Winter Newsletter
December 2020 and January 2021

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

Wishing you all the best as we make our way into the new year 2021!

On the heels of a year with few familiar markers of time’s passage, the History Center is cautiously looking ahead to 2021 with events that can bring us together outdoors, online, and in our museum galleries.

Stay tuned for calendar announcements in the next month.

Saugatuck Shanty Success
Read more about plans for the Saugatuck shanty and telling the story of Great Lakes History this summer!

In Memoriam
Recognizing the passing of SDHC members Josephine Clark, Hugh Callahan, and Pauline Brockington.

Family History Group
Want to learn more about your family tree? Welcome from new co-leaders John Mayer and Judi Thomas. Read about Cottage History: Knolls Cottages by John Upton.

Collection Corner
Kenneth Kutzel on new Anne Corlett paintings in the SDHC collections.

2020 Fundraising Success!
Thanks to you, we exceeded our fundraising goals at year-end. Read more about what that means in this newsletter.

January 2021 at Oval Beach: Lake Michigan levels have started to drop and still no ice! You can see the nineteenth century pilings from the Kalamazoo River channel visible.

Looking back at the SDHC's 2020 programs
Summer programs ended in early September, but you can revisit some of these on the SDHC's YouTube channel!

Visit our YouTube page for history on-demand!
The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center has secured a new home for one of Saugatuck’s last commercial fishing shanties by partnering with Retro Boat Rentals of Saugatuck.

Retro Boat Rentals will restore the Demerest Shanty and place it at their 730 Water Street site. The History Center will research, design and install interpretive displays inside and outside the Shanty to tell the story of commercial fishing in Saugatuck. The exterior of the Shanty will be open to the public 24/7. Interior exhibits will be open during Retro Boat’s normal operating hours. Marvin “Demi” Demerest, previous owner of the shanty and one of Saugatuck’s last commercial fishermen, passed away in April of 2020.

For 100 years, from the 1860s to the 1960s, commercial fishing was an important industry in Saugatuck, employing hundreds of people and producing tons of fish for local and regional markets. The industry was originally concentrated at “Fishtown” across from what is now the Ox-Bow School of Art. After the course of the Kalamazoo River was straightened in 1906, Fishtown became landlocked and the industry migrated into Saugatuck. Buildings like the Demerest Shanty once dotted the shore around what is now Coughlin Park and between Francis and Lucy Streets. By the 1960s, environmental pollution, invasive species, and state regulations favoring recreational fishing contributed to the demise of commercial fishing in Saugatuck and throughout Lake Michigan.

The SDHC’s unique public/private partnership agreement with Retro Boats was central to the preservation of the Demerest Shanty and its reinvention as a “mini museum.” During this year of remarkable challenges, History Center representatives sought innovative solutions to preserving and interpreting local history. The SDHC worked with multiple public and private entities in the area, prioritizing a waterfront site accessible to the public and a partner willing to invest resources to restore and maintain the shanty. John Sharar and Lauren Stanton, owners of Retro Boat Rentals, and the Harrington family who own the site, generously agreed to take on this challenge. In partnership with the SDHC, significant portions of the shanty will be reserved for historic displays, and Retro Boats will use other portions as a gathering space for customers waiting to rent boats.

Display sponsorship opportunities are available at various levels, and sponsor names will appear on site. If interested, please contact SDHC committee chair Julie Bizzis at jkbizzis@gmail.com.

You can follow along on Facebook for regular updates on the history of the waterfront and fishing on Lake Michigan at our page: https://www.facebook.com/SaugatuckShanty

In Memoriam

Josephine "Jo" Clark

March 21, 1922 -- November 24, 2020

Josie was born in Montclair, New Jersey to Ralph M. and Harriet Parsons Watt. She graduated from The Kimberley School and
attended Smith College. Josie's family vacationed in Douglas, Michigan every summer and it was there that she met Bill Clark. The summer romance became a lifelong one when they were married on December 28, 1942.

Bill and Josie lived in Kirkwood, MO for many years, raising their family of six children. They lived briefly in Pittsburgh, PA before moving to Kingwood, TX in 1975, but always returned to Michigan for the summer. Josie moved back to St. Louis in 2017.

Click here for obituary.

Hugh “Don” Callahan

May 7, 1947 – January 6, 2021

A great friend to all who knew him, Don Callahan passed suddenly. He was probably best known as a regular fixture at the Saugatuck Antique Pavilion, gregarious, helpful and always smiling. Don was also a member of the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center.

After growing up in Baltimore, Maryland, Mr. Callahan served in the United States Navy. Later, he lived all over the United States, including, California, St. Louis, Missouri, Detroit, Michigan and Florida. He finally settled in the Saugatuck-Douglas community.

Don was preceded in death by his mother, Clarice Callahan, and his lifetime partner, Mark Richter.

Pauline "Pauly" Brockington

December 17, 1925 - June 3, 2020

Pauly was born and raised in Columbus Ohio. She spent many enjoyable summers at Big Darby Creek in the Hocking Hills of Ohio. Pauly graduated from The Ohio State University, where she met her husband Ned. She was a long time resident of Saugatuck, where she worked at Force's Gifts and Saugatuck Bank.

She was very involved in the Saugatuck-Douglas Art Club, Garden Club, and Historical Society. Pauly was a storyteller, through both her writing and painting. She was an active part of a writers group that published "Meanderings" articles in the Commercial Record. She wrote hundreds of stories for her grandchildren about growing up in Ohio, and what it was like to be a child of the depression. She was always happy
Family History Group Updates

Welcome from John Mayer and Judi Thomas, your new co-leaders of the SDHC's Family History Group.

This is a reminder that our Family History Group meeting date has changed for the year of 2021. We will meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3:30pm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will meet via Zoom.

Upcoming meetings will feature a presentation by John Mayer on "Free Resources for Researching your Irish Ancestry" followed by any tips or stories (Irish or otherwise) from the group regarding your family research. Subsequent topics on DNA testing and family history are also planned.

If any of you are having trouble joining us because of very slow internet connections or no internet access at all, know that you can also phone into the Zoom meeting. Contact us for more information!

SDHS Family History
Box 617
Douglas, 49406,

sdhsfamilyhistory@gmail.com
269.857.5751

Until further notice all meetings will be held online using Zoom. An email will be sent to the members of the group 5 days prior to the meeting with a Zoom meeting invitation.

Collection Corner: Ken Kutzel on Anne Corlett

Though the cold weather is here and the Covid Pandemic has affected our ability to meet in person, the volunteers at the Old Schoolhouse have continued to work diligently to prepare for the future. It is great that our community continues to support us in so many ways!

Recently, Anne Corlett, a well-known local artist has presented us with two of her works, both landscapes, and both recognizable local scenes.

Right: Anne Corlett, Sailing in Saugatuck, oil/canvas, 2017

Anne is not the first Corlett artist to paint in the Saugatuck Douglas area. According to Anne, her grandmother, Helen Corlett, first visited the area with her parents at the age of 6. The Chicago family originally stayed in a boarding house on Lake Shore Drive.
Later the Corletts bought that house, which still remains in the family. Helen later studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. As an adult, Helen would come for long weekends and host “painting parties” for her artist friends. She was a member of the Saugatuck Art Club and also took classes at Ox-Bow.

Above: Helen Corlett, Alley Behind Center Street, Douglas, watercolor, c. 1930

Anne’s other grandmother, Pauline Randall, also moved to the area, from Chicago, in 1950, when she and her husband purchased West Shore Golf Course. Pauline was also a painter and a member of the Saugatuck Art Club, though she was not formally trained.

Anne Corlette graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with a B.S. in Fine Art. She later studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, The Royal Academy of Art, London, the Kalamazoo Art Institute and Ox-Bow. Anne has shown her work in countless exhibits all over the United States and Images of her work have often been published.

In the Summer of 2017, Anne Corlett participated in a special event gathering at the Old Schoolhouse, where she created Old Schoolhouse Garden (left) while the public watched her paint. I remember at the time Anne promising to eventually give the painting to the History Center. This Fall, Anne kept her promise and presented the painting to us for our permanent collection.

Cottage Histories: Knolls Cottages with “Nicknames”
contributed by John Upton with assistance from Chris Yoder

“The Knolls” is an area along the lakeshore just south of Shorewood. There were two cottages in The Knolls to which “nick names” were attached, neither taking wide effect.

The first, “Oak Openings” (Photo--left--388 Lakeshore Drive), was constructed, occupied and christened in 1900, though the oaks were few and the openings many and spacious. So far as is known, the name “Oak Openings” quickly faded away. Direct descendants of the Frederick A Sperry family (the original owners) continue to enjoy it, maintained in excellent condition virtually unchanged except for interior enhancements. It is the southernmost of four cottages in the hollow below the Knolls service road, nearest the lake.
Once Called “Hillcrest”

When Ellen Canfield and Herbert H. Upton were married Sep. 8, 1921, they married on the porch of the largest and most accommodating of neighboring structures, the Knolls cottage on the hilltop (380 Lakeshore Drive). In the Commercial Record article about the wedding, it was referred to by the name “Hillcrest”. Ellen was the daughter of Prof. and Mrs. Arthur G. Canfield of Ann Arbor and granddaughter of Prof. L. E. Sayre of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas—both of whom the newspaper referred to as “almost the pioneers of the now considerable colony of cottages on the West Shore”. Frederick Sperry, son of the builder of “Oak Openings” was the best man. Following the ceremony, a wedding supper was held on the south porch, which had been decorated in flowers and greenery for the occasion. The nickname “Hillcrest” would have been introduced by either the Frank Caldewells who had owned the cottage from 1916 or by the original builders (Frank and Susan (Draper) White). The Whites built the cottage about 1904. When the Upton family later purchased it in 1943 from a Mrs. Sudler, they found a stack of nice stationery bearing “Hillcrest” as its heading. The Uptons, who still own the place, may have utilized the supply, but none remains nor does the “Hillcrest” moniker which appears not to have had a life otherwise.

Left: A photo of Ellen Canfield Upton and Herbert H. Upton, on the porch of the home at 380 Lakeshore Dr. for the 60th anniversary of their 1921 marriage.

In this picture, they were posed at precisely the same spot on the porch where they took their marriage vows.

Right: Brayden Henry and Anne Upton

This past August, great-granddaughter Annie Upton and Brayden Henry celebrated their own marriage at this family cottage, not far from the spot where Ellen and Herbert wed almost ninety-nine years before.

Help us continue this series of local cottages with “nicknames” by sending along the story of your own place to Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net, 616-212-3443.
2020 Fundraising Success!

The History Center ended 2020 on a high note with multiple successes from our year-end fundraising campaign and holiday sales.

**The 2020 End of Year Campaign** performed well this year. We exceeded our goal of $20,000 to raise over $24,000 from more than 100 donors. Thank you to all who contributed.

Coming through a challenging year of uncertainty the History Center finished the year strong, having made up the cost of major expenses including the re-roofing of the Old School House.

As we start the new year, watch for more updates on 2021 events and programs where you can get involved!

Holiday fundraiser with Isabel’s Market & Eatery

The SDHC also raised over $3,000 from the "Party in a Box" event.

Thank you to Renee Zita, John Kerr, and Bill Underdown for planning this effort. Special thanks to board members who helped underwrite the cost of SDHC Saugatuck puzzles as part of the package.

Finally, we want to give thanks to Lisa Wiley and the staff at Isabel’s Eatery who put the packages together for us as well as Elizabeth Estes who directly supported this collaboration.

Consider making a donation with PayPal today!

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 non-profit 501(c)3 history organization with nearly 700 members residing in

The SDHC indoor facilities remain closed to the public this winter. Please check our social media and website for updates about programming.

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located
nearby communities and across the country.

Members are the lifeblood of our volunteer organization.

To renew or join as a member, visit our website for more information.

The History Center -- Old School House and Francis Surfboat Exhibit are located at 130 Center Street in Douglas.

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, e-mail the archives directly at archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751
Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901

The SDHC is supported with a grant from Michigan Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan.

The SDHC also receives operational support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Saugatuck-Douglas History Center
www.mySDhistory.org

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