

Waterford Historical Society

Waterford Historic Village

www.waterfordhistoricalsociety.org

Hatchery Road 4490
Waterford, Michigan
in Fish Hatchery Park

Welcome

Welcome to the museums of the Waterford Historical Society. We hope you enjoy a trip back in time to the turn of the 20th century.

Historic Waterford Village is our interpretation of Waterford's place in history. Some of our buildings are original, some are exact replicas and some are representations of what the buildings would have looked like in the early 1900s as progress and prosperity brought Waterford successfully into the next century.

Take a Tour

Take a walking tour of our buildings at your own pace. Follow along with the map and read about each building. Listen to the audio boxes in many of our buildings for additional information.

We ask that you enjoy our Historic Village with your eyes only and respect that many of our artifacts are fragile. Please only touch if you are in our Hands-On History area. Exception: you may sit in any school desk that you see in any building!

Fish Hatchery Park

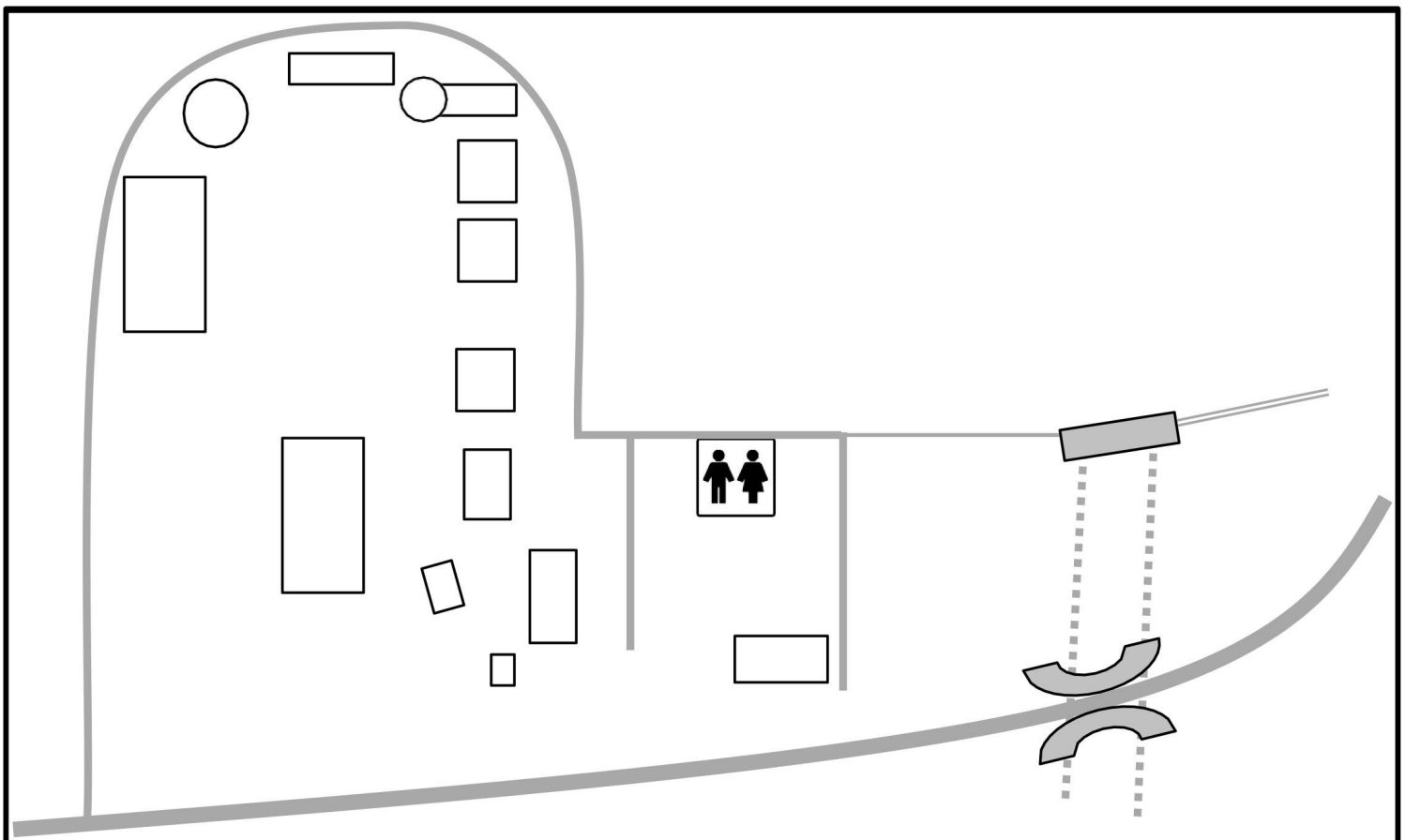
Please enjoy the lovely Fish Hatchery Park along the Clinton River.

Feel welcome to sit and relax at one of our many benches or picnic tables. The six-acre property is owned by Waterford Township and operated by the Waterford Parks and Recreation Department.

We feel Fish Hatchery Park is a little known Waterford gem that we are proud and fortunate to be a part of.

The Park, along with the grounds of the Drayton Plains Nature Center across Hatchery Road, was once home to the Drayton Plains Fish Hatchery in operation from 1901-1964.

Thank you for visiting and please help us keep Fish Hatchery Park clean and available for all.



1. Hatchery House

The Hatchery House is a Sterling Home kit house built between 1919-1921. Sterling, the kit home division of International Mill & Timber Company, was based in Bay City, Michigan, and sold kits from 1915 to 1971. As far as we know, it is the only Senator B model in existence with the original floor plan. Architecturally it is known as a Four-Square. The kit came from Bay City to the Drayton Plains Depot by train and was then brought on site by horse driven wagons.

Once the home of the superintendent of the Drayton Plains Fish Hatchery that was in operation from 1901-1964, it now houses the office of the Waterford Historical Society.

The Hatchery House represents the early 1900s. People moved out of log cabins and into much more modern timber framed houses with indoor plumbing and electricity. The house looks almost like the one you may live in now.

Our extensive library is housed on the second floor and available for research.

2. Log Cabin

The log cabin was built in the early 1930s for use as a home and variety store. The building originally sat on the north side of Dixie Highway across from Andersonville Road. It was dismantled and moved to our site on September 30, 1994.

Our log cabin represents how the early settlers of Waterford lived. Using only the resources available to them in 1818, the pioneers built their homes of logs from the trees they cut down to clear their land.

The plentiful lakes in Waterford were attractive to these early pioneers as basic survival depended on water for farming, fishing as a food source, and later ice for industry.

In the log cabin you will also find our log cabin store where you can purchase various Waterford gifts items and resources such as maps.

3. Blain Playhouse

The Blain Playhouse was built in the early 1930s by Doctor Alexander Blain II, founder of the Blain Memorial Hospital in Detroit.

Dr. Blain first built a playhouse for his daughter, Shirley. His sons, Alexander III and Donald, were upset and so a "boy's" playhouse was built. We have the boy's playhouse.

Built on Blain Island in Lotus Lake, the playhouse moved several times before coming to Fish Hatchery Park in 1997. It is currently a museum for antique toys.

4. Outhouse

Our outhouse was donated by the Waterford Fire Department and came from property on Crescent Lake Road.

Before indoor plumbing existed, the outhouse was part of normal everyday life.

As toilet paper was a luxury, old Montgomery Ward or Sears catalogs were used and were also handy for reading material.

Ours is a two-seater.

Flowers were frequently planted near the outhouse. Can you guess why?

5. Carriage House

Carriage houses were used before automobiles as a place to store a horse-drawn carriage and all the necessary tack.

Our carriage house is currently being used for storage and a workshop.

Blacksmith Shop

Attached to the Carriage House, the Blacksmith Shop is the newest building in our Village.

A blacksmith is one of the most important people in a town. Blacksmiths create objects from iron or steel. Think of the many things pioneers would use: farm tools, rims and parts for wagons and carriages, nails, fireplace racks and tools, locks, door handles, pots, utensils, and of course, horseshoes.

According to the *History of Oakland County*, 1877, by Samuel Durant, blacksmithing was done prior to 1840 by Henry S. Andrews, who opened the first blacksmith shop in the Village of Waterford. He manufactured and fitted much of the iron work in the grist mill.

6. Restrooms

Water closet for both ladies and gentlemen.

7. Jacober's General Store

Our store is a replica of the original Jacober's General Store. The Store was built in 1856 on the southeast corner of Dixie Highway and Andersonville Road.

General stores were places where people could shop for a wide variety of merchandise they could not make themselves. These stores were often described as having merchandise available *from cradles to caskets*. When the railroad came to Waterford in 1852, many new items could be stocked on the shelves. Our store is a representation of the early 1900s and is called Jacober's General Store after August Jacober.

August Jacober bought the store in 1917. He ran it there until Henry Ford purchased it for \$700 in 1927. Henry Ford had it moved to Greenfield Village where it still stands with the name of J.R. Jones, one of the owners at the turn of the 20th century. August Jacober built a brick store next door to the original location and ran it until 1957 when he sold it to Community National Bank.

8. Nelson's Filling Station

Our Station represents the early 1920s when automobiles began replacing horse and buggy as the preferred mode of transportation.

Automobiles required gasoline. At first, motorists had to buy their gas in cans from general stores. Next came hand pumps in tanks at the curbside in front of these stores. Congestion ensued with many accidents taking place because the General Stores were sitting so close to the roadway.

To fix this problem, small buildings were built just to sell gas. These were called *filling stations*. These stations had dedicated areas where a customer had room to pull up next to the pump in a safer manner.

Next, service areas were added to these buildings and became full service gas stations. Starting in 1982, self-serve stations became the norm.

Completed in 2011, our Filling Station was entirely funded by member Robert Nelson.

9. Cobbler & Shoemaker Shop

This shop was the Eagle Scout project of Brad O'Connor, Boy Scout Troop 51, in Waterford. In June 2014, this *storage shed* was moved from next to our Carriage House to its present location between the Print Shop and Nelson's Filling Station. It was turned around, outfitted and repurposed into a Cobbler Shop.

Shoemakers or Cobblers were important to early towns. Shoes were very expensive and not disposable. Cobblers repaired and made shoes out of *old* leather. Shoemakers repaired and made shoes out of *new* leather. This was before shoes were made on machines.

People wore their shoes for years, had them repaired and then passed them on to others. Children oftentimes went barefoot or only wore shoes to church. Rarely did they have a new pair.

Our shop represents the early 1800s Cobbler Shop that existed in the "downtown" area of Waterford at Andersonville Road & Dixie Highway.

10. Lohff Print Shop

Early print shops were the center of news and information for the people in a community. The printing business was a very well respected and important job, though very labor intensive. Setting type for one small newspaper took 25 hours of hand labor.

A print shop would typically produce: newspapers, books, government forms, handbills, receipt books and advertising for local shopkeepers.

Our printing press was purchased used in 1908 by Theo and Minnie Lohff. They came to the Pontiac/Waterford area in 1923 and set up shop in their home. The press was able to keep the family going during the depression years of the late 1920s.

Built by the Waterford Rotary Club in 2005, the Print Shop also houses our collection of cameras, typewriters and various office machines of the past.

Did you know the keyboard you use to type is called *QWERTY*? Those are the first six letters on the top left. This order first appeared in 1878 on the Remington No. 2 typewriter.

11. Webber & Crigger Hardware

As people moved into early towns, saw mills sprang up to supply the various wood people needed to build their houses and barns. This led to a desire for more specialized tools to work with the wood. The need for these tools outgrew the space in the General Store and thus hardware stores came about.

This was how most specialty stores began, like clothing stores, millineries, book stores, and department stores. Having extensive knowledge and advice for the customer made these stores extremely popular, even today.

Many times the Hardware store also carried sporting goods, crockery for housewives and toys for children.

Our Hardware Store is a representation of these early specialty stores. Built on our site in 2004, the funds for the Hardware store were donated by Dorothy Webber and named after her husband, Leon C. Webber and her father, John J. Crigger.

12. Drayton Plains Depot

Our Depot is an exact replica of the Drayton Plains Depot that was on the Railroad tracks at Hatchery Road just south of Dixie Highway. That original Drayton Plains Depot was built in 1908, closed in 1957, declared an "eyesore" in 1964, and demolished in 1965.

In the early days, train travel was common and the Drayton Plains Depot bustled with daily activity. Many tourists came to Waterford from places like Detroit so they could vacation on the beautiful lakes during the hot summer.

Many students in Waterford would ride the train from the Drayton Plains Depot to Pontiac High School to go to school (when Waterford High School only went to 10th grade).

Blocks of ice cut from the Pittmans & Dean Ice House on Loon Lake were loaded on the train at the Depot and shipped all over the United States.

The Conservation Department shipped live fish raised at the Drayton Plains Fish

Hatchery to points throughout the state of Michigan.

Our Depot was built by Richard Welsh on his property in Holly, Michigan. The Depot was donated and moved to our grounds in 2001, effectively bringing the depot "home" only a quarter mile away from its original location.

13. Grand Trunk Caboose

The Railroad came to Waterford in 1852, bringing tourists, settlers and all kinds of freight into town. The Railroad also carried Waterford freight, like ice and apples out across the country.

Our 1957 Caboose arrived on site in 1999, and is a 28 ton, 40 foot reminder of the past. Though not as old as those first Caboose arriving into town, our Caboose still represents that early time in railroad history.

The caboose was at the end of a train. It functioned as an office for the conductor and a home away from home for the trainmen and crew consisting of the brakeman and flagman. They would cook their meals, eat, sleep, relax and decorate with homey touches like curtains and family photos.

Once under way, the trainmen would sit up in

the cupola and watch for smoke or other signs of trouble from overheated wheel journals (called hotboxes).

Eventually technology, like automatic airbrakes and then computers, put the caboose out of business. Since 1984, "end of train" or *EOT* devices have been used on trains. These small metal remote radio devices hang on the last car and take the place of every function the caboose used to do.

In years to come, the only caboose you see will be the ones that have been restored. They are considered obsolete.

14. Water Tower

The Water Tower was built on our site in 2009 to complement our 1957 Grand Trunk Caboose.

The Water Tower functioned in the era of steam engines when the engines needed to take on water to operate their boilers. Towns sprang up around these stops.

15. Watchpocket

Building

The Watchpocket Building and **Bakery** are named after the Ellsworth Watchpocket Family. A bakery in the early 1900s served the same function as today, to provide fresh baked bread, pastries, cookies, cakes and pies to the public. Some Bakeries branched out into candies and would install a soda or ice cream fountain.

Marge & Irene's Millinery is named after the mothers of The Dick & Carol LeMarbe Family. Millineries, most often owned by women, carried all types of ladies hats, gloves and accessories. Many of these shops would also carry clothing or have the ability to custom make clothing for women. This was one of a few well respected professions for women in the early 1900s.

The Village Barber Shop is a one chair shop. An early 1900s Barber shop functioned, not only as a place to groom the men in a town, but also as a popular center for daily news and gossip. Our circa 1880 chair was donated to us for our shop by the White Lake Historical Society.

The Doctor's Office represents a typical town doctor of the early 1900s. Cramped and simply furnished, the doctor's office was a no-frills place with very little privacy. This was a time when the medical field was just discovering the importance of germs, hand washing and sterilization.

The Dentist's Office also represents an early time in dentistry. In 1937, Dr. J. Keith Schachern purchased the dentist chair from Ransom & Randolph in Detroit, to start his practice at 28 1/2 W. Huron Street in downtown Pontiac.

Much like the doctor, early dentistry was painful business and most folks simply chose not to go.

16. Hands-On History

The Hands-On History area is in the north end of the Watchpocket Building and functions as an area where our visitors can *touch* the past.

In this area you will find books, dolls, games and toys. Please feel free to grab a slate and chalk and sit at a school desk to complete your penmanship or arithmetic exercises. Write on

our full size chalkboard and try your hand at our artifact challenge. Play a game of checkers or build with Lincoln Logs.

You will also find outdoor activities in nice weather: clothes washing, stilts, mattress stuffing, and game of graces.

This section of the Watchpocket building was constructed in part with funds presented in March 2012, to the Historical Society by Paige Daniel as part of her State President project for the Michigan Society, Children of the American Revolution.

Did You Find ?

Icebox, hitching post, corn sheller, 48-star American Flag, butter churn, Telegraph Spoon, moveable type, ice skates, wood burning stove, wood snare drum, telephone, typewriter, straight razor, eyeglasses, ice tongs, yard goods, checkers, chamber pot, cupola, wringer washer, Daguerreotype of Reuben Chapman, 1940 aerial map of Waterford, bucket and dipper, suitcase, fly swatter, photo of a gandy dancer, green stamps, dry sink.

17. Schoolhouse

Built on site in 2014, our schoolhouse is one-room and represents the eleven one-room schoolhouses in early Waterford.

A one-room schoolhouse was literally *one room* where all ages and grade levels were taught together. School was centered on the "Three R's", Reading, 'Riting (writing) and 'Rithmetic (arithmetic). To help the teacher, older students would help younger students with their lessons.

The schoolhouse served other community functions. Social and holiday gatherings, box socials, spelling bees, singing bees and even church services were also held in the schoolhouse.

Education was extremely important to the early Waterford pioneers. Schools were built one by one as the population increased.

In the fall of 1821, the first school classes in *Oakland County* were held in Oliver Williams' sheep barn on Silver Lake. Seven students attended class. The first schoolhouse was made of logs

and erected on that same property in 1822 for twelve students.

Ira Donelson was named the first Supervisor of Education in 1835.

18. Fire Station

The Fire Station tells the rich history of the Waterford Township Fire Department through an extensive collection of artifacts, photographs and displays.

Built in 2018, the Fire Station was entirely funded by the Waterford Township Volunteer Fire Fighters Association. Many community members volunteered countless hours and resources to this project. The organization also owns, staffs and maintains the building.

The gem of the collection is the 1941 GMC American Fire Engine. This is the first Fire truck in Waterford Township. The truck has a 500 gallon per minute pump and a 500 gallon water tank. Purchased December 5, 1941, for a cost of \$5919.50, the truck remained in service until 1969. The truck still runs and participates in many local parades.

Did You Know ?

Waterford became a Township in 1834. Michigan became the 26th State in 1837.

The first Supervisor of Waterford Township was Isaac Voorheis. He was elected in 1835 with 35 votes.

In 1840, the railroad was completed as far north as Pontiac. It was ten years before construction was completed through Waterford. There were three stations; Drayton Plains, Waterford, and Windiate Park. The railroad made Waterford lakes available to people from Detroit and other cities. Waterford gradually became a resort area.

The first Township Hall was built in 1941 at the corner of Crescent Lake Road and Highland. The Waterford Fire Department was organized with one fire truck, a 1941 GMC Pumper. They were housed in a small lower level room in that Town Hall.

The Waterford Police Department was established in October of 1953. The first three police cars were purchased for \$1662.78 per car. They were also in that increasingly crowded Town Hall.

The History of Waterford

To understand the history of Waterford, we must go back to when land was being sold to settlers. Michigan was part of the Northwest Territory owned by the British. By the treaty of peace in 1783 between the United States and Great Britain, this area became a part of the United States. British Troops did not evacuate until July 12, 1796. When they left, Captain Moses Porter took possession of Fort Detroit. General Arthur St. Clair was appointed the first governor.

In January 1805, Congress passed an act for the organization of the Territory of Michigan. In 1813, Colonel Lewis Cass was appointed third governor. He formed the boundaries of Oakland County in 1819. Waterford became a township in 1834. Michigan became a state in 1837.

After the war of 1812, veterans were given parcels of land to encourage settlement. In 1815, Surveyor-General Edward Tiffin had the area of Michigan outside Detroit surveyed for this purpose. The report was so discouraging as to the condition of the land and the surrounding area, the veterans were given land in Illinois and Ohio instead. This report was one of the main reasons for the delay in settlement of Michigan.

During the time Michigan was part of the Northwest Territory, there were two main Indian Nations: the Algonquin (who were tribes of the Huron, Ottawa, Ojibwas, Pottawatomie, Miami, Sauk, Sashabaw and others), and the Iroquois. The Algonquin, farmers and trappers, helped the new settlers as they moved westward. The Iroquois were warlike and were finally defeated to just a few by the Algonquin's who had the help of the soldiers. By the time the settlers ventured into Waterford Village, there were few Native Americans living in the area.

By the end of 1818, a land office was set up in Detroit and parcels of land were sold.

In the later part of 1818, Major and Mrs. Oliver Williams, Mr. And Mrs. Alpheus Williams, both formerly of Massachusetts; Calvin Baker, Jacob Eilett and Colonel Beaufait made a journey from Detroit to Oakland County on horseback.

The party returned after three or four days with specimens of flowers, trees, and shrubs. Oliver Williams and Alpheus Wil-

liams, his brother-in-law, entered the first land purchase for \$2.00 an acre. Archibald Phillips and Alpheus Williams purchased 161.40 acres in what became the Village of Waterford.

In 1819, Mr. And Mrs. Alpheus Williams, their four daughters and two sons, Captain Archibald Phillips and Major and Mrs. Oliver Williams with their eight children set out to settle Oakland County. The Oliver Williams family established the first farm settlement on the banks of Silver Lake.

Archibald Phillips and Alpheus Williams continued on to where the Clinton River crossed the Saginaw Trail (Dixie Highway). This would become the Village of Waterford. Here the first house of the Village were built by Alpheus Williams on the north bank of the river. Archibald Phillips built his home where Andersonville Road meets Dixie Highway. Williams and Phillips also built the first dam where the Clinton River crossed over the Saginaw Trail and erected the first saw mill.

In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville, of France, made a trip into the interior of the Territory. He came back with a description of beautiful land, abundant game, excellent fishing, pristine lakes and virgin forests.

Dr. George Williams (no relation to the Williams) was the first physician in the Village of Waterford though he traveled throughout the area. The first resident physician was Dr. Charles Robertson.

The first school classes held in Oakland County were in Oliver Williams' sheep barn in 1821. Seven students attended class. A schoolhouse was later built in 1822. The first school was established in the Village in 1837-1838, on Andersonville Road across from Steffens Road (now a driveway). It was built by Methodists for church services. In 1871-72 a two story brick building was built on Steffens Road where Waterford Village was located. It burned and was rebuilt in 1901.

The first cemetery was deeded by Archibald Phillips to Governor Cass for burial purposes in 1826. The first burial was Oliver Williams, son of Alpheus Williams, who died in 1820, age 17. Oliver's sister, Nancy, was the second in 1826.

Alpheus Williams died July 9, 1828, at age 62. His wife, Abigail, died September 5, 1826, at age 58. Both Alpheus and Abigail are buried there. That cemetery, Waterford Village Cemetery, is still there at the end of Clippert Court off of Dixie Highway. The Cemetery is not open to the public. Archibald Phillips died in December 1847. We do not know where he is buried.

The first post office in Waterford Township was established in 1834-35 on the north shore of Elizabeth Lake. The first Village post office was established in 1865 when John Owen ran the General Store (later to become Jacober's General Store).

The first store in the Village was the home of Alpheus Williams where he kept a few shelves of staples. After his death, the land exchanged hands many times. In 1837-38, Merrick and Bruce purchased it and built the first established store next to the original home of Alpheus Williams.

In 1854, Horace Huntoon and John Griffen built a store on the southeast corner of Andersonville Road and Dixie Highway. We know it as Jacober's Store. In 1927, Henry Ford purchased the store from August Jacober for \$700. The store was set up and currently stands in Greenfield Village.

The church building, erected in 1869, is still standing at 5860 Andersonville Road near Dixie Highway. It was renovated in 1976 and is now privately owned.

The historic district of Waterford Township includes Dixie Highway, a block north and south of Andersonville Road, then Andersonville Road between Dixie Highway and Airport Road, then south on Airport road to the RR tracks. The homes and businesses of the area were re-surveyed in 1976 by the early Waterford Historical Society. In 1977 the Waterford Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Walking tour books of this district are available at our Log Cabin Store. An audio tour of the Waterford Historic District is available to download on the Township website: <https://twp.waterford.mi.us> on the Community tab.

Membership

We welcome you to become a member

\$15.00 Individual

\$25.00 Family

\$50.00 Organizations/Businesses

\$100.00 Lifetime Individual

\$125.00 Lifetime Couple

\$150.00 Lifetime Family

Annual memberships are due December 15th of each year.

We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that gets no funding from local, state, or federal levels. We rely on Waterford community members and businesses for funding.

If you would like to become a member or make a donation please send it to:

Waterford Historical Society
P.O. Box 300491
Waterford, MI 48330-0491

Visitor Information

The Hatchery House and research library are open April through mid December on Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

We are closed in inclement weather or If the Waterford School District is closed.

The Historic Village is open on Wednesdays May through September each year from 10:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Events: please check our website for all schedules and special events.

www.waterfordhistoricalsociety.org

General information please call 248-683-2697.

Please address all correspondence to:

Waterford Historical Society
P.O. Box 300491
Waterford, MI 48330-0491

Please visit the *Genealogy and Waterford History* page on the Waterford Township Library website. Look under the “Research and Learning” tab.
<https://www.waterfordmi.gov/Library>

Mission Statement

Collecting, protecting and preserving the history of Waterford Township for the interest and education of present and future generations.

www.waterfordhistoricalsociety.org

Non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

