



NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY IN OCEANA COUNTY



Tribal History of the Ottawa Indians In Michigan and Oceana County

We know from reading various accounts of Native American history that the Ottawas were one of many tribes that lived in Michigan. How these once great, once powerful people arrived in Oceana County is recorded in a variety of locally kept historical volumes. (see list on next page) Through a series of treaties in the 1800s, the US government sought to gain access to the Indian held lands. Of special interest to us in Oceana County were those lands that bordered the great Grand River running through the center of Michigan's lower peninsula. It was from these lands that the Ottawa Indians migrated to the north.

(Continued on next page)

RUTH ANN KELLY A Woman On a Mission

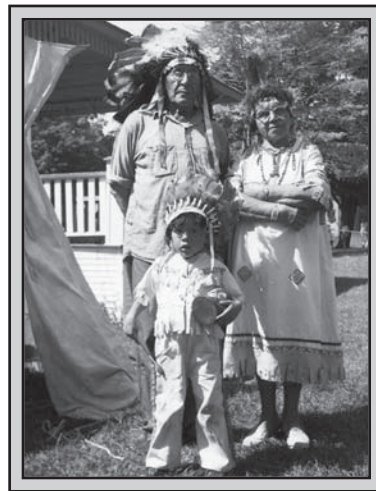
After only a few moments in her company, a visitor to the "Indian Room" at the Oceana County Historical Society is immediately aware of Ruth Ann Kelley's passion for Native American history. This visitor was captured by her energy. Although not an educator, Ruth Ann, a commensurate teacher, is soon drawing you into her small classroom, "the Indian Room". Before you realize it, the history lesson begins; her enthusiasm is contagious.

In this small room, in a labyrinth of other small rooms at OCHS's Munger house, the "Indian Room" occupies

(Continued page 3.)

(Tribal History of the Ottawas Continued)

In the treaty of 1855, the Ottawas agreed to surrender their lands on the Grand River in exchange for lands farther north. These lands, later called the Reservation, consisted of four townships - Eden and Custer in Mason County; Crystal and Elbridge in Oceana County, roughly paralleling, from north to south, the shoreline of Lake Michigan. The final treaty was signed by Ottawa Chief, Caw-Ba-Mo-Say (often referred to as Cobmoosa) and his associates (elders). Shaw-Gwaw-Baw-No and Pay-Baw-Me were other chiefs who were frequently mentioned in historical accounts of treaty negotiations. The migration began in 1857 and 1858 when two contingencies of Indians were transported aboard steamers from Grand Haven to Pentwater.

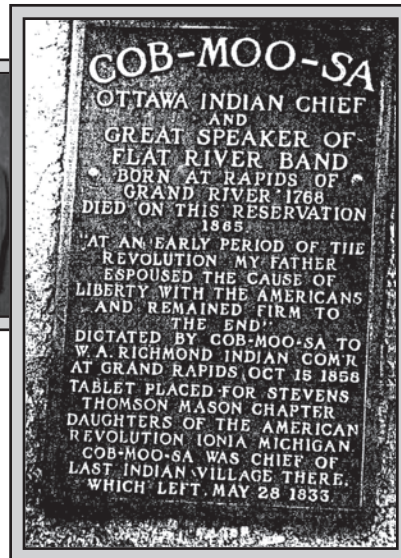


This treaty differed from others where reservations were the norm. Instead of granting the lands to be held in common, each family or single adult was given a parcel of land. It was hoped that this would induce the Indians to give up their hunting, fishing, and small farming ways of life and to adopt the patterns of the whites.

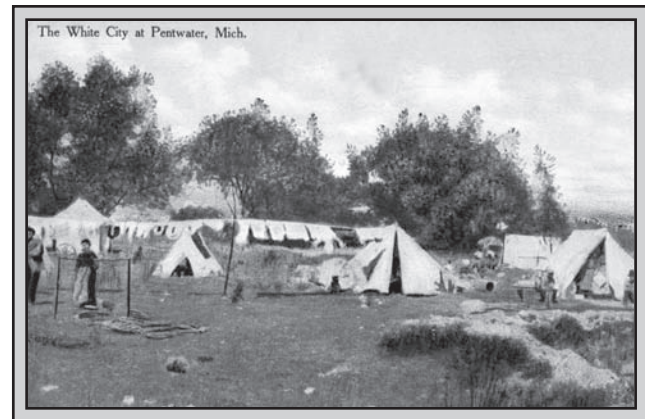
The treaty also provided for the government to pay annuities, in coin and goods, for the first ten years, for the building of four schools, for obtaining livestock and tools, and for operating a blacksmith shop. These promised goods and services, as well as the annuities, gradually came to a premature end. During this period, the Indians were to live on the land allotted to them. However, the concept of individual ownership of land was not something the Indians greatly understood. According to the writings in Vol. 1 of the OCHS yearbook of 1990, "The lack of the idea of individual ownership coupled with the encroachment of the white settlers meant that, after individual patents were issued in 1870, many Indians soon gave up their land, often in ways unfavorable to them."

As written in Wyckoff's Manuscript, "The policy led to the eventual loss of all the lands reserved for the Ottawas in the townships. Some sold their lands soon after receiving their patents, but many more were cheated out of the

allotments by land speculators and timber dealers, or were lost through non-payment of taxes." What may have begun as an Indian effort to escape to the north and the intrusion of the white man, ended with even greater fragmentation of their small bands and loss of their lands.



Elbridge Township has a wealth of reminders of the early Native American presence. Points of interest that illustrate this include the burial grounds, an Indian school, Cobmoosa Lake, Cobmoosa's house now relocated in the Historic District of Hart, and several monuments, one of which honors Cobmoosa called "The Great Walker".



Top Left: Cobmoosa Memorial Southeast of Pentwater.

Top Right: The inscription on the Cobmoosa Memorial.

Lower Left: American Indian family at the annual Pentwater Pow Wow.

Lower Right: This scene of a Native American encampment appeared on an antique postcard.

For the interested reader, the following materials are listed for the study of the Native Americans' migration to Oceana County:

- Oceana County Historical Society, 1990 Yearbook, Vol. 1, housed at the OCHS Munger House, Hart, MI.
- History of the Grand River Ottawas Under the 1855 Treaty, Larry Wyckoff, The Hart Public Library.
- Pentwater Indian Migration, Carrie Mears, The Pentwater Twp. Library.
- Page's History of Oceana County,
- Bicentennial Collection of the Walkerville Area-Colfax, Elbridge, Leavitt Townships, Privately owned.
- Pioneers and Business Men of Today, Hardwick and Tuller, Pentwater Twp. Library.

(Ruth Ann Kelly Continued)

a space dominated by a large desk, walled with file cabinets overflowing with Native American materials where maps and colorful Indian prints and artifacts are housed.

It is here that she is most at home. You sense her vast knowledge acquired through years of research into Native American history and you want to know more about her. When asked, she will answer that she has been an active volunteer and officer of OCHS for 14 years having established the "Indian Room" some 12 years before. You learn that her interest into Native American history first budded when she agreed to help a gentleman who was seeking information about his great-grandmother. The subsequent research she conducted showed that the great-

grandmother was Josetta Derosier, De Vernay, Moon, Robinson, thrice married and third wife to Robinson, who was a nephew of Rix Robinson, a noted trader with the settlers and Indians along the Grand River in the late 1800's. She's got your attention now. You have read about Rix Robinson in other historic accounts of early Indian activity along the Grand River and later in Oceana County. It was from this small foray into local genealogy that Ruth Ann's interest was first sparked.

The extent of the work, both personally and for OCHS, that Ruth Ann has done, can only be described as prodigious. Her passion for Native American history continues and fulfills her greater purpose – to honor the Native American by accurately telling their story. This she has done and done well.

PATRIOTISM AMONG THE INDIANS: CIVIL WAR RECRUITMENT

The Indians of Oceana County were well represented in Company K of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. In July of 1863, a great Fourth of July celebration was held at the Reservation some 15 miles east of Pentwater as the crow flies. A Lieut. E V. Andress of the 1st MI Sharpshooters, whose speech was interpreted by Louis Genereau Jr., gave an impassioned oration to encourage the young braves to enlist.

According to a copy of the 1890 Oceana County Pioneers and Business Men of To-Day by Hartwick and Tuller, "The speeches were so effective that twenty-five Native Americans responded by enlisting. These men, led by Louis Genereau Jr., stepped forward and were sworn into the service of the U.S Government. On the Sunday following, Lieut. Andress marched them (the Indian men) to Pentwater accompanied by nearly all the Indians from the Reservation."

The departure scene surely must have been one of both sadness and excitement. Hartwick and Tuller wrote that the Indian women watched their mates board the steamer, mothers took leave of their sons and younger women cast shy glances at the departing braves. Quoting from this account, "As the boat left the dock, three hearty cheers were given to them and responded to by them. This company did good service and several times reports of the gallant

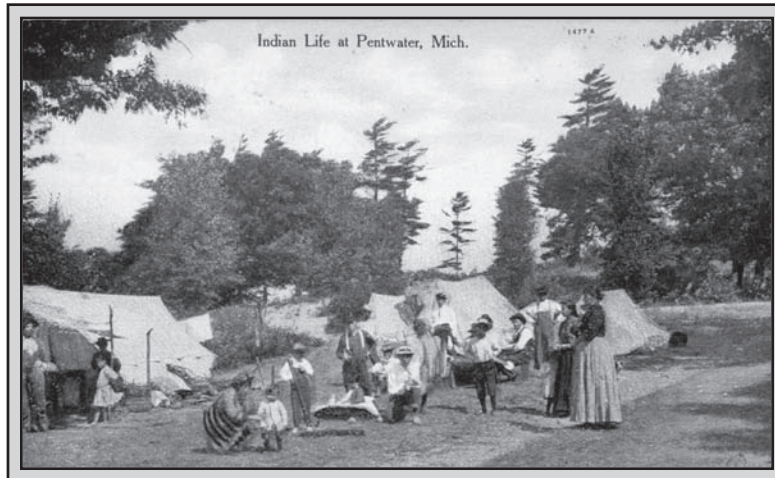
conduct of its members came back. Some of them never returned, but gave their lives to perpetuate the white man's government."

In writings from the OCHS yearbook of 1990 we find this quote, "Through time and history the American Indian has fought next to the white man in his wars, starting earlier than the American Revolution and including the Civil War ... In Oceana County the men of the Indian

community have always answered the call to arms when asked by Washington and its government". "At a celebration in Detroit in 1920 ... a wizened woman from Oceana County named Mrs. Margaret Negake, stood as an honored guest. Mrs. Negake was there as an Indian mother to receive the remains of her son, William Negake, who gave his life for his country

which was truly his, a country which had been the home of his grandfathers from time immemorial ... He was the great grandson of Cobmoosa and the son of Rodney Negake, some of the last chiefs of the Ottawas." Negake was the first soldier from Oceana County to lose his life in World War I and for whom the Hart VFW Post #1329 was named.

An online, Yahoo web search, produced an entry entitled "Men of Co.K, 1st MI Sharpshooters, 1863. An investigation of this entry showed the names of both white and Indian men who served from Pentwater.



This scene of an Native American encampment appeared on an antique postcard.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARCH MADNESS!!! In March the sports world turns to the NCAA Basketball Tournaments where the number one college team in the country will be decided. For many of us it is that time of the year when we look forward with great anticipation and much conjecture as to who the new reigning champion will be.

Stop by the "Good Stuff's" shop for the local men's morning coffee klatch, and



Boys' 1921 basketball team.

you will hear a host of theories on who will win the National Basketball Title. Recently while browsing through old family pictures and newspaper clippings I came across several old Pentwater High School basketball teams. To my delight, I found the basis for my winter newsletter message. I hope you will also find this bit of history to be both interesting and timely and perhaps it might just stimulate fond old memories for you as well. This article spans 88 years of Pentwater Basketball, from 1921 to nearly the end of the 2009 season.

In 1891 the game of basketball was originated by Dr. James Naismith, Springfield College in Massachusetts, as a simple physical education game. The game was intended to keep students interested in physical training. As the story goes two peach baskets were used, with one on either end of the gymnasium, and placed 10 feet in height from the floor. Thirteen

simple rules were established, that have changed continuously over the years to fit the game as it is played today. A college student came up with the name of "basketball" for the game because peach baskets were used as goals. In 1893 the Narragensett Machine Company sold the first manufactured basket for the game. A soccer ball was



Girls' basketball team of 1921.

used in the beginning and the first actual basketball came into existence in 1894. Glass backboards came into being in the year 1909. Today, over 300 million play the game world wide! Thanks to the internet information highway for the originating facts about the game of Basketball.

The first newspaper picture is of the Boys' 1921 Basketball team. Reading top left to right are Carl Sarles, Coach Maynard, Vernon Martin, John Melquham, Donald Hawkins and Harold Shaw holding the basketball. The second newspaper picture is of the Girls Basketball Team of 1921. Beginning with the top row and left to right are Leafy Lattin, Olive Wieber, Adelaide Wise, Anna Ferry, Madonna Flagg, Goldie Patterson, Olive Richmond, Doris Lambrix and Cecelia Cosette. Both Pictures were taken on the front steps of the old Pentwater School Building, then located between what is now First and Second Streets and facing Rutledge Street.

Next is a photograph of the 1927 Class D, Oceana and Mason County Champion Girls Basketball Team that was taken in front of the old Pentwater School Building. Coached by Ed Schimke, the lady players are Isabelle Peterson, Barbara Hunt, (Captain) Marquerite Richmond, Dorothy O'Brien, LaVerle Sayers, Ethel Sayers and Mildred Richmond. Names are correct but not in order as shown in the picture. The team had eight season games. Their record was two wins, two ties and four losses to class C teams. For the season the team scored



Girls' basketball team of 1927.

an accumulated 109 points and the opposition scored 116. The average game score for the team was 13.6 points per game! On February 24, 2009 the Pentwater Boys Falcon team played the Hesperia Panthers scoring 91 points to win the game. The dramatic increase in points scored may well be attributed to the change in rules, addition of the three point shot, improved gymnasium facilities, coaching techniques, early development of player skills and commitment to the game.

The next picture is of the Girls Basketball Team of 1929, again photographed in front of the old Pentwater School. Reading from the back and left to right are Helen Spore, Ruby Spore, (Captain) Audrey Squire, M. Richmond, L. Sayers, L. E. Meyers, Ruth Palmer, Mona Gifford and A. Gensen. It is interesting to note that today's uniforms have greatly changed from those worn by teams of the 1920's.

Moving forward twenty six years we find photos of the 1955 Boys basketball team and Lady Falcon Cheerleaders. For the Boys team members and viewing from left to right are Ray Parnell, Chuck Gregwer, Darrell Martin, Bud Ringwald, Frank Venn, Ed Bigelow, Tom Haas and Marvin Strong. The Falcon Cheerleader picture; reading left to right are Roberta Gregwer, Linda Lou Blamer, Sharon Finucane,

avored Saint Simons with a final score of 78 to 58, thus ending the season. As the 2009 Boys Basketball season draws to a close the last picture is of the Falcon Team prior to a home game with Manistee Catholic Central. The varsity team players for 2009 starting from the back row left to right are Trevor VanZoeren, J. R. James, Matt VanDerZanden, Michael King, Brandon Knoll, Eric Wallstrom, Andre Williams, Cody Stotler and Chad Blamer.

of interest to you from past years. Available for your use at the Pentwater Township Library (view and print), Pentwater School (view only) and the Oceana County Historical Society are microfilm copies of most Pentwater Newspaper editions. Microfilming of the Pentwater News Papers was a project undertaken by the Pentwater Historical Society for the benefit of our members and public at large. Pentwater News Papers on microfilm are from April 20,



Girls' basketball team of 1929.



Boys' basketball team of 1955.



The Falcon 2009 basketball team.

and Kay Kessler. A new milestone in Falcon scoring took place that year when Pentwater scored 100 points to Manistee St. Joseph's 60 points. High scoring players were Ray Parnell 32, Darrell Martin 18 and Ed Bigelow 17 points respectively. The reserve team also won by a score of 31 to 24 points. The determining game for the Class D championship was played in Ludington between Pentwater and Ludington Saint Simons. The game outcome

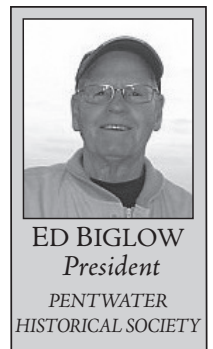
In addition to providing a glimpse into local Pentwater basketball history for our newsletter readers, my intent is also to share the value of using the internet, library and historical society as a means to recall history and events

1861 to February 23, 1961 or nearly 100 years of delightful reading and research if you are so inclined to try your hand at it.

If you would like to actively participate in the Pentwater Historical Society, please contact any board of trustee member for information about projects or functions that could use your support.



The Falcon Cheerleaders of 1955.



ED BIGLOW
President
PENTWATER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DEATHS

Dorothy Bell Grace Gregwer Jeanne Pettingill

MEMORIALS

FROM:

Millie Bennett

MEMORY OF:

Lola Botfruff

Jim Tierney

Rudy Gustafson

2007-2008 OFFICERS & TRUSTEES OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FREDRICK HERMAN IMMER

(As told by: Fredrick Immer Jr. November, 2007)

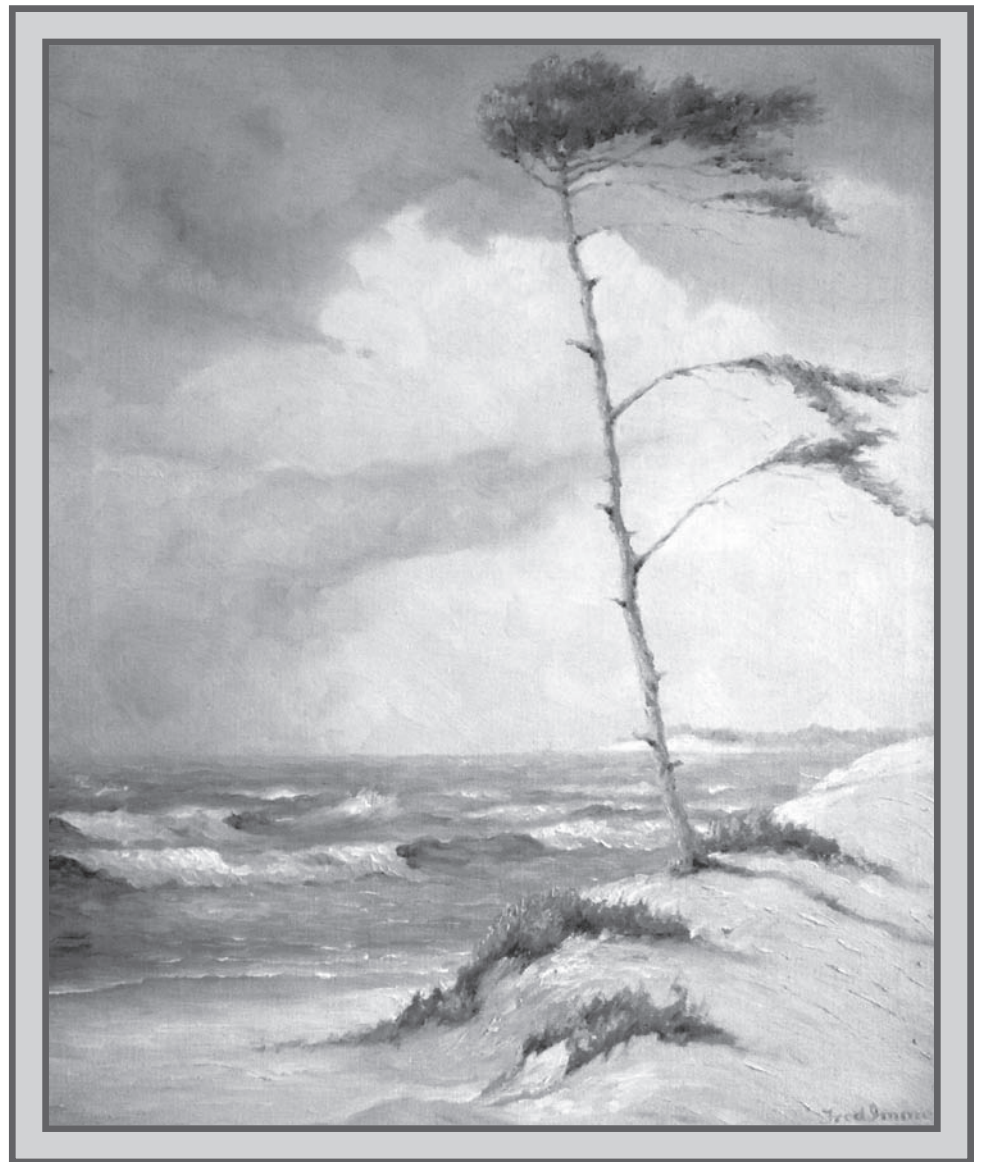
The story of Fredrick Immer began on October 7, 1884 at Ditzmer Verlast, East Friesland Germany, where he was born to Rev. Carl and Flora (Eilers) Immer. Fredrick's father was a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as were all but one of his brothers. While in Germany Fredrick studied at the Gymnasium. As a young man he wanted to enlist in the Kaiser's Army with an officer's commission, but a commission had to be purchased and Fredrick's family chose not to do that. Shortly after the door to an army officer career was closed to him, he immigrated to the United States.

He made the move in August of 1902 at 18 years of age and resided with Ludwig Hirschfeld in Waco, Nebraska until 1918. During this period he traveled to such places as St. Louis Missouri, Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles and San Francisco, California, Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida painting murals and stage scenery in theaters. While working in theaters Fredrick got to meet and know Tom Mix, one of the cowboy stars of silent films.

In April of 1918 Fredrick became a scenic artist headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida in the winter and moving around to a variety of locations in the North during the summer months. In 1921 Fredrick met Hazel Ester Wagner while vacationing at Pentwater's Nickerson Inn. He lived in Lansing and continued to see Hazel while still traveling around the Midwest working on scenery painting. On July 9, 1924 they married and in March, 1927 moved to Pentwater where they became permanent residents. They spent their years in a home at 440 Lowell Street near the Charles Mears State Park.

From 1927 until his death on July 16, 1939 at the age of 55, Fredrick painted and sold scenic oil paintings of the Pentwater area. His painting studio was in Edwin Kent's furniture store across from the Big Maple Garage and next to the Standard Station in downtown Pentwater.

Fredrick and Hazel had three children. Fredrick William, Gretha Mae (Immer) Moak and Alice Medora (Immer) Hall. All three graduated from Pentwater High School and Alma College.



On a beach near Pentwater a lone tree braves stormy winds in this dramatic painting by Fredrick Immer.

Bob's Corner

by Bob Childres

Some time ago I wrote about an ongoing battle between the saloon owners and the Temperance League. Enter a new white knight on the side of those Temperance League people.

Enter ...blazing trumpets please...taa daa, "The Law and Order League". Just the sound of the name should send chills up and down my spine. "The Law and Order League is getting its work here, and apparently with plenty to do." J.G. Turck and John Michaelson, saloon keepers, have been arrested for violations, and this following so closely after the arrest and conviction of Ed Perkins and "Stub" Fulsher, has created quite a rustle in the affairs of that class of citizens who are found among the "easy going".

Your esteemed reporter did some further investigation and found "Mr. Turck and Mr. Michaelson had been warned about fighting and drunkenness in their establishments many times before. Mr. Perkins' and Mr. Fulsher's arrest had to do with drunkenness and gambling in their saloons." I do know there was a shooting in there someplace but I haven't found it yet.

And now, period news from beyond Pentwater. Watch closely because this was really big folks.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE MODERN WORLD, CIRCA 1871

- Printing
(Since I was a printer I was happy to see this)
- Gunpowder
- Labor Saving Machinery
- The Photograph
- Optical Instruments,
(Such as the telescope and microscope)
- The Steam Engine
- The Electric Telegraph

NEW MEMBERS

Kerrie Kurgat Russell S. Christianson Colleen Donaldson
Jerry & Char Daggett Thomas & Donna Hackey

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 PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPRING DINNER

Wednesday, May 27, 2009
Social Hour 6:00pm (BYOB)
Swiss Steak Dinner 7:00pm
At The Pentwater VFW Hall
This event open to the public.

Featuring:

Dr. Bill Anderson

WOMEN OF THE CIVIL WAR

Enjoy this social and educational event

ONLY \$13.00

TICKETS ON SALE AT:

Society Officers The Pentwater Township Library Durand's Wine Shop

DUES ARE DUE

Membership dues for the 2008-2009 year were due September 1, 2008. If you see "08" 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:

The Pentwater Historical Society
P.O. Box 54, Pentwater MI 49449.

2009 EVENTS

Pentwater Historical Society

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

The Spring Dinner & Program, Wednesday May 27.

The Annual Meeting, Wednesday July 8.

Summer Dinner & Program, Wednesday Aug 26.

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

HOME ADDRESS _____ SUMMER ADDRESS _____ From _____ To _____

NAME _____ NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

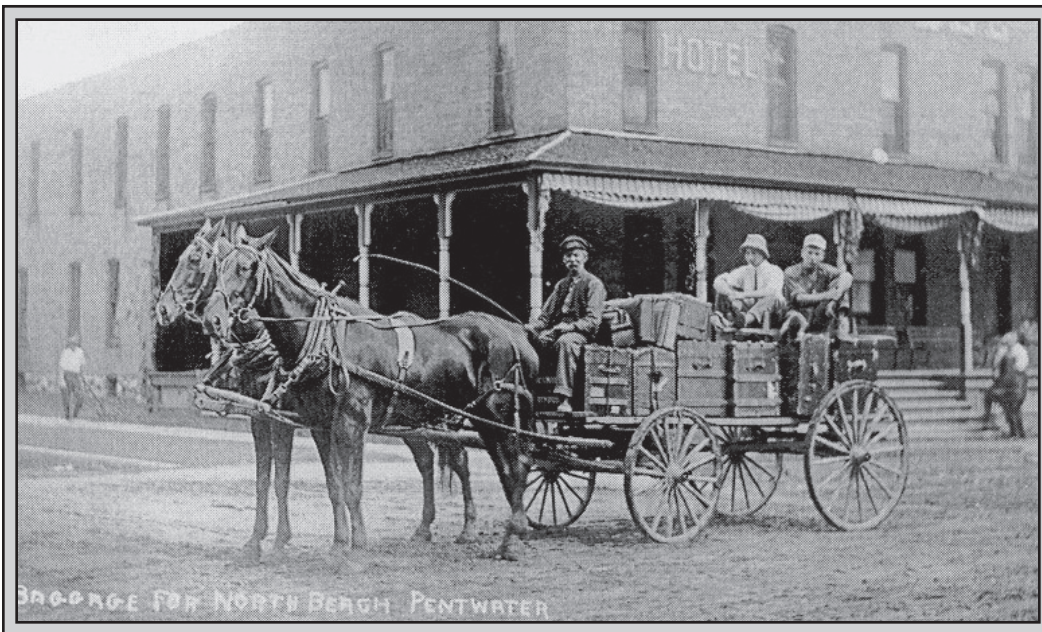
PHONE _____ PHONE _____

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: AUTHORIZED
 The Pentwater Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Pentwater, MI 49449 SIGNATURE _____



This old photo is labeled "Baggage for North Beach, Pentwater".

This is how summer visitors and cottage people arriving by boat or train managed to transport their trunks and cases to their lodgings or lake front homes.

Building in the background shows a sign identifying it as The Glendee Hotel.



The old ferry crossing the channel near a Schooner that probably has just recently arrived and is ready to receive another load of lumber from Pentwater.



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

PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPRING DINNER AT THE VFW HALL WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, AT 6 PM