



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2011

Midland County Historical Society presents:

What: Heritage Series: The Dionne Quintuplets

When: May 19, 2011 • 7:30 pm

Where: Carriage House Hall, Heritage Park, 3417 W. Main St., Midland, MI 48640

Cost: \$5 | FREE for MCHS members

Information: Call Ticket Office at (989) 631-8250 or (800) 523-7649 or www.mcfta.org

Find this on our website: <http://www.mcfta.org/Learn.html#heritage>

MIDLAND - The Midland County Historical Society's **Heritage Series** takes place at 7:30 pm on May 19 in the Carriage House Hall, Heritage Park, in Midland. Floyd Andrick, Chairman of the Midland County Historical Society Advisory Board, will present a discussion on the famed **Dionne Quintuplets**. Born in 1934, the identical quintuplet girls from Canada were a world sensation, their young lives at times compared to a circus sideshow. Seventy-seven years later, the quints' story still fascinates listeners. In this special presentation, MCHS Advisory Board Chair Floyd Andrick will share stories he heard firsthand from the quints' parents, followed by an extensive narrated visual presentation on the quints and their lives, and a question-and-answer session. Refreshments will be served at the end of the program. Admission is \$5 for the public; FREE for MCHS members. Tickets and information are available by calling the Ticket Office at 989-631-8250 or 800-523-7649 or online at www.mcfta.org.

THE DIONNE QUINTUPLETS

The Dionne Quintuplets were born in a log farmhouse on May 28, 1934, to Oliva and Elzire Dionne near Callendar, Ontario, Canada. The family was given little hope that the babies would survive, and little chance that the mother would live. The newborns were placed in a basket on the oven door for warmth and were fed from an eye dropper. Up until this point, no sets of quintuplets had ever been known to survive, and the Dionnes attracted publicity from around the world with hour-by-hour and day-by-day radio and newspaper coverage of their condition.

At age four months, the five babies were taken away from their parents and placed in a special hospital building quickly constructed across the road from the farmhouse. The Canadian government felt that the parents were not capable of providing for the quints and managing all the publicity and promoters from around the world. The quints were to live in this special hospital for two years, until their health was insured, and then be returned to their parents. But two years later, the quints were a \$500 million asset to the Province of Ontario, and the government turned a deaf ear to the parents' demands for custody. After a 6-year legal battle, the parents were awarded custody of the 8-year-old girls. A huge house was built for the family which by then included 13 children: 5 born before the quintuplets and 3 born after.

The quints lived a sheltered and protected life in the family mansion until graduating from high school in 1952. Subsequently, they all went off to Montreal to college and convents. Two quints, Annette and Cecile, decided to study nursing; Yvonne went into art school; Emelie and Marie went into a convent to become nuns. Two years later at the age of 20, Emelie died during an epileptic seizure. Her funeral in August of 1954 attracted thousands of people. Eventually three of the

sisters left college and married. Yvonne remained single and spent years in a convent. The marriages of Annette, Cecile and Marie all ended in divorce. Between the three, they gave birth to 10 children, including a set of twins born to Cecile. In 1970, Marie died at age 36 of a stroke. In 2001, Yvonne died at age 67 of cancer. Only Annette and Cecile still survive at age 76.

THE MIDLAND CONNECTION

Midland County Historical Society Advisory Board Chairman **Floyd Andrick** is a distant relative of the nurse who tended the Dionne babies from when they were just 12 hours old until they were age two years. The quintts were often a topic of conversation in his farmhouse on Baker Road in Midland, and the death of quint Emelie in 1954 was all the news in the house for several days. His grandmother had many photos of the quintts on the walls of her bedroom. In 1966, after college, Floyd and a friend decided to take a trip to Canada. It was his wish to see where the quintts had lived and what might be left from the days when they were the biggest attraction in northern Ontario – equalling Niagara Falls. By a stroke of luck, Floyd had the good fortune to meet Mr. Dionne during that trip, who invited him to the family home where Floyd met Mrs. Dionne. The three became good friends and Floyd has enjoyed many visits with the parents and their other children. He met the three surviving quintuplets at their father's funeral in 1979. Mrs. Dionne died seven years later in 1986. Today, only two of the quintts and three of their siblings survive.

The Midland County Historical Society maintains Heritage Park, which includes the Herbert D. Doan Midland County History Center, 1874 Bradley Home Museum and Carriage House and the Herbert H. Dow Historical Museum. The Historical Society was founded in 1952 and is dedicated to fostering the understanding, appreciation and preservation of Midland County's heritage.

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan incorporating six groups: Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, Center Stage Theatre, MATRIX:MIDLAND, Midland County Historical Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, and Music Society – Choral. Activities at Midland Center for the Arts are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at www.mcfta.org.

Contact:
Julie Dukes
Communications Manager
(989) 631-5930 x 1602
dukes@mcfta.org

#

Midland Center for the Arts • 1801 W. St. Andrews Rd. • Midland, MI 48640 • (989) 631-5930 • (989) 631-7890 fax • www.mcfta.org