



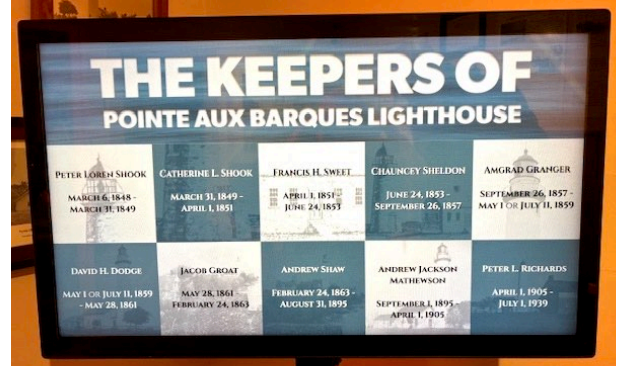
# POINTE AUX BARQUES MARITIME MUSEUM

Fall 2025

7320 Lighthouse Road, Port Hope, MI 48468

## More Improvements in Lighthouse Museum

In the Lighthouse Room of our museum, we replaced the paper display about the lighthouse keepers with an interactive electronic display that allows visitors to scroll through updated information about the ten keepers who operated the lighthouse from 1848-1937. This winter we will be enhancing our Storm of 1913 display with a mast light from the *John A. McGean*, one of eight ships that went down in Lake Huron during the worst storm in the recorded history of the Great Lakes.



## Assistant Keeper Program Celebrates Five Years

Since the summer of 2021, we have been welcoming guests who stay in the assistant keeper's house for a week and work as docents, help with grounds maintenance or assist in the gift shop. This year, Assistant Keepers came from Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and West Virginia as well as various parts of Michigan. We're lucky to have such friendly, hard-working maritime enthusiasts to help us keep the museum running. One of our Assistant Keepers shared with us that "this was an incredible experience. I learned a ton and really enjoyed sharing with all the visitors."



Photo courtesy of Josh Boland/Bridge Michigan



## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Heritage Festival

Over 1000 people attended the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Heritage Festival the first Saturday in August. The Detroit-based R&B and blues band, Dreams Deferred, was a huge hit with the crowd, and twelve vendors, two food trucks and our bake sale offered a wide array of items for sale. Visitors were able to climb the tower, tour the 1876 life-saving station, and visit with members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary about water safety. The biggest thrill of the afternoon was getting to hear the steam whistle from an 1882 steam ship that sank off PAB in 1904. See inside for more details.



# Life-Saving Station Restoration

As reported in our last newsletter, we have drawings and specifications prepared and ready to go out for bid for our estimated \$1.3 million restoration project. We applied for a large grant to restore the entire exterior of the station house and keeper's quarters, but, unfortunately, were not selected. To address funding issues, we've broken down the exterior restoration project into several discrete tasks that can be accomplished with smaller amounts of funding. These include: rebuilding the lookout platform and cupola, installing chimneys and staining the roofs of the two buildings; installing a ramp from the boat room; rebuilding the summer kitchen between the station house and the keeper's quarters; and rebuilding the exterior stairway to the second floor crew's dormitory. We are currently preparing a grant application requesting \$50,000 from America250MI (Michigan's committee for the U.S. Semiquincentennial, established by Governor Whitmer to commemorate the U.S.'s 250th anniversary). While we are constantly on the lookout for available grants, we also need donations from the community and supporters of the museum.

This coming year also marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. Life-Saving Service in Michigan and on the Great Lakes. We are beginning to plan a celebration of this important anniversary at our annual Heritage Festival in August 2026.



**BUILDINGS AFTER RESTORATION**



## Public Outreach Efforts Continue

This fall marked our fourth year hosting all public and rural school 6<sup>th</sup> graders in Huron County at Lighthouse Park. We were able to cover the cost of providing transportation thanks to generous grants from Greater Huron County United Way, Huron County Community Foundation and the Junior Priscilla Club of Port Austin. We also welcomed residents from Meadow Lane Assisted Living who came out for a picnic and tour of the museum.





# Steam Whistle from 1880s Sunken Steamer Blown at Maritime Museum Festival

More than 1000 visitors attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Heritage Festival at Pointe aux Barques Maritime Museum on August 2 and were they in for a treat! For the first time in 121 years, the steam whistle from the *Iron Chief* blew across the waters of Lake Huron.

The *Iron Chief* was a 228-foot long, 1,113-ton wooden schooner with a 35-foot beam. She was launched on July 12, 1881 and converted to a steam bulk freighter in 1882. On October 3, 1904, while laden with coal and towing the barge *Iron Cliff* enroute to Fort William, Ontario, one of the *Iron Chief's* steam pipes broke, damaging the propeller shaft stuffing box and causing the ship to flood. The ship *Andrew Carnegie* rescued her crew and attempted to tow the crippled ship. However, during the night, the *Iron Chief* foundered in heavy weather six miles from Pointe aux Barques. The barge made it to Alpena the next day.

In the 1970s, divers brought up several artifacts from the ship, including the ship's whistle. The whistle was flattened and encrusted with coal, both probably due to a steam explosion as the *Iron Chief* went down. In the 1980s, well-known local maritime artist and historian Robert McGreevy had the whistle restored to working order. As part of the restoration, McGreevy removed the encrusted coal and had

a friend smooth out the dents in the whistle using expanding rollers at a Ford Motor Co. metal shop. To prepare the whistle for blowing, McGreevy and Chris Roth worked with Walter Murawski and Paul Deo to connect the whistle to Murawski's 1914 Port Huron steam tractor that provided the steam to blow the whistle. When the whistle was blown for the first time on Lake Huron since 1904 at the Heritage Festival, it was a sight and sound to be remembered.



Thank you, Bob McGreevy, Chris Roth, Walt Murawski, Paul Deo and Damon Rhines for making this event happen!  
Thanks also to Joe Murawski for his help and Mike and Cindy Lynch and Matthew Murawski for excellent video footage of the whistleblowing.

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Healthy 2026

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