SAVE THE DATE!
SEPTEMBER 23, 2017
Old School House
150th Celebration

Yes, 2017! The sesquicentennial of the 1866-67 Old School House can't just be celebrated in one year! Over the coming months, you'll hear more details how the Society will celebrate this important birthday. Stay tuned, but for now - mark that 2017 calendar!

Dine Around
A Delicious Series of Dinners and Parties
All proceeds support the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society

Defeating the Demolition Teams!
Saturday, August 27 from
5:00-8:00pm
$100 per person

Tickets now available! Just REPLY to this email and we will be in touch.

Snack and sip your way through three historic homes in downtown Douglas that have been or are in the process of extensive restoration.

Pass that note - we need your help! (click all for full size)

Did you attend school in the old Douglas Union School? Do you have memories of attending class, playing on the playground or sliding down the fire escape tube? Do you have any photographs or the building, either as a school or as apartments?

If you have stories, memories, photographs or documents, we need to hear from you! SDHS is actively searching for information which will help commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the building in 2016-2017. This celebration presents a unique opportunity in that folks are still alive today who have stories, photos or other artifacts from this special place in Douglas which will assist SDHS.

If you have stories, memories, photographs or documents, we need to hear from you! SDHS is actively searching for information which will help commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the building in 2016-2017. This celebration presents a unique opportunity in that folks are still alive today who have stories, photos or other artifacts from this special place in Douglas which will assist SDHS.
The Gerber House now overlooks Beery Field on the site of the former Douglas Hotel. Built in the 1860s by Daniel Gerber for his family who founded the giant Gerber Baby Food Company, the Greek revival house was moved to its present site by Mark Randall and Chris Saldivar in 2013. Their painstaking restoration has preserved as much as possible, including the original doors and windows. The highlight of the modest furnishings is a fine collection of paintings by Ursula Randall, Mark’s mother, who has made Saugatuck/Douglas the subject of much of her art.

Wade Cottage, the oldest house in Douglas, is a plank-constructed home that has a pre-balloon frame. It was built by Jonathan Wade who came to Douglas from Singapore. The new owners, Mark Neidlinger and Steve Merouse, are restoring the original structure and adding additional living spaces.

---

The Douglas Union School ca. 1905. The two boys are Maurice Bradley and Leonard Durham. (SDHS collection)

Do you know anyone on this class list from 1937? We're looking for your stories and memories from the Douglas Union School! (click for full size)

Mark Your Calendar: Summer Program Series

TUESDAY TALKS
Beginning at 11AM at the Old School House, 130 Center Street, Douglas

July 26 - Ox-Bow & the Venetian Festival
Sponsored by Mike Mattern and Bill Hess, and Kathleen Markland

August 2 - Saugatuck Lighthouse and Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area acquisition history
Sponsored by Fran and Bill Myers

August 9 - How artists relate to water
Sponsored by Ken Carls

August 16 - The Old School House and its impact on the Community
Sponsored by Bill and Nancy Woods
In 2014, Chicago-based interior designer John Regas relocated Saugatuck's **House of Seven Gables** from Pleasant Street over the bridge to Fremont St. in downtown Douglas. The traffic-stopping move saved this rare Carpenter Gothic home from destruction and gave John an inspirational starting point for a loving and luxurious transformation.

The extensive restoration included saving many of the original windows and replicating storm-damaged porch railing and gingerbread trim. An addition to the house allows for a state-of-art kitchen, sitting area and an upstairs master suite.

Restoring the old while meeting today's building codes is not an easy task but one which the Historical Society is always grateful to see become a reality. Tickets for this truly historic event are $100 per person.

View the full 2016 Dine Around schedule [HERE](#).

**Welcome New Members!**

We would like to welcome the following members who have joined or re-joined the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society since the last newsletter!

- Karen Clark, Fennville, MI
- Barbara and Dennis Kiszonas, Hawthorne, NJ
- Jon and Judy Klatt, Grand Rapids, MI
- Laura Nelson, Holland, MI
- Howard Rochte and Russ Lamesfield, Saugatuck, MI
- Penny Sawasky, Fennville, MI
- Ken Schmidt and Bill Russell, Grand Rapids, MI
- John Thomas, Phoenix, AZ

---

**MONTHLY MEETINGS**

All upcoming Monthly Meeting presentations begin at 7:00PM at the specific sites indicated below.

- **August 10:** 6:30pm, Annual Society Picnic at the Old School House, Douglas  
  **Sponsored by Jolene Jackson and Lonnie Hannaford**
- **September 14:** 7:00pm, Field Trip to the Douglas Root Beer Barrel for a project update, corner of Center and Ferry Streets  
  **Sponsored by Harbor Duck Adventures**

---

**A NOTE ABOUT TUESDAY TALKS**

New for 2016: Attendance is free at all Tuesday Talk programs for current SDHS members. Non-members and guests of members are encouraged to attend by making a suggested donation of $5. New memberships may be obtained with dues payment at any Tuesday Talk. Seating is first-come, first-served.

---

Thank you to those who have sponsored one of our programs! Multiple sponsors for each program are welcome and encouraged. If you would like to sponsor one of the 2016 programs, please REPLY to this email and we'll be in touch. Sponsorships are $150 and help ensure we can continue our tradition of varied and interesting programming throughout the year!

---

**New at the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum Shop**

The late and great Henry Van Singel always said, "A
How the Barrel came to be owned by the Historical Society

The newly constructed Barrel roof is set into place atop the new vertical support columns. (click for full size)

-Story as told by the last owner, Tim Dykema

"Re: 382 Center Street (The Barrel Address):

"I am not certain of the complete line of ownership after Al Enos...but I do know that Barker Brokerage (I believe Dave Barker, the developer who also had been involved with the former Mi-Ro golf course property, etc) owned it at some point. In 1997 it was transferred to a Marion Moore. I am not certain if she then sold it or if through death or family transaction or what, but in 2002 the Anderson's became listed as the owners. My understanding was they had been tinkering around with the rundown home on the back corner of the property with the intention of living in it.

"I (as Wiseacre, LLC) purchased the property from the Anderson's in 2005. Many of the barrel staves had rotted to a point that they had released from the lower retaining band and things were progressively day away from Saugatuck is a day wasted." To honor these wise words, the museum shop is featuring cork coasters and beverage koozies that proudly proclaim our love of Saugatuck. Affordably priced, and a great memento of good times and memories for yourself or a friend!

Don't forget, current SDHS members get a 10% discount on museum store purchases!

They're coming: New exhibits at the Old School House History Center

The installation of new exhibits is underway in the Old School House History Center in downtown Douglas. Visitors to the History Center will soon find new opportunities for learning on the site in addition to the Back-in-Time Garden and Francis Surfboat/shipwreck exhibits.

On the main floor, a new exhibit titled "You Are Here" highlights the history and growth of our region through the Society's stellar collection of local maps. Visitors will learn about various map uses and are able to compare and contrast several different types and styles of maps. The exhibit also features wall-size "Bird's Eye" maps of Saugatuck and Douglas from 1907 and the popular Super Map, which is being updated to better tie in historical community landmarks with text and photos.

Centerpiece on the main floor is a new exhibit nearing completion about the 150-year history of the Douglas Union School. Through photos, artwork, artifacts and text, visitors will learn what a Union School is, what class was like, what makes its design so special, and how the building was repurposed and renovated (twice!), preserving it for the future.

SDHS' exceptional Exhibits team has been researching for months to put this together and it will yield a special story about a slice of Douglas history. An important component of this exhibit will be its flexibility - a fully functional exhibit will be able to be easily "deconstructed" to allow the room to be re-set for Tuesday Talks and other presentation-functions, then quickly set back up again. SDHS Lifetime members and exhibit sponsors will be treated to a special exhibit preview event - watch for details to follow!
getting worse. There was also the run down remains of the structure which was attached to the barrel serving as a home to a number of animals...as well as the single family home in a non-habitable condition on the opposite back corner of the lot.

"I originally had thought about rehabbing the barrel myself and perhaps putting it to commercial use but given the extensive deterioration decided against it.

"In 2011 I had a cottage in Saugatuck but was living halfway across the country, only spending summers in Michigan. In an effort to clean up the property and reduce liability created by the crumbling structures and frequent trespassing, I made plans to have all the structures removed.

"In 2011, a day or so before that work was to commence, Dottie Lyon contacted me and asked if I would hold off on the demolition to see if a plan could be made to save the barrel. I said as long as the SDHS or some other group was willing to take on the project I was all for it. After some paperwork to deal with liability, ownership of the barrel and the responsibility for its disassembly and removal from the site was transferred.

"I have followed the progress of the barrel and look forward to seeing it on the corner of Center and Ferry. I think the steel base pieces being created by the high school are fantastic! That was definitely a weak point of the old design."

Thanks so much for sharing this Tim!

Editor's Note:

Since that time, SDHS through its Friends of the Barrel group and numerous partners deconstructed the barrel, refinished or fabricated several important components, and have fund-raised to keep the project moving forward. On June 8, 2015, ownership of the Barrel was transferred to the City of the Village of Douglas which will be responsible for its construction on the southwest corner of Center and Ferry Streets and continued maintenance. Per the agreement, anyone wishing to support the Barrel's ongoing reconstruction efforts must now make their donation to the "City of Douglas" with "Barrel Project" in the memo line.

The Society looks forward to promoting the completion of the Barrel project and following through on its requirements to acknowledge donors.

Rounding out the new exhibits will be a first-of-its-kind site-specific art exhibit in the upstairs gallery. Exhibits of this type choose a location to highlight in both artworks and images. This first exhibit will feature 14 artworks and additional images of the landmark Chain Ferry and Ferry Shack and Ferry Store which served as its two end-points through the years. The new exhibit will be enhanced with the exhibition of the Society's collection of Wally Berg drawings of Saugatuck-Douglas, on exhibit as a set for the first time together.

We need Old School House hosts! Projected hours for public operation of the building are 11am-3pm Thursday-Saturday, IF we can find some folks to welcome visitors and answer questions. Training and instructions will be provided! Contact Steve Hutchins if you are interested to learn more about volunteering: admin@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

By Jack Sheridan

The Bill Simmons Scrapbook

By Jack Sheridan

This is the tenth month of the History by Camera feature - the BILL SIMMONS SCRAPBOOK. Bill
at the site and provide interpretive signage to highlight roadside architecture and the Barrel's unique story in Douglas!

Test fitting a refinished stave in June. (Barrel photos courtesy Vic Bella)

__________

**Garden Happenings**

"The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses."

~Hanna Rion

Restore your senses by walking through our gardens. Sit down with a good book and enjoy this beautiful time of year. We should never be too busy to take care of ourselves! There will be activity in our garden soon. We are shuffling our "Back In Time" garden to accommodate our next door neighbor's new condos. We are hoping to complete this change in the next couple of weeks. Stop by to take a look!

The news of the day is **Root Camp**! We had such a great camp this year, both sessions filled to capacity and only one or two bandages used!!! A lot of help came from a lot of people. Many, many thanks to our sponsors, teachers, senior and junior counselors, our college interns, our executive director, and Natalie, Kim and Ruth for all the time and effort that was put into this year's camp. Also thank you to the people in the Barrel who provided interpretive signage to highlight roadside architecture and the Barrel's unique story in Douglas!

I appreciate your feedback on my captions, and the selection of these images. Please point out my good choices and my goofs by sending an email to jack.sheridan@gmail.com. I'd love to hear some feedback on my choices - how about some discussion? **Subject suggestions encouraged**!

Any reader comments will not be published without reader permission.

---

George Mason Clark, 93
our Society that shared their children with us. We love having them at camp and love the support you gave us. You may have noticed the suet cakes in our Peach Orchard. These were birthday cakes for the birds, made by the campers, to celebrate the 150th birthday of our beloved old school house. We will be putting more up during the cold winter months to help our little friends out. Our Root Camp wrap up meeting is coming up, so the committee can figure out needed changes for next year and create our specialized thank you card. We cannot thank Nathan enough for helping the committee out with the business details of Root Camp.

George Mason Clark, longtime Life member of the Society, passed away on June 15.

Click here for more details.

What you missed

Over two dozen SDHS members and friends made the short trip east on July 13 to New Richmond Bridge Park to learn and see the fascinating story of the historic swing bridge and local sturgeon population at the Society's July Monthly Meeting-Field Trip.

Al Weener coordinated two knowledgeable guest speakers on a breezy summer's evening. Bill Nelson is a retired project engineer with the Allegan County Road Commission and was the project director of the Swing Bridge restoration project undertaken from the late 1990s-2005. He explained the history of the existing truss spans which were built in 1879 (with another added in 1899) and how the structure is nationally-significant as one of the oldest surviving highway swing bridges in the United States. The structure was rehabilitated for pedestrian-only use
The Critter Barn visited from Zeeland with furry friends and a demonstration of how sheep's wool is cleaned, carded and prepared for human use.

With much thanks to this year's Root Camp sponsors:
Arthur Ashley and Darin Reiling
BASF
Coral Gables
Holland Horticulture Club
Suzanne Jenkins
Gary Medler
Fitz, Fran and Zelda Foundation

And to Root Camp's presenters!:
Critter Barn
Hunter Engel
Jim Laperriere
Michael Pcolinski
Jim Schmiechen

Until next month,

The Garden and Root Camp Committees

Sign of the Times!

The group then adjourned to the north bank of the Kalamazoo River where the Michigan DNR has a mobile fish hatchery set up to actively help restore the sturgeon population in the Kalamazoo River. Fisheries specialist Zach Cleeman explained about the significance of the sturgeon species (pre-historic in origin, they are the largest native fish in the Great Lakes and have a life expectancy of 60-100 years!) and the decimation of the populations in our area in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

The Michigan DNR in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Gun Lake Tribe operate the Kalamazoo River Sturgeon Hatchery which is working to build up the population of this native fish in the river. Eggs are collected in April which are fed and studied in the hatchery trailer, then are released into the River in mid-September when they are about 7-8" long.

A visit to the New Richmond Bridge Park site is well worth the short drive to the end of Old Allegan Road. Visitors can walk across the historic swing bridge and read several signs and markers interpreting its history. The sturgeon hatchery trailer is staffed from 8am-8pm daily from April through the fish release in September. Walking paths, a boat launch, and fishing opportunities, along with the occasional rumbling passage of a train over the
In late June, the City of Saugatuck installed a SDHS-provided sign on the wall of the Mt. Baldhead Park restroom building. The sign's purpose is to alert Mt. Baldhead stair climbers of the Museum and that our Gift Shop has souvenirs of their climb.

Hopefully the sign will encourage more visitors to the Museum and the Gift Shop.

Thanks to Sally Winthers for designing the sign and to the City of Saugatuck for its partnership and sign installation!

\[Can\text{ }Anyone\text{ }Identify\text{ }These\text{ }Folks?\]

By Chris Yoder

adjacent railroad bridge, make this spot on the Kalamazoo a great nearby field trip destination!

Learn more [HERE].

Sturgeon specialist Zach Cleeman discusses the history of the local sturgeon population and efforts to revitalize it in the Kalamazoo River.

Baby sturgeon - about two months old and 4-5" long - in one of the rearing tanks at New Richmond Park. Sturgeon specialists are on site 8am-8pm and welcome visitors.

\[Baby\text{ }sturgeon\text{ }-\text{ }about\text{ }two\text{ }months\text{ }old\text{ }and\text{ }4-5''\text{ }long\text{ }-\text{ }in\text{ }one\text{ }of\text{ }the\text{ }rearing\text{ }tanks\text{ }at\text{ }New\text{ }Richmond\text{ }Park.\text{ }Sturgeon\text{ }specialists\text{ }are\text{ }on\text{ }site\text{ }8am-8pm\text{ }and\text{ }welcome\text{ }visitors.\]

By Jack Sheridan

Interested in learning more about your family history? Many times, folks who "aren’t into history" find the research and learning in tracing their ancestors back to be a truly exciting experience - especially with more resources than ever available at one’s fingertips. Join the group and get some answers!

The Family History Group can help you in your quest, whether you are new to family history research or just want to learn more about sources and
submitted this unidentified Saugatuck photo from an old family album, they think the folks may be members of the Thomas & Ruby Tibbitts Williams, Worst or Goodman families. All were from the Saugatuck area. The photo was taken by William Baker, Saugatuck photographer, sometime around 1899-1905. In the March 2009 newsletter we told the story of the cane chair in the photo, which now resides in the Cheshire, CT condo of Bob Erickson, having been in his family for over 100 years.

Learn more about this unique chair here: [http://sdhistoricalsociety.net/research/SDHSWeb/Stories/ConnecticutChair.htm](http://sdhistoricalsociety.net/research/SDHSWeb/Stories/ConnecticutChair.htm)

Anyone who thinks they may know the identity of the couple in the above photo, please contact Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net or 616-212-3443.

These upcoming meetings are in the Old School House in the downstairs tech room, and begin at 3:30pm. Note that your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area! If you can't attend a meeting, we can still provide assistance! The only requirement is a membership in the SDHS.

Questions/comments/advice/needs - contact
Jack Sheridan: 269 857-7144
jack.sheridan@gmail.com
Chris Yoder: 269 857-4327
cyoder@tds.net

**Difference in Decades**
The July 12 Tuesday Talk focused on the history of the Saugatuck interurban train and the previous employer of our Executive Director (which was an historic streetcar museum). One of the local images featured was the picture above ca. 1906 on Lucy Street in Saugatuck looking west toward Water Street and the Kalamazoo River. Prominently rising above is Mt. Baldhead - no lookout tower or radar beacon yet - but still offering a challenging climb even in that era. The interurban tracks turned from Lucy onto Water for the trip down along the Pavilion to the turning loop and interurban station near the Hotel Butler. Other interesting details include the coal shed on the right, perhaps served by the siding track, whose switch blends in with the landscape just beyond the driveway crossing, and of course the Saugatuck Pump House across the river in its original form as a simple water pumping station - today the home of the Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum!

Fast forward about 110 years and we're in the same area looking west down Lucy. Mt. Baldhead, now with its iconic radar dome, continues to dominate the scene. The History Museum - inside the pump house building, is planted on the west shore of the Kalamazoo squarely behind the white boat house beyond the road. Interestingly, the Saugatuck Fire Boat under the willow shown below appears to be in the same exact location as the small steamboat at the "end of the tracks" in the 1906 image. Click each image for full size.

### ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Members are the lifeblood of the Society. To join as a member, select from the following categories:

- **Individual** $50
- **Household** $70
- **Premium** $300
- **Corporate** $500
- **Lifetime** $1,000
- **Senior (65+)** $30
- **Senior Household** $45

Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. Click [HERE](#) for a Society Membership Application.

Send in your dues payment today or click [HERE](#) to renew online.
SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FACILITIES

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Saugatuck Pump House building. The History Museum and WATER, our feature exhibit, is open daily from 12noon-4pm through Labor Day, then Saturdays and Sundays through the end of October. Always free to the public but donations gratefully accepted.

Click HERE to learn more about the Museum and recent past exhibits.

The Old School House History Center and Francis Surfboat Exhibit is located at 130 Center Street in Douglas. For group tours of the School House, please contact Nathan Nietering at 269-857-5751 or by email at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org. The Surfboat Exhibit and Back-in-Time Garden are open to the public daily throughout the spring and summer. The Old School House will be open Thursday-Saturday, 11am-3pm. Admission is free to the public but donations gratefully accepted.

The Society's Technology Center is located in the lower level of the Old School House History Center at 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas. Open by appointment.

The Society's Archives office is located in the lower level of the Old School House and is open for research on Monday afternoons 1-4pm. Use the back stairway for easy access. E-mail the archives directly: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

Society Main Phone: 269-857-5751
Museum Phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives Phone: 269-857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsociety.org
Follow us on Facebook! Click the logo below.

Again this year, the Society's Newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.

Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society, P.O. Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406