

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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SDHC/GVSU "STORIES OF SUMMER" HISTORY HARVEST INVITES MID-1900s ITEMS AND STORIES SATURDAY, JUNE 2

MAY 25, 2018 -- Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's first "Stories of Summer" History Harvest, seeking local historical memorabilia and personal reflections of Saugatuck in the 1950-80 timeframe, opens Saturday, June 2, at the Old School House, 130 Center St. in Douglas, 9am to 4pm. Anyone with materials to share or stories to tell will be gratefully welcomed.

Volunteers from Saugatuck-Douglas History Center and the Kutsche Office of Local History at Grand Valley State University will team up to conduct oral history interviews and receive materials brought in by anyone who lived around here or visited this area during the mid-late 1900s. Special equipment will be set up to photograph or scan submitted materials for digitizing as additions to SDHC archives; originals will either be accepted if donated, or returned to their owners.

Oral history interview sessions must be scheduled in advance by phone call to 269.857.5751, or by e-mail to info@sdhistoricalsociety.org. For broader accommodation, sessions also may be scheduled for the following Monday through Wednesday (June 4, 5 & 6) from 9am-noon. Oral history providers will receive a digital recording of their interviews on USB (stick) drive.

Supported by a \$12,000 grant awarded to the Kutsche Office by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through its "Common Heritage" program, the SDHC project shares \$250,000 in NEH funding for 23 similar projects nationwide, all aimed at capturing America's cultural heritage "hidden" in personal life stories, family histories, photo albums, newspaper clippings and other home memorabilia.



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Humanities

Staff members from Grand Valley's University Libraries will preserve the digitized interviews and images on-line for public access. Transcribed copies of oral histories and collected materials will be kept at SDHC's Old School House in Douglas and in an on-line database.

According to SDHC Executive Director Nathan Nietering, the Center's "Stories of Summer" project was designed in partnership with GVSU to chronicle our area's evolution through its turbulent post-war growth of tourism and concurrent rise as a lakeshore destination for the LGBT community. "What we're hoping to gather and preserve", he says, "are the depictions and experiences of everyday life that will piece together a broader picture of how Saugatuck and Douglas came to be as they are today. It's a story best told by those who lived through it."

He notes that this period shares the focus of SDHC's current two-year exhibition at the Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum at Mt. Baldhead, "*Cold War | Hot Towns*", in which first-hand accounts of wild music festivals, motorcycle gangs on the backstreets of Douglas, college parties in downtown

Saugatuck and more are presented around a structure representing the Mt. Baldhead radar tower, dramatizing its mission to search the skies for Soviet bombers at the height of the Cold War scare.

A second History Harvest event is planned and will be announced for Saturday, July 21. Later in the year, date to be determined, a community-wide dialogue will be scheduled to share items uncovered and highlight interesting aspects of the interviews, and to invite feedback about additional ways to make the information widely available.

For more information about the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its Museum in Saugatuck and Old School House in Douglas, volunteer opportunities or activities planned for 2018, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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Images depict Saugatuck area tourist brochures and postcards, typifying the types of materials we are hoping to “uncover” during the History Harvest on June 2.

