



*The Pentwater Information Booth in its former location on the village green and the present location at Snug Harbor Marina*

## Presidents Message

There is a little bit of Pentwater history that many people walking around town miss. It is easy to do. Just a few yards past this unique architecture are the many boats of “cruisers” that visit Pentwater during the summer. The lure of the yachts moves one quickly past this little gem before one even realizes it. On the west end of Snug Harbor Marina this non-descript, white, eight-sided building with no markings, looking over Pentwater Lake, holds a small place in the Pentwater historical annals. There are no clues to its past as one gazes in the four windows to an empty little room.

A conversation with Jack Witt, the owner of Snug Harbor Marina, begins the story.

The building was moved to Snug Harbor in 1974 and re-furbished with new siding, roof and paint. Deeper investigation reveals an interesting history. The Pentwater News in 1935 states that the building had stood for years in the yard of E.M. Byron on the south side of the Pentwater Channel. Mr. Byron donated the building to the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce to use as an Information Booth



Jim Ege, President,  
PENTWATER  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Historical Society’s Summer Dinner Will Feature Historian John McGerry

If you think of a historian as a person who studies dusty old tomes of obscure history you’ll change your perceptions when you hear John McGerry talk about his career as a historian at the Summer Dinner at the VFW on Wednesday, August 22, 2007

John’s experience as an historian has been unique and has had him doing everything from documenting old spanish treasure ships to his present position as the Executive Director of the Muskegon County Museum.

Some of his former positions have been with the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society in Key West Florida, US Marine Corps History and Museum Division, National Park Service at Fort McHenry and consultant to many field archaeology projects. All this variable experience in his long and productive career has given John plenty of material to give an audience a delightful, informative and engaging presentation of “My Life as a Historian”.

See more information on this cultural and social event on page 5.

for tourists. The booth needed to be moved to downtown Pentwater. Wm. Fredrick, a local dairyman, offered his services and truck for the move. Several volunteers helped Mr. Fredrick move the building to the hill between the Newspaper office and the Miracle Theater Building in the same area as the "White Elephant" building. This location is now the Village Green. An information sign, window boxes and green striped awnings were added to the Tourist Information Booth.

The "Ellen Lewis Keepsake Book" states that for years Esther M. Dempsy, Post Master and editor of the Pentwater News manned the booth giving information to tourists. She passed away in 1960. The booth stayed on the Village Green until it was moved to Snug Harbor where new shingles were applied, rotted boards replaced and it received yet another coat of white paint.

One can imagine the many tourists who visited the little Information Booth over the years and were helped by Mrs. Dempsy. Today, Jack Witt and his son are giving the Information Booth another new coat of paint and plans are being made by the Pentwater Historical Society to add an informational sign, apply for State Historical Building Status and bring the Information Booth back to its original state. There is hope that in the future we can move the building to the area under the water tower.

If you are near Snug Harbor be sure and stop by to look at the little building, maybe with a new perspective, and imagine Esther Dempsey in the booth ready to give you some information to assist you in your stay in Pentwater.

*Note: A special thanks to Nancy Grant for compiling the historical information.*

## Nickerson Inn Memory Piece



*Can you identify any of these happy group of guests and maybe a couple of staff. Photo donated by Mrs. Sam Riggs (Mary Buckbee).*



*This photo shows no porch and was probably taken soon after the building was completed.*

**H**al and I took over as the keepers of the Nickerson Inn in 1972. It was passed on to us as a precious family heirloom in need of safekeeping. We loved and cared for the Inn for twenty years. It was our home. We worked, slept, and cleaned 24/7 as a family. Our children and grandchildren grew up living there all summer long, and when they were old enough (4 or 5) they all had jobs to do.

We have so many good and happy memories of the Inn: remembering our helpers in the kitchen and all of the local kids who worked for us in the summer washing dishes, waiting tables, or cleaning rooms. I still remember how the girls would gather and wrap up all the sheets and towels from the rooms in a ball and bring them to the top of the stairs. One girl would make sure the coast was clear, and the other would roll them down the stairs. Then they would take them over to Maggie Reed's to be washed. Maggie had wringer washers, but no driers, so she would hang the wet sheets and towels all over her house to dry. I don't know how she did it, but every time those towels came back they were as soft as a kitten.

The morning of May 21, 2007, was like a death in the family.

I arrived at the scene before the firemen did, and I stayed until the end. It was like being with a dear friend who was dying with a terminal illness: you stay until it's all over and try to cradle them in your arms and hope it will all go away, but it didn't.

Many people don't understand how we (the whole Carlin family and the Baker family) feel about the Inn. It was our home, a part of our family. She was like a Great White Lady sitting on the hill, with her majestic white porch and stone fireplace.

We burned coal in the fireplace like the keepers before us. The great staircase, the large French doors leading into the dining room, five bathrooms with large old bathtubs from the 1920's. My girls loved to take baths in the deep tubs during the Spring and Fall when there were no guests at the Inn. I could go on and on, but there's not enough room for our 20 years of memories, or the Nickerson's 93. I would like to give special thanks to my grand-daughter, Caitlin, for helping Grandma put the Nickerson's feelings and memories together.

*Hal and Myrna Carlin and family*

## Meet Jay and Marge Reid

A few weeks ago it was my pleasure to take a picture of Jay and Marge Reid at the Charles Mears Park beach. The picture shows them on the North Pier just before sunset. Jay and Marge are interesting Pentwater people of long standing in the community. Since I have known these folks since I was a youngster in Pentwater, I thought it would be appropriate to share some of their history and background in the summer newsletter.

Jay, a son of John and Mae (Whitney) Reid was born on August 25, 1924 in Flint, Michigan. Jay had sisters Fay (Crocker), Joyce (Gardy), Nola (Stenberg) and a brother Gene Reid. Jay first came to visit in 1941 and then to live in Pentwater in 1946 after his Navy service.

**The World War II Experience.** In 1942 Jay enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served his country until discharged in 1946.

Jay is a charter member of the Pentwater Eldon Chadwick VFW Post 6017. His Navy service was as an Aircraft Ordnance Man with the rank of AOM 2nd Class aboard the USS Wasp CV-18, an Aircraft Carrier that served in the Pacific Theater. His ship replaced the USS Wasp CV-7 that was sunk during the battle of Guadalcanal. The USS Wasp CV-18 was involved in the major

sea battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf and engaged in eight major landings in the Pacific during 1944 and 1945. As a result of enemy aircraft strafing and bombing attacks, Jay's ship lost and buried 103 members of its crew at sea off the coast of Japan.

After the war Jay worked for two years on the City of Saginaw - 31 car ferry. . .one of seven car ferries operating out of Ludington at the time and then worked for 30 years for Misco, a Division of the Howment Corp., in Whitehall.

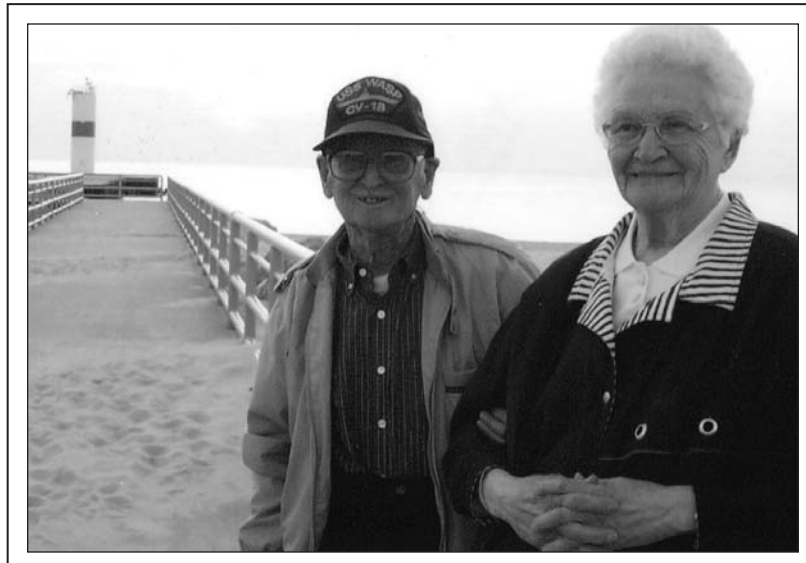
**Marge Contributes to the War.** Marge graduated from Pentwater High School in 1944 and worked for two years at Balfours' Machine Shop (now known as the Pentwater Wire Products).

During the war years Marge, Vivian Stewart, and Izzy Larsen made Bomb Racks and Sway Braces for our war aircraft.

This is very interesting as Jay was one of many men

who were responsible to load bombs into the airplane bomb racks that might have been produced in Pentwater with his wife's helping hand. During that time, the factory Superintendent was Sam Griffin (uncle of Jay), and included in the workforce was Jay's dad John Reid and Marge's dad Otho Graham along with

*(Reid article continued next page)*



*Jay and Marge Reid at Charles Mears State Park*

## The Balfour Machine Shop – 1944 Photograph

The photograph was taken in 1944 on the Pentwater Lake side of the building formerly known as the Pent Electric Company. The building was located on the property now known as Snug Harbor and across 6th street from Cenzo's Fresh Market & Spirits. When this picture was taken Marge Reid says that the building was also part of the Machine Shop business. Marge Reid has identified some of the people in the picture. If you can help to place names for those people not identified please let us know!



Front Row: June Jobbins, Daisy Hepworth  
2nd Row: Marge Graham, Marion Bates, Fred McMahon, Marion Reed, Floyd Wilder, Otho Graham Jr.

3rd Row: Jessie Hepworth, Harry McMahon, Mary Jane VanBoxal, John Eyestone, Jerry Eyestone, Lee Freeman



*Herbert Fred Sands, Captain,  
Company A, 35th Michigan Volunteers,  
Spanish-American War  
and Nina Delong-Sands*



*Mrs Nina Delong-Sands*



*Women's  
Literary  
Club*

*(Reid article continued)*

many other local Pentwater people.

During their youth, Marge and her sisters and brothers all worked at the Pentwater Theater. Buck Graham ran the theater projector. During these years, Mr. Stu Roach, a prominent Hart businessman, owned the Hart, Shelby and Pentwater Theater buildings.

Jay and Marge were married after the WWII on March 31, 1946 in the Pentwater Methodist Church Rectory and have been married for a wonderful 61 years! The Reid's have a daughter Karen and son Dan who have given them grand children Lindsey and Greg Masters and Gabriel Reid, and two great grand children Haley and Emma.

**Family ties to Pentwater.** Past local Pentwater families of the Reid's were Marge's grandfather John Graham, and Jay's were Sam and Pearl (his aunt) Griffin. Sam and Pearl were the owners of the building now known as the Lakeside Restaurant. Some of the other previous owners or tenants of this building were Earl and Kit Griffis (Earl for many years was the local shoe shop owner) and my great uncle and aunt. Also, Bill and Fran Craig lived in the building, and for a number of years many of us kids enjoyed the local "Franteen" kids restaurant, game room and dance hall as our place to go! Of recent, Tony and Linda Fortich had a Deli and Pizza shop business until purchased by

the current owners Rick and Carol Garland. This building has evolved over the years with a variety of business and physical changes.

Marge says that the Graham men (John, Otho, Harold and Wid) working as carpenters in Pentwater helped in constructing the Hancock Building that was formerly the theater building. Also the Grahams worked on the Gardner Building that for many years was the location of Bill Balfour's Grocery Store and Duke and Emily Dewyer's Bakery.

Sam and Pearl Griffin purchased a large tract of land on the South side of Pentwater Lake and proceeded to build two cottages and a home along the lake shore. While Jay was on leave from the Navy, he helped Sam using a flatbed truck to move a small railroad building then located near the railroad tracks by Fire Tower Hill, to the little bayou to be used as a cabin. In a collection of pictures of these cabins, one picture has the words "Muck-I-Ta-Wog-Go-Me Point" which is the Indian naming and meaning for Dark Water or their description of Pentwater Lake.

These are just a few of the interesting stories or historical points that Jay and Marge have shared about their life background, Pentwater lore and their contributions to preserving our great nation. A hearty Thank You to Jay and Marge for this personal family and Pentwater history accounting.

*Article by Ed Bigelow*



*Indian Life.*

## Shopping In Pentwater 136 Years Ago

(From the 1871 US Census Report )

Presently, the population of full-time residents in Pentwater is 891. In 1871 the population was 1,414 and, according to the 1871 Census Report, merchants and tradesmen offered the the following shopping opportunities:

Attorneys - 6	Grocery Stores - 5
Lumber & Shingles - 3	Blacksmiths - 3
Dry Goods Stores - 6	Tailors - 2
Barber Shops - 2	Milliners - 2
Harness Makers - 2	Markets - 2
Jewelers - 1	Gun Smiths - 1
Insurance Companies - 1	Physicians - 4
Foundries - 1	Druggists - 3
Boot & Shoe Stores - 3	Wagon Makers - 1

### Post Office Closes!

The Pentwater Newspaper of April 10, 1902 informs local residents: "A notice received last week informs us that the Bass Lake post office is to be discontinued April 10th."

### New Members:

*Life - Rev. Same & Jane Morrison*  
*James Pikaart*                      *Joan Warner*

### MEMORIALS

In Memory of Brian Grant: M. Delores Samuel  
 and Roger & Ruth Bailey  
 In Memory of Florence Jeffries: *Macy Mullen*  
 In Memory of Mary Ann Bates: *Macy Mullen*  
 In Memory of Wally Waller: *Millie Bennett*  
 In Memory of Russell Blades: *Millie Bennett*  
 In Memory of Irene Banninger: *Millie Bennett*

### THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

*Lighthouse Seekers*    *Eldon Chadwick Post 6017 VFW*

*You're Invited!*

TO THE

## PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SUMMER DINNER

Wednesday, August 22, 2007

Social Hour 6:00pm (BYOB)

Dinner 7:00pm

At The Pentwater VFW Hall

This event open to the public

*Come and enjoy this social  
 and cultural event!*

### HISTORIAN JOHN MCGERRY

*Executive Director of the Muskegon County History Museum*

*Presents:*

### "Life as a Historian"

*What a Real Historian Really Does!*

### TICKETS: \$12 PER PERSON

Tickets must be purchased by noon August, ??

### Tickets are on Sale from:

Society Officers

The Pentwater Twp. Library

Durand's Wine Shop

### 2006-2007 OFFICERS & TRUSTEES OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Jim Ege - President*

*Ed Bigelow - V. President*

*William O'Donnell - Secretary*

*Kenneth Lindstrom - Treasurer*

TRUSTEES: Roger Bailey, Myrna Carlin and Bob Childers

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRWOMEN: Karen Way

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

*Celene Idema*  
*Editor*

*Jim Pikaart*  
*Layout/Design*

*Dave Rose*  
*Photo Editor*

**USE THIS FORM TO SIGN A NEW MEMBER**

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMER ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

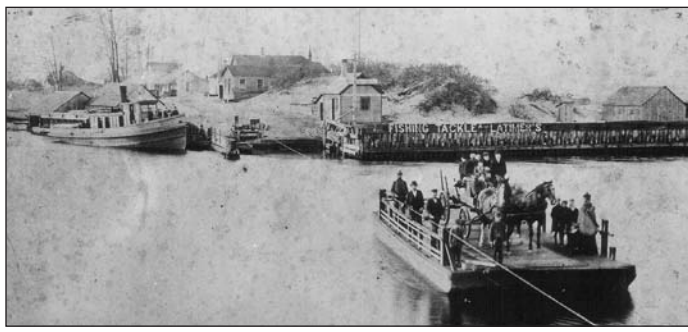
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:    • Patron \$500\*    • Life \$125\*    • Sustaining \$40\*  
                                   • Annual \$10\*    • Student \$3    (\* Includes Spouse)

STATUS:     New  
                   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 \_\_\_\_\_

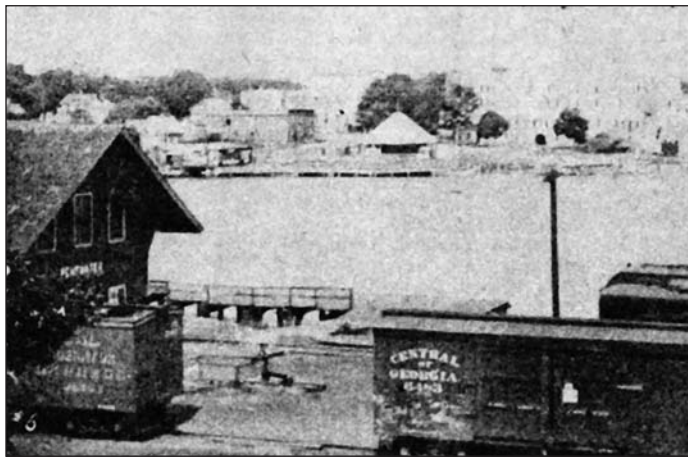


Above: *The old rope ferry across the channel*

Above Right: *Campfire Girls.*

Left to right: *Vandyke, Anna Johnson, Thyra Legesen, Gertrude Kinney, unknown, unkown, Zoa Fuller, Thyra Sands (circa 1915)*

Right: *Early Photo of Pentwater Village. Help us determine the date and how this photo was taken.*



*The Pentwater Train Station*



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

**ANNUAL SUMMER DINNER • WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22 AT THE VFW HALL**