

Milford Moments in Time

By Joyce M. Clark

Sherwood. To anyone who lives or visits the area, this name should sound familiar. After all, there is Lake Sherwood which covers not only a body of beautiful water, but also represents a fine subdivision. There is Sherwood Creek that flows through Camp Dearborn , as well as Sherwood Party Store on Commerce Road . But who are the Sherwoods? And are there any ancestors still living in the area?

Well it all started back in 1844, when Milford was just getting started (8 years old since it was established in 1832). John Sherwood was making bricks in North Cove, England and decided it was time to spread his wings. According to Garner Sherwood, fifth generation living in the area, back in the mid1800's people outside of America often heard about how America 's landscape was so fresh and brand new. Men like John, who had big dreams and ambition to match, often were drawn to the adventures they heard about in America and wanted to experience these adventures for themselves.

So after traveling across the ocean and working in a brickyard in New York to earn money, John took a boat trip through the Erie Canal and a stage coach to Pontiac , Michigan . He then walked the remaining 20 miles and landed at the doorstep of the Potts family.

The Potts, who started immigrating to Milford in 1833, were neighbors of the Sherwoods back in England . Since the Potts were the only people John knew in America , Milford seemed like a place he ought to visit.

The Potts had four boys and a girl (Susan). Susan Potts and John Sherwood took a shining to each other, now that Susan was all grown up, and as they say in the movies...they lived happily ever after (marrying on January 23, 1846.). That was just the beginning of the Sherwood family here in Milford .

John again turned to what he knew best and opened his owned brick-making business. John's bricks built the home across from the entrance of Camp Dearborn on General Motors Road. This home is still referred to as the Sherwood house by current family members. His bricks are also said to have built Milford 's first brick school building, the local Masonic Temple , and the building on the southeast corner of Main Street and Commerce (the previous McMartin's Jewelers and now For Feets Sake).

The second generation of Sherwoods took up farming while the third generation continued to farm and added Blacksmith to the family resume. It was with the third generation Blacksmith that the Sherwood family decided that when you needed a tool, you should make it rather than buy it.

The third generation (Robert Clayton Sherwood) acquired quite a bit of farm land from Walter Keller, brother of K.T. Keller (President of Chrysler starting in 1935) and with the assistance of the fourth generation, ended up selling a portion of their land 60 years ago to a local town that created Camp Dearborn . In gratitude of the sale, Dearborn gave the third generation Sherwoods a “life-time pass” to Camp Dearborn .

The future generations were not granted the pass, and yet felt drawn to the old family farm. And so began a type of informal ritual for the Sherwoods, where various family members would visit the old homestead via the “back door” (without paying park admittance). For example, during Betty Sherwood-Bullard’s (fifth generation) younger days, she would from time-to-time park her car near Camp Dearborn , climb a fence, and enjoy walking the grounds. One time, upon returning to her vehicle, she found some cows washing her car (licking the bumpers and hood).

The sixth-generation Sherwood-Bullards were known to have slipped into the park via canoe. The seventh-generation Sherwoods, teenagers and young adults now, have yet to disclose their method of admittance.

Raymond Sherwood, a fourth generation Sherwood, added road planning and development to the family resume since he was a Supervisor for the Oakland County Road Commission. During one assignment, Raymond helped a developer locate what is now known as Lake Sherwood , and in his gratitude, the developer named the area after the Sherwoods. Alton Sherwood, Raymond’s brother and a road commission employee for a short time, helped build M59.

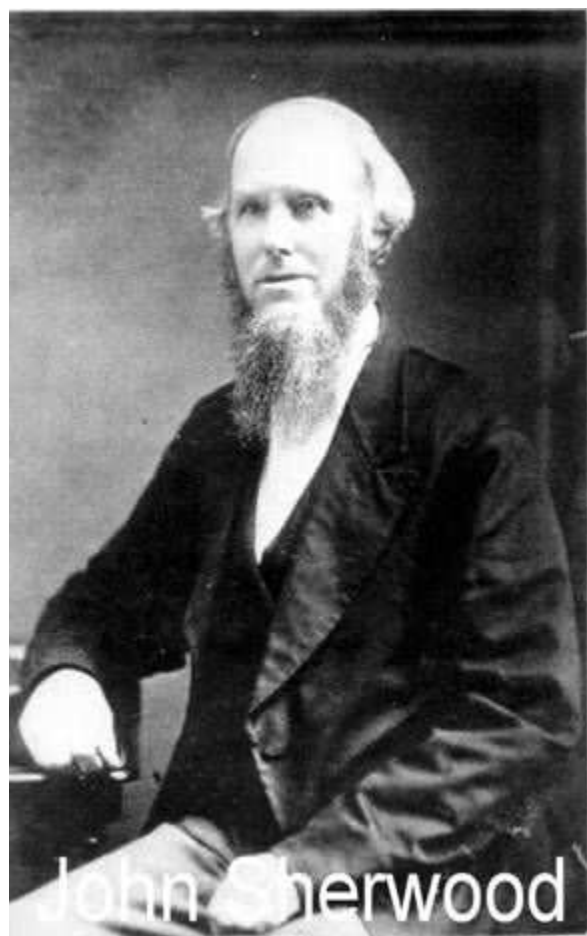
Even though various Sherwoods still live in the area, most have traveled outside of Milford from time to time and have even helped carry the name beyond Michigan ’s borders. For example, fifth generation Garner Sherwood owned a Vagabond Coach that his family used to tour America during summer vacations. A Vagabond was an early house trailer and the one Garner owned was made in 1938.

After over 40 years of touring, it was time to retire the fine Vagabond. At that point, Garner and his family donated the Vagabond to a museum they once visited in Minden , Nebraska called Pioneer Village . Visitors from all over America visit Garner’s Vagabond and view his daughter Cindy’s fine artwork painted around the license plate.

A lot has changed in Milford since John Sherwood first arrived back in the 1840’s. However, he might be pleased to know that fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth generation Sherwoods still enjoy living and raising their families in this area.

2007 is the 175th Anniversary of Milford and in celebration of this major milestone, we are asking you to share some of your stories with the rest of the community. If you have a little Milford history to pass along, please contact Sue

Bullard, Milford Historical Society President, 248.685.7308 or milfordhistory@yahoo.com. The Milford Historical Society is happy to document your story and share it with others.



Caption: First generation John Sherwood and Susan Potts.



Caption: Sherwoods gather in 1944 to celebrate 100th Anniversary of living in Milford . Back row: Robert Clayton Sherwood (3rd generation), Stewart Sherwood, Marjorie Sherwood, Iva Sherwood, Lura Sherwood (Robert's Wife), Bernice Sherwood Newcomb; Front row: Alton Sherwood, Oliver Newcomb, Perry Sherwood, Raymond Sherwood, Betty Sherwood, John Sherwood. Garner Sherwood is not in photo as he was still serving in the military.



Caption: Jesscia Sherwood (seventh generation) visits her grandpa Garner's Vagabond Coach at Pioneer Village in Minden, Nebraska.