening tales?

Author Debbie Larsen's compilations offer short, yet comprehensive overviews of our town, its entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as its losses.

Learn more about locations, structures and events of particular interest, or simply enjoy memories sparked by the stories presented.

Priced at only \$15, this bundle contains the titles shown here.

Proceeds from the sale of these and all merchandise items offered by RAHS fund our ongoing preservation and educational efforts throughout the year.



Available online and at RAHS events.

For online purchase, visit:
<http://rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org/our-store>

Don't Miss these Upcoming Events

Be sure to mark your calendar now!

MARCH						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Evening Program
@ Library
Thursday, March 2
7:00 p.m.

Antique Appraisal Day
Sunday, March 5
Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, March 7
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Kroger Rewards Enrollment
Saturday, April 1

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, April 4
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Evening Program
@ Library
Thursday, April 6
7:00 p.m.

APRIL						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

MAY						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, May 2
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Evening Program
@ Library
Thursday, May 4
7:00 p.m.

Greater Rochester Heritage Days
Saturday, May 20 - 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 21 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Contact Information for

RAHS Board of Directors and Committees

Board of Directors

Brian Dunphy, President	248-376-3460
Carol Tough, 1st Vice President, Operations	248-375-0084
<i>*Position Open, 2nd Vice President, Finance</i>	
Tom Bledsoe, 3rd Vice President, Development	586-822-2148
Holly Bledsoe, Corresponding Secretary	248-923-2602
June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary	248-652-9242
Cary Downer, Treasurer	586-201-2285
Tiffany Stozicki, Director, Communications	248-650-0415
Leslie Mack, Director, Editor, Era Newsletter	586-924-4961
Janet Potton, Director, Membership	248-652-7296
Mary Howarth, Director, Merchandising	248-375-0206
Margaret Bartos, Director, Programs	248-759-4768
Barb Bates, Director, Special Projects	248-495-6258
Bree Boettner, Director, Historical Preservation	248-515-0881
<i>*Position Open, Director, Fundraising Events</i>	

Committee Chairpersons

Gail Kemler, Honorary Historian	248-651-0907
Deborah Larsen, Research	248-375-2974
Samantha Lawrence, Oral History	586-255-1883
<i>*Position Open, Walking Tours</i>	
Gary Jaracz, Media	313-407-9326

Volunteer Areas of Interest

How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Special Project Volunteer
- Website/Social Media

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New | \$15 <input type="checkbox"/> Student |
| | \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual |
| | \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing |
| | \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Business |
| | \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> Patron |

Join the Rochester-Avon Historical Society Today! Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Volunteer Areas of Interest

How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Special Project Volunteer
- Website/Social Media



Mail completed form with check payable to:

Rochester-Avon Historical Society

P.O. Box 80783

Rochester, MI 48308-0783

Questions? Call us at 248-266-5440

This Month in Local History: The Millerites

By Tiffany Dziurman Stozicki

(Continued from front page)

The Millerites determine the end of days

In his reading of the Book of Daniel, Miller ascertained that Christ would return in March 1843, when believers would experience the moment of Rapture and ascend into heaven. According to White, Miller used a “very elaborate and somewhat circuitous system,” to come up with the year 1843.

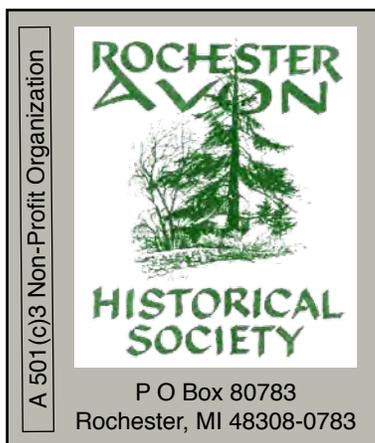
For the most part, Millerites were ordinary Americans, writes White. Several were already involved with other causes such as temperance, abolition and women’s rights.

“People were drawn to Miller,” notes White, “out of a larger cultural climate of the moment.”

Already deep into his fanaticism, Adams remained a devoted follower of the Millerite movement. He eventually settled on a farm located on what is now the southwest corner of Walton and Livernois (home to Rochester High School). As Adams awaited the end of days, the farm was neglected and the crops overgrown.

A new day and a great disappointment

March 1843 came and went and life continued as usual. Disappointed, Miller recalculated his figures and released a new date for Christ’s Second Coming – October 22, 1844.



“Pride in Preserving the Past”