

What do the names, Saugatuck and Douglas mean?

SAUGATUCK is an Algonquin Indian word which means “on a lake near the river’s mouth.” Saugatuck



is situated on Lake Kalamazoo near the river’s mouth.

The village was platted in 1834 as **KALAMAZOO**, but

there was already a post office named Kalamazoo in

Calhoun County communi-

ty on the same river, so in 1835 the Allegan County

town applied for a post office named Saugatuck. It is

uncertain whether the word was from the local Indi-

ans, or whether the Michigan Saugatuck was named

for the town of Saugatuck, Connecticut (later part of

Westport), where the geographic situation is identi-

cal and the Indians spoke

a similar language. When

the village was incorporat-

ed in 1868 a petition was

written out asking for in-

corporation as the village

of “Belle Haven.” How-

ever, at some point in the

proceedings, Saugatuck,

the name of the post office,

was written on a separate piece of paper and glued

over Belle Haven. The petition in the Allegan County

files still shows this alteration.

of Allegan County, State of Michigan
We, the Undersigned, legal voters
residing within the limits of Section Nine
(9) and North East fractional part of Section
sixteen (16) on north side of Kalamazoo River
Township of Saugatuck, County of Allegan
& State of Michigan - respectfully show that
the number of citizens residing within
said limits is, according to accompanying
census list, more than ample sufficient
to authorize the granting of a village charter
incorporating said limits as a
village as provided for by law.
Your petitioners therefore pray
that your honorable body cause the
granting of a charter incorporating the
said limits as a village - under the name
of the Village of **Saugatuck**
Dated August 13th 1867
A. E. Burt

DOUGLAS is named for Douglas, the capital of the

Isle of Man, located in the Irish Sea. It is where the

Dhoo (“gray” in Manx) and the Glass (“clear”) riv-

ers meet. The Michigan town was named by Frederic

H. May, who had been born in Douglas, Isle of Man,

when his father was headmaster of a school there.

Jonathan Wade who owned the land south of Cen-

ter Street, founded his own settlement called **DUD-**

LEYVILLE, named for his brother. In 1870 the entire

area of both communities was incorporated as the

Village of Douglas. The name appealed to the Dud-

leyville residents because they were mostly Demo-

crats and had been supporters of Stephen A. Douglas

against Abraham Lincoln in the presidential election

of 1860.