



Flushing Area Historical Society

810-487-0814

431 W. Main St. • Flushing, Michigan 48433 •

Facebook: [Flushing Area Historical Society & Museum](#)

Winter & Spring Hours
Tuesdays, 10 AM -1 PM
and by appointment

For information, call or e-mail:

810-487-0814 fahs@att.net

Museum	810-487-0814
Museum tours & building use:	
Dan Anderson	810-686-6669
Membership,	
Robert Davies	810-624-0278
Donation of artifacts:	
Call Museum	810-487-0814
President,	
Dan Anderson:	810-686-6669

Board of Directors:

President:

Dan Anderson 810-686-6669

Vice President:

Matt Hartmann 810-210-1518

Secretary: Paul Morgan

Treasurer: Robert Davies

Directors:

Term expires Dec. 31

Jenny Kress	2025
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Don Wilson	2026
Jim Leszczynski	2026
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Endowment Trustees:

Jim Wood, Chairman	810-659-0494
Robert Davies	810-624-0278
Carl Liepmann	810-639-7075
Dan Anderson	810-686-6669
Mary Smith	

Flushing Area Historical Society (The Depot)

431 W. Main St. at the R.R. track

7 P.M. Monday, March 17, 2025

Flushing Grain Elevator

Guest Speaker for our March meeting will be Robert Tomalia. Robert grew up in the Flushing area. His family has been involved in the Flushing Grain Elevator since 1941. Robert came along in 1943. He grew up in the country on five acres of land with a creek running through it. Robert and his three brothers thought it was paradise on earth. In the early years he attended the Caldwell school, he changed schools to attend the new St. Robert's Catholic school, of which Robert was in the second graduating class.

Following grade school, Robert attended Flushing High school and was a member of the first graduating class of the NEW High school of 1961. He married Kathleen Coolick and they had five sons. Robert elected to work at General Motors, instead of the elevator, and retired after 34 years. Currently, he serves on the Flushing High School Alumni Board.

Robert loves to work on old cars and currently owns two Corvettes. He is a member of the Corvette Club of America.

Robert will talk about his experiences while working at the elevator in his youth, and other Flushing memories.



Notes from Dan's Desk:

Greetings to everyone and I hope you are doing well this month. It sure has been a cold and snowy February, hopefully March is better, weather-wise. Here at the museum, we are working on changing our displays for the new season to be ready when we open in May. This year we are planning for the next two years, so we can help "Celebrate America 250". 2026 will be the 250th Celebration of Independence in the United States.

As we celebrate over the next two years you might hear me talk about various groups we are working with. So, I thought I would share with you what some of these group's initials mean. First is FCC which means Flushing Chamber of Commerce. This is the group that helps organize the various festivals in town such as CandleWalk and Harvest Festival. They also provide help to local businesses and organizations in Flushing.

Next is HSM which means Historical Society of Michigan. HSM is a statewide organization that provides grants, information and resources for local museums. This is the group that gave us a grant for upgrading our technology at the museum. The Historical Society also offers conferences to attend to learn about Michigan history and meet others interested in history.

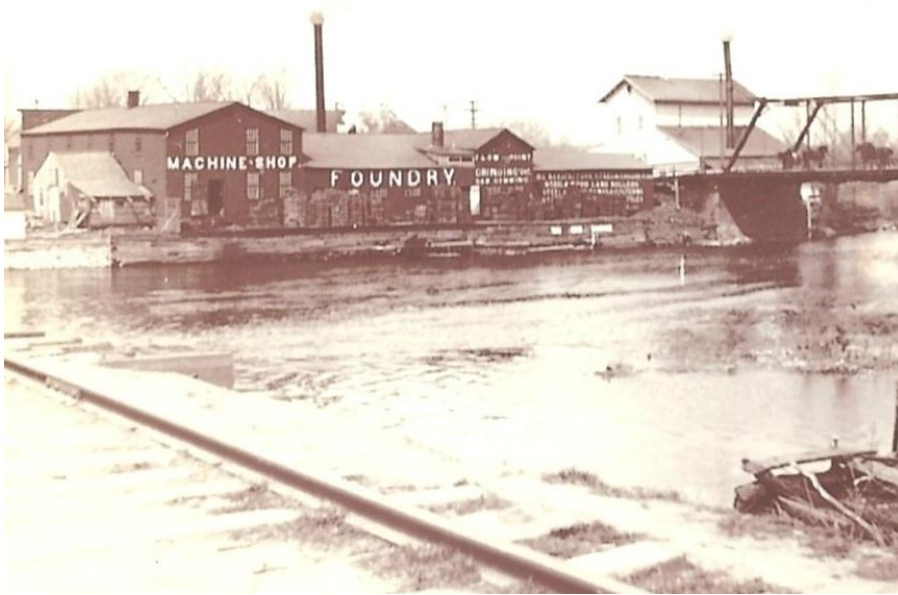
Next is MMA which stands for Michigan Museum Association. This is also a statewide association that provides help to Museums in the State. They have training sessions to help you learn how to improve the running of your museum.

Next is AASLH which is the American Association for State and Local History. This is a National Organization that runs programs to promote museums throughout the nation . They have been leading the effort to promote the "America 250 Celebration " with ideas and conferences and keeping you updated on projects throughout the country.

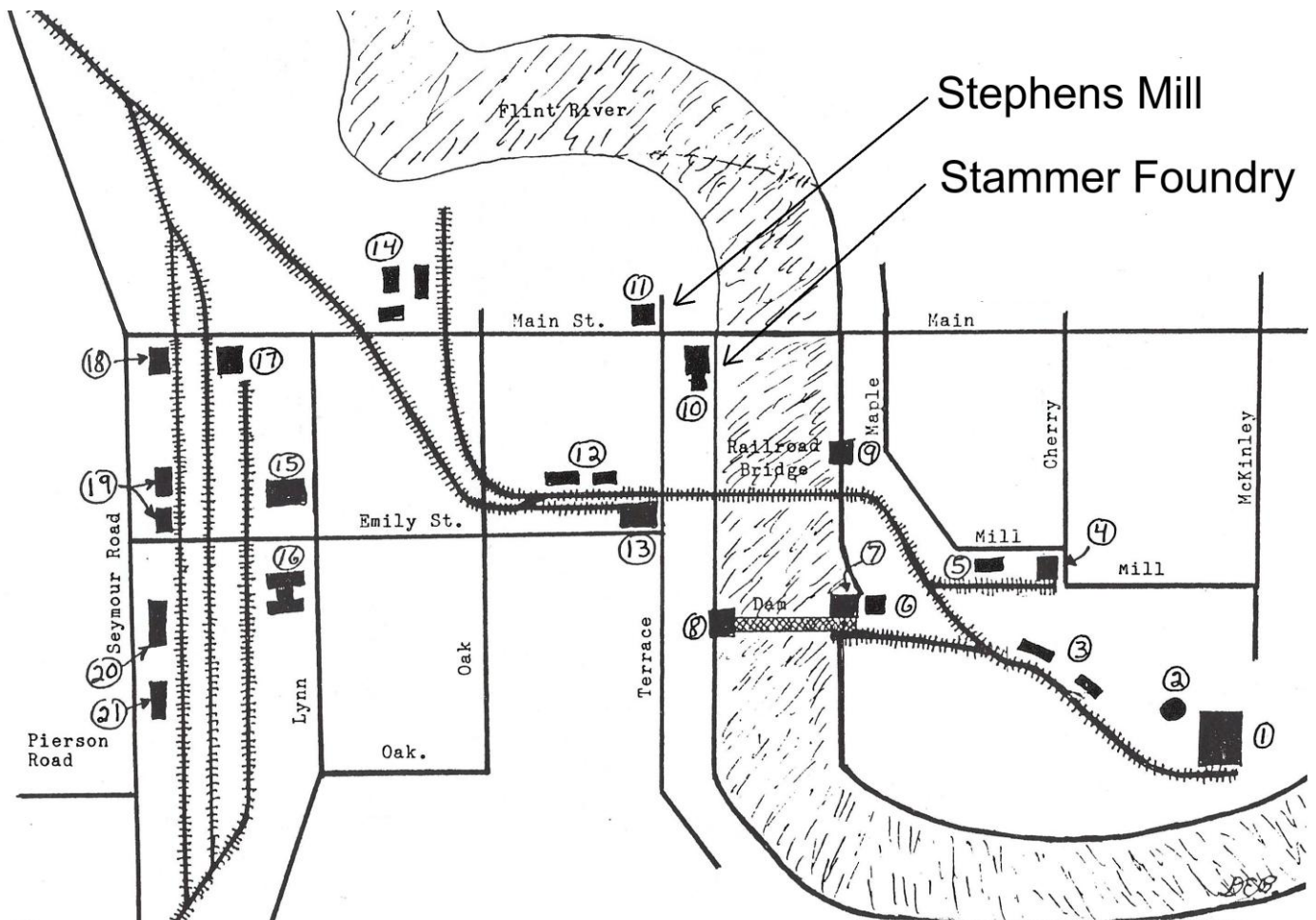
All these groups have been working together to promote the upcoming event and to support museums in their efforts. As we go forward in the next few months we hope to continue to work to promote and work with these organizations to celebrate the upcoming event. This will include asking you, our members, for help in making our displays. Keep your eyes on the newsletter for updates and a wish list of things we need.

If you are doing any type of research, it is best to e-mail at least one week ahead. Include everything you know, including names and dates. Most requests involve researching various databases and locating the material. This can be time consuming and can be difficult to do on a busy Tuesday.

Stephens Mill and James Sammer Machine Shop & Foundry, 1890-1900 era



This photo is looking north-west from the railroad bridge that ran to the Hart Mill. It is a good view of the James Sammer Machine Shop & Foundry on the corner of Main St. and Terrace St. The building on the far right, north of Main St. is the Stephens Mill.



This map is from Flushing Sesquicentennial History, Volume1, page 94.

WORKING IN FLUSHING

Helen E (Austin) Dowland

I had just finished my end of 10th grade bookkeeping exam. Very pleased because I had received an A+.

Next day I was called to the office. There I met a man named Ransom. He owned a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership on Maple St. in an old Opera House I was told. He wanted the school to recommend someone for a bookkeeper as he was being drafted into the Army. So, I was hired for 50 cents an hour. I started immediately and worked all summer. I soon learned to do a daily ledger and sent a monthly statement to Chrysler in Detroit. I worked 2 ½ hours after school started again in the 11th grade.

The parts bin was in the office and I soon learned to read parts catalogs and could sell and order small parts. We could not get cars because of the war, so Mr. Ransom started selling wringer washing machines and General Electric refrigerators.

It was almost impossible to get tires. And if we did, the tires would have to be sold to someone who really needed them.

One day after going to the bank on the corner, to make a deposit, I came out and the town was very quiet. Some people were even crying. I learned that President Roosevelt had died. People felt very deeply about him.

The first car we received after they started them was a Chrysler. It was sold to Dr. N.A.C. Andrews, a local doctor whose office was on Main St. I do not remember who got the first Plymouth, but I believe the price was \$1,668.00. We only received one or two a month for a while.

I worked there for 5 ½ years and got to know a lot of nice people. Oh, and I did get a raise to \$1.00 an hour after I was out of school.



Helen (Austin) Dowland (1927-2021) graduated as Salutatorian of the Flushing High School class of 1945 and worked as a bookkeeper for the Plymouth-Chrysler dealership from 1943 to 1947. Helen married Deuane George Dowland in 1945. They moved to Clio in 1959.

The story above was submitted to the Flushing Area Historical Society several years ago. A brief family story (Dowland) can be found in Flushing Sesquicentennial History, volume II, page 44. A close examination of the photo reveals a parking meter in front of the showroom window. Does anyone remember when parking meters were removed?



The undated photo to the left is of the Chrysler Plymouth-Valiant dealership located at 103-105 N. Maple St. in the former Cronk Opera House. The property is now a parking lot and an open area. It is difficult to guess the year from this low-quality photo, but the sign advertises the Plymouth-Valiant model, which was only made between 1960 to 1976.

Thank you: We wish to express thanks to all our members who donate money to the Flushing Area Historical Society in memory of a loved one or friend. This money is placed in a trust fund and the interest received helps with the expenses and operation of the Depot. The Historical Society is a 501 (C) 3 tax-exempt, non-profit Michigan Corporation. There were no memorials received between January 23 and February 20.

Check the mailing sticker on your newsletter for your renewal date. If it is highlighted, it is now due. Thanks to those who pay for two or three years as this saves a considerable amount of paperwork. We print 8 newsletters a year: Feb. - June and Sept - Nov. If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail when renewing, fill out the "e-mail" line at the bottom of the membership form below. Make sure that fahs@att.net is in your address book so it does not end up in the "spam" folder.

-----cut here-----

___ please send membership card. Flushing Area Historical Society
___ new member 431 W. Main St.
___ renewal Flushing, MI 48433-2035

Name _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

Senior 1 year \$4____, 2y \$8____, 3y \$12____ Supporting 1 year \$10____, 2y \$20____

Individual 1 year \$5____, 2y \$10____, 3y \$15____ Contributing 1 year \$25____, 2y \$50____

Family 1 year \$7____, 2y \$14____, 3y \$21____ Business 1 year \$10____, 2y \$20____

Sustaining 1 year \$100.00 ____

Life membership \$150.00 ____

Make checks payable to: "Flushing Area Historical Society"
Please send by e-mail to: _____@_____

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2025

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