

# Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SPRING 2016

Michigan State Normal College Gymnasium.

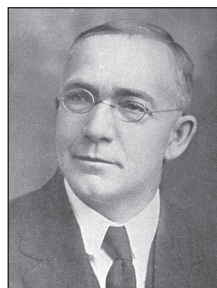


## 100 YEARS of Michigan High School Basketball Tournaments – 1916-2016

BY ERIK PEDERSEN

The Michigan State Normal School Gymnasium in Ypsilanti was the site of the first basketball game to be held west of the Allegheny Mountains. Wilber Bowen, head of the newly established Physical Education major program at the Normal School, was the person responsible for bringing James Naismith and his Springfield College student basketball team to Ypsilanti to help celebrate the dedication of the new Michigan State Normal School gymnasium on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1894. (See the *Summer 2006 Ypsilanti Gleanings* article on “Ypsilanti, Basketball’s Gateway to the West.”)

**1916 to 2016:** It seemed only fitting that Bowen, along with Michigan Normal College Department instructors Elmer Mitchell, W. T. Samson, and Lloyd Olds would be the ones to promote the first Michigan High School Basketball Tournament. Michigan High School



Wilber Bowen was the person responsible for bringing basketball teams to Ypsilanti to help celebrate the dedication of the new Michigan State Normal School gymnasium.

Basketball will celebrate a very special anniversary on March 23 -25, 2016. Those dates will mark 100 years since the first Michigan High School Basketball Tournament was held on the Normal College Campus.

**Tournament Participants:** According to the March 10, 1916 *Normal College News*, an invitation to take part in the 1916 Michigan Tournament was sent out to three hundred high schools. It is interesting to note that only high schools with less than 200 students

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# From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY ALVIN E. RUDISILL

Our "Intern Agreement" with Eastern Michigan University has been renewed for another five years. This agreement provides for two twenty hour per week interns that are enrolled in the Graduate Program in Historical Preservation at EMU. One of our current interns, Kelly Beattie, will graduate this spring and will be replaced by Courtney Brandt. Kelly joined our team in December of 2014 and has done an exemplary job of cataloging our archival collections and doing research for on-site archive visitors and in response to telephone and email information requests. His dedicated efforts will be missed. Courtney Brandt will replace Kelly as an intern in the YHS Archives once he graduates this spring. Courtney's special interests are digitization and digital collections which will be a great asset to the archives.

By the time you receive this issue of the *Gleanings* our Spring Membership Meeting on March 20 will have come and gone. The program will be presented by automotive historian Steven Stanford. Steven is a member of the Henry Ford Heritage Association, the Society of Automotive Historians and the MotorCities National Heritage Area. His presentation will focus on the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Clara Ford.

The Museum Advisory Board has been busy preparing for the recently completed "Museum Docent Training Program," the "High Tea" scheduled for May 7, and the "Annual Art Exhibit" scheduled for May 15 to June 1. Many of the existing displays have been updated and many new displays have been set up.

Val Kabat is doing an exceptional job as Chair of the YHS Publicity Committee. Our new "Facebook" presence, our new monthly online newsletter and the many new online posts have added significantly to our visibility in this electronic era.

If you are not on our email listserv please call the Museum at 734-482-4990 and have your name added. We are using the listserv only for program notifications and your email address will not be shared with others. Also, please check the Event Schedule on our website for upcoming special programs and displays.



## HIGH TEA

Saturday, May 7 • 2:00 p.m.

\$5 donation

Entertainment by **Harmony 4 Fun**

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with names & telephone numbers of those attending

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The person on the Normal College faculty with the skills and knowledge of how to conduct tournaments was Lloyd Olds.



Elmer Mitchell served as Lloyd Olds' assistant before becoming the director of intramurals at the University of Michigan.

were invited. Even in the early 1900's schools in Michigan were divided into classes based on school enrollment. Wilber Bowen was interested in getting the smaller high schools "educated in basketball." Bowen felt that basketball was still a relatively new game and that not too many small schools knew much about it. He hoped to invite larger schools the next year.

The 1916 Michigan Normal College yearbook, *Aurora*, indicated that there was another reason for the Normal School to want to host a basketball tournament. The Normal College was primarily a teacher training school. Most of the students enrolled at the college were women. The college's Men's Union helped with organizing the tournament in hopes that it would attract more men to the school.

Entrance to the tournament was free. However, expenses related to transportation and room and board had to be provided by the participating schools. The Physical Education Department made it easier for schools to participate by making arrangements with local residents to provide food at 20 to 25 cents a meal and lodging at 25 cents a night for each player.

Students and faculty from the Normal College contributed to the success of the first tournament. In addition, local volunteers helped with different aspects of running the tournament. In keeping with Bowen's mission to educate, tournament participants were able to attend sessions on conditioning, athletics in general and

basketball. Emphasis was placed on providing opportunities to stimulate fellowship and good sportsmanship.

**Tournament Requirements:** For a school to take part in the tournament, Bowen established the following requirements:

- Principals of prospective high schools had to certify that enrollment did not exceed 200.
- No member on a team could be older than 21.
- No team member had graduated from a four-year high school.
- Team members had to be doing passing work.
- No team member could have entered school later than March 1, 1916.

The *Normal College News* noted that the splendid Normal College facilities were more than adequate for conducting a tournament. The facilities included four basketball courts that could all be used at the same time. By conducting one session of games on Thursday evening, three on Friday and two on Saturday they were able to conduct a double elimination tournament.

**Tournament Results:** Of the three hundred schools invited to participate in the tournament only 12 accepted. The teams were Marine City, Dundee, Milan, Mancelona, Farmington, Elkton, Royal Oak, Middleville, Lansing, Mount Clemens, Wayne and Saline. Marine City won the tourna-

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ment after having to play Dundee in a playoff game. Both teams finished the regular schedule with a 5 and 1 record. Marine City won the playoff game 23 to 22. Milan, Mancelona, and Farmington tied for third.

The winning team was awarded a silver shield mounted on an oak base. Second prize was a silver cup and the third place team received a banner. Individual participation awards were given to all players and the first place winners were awarded medals. The Ypsilanti Press at the time felt the Normal College “went first class with the awards.”

**The 1917 Tournament:** As noted earlier, Bowen planned to include larger schools in 1917. However, based on the information in the March 23, 1917 *Normal College News*, it seems that schools with less than 200 students were again the only ones invited. That tournament attracted 21 schools and over 250 participants. The 1917 Normal College yearbook noted the tournament attracted so many players that the gymnasium and department offices were turned into a temporary dormitory. The 1917 tournament was won by Grayling. They easily defeated a team from Chelsea 42 to 9. Milan finished third. It appears that the same Grayling squad took part in the first University of Michigan tournament the following week.

It didn't take long for other Michigan schools to begin conducting basketball tournaments. Northern Michigan Normal College in Marquette announced its plans to hold the first UP tournament on March 2, 1917. Not to be outdone, the University of Michigan held its first inter-scholastic basketball tournament on March 22, 23, and 24, 1917 in the Waterman Gymnasium. The tournament attracted over 39 schools and was open to any high school that wanted to participate. A majority of those schools were class A schools and had little effect on the Normal School class B tournament. It is interesting to note that the University of Michigan didn't have a varsity basketball team until the following year when Elmer Mitchell became a faculty member there.

**Related Information:** The person on the Normal College faculty with the skills and knowledge of how to conduct tournaments was Lloyd Olds. One of Olds' primary responsibilities was directing the school's intramural program. Olds' organizational abili-

ties and ideas related to intramurals were emulated all over the country. Elmer Mitchell served as Olds' assistant for a couple of years before becoming the director of intramurals at the University of Michigan. Olds also invented the zebra striped officials shirt that helped to distinguish players from officials.

**Elmer Mitchell:** Another key individual assisting Wilber Bowen in planning the 1916 tournament was Elmer Mitchell. Mitchell coached the 1915 and 1916 Normal College varsity basketball teams. His two-year record was 27 wins and 6 losses. He then went on to coach for the University of Michigan where he had a two-year record of 24 wins and 16 losses. Mitchell served as the first basketball coach for both schools. While at the University of Michigan he is given credit for helping to develop the format for planning state basketball tournaments for many years. When being interviewed by Will Snyder for an *Ypsilanti Press* article on the 60 year anniversary of Michigan High School Basketball Tournaments, Mitchell gave credit to Wilber Bowen, the Normal College at Ypsilanti and the University of Michigan for developing high school athletics to the level that they had attained at that time.

**Student Coaches:** It was mentioned above that it wasn't until 1915 that Elmer Mitchell was appointed as the first basketball coach for the Michigan Normal College and 1917 for the University of Michigan. This was not unusual. During the 1890's and early 1900's many college and university athletic teams were coached by students. Student coaches were usually seniors with athletic experience. As the popularity and importance of athletics grew, more qualified and experienced coaches other than students were appointed.

**Charles Forsyth:** Taking part in the 1916 tournament as a player on the Milan team was Charles Forsyth. Forsyth would become instrumental in Michigan sports when he later became the Director for Michigan High School Athletics.

**Ruth Boughner Interview:** The 100 year anniversary of Michigan high school basketball probably would have gone unnoticed if it wasn't for a June 24, 1980 interview with Ms. Ruth Boughner. While collecting information for the history of a phys-



Recognition Ceremony from Left to Right: Dr. Michael Paciorek, Professor EMU Compliance; Dr. Erik Pedersen, Professor EMU Emeritus; Terrance Porter Farmington High School; Julius Edwards, Lansing Eastern High School; Chris Ming, Marine City High School; Chris Pope, Milan High School; Kirk Evenson, Saline High School; Greg Ambrose, Wayne Memorial High School; Christian Spears, Deputy Director of Athletics EMU.





The 1916 tournament plaque was won by Marine City.



Marine City beat Dundee in the playoff game 23 to 22.

ical education course, I interviewed Ms. Boughner who taught at the Normal College from 1920 to 1952. During that interview Ms. Boughner mentioned how Wilber Bowen and the physical education department faculty organized and conducted the first Michigan State High School Basketball tournament. That interview took place 36 years ago and the information obtained that day has helped recall a significant date in Michigan High School Athletics.

**Centennial Basketball Celebration:** Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Michael Paciorek, of the Eastern Michigan University Athletic Department Compliance Office, a celebration of the first Michigan High School Basketball Tournament was realized. On Saturday, February 20, 2016, six of the twelve high schools that originally took part in the 1916 tournament returned to the Eastern Michigan University campus. The schools taking part in this event were Farmington, Lansing, Marine City, Milan, Saline, and Wayne.

Recognition of the six schools returning to help celebrate this occasion was given during half time of the Eastern Michigan University and Toledo University basketball game. A representative from each school received a commemorative plaque noting the centennial. The Eastern Michigan Department of Health Promotion and Human Performance provided the recognition plaques for the participating high schools. The Ma-

rine City representative provided an unexpected surprise. He brought the original first place trophy awarded to them 100 years ago and a photo of the 1916 basketball team.

Others who helped celebrate the occasion were: Heather Lyke, EMU Athletic Director; Greg Steiner, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations; Ron Pesch, Michigan High School Athletic Association Historian; Alexis Braun Marks, EMU Archives; Don McLean, Assistant Director for Development; and Julie Jahn, Associate Professor HPHF.

*(Acknowledgements: 1: Much descriptive detail was obtained from The Normal College News of March 10, 1916, March 24, 1916, March 23, 1917, and the Ypsilanti Press of March 26, 1976. 2: General background and biographical information was obtained from, A History of Physical Education at Eastern Michigan University from 1852 to 1996 by Dr. Erik J. Pedersen. 3: A special thank you to Alexis Braun Marks, in the EMU Archives, for locating and copying several pertinent Normal College Newspaper articles related to the early Normal School Basketball Tournaments. 4: A special thank you to Ron Pesch, MHSAA Historian, who was willing to share information about the early years of Michigan High School basketball history.)*

*(Erik Pedersen is an Emeritus Professor of Physical Education at Eastern Michigan University.)*

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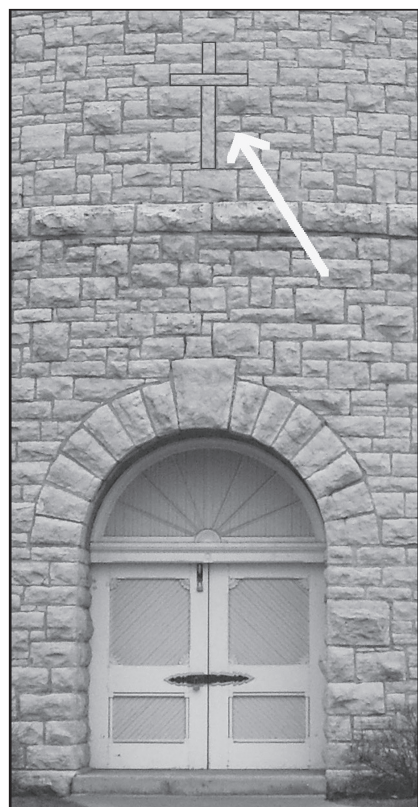
# Council Approves Eagle Statue

NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS

The Ypsilanti City Council at their first meeting in January of 2016 approved a project which will place a 25 foot bronze eagle statue on top of the water tower on Cross Street. The project was initiated by Dr. Donald Loppnow, current Interim President of EMU. He stated that the project will “...focus the public on the great relationship that exists between EMU, represented by the

Eagle, and the City of Ypsilanti, represented by the Water Tower.” The project was pushed through the City Council by Mayor Amanda Edmunds and Councilman Pete Murdock. The project will cost \$250,000 and will be paid for by a 5 percent increase in city property taxes for 2017 and 2018. Local activist Steve Pierce voiced objection to the project unless non-city funds can be raised to pay for it.

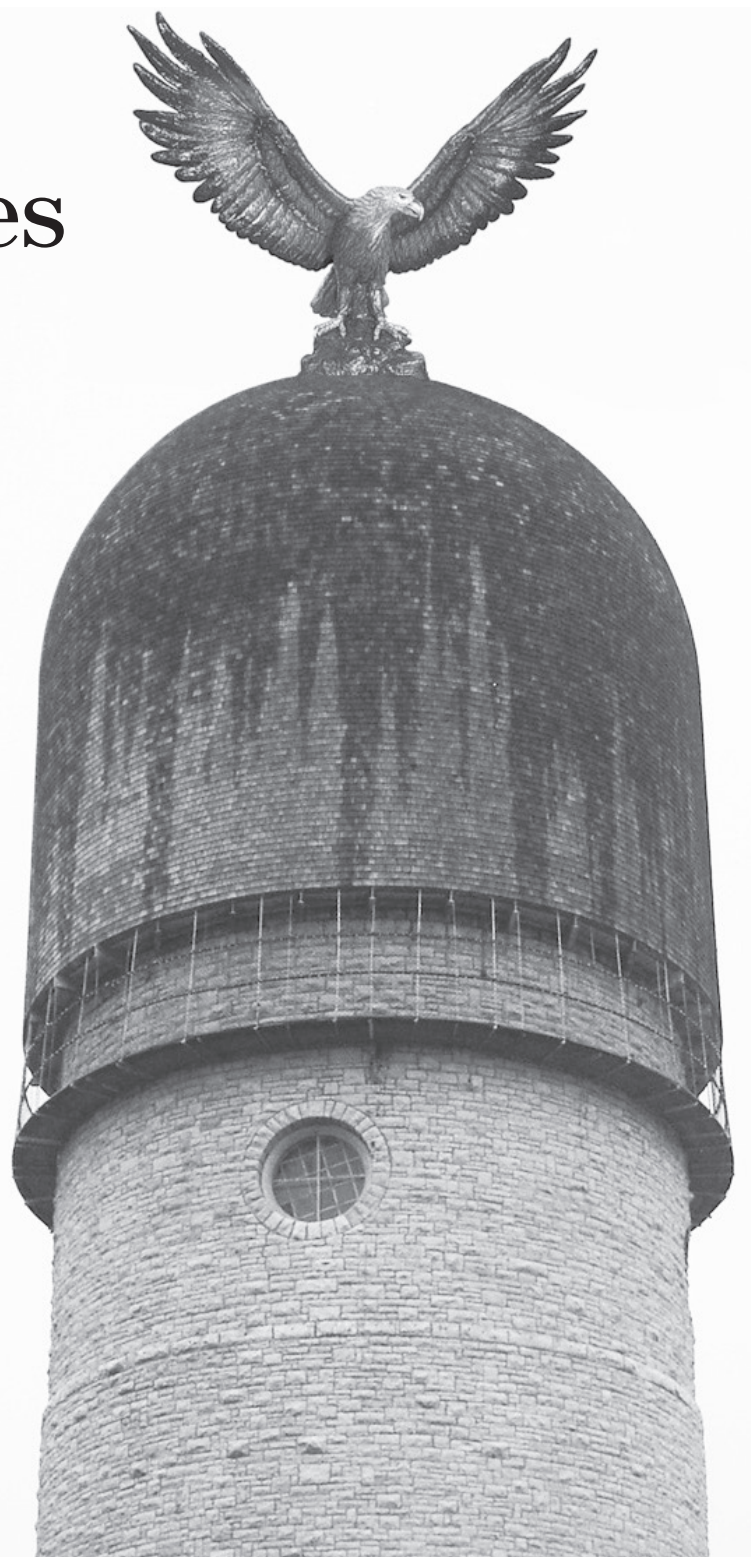
A sculptor named Dr. Ican Doitto from Cornell University in New York has been commissioned to complete the artwork. Doitto has started work on the statue and is expected



Complaints about the cross on the water tower have increased and the City Council took action to have it removed.

to complete the work by the summer of 2017. It is projected that it will take approximately six months to mount it on top of the water tower. A company from New York has been contracted to mount the statue on the water tower using a four engine pilotless drone.

The motion to approve the statue for the water tower also contained wording that will require the removal of the cross in the stonework above the door on the water tower.



The 30 foot bronze eagle statue will be placed on top of the Ypsilanti water tower.

A few complaints have been received in past years by the City Council regarding the cross but recently a number of protests have been held under the cross and the Council decided that it had to take action. The cross will be removed this coming summer and will be replaced by regular stones that will match the pattern of the entire tower.

The exact wording of the action taken by the Ypsilanti City Council can be found on page 34.



# Museum Board Report

BY NANCY WHEELER, BOARD CHAIR

Good-bye winter, hello spring!

Our Board has many great events planned for the coming season. Some of Earnest Griffin's Ypsilanti memorabilia is on display in the Library. The glass souvenir items are red, cream and green. The post-cards are of Ypsilanti landmarks.

The blow torch, coffee roaster, dress stays, and kerosene stove were manufactured in Ypsilanti.

The kitchen display case holds cookbooks from 1871 to 1975, all donated by Ypsilanti residents. The 1890 Florence Babbitt "Receipts Book" (a term used by some groups for recipes) is handwritten.

The Museum will have the Meredith Bixby Marionettes on display this spring! Mr. Bixby's performances were based on fairy tales and children's stories. They were performed in schools from 1932 through 1982. All the marionettes and back-drops were handmade.

Our eye glasses are displayed in the upstairs hall case. They date from the 1800's and include a pair of work goggles with side screens to protect eyes from flying bits. "High Tea" is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, at 2:00 pm (the day before Mother's Day). This event, our third Tea, has been very popular so get your reservations in early! Call 734-482-4990 with your name, guest's names, and phone numbers. Suggested donation is \$5.00. Savory and sweet treats will be served with your choice of tea. Hats and gloves are optional! Entertainment will be supplied by the "Anything Goes" quartet.

An Art Exhibit is planned for May 14 through June 1, 2:00 to 5:00 pm. "Meet the Artists" will be Sunday, May 22, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Come and enjoy the talents of local artists. Some work will be for sale.

It takes many people to present all these features for your appreciation. Can you help? Call 734-482-4990 and volunteer. We especially need weekend docents to serve as hosts in the Museum.

## Non-local bankers think The Grinnell Brothers are at The Ark next week.

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artists. Selective works  
of art will be for sale.

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Tuesday thru Sunday

220 North Huron Street  
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Meet the Artist Day  
2:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
May 22, 2016

## YHS "High Tea"

Saturday, May 7  
2:00 pm  
\$5.00 donation

Entertainment will be  
supplied by  
"Anything Goes Quartet"

Call 734-482-4990 with the  
names and telephone numbers  
of those attending.

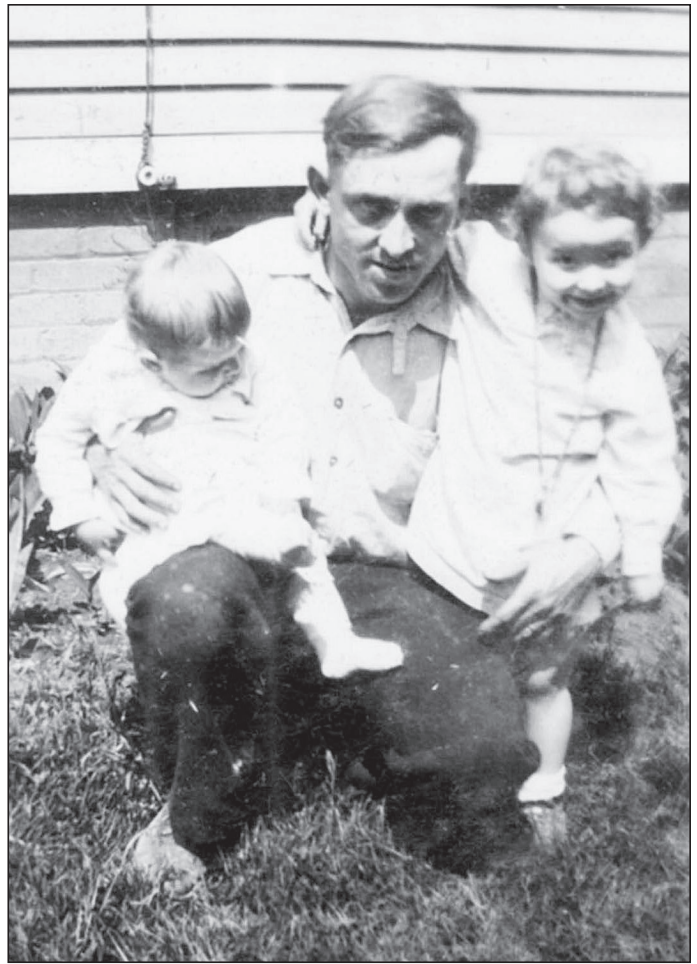
Savory and sweet treats will be  
served with your choice of tea.  
Hats and gloves are optional.



# Providing for the Family During the Great Depression: An interview with Virginia Davis-Brown

BY ERIC SELZER

Virginia Davis Brown has been active with the Ypsilanti Historical Society since 1980. She has served as a volunteer and been a member of the Board of Trustees for over four decades. She was born in Washtenaw County in 1925 and grew up in the 1930s, during the height of the Great Depression. Last autumn, Mrs. Davis-Brown discussed some of her most vivid childhood memories in a tape-recorded interview that is currently on file in the Society Archives in conjunction with an ongoing oral-history project.



Virginia (right) in 1928 with her brother Harrison and her father, Frank Jr.

## ***Virginia, could you tell me a little bit about your home life experience?***

My dad, Frank Jr., was a builder and worked on several buildings in the Ypsilanti area. He helped build the Huron Hotel. He was not wealthy, but had enough that we could build a house. So he bought property out on Michigan Avenue near Hewitt Road and built a house, never completing it, because when the depression came the banks closed and there was no money. He had absolutely no money, no job, and did not work for two years. He had children to keep fed and warm ... And so, we had to grow our own vegetables, our own food. We always had chickens, so we always had eggs. My dad went hunting almost every day for food and he would come home with squirrels and rabbits and raccoons and my mother, Helen, would can them. There were not that many deer in this area ... but the everyday things were the rabbits and the squirrels and the raccoons. And my mother would can anything that he brought home, so we would have enough food to carry us through in the winter, because there was no money for food. There was no way of getting [food] except walking the two miles into Ypsi to buy the necessary things that we could not raise on our own.

There also were men who walked up Michigan Avenue coming from Chicago and going to Detroit that had no food and they would stop at certain houses. My mother always had an egg sandwich for them and they always said, "thank you," and wanted to help. Sometimes they'd see if they could help do something around the house to pay for what they had received and then they would continue on their way. They always said, "thank you." They were always very, very polite. My dad eventually lost the house. He borrowed money on it and was not able to pay it back and so they foreclosed and we had to move.

## ***What sort of attempts did your father make to find employment during those two years?***

Well, he tried a lot of different places, but there were just no jobs for anybody. The government was just starting with the Works Progress Administration and he did apply for that, but did not take it. He was a builder and so if he was not out hunting, he was out collecting willow and made furniture. He had a few nails and we had all kinds of furniture. He sold some, but not much because not many people had money. But he was very, very busy trying to keep up with the garden. And we had to grow enough food to carry us through the win-



ter. We would buy flour, so we would have flour enough to carry us through in the winter to make bread and biscuits and other things that we would need the flour for. We made all of our own bread. We had no idea what it was to have bought bread.

***Tell me about canning. How did a person can their own vegetables?***

Well, you had cans and you had to cook part of the crop. Sometimes with tomatoes, especially, you just boiled them until they were cooked. You put them in a fruit jar and put a lid on them and they sealed. By the time winter started we would have corn and peas and tomatoes and potatoes that you would collect in the basement. Carrots, you would have a box with the carrots you pulled out of the ground and put in a box of sand so that they would keep over the winter. Onions, you brought in and dried those so that they would keep over the winter. And we had to do all of these things or we would not have had anything to eat. Now there were stores, but we had no money to buy things with.

***Did people trade?***

Yes, some people did. And there was one thing that is altogether different than it is today, because everybody was dependent upon everybody. The neighbors would help out in any way they could. Anything that they had you were welcome to. The same with us, anything we had, if the neighbor needed them, they could have. Like ... if you needed flour you would borrow a cup of flour from a neighbor and take it back. The families that made clothes for us shared. And that was the way we lived. Neighbor helped neighbor and we were very, very close friends. As a matter of fact, I still am in touch with a friend of mine, who I have known since I was two-years-old. And I'm now ninety and she's ninety-one!

***Do you feel like the depression brought you closer as a community?***

Oh, definitely! Definitely! The only entertainment you had was what you had at the school, because it was the meeting ground for everything. We did not have a church in our area. And we could not come to Ypsilanti, so the neighbor ladies started a community Sunday school. We all went to Sunday school every Sunday. And once a year they would find a minister at Easter-time to come out and baptize all the children that had been born that year. I'm Methodist, my brother was Methodist, but I have a sister that was Presbyterian and one that was baptized Congregational. This was the community that was brought together by the depression, because we had no other way of going places or doing things ... They would have community plays and everybody would participate. They had one at the

Begole school and you have a copy of the play right here at the museum ... We had all kinds of nights of singing and things like that ... community things.

***So you entertained yourselves as well?***

Yes, you had to because you had no place to go or anything to do

***Sounds like you were very far removed from downtown Ypsilanti. How often did you go into town and why would you sometimes travel to town?***

We would go maybe once a month if we were able to go. There was one time that we needed a few groceries, such as flour and things like that. We did not need lard, because we used chicken fat that we took off of the chickens and rendered out. And if you ever had any pork you would render out the fat and have lard ...

***You would have to buy pork?***

Yes, every once in a while you would buy something. There was one time I remember that my dad had to go to town and I went with him to help him carry stuff home. And he carried a lot of newspapers in his pocket, because I had a hole in the bottom of my shoe. We walked to Ypsi and every so often he would have to



(Back Row L to R) Virginia in 1939 with her brother Harrison, who was two years younger than Virginia; (Front Row L to R) Virginia's brother James, then her brother Earl Harwood, and then her sister Shirley Harwood Slotka.



stop and take the old paper out that had worn and put new paper in, so that I was not walking on the ground. And we were not able to buy any shoes ... So he had to constantly keep putting folded newspaper in the bottom of my shoe so I could walk.

***I'm interested in your neighborhood and I'm also interested in what kind of medical care you would have if you were so far from town?***

We lived on Michigan Avenue, on the south side between Ellsworth Road and Hewitt. On the north side was absolutely nothing. There were no houses or anything. That didn't come until much later. Medical, everything we had to do for ourselves pretty much. My mother had three babies during that period of time.

***What kind of medicines or home remedies would you use? What would you do if somebody was sick?***

Well, you did the best you could. If you had pneumonia or a very, very bad cold my dad had a concoction that was lard and turpentine and I don't know what else. It smelled terrible and sometimes you got burned a little bit from it, but it would always help.

***You were supposed to swallow this concoction?***

No, they rubbed it on like a poultice and put a warm piece of flannel or wool over the top of it to keep all the medicines inside. And it helped. It really did! Earaches received a little warm oil of some sort and it really didn't make any difference. It was warm oil that helped if you had an earache, because it soothed it. If we needed a doctor and we couldn't get in they would make house-calls ...not very often, because you didn't have any money to pay them for it, so they wouldn't come. You would not get a doctor very often, unless you were practically dying!

***Do you remember any times when a doctor had come?***

Yes, my mother had double pneumonia. And so they had him come out. But my dad had used this poultice of whatever-that-concoction-was and she was doing better. But that is the only time I remember a doctor coming to the house.

***And what about childbirth?***

The midwife would come and help with that. It was always interesting to be awakened in the middle of the night and suggested that you go to grandma's. And you quickly put a few things in a paper bag. My dad would take us out and drop us off at grandma's and go pick up the midwife and bring her up, so that she could de-

liver the baby. And then we would come home in three or four days and there would be a new baby. And we had no idea where it came from. At that time you didn't talk about pregnancies. You didn't pay any attention to that. It wasn't like it is today, where they show everything on television. We had no sex education. At that time we didn't even know where babies came from or how they got there. My friend had a friend who was pregnant and her sex education was, *just don't get that way*. And that was all her mother told her. So we had no sex education until after we were into high school. We had no idea at all!

*(Eric Selzer has been an active volunteer with the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives since 2012. He holds two master's degrees and a PhD in Modern British History from the University of Edinburgh and has been fortunate in contributing to several educational projects at non-profit and historical organizations in Scotland and the U.S.A. He is especially excited to be participating in an oral history project currently underway at the Ypsilanti Historical Society.)*



Virginia on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at a party held for her in the YHS Archives.



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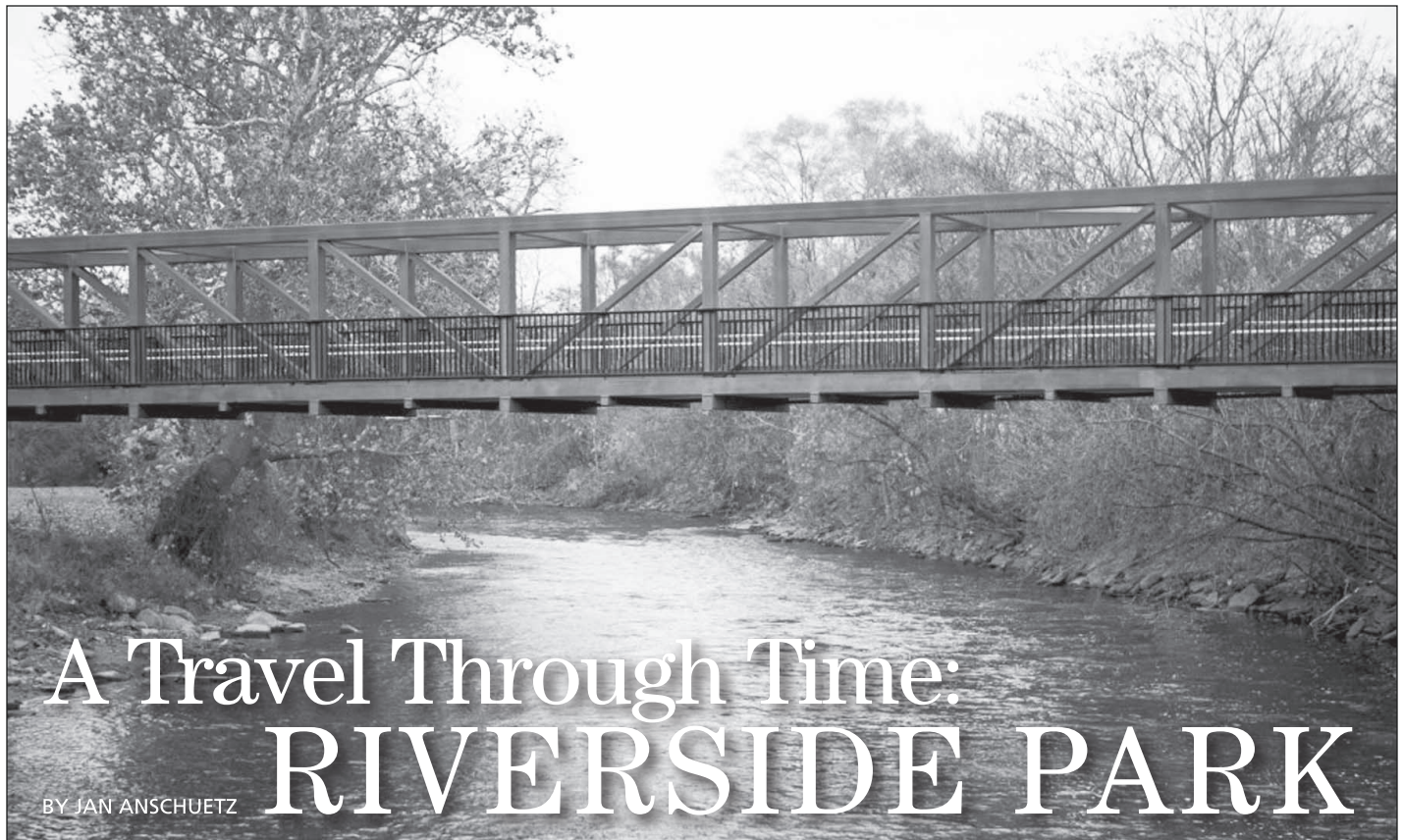
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The recently-installed Heritage Bridge allows those with wheelchairs, strollers, and bicycles - as well as pedestrians - a Michigan Avenue entrance to the park.

If a city has a heart, then Ypsilanti Michigan's heart must be Riverside Park. Nearly everyone in Ypsilanti and beyond can share a wonderful memory of an event in the park, whether it is of the thousands of people from far and wide who participate in the Color Run, those that imbibe in their favorite brews at the Michigan Beer Festival, the thousands who come from all over the nation to the annual Elvis Fest, families that enjoy a Memorial Day weekend concert by the river, car fanatics that attend the many auto shows, those that enjoy meeting friends and family at the Heritage Festival, or the many locals who enjoy their time merely walking the lovely trail by the river in all seasons. Going further back in time you may remember attending the winter Festival of Lights show complete with horse & carriage rides, or having your heart stopped as the Wallenda family replicated the dangerous seven-man pyramid in Riverside Park decades after their family's tragic accident in Detroit.

2016 is a special year for Ypsilanti's Riverside Park, located on the Huron River between Michigan Avenue and Cross Street. The recently-installed Heritage Bridge allows those with wheelchairs, strollers, and bicycles - as well as pedestrians - a Michigan Avenue entrance to the park. This is a dream come true after more than 100 years of waiting. The Olmsted Brothers (the landscape firm responsible for plans for Belle Isle, New York's Central Park, and many other public parks and private gardens) suggested in their 1913 plan for Ypsilanti that the city acquire all of the land adjacent to the river, and even provided an illustration of

what is now Riverside Park connecting to Michigan Avenue by way of a bridge. The Heritage Bridge also provides a gateway to the new Border to Border Trail which continues south of Michigan Avenue and becomes a new linear park that connects with Water Works Park, North Bay Park, and Blue Heron Park, and eventually all of the way to the Wayne County line.

Like me, you may have wondered how this beautiful park came about and I would like to share what I have learned of its history. Pretend that you are pausing with me for a moment on the new Heritage Bridge, crossing the Huron River at Michigan Avenue and look back to the charming vista of what is now Riverside Park. Then let us imagine that we can go back in time over two hundred years. What



If we could go back over 200 years we would see high on the northwest bank of the river an Indian trading post called "Godfroy's on the Pottawatomie Trail" after Gabriel Godfroy.

we would see then? High on the northwest bank of the river would be an Indian trading post owned by three Frenchman: Gabriel Godfroy, Francois Pepin, and Romaine La Chambre which was called "Godfroy's on the Pottawatomie Trail." This trading post was built where the Saulk trail (now Michigan Avenue) and Pottawatomie trail (which ran along the Huron River) converged. The post was in a good location as the last trading post before entering the



large settlement of Detroit, and the first trading post after leaving that location.

Most likely the trading post would have been a rough hewn square log structure. Perhaps some customers would be lounging in front or camped by the shore of the river. The three major tribes using both the trails and the river for transportation were the Ottawa (Odawa), the Ojibwa (Chippewa), and the Pottawatomie who had formed an alliance known as the Three Fires. The Wendat (Wyandotte) Indians also traveled through the area. The Huron River is said to have been named by the French who thought that the Wyandotte Indian hair style of shaved sides and stiff hair in the middle reminded them of the spine of a wild boar – which they called “huare” and which eventually was anglicized as “Huron,” according to Charles Chapman’s *History of Washtenaw County, Michigan* published in 1881.

Like other trading posts of the time, we can imagine that Indians, trappers and hunters could exchange the fur of beaver, deer, bear, fox, wildcat, wolf, otter and muskrat for powder, shot, muskets, cast iron cooking pots, axes, knives, beads, silver breast plates, bracelets, and other items.

We learn more about Colonel Gabiel Godfroy in *The Story of Ypsilanti* written by Harvey C. Colburn, published in 1923, and now available for sale in re-print at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum Archives. Godfrey was a man of influence and ambition as well as some wealth. Like his partners, Pepin and La Chambre, he was not a friend of the British and supported the Americans in the war for independence. He was 51 years old when he established the trading post in 1809 and, like his partners, was firmly established in Detroit where he held office as an assessor, operated a ferry across the Detroit River to Canada, and owned a milling business. It seems that he continued to live in Detroit while he owned the trading post, and he also owned 68 acres of land in Detroit and another 200 acres in Dearborn. Along with his son in law, James

McCloskey, he served on the Detroit Board of Selectmen, on which there were only five members. We know that in 1814 Godfroy was one of the trustees of historic St. Anne’s Parish (the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest continuous Catholic Church parish in the nation still in existence) and that by 1815 he also owned a tannery in Detroit. His commission of Colonel is from the First Michigan Regiment.

His partners, Pepin and LaChambre have also left their mark on history by supporting the Americans instead of the British. In fact, at one time, a British officer, Colonel Burke, wrote a letter to the Pottawatomies in an effort to turn them against the Americans, and the letter fell into Pepin’s hands. Pepin made sure that the message was delivered after he added this postscript: “My Comrades: You know that I have always spoken to you as a brother and this time I am incapable of lying to you. He who writes this (Burke) is neither a Frenchman nor a priest, but a rascal who has been chosen by the English to deceive you.”

The trading post did not last long. It burned and was rebuilt once but the treaties of Detroit and Saginaw removed the Indians from the area. In the year 1811, these three ambitious men took advantage of the new opportunities for land ownership in what would become Ypsilanti, and purchased large tracts of land in the area known as “French Claims”. The claims began at the river and then followed the line of what is now Forest Avenue southwest for about two miles and then the line turned southeasterly for two miles again where it intersected with the river. This area composed about two square miles, or around 2,500 acres, and the river became the eastern boundary. The deeds were signed by President Madison along with the three Frenchmen who partnered in the trading post. Two of Godfroy’s children also shared in the ownership.



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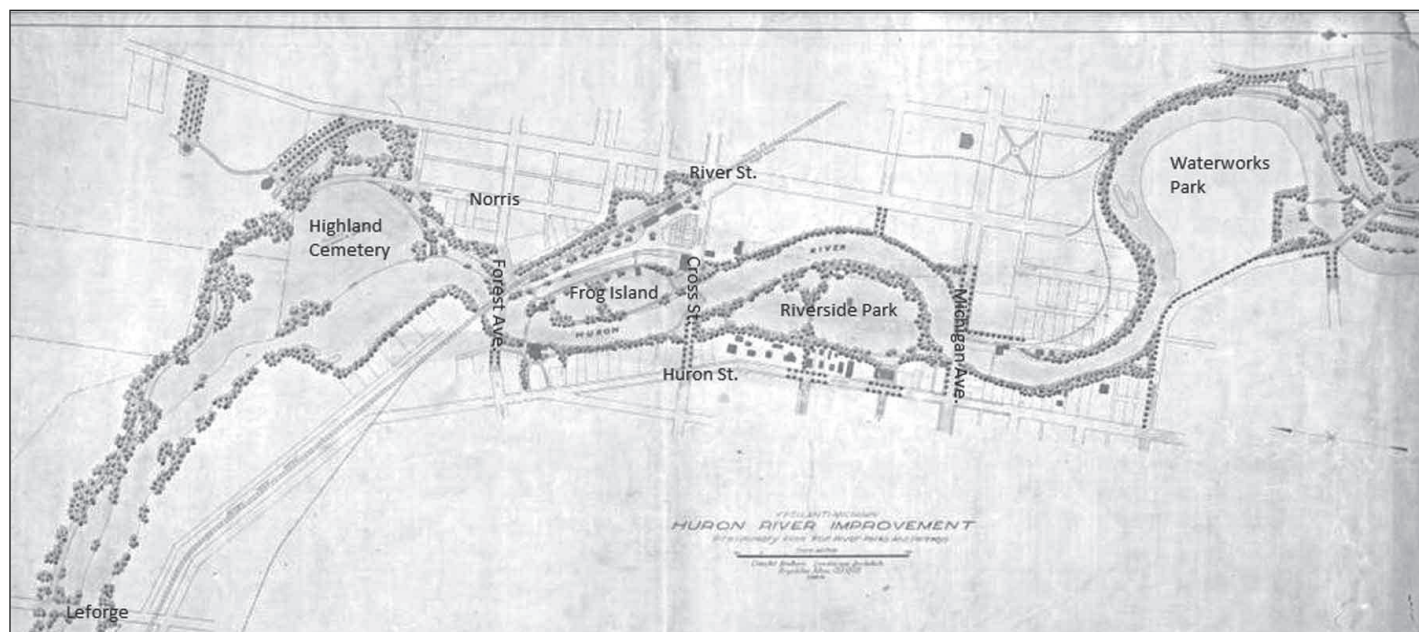
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In 1913, the Olmsted Brothers were commissioned to give advice on how to help the town grow and to provide a healthy living environment for its citizens.

By 1823, the river, and the water power it offered, was quickly bought up by nineteenth century industrialists such as Norris, Harwood, Hardy and Reading, who all built dams for harvesting the river power. When the railroad was built in Ypsilanti in 1838, stockyards holding sheep, pigs and cattle lined the river bank. Far from the clear waters we see today and could imagine when the trading post flourished, looking down from Heritage Bridge we would have seen waste – both human and animal – and garbage of all descriptions – flowing in the river, certainly no place for a tranquil park.

The Godfroy family sold their land on the river to some of the wealthy industrialists who had taken advantage of the river power, before the age of electricity. Soon elegant and picturesque mansions lined the high banks of the Huron River, many with ornate terraced gardens which lined the sides of the cliff. Because the river often flooded, the lower part of their property could not be built on, and without stable banks would be considered boggy and marshy – what today we know as wetlands and were then called “flats.”

It could be that the first recreational use of this land occurred in 1886 when the Ypsilanti Toboggan Slide Compa-



It could be that the first recreational use of this land occurred in 1886 when the Ypsilanti Toboggan Slide Company was formed by four young men.

ny was formed by four young men. A 200-foot wooden slide was constructed starting at the second story window of an existing barn on Huron Street (about where Riverside Arts Center now exists) and in trestle like fashion with a drop of 50 feet. The wooden structure was packed firm with ice from the river. Thrill seeking Victorians could provide their own sleds or rent one for a modest fee. It seems that this was a spectator sport as much as one for participation, as an audience could watch women and girls in long dresses and men and boys screaming past them as they made the chilling descent from a second story window high above the river.

By 1892 the city formed an official Ypsilanti park system when a group of women determined to transform public land into a park where a cemetery existed at Cross and Prospect Street. The original bodies had already been moved to Highland Cemetery. The land was soon transformed into a pleasant place to walk with flowered paths and even a pond and fountain known as Luna Lake. Visitors were said to arrive by train from Detroit and Ann Arbor to enjoy this tranquil space.



The following account could have been the inspiration of the beginning of a park on the river. About 1908 the Quirk family donated their large Victorian mansion to the city of Ypsilanti for use as a town hall, replacing the small town hall/jail located on the north east side of Cross and Huron Streets. Not only were the residents of Ypsilanti given a stately building, but it came complete with terraced gardens and riverside land. A "Landscape Design for Development for Quirk Park" was done by the



About 1908 the Quirk family donated their large Victorian mansion to the city of Ypsilanti for use as a town hall.

Monroe, Michigan firm of J. Joseph Poleo and shows a meandering series of garden paths between the mansion on the bluff and the river. Harvey C. Colburn indicated in his book, *The Story of Ypsilanti*, that the flats behind the city hall were used for "pageants" and athletic events for the nearby high school. The rest of the area, which is now Riverside Park, was held in private hands with the "ribbon lots", extending in the French way from Huron Street to the river.

In 1913, the Olmsted Brothers were commissioned by the small town of Ypsilanti, whose population was then about 6000, to give advice on how to help the town grow in such a way as to not only attract business and industry, but to provide a healthy living environment for its citizens. As far as the Huron River was concerned, the Olmsted Brothers were frank in their criticism of its neglected and defiled state saying in their report: "The Huron River with its large natural reservoirs and its steep channel, was long

ago claimed for economic uses, by water power development in a small unsystematic way. Many mills were built but most of them have since fallen into disuse and decay, and the river is now largely in a picturesque state of neglect. Its shores now overgrown in many places, pools and rapids break into monotony (sic), while railways and public roads cross and re-cross it in many places."

The report went on to chastise the city for neglecting the riverfront, which at that time was often used as a garbage dump with raw sewage, waste products, and chemicals flowing into it daily. The report continued: "The river, with its many advantages as a naturally beautiful feature of the city, is now almost wholly ignored, or worse, it is defiled and treated as a menace to adjacent property." The Olmsted Brothers suggested that the flood plain between Michigan Avenue and Cross Street, unsuitable for building, could be used as a public park. The firm also provided a drawing of a string of parks throughout the city on the Huron River, which included what would become Frog Island and Riverside Park. In a more detailed drawing of Riverside Park there is an access bridge from Michigan Avenue in the vicinity of where the 2015 Heritage Bridge is newly located!

Perhaps with the need for employment during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the possibility of municipal projects funded by the Fed-

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eral Works Progress Administration, Olmstead's ideas began to take shape. During this time, the city was able to collect the deeds to the many parcels of land that now make up the 14 acres of what we now know as Riverside Park. Some were purchased and some were donated. We read in an Ypsilanti Press article in 1932 that the Detroit Edison Company not only donated the hill and land to the river behind their property, but paid for the land to be landscaped to conform to the adjacent slope and land of the park. The city purchased the old Greek Revival home at 126 North Huron Street and demolished it in order to provide an entrance to the park between St. Luke's Church and the Ladies Library. We read descriptions of this entrance to the park, which sound charming, involved rock gardens along the slope on the way to the park, and remnants of them can still be seen.

With a polluted river running through it and the river bank still being used for trash and garbage disposal, River-

side Park was nowhere near the scenic refuge we all enjoy today. With movement to clean up the river in the early 1980s, Riverside Park started to resemble the beautiful landscape we now enjoy. Even in the early 1970s, I viewed the river every day when I drove my husband to work at Eastern Michigan University, in our \$45 VW Beetle. As we crossed the river, it was always interesting to see what color the river would be – red, purple, green, or brown. This ongoing color change was caused by chemicals from the upstream paper company being discharged into it. Because few families and children used the park for picnics and pleasure, it gained the reputation as a dangerous place to be. Motorcycle gangs were known to use the land behind City Hall as a place to race their bikes up and down the terraces after dark and drug activity could be observed. I remember one day in the 1970s, resolving to bring my young family of five children to the park, that we had to stop as a man, during the

heat of an August day, dressed in a long fur coat, made dog-barking noises at us when we passed him by the river. Thankfully those days are now but a distant memory with the beautiful park that we all now enjoy.

Ypsilanti is a town of optimists and hard working generous volunteers and during the past 30 years citizens have joined with city leaders to reclaim the park and help form it into the enjoyable river vista that it is today. Clean water practices have all but stopped chemicals, pollution, and garbage from spoiling this waterway which is now deemed a "Natural River" by the DNR. Over this time, new paved walkways have been added, a bathroom building was erected, new light fixtures and electrical outlets were installed, and a beautiful cement stairway was built that now provides an entrance from Huron Street near the Riverside Arts Center. A gazebo and fishing pier now also grace the waterfront. The "tridge" connects the park to both Depot Town and adjacent Riverside Park. Fishing habitats have been established, and the river itself is part of the new 100-mile waterway which can be enjoyed by paddling enthusiasts.

As you enjoy your next visit to the park – whether it be to an auto show, Elvis Fest, or the highly popular beer fest, or merely through a casual walk, please take a moment to appreciate the many changes that have occurred in these few acres. I hope that this little journey through time has provided you with an understanding and further appreciation of our beloved Riverside Park – which is truly the heart of Ypsilanti.

*(Jan Anchuetz is a local history buff and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*



In 1932 the house at 126 North Huron Street (shown in this 1908 photo with Mrs. Harrison Fairchild) was purchased by the city and demolished in order to provide an entrance to the park between St. Luke's Church and the Ladies Library.





Ypsilanti Historical Society

# APRIL ..... Movie Nights

**Starting Time**  
**7:00 pm**

220 North Huron Street  
Entrance to Archives is on North  
Side opposite Parking lot

**Friday, April 1, 2016** .....  
**HARVEY** 1950, Running Time 104 Minutes

Elwood P. Dowd (Jimmy Stewart) and his friend Harvey are on a mission to spread happiness in the world. There is one problem, as Harvey is a six foot three inch tall white rabbit that only Elwood can see. Harvey, you see, is a pooka. Elwood's sister Veta and his niece, Myrtle Mae, who live with him and Harvey, want a normal life, and plan to commit him to a sanatorium. Cast includes: Josephine Hull, Victoria Horne and Harvey.

**Friday, April 8, 2016** .....  
**OLIVER TWIST** 1922, Running Time 74 Minutes

A silent film adaptation of the Oliver Twist Story by Charles Dickens. Oliver is a young boy raised in a workhouse and apprenticed to an undertaker. He eventually ends up with a gang of thieves. At the same time, there are family secrets waiting to come to light. Cast includes: Jackie Coogan as Oliver and Lon Chaney as Fagin.

**Friday, April 15, 2016** .....  
**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER** 1922, Running Time 123 Minutes

On the night of April 14, 1912, the RMS *Titanic* struck an iceberg and the ship, said to be unsinkable, began to sink. This is considered the most accurate of the Titanic movies.

**Friday, April 22, 2016** .....  
**JANE EYRE** 1943, Running Time 97 Minutes

Classic film adaptation of the novel by Charlotte Bronte, starring Orson Wells and Joan Fontaine. Jane Eyre is a governess in the household of Edward Rochester, with whom she falls in love. All is not well, as Mr. Rochester has a secret living in the attic.

**Friday, April 29, 2016** .....  
**LAURA** 1922, Running Time 88 Minutes

New York City police detective Mark McPherson is investigating the murder of Laura Hunt, who was killed by a shotgun blast to the face. The detective is surprised when Laura returns from a weekend away and in good health. Cast includes: Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews, Clifton Webb and Vincent Price.





## *George Ridenour -* **An Appreciation**

BY PEG PORTER



*George Ridenour,  
a regular volunteer  
in the YHS Archives,  
passed away on  
December 11, 2015.  
He will be missed by  
all his friends and colleagues.*



During the second week of December, the YHS lost yet another of its dedicated and productive volunteers, George Ridenour. You could find George sitting at the desk in the Archives studying the computer screen. He appeared to be somewhat of a curmudgeon, not given to a lot of small talk. He knew the print resources, particularly the numerous directories that lined the shelves and would give direction to the most appropriate resources for the visitor's needs.

George was an Ypsi boy. Born in Ann Arbor, he grew up on Clark Road and graduated from Ypsilanti High School. Upon graduation he joined the Army and saw action in the Viet Nam War. Later he would return to his home town and study at Eastern Michigan University. He was a social worker for the VA hospital in Ann Arbor. After his retirement, he discovered the Historical Museum and Archives. He also moved to Cross Street Village, to live in a classroom of his former high school. He was steeped in the stories of Ypsilanti, its places and its people. He knew Ypsi's history as only a native can.

I knew George primarily as a contributor to Gleanings. During the time I was actively involved in the editing of the YHS publication I reviewed and commented on a number of





his articles. His contributions were varied in tone and subject matter yet they were always interesting. George went beyond the retelling of stories from old issues of Ypsilanti newspapers. He had the journalists “nose” for finding stories, researching them and preparing them for publication. One of his last articles for Gleanings grew out of visits he had with a neighbor at Cross Street Village.

Most importantly George had the gift of storytelling, not all writers do. I believe it is a gift whether inborn or gained from listening to stories as a child. I’ve heard professional writers discuss the origins of storytelling. The general consensus is that teaching someone to be a good storyteller is nearly impossible. How George acquired the ability I do not know, but that he shared his talent with the readers of Gleanings is our good fortune. Go back and read “On the Banks of Sneak-a-Leak Creek” or revisit the story of “Eph Thompson,” the young black Ypsi boy who ran away with the circus and became one of the foremost elephant trainers of his time. George was contacted by one of Thompson’s British descendents, a real-life example of how local history can have far-reaching impact.

Someday I envision the publication of “The Best of Gleanings.” You can be sure George’s work will appear in its pages.



*(Editor Notes: George Ridenour was born to Joseph Walton Salley and Phyllis (Hagopian) Salley on November 7, 1945 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The couple divorced and Phyllis married Floyd E. Ridenour of Ypsilanti in 1954; Floyd adopted Phyllis’ three children, which is how George became George Ridenour.*

During the course of his lifetime, George dedicated himself to serving others. He helped military veterans file for G.I. benefits at the Veterans Administration, prior to that he counseled terminally ill AIDS patients and their families. He was also a dedicated organizer for the Ypsilanti High School Class of 1964 Reunions, without being a class officer. There was not a day that went by that George was not online checking the status of his former classmates. More recently, he specialized in genealogical research and writing for The Gleanings, for the Ypsilanti Historical Society, until failing health prevented him from doing so.

While hospitalized, George continued to counsel veterans. One veteran who spoke at George’s memorial service said that when the computer failed to cooperate, George wrote out everything longhand for his clients. On December 11, 2015, George passed away. For those who knew, loved, and relied upon him, George will be greatly missed; he will be remembered as a true humanitarian.)





# Summer & Winter Fun at Riverside Park

BY ROBERT & ERIC ANSCHUETZ



The favorite crawdad spot was under the Cross Street bridge at Riverside Park.

Growing up as children in Ypsilanti is great because there are truly four distinct seasons and so much outdoor activity to enjoy in every one of them. Spring means that the end of school is drawing near. Warm weather promises to be just around the corner, and children can once again play outside without jackets. Summer means the end of school and brings on carefree days where the only concern will be what games to play and who will be the next Tigers' opponent. Fall for children means the drudgery of going back to school, but it also brings back cooler days, playing in the leaves, Halloween, and renewed hope for the Detroit Lions. As nice as all of those seasons can be, equally enjoyable for children growing up in Ypsilanti is the winter season.

There was so much for children to enjoy in the Ypsilanti-outdoors in any season in the decades gone by, and the opportunities are still there for the current generation. One of Robert and Eric Anschutz's favorite summertime pastimes growing up in Ypsilanti in the 1970's was to go down to the Huron River at Riverside Park with a couple of jars to catch crawdads. The size of the crawdads ranged from "baby size"

(about a half inch long) all the way up to "big momma" (five inch) and "big daddy" (10 inch) status. Of the hundreds of times the boys went down to the river, they only saw the "big daddy" variety once or twice.

For the uninitiated, crawdads look like miniature lobsters and reside in freshwater streams and rivers. They swim backwards in a flash of dirty water caused by them flipping their tails on the muddy bottom of the river. The technique that Robert and Eric used for finding and catching crawdads was to wade through the water and lift up rocks that they might be hiding beneath. There was a remarkably high percentage of seeing one under a rock that was lifted – the hard part was catching them! The bigger the rock, the bigger the crawdad. It was funny how there never seemed to be more than one crawdad under a given rock – they must be highly territorial.

Anyway, once the rock was lifted, Robert and Eric would place a cup or jar under water about a foot behind the crawdad. Then they would slowly move the cup forward until it got close enough to the crawdad to scare it into its reflex action of scooting backwards in a cloud of mud. You never knew if

you caught one until the water cleared and you looked into the cup. 90% of the time, the cup was empty, and when that happened the boys jumped up out of the water and onto a large rock to make sure that the large escaped crawdads didn't get aggressive and go after their big toes! Really small crawdads were sometimes caught by cupping two hands together and using the same technique as with a jar. Once the water drained through their fingers, the boys would often have a flapping little crawdad in their hands. No one would ever try this technique with a "big momma" or a "big daddy!"

Catching a large crawdad definitely required a jar or a cup instead of bare hands, and it usually meant standing on a rock that raised above the water line so the toes weren't exposed to an onslaught of pincers (most local boys mistakenly called them "pinchers"). Big crawdads always seemed to spot their attempted catcher before he could lower the jar in the water. The crawdads would extend their claws up and behind their heads in the most aggressive pose imaginable. If a kid caught a big one, he wouldn't dare put it in his hands, because he usually knew by experience how much dam-



age it could do if it pinched him. Several crawdads that were caught in the Huron River only had one pincer, and some were in the state of regenerating a new one. Whether the single pincer was due to predatory behavior and fights, or through genetic mutations caused by prolific amounts of paper company chemicals in the water will never be known. The boys always released the crawdads once they caught them, because they didn't have a place for them to stay alive if they brought them home.

Local Ypsilanti boys' favorite spots for catching crawdads was either under the Forest Avenue train bridge or under the Cross Street bridge at Riverside Park. The really big ones seemed to be reserved for Riverside Park, and they could always count on a "big momma" near the Riverside Park shoreline. One time when they were in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the late 1970's, Robert and Eric happened to come across the biggest one they'd ever seen – definitely a "big daddy!" It was on the Depot Town side shoreline of the Cross Street bridge. This one was definitely 10 inches long, if not a foot. It resembled its larger lobster cousins. The boys spent a long time trying to figure out how to catch it. They were scared out of their wits trying to get close enough to try to get it. There was something strange about this particular crawdad, though. It didn't assume the aggressive stance of pincers behind the head like the smaller ones did. It just kind of laid there. Robert and Eric were all convinced that it was plotting some kind of maneuver for making a huge cloud of dust to try to make its escape. However, as they got the bucket behind it, it still didn't move. They ended up scooping the thing up with the greatest of fear, but also with the greatest of ease.

Robert and Eric admired the size of the huge "big daddy" crawdad and decided to take him home and show it to their siblings and parents. The crawdad never moved much that day, and by the next morning Robert and Eric

found him dead in the bucket. He was the only one they ever took home and he died not too long afterward. Looking back, it is fairly certain that he was coming to an end of his life even while in the river, or they never would have been able to catch him in the first place. Feeling terrible that the crawdad died under their care, this incident taught Robert and Eric a lesson about not trying to interfere with nature's plan for crawdads, and they resumed their "catch and release" practice from then on.

As fun and carefree as summertime is for Ypsilanti children, winter brings a whole new set of fun and adventure. Robert and Eric anxiously awaited the first snow of the season for days off of school due to snow days, and the sure prospect of sledding at the "Four Hills" at Riverside Park. It's not clear how far in Ypsilanti lore the name "Four Hills" extends back, but it was certainly the common term for the terraced banks behind Huron Street well before the Anschuetz family moved to Ypsilanti in the 1960's. The name referred to the four terraces (or humps in the hill) behind the old city hall, leading down a steep bank and on to the Huron River in Riverside Park. At one point in time, long ago, Robert and Eric could imagine that these terraces were the home to beautiful flowerbeds. By the time that they were growing up in Ypsilanti in the 1970's, those flowerbeds were ancient history and the hills served no other purpose than to provide a great place to sled



Catching crawdads in the Huron River was a favorite pastime of kids growing up in Ypsilanti.

for the Ypsilanti youth.

Robert and Eric enjoyed skating at the frozen-over tennis courts at Prospect Park, but they were never very good at it. Their sledding skills were almost unmatched, however. They were both fearless and brave enough to spend hours sledding in the freezing cold. Riverside Park was an underutilized park in the summer when they were growing up in the 1970's. At the first sign of snow, however, kids from both sides of Ypsilanti's dividing line, the Huron River, seemed to congregate at the park to go sledding. It was one of the few times when East Side kids got to meet their West Side counterparts. Over the years, Robert and Eric's parents bought them and their siblings many sleds. It seemed that no matter how tough the plastic sleds were, they were no match for the Four Hills. We kept K-Mart in business during the winter purchasing new sleds every couple of weeks. By the very nature of the four hills' layout, sledding down the hills led to a smooth ride over the first bump, but the following ones led to progressively higher flights through the air with hard landings on the next hill. Of course, there were strategically placed 100-year-old trees at the bottom of the four hills, which were known to injure several Ypsilanti children each winter.

In the end, after breaking many of the expensive sleds, many kids usually resorted to a cheap strip of plastic that was sold in stores as a blue rolled-up sled. The plastic sleds offered two challenges: they didn't offer any cushion at all, and, at least when they were new, they had the propensity to go back into their original curled shape making it very difficult to jump on them. Many kids also went through many plastic "saucer" sleds that were, appropriately enough, shaped like a saucer. These sleds offered the added thrill of spinning around while going down the hill.

Robert and Eric were never content with merely getting on the sled and





Sledding at the four hills in Riverside Park.

gliding down the hill. They usually would try to get a running start from the top of the hill and dive head first onto the sled while trying to keep it from rolling back up. They usually went head first on their stomachs, but over the thousands of runs that they took, they tried every position possible. The first hill was gentle enough, but by the second and third hills, they literally were flying through the air and landing hard on the bottom of the hill, only just recovering before being launched by the next hill. A very successful run was marked by almost being able to jump off the third hill without hitting the bottom of that hill – instead landing directly on the smooth slope of the final hill. Another mark of a successful run was sledding all the way to the river. There were several small trees growing at the very edge of the river bank, and it was always the mark of a superior run to sled all the way across the service

road and to the bank of the river, only to be “saved” by grabbing onto a tree trunk by the river’s edge. It was rare to have conditions good enough to be able to perform this feat, but they did it on more than one occasion.

Robert and Eric would go up and down the four hills for hours, often daring each other to make more spectacular runs. They would challenge each other to go down the hill backwards, spinning, or blindfolded by their ski caps. Thankfully, none of them had the courage (or stupidity) to try standing up! Sometimes, they would take a route down the old sloping road that led from the top of the hill to the bottom next to the old carriage house of the old City Hall. That route was generally slow and safe. However, there were many trees in that area. One time Robert and Eric dared their sister Jennifer to take a ride in the fresh snow down the opposite side of the

road through the forest of trees and underbrush. The bottom of that run was marked by two trees that had to be navigated perfectly through the middle in order to make it successfully. Jenny was certainly brave enough to take any challenge, so she attempted the dangerous sledding run. Unfortunately, she ended up hitting one of the trees and ended up having to go to the hospital with a mild concussion!

After hours of sledding, Robert and Eric and their friends would come home as frozen as icicles. They would almost always sled well after darkness. Riverside Park was illuminated by street lights, and it became dark as early as 5:00 pm in Ypsilanti in the dead of winter. They would walk home through Frog Island in the beautiful moonlit night. They would usually take another one or two slides down the banked slopes of Frog Island before making their way up the Forest Avenue hill on their way back home. They would take off their shoes or boots and there would be ice and snow caked in their socks. Their feet had long before stopped feeling the pain of the stinging ice and snow. They would race to take their gloves and shoes off in order to place their hands and feet directly on the radiator in the family room of their Victorian house. It took awhile before they thawed out, but the only thoughts that they had were of going back to the Four Hills again for more sledding the next day.

*(Robert and Eric Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti on River Street and are regular contributors to the Gleanings.)*



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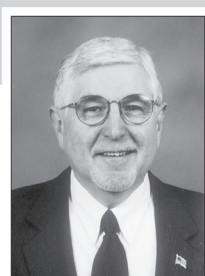
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# Sweet Memories

BY RODNEY BELCHER

From my earliest memories, I remember the elation I would feel as the car slowed and I looked up at the neon sign of the two tiny bakers carrying a humongous rolling pin. Even before I knew what the glowing red and green letters spelled out, I knew it was donut time. Terry Bakery meant sweet goodness!

Looking back, I don't even remember why my grandmother, who was the architect of these excursions, would have stopped, except for those delicious deep fried pastries. She was an advocate of shopping "downtown" as she didn't particularly like the new malls that were popping up along with the slow move out of town for most businesses. So she made her one woman stand and still "traded" at the shops that lined the streets of Ypsilanti at the time. But still, I wonder why the bakery? My grandmother was not afraid of the kitchen and could make her own share of sweet delicacies at home. She took great pleasure in making tried and true desserts and was never afraid to try a new one that caught her eye. But, she couldn't make the donuts...

As I got older, I moved away frequently from my hometown. I spent time in Westland, and then Belleville and finally, Taylor, before coming back home in the spring of 2012. I slowly acclimated myself to the changes, such as the gaping hole along Michigan Ave where the Arlen's shopping center (Flea Market/Secretary of State for the younger set), the old State Police Post and the collection of buildings and shops that used to be between Water and Park Streets. I also was able to revisit the traditional Ypsi landmarks of my youth: Bill's, the Chick-Inn, Roy's; I'm a bit of a foodie.

I had driven past Terry Bakery and noticed that they looked like they were not in business any more. I was a little melancholy at the thought of such a cherished memory being gone. I came home and did a search online and was pleased to find out that they were, in fact, still in business and although the donuts were long gone, they are still producing some of the best muffins and cakes that I have ever had! The store's business days and hours are drastically reduced and they are limited to cakes and muffins due to an issue with obtaining a commercial deep-fryer, but they are alive and well!!

I struck up a conversation with the lady working the counter one day about my love of the store and decided that I wanted to do some research on the storefront and its history. During my digging, I found some interesting information on 119 W. Michigan Avenue.



The Terry Bakery neon sign features two tiny bakers carrying a humongous rolling pin.

As far back as I can go with the resources at the Fletcher-White Archives, from 1896 to now, this space has been mostly used as a bakery or a confectionary store. The directory from 1896 lists it as G.M. Gaudy, whose business is listed as a bakery and confectionary.

George Milne Gaudy was born in 1864 in Canada. He came to the Ypsilanti area around the age of 20 and worked with a local baker, Horatio Haskin, whose shop was located in Depot Town. In May of 1886, he married a local girl, Nellie Jarvis, and together they opened a bakery in 1887 on N. Huron Street. By the time we pick up the history on E. Michigan Avenue, which incidentally was known as E. Congress at the time, Gaudy had established himself as a respected businessman and a purveyor of fine chocolates and sweets. He also dabbled in community service, according to his obituary, having served as mayor, councilman, assessor, supervisor and relief administrator throughout his career. He was named postmaster for the city by President Coolidge in 1925, a post he held for nine years.

Around 1913 the shop was moved to 24 N. Washington where the name changed to Gaudy's Chocolate Shop. In July of 1918, Mrs. Gaudy passed away and their son, Harold, entered the business with his father after obtaining his pharmacy degree from the University of Michigan and serving stateside in the medical corps during World War I. By the end of 1920, after Harold married the former Ellen Kishlar in June, he had settled into business at the choc-



olate shop on Washington. When he passed away at the early age of 47 in 1941, Ellen Kishlar Gaudy operated the shop through most of WWII. The shop evolved into a lunch counter because of wartime shortages of ingredients needed to continue to make the premium chocolates that established the Gaudy name and reputation statewide in the candy business. Ellen Gaudy sold the shop in 1944 putting the name Gaudy into the history book of Ypsilanti businesses.

From the time George Gaudy relocated to N. Washington Street through the rest of the decade of the 1910's, 119 E. Michigan was primarily a grocery business. From Olds & Freeman to Caderet & Dupont to finally Caderet's, the business spot was not making products, just selling them. There is one interesting fact from the time of Olds & Freeman; Earl Freeman who was a clerk at the grocery ended up selling real estate and insurance after returning from WWI. He founding the Freeman Bunting Insurance agency still in business in downtown Ypsilanti today.

The 20's brought in the Renton family ownership of the shop. George Daniel Renton was born in 1887 to parents who settled here from Scotland. There are two highlights from the Renton era that I found: a burglary from the 20's at the Renton bakery and the fact that all of George's siblings and his parents lived seventy plus years, except for him. Four of the six Renton siblings, Agnes, Jane, John & Janet, never married nor had children (George had one son and his brother William had four sons). Not long after the robbery, George turned to sales, becoming a representative for King Midas Flour Mills out of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He passed away in 1947 in Florida at the age of 58.

From the mid 20's until 1951 when Leon Terry took ownership of the shop, it was called Gauss Baking Company. Gauss was a commercial baking company with a large factory in Ann Arbor.



George Gaudy moved to Ypsilanti in 1884 and established himself as a respected businessman and purveyor of fine chocolates and sweets.

Which brings us to the 1950's and the birth of Terry Bakery. Leon Terry was from Plymouth and had worked at Ford and another bakery before he came to Ypsilanti to establish his own bakery. His wife, Zella, and he ran the bakery for over a decade until her death in 1962. They had one son, Leon Cass Terry, who had a successful career in the medical field.

Leon Cass Terry graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in pharmacology two years after his mother passed away. He worked in a couple of drug stores, one in Ann Arbor and one in Traverse City until 1966 when he started medical school in Milwaukee at Marquette University. After receiving his degree at Marquette he did his internship at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York. Finishing his internship, he enlisted in the Navy and served as a surgeon for the Public Health Service, with a rank of Lieutenant Commander.

After his service in the Navy he returned home and did a residency in the neurology department at McGill University in Canada. He returned home with his wealth of education and experience and taught at the U

of M medical school from 1978 until 1989 when he joined the staff of professors at the University of Wisconsin from 1989 through 2003. In addition to the schooling and teaching he has done, he has been on several advisory boards and held many consulting roles over the years. Somehow, despite all the activity in his life, he snuck in the time to receive his MBA from South Florida University in 1994. Even at the age of 75, he is in private practice in Iowa.

So there you have it, a quick history of one building in our fair little city, a city that oozes history and stories. Who knows what secrets and adventure all the other buildings hold?

*(Rodney Belcher is a native of Ypsilanti and attended Ypsilanti High School and Eastern Michigan University. In addition to being a volunteer in the YHS Archives, he is a writer, genealogist and photographer.)*



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# Senator Alma Wheeler Smith



*(This is the text of the speech informing the audience at the Eastern Michigan University Women and Gender Studies 40th Anniversary celebration of the basis for Alma Wheeler Smith's selection for the Inaugural Mary Ann Starkweather Award. These remarks were given by Jacqueline Goodman, Chair of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Eastern Michigan University.)*

Senator Alice Wheeler Smith was selected to receive the first Mary Starkweather Award.

The WGST Community Board is extremely pleased to present Senator Alma Wheeler Smith with the first Mary Ann Starkweather Award. Senator Smith, like Mary Ann Starkweather, is a formidable public servant, who has consistently advocated for women, for EMU, and has demonstrated a strong record of commitment to social justice. She has selflessly promoted progressive values in her work, with sustained generosity of spirit.

Senator Alma Wheeler Smith was raised by activist parents who fought in the struggle for Civil Rights, giving generously of themselves to the community. Her father was the first African American Mayor of Ann Arbor in the 1970's, and her two sisters, Illinois Appeals Court Judge Mary McDade, and retired Washtenaw County Judge Nancy Wheeler, were, like Senator Smith, committed to social justice.

Senator Smith served in the Michigan State Legislature for 14 years, sitting on the powerful Appropriations Committee. Her focus was consumer protection, public health, and human rights. She authored a public health law that increased citizens' protection from lead in the environment. She funded the first successful drug court program, protecting individual privacy on genetic testing from insurance companies and employers, and she wrote the law that

provided funds for breast and cervical screening through the University of Michigan "Healthy Asian American" project, which she helped found.

Alma Wheeler Smith promoted human rights through her authorship of a law to divest Michigan retirement funds from Darfur, in order to pressure the Sudanese government to end the genocide in Sudan during the 2000's. She promoted equality by introducing a constitutional amendment to bring Michigan into compliance with the Americans for Disability Act, and through a law that funded the first early childhood education

program, enhancing equality of opportunity.

Senator Smith has been a consistent advocate for Eastern Michigan University, and was the keynote speaker for the first Washtenaw County Women's Diversity Summit in 2007. She was the first African American to run for governor on Michigan's Democratic ticket in 2001, and was Congressman David Bonior's choice for Lieutenant Governor in his 2002 campaign for Governor.

Since her term-limited retirement from the Michigan Legislature, Senator Wheeler Smith has been serving on the Boards of University Bank, SOS Crisis Center, the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, the Legislative Retirement System, and the Southeast MI Regional Transit Authority (RTA). Earlier in her career Senator Wheeler Smith served Washtenaw County as a Cable Casting Commissioner, a School Board trustee, President, and County Commissioner.

She has lived in Salem Township since 1978, where she raised her three children: Conan, Dana and Tara. Now adults, her son Conan Smith carries on the family tradition of political activism as a Washtenaw County Commissioner, and is married to Michigan State Senator Rebekah Warren. Dana is the mother of Senator Smith's



Mary Ann Starkweather.





Mary Ann Starkweather donated the Starkweather Memorial Chapel in Highland Cemetery in memory of her husband. The Richardsonian Romanesque chapel was dedicated in 1889 and included 12 art glass windows from the Tiffany Glass Company of New York City.



Starkweather Hall on the Eastern Michigan University campus was constructed in 1896 for use by the Students' Christian Association. The Association appealed to Mary Ann Starkweather for funds and she bequeathed \$10,000. The building was built for a total cost of \$11,000 and was originally named the Starkweather Religious Center.

grandson, 8-year-old Isaiah.

Senator Smith has been recognized on both sides of the political aisle as one of the most knowledgeable and effective leaders in Lansing, and has earned numerous awards from health, social, legal and human service organizations. We are pleased to add to this list of awards.

Congratulations, Senator Smith for being the first recipient of the Mary Starkweather Award. You are most deserving!

*(Editors Note: Mary Ann Starkweather was a local philanthropist who used her inheritance to make contributions to local charities, churches and the City of Ypsilanti. Over the years she gave the following: Hebe Fountain on South Huron Street, Starkweather Memorial Chapel at Highland Cemetery, Starkweather Hall on the campus of Eastern Michigan University and her home on North Huron Street which became the Ladies Library.)*



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# Johnson Smith CATALOGS

BY GERRY PETY

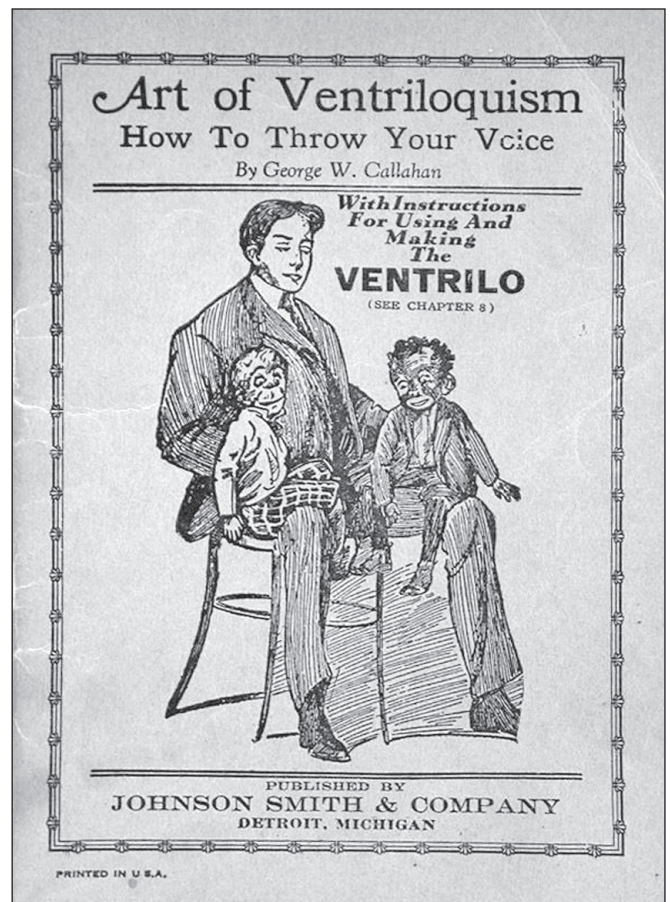
Ladies, have you ever noticed that no matter where you were raised in the United States; guys always seemed to be in a backward developmental stage somewhere between 2 to 3 years behind same-age, female friends. Many pre-pubescent theoreticians used to think it was strictly genetic. A so-called gender gap in pre-adolescent development of males stemming from an early age that sometimes carried on even into adulthood? Shocking you may say, that some cultural contaminant would cause males to literally slide backwards several notches! You know, even to the point of adult males acting juvenile at times! Guys just refusing to grow up!

After speaking with several male 'Seasoned Citizens' who habituate the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives, I have come to an astonishing conclusion! That this very common malady and lack of social development was probably due to a reading habit picked up earlier in life. This retarded development in young boys was probably not due to genetics, religion, culture or even what guys eat, but rather what we were exposed to from a very early age: the infamous and sinister "Johnson Smith Catalog"! And it was definitely available in Ypsilanti!

This was a publication that could be had by any male child who read magazines or comic books such as; "Superman," "Green Lantern," or "The Hulk." For contained on the back pages of these publications were advertisements for this 'rite of passage' that almost all of us guys were exposed to. For one thin dime and one nickel postage, we could be exposed to a publication that made our imaginations go into bizarro mode on steroids!

Along with our "Mad Magazines," comic books and "Uncle Billy's Whiz Bang" our teachers and nuns used to confiscate these magazines (never to be seen again-hmm!) on the assumption that they were detrimental to our mental health and stability. They attempted to intervene to stop the early stages of this mental disorder. BUT! By the time we were caught reading these banned comic books and "Mad Magazines" during school hours we had already mailed in our own order for THE "Johnson Smith Catalog". That 'baby' was on its way to our mailbox!!

Now some of you ladies have probably never seen or heard of a Johnson Smith Catalog, it was a guy thing, but let me assure you - they do exist even to this day. Contained therein, were things beyond our wildest imagination. These were

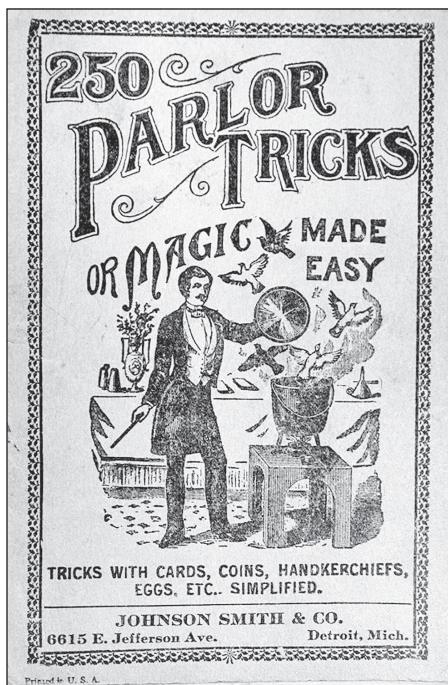


1930s Johnson Smith Art Of Ventriloquism Novelty Mail Order Catalog.

not the girlie or nudie magazines from our dad's cache of verboten reading, of um, tasteful 'viewing' materials. Johnson Smith was a company that preyed upon us young boys with novelties, magic tricks, whoopee cushions, x-ray goggles, (better to see you girls with) very realistic fake vomits, itching powder, and soap that made you dirtier the more you used it on your hands or face. This gag soap was way too cool, in an age where we still used bar soap in school! Imagine coming out of the lavatory dirtier than when you went in - great fun! It used to drive the nuns crazy in my school. Gaud, along with carbide cannons and carbide granules, this stuff was absolutely GRRRREAT - AND IT WAS AFFORDABLE TOO!

Who could possibly study your readin, riten', or rithmetic, when you could study your Johnson Smith Catalog for something to spend your allowance on! It was just small enough to hide within your school book during class, giving your instructor the misconception you were studying - your report card would prove otherwise of course! One of my good friends used to collect shrunken heads from some jungle place in deep, dark Borneo - supposedly they were genuine head hunter trophies if you read the description in the Johnson Smith catalog. Hopefully, it was not some unfortunate missionary or your crazy sociologist uncle Howie traipsing around in that jungle. Good grief! (we later found out that they were made from old, worn out baseballs that had been heavily 'reconfigured' to look like a shrunken head! Probably from Briggs Stadium in Detroit where Johnson Smith





1930s Johnson Smith 250 Parlor Tricks or Magic Made Easy Mail Order Catalog.

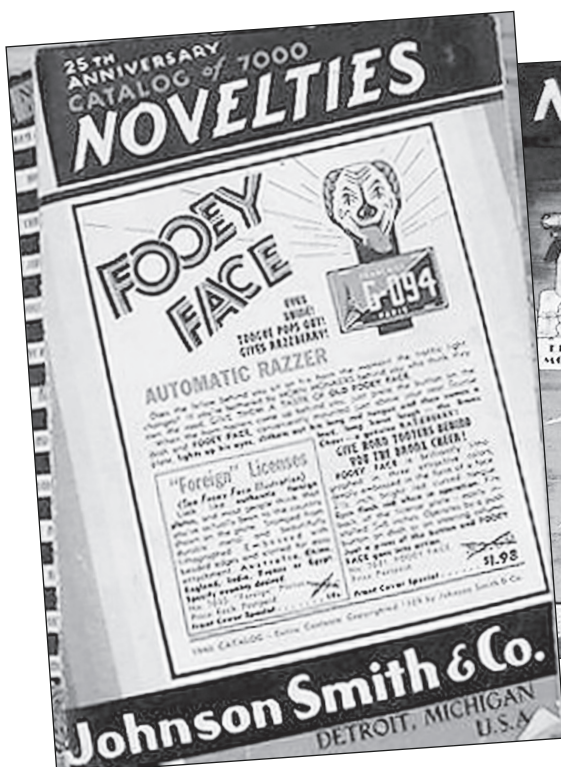
may not understand...and they still are small enough to hide within a college textbook if you know what I mean.

(Gerry Pety is the Director of the YHS Archives and regularly contributes articles for the Gleanings.)

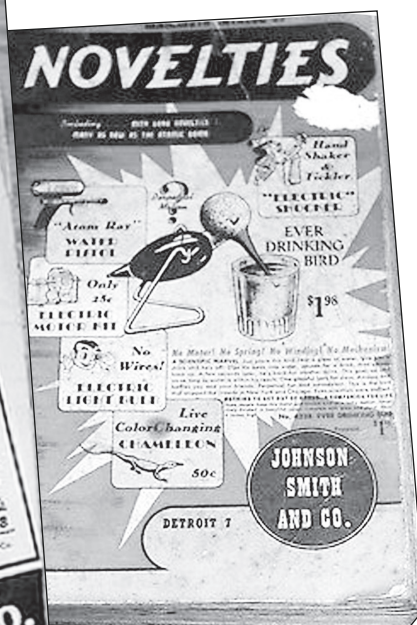
was headquartered for many years).

How about a genuine petrified frog, or a guaranteed sorcerer's medallion - to ward off the 'evil eye', we used to get from our teachers when we were bad. Where else could you get carbide powder and fuse to make metal garbage cans explode on the 4th of July. Just blame it on Johnson Smith! I do not think I ever have seen a Johnson Smith catalog being thrown out - they just kind of melted away from years of going from hand to hand. Sad too.

In 2014 the Johnson Smith Company celebrated its 90th birthday in the United States and its 100th birthday in 1915 in Australia, where it all began. And, hey guys, ah, you can still order the new catalogs on the internet. Use your favorite search engine and see the amazing stuff they sell now! Just don't let your wife or significant other catch you with it! They



1948 Johnson Smith Novelties Mail Order Catalog.



Johnson Smith 25th Anniversary Mail Order Catalog.

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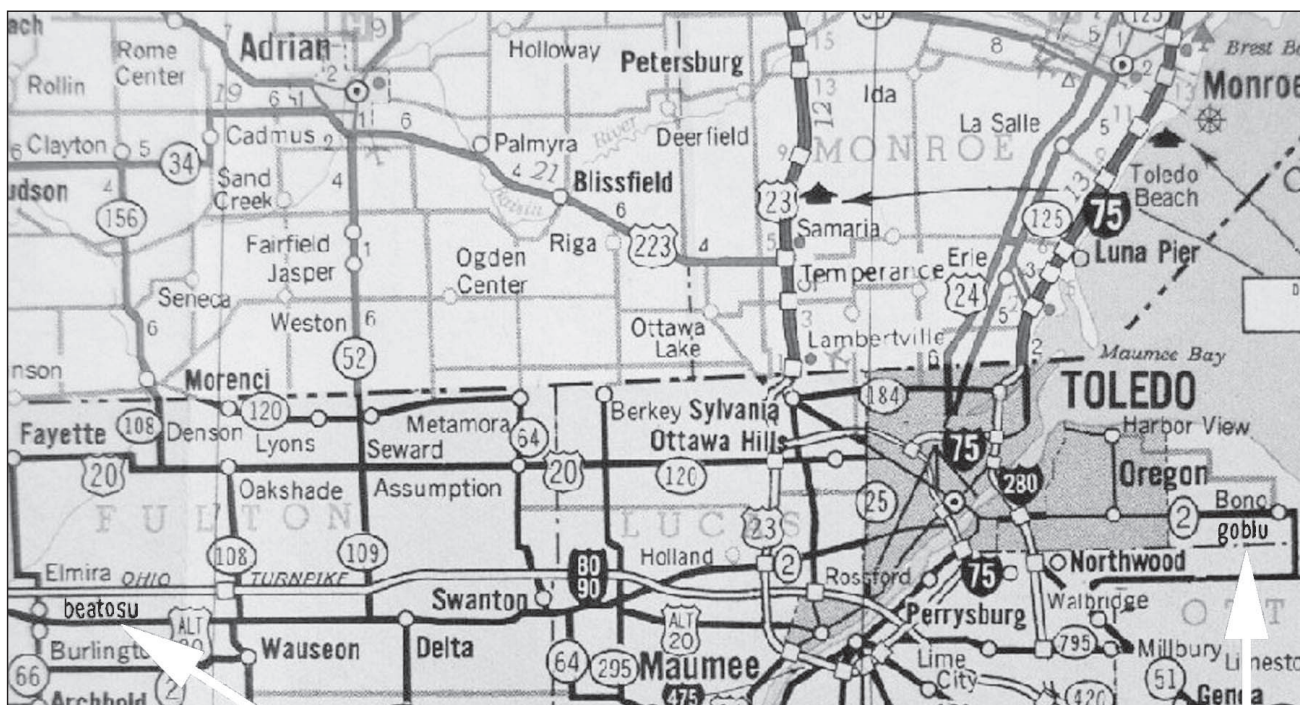
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# THE MAP HOAX

BY AL RUDISILL



Note the towns of "beatosu" and "goblu" that Fletcher had inserted into the official 1978-1979 State of Michigan Highway map.

Peter Fletcher passed away in 2012 but if he were still alive he would be celebrating his 21st birthday this year. Fletcher was born at Beyer Hospital in Ypsilanti on February 29, 1932. Although he was 80 years old at the time of his death, he was only able to celebrate 20 birthdays because February 29th appears on our calendars every four years. Peter always had fun explaining this phenomenon and told people to *"conserve your pity and bestow it upon those who truly need it when you consider the circumstances of those of us born on February 29th."*



Peter Fletcher was born in 1929, a leap year, and if he were alive today he would claim that he just turned 21.

Over the years Peter held numerous political offices within Michigan and in the Republican Party. In 1975 he was named National GOP Committee Member and in 1976 he served as Gerald Ford's Michigan Campaign Manager during the presidential campaign. In 1972 Fletcher was appointed Chairman of the Michigan State Highway Commission. In this position he controlled a budget of \$5 billion and a work force of 4,300. Although he is well known for his many statewide contributions in this position, he will always be remembered for putting the fictitious towns of "Beatosu" and "Goblu" on the official highway map for the State of Michigan.

In the early 1970s a fellow University of Michigan alumnus was teasing Fletcher about the green and white colors of the Mackinac Bridge, which were the official colors of Michigan State University. Fletcher checked it out and found that the bridge colors were in compliance with federal highway regulations and therefore he could do nothing about it. However, he did have control over the State of Michigan highway map so he had the fake towns "Beatosu" and "Goblu" inserted into the 1978-1979 highway map as a way to reference his preference in the archrivalry between the University of Michigan and Ohio State University.

When then Governor Milliken received a few complaints about the map he indicated that Fletcher, as State Highway Commissioner, was entitled to a \$60,000 salary that he did not accept and felt that the small cost of the ink required to reprint the state map was inconsequential.

Some of the many other positions held by Fletcher include: Trustee on the Board of Michigan State University, Ypsilanti Representative on the People's Community Hospital Board, Treasurer and Board member of the Ypsilanti Players, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the Chamber Citizens Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal, Director of the Rotary Club of Ypsilanti, Chair of the Ypsilanti Area Washtenaw County Cancer Crusade, Director of the Ypsilanti Community Chest, Director of the National Bank of Ann Arbor, Board Chairman for the First Methodist Church, Chair of the Washtenaw County Republican Committee, and

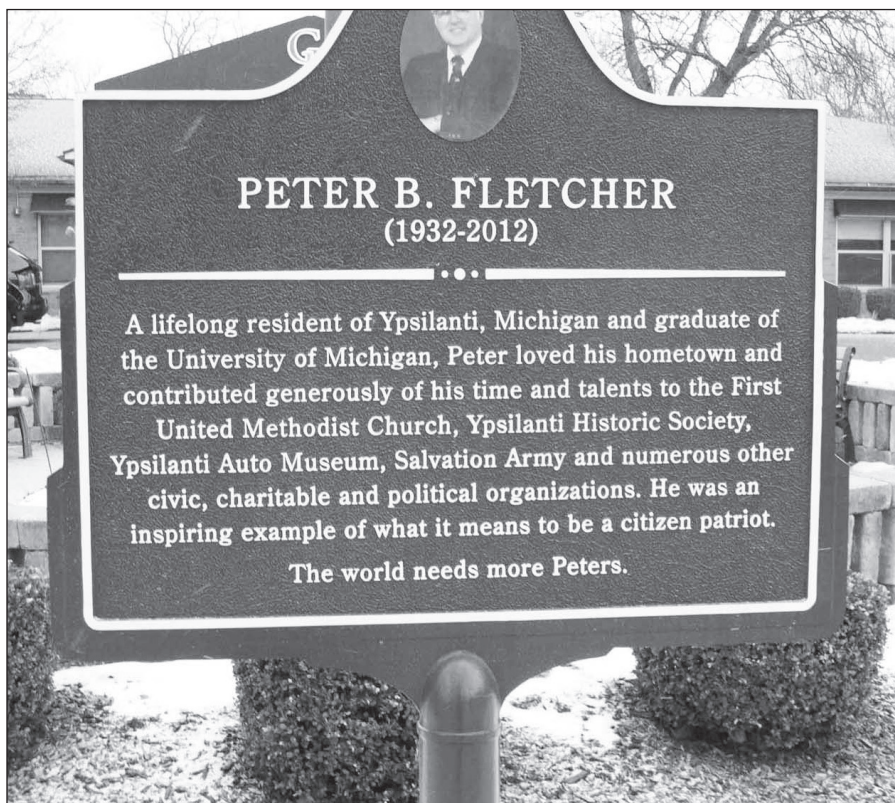




The official 1978-1979 State of Michigan Highway map.

many others too numerous to mention.

Recently, a new sign has been installed in front of the Gilbert Residence. The Sign Reads: "Peter B. Fletcher - 1932 – 2012 – A lifelong resident of Ypsilanti, Michigan and graduate of the University of Michigan. Peter loved his hometown and contributed generously of his time and talents to the First Methodist Church, Ypsilanti Historical Society, Ypsilanti Auto Museum, Salvation Army and numerous other civic, charitable and political organizations. He was an inspiring example of what it means to be a citizen patriot. The world needs more Peters."



The Peter B. Fletcher sign that Dr. Richard Robb arranged to have placed in front of the Gilbert Residence.

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# Ypsilanti's Forgotten Hero



The 50th Annual Reunion of the 20th Michigan Infantry Ypsilanti Unit in 1915. The Unit saw the "elephant" or battle for the first time in action at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862.

BY TRACE BRUSCO

**B**yron Mac Cutcheon stumbled into the town of Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1855 a bright and buoyant 19 year old man. His aspirations to further his education drove him to this hotbed of education. Originally, from Pembroke, New Hampshire, Cutcheon found a job in the surrounding area as principal of Oak Grove Academy in Lenawee County, Michigan. Cutcheon took the job as a means to pay for his college education. Cutcheon began attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1859. Upon graduation in 1861, Cutcheon received an offer to be principal and teacher of ancient languages, mathematics and mental and moral philosophy, at what is now Ypsilanti High School.

Byron Cutcheon spent 1861 and most of 1862 teaching the young people of Ypsilanti to use their intellect in order to effectively work through their disagreements. But an oncoming clash of racial ideologies and quarrels on the subject of state's rights would send Cutcheon's beloved students headlong into a bloody civil war. A conflict that would forcibly shove all of Cutcheon's learned rational aside and instead challenge the mettle and sprit of the young people he taught.

After a year and a half of viewing the war from the outside, Byron Cutcheon began to feel the yearning that many of his students felt just before they went to offer their services to the United States. His personal conflict ran rapid through his mind. On one hand, he very much loved his studies and teaching his students, but on the other, he felt a personal debt that many-a-man felt that would propel them to serve their country. His heart eventually led him to Jackson, Michigan on August 15, 1862, where he began to assist in raising a full company of volunteers for the war. These young men would build up a war record that would be seldom challenged throughout American military history. Fighting in two theaters of the conflict, they would eventually be mustered out of service on May 30th, 1865, one month after the conclusion of the war.

Byron Cutcheon became Second Lieutenant Byron Cutcheon and the 20th Michigan departed from Jackson in the closing days of August, bound for Detroit. From Detroit, the regiment boarded a boat to Cleveland then boarded a train to Pittsburg. In less than a week's time, Cutcheon and the regiment found themselves marching into Washington D.C. Unknown to the regiment and the newly appointed junior officer, Cutcheon would quickly show his worth on and off the battlefield leading coolly and calmly, all the while showing the keenness and intelligence of an educator on the battlefield.

The 20th Michigan saw the "elephant" or battle for the first time in action at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. Luckily, Cutcheon made it out of the massacre unscathed. His first action had been an unexpected turnout. The battle of Fredericksburg ended as a disaster of epic proportions when his unit and the beloved Army of the Potomac were routed. Spirits would never reach a lower point for the men of the Army of the Potomac.

The winter crossover to 1863 brought new advantages and opportunities for the Union army in the west. The Mississippi River was almost in the Union's hands. One final stronghold was left standing. To General Ulysses S. Grant, the key was Vicksburg, Mississippi, which had been besieged by the Union army since the summer of 1862. Grant needed more units to deliver a knockout of the final stubborn Rebel resistance. Byron Cutcheon and the other soldiers of the 20th Michigan found themselves on the move, once again. This time they were en-route to the banks of the swampy Mississippi River. The newly appointed Major Byron Cutcheon, found himself in a new land and in a new command. But before he and the 20th Michigan could prove their worth to General Grant, there would be a gauntlet of battles on the way to the Mississippi.



On May 10, 1863, Cutcheon's finest hour drew near upon the banks of the Cumberland River, near Jamestown, Kentucky. Though merely a small skirmish, the battle of Horseshoe Bend remains etched in Byron Cutcheon's legend. While being pressured all through the night and much of the morning by potshots from a numerically superior Confederate force, Major Cutcheon was given orders



Byron Mac Cutcheon rests in section 100, lot 42 of Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

to take half of the 20th Michigan and a few dismounted cavalry units and push the stubborn Rebels out from their position on an old farm less than a mile away. As the conflict unfurled, the situation seemed destitute for Cutcheon. His men were falling from rigorous rifle fire from in and around the old farm house. Cutcheon's first command was taking a turn for the worst. But fortuitously for Cutcheon, Lieutenant Colonel William Green, the commander of the 20th Michigan, was observing the pressure Cutcheon was under. He decided to bring up the remainder of the 20th Michigan as support. But disastrously, during the slow, meandering advance, Lt. Col Green fell mortally wounded. Major Cutcheon now found himself at the head of the 20th Michigan. Cutcheon quickly took the initiative and led a fierce counter-attack against the stubborn Rebels, dislodging them from in and around the old farmhouse. This maneuver and result would earn Cutcheon the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism. On June 29th 1891, twenty-eight years later, he received his award. Leading by example became Byron Cutcheon's forte. Something he would use throughout the rest of his life.

Following his heroics at Horseshoe Bend, Byron Cutcheon left Kentucky on leave for Michigan. Meanwhile the

20th Michigan continued its advance down the Mississippi towards Vicksburg. During his time on leave, Byron Cutcheon felt the urge to tend to another important matter. He and Marie A. Warner of Dexter, Michigan married on June 20th, 1863. Marie was a student at the University of Michigan and a teacher in Ypsilanti. Marie could trace

her lineage back to the American Revolution. One of her relatives was Colonel Seth Warner, whom at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, fought with great gallantry and zeal. Col. Warner would rise to lead the Green Mountain Boys with Ethan Allen and served competently to the end of the revolution.

With his life in order, Major Cutcheon left his new bride and returned to the 20th Michigan just in time to fight during the waning hours of the Vicksburg campaign. Major Cutcheon would not have to wait long to be called upon to lead the 20th Michigan once again. Stemming from the death of Lieutenant Colonel W. Huntington Smith, our hero Major Byron Cutcheon, now took over command of the regiment permanently. He would go on to see first-hand the fall of Vicksburg and the severing of the Confederate States of America. On December 14th, 1863, Cutcheon was promoted to Colonel of the 20th Michigan, but due to the shrinking unit size, was only granted a Lieutenant Colonelcy.

Subsequent to the end of 1863, the 20th Michigan was once again transferred to the eastern theater of the war. This was due to the massive troop build-up that newly appointed Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant began for his Overland Campaign, in the spring of 1864. Throughout this campaign, Lt.

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Col. Cutcheon and the 20th Michigan saw a consistent bloodbath. From the battle of the Wilderness to the siege of Petersburg, the 20th Michigan certainly fought without waver. Unfortunately, our hero would only see half of this great military campaign. During the battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, while addressing his line at the head of an assault. Cutcheon was struck by shell fragments in the chest. Cutcheon would return three months later, but this time at the head of the brigade. Byron Cutcheon finished the war as a brigade commander and was very much loved by those who he commanded. With brigade command, came sure promotion. Promoted to Colonel, after Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, and then to Brigadier General soon after the surrender of all Confederate armies. This was a gesture to commemorate his outstanding service and to his many commands held throughout. General Byron Cutcheon made his way back to Ypsilanti a war hero.

Due to his education and military status, Cutcheon was able to find work easily after the war. He took a position as a clerk in his brother, Sullivan Cutcheon's law office in Ypsilanti. Sullivan was already a prominent state

representative throughout the Civil War.

Cutcheon quickly graduated in a year and was admitted to the state bar in 1866. Afterwards, he left his brothers office and moved to Manistee, Michigan to open up his own firm with George Bullis, another up and coming lawyer. The firm was to be called Bullis & Cutcheon. Cutcheon would study the law there until 1880 when he decided to try his hand in politics.

Elected to the United States Congress on the Republican ticket in 1882, Byron Cutcheon served eight consecutive years before being voted out in 1890. During his time in Congress, he was appointed the Chairman of Military Affairs, along with thirteen other elected and appointed offices. Upon his homecoming from Washington D.C., Cutcheon remained a massive presence in Michigan's political spectrum. He soon became a member of ten different clubs and societies. In 1895, he became an editor and writer for the Detroit Daily Tribune and The Detroit Daily Journal, publishing over 1000 articles for the papers in his one year working for them.

Finally, Byron Cutcheon had enough. He retired in 1896 and began writing

books. Writing two of the four volumes of Michigan as a Province, Territory and State, as well as a written history of his beloved 20th Michigan Volunteer Infantry. Byron Cutcheon spent his last summers in Traverse City, Michigan and his winters in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Though he always would leave, he would always find his way back to Ypsilanti.

In 1908, Byron Cutcheon died at the age of 72, here in Ypsilanti. Throughout his life, he played the part of an educator, war hero, politician, husband and father of six. Byron Mac Cutcheon rests in section 100, lot 42 of Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti, Michigan. And so it goes for Ypsilanti's forgotten hero, who helped our country succeed in every category fathomable. Which brings us to ponder: What does a guy have to do to get a statue!

*(Trace Brusco is a student at EMU perusing a history major and is completing an internship with the YHS as part of his program. His interests reside in 19th century American History, especially the Civil War that has been one of his passions since he was 11 years old.)*

## Council Approves Eagle Statue *continued from page 6*

**NOTE REGARDING COUNCIL ACTION:**  
***This issue of the Gleanings will be distributed on or near April Fool's day, 2016.***

April Fools' Day is celebrated all around the world as a day filled with practical jokes and general silliness. It is unclear how this silliness



began but some date the practice back as far as 1392. Two fairly recent examples of April Fool Hoaxes in the United States are:

- 1) In 1996, Taco Bell announced that it had bought the Liberty Bell to help ease the national deficit. When the company claimed it would be renaming it the Taco Liberty Bell, thousands of citizens were fooled and called to complain. The company revealed it was a practical joke a few hours later, but not before reporters asked White House press secretary Mike McCurry about the sale. Creating a joke of his own, he responded that the Lincoln Memorial had also been sold and would now be known as the Ford Lincoln Mercury Memorial!
- 2) In 1998, Burger King ran an advertisement in *USA Today* announcing its new "Left-Handed Whopper," which was specifically designed for left-handed Americans by rotating all condiments exactly 180 degrees. Burger King revealed the hoax the next day but claimed that thousands of customers had requested the new sandwich at their restaurants.



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