

# Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



WINTER 2016

## My Time with John Porter

BY JACK D. MINZEY



Dr. John Porter served as President of Eastern Michigan from 1979 to 1989.

My first experience with John Porter came in 1961. I was the Principal at Milford High School, and the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals had appointed me to be their representative on the Michigan Testing Committee. This was a great opportunity for me. I met regularly with two outstanding professionals. One was Dr. Jim Lewis who had been the superintendent of the Gross Point Schools and was then a Vice-President at the University of Michigan. The other was Dr. Frank Womer who was a Professor at the University of Michigan, and the national authority on testing in the United States. These two men were mentors who later became personal friends. We met regularly, and our primary purpose was to plan and host a state conference on testing.

As a result of my membership on that committee, I was invited to be a member of a state committee which was appointed to develop a state college scholarship program. There were twenty members on that committee. Again, there were two special persons who were to become colleagues and friends. One was Dr. Charles Blackman who was a member of the Michigan State University faculty and a national authority on curriculum. The other was Dr. Howard McClusky who was a faculty member at the University of Michi-

gan, and a person with whom I would later have a great deal of personal contact. It was surprising to me that over half of the committee consisted of presidents of various private colleges and universities in Michigan.

John Porter was the coordinator of that committee. At that time, he held the lowest civil service rank in the Michigan Department of Education. I did learn that John had graduated from Albion College with a degree in teacher education and had been an outstanding basketball player at that institution. He had applied at various school districts for a teaching position but had not been able to secure a position. The only job that had been offered to him was as a custodian. As a result, John had decided to take a position with the Michigan Department of Education. I doubt that many people would have surmised that this man, through his personal efforts, would rise to the position of State Superintendent of Public Education.

John's style of leadership was obvious immediately. From the beginning, there was no doubt that he was in charge. He expected punctuality. Meetings started at exactly 8:00 a.m. Lunch was exactly at noon, and we reconvened exactly at 1:00 p.m. We

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The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is a museum of local history which is presented as an 1860 home. The Museum and Fletcher-White Archives are organized and operated by the Ypsilanti Historical Society. We are all volunteers and our membership is open to everyone, including non-city residents.

[www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org)

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## From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY ALVIN E. RUDISILL

**T**his is the last issue of the Gleanings for 2016. I want to thank the editorial staff of this publication and also the many authors who

have submitted articles.

We receive a great deal of positive feedback from members of the Society regarding this publication. Ypsilanti has a very unique and interesting history and even those of us who did not grow up in our city find the stories of those who did interesting and exciting.

It has been a great year for both the YHS Museum and Archives. We are fortunate to have so many talented volunteers that serve the Society in many different ways. Our museum volunteers have set up many different displays during the year and currently our house is beautifully decorated

for the Christmas season. Our archive volunteers continue to organize and digitize our collections and more and more information is being made available on the Society web site.

On Sunday, December 11, we will have the annual Christmas Open House from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. We will also have a brief membership meeting at 2:00 pm to elect new members of the Board of Trustees. Usually

this is done at the October meeting but this year we had the Awesome Auction in place of that meeting. We raised approximately \$8,000 at the



Museum volunteers have been busy decorating the house for the holidays. The Annual Open House is Sunday December 11, from 2 to 5 p.m.

auction thanks to the leadership of Val Kabat and Steve Gross.

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



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ended at exactly five o'clock. In addition, we had an exact agenda each day which we followed to the letter. Early on, John announced that we would not be voting on any issues. Everything would be decided by consensus.

On the first day we covered a great deal of material. Surprisingly, on the second morning, John arrived with all of our work typed, collated, and ready for us to review. I believe that everyone was impressed with the fact that he could have accomplished so much after we had adjourned the previous day. As the meetings went on, we were presented with each day's proceedings. It was amazing and unbelievable. It was only years later that I learned how this had been accomplished. John had all these materials prepared weeks before the committee met. His tight agenda and use of consensus allowed him to move us through his pre-planned operation and caused us to believe that the outcomes each day were of our choosing. It was a clever strategy that was implemented to perfection and was a part of John's belief in efficiency and accomplishment.

I do not recall any objections to the procedure or the outcome. Considering the educational level and the status of the participants, that is amazing. I did have one question about the procedure, but I was hesitant to bring it up in the meeting. Therefore, I waited until I could talk to John privately. My point was that while we were developing a college tuition program for the State of Michigan, I was concerned as to how the candidates were to be selected. We had considered two possibilities. One was that the scholarship would go to the poorest student who then had the greatest financial need. The second was that the scholarship would go to the student who was the brightest who then had the greatest need. John moved us to the later decision meaning that we would first consider the academic ability of the student and

then look at their financial need. To me, that seemed contrary to what a person like John would have decided. It seemed to me that we would want to select financially poor students in cities like Detroit and then decide on who was the brightest of that group. It was then that John explained to me that the purpose of the scholarship was to get state money into private colleges and universities. If this was the goal, then private institutions of higher education wanted bright students, not those academically challenged. If a bright student applied to both a state and a private college then it would be likely that they might select a private college since the higher tuition would give them a greater need and thus give them a state scholarship. Even today, there is a strong protest against giving public money to private institutions, and yet, it is doubtful if many have realized that the state started doing that in the 1960s.

My next contact with John Porter was in 1965. John had now earned a PhD and was Associate Superintendent in charge of higher education in Michigan. He contacted me and offered me a position. At that time, I had just moved from a position with Michigan State University as the Director of Continuing Education to the role as Associate Director of the Mott Institute at Michigan State University. The position John offered me was Supervisor of Higher Education for the State of Michigan. I debated whether or not I should take the job and went to one of my mentors, Dr. Don Bush, who was on the staff of Central Michigan University. Don had spent several years with the Department of Education in Nebraska. He told me that everyone should experience what it is like to work at a state department, but no one should make it a career. As a result, I accepted the position.

Our office was in a shopping center on Grand River Avenue across from the Michigan State University campus. My office was in a suite of of-



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fices with John's. Immediately, I could see the leadership characteristics which John had portrayed before. He expected punctuality, loyalty and hard work. He was not one for socializing or fraternizing during working hours. He still had expectations of dealing with problems quickly and efficiently. One example had to do with parking. Parking was limited, and so we had personal parking spots identified with our names. However, on many occasions, people would park in our spots regardless of the warnings. John developed a technique for dealing with this problem. He created a twelve inch by twelve inch sheet of paper which stated "You are illegally parked." He then laminated it with the strongest of glues. Whenever someone parked in one of our spots, he sent his assistant out to glue one of those sheets on the driver's window. It took several minutes and a lot of effort to remove those sheets. As a result, in a very short period of time, we had no violators in our parking spots.

There was one action of John's which I never understood. Shortly after I started in his department, he assigned me the task of answering some of his official letters. I had always found John to be very articulate, and I did not know

why he did this. At first I received his mail each morning and immediately responded. When I took the letters for John to sign, he immediately reached for his red pencil and made corrections. Since the corrections were not major, I assumed he was simply establishing the fact that he was in charge. Finally, I told him that his corrections were now becoming corrections to his previous corrections, and the system was not an efficient way to handle his mail. John was always open to change. He agreed that my comments were accurate, and from that point on, he rarely corrected the letters that I brought for him to sign.

John also gave me another major writing task. The department was having a problem with groups outside of Michigan coming into the state and offering college credit or degrees. Some of these were legitimate organizations, and some were scams. What was needed was state legislation to deal with this problem. John engaged a person who was with a health organization in Kalamazoo to develop a position paper which could then be the basis for legislation. He then asked me to edit the material which that person submitted. This I did although John implied to the consultant that he was the one doing the editing. As a result, the po-



The John W. Porter College of Education building was dedicated on October 9, 1999.



sition paper was completed and submitted to the state legislature. They in turn passed legislation which provided the policy necessary for dealing with this problem.

My major responsibility with the department was to monitor the private colleges and universities in the state. Part of that job was to develop a directory for all state institutions of higher education. The other part was to visit all the private institutions and check to make certain they were following their charters. Private colleges are not governed by the State Board of Education. Instead, they each have a charter granted by the State of Michigan which describes what they can legally do. For much of my time, I traveled the state, checking the status of each institution against their charter. I found only two institutions which were not in compliance. One was a small college in Bay View, Michigan. Bay View was a community in which many of the houses are owned by the Methodist Church. Many people traveled to that area to spend their summers. Over the years, they developed a Chautauqua which offered people classes and social events. At one point, they had asked Albion College to offer classes for credit to their members and Albion had done so. Somewhere along the line, Albion no longer participated, but the members of that community continued to operate as though they were a college and actually were listed in the state directory as Bay View College. When I visited them, I discovered that although they were listed as a college in the state directory, they actually had never been granted a charter and thus did not legally exist. I offered them a procedure, similar to North Central Association procedures, by which they could go through a process and apply for a state charter. They opted not to do this, and so their college ended.

The second institution I discovered out of compliance was Cleary College in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Their charter permitted them to offer Bachelor

Degrees, but they had begun offering Masters Degrees. Again, I explained the process for amending their charter, and they opted to do so. They developed a proposal for the new degree regarding faculty, facilities, resources and library holdings, and I organized a committee of recognized experts in higher education and held an onsite evaluation. Eventually, they met the requirements and were approved for the new degree by the state legislature.

Because of John's position, all of the college presidents came to his office to confer with him. Many times, John included me in their discussions, and we frequently went to lunch together. One of these presidents was Harold Sponberg, the President of Eastern Michigan University. For some reason, we bonded and many times, Dr. Sponberg would drop by my office to chat and have a cup of coffee. On one occasion, he offered me a position at Eastern Michigan University. He told me that he had some future plans and felt that I might be the person to help achieve those goals. One goal was to have a Mott Funded Community Education Center. Another was to develop Eastern's first doctoral degree, and the third was to have a College of Education Building named the Mott-Manley Building. I talked to John about this offer, and he encouraged me to take it. In fact, he gave me the same advice that Dr. Bush had given me, "Everyone should work at the state department sometime, but no one should make a career of it." As a result, I accepted the position of professor at Eastern Michigan University.

In 1979, John followed his own advice and applied for the position of President of Eastern Michigan University. I was flattered that during a couple of his interviews he referred to me as a person who could vouch for his leadership abilities. I had no doubt that he would be a great president, and during his tenure in that position, he certainly lived up to my expectations. John brought the same skills to Eastern that

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I had observed in his role in the Michigan Department of Education. Because Eastern was so much larger than his previous position, I assumed that he would remove many of his subordinates and replace them with people who would be his team. He did not do this. I was concerned because leadership theory has a doctrine called "span of control." This theory states that no one can be effective if they have more than twelve persons reporting to them. John had the unique capacity to void that belief. I don't know how he did it, but he seemed to be able to supervise everyone in the organization. John could be somewhat intimidating, and I have seen him confront staff members from vice presidents to custodians with an apparent knowledge of what they are responsible for and where they were not performing satisfactorily. In John's case, he needed people who were loyal and hard working and those who would carry out the orders and directions which he gave them.

Bringing an effective and efficient operation to a university is a difficult task. The main members of your staff are professors who are employed in an organization where it is assumed that all of them will be task oriented. However, if any of them are not, then it becomes very difficult to introduce any type of accountability. There have been times when professors held full time positions outside the university, and there was little opportunity for the President to be aware of such a situation. Professors have three responsibilities: teaching, research and service. The teaching is measurable because professors have classes, and it is possible to know if they are meeting those classes and to obtain information as to how successful they are as perceived by their students. For the other two areas, there is little to audit except at the time when they are due for promotion. At that time, they have to produce evidence that they have been successful professionally for their research and their service. However, those occasions only come up over a period of years.

For John, he believed that for an institution like Eastern, teaching was the most important function, and he quickly established a system for evaluating that. In addition to student evaluations, he set up a procedure where departments would be allocated faculty on the basis of their credit hour production. He set the number of classes faculty must teach and set a minimum number of students in each class for which the faculty member would be accountable. On the basis of this production, each department would be allocated their number of faculty members for the coming year.

This immediately pressured the deans and their department heads to find ways to meet the requirements John had established. In my case, I offered many classes off campus which gave me numbers without affecting my regular faculty because I had these classes taught by visiting lectures. I also left two full time positions unfilled. As a result, in-

stead of being able to offer 16 classes, I could offer about 30 because I again staffed these classes with visiting lecturers who did not count as much as regular staff. I am certain that other department heads did the same. The point is that for the first time in my tenure at Eastern, we had to account for student production in order to qualify for our faculty.

John also had a way of clarifying his goals to his staff. He worded his goals in terms of such phrases as "Ten Ways



1979-1989  
A  
DECADE  
OF  
ADVANCEMENT

THE PRESIDENCY OF  
DR. JOHN W. PORTER  
AT EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

The publication "1979 - 1989 A Decade of Advancement" lists the following as the most outstanding contributions Dr. Porter made to Eastern Michigan University: 1) Establishment of the College of Technology; 2) Record enrollment growth; 3) Construction of the Olds Student Recreation Center; 4) Capital campaign to renovate Quirk Theater and build the new Sponberg Theater; 5) Develop a national model for Cooperative Education; 6) Establish the "Quality, Uniqueness and Opportunity Program" to attract academically superior and talented students; 7) Establish the Honors Program to recruit, retain and recognize gifted students; 8) Establish a Cogeneration Program to preserve and manage energy utilization; 9) Establish a Children's Center on the EMU which operated on a child-directed philosophy; 10) Develop the Huron Center (now Eagle Crest) which involved a golf course, training center and hotel; 11) Revitalization of Intercollegiate Athletics through a pay for performance plan for coaches and athletic administrators; 12) Renovation of Pierce Hall for a Student Services Center; 13) Restoration of Welch Hall for meeting and office space; 14) Construction of the College of Business building in downtown Ypsilanti; and 15) Probably the most significant accomplishment of the decade, the establishment of the first doctoral program on the campus in educational leadership.



to Success,” “Five steps to our future,” or some other title which specifically identified his direction. He then followed these with specific steps to be taken to get us to those goals. As I look back to the goals of President Sponberg, it happened that John Porter was the one to achieve most of those. We did have an outstanding Community Education Center when John became president. However, the doctoral degree, which had been struggling for life for several years, did get his attention. He liked the uniqueness of the degree. Unlike any other institution, it was created as an addition to our Specialist Degree. In addition to those graduate hours, a doctoral candidate would have to take hours in statistics, some cognitive work and write a dissertation. The unique feature was that contrary to other institutions where people who did not complete the dissertation were referred to as “all but the thesis (ABT)”, our students would at least have a Specialists Degree if they did not complete the doctoral requirements. Also, he liked the feature that seemed to be keeping with the times. The age old degree was Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) which is primarily a research degree. Over the past several years, disciplines have preferred to have degrees which represented their profession. Thus instead of a PhD which does not indicate any specialty, there were medical doctors (MD) (DO), (DVM), doctors of dentistry (DDS), lawyers (JD), doctors of business (DBA) and (DM), doctors of divinity (DDV) and (ThD), nursing (DNP), etc. In keeping with that direction, John agreed that doctors who were experts in education should have an appropriate degree. Thus Doctor of Education seemed most appropriate (EdD) because it is one of the few degrees that is viewed as both a teaching and research degree.

For a while, we were unable to move forward with our proposed degree because our legislative representative had said that such a movement would not be viewed positively by the state legislature. I do not know exactly what happened, but one Friday, John called me to say that he had to have an updated doctoral proposal on his desk on Monday. I worked all weekend and met the deadline. Then followed approval by the Regents, approval by the 15 state universities (8-7), a testy visit by the North Central Association, and final approval. There is no doubt that John’s influence greatly affected each of these approvals. Unfortunately, the doctoral degree which was implemented was a traditional PhD. and did not follow the one we developed and the one for which John had given his approval. But at least we had Eastern’s first doctoral degree which moved us into another level of academic respectability. Interestingly, when John showed me his diary, he listed the doctoral degree as he greatest accomplishment at Eastern.

*John worded his goals in terms of such phrases as “Ten Ways to Success,” “Five steps to our future,” or some other title which specifically identified his direction.*

As for Dr. Sponberg’s third goal, we did get a new college of education building, but it was called the John Porter College of Education Building, and that title was justly deserved.

During all the time I knew John Porter, I never heard him refer to race or color in his professional performance. He certainly had experienced prejudice in his early days as a teacher. John was a champion for underserved children and youth. He used the terms “screened, sorted and selected” to describe how our educational system works, and he felt strongly that many of our young people were being given a great disservice as a result. However he never used color or race to describe those persons. We did have two racial incidents on campus while he was president. On

one occasion, the Regents had invited a world famous golfer, Gary Player, to our campus. He was to play our golf course, and he had announced that he would create a \$75,000 scholarship for our students. A group of faculty protested his coming to campus. Their complaint was that he was born in South Africa, and because of the racial policies in that country, they felt he should not be on our campus. Later, the Regents invited Dr. Christian Barnard, who was the first doctor to do

a successful heart transplant, to be our commencement speaker. Again, a faculty group mounted a protest on the same grounds. As a result, John uninvited these two individuals. In a later discussion, he told me that he felt the protests were wrong, but he did not want to risk injury or embarrassment to either of the two invitees so he took what he thought was the most appropriate action.

John Porter was certainly one of the most interesting and unique leaders I have ever met. Having taught leadership classes for twenty five years, I believed that I understood all of the characteristics necessary to be a good leader. John challenged many of those ideas and did so very effectively. He was a man of honor and character who knew where to take an organization and how to get it there. His dedication to his beliefs and the energy he had for getting things done have been matched by no one else in my life. He was a role model for other leaders and an inspiration to those who really knew and understood him. It was my good fortune to have him as a colleague and a friend.

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

# The Story of WATER WORKS PARK

BY JAN ANSCHEUTZ



Early photographs and post cards show us that there was once a bridge over the river which connected the new Water Works Park with Gilbert Park c1909. Also, note the dam under the bridge.

**T**he next time you visit the bathroom and flush the toilet you might want to reflect on the miracle of running water and an efficient sewer system and thank our forefathers in Ypsilanti for their insight and planning – a byproduct of which is the lovely and secluded Water Works Park on the Huron River.

Prior to 1889 and the installation of a water system in this growing town, the health of many residents depended on access to clean water which was not always easy to come by. Homes and businesses had wells, cisterns, rain barrels or water had to be fetched from the Huron River or streams for livestock, business and family use. Without fire hydrants, the town was in danger of burning down, as it had in 1851. There also needed to be a sanitary way to dispose of waste so that it would not spread disease. At the time, each property owner was on their own to solve this problem in as constructive a way as possible. The health and safety of local citizens and students at the growing Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) depended on a common solution to the problem of having sufficient safe water and sewer facilities.

Even though thousands of years ago the Romans were known for building elaborate water and sewer systems (with many of them still functioning today), Ypsilanti only achieved this goal in 1890 when, by bonding \$75,000, and

later an additional \$50,000, the massive undertaking of finding and then pumping and piping water throughout the town, and removing sewage, was attempted. Amazingly, this was done within two years of the initial vote when the citizens of Ypsilanti approved the money for a water system and a Board of Water Commissioners was appointed to oversee it. Local workers were hired to dig the wells, build the pumping station, and install over 17 miles of pipes and 132 water hydrants. Ypsilanti's world famous water tower was also constructed at the highest point in the town to provide consistent water pressure.

This distinctive architectural feature of Ypsilanti continues to attract gawkers and has been the subject of thousands of post cards and jokes over the years. Its architecture was a matter of contention for the Olmsted firm in their 1913 review of the town of Ypsilanti. Without too much comment, they suggested that the features of the water tower, which are notable, be modified to a more formal and dignified design. In the end, this became merely another recommendation by consultants which had joined the ever-growing stack at City Hall.

The water commission quickly hired William Coates, who had built the water system in Kalamazoo, as the head engineer. He located a good source of water and the old Yp-

*continued on page 10*



# Museum Board Report

BY NANCY WHEELER, BOARD CHAIR



Florence Babbitt at the 1923 Ypsilanti Centennial Celebration. All the articles she is wearing were bought in Ypsilanti between 1859 and 1861.



Florence Babbitt's 1923 centennial costume that is currently on display in the Museum.

On September 23, the children of puppeteer Meredith Bixby, Michael and Nora, visited the museum to see the Bixby marionette exhibit. Michael thrilled us with a short presentation of "The Stalk". (See Gleanings, summer 2016) The exhibit will come down in early January, 2017. If you have not seen it yet, come soon!

New exhibits upstairs are Florence Babbitt's 1923 centennial costume and items she had collected. (See Gleanings, summer 2010) "A Night at The Opera" features a gentleman's outfit. Ypsilanti High School and Eastern Michigan University memorabil-

ia are also displayed. The back hall china cabinet has Fenton shoes and new cups and saucers. A dining room case displays some of our silver pieces. The kitchen features Seraphin Angels by Roman, Inc. that are part of the Trina McGinnis Collection. Other exhibits are planned for the winter season.

Welcome to new Docent Raudhaun McElroy! We always need docents. Three hours a month and some training is all it takes. Call 734-482-4990.

We wish you a happy holiday season and hope to see you at the December 11 Open House.

silanti Paper Company mill owned by the Cornwell family was purchased. With much difficulty in tunneling through dense clay, a well was dug, the old mill building was transformed into a pumping station, and a water storage unit built. This is in the Catherine and Spring Street area which we now know as Water Works Park.

As can be imagined, the citizens of Ypsilanti marveled as mile after mile of pipes were laid. The Ypsilanti Commercial Newspaper followed the progress and even devoted a regular column called "Water Works Little Drops" to keep the citizens informed of this history-making task. In the July 18, 1889 "Little Drops" we learn that "Mr. Cornwell was the first one to have city water carried into his house" that Wednesday. Also, a Mr. A. J. Murray and his horse were stuck in a ditch being dug for the water service, and a

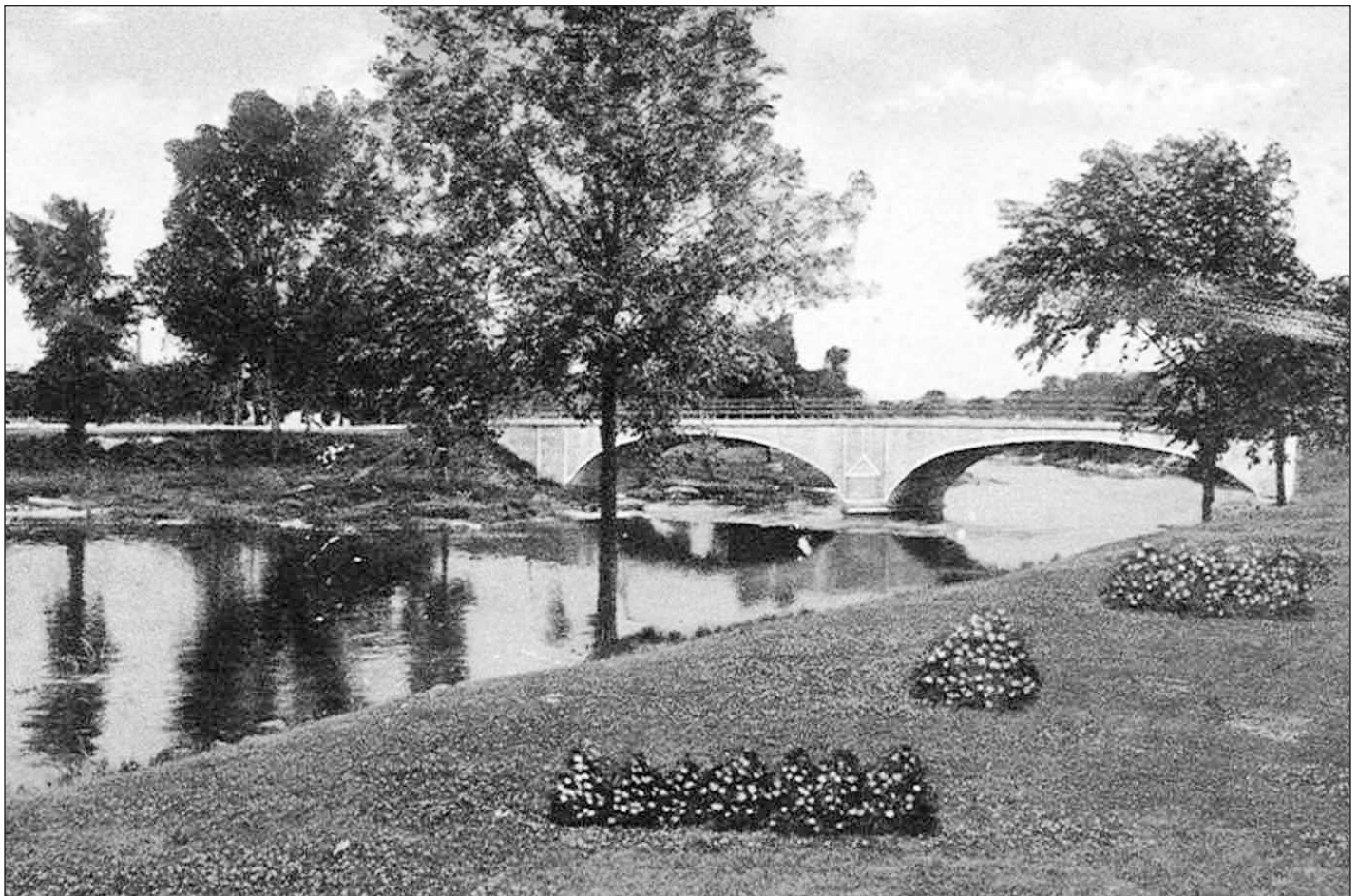
crowd of people watching the laying of pipe at the corner of Cross and Huron Streets were accidentally squirted with water from a hose.

The newly installed water system was considered a success and the first yearly report of the water commission included several testimonials including this glowing one from a Mr. G. Fuller: *"I have been troubled for the last three or four years with kidney complaint, and tried almost everything I could get in the shape of medicine, but did not get any permanent relief until I commenced using the water from the Ypsilanti Water Works, and almost immediately experienced relief, and have continued to use it since...and can only attribute it to the water from the Ypsilanti city well."*

Not only was Ypsilanti blessed with the wonder of running water, but a

new park was being formed on a once industrial site in the area surrounding the water works. In *The Story of Ypsilanti* written by Harvey C. Colburn in 1923, we learn that *"The Waterworks Park was developed by Superintendent William Blanchard, who started its improvement with flowers from his own gardens. It became a lovely spot, having the advantage of proximity to the river."*

Early photographs and post cards show us that there was once a bridge over the river which connected the new Water Works Park with Gilbert Park. Gilbert Park had been one of two town squares and had everything that you would imagine a small town park to have including a large gazebo for summer concerts, picnic areas, paths and flower gardens. It was also the staging site for Ypsilanti's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday when a log cabin was built



View of the gardens and the river in Water Works Park.





Picnic tables in Water Works Park.

there to honor the early settlers.

Water Works Park slowly evolved to a most remarkable use and became a campground, complete with zoo, during the great depression. It was where not only families but students from the Normal and University of Michigan could find affordable (tent) housing while attending college. The park became known as "*The Ypsilanti Tourist Park*." There are many yellowed newspaper articles in the Ypsilanti Historical Society archives describing the zoo which eventually housed a menagerie of birds, bear cubs, a monkey, two baboons, snakes, frogs, chickens, ponies, goats and possibly other animals not mentioned in a 1937 newspaper article.

This collection of animals came from a variety of places and were clustered in make-shift fashion. For example, the school children of Ypsilanti collected \$75 in order to purchase the two baboons. Many of the birds lived in a cage made out of an unused popcorn wagon. The bear cubs would often

share their cage with a little white dog to the delight of the visitors. When the single crow was injured by the goat sharing its cage, a resident from Saline donated an additional crow to keep it company and they spent their time chasing the chickens. Entertainment must have been difficult to come by during the bleak days of the depression as evidenced by a local newspaper article reporting on the "*news*" of the snakes at this little zoo shedding their skin!

This tourist park campground on the 9.3 acres of what we now know of as Water Works Park is most often remembered for the mystery of the disappearance of the Starkweather Fountain, which had been donated to the city of Ypsilanti at the completion of the water project and stood proudly at the southeast corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron Streets. The versatile statue served as a drinking fountain for people, dogs, and horses, and the top half of it, the crowning statue of Hebe, goddess of youth, made its way

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to the little zoo park. No one today is sure what happened to it, but it is guessed that because it was bronze, it was melted down to help in the war effort during World War II.

As Hebe disappeared, so did the campground, the animals, and the recreation and entertainment that they provided. Also, in 1996, the city of Ypsilanti no longer pumped their own water from wells but contracted with the city of Detroit for a clean water supply. The buildings have been torn down and there is now a compost pile where they once stood.

In 1953, Ypsilanti Legionnaires of Post 282 constructed a foot bridge across the river to Water Works Park to en-

able pedestrians to have easy access to the Happy Land Carnival which they would hold at Water Works Park on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July for many years.

Over the years, the park was used for lunch breaks and after work ball games by workers at the Ford factory across the street from it. Now that the factory is vacant, the ball field has been recently renovated by the Ypsilanti American Little League. A disc golf course was built in 2007 by volunteers, and there is also a picnic shelter. The 2014-2019 Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation master plan cites some of the current challenges of Water Works Park as being secluded, *"separated from the nearest major thoroughfare,*

*Factory Street, by the mulch yard for the City, formerly a water treatment plant. Sidewalk connectivity in the immediate area is poor, due to a history of industrial use to the east and south, steep slopes to the west, and the Huron River to the north."*

In the plan, we read of priority proj-



Water Plant in Water Works Park.



No one today is sure what happened to the Hebe Fountain, but it is guessed that because it was bronze, it was melted down to help in the war effort during World War II.



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ects for the park as money becomes available including constructing side-walks along and east of Catherine Street, improving barrier free parking, and exploring other uses for the park. Currently there are plans to repair the pedestrian bridge connecting it to the River's Edge Linear Park.

Perhaps because of its seclusion and proximity to the river, which curves gently around it, Water Works Park is still a jewel in the crown of Ypsilanti's parks. It no longer houses a tourist park or zoo, which was said to welcome visitors to the city from many states, nor a gaudy carnival with fried food and dangerous rides, but invites visitors to play Frisbee golf or a game of baseball, or perhaps just to walk or picnic and enjoy the river's sparkling water and soothing sounds.

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



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# A History of Helen Clarke (Jenks) CLEARY

BY PATRICK ROGER CLEARY II



P. R. Cleary's boyhood home (picture taken in 1938, 69 years after he immigrated to the United States).

In a previous *Gleanings* article on the history of the Cleary family in Ypsilanti, we began the story in 1858 in the town of Borrisokane, Tipperary County, Ireland where Patrick Roger Cleary was born to poor parents. Patrick came to the United States, secured an education and by 1883 had decided that Ypsilanti was where he would start a school of penmanship.

The second part of our story begins on August 3, 1865 with the birth of Helen Clarke Jenks in St. Clair, Michigan, P.R. Cleary's future wife. Helen was the sixth child of Robert

Patrick was introduced to Helen Clarke Jenks, a very pretty twenty-two year old from St. Clair, Michigan. She was a cousin of Mrs. Scherzer and was visiting in Ypsilanti. P.R. was smitten with this pretty young lady and began a correspondence with her. He was 29 years old and she was 22.

Helen graduated from St. Clair High School in 1883 and attended Somerville, a private school for women in St. Clair.

There was a great deal of difference between the background of the two young lovers and people wondered if Helen Jenks would win the heart of Patrick Cleary. But, by 1889, he had proposed to her and she had accepted. They were married in a small wedding at St. Clair on June 27, 1889.

On June 16 P.R., in a letter he had written to Helen: "Yes dear, it will be the 27<sup>th</sup> before we know it. Only a week from Thursday and I have much work to do in the meantime. Could we practice at the church after I get there." (They were planning a month long honeymoon in Europe). Then he said, "But no, that would be too late. I must try to be there Wednesday noon at the outside." He went on to say that he was going to Detroit to get a silk hat and two handsome shirts and a pair of light shoes. He wanted her to be proud of him.

Later in the letter he wrote, "Dearest, we must always be young, even though we advance in years. We must enjoy life. I think we will to my dear little "Jink girl." (possibly teasing her regarding the name Jenks). Then he wrote, "I think I will have no trouble in getting a license provided I can get the money. But I think I can earn it this week." He signed it, "Your own loving boy."

The wedding surprised the Ypsilanti residents since they had considered P.R. as a most eligible bachelor and he had given no indication that marriage was imminent. The newlyweds left immediately after the wedding for a month long honeymoon in Europe.



Patrick R. Cleary 1887.



Helen Clarke Jenks in 1887.

Jenks and Mary Clarke Jenks.

Helen had a pleasant childhood. Her parents were well established in St. Clair, Michigan. Robert Jenks had been active in education, shipping, financial and other businesses in the St. Clair area and Mary was a writer and an active member of the St. Clair Ladies History Class.

In 1887 P.R. Cleary was making the front pages of the Ypsilanti Commercial Weekly with reporters speculating who would "land" Ypsilanti's most eligible bachelor. That spring





Helen Cleary with her four children in 1903. Left to right: Marjory Julia, Ruth Marie, Helen, Owen Jenks and Charles Brooke.

By the end of the decade, P.R. and Helen had four children born to them: Charles Brooks Cleary in 1890, Marjory Julia Cleary in 1892, Ruth Marie Cleary in 1894 and Owen Jenks Cleary in 1900.

It did not take long for Helen to enter into the role of partner and co-worker with P.R. She assisted him in publishing several books including "How to Figure Profit." She involved herself with community projects such as the Ladies Library and the Ladies Literary Club.

In 1905, P.R. moved his family from the house on Forest Avenue, where all the children had been born, to 7 North Normal Street, a house that had been built in 1848 by the Smith family. It was a large, four-bedroom, Georgian style house with an upper front porch with wooden scrollwork forming the railing, which gave it a "New Orleans" appearance.

For years, in this large house it was commonplace for the Cleary's to invite students for regular open house gatherings at their home to promote student social development. Many of the students were from rural areas and could be shy. These social functions served to promote friendships among the students. Many times over 300 students would participate. She would ensure that new students were introduced to the older ones

who could help the new ones become familiar with the College routine. As stated by P.R. regarding the open houses, "I made it a point to see that the students mixed. If I saw a person or a group alone that was not talking, I brought others to them and gave them something to talk about. And in that, Mrs. Cleary was a real assistance to me. It kept us busy to keep them all in conversational contact throughout the evening."

Helen was an elegant and generous hostess. Being one of nine children from a well to do family, she was brought up learning social graces and the art of entertaining. Besides staging the open houses for the students, she took charge of all the early commencement banquets and entertained the Cleary sports teams and alumni groups. Students were always welcome.

Helen was of great support to P.R. following the extensive damage to the new college building caused by the tornado of April 12, 1893. She not only had two young children to care for but also participated in supporting the reconstruction effort.

All the Cleary children attended Ypsilanti High School with Charles, the oldest, going on to Cleary College and then the University of Michigan. Marjory attended Cleary College, the Michigan State Normal College and

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The Cleary house at 7 North Normal Street in Ypsilanti, Michigan.



The original Cleary College building in 1893.

the University of Michigan. Ruth followed suit, attending the same institutions. Owen attended the Michigan State Normal College for one year prior to entering the U.S. Army.

When the U.S. entered World War One, all the Cleary children took part in the war effort. In 1917 Charles was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Marjory and Ruth traveled to Washington, DC where they found work at the War Industries Board. In 1918 Owen was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the U. S. Army. He was one of the youngest 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants in the Army at that time.

Helen's patriotism was amply demonstrated by her holding significant offices in the Daughters of the American Revolution and in the Detroit Chapter of the Daughters of Patriots and Founders. This latter affiliation came from her interest in her ancestry. Some of her forebearers were prominent in colonial America. On the Clarke side she had an ancestor who participated in the Boston tea Party. With her children away and involved in the war effort, Helen became active with the Red Cross and remained so throughout the duration of the war.

After the war she was commissioned by Governor Albert Sleeper to compile the records of all the soldiers

from Washtenaw County who served in world War I to be entered into the State of Michigan archives.

She was a life member of the Ladies Library Association. She had an abiding interest in history and compiled a history of the Association. She was prominent in the Ladies Literary Club, The Faculty Dames of the Normal College and of the women's societies of the Congregational Church.

In 1933 when the college was turned over to a Board of Trustees, she became a trustee and was elected Vice-President of the Cleary College Board of Trustees, a position which she held until her death in 1939. In addition to her other interests, she spent five years compiling the history of the Jenks line. Helen was a well known genealogist and accounted for over three hundred descendents of her ancestor Jerimiah Whipple Jenks and his wife, Hester.

Of the fifty commencements held during her marriage to P.R. Cleary, she missed but very few and those because of illness. Two months before her death she made a supreme effort to bring her gracious presence to a Cleary Alumni banquet.

Helen Clarke Jenks Cleary, a woman for all seasons, peacefully passed away in her sleep on December 13, 1937. She was 73 years old.



Damage to the Cleary College building by a tornado on April 12, 1893.





Helen and Patrick Cleary circa 1933.

A member of the Ladies Literary Club, Lulu Capenter Skinner, wrote a Eulogy of Helen the month after she died:

*"That's the portrait of a lady  
Whom you've loved and lost  
awhile"  
Can you see her lovely features  
Catch the magic of her smile  
Feel her ardent spirit with us  
And her gracious presence here  
To inspire each to better service  
Through the coming years."*

*(Patrick Roger Cleary II has served on the Board of Trustees of Cleary University since 2003 and was recently named Vice-Chairman of the Board.)*



Helen Cleary on the front porch of her home at 7 North Normal Street in Ypsilanti.



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# The First National Bank Building

By James Mann

The original First National Bank building was constructed on the corner of West Michigan Avenue and Huron Street and opened in 1905.

**T**he National Bank Building at 133 West Michigan Avenue, with its exterior of pressed-red brick, sandstone and Terra-cotta trimmings in the Beaux Arts style, easily stands out as one of the handsomest buildings in the city of Ypsilanti. The building, for most of its history, has been the home of a bank, but not always the First national Bank.

The First National Bank of Ypsilanti was incorporated on November 25, 1863, with a capitalization of \$50,000. For many years, the First National Bank would hold the distinction of being the oldest national bank in the state of Michigan. It would hold its original federal license number of 155 without interruption many years as well. The first president of the bank was Asa Dow, who served from the incorporation of the bank until January 8, 1867. Isaac N. Conklin was elected to succeed Dow, and held the office until his death in 1884. Daniel L. Quirk Sr. was elected as the next president, and remained in office until his death in December of 1911. It was during his time as president that the National Bank Building was constructed.

In 1905, the bank moved to new quarters on the South East corner of Congress, now Michigan Avenue and South Washington Street. The First National Bank of Ypsilanti opened the doors of its new building on the morning of April 24, 1905. This new building was designed by Donaldson & Mei-

er of Detroit. "It's exterior of pressed red brick, sandstone and terra-cotta trimmings places it easily as the handsomest business structure in the city," noted *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of that day, "while its interior combines the latest and most artistic scheme of decorations."

"As one enters the door from the vestibule," continued *The Ypsilanti Daily Press*, "the room at the right occupying the corner of the building, is reserved for the president, while just back of it is the cashier's office, following which within the cage are the desks for collections, the bookkeeper and the paying and receiving tellers." The tellers had direct access to two of the three vaults on this floor. "Occupying a similar place on the left of the entrance door to the president's office is a rest room for the convenience of the patrons, and this is fitted with tables, easy chairs and stationary and is always at the disposal of the citizens of Ypsilanti."

"The decorations of the interior of the building are striking and elaborate. The walls are of porphyry green, while the columns which separate it into panels are of dull gold, the capitals being polished. The ceiling shades to cream and is bordered with a Roman key pattern. The wainscoting is Italian marble, and the cages are verd copper. The woodwork is in quarter sawed white oak with a dark golden finish. The floor is marble and the carpets in the



offices are red velvet, and the furniture, which was made especially for the building is in weather oak." Even the ink wells and the desk furnishings were especially made for the building, and were in the same design as the decorations.

"In the basement are the remaining vaults for storage, and access is given to these by an outside door at the rear of the building, so that all supplies, such as stationary, books, etc., may be taken into the building without disturbing the bank proper. The coal and wood are in bins in a cellar extension under the sidewalk, so that no dust or dirt is allowed to enter."

"All in all," concluded *The Ypsilanti Daily Press*, "the building stands completed as a beautiful monument to the city's progress and one that speaks well for the enterprise of the institution which it houses."

When Daniel L. Quirk Sr. died in December of 1911, at the age of 94, he was the oldest working banker in the state of Michigan. His son, Daniel L. Quirk Jr., was chosen to succeed him. It was under him that the National Bank Building was closed, beginning in 1919, for nine months for remodeling. "It stands in its finished perfection a model of high efficiency," reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Tuesday, April 6, 1920, "expressed with beauty and interest at every turn. The requirements of modern banking have been expertly met by the architects, the Haggson Brothers, New York, so that every appliance and arrangement is the last word in efficiency, but the whole building speaks eloquently of the intelligence and unerring tastes of the president D. L. Quirk Jr., who has a peculiar gift for investing every project he inspires with grace and a differentiating touch."

"One's first impression in the lobby is spaciousness and satisfying color. Botticini marble lines the walls with its soft tones, which are repeated in the tiling of the floor, grill-work, the high desk in the center of the lobby,

*For many years, the First National Bank would hold the distinction of being the oldest national bank in the state of Michigan.*

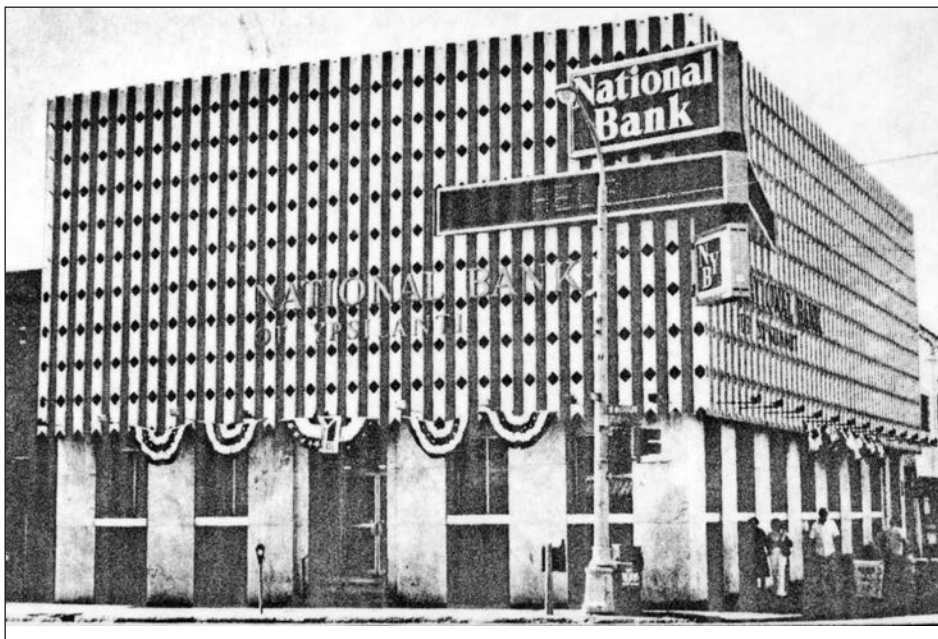
and the silver gray quarter-sawn oak of the woodwork and the furniture. The light is mellowed by sifting through window hangings of gold-bronze silk which gleam metal lically." There were three desks to the right of the front entrance for the president, cashier and assistant cashier.

"Two consultation rooms open at the north. Turning south, one passes the discount window, the window for collections, and then into a wide work space, from which opens the book vault. After this comes the paying and receiving tellers' compartments, with the cash vault behind, and then one enters the safety deposit department through a glass door controlled from the inner side. At the left of the passage are five coupon rooms and at the end a larger one, all provided

with every arrangement for the comfortable dispatch of business. On the east side of the lobby are two savings windows and three empty windows to provide expansion."

"The stocking room for women clients," the account continued, "is at the northeast corner and is most inviting in rich blue with gray wicker furniture gay with chintz. The desk holds an attractive bronze set and is lighted with a silver candle, while a lavatory and various toilet ministrants are typical of the thorough manner in which accessories of all kinds are provided in all instances." From here a stairway went to the basement where at the right was a door to the directors' room, which was furnished in mahogany. The room had green silk curtains and the color scheme was completed with a green velvet carpet. There was a massive table, on which stood a hand wrought iron lamp.

Across the hall from the directors' room was a large room intended for public meetings furnished with a table and a full compliment of chairs. Here those with business to transact could do so undisturbed. There was a sec-



The First National Bank building after it was covered with aluminum screening and marble panels in about 1965.



Money issued by the First National Bank of Ypsilanti in 1903.

ond flight of stairs to the basement, at the rear of the building as well. *"The private apartments for the employees are placed on the west. The first in the series is a dining-room, for the custom will be observed of having lunch at the bank. Wholly unofficial and very home like this room is made with yellow walls and gray furniture. From the gray buffet gleams a lustrous array of teapot, coffee-pot, etc., in copper on silver. The coppery tints are repeated in the runners, while the shelves of the pantry just beyond reveal the attractive dishes which will add their bright colors to the table. At the west of the pantry is the kitchen, equipped with gas stove, refrigerator, etc., and in charge of Mrs. Abraham Wood."*

*"South of these is the women's locker and rest room. Then comes two fire-proof storage vaults, while across the hall is a commodious room for stationery supplies. At the extreme south are the men's lockers and shower-baths. The remainder of the basement space is consumed by the furnace rooms."* New to the lobby was the mural on the south wall, painted by Alexander Mastro-Valerio. The mural was symbolic of three ideas, thrift, agricultural, manufacturing and industry.

*"In the center," noted The Ypsilanti Record of April 1, 1920, "are two girls offering production to thrift. At the left is agricultural portraying the natural lines of spring. Manufacturing at the right portrays a more serious effect of labor holding an anvil—a man with an electric motor and a woman representing the scientific part of industry."*

The building has been remodeled several times since then, each an effort to give it the modern look. In about 1965, the building was covered with aluminum screening and marble panels. For this, the building received, in December of 1982, the dubious honor

of *"Remuddling of the Month,"* from the *Old House Journal*. The aluminum screening had the unintended effect of providing some 200 pigeons the perfect place to build nests. The droppings fell to a metal ledge, which became overloaded and started to collapse. The smell was a problem as well. In the end, the aluminum screening and marble panels were removed, and the old building once again came into its old glory. The building is no longer home to a bank, but it is still a handsome structure.

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

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# The Coney Island Hot Dog

Angelo's has been serving Coney Island hot dogs in Flint since 1949.

BY JACK D. MINZEY

For people in Michigan, whether Michiganders, Michiganians or just plain natives of Michigan, there is a certain jargon that develops as a result of living here. Lions, Tigers, Red Wings and Pistons conjure up some degree of loyalty. So do the names Wolverines and Spartans. When people hear the words Straights or Locks it means a certain place in the State. Youppers means a particular part of the State population. Up North causes a sense of nostalgia. We make Michigan left turns. We drink Vernors not ginger ale and Fago has a particular meaning. We drink a bottle of pop not a soda. Paczkis are a special donut and pasties mean the same thing to all Michigan residents unless they happen to frequent establishments that have strippers.

One of the specific words in Michigan is Coney which is our way of indicating a Coney Island hot dog. Actually, the term is universal in the state but the product is not. The State is covered with Coney Island Restaurants, and almost everyone has experienced eating them. For most of the State, the Coney Island is what some people would call a chili dog. They call it that because the sandwich is really a hot dog with mustard and perhaps onions covered with the same chili which is served when you order a bowl of chili.

However, there is another group of Coney Island aficionados who have a different version of this hot dog and would claim that theirs is the true Coney Island. Those people would be the ones who got their Conneys from Lafayette's in Detroit or grew up in Flint. For the Flint resident, the Coney was the favorite sandwich in the city. It is true that the Kewpie Hamburger ("Kewpie, pickle on top, makes your heart go flipity flop") was always special, but the Coney was by far and away the favorite.

In the 1930s, there were no fast food places in Flint. Eating at a restaurant was not within the financial realm of most of the factory workers, but the Coney Island was. There were three Coney Island Restaurants in downtown Flint- the Original, the American and the National. As the downtown area developed, those restaurants closed, but they moved to other parts of the city so that there were about 20 such restaurants in the 1980s. There were a few other places in Michigan that had similar Conneys. As mentioned, there was the Lafayette in Detroit and also a restaurant across from the old Tiger's Stadium. There was a place in Jackson, Michigan and also at the old hotel in South Lyon. There were also some in surrounding cities near Flint. The Apollo Restaurant in Davidson and Andrigos in Fenton were other



places with what many called the Flint Coney Island. In fact, there was a sign outside Denver, Colorado which advertised Flint Coney Islands. This was not a mere coincidence. That restaurant in Denver was owned by a former community school director from Flint. There are probably others throughout the State.

It is very likely that those who grew up on chili dogs believe that they have eaten the real Coney. But the people in Flint have made their Coney almost an addiction, and they are adamant about the superiority of their Coney. It is also likely that the Coney is an acquired taste. Natives of Flint swear by their Coney. The restaurants are owned by the same Greek family. Names like Branoff and Nicoloff are connected with these restaurants. Most of them are open twenty four hours a day, and the clientele represents a cross section of the community. You will see customers who are truck drivers, factory workers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, clerks and politicians. The dress will go from overalls to suits and ties. After an evening out, getting a Coney is usually the last stop before one goes home.

The chili dog is pretty well explained by that name. But a Flint Coney is much more complex. Most people have nev-

er analyzed the Flint Coney, and even if they did, the preparation is kept secret by the family. My discovery of the contents came about in a very unexpected way.



The Coney Island is a hot dog with mustard and onions covered with chili.

At one time, I was commissioned by the Department of Education in South Carolina to do a series of workshops in their State. Each workshop was one day in length, and I was to do about six. One of the workshops took place in a small rural community whose population was all African American. After the workshop, the ladies in a local church arranged to prepare a luncheon for the participants. The luncheon was in the church and was set up cafeteria style. The meal consisted of a scoop of white rice, a couple pieces of lean pork and a ladle of sauce that looked much like thick chili.

The taste was delicious and something I had not anticipated. It was so good that I requested seconds which they willingly served me. At the time, I asked how the sauce was made, and they told me that they would tell me after I had finished my lunch. When I was finished, a lovely lady came to my table and explained the contents of the sauce. Basically, they took the insides of a pig (heart, kidneys and liver) ground them up and cooked them. Then they added their special spices. It certainly did not sound as good as it tasted.

A few years later, I was doing some consulting in Flint at the Mott Foundation. On my way home, I realized that I had not had my Coney fix. I knew that there was a restaurant in Fenton that had Coney, so I stopped there. Because it was in the middle of the afternoon, I was the only customer. My Coney was served by the cook who was also the owner. He sat down with me while I ate my meal. In the conversation, I asked what it was about the Flint Coney Island that gave it such a unique taste. He explained the contents. First you need a steamed bun. Then you must have a Koegel all beef hot dog. The hot dog needs to be left on the grill until it is a little charred. Then comes the special chili, mustard and chopped sweet onions. When I asked him about the chili, he said "well you take the inside parts of a pig ( heart, kidneys, liver), grind them up.....".

Obviously, I have a bias. A real treat when I was a boy was a Coney Island. I have eaten them warm and cold. I have driven long distances just to treat myself to one. I have taken many people to try them, although they often do not share my enthusiasm about the taste. But to the people of Flint, and to me, there will only be one real Coney Island.

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# Growing up on the GREAT LAKES

*An Interview with Gordon Cahours  
by Eric Selzer*

**G**ordon Cahours was born February 15, 1920 in Detroit, Michigan at number 13 Stare Avenue, which is southern Detroit. Shortly after he was born, his parents moved to Ypsilanti and bought a home at 413 South Huron Street. Gordon was raised there until 1936 at which time the family moved to Cross Street. During those years many things of considerable historic note took place; one of which was when Gordon was seven years old. In April of that year he remembers that "... Charles Lindberg flew the Atlantic Ocean." His family was one of the few families that had a radio and he heard the news over the radio. Gordon remembers there was lots of interest in aviation following this particular event.



Gordon Cahours served in the United States Coast Guard from 1941 until March of 1946. He served on U. S. ships in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Gordon remembers that at one time Ypsilanti had two airports. The one that was out on Carpenter Road was called Ypsilanti Airport, which was a pretty good airport. He remembers the other one was south on Whitaker Road which was called

McKenna. When Gordon was eight-years-old his uncle took he and his older brother out to the airport with the rest of the family and all of them got a chance to ride in a W.A.C.O., [Wayne Aircraft Company] bi-plane, which he remembers was quite a thrill. Gordon indicated that flight made quite an impression on him and from that point on he was hooked on airplanes.

## ***Do you remember hearing about Charles Lindberg's baby being kidnapped?***

Oh yes! I remember that very clearly including many of the details of the investigation that followed the kidnapping.

## ***How did you feel when you were hearing about it?***

Well, like most children anything that was scary like that, of course, would make you think twice about some of the things that could happen to ya' ... That was one of them, but there were so many other things that took precedence over that, it was really not that big a deal with us. I vividly remember back in 1933 when I was about thirteen that President Roosevelt's administration had just begun and one of the first things that he ordered, because the banks



In 1945 Gordon Cahours served on a U. S. Coast Guard ship that traveled to Buenos Aires delivering relief supplies.

were apparently in bad shape, was what they called "a moratorium." This required all of the banks in the United States of America to shut down. When this occurred they didn't open right away so people couldn't get at their savings and they couldn't write checks. The business people that relied upon the flow of money were temporarily put out of business.

## ***How did this affect you and your family?***

As I came home from school one day I found my mother



[Grace Hennessey Cahours] in tears, which was very rare. I had never seen her cry before. I asked her what seemed to be the trouble and she said, "Well, the banks have just closed and we have no money." She said, "I have less than five dollars in my purse." And then she said, "That's all the money that we have! I don't know what we're going to do!" So I had lunch and I went back to school in the afternoon.

I talked to my neighbor who was the son of Atwood McAndrew Sr., an undertaker whose father owned the Ypsilanti Savings and Loan, about the banks closing. He said that the losses were paper and where people had speculated. He explained his family had a private bank and anyone who had money in that bank could withdraw it and some did. He said that many people withdrew their money and took it home. A couple of days later, when they found that McAndrew was still in business, many came back and put it in his little bank once more. Again, it was called Ypsilanti Savings and Loan. During the course of those weeks things were extremely bad. The children in the elementary schools had savings programs put on by the banks. We'd bring our pennies in and put 'em in this little bank deposit thing and make a note in our little books that we had money in the bank.

***You can remember saving some of your money?***

Oh, absolutely...Ypsilanti Savings Bank.

***How much money did you save?***

I must have had fifty cents, something like that in it. About once a week or once a month, we would take a few pennies or whatever we had in our pocket and deposit it. Back in those days, if you had a penny you were rich. All that money was subsequently lost, although the banks did say that when they opened again that the children's savings would be returned. It never happened. We never got our money back and the bank never really reopened.

***What about your mother?***

My mother, fortunately, had a mother. Her mother and father lived in St. Clair, Michigan and my grandmother had money in a bank, a Canadian bank over in Sarnia. She told my mother that she could loan her three hundred dollars. If she could get up to St. Clair that she would be glad to take care of her ... in that amount of money. Of course that made my mother feel a whole lot better. So within a few days, not very many, we went up to Saint Clair and my grandmother gave her American money if you please. She said they exchanged it when they brought it over. So that took care of her immediate needs. There were four [children], my older brother, myself, my younger brother, Hilaire, and my baby sister, Gracie. Things were really bad at that particular point.

My father, [Edward Henry Cahours], was a lake captain and was away a lot of the time. He would leave home usually in April and wouldn't be back until December. My father worried about her being alone with a large family and [with the] other business interests that she looked after. We had what they called a flat upstairs. It was an apartment with a kitchen and a couple bedrooms nicely laid out all on the second floor. They used to rent it out occasionally. This one afternoon a lady by the name of 'Walters', who belonged to the Child Study Club in Ypsilanti [with] my mother, approached her and said that she'd just moved in from Iowa. She had four children and she wondered if she would rent her the flat. [My mother] said, "yes, I will." It turned out that her four children were nearly the same ages of our family, so we got a whole bunch of playmates ... they had a dog and so did we. Also, my grandmother was staying with us for health reasons for a few weeks and so was my Aunt Anne, who lost her job in Detroit. We had all those people living in this house. It must have been awful for the grown-ups, but it was hilarious to me. It was more fun. There were thirteen or fourteen people living in

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that house all at one time.

It was a lot of fun until 1936 when the Cross Street house came up for sale. One of the realtors approached my mother and wanted to know if she was interested. She said she was and she wanted to look at it. So she went up and looked at a house located at 965 West Cross Street, a very large, colonial home. Apparently, she'd saved up enough money so she bought the house. A few days later my father called her from somewhere in Northern Michigan, where he was loading stone, and she told him that she was able to buy this house. He was thrilled to death. He said, "We've needed a bigger house for the longest time." That's how we came to move to West Cross Street.

***How did your mother save all this money at the height of the depression?***

My father, as I said, was a lake captain. He didn't always work, [but] when he did work his pay was substantial. So as far as money was concerned it really wasn't a problem for my parents.

***So you never experienced any hunger during the depression?***

Oh no ... as I look back upon it we didn't have any pocket money to spend or anything like that, but we had good clothes, good shoes and did some nice things. One of the things that I clearly remember, back in 1933, we had a world's fair in Chicago, called a Century of Progress.

***You went to the World's Fair in Chicago?***

I went to the World's Fair ... I was playing with Atwood McAndrew one summer afternoon. He and his family were talking about going to the World's Fair. And it seemed that a man by the name of Floyd Smith, who was the principal of the Woodruff School for many years, was taking a group of Boy Scouts to the World's Fair. He had arranged a campground for us and that sounded pretty interesting. The scout

troop number was seven, I remember, an outstanding troop. We used to go to summer camp out on the Huron River and do some other things, but the World's Fair was absolutely wonderful.

***You went with your Boy Scout troop and you were staying at a campground?***

I was a Boy Scout, right. What happened is that several businessmen, one of whom was Charlie Delano, who was also a plumber, had time in his schedule to go with us. So four of us rode with him and several other cars, including Floyd Smith, made the journey over to Chicago.

***Was that the longest trip you had ever taken?***

The longest trip by car I've ever taken, right. We pitched our tents and got things ready. Then, after we'd settled down for the night, we had a campfire and some stories and some interesting things like that. Next morning we got up and made our first trip to the fair. That was an astonishing experience.

***What did you see?***

There were all kinds of stands, every fair has its own attractions. One of the things that we saw was an overhead tram, which was a very streamlined looking railway car that traveled on cables, maybe rails, up in the air about maybe fifty feet. It ran from one place to another, maybe a mile or so. Another exhibit they had was a brand new airplane produced by the Boeing Company, called a 7 - 247. It was a passenger plane that resembled a plane that was produced by Boeing later, which was known as the B-17. They had kind of similar designs, although the bomber was much larger. The 247 was a two-engine airplane that was very comfortable to ride in and became famous because it participated in a race from Great Britain down to South Africa. It didn't win the race, but the people that rode in the airplane were thrilled, because it was very comfortable and had a lot of modern

comfort features.

***Did you find the technology at the World's Fair fantastic? Had you ever seen anything like that before?***

Yes, the technology that we saw and even the railway engines, the locomotives, were streamlined. The inside of the steam engine wasn't a whole lot different than the old-fashioned engine, but it had sheet metal over the front and the back, so that really looked like it was very modernistic. Of course the railway cars were redone so that they resembled the Amtrak cars that we're seeing today. That was the condition of some of the railway items that we saw.

They also had some wonderful musical shows [in] the evening. We stayed over and visited a concert put on by the A & P grocery people. They had an orchestra called the "A & P Gypsies." They sang and played a lot of popular tunes of the day and had their own distinct, distinguished signature. That was a whole lot of fun.

***Where was the World's Fair being held?***

The World's Fair was on an island. I think subsequently it became a small airfield. It was a pretty good sized island, maybe a lot like Belle Isle. That was the location of the Century of Progress. It was quite an experience.

***How long were you there for?***

We were there for five days. Yep. That journey cost each of the players, the children that participated, like twenty-five dollars for that experience.

***Can you imagine?***

Well worth it! Oh wow!

***Do you remember anything else ... food?***

We had breakfast and supper at our camp, but at the fair we had to provide our own meals. We had all kinds of food there, like hot dogs and everything that kids like. So it was a whole



lot of fun. One of the other highlights at the fair was that I ran across our neighbors, a family by the name of Congdon. It was Mr. and Mrs. Howard Congdon. They owned a hardware store in Ypsilanti and I grew up with their son, Eugene. It's a small world and I was astonished to see this couple. The time finally came to return to Ypsilanti. We were all tired and needed a bath ... but it was well worth it.

***Do you remember any other trips that you took around that time?***

I had quite a few experiences, but some of the trips were just everyday affairs. Like every month or so we'd go up to the family farm. My family had a dairy farm up in St. Clair County. We had a caretaker to run the thing and he and his family ran the dairy farm. We worked it on shares. At the end of the year, whatever money we had was split between the families. Back in those days it was hard to find a job, so a lot of people that could farm went out and worked on this arrangement, which would divvy up at the end of the year and they would do whatever farm work they could so they had food and shelter from the farm and a little income. You'll have to remember that back in those days we were still in the depression. Although some of the banks did open, money was still scarce and very hard to get. A dime or a nickel was a lot of money. You could buy a quart of milk for a nickel or a dime, or a loaf of bread for a nickel. Unbelievable prices, but it was believable in the sense that if you didn't have it, you didn't buy it! A lot of parents back in those days made their own bread and there was a lot of canning and things like that to survive.

***Did your family do those things?***

Oh, sure they did. We canned. We had a garden.

***Did you raise any chickens?***

No, we had chickens up on the farm so we didn't have to worry about the chickens in Ypsilanti. We had lots of chickens up at the farm as well as

cows, horses and pigs. Now this was a dairy farm. We had eighteen milking cows. The way it worked was every several days a milk truck would come around and pick up huge five-gallon, stainless-steel cans of milk that we took from the cows two times a day. At the end of the month, they'd send you a check. For our family the checks used to run between five and six hundred dollars a month.

***Were you able to keep some of the milk for your own use?***

When we were up there we did, sure. We made buttermilk and cheese and all kinds of stuff.

***Your mother did this? Sure.***

***She made her own butter and cheese?***

Oh yeah. The thing you have to remember is that the women had survival skills back in those days that girls aren't equipped with today. Many women back in those days could make their own clothes. They could make clothing for their children. They could cook and wash and sew, and a lot of different things.

Something that's kind of noteworthy is that back around 1920 ladies got the right to vote. My aunts and my mother were talking about that one night after we'd gone to bed and, of course, kids eavesdrop on what real grown-ups have to say. That question arose before the time that the ladies could vote, how my grandmother felt about issues that were up for discussion or could be voted upon. She said, "Well, I just tell William the way I want him to vote and he just goes out and votes that way and that's how we do it!"

***William was her husband?***

Yes, he was my grandfather. Families had different ways of doing what they wanted to do. It was kind of interesting because many women, who wouldn't dream of smoking cigarettes, took up smoking. That was supposed to be the great thing to do. Ladies began to acquire automobiles. One of the first



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cars that I think my mother had was a Model-T Ford. It was called a "Flivver." That was the pet name for it. It was a Ford car, but the ladies called it a "Flivver." It was an interesting automobile. It had unusually good range. It could travel ninety miles without stopping. For example, we could go from Ypsilanti, Michigan to St. Clair, which was about ninety miles, over paved roads. It took us about three hours to make this journey.

***This was your family car?***

This was the family car. And then after the Model-T we had an Essex. An Essex was a brand produced by Hudson. We had a Nash, a car built in Kenosha, and then we had a couple of Hudsons after that.

***Because your father was away often throughout the year, your***

***mother was the person who had to be doing a lot of the driving and work?***

She did a lot of it. My older brother helped with the driving. He was four years older than I. Edward was born in 1916. He was very mature and very responsible and so he was really my mother's right-hand-man. If she wanted anything done that she didn't think she could handle by herself, she'd enlist his help.

***What sorts of things could she not do by herself?***

Well, I don't think she was crazy about traveling by herself. If she was going to go up to the farm or something, like most women, they want to take a couple of the kids along for support. That's like taking your army with you. So when Edward was around things

went well indeed. We spent a lot of time in the summertime in St. Clair because of the farm business.

***Do you remember spending any time in Detroit?***

Actually, the only time we went to Detroit was to visit my Aunt Marie and to go shopping. We used to shop at Hudson's and Himmelhoch's and some of the better stores.

***Can you tell me some of your memories of Detroit in those days?***

Detroit was a very good metropolitan city, nothing like it is today. There was lots of traffic and lots of automobiles. One of the things that was outstanding was the a street railway known as the D.S.R. Streetcars ran from downtown Detroit almost all the way out almost Wayne and north to some areas near

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Gordon Cahours finished his education at Eastern Michigan, taught school in Ypsilanti and Livonia, served as a school administrator in the Southgate Community School District and worked for a time for Ford Motor Company. He retired in 1980.

Pt. Huron. This transportation link was enhanced by the interurban line between Saline, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and the City of Detroit. The street railway that we had was called an "interurban." We could get on the interurban in downtown Ypsilanti and go many places. I can remember as a child, we'd catch the interurban and in one hour flat arrive at Hudson's Department Store.

#### ***How did that feel?***

It was fun. We picked up the interurban down at Michigan Avenue near the corner of South Huron and South Washington. It was that area right in there we picked up the streetcar, or the interurban as we called it. We often called it a streetcar, but it was actually the interurban. When we got on the interurban, we'd go down Michigan Avenue, down the hill, down past the car barns and some of the business that were down there, up the hill, past Prospect and on out on East Michigan Avenue. From that point on we really sped East to Wayne, Michigan, where we stopped and picked up freight or passengers. Moments later we were on our way again to the City of Detroit. Once down in Detroit you could go shopping or do whatever you wanted to do.

#### ***What did you do?***

What we wanted to do, really, was to go shopping. That was where a lot of people used to shop, not for groceries or things like that, but for things that weren't readily available in Ypsilanti. Besides, the prices were better in Detroit than they were in Ypsilanti.

#### ***What sorts of things would you buy?***

In Detroit we could buy specialty foods. Women would buy clothing because of the variety of styles and the dresses that they had. We went down to Hudson's and exchanged cars and went all the way to St. Clair, Michigan, which was quite a ride back in those days. It was a good one. Actually, it was faster than the car and a whole lot more comfortable. Back about 1928 or '29, with the coming of the motor bus the interurban couldn't make it financially anymore. It finally went out of business and we lost that link to Detroit. The Greyhound Bus Company pretty much took over the route. It wasn't nearly as good or as much fun as the train, but that's the way it happened.

#### ***Did you ever go to places like Belle Isle or any of the amusement parks?***

About once every two or three years we'd go to Belle Isle and have a picnic down there. That was an all-day experience. The other thing that we did was go to Royal Oak, where the Detroit Zoo is now and always has been. We got to see the zoo and that was quite an experience too.

#### ***What was the zoo like in the 30s?***

Pretty much like it is today, only now it's not as crowded. There was not the congestion and there weren't the businesses between cities that we have today. There were no strip malls or anything like that. It was pretty much farm land, but the roads were fairly good. We had a three-lane highway that connected Ypsilanti and Wayne. From Wayne we had a double high-

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way, one going east, one going west from Wayne all the way to Detroit. One of the ways that we used to go to St. Clair was to take Michigan Avenue and these great highways down to Telegraph, which was also a super highway, up to 8-mile Road and then over to Gratiot, which would take us all the way up to Port Huron.

***Do you remember seeing any of the Ford factories?***

Oh, many times. Back in the twenties and thirties my father had a ship with something called a "south unloader." It was a contraption that they put in the middle of the ship with a boom on it to unload buyer cargo like coal or stone or whatever the commodity was. The cargo was then taken it to the Rouge Plant and unloaded. The Ship carried about eight-thousand tons, a whole lot of stone or coal or whatever it was that Ford was buying at the time.

It's kind of interesting that many of the men back in those days used to smoke cigarettes and chew tobacco and things like that. You weren't allowed to smoke on Ford property, absolutely not! You couldn't smoke on the boats either. And if you wanted to haul the Ford coal or stone or whatever they needed, you had to turn out the smoking lights. It's amazing, but it was like that. It was the same way in the Ford plants. You couldn't smoke on Henry Ford's property.

***So you remember the docks and the waterfront?*** Oh, absolutely.

***What was that like?***

Well, the docks looked like any other coal dock or iron ore facility, lots of concrete and massive structures. Ford Motor Company had several ships. They had the 'Benson' and the 'Henry' and several other smaller vessels that they used to haul their own commodi-



Gordon married Virginia Blaha, an Ypsilanti girl, in 1945.

ties with. They also had mines up north in Northern Michigan. The Ford Motor Company was the biggest industry, I think, in America and back in those days it was owned by the Ford family. Henry Ford didn't trust the bankers in New York and for good reason. That's how it was with Ford Motor Company.

***Tell me a little a little bit about your father's [Edward Henry Cahours] activities. What did he transport?*** As I was saying, the Great Lakes' cargos principally were commodities. They transported millions and millions of tons of iron ore from Minnesota and Michigan to the lower lake ports at Toledo and Detroit, Buffalo, Conneaut, [OH], all these places. These were all receiving docks for iron ore. At one time there were three-hundred vessels doing this, so you can imagine the amount. They all carried about ten thousand tons a trip.

***And what did your father do?***

He was captain of one of those ships and he and his crew ran the ship from one port to another carrying these different cargos. It was like running a huge train, if you want to put it that way. It was like a huge freight train with a big locomotive on the front and a caboose on the back.

***Can you remember how long one trip would take?***

Absolutely, it took three and a half days to go to Duluth and three and a half days to come back again. We made a round-trip every week, that's if we could get more speed out of it. They were always after more speed, so we could get a quicker turnaround. If we could make it in six days, it meant you could make another trip a season and, of course, every time you took a trip they got a dollar a ton to transport the iron ore.

***And your father was able to do this all year?***

No, we did that from April until December. Then after the first of December the ice and the bad storms came. They closed down the Sault locks, so you couldn't get through anyway.

***He took you with him on some of these trips as a child?***

Oh yes, every year I got a trip.

***Can you remember how old you were the first time you went with him?***

I was young. I'd say probably about five years old. My older brother and I went with my dad and it was quite an experience. I was glad to get off at the end because it was boring. There was nothing that little kids could do. All you could do was look out the window. They wouldn't let you get too close to the side, because, little kids being what they are, it was not the safest place in the world to be sometimes. But my father wanted to be with his children and so that's the way it was arranged. We would be around this ship down at Detroit or Toledo or wherever this vessel happened to be, climb up this great big ladder and head for his quarters and that was our headquarters for the next week.

***What were his quarters like?***



Cramped. His living space was a whole deck. It probably was about thirty feet wide and about maybe twenty feet long and divided up into several rooms. He had an office area. He had an observation area, which was kind of a fancy room up in the bow with lots of windows, portholes in it, and fancy furniture and a bar and some things like that. Then he had his own bedroom and it had a stairway in his bedroom that went up to the pilot's quarters.

When I graduated from high school in 1938 things were very, very bad. The depression had really returned and there was no work for youngsters. I got a job running an elevator at what used to be the Huron Hotel. Then I attended Eastern Michigan University in the fall. At the end of the school year I wanted to do something else. I thought I wanted to be a marine pilot like my father so he arranged for me to get a job on an ore carrier. That didn't work out, so I got a job on a barge that carried coal between Toledo and Detroit. It was like working in a coal mine. You were always covered with coal dust. You had coal dust in your eyes and on your clothes. It was just a mess, but the food was good and the pay was pretty good. I think we got something like seventeen dollars a week, but you worked seven days a week to do it.

#### ***Where did that ship go?***

It ran between Cleveland and Detroit. Then we ran out of contract and I was able to find another job on an ore carrier. When it got to be near September, and it was time to go back to school, my father and mother decided that I should go to John Carroll University, which was a school that some people preferred located in Cleveland, Ohio. John Carroll University was quite a prominent Catholic school. I didn't know whether they wanted to get me out of Ypsilanti or what. I just wanted to be a marine pilot. I didn't really care much about school, but I enjoyed it once I got started.

#### ***So you moved to Cleveland in what year?***

This would be in 1939.

#### ***Do you remember Cleveland in 1939?***

Oh, absolutely. It was a lot like Detroit. It was a beautiful city in many ways. The downtown area had red-brick streets that were absolutely beautiful. They had lots of streetcars that took you all over the place. The main building was Terminal Tower, which was a skyscraper under which the trains from all over the nation converged with passengers. It was that kind of a place and that kind of a terminal. We didn't have airplane transportation in those days, so you would go by rail. John Carroll was a great place to be. I studied Spanish and a lot of sciences and I played in the orchestra – in the band.

#### ***How long did you live in Cleveland?***

I attended that school for two years.

#### ***What did you do to socialize while you were in college in Cleveland?***

The way that our society was set up, you were a stranger when you left home. Here I was with a whole bunch of other fellows about the same age. We were all assigned classes and we were all given activities, musical and otherwise. We attended movies downtown every once in a while. One of the things that I got into was music. One of my friends played in the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. He played the cornet.

One time after we had had an athletic game of some kind and we were still in our band uniforms, we stopped at a little beer joint near the university and had a couple of beers. And my friend says, "Well, I'm going to play at this burlesque place next Saturday night. They don't pay very well, they only pay a quarter an hour, but," he said, "it's a quarter!" And he says, "You're going to have two hours of work and maybe get something to eat." And he

said, "It's kind of fun. You're off to the bright lights and if you want to join me, why, come on down!" So we did that about two or three different times, playing in the orchestra pit in this theater. Of course we saw all the shows which was really kind of interesting because the burlesque shows in those days were a lot like Bob Hope used to put on on T.V. They'd have clowns that came out and they would tell stories that were really funny, but kind of off-color. Then they would always have their dancing girls. There was nothing else like it here in the States, but back in those days it was all entertainment, live entertainment. It was a lot like vaudeville. Vaudeville was a show like that, where they'd have dog acts. The dog would come in and march around on its hind feet and you'd have people that juggled and did things like that.

*(Eric Selzer has been an active volunteer in the YHS Archives since 2012.)*

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# Terror in Ypsilanti

BY YHS ARCHIVES STAFF

About three years ago our friend and volunteer George Ridenour recruited Gregory Fournier, author of the new book *Terror in Ypsilanti: John Norman Collins Unmasked*, who

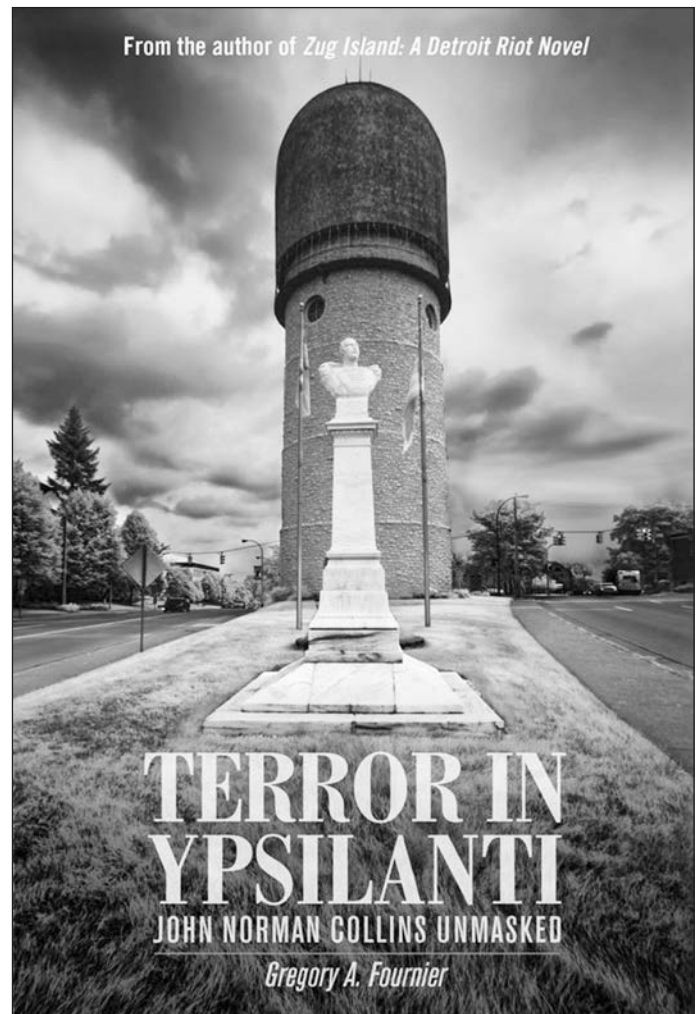
was in the archives on one of his many research visits, to become a member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society. Later, Fournier even acknowledged that Mr. Ridenour and the Graduate Assistant from Eastern Michigan University at the time, Deirdre Fortino, in the dedication as “...key to writing this book.”



Author Gregory Fournier has a bachelor's and master's degree in English Language from Eastern Michigan University and taught high school in Ypsilanti.

Gregory Fournier is a former resident of Ypsilanti, who completed both his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in English Language and Literature at Eastern Michigan University and taught at Ypsilanti High School. He gained fame through his first book, *Zug Island: A Detroit Riot Novel*, published in 2011. His newest book, *Terror in Ypsilanti*, is a true crime novel, which focuses on the details of the “Michigan Murders” involving John Norman Collins, the prime suspect in the murders of seven young women in the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor area in the summers of 1967 to 1969. This book is the first of its kind to focus on the real facts of the case in a straightforward and journalistic manner.

While the rest of the country was bombarded by the news of the “Helter Skelter” murders by the Manson Family in California's Hollywood Hills, John Norman Collins, a seemingly clean-cut and good looking student at Eastern Michigan University, was the main focus of a trial and investigation into the murders of seven women in the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area. Collins was tried and convicted for his last murder, that of Karen Sue Beineman, by Washtenaw County prosecutors in the early 1970's. At the initial time of Collins' trial and conviction, the other six murders were dismissed as cold cases. In later years, however, with developments in forensic investigation and analysis techniques, many of these murders were eventually attributed to him as well.



The new book on the Norman Collins murders authored by Gregory A. Fournier.

Mr. Fournier, who lived just a block from where Collins lived at the time of the Michigan murders, says that he “...strives to restore the lost history of these cases” through *Terror in Ypsilanti*, as many of the records have been thrown out over time due to the exhaustive nature of the multiple appeals by Collins' lawyers in the years after the initial trial. He also presents his collected evidence as a cautionary message that rings true for young people today, saying “... If something doesn't feel right about a person, trust your instincts. Don't place yourself in a compromised position and recognize danger before it's too late.” The staff at the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives agree with this cautionary note.

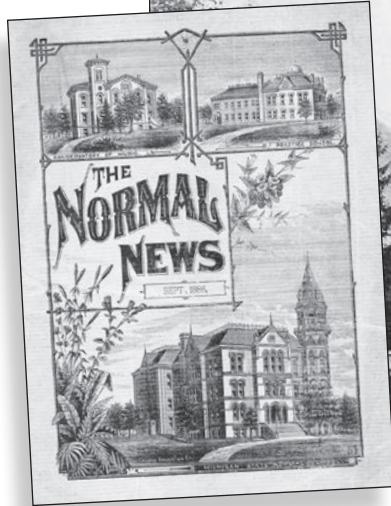
*Terror in Ypsilanti* can be purchased through Fournier's website ([gregoryfournier.com](http://gregoryfournier.com)) and through Wheatmar.com and Amazon.com, in paperback, as well as Kindle form.

(Gregory A. Fournier has a bachelor and master's degree in English Language and Literature from Eastern Michigan University and taught high school in Ypsilanti, Michigan and San Diego, California. For ten years, he also worked as an adjunct professor at Cuyamaca College in Rancho San Diego before retiring. His first writing effort was *Zug Island: A Detroit Riot Novel* published in 2011 by Wheatmark, Inc., which is now available in a newly revised 2nd edition.)

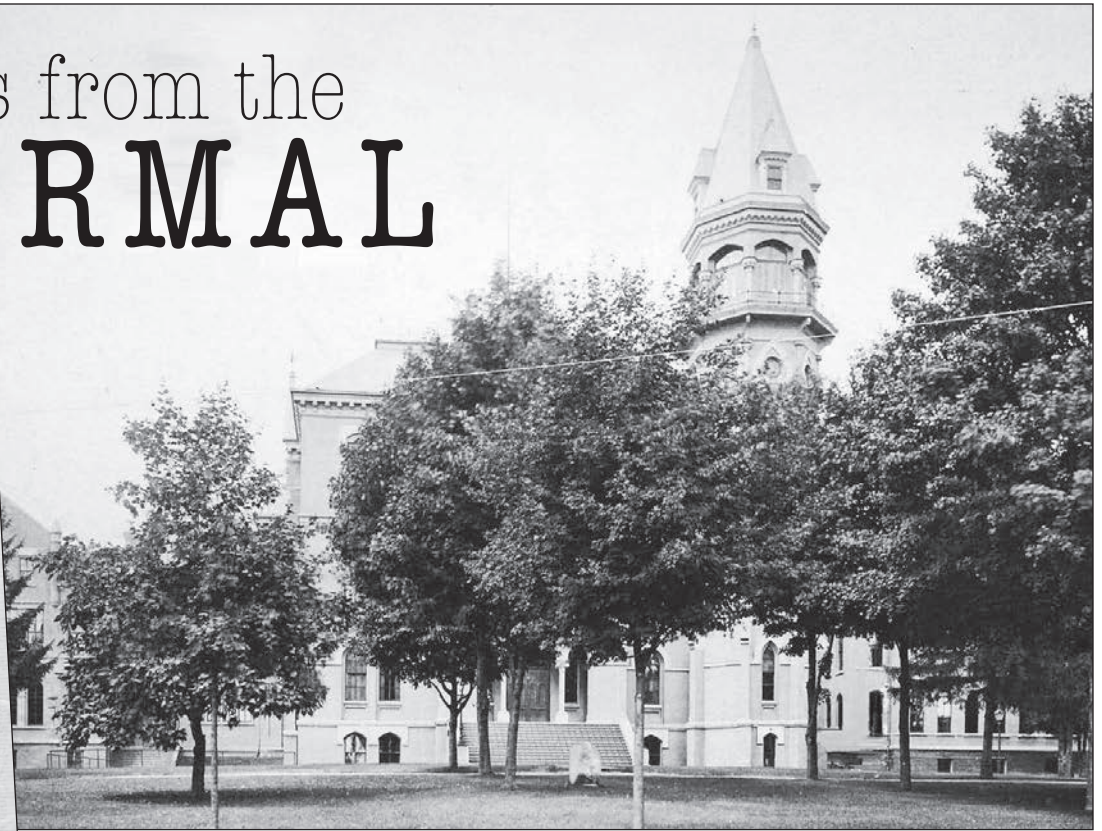


# Notes from the NORMAL

BY PEG PORTER



The Normal News from September, 1886.



The Michigan State Normal College in 1893.

One hundred years ago Ypsilanti was primarily a college town. There were businesses, including small manufacturing, but the preparation of teachers is where the town made its mark. Under the leadership of President Charles McKenny, Michigan State Normal College was flourishing both in terms of student enrollment and expansion of the campus.

The Normal published a College Yearbook each year. The Yearbook differed from what we typically think of yearbooks or annuals. This publication was available at the beginning of the school year. It contained numerous sections and usually exceeded 200 pages. Its contents covered general information such as the location and purpose of the college as well as curricula overviews, course descriptions, a listing of administrators, guidance for using the Library, rules and regulations for boarding houses (no dormitories then), student behavior and discipline, names of the most recent graduates with their degrees or certification and directories of students and faculty. The students were listed with their home town, the faculty with their home addresses.

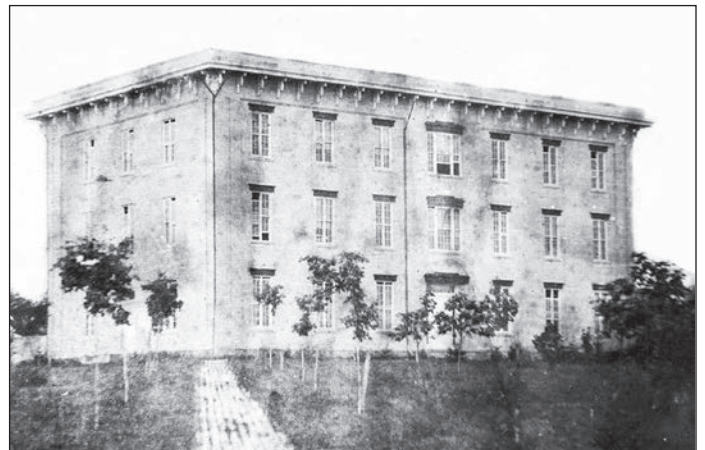
The Normal's annual, *The Aurora*, began publishing in the late 1800s. What follows are excerpts from the yearbook with occasional commentary by this author.

**Location:** "Ypsilanti is on the main line of the Michigan Central Railroad, over which it is readily accessible from all points on the various divisions of the Michigan Central system....The D. J. & C. electric line passes through the College

campus, giving communication *every hour* with Detroit, Ann Arbor, Jackson and intermediate points." *The electric line was popularly known as the Interurban.*

**Purpose:** "the purpose of the Normal School shall be the instruction of persons in the art of teaching...The institution stands for three essentials in the preparation of the teacher: (1) a high grade of scholarship; (2) the study of education as a science; and (3) practice in teaching under expert supervision and criticism."

**Student Welfare:** "The college authorities appreciate the solicitude which parents feel when they send their sons and daughters away from home to school and they also appre-

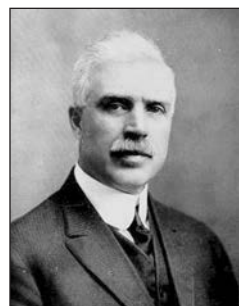


The original Michigan State Normal College building that burned on October 28, 1859.

ciate the great responsibility which a college assumes in the care and training of the young men and women who come to it. No subject is given more serious consideration by the faculty of the Normal College than the physical

and moral welfare of its students."

**Dean of Women:** "The welfare of the women students is looked after by the Dean of Women who takes a direct interest in all matters pertaining to their



Charles McKenny was President of Michigan State Normal College from 1912 to 1933.

school life." *The woman who occupied this position had a great deal of power and influence. Note: There is no Dean of Men. That would come later.*

### Rules Relative to Rooming and Boarding Places:

- The college keeps an approved list of rooming places. Students are not permitted to engage rooms at places not on the approved list.
- Students are not expected to change

their rooming places during term time without the permission of college authorities.

- Women students are not permitted to room at houses where there are men roomers (single or married) except by special permission...obtained through the Dean of Women.
- It is expected that not more than two students will occupy the same room.
- Students may expect the following accommodations: a. usual bedroom furniture; table, three chairs, waste basket, bookcase, closet space; b. change of bed linen every week; c. thorough cleaning of the room each week by the landlady unless the student agrees to care for her own room; d. Bath privileges; e. sufficient heat and suitable light for evening work.
- A room on the first floor suitable for receiving gentlemen callers should be accessible to women students....Under no circumstances can gentlemen callers be entertained in the rooms of women students.
- As a general rule, young women are not expected to receive gentlemen callers oftener than once a week.
- Social calls and social functions shall close so that young women may be in their homes at ten o'clock.
- Young women are expected to observe the rule of social propriety which they shall not go out of the city evenings, nor driving or canoeing evenings with young men, unless accompanied by persons approved by the Dean of Women.

Selected Course Offerings in Physical Education:

### For Men

**Football:** "A squad of 25 to 35 men is usually out for the college game, from which a team is selected for a few outside games. Effort is made to provide useful work for the men who do not wish to make the team or who are not yet able to attain it." Fall Term.



The Gymnasium at Michigan State Normal College located on Cross Street.

### For Women

**Physical Training:** "A course in Indian Club Swinging, Fancy Steps, and simple Folk Dancing. Two days each week are given to the playing of Basket Ball." Fall Term.

*Separate courses for men and women were not limited to Physical Education. For instance there was a basic Physics course for men and another for women.*

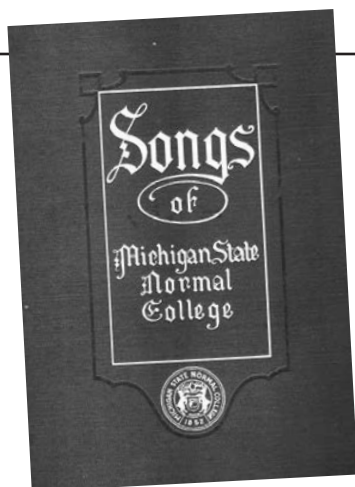
### Student Statistics for the Year 1913-1914:

**By County** - Most populous: Washtenaw (242) Wayne (127); Counties with 40 or more students: Houghton (45) Ingham (43) Jackson (43) Kent (43) Lenawee (48) Oakland (47); Counties with 20 to 40 students: Bay (24) Berrien (30) Eaton



May Day on the Green at Michigan State Normal College.





The Michigan State Normal College songbook includes the following songs: Alma Mater, Now Floats Our Banner, Field Song, Victory, M.S.N.C. We Sing of Thee, Michigan – My Michigan, Alumni Song, Normal College Hymn, The Hills of Washtenaw, Hail to Alma Mater, Green and White, Regalis Regina, Ypsi – To Thee, Dear Old M.N.C., College Days, March – March, Ypsi – My Ypsi, Ypsi Will Shine Tonight, Hand Me Down My Bonnet, Normal Days, Men's Union Banquet Song, Integer Vitae, League of Memories, America the Beautiful, Ivy Day Song, By the Light of the Moon, Funiculi – Funiculi Ypsi, Ypsi Boosters, Ypsi All The Time, Where – Oh Where, M.N.C. Fight Song, Fight! Ypsi! Fight!, Fighting M.S.N.C., Class Song of 1888, Stars of the Summer Night, Love's Old Sweet Song, There's Music In The Air, Long – Long Ago, Santa Lucia, Silent Night, Battle Hymn of the Republic, The Star Spangled Banner and America. The songbook was dedicated to the President of the College, Charles McKenny.

(31) Hillsdale (25) Ionia (26) Macomb (31) Muskegon (20) Ottawa (21) Sanilac (25) Shiawassee (24) Tuscola (22). Consider this information in context with the location/transportation discussion at the beginning of this article.

**Students from Other States** - Ohio (52) Indiana (13) Illinois (6) Minnesota (6) New York (5) Pennsylvania (5) Arkansas (2) Wisconsin (2), and 1 each from Arizona, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia.

**Canada** - Ontario (1).

One of the most obvious differences from today's campus life is the treatment of female students. Young women were subject to rules and restrictions not applied to young men. The college officials took seriously the notion that they were substitute parents or *in loco parentis*. Over the next decade, however, the treatment of women would begin to change. More women entered the workforce during World War 1.

In 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment, women gained the right to vote. Women's clothing became less constrictive and skirts got shorter. Change came slowly, though. Young



Students from Michigan State Normal College Canoeing on the Huron River



Members of a fraternity at Michigan State Normal College.



Members of a sorority at Michigan State Normal College.

females entering teaching were expected to be single triggering a rash of "secret marriages." This practice was still common in the mid century.

On a more positive note, MSNC fac-

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Ypsilanti Animal Clinic

ulty were an impressive group. The college was highly rated in teacher preparation. Students were active in clubs, sororities and fraternities. There was a sense of tradition and pride. It was a good place to be.

(Peg Porter is the Assistant Editor of the Gleanings and regularly contributes articles for publication. She is currently working on historical fiction for young girls set in Ypsilanti. It was in doing research for this project that she discovered the Yearbooks.)

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