

Saturday, September 17, 11-4

Heritage Festival

Douglas, Michigan

2011

A Patchwork Village
from Everyday to Extraordinary

Exclusive Homes Tour

Tour begins at the Old School House: 130 Center St., Douglas MI 49406 • Tickets \$20
Benefiting the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society • www.SDHistoricalSociety.org

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT | *The Saugatuck-Douglas Heritage Tour for 2011 is about everyday structures and homes that reflect the old-fashioned “village character” of this former port village in the heart of Michigan’s fruit-growing area. Behind its veneer of attractive shops and eateries and fine waterside cottages, Douglas is energized by scores of residents, both straight and gay, interested in the arts and the village’s cultural roots—working together to preserve and re-invent the this place they call “home.”*

Today’s twelve tour sites range in time from the village’s oldest to quite recent. Most are modest in size but ideal in design for today’s “small is beautiful” living sensibilities. Taken as a group, they mirror the interesting lives today’s village residents. Tour participants will see firsthand the various ways that Douglas-ites have put older structures into contemporary use—and come to understand some of the restoration/preservation issues contractors, designers, and homeowners faced in achieving their goal to retain the village’s small-scale character.

THE HERITAGE TOUR MENU | Pick and choose or do them all:

- 1) The **“Downtown Walking Tour”** Walk Douglas’s commercial hub and meet the Center Street shopkeepers.
- 2) The **“Lakeshore Trolley Story Tour”** conducted by a local historian. Drive along the Douglas lakeshore and hear the stories of the many Douglas lakeshore cottages—some grand and some not so grand—of a century ago and the charming 1904 Arts & Crafts Lakeshore Chapel designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright.
- 3) The **“Front Yard Stops.”** The tour also highlights another dozen or so Douglas neighborhood houses that tell their story with a story-stop at the front yard—as well as stories of some of the village’s “lost” houses and people from the past.
- 4) The **“Village History Narrative and Picture Show,”** conducted by a local historian at the Old School House, one of Michigan’s finest architectural gems of the Civil-War era.
- 5) The **“Open to View Tour.”** Go inside. Look around. Twelve of the village’s most characteristic structures will be open with docents and some owners — present to show you through and answer your questions.

- **The Old School House** (1866-67), 130 Center Street. Tour headquarters. This noble structure demonstrates Michigan’s most important public education reform program as of that date, promoting school consolidation, free high school education, and professional teacher training. With its fine bell cupola and imposing Italianate roof brackets and Classical architectural detail, this is a stellar example of Civil War era public school architecture. Its use as a school ended in 1957, after which it was converted to four rental apartments. In 2006 it was purchased by the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society and after a \$1.3 million restoration, it was reopened as The Old School House History Center and Art Gallery, putting in back into service as a center

for community education. A jewel in the History Center crown, a new structure has been added on the property house the Society's rare 1854 "Francis" iron life saving boat—built by the company that built the Civil-War-era ironsides.

- **Douglas Village Hall** (*"Dutcher Lodge"*)(1875-1902, restored 1995?), 86 Center Street. The home of the Masonic Lodge and the Village Council—and the venue for the village's traditional Saturday night dance—Dutcher Lodge was the most important building in Douglas daily life. With its simple façade and contemporary interior, today the building houses Douglas city offices and council chamber.
- **Wickes-Welch House** (1900, recently restored) 149 Main Street, at South Street. This imposing example of a turn-of-the-century Queen Anne farmhouse has an impressive 51 ft. enclosed curved front porch and notable interior woodwork.
- **Douglas House** (former Hotel), 41 Spring Street. This is a remarkable post-fire historic "recreation" from the portions of the 1861 Greek Revival village hotel-stage stop and tavern. Learn how the owners, converted the remains of the old hotel into a charming new family home.
- **Kirby House** (1890), 294 West Center Street. Built in the Queen Anne style, the Kirby House was originally the private residence of Frank and Sarah Kirby. Eventually Mrs. Kirby and daughter converted it into a guest-house, then later as Douglas's first hospital. In the 1980s it underwent extensive restoration/renovation to be become a Victorian jewel and one of Saugatuck's best known "gay friendly" B&Bs.]
- **Herman Bekken's Blacksmith Shop** (1887),---Washington Street. Douglas in the later 1800s was a busy industrial-agricultural port town. A swing bridge allowed steamships to access docks at end of Center Street and this shop was busy repairing wagons and carriages and shodding horses.

- **Gerber Building** (1890), *Corner of Spring and Center Streets, (enter via Spring Street)*. Douglas’s most prestigious commercial structure, built by Daniel Gerber, Jr., of one the town’s principal families. The family farmed large orchards within the village and experimented with preserving fruit products and the manufacture of fruit containers. For many years the building housed a side-by-side drugstore and ice cream shop. The decline of Douglas by the 1940s led to the building’s “re-purposing”—including use as the village’s Catholic School and convent. The lower floor was restored in the 1980s. You are invited to view the upper floor with its stylish condos—enter by way of a new courtyard and residential wing facing Spring Street.
- **Congregational (UCC) Church of Douglas** (1884), *Spring and Wall Streets*. Built by a local furniture maker/carpenter in the country-gothic style popular at the time, this was Douglas’s most prominent church. It was known for its music. It has been carefully preserved. The stained glass windows are original. A memorial garden was added to the north in the 1990s. It is a UCC “affirming” church with a large and diverse “gay and straight” membership.
- **Putnam-Greenwood House** (1870s), *Corner of Freemont at Spring Streets*. Dyer Putnam was Douglas’s first Postmaster (until 1885) and general store merchant. Restored and “modernized” in 1920s with porches, fireplace, and stylish French doors/windows, the house later became a boarding house and later still fell into considerable decay. Now under on-going restoration by owners Lesa and Jeff Greenwood. Note the exterior *Italianate* trim work, interior hardware, floor restoration, an addition and some re-arrangement of rooms.
- **Wade Cottage** (1851), *149 Washington Street*. Douglas’s first house. Built by Jonathan Wade, founder of Douglas (then called Dudleyville), this is a traditional two-room up and two-room down settler’s house, with a “lean-to” dining/kitchen addition and pedimented front porch added in the 1920s. Original vertical “plank” construction can be

observed from the interior. Currently used as the shared part time country home of artist & designers.

- **Crow Cottage** (2007), *31 Spring Street*. On a narrow lot smack in the middle of the village, this small contemporary open-plan house was built on a small budget. Note the interesting wood finishes, upper sitting porch with fireplace, use of concrete block — and striking art collection. The enclosed garden leads to an even smaller guest house called “the Bird.” Designed by the owner.
- Fleming House (*ca. 1865?*) *Corner of Wall and Main Streets*. Traditional millworker dwelling with a “salt box” character, within a neighborhood of other houses built in 1860s for local lumber (and later basket factory) workers. Here the owner and contractor sought to restore exterior to its 1860s form, including the fieldstone foundations—but with a contemporary garden side porch addition that maintains the original scale of the house. The interior is ready for 21st century use with material upgrades appropriate to and respectful of its past.