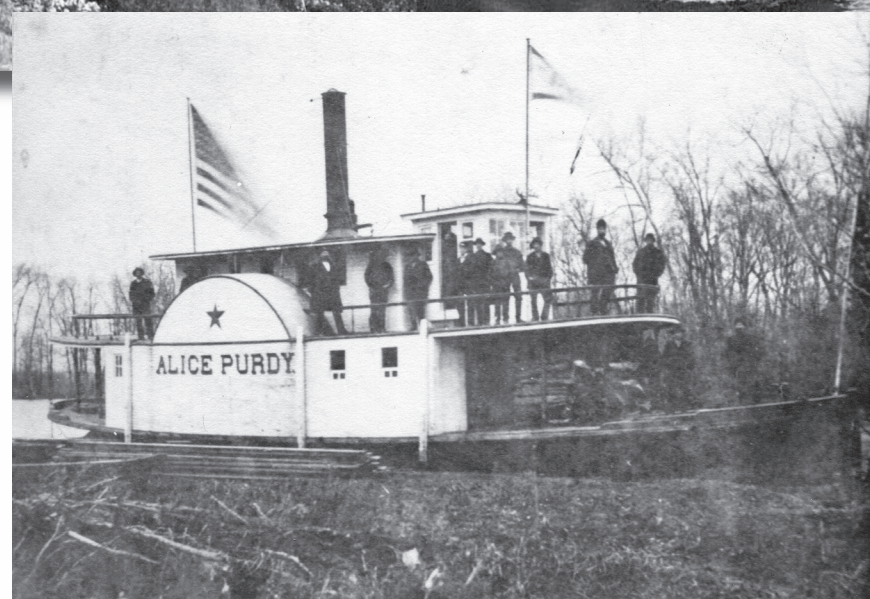
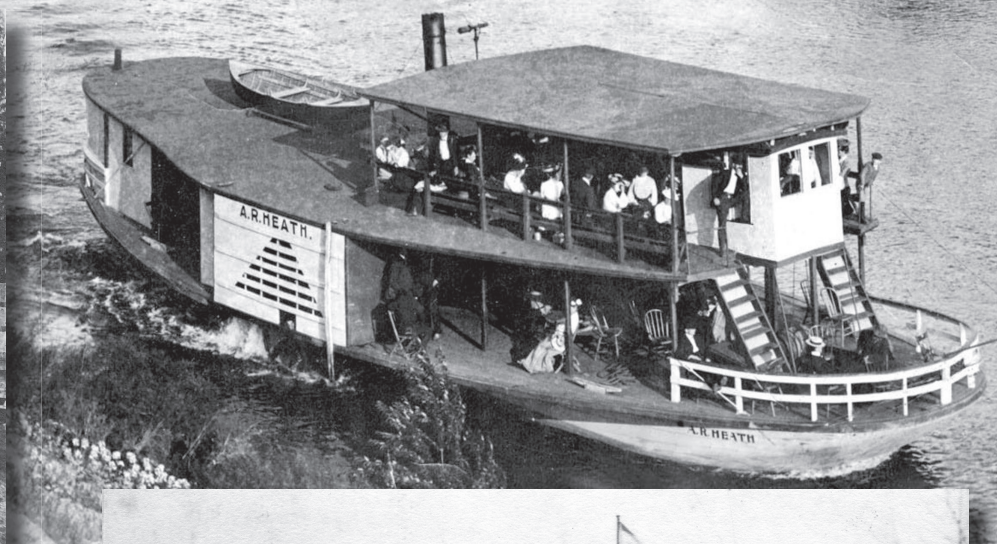
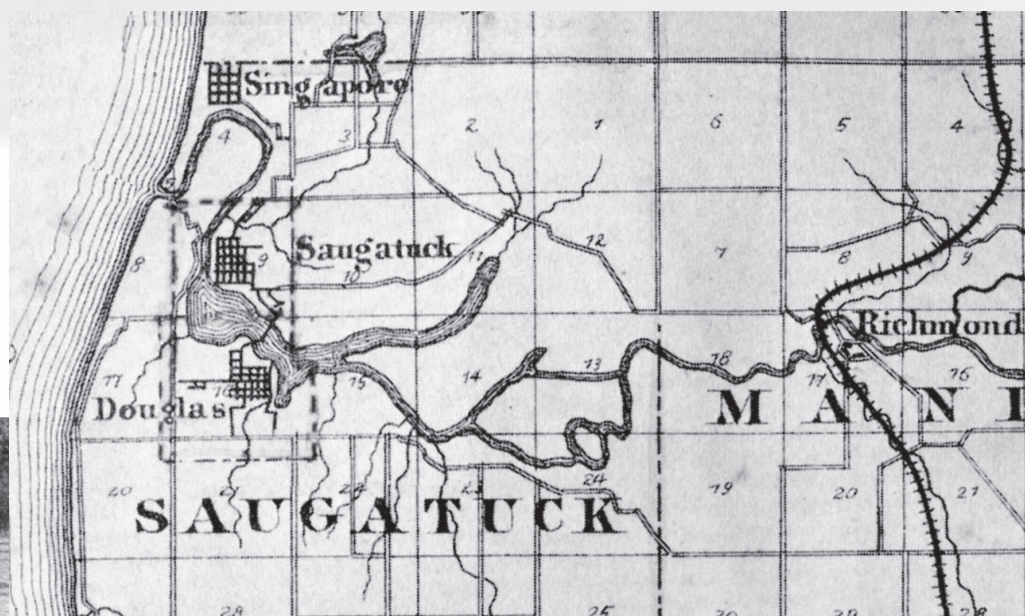


### NEW RICHMOND RUN - THE RIVERBOATS

As a realtor says: "location, location, location". In 1837 Richmond was born because of its location on the Kalamazoo River and got new life twenty four years later as New Richmond—because of location and the new railroad. New Richmond lies about seven miles upriver from Saugatuck and Douglas. With good conditions a riverboat could make the scenic and smooth trip in less than two hours – a preferred route compared to a lurching wagon or stagecoach ride of the same duration. Riverboat cargo varied from sightseers to shingles with agricultural produce being of major importance in the fall. For fruit shipping, the connection with the railroad was an especially important factor.

Sounds good – but there was a fly in the ointment – which was the fickle water level in the less than mighty upriver Kalamazoo. Even though the draft of most riverboats was less than twenty inches, boom or bust profit still hinged on water level. Between 1840 and 1910 the historical record (Kit Lane chronicles many in her book "The Dustless Road to Happyland" – Pavilion Press 1995) is rich with stories and photos of the boats that plied their trade on the Saugatuck-New Richmond route.

By Jack Sheridan



Top left - Loading fruit at New Richmond ca 1900  
 Top right - A. R. Heath cruising with a load ca 1905  
 Left - Arthur of Chicago ca 1908 - load of sightseers  
 Above - Alice Purdy, one of the most successful riverboats  
 was launched 1881- burned in Saugatuck in 1887

The Remembering When feature is the creation of Jack Sheridan and Jim Schmiechen of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society. Please visit the Society's museum – this years exhibit "Lincoln's Ready-Made Soldiers: Saugatuck Area Men in the Civil War" is open through the fall. The museum is located on the west side of the Kalamazoo River at the foot of Mt. Baldhead, and is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. There is no admission charge.

We welcome your comments on Remembering When. Call 269 857-7901, email us at [sdhistory@accn.org](mailto: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](http://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.

