

# Past Times

THE HARBOR SPRINGS AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY JUNE 2005 NEWSLETTER VOL. 16 No. 2



**Historic City Hall as seen around the turn of the century, before the stucco treatment was added to the exterior.**

Photo: Bruce G. Gathman Collection

Photographs of Harbor Springs in the early 1880's depict a very different view from what we see today as we drive toward downtown from the East Hill. Then, Main Street was a ragged muddy road lined with wood framed houses surrounded by fences to keep wondering livestock out of yards and gardens. An occasional boardwalk can be seen which made walking into town possible. What is missing in these early photographs is the structure that we today call historic City Hall.

At that time, Harbor Springs was the seat of Emmet County and a building was needed to house the circuit

court and county administrative offices. On November 28, 1885, an agreement between the Village of Harbor Springs and local contractor Mr. Charles W. Caskey was signed to "furnish the materials for and make, erect, build and finish in a good, substantial and workmanlike manner, a village hall..." The contract stipulated that the building be completed by April 15, 1886 for the sum \$4,000. Mortimer L. Smith, a Detroit architect, was hired to design the building.

By all accounts, this building must have been quite grand for the small village of Harbor Springs. It housed the county offices only briefly, however, and intriguing stories remain about how and why the county seat moved to Petoskey. Also, unknown is the exact date (or even decade) when the frame building was covered with stucco.

What is known is that for over 115 years the building served a variety of functions including the city offices, police headquarters, opera house and recreation center. At one time, the fire department was located in an annex on the west side of the building where today we see one of the two vault extensions on the first floor. On the second floor, wooden voting booths, a painted shuffleboard court and play bills glued to the molding and old Monopoly cards found in the basement attest that the building was once a bustling community center.

In the early days of Harbor Springs, a yearly elected president presided over the village. In all, according to HSAHS trustee Ed Meyer, 51 presidents served the City beginning with Carlos Hampton, who was elected in 1881 with 73 out of 112 votes cast. In 1932 Allen C. Angell became the first mayor of the City of Harbor Springs and elections were now held every two years. In 2003 the City moved to a renovated building on Zoll Street, which was once the city's waterworks building.

At that time, HSAHS was looking for a building to house a future area history museum and discussions began to ensure that the original City Hall would re-

main a historical structure. In the fall of 2004, HSAHS signed a long term lease with the city and planning began to renovate and adapt the landmark building for reuse as a museum. As part of this effort, any information, photographs, documents and stories about the old City Hall would be greatly appreciated. Please call the historical society, 526-9771, if you have information to share that can help HSAHS in its efforts to preserve the structure and its history. With help from the community, this grand old building can once again be a center for the residents of Harbor Springs and provide a place where our area's history can live on for future generations.

## **8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SHAY DAYS JULY 15<sup>TH</sup> TO 17<sup>TH</sup>**

Shay Days has become an annual Harbor Springs event and a tradition for area history and railroad enthusiasts, as well as visitors from throughout the country. Three full days of activities focus on the life and achievements of Harbor Springs resident Ephraim Shay and his inventions that changed the logging industry.

Steam-up demonstrations, model trains, slide talks, photo displays, video programs, walking tours, as well as special activities for children provide fun and education for all ages.

With the purchase of a button pass, good for all three days, you can come and go as you please and take full advantage of the many programs and offerings. Buttons are \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 for the whole family (up to five family members). Shay Days hours are Friday and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon to 6:00 p.m.

All activities start near "The

Hexagon", Ephraim Shay's house at 396 East Main Street in downtown Harbor Springs – rain or shine. Look for the green signs and join us the third weekend in July!

### **SHAY STUDENTS TOUR LIGHTHOUSE**

Fourth grade students from Shay Elementary had a special experience in May thanks to the Harbor Point Lighthouse Committee and the Harbor Springs Area Historical Society. Sixty students and chaperones took a step back in time as they boarded Stafford's Trolley for guided tours of the Little Traverse Lighthouse on Harbor Point.

Students in Barb Austin's, Robin Kredell's and Jeff Joneson's classes toured the lighthouse and learned about the history of the lighthouse, including the first lighthouse keeper Elizabeth Whitney Williams. A special treat for the eager students was climbing the steep steps and seeing the Fresnel lens in the tower.

HSAHS volunteers who helped with the day were Jim Grogan, Irene Schimmel, Judy Meyer, Betrina Snively, Jan McDonald and Josie MacLean. Lighthouse Chair Sarah Cohen coordinated the event.

After their visit, the students wrote logs of their experience, just as keepers kept daily logs of lighthouse activities. Copies of the students' work will be on display at the Josephine Ford Park Reading Room this summer.

### **MARCH TO JUNE MEMBERSHIPS**

Thank you to new and renewing members! Your support enables HSAHS to continue to preserve our area's past.

Debra and Lawrence Borrusch  
Mary Boyd  
Fay & Larry Buhl

Patrick Burns & Helen Hansens  
John Colley  
Mr. and Mrs. William Corbett  
Helen Cosens  
Stanley & Kelli Flory  
Dennis Hall & Beth Conway  
Ed Eichenberger  
Twink Frey & Jim McKay  
Katherine Geraghty  
Judy Harvey  
Jo Isenhardt  
George and Lyda James  
Mary Cay Jones  
Patsy Ketterer  
Jane Kitchen  
Anne & Ron Koontz  
Jan & Don Kopka  
Dennis & Gale Koster  
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Mary Beth & William Soellner  
Lawrence & Suzanne Ternan  
Julianne and John Tobin  
Ed & Mary Warner  
Annette York-Rokop  
Linda & Steve Young

### **Other gifts and donations which help sustain the Historical Society.**

The Arts Foundation  
William & Julia Edwards  
Martha and Michael Cameron  
Sarah Cohen  
Tanya Graham  
Allyn Shepard

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

"Onward and upward," is the motto of one of our board members and it aptly describes the recent activities of the historical society. We continue to make great strides forward, thanks to committed volunteers who are willing to give their time and talents to help HSAHS realize its dream of opening a museum in the old City Hall.

This spring an Architectural Selection Committee conducted an extensive search for the project architect. Local, state, and regional firms were invited to submit proposals. After a six-week process that included site visits and interviews, the committee selected John Meyer, F.A.I.A., project architect, and Ken Lemiesz, A.I.A., project manager. They are with the firm Wigen, Tincknell, Meyer and Associates of Saginaw, a firm recognized throughout the state for historic preservation projects. John and Ken impressed the committee with their renovation experience, attention to detail, practical approach and experience with museum projects.

Please visit the Reading Room at Josephine Ford Park this summer. In addition to new exhibits, we hope to have drawings and plans for the renovation project available for review and comment.

New this summer is a Historic Home Tour, "A Day in the Country". Tickets will be limited so call for reservations.

The postcard book committee is putting the finishing touches on *In All The World, No Place Like This*, Early Postcard Views of Harbor Springs. We look forward to its arrival, with great fanfare, later this summer.

Pat Kaniarz recently returned to HSAHS as our administrative assistant. Pat blends her love of local history with a fearless attitude toward technology and will be helping HSAHS put new donor and collections management software in place.

So, onward and upward it is. We're working hard and having a grand time making plans for the future, a bright future that includes making the dream of having a place to preserve this area's history a reality.

*Linda Young* Executive Director

## TRUSTEES

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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

### SUMMER CALENDAR

#### READING ROOM OPENS JULY 1ST

Each summer HSAHS volunteers staff a Reading Room in the municipal building at Josephine Ford Park on Bay Street. Come see the new exhibits, listen to tapes that tell stories about life in Harbor Springs or browse through the growing collection of Harbor Springs' yearbooks.

Open on Tuesday through Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**DON'T FORGET**  
**SHAY DAYS**  
**JULY 15 - 17**



Live steam Shay locomotive demonstration.  
Photo: Bruce G. Gathman

#### "I REMEMBER" TALK AT THE LIBRARY

Mark your calendar for this special event at the Harbor Springs Li-



Five Mile Creek School House  
Photo: Bruce G. Gathman

brary. On Wednesday, June 8th at 7:00 p.m. Long-time and much beloved resident Patsy Ketterer will share her memories of Harbor Springs.

#### HISTORIC HOME TOUR

"A Day in the Country" a tour of historic farms and country homes will be held August 1st from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tour historic homes along lovely Shore Drive and enjoy an old-fashioned box lunch at the Five Mile Creek school house. \$25.00 per person. Advance reservations only!

For reservations call: (231) 526-9771. Proceeds from this event will enable HSAHS to renovate and open a history museum in the historic City Hall.

#### SUMMER BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are open to the public and are held at the Harbor Springs Public Library at 7:00p.m.

Monday, June 20th  
Monday, July 18th  
Monday, August 15th