Happy New Year 2019

Hard to believe that the History Center is now well into its third decade of preserving our community’s stories and inspiring new generations of residents and visitors. We’re looking forward to our 25th year of museum exhibitions with a new exhibit: *Then and Now: Photos from the Archives* opens this May!

Speaking of summer, February marked the opening of Stories of Summer at Grand Valley State University. We also have a full slate of Monthly Meetings and Tuesday Talks all lined up for the coming season. Between now and that magical time when the ice clears out from our warm, sandy beaches, we’re working on our art and archival collections, digital collections updates, and a few special events too.

Stay warm out there friends and check in with us on Facebook, Instagram, email, phone, or the Douglas Post Office box. We love to hear from you!

The Old School House after the Polar Vortex

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New Exhibits -- Coming Attractions!

Stories of Summer opening at GVSU

The showcase for the Stories of Summer collaboration with Grand Valley State University opened on February 5th at the Allendale campus. The exhibit includes portrait panels of those interviewed and thematic panels on some themes from the History Harvests that took place at the Old School House in Douglas.

You might recognize some of these folks! Beautiful work from the GVSU Kutsche Office of Local History team with special thanks to Kimberly McKee, Courtney Sherwood, and Mollie VanOrsdol and SDHC Director Nathan Nietering for the original proposal and design.

You have until March 15 to see it on campus. Then the show's coming to the lakeshore where we'll host it at the Old School House from June 12th through the summer season.

For more information read the GVSU press coverage about the exhibit here!

Summer exhibit at the History Museum

Wintertime is the right time for history exhibit research and design! Dedicated exhibits volunteers Lynn McClure, Sally Winthers, Jack Sheridan, Vic Bella, and Eric Gollannek have searched the archives to pull together a new view into the history of our area. The history exhibit titled "Then and Now" uses our extensive collections of historic photographs to share the experiences of
everyday life in Allegan County and the Saugatuck-Douglas area from the 1860s to the present day. The exhibit highlights key themes including how people worked, played, and traveled then...and now. This concept approaches history as a dialogue between past and present. It also harnesses the power of photography to engage viewers in a personal way, leading them to reflect on continuities and change in our communities and the landscape.

Mark your calendars for the Memorial Day Members Opening on May 27th.

Spring and Summer Programs

**Calendar of 2019 Tuesday Talks**
Tuesdays in July & August at 11 AM at the Old School House

Would you or your organization like to sponsor a Tuesday Talk? Please contact us at info@sdhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

**July 2**
Promoting West Michigan For Over 100 Years: A History of West Michigan Tourism with Christine Boyer

**July 9**
Camp Gray Stories with Larry Labine and others

**July 16**
Boat Building in the Holland with Geoffrey Reynolds

**July 23**
Local Art: Then and Now with Mary Jo Lemanski

**July 30**
Burr Tillstrom, Kukia, Fran, and Ollie with Michael Schwabe and Larry Bassall of the Village Puppeteers

**July 6**
Stories of the “Morgan J” with Saugatuck Fire Chief Greg Janik

**August 13**
Kalamazoo Lake Water and Sewer Authority with Barry Johnson

**August 20**
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi with Nicole Holloway

**August 27**
Cora Bliss Taylor: The Artist, the Teacher with Ken Kutzel

**Upcoming Monthly Meetings and Events**

**Saturday, March 2, 12-3 PM**
Douglas Winterfest with sleddog teams at the Old School House

**Wednesday, March 13 at 7 PM**
**Monthly Meeting:** Exploring the Legacy of Charles Lorenz and the early history of Saugatuck with Eric Gollannek, PhD, SDHC director

**Wednesday, April 10 at 7 PM**
**Monthly Meeting:** Heroes, Villains, and Just Plain Folks: Twenty Years After with Jack Sheridan

**Wednesday, May 8 at 7 PM**
**Monthly Meeting:** The Ancient Garden Builders of Southwest Michigan with Lon Kreger

**Saturday, May 27**
Opening Party for Then and Now: Photos from the Archives at the History Museum

You can keep up to date on all the happenings at the History Center through our Facebook Page and Facebook Events. You can also find a complete list of events on the website under Calendar and Activities.

Love history programs at the Old School House? Consider sponsoring a Tuesday Talk or Monthly Meeting. Sponsorships cost $150 and get your name or business included with all promotional materials. These help support the high caliber of our presentations and field trip activities! Multiple sponsors are welcome and encouraged and all will receive billing in future announcements. Please call the Old School House or send an email to info@sdhistoricalsociety.org for more information.
In Memoriam

This has been a sad time of year as we’ve received news of the passing of several friends, neighbors, and SDHC members.

History Center Life Member
**George Brown**, the husband of Gregg Kurek, passed away on December 16, 2018.

**Helyn Henry**
mother of History Center Past President
Marsha Kontio, passed away on
January 1, 2019.

History Center Life Member
**Carl Jennings**, the husband of Larry Gammons, passed away on February 3, 2019.

History Center Member
**Rev. Dr. Laird Stuart**
husband of former SDHC Board Member Virginia Kirkland Stuart, passed away on
December 19, 2018.

(Links to online obituaries--click on photographs or visit the SDHC website)
This photo of Saugatuck lighthouse keeper George Baker and his wife turned up at the Portland Oregon Antique Show where Shelley Cardiel found it and set out to reunite it with his family. Thus far, Shelly has made contact with several local family members in her quest.

George and Mary (Lackie) Baker

George Baker, Lighthouse Keeper

(photos from the History Center Archives)

George Harris Baker (1841-1910) was born in Granger, Ohio, and at the age of 19 went off to serve in the Union Army. By the time the war was over he had taken part in 97 engagements and traveled over 27,000 miles on horseback.

In 1867 he traveled to Ganges, MI with his uncle Henry Reid where they became part of the early fruit growing industry. In 1867 he married Mary Lackie. After a short return to Ohio, the couple came back to Saugatuck, where George worked in the mills and the fishing trade. He was then hired as the keeper of the lighthouse at the mouth of the Kalamazoo River and held that job from Dec 1878 to Jan 1909, when he retired due to a paralysis. (Jack Sheridan's grandfather George Sheridan was transferred from the lighthouse at South Manitou Island to succeed George Baker and was to be the LAST local lighthouse keeper.)
The Bakers had two sons, George and William. How did the photo get to Portland? George's widow Mary was living in Seattle Washington at the time of her death in 1916. And when son William registered for the WWI draft, he did so in Portland where he was a salesman for the Sherwin Williams Company. William's family remained in the Oregon/Washington state area. That must be the answer.

Mary's body was returned to Saugatuck to be buried at Riverside Cemetery with her husband. Later generations rest there as well.

Collections Updates
Art Collection Updates

The large scale (3 foot by 5 foot) paintings by Cora Bliss Taylor and her students almost finished and ready for display this spring!

We've seen a wonderful show of support for art history and conservation from the community over the last two months. Those of you who attended the Holiday Party and readers of the December Newsletter will remember discussion of "art in need" from our 2019 "triage list" shared by collection manager Ken Kutzel.
Thanks to generous donors we've raised over $2,000 to support the conservation and framing for our 1844 Map of the Midwest and the Cora Bliss Taylor Art School murals from the mid-twentieth century. Special acknowledgement goes to Bill Hess and Mike Mattern, Kathleen Markland, Dennis Maurer, and the Lakeshore Garden Club for their support of Saugatuck-Douglas art. Thank you!

Ken Kutzel and Steve Hutchins engaged as art handlers escorting the first Cora Bliss Taylor artwork on its trip across Douglas on the Interurban!

We look forward to showing off these projects and showcasing the passion for art and history in our community during spring events.

The newly formed state of Michigan without Saugatuck or Douglas!

On the 1844 map, Singapore is shown as an important "city" on Lake Michigan alongside the never constructed town of Breeze. There is no indication of the existence of either Saugatuck or Douglas.

This work on paper requires conservation treatment to repair folds, tears, and areas of loss. After conservation, it will be framed for viewing in our map room at the Old School House.

Caring for our history takes a village. Would you consider a gift to support art conservation at the SDHC? We are accepting additional donations for this important work of caring for collections. Donations can be made out to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center with Art Fund in the memo line.
This winter our collections team saw new activity at the old Redwood Diner and stopped in to see what history the remodeling might yield. Good fortune produced the hand painted menu board dating from the 1960s. Member Jane Osman shared her memories from working there:

The structure now referred to as the Redwood probably went up in the early 1960s for it was originally a small square "eat it and beat it" drive-in called the Frost Mug and located a bit closer to the Blue Star next to the Dairy Queen run by the Naughton family. The menu was posted outside, and yes TOMATO is misspelled, but those WERE the prices!

Owners Joe and Cathy Hanecek were the kindest and hardest working couple I have ever known. Joe had two sets of clothing -- "Summer Slims" for working the grill more than 16 hours each day and "Winter Wides" where his waist increased enormously! Cathy ran the fryers all day plus played the organ at St. Peter's Church. Our car hop hours varied from 11 am to 6 pm or my usual evening shift 5 pm to 3 am.

A shelf surrounded three sides of the first structure, piled high with trays waiting to be cleaned during the busiest 6-8 pm and 2-3 am hours. Each car-hop, paid 50 cents an hour, took orders on a green flip pad, turned it in to Cathy where it was filled, and then delivered it, hoping that the car's windows were wind up and not the new "automatic" ones which were easily nicked by an elbow and then the whole tray's contents went smashing to the pavement!

Business must have been golden for my next year the present Redwood appeared with its new name, but the same frosted mugs were the signature for chocolate or white milk, root beer, or coke. Three chest freezers held hundreds of stacked mugs. The best treat we kept for ourselves -- filling the frozen mug half full of chocolate milk and then adding root beer -- delicious!

As servers we filled our own drinks, handled money from the open cash till, and rushed back and forth via swinging doors. We had no dress code, but no one wore slacks. How federal regulations have changed!

Our only real breaks came after midnight as we waited for the bars to close at 2 am. During that time slot after all was tidied and pots of coffee were perking, we would gather around and tell jokes until cars pulled up. Most ordered cups of black coffee and this was the best part, for here we collected our biggest tips as many just emptied their change pocket and dumped it on the tray!

It was great fun, but hard work. During the Jazz Festivals we stayed overnight at Joe and Cathy's place on Pleasant Street -- allowed into the village even though all the others were denied access.
HERMAN SIMONSON PORTRAITS

The 2019-2020 Pumphouse exhibit is the formulative-design phase and I have been working with Lynn McClure as she has been busily sifting thru the photo collection. She is looking for images that her professional eyes see as a hit! Since I know the images and often the history behind the photo scene, I am answering questions and making suggestions. She is making fine progress.

One possible category for the exhibit are portraits or at least posed photos taken by Herman Simonson on Culver St in downtown Saugatuck.

We have a goodly number of portraits in the SDHC archives. Many are unidentified. Attached is a small sampling of them.
My December's **ASK JACK** included this:

Skipping back in time, I am old enough to remember meeting Herman Simonson about 1950, when I was twelve years old. That was the year I started working for the studio while spending summers with my grandmother Sarah Sheridan who lived across the street from the Simonson Studio. Herman passed at age eighty two the next year and Carlton my summer employer for the next six years, carried on the photography business.

Herman had a sense of fun and of business and had a knack for doing new things that promoted the business and the bottom line. Besides the Culver St studio there was a branch studio on Water St. across the street from where Wicks Park is located. Some of the inside prop shots were done there. Post cards were created with a photo of you, the tourist, astride Dynamite the mule on one side and the address and message on the other.

[Click here](#) to see a montage of Simonson portraits.
Welcome from Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder, leaders of the Society Family History Group.

Please visit a regular Family History Group meeting to see what we are all about and join the group. We share "lessons learned" about the many tools available for family history research.

Questions/comments/advice/needs:

Mayflower ancestor, Revolutionary War vet, famous cousins, great grand parents, ...
Where did you come from?
Thinking about a DNA test?
Answering questions: we are best at ...

Call or email us, meetings are normally the first and third Thursday every month at 3:30 at the Old School House.

Upcoming meetings : Thursday February 21, Thursday March 7, Thursday March 21.

Your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area !!!

Not sure how to get going? Let us provide a helpful jump start by recording what you know about your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents and send it along for a review by Chris Yoder or myself.

The snail mail address is:
SDHS Family History
PO Box 617
Douglas, MI 49406

or email to either cyoder@tds.net or jack.sheridan@gmail.com

We will soon be back to you with readily found data and with suggestions on the next steps to take. Further help is always available from Chris and myself by phone and email.

The only requirement is membership in the SDHS.
Join the group and find the answers.

jack.sheridan@gmail.com 269 857-7144 or cyoder@tds.net 616 212-3443
History Around Town

All Saints Episcopal Church plans to celebrate 150th year with new Michigan History Marker

All Saints Episcopal Church commemorated the sesquicentennial with the publication of Fr. Corey Stoppel's history of the congregation last year. Now they are working to place a new Historical Society of Michigan 150th year marker on site. They have begun a fundraising campaign to cover the $500 costs of the program and are seeking donations. Please consider supporting this effort recognizing this important place in Saugatuck's history.

Please contact Don Olendorf to learn how to support this effort through the Parish Office at: 269-857-5201 or allsaintswmich@gmail.com

ABOUT THE SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society was founded in 1986 by a group of charter members interested in preserving and sharing the unique history of Saugatuck, Douglas and the surrounding area. In 2016, the Society was renamed the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to celebrate its growth and to recognize the development of the History Museum and Old School House sites. We are a vibrant organization with nearly 700 members residing in nearby communities, around Lake Michigan, and across the country.

Members are the lifeblood our largely volunteer organization. To join as a member, select from the following categories:

- Individual $50
- Household $70
- Premium $300
- Corporate $500
- Lifetime $1,000
- Senior (65+) $30
- Senior Household $45

Join as a 2019 member today! Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. Click HERE for a printable Membership Application.

Send items for the newsletter to: SDHC Attn: Newsletter, PO Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406 or email info@sdhistoricalsociety.org
SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER FACILITIES

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Saugatuck Pump House building. The History Museum is closed for the season until May.

Click HERE to learn more about the Museum and recent past exhibits.

The Old School House and Francis Surfboat Exhibit is located at 130 Center Street in Douglas. For group tours of the School House, please contact facility manager Steve Hutchins at 269-857-5751 or by email at admin@sdhistoricalsociety.org. The Old School House exhibits are open for summer hours Wednesdays-Saturdays from 11am-3pm.

Visit the newly opened art exhibition Keeping an Eye on History, showcasing 31 unique artworks of local scenes recently given to the History Center by members Kenneth Carls and James Schmiechen as well as Michigan Dunes, an exhibit of paintings from along the Lake Michigan shoreline on view until May of 2019.

The adjoining Back-in-Time Garden and Surfboat Exhibit are open daily. Admission is free but donations gratefully accepted.

The History Center Archives is available for research by appointment. For more information, call 269-857-7901 or e-mail the archives directly: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751
Museum phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901
www.MySDHistory.org

Follow us and learn more history on Social Media! Click the logos below.

Again this year, the SDHC newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys
A look ahead at Monthly Meetings

Wednesday, March 13 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: Exploring the Legacy of Charles Lorenz and the early history of Saugatuck with Eric Gollannek, PhD, SDHC director

Wednesday, April 10 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: Heroes, Villains, and Just Plain Folks: Twenty Years After with Jack Sheridan

Wednesday, May 8 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: The Ancient Garden Builders of Southwest Michigan with Lon Kreger

Wednesday, June 12 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: Member opening party for GVSU's Kutche Office of Local History Stories of Summer exhibit at the Old School House

Wednesday, July 10 time TBA
Monthly Meeting road trip to Summerhouse Lavender Farm with Dan McGavin

Wednesday, August 14 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: Only the River Remains: History and Memory of the Eastland Disaster in the Great Lakes Region with Caitlyn Perry Dial, PhD

Wednesday, September 11 time TBA
History Center Annual Picnic (note new date!) at the Old School House and Back-in-Time Garden

Wednesday, October 9 time TBA
Monthly Meeting: Inside Saugatuck's Christian Science Church field trip

Wednesday, November 13 at 7 PM
Monthly Meeting: The Great Lakes in Danger with Julie Ridl

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