

View from Baldhead 1874

# Remembering When ...

## Our History

**SCHOOLS OF SAUGATUCK** The early Saugatuck schools were one-room. The first was not much more than a warehouse shed in Singapore – the next was at the end of Dug Road in the area that is the Pine Trails Camp today. The next two were the Pine Grove School and the Ward School. The former (still standing and the home of Doug and Korry Hoeksema ) is at the end of Mary St between Butler and Griffith. The Ward School was between the Riverside Cemetery and the Pine Trail Camp.

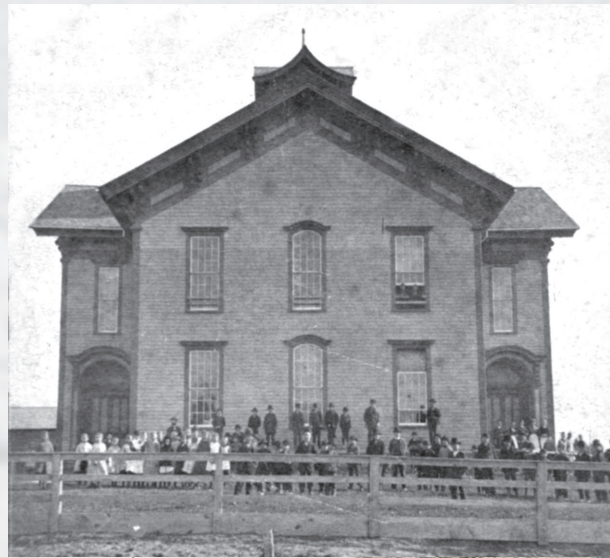
Then Douglas set a new standard in 1867 with the splendid Union School. A few years later Saugatuck followed with a slightly larger building of similar design. This building was destroyed in a terrible windstorm and fire in 1896 but was replaced with a grand brick structure a year later.

The Saugatuck Union school was eight grades until 1874 when the upper four grades and a high school program was adopted. Douglas Union School graduates often attended high school there. The first class graduated in 1878. School attendance in those days was often limited and graduation from high school was an honor and distinction comparable to present-day graduation from college with an advanced degree. Graduating classes were small, often less than four before 1900.

The principal, always known as the “professor”, was expected to be an outstanding personage in the community. However, he did not manage any part of the school operation except for education. The school board reserved—beside financial management—the right to run the school which included management of the janitor, building maintenance, supplies and physical changes or improvements in the school plant. The professor was not expected to have involvement in anything not on a high academic plane. Nor was he expected to concern himself with problems of hiring or firing of the teaching staff.

The local educational system was run with pride and the honor of being elected a member of the school board marked one as being in the top echelon of local leadership. Teachers were often young high school graduates. Though underpaid, they were much respected. Their compensation-in part-often consisted of room and board provided by the student’s parents.

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society is gathering historical data and photos about our local schools. Do you have old class photos or other photos/information? Stories to tell? Call Jack or Jim at the Society’s “Tech Center,” 857-7901—or Judy at 857-1183.



*Above - Saugatuck students 1880*

*Front - Robert Miller, Eddie Sprague, Frank Forbes, Johanna Miller*

*Second Row - George Dole, Jessie House, Jennie Miller, Nellie Underwood, Susie Hibberdine, Kate Nies, Ella Deming, Joe Richards*

*Back Row - Abbie Wheeler, Ida Holmes, May Moffet, Doc Heath, Ida Shotwell (teacher) Burr Billings, Ida Nies, Dell Holmes, Sylvia McClair*



*Top - The first Saugatuck Union School ca 1880 on top of Old Allegan Rd hill*

*Middle - Ward school ca 1900*

*Bottom - Saugatuck Union School ca 1910*

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

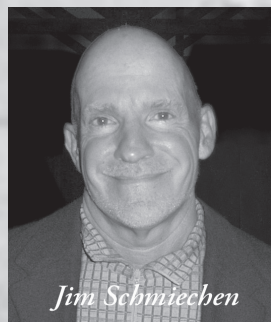
Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to noon, beginning June 21.

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



*Jack Sheridan*



*Jim Schmiechen*