



P.O. Box 177  
 Empire, Michigan 49630

1998/1999, Vol.9, No.2

July 1998

**GREETINGS FRIENDS!!**

**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY  
 ANNUAL MEETING  
 SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1998  
 EMPIRE METHODIST CHURCH  
 9:30 A.M.**

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**SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND  
 ANNUAL PICNIC  
 EMPIRE TOWNSHIP HALL  
 SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1998  
 12:00 NOON**

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**News from Our President**

In our last Newsletter it was discussed that our Annual Meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. for greetings on Saturday, July 25 - with the meeting beginning promptly at 10 a.m. The plan is to devote nearly all of the meeting to an open forum to discuss our hopes, dreams and plans for the Society.

Not long after that Newsletter, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore announced an invitation to comment on plans for the park. Several of our members participated in this project. As is discussed below, we

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have an opportunity to lease and restore one of the historic farmsteads on South Manitou Island. It will not be without considerable effort and expense. If we take this on, I believe it will be the most important project that we have worked on. It needs a lot of explanation and discussion, and our Annual Meeting at the Empire

United Methodist Church is the time and place to do it. We are at an important crossroads in the Society's history.

In the last issue, the Historic Properties Management Plan was introduced and the public was invited to attend information meetings in March, 1998. Our President responded to the Park with the following letter:

April 17, 1998

Mr. Ivan Miller  
Superintendent  
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore  
9922 Front Street  
Empire, MI 4963 0-9797

Dear Ivan:

The following comments on historic properties on South Manitou Island are sent per your request. Although I have talked to many members of the Society, this does not represent any consensus among a majority of the members. Kim Mann has assured me that the open forum already scheduled on July 25 will be in time for more detailed comments. In addition, you will also be hearing from the individual members.

South Manitou Island has been significant historically for two centuries as the only easily accessible deep natural harbor in the 300 miles between the Straits of Mackinac and Chicago. Much of its history extends from that fact. In 1819 the first steamship appeared on the upper great lakes and by 1834 there were 34. The following year the first resident, William W. Burton arrived and seeing the members of the ships cutting wood, decided that was a need he could provide. When the long-needed lighthouse went into service in 1840, Burton became its first keeper. His entrepreneurial skills led him to build the "old dock" and a road and railroad track leading to it. When the first farmers, Putnam Burdick and George Johann Hutzler, arrived by the mid-1850's, they found a way to ship the Island's agricultural products to Chicago markets. That arrangement prospered from the 1850's to the 1880's when ships changed from wood to coal to fire their boilers. The 1880 census showed the resident population at 98, the highest in the Island's history.

The most significant era in the island's history began in 1918 as the site for growing Rosen Rye seed which had a world-wide impact. The island was chosen because of its isolated location and the record of community cooperation. It proved to be an ideal place for solving the cross-pollination problems posed by the crop. Later the Michelite pea-bean was developed. The 1920's and 30's were the highlight of farming on the island.

From 1840 when the first lighthouse was opened to the closing of the third and last lighthouse in 1958, South Manitou Island served both as a beacon to shipping and a safe harbor and rescue location for Lake Michigan shipping. The lighthouse remains a symbol of the entire lakeshore.

Two other important symbols to island residents and their descendants are the cemetery (restored by Society members led by Glenn Furst), other graves sites, and the schoolhouse, built in 1899 and closed in 1944. Society

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members may be painting it this summer, with permission from the National Park. The best known student of the schoolhouse is Admiral Willard Smith, U.S.C.G. Ret., a member of the Society.

Thus there are three major historical districts which deserve preservation and recognition. They are the Lighthouse, life-saving station, and village (with the exception of the Lighthouse, mostly completed); the historic farms where the Rosen Rye was developed (partially completed); and the old dock, railroad track, and sawmill site (not begun). The Society would also like the cemetery and other grave sites to be maintained along with the schoolhouse.

*(At this point I mentioned homesteads that should be preserved primarily for their collective involvement's both in early farming and the scientific achievements, particularly Rosen Rye. With the exception of two, which I will mention next, they are not on the National Register of Historic Places and are therefor ineligible.)*

I, and other Society members, look forward to continued participation in this process.

Cordially,  
Donald A. Morris,  
President, South Manitou Memorial Society

On June 5, Treasurer Joe Orbeck and I met with Ivan Miller and Duane Pierson, Assistant Superintendent, (Kim Mann also attended part of the meeting) to discuss the possibility of the Society entering into a long-term lease for either the August Beck or George Conrad Hutzler Farmsteads under a federal program which has existed since 1982. Although designed primarily for for-profit organizations because of tax incentive credits, non-profit organizations such as the Society are eligible.

Doing this would be a large commitment of the time, talents, and treasure of our members. The farmhouse, and perhaps other buildings, would have to be restored inside to Lakeshore requirements and made livable under what would still be somewhat primitive conditions. This would not be easy to do since materials and equipment would have to be brought to the island.

Well, you might ask, why should we do this? There are at least three reasons. The first is that we would be able to restore one of these two key farmsteads in the history of the island and particularly the history of Rosen Rye. Second, would be the opportunity to conduct historical and cultural education on life on the island from a location which would make it come to life more easily. The third reason would be to provide a place for our members to live when they are doing this education which would not be in a tent. I should stress that this "free" housing would carry the cost of actual work and not be just a vacation.

As mentioned elsewhere, this project will be a major part of the open forum at our Annual Meeting on July 25. Please come with your ideas and questions. This could be one of the most important Annual Meetings that we have had. I look forward to seeing and speaking with you all there!

Donald A. Morris, President

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**TREASURY REPORT**  
**South Manitou Memorial Society**  
**May 31, 1998**

<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>	<b><u>5-31-98</u></b>
First Chicago Corp Bond - Perpetual Fund	\$ 10,108.00
Empire National Bank C.D.	11,419.00
Jack Phillips Memorial Fund C.D.	1,645.00
Empire National Bank Savings Account	3,775.00
Empire National Bank Checking Account	775.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 27,420.00</b>

Submitted by Joe Orbeck - Memorial Society Treasurer

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## ***FRED BURDICK*** of SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND

Passed away on April 17, 1998

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How many people can say they were born on South Manitou Island - and died in Bombay, India? Fred was on a world cruise. ... living life to its fullest ... when he passed away. I'd say that's living a good life!

Fred was born on South Manitou Island on Sept. 7, 1917, where his father, James Burdick, was the Lighthouse Keeper. He was a fourth generation descendent of Putnam Burdick, one of the first settlers on the island. Fred remained on the island until 1928,

when his father was transferred to the Lighthouse at Muskegon. He was the youngest of five children, born to James and Lillian (nee Vent) Burdick. Fred spent 16-years in the National Guard, and nearly 30-years working for the Michigan Dept. of Labor. He and his wife, "Bea", returned to South Manitou in 1961 to establish the "Manitou Haven Resort."

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Many of us met, and came to know Fred as a friend during this time period. Bea was buried on South Manitou in 1983, in a ceremony much like Fred's. Fred was influential to many people, even those he never came to know. Visitors to the island were treated warmly and welcomed by Fred Burdick. He introduced many newcomers to the island ... I was one of them. His zeal for island story-telling attracted me. I wanted to know everything that happened on the island, and he was always ready to share stories with me. We hiked about the island on many of the "old trails" he knew as a boy. We shared a love for the island, Fred and I. His respect and conviction for his family name, and their place in history on the island, overwhelmed me. I deeply respect Fred for his sense of pride and personal conviction.

In 1979, Fred led a group of Y.C.C. (Youth Conservation Corps) young adults, to "bring back the cemetery" from the dense undergrowth of juniper bushes, trees and weeds which had taken over the grave sites. He was awarded a plaque for his efforts which read: "Sleeping Bear Dunes Y.C.C. 1979 would like to thank you for your cooperation, enthusiasm, all around helpfulness and most of all, your friendship."

To insure perpetual care for the cemetery, Fred, along with Glenn Furst and Johanna de Kok, formed the South Manitou Cemetery Fund, which later became the South Manitou Memorial Society. Many years later, the beautiful cemetery that he brought back from mother nature's hold would be the gathering place for 80 (yes, 80!!) of his friends and relatives who came with Fred to the island, one final time.

As the great spirit of the Manitou would have it, the day of the burial ceremony started out overcast, windy, and threatening of rain. Patty, Gwen, myself, and all the park service personnel, prepared a day in advance for the ceremony. We scrubbed trucks, washed and waxed the "Hurst" (a.k.a. Dodge pick-up), and arranged flowers with beautiful ribbons. I prayed for "no rain", but should have included a request for "no wind". The Mishe Mokwa brought Fred over with high winds and waves, not unlike many trips that Fred has made over the years. (I think Fred may have been the only person who didn't get a bit "queasy" on the trip over.) With the Mishe in sight, the clouds blew out and brought full sunshine and warm temperatures. The wind remained strong, to keep the bees away, which had been prolific the day before as "Fuzz" prepared the grave.

The ceremony, which was prepared by Margaret Braden and Patty Kelly was perfect for an island burial.

Fred must have been smiling down from heaven at the sight of all of us telling stories about him, singing "Amazing Grace", reciting the Lord's Prayer, listening to "Taps" played on the trumpet, and paying our individual respects in his honor. It was a beautiful day.

And now we go on from here ... I'm missing my "buddies" Fred and Glenn, who shared with me generations of island history and memories. They gave us the renewed cemetery and the Memorial Society to care-take. Now, we need to carry on their dream, the vision they began ... and have now given fully to us.

Kathy Bietau, Newsletter Editor

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**From Fred's niece, Patty Kelly:**

When I first heard the news of Uncle Fred's death, one of my first thoughts was that I lost someone I considered to be a quasi-parent.

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Even though he had no children of his own, all of his nieces and nephews were treated as such. I enjoyed the visits every Sunday morning after he had been to church. His visits were always colorful and playful. He would play games for what seemed like hours. And all the while he would carry on a conversation with my mother (his sister). Neither felt slighted as we both seemed to have his complete attention. I looked forward to these times and also to the times we would go to his house and visit with him and Aunt Bea.

As time went on we saw each other less frequently but we always seemed to pick up where we left off. He was ageless to me and the thought of time passing never occurred to me. He was someone who should have lived forever.

Uncle Fred ate life up and digested every sweet morsel. He made the most of every waking moment, never wasting time with trivial matters. Everything he did had a purpose and everyone he met, he cherished. Some more cherished than others, but I don't remember him saying unkind words about people. Instead of unkind words, they were well thought out words. It was a certain knack that he had.

I remember spending some time with him last year when there were no distractions. We talked about his closeness to his family and his big sister in particular (my mother). I told him that I always feel closer to her whenever I'm on South Manitou and a certain calmness comes over me.

His love of South Manitou seemed unequalled. His heart was always there and even with all of his worldly travels, he so looked forward to going "home" every year. He told me he felt a warm embrace whenever he returned. He described it as almost being mystical.

He told me he was proud of me for volunteering to do work for the Park Service, as this was a way to ensure the family would still be connected to South Manitou. I told him that I had made a certain promise to my mother before she died and that I found a way to keep that promise. I shared that promise with him and with a tear in his eye he said my mother would also be proud.

Uncle Fred is now at rest. I've said goodbye to not only an uncle, but to a parent and a friend. He's now home to stay.

by Patty Kelly

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## **FREDERICK W. BURDICK 1917 - 1998**

For those of us who attended Fred Burdick's funeral on South Manitou Island on May 16, 1998, it was difficult to imagine that the cemetery did not always look as lovely and as well-kept as it did on that day.

In the early 1900's, when the cemetery was first dedicated, the Township of Glen Arbor, MI was responsible for its upkeep. However, little evidence exists that anyone from the mainland ever went over to the Island to engage in any maintenance, certainly not after most of the islanders had left.

In the late 50's and 60's when Fred had again become actively involved with South Manitou, the cemetery had become overgrown with juniper bushes and weeds, and the wooden fence and gate had deteriorated in

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several places. Still, Fred took pride in the cemetery. This was the place where most of his ancestors were buried, and where he could easily tell about the human history of the Island. However, it did hurt him that the grounds had been neglected, and he was afraid that, in time, no one would be able to find it anymore.

After the National Park Service began to acquire property on South Manitou Island he approached the Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to see if the NPS had plans to maintain the cemetery, but at that time none were in place. In 1973, Pete LaValley arrived on the Island as NPS's first ranger, and, in their spare time, Fred and Pete began to clear away some of the juniper bushes. The clearing did make a difference, but to complete the task was too big for two people who only had a few hours available here and there.

In 1976, a group of teenagers working for the Youth Conservation Corps, were scheduled to spend the summer on the Island. NPS personnel came around to ask Fred, and others, if they had suggestions about possible projects which could be handled by youngsters who were not allowed to work with power tools.

Priority #1 was to repair the boardwalk to the Lighthouse, but Fred campaigned to also have the youngsters work on clearing the cemetery grounds. Fortunately, the plan was approved and during the summer, as well as the next, Fred worked alongside the Y.C.C. group to clear the cemetery of everything that did not belong there. Truckloads of debris were hauled away.

In the meantime, Fred had found other allies, Glenn Furst and George Hutzler, who not only helped in clearing the cemetery but went a step further. They researched records and talked to relatives and friends to try and find out which Islanders were really buried on the island. In addition, they tried to locate unmarked graves. Together, they collected funds to place monuments on known graves, and put wooden crosses, later to be replaced by concrete ones, on the graves of Islanders about whom they had little information.

After all of this work had been done, Fred again approached the National Park and offered a donation to be placed in a special fund for maintenance of the cemetery. However, the NPS had to refuse such a donation for several reasons. The main reason being the cemetery was still under the jurisdiction of Glen Arbor Township. Moreover, the NPS pointed out that it does not administer private funds designated for a specific purpose.

It was at this point that Fred and Glenn Furst developed the idea of, perhaps organizing a Memorial Society whose members would specifically take care of the cemetery, physically as well as monetarily. Later, the plan was to include the graves located in the outlying areas as well.

The South Manitou Memorial Society has been actively involved in improving the cemetery by replacing the wooden fence and gate, and placing new picket fences around the graves in the outlying areas, making Fred proud of his last resting place.

Because of Fred Burdick's concerns for the cemetery and his efforts to try to improve the grounds, Fred and his wife Bea, and his ancestors will not be forgotten. Neither will be the other settlers of South Manitou.

We thank you Fred. May you rest in peace!

by Johanna de Kok

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## ***FRED MESSERSCHMIDT***

**SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND FRIEND,  
VOLUNTEER, AND MEMORIAL SOCIETY  
MEMBER**

**PASSED AWAY  
FEBRUARY 25, 1998**

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Fred meant a great many things to a great many people. **To his sons, Gary and Mark, and daughter Heidi, Fred inspired the following words:**

"When you think the world of someone, like we did our father, it's really hard to come up with the words to do him justice. We were very lucky to be able to call such a special and wonderful man "Dad".

Our Dad was probably one of the smartest men I have ever known. I often wonder how that happened because when we were teenagers he knew absolutely nothing, and we were convinced we knew absolutely everything. But as the years went on, he seemed to get smarter and smarter, and we found ourselves seeking his advice often. Whether it be engine problems, financial decisions, lawnmowers, house purchasing, or any kind of glue you could possibly think of on the market. The list is endless of everything he knew.

But of all the knowledge and experience he retained, he had a quiet wisdom about him. Our Dad was never a bragger or a "know-it-all". He was never loud or boisterous, so you had to listen carefully to appreciate his great sense of humor, and his unique one-liners.

Our Dad had so many joys in his life. Family, friends, traveling, hiking, camping, and mostly volunteering for the National Parks. He had such a respect for the outdoors and passed it on to his kids and especially his grandkids. There was nothing better than staying in "Grandma & Grandpa's R.V." and sitting around the campfire.

His greatest love, though, was the love that he had for our Mother. Where ever she was, he had to be right there with her. It's hard to imagine us not hearing them discussing, laughing, and arguing over everything.

As much as we're going to miss our Dad, we're so fortunate to have so many good memories to look back on, and to know that not only did we love him so much - but how much we really liked him as a person also.

Countless times people have told us "boy, your Dad is such a nice guy", but they weren't telling us anything that everybody doesn't already know...

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To me ... he was my island friend:

Fred and Mary came to South Manitou Island in May of 1989 to volunteer their services. Within a few days I knew it was going to be a challenge to keep Fred busy. I would give him a task to do, and before I knew it, he was standing in front of me asking "what's next Kathy?" I loved it ... Fred was a challenge to work with. Fred did campground patrols and lighthouse tours, trail maintenance, and even the "dreaded outhouse duty". No task was beneath him or above him. He had endless energy and a beautiful disposition, which touched every visitor to the island. He enlightened my life that summer ... and little did I know the friendship we would grow to share over the years. We would spend hours chatting on the Coast Guard Station front porch, and at the kitchen table. I was able to show Fred and Mary the beauty of the island, and they showed me many good times. I remember a special sunset on the western dunes, a fantastic boat trip around the island, and many delicious "on-the-spot" potluck dinners. That summer with Fred, Mary, Ranger Ted, Chuck and Jennifer remains one of my favorites. I will miss his companionship, his stories, his kind gentle nature, and his amazing energy ...

I appreciate all Fred did for South Manitou Island, as a Memorial Society member and as a "lover of the island". His ashes were spread over portions of South Manitou Island. A part of him will remain with the island forever!!!

by Kathy Bietau

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'I remember when ...'

### **COMING THROUGH WITH RYE:** **SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND COMMENTS**

I read with great interest Brenda Williams study on the agricultural history of South Manitou Island published by the Park Service in 1996. What amazing farmers the Hutzlers were, as were the many farming families on the Island! A great deal of research went into this comprehensive project. Some of the statistical data are astounding. Appendix B with federal census tabulations, alone, make the whole work extremely valuable to anyone doing research on South Manitou. It is an important work with a direct bearing on the agricultural history of our country. It is a study that I will refer to often.

There has long been a great deal of confusion over George Conrad Hutzler, Sr. and George Conrad Hutzler, Jr. The senior Hutzler was always referred to as Conrad Hutzler by the family to avoid confusion with the name of his half brother George Johann Hutzler. The stone on George Conrad Hutzler's grave reads Conrad Hutzler. There are few alive in the family today who can place the two Hutzlers in their proper perspective. They would have to be of the generation of my grand parents because Conrad Hutzler died in 1896. Conrad Hutzler is to remain a figure of mystery. There is another Hutzler family in Buffalo, New York who trace their ancestry to a Conrad Hutzler. Is it the same man?

On page 86 in the section on the George Johann Hutzler/John Hutzler farm, Williams repeats again the legend of John and Bertha and the death of their son, Stanley, who was trampled by a bull and who consequently died. The legend was also related in Myron Vent's book, and in even greater detail. I call this a legend because it has no basis in fact. There were no actual witnesses to the fact. The reality is Stanley became ill and a concerned

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Bertha took him to Chicago for medical care. The child died and was buried in Chicago. The cause for death was listed as leukemia on the death certificate.



When I was about eighteen years old, my grandmother Jessie Haas Hutzler, told me the story of Bertha and Stanley. My grandmother was a contemporary of Bertha's. Grandmother had married in 1899 and left South Manitou, but she returned frequently for long periods of time with her three small daughters to be with her mother, Florence Haas. She filled me in on the facts as she and her mother knew them. The child was also thought to have been born with a congenital liver defect probably related to the blood condition. Medical diagnosis was still in a somewhat primitive state in the early years of the 20th century.

For years I have been tempted to speak up when this tale was told of Bertha, Stanley, and the bull. It is a very sensitive subject. Many of the people involved were my own relatives, but even so, one feels an obligation to put things right after over 90 years of hearsay. My grandmother told me that Bill Haas, her own uncle, had spread this vicious story throughout the Island. What was his motive? Bill Haas, a confirmed bachelor, his widower brother John Haas, and John Hutzler were neighbors and very close friends. Bertha had come between them. Other women on the island, including his sister-in-law, Florence Haas, was also to suffer much abuse at his hands. It was the source of numerous fist fights between my great grandfather and his brother. Bill Haas has to be regarded as something of a trouble maker.

There were rumors that Bertha neglected the child and even that she had an affair with a visiting sailor. One does not have to search the imagination far to know the source of these allegations. Bertha was always an island character, especially after the death of the child and the rumors that were spread about her. I am sorry that I did not have the opportunity to ask my grandmother how Bertha had been before the family tragedy. She had perhaps always been a little bit different than the other islanders.

It is strange that on an island with a population of less than one hundred souls, there was so much friction between some of the inhabitants. I can only speak of the differences between my Hutzler and Haas relations - and they were numerous. It is to be hoped that this legend of Bertha will someday be put to rest along with all the residents that peacefully slumber in the cemetery on South Manitou Island.

The rather primitive map on page 152 of the study was drawn by myself when I was twelve years old. The map is attributed to my mother Jessie Hutzler Roy. My grandmother had furnished the names and details. On my first visit to the island in 1960, I found it extremely accurate. I borrowed my cousin Bud Vent's ancient bicycle and went over all of the mapped areas. My grandmother's memory was correct in laying out all of the details of the farms and other property locations. She had always said that there had been two schoolhouses, and that the present schoolhouse was the second. I could find no evidence of the first school the times that I searched. This first school, probably a log cabin-like structure, vanished with the erosion of time.

Thanks again are due to Brenda Williams, Arnold Alanen, and William Tishler for their thorough study of the island. I have not meant to be at all critical of the study by pointing out a few facts. It has a valued place on the shelves with my other studies and books on South Manitou.

February, 1998.  
Don Roy

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**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY**  
**ISLAND OUTING**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1998**

Make your reservations today!!!! Call the Manitou Island Transit at 616-256-9061. Make your reservations under your own name - but please tell them you are with the South Manitou Memorial Society.

The boat leaves Leland at 10:00 a.m. (be there by 9:00 - 9:30 to park your vehicle and board) and returns at 6:00 p.m. Bring a picnic lunch, warm clothing and rain gear. We plan to visit the historic farms, schoolhouse, cemetery, lighthouse ... etc. Invite your family and friends! We'll see you there!

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Fred Burdick with niece Margaret Braden.  
 returning from the South Manitou Memorial  
 Society outing, July, 1996.

The South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter is copyrighted 1998/1999. Vol.9. No.2  
 The deadline for articles to be included in the next Newsletter is October 15, 1998. Please submit to Newsletter Editor: Kathy  
 Bietau at 2400 N Morse Rd., Fountain, MI 49410. OR E-mail to [bietau@CARRINTER.net](mailto:bietau@CARRINTER.net)

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**South Manitou Memorial Society**  
**P.O. Box 177**  
**Empire, MI 49630**

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President: Don Morris  
 Vice-President: Jack Kolasinski  
 Treasurer: Joe Orbeck  
 Secretary: Judy Fogle

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The South Manitou Memorial Society  
 Newsletter is published three times  
 a year. In March, July, and  
 November. Ideas, suggestions,  
 research, stories, photographs,  
 illustrations, etc., are encouraged.  
 Send to above address.



**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY/STATE/ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$10.00** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$25.00**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **\$50.00** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$100.00** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$OTHER**

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