



City of Saugatuck

Established 1868

Chartered 1984

HISTORY OF SAUGATUCK'S VILLAGE HALL

In 1868, the Village of Saugatuck was incorporated by the Board of Supervisors of Allegan County. An incorporation census counting 831 residents was taken on January 8, 1868 and in 1869-70, the Village was reincorporated by an act of the legislature.

The Fire Department was organized in January, 1871 and the fire house stood on Mason between Butler and Water Streets. A bell and some equipment was purchased and a call went out for volunteers. On October 9, 1871, Fennville and Holland burned to the ground, the same day as the great fire in Chicago. Saugatuck was spared, leading to a greater awareness of fire fighting. Two hundred pails were purchased and distributed around town.

Impetus for the construction of a new fire house, council chamber, hall and lock up on Butler Street came on July 7, 1879 when it was determined that the old fire house was too small to accommodate the fire equipment. The fire house committee decided to begin construction which was almost completed in 1880 at a cost of \$824.33.

The builders were Amos H. Gardner, James G. Williams and Ralph C. Brittain; suppliers were John Nies, Daniel L. Barber and John Priest. The jail was moved from its old location to the northwest corner of the first floor in the new fire hall.

In 1873, the fire equipment consisted of a \$2000 Babcock engine which proved a failure. By 1881, the engine company was composed of 32 members with a hand pumper and hose cart replacing the engine. Amos H. Gardner was foreman and J.P. Hancock was in charge of the eight-member hose company which was equipped with hook and ladder. Chief Engineer of the Fire Department was John Wilson.

The council chamber was entered from a double set of outside steps which led to the second floor. These were removed in 1908 and an internal staircase was built in the northeast corner, with a door that led to the outside. The building was redesigned and renovated in 1926 by noted local artist Carl Hoerman, who created a new entryway with the distinctive pillars that we see today. The bell was replaced by a siren and the ball rope which always hung at the entrance, disappeared forever. Cost of this work was \$1,682.65.

In 1929, a basement was dug and the jail moved downstairs. Remains and burial articles from a Native American cemetery were excavated in the process of this work. (The early settlers had also buried their dead here until Riverside Cemetery was created in the 1860's.) Cost of digging the basement and building a foundation under the structure was \$1,185.00. In 1949, the jail was moved to the public works building. The Fire Department left in 1954, when a new fire house was completed. The Police Department eventually opened an office in the public works building.

The Saugatuck Art Association opened an art gallery in the council chamber in 1931 highlighting Saugatuck's long time contribution to the arts. The City Council continues to honor the talents of many artists by displaying and rotating works of art throughout the chambers of the City Council.

The interior, where the fire hall had been, was remodeled in 1957 to accommodate the Clerk's Office, Chamber of Commerce, public rest rooms and lounge, serving visitors to the art exhibitions. In more recent years the Police Department office and lock up had returned. The Chamber of Commerce was relocated and their office was used by the Interurban, which provides the area's public bus service. The need for a second floor fire exit was served by a new staircase at the rear of the building.

Saugatuck became a City in the summer of 1984. In 1988 local architect Richard Rudich was hired to redesign the interior. Modern offices for the Clerk, Treasurer, Police, Mayor and City Manager were provided. The work was completed in the spring of 1989 at a cost of \$175,125.00. On July 19, 1990, the building was listed on the Michigan's State Register of Historic Sites completing 110 years of continuous use.

Since 1988, very little has been done to change the appearance of City Hall. The Saugatuck and Douglas Police Departments combined forces and their office is now located in the Douglas Village Hall on Center Street. The Interurban bus service constructed their own facility and also left Saugatuck City Hall. The entire building now houses the offices of the City Manager, Clerk/Treasurer, support staff and Assessor.

SAUGATUCK VILLAGE PRESIDENTS

Horace D. Moore	1868-1869
John B. Bacon	1870
Stephen A. Morrison	1871
Randolph Densmore	1872
Isaac Wilson	1873-1874
Daniel L. Barber	1875-1876
Lintsford B. Coates	1877
Horace D. Moore	1878
Alfred B. Taylor	1879
James G. Williams	1880
Wallace B. Griffith	1881
James G. Williams	1882
Daniel L. Barber	1883
Frank A. Winslow	1884-1885
John F. Henry	1886-1892
James M. Pond	Nov., 1892
Fred Wade	1893-1896
Samuel Reed	1897-1898
Fred Wade	1899
John H. Pear	1900-1901
John Koning	1902
John H. Pear	1903-1904
Henry Bird, Jr.	1905-1906
Waterman G. Phelps	1907-1910
William R. Takken	1911-1912
Frank J. Comstock	1913-1914
Clarence Wade	1915-1916
William Allen	1917
Clarence Wade	1918
Waterman G. Phelps	1919-1920
Clarence Wade	1921
Joseph Zwemer	1922
Clarence A. Lynds	1923
Herman E. Kreager	1924-1933
Clarence A. Lynds	1934-1935
Frank W. Sewers	1936-1938
Frank. J. Comstock	1939
Francis E. Force	1940-1942
Clarence A. Lynds	1943-1949
Frank Wicks	1950-1951
George W. Wright	1952-1955
Roscoe Funk	1955-1956
Richard Hoffman	1957-1960
Lynn McCray	1961-1970
Julius VanOss	1971-1973
James Christenson	1974-1977
DeForest Doerner	1978-1983
Wayne Entsminger	June, 1984

SAUGATUCK CITY MAYORS

Gerald O'Connell **1984-1985**

Margaret Sanford **1985-1987**

Robert Berger **1987-1989**

David Mocini **1990-1992**

Richard Crawford **1993-1994**

Charles Rickett **1995-1996**

Mark Bekken **1997-1998**

Russell Gardner **1999-2000**

Jeff Spangler **2001-2002**

Henry VanSingel **2003-2004**

Catherine Simon **2005-**