



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

Happy Fourth of July!

Hope that everyone had a fun and safe Holiday Weekend. This year was rare for me, as we didn't spend Fourth of July on the Island. Family events took us up north for the weekend, and although it was wonderful to be around extended family, the woods aren't quite the same as the lake (at least for me).

The Board continues to work on getting events on the calendar, with our speaker Brenda Williams coming July 23rd. The event is earlier in the day, with a brunch just before Brenda speaks. It is exciting to be able to use the new museum space to hold events like this, and I hope you can come and enjoy some good food, the speaker, and our museum!

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### *Scale Model of Downtown Sans Souci and the Edmund Fitzgerald*

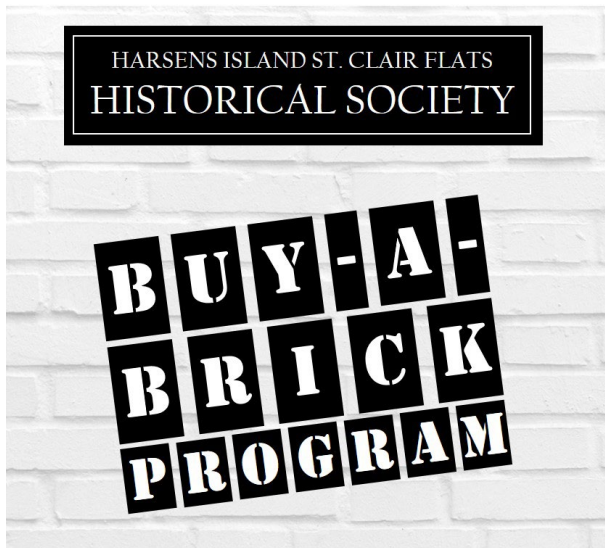
One of our new hosts, Dan, creates scale models using Lego. He brought in his creations to the museum on July 2, replicas of downtown Sans Souci businesses and the Edmund Fitzgerald. We will let you know if the models will be making a return visit.



## *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 [xharpsph@aol.com](mailto:xharpsph@aol.com).



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



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

The annual membership meeting time has moved to the morning this year, please join us on August 13th at 10:00 AM in the museum. Please join us, we love to see and hear from our members!

Work also continues on the museum, with volunteers recently organizing and cleaning the back storage room, fixing a leaky roof, and fine tuning some our displays . . . in addition to the regular maintenance and cleaning. It takes a village to maintain the operations of the museum and I thank all the volunteers that make it happen!!

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*

### **Harsen's Island and St. Clair Flats provide locale for enthralling exploration trips**

**By The Old AAA Traveler – printed in The Delta News, April 10, 1950**

James Harsen was a gunsmith and Isaac Graverat was a silversmith, and they probably set up the first business venture on the island, turning out guns for the hunters and trappers who were coming into the area and silver ornaments for the Indians.

By 1830 the island had a population of more than 200 and from that time to this it has grown in importance, first as a trading center for the Indians and the farmers who were farming their little patches out of the island wilderness and later,

for the city dweller who sought the peace and quiet of this island sanctuary. The old Harsen home still stands, just as stand many of the old mansions built in an earlier day. It is highly interesting and not a little disconcerting to prowl the fifty miles of island highways to find white columned home reminiscent of the Deep South and great old farmhouses in the "gingerbread" architecture of a by gone day.

In time hotels were built, many of them, and boats from Detroit transported their pleasure-seeking throngs to the island. In connection with the boats, we found an 1895 menu from the Northern Steamship Company's steamer "North West."



*S.S. North West, Northern Steamship Co. – Library of Congress*

*continued on page 4 . . .*

*... enthralling exploration trips ... continued from page 3 ...*



*Chateau d'Yquem 1895*

That old menu is enlightening, for you find ribs of beef at 50 cents, quail at 60 cents, cold roast turkey at 50 cents and cheeses at 10 and 15 cents an order. Under the tobacco section of the menu, you find Sweet Caporals – shades of the old timers! And Richmond Straight Cuts. Grandfather will remember these brands back in the days when smoking a “coffin nail” was looked upon as being not a little bit sinful. Most of the wines listed have passed from the picture, but today, of course, in the right spots you will find Chateau d'Yquem and Pommard Burgundy.

The old records would indicate that eating and drinking were prime pastimes on the island, and there are some tall tales of the hotels in the early days.

No chronicle of Harsen's Island would be complete without a little attention paid to the famous Joe Bedore, who was born in Quebec in 1839 and died in Detroit in 1921. Joe Bedore was sage and counselor of the island for many years, reigning from his rocking chair on the porch of the hotel.

Joe, bewhiskered Frenchman and always with a straw hat atop his thatch of hair, ruled as “King of the Flats” with an iron hand and in a somewhat Rabelaisian manner. Our own George Stark, who knew and loved Joe Bedore as did thousands of hunters and fishermen, will tell you that Joe Bedore was a past master in the art of profanity. Not only did he do a work-manlike job in both French and English, but when his French temper mounted, he invented his very own profanity as he went along.

“And that Joe Bedore profanity was both startling and frightening.” added Lee Smits, another of Joe intimates in an earlier day.

For years Joe Bedore and his good wife, Marceline, ruled over their island hostelry. They have passed to their reward, of course, but the Bedore Hotel still stands and is still a rendezvous for those who have loved the island through the years.

Another famous hotel was the Grande Pointe at the upper end of the island, which was operated for years by August P. Harsen, and there still stand several hotels which were highly popular in the early days when Tashmoo Park was Detroit's No. 1 suburban play place. In those days boats transported their merrymaking throngs from Detroit to Harsen's Island for hours of swimming and eating and general joy making. In 1903 a writer had this to say of the boat trip to Harsen's Island:

The trip of trips is the one to Port Huron and return. Here is a daylight journey unsurpassed. Swinging out from the pier, 22 miles of riverfront may be seen at one glance, half on the American side and half on the Canadian side of the river. Here



*Joe Bedore's Hotel – Library of Congress*

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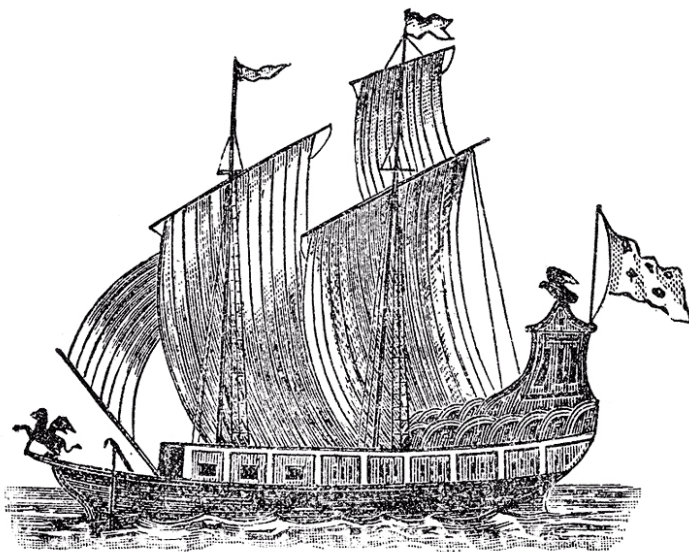
*... enthralling exploration trips ... continued from page 4 ...*

is Detroit with its 350,000 population and Windsor with its 15,000 and between the two, one of the greatest commercial scenes. The river is alive with all kinds of craft, from the monstrous sailing vessels loaded with lumber to the smart little naphtha launches on pleasure bent."

The writer goes on into a panegyric on "The Flats." He says:

"Where tired feet and dusty pavements are no more, but where the people float through liquid streets, and drifting out in the wider waterways, adjust the sail or dip the oar and, without a thought of slumberous Italian skies or Mediterranean zephyrs-glide into an expanse of American water and view with rapture the blessings of the St. Clair. Little Venice! For this is America's Venice, not splendid with gloomy antiques or crumbling marble, but sweet and fresh where, in place of the gondola, float our own convenient boats; instead of the serenade of a love-sick swain, the merry laugh of little children."

And certainly, no story of Harsen's Island would be complete without some treatment of the Old Club, originally the Lake St. Clair Fishing and Shooting Club. The club was incorporated in 1872, and today is one of the most important social clubs anywhere in this Midwestern territory.



*Le Griffon, disappeared on the return trip of her maiden voyage in 1679*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_Griffon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Griffon)

that the island will remain just that. Presently access to the island is by the Champion ferries, but, once on the island there is about 50 miles of improved highway over which the entire island may be explored, and that exploration is highly important in the proper enjoyment of the island, because, in addition to the old homes, you will find ancient fruit orchards and lush truck farms, and over all the peace and quiet that comes from being away from the hustle and bustle of a modern town.

There is, of course, much to see in addition to Harsen's Island when you go into that country, because just across a narrow

Of course, it was the white sails of the "Griffon" which first moved majestically by the present site of the Old Club, while today swank yachts in mahogany and brass are tied up at its piers. The "Griffon," of course, loaded with supplies for a long trip of exploration sailed up the lakes to Green Bay and it always has been assumed that the little ship foundered in a gale and went down with her entire crew. This Old Club, as we said before, was founded in 1872 and a small clubhouse was built at the point where the St. Clair River becomes Lake St. Clair. Today there is the club proper and numerous cottages have been built by club members on the club reservation.

Harsen's Island is a great play place, as we have said, and it is to be hoped that the

*continued on page 6 ...*



... *enthralling exploration trips ... continued from page 5 ...*

strip of water is Walpole Island – the “Indian Island” it frequently is called – where a great number of Chippewa and Potawatomi still reside. On Walpole you will find beautiful basketry and beadwork and, of course, in the fall the annual Indian fair, Harsens’s Island also has its fall festival, when one weekend becomes a fair and homecoming.

If you are like most of us – certainly as I myself am – you will have sighted Harsen’s Island many times as you have driven the coast highway. But I question if you have ever seen it as it should be seen. I would, therefore, strongly urge that you budget out a Saturday or Sunday, or possible a midweek day, for a run up there. Prowl the island, talk with the natives, see what has been done in transforming the island into a great modern play place and you will sense why the thousands look at Harsen’s Island as the No. 1 nearby area for fun and real living.

I found these in some vintage The Delta News. Had to share! Plus, my dad is mentioned. 😊 By the way, I had to read the STOLEN notice twice to make sure I read it correctly.

### STOLEN

Richard Beecher barn containing furniture of Mrs. Clara Lemke. REWARD offered to anyone leading to the whereabouts of barn or furniture. Call or write:

Mrs. Clara Lemke  
8100 East Jefferson  
Detroit, Michigan

April 20, 1949

### WE'VE HEARD THAT ...

Mr. and Mrs. George Lahodny of Berkley and Green Drive, spent a week of November vacationing at Eaglesmere, Pennsylvania.

Mr. and Mrs. William Beyster of Birmingham and the Flats announce the engagement of their daughter Joyce to Richard H. Allen of Detroit.

Mrs. Robert Hill of LaCrix Road, Harsen's Island, gave a Christmas party in her home for her friends. A luncheon was served by candlelight and gifts were exchanged. Understand Mrs. Hasehker poured the tea.

Mr. James Bright of Detroit and the Flats, has sold his tire business to the Goodyear Tire Company of Akron. Wonder how “Jim” will now occupy his time. Perhaps fishing through the ice on Muscawmoot Bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Hal Heym of Birmingham and North Channel Drive, announced the betrothal of their daughter Barbara to Maynard Frederick Outwater at a buffet supper. Mr. Outwater, son of Mr. and Mrs. Olney Outwater, is from Ann Arbor.

December 23, 1948

### THE YOUNGER SET ...

Nancy Kendall of Detroit gave a surprise birthday party on August 11 for Chuck Turner of Green Drive.

Ginger Grisinger of Berkley, Michigan spent a week with Jean Lahodny.

Eugene Herschelman really had a wonderful birthday party on July 26. He entertained twenty of his friends. They played games and later had lunch and, of course birthday cake!

Dick Knight entertained three of his friends from Detroit over the Field Day week-end. The fellows were. Don Johnson, John Posa, and Harold Chavey.

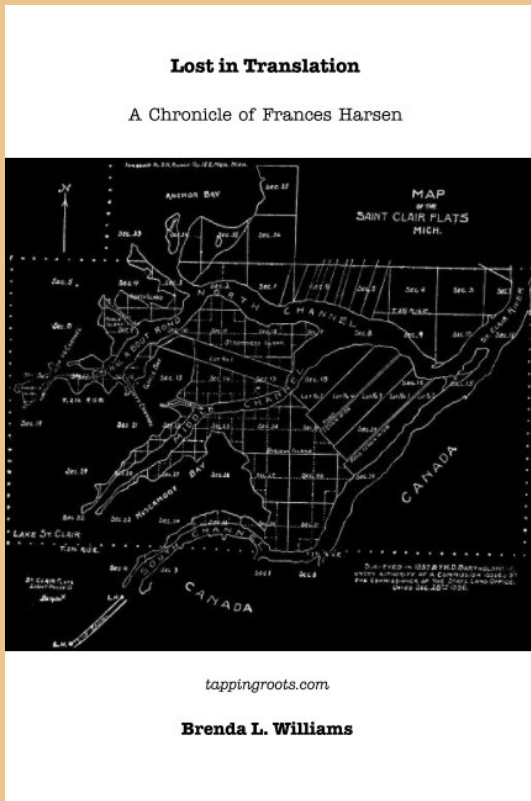
Jackie Armstrong of Green Drive gave a surprise birthday party for Helen Coons on Friday the thirteenth. Most of the Beachcombers were over Friday evening.

Mary Clare McGlynn was the week-end guest of Judy Racicot for the Field Day.

Just about everybody gathered on Lloyd Richardson's dock Sunday, August 22, to attend his swimming party. Everyone had a wonderful time.

September 11, 1948

## Guest Speaker – Brenda Williams – July 23



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.

Join us at the Museum for **Brunch at 11:00 AM** (Quiche, cinnamon rolls, fruit, bagels, muffins, and beverages).

**Speaker Event at 11:30 AM** at the Museum.

### 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.

# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2022

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

Date	Day	Time	Event
July 9	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
July 23	Saturday	11:00 AM	Brunch at the Museum
July 23	Saturday	11:30 AM	Speaker - Brenda Williams – Author of “Lost in Translation”
August 13	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
August 13	Saturday	10:00 AM	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 (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**

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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 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](http://www.hsmichigan.org/awards/michigan-heritage-home)

<https://www.hsmichigan.org/awards/michigan-heritage-home>

