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TWO NEW S-D HISTORICAL SOCIETY ART EXHIBITIONS
MOUNTED AT OLD SCHOOL HOUSE HISTORY CENTER

SEPT. 22, 2016 -- Two new art exhibitions will be open to the public at Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society's Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street, Douglas, 11a.m.-3 p.m. every Thursday, Friday and Saturday through October. Admission and nearby parking are free, with donations gratefully accepted.

One presents a group of drawings by well-known Muskegon artist Wilfred "Wally" Berg (1908-2002), best remembered for his WPA murals and for easel painting. Done in the early 1950s, these drawings depict various identified Saugatuck-Douglas scenes. One bears tiny numbers in pencil, possibly indicating that it was an "idea" for a mural. The Society has had 14 examples of Berg's work in its collection for about 15 years, and this exhibition marks the first time they have been shown as an entire collection.

The second exhibition combines 14 works by various artists, most owned by S-DHS but some borrowed from private collections and from the Saugatuck Woman's Club. Specially selected as the Society's first "site-specific" presentation, all of its art works relate to Saugatuck's Chain Ferry and the "landings" at either side -- including the Ferry Shack on the east bank of the Kalamazoo River and the Ferry Store on the west bank.

According to S-DHS volunteer art collection manager, Ken Kutzel, "these exhibitions were assembled to highlight the phenomenal local-image presence within our expansive art collection. This combination of photos and art works presents a unique look at the past and how the artists perceived and captured the charm of the area."

Kutzel, former Social Studies Dept. Head for the East Detroit Public Schools, earlier studied Art History at Oakland University and Wayne State University, and guides the Society's art restoration activities. As curator of the new exhibition, he usually is available Mondays from 1 through 4 p.m. to provide a guided tour.

S-DHS owns some 90 artworks including drawings, paintings, posters and prints, made possible by generous gifts of individual pieces from Society members and friends, and maintained with the help of contributions supporting the proper care and necessary restoration for this one-of-a-kind collection. The Society's longer-term goal envisions building one of the great collections of the Midwest.

For more information about the Historical Society, its Museum and its Old School House History Center, visit www.sdhistoricalociety.org. Questions or comments about the Society's art collection may be e-mailed to art@sdhistoricalsociety.org

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Representing the Wally Berg drawing collection is this image of the Big Pavilion in Saugatuck, drawn from the west bank of the Kalamazoo River.



The Ferry Landing, by Rolla Taylor (1872-1970) capturing the Ferry shack as it looked in the 1920s. Rolla Taylor is well-known in Texas. This work was done in Saugatuck, when Taylor came to Ox-Bow School of Art to study with Fredrick Fursman.



Done by Francis Chapin (1899-1965), a painting teacher at Ox-Bow School of Art and known as the "Dean of Chicago Painters", this modernist watercolor is a very rare look into the interior of the Ferry Store, where the artists hung-out and purchased their supplies.