

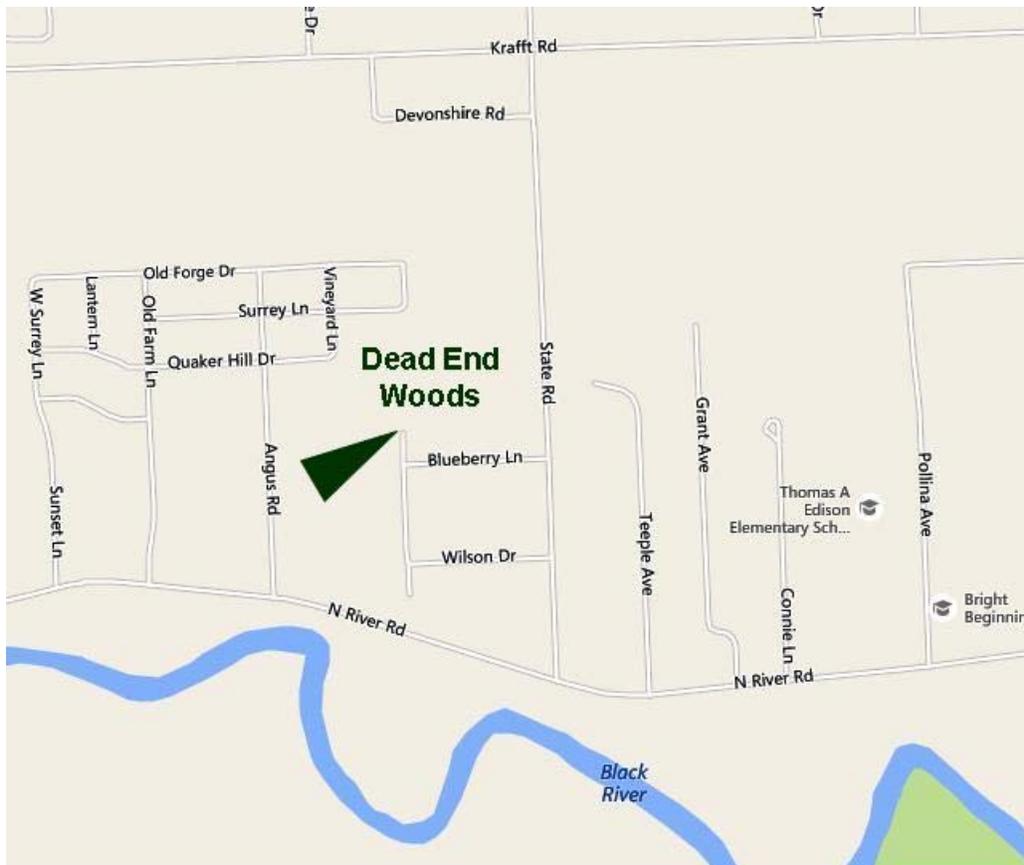
# Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

**December 5, 2016**

## **TLC Christmas Gathering and Executive Board Meeting – Saturday, December 17, 1:00 – 6:00 PM**

We are having a little Christmas gathering on Saturday December 17 from 1:00 to 6:00 PM at the home of TLC executive board member Dorothy Craig, at 3685 Wilson Drive in Fort Gratiot. She is at the dead end of Wilson Drive next to our Dead End Woods Sanctuary. Except for our 4<sup>th</sup> quarter executive board meeting, the gathering will be very informal; a time to relax, take in a little holiday solitude, socialize, and maybe take a walk through the Dead End Woods. There will be at least one presentation, and discussions of current and future conservancy projects.

All are welcome. A dish to pass, snacks, or beverages are appreciated. Most of all, just show up and bring your thoughts about nature preservation in the Thumb. Please RSVP if possible.



3685 Wilson Drive, Fort Gratiot, at the dead end of Wilson Drive

## **North Street Post Office, General Store, and Railroad Station Clyde Township, Saint Clair County**

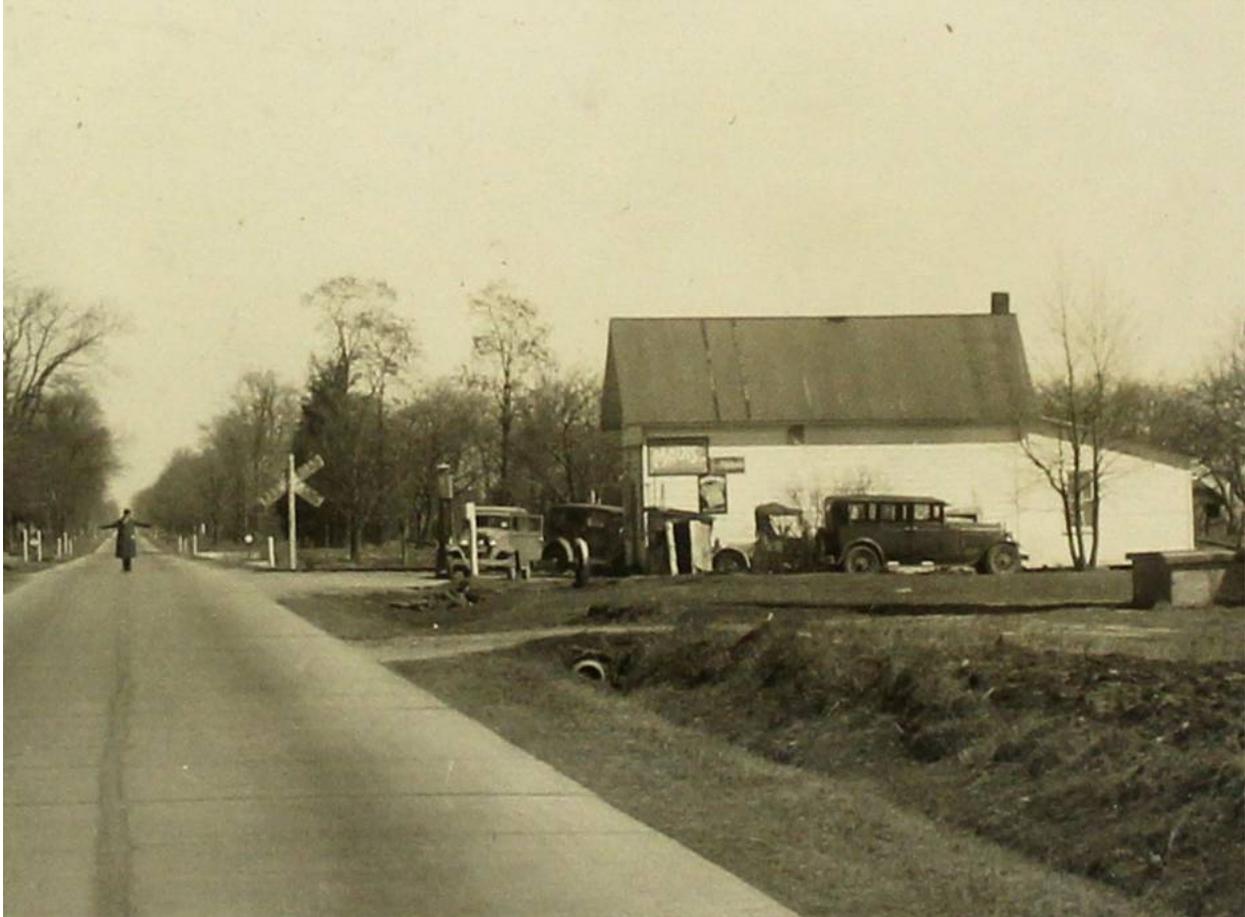
The following press release was sent to all local newspapers today:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Groups Partner to Preserve Our Rural History in North Street

*North Street, Michigan – December 05, 2016* – The Clyde Historical Society and Thumb Land Conservancy are working together to preserve a small piece of our rural history; an old house in North Street that once served as a railroad station, post office, and general store from the late 1800's until about 1960. The Thumb Land Conservancy purchased the property in August through the Saint Clair County tax auction. This historic structure is one of only two remaining stations between Port Huron and Croswell along the old Port Huron and Northwestern Railway which opened in 1879. The main line ran from Port Huron to Saginaw, with branches to Sandusky, Port Hope, and Port Austin. The line became part of the Pere Marquette Railroad in 1889. The other remaining station is at Zion, a nearly forgotten place near Wildcat and Metcalf Roads. Stations from Port Huron heading north included Gardendale, North Street, Atkins, Zion, Blaine, Jeddo, Amadore, and Croswell.

Thumb Land Conservancy Executive Director, Bill Collins, noticed the North Street property on the county auction list while looking at another property the group wanted to add to one of their nature preserves in Fort Gratiot. Because of a family connection, the North Street property caught his attention. Collins says, "My grandfather, Rolland Allen, was the postmaster of North Street in the 1940's. Before him, my great grandfather, Freeman Allen, was postmaster, and with my great grandmother, Elsie (London), ran the general store and railroad station in the 1930's." Collins says, "My grandfather told us many stories about North Street. During Prohibition, rum runners stopped by in the night, laid cash on the counter, and told everyone to stay inside while they filled up with gasoline. As postmaster, my grandfather was required to complete a federal census form. Where they asked for the population, he mistakenly entered the number of households served by the post office and North Street has been on the Michigan road map since. My mother, Kay (Allen), lived there as a little girl. She set pennies on the railroad track to be flattened by the next train, and I still have a few."



The North Street rail station, post office, and general store shown in the early 1930's. The new post office is located directly across the road. The person standing in the road at the rail crossing may be Rolland Allen, future postmaster of North Street in the 1940's.

Collins says that learning more about the old Pere Marquette Railroad has been interesting. "We've had a lot of input from local historians and residents. Until a few months ago, I didn't know the grandparents and great grandparents of my long-time Scouting friends, the Richard Morden family, originally of Fort Gratiot, were postmasters and managers of the Atkins station. And a girl I went to school with lives in the old Zion station."

This historic structure probably would have been demolished if not acquired by the Thumb Land Conservancy says Collins. "For now, we simply want to restore the exterior, install a few signs to describe the history, and make the property available as a local historical site. Eventually, it would be nice to restore the inside and open it once again as an old-fashioned general store and rail station."

Even before the property was acquired, the Thumb Land Conservancy was in contact with the Clyde Historical Society. Collins has been friends with Clyde Historical Society President, Janet Kruger, for years. They both knew Bertha Daubendiek, the late co-founder and leader of the Michigan Nature Association who lived near Janet along Mill Creek. The Clyde Historical Society and Thumb Land Conservancy are now working together to promote and fundraise for the restoration of the North Street property. "Having completed major restoration of the old

Clyde Township Hall, there is interest in pursuing other projects like this in Clyde Township” Kruger said.

The Clyde Historical Society was founded in 2003. The Society acquired the old Clyde Township Hall, built in 1879, and moved it to Bill Bearss Park in 2007. It is a very nicely restored structure with many items of Clyde Township history on display. Their annual Ox Roast Fundraiser is every August at Bill Bearss Park. The Clyde Historical Society meets the third Thursday of each month, March through November, at 7:00 PM at the restored township hall. For more information, visit their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1481890455361159/> or contact them at 810-324-2572.

The Thumb Land Conservancy was founded in 2008 and has three nature preserves in Saint Clair County, including the 18-acre Dead End Woods Sanctuary in Fort Gratiot, 12-acre Peltier Beach Ridge Sanctuary in Fort Gratiot, and the 39-acre Gerrits sanctuary near New Baltimore. All three preserves are open to the public. They also manage a 12-acre preserve in Huron County near Port Hope. For more information, visit their web site at: [ThumbLand.org](http://ThumbLand.org) or contact them at 810-346-2584 or [mail@ThumbLand.org](mailto:mail@ThumbLand.org).

The Thumb Land Conservancy and Clyde Historical Society are asking for your help in funding this project. Please make donations payable to the “Thumb Land Conservancy”, reference “North Street Project”, and mail to 4975 Maple Valley Road, Marlette, Michigan 48453. They also accept donations on their web site through PayPal. Donations of materials and labor are also needed.

Contact:  
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