THE WILCOX FOUNDATION
ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST - 2020

“Dedicated to the belief in education - desiring to encourage learning about the History of Plymouth”

-Providing Academic Scholarships To Plymouth and Canton Students-
Essay Theme

The decade of the 1950’s was an exciting time in Plymouth, especially for growing families. Baby boomers were of school age and life was rapidly changing due to new neighborhood development and the construction of additional schools. Between the years 1951 and 1958, the school-age population increased over 105%, from 2284 to 4691 students. What was life like for these children growing up in post-World War II Plymouth? How was their life different from those growing up in Plymouth today?

This year’s Wilcox Foundation Essay Contest will focus on the lives of typical school-age children living in the Plymouth community between 1950 and 1960. Essay participants must conduct an interview with someone who was living in Plymouth and attending school during these ten years. (If you don’t know who to interview, ask at the Plymouth Historical Museum. The Museum Archives will have a list.) Then, compare their experiences to yours in Plymouth today.

While responses to these exact questions are not required, here are some examples of the types of interview topics to discuss. Please be creative and choose additional ones of your own.

- What was a typical day like for you when you were going to school? What did you do after school?
- Did your home have a television, and if so, what kinds of tv programs did you watch?
- How did you contact your friends? Did you use a rotary phone – and what was that like?
- What kinds of community activities were available in Plymouth? (Hint – 4th of July & Halloween parades)
- Where did your family do its shopping? Be specific as to which local stores were around during that time.
- What did you do for fun – and where did you hang out in town? Did you go to movies?
- Did you ever hear of bomb shelters? What did you think when the first time an air raid siren went off on Saturdays?
- What did you like the best about growing up in Plymouth in the ’50’s?
- Did your family play games together? If so, what type?
- How often did your family go out to dinner as a family?
Supplemental information regarding 1950's Plymouth community events, local stores, and entertainment venues may be found in the local Plymouth newspaper, the Plymouth Mail and Observer. This may be searched online through the Plymouth Library’s website, plymouthlibrary.org.

All historical facts attributed to your research must be fully cited as to where the information was obtained.

Sam Hudson’s book, *The Story of Plymouth Michigan; A Midwest Microcosm* may be consulted for essay ideas, but must not be quoted or cited as a resource. Essays which do not meet this criteria will be marked down.

**Hints For A Successful Essay**

The purpose of this essay contest is to encourage students to become historians as they develop their essays. Learning history can be exciting and challenging if students become participants in the whole process of “doing” history. Learning to be a historian involves much more than simply reading textbooks in the classroom. Anyone can do research and write about it, but certain guidelines and standards must be followed to produce “good” written history.

Historians must:
- Be resourceful in searching for and examining all kinds of information.
- Locate a wide variety of sources.
- Establish the relationship between people, places and events.
- Recognize the different points of view which the past and present offer.
- Present their research to the judging panel.
How To Find Information And Resources

The first task of a historian is to find a great deal of information about the topic. One of the best ways to make research easier is to choose a topic that relates to family and/or experience in the community or a topic which greatly interests you. Local resources for historical topics include:

- The Plymouth Library or the Canton Library
- The Plymouth Historical Museum
- Interviews with people in the community who know about topics of historical interest.
- The Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.
- Newspapers’ archives which may be available on the internet or at the Plymouth Historical Museum

General Rules

You must be a high school senior residing in the Plymouth/Canton School District.

Your essay must be submitted no later than Monday, April 13, 2020.

Award winners will be notified by phone or text, then followed by a letter.

Students who reside in the Plymouth/Canton School District and who attend either Canton, Plymouth or Salem High School should submit their essays to the Counseling Office at Salem High School.

Students who reside in the Plymouth/Canton School District but who attend a school other than Canton, Plymouth or Salem High School may submit their essays to Win Schrader, c/o Salem High School, Counseling Office, 46181 Joy Road, Canton, Michigan, 48187.

The essay length is to be between 5 and 10 pages. Pages are to be numbered. The title of your essay is to appear at the top of the first page of your essay. Notes, captions, supplemental/appendix materials, annotated bibliography, illustrations, names of any interviewees, and the cover page do not count in the total. The essay must be typed or computer printed with type size of either 11 or 12 points, double spaced, on standard 8.5” by 11” white paper.
Citations including footnotes or end notes are required. A minimum of five citations is required. There will be a reduction of 10 to 20 points for no documentation. You may wish to consult OWL, a Purdue University web site which suggests formats to use for citation references.

Any essay of minimum length which evidences incomplete effort will be rejected by the judges.

Your name is to appear on the cover page only. All requested information on the cover page that is handwritten by you must be legible. Prior to judging, the cover page will be removed and a number will be assigned to each essay. This will prevent the judges from knowing any participant's name and will insure impartial judging. An example of the required cover page is included.

Since this essay contest is not based on prior academic performance, please DO NOT attach a copy of your school grades transcript.

Submit four (4) copies of your essay.

Criteria For Judging

The essay should be written using standard formal English.

Originality, creativity, accuracy in use of supporting data, organization, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and capitalization will all be considered in the judging. However, judges will weigh the depth of research and its resulting application to the theme of the essay, originality of thought, creativity and expression above the mechanics of the composition.

It is important to note, however, that the judges will not be looking for the most scholarly written or academically superior paper.

The primary idea behind this program is to encourage students to discover the tools available for historical research and to participate in a project that will give the student insight into the history of the Plymouth area.

Accordingly, a great deal of weight will be given to the effort made to locate illuminating resources and complete information from those sources. Judges will be looking for evidence that the student discovered information and learned about Plymouth's history. Research conducted solely using the internet will not be considered utilizing multiple sources nor to be hands-on research.
While on-line research is useful, one of the objectives of the essay contest is to introduce students to historical documents and hands-on research so that they can get a personal flavor or sense of old records. Accordingly, this year, the judges will give extra consideration to hands-on research. In addition to “Citations” as described above, students should specifically indicate all sources or records where an in-person physical review of documents occurred.

**Information drawn directly from Sam Hudson’s well known books about the history of Plymouth is not to be used, quoted or referenced in your essay.**

Certain special situations may occur which will require the individual attention of the judging committee. Such situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The decision of the judges will be final.

Judges will assign value using the following guidelines:

- Discovery and use of multiple sources/resources: 30 points
- Use of supporting data to develop the paper: 20 points
- Does the essay follow the General Rules?: 20 points
- Appearance, organization, spelling: 10 points
- Originality, creativity: 20 points

**Scholarship Awards**

All essays will be judged in one group. Based on the quality of each essay, each essay will receive either a First Place, Second Place or Random Draw designation. First Place is $2,000.00, Second Place is $1,500.00, and Random Draw is $1,000.00. (After the First Place and Second Place winners are selected, the essays from those remaining will be selected, at random by a "blind" draw, and will be the Random Draw winners.) The maximum amount of Scholarship Awards that will be awarded will not exceed $26,000.00. The Scholarship Awards must be used for post high school educational purposes. The scholarships are not renewable. Scholarship Awards will be sent directly to your educational institution.

The scholarships will be formally presented, if requested, at the Honors Convocation at each recipient’s high school.

For questions, contact Mr. Schrader by phone (734)355-0533, text or by e-mail at winschrader@earthlink.net.
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COVER PAGE

Name
(print name - must be legible)

Mailing Address
(street)

(city & zip code)

E-mail Address

Phone Number

School Attended

Essay Number
(To be filled in by Judges)