



Message from the President . . .

Hi All,

Building Addition Update

Since last month our insulation and drywall contractor, Alex Bugg, has completed the installation of the doors, drywall, taping and sanding. It's now time to move on to painting the interior of the addition. Painting will begin this week with spray painting all the roof joists and underside of the roof deck, which acts also as the ceiling. When that is complete, we move on to painting the walls and doors. After that we will be installing flooring, base along the walls and light fixtures. That will complete our addition and our collection committee can then move into the space and begin to setup the storage units and exhibits.

Annual Pie Sale

The museum had their Annual Pie Sales on Saturday, October 3rd. Although the attendance was less than last year we still had several islanders donate and buy pies. Thanks to all of our supporters!

Museum is Open by Appointment

This is a reminder that at this time the museum is open by appointment. We have a list of rules we are following in keeping with State law to help reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus in our State. The details were published in our July newsletter and are posted on the front door of the xharpspah@aol.com.

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.

Later in this newsletter you will see some vintage photos with visitors at some of the island hotels. This got me thinking about fashion and hairstyles in the early 1900's.

Women's Fashion in the 1910's

During this decade, frilly, puffed blouses and fluted skirts were popular. A slightly high waistline was fashionable, as was a long tunic-like top worn over an ankle length A-line or 'hobble' skirt (cinched in at the hem). During World War I (1914-18), women adopted practical, working clothes and they sometimes wore uniform, overalls and trousers.



continued on page 2 . . .

What Was it Like Back Then . . . continued from page 1 . . .

<https://hair-and-makeup-artist.com/category/vintage-hair-makeup/1901-1910-edwardian/>



<https://quotesgram.com/mens-hair-quotes/>

Woman's hair was worn in a center parting, often looped around pads and false hair to create a wide 'brim' of hair around the hairline. This hairstyle was worn under vast, broad hats with shallow crowns, heavily trimmed with flowers, ribbons and feathers. Towards the end of the decade, younger women sported short bobs.

Men's Fashion in the 1900's

Men wore three-piece lounge suits with bowler or cloth caps. Jackets were narrow with small, high lapels. Most collars were starched and upstanding, with the corners pointing downwards. Some men wore their collars turned down, with rounded edges and modern knotted ties.

Beards were now reserved for mainly older men, and most young men sported neat moustaches and short hair.



<https://www.historicalemporium.com/mens-edwardian-clothing.php>

**Another Wonderful Addition to the Museum**

Kathleen and Kevin Felker donated a 1900-1950 handheld oil burning boat signal lantern used to communicate or signal to/from ships and boats. It has a manually operating open/close shutter allowing or preventing light thru the magnifying Fresnel lens. This special magnifying lens amplifies the light from the single wick burner which would typically be used at night to send/receive messages in Morse code. This was also a staple piece of equipment found in life boats.

Help Us Record This Historic Time

By Bob Williams

This is truly an historic time in the world and right here on the island. The island, as you know, is also dealing with the high-water crisis and the ferry dock problem, which led to a lack of being able to bring sand to the island to aid in shoreline protection.

I have a favor to ask.

Decades from now people visiting our museum will be asking what was happening on the island during the pandemic and how did it affect the islanders. I believe that, as a Society, we need to not only make available the history we know of but also to record history as it happens.

Recently I received an email from the Historical Society of Michigan (HSM) describing a project they have undertaken for the Library of Michigan, to record stories of this time in Michigan's history. Some of the text from that email is copied for you at the bottom of this message. HSM is asking Michiganders to write their story of their experiences during this historic time.

Being quite involved in family tree research, I have many times wondered what my ancestors were doing and thinking during events such as the Great Depression, the world wars, or the pandemic of 1918. As a result, I began a diary about eight weeks ago, for the purpose of leaving a record for my descendants. I also plan to leave a copy of that diary in the files of our museum. I would like to encourage you to add to that file by writing a bit about your experiences during this time in your life on the island. It is our intent to collect all of the articles received and compile them into one document that will not only be on file at the museum but will also be submitted to the Library of Michigan to become a part of their project.

If you are interested in being a part of this project, please send your writings to me at xharpspah@aol.com. If you would like a few ideas to get started, you can see the HSM webpage about their project at: <https://bit.ly/2ynT8rj>

Thank you and stay safe.

Robert Williams

BELOW IS PART OF THE EMAIL I RECEIVED FROM HSM ABOUT THEIR PROJECT

The Historical Society of Michigan is sponsoring an effort of the Library of Michigan to collect your stories of life during the coronavirus pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in many different ways, and we are all eyewitnesses to the events that have been unfolding in the last few weeks. This is a time for us to record our daily experiences, thoughts, and feelings in diary form, either in writing or video.

The Library of Michigan and the Historical Society of Michigan envision collecting and preserving these stories of our daily lives during the crisis to provide future historians, researchers, and students with information and data on life in Michigan communities during the pandemic.

Please take the time each day to record your activities, thoughts, and/or feelings in diary form. The entries can be handwritten, typed, or in video format, and they can be as long or short as you want. Don't worry about handwriting, spelling, or punctuation. The goal is to capture your personal experiences.

Please consider saving and sharing your story of life during this pandemic for the Library of Michigan.

Harsens Island Bus Tour in 1996 – Notes from Bob Coulter – Part 2

By Chris Knight

You may recall from last month's newsletter; I was going through the Ann Grout collection in the museum library and I found this unique bus tour narrative of Harsens Island. It was written by Bob Coulter, the author of *A Kid on the Flats*. Marie Eidt was able to confirm with Joan Bulley that there was indeed one bus tour in 1996 narrated by Bob Coulter.

The tour includes 25 stops. I included 13 stops in the September newsletter. Here are the rest of the stops.

14 – Now that funny looking building down there was my favorite of all places on the flats. That was home. Actually, the home was the house behind the store, but for all intents, that dilapidated old (100 years) building was home. It was originally built as a cottage by my grandfather in 1895. My grandfather inherited it and he and my grandmother used it as a cottage until the mid-1930's when the depression hit them both very hard. Both were business people in Detroit. They solved many of their problems by selling their home in the city and moving year 'round to the cottage. They tore out the living room and dining room and converted the space into a grocery store, to serve the many cottages in the area. They never made much money in that store, but it kept them busy and off the welfare rolls.

My book, *A KID ON THE FLATS* originates in that old building. It's there that I remember so many good things from my childhood.

15 – You should try to visualize all the little islands down here. The road has joined many of them and later cottage builders have connected many more for their convenience. In the old days this whole area of the Flats was edict of Squatter's Rights. In later years, leases were issued by the state and I understand that now much of the property is deeded to its owners.

16 – For those of you who may have known them in high school, that big white house on the island, on the right was the home of Alf Dandron and his brother Bobby. They were my best friends here on the Flats. In fact, we were the only boys of the same age living down this way except for Larry Havens, but Larry was quite a bit younger than us.

17 – This big island on the left with just the two houses on it, was known as Star Island. Star Island, along with the other hotels I've mentioned, were all stops for the excursion steamers which brought thousands of visitors to the Flats each summer from roughly 1890 up through the mid-1930's. Star Island was built by White Star Line. The Star Island House was known as one of the most splendid of the hotels along the river. Its dining room was renowned for excellent perch and pickerel



Star Island Hotel



Star Island Dock

continued on page 5

Bus Tour 1996 . . . continued from page 4 . . .

dinners and could serve 500 diners at a time. There were 150 hotel rooms which rented, during its prime, for \$2.00 per day. It was burned in 1916.

When you figure that the cost of a roundtrip steamboat ticket to the Flats was a dollar, a nice hotel room with spectacular view ran \$2.00 a night and dinners in the dining room cost between 25 and 50 cents per person, it's no wonder so many city folks took advantage of coming to the Flats on summer weekends.

18 – Those two red brick buildings on the river are the Coast Guard Station. I think it's only manned on weekends through summer now. The front light of St. Clair River Range is mounted on a small tower there.

19 – We're approaching the end of the road now. Down in this area were the old Rushmere Club and the Hotel Mervue. I guess I haven't mentioned it, but all of those old hotels burned down at least once and some of them two or three times. What about the Idle Hour you may be thinking? Yes, it also burned down at least once and was rebuilt to live again.



Rushmere Club



Hotel Mervue

20 – End of the road (if it's a clear day, point out the view across the lake). I'm happy we've been blessed with a clear day on Lake St. Clair. You can see, just about straight out, downtown Detroit with the Ren Cen prominent there. To the right the Shore Club Tower at Nine Mile Road in St. Clair Shores stands out. Further to the right can be seen the buildings of Mt. Clemens. Directly across (northwest) is Club Island, home of Clinton River Boat Club over there on the Middle Channel.

21 – Beyond the gate over there is the entrance to the Old Club. The road continues for about a mile down to the end where the clubhouse and most of the cottages are. The Old Club was founded in 1872 as the St. Clair Flats Fishing and Shooting Club of Detroit. It's one of the oldest and most prestigious social clubs in the state.

Driving back towards Sans Souci I'll try to answer any questions that our guest may have.

22 – Gibson's Corner – The red brick house there on the river once belonged to Tom Gibson, Edison's main man on the island. Tom used to come down to the Flats in his little speedboat and read all the cottage meters from it. Those cottages that had electricity, that is. Three of his kids, all younger than I, attended Algonac High School. Some of you may remember Sally, Tommy and Mary Gibson. Today Sally is Sally Lozen of Algonac, and the librarian for Ira Twp. Tommy owned the Little Bar in Marine City, and Mary, poor girl has been afflicted with arthritis quite severely, but I think she still lives in the area.

continued on page 6 . . .

Bus Tour 1996 . . . continued from page 5 . . .

23 – Maple Leaf – This section along here for several blocks was once platted-out for a subdivision of cottages, it was called The Maple Leaf. A number of very prominent Detroiters built small mansion-like cottages along the river here. Fred Sanders was one. A few years ago, Joseph A. du Lac III and his wife Beth purchased the big green, white home with the red roof and began a complete and total renovation. He has, himself replaced all 60 of the piers the house rests on, just to get started. Since then he has redone the roof, torn out all the interior walls and is re-installing them. They want to restore the house to its original look while incorporating modern conveniences such as insulation, heat, proper plumbing and refined facilities. Joe du Lac is our nephew.

24 – Tashmoo Park – I don't think I need to say too much about Tashmoo Park, I'm sure you're all at least somewhat familiar with it. The park was built in 1897 by The White Star Line at about the same time the sidewheel steamer, the *Tashmoo* was built in Wyandotte. The Park was meant to compliment the steamer by giving excursions a place to picnic, swim, play games, dance and relax while the *Tashmoo* steamed its course up to Port Huron and return. Tashmoo Park was immensely popular up until the mid-thirties when the *Tashmoo* sunk down near Amherstburg, Ontario during a moonlight dance cruise. By that time, however, excursion boats were losing popularity, between the hardships of the depression on one hand and the increased use of automobiles for recreational trips, on the other hand people just didn't use the many excursions boats as much as previously. I might add that Tashmoo Park was also a stop on the schedule of the *Mineral City* from Mt. Clemens. The *Mineral City* was owned by my wife's grandfather, Captain Bert du Lac.



Mineral City Steamer



Put-in-Bay Steamer

After the war the owners of the popular Ohio steamer, the *Put-In-Bay*, opened Tashmoo Park and sent the boat up to the Park, then on up to Port Huron and back. I think this service was limited to Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday evenings. I remember that the Dandron brothers and I, on a lark, boarded the *Put-In-Bay* for a ride up to Port Huron and back. We had a great time, even met some girls our age and did some dancing. Now that was quite a thing for three scruffy muskrats like ourselves. Incidentally, that story is also in my book. Tashmoo Park is now a marina owned by Bob Bryson. Some of the old buildings remain and are currently used for boat storage.

25 – Sans Souci – means without care in French. And that often times may be seen existing within the confines of the world-famous Sans Souci Bar, made immortal through the pages of Dutch Leonard's Killshot and Commodore Mushrat's A Kid on the Flats. The little business settlement here has seen many different businesses come and go over the years. Some stick, some don't.

Need help from Jane and Evelyn for comments north of Sans Souci. As we pass Beardsley Marina, we'll mention that Joan Bulley's parents operated the Raymond ferries from there, years ago.

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2020

All events and meeting are subject to change due to
Stay-at-Home orders from the State of Michigan

Date	Day	Time	Event
October 17	Saturday	5:00 PM	Board / Membership Meeting on ZOOM Details will be emailed prior to meeting
December 5	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk at the Museum

Annual Membership Virtual Meeting

Saturday, October 17

5:00 PM

Instructions for a Zoom Meeting will be emailed a few days before the meeting

Museum Hours (Subject to change)

Winter Schedule

Winter Schedule (September through May)

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>

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 and 2020. Or if you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, I can help you capture your memories for future generations.

Please contact our interim curator, Chris Knight
(chris.knight@comcast.net).

Mark Your Calendars
Annual Cookie Sale at the
Harsens Island Museum
December 5 10:00 to 1:00 PM



Drop off your cookie
donation between 9:00 and
9:45 AM

Additional COVID-19 safety
measures will be instituted for the
Cookie Sale

Membership Application 2021

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: _____ Current Membership Type _____

<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 \$ _____