



Pentwater Filling Stations, Part II

In 2007, Pentwater Historical Society members Nancy Grant and Betty Jensen gathered information and produced a document about gas stations on Hancock Street. Extracts from their research were first printed in the publication "Pentwater This Week", issue date August 21–28. We found this of great interest and decided to feature their complete work for the benefit of our members.

The Crystal Flash Station



Thanks to Bruce Bates for his recollection of the Crystal Flash gas station. Without his support we would have missed the following candid snapshot of not only the history of the station but a keen insight into Pentwater life in the late "30's and early "40's.

The station was located on 6th street just across from St. Vincent Catholic Church, near the corner of Clymer. Bruce received the following information and pictures from Florence Owen, daughter of the station owner Sam Hepworth. She recalls:

I don't know if you know that the gas station my dad had was a Leonard Station for a while, and then he changed over to Crystal Flash.

He gave up the station when gas rationing began during the 2nd World War. He didn't want to deal with the ration stamps and he couldn't make enough money to keep the station open.

Sincerely,
Florence Owen



Top photo: Sam Hepworth and his wife Edna.
Photo above: Edna and daughter or two of the daughters?
Photo left: Sam Hepworth posing by the pumps during the construction of the Station.

Sinclair – Sunoco

What is generally known about Teapot Dome is contained in the "Oceana County History". But just in case, you haven't had the opportunity to read it, here are some extracts along with John Grondsma's obituary printed in the local paper as well as an article written by Edith Smith, John's stepdaughter. Although lengthy, they put a lot of meat on the bare bones facts so I hope you find them rewarding.

Pentwater News Dateline: Friday April 25, 1952 Funeral services for John Grondsma, 54, who passed away at Oceana Hospital late Monday evening after an extended illness were held at the First Baptist church on Thursday afternoon, Rev. Elmer Ubbink, officiating.

Mr. Grondsma was born in the village of Joure, Province of Friesland, in northern Netherlands, on Oct. 14, 1897, one of 16 children. He came to the U.S. when a young man and lived for about two years in Grand Rapids prior to coming to Pentwater. After being in business in Pentwater for a short time he established the Teapot Dome service station and store on US-31 at the north edge of Pentwater township about 25 years ago, which he operated during the ensuing years. He started the business on a small scale and built it up through the years. He was married in March of 1927 to Mrs. Carrie Freeland Lynn of Pentwater.

Surviving besides the widow are two sons, John, who aided his father in the management of the business, and Pfc. Nicholas Grondsma, who was called home but a few days ago from Korea because of his father's illness; five daughters, Mrs. Denzil Hepworth, Mrs. Alfred McLachlan, Bass Lake, Cora, Betty and Alice at home; two stepsons Robert and William Lynn; two stepdaughters, Mrs. Cecil Smith, Bass Lake, and Mrs. Russell Kubbon, Crystal Valley.

Mr. Grondsma was widely known among the summer visitors to this area and had many friends among them as well as among the residents of this area. He was a good neighbor and a good citizen of the community, always ready to lend a helping hand if needed. He will be greatly missed, not only by his family but also by his wide circle of friends. Burial was made in Pentwater township cemetery. Funeral arrangements were in charge of the E.F. Kent Funeral Home.

By Edith Smith

Teapot Dome was a small two story store and gas station near Bass Lake. It was 1927 when we first moved there. The down-

stairs was the store with a small kitchen in the back that was the size of a large pantry with a stairway going up through it. The cooking was done on a gasoline stove, used both for customers and family. There was one large sleeping room upstairs then.

The outhouses were outside in the back. The gas station was a building about 4ft by 8ft, with one or two large oil barrels inside.



The Sinclair Filling Station on the present site of The Main Event Restaurant.

Oil was pumped up into bottles to put into cars. The gas pumps had to be pumped back up each time they were emptied. I think that there were two pumps. I was six at the time and my sister Rosalie was about one.

John married my mother sometime before that and we lived in Pentwater first where he ran a

pool room in the White Elephant. He bought the Teapot Dome then and we all moved there. The Teapot Dome sold Sinclair Gasoline and was named after the Teapot Dome Scandal.

Through the years, rooms were added to the store. Two more bedrooms upstairs and two large rooms in the back with a better stairway. Also a basement was added under the entire building. I'm sure that the basement was quite an undertaking as modern tools were not available. Probably dirt was wheeled out with a wheel barrow. The gas station was enlarged and then later removed and a new one built which is still there. We used the old one for a play house over the hill.

Six children were born in the upstairs bedroom: John Jr., Margaret, Nick, Cora, Alice, and Betty. Nick lives just down the road and Cora in Pentwater. Marge lives in Reading, Mi. I live around the lake, John in Muskegon. Alice and Betty are both in California.

Rosalie passed away in 1988. In 1940, we had a fire which burnt the old store with everything in it. Some of the children were in bed and our first thought was to save them. The pine lumber in the store building burnt very fast.

John rebuilt the store in the same fall, this time the living quarters were all upstairs with plenty of room for all. We had five bedrooms now and we really enjoyed it. Before, four of us girls slept over the gas station, but now we didn't need to do that. We had a laundry room where we did the washing and also a lot of our canning. That did not burn so we continued to use it.

I was married in 1942 and my husband went off to the service, so I and our son came back and lived at the store again. When I was working, Dennis was in the store in his jumper and everyone

talked to him. He always enjoyed that. Also, so many Aunts and Uncles to play with him. In 1945, my husband Cecil returned from the service and in 1946, John built again. This time it was a large service area, garage and appliance store with a work shop. Apartments were to be built upstairs, but only one was done and my husband and I and our two children moved in it, with my husband running the appliance store and repair shop. We did this for about three years.

Writing this brings back all the memories of swimming, fishing, ice skating, and sliding on Bass Lake. We hiked the trails and picked wild blue berries and wild flowers. The blue berries are all gone now. The sixteenth birthday party for Rosalie was quite an occasion. It was held at the beach with food carried over the trail by all the kids that came from Pentwater. We had a hotdog roast, swimming, and back to the house for cake and homemade ice cream. The kids that came walked out from Pentwater and had to walk back again. I'm sure some remember it.

One time Cora cut her wrist badly with a broken bottle and had to go to the hospital. She still is bothered by it. Marge spent one of her prom nights in bed with poison oak. Marge also cracked her ankle while hiking and Rosalie and I had to partly carry her out to the road so her dad could come for her. Nick had appendicitis from eating wild grapes, or at least that's what we thought it was from.

John and Nick both went into the service. All of the family mar-



John Grondsma with some of the Grondsma girls in 1950.
From left: Alice, John, family friend Bertha, and Betty and Cora.

ried and are grandparents. Sometime after John died in 1952, the property and business were sold. It is now apartments and the Main Event Restaurant.

Editor's note. Carrie Grondsma sold the property to Harold De-Moat and Rex and Ethel Hanover in 1979. Subsequently their estate sold it to David Plummer in 2007.

We need your photographs.

You may be one of the many people who have older, historical photos of Pentwater that you would like to share. The Historical Society would like to take a look at them and possibly preserve them by scanning/copying and then returning them to you.



The beach during the 20's at the present Charles Mears State Park

2008 EVENTS

Pentwater Historical Society

Mark your calendar with these always informative programs and fun social gatherings.

The Spring Dinner & Program
Wednesday, May 28,

General Membership Meeting & 25th Year Celebration
Wednesday, July 9

The Summer Dinner & Program
Wednesday, August 27

The Antique Fair
Saturday, Sept. 13 from 10 till Noon



Harbor view of Pentwater with the "White Elephant" building behind the building that now is the Yacht Club.

The Standard Oil Station

Going north past Second Street, centered on the east side of the block at 168 Hancock, stood Mr. Bouga's Livery Stable business. In 1915, Mr. David Eisenlohr purchased the building.

He continued the livery business and used a portion of the building for auto parts and repairs. He hired builder John R. Graham in 1920 to remodel the building and install a gas pump by each of the two brick pillars on Hancock Street.

Mr. Eisenlohr reopened as a full service Standard Oil Station. A huge garage door opened to an area with angled spaces on each side for auto repairs and parking. It had a centered car lift near the rear garage door. He also owned another garage that he used for major repairs and storage. It was located at the building's rear and faced East Second Street.

The building is currently an Antique Mall. During the 1930's and 40's David and his son Chet (Sr.) ran the Standard Station. After that, Joe McGuire, Chet's son-in-law owned and operated the



The Standard Service Station in the early fifties. Now a variety of retail shops.

station. It was then purchased by Joe's brothers-in-law, Chet (Jr.) and James (Jim) Eisenlohr. Roger Taylor, an employee, worked there for years and eventually rented the building and operated the business. It was closed and vacated in 1976. Gustafson's Boutique Clothing Store opened in 1981. From 2002 onward, the building was used for a variety of retail services.

From Our Readers

In response to the "Pentwater Filling Stations" article two members provided additional information.

Gayle LaMielle provided information that validates and supplements the article on the Standard Station. We had a tough choice of whether to merge Gayle's information into the original article or to present it separately. For reasons too numerous to relate we opted for the latter.

From Gayle LaMielle :

I am offering the following information in reply to your request in the Fall Newsletter. On 7/4/1916

David Eisenlohr purchased the property (which is now the Cosmic Candy Co.; & G.O.T.T.) at 168 S. Hancock Street from John and Parmelia Bouga who had been operating a Livery Stable there. They moved their Livery Stable business across the street to the "Big Maple Garage" location. David Eisenlohr and his son, Chester opened up the area's first auto sales showroom calling it "Eisenlohr and Son."

On 4/30/1920 Chester Eisenlohr purchased the property, which is now Carriage House Antiques, at 50 E. Second Street from William J. Sloan to be used as an automotive repair garage. This property was directly behind the Hancock Street showroom. The original livery building on Hancock Street was demolished

and a new building was constructed in 1922. There was a large garage door at the rear of the showroom. Cars would be driven through the door, across the alley and into a corresponding door in the repair garage. At this time the name of the business was changed to the "Pentwater Auto Company." Chester Eisenlohr sold the repair garage in 1954 but it continued to be operated as a garage until around 1990 when the owner, Henry "Mac" McGinnis changed it to a bait shop. He sold it in 1998 and it has been an antique store since then.

Ownership of the Hancock Street showroom went to Chester when his father, David died in 1943 and stayed in the Eisenlohr family until 1992 when it was sold to the Gustafsons.

The above information was obtained from Deeds to the properties. I do not know whether there were gas pumps at either location.

From Fred Immer:

The Big Maple Garage, after being a skating rink, was used for a while by "Rapid Titan" as a warehouse and for at least one of their assembly lines. In the early "50's" I worked on that line over Easter vacation from Alma College in 1952 and "53". Rapid Titan was started by Harry Balfour and Bill Yonkman during World War II and made wire harnesses for tanks.

President's Message

As the 25th year begins for the Pentwater Historical Society, a quote from President John Kennedy comes to mind. "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." Now is a good time for each member to consider what makes our organization strong. I hope you will find in that examination that strength comes from the contributions of each member.

Some members may believe that they can only contribute membership fees, donations and memorials. However there is so much more that all of us can do.

The goal of preserving Pentwater's history and making that history available to future generations is our driving aspiration. In order to build on the existing archives, the core of the organization, we need to enlarge our collection of stories, photographs and objects from Pentwater's past. Recollections of growing up in Pentwater, of summer visits, of homecoming, of parents and children and relatives, of weddings and funerals, of fishing and swimming, of campfires and picnics, of the

beach and the water tower, the barn and the bandstand, of summer band concerts and winter skiing, any and all would be



very valuable additions to our collection. Of course there are items that you may want to keep for your family. Photo-

graphs, documents and even objects can be digitally scanned and stories can be recorded to make a historical record. With today's technology mementoes can be retained for families and also shared with others. These digital records could be a great legacy for future generations.

2008 can be the year that each member makes it a goal to gather information and build Pentwater's collection. We can scan your photographs or documents and return the originals to you, or you could have them scanned and send us the digital records. You could record stories and memories and send them to us. Written memories can be sent to us by e-mail. We will be listing current projects in the newsletter. Let us know if you can help with any of them.

Let every member make the 25th anniversary of the Pentwater Historical Society the year that we expand our collections of memories before they are lost to those who follow.



Jim Ege, President,
PENTWATER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Take a look at the themes that the Newsletter is going to feature in upcoming articles and then take a look at your families old photos, diaries and documents that may be of interest or, send us your reminiscences of these themes.

Send them to the PO Box 54 address on back page or by e-mail to: newsletter@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

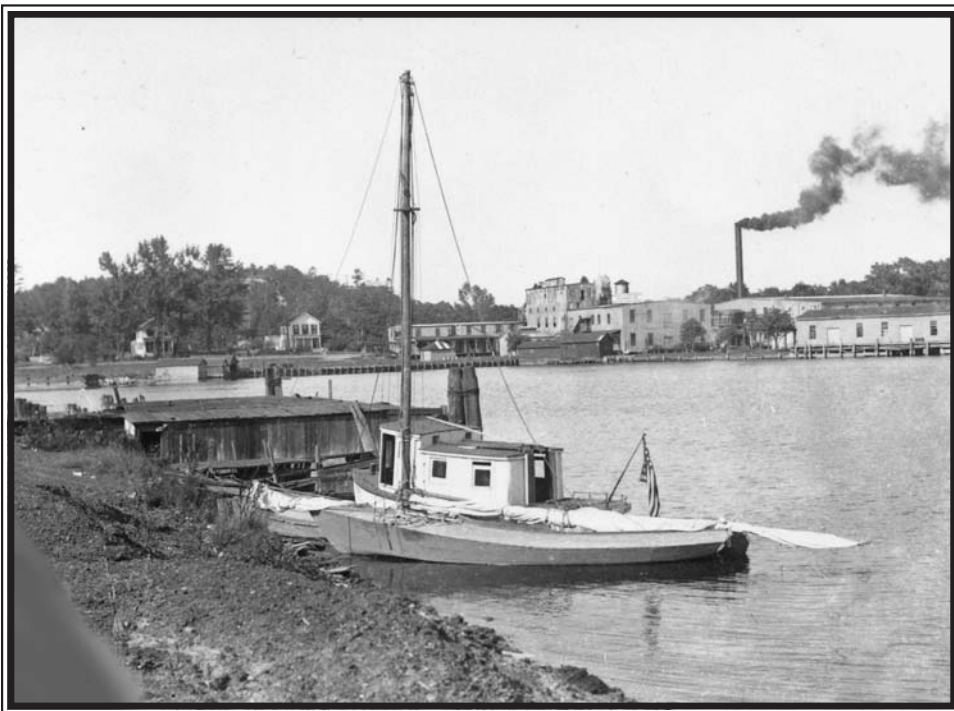
Upcoming feature articles in The Pentwater Historical Society's Newsletter:

SPRING 2006
The Pentwater Cemetery

SUMMER 2008
The Beach and
Charles Mears State

FALL 2008
Ancestors and Indians

WINTER 2008
Novels and Novelists



Foreground shows a tug and a gaff-rigged sailboat near the dock. Across the lake is the Bedstead Factory and the Flagg homes along Green Street.

Bob's Corner

Bob's corner got a bit lengthy in this issue with some comments from Jim Pikaart and the editor.

I had heard of the existence of this song but never thought much about it. I thought, oh that's nice and filed it away in the back of my meager memory bank. Occasionally I would hear someone say, "Yeah, I remember 'something' about that song. You will notice I said, 'Something'. No one could remember the words.

I would like to say I dove right in and started looking but truth be known I stumbled across it while still trying to find who brought the first automobile to town. Don't ask me how I found it, I have no idea. Anyway, I can't find who wrote it or when, I did find the song which is based on the lyrics of an old minstrel song from the 1850's, "Old Dan Tucker". Can't say I ever remember hearing the song "Old Dan Tucker". How about some of you budding song writers put additional lyrics to these words?

Anyway, here's the poem:

A Song of Pentwater

For thy gleaming lake and river,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
Where the moonbeams glance and quiver,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
For the waves that wash thy shore,
The blue heavens bending o'er,
I shall love thee evermore,
Pentwater, Pentwater.
Shining in the sun's bright glory,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
Thou art rife with nature's story,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
Seated by thine inland sea,
Grit with hills, ravine and tree,
There my world shall ever be,
Pentwater, Pentwater
While thy light is softly beaming,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
Ad of thee I'm fondly dreaming,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
There my heart is free from care,
And my spirit's like the air,
Thou art ever sweet and fair,
Pentwater, Pentwater,
Thou art sweet and fair,
Pentwater, Pentwater.

Comments on "A Song of Pentwater"

The Newsletter's Graphic Designer Jim Pikaart reacted with the following comment: "Wow, I was struck by the archaic language when setting this copy. There was a time when people wrote poems, however poorly or not, of tragic events, marriages, deaths and their environment and one can still see glimpses of this urge when reading independent, small town, rural newspapers. This song/poem is a great example of this. Isn't it odd that people didn't speak like this with all the thee, thy and thou's but reverted to a sort of formal language when writing this stuff."

And finally, the editor's comment:

Now if Bob has piqued your curiosity the way he did mine, you'll feel like you can't wait to log onto your favorite search engine to get the real scoop on "Ole Dan Tucker." My first stop was Wikipedia to learn about the origins and lyrics of "Old Dan Tucker." Then to get the flavor of the music itself, on to YouTube to hear Bruce Springstein and several other groups perform it. It's hard to keep your feet from a tappin' at the sound of refrains like: Old Dan Tucker was a mighty man; he washed his face in a frying pan. He combed his hair with a wagon wheel and died of a toothache in his heel; or Old Dan Tucker went to town, ridin' a mule and leadin' a hound. The hound, he barked and the mule, he jumped and he threw Old Dan out over a stump. A popular chorus: Get out the way for Old Dan Tucker! He's too late to get his supper. Supper's over and breakfast's cookin'! Old Dan Tucker just stands there a-lookin' completes the image.

The thing that struck me was the somewhat spontaneous folk creation of such a wide variety of lyrics and a suggestion that "the song is perfect for making up your own verses".

While my mind cannot reconcile the lyrics or tenor of "A Song of Pentwater" with the tune of "Old Dan Tucker", I'm sure some of our members can.

There is a wealth of talent that would be willing to put "A Song of Pentwater" to Dan Tucker's music and/or take up Bob's challenge to create new lyrics centered on people and events in Pentwater's past. Better yet, can someone put together a program featuring local musicians and groups including representation from the Pentwater School's music program for one of our dinners?



The official opening of the new highway bridge across the Pentwater river on what is now business 31. The barn in the background is the original barn built by Charles Mears. The former iron bridge crossed the river nearer to the barn and the top rails of the old bridge can be seen off to the right of the photo. The various state, county and township dignitaries have gathered to cut the ribbon. Can you identify the women with the dark glasses?



View of Pentwater Lake from across the lake above the railroad station.

DUES ARE DUE

Membership dues for the 2007-2008 year were due September 1, 2007. If you see "07" or an earlier year following your name on the mailing label, it is time to renew your membership. The dues amounts are shown on the Membership Application form on the last page of the newsletter.

Please send your check to:
 Pentwater Historical Society
 P.O. Box 54
 Pentwater MI 49449

New Members:

Mark S. Phillips Jerry & Maggie Saylor
Fred Immer Jared & Pam Griffis

New Life Member Formerly Annual Member:

Frank Cutler

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

Richard & Sylvia Warne

DEATHS

Patricia Fawkes Fern Schader

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USE THIS FORM TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HOME ADDRESS _____ NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____	SUMMER ADDRESS _____ From _____ To _____ NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____	
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patron \$500* • Annual \$10* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life \$125* • Student \$3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining \$40* (* Includes Spouse) 		STATUS: <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal

Would you like to be contacted to participate in society activities? If so, your area of interest is: _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:
 The Pentwater Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Pentwater, MI 49449

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE _____



An old view of Pentwater. The former Railroad Station is to the far left of the photo.



The lake steamer E. G. Maxwell is at the town dock with the Pentwater Bedstead Factory in the background.



PENTWATER
 HISTORICAL
 SOCIETY
 P. O. BOX 54,
 PENTWATER,
 MICHIGAN 49449