

Renewed Remembering: The Newsletter of the Conneaut Area Historical Society

Volume 1 Issue 9

September 2023



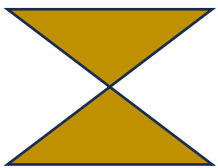
We Remember

“Remembering” was the name of the original Conneaut Area Historical Society newsletter. Joan Barnett was the last editor, and with her death and the Covid pandemic the newsletter has not been published for a time. It seemed fitting to name this new version of the old newsletter “Renewed Remembering,” in honor of the former editors including Louise Legeza and Joan Barnett who edited and published the newsletter for so many years. We hope you enjoy it!

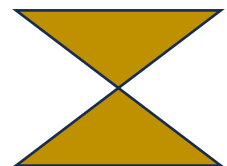
The President's Paragraph

The Conneaut Area Historical Society wants to thank you for your continued support. As always, new members are welcome. You can call: 440-599-6011 with further questions or write to Conneaut Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 563, Conneaut Ohio, 44030. Our street address is: 518 Mill Street.

Time Travel Tuesday



Travel through time with Us on Time Travel Tuesday on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Conneaut Public Library. This month's program will be Pioneer Portraits in Conneaut and Ashtabula County with Kathy Warnes. Travel with us!



Accomplishments and Aspirations

The Conneaut Area Historical Museum is continuing to recover from its season of Covid. During our post-Covid seasons, we established a research library for history buffs, genealogists, and other interested people to use. We created a website to present historical articles and history items and programs about Conneaut and the surrounding area. It also features historical videos, fiction, and non-fiction. Please check us out at: <https://capturingconneauthistory.com/>

Here are a few of our website stories and the links to them:

Bob Blickensderfer Profiles Paleo- Americans

<https://capturingconneauthistory.com/2023/03/10/robert-blickensderfer-profiles-paleo-americans-1960s-1970s/>

History of Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries

<https://capturingconneauthistory.com/history-of-happy-hearts-school-and-ashcraft-industries-crafted-from-the-hearts-of-caring-people-book-length-version/>

Stories for kids and the young-at-heart.

Elephants Cheerily Swim in Lake Erie.

<https://capturingconneauthistory.com/elephants-cheerily-swim-in-lake-erie-2/>

Reverend Badger and the Bear.

<https://capturingconneauthistory.com/reverend-badger-and-the-bear/>

We brought back some time-tested practices that the original museum founders had established. We now have a newsletter that we named Renewed Remembering to give it a sense of continuity with its original name, Remembering.

We resumed our monthly history programs that we call Time Travel Tuesdays, with speakers presenting different events in Conneaut and Ashtabula County History.

Some of our innovations for the 2023 season include new displays, a new book for sale called “Tales (Some Tall) of Conneaut and Ashtabula County and a book about the venerable St. Mary’s Church by local author Mary Lou Lardi. Board Member Debbie Herbal introduced a Barn Quilt Contest at our July Time Travel Tuesday and is waiting for a person to find the barn! We have introduced a new patron advertising feature in our newsletter, and the Octagon House has been painted and will eventually be open to tours by appointment and some special programs.

We have a Model T Ford, and exhibits featuring vintage businesses, tools, clothing, the Creamerie, and original firefighting equipment to name just a few. Our official season closes on Labor Day, but we will conduct tours by appointment, weather permitting.

Museum Steering Committee

Karl Rowbotham

Jerry Janco

Jerry Anderson

Delmas Bennett

Debbie Herbal

Mo Tanner

Nancy Lamb

Kathy Warnes

Museum Officers

President: Jim Jones

Vice President: Jerry Janco

Secretary: Debbie Jones

Treasurer: Pat Jones

Historian: Kathy Warnes

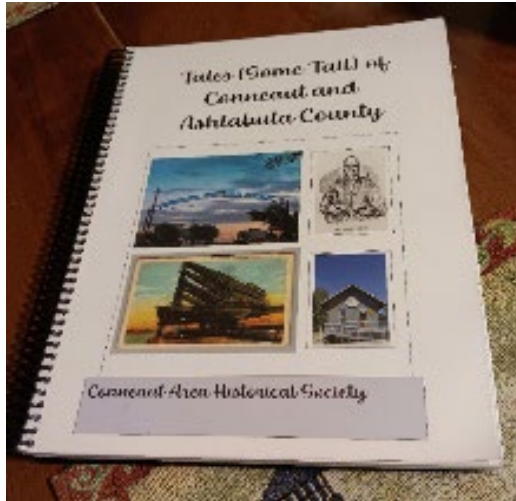
Needed: Museum Volunteers!

We need Enthusiastic and Dedicated Volunteers to help us help the Conneaut Area Historical Museum realize its full historical potential. Lend us your willing hands, hearts, and minds to help our museum grow. Be a Museum Volunteer!

We Need Gently Used Notebooks

If you have some gently used binders that you are willing to donate to a new home, please bring them to the museum or give them to a museum officer or steering committee member. We are in the process of organizing documents and pictures into collections and your notebooks will be welcome and well-treated.

Tales, (Some Tall) of Conneaut and Ashtabula County



The Conneaut Area Historical Museum introduces its latest publication: *Tales (Some Tall) of Conneaut and Ashtabula County*. Yes, there are still some untold or just lightly touched. For example, did you know that Elizabeth Stiles of Ashtabula spied for President Abraham Lincoln and the Union during the Civil War? Read about her gallant and often tragic life. We are asking for a \$25.00 donation for our book, with all proceeds going to improve the Conneaut Area Historical Museum.

You can purchase the book at Gerdes Pharmacy, from a Museum Board member, or by appointment at the Museum.

The Historical Hulett

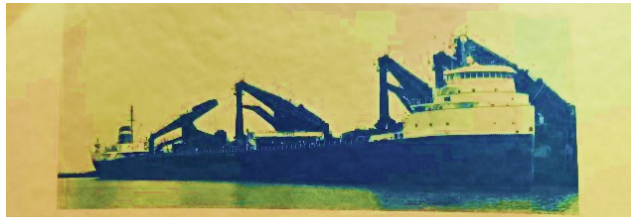
The Hulett unloader was both something to behold and an engineering masterpiece with approximately 80 built between 1898 and 1954. In Conneaut and Huron, the original steam engines were replaced by electric Hulettts. Other docks replaced small, older electric machines with larger designs or made do with the same Hulett for as much as seventy years.

Virtually all Hulettts were built for service on the American side of the Great Lakes for unloading iron ore. At least one was built, however, in New York City to unload of all things – garbage! Another pair of machines saw duty at Port Reading (Philadelphia) for unloading ocean ore freighters.

In Canada, two Hulettts were built for a Canadian Pacific coal dock at Fort William, Ontario. This was unusual because a Hulettts bucket didn't really have the cubic capacity to be an efficient coal unloading rig.

By the 1980s the Hulett was beginning to disappear from the Great Lakes scene. They were expensive to build- up to three million dollars a piece by the mid-1950s- maintain, and operate, but more importantly they had been superseded by more efficient equipment. Major advances had been made in materials handling that rendered the Hulett obsolete in the modern age. What was once a major breakthrough in handling iron ore machinery had been surpassed by conveyor belts and other equipment. (Eric Hirsimaki, *Hulettts of the Ore Docks of the Lower Lakes.*)

Hulett's and other Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Happenings:



Jones, Jerry Anderson, and Jim Lyon

Jim Jones, Jerry Anderson, and Jim Lyon were not around when Moses Cleaveland and his surveying party landed in Conneaut in 1796. They also did not witness Captain Erastus Day building the Conneaut Docks or Andrew Carnegie and Carnegie Steel creating the Pittsburgh and Conneaut Dock Company and building it into a major coal and ore port on the Great Lakes, ranking in the top tier of Great Lakes ports.

These three Conneaut citizens, Jim, Jerry, and Jim are long-time dock employees who spent decades working on the docks during the P&C thriving

years as a major port, when the dock shaped the futures of Conneaut and its people as well as the Great Lakes.

Jim Jones, Jerry Anderson, and Jim Lyon reminisced about their experiences at the P&C Dock at the Conneaut Historical Society's August 2023 Time Travel Tuesday program. Even though they worked at the docks just a few decades before the docks downsized instead of expanding, their experiences are important parts of the historical legacy of the docks. All three of them project a "home port" aura when the Pittsburgh and Conneaut Docks are mentioned.

Jim Jones, 39 years at the P & C

Conneaut Historical Society President Jim Jones is modest but at the same time proud about his time on the Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock. He started as a laborer and while working his way up the dock hierarchy, he learned to operate all of the dock equipment. He recalled that his

working conditions were “dusty, dirty, and noisy,” and at times, the eight-to-sixteen-hour workdays sapped his energy and being on call was “murderous.” On the positive side, he enjoyed the feelings of accomplishment, a job well done, and a decent living wage.

One of the big drawbacks of long hard-working days was the dent they made in family time. “I thank my wife for a lot,” he said, adding that most dockworkers and sailors had to juggle their time at the docks and on the boats with their time at home. Their wives played a major part in lasting marriages because often they had the sole responsibility for maintaining their homes and children while their husbands were working or sailing.

But paradoxically, Jim added, the dockworkers were one big family. People knew and socialized with their fellow workers both inside and outside of the docks, and dock employees often spanned generations.

One of the noteworthy events that occurred at the P&C Dock while Jim worked there took place in 1964, when the P&C Docks underwent major construction and expansion. As part of its ending efforts to keep pace with modern technology, the P&C Dock Company acquired a new conveyor system for its coal docks. Since he worked on the coal docks, Jim knows more than a little something about coal dock machinery. Bucket wheel reclaimers handle and move large amounts of bulk material in a short time. They are designed as bucket wheel reclaimers or as combined bucket wheel stacker reclaimers to handle Mt. Everest piles of coal, ore and other material in ports and other industries.

He discussed the merits of the McDowell Wellman reclaim wheels, bucket wheel excavators and train positioner/car dumper systems, comparing and contrasting them with the German thyssenkrupp Engineering Models. His verdict: “Krupp was the Cadillac.”

Jim highlighted some of the maritime events that took place at the P&C Docks and in Conneaut maritime history and during his time at the docks. He noted that Conneaut is the only port in the world that has a

four-track swing bridge and that fishermen wanted the moveable bridge so that they could fish. In 1967, Conneaut was the first port to unload two ships at the same time. He added that Conneaut with the help of favorable geography, George Hulett and his Huletts, Andrew Carnegie, and the hardworking P&C Dock workers was second to only Cleveland as a primary ore unloading port and is a St. Lawrence Seaway Port. Jim sums up Conneaut his homeport and his career on the P&C docks. “It was a good place to work,” he says with quiet pride.

Jim Lyon, 34 years at the P&C Docks

Dedicated Conneaut Historical Museum Volunteer Jim Lyon worked on the Huletts in the Electric Shop, ensuring they could effectively operate on the docks.. Jim said that much of the structure of his workday depended on the absence or presence of the ships that brought cargo to the docks and the efficiency of the Huletts in loading the cargo into railroad cars. Problems with the operations of the Huletts or the cars impacted his working days and times.

He described shifts stretching from seven o’clock in the morning until 7 o’clock in the evening. At other times, he experienced a workday that could be cut short if there were no boats in port and worked long uncertain hours if the boats were in port and needed to be unloaded.

Through years of day to day, up close and personal experience with Huletts gained Jim a close understanding of their history and operations and familiarity with the Conneaut and Great Lakes maritime world. He said that most steam powered Huletts were gone by the 1920s, and even though he spent his working years at the P&C Dock keeping Huletts operational, he foresaw that self-unloading ships like the MV Roger Blough would eventually displace Huletts as the primary means of unloading cargoes which they had done by the 1980s. He knew that red ore was hard to move, and taconite pellets were slippery.

Expanding on the fact that Conneaut Harbor is the only port in the world possessing a four-track swing bridge, he commented that workers constructed a concrete cofferdam around the bridge so that pranksters or saboteurs could not move it.

Although he was not technically a sailor, Jim acquired sailor and marine wisdom. He mentioned that self-unloader crews did not get much shore leave, and neither did sailors. He said that the ships of the United States Steel fleet employed good cooks and the crews were probably the best fed sailors on the Great Lakes.

And with a laugh, he remembered that on the P&C Docks, “There was always a keg of beer!”

Jerry Anderson, 39 Years, Eleven Months at the P&C Docks

Conneaut Historical Museum Board Member Jerry Anderson described his first days with the Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock, “I headed out in March 1971 and spent the next 39 years, eleven months working there.” He said he started at the bottom of the dock pecking order, shoveling ore and a lot of “grunge work.” Learning quickly and determined to do a good job, in two years he had proven his worth as a willing and hard worker and in the spring of 1973 he qualified for a four year electrical apprenticeship. During his apprenticeship he learned electricity basics and more specifically the basics of electrically maintaining Hulettts. He would later transfer his knowledge of electricity to more civilian occupations, including the electric jobs around the Conneaut Historical Museum.

As the 1960s and 1970s progressed, P&C Dock continued to try to keep in step with the times. Jerry reported that at one point the Docks employed 315 hourly people, 125 salaried people, and at least five Hulettts. Although he recalled four workers being killed during his time at the Docks, Jerry said that the Dock administrators always emphasized safety.

By the 1980s and 1990s, technology outpaced the iron and steel industries and the increasingly larger Great Lakes vessels transitioned into self-unloaders and workers left the P&C for better opportunities as it downsized. Despite its losing battle with marine engineering and technology, the Pittsburgh and Conneaut Dock

was the first dock facility to blend western coal with high sulfur coal to be better burning coal with fewer emissions.

Although he concluded that the P&C Dock was an “interesting place to work”, Jerry also said that on zero degree morning with freshly falling snow, he doesn’t miss the Docks “one bit.”



The MV Roger Blough made its maiden voyage to Conneaut Harbor on November 21, 1972. Captain Joseph N. Rolfson Jr. was presented a plaque in commemoration of the event by Vice-President and General Superintendent C. H. McGuirk. Its initial cargo of taconite pellets was more than 46,000 tons.

Conneaut Harbor and P&C Timeline



(Raymond Welsh and P&C Dock Company Documents)

- July 3 & 4. 1796, Moses Cleaveland and his surveying party of 52 arrive on the Conneaut beach and begin to build a storehouse for supplies and shelter before they begin their exploration journey further south.
- 1825. Not much was done at the future Conneaut Harbor until the U.S. government made its first appropriation and docks were built in 1825.
- From 1825 to 1869, Conneaut Harbor was the largest and best port on this shore of the lake, all boats stopping there for fuel. A great passenger business was also carried on. Such steamers as the Charter, Indiana, and Southern made regular stops, besides exporting a great quantity of lumber, staves, wheat, and oats. The imports were mostly supplies for the surrounding country. Wagons came from Pittsburgh, in fact, for all of those cities, for their supplies. There were five large warehouses located along the river owned by John Hall, Calvin Appleby, Ike Ford, and A. Fargo.
- 1825-1860. A large number of boats were built in Conneaut Harbor, being second to none in size. Captain O. Capron was perhaps the most prominent in ship building. Some of the boats built by him were as follows: Monitor, Anna Maria, Conneaut, Valentine, T.B. Rice, M. Capron and the scow, Times. There were also a number of boats built by other parties. They included the steamers North America, Constitution, Constellation. Built were the brigs Banner Lucy A. Blossom and the schooners Nightingale, Indianola, Telegraph, Traveler, O'Graila, Rosenberg, Richards, J.W. Brown, May

- Guthrie, Venture, Conneaut Packet, Kate Jillet, Sea Bird, H.G. Stamback, Henry McKinney, J.B. Skinner, Dan Markle, Snow Drop, and many others.
- 1827. Fleets of both sailing and steam crafts increased in number and tonnage capacity until boats of six or eight hundred tons were common. It became necessary to build a long pier out into the lake at a point about one mile west of Conneaut Harbor, about the area where Township Park is now located. The Government appropriated \$7,500 dollars to build two piers, each two hundred feet long, one on each side of the river. (Emil Bartone, Dock Talk, June 1978).
 - 1829. The Conneaut pier project is completed, and Conneaut Harbor had an entrance one hundred feet wide with twelve feet of water. This completed project stimulated a rapid increase in marine growth and made using the up-lake pier unnecessary. Conneaut became known as one of the best deep-water harbors on Lake Erie. Leading ship captains from Conneaut in the 1830s included Captains Calvin and Gilman Appleby and L.B. Goldsmith. Andrew and William Lent, Howard and George Foster, Marshal and Orange Capron, the Bloods, the Salisburys, and Captains West, House, and Coughlin were busily involved in freight service. The principal shippers Robert Lyon, D.N. Webster, and Cyrus Cleveland had to build and line the dock which is now Dock 1 with warehouses to handle the freight traffic. (Emil Bartone, Dock Talk, June 1978).
 - 1837. Contractor David Noble performed the first dredging of Conneaut Harbor.
 - 1865-1888. Scarcely anything done.
 - 1888. Colonel Dick of Meadville, Pennsylvania, assisted by A.M. Cox, S.J. Smith, G.M. Whitney, A.C. Huidicoper, succeeded in getting a railroad from the coal fields to the harbor and from that time on, things began to boom. In 1890, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad was completed, the docks rebuilt, and three dredges put to work widening the channel and now the largest boat that sails the lake can turn without the least of trouble. Four Brown Hoists were built and afterwards, two King hoists were put up. Besides this, the harbor supports ten whirligigs.
 - 1892. Andrew Carnegie established the Pittsburgh and Conneaut Dock in 1892 with the intention of bringing iron ore into Pittsburgh. The first ore dock is completed at Conneaut Harbor and the steamer Charles J. Kershaw unloaded 1,130 tons of iron ore, the first movement of iron ore via the Great Lakes to Conneaut.
 - 1893. The Pittsburgh and Conneaut Dock Company was incorporated on March 8, 1893.

- 1893. In 1893, the receipts of ore were 203,207 tons, the shipments 135,930, leaving a balance on dock May 1, 1904, of 68,484 tons. In 1894, the receipts were 237,905 tons on dock. December 1, 1894, 199,365 tons on dock. March 1, 1895, 157, 544 tons. Besides the ore handled, there was in 1893, 23, 183 tons of coal shipped and in 1894, 89,023 tons, which shows a steady growth and the outlook for the coming season is very flattering. With the two Conneaut and Port Dover ferryboats under construction, Conneaut expects to do immense business.
- 1897. The P&C Coal dock had its beginnings in 1897 when a slip of 1,300 feet long and 163 feet wide was dredged out and a dock constructed.
1897. Andrew Carnegie created the Pittsburgh, Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad to haul iron ore to Pittsburgh.
- March 20, 1898. The world's first Hulett is constructed at the Conneaut docks of the Pittsburgh, Shenango & Lake Erie Railroad, a subsidiary of the Carnegie Steel Company. Tradition has it that Andrew Carnegie sponsored George Hulett's idea for the unloading machine in the spring of 1898 at a cost of \$40,000 and was in service at the start of the navigation season. It was built on the new "Dock 4" which at very recently been equipped with a battery of four "Fast Plants" which made it easy to compare the efficiency of the two machines. This new dock was intended to be the primary ore handling facility in the harbor and featured the most modern equipment. "The Hulett Automatic Unloading Machine" quickly proved its worth. It unloaded ships faster and with fewer crews than any other machine. (Eric Hirsimaki, from Huletts of the Ore Docks of the Lower Lakes.)
- In 1901, J.P. Morgan, the most powerful banker in the United States, bought Carnegie Steel Corporation and merged it with nine other steel companies to form the United States Steel Corporation which was capitalized at \$1.4 billion dollars.
- 1924. Conneaut had nine Huletts, five of them electrically operated. Space to store nearly three million tons of ore was developed on the East side of Conneaut Creek behind the Huletts.
- 1964. The Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad Company constructs a coal conveyor storage and reclaiming system which is operated under contract by the Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Company. It was developed to eliminate surges, delays, and shutdowns in the coal and railroad industries, and permits coal to be shipped to Conneaut for storage on a year-round basis. Present storage capacity is 4,000,000 tons. (Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Publication, undated).

- 1973. Coal Statistics from 1951 to 1973 for the Pittsburgh & Conneaut Docks. The 1973 statistic is 6, 938, 300 tons, compared to the 1951 total of 2, 332,000. (Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Publication, undated).
- Shipments were at a peak in the mid 1970's with thriving business from the steel industry of Pittsburgh, Youngstown and Sharon, PA. The coal business was also higher with 12 million tons a year but the switch to nuclear power has decreased the need for coal over the last 10 to 15 years.
- While one area of work may slack off, P & C created other specialized services that keep them in high demand. Blending various grades of coal to get specific chemical analysis of sulfur which meets regional requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency standards is one example.
- "It is something we have more capability to do than most other docks," Porter said.
- With 20 miles of conveyer systems on the 500 acres of dock and storage area, there was a need for testing of the conveyers. The company developed its expertise and offered the service to other ports. Although owned by P & C, the conveyer maintenance company was operated under a separate name.
- Late 1970s. Self unloading ships foretell the demise of the Hulett's.
- 1980s. The steel industry in the United States falls on hard economic times, which adversely affects all Great Lakes port cities, including Conneaut.
- 1990s. Self unloading ships make the Hulett's obsolete.
- 1992. Hulett's no longer unload ships on the Great Lakes, and they were dismantled, either for future reincarnation or scrap.
- 2004. In 2004, the Canadian National Railroad acquired the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad and currently operates it as its Bessemer subdivision.
- Thursday, April 15, 2004. The U.S. Surface Transportation Board Friday approved Canadian National's acquisition of three railroads that serve the steel industry as part of the railroad's purchase of Great Lakes Transportation LLC.
Canadian National said last October it had agreed to buy two short line railroads, a switching company, and a fleet of eight Great Lakes bulk vessels for \$380 million. The railroads are: The Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway Co. a 212-mile railroad that carries iron ore from Minnesota's Mesabi iron range to Iowa and Wisconsin for transfer to connecting railroads or lake vessels serving steel mills in the East, South or Midwest, including key customers U.S. Steel and Ispat-Inland Steel.

The Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad Co., which primarily carries coal and iron ore between the Lake Erie port of Conneaut, Ohio, and blast furnaces in the Pittsburgh area, including U.S. Steel, Ontario Power Generation and AK Steel.

The Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Co., a switching railroad that handles ship-to-rail and rail-to-ship transfers for the Bessemer and Lake Erie.

“This minor transaction connects two transportation systems that do not compete, but complement each other, and will improve rail transportation in this part of the Great Lakes region,' said Roger Nober, STB chairman, in a statement announcing the decision. 'I expect CN will work hard to integrate the companies smoothly so that shippers in the region.

Nober made the decision by himself, since he is the only person on the three-member board, pending Senate confirmation of two new board members nominated by President Bush.

The STB imposed several conditions on the transaction, requiring:

- * STB oversight of the transaction for one year.
- * CN to keep all existing active gateways open.
- * CN to waive its defenses regarding rate regulations on bottleneck line segments created by the transaction.
- * CN to adhere to the terms of the settlement reached with the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. regarding potential construction build-outs.
- * CN to address certain concerns raised by some shippers about the change in the competitive balance where CN and Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway operate parallel lines.

The STB has no jurisdiction over CN's acquisition of Great Lakes Fleet Inc. The U.S. Maritime Administration and the Coast Guard must approve that part of the deal.

Dock Talk Doings

Iron Ore Record

The records showed that the Dock Company's five Hulett's unloaded one third of all the ore received at Lake Erie Ports during the 1955 season. A monumental task!

Telequiz

The wives of four employees responded correctly when quizzed by telephone about the safety rule currently posed on the Company's bulletin boards. They proved they knew the weekly rule and won for their families two decks of playing cards, each backed with a different scene of Conneaut Harbor.

Winner for each week and the rule they quoted are:

Week of December 4, 1972, Mrs. John Rebera, Rule A 27: There are safe, risky, and dangerous ways of doing every job. We want only the SAFE one used here.

Week of December 11, 1972, Mrs. Ron Nichels, Rule 25.6. Smoking or use of open lights is strictly forbidden in battery rooms.

Week of December 18, 1972, Mrs. Jacob Kesatie, Rule 24.2. Do not stand or walk under the empty hook of a crane.

Week of December 25, 1972, Mrs. Roger Bonnaud, Rule 20.6. Individuals working near moving conveyor belts must wear close fitting clothing which cannot become caught in moving parts. They must not permit rags or waste to hang from pockets.

Each employee should check the bulletin board and note the new Safety Rule of the Week. He should advise his family when it is so that when the Telequizzier calls his home, his family can respond with the correct answer. Remember: SAFETY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR JOB!

(Dock Talk, January, 1973)

Join Our Patrons Program!

The Conneaut Area Historical Museum is excited to announce a new Merchant Patron program which is available to any local business who desires to help our museum to function and improve. For \$50 per year (January to December) we will include your business name and phone number in the publications the museum produces, including a monthly newsletter, any future books the museum produces, and our website.

If interested, send your donation of \$50.00 to P.O. Box 563, Conneaut, Ohio 44030. We will include you in our list of great merchants and businesses in this area.

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Phone Number_____ E Mail Address_____

Would you be willing to volunteer at the Museum during the summer months or help us with winter projects?

We are open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from noon until 5 p.m., starting on Memorial Day and ending on Labor Day.

What day or time is best for you?

Thank you for your membership.

P.O. Box 563

Conneaut, Ohio 44030