



### *Message from the President . . .*

Happy New Year and Winter!

I hope everyone is having a good winter, whether you're in warmer climates or here in Michigan. We've had our share of bitter cold so far this year. I'm always grateful for a home with central heat and a fireplace, especially grateful this winter! We took advantage of slightly warmer temperatures last weekend and checked on the cottage. Seeing freighters is a favorite anytime but seeing ice cutters escorting freighters through the ice was bonus viewing. I was quickly reminded of the power and beauty of ice.

Throughout the year, but especially over the museum's off season, Board members attend Michigan Historical Alliance meetings, other history seminars, and historical speakers throughout Michigan to get fresh ideas and stay current with other historical societies and organizations.

The Board is working on making the 2025 season at the museum a great one. We are working on getting several new speakers, that should be of interest and fun for all. Plus...although in the very early stages of planning, we hope to host a very special and mysterious event at the museum . . . stay tuned.

As always, thank you for your support!

*Joyce*

Joyce Hassen, President



Courtesy of Michele Komar

## 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We encourage, and would like to assist, islanders in getting their old photos, slides, negatives, and historical documents into digital format to preserve and/or display them.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You can bring photos, slides, negatives, or historical documents to the Museum to have them scanned and the digital copy put on a USB flash drive to take home along with the documents you brought for scanning.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](mailto:xharpspah@aol.com).



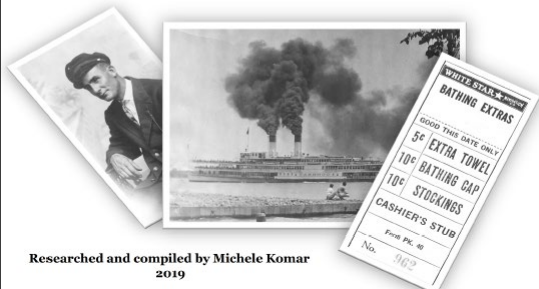
Harsens Island Fire Hall Dedication in 1938

## Tashmoo Park

### Timeline

1896 - 1950

Harsens Island, Michigan



### *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.

Interesting facts about some of the buildings and grounds at Tashmoo Park.

*Continued on page 3 . . .*



*Continued from page 2 . . .Tashmoo Park Timeline*

## Tashmoo Park - Bathhouse

The two-story bathhouse was built early in the park's history and featured the signature cupolas on the roof. Both floors had changing rooms and a large veranda across the front for viewing the river and the bathers.

Extra towels were available for five cents each, a bathing cap for 10 cents and stockings for 10 cents. Modesty was important and both men and women covered up. The 1920s saw a relaxation of the social conventions and many women dared to show their knees.

The beach featured a sandy bottom and was ideal for wading on a hot summer day.



*Courtesy of Detroit Publishing Co.*

*An early 1900s beach scene with the bathhouse in the back middle of the photo.*

## Tashmoo Park - Refreshment Pavilion

It is possible that this structure was originally the dance pavilion. A 1904 newspaper article stated that a refreshment pavilion would be built to the left of the dance pavilion. It would be designed by renowned Detroit architect, A. C. Varney. It was 46 x 78 feet in size. The picture above is clearly the refreshment pavilion as the dance pavilion had rounded gazebos at the four corners. Perhaps the final design stage changed and the original dance pavilion would be utilized for refreshments and the new structure became the dance pavilion.

During the early years of Tashmoo Park, it was used exclusively as a picnic area and could accommodate hundreds of people. Steam tables were incorporated and hot food could be served. Over time, other features were added. Arcade games such as pinball, skeeball and iron claws were popular.

*Continued on page 4 . . .*

*Continued from page 3 . . . Tashmoo Park Timeline*



By the 1930s, a radio for the seniors who wanted to listen to the Detroit Tigers play ball and a small refreshment stand that sold drinks, candy, cigars and cigarettes were included. During winter months, park benches and tables were stored indoors and heavy wooden shutters were placed over the openings to keep out the weather.

The structure still exists today and is used for boat storage at Tashmoo Marina.

## **Tashmoo Park - Dance Pavilion**

Dancing was an extremely popular pastime, and all the resorts, hotels and excursion boats boasted of having a dance floor. A live orchestra was employed to entertain both on the boats and at the park. Zickel's Orchestra had this contract for the first few years, but Finzel's Orchestra took over musical duties in 1903 and held that contract until the mid-1920s when the park declared bankruptcy.

The building had a 15,000 square foot maple floor and a raised area in the center for the orchestra. Structurally, the roof was supported by trusses that started at the floor and curved over the top and back to the floor on the other side. During the 1940s it was said that teenagers dared one another to climb the trusses from one end to the other. The structure still exists today and is used for boat storage at Tashmoo Marina

*Continued on page 5 . . .*



*Continued from page 4 – Tashmoo Park Timeline*



## **Tashmoo Park - Grounds**

Initially the 60-acre park consisted of the dance pavilion, a couple of baseball fields and a walking/bicycle track, a small picnic area and a few trees. By 1900, there was a children's nursery, bathhouse and a small safety pond for the tots to splash in. Lily ponds were scattered about the property.

A key figure in designing the landscape of Tashmoo Park and Sugar Island was Miss Greta Rice who at the time was the only known female horticulturist in Michigan. Her father, L. B. Rice, ran a nursery business in Port Huron. Hundreds of poplar trees were planted to create picnic groves and line the grand walkway from the dock into the park. Miss Rice supervised the layout of groves and groups of flower beds and shrubs. It is known that she favored geraniums along the walkways

Other buildings not mentioned in this section included men and women's restrooms and a building that housed the steam engine that provided steam for the cafeteria and powered the dynamo that provided electricity prior to 1923. The merry-go-round was at the park from 1915 until the mid-1940s. Other rides were added after Sugar Island was sold in 1925 such as a Ferris wheel, whip and airplane ride. There were swings and a slide for children. Small concession stands sold hot dogs, candy and cold beverages. When the park went up for sale in 1948, the acreage was down to 20 acres having sold off plots of land in an effort to downsize. Offered for sale were fine shaded picnic groves, 2 ball diamonds, athletic track, steamer dock, dance hall, pavilion, cafeteria, merry-go-round building, 7-room caretaker's home, new 9-room owner's residence, large cottage, 3 concession stands, toilets, workshops and various other buildings.

*Continued on page 6 . . .*

*Continued from page 5 – Tashmoo Timeline*



Courtesy of Michele Komar

The dance pavilion is to the left with a concession stand in the middle and the refreshment pavilion on the right.



Courtesy of Michele Komar

Looking from South Channel into the park. A small concession stand is directly in

## Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2025

Date	Day	Time	Event
January 18	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
March 8	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
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 TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
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](http://www.harsensislandhistory.org)

**HISCFHS Board of Directors 2024**

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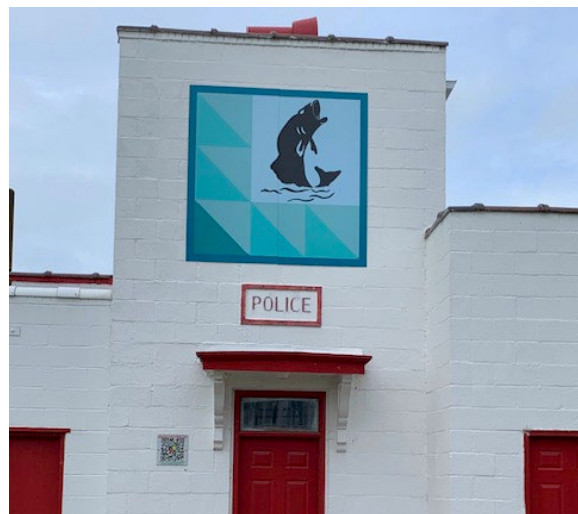
The historical society is looking to add to its collection. We accept donations of artifacts, photos, documents, and stories related to the Island and surrounding area. If you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, we can help you capture your memories for future generations.

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

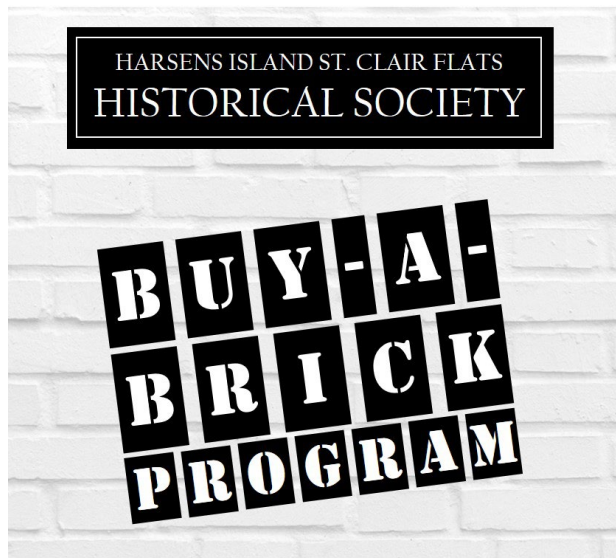




## *Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society Building Renovation BUY-A-BRICK Program*

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.**

**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.


**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).