

from the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society
Saturday, August 14 at 1 p.m.
Saugatuck Village Square



May Heath Memorial Plaque Dedication



Ceremony Program Chair Peg Sanford and Memorial Committee Chair Chris Yoder show new memorial plaque honoring May Francis Heath.

A bronze plaque memorial honoring May Francis Heath (1873-1961), early Saugatuck historian, writer, teacher, artist and civic leader, will be unveiled and dedicated to the people of Saugatuck in a public ceremony at the water fountain in Saugatuck Village Square on Saturday, August 14 at 1pm.

This event, funded by donations from the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society, Saugatuck/Douglas Art Club, Heath family descendants and friends, will feature commemorative comments by Allegan County Historian John Paul

and the Historical Society's Marsha Kontio, Peg Sanford and Chris Yoder. Saugatuck Woman's Club President Karen Drongowski will comment on the Club's recently created May Heath Scholarship and introduce its first scholarship recipient. May Francis Heath's three great-grandchildren will speak and then unveil the plaque. Refreshments will follow.

As granddaughter of S. A. Morrison, the man credited with naming Saugatuck when the town's first post office opened, May Heath was one of Saugatuck's most influential citizens of her time. She was instrumental in establishing Saugatuck Woman's Club, Saugatuck-Douglas Art Club and the town's first public lending library, spearheaded historical events such as the 1930 centennial celebration, and was personally responsible for preventing the cutting down of the Saugatuck Treaty Oak, which still stands on the west side of Holland Street north of Francis Street.

May Heath is perhaps most widely remembered here as the author of *"Early Memories of Saugatuck, Michigan 1830 to 1930"*, considered a masterpiece of personal retrospective and a major reference work on local history. Historical Society volunteer Rob Carey found an out-of-print edition of Heath's book, scanned and edited its contents, adding a previously published biographical sketch of Heath while Saugatuck author/historian Kit Lane created an index for the new edition. The enhanced book, reprinted by the Society and offered in 6x9" soft-cover format, includes woodcut illustrations by noted artist Carl Hoerman.

The next event planned for the celebration of May Heath's life will be a program presented by Marsha Kontio at the Woman's Club on October 8 at 2 pm, titled *"Tea with May Heath: Stories Of The Famous Local Historical Matriarch"*.

A series of articles about the life, times and accomplishments of May Francis Heath is available in the Historical Society's monthly newsletters, December

2009 through current, which can be viewed and printed out on www.sdhistoricalsociety.org; select News Library, then E-News.