



Message from the President . . .

Happy start of Summer!

Saturday, May 29th was a great day for the Historical Society. We opened our new addition with a ribbon cutting ceremony and dedication, dedicated the new library, and unveiled the new exhibit and artifact. The event was well attended, and it was great to see so many visitors. For those of you who don't know or couldn't attend, The Henry Ford has generously loaned us the bell from the *Tashmoo* steamship, and it is now proudly displayed in the museum with many other *Tashmoo* artifacts. It's well worth a visit to see!!

There are many, many people to thank that made Saturday possible, but I want to take a moment to personally thank Chris Knight, Corinne Trexler, Marie Eidt, John Eidt and Ellen Probst for all their hard work over the last months that made the opening and the event last Saturday possible. They opened the museum to contractors, re-designed displays, ordered furniture / shelves / display cases, moved artifacts into their new space . . . and when the cleaning service canceled at the last minute, they worked together to dust / clean / mop and get the museum ready for our opening event. We couldn't have done it without you . . . thank you.

We kick-off the 2021 Social Hours on Friday, June 11 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the museum. As we continue to take precautions to stay healthy, please ensure any food items brought to share are individually pre-packaged. If you chose to bring snacks or drink for yourself, that is fine too!

I am looking forward to a great summer and year full of activities and visitors to the museum.

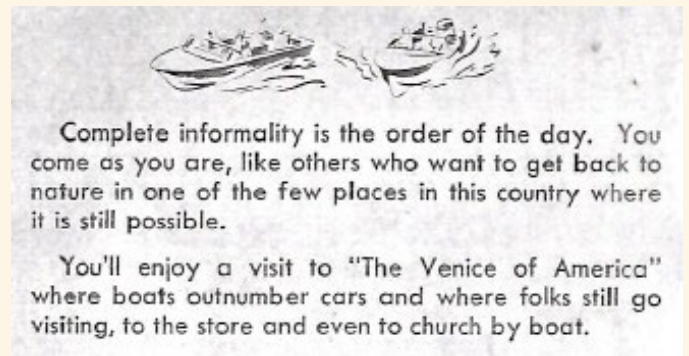
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Feature Column

- Harsens Island Businesses -

This year our newsletter's feature column will highlight island businesses from years gone by or have withstood the test of time.

In researching island businesses, I found an advertisement for Browns, circa early 1960s. In the brochure was a section that still applies today.



And as it was fun in the 1960s, it is still a fun place for everyone.



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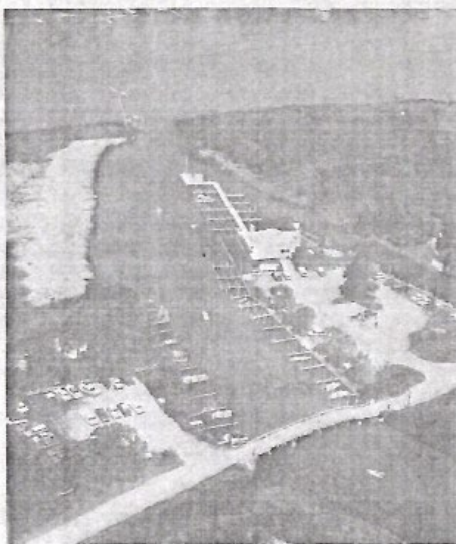
As always, thank you for your support.

Joyce

Joyce Hassen, President

P.S. We need people to be a museum host for 2-hour blocks on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer, please volunteer and help keep the museum open. It's fun and easy to do!!

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



BROWN'S LANDING

FINE FOOD — LIQUOR

Entertainment and Dancing

SHELTERED HARBOR
off the Middle Channel

St. Clair Flats
"The Venice of America"

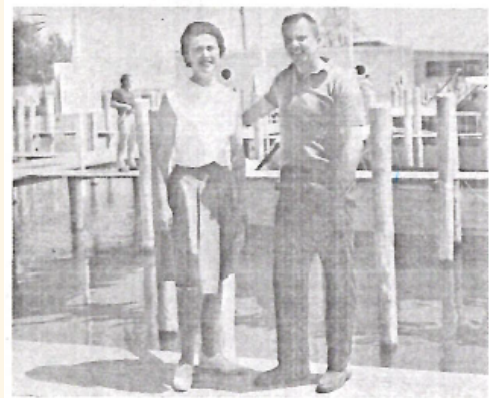
Quality New Boat Wells and
Parking Area for Guests

BOATS, MOTORS AND GUIDES
Available for Hunting and
Fishing

Fuel Dock and Supplies

BROWN'S LANDING

Phone: RI 8-9793
6630 Middle Channel Rd.
Harsens Island, Mich.



Mr. and Mrs. Earl Brown

RETURN TO NATURE

Brown's Landing is located on the Middle Channel in the vast area known for years as "The Venice of America." It is reached by water or highway and by air.

Away from the traffic of the South Channel, Brown's is in the center of a great area still in its primeval stage, where game fish break water and winged game soar in the blue skies above, one of our last great natural areas.

A writer in 1855 described it thus: "You may call it a marsh; but there is no mud, no dark slimy water nor stagnant scum . . . The clear water of the channels ran over golden sands and hurled among the stiff reeds so swiftly that only in bay, or where protected by crescent point, could the fair white lilies float in quiet their serene beauty requires." While a few good roads and docking have been added, and scene has changed some, the atmosphere and wildlife remain the same.

Dining at Brown's Landing is a sheer joy. While fish dinners are the favorite and the "speciality of the house," you will find anything from a snack to a full course steak dinner, an adventure in good eating.

Add to this, the atmosphere where you sit by broad windows and look out at small craft plying the Middle Channel, or ducks, wild geese and other game birds flying over or tending their young in the nearby bays and bayous, or an angler trudging in with a string of fresh caught fish. Dining here is fit for a king, his family and friends.

The Ribbon Cutting and So Much More!

We had a wonderful event on Saturday, May 29 to commemorate the reopening of the museum. It was windy and a bit cool, but the sun was shining, and the sky was as blue as the river. There were many happy islanders and visitors (over 60 people attended). Happy to be able to gather with friends for activities and excited about seeing all the changes in the museum. Here is a brief walk through of the event’s speeches, dedications, and announcements.

We kicked off the event by having one of our long-time and respected island residents, Nancy Streit, blow the J.B. Ford Steam Whistle. Nancy got a quick tutorial from Tom Hellstrom on how to blow the steam whistle. She did a great job and was ready to do it again.



Bob Williams led our visitors around the building to the new garage door for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

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Ribbon Cutting – Bob Williams

“We began the construction of this addition in the spring of 2019 with plans to open for our tenth anniversary celebration in the spring of 2020. Along the way we experienced delays of not being able to get concrete due to a broken ferry dock and of course, a year of quarantine. But we made it and are here today to celebrate the

completion of the addition. It took many different contractors to build our addition. We did our best to use local contractors where possible. Some of them are long time members of our Historical Society, and many made major donations of materials and labor. I’d like to recognize our contractors at this time. Our General Contractor was Michael Moore of Casco, MI. He was responsible for the foundations, masonry, and concrete floors. The steel supplier who donated the roof joists, metal deck and full installation of those items was Robby Kehrig of Kehrig Steel in Ira Township.

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The roofing contractor who made a major donation of roofing materials, roof insulation, and installation was Dan Davis of Royal Roofing in Lake Orion. We received a major donation in the form of electrical work from Amy Strutz of AJ Leo on the Island. Also, Jim and Dave of J&D Smeel were kind enough to donate part of their labor to help us get the exterior painted on budget.

Additional island-based subcontractors who worked on the addition included:

- Miscellaneous roofing services - Alex Bugg
- Heating and Air Conditioning - D&S Heating - Doug Shugar
- Grading and septic work - Rod Jessup
- Interior painting - Tom Wall

Other local area subcontractors included:

- Plumbing – Paul Miller of Algonac
- Floor coverings – Custom Floor Covering of Algonac
- Garage door – M&M Garage doors, New Haven
- Windows – Preferred glass, Marine City, Kevin Beindit
- Technology installation – Bluewater Audio/Video of Kimball Township



I would like to recognize our Society members who served with me on the Building Addition Committee, Chuck Miller, Judy Jessup and our last committee member who is also our very dedicated volunteer who has assembled furniture, built display cases, and was on the spot to let contractors in and out, for over two years, John Eidt.

This list covered those people who helped us get the vacant building completed but does not include the Society’s many volunteers who manage the collection and put together the wonderful displays you are going to see.”

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After the ribbon cutting the visitors entered the museum’s new addition. Once everyone was settled Bob Williams did The Clayton Evans Room dedication speech.

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The Ribbon Cutting and So Much More . . . continued from page 4 . . .

Clayton Evans Room Dedication – Bob Williams

“I’d like to tell you the story of how this addition came about. Our Society founded eleven years ago grew quickly in membership and in its collection of artifacts of island history. So many people love the Island and their memories of it and love to share these memories and artifacts with others, that within a few years of opening the museum we knew we were going to have to expand the building. The board began planning for future expansion, and in 2018 we were notified that we were the beneficiaries of one third of the estate of a man named Clayton Evans. Clayton was not a wealthy man, but he was hard working, and he loved the Island.



I suspect that most of you had never heard of Clayton prior to this bequest.

Clayton was born in 1917 in Detroit. When he was four his mother brought him to Tashmoo Park by way of the steamer *Tashmoo*. They fell in love with the Island and soon made that trip on a regular basis. Clayton’s parents were hired to be the teachers at the Island school. His mother taught first to fourth grades and his father fifth through eighth grades. The schoolhouse at the time was the building on Little Road which later became Judy Jessup’s home. When Clayton was preparing to enter fifth grade his family moved to Detroit, however that was not the end of his connection to the Island.

Seven years later on the morning of his graduation from high school he came back to the Island and found a job working at Peter Krispen’s store. Later he worked for Mr. Harms at Tashmoo Park and after that for Art Champion on the ferry. Clayton was present at the ribbon cutting of this original fire hall in 1938 and recalled the fire truck backing out the front door and rolling into the river. He recalled getting a tractor to pull it out of the river that day.

Clayton continued living and working on the island until he was 24, when he was offered a job on the steamer *Zenith City* out of Lorain, Ohio. Though he moved away he never forgot his early years here on the

Island. Clayton came back to visit the island about ten years ago and began a friendship with Judy Jessup who lived in the house where Clayton’s parents had lived. Clayton was living in Washington state in 2015, and at the age of 98 he packed up his car and a trailer and began a trip back to Michigan, but unfortunately was hospitalized in Montana and had to abort the trip. Clayton passed away in 2018 at the age of 100, still dreaming of making one more trip back to the Island he loved so much.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society I now dedicate this addition and exhibit space to the memory of Clayton Evans.”

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Next, Joyce Hassen, our Historical Society President spoke, dedicating The Karen and Drew Peslar Library.

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The Ribbon Cutting and So Much More . . . continued from page 5 . . .

Karen and Drew Peslar Library Dedication – Joyce Hassen

“For those that don’t know me, my name is Joyce Hassen and I am the current President of the Historical Society. I have been on the Board as Treasurer for 8 years. My Dad, John Chamberlain was on the first board, and one day asked me fill in on the board until the next election due to unexpected turnover . . . we know how that works . . . eight years later.

I also want to thank the many volunteers, donators and Board members present and past that made this addition possible. Many countless hours have been put in to making this a reality. But this addition wouldn’t be possible if we didn’t own the building in the first place.



Very early on we entered a land contract to purchase the Fire Hall and use it as a museum. As we moved forward with many fundraisers to support and pay for the museum, and like today, we had many volunteers, supporters, and donators that kept us motivated to move forward. Our goal of owning the museum was sometimes daunting, but our membership provided us the incentive to keep going. Then a significant contribution from Karen and Drew Peslar, made it possible for us to pay off the land contract, thus ensuring that the building was ours!

The Peslars have been members since the very beginning over 11 years ago and have been great supporters for the entire time. Karen and Drew have always been generous donators and have been there for us over the years and in addition to the building itself, their donations have helped furnish the addition and library, and helped renovate the existing building.

It is my honor and privilege to dedicate the new library in the name of Karen and Drew Peslar. On behalf of the Historical Society, thank you so much for your support.”

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Author Art Woodford

The Historical Society had a special guest at the event, Art Woodford. Art is the author / editor of nine books including “Tashmoo Park and the Steamer Tashmoo”. In Art’s book he captures the fascinating story of the 60-acre resort called Tashmoo Park which became Detroit’s most popular destination for 50 years. His book also showcases one of the White Star Line's

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The Ribbon Cutting and So Much More . . . continued from page 6 . . .

excursion boats, the most famous of which was, without question, the steamer *Tashmoo*. Art also includes selected images from a variety of sources, including libraries, museums, and archives, as well as from a number of noted private collections.



Art stayed after the event to sign his book for the museum visitors . . . Thank you, Art!



Chuck Miller, the Historical Society’s curator, spoke last to unveil a very special addition to the *Tashmoo* Exhibit.

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The Heart of the *Tashmoo* Steamer Returns to Harsens Island – Chuck Miller

“Maritime tradition holds that the ship’s bell is the heart and soul of the vessel. In recognition of that tradition, the Harsens Island Historical Museum is proud to announce that the Heart of the *Tashmoo*, it’s bell, has come home to the Island and it has now taken center stage in our newly renovated *Tashmoo* Exhibit. The Bell had languished in a storage building at the Henry Ford Museum and, after inquiries, was ‘re-discovered’ in a detailed search by Henry Ford Museum staff. We have obtained the bell under a long-term loan agreement.



The *Tashmoo* Bell was made by the Meneely Bell Company in Troy, New York in 1900 and weighs approximately 250 pounds. It is made of aluminum, bronze and chrome steel and stands 27” high. The Heart of the *Tashmoo* Steamer proudly displays the *Tashmoo* name and date of manufacture (1900) and was placed on the vessel at her launching. The firm was a prominent bell maker and records show a number of their bells were sold here in Michigan during this period. A partial record from the time shows 83 Meneely Bells located in Michigan, in locations as close as New Baltimore, New Haven, and St. Clair.”

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A huge thank you to Stacy Williams (Harsens Island Photography, LLC) for all the wonderful photos of the event.

The Ribbon Cutting and So Much More . . . continued from page 7 . . .

All in all, it was an amazing event. If you missed the event, stop by the museum, and see the expansion, the new displays and the *Tashmoo* Bell! Harsens Island's little museum is now bigger and better.



From the Collections of The Henry Ford



From the Collections of The Henry Ford

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

Contact Corinne Trexler for additional information 313-530-9173

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2021

Date	Day	Time	Event
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

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).

Preview of Museum Exhibits

Visit us to see the new and improved exhibits and displays. Check out the new Fire Hall Exhibit.



Building the Future ~ Preserving Our Past