

Past Times

THE HARBOR SPRINGS AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY DECEMBER 2004 NEWSLETTER VOL. 15 No. 4

SUCKER CREEK AND THE "AHA"



This view shows Ephraim Shay's boat the "Aha" at rest near Sucker Creek. It resided here derelict for many years before the State of Michigan rescued it for posterity.

Photo Courtesy Cynthia Haynes from Virgil D. Haynes Collection

MEMORIES BY STAN STUTSMAN

Thinking back to the 1950s when northern Michigan was not the fast-paced environment that it is today, certain inexpensive pleasures were enjoyed which are not possible or permissible today.

One of those that I am referring to was the excellent small-mouth bass fishing offshore, using waders, at Sucker Creek where it empties into North Sturgeon Bay

about 2½ miles along the beach starting at Lakeview Road, a stretch now permanently closed.

To get to Sucker Creek by land at that time, you needed a 4WD vehicle, or you could walk or go by boat from Lakeview Road on to the north by water. The sandy beach was deep and tricky in spots along the way! Large boulders also littered the beach here and there.

For several years, Sucker Creek could be determined by a

unique landmark which was Ephraim Shay's steel-hulled boat, the *Aha*, that was beached there. Many times my father and I wandered over to this skeleton of a boat curiously studying it. You see, my father, Rhinard R. Stutsman, was a brakeman on Ephraim Shay's Hemlock Central Railroad, when the late Homer Armstrong was its engineer, so we both had more than just a passing interest in the boat hull.

In the fall, we both camped

out close to the *Aha*, back from shore in the woods during deer season. On one occasion, I climbed up into the *Aha* to get out of the cold wind to watch for deer to come down to the water's edge to drink.

Needless to say, however, upon noting several bullet holes here and there in the hull, I wasted no time getting out of the *Aha* and away from it! Fond memories of 48 years ago!

Our thoughts are with Stan and wish him good health with the hope that he will be able to continue to share some of his memories of our area.

Note: The Aha was moved to Harbor Springs in the fall of 2003 thanks to transportation provided through the generosity of Walstrom Marine. It is now located in the Harbor Springs Department of Public Works' yard, behind Franklin Square. In poor condition, the Aha is in need of funds and volunteers to help with its restoration. For more information call the Historical Society at 231-526-9771.

POSTCARD BOOK CAPTURES HISTORIC VIEWS

Time flies when you're living in the Harbor Springs area, but occasionally it stands still long enough to have its picture taken.



Early Bay Street.
Graham Family Collection

Since the late 1800s, photographers have been capturing little moments of history and putting them on postcards. Yesterday's tourist novelty has become today's visual

record of what life was like here long ago.

Over the past few months, post card book committee of the H.S.A.H.S. has been combing through a vast private collection of historic postcards to create the first in a series of coffee table books featuring both rare and familiar views of the Harbor Springs area as it once was.

The first book, **In All The World, No Place Like This — Early Postcard Views of Harbor Springs**, is already well underway and scheduled for publication in mid-2005. This book will focus on postcards from the 1870s to the 1920s. Not only will this volume help to preserve and enhance our local history in a way that everyone can enjoy, but also the profits will go towards the establishment of a new history museum in the original City Hall.

See the enclosed order form for more details on how you might get a copy.

LIGHTHOUSE TOUR A SUCCESS!

Over 400 visitors braved blustery winds to visit the Little Traverse Lighthouse on Saturday, October 2, 2004. The event raised over \$9,000 towards efforts to pen an area history museum in the Historic City Hall. Participants were treated to a ride on the Perry Trolley through the grounds of Harbor Point to the lighthouse. Memories of living at the lighthouse were shared by those who fondly recalled living there.

HSAHS appreciates the help of the many volunteers who helped make this event possible. A special thanks goes to the Harbor Point Association for this second tour and the opportunity to share the history of the lighthouse.

SEPT — NOV DONORS

Thank you to those who have renewed their memberships this fall and for the other donations that will enable HSAHS to continue to work toward preserving our area's history.

Rich Bachus & Carol Johnston
Judy Bennett
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Anne Woudenberg

MEMORIALS

Charlie Fort - The Arts Foundation (Mr. & Mrs. L. Ted Sloane)
Carma Erwin - Virginia Birney,
LuAnne & Doug Dancer, Mary Jo Westgate

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." Henry David Thoreau

In 1990 a small group of Harbor Springs citizens came together to found an organization dedicated to preserving Harbor Springs area history. The organization grew through the years with measured successes: providing historical photo displays at the high school, opening a summer reading room at Josephine Ford Park, presenting historical slide talks, producing a newsletter, organizing Shay Days in July, acquiring Ephraim Shay's boat, the "Aha", organizing tours of the Little Traverse Lighthouse and planning for a future postcard book of historic Harbor Springs.

When in this fifteen-year history did the HSAHS Board of Trustees begin to dream about opening a historical museum in Harbor Springs? Well, I'm not really sure. But I do know that, once the historic City Hall be-

came a possibility for a future home a few years ago, the Board did begin to dream and to "build castles in the air".

However, this hard-working group isn't one just for day-dreams. Over the past few months we've been hard at work putting the foundations in place: a long-term lease agreement for the City Hall, an assessment of the building, a strategic plan, a grant from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation and L'Arbre Croche Fund - a component of the community foundation, to develop a donor and collections management system. In October, HSAHS hosted a series of Open Houses with over 150 members of the community touring City Hall and sharing ideas for a future museum.

We need both dreamers and builders as move forward. Please contact us if you would like to help HSAHS build for the future.

Linda Young
Executive Director

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I want to help support the work of the Harbor Springs Area Historical Society.

Enclosed is my 2005 membership contribution for: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other

Name _____

Winter Address _____

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New Member _____ Renewal _____

Make your check payable to the **Harbor Springs Area Historical Society**, P.O. Box 812, Harbor Springs, Michigan 49740. HSAHS is a 501(C)3 charitable organization. Thank you for your support.



CURRENT EVENTS

WINTER CALENDAR

BOARD MEETINGS

HSAHS board meetings are held at the Harbor Springs Public Library on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Guests are welcome! No meeting in December. Winter meetings:

Monday, January 17th

Monday, February 21st

Monday, March 25th

VICTORIAN TEA

Friday, February 11th, 2005
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Just in time to cast away the winter doldrums, the Historical

Society is planning a Victorian Tea at the historic Shay House at 396 East Main Street in Harbor Springs. Bring a friend and enjoy



an elegant High Tea on Friday February 11, 2005 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Hexagon with its decorative tin walls and ceilings will be a charming setting for tea, sweets and savories. Tickets are \$15.00 and reservations with prepayment are necessary. Call 231-526-9771 to make a reservation and join us for a lovely afternoon anytime between 2-5 p.m. Pro-

ceeds from this event will help HSAHS renovate and open a Harbor Springs area history museum in the historic City Hall.

BOARD NOTES

At the Annual Meeting in September, five new directors were elected to the HSAHS Board of Trustees. They are: Rich Bachus, Jerry Burns, Mary Cummings, Linda Heminger and Karen Searles. Welcome aboard!

New officers for 2005 were elected at the October board meeting. They are: Lois Cassidy, President; Tanya Graham, Vice President; Linda Heminger, Secretary; and Norine McBride, Treasurer. Members elected to the Executive Committee include Linda Rosenow, Past President; Mary Cummings, Assistant Treasurer; and Sarah Cohen, Member at Large.