

The SOCIETY PAGES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TASHMOO DAYS July 20, 2013

MARK your calendars for this *Summer Saturday* and plan to be in Sans Souci for the afternoon. The Historical Society, in cooperation with Island businesses, churches and other Island organizations are launching a new Island event - **TASHMOO DAYS**. This event will also include the *First Nations Day* that was organized separately last year. TASHMOO DAYS is envisioned to replicate a portion of the experience of visiting Harsens Island and the St. Clair Flats as visitors and tourists would have over 100 years ago. Back then, visitors came by boat, primarily the Tashmoo Steamer, from Detroit on a daily basis to enjoy the attractions that existed here on the Island. Now, 100 years later they will arrive primarily by automobile.

While we cannot fully replicate the hotels or the "full Tashmoo Park experience", many of the activities that existed 100 years ago will be available. Some of the attractions planned are:

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From the President

March is here and we're looking for signs of spring . . . a couple crocus and some daffodils pushing their way out of the ground is good to see . . . it always makes me happy . . . I hope it does the same for you.

Your board is busy pushing forward on a number of fronts. The foremost is the new **Tashmoo Days Event** scheduled for July 20, 2013. Most businesses and organizations on the Island have committed to take part in the event so please mark it on your calendar. The **COMMUNITY CALENDAR** continues to be updated, so you can use this as an accurate source of information on scheduled Island activities. (Print a month and post it on your refrigerator for easy reference.) We have not made any significant progress on the **Freighter View Park Project**; it is still under deliberation at the CFSCC and Clay Township.

A reminder: The 2013 Lecture Series will kick-off on Saturday April 13 with certified PADI Divemaster, **Tony Gramer**, who has been diving since 1977. Tony is the president of Silent World Information Masters, Inc. (SWIM). His images have taken best in show and first place in photo contests across the world. This is a lecture you will not want to miss. Make your reservation early by phoning 810-748-1825, or e-mail: nlicata@comcast.net and, put this lecture on YOUR CALENDAR for April.

For those of you who responded promptly to the Annual Dues mailing, THANK YOU! The thank you is not only for responding in a timely manner, but also for your generosity. If you have not mailed in your dues, this is a reminder. We cannot carry-on without you! Please bring along a friend and invite them to be a part of The Society and the good things it brings to the Island.

Your board and executive team cannot function without your input. Any questions or comments should be sent directly to me at: president@hiscfhs.org.

*thank you,
bernard*

The Society Pages

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TASHMOO DAYS continued

- ❖ Gambling: The Lions Gaming Hall as a substitute for Tashmoo Park's gambling hall.
- ❖ Live Music Venue - all day long - with such attractions as **The Balduck Mountain Ramblers**, and **The Ourselves** group from the Bluewater Folk Society and more.
- ❖ Special Museum Exhibits on Tashmoo Park and the Steamer.
- ❖ Special Museum Exhibits on First Nations/Native American Culture.
- ❖ Lectures on: Hunting, Fishing, the Tashmoo, the Park and Steamer, etc.
- ❖ First Nations/Native American arts & crafts and perhaps singers, drummers and dancers.
- ❖ Garden Club Exhibits.
- ❖ Scheduled Square Dances (street dance).
- ❖ An organized walking tour of the most notable Victorian Homes on South Channel.
- ❖ Games for Kids and Adults...Museum tours...and more.
- ❖ Trap Shooting at the Lions Hall.

We are planning specialty food venues, a beer tent, wine tasting tent, local arts and crafts; there are rumors of a *Homemade Pie Sale* and more! You can stay tuned to updates on the event at: www.tashmoodays.com.

Put this event on your calendar for **Saturday July 20, 2013**.
See you there!

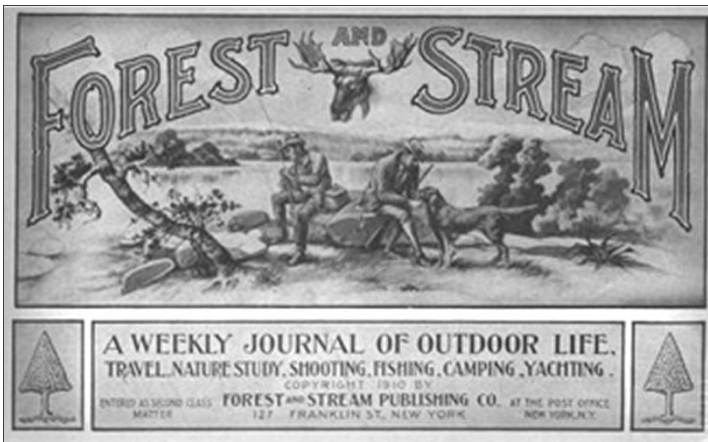
St. Patrick's Day - March 17

St. Patrick's Day or the **Feast of Saint Patrick** is a cultural and religious holiday celebrated on March 17. It is named after Saint Patrick (c. AD 385-461), the most commonly recognized of the patron saints of Ireland.

For Christians, the day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland. However, it has gradually become more of a secular celebration of Irishness and Irish culture.

The day generally involves public parades and festivals and wearing of green attire or shamrocks. Originally, the color associated with Saint Patrick was blue. Over the years the color green and its association with Saint Patrick's day grew.

Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Newfoundland and Labrador and Montserrat.



The Clubs of the St. Clair Flats by E. Hough

Editor's Note: This is Part 6 of a multi-part series originally published in Forest and Stream in August and September, 1890.

The Delta Club Joe Bedore's

THE constant passage of the big lake boats up and down the narrow ship channel keeps up more or less wash along the planked face of the "made land," and when one of the great steamers plows by there is a cross sea that has swamped many and many a careless rowboat on the channel. Even a small steam yacht sends quite a spiteful series of waves along the docks, as I noticed when Mr. Roydell came to pick me up in his little steamer. We tied the duckboat up behind the yacht, and there it stood, half out of water on the surge thrown up by the screw. These little yachts steam along very rapidly, and make the best craft for a cruise around the Flats. They are not the safest thing in the world. One went over and I believe drowned one or two persons lately on the Flats. These shallow waters have their fatalities and are not devoid of a certain romantic interest of their own.

Above the Peninsula Club is the little green cottage of Mr. C. P. Collins, and then the Gibson cottage, and then the Huff cottage, and then the Riverside Hotel, 60 x 70 ft., two stories and comfortable. Then there is the Duggan cottage, and the Jas. Wilkie cottage, of Detroit, and the Jas. Higgins cottage, of Detroit, and the cottage of Geo. Smith, of New York, and then another cottage and two cabins belonging to Capt. Freeman, and then the cottage of M Louis Benaur. I give these names and their order chiefly

from memory, but they are substantially correct. Next is the Bishop cottage, and then the Fred. Opper, Peter King, A. Kate and Kulp cottages strung along, and just beyond is the old cottage of M. Jules Soulier, and then you have the modest structure of the **DELTA CLUB**.

There was nobody at home but the hired girl when I called at the Delta Club, but I had a very pleasant visit with her, and had time to glance over the rather compact little premises. The Delta Club is a "thirteen club," having just 13 members. The house is small, with only six bedrooms, but everything is neat and handy. There are only six or eight boats. The only yacht, the *Dream*, belongs to Mr. H. H. Taylor, of the Detroit Screw Works. "You want to see Mr. Taylor, if you're after fish stories," said the handmaiden naively, "He's a great one to talk."

I did see Mr. Taylor later, and a very cheerful and obliging gentleman he proved himself. From him it was learned that the Delta Club was organized five years ago, for the purposes of a quiet fishing and boating lodge. It is made up of people who are all friends and intimates, and who delight in a pleasant summer day among the channels. The membership will probably not increase much, as the club is well satisfied now. The members are all conscientious sportsmen, but anglers rather than shooters, but observers of the law in every case. There were three men in this club formerly who used to spear bass. These men are now out.

The dates of the Delta Club are opening day June 1, closing day Oct. 1. This is a sort of nice little family club. It was named from its location on the "delta" of the St. Clair River. The Rushmere Club fancied this name before it chose its present name, and tried to buy the copyright from the Delta folks, but the little 'un said it got there first and must have the name.

In common with everybody else, the Delta people were invited by Mr. McQueen, the modest Canadian who thinks he has the Flats by the tail. Mr. Taylor says McQueen originally bought a strip along a fence of the island, in width forty feet, "more or less." Mr. McQueen interprets that to mean "more." He quit claims for anything you will give him. M. Muir, keeper of the Canada Club, paid him \$30 for 400 ft., and he promised to pay that back if he could not show title. He struck Joe Bedore, the old fisher and hunter, one of the

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quaintest characters of the Flats, and as quick as Joe learned what McQueen wanted, there was music in the air. McQueen couldn't get away quick enough.

Mr. Taylor is an ardent and successful angler, and from him were gathered some interesting details about the fish and fishing of the Flats.

"I don't think the bass fishing is what it once was," said he, "although big runs are still made. On the 4th and 5th days of October, 1889, I caught 70 black bass, running 3 or 4 lbs. in weight for the most part. So far as I heard, this was about the best catch of 1889 made among my friends. One day in August, 1888, I caught 105 white bass. We don't care much for the big-mouths, or mud bass. By casting with a frog among the rushes, I suppose a man could catch two bushels a day of them in the summer time. When the perch are running, there is no limit to the fun, such as that is. I have known a man to fill a bushel basket to the brim in a couple of hours."

"We fish bass by casting with the minnow chiefly, the fishing being done usually in from 4 or 5 to 11 or 12 ft. of water. We don't favor the spoon much, and the man who would use a **deep spoon** or **bottom troller** would be tabooed, in our club at least."



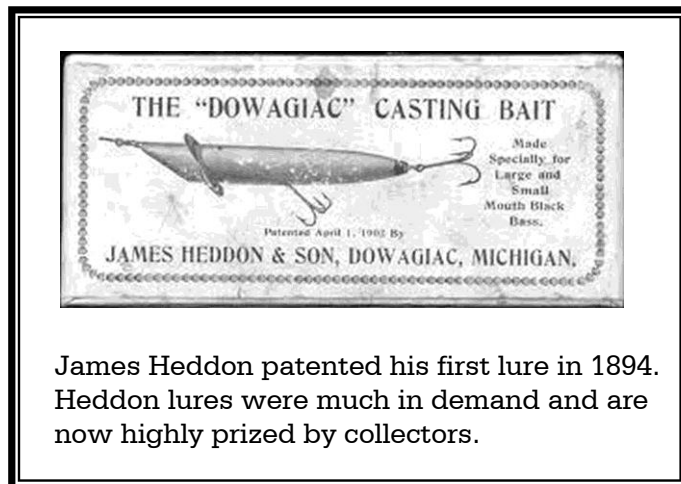
Smallmouth Bass

A bottom troller is made in this way: A heavy sinker of lead, about 2 lbs. in weight, is the foundation of it. The current is often very swift and it takes a heavy sinker. This chunk of lead bobs and thumps along, right on the bottom all the time. Above this sinker is a heavy wire, a couple of feet long, with a sort of hinge in its top, to which is joined a second length of wire, at whose top the line is made fast. At each of these hinges there is made fast, by a swivel joint, or rather a looped hinge, the leg of a long triangle of heavy wire. This triangle is thus forced to play in any direction, and it can be spun around and around the wire that connects the sinker to the line. The legs of the triangle are of stiff wire, and its apex

is bent into a loop, into which is tied what may be called the trolling line proper. This trolling line is only about 10ft., and at the end of it is a spoon. Of course you can see that the spoon plays along behind the bumper, only a little way above the bottom, and right along where the bass lie. It works very smoothly and freely as the boat is pulled along, and it has been found to be an exceedingly deadly lure for small-mouthed bass. Sportsmen will not use it. Market fishers and fish hogs do.

I suppose you know what a **chug** is? That is a French fisherman device, and although very rough it is very killing. A chug is, roughly speaking, a sort of block of wood, weighted with lead and bristling with hooks. It has a long handle, and is jerked forward and upward along near the bottom. It is thought that the fish follow it in its movements: at any rate, a great many of them are struck by the hooks and thus yanked into the boat. I do not know that this is especially destructive to bass, but it is one of the methods of the French fishers. When they bring in fish you will always hear them asked whether they got them with the chug or the spear.

Another contrivance akin to the chug is the **lead minnow**. This is made of an alloy of tin and lead, and is always kept very bright. It is shaped roughly like a fish and has two or three hooks projecting from it. It is so hung on the line that when jerked up sharply it darts a little at an angle. It being bright the fish dart at it, and when one is felt to touch it, a sharp jerk on the line usually snags him.



James Heddon patented his first lure in 1894. Heddon lures were much in demand and are now highly prized by collectors.

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Another form of the lead minnow is a sort of bright lead squid, with two or three hooks triangled at the bottom of it. It is bobbed up and down in the deep water, and snags the fish that run over it to watch it in fish curiosity. These last two devices are especially killing on the wall-eyed pike. The Frenchmen know how to use them. I need not say that the members of the Delta Club do not. We just do good, plain fishing, mostly with the short rod and the minnow. You may say that the Delta Club is perfectly happy and comfortable, that it has lots of fun, and that it don't want any fun that isn't gentlemanly and sportsmanlike, beyond a question.

But meantime our narrow tongue of land is still curving on up along the Ship channel, and we have still a few more choice cottages and one or two celebrities to mention. Reference has been made to Joe Bedore. Joe runs the best and most practical duck shooting box on the Flats in all probability, and gets a great deal of the "fish supper trade" of the Detroit boats. He is a popular old character, pretty well understood, but pretty well liked. In sheer oddity "he is one of the most delightful features of the Flats; and he who leaves that region without seeing Joe Bedore has missed half his trip.

Joe is a man of fifty or sixty years of age. He is about as broad as he is long and good-natured clear through. His dress consists of a hat, a shirt, a pair of overalls and a pair of boots. His speech is hard for an American to understand, being a mixture of French patois and broken English. Joe is an outgrowth of the Flats. Did we say he was sixty years old? He is older. He has been there ever since the Flats were, and what he does not know about them never began to happen. Doubtless he is as good a guide as any that can be had in the region. He has quite a good little sportsmen's hotel, well supplied with boats, decoys, etc. His dock is just across the waterway from the Delta Club. Just across the channel from his house Joe will point out to you a green tree or two on the other bank, and tell you that he lived there for years and had built him up a home there with his wife and children, when the Canada Club came along and evicted him.

Joe's reputation on the Flats is hardly that which Caesar desired for his wife, but I vow I couldn't talk with the good-natured old fellow and believe him as bad as they try to make him out. Joe admits that he has bought speared bass off the

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Joe Bedore's Hotel



Joe Bedore's Hotel was a stand out from all the other hotels of his time. Joe catered to the outdoorsman. He had the best stories and always knew where to find the biggest fish and plumpest ducks. Even today, most islanders have heard of Joe Bedore.



Indians, at one time eight barrels speared in one day, which he sent to Detroit market; but he says he did no more than the rich club men do right along, and he deprecates all such work, for he knows the fish supply is decreasing.

The end of the Little Bassett Channel, one of the windier, wandering, deep creeks or channels that go meandering through the wilderness of rice across the river, through the alleged preserves of the Canada Club, lies not far from Joe's house, across the channel. As we talked of this, I asked Joe where and at what time the best bass fishing was to be found on the Flats. He replied that the earliest fishing was usually on the Horseshoe Bay, about four miles distant from the "made land" where we were. Next came the East Ground, about three miles distant, east of the piers, in Canada; then Johnson's Channel—or "The Johnson," as it is commonly called—about ten miles; the "Any Carty," distant about ten miles; Mitchell's Bay, twelve miles; the Big Bassett, two to four miles; the South Channels and Little Bassett, one to two miles; the last fishing of the season he was prone to expect on the lower end of the pier, and here some big bass were taken.

Back of Joe's house and the Delta Club is a stretch of marsh, over which it is a wide look to Hersen's island. In the shallow water back of this marsh the bass were spawning at that date (May 31). Soon they would begin to run and would commence biting.

Joe showed me the nests of two dusky ducks (black mallards), in the marsh just back of his boat house, not 100 yds. away. He insists on an observance of the game laws among his guests, and has kept these ducks safe all the spring. This back marsh is good shooting ground.

The finest redhead decoys I ever saw in my life were here at Joe Bedore's. He explained to me that there was only one man in the country who could shape these decoys right. This man boards with Joe during the winter, and they put in the evenings working at the decoys, Joe doing the rough work and the artist furnishing the higher skill. The decoys were beauties. Joe explained to me that a redhead decoy, to be lifelike, must have the top of the head just about on a line with the top of the back, not higher. The back is humped up very high and sharp, and the curve of the back

runs right down behind into the water, not showing any tail at all. I guess he's right about that. These decoys were nicely painted, the head being treated with a bronze powder which is simply a stroke of genius. The eyes are glass. All these decoys are hollow and flat-bottomed. Joe told me that no man could make wages by working at these decoys, and that the only way he got them was by the night work in winter time. There was an individuality about these birds which made me want one for a specimen, and Joe promised to finish one up and send it to me; but he never did, I could not buy any from him.

I would rather sit and talk to a man like old Joe Bedore than do anything else; but he, too, had to be left behind. I can't believe all the hard things they say about Joe's being in league with the half-breeds and the Indian fish-stealer, or about his shooting ducks before the season opens. It may be because everybody along the Flats tries to jump on Joe that I don't feel disposed to jump on him myself. I believe he is as good as the average up there. I would rather jump on the Canada Club, and I am due to do that pretty soon now. It reads English, and can take care of itself.

For a little distance above Joe Bedore's there is a crude beginning at land-making, and then the marsh sweeps up, with about the nearest approach to a natural river bank to be seen for a long way down. Beyond the marsh is the little cottage of Louis Gorman, and then the goodish small cottage of Dr. Woodward. Then there is some more marsh, and then the cabin of John Witmer. Right on the point is a neat cottage belonging to Mr. Cromharn.

We have now come about to the end of our journey. We are directly at the great sweep of the ship channel known as the "Southeast Bend." Here, roughly speaking, ends the tongue of land to which our main interest is confined, and we shall not go any further up the river. To the left, above us, we can see the green of Hersen's island; to the right the timber of Walpole Island. There are hotels up there still further, and at Grande Pointe there are cottages up and perhaps a club or so going in. They are making a summer resort there. But we shall have to draw the line somewhere this side of Lake Superior. ■



PO Box 44
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Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society 2013 Calendar of Events

subject to change

Members are welcome to attend any Board / Membership Meeting to keep apprised of Society activities and to bring issues before the Board.

Museum Hours

Jan, Feb, March - closed - open by appointment

April, May - Saturday - 10 AM - 3 PM

June, July, Aug, Sept - Saturday 10 AM - 3 PM and Sunday Noon - 4 PM

Oct, Nov, Dec - closed - open by appointment and for Christmas Sale (Dec)

March

30th - Saturday - 11:30 AM - Board / Membership Meeting (Museum)

April

13th - Saturday - 3 to 5 PM - Lecture Series I (Lions Hall) with **Tony Gramer**

May

11th - Saturday - 11:30 AM - Board / Membership Meeting (Lions Hall)

11th - Saturday - 3 to 5 PM - Lecture Series II (Lions Hall)

25th - 27th - Saturday, Sunday, Monday – 11am – 4pm Memorial Day Open House (Museum)