

## Artifact (from page 2)

electrical piece gorgeous and showy." The winning design was simple, direct and elegant, and speaks to visions of Saginaw's future. It was unlike many of the other entries that looked to the community's past as the lumber capitol of the world for inspiration. Other entries transcend time and seem fresh and new. Some are a little more obscure. In fact, a few may have been a little esoteric in 1908 and the author of the motto "Valley of the Saw-Cosa" was careful to include the following key: "Meaning Sawdust, Coal, Salt, the products of the Valley. Although not currently on display, this revealing document of community's vision may be viewed by appointment. Contact Tom Trombley at 989-752-2861 ext. 304 or by email [ttrombley@castlemuseum.org](mailto:ttrombley@castlemuseum.org).

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# CASTLE COURIER

Newsletter of the Historical Society of Saginaw County

500 Federal Avenue

Saginaw, MI 48607

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## Mitchell to Perform on Historic Piano at the Castle

Join us Thursday, February 10th as Brett Mitchell, Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, performs a few songs on one of the Castle Museum's historic pianos. Mr. Mitchell will perform at 6 p.m. in the Museum lobby. The event is free and open to the public. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and light refreshments will be served.

Mr. Mitchell's performance is in celebration of the Museum's newest exhibit, *Of Local Note: Piano Manufacturing in Saginaw County*. The exhibit opens Wednesday, February 2nd and features several historic pianos from the Museum's collection.



## Exhibit Focuses on Important Time in Saginaw's History



Deputy Director Tom Trombley discusses artifacts from Saginaw's musical heritage during his Lunch and Learn gallery talk on January 24th.

Although piano manufacturing was never a dominant industry in Saginaw, it provided an important link between Saginaw's success as a lumbering center and its reinvention as an automotive manufacturing center.

By the early 1890s the forests that had supplied Saginaw's lumbering boom had been depleted. However, there still were tremendous resources to direct towards new industries. The community's leaders were determined to reinvent Saginaw as a manufacturing center and a variety of products were made in Saginaw. These businesses record the area's triumphs and failures. Although it would take over a decade and many failures, Saginaw was reborn a manufacturing center.

The exhibit, which features the Museum's collection of pianos made by Erd, Brewer-Pryor and Germain, is on display in Centennial Hall through April.

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- Tuesday, February 1:** **Lunch and Learn:** *Virginia Kaleidoscope: The Claytor Family of Roanoke, and Some of Its Kinships, from First Families of Virginia and Their Former Slaves.* Join us as we welcome Ruth Claytor Marsh who will discuss her family's history and the book she co-authored. Free with Museum admission. Dessert & beverage provided. **12:00 Noon.**
- Thursday, February 3:** **Michigan Archaeological Society - Saginaw Valley Chapter meeting.** Morley Room 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 8:** **Lunch and Learn:** *Make Your Own Victorian Valentine!* Museum staff will demonstrate how to make your own Valentine's Day card reminiscent of cards seen during the Victorian Age. Learn about St. Valentine and find out the history of this centuries-old holiday from ancient Roman rituals to the customs of Victorian England. Free with Museum admission. Dessert & beverage provided. **12:00 Noon.**
- Thursday, February 10:** **Brett Mitchell Performs at the Castle.** Join us as Brett Mitchell, Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, performs a few songs on one of the Castle Museum's historic pianos in the Museum lobby. The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. **Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Mitchell will play at 6:00 p.m.**
- Tuesday, February 15:** *Pages in History Book Club:* The group will discuss "The Architecture of Alden B. Dow" by Sidney K. Robinson. This event is co-sponsored by the Public Libraries of Saginaw. All are welcome. Free with Museum admission. Dessert & beverage provided. **12:00 Noon.**
- Tuesday, February 22:** **Lunch and Learn:** *Washington, Walnuts and Linton.* George Washington may have cut down a cherry tree but his favorite tree was a walnut. Saginaw is graced with descendants of his Mount Vernon walnut trees. Historian Tom Mudd will explore the life of William Linton – a community and civic leader, congressman, and the man responsible for the Washington Walnuts. Free with Museum admission. Dessert & beverage provided. **12:00 Noon.**

### Museum Hours

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### General Admission

Adults \$1.00

Children .50¢

Members FREE

The Historical Society of Saginaw County is committed to serve the community by telling the continuing story of the people of the Saginaw region through exploration, preservation and presentation of their historical and cultural heritage.

# castle connections

Larry Toft

Though Saginaw Township's early history centered around farming, entrepreneurs were finding new ways to establish a livelihood.

The artisans of the brickmaking industry found the clay near the Tittabawassee River to be perfect to produce their wares.

Thomas Parker established his brickyard at a time when Abraham Lincoln was grappling with slavery.

Larry Toft spent more than three years researching his book on the history of Saginaw Township and became fascinated with brickmaking and how it played a role in that community's development.

"It was a very lucrative business and gave many of the farmers extra income," he notes, adding that farmers often were hired to transport the bricks into the city of Saginaw by horse and wagon.

Larry, who worked as a teacher and administrator for more than 30 years, has served on the Historical Society's Board of Directors since 2008.

He admits that while the research is often painstaking, the rewards far outweigh anything else.

"It's like putting a puzzle together," he says. "Piece by piece I was able to put together the story of Saginaw Township."

Don't forget to stop by the Castle beginning in February to see our newest exhibit, *Molded From Clay: Brick Making along the Tittabawassee River*.



# The Artifact

During the first week of December 1908, Saginaw held an industrial exposition. After a decade of depression, job loss and declining population, it was a celebration of the community's rebirth as a manufacturing center. Held at the new Saginaw Auditorium, the event showcased the diversity and breadth of the community's resources and was part of an elaborate marketing campaign. The motto for this campaign was "Saginaw the City of Opportunity". The motto and a companion logo were selected by competition. The designs submitted to this contest are in the Castle Museum's collection.

The presentation of the new logo at the exposition was described in *The Saginaw Courier Herald*: "The word Saginaw is in large white letters at the bottom, while the letter "S" in its peculiar shape, is shown in the center by small red lights so as to be almost one .... making an

*Please See Artifact on the Back Page*



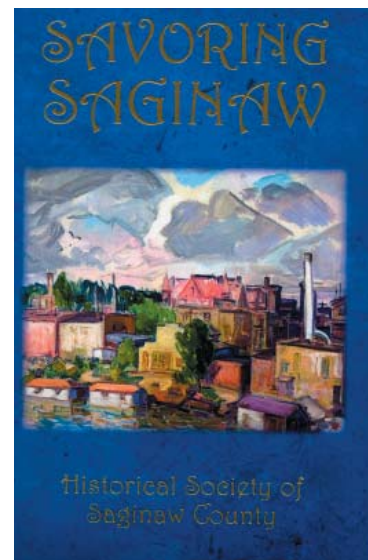
## Area Businesses & Volunteers Help Sell Cookbook

The Castle Museum and Historical Society of Saginaw County would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to the following businesses for selling the Museum cookbook, *Savoring Saginaw*:

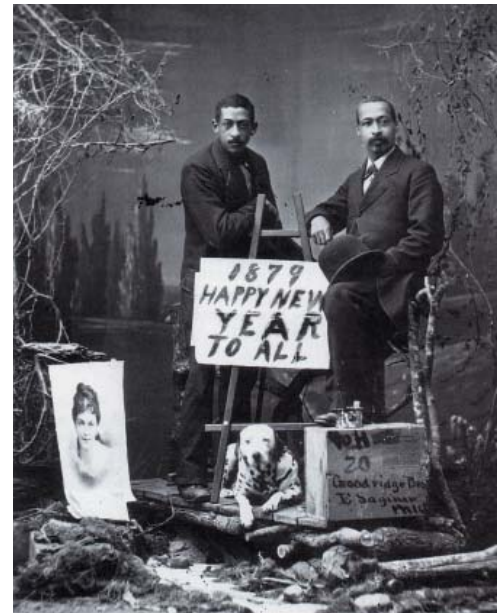
Print Express Office Products, Hamilton Home Bakery, Jack's Fruit and Meat Market, Saginaw Country Club, Crumbs, Meadowcreek Clothier, Prime Cut, Arden & Whitney Flowers, The Saginaw Club, Fralia's, Children's Book Company, Andersen Enrichment Center, St. Mary's of Michigan and First Congregational Church.

In addition to the businesses that sold cookbooks, a big thank you to Sarah Jury, Marilyn Dust, Dave Hall, JoAnne Saari, Sallie Hak Enszer and Margaret Clark for all their efforts in promoting and selling the cookbook.

Without our dedicated volunteers and these civic-minded businesses, there is no doubt there would still be boxes of cookbooks sitting in a storeroom at the Museum. There are still a few copies left in the Museum store. Hurry in and get yours before they are all gone.



# Notable African Americans in Saginaw's History



*In honor of Black History Month, the Courier is recognizing notable African Americans in Saginaw's history. This information came from Roosevelt Ruffin's book, "Black Presence in Saginaw, Michigan 1855-1900".*

In Saginaw's history there have been many African Americans who have made a lasting impact on this community with their accomplishments. Two such examples are **William Q. Atwood** and the **Goodridge Brothers**.

Born in Wilcox County, Alabama, William Atwood came to Saginaw in 1861 to invest in timberland after several business ventures in California that included speculating in gold and silver mines. He displayed incredible acumen in business dealings and became one of the richest men in the area of any race. By 1868 he had a real estate office at the corner of Water and Tuscola streets. In 1888 he served as a delegate at the Republican convention.

Wallace and William Goodridge passed through Saginaw on their way from Pennsylvania to Minnesota as they were fleeing Confederate soldiers who were "unappreciative of their involvement in the Underground Railway."

The brothers remained in Saginaw, and by 1862 had a studio at the corner of Genesee and Washington. They are the oldest black photographers in Michigan and perhaps in the nation. When a fire destroyed their home during the Emancipation Celebration of 1869, one of the finest libraries in the city - it had more than 1,250 volumes - also was ruined.

Their work offers the most graphic interpretation of Saginaw spanning over a half century and they were among a small number of black pioneers who possessed the talent and industriousness to carve out an existence in Saginaw's timber environment.

## Brickmaking Plays Big Role in Townships' Stories

When Thomas Parker, a brickmaker from Scotland, opened a brickyard at the corner of what is now State and Midland roads, he began an industry that played a key role in the development of Saginaw Township, Saginaw County's oldest and largest township.

The history of brickmaking in Saginaw, James and Thomas townships is the subject of a new exhibit that will open at the Castle Museum the first week of February. The exhibit not only describes the history of several brickyards scattered along the Tittabawassee River, but explains why these brickyards were so successful, how the bricks were made and how long the industry thrived in our community.

A special thank you to volunteer and Historical Society Board Member Larry Toft for coordinating this project and thank you to Walter and Elizabeth Nagel for their help. **Larry is our featured speaker for our Lunch and Learn on Tuesday, March 1st at Noon and will talk about the brickmaking exhibit.**



**The Parker House**

Thomas Parker proposed to Ellen Garden of Scotland in 1852. She agreed to marry Thomas if he would build her a masonry house with a cupola... on the water. Her dream came true in 1865 when the house was completed on the property at State Street and Midland Road. A total of 350,000 bricks were used in building the fifteen-room Italianate cube-style house. It had twenty-inch thick walls with double and triple layers of brick. The cost of construction was \$12,000.

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