



e-news

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY | BOX 617 | DOUGLAS, MI 49406 | 269-857-5751 | www.sdhistoricalociety.org

JUNE 2010

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Mark your calendar

• **Wednesday, July 14, 7:00 pm at the Old School House, A Tale of Two Weddings.** Jim Hanson will tell how his ancestors met, married and settled in the Saugatuck area.

In 1909, two young people, both orphans from Chicago, met while vacationing in Telluride, Colorado. He was a Norwegian Lutheran, and she was a Catholic of German and Belgian heritage. In August, 1910 they married in Chicago, and took the boat for Saugatuck for their honeymoon. These were my grandparents, Harry and Antoinette Hanson.



Harry & Nettie Hanson on the beach
August 21, 1910

Thirty years later, their son courted a Chicago girl who had spent a good deal of her childhood at her grandparents' farm between Douglas and Fennville. In August, 1940 they decided to get married at old St. Peter's Church in Douglas. These were my

WHAT YOU MISSED

Wednesday, June 9 | 7 pm

A Walk In The Dunes at the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area

After opening remarks by Society president Harold Thieda, approximately 50 Society members were introduced to April Scholtz and Melanie Manion from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and John Legge from The Nature Conservancy.



Gathering

Members learned about the acquisition of this 171-acre property and the need for donations (large and small) from the community to repay the purchase loans and create an endowment for the future. The first stop on the walk was the site of a future scenic overlook, just North of the Oval Beach parking lot. Visitors kept to the trails to protect the Marram Grass that stabilizes the dunes. A monitoring project by Dr. Ed Hanson of Hope College will track the inland dunes' recovery now that

parents, Eugene and Dorothy Hanson.



Dorothy & Eugene Hanson, August 3, 1940

Anyway, the story of how this family of summer people entwined their lives into a special place they all loved will have plenty of vintage photographs and stories. *contributed by Jim Hanson*

• **Wednesday, August 11, 6:00 pm Annual Picnic at Mt. Baldhead Park.**



sunbathing, dogs, motorized vehicles, and non-trail hiking have been forbidden.



Climbing

A little sand in the shoes was rewarded by a view of the Ox-Bow lagoon, the Fishtown site, and the Deam property.

April Scholtz, LCWM Land Protection Director, told about how the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area owed a debt of gratitude to the Deam family, who have resisted development of the land since they first purchased their parcel in 1936. The Deams still own a rectangular plot of land that sits in the Southwest corner of the Natural Area and to honor the Deams, everyone was asked to respect their privacy whenever they are enjoying the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area.

The walk then moved North to view an area of interdunal wetlands: a rare habitat that due to its varying water levels is free of fish and ideal for amphibians, most notably the Blanchard's cricket frog.

Occasionally, the Geiger-counter-like chirp of the Blanchard's Cricket Frog could be heard in the distance along with the more familiar call of the Gray Treefrog. Other species spotted (or heard) included the Hairy (not Hoary) Puccoon, a low, yellow wildflower; the Prairie Warbler; Bank Swallows; and a trio of curious deer.

NINE TUESDAY TALKS SCHEDULED

Mysteries, Memories & Old Tales of Saugatuck & Douglas

1. **July 6** *Eight Ox-Bow Photo Stories: The Best of One Thousand* by Jim Schmiechen
2. **July 13** *Saugatuck and Douglas Golf Courses: Some Lively, Some Forgotten* by Art Lane
3. **July 20** *Life at Ox-Bow: the Radical 1960s* by Judy Anthrop
4. **July 27** *Jack's Photo Mysteries Game* by Jack Sheridan
5. **August 3** *Lost Saugatuck and Douglas Paintings Rediscovered* by Ken Kutzel
6. **August 10** *Saugatuck & Douglas Area Gay History: A Preview of the Video* by Steve Croley & Bridget McCormack
7. **August 17** *The Persistence of the Picturesque in Landscape and Memory* by E.W. Ross
8. **August 24** *Remembering Ox-Bow* by Norm Deam
9. **August 31** *To be announced*

These fun and informal talks will take place on Tuesdays, 11am at the Old School House in Douglas. Free admission. Click [HERE](#) to download and print a schedule poster for your frig.

HOLLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOURS OLD SCHOOL HOUSE



On Tuesday evening, June 8, approximately 70 members of the Holland Historical Society visited the OSH. Harold Thieda gave them a warm welcome and



Resting



The View

Thank you to Jane Underwood for organizing this informative walk in the dunes. It was a beautiful evening in a beautiful natural setting.

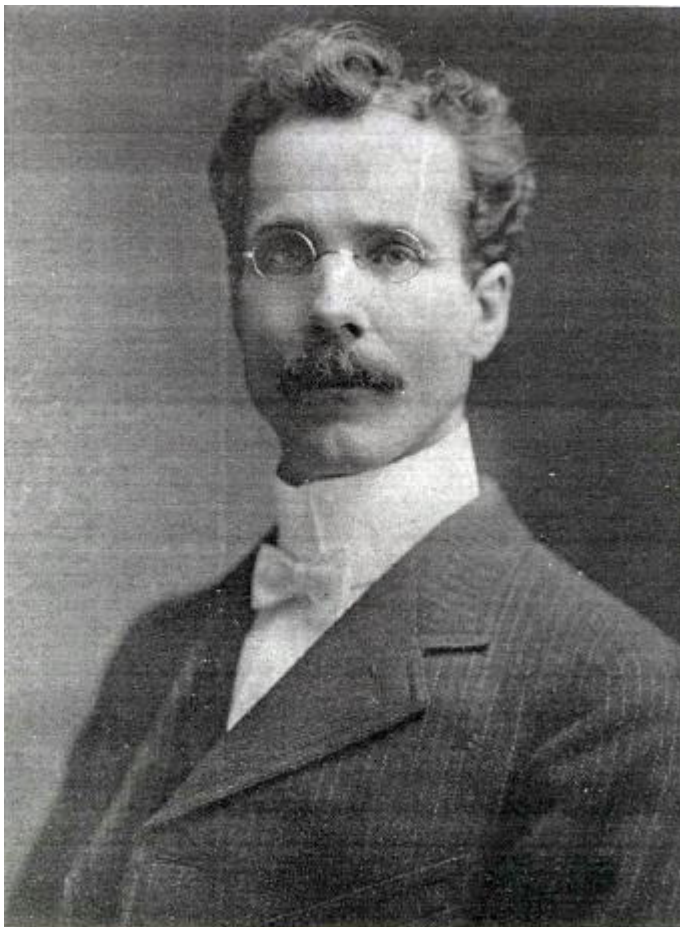
Photos courtesy of Mary Voss Summary written by Sally Winthers

Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society Bulletins

told them a brief history of the building and with further urging, the history of the Saugatuck/Douglas area.

Harold leads the Summertime Saugatuck Walking Tours so he was just the knowledgeable person to ask and he did an awesome job. There were many questions that were answered. After the welcome people toured the building and enjoyed ice cream sundaes. Many positive comments were overheard. A big thank you to Steve Hutchins for getting the school house ready and setting up all those chairs. *submitted by Mary Voss*

R. G. HUNTINGHOUSE



Rudolph G. "R. G." Huntinghouse, Dance Instructor Extraordinaire was born August 9, 1861 in West Bend, WI to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Huntinghouse. Voter registration information shows he was living in Chicago by 1886. He married Betty Schertl on 16 Jun 1888 in Cook County.

a tour of Saugatuck

walking around and
soaking up history

Volunteers are needed to guide visitors on the Society's summer Walking Tours. You don't need to be an expert, but you must enjoy interacting with visitors who are interested in local history.



Tuesday Talks

Summer 2010

MYSTERIES, MEMORIES & OLD TALES
OF SAUGATUCK & DOUGLAS

The Tuesday Talks will kick off on July 6 and run through August. See complete schedule elsewhere in this Newsletter. These fun and informal talks will take place on Tuesdays, 11am at the Old School House in Douglas. Free admission. Click [HERE](#) to download and print a schedule poster for your frig.



Wife Betty, R.G., and daughter Kathryn, about 1901

In the 1890s he founded the Huntinghouse Dancing Academy in Chicago and operated it for 60 years. He was the first President of the Chicago National Association of Dance Masters, 1913-1914, an organization which is still in existence. For 15 summers he taught dance at the Big Pavilion in Saugatuck, and was a strong promoter of the community. The Commercial Record of Aug. 14, 1919 reported:

"Probably more people have come to Saugatuck this summer on account of the gratuitous boosting by one Chicago man than through any other means. Professor R. G. Huntinghouse, who conducts two of the largest dancing academies in that city, has for many years spent his summers here, conducting dancing classes at the Big Pavilion. All this time he has told his Chicago clientele of the summer attractions here, and the Saugatuck reunion at his Albany Park academy in the fall is an annual event eagerly looked forward to by those who have been here. This year Mr. Huntinghouse has established a neat monthly magazine "Voices and Echoes," in which he gives free rein to his thoughts and fancies. And though ostensibly a publicity agent for his academies, the four issues so far published have more to say about Saugatuck than they do about dancing. The magazine, which is circulated free, reaches a large and receptive clientele, and without question many hundred of people came here this summer solely because of its consistent presentation of Saugatuck's charms."

Heritage PRESERVATION



Generating participation is key to the success of the newly formed Heritage Preservation Group. In an attempt to learn more about our members willingness to serve, we devised an on-line survey.

Please take a few moments by clicking [HERE](#) and completing this short survey. We will share the results in an upcoming Newsletter - stay tuned.

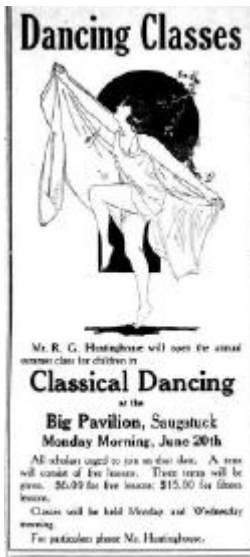
SOCIETY WISH LIST

Underwriting & Sponsorship Opportunities

The following items on the Society's wish list are needed to fulfill our mission to our members and the community:

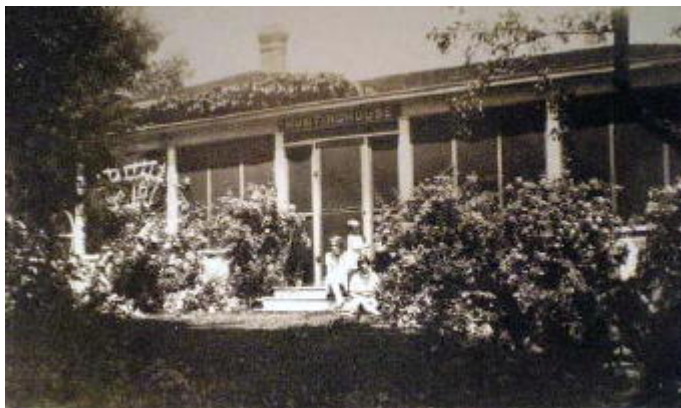
- Sponsorship of each of two new Society **"rack cards"** (like our current Chain Ferry history card underwritten by the [Star of Saugatuck](#) - click [HERE](#)) featuring the history of Saugatuck City Hall and Mount Baldhead. Cost of underwriting the production of 2,000 cards displayed all over town is just \$150. Note: Sponsor will be identified on the rack cards as underwriter. It's a great advertising opportunity for a local business.
- **"Your Tuesday!"** For only \$100 you can sponsor one of this summer's Tuesday Talks. You will be acknowledged as the sponsor of the talk on the press release, the Society's website, newsletter and at the talk.

To underwrite or sponsor, just REPLY to this email and we'll be in touch



Ads From the June 1921 Commercial Record

He purchased his summer retreat in Saugatuck in the spring of 1920. His 10 acre plot included the Burns house and it was a part of the former Calvin Whitney estate at the north-east corner of South Maple and Allegan, directly across from the Henry Barr property (now the Cappelletti house).



Huntinghouse Home in the 1930s and Today

The 1900 census shows that 2 children had been born to

A SPECIAL THANKS FOR SUPPORT OF SDHS

The Society would like to thank the following companies and individuals for their generous gifts and donations to the 2010 Museum exhibition and the Society's programs.

Your support of these companies would be greatly appreciated.

- **D & D's Tree/Lawn Care**, 616.886.9399 for the donations of their time, staff and equipment to move bookcases and shelving from the Museum to the Old School House.
- **Signs Now - Your Single Sign Source**, 616.392.1159, Holland, for production of the Museum 2010 exhibition outdoor sign.
- **Computers and More**, 616.396.6522, Holland for providing a discount for the purchase of the digital photo frames used in the Museum's exhibition.
- Alex Fink & Sarah Harris of the **Nines Gallery** and Framing Studio, 616.392.3239, Holland, for mounting services for the 2010 Museum exhibition.
- Michael Zelenka and Teresa Aguis Decorating, 269.561.2989, Fennville, for the full donation of their time to mount the "wall paper" for this year's Museum exhibition.

OX-BOW WALKING TOUR & LECTURE

Would you like to have lunch at Ox-Bow and Enjoy a Walking Tour?



I am conducting a walking tour and lecture of Ox-Bow on July 29, 1-5, includes lunch. For all of you who have always wanted to know more about Ox-Bow and spend

Betty, of whom only daughter Kathryn (born Novmber 1899) was then living. R. G. and his wife lost two more children by 1910. By 1920, R. G. is shown as a widower. Daughter Kathryn, then 20, and her husband, Fred Pfaff lived in his household. Fred Pfaff was a grandson of August Pfaff Sr. of Saugatuck.

R. G. retired to Saugatuck, spent the last 10 years of his life here, except for a short period during the winters when he stayed with his daughter and her family in Chicago. He died in the Douglas Community Hospital at the age of 93 on August 21, 1954, and is buried in Riverside Cemetery.

contributed by Chris Yoder

Thanks to granddaughter Marion Britz for the photos of R.G. In a future Newsletter, watch for her stories on R.G. and the "Unsinkable Swimming Suit" and R.G.'s appearance in "*Ripley's Believe It or Not*".

the afternoon on campus this is it! I will conduct a historical tour based on my book "*A Portrait of Ox-Bow: Art-Architecture-Artists*". You will learn about the buildings, the history of the place, the people and their art. You will experience the evolution of the school in its 100 years. You will hear the stories of the landscape, the folklore and visualize and feel the traditions.

Please join me for this rare opportunity. Call Ox-Bow to register for the event. The fee is \$35.00 including lunch on the old porch of the Ox-Bow Inn. You must register soon the class will be limited. Ox-Bow can be reached at 269-857-1183. Click [HERE](#) for more info on Ox-Bow.

submitted by Judy Anthrop

NEW MEMBERS SESSION

The second "*SDHS 101*" session of the year is coming up and is a great chance for new members and interested former members to learn about the Society and the opportunities that it has to offer. There will also be a discussion of this year's exhibit that celebrates the 100th anniversary of Ox-Bow.

The session will be held on Saturday, July 31, at the Old School House beginning at 10:00 a.m. If you are able to attend, please call Nyla Hensley at 269-857-5704 or email noteablenyla@yahoo.com

MEMORIES OF MAY FRANCIS HEATH: A SERIES

May Heath And The Saugatuck Woman's Club



Woman's Club Buildings - Once the Public Library

On November 25, 1904 a group of ladies met in the home of Hattie Bird to form a reading group. May Francis Heath was member number 10 in the roster, and, at 31, one of the youngest of the founders. A club constitution was developed and voted upon on December 9th, and in the same meeting May was elected the club's first librarian. On May 5, 1905 she was chosen club secretary.

Over the next 57 years, May would serve as vice president, president, corresponding secretary, and was an active contributor to the many and varied educational programs. A natural speaker, she came to be frequently selected as toastmistress for the Club banquet. Her knowledge of local history was always evident, as she gave a program in 1916 on "Saugatuck's Early History".

In 1934, May was one of the trustees of the estate of Minnie Breuckman, who left the Woman's Club her family home at 303 Butler Street "for Woman's Club and library purposes" and a \$2,000 bequest for construction of an

auditorium. Local architect Thomas Tallmadge designed the structure and May was active in the fundraising which enabled its construction.

Her last Woman's Club meeting was a "Big Card Party Benefit to Paint the Club Library" (the Breuckman home) given by the club "Building Board" on August 8, 1961. She reported in her diary that they had a small crowd "only 10 tables in play".

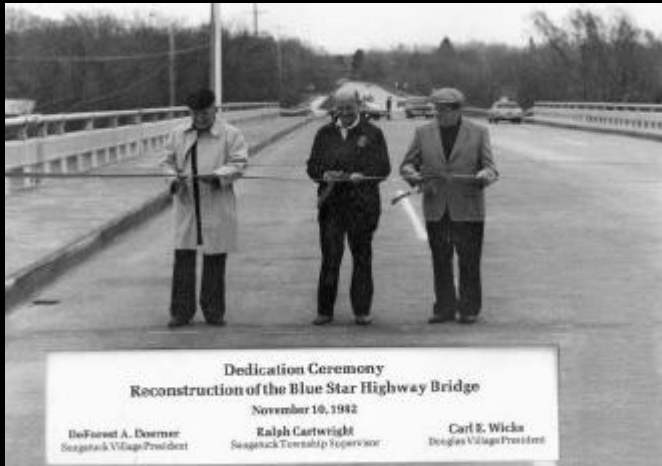
submitted by Chris Yoder

Put it on your calendars now! The Dedication of the May Francis Heath public memorial in the town square will be Saturday, 14 Aug 2010. Details to follow. Your donations are still needed, for the memorial and also an eventual small marker for the treaty oak. Make out your check to "The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society" marked for "the May Heath Memorial Fund". We are also still collecting photos of May, of her paintings, and personal recollections from people who knew her. Contact Chris Yoder, cyoder@tds.net (269) 857-4327 or Marsha Kontio (616) 566-1239.

HISTORY MYSTERIES

by Jack Sheridan

(Answers are at the bottom of the Newsletter)



HISTORY: In 1982 the Blue Star Highway bridge was rebuilt.

MYSTERY: *When was this bridge built?*



HISTORY: 1968 preparing for a big event.

MYSTERY: *What is going on here?*



HISTORY: A glass plate photo of a fine house ca 1890.

MYSTERY: *Where was the house located?*



HISTORY: A great view in 1951.

MYSTERY: *What structures are still with us?*

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

To become a member or renew your membership select from the following categories:

Individual	\$30
Household	\$50
Corporate	\$150
Historian	\$250
Life	\$500
Senior (65+)	\$20
Senior Household	\$35
Student	\$5

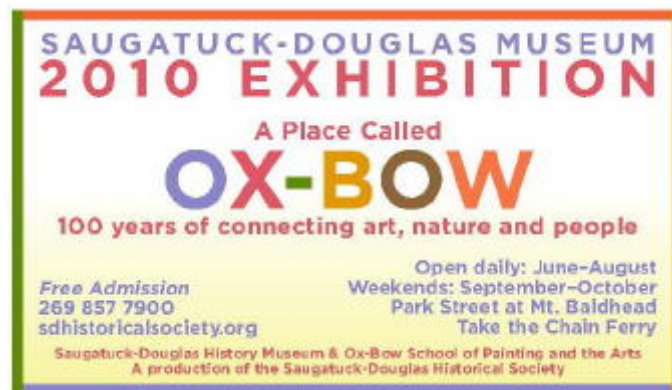
Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. You can also click [HERE](#) for a Society Membership Application.

Send items for the newsletter to: Fred Schmidt, PO Box 617, Douglas MI 49406 or email info@sdhistoricalsociety.org

MUSEUM AND TECH CENTER

The Saugatuck-Historical Museum is located in the historic Pump House at the foot of Mt. Baldhead on the west bank of the Kalamazoo River. The Museum's 2010 exhibit is titled:

"A Place Called Ox-Bow: 100 Years of Connecting Art, Nature, and People"



The Museum is open daily from noon to 4 pm through Labor Day and on weekends during September and October. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Museum and view images of the 2009 exhibit.

The Society's Technology Center is located in the lower level of the Old School House History

Center at 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas.

Society Phone: 269 857-5751
Museum Phone: 269 857-7900
Tech Center Phone 269 857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsociety.org

Upper left: This bridge was built in 1936. The first bridge across the river here was built 1870.
Upper right: The Keewatin is beginning a journey from the old pumpthouse waterfront to a berth on Kalamazoo Lake.
Lower left: This is an unsolved mystery - we need your help! Send an email to Jack Sheridan at jack.sheridan@gmail.com or call Jack at (269) 857-7144 if you can solve the mystery.
Lower right: The Coral Gables, the Blue Star bridge and parts of Marro's. The Pavilion burned fifty years ago.