



NEWS From
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**2008 HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM EXHIBIT
PEEK INTO PAST VIA PERIOD ARTWORKS**

MAY 16, 2008 -- A new exhibit at the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society Museum, opening for the season on Sunday, May 25, visits our area's past with "13 Moments in Time: The Artist as Storyteller". Built around a selection of seldom-seen paintings and drawings completed in Saugatuck from 1898 to 2002, the exhibit evokes historical vignettes of Saugatuck and Douglas at the time each artwork was created.

"Each of these pictures tells a story", says exhibit curator Kit Lane, local historian and author. "Works of art have the ability to go beyond the visible to give us a sense of what the artist felt about the scene, allowing us to share what the artist experienced." Each piece is enhanced with a biography and, where possible, a picture of the artist, plus descriptive commentary on the Saugatuck area during that period -- its social and economic environment, important local issues, etc. Additional photos and drawings provide context for whatever is seen in the featured artwork, such as depictions of the same scene experiencing other uses in other eras, nearby buildings or events occurring close to the scene.

"The period visited by our exhibit marks a very important turning point in our community's history," Lane points out. "By 1890 most of the worthwhile timber in the Saugatuck area had been cut. That and problems with shoaling in the river caused boatbuilding and lumber products to decline as the area's prime industries. Fruit growing and shipping basket production were on the rise, but many village dwellers were beginning to see tourism as their key to future prosperity. Some of the earliest tourists were artists who came to paint the sparkling water and cool green countryside, which seeded the artistic character of our community today."

The earliest piece in the exhibit is a pen and ink drawing done in 1898 when a group of artists camped out on the lakeshore. They also left a series of photographs taken at that time showing their rustic camp, with the coffee pot boiling on the fire.

Some of the scenes were painted by well-known artists including Frederick F. Fursman, Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, Francis Chapin and Albert Krehbiel from Ox-Bow, which opened as a summer school for artists in 1910, Wilfrid Borg of Muskegon, and Carl Mauch of Chicago. Among the less widely known artists are George V. Brown, Len Lynema, F.D. Schook, Helen Corlett (an early Douglas cottager) and William Hartman who worked at Silver Lake.

One depiction of the Big Pool at Saugatuck was done by an unknown sign painter, and one pastel of the dunes is the work of contemporary Saugatuck artist Anne Wiley.

In addition, the exhibit features 18 views of the Saugatuck area done by high school students under the direction of art teacher Christa Wise, a reconstruction of the studio of Bill Olendorf,

one of the area's best-known recent artists, and a working studio where visitors can create their own "Moment in Time" art.

Varying the Museum's tradition of special books to accompany exhibits, this year's exhibit will offer a portfolio packaging 5 x 7 color depictions of all 13 paintings with their stories attached.

Founded in 1992, the Museum occupies the historic Saugatuck Pump House at 735 Park Street, along the west shore of the Kalamazoo River at Mt. Baldhead Park, a short walk north from the Saugatuck Chain Ferry landing. The Museum is open noon to 4:00pm daily from Memorial Day through August, then Saturday/Sunday in September and October. Admission and parking are free. Tel: (269) 857-7900; www.sdhistoricalsociety.org

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