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# CASTLE COURIER

APRIL 2011

Newsletter of the Historical Society of Saginaw County  
500 Federal Avenue  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
(989) 752-2861

[www.castlemuseum.org](http://www.castlemuseum.org)



## The Artifact

(continued from Page 2)

The museum's casing is from one of these early tests.

"Although several GM units are engaged also in machine gun manufacture...the Saginaw plant received the first order and can be considered a 'pioneer in the field,'" said Steering Gear General Manager Alva W. Phelps in the article.

Donated by Gerald and Arloa Shreve, the casing belonged to Arloa's father, Edwin Poellet, who worked for General Motors in the early 1940s.

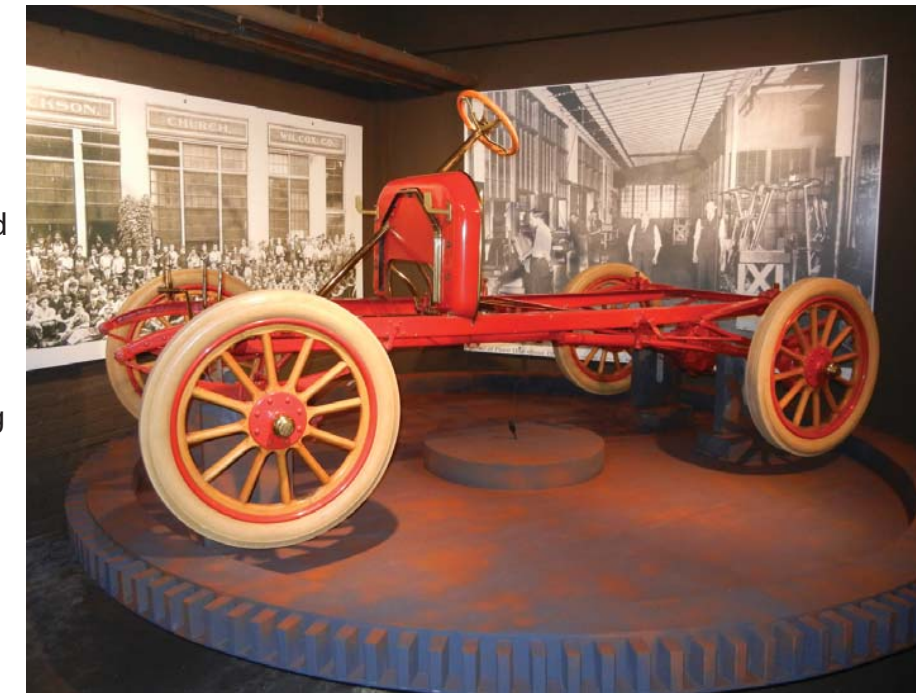
The casing and a machine gun made at the Saginaw plant are included in *Geared for Production: The Story of Automobile Manufacturing in Saginaw*.

## Auto Exhibit Now Open

The Castle Museum's newest exhibit opened Friday, April 1. *Geared for Production: The Story of Automotive Manufacturing in Saginaw* is one of the most ambitious in-house exhibits the Museum has ever created.

Compelling, dramatic and filled with stirring images and artifacts from one of the most important aspects of Saginaw County's story, this exhibit is one you will not want to miss.

The Museum will feature guest speakers related to this exhibit at upcoming Lunch and Learns, which are held every Tuesday at Noon. Visit our website for more information.



## APRIL CALENDAR

**Tuesday, April 5:** Lunch and Learn: *The Making of Geared for Production*. Deputy Director Tom Trombley and Exhibits Coordinator Geoff Pelkey will discuss the creative process in designing the Castle Museum's newest exhibit on the history of automotive manufacturing. Some time will be spent on an exhibit tour. Free with Museum admission. Dessert and beverage provided. **Noon.**

**Thursday, April 7:** Michigan Archaeological Society – Saginaw Valley Chapter. Morley Room. **7:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, April 9:** **TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME PARTY!** Come celebrate baseball and our newest exhibit, *Peanuts at Bat* with a family-friendly event. Please see Page Two for more details. Free with Museum admission, however reservations are required to ensure the Museum has enough supplies. Please call Ruth Mancina at 752-2861, Ext. 315. **1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday, April 12:** Lunch and Learn: *Learn How to Make Kraslice*. Museum Curator Sandy Schwan will teach guests how to embellish Easter eggs in the Czech style of egg decorating called Kraslice. PLEASE ALLOW A MINIMUM OF TWO HOURS FOR THIS EVENT AND WEAR CLOTHING APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH EGG DYES. Free with Museum admission, however reservations are required. Please call Ruth Mancina at 752-2861, Ext. 315 for reservations. Dessert and beverage provided. **Noon.**

**Tuesday, April 19:** Lunch and Learn: *Pages of History Book Club*. The group will discuss "Public Gardens of Michigan" by Miriam Easton Rutz. This event is co-sponsored by the Public Libraries of Saginaw. Free with Museum admission. Dessert and beverage provided. **Noon.**

**Tuesday, April 26:** Lunch and Learn: *The Story of Frankenmuth's Bavarian Inn Restaurant*. Amy Zehnder Grossi will talk about her family business. Also available for sale will be the new cookbook by Dorothy Zehnder called *Come Cook with Me*. Free with Museum admission. Dessert and beverage provided. **Noon.**



## New Look, New Items at the Castle Store

We all know it's a good idea to give our homes a good cleaning in the spring. Well, here at the Castle Museum, we do the same thing with our Museum Store.

It's time to unveil some new products we have purchased just in time for Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduation and weddings. We have fabulous gifts that are unique with many items that will fit any budget.

We are pleased to announce that we also will carry Saginaw-themed merchandise, including jewelry, teddy bears, magnets, coasters and other items. Everyone who stops by the store in April can enter their name into a drawing for one of our adorable Saginaw bears. These make great gifts and help spread pride in our community.

### Museum Hours

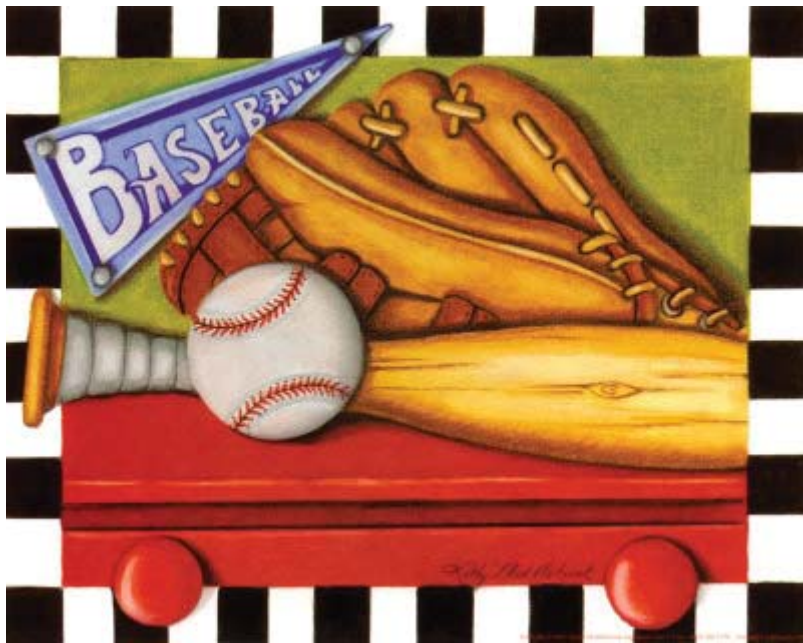
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### General Admission

Adults \$1.00  
Children .50¢  
Members FREE

The Historical Society of Saginaw County is committed to serve the community by telling the continuing story of the people of the Saginaw region through exploration, preservation and presentation of their historical and cultural heritage.

# Take Me Out To The Ball Game Party



**Saturday, April 9th  
1 p.m. - 3 p.m.  
Castle Museum**

Learn how to draw Charlie Brown or Snoopy, make a pennant of your favorite team, and decorate a frame to display your cartoon.

While you're here, please visit our new exhibit, *Peanuts at Bat*.

**FREE!** Reservations are required to ensure we have enough supplies.

Call Ruth Mancina at 752-2861, Ext. 315 by April 7th.

## Memorials

A Memorial Gift has been made by Margaret Clark in memory of **Freeman W. Coats**

## MEMORABILIA WANTED



Do you have any historical items from the Harry Browne Airport? The Saginaw Valley Air Museum would love to hear from you! Please call Dan Kenny at 770-4819.

## The Artifact

In the picture at right is an empty shell casing used in a machine gun. The tinned exterior and the lettering on its base indicate that it is from a test cartridge. Engraved on its side is "Shell from first machine-gun made in Saginaw 3-25-41" – it is this inscription that connects it with a milestone achievement Saginaw's history.

Saginaw Steering Gear had been working on a revolutionary system of mass-producing machine guns for the Detroit Ordnance District. Until this time, machine guns had been individually hand-crafted. Experts were skeptical and did not believe that machine guns could be assembled on an assembly line. Through innovation, stamina and skill, the people in Saginaw proved the skeptics wrong. They were able to deliver a completed gun more than seven months ahead of schedule.

The Saginaw News announced on March 24, 1941, that "Completion was Near" and that Governor Van Wagoner would join representatives from the Army ordnance department, city officials, and managers from General Motors for a ceremonial test-firing of the first completed unit. The paper noted that the gun had already been test fired.



The Artifact (continued on the Back Page)

## Museum Reaching Out to Schools with *History on the Move* and Virtual Field Trips

The Castle Museum has received a \$5,000 grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation for *History on the Move*, a mobile museum and classroom that is available at no cost to all schools in Saginaw County.

The interactive program allows children in grades 2-5 to learn about the field of archaeology and how an archaeologist works. Any school - public, private, parochial, or charter - may contact the Castle Museum and arrange for *History on the Move* to visit.

Since *History on the Move* was unveiled in Spring 2010, more than 2,100 children have visited the truck.

A big "thank you" to the following organizations for their support of this innovative, hands-on program: *Citizens Bank, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Saginaw Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Dow Corning Donor Advised Fund, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Hausbeck Pickles & Peppers, Stevens Worldwide Van Lines and Team One Credit Union.*

While *History on the Move* has been out and about in the community, the Museum has found another way to reach out to area school children.

The Museum has begun offering virtual field trips which allow students to learn about our community's history without ever having to leave the classroom.

Using the Internet and special equipment the Museum purchased last fall, Chief Curator Sandy Schwan has taught children at Freeland Elementary School about the lumbering era and will speak to children in St. Charles about the same subject later this month.

"We understand that not every school can visit the Museum, but we do want to play a role in their education about local history," Museum President Ken Santa said. "This equipment allows us to reach out to schools in a different way. It's rewarding to be able to offer educators these opportunities."

## castle connections

Sheila Hempsted



Sheila Hempsted always knew she loved art, but it wasn't until a college professor encouraged her to pursue it as a career, that Sheila found her niche.

After studying at Delta College and spending hours in the ceramics studio, Sheila went on to Michigan State University

to earn a degree in art history. Her dream was to work in a museum, work with art all day long and be able to get paid for it.

She did just that when she found a job at the Saginaw Art Museum.

She left the Museum to be a stay-at-home mom, and as the kids got older she began working as a substitute teacher.

Sheila joined the Castle Museum staff in March as the Education Coordinator and is thrilled to be back working in a museum and with kids.

"I love working with kids and I love history," says Sheila, who has been a Girl Scout leader for 15 years. I enjoy educating people about all the things going on here and it's a very hands-on type of job."

Sheila's primary focus will be on getting our mobile museum, *History on the Move*, out to area schools. She also will coordinate school tours at the Museum.

In her spare time, Sheila enjoys coaching volleyball and is an Advanced Master Gardener.

She has helped design gardens for several non-profit organizations in the community - something she says she loves to do.

If you get a chance, stop by and say hi to Sheila. We are thrilled to have someone with her skills join our team.

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