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

January-February 2020

B&C Directory

- SDHC Coming Attractions for 2020
- Barrel Ornaments Back in Stock
- Dine Around Fundraiser: Save the Date!
- Root Camp: Rolling out the Barrels
- Family History Contribution on Cottage Names
- House History on Lucy Street
- SS Keewatin Book Available
- Tuesday Talk Schedule and Sponsorship

Exciting SDHC coming attractions for 2020

The Programming Committee has worked hard to put together our 2020 calendar. With eight Monthly Meetings throughout the year and eight Tuesday Talk summer programs, there's something for every interest from art, architecture, photography, boating, and women's history.

Upcoming events include:
Saturday, February 15, 12-5 PM
Robert Harry Fort: Rediscovering a Michigan Artist exhibit opening at the SDHC School House

We're now well into a new year at the History Center and we're grateful for all of your support. Nearly 100 donors contributed to our year-end campaign. Every gift helps us do the work of preserving our community's history and inspiring learning through exhibits, programming, and outreach.
This year marks the culmination of projects many years in the making. New signage for the History Center, a Native American interpretive space in the Back-in-Time garden, the *Century of Progress: Gay History Timeline* exhibit, Ox-Bow art, and so much more!

In addition to sponsorships and financial contributions, know that we cannot do any of this without the support of time and talent you all share with the History Center.

Here's to the beginning of a great year!

Warmly,


eric

Eric Gollannek
Executive Director

**Saturday, February 29, 12-3 PM**
Douglas Winterfest with sled dog teams at the SDHC School House

**Wednesday, March 11 at 7 PM**
Monthly Meeting: *Robert Fort, Rediscovering a Michigan Artist Celebration* and talk at the SDHC School House

**Saturday, March 28**
SCA Real to Reel Filmmfest 2020 -- Mountainfilm Festival venue at the SDHC School House. See the SCA website for more information: [https://www.realtoreel.sc4a.org/](https://www.realtoreel.sc4a.org/)

View the full list of events for the year at our website:
http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/current/calendar.php

**Return of the Barrel Ornament**

If you missed picking up one of the hottest items of the holiday season, good news, history lovers! The SDHC commemorative Root Beer Barrel ornament is back in stock and available for purchase at the History Center in Douglas. Ornaments sell for $40 and can be shipped to you for an additional charge. Contact John Kerr at johndkerr55@gmail.com for more information or call the History Center at 269-857-5751 to pick one up in person!
What's hot for 2020? *Dine Arounds* are back!

You asked for it, so by popular demand, we're excited to announce the History Center dine around is back! The Dine Around tradition turns ten years old this year, "An evening of tasty fun and palatable fundraising" that delights and nourishes all who attend.

**Set in the historic location of West Shore Golf Course**

**When:** Sunday, July 12 from 4 to 7 PM  
**Where:** West Shore Woods

Four homeowners have generously offered to open their homes for tours with great appetizers and adult beverages.

**Watch this space for more information on how to reserve your spot and purchase tickets.**

Thank you to our wonderful hosts for their offer of hospitality in support of the History Center:

- Lori and Keith Hayward
- Michael Doriean and Michael Hoffman
- Shirley Sutton and Dick Shaw
- Beth Howley
Root Camp branches out this year, inviting campers to ask what we can learn about history and nature from the Douglas Root Beer Barrel?

During the four days of Root Camp, young campers will learn about the history of the forests and lumber industry at the Lakeshore, see historic tools used in woodworking, learn how artists create wooden sculpture, experience animal power demonstrations, and experience the fizzy science behind natural root beer soft drinks. Campers will also visit the Root Beer Barrel for a celebratory treat!

To register, please visit our website here:
http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/current/rootcamp/rootcampapp.php

Update: We've had outstanding response to this year's Root Camp and the Morning Session is now full! Please contact the History Center if your child would like to attend but you are unable to make the afternoon session.
Cottage Histories Feature

The Cottage History feature continues in this issue of the Ball and Chain as Chris Yoder collects some of the history behind Saugatuck area cottages and their names. A member wrote in to share her story:

"Hams Haven" - The Gallas Cottage
Contributed by Nicki Gallas

My parents bought our cottage around 1940 and named it "HAMS HAVEN."
My parents, George and Jo Ann Gallas, were a dance team, and performers are known as "HAMS."

There was a famous burlesque dancer, I guess in the 1940's, named Ann Coreo and she and her husband had a house in Malibu named "Hams Haven." My parents worked with her and they asked if they could borrow the name for their cottage and she said yes. So when it came time to name our cottage, it became "Hams Haven." Nobody understands the name, so I'm always having to explain it to people and since I am an actress, the name still applies.

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.
Two rusty old spikes preserve the memory of the railing which once bordered the "float bridge" allowing travelers to drive their wagons across Goshorn Lake. We can thank the late S. Louise Johns for keeping them and documenting what they were. They appeared about a decade ago for sale on eBay, and now will be preserved among the items in the SD History Center's archives.

According to Kit Lake's wonderful book *Goshorn Lake Remembered*, the floating bridge was built about 1867 across the narrower western part of the lake, but in 1887 was shifted east to follow the north-south section line. The railings appear in a circa 1895 photo of the bridge, but appear missing in later photos. The bridge was used for many years, but fell into disrepair and had not been used for many years when it broke apart about 1909. In 1915, the wood was salvaged for various uses.
S. Louise Johns (1883-1955), whose grandfather Samuel came to Singapore in 1862 to work in the Stockbridge Mill, was the daughter of George and Nina Johns. By 1895 her parents owned the property at the south end of the lake, directly where the float bridge came to shore. As early as the 1920's her mother Nina began running a public beach on their sandy shoreline, charging a five cent admission fee. Louise and her brother Lem remained on the property after the death of their parents and upped the admission in the 1930s to ten cents. Lem also served as the caretaker for Riverside cemetery. The family sold the property in 1948.

**Southwell House History on Lucy Street**

*This month we have a new member-historian sharing the story of their Saugatuck house research. Welcome John and Vicki Mayer!*

My wife Vicki and I purchased our brick house on Lucy Street in Saugatuck, in 2012, and I was anxious to track down any old photos that might reveal some of the original elevations. My research led me to Allegan County Tax records, Ancestry.com, and of course the SDHC, where I was never able to find an historic photo, but I found much more. I found an interesting family history for one of the previous owners, that would make a great mystery novel.

Carlos (Charles) Southwell and his wife Ellen Peabody were married in March of 1829, in Jefferson County, New York and began to raise their family not far from the St. Laurence River in Clayton, New York, about ninety miles north of Syracuse. Their family quickly grew and in the early 1850's, Carlos and Ellen Southwell headed west with their nine children and settled in Allegan County. Not long after arriving Ellen Peabody Southwell passed away in August of 1856.

Henry Southwell was the oldest of Carlos and Ellen Southwell's children. He was born December 11, 1829. Shortly after arriving in Allegan County with his family, he married Nancy Billings, and by the 1860 census he was living in Allegan Township with his wife and children, Edwin, Oren and Danforth. By 1874, this family had grown to include the additions of Ida, Mary, Carrie and Charles.

Danforth Southwell married Sarah Cline Goodman on January 6, 1888 and shortly after purchased Lot two in the original Plat of the City of Saugatuck, on Lucy Street. Allegan County Tax Records show our home was in the possession of the Danforth Southwell family from 1889 through 1915, so I began looking at on-line Commercial Record articles on this family.
Danforth Southwell and his brothers Oren and Charles were the subjects of a number of tragic news reports during a sixteen-year period.

On October 5, 1885, Charles Southwell was badly injured in a fall on the stairs at school in Saugatuck.

On December 19, 1890 as reported in the *Lake Shore Commercial*, "The residence occupied by the Oren Southwell family was totally consumed by fire including all their household possessions. This residence was on Captain Brittain's farm east of town. A house on the same premises and occupied by the same family burned down a year earlier.

The year of 1900 was particularly hard on Danforth Southwell. The April 1900 census showed Danforth residing in Benton Harbor in a boarding house while working as a shipbuilder. On April 10, 1900 he left Benton Harbor to visit Saugatuck for the day onboard the Pere Marquette Railway. He was joined on this excursion by his brother Oren who was working at nearby Paw Paw Lake. Six days later someone broke into a shed at Danforth's house on Lucy Street and hung his dog, while he was away working.

On May 25, 1900, the *Commercial Record* reported the "brick house on Lucy Street, owned by Danforth Southwell was destroyed by fire, leaving a shell". It also noted this home replaced an earlier home on the same site that was also destroyed by fire. Reconstruction on the Lucy Street house began in October 1900.

On January 18, 1901, the newspaper felt it important enough to note that Danforth Southwell was on the "sick list" this week. Three days later, on January 21, 1901, his brother Charles was found murdered on the burning deck of the steamer City of Louisville in Chicago. Charles funeral took place in the house on Lucy Street.

In 1903, Danforth and Sarah Southwell got divorced. She remained at the house for few more years. Danforth moved to Arkansas, remarried and eventually ended up in Los Angeles, where he died in 1937.

While following this trail, I was able to communicate with an ancestor of Danforth, and did receive a photo of the man after he left Michigan.

Many signs of the 1900 fire still exist in our home. We have uncovered charred timbers, and blackened bricks as we have remodeled.

It is ironic to me that all these years later I, as a retired firefighter, would end up living a house previously owned by a family so impacted by fire.

I still have not found any old photos of our home, but remain hopeful.

If only the walls could talk!
-- John Mayer

*If you have any leads on historic photos or other information, please email or call the History Center!*
Program Sponsorships

Love history programs at the Old School House? Consider sponsoring a Tuesday Talk or Monthly Meeting. Sponsorships cost $150 and get your name or business included with all promotional materials. These help support the high caliber of our presentations and field trip activities!

We are currently looking for sponsors for our Winterfest sled dog program on February 29 and Monthly Meetings. You can view a complete list of programs on our website here: http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/current/calendar.php

Our full slate of Tuesday Talk programs are also available for your support!

Calendar of 2020 Tuesday Talks
Tuesdays in July & August at 11 AM at the Old School House

Would you or your organization like to sponsor a Tuesday Talk? Please contact us at info@sdhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

July 7
Michigan State Parks Along the Old West Michigan Pike with Christine Byron and Tom Wilson

July 14
Wildlife Conservation in West Michigan with the Outdoor Discovery Center

July 21
Boating and the History of the Saugatuck Yacht Club with Andrew Zolper

July 28
Getting the Vote: Michigan Women and the Path to Suffrage with Ruth Stevens from the Greater Grand Rapids Women’s History Council

August 4
The Saugatuck Center for the Arts: A Reprise with Kristin Armstrong

August 11
Land Conservancy of West Michigan: Strategic Planning with Justin Heslinga

August 18
Re-Painting the Town: Looking Back on the 1997 Exhibition with Ken Kutzel

August 25
On ‘Artists and Taking Chances at Ox-Bow’ with Mary Jo Lemanski

Multiple sponsors are welcome and encouraged and all will receive billing in future announcements. Please call the Old School House or send an email for more information.
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

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

The S.S. Keewatin Museum visted Saugatuck to spread the good news of their restoration of "The Kee" in October. Both Eric Conroy and Corey Keeble, Emeritus Curator at the Royal Ontario Museum gave a riveting hour-long program at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts 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 now 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!

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:

- Individual: $50
- Household: $70
- Premium: $300
- Corporate: $500
- Lifetime: $1,000
- Senior (65+): $30
- Senior Household: $45

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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