

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

Official publication of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, featuring articles and reminiscences of the people and places in the Ypsilanti area



FALL 2017

JACOB GROBE - *The Most Popular Man in Ypsilanti in 1870!*

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ



Jacob Grobe (at the back of the wagon) with his Peninsular ice wagon (c 1868).

This is another in the River Street Saga series which I have been writing but I didn't know it until my story was finished! All roads seem to lead me to River Street. Please come along on this journey and discover how we get back to River Street from the first commercial brewery in Ypsilanti.

This story started on a snowy winter day when I discovered that the Library of Congress had added several years' worth of Sanford Fire Insurance maps of Ypsilanti to their web page (<https://www.loc.gov/maps/?q=ypsilanti>). These hand-drawn maps provide interior sketches of businesses with notations regarding the safety of the building such as what type of heat and lighting is used and if there is a night watchman. What fun to be able to view drawings of the interior of businesses at the end of the 19th century!

This is how I first "met" Jacob Grobe. The map clearly shows his residence and place of business at the south west end of the wooden Forest Avenue bridge in the year 1888. He must have been amongst the small town of Ypsilanti's most popular men. Why? Because in the sweltering heat of an Ypsilanti summer he provided ice to keep food fresh and cool, before the days of electricity and refrigerators,



During the harvesting of the ice it was cut into cords that were 4 feet x 4 feet x 8 feet.

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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY ALVIN E. RUDISILL

Our Fall Quarterly Membership Meeting was held on September 17, 2017. The program was presented by Lynda Hummel who provided a slide show on past Ypsilanti Heritage Festivals. It was very interesting to see the impressive history of this annual event.

Another feature of the Membership Meeting was the presentation of two "Gerald Jennings Service Awards. This award program was established in 2012 by the YHS Board of Trustees to honor individuals who have dedicated a significant amount of time and talent to Society programs. This year the awards were present to Russel Kenyon and Ann Thomas.

The award presented to Ann Thomas reads as follows: *"Presented to Ann Thomas for extraordinary service and dedication to the Ypsilanti Historical Society since 1978. Ann has served as a regular and substitute docent in the Museum and has consistently helped with school and group tours. She is a valued contributor to our community and her service sets an example for all of our other volunteers."*

The award presented to Russel Kenyon reads as follows: *"Presented to Russel Kenyon for extraordinary service and dedication over the past several years to the Ypsilanti Histor-*

ical Society. Russel has organized and scanned over 10,000 images in our Photo Archives Collection and brought invaluable technical knowledge and skill in the care and preservation of our photographs. Further, he has been a true and steady sounding board and source of advice for others working in the Archives.

We have installed a new Microfiche Reader in the Archives that was paid for by earlier fundraising activities. Also, a new color printer has been installed that will improve the quality of copies provided for visitors to the Archives. Thanks to all of those who contributed to and supported these acquisitions.

Our Endowment Fund Advisory Board is working with the Ann Arbor Community Foundation to promote charitable gift annuities and retirement beneficiary plans that will establish the long term financial stability of the Ypsilanti Historical Society. We are fortunate to have so many loyal supporters that enable us to provide our archival services and museum programs free of charge to the public.

We appreciate the continuing support being provided to the Society by the Ypsilanti Ale House and Haab's Restaurant through fundraising events at those establishments.



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and he also brewed beer to keep the residents of Ypsilanti happy and refreshed all year long.

Of course, after seeing Grobe's brewery and ice house on the Sanford map I wanted to learn more about him and his life, and this is what I was able to discover after searching far and wide and even contacting his great-grandson and

a Grobe family genealogist. In the book *The History of Washtenaw County* published in 1881 on page 1207 we read "Jacob Grob (note – spelled wrong here and forever more whenever he is written about) brewer and ice dealer, Ypsilanti, was born in Wurtemberg, Germany in 1839. In 1851 he crossed the Atlantic and first located in Monroe, Michigan. In 1864 Mr. Grob (sic) erected an extensive ice house and supplied tons of that cooling luxury to the inhabitants of Ypsilanti during the hot and sultry summer months."

Jacob was actually born in the town

... ice was harvested on the Huron River by horse and man power in the area that St. Joseph Hospital now exists.

Ypsilanti, Mich., July 15 - 1899.
This is the most & longest shipped
July 6 A Forests " 90 Bn
15 J Grob " 22 Bn
10 Hoshing Bish " 140 Bn
12 J Grob " 22 Bn
19 J Hoshing " 1325 Bn
13 Conrad Huffer " 233

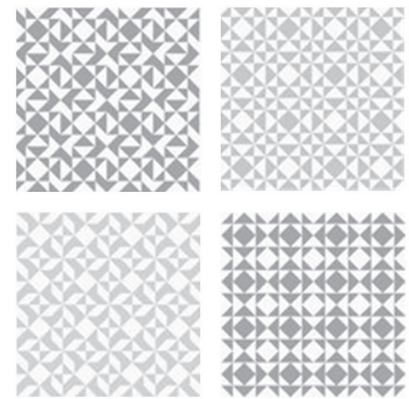
Records found from July of 1893 indicating how many barrels of malt were shipped.

of Meckleburg, Germany and his parents were Jacob "Fritz" Grobe and Mary Augusta Guiton. They had other children including Anna, Johann, Augusta and William, according to family researchers on Ancestry.com. We know that after settling in Monroe, Michigan with his parents, the young Jacob at age 22 moved to Detroit where he lived with a brewer named John Gredinger and perhaps was apprenticed to him. In 1861 in Ypsilanti, he married Sophia Marie Christina Post, who had also been born in Meckleburg and had come to the United States with her parents when she was 12 years old.

After purchasing land west of the wooden plank Forest Avenue Bridge they settled in a home at 5 West Forest Avenue (some of the city directories give his address as 15 Forest) and he erected a small brewery behind it. In



Jacob Grobe's crew cutting the cords of ice into smaller sizes that were delivered to homes and businesses.



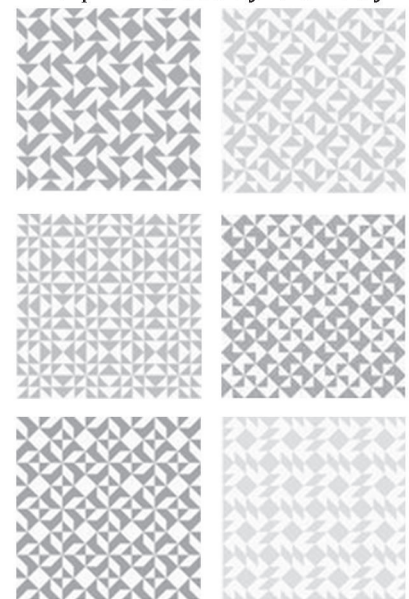
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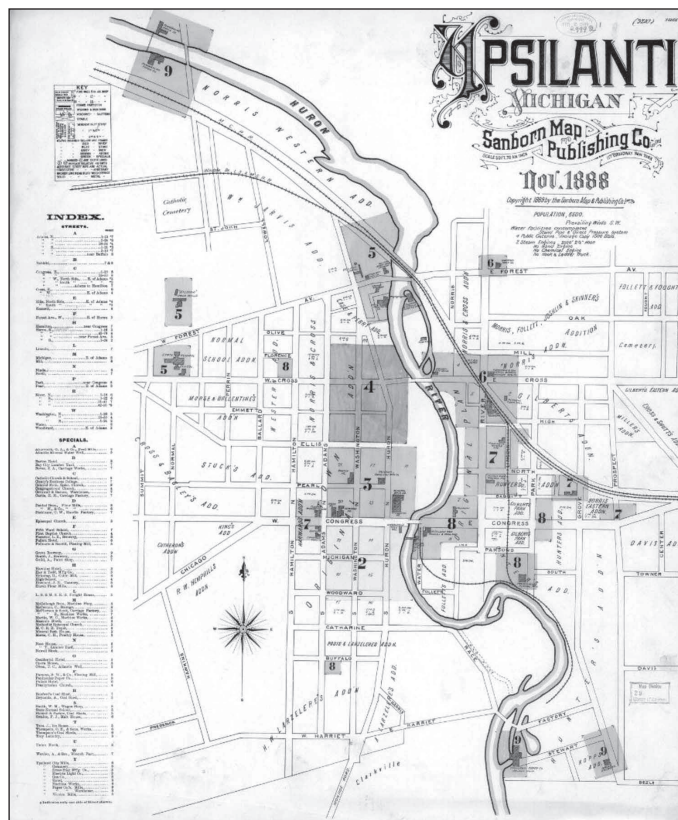
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the year 1864 he constructed an extensive ice house. The picture accompanying this article shows Jacob with his ice wagon and horse in 1866. Before the days of electric refrigeration, ice harvesting was an important and dangerous activity participated in by farmers and ice dealers alike. In the Ypsilanti area, ice was harvested on the Huron River by horse and man power in the area that St. Joseph Hospital now exists. This activity generally took place in late January into February when the ice on the river would be at least 11 to 13 inches thick. It is said that an experienced ice harvester could stomp his foot on the river and from the sound could tell when the ice was ready for harvest. Then the horse-drawn wagons were readied and the saws sharpened. Ice was first cut into long thin strips and these were cut again into more manageable chunks for placement in an ice house where they were first covered with sawdust for insulation and then stacked high upon each other and made ready for use. Farmers often had a pond on their property which provided them with ice and an ice house to keep it frozen all year.

Ice men and their wagons were a common sight, even in Detroit, where my husband and I grew up 70 years ago. Potential customers would put a sign in their front window for the ice man if they were in need of ice that day with the amount of ice printed on it from chunks of 5 to 25 pounds. The horses knew the route and the ice man would stop the wagon when he saw a sign and cut a chunk of ice to size, carry it into the kitchen, using ice tongs, and place it in the wooden ice box to keep food fresh and preserved. Even with electricity, refrigerators were not considered a necessary kitchen appliance until after the war in the 1940s as the first ones were not any better at keeping food cool than the old ice boxes. My parents' ice box is still in the garage at my childhood home in Detroit and the electric refrigerator bought for our cottage in 1947 is still working! Records show that in the winter of 1880-1881 Jacob harvested over 600 cords (4 feet x 4 feet x 8 feet) of ice! Looking at the Ypsilanti city directories in the Ypsilanti Historical Society archives we find that his business, the Peninsular Ice Company, continued selling ice until 1918 when a company



The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Ypsilanti clearly show Grobe's residence and place of business at the southwest end of the wooden Forest Avenue bridge in the year 1888.

that made ice using electricity set up shop on nearby Huron Street.

Getting back to Jacob and Sophia, they were blessed with three children, first a daughter Elizabeth Marie, born in 1865, another daughter Edith born in 1872, and John Frederick born in 1883 and dying at the age of five in 1888. Grobe's brewery is written about not only in *The History of Washtenaw County* but two other recently published books *Ann Arbor Beer* by David Bardallis published in 2013 by American Palate A Division of The History Press and *Brewed in Detroit* by Peter H. Blum and published by Wayne State University Press. Both authors contend that Grobe never bottled his beer but instead brewed only small batches of 4 or 5 barrels at a time which could be purchased at his home on Forest Avenue and

it is speculated that his home became a sort of pub where one could buy beer by the glass, bucket or barrel. In the Sanborn maps we can see a large kettle for brewing beer occupying one half of the ice house. An *Ypsilanti Commercial* newspaper article from 1878 credits Jacob with manufacturing 190 barrels of beer that year. *The History of Washtenaw County* article states that Gobe's beer "is said to be much appreciated by those who use it."

In doing further genealogical research it seems that his sister Ann E. Grobe was wife to George Otto. They lived nearby at 37 Park Street and George's occupation was listed as a saloon tender so perhaps some of the barrels were brewed for his saloon.

Records that were found in our home, formerly that of maltster Frederick J. Swaine, indicate that Jacob was still working as a brewer in the year 1893 as he purchased about 22 bushels of malt each week in July and August of 1893.

At age 61, in the 1900 census, Jacob's occupation is listed as a brewer and in the city directory of that year he is listed as both a brewer and an ice dealer. By the 1910 census when he is 71 years old, he seems to have given up brewing and his daughter Edith, her husband Jacob Lambert, and their two children Frederick and Lillian are living with her parents. It is believed that not only his old age but the growth of the Foerster Brewery on Grove Street seemed to put a



Herman Bortz, son in law of Jacob Grobe, built a home for his parents at 111 North River Street.

damper on his business.

It is interesting that Ann Arbor Brewery is continuing in the brewing tradition started in Ypsilanti by Jacob Grobe and only a block east on Forest Avenue from where the first brewery in Ypsilanti began. Jacob died in 1921 at the age of 83 and is buried in Highland Cemetery on River Street, outliving his wife Sophia who died at the age of 80 in 1918.

There is still another connection to River Street. One of Jacob and Sophia's daughters, Lizzie, was married at a Christmas wedding on the same day as her sister Edith on December 21, 1892 in Sumpter, Michigan. She married Herman Bortz and they had two children, Wilhemina and Frederick. Frederick was a skilled carpenter and built a beautiful home for his wife Beulah Martin at 113 East Forest and he also built a home for his parents to enjoy their last years around the corner at 111 North River Street.

...So here we are back to my beloved River Street and if we travel down the

block we can visit the graves of not only Lizzie and Herman Bortz, but of Sophia and Jacob Grobe at Highland Cemetery where they will forever rest in peace after providing the town of Ypsilanti with both ice and beer. Jacob Grobe must have been one of the most popular and appreciated citizens of Ypsilanti in 1870 providing both ice and beer for its residence pleasure.

(Janice Anschuetz is a local history buff and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



The graves of Lizzie and Herman Bortz and of Sophia and Jacob Grobe in Highland Cemetery.

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What Makes a Successful School

BY JACK D. MINZEY

When I first started teaching in 1950, I worked with a professional educator named Art Burklund. We were later to be fellow elementary principals. Art had been a teacher and administrator in public schools for many years, and his experiences had taught him many things. One idea which he shared with me was that a public school cannot be a good school unless both teachers and parents do their jobs appropriately. He stated that all teachers are also parents, and all parents are teachers. For many years, this did not make much sense to me, but as I have gained years of experience and had children of my own, it has become a guide line to which I subscribe.

Children spend ten percent of their clock hour time in the schools and ninety percent outside of school. In general, all teachers are qualified and dedicated to do a responsible job with the children assigned to them. However, that is not true of parents. Parents have the greatest amount of time to help educate their children, and yet in some communities, they do little or nothing in this respect. Where you find a good school system, you find parents who provide their children with learning devices such as books, dictionaries, computers, enrichment activities, travel, supervised homework, role models and attitudes about the value of education and support for their children's teachers. In other cases, parents see no role for themselves in the educational process. Unfortunately, this is often reinforced by teaching staff, administrators and school board members who imply that all of education is achieved in the local schools and constantly promise to do more to improve education for those who seem to be neglected by the school system.

A minor example of this happened in our family. Our son was enrolled in the third grade. He was a good student, but seemed unable to learn the multiplication tables which are a basic part of arithmetic at that level. For some time, he was receiving bad grades in arithmetic, and we received notes from the teacher warning us of his poor achievement. When we investigated, we discovered that the teacher, who was in her first year of teaching, was using a method of teaching multiplication different from what we had experienced. Following her training in college, she felt that memorization was a poor way to learn and that students needed to understand the complexity of multiplication. As a result, she built a matrix for her students. Across the top she listed all of the numbers one through ten. On the side, she did the same. Students could find a number at the top, match with a number on the side and where the two intersected on the matrix, would find the right answer. In her mind, this method would allow the students to see numerical relationships and make their learning that much more significant.

Later in the fall, there was an open house at the school. My wife and I attended and were surprised when the teacher cited our son as an example of how well the system works. She told the group of his failing at the beginning of the year and of how he suddenly had an "aha" experience and quickly became a top student in arithmetic. Following her presentation, the parents were treated to the traditional cider and donuts. As many of us stood around sharing conversation, several parents congratulated us for our son's success. Finally, I felt compelled to tell them that in a way we had cheated. My wife had gone to the Dime Store

(today's Dollar Store) and purchased a set of flash cards. Each night she worked with him until he had finally memorized his tables just as we had done when we were in the third grade. Surprisingly, the entire group reacted with a chuckle. It turned out that every parent in that room had also purchased flash cards and done the same thing. While a bit humorous, the point is well established. That teacher's success in teaching the multiplication tables was the result of both her teaching and a group of parents who were also doing their job.

More and more, the public schools of today are being held accountable, through tests and other measurements, to assure that they are doing a good job with our children. What I am submitting is that in most schools, faculty are not that much different. Where schools are being successful,

there are parents who realize that the success of their children in education is a result of the professional staff and the role that parents play in helping their children to achieve. It is very likely that where we see the identification of sub level schools or the failure of some students is because parents either do not realize or are not motivated to play the role in their child's education that is required for educational success. The quality of a school reflects the professionalism of its teachers and also the dedication of the parents to enrich their child's learning, and until each community recognizes and enacts such interaction, it will be left with a school system which has less than desired outcomes.

(Jack Minzey retired in 1992 from Eastern Michigan University after serving as a Professor and Department Head in the College of Education.)



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Hidden in Plain Sight:

Michigan Ladder Company in Ypsilanti

BY JORGE AVELLAN

(Reprinted with permission of Jorge Avellan who is a reporter for 89.1 WEMU News)

Old photograph of the Michigan Ladder Company building in Ypsilanti.

Today, we launch what will be an occasional series that will introduce you to some of the people, places, and things that help comprise who we are as a community. These are parts of our community that, in some way, are making a difference, and yet, you may not be at all familiar with them. That's why this feature series is called "Hidden in Plain Sight."

Today, we take you to Michigan Ladder Company. 89.1 WEMU's Jorge Avellan spent time with the folks at the Ypsilanti factory that makes products found everywhere from Washtenaw County, to the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, to the White House.

It's always surprising to me how few people know that we're even here. The Michigan Ladder Company has been in the same spot in Ypsilanti for 116 years. It opened its doors at East Forest Avenue, near the train tracks, in 1901. Since then, the company has only had four presidents. Tom Harrison is the current one. Harrison shared that "There were three gentlemen from Ypsilanti who de-



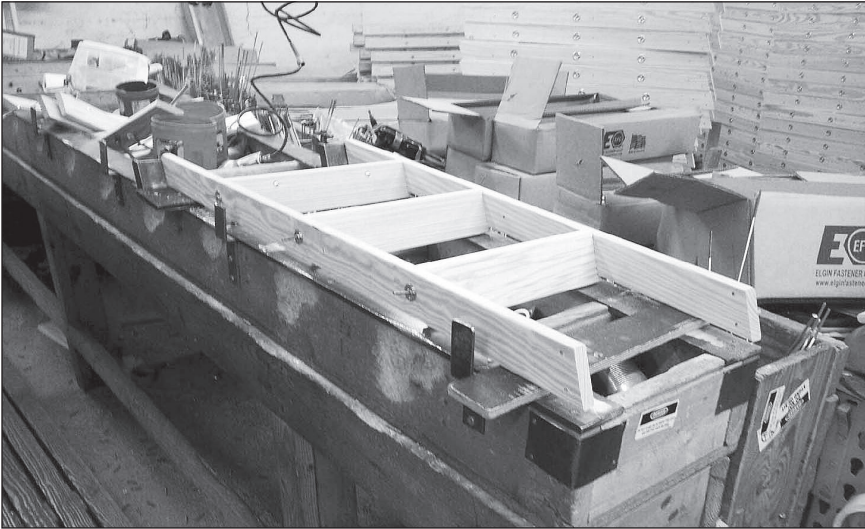
The company logo.

cided that they wanted to make ladders. They made a deal with the city that if they employed, I believe, it was ten people within the first five years, that the city would give them the land."

Harrison says they're the oldest ladder company in the country. If you walk by the 75,000 square foot factory, you'll most likely hear workers assembling wood ladders by hand.

Over the years, trends changed, and the company started producing aluminum and fiberglass ladders. A popular one called "Double Front Steps," because you're able to climb it from both sides, is assembled using machinery. While Michigan Ladder still makes wood versions, the majority of work these days is in the alternative materials. But Harrison says there was a time in the company's history that it provided a more diverse line of products "From toys to diving board to boats to furniture to ironing boards."

From the 1960's to the mid 1990's, it produced another product that actually made it to the big screen in Holly-



Wood ladders like this one are assembled by hand.



Wood ladders in the warehouse.



Fiberglass ladders ready to be loaded in trucks for distribution.

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Established 1901

This vintage advertisement shows how strong the Michigan Ladder's are.



Tom Harrison, President of Michigan Ladder Company.



Employee Donald Kenworthy assembles a fiberglass ladder using machinery.

wood. Harrison explains what it is. "Probably the most famous other product that we produced here is a line of ping-pong tables called the *Detroit*, and, if you saw the movie *Forrest Gump*, all those ping-pong tables were made here. And those ping-pong tables were shipped all over the world. They were used in the Olympics, the National and International Championships, and so forth."

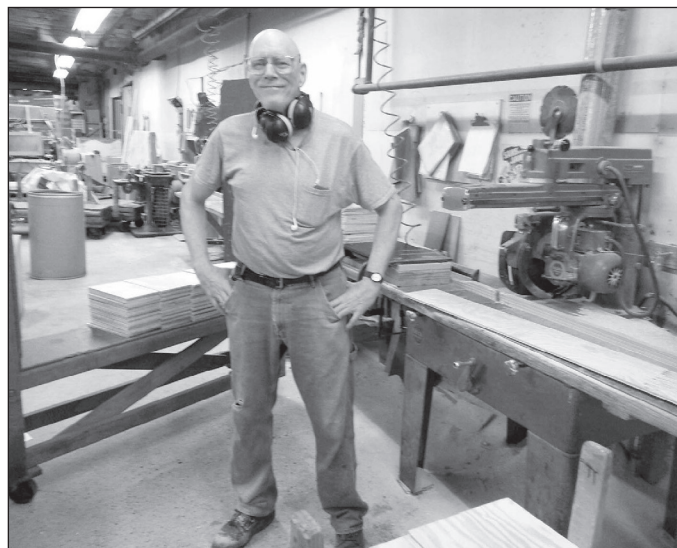
Buddy Castle was part of the team who made the ping-pong tables. He now works as a shipping clerk. We chatted for a bit in the loading dock area. Reporter: "Why did you decide to stay with the company, so far for forty years?" Buddy Castle: "They won't let me go." Reporter: "They can't find anyone else to load the ladders?" Buddy Castle: "They won't let me go. I got a tether on, and,



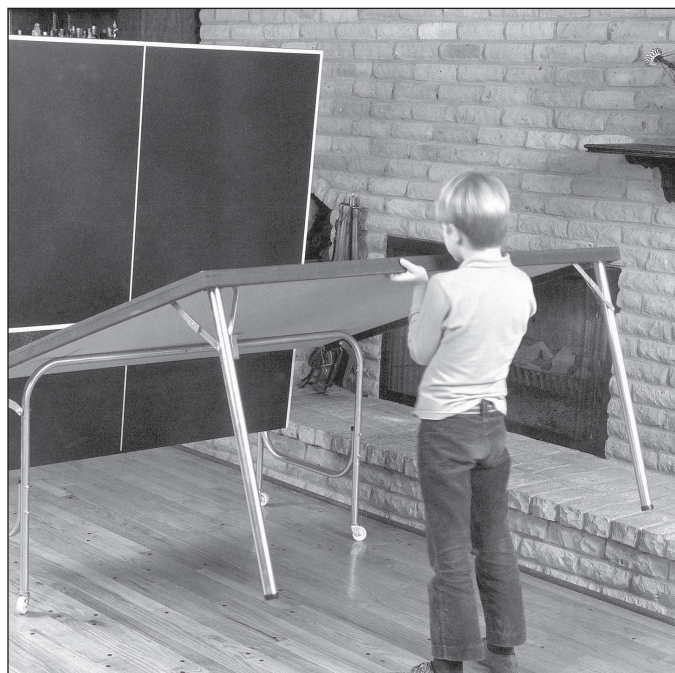
Buddy Castle is a shipping clerk and also once helped make the ping-pong tables called the "*Detroit*."

when I go too far, it goes off. It's just a good company, a good place to work, and I grew up on the corner over here. My father worked here, my two brothers, my two cousins, and they all since retired. It's like one big family here."

Scott Bruneau is another employee who's been with the company for decades. He's a lumber inspector, and, on this day, he's cutting parts for wood ladders. "There's a history here that weighs upon you at times as I go through this place, such as where I'm standing now. I did the same



Scott Bruneau is a lumber inspector.

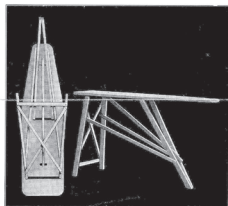


Ping Pong tables called the "*Detroit*" were produced by the company from the 1960's to the mid 1990's assembled by hand.

Just the rack for the kitchen or bath room easily attached to wall by hooks included. Has drying space of 17 feet and can be extended 24 in. ches. Folds back under shelf in space of 6 inches.

No. 1
Ideal Compact Clothes Rack Large Size. Has 36 ft. of drying space. Stands 62 inches high, 39 inches long and 26 inches wide when open. Closes down to 5 inches high. Has coil spring hinge locking device. Packed 3 in bundle. Shipping weight 126 lbs. per dozen.

No. 2
Nursery Space Saver Clothes Rack same as only smaller. Has 20 ft. drying space, standards high, 26 inches long and 13 inches wide open. Closes down to 4 inches thick. Equipped with coil spring hinge locking device. Packed ready shipping weight 55 lbs. net dozen.



Made from well seasoned selected material
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Simple and rigid. **One operation** for opening or
closing. Top 15x54 inches. Height, 31 inches. Pack
of two to the bundle. Weight 180 pounds per doz.



A good all around family board at a low price. Made of well seasoned material, legs well braced and equipped with adjustments on under side of board that permits of different heights. Top measures 12x47 inches.

Packed 4 in a crate. Average shipping weight, 150 lbs.

A black and white photograph of a large, curved wooden plank, likely a piece of lumber, leaning against a wooden ladder. A rectangular label is affixed to the plank. The label contains the following text: "IDEAL" in large, bold, serif capital letters; "IRONING BOARD" in smaller, bold, serif capital letters; "MADE IN" in small, plain capital letters; "GERMANY" in medium-sized, bold, serif capital letters; "Sole Importers" in small, plain capital letters; "The American Furniture Co., Inc." in medium-sized, bold, serif capital letters; and "New York, N. Y." in small, plain capital letters. The plank is light-colored wood with visible grain and knots. The ladder is made of dark wood with several rungs. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

One of the original ironing boards produced by Michigan Ladder.

The company has 30 full-time employees. Additionally, it provides employment to about ten people daily who are either part of a disabled or felon workers program. Harrison says Michigan Ladder is not just here to make money but to help the people who live in the community. That, he says, has helped the company. "We had our share of highs and lows, but I think one of the reasons why we continue to do as well as we do is we are an extremely resourceful company. A lot of the machinery and equipment you see in here, we've had people here who made it themselves. We can fix these things and keep them running."

Throughout the years, Michigan Ladder has had the opportunity to move away from Ypsilanti, but Harrison says the company has stayed because this is home.

(Jorge Avellan is a reporter for 89.1 WEMU News. He can be contacted at 734.487.3363 or javellan@emich.edu)



The Michigan Ladder Company opened in 1901.

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Marie Tharp as a young woman.

MARIE THARP

Renowned Scientist from Ypsilanti

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ

Marie Tharp was a renowned Ypsilanti-born scientist, but many people haven't heard her story. Marie's claim to fame is that she was a major contributor in creating the first scientific map of the earth's ocean floor. Her work revealed the Atlantic Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Ridge between North America and Europe, which helped prove the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift.

Marie Tharp was born in Ypsilanti on July 30, 1920. Marie's parents, William Edgar (W.E.) Tharp and Bertha Louise (Newton) Tharp only lived in Ypsilanti for a short period of time since W.E.'s work as a surveyor was very transient and required them to move every year or two. So it is a lucky happenstance that Marie was born in Ypsilanti and we can claim her as one of our notable citizens. Prior to her marriage, Bertha attended the Michigan State Normal College and the University of Michigan. She was a German, Latin and Music teacher. Bertha's parents were Albert E. Newton and Harriet (Wright) Newton. The Newton's lived in Ypsilanti for some period of time at 967 Ellis Road (now 967 Washtenaw Ave.) near Michigan State Normal College (in about 1922 Ann Arbor Road and Ellis Street were combined into one street and renamed Washtenaw Ave.). W.E., Bertha and Marie Tharp moved away from Ypsilanti early in Marie's life, but Marie and her mother came back to Ypsilanti for at least one year while Marie was in 2nd grade to care for Marie's dying grandmother, Harriet.

The story of Marie Tharp can't be written without first exploring the biography of her father, W.E. Tharp. W.E. was

born in La Harpe, Illinois in 1870. Shortly after he was born, W.E.'s father moved the family to a farm in Stuart, Iowa. W.E. never attended college and only went to one year of high school in Stuart before he was declared by the school to be learned enough to graduate. In 1904, W.E. began working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Soils. The job took him to countless locations. W.E. married his first wife, Ethel Griffin, and had one child named Orlo before Ethel died at an early age. Because of all of the extensive traveling W.E. did for his job, after Ethel died, Orlo was raised by Ethel's parents.



W. E. Tharp surveying in the field (date and location unknown).



Marie Tharp and Bruce Heezen at work mapping the ocean in the 1950's.

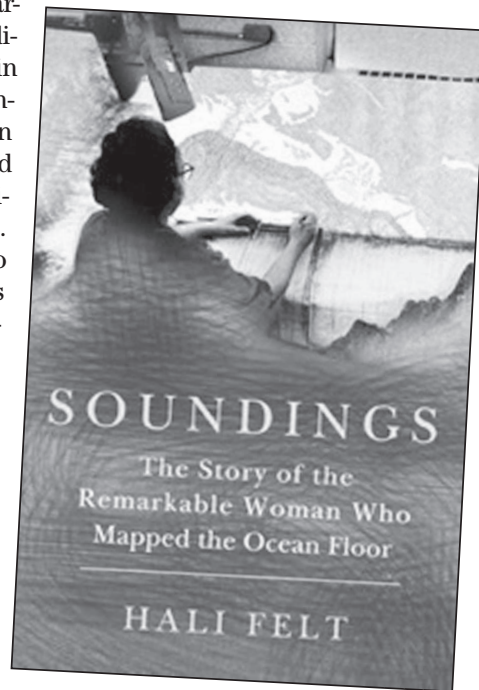
W.E. Tharp continued his surveying career, and met Bertha Newton in a boarding house in Frankfurt, Indiana. The two married in either 1912 or 1917. Marie was born in 1920 when her father was fifty and her mother was forty. Surveyors typically mapped the northern states in the summer months and the southern states in the winter months, so they were always moving. In addition, they also spent the winter months of every fourth year in Washington, D.C. to publish their results. In all, W.E. mapped soils in 14 states for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The transient lifestyle of Marie and her close bond with her father played a formative role in her childhood. Marie's career in geology was molded by her early interest in the science surrounding her father's career.

Marie attended more

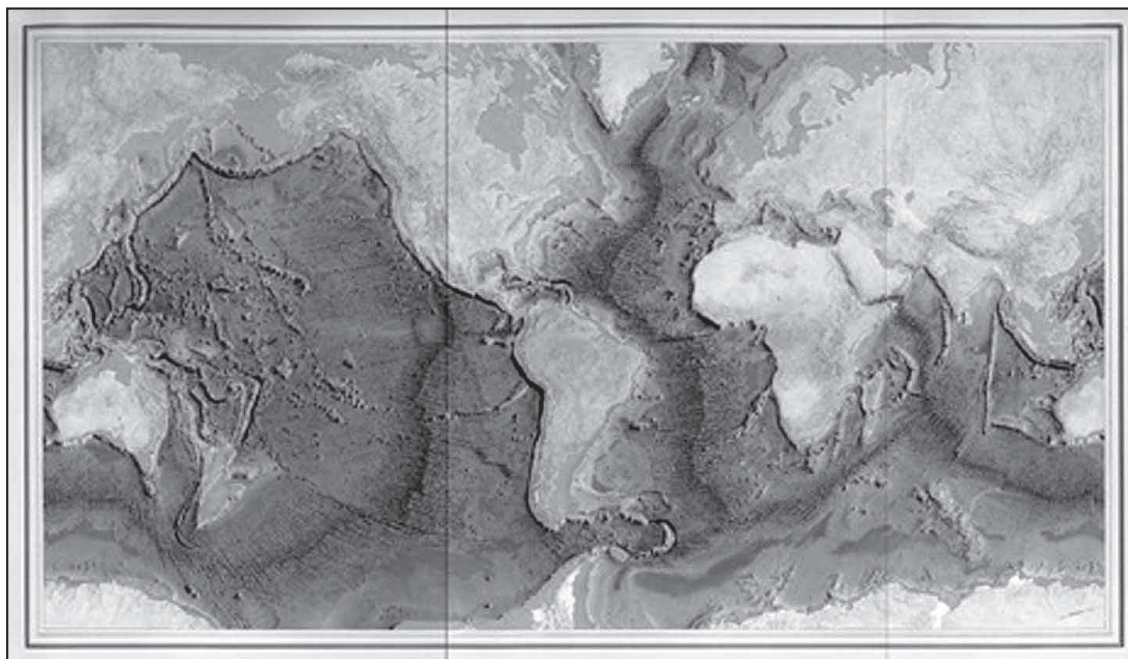
than 18 schools before she graduated from high school. She described her family as close-knit "perennial gypsies." Marie attended kindergarten in Tippecanoe, Indiana, half of first grade in Peru, Indiana, the other half of first grade in Marion, Alabama, and then returned to Ypsilanti for second grade. The family would go on to live in numerous states including Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Alabama, Ohio, New York and Mississippi. In many of the locations where Marie's father was sent to work, he didn't take his wife and daughter either because there weren't any schools or the assignment was too temporary.

Marie's mother, Bertha, died in Bellefontaine, Ohio, in 1936 when Marie was only 15 years old. Apparently able to settle down after retirement, W.E. would die in that same city in 1959.

Marie graduated from Ohio University in 1943 with Bache-



Soundings – The story of the remarkable Woman who mapped the ocean floor written by Hali Felt.

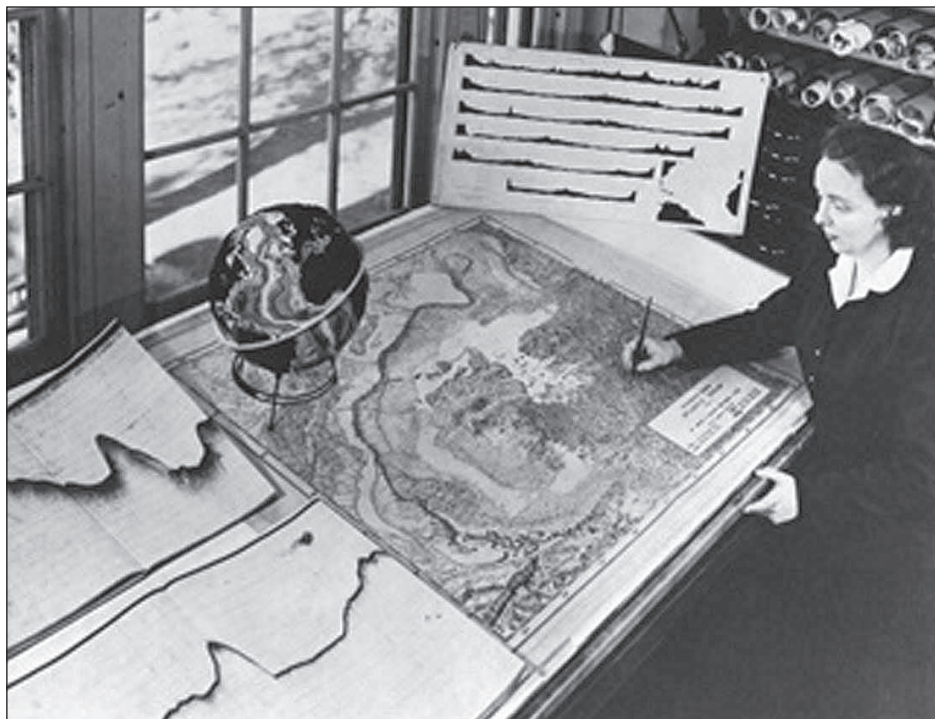


Painting of the Heezen-Tharp world ocean floor by Heinrich C. Berann, 1977.

lor's Degrees in English and Music, as well as four minors. She later said that she changed her major every semester while searching for something that she was good at, something that she could get paid for, and something that she really liked. Those criteria should be any college student's guideline for choosing a major, even to this day. After graduating from Ohio University, Marie went on to receive a Master's Degree in Geology from the University of Michigan. She later earned a second Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Tulsa while she worked in Oklahoma as a geologist for the Standlind Oil & Gas Company. At Standlind, Marie found out that women were not permitted to conduct field work, and the only job available was office work where she coordinated maps and data from her male colleagues. In her career, Marie ran into many hurdles faced by women scientists, but through perseverance she was able to overcome these obstacles.

After receiving her degree at Tulsa, Marie moved to New York in 1948. There, she worked at the Lamont Geological Laboratory at Columbia University and began oceanographic topology research with Bruce Heezen, then a graduate student in geology. Their partnership would ultimately lead to a 30-year collaboration. In the beginning of their research together, Marie and Heezen used photographic data to locate downed aircraft from World War II. In 1952, they began working together to map the topography of the ocean floor. As a female, Marie was restricted from traveling aboard research vessels due to the fact that women were excluded from working aboard ships. So while Heezen collected the data, Marie drew the maps and developed theories on the topography of the ocean floor. By processing thousands of soundings from the North Atlantic, the two scientists undertook solving a scientific mystery that had previously been unexplored.

Using data collected from research



Marie Tharp at work on one of her ocean floor maps.

ships and seismographic data from undersea earthquakes, Marie and Heezen began the monumental task of mapping the entire ocean floor. By 1957, Marie and Heezen had published the first map of the North Atlantic Ocean floor. In the early 1960's, Marie contributed to Heezen's academic papers which pushed the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift, though she wasn't always credited in the papers. It took until 1977 that their work finally culminated in a published map of the entire ocean floor, painted by Austrian landscape artist Heinrich Berann.

Recognition of Marie's accomplishments in cartography and oceanography came late in her career, but fortunately they are now well documented. A map of the Indian Ocean Floor was published in *National Geographic Magazine* in 1967, and was credited to her and Heezen. A book by Hali Felt published in 2013 entitled "Soundings – The Story of the Remarkable Woman Who Mapped the Ocean Floor" captures the full story of Ypsilanti's-own scientific pioneer.

Marie served on the faculty of Colum-

bia University until 1983. Marie donated her map collection to the Library of Congress in 1995. In 1998, Marie was honored at the 100th anniversary of the Library of Congress' Geography and Map Division. In 1999, Marie received the Women Pioneer in Oceanography Award by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Marie, who never married, died of cancer at the age of 86 in Nyack, New York on August 23, 2006.

Marie Tharp's contributions to plate tectonic theory and geophysics:

1952 Marie Discovers Mid-Atlantic Rift Valley

1957 Mid-Atlantic Rift Valley Announced

1959 N. Atlantic Physico-graphic diagram published

1961 S. Atlantic Physico-graphic diagram published

1964 Indian Ocean Physico-graphic diagram published

1967 Indian Ocean Panorama published in *National Geographic Magazine*

Books by Marie Tharp:

With Bruce C. Heezen. "Physiographic Diagram of the North Atlantic." *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 67 (1956): 1704.

With Bruce C. Heezen and Maurice Ewing. *The Floors of the Ocean*. Geological Society of America Special Paper 65. New York: Geological Society of America, 1959.

With Bruce C. Heezen. "Tectonic Fabric of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and Continental Drift." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences* 258, no. 1088 (1965): 90–106.

With Bruce C. Heezen. "Physiography of the Indian Ocean." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series A: Mathematical and Physical Sciences* 259 (1966): 137–149.

With Henry Frankel. "Mappers of the Deep: How Two Geologists Plotted the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Made a Discovery that Revolutionized the Earth Sciences." *Natural History* 95, no. 10 (1986): 49–62.

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Soundings – The Story of the Remarkable Woman Who Mapped the Ocean Floor, by Hali Felt (excerpts) <http://halifelt.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Soundings-Excerpt.pdf>

The ties that bind: Soil surveyor William Edgar Tharp and oceanographic cartographer Marie Tharp, by Edward R. Landa <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1436&context=usgsstaffpub>

(Janice Anschuetz is a local history buff and a regular contributor to the *Gleanings*.)



Marie Tharp with her ocean floor topographic maps and globe.



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Class Reunion

BY JO DAVID STOCKWELL *(Submitted by Jack Minzey)*

Every ten years as summertime nears,
An announcement arrives in the mail.
A reunion is planned, it'll be really grand.
Make plans to attend without fail.

I'll never forget the first time we met,
We tried so hard to impress.
We drove fancy cars, smoked big cigars,
And wore our most elegant dress.

It was quite an affair; the whole class was there.
It was held at a fancy hotel.
We wine and we dine, and we acted refined,
And everyone thought it was swell.

The men all conversed about who had been first
To achieve great fortune and fame.
Meanwhile their spouses described their fine houses
And how beautiful their children became.

The homecoming queen, who once had been lean,
Now weighed in at one-ninety-six.
The jocks who were there had all lost their hair,
And the cheerleaders could no longer do kicks.

No one had heard about the class nerd
Who'd guided a spacecraft to the moon;
Or poor little Jane, who'd always been plain;
She married a shipping tycoon.

The boy we'd decreed "most apt to succeed"
Was serving ten years in the pen.
While the one voted "least" now was a priest;
Just shows you are wrong now and then.

They awarded a prize to one of the guys
Who seemed to have aged the least.

Another was given to the grad who had driven
The farthest to attend the feast.

They took a class picture, a curious mixture
Of beehives, crew cuts and wide ties.
Tall, short, or skinny, the style was the mini.
Your never saw so many thighs

At our next get-together, no one cared whether
They impressed their classmates or not.
The mood was informal, a whole lot more normal.
By this time we'd all gone to pot.

It was held out-of-doors at the lake shores.
We ate hamburgers, coleslaw, and beans.
Then most of us lay around in the shade
In our comfortable T-shirts and jeans.

By the fortieth year, it was abundantly clear,
We were definitely over the hill.
Those who weren't dead had to crawl out of bed,
And be home in time for their pill.

And now I can't wait as they've set the date.
Our sixtieth is coming I'm told.
It should be a ball, they've rented a hall
At the Shady Rest Home for the old.

Repairs have been made on my old hearing aid.
My pacemaker's been turned up on high.
My wheelchair is oiled, and my teeth have been boiled,
And I've bought a new wig and glass eye.

I'm feeling quite hearty; I'm ready to party.
I'll dance until dawn's early light.
It'll be lots of fun, and I hope at least one
Other person can make it that night.





Museum Advisory Board Report

BY NANCY WHEELER, BOARD CHAIR

Welcome to our new docents, Derrick and Jennifer Roberts! This young couple is very enthusiastic and is a great addition to our docent group. We are still in need of more docents, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. Training only takes 1½ hours, and we only ask for one shift per month. If you're interested please call 734-482-4009.

A big 'Thank you' to our Heritage Festival volunteers! The lace demonstrators set up in front of the museum again and provided a key fob project for visitors to make.

The Quilt Show is being held from September 24th through October 8th. The quilts on display are loaned to us and really make for a beautiful exhibit. We are anticipating a nice turn out featuring quilts of various techniques and vintages. Sometimes a quilt or two is for sale, so be sure to stop in and take a look! As always, admission is free, but those who donate will be entered into a raffle to win 'Our Friend's Garden', a quilt created and donated by the Western Wayne County Quilting Guild. Thank you to Sarah VanderMeulen and her committee for spending many hours organizing this anticipated exhibit.

New museum displays are currently being organized for display after the quilts go home. The museum is decorated in autumn finery and will soon change for the winter holidays. Our holiday decorations will be on display from November 26th through December 30th. Be sure to mark your calendar for the Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 10th from 2-5pm.

Ann Thomas was honored on September 17th at our Membership Meeting winning the Gerald Jennings Service Award. Ann has been an active docent since 1978 and is a valuable member of our society. Thank you Ann for your many years of service, we applaud you!



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Photo Courtesy of the Yankee Air Museum

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The Eastern Michigan University Athletic Club

BY JACK D. MINZEY

This article is about the E.M.U. Athletic Club as it has existed since my return to Ypsilanti in 1968. At that time, the club was primarily a voluntary organization, held together loosely by leadership from some motivated fans. The main activity of the club was to hold lunches once a week during football and basketball seasons. Their function was to make the luncheon arrangements and to notify fans of their existence. The attendance was usually about 30 people.

In 1994, Tim Weiser, who was the athletic director, decided that the athletic department needed a more permanent and organized athletic club. He invited a group of people to help him with that project. Those invited were; Tom Slade, Jack and Esther Minzey, Ralph Pasola, Lynette Findley, Sandy Herman, Jack Johnson, Sandi Lawson, Don Moffat, Bob Okopney, Fred Roberts, Sioux Shelton, Jerry Snyder, and Bob Taylor. Esther Minzey declined the invitation because she felt it was inappropriate to have two members from the same family on the committee. Jeff Freshcorn was the Foundation advisor and also served as secretary.

The group met in June, 1994, and Dr. Weiser explained to the group that it was his desire to develop an active athletic club. He felt that each sport was approaching their funding and activities on an individual basis, and he wished to consolidate these efforts in terms of more efficiency and better organization.

A subcommittee of Jack Minzey and Ralph Pasola was appointed to draw up a constitution and by-laws. This committee met intensively for several weeks. They collected information from several other universities and drafted a document which was then edited and approved by the current members of the committee.

Not all the members of the appointed committee continued to serve, but those that did continued to meet and be engaged in the further development of the board. After approving the by-laws and constitution, they set about developing a brochure. This was a difficult task since Eastern was going through the transition from Hurons to Eagles, and the politics and wording of any publication had to be carefully carried out.

The brochure was finally developed,

and the club began to meet regularly to carry out their tasks. By 1995, the new board consisted of the following; President: Tom Slade, Vice President: Jack Minzey, Secretary/Treasurer: Ralph Pasola, Board Mem-

bers: Bill Anhut, Andy Eggan, Lynette Findley, Jack Johnson, Don Moffat, Bob Okopney, Fred Roberts, Sioux Shelton, Jerry Snyder, and Bob Taylor. Dr. Weiser served in an ad hoc position, and the board began to solicit new club membership. Over the years, new board members were added; Tom Averett, Connie Clipfell, Rick DeBacker, Jeff Fulton, Bert Greene, Ed Mizinski, Jim Nelson, and Bob Oliver. The board now began to carry out the functions for which it was created. In actuality, all of the sports eventually came together under this new structure except for baseball which continued to have its own advisory committee and raise money through their golf outing, their beer tent, and their stag night.

During the following years, the board engaged in many activities. Listed below are some of the examples of things in which they were involved.

Raised money. The club started with 150 members and by 1998, had 370 members and had raised \$105,000 that year. The club was actually mailing to 585 potential members.

Dispensed funds- requests for additional funding were submitted to the athletic director who gave us his recommendation which the club then acted upon based on their criteria.

Organized and or hosted events- athletic lunches, coaches radio shows, pre-season events, banquets, after game events, special events (i.e. Charlie Batch Dinner), opening of the Convention Center, Keepers of the Green (polished football helmets), receptions at basketball games, half time

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with 150
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that year.*

reception at football games, Spring Cook-Out, tailgates, receptions in Eagles Nest, golf outings (until the Regents forced us to hold all our outings at Eagle Crest which eliminated all of our profit.)

Served on committees to select a football coach and a basketball coach after the current coaches resigned during Christmas vacation.

Published an Athletic Club Newsletter (EMU-AC Today).

Provided for an annual meeting and election of officers. It was decided that the elected vice-president would move to the presidency, and a vice president would be selected each year.

The club remained active and strong for the next few years. Carol Houston succeeded Tim Weiser as athletic director, and she continued to support the athletic club as he had. Tom Slade served as president for the first two years followed by Jack Minzey, Andy Eggan, Tom Averett, and Jeff Fulton.

Then two things happened that began to affect the effectiveness of the club. Roy Wilbanks, the President of the EMU Foundation interceded in the club's activities. It was his belief that any one who donated to Eastern be given the privileges granted to Athletic Club Members. Thus, if a person gave \$1,000 to forensics, they would receive the benefits as though that amount had been given to athletics. Mr. Wilbanks summoned the officers of the club to his office in the Cooper Building. There, he made changes in the bylaws and the constitution which actually placed the organization under the direction of the Foundation appointee.

During that same period, Dave Diles became the new athletic director. Dr. Diles' administrative style was quite autocratic, and the role of the club

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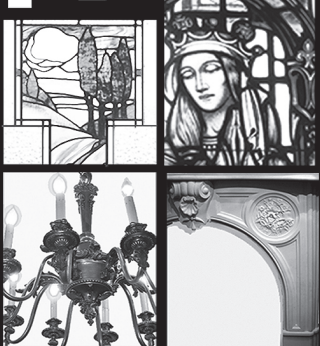
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changed dramatically. Dr. Diles took charge of the funds raised and administered them without input from the club. Brochures or any formal solicitation of funds ceased to exist. Annual meetings and elections ceased, and meetings became state of the athletic department reports by Dr. Diles. Questions and recommendations were discouraged, and the role of the club became perfunctory. Dr. Diles reorganized the club into subcommittees selected by him under the direction of various members of his staff. He appointed the chair of the athletic club which became a permanent position. For all practical purposes, the club ceased to exist as a viable, independent organization.

Also during the intervening years, representatives of the Foundation changed. That role was filled by a succession of Foundation personnel; Dana Starns, Julie Babington, Anna Schmitt Reichaert, and Rich Juday. The role of each of these persons was to be supportive and advisory.

When Dr. Diles left, Bob England became the acting athletic director. In a letter dated February 15, 2006, Dr. England expressed his desire to reestablish the athletic club. He stated that it had been a valuable asset to the department and was a necessary part of the future of athletics. The problem was that there was to be no University or Foundation support for reinstating the organization until a new athletic director was hired.

The new athletic director was Dr. Derrick Gragg. His style was quite laid back, non-directive and almost completely opposite of Dr. Diles. He did not show any interest in creating an athletic club. Instead, he turned the operation over to Craig Fink who was

the new Foundation liaison person. Craig also did not show an interest in resurrecting the old athletic club. Instead, he did meet with members of the club but used them more as a window dressing group than as a viable organization. Even some of the club's activities which had started under Dr. Diles, were no longer continued. Mr. Fink's main activity with the club members was to host a reception in the Eagle Nest at each men's basketball game.

As time went on, Mr. Fink switched his identity with the athletic club members to an association with the E-Club. New organizations sprang up such as the Gridiron Club and Hoops which were made up primarily of athletes. Tailgates and suites at the arena were organized by these groups, and typical fans were really not a part of their operation. Eventually, and just before his departure, Mr. Fink called together

some of the leadership of the former athletic club and officially disbanded the group.

The final chapter of this saga came with the hiring of Nikki Borges as the Foundation representative to athletics. Ms. Borges did meet with former athletic club members

and was given the information which appears in this document. However, this did not result in any identifiable movement toward the development of a legitimate athletic club organization.

The Eastern Michigan University Athletic Club was a great success and contributed to both the financial and morale aspects of the Athletic Department. Its success and failure proved one thing. An athletic club can only exist if there is the proper leadership amongst the fans and the right support from the athletic department.

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The Strange Death of Edger Slater

BY JAMES MANN

Joseph St. Aubin, and his son Fred St. Aubin, were out hunting with Errol Moore on the flats two miles southeast of Ypsilanti on the afternoon of Saturday, October 22, 1916, when they came across something they would have preferred never to see. Near the fence line dividing the John King and William Gotts farms was the nude body of a man swinging from a tree.

Washtenaw County Coroner Burchfield and Ypsilanti Chief of Police Cain were informed of the discovery and both arrived on the scene. After the arrival of Burchfield and Cain, the identity of the man was discovered to be Edger D. Slater, who had been missing since the previous Wednesday, October 19, 1916. Slater had formerly been employed by the Michigan Central Railroad, but more recently worked at the Staib saloon in Ypsilanti. Early on Wednesday morning he had left his home on South Huron Street, as usual, and it was assumed he was going to work. A search was carried out after he was reported missing, but no trace of him was found at that time.

Slater had apparently undressed himself folded each item of clothing, and placed his clothes in a neat pile near a stump. On top of the pile of clothing was his hat, covering a whiskey bottle in which he had placed a note to his wife. The note Slater wrote indicated he regretted the necessity of his act. In the note he asked his wife to see that their young children were

brought up in a Christian way. Not far from where the body was found were the remains of a fire, and nearby was part of a loaf of bread, some bologna sausage and a razor.

"A bullet hole was found in his left breast, and suspended from the limb on which he hanged, and dangling at his side, was the revolver from which the shot had been fired, presumably when death did not result readily from hanging. His body had been mutilated before death," reported *The Ypsilanti Record* of Thursday, October 26, 1916. Slater had stabbed himself before death as well as shot and hanged himself.

"The man had stood upon a stump, placed a rope around his neck, then shot and slashed himself and jumped from the stump. It was stated today that either the shot or the slashes would have been sufficient to cause death, the former piercing the body above the heart and latter being inflicted in the abdomen," noted *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Monday, October 23, 1916. Ill health and the use of liquor were thought to be the motive for his suicide. It was reported that he had not been addicted to drink until recently. The body was taken to Mt. Pleasant, where the family was from, and buried in the family burial ground.

(James Mann is a local historian, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



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The Plank Road Tavern was located on the corner of East Michigan Avenue and Harris Road.

The Plank Road Tavern

BY JAMES MANN

The house that once stood at Michigan Avenue and Harris Road, long known as the Plank Road Tavern, was the oldest structure in Washtenaw County.

John Bryan, with his wife and five children, set out from Detroit in October of 1823. They traveled with an ox team on the old Indian trail, now Michigan Avenue, which was then little more than a narrow path. They had to clear the trail as they traveled so it took them four days to get to Woodruff's Grove, the forerunner of Ypsilanti. They arrived in Woodruff's Grove on October 23, 1823. The Bryan family was the first to come by the old Indian trail, as those who had come before had sailed on rafts by way of the Huron River.

A native of Massachusetts, John Bryan was the son of a Revolutionary War soldier. He seems to have liked what he saw at Woodruff's Grove, as he decided to stay. A carpenter by trade, his first order of business was the building of a log cabin for his family. This was made necessary as

his wife was pregnant. She gave birth to a son, whom they named Alpha Washtenaw Bryan, the first child born of a settler in the county, on February 24, 1824.

At first times were hard and lean for the family. Then in 1826, John built a sawmill at what is now the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Harris Road. Then the next year, 1827, he built the family a home on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Harris. On the first floor of the original house, there were three rooms, a dining room, a middle room and a small bedroom, with three bedrooms on the second floor. The beams and frame were hand made from black walnut. The joists under the house were made of logs nine or ten inches thick.

The dining room was most likely the original kitchen, as the big fireplace was there. A bake oven was in back of the fireplace, making use of the same chimney. There was a small iron door to the oven on one side of the fireplace. To use the bake oven, a fire was built in the lower part

and when sufficiently hot the embers were raked out and what was to be baked was placed on grates above the fire pot. When the house was built, it had one of only two bake ovens in the settlement.

The house would be not be known as The Plank Road Tavern until 1937, it was most likely used as a tavern from the first day the Bryan family moved in. What is now Michigan Avenue, was then the Chicago Road, the only land route linking Detroit and Chicago. Travelers leaving Detroit in the morning would arrive at or near Ypsilanti at nightfall. The travelers would seek shelter at the first available place. For this reason every house along the trail was a tavern, no matter the size or amenities.

John Bryan built the first horse bridge over the Huron River, just south of the present Michigan Avenue bridge. He was also the first regularly appointed postmaster in Woodruff's Grove. It was in his carpenter shop on September 3, 1832, that the voters of Woodruff's Grove met to formally organize into the village of Ypsilanti.

Bryan also built the Ballou House, which was a hotel, in 1832. Mr. Ballou supplied the materials, but it was Bryan who managed the hotel for the first three years. During the years Bryan managed the hotel, it was run on the Temperance Plan which meant no liquor was sold. When Mr. Ballou took over operation of the hotel in 1835, he managed it on the Whiskey Plan which allowed liquor to be sold.

Eventually, the Bryan family chose not to stay in the area. They moved to Ann Arbor in 1834 when John erected the first Washtenaw County Court House. The family moved further west in 1836. After the Bryan family moved out, the house at Michigan Avenue and Harris Road went through a number of owners, linking it to many prominent names in local history, including, Spencer, Harris and Clawson.

When the Chicago Road opened, it

was little more than a path filled with mud. One traveler noted that between Detroit and Ypsilanti, there was only one mud slick. The length of the mud slick, however, was from Detroit to Ypsilanti. The problem of mud and dust was dealt with in about 1850, when wooden planks were set across the road. This was a single lane road, so everything was fine, so long as traffic moved in one direction. Over time, however, the planks dried and shrank, so the stage coach and other vehicles could be heard long before their arrival.

Over the years the house became almost legendary, with many stories told about the goings on there. Some might even be true. "During prohibition, for instance, the house was popularly thought to be a 'speakeasy'. Pipes from an upstairs room, where the still was supposedly located, let to a downstairs room used as an outlet for the 'moonshine', this legend has it," noted The Daily Ypsilanti Press of November 19, 1948. "Then again," the account continues, "legend identifies it as the scene of a murder, but nothing was ever proven and while a trial resulted so did an acquittal."

The house became known as the Plank Road Tavern in 1937, when Mrs. Nell Dunn restored the structure and used it as a tea room. Then it was sold to Bert Baker, a car dealer, who rented the house to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mueller, who operated an antique store there. The couple planned to retire to a warmer climate, but the death of Frank brought the business to an early end. The house was moved 300 feet to the west in 1948. The move was made necessary, to make room for a gas station. The move was only a reprieve, and the house was demolished in 1967. The house, it was said, was a victim of progress.

(James Mann is a local historian, a volunteer in the YHS Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

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Wedding: Was There or Was There Not?

BY JAMES MANN



It's all unfounded; the most ridiculous thing I ever read," said Hugh M. German, who in February of 1916, was a student at the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University. What had Mr. German upset was a report of his marriage carried in a Detroit newspaper. This Detroit newspaper reported that he had married a Miss Binding of Laporte, Indiana, on Sunday morning. The newspaper gave half a column on the front page to the report. Mr. German said he was in Ypsilanti that Saturday night and had not seen Miss Binding for more than three weeks.

"German," reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Monday, February 14, 1916, "says he went to Jackson Friday afternoon where he visited his sister and spent the night. Saturday, he says he returned to Ypsilanti and was not out of the city again. A missing link in the story comes in an interview with Mrs. German, the young man's mother, who did not know that he had returned from Jackson until late this morning."

"German," continued the report, "was injured in the gymnasium a short time ago and Mrs. German states that on that account he often stays with fellow students near the Normal instead of going to his own home. He arrived at the house shortly before noon today and told his mother the report was false and that he was going this afternoon to have the matter straightened out with Detroit papers. He left immediately to determine the possible source of the story and to have his own wedding announcement postponed till it may be more timely."

The reports carried by the Detroit paper that had caused Mr. German such anger, are as follows: "Laporte, Ind.,

Feb.—"Come down and issue us a license," was the telephone message, which County Clerk Raab of South Bend received at midnight last night. At 12:30 Sunday morning Hugh M. German of Ypsilanti, Michigan, a student in the State Normal school, was given a license to marry Miss Etta Binding, of Stockbridge, Mich.

While no return of marriage can be made until tomorrow, it is said the Michigan couple went in quest of justice of the peace and that the ceremony was performed in time to permit the couple to leave for Ypsilanti, where the groom will continue his studies."

"Stockbridge, Mich. Feb. 14—Miss Etta Binding is the daughter of one of the best known families of this vicinity. Her father is Willis Binding, a retired farmer. The young woman was at home for a visit last week but did not give her people any inkling of her contemplated marriage they said Sunday night. Miss Binding, according to her parents, had attended an academy at Holly. She was employed by the L. H. Field Company at Jackson, where she went from her home last Friday. The parents said that they had never met their daughter's husband."

The final turn in the story occurred on Tuesday, February 15, 1916, when Hugh German admitted he and Etta Binding were in fact married. He explained he wanted to keep the marriage a secret until after he had completed his studies at the Normal. "The announcement leaked into print despite his precaution and Monday, fearing that it would

stop his school work, he attempted a public denial. Facts were against that course, however, and today he decided to let the announcement stand and have his bride here with him," noted *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Tuesday, February 15, 1916.

"German declares, however, that the wedding was 7:30 o'clock Friday evening and that there was no mid-night escapade as reported," concluded the account.

(James Mann is a local author, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the *Gleanings*.)



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