

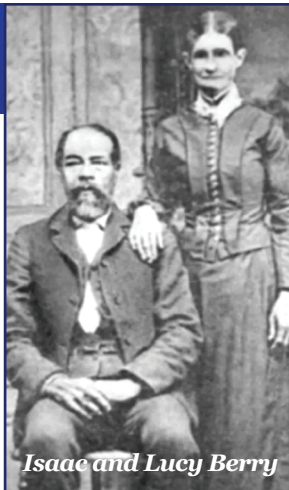
A Nation Within Itself

Our goal is to bring awareness to our unique melting-pot community within the broader story of Michigan and our nation's history. This story begins with Isaac Berry, Sr., born into slavery in Missouri, 1831. While working in his master's fields, Isaac met a neighboring girl named Lucy, who brought him water and read passages from the Bible to him. As Jim Cross, great-grandson of Isaac and Lucy Berry, told the Pioneer newspaper in 2013, "Lucy and Isaac fell in love."

At the age of 27, Isaac escaped slavery on foot, following rivers and railroad tracks northward. Assisted by Underground Railroad families in southern Michigan, he eventually reached freedom in Canada. Lucy later traveled by rail to Detroit and crossed into Windsor, where she found Isaac after recognizing the sound of his violin being played in a tavern. The two married in 1860 and settled in Little River, Windsor, where they raised six children.

Years later, Isaac and Lucy homesteaded in Mecosta County, Michigan, becoming part of a growing and integrated settlement community. By the turn of the century, Berry and fellow settlers realized that the presence of 10 families with children living within a four-square-mile area qualified them to establish a new school district. Isaac donated two acres in Section 16, known as the "school section," for the construction of a new clapboard school named after the Berry family's Canadian home community. Built in 1905 by neighboring families, Little River School served multi-racial children until 1935 and still stands in its original location today.

According to Isaac's great-grandson, Berry "was interested in helping children grow up to be upright citizens," and the integrated community functioned as "a nation within itself," where neighbors and students worked side by side and relied on one another to succeed. Their story reflects enduring lessons about the struggle for liberty, the opportunities created through perseverance and community, and the importance of preserving historic places that continue to draw descendants of the original "Old Settlers" back each year. To view the Little River School Story, visit 3ij4idd.s.gy/Tr56Qa or scan the QR Code:



Isaac and Lucy Berry

A Nation Within Itself



As an America250MI History Grant Program Tier 2 awardee and Partner, Remus Area Historical Society (RAHS), on behalf of a collaboration of area organizations called the **Remus-Mecosta Area America250MI Committee**, is leading a community wide effort to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence adoption with a project called Preserving and exploring lessons learned from "A Nation Within Itself."

The state grant, combined with local funds, will restore the 1905 Little River Schoolhouse, offer educational programming, host presentations that teach our melting pot story – a model of community members supporting one another – and offer a unique America250MI Colonial Social Gathering that celebrates freedom, democracy and equity. To learn more, visit America250MI.org

Remus Area Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit managed by volunteers, works to preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of all rural area of Wheatland, Broomfield, Rolland, Millbrook, Hinton, Sheridan, Morton, Martiny, Austin, Colfax Townships and surrounding area. RAHS manages the Remus Museum, making area artifacts available and accessible to residents and tourists while offering services and community programs that draw people to Mecosta

County. The museum, supported by donations, memberships, fundraising, and grants, features distinct displays focused on education and early schools, rural life, lumbering, creamery and agriculture, veterans, outdoor recreation, genealogy, family histories, and more. Watch the Remus Area Historical Society Powerpoint on YouTube at 3ij4idd.s.gy/my-link or scan the QR Code:



Remus Area Historical Society, in collaboration with the **Remus-Mecosta Area America250MI Committee**, is thankful for these contributors:

- America250MI grant via the Michigan History Center & Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Little River Schoolhouse Volunteer Group
- Albert Schiffer VFW Post 2335
- Russell Kirk Center
- Mecosta County Optimist Club
- Old Settlers Reunion Website
- Remus Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Wheatland Music Organization
- General Federation of Women Clubs - Mecosta, "Heart of the Lakes"
- Thrivent

In-kind supporters:

- Fate's Market
- Ferris State University
- Hearty Harvest
- Hixson's Family Market
- Mecosta County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Mecosta County Park Commission
- Morton Township Library
- New Hope GMC Church
- Village of Mecosta
- Wheatland Township Library

Remus Area Historical Society/Remus Museum
P.O. Box 71, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, Michigan 49340
Website: Remus.org | Email: RemusMuseum@gmail.com
Open: Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. April -October.

2026 Schedule of Special Events

Most events are free!

APRIL

- **How to Build Your Family Tree – Four-Part Genealogy Workshop Series**
Register for the next series by emailing instructor Mary Ann Stickler at MaryannStickler@hotmail.com. Workshops are held at the Morton Township Library, Mecosta, MI. *Wednesdays, April 8, 15, 22, & 29, 10:00 a.m. - Noon*
- **Board Meeting** Remus Museum, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Wednesday, April 15, 4:30 p.m. Open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- **Trivia Night Fundraiser** with Margo Miller for the Remus Museum, held at the Remus Tavern, \$10 per person, teams of 2-6. Local, state and national history! *Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 p.m.*
- **Family/Kids Time with Revolutionary Drummer and Betsy Ross Program**
Morton Township Library, 110 South James St. in Mecosta, MI. *Friday, April 24th, 6:00 p.m.*

MAY

- **Board Meeting** Remus Museum, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Wednesday, May 20, 4:30 p.m. Open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- **Circling Lake Michigan: 1100 Miles of History, Arts & Culture** with Dianna Higgs Stampfler at the Morton Township Library, Mecosta, MI. *Wednesday, May 20, 7:00 p.m.*
- **School days for area third graders at Little River Schoolhouse** at School Section Lake Veteran's Park, 9003 90th Avenue, Mecosta, MI 49332. *Monday-Friday, May 18-22*
- **Memorial Day** *Monday, May 25* VFW Post 2335 - 9 a.m.; Remus Parade - 10 a.m.; Memorial Program at St. Michaels Catholic Church - 11 a.m.; Mecosta Parade - 11:30 a.m.; Memorial at Mount Hope Cemetery in Mecosta; Free Hotdog lunch at VFW Post, 1050 W Main, Mecosta, MI - *Noon*

JUNE

- **America250MI Colonial Social Gathering** at New Hope GMC Church, 7296 Nine Mile Rd. Mecosta, MI. Community event for adults and teens to experience a 1776-style formal social affair. Guests are encouraged to wear period clothing. Enjoy an outdoor tent encampment, re-enactors such as Women of the Revolution, John Adams & Benjamin Franklin, colonial music, food, beverages & 'high tea,' dance, and mementos. Tickets are free but limited. Email RemusMuseum@gmail.com to reserve free ticket(s), or see Remus.org. *Saturday, June 13, 5:00-8:00 p.m.*
- **Board Meeting** Remus Museum, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Wednesday, June 17, 4:30 p.m. Open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- **Abraham Lincoln: A New Birth of Freedom** with Kevin Wood at the Morton Township Library, Mecosta, MI. *Tuesday, June 23, 7:00 p.m.*

JULY

- **Patriotic Children's Scavenger Hunt** at VFW Post 2335 booth in Mecosta, MI. *Friday, July 3, 2:00 p.m.*
- **Patriotic Elvis Concert** at Bromley Park, Mecosta, MI. *Friday, July 3, 6:00 p.m.*
- **4th of July Celebrations, Village of Mecosta** *Saturday, July 4*
Parade - 11 a.m.; Car Show, VFW Post 2335 - Noon-6 p.m.;
Book Walk for children, by Morton Township Library at Bromley Park - *All Day*;
Children's Colonial Games and Music with Optimists at Bromley Park - *Noon*;
Fireworks - *Dusk*
- **Declaration of Independence Celebration** at the Wheatland Township Library, Remus, MI. Reception and reading of the Declaration of Independence. *Wednesday, July 8, 5:00-6:00 p.m.*
- **Docent Led Tours of 1905 Little River Schoolhouse** at School Section Lake Veteran's Park, 9003 90th Avenue, Mecosta, MI. *Saturdays, July 11, 18 & 25, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.*
- **Sea Shanty Sing-a-long** with Ben Traverse at the Morton Township Library, Mecosta, MI. *Tuesday, July 14, 7:00 p.m.*
- **Remus Heritage Days, theme 'Party in the USA'** *Friday* - Classic Car Show, Truck Pulls, Quilt Show; *Saturday* - Parade/Events of American History, Kids Activities, Quilt Show, 5K Run, Craft Show, Pedal Pull for Kids, Singles Horseshoe, Corn Hole, and Softball Tournaments for adults, Fire Works; *Sunday* - Pancake Breakfast, Cement Pulls, Pet Contest, Corn Hole, and Softball Tournaments for adults; all weekend - Double Horseshoes and Hospitality Tent. Wheatland Township Park, Remus, MI. *Friday-Sunday, July 17-19*
- **History of Mecosta County** with author and presenter Dana Kenneth Johnson. Open House during Remus Heritage Days at the Remus Museum, 324 S Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Saturday, July 18, 1:00 p.m.*

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

- **Docent Led Tours of 1905 Little River Schoolhouse** at School Section Lake Veteran's Park, 9003 90th Avenue, Mecosta, MI. *Saturdays, August 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.*
- **Old Settler's Reunion** at School Section Lake Veteran's Park, 9003 90th Avenue, Mecosta, MI. The 93rd annual gathering of descendants of original early settlers. *Saturday, August 15*
- **Board Meeting** Remus Museum, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Wednesday, August 19, 4:30 p.m. Open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- **Voyageurs & the American Fur Trade Company at Little Bear Artisan & Maker's Fair** downtown Mecosta, MI. *Saturday, September 5, 11:00 a.m.*
- **Board Meeting** Remus Museum, 324 S. Sheridan, Remus, MI. *Wednesday, September 16, 4:30 p.m. Open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- **Open House Celebrating Little River Schoolhouse Renovation** at School Section Lake Veteran's Park, 9003 90th Avenue, Mecosta, MI. *Saturday, September 19, Noon*