



Pentwater Filling Stations

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 Shell Station

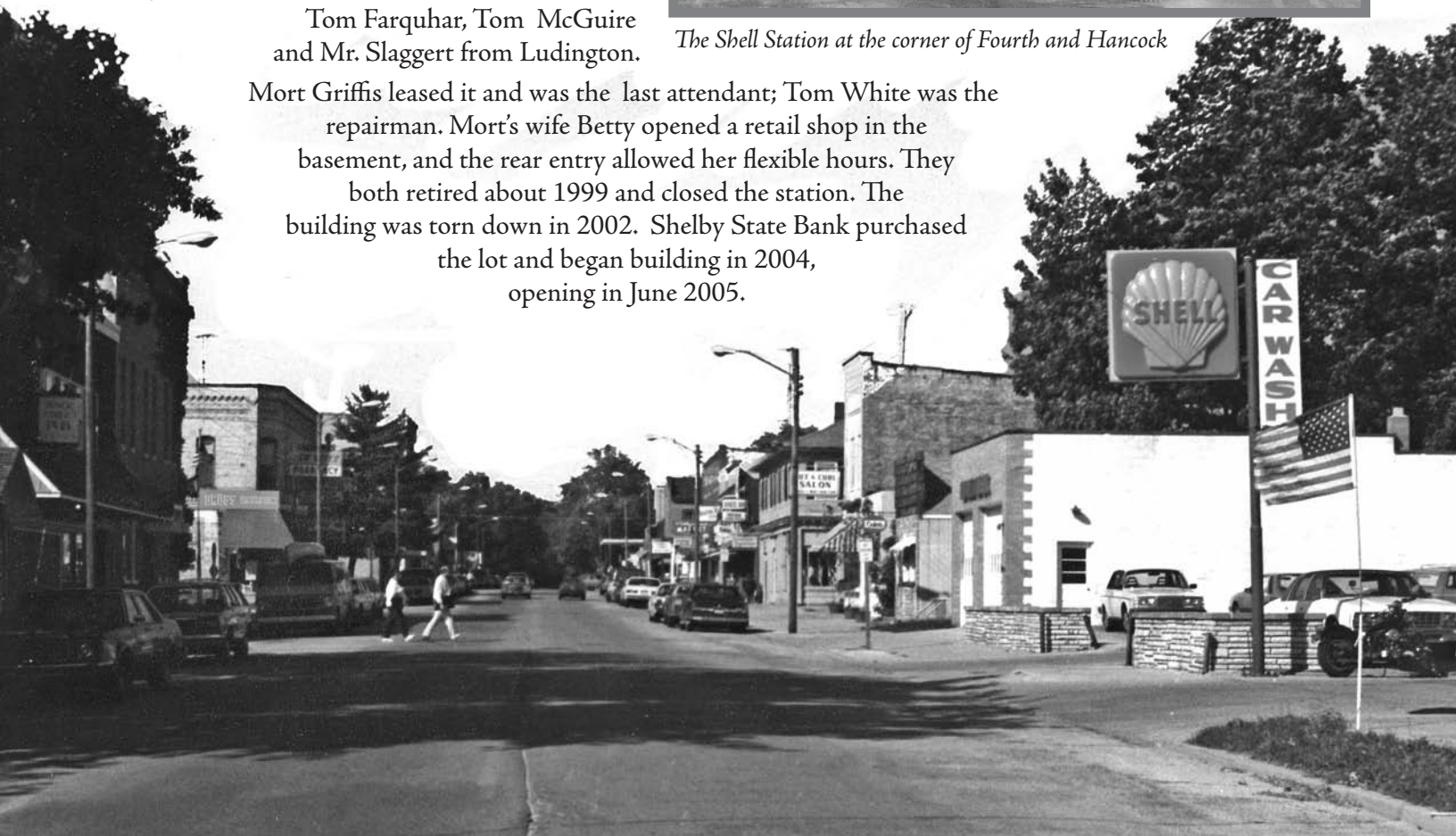
Facing west on the northeast corner of Hancock and Fourth Street, Mr. Miles Pool built a small Standard Oil Filling Station with a partial basement in 1925. He sold it to Mr. Collins Gregwer in April 1943, who opened it as a Shell Oil Gas Station with full service.

Collins added a 30 x 30 foot cement garage on the north side and an outdoor self-serve car wash next to it. Mr. Gregwer retired in 1958. From then to 1980, there were several different owners/managers, Jim Blamer, Bob Graham, Max Johnson, Leonard Hillman, Lavelle Freeland, Tom Farquhar, Tom McGuire and Mr. Slaggert from Ludington.

Mort Griffis leased it and was the last attendant; Tom White was the repairman. Mort's wife Betty opened a retail shop in the basement, and the rear entry allowed her flexible hours. They both retired about 1999 and closed the station. The building was torn down in 2002. Shelby State Bank purchased the lot and began building in 2004, opening in June 2005.

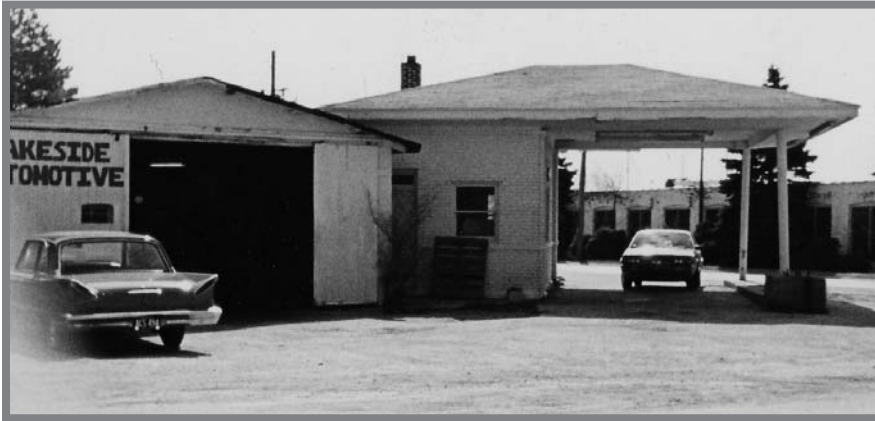


The Shell Station at the corner of Fourth and Hancock



The Mobil Station

The Mobil filling station, housed in a small brick building with an adjacent shed, stood on the northeast corner of Sixth and Hancock. It had an angled driveway dissecting the corner connecting both streets. From the 1920's to 1940, the shed was Mr. Ed Sayers's icehouse for his winter's



Lakeside Automotive – the former Mobil Filling Station at Sixth and Hancock

ice harvest. Later Al Kent, the mortician, used it to store his hearse/ambulance. Mr. Corbin operated a station there until 1942 and Mr. Jacobsen until 1947. Frank and Amanda Conroy then owned the service station and a storage building for ten years. For the next 36 years, owner Marv Suchy operated it. He had three gas pumps. He converted the storage building into a garage by removing the center chimney, brick by brick.

After Marv retired, the pumps were removed and the building leased to Bruce Maynard who ran his "Lakeside Auto Repair Shop" in the garage until May of 1991. The land was then cleared and a large log cabin, which housed a sporting goods and bait shop, was built on the site. In 2005, the cabin was removed, piece by piece, and the lots were again cleared to make way for building the Harbor Place Condos, which began in the winter of 2006-7.

Texaco

In 1921, at 119 Hancock Street on the west side between First and Second Street, Mr. Bouga demolished his livery stable and hired builder John R. Graham to construct a large cement block garage and opened a Texaco Service Station. It was named "The Big Maple Garage" because of the maple tree on Hancock Street.

Large doors were placed across from each other, one on the east end facing Hancock and the other on the west facing Division Street. This station had two pumps on Hancock, each having a picture of the Texaco Fire Chiefs' red hat and a Texaco Star on the top glass globes. Hudson-Essex automobiles were sold here. Orders were filled by going to Grand Rapids and driving the vehicle back to this station. Reed's garage, located by the alley on Lowell between Hancock and Dover, did service and repair work.

The Big Maple Garage served as the Greyhound Bus stop until the bus stop was moved south to the drugstore on Hancock and Third Streets. The maple tree had to be removed in the early 1940's. Rex Frutchev owned the Texaco Station, from about 1942 to 1947. He closed it down and reopened it as a roller-rink. He opened the large doors to catch the breezes and the attention of onlookers. The building stood empty until 1966 When Bob Lucas from the Lucas 5 and 10-cent store bought out Les Bailey, owner of Bailey's Hardware, and opened the combined stores as Birdland Hardware and Variety. It was given that name because of the birds that flew in through the broken windows and sat on the open rafters. In 1969, Gerry Emery became owner of Birdland. Les continued to work there for both Bob and Gerry. Alan Decker bought the business in 1996. By March 2000, new owners transformed the building into a Mini-Mall with three or more shops.



The "Big Maple Garage" presently a mini-mall

From the Editor:

Help! Information for articles are gathered from a variety of sources but in some cases there are gaps. We are not always able to answer the standard journalist questions of "Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.

For this, we need your help. While compiling articles on the filling stations we received information from some folks around Pentwater who remember the "Crystal Flash" during the 1930's and 40's when gas was a dime a gallon. We are seeking information about this station, which had been located across 6th street from St. Vincent Catholic Church, or any others that had been in Pentwater.

If you have any additional information, memories or photographs, we would be happy to hear from you. Watch future issues for stories about the Crystal Flash, other stations and the Teapot Dome.

Please note that all street references use the 2007 names.



Above: Pentwater Fire Department before 1900

Right: Pentwater Train Station. Note the milk cans for pick-up.

Below: The Sands & Maxwell's Lumber Mill - 1905.

Below Right: Young dandies posing in their "Sunday Clothes" on the Sands & Maxwell log pile. That's George Burril with the pipe in his mouth.



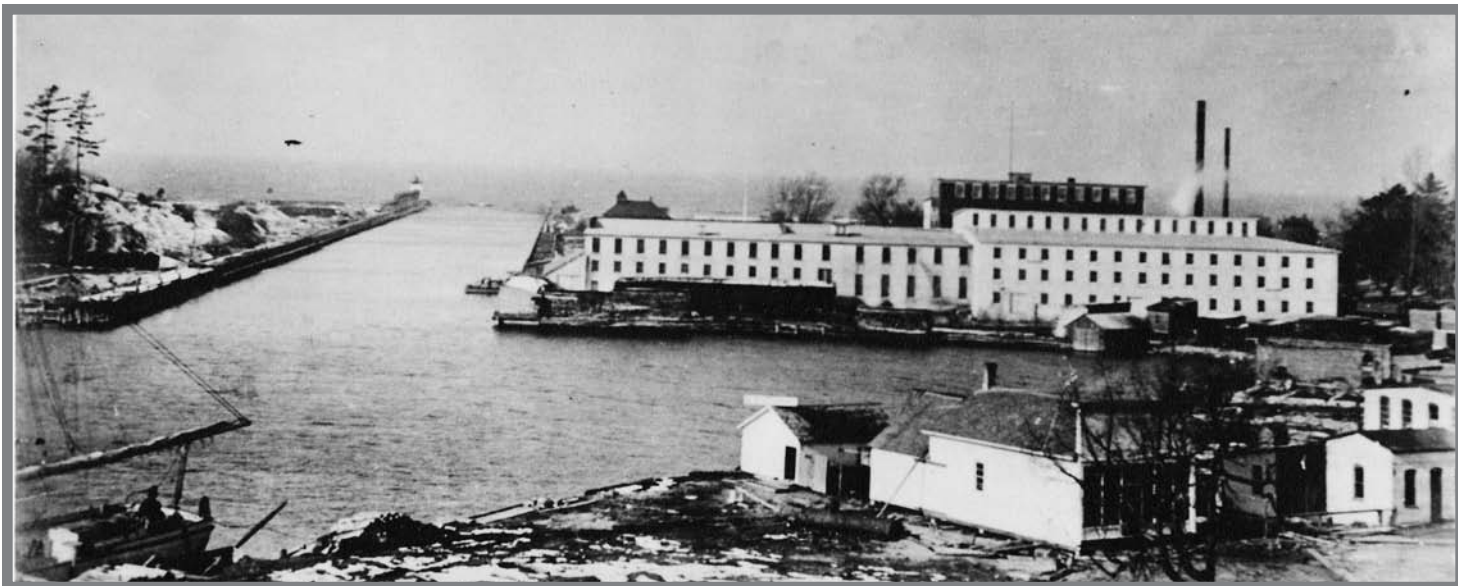
DUES ARE DUE

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





President's Message

There has been much discussion in Pentwater in the last few months regarding the building of condominiums in Pentwater. Of note is the large condominium building on the south end of Hancock across from Snug Harbor that had been completed this spring. The discussions sparked my curiosity about the character of Pentwater and its changes over the years.



Downtown Pentwater in 1919

I began by searching the photo archives in the museum. My quest centered on photographs of downtown Pentwater's early history. Immediately I noticed the wide variety in the height of the buildings. Of course building techniques and materials available at any given time had a lot to do with building height. Economics entered into the process too. The mechanical devices available made it difficult to move materials and people to the upper levels of buildings higher than two-stories. Single stories were ten feet or more in height. In many cases the facades were taller than the roofs. Lots were narrow and adjoining buildings shared walls. Walkways were wood and built higher than those of today because of water and mud. They were wider than today's sidewalks. Porches appeared on many buildings. Some with roofs that extended out over the walkway and awnings. Most porches bore advertising as ordinances were few and space was never wasted.

There was parking on both sides of the street. Horse drawn buggies and wagons could not parallel park so angle parking was the general rule. Pentwater's bustling downtown as it was then, seemed crowded, tall and congested. Then add to that the piles of snow that could not be plowed out of the way in the winter.

Factories and logging buildings abutted the upper channel, while many houses edged the side streets. Ships lined Pentwater Lake taking lumber, wood shingles and other items of commerce to Lake Michigan.

The train tracks and depot on the other side of the lake crowded the south shore along with French Town. At some point, an investor saw an opportunity to build the "white elephant", and for a time it loomed, with its castle-like spire over the downtown. This was Pentwater in its "heyday". It was a bustling little metropolis, and people were drawn to it for its commerce, water access and surrounding forests.



Pentwater now

Fire, loss of natural resources, and perhaps, changing economic conditions brought Pentwater's "heyday" to a close. It never regained what it had been. The loss of its major enterprises; lumber, shipping, manufacturing and commercial fishing had a lasting impact on the character of the village. Discovery of oil

resources gave Pentwater a bit of growth in the late forties, fifties and early sixties. However, eventually it was little more than a stop along a busy two-lane highway on the west side of Michigan. The addition of the four lane Rt. 31 expressway further isolated it, reducing Pentwater to a place to "pull off". You had to know about Pentwater or you would have missed it on your way north to Traverse City or Petoskey.

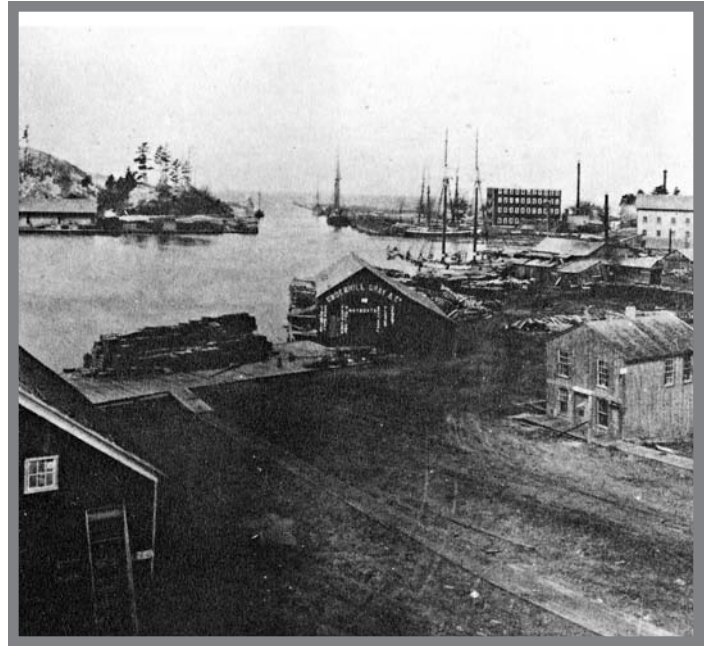
Even as Pentwater was going through cycles of boom and bust, tourism anchored by Charles Mears State Park remained solidly in the background. As the traditional economic underpinnings receded, tourism became dominant. Water, sun and sand have kept Pentwater's broad appeal as a vacation destination.

Families have come for generations to enjoy the small town atmosphere and to escape the big city rush. That "escape" continues to characterize Pentwater today.

Active seniors recognized this as well and sought it out as an ideal retirement spot. Businesses reflect the need for "escape goods". Small stores close in the winter as people return to the big cities or head south. Local people relax for the winter, and the downtown reflects the process of relaxation. That is Pentwater today. I will make no issues here; I am just passing on my findings of what "was" Pentwater then and what "is" Pentwater today. What do you think?



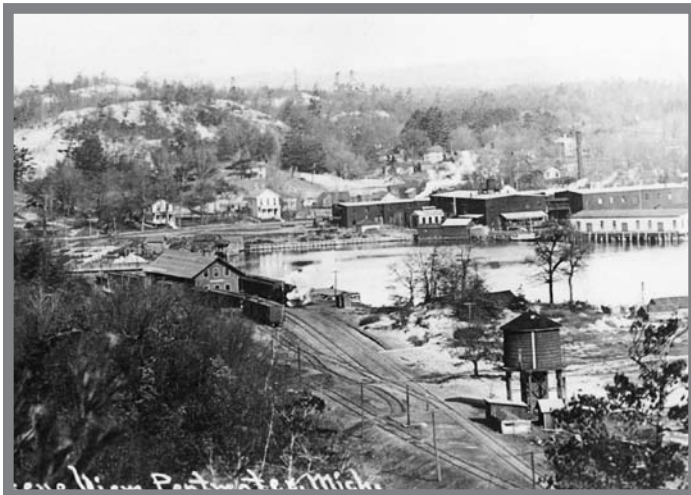
Jim Ege, President,
PENTWATER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Another view of industry on Pentwater lake - 1870's

Time Travel by Bob Childers

The year is, oh say, 1879 and you are standing at the site of the current Snug Harbor. Let's start our walk down Hancock, and window shop. We only have time to go a few blocks before our time travel window closes. Near the steamboat landing we find Bryant House Hotel, E.W. Bryant, proprietor while across the street is E. Rich Dry Goods. On down at Hancock and 3rd, Hanna & Malcom Dry Goods Store, H.J. Slater Grocers and E. A Wright Grocery offer goods of every nature. If you make a turn and go down to the dock at the foot of 3rd you will find more shopping at Lyman & Higby's Grocery. Next issue we will continue our walk down Hancock Street.



View of industry from across the lake by the railroad station.

Got Photos?

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/coping and then returning them to you.

FOR SALE

- Beautiful 20 x 40 Pentwater Afgans
- Black \$65 •Pewter \$75
- Tour Maps \$1
- Pentwater History Book . . . \$10

New Member:
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New Life Members:
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In Memory of Brian Grant: Barbara Davies & Lynn Roe

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

Lois Flynn

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


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An old view of Pentwater where the marinas are today.



*Winter meat delivery in the old days.
 That's Ed Dagget with his shop apron on and Wade Maynard
 on the right. The man in the middle is unknown.*



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