



Message from the President . . .

Happy Anniversary!

Last Saturday, we celebrated the 1st anniversary of the 10th anniversary of our museum. Due to the museum being closed during 2020, we didn't have a formal celebration for our 10th anniversary, but it was worth the wait to celebrate in 2021. The extremely hot and humid weather may have kept the crowd down a bit, but for those of you that came out to help us celebrate – thank you!

The celebration started with a salute from our freighter steam whistle and continued with recognition of the museum's heritage as a Fire Hall. Chief Rose brought Clay Township/Harsens Island's brand-new fire engine for us to tour. They had special fire hats and backpacks for the kids who got a chance to see the inside of the truck and sit in the driver's seat. It was truly remarkable to see the technology and get an idea of the effort our fire fighters and volunteers put forth in an emergency. Also, on display, and for stark comparison, was the Museum's very own Rescue Car from the early 1960s. The side-by-side comparison was a reminder of how technology and equipment have advanced.

The morning was also enjoyed by kids who played games in the museum and enjoyed special fire engine activities in the Kid's Corner . . . and of course free doughnuts and cider was available for all visitors.

Special thanks to Chris Knight, Corinne Trexler, and Ellen Probst for all their help putting this event together and keeping everything running smoothly throughout the day.

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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 most of you know the Sans Souci Bar closed its doors in late spring of 2020. In the early 1800's the bar was a port for mail, commerce, and food deliveries. Later it was an ice cream parlor and then a tavern.



At the Sans Souci Bar in 1944. From left to right is Janet, Jack Beamish, Gladys, Owner Kenny Ring, and Louis McDonald. Ivy King is serving (as remembered by Jim Yax. Photo courtesy of Ron Krispin.

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Don't forget to look for us on September 4th in the Labor Day Parade!

As always, thank you for your support.

Joyce Hassen, President

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SAN SOUCI BAR
 UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

**MILLY'S CHILI AND SOUP
 SANDWICHES
 MILLER ON TAP**



**LOWEST PRICES ON THE ISLAND
 PLENTY OF DOCKAGE AVAILABLE**

Bob and Jerry's

Sans Souci
CASUAL BAR

LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN SANS SOUCI
 AND NOW SUNDAY LIQUOR AFTER 2

Stop In and Ask For A
"FROSTIE"
HARSENS ISLAND

Harsens Island Historical Society and Museum Anniversary Celebration

We were not able to celebrate the Historical Society's 10-year anniversary (April 2020) due to the museum being closed for COVID. On Saturday, August 28th we did 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 now the Harsens Island Museum and the volunteer fire fighters of yesterday and today.

Linda Schoonover, one of the museum's docents, kicked off the celebration by blowing the J.B. Ford Steam Whistle. Bob Williams presented a brief history of the Fire Hall / Historical Museum.

"This building was built as the new island fire hall and dedicated on July 3, 1938. One member of our Historical Society who was there that day was Clayton Evans, our benefactor of the addition which we added and dedicated earlier this year. Later a small wood framed addition was added to the rear of the building to house the Harsens Island Rescue Car which you see here today.

In 1979 a new fire hall was built on LaCroix and this building was later sold. In 2001 the building was purchased by Jane

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and Ken Cihon to be opened as Harsens Island Antiques. A few years later the store was closed, and the building was sold to Bluewater Land Development. Our historical society was founded in 2010 and a year later we rented the building for our museum.

On June 1, 2013 we entered into a land contract with Bluewater Land Development to purchase the building for \$140,000. Two and a half years later in December of 2015 with the help of many members and supporters we fully paid the balance of the land contract and the building was ours.

In 2017 the society added the compressor room addition to house our steam whistle and in 2019 demolished the old wooden storage room from the rear of the building and began the construction of the new exhibit hall and storage room which we opened and dedicated earlier this year."

Chief George Rose from the Clay Township Fire Department spoke next. He talked about the new Harsens Island Fire Engine which will be ready for use in September.



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After his remarks, Chief Rose presented Bob Williams with an antique fire hose nozzle, which has been added to the museum's collection.

Afterwards, Chief Rose and EMT Chris gave visitors a tour of the new fire engine. Kids were allowed in the fire engine to take pictures. And they got fire hats and back packs.



In the museum, there were games and activities for the kids. Kids also received a mini fire extinguisher squirt guns, fire hats and mini fire engine pull toys.

Gerhard Rauch won the 50/50 Raffle, which he donated back to the museum. Thank you, Gerhard!

Thanks to all who came to help us celebrate!!

Donations

We are so thankful to all the generous islanders who have donated documents, books, photos, art work, and artifacts. Our collection has grown exponentially since the Historical Society was founded in 2010. In the last couple of months, we have received several donations, some are shown below.



Fire hose nozzle donated by the Clay/Harsens Island Fire Department.



Fireman's boots donated by the Babicz family.



Woven mini basket, tea cup and match holder made by a Walpole Indian. Donated by Ann Borthwick.

Museum Visitors

The Harsens Island Museum is open on weekends, May through September, but did you know that arrangements can be made to open the museum for a private tour. In August there were two small groups who coincidentally made appointments for the same day and time. One group was a couple from Arizona who were visiting an island friend, and the other was a group of four ladies visiting someone else on the island. While they were visiting, another couple from Arizona came in, so the museum ended up hosting quite a group that day!

Later in August, a group of seniors from the Village of East Harbor, in New Baltimore, came to visit. Corinne Trexler hopped on the East Harbor bus for a guided tour of the South Channel and Green Drive, all the way down to the turnaround. Afterward, the group returned to the museum to see all the displays and learn about the history of the homes they saw and landmarks of interest. They had a treat while at the museum . . . they were able to watch a freighter pass by.

Interested in arranging a private tour? Contact Corinne Trexler at 313-530-9173 or Chris Knight at 586-242-4560.



Tashmoo: An Appreciation of the Beloved "Glass Hack"

By J. Michael O'Brien

Content sourced from Telescope October 1965, Volume 14, Number 10

"Did you ever have an occasion to stroll beneath towering funnels that emitted great plumes of smoke, and to feel beneath your feet the syncopated throbs of great sidewheels forcing the ship's hull through the water, leaving a picturesque pattern astern? If you were so lucky, you may have been aboard the Queen of the St. Clair River. And of course, there was only one.

Tashmoo resulted from a search for a steamer to carry the multitudes that found pleasures of the Harsen's Island area and that had to settle for the smaller, crowded steamers of the 1870's and 1880's. This search brought into play the talents of the famous father of Great Lakes ships, the noted architect, Frank E. Kirby. The Star Line commissioned him in 1898 to produce a suitable steamer. With hull characteristics of the famous Hudson River steamer *New York*, the ultimate in excursion steamers began to appear upon his drawing boards. Detroit Shipbuilding Company was chosen to build the ship, and construction began in the early summer of 1899.

On December 31 of that year, the hull was launched amid a shivering party of officials and shipyard employees at the Wyandotte yard. As was the usual practice, the hull was towed up to the Orleans Street yard for joiner work to be built during the winter. Décor was styled after some of the most lavish hotels of the era. Mr. Kirby wrote to Messrs. J. T. Hall of New York, the decorating firm, "the finish on the main deck is to be quartered oak, natural color. Dining saloon mahogany. Bar – pine, enameled and gilded. Stairs of mahogany throughout. Promenade deck saloon mahogany. Staterooms as parlors, trimmed in different styles. Smoking room – chestnut stained dark green." As winter became spring and the last ice floes left the river, the efforts of many craftsmen began to show as the big flyer emerged in sparkling white dress. Lifeboats and ventilators were installed. Rolls of canvas were put aboard, awaiting weather for fastening down on the decks. The smell of paint was in the air. And then signs were hung out, simply stating Help Wanted.



Tashmoo is seen at Toledo in her first year of operation.

Time was of the essence. June 1st was the deadline. The Star Line would pay a bonus if the big ship was finished, given trials, and accepted before then. April arrived and the engines were given life. Adjustments were made and the dynamos checked; and Kirby and the Barlums scrutinized last minute details to be sure they were according to contracts. These engines were the low lying "inclined" design, giving her greater stability and the smoother operation of a balanced engine. The absence of vibration was vital, as was the greater thrust on the shafts per pound of coal per horsepower. This was the third installation of this type on a Great Lakes merchant sidewheeler. The much less expensive first cost of vertical beam engines had made them standard for sidewheelers before then; but after *Tashmoo*, no new beam engines were installed in large lake paddlers.

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Tashmoo: An Appreciation . . . continued from page 6 . . .

On May 13, 1900, with a mighty whistle blast, *Tashmoo* left Orleans Street for her builder's trial run to Lake St. Clair. Out in the lake she began a series of crash or collision stops and rudder exercises. Finally, she made a twelve-mile run at half speed for engine calibration and adjustment under steam.



The stern view shows her at Port Huron sometime just after World War I.

Fitting out continued. Two grand pianos were placed on "B" Deck at the forward and after areas of the salon. Elaborate Wilton carpeting was laid down. Heavy mahogany furniture was generously distributed at convenient points around the second and boat deck salons, as were wicker rockers and arm chairs, writing and library tables. The marbled columns in the dining room, as well as the chandeliers, testified to a richness never seen before in an excursion ship. The Barlums intended *Tashmoo* to be a money-maker. But more than that, *Tashmoo* would be an entertainment center for the wealthy families of Detroit, particularly those with cottages in the "Flats".

Fourteen days after the first trials, *Tashmoo* entered Lake Erie for her final adjustment trials and a speed run over a measured mile. To her new owners' satisfaction, she proved her ability to move at a fast clip. The flyer began service officially on June 11, 1900. A series of private trips to various ports was made to show off the new vessel. President McKinley was aboard for one of her early trips. On another occasion, she was host to Admiral Dewey, the victor of Manila Bay, and led a celebration parade up river."

The full article can be found in the Telescope mini magazine in the Harsens Island Historical Museum library.

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2021

Date	Day	Time	Event
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

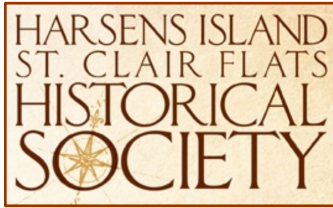
Summer Schedule (June, July, August, September)
Second Fridays 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (October through April)
Closed but Open by appointment

Save the Date

Pie Sale

October 9 10 AM to 1 PM

Bakers who would like to donate a pie to the sale
can contact Chris Knight at 586-242-4560



A publication of the Harsens Island St.
Clair Flats Historical Society

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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).

Museum Exhibits

Visit us to see the new and improved exhibits and displays. Stop in and check out the *Tashmoo* Steamer exhibits. There are several artifacts from the steamer including menus, dishware, and a life preserver. And of course, the *Tashmoo* Bell, on loan from The Henry Ford.



Building the Future ~ Preserving Our Past