

Above - Ben Plummer ca 1875

Left - Map of Pier Cove ca 1860 - drawn by Bob Simonds. The path of Lake Shore Drive today follows North Main, Pier and South Lake streets.

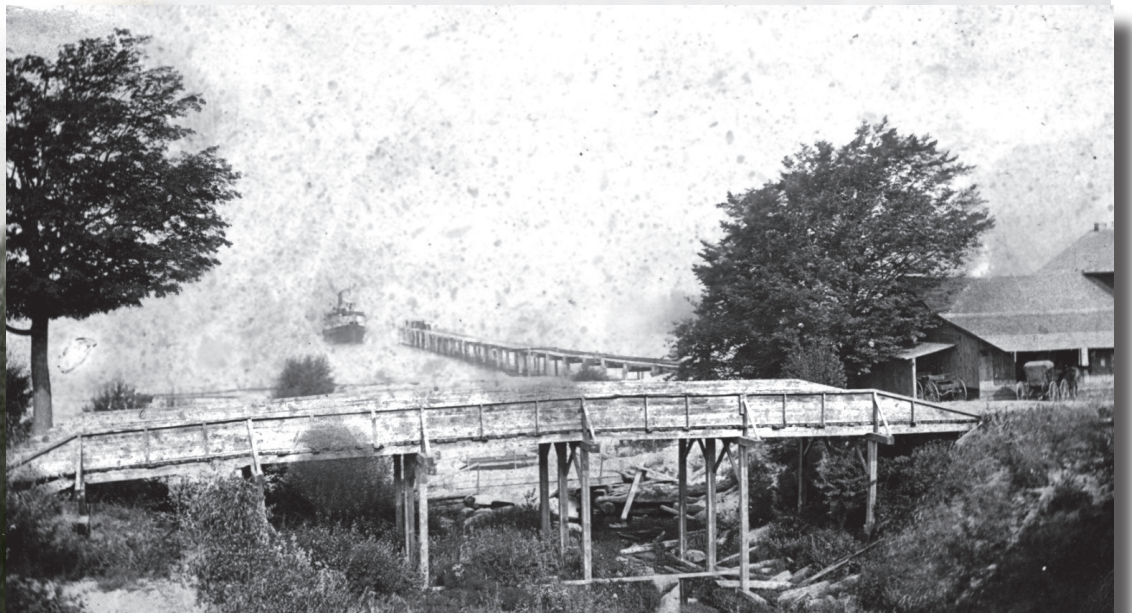
**PIER COVE EARLY HISTORY** Ben Plummer was the first in the area about 1847 when he built a sawmill on the creek about a mile south of what is now Pier Cove. Near the sawmill, O. R. Johnson, F. B. Wallin and Stephen Morrison owned and operated—at separate times—a tannery there. These early settlers were tanners and lumbermen of means who were a powerful force for thirty years in various Singapore and Saugatuck area enterprises.

In 1848 near a small creek just a mile up the road a small village, later named Pier Cove, started up and grew in a burst of frontier energy: 1849 First settlers - 1852 Sawmill established - 1853 Turning mill started - 1854 Post office established - 1855 Nichols home built (still exists) - 1860 High point for Pier Cove.

The first settler was Marcius Sutherland who proceeded to build a 200 foot pier. Then Sidney Squires rebuilt a small sawmill that had been brought up from Battle Creek. Seizing on the growing economic opportunity, Charles Richards dammed up the creek and built a turning and grist mill. So Pier Cove got its start and by 1860 included stores, churches and a saloon.

The focus of the activity was cordwood, lumbering and tanning businesses. Raw hides were imported from Chicago, tanned (local hemlock bark was key to the tanning process) and shipped back along with cordwood and milled lumber. Business really boomed after the 1871 Chicago fire, though by the late 70s the big pines and the hemlocks had been harvested, spelling the end for the sawmills and the tanneries.

Farms began to take over the once forested countryside and farmers soon cultivated the next boom product—the peach! That is another story.... By Jack Sheridan



Above - Ca 1895 - A vessel approaching the north pier. The building on the right is the warehouse.

Left - Ca 1890 - The mill on the creek was built ca 1852, closed after the dam washed out in 1881, but was a landmark until collapse in 1915.

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.

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