

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



WINTER 2020



Helen Walker McAndrew First Woman Doctor in Washtenaw County

BY WILLIAM MCANDREW

(This article was written in 1931 by Helen McAndrew's son William and was published by the Ypsilanti Business and Professional Women's Club to pay tribute to Dr. Helen McAndrew.)

Helen Walker, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Boyd Walker, was born February 6, 1826, at Kirkintilloch, Scotland. She married William McAndrew in 1849 and they immediately moved to America and eventually arrived in Ypsilanti in 1850. She graduated from the Traill Institute in New York in 1855 and returned to Ypsilanti where she became the first woman doctor in Washtenaw County.

O'Henry once told an interviewer that you can change the name of any place in any good story to any other place and have the narrative just as true, which means that Ypsilanti is just as full of romance, heroism, surprise and wonder as any other settlement of its size; just as many heartbreaks, just as many smiles, just as honest men, just as noble women. This is the story of two Ypsilantians.

In the shifting time of 1849 a young cabinetmaker who had moved from Perth to Glasgow met, at the frequent gatherings of a little church, a girl who had come up from Paisley to work in a bookbinding shop. After the usual time that elapses before Scottish people reach an important decision, the minister announced that William

McAndrew and Helen Walker were to be married and go to America on their honeymoon. In due time they added up their shillings. William packed his tool chest and Helen packed the Burns, Bunyan, Shakespeare and big Bible she had bound for herself.

Fergus Ferguson married them, and they climbed into the steerage of a sailing vessel that gave them a wedding trip of eleven weeks from the Clyde to Sandy Hook. At Castle Garden a genial stranger with a fine Scottish burr in his voice welcomed the young couple to the land of the free and offered to show William a lodging-house. Generously, shouldering the new arrival's

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The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is a museum of local history which is presented as an 1860 home. The Museum and Rudisill & 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.

DURING THE PANDEMIC CLOSURE

Ypsilanti history and genealogy research requests and museum donations continue to be welcomed at:

archives.yhs@gmail.com

or 734-217-8236

www.ypsihistory.org

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From the **PRESIDENT'S DESK**

BY BILL NICKELS

To close out fall, we hired students from Eastern Michigan University's University Christian Fellowship to rake and bag our leaves that bury our grass every year. They completed the job using 55 yard-waste bags! It was a feel good experience to help the students as they helped us. We are ready for snow!



Students from Eastern Michigan University's University Christian Fellowship program were hired to rake and bag our leaves.

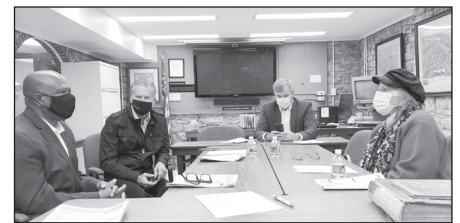
Even though COVID has closed our Museum and Archives to the public, Ypsilanti history and genealogy research requests continue to be welcomed at archives.yhs@gmail.com or 734-217-8236. Inquiries regarding museum donations can be directed using the same contacts.

Our Board of Trustees continues to meet monthly using Zoom. Expecting to receive the Joe Lawrence Memorial Fund money so it will accrue earnings in a year or so (we are restricted to using earnings), a Building Maintenance Committee was appointed composed of Jerry Jennings, Al Rudisill, Daneen Zurich, and myself. Jerry prepared a priority schedule listing maintenance projects in order of importance. We will start with some small affordable projects in early 2021.

We were also recently contacted by the Toledo Spirit Hunters. They are interested in visiting our museum on a Saturday night between 8:30 PM and 1 AM with their paranormal team. To start, they requested to record an interview focused on the history of our museum. Such an interview with help them direct their paranormal search within the museum. With other similar venues, their interviews and

searches are planned to be part of a Netflix series. We view their visit as an opportunity to air our local history to a national audience. Their visit will likely be some time in 2021.

Long-time Ypsilanti's Michigan House of Representatives member Kirk Profit contacted me recently. Having grown up in our diverse Ypsilanti, he asked if and how the Ypsilanti Historical Society could tell Ypsilanti's African-American History. I suggested we use our *Gleanings* publication to host articles from Ypsilanti's African-American citizens telling their Ypsilanti experiences. Kirk welcomed the idea and volunteered to link Ypsilanti African-American citizens with ghost writers from Eastern Michigan University, together coached by an Ypsilanti Historical Society representative. On Monday November 9th, Kirk, Michigan House of Representative member Ronnie Peterson, Ypsilanti Mayor Lois Richardson, and I met to get started. YHS Vice-President Al Rudisill will help guide the project. Board of Trustee member Rick Katon has thoughts about expanding the project.



Representative Ronnie Peterson, Kirk Profit, a staff person and Mayor Lois Richardson discussing a project related to Black history in Ypsilanti.

We are now experiencing winter and the holiday season in the midst of a pandemic. This is an entirely new and difficult experience. A photographic and/or a written description of how COVID is affecting you and your family this winter will be welcomed by our Archives. Send them to the Archives by USPS (220 N Huron, Ypsilanti 48197) or by email (archives.yhs@gmail.com). When the pandemic is over, the future will want to use what is submitted to learn about our experiences. Stay safe.

chest of tools, he disappeared in the crowd and the immigrants never saw him nor his burden more. Perth Amboy, at the head of Raritan Bay, was on the mainland, much nearer the ocean and had a railway, the first one in America. Perth Amboy would be the metropolis of the United States. So, hope for the Raritan and the big city-to-be.

But one must eat. While Perth Amboyans are sitting on their corner lots waiting for the ships of the world to sail into their harbor, certain Cornelius Vanderbilts, William B. Astors, Peter Coopers and A. T. Stewards, not knowing the great destiny of Perth Amboy, are doing business at the old stand at the upper end of the harbor and getting all the trade. Grass is growing in the streets of Perth Amboy. The McAndrews must try elsewhere. Baltimore looks promising. But here they get themselves into trouble teaching Negroes to read. The neighbors don't like it. It is not respectable. Friends fall away. Better try some other place.

Out of Baltimore every morning a long white packet-boat is towed by a steamer up the Chesapeake Bay and gets itself somehow or other into the wonderful west. As soon as the passage money is saved the two adventurers are aboard. At Havre-de-Grace, their smoky tugboat turns them over to a trio of mules driven tandem; the leader has a loop of bells springing over his collar. The lock-gates are opened and in goes our long white boat into a stone box.

We float up on foaming, gurgling masses of water, until the upper gates are opened; the mule-boy shouts, the bells tinkle, the rope stiffens, and away we go through the long curves of the canal. Blue hills on both sides and, for a neighbor, the rippling Susquehanna, all the way to Harrisburg. Then our watery road winds among the mountainous hills along the blue Juniata. Day after day we sit upon the yellow deck and watch the landscape unfold a great book, each page showing a new and charming picture: farms, factories, bridges, villages, cascades galloping down the mountains, charcoal-kilns reddening the cliffs at night, until at last there are no more streams that may be tapped to float a boat.

We are at the very heart of the Alleghanies. But wonders have not yet ceased. A huge cradle rides down the mountain on an iron track and dangling on the end of a rope. It slides under the canal-boat. Ropes are made fast to the upright stakes protruding from the water. A man waves his arms toward an engine-house up the mountain. Out of her element crawls our great boat with all its company, and, like that tropic fish that climes up trees, the packet ascends the mountain. This is Portage, then counted one of the wonders of the world, now

an inconspicuous station four miles south of the Horseshoe Bend on the Pennsylvania railroad. Over the summit the boat advances and then, head foremost, down the western slope. There is a reservoir made by a dam of



William McAndrew was born in Perth, Scotland in 1824 and moved to Ypsilanti with his wife, Helen, in 1850. William was a cabinet maker and in 1853 and 1854 built the octagon house at 105 South Huron Street almost entirely by himself.



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earth across a valley and holding water for the upper reaches of this canal in time of drought. It is a pretty lake. The passengers admire it. Yet forty years later, long after this canal had gone to ruin, this lovely mountain pool, neglected, was to break bounds and visit Johnstown with death and terror.

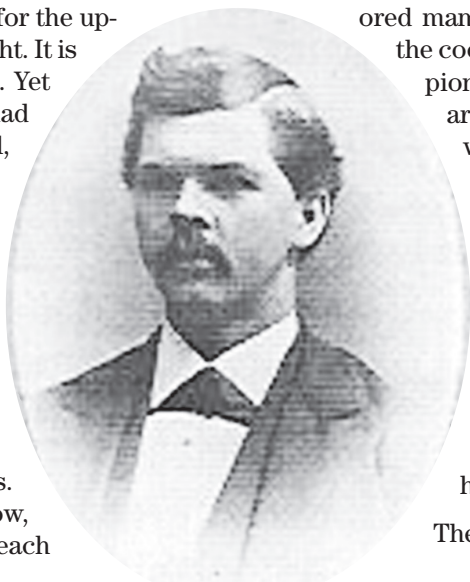
Into Pittsburgh, down the Ohio, then by another canal to Cleveland and so by side-wheel steamer to Detroit the travelers came. They heard of another promising settlement, destined to surpass the City of the Straits. Its name was Rawsonville. It had a piano factory, woolen mills, flour mills, stores, hotels. The river boats from Detroit, long narrow, flat-bottomed scows with a slim walk each side down which the polemen alternately glided, slowly pushing the vessel upstream, brought merchandise up and carried back the products of the region. Here William McAndrew settled and plied his trade, constructing piano and melodeon cases from the native walnut and cherry of the valley.

Last move of all, in 1850, they came up the river to the first station on the post-road west of Detroit, where the coaches rolled up in the evening in front of the long white Hawkins house for hot supper and a night's lodging.

To the life of Ypsilanti for half a century the two McAndrews contributed according to their dispositions. William had acquired a religion of peculiar cast. It magnified the mysticism of Daniel the Prophet, stressed the wheels within wheels, the flying scrolls, the prophecies of an early coming of the Lord. Not finding satisfaction in existing churches, the cabinetmaker turned carpenter and built one on the ground level northeast of town. Here he was preacher, choir and sexton; his congregation, two families besides his own. Convinced of an early dissolution of the world, he saw no need of laying up treasures on earth. What he earned he turned over to a religious society appearing to him nearest in sympathy with his own belief. Ambition, worldly success, the opportunities of a growing state he sets himself steadfastly against yet rises before the sun and works his fourteen daily hours in summer, twelve in winter, year in and year out, setting forward from time to time.

But the little wife saw different visions. She inhaled the spirit of the new land. There was employment for everybody. She found she had a talent for nursing. She could hire her own housework done and have money over from what she earned.

Why not become a physician? There was no school of medicine west of New York that would admit a woman. A col-



Thomas was the first son of Helen and William McAndrew and was born in Ypsilanti in 1852. Thomas followed in his father's inclination and entered the furniture business. The Mack and Mack furniture store was a landmark in downtown Ypsilanti for many years.

ored mammy is secured as housekeeper. Helping the cook on the steamer and Erie canal boat, the pioneer woman reaches the metropolis and argues the college into taking her in. She works at her bookbinding trade for her board.

In time she grasps the coveted diploma and with a few medical books returns to the growing town, a doctor. But who ever heard of a woman doctor? It isn't nice; it isn't respectable. The men physicians turn up their noses. The town doesn't think it likes this sort of thing. Only Negroes and poor whites come into her office.

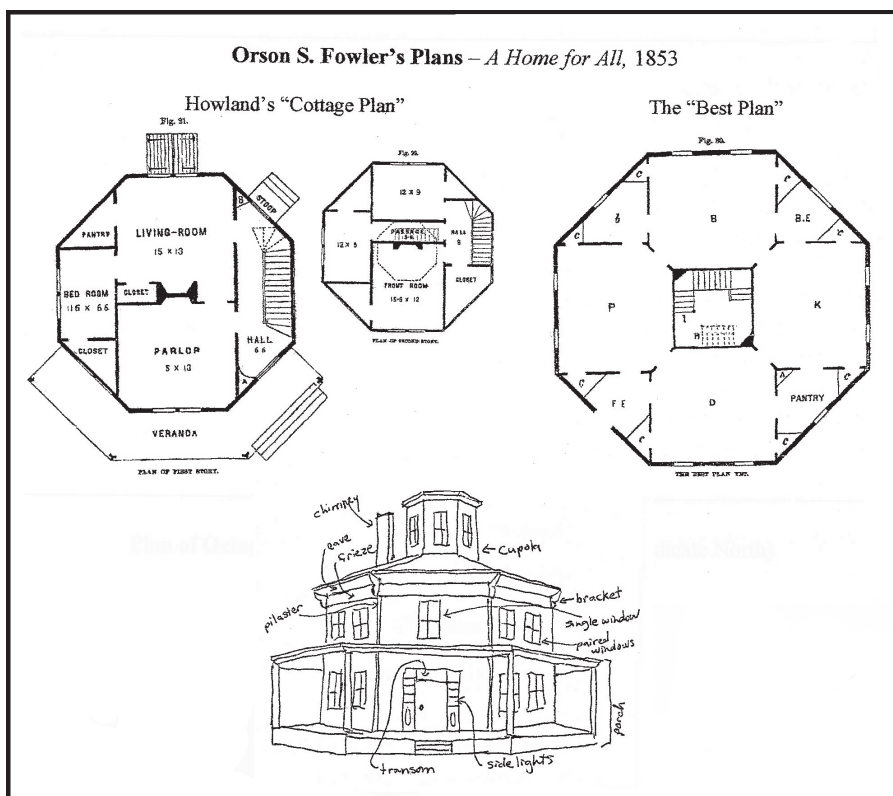
Then comes the turn. The big man of the town has had a long siege of illness in his home. The gentle lady of the household doesn't get any better. He has the "highbrows" from Ann Arbor come and hold learned consultations by the quiet sufferer's bedside. The judgement is unfavorable. The big man walks sadly in the garden. The gardener comes to him. "Samuel, ye might try the little Scotch woman; she pulled my Jinny through fine." The big man chances it. The little woman is called. She opens all the windows. She empties the bottles of bitter drugs into the drain. She cooks plain and tasty dishes. She moves the bed so as to permit a view down the green lawn and the shady street. She keeps repeating, "How much brighter you look, little lady! If you keep on like this you'll be lifting full flour barrels soon." The sick lady at length got up and lived for many years thereafter. And the big man of the town, Samuel Post, flouted the traditions and prejudices of those who had belittled the woman doctor. "She knows what she is about," he said, "She's a very superior woman. There's no nonsense about her, she knows the laws of health and she works along with them." He sang her praises to the Uhls, the Folletts, the Kings and the Lays. She was in confinement cases. Whatever men and women born in Ypsilanti are now between forty-five and sixty-five the chances are more than ever that Helen McAndrew first held them in her hands and gave them their first baths.

She was a water enthusiast. She built a water cure on Huron street and a swimming-bath in the river. She put in vapor baths, shower baths, mineral baths, sitz baths and preached a new gospel of scrubbing the mind clean of all meanness, selfishness, greed, conceit, intolerance and sin — outside and inside washing.

The McAndrew couple were forever in the salvage movements of the day. First it was the abolition of Negro slavery. William McAndrew helped hide the runaway Negroes in barns and drove them in wagons at night, covered with



The Octagon house that William McAndrew built in 1853-54 at 105 South Huron Street in Ypsilanti.



Orson S. Fowler's house plans for the house that William McAndrew built in 1853-54.

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loose hay, to the outskirts of Trenton, where rowboats ferried them to Canada.

Next the McAndrews entered heart and soul into the war on the liquor saloon. They ran an afternoon temperance Sunday school in a barn on the flats, not far from the present pumping station of the city water-works. They had the best part of the membership of the Normal school working in the barn and in Hewitt hall, where dramatic representations every fortnight gave entertainment and hammered home the lessons. They organized a juvenile temperance society, the Band of Hope, and held the children together by means of picnics, festivals and shows.

Into the woman suffrage movement both of them went with energy. Susan B. Anthony, Frances Willard, Mary Livermore and Lillie Devereux Blake came by their invitation to lecture and stopped at their home.

Into the Salvation Army they went when that elaboration of Christianity reached town. They marched the streets in their old age with the same grim determination to back up some despised reform that they had shown for abolition when it wasn't respectable, for women doctors when they were despised, for temperance when it was unpopular, for woman suffrage when it was ridiculous.

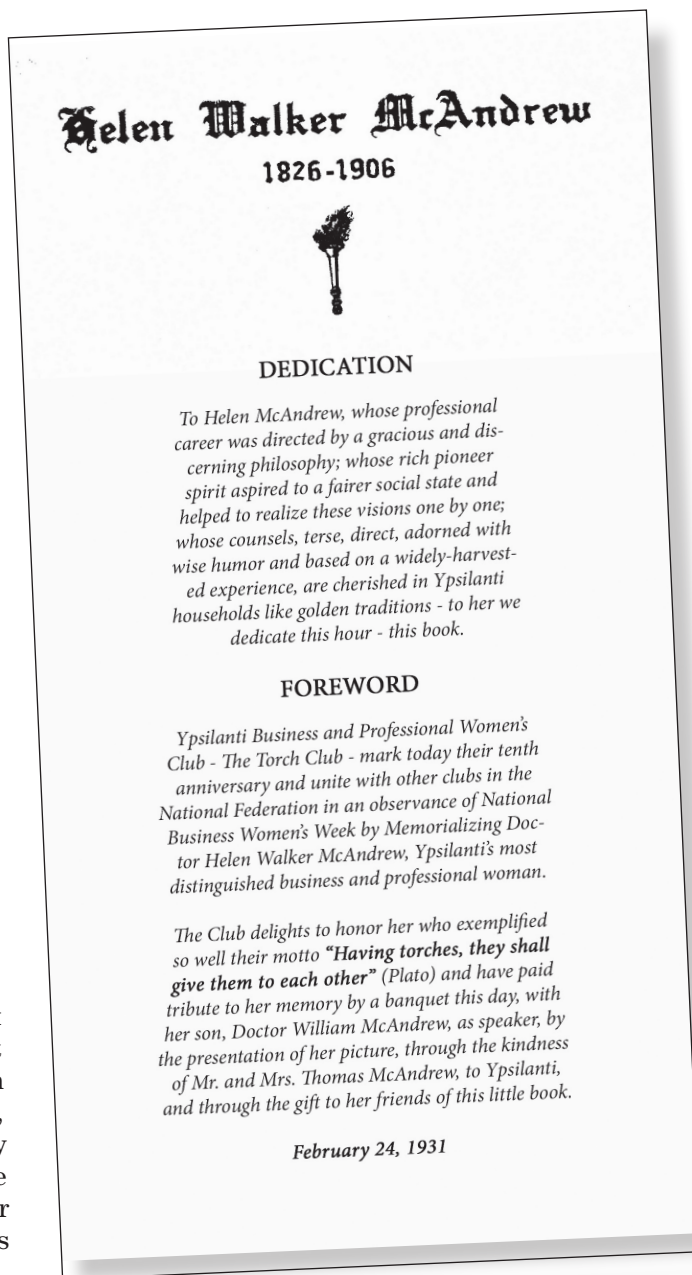
Indeed they charged themselves to obey some call of some power greater than themselves to lift up the downtrodden, to heal the sick, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to those that are bound.

Withal they were a quiet pair. No one ever knew of their

either pushing for high place or for notice. William McAndrew always wrote "I" as a small letter and when he was told that it was incorrect replied, "It is not incorrect for me." Both spoke in public when called upon, but you never heard them talk

of themselves. Their addresses were full of anecdote, short and to the point. They were constant readers throughout their lives, devouring history, travel, religious periodicals, current magazines and newspapers. William McAndrew, when going to fairs or expositions, wore an odd dressing-gown because the pockets generously held all the circulars given away by exhibitors and enabled him at home to extend for many evenings the pleasure of the show. Helen McAndrew held that mental exercise was as essential for the health of the intelligence as bodily exertion is needful for the physical tone. She used to carry about a small mental arithmetic and propose its problems to herself for exercise. William McAndrew was fond of old tunes, but as no one else seemed to enjoy them he would retire to his room and sing several pages through at a sitting. If visitors would say, "What is that family noise?" Mrs. McAndrews would answer, "Oh, that is William giving himself a concert." He had the habit of work so ingrained that once when he visited a former employee at Portage Lake, doing nothing for three hours so bored him that he said he guessed it was time to go home. His host couldn't take him to Dexter to catch a train until the next noon. In the morning McAndrew walked over

to a neighbor's new barn. Help was needed to finish it. He borrowed a suit of overalls, worked morning, afternoon and evening for two weeks, took his pay, paid his board at his host's, came home, and ever afterward revived memories of the best visit he ever had.



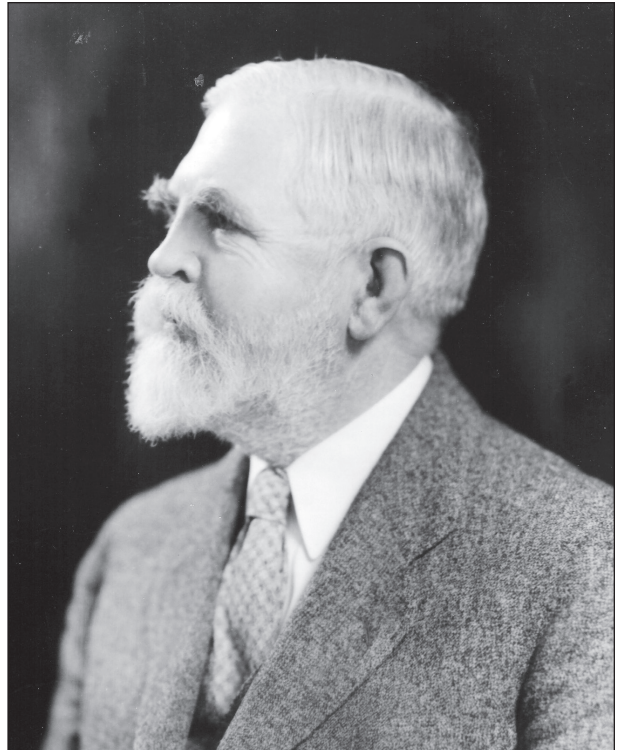
The Dedication and Forward from the book published on February 24, 1931, the day the "Ypsilanti Business and Professional Women's Club" honored Dr. Helen McAndrew's contributions to society.

Both had singular courage. None of their acquaintances recall ever seeing either of them exhibit any trace of fear or nervousness on any occasion. She responded to calls, as a doctor, at all hours of the night, driving alone sometimes twenty miles. She led committees of women to town officials and laid down the law like a political boss, and yet she was a quiet, modest woman, with a genius for friendship, loving nothing so much as a chat and cup of tea before the fire.

Both loved Ypsilanti and its people as nothing else in the world. They were especially fond of the approach from the East up to the edge of the slope, from which one looks over the trees and the roofs of the houses and the gleam of the river to the western rim of the valley and the great school on the hilltop, a lighthouse for all Michigan and beyond.

William McAndrew passed away October 22, 1895. Helen McAndrew survived him by eleven years, her death occurring October 26, 1906.

(William McAndrew, second son of Helen and William McAndrew, was born on August 20, 1863. After graduating from Ypsilanti High School, the Normal and the University of Michigan, where he received his Ph.D., he began his career as an educator. He spent 30 years in New York as a teacher and principal and then moved to Chicago where he served as a school principal for many years.)



William was the second son of Helen and William McAndrew and was born in Ypsilanti in 1863. He spent his life as an educator.



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Charles Kettles had the photo of Byron Cutcheon enlarged and framed with a Medal of Honor and it is now displayed in our Civil War exhibit.



The Charles Kettles Medal of Honor display in the YHS Museum.

Ypsilanti's Two Medal of Honor Recipients

BY BILL NICKELS

The Medal of Honor is the United States' highest and most prestigious personal military decoration that is awarded to recognize U.S. military service members who have distinguished themselves conspicuously by gallantry at the risk of their life above and beyond the call of duty. According to a Google search, 3,473 Medal of Honors have been awarded since the beginning in 1861. According to another Google search, there are 4,727 cities in the United States with a population of 5,000 or more – that means, on the average, each American city has received less than a whole Medal of Honor. Ypsilanti has two Medal of Honor recipients!

Charles Kettles is Ypsilanti's most recent Medal of Honor recipient. It is pretty well known that, on May 15, 1967, Charles disobeyed an order by returning to a battle zone to pick up eight abandoned soldiers. Knowing the eight soldiers would overload his helicopter, he refused to leave before all were aboard. Under heavy enemy fire, he found it necessary to bounce his helicopter down a valley floor to gain enough momentum to fly back to base. On July 18, 2016, thirty-nine years later, Charles received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama for his demonstrated gallantry.

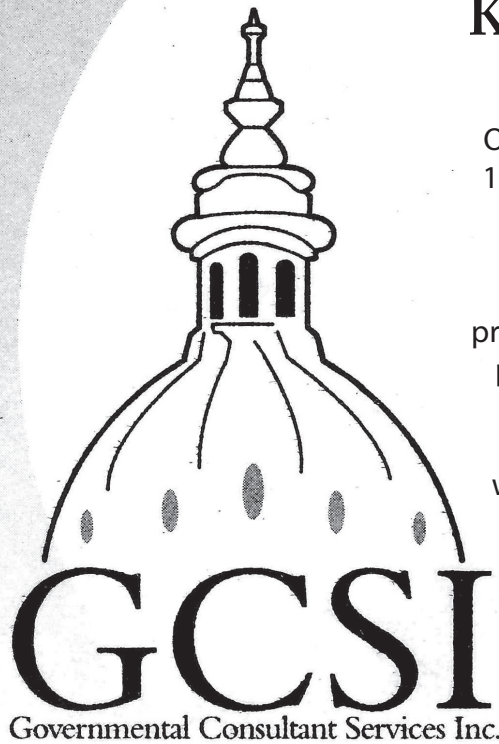
Charles donated his uniform and additional memorabilia for an exhibit in our museum. Knowing about Byron Cutcheon, a Civil War Ypsilanti Medal of Honor recipient,

Charles volunteered to have a small Byron Cutcheon photo enlarged and framed with a Medal of Honor. This framed picture became the centerpiece of our Civil War exhibit.

Byron Cutcheon's valor during the Civil War is not well known. On May 10, 1863, a skirmish developed on the banks of the Cumberland River near Jamestown, Kentucky. A numerically superior Confederate force opposed the 20th Michigan and Major Cutcheon. Major Cutcheon was ordered to take half of the 20th Michigan and push the rebel forces out from a position at an old farm house less than a mile away. Things went badly for Major Cutcheon and his men. Recognizing the situation, Lieutenant Colonel William Green decided to move the remainder of the 20th Michigan to support Major Cutcheon. In so doing, Lieutenant Colonel Green was mortally wounded. Finding himself at the head of the 20th Michigan, Cutcheon led a fierce counterattack against the Rebels dislodging them from the old farm house. The event is known as the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. On June 29, 1891, twenty-eight years later, Byron Cutcheon received the Medal of Honor for his demonstrated gallantry during President Benjamin Harrison's term as president.

The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is honored to display Ypsilanti's two Medal of Honor recipients.

(Bill Nickels is the President of the Ypsilanti Historical Society.)



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Museum Board Report

BY JAMES CURRAN

The Holiday decorations will be limited to lighted candles inside and wreaths with ribbons outside facing Huron Street. We are using new battery timed candles that operate for 8 hours beginning at 4 pm and are off for 16 hours.

As was mentioned in the last issue, the mannequins in the museum are dressed warmly and keeping a safe distance from each other throughout the museum.

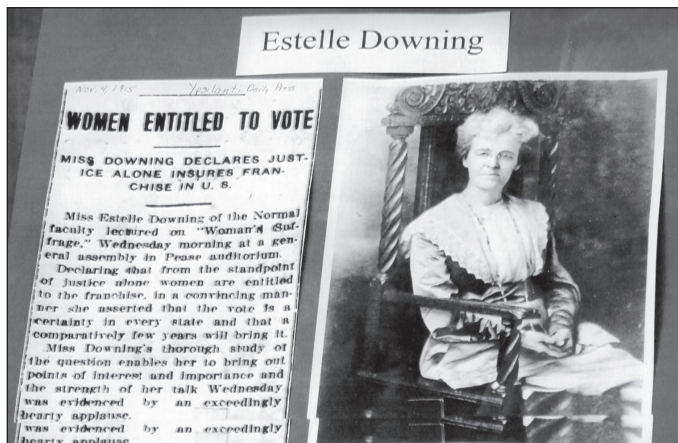
The Women Suffrage exhibit will remain on hold until it is safe to open the museum.

Marcia McCrary, our resident scholar on the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage (2020), has worked on setting up the displays with her team. Please note our collection with photos of articles, banner on the mannequin and a 48 star flag that would have been flown 100 years ago. This exhibit is in the Joe Lawrence Family Room and will stay in place, even after we reopen. Please plan on coming in to see the exhibit.

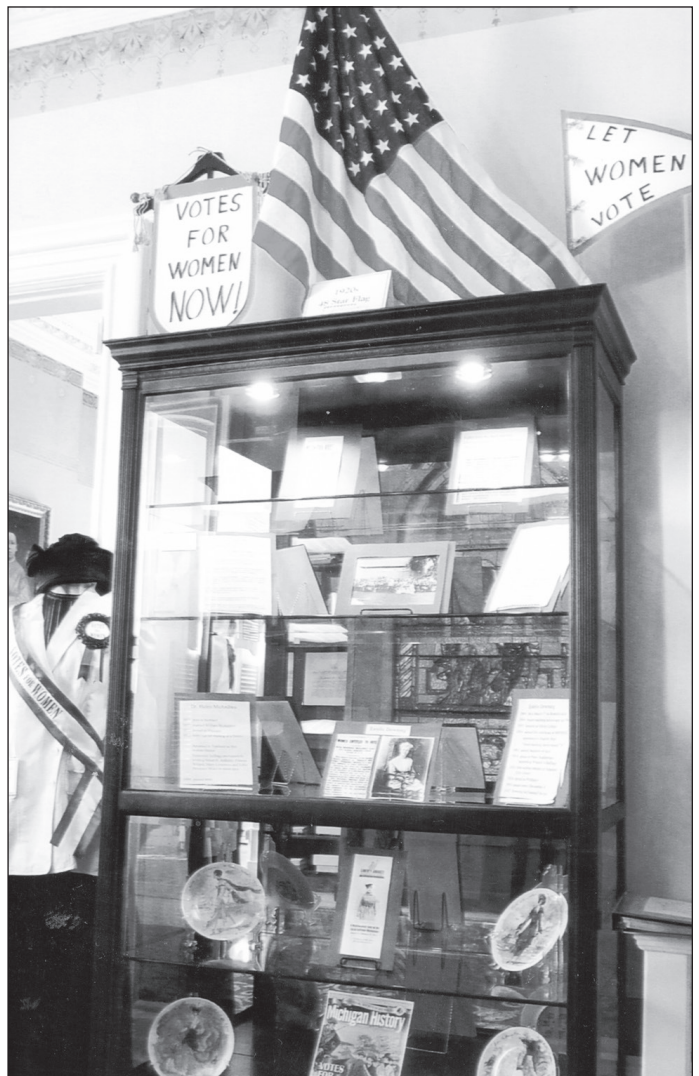
Also, when you come for the tour of the Women's Suffrage exhibit, plan on visiting the "Ypsilanti Room" (the adjoining room to the East) with our many local black heroes. We have the "Real McCoy" along with the story of how this device helped win the Civil War for the North. Don't be surprised that the portrait of the well dressed black-man framed on the top shelf, is a graduate of The University

of Edinburgh in Scotland and he is the Real Elijah McCoy inventor Himself! The Museum Archives in the lower level has lots more information.

Additionally, we have material regarding A. P. (Albert Prince) Marshall who came to Ypsilanti as the director of Eastern Michigan University library in 1969 and also served at the same time as Dean of Academic Services, plus teaching a class in black history. Marshall retired from EMU in 1982. During his time at EMU he wrote many articles and books. One of these books he wrote was entitled "*The Real McCoy*" and we have a copy in the Museum. A.P. Marshall, while here in Ypsilanti, did extensive research on African-American history and was involved with many community organizations including the Ypsilanti-Willow Run branch of the NAACP and the Brown Chapel. When he left Ypsilanti he turned all his historic collection over to the YHS Archives.



Estelle Downing, a member of the Normal School faculty provided leadership in the Women's Suffrage movement.



Women Suffrage display in the Lawrence Family Library room.

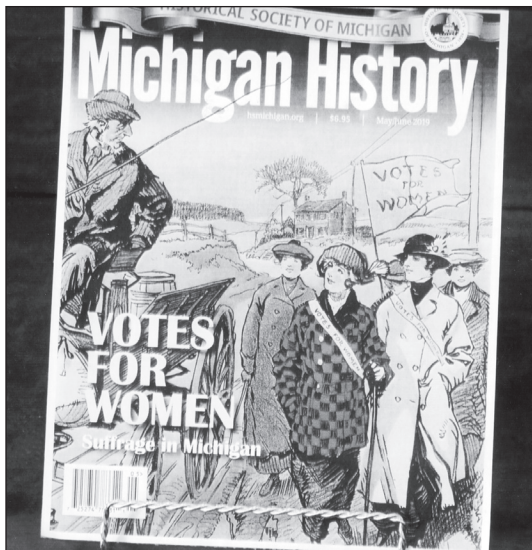
Another honorable man that grew-up and lived in Ypsilanti was George Goodman who was head of the Michigan Municipal League and served as the Mayor of Ypsilanti from 1972 thru 1989. The Goodman family spans many years in Ypsilanti. George cannot be mentioned without including his wife Judith, together they sponsored a scholarship program and student grants. Today they still have a home in Michigan on Mackinaw Island and a winter place in Arizona.

President Dr. John W. Porter served as EMU president from 1979 thru 1982. During his tenure as president at EMU he made a significant number of achievements including the establishment of the College of Technology and the construction of the College of Business in downtown Ypsilanti.

Dr. Porter, after retiring from Eastern Michigan University, served as Superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools. Jack Minzey wrote an article for Gleanings that was published in the Winter 2016 issue. You can access Gleanings issues on the YHS website at YpsiHistory.org.

The Ypsilanti Historical Society has much more information to share about these gentlemen plus others. Please check out our web site.

Additions to the Museum Advisory Board: Molly Wright, sometimes known as the "plant lady" will become active on the Board as well as care for the plants; and Evan Milan, who has been serving as a docent will be adding new energy to the board. Thank you both for all you've done.



The Women's Suffrage display contains a number of early publications.



The Women's Suffrage display will remain displayed until the Museum opens again to the public.



Many other local and area museums have featured displays on the history of Women's Suffrage movement.

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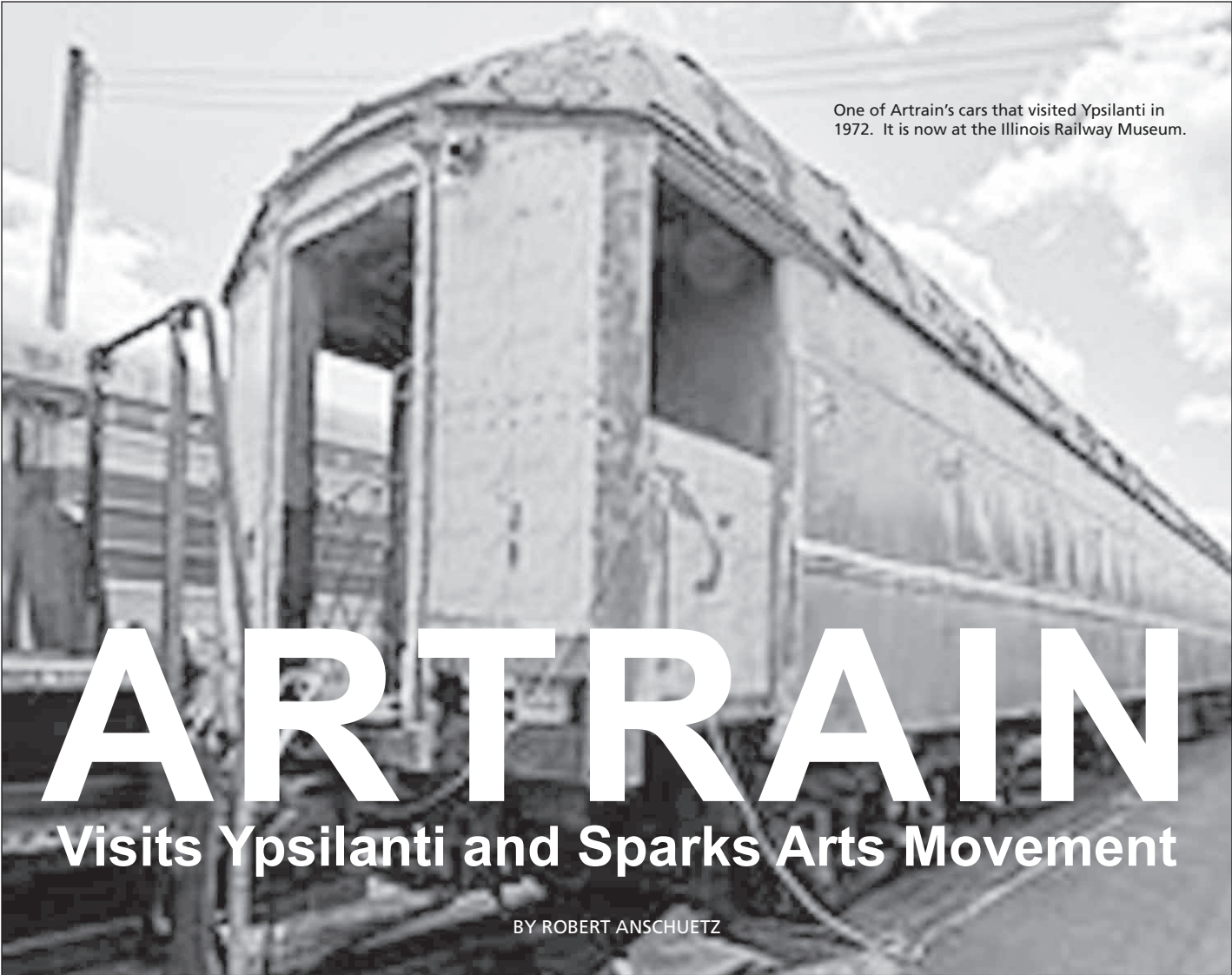


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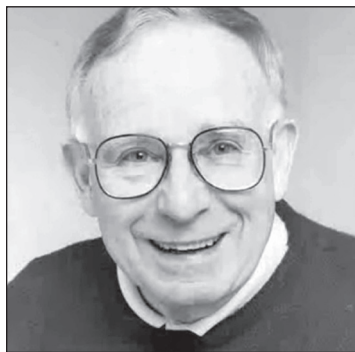
One of Artrain's cars that visited Ypsilanti in 1972. It is now at the Illinois Railway Museum.

ARTRAIN

Visits Ypsilanti and Sparks Arts Movement

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ

Artrain was established in 1971 in Detroit as a travelling art gallery on rails with the mission to bring arts to underserved communities throughout Michigan and eventually the whole country. Artrain was conceived by E. Ray Scott with the support of Helen Milliken, former First Lady of Michigan, as a flagship project of the Michigan Council for the Arts (MCA). E. Ray Scott served as the Executive Director of the MCA from its inception in 1966 to 1985. Artrain required \$1M in startup costs before the idea could become a reality, and was initially expected to be a short-term one - or two-year program. To quote E. Ray Scott: "Artrain was conceived as a way to



Founder of Artrain was E. Ray Scott who served as the Executive Director of the Michigan Council for the Arts from its inception in 1966 to 1985.

bring art to the rural parts of Michigan. When you unlock the creative gene in a young person, you have a friend of the arts for life."

Artrain began touring Michigan in 1971, visiting small towns that did not have their own museums. Throughout that summer, Artrain welcomed over 191,000 visitors in 28 Michigan communities. Visitors experienced art in Artrain's vintage baggage car, which was converted to a studio car where two resident artists travelled with the train and demonstrated various art processes and mediums. Artrain expanded over the years to incorporate several additional rail cars and a caboose, cooperating with railroad companies to haul the rail cars around the country. Within three years of its founding, Artrain headed out west on an eight-state tour sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Artrain continues to the present providing arts and cultural programs for over 3.2 million people in more than 850 cities across the country.

Artrain first visited Ypsilanti in October and November of 1972. The train was parked alongside the Freight Building



Artrain's Caboose.

and was open to visitors for 18 days. Over the course of its stay, the official attendance in Ypsilanti was a staggering 12,877 visitors. I still remember the excitement of first visiting Artrain that year as a seven-year-old child. It so happens that I lived only a few blocks from where it was parked, so it was easy to walk there on several occasions. The first time, I visited with my parents and siblings as a family. After that first introduction, my siblings and I were even allowed to attend Artrain unaccompanied, where we were able to visit the train and explore the art on our own. Such was the fascination of Artrain.

Throughout the years, Artrain has made official stops in Ypsilanti eight times, drawing thousands of attendees during each visit. Artrain made regular stops during the Ypsilanti Heritage Festivals of 1986, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1996, and 2001. It wasn't a far trip for Artrain to go to Ypsilanti,

since by then Artrain had moved its headquarters to Ann Arbor.

Artrain Visits to Ypsilanti

On its 1986 tour, Artrain commissioned urban graffiti artists to paint the exterior of Artrain's railcars for the "Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Photo-Realism in America" exhibition. These graffiti artists, who normally painted murals on unattended train cars in New York City, were invited to paint 12 murals on the cars over the course of four days. The murals were painted in Port Huron at the Grand Trunk Western Railroad's repair depot with final touches completed at Selfridge Air Force Base where Artrain was often parked when it wasn't touring the country. Many of their murals used familiar images from Pop Art. This exhibit began in Detroit near the Renaissance Center, and made its visit to Ypsilanti during the 1986 Heritage Festival from Au-



1986 Artrain "Signs of the Times" Exhibit.

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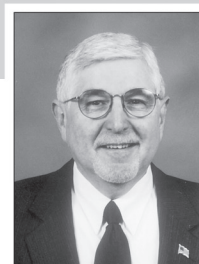
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| Year | Tour dates | Exhibition | Days | Attendance |
|------|-------------|--|------|------------|
| 1972 | 10/27-11/13 | Man Creates... A Vision of Art | 18 | 12,877 |
| 1981 | 1981 | Traditions: The Region, The World | 5 | 4,858 |
| 1986 | 8/20-8/24 | Signs of the Times: Pop Art & Photo Realism in America | 5 | 3,986 |
| 1987 | 8/21-8/23 | The Cranbrook Vision: Past & Present | 3 | 2,807 |
| 1989 | 8/18-8/21 | Treasurers of Childhood | 4 | 4,084 |
| 1994 | 8/18-8/21 | Romance of Transportation | 4 | 2,337 |
| 1996 | 8/15-8/18 | Art in Celebration! | 3 | 2,729 |
| 2001 | 8/17-9/01 | Artistry of Space | 3 | 3,208 |

Statistic of Artrain Visits from 1972 to 2001.

and demonstrated their talents at each of the stops. Hands-on programs were important to the educational aspect of Artrain, and many of the attendees were children seeing an art museum for the first time in their lives. Although admission was usually free, the staff collected tickets in order to track attendance. The staff often gave tours to interested railroad personnel as well as art novices and art aficionados.

Artrain's mission of providing art to the masses was so important they established a permanent Artrain exhibit space in a storefront in Depot Town that was in place for much of

the 1970's and 1980's. Tom Dodd, a long-time Depot Town resident, art proponent, publisher of *the Depot Town Rag*, a member of the Artrain USA Committee, was instrumental in establishing Artrain's permanent Ypsilanti residence. Tom studied and taught art and was commissioned to paint the exterior of four of Artrain's 90-foot train cars and the caboose. Tom gave credit for Artrain for setting the foundation for growing the various arts programs that have taken root in Ypsilanti. Tom said: *"The biggest outcome is what happens in communities like Depot Town. There is the place that was boarded up commercial buildings,*



2001 Artrain "Artistry of Space" Exhibit in Ypsilanti.



Artrain building in Depot Town circa 1980.

built in the mid-19th century. I think Artrain told people that it was OK to have these cultural things going on, and as a result today we have the Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra, we have the Community Band, we have the Community Chorus, we have Riverside Arts Center. There are 14 different theater companies operating out of the Riverside Arts Center now. Who'da thunk it?"

In 2006, Artrain received the National Medal for Museum Service, which is the nation's highest award for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. In 2008, as the rail industry restricted access to its railways, Artrain retired and sold its museum-on-a-train. Artrain's presence at events over the decades has left a lasting impression on those communities. Many community arts councils stemmed from Artrain visits, and Artrain provided the inspiration for many art residency programs and community arts festivals. In addition, many dilapidated train stations were renovated in preparation for an Artrain visit or as a result of fundraising associated with those visits. What happened to Ypsilanti's growing art scene as a result of Artrain visits happened in countless communities across Michigan and across the country. Today, without the train, Artrain uses a variety of alternative delivery methods to help spread art to the United States and around the world. Artrain still has its headquarters on North Main Street in Ann Arbor.

Author's Note: I would like to thank Deb Polich, President/CEO of the Arts Alliance and Artrain, Inc. for providing some of the information contained in this article. Deb Polich is a co-host of creative:impact, a radio show discussing the arts which airs on Tuesdays at 7:50am and 9:50am on during NPR's Morning Edition on WEMU 89.1 FM in Ypsilanti.

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



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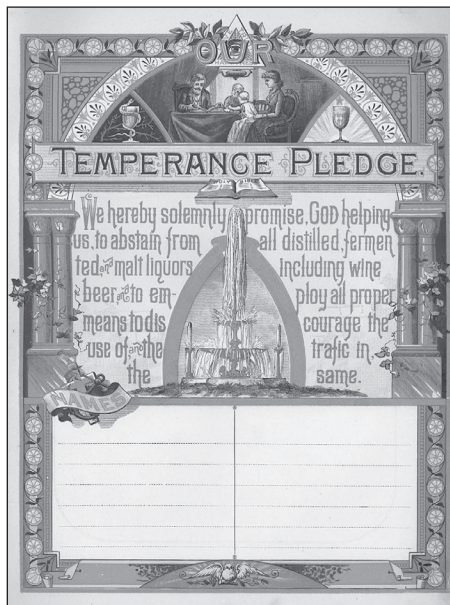


The Michigan Beer Fest held each year in Riverside Park brings thousands of beer lovers to Ypsilanti.

The Grand Time in Ypsilanti

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ

You may have shared the experience which I have had of telling someone that you live in Ypsilanti and notice that the person's eyes light up as they remember visiting our city and enjoying a cold brew or two. Ypsilanti is gaining a reputation as a city that not only makes good beer, but consumes it with gusto. The very popular Michigan Beer Fest is held at Riverside Park and sells out to beer lovers each year. Ann Arbor Brewery on East Forest is a popular gathering spot where delicious food and drink can be consumed in a German-style beer garden or in the historic building. The 734 Brewery on Cross Street is a great place to meet friends, people watch, and consume beer. The Ypsi Ale House on Pearl Street, downtown, often pairs local musicians with a mug of beer and tasty food. Let us not leave out what will be the newest venue in which to enjoy alcohol of all kinds - whiskey, bourbon, and beer - as customers come from far and wide to taste many varieties in the newly restored Thompson block on River



A temperance pledge such as would have been signed about the "Grand Time."

Street. This is not to mention the many inviting bars sprinkled throughout our city.

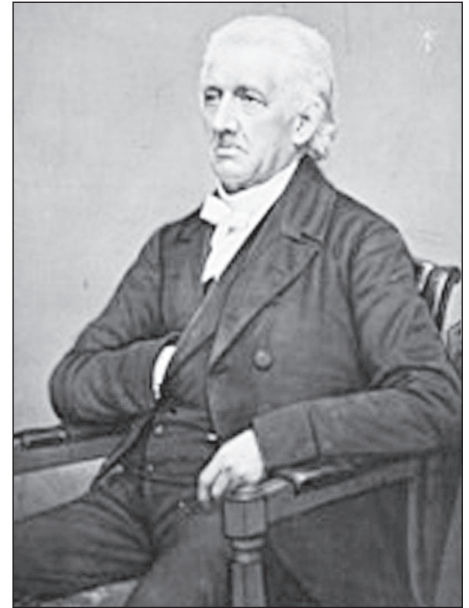
As much as alcohol is now a positive draw to our city, at one time, a long time ago, it was the reason that many avoided our small village nearly 200 years ago. Let me explain what I have learned by reading an obscure small book called *"The Past of Ypsilanti"* which you can download for free on Google Books.

It was written as *"A discourse delivered on leaving the old Presbyterian church edifice, Lord's day, September 20th, 1857..."* by none other than Gustavus Lemuel Foster, the minister. In it, he summarizes how the moral climate of Ypsilanti had changed in 30 years and he explains how having churches and congregations has had a positive influence on the citizens. You need to know a little about the history of Ypsilanti in order to understand the role that alcohol has played over the years. Let's begin with Godfrey's

fluence on the citizens. You need to know a little about the history of Ypsilanti in order to understand the role that alcohol has played over the years. Let's begin with Godfrey's

Trading Post on the Huron River at the point where two Native American trails intersected. The Great Sauk trail (now Michigan Avenue) met the Potawatomi trail (now River Street) around where Riverside Art Center sits on Huron Street above Riverside Park. This was a log structure built around the year 1800 by three French men from Detroit, and there is evidence that it lasted at least until 1825, when it was a voting place. During its time, Godfrey's Trading Post was a money-making venture. The trading post purchased furs from the passing Indigenous people, and Foster contends that one of the main units of exchange for the furs was alcohol. He states, *"The first trading houses had been established in part, for the purpose of trafficking with the Indians in intoxicating drink."*

By 1820, few Native Americans remained in Michigan as their land was claimed by the United States government in the Treaty at Gaginias and sold very cheaply from a government land office in Detroit. Learning of this, ambitious men could sell their worn out farms in the east and purchase many more acres of fertile land with the proceeds in what was then the territory of Michigan. As soon as 1823, hopeful and hard-working people began to arrive in the mosquito and malaria-infested wilderness which we now know of as Ypsilanti. People left their families, schools, stores, and churches to seek their fortune. They brought with them their own tools, farm animals, seeds, hope, and whisky which Foster referred to as *"comforts of life"* and adds *"to use these drinks then was more common*



Rev. Lyman Beecher, "Father of the Temperance Movement."

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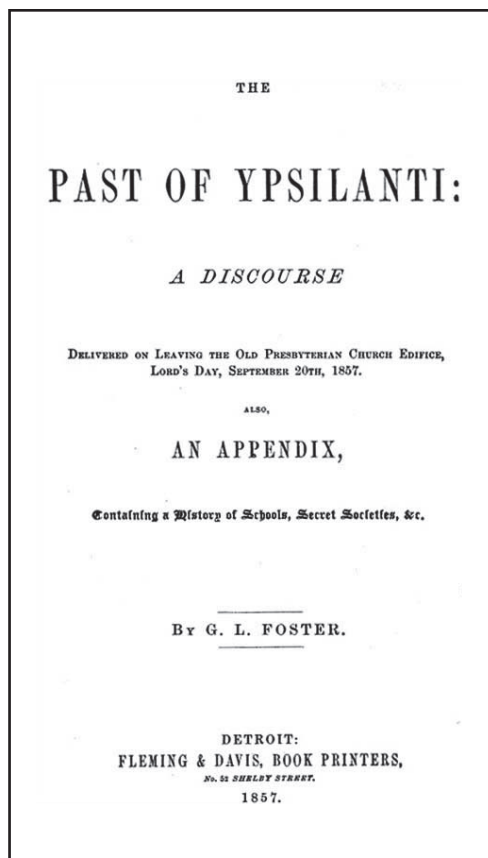
everywhere than now."

One of these early settlers was Elena Rogers, who eventually married Alvin Cross, who also arrived here in 1823. She was an orphan who lived and worked on the farm of the Woodruff family, and gives us a glimpse of the difficult life in this wilderness which is published by the Pioneer Society, and is printed in the "*The History of Washtenaw County, 1881*" published by Chambers and available to read in reprint form on Google Books.

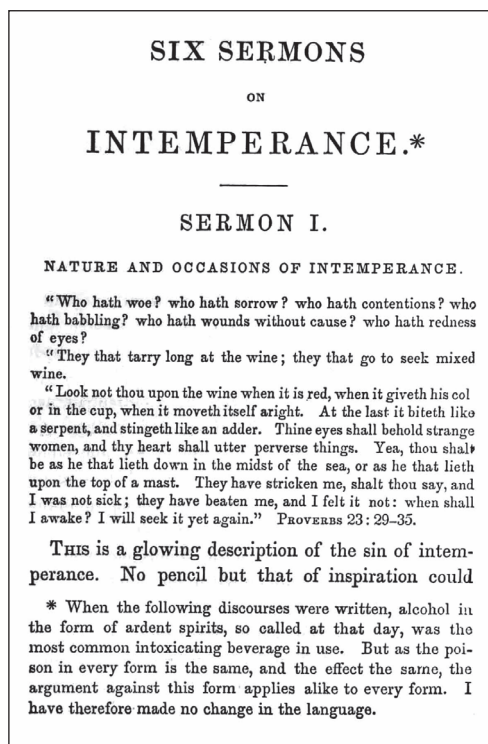
Elena tells of living in a one-room log cabin with a dirt floor which she first mistook for a sheep pen, without a fireplace or chimney. Fires were made in the middle of the room and smoke went out through a hole in the roof. The corn they planted grew abundantly in fields that only years before had been cleared and planted by the native people. Corn supplied the settlement with their main diet during the first few years and was prepared as both corn bread and corn pone. What was to be done with the rest of the corn since the only market would be in Detroit, which was five days of difficult journey away? You might have guessed that it was quickly turned into corn liquor, or whisky.

Whisky made the first Fourth of July celebration in Ypsilanti a very exciting one, as you might imagine! It was held near an island on the Huron River, the remnants of which can be seen today off the new section of the Border to Border (B2B) trail between Grove Street and Michigan Avenue. All 30 residents of Washtenaw County were invited to this event along with a Native American named Blue Jacket. What made it even more jolly was that 14-year-old Elena made the punch and later confessed in her memoir that she was unfamiliar with spirits and put twice as much whisky in the drink that everyone enjoyed a little too much, but she also stated it did make for a festive occasion.

As the small settlement of Ypsilanti grew, so did the brewing and con-



The cover page of The Past of Ypsilanti written by G.L. Foster in 1857.



Rev. Beecher's sermons that were read to the alcohol consuming population in Ypsilanti

sumption of alcohol. There was little to do in the way of entertainment and no churches. The traditional Sunday "*day of rest*" soon became the day to drink, especially since there were no churches in the village. Foster contends "*There was no religious nucleus around which people might gather, and no strong religious heart radiating its influence for good. There was nothing to make the Sabbath differ from other days of the week except that idleness was germinating and cultivating its natural fruits.*" He goes on to write that Ypsilanti was then a "*hard town*" with a poor moral state. Missionaries occasionally visited the settlement and Foster tells us of the experience of one of them. The first missionary sent from New York State, a Reverend William Jones, wrote: "*I arrived at Ypsilanti on the third of October, 1829, and found the people without a church in a deplorable condition. Almost the whole village, with few exceptions, were given over to unrestrained indulgence in intoxicating drinks. The holy Sabbath was openly desecrated by revelry, drunkenness, and the pitching of quoits on the banks of the river.*"

As if this impression of Ypsilanti was not vile enough, the goodly Reverend Jones decided that this community was sorely in need of a more positive direction. He tells us that there was no place for him to preach – no public building, school, or other facility so he was invited to a private house and "*the fetid breath of intoxication sensibly (sic) impregnated and polluted the atmosphere of the room. These things were literally true.*" He goes on to say that the atmosphere and the people left him "*heart sickened*" and he decided that their ways needed to change, but what was he, an ordinary missionary, to do? Jones thought about this and decided that "*nothing could be done until the people were restored to sobriety.*" Jones then went out to various neighborhoods in the village and "*read to them Dr. Beecher's sermons on 'The use of Intox-*

icating Drinks.' Attention was arrested; a temperance society was formed at Ypsilanti and from thence the temperance reformation spread through the county." Dr. Lyman Beecher was a Presbyterian minister who not only fathered the Temperance Movement in this country, but was also father to Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

After reading this letter, Reverend Foster asked some of the early residents of Ypsilanti if the reputation was accurate, and they assured him that it was and added that the

drinking and drunkenness common in Ypsilanti had been discouraging people from bringing their families to settle here. The traveling families may stop in the village for a day or two of rest, but would then travel on to a more civilized environment because there was "too much drinking for the prosperity of the town." There seemed to be consensus in the village that the consumption of alcohol needed to stop, thus, the town elders decided to set a date for this to occur, no more drinking and carrying on would occur after that date. They also decided that this would end with what they called a "Grand Time" when settlers could use up their store of alcohol and after that, sign a pledge of sobriety.

This turned out to not be such a good idea. Foster writes, "Well, just about the time that the "Grand Time" was being enjoyed-when drinkers had drank rather excessively, and some temperance men had been forced to taste a little – the missionary came along on foot to do the work of his mission. One cries out "There's another man!" Another says – "Hold on boys, I guess he is a minister!" "Never mind" says a third, "grab him." A general rush was made, but as heads were reeling and feet were not very nimble, some missed him and others fell headlong. His reverence was soon seen in the distance, giving unmistakable evidence of speed, while the rabble were crying out "Catch him! Catch him!" This was a rather novel way of receiving a minister..."

After the "Grand Time," a Temperance Society was in-



Temperance cartoon.

deed formed by many of the leaders of the village, including Mark Norris, and continued to have a positive influence on the community for many years. However, in his essay, Foster does not leave the matter of alcohol, the church, and the village alone. He tells us of the difficulty of finding workmen to raise a church spire when the first Presbyterian church was being built in 1838. He explains that "when the frame was ready, it was difficult to find men enough to raise it without the help of intoxicating drinks. It is said that when two bents (sic) were up, a wind blew them down, and that the wicked down town, sent up a shout of tri-

umph... The men insisted in being paid in hard liquor and because no one else would take on this challenging and difficult task" it was provided to them. After having their fill of beverage of choice, the church steeple went up in Ypsilanti as a testament to a new moral conviction in the village and the power of drink. The first day that the building was open a temperance meeting was held after the sermon, and members sang a song with verses of "When rum's delusive fountains roll down our happy land... They call us to deliver their friends from ruin's chain."

Fortunately, today it seems that instead of alcohol driving people away from the city of Ypsilanti, it is drawing them to it. Although we always have plenty of joggers, I doubt if there have been any fast running ministers trying to outrace the effects of demon rum in the past 190 years.

(Janice Anschuetz is a local history buff and a regular contributor of articles for the Gleanings.)

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Sabotage at Willow Run

BY JAMES MANN

On the night of June 12, 1942, John C. Cullen, a member of the United States Coast Guard was walking among the dunes on a beach near Amagansett, New York, on Long Island, when he came across four men dressed in the uniforms of the German Navy. This must have come as a surprise to Cullen, as the United States and Germany were then at war. The leader of the group took hold of Cullen by the collar of his shirt, threatened his life and handed him \$260 dollars in cash. Cullen reported the incident and a search turned up some equipment buried by the Germans.

The Germans were members of two teams of four men who arrived by U-boats off the east coast of the United States to carry out sabotage missions against such targets as hydroelectric plants, a cryolite plant in Philadelphia, Hell Gate Bridge and more. Nothing came of the mission as no acts of sabotage were carried out and the leader of the mission turned himself into the FBI and revealed everything. The rest of the group were quickly rounded up and jailed.

The eight stood trial before a military tribunal; six were sentenced to death and executed. One was sentenced to life and the leader of the group, who had turned the others

in, received a sentence of thirty years. After the war their sentences were commuted and the two returned to Germany, where they were considered traitors. This was the only attempt by the Germans during the Second World War to carry out missions of sabotage against the United States. There was, however, one act of sabotage carried out at the Willow Run Bomber Plant.

William Mocerì was 20 years old in July of 1942, and had been employed by the Ford Motor Company for two years. He had been transferred to the Willow Run Bomber plant in April of 1942 where he worked as a riveter. A native of Wyandotte, he was the son of Italian immigrants. On Saturday, July 26, 1942, Mocerì gave notice of leaving the employment of the Ford Motor Company, as he was planning to go on holiday before entering the Army. He had been drafted and inducted into the Army on July 21, and was given a 12 day furlough to put his private

affairs in order.

At about 8:00 pm, of Saturday, July 25, 1942, about three hours before he was to leave the employment of the Ford Motor Company, Mocerì was seen climbing to the top of a bomber, where his work would never take him. There, it was alleged, according to FI agent John Bugas, he drilled

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18 holes into the gas line of the plane. "Final inspection disclosed the damage in time to prevent a possible crash or midair explosion, the FBI agent said," reported *The Detroit Free Press* of Thursday, July 30, 1942.

"A theory," continued the account, "that the youth's act grew out of resentment at having been called into military service was denied by him and his mother. She supported his statement that he had long wanted to join the Army but had heeded her pleas to wait until he was drafted." Mocerri could give no reason for his act. "I did it without thinking," he said, "I meant no harm - I was just playing around."

"Police records," noted *The Detroit Free Press*, disclosed that Mocerri previously had been arrested seven times in Detroit on charges ranging from reckless driving to armed robbery and that he was on probation at the time of the alleged act of sabotage.

"His first appearance in court was before Traffic Judge George T. Murphy on June 6, 1937, on a reckless driving charge for having driven a car into four pedestrians at Woodward and Adams. The fifteen-day sentence imposed made him the youngest defendant ever to be jailed by Judge Murphy."

"Mocerri was picked up by police for

investigation in a breaking and entering case in November, 1939, but he was released. Then, Jan. 23, 1940, he held up a grocery store at 3131 Woodward. Arrested a few minutes after the holdup, he was found guilty of unarmed robbery and put on probation for five years by Recorder's Judge Joseph A. Gills. Other arrests followed June 10, 1940; Dec. 22, 1940, and Aug 15, 1941, for investigation in cases ranging from simple larceny to armed robbery. In each case he was discharged without prosecution."

"He was arrested again," the account concluded, "last Feb 12, when he was accused of violating terms of his probation and turned over to probation officers." As Mocerri had been inducted into the Army five days before the event, he was a member of the armed forces, and therefore subject to possible court-martial.

In the end, Mocerri stood trial before Federal judge Frank A. Picard on Wednesday, June 28, 1944, while a soldier stationed at Fort Custer. He pleaded guilty to the charge of punching holes in the manifold of a Liberator bomber. For this, he was given a five year suspended sentence.

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

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New York Officer Shot

BY JAMES MANN

At about 12:45 am. on the morning of Thursday, September 18, 1930, Peter J. O'Rourke was driving his car on Plymouth Road near Frains Lake. O' Rourke was a patrolman with the New York City Police Department. In the car with him were his wife and three daughters, Betty, 10 years old, Marjorie, who was 8, and Gloria, who was 7 years of age. They were on the return leg of a vacation, and were driving from Battle Creek.

As the family traveled on Plymouth Road, a second car, later described as a light coupe, pulled up beside them, and the occupants, without warning opened fire on the O'Rourke car. Peter O'Rourke was struck and slumped over the steering wheel. His wife grabbed the emergency brake and stopped the car. The men in the coupe continued firing, sending some 16 bullets into the car. In the car, 10 year old Betty's head was grazed by a bullet, and Marjorie and Gloria were cut by flying glass.

"The two gunmen got out and came over to us." said Mrs. O'Rourke later. "I told them all we had was \$50 and that we were on our way home. They refused the money, and said, 'You better drive your husband to University Hospital in Ann Arbor.' then they drove off. I took the wheel and drove to Ann Arbor and took my husband to the hospital. I was slightly cut by flying glass."

"Two wounds appear on the face of the patrolman, one below each eye, but it could not be definitely stated at the hospital whether they were caused by one or two bullets," reported The Ypsilanti Daily Press. At this time, his condition was described as "fair". Doctors said it was most likely, if O'Rourke recovered, he would be blind.

Earlier in the evening a Miss Dorothy Strout was driving on the same road, in the car with her was M. W. Shellman, when a light coupe drove up beside them and one of the occupants of the car shouted something that sounded like "Get Over." She increased her the speed and left the light coupe behind. Now three shots were fired into her car, and if any one of the shots had penetrated through the back seat a fatality would have resulted.

"Miss Strout stopped when the firing commenced and one of the bandits jumped into her car, and holding a gun on-the couple, forced them to drive onto a side road where he robbed Mr. Shellman of \$10. Miss Strout, who was wearing a valuable diamond ring, slipped it from her finger

and placed it in her shoe, thus retaining possession of it. When the thug was leaving the machine Mr. Shellman protested that they had some distance to go and that their gasoline was low. The bandit returned them \$1. The couple stated that they were treated considerably by the man who stepped into the car," reported the account.

About ten minutes later a car driven by a Frank Novotney was stopped and menaced by armed men in a car. One of the men climbed into the car and directed Mr. Novotney to move the car to the side of the road. In the car with Mr. Novotney were his wife and two other women, all from Chicago. *"After a methodical search which delayed the party for about 10 minutes the man allowed them to go without having found any valuables. While in the car he kept his gun pointed at Mr. Novotney...All members of the party asserted this morning that they had been treated kindly*

by the robber. They described one as blond and tall and the other darker and shorter in stature... They said the men who held them up were from 18 to 20 years old and appeared to be 'nice boys'... They described both as slim."

As soon as word of the shootings and holdup reached the police patrols were dispatched to Plymouth Road, and a search was begun for the gunmen. Two men who were found sleeping in a car within a few miles of the scene of the shooting were taken into custody, but were later released. Four oth-

er suspects were later taken into custody, but were later released as well.

Two weeks later the fingerprints from the Shellman car identified Russell McComis, 17, and William Brown, 21, both of Detroit, as the holdup men who had shot O'Rourke. The two men matched the description of the holdup men given by witnesses. Information of the two were sent nationwide by Wayne County Sheriff Ira Wilson. *"The pair," reported The Ypsilanti Daily Press of Wednesday, October 1, 1930, "are well known to Wayne officers and both are ex-convicts. Both are known as dope fiends."*

Patrolman Richard Holdburg of the Port Huron Police Department found two young men loitering in a car near a gas station. One of these men was Russell McComis, and the other was Russell McCommis, 21, of Detroit. Officer Holdburg searched the two and took a revolver from each of them. He placed the two under arrest and handcuffed the

two together at the wrist. Holdburg then called for police flyer.

Responding to the call were Sergeant Roy Shambleau and Lieutenant Thomas Hastings. McComis and McCommis were placed in the car, and began the trip to the station. Holdburg followed behind in the car the two had been loitering in. "At Maple and State Streets the police flyer suddenly swerved to the curb and Holdburg heard shots. As he sped toward the corner he saw the handcuffed prisoners leap from the flyer," reported *The Detroit Times* of Saturday, October 11, 1930.

McComis had a pistol strapped to the small of his back, and managed to work the gun free. He shot Shambleau, who was driving, and he slumped forward dead. Then McComis shot Hastings in the hand, as the two struggled for the gun. McComis and McCommis rushed from the car and, still handcuffed together at the wrist, began running through an alley. Holdburg jumped from the car he was driving and gave chase. McComis and McCommis continued running and tried to pass a tree, one on the left and the other on the right. The tree between them brought the two to a sudden stop. Holdburg fired twice at the two, the bullets striking the tree close to their heads. The two offered no resistance when Holdburg caught up with them, McComis having

dropped his gun as he was running.

"I knew we were on the police circulars for some jobs we pulled," said McComis. "we were certain to be identified and sent up if they took us to headquarters. I decided to try a getaway."

"When the officer that arrested me searched Macklen and me, he didn't catch my gun which I had tucked down in the back of my trousers," said McComis. "After we had gone a little ways I managed to get the gun out and fired three times."

For the previous two weeks the pair had been staying in a cottage on a lake. That Saturday night the two, with two companions moved to an apartment in Port Huron. From the apartment McComis and McCommis set out for a place to rob. *"We were broke and had nothing to eat," said McCommis, "so we started out to find a gas station that looked good."*

When police searched the apartment where the two had been staying, they found William Brown and Charlotte Rawless, a seventeen year old girl from Clearfield, Pennsylvania. The two were taken into custody. The Rawless girl was described as the sweetheart of McComis.



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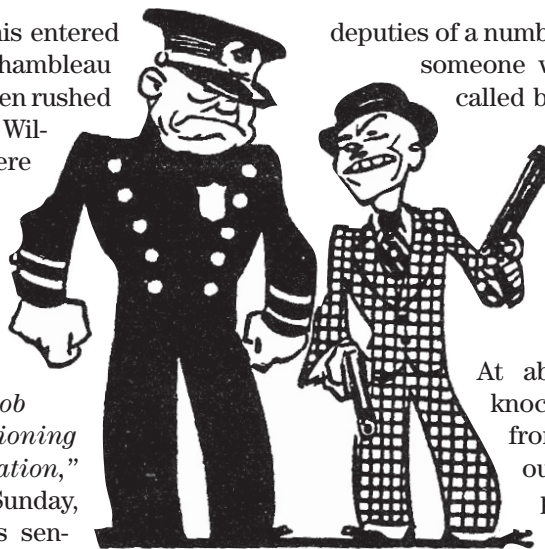
On Saturday, October 11, McComis entered a plea of guilty to the murder of Shambleau before the justice court. He was then rushed to the Circuit Court where Judge William Robertson was waiting. There was reason for the rush, as a crowd of 1,000 people were milling around the courthouse. Several hundred people forced their way into the courtroom.

"Police fearing some untoward circumstance might rouse the mob to violence moved about cautioning citizens against any demonstration," reported *The Detroit Times* of Sunday, October 12, 1930. McComis was sentenced to life imprisonment in solitary confinement at hard labor. After the trial was allowed a brief moment with his sweetheart, Charlotte Rawless, who was being held for investigation. He, she said, was her first true love.

"Well, kid," he said, *"I'll be gone a long time. I'll be gone 16 years at least."* *"I'll wait,"* promised the 17 year old girl. Then they kissed each other good-bye. Police had to pull the two apart.

McComis was then surrendered to a detachment of the Michigan State Police, who formed a square around him and moved him to a car before the crowd knew what was happening. He was delivered to Jackson Prison four hours later, just eighteen hours after the murder of Shambleau. McComis was sent to Ohio, to face charges of murder in the first degree. William Brown was turned over to deputies of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, and taken to the jail in Ann Arbor. There he would face charges for the shooting of Peter O'Rourke.

Late on the night of Sunday, October 26, 1931, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department received a call from a telephone operator, who informed the officers that she had been informed of someone trying to get into the second house east of Milan Road. This may have reminded the



deputies of a number of calls received the night before, from someone who said they needed help. The person called back a number of times to ask if the men had been sent out. The call for aid was a fake and left deputies puzzled.

In response to this call, two deputies, James Wanseck and Alex Schlupé, left the jail to investigate. This left Deputy William Dailey as the only man on duty at the jail. The jail was never left unmanned.

At about 12:15 Monday morning someone knocked on the door at the jail. Officer Dailey, from inside the building, asked the person outside what they wanted. He was told the person was in need of a place to spend the night. Jails will sometimes take in persons who have no place to go.

Dailey opened the door, and the man rammed a gun into his side and demanded the keys to the cell block. Dailey told the man he could find the keys in the drawer of the desk near the door. The man then used his gun as a club, and struck Dailey across the bridge of his nose. Then the man stepped behind the desk to search for the keys.

"As he lowered his head slightly while attempting to locate them Deputy Dailey sprang at him and the two fought for possession of the bandit's gun. In the course of the struggle the stranger kicked the deputy, fracturing two ribs and then ran for the back door of the office which opens into a court way where a machine was waiting. As he reached the door he fired at the officer who returned the shots. He is believed to have escaped in a car which garage employees across the road had noticed parked there. They also noticed that the car lights were used as signals," reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of that day.

"Deputy Sheriff Jacob Andres," continued the account, *"who maintains his residence at the jail heard the shots and rushed to the office while Mrs. Andres phoned the police department, from an extension telephone. When Deputy Andres arrived he found the other officer on the floor covered with blood."* A search for the attacker was unsuccessful.



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cessful. Deputy Dailey was taken to University Hospital, and released the same day.

Deputies Wanzeck and Schluppe were back at the jail by 12:35 am., having found they had been called out on a false call. A search of the jail found William Brown in his cell fully dressed, as if he expected to be leaving soon. Brown admitted there was a plan to free him from the jail. That same morning Brown plead guilty to the charge of armed robbery and was sentenced to Jackson prison "for the rest of his natural life." As Brown was facing the court, Peter O'Rourke was leaving Ann Arbor, to return to New York. There was a slight chance he could regain some sight in one eye.

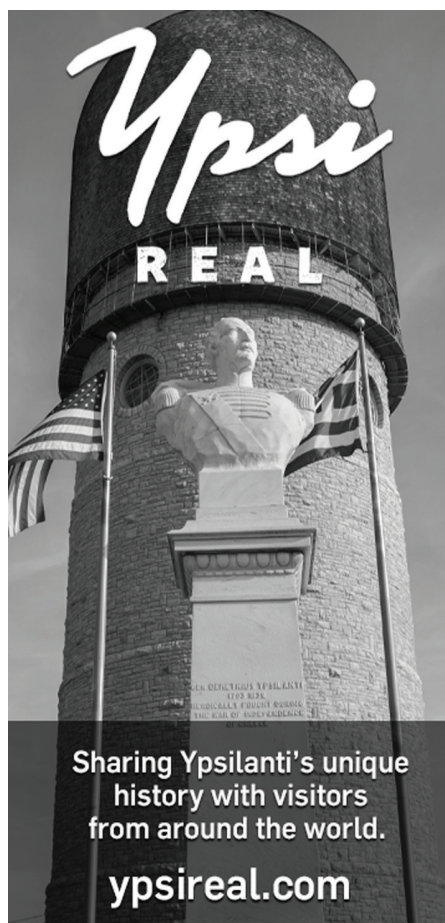
A search of the jail uncovered hacksaw blades in the possession of Fred Cameron, who admitted the blades were intended for Brown. A woman had been caught talking to Cameron some time before the attempt to free Brown. From the woman, Cameron passed on a message to Brown, that he was to be freed that Saturday or Sunday night. The woman was Elsa Lutz, the 24 year old sister of Brown. She, with Irene Brown, the 18 year old wife of Brown, were taken into custody that day in Detroit, and sent to the jail in Ann Arbor. Taken into custody at the same time was Clyde

"Tony" Pyle, who was identified that evening by Deputy Sheriff Dailey as the man who assaulted him.

Pyle denied taking part in the attempt until the afternoon of Thursday, October 30, when he broke down under questioning by Deputy Sheriff Dailey. *"The confession ... told briefly of how the prisoner had sought shelter for the night at the jail, covered the deputy with his gun and fumbled in the drawer of the desk for the keys of the lower cell block. He admitted struggling for possession of the weapon with Dailey and told of how he managed to unbolt the back door when the two rolled over there. At the door he said the gun he carried was discharged,"* reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of that day. Pyle said Lutz offered him \$200 to try and free Brown, and \$500, if he succeed in releasing him. William Brown, at Jackson prison also made a confession that day as well. Pyle, for his efforts, was sentenced to life in prison.

Peter O'Rourke died at the age of 57, on March 12, 1954. His obituary in *The New York Times* noted he "died of a heart attack while dancing with his wife, Alice, at a party at *The Lighthouse*, the New York Association for the Blind."

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



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