



Message from the President . . .

Happy Spring!

The calendar and the weather some of the past days say spring . . . which for most of us means cleaning, refreshing, opening cottages / houses that have been closed for part or all of the winter, waxing and cleaning boats, outdoor chores, and garden clean-up. The same is true for the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society. Many have worked very hard in recent weeks, getting the museum and its addition ready for our spring opening by cleaning, painting, installing new fixtures and displays.

A very special thank you to Bob Williams, Chris Knight, Corinne Trexler, John Eidt, Marie Eidt, Ellen Probst, and Chuck Miller who have spent countless hours on the museum to get it ready.

Stay tuned . . . we have a very special surprise display for the opening . . . we will be making some announcements soon . . .

Switching gears, I want to take a moment to remember Larry Zelensky, a past Board member who sadly lost his battle with COVID earlier in the pandemic. Larry did not serve on the Board for a long time, but his talent and art will be with us forever.

He donated significant time and effort designing logos, posters, and graphic art that promoted the Historical Society in our early days in a beautiful and memorable way. Our heartfelt sympathy to his family and friends.

continued on page 2 . . .

Feature Column

- Harsens Island Businesses -

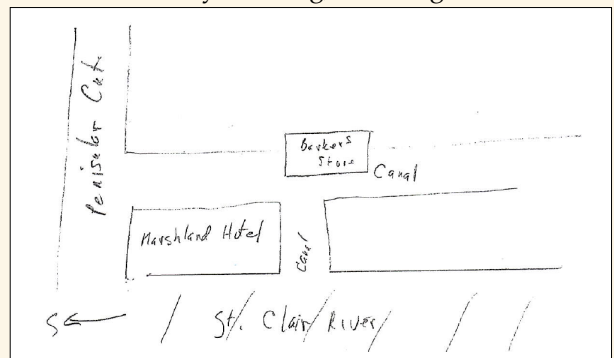
This year our newsletter's feature column will highlight island businesses from years gone by.

Barker's Store - A relative of the Barker's, Susan Barker of Algonac sent the following note along with the photo you see on the next page.

"This picture is a copy of a picture taken about 100 years ago. My guess is 1918 or 1919. The store was owned by Frank and Vernie Barker and they lived there from 1914 to 1929.

The sign above says 'Groceries & Provisions'. The people from left to right are James (Jim born 1914) and Stanley (Sid born 1916) and Vernie Barker.

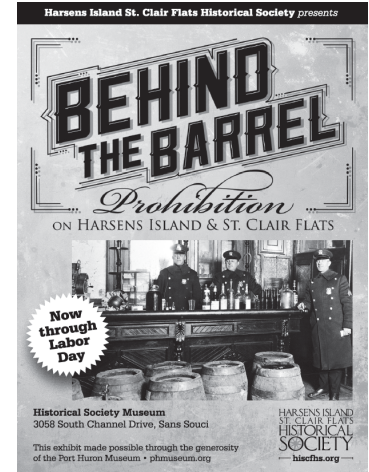
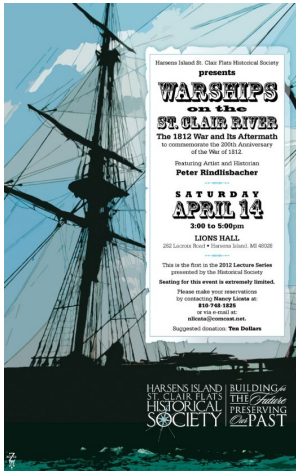
The store is below where the Idle Hour is now and was behind the Marshland Hotel near Peninsular cut. There is the store, and Ice House which had ice for sale in the summer, gasoline, fuel oil and other things people needed while in their cottages. The Barker's owned most of the island behind the store (about one city block) and about 2 islands from what is now the road. I've tried to a map below. Don't rate my drawing, I'm not good."



continued on page 2 . . .

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

The LOGO, image and branding services, the Lecture Series Posters, the weekly AD's in the HI Flyer and more were provided by Human Touch Graphics, Larry Zelensky – Thank you Larry!



As always, thank you for your support.

Joyce

Joyce Hassen, President

Harsens Island Businesses . . . continued from page 1 . . .



Barker's Store was located near Grocery cut off Peninsular Highway on the Flats. Vernie Barker is on the porch with boys James and Stanley. That's an ice house to the rear. The owners lived over the store.

THANK YOU!

This year the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society automatically renewed annual memberships and waived the 2021 dues. We were overwhelmed by the kindness of our members who sent in donations. Thanks to all of you we will be able to further improve the new displays in our museum's expansion and renovation project.

DONORS

- ❖ David & Deborah Addy
- ❖ Bill & Jen Atwood
- ❖ Susan Barker
- ❖ Kevin Beindit (Marine City Storage & Preferred Glass)
- ❖ Ellen Bindek
- ❖ Joseph Bleau
- ❖ John & Nancy Bonacquisti
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- ❖ Bill & Melinda Champion
- ❖ Fred & Cheryl Cardinali
- ❖ Family of Paul Carollo
- ❖ Mike & Kristi Cass
- ❖ Megan Chartier
- ❖ J. Lewis and Judy Cooper
- ❖ Michael Dixon
- ❖ John and Marie Eidt
- ❖ Christopher and Barb Engel
- ❖ Mark and Carol Everett
- ❖ Midgie Fannon
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- ❖ Dennis and Claudia Gilpatrick
- ❖ Gerald Gordinier
- ❖ Marc and Joyce Hassen
- ❖ Daniel Harrison
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- ❖ Mary Ann Kaiser
- ❖ John and Cindy Kopchak
- ❖ John Korchmar – Sculpture Cabinetry
- ❖ Donna Krispin
- ❖ Christina Lombardo
- ❖ Joe and Sue Lucchese
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- ❖ Lawrence McDonald
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- ❖ Virginia Merritt
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- ❖ Chuck and Doreen Miller
- ❖ Larry Miller
- ❖ Steve and Lisa Nicol
- ❖ Kathy O' Connor
- ❖ Sandy O' Dras
- ❖ Larry and Karen Ortel
- ❖ Ronald Parker
- ❖ William Pausus – Nu-Era
- ❖ Drew Peslar
- ❖ Ellen Probst
- ❖ Robert and Mary Roselle
- ❖ Joan Emerick and Peter Saldana
- ❖ Robert and Jackie Saunders
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- ❖ Terry and Lori Wiggins
- ❖ Neil and Marlene Willemse
- ❖ Susan Wright

The Events that Helped Shape Harsens Island

By Chris Knight

As we draw closer to the reopening of the museum this spring, I am excited for all of you to see all the changes made to the exhibits. This past year while working on the updated displays and exhibits, I have learned to appreciate the rich history of the island and **all** the events that have taken place since Jacob Harsen settled here.

The information below is from a Times Herald article (Steamer Tashmoo helped shape island's past, present") by Bob Gross published on March 28, 1999.

Memorable Events

1797 – Jacob obtains title to the island from Chippewa Indians

1828 – Clay Township established

1872 – Lake St. Clair Fishing and Shooting Club of Detroit (The Old Club)

1889 – Maple subdivision platted

1890 – Grand Pointe Hotel opens, Sans Souci platted

1897 – Tashmoo Park opens, St. Mark's Roman Catholic Mission built

1900 – Tashmoo excursion steamer built in Wyandotte

1906 – Lake St. Clair Fishing and Shooting Club of Detroit becomes The Old Club

1909 – Grand Pointe Hotel destroyed by fire

1917 – Riverside Hotel becomes the Idle Hour Club

1926 – Fire destroys The Old Club clubhouse

1936 – Tashmoo sinks near Amherstberg, Ontario

1938 – Bates Highway completed, finishing road link along South Channel

1939 – Art Champion starts year-round ferry service with first steel hull

1945 – Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Homeowners Association results from merger of two previous associations

1949 – Creation of St. Clair Flats Wildlife Area

1951 – Tashmoo Park closes

1958 – Boys and Girls Club of Detroit opens Camp Drusilla Farwell

1981 – Creation of St. Clair Flats Management Plan

1985 – Camp Drusilla Farwell closes

"Dick Weber said the island has shifted over the course of the century from a resort with large hotels that attracted summer visitors to more of a residential community. He and his wife Pat, live on the island year-round now. He has been a summer resident, however, since 1937 when he was born.

His grandfather, Joseph F. Weber, a Detroit lumber baron, built a cottage in 1881 on a small island in the St. Clair Flats part of Harsens Island. "By the time I came into the picture, it was primarily cottages," he said.

Many of the hotels that attracted visitors during the latter part of the century burned down and were not rebuilt. The Idle Hour Yacht Club is all that remains today.

The Old Club which started in 1872 as the Lake St. Clair Fishing and Shooting Club of Detroit, also remains at the southern tip of the Flats. At one time it numbered both Henry and Edsel Ford as members. Many of the Old Club buildings burned in 1926 and were rebuilt."



Old Club

Artifact Donations from Michele Komar

Michele Komar is one of the museum's most generous donators of her time and several unique pieces of history. Some of you may recall that last year Michele gave the museum a beautiful four-volume set of books of her compilation of articles about the Tashmoo Timeline. This past month we received several donations of artifacts (over 40), some are shown below. We are excited about adding these items to the museum's collection and displaying them in the new exhibits. ---- THANK YOU, MICHELE!



The American Educator Encyclopedia by Foster, Hughes & Goodwin, 1935. Stamped inside "Property of Harsens Island School, Dist. No. 2, Clay Twp."



Elson Basic Readers Book Three by Elson-Gray, 1931. Stamped inside "Property of Harsens Island School, Dist. No. 2, Clay Twp."



Paper cup holder from Tashmoo Park or Sans Souci Confectionary (Michele Komar's grandparents managed both). Reads "Silver Quadruple Plate" on the bottom.



Tashmoo Park ceramic girl with basket souvenir and Enamelware Tashmoo Park teapot.

The "Punter"

By Chris Knight

As board members and historical society helpers move, catalog, and organize all the museum artifacts and documents, someone is bound to find unique facts and stories that need to be shared. This is one such article.

This is a brief story about Louis Brusoe, who was born in 1848 and worked at the Old Club for over fifty years.

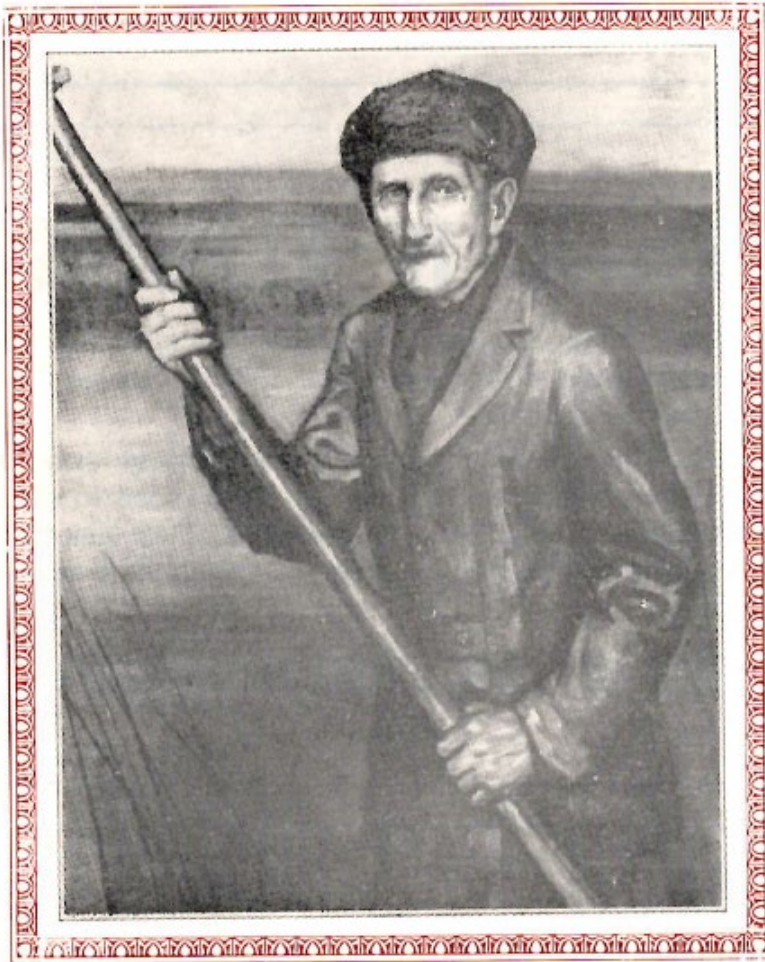
"The Punter"

Copied from The Delta News, April 1952.

"We take pleasure in reprinting from a "St. Clair Flats Bulletin" of over twenty years ago, the picture of "The Punter" an old Flats figure by Roy Gamble.

Louis Brusoe is said to have posed for the picture. In his youth being a punter meant having ability to pole a skiff all day and to have an intimate knowledge of the flight of wildfowl and movements of the bass schools. Louie Brusoe was a lovable character, quiet, self-effacing diligent doing his work with dignity and modesty and winning the affection of all with whom he came in contact. He died in 1931 at the age of 83 having been an employee of the Old Club for over fifty-eight years.

Past director William H. Thomson of the Thomas Galleries in the David Whitney Building, Detroit, Michigan, advises us that Roy Gamble is a skilled and distinguished local artist and that his interest in the Flats enabled him to capture its atmosphere in this fine portrait of "The Punter".



Source: *The Delta News* April 1952, Painted by Roy Gamble and Posed by Louis Brusoe (an old Flats figure)

Donations from Brady Harris

Brady Harris is a local artist who donated these two beautiful nostalgic pieces of art. One is the Harsens Island Fire Department and the other one is themed on Rum Runners from the Prohibition era. We are excited about adding these pieces to the museum's collection.



Harsens Island Fire Dept



Contraband

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2021

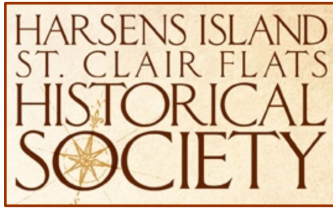
PLEASE NOTE: All events and locations in the following schedule are **tentative**. This schedule will be updated in the spring as more is known about COVID safety guidance from the State of Michigan.

Date	Day	Time	Event
May 8	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum or Zoom
May 29	Saturday	TBD	Museum Opens
June 5	Saturday	9:30 AM	Museum Host Orientation at the Museum
June 11	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
June 12	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum or Zoom
July 9	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
July 10	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum or Zoom
August 13	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
August 21	Saturday	4:30 PM – 5:00 PM 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM 6:30 PM	Wine and Appetizers at the Museum Annual Membership Meeting (Election results) Board Meeting
September 10	Friday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Social Hour at the Museum
October 9	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Pie Sale at the Museum
October 16	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum or Zoom
December 4	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk at the Museum
December 11	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum or Zoom



Museum Hours - Tentative

Memorial Weekend May 29 – 31
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

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www.harsensislandhistory.org

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The historical society is looking to add to its collection. We accept donations of artifacts, photos, documents, and stories related to the island and surrounding area. If you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, we can help you capture your memories for future generations.

Please contact our curators; Chuck Miller and Chris Knight (chris.knight@comcast.net).

Brief Update on Museum Renovations

Great News . . . we started working on Phase 2 of the museum renovations. The room we previously called the Tashmoo Room has been cleared of all displays. The room is being painted and new flooring will be installed mid-April. Phase 3 (Main Room) of renovations will begin late fall of 2021 and carry into 2022.



Building the Future ~ Preserving Our Past