

View from Baldhead 1874

Remembering When ...

Our History

THE DRUMMER BOY

William T. Kimsey, according to some sources, had visited and worked in the print shops of Michigan, and perhaps the Saugatuck area, as early as 1855. However, he was running a newspaper in Dekalb County, Indiana, when he and his brother John enlisted, as musicians, in the 44th Indiana Infantry on September 25, 1861.

William became a drummer of Co. K. After a rocky

first year--he deserted in November of 1862, but returned to duty in April 1863 after President Lincoln declared amnesty for deserters who returned to their regiments--he was rapidly promoted to drum major, and then principal musician of the entire regiment.

After the war Kimsey moved to Saugatuck and worked in the print shops of the Douglas Weekly Record and the Saugatuck Commercial, as well as carrying on a commercial printing business. He had returned from the war with the drum that he had used at Chickamauga and

other major battles and was much in demand to lead parades and play for memorial services. In 1930 he participated in an encampment of musicians at Chicago and was chosen to play the long roll on the radio. Kimsey died October 9, 1932, at Fort Wayne, where he had gone to attend a reunion of his old regiment.

He was a resident of Douglas and lived in the two story square home on Spring Street across Lawn Street from the first Red Barn Theatre. The structure was razed in the 1970s. *By Kit Lane*



Above - Kimsey and other veterans leading a parade on Butler Street about 1918.

Left - Kimsey's Civil War drum.

Right - William T. Kimsey age 90.



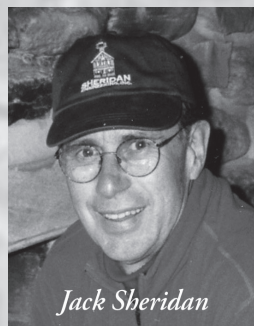
The Remembering When feature is the creation of Jack Sheridan and Jim Schmiechen of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society. We remind our readers that this year's SDHS Pumphouse Museum exhibit titled "Lincoln's Ready-Made Soldiers: Saugatuck Area Men in the Civil War" is now open. The historic museum is located on the west side of the Kalamazoo River at the foot of Mt. Baldhead. It is open daily, noon to 4 p.m. until Labor Day, and then on fall weekends. There is no admission charge.

In addition, special presentations featuring various historical topics will be presented at the museum on

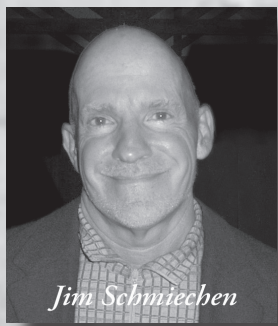
Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to noon, beginning June 21.

We welcome your comments on Remembering When. Call 269 857-7901, email us at sdhistory@accn.org or write to Box 617 Douglas, MI 49406. SDHS historical images can be seen on the SDHS web site at www.sdhistory.com and all historical photos are available for purchase in print sizes up to 12x17.

Our historical image database is growing through your contributions. We scan your old photos--you keep the originals--and we then provide you with a CD of your digitized images.



Jack Sheridan



Jim Schmiechen