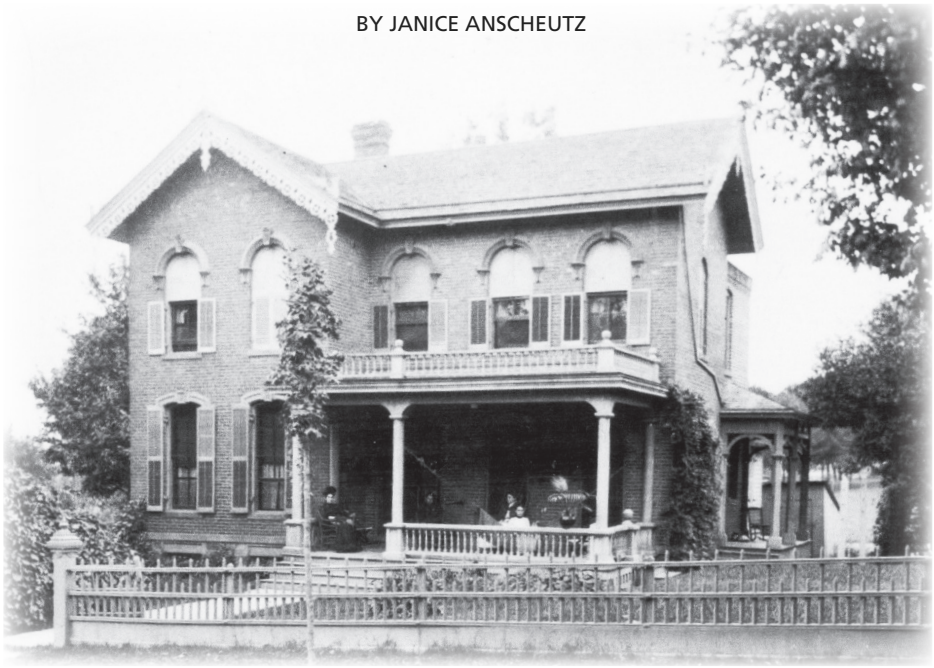
Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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

FALL 2019

Swaine Gingerbread House

BY JANICE ANSCHEUTZ

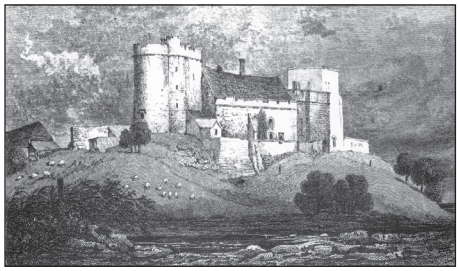


The Swaine House with new Greek Revival style front porch, circa 1900 with Lizzie Swaine and her daughters Florence and Jessie.

When we purchased the Swaine House at 101 East Forest in 1969, we were asked a lot of questions such as *"Are you nuts?"* or more often *"Do you really think that this house can be saved?"* or *"How can you live in that haunted wreck?"* and more along those lines. People who came to visit would just shake their heads if they were polite or they would have some pointed jab as they looked outdoors through a crack in the kitchen wall or tried to flush an antique toilet without any water pressure.

After living here for 50 years and spending many thousands of dollars and hours in restoration of the home and garden, even strangers stop me and wonder if they can tour our home, or ask if we know about the family that built it, or the history of the house. Our house has been given the nickname of ***"The Gingerbread House"*** because of the restored trim. I hope that this article will answer any questions you might have about the history of our home.

It might sound like a fairy tale, but it is a true story. Frederick Swaine, an only child, was left an orphan at one year of age and went to live in a castle in the Romney Marsh area of England, in Kent, owned by his guardian. He was brought up by his mother's cousin, who made sure that he was well educated. When



The Lympne Castle in England where Frederick Swaine grew up.

continued on page 4

In This Issue...

Society Briefs

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK BY BILL NICKELS

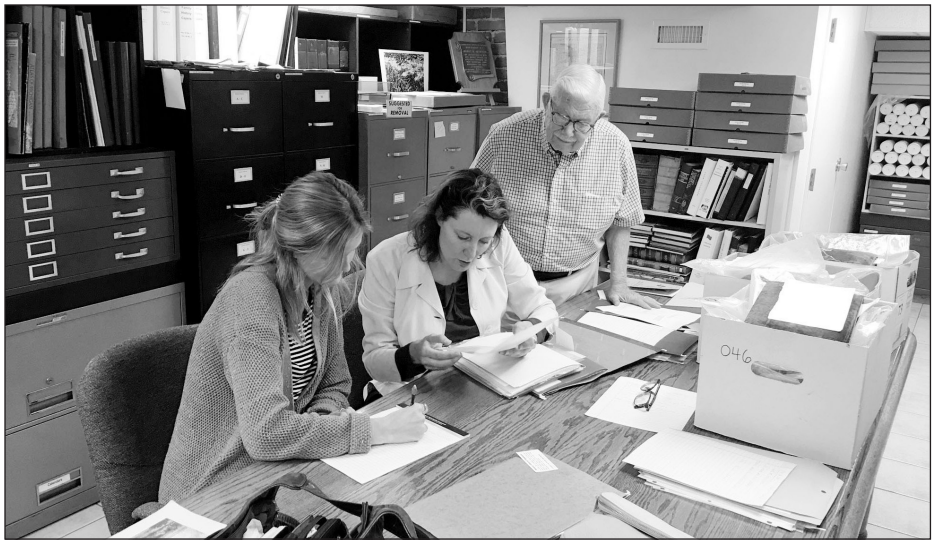
The Ypsilanti Historical Museum & Archives continues to grow as a community resource. For several years, a video production class from Washtenaw Community College has used our museum, as well as the fire and car museum, as a source of topics for student video productions. Stopping by the museum in July, I noticed a woman seated by the side walk with a drawing pad on the chair's arm. Inquiring about her interest in drawing a picture of the museum, she said her entire class from WCC is visiting the museum today. Most of the students were in the museum using displays for their drawings. She elected the front façade as her drawing assignment.

Marcia and Bob McCrary used their carriage pulled by a several horse power lawn tractor in Ypsilanti's 4th of July parade as an Ypsilanti Historical Society entry. It was fun to have us represented in what has become a really nice community parade.

On Saturday evening, July 20th, our country celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Apollo 11's moon landing. Archive Advisory Board Chair Kelly Beatie and Society member Peter Church hosted the watching of NASA's recording of that landing in our Archives theater that evening.

As written about before, author Greg Fournier has used our Archives while researching two of his books. As the author of *Terror in Ypsilanti*, about the Michigan Murders, Greg was contacted by Fox 2 as a consultant for their planned series for the 50th Anniversary of John Norman Collins reign of terror in Ypsilanti. Ray Wolcheck, from Fox 2, used our Archives for his interview of Greg. The broadcast was

Ray Wolcheck, from Fox 2, used our Archives for his interview of Greg Fournier, author of *Terror in Ypsilanti*.



Dr. Anna-Lisa Cox, from Harvard's Hutchin Center for African American Research, viewing our Asher Aray family collection.

part of Fox 2's 10 PM broadcast with 5 to 10 segments shown on July 22, 23, and 24th.

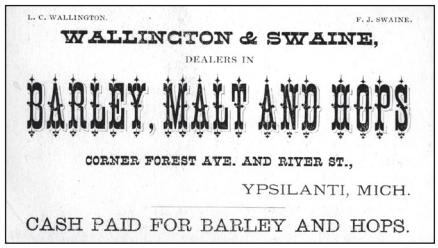
Also in July, our Archives was contacted by Dr. Anna-Lisa Cox, from Harvard's Hutchin Center for African American Research. She asked if she could view our Asher Aray family collection. Asher Aray was a black man who had a farm on Michigan Avenue just west of US 23 and actively participated in the Underground Railroad. Thinking she might be interested in other items in our Black History Collection, all of our materials were displayed for her review. She is an expert at dating old photographs based on dress. Looking at our photograph collection, she found about twenty pre Civil War studio-taken photographs of well-dressed local black families. She said our collection will help conclude that free wealthy black families flourished in the north prior to the Civil War. That understanding is currently controversial. We learned the dates and value of a good portion of the photos in our Black History Collection.

On October 13th, our annual meeting will celebrate Ypsilanti's long beer making history. Marcia McCray will tell the history of Ypsilanti beer making starting in the Nineteenth Century up until today. After the program, all will sample products of our current operating breweries. Formal program announcements will be mailed in September.

Vice-President Al Rudisill, Board of Trustee member Maria Davis and I recently met to update and make our bylaws consistent to practice. Members will soon be asked to review the proposed changes for a vote at our October Annual Meeting.

For the 9th year, Archive volunteer James Mann will continue hosting Friday Night Movies in the Archives. It all starts Friday evening September 6th. Check the Ypsilanti Historical Society Facebook page for program details. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during the last three weeks of October, James will continue his Highland Cemetery Halloween tours starting at 7:00 PM. The family friendly tours visit different historically interesting graves every year.

The YHS has a big pair of shoes to fill with the resignation of Nancy Taylor from the Chair of the Museum Advisory Board and Board of Trustees. Among her many duties she approved and trained new docents, planned new displays with Karen Nickels, scheduled museum maintenance projects, scheduled and staffed the museum for tour groups, filled in for docents, and assumed a docent shift herself. There also is some good news. After a rest and break, she would like to come back and take on some less demanding responsibilities. We will be glad to have her back!


L. C. WALLINGTON. F. J. SWAINE.

WALLINGTON & SWAINE,

DEALERS IN

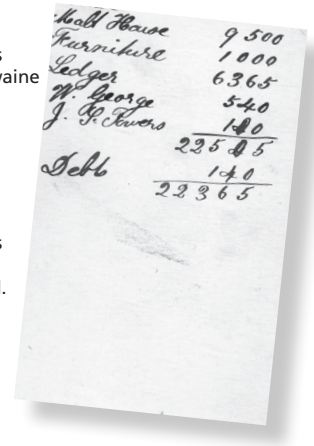
BARLEY, MALT AND HOPS

CORNER FOREST AVE. AND RIVER ST.,

YPSILANTI, MICH.

CASH PAID FOR BARLEY AND HOPS.

Front of Malt House business card before Swaine bought out Wellington.

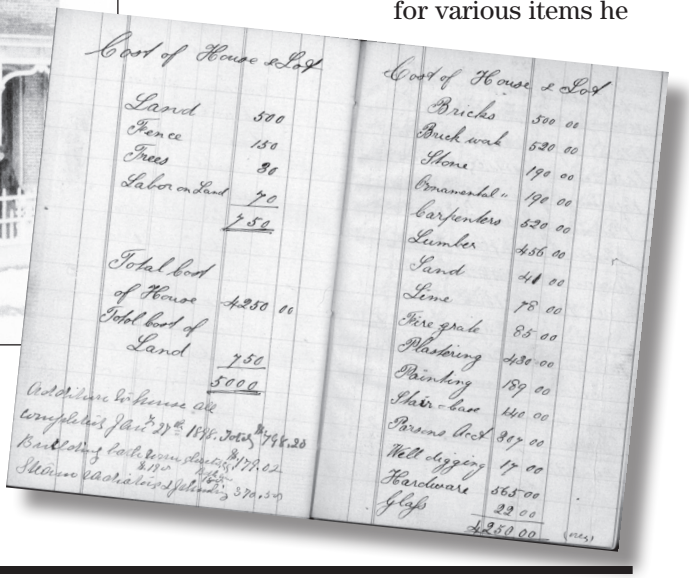

Malt House 9500
Furniture 1000
Ledger 6365
W. George 540
J. P. Towers 180
225 05
Debt 140
223 65

Back of Malt House business card with expenses listed.

Swaine graduated from King's College in London with a classical education, he decided to seek his own fortune and travel to America. He stopped in Ypsilanti to view a malt house run by relatives that he had known in England. Swaine's father and grandfather owned a brewery and were licensed to brew for King George III and Queen Victoria. He liked what he saw and soon purchased the malt house, which had been built from the repurposed Peck Street Primary, from his future brother-in-law, L.C. Wallington and George George, his soon to be father-in-law. Swaine soon after proposed to his second cousin, Lizzie Cary George, and then contracted to have the home built at 101 East Forest. The house was started in 1873, Frederick and Lizzie married in 1874, and the house was finished in 1875, the year that the first of four children was born.

There is much evidence that David Edwards, treasurer of Ypsilanti in 1863, and mayor in 1864 and 1867, was the builder responsible for this Italianate wing and gable style Victorian home. In the 1873 city directory, we find Edwards in partnership with J. H. McKinstry and A. C. Van Cleve as Carpenters and Builders. They were located at the Northeast corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams Streets. More evidence is supplied in an article in the Ypsilanti Press where Swaine's daughter credits Edwards with building the beautiful spiral staircase. Edwards was known to be a high level Mason and ornaments carved in the cement hoods above the windows and doors were pointed out by a visitor as secret symbols depicting a Mason blessing to a house. Furthermore, interior trim and details mirror that of other Ypsilanti homes that Edwards built. Swaine kept records of the expenses of building the house, and we have his little white calfskin notebook where they are recorded along with his investments in the malt house. It seems he paid $9,500 for the business when he purchased it from his in-laws. Under the heading *"Cost of House & Lot"*, he lists the land at $500, fence $150, trees $30, Labor on Land $70, for a total of $750. He continues notations on the next page and adds bricks $500, brick work $520, stone $190, ornamental $190, carpenters $520, lumber $456, sand $41, lime $18, fire grate $85, plastering $430, painting $189, stair-case $140, parson's acct $807 (whatever that is), well digging $17, hardware $565, glass $22, for a total amount of $4,250. On another page he details the price of the 1874 Chickering square grand piano as $450, and furniture and buggy as $1,000. We also have a scrap of paper with more expenses including baskets $20, pillows $52, blankets $80, crockery $26, and linens $8. Swaine sent to England for various items he

Swaine house as originally built with Victorian front porch. Jessie and Florence are sledding with mother and nursemaid watching.


Cost of House & Lot

Land 500
Fence 150
Trees 30
Labor on Land 70
750

Total cost of House 4250 00
Total cost of Land 750
5000

Cost of House & Lot

Bricks 500 00
Brickwork 520 00
Stone 190 00
Ornamental 190 00
Carpenters 520 00
Lumber 456 00
Sand 41 00
Lime 18 00
Fire grate 85 00
Plastering 430 00
Painting 189 00
Stair-case 140 00
Parsons Acct 807 00
Well digging 17 00
Hardware 565 00
Glass 22 00
4250 00

The small book where the Swaines kept track of their expenses.

Parlor with the original fireplace. The charcoal portrait of Frederick Swaine above the fireplace is the one found under the attic floor boards.

Front doors with newel post of the stairs.

had inherited, including silver, china, furniture, and even a marble Roman plaque which had been unearthed on the grounds of Lympne Castle, where he grew up, which is built on the site of a Roman fortress.

The house itself was designed for both comfort and pleasure. The interior walls from the basement to the attic are 4 bricks thick with lathing and plaster which keeps the home cool in summer and warm in winter. The exterior walls are even thicker. Two coal burning fireplaces with vents to distribute warmed air to the upstairs bedrooms, a kitchen stove, and small coal stoves provided heat. The ceilings in the original house are 11 feet high, including the basement ceiling. The staircase is made of black walnut, and baseboards and wood trim are of white pine grained to look like more expensive woods.

On the first floor, there are two parlors with ornamental plaster and ceiling medallions, a kitchen, bedroom, a dining room, and a half bathroom. We purchased all of the furniture left in the home and have restored the square grand piano, and regularly use the Swaine desk, a rocking chair (found in pieces in the wood pile - now intact), the dining room sideboard, kitchen table, dough table, blanket chest, and clothes closet. Upstairs, the house was originally built with three bedrooms, and later a small room, closet, and bathroom were added on when a water system was installed in the city. We purchased from an auction house one of the dressers and have a matching bed which belonged to the oldest daughter, Florence.

One of the most distinctive features of the home is the original cypress wood shutters which still function today and are able to open and close. The stained-glass windows were designed and made by me to add protection to the single paned glass, provide privacy, and add a decorative feature consistent with the house. A large cistern was built in the basement with gutters that directed rain water from the roofs and a well was dug with a well house outside of the kitchen to provide water. In about 1898 city water replaced the well and the need for stored water to be pumped from the cistern.

Frederick and Lizzie were blessed with four children: Florence, Jessie, John and Frederick, but only the girls survived past the age of four and went on to become teachers. They enjoyed travel and gardening, were active church members and were noted for their hospitality and cooking. The oldest, Florence, was also an avid genealogist, historian, and writer, and several of her essays have been published recently in the Gleanings.

After Frederick's death in 1896, the handwriting in the little record book changes to that of his widow. It seems that a new kitchen addition was added to the back of the house and there is evidence that it had once been part of a smaller home located to the north of the Swaine house. The Swaine's house and malt house became Ypsilanti's newly formed electric company's first residential customers and the price of the electrical wiring is noted in the little book. In 1898, not only was there an upstairs addition built which added a bathroom and a small room that the Swaine's referred to as the "lumber room", which is the English term for a storage room, but central steam radiator heating was installed. We have a receipt from M.A. Willis, Plumber, Steam and Gas Fitter, located in the Occidental Hotel Build-

Parlor showing ornamental plaster and original light fixture.

Spiral staircase with original closet.

ing, with a detailed estimate for the work, dated Oct. 6th, 1897. One major change to the home's exterior was that the front porch was "modernized" in the Greek revival manor. Round pillars replaced the original ornate wooden ones. At some point in time pieces of the top gingerbread known as tears and crowns were removed. Finding pieces of the original gingerbread in the Swaine wood box, we had them replicated and installed by a historic preservation carpenter.

The house was also painted and the parlor papered in 1898. There is another notation in the book with the cost of papering and painting work done to the interior in 1913. They left their names and the date written on the parlor wall and were from Cambridge England.

The handwriting again changes as Florence, the oldest daughter writes down the cost of adding a downstairs bathroom and kitchen cupboards in 1923 as well as hardwood floors. Originally, the large parlor had wall-to-wall flowered carpeting with smaller oriental style rugs covering pine floors in other rooms. In 1928, the kitchen exterior addition was plastered over in stucco, the English way of keeping drafts out. The notations end in this little book in 1928 when a new oil burner, water softener, and water heater were added. This notebook and a number of other family papers including Swaine's report cards, bank statements, genealogical information, his father's malt business accounts, and so forth were mailed to us from Pennsylvania by the granddaughter of a family friend who had inherited them. If you want to know more about them you can read the article I wrote in the Gleanings, summer edition, 2016, page 10, "The Surprise Treasure Chest." https://*www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org/publications/sum-*

Kitchen with cast iron stove and original table.

Small parlor fireplace and restored square grand piano.

mer2016.pdf

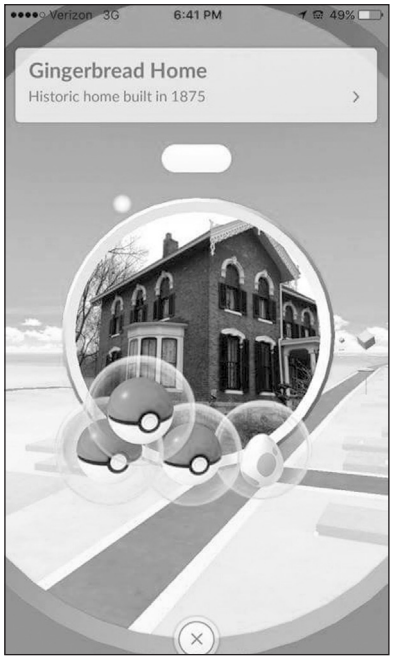
The large garden that exists today is based on the one that Lizzie, Florence and Jessie planted and enjoyed, and is original in its shape to the house. Old roses which they planted still bloom each spring to honor their memory. The malt house was torn down in 1912 and the additional lots sold with two new houses built on them in the early 1920s. The brick wall at the east of the property is the bottom portion of the malt house wall, and the remaining large brick structure is all that exists today of the Peck Street Primary which had been built in 1839 by the original owners of the land. It was the first graded school in Michigan.

Fortunately for the home, we restored as much as we were able to afford and it boasts the original light fixtures, fireplaces and mantels. We found portions of the original fence in the garage and had it replicated. We always respected the integrity of the house rather than try to modernize it. It lay empty for two years without a single sales offer and the plan had been to dismantle it and sell the property just for the land. I spent every summer after we purchased it reviving one of the rooms. Some had as many as 14 layers of paint and wallpaper on the walls. When I was really discouraged, it would seem that the house would give me a present such as digging up a little silver thimble in the garden with the initial "S" on it, or finding a portrait of Frederick Swaine under attic floor boards.

There is still one Swaine family mystery to solve, and perhaps you can help. When we first purchased the house, a friend who was an antique dealer put me in touch with another dealer. She had in her possession a Swaine photo album from around the turn of the century. It showed Florence and Jessie, as young ladies, as well as their friends, sitting on the top of the front porch in Victorian dress, among other pictures which were not the usual studio portraits of the day but snapshots of daily life. The Swaines owned their own camera and the Ypsilanti Historical Museum was willed two photo albums that are now part of the archives. The woman would not allow me to make copies of the pictures or purchase the photo album. I learned two years later that it had been willed to the museum and the woman somehow acquired it when the home was being emptied. I have been searching for it for the past 45 years and although someone told me that he had seen it he couldn't remember where. I have checked with museums and libraries to no avail. If you have any idea where it might be, please contact me through the Ypsilanti Historical Museum archives.

I hope that you enjoyed the information I was able to provide about our well-loved home. I was told that on her death bed, in the same bed and in the same bedroom that she had been born 89 years earlier, Jessie Swaine said *"Please don't let them tear down my home"* and somehow her plea may have reached my heart and instead of tearing it down, we have restored it with love. We also filled it over the years with five children and countless animals. I hope that you will enjoy reading the accompanying article our sons wrote about growing up in the Swaine House, which is also in this issue of The Gleanings.

(Janice Anschuetz is a prolific writer and regular contributor of articles to the Gleanings.)



The Swaine House is a Pokemon stop and they identified it as "The Gingerbread House".

Recent Museum & Archive Acquisitions

The museum and archives receive donated items on a regular basis to add to our collections. It is through these donations that we have a furnished museum and an archive full of research material.

Number	Date Received	Name of Donor	Disposition Date and Initials
HSA-2019-22	06/09/19	J. E. Terrall, Kathleen J. Terrall Campbell	Two Brothers Go To War Book written by J. E. Terrall
HSA-2019-23	7/15/19	Tom Warner	Old Newspapers-various dates
HSA-2019-24	7/16/19	Richard Robb	EMU Programs, Meeting Minutes, Book: Studies in the History of Modern Education
HSA-2019-25	7/11/9	Bobby J. Bowen	Photos of 1947 expansion of Ypsilanti Ford Plant
HSA-2019-26	6//19/19	Derwood Hagen Marcia Hagen Speer	WWII Ration Book
HSA-2019-27	7/31/19	Eric Miller	EMU 1920 Yearbook, Ypsilanti & Ann Arbor Information Books
HSA-2019-28	6/19/19	Nancy Taylor	1933 Normal School Newspaper, Ypsi Song sheet music, 150th Year Alum Directory, 5 Commemorative Plates

Museum Advisory Board Report

BY JIM CURRAN

On August 5th, the Museum Advisory Board elected Jim Curran as the new chair, replacing Nancy Wheeler. Nancy is recovering from a fall, and is also in the process of moving. Thank you Nancy for your many years of service to the Ypsilanti Historical Society. Special thanks to Fofie Pappas for assuming the chair duties before Jim was elected.

The cake that was served at the luncheon.

The Volunteer Luncheon was held July 15th in the museum with 22 volunteers attending. Everyone enjoyed a lunch and friendly conversation. A special thanks to Daneen Zureich, Virginia Davis-Brown and other board members that assisted.

Volunteers enjoying refreshments at the "ThankYou Luncheon".

The Ypsilanti Historical Society is a great place that would not exist without our many volunteers. There's room for more volunteers, please call Lindsay Dascola at the museum 734 482-4990 or Jim Curran 734 646-7235 for more information.

Kathleen Campbell and the "Lace-ers" will again be on the front lawn during the Ypsi Fest, formerly known as the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival, August 23, 24 and 25th. The museum has an extensive display of the equipment and lace samples on the second floor.

The Quilt Show is Sunday, September 8th through Sunday, September 29th during regular museum hours.


Volunteers gathered in the museum kitchen at the luncheon.

Many of the quilts will be for sale. Please check with the person displaying, the museum does not control which quilts will be sold.

The Anschuetz Children: (front row) Kurt; (back row) Robert, Eric, Jennifer and Arlea (circa 1971).

Growing up in the Swaine House

BY ROBERT AND ERIC ANSCHUETZ

Many of us enjoyed having our memories taken back a half a century with the recent news coverage of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. The year 2019 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Anschuetz family's move to the Swaine House, which for our family also brings us back many fond memories that are still as vivid today as they were 50 years ago. In this article, we are going to reminisce with you about what it was like to grow up as children in the Swaine House in Ypsilanti during the 1970s.

When our parents, Robert and Janice Anschuetz, purchased the Swaine House in 1969, we were four-year-old twins. We were joined in the move to our new house by our older sister, Arlea, and our younger sister, Jennifer. A year later, in 1970, our younger brother, Kurt, became the first newborn in the house since it was built in 1875. In fact, to commemorate the event, the Ypsilanti Press came to Beyer hospital and wrote an article about the first baby born in the Swaine House in almost 100 years. Growing up in a Victorian house with a young family of seven was definitely a unique experience. As large as the house seems from the outside, there were only three rooms upstairs originally designed as bedrooms, plus one room downstairs that also served as a bedroom.

An 1880s addition to the house included a full bathroom and another very tiny bedroom that was originally used as a maid's quarters. With our parents and us twins each sharing bedrooms, the other three children were able to have their own bedrooms. The fact that seven family members shared one full bathroom and one half-bath probably seems undoable these days, but we made it work. We were also surrounded in our home by countless pets over the years, including dogs, cats, gerbils, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, rats, pigeons and even ducks in our backyard.

The location of our house at the corner of Forest Avenue and River Street was centrally situated within a short walk to Depot Town, Prospect Park, Findlay Field on Holmes Road, the Highland Cemetery, Frog Island, Riverside Park and the Huron River. These were our childhood play spots,

especially in the endless summers of youth when we would be allowed to go unsupervised while exploring our neighborhood with our siblings and friends. We were only a few blocks from the country, city, woods, or river – it was an ideal location to grow up. We also had a huge yard that provided four seasons of outdoor activities like hide-and-go-seek, tag, running races, slip-n-slide, football, basketball, badminton, croquet, whiffle ball, lawn darts, and even swimming and ice skating.

Looking back, we had an idyllic Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer childhood while growing up in a Norman Rockwell town. It was very different living in a Victorian house, while the rest of our friends mostly lived in post-WWII bungalows and ranch houses. Our teachers at Adams school thought so too, so our house became the destination for several field trips over the years. The Adams school classes walked to our house where our mom entertained our classmates with history lessons, antique demonstrations, and games that were played in the 19th century. Of course, all of this was old hat to us, but our classmates were enthralled. Our mom put the dogs in the basement when the classes came over, and told the kids not to open the basement door. Of course, one year, some child had to peek in the basement and one of the dogs got out of the basement and escaped the house into the side yard. Nobody could catch the escaped dog, and she ended up following our class all the way back to Adams school before our mom was finally able to catch her and bring her home.

Our mom did an excellent job of filling our house with period antiques while still providing modern furniture and accommodations for our young family. The parlor was maintained in the Victorian style, with a secretary, antique chairs and a fainting sofa to

One of the many backyard igloos built by the Anschuetz children.

go along with an ornate fireplace and the original square grand piano that was included in the purchase of the home. An 8-foot wide floor-to-ceiling curtain separated the parlor from the main entrance hall, and this curtain was typically kept closed. Our parents also purchased an old pump organ to place in the parlor, and it fit right in with the rest of the furnishings. Our family used the parlor as it was originally intended – for special occasions and entertaining company. The kids never really took their friends to play in the parlor, even though it was the most spacious room in the house. Our friends always seemed to enjoy coming to our house to play outdoor games in the yard or indoor games in our bedrooms. One thing we had going for us living in a very old house was a full-sized basement and attic. Our friends would love to come over and go down to the musty basement where we had at various times a ping-pong table, a pool table, and large train set. Even more fun was opening the door in one of the upstairs bedrooms that led to a hidden stairway to the attic. The attic had two wings to explore, and more than one séance and Ouija board game was held in the attic, which scared the dickens out of all of us.

When we were about five years old, we thought of a game that could only be played in a 100-year-old house. The room just to the right of the front entryway was used as our family room – it was originally a smaller parlor with a fireplace. The room had two matching doors that led out to the front porch. Each door was actually a pair of double doors separated by about a one-foot space. The outside storm door on the porch side could be replaced in the summer with a screen door. One day, Eric got the bright idea to dare Robert to stand in the narrow gap between the doors while Eric closed both glass doors and locked him between them. Once between the two doors, it was virtually impossible for Robert to even turn his head to the side, much less turn around. Robert remembers the panic suddenly setting in after a couple of seconds, and he started screaming at Eric to open one of the doors. Maybe Eric didn't hear him, maybe he didn't react fast enough, or maybe he was just being mean, but Robert quickly got to the point where he couldn't take it anymore. The next thing he remembers, there was blood all over the place! Robert had smashed his left elbow into the porch-side glass door in order to free himself. We didn't have a second car at the time, so our mom went over to our next-door neighbor, Frank Lidke, and he drove Robert and his mom to the hospital while Frank's wife, Kitty, watched the other children. Robert received seven stitches, and the scars are still visible to this day.

The basement of the Swaine House had stone walls all around the perimeter that were painted white. It was a full basement made up of several different rooms. The room at the bottom of the stairs was used for storage. The room just to the right was converted into a "rec room" in the 1980s by Robert and Eric with the supervision of our mom by installing paneling on the walls. Still further to the right was the laundry room, which also housed the furnace and hot water heater. To the left of the stairs was the last room in the

basement. When we were teenagers, this room housed our sister's brood of Netherland Dwarf rabbits for which she earned numerous ribbons at the annual Washtenaw County 4H Fair. Adjacent to this room was the original cistern to the house, and an entryway from this room led into the crawl space under the kitchen. This room had another novelty: there was a set of double doors that opened up to a stairway that led through a trap door in the side porch and out into the side yard. We hardly ever used this basement staircase, but this became the entry point of many "haunted houses" that we constructed in the basement. Our family always liked to celebrate Halloween to the fullest, so there was no shortage of scary decorations in the attic. We usually set up some kind of maze with walls made of bed sheets to make the haunted house appear longer. We also used a "creepy crawler" toy set to make rubber insects, bats and skeletons out of plastic "goop." The entry to our haunted house in the basement started with a ride on a sled or wagon down the basement steps under the porch. Our siblings and friends would land on a soft mattress at the bottom of the stairs. From there, our shaken guests would be subjected to all sorts of other terrors that we could dream up. We would hide behind dark areas and jump out in front of our victims to further scare them.

The maple trees that the Anschuetz children tapped for syrup.

Our house was originally heated by fireplaces and coal-burning stoves. There is a network of vents that run adjacent to the fireplace flue that connect some of the bedrooms. We used these vents as intercoms to talk to each other from one bedroom to the next, or even from the bedroom all the way down to the basement. In the mid-1970s our parents purchased an old wood-burning stove. In order to vent the smoke out of the house, a contractor rebuilt the stovepipe and chimney on the kitchen. We used our wood-burning stove all the time in the winter to provide heat to the downstairs and humidify the house with a pot of boiling water. The stove could burn either coal or wood, and we had an endless supply of wood from the wood-scraps thrown away at the Michigan Ladder Company down the street on Forest Avenue. Lighting the fire was accomplished by lighting newspapers to establish a draft. Fire-starting was an art that all of us learned to master. It was loads of fun to cook eggs, pancakes, and bacon on the stove. We only used the oven a couple times because it was very difficult to regulate the heat.

The flat roof above the front porch of our house provided a great deal of opportunities for mischief while growing up. In old pictures of the Swaine House, there used to be a railing around the roof so the Swaine family could spend time sunning themselves and socializing. There were no doors

Robert and Janice Anschuetz floating in the backyard pool in the 1970s.

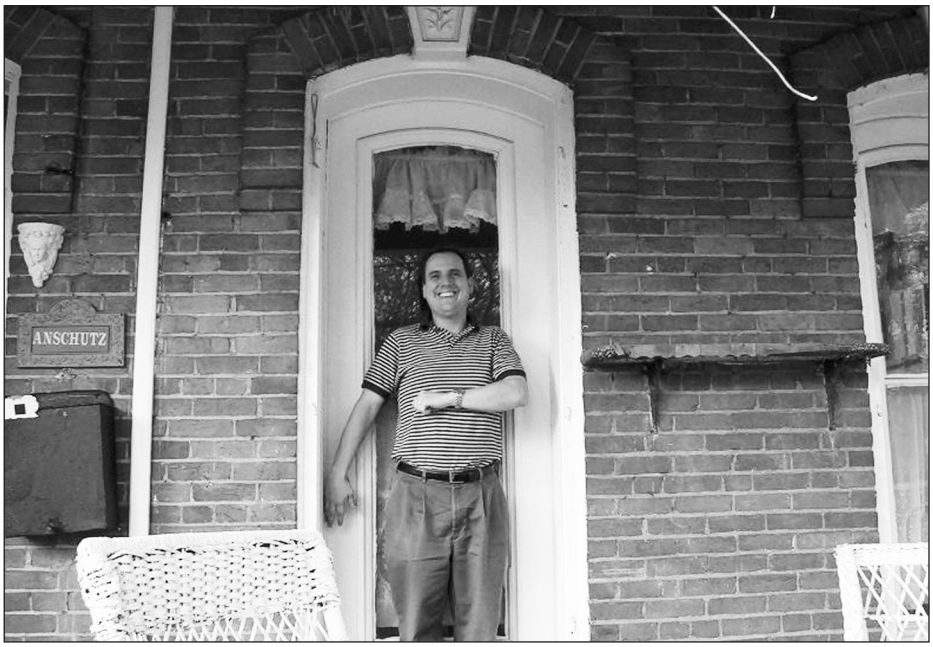
leading out to the roof, so the only way to get to the roof was to climb through the windows of the bedroom and upstairs landing hall that led directly out to the porch roof. Of course, climbing out windows directly onto the porch roof would have been too easy for us. So we sometimes crawled out another bedroom window that wasn't above the porch, where we grabbed onto the trumpet vines clinging to the front of the house, and these would be used to provide something to hang onto while climbing like Spiderman on the front of the house over to the front porch roof. From the porch, we would sometimes shimmy down the rain gutter to the ground. We never had to worry about escaping our second story in case of a house fire - we did it all the time! On one occasion, we were on the front porch roof and started eyeing the possibility of jumping about 15 feet off the side to the ground below. It took a lot of contemplation, but Robert and Jennifer decided to give it a try – Eric never mustered the courage despite spending minutes at a time perched at the edge. There was a bone-jarring thud as we reached the ground below.

When we first moved to the Swaine House, the three oldest Anschuetz children were given "scooters," which were like sleds with wheels. The scooters were made out of red plastic and had yellow handlebars for steering. The scooters had really small wheels – sort of like miniature shopping-cart wheels. We would walk our scooters up the hill on Forest Avenue in front of our house. Sometimes, we would hold onto the leash of our Alaskan Malamute dog, Suzy, and she would pull us up the hill like we were riding on a dogsled. From there, we would start at the mailbox at the corner of Dwight Street and lie down on the scooters to go head first down the Forest Avenue hill down to River Street. Every crack in the side-

walk was felt with a jar in the scooter. Braking at the bottom of the hill was accomplished by dragging our rear toes on the sidewalk. We quickly progressed from scooters to bikes. Not long after we learned to ride bikes, Robert got into a bad accident coming down that hill that provided him with a gap-toothed smile from about age four to age six. At the intersection of the Forest Avenue and River Street sidewalks, there has always been a large bush, which is still there to this day. Our older sister, Arlea, was riding her bike on River Street toward the intersection and Robert was riding his bike down the hill on Forest Avenue toward the intersection. The bush provided concealment so they couldn't see each other, and the result was a big crash at the intersection that sent Robert flying face-first from his bike and onto the sidewalk. The result was a missing front tooth, bloody gums, and a punctured lip. Robert's 1st grade school photograph bears witness to the missing tooth from the accident.

One of our favorite activities in our pre-teen years was jumping ramps on our bikes. The slope of Forest Avenue in front of our house made for a perfect run-up in which to gain sufficient speed in order to make a long jump. At this time, Evel Knievel was a celebrity for his daring motorcycle jumps, and we wanted to be just like him. We would place a couple of bricks on the sidewalk and use a board as a ramp. We would race down the hill, hit the ramp squarely in the middle, and fly the incredible distance of five feet or so. We would then slam on the foot-pedal brakes and make a long black rubber streak on the sidewalk as we skidded to a halt. One day, our younger brother, Kurt, decided to try ramp-jumping with his bicycle. We had a Detroit Lions football helmet that was large enough to be worn by an adult, but we thought that it might offer some protection in case of an accident. We didn't take into account the fact that the oversized helmet would cover Kurt's eyes and he would essentially be jumping the ramp blind! We both watched in anticipation as Kurt sped down the hill. As he gained speed, the helmet predictably jostled forward and covered his eyes. The next thing we knew, Kurt hit the ramp at a bad angle and fell off both the ramp and the bike. Kurt ran inside the house and our mom was mad at us for allowing our young brother to try such a stunt.

The Anschuetz family went through "above ground" pools like most families go through paper plates. Every spring, or at least it seems, we would rush out to K-Mart and buy a new 3-foot high and 15-foot diameter above-ground pool. We would assemble the pool during the day, put in the hose at night, and the next morning treat ourselves to a refreshing swim. The pools always provided hours of entertainment during the hot summers. Unfortunately, winter always came too quickly and we did not have the same enthusiasm to drain and disassemble the pool in preparation for the winter. The pool liner would inevitably get brittle and crack during the winter. In fact, we distinctly remember ice skating on the frozen pool surface and slashing the vinyl with our sharp ice skate blades. Our parents were good sports and always seemed ready to buy a new pool the next spring. One year, we decided to make an in-ground pool out of a pool that was supposed to be installed above the ground. We carefully measured the 15-foot diameter and began digging. We dug, and dug, and dug, for many days. It was a lot of work to dig a 3-foot hole with a 15-foot diameter. Once the hole was finished, we assembled the pool which fit into the hole perfectly. We backfilled the dirt and filled up the pool, and the pool only protruded about a foot above the level earth. We took special care of that pool and we believe that it lasted at least two years. The pool was smack in the middle of our mom's vegetable garden, and it was a little bit strange to swim in the cornfield and other vegetables growing around the pool.



Robert reinacts being locked between the storm doors - the outermost door was removed in this picture.

The fall season was always enjoyable with cooler weather and beautiful changes of colors of the leaves. Our property is blessed with several 100-year-old sugar maples lining both Forest Avenue and River Street. There are also several additional sugar maples in our backyard "woods" lining the driveway leading to the garage. In these woods, there were mostly more sugar maples, but also box elders, elms, mulberry, and walnut trees, plus a very old and large apple tree. The apple tree was the largest apple tree either of us have ever seen, but every single apple seemed to be worm-infested so we never were able to enjoy the fruit. The apple tree succumbed to illness in the 1990's. In the front of the house, we had two very interesting and prominent trees – a Camperdown elm and a Japanese maple. The Winter 2012 issue of the Gleanings talks about our Camperdown elm tree and the fun we had climbing it. (See *https:/www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org/publications/winter2012.pdf.)*

Through the years, Robert and Eric constructed several tree houses in the maples and box elders near the back driveway. The tree houses weren't elaborate or too high off the ground, but they were fun places to spend time with our siblings and friends. In the fall, we did our best to join in on the leaf-raking chores with our dad. Actually, it was quite fun to grab a rake and listen to a Michigan football game and see the progress being made on an immense job. We would rake the leaves into several huge piles in the yard, then place them into cardboard boxes and cart the leaves into huge piles to the street. Our leaf dumping ground was along River Street, and we would literally have a mound about six feet tall stretching the length of our long property along the street. Every once in a while, we would gather up a really large pile of leaves near our swing set and we would climb the ladder to the top of the slide and dive into the pile of leaves. We also would bury each other in a huge pile of leaves to see how long we could stand it. We can still remember the sweet but musty smell of the leaves as if it were yesterday.

We knew growing up that sugar maples were the source of maple syrup. The sap from sugar maples runs in the springtime, and Michigan woodsmen have tapped the trees for years to produce pure maple sugar. One year in the late 1970s or early 1980s, our mom bought some tree-tapping

spikes at the Farm Bureau, which was located near the river on Forest Avenue. These hollow metal spikes could be driven into the maple trees to extract sap from them. We were hoping that our family could go through the learning process of making our very own maple syrup. We got about 10 spikes, and hammered them into the trees and hung plastic and metal buckets from the spikes to collect the sap. The day after we hung up the buckets, we checked them for sap and, sure enough, a couple of the buckets were already half full. As the sap filled the buckets, our family poured them into a much larger repository – possibly an old washtub. The raw sap was clear in color and weak in taste and smell, and it wasn't anything that could be poured onto pancakes in a raw form. The process of boiling the sap into syrup was the next step. Our mom got all the burners going on our wood-burning cast-iron stove in the kitchen, and we started boiling down the sap. It didn't take long until our 10 or so gallons of sap boiled down into one small syrup bottle. We tasted the resulting syrup and it really didn't taste very good. Perhaps we either boiled it down too much, or maybe not enough. All that work and not even a small bottle of good syrup resulted from it! We took some of the syrup and poured it into the last remains of springtime snow to make snow candy out of it. We eventually finished the syrup, but we never bothered to make homemade syrup again.

The Anschuetz kids built at least one snowman each winter – usually with the first snowfall. We would always build them in the front yard, using up all of the snow available. We were experts at determining when the snow was perfect for making snowmen. We decorated the snowmen with scarves, broomsticks, eyes, hats and other accessories. By the time that we were in middle school and high school, we had mastered the art of sledding down the Four Hills in Riverside Park and we were looking for a new winter-time activity. We had built our share of snow forts and had plenty of snowball fights, and we even built skating rinks in our back yard. We never thought of building igloos until one of our friends showed us how to do so by piling a lot of snow up in a big mound, and then simply digging out the inside. After a big snowfall, we would pile a huge mound of snow and would start digging out the snow to make a small entrance into the igloo. After some digging, we were able to crawl inside a bit and start shoveling out the snow with our hands. After less than an hour, the entrance hole was big enough for one of us to go inside and start digging more of the walls out in order to enlarge the hole. Many times, our igloos were built big enough for us to stand up inside. Our igloos would last for over a month in the cold Michigan winters.

Looking back, our family had a lot of fun growing up in the Swaine house. The experiences of the young, vibrant family living there could not have contrasted more from those of its previous owner, 89-year-old Jessie Swaine, who lived alone in what had become a quiet old house. However, our growing family made use of the house in the way it was intended to be used–just as it was when it became home to the Swaine family in the 1870s and its own young children played host to many cousins living down the street. For the Anschuetz family children, the Swaine house at the corner of Forest Avenue and River Street will always be the source of great memories of experiences that helped shape us as adults. As we now commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our family's residence there, we'd also like to think that the history we lived out in the Swaine house left an imprint on it that is not unworthy of the vitality and accomplishments of its founding Swaine family.

(The Anschuetz brothers, Robert and Eric, are regular contributors to the Gleanings.)

Sergeant Alvin York, an American hero during the first World War.

The Day Sergeant Alvin York Came to Ypsilanti

BY JAMES MANN

Sergeant Alvin York was an American hero of the First World War. A native of Tennessee he served in the army during the First World War and received a Congressional Medal of Honor for action during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. He came to Ypsilanti on Tuesday, November 17, 1919, to use his fame to improve the lives of others. He was a hero in more ways than one.

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, in October of 1918, then corporal York was one of seventeen men assigned to infiltrate German lines and silence enemy machine gun positions. As his Medal of Honor citation reads: *"After his platoon suffered heavy casualties and three other noncommissioned officers had become causalities, Cpl. York assumed command. Fearlessly leading seven men, he charged with great daring a machine gun nest, which was pouring deadly and incessant fire upon his platoon. In this heroic feat the machine gun nest was taken together with four officers, 128 men, and several guns."*

Later York told Brigadier General Julian Robert Lindsay *"A higher power than man guided and watched over me and told me what to do."* To this General Lindsay said, *"York, you are right."*

On his return to the United States and discharge from the Army, York was offered many ways to profit from his fame, including an offer to appear for $1,000 a night for thirty days in a show and $50,000 for a movie deal, but turned all of these down. Instead, he used his fame to improve the lives of others. This is why he was in Ypsilanti.

York was a speaking tour to raise funds for the Alvin C. York Foundation, for a school to be established in Tennessee. The talk was under the auspices to the Rotary club. At 8:00 pm, Monday, November 17, 1919, Prof. Charles Holt introduced York to a capacity audience at Pease Auditorium. In his opening remarks, Prof. Holt said York was a double hero, a

hero on the battlefield and a hero to the people of Tennessee. *"Great applause greeted the tall athletic, sandy-haired, calm, soldier, from the mountains that had done such havoc among the Germans,"* reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Tuesday, November 18, 1919. *"There's no use of my telling you that I'm not an educated man,"* said York in his pleasant southern accent.

York began his talk with a short sketch of his time overseas, and the action that brought him fame. This was a subject he really did not like to talk about. He spent most of his time asking for support for the Alvin C. York Foundation with the mission of increasing educational opportunities in his native region of Tennessee. *"The boys and girls of my section are Americans of the truest type and are entitled to the advantages of other children,"* said York. *"Give them a chance. They never get a chance to go to school over three months in the year and they are pleading for a chance in the schools."*

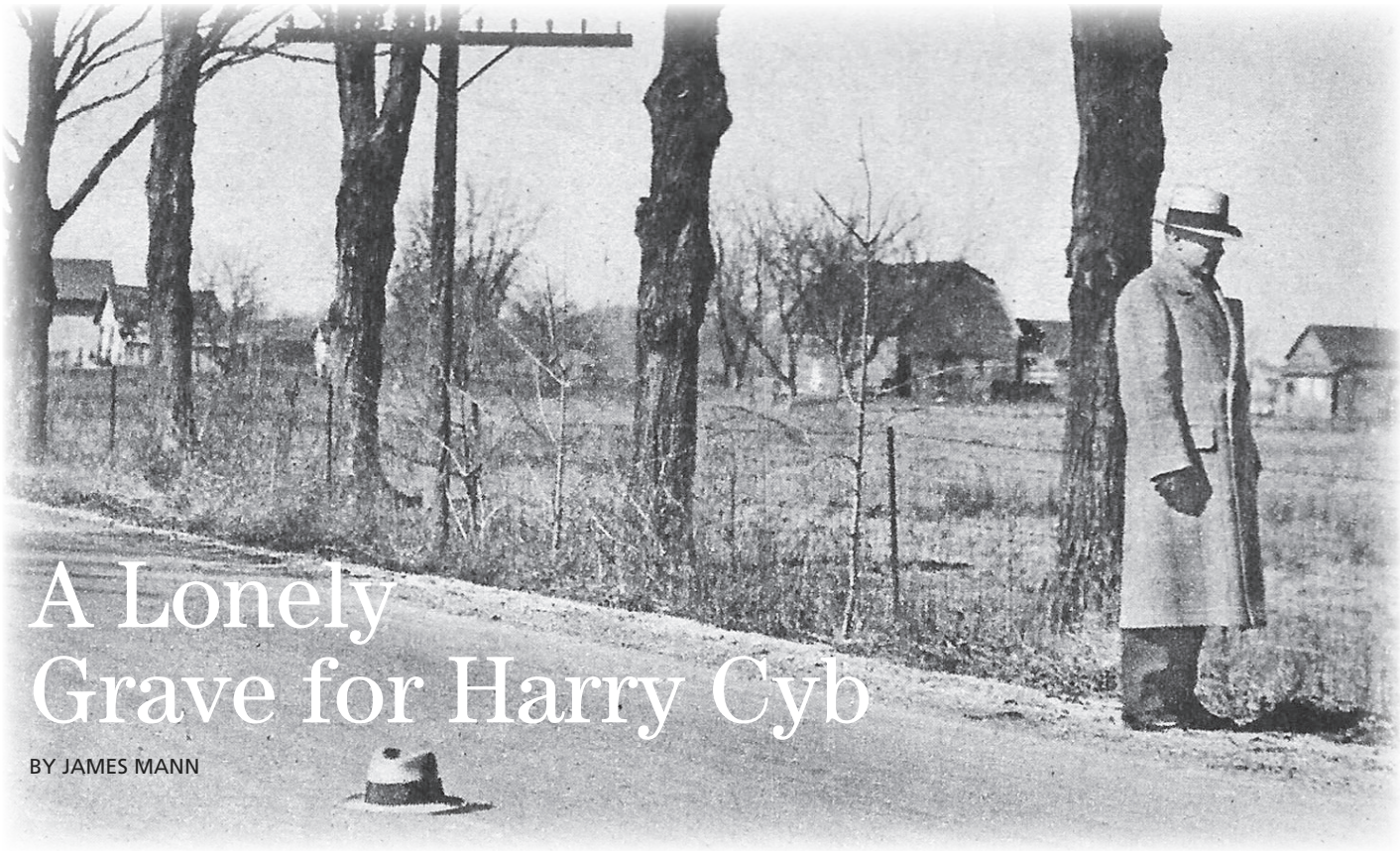
As his Medal of Honor citation reads: *"After his platoon suffered heavy casualties and three other noncommissioned officers had become causalities, Cpl. York assumed command. Fearlessly leading seven men, he charged with great daring a machine gun nest, which was pouring deadly and incessant fire upon his platoon. In this heroic feat the machine gun nest was taken together with four officers, 128 men, and several guns."*

"The Rotary club is sending me out, paying me only my expenses, to help raise the sum of $300,000 for these boys and girls that need this help so much and long for the opportunity to have the better things of life. There are two million people living in these mountains where my home is, and every one of them is of pure American stock, living in houses, some of them just as they were 150 years ago when their ancestors first entered that region."

York explained the reason he turned down the offers of further fame and fortune with the statement, *"I have a little book that I carried all thru the war with me, and it says," "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"*

Sergeant Alvin York was a true hero in more ways than one.

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



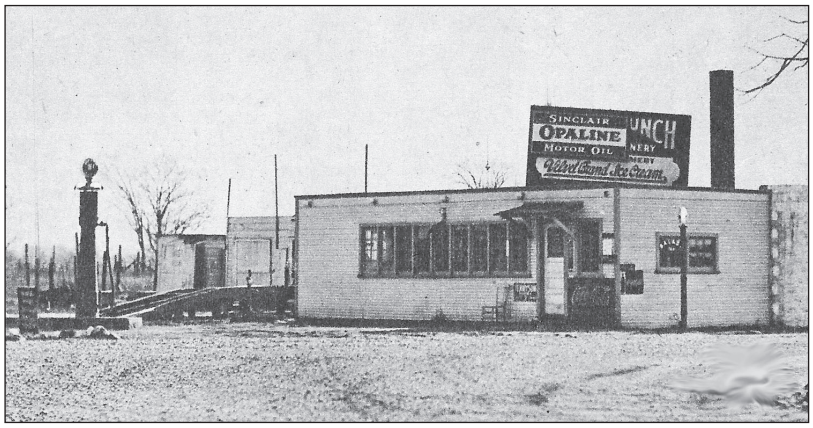
A Lonely Grave for Harry Cyb

BY JAMES MANN

Sergeant Ernest Klavitter looking at the ditch where he found the unconscious form of Harry Cyb. The hat marks the spot on the road where the pool of blood caught the attention of the officers searching the road.

The Lincoln Consolidated School in Augusta Township stands on the Northwest corner of Whittaker and Willis Road. Located on the Southeast corner on September 18, 1925, was the store and gasoline station owned by Harry Cyb, who was then 35 years of age. The building was also home to Cyb, his wife Mary, and their five children. Cyb, who was Austrian, had owned the store only a short time. In the short time he had owned the store, he had been robbed once or twice, and Cyb had told police he suspected two men named Crossie.

At about 10 pm. of Friday, September 18, 1925, Harry went in his house by the side door, to lie on the bed. His wife Mary sat nearby sewing a dress for their little girl. Mary looked out the kitchen door and saw two cars in the yard. She could see two men in the first car and one man in the second. One of the men in the car asked for Harry. He said he wanted gasoline. Mary told Harry someone wanted gasoline. Harry got up from the bed and walked through the store to wait on the man. Once the tank was filled with gasoline, the man asked for oil.



The gas station operated by Harry Cyb in September of 1925 when he was the victim of a hammer attack.

Looking through the window in the door leading from the house to the store, Mary saw Harry prepare an ice cream soda for a man she knew only as 'the Lord boy.' This was Robert Lord, a student at the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University. Lord was employed at a gas station at 15 East Cross Street in Ypsilanti, and lived four miles south of Ypsilanti on Whittaker Road.

Lord later said he arrived at the store at about 10:35 pm. and talked with Harry for about five minutes. Then Harry went out long enough to put oil in the men's car. Harry then went into the store with an empty oil bottle to fill it. Harry talked with Lord for four or five minutes and then went outside. *"The first noise I heard,"* said Lord later, *"was that of the car starting. I noticed it because the driver stepped on it three or four times before it started and because it made a distinctive noise. I was leaning against the counter at the back of the room*

and I could see the windshield, part of the hood, and the front seat from where I stood. There were two men in the front seat. I couldn't see anybody else."

Two or three minutes after the car had been driven away Lord went outside. He saw an empty oil bottle to the left of where the car had been, and a small spot of blood near the bottle. To the right of where the car had been was a larger spot of blood. Lord tapped on the window of the house to tell Mary something was wrong, Harry was missing. Lord, Mary and the five Cyb children rushed to the nearby home of Washtenaw County Deputy Sheriff , I. M. Yoder. Because Yoder did not have a telephone, he, Mary, Lord and the five Cyb children crowded into his car and drove east to the village of Willis. At Willis Yoder had E. J. Dexter notify the police in Ypsilanti and Detroit and the Michigan State Police in Wayne. Yoder then tried to follow the car, thinking the men were driving to Detroit.

At Ypsilanti the call was received by Officer Ernest Klavitter, who at once summoned Washtenaw County Undersheriff Dick Elliott because the case was outside the limits of the city. Elliott received the call at 11:20 pm, and at once left for the store near Lincoln Consolidated School with Klavitter and Officer Herman Oltersdorf. On their arrival at the store, they saw the two spots of blood. Then they drove to the village of Willis since that was where the call had come from. As they drove to Willis they saw a large dark spot in the road but did not stop to investigate. At Willis they were told by Dexter that police in Belleville and Wayne had been called. They were also informed that Officers Krimmel and Erwin of the Michigan State Police were working on the case.

Now Elliott, Klavitter and Oltersdorf began the ride back to the store, but this time stopped to investigate the dark spot in the road. The men found the spot with their flashlights and followed a trail of spots to the side of the road. There they found Harry Cyb, alive, but unconsciousness. Cyb was rushed to Beyer Hospital in Ypsilanti and the men waited to see if he would regain consciousness. After a time, the men returned to the store by Lincoln Consolidated School. Cyb never did regain consciousness and died at 9:30 in the morning. The cause of death was a blow to the head. Police later concluded that someone had struck Cyb over the head with a blunt object while he was pouring oil into the engine of a car. Then they dragged the unconscious Cyb into the car and drove off with him.

When Elliott, Klavitter and Oltersdorf arrived at the store, they found Officer Erwin of the Michigan State Police there. Erwin had just taken Herman Crossie into custody. Erwin had been driving on Willis Road when he saw Crossie walking toward where the body of Cyb had been found. When Erwin slowed his car, Crossie paused, then went over to the car and told Erwin he was going to Ypsilanti. *"You're crazy,"* said Erwin, and told Crossie he was going in the wrong direction. Erwin told Crossie to get in the car and he would give him a ride to Ypsilanti. As Crossie got in the car Erwin noted that Crossie was partially intoxicated. As Crossie got in the car Erwin also noted blood stains on his right cheek and little finger. The stains appeared to Erwin to be about two hours old. Crossie's right hand also appeared to be hurt. When Erwin asked about his hand, Crossie said he had been cutting corn for his mother. Crossie added that he had cut 20 shocks. When asked about the blood on his clothing, Herman Crossie said he had been in a fight, but did not say who with.

Herman Crossie was known to the police as he had been arrested on June 3, 1924 for violation of the Prohibition law. He was found guilty in Circuit Court and fined. He was also suspected of stealing chickens but the evidence was insufficient. Elliott left Crossie at the store in the custody of Oltersdorf and with Klavitter and Erwin went to the Crossie home. There they found

Deputy Sheriff E. Lynn Squires holding the hammer that struck the lethal blow to Harry Cyb.

Owen Lidke sitting in his car in front of the house. The officers found blood spots on Lidke's clothing. He was not intoxicated.

The Officers asked where William Crossie, the brother of Herman was, and were told he was in the house. At the house a woman answered the door and asked what they wanted. A few seconds later William Crossie came to the door, fully dressed, and very drunk. The officers noted there appeared to be blood stains on his clothing. When Crossie was asked where his car was, he said he did not know. He added that he had been driving. At this time it was pointed out that if he had been driving his ca, he should know where it was. To this Crossie said he would take them to the car. Crossie took the men to the car which was in a ditch on the county line. Crossie sang all the way to where the car was. The officers found blood on the left fender and on the left rear curtain of the car. There was wet sand on the running board as well. William explained that his brother Herman was driving and while trying to turn around he went into the ditch.

Now the officers drove Crossie, and most likely Lidke, to the store near Lincoln Consolidated school. William sang as they traveled down the road toward the school but as they approached the spot where the body of Cyb was found, William stopped singing. He was quiet when they approached the site where the body was found. As the car was slowed as it neared the spot where the body of Cyb was found, Crossie all but stood up in his seat to look north where the body had been left. Not once did any of the three men ask why they were being taken into custody. The three men, William and Herman Crossie and Owen Lidke were housed in the Washtenaw County jail.

The body of Harry Cyb was returned to the family home at the store where it remained until Tuesday, September 22, 1925, when Cyb was buried in St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery on River Street in Ypsilanti. Mary Cyb remained at the store for a time but realized she would be unable to continue the business as she had little understanding of English. Not long after the funeral she began the effort to find someone to rent or sell the store to.

The examination of William and Herman Crossie and Owen Lidke, charged with the first degree murder of Harry Cyb, opened before Justice D. Z. Curtiss in the Municipal Court of the city of Ypsilanti on the evening of Thursday, October 1, 1925. The court was held in the City Hall of Ypsilanti, then in the Second Empire style house at 304 North Huron Street. At least a thousand people crowded the lower floor of the building filling the court room to capacity. Outside the building people milled about yard.

A question that went about those gathered was, *"Will the Crossies get out of it?"* For those who lived in and around the village of Willis, the reply was, *"The law may let them out of it, but they won't get far."* The first official act of the proceedings was the censure of Luis Burk, attorney for the Crossies for being late. Justice Curtiss demanded the examination be conducted in a businesslike manner. The first witness called to testify was Mary Cyb, the widow of Harry. She spent an hour and a half answering questions asked in a language she could barely understand. Question by question she retold the events of that night. *"And so she told her story, over and over again,"* noted *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Friday, October 2, 1925, *"until at last all three attorneys were satisfied, and she was allowed to leave the witness stand to stand with the crowds along the wall for nearly another hour before the case was finally adjourned for the night."* Her testimony was followed by others including that of Undersheriff Dick Elliott.

The examination resumed the next afternoon, Friday, October 2, 1925, and again many came to see the proceedings. *"The hall and rooms of the lower floor of the city hall where the examination was held were jammed with townspeople who crowded to hear what was being said and at the end fought to gain a glimpse of the accused men. Considerable difficulty was encountered by Justice Curtiss in quieting observers crowding the court room. By means of a step ladder a group of boys unable to get within hearing in the crowd climbed to the sill of an outside window and watched the proceeding from there,"* reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Saturday, October 3, 1925.

At the start of the proceedings Undersheriff Elliott was to be called to continue his testimony, when Herbert W. Emerson of the University of Michigan arrived with the results of tests on the stains of the shirts of the accused men. The stains on the shirts where blood, said Dr. Emerson. The stain on the fender of the car did not prove to be blood but, continued Dr. Emerson; he did not prove the stain was not blood. When Dr. Emerson was finished, Undersheriff Elliott resumed his testimony about the events of the

The grave of Harry Cyb is at the rear of St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery on River Street in Ypsilanti. It is up against the fence and overgrown with bushes.

night of the murder. He further told of placing a shoe of Herman Crossie onto a footprint found near where the body of Cyb had been. The shoe fit the print exactly, said Elliott. The shoe, he continued, was tried in several of the footprints. None of the shoes of the officers would have fit the print, added Elliott.

The defense began the presentation of its case on Saturday, October 3, 1925, and called Florence Richardson to the stand. She had been riding in the front seat of a sedan as it turned the corner of the store and was within a few feet of the site. *"She told how as she rode by she saw a large open car standing at the filling station with Harry Cyb bending over the motor as if to pour in oil. Outlined against the light of the gasoline pump she saw the head and hand, lifted as through to strike a blow of a man of small stature whom could not be recognized. The man was standing on the running board leaning over Harry Cyb, she testified,"* reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Monday, October 5, 1925. The car, she said had a dark colored body but she could not be sure of the color. *"She was familiar with the Crossie car, she admitted, but she could not say that the car at the filling station was the same size,"* noted the account. *"I have known the Crossies for two or three years,"* testified Richardson, *"and seen them often." "Do you recognize any of these men as the man you saw at the filling station?"* she was asked. *"No." "Do you recognize anybody in the room as such?" "No."* She had never seen Owen Lidke before the trial, she said. The proceedings were concluded on the evening of October 8, 1925.

"This case has been given an exhaustive inquiry," said Justice Curtiss. *"The defendants have elected, as is their right, not to take the stand. The sheriff has made a thorough investigation and the crime is still unsolved. There have been, to my mind, sufficient developments to indicate that these defendants might have committed this crime and I am not willing to take the responsibility of dismissing the case, but will hold the men to Circuit Court."* Rumors were going about Augusta Township by the end of January of 1926 that Washtenaw County Prosecutor William Laid was contemplated a motion of nolle prosequi. That is, not to proceed with the case. Laird, it was said, was reluctant to put the county to the expense of a trial, as he felt the evidence was insufficient for a conviction. The great weakness of the case was the inability of the prosecution to place the three accused men at the scene of the crime at the time it was committed. Witnesses who said the three were trying to pull their car out of a ditch at the time of the murder were questioned, but would not change their story.

A petition was circulated among the residents of Augusta Township requesting the assistance of Michigan Attorney General Andrew B. Dougherty and was signed by over 200 residents. The residents accused Laird of being lax in handling of the case. A delegation of 14 residents, including members of the township board, arrived in Lansing on Tuesday, February 2, 1926, to present the petition to Dougherty. The delegation did not meet with Dougherty, as he had unexpectedly been called away. Instead, the delegation had a meeting with a deputy. The delegation was assured by the deputy that a representative of the Attorney General's department would be sent to Washtenaw County to investigate the case at once.

Assistance Attorney General Fred Warner arrived in Ann Arbor on Friday, February 5, 1926, to study all of the facts concerning the case. Warner conferred with Laird and Undersheriff Dick Elliott and went over the stenographic reports of the preliminary hearing. He was informed of additional evidence that had been uncovered since the hearing. He also paid a visit to the scene of the crime. When he had completed his investigation Warner returned to Lansing to make his report to Deputy Attorney General Clare Retan. The Attorney General could make one of three choices. He could order Laird to proceed with the case, send an attorney from his office in Lansing to prosecute the case in place of Laird, or call for a one-man grand jury.

Laird received a letter from Retan on

Friday, February 12, 1926, ordering him to proceed with the case. The letter informed Laird the *"attorney general's department has found there is reasonable cause to believe the prisoners are guilty and the facts should be submitted to a jury as soon as possible."* Laird responded with a letter of his own on Saturday, February 13, 1926. Laird wrote*: "In reference to your letter of February 11 regarding the above cause, it appears that Mr. Warner has not reported to you the attitude of this office in respect to the trial of these men. I endeavored to make it plain to him at our conference last week that I did not believe the character of the evidence now available is sufficient to warrant a trial of these men at this time and that I would not try them until I am satisfied that we have enough facts to justify the submission of the same to a jury. I have come to the conclusion after having spent the best part of the ten days immediately following the commission of the offense in investigating this case and after having personally examined all of the witnesses with but a few exceptions who had any knowledge bearing on the subject and with a full knowledge of all the facts which have been brought to light by reason of the investigation made. I have given this matter careful and deliberate consideration and I feel that on account of the character of the evidence now available I would not be justified in assuming the responsibility of asking the people of the county to stand the burden of such a trial at this time. I also appreciate a certain amount of local prejudice and public hatred against the respondents has been voiced in one section of our county, but local prejudice is not proof of guilt nor is public hatred a standard by which the innocence or guilt of an accused can be determined. As I have already stated to Mr. Warner in view of the fact that your office is thoroughly familiar with the evidence and as you feel that under the circumstance these respondents should be tried immediately. I have no objection, if your office wants to assume the responsibility of trying these men at this time. If you do, I am sure that the sheriff's department and the prosecutor's office will be glad to co-operate with you and will render every possible assistance."*

In response to the letter Dougherty sent a letter to Laird on Thursday, February 18, 1926, ordering him to proceed with the trial of the Crosses and Lidke, or face proceedings to remove him from the office of prosecutor. *"The prosecutor should not usurp the province of a jury,"* wrote Dougherty. *"A conviction can very seldom be guaranteed but that is no reason for not presenting proper cases to a jury for their determination. The duty of law enforcing officers to protect the lives and property of people in the State is greater than their duty to make a record for convictions." "We regret therefore, that you assume the attitude you do,"* continued Dougherty, *"but must insist on this case being brought to trial as soon as possible. Two of the respondents have already rested in jail several months. If all the facts are properly presented, to a jury, we believe conviction may be secured."*

"Should you continue in your refusal to bring the case to trial there is only one course left open to this department and that is to make an application to the governor for your removal from office. We trust it will not be necessary for us to pursue that course." Laird responded to Dougherty on February 19, 1926. *"In view of the fact that you have assumed responsibility of insisting that the case against these men be brought on at once, the trial of the first of these respondents will begin upon the return of his counsel from California. I have been informed this will be in about ten days or two weeks."*

As Laird believed he had the strongest case against Herman Crossie, he chose to prosecute him first. The trial was set for the March term. There was keen interest in the case, most notably in Augusta Township where many feared the Crossies, and what might happen if they were released. Some who might have taken the stand against them were too frightened to do so. *"A jury may free those men: perhaps the facts won't be strong enough to secure a conviction,"* said an unidentified resident of Augusta Township to *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Saturday February 20, 1926. *"In that case those of us who have been fighting for a trial can expect trouble with them when they are released. We've all had trouble with them before. Most of us think they are guilty: otherwise we have gone to the trouble of asking the state to prosecute the case when we understood the county prosecutor was going to nolle posse it. But we aren't anxious to go through Harry Cyb's experience."*

Witnesses were called including Robert Lord, who testified to the events of the night of the murder. The widow of Harry Cyb, who had moved to Detroit, returned to retell her version of that night. The officers who investigated the case recounted the events as well, much as they had at the preliminary hearing. Some of the witnesses could not be found for the trial, so their testimony from the preliminary hearing was read into the record. The wife of William Crossie was called to the stand, and told of the visit of Owen Lidke and Herman Crossie to the farm on the night Cyb was murdered. The men told her they were going to get beer, and drove off in William's car. When the men returned they had been drinking and were partly intoxicated. She said she was asleep when they returned and did not know the time.

The next witness was Owen Lidke. *"As he experiences difficulty in hearing,"* reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of Wednesday, March 17, 1926, *"attorneys were obliged to stand over him and shout to make questions heard."* Lidke said he had seen Herman Crossie before but did not know him. Herman asked Lidke to drive him to his mother's farm ten miles south of Ypsilanti. Lidke agreed. Lidke said his car failed to start when he tried to re-

turn to Ypsilanti. The Crossies suggested he go for a ride in their car. He said they left the farm at about 7:25. *"Not withstanding the fact that you wanted to be back in Ypsilanti at 6:30, and that you had not had your supper yet, you fooled around the yard for one hour, didn't you?"* demanded Laird. *"Yes,"* answered Lidke. He went on to explain, he had a late lunch while still in Ypsilanti at about 5:20.

A close-up view of Harry Cyb's gravestone which is more than 250 feet from other gravesites in St. John' Cemetery.

William Crossie and Herman Crossie would also take the stand, and all three would tell for the most part the same story. Before setting out, Herman and William had tried to talk Lidke into trading his 1925 Chevrolet for the Crossie 1919 Buick. Lidke asked if the starter worked. William knew the starter had not worked for two weeks. He then tried to show it did work. His attempt to prove it did work failed. Then Lidke admitted he did not hold title to the car, as it was partly owned by his brother. Then Lidke tried to start his car to go back to Ypsilanti, but it failed to start. This is when the Crossies suggested he join them in a ride.

William had wanted Herman to help him dig potatoes, but Herman wanted to go to Detroit. After some discussion, Herman agreed to help, if William would get some beer. William said he knew of a place just over the line in Wayne County. Herman suggested they go there at once. Lidke was invited to join them, and the three got in William's car and, after using the crank to start the motor, set out for the blind pig. Lidke said it took them about a half hour to get there. *"He told how they drove into the yard,"* reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Thursday, March 18, 1926, *"and entered the kitchen of the house by a door on a porch. In the room were three young men, a small girl, and an old woman, a Polish woman."*

Lidke said he had two bottles of beer, and some hard liquor. He said he did not notice how many bottles of beer William had, and did not know who paid for them. Lidke said they left at about 10:00. After about five minutes, they realized they were on the wrong road. Herman, who was driving, in an effort to turn the car around, backed the car into a ditch. William began to bawl Herman out. *"You're always picking on me,"* replied Herman. Then he struck the car with his fist. Lidke said they were stuck in the ditch for about an hour. Then a farmer pulled the car out of the ditch with a stump puller. Then they pushed the car into a yard, as the clutch was out of order. A passing car gave the men a ride back to the Crossie farm.

Once back at the farm, Lidke went to work on his car. William and his wife wanted Lidke to help pay for the cost of repairing the car stuck in the ditch. Lidke refused, and William and his wife took down his license plate number. *"Finally the Crossies retired, leaving Lidke the lantern. Twice William came out to invite him to stay the night, but Lidke declined. After he had gone in for the last time, the officers arrived to arrest them,"* reported account.

William Crossie was next called to the stand and confirmed the account testified by Lidke. Then Herman Crossie was called to the stand and testified to the same story as his brother William and Lidke. Herman said he was not walking the wrong way when picked up by Erwin, but that Erwin was mistaken as to the direction he was walking. The defense would point out, this was not the area Erwin usually patrolled and was mistaken as to the direction. When asked why he stopped singing when the car he was riding in approached the site where the body was found, Herman said he stopped singing because of a hard look he was given by Officer Klavitter.

The defense rested, and the case was to go to the jury. Judge George Sample addressed the jury: *"This is a criminal case in which Herman Crossie, the respondent, is charged with the murder of Harry Cyb. It is claimed by the prosecution that although there were no eyewitnesses to the murder that, nevertheless, enough of facts and circumstances have been established to satisfy the members of the jury beyond a reasonable doubt as the guilt of the defendant." "In criminal cases there are two general classes of evidence, namely direct evidence which is evidence from eye witnesses who claim to have seen the thing about which they testify… There is another class of evidence called circumstantial evidence which is evidence of facts and circumstances which, when established, lead the mind to certain conclusions or inferences taken there from."* He reviewed the case for the prosecution.

Judge Sample defined first and second degree murder and manslaughter and told the jury they could find Herman Crossie guilty on one of these or find

him innocent. He further reviewed the case for the defense. The case went to the jury on Friday, March 19, 1926. When the jury retired that evening, they stood six to six for conviction. They resumed deliberations the next morning and reached a unanimous decision, which was announced at 10:30 am. The verdict of the jury was Not Guilty. Herman Crossie was freed and in time the decision was made not to take William and Lidke to trial and both were released. That was where the matter rested, for a time.

Beatrice Sweet was 19 years of age in February of 1931, and had been sentenced two years before for cashing a worthless check. She made a comment about her belief that she had been framed by a man named Grover Terry, because of what she knew. That remark caused Washtenaw County Deputy Sheriff Lynn Squires to question her. She told Squires she went to live in the home of Grover Terry in 1927, and there learned Terry had some part in a murder. Sweet gave the officers the names of others who might tell what they knew. One of the names was Genevieve Allen, who was living with Fred Lagness at the time Cyb was murdered. Genevieve Allen married Lagness in January of 1927, and in March Lagness was sentenced to seven and half to fifteen years in Jackson prison for robbery armed. This was for robbing a gasoline station on the corner of Ecorse and Telegraph.

Squires questioned those named by the women, including a Sumpter Township bootlegger and a gasoline station attendant. The officers were able, with the information provided, to trace the steps of Lagness and Terry on the night of the murder. Terry was arrested on suspicion of stealing chickens; he was convicted and sentenced to 90 days in jail. This allowed the officers to hold Terry as they proceeded to secure the last witnesses needed to convict him of murder. When confronted with the evidence Terry confessed and named Lagness as the one who struck the fatal blow. The men had stopped at the Cyb gasoline station some time before the night of the murder, and had seen Cyb with a thick roll of bills. On the night of September 18, 1925, the men decided to rob Cyb of his money. Lagness and Terry left the place in Dexter where Lagness and Allen were living, and obtained liquor near Martinsville. They borrowed a hammer from Oliver Griffin's oil station in Sumpter Township.

"We drove up to the gas station after dark," stated Terry in his confession, *"this was Cyb's gas station located at the corner of Willis and Whittaker Roads, Washtenaw County, Michigan. I was in the back seat at this time. Cyb and Fred had some argument over some liquor the exact words I do not remember. Fred hit Cyb with a hammer and threw him in the front seat and got into the car and drove east on Willis road. Near a small bridge Fred threw Cyb out of the car on the north side of the road. We then went and got some more liquor and went to my home south of Dexter Michigan on Fred Burch's farm."*

Early on the morning of Monday, March 2, 1931 Prosecuting Attorney Albert J. Rapp, Deputy Sheriff Lynn Squires and Sergeant Bruce McGlone of the Michigan State Police left Ann Arbor and drove to Lansing. There they obtained a temporary pardon for Lagness from Michigan Governor Wilbur M. Brucker. From Lansing the men went to the prison at Jackson, and there secured the release of Lagness. Then, with Lagness, they returned to Ann Arbor. There Lagness made his confession to the murder of Harry Cyb. Lagness, in his confession, named Terry as the killer of Cyb.

"On the way over," said Lagness in his confession, *"when we turned on to Willis Road we planned to just drive in and get some oil and when he came out with the oil we were going to stick him up. Well he came out with the oil and put it in the car. When he bent over to put it in the car, Grove suggested that we would not stick him up because it would make too much noise with the pistol. So while I was sitting at the wheel he got out of the car with the hammer and hit Cyb over the head. Cyb fell down on the ground and Grove picked him up and laid him on the front left fender of the car. Then we drove down Willis Road with Cyb on the fender and Grove Terry stood on the running board of the car and held him on. When we got down the about one half mile Terry lost hold of him and he (Cyb) fell off. After he fell off I stopped the car and Terry ran back to where Cyb was lying and went through his pockets (I did not see this but he told me). Terry then shoved the body off the north side of the road and came back to the car. I did not see Terry hit but once but he hit him harder than he intended to and the other cuts and bruises must have happened when he fell off the car."* According to Lagness, all they got off Cyb was the ten dollar bill they had given Cyb to pay for the oil and forty cents.

Grover Terry and Fred Lagness appeared before Circuit Court Judge George Sample on Tuesday, March 3, 1931. The two plead guilty and were sentenced to life imprisonment at Jackson. *"Lagness"*, said Judge Sample, *"was one of the most hardened criminals he had ever interviewed. He has no conscience for feelings of others as far as human beings are concerned." "Terry was ordered segregated at the prison on account of a disease which he is suffering,"* reported *The Washtenaw Tribune* of Wednesday, March 4, 1931. By this time Mary Cyb had moved to Detroit where she raised her five children.

The grave of Harry Cyb is at the rear of St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery on River Street in Ypsilanti. The headstone stands alone, as there appears to be no other graves near it.

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

The Great Storm of March 1913

BY JAMES MANN

On the morning of Friday, March 21, 1913, between the hours of 5:00 & 6:00 am, a heavy rainstorm passed over Ypsilanti. This was followed by strong winds, with gusts of perhaps 70 mph. This was part of a storm system reaching from the Rocky Mountains eastward to Pennsylvania.

"During the morning the wind played havoc," reported ***The Daily Ypsilanti Press*** of March 21, 1913, *"…in almost every direction and there were some narrow escapes from what might have been serious accidents. A heavy stone was blown down from the top of the Light Guard Hall at the corner of Congress (Michigan Ave.) and Washington Street, narrowly missing a little boy who was passing at the time."*

"The number of umbrellas which were turned inside out this morning cannot be enumerated," noted the account. *"The wind was so high that a repetition of the cyclone which struck Ypsilanti some years ago (1893) was feared. Wash boilers, parts of two roofs and papers of all descriptions went sailing down the street. The interurban cars were delayed by branches being blown across the road, interfering with the trolley poles, causing the cars to be late. The telephone lines were down in some places and telephoning out of town was attended with great difficulties. The dumping of paper in Ypsilanti alleys was shown to do much towards beautifying the city, the streets being covered with variegated colored paper."*

"What might have been a bit amusing if it had not been so serious for the one concerned happened at the Davis & Kishlar's corner (Michigan Ave. and Huron). A woman loaded with bundles was noticed trying to cross the street. Three times she tried, each time losing a part and finally all of her belongings, including her hat, hair and all but one package, that was clutched desperately, when with the aid of a passerby, she was launched on the other side. Her remaining hair was streaming to her waist and an angry ejaculation was audible above the roar of the wind."

Homes throughout the city were damaged by the gale force winds, chimneys were forced off roofs and falling bricks did further damage. Plate glass windows were blown inward and smashed to pieces in several buildings. In the country around the city the wind tore the roof off a number of barns. At least one barn was moved off its foundation. The owner of another barn was reported to be hoping for good weather, as only the sky covered his animals.

"The west bound electric car on the D. J. & C Railway, due in Ypsilanti at 8:50 was considerably late owing to a large branch of a tree being blown across the track. It had to be sawed off before the car could move on," reported the account. *"The storm this morning gave particular attention to the Michigan State Normal College* (now Eastern Michigan University). *It blew down some of the bleachers, took off the steel roof of the heating plant and the flagstaff off the main building. One window was blown in with such force that the glass broke and slightly cut the hand of one of the teachers."*

Ypsilanti was lucky, as there were no deaths or serious injuries. Once the storm had passed, the work of cleaning up the mess was started. Workers were found to fix the roofs and repair the chimneys. Fallen tree branches were cleared away from the streets and lawns. Soon, life returned to its normal pace, and the storm, for the most part, was forgotten.

That same day in Ohio heavy rains fell on ground already saturated from a previous storm resulting in flooding throughout the state. At Dayton a levee broke submerging the downtown area under 20 feet of water. The citizens of Ypsilanti sent aid to Dayton, in the form of supplies and money.

"It is a beautiful tribute to the American people when one city will come to the relief of another with the promptness and whole heartedness with which the city of Ypsilanti answered the call of Dayton's distress," wrote the mayor of Dayton. *"Our city is passing through a dark period in her history, yet we are not dismayed: the words of cheer, encouragement and kindly sympathy we have received from our sister cities throughout the length and breath of the land, large and small alike have lightened the gloom that surround us and given us strength to enter confidently upon the work of building a bigger, better and greater Dayton."*

The storm had passed, but one day, another like it could come again.

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

This school building was built on the site in 1902 and was named the Woodruff School, after Charles M. Woodruff. It was used until 1954.

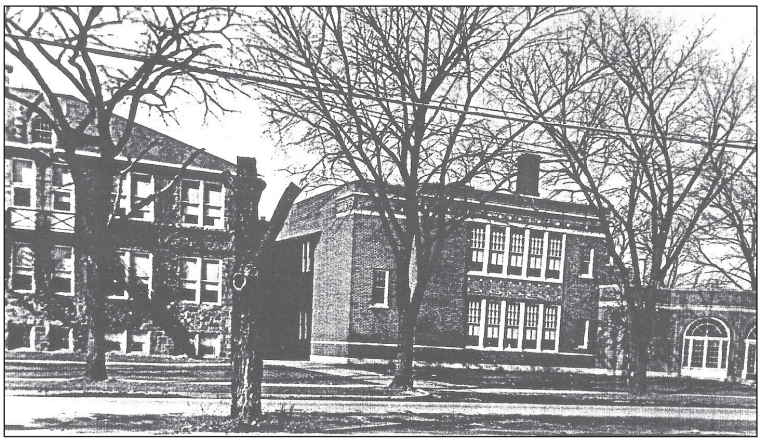
School for Sale

BY JAMES MANN

Is anyone in the market for a slightly used school building? There is one for sale here in Ypsilanti. The New Beginnings Academy building at 211 East Michigan Avenue is up for sale. The building occupies a site of just under two acres, with primary frontage facing the north side of East Michigan Avenue. The building has two stories and 20,000 square feet of space. This is the building with the big sign in front announcing: Court Ordered Sale.

For many years, beginning in the 1800's, this had been the site of the Fifth Ward School. This was demolished in 1900, and a new structure was built in its place in 1902. The new building was named the Woodruff School, after Charles M. Woodruff.

"It is the more fitting," noted *The Ypsilantian* of April 25, 1901, *"because the land on which the school stands was once owned by Mr. Charles Woodruff and adjoins his residence, which was the first school house built in Ypsilanti. The Board could have found no name more fitting for this school and this action is a graceful tribute to an honored name."*



This new addition to Woodruff School was constructed in July of 1928.

An addition to the building was constructed in 1928. The original building remained in use until 1954, when the State Fire Marshal ordered it removed. The Ypsilanti Board of Education authorized the construction of a new addition to the school in July of 1954. This addition was dedicated in 1955. At the same time additional property was purchased to the north of the building, to provide a larger and safer playground for the stu-

dents. This resulted in the closing of Babbitt Street between Lincoln and Park Streets.

Woodruff School was closed in 1981, due to declining enrollment. The site was sold in December of that year for $150,000 to the Word of God Inc. In time the school became New Beginnings Academy, which closed in the spring of 2018.

Now, the building and lot are up for sale. Anyone interested?

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

The Ypsilanti Board of Education authorized the construction of a new addition to the Woodruff School in July of 1954 and it was used as a school until 1981.

Update: The Sad Tale of George Haddix

BY JAMES MANN

The Winter 2017 issue of *The Ypsilanti Gleanings* included a story entitled *The Sad Tale of George Haddix* who had moved to Ypsilanti in about 1912. He said he had been a United Brethren minister and had done evangelistic work in Hillsdale County, Michigan and Williams County, Ohio. Haddix claimed he had acquired about $10,000, which he said he was cheated out of. His wife, he said, had died, and he moved to Ypsilanti and lived in a shack as best he could. In 1916 he lived in a hut on the grounds of Highland Cemetery, which was lost in a fire. He then moved to the County Farm, a combination of poorhouse and insane asylum. The story ended with the question: "So, what became of George Haddix?"

Ypsilanti Historical Society member Michael McCloy was intrigued by the question, and decided to try to find the answer. *"I emailed the U. S. national office for the Church of the Unithren in Huntington, IN."* wrote Mr. McCloy, *"This is the denomination current headquarters based at Huntington University, their only college."* After searching their archives, Bob Kacher, who works in the Health Ministry Resources, responded *"Sorry, it looks like he (George) was not a United Brethren in Christ member; at least we do not have any information about him."*

"It appears," continues Mr. McCloy, *"however, that George did at least spend some time in the Hillsdale, Michigan, area. I contacted the Mitchell Research Center in Hillsdale, Michigan. One of their researchers, Delores Kimling, found a George Haddix in the 1910 census as living in Augusta Twp, Washtenaw County. He is listed as a divorced fifty-nine-old farm laborer."*

"A death certificate indicates he died in 1923 at the age of seventy-two. He was buried in the Lake View Cemetery, in Hillsdale, Michigan. He was divorced. The web site Find-a-Grave shows that his parents were Levi and Mary Haddix. According to Delores, George, and Mary divorced in 1901. They had two children, Minnie and Ica Belle Haddix."

"My guess is that after George's luck ran out in Washtenaw County he returned to his roots/home back in Hillsdale. After leaving Washtenaw County, George died in Hillsdale. His death certificate shows no address. He died in the "County House" which usually meant public assistance. This appears consistent with his impoverished lifestyle during his final days in Washtenaw County."

"It seemed," wrote Mr. McCloy, *"old George could just never get a break."*

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

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