



volume 16 / number 2

March / April 2025

Message from the President . . .

Happy Spring!

Membership renewals were mailed to members earlier this year, and once again we have a great response and renewal rate! This organization couldn't be a success without the support of our members . . . thank you!

This time of year, keeps the Board busy preparing for the spring opening of the museum and events of the summer. We have some great events being planned for this summer, some of which are confirmed and others still in process. Our speaker series continues this year with speakers confirmed for July and August. And the mystery continues as to the new event being planning for June . . .

As some of you know, the book by Karl Manke, Harsens Island Revenge has been made into a movie by Collective Development Incorporated out of Lansing. The movie is almost ready for release to theatres. Although much of the movie was filmed in Alpena, the film makers did spend some time on Harsens Island filming in Sans Souci and around the channels / delta. The Historical Society has been in communication with one of the producers and began discussions to have a showing of the film in the area this summer. It looks like a theatre in Marine City is the closest location that has the big screen and appropriate technology needed for the film . . . so stay tuned for further details as we continue those discussions.

As always, thank you for your support!

Joyce

Joyce Hassen, President



Tashmoo Steamer 1932

Photo from the Detroit Free Press archives.

Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society presents

Interactive Murder Mystery

MURDER ON THE TASHMOO



The tranquil waters of the St. Clair River were shattered when a passenger on the Tashmoo Steamer was murdered.

Help solve the murder!

JUNE 21, 2025

Doors Open at **4:30 PM**

Event Starts at **5:00 PM**

At 3058 South Channel Drive
1920s period costumes encouraged

Ticket
Price
\$50

Only 50 tickets are
available for this
exclusive event.

Tashmoo Steamer inspired drinks and food

Cash Bar by the Tashmoo
Distilling Company



Appetizers by
Schoolhouse Grille
(Included in Ticket Price)



For Tickets Contact

Corinne Trexler - ctrexler5@gmail.com or Call 313-530-9173

Ellen Probst - elpro8@bellsouth.net or Call 772-766-2912

The St. Clair Flats

In 1930 Mr. O.J. Mulford, William J. Windisch, Leo Detrich and Stanley Duprie decided to publish a leaflet called the St. Clair Flats Bulletin of 8 pages and financed by the ads in it. This was published for 4 years every three months. It contained all Association news relating about road and electric progress. Also, enforcements, court decisions and news of sportsmen.

Bulletin Published by the



St. Clair Flats Association

"An Association devoting its time and energy to make the St. Clair Flats more livable, more healthy and enjoyable; to protect wild fowl; to enforce all game laws; to promote good fellowship among all residents; to protect property owners and to secure for them permanent titles to their holdings."

Volume IV

DETROIT, AUGUST, 1931

Number 5

Boost
The
Beautiful
Flats



Boost The
Venice
Of
America

THE NEW FLATS TODAY

"Time and Tide" wait for no one is very significant at the Flats. In the past few years, when one makes an observation trip through the Flats he sees its progress from a stretch of marshland extending into Lake St. Clair from Harsen's Island. Constant improvement and remodeling have in fifty years transformed this marsh into a series of individual islands surrounded by deep canals and walled in with sheet piling with beautiful homes and lawns. The progress at first was slow but transportation made the change constant until now we see the city folks taking the place of the old settlers or squatters who are gradually passing out of the picture.

The "old timers" who remember the St. Clair Flats when it was the fishing center of the north, have seen it go through a big change in the past forty years.

At first the squatters' shanties, built on spiles, spotted the shores from the Old Club up through Harsen's Island. In those days the trip from Detroit was made in sail boats, small steam launches and many a fisherman rowed his boat across Lake St. Clair to enjoy the fishing and the primitive life it afforded. Gradually the traffic became heavier and the old steamers such as the Steinhoff, Jennie Bell, Ossifrage, Pilgrim and Arundel made weekly trips to this spot which was then only marshland. Eventually stronger docks were built to handle the crowds at all the landings.

One of the favorite stops was the old "Arthur House" near the Old Club. Here a good dock was built for the larger steamers to land. In the gradual course the Old Club and Star Island Club built hotels and Joe Bedore moved to the American side from his Canadian location,

The Willows on the southeast bend. These hotels became the mecca for people from all parts of the country. Next the Mervue, Peninsular, Rushmere, Muir, Riverside, Tranz, Damer's, and Ruhl's all followed so that finally, boat landings were only a few thousand feet apart. These small steamers could easily make the landings at the small docks. Later when all these hotels were in operation, The Flats became the ideal place to spend a week end.

As is always the case in those days, gambling which was not so restricted, became another attraction. With this came the bar rooms where good liquor was served and orderly crowds enjoyed themselves.

Steamer Transportation

About this time larger steamers were added. One line of steamers was operated by the Red Star Navigation Company and the other by the White Star Navigation Company. After a while the companies merged into The White Star Line which operated for about thirty-five years. Some of the vessels which carried thousands of people have been destroyed by fire or sunk. The steamers Idle Wild, Huron, The Old Greyhound, City of Toledo, The New Greyhound, Owana, later the Wauketa and The Tashmoo, have made the trip year in and year out with many happy throngs and carried thousands of people with safety.

We must mention here that in all these years, not a life was lost or any serious accident occurred. Congratulations to the capable masters of these steamers.

Ten years ago, three steamers plied daily from Detroit, giving us good commuter service as long as the river was free from ice. Today we find only one boat daily and operating about ten weeks during the summer.

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.



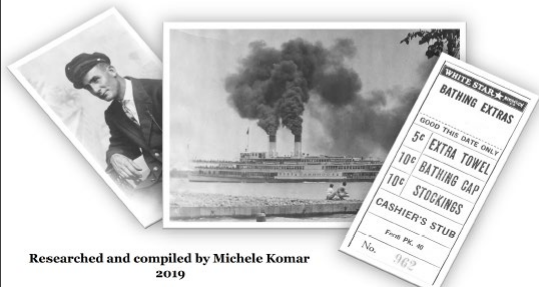
Harsens Island Fire Hall Dedication in 1938

Tashmoo Park

Timeline

1896 - 1950

Harsens Island, Michigan



Researched and compiled by Michele Komar
2019

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.

Here are some additional facts about Tashmoo Park, continued from the last newsletter.

Continued on page 5 . . .

Continued from page 4 . . .Tashmoo Park Timeline

Tashmoo Park - Nursery



The above picture is believed to be that of the nursery either at Tashmoo Park or Sugar Island. This building as one of the very first structures to be constructed for both parks with the Tashmoo Park nursery being built around 1899 or 1900. Its purpose was to provide a place for mothers to bring their babies and young children. It was overseen by a matron and provided baby supplies if needed such as diapers and other essentials used by the youngsters. It also allowed the mothers to rest knowing that their children were safely watched over.

In 1944, the current owner, Arlington Fleming, started renovation on the nursery to convert it to his home and moved it to the front of the park where it stands today.

Tashmoo Park - Ball House

The ball house contained the sports equipment for use at the park. It wasn't always practical for large groups already carrying picnic baskets and other items for personal use to bring along sports equipment. If an impromptu game of baseball or items needed for picnic games like tug-of-war, the ball house kept quite an array of sports equipment to meet any need. It is unknown where the building was located or if it still exists today. However, while renovating the nursery in 1944, Mr. Fleming stayed in the ball house for the summer until the nursery renovation was complete.

Continued on page 6 . . .

Continued from page 5 . . . Tashmoo Park Timeline

Tashmoo Park – Superintendent's House



The superintendent's house features the cupola and dormer that was a signature feature of Tashmoo Park buildings. The back room was added to help accommodate William Christian Harm's six children.

The superintendent's house was located towards the back of the park. It consisted of several bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The privy was outside. While there was electricity, the only water was from a handpump in the kitchen. The heat was supplied by a woodstove.

Prior to 1921, the home was occupied by William Christian Harm and his family. From 1921 to 1946, Bill Harm, Jr. lived there with his family.

Dolly Harm Komar grew up in that house. She had the benefit of the run of Tashmoo Park spending countless hours riding the merry-go-round. The Harm's also raised chickens for meal use at the park. Dolly had many stories about the chickens being dispatched by having their heads cut off and then running around the yard headless until they finally dropped.

When Arlington Fleming bought the park in the mid-1940s, he had the nursery remodeled to be his home rather than live in the existing house. By the 1970s it was in poor shape and was torn down sometime after that.



Dolly Harm Komar, standing, with her parents, Bill and Minnie Harm, sitting on a bench outside the home.

Below is Dolly as a toddler with the chickens.



Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2025

Date	Day	Time	Event
April 19	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
May 17	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
May 24	Saturday	TBD	Museum Opens
June 21	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
June 21	Saturday	5:00 PM	"Murder on the <i>Tashmoo</i> " Interactive Mystery Event (Doors open at 4:30 PM)
July 19	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
July TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
August 9	Saturday	TBD	Special Event – Speaker Sue Wrobel
August 16	Saturday	10:00 AM	Annual Membership Meeting at the Museum
August 16	Saturday	10:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
August 30	Saturday	11:00 AM	Labor Day Parade
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, 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 2025

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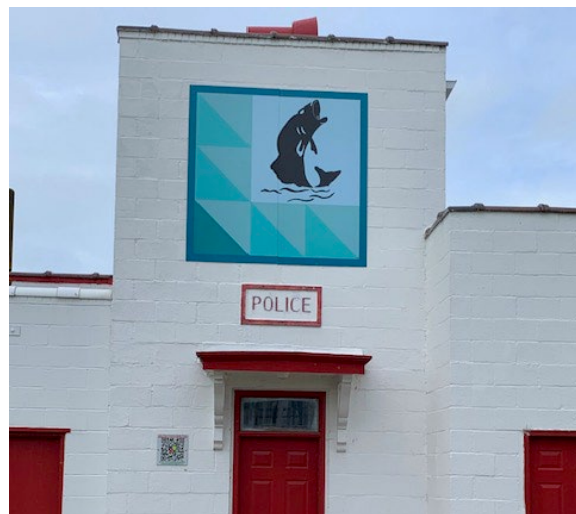
The historical society is looking to add to its collection. We accept donations of artifacts, photos, documents, and stories related to the Island and surrounding area. If you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, we can help you capture your memories for future generations.

Please contact our curator; Chris Knight at
chris.knight@comcast.net

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.

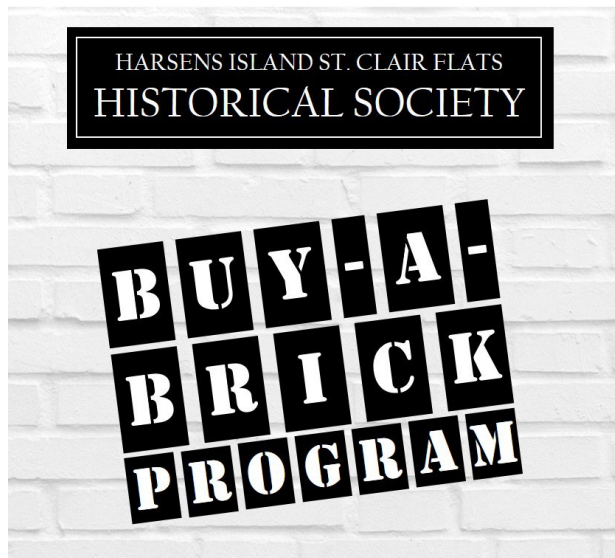
The [Historical Society of Michigan](#) published their 2024 Winter Issue of the Chronicle. The new Harsens Island Historical Society Quilt Block was mentioned in the magazine.



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.



BUY-A-BRICK Order Form is included below.

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 2025

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: \$ _____

(* 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).