

# Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SUMMER 2018

## Ypsilanti Rotary celebrates 100 years

BY JAMES MANN

The Ypsilanti Rotary Club celebrated 100 years of community service on Saturday April 14, 2018, with a banquet at Haabs restaurant. The celebration began, as most Rotary events in Ypsilanti begin, with an invocation written by past District Governor A. P. Marshall, read by Les Huddle. Guests were introduced, including current District Governor Barry Fraser. Then the important duty of ordering dinner commenced.

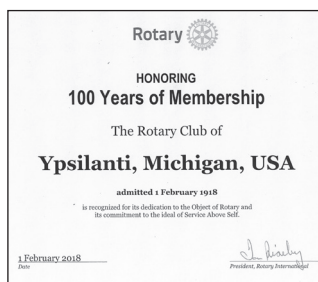
On a table to one side were pages for the bidding on items in a silent auction. The proceeds from the auction went to support the programs of the Ypsilanti Rotary club. Another item on display was the Congressional Recognition Certificate to the club from U. S. Senator Debbie Stabenow.

What is today Rotary International began in Chicago on February 23, 1905, when Paul P. Harris brought three business acquaintances together in the office of a friend. The name Rotary came about because it was the original practice of the members

to rotate the meeting place from the office of one member to the next. The purpose of the club was to develop friendship as an opportunity for



Rotary District Governor Barry Fraser presenting the Rotary 100 Year Membership Certificate to Ypsilanti Rotary Club President John Barr.



The Rotary International 100 Year Membership Certificate signed by the Rotary International President.

service. As stated in the Manual of Procedure: "It is the duty of all Rotarians, outside their clubs, to be active as individuals in as many legally constituted groups and organizations as possible to promote, not only in words but through exemplary dedication, awareness of the dignity of all people and the respect of the consequent human rights of the individual."

The motto of Rotary International is: "Service Above Self." A secondary motto is: "One prof- its most who serves best." The ideals of Rotary spread quickly, as a club was founded in

Ann Arbor in 1916. This club accepted responsibility for the formation of a new club in Ypsilanti in 1917. A meeting was held on November 26, of that year in Ypsilanti, to begin the work of starting the new club. The group met on December 4 to plan

## In This Issue...

Ypsilanti Rotary Celebrates 100 Years.....	1
By James Mann	
This Year Marks 150 Years of Library Service in Ypsilanti .....	4
By Jerome Drummond	
Nathalie and Bill Edmunds .....	6
By Bill Nickels	
Fred Fay – Ypsilanti's Streetcar Union Representative.....	10
By Robert Anschuetz	
EMU's Historic Preservation Program .....	13
By Ted Ligibel	
Westward Ho! A Godfroy in the Wild, Wild West .....	16
By Kathleen Chamberlain	
A New Use for an Historic Church. ....	18
By James Mann	
Deadly 1908 Ypsi-Ann Streetcar Crash .....	21
By Robert Anschuetz	
Ypsilanti Paper Route.....	24
By David Novak	
Cursed House on Huron Street.....	32
By James Mann	
Family Feud on Ellis Street.....	33
By James Mann	
Fred Newton –Gun Victim .....	34
By James Mann	

## Society Briefs

From the President's Desk.....	2
Society Board Members .....	5
Acquisitions .....	9
Museum Advisory Board Report ...	20
GLEANINGS Sponsors .....	25
Membership Application .....	35
Advertising Application .....	35

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It is easy to have concerns when putting on a special event; the Edmunds "Tribute" program on May 6th was no exception. The food and beverages provided by Ypsilanti Historical Society and Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation volunteers left everybody not needing a Sunday dinner! With seating for 98 in a full Ladies Literature Club, many were standing during the 55 minute program that featured Nat and Bill's community story. John Harrington told about being recruited and serving on city council with Nat. Jim Curran and Andrea Linn told about their Heritage Festival times with Nat, and Lauren Carpenter Thomson described working with Nat during the restoration of the Freighthouse. Maxe Obermeyer remembered a couple of humorous recollections. Son George Edmunds and granddaughter Christine Gliha closed the program with "Thanks" to the YHS, YHF, and for everybody attending. Family members who attended in addition to George and Christine included Nat's brother Sam Elliott with his wife Sue and their children and grandchildren. Nat's niece Sharon Miller also attended.

Shortly after Nathalie Edmunds died, her son George mentioned an original Olmsted plan for Ypsilanti parks that his parents had purchased many years ago. Fredrick Olmsted Senior was a famous landscape architect and is famous for his plans for New York's Central Park and Detroit's Belle Isle. The plan for Ypsilanti was developed by Fredrick Olmsted Junior in 1905 after his father's death and is a measure of Ypsilanti's culture at the time. It is a park plan for what are now Frog Island, Riverside Park, and the Water Street area. Park development along the Huron River was thought of in 1905 and continues today with Washtenaw County's Border to Border trail system along the river.

George said his parents intended the plan to go to our Historical Museum's Ar-



The original Olmsted plan for Ypsilanti parks included what is now Frog Island, Riverside Park and the Water Street area.

chives and was somewhere on loan to the City of Ypsilanti. With the help of Cheryl Farmer, the 2' by 6' paper on canvas plan was found and delivered to the archives. It is now waiting to be framed and permanently displayed in the museum.

On Saturday June 9th, the museum hosted a "Lemonade & Cookies" reception for Suzanne Benton and Roxane Canfield, descendants of Ypsilanti pioneers Mark & Roccena Norris. Suzanne, from Oregon, and

Roxanne from California, were treated with a tour of Norris sites and family graves in Highland Cemetery by museum volunteer, Jan Anschuetz. During a short program in the museum, a proclamation from Ypsilanti mayor Amanda Edmonds was read and copies of the book *Down By The Depot* were presented by author/historian James Mann. The Norris family first visited Ypsilanti in 1827 and, with their son-in-law Benjamin Follett, was instrumental in the development of Depot Town.

The Ypsilanti Historical Society is pleased to announce that Tom Warner is a newly elected member of the Board of Trustees. Tom's parents grew up in Ypsilanti; he was born in Beyer Hospital and is a graduate of Estabrook Elementary, West Junior High, Ypsilanti High School, and Eastern Michigan University. Because of concern having to relocate to wherever a post-degree job might dictate, Tom decided against entering a doctoral program at the University of Michigan. Working in real estate became his default profession. He and his wife Betsy live west of Ypsilanti on what was a family dairy farm. Welcome Tom!

Museum volunteer Norman McFall did needed outside painting this spring. Al Rudisill has the grounds looking fresh. With new exhibits inside, the museum is a good place to bring out-of-town guests this summer.



Jan Anschuetz hosted a reception and tour for Suzanne Benton and Roxane Canfield, descendants of Ypsilanti pioneers Mark & Roccena Norris.



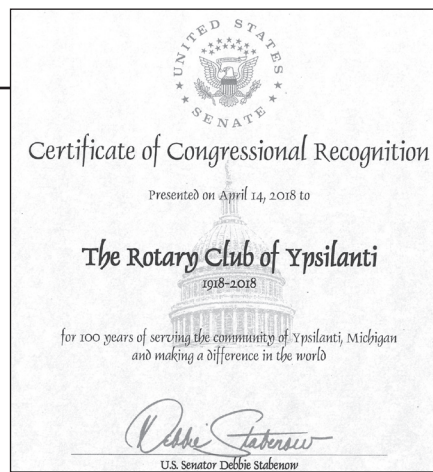
the formation of the club, while holding the meeting in the Ypsilanti High School. Club members decided to hold meetings at noon on Monday of each week. Each meeting begins with lunch, followed by the business of the day.

The charter of the new club in Ypsilanti was granted on February 1, 1918, number 356, just thirteen years after the founding of the original Rotary club. The charter members of the club were H.E. Van de Walker, D.L. Quirk Jr., Stanley Morris, D. B. South, Fred Gallup, F. H. Nissly, Harry Shaefer, D. H. Roberts, J. A. Marrs, C. V. Brown. The first president was Van de Walker, with D. B. South as the first secretary.

Rotary clubs meet weekly. At first the Ypsilanti Rotary Club held meetings in the dining room of the Central High School, now Cross Street Village. Later the club met in the lunchroom of Roosevelt High School on the campus of Eastern Michigan University. The meetings were later moved to the Catholic Club House and then at the Huron Hotel. For a time, the club held meetings at the Marriott Hotel. Today the meetings are held every Monday for lunch at the Student Center of Eastern Michigan University.

"In civic life the club was active in such projects as the organization of the Board of Commerce, the Alley Fiesta for which the club arranged a minstrel show; a Boy Scout building on the river near Superior, the sale of stock and promotion for the Hotel Huron and payment of a \$1,000 mortgage on the home of the widow of a prominent Ypsilanti man," noted The Ypsilanti Press of December 14, 1942.

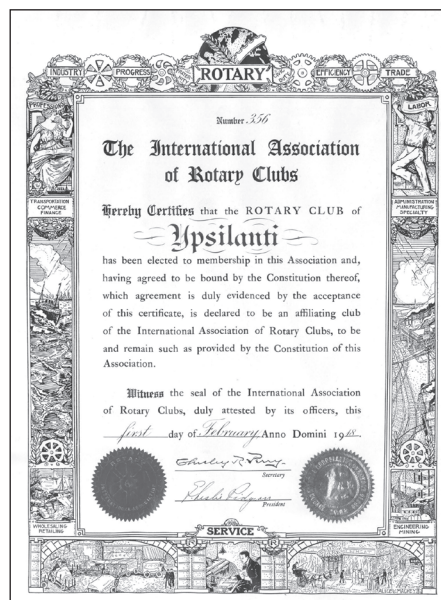
Children with special needs is also a concern of the club. For years the club arranged for children who were patients of the Ypsilanti State Hospital to be sent to a summer camp. When Rackham School was established at the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University, to train teachers in the teaching of



The Congressional Recognition Certificate received by the Ypsilanti Rotary Club from U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow.

children with special needs, the club provided the playground equipment. Once each year the club held a meeting at Rackham School so the members could mingle with the students. The club established a fund to supply glasses, shots, prescriptions and other services to children in need. The children, for some years, were taken to the Willoughby farm near Saline, where they could enjoy hayrides, pony rides and refreshments. The club provided equipment for students who were hard of hearing.

The club had a storehouse for medical equipment such as wheelchairs, crutches, walking canes and more which members of the community could borrow and use as needed. Today, the club grants scholarships to



The original Certificate presented to the Ypsilanti Rotary Club in 1918.

selected local high school students.

Membership in Rotary is by invitation, when a current member agrees to sponsor a potential new member. The members each represent a different profession or business from the others. Members are chosen without regard to religious, social or political differences. New members are greeted with the words: "Your fellow Rotarians have chosen you—not in the sense of exclusiveness, but because they believe that you were the person to represent your profession in the Rotary."

The Ypsilanti Rotary accepted the first African American member, Clyde Briggs in the 1950's. The first two female members were admitted in 1988, when Sioux Shelton and Donna Davenport joined. African American member A. P. Marshall was club president and was nominated for the office of District Governor by the club in 1976. Marshall held the office for the 1977-1978 term.

After dinner the results of the silent auction were announced for the items and services that were donated by local businesses. Then Rotary District Governor Barry Fraser presented the Rotary International 100 Year Membership Certificate, signed by the Rotary International President to club President John Barr.

Then the meeting concluded, as all Rotary meetings are concluded, with the club President leading the members in the Rotary 4-Way Test:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

The meeting adjourned and the next one hundred years of Rotary in Ypsilanti began.

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

# This Year Marks 150 Years of Library Service in Ypsilanti

BY JEROME DRUMMOND

It was 150 years ago this May that the Ladies' Library Association of Ypsilanti opened the first official library in the city. According to Helen J. Clarke Cleary, writing one hundred years ago on the early history of the institution of which she served as Recording Secretary, the original idea came from Mrs. Eunice Watling, a member of the Ypsilanti Home Association. After having consulted with Michigan State Normal School Professor William Payne on library details, Mrs. Watling called a meeting at the Union School of interested parties, mostly women of means and education such as herself, who would have the influence and wealth to start a project like that.

Libraries open to a "public" originated on the East Coast two or three decades earlier, primarily the work of men, and the idea moved gradually westward. What emerged in the Midwest was the work of women, and usually associated with a literary society of women. The first Ladies' Library Association in Michigan was founded in Kalamazoo, beginning ostensibly in 1852 as a sewing group in private homes with books read aloud and discussed, then leading to the establishment of their own subscription library.

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the overarching issue of abolition having been settled, there was space for other issues, one of these was the drive to independence on the part of women. In Michigan, a bill to extend the suffrage was introduced in 1866 and defeated, then voting rights for women limited to school elections was passed in 1867. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton founded their National Women's Suffrage Movement in 1869. A statewide ballot initiative was brought before the Michigan voters in 1874. The Ladies' Library Association of Ypsilanti, founded and operated by women, fit into this movement quite nicely.

A space was secured in the Arcade Block in the City and opened to the public on May 23rd, 1868. The collection of volumes, donated for the most part, numbered 525 by the end of that year. "Opened to the public" however, at this time, meant the paying public, because like most non-academic libraries of that time the library financed itself in part by subscription, \$1.00 per annum, and, of course, would only be accessible to a refined audience. Mrs. Watling was an excellent example of that audience. Born in New York state in 1842 to elite parents (who could trace themselves to the American Revolution), obviously edu-



The Ladies' Library in Kalamazoo c. 1878.

cated and married to a U of M professor, she would be just the sort of person that would consider it her obligation to further the interests of society.

The Ladies' Library Association of Ypsilanti was formally incorporated with the State of Michigan in 1869. The library they founded was a success, but always short of money. Many in the community took it upon themselves to help through a variety of fundraisers, which usually took the form of public presentations. Lectures were always popular, sometimes by denizens of the talk-circuit but more often professors from the local colleges or visiting clergymen. Theatrical productions and especially musical performances were well-attended, often having a connection to Professor Pease of the Normal, known everywhere for his original compositions. Of course, wealthy donors were an important component too.

Public libraries from the beginning have always had to keep a balance between high-brow materials and popular ones; one school of thought being that reading is meant to elevate the individual, the other that it could be an entertainment. One local newspaper publisher, rather well-read, criticized the library for what he considered to be its lightweight reading materials. The ladies, however, knew that scholarly reading could be found at the local college libraries so there was no need to duplicate offerings. We can guess though that the popular literature selected usually had an elevated moral level, and there were certainly standard reference works.

The library proved a great success and soon outgrew its space, relocating to another part of the Arcade Block with multiple rooms. It continued to grow, even through the financial depression of the 1870s, relocating again, before receiving a marvelous gift from Mrs. Mary Ann Starkweather – her house on Huron Street, which stands even



today. Mrs. Starkweather was famous for her many munificent donations to local causes. This elegant house was the Ladies' Library's first stand-alone structure, owned completely by the library, and, to add to the elegance, Mrs. Starkweather purchased a beautiful Tiffany window, displayed on the upper floor, facing Huron Street. As the window faced to the setting sun, we can only imagine the beautiful color display on the second floor. This window resides in the Ypsilanti Historical Museum on the same street today and can be seen there.

The deed to the Starkweather house was signed over in April of 1890, and work commenced to make it suitable as a public building. A reception was held for patrons and friends that December, in which the inclusion of a new furnace system the same month must have been a welcome addition. An arched molding was added above the front door which was engraved LADIES LIBRARY, although a wag at a local newspaper was incensed that there was no apostrophe included.

As said before, the library was really a creature of the well-to-do and the socially interested, such as Mrs. Starkweather, but lived hand-to-mouth since its beginning, its existence dependent on charity almost. As the years went by, the library appealed to and included more and more people, expanding its base of support to the point where it was considered a necessary institution and ornament for any self-respecting community that



The Ladies' Library in Ypsilanti.

valued education for males and females alike. Even the smallest towns in the Midwest by then had some sort of library. The people of Ypsilanti demonstrated their love for their library by its constant growth. In 1899, the Ypsilanti Common Council opted to finance the Ladies' Library and absorb all its expenses. Free of debt at last! People no longer had to pay a subscription fee, the library was now free to all, a true public library. It's usage increased, so much so, that an Assistant Librarian had to be hired.

In that same year of 1899, the Ladies' Library joined the Michigan State Library Association, and was eligible to borrow books from the State Library. This development brought the library into communication with libraries outside of Washtenaw County and across the state. Advancements in library practices could be shared and achieve uniformity. The public library was in this time losing its local idiosyncrasies to become the institution we know today, under the influence of Melvil Dewey, the innovator responsible for much of the organization of a modern library.

In 1904, the Common Council thought the library of such importance that it formed a committee for its oversight and raised the library's annual appropriation to \$1,600. That's about \$45,000 in current value, a considerable boost, in return for the library agreeing to be open six days a week. So nice was the library building and its holdings then, which the people of Ypsilanti had envisioned and assembled for themselves, that an offer of a Carnegie library was spurned as not worth the money.

Today the Ypsilanti District Library has three branches and a bookmobile, serving thousands of patrons with thousands of books and other materials. All because Mrs. Watling thought it would be a good idea.

*Jerome Drummond is an historical researcher who lives in Ypsilanti and is employed by the Ypsilanti District Library.*

# Ypsilanti

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# Nathalie & Bill Edmunds – *They Made a Difference*

BY BILL NICKELS



The octagon house now located at 114 North River Street.

During the early years, Ypsilanti had everything. It was a college town, it had major industries, it was a financial center for the area, and downtown was a major shopping district. Owner occupied large Victorian homes filled wide streets.

It all changed with the start of World War II. In order to provide housing for workers at the bomber plant, the large Victorian homes were sold and broken up into apartments. After the war, the student enrollment boom at EMU kept up a demand for housing. Motivated to maximize profits, landlords neglected their rentals. Homes were demolished and their lots filled with motel like apartments. Local industries closed one at a time. With the construction of nearby shopping malls, downtown shops went out of business. Anxious to bolster the city, a major park was sold to allow the construction of a budget department store. The downward slide seemed unstoppable.

In 1945, Nathalie “Nat” Elliott graduated from Ypsilanti High School. The prophecy for Nat in her class year book was “Because of her persuasive voice, Nathalie Elliott has taken up missionary work.” Her classmates would not be surprised that her prophecy would prove to be true; they would only be surprised it would be in her home town! Nat enrolled in the University of Michigan during the fall of 1945.

Also in 1945, William “Bill” Edmunds from Cleveland, Ohio was discharged from the Air Force where he served in the Pacific as a navigator on a B-29 Super Fortress. Using his veteran benefits, he also chose the University of Michigan to attend. Both signed up for the same English class. The professor did what teachers and professors have done forever with no consequence - he sat them in alphabetical or-

der. Like it was destiny, Nathalie Elliott met Bill Edmunds. The simple act of seating students in alphabetical order determined the lives of two people and the destiny of the City of Ypsilanti. They married while attending the University of Michigan and Bill finished medical school. Nat’s persuasive voice probably contributed to Bill starting his medical practice in Ypsilanti.

The Ypsilanti Historical Society was founded in 1960 with Dr. William Edmunds as an early board member. With Ypsilanti’s 150th birthday in 1973 as a focus, Bill and others founded Project 73. He was quoted describing the purpose of the organization in the Ypsilanti Press in August of 1963: “We can make Ypsilanti a community of significance to ourselves, our children, and our country. We believe the key to this significance lies in the past.” In 1966, as had happened to many Ypsilanti buildings earlier, one of only two Octagon Houses in Ypsilanti was threatened to be demolished, an apartment building to be built on the site. In January of 1966, Bill led Project 73 in an effort to save the building by moving it. By May of 1966, the Octagon House travelled from West Cross Street across from the Water Tower, down Michigan Avenue, to North River Street, where it proudly sits as a contributing structure today.

Ypsilanti’s Michigan Avenue post office was sold to the city when it moved to a new building one block away. There was an offer to build a gas station on the site. In 1963, Nat lobbied the city to allow the public library to move from a house on North Huron to the post office. In 1966, the infant Ypsilanti Historical Society started a museum in the basement.

Over time, the City of Ypsilanti acquired the east side of North Huron from Washtenaw to West Cross. Develop-



ers worked up plans to demolish the houses and develop the block in a variety of ways. Next to the city hall, the Ypsilanti Historical Society was allowed to use the neglected Dow Mansion at 220 North Huron as an expanded historical museum. The mansion had been chopped up into apartments - a huge challenge to convert it into a museum. Bill volunteered and was assigned the responsibility to lead the project. With board members and his four kids doing the work, the mansion was opened as a museum in 1970

In order to have greater influence on

the future of Ypsilanti, Nathalie decided to run for Ypsilanti city council in 1970. She served as council member and mayor pro-tem until 1983. As an elected official, she was able to publicly use her persuasive powers to protect Ypsilanti's historic buildings. In 1972, there was a plan to build a senior citizen high rise on the site of Ladies Library and Riverside Park. Many accused her of not supporting Ypsilanti's seniors. She explained that she did not oppose seniors; she supported keeping the park and Ladies Library!

Also in 1970, the State of Michigan

passed Act 169 which allowed local governments to form historic districts. Realizing that her persuasive powers may not always be enough, Nathalie teamed up with Jane Bird (now Jane Schmiedeke) to pass a Historic District Ordinance. Realizing political support was needed to pass such an ordinance, the two worked to elect supporting council members. The ordinance passed when it was first brought to council in 1978. The ordinance gave a historic district commission jurisdiction over the demolition of historic buildings within the historic district. Jane was elect-



The Dow Mansion as it looked in 1965.



The Dow Mansion was converted to a museum in 1970 and is shown here in 2012.

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ed chair of the newly formed historic district commission and Nathalie was elected vice-chair.

Before the ordinance was passed, the oldest frame house on an original foundation, known as the Towner House at 303 North Huron, was threatened with demolition in 1974. Jane and Nathalie formed the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation which negotiated an arrangement to save the building. To this day, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation promotes historic preservation in Ypsilanti with their annual Historic Home Tour and historic structure markers. Nathalie may be best known as founder of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation in 1979. A lengthy article in the summer of 2017 issue of the *Gleanings* describes this effort in detail.

By 1982, the agreement that allowed the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation to manage the Towner House had ended. Nathalie, Bill, Kathryn Howard, and



In 1978 Jane Schmiedeke and Nathalie Edmunds formed the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation which negotiated an arrangement to save the historic Towner House.

Laverne Howard founded the Towner House Children's Museum. Working with Ypsilanti Public Schools' curriculum director Judy White, students from the Ypsilanti schools visited the Towner House and experienced what it was like to live in the Nineteenth Century.

After the Civil War, veterans formed the Grand Army of the Republic. They had their own building at 110 Pearl Street in downtown Ypsilanti. Over time, the organization's members



GAR Hall as it appeared in 1973.

aged and their Ypsilanti building was threatened from lack of maintenance. To save the building, Nathalie joined the GAR Woman's Relief Corp and became president of the organization. She found GarE Maxton to restore the building which is now used as an attorney's office.

During the early 1980s, the Breakey Mansion at 125 North Huron was neglected as it sat vacant. The building needed restoration to allow the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce to lease the building for their office – Nathalie led a committee to accomplish the task. The lease of 125 North Huron was signed in 1987.

Back in 1967, Bill Edmunds partnered with Kenneth Leighton and purchased the Cornwell Mansion at 223 North River as a Project 73 effort to save Ypsilanti's significant homes. The Edmunds family eventually became sole owners of the house and invited the Ypsilanti community to an open house to visit the restored mansion on December 15, 2002. The Edmunds family continues to own and maintain the house.



In the 1980s Nathalie Edmunds led a committee to restore the Breakey Mansion at 125 North Huron which was then leased by the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce.



GAR Hall as it appears today.

Starting in 1979, Ypsilanti's Freighthouse was a center for community activities after it was purchased by the City of Ypsilanti. As a result of needed improvements, it was closed in 2004. A citizens group, The Friends of the Freighthouse, was authorized to lead the restoration. Nathalie Edmunds and Bonnie Penet were the first co-chairs. Leadership and membership of the organization changed over time with one constant – Nathalie continued as a participant in the restoration until the Freighthouse reopened in 2017.

Near the end of his first term in 2009, Mayor Paul Schreiber asked for a community committee to formulate a road map for the future of Ypsilanti. He called it his "2020 Task Force." Nathalie was one of the first to apply by submitting her extensive resume. As a result of the energy generated by Nathalie and Bill, historic preservation has made Ypsilanti a community of significance and is part of the road map for the future.

*(Bill Nickels is the President of the Ypsilanti Historical Society and a regular contributor of programs for the Society and articles for the Gleanings.)*



# Recent Museum & Archive Acquisitions

*The museum and archives receive donated items on a regular basis to add to our collections. It is through these donations that we have a furnished museum and an archive full of research material. We will be including recent acquisitions in the upcoming editions of the Gleanings. Thank you to all of our generous donors!*

*Here are the new items in our collections.*

Number	Item	Description
HSA-2018-16	Commemorative Plate & Pins	Plate from the sesquicentennial celebration & various Heritage Festival pins
HSA-2018-17	Yearbooks & Photographs	East Middle School and Ypsilanti High School 1972 yearbooks & Emmanuel Lutheran confirmation pictures
HSA-2018-18	Photo Album	Pictures depicting the 1984 construction of the Cross Street Bridge in Depot Town
HSA-2018-19	Yearbooks & Photographs	Emmanuel Lutheran Photos & 1927 Ypsi High and 1969-1970 East Middle School Yearbooks
HSA-2018-20	DVD Movies	Five copies of "Where the Brave Dare to Tread: The Bob Arvin Story"
HSA-2018-21	Willoughby Family Genealogy	Family research for Robert Thomas Willoughby & the funeral program for Edie Knapp-Willoughby
HSA-2018-22	Buffalo Bill Information	William Cody (Buffalo Bill) research
HSA-2018-23	Haig Family Genealogy Book	"Tom: A Memoir" by Thomas O. Haig
HSA-2018-24	Michigan History Magazines	"Michigan History" Vol. 60 No. 4 Winter 1976 & "The Michigan Historical Review" Vol. 18 No. 2 Fall 1992
HSA-2018-25	Yearbooks	Ypsi. High School Yearbooks: 1959, 1958, 1957, & 1956
HSA-2018-26	Photographs	Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Photo DVDS
HSA-2018-27	Books	"The Grand Army Blue-Book" & "The Glorious Masterworks of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral" Book
HSA-2018-28	Programs & Photographs	3 photos from the 1982 & c. 1990 Heritage Festival; 2017 EMU Women's & Gender Studies Awards Ceremony Program
HSA-2018-29	Books & Directories	"The Excitement is Building" Book; "The Story of Willow Run Book"; Willow Run Community Schools Directory for '91-92 & '93-94; Ypsi. Business Pamphlets
HSA-2018-30	Photographs	Photos of Ella, Alice, & Helen Vorce AND Fayette Clark
HSA-2018-31	Tag & Keys	Metal tag from Weidman Ford & keys from the Ypsilanti Locksmith
HSA-2018-32	Various School Information	Estabrook New Horizon class elements and newspaper article
HS-2018-651-1	Folding Chair	Wood and fabric folding rocking chair
HS-2018-652-1	Flour Sack	Ypsilanti Farm Bureau, 100-pound capacity
HS-2018-653-1	Wallet Calendar	1999 promotional wallet calendar for Ypsilanti's Tea Thyme & Treasure-The Tea Cozy
HS-2018-653-3	Deck of Cards	Set of Bridge Cards displaying Ypsilanti architecture, businesses, and landmarks
HS-2018-653-4	Post Card Blanks	Set of 2 John Witherspoon 9¢ postcard blanks
HS-2018-653-5	Post Card Blanks	Set of 3 Samuel Adams 8¢ postcard blanks
HS-2018-654-1	Cartridge Case	Spanish-American War cartridge case
HS-2018-654-2	Cigarette Tins	Set of 2 green metal Lucky Strike cigarette tins
HS-2018-654-3	Cigar Boxes	1x Humo an 1x San Felice cigar boxes
HS-2018-654-4	Cigarette Tins	Set of 2 metal Chesterfield cigarette tins
HS-2018-654-5	Battlefield Artifacts	Glass bottle containing battlefield artifacts from Battle of Atlanta

# FRED FAY –

## Ypsilanti's Streetcar Union Representative

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ

On May 1, 2018, Matt Siegfried led a May Day labor-themed historical walking tour through the streets of Ypsilanti. As he led the walking tour down Babbitt Street, Mr. Siegfried talked about a streetcar worker's labor union representative named Fred Fay who had once lived on the street. The story of Fred Fay is an interesting and important one that isn't well known in Ypsilanti and deserves to be told. Fred Fay was a streetcar motorman and prominent union representative who lived in Ypsilanti during the early 1900s. He fought hard his entire career to improve streetcar workmen's rights, and some say he even sacrificed an early death for the cause. Perhaps Fay's biggest claim to fame was that he successfully represented the Boston railroad car men in a successful strike in 1912.

Frederick J. Fay was born in Forester, Sanilac County, Michigan, on December 15, 1863. Fred's father was Israel Fay, who was born in Ohio in 1815. Fred's mother was Eveline Webster, who was born in New York in 1820. Israel and Eveline were married in 1839 in Forester, but moved to Ontario, Canada, for a period of about 10 years prior to settling back in Forester. Israel and Leila Fay had seven children, four boys and three girls. The first four children were born in Canada, and the last three were born in Michigan. Fred Fay was the last and youngest of the seven children.

Fred Fay grew up in Forester, but eventually left as young single man to work for a streetcar line in Saginaw, Michigan. In 1893, Fay organized a union division in Saginaw of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America. The Amalgamated Association union was a union of electric rail car workers based in Detroit. Fay was ultimately fired from his job and black-listed for his work with the union, and spent the next year working odd jobs. Fay's union activity in Saginaw would be the first of his career, but it wouldn't be the last.

Fred Fay married the former Leila Madison on March 28, 1894 in Saginaw. A year later, the Fays welcomed a baby girl, Myrtle, who was born in 1895. Fay's next place of employment was with Rapid Railway Company. There too, he organized a local labor union. The management at Rapid



Fred Fay c1910.

Railway Company was displeased with his union work, and he was forced out of his position. Sometime prior to 1900, Fay was offered a job as a streetcar operator, known as a motorman, on the Ypsilanti and Jackson ("Ypsi-Ann") streetcar line operated by the Detroit Urban Railroad (D.U.R.). For this job, Fred, Leila, and Myrtle Fay moved to Ypsilanti, along with Fred's mother, Eveline. They

lived at 422 River Street for a short time before moving to 112 Babbitt Street in 1900. In 1902, the Fays had a son, Roy, who died as an infant. The Fays would remain in their home until 1914, and the home is still standing today.

Shortly after he started working for the Ypsilanti and Jackson line, Fay organized the Ypsilanti Division No. 111 of the Amalgamated Association Union. In 1903, Fred Fay was nominated for the General Executive Board (G.E.B.) of the Detroit-Based union. For the rest of his life, Fred Fay committed his whole energy to promoting the interests of the Amalgamated Association, organizing electric railway men throughout the country. He worked directly for the International President, and Fay was given some of the most difficult problems with which to deal. In addition to his union duties, Fred Fay continued as a motorman on the streetcar line that ran from Detroit to Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor, terminating in Jackson.

In early 1908, Fred Fay had been away on union duties and hadn't been working as a motorman on the route for quite some time. Union rules allowed an employee who was away on union duties to get his regular run back when returning from the union work. Just a day or two after returning to his job as a motorman, Fred Fay ran two miles beyond the regular meeting point where eastbound cars pass westbound cars on a segment of track known as a "switch meeting point." Perhaps due to the rail car coming from the opposite direction running behind schedule, it was a miracle that the car operated by Fred Fay didn't meet up and crash with a car coming in the opposite direction. As a result of their presumed negligence, Fred Fay along with the streetcar conductor, were discharged from their jobs. The Amalgamated Association took up their case, led by Fred Fay's nephew, Isa Fay of Jackson, Michigan. Like his uncle, Isa Fay was also a motorman and an official of



the Ypsilanti street car union Division No. 111. Fred Fay's case for reinstatement went to arbitration, and the case dragged on for a couple months. The arbitrator finally decided that Fay's legal case had to be separated from the streetcar conductor which delayed the decision.

On April 29, 1908, Fay's nephew, Isa Fay, of Jackson, was operating an Ypsi-Ann streetcar as a motorman. He was involved in a nearly identical incident as his uncle Fred Fay had several months before. Only in this case, Fred Fay's nephew paid the ultimate price of death, and so did nine innocent passengers. Isa Fay was motor-ing the Ypsi-Ann streetcar eastbound toward Detroit and had just passed the Washtenaw County border into Wayne County. Like his uncle a couple months before, Isa Fay ran straight through the meeting switch where streetcars pull off to pass each other. The eastbound streetcar plowed into a westbound streetcar. Several people were immediately killed, and there were dozens of injuries. Isa Fay

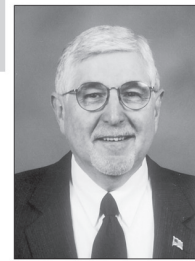
was amongst the fatalities. His body was literally severed in two. Ironically, protruding from the dead Isa Fay's jacket pocket were the arbitration papers concerning his Uncle Fred Fay's termination case. It's unclear what the results of the arbitration case were, but for almost the rest of his life, Fred Fay focused on national Amalgamated Association union activities rather than functioning as a streetcar motorman.

During the time he was a member of the G.E.B. of the Amalgamated Association union, Fred Fay organized or played a role in many of the prominent streetcar labor strikes, including those in Winnipeg, Hamilton, Columbus, and Des Moines. In the August, 1912 issue of "The Motorman and Conductor", the official newsletter of the Amalgamated Association, an article about Fay describes his involvement in these important labor strikes. The article refers to an interview with Fay discussing the strikes which he was instrumental in organizing. Fay



A current photo of the Fred Fay home at 112 Babbitt Street.

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humbly gave credit to all of the union members instead of himself and replied, "You have the list of membership down there. Well, begin with A and follow the list alphabetically until you get to the last name. Exclude me and you have the men who are entitled to all the credit."

In 1912, Fred Fay was appointed by the Amalgamated Association union to represent employees of the Boston Elevated Company, who were lobbying to obtain better wages and working conditions. The Boston Elevated Company included 7,000 elevated, subway, and surface train workers. Fred Fay was able to successfully lead 2,500 of those workers into forming a new union, and organized a strike for better working conditions and salary starting on June 7, 1912. Through Fred Fay's leadership, the number of union members grew to 4,000 by the time the strike ended on July 29, 1912. The settlement brought higher wages for employees, the recognition of the union, and overall better conditions.

Although Fred Fay was very successful in his union endeavors, his home-life was a different story. Fred and Leila Fay's marriage fell apart in 1914. An article in the Detroit Free Press on October 27, 1914, publicly shares the details of Fred Fay's divorce filing in a headline that states, "Wifey Says Labor Delegate 'Blows' \$77 Weekly Pay – Mrs. Fred Fay, Ypsilanti, Charges Hubby is High-Life Flirt." Fred Fay

claimed that his wife ran through all of the savings in a joint bank account. He also claims that he was constantly being spied on by detectives representing the Boston Elevated railway company. Leila Fay claimed that Fred Fay spent his \$77 weekly salary on "riotous living." Leila also accused Fred Fay of having love affairs that "extended from aristocratic Back Bay, Boston, to Lake Minnehaha." The article went on to say that "judging from her present frame of mind, they will be public gossip in a few days." It's never a good thing to have the details of a divorce played out in a prominent newspaper.

The Fays were granted a divorce on December 21, 1914. Perhaps as proof that Leila Fay may have been accurate in some of her accusations during the divorce proceedings, Fred Fay married his second wife Margaret Strathearn, of Massachusetts, on December 31, 1914. The marriage occurred just 10 days after the divorce settlement. Fred Fay left Ypsilanti and moved permanently to the Boston area to live with his new bride.

Fred Fay's life with his new bride wasn't a long one, lasting less than two years. Fay died on October 9, 1916, in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. His obituary published in the Boston Post on October 10, 1916, stated: "Early last evening Fred Fay, one of the leaders of the big strike of Boston Elevated employees in this city in 1912, died at his home on Sedgwick street, Jamaica Plain. His death resulted from a complication of diseases due, it is said, to overwork in behalf of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America, of which he was for many years a general organizer. Mr. Fay was a very energetic man and the work he did for the Boston street car men, sometimes prolonged to 24 hours at a stretch, was phenomenal. It affected his health, however, in spite of his strong constitution, particularly as it was followed by equally hard work in behalf of the men of the Bay State railway during their troubles, and after that some more strenuous work during the strike of the Providence, R.I., car men. His labors extended over a period of about three years, and it was said by the doctors that this used up all his vitality. Mr. Fay was a native of Detroit, Mich., but made his home in Boston after the strike. Although no arrangements have been made for his funeral, a special meeting of the Boston Street Carmen's Union will be held tomorrow night. Mr. Fay's widow survives him."

Fred Fay left his mark on this earth by fighting for better labor conditions and salaries for working-class men and women all across the country. He sacrificed his marriage, and perhaps his life, trying to make life better for common workers and their families.

*(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti on River Street and is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*



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Marshall McLennan (left) and Ted Ligibel toasting the success of the EMU Graduate Program in Historical Preservation in October of 2017.

# EMU's Historic Preservation Program

BY TED LIGIBEL

When founders, Drs. Marshall McLennan and Andrew Nazzaro established the Historic Preservation program in the late 1970s, no one could have imagined that the Master's program would become the nation's largest graduate degree in historic preservation.

Now approaching its 40th anniversary, the program has educated hundreds of students, many of whom have held positions with well-known preservation-based organizations, agencies, and companies, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, Preservation Action, the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Preservation Utah, Heritage Ohio, the Steamship Historical Society of America, Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and dozens of other SHPO and state offices throughout the nation. Many private firms like Quinn Evans Architects and CCRG in Michigan, as well as throughout the country, have relied on program graduates to meet their professional demands. Program alumni too have held seats on boards and commissions, especially Historic District Commissions (HDCs), across the nation. Program graduates have an international presence as well and are working in places like India, Africa, Saudi Arabia, England, and of course Canada.

Student internships also have been a mainstay of the program with students placed throughout the nation in paying and unpaid positions, ranging from National Parks to historical societies to private businesses. The long-running relationship with YHS in sponsoring two Graduate Assistants to help with the museum and its archives is one of the longest-running of these internships, as was the intern placed with the Ypsilanti HDC until the intern-

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ship's recent cessation due to city funding issues.

Marshall McLennan was director of the program since its inception and through 1999. Dr. Ted Ligibel, who had been at EMU, teaching in the Historic Preservation Program since 1991, took over as director in the Fall of 1999 when Marshall officially retired. Ted Ligibel continues to run the program and is grooming the next director.

In a recent communication with former Ypsilanti Mayor Cheryl Farmer about HDC founder Jane Schmiedeke and the late Nat Edmunds, Marshall recounted the founding and early days of the Historic Preservation Program.

*"Nat's and Jane's active pursuit of historic district protections for Depot Town and Ypsilanti's main street began before Drew's and my endeavor, but best as my memory serves, overlapped. They were among our strongest cheerleaders.*

*The preservation program was initiated with the first offering of classes in the fall of 1979. It was the product of a series of events leading to adjustments in the University's primary educational missions. I joined the Geography and Geology Department in 1970 with regional and topical specialties in Southeast Asia and settlement geography respectively. It was my professional interest in settlement geography that ultimately led me in the direction of historic preservation. Ted asked me to elaborate on the process by which the preservation program came about for his own information, so I will go into a bit more detail than you may be seeking.*

*I did my doctoral studies at the University of California, Berkeley, focusing in cultural and historical geography. At the*

*time I attended Berkeley, a fundamental premise underlying cultural geography was that the varied culture groups occupying the earth's surface create cultural landscapes, each distinct from the others across the face of the earth through their vision of how to reshape the natural landscape for their own purposes. Over the decades and centuries each culture region acquires its own character or sense of place. Among features contributing to the visual character of place are the settlements, the spatial pat-*

The preservation program was initiated with the first offering of classes in the fall of 1979. It was the product of a series of events leading to adjustments in the University's primary educational missions.

*terns in which they are laid out, the architectural appearance of public and domestic buildings, etc. This is the aspect of cultural geography, the origin and subsequent evolution of regionally distinct cultural landscapes*

*over time, that interested me.*

*Because of the Vietnam War, I was specifically hired by EMU in 1970 to teach "Geography of Southeast Asia." Initially that class and others that I taught enjoyed large enrollments. However, enrollments for the SE Asia course took a significant hit when we pulled out of Vietnam. Almost concurrently another world development adversely impacted enrollments throughout the geography department and the University - the OPEC oil embargo. As you undoubtedly know, EMU originally was established as a teacher's college. When I arrived in 1970, EMU had already expanded into a full-fledged university, but its educational roots were still reflected by the number of students pursuing a degree and certification in education - over fourteen thousand out of a total campus enrollment of some 21,000. All these education students were required to take a minimum of two regional or human geography courses. The OPEC oil embargo caused a serious recession in the US. One consequence was that school systems all over the country, losing tax base, began shrinking their teacher base. Very quickly many college students sought alternatives to career teaching. At the low point, EMU's campus wide enrollment dropped to a bit over 13,000, and the State legislature facing its own economic difficulties, began grumbling about closing EMU.*

*Until this point, teacher training remained EMU's most important educational mission, and, in terms of numbers of students taking courses, the geography department's primary mission was to offer classes in support of the College of Education. The University realized*



that a long term adjustment in missions would be necessary if the University was to survive. Trying to emphasize new research programs in competition with nearby University of Michigan would be fruitless, so the University sought to develop new applied programs. The expansion of the College of Business, with a new range of majors, and its relocation to downtown Ypsilanti, was one outgrowth of the University's mission adjustments.

The rapid decline in student numbers in the College of Education was echoed in the Geography and Geology Department, especially in the regional geography courses servicing education majors, and this was particularly the case for my Southeast Asia class (the negative psychological spinoff of the loss of the Vietnam War). The administration marked the Geography and Geology Department for downsizing. Scrambling to avoid layoff, several of my colleagues developed an applied major in land use planning, which ultimately evolved into a major in urban planning. My own prospects were not good. For developing an applied program, my regional background was a nonstarter. My systematic focus on cultural geography looked no more promising since the only obvious applied field was "teaching." Moreover, I was not yet tenured. It came as no surprise when I was given a one year notice of layoff. I attempted to seek a position elsewhere, but with the nation in recession, not much was available.

In retention decisions, the university also valued individual professors' ability to generate income for the University through obtaining grants. One day one of my colleagues, Andrew Naz-

zaro, also a cultural geographer, called to say he had seen a notice in the local paper from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office soliciting funding proposals to carry out historic site and architectural surveys. Andrew (Drew) suggested we develop a proposal to survey old water, steam, and electric power sites along the Huron River, and analyze the influence these sites played upon the emergence and subsequent development of settlement patterns in northern Washtenaw County. We developed a proposal, and it was accepted. One thing led to another. A few weeks after our Huron River survey was approved by the State, we received a letter from the National Trust for Historic Places soliciting the development of a master's degree program in historic preservation (with some degree of funding assistance). The National Trust, at this very time, was looking to expand professional education in the preservation field, and...having just facilitated a sabbatical internship for a geography professor the previous year, they had become cognizant of geographical perspectives potentially [being] useful to the preservation field. The rest is history."

Today, the Historic Preservation Program continues to thrive in the Geography & Geology Department and has a faculty of three in addition to Ted Ligibel: Professor Dan Bonenberger (University of West Virginia); Professor Nancy Bryk (University of Michigan), and Dr. Matthew Cook (University of Tennessee). As the program looks forward to its 40th anniversary celebration watch for future articles about its history and evolution.

(Ted Ligibel is the Director of the Graduate Program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University.)



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# Westward Ho!

## A Godfroy in the Wild, Wild West

BY KATHLEEN P. CHAMBERLAIN

*(Editor's Note: Ypsilanti history begins with the establishment of the Godfroy Trading Post. French Claim No. 690 was deeded to Gabriel Godfroy by the U. S. Government on July 3, 1812, and contained 562 acres. Claim N. 680 was deeded to Gabriel Godfroy's children and contained 567 acres.)*

What do Ottawa warrior Pontiac and Billy the Kid have in common? More than a century and a thousand miles separate them. Pontiac organized a pan-tribal Indian rebellion in 1763 to drive British from the Great Lakes country. In 1878, Billy the Kid participated in a bloody conflict called the Lincoln County War in far-off New Mexico territory. The connection? Michigan's pioneering Godfroy family played roles in both frontier dramas. British officials accused Jacques Godfroy with aiding and abetting Pontiac; great grandson Frederick ran afoul of Billy. Both Godfroys found their reputations tarnished and lives threatened as a result.

Godfroys arrived early in New France and eagerly embraced the burgeoning fur trade. James sailed from Rouen, France, in 1683, and at age thirty, settled in Three Rivers, Canada, traveling waterways from Quebec to the Straits of Mackinac. His son Jacques followed in his father's footsteps and in 1710 made his home in Detroit where French military commander Cadillac built Fort Ponchartrain in 1701 to thwart British expansion above Lake Erie. This was the first generation of Godfroys to reside in present-day Michigan.

The third Godfroy, also named Jacques (1722-1795), traded and served as interpreter between French and native peoples. His first and third wives were Native American, the third of the Miami tribe. His second, French-born Louisa Clotilda Chapotan, produced what was considered his only legitimate son, Jacques Gabriel, in 1758. While Jacques's skills earned him respect among French and Indians, they provoked British distrust. After France withdrew from America in 1763, following the French and Indian War, charismatic Ottawa warrior Pontiac organized a pan-tribal confederacy to defeat their English foes. They captured Fort Michilimackinac in June 1763 and then laid siege to Detroit. British officials surveilled Godfroy, believing he used his influence to rally support against them. When the revolt failed they arrested and charged him with treason, but lacked the evidence to convict.

Jacques Gabriel (1758-1833) became a proud American entrepreneur. Called Gabriel, he adopted the moniker "Senior" after christening his own son Gabriel in 1783. Senior owned lumber mills in Detroit and Monroe and trading posts across southeastern Michigan including one built in

1809 where the Huron River and "Potawatomie Trail" intersect in what is now Ypsilanti. He became Indian agent to the Potawatomi. Senior married three times. His second wife, Mary Teresa Bondy, gave birth to their fifth child, James (Senior's tenth overall), on June 29, 1802. James married Victoria Navarre in 1823 - another Michigan pioneer family - and their son Frederick was born May 15, 1827. James pressured Frederick to enter the priesthood, and Frederick dutifully studied at the University of Michigan in preparation. James's last will and testament excluded Frederick, leaving his son's needs to the Church. When James died in 1847, Frederick left school and converted to Presbyterianism.

James married Clara Philips in 1849, and settled in Monroe working as a clerk in various establishments. In 1854, he was elected town marshal. He fought with the 4th Michigan Infantry during the Civil War. In 1875, family connections - probably Michigan Senator Isaac P. Christiancy - gained him an appointment as agent to the Mescalero Apaches in southeastern New Mexico.

Frederick Godfroy arrived at the Mescalero Agency on July 1, 1876, and encountered immediate obstacles. Government housing proved woefully inadequate, forcing Godfroy to rent a home from Joseph H. Blazer, who operated a saw mill on the reservation. Clara let spare rooms and served meals to visitors to make ends meet. Agency storage facilities were dilapidated and leaked so badly that they were unfit to safeguard Indian goods. Moreover government officials had never surveyed reservation borders or removed non-Indian squatters. The main road cut straight across the reservation exposing the Indians to violence and their livestock to thieves. Godfroy's daughter Kate experienced the problem first hand in October 1877 when a gang of rustlers called "The Boys" stole her mare. Leader Jessie Evans later returned the animal to her "with his affectionate kiss."

Area roads were few and stagecoaches irregular. Lincoln's economy was barter. Cash came from government contracts for goods and services to Indians and soldiers at nearby Fort Stanton. Cronyism was rampant. Former army officer Lawrence G. Murphy, for example, used his military connections to establish the only mercantile in the county. Locals pledged crops in exchange for seed and supplies, which enabled Murphy to bid on government contracts. Murphy used his position to get elected probate judge making him tax assessor with near total control over the area's economy and politics. Fort Stanton officers so reinforced his hold that when Godfroy's predecessor tried to exert his authority over reservation affairs and halt Murphy's bootlegging operations, the commanding officer ordered him out claiming



agency land belonged to the army. The agent protested, but the Interior Department had misplaced the deed. Thus Godfroy discovered that he also could not count on government support.

Two newcomers, Alexander A. McSween and John H. Tunstall, had recently intensified tensions in Lincoln. Attorney McSween partnered with Tunstall, son of a London shipping merchant, to build a store and ranch and compete directly with Murphy. Tunstall employed young Billy Bonney, aka Billy the Kid, to work on his ranch. In February 1878, McSween wrote to Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz accusing Godfroy of pocketing government funds. Because government hired its Indian agents on the basis of party affiliation, skimming money was common. In addition, Congress economized endlessly, and paltry salaries exacerbated the problem. McSween wanted Godfroy out and a friend installed since channeling government contracts through Tunstall's store offered potentially lucrative opportunities. There is no evidence that Godfroy was corrupt.

On February 18, 1878, Murphy partisans murdered Tunstall in cold blood. Tunstall supporters united under the sobriquet of "The Regulators" to avenge the killing; prominent among them was Billy the Kid. As Lincoln exploded in gunplay, federal investigator Ezra C. Watkins arrived to probe McSween's charges against Godfroy. Despite the violence Watkins assembled testimony, letters, and affidavits from 45 individuals. He concluded that Washington must remove squatters and construct adequate agency buildings, but Mescaleros seemed happy with Godfroy overall. Godfroy admitted loaning coffee, flour, and sugar to Murphy for sale in his store, but insisted that he did so because of the leaking storage facilities and claimed that goods were always returned in kind. Irregular perhaps, but not illegal.

Watkins deemed McSween's allegations "hearsay." However Frederick had neglected to conduct a reservation census as ordered. "Terrorism" prevented it, he claimed, but on August 2, Godfroy was suspended pending a replacement.

Three days later violence struck with the appearance of Billy the Kid and the Regulators. Godfroy and assistant Morris Bernstein were distributing rations at the time. Anticipating that the Regulators might steal Apache horses, Bernstein raced to the river where the animals grazed. Suddenly Godfroy heard gunfire. He ran towards the sound and found Bernstein dead with five bullet holes. Frederick feared that Billy might return to kill him as he had occasionally administered medical attention to Murphy supporters. Luckily for Godfroy, Billy had bigger problems and was soon on the run from territorial and federal lawmen.

Godfroy formally resigned November 21, 1878, still hoping for reinstatement. In February 1879, he attended the wedding of his daughter Kate and army surgeon Daniel M. Appel at Fort Stanton. That August his 14-year-old niece Hattie, visiting from Michigan, eloped with gunman Marion Turner, at least ten years her senior and described as "handsome, aggressive, and dangerous." Godfroy overtook the couple, annulled the marriage, and escorted Hattie to Michigan where he and Clara remained. On May 15, 1885 - his 58th birthday - Frederick died of heart disease while visiting Kate and Daniel in Plattsburg, New York. Godfroy was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo, not the family plot in Monroe. Perhaps his Presbyterian conversion was the reason.

Both Jacques and Frederick Godfroy experienced a degree of fame and blemished reputations from their frontier adventures. Jacques abandoned French society and remained with the Miami Indians. Frederick's career never recovered. In addition,


history labeled Murphy partisans the "bad guys," and Frederick's character suffered by association. Sadly the Godfroys have inspired little historical research despite playing major, often decisive roles in the fur and Indian trade, colonial and early American wars, and the founding of Detroit, Monroe, Dearborn, and Ypsilanti. They are woven into Michigan history, and through Frederick, link the once wild Great Lakes to the later Wild West.

*(Kathleen Chamberlain recently retired from Eastern Michigan University where she taught U.S. and Native American history since 2001. She has presented talks on Indians of Michigan and the fur trade to Chautauqua and Elderwise audiences in Ypsilanti. A former member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, she currently lives in New Mexico. She has published four books on American Indians and the US West.*

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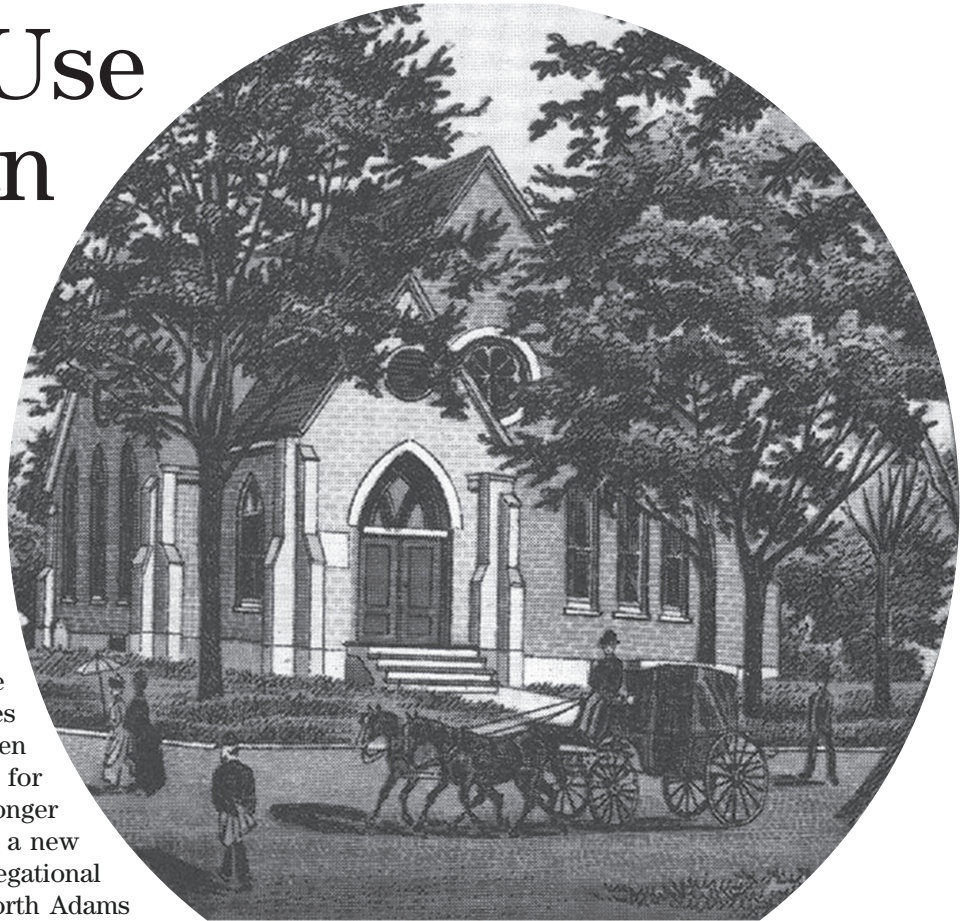
# A New Use for an Historic Church

BY JAMES MANN

When a decision is made for the construction of a new building, there is always consideration regarding the purpose for which it is to be used. The intended use of the house, shop or church influences the architectural plan of the facility. Even when a building has been constructed for one use it can, should that purpose no longer need to be filled, be modified to serve a new use. Such is the story of the First Congregational Church building of Ypsilanti at 218 North Adams Street. This building will no longer serve the purpose for which it was built, as a house of worship, but will soon be put to a new use, as a music venue. Still, it has a long history, as a house of God.

Members of the Congregational church arrived in Ypsilanti as early as the 1840's, but their numbers were too small to support a church building of their own. For this reason, the members of the Congregational community were part of the First Presbyterian Church. This was in accordance with the close relationship of the two dominations at the time.

"As the membership of the church increased with the passing years the Congregational membership increased in proportion. Eventually the number of members became such that a demand arose for a distinct Congregational organization. That organization became official on October 4, 1881. Although there was a natural regret on the part of some Presbyterian people the separation of the two organizations was brought to pass with entire good will on both sides. Reverend George H. Grannis, the Congregational pastor who came to Ypsilanti to further the movement, was cordially received by many good Presbyterians, and among them, was especially aided by Robert Lambie, who in company with his daughter, afterward Mrs. William B. Hatch, drove him around the adjoining country in his canvass for members. Reverend Richmond, the Presbyterian pastor, had expressed himself as favorable to the plan of separation, but nevertheless was a bit disconcerted on returning from a vacation to find that forty of his members



An artist's rendition of the original church structure constructed in 1883.

had affiliated with the new organization," noted the Reverend Harvey C. Colburn in *The Story of Ypsilanti*.

The formal separation occurred on October 4, 1881. A Congregational Society was formed to look after the financial interests of the community, with the Reverend Grannis as the first pastor. There were sixty charter members in the community. As the community was still too small to support a church building, the members held their meeting in a number of places in the city, including the Opera House, the Ladies' Temperance Rooms, and Wells' Grocery store. For a time, services were held in Y.W. C.A. rooms, above the Loughbridge and Wilcox Marble shop on North Washington Street.

The community purchased two lots in 1883 on the southwest corner of Adams and Emmet Streets, from a Mr. Dolson, for \$1,000. A simple brick structure was built, and dedicated on July 10th of the same year. This was done at a cost of \$6,150. South of the church, where the parsonage would later stand, was an apple orchard. Here the members tethered their horses during services. The parsonage was built in 1888.

Over time the number of those attending services exceeded the space available in the church. Plans were made for the extension of the building toward Adams Street. "On the north side will be another addition which provides for a



large and commodious Sunday school room and infant class room. Under this portion will be a basement, which gives a large dining room, kitchen and closets. A square tower stands in the angle at the front, between the two entrances, and gives space for the pastor's study," reported *The Ypsilantian* of January 18, 1898. Plans for the addition were approved, and the community returned to the Opera House for services during construction.

The addition was in the Neo-Gothic style, with rock face, square cut stone which was quarried in Manchester, Michigan, and from farms along Geddes Road. The addition was created by building around the original structure. At the front of the addition is the large memorial window in memory of Prof. Joseph S. Estabrook, donated by some of his students. In the south wall are memorial windows in memory of Mrs. Nancy Higley, a second to her daughter, C. Juliet, and a third in memory of Mrs. Mary J. Platt. The addition was dedicated on June 25, 1899. The architect was W. Butterfield of Detroit, and the builder was Frank Norton. A tracker action organ was installed in 1906.

The Reverend Harvey C. Colburn was pastor of the church from 1918 until 1937. He is today best remembered as the author of *The Story of Ypsilanti*, published in 1923, part of the city centennial celebration.

During the cold winter months of the Great Depression, his wife, Mary S. Colburn, was moved to pity for the men digging sewers in the city. She took action, and began to feed the men a hot meal at noon each day. As many as 30 men



The First Congregational Church as it appears today.

came to enjoy what they called "Congregational stew."

Over time, the parsonage became the office of the parish, as the pastor lived elsewhere. In 1988, the parsonage was removed and relocated on South Huron Street. Today, the former parsonage is The Parish House Inn, a bed and breakfast.

On the former site of the parsonage, a new addition was constructed, and attached to the church. This addition provided office space as well as space for a kitchen and a classroom.

As the years passed, the numbers of those attending services there declined, and the church no longer needed so much space. Services were finally moved to the classroom in the addition. The church building was placed on the market for sale in 2007.

The church is no longer on the market, as it has been purchased by Steve Pierce. He plans to restore the building to some of its former glory. The old church is in need of a little work. The office addition will be rented out as office space. The church itself will become a music venue. All kinds of music will be welcomed. An old historic building will now be put to a new use.



On the former site of the parsonage, a new addition was constructed and attached to the church.

The Congregational community now holds services in the old Chapple Elementary School at 111 South Wallace Street at 10:00 am on Sunday. Entrance is by the back of the building off Jones Street.

*(James Mann is a local historian, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular*

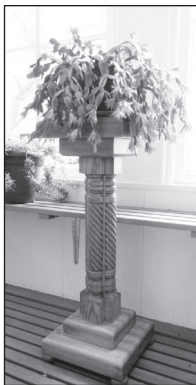
# Museum Advisory Board Report

BY NANCY WHEELER, CHAIR

Our mannequins and dress forms are ready for the weather in their beautiful white summer dresses. Thank you, Fofie Pappas, and your committee for the interesting accessories.



Mannequins and dress forms are ready for summer weather in their beautiful white dresses.



The beautiful oak plant stand in the Solarium that was recently purchased with memorial funds.

The large cabinet in the dining room contains our crystal. It really sparkles! The Majolica pottery is prominently displayed in the slant front case. We have a beautiful oak plant stand in the Solarium that was recently purchased with memorial funds. The Library has a display to commemorate the end of World War I. Glass slippers are on exhibit upstairs in the hall case.

We had "deep cleaning" last month. That means we

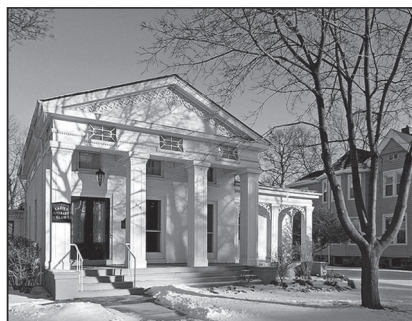
clean behind the furniture and pictures, roll up the carpets, polish the wood, clean the glass, and make everything shine! (It is not all work, we chat and have a great lunch. But the best part is that we get to handle the beautiful pieces we normally cannot touch! Call if you also want to help finish the last rooms this fall.)

Erickson second graders visited us in April. We always welcome groups. Just call or e-mail us to set up a tour.

Welcome to new Docents David and Joyce Novak! They are longtime residents of Ypsilanti and have lots of interesting stories about our area. We need four more Docents for the week-ends. You can be new to the area, we give training. Each Docent has an individual style and interpretation of our Museum. Just call 734-482-4990 and volunteer.



The Library has a display to commemorate the end of World War I.



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# Deadly 1908 Ypsi-Ann Streetcar Crash

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ

When it comes to horrific train crashes much of Ypsilanti lore focuses on the 1929 Depot Town crash that reshaped the building occupied by the Sidetrack Bar and Grill at the southwest corner of Cross Street and River Street. Few were injured in that crash, however, and there were no fatalities, unless you count the demise of an entire corner of a large brick building. Far lesser known to most Ypsilantians is a prior crash that occurred just three miles east of Ypsilanti. This particular train crash killed 10 people and injured dozens more.

The fatal crash occurred on April 28, 1908, and involved two streetcars headed in opposite directions on the "Ypsi-Ann" interurban route, operated by the Detroit United Railway (D.U.R.). The big yellow eastbound "limited" train was headed toward Detroit. The westbound "local" train was headed toward Ypsilanti. The "limited" was so-named because it was an express train with limited stops, with main stops in Jackson, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Detroit. The "local" made more frequent stops. Each train was operated by a motorman and a conductor. The motorman of the eastbound limited train was a man named Isa Fay and the conductor was George Meade. The motorman of the westbound express train was George Wingrove and the conductor was George Collum.

For the most part in the early 1900s, there was a single set of train tracks between Ypsilanti and Detroit. To allow train cars headed in opposite directions to pass one another, the train cars were expected to pull over at several designated sections of the track called "switch meeting points." These switch meeting points had multiple lanes that allowed the train cars to pull over, wait for the train coming from the opposite direction, and then proceed to pass each other. At the time of the crash, the switch meeting points had recently been changed to accommodate a new train schedule. This may have led to some confusion which contributed to the crash. A dispatcher kept track of the train locations via telephone, and was expected to notify the conductors of the locations of the trains coming from the opposite direction and make orders to the conductors of eastbound and westbound trains to ensure that no accidents occurred.

An article in the Detroit Free Press the day after the train accident described the facts of the incident as follows: "A misunderstanding of orders resulted in nine (later increasing to ten) deaths and injuries to 35 persons when an eastbound limited car and a westbound local on the Ypsi-Ann Interurban crashed head-on near a curve three miles east of Ypsilanti at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon. The limited car was completely crushed up to the partition which separates the smokers' section from the rear section, grinding the passengers in the forward part of the cars into a fearful mass of blood and death. Seats in both cars were ripped from their fastenings by the impact and the human freight was hurled into a screaming, agonized tangle. Motorman Isa Fay, of the limited, stuck to his post, putting on the brakes, as was shown by an investigation, and was ground to death, while his companion, Conductor George Meade, of Jackson, who leaped for his life, went mad at the sight of his partner's mangled form. George Wingrove, motorman of the local car leaped from his post as he saw the limited rushing down and escaped with only a few bruises. George Collum, of Jackson, the local car conductor, sprained his ankle when he jumped."

The crash occurred just east of the Washtenaw-Wayne County border near the Smith's Crossing switch meeting point, close to a farmhouse owned by Mr.



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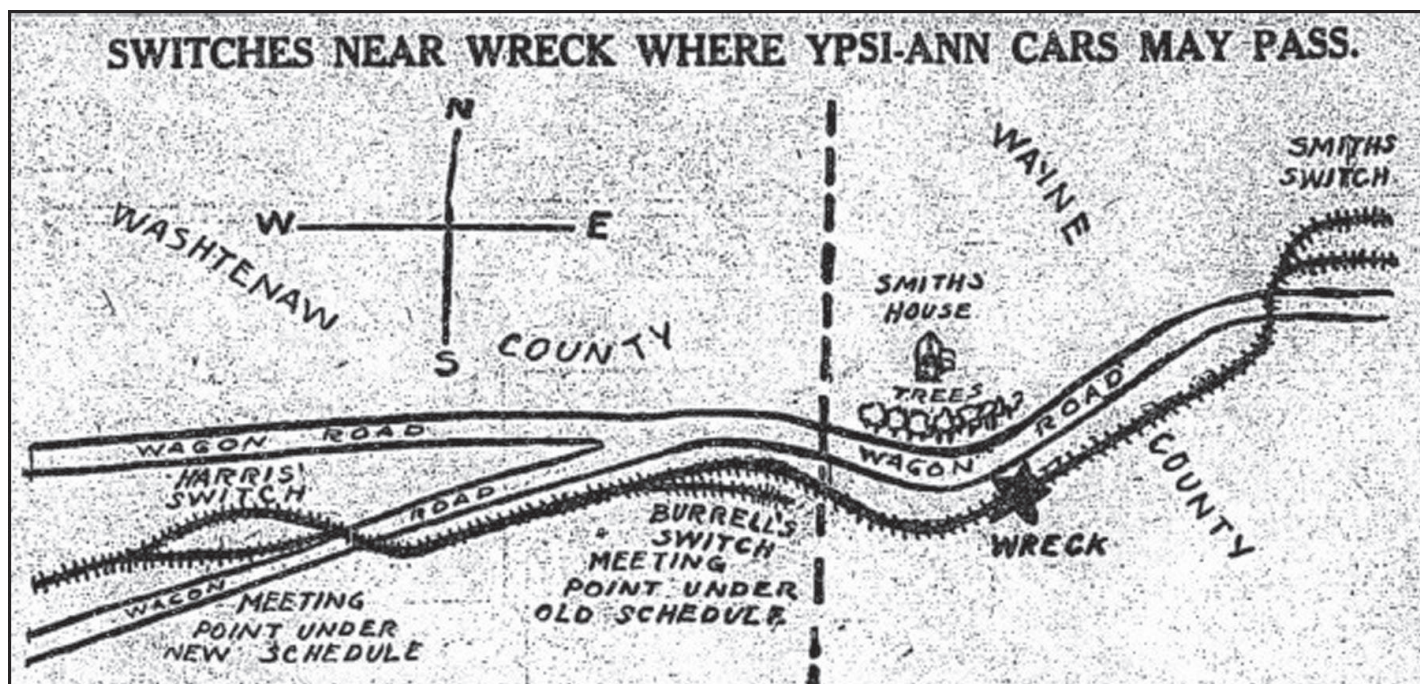
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Map of crash from the April 30, 1908 Detroit Free Press.

Charles Smith. Ambulances were hurried to the tragic scene, and a special car was loaded up with injured and raced back toward Ann Arbor. Some of the passengers with minor injuries got off the train in Ypsilanti, but 18 injured were taken to the Homeopathic and University hospitals in Ann Arbor. Mr. Smith's house and barn were converted into a temporary hospital and morgue to treat the dead and most severely injured. Four men were pronounced dead on the scene, including Isa Fay, John Paget, Jack McMullen, and Solitro Stifan. These four dead were taken to a morgue in Ypsilanti. As the train car carrying the injured sped to the Ann Arbor hospitals, two additional men named Charles Carmen and George E. Howard died on the way. Howard's body was immediately taken back to Detroit where he held residence. Four more men died in Ann Arbor hospitals, including Garabarino Groonni, Alfio Panfatone, Paulo Latorre, and Sidney Stever.

By all accounts, the accident was caused by the eastbound train running straight past both Harris's and Burrell's switch meeting points, just east of Ypsilanti, instead of waiting at one of the two switches prior to pass-

ing the westbound train. The crash occurred a couple miles later when the two trains, running at full speed, ran into each other. The day after the crash, George Meade, the conductor of the eastbound Ypsi-Ann limited car was found by investigators to be at fault. He was arrested by Washtenaw County Deputy Sherriff Handt. The arrest was made at the Homeopathic hospital in Ann Arbor where Meade was being treated, and Meade was allowed to remain at the hospital to recover from his injuries. One of the key pieces of evidence that led to his arrest was that immediately following the accident, Meade was overheard to have said, when seeing the crushed body of Motorman Fay, "My God! I have killed my boy."

Evidence for the cause of the accident was quickly gathered. Assistant Prosecutor Robinson, of Detroit, found that the eastbound limited train, known as train No. 103, with Isa Fay and George Meade in charge, had changed train cars in Ypsilanti because the air-brakes of the original car were not in working order. While in Ypsilanti, Dispatcher Harrington's orders to Meade were to stop at Harris's switch and look for the west-

bound train, and if the coast was clear proceed to Burrell's switch and wait there for the westbound train. Meanwhile, the crew of the westbound express train, known as train No. 44, called the dispatcher from east of Smith's farm and were told to call again upon reaching Smith's switch. From there, they were ordered to proceed to Burrell's switch and meet the eastbound train. According to the dispatcher's story, Meade and Fay did not stop at Harris's switch as ordered, and also ran through Burrell's switch, resulting in the crash.

Conductor George Meade was represented by attorney John Kirk of Ypsilanti. Several of the passengers testified at the trial of George Meade. Some indicated that the eastbound train was behind schedule and may have been trying to make up time. The passenger testimony disagreed on whether the eastbound train, under Meade's and Fay's control, had stopped at any of the switch tracks east of Ypsilanti prior to the accident. Some of the passengers said the train stopped, and some said it didn't. The jurors were allowed to go to the Homeopathic hospital to obtain testimony from Meade prior to the trial. When



the jury arrived, the doctor stated that Meade had a severe headache, possibly due to the weather. Meade's attorney Kirk suggested to the jury that his client was in no condition to testify and proclaimed his client's right to refuse to testify until he was in better condition. The jury left the hospital with no testimony. The jury later investigated the dispatch system of sending and receiving orders for the trains, and they also visited the switch sights and the dispatcher's office.

About a month after the accident, George Meade's trial was held on May 15, 1908. Meade finally testified on his own behalf. He was still showing ill-effects from the accident through a pronounced limp. Meade turned pale on several occasions during the trial, and water was required to restore him. Meade testified that his orders from the dispatcher were: "(Train) 42 at Ypsilanti. (Train) 44 at Smith's. Telephone from Wayne." Dispatcher Harrington had testified that his orders were: "Meet (Train) 42 at Ypsilanti. Remember (Train) 44 at Harris. Telephone from Wayne." A citizen near the telephone booth in Ypsilanti where Dispatcher Harrington made the orders testified that she overheard the dispatcher give the order to Meade to "meet at Smith's".

In summing up the case, Assistant Prosecutor Robinson instructed the jury that if the crew deliberately ran by their meeting place to make up time, they were guilty of manslaughter.

ter. If they did it under a misunderstanding of the dispatcher's orders, they were not. Robinson also pointed out that if the dispatcher gave a bad order, he would be the one who should be criminally responsible. The evidence was clearly conflicting about whether the blame should be placed on the Dispatcher Harrington, Conductor Meade, or simply on a blameless communication mistake. Meade's train had clearly overrun the switch point, but Dispatcher Harrington's exact instructions were unclear from the testimony. Even Assistant Prosecutor Robinson pointed out that the evidence was conflicting.

The jury deliberated for one hour and twenty minutes before returning with a not-guilty verdict against Meade. Their findings suggested that it was a misunderstanding of orders, and neither Conductor Meade nor Dispatcher Harrington should take the blame. Nonetheless, the Ypsi-Ann Interurban's motorman Isa Fay and nine innocent passengers lost their lives that day, and dozens more were injured. As the Detroit Free Press reported on the trial, it "shows how difference in wording brought about collision" that killed several people. Just as the 1929 Depot Town train crash made a permanent impression on the city of Ypsilanti, so too should a lesser-known Ypsi-Ann train crash that took the lives of 10 men.

*(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti on River Street and is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*

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# Ypsilanti Paper Route

PART 1 of a 2 PART SERIES

BY DAVID NOVAK

When I was a kid back in the 40's and 50's, many boys in the 8 to 12 age group had paper routes. Whether a written or unwritten rule, paper routes seemed to be a "boy thing"; I suspect girls didn't even want to deliver papers in those days. I'm probably wrong! For boys like me, it was something to do after school. Sort of a latchkey program of the time that promised some good spending money, especially if you took care of your customers. Looking back, I realize that it was also a pretty good introduction to the world of business as well.

In 1947, at about the age of 10, I took off on my old bike to get my first job as a newsboy, delivering the Ann Arbor News. The "News" was experimenting with daily delivery of the newspaper in Ypsilanti as it had hadn't penetrated the Ypsilanti market yet but felt it could compete against the Ypsilanti Daily Press.

I got the job and my route covered roughly everything east on the South side of E. Michigan to Ecorse Rd. and from Michigan Avenue to I-94. After about a year and a half of experimenting with the delivery in Ypsilanti, the Ann Arbor News scrapped the project. I guess it just wasn't profitable. They said, "Maybe some time in the future," as they let us go! But I did make enough money to buy a new Black Beauty bike from the Western Auto store on Huron St.

So, here it is 1948, I'm 11 years old and out of a job. Not one to give up that easily, I figured that maybe I could become a delivery boy for the Ypsilanti Daily Press, and sure enough, I succeeded in landing a paper route that was almost identical to my old Ann Arbor News route. It was South of E. Michigan and Water Street, over to what is now I-94 and East to Ecorse Road, over to Tyler Road. I had close to 90 papers a day to deliver. The papers didn't have a lot of pages, like the Detroit newspapers, so they were easy to stuff into the bag. I believe Bob Mayo, another longtime Ypsilanti resident, had the route on the North side of E. Michigan.

I want to invite you to tag along as I relive a typical day delivering newspapers along my route and introduce you to the streets, homes, buildings and most of all to the people that often became friends - almost family to that chubby little guy that brought their newspaper (through wind, rain, snow and whatever) to their front door. I'm sure other paper carriers are familiar with this routine! I should mention that the exact route I took to deliver is



Dave delivering the Ann Arbor News as a 10 year old.

a bit cloudy in my mind these days but I have checked as many of the facts as I could, mostly by looking up streets and family names in the Ypsilanti City Directory at the Whittaker Rd. branch of the Ypsilanti Public Library. The map shows the streets on my route, follow along: 3:15 pm: On weekdays my classes at school were out at about 3:00, and I headed directly from Woodruff School to join other carriers to pick up my newspapers at the Press Operations Building at the corner of Pearl and N. Huron Street. Those papers were printed with presses in the basement of the building. Mr. "Shorty" Starr was the man in charge of the pressroom and he lived near my house. I remember Mrs. Harrison, with white hair and silver rimmed glasses, sitting at the Linotype machine to the left as I entered the front door to the building. The Linotype was a machine like a huge typewriter that punched out the metal type that ended up on the huge and loud printing presses. She always had a friendly smile as we passed her on our way up the old and noisy stairs to get our papers at the sorting room on the second floor.

We sometimes folded the papers before we headed out. Folding enabled us to throw the papers onto our custom-



er's porches (or as close as we could get). Depending on how many pages were in the paper on any one day dictated how I folded the papers. Heavier papers would be folded in thirds with the right side inserted into the left side. A little twist and the paper was pretty solid. Lighter papers could be folded a couple times in a way that resulted in a



Map showing the streets included in the paper route.

paper that was about the size of a big hamburger bun. This size really flew well and was very accurate. Never had a broken window!

Now we're ready to go, but what the heck, why not stop at Haab's first and pick up a big bag of hot shoestring potatoes to help me get started on the journey? And, for only 25 cents!! I'd like to believe Oscar and Otto Haab, the two brothers that owned the restaurant, looked forward to my daily stop although they couldn't have been as happy as I was. They always called me "David" in their German accent.

#### **FIRST STOP - WATER STREET:**

Come on along as I work my way downhill from Huron St. and cross Michigan Ave. to the south side of the street just as the bridge goes over the Huron River. We turn right onto Water Street where my route really begins. While the name is familiar now because of the Water Street Project, Water Street itself no longer exists and many may not realize that there really was such a street. Running as it did right next to the river, it was a great place for people to fish. Just throw your line under the bridge and you've hooked one. You could

see people fishing there all year long.

The river always flowed heavily in the spring and Water Street homes and businesses were in jeopardy of flooding - and they often did. I always checked to see what color the river was as it changed, depending on the run-off from the Peninsular Paper Company, located a bit upstream at

LeForge Road and the Huron River. Not being real environmentally sensitive in those days, I sure did enjoy seeing a bright red, yellow, or green river running through my town.

What a varied group of people lived along this street. There's Mr. Seleska (who worked at the Ford Plant/River Rouge); Mr. Weaver (he worked at Motor State); Mr. Lambert (from Central Specialty); Mr. Babcock (worked as a guard at Kaiser-Frazer); Mr. Rudick (a city policeman and his wife worked at Packer's grocery Store where the Fisher Honda dealership is today); Bernard Stitt worked at Schaffer Motor Sales and had a son, Mike, and a daughter, Susan, and I believe, a younger daughter. I went to school with Jake Lambert and Mike Stitt. These two families date back to the early days of Ypsilanti.

I delivered to a couple of the businesses that were mixed in with the residences. Moorman Lumber Company and Sinclair Refining got their papers every day just like the homes. I then headed further down the street and when I got to the city dump, it was time to turn around and head back up to Michigan Avenue.

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## **CORNER OF WATER STREET AND EAST MICHIGAN AVENUE:**

Turning right on Michigan Avenue we'll deliver first to Schaffer Motor Sales (Chrysler-Plymouth Dealer); Silkworth Oil and Gas Station (in 1950's it became Stewart Distributors which was the local stop for car/truck parts, David "Zeke" Towler was always behind the counter at Stewart's; Fosdick Auto Repair; Chapel Auto/Ypsi Tractor Sales (they sold Ford Tractors); Whittaker Motor Sales (Used Cars); Davis Motor Sales (this later became Serbay Chrysler/Plymouth); Ypsi. Body Shop, which also housed the Packard Sales and Service dealership, (owned by Herb Teachout). Yoder Real Estate was above the body shop and Doran Chevrolet was at the southwest corner of River St. You can see that this block was pretty much dedicated to automotive sales and service.

We'll make another right turn onto S. River St. (towards the river) and stop at Motor State Products. The main product they manufacture is convertible tops for automobiles. Prior to housing Motor State Products, the building was home to Apex Motors, ca. 1920, where they made the short-lived Ace Automobile (more information regarding the Ace is available at the Ypsilanti Auto Heritage Museum on the corner of E. Cross and N. River St.).

The final stop on this street is Riverside Manufacturing where they made harnesses but I'm not sure now if they were for horses or electrical harnesses for automobiles. Though in the building since 1917, I found it very interesting to learn as I checked the records, that prior to being home to Riverside the building housed the Crossman Stamping Company, makers of high grade metal stampings and artillery wheel parts during WWI. The Ypsilanti Aluminum Foundry was nearby. End of the street and there is the dump again.

Back towards Michigan Ave. for a stop at the house where the Floyd Hil-

er and Ken Croff families lived (they must have shared the one paper!). Next, we'll deliver to Charles Kuster Beer Distributing; they tipped well but never offered me a beer. Now back to the corner and here's Charlie White's Restaurant. Later, the restaurant moved to Washtenaw Ave. and became Charlie's Country Squire; it's now the Golden Egg. Onward along Michigan Ave. to Convis Motor Sales; The Royal Tavern; Acme Radio and Television and the big house on the corner where Mrs. Irwin, Marion Hansen and Raymond Jeppeson live. I don't deliver here but did get to know them.

## **LINCOLN, PARSONS and PARK**

**STREETS:** Turn right on Lincoln Street. It runs alongside the railroad tracks. The railroad moved materials to and from the Ford Plant on Factory Street. We have to be sure to stay out of the way when that train and I are on the same route at the same time. There were only 2 houses on this short street, and I only delivered to one, Mr. Glenn Sinkule a salesman at Grinnell's Music. I believe he later was involved with Sinkule Market in Depot Town where Maize is now located.

We'll take a right turn onto Parsons and deliver to Ypsilanti Iron & Metal, a metal salvage company that also sold iron and steel products. Next comes the Hartwick-Westcott Lumber Company. We're now heading back East towards Park Street. Next, are 4 big three story very old homes. Mrs. Zimmerman, a widow, turned her home into apartments. Mrs. Case is next, and not sure how many people lived with her. Just met her at the door to collect.

Now comes Mrs. Cattermole's home, where I had my first encounter with people displaying a deceased family member in the parlor. I had gone up to the door to collect for the paper and Mrs. Cattermole kindly invited me inside (it was winter and cold). It was then I saw the parlor lit with candles and this open casket on a ta-

ble or something. I must have looked a sight as I remember standing there like a tree and just staring. She offered me some hot chocolate. I said "Thank you, but I've got a lot of papers yet to deliver"; never knew my bike could go so fast! And I never forgot that encounter. I guess that was Mr. Cattermole in the casket as I never saw him again.

There was one other house I delivered to on Parsons, on the corner, but I don't remember who lived there. Eventually, this house and the Zimmerman, Case, and Cattermole homes were all razed to make room for the Arlan's Department Store.

Around the corner on Park Street is the Charles Hines home. Very big. I went to school with Charles' son, Harold, from Kindergarten (at Woodruff) until graduating from Ypsilanti High School in 1955. This home was later moved to the corner of E. Forest and E. Grand Blvd. in Ypsilanti Township, then was leveled in 2013. Beyond the Hines home is Mr. Bauer's home and the U.S. Truck Company. Later, the truck company property became the baseball field for Ypsilanti National Little League Baseball. When I became a father, my four sons all played ball there and I also coached at that field. Heading back towards E. Michigan on Park St. is the Salvation Army building on the East side of the street. It's still there.

At the corner of Park and Michigan Ave. across from Woodruff School and in front of what later became Arlan's Department Store and parking lot, was a large piece of property donated to the city by the Gilbert family. This was, as you may have guessed, Gilbert Park. It was a favorite after school stop for me, at least it was before I got the paper route. Always something interesting going on there. I particularly remember that shortly after the end of WWII, the park often hosted a group of Philippine performers/artists who were yoyos "experts". They could do unbelievable tricks that we all tried to copy and, when not performing, they



created hand-carved yoyos to sell. They sold for 10 or 15 cents each, depending on how fancy the carving was. Next to the park was the Michigan State Police Post. I delivered the paper to the front desk and was always greeted with a smile and thank you from the officer at the desk.

**MICHIGAN AVENUE to GROVE STREET:** Across the street, on the south east corner of Park is the C.F. Smith Co. (a wholesale grocer). Next comes the Emil Bachelor Market (meats and groceries), the Bomber Restaurant (there was a red headed man, Mr. Averill, that owned the restaurant and he was always there); then Parkview Pharmacy. Mr. Binder and Mr. McIlhargie ran the pharmacy. The Binder children Doreen and Richard, often tended to the soda fountain (they were a lot older than I). Doreen made the best sodas and Richard made the biggest hot fudge sundaes. Mrs. Binder worked all through the pharmacy. They had the best comic book selection of any store in town. Both Doreen and Richard went on to have successful careers in education at local school districts.

Next door to the pharmacy is Ypsilan-

ti Printing Company, and then comes Kealy Bakery - yum, yum – and following the bakery is Mr. Max Bittker's clothing store. Aisles and aisles of clothes much like Pear's uptown. Huron Valley Van Lines has an office at the next stop, next is the big brick home of Mr. Reuben Willoughby (he's a Rigger for Kennedy Construction Co. at Willow Run). The house later became a plumbing and fixture business. There's Harry Scott's Used Car lot next and then the Tooze Barber Shop (still standing). East Side Furniture comes next and then Cutler Motor Sales (the Kaiser-Frazer dealer) is right on the corner of Grove, where Crawford Door Company is now.

**SOUTH GROVE STREET:** Turning South on Grove we pass the other end of Parsons Street. On the corner of Grove and Parsons is the big duplex home of Joseph Duperon and his family. Also residing here is the family of Orville Landrum. Next is Mrs. Gable's Grocery store. I remember her as an elderly woman who was always wearing a big apron. I guess at 11 years old just about every adult was elderly. The old wood floors were covered with this red sawdust stuff. The building is still there! Mr.

Wellbrook and his family share the next home with Mary Thumm, who is a clerk at the C.F. Smith Wholesale Grocery, a couple blocks away. The Briddle family is at the next stop and Mr. Briddle works for the New York Central Railroad. Roy Strohl, who works for The Home Furnace Company, and his family live in the corner house.

We'll turn right (West) now onto South Street. Starting with Lester McFall's home (he works at Central Specialty and his wife, Mary, works in the office at the Kresge store uptown), and head towards Park St. Next comes another home that has two families, the Harry Neely's and the Robert Turner's. Robert Thumm, a carpenter, and his family have the next home and the neighboring house belongs to Wilford Grannis, the Sexton for the Highland Cemetery, and his family.

Next up is Farmer Street, and we turn right here to deliver on this short street that runs between South and Parsons Street. First, we come to another one of those homes that has two families living there: the James Nichols family and the James Carlton's. Albert Malcolm and family live



From left to right in 1948 was Bittker's Clothing, Kealy's Bakery, Ypsilanti Printing, Parkview Pharmacy and the Bomber Restaurant which was half its current size with the Bachelor Market in the second half, and C.F. Smith where MetroPCS is now.



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next door, and he works at the Ypsilanti Ford Plant. Now we make a quick turn onto Parsons for a stop at Howard Gragg's home. He's a fireman with the Ypsilanti Fire Department.

There are three other families living on Parsons; the Lloyd Miller's, the Henry Cooley's and the Ernest Crowder's, but we don't deliver to any of them. Guess they get their papers somewhere else. Back on Farmer we have the Earl Bradley family (he's a clerk at Michigan Central Railroad), and the home of Lewis Mayo (he's a welder at the Ford Plant). Went to school with the daughter, Sally, from Woodruff to Ypsilanti High School. Son, Bob, was a year or so younger. The house on the corner of Farmer and South that belongs to a widow lady, Mrs. Cain.

**SOUTH STREET** Up other side of South Street we have William Renton and his family who live in a very nice home. He is a clerk at the nearby

Hartwick-Wescott Lumber Company. (Should note here that the homes on this side of South St. are smaller than those on the other side that seemed to have more than one family living in them.) Next is the Harvey Graham home. He works at Central Specialty. Interesting, the house next door belongs to Alfred Graham and his family. He is a foreman at Central Specialty. (Just has to be related but don't recall the details.) Finally, at the corner of South and S. Grove St. is the home of John Vealey and his family.

We need to head back south now along the other side of Grove St. Here we have Anthony White and family (he worked for the city); the Gondek family (he works at the Ford Plant); Robert Cooley and family (he was a clerk at Ford Headquarters in Dearborn and had a son, Bob, Jr., who was my age); the John Duguid home (he was a teacher for Ypsilanti Public Schools); Metco Processing Company (they did welding and the building

was located in the area that local legend said were Indian Burial Mounds, a whole other story). Now we need to turn around and head north and deliver to houses along the other side of the street.

We start with Kelton Bauer (salesman for McCaslin Homes) then deliver to Bert Curtiss (janitor at Michigan State Normal College, Eastern Michigan University today); Frank Thumm; Mark Yates (foreman at the Ypsilanti Ford Plant) and then to Lamar Thumm home (owner of Thumm's Gravel Pit). Seems like a lot of Thumm's live close. Harold Sanderson of the Sanderson Metal Parts and Stamping Co. (I grew up with son Harold Jr.) is next and then we have Samuel Treat, a salesman at the Miller Motors Hudson dealership located at River St. and Cross (still there as part of the Auto Museum), then Bud Neely's home that had several tenants and Mrs. Beck's home (she worked at Central Specialty, also with tenants).



**Ypsilanti Area  
Community Fund**

## **A new year is a great time to revisit your future plans— please include YHS!**

Experts advise revisiting your financial and estate plans regularly, as circumstances change. For example, you may now benefit from making a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA or setting up a charitable gift annuity (CGA) for life-income.

Through our endowment, held through the Ypsilanti Area Community Fund (YACF), we now have such options available!

Resolve to learn more about options that can help you today and benefit YHS forever.

**Contact Bill Nickels at YHS (734-483-8896) or Shelley Strickland at YACF (734-436-7583)  
for a no-obligation discussion about these and other options!**



Mrs. Kennedy (manager of Ypsilanti Credit Bureau) is next and she is another homeowner with tenants (the Harold and Ben Moyer families). Our last stop on S. Grove is the James Van Riper home (he works at Central Specialty).

It seems there were a lot of homes in the area that rented out "extra" rooms to tenants, many of the homeowners seem to be single women (according to the City Directory). Given that this was only a few years after WWII, these women may have been recently widowed or were women who became the primary owner as the husband had gone off to war. Most people in town had rented rooms to those who migrated here to work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant for the war effort. Many of the renters stayed on long after the war effort was over.

Several people along the route worked at Central Specialty Company which was located on E. Forest and N. River Streets, right across from the Michigan Ladder Company and just down from where the Corner Brewery is now located. Also, many of my deliveries were to people who worked at businesses within easy walking distance of their homes, a common practice in those days as driving everywhere was not the given it is today. There were not two cars in every driveway and, in many cases, there weren't even driveways! This will also apply to properties further along the route.

We're now at corner of E. Michigan and S. Grove. We're about half-way through the route!

**EAST MICHIGAN AND SOUTH GROVE:** On The corner is the Ypsilanti Piano Company, owned by Mrs. Carrie Chadwick. A little background story here: In 1908, George Chadwick, a salesman with Grinnell's Piano of Detroit, was sent to Ypsilanti to conduct a 10 day sale. It went so well that he, along with his wife Carrie, who taught piano, opened a permanent Grinnell's branch on West Michigan near the Wuerth Theatre. My mother

worked at the store and also taught piano there for a few years after high school.

After a few words with Mrs. Chadwick, we'll walk the bikes up the hill and deliver to Peter Estermeier's (he's an electrician at A.F. Smith & Son); the Stephen Hadas family (I later had a couple of their sons in my Boy Scout troop at Woodruff School); the Harvey Reddaway's and the Harvey Laurain's (he's a group leader at United Stove). We're almost at the top of the hill. Next is Mrs. Lillie's home (she's a widow). Christian Miller's home is next and then comes the Lighthouse Gospel Assembly of God Church on the corner. Finally, time to catch a breath. That's a pretty big hill.

**EAST MICHIGAN & SOUTH PROSPECT:** We'll cross to the East side of Prospect heading South and find the Hopkins - Thomas Insurance Agency. This was a very big stone house with a big porch. This house was later replaced by the Bell Telephone building which is still there. Tom Taylor's family is next door and he's a steamfitter for U of M. Leslie and his family have the next stop and then the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church. The Batson families, Woodard and Julian, are on the corner of S. Prospect and Towner and they both work at Kaiser-Frazer.

For our next stop, we'll cross over the street to "old" Beyer Hospital (now The Villa at Parkridge, a health care facility) and drop off 8 papers: we don't fold these, just take them up the steps and leave them inside the door at the front office. Back across the street and we're on Towner (at corner of S. Prospect) where Mrs. Forbes, a widow lady, lives. Next door is Mrs. Helle, also a widow, who works at the Ypsilanti State Hospital. Across the street and next to an alley that runs to Michigan Ave. is Mrs. Simpson's house, another widow.

Back across the street again to Mrs. Riley's house and next to her is the William Boutell's (he's a guard at the

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This was the Wallace home before the Hopkins-Thomas Insurance Agency took it over.

local Ford plant). Next door is the Ralph Oltmann's home (he's a clerk at New York Central Railroad). Then comes the Paneks, Vincent, Mayme and Stahi. Don't remember seeing Mr. Panek but would always see Mrs Panek (Mayme) tending her yard full of beautiful flowers. Across the street is where James Hinckley, a trooper with the Michigan State Police, lives along with Bob Peterson. We're at corner of Center and Towner now and we'll take a left to head down Center Street towards Michigan Ave.

First is the home of Leslie Elliott, a superintendent for George Ennen's Metal Stamping company. Next, we'll deliver to the Aaron Privett and Norman Fan's homes. The Thomas Ray home is next; he works at Detroit Ford Plant. The Edward Thumm home is on the corner of Center & Michigan. He had a big pond in his backyard and kept fish in there all year long. Always wondered why the fish didn't freeze. There was a big concrete slab with the THUMM name on the Center St. side of his home. No idea where that marker ended up when the "mini-mall" was put there. I don't recall ever seeing a Mrs. Thumm.

Between Center & Prospect on Michigan Ave. were 3 houses; the Charles Nepodal's; the Sharrock's and the Gunn's home as well as the Longnecker Buick dealership. Only delivered

to the Buick dealer. We'll now cross going East and back onto Center Street to Jennie Kirk's home. It's actually on Michigan Ave. at the curve. The Kirk family is one of oldest in Ypsilanti history. (Went to school with son Paul.)

Back on Center is Frank Frick's house and then the Demetrio Chavez family. Mr. Chavez is an Interpreter for the Michigan Central Railroad, and I went to school with son, James. Seemed to be a big family. The Charles Oakes house is next and then are the homes of Denver Simcox and Hugh Vasser. They all live in one house, but they must share the one paper! They work at the Detroit Ford Plant and at Kaiser-Frazer respectively.

Next is Kenneth LaRoe and his family. Mr. LaRoe worked at Kaiser-Frazer

and I went to school with son David and was friends with his brothers and sister. They were all close in age (or so it seemed). We'd play a lot of games in their big side yard. Big empty lot next and then the Oscar Bowman's. He worked at the local Ford plant.

Next is the big house that Mr. Edward Marushak and his family lived in. There are a lot of girls, daughters, that lived there and one of them, Betty, later married my uncle Bob Wilkens. I believe there were "only" four girls, though it seemed like more, and there was also a son, Lyle. Nice family. Last house on corner is that of The Ambrose Birmingham's. Across the street to the house on the corner of Towner & Arnet Streets and we come to the home of the August Sylvester. He's a foreman at the Hartwick-Westcott Lumber Company.

Sadly, all of the homes in this area are gone due to redevelopment.

**TOWNER & SOUTH PROSPECT:** West on Towner Street to South Prospect and past a big empty lot is the Wm. Dusbiber home. He's a salesman at Mellencamp's clothing store on Michigan Ave. uptown. Next is Milton South's and then we cross the street again to deliver to Mrs. Zeisler's. She is a widow and is an attendant at the State Hospital. Next door is the home of Dr. John Miller and family. He's a teacher in Wayne schools. Rumor

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has it that this home was the last home in Ypsilanti to have electricity installed, though not confirmed. It's still standing at 124 S. Prospect and it had electricity when I delivered! No more homes on this side until Factory Street so back across to Sidney Lambert's home. Mr. Lambert is a janitor in Ann Arbor and has 2 children my age, Sidney Jr. and Marie. They were related to the Lambert's on Water Street, you remember them.

Next is the Lawrence Green family. Big family! Barbara was my age and we went to school together from Kindergarten to high school graduation and she was my first "date". We went to the Wuerth Theater and my mother drove us there. I was probably 10 or so years old. Mr. Green worked at River Rouge Ford Plant. He had a big red barn behind his house and had a couple horses and an apple orchard that went behind his place and the Lambert's. He planted corn and other crops, and used the horses to plow land and harvest the crops. You have to visualize this large block (now occupied by the Forest Health Medical Center) that had all these houses around it but the lots didn't go back too far. That left the interior pretty much empty enough to have our baseball field, the apple orchard and this big field that Mr. Green farmed. Who really owned all this ground that was inside all those surrounding homes and that had a fence of some sort that backed up to it? I never knew.

Max Vom Steeg's is next (he's a polisher at Motor State). Then we have

the Virgil Albertson home. He works at King Seeley in Ann Arbor. The O.J. Kinsey family is next and he owns a well drilling company. Mr. and Mrs. Boles, along with Grace and Margaret, come next and William Green (who's a molder in Ann Arbor) and The Charles Wolford family (Mr. Wolford is a painter). Sadly, again, the homes in his area are gone due to redevelopment.

**SOUTH PROSPECT & DAVIS STREET:** We're now at the corner of Davis and S. Prospect heading south on Davis. Charles Herbert's home is on corner and he's a driver for Ypsi Dairy. Next are the Nixon's; the Frost's; the Elmer Norris's (he works at Kaiser-Frazer); the Albert Guilloz's (he is a salesman at Shaefer Hardware); Clair Simon, an area auto mechanic, and Harry Vealey's home. The Vealey's also have other relatives living close by. At the corner of S. Prospect and Factory St. we head down the hill to Grove St. and turn left onto Grove. Here we have the Louis Foerster house on the SW corner. Next is Albert Foerster and his wife Anna. He works at the local Ford plant that is just down the street. The Foerster family is very old in Ypsilanti history and operated the Foerster Brewery in the late 1800's: it was located along the river and near this family home. Now we cross the street to the James Waite family home; I went to school with son, James. Mr. Waite was a supervisor at Warner Dairy. Next to his home is that of Joseph Hardin, a superintendent at Trojan Laundry. Back

across the street again and to the Vernon McCarter home. Mrs. Margaret Santure, a friend of the family and widow of Leo, also lives there and is a cleaner at the County Farm out on Platt Rd.

We are now at Stewart St. and we have only one delivery here to The Stanley Durham's. He works in the lab at Peninsular Paper. Later, Stewart Street and the surrounding area was taken over by Ford Motor Company when they expanded the local Ford Plant on Factory St. Anyway, back on Grove and up a small hill to the Nye Potato Chip Company. Besides delivering the paper I also really enjoyed watching the chips being made and, more importantly, getting a free bag of these freshly made chips. Talk about benefits!

### ***End of Part 1/ Part 2 will appear in Fall 2018 Gleanings***

*(David is a lifelong Ypsilanti resident except for his tour with the U.S. Navy. He graduated from Ypsilanti High School (1955) and Wayne State University (1978). He was the Corporate Services Manager for the Kelsey-Hayes Company of Romulus, MI for over 36 years until his retirement in 2001. David serves on The Board of Directors for the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum and is a member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. He and his wife Joyce have four sons, 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.)*



Emerick Street facing Ecorse Rd. as it looks today. Peapod is the building to the right of Vacuum Sales.

# Cursed House on North Huron Street

BY JAMES MANN

Today Riverside Park is one of the beauty spots in Ypsilanti, where one can take a stroll from the north end of the park off Cross Street and meander along the paths until stepping out onto Michigan Avenue at the south end of the park. It was not always this way. The idea of city parks is something of a recent development. From the early years of the city, what is now the park, was the property of those who owned the houses on North Huron. The lot of each house extended from the street in front of the house and ran to the bank of the river.

Over the years, the city acquired the property that is now the park, piece-by-piece, lot-by-lot. This was not one continuous stretch of land, as the city owned two lots, with a third between the two that was private property. One could not walk from Cross Street to Michigan Avenue without crossing private property. This made it necessary for the city to provide a way for everyone to enjoy the park, while not crossing private property.

To provide an entrance to a park, the city demolished a house at 126 North Huron Street, in June of 1936. This was the space between the Ladies Library Building at 130 North Huron and Saint Luke's Episcopal Church at 120 North Huron Street. At least, that was the official reason. A possible unofficial reason may have been because some might have thought the site cursed.

When the house was built is not known, only that it was in the early years of the city. On Thursday, July 18, 1935 The Ypsilanti Daily Press printed a history of the ownership of the house. In part, the account reported, "Mrs. Jane T. Finley acquired the place February 10, 1883: she and her husband, Florus Finley, and their sons Mark and John are well-remembered Ypsilanti People."

The house was sold on February 26, 1902 to Harrison Fairchild and his wife Margaret. Harrison Fairchild had been in the meat business for over fifty years. Margaret was the fourth wife of Harrison Fairchild. The previous wife, Ann, committed suicide on Wednesday, December 6, 1899, by shooting herself through the heart with a revolver. This was at the family home at 230 Congress Street, now Michigan Avenue. She was alone in the house at the time. "Poor health and a rumor of weak mind are alleged to be

the cause," noted The Evening Times of Wednesday, December 6, 1899. "Dr. Hull, the family physician, says there is no need of an inquest."

Margaret died in 1915, and Charles Fairchild, brother of Harrison, moved into the house to be with him. The two were in the habit of having breakfast together. On the morning of Tuesday, September 7, 1915, Charles awoke and found that his brother was already awake. He assumed his brother was preparing breakfast, but did not find him in the kitchen. He went looking for Harrison, and went to the barn. There he found that Harrison had hanged himself. "Mr. Fairchild," reported the Daily Ypsilanti Press of that

date, "had entered the barn, hung his hat on a nail, pulled the buggy up beneath a beam, and fastened a rope. Slipping the rope about his neck, he had kicked the buggy backward and jumped off. When found, he was fully attired in his everyday clothing."

The house was sold on March 20, 1916, to Waldo Wardle, who was a rural mail carrier. He lived at the house with his wife Lydia. His father, James Wardle, by 1922, was living at 17 North Huron. At about 7:00 in the morning of Wednesday, April 5, 1922, Waldo Wardle stopped by his father's room

before starting out on his rural mail route. His father had not been feeling well for a few days, but now appeared to be in good spirits. Soon after the son left, James Wordle went to the barn behind his son's house and hanged himself. "His body was found by William Boutell at 8:30 when he went to get his horse to start on his mail route. The police department was immediately notified and Chief Connors went to the barn and cut the body down and had it removed to the undertaking rooms of J. E. Moore," reported The Ypsilanti Record of Thursday, April 6, 1922. "There seems to be no good reason why Mr. Wardle committed suicide. He was a man that was well liked by those who knew him and seemed to be contented and happy," noted the account.

Waldo Wardle and his family continued to live in the house for some time, but by 1935, the house came into possession of the bank. The house was sold to the city for \$75 and was demolished. Today, the site is a parking lot.

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



Mrs. Harrison Fairchild in front of the residence at 126 North Huron Street in 1908.



# Family Feud on Ellis Street

BY JAMES MANN

On Thursday, July 28, 1918, The Ypsilanti Record reported that: "Attorney F. E. Daggett has recently received the documents in the case of Mrs. Flora Fowler vs. Charles B. Isbell and Fred P. Wilber, in which the supreme court of the state of Michigan affirms in all things without costs, the ruling of the circuit court in the same case." The account noted the case involved residents and property in Ypsilanti. "The circumstances of this case are somewhat unusual and interesting." In June of 1911 a Charles B. Isbell purchased the house at 309 Ellis Street, now Washtenaw Avenue. He was 86 years of age in 1918, and had lived for some 50 years on a farm near Saline. He was a widower and the father of three children. One of his children was Flora Fowler.

Charles Isbell agreed to let his daughter Flora and her husband Eugene, live in the house on Ellis Street, paying him five percent interest on the amount of the purchase price per year, as well as taxes, insurance, and repairs. Flora would later claim that her father agreed to execute a deed to the property, and it was to be placed in escrow beyond the reach of either of them. This was to be delivered to her at the time of his death. Charles Isbell later denied he agreed to deed the property to her but admitted he made such a deed in the fall of 1911. This deed was placed on deposit with the Bank of Saline from September of 1911, until either 1914 or 1915, when Isbell secured possession of the deed and destroyed it.

At some point, Isbell began rooming in the house with Flora and Eugene, but all did not go well. Bad feeling grew to the point where Isbell stopped boarding with Flora and Eugene, but still retained a room in the house. "After the destruction of the deed," noted the State Supreme Court of Michigan in its decision, "and in May of 1917, defendant (Isbell) sold the place on land contract to a Mr. Wilber for \$4,700 and Mr. Wilber advertised it for sale. Said Mr. Isbell: "It was not a bona fide contract, but he has paid enough to bind the bargain." This action on the part of Mr. Isbell, did not improve relations within the family.

His daughter Flora sought action in the Washtenaw Coun-

ty Circuit Court, asking that her father be compelled to execute the deed as agreed. The court agreed with Flora, and so ordered. Her father, who appears not to have been happy with this decision, appealed the case to the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan. The case was submitted to the court on June 18, 1918, and decided on July 18, 1918. "At this time," noted the court, "plaintiff (Fowler) had been in possession of the premises nearly six years, had expended several hundred dollars thereon for repairs and had paid taxes and insurance thereon in accordance with the agreement. She had likewise paid to her father

the interest agreed upon until the trouble arose. The question presented is whether the defendant shall be compelled now to execute a deed to plaintiff to become operative at his death, conditioned upon her carrying out the contract so far as its terms impose duties or obligations upon her."

The court further noted that: "The learned circuit judge who heard the case and saw the witnesses entered a decree compelling defendant to execute said deed upon the condition that defendant

execute said deed upon the condition that plaintiff pay to him five per cent per annum upon the sum of \$3,500; that she keep the dwelling house insured in the name of the defendant in the sum of \$2,500, and pay all taxes within 30 days and keep said dwelling house in good repair."

The State Supreme Court of Michigan concluded after a careful examination of the record, that the learned circuit judge had reached a proper result. "We have no doubt that the agreement as recited by plaintiff and her witnesses was made and that there has been such performance on her part as to warrant the court in ordering specific performance therein."

Flora Fowler lived at the house until her death on June 24, 1936. Her husband Eugene continued to live at the house, until his death on June 14, 1956.

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



The house at 309 Ellis Street, now Washtenaw Avenue, that Charles B. Isbell purchased in 1911.



The Frederick Newton tombstone located in Highland Cemetery.

# Fred Newton - Gun Victim

BY JAMES MANN

**F**red Newton was a promising young man of 20 years of age on July 10, 1916, and was said to be of excellent character. He had graduated from the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University, in June. His plan was to take advance work over the summer, and had accepted a teaching position in Pellston to begin in the fall. Fred was said to be in high spirits in anticipation of his first teaching job, and prospects for his future.

In the meantime he lived on the family farm on the bank of the Huron River in Superior Township, a short distance west of the Peninsular Paper Mill, which is now the site of Peninsular Place Apartments. Fred was acting as the manager of the farm for his mother, as his father had died the previous September. Here he stayed with his mother and two sisters, Pearl and Alice.

At about 12:30 of the afternoon of Monday, July 10, 1916, Fred began to clean his shotgun. This was an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun with two barrels. One of these barrels contained a load, which it was thought could not be dislodged in the usually way.

"Fred sat in the living room with the gun for a time, then walked into his bedroom and began cleaning the unloaded barrel, the butt of the gun resting on the floor. In some manner, the barrel with the load discharged, and the entire load of shot took effect in the young man's face," reported The Ypsilanti Record of Thursday, July 13, 1916. "The charge of shot removed the right eye and carried away the

entire top of the head, causing instant death," the account further noted.

His mother and sisters were working about the house in the usual manner, when they heard the sudden deafening report. Chilled with fear, they called to Fred, but failed to hear a response. The women rushed to his room, hoping no harm had been done, but it was a vain wish. A Dr. Paton was called who hurried to the home, but there was nothing he could have done. Death had occurred in an instant.

"Coroner Burchfield, of Ann Arbor, was notified as a legal precaution, and he drove to the Newton farm home at once, arriving within an hour after the shooting. He viewed the body, investigated the premises, and interrogated members of the household, but determined a jury was not necessary. A decision of accidental death was given," reported the account. Funeral services were held at the home on the afternoon of Thursday, July 13, 1916. The service, reported The Daily Ypsilanti Press of Friday, July 14, 1916, "was largely attended by neighbors, relatives and friends, members of the Normal faculty and the Phi Delta Pi fraternity were present in a body."

"The flowers," concluded the account, "were beautiful and consisted of many lovely emblems, pieces and large sprays of cut flowers. Dr. A. H. Leeson officiated."

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

## 2018 Museum Sponsored Events

Fire Truck Muster	Thunder Over Michigan	Multi-Media Art Show	Orphan Car Show
Michigan Firehouse Museum	Yankee Air Museum	Ypsilanti Historical Museum	Automotive Heritage Museum
August 18	August 25 & 26	September 7 to 30	September 16



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Sustaining	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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