



NEWS From
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEBUTS NEW BOOKS
AT MUSEUM BOOK-SIGNING PARTY JULY 13

JULY 3, 2008 -- A book-signing party at the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Museum on Sunday, July 13 from 2 to 5pm, will introduce three new publications loaded with insights about life in the early days of our community.

"History by Camera: Saugatuck & Douglas Photographs 1870-1970", published by the Historical Society this spring, offers rare historical views, many of which appear pristine considering that they are up to 138 years old. Author/photo editor Jack Sheridan and graphic designer Rick Vanderleek, both avid Society volunteers, will be on hand to discuss their work and sign copies. Special numbered and limited hard covers are available along with plenty of soft covers.

"Early Memories of Saugatuck, Michigan 1830 to 1930", newly reprinted by the Society, revisits a 1930s masterpiece of personal retrospective by May Francis Heath, who was born here in 1873 and died in 1961. Society volunteer Rob Carey found an out-of-print edition of Heath's book, scanned and edited its contents, adding a previously published biographical sketch of Heath while local author/historian Kit Lane created an index for the new edition. The book, offered in 6x9" soft-cover format, includes woodcut illustrations by Carl Hoerman.

"History of Western Allegan County, Michigan", the heavyweight of this publication bonanza, reawakens a resource originally published by Curtis Media Corporation in 1988 and thought to be out-of-print until 170 copies were discovered in a Texas book warehouse by Society volunteer Chris Yoder, and purchased by the Society. Earlier known locally as "The Big Black Book", this hardcover 9x12" tome is 1.5" thick and contains 537 pages, comprising about 20 percent local history and 80 percent western Allegan County family history vignettes dating up into the 1980s. Kit Lane, then project director for Curtis Media, wrote much of the history portion and helped families compile their family history data.

This special party is open to the public and provides an opportunity to see the Museum's new 2008 exhibit visiting 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. The period covered by this exhibit witnessed important evolutionary shifts in local history, when most of the worthwhile timber in the area had been cut and problems with shoaling in the river caused boatbuilding and lumber products industries to decline. While fruit growing and shipping basket production emerged to fill the void, many villagers began 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, seeding the artistic/vacation ambiance that characterizes these communities today.

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. Parking and admission are free, donations welcomed. Tel: (269) 857-7900; www.sdhistory.com

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PHOTO ATTACHED SEPARATELY
(see jpeg "SDHS BookPartyPhoto")

Caption:

"*Calm riders and nervous horses*", a 1909 chain-ferry scene with Saugatuck's Big Pavilion in the background, samples the early photography found in the new "History By Camera" book offered at the Museum.