

SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the preservation of our history in order that we may pass the light of our symbol to the future generation.

P.O. Box 177
 Empire, Michigan 49630
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April 1995

DEAR ISLAND FRIENDS!!

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The summer of 1995 looks like it could be a busy time. Currently, we have 2 work projects planned for the summer.

1. The first one is planned for Memorial Day weekend. The project involves placement of cement crosses on unmarked grave sites on North Manitou Island. May 26-29.

2. The second project is planned for June 12-17. The project involves erecting a woven-wire fence around three sides of the cemetery on South Manitou. This would finish the cemetery fence.

Volunteers for these projects are needed, and all help will be appreciated. Further information is included in this Newsletter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul Rocheleau
 President

If you are interested in volunteering with these projects, or would like further information, please contact Kathy Bietau at 317 N. Lavinia St., Ludington, MI 49431 or (616) 843-8108.

We're looking forward to an exciting and ambitious summer!!!

MEMORIAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the Annual Business Meeting, scheduled for Saturday July 29, the Officers for the Memorial Society are up for re-election. Paul Rocheleau, President, and Margaret Braden, Vice-President, have graciously offered to serve another term in their present positions. However, both Sandra Black and Zella Morris have requested to step down from their positions as Treasurer and Secretary.

Please consider volunteering for any of the Board positions! Especially Treasurer and Secretary!

Please contact Paul Rocheleau at 5437 S. Crawford Rd. Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 if you are interested in any of the Board positions. We will report the nominations slate in the July Newsletter. THANKS!! !!!

ISLAND OUTING

We will be making the 3rd Annual trek to South Manitou Island this summer - July 30, 1995 - Sunday - The day after the reunion and meeting.

Please contact Kathy Bietau at 317 N. Lavinia St., Ludington, MI 49431 or (616) 843-8108 for reservations. The schedule will be similar to last year. This year we'll make a special stop at the Schoolhouse to discuss the Society's role in rehabilitation efforts.

Come join the fun!!!!
 Further details in July's Newsletter.

WHERE ARE THESE MEMBERS??

If anyone knows the whereabouts of the following Members, please contact Kathy Bietau:

- Mrs. Trudy Bergsten
- Gary & Theresa Wilson
- John & Judi Anderson
- Paul & Karrie Johnson
- Avis Hanson
- Linda Murphy

We have been unable to deliver Newsletters to these Members. Thanks!!!

NEWS FROM SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

The Architectural/Engineering firm, Quinn-Evans, from Ann Arbor continues to research the South Manitou Island Lighthouse for the Historic Structures Report they are providing to the National Park Service. Quinn-Evans plans to be back on the island in the late spring to continue collecting field data.

Brenda Williams is continuing her research on the South Manitou Island Agricultural District and hopes to have a draft report to the park in late spring. A number of SMI Memorial Society members have provided Brenda with information concerning the report, and the park thanks the Society for their help.

The park has agreed to restore fences in both the North and South Manitou Island cemeteries, with the help of the SMI Memorial Society. Materials for the operation has been purchased by the SMI Memorial Society, and will be stored and transported to the islands in the spring via the park boat. Two volunteer groups, the Sierra Club and the Muskegon Hiking Club, have agreed to donate their time to help work on these projects this summer.

The materials purchased are cedar posts and scroll yard fencing for South Manitou Island, and barbed wire for North Manitou Island.

Each fencing type represents the historical materials associated with each cemetery. The Sierra Club will begin work on the North Manitou cemetery during the Memorial Day Weekend, and the Muskegon Hiking Club will be working on South Manitou Island June 12-17th.

The new island district ranger arrived last October. Chris Johnson arrived from Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Montana. Chris, wife Barb, and their sons Corey and Tim are looking forward to spending time this summer on both North and South Manitou Islands. Chris states that staffing numbers on the islands will be the same as last year. Chris is looking forward to working on the island and meeting more of the SMI Memorial Society members.

Kim Mann
 Sleeping Bear Dunes N.L.

NEW CEMETERY FENCE

Mark your calendars! If you like to sweat and work hard, have we got a job for you. On June 12-17, you are cordially invited to dig posts, string fencing, staple same, and do it again and again and ... A volunteer group consisting of Muskegon and Grand Haven GTE employees have graciously volunteered to help construct the remaining fencing needed at the cemetery on South Manitou Island. Fencing which resembles the original style was found in Chicago; it has been ordered and is to be delivered this spring. In addition, cedar posts will be used for authenticity as well as aesthetics. When completed, the cemetery will look like it did at the turn of the century. All help is welcome and encouraged. If you have any post hole diggers, bring them along and they'll be put to use. Seriously, it'll be a fun day of camaraderie and a sense of community service.

A feel-good thing ... try it! Thanks!!!

Margaret Braden
 Vice-President

HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES RESEARCH PROJECT

A research project focusing on the historic agricultural landscapes of South Manitou Island is currently being conducted by members of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The project is being sponsored by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, located in Omaha, Nebraska. Professors Arnold Alanen and William Tishler, along with graduate student Brenda Williams, began work on the project in May of 1994. They spent the summer gathering information about the island's farms and agricultural activities.

Inventories were conducted at the historic farm sites, and plan drawings that include the locations of buildings and domestic plants are being prepared. Historical research for the project has involved reviewing primary sources, including Homestead Applications, Federal Population Census Manuscripts, Federal Agricultural Census Manuscripts, documents in the Betty Kramer Collection, which was prepared by Sylvia Kruger and is located in the Leelanau Historical Museum; and secondary sources, including books that have been written about the island's history - e.g., Glenn Furst, Myron Vent, Charles Anderson, an unpublished manuscript prepared by Park Ranger, Linda Henry. In addition, interviews with previous residents of the island have been conducted to gain information regarding life on the island farms. Ms. Williams was able to attend the Memorial Society's reunion last summer, and met several "islanders," many of whom have been helpful throughout the project.

The Homestead Applications are of particular interest, since fourteen of the island's farms were originally acquired via the Homestead Act (the first claim was made in 1863 by George Johanne Hutzler). The documents that were filed for these claims include "proofs" that contain detailed information about the farms, listing of

buildings, the number of acres of cultivated land, the number of fruit trees planted, and other improvements. The Agricultural Census Manuscripts for 1870 and 1880 also provide detailed information about the island's farms, including quantities and types of livestock on each farm, acres planted and bushels produced of particular crops (including oats, Indian corn, rye, barley, wheat, and potatoes), and the number of fruit trees on each farm. For example, the 1870 census of agriculture for Manitou County, which included South Manitou Island, North Manitou Island, and the Fox islands, lists twelve farmers. Of the twelve, nine were South Manitou residents. Seven of these obtained their land through the homestead process. In 1870, there were 173 acres of improved land on the island's farms; 123 acres were on property originally acquired through the homestead process. There were six horses on the island in 1870; all owned by George Hutzler, while two cows were owned by William Smith. The island's farmers had a total of 30 milk cows, 57 other cattle, 12 working oxen, and 25 swine. Crop production by island farms in the year 1869 included: 64 bushels of spring wheat, 361 bushels of rye, 320 bushels of Indian corn, 193 bushels of oats, and 1,950 bushels of Irish potatoes. In addition, 1,520 pounds of butter were made on the island in 1869.

The project research has uncovered a number of interesting documents. The State of Michigan Board of Agriculture Annual Reports from 1918 through 1924 make references to the island's cooperative efforts in growing of Rosen Rye seed. Also, Frank Spang's experiment registers were found at the Michigan State University Archives; they include references to "South Manitou Island Rye" and to "Hutzler Rosen." These, along with several Agricultural Extension Bulletins, mention the island as an ideal location for the growing of Rosen Rye, and various other references to the importance of this crop are helping to build an understanding of the significance of the island farms.

The information is now being organized into a report that documents and evaluates the historic agricultural sites on the island. The project is scheduled for completion in August of this year. We would like to thank the members of the South Manitou Memorial Society for their cooperation and assistance with this project.

submitted by Brenda Williams

SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS ...

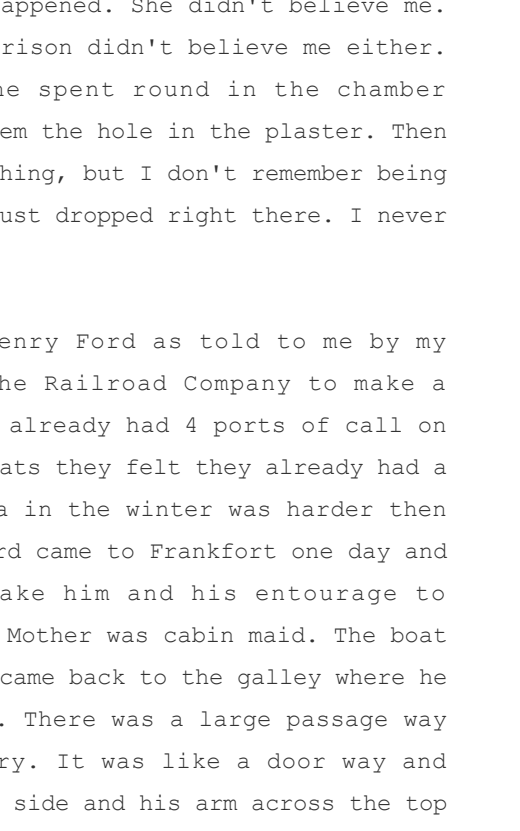
Spring is in the air, and the windows are being opened once again ... closets are being cleaned, basements swept, boxes opened and memories rekindled. Any surprises? How about the report cards you or your grandparent received from your favorite teacher at the schoolhouse on South Manitou Island? Or the reprimand for being too "social"? Or the grade for decorum? Maybe you still have to carry, school books, or the strap used to slather them. How about your uncle's lunch pail?

If you do, you'll be interested to know that an effort is underway to regear the schoolhouse, and if any of you have artifacts or stories of interesting events, you are cordially invited to share them! It's important to note here that the artifacts (report cards, lunch pails, etc.) can still belong to you if you choose to display them at the schoolhouse when it's ready for show. You're not being asked to donate these items. Too, they will be on display, rather than warehoused, with any interesting information you'd like to share. In addition, historic photos are being sought that show the interior or exterior of the structure as well as any construction changes, school groups, any outbuildings, and any of the teachers which were unforgettable. This project is a joint effort by Kim Mann and the Memorial Society. Kim, for those who don't know her, is the Historic Architect with the Sleeping Bear Dunes N.L. and a dynamic advocate of the cultural resources of the island.

Your items, artifacts, pictures, etc. which you might consider for use can be handled in several ways: They can be reinstalled in the schoolhouse as a loan to the National Park Service, they can be donated to the Park if you choose, or they can be donated to the Memorial Society and then exhibited.

This is an opportune time for those of us who have wanted to share what we know would be useful to an understanding of the island families and their daily life, but have been hesitant in the past. While breathing in the fresh spring air, think of the renovated-to-be schoolhouse and what we as Society members can do to augment the public's understanding of a unique way of life that we were fortunate to have experienced. Please contact Margaret Braden, 916 Glastonbury Circle, Traverse City, MI 49686 (616-933-0227) with any questions you might have. Thanks!

submitted by Margaret Braden



"I REMEMBER WHEN ..."

ISLAND RECOLLECTIONS

by Theron Haas

It must have been sometime in 1936 when Bill Haas became too ill to stay on the Island. They brought him over to Frankfort and put him up in our home. My Mother nursed him until he passed away in the fall, I think. We took him up to Glen Arbor. I remember that old dock that stood there. It was a big thing with a warehouse and the remains of the railroad that once went out on it. It had these long sloping loading ramps. The mailboat was rigged like a palm net boat with a small cabin forward and an open deck aft. They loaded Bill onto the boat and we started for the island. About half way across we ran out of gas. The operator had some spare cans aboard. Why he didn't let them down before we left nobody knows. The engine refused to start. The operator knew my dad was an auto mechanic so he asked him to help start the engine. They must have loaded Bill's casket right over the engine hatch as my Dad had to get down in the cabin and crawl back under the deck to reach the engine. He got it started and away we went. After we reached the island my Dad told me that no way in the world were we going back on that boat. He said he could see daylight between some of the planks. He could smell raw gasoline and the flame arrester on the carburetor was missing. We stayed a couple of extra days and got a ride back with the Coast Guard.

One afternoon my Dad, Harrison and myself got into Uncle Henry's "T" model and started for the point. The motor acted just terrible, jerking and missing. We passed a field in which a number of old Model "T"s were abandoned there. My Dad had Uncle Henry stop. My Dad got out and started scrounging around among those cars. He found one with an almost new distributor cap and rotor which he exchanged for the one on Uncle Henry's car. The motor then ran like a clock ... Uncle Henry was as pleased as punch.

Ruth, Harrison, my folks and myself were all up to Uncle Henry's place. I started to follow Harrison upstairs. As I went into the stairwell I saw a 22 caliber rifle leaning in the corner. I picked it up, you know how 10 year old boys are, and made the following discoveries. It was loaded, with a round in the chamber. It was cocked, and it had a hair trigger. It went off. It was just a miracle it wasn't pointed at

Harrison because he was right in front of me. I put the rifle back and waited for a reaction. Harrison took no notice and continued on up the steps. Later on I told my Mother what happened. She didn't believe me. Neither did my Dad when I told him. Harrison didn't believe me either. Then I showed them the rifle with the spent round in the chamber smelling of powder smoke and I showed them the hole in the plaster. Then they finally believed me. It's a funny thing, but I don't remember being bawled out or yelled at or nothing. It just dropped right there. I never could figure that out?

This is about Grandma Florence and Henry Ford as told to me by my Mother. Mr. Ford was trying to get the Railroad Company to make a connection at Escanaba. As the Company already had 4 ports of call on that side of the lake and with only 4 boats they felt they already had a full plate. Anyway, getting to Escanaba in the winter was harder than Menominee, which was bad enough. Mr. Ford came to Frankfort one day and arranged for the car ferry No. 4 to take him and his entourage to Escanaba. Grandma was first cook and my Mother was cabin maid. The boat left Frankfort in the morning. Mr. Ford came back to the galley where he engaged my Grandmother in conversation. There was a large passage way between the galley range and the pantry. It was like a door way and Henry stood in this, leaning against one side and his arm across the top to the other door jam. There was plenty of room for Florence to pass by him and under his arm. She was preparing dinner and among other things she was preparing pies for the oven. According to my Mother, he tried every which way to get one of those pies. Even offered her \$5.00 for one. She told him there was just enough to go around and he would get his share at meal time. I guess she just couldn't be bribed. Can you imagine telling someone like Henry Ford he couldn't have something he wanted, in that day and age? He went ashore in Escanaba and had a meeting with the city fathers. The whole trip must have been a big disappointment for him. He didn't get all the pie he wanted and the car ferry's never stopped at Escanaba.

Theron Haas

February, 1995

Ludington

Flashback To The Past

By Sandra M. Black

FROM SANDHILL SAVAGE TO REAR ADMIRAL SIGVAL BERNHARDT JOHNSON

Sigval Bernhardt Johnson was born on June 15, 1886 in Whitehall, Michigan. He was the first born child of Bernt Sakarias Johnson and Petrine Gesine (Gabrielsen-Thompson).

The Johnson family moved to South Manitou Island in approximately 1888 where Sigval lived until he enlisted in the Life-Saving Service. The Coast Guard records show he enrolled in 1904 at the age of eighteen. In 1908, Sigval married Dora Allie Rogers in Frankfort, MI. The Johnsons had three sons - Roger, Howard, and Bernard.

Besides Frankfort, Sigval's duty assignments took him to Grand Haven, Petoskey, Michigan City, Indiana, and Green Bay, Wisconsin. His specialty was in life-saving stations. He joined as a surfnan and worked his way up through the ranks.

During World War I, Chief Warrant Officer Johnson, commanded a tugboat in New York Harbor, where one job was towing ammunition barges to ships to be loaded for overseas transit.

After World War I, CWO Johnson was transferred back to the Great Lakes, having charge of the life boat station and patrol boats enforcing the Volstead Act. This Act was known as the Prohibition Enforcement Act to stop smuggling of liquor into the United States from Canada.

In 1937, Admiral Johnson was transferred to San Francisco, California, and placed in charge of all Coast Guard actions along the coast from the Oregon border to Point Arguello, California.

During World War II, Admiral Johnson was operations officer of the Twelfth Coast Guard District. He was responsible for setting up beach patrols and lookouts and planning defensive measures along the entire central and northern California coast.

Rear Admiral Johnson retired from active service in 1946. He promptly became active in forming the County Board of Harbor Commissioners, San Mateo County Harbor District. He was known as "Mr. Harbor Commissioner." He also served three terms on the Coastside Elementary School District board of trustees, in Moss Beach, California.

Rear Admiral Johnson died on January 25, 1968 at the age of 81. At the time of his death Admiral Johnson and his wife, Dora Allie, had been married 59 years. Admiral Johnson was buried in Frankfort, MI.

Who would have ever thought that a Sandhill Savage from South Manitou Island would become a Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard!



Sigval B. Johnson as a Surfnan at the bow of boat in summer whites. 1906



Theodore Thompson, Sigval Johnson, Bernt Johnson

Submitted by Sandra (Thompson) Black