The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center preserves local history and inspires learning to inform and improve our community.

December 2019

THE PUBLICATION OF THE
SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER
PO BOX 617 | DOUGLAS, MICHIGAN | 49406-0617
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SDHC Year in Review

New Year's Celebration more than 100 years ago in Saugatuck!

Winter's Arrival

Winter arrived at the Lakeshore last month but before the leaves had even fallen. Yet now we're in for milder temps to close out the year.

It's the season when we're all making New Year's Eve plans and compiling our year in review lists. We've had a great 2019 at the History Center. Together we've welcomed more than 8,500 people through our doors at the Museum and School House. They came to learn about Burr Tillstrom in Saugatuck, hear Stories of Summer, and celebrate the Saugatuck High School graduating seniors. We also took more than 7,500 snapshots and selfies in the photobooth at the new Then and Now exhibit at the Museum!

And we couldn't have done it without you. The SDHC relies on people who care: our community of volunteers and supporters.
Somehow I suspect we'll have more winter wonderland by January.

We wish you all a wonderful holiday season whether you're here in Saugatuck-Douglas or reading this in sunny Palm Springs or Palm Beach.

In the meantime, enjoy reading about Saugatuck's Harry Newnham in this month's Ask Jack feature. We'll also have the History Center exhibit, Robert Fort, Rediscovering a Michigan Artist on view with its many charming winter scenes.

One of two dozen paintings by Saugatuck painter Robert Fort on exhibit now. This winter scene is dated 1938.

Every year more than 75 volunteers give their time to serve as museum docents, keep our gardens blooming, stock our gift shop, plan events, and serve on committees and the board of directors.

I hope you will consider supporting us with your time in 2020. As we wrap up our year end fundraising campaign, I'm also asking you to consider a donation. We rely on donors at every level to deliver the quality programs you love as well as covering our year round operating expenses.

Happy Holidays,

PS Please consider a year-end gift by contacting me directly or make an online gift.

Story behind the Barrel Ornament

The SDHC commemorative Root Beer Barrel ornament made its debut at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts Holiday Market on November 29. Thanks to the volunteers who made the SDHC shop possible: John Kerr, Sally Winthers, Vic Bella, and Bill Kelleher.

The excitement for the barrel exceeded everyone's expectations and we sold out of our inventory in the first week. The good news: we expect a new shipment of ornaments due to arrive in February. We will have them available to ship or purchase at the Old School House in Douglas at that time.
The 4-inch-high Root Beer Barrel ornament is hand-crafted in Poland and continues Douglas's tradition of celebrating its historic structures as "old-world" Christmas decorations.

Stay tuned for more ornament news in the months ahead!

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**S.S. Keewatin Book Now Available**

The [S.S. Keewatin Museum](http://www.sskewatinmuseum.com) visited Saugatuck to spread the good news of their restoration of 'The Kee' in October. Both Eric Conroy and Corey Keeble, Emertius Curator at the Royal Ontario Museum gave a riveting hour-long program at the [Saugatuck Center for the Arts](http://www.saugatuckcenterforthearts.org) supported by the SDHC and generously underwritten by R.J. Peterson.

Copies of both the standard and deluxe editions of the new book from the Ontario museum are at last available to purchase at the SDHC School House.

We are pleased to have copies of both the Deluxe and Standard editions in stock. These sell for $104.95 for the special edition and $69.95 for the standard edition and can also be shipped direct to you. Stop by the School House to have a look or pick up a copy!
Holiday Celebration Wrap-up

Our December 4th Holiday Celebration marked the end of the History Center's monthly programming for the year. A festive and fun time was had at the Saugatuck Yacht Club where we hosted a capacity crowd of 110 members and friends for scrumptious eats provided by Farm House Deli and wine courtesy of Arthur Ashley and Darin Reiling.

Thank you to our party planning committee chaired by Janet Schmidt and our team of volunteers including: Arthur Ashley, Vic Bella, Lori Ferlito, Sunny Hill, Steve Hutchins, Maryjo Lemanski, Darin Reiling, Fred Schmidt, Jim Schmiechen, Leslie Thompson, Sally Winthers, and Renee Zita.

The History Center also raised cash and gathered food donations to support our Douglas charity partner, Christian Neighbors. Together we donated five shopping carts of food for families in need this holiday season.

Thank you to all who contributed!
From the Archives

Project updates: Saugatuck High School Stories

Are you a Saugatuck HS graduate? Booster? Know a few things about area history from the 1900s-1980s? We need your stories!

The Saugatuck High School Journalism class completed their first trimester working on a project with the History Center. Students have selected artifacts from our collections and are researching the stories behind the objects. Thank you to Christina Lewis for directing this project!

Students have conducted research using the SDHC archives as well as the Commercial Record online. Social media has also proven quite successful as a way to connect with SHS alumni and community members. This spring, students will have completed short video documentaries exploring the stories of their artifacts. These will be shared with the community once completed.

This signboard is another artifact that students are researching. They had success learning more about the 1973-74 team and their season. They also learned the sign was displayed at the drugstore in Saugatuck.

From careful looking at the surface of the signboard, there is clear evidence of the lettering for earlier seasons beneath the current layers.

The sign painter is identified as Dan Cook on the sign.

The students are interested in learning more about this sign, its history, what people remember about sports in Saugatuck in this era.

Check out our Facebook page for more objects and stories!
Welcome from Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder, leaders of the Society Family History Group.

Please visit a regular Family History Group meeting to see what we are all about and join the group. We share "lessons learned" about the many tools available for family history research.

Questions/comments/advice/needs:

Mayflower ancestor, Revolutionary War vet, famous cousins, great grand parents, ...
Where did you come from?
Thinking about a DNA test?
Answering questions: we are best at ....

Call or email us, meetings are normally the first and third Thursday every month at 3:30 at the Old School House.

Your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area !!!

Not sure how to get going? Let us provide a helpful jump start by recording what you know about your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents and send it along for a review by Chris Yoder or myself.

The snail mail address is SDHS Family History Box 617 Douglas, 49406, or email to either cyoder@tds.net or jack.sheridan@gmail.com

We will soon be back to you with readily found data and with suggestions on the next steps to take. Further help is always available from Chris and myself by phone and email.

The only requirement is membership in the SDHS. Join the group and find the answers.

jack.sheridan@gmail.com 269 857-7144 or cyoder@tds.net 616 212-3443

Cottage Histories Feature

For this edition of the Ball and Chain, Chris Yoder shares some history behind Saugatuck area cottages and their names.

We are blessed to have many summer cottages in our area, treasured, handed down in the same family for generations, and often lovingly given their own special nickname. Our own family cottage was built on land
purchased by my grandparents at the far south end of Maple Street in the mid 1920s. The July 3rd, 1931 issue of the Commercial Record announced "Mr. and Mrs. F.G. Pamperien of Lagrange, Ill. are now occupying their new home on Maple Bluff." Fred and Lilian Pamperien and their two girls, Phyllis and Elizabeth, loved their cottage and visited it frequently through the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 60s, by the end of which decade both Fred and Lilian had passed on. After the girls married and had families of their own (in the 50s and 60s) it became a summer gathering place to include three grandsons.

The girls decided early on that the place needed a formal name, and chose "Far Gaze Point" - using their father's initials, and also paying tribute to the wonderful view in the days before the trees grew up on the hillside above Bridge Street. Later, Elizabeth and her husband Stewart Schultz would give it an added name based on the street address of 545 S. Maple and had a small sign made saying "Quarter of Six" but it was always "Far Gaze Point."

Fred and Lilian Pamperien with Grandson David Schultz

Just a few of the many other local home nicknames include: Idylease, Green Gables, Bonnie Meadows, Stonegate, The Flower Basket, The Shades, Porches, Council Oaks, Cozy Cottage, Allake Cottage, Willowood, Driftwood, Rose Cottage and Kemah. How many of these do you recognize? Does your own place have a nickname and, if so, would you share its story for a future newsletter? Email Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net or call 616-212-3443.
By Jack Sheridan

Browsing through images for the creation of my Holiday Greetings card I settled on a 1937 image of Harry Newnham and snowplow. Hmmm, it struck me, that will do well also for my next ASK JACK feature.

And I am sure when I send out the cards, it will generate the question, who was Harry Newnham? Well, he just happens to be a Saugatuck hero of mine from the 1940s and 50s. You see, he lived at 131 Griffith Street - across from today's Chemical bank parking lot, a half block from Grandma's home, and my summer place. I would see Harry often and admire him a lot more.

Harry Waterman Newnham was at various times, and often at the same time, snowplow driver, village maintenance director, police chief, fire chief, water and sewer director, and village council member. Harry Newnham was an all around man among men, and an icon of community protection.

A little family history research tells that the Newnham family has an interesting Saugatuck history, starting in the 1860s.

Harry's grandfather was Richard B. Newnham who was born in England in 1819 and in about 1861, came to this country to enlist in the Union Army. After the war, his family, including son Stephen, came here as described by May Heath in her EARLY MEMORIES OF SAUGATUCK MICHIGAN:

Stephen Newnham, son of Richard B., loves to tell of his voyage across the ocean sixty-five years ago, coming from England.

We, mother, Richard, Lizzie, Marie and myself left the London docks on Dec. 8, 1865 on the packet ship, the Robert Peel, bound for America and after a tempestuous voyage of ten weeks we arrived at New York. The trip was a stormy one, the bulwarks were carried away, deck houses blown down and we were thankful to see land again; we were taken to Castle Garden after the boat had undergone inspection by health officers and the next day took the Grand Trunk R. R. line to Kalamazoo where we were met by my father and Capt. Upham with bob-sleighs to convey us through the wilderness to our new abode in America; the trip proved very interesting to us children as everything was new to us and so vastly different from our London home, when we arrived in Saugatuck, we ate our first meal at Margaret Goodrich's boarding house.

In 1879 Stephen was married to Althea Deming and they had five children, Wayne,
Bessie, Hazel, Harry [featured here] and Richard. Steve became a mariner, sailing the Great Lakes forty-seven years, forty-five as a chief engineer.

So Harry Newnham was born, raised and lived his life - like many descendants of early settlers - making this little village by the Lake a better place for those of us who have followed.

A tip of my history hat to the memory of Harry Newnham!

ASK JACK is presented each issue by Jack Sheridan. This column "lives" off reader interest and inquiries. Please send your questions to jack.sheridan@gmail.com or call me at (269) 857-7144

ABOUT THE SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society was founded in 1986 by a group of charter members interested in preserving and sharing the unique history of Saugatuck, Douglas and the surrounding area. In 2016, the Society was renamed the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to celebrate its growth and to recognize the development of the History Museum and Old School House sites. We are a vibrant organization with nearly 700 members residing in nearby communities and across the country.

Members are the lifeblood our largely volunteer organization. To join as a member, select from the...
following categories:

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Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406 or visit our website at [http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/membership/membership.php](http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/membership/membership.php)

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER FACILITIES

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Saugatuck Pump House building. The History Museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 12-4 through October.

The History Center -- Old School House and Francis Surfboat Exhibit are located at 130 Center Street in Douglas. For group tours of the School House, please contact director Eric Gollannek 269-857-5751 or by email at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

The adjoining Back-in-Time Garden and Surfboat Exhibit are open daily.

The History Center Archives are available for research by appointment. For more information, call 269-857-7901 or e-mail the archives directly: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751
Museum phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901

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