



Message from the President . . .

Hi All,

Building Addition Status

As you probably recall we are on hold with the building addition until the ferry can handle concrete trucks. Our floor in the addition is the next step in our project.

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 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.

Donations have been arriving for completion of the addition, and we are pleased to say that we have received about \$15,000 so far. Our fundraising will continue into the spring, so it is not too late to donate if you had intended to but have not yet done so.

Membership Renewal

Most members have already renewed for 2020. If you have not renewed your membership yet, you can use the form available in this newsletter.

Our Museum Exhibit Inventory and Improvement Committee (EXPO for short)

We have a new committee which is working on preparing our exhibits for installation in the new addition. Part of their work includes cataloging and labeling all of the artifacts in our ever-growing collection as well as determining display methods and overall exhibit layout. The committee consisting of Chris Knight, Corinne Trexler, Ellen Probst, John and Marie Eidt, and Chuck Miller,

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What Was It Like Back Then?

This year our newsletters are going to feature a new section called "What Was It Like Back Then?". Each month this section will highlight how people lived in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The "Dating Scene"

In the 1800's dating was called courting and very different than it is today. Courtship etiquette was expected of an eighteenth or nineteenth century gentleman. A gentleman could not pay exclusive attention to one woman unless he was serious and wanted to pursue marriage, and he could not attend church with a woman regularly, give her costly presents, or be her constant escort unless he had serious intentions.

Before a gentleman could even consider courting a woman, he had to have already met her or arranged an introduction through society's proper channels. After the introduction a gentleman may write the woman's father and stating his position in life and prospects, as well as mention his family, and request permission ... to visit the family.

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President's Letter . . . continued from page 1 . . .

have been meeting over the winter, and in some cases working individually on the project. Chris will tell us more about the work of the committee in the next newsletter. Thank you all for helping us get ready for the big move into the addition this coming fall.

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)

What Was It Like Back Then? . . . continued from page 1 . . .

Parents often viewed the gentleman suitor as an interloper. Someone plucking from their well-tended garden, a flower they had tenderly reared. So, the gentleman should be respectful toward a woman's parents.

If a gentleman wanted to court a woman, he followed these rules:

- Always treat ladies with the greatest respect — This meant a gentleman was to not treat a woman as his equal, but as his superior. He was to carry a woman's bundles, give her his seat on a crowded car, open doors, etc.
- Be, at all times, a perfect gentleman — Avoid rudeness, be polite, and behave respectfully.
- Be neat in your person — Gentlemen were to avoid "carelessness or slovenliness," and all gentlemen were advised to "have your linen clean and neat, your collar on and buttoned, and your necktie in place."
- Be prudent in your proffers of love — A gentleman was never to force his company upon a woman nor "resolve" to marry somebody at any cost.

<https://www.geriwalton.com/courtship-etiquette-for-gentlemen/>



Gentleman of the 1800's

When did courting change to dating?

The 1920's was when the young generation started rejecting the stodgy rules of their elders. The youth rebelled by drinking, smoking and they loved to dance to wild new rhythms. The women wore makeup with flaming red lipstick and eyes heavily lined with mascara. Being a flapper or sheik (a) was a symbol for the young and they were always looking for the next party.

The youth started having petting-parties which pushed the limits with kissing and fondling. This of course was scandalous to the older generation and they were not amused. Police tried to stop the parties by fining the youth or throwing cold water on petting parties at beaches. But all the attempts at repression were futile.

It was called the Roaring 20's for a reason.

(a) *Sheik* was term coined for the young men as a tribute to the dashing film star Rudolph Valentino.

Life Explores: The Roaring 20's, Published by Meredith Corporation, 2019.

Historical Society and Museum Milestone - 10 Years

By Chris Knight

It is hard to believe that just 10 years ago the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society was founded. We are all proud of how far we have come in such a short time. I put together a few of the great milestones we have had over the years.

HARSENS ISLAND ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 10 YEARS AGO!

TOTAL MEMBERS

218

AVERAGE GUESTS PER YEAR

400

TOTAL TASHMOO EVENTS

5

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

1,370

TOTAL ANNUAL COOKIE WALKS

8

SQ. FT ADDED TO BUILDING

875

Prohibition – Part 2

By Chris Knight

In the last newsletter I reminded everyone about the historic event that happened 200 years ago, January 17, 1920, the ban of alcohol. In Prohibition Part 1, I covered how prohibition started and how easy it was to get alcohol from Canada. It became a booming business for many. Let’s continue the journey about how prohibition turned into a nasty and dangerous business.

Prohibition enabled many Harsens Island residents to make a lot of money, trafficking liquor from Canada, running speakeasies (Bling Pig) or moonshining. It was a booming business but friendly between the residents and the police. Lawlessness was innocent at first, but lawlessness took a turn for the worse. There were some incidents where stray bullets hit innocent passengers on the stream boats in the river. This led to a crackdown on smuggling in the river. The coast guard and custom officers would have a spring drive to get the rum runners on the Detroit River and Great Lakes (late 1920s). This deterred the smaller smugglers, but it opened the door to organized crime.

It did not take long for gangs to begin capitalizing on the smuggling trade. Gangs would go after each other for territory. It got very violent, very quickly. There were turf wars and murderous rampages. In 1923, Detroit’s notorious Purple Gang started to emerge and took over Detroit. Prohibition was intended to improve family life and reduce crime. Instead, a new and dangerous criminal class had developed.



Prohibition lawlessness comprised of predominately Jewish members, the Purple Gang was a mob of bootleggers, hijackers, and murderers that existed from 1910 to the mid-1930s, with its heyday during the late 1920s. One of the gang’s biggest money-making operations was supplying Al Capone with liquor from Canada.

Capone and other gangs purchased a lot of their liquor from Canada during the prohibition, and the Purple Gang was a major go-between. In the summer, the gang transported liquor from Canada by boat. In the winter, when the river was frozen, trucks were simply driven across the ice.

News photo of gang members unloading a delivery in Detroit at Riopelle St.

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ALGONAC-IRA-CLAY COMMUNITY EVENTS

Algonac Clay Community &
Maritime Museums Open
1 PM – 4 PM WEEKENDS
(April through October)

May 13
Algonac Clay Historical Society
AYCE Perch 5PM -8PM \$20 Johnnie
Lega’s. GUN RAFFLE!

Prohibition – Part 2 . . . continued from page 4 . . .

The Purple Gang utilized lookouts and an arsenal of guns to move the liquor across the border. Smaller local rumrunners used the cover of darkness to transport liquor and the marshy canals to hide the booze. They also relied on the people who lived in cottages along the river.

To say the least the police, the US Marshals and the US Immigration Service's Border Patrol had their hands full. While the police in Detroit conducted numerous raids in speakeasies and illegal distilleries, the border patrol went after the rumrunners and the barge-like vessels anchored off the Canadian shore selling beer and liquor. The border patrol agents had about 20 apprehensions of liquor to one apprehension of aliens.



Alcohol, discovered by Prohibition agents during a raid on an illegal distillery, pours out of upper windows of three-story storefront in Detroit during Prohibition. (1929)

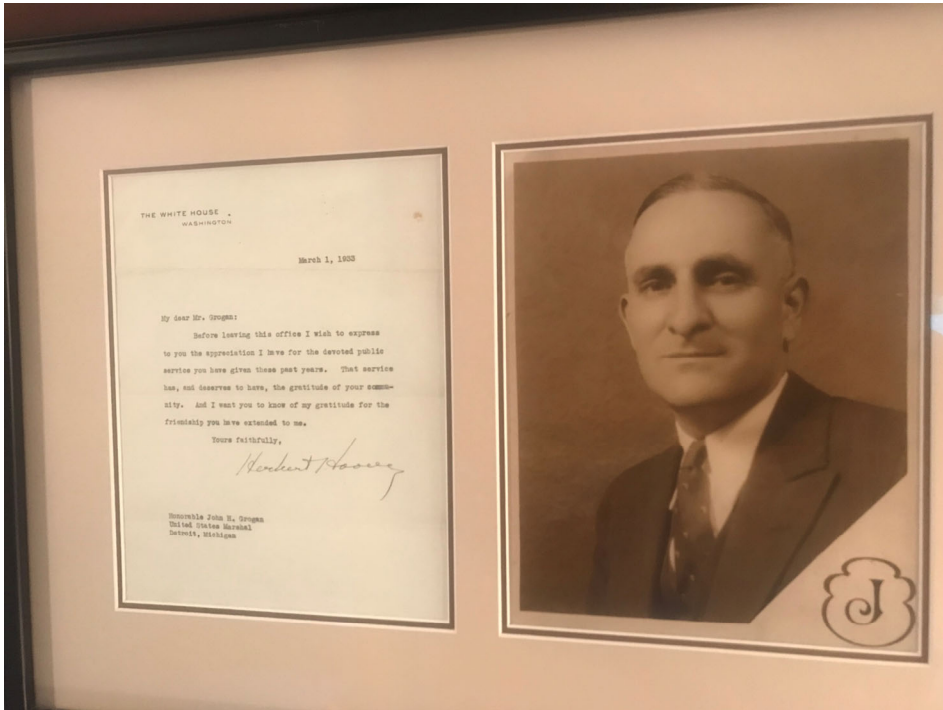
Some called it the Failed Experiment . . . months after the start of prohibition, the bootlegging began. Police and politicians took bribes and the public skirted the law by making, bartering and drinking alcohol. After more than a decade Michigan reversed its own prohibition laws and, calling for the repeal of the 18th Amendment, the United States Congress sent the 21st Amendment to the states for ratification. Michigan was the first state to ratify the amendment, and Prohibition was officially repealed nationally on December 5, 1933.

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Prohibition – Part 2 . . . continued from page 5 . . .

“My Grandfather was a US Marshall” – Submitted by Jerry Munro

My grandfather, John Grogan, dealt with the Purple Gang for years. He was the United States Marshall for Southeast’s Detroit area. Here is a letter from President Herbert Hoover to my grandfather after he was voted out of office. Roosevelt kept him in office when he came in.



“My dear Mr. Grogan,

Before leaving this office I wish to express to you the appreciation I have for the devoted public service you have given these past years. That service has, and deserves to have, the gratitude of your community. And I want you to know of my gratitude for the friendship you have extended to me.

Faithfully Yours,

Herbert Hoover”



He and my grandmother, with my mother, Hetty Munro, and sister Gerry White lived at the cottage five houses northeast of the Idle Hour which was built in 1890.

Idle Hour on the left where the sailboat is Grogan house, first one on the right. Notice the light house. Now gone. No seawall. This was 1895.

Photo from Jerry Munro: 1985, Idle Hour on the left.

People of Harsens Island – Carol Havens Hogg

By Chuck Miller

Late last year, we circulated a questionnaire to our old-time members asking for their written recollections on a specific set of questions. Carol Hogg provided some great responses and some funny anecdotes. The full 20-page article is archived at the Harsens Island Museum. Parts of the article are in this issue for your reading pleasure. Many thanks to Carol!

How and why did you come to Harsens Island?

My dad was born in Toledo, Ohio and raised in Marine City and St. Clair. His parents met at Joe Bedore's, where his mother worked as a waitress. They married and had five boys and girl. When Dad lost his job in Detroit, his friend

Alfie Dandron asked him to come to Harsens Island. My parents rented and later bought a three-room cottage in 1939. When they moved here my dad's father (Harry Havens) already had a one room house on the property. That piece of property was a complete island in itself. You could only get there by boat, and you had to park your car on the main road which was put in a few years earlier. The road only went as far as Clay's Landing.



Bill and Edna's Wedding Day, May 24, 1934.



Bill and Edna's Anniversary

My brother, Larry Havens, was four at the time. My dad's sister Sylvia and brother-in-law Avery Dandron also had a house on the same island. Avery's dad, old Mr. Dandron, had a one room house there. He and my grandfather, Harry Havens, each had a one room house and shared an outhouse. My grandfather thought it was great that they were neighbors and shared the outhouse. Avery's brother Alfie Dandron also had a home there with his wife and two sons.

Dad lost his job when Detroit Vapor Stove Company closed. Dad (Bill Havens) and Mom (Edna) moved to the island in 1939 because he got a job with the Old Club (Alfie told him that the Old Club was looking for help). Dad got a job in maintenance and worked there 27 years (During the WWII he worked at Chris-Craft, building landing barges, then returned to the Old Club).

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People of Harsens Island . . . continued from page 7 . . .

I was born in 1941, and in 1943 my dad (Bill Havens) bought property across the canal and started to build a house. This property was connected to the main road. Wow! No more boat taxi! I was about two then and when Dad asked me how I liked it, I said I wanted to go home . . . Dad said "this *is* your new home". Mom and Dad lived in that house until they died. He was 83 and she was 98.

Any unique skills?

My dad loved to work with wood, and he carved many things. When Mom said she needed a pair of new shoes, he obliged and carved a tiny pair of "new shoes". I still have the ones he carved for her.

I also have a bow gun he carved out of wood. He also made a scale model of the Canadian Pacific Steamer, Noronic, at one quarter inch to one-foot scale. (Larry Havens has that right now).

Dad loved music and the family was always singing in the car. At home he played a harmonica and we all loved to sing along.

Dad also loved making wine; Grape Elderberry Blossom, Dandelion Blossom and Tomato. The Tomato was a clear color and not red at all (I still have a bottle from 1971, sadly I could not find the recipe).



Bill Havens building the Noronic.



The "New Shoes"



The SS Noronic burned in Toronto in 1939.

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*Shipwrecks Around Harsens Island . . . continued from page 8 . . .**Lifestyle at the time*

We lived the plain and simple life. We had a large garden that Dad hand-spaded every year. We had lots of fresh vegetables. We also hunted for fish, ducks, muskrats, and frogs. We got bull frogs and little green frogs for their legs. You pay a lot for frog legs now, *if you can find them*, and we had a lot for free. We also had snapping turtles. Mom shopped at Herschelman's Grocery in Sans Souci. We also had a fantastic bakery that was owned by the Haschkers in Sans Souci. In addition, we had a drug store with the lunch counter, a hardware store, and of course the old bar.

Everyone went fishing in both the summer and winter and rarely were left longing for something to eat. Mom got fresh eggs from Gibson's. We had a bakery truck from which we bought fresh baked goods. You just picked out what you wanted. When I was in High School, I discovered the baked goods deliveryman was a classmate's father. Every week, Watkins delivered spices and Twin Pines delivered milk and other dairy products to our door, so life was good. Especially for kids. We swam a lot and Dad saw to it that we could swim well. At three, I could swim the canal without a life preserver.

We had no TV until I was 10, so we played board games and a lot of cards. I was also a roller skater (at Tashmoo Park) and did a lot of bike riding. Tashmoo Park had a wonderful carousel and we spent hours at the Park.

For our tradition on New Year's Eve, Dad would fire off his double barrel shotgun and yell "Happy New Year". Then our neighbor (Mr. LaParl) would fire his gun and yell out in response "Happy New Year".

How important was fishing and trapping back then?

Fishing and trapping muskrats were an essential part of life. It was a very important part of your diet. Muskrats were very much in demand in this area in those days for their fur and for their meat. Many of the residents depended on Muskrats for their subsistence. The need was so critical, the Catholic Church allowed its congregation to eat the meat on Friday. The reasoning was, "it swam, it so it was okay".

Fish were very important because you could fish all year-round. My dad always had a fish shanty out there on the ice and we speared a lot of pike in the bay. Besides fish and muskrats there were other sources of meat. Dad set lines for snapping turtles. The smaller ones were fixed like pot roast. The larger ones were ground up and used in dishes like spaghetti, spanish rice, etc. The meat was very white in color, larger ones were tough. Therefore, they had to be ground up.

Ducks were also a part of our diet. Dad didn't have money for gun shells, so he would set traps in shallow water with corn on the pallet. Next day he picked up the bodies and that night we had them for dinner. Bullfrogs were plentiful in the spring along with the smaller green frogs. Those hind legs were very tasty. They are very expensive in restaurants, if you can find them now. I had my own trap line all through high school. I helped my brother and father skin their muskrats for \$.10 each, we used to tell our relatives they were "Marsh Bunnies". They didn't like the name muskrat. Anything for a little extra money!

One thing is for sure . . . I love Harsens Island and I would not want to live anywhere else on earth.



Carol and her dad Bill with a typical catch.

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2020

Date	Day	Time	Event
May 2	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board / Membership Meeting at the Museum
May 23	Saturday	12:00 PM	Historical Society 10th Anniversary Celebration
May 23 - 25	Saturday Sunday Monday	11:30 AM – 3:00 PM 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Memorial Weekend Museum Open House
May 30	Saturday	9:30 AM	Museum Host Orientation at the Museum
June 6	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board / Membership Meeting at the Museum
June 12	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
July 3	Friday	8:00 PM	Board / Membership Meeting at the Museum
July 10	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
August 14	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
August 15	Saturday	4:30 PM – 5:00 PM 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Wine and Appetizers at the Museum Annual Membership Meeting (Election results)
September 13	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
October 3	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Pie Sale at the Museum
October 10	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board / Membership Meeting at Museum
December 5	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk at the Museum



Museum Hours

Memorial Weekend May 23 – 25
Saturday 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM
Sunday 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Monday 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Summer Schedule (June, July, August, September)
Second Fridays 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (October through April)
Closed but Open by appointment



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/>

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

Volunteer to be a Host at the Museum this Summer

Volunteer for 3 (2 hour) shifts and get a Free T-Shirt from the Museum Gift Shop

Orientation - May 30 at 9:30 AM

Contact Corinne Trexler for additional information 313-530-9173

