Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Street Development in the early 1900s
By Dee Stevens

Part 2
The building of the Soo Canal created an “island,” which was essentially the more or less agreed-upon, though perhaps never formal, Indian reservation, where those who fished the rapids lived. There were three little islands offshore, two of which were Middle Island, where canoe guide John Boucher lived, and Fish Hatchery Island, where the state fish hatchery was built. There was also a power plant built by William Chandler and Harris Dunbar, over which court battles were fought for many years. All these things had to be removed or settled when the construction of the third and fourth locks began after 1910. There was a clause that Boucher could keep his land in the rapids until he died (which he did in 1902), and the fish hatchery was moved to the mainland in 1911. The Chandler plant was directly in line with Magazine Street, and was bought by the government for its use, though Edison Sault could buy the extra power not needed by the government.

Plans for a water power canal were in the works from the 1840s on. James Bendry, a ship captain, had a claim on the Whelpley map on the riverbank where the mouth of the canal was projected to be. When it actually came to fruition around 1900, the canal had shifted subtly southward from the original plan. South Street, AKA Sheridan Drive, had originally extended beyond Ashmun Street, but this became the power canal’s course up to its northward bend at Johnston Street.

Several things that occurred in the 1890s also affected development in this area. Fort Brady moved to Ryan’s Hill just south of this neighborhood in 1894, and the railroad built a new, lovely Union Depot in 1899 on Portage (or Canal) west of Magazine Street. There had formerly been a depot on the railroad tracks west of Meridian and north of Spruce streets.

A major north-south street in the area being considered is called “Magazine.” The magazine in question was not for Fort Brady. It was the location of the Hazzard and Spalding yard, where dynamite was kept for the construction of the first, State, lock in 1853.

Another parallel street is named Grand Trempe, or Trempe’s Grand Avenue. It was named for Louis P. Trempe, a resident of the Sault from 1849 until his death in 1892. Ferris Street was named for the founder of the Ferris Subdivision, John G. Ferris, who was listed as a butcher on the 1880 Chippewa County census. Fort Street was really Fourth Street, and ran parallel to Second Street south of the canal, but as it led to Fort Brady, it became corrupted to “Fort.” North of Spruce, Fort was formerly known as Stephen R. for Stephen R. Woods.

The farthest west street in the area has changed its name over time. It was Meridian, as it sits on the Michigan Meridian, from which east-west surveying was done, until a major reconstruction of the street to connect it with Easterday Avenue in the 1970s. This created a second approach to the downtown area. Since then, along with Eureka Street, the route has been named Portage Avenue as an extension of the waterside route.

Portage took its name from its location along the original portage around the rapids. The western portion of the old route, west of the curve at present-day Karl’s Cuisine, was known as Canal Street, as it paralleled the Soo Canal. Portage, up until the time of the construction of the third and fourth locks, actually extended in a straight line to the head of the rapids, and the head of the island created by the digging of the canal.

The next street back was Ridge Street, named for the rise from the riverbank that ran in its location. Then was Gros Cap, or Big Point, which is the name still given to the area above the rapids where ships approaching the locks from the north have to call in.

The next street south, the last before the power canal, is Spruce Street. It is one of several east-west streets in the Sault all named for trees, including Cedar and Maple. (Elm Street, way out on the east side, runs perpendicular to the other “tree” routes, and Oak, Ash and Chestnut are west of the downtown in Algonquin.)

Besides these major routes are Emeline, which now only runs from Fort to Magazine and is named for Emeline Johnston Woods, and
three humorous alleys in John Johnston’s subdivision, from north to south Oil on the Brain Alley, Silver Lead Alley and Outward Bound Alley. (look for more on this topic at the end of the newsletter)

Bells of the City
By Bob Aldrich

Sault Ste. Marie has a few statues and many streets identifying people who played a significant role in the history of this city. Several parks are named after individuals who were influential in the development of the city or active in the daily lives and social affairs of the citizens living here in the past. A large number of buildings built in the past have been repurposed, updated, restored and continue to be used today. All these tributes can be seen.

We all might wonder what stories these places and things could tell if they were able. We are all aware of the phrase “if these walls could speak.” However, there is an historical legacy to Sault Ste. Marie which has been heard by hundreds but seen by only a few.

In 1906, a set of 11 bells, or “chimes” were dedicated and installed in the tower of St. James Episcopal Church. These were given to the city of Sault Ste. Marie and St. James Church by Chase S. Osborn, a local businessman and one-time governor of Michigan. It is recorded that the tower of St. James was the only one which could house the bells at that time in history. They still ring out on Sundays, special religious and National Holidays, and in observance of local or national commemorations such as July 4th. A Centennial Concert was performed during the summer of 2006 in recognition of a century of service to this city.

The information in these two historical articles has been copied from a booklet about the dedication recital dated September 23, 1906.

I Remember When... 1923
Recollections of Old Times in the Sault

Mail by Dog Sled
I remember seeing a team of about ten dogs dashing down Main Street in St. Ignace. The dogs drew a large sled piled high with mail sacks. A board on each side of the sled bore the words, “Le Sault de Ste. Marie.” It was the Sault mail team, off on its sixty mile dash. It made a proud showing as, with crack of whip and the driver’s cry “Mush-on,” it raced down the main street of what was then the Sault’s rival town.

R.G. Hulbert

Busses Use River Instead of Street
I remember when the first passenger depot was near the roundhouse. The road through the alders to Spruce street was so bad that the busses drove through the water along the shore to the end of Spruce street making the ride much easier and more comfortable.

Otto Supe 706 Cedar St.
Railroad Is Dedicated
I remember when the Hon. Thomas Ryan made the dedication address at the first coming of the railroad into Sault Ste. Marie. In part he said, “This is the railway I long have sought-and mourned because I found it not.” The celebration took place in 1887, I believe.

Davis Povey 527 E. Spruce St.

Stained Glass
Window donation
By Carolyn Person

CCHS was contacted the end of October by War Memorial Hospital letting us know the old German Lutheran Church on Pine and Nolte was going to be razed to make room for parking. Would we be interested in any of the stained glass windows? Chris Delridge and I were able to remove one window and bring it to the Society. Other windows were retrieved by War Memorial Hospital and Immanuel Lutheran Church who is the descendant of the old church. The glass in the windows originated from the early 1900s and has become very fragile with aging and the lead between the glass has deteriorated. We have carefully packed the window for storage until such time restoration can take place.

It was a difficult decision to rescue the window as we currently have no place to display it. So many times items of Sault history go to dealers or to settings not representing our history. Several places downstate have items stored in their collections that represent our history and not theirs.

We find that when single items are donated, others of like history follow. A story begins to unfold and another piece fits into the Sault history puzzle. Our window will incubate and who knows what story will be revealed.

Dennis’ Train Corner
By Dennis Hank

First, I would like to thank all who attended our first 5 open houses—it was very rewarding for all of us to see the previous attendance records shattered! The idea of adding a limestone quarry came up a couple times in the past, but this year we added our representation of the Fiborn quarry, which is west of Trout Lake, and was served by the D.S.S.& A. railroad, providing limestone for Algoma steel. The real Fiborn quarry was abandoned long ago, but it is a neat place to visit in the summer and do a little hiking. The other new item on the 5’ x 8’ addition is the logging camp and sawmill, to which Paul has added a ton of details. Many people have commented that they’ve visited the layout one day and then came back another time and found even more details they’ve missed. The changes didn’t stop there, even between the events in December, more things were being added, including a historic building with interior details.

It was fun watching kids of all ages pull the rope sounding the real diesel train horn which we have mounted on the second floor. Looking forward to next year, we are always trying to make our display more locally and historically relevant so please let us know if you have any suggestions--favorite business, place, person, memory. We are trying to keep things in the 50’s to 70’s timeline.

If you didn’t make it to one of the open houses in December, you have two more chances in February—the 1st (1-500 day) and the 15th (Ice Festival)

A little winter train trivia: If you’ve ever snowmobiled in the Sault area, you likely drove to Brimley on “the grade”. Maybe you didn’t know the history of those tracks. It was the route of the Duluth, South Shore, and Atlantic, a competitor of the Soo Line. The tracks ran from Sault Ste. Marie to Duluth, along the “south Shore” of Lake Superior. In 1961, a consolidation of railroads took place leaving the D.S.S.& A. tracks unnecessary. The tracks were removed shortly thereafter, leaving us with a perfect route for a snowmobile trail... Happy riding!

Holiday Open Houses
By Ginny Cymbalist

Looking at old pictures makes me realize just how far the train layout and our holiday open houses have come. From a simple circle around a Christmas tree to a couple of banquet tables covered with “snow” to the amazing interactive exhibit it has become. And, it continues to evolve with more and more local businesses being represented—1950’s Sault Ste. Marie sparks many memories from long-time residents and questions from people who didn’t live here then.

Thanks to Paul Duesing who spent well over 300 hours on this year’s improvements; Dennis Hank who also spent hours with the layout as well as working together with Gil Cymbalist to enable the whistle blowing; and the countless others who did everything from decorating to food preparation, to designing flyers and stickers, to welcoming visitors, to checking through all four floors of the building to fulfill fire regulations. This was truly a group effort.
Financial support from the local business community and individual donors was amazing and helped defray the costs involved. As you might imagine, a layout like this is not inexpensive.

Now for some facts. I won’t give comparison numbers from years past but, suffice it to say, this year’s figures blow all the others away. We welcomed well over 1600 visitors, on-site donations were very good, and the gift shop sales went well.

All of this and we still have two more open house days in February. Then everything but the track is carefully removed, the sections are separated and stored, and planning begins for future additions.

Don’t miss your last chances to see this great display on February 1 (from 10 – 4) and 15 (from noon – 6).

The Search for an Ancestor’s Grave and his Civil War Record
By Vicki Scott

You may remember a Random Act of Kindness from the Chippewa GenTalk of October 2016. I was on the receiving end of this act and would like to share the story.

In the summer of 2015 while searching on Ancestry, I came across Headstones provided for Deceased Union Civil War Veterans 1879-1903 for Neil McCoy, death date November 4, 1879. He was with Company B 27th Regiment for the Michigan Infantry. I was surprised as he was from Canada so I had never thought to look for this record.

On Family Search I discovered a United States Veterans Administration Payment Card 1907-1933 for Theresa McCoy, who is my 2nd great grandmother. It was the same military company and the address matched my grandmother, Jennie McCoy, in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan.

Where was the headstone and where had he fought in the Civil War? I knew he was not in Riverside Cemetery next to his wife, Theresa. My grandmother Loraine Single had told me that he was buried in a cemetery on a hill that had been closed. Sandy from the Chippewa County Genealogical Society volunteered to try and find his grave. She was unable to find a gravestone in Maple Ridge Cemetery, but felt he was buried there and most likely because of erosion, his stone had been lost. She was successful in obtaining his Civil War records on a trip she made to the National Archives. He was born in Canada and enlisted in the town of Marquette, Michigan on the 26th of January, 1864 at the age of 31. His enlistment name was Neil McKay. He was a laborer. Had brown eyes, dark hair, dark complexion and was 5’ 11”. He volunteered for a term of three years. He was mustered out on July 26, 1865 at Delany House. He had been promoted to Corporal June 1, 1865. When he enlisted his regiment was stationed near Mossy Creek, East Tennessee.
As Neil McKay, Prv, to July 10 to 15, 64 wound, head passing to the left or on a line with sagittal suture scalp wound, wounded near Petersburg, July 10, 64, as Neil McKay and July 15 to Aug 8, 64 wound head, as Neil McKay”. He was not returned to duty until October 12, 1864 near Peebles House, Virginia.

To bring this project to a successful conclusion, we wondered if we could have a new headstone for Neil McCoy. Working with Ernie at the Riverside Cemetery this was accomplished. He submitted all the paperwork to the federal government to have the headstone re-made. It was delivered the day before he retired in December of 2016. We then worked with Randy who set the stone next to Neil’s wife in Riverside Cemetery.

From the President’s Desk
By Carolyn Person

In the last newsletter, I have mentioned the Board has determined that a priority for the society should be an elevator. Simple enough? The initial estimate was $300,000. However, the fire marshal has indicated our fire suppression system needs updating so we have estimates of $80,000 and $60,000 to accomplish that task. However, the companies working on the sprinkler system would like all the asbestos and lead paint removed before they undertake any work. We contacted an environmental company and have a report of areas in the building that need material removed.

Apparently in the late 1960’s adding asbestos to construction materials was a popular method. Not only were those nice long-lasting floor tiles manufactured with asbestos, the mystic glue had fibers! So, the tile must be removed (it’s cracked and worn) but the glue must be scrapped off. Drywall compound, the mud, contained fibers so all joints must be especially covered. Before 1960 all paint contained lead. In our old building much of the paint has loosened and is hanging in pieces from the walls and ceiling. It is brittle and dry so dust from fine particles is a concern.

We now have an estimate for asbestos removal and will proceed with that job as the first step of the first step. As a small organization our funds are limited and any donation will continue to help us in this huge undertaking.

Installing an elevator is an exciting project EXCEPT this must be done before that can be done. And on it goes. We will be working on grants and other funding. It takes work to find a source willing to lend money for rehab and many times it takes matching money to acquire the grant.

The Board believes our historic building is worth saving. It has housed many small businesses; the early Evening News, Edison Sault and the alternate school. It represents an architectural style that was prevalent in the Sault in the early years and is basically a strong building. Our membership and supporters keep us going toward our goal. Thank you for your financial assistance.

Electrifying News
By Sandra Robbins

In 1887 our local newspapers were full of articles anticipating the arrival of electricity in Sault Ste. Marie! Then again in 2020, thanks to a widespread ice storm that hit the Eastern U.P. in the final days of 2019, “electricity’s arrival” was once more the talk-of-the-town. In 1887 living without the constant companionship of “Reddy Kilowatt” was everyone’s normal. However, his gift of spark is so common to us now that when we encounter an outage we creatures of habit still reach for the light switch each time we enter a room — even if our lights have been off for hours, or days.

This whole energy thing has me thinking of how much simpler some aspects of life were in 1887. We hand-pumped our drinking water and
bathing was at best a weekly affair as the whole family shared the one tub of precious water warmed in kettles on the wood burner. Phone service? (What was that?) So we had no need to risk life and limb to get to the nearest source of power to charge our watches, cell phones, or tablets. Curling irons were heated on our wood stoves, and beard trimmers weren’t electric — they were humans of the tonsorial ilk! As for electric toothbrushes … I’ll let you fill in that blank space.

I must confess to liking our current living conditions (pun intended!). And I applaud the Yooper Strong residents of the U.P. who found many fun and innovative ways to pass their powerless plunge back into an earlier way of life — and emerged with tales to tell.

Note: Residents living outside Sault Ste. Marie’s city limits are relative newcomers to the “electrified modern age.” The Rural Electrification Act (REA) signed May 20, 1936 as part of President Roosevelt’s New Deal and the 1938 founding of our local electric cooperative (today’s Cloverland Electric) brought electricity to our rural areas 50-plus years after the first lightbulb glowed in town. Do we have readers who remember the first lights in their homes or barns? Please share your memories with us!

Winter Scene at the Saut
One of the novel winter scenes, peculiar to this isolated region, was witnessed here a few days ago, which threw our community into a clever state of excitement. It is always a great occasion when overland snow-shoe and dog train express arrives, in winter, from “below” or “America;” but as there have been several hundred new comers added to our population within a few months passed, who have been accustomed to see mails arrive at all hours of the day, instead of semi-occasionally, the announcement of a mail arrival this winter, will be a source of greater excitement than before, that is, if we may judge from the opening scene.

Nearly a month had elapsed after all water communication had been cut off between this place and the rest of mankind, during which interesting season, how many anxieties, how many fears had filled the breasts of restless mortals, when the approach of the mail carriers was heralded by runners from the head of Portage; and soon two stately Chippewas, known to be mail carriers, were seen walking, in Indian file, down Portage Street followed by a throng of fast boys and nervous gentlemen.

Aside from their important mission and the burden of their news, these native sons of the forest were interesting objects to look at, and the eye of many along the street followed them as they past. They were dressed in the usual quant costume of this people, with moccasins and leggings, blanket and cap, a small ax in a red sash or girdle, and snow shoes suspended at their backs, and each with a good sized blanket bundle, which of course, contained all the letters, and news every one expected. The news spread like wild-fire, and by the time they reached the Post Office there were not many out of fifteen hundred inhabitants, who had not heard of the arrival of at least one mail. The carriers, as they came down the street were closely besieged by anxious inquirers after news, but they could not, or rather did not speak English, French or German and did not seem inclined to gratify their curiosity and merely answered all alike with “ke-get” and a good natured look to “how ar’ ye.”

– Copied from Lake Superior Journal Saut Ste. Marie, Michigan Monday, January 2, 1854

Photos in a Box: A Big Find!
By Jim Dwyer

Recently, an employee of The Newberry News made a startling discovery while reviewing some items in a former photo darkroom at the office.
Sterling McGinn of Newberry has been collecting historic photos since he was five years of age and has made many discoveries. None of them compare with the most recent one. He opened a small cardboard box, which had an alert written on the cover to use the contents by May 22, 1918. The box was full of historic photo negatives which upon review turned out to be about the early lives of Newberry State Hospital employees. There were about 150 negatives all of which were in very good condition. Some are a mite out of focus, but most are very clear. The photos may have been stored in the location where they were found, for the past 101 years. The contents represent an even better story as there were about 150 of the negatives. A few of the negatives had dates which were from 1915 and all the others appear to be from that era. It is fortunate that the photos were found by McGinn as he understood the significance and didn’t discard them as “junk.”

Fortunately, McGinn happened to know somebody in the Soo who had just bought a new scanner. It was an upgrade from previous scanners as the current one has the capacity to convert photo negatives of any size into positive images.

The photos reflect many aspects of the lives of the employees and their families, including sports activities such as graduations of nurses and attendants, baseball, football, croquet, basketball, and other sports. Dances were common, along with frequent concerts conducted by the state hospital band. Training activities and graduations of nurses and
attendants were also a common activity.

There were Chippewa county connections in that a review of the 1914 to 1916 Biennial reports of state hospital activity shows that of the 249 patient admissions during that time frame, 34 were Chippewa county residents.

The History of Island No. 2
By Kelly Freeman

Readers who are familiar with the geography in the vicinity of the Sugar Island Ferry dock on the Sault Ste. Marie side of the St. Marys River are also likely to be familiar with Rotary Island and Steere Island, home of the rustic Judge Steere cabin. Of lesser acclaim, but of no lesser importance is Island No. 2, the largest island in this grouping located on the river’s west side on the south side of Steere Island.

At just over 50 acres in area, Island No. 2 had historically been home to a number of vacation cabins under shared ownership by no fewer than seven local families. The use of the island for leisure stays was established in the 1920s based upon the construction techniques of the island’s former cabins, if not earlier. In the 1950s, aerial photos show narrow pedestrian bridges connected Island No. 2 with Steere Island and the two other small islands between them. Long since gone, those bridges were no doubt critical to the once bustling social scene among those staying on the islands.

Late 1986 saw the seven families donate their individual ownership interests to the City of Sault Ste. Marie bringing Island No. 2 into public ownership. The donation came after the families apparently decided that the property was not the investment opportunity they were hoping it would be.

The first 30 years of City ownership saw little done with the island or its buildings. Only accessible by water, the island was a place one didn’t just stumble across. Outside of those bold enough to show shoe across the ice in the winter, the island, its buildings, and its wildlife lived a largely undisturbed life.

In the summer of 2016, a cadre of local volunteers with a vision began the groundwork of charting a new course for the island. With the permission of the City Commission, the summer of 2017 saw major changes to the island. Access was improved with the construction of a kayak dock with companion facilities at both Rotary Park and Harvey Marina. Interior to the island saw the clearing of the former hiking trails and construction of boardwalks where damp conditions necessitated. The remains of three collapsed cottages were also removed from the island, although at least one fireplace and chimney remain in place.

Since 2017, the island as served as a destination for hundreds of local and visiting paddlers alike as it becomes an attraction in its own right.

How to Start or Move Ahead on the Family Tree
By Steve Gorden

If you are looking to start documenting your Family tree, or simply continue to work on it to find new relatives, here is some info on about a hundred upcoming free Genealogy Webinars. All live webinars are free and their recordings are free to watch for the first 7 days. Some are on very specific advanced topics, but others are for the beginner.

MyHeritage and FamilyTreeWebinars.com are pleased to announce that registration is now open for its 2020 Legacy Family Tree Webinars series, now in its 10th year.

Choose from 100 classes from genealogy's leading educators on topics ranging from Australia to England to Spain, from Snagit to Virtual Private Networks, from the Mayflower to the 1939 Register, and from DNA Painter to endogamy.

Click here to register (free). -- https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars-multireg.php

Final Wine Release of Year and Sault History Trivia Contest
By Mary June

December 7th the Historical Society held its final Wine Release in celebration of the Society’s 100th Anniversary, held at 1668 Winery. Ray Bauer has worked with CCHS offering us a fundraising opportunity by offering the Society $2 for every bottle of wine sold from the batches, labeled with labels created with photos from the CCHS’s photograph collection. Bernie Arbic made the final selection of photos for the labels and came up
with the catchy titles for the different batches of wine. December’s wine, titled “Reveille Red” sported a CCHS photo of a soldier at Fort Brady blowing a trumpet.

During each Wine Release CCHS hosted a Sault History Trivia contest. Over the course of the year, a friendly rivalry developed between some of the regular teams that attended. December 7th, the teams were all ready to go and the competition was fierce. Bernie Arbic also created the questions and acting as MC announced the questions. In between rounds he reviewed the answers slipping in interesting tidbits of history along the way. At the end of the evening, Randy’s Raiders, led by Randy Suggitt came out on top, winning the evening’s event. Besides Trivia, CCHS also had 2 gift baskets and a packable shopping bag to raffle off. One of the baskets contained a bottle of “Ridge Street Red” (1668 wine) and a variety of cheeses and crackers and a tin of cookies. The second basket was a selection of candy from Alpine Chocolat Haus which included a reindeer decorated caramel apple, sea foam candy, caramel corn, taffy, and rice crispy shaped tree covered in chocolate. The packable shopping bag was thermal lined.

The winners of the raffle were: 1st place Nancy Miller; 2nd place Burt Stretke; and 3rd place Ginny Johnson. CCHS would like to thank Ray Bauer for providing the Society with this fun fund-raising opportunity, all the excellent assistance Kara and her staff at 1668 provided at each event, and another big thank you to all those who attended the Wine Release events over the past year. We also wanted to thank all of our members who volunteered at each event to make sure it all ran smoothly, some of those people are: Bernie Arbic, Carolyn Person, Ruth Neveu, Sharon Dorrity, Ginny Zimbalist, Karen Sabatine, Janet Russell, and Mary June. Thank you everyone for a great year and event!

***** 1887 *****

Railroads Initiate Building Boom in Sault Ste. Marie

The Upper Peninsula was a beehive of construction activity in the latter part of the 1880s. Railroads were being constructed by several syndicates. The major lines traversing the northern peninsula were: The Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie and Atlantic Railway coursing across the southern edge of the Upper Peninsula; the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway running along the southern shore of Lake Superior; and both the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk Railways which were all converging on Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

The railroads brought high hopes for the rapid growth of Sault Ste. Marie. Within the incorporated village businessmen in 1887 were constructing new commercial buildings and a hotel, and substantial residential properties were rising as quickly as the architects and tradesmen could manage. Electricity, as mentioned elsewhere in the publication, was about to shed new light on the town proper. At the western end of the St. Marys Falls Canal (aka “The Locks”) the International Railway Bridge, also under construction, harbingered major commerce at this Canadian-United States port of entry.

The Sault’s boom also included construction of a new lock and approaches; the cutting of the Hay Lake Channel in the lower river; and initial power canal work. Plans were “on the drawing board” for the dismantling of old Fort Brady along the river and the building new Fort Brady on the hill. In support of the anticipated commercial rail business docks, grain elevators and warehouses were under construction; as were railcar shops, switch yards, freight and round houses, and a temporary depot.

Extensions were made to the city water works and sewers to accommodate the new neighborhoods and the expanding business district. On July 14, 1887 the Sault Ste. Marie Democrat reported an estimate of $15.2 million dollars ($412.4 million today) would be expended on these projects. In addition, talk was astir of a newly formed street railway franchise; and of a ferry company and of an excursion yacht service in the coming year.

As the Sault awaited the arrival of its first train one enthusiastic reporter wrote in early September 1887: “The locomotive’s whistle! What a joyous sound!” “This single toot of the steam horse announces to the world that Sault Ste. Marie, little known in the commercial world, has jumped from comparative obscurity into great prominence. No longer a hibernating village but a city, with prospects greater than any on the upper lakes.”
That first train on the D. S. S. & A. railroad reached Sault Ste. Marie on September 16, 1887, and the whole town was said to be “crazy with enthusiasm. The last spike was driven at twelve o’clock noon amid a salute of 21 guns fired from a cannon brought from Fort Brady to the terminus of the road, while the air shook with the cheers of the multitude of enthusiastic spectators. After years of waiting and longing, those who have stuck by the Sault now see their fondest hopes realized. There’s nothing too good for us tonight, and the toot isn’t confined to the democratic office this time.”

As for the M., S. M. & A. train coming up from the southern edge of the U. P., the St. Ignace News of December 2, 1887 announced: “The last rail between Minneapolis and Gladstone, Mich. has been laid. The road bed is also completed for a distance of 50 miles beyond Gladstone, leaving an uncompleted gap of only 30 miles between Gladstone and Sault Ste. Marie, where connections will be made with the Canadian road.

This entire growth boom occurred while the Sault was still technically considered a village. Having been incorporated May 29, 1879 the village of Sault Ste. Marie, continued to be governed by a village council until April 9, 1888 when the first elected members of the newly formed “City of Sault Ste. Marie” formally took office.

[Article postscript: The C.P.R. acquired the M., S. M. and A. (which had been built by a consortium of Minneapolis flour mill owners formed in 1883) on June 11, 1888 and consolidate it with four other mid-western railways to form the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway. A month later the Sault Ste. Marie News headlines of July 14th reported “A Big Deal - The South Shore absorbed by the Canadian Pacific.” (In actuality the latter acquisition was that of several independent investors who just happened to be chief stockholders of the C.P.R. who purchased the controlling stock interests of D. S. S. & A.]

**Off to School**

By Patty Olsen


A second mission and school was established by the American Baptist Church on October 9, 1928 by the Rev. Abel Bingham. He and his wife ran the school for approximately 30 years and served 57 students. A stone on our Court House Lawn marks the location of the school.

Rev. Thomas Easterday arrived in Sault Ste. Marie in 1864, and is considered founder of our modern public school system. A one room wooden school house was built on the corner of Portage and Bingham Avenue which was on Fort Brady ground. Mr. Easterday taught at the school for two years. He later became president of the village Board of Education. This school was in operation until the 1870’s when Central School, a combined elementary and secondary school was built in the same location.

**Another way to Donate to the Chippewa County Historical Society – Donate Your History**

By Ruth Nevue and Julia Rawlings

One of the missions of the Chippewa County Historical Society is to preserve the histories of the people of Chippewa County. Bernie Arbic, Carolyn Person and others have recorded several oral histories of elders who are no longer with us. As members of the Chippewa County Society this is something we can all do whether it be the voice recorded memories of our elders or perhaps the memories we have of our parents, grandparents, etc. How did your parent, grandparent decide to locate in Chippewa County? This is the story my sister and I remember regarding my father.

Robert Clare Rawlings was born in Detroit, Michigan. He served in the Navy during WWII aboard an aircraft carrier. While in the Navy he became certified as an aircraft mechanic. The war ended in 1945, so he went to school for 6 months then decided to go to California to look for work. Before he made it to California he received a job offer in Sault Ste. Marie, MI an aircraft mechanic for Lake Superior Air Service. So that is how he ended up in Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

In 1949 Robert bid on a contract mail job for the U.S. Postal Service. He got the bid for $10,000 for one year. His job was to pick up and drop off mail in St. Ignace, Kinross and Sault Ste. Marie (at the original Post Office on Portage Ave.) two times a day and once a day in Mackinaw City. To get the mail in Mackinaw City he bought a child’s wagon, built up the sides and walked on the ferry - he was surprised they never charged him. In order to do this work he had to borrow $3,000 from his Mother, this was part of the money he had sent her while in the Navy. The $3,000 was used to buy a 1946 ½ ton Dodge pick-up which he used to do the mail run. Since the pick-up bed was open once when it rained the mail got wet and Eva Hassett at the Kinross Post Office has never forgiven him. On Sundays he had to take the big truck? because of the Sunday Detroit Newspapers. Robert’s father Charles came up from Detroit to help him during this year. Charles did one run a day - the one that did not include Mackinaw City. During his contract there was a young man who often wanted to ride with him - little did Robert know but he was studying how to do the job and the following year this young man underbid Robert. At the end of his contract Robert paid back his Mother the $3,000.

Since he was mechanically inclined and was one of those people who
would work on friends’ cars in the driveway, this led to the junkyard on 3 mile road – City Limits Auto Parts. Another institution in the Sault is the local Sault Ste. Marie Municipal Airport- “Sanderson Field”. At some point he took flight instruction from C.G. Sanderson. After obtaining his pilot’s license flying became another one of his obsessions. He was quite the entrepreneur and around the time that the International Bridge was being built 1960-62 he docked a Seabee float plane next to the Welch’s dock #2, where people would pay about $10.00? and get a bird’s eye view of the locks and surrounding vista. He owned and operated an Air Charter Service that provided land, sea and ski ambulance equipped aircraft from 1960 to 1970.

In later years when we would take him out to parades, cars shows, etc. many a younger man would come up to my dad and recount how they bought their first car from the junkyard OR he was the one who gave them their first airplane ride. They obviously had great memories of these firsts in their lives. I feel like my sister, brother and I could write a book about his adventures and misadventures that could be passed down to future generations. I encourage you to do an oral history or write down your family memories and share them with the Chippewa County Historical Society. These memories could be useful to future researchers or could be published in an anthology. Let’s see what the CCHS can collect? Your history memories can be emailed to history@chsmi.com or mailed to CCHS 115 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 OR if you would like us to record your oral history use any of our contacts, phone, email, etc. to let us know.

Ice Storms
When we remember ice storms we don’t always think about those boats working the Great Lakes. This is the Favorite, once a working tug around the Sault area. Yes, those are deck hands with the ice. Thanks to Brenda Coullard and the Great Lakes Group.

Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Street Development in the early 1900s - continued from page 2
By Dee Stevens

There were several in 1887, and Alberta House Hotel, 1905-28. The 1900s had Lewis Kemp, Caskey warehouse, Leo Biking machinist, 407 Gros Cap, 1905-19. Magazine was busy from 1905 (but was that because of Weber’s notes?) to the 1940s.

The busiest area was Magazine around Spruce to Grand Trempe. The west block of Magazine south of Portage had a flour mill and a woolen mill early on. Across from it on Magazine were the (?) Gallagher Saloon from 1905 to 1920 and Gregoire LeLievre from 1919 to 1928 at 205 Magazine; Dan’s Kitchen in 1913 and the Lewis Sinigos Restaurant from 1917 to 1947 at 207 Magazine; Julius Tanguay Restaurant in 1908 and then a barber shop; the Strachan machine shop in here sometime around the turn of the century; George Abowd Confectionery from 1905 to 1909 at 221 ½ Magazine; the Central Hotel from 1905-11, the John Doyle Hotel in 1905 and the Mary Doyle Hotel from 1909-13 at 223 Magazine; and Moher Meat at 233 Magazine from 1905-28.

Across the street was T. Quinn Saloon from 1905 to 1906, F. Brooks Saloon in 1908, J.P. Wilson Saloon in 1909, and Braxton barber in 1915-20 at 222 Magazine; John O’Connor bakery from 1905-09, Lymes Hughes Shoeshine in 1911, and Alfred Chartrand Second Hand from 1915-17 at 224 Magazine; Jacob Jones Second Hand from 1917 to 1928 at 226 Magazine; and F.W. Roach and Sons Second Hand from 1917 to 1928 at 236 Magazine.

South of Ridge on the west side of the street was J. Abbott barber and Dennis J. Gallagher’s Park Saloon from 1905 to 1909, Mary Gallagher Grocery in 1911, Frank Camparino Grocery from 1913 to 1902 at 300 Magazine; Lillian Proctor Restaurant in 1905-06 at 304 Magazine; American Hotel (Achille Corriuex, who also had a saloon there) in 1905 to 1922, then the Clovernland Hotel (Kaizer Maze) from 1924 to 1960 at 306 Magazine. At Gros Cap was James McGauley, brewer’s agent, from 1909 to 1917 (I think on the north side).

Abraham Ferris, confectioner and groceries, was at 400 Magazine.
from 1905 to 1928. Louise Tebo Restaurant was at 402 Magazine in 1911.

Around the corner on the north side of Spruce was Maurice Reidy grocery in 1893, then Edward Reidy and Jerry Neville, at 500 W. Spruce. Water Power Hotel (Margaret McConnell and Duncan Kennedy) in 1905 to 1914 and then the Cadillac Hotel until 1960 were at 512 W. Spruce. At 532 were the Montreal House and Theophile Gariepy Saloon in 1905, Brockman’s Family Restaurant in 1917 and Michael Romani Restaurant in 1924. At the corner of Spruce and Gros Cap, at 600 to 602 W. Spruce, was the Clifton House of P. and A. Goetz in 1893, and the Michigan House of Edward Berube in 1905. The Ernest Priester Saloon was at 630 W. Spruce in 1906 (later Pike Distributing). The Pacific House of John McGir was way down the block at 778 W. Spruce.

On the south side was Lock City Manufacturing at 501 W. Spruce, started by the Moran family, in 1903; John Killackey Saloon in 1900 to 1905 and Thomas Hallesy Grocery in 1924 at 535 W. Spruce; around the corner on Fort the Caskey Furniture Factory and Benjamin King Machine Shop; across the canal, the Peterson Grocery. At 711 W. Spruce was Tymon Lumber (later Kaysner Construction and Waste Management). Mark Tymon served as mayor of the Sault at one time.

About 40 rods from the round house carpenters have commenced work on the temporary depot. This building will be 16x40, divided off into three apartments, one for freight, another for passengers and the third for the office. On the completion of this building the carpenters will commence the erection of a freight house which is to be 24x80.

**THE PERMANENT STATION**

It is hardly expected that the workmen will be able to commence the erection of the Union station this fall, but the plans have been drawn and accepted by both the D. S. S. & A. M., S. S. M. & A. This building will be a magnificent structure, costing $75,000. It will be divided into waiting rooms for first and second class passengers, baggage room and dining hall, with the offices upstairs. The trains will approach from either side under cover, as is the case in Detroit and other large cities. We have not been able to see the plans, but we are informed by the officials that it will be a beauty, as well as large, and arranged for the comfort of the public.

**It almost happened**

In the early 1920’s a group of investors wanted to establish a railroad from the Hessel Cedarville area toward Detour and parallel the St. Marys all the way to the Soo ending near the present golf course. A special roadway was to be constructed over Munuscong Bay. Speculators planned stopping places for picnicking, hotels or cabins for overnight stays. Tourists from Chicago and Ohio were to flock to the train for the novelty and the promise of joining with nature. Like venture capitalists today, what seemed like a sure thing never got the financial support to make the vision materialize.

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**Reprint of two Sault Ste. Marie Democrat articles dated Thursday, October 6, 1887:**

**At the D. S. S. & A. R. R.**

The masons have nearly finished the walls of the round house and it is about ready for the roof. The front columns, it is expected, will be placed in position this week. The water tank is completed and will be filled today, and the turn table will probably be finished by night.
Approaching at night, the distant lights and factory smoke suggest a large industrial city. Slipping down into Sault Ste. Marie breaks the illusion, revealing a small, sturdy community at the northern tip of Michigan. The deceptive lights glow from its larger twin city to the north, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, on the opposite bank of the St. Mary's River.

Founded in 1668, the town preserves several wooden buildings that housed traders, soldiers, and priests from the 17th and 18th centuries and hint at the town’s longevity and previous financial booms. These structures escaped cataclysmic destruction from past town fires and pathological urges in the 1960s-70s to tear down the old to build the new. But the Soo Canal feeding into the 19th century red sandstone power plant, crafted by Italian masons, and the Corps of Engineers’ commanding system of Soo Locks and support buildings on the St. Mary’s River dominate the town.

Given its industrial look, albeit a quaint one, one might be surprised to learn that the Sault has a long literary tradition enriched by the stories of the Anishinaabe (“the original people”) and generations of immigrants under the reign of three consecutive national flags – France, Great Britain, and the United States. Several authors from the 1800s to present illustrate the Sault’s multicultural legacy arising from its unique place on the St. Mary’s River between Lake Superior to the west and Lake Huron at the river’s southern end.

The linking of native and European cultures in the Sault stimulated the rich creativity of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Bamewawagezhikaaqay, her Anishinaabe name), who lived between 1800 and 1842. The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, edited by Robert Dale Parker and published in 2007, collects many of her surviving works and tells the story of her tragic life.

Her mother, Oshahguscodawayquay (Susan Johnston), daughter of the Anishinaabe leader, Waubojeeg, married John Johnston, an Irish fur trader. He assembled a sophisticated library of some 1,000 books in French and English at Elmwood, their Sault home, which became a center of culture and politics in the Upper Midwest. Johnston ensured his métis (mixed ancestry) children received a strong European education, while Susan Johnston, a beloved political leader in the Sault’s multicultural community, taught the Anishinaabe language, customs, and culture.

As a métis, Jane reflected both native and European cultures in her work. She grew into a prolific, often uncredited, author of prose and poetry in English and Anishinaabe. Jane married a white man, the Indian Agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who relied on Jane to translate, transcribe, and interpret the native stories he collected across the Upper Midwest. Jane’s artistry and skill produced key sources used by Henry Longfellow to write The Song of Hiawatha. Jane’s poems of the early death of her firstborn son, Willy, and the loss of her children, who Schoolcraft sent East for a “proper” education, gnaw with a profound depth of human sorrow, loss, and loneliness.

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Upcoming Events

TRAINS: February 1, 2020, I-500 Saturday 10-4
TRAINS: February 15, 2020
at the Winter Ice Festival 12-6
Last chance to see the trains until December 2020!

Office Hours:
Mon. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
and Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
at back door.

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Make checks payable to: Chippewa County Historical Society, P.O. Box 342, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783