

Essay:

Back to the Future

By: Ava E. Shiner, Age 10

Today, as a kid who attends St. Mary's Catholic School, I travel to school in a car on paved streets listening to the radio. Back in the 1800's, things were much different for a child of ten. In Mt. Clemens in 1818, there were no schools so children were taught very little, mostly at home by their moms but were most likely illiterate. Life was very hard for any child growing up in 1818 in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. They matured much quicker than kids in 2018 because they were forced to take on responsibilities that adults would do today. Things like hunting, fishing and trapping were normal for kids to do along with chores at home like feeding and taking care of any animals used for many uses. Life was tough for any kid my age in 1818.

For entertainment today we watch television, play on our iPods or go to the movies but in Mt. Clemens in 1818 kids had to entertain themselves. One place to do so was by the banks of the Huron River (known as the Clinton River today) where boats and canoes would travel up and down from Mt. Clemens to Detroit and back. Kids would sit on the banks of the river and watch as people and traders would travel to the big city of Detroit on a daily basis carrying food and supplies.

The winter months in Mt. Clemens were cold and snowy just like today but there was some entertainment. Many days a large number of sleighs would travel around with musicians playing music at all hours of the night. Kids could probably hear the sounds as they were getting ready for bed. Of course, they could also have snowball fights and slide down hills like we do today.

I can't imagine living in Mt. Clemens in 1818. I think I would miss all the comforts we have today but maybe I would like to try it for one day, and then come "back to the future"!

Bicentennial Essay

Erica Johnson

Back to the Future: Mount Clemens 1818

It's a cold winter day in Mount Clemens. I am a ten-year-old girl living here with my parents in late half of the year 1818. My mom wakes me up early so I can get ready to go to school for the day. Before leaving, I make my bed, get dressed, and eat some warm cereal my mom has made for me. I then must be out the door with my books in hand. My school is at the nearby log courthouse where myself and only a few other students of various ages share a class. The log house has two stories inside. The lower floor houses a small jail with a few cells sectioned off. I never go down there. The second floor has a small church, courthouse and my school room. Our school has very few books and supplies but we learn our math and reading to our best ability. I don't realize the tough job my teacher has with such limited resources but she helps us get through our lessons daily. When I come home from school, I have to do my homework, help my mom with making dinner, and clean the dishes afterwards.

I tell my mom and dad that today in school we were talking about some of the history of the village. Our village of Mount Clemens in 1818 has some exciting beginnings. My mom and dad tell me stories about how a man named Christian Clemens first came from Detroit to here back in 1795. Mr. Clemens helped to clear the land for development in hopes for a village and people to come settle. My dad tells me that Mr. Clemens and Governor Lewis Cass were the ones who discovered this area and it is named Mount Clemens after Mr. Clemens. I ask, "where does Mr. Clemens live"? My mom tells me that he has returned to our village this year with his family. It is in his honor, they have named our community. I am amazed at how much at all of this and want to hear more. My dad tells me of how earlier this year, our streets were laid out by Mr. Clemens, Governor Lewis and General Alexander Macomb. These men name the village streets Front, Court, and Walnut that run parallel to our main waterway, River Huron. They also plotted out the other four streets Cass, Macomb, New, and Market. I didn't know until now that these streets were linked to these famous people in our village!

I look outside and the darkness of the day is setting into our house. My mom reminds me that there is another day ahead of me at school tomorrow. Also, dad must be up early to fish and hunt along the river banks. My mom helps me off to bed. The light in my room is dim. Mom readies the oil lamp next to my bed table. I wash-up quickly with the cool water in the basin in our small washroom. Before I go off to sleep, my mom reminds me that life here is a blessing to our family and the path ahead of us is just beginning as a new year is upon us. My mom kisses me Goodnight. Although I feel too awake to fall asleep, I still close my eyes. I smile and feel grateful for my family and this place that I call home; Mount Clemens!

Back to the Future

By: Bella Farah

Back to the Future

Brielle was 10 years old. She lived in Mount Clemens. Mount Clemens was not called Mount Clemens in 1818, when our story takes place. It was actually just a village.

Every day, 10-year-old Brielle would get up at an average time for a school day. Brielle would get dressed in a nice dress, of course not too fancy considering the lack of money her family had. She would walk, and sometimes run to school. At school, she sits next to a five-year-old on the left, and a 15-year-old on the right. Her teacher, Mrs. Gardewaise would teach them math, science, reading, spelling, English, and more in the one room school house. At recess, everybody would play by the Canton River. At dismissal kids would walk home to their log cabins by the river.

Dinner was some meat that the father had killed from an animal or leftovers. Most families didn't have a lot of money, and a hundred dollars was a lot to them. After dinner, she would either go to bed, or read a book, or write letters, or play with her siblings outside.

They didn't have any phones or electronics back then. So, when kids wanted to talk to each other they had to meet or use letters. Mount Clemens did have a post office back then.

Back then was a simpler time, but it was still pretty fun.

Christopher Mingle

My name is Christopher Conway, I am 10 yrs old and my family runs the general store in the town of Mount Clemons. We moved here from Detroit after my father returned from the war of 1812. He was part of the Mount Clemens Rifle Guard. He wore grey shirt with green facings and large brass buttons. My mother and I stayed in Detroit during the war of 1812 because it was not safe in Mount Clemons during the war. After the war we made the two day journey down "the lake road" now called Graciot, to Mount Clemons by horse and wagon bringing the goods needed to open up our general store.

One of my chores is to get water. I use a yoke, a stick that goes across my shoulders with two buckets attached at the ends. I walk one mile to the Huron river, I have my favorite water spot where it is easy to get my buckets filled with water, and then I walk the mile back trying not to spill it. Wash day is Wednesday I have to make several trips that day, not my favorite day of the week. We also get water by putting out barrels to collect the water and in the winter we melt snow. Getting water is hard work.

Another chore that I have is the chickens and their eggs. It all starts with a keeping a clean chicken coop. This involves cleaning up the dropping every day. I take the droppings to the fields that we will use next year and spread it around for fertilizer. Then I clean nest to make sure I get the best eggs, I do this by giving them fresh hay. I also need to give them fresh water and food. The chickens eat anything, we feed them all of our food scraps and in the winter we feed them dried corn. I even grind up their shells from the eggs we eat and feed it back to them, this helps the new egg shells stay strong. To preserve the eggs for ourselves and to sell in the store I put them in a crock with some powdered quicklime that we get from Detroit, mix it with water to fill the crock and they will last for a year this way. This is great because our chickens do not lay eggs year round.

Mount Clemons was a great place to settle it has many resources for us. Every day I store growing bigger.

Bicentennial Essay Contest

Name: Jack Janusch

Bicentennial Essay Contest

Hello, my name is Jack Janusch and I am ten years old. After doing some research about Mt. Clemens, I have learned a lot about how it began. Life in Mt. Clemens, MI in the year 1818 was much different than in our soon to be year 2018. The first settlement in Mt. Clemens was in 1781. Christian Clemens land was only seven blocks plus the courthouse square. The village lots were approximately 60x90 feet. Early histories believed that there were 15 families living in village. The 1820 census showed there were 37 households and 247 people living in the village. Cooperage and glass making were early economic activities. In 1797, a distillery, salt well, and hardware store was built. This was all done before the war in 1812. In 1819 a log courthouse was built. The jail was in the lower story. The upper story had the courthouse. The little village did not have a school or church building, so they were both taught in the courthouse. Before 1819, children were taught by their parents at home. Many children worked a long side of their parents and were raised to help the family farm or business. Most families did not do much reading and school work at home. Parents were busy trying to keep their families fed and have a place to live. Once the courthouse was built and there was a place to school the children, this helped the parents to educate their children.

In the new town of Mt. Clemens, the main transportation was the river. The river was named the Huron, but because there were so many Huron bodies of water, they renamed it the Clinton River in 1824. Mt. Clemens had only one man made trail called the Moravian Trail that could be taken to Detroit. In 1827, they began building a military road to connect Detroit to Fort Gratiot. The road reached Mt. Clemens by 1831. By the time Michigan became a state in

1837, the town of Mount Clemens had between 800 and 1000 residents and was large enough to have a separate government from the township of Clinton.

In 2017 the Christian Clemens village has turned into a modern city. It still will have challenges in the next century just like in 1818. Mount Clemens has spirit and embraces history and looks toward the future. Mount Clemens is the center of a thriving county.

I started going to school at St. Mary Catholic School in Mt. Clemens five years ago. It was the first year the school was in the new building on Union St. I have made lots of friends that live all around the Macomb county area. I have also been able to visit restaurants and shops in Mount Clemens that I would have not done if I did not go to school here. I have lived in Chesterfield all my life. It was nice to read and learn more about how Mt. Clemens began.

Back to the Future

Emma Dobrzycki

My name is Emma and I live in Mount Clemens. Mt. Clemens is a small town. There are not a lot of people who live in town. Most people live on farms outside of town. My family is one of the many families who live on a farm. Our farm is really big with lots of open land surrounding it. In the middle of our land we have a small, but beautiful house. I help my mother take care of our house. My father takes care of the farm. I've been helping my father with extra chores around the farm too.

Today started out like every other day. My mother woke me up before sun rise to begin my chores. I got clothed and went to the barn where I milked the cows and collected eggs from the chickens. The chickens were not happy today, so when I tried to collect the eggs, one of the chickens pecked at me, but the cows were settled. Then I walked back to the house. My mother and I made a splendid breakfast from the eggs I collected. When breakfast was over, my mother and I cleaned up the dishes and the kitchen. My morning chores are done, so now we are off to school.

My brother and I go to school in a small one room school house. We have to leave early because it is a one mile walk to school. I have to take my five year old little brother with me. At school we learn about math, reading, and writing in a small room. Kids of all ages are there, so it is very crowded. Math is my least favorite subject because it is the hardest for me, but I like reading and writing. My teacher gives us time to go outside and play with our friends. My brother usually gets really dirty outside. After class is over I walk home with my friends and my brother.

When we get home from school, I have to wash my brother and get him some clean clothes. Then it is back to work helping my mother. I help her make bread, churn the butter, make cheese, and help with preserving the foods. When we are done with the food, I have to

jump right in to making candles and washing the laundry. I do not mind making candles, but washing clothes is hard work.

It is getting dark, so father comes in for story time and dinner. At dinner we eat the bread I made and use the fresh butter I churned. Mother makes a delicious meal.

My day is almost done, but we still have to do my favorite thing. I love sewing. My mother taught me how to make doll clothes first. Now she is teaching me how to make my own clothes. I even make some for my little brother. Sewing is my favorite part of the day.

Now it is time for bed. Mother and father tuck us in and we say a prayer.

Ryan Baughman

“Back to the Future”

It was a harsh winter in 1807, the year of my birth. We were low on food, and to make things worse harsh storms and blinding blizzards were increasing. Mom and Dad were saving every penny so that I could be raised in a new home where life seemed promising.

Since land was recently for sale near the river, people took full advantage of that. Some of those people were my parents. When we moved, my dad found a job working at a tannery. There he smoothed out the rough animal skins to make them soft and clean. He even gave me one to put in my room as a rug.

A new person came into the same place where we were living. Little did I know, that person was the famous Christian Clemens. He was born in Pennsylvania and later moved to Detroit before coming to the village that would one day be named after him.

So many years passed and before I knew it I was five. But things still weren't perfect. A war broke out with Britain. Many soldiers risked their lives to fight in the war. Some people even came to random houses to ask them to join the war. I was glad that I was just a kid. In order to survive we had to ration our food. Soon it was like we were down to breadcrumbs and grains of salt. The war finally did pass, and our small town finally got a name, Mount Clemens, named after Christian Clemens.

Being an 11-year-old boy in 1818 in Mt. Clemens, I spent the day helping my parents tend the farm and keep our small house tidy. One of the jobs that I hated was to go down to the Clinton River and help unload the boats from Detroit. A lot of the supplies we needed to

live and build the village came from there. My dad told me that it took a whole day for the boats to make it down to us.

Aside from work at home, I had to be sure I made time to study on my own at home since there were no schools to go to. I always wondered what it would be like to be in a school with kids my age instead of my pesky little brother always bothering me. My family and I all went to church at a space upstairs above the jail in the courthouse. I always wanted to grow deeper in my religion especially since my parents kept saying to trust in God that good things are coming our way. I hoped one day we would have a real church we could go to.

I have noticed day-by-day that the town has been growing and new roads are being made so that our time traveling on the river would be shorter. More buildings were being built, and more people have been moving into our village. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for Mt. Clemens!

Keegan Walker

I woke up, the sun shimmered in my eyes. I took a deep breath and let a vision form into my mind: a big town with many people swarming into the many shops, candles flickering in the night. I opened my eyes to see my sad little room in the tiny happy house. Finally, I would be moving to Mount Clemens, a big city compared to this tiny farm in Buffalo, New York.

We arrived after a week of hard traveling. The street was light up with candlelight as I predicted. Pa kept walking toward our claim, it was huge and beautiful. "It's beautiful here", I whispered, so only Pa could hear. "It sure is", he whispered back. "And soon I will build us a nice clean cabin. Until then we will be staying at the hotel right around the corner," Pa said so Ma and my sister could hear. As we walked down the skirts of the town I noticed many "coming soon" signs attached to many unfinished doors on unfinished buildings. We made our way to the hotel with many people in it, all who were waiting for their cabins to be built and in the meantime, would stay at the hotel. As we walked up to the front desk I noticed the deck was full of amazingly bright flowers and vine. When we walked into the room I was amazed to see how big and beautiful it was. As I put on my night garments and got tucked into bed I realized how amazing the next day would be. When I woke up the next day, Pa was gone. I asked Ma where he was and she replied, "your father has gone to find supplies for our claim, Lily. Today we will be walking through town to see what we can find."

Later that day when Pa had returned my family walked through town. Ma told me, "this would not be normal day for me. When our claim was done a normal day will be full of chores and school work. Since there is no school built as of now I will teach you myself Lily. It may be boring sometimes." I thought to myself, how could anything in the great town of Mount Clemens be boring?

Nolan Apsey

I was a ten year old boy,
the year was 1818 in Mt. Clemens,
Michigan. My daily activities included, first thing I would do was eat breakfast, then help out on the farm. My work on the farm included, cleaning-up the horses' business and feeding them. Then I would collect the hen's eggs for the next day. The next part of my morning was going to my schoolhouse. We learned math, reading, and spelling. I would walk home for lunch and then I would walk back to school and spend the rest of the day learning. In the evening I would feed the horses, eat dinner, play a game of checkers and sing songs with my family. I would go to bed really early because I had to get up so early to tend to my jobs on the Farm.