



**Have a joyful present and a well-remembered past. Best wishes for Happy Holidays and a magnificent New Year!**



Whether your tree is real, artificial, green or white, big or small . . . there is a feeling of joy and contentment when the family sits around a decorated Christmas tree during the Holiday Season.

**Interesting facts about the Christmas Tree:**

**1510** – The first written record of a decorated Christmas Tree comes from Riga, Lavtia.

**1800's** – The Christmas Tree was introduced in the United States by German settlers.

**1853** – Franklin Pierce credited for bringing the first Christmas Tree to the White House.

**Late 1800's** – The first glass ornaments were introduced in the United States, again from Germany.

**1883** – Sears, Roebuck & Company starts offering first artificial trees – 33 limbs for \$.50 and 55 limbs for \$1.00.

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

Hi All,

This is a reminder that while the museum is closed, the Society will only be publishing the newsletter every other month. Your next newsletter will arrive in February.

**Remembering Nancy Boulton**

Thank you to everyone who came to the museum in October to help us remember our founder, Nancy Boulton, who passed away in September. The event was well attended, and many people brought snacks to share while we visited and remembered our Founder. I would also like to thank the many members who brought or sent donations in honor of Nancy. The Board has chosen to open an endowment savings and investment account with only the income from this account being used for normal operating expenses. Our hope is that the principle in this endowment account will be retained to support the museum for decades to come. Donations received in the future to honor other Islanders will most likely be added to this account unless earmarked by the donor for a specific project.

In November the Board of Directors voted unanimously to name our large exhibit room "The Nancy Boulton and Gary Grout Founders Gallery" in honor of Nancy and of Gary, whom we lost last year. Gary, you will recall, was also one of our founders, served as our first President, and was a board member every year since the Society's inception.

Nancy Boulton's presence will be greatly missed, as we try to find volunteers to do all of the things that Nancy took care of around the museum. It is impossible to find one person to replace her. Corinne Trexler has volunteered to take on responsibility for the museum store, Donna Krispin will be watching over the archiving project, and Chuck Miller will be managing the museum hosts next year. Thank you, all.

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### *Message from the President . . . continued from page 1 . . .*

The Board of Directors has appointed Chris Knight to fill the remainder of Nancy's position on the Board. Chris has been a regular attendee at board meetings for the last couple of years as our Webmaster and has taken on specific projects such as the Memorial Get-Together in honor of Nancy Boulton, the Pie Sale, and the December Cookie Walk. In addition, Chris is now our newsletter editor and has also volunteered to become our first Publicity Director in years. Thank you, and welcome to the Board, Chris. Also, thank you to Mary Woodford for serving as our Newsletter Editor during 2018 - job well done.

#### **Steam whistle project update**

I would also like at this time to thank John Eidt, Tom Hellstrom, and Bobbie Bryson for their continued work on our Steam Whistle Project. Bobby obtained a donation of an additional air storage tank and has modified it to meet our needs. Tom has put on a couple of coats of paint to protect it, and John is working on making the structural brackets to support the tank and whistle on the roof of our new compressor room. The project should be completed by Memorial Day. Thank you, everyone.

#### **Exhibit and storage space building addition update**

On October 24th we received our Special Land Use and Site Plan Approval from the Township, which is needed to begin work on the proposed new exhibit space and storage room addition to the museum. Complete architectural plans have been prepared, and the next step is to obtain contractor bids and the building permit. Our Curator Chuck Miller has begun the process of cleaning out the museum's storage room, to prepare for its demolition in the Spring. Thank you, Chuck.

If you are looking for that last-minute year-end tax-deductible donation, we would be happy to put your donation to work in our upcoming building addition. We have received a major donation to erect the basic structure, but by spring will be looking for donations to help finance technology, energy conservation features, and renovation of the existing building. If you would like to learn more, feel free to contact me.

#### **Membership renewal time approaches**

Watch your mail in January for your membership renewal information for 2019. If you have already renewed or are a lifetime member, you will only need to return the form if there are changes to your contact information.

During the winter the museum may be closed, but the work goes on. Keep in mind that we can always open up for special groups.

#### **New water service**

You may recall that the sink in the museum bathroom has always been labeled "Do not drink this water." That was because the water supplying the museum was pumped from the river and was not safe to drink. In September the water pump broke down, and the Board decided that this would be the right time to invest in a connection to the public water system instead of putting money into the broken water pump. With the help of two local contractors, Paul Miller, plumber, and Rod Jessup, excavator, we now have potable water in the museum. Both contractors donated their labor to the project. Thank you, both.

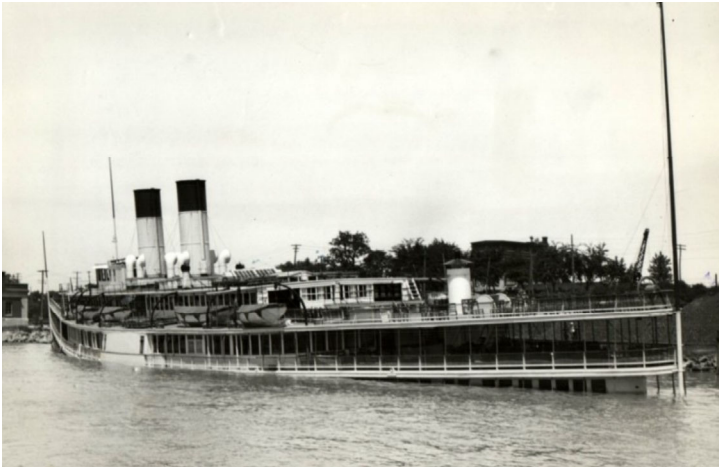
Bob Williams, President  
(xharpsah@aol.com)



## The Tashmoo Sinking: An Additional Perspective

Contributor: Chuck Miller

As you know our museum continues to be very involved in compiling and researching the history of the Tashmoo Steamer. Member Michele Komar has been compiling a comprehensive digital data base of information from numerous sources that covers the entire period of Tashmoo's existence. Her material provides additional insight into the day-to-day events involving the steamer and Tashmoo Park. This brief article combines her meticulous research with some additional work on the impact of water levels over time. We think the result makes for an interesting story. We'll have much more to show of Michele's work in 2019.



"A great jagged hole was ripped in the Tashmoo's Keel on the starboard side Thursday night as she reached the Livingston Channel Light, carrying 1,419 passengers home from a moonlight trip to Sugar Island." (Detroit Free Press, June 20, 1936.)

Tashmoo ran 1/2 mile to Amherstburg, Ontario and sank at a pier there in 12 feet of water. Passengers and crew made it ashore unharmed. They huddled in the dark until a second steamer could retrieve them for a return to Detroit. Interestingly, *the very next day* qualified speculation arose that the Tashmoo might be unrepairable;

"It was said Friday, that the Tashmoo may never be returned to service. A representative from one of the companies handling insurance on the Tashmoo said that, in his opinion, the boat would not be salvaged. He said that it would cost \$40,000 to refloat the ship and several thousand more to recondition her". (Detroit, Free Press, June 20, 1936)

His prediction proved accurate. In spite of a seasoned crew, experienced in navigating the narrow channels carved out of bedrock, Tashmoo was to run no more. The captain had only supposition as to the cause and stated under oath that he was on course at the time. One of the

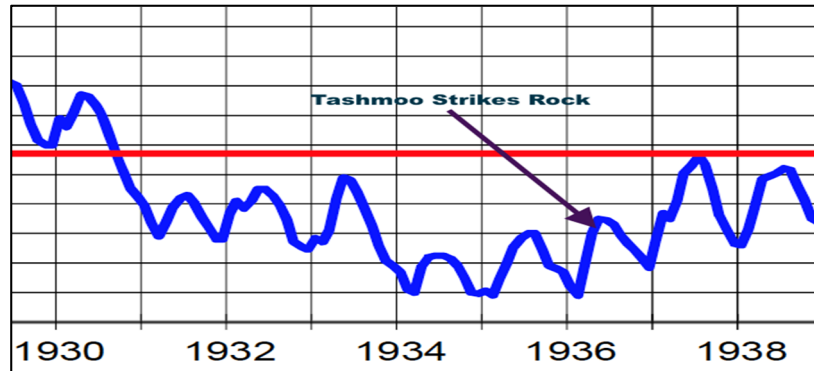


passengers claimed to have looked down into the engine room as the vessel was running for shore and saw the water gushing in. There's just no question as to the root cause of the sinking, but is it possible that some other factor could have contributed to the sinking? Is it plausible to suggest that low water levels at the time of the event could have played a role in the accident?

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## The Tashmoo Sinking: An Additional Perspective . . . continued from page 2 . . .

An examination of old (1933) navigation charts of the area coupled with Corps. of Engineers water level data for the lower Detroit River for that period are very revealing. Below you see a piece of a historical water levels chart (in blue) for Lake Erie showing the period 1930-1938. *This particular period records the lowest water levels ever taken from early 1900's-to 2018.* At its lowest, the blue line showing water level is approximately 3.5 feet below the red average line. Note that the Tashmoo accident occurs during this period.



Is it just possible that the record low water levels were a contributing factor in the Tashmoo sinking? We'll never know for sure . . .

## The Museum Library of Current and Historical Archives

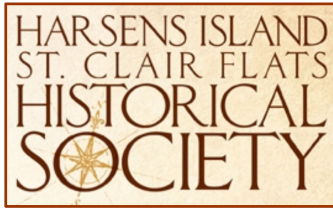
Let's go back a couple of years to 2016 . . . our dear friend, Nancy Boulton, and a founder of the Harsens Island Historical Society and Museum started the arduous task of going through a mountain of donated historical books, photos, newspaper articles and legal documents. Some of donations came from Jean Nelson, Donna Krispin, Ann Grout, John Cameron, Gwendolyn Bates, Michael Dixon, and many, many more. With help from many volunteers the information was sorted, organized, cataloged and filed.

Today, we have a fantastic library of historical information catalogued by numerous topics. Here are a few of the topics organized into binders:

- Boats
- Bridge
- Churches
- Clubs
- Coast Guard
- Environment
- First Nations
- Fire Department
- Freighters
- High Water
- Hotels
- Ice Jams
- Leased Lands
- Maps & Charts
- Restaurants
- Schools

We even have binders dedicated to Harsens Island families and their lineage. For example, The Harm Family and the Shirkey Family. If you are interested in adding your family to our library, our Collections Committee would be happy to help you. The library also includes issues of the Delta News, the Harsens Island Flyer, the Island Issue (HI St. Clair Flats) and The Islander.

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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.

<https://harsensislandhistory.org/>

**HISCFHS Board of Directors**

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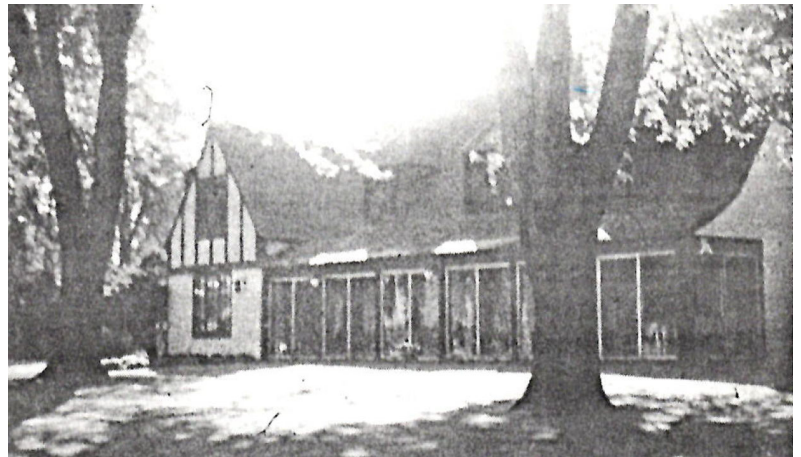
Directors  
**Terry Wiggins**  
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**The Museum Library . . . continued from page 4 . . .**

I was hosting at the museum this summer and a visitor came into the museum asking about the carriage house on the corner of South Channel / Circuit Street and Orchid. The information about this house can be found in the Homes binder.

**The Mendelson Cottage**

The most luxurious home on Grande Pointe was the estate of Herbert Mendelson. Built in 1930, the two-story home of cement block included a basement and recreation room. Behind the house was the garage with a second story apartment, and heated greenhouse. In 1974, the house burned down in a fire. The caretaker perished when he returned to the burning house for his wallet. After the fire, the house was rebuilt as a private residence.



*Photo credit "The Flats Golden Era – Volume II" Michael Dixon*

Our Collections Committee, led by Corinne Trexler, continues to catalog and bind the current and historical information received through donations and research. The committee meets twice a week to work on expanding and refining the library.

If you are interested in volunteering or donating photos, articles, documents or information about your family lineage please contact Corinne Trexler (ctrexler5@comcast.net).

Even though the museum is closed for the season, you can arrange for a tour or to look through the library.



Contact our curator to arrange for a visit;  
Chuck Miller (cmiller5179@gmail.com).

## Membership Application 2019

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Annual Dues:</u>		<u>Life-time Dues</u>	
{ } Individual (1 Member Only)	\$20.00	_____ Life Individual	\$300.00
{ } Family (1-2 Adults plus children under 18 years)	\$30.00	_____ Life Family	\$500.00
{ } Business	\$50.00		

**BUILDING ADDITION DONATION: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **OTHER DONATION: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

If desired, please specify use: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletters are emailed to members. If you require newsletters via postal mail, please write a note on your returned application.

Please complete and send with a check made payable to: **The Society**. Mail to: The Society, PO Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_