



volume 13 / number 4

June 2022

### *Message from the President . . .*

Happy Summer!

We officially kicked off summer, with a long Memorial Day weekend filled with family and fun. The museum officially opened the renovated space, to compliment and complete the addition we opened last year. It has been quite a journey to make it all happen. The Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society is extremely proud of our 'new' museum. We loved having such a great turn out for the Opening Ceremony and the large number of visitors over the Memorial Day weekend was fabulous.

The new display designs are stunning and one that received a lot of attention from our first visitors was the newly acquired gravestone of Jacob Harsen (the son) ...displayed in its new museum graveyard. Many hours of creativity and work went into the new displays, but the gravestone display is exceptional.

As I mentioned a couple of months ago, we're bringing back the speaker series and have a couple of individuals lined up this summer, including a woman who has done significant research on Frances Harsen – the Walpole Island native wife of Jacob, whose gravestone now sits at the museum...stay tuned for the final date and details!

Remember – we're always looking for volunteers to host the museum on Saturdays and Sundays this summer, contact any Board member for more information.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

*Joyce*

*Joyce Hassen, President*

### *Renovation Project*

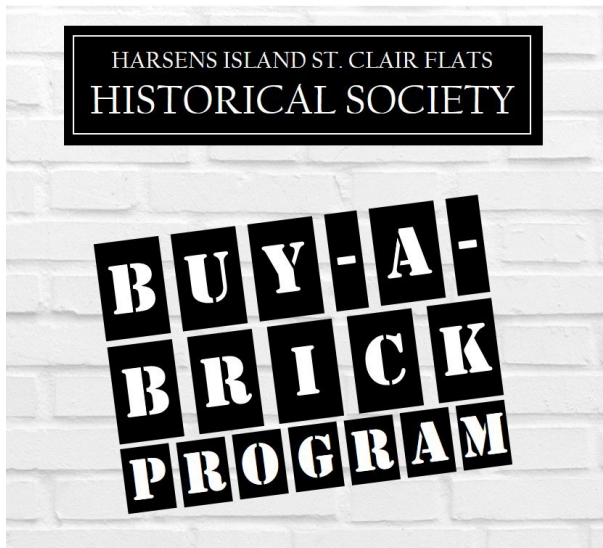
The Renovation Project is complete, and the museum is open for the summer! We are all excited about the improvements we made to the existing exhibits and the newly created exhibits. Stop by and see the Harsen Family Tree, First Nations, Early History, Freighters and Ferries, and the Transportation Boom exhibits.



## *Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society Building Renovation BUY-A-BRICK Program*

In 2020 we celebrated the completion of the Clayton Evans Room Addition and in 2021 the completion of the renovation of the Karen and Drew Peslar Library. We have now begun work on the final phase of our construction, the renovation of the large exhibit space at the entrance to the museum.

To help maintain a healthy financial position for our Historical Society, we are reactivating our BUY-A-BRICK Program.



Members and friends can support the Historical Society and assure the continuance of the museum by donating \$350 to our BUY-A-BRICK program. Donors will be recognized or may designate a memorial on one of the bricks inside the museum. Of course, they may remain anonymous if they wish. Donations of any amount to support the renovation efforts are welcome and appreciated. To sign up, or if you have questions, contact Bob Williams at 248-388-0465 or [xharpspah@aol.com](mailto:xharpspah@aol.com).

**BUY-A-BRICK Order Form is included at the end of this newsletter.**

## **Museum Renovation Project Complete After Three Years**

### **Main Room Dedication to Gary Grout and Nancy Boulton**

We had a wonderful event on Saturday, May 28, to celebrate the completion of the museum's renovation project. A long journey which started in 2019. We also dedicated the main room in the museum as the Gary Grout and Nancy Boulton Room. Many islanders and visitors attended the event to hear the event's speeches, dedications, and to see all the improved and new exhibits.

#### **Welcome to the Museum's Main Room Dedication – Joyce Hassen**

*"We are here to celebrate the opening of our renovated museum. A journey that has taken several years, complicated by high water, construction material weight limitations, and a pandemic, but last year we opened the addition - and today we open the renovated original space.*

*We have a couple of special guests with us today, but before I begin introductions, I want to give a shout out and a heartfelt thank you to a couple of people whose dedication, creativity, and countless hours of volunteer work made this possible:*

- *Christ Knight*
- *Marie and John Eidt*
- *Ellen Probst*
- *Corinne Trexler*

*As a small token of my appreciation, there are some flowerpots here for you. Thank you."*

Next up – our Chairman of the Board – Bob Williams

#### **Gary Grout / Nancy Boulton Room Dedication – Bob Williams**

*"Gary Grout was one of the founders of our Historical Society and served as our first President. He continued serving on the Board of Directors for another six years as the Chairman of the Board.*

*Gary was a resident of the island at his house on South Channel which had been in his and his wife Ann's families since the early 1900's. Gary and Ann raised three children, Denice, Cheryl Ann, and Guy. Today the 5th generation of their family still owns the property.*

*Gary was a genealogist and Harsens Island Historian. He served during the 1950's as a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve. He produced a video, now a DVD, about the Steamer Tashmoo and the Hotels of Harsens Island. It is available in the Museum. Gary was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, General Society for the War of 1812 and the Sons*

*continued on page 4 . . .*



***Museum Renovation Project Complete. . . continued from page 3 . . .***

*of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Gary provided a great service to The Society as a leader and advisor."*

Next up – our Treasurer – Corinne Trexler

**Gary Grout / Nancy Boulton Room Dedication – Corinne Trexler**

*"Today we are dedicating our renovated room in the museum to Gary Grout, and to Nancy Boulton, our Founder. Nancy was the one with the vision. She believed that Harsens Island was deserving of its own Historical Society and Museum. In 2009, Nancy spent months promoting her idea, and was successful in assembling a group of people on the island who agreed with her, including Gary Grout. In 2010, the first Board of Directors was formed, with Nancy named as the Museum Director. She arranged to rent the old Fire Hall here, and the Historical Society had a home. Then she spent countless hours procuring and organizing artifacts for display, and recruiting volunteers to renovate the building, design the displays, and open the museum to the public. She held numerous fundraising events. The Cookie Walk and Fall Pie Sale are events that Nancy started and continue to be annual events today.*

*Nancy Boulton had a gift for motivating and inspiring people. She is the reason I am standing here today. When Nancy, my neighbor on Poplar St., learned that I would be a full-time islander, (not just a cottage weekender!) she set to work on getting me involved with the museum. I also know that it is Nancy who "reeled in" Chris Knight and Ellen Probst as active Museum Board Members. I'm sure there are others here today who were inspired by Nancy.*

*Although Nancy is no longer with us, her heart and her footprint will always be here in this museum. I believe she would be proud to see how much this museum collection of Harsens Island artifacts has grown. She would be proud to see everyone here today, continuing to support the museum that was her vision!"*



Bob Williams sharing Gary Grout's Island history.



Corinne Trexler spoke about how Nancy Boulton's vision inspired the Historical Society and the Museum.

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*Museum Renovation Project Complete. . . continued from page 4 . . .*



Nancy Boulton's sister, Peggy, blows the whistle in honor of her sister.

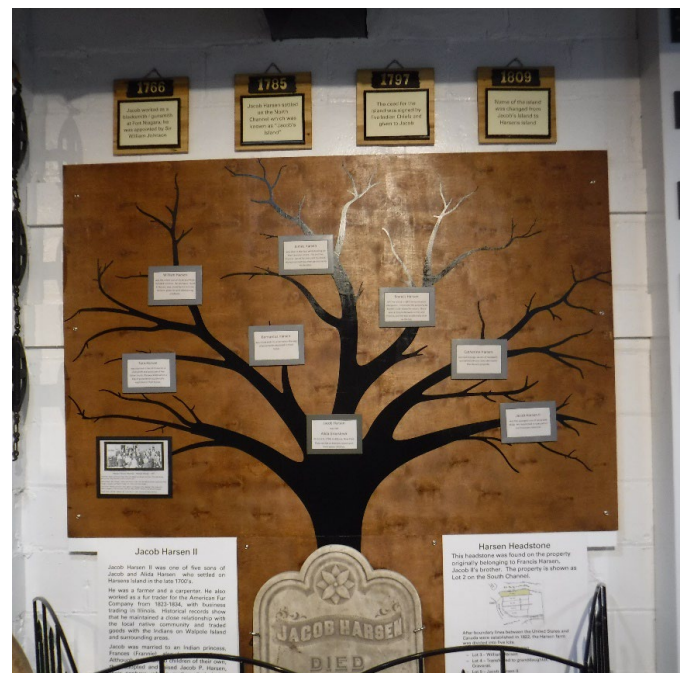


Milton Osgood Jr. shares the story on how he found the Jacob Harsen II headstone.

The Museum had another special guest, Milton Osgood Jr., who was invited to help unveil the new Harsen Family Tree Exhibit.

Milton Osgood Jr. spoke about the day he found the Jacob Harsen II headstone in the 1960s, in the wooded area near his home on Grande Pointe. He saw a small piece exposed and sticking out of the ground. He cleaned it off and dug out the remainder from the ground. The headstone was broken in two pieces and the missing portion is probably still in the ground.

Milton Jr. thinks he can still find the missing piece and show the board where the headstone was found.



The new Jacob Harsen Family Tree and headstone Exhibit.

## Save the Date – July 23

### Lost in Translation

A Chronicle of Frances Harsen



tappingroots.com

**Brenda L. Williams**

Author Brenda L. Williams will be speaking at the Harsens Island Museum on July 23. Brenda wrote the book, “Lost in Translation”, which is about Frances Harsen (a Native American woman) who married Jacob Harsen II.

Stay tuned for details.

## Volunteer to be a Host at the Museum this Summer

The Harsens Island Historical Museum is now open every weekend through the summer, Saturdays from 10-3, and Sundays from Noon – 4pm. Volunteers are needed to work as hosts this summer to maintain these hours. If you can volunteer for two or three hours on any Saturday or Sunday this summer, please contact us.

Hosting simply means being there to greet visitors, answer questions if you can, and record sales in our Museum Shop. Many volunteers have found that it is also an opportunity to spend a little time learning more about our interesting Island history!

If you are interested in volunteering, or would like more information, please contact Corinne Trexler at 313-530-9173, or Linda Schoonover at 313-671-6663.

## The Osgoods

Sourced from "The Flats Golden Era – Volume II – An American Venice"

by Michael M. Dixon, Copyright 1987

David H. Osgood, a real estate developer from Detroit, began coming to the Flats in the 1880s. He built many Grande Pointe's homes and other buildings, including the landmark, St. Mark's church. (Twenty-five years later his son's construction company worked on St. Paul's Episcopal church.)

D.H. Osgood's home was built along the north shore of the Grande Pointe subdivision in 1892 and his brother William, soon built his residence next door. Today D.H. Osgood's original home and other homes acquired and built by the heirs of David and William Osgood remain in the family (Nelson, Wright, and Osgood)



*Above, the cottage of David H. Osgood, built along the North Channel of the Grande Pointe in 1892.*



Canals formerly ran from both the South and North Channel to the Grande Pointe Cut. After partially filling in with sediment, they were eventually filled and made level with the island, circa 1930. The photograph on the left illustrates the North Channel Cut with the original cottages of David and William Osgood seen in the background.

# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2022

PLEASE NOTE: All events and locations in the following schedule are **tentative**

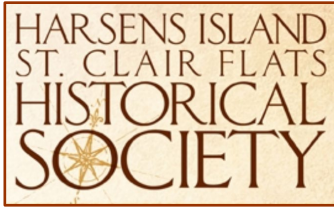
Date	Day	Time	Event
June 11	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
June TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
July 9	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
July 23	Saturday	TBD	Brenda Williams – Author of “Lost in Translation”
August 13	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
August 13	Saturday	TBD	Annual Membership Meeting at the Museum
August TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
September 3	Saturday	11:00 AM	Labor Day Parade
September 10	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
October 1	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Annual Pie Sale
October 8	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
November 6	Sunday	2:00 PM	Remembrance Edmund Fitzgerald
November 12	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Planning Meeting via Zoom
December 3	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk
December 10	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom



## Museum Hours

<b>Summer Schedule</b> <b>(June, July, August, September)</b>
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
<b>Winter Schedule (October through April)</b>
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.

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

**HISCFHS Board of Directors 2022**

Chairman of the Board

**Bob Williams**

President

**Joyce Hassen**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**Chris Knight**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

**Ellen Probst**

Treasurer

**Corinne Trexler**

Secretary

**Nancy Bonacquisti**

Directors

**Terry Wiggins**

**Sue Wrobel**

**Lori Wiggins**



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 curator; Chris Knight at  
[chris.knight@comcast.net](mailto:chris.knight@comcast.net)

**Is your house more than 100 years old?**

The Michigan Heritage Home™ program recognizes houses that were constructed at least 100 years ago and are in substantially original condition. That designation comes with a handsome cast-aluminum plaque that lets everyone know that your home has its own rich heritage and historical significance. This distinguished plaque, authorized by the Historical Society of Michigan, will remind both new and longtime community members of your home's contribution to your shared heritage.



For more information click here to go to the

[Michigan Heritage Program](https://www.hsmichigan.org/awards/michigan-heritage-home)

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