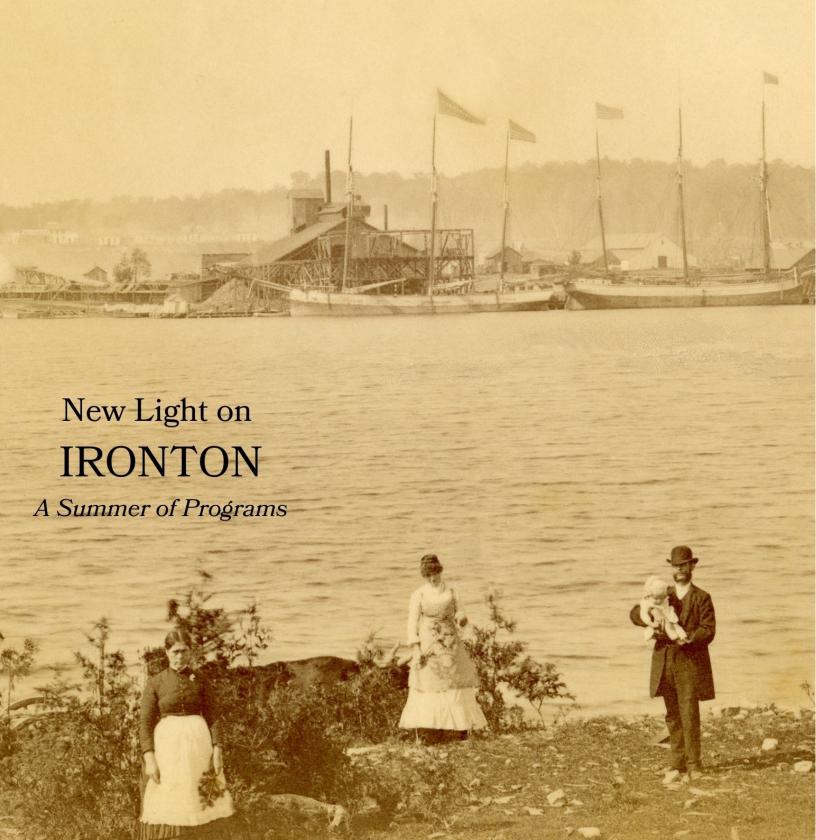


NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025

Bridging our past with our future







This summer, the Charlevoix Historical Society presents an exciting series of programs on Ironton, a historic community on the western shore of Lake Charlevoix's South Arm. Ironton's story began in the post Civil War era in the late 1860s, when pioneering farmers began to homestead in the still remote and undeveloped wilderness of Eveline Township. The picture changed in the late 1870s with the arrival of R. M. Cherrie, an industrialist from Chicago looking to expand his interests in iron production in Northern Michigan. He chose an approximately eighty acre tract just north of today's ferry crossing as the site for the Pine Lake Iron Company, an integrated iron smelting and charcoal manufacturing operation. Ground broke in 1879, with the facility coming into full operation in 1881. Within only a few years, the business found success and had drawn a significant population to the area, first known simply as the "Furnace" at the mouth of the South Arm. It was named Ironton for its first industry and economic lifeblood, pig iron ingot, when Cherrie platted the village and established the first post office in 1884.

The Charlevoix Historical Society presented its first program on June 3rd with *Jon Fogg* at the Train Depot, who discussed the family's marine towing business, with its origins on Beaver Island, and whose mainland operations now center in Ironton on the site of the former Pine Lake Iron Company.

In July, board member, *Ole Lyngklip*, whose ancestors were among Ironton's early pioneers of the 1880s, will give a lecture titled "*New Light on Old Ironton*". Based on recent research and several important acquisitions at the Museum at Harsha House, he will discuss the major eras of the town's early history, beginning with first settlement in the 1870s, rapid industrialization in the 1880s, and the first economic collapse of the 1890s, which brought Ironton's chapter of heavy manufacturing to a fateful close. The growth of the resort era in Ironton, beginning around 1900, ushered in a renewed economic vitality, which too saw an unexpected end, led by the start of the great depression in 1929, and capped by a calamitous, and still unexplained, fire in 1931, which destroyed most of the original structures of the original pioneer settlement.

In August, ferry operator and local historian *Bob Goodenough* will present a program on August 18th on the history of the Ironton ferry, the oldest surviving relic of the original pioneer settlement. His talk coincides with the centennial anniversary of the current Ironton ferry vessel, which went into service 100 years ago this June.

Cover Photograph: Owner R. M. Cherrie stands with family in front of the Pine Lake Iron Company's immense smelting operation, a speculative business venture on Lake Charlevoix's South Arm that literally put Ironton on the map, ca. 1887

Above Left: A fishing party from the Sweet Brier Farm resort poses aboard the Ironton ferry with famed early operator Sam Alexander (right), Summer 1901

Above Right: The abandoned beehive-shaped charcoal kilns of Ironton, last vestiges of the failed Pine Lake Iron Company, ca. 1898



New Treasure Comes to the Museum...

In April, 2025, the Charlevoix Historical Society received a small rocking chair that had once been in the house of poetess Sara Teasdale. Teasdale was a summer resident in Charlevoix for 22 years in the early 1900s. She was born in 1884 in St. Louis, Missouri, and was considered one of America's leading literary lights. There is more information on this story written by our historian David Miles if you visit our website. Much of the information in this article is based on the recollections of Earl Young in his memoirs.

A Big THANK YOU to

Currier Lawn Maintenance, Inc.

They have graciously cleared the Harsha House parking lot of snow this past season at no charge in support of the Historical Society.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you to all who have continued to support us and have made significant contributions to our operating funds. This past month *Cheryl Shanahan* was appointed as an advisory board member. Cheryl comes to us from a long career in business where her specialty was helping to reorganize departments and information technology. We look forward to benefiting from her experience and energy on future projects. I hope to see all of you this coming year at our many scheduled events covering the history of Ironton and our Oktoberfest fall fundraiser on October 18 at Shanahan's Barn.

The board also wishes to thank Tom Darnton for his six years of service as a Director along with serving as Vice President, John Duerr for his six years of service as a Director, and Steve Paterka for his many years as a member of our Advisory Board.

Geoffrey Reynolds

President



Upcoming Programs and Events

July 8th: Charlevoix Historical Society Annual Meeting, 4 pm @ Train Depot

July 10th: History of Ironton, Ole Lyngklip, 6 pm @ Charlevoix Public Library

July 15: The Argonne, 100th Anniversary Program, David Miles & Cindy Whitley, 7 pm @ Train

Depot

July 25th: Venetian Potluck & Fireworks, 7 pm @ Train Depot

August 9: Argonne Centennial Gala Celebration, 6-9 pm @ The Argonne House

August 11: Downstream from Here: a Foreign Correspondent Discovers Home, Charles R.

Eisendrath, 6 pm @ Charlevoix Public Library

August 18: Ironton Historian Robert Goodenough, 6 pm @ Charlevoix Public Library

August 28th: Annual Ralph Hamilton Circle Reception @ Train Depot

October 18: Oktoberfest @ Shanahan's Barn, Charlevoix Historical Society and Charlevoix Circle of

Arts, 6-9 pm

Save the Date!

Downstream from Here: a Foreign Correspondent Discovers Home, August 11, 6pm In a special program, acclaimed journalist and best-selling author Charles Eisendrath will tell stories from the new edition of his inspiring and wide-ranging memoir - from wars covered as Time Magazine correspondent, to local sports fishing and wood fired grilling, to his Overlook Farm in East Jordan, where he started a cherry orchard and maple syrup operation that has become the last working farm on Lake Charlevoix.

Argonne 100th Anniversary Program

2025 marks the 100th year that a local business has been providing quality service for untold thousands of people from across northern Michigan, the country, and abroad. What began as the Thorman Country Club on Boyne City Road turned into the Argonne not long after, and ever since has been one of the premier places to travel to for a quality dining experience in Charlevoix.

Join us as Museum at Harsha House Curator David L. Miles presents a fully illustrated program on the history of the Argonne. He will be joined by Cindy Whitley, who with her late brother Steve Ager were recent owners. They inherited the business from their sociable and popular parents Ted and Clara Ager. The public is invited to join in with reminiscences and stories about their times at the restaurant, and what it meant to them and their families and friends over the years.

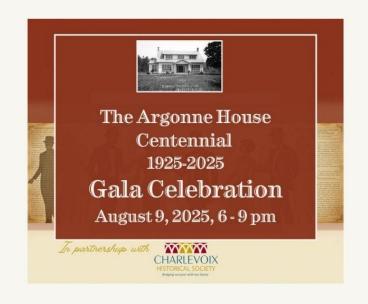
The current owners will be recognizing this important year with a special evening on Saturday, August 9 from 6 to 9. See the separate article in this newsletter.

The Argonne program will be presented at the Society's historic Train Depot at Depot Beach on Tuesday, July 15 at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free, but donations to the Society are always appreciated.

The Argonne House Centennial Gala

Step back in time and enjoy a spectacular evening of dining, music and dancing as The Argonne House celebrates its centennial this year! Very few business establishments can claim this distinction, especially in Charlevoix. The Argonne was an extremely popular destination for area visitors and residents across the decades to dine and be entertained. It still holds a very special place in the hearts and minds of many who still come to Charlevoix.

To help them celebrate and to share their storied history, the Historical Society is partnering with The Argonne House on this special event, and they are generously donating 10% of ticket sales to the Society.



Saturday, August 9, 2025 @ 6 pm

Cost: \$100 per person, includes:
Dinner, entertainment by Charlie Millard Band,
program and special guests
Call The Argonne House at 231-547-9331 to
book your spot and buy your tickets





Join us for some festive fun as Charlevoix Historical Society & Charlevoix Circle of Arts team up for this major fundraiser at Shanahan's Barn. Bavarian fare will be provided by Stigg's Brewery & Kitchen with live music by Enzian aus Detroit.

There will be a Silent Auction along with Oktoberfest traditions.

Table Sponsorships for eight or ten people available. By sponsoring a table, you're not only securing a memorable night of Bavarian-style fun, but you're also making a meaningful impact on the arts, history, and cultural vibrancy of our community.

Your support helps sustain programs, exhibits, and educational outreach that keep Charlevoix's creative and historical spirit alive.

Individual tickets @ \$150 per person will go on sale July 1, 2025

Charlevoix Circle of Arts - 231-547-3554 | charlevoix circle.org Charlevoix Historical Society - 231-547-0373 | visit chxhistory.com

All proceeds will be shared equally between the Historical Society and Circle of Arts

New Customer Relationship Management System

From our membership team, we are excited to announce that the Society will be introducing a new software platform to manage our membership database later this summer. It will provide many new features and benefits to our members, including your own member portal, an improved experience joining or renewing through our website, and the option for seamless renewal each year. Keep an eye out for more details as we get ready to launch.

Annual Meeting

The Society's Annual Meeting will be held on *Tuesday, July 8, at 4:00 p.m. at the Train Depot.* Earlier this year Gail DeMeyere was appointed as an Advisory Board member. She has been nominated to serve as a Director on the board for a three-year term. Susan Tukel has been nominated to serve as a Director for a 2nd three-year term. Board Director Jamie McLane has been nominated to serve as the Vice President and Denise Fate has been nominated to serve as the interim Finance Chair. We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting and meeting all of our board members and staff.



The Society is pleased to announce that grant funding has been awarded to support the \$140,000 project to repair and repaint localized areas of the interior and exterior of the South Pier Lighthouse, along with sealing the lantern gallery, planned for later this year. A \$60,000 grant was received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for a Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program Grant (MLAP), an \$8,000 grant from Great Lakes Energy (GLE) People Fund and a \$9,000 grant from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. The MLAP program is funded from the Save our Lights license plate program. Great Lakes Energy members provide the sole support for the People Fund by allowing their bill to be rounded up each month to the next dollar. Please consider participation in these programs, which fund so many important projects throughout our region, if you are eligible. We are extremely grateful to these grantors for their support.

Society Receives 2025 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

Left to Right:

Ryan Schumaker, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Scott Ray, from the office of Parker Fairbairn, State House Representative representing the 107th House District Lindsey Dotson, Buildings and Grounds Chair

Trevor Dotson, Historical Society, accepting on behalf of Richard Neumann

Denise Fate, Historical Society President Emerita

Mark Heydlauff, City of Charlevoix Michelle Smay, Smay Trombley Architecture

Robert Jess, Freshwater Charch Steve Seebohm, Historic Paint Consultation



Photograph courtesy of Michigan Economic Development Corp.

Now in its 22nd year, the Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation program, held annually during National Historic Preservation Month, was created by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to celebrate outstanding historic preservation achievements that reflect a commitment to the preservation of Michigan's unique character and the many archaeological sites and historic places that represent our rich past. This year's event took place in Heritage Hall at the Michigan State Capitol on May 8, 2025.

The Charlevoix Historical Society was one of seven recipients from across Michigan recognized for long-term stewardship of Charlevoix historic sites: the Museum at Harsha House, historic Train Depot, and the South Pier Lighthouse. The society wishes to thank those who partnered with us on these endeavors and were also award recipients: Freshwater Charch: a Design Build Firm; Smay Trombley Architecture; Richard Neumann, Architect; Steven C. Seebohm Historic Paint Consultation; and the City of Charlevoix.

The Charlevoix Historical Society's care for three historic resources connects both residents and visitors with the city's history. Built in 1892, the Queen Anne-style Harsha House has been the home of the society and its museum for more than 45 years. Starting in 2016, a master plan for the property prioritized needed work, leading to a new roof, wood siding and masonry repairs, and a fresh repaint. On the interior, the foyer was restored, and other renovation work improved the society's exhibit and artifact storage space.

The unused Chicago & West Michigan Railroad depot was gifted to the society in 1992 and immediately stabilized. A phased rehabilitation effort began in 2018 to restore the original look of the building, including exterior restoration and a detailed paint analysis, which informed a complete repaint into historically appropriate colors. In 2023, a SHPO Certified Local Government program grant helped to fund a new roof for the depot building, which is currently used as an event venue.

The South Pier Lighthouse came under local ownership in 2006, requiring a long-term plan for restoration. Local fundraising was paired with several successive Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program grants to replace corroded steel and concrete, repair ventilation equipment, repaint the lighthouse interior, and restore the exterior's fire engine red color. The lighthouse remains the city's most photographed landmark and celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2023.

The society has also led local storytelling efforts with the recent installation of several large interpretive panels throughout the community, sharing historical information and photographs with both residents and visitors. SHPO states, "With the Charlevoix Historical Society's leadership and support from the city, the history of this lakefront town will be in good hands for years to come."



103 State Street / P.O. Box 525 Charlevoix, MI 49720

Board of Directors

President Geoffrey Reynolds Vice President Tom Darnton Secretary/Membership **Janet Kohler** Treasurer Ken Kranz **Finance Chair** Jamie McLane

> John Duerr Jon Fogg Ole Lyngklip III Susan Tukel

Staff

Manager of Operations

Trevor Dotson **Curator/Archivist** David Miles **Museum Assistant Iessica Dominic**

Controller Jeff Mason

Donations (unrestricted) received from:

Matthew Anstett Charles & Barbara Gluek Sandy & Michael Hermanoff Abbott McCartney Linda Richardson Mason & Lynne Rosenthall

Donations Given in Memory of:

Joan Swanson from Thomas Swanson Joan Robinson from Denise and Gary Fate **Donations For Lighthouse Preservation:**

Vera and Joseph Dresner Foundation

Welcome New Members with sincere thanks for their support!

Edith DeMeyere

Sarah Miller

Gail DeMeyere - Lifetime Membership in memory of Richard Keith DeMeyere

The Charlevoix Historical Society wishes to express condolences to the friends and family of long-time members Thomas Bleha, Marjory Dinwiddie, Joan Robinson and Joan Swanson at their passing.