

P.O. Box 177
Empire, Michigan 49630

1997/1998, Vol.8, No.2

July 1997

GREETINGS FRIENDS!

**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING
EMPIRE METHODIST CHURCH
SATURDAY JULY 26, 1997 10:00-12:00 a.m.**

AGENDA:

Introduction of Present Board Members and members in attendance.

I. Old Business

- A. Reading of the Minutes from last years Annual Meeting.

II. New Business

- A. Election of New Officers to the South Manitou Memorial Society Board of Directors.
- B. Additional items will be added.

**SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND PICNIC
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP HALL
SATURDAY JULY 26, 1997 12:00 noon**

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I have learned from this experience as President, and I am proud of the projects the South Manitou Memorial Society was able to accomplish in the past 4 years on both North and South Manitou Islands. I believe the South Manitou Memorial Society with the Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Lakeshore can help preserve the history of the islands for future generations. Thank you once again, it has been an honor to serve as your President.

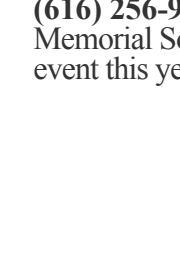
Paul Rocheleau
President

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee of the South Manitou Memorial Society submits the following slate of officers to be voted on at the Annual Meeting on July 26, 1997 in Empire Michigan. The Committee consists of the following members: Judy Fogle, William E. Goeman, Lorraine Kolasinski, Donald A. Morris, Chair, and Donald Tobin.

President: Don Morris
Vice-President: John Kolasinski
Treasurer: Joseph A. Orbeck
Secretary: Judy Fogle

*It should be noted that neither Judy Fogle nor Don Morris nominated themselves. The vote by the Committee was unanimous. The by-laws call for the officers to be voted for one at a time as a group on one ballot, and shall not be voted for individually one at a time.



Once again the South Manitou Memorial Society will set sail for South Manitou Island on Sunday July 27, 1997. If you are interested in joining the group **PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS by phoning Manitou Island Transit at (616) 256-9061.** Bring your family, friends, a picnic lunch, rain gear, your South Manitou Memorial Society sweatshirt and LOTS of stories and memories. Judy Fogle will be organizing the event this year! Thank you Judy. See you all there!

**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY
ISLAND OUTING
SUNDAY JULY 27, 1997**

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND RANGER STATION PIANO

A member of our Society is interested in the history of the piano which is now located in the Coast Guard Station (Ranger Office/Residence) on South Manitou. She has determined that it was built between 1908-1909 by Colby and Company, New York. Does anyone remember who had pianos on the island? Did Bertha Peth have a piano in her home? When? Was this piano ever at Johnny Hutzler's house on the north end of the island? When was this piano moved into the Coast Guard Station? If you can provide information, please write to the Memorial Society's Empire address. Thanks so much!!!

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This paragraph was mistakenly omitted from the last Newsletter (My apologies ...)

ARTICLE V. PROPERTY UTILIZATION

Society members who serve as educational and cultural resources on South Manitou Island will receive the same rights and privileges as do other volunteers in the NPS. Further, the Lakeshore will provide housing and other arrangements as with other volunteers on South Manitou Island so that Society members will be able to conduct educational and cultural programs for visitors to the island. These arrangements could be similar as at other NPS parks such as Ebbeys Landing near Puget Sound in Washington.

Title to any permanent exhibits or related educational and cultural materials installed on Federal lands or visitors centers will automatically transfer to the NPS upon installation. Title to temporary exhibits or short term displays of artifacts or other educational materials will remain with the Society or other contributors. Such exhibits or displays will be removed within thirty (30) days of the expiration or termination of this agreement.

"I REMEMBER ..."

THE "J. Y. SCAMMON"

The following are excerpts from a letter written on July 12, 1990 by Chuck Kruch to Johanna de Kok. At the time Chuck was a ranger for the National Park Service on South Manitou Island. Among his duties on the Island were meeting the passengers as they disembarked off the ferryboat and conducting guided tours of the Lighthouse. He writes:

Although I work on the island it seems I'm continually drifting away from part of it, the history and the people of the past. Fortunately, there are occasions when a former island resident or relative arrives on the ferry and mentions his or her special connection to the island. Little by little the precious pieces come together. It is amazing when you get a glimpse of a building through the eyes of one who lived there many years before as when Don Tobin came to visit. Or when Mae (Tobin) Caron can in a flash recall the big ships that came into the bay and the life that went on in the village, even shuddering at the thought of the loose cattle that chased children on their way to and from school. Those little pieces can make such a big and beautiful picture ...

Sally Ann Hall, a tall, graceful woman, spoke to me at the beginning of a Lighthouse tour and mentioned that her grandfather had been a keeper at the Cat's Head or Northport Light many years ago. I asked Sally Ann if she would assist me by reading a South Manitou shipwreck story to eight visitors while I took another ten up the tower to the parapet. She agreed without hesitating. I explained the situation to everyone and mentioned that the story was written by Alonzo Slyfield, the keeper of the Light when the J.Y. SCAMMON wrecked in 1854. Ms. Hall gasped and was clearly startled but soon regained composure and related to us that her grandfather had been the captain of the J.Y. SCAMMON before he became a Lightkeeper. She read the story and several visitors told me later they would always remember the tour, as I knew I would. It may have been a coincidence but I think the island has a special way of connecting people with its history. I've enclosed the story of the J.Y. SCAMMON shipwreck* and some articles on Peter Nelson, Sally Ann's grandfather, which I found while looking through the Park Library. Enjoy. Best Wishes, Chuck.

(* The story was published in the Vol.8, No.1 Newsletter of the South Manitou Memorial Society. The following are the articles Chuck mentions:

The following is an excerpt from *GRAND TRAVERSE AND LEELANAU COUNTIES*, page 364 and 365, sent by Chuck Kruch to Johanna de Kok:

"One of the hardy mariners closely identified with the early history of Leelanaw County and Grand Traverse region was Captain Peter Nelson, who was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1811, coming to this country in 1835. Like most of the Norseman whose life among the wild seas and fjords of their native land make them almost as much akin to the sea as a skillful sailor, and we first hear of him in 1851 as captain of the little sail vessel "Jenus", running between Chicago and Traverse Bay, and for many years he sailed the old schooner "J.Y. Scammon" between Chicago and Traverse City. This boat, owned by Hannah, Lay & Company, of Traverse City, was the great transportation line for general traffic for this region, carrying passengers as well as everything else required. Captain Nelson was known as a reliable and careful navigator, and his widow still relates, as an example of his rigid ideas of duty, the incident of his landing Mr. Smith's young son and daughter on one of their journeys home from college, on the farther shore beyond Carrying Place, because he considered it would conflict with his duty to run into the harbor with them. As it was night when they went ashore and they got lost in their efforts to spend the night in a cedar swamp without food or shelter and find their own way home in the morning, they thought it a rather firm example of duty.

After the "Scammon" Captain Nelson received the appointment of lighthouse keeper at Cat's Head, which position he held for a number of years. He died on his farm south of Northport in the spring of 1891. Captain Nelson remained unmarried until well advanced in years, as it was not until 1866 that he finally settled down to domestic life, marrying Mrs. Alice Bigelow, of Northport, who is still living in their old home. Two sons and a daughter were born of this union, all of whom are living."

The following was originally given to Fred Burdick of South Manitou Island - and presented to the SMMS by Johanna de Kok:

"A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CHARLES B. SLYFIELD"

Once upon a time in the long, long ago, in the midst of a terrible northeast storm at the old stone dwelling at the South Manitou Lighthouse of which my father was at the time keeper, a baby boy was born and that small bunch of humanity was me. They named me Charles, I suppose because they could not think of anything better to call me. This memorable day was June 8th, 1854. I have always been told that on that day the snow fell to the depth of six inches which went off again very soon with a rain.

The brig rigged vessel, "J.Y. Scammon", owned by Hannah & Lay Company of Traverse City, came ashore that day in the Manitou Bay right where the U.S. Life Saving Station now stands. I have always supposed that the storm that day was a terrific one for that season of the year.

Well, I managed to live through my infancy and grew for about four years. From 1858 I can remember the building of the keepers dwelling at the South Manitou from the men boarding with us in the summer of 1859; also a schooner coming ashore the same fall. Its name was "Mina Kinny" and came ashore a little west of the Lighthouse. I remember that two tugs worked on her getting her off the beach and the sailors stayed at the Lighthouse. The lantern where the light was kept was constructed like a cupola on the end of the dwelling, but in after years it was changed and the 100 foot tower that is used now was built.

In March 1859 my brother, Edwin, was born. I now remember that day well as though it was but yesterday. In the summer of 1859 my father resigned as keeper of the Lighthouse and I, with the rest of our family boarded for about three weeks with a man by the name of Putnam Burdick, who lived about two miles west of the Lighthouse on the shore of the island, father being at that time over on the main shore, about two and one half miles north of where Empire now is, building a house or shanty on a farm of 160 acres of land that he had previously purchased.

The Manitou Island at that time, and for some years before, was used as a wooding place for steamboats, as most of the boats burned wood in those days. They would come and lay at the dock and take on wood for several hours at a time, enough to run them to Chicago and return to the island, and it was easy for one to get away from there then, as a number of boats wooded there each day, going either to Chicago or Buffalo.

To return to my story, when father had got the house nearly done, Mr. Burdick took me with the rest of our family, consisting of Mother, sisters Ella and Mary and baby brother Edwin, and loaded us into his mackinaw boat with a few of our earthly belongings, setting her sails and started to cross over to our new home.

It was a lovely day about the middle of July. The lake was calm except for the small ripples caused by the light southeast wind that was blowing, just enough to fill the sails of our boat. The sky was clear and sunshiny, an ideal summers day. The wind was so close that he could not steer for our landing, but came in about three miles north of our shanty. He tied his boat behind the wreck of the schooner "Gold Hunter" that had been wrecked some years before. Then we all started and walked to our new home. Mother carried the baby and Mr. Burdick carried little sister Mary, only three years old who was sick coming over from the island. When we arrived we found father hard at work trying to complete the house. (Of course, if we had sent him a wireless, he could have been expecting us). Then he and Mr. Burdick went down and brought the boat up with our goods.

There was a small patch cleared, perhaps an acre, besides a lot of timber that was blown up by the roots as though a cyclone had gone through there. Another shanty stood about twenty rods south of ours where two families of fishermen were living and fishing off the beach that season. The men married two sisters, and they all lived in one shanty. They had three children between them. They only stayed a few weeks after we came there and I never knew where they went.

It was a pretty lonesome place to stop at, no neighbors very near. Mr. John LaRue lived where Empire now is. He moved there the same season that we came. He had a wife and six children. They lived in a small shanty right on the beach of Lake Michigan. A man by the name of Thomas Wickham lived at Glen Lake, about three miles east, and Glen Arbor was about nine miles north. There was a dock for wooding steamboats and a small store there. Also a few families scattered around.

The greater part of our household goods were taken from the Island to Glen Arbor by a small schooner that Father chartered for the purpose to carry his live stock which consisted of three milch cows, then young cattle, and a flock each of chickens and turkeys. From Glen Arbor the cattle were driven to our new home, and the other things were transported in a small boat along the shore.

My little sister, Mary, was taken sick coming from the Island, and I was also taken sick a few days after. We were both down at once, and were sick for about three weeks when sister died on the 15th of August, and I had begun to improve. I was troubled with a tapeworm which passed away, but they never did just know what her sickness was. On the morning of the 15th she appeared very much better and brighter in every way.

Father had business at St. Clair and as she appeared to be getting better he went to Glen Arbor and took a boat for Port Huron and St. Clair, and at sunset that night she died. Mr. Burdick had come back from the Island and was clearing land for us. He brought his daughter June along to help Mother and keep her company. She was about 17 so it wasn't quite so bad as being alone, but it was a hard blow to Mother as the child was her favorite pet, and the rest of us children were so young that we hardly realized what was going on.

I remember Mr. Burdick made a little pine box or coffin and painted it black, and they laid her in it to sleep her last long sleep. There is little eminence overlooking a beautiful little lake, about one half mile south of our old house on the shore of Lake Michigan where they laid her to rest. Mr. LaRue and some of his family, Mr. Burdick, his daughter, Mother and us children followed to her last resting place. It was a small funeral procession without a minister to say a word of comfort. But I suppose it was: "Just as well as she had gone to a better world from which no traveler returns. As Jesus has said in his word: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for such is the Kingdom of Heaven", and I have faith to believe she is there.

When Father came home he made a little picket fence around the grave and also put up head and foot boards, and painted the whole white with black lettering on the headboard, telling her name and age. It has now stood 52 years and the little fence and head and foot boards still stand, and the lettering is still quite plain.

SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 177
EMPIRE, MICHIGAN 49630



**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

DONATION: _____ \$50.00 _____ \$10.00
_____ \$100.00 _____ \$25.00 _____ SOTHER

**THE SMMS IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW.
SEND TO: SMMS P.O. BOX 177 EMPIRE, MI 49630**

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

South Manitou Memorial Society t-shirts and sweatshirts are available in oatmeal (cream-colored) with the society logo printed on the left chest with the above mission statement on the back in large print.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ home _____ evenings _____

T-Shirts Size No Price ea Total **Sweatshirts** Size No Price ea Total

XXL _____ \$16.22 _____ XXL _____ \$27.00 _____

XL _____ 14.00 _____ XL _____ 25.00 _____

L _____ 14.00 _____ L _____ 25.00 _____

M _____ 14.00 _____ M _____ 25.00 _____

S _____ 14.00 _____ S _____ 25.00 _____

Youth L _____ 12.00 _____ Youth L _____ 20.00 _____

Youth M _____ 12.00 _____ Youth M _____ 20.00 _____

Youth S _____ 12.00 _____ Youth S _____ 20.00 _____

*Shipping (\$4.00 per order) _____
Total Enclosed _____

Payable to SMMS. Send order to JUDY FOGLE, 2595 OKEMOS RD, MASON MI 48854

Remember, teenagers like their shirts very big, and the sweatshirts are quite thick and warm.

These shirts will be first-order-first-get. Save shipping by pre-ordering t-shirts and sweatshirts for delivery to the SMMS meeting/potluck on July 26, 1997. Whatever stock is left over will be brought to the potluck.