

The SOCIETY

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Joe Bedore's invitation

"Hello ! My friends. An' how you find yourself?
Alright? Dat'z good. You ax what fetch me here ?

I come for feed. My place eez full o' folks.
Dem ceety folks, what feesh dis time of year.

Day catch much fish?
Don't ax me dat my friend. Dat's not my
business to spile de fun.

Come on de Flats and sateesfy yourself. I let you
take my fish pole an' my gun.
"You say nothing- I send my boy wid you.
He'd take my scow an' punt you from de marsh.
He's good for dat. He ketch you lot o' feesh-
Nobody no- jez give him a lettle cash -

"Folks fish that way?
Don't ax me dat, my friend.
Come on the Flats an' stay all night wid me .
You hear de bullfrog croak, the mud hen sing,
You bring home plenty feesh. Come up an' see.



JOE BEDORES' HOTEL Early 1900's

*From Gary Grout's newly revised DVD
"Jolly Trip on the Steamer Tashmoo", 2017
To be available in the spring.*

New Season-New Programs

The Society opens the 2017 season with enthusiasm and renewed focus on continuing to grow our membership and the value we provide to you. Our volunteers have been busy over the winter organizing the large archive of articles, letters, documents and photographs donated over the five-year history of The Society. The information is readily available in the Museum for anyone wishing to do research. Please consider us your safe repository for Island history and heritage.

This year's Special Exhibit will look at the history of one of the most important ingredients of Harsens Island life- Sports and Recreation-winter and summer. Historical topics will include antique fishing lures and equipment, decoys, picnicing, sailing and boating and the advanced art of liesure (including boat watching). Stay Tuned!

Our Lecture Series will continue this year. The second in our special island heritage lecture series ISLAND STORIES is scheduled for June 17th at the School House Grille. Island resident Judy Jessup will be one of our featured speakers along with Carole Hogg. Judy grew up in the home once owned by Aura Stewart on Stewart Farm. Space is limited to the first forty reservations so call in your reservation early to Donna Krispen at 810-748-9527. Remember, ISLAND STORIES, School House Grille, June 17th at 3:00 p.m.. Information on the other speaker will be posted when confirmed.

Help Grow Society Membership: ...Encourage a Family Member, Friend or Neighbor to Become a Member of The Society in 2017:

"It's easy":

- Go to the following URL:
<http://stewartfarm.org/hiscfhs/docs/memberapp.pdf>
at the Historical Society Website
- Print the Membership Application.
- Fill it out; and,
- Mail it to: PO Box 44
Harsens Island, MI 48028

Some new changes for 2017:

Expanded hours at the Museum.
Lecture fees for non-members will be \$15, members rate remains \$10.
Special offers available at the Museum store.
New Society decal will be available this spring.

BENEFITS to Members are numerous. Contact us for details!

The Society Pages

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Clair Flats Historical Society

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March 2017

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Message from the President:

Hi All,

This is the first issue of *The Society Pages* produced by our new newsletter editor Chuck Miller. Thank you, Chuck for stepping in to take over this position, it takes a lot of work to put together a newsletter every month. Any help the membership can give him by writing articles about Island history would be greatly appreciated. For those members who grew up on the Island you probably have all the information you need for an article right there in your head. Elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter you will find an article written by long time member Clayton Evans. Thank you, Clayton. For those who have not been around the island very long, if you would like to learn more about the history of our island you are welcome to come to the museum and look through our newly organized archives and write an article about whatever you find of interest.

Thank you to all who have sent in their renewals for 2017 and those who have sent donations to the building and operating funds. Your annual dues and donations are critical to keeping our finances in the black. If you have not returned your renewal form and payment yet, please do so as soon as it's convenient, the winter is a quiet time we take advantage of for all the processing, paperwork and date base updating required to maintain our membership and mailing lists. If you did send yours in, and the check has not cleared your bank yet, don't be concerned. We are currently working without a membership director, and at this time of the year many of our Board members are in warmer parts of the country. The mailbox is not checked as often, so the renewals then get mailed on to a remote Board member for processing and the checks are then deposited via mail.

That brings me to the issue of the Historical Society currently not having a Membership Director. If you would be interested in filling that position, please contact Bob Williams at 248-388-0465 or xharpspah@aol.com. The membership director should have access to, and some experience with, a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel which is helpful in maintaining the membership list and producing mailing labels.

Bob Williams, President

NEW MUSEUM HOURS

January, February, March, April– CLOSED – Open by Appointment only

May – Thursday, Friday - 12-4 PM; Saturday – 10 AM-3 PM
and Sunday – Noon-4 PM

June, thru September –Thursday, Friday -12-4 PM

& 2nd Friday - 6 PM-8 PM (Social Hour)

Saturday – 10 AM-3 PM and Sunday – 12 Noon-4 PM

Join us on Facebook!



Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society 2017 Detailed Calendar

TBD = to be determined

Locations may change – See our website at HarsensIslandHistory.org for the latest information.

All members welcome to attend any Board meeting listed as Board/Membership meeting.

Jan. - 7th - Saturday – 10:30 AM - Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
April - 22nd - Saturday – 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
May - 6th - Saturday - 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
TBD - 20th – Saturday – 3:00 PM - Lecture series at Schoolhouse Grille –
27th – 29th - Saturday, Sunday, Monday - Memorial Day Museum Open House
(Special open hours - Saturday 11:30am – 3pm, Sunday 12 noon – 4pm, Monday 10am – 3pm)
June - 3rd – Saturday – 9:30 AM – Museum host orientation at the Museum
3rd – Saturday - 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
3rd – Saturday – 3:00 PM – Museum host orientation at the Museum
9th – Friday – Social hour – 6 to 8 PM at the Museum
10th – Saturday – Delta News collectors meeting, open to the public – 11 AM at the Museum
17th - Saturday – 3:00 PM - Lecture series at Schoolhouse Grille – “Island Stories”
July - 1st - Saturday – 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
14th – Friday – Social hour – 6 to 8 PM at the Museum
22nd – Saturday – Tashmoo Nights
August- 5th - Saturday – 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
11th – Friday – Social hour – 6 to 8 PM at the Museum
19th – Saturday – 4:30 PM Wine and Appetizers at the museum.
5 to 6 PM **Annual Membership meeting** at the museum.
Sept. -8th – Friday – Social hour – 6 to 8 PM at the Museum
16th – Saturday – 3:00 PM - Lecture series – Tony Gramer at Schoolhouse Grille. “*Great Lakes Wrecks*”
Oct. - 7th – Saturday – 10 – 3 PM - Pie Sale at Museum
14th - Saturday - 10:30 AM – Board/**Membership meeting** at the Museum
TBD -28th – Saturday – 3:00 PM - Lecture series – at Schoolhouse Grille
Dec. -2nd – Saturday – 10 AM– 3 PM - Cookie Walk at the Museum
9th – Saturday – 10:30 AM – Board Meeting at Museum

Little Boy and The Bootleggers- By Clayton Evans, August, 2006

During the early years of this little boy’s life his parents taught school which meant that the family moved to a different house each fall. The first one was on a farm, then the Patton place across the road. Finally came the one which he liked the best, even though he had nothing to say about it, this was a two-story cement block structure. As usual it had the kitchen and living room on the lower level and the bedrooms upstairs.

It faced the river through which all the ships on the Great Lakes went by. He would and did spend a lot of all his spare time watching them and wondered where they were going or where they came from. Across the river the land was part of Ontario, Canada. There were native Indians living there and later in life he would visit them when the river was frozen. During the winter, when the river ice was safe to drive a car on, he would watch a long row of cars moving downstream along the edge of the river on the Canadian side. These cars were mostly at night when there was no full moon and had their headlights on. Sometimes they would stop and wait and later move on. This little boy later found out that these cars were loaded with Canadian whiskey bound for places in the United States through Detroit. This whiskey was the very finest produced. When the cars stopped there was the signal from somewhere that a customs agent was looking for those cars and was going to arrest them. At that time it was illegal to bring spirits in the United States. When the agent was gone the cars proceeded to cross the river and onto Detroit.

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Many a time he asked his dad to take him to find where the signal came from. He never did find out and by the time he was old enough to go himself it was legal to bring the liquor into the United States. Everyone knew what the cars carried for nearly everyone was making their own homebrew or beer. Probably even some of the residents new some of the bootleggers. For all he knew he could've been one of the residents.

During those years very few houses had a bathroom. Generally on the Saturday he got his bath. A large round galvanized tub was brought in and placed in the middle of the floor. Mother heated the water on the range in the teakettles, poured it in the tub and mixed in the cold water until the temperature was just bearable. Off went the clothes and into the tub he went.

In early December he heard the word Christmas so he asked his parents what it meant. His father explained it to him that on Christmas day Santa Claus would bring him a gift if he had been a good boy. Santa kept the list of names of all good children that he was told about so he began to wait and counted the days as the days went by. What did he want he wondered... would a toy be best or a shirt? No, he wanted a yellow rain coat, boots and rain hat. All in bright yellow. Oh a toy or shirt would be okay but the best would be a yellow raincoat. Christmas day came. He began to open his presents. He got his toy and shirt but no raincoat. Finally, his dad gave him the last package from under the tree. It was his yellow raincoat! He really whooped with joy!

It had been a dry week before Christmas day with no rain or snow, but he put on his yellow raincoat anyway and would go outside and look up at the sky and wonder why it didn't rain. Oh why didn't it rain so you could stomp in a puddle with his new boots? To this day he doesn't remember what happened to it or how many times he wore it but after all these years he fondly remembers that yellow raincoat.



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