



THE PENTWATER CEMETERY: LOOKING BACK ON A SPECIAL PLACE

If you think that reading a history of a cemetery, a place of usual quiet representing the final resting place for many Pentwater citizens is dull, then you should read deeper into the following two histories.

These were documented by research from Nancy Grant and Roger Bailey and contain some very interesting elements of history. Read on.

What place in Pentwater could be the site of both a school and a cemetery? You guessed it. Block 36, located on Rutledge St between 1st and 2nd streets, was the first site of the cemetery and later would be cleared of

graves to become the location of the Pentwater School.

Do you think the school kids might have been a bit spooked by this information? It took a piece of legislation from the State of Michigan to accomplish this task of clearing Block 36. And there's more interesting cemetery trivia.

What do you think was the most common shape of a coffin? And why did three Pentwater undertakers also own and operate furniture stores? And finally, do all cemeteries have an area called "Potter's Field"?

Maybe some of our readers know. Enjoy these two histories of the Pentwater Cemetery and find the answers to some of the questions posed above.

THE PENTWATER CEMETERY: TAKING ANOTHER LOOK

In 1870, forty acres north of the Village went up for sale by the Flint and Pere Marquette railroad. The Pentwater Board of Health, searching for suitable property for the cemetery secured the property and used 5 acres to receive the remains from the former cemetery site on Block 36 in the Village.

In November of that year, the new cemetery was opened. Lots sold for \$3.00 each, but a fractional lot was available for \$2.00. The exception to this was Block 7 called "Potters Field." The surveyor for the project was Mr. M. J. Cross. The sexton, Orin Hills, was to immediately begin removing bodies in exposal condition from Block 36 to Potters Field.

There are no records available identifying the first person buried in the new cemetery. In September 1876, Charles R. Whittington became the 2nd Sexton of the cemetery and was paid a wage of \$25.00 a year. He was also Pentwater's first undertaker and served in that capacity from 1871 to 1897. He owned a furniture store and had ready-made coffins on hand. Previously, local carpenters provided this service. Rectangular coffins were less expensive than those

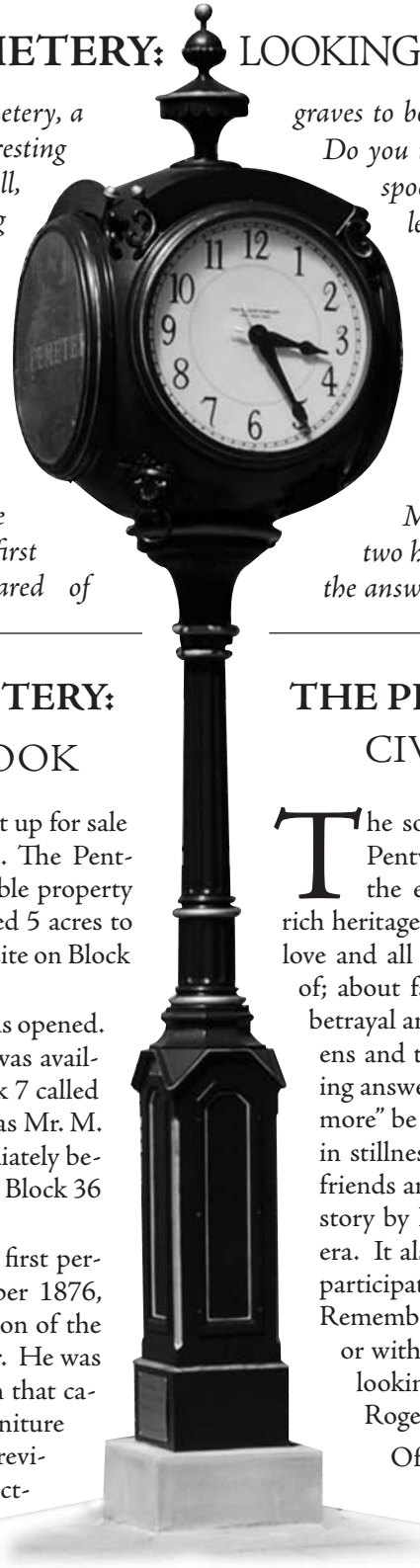
Continued on next page.

THE PENTWATER CEMETERY: CIVIL WAR VETERANS

The solitude of the rolling hills that make up the Pentwater Township Cemetery only hint of the existence of the countless stories about the rich heritage of our community; about lessons of life and love and all of the emotions that our species is capable of; about faith in God and faithfulness to man, about betrayal and constancy, about our reaching to the heavens and to the frontiers of human imagination, seeking answers to the question "Why." Some will "forever more" be the exclusive domain of those who lay there in stillness, some are known only to family and close friends and some are part of local lore. The following story by Roger Bailey invokes images of the civil war era. It also could be a great launching board for your participation in the fall issue, "Ancestors and Indians." Remember, it's not too early to start. Your stories, with or without pictures are part of our heritage. We are looking forward to your participation. And now, Roger relates:

Of the approximately 65 Civil War veterans buried in the Pentwater Township Cemetery, I would like to write a little about

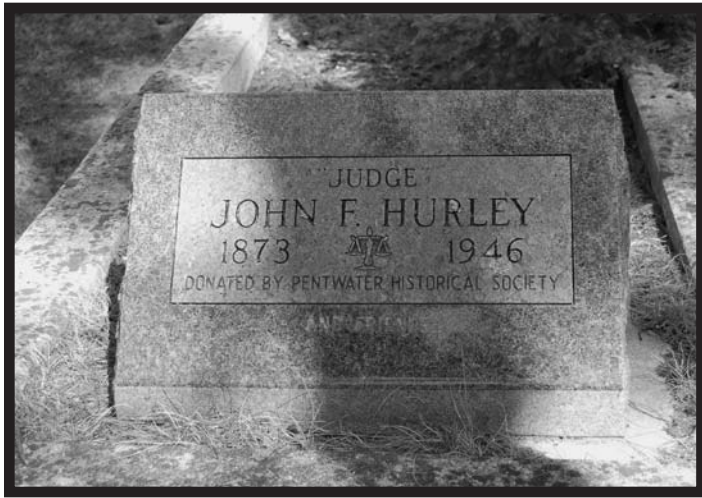
Continued on next page.



Taking Another Look Continued.

that tapered toward the feet. He died in 1905 and was buried on Block 5, Lot 31 in the new cemetery.

In October of 1876, John H. Flagg, brother of Henry C. Flagg of Pentwater, was named as the 2nd surveyor and charged with enlarging the existing boundaries of the new cemetery to be platted and measured. He was also elected Health Officer for one year. A Mr. E.H. Hutson from the State Legislature was sent to Pentwater to oversee the removal of bodies from Block 36 of the village, after a law was passed allowing this removal. In September



The Gravesite of Judge Hurley

of 1879, the Pentwater Board of Health notified the public that all bodies buried on Block 36 were to be removed by November of that year. In December of '79, the remaining unclaimed bodies were removed.

The oldest monument was that of Mrs. Wealthy Weatherbee Tower (born 1777, died December 13, 1863). It was removed to the new cemetery grounds and placed in Block 2, Lot 25. In May of 1880, Mr. John H. Flagg platted and measured for another cemetery addition. Mr. Orin Hill was given the job of clearing the old cemetery grounds on Block 36 of the Village. Mr. C.C. Ambler was the new resident agent for monuments and gravestones. In 1881, work began to clear Block 36 of the Village in preparation for moving the schoolhouse to its new site.

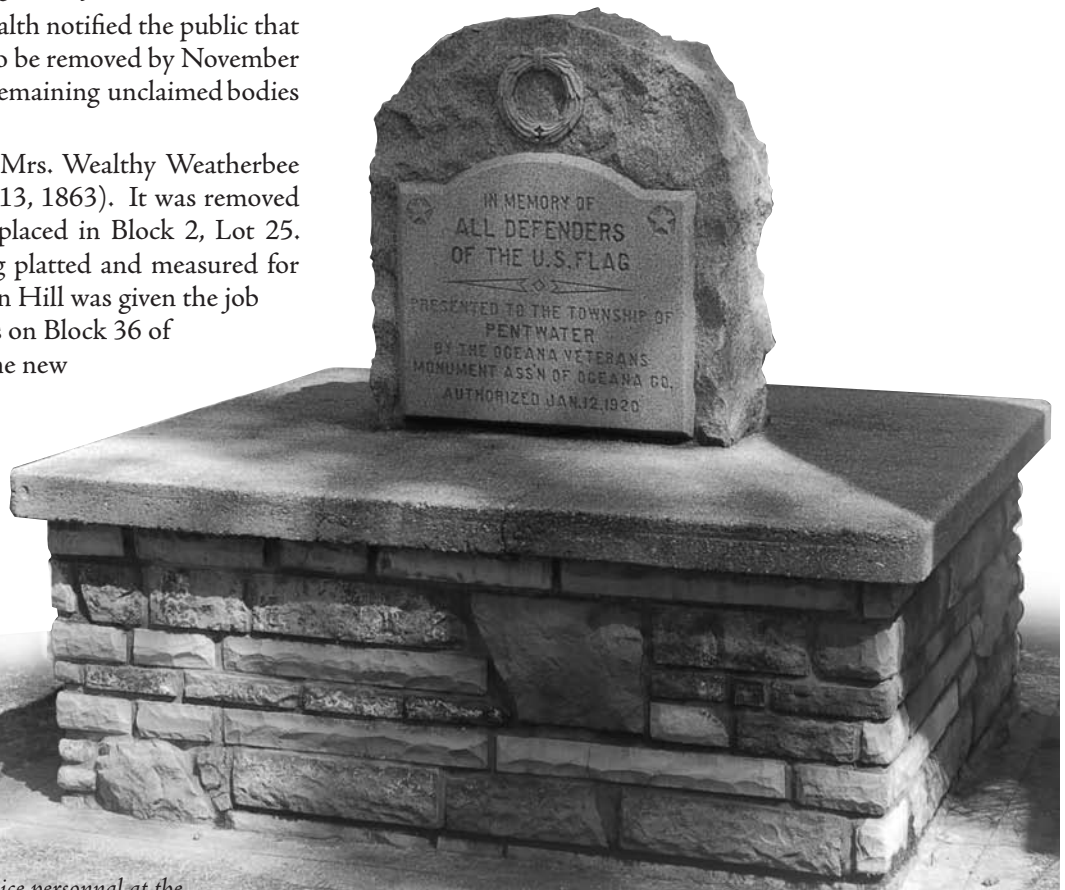
Continued on Page 6.

Civil War Veterans Continued.

two of them; the first and the last Civil War veterans buried in Pentwater.

The first veteran, James G. Blowers, enlisted on August 12, 1862 in Co. A of the 26th Michigan Infantry for three years. On September 11, 1862 at age 29, he was mustered into service, but was discharged on May 16, 1863 for sickness. After returning home he was taken ill again, dying on July 10, 1863 and was probably buried in the original Pentwater Cemetery. Later his remains were moved to his present burial space in Block 3.

William Joseph Wilson, the last Civil War veteran interred here, died April 30, 1937 in Pentwater just three weeks before his 93rd birthday. Wilson was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He enlisted in Co. M of the 17th PA Calvary on March 4, 1864 and was discharged on July 24, 1865. Wilson moved to Pentwater in the early 1900's and became an honorary member of the V F W post in Hart. They were in charge of his burial service at the cemetery where veterans from many towns were in attendance as was the American Legion Band from Muskegon. His obituary in the Pentwater News contains many interesting things about his life. According to the paper he was born into a circus family and was an acrobat early in his life. It also linked him to Buffalo Bill's unit and to General Sheridan's scouts in the Shenandoah Valley as well as many other things too numerous to include in this article. Captain Billie, one of his several nicknames, is buried in the middle section of block 13.



A memorial to service personnel at the Pentwater Township Cemetery

Raking the Cemetery in the 1950's

From Our Readers

Just received the PHS newsletter ... in response to the request for information

I am offering the following.

"Raking the cemetery in the 1950's" A popular fund raising activity for some Pentwater High School classes was to rake the cemetery in the spring. The benefits

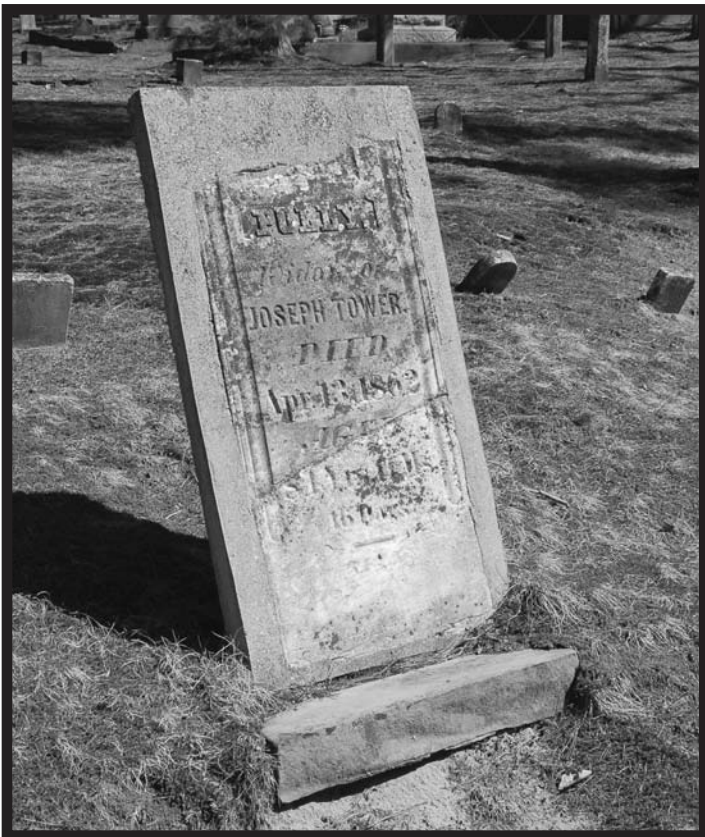
were a cleaner, tidier cemetery for Memorial Day events and the senior class received money for their work. In our case the PHS class of 1953 used the funds for their senior trip to Washington D.C.

Dolores Ardrey Samuel reports the PHS class of 1954 also pursued this activity.

Sincerely, Rhea Ardrey Murray.



Rhea poses with her rake at the Pentwater Cemetery



The 1862 Gravestone of Joseph Tower

We need your photographs.

You may be one of the many people who have older, historical photos of Pentwater that you would like to share. The Historical Society would like to take a look at them and possibly preserve them by scanning/copying and then returning them to you.

2008 EVENTS

Pentwater Historical Society

*Mark your calendar with these
always informative programs
and fun social gatherings.*

The Spring Dinner & Program

Featuring:

LEE MURDOCK

*with Songs, Stories
and Lighthouse Legends*

Wednesday, May 28,

General Membership Meeting & 25th Year Celebration

Wednesday, July 9

The Summer Dinner & Program

Wednesday, August 27

The Antique Fair

Saturday, Sept. 13 from 10 till Noon



History of Pentwater Township Cemetery

Pentwater Township Cemetery was founded in November, 1860 when Jacob Brillhart's young son died. He instructed John Bean Jr., Henry Flagg and Timothy Barber to select a block of land for a cemetery outside the Village limits at the time, with his promise to deed the land to the Village. His son, Willie, was the first burial at the cemetery, which now (2008) is the block where the auxiliary building of the First Baptist Church is located.

This location served as the Township Cemetery until 1870, when 40 acres of land north of the Village was purchased for \$5.00 per acre from the Flint and Pere Marquette Railroad for a new cemetery. In the fall of that year the southwest portion of the parcel was laid out for burials and use of the original cemetery was discontinued. By 1879, many of the remains had been moved by families to our present cemetery site. The Township then received permission from the State of Michigan to move the remaining bodies to the new site.

In December of 1879, E.H. Hutson was contracted to move the last unclaimed bodies to the new cemetery for a fee of \$194.00 upon completion. These remaining bodies were moved to the northwest corner of Block 2 in the cemetery. At some unknown time the eastern portion of the original 40 acre parcel that had been set aside for the Township Cemetery was sold. The present cemetery contains about 18 acres of land.

In early 1992, the development of blocks 16 and 17 was begun,

followed by the development of blocks 18 and 19. During the last 10 years, the columbarium for the interment of cremains was installed, the combination garage/maintenance building was erected, the cemetery entrance area clock was purchased, an irrigation system was installed for blocks 17, 18 and 19, and four privately owned lots between the entrance area lawn and blocks 3 and 7 were purchased.

The Township Board continues to strive to make our beautiful, peaceful cemetery a place that the community of Pentwater can be proud of, now and in the future, as well as to preserve its rich history.

DUES ARE DUE

Membership dues for the 2007-2008 year were due September 1, 2007. If you see "07" or an earlier year following your name on the mailing label, it is time to renew your membership. The dues amounts are shown on the Membership Application form on the last page of the newsletter.

Please send your check to:

Pentwater Historical Society
P.O. Box 54
Pentwater MI 49449

President's Message

I feel it is important to provide an update for you on the activities of the Board regarding the By-Laws. Article II gives the Board and members at large the charge ...

1. "To encourage and promote historical awareness and knowledge of the Village of Pentwater and Pentwater Township, Oceana County, Michigan by the members and public".

2. "To collect, maintain and preserve items of historical interest and significance of whatsoever type and nature."

3. "To endeavor to own or lease and to own or lease and operate a permanent meeting place and museum of the Pentwater Historical Society."

4. "To share information and knowledge of historical interest or importance with the Village of Pentwater, Pentwater Township, Pentwater Library Board, Pentwater Public Schools and Oceana County Historical Society and to interact with said bodies in connection with historical matters and issues."

Finding suitable museum space has been under consideration from time to time over the past twenty five years. Recent real estate activity in downtown Pentwater has prompted renewed interest. Consequently the Board established a Building Committee with the goal of finding new space at an affordable cost. Their task is threefold; establishing space requirements for the museum, determining a suitable location, and considering funding options.

The museum space at 327 S. Hancock can only be viewed as a "static" space. It is too small to display and store all of the

artifacts and there is little ability to rotate exhibits. It is poorly lit and ventilation and humidity control are inadequate. The museum display space needs to be doubled at a minimum. Currently the work areas for building rotating exhibits, recording artifacts or researching archives by volunteers and historians of all ages is inadequate. A more stable "environment" for artifact storage is needed whether it is "on site" or at a remote location.

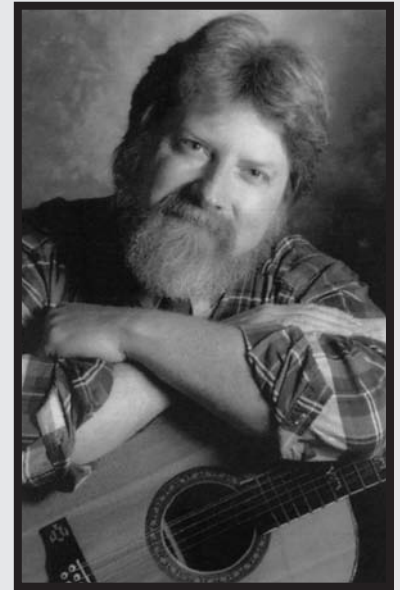
The number of visitors is directly linked to a proper location. Because Hancock is the main thoroughfare in the Village, it would be the number one choice for the museum location, but real estate is at a premium on Hancock Street. It has been suggested for years that the upstairs at the Village/Township Hall would be a good location and that is under consideration. It should be noted that the upper floor would require extensive upgrades and the addition of an elevator. However, it would not be on street level. Other choices for the museum location would be on a side street close

to Hancock, or one of several downtown buildings. A residential site in the Village could also be a possibility. A donated historical building would be advantageous for monetary reasons and as an "era" look for the museum. Other possibilities include purchasing or renting space in a privately owned building which would allow the Society to avoid the issues involved in owning real estate. A library and museum combination is a possibility as the library considers expanding. This partnership would be a natural fit by providing a single location where visitors could do research and see displays of time periods they have just explored.



Jim Ege, President,
PENTWATER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lee Murdock presents: "Lighthouse Legends"



Don't miss the return engagement of the Chicago-area musician Lee Murdock at our spring dinner on Wednesday, May 28, 2008.

The presentation, "Lighthouse Legends" is both entertaining and informative and has been well received. Like the great castles of Europe, there is an aura of mystery and romance surrounding a lighthouse. Lee's songs and stories share the heroics, the isolation and the breathtaking beauty of lighthouse lore and the US Life Saving Service (known today as the Coast Guard).

A fluent instrumentalist on six and twelve-string guitars, Lee's musical influences span three centuries, from 17th century Irish harp music to Scott Joplin ragtime to original songs. He specializes in songs from the Great Lakes, also known as the "Sweetwater" seas. In addition to performing at the dinner, Lee will also give a performance for the students at the Pentwater School.

Presidents Message Continued.

Funding to create another museum is an important area under consideration. A building or land donation would be a very important "step up" in the process. Complimenting that, a fund raising venue would be needed as well as investigation into all areas of state, federal and private grant money. Once a new museum location is established, a continuous revenue stream would be needed to maintain it. Revenue to work on projects and improve displays is very important in the process of planning for the future. Our revenue, at this time, comes primarily from membership dues and donations. Eventually the building committee may have to look at the dues structure, in order to expand and maintain the museum, as well as creating other revenue streams such as museum entry fees or operating a small gift shop.

The options of co-locating with the Chamber of Commerce or participating with a community wide group to create a "multiple function" building have been offered and will be considered as a part of the exploration process.

As you can see this is a large undertaking with many issues to investigate. By exploring a wide variety of ideas, we can craft the best deal possible for our members. We do not however intend to go it alone. As a board we are requesting that our members put some heavy soul searching into this issue. We are looking for you let us know where you, as members trying to preserve Pentwater history, want to go. I am proposing that we use part of our August Dinner/ membership meeting to discuss this important issue. While you are in town this summer, look at real estate, stroll Hancock Street, visit our museum if you haven't seen it in a while, talk to me or other board members and help us make some important decisions about how we can save and display the history of Pentwater for future generations.

You can contact the Historical Society by mail,
See address on back page,
Or by e-mail to:
Newsletter@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

Visit the website at: www.pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

DEATHS

Margret Frank Frank Noffke Jay Petter

MEMORIALS

FROM:

Virginia Williamson
Jeanne M. Rose

MEMORY OF:

Margaret Frank
Margaret Frank

Taking Another Look Continued from Page 2.

Mr. Peter N. Lagesen was the second city undertaker, serving from 1897 to 1920. He also took over the furniture business.

He held classes for the State Board of Health, introducing new literature and equipment to funeral home employees, many of whom were female embalmers. Mr. Lagesen died in 1920. His daughter married Mr. Elwin F. Kent who became the 3rd undertaker, also taking over the furniture business.

Mr. Kent offered the first ambulance service, which served the area for the approximate years of 1930 to 1970. With the formation of the Pentwater Cemetery Association in May of 1931, many improvements were designed and carried out over the years. (note Roger Bailey's article for details) This beautiful area is full of history and as it rolls out over the slopes and knolls of the cemetery acreage, contains many additional facts of interest, some held quietly, just waiting to be told.

You're Invited!
TO THE

**PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL SPRING DINNER**

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

Social Hour 6:00pm (BYOB)

Dinner 7:00pm

At The Pentwater VFW Hall

This event open to the public

*Come and enjoy this social
and cultural event!*

Featuring:

LEE MURDOCK

TICKETS: \$15 PER PERSON

Tickets must be purchased by noon on Saturday, May 24

Tickets are on Sale from:

Society Officers

The Pentwater Township Library

Durand's Wine Shop



Shadows fall across the hills of the Pentwater Township Cemetery

Bob's Corner

Time Travel, part two
by Bob Childers

The year is still 1870 as we continue our walk down Hancock Street. Between 4th and 5th Hancock is very crowded. We see the Northwestern Hotel, Mr. W. Walrath, proprietor. Moulton & Flagg dry goods store is across the street. Their lumber and shingle mill is next to the store. If we look down towards the lake we see the S.A. Brownes' Lumber and Shingle Mill at the foot of 4th Street. Back up on Hancock, Mr. James R. Mooney has his fine grocery store just near there. Ah yes, there's Sands, Harris & Maxwell's dry goods store. Charles Mears also has a dry goods store. Needless to say, our town has its share of dry goods stores. Enough for now, later I will continue our walk down Hancock Street. There is so much history in our town it will take years to report on everything. Sometime in the future I will do an article on all the "watering holes" in Pentwater. There were a few.

New Members:

<i>Dan Kelly</i>	<i>Nick & Linda Fekken</i>
<i>Roxanne Wypych</i>	<i>Harriet Fitzsimmons</i>
<i>David Erickson</i>	<i>Marjorie Peterson</i>

New Life Member Formerly Annual Member:

Richard & Martha Michel

New Patron Member Formerly Life Member:

Jim & Yvonne Reinsch

2007-2008 OFFICERS & TRUSTEES OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<i>Jim Ege - President</i>	<i>William O'Donnell - V. President</i>
<i>Ed Bigelow - Secretary</i>	<i>Kenneth Lindstrom - Treasurer</i>

TRUSTEES: Roger Bailey, Myrna Carlin and Bob Childers

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON: Karen Way

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

<i>Sharon O'Donnell</i>	<i>Jim Pikaart</i>	<i>Bruce Bates</i>
<i>Editor</i>	<i>Layout/Design</i>	<i>Photo Editor</i>

USE THIS FORM TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HOME ADDRESS _____

SUMMER ADDRESS _____

From _____ To _____

NAME _____ NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ PHONE _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: •Patron \$500* •Life \$125* •Sustaining \$40*
 •Annual \$10* •Student \$3 (* Includes Spouse)

STATUS: ☐ New
 ☐ Renewal

Would you like to be contacted to participate in society activities? If so, your area of interest is: _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:
The Pentwater Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Pentwater, MI 49449

AUTHORIZED
SIGNATURE _____



Old Glory waves over the service memorial at the Pentwater Township Cemetery.



The Pentwater Cemetery gravesite of Judge Hurley.



PENTWATER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 54,
PENTWATER,
MICHIGAN 49449

COME HEAR LEE MURDOCK AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S SPRING DINNER AT THE VFW HALL MAY 28, AT 6PM