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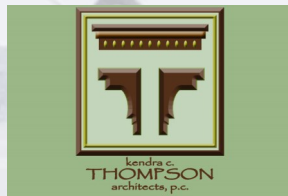
Mason Memories: Winter 2025



Bank lobby of the National Bank of Ludington 1882, 123 W. Ludington Ave.



Thank you to our Business Sponsors



Mason County Research Center Schedule of Winter/Spring Events 2025

Please call ahead for event times & costs at 231-843-4808 or visit our website at: www.masoncountymihistory.org.

Located at Mason County Research Center unless otherwise noted.
Events cancelled if local schools are closed due to weather.

Date TBD - Bus Tour: "M&O Rail Road". The day's event will end at Historic White Pine Village with a dinner catered from Jamesport Brewing.

- Thursday, March 13th - Winter Speaker Series - Rob Alway "In a Flip of a Coin. How Scottville got it's Name".
- Saturday, May 3rd - Opening Day of Museums 25% off regular admission tickets
- Thursdays in May 8, 15, 22 & 29 - History in Action Days (Village)
- Saturday, May 10th - Mother's Day Weekend - Mom's Admission is free
- Friday, June 6th - 9th Love Ludington Weekend
 - * Saturday, June 7th - Blessing of the Boats
 - * Historic Homes Tours 10 am to 11:30 am.
- Saturday, June 14th - Father's Day, Dad's admission is free



Scan Here



Support the Historical Society today!

All proceeds go towards the presentation and preservation of Mason County History

Contact Us
masoncountymihistory.org
231-843-4808

Historical Presentations Offered

Thursday, March 13th at 7 pm
at the Home of the Rose Hawley Archives

In the early 1880s scandal hit the little town of Sweetland, as its namesake left town, presumably with another woman! The town fathers didn't want to live in a town named after an adulterer, so they flipped a coin and changed the name -- or so the story goes. Rob Alway will explore the facts behind local lore and determine if the coin flip really happened -- and when it happened.

How Scottville Got Its Name
by Rob Alway

WINTER
Speaker Series
March 13th

In the early 1880s scandal hit the little town of Sweetland...

Presented by Rob Alway

7 PM

Mason COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

130 E Ludington Ave, Ludington MI, 49431

Mason County Historical Society's 2025 Board of Directors

President - James Jensen
Vice-President - Kim Cole
Treasurer - Dale Horowski
Secretary - Dr. Joan Killion
Dr. Connie Schwass

Rob Alway
Mike Hankwitz
John Neilsen
Ted May

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Join us for Spring Clean Up at Historic White Pine Village!

Dates: April 22, 24 & 29 and May 1 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

What: Sweeping, dusting and cleaning out the buildings; and raking leaves for Opening Day!
Snacks and coffee will be provided in the Admissions Office.

Mason County Research Center

Houses the archives and artifacts of the Mason County Historical Society
Behind-the-Scenes tours offered by appointment.
Tour takes about an hour. See how we store our collections, and special exhibits in the Research Center.
Monday - Friday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm (Winter Hours)

Historic White Pine Village

30 historical buildings and exhibits set on 12 acres. Tour takes 2 - 2 1/2 hours, give yourself plenty of time to wander through!
Open for the season starting Saturday, May 3rd
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
*Ticket sales end at 3:30 p.m. daily.

Port of Ludington Maritime Museum




3 floors of exhibits that explore the maritime history of the Great Lakes. Tour takes about 2 hours, give yourself plenty of time to wander through!
Open for the season starting Saturday, May 3rd
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
*Ticket sales end at 4:30 p.m. daily.

Mason COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
130 E Ludington Ave.
Ludington, MI 49431

Three Part Presentation Series
CHRONICLERS OF MASON COUNTY

The Mason County Historical Society is excited to announce a special presentation series by board president James Jensen in cooperation with the Ludington Senior Center. These engaging talks will explore the lives and work of key figures who documented Mason County's history, followed by insights into uncovering the stories of the past.

Schedule: Breakfast 8:30 AM & Presentation 9:00 AM

<p>February 12, 2025 Ludington Senior Center:</p>  <p>Discover the incredible contributions of <i>Frances Caswell Hanna</i>, whose passion for chronicling Mason County's history has preserved countless stories for future generations.</p>	<p>March 12, 2025 Ludington Senior Center:</p>  <p>Learn about <i>Luman Goodenough's</i> dedication to documenting the rich history of Mason County and his significant impact on our historical archives.</p>	<p>April 09, 2025 Mason County Historical Society:</p>  <p>Explore the fascinating process of uncovering historical stories and how they shape our understanding of the past.</p>
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We hope you'll join us for these captivating presentations. Don't miss this opportunity to dive deeper into the stories and individuals who have preserved Mason County's legacy!

**January, 2025
Message from the President**



The winter months have traditionally been a time of planning and preparation for Mason County Historical Society. That continues to be the case as we begin 2025.

The Society has three standing committees consisting of Board members, staff and a few volunteers. These committees are:

Executive Committee - This committee, chaired by the Board President, helps prepare annual budgets in conjunction with the Executive Director, reviews interim financial reports on a monthly basis and provides general oversight.

Buildings & Grounds Committee, chaired by Director Kim Cole, conducts periodic "walk-throughs" of all three MCHS locations, prioritizes needed repairs and major maintenance and assists the Executive Director in preparing capital expenditure proposals for Board review and approval.

Collections Committee, chaired by Director Rob Alway, works closely with MCHS staff to evaluate potential archival additions and manage our ever growing archival collection (well over 100,000 items currently.)

Last year we also formed several ad-hoc committees to address particular needs; each with a very specific task. Examples of the tasks involved are:

- Planning and facilitating major Society events like the Annual MCHS Gala and bus tours
- Maintaining member communication
- Growing the MCHS volunteer group

Of course in addition to the time and talent of dedicated members and volunteers, those who can offer treasure are also crucial to our operational success. New Business Partners, Adopt -A-Building underwriters and Event sponsors are always welcome. We are very grateful for the many companies and individuals who have supported us over the many decades of our existence and we are especially happy to welcome newcomers to that list of supporters each year.

We again expect that the upcoming year will be filled with both challenges and opportunities for our organization. The Board of Directors again looks forward to working with all of you in 2025 as we preserve, protect and present the fascinating history of Mason County.

James R. Jensen,
President of the Board of Directors

THE AGE OF STEAM

SHIPS FOR SPONSORSHIP

For more information
rebecca@mchshistory.org



Puritan



M.V. Manistee



Maggie Marshall



**Engelman
Transportation Co.**



Amoco Indiana



Charles Williams



City of Milwaukee



The North American



A New Exhibit at the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum Announcing STEAM: The Evolution of Mechanized Propulsion on the Great Lakes.

We're thrilled to announce an exciting new exhibit coming to the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum in Spring 2025: *STEAM: The Evolution of Mechanized Propulsion on the Great Lakes*. This stunning new addition will showcase the transformative era of maritime history when the Great Lakes transitioned from wind-powered sailing vessels to the age of steam propulsion.

Thanks to a significant donation of 11 beautifully crafted steamship models, we're bringing to life the stories of these iconic vessels and the technological advancements that powered them. This exhibit will captivate visitors of all ages, offering a rich and immersive experience of one of the Great Lakes' most groundbreaking periods.

What to Expect

- **Breathtaking Displays:** Newly designed exhibit counters and custom graphic panels will showcase these incredible ship models, each accompanied by an information panel sharing the vessel's unique story and the relevance of that type of steam propulsion to evolutionary changes.
- **Interactive Features:** Dive deeper into history with a hands-on marine traffic touch table, exploring the traffic on the Great Lakes.
- **Historical Content:** Learn about the evolution of steam propulsion, the engineering feats behind these ships, and the impact they had on the Great Lakes and beyond.
- **Maritime Artifacts:** Admire accompanying artifacts, such as detailed engine models, which further enrich this captivating narrative.

This exhibit is designed to inspire and educate, celebrating the ingenuity and innovation of a bygone era while preserving these stories for future generations.

How You Can Support This Vision

The total anticipated cost to bring this exhibit to life is **\$25,000**, and we need your support to make it happen. Here's how you can get involved:

Be a Part of History: Sponsor a Ship Model!

With a \$2,000 sponsorship, you'll play a vital role in this exciting project. Sponsors will have their names proudly displayed on the informational panel accompanying the ship they support, a lasting testament to their contribution. Imagine seeing your name (or your business or loved one's name) alongside a stunning model that will inspire countless visitors for years to come.

Every Gift Makes a Difference

Even if a sponsorship isn't for you, every donation, big or small, brings us closer to our goal. Your support will ensure this exhibit becomes a centerpiece of the museum and an educational treasure for the community.

To make a donation or sponsor a ship model, call Rebecca at 231-843-4808. Together, we can bring this incredible piece of Great Lakes history to life and celebrate the age of steam with our visitors.

Thank you for your continued support of the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum. We look forward to welcoming you aboard the *Steamship Model Exhibit* in 2025!

From The Executive Director

January 31st, 2025

*Whatever your story, whatever your Mason County experience,
we are dedicated to preserving it!*



A Warm Welcome to 2025

Happy New Year! As we step into 2025, I'd like to reflect on the incredible accomplishments of 2024 and share my excitement for the year ahead. Last year, we hosted 22 events, welcomed 25,000 visitors to our museums, and provided educational opportunities for over 2,000 area school students. Thanks to the generous support of our Adopt-a-Building donors, we were able to dedicate \$32,000 to vital building improvements. Meanwhile, our incredible volunteers contributed 4,220 hours to support events, school programming, and maintaining our beautiful gardens at Historic White Pine Village. From our Gardening Angels to those cataloging archival documents, sorting artifacts, and organizing historical photos, their dedication makes our mission possible. These achievements are a testament to the hard work and generosity of our staff, donors, and volunteers, and I'm confident that 2025 will bring even greater opportunities to preserve and celebrate Mason County's history.

As we begin this new year, I am thrilled to welcome two new board members to the Mason County Historical Society: John Nielsen of Floracraft and former City Council member Ted May. Their experience, passion, and commitment to our mission will bring invaluable insight to the board of directors. You can learn more about John and Ted on page 15.

While winter has blanketed Mason County in snow, our staff is hard at work preparing for the upcoming tourist season. The success of our summer programs and activities depends heavily on the work being done now. From inventory management and exhibit repair to event planning and program development, these winter months are essential for ensuring a meaningful and engaging experience for our members and visitors.

As the Historical Society continues to grow, we are excited about the changes that this growth brings. Olivia will expand her role to include program management while continuing to handle some of her executive responsibilities. Her focus will be on enhancing treasured programs and developing new opportunities for enrichment. Michelle's role will grow to assist with additional executive functions, while Amber will continue managing our collection and supporting the daily operations of all three locations. Additionally, we are looking forward to adding a new position focused on marketing and membership development—a much-needed role to help us better serve our members and share the important work we do with an even larger audience.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be an exciting year filled with fun opportunities to engage with Mason County's history. We're thrilled to host our 2nd Annual Mason County Bus Tour, which will take participants on a fascinating journey exploring the Mason & Oceana Railroad. A new steamship exhibit is being developed at the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of the region's maritime legacy. Additionally, we are expanding volunteer opportunities at Historic White Pine Village, creating interactive experiences that will bring history to life for our guests. These are just a few of the exciting things we have planned for the year ahead, and we can't wait to share them with you.

None of this would be possible without your continued support. Your generosity and passion for preserving Mason County's history inspire us every day. Together, we ensure that the stories of our past are preserved, celebrated, and shared with future generations. Thank you for being part of our journey and for your commitment to keeping Mason County's legacy alive.

Here's to a year filled with growth, opportunity, and shared history!

Warm regards,

Rebecca Berringer
Executive Director, Mason County Historical Society



Adopt-a-Building at HWPV

By: Michelle DeKuiper, Operations Manager

Buildings available: 1905 Port Huron Sawmill, Agriculture Shed East & West, Marchido School, Military Bldg., Siddon Print Shop, Sugar Shack

You can become an Adopt-a-Building Sponsor with a gift of \$750.00.

Your donation will afford us valuable resources to provide for our historical buildings' long-term preservation and guarantee an authentic historical presentation of Mason County's pioneer era. Adopt-a-Building donors are recognized with signage at the entrance of the building, and at our Annual Meeting.

If you are interested in Adopting a building please e-mail michelle@mchshistory.org or call 231-843-4808.

Projects for 2025 include:

- New roof on the Blacksmith Shop
- Re-painting the Hardware Store
- New windows in the Time Building
- Fixing the leaking chimney in the Trapper's Cabin



- Abe Nelson – Dornbos Family
- Artisan Center – Anne Pettigrew
- Blacksmith Shop – Patrick & Maria O'Hare
- Burns' Farmhouse - George Miner
- Coles General Store – Kim & Gina Cole
- Doctor's Office – Chuck & Glenna Paukstis
- George R. Petersen Admissions Office - James & Judith Jensen
- Hamlin Lake Cottage – Kathy Bromley, Hamlin Lake Preservation Society
- Jorissen Barn – The Jorissen Family
- M&O Train – Greg Gariepy, In memory of Jim Gariepy
- Museum of Music – Edgar Struble & Scottville Clown Band
- Pere Marquette Town Hall – Greg Gariepy, In memory of Jim Gariepy
- Phoenix Fire House – Ellamae McDonald
- Post Office - Delores Gariepy
- Rose Hawley Museum - Thomas & Jackie Lane
- Time Building - Greg Gariepy, In memory of Jim Gariepy
- Trapper's Cabin - Tom & Kaye Sorensen
- White Pine Village Chapel – Emanuel Lutheran Church
- Wm. E Anderson Hardware Store – Suzanne & Terry Major

Thank you!



Historic White Pine Village Spring History in Action Days

Dates are: May 8, 15, 22 and 29



Each of our 30 museum buildings/exhibits are filled with artifacts and reminders of our pioneer history. During History In Action Days interpreters help students understand how pioneer families lived. Several special activities are usually taking place throughout the Village as well, i.e. candle making, flint knapping, blacksmith, sawmill demonstrations, storytelling, spinning, loom weaving or woodcarving.

Historic White Pine Village will be a memorable and educational trip for your class or group of classes!

The cost for the "History in Action Days" is \$9.00 per student and \$12.00 per chaperone (teachers at public schools are free of charge), which includes an ice cream cone or popcorn from our Old Fashioned Ice Cream Parlor, and our gift shop will be open with offers of historic toys, candy and gifts for sale.

Advance reservations are required: number of students is limited and payment for students and chaperones is due 2 weeks prior to arrival for this special event. We look forward to hearing from you. Please email your reservation request to olivia@mchshistory.org or call 231-843-4808 ext. 104



Port of Ludington Maritime Museum Maritime History Days (2nd grade)

The Port of Ludington Maritime Museum is housed in Ludington's historic Coast Guard station built in 1934, which remained active until 2004, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum features three floors of exhibits on various topics of maritime history and is filled with state of the art exhibits the students can see, hear, read, and interact with; including a fully interactive simulation of being at the wheel of the Pere Marquette 22 as it sails in and out of Ludington harbor in the late 1920s.

The students learn about the Coast Guard and Life Saving Service, railroad carferries, shipwrecks, Fresnel lenses, the Great Lakes, nautical knot tying and the lumbering era in Mason County. These field trips are geared towards 2nd grade curriculum but can be enjoyed and appreciated by any grade level.

Homeschool groups also can visit the museum on these days. The cost for the "Maritime History Days" is \$9.00 per student and \$12.00 per chaperone (teachers at public schools are free of charge).

Please email your reservation request to olivia@mchshistory.org or call 231-843-4808 ext. 104

Both museums are in need of volunteers for the upcoming season! Volunteers help explain to our visitors what they are seeing. They help us "Bring History to Life" for our guests. Please contact us at 231-843-4808 ext. 104 to volunteer!



Echoes from the Past

By: Michelle DeKuiper, Operations Manager



The following article is an excerpt taken from: *The Mason & Oceana Railroad* by Robert W. Garasha.

The story of the Mason & Oceana Railroad begins in 1874, with the arrival of Horace Butters in Ludington, Michigan. Butters was born in Maine in 1833. At the age of 19 he left home and went to Manistee to engage in logging. Twenty-two years spent in Manistee were not only enough for him to learn thoroughly the involved business of logging, but they also convinced him that his real opportunities lay elsewhere.

Early in 1878, Horace Butters entered into partnership with Richard G. Peters, forming Butters, Peters & Co.; to be known within a short time as the Butters & Peters Sale & Lumber Co. Peters was born in Delaware County, New York, July 3, 1832. He left his home at 18 and started for Cincinnati, Ohio. From there he came to Michigan, landed at

Point Sauble in 1858, and went to work for Charles Mears, one of the pioneer lumbermen of the area. From there he went to Ludington to oversee the lumbering interests of James Ludington, where he became associated with Horace Butters.

The Butters & Peters logging railroad was incorporated on August 9, 1886. Its charter from the state named it the Mason & Oceana Railroad, and specified that its route would be from Butters & Peters Mill to Section 36, Township 16N, 16W. Officers of the company were Horace Butters, President; R.G. Peters, Vice-President; Marshall F. Butters, Secretary; and Martin McDermott, General Superintendent. (Marshall F. Butters was Horace Butters' son). Directors were R.G. Peters, Horace Butters, Marshall F. Butters, Robert Arnott and Patrick O'Connor.

On January 20, 1888 service was opened from Buttersville to Stetson, 27 miles. Stetson was actually the name of a post office located south of the present town, and the state which was originally called Stetson, later became Walkerville.

There were now 6 stations and eleven highway crossings at grade, none protected with gates or flagmen. There were 40 employees. Naturally, the greatest part of the traffic carried consisted of lumber and forest products, but in addition to this the M & O was now handling grain, flour, provisions, animals, coal, plaster, lime and cement, salt, petroleum, stone, brick and sand and general merchandise. It had become a genuine utility to the communities which it served.

On August 25, 1909, a blaze was discovered in the "hog house" at Buttersville, a building separate from the main plant, where wood was ground up for fuel. There was no fire department in Buttersville. By morning the sawmill, shingle mill, several thousand shingles, cooper shop, lumber yards, sale block and cocks were destroyed.

This was the beginning of the end for the M & O railroad, for it meant the loss of its main sources of traffic. The official end would come on December 1, 1909.

With both the mill and the railroad gone, few people had any reason to continue living in Buttersville.

Most of the remaining houses were moved to Ludington. Buttersville became a ghost town. In a few winters the pounding, howling fury of Lake Michigan removed the remaining traces of the town, leaving the sandy peninsula as it was originally.



Programming Position returning to the Historical Society!



By: Olivia Lambrix, Executive Assistant/Program Coordinator

My first summer season with Mason County Historical Society has successfully wrapped up, and my one year anniversary of joining this amazing team is rapidly approaching. The passion I have for sharing local history and participating in community engagement continues growing, and I'm thrilled to belong to this expanding organization.

During the operating season of May through October, you may have seen me at any of our museums helping with school groups or taking photos at special events alongside our Board Members, awesome staff, and incredible volunteers. On the days you might not have seen me, I worked in my office, behind the scenes, assisting Rebecca any way I could as Executive Assistant.

This year, along with my current position, I will also be managing as Program Coordinator! This wonderful opportunity allows me to create educational and engaging programs and events for all visitors. My previous work experience as a costumed Civilian Interpreter at Colonial Michilimackinac provided me insight into practicing and presenting successful interpretive skills.

Currently I am working on creating a few programs for Historic White Pine Village involving food culture, life at the lumber camps, and a one room schoolhouse education. The Port of Ludington Maritime Museum has a couple walking tours in the works, as well as educational and interactive programs for school groups. I will also create a training guide with resource material for volunteers interested in doing a demonstration or tour.

Be on the lookout for additional programming and downtown events throughout the year that Mason County Historical Society will be hosting or participating in. For example, we will be handing out a warm sample of soup for the Sips & Soups Downtown Ludington event Saturday, February 8, 2025.

Did you know that there are over a dozen recipe books and cookbooks in the archives? There are truly some unique flavors in these recipes, and I want to share them with you! I've pulled a recipe from a 1931 book in the Rose Hawley Archives to serve for the Sips & Soups event, along with recipe cards of the soup to take home. Stop by for a sample and we can chat about soups, stews, and chowders throughout history!

I am looking forward to another great year for the Mason County Historical Society. Thank you to everyone who attended even just one of our events, our members and donors for supporting us, and our wonderful volunteers for their time and passion for sharing knowledge!

See you soon!





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How It Works:

- 01 Scan the QR Code**
Open your camera or QR code scanning app and point it at the code below.
- 02 Select Options**
Choose from various membership options to best fit your needs.
- 03 Pay Securely**
Complete your payment through our secure platform.



masoncountymihistory.org

231-843-4808

History Mystery

This is a photo from our collection, and has no information attached to it. If you can help identify the gentleman in the photo, we would to add his name to the photo for future generations. Contact Amber, Collections Manager at 231-843-4808 or amber@mchshistory.org



Become a Business Partner!

Get on board!

For over 80 years the Mason County Historical Society has educated and entertained the public while working to preserve and protect the rich and vast history of Mason County. Be part of one of the largest historical societies in the state of Michigan! Choose a level below.



BUSINESS PARTNER LEVELS

	Friend \$300	Archivist \$1,000	Curator \$1,500	Educator \$2,500	Historian \$5,000
Benefits					
After-hours reception for up to 20 people					●
Free Legacy Hall room rental at Mason County Research Center				●	●
Sponsor of the Day recognition		1	2	3	4
Combo guest passes		2	4	8	15
MCHS Annual Meeting tickets	1	2	4	6	10
Family tree genealogy entries	1	2	4	6	8
Annual individual or family membership	●	●	●	●	●
Business listing on MCHS website	●	●	●	●	●
Recognition in quarterly Mason Memories newsletter	●	●	●	●	●
25% discount on Gift Shop merchandise	●	●	●	●	●
Recognition at Mason County Research Center	●	●	●	●	●



Join at: www.masoncountymihistory.org/sponsors/

Welcome New Directors

John Nielsen joined FloraCraft Corporation in 2020 and is serving as their CFO. FloraCraft is a private and closely-held, Michigan-based company and is the world's leading manufacturer of foam products for the Craft and Floral industries. In this role, John has oversight for Finance, Information Systems, Internal Controls, Risk Management, Audit and Expense Management. Prior to FloraCraft, John was Treasurer of Henniges Automotive, Head of Treasury with MAHLE Industries, he worked in Treasury Operations at BorgWarner, and he held various financial positions with Delphi. However, John began his career in Finance as a teller at Old Kent Bank.



John holds a dual MBA from Michigan State University in Finance and Information Systems and a bachelor's degree from Michigan Technological University. He is a Certified Treasury Professional and a member of the Association for Financial Professionals. He was former President and board member of the Great Lakes Association for Financial Professionals and served on the Strategic Advisory Council of Comerica Bank. John is also a board member of the Chamber Alliance of Mason County and recently joined the Mason County Historical Society as a board member. John lives in Ludington, MI and has been married to his wife Erika for 25 years and has a daughter who recently graduated from U of M in Neuroscience. Outside of work, John enjoys working on cars, woodworking, homebrewing and sailing.



Theodore R May is an Alma College graduate and holds a Masters from Central Michigan University. He was a teacher for Junior and Senior grades and coached many sports including: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Softball and Track. Ted is also a former Adult Education Director of St. Albans, West Virginia, public schools. He then worked for 28 years as a Special Agent for the FBI.

Upon retirement, he then moved to Ludington, where he has owned a home since 2004. After moving to Ludington he worked part time at Historic White Pine Village for two years, and afterwards volunteered on the Village grounds as well. He has held office as a Ludington City Councilor for the past four years and also is currently serving on the Board at Lincoln Hills Golf Club.



From our collection: a photo of the old Free Soil School.

From our Collections



By: Amber Berliner, Collections Manager



The Collections department is excited to share our recent updates over the past few months. We've made strides in improving artifact storage, enhancing organization, and expanding our catalog.

Collections Move: Progress Updates

We are continuing to unpack items from the storage location at Historic White Pine Village. Items moved over this winter include women's and men's hats, baby and toddler clothing, medicine bottles, paintings, and various award plaques. We have moved over 96,200 artifacts and documents to our downtown location.

Improvements in the Collections

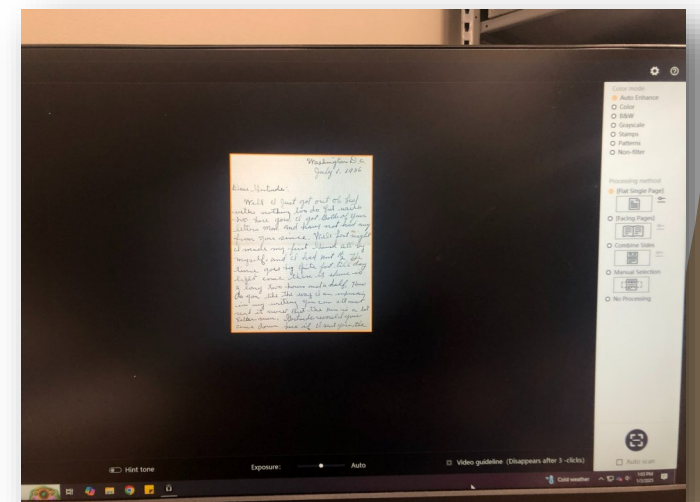
Significant improvements have been made in the museum's collections care, ensuring better preservation and accessibility of artifacts. We are in the process of resizing photo boxes to more appropriately fit materials and reducing wasted space. In the textile room, hats have been rehoused into acid-free boxes for better preservation and dust covers have been added to hanging

clothing. Items that have been moved over the summer are now being unpacked and processed into new areas. Currently, dedicated volunteers have been working on digitizing hundreds of WW2 letters. Preserving our history would not be possible without your contributions, thank you.

Research and Artifact Donations

Recent research requests have included family history and local business history. Donations from the past few months include a sign from the Pere Marquette Railroad Company, local business documents, and a collection of COVID-19 materials.

We are actively seeking any Mason County artifacts and documents, by donating you can contribute to preserving our area's history. Please contact me at amber@mchshistory.org for research or donation.



From the Mason County Historical Society

Photo Collection



*Christiansen Cabin,
Victory Township*



*Ludington Avenue
1940*



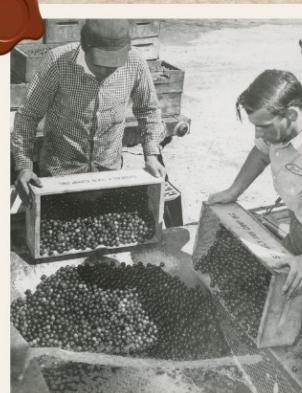
*Hollick-Carlson AG
Store, Ludington*



Unknown



Macabees



*Stokely Van Camp
Inc.*



*Ludington Coast
Guard*



Red Cross 1942

Vintage Memories



BOGO 50% OFF

All sweatshirts

DON'T MISS OUR CLEARANCE SALES!

**GET GREAT DISCOUNTS ON SELECT
ITEMS**

**MASON COUNTY
EMPORIUM
AND SWEET SHOP**

**OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY
10AM-4PM**




Volunteer Workshop

Mason County Historical Society offers a wide range of opportunities for anyone interested in volunteering in the community. A Volunteer Workshop will be held at our downtown location to explore the various opportunities that can use your support. From being the friendly face that welcomes guests at the Maritime Museum front desk, to providing an engaging demonstration in the Blacksmith Shop at the Village. Every contribution you make will create a significant impact.

Support the Mason County Historical Society in our mission to preserve and protect history for generations to come. Help give history a future!

Workshop Hours:

Friday May 2, 2025
10 am - 12 pm & 4 pm - 6 pm

 130 E Ludington Ave.
 Ludington, MI 49431

Please RSVP by: Monday, April 28th
 to Olivia@mchshistory.org
 or 231-843-4808 x104

Volunteer Opportunities

- Interpretation, Tour Guides, Specialized Demonstrations
- Event Support
- Facility & Ground Maintenance
- Educational Programs
- Research Assistance
- Cataloging in the Archives
- Photography & Data Entry
- Plus Benefits and More!

Contact Us



www.masoncountymihistory.org | 231-843-4808 | Follow us on Facebook for updates



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Gain skills in multiple museum positions from a historic village setting to a maritime museum, and collection storage. At the end of the program receive a \$750 stipend.

Application Deadline April 18th

POSITIONS

Collections

Education

Operations

For more information contact
 Amber at:

Amber@mchshistory.org
 231-843-4808x106



Celebrating 150 Years of Cross-Lake Service

By Rob Alway

The year 2025 marks 150 years of cross-lake service from Ludington, Michigan to Wisconsin. In 1875, the first ships to transport goods across Lake Michigan were known as break-bulk freighters. Railcars at that time did not travel across the lake, so the contents of the cars were removed, loaded onto the break-bulk steamer, shipped across Lake Michigan, then re-loaded onto railcars waiting on the other shore.

In December 1874, the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway completed construction between Flint, Michigan and Ludington in Mason County, with the first train arriving on Dec. 6. Within the next year, cross-lake service, the predecessor of the railcar ferries, began.

Construction of the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway began in 1859. Railroad executives had been considering a cross-lake route to Manitowoc, Wis. since 1859 because the trip around Lake Michigan was costly, mostly due to heavy rail traffic through Chicago.

In 1875, the F&PM chartered the 175-foot-long side wheeler steamer John Sherman to shuttle grain, packaged freight and passengers between Ludington and Sheboygan, Wis. to connect with the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac Railway. The steamer also handled passengers and general cargo.

The John Sherman was too small for the needs of the F&PM and served only for a single season. Beginning in 1876, the railroad chartered a variety of steamers from the Goodrich Transit Company, the largest Lake Michigan passenger and package-freight carrier. The Goodrich ships operated at various Wisconsin ports, but the principal route in connection with the Flint & Pere Marquette came to be the run from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to the Michigan ports of Ludington, Manistee, and Frankfort.

The F&PM ended its relations with Goodrich transit in 1883 and purchased two steamers for its own operation out of Ludington, F&PM Nos. 1 and 2. Both were typical Great Lakes propellers at the time, with their engines aft and a single tier of cabins for 25 passengers on the spar deck. A spar deck is the upper deck of a ship that extends from stem to stern.

With an increase in traffic in the late 1880s the railroad expanded its fleet by three ships: F&PM Nos. 3, 4, and 5, built in 1887, 1888, and 1890, respectively.

The F&PM began negotiations with the Wisconsin Central Railway toward the end of establishing a through all-rail route via Ludington and Manitowoc. The arrangement required the Wisconsin Central to build a branch from its main line at Neenah-Menasha, near Lake Winnebago to Manitowoc.

In December, 1895, the F&PM ordered a steel carferry, designed by Robert Logan (1861-1918), a prominent naval architect of Cleveland who had immigrated to the U.S. from Scotland.



The Pere Marquette was launched on Dec. 30, 1896 and arrived in Ludington on Feb. 13, 1897. It was then sent to Milwaukee for inspection. The Pere Marquette made its maiden voyage from Ludington to Manitowoc the evening of Feb. 16-17, 1897. It carried 22 freight cars and the private car of S.T. Crapo, general manager of the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway.

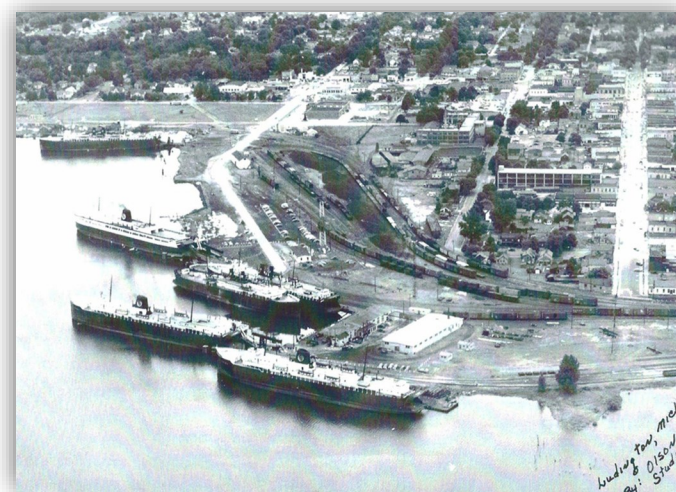
The Pere Marquette Railway was formed on Nov. 1, 1899 to consolidate the Flint & Pere Marquette, the Chicago & West Michigan and the Detroit Grand Rapids & Western. When the new company was formed, it also obtained the former F&PM fleet consisting of the carferry Pere Marquette and the passenger and break-bulk freight-carriers F&PM Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5. Additionally, it acquired a carferry that had been owned by the Detroit Grand Rapids & Western.

In 1901, the Pere Marquette Railway changed the names of its entire carferry fleet, including its Detroit River ferries. Break-bulk freighters were to be numbered 1 and up. The river ferries were to be numbered from 14 downward and the Lake Michigan ferries were to be numbered 15 and above.

The break-bulk freighters were renamed Pere Marquette 2, 3, 4, and 5. The Pere Marquette was renamed Pere Marquette 15 and the Muskegon, a ship that the railroad acquired as part of its merger, was renamed Pere Marquette 16.

The fleet of Ludington-based carferries continued to grow and evolve. In 1947, the Pere Marquette Railway was absorbed into the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. In 1951, the C&O asked for bids on a pair of ferries, similar to its City of Midland 41, built in 1941. The result were the Spartan (1952) and the Badger (1953), the last two steam-operated carferries built to operate on the Great Lakes.

Today, the Badger is the last of the ferries that began in 1875.



Sources: Mason County Historical Society, "The Great Lakes Car Ferries" by George W. Hilton.

Rob Alway is Editor-in-Chief of Mason County Press in Scottville, Mich., a member of the Mason County Historical Society Board of Directors, and Outside Marketing Representative for Lake Michigan Carferry.

Member Appreciation Event to be held on Thursday, June 26th at the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum in celebration of this milestone!

