



December 2006

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### Old Fashioned Christmas

On Sunday, December 3rd from 2-5 pm, the Plymouth Historical Society and the Plymouth Park & Recreation Department are co-sponsoring the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual "OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH". The purpose of the event is to provide some old fashioned Christmas spirit and activities for families in Plymouth. Children can visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus will be right there to help the Elves hand out candy canes. A hay ride pulled by Belgian horses with bells jingling will be giving rides (50 cents per person), hot cider and cookies will be provided, carolers and making Christmas decorations are other activities for the children.

This year we again have our great story teller back. Bob Gasch will be telling holiday stories, something you don't want to miss! Also the Armstrong Chamber Singers will be singing

holiday songs and delighting the children young and old.

On Saturday, December 2nd starting at 9 am, we will decorate the two old fashioned Christmas trees and the building. We are looking for help in decorating and bringing items that could be borrowed for the day to add some more old fashioned Christmas spirit.

If you can help to bring decorations, please call Gary Schiebe, 763-473-4889.

So bring your friends, relatives, neighbors and kids ages 9 months to 90 years young. The annual event has attracted large crowds with some families having a perfect attendance record with their children since it started in 1987. We had a great time last year as we do every year!

*Activities include:*

*Visit with Santa*

*Old Fashioned Hay Ride*

*Hot Cider and Cookies*

*Old Fashioned Xmas Decorations*

*Old Toy Train Display*

*Candy Canes*



*Wood Carver*

*Crafts*

*Story Telling by Bob Gasch*

*Music Groups*

*Armstrong Chamber Singers*

*Messiah Recorder Ensemble*

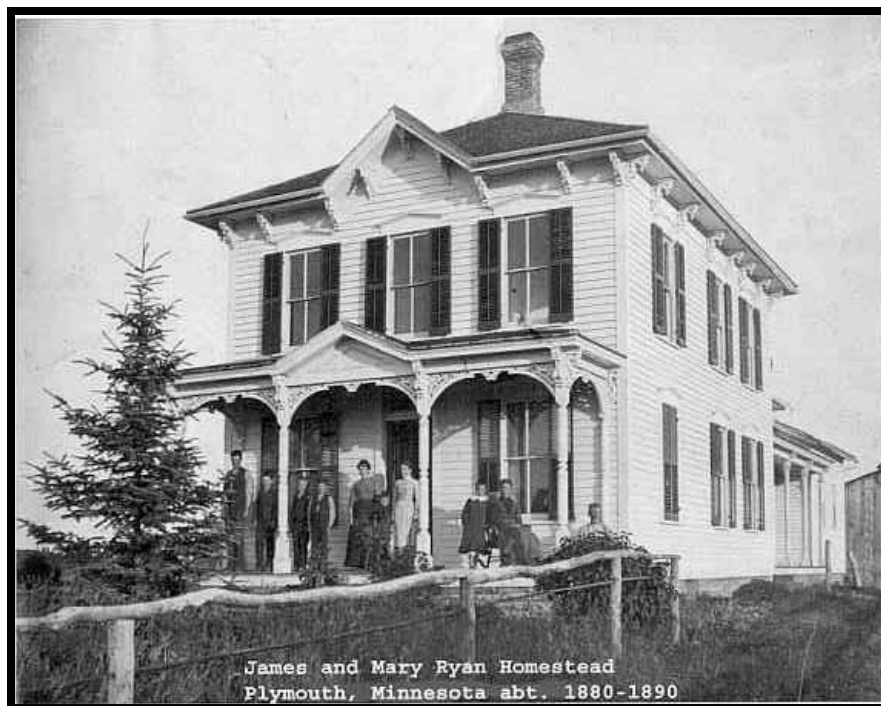
*Student Piano Players*

## *The Ryan Farm*

Edmund Ryan married Mary Bourke and they lived in Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. They had five children Mary, Thomas, Winnifred, William and James all born in Ireland. They set sail for America with many other Irish spending six weeks sailing across the Atlantic in over crowded vessels. After arriving in New York they went to Auburn in upper New York State where many Irish were working on the Erie Canal.

William Ryan married Catherine Ryan (not related) in Auburn, NY in 1851 or 1852 and had four sons Edmund & Timothy (twins), Michael and William. James Ryan married Mary Smith in 1855 in New York and in the mid 1850's the Ryan families or a portion of them moved to Minneapolis. Construction of new railroads heading west extended to Chicago in 1852 and then Galena, Illinois in 1853 hastened the migration flow to Minnesota. On arriving at Galena they would have taken a steamboat up the Mississippi to St. Paul, which was a three day trip.

Shortly after William Ryan's arrival (James's older brother) bought 160 acres acquiring patent on the land March 3, 1856. The financial panic of 1857 delayed settlement in Plymouth so they remained in Minneapolis another year. A log cabin was initially built but it is unclear when the farm buildings appeared, probably occurring over a period of years. In the 1860 farm census the land was valued at \$400 and the farm building \$150. As shown in one of the early pictures below there are multiple portions of the farm house built together along with several out buildings.



The 1857 MN Territorial census indicates that William & Catherine Ryan along with James & Mary Ryan plus other Ryan family members occupied adjoining buildings. Several years later William sold half the farm to James & Mary. In 1882 when William's eldest son married, the remaining 80 acres

parcel of land went to him which is the next farm east. William then bought another 160 acres farm in Minnetonka Township. James also owned another 80 acres just south in Minnetonka Township with the land adjoining.

Census records indicate that James and Mary had eleven children with the last eight probably born at the farm in Plymouth – Mary Elizabeth, Bridget, Catherine, Janie, John, Annie Cecelia, Ellen, Lawrence, Michael, Thomas and Theresa.

The farm picture indicates that the Ryan's were successful farmers. All traces of the farms are gone today having been replaced with 494 Interstate and office buildings. To provide a reference today of where the farm would have been located in Section 34; the house faced Cty. Road 15 (Wayzata Road) and was a ¼ section wide and south of where Cty. Road 15 crosses over Interstate 494. The 160 acres extended from just north of Cty. Road 15 down into Minnetonka to the 394/494 Interchange.



### *2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class Tours*

On four days in September & October the Plymouth Historical hosted the second grade classes from Birchview, Sunset and Oakwood Elementary Schools. The event was organized by Sue Strom – teacher and Bob Gasch – story teller. The children arrived by bus and had two adults for each six students. Their assignment was a history scavenger hunt. They had a checklist with a variety of items that they had to locate in the museum and determine what it was or what it was used for. They were very well organized into groups and toured the museum, carriage house and Bob Gasch took them for a story telling walk in the “Big Woods” with the maple trees in full color. Vern Dotseth, Kay Bertrand, Betty & Dennis Jacobson, Ben Broman and Gary Schiebe hosted our young visitors. Before each group left to return to school the 1925 Ford Model T Truck was started up and all the horns tooted to the delight of the kids and adults.



## *Samuel Merchant Farm*



Thanks to John and Bea Merchant for providing this great picture of the Samuel Merchant farm. It was located just east of 494 and north of the Soo Line Railroad tracks. What makes this picture so interesting is that this is the farm house where the town clerks first several record books were saved by Niel Neilsen. Samuel Merchant was Plymouth 's Town clerk for a number of years and suspect that when these early record books were filled, they were stored in the farm house attic. He probably only passed along the current ones to the next town clerk and the first ones would have been lost except for Neil's interest in local Plymouth history. Before the farm house was burned down in the early 80's Neil checked it out and discovered the books in a wooden box in the attic. They were all wet and minutes away from being lost for ever. As a result, the Plymouth Historical Society has the documented town meeting minutes of the formation of Plymouth Township in 1858; handwritten by Plymouth's first Town Clerk – Jonas H. Howe. Thanks again Neil for saving a very important part of early Plymouth's history.



## Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Vern Doseh	763-559-3777
Vice President	Ben Broman	763-559-5721
Secretary	Mable Swanson	763-545-7705
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



## Donations

The Plymouth Historical Society wants to thank the following people for their donations.

- Pictures of Samuel Merchant Farm House, Log Cabin and District #123 School Class picture from 1950.

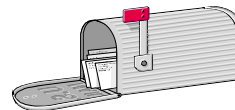
Donated by: John & Bea Merchant



## Meetings

The monthly meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN. The Museum is also open the third Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 PM

## Mailing and Membership List



If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call: Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

The 2007 annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

*See you at the  
Old Fashioned Christmas*