



*Message from the President . . .*

Happy Summer!

I hope that you are enjoying the summer on the Island, whether for a short visit, a long visit, weekends, vacations, or every day. My family, as I know many others, have spent countless hours this summer fixing and restoring property, yards, landscaping, and buildings damaged with the high water of the past two years. We've made great progress, but much work remains. Despite all that still needs to be done, we've been able to take some time off from the work and squeeze in fun on the water with family and I hope you have too!

The museum has had many visitors so far this summer, and all seem to have enjoyed the new space and exhibits. The Kids Corner has gotten a lot of attention. I had the pleasure while hosting last week, watching a couple of our younger visitors diligently finding all the items with the museum Eye Spy game. Not sure who had more fun, the kids, their parents, and grandparents, or me watching and giving hints when they were stumped! It was a good reminder that the museum is fun for all – including the hosts. We have openings for hosts, please consider volunteering for an hour or two.

We still have a lot of summer left. We are looking forward to our Annual Membership meeting on August 21st. The social part of the meeting will start at 4:30 PM with wine and appetizers, and the meeting officially starts at 5:00. All members are welcome, please join us.

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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.

As we all know, businesses on the island come and go for various reasons. Some are bought by new entrepreneurs and renamed, some are renovated to become residences and some sadly stand vacant. In this month's column I want to highlight some of the businesses that were here when I was in high school in the early eighties. Our long-time residents will recognize all these businesses.

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The Honey House – At the ferry - Seasonal - Pure Island Honey - Sandwiches - Ice Cream - Catering

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Packy's Party Store – "The Harsens Island Breakfast Spot" – Hot Lunches - Liquor - Beer - Wine

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Four Winds – Dining & Cocktails - Enjoy the View and Service from Our Patio

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Island Queen Ice Cream Parlor

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Herschelman's Market

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Peter Henkel, Inc – Classic Boats and Motors

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

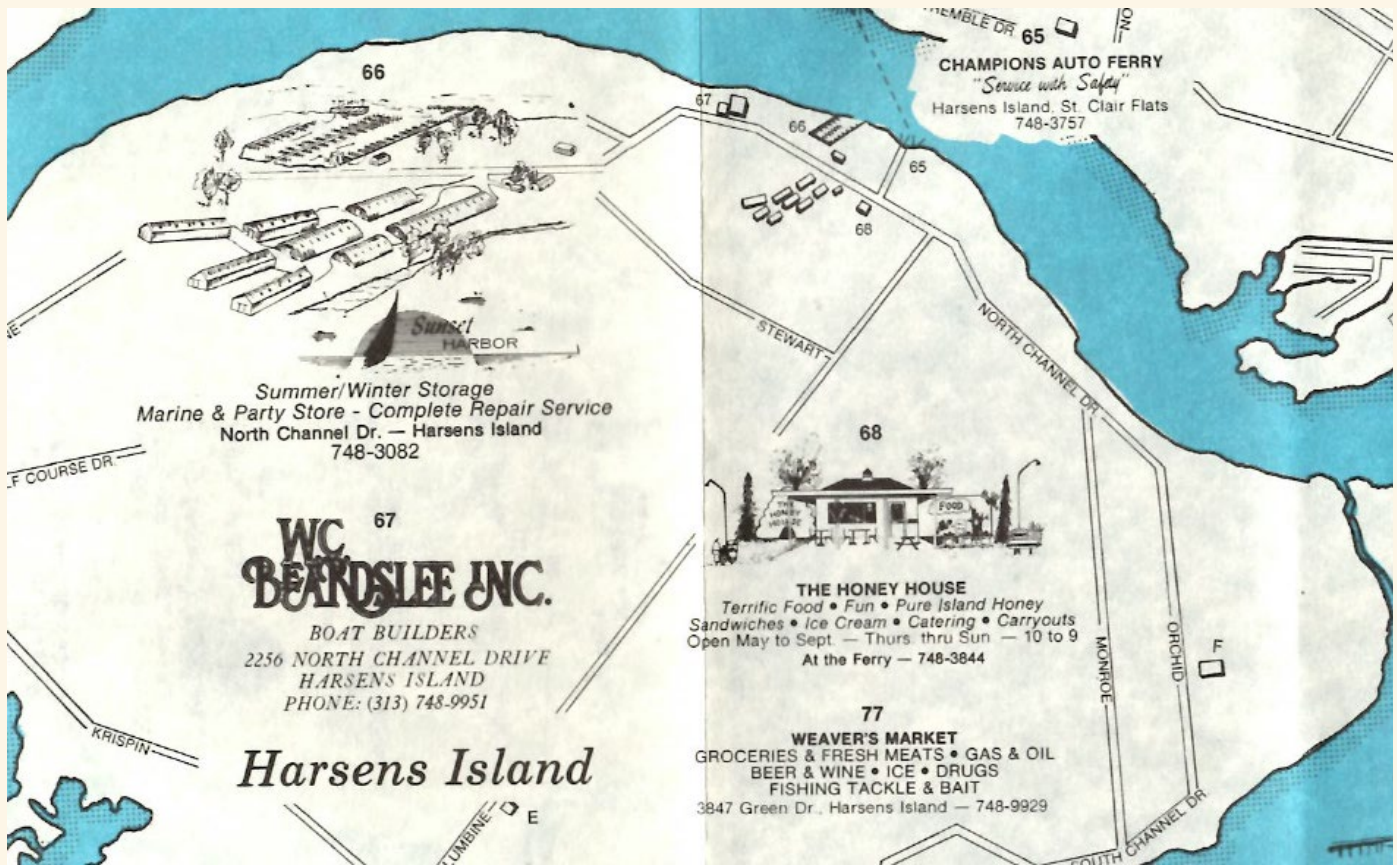
Also, upcoming - our Anniversary event on August 28th and on September 4th we'll be represented in the Labor Day Parade – so come out and have some fun with us!

As always, thank you for your support.

*Joyce*

Joyce Hassen, President

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Harsens Island Businesses . . . continued from page 2 . . .




**74**  
**SANS SOUCI BAR**  
 — with a character all its own —  
 3057 S. Channel  
 — Join us and watch the ships go by —



**75**  
*The Waterfront Shoppe*  
 "LOCATED IN SCENIC, SWINGING DOWNTOWN SANS SOUCI, HARSENS ISLAND"  
 Gifts, Souvenirs, Summer Apparel  
 Plants, Jewelry, Candy  
 Boating Charts  
 3061 S. Channel Dr. — 748-3623



**69**  
**UNDERSEA RELICS**  
 A Division of Search & Recovery Inc.  
 189 LaCroix, Harsens Island  
*a fabulous marine collection of authentic underwater relics*  
 — professional recovery work  
 725-4579




**70**  
**HERSCHELMAN'S MARKET**


**71**  
**VILLAGE HARDWARE**

**72**  
*Pachy's Party Store*  
 "THE HARSENS ISLAND BREAKFAST SPOT"  
 Hot Lunches  
 TAKE OUT  
 LIQUOR — BEER — WINE  
 3064 S. Channel Dr. — 748-3021


**73**  
**ISLAND QUEEN ICE CREAM PARLOR**




**82**  
**BROWNS LANDING**  
 Open May thru first October weekend  
 On Middle Channel  
 Restaurant - Cocktails - Dancing - Gas Dock  
 6630 Middle Channel Drive — 748-9793




**81**  
**FOUR WINDS**  
*By Land or by Sea Boats to 60'*  
 Dining & Cocktails  
 Enjoy the View & Service  
 From our Patio  
 9195 S. Channel • 748-3231



**78**  
**CONCEPT PROTOTYPE INC.**  
 PROTOTYPE AND PRODUCTION INJECTION MOLDS  
 7137 McDonald Harsens Island, MI 48028  
 (313) 748-9732



**79**  
**Peter Henkel, Inc.**  
 Phone (313) 740-3600 7600 South Channel Dr.  
 Harsens Island, Mich. 48028  
 Classic Boats & Motors  
 St. Clair Flats Marina Scripps Marine Engine Co.



**80**  
**WALKERS LANDING**

We are a little late in celebrating the Historical Society's 10-year anniversary (April 2020), but we wanted to celebrate the Historical Society's journey over the last decade. What better way than to recognize this milestone than to acknowledge the Fire Hall which is Harsens Island Museum and the volunteer fire fighters of yesterday and today . . .

## HARSENS ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

### OLD MEETS NEW



Harsens Island Rescue Car  
(1963)



New Harsens Island Fire  
Engine (2021)

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 28TH 10 AM – 12 PM

- ❖ Kid's Activity in the Museum
  - ❖ Fire Firefighters showcase the New HI Fire Engine
  - ❖ 50/50 raffle
  - ❖ Free Balloons for the kids

Downtown Sans Souci / Historical Museum  
3058 South Channel Harsens Island

## Interesting Steamboat History

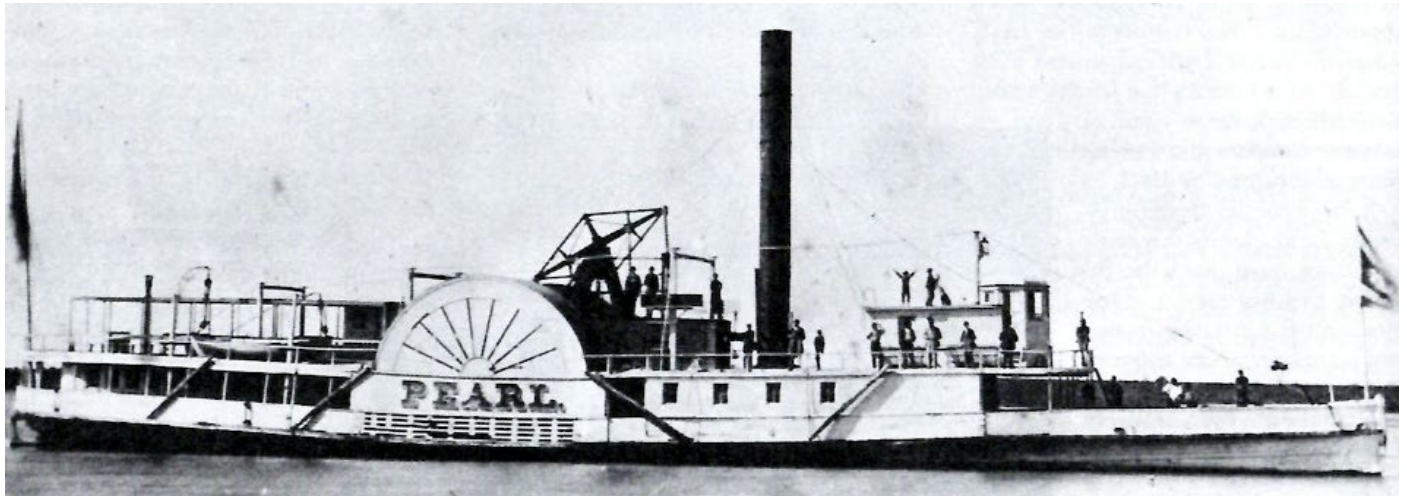
Content sourced from Steamboat Bill - Number 240 - Winter 2001

Journal of The Steamship Historical Society America

For those of you who are fascinated by steamship history I highly recommend you purchase a copy of the Steamboat Bill available for sale at the Historical Museum. Here are some excerpts from this magazine which I found interesting.

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“From the earliest times, ships passed between Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River through Anchor Bay and a North Channel skirting the mainland on the edge of marshes of a river delta we know as the St. Clair Flats. Captain Sam’s *Pearl* and Captain Eber’s *Ruby* made the passage each way between Detroit and Port Huron on alternate days. Now Captain Sam learned to speak Chippewa language so he could wood up his steamer for fuel at Walpole Island Indian community. The Walpole Island Indians preferred to travel the South Channel of the Flats (the international border between Canada and the United States) whose shoals hardly troubled their canoes. One day, an Indian friend piloted Captain Sam’s *Pearl* through a route staked out to avoid shoals in this South Channel. *Pearl*’s resulting fast time astonished Captain Eber until he learned the secret. When Captain Eber’s *Ruby* tried the South Channel, however, Captain Sam’s Indian friends had moved the stakes. *Ruby* got stuck in the shallows and had to be towed off. Captain Eber and his *Ruby* did not reach port until the next day, and he was furious. (Detroit *Free Press*, July 21, 1886).”



A good picture of the *Ruby* does not seem to exist, but this is a photo of the sister steamer *Pearl* – Worden collection

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“After the clubs and hotels came the cottages. A subdivision for cottage sites on Harsens Island (toward the upper end of the South Channel of the Flats) was advertised in Detroit papers in April 1890. The Harsen family had settled in the Flats before 1800, but the village of Sans Souci grew up only in the nineties. Just downstream from it was built the white wooden Victorian Gothic St. Mark’s Roman Catholic Church. Back downstream, clustered just below the Star Island House, had already appeared a pair of private clubs, the Rushmere and then the Mervue. About that time, the Harsen and Dickenson heirs tried to claim title to what had seemed worthless land only a dozen years before. They lost out to the State of Michigan, which became landlord to the Flats, happy to have people improve state property with cottages, hotels, and clubs. A survivor of the hotel era is the Idle Hour in Southeast Bend, once the Riverside Hotel and rebuilt after a fire in the thirties.

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*Interesting Steamboat History . . . continued from page 5 . . .*

It is now a private club.

Getting to the Flats could be a challenge. A line of electric interurban cars ran along the North Channel on the mainland to Algonac at the turn of the century, turning north to continue to Port Huron. Until then, the steamers and other craft were the only transportation, and remained so in the Flats itself. Numerous lake vessels clogged the South Channel even when traffic moved properly. Many old lake steamers and schooners had been cut down into barges. Tugs might tow a string of schooners or barges through the river as many as half a dozen or more at one time. Ships too deeply laden might go aground and hinder traffic. In 1888 the steamer *New Orleans* disobeyed protocol and ran aground, "and for a while rooted around like a mad bull, tearing up everything within her reach. In trying to work herself off, she turned completely around twice and did considerable damage to the sides of the canal as well as throwing up banks of sand in all directions". In 1891 came the log raft. The steamer *J.H. Wade* struck one raft in 1894, scattering its logs throughout the Flats, while logs jammed and damaged wheels and engines of tugs tending the raft. At season's end in 1894, contracts were let to deepen the Ship Canal to twenty feet."

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"Like the *Kirby*, *Tashmoo* was a "line boat" meeting trains at her destination; the Grand Trunk at Sarnia or the Northern Navigation boats for the Lake Superior lakehead, for example. Besides broad decks for excursionists who would get off at Tashmoo Park, she needed fine appointments for her through travelers. Aft on her main deck was a dining room in mahogany with marble columns, seating 114 with a dozen more in a private dining room (all with table clothes and silverware). The main salon filled the deck above, flanked by ten parlors, each having a bay window. Two grand pianos, brocaded armchairs and late Victorian *tete-a-tetes* fitted up the main salon. The smoking room above was in chestnut stained dark green with wicker chairs and a cuspidor at each chair.



Photo on left is the private dining room in which president Roosevelt had lunch on September 22, 1902.

Photo above is the main salon on the promenade deck, paneled in mahogany.

Courtesy of The Mariner's Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

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*Interesting Steamboat History . . . continued from page 6 . . .*



Photo above is the aft end of the main salon, looking aft.

Photo left is the snack bar, finished in oak, on the main deck just aft of the engine room, which can be seen through the open window at left.



# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2021

Date	Day	Time	Event
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	Wine and Appetizers at the Museum Annual Membership Meeting Board Meeting (after Annual Meeting)
August 28	Saturday	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Historical Society Anniversary Celebration
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

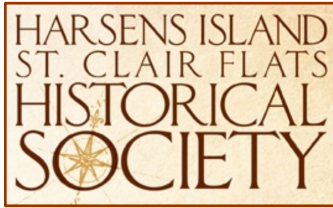
Summer Schedule (June, July, August, September)
Second Fridays 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (October through April)
Closed but Open by appointment

## 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





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.

[www.harsensislandhistory.org](http://www.harsensislandhistory.org)

**HISCFHS Board of Directors 2021**

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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](mailto:chris.knight@comcast.net)).

**Museum Exhibits**

Visit us to see the new and improved exhibits and displays. Check out the Harsens Island Cottage Exhibit. A couple new additions and a new layout makes it easier to get a closer look at typical household items you would find in a cottage.



Vintage refrigerator, stove, radio, and sewing machine.

*Building the Future ~ Preserving Our Past*