

# Munster Historical Society

## Moving Forward to Preserve the Past



**The 2024 slate of officers have been working hard refining our bylaws and renewing exhibits at the Munster History Museum.**

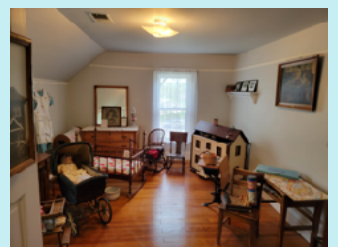
President - Carole Cornelison  
V.P. - September Alexander  
Secretary - Andrea Miller  
Treasurer - Beth Palmer  
Director - Immediate Past President - Kelly Benoit  
Director - Ken Schoon  
Director - Cindy Badten  
Director - Diane Kitchell

### Did you know?

"The Munster Garden Club will do a "makeover" of the Munster History Museum front landscaping" photo - Tom Alexander

On Earth Day, Mariellen Smith, Munster Garden Club President received a donation from Munster Historical Society in support of our "makeover" coming soon! MGC also received support from the Munster Civic Foundation and Munster Parks to re-landscape the front of the Munster History Museum with native shrubs and plants!

**Kids Room refresh - DAR Grant Money helps with fresh paint, clean floors. See "the reveal":**



#### JUNE CONCERTS

**9,23**

**SUMMER CONCERTS  
- CONCESSIONS**

6:30-8pm

#### JULY CONCERTS + AUG 4

**7,21**

**SUMMER CONCERTS  
- CONCESSIONS**

6:30-8pm

#### AUGUST PROGRAM

**24**

**TALKING TOMBSTONES  
- CEMETERY WALK**

1-4pm

**V**olunteers  
needed -  
**JOIN US,  
jump in, help us!**

< < < For these events  
contact Carole at  
219-836-6530.

## President's Corner

by Carole Cornelison



Did you ever wonder what the granite boulder on Ridge Road was all about?

The boulder marks the site of the Brass Tavern in 1952 by a bronze historical plaque donated by the Julia Watkins Brass Chapter of

the Daughters of the American Revolution (Crown Point, In). Julia's father served in the Revolutionary War.

The Brass Tavern and Inn, established in 1845, was owned by Allen H. and Julia Watkins Brass. This tavern and inn stood as a way station whether on foot, buggies, horseback or wagons. Travelers and neighbors stopped by the inn to rest, dine, and catch up on current news.

Hope you stop by and see us at the Town Hall Concert Series concession stand this summer. Best regards, Carole Cornelison, President



## "Munster Junior Historical Society Captures Time!"

Munster never had a Junior Historical Society until 2007 when teacher, Dr. Louise Chickie-Wolfe, created the student organization as a centennial tribute. She started with three founding students—sixth grade Becky Seligman, fifth grade Elana Piech, and seventh grade Tony Hamer. Their goals were to preserve history, provide service and build character. **Their first project was a Time Capsule which was filled and buried beside the Kaske House and commemorated with a plaque.** Only those four individuals know what is in the Time Capsule, but **on July 4, 2032, they intend to dig up the Time Capsule after 25 years to reveal its contents to Munster residents and current students of the MJHS.** So be sure to plan way ahead, mark your calendars, and don't miss out on the fun!

**For more information - Like us on Facebook - Munster Historical Society**

Become a member of the Munster Historical Society by sending in your membership form found on our website - "About Us" / Membership Form.



Newsletter editor - Diane Kitchell @ kitchelld@gmail.com



# Munster Historical Society

## Moving Forward to Preserve the Past

### Lucius G. Fisher II

Originally published - MHS newsletter 3.22.11

Author: Cindy Ellison Badten

What do Munster's Fischer Street and Jodie Foster the actress have in common? Well let's find out, shall we?

Munster has many streets named in honor of local residents dead and living such as Hohman, Wilson, Kool, Kray, Ada Lane, and Fran-in to name a few. But one name has always stood out as curious to me, Fisher. It runs east and west, much of it alongside Schoon Ditch. What or who was Fisher? A Local resident? No. It is named for Lucius George Fisher II. Both Dr. Ken Schoon and Dr. Lance Trusty mention him in their books on Munster's past. We see that in 1906 Mr. Fisher owned approximately 900 acres in the unimproved southwest section of what would become our proposed town. When the village fathers began discussion of incorporating to become the Town of Munster we find Mr. Fisher challenging the validity of the act of Incorporation. He feared increased property taxes. Our Town Board managed to assure him of their fiscal conservatism and won his consent by naming a street after him. We find him again in conflict with the town in 1914 over the proposed south extension of Columbia Ave to the Dyer line. Fisher objected to the highway through his property because it might interfere with a planned factory on his land. By 1916 Fisher has passed away and in 1924 his estate sells over 1000 acres of his property to Henry Ford.

What was this man all about and why did he purchase property in what was then considered the "boonies"? We may never know why he really purchased property here but it appears that he was a long speculator, buying property in many different areas of the country.

Lucius G. Fisher II was born in Beloit, Wisconsin in 1843. He was the son of Lucius G. Fisher I and Caroline Field of the famed Marshall Field store family. Lucius I was born in 1808 in Derby VT. And like many he came west. He first came to Chicago in July of 1837, but was not impressed with what he found so he headed north to Milwaukee and by a few strange turn of events ended up in what would soon be known as Beloit, Wisconsin. He is one of the very first white settlers and lives and works among the natives. In reading the events that he is involved in it seems that he is pre-destined to help Beloit become one of the many great Wisconsin cities. He is involved in the railroad, banking, and politics, and becomes a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln who appoints him as Post Master of Beloit. When Lincoln becomes President he offers Fisher a seat in his Cabinet in Washington but Fisher declines.

Now our Lucius Fisher was ready to enter his freshmen year in Beloit College with Pikes Peak gold fever broke out. He then persuades his father to let him accompany the train his father was sending to the mountains to start the first quartz mills. He was given a wagon and six yoke of oxen and crossed the plains and worked there until 1861. He then goes to New York and clerks in a hardware store until the 1865 when he enlisted in the Eighty-fourth N.G.S.N.Y. He has a short campaign in the Shenandoah Valley then back to New York to help with the riots. After his 90 service and his discharge he joins the Navy and at the close of the war he goes to Chicago and starts employment with the Rock River Paper company. His father is also in Chicago by now.

By 1871 we find him purchasing an interest in the Wheeler & Hinman company which he soon changes to Union Bag and Paper Company. By 1870 he is married to Katherine Eddy and on his way to becoming a wealthy business man. Not only does he become the paper magnate of the business world he also has a

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career as an architect. In 1895 he enlisted the help of Daniel H. Burnham to build him an eighteen story building at 343 S. Dearborn. It eventually was enlarged to twenty stories. This building still stands today and is the oldest (18 story) skyscraper in Chicago. It was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and designated a Chicago Landmark in 1978.

Lucius G. Fisher II dies March 20, 1916 and is buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. As families go he and his descendants have their share of drama which I will not into here but will say it certainly is colorful to say the least. Lucius and Katherine's daughter, Alice Eddy Fisher marries Alexis C. Foster. It is their grandson Lucius Fisher Foster III who is the father of Jodie Foster the well known actress. One of their other children is Lucius "Buddy" Foster who also has done his share of acting in such roles as Hondo, Mike Jones and from 1968 to 1971 played the son of Ken Berry on Mayberry R.F.D. Their mother was Evelyn "Brandy" Almond. She married their father during a whirlwind romance and had three children. Soon divorcing and fighting over child support etc. they came together to discuss the situation at hand and conceived Jodie. So she was actually born to them out of wedlock. Her birth name being Alicia Christian Foster born Nov. 19, 1962.

So there you have it. Still don't know why Lucius G. Fischer II purchased land in Munster but glad he did.

## STREET NAMES - HISTORY STORIES

### Kooy Drive: What's in a Name?

The Peter and Guurtje (Gertrude) Kooy family was one of the first five pioneer families to establish homes here in Munster. Born in Holland, Peter and Guurtje, with three young children, arrived in Roseland (now part of Chicago) in late summer, 1855. Their son Gerbrand was born so soon after their arrival, that they hadn't yet found a home and so were living in a Roseland barn.

It was there that Gerbrand was born on September 5. As a result, whenever (as an adult) Gerbrand would pass through a door without closing it, his wife would tease him, asking,



The Gerbrand and Mary Kooy house on Ridge Road ca. 1890.

"Gerben! Were you born in a barn?"

Gerbrand Kooy married Mary Schoon in 1871, and built a home on Ridge Road on what is now the corner of Ridge and Jackson Avenue. There they raised their four-teen children.



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Gerbrand was a carpenter and farmer. He, his brothers, and sons built many of the farm-houses that still stand along Ridge Road today. He also built violins and coffins as needed. And when a neighboring house needed to be moved, Gerbrand was the man to do it.

In 1907, Gerbrand, Jacob Munster, and Carl Stallbohm supervised the referendum that established the incorporation of

the town of Munster. One year later, Gerbrand was one of three residents appointed to the first Munster School Board.

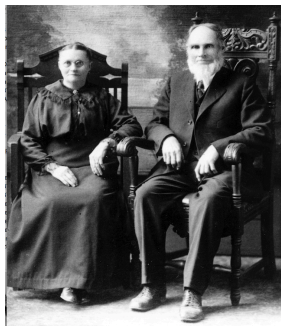
About 1919, Gerbrand and Mary sold their land in Munster and purchased a larger farm in the DeMotte area of Jasper County. Some of his family also moved to the much more rural county, but many remained in Munster. And a number of their descendants still live in town.

### The Next Generation

Jacob G. Kooy (Jake), the oldest son of Gerbrand and Mary, was born in 1880. In 1909, at age 29, he became one of the first two Munster residents to own an automobile.

As Ridge Road saw more cars, Munster citizens, more used to horses than cars, saw it necessary to impose a speed limit. So in 1909, the speed limit on Ridge was set at eight-miles an hour.

Jake married Mary Braschler in 1913. Like his dad, he was a self-employed carpenter. Among others, he built several of the older houses on Columbia Avenue. Naturally, he built his own



Mary and Gerbrand Kooy  
on their 35th anniversary,  
1913.



Jake and Mary Kooy's  
house next to Kooy Drive  
--2023.

house at what is now the corner of Ridge Road and Kooy Drive—just north of Bieker Woods.

After they moved in, they never lived anywhere else. There they raised their daughter Marcella. Soon Jake became a leading citizen of the town.

His family must have been the envy of the neighborhood when

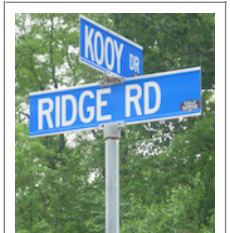
they became owners of an electric washing machine. By the way, Jacob Kooy did not have a middle "name." In the Dutch manner, he used the initial "G," which just meant that he was Gerbrand's son. There is no evidence that he ever used the full

name Gerbrand.

In 1953, Jake and Lawrence Monaldi subdivided their properties and built more houses. The new street through this area was named, "Kooy Drive" (although at first the street only went as far as Ridge-way Avenue.

Jake Kooy lived his whole life in town

of Munster. He died at his home next to Kooy Drive in 1964 at the age of 84.



Author - Ken Schoon

Gerbrand and Mary Kooy's great-nephew

Member, Munster Historical Society

Member, Munster Town Council

June, 2023

And, by the way, despite what some folks have claimed years back, the only correct pronunciation for the family name or the street is "Coy."

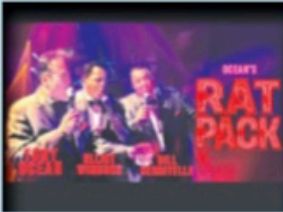
## SUMMER CONCERT SERIES



### Summer Concert Series



Sundays | 6:30-8:00 pm | Munster Town Hall | 1005 Ridge Road | FREE Admission and Parking!



#### June 9 THE RAT PACK

Performing the music of Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr.



#### June 23 GOOD CLEAN FUN

Performing Sock Hop, Golden Oldies, Disco, Motown, 80's, 90's and Top 40 hits.



#### July 7 THE STINGRAYS

Performing the greatest Rock & Roll ever written with a highly interactive show!



#### July 21 JOHN DAVID DAILY

Classic country, Midwest rock and original music reflecting the passion and life in the heartland of America.



#### August 4 DUELING PIANOS

Interactive and musical comedy experience with performances driven by audience requests!

Concessions Provided by:

THE MUNSTER  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Inclement Weather Location:

South Side Christian Church  
1000 Broadmoor Ave., Munster  
Enter Door #6



#### Weather Hot Line

Please call (219) 836-6927  
for updated program  
information 30 minutes  
prior to start time.

Sponsored by:



A FINWARD  
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Everything you want to do. Places to go. Events you don't want to miss!

# **“Talking Tombstones” Cemetery Walk**

The Munster Historical Society presents  
**“Talking Tombstones”**  
by Ms. Cindy Watson Badten, and Dr. Ken Schoon.

**Saturday, August 24th, 1 to 4 PM**  
1/2 hour tours - last tour at 3:30 PM.

This special treat of a cemetery walk tour will honor departed Munster residents including burials at both the Schoon Family Cemetery and the Munster Christian Reformed Church private Cemetery.

Behind the Munster Church  
**214 Ridge Road**  
The southeast corner of Hohman Ave. and Ridge Road.

**TICKETS \$5.00 CASH ONLY/person**

