



*Interior of the Saugatuck Fruit Exchange*

## SAUGATUCK

# FRUIT EXCHANGE

This was one of the most important spots in the history of the Lakeshore's fruit industry. There were no orchards here, but from the 1900s to the 1950s area farmers converged at the massive Saugatuck Fruit Exchange at the corner of Griffith and Culver Streets.

As the local fruit industry boomed, farmers sought a better way to sell their produce in faraway places like Chicago. The Saugatuck Fruit Exchange was established in 1917 as a cooperative for members to bring their produce to be sorted, graded, and packaged for distribution to contracted wholesalers. By working together, sharing equipment and cutting out the middlemen, farmers improved their bottom line.

The Exchange was well placed near the waterfront and along the Interurban electric railway. But as highways developed in the 1930s, trucks took over as the primary means of shipping fruit. In 1954 the Fruit Exchange relocated to a new warehouse on the Blue Star Highway in Douglas (where the Saugatuck Antique Pavilion and Saugatuck Brewing Company are today). The Fruit Exchange operated there until closing its doors in 1960.



*A watercolor painting of workers operating a fruit sorting machine, circa 1935, inside the Saugatuck Fruit Exchange. Artist unknown. SDHC collections, donated by Jane (Bird) Van Dis.*

Back in Saugatuck, the old Exchange building became the offices of the Lloyd J. Harriss Pie Company. The pie factory, located across Culver Street, was a staple of the local economy for nearly forty years. The pie factory officially ceased operation in 1998 and the old Saugatuck Fruit Exchange building was demolished in 1999. In 2002, the pie factory building was transformed into the Saugatuck Center for the Arts.

*A steamship docked near the Saugatuck Fruit Exchange*



1920s

*A Fruit Belt Motor Transport Lines Republic truck ready to haul fruit to market*

*Child posed in front of the Fruit Exchange*



1970s

*The Fruit Exchange repurposed as the Lloyd J. Harriss Pie factory offices, circa 1970s*

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