



**From a Journal 1924 - 1942, Part 2**  
**by Guy Johnson, resident of Mapleton &**  
**East Shore Road**

*Editor's Note: This is the second and last installment about life on the Peninsula in the 1920s through the 1940s, and also the war experiences that Guy Johnson, like many Peninsula men, experienced during World War II. The first installment of this article appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of this newsletter.*

*During World War II, Stella Smith Edgecomb Johnson, Guy's mother, had three stars in her front window in the big white house, for three sons serving simultaneously in the war. Her son, Fred, by her first husband, Frank Edgecomb, was a Master Sergeant and a sharpshooter. He was sent across the U.S. to demonstrate sharp shooting to other soldiers. Guy's brother, Walter Johnson, went into the war as a Navy Lieutenant, and when he came out he transferred from the Navy to the Coast Guard Reserve in Traverse City, so as to be able to take over the home farm responsibilities. He studied many years and retired as Lieutenant Commander. And Guy...*

In 1944, I was drafted into the Army. By the time I left, I was a T3 Technical Sergeant in the Signal Corps, 8<sup>th</sup> Army Headquarters, as a Radio Teletype Operator. I was responsible for sending out military messages to 63 stations from my office in Japan.

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**From the President's Desk**

*[Because of President Paul Burns' illness at the time this issue of the newsletter was being developed, Vice President Donna Hornberger graciously agreed at the last minute to write this column. Donna, of course, will step up to the president's office after our annual meeting.]*

A historical society is similar to the Roman god Janus. Although we look to the past, we must also turn our eyes to the future. In order to preserve the past, we must plan for the future.

Recently our President, Paul Burns, has worked with Fred Stoye and the Peninsula Township Park Board to develop a Hessler Log Home agreement that should serve us for many years.

Our committees are vital to the mission of OMPHS. Not only do they provide education and enjoyment at meetings, they also give a permanent structure to the organization, providing all members with long-lasting benefits and protecting our past.

We have recently begun the process of collecting oral histories from our long-time residents. We thank these committee members, especially Ann Marie Grenadier and Penny Rosi, for their willingness to take on this task.

After serving as Chair of the Hessler Log Home Committee, Patti Rudolph has stepped down. We thank her for her dedication and hard work.

Like Janus, we look to the past and then turn our eyes to the future.

In conclusion, I urge all members to think of ways to help us in our mission to preserve, record and pass on our unique heritage. If you are already serving on a committee, I thank you. If you are not yet on a committee I welcome you to become involved. Please contact me at 941-0746 or dsh\_44@yahoo.com to get on a committee.

Donna Hornberger, Vice President

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# Draft Agreement for the Hessler Log House

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE

## HESSLER LOG CABIN (Log Cabin) OLD MISSION PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (OMPHS)

After long and careful negotiation with the Park Board, headed by society past president Fred Stoye, our board agreed to the draft agreement concerning the management of the Hessler Log House printed below.

### I. Curator

The OMPHS is designated as the official curator for the Log Cabin. Request for special events by schools, or any other organizations, need to be approved by the OMPHS. Only events deemed appropriate by the OMPHS may be held at the Log Cabin site. The township will be notified prior to the event.

The OMPHS must first approve all methods of repairs and maintenance to ensure preservation and representation of the time period for the Log Cabin. All maintenance and repairs will be completed in a timely fashion.

Approval of any landscaping at the Log Cabin site must be approved by both the OMPHS and the Park Commission. Funding for any landscaping must come from the group or organization that wishes to do landscaping.

The OMPHS shall maintain an inventory of the contents of the Log Cabin and provide the Park Commission with a copy of the inventory. The Park Commission will be notified of any changes in the inventory on a timely basis. Future appraisals of the contents will be done every five years. An inventory of contents will be performed every year.

The OMPHS will be responsible for the seasonal opening and closing of the viewing area of the Log Cabin.

Time of daily openings will be determined by the OMPHS and the Park Commission.

The interior of the Log Cabin will be open for public viewing during Log Cabin Day, which is the last Sunday in June, or a date designated by the State of Michigan. The OMPHS will staff the interior of the cabin during Log Cabin Day and will also provide descriptive information regarding the cabin to visitors.

Written permission from the OMPHS Board will be required to enter the interior of the Log Cabin other than on Log Cabin Day. Designated Township personnel shall be allowed to enter the Log Cabin as needed.

Keys for both the viewing area and the interior of the Log Cabin will be kept by the Peninsula Fire Department, the Peninsula Township, and the OMPHS.

### II. Handicap Accessibility

The OMPHS will maintain accessibility to the viewing area of the Log Cabin, as dictated by the Americans With Disabilities Act ("ADA").

### III. Viewing Area

The OMPHS will provide a viewing area for the general public to view the items on display.

The OMPHS will provide an audio taped message in the viewing area.

The OMPHS will also be responsible for the cleaning of the interior and exterior portions of the Log Cabin.

### IV. Park Commission

The Park Commission will provide for visitor parking for the Log Cabin.

The Park Commission will be responsible for the maintenance of the grounds around the Log Cabin.

*(Continued on page 4)*





## Dougherty Homesite Update

By Marty Klein

Here is some exciting news about the Dougherty Homesite. Plans are coming together for this summer.

Four Peter Dougherty Society (PDS) board members went to Lansing on February 8, 2008, to meet with Nancy Finegood, Executive Director of the Michigan Historical Preservation Network (MHPN) which holds the historic preservation easement on the Dougherty Historic Home Site. Nancy was enthusiastic about the general master plan outline that was presented. Some good ideas and information were exchanged and by the end of the meeting some general guidelines were agreed upon. Those items of agreement included:

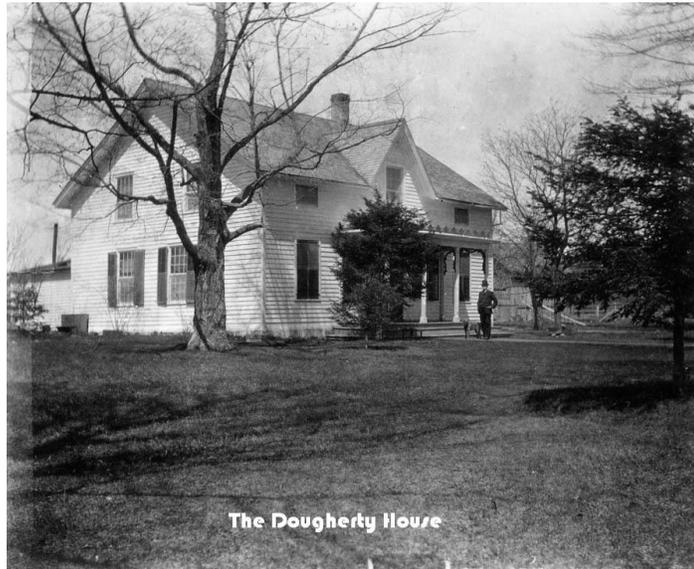
· A timeframe of 1880-1900 will be targeted for the rehabilitation of the house and site.  
· Certain areas will be addressed as necessary to make the house and outbuildings weather tight and secure.

· The icehouse was tentatively deemed appropriate for the site and a final plan has been submitted for formal approval.

· The general concept of the site plan prepared by Russ Clark and the PDS site committee was reviewed.

· The removal of the dead tree trunk in the front yard and the large maple endangering the carriage house was deemed appropriate and a formal request for action has been submitted.

· Temporary signage will be erected until the official State of Michigan Historical Marker can be erected. We



The Dougherty House

are in the process of obtaining the permanent sign from the State Historical Preservation Office in Lansing. Final approval will take one to one-and-a-half years.

Assuming that formal approval for reconstruction of the icehouse will be forthcoming, plans are underway to actually begin work. Master stonemason Tim Wicksall has agreed to get involved in rehabilitating the original stone foundation. It is anticipated that this work will begin in early June using small groups of volunteers from

our community. Once the foundation is restored, volunteers will also be necessary throughout the reconstruction of the building. Please call Marty Klein (231-223-4044) with any questions or to volunteer.

The Peter Dougherty Society recently hosted a nationally known expert on Historical Structures in conjunction with the beginning of a Historical Structures Investigation. Ilene Tyler, FAIA, of Quinn Evans Architects in Ann Arbor

discussed the importance and role of a historic structure report in restoring the Dougherty-Rushmore house in Old Mission.

The program was presented on April 11th at the Peninsula Township Hall as part of the "Documenting Historic Places" course offered by Professor Ted Ligibel of Eastern Michigan University. To learn more about the Peter Dougherty Society visit the society at [www.PeterDoughertySociety.org](http://www.PeterDoughertySociety.org).

### Corrections : History of Sarah & John Lane:

In 1903, a reporter visited with the Lanes at Mission Point Light. His article indicates that there had been no shipwrecks at Mission Point Light up to that date. The Lanes served from 1881 to 1907.

Thank you to Nikki Sobkowski for pointing out in an article appearing in the Fall newsletter that it was erroneously reported that the Lanes were the first lightkeepers. In fact, Jerome Pratt was the first lightkeeper.

### Newsletter Staff

Evelyn Johnson

Mary Johnson

Carol Lewis, Co-Editor

Stephen Lewis, Co-Editor

Flo Schermerhorn

Banner drawn by Terilee Johnson

Photographer, Tom Maguire



# Draft Agreement

(Continued from page 2)

The Park Commission will empty the refuse cans and maintain the toilet facilities.

## V. Financial

The OMPHS will be responsible for collecting monies from the Log Cabin donation boxes. These monies will be designated 75% for repairs, maintenance and other expenses of the Log Cabin and 25% to OMPHS General Fund.

If the cost of repairs and maintenance exceed the Log Cabin Fund derived from the donation boxes (V.A. above): a request from the OMPHS will be made to the Park Commission.

Fundraising by the OMPHS, on the Old Mission Lighthouse Park grounds, will need the Park Commission's approval before any event is held.

All OMPHS proceeds will be retained by the Society, itself, and to be used by them at their discretion.

Any current funds held by the Peninsula Township from the donation boxes will be turned over to the OMPHS to be designated for repairs and maintenance of the Log Cabin.

## VI. Annual Report to Park Commission

It will be the responsibility of the OMPHS's Board to report annually to the Park Commission on completed and planned repairs and maintenance for the Log Cabin and submitted by the first business day of January each year.

## Help Needed

For the next OMP Historical Society newsletter, we would like to do an article on the resorters and the steamers and boats that brought them up here from Chicago and any other places they traveled from in the early days of the resort era, when the big dock was still in the bay. We would like pictures of people, parents, children, grandchildren, pictures of the steamers and boats they road on, and interesting stories, like what they did, while they were up here in terms of coming up here for the summer, including opening the houses.

## Where Is It?

*By Evelyn Johnson*

Where was the barn on the right, and what do you remember about it?

The barn shown in the last issue can be found on Center Road 5 miles north from the intersection of Center Road and Peninsula Drive. It was once part of a 30 acre farm that is now the subdivision Council Oaks. With the original old farm house a little south of the barn/ house it was converted into a house in the 70s. Now owned by the Rheimheimers, who plan a renovation inside and out,, keeping the original beams and integrity of the barn-look.





## Guy Johnson's Journal, Part 2

*(Continued from page 1)*

I first shipped out to Fort Ord, California, a distance from my home place up from Mapleton on the Peninsula. From there I rode a train to Fort Lewis, Washington. There was no heat on this antique of a train, and we were packed in like livestock. During the two years in the Army, I was given a total of 63 vaccinations; I could barely lift my gun on guard duty. We shipped out from Washington on General Sturgis's ship with 3300 men on board. On our way in the Pacific, we were headed for a typhoon and had to re-route past Hawaii.

Usually, there were 3300 men in one line to the mess hall, but during the worst of the storm, it was impossible to line up single file. I slept in the bottom bed of multiple layers of bunks at the lowest level of the ship. The air was poor, only what came down the stairwell. During the storm, water slopped out of the "head" and over the sides of the deck. We were supposed to heave in our helmets, but there was always a stinking mess on the floors. The Red Cross gave out four packs of cigarettes and Baby Ruth bars. We played poker for cigarettes; I won a lot and sold them later for profit. Halfway across the Pacific, the second atomic bomb was dropped and the war was declared over. We saw moving lights from the ship and thought they were cars along roads in Japan, but at daylight we realized they were only fishing boats. The ship sat off-shore from Nagasaki, and when we disembarked, we loaded onto a train with fifteen cars. I was supposed to sit in the last car, but the men looked rough, so I headed for the front car. As the train crossed Japan, the soldiers in each car beginning with the last one would be dropped off. In the last car were my records and I was in the first car! When I was

dropped off, I ended up with an artillery company which had been fighting in the Philippines. The officer in charge thought I had lost my rifle in combat, thinking I had been with the others in the Philippines, and, subsequently, I was given a new automatic carbine. I was with that outfit for 30 days, during which time my records had gone back to DC and caught up with me. That company was shipped back to the states and I was assigned to another group of soldiers. During inspection, I was at the end of the line when a one star general grabbed my carbine and inspected it. He said to the sergeant who was taking notes: "This is the cleanest carbine I've seen overseas. Make sure this soldier does not get KP!"

The war was over when the Premier of Japan said so. We had other orders. I was now in a squad of 12 soldiers. We were ordered to destroy Japanese war planes, like the ones that bombed Pearl Harbor. We rounded them up and set them on fire. Two soldiers started up a prop plane, riding it up and down the strip. Soldiers dug a huge pit, dumped gasoline into it, and threw in one case of 50 caliber machine gun bullets that the Japanese had used in their planes. The war was over!

After separating from that squad which was de-activated and sent home, I was sent to the 4<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot outside

Tokyo. A sergeant asked if anyone could type. I threw up my hand because my half-sister, Gladys, had an Oliver typewriter at home, and I had learned on it. That typewriter is still with the Johnson family and is still in working order. So, I became a teletype operator. I would send out daily messages from Washington, D.C. and 8<sup>th</sup> Army Headquarters in Yokohama to 63 headquarters in the areas of the Pacific, some in code. Messages were sent out

*(Continued on page 6)*



**T3 Technical Sergeant Guy Johnson**



## Guy Johnson's Journal, Part 2

*(Continued from page 5)*

at the rate of 60 words per minute on a perforated tape that I had translated.

My office was located in Yokohama overlooking Yokohama Harbor. Ships from all over the world came in



**Guy and Unnamed Japanese Girl**

there. There were many homeless people. Some were in the park across the street from the YMCA where I stayed. The older guys got the better stuff – the solids – from our garbage. I noticed a young girl got the slop. I would give her food off of my plate. I used a Chinese laundry near the park, and once she started following me there. I asked the owner of the laundry if they had some decent clothes for her, and they said she could work for her clothes,

which she did. We had no common language, so I never knew her name; she was about 10 years old.

Mt. Fuji was visible from Yokohama. On weekends, a fellow soldier and I would go there by train and then walk to a hot spring high up on the mountain; it was beautiful. I bought cartons of cigarettes for 30 yen and sold them to Japanese for 300 yen.

Yokohama and Tokyo are only ten miles apart. Two young Japanese men had a restaurant in downtown Tokyo. Their father was supposedly a millionaire and lived north of Tokyo. Their family name, "Wakao," was written on the side of a building they owned in Yokohama. I would take cigarettes to them by electric train from Yokohama to Tokyo; it ran at sixty miles an hour. Tokyo had a subway route with Japanese soldiers on it but no one was ever hurt. I'd get off, transfer to a streetcar, and then walk a mile to their family's house. There were the two young men, a sister, a mother and father, one grandparent, a maid and a cook. I stayed overnight in an upstairs bedroom all to myself. At the barracks, I put my clothes under my mattress in my bunk to press them. At this home, I

slept on padding on the floor and laid out my clothes beside me. When I woke up, my clothes had been neatly pressed. Their dining table was a foot high. Next to it was a sliding door. The father would open it and pray to a statue of Buddha. They used rice flour for pancakes and ate with chopsticks. Shoes were left in the entry way. The toilet was a well-built hole in the floor, called a banjo. A large, gated fence circled the house. All doors and screens seemed to be made of paper and slid into a wall. Outside there was a small pool and a tea house. I was treated well and I treated them well, including buying an English dictionary at their request. They definitely did not live like the poorer Japanese in the city.

Once, while stationed in Yokohama, a typhoon was headed in our direction, and at the same time, we received orders from DC on our teletype to go home. Since I was the teletype operator, I was the only one who stayed at the office to give notice. All the machines' bells were ringing at once for information about the typhoon. From one of the 63 stations I had communicated with over a period of several months, one always signed "Amy." So, due to the urgency, I chose that "Amy" station to notify them about the typhoon and the orders to return to the states, writing, "Good-bye and good luck. Guy" and she wrote back, "Take care. Amy." I was out



**A Regular Visitor at Wakao's House**

of there!

Unfortunately, on the victory ship back to the states, we were caught in the "dead horse" trade winds, so-called because years ago horses on ships died due to a shortage of hay when the winds died down. I came back

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## Guy Johnson's Journal, Part 2, Continued

*(Continued from page 6)*

home by a bus out of Chicago; I don't remember much about the ride, except it was good to see the hills of the Peninsula and my soon-to-be-wife, June Blixt.

After the war, I worked for Harold Jamieson on



**Back Home Working for Walter Johnson**

Mrs. Ghering's farm on Kroupa Road. She cooked a great noon meal. I started working for Walter in the fall. June and I married that December 14, 1947, in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church where we met. June's father was part of the group that started the church. Paul Johnson, from Traverse City and who was in Texas with me during basic training, stood up with me and Elaine Gardner stood up with June. My father, Lester Johnson, was in the hospital, at the age of 49 with heart failure. My mother, Stella, and my brother and his wife, Walter and Mary, were there, as well as June's parents, her sister and some of her friends.

We rented the Harvey house on Kroupa Road that Daryl Kniss later tore down when he built the house that's there today. We were treated with a shiver. Some friends had taken all the labels off our canned goods and re-arranged our kitchen cupboards as part of the "treat!" We heated water on a kerosene stove out back. I bought a used Plymouth; two weeks later it had a cracked block. A year later we rented from Mrs. Crampton down Kroupa Road, a little house across her driveway which had a pot belly stove. That spring the Cramptons needed to use the house, and we started our search again. We were still

working for Walter.

My parents had sold the "Home place" to Walter and Mary and built a new house on "the forty" at the corner of Kroupa Road and Peninsula Drive, across from the Fruit Exchange. They had torn the old Lyle Helfrich house down to the foundation, but kept the siding, which was excellent wood, for sheathing on their new house. Sy Holcomb built the house the way they wanted it. Floyd Soper built the fireplace and chimney. "The forty" was not a valuable property for growing fruit when Walter and I were growing up. The weather froze everything that was not on a hill, because the frost flowed downhill west and east from Center Road. Some years later, however, Dad grew spectacular roses and took pride in the many varieties he nurtured, and Walter was successful in growing apples, prunes and cherries on that property.

My dad had moved the kitchen and pantry from the old house behind the newly built one. There was no running water or heat in either. June and I used the pantry for our bedroom and the kitchen for a combination living-dining room and kitchen. June had to carry water from an outdoor faucet. Dad gave us a Hoosier cabinet that my parents had used on the "Home place" to use as a cooking area, which our daughter, Phyllis, has in her Clarkston home now. June was pregnant with Phyllis one day when she fell through the wooden porch. She used some boards from my dad's barn and patched it up. But, we had a place to stay until something else came along. Phyllis



**Original House on Kroupa Road**

was born in April 1949. Eventually, we bought a house trailer from the Elzers, south about a half mile on Peninsula Drive and parked it out back of Dad and Mother's new house on the forty for the time being. We still used an outhouse though, but, at that time, even some folks in town did. Our second child, Stevan, was born during this



## Guy Johnson's Journal, Part 2, Continued

(Continued from page 7)  
time, in 1950.

My father had trucks coming up from Detroit for his cherries and apples. People couldn't can fruit or vegetables during the war – no sugar – but with the war over, they could. They lined up on Center Road by the home-

place” to buy fresh fruit. My mother came to the barn every hour with a cherry pail to collect the money. Cherries were a luxury crop people hadn't had in a long time. Just as a point of information, one lug equals 16

quarts and we sold them for \$3 a lug. F&M, the packing plant in Traverse City where we took some of the fruit, had a plant in Florida as well. June and I made plans to work at F&M in Florida, living in our trailer during the winter of 1948-49. When we got there, F&M was closed, so I picked oranges and grapefruit. Ladders were familiar to me, having been born and raised on one. A 90 pound grapefruit field box was 15 cents pay.

I picked oranges with 22 men on the crew. Children were taken out of school back then to help pick. I was the only white man on the crew. The foreman, Mr. Hall, was a cotton sharecropper from Georgia. He wore a pistol to keep workers under control. We traveled to Florida for three winters, so as to have a 12 month income. The crew taught me how to live frugally; where to buy cracked eggs, etc. When Phyllis turned 5, we needed to remain in Michigan during winters---for a time anyway---so she could go to school.

We had saved enough to buy 100 feet of the East Bay shoreline on the Peninsula. We paid \$2,750 for it. We

lived in our house trailer that we had bought from Elzers, which we parked on the lot across from the water. In 1953, Floyd Soper helped June and I build our house on East Shore Road. We started building August 9 and finished by Christmas. With a 5½ foot cross saw, June and I cut down trees but managed to maintain a lot of them;

most of them still remain today. June began working as a housekeeper for the Park Place Hotel. I left working for Walter and started working also at the hotel, inventorying the bar stock. I also painted and worked as a night



**With Daughter Phyllis Picking Fruit in Florida**

watchman. We were there two years.

In 1955, I started working for the Traverse City Post Office. One summer I worked seven weeks straight without a day off my first year as a substitute. Over a period of years, June provided foster care for children, worked in the Osteopathic Hospital kitchen and at Underwood's Fruit Market and Bakery. I retired from the Post Office in 1984.

In 1970, Lake Michigan and Huron were very high and Bluff Road was under water. We lost our shoreline on East Shore Road and built a sea wall eight feet high and 100 feet long with 29 yards of concrete. Our son, Stevan; son-in-law, Brent Cooley; and my half-brother, Fred Edgecomb, who was visiting from California, helped us build it. Previously, June and I had built a boathouse on the shore. One early spring day, with a foot of ice on the bay, an east wind, blowing at about 70 miles per hour, moved the ice into the boathouse. We dismantled it, saving the lumber for “a rainy day.” We used it to make forms for the back of the sea wall to hold the con-



## Guy Johnson's Journal, Part 2, Continued

crete in place.

East Shore Road was an Indian path following the curves of the bay.

The old timers reported the Indians had a sign on our property written in the Chippewa language, which no one could read. My mother told of driving a horse and buggy on that path, soon to be known as East Shore Road.

My memories were much too vivid of always cold feet when walking to school from the "homeplace" on Center Road. How nice it would be to have a bluff protecting us from the cold winds

here on the East Shore. And living on the water is pleasant. The sun and moon rise over the bay, seagulls dive for minnows, Canadian geese honk overhead, majestic swans

protect their young ones, breezes vary directions on the water, and fisherman and boaters do their stuff--all from our front window.



**Ice Moving Up the Cliff to East Shore Road**

June and I have been married 60 years. We have lived on East Shore Road on Old Mission Peninsula 55 years of our married life, and we did return to Florida--to our condo in Ft Myers. We have now spent a total of 27 winters in the Sunshine State during Michigan winters.

As we look back, we see how fortunate and happy we are to have such a beautiful place to call home on the Old Mission Peninsula. The State motto applies to

all the Township: "If you seek a beautiful peninsula, look around you."

## Gift From Old Mission Women's Club

On April 17, President Paul Burns and Treasurer Warren Berthelsen were pleased to receive a check for three hundred and fifty dollars from the Old Mission Women's Club as part of that organization's annual gift giving. The money has been designated for landscaping around the Hessler Log House. At our August meeting, a new landscape plan utilizing these funds will be presented.

In recognition of this generous gift, Paul and Cal Jamieson planted a six and a half foot tall sugar maple in front of the cabin. In addition, a plaque indicating that the tree is dedicated to the Women's Club in acknowledgement of its support has been ordered to be placed near the tree.

Paul, with the support of the Park Commission, will begin a two year term as chair of the Log Cabin Committee.

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