

**Saugatuck-Douglas  
Historical  
Society**



Old School House  
History Center



Saugatuck-Douglas  
History Museum

*"Old Dogs...New Tricks"*

e-news

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY | BOX 617 | DOUGLAS, MI 49406 | 269-857-5751 | [www.sdhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.sdhistoricalsociety.org)

**DECEMBER 2011**



## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The old year is fast coming to a close and I want to thank all our members and wish you a very happy holiday season. As we look forward to the new year and all the promise it holds, I hope each member will think about what they will do to make your Historical Society better in the coming year.

We will be finishing our Back In Time garden at the Old School House, open our exhibit at the Pump House Museum as well as holding our Tuesday Talks at the OSH. This year we will begin a new project, the Michigan Hometown Stories of Saugatuck and Douglas, a one hour documentary being produced by the WGVU public television network.

Your Society has been picked to be the first historical society to help research the content for this documentary. We will be giving you additional information in the future. This project is the first of its kind in Michigan. It is planned that a number of South Western Michigan towns will be done in the future, but we are the first. This documentary is planned on being presented in time for WGVU's 40th anniversary. Again, wishing you all a safe and joyful holiday season.

Harold Thieda

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## BOARD NOMINATIONS TIME

It is time to consider Board nominations for 2012. The Nominating Committee has begun meeting to form next year's slate for the Society board which will include names for Vice President and Secretary as well as several members at large.

If you are interested in serving on the SDHS board or have suggestions for good additions, please contact Jon Helmrich at 857-3574 or [jon@ibctv.info](mailto:jon@ibctv.info) with your

## HOLIDAY PARTY



Jane Underwood and Thelma Coghlin



Jim Schmiechen

ideas or questions. The slate for 2012 will be finalized in February.



Welcome from Jack Sheridan leader of the Society Family History Group. The Group meets on the first and third Thursday of every month at 3:30 in the Old School House. Our next meeting is Thursday December 15th. Please join us to see what we are all about and discover what you are all about. This short column appears in the Newsletter each month.

Presently, Group focus is on building family trees by learning and utilizing web based digital research techniques. In our current meetings we are learning new ways to search United States censuses - 1790 to 1930. And hold on! The 1940 census is coming out early next year. These records are a treasure trove of information and are computer searchable in many new and different ways.

Each month in this column a member will tell about an exciting, family history discovery. This month's **EUREKA!** moment is contributed by Chris Yoder:

Chris writes: "My great grandfather William Dillon lost his mother in 1855 when he was 13 years old. The children were farmed out after their mother's death. Our family history in that line was stone - walled at William and his wife Mary who lived in Kosciusko County, Indiana.

**EUREKA!!** Recently, thanks to an Indiana **Find-A-Grave** volunteer researcher working on the cemetery in Milford, Indiana, I discovered that Mary's maiden name was "Arnold". The researcher had found this in the death certificate for one of the Dillon daughters, and added it to the **Find-A-Grave** record. Certainly, this clue will help me make the next step to find and identify the parents of both William Dillon and Mary



Jim Wiley and Bud Baty



Sally Winthers







necessarily need to develop or think of things to do with the student or students that they work with)  
(2) focused on ACT Prep and the exploration of careers and post-secondary programs of study  
(3) flexible in terms of time commitment (some of the mentoring would occur online).

In general, we are looking for individuals/companies who would be willing and able to do the following:

- Work as a mentor for a small group of students (~3)
- The time commitment for this would be approximately an hour every other week. Ideally we would love this relationship to continue through the students' senior year.
- Come in during a lunch period to talk to Juniors about what they do and the industry they work in.
- Ideally, this individual/company would also be willing to do the next item in the list.
- Serve as a business/organization site for a small group of Juniors to visit and learn more about (The visit would last approximately an hour and a half to two hours). Ideally, this would dovetail with the companies that talk to Juniors about their business during a lunch hour.

We are looking for a wide array of different careers, businesses, and career pathways including health and human services, small businesses, not-for-profits, larger corporations, etc.

If you should know of someone or a company or business who may be interested in participating in this opportunity, please feel free to pass along this email to them or their contact information to me at

[jpasatta@oaisd.org](mailto:jpasatta@oaisd.org)

If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

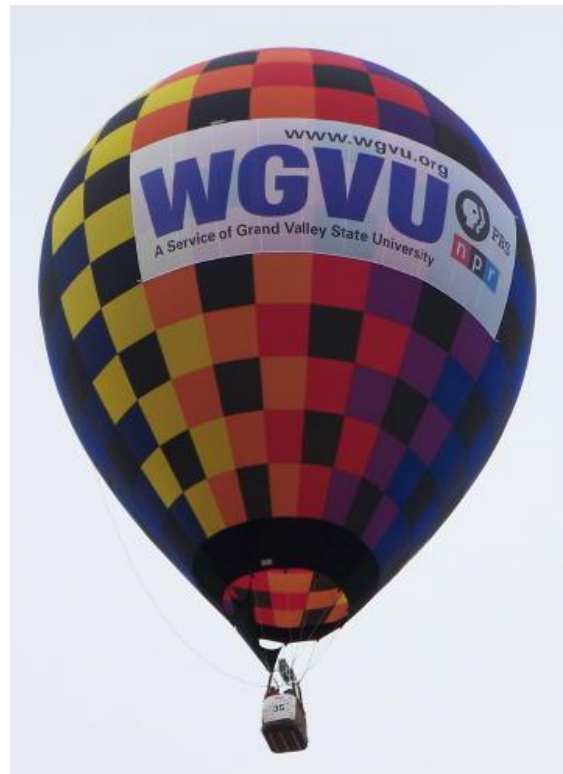
Thanks for your time, Jason Pasatta, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

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## ONE FINAL PEARL HARBOR MEMORY

Ginger O'Leary- "I was originally from Flint, Michigan, and that morning we had gone to church and come home and grabbed sandwiches for lunch. My

Ken Kutzel  
*photos provided by Marsha Kontio*



The Holiday Party's WGVU Balloon Ride Auction to support the Society's 2012 Intern Program was won by Fran Vorys of Holland. Fran is to be joined by Jon Helmrich as part of the deal. Congratulations, Fran

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome these new members who have joined the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society since the last newsletter.

- Floyd Fleming, South Haven & Douglas, MI
- Mary Liz McKinney, Rocklin, CA

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## IT'S A WONDERFUL TOWN!



grandmother had a cousin who lived in Detroit and would come over to visit on weekends.

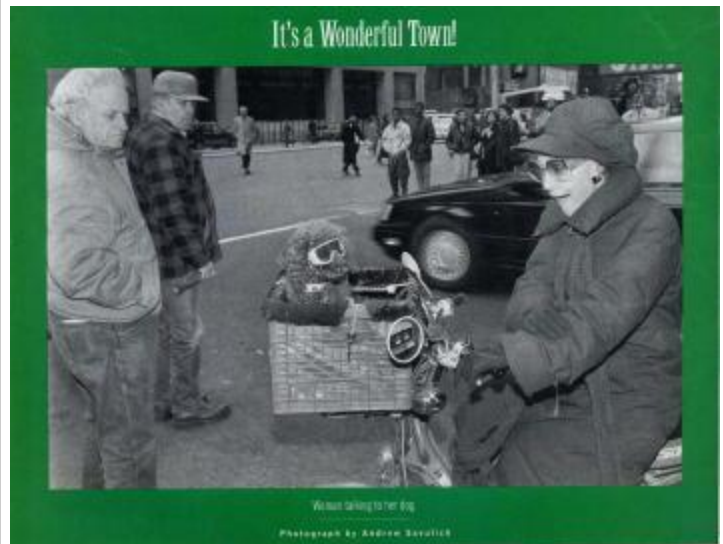
That day after lunch my mother, my sister, my grandmother and I all loaded up the car and started off to take the cousin back to Detroit. My mother was driving -- my sister and I were both teenagers and weren't driving yet.

We had the car radio on, and were probably about as far as Pontiac, when the news came across the radio. The news was hard to grasp - it was a big shock. The Japanese were in Washington, DC then talking about NOT going to war and we knew about it. Everyone's reaction was to ask 'what can we do', you know?' There was a gas station about a block from our house and right away they were taking old tires down there and piling them up and anything that was metal, they were taking to the stations. It effected people very early."

Click [HERE](#) for a recap of all the Pearl Harbor memories which have been collected.

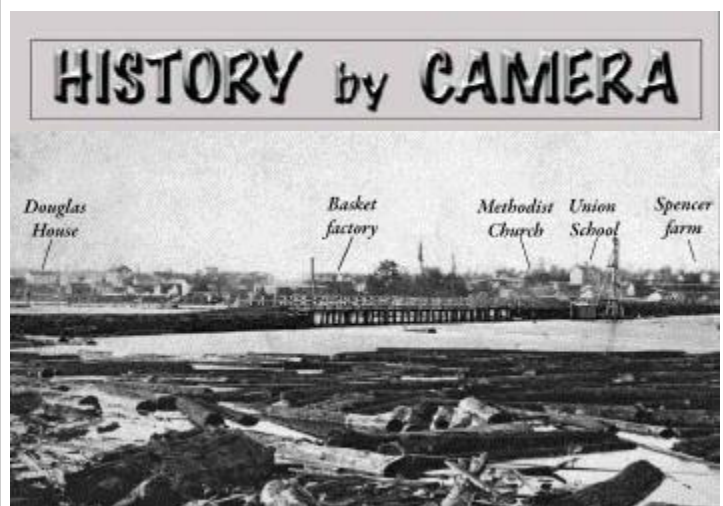
*contributed by Chris Yoder*

## A DOZEN DAFFODILS FOR THE DEARLY DEPARTED ("D4") 2011



Some of our Society friends actually migrate to cold climates in the winter -- as seen in this photo of Nicki Gallas (1993-1994 issue of SPY magazine) on her mini-bike -- in much the same mode as she is seen around Saugatuck in the summer with her favorite dog in basket, sun glasses on, and attracting a crowd. Jim Schmiechen recently found this in his library -- bringing back some smiles about when he lived in a cottage nearby Nicki Galles on a dune next to Mt. Baldhead in the 1980s and 1990s.

*contributed by Jim Schmiechen*



### A Bridge Unites Saugatuck and Douglas

This bridge photograph is the earliest and most significant photo of the bridge and of Douglas in the background. It is a marvelous view of the new bridge and can be dated exactly [fall of 1870] because of the fact that the M. E. Church is being built across the

Nathan and Doreen Tubergen and Joy Muhlenbeck

For a second year, a hardy crew braved windy weather to plant 36 dozen daffodils at graves in Riverside, Douglas and Taylor cemeteries. Plots were selected, in the most part, to address folks with no descendants or no local ones remaining. Thanks to HUNTREE for providing a 12 dozen of the bulbs used. Volunteers included Joy Muhlenbeck, Doreen and Nathan Tubergen, Charlie Hancock and Chris Yoder. Some of those recognized include:

### Riverside Cemetery

1. Rev Ezra Scovel (1794-1874) -Graduate of Middlebury College, VT. Pastored in Mexico, NY and elsewhere. "Mr. S. was not a man of the most exact habits. His penmanship was a scrawl ; his horse was seldom harnessed aright; his fences tumbled down; and his garden grew over with weeds; he was always forgetting something; when "father Robinson," a paragon of precision, his successor, went into the barn, he looked around and inquired where brother Scovel hung his harness, and was told that he never hung it anywhere ; he kept it on the floor." It is also written that "He was a kind pastor, and a clear, concise, sententious preacher. In the communion service, it was conceded that his equal was seldom found." Survived by a daughter in New York.

2. Mary (1826-1892) and Anna (1861-1881) Dana- Mary came to Michigan in 1865 with her husband David Dana, a brother of Charles A. Dana, then acting Secretary of War in Washington. She was widowed. In the death notice for daughter Anna who died at 20 of consumption (TB), the Commercial Record writes of Charles Dana, then of the New York Sun newspaper " Upon application at her death, he sent her the magnificent sum of \$10. You may expect to hear at any time now that the subscription price of the Sun has been advanced". Both rest in Potters field in unmarked graves.

Click [HERE](#) to see the rest of those honored.

*contributed by Chris Yoder*

street from the clearly visible Union School. In an enlarged image the steeple under construction is plainly visible. When viewing the photo remember that the relative distance of objects from the camera is difficult to discern. But what is seen is Douglas from the east end of Center Street [Douglas House] to the area which is today the intersection of Center and the Blue Star [Spencer farmhouse].

The unknown photographer made the photo standing on the river bank close to the intersection of State and Lake Streets. Logs in the foreground were destined for one of the mills down river, probably the OR Johnson mill then located at the intersection of Griffith and Culver Streets. The tower next to the bridge is a pile driver mounted on a barge. The bridge was only a year old having been completed in the fall of 1869.

The bridge was built by Ed Densmore at a cost of \$5,500 and was created by filling the swampy area on the Saugatuck side with log slabs, sawdust and mud, then building the structure seen in the photograph. The Saugatuck side span was followed by more fill and finally a drawbridge over the deeper channel to reach the Douglas river bank. That fill and drawbridge cannot be seen in this photograph. In fact there is no known photo of the drawbridge which was in service until replaced by a swing bridge about 1900.

Prior to the building of this bridge there had been another bridge, near the chain ferry location, for at least a few years in the 1850s. That first bridge was a drawbridge. There are no photos of it and the scant historical record mentions that it was often rammed by passing vessels and eventually collapsed. It was preceded and then replaced by a ferry which no doubt, originated in the early history of Saugatuck.

Next month we will cover the other end. Stay tuned.



## TRACES SAUGATUCK FAMILY

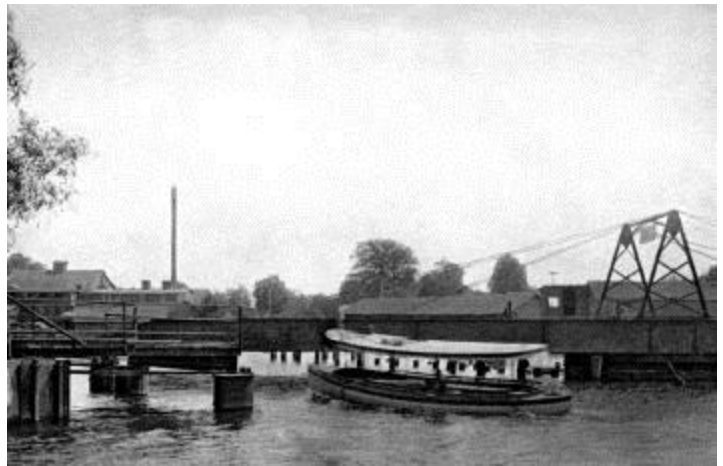


David Falconer of Nepean, Ontario with the Falconer Family Plot at Riverside

In 1873 two brothers, Daniel and Thomas Falconer, settled in Saugatuck Township, along with their wives, their younger children, and their widowed mother, Ann (McGlashan) Falconer. These Falconer families and their kin made their homes in the Saugatuck area in the 1870s through the 1920 and they included the only Congressman buried in Riverside Cemetery, Jacob Alexander Falconer (1869-1928) who represented the state of Washington.

In Sept 2011 David Falconer of Nepean, Ontario visited Saugatuck to track down and document his family history, and to share information and photos on these folks. He was greatly helped by the materials available on-line at the SDHS and by Aaron Sheridan, the sexton for Riverside cemetery.

He writes of our SDHS materials: "Thank you VERY much for the documents and for all the information you gave us. It has enriched our genealogy expedition immeasurably, and given us a lot of new insight into my Falconer ancestors who settled in Saugatuck. It's fantastic how the obituaries, photos and other documents are linked together." - *Best regards, David*



Click on the picture for a higher resolution copy.

submitted by [jack.sheridan@gmail.com](mailto:jack.sheridan@gmail.com)

## POKAGON FAMILY GETS RIVERSIDE MEMORIAL 100 YEARS LATE



Family and Others Gather

About thirty people gathered at Saugatuck's Riverside Cemetery the day after Thanksgiving to unveil a memorial on the previously unmarked plot of two grandsons of the famous Pottawatomi leader Simon Pokagon. Exactly one year earlier, a group of volunteers had been there to plant daffodils on the graves of various "orphans" in our local cemeteries. One of the gardeners, Doreen Tubergen, thought it was sad that the family of this prominent man lay unmarked and unremembered. Over the past year, she arranged with Curt Pieper at Hamilton Block to donate



*Falconer*

After his return home he updated his work "Falconers in Allegan County, Michigan", and has graciously provided us a [copy which now resides on the SDHS web site](#).



Ann (McGlashan) Falconer  
(1799-1879)



Thomas Falconer  
(1823-1890)

*contributed by Chris Yoder*

a boulder for the marker. Tool work for the plaque was provided by David Meengs and Skylark Machines Inc. in Holland. Gil Elsinga arranged for the movement and placement of the marker. The Saugatuck-Douglas Rotary Club paid half the cost of the required cement foundation.

This plot is the final resting place for John Waugon, husband of Cecelia Pokagon, daughter of Simon Pokagon, their two sons, Benjamin and Frank, and John's second wife Mary Snay Shashaguay Waugon.

A short dedication program was conducted, included prayers, and playing of traditional native drum and flute by Nance Plantinga and Nancy O'Donnell. The youngest person in attendance, Miss Paige Christ, uncovered the marker at the beginning of the program. Among those gathered were three generations of the Shashaguay family (Tom, Joe and Courtney) and representatives of the Gun Lake Tribe.



Courtney, Joe and Tom Shashaguay

Click [HERE](#) for an expanded article.

*contributed by Chris Yoder*

# ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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

Individual	\$30
Household	\$50
Premium	\$250
Corporate	\$500
Life	\$1,000
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](mailto:info@sdhistoricalsociety.org)

## MUSEUM AND TECH CENTER

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society History 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 2011 exhibit was titled:



## A Village Patchwork: Everyday Life in Saugatuck-Douglas

The Museum is now closed. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Museum and view images of the 2010 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.sdhistoricalociety.org](http://www.sdhistoricalociety.org)