



*Message from the President . . .*

Happy September!

Labor Day Weekend was spectacular this year!! The weather was perfect for the Peter Henkel Memorial Classic Boat Parade, the Street Parade, the Turkey Shoot, family gatherings and a great end the season for many. A weekend often bittersweet as we celebrate the end of summer with so many wonderful events, while the transition into school schedules, changing weather, and preparing or closing summer cottages begin. This is especially true for me personally, as I know the grandkids certainly won't be around the cottage as much as they begin school and fall sports, but . . . the boats, minnow nets, fishing poles, kayaks, fire pit, and everything else they love will all be waiting for next summer!

The museum also begins its transition to fall. We will be open a couple weekends in September with our regular hours. After September, the museum will only be open for special events or by appointment. But remember our special events . . . the Pie Sale, Edmund Fitzgerald Memorial and the Cookie Walk. Those events have become very popular and are always well attended, which we appreciate very much!

To help make the Pie Sale a continued success, we're always looking for bakers willing to donate pies . . . either sweet or savory!! Please consider donating and of course stop by and get a pie!

Remember, the museum opens for special groups even after we close for the season. If you have a request to see the museum, contact us through the website.

As always, thank you for your support!

*Joyce*

*Joyce Hassen, President*



JOIN US FOR OUR  
ANNUAL PIE SALE

Saturday, October 4  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

*Sweet and Savory Pies!*

**Bakers Needed** - Please drop off your pie at the Museum between 9:00 and 9:45 AM

**Buyers Wanted** - Come early to pick up your favorite pie to enjoy with family and friends.

# Preserving Your History

We encourage, and would like to assist, islanders in getting their old photos, slides, negatives, and historical documents into digital format to preserve and/or display them. In addition, the Harsens Island Historical Society would like to collect digital copies of historical photos and documents of the island for the museum's collection.

You can bring photos, slides, negatives, or historical documents to the Museum to have them scanned and the digital copy put on a USB flash drive to take home along with the documents you brought for scanning. Some photos or documents may be of historic interest, and with the owner's permission, a digital copy would be retained by the Harsens Island Historical Society for the museum's collection.

The Harsens Island History Society is also looking for 8 mm or super 8 mm home movies taken on the island prior to 1960 for segments to be digitized and place in the archives. There would be **no fee for members**, but non-members would be asked to make a small donation.

You can make an appointment for scanning with Bob Williams at 248-388-0465 or email him at xharpspah@aol.com.



Harsens Island Fire Hall Dedication in 1938

SAVE THE DATES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS  
**Historical Society Museum**

Invites you to the Edmund Fitzgerald Remembrance

**SUNDAY**  
**NOVEMBER 09**  
**3:00 PM**



There will be a brief history of the Great Lakes most famous ship followed by a sounding of Michigan's only museum rooftop freighter horn.

Live Entertainment by "ON THE BORDER" featuring Gordon Lightfoot's haunting ballad "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald"

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**Free Admission!** | Donations to the HI Historical Society are appreciated  
*Serving Mulled Wine, Chili, Corn Bread, Hot Dogs and Desserts*

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Harsens Island Historical Museum  
3058 South Channel, Harsens Island, MI

HARSENS ISLAND ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY | BUILDING THE Future PRESERVING Our PAST

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS  
**Historical Society Museum**

**Fundraiser**



**COOKIE WALK 2025**

**Saturday, December 6**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

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**Wanted: Bakers and Buyers**

Please drop off cookies between 9:00 AM and 9:45 AM  
For more information contact: Chris Knight (586) 242-4560

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Harsens Island Historical Museum  
3058 South Channel, Harsens Island, MI

HARSENS ISLAND ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY | BUILDING THE Future PRESERVING Our PAST

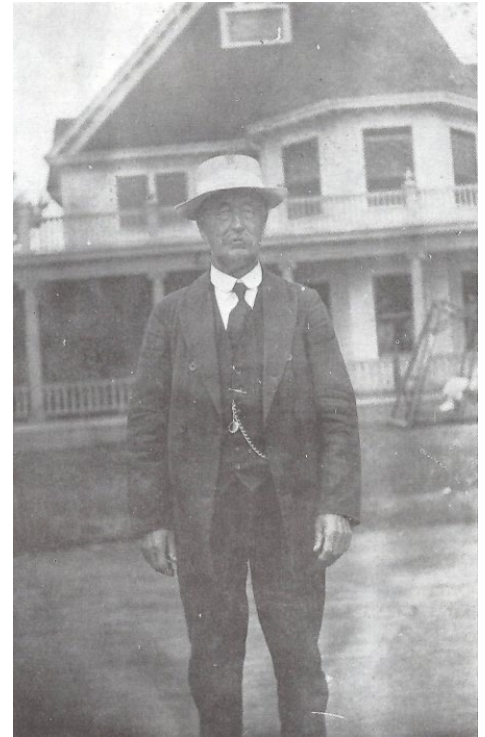
## In Remembrance of an Old Pioneer

Article from *The Flats Golden Era* (Volume II) by Michael M. Dixon

The passing of Wm. Lacroix at his home at San Souci, Harsens Island, Monday evening, May 1, 1922, at the age of 75 years and 5 months, marked the closing of the life of a man who took his part in life so well that his deeds and memory will continue to live on indefinitely.

Mr. LaCroix was one of the oldest pioneers on the St. Clair River. He was born in Cottrellville, St. Clair Co., Michigan, November 25, 1846, moving with his parents, at the age of two years to Fair Haven, thence to Algonac and later to Harsens Island. At the age of 16 years, he hired men and entered business for himself. He married Miss Annie Broussoe, of Algonac, in March 1865. He later took up sailing and in one instance in this capacity, was given high praise for commanding his ship in a terrific storm and saving the lives of all the crew.

He then secured contracts from the government and helped to build the original U.S. ship canal. He helped to put up a good deal of our beautiful St. Clair Flats—building docks and sheet piling, including the Old Club—the first club house on the Flats. He piled and filled and beautified everywhere and sought always to make the world better for his fellow workers. He built the Maple Leaf, Tashmoo, White Star Line, Algonac and San Souci docks—the latter being his own and having the finest pavilion along the river. His latest achievement was the building of the dock at Russell's Island for the Hannan Real Estate Co., Detroit.



When a young man he met with an accident which rendered him an invalid for seven years, and from which he always suffered. But his reputable name and honorable dealings brought him to the fore again and he entered the timber business which gained him a wide reputation from Port Huron to Detroit.

Mr. LaCroix has spent the last 26 years continuously on Harsens Island and has done a great deal through his efforts and money to make the island what it is today, a thriving summer resort and a profitable farm land by filling in and furthering good roads, etc. He established the first and only P.O. service on the island and to the Flats. Among our research we find no name more prominent than that of Wm. LaCroix. He was a good Christian man and lived devotedly to the Catholic faith. From the sentiments expressed by his many friends, we know of no one more deserving of the success that crowned his efforts. His one great ambition in life was to have a clean record in dealing with men as evidence of this accomplishment we have but to refer to his employers and employees.

His widow and 6 of 12 children survive him; Mrs. M.E. Lowe, of Seattle, Wash.; Mr. P. LaCroix and Mrs. A. Krause, San Souci; Mrs. J. Langel, Warren; Mr. Wm. Lacroix Jr. Mt. Clemens and Mr. Arthur LaCroix, Algonac, two brothers, Capt. Peter LaCroix, Port Huron, and Henry Lacroix, St. Clair; three sisters, Mrs. C. Ames and Mrs. A. Stewart, Algonac, and Mrs. E. Parker, Toledo; also 16 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held from St. Catherine's Catholic Church, Algonac, Monday morning at 9:30 o'clock. The heirs of Captain LaCroix are well represented in the area today, particularly through his son Peter. Thelma Baker and Esther Earl are Peter's

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*Continued from page 3 . . . Remembrance*

daughters and Norman, retired chief engineer of the Columbia Steamship Line, who returns every summer for long visits, is his son.



Another area landmark reminiscent of the LaCroix presence is the former Woods Hotel. This was originally built as the home for Elizabeth LaCroix Scott and her family. Mrs. Emma Woods (later known as Emma German) purchased the home and opened the Woods Hotel. Jack and Betty Baker bought the property in the 1950s and raised the fifth generation of LaCroix's at Sans Souci.



## The Middle Channel

Part of an Article from *The Flats Golden Era (Volume II)* by Michael M. Dixon

Many have heard about the Mervue Club, the Rushmere Club, and the Grande Pointe Hotel. But few have heard about these short-lived hotels that were located on the Middle Channel.

### McDonald's Island and Cottage Hotel

Walter and Edward McDonald settled on their island in 1895 and erected a two-story home, large barn and ice house. Ditching and dredging, they filled land, planted shade and fruit trees and sheet pile. Five years later, they built their second two-story home on the premises and a few years later added another residence and Walter opened McDonald's Cottage Hotel.



### Green Island Hotel

Nicholas Savage took possession of a portion of what is now known as Green Island in 1897, claiming 560 feet of frontage across from Winding Highway. A 28-foot cut was dredged around his Green Island. There he built a two-story residence, ice house, boat house, root house and made other small improvements. Sometime after 1901, he added a two-story hotel building, a two-story boat house, and a large barn and a landing.

In 1907, the hotel was purchased by William G. and Kate Butler, but Nicholas and Rhoda Savage were again in control of the property in 1909. Sometime after that the hotel faded from the scene.



# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2025

Date	Day	Time	Event
September 20	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
October 4	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Annual Pie Sale
October 18	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
November 9	Sunday	3:00 PM	Remembrance Edmund Fitzgerald
November 15	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Planning Meeting via Zoom
December 6	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk
December 20	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom

## Museum Hours

Summer Schedule (June, July, August)
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (September through April)
Closed but Open by appointment





A publication of the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 44  
Harsens Island MI 48028

**Museum Address:**

3058 S. Channel Dr.

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

**HISCFHS Board of Directors 2025**

Chairman of the Board

**Bob Williams**

President

**Joyce Hassen**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**Chris Knight**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

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**Corinne Trexler**

Directors

**Terry Wiggins**

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**Nancy Bonacquisti**

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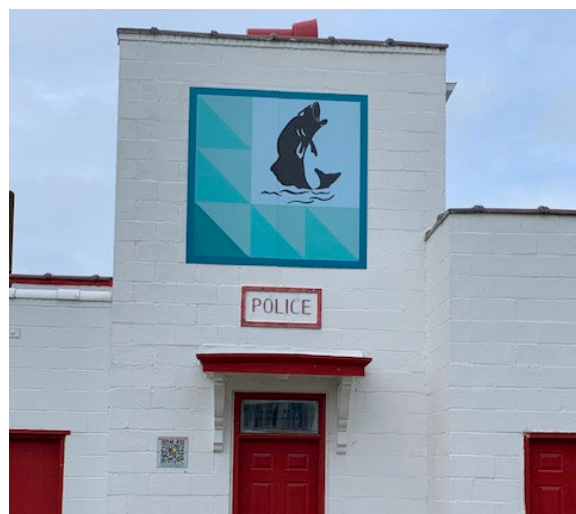
The historical society is looking to add to its collection. We accept donations of artifacts, photos, documents, and stories related to the Island and surrounding area. If you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, we can help you capture your memories for future generations.

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

**Harsens Island Historical Society**

The Harsens Island St. Clair Flats History Society has a quilt block on the building and a QR code is mounted next to the side door. Using the camera app on your phone, scan the code and it will show the link to the Historical Museum page in the [Quilt Trail](#) site.

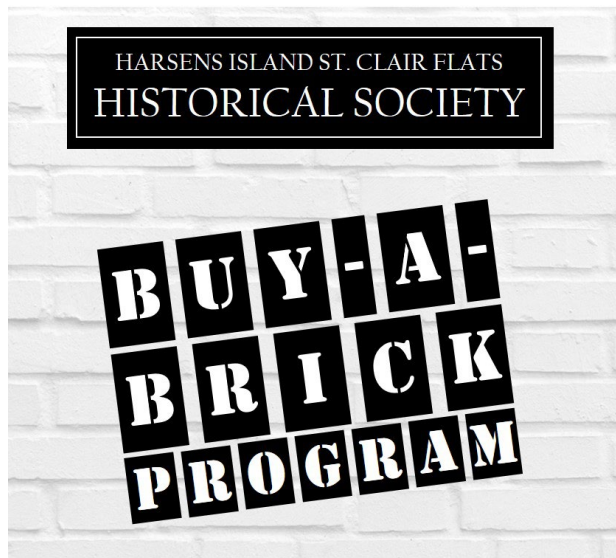
The [Historical Society of Michigan](#) published their 2024 Winter Issue of the Chronicle. The new Harsens Island Historical Society Quilt Block was mentioned in the magazine.



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

The past three years we celebrated the completion of several renovation projects; in 2020 the Clayton Evans Room Addition, in 2021 the Karen and Drew Peslar Library and in 2022 the large exhibit space at the entrance to the museum named the Nancy Boulton / Gary Grout Room.

To help maintain the museum's infrastructure and 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 below.**





PO Box 44  
 Harsens Island  
 MI 48028  
 www.harsensislandhistory.org

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2026

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

Primary Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Member No. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

Additional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Renewal Dues:

- Individual (1 Member Only) \$20.00
- Family (1-2 Adults + Children < 18) \$30.00
- Business \$50.00

Lifetime Dues:

- Lifetime Individual \$300.00
- Lifetime Family \$500.00

Building Donation / Roof: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(\* The necessary roof replacement in 2024 has left reserve funds low) 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: **Harsens Island Historical Society.**

Mail to: Harsens Island St. Clair Historical Society, P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

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

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

I would be interested in volunteering as a museum host this summer (greeting visitors, answer questions, if possible, & record museum shop sales).