



volume 15 / number 5

July 2024

Message from the President . . .

Happy Fourth of July

It's always a bit different with July 4th in the middle of the week, depending on schedules it's a long weekend on either side of the holiday, the entire week off, or simply a day off in the middle of the week . . . either option, it's a time to celebrate. It will be a bit quieter at my cottage as most are taking advantage of summer vacation schedules and heading out to explore other areas of the country. But I'll enjoy those not traveling being around for BBQs, boating, swimming, etc. etc. etc.

Speaking of schedules, don't forget that Bob Williams will be presenting the History of Harsens Island on July 20th at the museum. It's a very informative and fun presentation, please join us.

The museum continues to be a popular spot to visit. If you have a group or family that wants to visit the museum off hours, please contact one of our Board members to make an appointment. We often will open the museum mid-week for special groups. In early June we hosted several classes of second graders from Algonac schools over 2 days. They truly had a great time, and Ellen Probst did a great job of hosting. Thanks, Ellen!

As always, thank you for your support!

Joyce

Joyce Hassen, President

Speaker Joel Stone at the Harsens Island Museum

On June 8, the museum hosted Joel Stone, a native Detroit, a life-long sailor, and former senior curator at the Detroit Historical Society and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

Joel presented "Water Colors: Artists View the Detroit River". He walked us through how artists depicted the Detroit River over time. We saw common themes on what landmarks were prevalent for various artists across many decades.

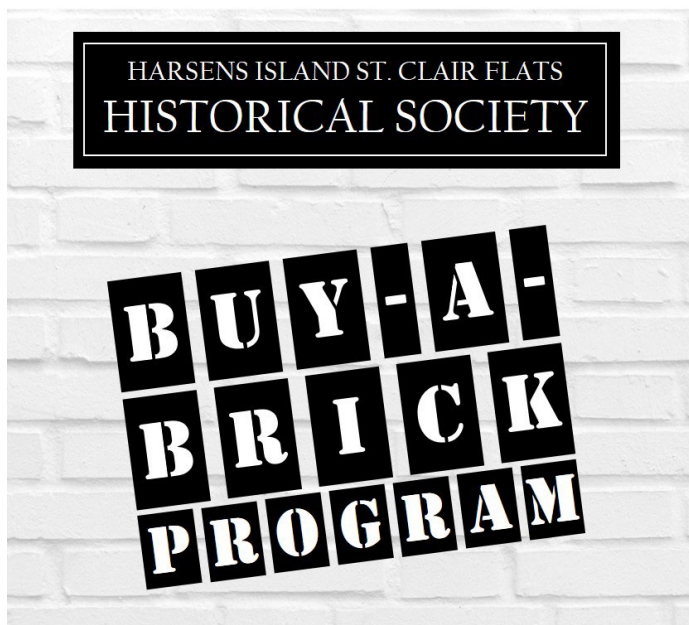
Thank you, Joel! – We learned a lot.



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.

BUY-A-BRICK Order Form is included at the end of this newsletter.

Join us on

July 20 at 11:00 AM at the Harsens Island Historical Museum

So . . . you think you know the history of Harsens Island?

Bob Williams will be presenting a History of Harsens Island. Bob will take us on a journey through history. From the creation of Harsens Island 12,000 year ago to today, where he showcases some of the people, places, and businesses that make the Island special.



HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS - Historical Society Museum

2024 SPEAKER SERIES

BOB WILLIAMS

presents . . . The History of Harsens Island

SATURDAY, JULY 20

11:00 AM

*Free Refreshments || Suggested donation: **Ten Dollars***

HISTORICAL MUSEUM HOST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Harsens Island Historical Museum opened for the season on Memorial Day weekend. We are open every weekend throughout the summer, Saturdays from 10-3, and Sundays from Noon – 4pm. We need 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!

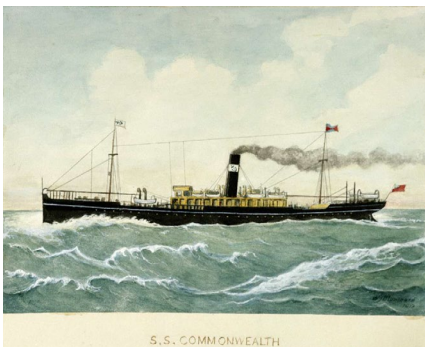
If you are interested in volunteering, or would like more information, please contact Corinne Trexler at 313-530-9173, or Ellen Probst at 772-766-2912.

THE QUEEN LIVES ON by "The Tashmoo Kid" (J. Michael O'Brien)

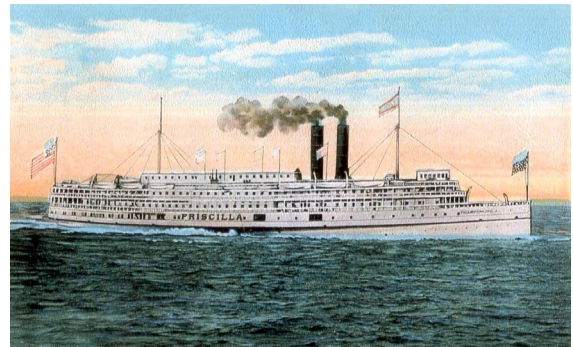
Article from *The Delta News*, April 3, 1951

On June 23rd of this year, the waters of the St. Clair River were disturbed by the presence of the veteran excursion steamer, PUT-IN-BAY. Aboard the vessel, as guests of the management, were some 600 members of several historical societies, prominent among there were 40 members and executive officers of the Steamship Historical Society of America Inc. The members of the afore-mentioned society are natives of the Long Island Sound area, and this trip up the St. Clair River was an experience they had long anticipated. Of course, the writer as well as other members of the various societies had to glory over the opportunity to show the various lands along the Flats, as well as mentioned the famous ships that were more of less part of our life in the "Good Old Days".

To those who travel East, certainly are familiar with such famous Coastal Steamship Lines as: "The Fall River Line," as well as "Eastern Steamship Lines" and "Hudson River Day Line," to mention a few. And if you had the opportunity to board any of the many ships that ran the long cruise from either Boston or Providence to New York, will certainly thrill to the magnificent splendor of the famous COMMONWEALTH or the beloved PRISCILLA. And if you found yourself in Albany, New York, you probably would board the sleek HENDRICK HUDSON for a daylight sail to the "big" city, or if you desired an overnight sail, the giant BERKSHIRE would be your choice. To lovers of "steam-boatin'" down east, these steamers were the peers of the paddle-wheel fleet of the Thirties. I suppose many of the members of the down east society



Source : <https://picryl.com/topics/commonwealth+ship+1902>
S.S. Commonwealth



Source : <https://smithapplebyhouse.org/steamer-priscilla/>
Steamer Priscilla

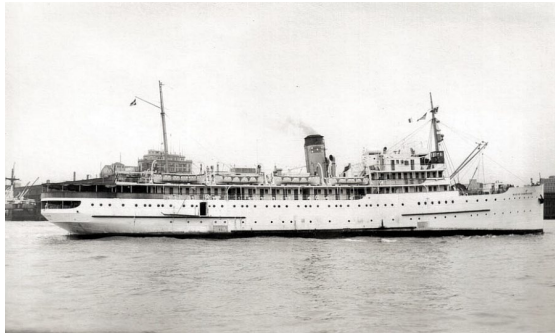
were quite surprised to find that here on our Great Lakes, we too, had steamers that in many respects exceeded theirs, and combined with the fact that a ship could travel 2,200 miles without duplicating the scenery on our Great Lakes caused them quite some stirring of the imagination. When we returned from the excursion, the ghost fleet – that only last year was giving service to our many cruise patrons, solemnly stood out from the dynamic outline of Detroit. More or less, the D.&C. fleet was the represented standards of luxury travel on the lakes for over 90 years. From the diminutive WESTERN STATES to the stately GREATER DETROIT, these vessels though silent in action, were our answer to the claims of the steamboatin' fraternity from the rock-bound harbors of Main to Point Judith, for size, capacity and engineering marvels.

As the Griswold streets piers were passed, one more vessel was missing that should have been included among our silent queens. Perhaps, you, the reader, IF you are a true native of the beloved St. Clair Flats, can surmise the name of the steamer that during her 36 years, actually was a floating Chamber of Commerce for the causes of the Flats. For no other vessel is quite as revered, and synonymous with the names of "Old Club," Star Island, Joe Bedore's, Marshland, and the park itself as is TASHMOO.

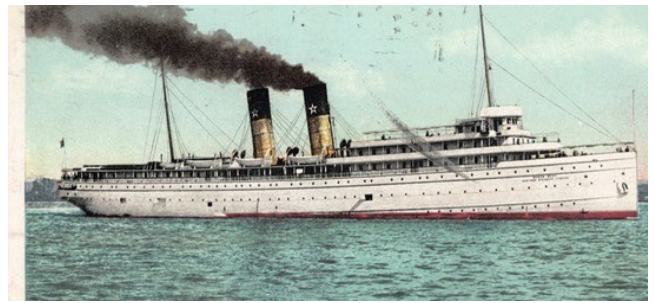
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continued from page 4 . . . The Queen Lives On

The TASHMOO was the last word in excursion design, and Frank E. Kirby was responsible for this. Built to the luxury standards of cruise ships, the TASHMOO, though only planned as a day steamer, was considered quite a departure from the average paddle-wheeler of the late nineties. Designed similar to the steamers of the Hudson River Day Line, her immense glass-enclosed superstructure will be remembered, especially when evening brought into use the many hundreds of electric lights, and as one would view her, you would naturally wonder where her hull was. Being three hundred and six feet in length, with a beam of sixty-nine feet, the grand lady of the Flats would have been quite a problem for any corset manufacturer. Her engines could produce 3,150 horsepower, and this combination of power with excellent underwater design, made the TASHMOO the speed queen of the St. Clair River, and probably could only be exceeded in knots by the well-remembered NORTHLAND, NORTHWEST, or the giant four funneled cruise liner SEEANDBEE. When the TASHMOO was launched and in operation, the steamer was originally classed as two and three-quarter decked ship. After a brief period of service, the "C" Deck was extended to the jackstaff.



Source: <https://www.tynebuiltships.co.uk/N-Ships/northland1926.html>
Northland



Source : <https://historicroetroit.org/buildings/north-west>
Northwest

The older members of the Flats will remember the famous race between our queen and the CITY OF ERIE of Cleveland-Buffalo night-boat fame. And no doubt many of the boys lost money when bets were placed on our TASHMOO. If there is any consolation to be offered., it might prove interesting to that the TASHMOO lost the race by a scant 19 seconds, and the fact that a return race would not be sanctioned by the Cleveland interests, coupled with engineering data proved that the TASHMOO could beat just about any day steamer or honeymoon special afloat. Several unrecorded attempts to race here were made on the upper stretches of the St. Clair River, but the White Star Flagship came ahead to keep her territory safe from any so-called speed-queens. The TASHMOO was not built for lake runs, and consequently, several changes in passenger accommodations were made while she made trial excursions out of Toledo during 1901. Several times, on day trips from Toledo to Sugar Island, the shifting of passengers on the upper decks made the TASHMOO list so severely, that for the remainder of the trip, the officers aboard kept the passengers below the "C" deck. This condition was quite consistent with any excursion steamer that ventured into Lake Erie, in fact, when you travelled aboard the famous FRANK E. KIRBY to Put-In-Bay, you travelled by rail. This was due to the constant changes in weather and the shallow steam channels. Even today, though there is no danger, the PUT-IN-BAY will take some seas, and in doing so will roll just enough to make the inexperienced excursionist wish he were safely on a trolley car.

During her thirty-six years of service to the Flats, the TASHMOO carried over six million passengers without loss of life, and during this period, this remarkable record has stood as a tribute not only to the designing and engineering ability of one of the world's greatest naval architects, but to expert seamanship of the officers and crew of the steamer.

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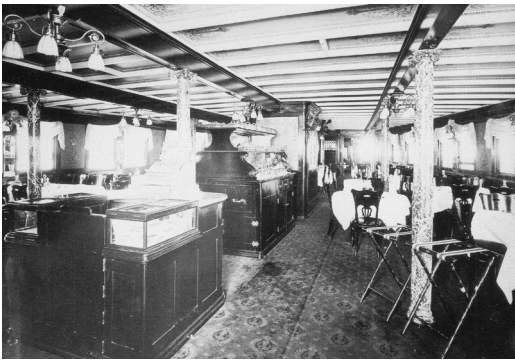
Donations

All these items were found under water by the Tashmoo dock. They were donated by diver and the Historical Society’s life member, Rick Ryan. Rick found some Cracker Jack coins with different presidents, a pendant, membership coins from different groups and mini clay objects (about 2 inches).



continued from page 5 . . . The Queen Lives On

The TASHMOO operated every day during the summer season from the foot of Griswold Street in Detroit, and her daily excursions to the Flats and way-ports to Port Huron were seldom interrupted. Her frequent stops in the Flats area were usually on time, and the often-used phrase, i.e., "You could set your watch to her arrivals and departures" was especially true where the "QUEEN OF THE FLATS" encountered very little opposition in the St. Clair River run, and often carried capacity crowds to the various clubs and Tashmoo Park, when over excursion steamers were only partially patronized. This popularity was due to two well-known facts. The run up-river was seldom stormy, and the passengers could always rely on a pleasant "on-deck" excursion. Secondly, the Detroit-St. Clair Flats-Port Huron trip was popular inasmuch as many of the patrons had their own cottages nearby, and the frequent schedules offered them flexible departures to and from Detroit. It is a well-know fact that many prominent Detroiters used the TASHMOO as their means of transportation to and from the office, especially on weekends. The cut-rate excursions sponsored by the Detroit News gave many a Detroiter a chance to spend the day on the water for the nominal sum of seventy-five cents for the round trip.



Many social clubs sponsored excursions to Tashmoo Park, among them the very well patronized excursion of the Vortex Club, Candyman's Association, not to mention the great many school and church organizations. While this phase of patronage was well distributed among the other steamers of the Detroit River, the TASHMOO received and played host to the greater number of social affairs. In connection with the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company's over-night run from Cleveland, the TASHMOO played host to many passengers who wished to enjoy an additional lake and river cruise, and then return to Cleveland in the evening aboard a D.&C. steamer. The Northern Navigation Division of the Canada Steamship Company used the TASHMOO as their connecting steamer with the Sarnia terminal; here cruise passengers would board either the HAMONIC or NORONIC enroute to Duluth, Minnesota.

No expense was barred from outfitting the TASHMOO, as the Flagship of the White Star line, and the prized project of the Barlum Family. The Dining Room located aft of "A" Deck rivalled any cruise ship afloat, both in appointments and cuisine. The mahogany paneled bulkheads interspersed with large rectangular port gave passengers and uninterrupted view while dining.

The spacious ballroom was located forward on "A" Deck, and how could anyone forget the wonderful music that Jack Okie and his Country Club Band would play? The familiar handkerchief under the chin of the violin-playing maestro will always stand out in association with the pleasant mannerisms of the red-faced Mr. Okie. The grand Companionway was located between the entrances to the dining room, and "B" Deck offered the familiar family groupings with picnic lunches, and happy faces. "B" Deck was usually the most popular

continued on page 8 . . .

continued from page 7 . . . The Queen Lives On

area for the excursionist, for it offered the cool breezes of the lake and river, as well as protection from the heat of a typical summer day. This deck also provided sixteen private parlors for those who wished to enjoy the scenery from intimate surroundings. The forward enclosed area offered full view of the passing parade of marine commerce and was especially welcomed in inclement weather. The TASHMOO was designed to accommodate 3,500 passengers under shelter of her extremely commodious cabins, and thusly she earned the title of the “Glass Hack,” because of the great amount of glass enclosed area.

“C” Deck offered the excursionists full promenade, as well as an observation salon forward, with enclosed companionway to “B” Deck. This deck also accommodated eight lifeboats as well as other life-saving equipment. A large, commodious cabin was situated for those who wished to have their picnic lunches inside, and provisions were made for serving light lunches in this cabin. Later on, when the famous “three-point two” beer came into the lives of the excursionists, the Lunch Stand was abandoned for more lucrative trade, and this area became one of the most popular spots aboard the “QUEEN.” The TASHMOO remained the largest paddle-wheeler excursion steamer on the lakes, and second only to the whaleback steamer CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS when both types of propulsion were considered.

Just as a matter of record, the following schedule is a direct abstraction from an original White Star timetable dated 1929. The TASHMOO left Detroit at 9:00 A.M., arrived at the well-known ports and flag stops in the following sequence: Old Club, 10:55, Millers, 11:00, Star Island, 11:03, Idle Hour, 11:12, Foster’s, 11:17, Joe Bedore’s 11:20, Muir’s (only stop when downbound), Tashmoo Park, 11:45, Russell’s Island, 11:55, Sarnia, 1:55, Port Huron, 2:00. During this same year, the steamer FLORIDA would make one trip each day from either Port Huron or Detroit, and the same stops were made. However, the FLORIDA didn’t make the round trip each day, and this service was meant to serve those communities that required freight as well as passengers who wished to take a later trip up to the Flats. Being one of the strongest supporters of this steamer, I have made, more or less, a complete survey of the inhibitions and maritime aptitudes accredited to TASHMOO, and I can’t think a more worthy name and vessel

NORTH BOUND		STEAMER TASHMOO	STEAMER OWANA or WAUKETA	
DETROIT TO PT. HURON EASTERN TIME		Daily	Daily	Daily except Sunday
		June 1 to Sept. 7	April 15 to Nov. 1	June 23 to Aug. 30
Mis.				
Lv.	DETROIT, MICH.	9 15 am	2 30 pm	4 30 pm
27	*Old Club	11 15 "	4 20 "	6 40 "
"	*Millers	11 18 "	4 35 "	6 45 "
"	*Marshland	11 25 "	4 40 "	7 15 "
"	Idle Hour Club	11 28 "		7 30 "
"	*Forster's	11 35 "	4 50 "	7 40 "
"	*Joe Bedore's	11 40 "	5 00 "	7 50 "
"	*Muir's		5 10 "	8 00 "
34	TASHMOO PARK	12 00 "	5 20 "	
"	*San Souci			8 15 "
"	*Grande Pointe	12 15 pm	5 30 "	8 25 "
"	*Russell's Island			
37	ALGONAC	12 30 "	5 45 "	8 50 "
"	*Port Lambton, Ont.		6 00 "	
44	MARINE CITY	1 05 "	6 20 "	
52	ST. CLAIR	1 30 "	7 05 "	
"	*Marysville	1 50 "	7 25 "	
"	*South Park			
64	SARNIA, ONT.	2 25 "	8 05 "	
65	Ar. PORT HURON, MICH.	2 40 "	8 15 "	

Example of Tashmoo Schedule

to add to the hall of fame of famous ships. Our “Glass Hack” certainly is worthy of the association of such noble vessels as MAURETANIA, MARY POWELL, PRISCILLA, J.T. MORSE, and the many others, that time nor effort will allow. The tragic ending of the service so faithfully rendered to all of us at the Flats, that only TASHMOO could offer, will always remain a symbol of a true lady. Though she was mortally wounded, returning from a Sugar Island moonlight, the TASHMOO discharged her cargo of humanity safely at Amherstburg, before submitting to the inevitable. June 19th, 1936, will always be remembered by those who knew the TASHMOO, as the memorial day to successful excursions to our beloved hideaway, as no ship has successfully conquered the area once reigned over supreme by a QUEEN never to be dethroned. Since the loss of the TASHMOO, several attempts were made to regain some of the lucrative trade by placing various steamers on the St. Clair River route.

continued on page 9 . . .

continued from page 7 . . . The Queen Lives On



The D.&C., sponsored Sunday and holiday excursions into Lake Huron using such giants as the CITY OF CLEVELAND III, CITY OF DETROIT III, and GREATER DETROIT. These paddle-wheeler giants attracted large crowds, but the expense of operation proved too great. The Bob-Lo Excursion Company also tried to operate the same run, without venturing into Lake Huron, but the COLUMBIA and STE. CLAIR were not equipped to accommodate the excursionists, and because the steamers had little enclosed cabin area, the schedule proved to be a failure. Our most recent entry, and the one that almost duplicated the TASHMOO schedule was the venerable PUT-IN-BAY.

The year 1950, saw the famous Ashley and Dustin steamer begin the season in almost an identical pattern. Stopping at Tashmoo Park, both ways, and terminating the upbound run at Port Huron municipal park, the once popular "Venice of America" route was again a reality. After one season, the PUT-IN-BAY returned to her original run to the Lake Erie resort of the same name. Now, only Saturdays, finds the PUT-IN-BAY returning to Port Huron, for the magic of the St. Clair River and the Flats still are to be remembered by many, who once knew the joy of steamboatin' aboard the TASHMOO. Today, as we view the ever-changing panorama from our vantage point on the South Channel, the absence of the White Star Flagship, as well as the numerous other famous steamers, makes one wonder what is next?

Though the huge freighters still carry the life's blood of our nation, the passenger ship is almost an oddity from the past. Apparently, the so-called declining years of the excursion trade has come to pass. The PUT-IN-BAY is the only excursion steamer operating on the lakes today. The beautiful NORTH and SOUTH AMERICAN still ply to distant ports, but this trio under American registry remains the only link to an otherwise gay and luxurious past. Their future, like the future of the many other great cruise and excursion steamers is apparently numbered. It seems unlikely, that the fascination of our GREAT LAKES has dwindled to this extent. Regardless of the advantages that an automobile can offer, the beauty and scenic atmosphere of the great bodies of water that surround our state can never be fully appreciated unless viewed from the deck of a steamer. When memories are stirred, a day at the Flats saw the great ships parade, and to again live when names like NORTHLAND, NORONIC, IDLEWILD, MARY, ARUNDELL, THOUSAND ISLANDER, CITY OF ALPENA, OWANA, INDIA, JUNIATA, GREYHOUND, to mention only a few were symbolic with sun filled days and moonlight nights, luxurious staterooms and elegant cuisine, tall funnels and melodic salutes, would be wonderful.

So as the last passenger ship will slip out of view, let us return to our memories, and I am sure we will find the pleasant voyages we encountered at one time or another, and foremost in these memories, the name TASHMOO should be remembered as the introduction to graceful living that we now experience at the Flats.

Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2024

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

Date	Day	Time	Event
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

HISCFHS Board of Directors 2024

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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

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>

Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society
Building Renovation BUY-A-BRICK Order Form

I / We would like to ‘BUY-A-BRICK’ to support the Museum.

Indicate on the three lines below the inscription you would like on the brick using up to 25 letters, spaces, or special characters per line.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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Print Your Name _____

Your Phone Number _____ - _____ - _____

Your email address _____ @ _____

_____ **Enclosed is my check for \$350 made payable to HISCFHS.**

_____ **I will not be purchasing a brick at this time but have enclosed a donation for the renovation.**

Payments should be made payable to “HISCFHS” with “BRICK” on the memo line and mailed to the HISCFHS at P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028.



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:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (1 Member Only) | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family (1-2 Adults + Children < 18) | \$30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$50.00 |

Lifetime Dues:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Individual | \$300.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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 \$ _____