



*Message from the President . . .*

Happy May and beginning of summer!

So far this spring, the weather has provided some big swings in temperatures from 80° to 58° daytime high temperatures, with a few overnight frost and freeze warnings thrown in . . . and don't forget the damaging storms. Despite the weather and its challenges, the summer season has begun with more summer cottages being opened, boats being put in the water, flowers in bloom, and baby geese everywhere!

The challenging weather has proved to be a challenge for the museum as well. As I mentioned last month, the winter was not kind to the roof on the old part of the building, with past repairs not surviving the snow / rain and freezing / thawing. The leaks have gotten worse, which has forced us to move forward with replacing the roof on the original building immediately (the roof on the new addition is fine). The Board would have preferred to wait until 2025 to replace the roof after some dedicated fund raising but risking further damage to the building's interior and the displays, waiting was simply not an option. Construction on the roof replacement is underway.

The historical society remains financially strong even with our financial reserves lower than they have been in recent years due to this expenditure. We don't have a single large fundraising event planned for this year, but we will be asking for your support and donations at our speaker and other events. There will also be special donation boxes at the museum dedicated to the roof replacement.

A very special thank you to those of you who have already contributed both time and money to the roof project so far!!

As always, thank you for your support!

*Joyce*

*Joyce Hassen, President*

**HISTORICAL MUSEUM HOST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

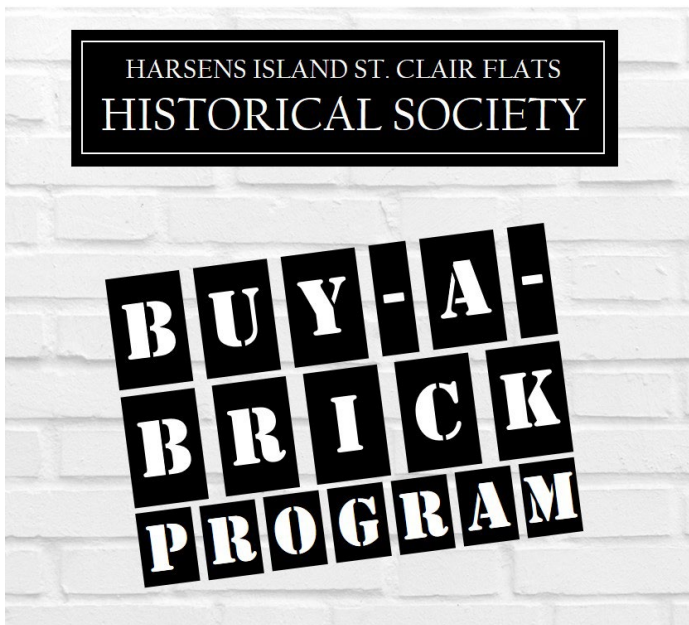
The Harsens Island Historical Museum will reopen Memorial Day weekend. We are open every weekend throughout the summer, Saturdays from 10-3, and Sundays from Noon – 4pm. We are in need of volunteers to work as hosts this summer to maintain these hours. If you would like to volunteer for two or three 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 Ellen Probst at 772-766-2912.

## 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 at the end of this newsletter.**

**\*\* SAVE THE DATE \*\***

**June 8 at 11:00 AM at the Harsens Island Historical Museum**

We kick off our 2024 Speaker Series with Joel Stone, curator emeritus with the Detroit Historical Society. He will share the story of the Detroit River through the people who preserved it for us with paint, brush, and pencil. Prior to the advent of photography, painters and illustrators captured the sailors, vessels and waterfronts of Detroit and Windsor. Not only did each artist create a historic record representing their era's aesthetic, but each artist represents an individual life and career that reflect the town they lived in.

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

**2024 SPEAKER SERIES**

**JOEL STONE**  
*presents*

**“Water Colors  
Artists View the  
Detroit River”**

Joel tells the story of how painters and illustrators captured the sailors, vessels and waterfronts of the Detroit and Windsor.



*Join us*

**SATURDAY, JUNE 8**  
**11:00 AM**

*At the Harsens Island Museum*  
*Free Refreshments*

*Suggested donation: **Ten Dollars***

Joel Stone is a native Detroiter, a life-long sailor, and former senior curator at the Detroit Historical Society and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

Joel is the immediate past president of the Association for Great Lakes Maritime History, and a current board member of the Great Lakes Maritime Institute. In 2023, he was honored as “Great Lakes Maritime Historian of the Year” by the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, a group founded in 1944.

His writing focuses on North American frontier and transportation cultures and includes “Floating Palaces of the Great Lakes” (University of Michigan Press, 2015) and “Interpreting Maritime History at Museums and Historic Sites” (Rowman



*Tashmoo Park Timeline*

The Tashmoo Park Timeline by Michele Komar is a chronological compilation of articles, booklets and photos that are mainly about Tashmoo Park, the White Star Line and its properties, people, and boats. Originally estimated to be 500 pages, it turned into 1,916 pages comprised of 4 volumes with thousands of articles and would take 2 ½ years from start to finish.

There are countless articles from the Detroit Free Press and The Times Herald in this compilation. I thought you might be interested in reading some of these articles from the year 1924 . . . 100 years ago!

July 9, 1924 – *The Times Herald (Port Huron)* - Page 14

**White Star Man Denies Smallpox at Tashmoo Park**

Sarnia, July 9—N. F. MacLean, general passenger agent of the White Star Line, at Detroit, was in the city Tuesday to deny stories which have been circulated stating that an outbreak of smallpox had been discovered at Tashmoo Park, the well-known St. Clair River summer resort.

Mr. McLean said there no foundation for the stories.

July 20, 1924 – *Detroit Free Press* - Page 11

**EXCURSION BOATS TO HAVE BUSY WEEK**

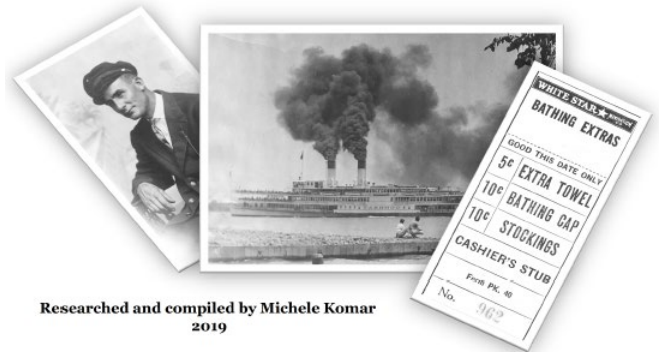
Bay excursion steamers of the White Star line operating between Detroit, Port Huron and Toledo and Tashmoo and Sugar Island parks will carry a large number of important excursions out of Detroit during the coming week.

On Tuesday, July 22, St. Anthony's church will give an excursion to Tashmoo Park; Wednesday the joint Lutheran churches will have their outing at Tashmoo Park; Thursday the Gallic league, Owl club of Grosse Pointe and the Nutty Nut club will spend the day at Tashmoo Park, and Saturday the German Beneficial association will give its annual excursion to Tashmoo Park.

# Tashmoo Park Timeline

## 1896 – 1950

Harsens Island, Michigan



Researched and compiled by Michele Komar  
2019

July 13, 1924 – *Detroit Free Press* - Page 26

**BLACK BASS AT FLATS ARE EASILY CAUGHT**

Neil F. MacLean, general passenger agent of the White Star Line, reports that the black bass fishing at St. Clair Flats is unusually good this season, and that fishermen, amateur and professional, have little difficulty in securing their quota. Mr. Maclean went to the Flats Thursday with the Gratiot Avenue Business Men's association, who spent the day at Tashmoo Park. Over 2,160 businessmen and their families made up the party headed by Frank Dechold, president of the association.

*continued on page 5 . . .*

*continued from page 4 . . . Tashmoo Timeline*

July 20, 1924 – *Detroit Free Press*

### Golf at Flats' Will Have Fine Water Hazzard

#### Old Club Members reported to Be Clearing Ground for 9-Hole Course

The greatest water-hazard gold course in North American will shortly be built, if rumors at St. Clair Flats are borne out. Members of the Old club are having buildings cleared away and filling up canals to make a nine-hole golf course.

Difficulties that attend the undertaking may be realized by golfers when they consider that the summer hotels, clubs and cottages that line the main ship channel are perched upon spiles out in the middle of the broad expanse of Lake St. Clair, and that hardly any of them have a patch of lawn big enough to accommodate half a dozen chairs.

That this course will have fine water hazards goes without saying. Part of Lake St. Clair will loom up as a formidable hazard "to trap the luckless balls that go sailing into the blue-sliced or cut. It may be necessary to equip the caddy boys with diving suits.

This latest step marks the passing of the Venice of America as it was a generation ago, when Joe Bedore was king of the domain. The lake then drowsed in the sunshine, and the only recreation for the restless ones who did not know how to loaf was to either take a motorboat ride or fish in some shady nook, and the fishing was then and still is good. No haven in the old days was more secluded than that Flats, or more enjoyed.

But a better Venice of America is taking the place of the old, in the opinion of N. F. MacLean, general passenger agent of the White Star line. One may now have restfulness and quiet and yet not be deprived of convenience, he believes.

Instead of dining by the smoky light of a kerosene lamp, you now have electricity. There is telephone service and the radio to catch whatever comes out of the invisible air.

July 22, 1924 – *Detroit Free Press* - Page 24

## DAILY EXCURSIONS

**Port Huron,  
Tashmoo  
Park,  
The Flats**

Str. Tashmoo, 9:15 a. m.  
Str. Owana, 2:30 p. m.



**Sugar  
Island  
and  
Toledo**

Str. Greyhound, 9 a. m.  
City of Toledo, 4 p. m.

**Port Huron, Tashmoo Park**

St. Clair Flats, Algonac and river ports. Str. Tashmoo leaves 9:15 a. m.; Str. Owana, 2:30 p. m. Finzel's Orchestra for dancing aboard and at the park. Passengers taking 2:30 boat can go as far as Tashmoo Park or Grande Pointe and return on Str. Tashmoo. Arrive back 8:40 p. m. Fares: Port Huron and return, \$2; Flats and Tashmoo Park, week days 80c, Sundays \$1.25; Algonac, \$1.30 R. T.

**The Bass Fishing at St. Clair Flats is Wonderful This Year!**

**Sugar Island and Toledo**

Str. Greyhound, 9 a. m.; Str. City of Toledo, 4 p. m.; Str. Owana every Sunday at 1:30 p. m. for Sugar Island. Fares: Sugar Island and return, week days 50c. Sundays 75c; Toledo, \$1 (one way), \$1.50 (Unl. R. T.).

The Right to Refuse Anyone Admission to the Parks and on Steamers, is Reserved.

Griswold St. Wharf
**WHITE STAR LINE**
City Time

July 29, 1924 – *Detroit Free Press* - Page 12

### 2 STEAMERS TO CARRY GROCERS TO TASHMOO

More than 3,000 persons are expected to attend the thirty-second annual excursion of the Detroit Retail Grocers' association to Tashmoo Park, Wednesday. Two steamers will carry the crowds to the up-river resort from the Griswold Street wharf of the White Star line. The first boat leave at 9:15 a. m., and the second shortly after. A long list of field sports has been arranged. The organization's yearbook containing 224 pages, including a program of events, will be distributed on the boats.



### The Memoirs of Aura P. Stewart

Reminiscences of the early 1800's in St. Clair County including Harsens Island and Clay Township. These memoirs include stories of early pioneers of St. Clair County and some of their adventures during the war of 1812. Written in 1876 and published in the Marine City Gazette, The Pioneer Society Minutes, and the History of St. Clair County by A.T. Andreas & Co. 1883

In previous newsletters, we printed a portion of Aura Stewart's memoirs as originally published in "The History of St. Clair County by A.T. Andreas & Co. 1883." Below are more of his reminiscences from the early 1800's.

After a visit of two weeks, my father returned to Michigan, and at the proper time, went up to the Thames, and himself, his brother and five hired men entered the harvest field, and were progressing finely in securing the grain. At this time Tecumseh was, with a band of his Indian warriors, stationed a few miles above where my father was at work with his men. Previous to this, war had broken out between England and the United States; and my father had consulted Esquire Jacobs about his remaining in Canada long enough to secure his grain, and settle some other business matters, and was informed that he could; and as his office was civil and military, he would protect him. Esquire Jacobs was a very prominent and influential man, and under his protection my father felt safe. But some envious and loyal person had informed Tecumseh that seven Americans were at work in a field some distance below and urged their capture. Tecumseh's feelings being hostile to all Americans, he sent sixteen of his band, all mounted on horses, to take my father and his men prisoners; but fortunately, a friend of my father's, on learning that Tecumseh was about to send a band of his warriors, mounted his horse and ran him to the field where my father was at work, and gave timely notice. The messenger told my father that he must leave the field instantly or he would be prisoner within ten minutes. My father expressed a wish to go to the other side of the field to get his coat, as it contained his pocketbook, papers, and all of his money; but his friend insisted that it would not be safe to do so, and he and his men rushed to the river, jumped into a canoe and rowed down as fast as possible for about a mile, when my father jumped on shore at his boarding house to get his clothes. He had just entered the house when the band of Indians came up; on seeing them, the lady of the house requested my father to jump down into the cellar, which he thought not safe to do, if the house was searched; he jumped through the window and entered the harvest field where her husband was at work, and went to work with the other men. The Indians were told that there were seven men in the field, and when they saw the six men in the canoe, they hesitated, giving them time to cross the river and enter the woods. They found lodgings that night at a French house near the mouth of the Thames, and the next day took the road leading to the River St. Clair, and crossing over at Harsen's Island, hired a friendly Indian to take them across to Clinton River, when they followed the road bordering Lake St. Clair and so safely reached Detroit.

My father, being separated from his comrades, found many kind and sympathizing friends. He was furnished with a wallet filled with provisions, and a boy by the name of Putnam gave him a large cavalry pistol with powder and ball. With these supplies, my father entered the woods, traveling on a line with the road. It was late in the afternoon when my father entered the woods, and when night came, he was forced to climb a small tree to protect him from the wolves, who came so near he could hear them snap their teeth. At the dawn of day, the wolves left, and father descended from the tree, took the road, which he safely traveled, reached Windsor, crossed the river, and entered the city of Detroit. It was a happy greeting when the seven men met in Detroit; his companions supposed that father had been taken prisoner.



Tecumseh - Source:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tecumseh>

# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2024

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

Date	Day	Time	Event
May 18	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
May 25	Saturday	TBD	Museum Opens
June 15	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
June 8	Saturday	11:00 AM	Special Event – Joel Stone The History of the Detroit River through Paintings
July 20	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
July 20	Saturday	11:00 AM	Special Event – Bob Williams History of Harsens Island
August 17	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
August 17	Saturday	TBD	Annual Membership Meeting
August	TBD	TBD	Special Event –Daniel Harrison
August 31	Saturday	11:00 AM	Labor Day Parade
September 21	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
October 5	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Annual Pie Sale
October 19	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
November 16	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Planning Meeting via Zoom
November 10	Sunday	TBD	Remembrance Edmund Fitzgerald
December 7	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk
December 21	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom



## Museum Hours

Summer Schedule (June, July, August, September)
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (October 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 2024**

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**Terry Wiggins**

**Sue Wrobel**

**Rebecca Verschave**



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

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







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

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2024

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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(\* Original Building Roof)

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_