

# SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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## FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN MICHIGAN AIRED AT SDHC JULY 28 ZOOM "TUESDAY TALK"

JULY 17, 2020 -- The decades-long struggle to gain women's voting rights in Michigan gets the spotlight at Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's next "Tuesday Talk" on July 28. Breaking with this series' Old School House venue traditions due to current Coronavirus protective measures, this Talk will be conducted virtually via Zoom technology from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Participation is free and the public is invited, welcoming information from those in the audience who may have relevant family stories or memorabilia to share. Interested participants will need to register in advance online at [tinyurl.com/SDHC-TT](http://tinyurl.com/SDHC-TT), in order to receive details on how to join the Zoom program.

Anticipating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (August 18), presenter Ruth S. Stevens will tell the story of Michigan suffragists whose work drew national attention because ours was one of the few states where women could vote in school elections long before they won full suffrage.

Ruth Stevens is a retired professor of Legal Studies at Grand Valley State University, where she taught Women and the Law among other Legal Studies courses. She earned a J.D. from the University of Michigan and a Master's in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University and she is currently a member of the board of the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. A published author and speaker, her recent focus has turned to filling gaps in the story of the women's suffrage movement in Michigan, with special attention to local suffrage efforts.

"Until I began studying the Michigan suffrage movement," Stevens says, "I thought of women's suffrage mainly in terms of well-known national leaders, such as Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul. I was fascinated to learn how women and men in large and small communities across Michigan contributed significantly to the movement. Their story is an inspiration to anyone who advocates for social change."

Recalling that Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave speeches across Michigan, she notes that Saugatuck became part of this historic effort in 1879 when Ms. Anthony visited the village to speak at the Odd Fellows Hall, and stayed at the home of Horace and Tamar Moore, today's Park House Inn. A large audience came to hear her and *The Commercial Record* reported that she "is a fine speaker" and "is laboring zealously for the woman suffrage cause."

Undaunted by defeats in 1874, 1912 and 1913, and a court decision which struck down legislation allowing for municipal suffrage, women and men in cities and villages across the state worked tirelessly to sway the opinions of male voters. In the course of their campaign they distributed many tons of literature, signed petitions, gave speeches, marched in parades, lobbied legislators, and even "took over" the *Grand Rapids Press and Kalamazoo Gazette*, creating special suffrage editions. Thanks to these efforts, Michigan suffragists finally achieved success more than a year before the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment finally granted suffrage to women across the country.

A summer tradition since 1996, weekly Tuesday Talks present entertaining and informative insights into local community life throughout July and August. This program is sponsored by **[ERIC?]**

Questions regarding online registration may be e-mailed to [info@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sdhistoricalsociety.org). For more information about the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its Museum in Saugatuck and Old School

House in Douglas, or its activities planned for upcoming months, visit [www.MySDHistory.org](http://www.MySDHistory.org).

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PHOTO ATTACHED SEPARATELY (see jpeg image "SuffrageTent1912")

Caption: 1912 photo recalls a Michigan State Fair tent promoting women's suffrage (Archives of Michigan)