

**November/December
2025**



CASTLE COURIER



The Artifact | Frosty Fest | New Arrival | SCSHoF Banquet | MLK Day Teach-In



The Artifact

A Bedroom Suite Manufactured by Saginaw Furniture Shops

For many years, the museum had a display of “artifacts wanted” in the lobby. Each “wanted” card included a photograph and description of an item needed for the collection. One of the objects was a bedroom suite manufactured by Saginaw Furniture Shops. Finally, we have captured one—a circa 1935 set.

Organized by Chicago investors in 1922, Saginaw Furniture Shops was initially named the Lund Furniture Company. Specializing in the production of bedroom furniture, Lund’s production first focused on a standardized base set that could be varied to create different models. Originally, the factory was on Park and Atwater. In 1923, the firm changed its name to Saginaw Furniture Shops, and in 1927, it took over the former Saginaw Table and Cabinet Company Factory on South Wheeler Street. The company remained at this location until it closed. As the firm thrived, they expanded their offerings and produced an array of pieces for dining and bedrooms—in 1935, they claimed over 100 patterns in stock.

Adept at adjusting to changing tastes and demands, Saginaw Furniture Shops in the post-World War II Era¹ became known for making compact furniture designed for apartments and smaller homes. One popular product was a table that looked like a cabinet and could be expanded into a full-sized dining room table. Saginaw Furniture Shops also had large contracts to produce television cabinets. In 1966, the firm was sold to Warwick Electronics, which supplied television sets to Sears and Roebuck. A 1969 *Saginaw News* article notes that even after the sale to Warwick Electronics, the firm “provides fine furniture under its brand name.” The company closed in 1971.

The *Local History and Genealogy Collection* at Hoyt Library holds an archival collection of Saginaw Furniture Shops trade catalogs. Our recently donated set is suite model number 2636. The number is stenciled on the back of each piece. Ours is made from mottled Aspen – the same as the

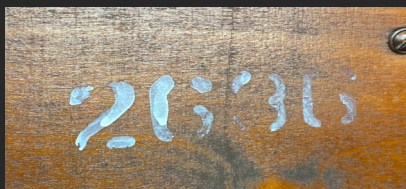
sample shown in the catalog. The listing indicates the set was also available in “Aspen and White Enamel Trim” and “All Enamel.” While the firm imported wood for some of their pieces, Aspen² was one of the regionally harvested woods utilized by the firm. A 1935 article notes:

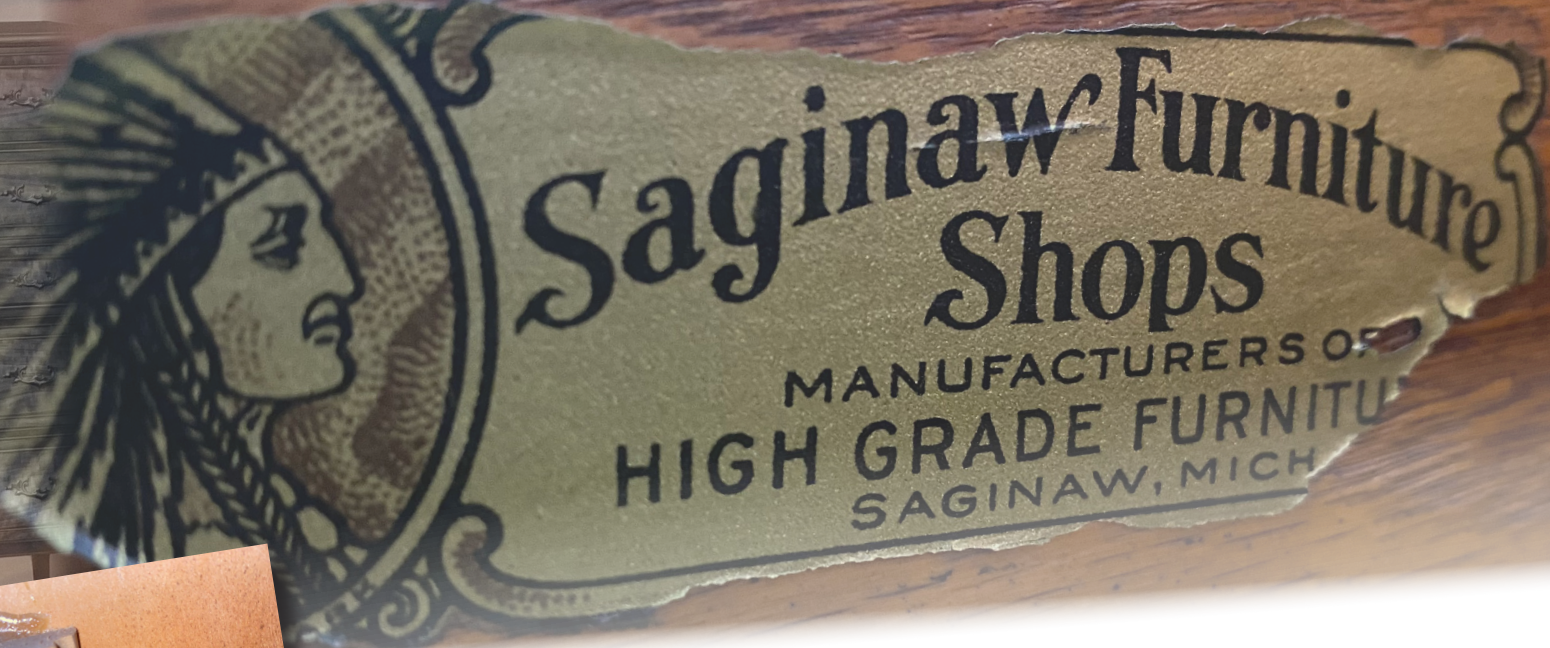
“Last surviving member of a once-prominent industry here, Saginaw Furniture Shops, Inc., still is keeping partly alive the area’s reputation of more than a half-century ago.

But Michigan’s tall white pine no longer is the chief target of the woodman’s axe. Now a minority member of Saginaw forests and woodlots, the pine has given away to such trees as the hard and soft maple, aspen, cottonwood, oak, cherry and walnut ...” (“Valley’s Lumber Vital Part of Product Made By Saginaw Furniture Shops,” *The Saginaw News*, March 29, 1953.)

Aspen was frequently employed in furniture made by Saginaw Furniture Shops. A hint to how highly regarded the firm held the species is a donation the firm made to the Smithsonian Institution in 1935, described in the institution’s annual report as “a handsome small board of knotty aspen wood, such is used by the firm.”

Saginaw Furniture Shops’ products “[f]urniture is of medium price and high grade, no ‘bargain’ pieces are made. While a good business is done in Michigan a larger part is done in the eastern states, with New York the principal market.”³ While touting in trade advertising that “Efficient factory production





has made a good retail markup," in 1935, Saginaw Furniture shops employed 300 men and women. Although the factory employed extensive machinery, the pieces still required intensive hand labor.

"Another interesting department is the room in which the carving, sanding and cabinet work is done. Near the front of the long room is a machine which is capable of carving 18 spindles at once. It is operated by one man, who guides the cutter for the center spindle, the other 17 cutters following the same course as the center one. This is only the rough carving, and merely represents a tremendous saving in time, for the spindles are later hand-finished, and imperfections are smoothed away by hand-carving and sanding. The cabinet work is done by hand, of course, employing skilled workmen of the highest type. Girls working on the far side of the room tack on moldings and small carvings which are used for decorative purposes." ("Wood Magic Wrought by Skilled Hands," *The Saginaw Daily News*, February 24, 1935.)

Similar combinations of mechanization and hand labor were followed throughout the plant. Finishes were applied by spraying and then rubbed out by hand. A team of women applied hand-painted details on many pieces of furniture. Clues to the production process are found in the construction of our newly acquired set. The blockings used to reinforce the carcasses are sections of leftover turned pieces – although the furniture might be produced on an assembly line, there was still time to make certain scraps of wood were not wasted. The chair was designed to complement several of their bedroom suite designs.

We have much more to learn about Saginaw Furniture Shops, its products, and the men and women who worked at the factory—and how much the set originally cost.

The bedroom suite was from a large collection of Saginaw memorabilia donated to the Castle Museum by the estate of Gary Foglesonger.

¹ During World War II, Saginaw Furniture Shops formed a separate company, Saginaw Body Manufacturing Co., to build wood cargo truck bodies.

² Interestingly, in the catalog, the dresser is shown with a separate wall-hung mirror; however, our piece has an attached harp and mirror. Based on other materials in Hoyt's collection, we believe that in earlier catalogs it may have been available with the attached mirror. Nothing conclusive has been located.

³ "Wood Magic Wrought by Skilled Hands," *The Saginaw Daily News*, February 24, 1935.



EVENTS

AT THE CASTLE

November & December 2025

NOVEMBER 6

MICHIGAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
6:30 PM
Saginaw Valley Chapter Meeting

NOVEMBER 11

LUNCH & LEARN
12:00 PM
A Focus on Veterans with the Michigan Heroes Museum

NOVEMBER 13

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME
11:00 AM
Native American Pinch Pots

NOVEMBER 15

HANDS ON HISTORY
10:30 AM-12:30 PM
Antique Toys

NOVEMBER 18

PAGES OF HISTORY BOOK CLUB*
12:00 PM
Killer Women of Michigan by Tobin Buhk

NOVEMBER 21

HOLIDAYS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

NOVEMBER 22

SAGINAW CHRISTMAS PARADE
11:00 AM

NOVEMBER 25

LUNCH & LEARN
12:00 PM
Snacks & Artifacts: Home for the Holidays with the Castle Team

NOVEMBER 27

MUSEUM CLOSED
Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER 1-23

GREAT ELF HUNT
Stop in during open hours to find our elves and win a prize

DECEMBER 4

MICHIGAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
6:30 PM
Saginaw Valley Chapter Meeting

DECEMBER 6

FROSTY FEST
10:30 AM-12:30 PM

DECEMBER 8

MUSEUM CLOSED
Staff Holiday

DECEMBER 9

LUNCH & LEARN
12:00 PM
Jennifer Vannette, History Behind Human Rights Day

DECEMBER 11

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME
11:00 AM
Christmas Story Time

DECEMBER 16

PAGES OF HISTORY BOOK CLUB*
12:00 PM
Dead of Winter by Stephen Mack Jones

DECEMBER 24-25

MUSEUM CLOSED
Christmas Holiday

JANUARY 1

MUSEUM CLOSED
New Year's Holiday

**In collaboration with Hoyt Library*

PROGRAMS



AT THE CASTLE MUSEUM
Sat. Dec. 6

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

castlemuseum.org

FROSTY FEST

- ★ Pictures with Santa
- ★ Cookies & Cocoa
- ★ Crafts
- ★ The Great Elf Hunt



Join Us for Saginaw's

Holidays in the Heart of the City

Friday
November 21
5:30-8:30 p.m.

Santa won't be the only
special guest this year...

Find All the Details & Events at prideinsaginaw.org

HOLIDAYS IN THE HEART



Saginaw County Sports Hall of Fame



The Saginaw County Sports Hall of Fame is thrilled to celebrate our upcoming **November Induction Banquet**, honoring the newest Class of 2025. All the planning and preparation leading up to our November 2 event has been focused on recognizing these outstanding athletes and contributors. This year's banquet will once again be held at Horizons Conference Center.

As the excitement builds, the board is already looking ahead to potential **nominees for the Class of 2026**. If you know someone deserving of consideration, please visit our website and click on the "Inductee Form" at the top of the page. The more details you provide, the better their chances of appearing on the ballot. Completed forms are automatically sent to our president, communications officer, and selection committee chair, and all nominations remain on file permanently.

If you haven't had a chance to visit our **updated Hall of Fame exhibit**, we invite you to stop by and see what's new. While familiar themes remain, we've also added fresh displays and ideas, made possible through the generosity of those who donate artifacts. Whether it's an inductee sharing a piece of their sports legacy or a team manager uncovering treasures from storage, every contribution helps grow and enrich our collection—and donations are tax-deductible! Please note, however, that while every item is priceless to us, we cannot legally provide appraisals.

We also invite you to take part in our **Queen of Hearts progressive 50/50 drawing**. Tickets are just \$1 and can be purchased at Merl's Tavern on Shattuck in Carrollton throughout the week or during the 6–8 p.m. time slot on Mondays. The drawing takes place every Monday at 8 p.m. sharp—and you don't have to be present to win!

The Saginaw County Sports Hall of Fame is always looking for donations of artifacts for our ever-expanding collection. If you have any items, call President/Curator Jeffrey C. Cottrell and chat with him! (989)752-2861 ext. 302.

Happy 135th Anniversary Hoyt Library

Our friends at the Hoyt Library are celebrating an important birthday this year: 135 years of serving the Saginaw community!

Join a celebration at Hoyt Library on November 1, from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. with a variety of events, --including a raffle, special story time, tours, and more! Open to all.

In addition, Vice President and Chief Historian of the Castle Museum Tom Trombley will give a talk on the history of the Hoyt Library building at 11 a.m.

Save the Date: MLK Day Teach-In



Monday
January 19, 2026



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY
TEACH IN

10 a.m.-2 p.m.
2-3:15 p.m.

Choose Your Own Learning Station
Keynote Speaker

Gifts & Memorials

Memorial in honor of Patricia Stoppeworth

Nancy Benjamin
Jeanne Causley
Shirley & James Cole
Mary Crannell
Judith Donahue
Kelly Reis
Roger & Nancy Thornton

Other Gifts

Ralph C. Heid & Dr. Don Cady
Veda Nasser
Saginaw Valley Antique Society
Deanna Sealey
Sylvia Reimus
Kathleen Wyatt

Gift in honor of Phyllis J. Harper

Donna Hammond





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CastleMuseum.org
@TheCastleMuseum



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 52
Saginaw, MI



Join Us!
Meetings First Thursday of the
Month @The Castle Museum
(No January Meeting)
6:30 p.m.
Open to All-Monthly Guest Speakers & Discussion



MICHIGAN
ARTS &
CULTURE
COUNCIL



The Castle Museum is supported in part by awards from
the Michigan Arts and Culture Council & the National
Endowment for the Arts.