



### Edmund Fitzgerald Sank – November 10

On November 10, 1975 the Edmund Fitzgerald sank during a storm on Lake Superior. The Great Lakes freighter sank with the loss of the entire crew of 29.



### Marine Corp Birthday – November 11

The US Marine Corps started as the Continental Marines on November 10, 1775. On that date, the Second Continental Congress decided that they needed 2 battalions of Marines to serve as landing forces during the American Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783). After the war the Continental Navy and the Marines were dismantled. However, after increasing conflict with revolutionary France, the Marine Corps was formally re-established.



*continued on page 2 . . .*

### *Message from the President . . .*

Hi All,

#### *Edmund Fitzgerald Remembrance*

On Sunday November 10<sup>th</sup> we had an event at the museum to remember those who, 44 years ago, lost their lives during the sinking of the Great Lakes freighter, the Edmund Fitzgerald. Highlights of the event included a rendition of the Gordon Lightfoot song, *The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, reading the list of names of those who lost their lives in the sinking, and using our rooftop freighter whistle to salute those people lost.

I would like to thank everyone who attended as well as so many members and friends who were involved in the event planning and providing food and refreshments for our guests. A special thanks to Gerhard and Jill Rauch for initiating the idea and providing entertainment, and to Corinne Trexler for heading up the team. It was a very moving event with about 75 people in attendance. The museum that day was pretty crowded, reminding us all how much we need the additional space which we are in the process of adding to the museum.

#### *Building Addition Status*

During October and November doors and windows were installed, roof insulation and roofing were completed, a new electrical panel was installed, and the heating system was completed. We now have a completely enclosed structure ready for winter. We do not yet have a concrete floor in place due to the moratorium on concrete trucks accessing the island, however we intend to continue with as much interior work as we can do without the floor.

#### *Fundraising for the Addition*

In mid-October a mailing was sent to all members and friends of the Historical Society outlining the status of the addition to the museum, including a list of items which still need to be funded to complete the

*continued on page 2 . . .*

*continued from page 1 . . .*

**Thanksgiving Day – November 28**

Many people trace the origins of the modern Thanksgiving Day to the harvest celebration the Pilgrims held in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. However, their first true thanksgiving was in 1623, when they gave thanks for rain that ended a drought. These early thanksgivings took the form of a special church service, rather than a feast.

Thanksgiving Day has been an annual holiday in the US since 1863. Thanksgiving Day is a day for people in the US to give thanks for what they have. Families and friends get together for a meal, which traditionally includes a roast turkey, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy, and pumpkin pie.



**Christmas Day – December 25**

The original meaning of Christmas is a special church service, or mass, to celebrate the birth of Christ. The story of Nativity, or the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, are particularly important in religious celebrations of Christmas. Many traditions that are around today have their roots in pre-Christian winter festivals. These include the importance of candles and decorations made from evergreen bushes and tree, symbolizing everlasting light and life.



Source: <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us>

*Message from President . . . continued from page 1*

addition. You may recall that all work completed so far was funded in full by a generous bequeath from the estate of Clayton Evans, an islander who was in attendance at the dedication of the original fire hall back in 1938.

In case you missed our mailing, copies of the documents are included in this newsletter. The response to our appeal has been very supportive, and we would like to thank all who have already responded to help us complete our addition.

The museum is closed for the season, but it can be opened for visitors. To schedule a visit call Chuck Miller at (810) 748-7209 or Corinne Trexler at (313) 530-9173.

Bob Williams, President (xharpspah@aol.com)

**Halloween Trick-or-Treaters Visit the Museum**



## Gales of November: Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald

By Chuck Miller

Shrugging off our construction setbacks, over 75 members and friends gathered at the Museum on Sunday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> to remember the 1975 foundering of the Edmund Fitzgerald off Whitefish point in Lake Superior. All 29 sailors aboard perished in the storm.

As a backdrop for our program, we flew an American Flag that had, at one time, been flown on the Fitzgerald. In addition, our local Sans Souci musical duo "On The Border" played tunes from the period, featuring in particular, a moving rendition of Gordon Lightfoot's epic The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald. Gerhard Rauch of the group led our ceremony in presenting a historical summary of the event and later a reading of the names of the 29 sailors who lost their lives.

On a lighter note, we were fortunate to have the Cuyahoga freighter pass us and we saluted him with our steam whistle. He returned the salute twice! A fitting contribution to our entire effort!

A special thanks to all of our Museum volunteers for their superb organization. And thank you to members for bringing food to the event . . . Susan Bryson's homemade chili hit the spot.



Live entertainment provided by Gerhard and Jill Rauch, "On The Border".



A huge **THANK YOU** to Jane's Sans Souci Market for providing refreshments. Dana's famous meatballs and fried fish were a huge hit. The market also provided desserts and gelato! Yes, the market now has gelato.



*continued on page 4 . . .*

*Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald . . . continued from page 3 . . .*

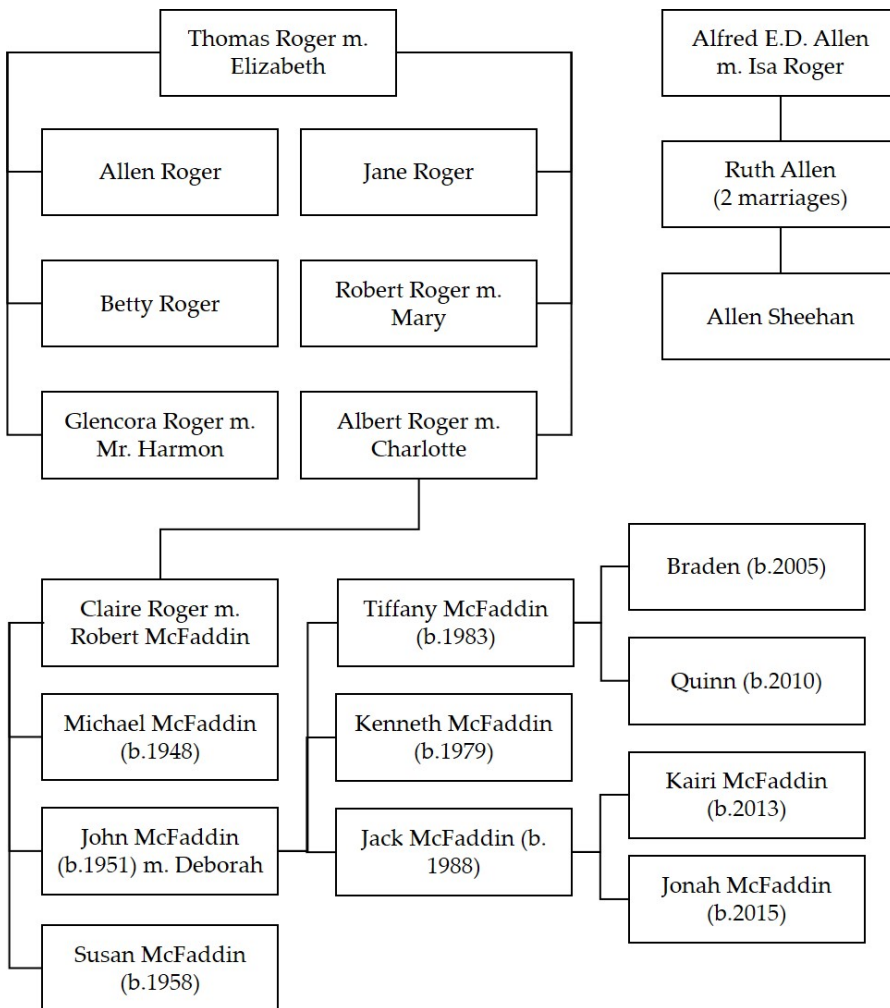


## People of Harsens Island – The Roger Family

By Chris Knight

This series, "People of Harsens Island", is about capturing the history of island families. This island family has been here for over 100 years, the Roger Family. I sat with John McFaddin, a full-time resident living on the North Channel, to learn about his family. John is a descendant of Thomas Roger who with his sister's husband bought a lot on the island in 1905.

In the 1900's the Harsen Family divided the island into three lots, which were divided into subdivisions and then again into lots to be sold. In April 1905, Thomas Roger and Alfred E. D. Allen bought Lot-1, Subdivision-4, Lot-Q for consideration of \$1.00. The Roger and Allen families built (year unknown) a duplex house (photo on page 6) on the lot for the families. The duplex house was two identical halves separated by two french doors so the families could visit with each other. Even though it was one house there were two separate addresses.



On the left are the 2 family trees; the Roger and Allen families. Thomas Roger and Isa Roger were brother and sister. This is a partial depiction of the known family lineage.

After building the house the families built matching boat houses (see photo on next page). Sadly, one of the boat houses was destroyed by ice in April 1972 (see page 7 for the photo).

John McFaddin believes that the wood for the home was delivered to Tashmoo Park. When John was building his current home, he found wood from the old house had Tashmoo stamped on it. Don't forget this was a time when the Champion Ferry did not exist, so most bulk goods were probably delivered to the Tashmoo Park on the South Channel.

You must be thinking . . . the families must have been close to have built a duplex and live side by side. They were . . . for a while.

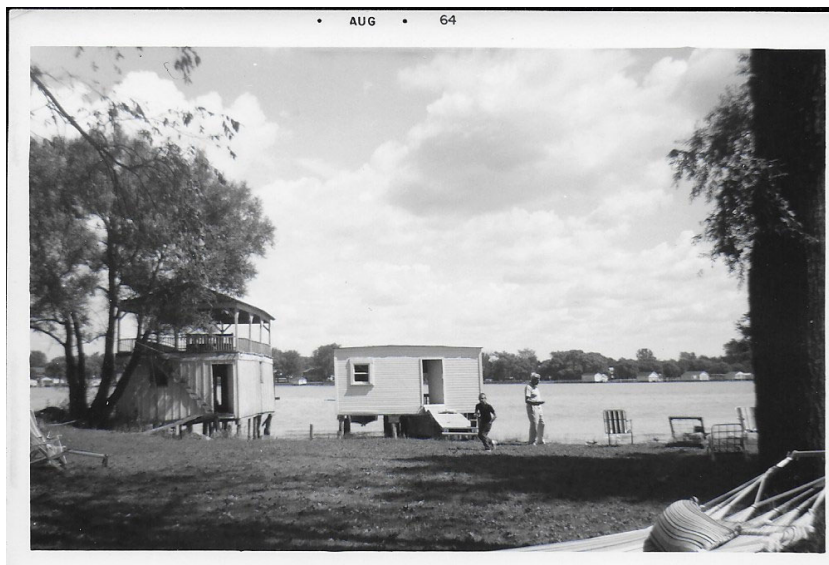
The families would come to island each summer. Happy Hour and dinner time were a regular event each day for the entire family. Happy Hour was at 5 pm sharp. Allen Roger was the bartender, a job he took

*continued on page 6 . . .*

*People of Harsens Island – Roger Family . . . continued from page 5 . . .*

*Thomas Roger and Alfred E. D. Allen on the porch of the duplex house built for the two families.*

*Note: Look in the background on the right, that is the red barn at Browne's field.*



*Boat houses built for each of the Roger and Allen families*

very seriously. His hair was slicked back with Vitalis Hair Tonic and he was remembered for always smoking a horrible smelling green cigar. Albert Roger's drink was a highball – a shot of whiskey and the rest of the glass filled with water. It was unthinkable to put ice in your drink. The pitchers used to mix cocktails had a section in the middle where ice could be placed. This kept the liquor cold but did not dilute it.

After Happy Hour the families had dinner together. A table was setup spanning both homes through the french doors.

At one point in the past a feud ensued between the two families and the french

*continued on page 7 . . .*

*People of Harsens Island – Roger Family . . . continued from page 6 . . .*

doors between the two homes were closed and the Allen family eventually stopped coming to the island. The doors remained closed for decades – there are no details as to what the feud was about. When John McFaddin was young boy the unoccupied half of the house got a reputation as “The Ghost House”. It wasn’t until the 1970’s when Ruth Allen started coming to the island from Florida that the doors were finally opened.

Without getting too much into the details, the property ended up being owned by Charlotte Roger who did a quick claim to Claire Roger. When Claire passed away John McFaddin received half the property through quick claim and the bought the other half from his siblings.

John McFaddin and his wife Debbie came to island frequently in the summer. John shared a cute story about one time when the family came to the island in early spring to get the house ready



*One of the Roger/Allen boat houses destroyed by ice in April 1972*



*Left to right: Betty Roger Henzie, Jane Roger, Charlotte Roger, Robert Roger, Mary Roger, Albert Roger, Ludwig Henzie, and Allen Roger*

for the summer. John and Debbie needed to stop at the store before continuing on to the island, so their daughter Tiffany and her boyfriend went ahead in the other car. When John and Debbie arrived at the island cottage, Tiffany and the boyfriend were already on the sofa watching TV. The only light in the room was from the TV. John was the first to see something was on top of the TV. Turning on the light in the living room, the family saw a snowy owl sitting on the TV. It did not move and was not scared of them. John got a fishing net, extended it out to the owl. The owl walked

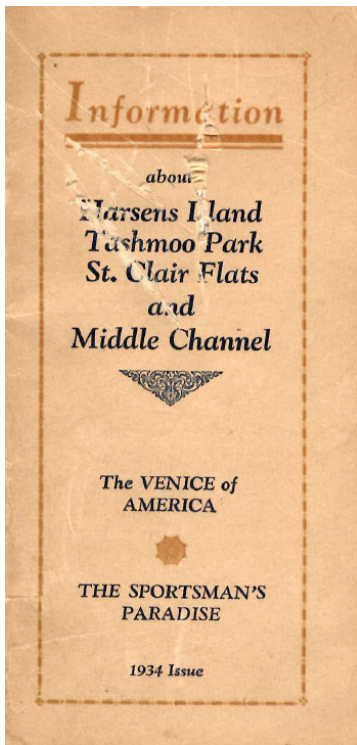
on to the net. John took the owl, calmly perched on the net, outside and placed the owl in a tree. To this day John and his family have no idea how the owl got into the house. There were no open windows and chimney was shut up tight.

John and his family became full time island residents in 2008 after the construction of their new home was completed. John and Debbie enjoy their beautiful home on the water especially when their kids and grandkids come to visit.

John also showed me a 1934 issue of the Harsens Island, Tashmoo Park, St. Clair Flats and Middle Channel Visitor Information Guide. Copies of some of the pages are shown on next page.

*continued on page 8 . . .*

People of Harsens Island – Roger Family ... continued from page 7 ...



**INFORMATION**

**HOW TO GET TO HARSENS ISLAND**

— 0 —

**From Detroit**—Take any Highway that leads to Mt. Clemens, U. S. 25 through Mt. Clemens 4 miles, turn right M-29 thru New Baltimore, Anchorville, Fair Haven. Pass a tower on right. Information booth one half mile past tower. Distance 44 miles from Detroit to Witmillers Ferry.

**From Port Huron**—Take M-29 South 27 miles, thru Marysville, St. Clair, Marine City, Algonac to one mile South of Algonac Witmillers Ferry to Harsens Island, Tashmoo Park and St. Clair Flats.

**VISIT TASHMOO PARK**  
An Ideal Place for a Day's Outing by Boat or Auto  
**FREE DANCING EVERY AFTERNOON**  
1:15 to 2:00 2:30 to 3:30  
4:00 to 5:00

**BATHING**  
**MERRY-GO-ROUND**  
**FERRIS WHEEL**  
**WHIP**  
Swings and Slides for the Kiddies

**REFRESHMENTS, CANDIES**  
**CIGARS, ETC.**

**CAFETERIA SERVICE, OR BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH WE SERVE COFFEE, MILK OR TEA TO TAKE OUT**  
**BALL DIAMONDS, TRACK EVENTS, ETC.**

**INDIAN SOUVENIRS BY INDIAN NATIVES**

**STR TASHMOO** leaves Detroit daily for Tashmoo Park at 9:00 A. M., Arrives 11:45 A. M. Leaves for Detroit at 5:20 P. M. except Saturday at 6:45 P. M.

**MOONLIGHT** to Tashmoo on Saturdays Leaves Detroit 9:30 P. M., Arrives at Park 11:45 Leaves 12:45.

**INFORMATION**

— 0 —

Freight service by United Trucking in care of Witmillers Ferry.

Harsens Island has two Ferry Companies serving the Island.

A fast Speed Boat Service is maintained between Champion's and Clay's Grocery, with all clubs, Hotels, stores and residences on the St. Clair Flats at reasonable rates.

Boats are available to take out Fishing Parties and Hunting parties at reasonable rates. Lake St. Clair provides some wonderful fishing and duck shooting. See Hotel accommodations on other pages.

Any of the three Associations will be glad to answer any inquiries about the Island or Flats.

Witmillers Ferry is at your service for information at all times. Write or phone.

Fishing Information, Pickering fishing outfits, minnows and worms are available at Witmillers Ferry.

**HARSENS ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT**

— 0 —

Harsens Island Fire Department consists of one Ford truck, one Barton F. B., pump, 500 feet of standard hose and what is needed to put out a fire. An electric siren is mounted on the fire house and, in case of fire, call Krispir's store

Phone 9324

tell them where the fire is.

Two blasts of Siren—  
LaCroix Road to Clay's.

Three Blasts of Siren—  
LaCroix Road to Grand Pte.

Four blasts of Siren—  
Gd. Pte. to Gore's Corner.

Five blasts of Siren—  
Gore's corner to the Bay.

In case of fire—do your share they may need your help.

**STEPHEN MEHL FARM**

**HOME MADE ICE CREAM**

**FANCY BROILERS**

**MILK AND CREAM**

Also

**CLEAR RIVER ICE**

— 0 —

**THE OLD DYKE TAVERN**

Lunches and Refreshments

**DRAFT AND BOTTLE BEER**

**BOATS AND BAIT FOR FISHING**

**CAMPING AND CABINS**

Information Booth for Harsens Island, Tashmoo Park and St. Clair Flats near Colony Tower. on M 29.

**BUS SCHEDULE AT WITMILLER'S FERRY**

— 0 —

**To Detroit:**  
8:19 A. M. 1:19—4:49—8:19 P. M. Sunday Only 7:19 P. M. Saturday and Sunday 10:19 P. M.

**To Port Huron:**  
9:43 A. M.—1:43 (4:43 P. M. Saturday Only.) Except Saturday and Sunday: 5:43 and 9:38 P. M. Saturday and Sunday 8:13 and 10:43 P. M.

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**STEAMER TASHMOO**

Daily Except Sunday

Leave Detroit . . . . 9:00 A.M.  
Arrive Park . . . . 11:45 A.M.  
Leave Park . . . . 5:20 P.M.

Saturdays Only

Leave Detroit . . . . 9:30 A.M.  
Arrive Park . . . . 11:45 A.M.  
Leave Park . . . . 12:45 A.M.

**HARSENS ISLAND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

— 0 —

An organization of property owners of Harsens Island.

An organized effort to secure:

**GOOD ROADS**  
**FIRE PROTECTION**  
**LAW AND ORDER**  
**LOWER TAXES**  
**COMMUNITY INTEREST**  
**BETTER PROPERTY VALUES**  
**UP TO DATE FERRY SERVICE**

We aim to make Harsens Island a better place to live and own property.

Join now and be a booster for your Island.

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

W. A. GRAY, JR. PRES.  
O. A. RASCH, TREAS. & SEC.  
JOHN HUSSEY, V. P.  
STEVE MEHL  
CAPT. WM. SMITH  
SAM GORE

Not matter how long your family has been on Harsens Island, be it 1 year or 100 years, there is a story to tell. If you would like to share your story contact Chris Knight, 586-242-4560.



## Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2019

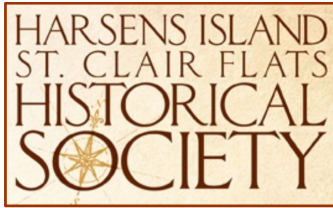
Date	Day	Time	Event
December 7	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk at Museum
December 14	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum

### Museum Hours

Winter Schedule (October through April)
Closed but Open by appointment



Stop by and check out the progress on the building expansion.



A publication of the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society

**Mailing Address:**

PO Box 44  
Harsens Island MI 48028

**Museum Address:**

3058 S. Channel Dr.

<https://harsensislandhistory.org/>

**HISCFHS Board of Directors**

Chairman of the Board  
**Open Position**

President  
**Bob Williams**

1st Vice President  
**Sue Wrobel**

2nd Vice President  
**Corinne Trexler**

Treasurer  
**Joyce Hassen**

Secretary  
**Nancy Bonacquisti**

Directors  
**Terry Wiggins**  
**Donna Krispin**  
**Christine Knight**



The historical society is still collecting photos and stories about the high water of 2019. Please contact our curator, Chuck Miller (cmiller5179@gmail.com).

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**Mark Your Calendars**  
**Cookie Walk at the Harsens**  
**Island Museum**



**December 7**

**10:00 to 1:00 PM**

**Drop off your cookies**  
**between 9:00 and 9:45 AM**

## Membership Application 2020

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Annual Dues:</u>		<u>Life-time Dues</u>	
{ } Individual (1 Member Only)	\$20.00	_____ Life Individual	\$300.00
{ } Family (1-2 Adults plus children under 18 years)	\$30.00	_____ Life Family	\$500.00
{ } Business	\$50.00		

**BUILDING ADDITION DONATION: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **OTHER DONATION: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

If desired, please specify use: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletters are emailed to members. If you require newsletters via postal mail, please write a note on your returned application.

Please complete and send with a check made payable to: **The Society**. Mail to: The Society, PO Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## ***We Need Your Help***

The Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society has come a long way since its first meeting ten years ago. After just two years we rented the 1938 Fire Hall and opened our history museum. In our fourth year we were able to make a down payment on a land contract to purchase the building, we paid off the land contract in full by 2016. A year later we added a small addition for the steam whistle, and this year with a generous donation of \$100,000 from the estate of Clayton Evans we began construction of a 1,300 square foot addition for another exhibit space and storage room. We have sufficient funds for completing the enclosure of the addition with basic electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, however there are additional items needed to complete our project for full occupancy. Here is a list of items which still need to be addressed along with cost estimates.

- \$2,500 Floor covering
- \$3,500 Interior partitions and doors
- \$6,500 Interior wall finishes and painting
- \$2,500 Additional insulation
- \$8,000 Furniture, shelving, display cases and filing cabinets
- \$2,500 Specialty lighting for displays
- \$4,000 Site work including sidewalk, driveway, sealcoat existing parking
- \$1,500 Landscaping
- \$2,000 Electronic air cleaning and humidification control
- \$2,000 Exhibit technology including video monitors and players
- \$5,000 Existing building renovation including painting and new floor covering
- \$40,000 Total

We have a goal of raising \$40,000 to make our museum complete. To help us meet our goal, please consider making a donation before the end of the year.

Please fill out the enclosed donation form and return it with your tax-deductible donation. The Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Feel free to call me at 248-388-0465 or any other member of our Board of Directors if you have any questions.

Thank you! We hope in the coming year you will join us in celebrating the completion of our Museum.

*Robert Williams, President  
and the Board of Directors of the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society*

Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society, P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028 - [www.HarsensIslandHistory.org](http://www.HarsensIslandHistory.org)

## Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Museum

### Building addition progress from June to November 2019



1. *The old storage structure is removed*



2. *Foundations are poured*



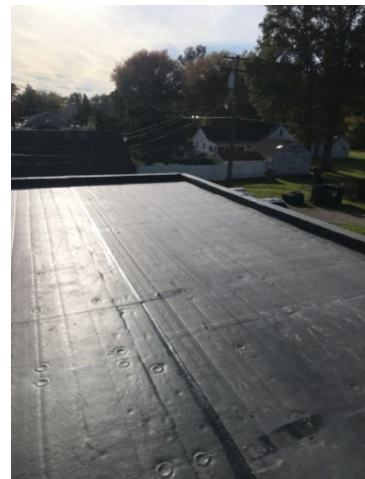
3. *Masonry walls are erected*



4. *Sand base for floor brought in*



5. *Roof joists and deck are hoisted into place*



6. *Roof insulation and roofing are installed*



6. Plumbing complete



8. Heating and air conditioning 85% complete



9. The exterior is painted, and windows and doors are installed

In November 2019 our project was temporarily placed on hold, while we wait for the opportunity to bring concrete to the island to pour the floor. Once that is done, we can finish the heating and air conditioning, electrical, partitions, insulation, and furnishings.

We hope that you will decide to help us finish our addition by donating to the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society.



**“FINISH OUR MUSEUM ADDITION” DONATION FORM**

*Yes, I am committed to preserving the history of Harsens Island and the St. Clair Flats and the memories of those who made it the special place that it is. I want to support the “Finish our Museum Addition” campaign to complete the addition which was begun with a generous donation from the estate of Clayton Evans. To help complete the addition I would like to donate at the following level:*

- ( ) \$25,000 or more – Diamond Building Sponsor and Lifetime Family Membership
- ( ) \$10,000 to \$24,999 – Platinum Building Sponsor and Lifetime Family Membership
- ( ) \$5,000 to \$9,999 – Gold Building Sponsor and Lifetime Family Membership
- ( ) \$1,500 to \$4,999 – Silver Building Sponsor and Lifetime Family Membership
- ( ) \$1,000 to \$1,499 - Bronze Building Sponsor
- ( ) \$ 500 - New Lifetime Family Membership for your family or a friend’s family
- ( ) \$ 300 - New Lifetime Individual Membership for yourself or a friend
- ( ) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ - Other donation over \$99

All donations received by March 1, 2020 in the above categories will be recognized on a plaque to be placed in the museum. Please specify exact name or names for the plaque in the donor information section below.

- ( ) \$ 30 - One-year Family membership for yourself or a friend
- ( ) \$ 20 - One-year Individual membership for yourself or a friend
- ( ) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ - Other donation amount

- ( ) *My check is enclosed.*
- ( ) *Contact me to discuss or arrange my donation.*

( ) *I prefer to remain anonymous.*

**DONOR INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)**

Name or Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. (Tax ID# 36-4665162). You will receive a tax receipt.

**Please complete the other side of this form for new memberships.**

NEW MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name or Names \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Summer Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email or emails \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your consideration.*

*With your help we hope to be celebrating the completion of  
our museum addition in 2020.*

*Please feel free to contact Bob Williams at 248-388-0465  
or [charpspah@aol.com](mailto:charpspah@aol.com) or any other member of our Board of  
Directors if you have any questions.*

Please complete the other side of this form and return it to  
Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society, P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028  
[www.HarsensIslandHistory.org](http://www.HarsensIslandHistory.org)