

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SUMMER 2017

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival

BY BILL NICKELS AND RICH BAIRD

Planning for the 2017 Ypsilanti Heritage Festival has been intensive and this year's festival will feature a number of exciting events including hot air balloon and helicopter rides in Frog Island Park. An extensive array of musical programs and children's activities will also be featured. The current Chair of the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Corporation is Scott Virgo. Chairing this year's Festival Planning Committee is Les Heddle who has assembled a large group of volunteers to plan and operate the festival.

It was during the early 1970s when several independent events occurred that led up to our first Ypsilanti Heritage Festival that was held in 1979.

Ypsilanti's sesquicentennial in 1973 featured a grand celebration that was several years in the planning. America's bicentennial celebration began with the Broadway play 1776 in 1969. Patriotic merchandise was sold throughout 1975 and 1976. Television programming featured American history specials. Interest in our history was awakened by both our local sesquicentennial and the national bicentennial.

Seemingly unrelated, Michigan's legislature passed the Accommodations Tax Act in 1974. The legislation permitted Michigan counties to impose and collect a tax on hotel/motel bills. The revenue collected could only be spent on the promotion of tourist business in Michigan counties.

During this time, the demolition of the Towner House, Ypsilanti's oldest frame house on its original founda-



Poster for the 2017 Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

tion, was threatened. Inspired by the surge of interest in history, local citizens led by Nathalie "Nat" Edmunds and Jane Bird formed the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation dedicated to saving the house. Michigan's Local Historic District Act of 1969 enabled local governments to form historic districts and enact ordinances to protect those districts from inappropriate change. In order to prevent the casual demolition of Ypsilanti's historic resources, Nathalie and Jane took advantage of the enabling legislation and led the creation of Ypsilanti's historic district in 1978.

Experiencing a high from the creation of Ypsilanti's historic district, Jane, Nat, and others wanted to celebrate Ypsilanti history in some way. When

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Ypsilanti Historical Society

220 North Huron Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Museum: 734.482.4990

Archives: 734.217.8236

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GLEANINGS Staff

Editor Al Rudisill
Assistant Editors.....Peg Porter
Fofie Pappas
Design & Layout.....Pattie Harrington
Advertising DirectorSarah Reyes
Finance Director.....Bette Warren
DistributionSarah Reyes

If you have suggestions for articles
or if you have questions, contact
Al Rudisill at 734.476.6658 or
al@rudisill.ws.

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS is published 4
times a year by the **Ypsilanti Historical
Society**, 220 N. Huron Street, Ypsilanti,
MI 48197

From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY ALVIN E. RUDISILL

We are pleased to introduce our new Museum Intern, Sarah Reyes. Sarah replaces Michael Gute who graduated with his Master's Degree in Historical Preservation and is now employed by the Foundation at Wayne State University. Sarah is enrolled in the graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University and will hold the Internship position in the Society for approximately two years.

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

We appreciate the support being provided by the Ypsilanti Ale House and Haab's Restaurant through fundraising events at those establishments. The fundraiser at the Ale House was held on June 20-22 and the fundraiser at Haab's will be held later in the fall. When customers at those events pay their tabs and mention the Ypsilanti Historical Society a portion of the bill is donated to the Society.



Sarah Reyes is the new Museum Intern and will be with us for approximately two years.

Make sure you read the Museum Board Report by Nancy Wheeler in this issue of the *Gleanings* to learn about the many new displays that are now set up in the Museum. Our volunteers do an exceptional job of designing and setting up many different displays in the Museum throughout the year. Thanks to all those who are involved in setting up and taking down these displays.

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.



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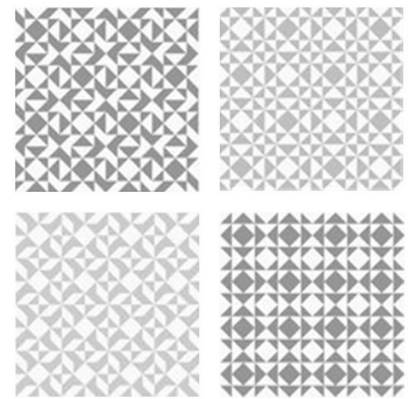


Part of the huge crowds that are attracted to Ypsilanti to attend the Heritage Festival.

Washtenaw County implemented the Accommodations Tax Act of 1974, both an Ann Arbor and a separate Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau were formed. Without local Ypsilanti hotels to support, the Ypsilanti CVB was given the responsibility to promote events. Rich Baird, young and full of energy, was hired as the CVB Executive Director in January of 1978. He was ready to give a community event the support it needed. Rich informed Jane and Nat that the Travel Bureau of the Michigan Department of Commerce had grant money ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000 available. Jane remembers their first thought was to ask them for funds to print a booklet about Ypsilanti's historic district. The Travel Bureau did not have money for a booklet; their money was available for an event. Rich applied for a \$15,000 grant that would "highlight Ypsilanti's historic roots." After applying, Rich received a call from the Bureau saying they were in Ann Arbor and would like to visit Ypsilanti to assess the worth of Ypsilanti's "historic roots." Rich called Nat and said he needed her to join him with the Travel Bureau on a tour of Ypsilanti's historic roots. Just out of the shower, she was ready in ten minutes. Rich

remembers that Nat was always one to remind him of Ypsilanti's history. A week later, Rich learned that Ypsilanti was awarded the \$15,000 grant! Nathalie Edmunds stepped forward and became the event chairperson with a band of volunteers, as remembered by Rich included Tom Dodd, Carolyn McKeever, Marcia Harrison, Sandy Hooker, Sue Jordan, Dutch Jordan, Ron Miller, Chet Jones, Betty Jones, Charles Kettles, and others. Thanks to the wave of interest in our history, the founding of the Ypsilanti CVB dedicated to promoting events, and committed volunteers; 1979 was the year the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival was set in motion. Thinking that the middle of August is a time when families are home from vacation and getting ready for school to start, the third weekend in August was picked for the event.

Existing annual Ypsilanti events were promptly invited to take part. Jane Bird was president of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation which sponsored their first annual Historic Home Tour on Mother's Day 1978. For 1979, the home tour was moved and became a center piece of the new Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festi-



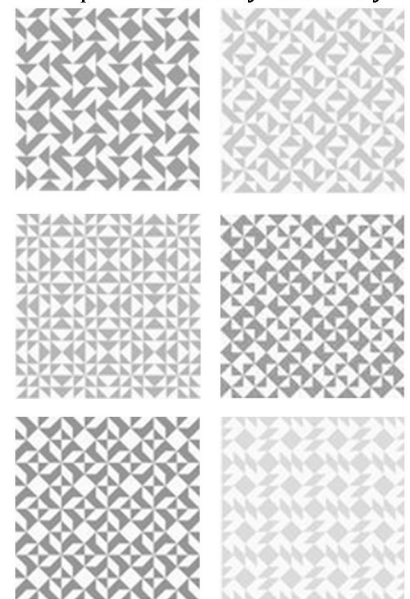
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Huge crowds view the Rubber Ducky Race from the Cross Street Bridge and the Tridge connecting Riverside Park with Depot Town and Frog Island Park.

val. The home tour expanded from seven homes in 1978 to twenty-two homes in 1979. Some were open only on Saturday, some were open only on Sunday, and others were open on both Saturday and Sunday. The Ypsilanti Kiwanis Club moved their annual Chicken Bar-B-Que to the Saturday afternoon of Festival while the Rotary Club moved their annual Pancake Breakfast to the Sunday morning of the Festival.

The specific dates for Ypsilanti's first Heritage Festival were Friday August 24, Saturday the 25, and Sunday the 26. The celebration began early in the week with historical window displays on Michigan Avenue, Cross Street, the library, and city hall. Festival volunteers were treated with a Champagne Party in Riverside Park the Thursday evening before the Festival began. A parade down Michigan Avenue kicked-off the Festival at 9:30 am on Friday.

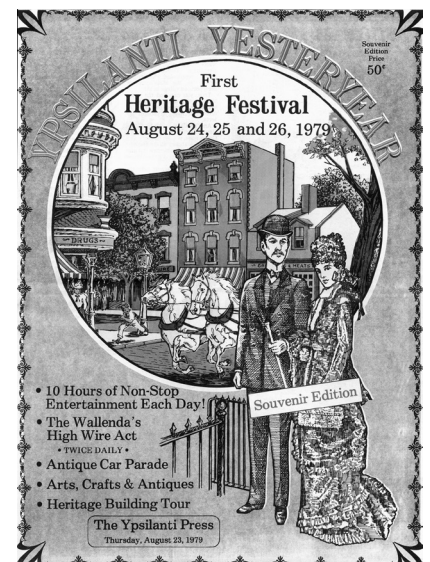
While looking for a feature event, Rich Baird found the very popular Wallenda High Wire Act advertised for only \$1,500 – a very affordable price. They performed free of charge to the public in the middle of Frog Island and were a feature for many Festivals after that.

Ypsilanti's Afro-Community Development Association independently sponsored a Black Arts Festival on the grounds of Perry School the same weekend as the first Heritage Festival. Black artists and craftsmen displayed their wares throughout the three days.

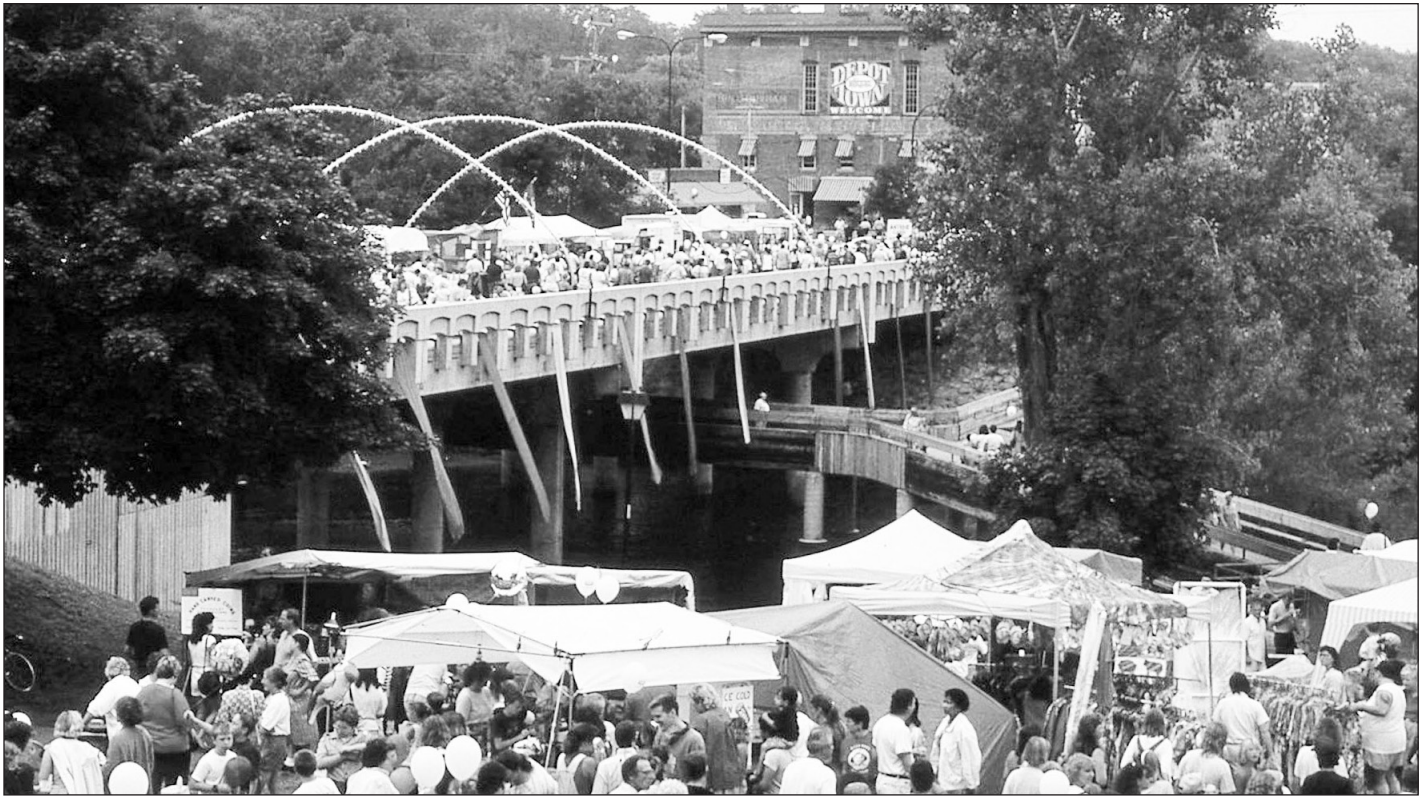
Ypsilanti organizations stepped forward and created events

for Festival. The Historical Museum immediately planned to be open all three days with craft displays and a treasure sale on both Saturday and Sunday. The Arts Council put on the play *Winesburg, Ohio* at the Methodist Church. The Corvette Club did a Road Rally. A Depot Town stage featured Ypsilanti Area Dancers, Ypsilanti Players, American Society of Magicians, Youth on the Move, and Dawn Donut Clowns. The Ladies Literary Club sponsored a lemonade stand while the Presbyterian Church featured an ice cream social. The Huron Valley Rose Society sponsored a Rose Show at St. Luke's Church and the YCUA opened the water tower which provided the rare opportunity to walk around the top high above Cross Street. Ypsilanti's automotive heritage was celebrated in Depot Town with classic car shows on both Saturday and Sunday. The spotlight was on Downtown's North Washington Promenade with car-

for Festival. The Historical Museum immediately planned to be open all three days with craft displays and a treasure sale on both Saturday and Sunday. The Arts Council put on the play *Winesburg, Ohio* at the Methodist Church. The Corvette Club did a Road Rally. A Depot Town stage featured Ypsilanti Area Dancers, Ypsilanti Players, American Society of Magicians, Youth on the Move, and Dawn Donut Clowns. The Ladies Literary Club sponsored a lemonade stand while the Presbyterian Church featured an ice cream social. The Huron Valley Rose Society sponsored a Rose Show at St. Luke's Church and the YCUA opened the water tower which provided the rare opportunity to walk around the top high above Cross Street. Ypsilanti's automotive heritage was celebrated in Depot Town with classic car shows on both Saturday and Sunday. The spotlight was on Downtown's North Washington Promenade with car-



The poster for the first Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival held in Ypsilanti.



The primary entrance to Ypsilanti Heritage Festivals is on Cross Street just west of the Cross Street bridge.

nival rides all three days. The Festival closed late Sunday afternoon with a square dance and another ice cream social sponsored by the American Legion on South Huron.

Like everything, the Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival was destined to evolve over time. During the second year of the Festival in 1980, the Champagne Party for volunteers was expanded and used as a fund raiser with an invitation sent to the whole Ypsilanti community. Old City Hall (the Quirk Mansion next to the Historical Museum) was used as the venue. In subsequent years, the Champagne Party grew into the Ypsilanti social event of the year and continued to be hosted in varying noteworthy Ypsilanti buildings. The Festival parade was moved to 10:00 AM Saturday morning and travelled from Recreation Park down Michigan Avenue, north on Huron Street, east on Forest Avenue, ending in Frog Island. George Bird helped bring the Franzen Brothers circus to the Festival with a big top at Frog Island. The Wallenda High Wire Act returned and moved their free performances to Riverside Park. The Heritage Foundation's Historic Home Tour consolidated back to a Sunday event. Using the old Ypsilanti High School building at Cross and Washington Street, Nat and Bill Edmunds organized an Antique Show and Sale. Continuing to use the Washington Street Promenade, Downtown was a focus with an Antique Car Jamboree on Saturday and a Corvette Club Heritage Road Rally on Sunday.

In 1980, the independent Black Arts Festival returned and was promoted with the Heritage Festival. In addition to

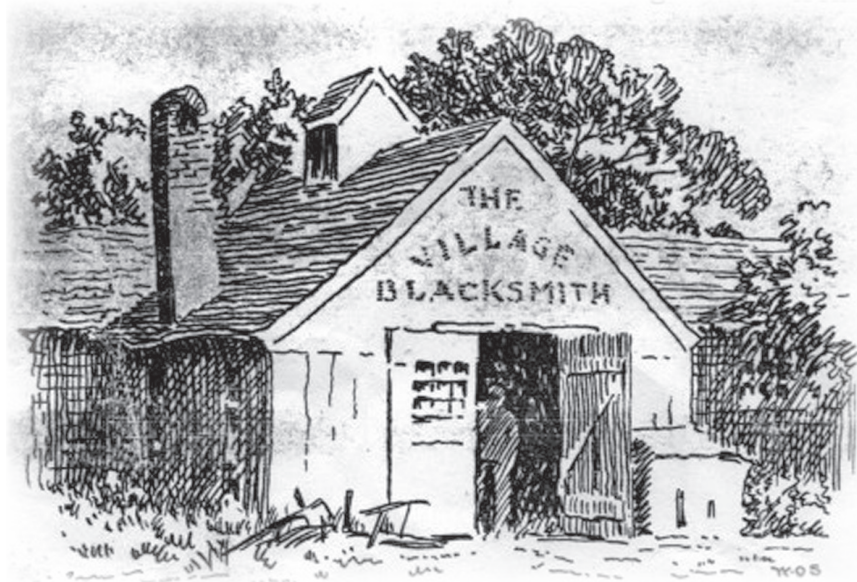
displays, the Afromusicology Ensemble under the direction of Washtenaw Community College's director of music, Morris Lawrence, performed.

In 1984, the *Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival* officially became simply the *Ypsilanti Heritage Festival*. Now, thanks to the leadership of Les Heddle and Scott Virgo, Ypsilanti will enjoy the 39th edition of Heritage Festival.



Ypsilanti Heritage Festival in Riverside Park.

(Along with documents from the Historical Museum Archives, the memories of Jane Bird Schmiedeke, Nathalie Edmunds, Rich Baird, and I collectively contributed to this article. Rich Baird is currently a Governor Snyder staff member and enjoyed reminiscing at the suggestion of Nat Edmunds.)



The poem "The Village Blacksmith" was written by Longfellow in 1840.

MEMORIZATION

BY JACK D. MINZEY

I am not certain as to what happens in public schools today, but in my time as a public school student, memorization was a part of the curriculum. I believe that it might have been the same for my Dad, because although he only went to the eighth grade, he could recite several poems he had learned.

In high school, we had to memorize the periodic tables in Chemistry, and an oration as a part of our tenth grade English class. We also had to memorize a number of dates related to history. In elementary school we had to remember our multiplication tables, but we also were expected to remember several poems. I still remember "Birdie with a Yellow Bill," "Oh How I Love to go up in the Swing," and "I Have a Little Shadow." In high school I memorized the "Cremation of Sam Magee" and a part of Pope's "Essay on Man" along with several other poems. We were required to remember the Gettysburg Address, the Preamble to the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. My wife memorized the books of the Bible; she and others also memorized the American Presidents, in order.

It is probably true that the pedagogy of the times felt that memorization exercised our minds and made us more capable of developing our mental abilities. It was believed, at that time, that the brain was a muscle and, like other muscles, had to receive a degree of stimulation. Today, there is likely far less reason to memorize due to the fact that everyone has a smart phone which immediately gives them the answers to any question which they might have. Actually, every person with a smart phone is a virtual encyclopedia. However, only time will tell if the lack of memorization has any impact on the performance of our memories.

This being said, I still find it enjoyable to occasionally recite some of the verses I learned, and with the use of several mnemonic devices, to have the capability to deal personally with some of the mental challenges which I face. ROY G BIV was one of those to remember the colors of the rainbow and "thirty days has September....." was another. Below is one of the nostalgic poems which I had to learn. It not only provides a rhythmic experience, much like singing a song, but contains some very worthwhile lessons for people to follow in their personal lives.

The Village Blacksmith

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The Smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms*

*Are strong as iron bands.
His hair is crisp, and black, and long,*

*His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can
And looks the whole world in the face
For he owes not any man.*

*Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.*

And children coming home from
school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that
fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church
and sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and
preach.
He hears his daughter's voice
singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's
voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once
more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he
wipes

A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,--rejoicing,--sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task
begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted,
something done
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my
worthy friend
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil
shaped
Each burning deed and
thought!

(Jack Minzey retired from Eastern
Michigan University in 1992. He is a
regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



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The front of the envelope with stamps cancelled in 1911.

An Exceptional ENVELOPE

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ

This is another article in the series that I call The River Street Saga. This time, instead of being about a person or structure on this small street, it is about an envelope which arrived at Forest and River Street over a hundred years ago, was treasured, tucked away, and then traveled hundreds of miles 50 years ago, only to come back home from Pennsylvania last year – over 100 years since its original mailing. What is so special about this small yellowed document? I will share that incredible story with you in this latest story from The River Street Saga.

Growing up in the 1940s, my parents had strict standards which they tried to instill in me. One of them was not to read another person's mail. In fact, to make sure that I followed this rule, they told me that this was a federal crime and they could report me to the mailman and I could go to jail for breaking the law if I ever opened another person's mail!

As a historian, it is hard to keep to this standard when so much *interesting and true* history can be found in letters as well as information that is not written about in books.

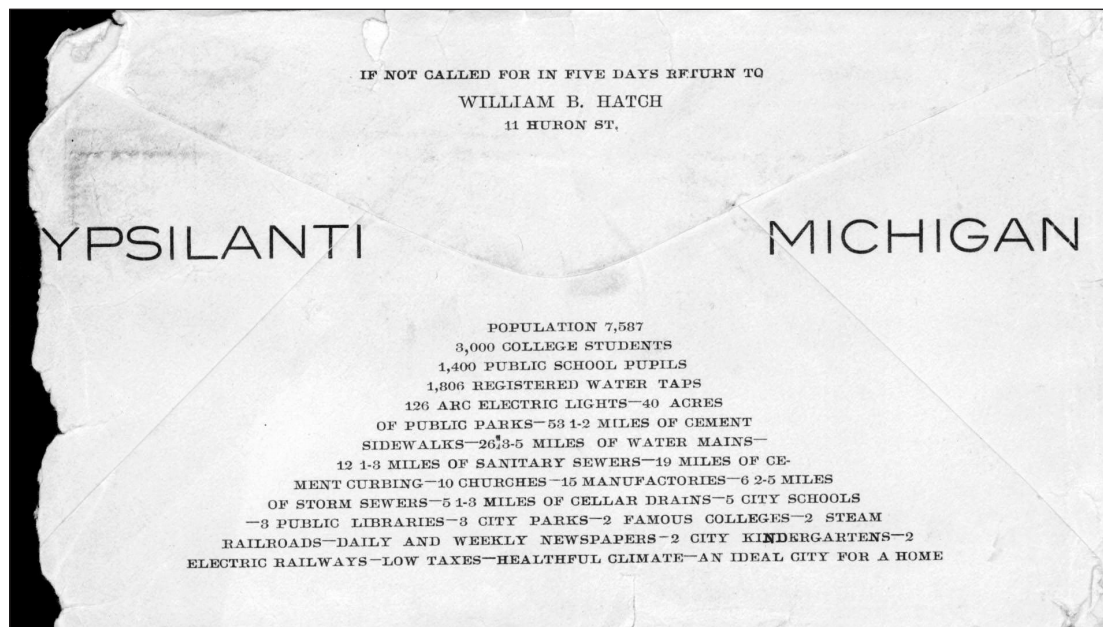
But in this case, the envelope in question was saved empty and had no letter inside, so we won't have to worry about serving time in a federal prison and my parents can rest easy in heaven.

You may be wondering about the history of this envelope which survived over a

hundred years and traveled hundreds of miles. This envelope was in a wonderful mystery treasure chest which weighed about 40 pounds and contained letters, legal documents, pictures, handwritten family history, play bills, hotel receipts, ships passenger lists, report cards from the 1850s, postcards, and so forth, saved by the Swaine family who built and lived in our home at the northeast corner of Forest and River Street. (Jessie Swaine, the last member of the family, died in the same bed, in the same room she had been born in nearly 90 years later; we were the first family to ever buy the home that her father had built in 1875 for his new bride Lizzie.) The mystery box had been sent here by the granddaughter of a Swaine family friend, Audrey Yeager, who had inherited it. Audrey Yeager's estate was distributed to others through the years, and Audrey's Pennsylvanian granddaugh-

ter who inherited the documents asked if I would like to have them returned to their origins at The Swaine House which my family has now called our home for almost 50 years. If you want to know more about this box, you can read the article I wrote for the Summer 2016 issue of *The Gleanings*.

Getting back to this special envelope, it is a small, yellowed, somewhat tattered empty envelope bearing two, two-cent red stamps which were cancelled in 1911. It had been slit open on the side and the contents removed. On the flap side of the still-sealed envelope we read in print: "If not called for in five days return to William B. Hatch, 11 Huron Street, and then written in capital letters on either side of the flap are the words: "YPSILANTI MICHIGAN." Searching city directories at the Ypsilanti Historical Society Museum, I



The back of the envelope containing information about Ypsilanti, Michigan.

learned that William Hatch lived in the city with his wife, Eunice, at 112 Washington Street, but had a nearby office at 11 North Huron where his firm is listed as "Hatch and Gilbert Lawyers, Loans, Real Estate, Fire Insurance, and Collections."

On the front of the envelope in neat and well spaced typewriting we read that it was addressed to Mrs. F. J. (Lizzie) Swaine, Forest Ave., Ypsilanti, Michigan and below this in Lizzie's own handwriting is written in bold black ink "Annual report of P.A. Society L. Swaine Sec'y (sic) April 20, (19)11." It is possible that she shared the draft of her report with the attorney re-

sponsible for the financial aspect of this society. Lizzie Swaine was an officer in the Public Aid Society of Ypsilanti which helped widows, orphans, the elderly and infirmed, and those struggling with rent, coal or wood to heat their dwelling, food, medical care, clothing and other needs before the days of public assistance. It was primarily an organization comprised of wealthy, educated women who had money and time to spare such as Alice Gilbert, Roccena Norris, and other kind women of Ypsilanti who tried to help those less fortunate. Written sideways next to the address, in the slanted style of Lizzie's oldest daughter Florence



Young girl is Florence Swaine in 1902.



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The Swaine house where envelope was mailed to Mrs. F. J. Swaine whose name was Eliza Ann George Swaine or "Lizzie."

is written "Secy of St Lukes PA Society from 1892-1911," referring to her mother and her position within the P.A. Society.

In the top left hand corner opposite the four cents in stamps are the words YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN in bold type and then we learn the magic of this worn piece of paper. The front and back of it seem to be an advertisement for the town of Ypsilanti in the year 1911 which would make it a place that anyone would want to move to, open a business, buy a home and go to school! It reads: "*Located in a beautiful and picturesque plateau 40 miles west of Detroit on the Huron River with its exceptional water power possibilities, presents*

attractive, inducements for industrial enterprise. It is within forty minutes of Detroit on main line (sic) of Michigan Central-New York Central system, Southern Railroad and the Detroit, Jackson & Chicago Railway. It has about eight thousand people and is surrounded by an agricultural area of acknowledged excellence and attractiveness. It is within 30 minutes by half-hour trolley service, of the University of Michigan, and has within it (sic) the Michigan State Normal College, the leading college of its kind in the middlewest (sic), and the Cleary Business College, besides a five-building public school service and equipment rarely equaled in a city of its size.

Pure Artesian table water and the best of mineral waters are invaluable municipal assets. Churches, libraries, colleges and culture combine here to create an inviting atmosphere where capital and labor can co-operate with waiting water and electrical power in creating wealth and permanent homes. YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

If that is not enough to convince a business or family to move to Ypsilanti in 1911, when the envelope is turned over to the back side we can read more of the pleasures and opportunities which the town offered. These are listed in all capital letters for emphasis:

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 MENT CURBLING – 10 CHURCHES – 15 MANUFACTORIES – 6 2-5 MILES
 OF STORM SEWERS – 5 1-3 MILES OF CELLAR DRAINS – 5 CITY SCHOOLS
 – 3 PUBLIC LIBRARIES – 3 CITY PARKS – 2 FAMOUS COLLEGES – 2 STEAM
 RAILROADS – DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS – 2 CITY KINDERGARTENS – 2
 ELECRC RAILWAYS – LOW TAXES – HEALTHFUL CLIMATE –
 AN IDEAL CITY FOR A HOME

Now that you have read this special envelope, perhaps you are thinking, like I am, about what makes Ypsilanti a wonderful place to live and work in the year 2017. Because there was nothing inside the envelope to read, I don't think that anyone will tattle to the postman about reading other people's mail and subjecting us to Federal prison – if indeed what my parents told me was true.

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



Eliza Ann George Swaine. This picture was taken in 1879.

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I Should Have Gotten a Warranty

BY JACK MINZEY

When things begin to wear out they seem to do so rapidly. One look at what I'm pushing around every day, and it becomes obvious that the old heap isn't what it used to be. The radiator doesn't hold as much as it used to, and I'm afraid it may start to leak. In addition, I believe that the head gasket may not be tight enough.

The main pump seems good, but I do detect some occasional wheezing and coughing. I also notice a lot of new squeaks and creaks, and I believe they are from causes which will not be cured by a greasing of any kind. The muffler never did work right, but now the tail pipe is failing. In fact, it had to be inspected twice in the last three years.

The differential is not what it was, and, it looks as though the suspension has dropped a little. I should

be thankful that there is no rust, although I do see a lot of wrinkles on the outer surface. The upholstery is not worn out, but the stuffing certainly has shifted. In addition, the fuel consumption seems to be greater than it was just a few years ago.

However, I suppose I should count my blessings. After all, it is easy to complain and forget all the years of good service that I have had. Still, even though I know I sound like a non-appreciative, complaining wife, I sometimes wish that I could trade him for something more dependable, like a car.

(Note: This article was written and submitted by Jack Minzey. The editors of The Gleanings are not responsible for any nervous breakdowns by husbands when they hear their wives laughing about the content of this piece.)



Tradition.

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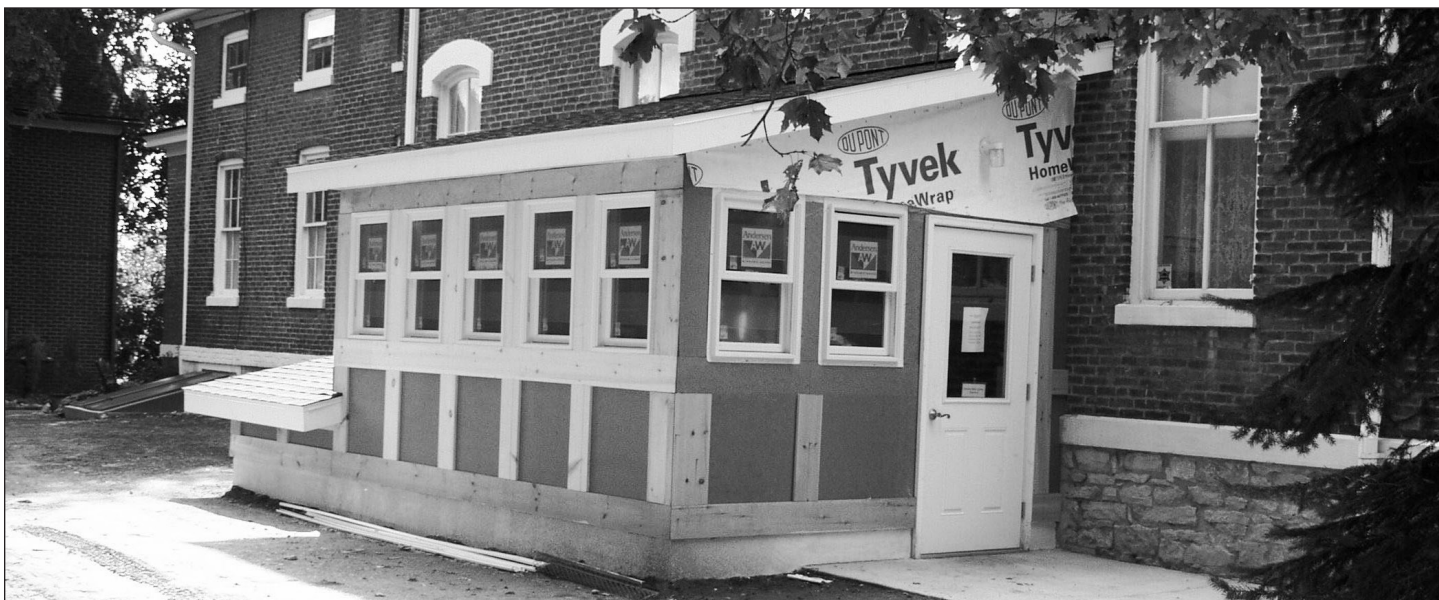
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Wow!

It Seems Like Only Yesterday

BY GERRY PETY, DIRECTOR – YHS ARCHIVES

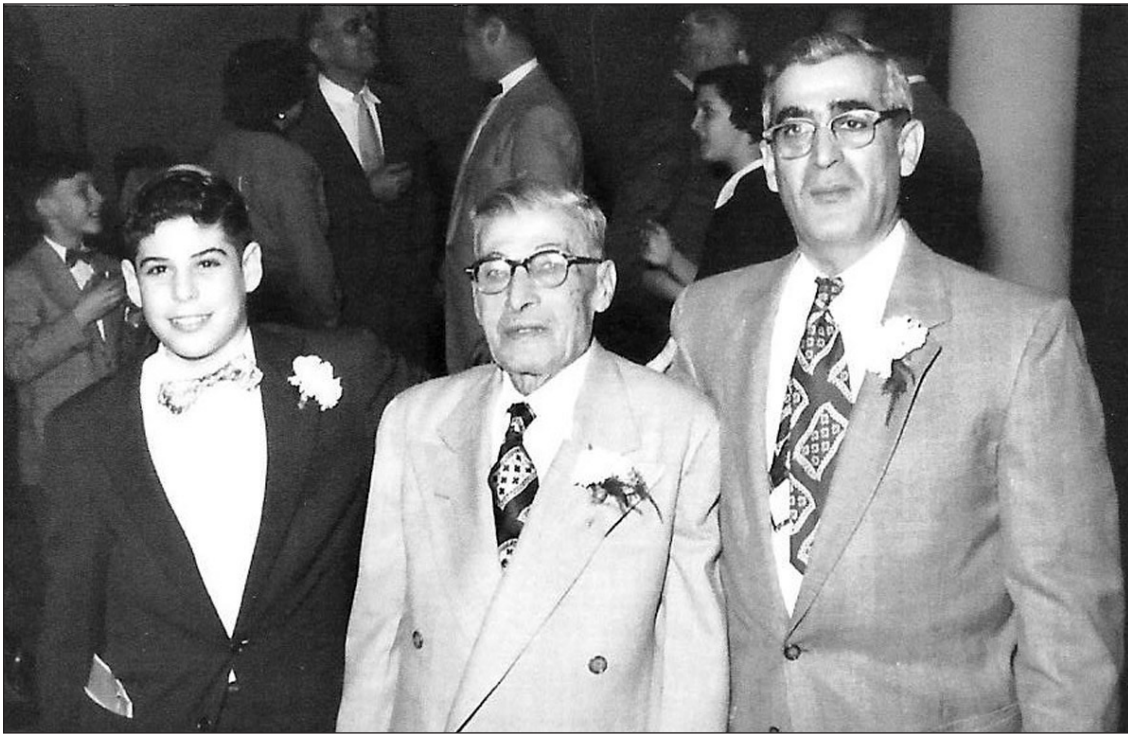
August 26, 2007, was a very special day. It was the day the Fletcher-White Archives moved to its present location in the lower level of the YHS Museum. What a day it was with many of our members showing up just to help bring over the heavily laden files and carton upon carton of books and files. Some of these items had not seen the light of day for more than four years. It was amazing to be involved. Al Rudisill and Jerry Jennings were there too directing traffic, helping place large items along with sorting of a lot of cartons. Also, several non-members had shown up to lend a hand too. For everyone's help we were very appreciative and it was something to see. It went amazingly fast considering what needed to be moved to the new digs!

What a feeling it was that the Archives were finally back in the YHS Museum, from exile considering that the previous building was really unsuitable for our purposes as an archive. It was close to the museum and the rent was, well, more than the place was worth but inexpensive, so I have been told. For those that still remember the old YHS Archive, it was located in what was once the real "carriage house" and "horse barn" of the 1860 Dow House Mansion. It was in back of where the museum is presently situated. It had charm and a spectacular view overlooking Riverside Park. We were able to spy on all of the "goings on" of the annual festivals and events that were scheduled in Ypsilanti's Riverside Park. It was something we all missed for a while! It was when Al and Jerry began to renovate the carriage house to repurpose it for apartments, now under the YHS ownership, we all began to realize the potential problems that were inherent in the old building we had just moved

from, some very serious! Whew, we dodged the bullet, so to speak and it was onward from there on!

2017 is the Archive's 10th anniversary at the new location. During these intervening years it, has grown to incorporate almost three times the amount of research materials and files that we previously had. Since 2007, we have had major expansions from the Eastern Michigan Archives, the City of Ypsilanti and several private collections from individuals and other sources. This enormous expansion has made the YHS one of the largest house museum archives in the state of Michigan. Considering our award-winning "Gleanings," our YHS journal, concerning this history of the surrounding Ypsilanti area, we were finally in outreach mode in this community. Additionally, with this we have also had an increase in the interest of people ably qualified to help in the research of Ypsilanti's splendid past. We have attracted a true cadre of professionals and academics that would make any archive green with envy with their individual and community service to our guests and members. Our Archive is rich in resource materials, and matched with all of our historical writers, researchers, and interpreters we are truly appreciative; as it is the human element that truly distinguishes any institution and makes it great!

It is quite gratifying to me to serve with such a great bunch of people at the Fletcher-White Archives these past ten years along with the YHS management. It has been well worth it, and Al Rudisill made most of it possible. I am certain of one thing, and that is that Louis S. White and Foster Fletcher, for whom the Archives is named, would be pleased with what it is and into what it has evolved!



Three generations of the Pear family (left to right) Ed, Abraham and Max.

The PEAR FAMILY *Coming to America*

BY PEG PORTER

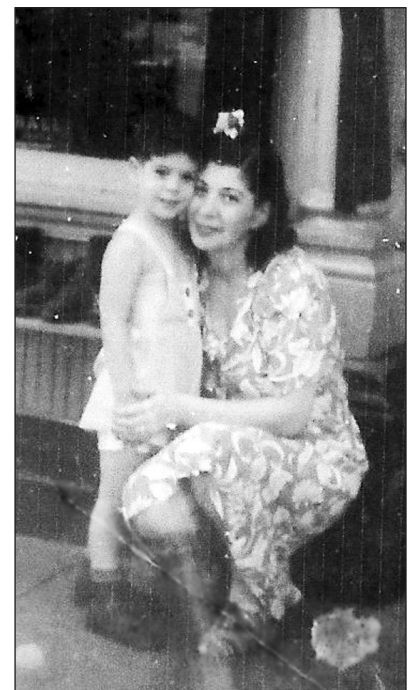
In the late 1930's, 1940's, 1950's and on into the early 1960's, Ypsilanti had a bustling downtown. Shops and businesses lined Michigan Avenue as well as Washington and Huron Streets. There were two dime stores, a Cunningham's, two movie theaters, four shoe stores, two jewelers, at least four women's clothing shops, a pharmacy, and four men's stores, from the higher end Mellencamp's to the working men's clothing business owned by the Pears.

This is the story of how the Pears came to Ypsilanti, opened their business, and were a mainstay of the retailing community for more than 40 years. The story begins in Piotrkow, Poland during World War I. Abraham was a tailor for the Polish Army. Married with five children, he became increasingly concerned for his only son's safety especially as Max grew older and was about to enter his teenage years. Abe knew his son would likely be drafted into the Army, and as a Jew would be sent immediately to the front lines. In 1916, Abraham left Poland and emigrated to the United States with the hope of starting a business and establishing a home for his family.

As he passed through Ellis Island, his Polish name was replaced with the name "Pear," perhaps an attempt anglicize the name of his village. With his "American" name, Abe made his way to Youngstown, Ohio. About a year later, he returned to Poland and brought young Max to Youngstown. Finally, he made a second trip to Poland, gathered his wife and four daughters and brought them to Ohio.

Abe had a small clothing store which sold a variety of items for men and boys. He provided alterations using his tailoring skills which he also passed on to his son. Max grew up working beside his father in the store. He met Ceil Grossman who was employed in another shop. Ceil was born in New York and moved to Youngstown while still a child. The two married in 1937.

Due to the Depression and its impact, Abe decided to close the store after 20 years. It was decided that Max would take the remaining unsold stock and establish a temporary business. One of Max's sisters had married and lived in Ann Arbor. She and her husband looked for an empty store available for rent. Ann Arbor real estate was too expensive.



Ed Pear with his mother Ceil in front of the Huron Street Store in 1943.

However they did locate a storefront on Huron Street in Ypsilanti that could be rented for \$25 a month. The building had an apartment on the second floor where the young couple could live.

In 1939, Max and Ceil loaded up their car with merchandise and drove to Ypsilanti to set up shop. Until the upstairs apartment was vacated, the couple rented lodging on Normal Street. Pear's Bargain Store had a steady supply of customers. It quickly became clear that the business was no longer temporary. They were in Ypsilanti to stay. Two years later in 1941 their first child, a son, Edwin was born. In December of that same year, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II.

The Bomber Plant at Willow Run had a major impact on the Pear's business. Thousands of workers came to the Ypsilanti area to work in the plant. The demand for work clothes skyrocketed. Ceil recalled a time when people were lined up to get in the store. They worked 12 hour days to keep up with the steady flow of customers. Ceil brought her baby son downstairs to the store where he slept on bales of clothing while she waited on customers. Ceil would comment later, "We were in the right place at the right time."

As the war wound down, the Pears decided it was time to buy a house. They purchased a red brick bungalow on Grant Street just off of Owendale from Elmer Cox. This would be their home where they raised their family. A



Max, Ed and Ceil at Ed's bar mitzvah.

second son, Michael, was born in 1946. Ed began school at Roosevelt where he would graduate in 1959. By the time Michael was ready to begin school, Estabrook was built. He would join his older brother at Roosevelt after he completed the sixth grade.

There were about five Jewish families in Ypsilanti in the early 1940's and no real Jewish community. The closest synagogue, Beth Israel, was in Ann Arbor. In the early years the congregation consisted of 25 families. There were no kosher food stores in Washtenaw County. Yet the Jewish people were able to keep their traditions and practice their religion.

Ypsilanti has been a diverse community since its very beginning. African Americans made their homes here before the Civil War. The town welcomed immigrants from Ireland and Scotland. They would be joined by Greeks, Germans, Italians, Irish, and later Lebanese. Religious discrimination was rare. The Jewish families blended into the mix. Ed told me recently, "I never felt discriminated against."

In 1959 the Shaefer's, who owned the building housing the Bargain Store and a second building on Huron Street, sold their properties to the city. The structures were demolished to create the Huron Street parking lot. Max bought the building that stands on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron from David Landy. He then purchased a second property directly to the west that had housed Modern Appliance and removed the connecting wall. The business was renamed Pears' Clothing.



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Max and Ceil's 50th wedding anniversary in 1987 with Ed (left) and Michael (right).

Dave Novak remembers both stores. His father took him to the Bargain Store when he was a child to get jeans and flannel shirts. The merchandise was displayed on boards laid on sawhorses. Dave recalls Mr. Pear folding and straightening the merchandise to keep things neat. Later Dave would visit the Michigan Avenue store to purchase clothing and men's furnishings. The Pears were known for their quality merchandise, fair prices, and good service. Max used his tailoring expertise to make alterations when needed.

The Pears sold the business to relatives in 1980. It continued as Pears Clothing until 1997. The first winter following retirement Max and Ceil joined other snowbirds in Florida. But once was enough for Max who declared he'd seen Florida and he would rather stay in Ypsilanti.

Although most of their time was spent

at the store, Max stayed active in his poker club. He played regularly with such Ypsilanti notables as Jim War-

ner, long-time Republican State Representative, Hazen Johnson of Trojan Laundry, and Stan Underwood, local entrepreneur.. Ceil participated in Hadassah and the Beth Israel Sisterhood.

Sons, Ed and Mike, worked in the store on weekends and during school vacation. However their future would be in law, not retail. Ed is a senior partner in Pear Sperling, Egan and Daniels. He served as City Attorney for Ann Arbor in the 1970s. Brother Mike, now retired, was prosecuting attorney in Orange County, California. Ed married his high school sweetheart, Sue Oler. They have three children and three grandchildren. Mike is the father of two.

Almost 100 years have passed since Abraham and son Max left Poland. Not only did Abe save his son from the fate that awaited him in the Polish Army, he also protected his immediate family from the horrors of the Holocaust. Many members of their extended family perished as a result of Hitler's treatment of the Jewish people.

Like thousands of other immigrants the Pears knew what they were leav-



Max Pear bought the building that stands on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron from David Landy.

ing behind and trusted they would have a better life in America. That trust was rewarded many times over. Ypsilanti, almost by accident, played a major part in a dream fulfilled.

(Peg Porter is Assistant Editor of the Gleanings and a regular contributor of articles. Peg and Ed Pear were classmates at Roosevelt and have maintained their friendship in the years that followed.)



This is how the building on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron looked when it was Pears Clothing store.



The Pear Clothing store in 1982.

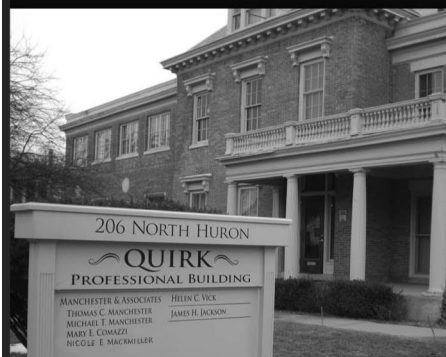
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MICHIGAN CHARTER SCHOOLS



BY JACK MINZEY

Education has always been a cornerstone of the United States. In the early years of our country, the Latin Grammar School was the institution for achieving our educational goals. The purpose of those schools was to create an educated population which was deemed necessary for the operation of a democracy. Since only male land owners could vote, the schools were only for the sons of land owners. They usually consisted of six grades, and the curricula were aimed at teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. It was also expected that these schools would create men who would be able to read the Bible to their families.

The Northwest Ordinance provided a basis for public schools by creating a section of land in each county for the purpose of public education. By the 1900s, schools were designed to offer education through the 12th grade. This resulted in the Michigan Agreement which stated that any Michigan citizen who graduated from an accredited Michigan High School would automatically be admitted to any of Michigan's public colleges or universities. Interestingly, that law is still in effect although it has not been honored

for many decades.

By the 1950's, public schools were viewed as a local responsibility although in truth they are an absolute state function. At that time, Michigan had several thousand school districts. Over the years political efforts, and particular laws, have reduced that number to about 550. These schools are financed through a combination of state and local moneys. During the 50's, 60's and 70's, these schools were idyllic. People who attended these schools have wonderful memories of their teachers, their classmates, and the many school functions which took place while they were there. Communities identified with their local schools in a very overt way, and school competition, particularly in sports, became one of the major community activities. Life in these schools was epitomized by TV programs such as "Happy Days," and movies like "Grease."

However, in the 1970's, there began to be signs of dissatisfaction relative to the public schools. For some people, there were options. Students could go to parochial schools, private schools, military schools or academies. But these

schools were expensive, so this was an option only for the more wealthy in the community. However, an idea began to surface which offered the rest of the parents an option. That choice was "homeschooling." At first, homeschooling was challenged on the basis of legality, but the courts ruled that if certain conditions were met, then home schooling was legal. The problem was that many parents did not feel competent in providing the teaching necessary for homeschooling. For other parents, they did not have the time. A further problem was finding the materials necessary for providing a state approved curriculum. This problem, however, was soon remedied by organizations which developed such documents and materials which made it much easier for parents to home school their children.

While the homeschooling movement had some modest success, the fact is that it never really caught on to any degree. Besides the previously mentioned drawbacks, there was another problem. Parents began to realize that education consists of the academic portion of a school and the socialization part related to interaction of students through personal associations and other school activities. Thus, homeschooling realized only a minor academic success as many parents wanted their children to also experience the friendships and involvement in extracurricular activities that were available in the public schools. But the dissatisfaction with the public schools still continued to grow, and parents continued to look for another solution.

There were real reasons for the unhappiness of parents regarding public schools. Part of the problem came about because of the creation of teacher's unions. It is true that there were many good reasons for the teachers to unionize, but some of the by-products were not viewed positively by the parents. Every year there were hundreds of strikes. The fact that such strikes were illegal did

not seem to deter the union's actions, and courts refused to rule against these illegal strikes. Many felt that such strikes reflected badly on the integrity of teachers. This also meant that the parents were disadvantaged by having to adjust their working and personal schedules to care for their children when these children should have been in school. Interestingly, when teachers strike, they are the only union not to lose wages. Since their work year is about 180 days, this means that they could actually strike for 180 days without losing any of their salary. Further, the outcome of strikes was not viewed positively by many parents. The end result was often higher salaries for teachers, shorter school hours and fewer students in classrooms. Also teachers made demands for payment for any service rendered, more released time for preparation, and limited involvement in teacher-parent meetings. Parents began to feel that teachers were less concerned about the welfare of their children than they used to be.

Many parents did not see any advantages for their children as a result of unionization. In fact, the shorter day and year has a significant meaning for learning. Almost all industrial nations have a school year of over 250, eight hour days, and any shortening of days or hours, in a system that was already out of sync with other countries, only exacerbated the problem. Add to this the tenure of teachers which has resulted in making it almost impossible to discharge a teacher, no matter what the reason, and parents were becoming less supportive of their public schools.

But there were other concerns of parents.

Methods of discipline in the schools had almost disappeared. Consequently, schools became less safe for students.

Teacher effectiveness became a concern when state and national testing began to indicate that schools were not achieving expected goals.



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Curricular changes did not coincide with parental expectations. Things like new math and other new educational ideas began to exclude the parent from helping or even understanding their children's studies.

Politically correctness crept into the curriculum. For example, traditional history now had to include consideration for minorities, women and homosexuals. To most parents, this violated the history they had known.

Grouping disappeared. It seemed apparent that children could be better educated if they were separated into groups that represented their ability to learn. This was the practice in all other industrial countries and had been practiced under the guise of "tracking" for many years in American public schools. Now the educational experts felt that such a practice was discriminating, and it was eliminated even to the extent of "mainstreaming" which placed special education students in regular classes. This produced a factor which most parents understood. To them this meant that teachers would teach to the lowest achievement level in the group which thus ignored not only the brightest students but even the average ones.

The politically correct aspect reached into many of the community beliefs. While schools often taught such things as the Muslim life and religion as a part of history, they refused to honor Christianity. Christian holidays were eliminated, and so was any symbolism. Some schools even eliminated the Pledge of Allegiance because it had the word "God" in it. Special rules were often instituted for minorities and homosexuals, and teachers often used their positions to advocate things which parents felt offensive and not the responsibility of a public school to teach.

Teachers and their unions became absolutely and overtly identified with the Democratic Party. Logic should tell them that alone would alienate

half their population.

Teacher Colleges have become extremely liberal in their political and social views, and the teachers they graduate extol ideas which are contrary to the beliefs of many parents in the community.

Public schools have succumbed to control by the federal government. Since education is not an enumerated power, this means that it should be illegal for the federal government to be involved in public education. However, our federal government has created a U.S. Office of Education with a budget of about 80 billion dollars. This money has been used to buy the government's way into public education and with that money has come many rules and regulations. Teachers have complained about those rules, but the government threat of withdrawing money causes the public schools to comply. History has shown that federal government involvement in public education results in testing which reinforces political ideals and politically correct decisions in the local schools curriculum. This becomes a direct threat to state and local control of public schools.

In the particular case of the Detroit Public Schools, another factor was at work which directly led to the demand for a change. The educational results were outrageous. Very few of the students who started school graduated. The dropout rate was unreal. Almost none of the graduates went on to post high school education. Of those who did graduate, many were socially promoted so that at graduation, they had an educational skill equivalent of an elementary student. In addition, corruption was wide spread. Misuse of school moneys and fraudulent activities were rampant. Several of the school officials were fined and sent to prison. When the state took over the operation of the schools in Detroit, it was almost mandatory because the conditions were so bad.

It was in this atmosphere that charter schools began to appear. It is important to know that their creation was not the idea of legislatures or politicians. Parents know that education is the basis on which future success in life is built, and they all want the very best for their children. It was the parents who insisted on an alternative to the public schools. At first only a few were created on an experimental basis. The idea became so popular that the legislature authorized 100 charter schools. The demand still exceeded the supply, and the legislature moved the approval of a total of 250 charter schools. This still was not enough, and so Michigan now has approved an unlimited number of charter schools to be opened.

The major portion of the charter schools were started in the big cities like Detroit, Flint, Saginaw and Pontiac. There were a few smaller districts which also have seen an increase in the number of charter schools. These districts, like Ypsilanti, Willow Run, and Benton Harbor had one thing in common with the big cities. They had a significant number of African American students enrolled. To acknowledge this certainly will activate the accusation of racism, and that is probably why no statistics are currently available. The fact is that it may be that charter schools are primarily dedicated to African American students. And if this is true, then one must also realize that the request for such charter schools are coming from African American parents, and that certainly should eliminate any racial accusations

Much of the publicity from the teacher organizations, and their supportive legislators, would indicate that these schools exist only to make certain people rich, and that they are inferior, unsupervised operations. The fact is that a charter school can only be opened if it chartered through either a public college or university or an intermediate school district. This means that the responsibility

for approving charter schools falls to organizations which are recognized for expertise in education. These charter schools are required to meet all state standards for teachers, civil rights, curricula and building codes. It is also the responsibility of the chartering organization to supervise these schools on a regular basis to be certain that they are complying with all of the state requirements. It is interesting that the Michigan Department of Education is responsible for the same supervision of all public schools. However, such supervision has never happened.

It is still too early to attest to the educational quality of charter schools because many of their failures or successes could be the result of the time their students spent at a regular public school. However, it is true that some of the charter schools have lost their charters due to their failure to meet state requirements and no longer are in operation.

To date, the teacher's unions and their political supporters have refused to accept the concept of the charter school. It is easy to understand their concerns. Contrary to American History and an economic system which is based on competition, the public schools have enjoyed an absolute monopoly in their endeavor for well over 100 years. Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, and "Ma Bell" were all examples of monopolies which were judged to be contrary to the free enterprise system, but the schools have not been challenged in their monopolistic role. As a result, all children between the ages of 6 and 16 were required by law to attend the school system in which they resided. The only exceptions were those children who went to parochial or private schools. Public schools had limited competition and enjoyed the luxury of a captive client. In such a system, the organization can tend to become less accountable and more autocratic in its operation and not be exposed to the advantages which are brought about as a result

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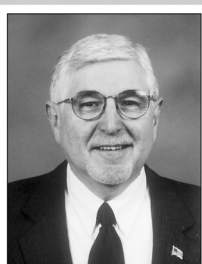


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of competition.

It is likely that the professionals in the public schools are threatened by competition which actually could lead to their demise to some degree. It is natural that they would have an emotional view of what is happening and attempt to discredit or eliminate this new competition. What they need to recognize is that charter schools appear to be a new player in the public education field, and as in any competition, the public schools need to realize that they must produce a product that is more appealing to the parents of their community than do the charter schools. The majority of school districts have already done this, and there is little likelihood of charter schools in most Michigan communities. When the emotional reaction has cooled, it behooves the public schools to reclaim their status by improving their product. They should realize that they have all the advantages and should win any competition from other educational opportunities. What are those advantages?

The public schools have higher paid teachers and by their own claims, teachers who make higher salaries and perks, provide a better education.

The public schools have more experienced and higher degreed teachers.

The public schools have far greater facilities. These include better class rooms, air conditioning, libraries, learning labs, language labs, science facilities, gyms, swimming pools and athletic fields.

The public schools have ancillary personnel such as guidance counselors, teacher aids, special administrators and coaches.

The public schools have a transportation system.

The public schools have many more teaching tools and media equipment.

The public schools have interscholastic athletics which is a strong force in community support.

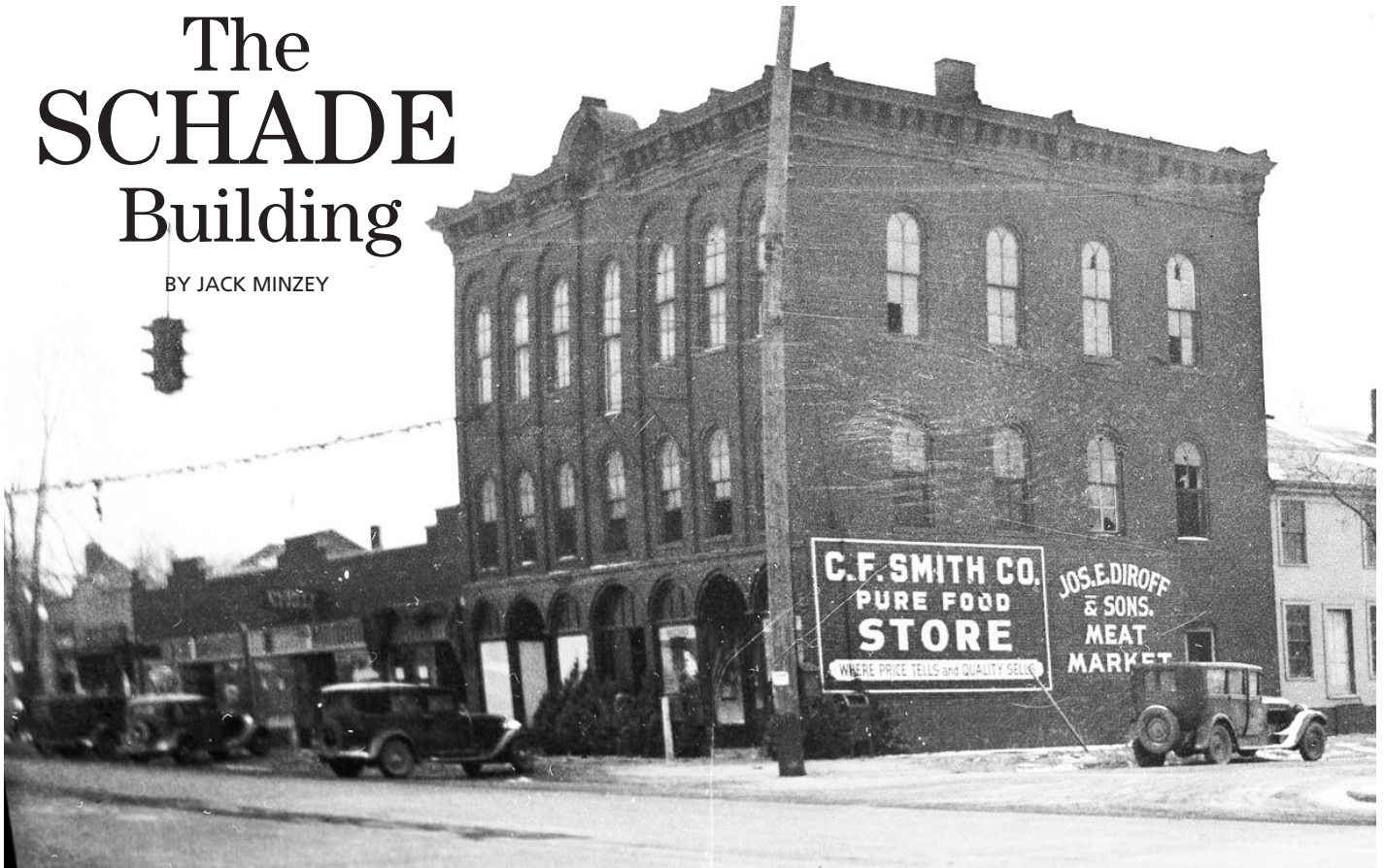
The public schools have more money by far. The charter school gets the state reimbursement for each student which is about \$8,000. This must pay for all staffing and building maintenance. The public school gets the same \$8,000 plus an added amount for being larger, disadvantaged districts. They also get the local 18 mills plus the ability to raise bond issues for buildings and equipment needs plus the money they get from the federal government. Thus, the public schools get more than twice as much funding as does a charter school.

With all of these advantages, it only seems logical that the public schools would be able to outdo their competition and regain their stature. What they need to do is to remember the basic concepts of teaching. Teachers should address controversial issues with the intent of equally presenting both sides of the argument and making certain that they do not reveal their own biases. Next, they should recognize that their purpose is to represent the values of their community and reinforce those values through their actions. Then they should cherish the original role of teachers as "in loco parentis." They share the education, growth and nurturing of their students along with the parents. And finally, they need to analyze why they are losing the support of parents and fix those failures so that parents can again feel that their best educational choice is the public schools in the state of Michigan.

(Jack Minzey received the Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State Normal College, the Master's Degree from the University of Michigan and the Doctor's Degree from Michigan State University. He worked for Michigan State University, the Michigan Department of Education and finally Eastern Michigan University where retired in 1992.)

The SCHADE Building

BY JACK MINZEY



The Schade Building was located on East Michigan Avenue where the Bomber Restaurant is located today.

Years ago, during the 19th century, East Michigan Avenue was lined with houses and trees, and once you passed Prospect Street you were out in the country. East Michigan Avenue, then known as Congress Street, even had its own business district, which was only a few buildings, with perhaps the most impressive being the Schade Building, standing on the southeast corner of what is today Michigan and Park Street. Today, the site is occupied by a single story business building, including the Bomber Restaurant, a local landmark. In its time, the Schade Building was something of a local landmark.

The original building on the site was a small two-story frame building that was the home of Leopold Schade. This was also his bakery and grocery store. The building was something of a hotel as well. *"Driving up to the frame building through the front yard to the north would come transients to spend the night at the Schade place and board their horses*

in the old red barn, removed some time ago," noted *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of Tuesday, June 30, 1936. *"Often they would be driving ox teams. Drovers would pass through with cattle on the way to market and give the beasts a chance for food and rest. There were tin peddlers exchanging their skinning wares for rags. Others were bringing through their stores of candy and tobacco. Probably they had paid tolls at the two-gates to the east or west of the town,"*

In 1871, Schade added a three-story brick commercial building to the frame building. On the first floor of the west side of the building was the Schade grocery store, where he waited on his customers while wearing carpet slippers for comfort. The east side of the first floor was one of the saloons of the day. In the center of the building was a wide hall with a stairway to the second floor. The second floor was space for living quarters. A second stairway running at right angles toward the east, went to a dance hall on the third floor. The dance hall

was a popular place for many years, until the building was condemned in about 1905.

Schade was known for his love of animals, and raised white mice, rabbits, a large flock of pigeons, and even a gorgeous peacock strutting among the birds. His prize pet, however, was a big brown bear. Just why Schade kept a bear as a pet is unknown, but the slow pacing of this hulking beast and the rattle of its chain held a fearful fascination for the children who scampered past the premises. Still, the presence of the bear did not keep the children away when they wanted the candy Schade sold.

Schade died in 1883, but the grocery store on the west side of the first floor continued in business for years after. The business of the saloon on the east side went on as well. All this came to an end when the building was demolished in the fall of 1935.

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

Museum Board Report

BY NANCY WHEELER, BOARD CHAIR

This time of year nature is filled with beautiful displays, and so is the museum! The “Did You Know or Do You Care” exhibit showcases stories and little known facts about Ypsilanti. Virginia Davis-Brown and David Mongson have created 19 boards that are scattered throughout the museum awaiting your perusal.

Boy Scout memorabilia has been loaned to us and is displayed by Rick Meints. Spark a memory from your childhood or see how things have changed compared to today’s Scouting gear. Do you have a collection you would like to exhibit? Call us at (734) 482-4990 and if it is a good fit for the museum we will work together to set up a display.

The museum mannequins and dress forms are currently dressed in bridal gowns dating from 1884-1997. Several of the dresses have not been on display before and are making their debut; you won’t want to miss them! Thank you to Fofie Pappas, Kathleen Fischhaber, and Louise Nagle for their elegant touch steaming, placing, and accessorizing the gowns for everyone’s enjoyment!

The Craft Room is feeling fresh with a new lace display, updated by Kathleen Campbell. Be sure to check out the Princess Lace Loom, bedcaps, and other lace finery.

Welcome to our new intern, Sarah Richards Reyes and new docent Molly Wright. Molly is also our plant caretaker in the Norton Solarium and the plants are looking particularly green these days!

The Quilt Show will be September 24th-October 8th. Be sure to look for the Gleanings ad for more details!

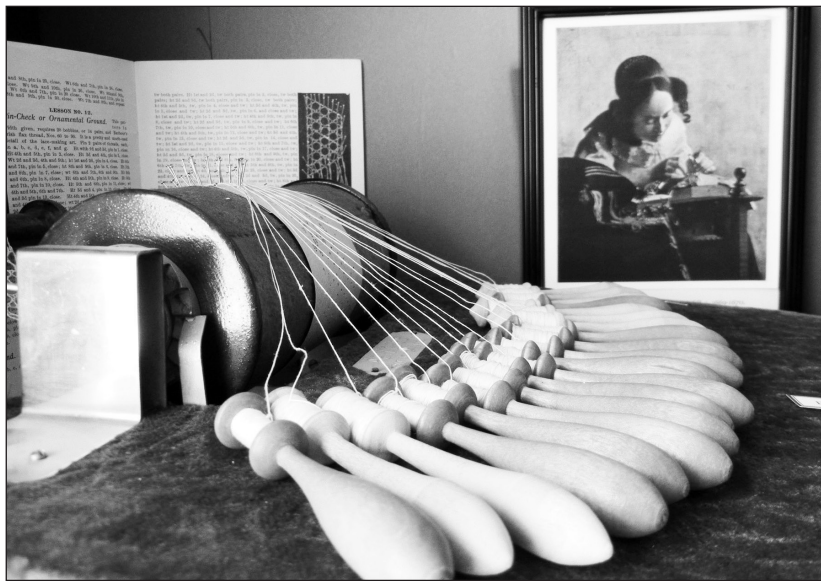
Heritage Festival this year is August 25th-27th. Museum hours will be August 25th 2-5 pm and August 26th and 27th 1-5 pm. We will be looking for volunteers to help at the museum, please check your calendar and expect a phone call soon!



One of the bridal gowns on display in the museum.



Part of the Boy Scout memorabilia loaned to the museum by Rick Meints.



Part of the lace display in the Craft Room.

Michigan State Normal College 1943-1950

BY JACK D. MINZEY

In 1943, our family moved from Flint, Michigan to Ypsilanti. Housing was difficult to find so each of our family members had a sleeping room in various parts of the city. My Mother was on Wallace Boulevard and my sister was on Grant Street. My Father and I shared a room with another man on Sheridan Street. The house was owned by Miss Hazel Davis who was a fourth grade teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School. When she knew that I was coming to Ypsilanti, she offered to enroll me in school. At that time, I had no idea that Roosevelt was not a public school. Actually, Roosevelt High School was a laboratory school for teacher training at Michigan State Normal College. Thus, I spent my last three years of high school as a part of a college campus.



Jack Minzey – Roosevelt High School Class of 1946.

Roosevelt High School had a total enrollment of about 300 students. I was in the class of 1946, and we had fifty four students in our class. However, even though it was small, its students enjoyed all the regular activities of a typical high school. We had plays, band and orchestra concerts, clubs, athletics, fun nights, sock hops, senior trips, school paper and proms. The faculty was identified as master teachers who had the ability to teach and train young students who wanted to become teachers. I did not have the ability to judge the quality of teaching, but I have always felt that I had excellent instruction plus a faculty that was truly in “loco parentis” and had the care and compassion to treat us like family.

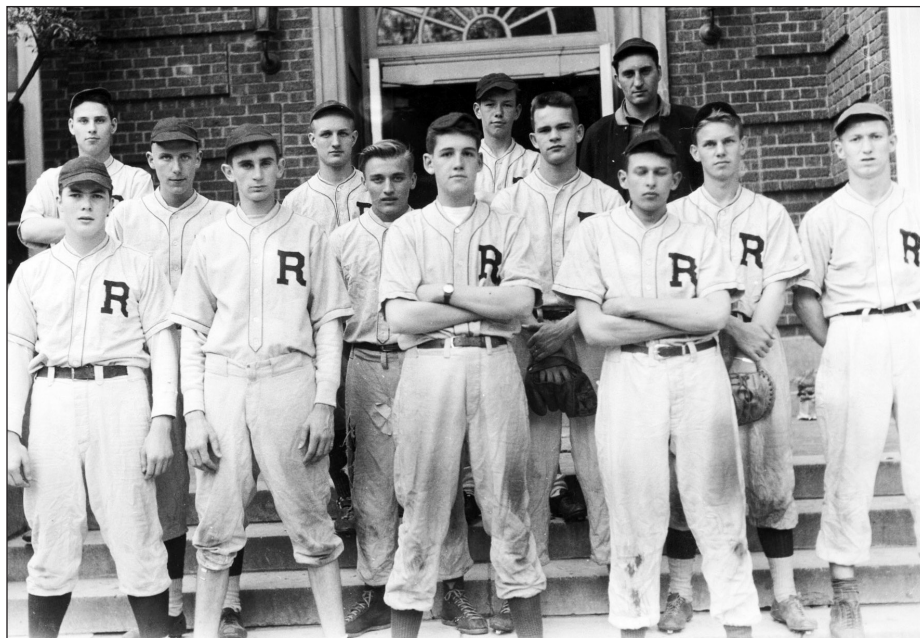
It is true that some of the students were from an elite group of parents. Almost all of the children of faculty, administration and staff at Normal College attended the school. There were children of doctors, dentists, politicians, legislators, bankers and business executives in the school. However, there were also children of small business owners, factory workers, farmers, bus drivers, custodians, ministers, teachers, clerks, secretaries and many other more menial occupations. I always looked forward to going to school. Each day, while I lived on Sheridan Street, I would walk to Ted Tangelakis’ drug store for breakfast and then on to school. Ted’s place at that time was much smaller, had a soda bar with four stools, and a booth in the back. Breakfast always consisted of a pecan roll and a glass of milk which I got for one dollar.

The faculty was exceptional. This included Miss Mildred Crawford and Miss Margaret Gotts (math), Mr. Louis Golozynski (biology), Mr. Laurance Deboar (history and government), Miss Chloe Todd and Mr. Arthur Walker

(phys. Ed.), Miss Virginia Cooper (Latin), Miss Susan Stinson and Miss Thelma McAndlis (English), Miss Lillian Ashby and Mr. William Fitch (choir and band/orchestra), Mr. William Wilcox (chemistry and physics), Miss Vera North (typing) and Miss Thelma Hunt (Latin). The Principal was Mr. Leonard Menzi. Our names sounded the same phonetically so most people thought that we were related. Mr. Menzi took me several times to Rotary and other meetings and after awhile simply, said “yes” when people asked if I was his son. We did have printing and industrial education, but these were taught by college faculty. Mr. Duane Chamberlain and Mr. Ralph Gildenstein taught these classes. Mr. Gildenstein later changed his name to Gilden. He later became a dormitory proctor, director of alumnae affairs at Eastern Michigan University and acting president of that institution for a short period of time. One of the things that I never noticed at the time was the fact that none of the female teachers were married. I later learned that for several years, school boards did not hire married women for some reason, and it is likely that the Roosevelt teachers were hired at a time when this was a rule.

In 1943, MSNC had an enrollment of about 250 students. The student body was primarily women. This was due to the fact that the United States was engaged in World War II, and all of the men were either in the military service or engaged in building war materials. As a result, there were no athletic teams in college at that time. Also at that time, women were not given the opportunity to play interscholastic sports, so they were confined to intra-mural activities. However, there were sports activities on campus. Roosevelt High School had a complete offering of school sports including football, basketball, baseball, track, cross country, swimming and tennis. All of these sports were coached by Art Walker except for tennis. Tennis was coached by Mr. Menzi. The venue for each of these sports was the college facilities except for swimming. Roosevelt had a regulation size pool with six lanes and room for a few spectators. Normal College had a pool, but it was about twenty yards long with four lanes but no room for spectators, and had a ceiling of about ten feet. Actually, the Roosevelt pool was also used for physical education so that the boys had physical education three times a week and swimming twice the first semester and reversed this procedure second semester. As a result, all of the students were excellent swimmers by the time they graduated. One other memory of swimming was a rule which I never understood. The girls wore swim suits during their swimming classes, but the boys always swam nude.

Michigan State Normal College was a much smaller campus in 1943. Forest Street ran directly through the campus and connected into Washtenaw beyond McKenny Union. There was also a road from Forest Street which ran north



1946 Roosevelt High School baseball team: (l to r back row) Jones, Wilcox, Curtis and Coach Ruddon; (center row) Miller, Woodward, Crew, Baird and Meadows; (front row) Ryneerson, Bloom, Minzey and Burenow.

to Goodison Hall (currently the Marshall Building). On the East, the campus was bound by Roosevelt High School and Pease Auditorium. Most of the rest of that block were private homes except for Snow Health Center (behind Pease) and Zwergel's Book Store on the South side of Pease. On the South, the North side of Cross Street was the boundary with the exception of the gym which was on the South side of Cross Street. Cross was a two way street. The gym filled the entire block between the water tower and Ted's drug store. It was a large brick building with the main entrance on Normal Street. However, most of the people used the door on Cross Street to enter. On the main floor were a large gym and two smaller gyms. One of the small gyms had an indoor track in the balcony. The other gym was smaller and was called the women's gym. In the basement were the locker facilities and the pool.

On the West the boundary was McKenny Union, the football field, the power plant and the baseball field. The college abutted Oak Street except for McKenny which had several

houses between it and Oak Street. McKenny Hall was about half the size it is today. When you entered the front there was a foyer. Beyond the foyer was a large dining hall which also had a soda bar at one end. Food was served cafeteria style. The primary customers were members of the community. My family ate there often because it was a place where we could enjoy a meal together. The football field ran east and west. It had a track around the outside. There was a set of bleachers on each side built of concrete and about 50 yards in length. They were about 20 rows high. Access to the field was at the West end of Briggs Hall which contained offices and a field house with a dirt floor. In the winter, the football field was flooded and became a community skating rink. There was a warming room under one of the bleachers to accommodate the skaters. South of the football field was the power plant and the baseball field. The baseball field had a good size set of bleachers. The main problem with that field was that a ball hit over the fence landed in someone's yard.

The boundary to the North was the

baseball field, a men's dorm, the special education complex and Goodison hall, a women's dorm which is currently the Everett Marshall Building and Roosevelt High School. Everything beyond these building was a heavily wooded area called Sleepy Hollow which included a small lake.

Cross Street was an absolute part of the campus. It was totally dedicated to serving the College. The first block East from the water tower, was composed of a drug store, a jewelry store and several book stores. The next block East was made up entirely of houses with one housing a doctor's office. The next block had a drug store, Wisbin's Barber Shop, with five active chairs, and Superior Dairy which was a soda shop and a major hangout for the college students. There were no restaurants or places that served alcohol along that entire area.

In 1945, some of the veterans came home from the war and entered the freshman class. At that time, sports returned to the campus. It was a small start, but it was a beginning. The senior class of 1946 graduated 111 students. The entering freshmen class was only around 120 students. The sports program was modest. The football team played Albion, Hillsdale, and Wayne. Their record was five wins and one tie. Elton Ryneron was the coach. He was also coach of the basketball team which won nine and lost nine. Track was coached by George Marshall. There was also a baseball team which was also Ryneron's responsibility. As for the women, their activities were still limited to an intramural program which included archery, basketball and fencing.

In the Fall of 1946, the college underwent a dramatic change in its enrollment. At that time, there were approximately 380 upper classmen at Michigan State Normal College. The incoming freshman class numbered a little over 800. A large number of these students were veterans. They were in their middle twenties, with

some older, and married, often with a family. They were financially well off. The GI Bill gave to each of them tuition, books and living expenses. This was to have a major impact on the college. This group was more mature, had dealt with some tremendous experiences, and was dedicated to being good students and receiving a college degree. This class of new students interestingly introduced males into the teaching profession like never before. The impact on college traditions (hazing of freshmen), requirements for professors to deal with a more mature student, social activities and athletics was immense.

In athletics, for example, many of these new students had had a great deal of athletic experience. Many had played college sports for a few years, and then played more college sports while in the service, and now had four more years of eligibility. They epitomized the life of Barney Poole (Poole was a famous split end who played three years for Ole Miss., one year for North Carolina, three years with Army and then two more years with Ole Miss. Thus, because of military eligibility rules, he played nine years of college football. At Michigan State Normal College, because of this rule, many of the freshmen who had just graduated from high school, and even some of the former varsity players at MSNC, were unable to successfully compete against these experienced athletes. Also, the fact that they all had no need for financial assistance meant that colleges did not feel it necessary to award athletic scholarships.

But there was another factor at work. Many of the veteran athletes were no longer interested in playing varsity sports. They had already had that experience and were not motivated to go through the vigorous training associated with college athletics. Instead, they opted to concentrate on their college studies and seek their athletic involvement elsewhere. The main impact of this was noticeable in

basketball where veterans found other places where they could continue to participate. Thus they joined athletic teams in fraternities, intramurals and city leagues. As a result, many of these teams were very good, and one of the constant rumors was that there were several fraternity basketball teams that could have defeated Normal's varsity.

Because of this great influx of students in the freshman class, housing became a problem. This was primarily true for the male students. Several of the married students found housing at Willow Run where they occupied housing originally created for workers in the Bomber Plant. McKenny Union took some of these students. Dormitory space was created on the third floor and in the basement of that building. There was also a Quonset hut building in the south end of Ypsilanti which accommodated another group. There was little construction during those years. A set of women's dorms were built east of Roosevelt High School. Pearce Hall, which was the largest classroom building, was torn down. It was located on the north side of Boone Hall. It was interesting to watch its destruction. City tow trucks were used to attach their cable lines to the building and then winch down the walls of the building. The space where Pearce Hall stood was left as a court yard. A new administration building was built on the corner of Forest and College Place (I believe that street might have been called Broward at that time). The president's office was then moved from Boone Hall to the new administration building. Interestingly, there were no parking lots on campus. Students had to have special permission to drive on campus, and this rule was still in effect at Universities throughout the state until the early 1960s. Those who did have cars had to park on the streets.

It is nostalgic to recall the faculty at that time. John Munson was President. It was said that he had little interest in athletics and forbade his coaches

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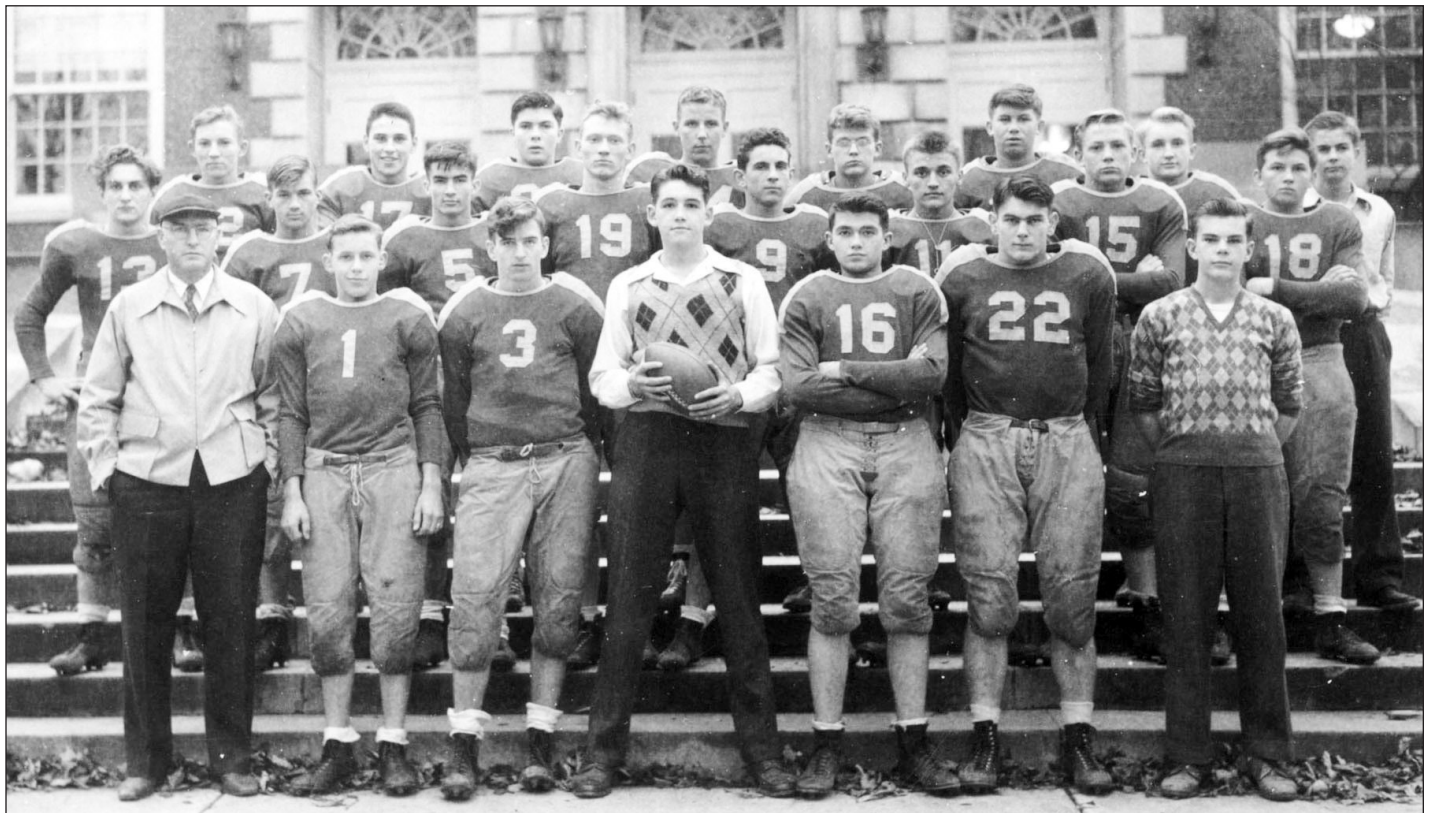
from using college stationery to solicit athletics. That attitude persisted until Harold Sponberg became president. President Sponberg had been a former college athlete, and more than once he stated that "he wanted to give Eastern Michigan University a football team the band could be proud of." There were many faculty members, actually about 219, but I shall only recall those who impacted my life. Dr. Egbert Isbell was the Dean of Administration, much like the Provost today. Mr. Clemens Steimle was the registrar. I mention these two because their children were in high school with me. The infamous James Bingo Brown was the Dean of Men and much has been written about his legendary status. Bill Brownrigg was the director of McKenny Hall and later the patron of the Kappa Phi Alpha fraternity. Dr. Leslie Butler was the head of teacher education.

It is interesting that a large number of the faculty did not possess doctor-

al degrees as required today. On the history faculty were Mr. Carl Anderson, Dr. Blackenburg, Dr. Fred Erickson, Dr. Paul Hubbel, Dr. Elizabeth Warren, Mr. Anthony Englesman, Dr. Edgar Waugh, and Dr. Paul Mancell. For Mathematics there was Dr. Carl Erikson, Mr. "Dutch" Falahee, Mr. Edward Goings, and Dr. Robert Pate. Physical education had Mr. Edward Gilday, Miss Gussey Harris, Mr. Merrill Hershey, Mr. George Marshall, Dr. Lloyd Olds, and Mr. Elton Rynerson. In science were Dr. Jennings Hickman, and Mr. Clark Spike. Dr. Francis Lord, Dr. Everett Marshall, Mr. Joseph McCulloch, Mr. Don Currie, Mr. Norton Knight made up part of the professors of education. English had Mr. Allen Miserez, Dr. John Sattler, Dr. Gerald Sanders, Miss Myra Herrick, Miss Esther Ballew, Dr. Notley Maddox, Dr. Joe Kelly, Dr. John Virtue, Miss Maxine Virtue, and Dr. Marian Magoon. Miss Herrick also taught hand writing which was a required course for many of us, and the Vir-

tues taught rhetoric which was another name for freshman English. There are interesting stories about each of these faculty; some serious and some humorous, but enough to write many other articles.

The college had many clubs and activities. These included Association of Childhood Education, Art Club, Chemistry Club, Commercial Club, Home Economics Club, International Relations Club, Industrial Arts Club, Natural Science Club, Special Education Club, Student Wives Club, Vet's Club, Occupational Therapy, Physical Education Club, Math Club, Music Club, Canterbury Club, Christian Youth Fellowship, Huron Christian Fellowship, Newman Club, Wesley Foundation, YWCA, Lutheran Student Association, Varsity Debate, Discussion Festival, and Gavel and Rostrum. There were also active fraternity and sorority organizations. Fraternities included Sigma Tau Gamma, Phi Sigma Epsilon, Phi Delta Pi, Kappa Phi



1945 Roosevelt High School football team: (l to r back row) Levinski, Jones, Ryneerson, Miller, Elliott, Boggs, Sweet and Fagerstrom (mgr); (center row) Shedd, Goins, Pester, Conally, Baker, Woodward, Smith and Herrest; (front row) Walker (coach), miller, Appl, Minzy, Bell, Wilcox and Elliott (manager).

Alpha, and Arm of Honor. There were also several honorary groups-Kappa Delta Pi, Omega Kai Mathema, Pi Kappa Delta, and Stoics. The sororities were Alpha Sigma Tau, Delta Sigma Epsilon, Kappa Mu Delta, Sigma Mu Phi, Sigma Sigma Sigma, Theta Lambda Sigma, and Pi Delta Sigma. There were also multiple student governmental organizations.

In sports that year, Lloyd Olds coached Golf. Football was coached by Rynearson and assisted by Coach Crouch. They finished with two wins and five losses. Varsity basketball was coached by Bill Crouch who replaced Ray Stites. Their season was five wins and 13 losses. George Marshall coached both cross country and track. Doc McColloch was the coach of the tennis team. The women participated in the Women's Recreation Association which included archery, volleyball, swimming, field hockey and basketball.

There was no question that Michigan State Normal would get bigger and much of that growth was positive. Changing the name from Normal College to Eastern Michigan University was certainly a positive factor. Most people did not know the origin of the name Normal and were left with some strange interpretations of that word. The campus expanded in every direction but South. The roads through campus were eliminated. New construction led to the elimination of sleepy hollow. There was a new gym and field house with a swimming pool. I wonder how many people remember the basketball court in the field house when it ran east and west, and the best seats were in the balcony. An intramural facility was built with a lake and a boat house. A beautiful new student center was created, and a complete athletic facility with athletic fields, a baseball field, tennis courts, a football field, a convention center and an indoor practice facility were created on the West side of campus. A mansion was built to house the president. Classroom buildings were built with air conditioning and modern technology. A state of the art library was completed.

There was a new music building, health center and theaters completed. The college was replaced with a university with five colleges and multiple preparation programs replaced the old role of just training teachers. The faculty became more credentialed and advanced degrees were added so that students could now earn master's and doctoral degrees. The student body grew to about 24,000 making Eastern the 90th largest higher education institution out of around 3,600 in the United States. The student body became more diverse in terms of race and foreign students, and the students were so much more adept at everything. Even the police force went from one night watchman to a full sized professional department.

But with all of its wonderful new changes, it is still nostalgic to look back at Michigan State Normal College and enjoy the memories that went with that institution. I still occasionally sing "hats off to thee," "fight, fight, fight for MSNC," and "loyal sons come show your might," knowing full well that I am politically incorrect. To me it was a simpler time, more compassionate and seemed to be more pure. For many people, it was their Camelot. So while I relish the growth and achievements of Eastern Michigan University, and am proud to be an emeritus faculty member and an alumnus, I have pleasant memories of the days of MSNC and its quaint, idealistic and historical time.

Roosevelt Song

Roosevelt, Roosevelt, we love you.

There's no other school like you.

You're the squarest, you're the fairest school

In all the world.

You inspire us through and through.

Hail to Roosevelt

Hail to thee, O Roosevelt

With students fair and true.

Where'er we go, what'er we do,

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We're always loyal to you.

Your name we'll cherish forever,

In our memories may it glow!

Our friendships we'll ne'er sever

As onward thro' life we go.

A Pledge

O Roosevelt, our hands we pledge to thee,

In token of our love and loyalty;

Thy call shall find us ready,

Our answer swift and steady,

While youth and strength our portion still may be.

O Roosevelt, our hearts we pledge to thee,

When years have pressed upon us wearily,

To thee in memory turning,

Sweet days of love and learning.

From age and care and tears we shall be free.

The Old Rotunda

The old rotunda, we'll make it thundah,

Bring out the fife, boys, the fife and drum.

It's not the first time, nor yet the last time,

*That we've put oldHigh School on the bum,
bum, bum.*

Now is the time boys, we're in our prime, boys,

We've got them going, yes, everyone.

It's not the first time, or yet the last time,

*That we've put oldHigh School on the bum,
bum, bum.*

Bum bum bum bum.....BUM BUM!!

(Jack Minzey received the Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State Normal College, the Master's Degree from the University of Michigan and the Doctor's Degree from Michigan State University. He worked for Michigan State University, the Michigan Department of Education and finally Eastern Michigan University where he retired in 1992.)

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