

## CHAPTER XIV

### ORGANIZATIONS

The history of an area is written by the activities of its people. Civic organizations reflect the kind of people that furnish the leadership for the area. The Montague Area has more organizations that are dedicated to community service than many cities twice our size. Probably the first such group to be formed was the Montague Chamber of Commerce.

The beginning of the Montague Chamber of Commerce can be traced to the early lumbering era when Montague docks teamed with activity and priceless forests were cut down as if the supply was inexhaustible. It was first called "The Board of Trade" which sought to improve conditions and to enlarge its possibilities. At that time Montague Iron Works was the only industry of any significance. No constitution was in evidence and dues were secured by voluntary subscription. With the exhaustion of the forests so did the Board of Trade decline.

Around 1930, the Chamber of Commerce was formed with Paul Medbury as its president. He had a guiding hand in many civic activities and his foresight is largely responsible for saving the Lake Michigan frontage now known as Medbury Park for the perpetual use of the people of Montague in 1943. During this time cedars were planted along the U. S. 31 approach to Montague and the area back of the Franklin Hotel cleaned up for a city park. The lake level raised and the cedars died.

In 1944, Paul Medbury died and Ray Osborne was drafted to take his place after which a new Constitution and by-laws were drawn up, a board of directors with overlapping terms was chosen, a system of regular dues was established for business members depending on the number of employees, individual dues at \$3.00 per year.

Standing committees were appointed on programs and memberships with members of the board as chairmen. They engaged in many worthwhile projects, such as the Memorial Field which was enthusiastically supported and an asset to the city. Later the field was lighted and a lighted baseball field was established a short distance away.

Medbury Park was planted in 1944 with 5,000 trees by some members of the Chamber and their children. Trees were donated by the soil conservation district. Other accomplishments of the Chamber were to establish the following industries in the Montague Area:

Whitehall Metal Studios located here also Century Forge.	White
EL CLAR CLEANERS	CLOUTIER SHOE SERVICE & TAXIDERMY
Clarence and Elberta Vanderstelt	John and Doris Cloutier
SPENCER MOBILE SERVICE	SMITH DEPARTMENT STORE

Lake Foundry in the old Montague Casting Company building in 1944. Howard Elmore and Walter Klaus organized the Arrow Foundry and started operation in the old foundry in 1945; 1946 Bronze plaque was made for members of World War II, placed in Memorial Field.

Erwin Knoth and Wesley Gross started machine shop known as L. C. K. Shop.

Chimont Machine products erected a building in city park property of Ferry Street in 1949.

Hooker Chemical Company selected a site for a \$10,000,000 chemical plant in 1951.

W. E. McIntosh Company occupied Red Pine Body Shop on U. S. 31 in 1951.

DuPont built a neoprene plant in 1955.

Linde Air Products bought 350 acres from DuPont as a subsidiary for Union Carbide in 1955.

Tech Cast, Inc., located on Whitbeck Road.

A city improvement committee was formed and with the help of the garden clubs and school children the causeway was beautified.

It has done a great deal for the city including help for the museum and now under the leadership of the present president, John O'Neil, who so ably does all these civic things, the Montague Centennial will be celebrated July 12-16, 1967.

The White Lake Junior Chamber of Commerce consists of members up to 35 years of age from both towns. Conducts annual White Lake Beauty contest, one contestant of which became Miss America, sponsors annual Montague-Whitehall football game on Labor Day between Montague and Whitehall alumni, and part-time Easter Egg hunts. Chartered in 1952.

The Montague Masonic Lodge No. 198 was organized in 1866 by George E. Dowling who was also Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan. Their first meetings were held in the basement of George Dowlings home. Its first worshipful master was George E. Dowling; Senior Warden, H. E. Staples; Junior Warden, E. Knudsen.

The lodge was made up of members from the entire White Lake area until about 1873 when the Whitehall lodge was formed. Most of the streets in Montague were named for Masons as most of the lumberman were members of the lodge. In 1869 Frank Fish succeeded George Dowling as Master. In 1881 the Masons moved to the second floor of the Ripley block and later to the second floor of Sweet's store, now known as Nesbits Quality Service. In 1921 the Masonic Building Association made up of members of the lodge bought the White Lake Inn, once known as the Sadler

H. James and Gladys Grover

Top's Whitelakers - Tuesday, 7 p.m.  
Faith Lutheran Church, Whitehall

HOME TV

STONEY LAKE TAVERN  
Red & Jerry Spence

block on the corner of Water and Dowling Streets. In 1924 the new temple of the Masonic Lodge No. 198 and the chapter of Eastern Star No. 404 was dedicated. To date there have been 48 Masters of which 20 are still living, Marvin Lipka, Sr., being the oldest. Richard Charles is the present Worshipful Master of 1967. The Masonic Lodge is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Other lodges of Montague of early days such as Odd Fellows organized in 1874,

Knight's of Honor

Lodge of Good Templers

Knight's of Pythias

Grand Army Post in 1905 which included members of Co. F., fifth Michigan Cavalry such as James Gibbs Little Pt. Sable; John Dill and F. E. Deyman, Claybanks; T. S. Watson, Whitehall; and E. Z. Green of Montague Co. F., was organized at White River, August 15, 1862 and honorably discharged July 13, 1865.

The 20th reunion of Co. F., was held at the home of Mrs. Annie Dowling, August 2, 1906. Veterans attending were Henry Beckes, Hesperia; James Gibbs, Shelby; John and David Dill, Claybanks; F. E. Deyman, Cranston; E. Z. Green, Montague, Ole C. Oleson, Holton, Tom Smith, Fremont; P. Parish, Ferry. Sixty-one of the company had died, ten deserted and whereabouts unknown, two lost while on the march and 30 still alive and addresses known in 1906.

The W. C. T. U. organization has a long history going back to lumbering days. Present organization was formed about 1916. It has been active and eventually brought about the situation where for many years Whitehall remained "dry" after prohibition so far as sale of liquor by the glass was concerned. Around 1960 they still had about 20 members.

The White Lake Women's Club was formed in 1889 as the Bay View Reading Circle with both men and women members. Finally the society broke into two sections: Montague Literary Society and Whitehall Literary Society. In 1903, they merged into White Lake Unity Club and in 1958 the name was changed to White Lake Woman's Club with members from Montague and Whitehall. They are very active at this time.

Onward Camp 1663. Royal Neighbors of America was chartered in April, 1899 and has been quite active.

In 1958 they purchased the St. James Community Hall. There are about 130 members. The Supreme Camp has honored the local organization twice with "Camp of the Month" designation, once for financing the World War II memorial in Whitehall and second in recognition of services for enlisted men at Camp Claybanks.

The ladies guild of St. James Catholic Church was organized

HEATING SUPPLY

HAPPY MOHAWK CANOE LIVERY

Jesse Hepworth

HILLSIDE MOTEL

STANDARD OIL CO.

Paul Young

in 1909. It was first known as the Catholic Women's Sewing Circle, with 26 charter members.

The highlights throughout the past years have been the many Benefit Dinners, Bazaars, card parties, bake sales, rummage sales and quilting bees.

In 1914 through the efforts of the Guild a large Iron Cross was placed in the Cemetery.

In 1920 the name was changed to Catholic Ladies Aid Society.

In 1920 the practice of an annual Requiem High Mass for the deceased members of the guild was started. The Mass is said in November of each year. At the funeral of a deceased member the ladies form an honor guard at the church and cemetery and also attend the rosary the evening before the funeral.

In 1924 the Rose Window above the alter was donated.

In 1925 the name was again changed to "St. James Catholic Guild."

Many of the Honorary members will recall the hard work that went into putting on chicken dinners, etc. In the "Good Old Days" all the cooking was done on a wood cook stove and there was no running water, especially "Hot" water. The men would put out big tubs of water outside the community hall, under the trees and wash the dishes as best they could. They also can recall how it was up to the ladies to do all the "Beggin" for the dinners and bazaars. In those days everything was donated by the members and anyone who would offer. They would call on all the "Resorters" who were usually very generous. The entire food menu was donated from fresh garden vegetables to milk from "Bessy". For the Bazaars there was always an abundance of patrons, rag rugs and especially beautiful quilts. A few will also recall not too long ago when about 4 ladies fried chicken all day Saturday until 4 o'clock Sunday morning, with never a let up.

In 1946 a study club was formed which proved very interesting for quite a few years. The subjects would be about our religion and very educational.

In 1947 a Junior Guild was organized for all the ladies who could not attend the afternoon meetings. This group was called "The Friendship Circle".

In 1948 the Guild donated \$100.00 towards the new organ.

New Guild Badges were purchased at \$.60 a piece. All were asked to keep them at home and wear them on their communion Sunday and sit in a group in the front of church, for a special blessing.

The Guild has always been active in the cleaning of the church and keeping up the alter, etc. For years the Guild had complete charge of keeping up the Altar. Cleaning Bees are held two or

NEW ERA CANNING COMPANY  
DETROIT BALL BEARING CO.

Lucretia & Henry M. Hunt  
PARK THEATRE  
Bill & Ila Thieman

three times a year for the heavy cleaning and two ladies are assigned for the weekly cleaning.

In 1955 the Senior Guild and Junior was combined and is now known as the present "St. James Catholic Guild."

At the present date, June 10, 1959 the Guild is celebrating its 50th year.

In 1912, Dr. George Smith, then Worshipful Master of Montague Lodge #198 F. and A. M. and a member of Whitehall Chapter "201 Order of the Eastern Star," secured enough names to petition the Grand Chapter of Michigan for organization of a chapter in Montague.

Montague Chapter was instituted December 17, 1912, with Worthy Grand Patron William C. Hollands presiding. He was assisted by Worthy Grand Matron, Minnie E. Keyes.

They worked under dispensation until October, 1913, when the Charter was granted the Montague Chapter #404 was constituted. Worthy Grand Matron sister Maxon, Worthy Grand Patron Brother Ellis assisted by Past Grand Matron Minnie Keyes.

Montague Chapter joined the Muskegon County Association, now the Muskegon District Association in 1915. Four of the past matrons have served as presidents. Ruzena Pillman in 1920, Della Graeme in 1939, Hazel Lawrence in 1951, and Lola Cox in 1962.

Two of the Chapter's past matrons were appointed Grand Representatives, Hazel Lawrence to New Mexico in Michigan in 1953 for three years. Evelyn Block to Colorado in Michigan in 1959 for two years.

Three of the members have received appointments to the Grand Chapter. Ivy Carlson in 1953 was a member of the publicity committee. Evelyn Block in 1961 was chairman of fraternal sunshine. Henry Eicke is now serving on Masonic Relations.

In 1923 the Chapter moved to the newly acquired Masonic Temple from the upstairs of Sweet's store which is now the Nesbit grocery and market.

In 1945 a past Matrons club was organized. The goal is to help the chapter in anyway. It meets the fourth Tuesday of the month. There are 28 members at the present time.

In 1956 Montague Chapter became interested in sponsoring the Youth program, 42 girls were interested and eligible for membership in the International Order of Job's Daughters. On March 2, 1956, a new Bethel was instituted, on June 16, 1956, this Chartered Bethel #59. The first Bethel Guardian was Evelyn Block, the first Associate Guardian was Lester Cox. Whitehall Chapter #201 are co-sponsors.

Velma Roesler is Worthy Matron this year and Henry Roesler is Worthy Patron. Our membership is 124. We meet the 3rd Tuesday

MEYERS SAWMILL  
PORT CITY HEATING & PLUMBING CO.  
Preston & Marian Murdock

SHOLLY DRAFTING  
NELSON GIFT HOUSE  
Albert & Eva Nelson

of the month.

The American Legion was formed in 1919 with 30 charter members. The Post was named for Algot Johnson, first Whitehall soldier to die in World War I.

It began building their present building in 1939 and completed it in 1945. A new kitchen and recreation room was added in 1949-1950.

The post has been active in the Muskegon County Blood Bank and taking helpful things to disabled veterans.

The American Legion Auxiliary No. 69 was organized July 29, 1921.

In 1924 it began its poppy sale a effort which has grown as the years go by. A number of projects for disabled veterans are sponsored each year. Members have been active in getting information in regard to pensions and other benefits to veterans.

The White Lake V. F. W. Post 3256 was chartered April 27, 1935 the meetings were first held in the Odd Fellows Hall. Its first officers were:

Commander	William Wentworth
Senior Vice Commander	Raymond McRae
Jr. Vice Commander	Francis Matson
Quartermaster	Marcus Dahl
Adjutant	Carrol Noble
Chaplain	Louis Eilers
Officer of the Day	Walter Nichols
Surgeon	Charles Eilers
Trustees	Ray Huston, E. D. Todd and Francis Eilers

There were 25 members when Post was chartered and 152 members in 1967.

Meetings have been held in various places such as Odd Fellows Hall, City Hall, Community Hall, Old Holland Church, Whitehall Legion Hall and now in the Old Sportsman Club with a new building being built on Walsh Road. The purpose of the V.F.W. is fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever.

The V.F.W. Auxiliary was chartered July 10, 1935, first meetings were held in the Odd Fellows Hall.

First officers were:

POSTEMA BROS.  
MR. PICS

OTTIGER'S AIRPORT  
Fred Ottiger  
TOWN AND COUNTRY CLEANERS

President	Elizabeth Eilers
Sr. Vice President	Mrs. Mable Wentworth
Jr. Vice President	Mrs. Violet Nichols
Treasurer	Mrs. Henrietta Dahl
Secretary	Mrs. Penelope McRae
Chaplain	Mrs. Kirstine Olesen
Trustees	Mrs. Alaida Noordhof
	Mrs. Mildred Troughton,
	Mrs. Edith Beeman
Guard	Mrs. Verna Huston

When chartered there were 16 members and now there are 84. Sr. White Lake Hospital Auxiliary was started in 1941 to help Shelby Hospital.

Since the formation of the White Lake Community Hospital non-profit corporation, the group has switched to helping the local hospital effort. A Junior Auxiliary was organized in 1954 to promote civic interest in the hospital plan and have donated thousands of dollars to hospital and equipment fund.

Montague Garden Club was organized by the Muskegon Garden Club in 1952 and became a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan in 1953. The membership is limited to 25. Its first president was Mrs. Carl Marquardt; Vice President, Mrs. R. R. Ritter; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Arthur Rehbein; and Historian, Mrs. Marvin Lipka, Sr.

Their aim is to co-operate with the city in all their beautifying projects by planting flowers, shrubs, and trees, discourage litter bugging and help retarded children as well as giving scholarships to Indians to further their education and preserving wild flower growth.

Montague-Whitehall Rotary was formed in 1954. Men from both towns are eligible. Their projects are swimming lessons for children at Maple Grove, annual travelogue programs and entertaining groups of exchange students and later the blood bank program.

Dirt Daubers Garden Club was organized January 9, 1957 and federated in February, 1958 with 14 charter members. First President, Mrs. Richard Donovan; Vice-President, Mrs. Arthur Rehbein; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. Ronald Ingleby. Their projects are beautifying Montague, bringing cheer to nursing homes, and bringing experienced flower arrangers to the White Lake area so that people will learn to appreciate the many uses of flowers and the many types of foliage.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles was organized on June 14, 1964, with 65 charter members. Their purpose is to help anyone in need such as Tag Day for the museum, collecting green stamp books for a handicapped childrens bus and all civic affairs. Their first

SAM'S CLOTHING

STEEL FABRICATING COMPANY

JENSEN HARDWARE

PLAZA MOTEL

Ken & Velma Hopkins

President, Robert Hall; Vice-President, George Fisk, Jr., Past President, LeRoy Hansen; Conductor, Don Shackelford; Secretary, Don Wurthner; Treasurer, Bud Sheneman; Chaplain, Don Runyan; Trustees, Don Burel, Roger Bradley, and Bill Joldersma, Inside Guard, Emil Burel; Outside Guard, Roy Jensen.

Their first meetings were held in the Royal Neighbors Hall in Montague and in 1966 they purchased a building from the White Lake Villa in Whitehall on Lake Street which will likely be their permanent home.

The Eagles' Ladies Auxiliary was organized in September, 1966.

After its founding in 1873, the Montague Fire Department continued an unbroken record of service with a consistent program of keeping abreast with improvements as they became available.

In 1884 a contract was let to J. S. McCoreghlin for building three cisterns at a cost of \$397.98 which were to store water to be used when fighting fires. Also the engineer of the fire department in 1884 was paid \$100.00 a year.

In 1889 a code of signals was adopted, to notify Whitehall Fire Department when their assistance at a fire was necessary, same to be a red flag by day and a red light at night, displayed so as to be in plain view.

In 1889, George Durham was the chief at this time there was Hose Cart #1 and #2, each had a foreman and four pipemen, each carried 200 feet 2 1/2" hose, were manually pulled or horse drawn.

On February 10, 1902, Charles Ohrenberger was selected chief. The department at this time consisted of twenty-five members, including officers. Mr. Ohrenberger served as Fire Chief until May 27, 1941, and was honored by this community on his retirement for so many years, of faithful service. John Thieman was elected chief upon Mr. Ohrenberger's retirement and he carried on the great tradition of giving us a very faithful and efficient fire chief.

On July 6, 1953, Mr. Thieman chose to retire and our present Chief Carl Schultz was elected and has carried on the enviable record of giving us another outstanding chief.

For so many years existence of our fire department, we have had a small number of chiefs and all were members of the department for many years before they became chief, being well schooled in fire fighting and running an efficient fire department. It seems that here is a devotion and a tradition that is hard to excell.

In comparison to the equipment that the department had at the conception of a fire department to the present day, Montague today, has a superior department. From the early day steam engine, to the hose carts, to the first trucks up to present tankers and pumpers. The department has increased from one truck pumper to three truck pumpers, two tankers and a jeep.

VANDERWALL BROTHERS, INC.  
WAYSIDE AUTO PARTS

LAKESHORE MACHINERY & SUPPLY CO.  
LIPTON OF MUSKEGON, INC.



Montague Township has purchased equipment and now has two pumpers that carry 1275 gallons of water which are kept in the fire station maintained and operated by the department. The city also increased the size of water mains and installed a large water tower to give us the best protection possible.

For many years the volunteer members of our fire department have carried on a tradition far beyond their call of duty, always working for better equipment and maintaining their equipment in the best possible condition, having regular meetings, trial fire runs and such devotion to their duty that we can only say in this book, to the present members and to previous members, a sincere thank you for your time, effort and your concern to protect each and everyone in your community. Yes, we are very grateful that we have had a superior fire department and a caliber of fire fighters second to none, these many years.

WONDER STORE  
PURDY'S FUNERAL HOME

MEDENDORP AUTO SUPPLY  
DON MARTIN