

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



WINTER 2021

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www.ypsihistory.org

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.



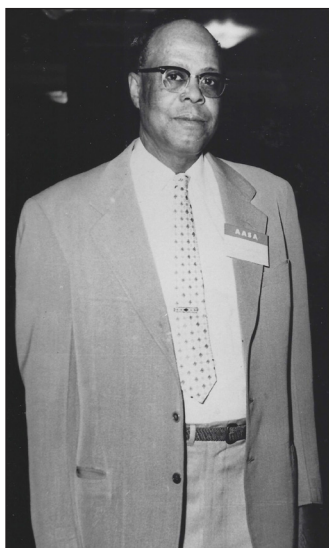
Board of Education - Seated L to R: Don Vogelsberg, Roy Barber (Supt.), Richard Roberts, John Miller, Standing L to R: Austin Norton, Amos Washington, Jon Monfouye, Beth Milford.

AMOS WASHINGTON — A Passion for Fair and Equal Housing

BY TOM WARNER

In the most recent issue of The Gleanings Judy Jackson wrote eloquently about “John Burton: A Life of Service.” We learned that Mr. Burton’s service to Ypsilanti only partially covered his many activities and achievements: he was also a U.A.W. staff member for many years, served as Democratic Party delegate to the 1964 national convention, later served as a regent at EMU for approximately fifteen years.....he even played professional baseball earlier in his younger years. His life exemplified a trait that numerous civic leaders have shared with our beloved city: An eagerness

to devote both their time and talents in significantly differing roles to the betterment of both Ypsilanti and the surrounding community.



Amos Washington moved to Ypsilanti in 1943 and worked for the Ford Motor Company as an electrician while enrolling at the University of Michigan for a Masters Degree.

Two of Mr. Burton’s contemporaries were Clyde King and James “Red” Cosgrove, both of whom spent lengthy terms on both the Ypsilanti Board of Education (both as President) and the City Council. Mr. King was also a member of the N.A.A.C.P., the Human Relations Commission and the Public Housing Board. He also

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A Passion for Fair and
Equal Housing
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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY BILL NICKELS

During the seventeen months we were closed as a consequence of COVID, we lost several museum docents, mostly for usual attrition reasons. When we reopened in July, we suddenly found ourselves short docents making us unable to have the museum open continually on weekends. With five new volunteer docents completing their training, they are about ready to docent one Saturday or Sunday from 2 to 5 one afternoon per month.

We are close to staffing the museum continually on weekends. We still need additional docents. If you are interested in learning some local history, enjoying the company of a second docent, and feel good about contributing to the museum's operation, contact Korey Morris at yhs.museum@gmail.com or 734-482-4990. The museum continues to be open Tuesday to Friday from 2 to 5 and many but not all weekend days. Check our website, www.ypsihistory.org for details. The archives are open from Tuesday through Sunday from 2 to 5.

Partnerships and working relationships with other organizations are important to us. For the first time, we had an opportunity to work with the Boy Scouts of America. During last summer, Ethan Marin inquired if we had a project he could tackle for his Eagle Scout project. Earlier, we were unable to find a contractor to install a new floor on the museum's small back porch. The project was approved as appropriate by the Boy Scouts. With Ethan as the project director, the entire troop worked with scout leader Todd Hoag installing the new floor. The project was completed over Halloween weekend.



Jerry Jennings congratulates Jan Anchuetz on receipt of the service award.

Four Gerald Jennings Service Award recipients were announced and presented during our October General Membership/Annual Meeting. Janice Anschuetz was presented an award for her dedication to researching and writing Ypsilanti history articles for our *Gleanings* publication. Starting in 2010, she has written more than forty-two articles. Her writings inspired her sons to write for the *Gleanings* too. Jan is the proud owner of the historic Swaine House at the corner of N. River and E. Forest and has been a leader and promoter of her neighborhood for many years.

James "Jim" Curran was a posthumous recipient of a Service Award for his service that began in 2006 as

a member of the Museum Advisory Board where he was chair from 2019 to 2021. He was an active member of our Board of Trustees, used his photography hobby



Boy Scouts Install Porch Floor at back of Museum.

to promote the museum, and monthly served as a docent. With Sheldon Clifton, he was co-owner of Depot Town's Cheeky Monkey Bears and Gifts and was an active member of the Depot Town Association. He represented the Presbyterian Church on the Towner House Preservation Project and was chair of the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival for many years. Sheldon was present to accept the award for Jim.

Pattie and John Harrington were individual recipients; but much of what they did to deserve a Service Award, they did as a two person team. Our two rental units lost long-term tenants during 2020 and 2021, requiring major work to make them inviting for new tenants. Because of COVID, it was almost impossible to timely have contractors do the updating. Pattie and John together volunteered to repair rotted wood, buy and install new light fixtures and window shades, entirely paint both units, install new bathrooms in each unit, and do all the little things that needed fixing. Together, they own one of the historic Quirk houses on North Huron. Again together, they are leaders of the Towner House Preservation Project which is completing the restoration of the house at 301 North Huron getting it ready for adaptive reuse.

Individually, John was elected to Ypsilanti City Council during the 1980s when the city first embraced historic preservation with the passage and support of a historic district ordinance.

Pattie has served as a Board of Trustee member and secretary since 2015. From her days as co-owner of Standard Printing with John, Pattie uses her graphic design skills to layout each issue of the Gleanings. Meeting announcement postcards and a new museum brochure also display her skills. She is also a board member of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.

The City of Ypsilanti's Historic District Commission has two vacancies.



Jim Curran's interest in automotive events led to his membership in the Cadillac LaSalle Club.

Our Historic District Commission maintains the historic character of buildings within the historic district by working with historic district property owners when they plan exterior changes to their homes and businesses. Applicants don't need to be a preservation expert, just have an interest. The vacancies can be filled by any city resident. Residents interested in serving can contact Scott Slagor, Ypsilanti's Preservation Planner, at sslagor@cityofypsilanti.com.

Our October "Ice Cream Social" general membership program was live with a full house at the Ladies Literary Club. We attempted a companion remote link to the program with a successful video accompanied with a less than adequate audio presentation. If you are unable to attend our general membership meetings live, please bear with us and continue to attend our remote presentations. We recognize our problems and are taking steps to improve the experience. We have several interesting local general membership programs in the planning for 2022.

Our museum is again festively decorated for the holiday season making a visit a good way to get into the spirit of the season. Have a safe and joyous holiday!

Historic Depot Town



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Amos Washington passed away in 1967 but his many contributions to the community will be remembered forever.

coached this author in the Little League in the late 1950's. "Red" Cosgrove (few if any people knew him other than as "Red") was a board member of The Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority, the city Department of Recreation and many others. Perhaps his first public role was that of neighborhood mail carrier beginning in the 1950's. This was a special time when many people thought of their mail carrier as nothing less than a family member.

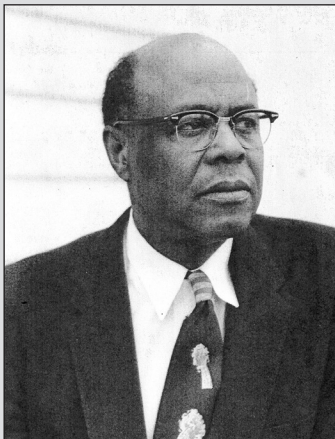
Today, however, The Society would like to share the life and achievements of another African-American community leader whose name is before the public to this very day: Amos S. Washington. As with the St. Louis born Mr. Burton, Amos Washington was also born in a city hundreds of miles from the city he would spend much of his life serving: Bristow, Oklahoma. Bristow was founded around 1891 as a railroad "way station" between Sapulpa and Oklahoma City. His birth in 1906 was only one year before Oklahoma even gained statehood in November of 1907 as the 46th state. Records show the population in 1900 to be 626; in 2019 it had an estimated 4,200 residents. As an agriculture community its main crop was cotton while petroleum products gained importance in the local economy in the 1920's.

Young Amos was one of ten children born to a Baptist

minister and his wife. He lived in Bristow through his high school years where he was active in both debate and track. His post-high school years were both varied and lengthy. He first went to Langston, Oklahoma and Normal College where he studied pharmacy for two years and then on to Jefferson City, Missouri where he enrolled at Lincoln University. After teaching a year in Jefferson City he moved to Kansas City and Western University where he taught both mathematics and chemistry. Interspersed in these university times there were many teaching assignments in the public schools, one culminating in a principal's position. He also found time to marry Tommie Yarbrough in 1924. The Washingtons had three children: Amos Washington junior and daughters Ometha and Beverly. It is Beverly who has been so helpful in the writing of this biography of her father. Thank you, Beverly!

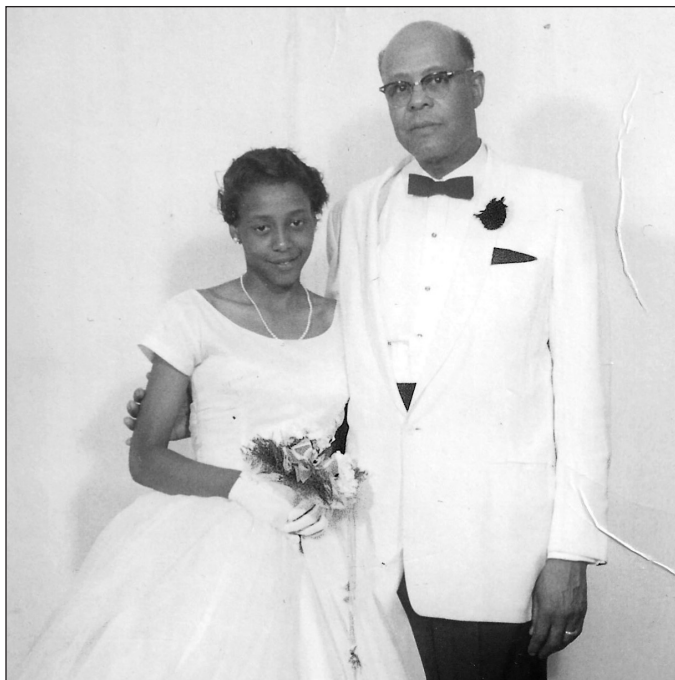
Before the Washingtons moved to make a new life in Ypsilanti they spent several years in Northern Michigan where Mr. Washington worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps. Upon arriving in Ypsilanti he worked for The Ford Motor Company as an electrician while enrolling at the University of Michigan for a Masters Degree. Our best research places this in 1943.

A listing of Mr. Washington's membership in various civic groups - the Ypsilanti City Council (4 years), the Board of Education (9 years), the city Recreation Committee (4 years), the City Planning Commission (19 years), the Ypsilanti Visiting Nurse Association, the local Rotary Club, the Negro Business and Professional League, the N.A.A.C.P., the Second Baptist Church - would seemingly take most of this Gleanings issue. It is his work in the area of public housing that he is perhaps most well remembered. This



The new Parkridge Center building is named after Amos.





Daughter Beverly & Amos Washington.

began in World War II.

He spent the years 1943-46 in Ypsilanti overseeing both the Parkridge and Worden Street trailer camp projects. "Parkridge homes served as segregated housing in the 1940's for African-Americans in Ypsilanti who worked at The willow Run Bomber Plant..." From 1946-49 he was also in Ecorse, River Rouge and Inkster involved with public housing issues so his interest and passion related to this field extended clearly beyond Ypsilanti. His career in the public housing sector can be best summarized by noting that he was the Executive Director of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission from 1951-67, the year of his passing.

The Parkridge Housing Project had 100 units in one, two and three bedroom configurations and Mr. Washington became its Director on March 1, 1952. In January of 2018 a ceremony marked the opening the \$18 million New Parkridge project on the same location as the original homes. U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell, Ypsilanti's mayor and many other dignitaries attended. The primary street through the neighborhood is named "Hilyard Robinson Way" after the African-American architect who designed the original Parkridge and many, many other homes and buildings in the mid-20th century. There are several web-sites we recommend to learn more about this significant, "new urbanism" built development whose significance is hard to over emphasize. (aachm.org - The African American cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County in Ann Arbor - ypsilantihc.org) More than 50 years after his passing Amos Washington was remembered and honored as the community building at the New Parkridge bears his name hence our notation earlier in the article that mentions "...whose name is before us to this

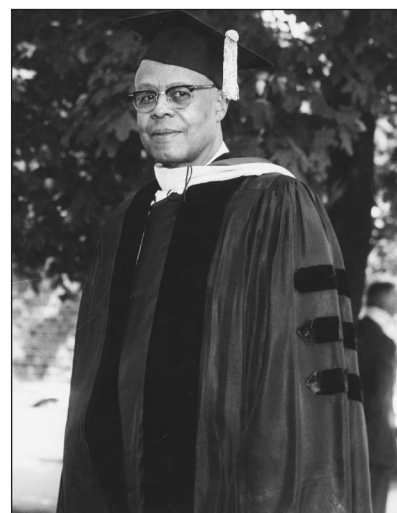
very day..."

During this past summer (2021) Mr. Washington's daughter Beverly accompanied Judy Jackson, Bill Nickels and me on a visit to many sites in what has always been known as the "south side." Openness compels me to note that at least in the 1950's during my earliest years it was often called "colored town."

Perhaps the most historically important stop was along Harriet Street between Huron to the east and Hamilton to the west. The vacant land across from the buildings on Harriet once held homes and businesses, one of which was Washington Brothers, a grocery store. Amos found the time and energy amidst his many civic duties to run a business; he also owned a diner at one time. One of Beverly's lasting memories was that of her father who, despite owning a thriving grocery store, would not allow her to consume what most of us know as "soda pop" or simply "pop"!

Mr. Washington died in 1967 at the age of 61 of an apparent heart-attack. Fittingly, he had spent the previous day at a housing conference in Toledo. Expressions of loss were city wide as his work on behalf of and love of Ypsilanti were known to all.

An appropriate way to conclude this article would be to quote several of the sentiments made about Amos S. Washington. "Mr. Washington, a quiet man with a ready smile..." "When he speaks (people) listen..." "Amos S. Washington is highly respected in Ypsilanti (for) the many hours he devotes to helping the community." His daughter Beverly fondly remembers her favorite quote from her father "A wise man learns from fools and fools learn from no one and therefore they remain fools."



Amos Washington at his Cleary College Commencement in 1966.

In addition to the web-sites recommended above we also hope you will go to: southadamstreet1900wordpress.com and the A.P. Marshall Oral History Archive. Dr. Marshall was a long-time librarian at EMU and is pictured in our Museum along with so many African-Americans of note in Ypsilanti's history.

(Tom Warner grew up in Ypsilanti and graduated from Ypsilanti High School and the University of Michigan. He is a volunteer for the Yankee Air Museum, a member of the YHS Board of Trustees, and a supporter of everything Ypsilanti.)



Normal Park Association members participated in many parades.

History of the Normal Park Neighborhood Association: The First Ten Years

BY LISA MILLS WALTERS

I have a long-held interest in, and affection for, the Normal Park Neighborhood Association. Not only was I a long-time resident of Normal Park and one of its City Council representatives, I was also a charter board member of the NPNA and long-serving president, secretary, and newsletter editor. I greatly enjoyed my time living in Normal Park, and after more than 30 years, I thought it might be a good time to look at how the association got its start and realize how far it's come.

The NPNA held its first general meeting on August 2, 1990. The idea for such a group, however, was born about a year earlier.

Many residents were concerned about traffic speed on Wallace and other streets in the neighborhood. Three of these neighbors, unaware of the existence of the others, independently contacted then-Ward Two councilmember Mike Homel, for assistance. Mike, knowing there was strength in numbers and seeing an opportunity for the neighborhood, suggested that they get together and present a petition to the City Council, at the time headed by Mayor Clyde King. As the three neighbors worked on this, they realized that they had other goals and interests in common and that other neighbors probably did, too.

The first newsletter was published in May of 1990. At this

time, the three volunteers proposed an association that would give residents the opportunity to socialize with each other and through which they could *"improve the safety, quality, and appearance of our neighborhood."* The newsletter also explained in detail the traffic/pedestrian concerns of the neighborhood and stated the exact wording of the petition.

Both the idea and the petition, which was submitted to the City Council that June, were a success. By the time the first NPNA meeting was held in Edith Hefley Park on August 2, 1990, new stop signs had already been installed. Residents quickly got to work on plans to write a charter, elect board members, clean up Recreation Park, and deal with issues regarding the party store on Congress Street near Summit. In January of 1991, eleven neighbors and I volunteered to serve on the board, with Cathy Vlisides serving as the first president. We created committees to deal with Neighborhood Watch, Recreation Park, Membership, Fundraising, Social Events, and other issues. Residents were invited to inform the board of their concerns and what they saw as the role of the association.

Creating a name, logo, and signs for the association made for some interesting discussions. The new board determined the general boundaries of the association to be W. Cross to

the north, N. Mansfield to the west, S. Congress to the south, and N. Summit to the east. "Normal Park" is the legal description of much of this area, specifically from N. Wallace Boulevard east; the west part of the area is plotted "Orchard Park." Because of the history of the Michigan State Normal School (now, of course, Eastern Michigan University) and the fact that the majority of neighbors lived within the area designated as Normal Park, we went with that name. (EMU was originally the first teacher-training school west of the Alleghenies, and the term "normal" alluded to the norms that were to be taught by all educators.)

Next we discussed the signs that would be posted at the four corners of the neighborhood: N. Congress and Summit, South Congress and N. Mansfield, N. Mansfield and West Cross, and Washtenaw and Summit. One board member and I suggested that our signs read "Abnormals, Keep Out!" ☺ We went with more welcoming text and a picture of what we considered a typical Normal Park home; it was actually inspired by the Nickels home at 311 N. Wallace. The signs were erected in 1992 and were funded in part by a grant from the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.

These signs were our way of announcing that this neighborhood had an identity and proud residents. Previous to this, the neighborhood was sometimes called "the older west side" or just identified by its boundaries. Unlike, for example, College Heights, it had never had an official name. But it wasn't long before real estate agents were touting the area as one of the city's most desirable, and within only a few years it was rare to find a city resident who was unfamiliar with Normal Park and its neighborhood association.

Through the years we dealt with a few transient issues, such as the party store and excessive street noise, but for the most part, the NPNA focused on its goal of improving the neighborhood. Probably our most ambitious project was the restoration of Recreation Park. That story



The tenth anniversary of the Normal Park Association was the year 2000.

and its trials and tribulations would fill a book, and we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to neighbor Carol Leyshock, who worked tirelessly for many years on park improvements, including a jogging path and playground equipment. Carol and her husband, Rick, also spearheaded the project of returning to its former glory the Rose Garden east of the Senior Center.

Highlights of the NPNA's early days were the annual winter holiday kick-off parties at the Senior Center and the June picnics in Rec Park. Our Neighborhood Watch program, including block and street captains, was called "the most well-organized and comprehensive" in the city by our then-police chief. (This took some serious planning and a bit of time in the days before email and internet communication, when everything was accomplished via telephone and door-to-door canvassing.) We took part in the Heritage Festival parade, with long-time board member Jim Hetzel in the guise of A. B. Normal, sporting a conehead and carrying a sign promising higher taxes and fewer services ("a promise I can keep!"). We were charter members of the Adopt-a-Street program, and for its significant efforts at improving our environment, the NPNA received an Ypsi PRIDE award in that event's first year. In 1997, our board met with members of four other neighborhood associations to form Ypsilanti Neighborhoods Organized Together (YNOT?)

The annual neighborhood yard sale each June was, and continues to be, an extremely popular event, drawing shoppers from as far away as Toledo and Grand Rapids. Some have called it a very sophisticated recycling system, where items go from neighbor to neighbor, year after year. In 1996 we got the idea to hold a "bargain sale" at the Senior Center the next day, all of the proceeds going to the restoration of Recreation Park. After the regular sale on Saturday, neighbors would bring their unsold goods to the Center where I and a few other volunteers would organize them. We knew from the start that it would be much too complicated to try to price everything and total the cost at the end, so we opted for an easier way with this slogan: "Take what you



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want and pay what you like.” This proved to be a huge success. The Summer 1996 NPNA newsletter described it thus: “So much merchandise arrived that we were not able to display it all for lack of space. The word ‘overwhelmed’ does not adequately describe our reaction. ‘Stunned’ and ‘panic-stricken’ are more like it. Lisa Walters walked around saying, ‘Whose idea was this?’ (It was hers.) Jim Hetzel asked, ‘Why didn’t the president VETO this idea?’ (Jim is the president.) And Tom Whitehouse said, ‘This lamp is groovy! I’ll take it!’”

Of course there were people who would carry out boxes of stuff and give us a dollar, but just as often someone would take one book and give us \$20.00. I specifically remember one woman who bought little and donated a lot, saying, “The enjoyment was priceless.” The first year’s bargain sale brought in \$750, and our total in 1997 was \$1062.12. The “pay what you like” plan worked very well and accounted for the unusual dollar amount ending in 12 cents; many people simply emptied their pockets.

The association’s quarterly newsletter informed residents of neighborhood news, local elections, houses for sale, nearby baby-sitters, kids’ play groups, local concerts and events, and reports for various committees, such as zoning/ordinance, fundraising, membership and greenscape. The physical newsletter itself is indicative

of the growth of the NPNA. We started with a half a page. By 1994 we were printing an 8 x 14 sheet, and in 1997 we had so much news to share that we enlarged our newsletter to a folded 11 x 17 piece. Our number of social events grew, with additions like the Ice Cream Social (1997), Halloween parade and Night of Lights.

Quarterly meetings held at the Senior Center featured a variety of speakers on diverse topics like landscaping, Halloween safety, historic preservation, city government, wild birds, homeowners’ insurance, and city ordinances. Speakers included such local luminaries as Tony Dearing, managing editor of the Ypsilanti Press edition of the Ann Arbor News; Barry LaRue, historic preservationist extraordinaire; then-newly appointed City Manager Ed Koryzno; Washtenaw County Circuit Court Judge Kurtis T. Wilder; Alan and Barbara Saxton, local experts on lawn and garden care; then-police chief Len Supenski and several officers; Steve



Normal Park signs were posted at the four corners of the neighborhood.

Gross, well-known antiques dealer and auctioneer; Jane Schmiedeke, Historic District Commission chair; Bill Nickels and me, local postcard collectors; and neighbor Lois Katon, who presented a wonderful history of the neighborhood from decades past. This presentation was videotaped and a copy was given to the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

Those of us who have been involved since the beginning are proud of the association’s accomplishments and, especially, its longevity. Before 1990, neighbors in many areas of the city often formed alliances when there was a problem to solve. Usually, and often in spite of good intentions, once the problem was solved, the association disbanded. This was not the case with the NPNA, where one of our earliest goals was to enjoy the neighborhood and each other, not just to tackle problems. In 1994, shortly after the city downsized from five wards to three, the Ann Arbor News published lengthy

profiles of the new wards. I remember one phrase that read something like “In Ward 2, where a neighborhood association still thrives more than four years after forming...” As then-president, that line pleased me greatly. And the association continued to thrive. In 2000, the State of Michigan joined with us in celebrating our 10th anniversary; in addition to a proclamation from the Ypsilanti City Council, declaring August 2, 2000, to be “Nor-



Then-Ward 2 councilperson Mike Homel, then-mayor Clyde King, and then-Ward 2 councilperson Jan Davis at the NPNA Holiday Kick-off party at the Senior Center, judging the dessert contest. December 1992.

mal Park Neighborhood Association Day,” we also received tributes from State Representative Ruth Ann Jannick, State Senator Alma Wheeler Smith, Governor John Engler, and U.S. Congresswoman Lynn Rivers.

As the decades have passed, new residents have volunteered to replace those neighbors who have moved away or grown older, and the board has continued to benefit from an influx of new members with enthusiasm and new ideas.

None of the charter board members still live in Normal Park. Some have passed on, some still live in Southeast Michigan, and others, including me, have moved out of state. But I know that we all have fond memories of the association and enjoyed our years in such a wonderful neighborhood.

(Lisa Walters lived in Ypsilanti for many years and was active in many community organizations and activities.)

Museum Advisory Board Report

BY EVAN MILAN AND KOREY MORRIS



Daneen Zureich gives a decoration the finishing touch.



Members of the EMU Baseball Team helped decorate the Museum for Christmas.

Now through Autumn, and on our way to winter, the Ypsilanti Historical Museum is beginning to settle into the routines we knew before the pandemic. Visitors to the museum will notice the work our Displays Committee have put into keeping seasonal accents on a continued rotation; flower arrangements and textiles have been placed to compliment the time of year. Our displays committee has, as well, taken on the task of reorganizing displays and storage to allow for an improved experience while visiting and to ensure the preservation of our collections.

Though we have returned to a semblance of pre-pandemic activity, we have spent our first few months of normal operations with a shortage of docents. Though we have prioritized operating at posted hours, we have been required to close on a number of weekends due to a lack of available docents. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we are now welcoming new members to our docent staff. Annie, Marlene, Steve, Liz, and Jenna thank you all for joining us.

We cherish the opportunities to work with other Ypsilanti organizations and institutions. This Fall semester our Museum and Archives Graduate Interns, Korey Morris and Rebecca Murphy worked with Nancy Bryk, professor of the Curatorship program at EMU, to dive deeper into some of our collections.

Students in this class chose an object and researched the families and stories associated with those pieces.

Now, with many of our former routines returning, it is with great enthusiasm we will again be donning the museum in its Christmas regalia. With help from the EMU Baseball team, the many pieces of our Christmas collection will again be descending after a season in storage. Visitors to the museum may notice that we will have a pared down display; with an emphasis on viewing pleasure, our Christmas Committee has gone to great lengths to determine how to best display pieces from our large collection of décor.

Finally, we at the museum owe a debt of gratitude to our local Boy Scout troop. The back porch, hidden from view just beyond the kitchen door, had been in a state of disrepair for some time. Though out of view to most, the integrity of the Asa Dow home requires that all elements to its structure are properly maintained in order for it to continue to withstand the ravages of time. One scout led the project to earn his Eagle Scout ranking, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. They completed the process of replacing the deteriorated boards of the porch with eye catching results.

We look forward to continued progress as we navigate through the end of these unprecedented times, and have great expectations for 2022.

The Life and Ancestry of Olive Pearl Green Boland Kersey Evans

BY THERON WILLIAMS KERSEY III AND JUDY JACKSON



Olive Green Evans - After her graduation from Michigan State Normal College in 1941.

Theron William Kersey III (a.k.a. "Brother Bill"), is the retiring pastor of the Community Church of God, 565 Jefferson St. Ypsilanti, Michigan. Pastor Kersey has served not only his church, but the community of Ypsilanti for 56 years. Theron is married to his lovely wife, Geanne, and has seven children: Pamela Oldes, Patricia Lewis, Margaret (Peggy) Miles, Julia Gilbert, Jennifer Jenkins, Janiston Sutton, Theron William Kersey IV. He has twenty-two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Theron is a member of The Washtenaw Regional Organizing Coalition (WeROC), the Covenant Pastors Fellowship, and the Council for Pastors. Theron was appointed by then Governor Jennifer Granholm to the Michigan State Prison Re-entry program in Washtenaw County. Theron was the past board director and current board member of Ypsilanti's Hope Clinic and Center (located at 518 Harriet St), which provides medical, dental and social services to Ypsilanti.

Because of his rich ancestry, Pastor Kersey, a history buff himself, wants to share his family stories, demonstrating how African Americans have always been a part of Ypsilanti, contributing to its growth through religion, industry, self-reliance and education. How many know that "Free" Black people lived in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County before the civil war, and before the United States annexed Michigan in 1837? Black people came to Ypsilanti as settlers from the East and freedom-seekers from the South. Ypsilanti also has strong ties to Black Canadian settlements, especially those settlements in the area of Upper Canada, now known as Ontario. Many of those Canadian settlements were in Kent and Essex counties, such as: Anderton, Marble Village, Union, Gambia, Haiti Village, Brion, Dawn, Elgin, Dresden, Shrewsbury, Puce, Elmstead, Little River, Gosfield, Gesto, Gilgal, New Canaan, the Matthew Settlement, Edgar, Mt. Pleasant, Rochester, Harrow, and the Refugee Home Society Settlement.

Pastor Kersey's first contribution to YHS Gleanings publication is to introduce you to his grandmother, who was born Olive Pearl Green, but many who attended Harriet/Perry School in the 1940s, and 1950s remember her as Mrs. Evans. We cannot talk to you about Olive unless we talk about her family history.

Olive Pearl was the child of Arthur Green and Nellie Jane McCurdy who were married in 1892 in Colchester, Canada. Olive Pearl was the youngest of five children. The Green family emigrated from Canada to the United States in 1903, when Olive was just a toddler. The family lived at 423 South Adams St. here in Ypsilanti.

The Pearl Family: Arthur Green's family had connections with Ypsilanti prior to their 1903 arrival. Arthur's maternal grandparents were Bazel (Basil) Pearl and Catherine Hilton Pearl. Census records report that some of Bazel's children lived in Ypsilanti and surrounding townships as early as 1879. The 1820 US Census reports that Bazel lived in Green County, Pennsylvania as a free man of color. The Pearls were a mixed-race family that moved westward from Pennsylvania because of the changing laws regarding interracial marriages. Bazel Pearl is listed as a resident of Ypsilanti and died in Ypsilanti prior to 1871. The Pearl family also appeared to move back and forth from Michigan to Canada, depending on the political climate and the availability



John Green, formerly known as Elisha Young.

of work. Bazel and Catherine's eighth child was Nancy Ann Pearl, who married Gilbert Green on March 13, 1868, in Essex, Ontario, Canada, and who became parents to Arthur Green and grandparents to Olive Pearl Green.

The Green Family: Arthur Green's paternal ancestry can be traced back to John Green, born in 1809. He was the son of a slave owner, Peyton Young of Virginia. John Green, formerly known as Elisha (Young) was born in either Kentucky or Virginia according to contradicting records. Family history says that Elisha married Charlotte Brown in 1828 in Mason County, KY. Charlotte lived on a neighboring plantation. From that union, three children were born: Gabriel Amos (1834), Candes (1835) and Polly Ann (1838). In 1837, Elisha, who had been ill, discovered that his master planned to sell him 'down river' to the Deep South. After a

plea to Charlotte's owner to purchase him, which was denied, Elisha left on his freedom journey, leaving his wife and children behind. Charlotte was pregnant with Polly Ann at the time. He tried later to rescue his family but was not successful. Charlotte never gained her freedom, and Elisha's son Amos also died enslaved. Elisha was reunited with Candes, who used the surname Green and Polly Ann, who lived in Ohio with Elisha in his later years. You can find more information about Elisha's escape to freedom at <https://amherstburgfreedom.org/green-family>.

When Elisha Young arrived in Canada, he shed his slave name Elisha and renamed himself John Green. John Green eventually married Melinda Main (known as "Dr. Molly") a midwife with mostly indigenous parentage. They had seven children together, Gilbert, Simon, John W., Elizabeth, Sarah, Harriet and Susan, all of which were born in Colchester, Essex, Ontario, Canada. All of John's and Melinda's children would eventually migrate to Ohio around the Cleveland area after the civil war, including Olive's grandfather, Gilbert Green, who died in Paulding, OH in 1925.

Gilbert Green married Nancy Ann Pearl in Essex, Ontario, Canada in 1868. Four children were born to that union: Arthur (1869), Joseph (1876),

Rosadelle (1876) and Fredrick (1879). We know that Gilbert and Nancy Ann moved back to Canada sometime between 1876 and 1879 because the first three children were born in Ohio, but the youngest child was born in Canada.

Arthur, Gilbert Green's oldest son, and the father of Olive, initially stayed in Ohio with his Aunt Polly Ann, who had a son his age. However, when Gilbert's sister Elizabeth came to visit her father and found that Arthur was still living there a whole year after his parents left, she insisted on taking him to Canada, believing that a boy should not grow up without his siblings.

Arthur Green married Olive's mother, Nellie Jane McCurdy on Jan 10, 1892, in Colchester, Essex, Ontario, Canada. They had five children: Chancey Carnell (1893), Bessie M. (1895), Jessie B. (1895), Wavey (1897), and Olive Pearl (1899). In 1903 Arthur moved his own family to Ypsilanti. Job prospects were limited in Colchester, if you did not want to farm. Arthur worked in the foundry in Ypsilanti.

The 1930 U. S. Federal Census reports that Arthur and Nellie were divorced, and Arthur was staying as a lodger at the age of 61 with Levi and Etta Harrison at 605 Watling Blvd in Ypsilanti. However, research shows that Arthur moved back into the homestead on 423 Adams St. in 1934 and lived there



Olive Green Evans directing an Ypsilanti school choir.

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Olive, Theron III, Pamela, Patricia, and Peggy.

until 1939.

Arthur died at the age of 71 at the Ypsilanti State Hospital, a mental health facility in December of 1940. He resided there a little over a year and had been suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis for two years, chronic glomerulonephritis (a kidney disease), chronic myocarditis (a heart disease), and insanity, according to his death certificate.

The McCurdy Family: Nellie Jane McCurdy was the daughter of Alvin S. McCurdy (another Ypsilanti resident) and Ida Artimessia Crosby McCurdy. In 1850 Alvin's father William Henry McCurdy made his home in Greene County Pennsylvania. William and Mary Pearl had two children: Alvin (1844) and Sarah Helen (1847). Mary Pearl passed away and William later married Mary Ann Grinage, they went on to have eight more children: Mary Jane (1849), Rachel Ann (1856), William Henry (1857), Minerva Alice (1859), Delipha (1864), Joseph M. (1866), and Georgie McCurdy (1868).

Alvin's grandfather was Nasa McCurdy who lived and owned land in Gilgal, a predominantly black village near Colchester, Ontario, Canada. In fact, Nasa donated land to the community to build the British Methodist Episcopal Church in 1852, which also served as a school until a schoolhouse was built next door. It was reported that inventor, Elijah McCoy, was an early student at that school.

Alvin's younger sister was Dr. Sarah Helen McCurdy. Sarah graduated from the Louisville National Medical College in

1882. She was the first woman of color to earn a medical degree in Kentucky and she went on to practice medicine with her husband Dr. Henry Fitzbutler. In fact, Henry was Detroit's first African American medical student. The two doctors were originally from Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada where they met and married and later moved to the United States.

Michigan marriage records show that Alvin McCurdy married Ida Artimessia (Artie) Crosby in Detroit in Sep 1883, but the family believes the real date was in Ontario, Canada, sometime before 1869. Alvin and Artie had eight children: Mary Etta (1868), William (1869), Elizabeth (1870) Fred (1872), Nellie Jane (1873), Lillian (1874), Ellen (1881), and Bertie (1882). Their oldest daughter Mary Etta was born in Pontiac Michigan, but Nellie Jane was born in Colchester, Essex, Ontario, Canada. In 1910, we see that Alvin and Artie are also living at 423 S. Adams St. Ypsilanti, along with their daughter Nellie Jane and her husband Arthur Green.

Nellie Jane McCurdy Green, continued to live in Ypsilanti after Arthur Green's death, until her passing in 1950. Arthur and Nellie Green were members of Brown Chapel AME Church, Nellie was a founding member of the Palm Leaf Club, along with Emma Anderson (President), Alice Anderson, Mary Jones, Mary Ann Kersey, Margaret McCoy, Amanda Moore, Elizabeth Martin, and Temperance Woods. The Palm Leaf Club was established on Oct. 30, 1904, initially as a group to assist in reducing the debt of Brown Chapel AME's new building. Later the Palm Leaf Club became an independent ladies' service club that could determine their



Crosby/McCurdy/Green homestead located 423 S. Adams in Ypsilanti.

own benevolent projects. The Palm Leaf Club is still going strong today.

Olive Pearl Green Boland Kersey Evans: Olive Pearl lived most of her life in Ypsilanti. The Pearl Family and the McCurdy Family were free blacks, who went to Canada to live their life on their own terms without the fear of being taken into slavery or restrictions on who they could marry. Members of the Green Family were born free after Elisha Young took his freedom and changed his name. Most of Olive's ancestors were educated, innovative, and actively pursued their happiness. Given this family history it should not be a surprise that Olive chose to be an educator and a musician.

Olive grew up in Brown Chapel AME Church and was a gifted singer, pianist and choir director. She was educated at Ypsilanti First Ward School. On July 14, 1918, she married Usman Boland of Ann Arbor, Michigan, when she was nineteen and he was twenty-one. Exactly, one year and one day from the time that they were married, he died of a distressed heart and appendicitis at the age of twenty-two.

Newly widowed Olive moved back to the family home at 422 S. Adams St. Three years later in 1921, she married Theron William Kersey, the choir director at Brown Chapel AME. The following year they had a son, Theron William Kersey, Jr. Unfortunately, that union did not last, and they divorced in 1926. In the 1930 census we see that Olive and her son were lodgers living down the street from the Green Family homestead at 434 S. Adams St. at the home of Florence Roderick.

Sometime after 1926, Olive attended a revival at the Church of God on Monroe Street. She was inspired and joined the church. Known as Olive Kersey, at that time, Olive became the church pianist and directed the youth choir. Olive's name appears regularly in the Ypsilanti column of the Detroit Tribune newspaper in the 1930s and 1940s, highlighting her musical events. Dr. L. C. Perry admired her artistry, so

much so that he asked her to collaborate with him to organize a community choir. Jointly they created the Musical Gems. Dr. Perry was the groups' manager, and she was the musical director. They booked and played at local and state-wide events. In 1941, the Musical Gems performed a musical play called "The Rise of the People" that was co-written by Olive and Dr. Perry. The play told the story of the struggle of the "Negro" from the time his forefathers entered America until the present (meaning the 1940s). The musical play was performed at the Church of God on Monroe Street.

At the age of 35, Olive decided to go to college to become a certified teacher. She attended Michigan State Normal College and obtained her Bachelor of Science in public school music education in 1941. Unfortunately, the music teachers' jobs were limited since she was only allowed to teach at Harriet School. White teachers could teach at Harriet School, but black teachers could not teach at white schools. Charles Eugene Beatty, the new principal at Harriet School, hired Olive to teach second grade, in fact Olive was



Gilbert Green, Nancy Ann Pearl Green, and Arthur Green (circa 1871).



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his first hire in his new position. Mr. Beatty encouraged Olive to establish the Harriet School Choir, which he promoted heavily, and received many accolades. The choir played at venues all over the state. Olive also directed an all-city ladies' choir made up of members from different congregations.

Olive's son, Theron William Kersey Jr., married and had three children, unfortunately the marriage was troubled, and the children were placed in foster care. Olive wanted to provide a home for them but did not own a house. It was exceedingly difficult for an African American to purchase a house, no banks would give her a mortgage. It was also hard for a single woman, so Olive had two strikes against her. She had to purchase land and find a builder. Through perseverance, she found a way. Pete Brooks and Herbert W. Francois agreed to sell her property that they owned, and Mr. Jackson, a white real estate developer, agreed to build the house and helped her to get a mortgage at Wayne Federal Bank. She built the house at 544 Monroe St. It was a two-bedroom house with no basement. That house allowed her to rescue her grandson, Theron William Kersey III, and provide him with a stable home. "She wasn't the best cook,



Olive Green Evans playing the piano at the Community Church of God on Monroe Street.

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but she could make a really good meatloaf,” Pastor Kersey said. He lived with his grandmother until he married and got a house of his own.

Olive did re-marry in 1947 to John Evans and was known after that as Mrs. Evans.

Mrs. Evans stopped teaching at Perry (Harriet) School in 1962. Some of her students are still living in Ypsilanti and remember her as being a strict teacher, some say that she was even mean, but a good teacher. Pastor Kersey recalls a time when one of her past students threw a rock through her window for flunking him in school.

Olive’s great grand-daughter Pam remembers her spoiling them with gifts at Christmas time and playing the piano at church. Mrs. Evans passed away May, 1976, she lived a full life.

(Judy Jackson is a retired Environmental Protection Agency IT Project Manager and an amateur genealogist. She is a member of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County and WeROC. Judy has one daughter, Aisha Espey.)



Theron Williams Kersey Jr., Olive Green Evans, and Theron Williams Kersey III.



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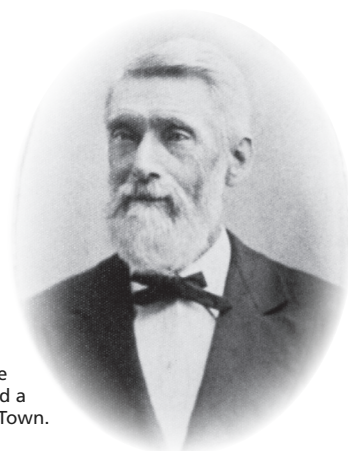
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The Strange Case of Thomas Ninde

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ

Thomas Ninde – Ypsilanti village attorney, judge, mayor, who had a street named for him in Depot Town.



This is a different kind of article but I wanted to write it to illustrate that news is not always what we read in media, especially when it is over 100 years old. I will tell you about the journey I took to find out what really happened that fateful day in 1898 when a young woman was shot point-blank in front of many witnesses at the corner of Adams Street and Congress Street (now Michigan Avenue), and the shooter, Thomas Ninde, walked away free without any charges, trial, or consequences.

It all began as a Xeroxed copy of a local Ypsilanti newspaper article from 1898 which was shared with me by an historian. The historian thought this was an example of the climate of Ypsilanti at the turn of the 19th century. His impression was that Ypsilanti was a small town ruled by a few families who married into other prominent families, held public office, served on bank boards, church boards, and lived in luxury in beautiful and elaborate showcase mansions while the remainder of the population of the village were poor people, often uneducated, working long hours for starvation wages at the many mills and foundries, or as servants. He argued that this article demonstrated this class distinction in Ypsilanti in the 1800s.

The article reads “Ninde Goes Free - Thomas Ninde, of Ypsilanti, who in a fit of jealous frenzy shot a waitress at the Hawkins House, Ypsilanti, because she was about to go home without giving any encouragement to his suit for her hand, will probably go free of punishment. Arthur Brown, acting prosecuting attorney Wednesday asked permission of the court to nolle prosecute the case on the ground that he did not believe a conviction could be had as the complaining witness refuses to prosecute and his discharge is requested by a large number of business men in Ypsilanti”.

2021 is the Year of the Woman, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Equal Rights Amendment for women. I lived through the “I am woman hear me roar” (as the Helen Red-

dy song goes) era and experienced the difference that the Equal Rights Amendment provided working women like myself. So, you can only imagine my outrage after reading this. I knew a little about Thomas Ninde: that he had been mayor of Ypsilanti, lived in a mansion on River Street, and a street in Depot Town is named after him. I imagined myself going to a Depot Town Association meeting with said article in hand and demanding that this small road be renamed, possibly for the woman Ninde had shot. Well, I decided that I needed to have more information in order to make an informed presentation and, of course, this required more research about this incident. What I discovered is that the information we read in the news is not always complete or correct, and that my assumptions about the shooting of a young woman in broad daylight on a busy street in a small town was much more complicated than I first imagined.

I ended up locating and carefully reading several newspaper reports of the crime, and in piecing them together, I arrived at something of the truth. I'll share this information with you so that you can draw your own conclusions. The Ypsilantian newspaper dated October 6, 1898, begins with the headline:

“A Jealous Man Shoots a Girl in Ypsilanti”. It reads “Sunday evening about 8 o'clock, Thomas Ninde Jr. who is well known in Washtenaw County by reason of his horse jockey proclivities, shot Miss Millie Young, a waitress at the Hawkins House, Ypsilanti, to whom he had been trying to pay his advances, but which she by no means encouraged. Miss Young had decided to return to her home in Carleton the next day and was out walking with Mr. Curtis, a barkeeper at the Hawkins House and, his wife, when

just west of Cleary College they were overtaken by Ninde, who had heard Miss Young's intentions. ‘Millie,’ said Ninde, ‘I want to speak with you a minute’. ‘What is it?’ ‘I want to speak with you privately.’ ‘If you have anything to say to me Tom you can say it in front of this lady. You have already created two scenes for me already and you must not create a third.’ Mrs. Curtis saw that trouble was brewing and took Millie by



Thomas Ninde's home at 305 East Cross Street when he came to Ypsilanti in 1855.

the arm as if to draw her away. As she was doing this, Ninde drew his revolver quickly and said as he pulled the trigger 'Well, here is the third then.'

Saved by Her Corset: "The wounded girl was taken to the Hawkins House and Dr. Hull was summoned. He found that the bullet had struck her just above the heart but was deflected by steel which caused it to glance and land in her chest." (Author's Note - Steel corset stays were manufactured in Ypsilanti by the Ypsilanti Dress Stay Company on Pearl Street and had recently been offered for sale to replace whalebone corset stays which were not very comfortable.)

The Story Becomes Stranger Still: "As soon as Ninde fired the shot he disappeared among some bushes on the lawn adjacent to Cleary College, less than a block away. He ran directly to the city lockup and knocked at the door.' (Authors Note -At that time the city jail was located on north side of Cross Street, adjacent and west of the Huron River). "Jailer Jackson opened it and Ninde said 'I want to be locked up.' Mr. Jackson inquired what was the matter but all Ninde would say was that he wished to be put behind the bars and he did not care what the law did with him. He was promptly locked up."

"Jackson reported that Ninde then slept like a baby that night and

seemed to show little interest that his victim was alive. He was taken before Justice Childs on Monday morning and waived examination, taken to the Washtenaw County jail where he was to await trial for attempted murder."

Then my assumptions about the crime began to unravel. It seems that this Thomas Ninde was not the same man as the influential judge, former law partner of Lyman D. Norris, and once mayor of Ypsilanti who had a street named after him. Instead, Thomas was his son who had grown up with wealth and privilege. We also learn that he has several uncles who were prominent attorneys - one in Detroit and another as a partner in the Crane Uhl law firm in Grand Rapids.

Thomas Ninde, Esquire: I wanted to find out more about Thomas Ninde Sr. and this is what I discovered. Thomas Ninde was born on September 10, 1815 in Baltimore, Maryland and educated at Genesee College in Lima, New York and was later admitted to the bar at Rochester, New York. We find a biography of him published in the proceedings of a Michigan Constitutional Convention of 1867, which he participated in, stating that Thomas moved from Baltimore to Lyons, New York, in 1823 and then to Palmyra, New York in 1847 where he served as post master from 1847 to 1853. From legal records we know that while liv-



Ninde Street in Depot Town runs from Cross Street and Photo Street.

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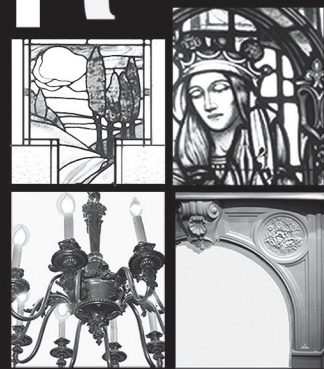
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Thomas Ninde, Jr. hid in the bushes around Cleary College after shooting pretty Millie Young.

ing in Palmyra, New York, he was married to a woman by the name of Caroline Moore (as is often the case, both Local wiki.org and information in the genealogy site Ancestry.com have the wrong wife listed for him, and his correct wife is authenticated through census records). Caroline Moore was born in 1822 and died at the young age of 43 in 1865 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Together they had three children: William George (1841-1842) who died as a baby; Mary Elizabeth (1853-1932); and John Caldwell (1857-1879). It is stated in Local wiki.org that they moved to Ypsilanti in 1855. Thomas Ninde had worked as an attorney on the famous Dred Scott Case, and moved to Ypsilanti to become a law partner with Lyman D. Norris, who also worked on the case prior to its many appeals. (Read more in my article *A Tale of Two River Street Men: Justus and Lyman Decatur Norris* in the Spring 2015 issue of the *Gleanings*). I discovered a land record indicating that Thomas Ninde of Palmyra, New York, purchased a modest home at 305 Cross Street two blocks from his law office in the Follett building in Depot Town, on September 13, 1855.

Thomas and Caroline Ninde moved to a much larger home at 307 River Street selling the modest Cross Street home on January 8, 1863, two years before her death in 1865. The River Street home is no longer there and has been replaced by a brick building which now houses Cultivate Coffee. In a well-researched article, published

in the *Historic Eastside Newsletter* from February, 1983, the author, Scott Kunst tells us that in 1859, two years after purchasing the Cross Street home, Ninde became the first Ypsilanti Village Attorney. In 1860 he was elected as a Probate Judge, serving from 1861-1865. He became a delegate to the Michigan state constitutional convention in 1867 and in 1878 was elected the 10th mayor of Ypsilanti. Kunst asserts that Ninde was much loved and admired and so much so that, in 1868, the city named the alley after him which went from behind Ninde home to Cross Street in Depot Town, and we know it today as Ninde Street.

Two years after the death of his first wife, Caroline, on the day after Christmas, 1867, Ninde married again to a woman by the name of Lois Crane (1847-1873). They had two sons – George Gillespie born September 25, 1868 and the Thomas Cole Ninde, Jr., who I am writing about, who was born March 10, 1871.

Thomas Ninde, Sr. died July 3, 1891 and I quote from his obituary published in the *Ypsilanti Commercial* of July 3, 1891. “Death of Judge Ninde – Tuesday morning, June 30th, Judge Thomas Ninde died at his home in this city, aged 76 years. No man in Ypsilan-

ti possessed or deserved a greater degree of confidence and respect of the public. He was a man whose deeds need not the covering of the mantle of public charity to make him honored of men.”

More About the Thomas Ninde, Jr. Case: The reporter for the newspaper, *The Ypsilantian*, adds to his story by explaining some reasons that Thomas Ninde might be despondent, saying that both his father and brother had died (Author’s Note: this is most likely referring to his brother George, who committed suicide eight years before) and that Thomas had no ambition to follow his father or uncles as lawyers but was well known as a jockey and horse trainer. At that time the Hawkins House Hotel was only a few blocks from the horse race track in Ypsilanti which we now know as Recreation Park. We also know that Thomas’ mother Lois had died in 1873. As for Thomas, “He has never seemed to care for anything but horses and gave his entire time to horse training. Only a short time ago he was severely hurt in a runaway, and this may have had something to do with his recent strange actions.”

An article published in another local newspaper, *The Evening Times* of



The elegant Hawkins House Hotel which was on Congress (Michigan Avenue just east of Adams Street).



Thomas Ninde, Jr. ran to the jail on Cross St. and insisted on being locked up

October 7, 1899, follows up with an interview with the wounded Mildred Young. The reporter describes her as a woman with an unblemished reputation. "Young had terminated her contract with the Hawkins House, and she and her sister were planning to return to their home at Carleton, Michigan the next day. A possible reason for her decision to leave Ypsilanti may have been the persistent and unwanted attention of Ninde. She had been kind to him, but had never returned his affections. A few weeks before he had made his attention more marked, and she had refused to have anything more to do with him...He had been drinking heavily for several weeks, but that night was said to have been sober."

Young continued to make steady progress after being shot, and a few days later was able to raise her arm and sit up in bed without pain. The bullet remained in her breast, though. The reporter from *The Evening Times* wrote "The sight of her pale but still bright and interesting face with its pretty brown eyes and hair, was enough to fill the hardest heart with profound sympathy for the young lady and deep anger against her assailant."

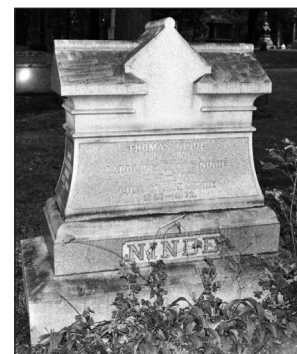
Young Millie's Side of the Story: Mildred Young provided her side of the story to the newspaper, saying "When I first knew Thomas Ninde I felt sorry for him and was pleasant to him for the very reason that he seemed in hard luck and in low spirits. Of course I never went anywhere with the man,

but frequently he would walk down the street with my sister and myself or would chance upon me when I was alone. He realized that he was making a failure of his life and knew that he had no name or standing in town. For he would often say by way of apology for starting a conversation, 'It certainly can't do any harm to talk to me.' As I say at first I tolerated his presence and would even talk with him seriously and urge him to stop drinking and try to be like his father, and do you know, the man would actually cry. He confessed to me that he had an ungovernable temper, but I never thought that it would lead to anything like this. To think that the man who I pitied and whom I was kind to on account of his hard luck should repay me by actually trying to put an end to my life. It is terrible. There is one thing I will say for him, though and that is that he was always entirely respectful in my presence and in every way a perfect gentleman."

Young told the reporter that if she could stand the physical strain, she would appear in court against him adding "Any man would could do such a thing was dangerous and should be locked up." Well, we know how that ended by the first newspaper article we read about Ninde. He went free because she refused to testify against him and the prosecuting attorney was swayed by numerous letters from influential citizens and relatives including judges and even a cousin who was a bishop. And then what? Like me I am sure that you want to know. Well,

we can be sure that Miss Young would never forget her experience of living and working in Ypsilanti, and through a search for Thomas Cole Ninde, Jr., the last place I was able to find him in history was the information that he died at Eloise State Hospital in Wayne, Michigan on February 23, 1926. Eloise State Hospital was the county hospital for the poor, sick, insane or a combination of all three.

So, I learned something about spending the extra hours finding the whole story and nothing but the entire story. However, you may be asking yourself the question that I still have and we will never know: did those influential men that wrote to the prosecuting attorney also contact the innocent and kind Millie Young to pressure her not to press attempted murder charges again young Ninde who had grown



Ninde Family Monument at Highland Cemetery.

up with wealth and privilege? Perhaps the historian who showed me this article is correct, and whichever

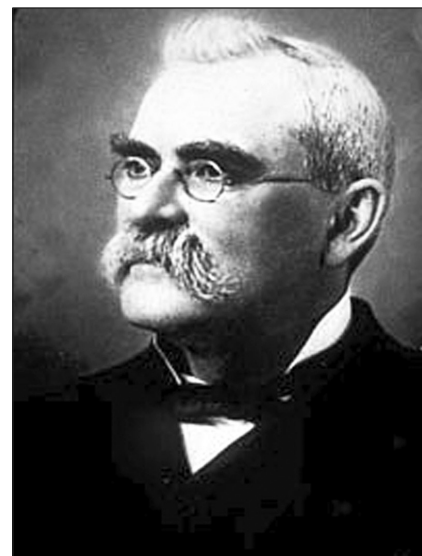
Thomas Ninde, father or son, it is still an example of the few families in Ypsilanti with wealth, political connections and power exploited the working class, people like Millie Young, and living by their own rules. This ends as many of my stories do with Thomas Ninde, Sr. and his wives and some of his children now reposing beneath an elegant monument at beautiful Highland Cemetery on River Street. Hopefully his two troubled sons, Thomas and George are able to rest in peace.

(Janice Anschuetz has lived in the Historic East Side of Ypsilanti for over 50 years. She is an Ypsilanti historian and a regular contributor of the Gleanings.)

McLouth Family of Ypsilanti

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ

Michigan State Normal College
Professor Lewis McLouth.



The McLouth family made significant contributions to the growth of Ypsilanti as both an academic and industrial city. Three generations of McLouth's invested their time and talent into helping make Ypsilanti into its unique blend of industries nestled in a college town. Here you will learn the family's story.

Lewis McLouth was born to Farley and Mary McLouth in Walworth, New York, on September 21, 1835. When he was less than a year old, his parents moved to a farm in Bedford, Michigan in Monroe County. McLouth's father died when he was 13 years old, and his mother sent him to a neighboring academy, and afterward to the Michigan Central College, now known as Hillsdale College. McLouth transferred to Oberlin College before enrolling at the University of Michigan, where he graduated in 1858. In the fall of 1859, McLouth became the principal of the Lapeer Seminary, where he worked for two years while simultaneously working on a Master's Degree from the University of Michigan, which he earned in 1861. McLouth then served as the principal of the Ontonagon public schools, and next became the principal at Monroe High School before accepting the position of superintendent of Monroe schools. McLouth took positions at Lapeer, Missouri University, and Battle Creek before being added to the faculty of the State Normal School in Ypsilanti in 1869 for the subjects of drawing, geography and history.

On December 30, 1860, Lewis McLouth married Sarah Ann Doty in Washtenaw County, who was born in Rochester, New York, on June 21, 1834. Sarah Ann Doty's parents were early

residents to Washtenaw County, and had come to Ann Arbor around 1840. Lewis and Sarah Ann McLouth had four sons and five daughters, all of whom were born in Michigan and most whom were born in Ypsilanti. In order of birth, they were: Fanny (1861-1862), Lawrence Amos (1863-1927), Bessie Caroline (1864-1882), Lewis Clark (1866-1942), Mary Celia (1868-1962), Sara Clara (1869-1942), Ida Bassett (1872-1899), Benjamin Fuller (1874-1947), and Farley Doty (1877-1923). Three of the daughters died at relatively young ages, while the other two daughters got married and raised families. All of the sons were successful in life, with two of the sons becoming college professors and two of the sons entering the business world.



Lewis McLouth and Sarah Ann Doty McLouth.

Lewis McLouth was a professor at the Michigan State Normal College from 1869 to 1885. He worked in the department of natural and physical sciences, and taught physics, astronomy and chemistry. While at MSNC, he was nominated by the State Board of Education to be the co-executive of the school. During his time at MSNC, the school grew from an attendance of 150 students to approximately six or seven hundred students. Large additions were made to the campus buildings, such as the original Pierce Hall, and McLouth's department was furnished with well-equipped physical and chemical laboratories. McLouth was largely responsible for a working astronomical observatory to be built and equipped largely by private funds. While at MSNC, McLouth was often called on by the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction to assist at or conduct teachers' institutes in most of the cities and villages of the state. At MSNC, McLouth was

instrumental in creating a curriculum for manual vocations, with MSNC becoming one of the first colleges to offer such courses. In 1884, McLouth was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree by Hillsdale College. In 1903, McLouth was awarded the degree of Master of Pedagogy by MSNC.

In 1885, McLouth was elected president of the Michigan State Teachers' Association. That same year, McLouth left MSNC after he was asked to organize the new department of Mechanic Arts at the Michigan Agricultural College in Lansing, now Michigan State University. While working at the Agricultural College, McLouth visited larger manufacturing cities where he met manufacturers for the purpose of creating an active interest in the new department of Practical Mechanic Arts at the Agricultural College. In the winters of 1885-86 and 1886-87 he also assisted at many farmers institutes.

On September 30, 1886, Lewis McLouth accepted the position of President of the South Dakota Agricultural College in Brookings, South Dakota, now known as South Dakota State Univer-

sity. As President, McLouth created the School of Pharmacy and changed the institution's focus from preparatory level work to college courses in the industrial and vocational fields. His time in office was marked by the continued growth and development of the school. The construction of many buildings occurred during his term, including North building, South building, the shop building, and many barns and farm buildings. McLouth also privately built Woodbine Cottage for his family's personal residence, which was later bought by the college and has housed almost all of the presidents since that time. Woodbine Cottage still serves as the president's residence at SDAC today, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. McLouth left SDAC in 1896 to become a professor at the University of New York.

Lewis McLouth died on March 15, 1909 in New Britain, Connecticut. His name was so widely known that his obituary was printed in the New York Times. He is buried in Connecticut. His wife, who died December 7, 1919

in the Bronx, NY, is buried at Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti.

Lewis and Sarah's son, Lewis Clark McLouth, grew up in Ypsilanti while his father instructed at MSNC. He followed his parents to South Dakota and enrolled at South Dakota State Agricultural College, where his father was President. While getting his degree, he instructed machine shop classes for two years. Lewis Clark McLouth received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1889. After graduation, he enrolled for a short time at Purdue University, then returned to Michigan to earn his Master of Engineering degree in 1891 from the University of Michigan. At U of M, he was a member of the Athenaeum and Crescent Literary societies. He was also an instructor of mechanical drawing and machine shop practice in his junior year. McLouth was also an athlete, as he was a varsity member of the baseball and football teams and was a winner of the 100-yard dash and high jump gold medals.

After graduating from U of M, Lewis Clark McLouth launched himself into the working world. He accepted a position as the superintendent of the Central Manual Training School at Cleveland, Ohio. Lewis Clark McLouth could have been the next Henry Ford. Graduating from U of M with an engineering degree just as the automobile industry was starting, McLouth landed a job at the Eastman Automobile Co. in Cleveland, Ohio. There he patented an automobile body design that would have formed the basis for the company's first automobile. The job at the Eastman Automobile Co. didn't last long, however, and the lure of a young lady named Cornelia returned Lewis Clark McLouth back to Ypsilanti.

Lewis Clark McLouth married Cornelia Eiline Howland on June 14, 1893 at the Presbyterian Church in Ypsilanti. Cornelia was born on October 10, 1866 in Ypsilanti, the daughter of John Newton Howland and Sarah Patrick Stebbins Howland. The couple had four children born in Ypsilanti: Lewis Howland (1894-1940), Lawrence New-



Cornelia McClouth and Julia Jennings in Costumes for the 1823 Centennial Celebration.



Lewis Clark McLouth and Cornelia McLouth's House at 502 W. Forest Avenue.

ton (1898-1961), Donald Benjamin (1901-1954), and Bruce Farley (1904-1992). The family resided in a large house at 502 West Forest, which was long ago torn down for classrooms for

Eastern Michigan University.

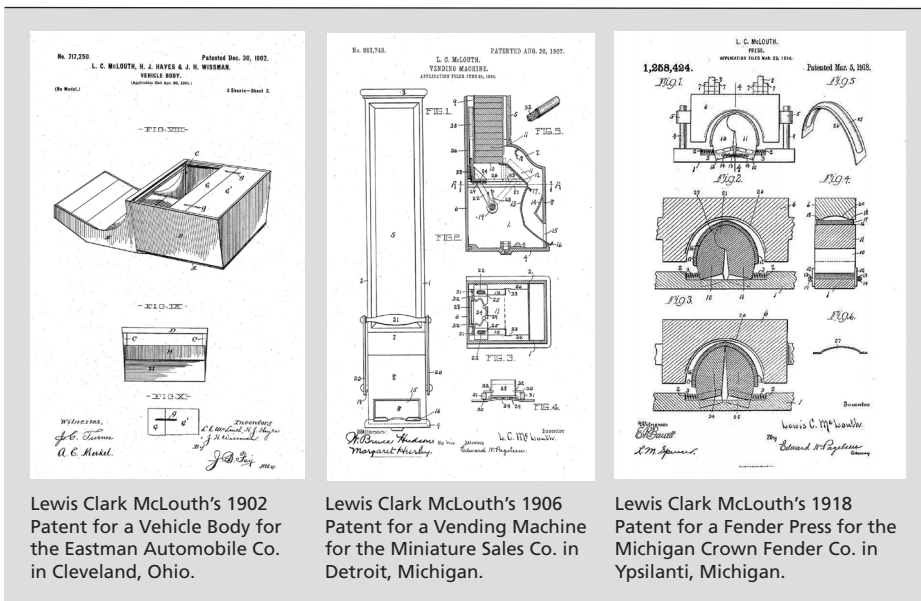
Lewis Clark McLouth worked as a traveling salesman for the Miniature Sales Co. in Detroit. During his time

with the company, he utilized his engineering skills to patent a vending machine, which was undoubtedly used to dispense the products produced by the Miniature Sales Co. Lewis Clark McLouth eventually was named president of the company.

In 1907, there was a nationwide bank panic known as the Knickerbocker Crisis. This financial crisis caused the New York Stock Exchange to fall almost 50% from its peak the previous year. There was also a nationwide recession, so panic occurred, and there were numerous runs on banks throughout the country. The 1907 panic spread to many state and local banks, and many businesses entered bankruptcy. As a result of these tough times, the Ypsilanti City Council took action to lure more businesses to the city.

The council voted to purchase the Swaine malt house building at the corner of Forest Ave. and River St. for \$3,000 with the intention to give the building to the Miniature Sales Co. The Swaine malt house had ceased operation in 1904 several years after the owner Frederick Swaine had died, and the building was only being used to store ladders built by the Michigan Ladder Co. a few blocks west on Forest Ave. The city also voted to build an \$11,000 building for the Ann Arbor Hay Press Co. In return, the Ypsilanti City Council expected that these companies would both agree to employ at least 25 people for five years, and that the Miniature Sales Co. would bring its other factories to the city of Ypsilanti. The Ann Arbor Hay Press Co. told the city that it expected to have a workforce of 100 employees, and the Miniature Sales Co. indicated that it would have a workforce of 75 employees. The Miniature Sales Co. deal fell through, though, and the Miniature Sales Co. never moved from Detroit into the malt house building on Forest Ave. in Ypsilanti.

Lewis Clark McLouth left the Miniature Sales Co. and got back to invent-



Lewis Clark McLouth's 1902 Patent for a Vehicle Body for the Eastman Automobile Co. in Cleveland, Ohio.

Lewis Clark McLouth's 1906 Patent for a Vending Machine for the Miniature Sales Co. in Detroit, Michigan.

Lewis Clark McLouth's 1918 Patent for a Fender Press for the Michigan Crown Fender Co. in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

ing parts for the emerging automobile industry. He invented a one-piece running board and fender combination that could be outfitted on Ford automobiles. Lewis Clark McLouth was a member of the Civil Engineers Club of America and the Society of Automobile Engineers. The Michigan Crown Fender Co. was organized in August of 1914 with its principal office at Ypsilanti. The company initially occupied the current Miller Motors building at the corner of Cross St. and River St., but moved into a brand new 80' x 400' location at the corner of Huron St. and Lowell St. in 1916. The company was financially backed by the Bennett brothers, who owned the Daisy B.B. Gun business in Plymouth and had other family business operations in Ypsilanti. The Michigan Crown Fender Co. sales office was established at the Kerr Building in Detroit.

The Michigan Crown Fender Co. plant in Ypsilanti manufactured fenders, hoods, running boards, and other sheet metal products for automobiles and trucks. In 1922, the Michigan Crown Fender Co. purchased the Jackson Stove Co. and moved the plant to Ypsilanti for the manufacturing of heaters and ranges. The Jackson Stove Co. was renamed the Michigan Stove Co. The Michigan Crown Fender Co. ceased operations in 1924 and transferred the assets of the automobile parts plant and stove plant to the United Stove Co. More can be read about the Michigan Crown Fender Co. in the Winter 2013 issue of the Gleanings in the article "The Saga of the Men Behind 'Ralphie' Parker's Coveted Red Ryder" by Bryce Ford.

Within four years of the closing of the Michigan Crown Fender Co., Lewis Clark McLouth and his wife moved to Royal Oak. Lewis Clark McLouth died July 31, 1942 and is buried at the Grand Lawn Cemetery in Detroit, Michigan. His wife Cornelia passed away Novem-

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Advertisement for the Michigan Crown Fender Company located in Ypsilanti.

Michigan Crown Fender Co. Advertisement.

ber 19, 1949 and is buried with her husband.

Two of Lewis Clark McLouth's sons established notable manufacturing businesses. In 1917, Lewis Holland McClouth was one of the three founders of the Crossman Stamping Company, along with George J. Crossman and E.A. Sanford. The company built a plant on River Street in Ypsilanti, where it produced high grade sheet metal stampings and tool dies. During World War I, the Crossman Stamping Company built over one million artillery wheel parts. This is yet another example of Ypsilanti contributing to the Arsenal of Democracy.

In 1934, Donald Benjamin McLouth founded the McLouth Steel Co. with headquarters in Detroit. The company was once the 9th largest steel manufacturer in the United States, and had plants on Jefferson Ave. in Detroit, Trenton and Gibraltar. The company remained in business until 1996 when it was sold to the Detroit Steel Co. The Detroit plant was demolished in 2018.

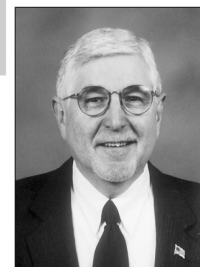
So, there you have the story of the McLouth family from Ypsilanti. Three generations of McLouths lived in Ypsilanti and made significant impacts in the areas of education, automobiles, machinery and steel that contributed to the growth of this area and also this nation.

(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti in the historic Swaine house at the corner of Forest Ave. and River St. He is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



McLouth Steel Logo.

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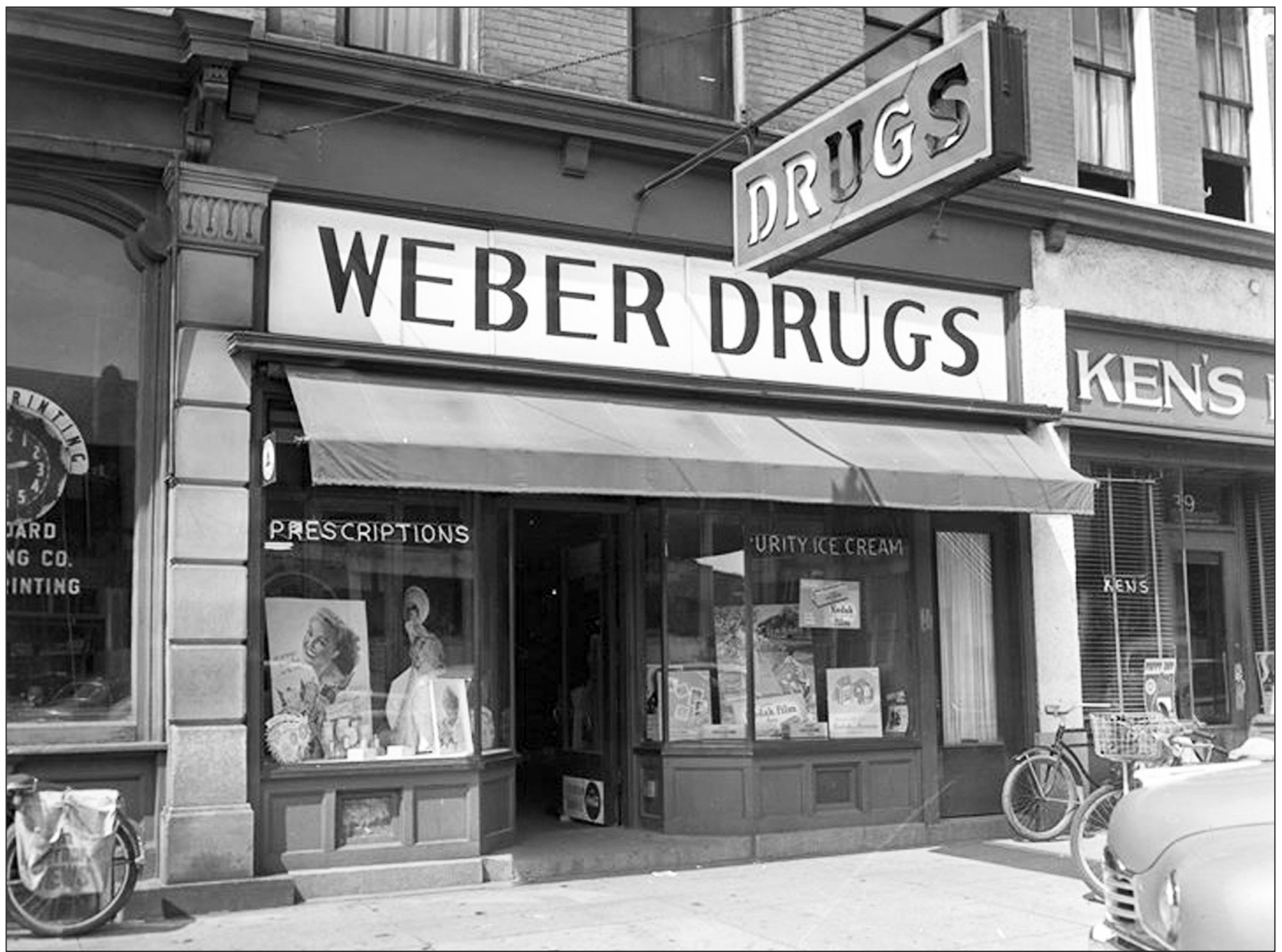
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Front view of Weber Drugs in Depot Town.

ICE CREAM

in Ypsilanti

BY MARCIA MCCRARY

At the October 10, 2021 Quarterly meeting of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, the speaker was Marcia McCrary, a member of the Board of Trustees and Archives volunteer.

Maria Davis suggested that she speak on the topic of Ice Cream shops as a followup to her speech on the early breweries of the city, and that ice cream be served!

Marcia reviewed some of the history of ice cream, from the time of Nero to the US Armed Forces being the world's largest manufacturer in 1943.

She selected four shops to talk about:

Gaudy's Chocolate Shop at 24 N. Washington Street from 1896-1944: George Gaudy came to Ypsilanti in 1882, served

as mayor from 1904 to 1905, and was renowned for his chocolates!

Weinmann-Matthews DrugStore with various locations including 118 Michigan Avenue and 36 N. Huron from 1898 to 1957: E. Fred Weinmann and Ernest D. Matthews began their drug store business on N. Huron Street, adding C.W. Rogers in 1903. Their sons eventually became part of the management team as well. By 1945 their store was known as "The Rexall Store". The September 1974 issue of "The Newsletter" (the publication that became the Gleanings) highlighted these two stores.

Michos Confectionery from 1921-1958: A picture in the Ypsilanti Archives showed Anastasios G. Michos in 1911 in front of what was called "The Greek Store" on Michigan Avenue.



Top of menu from Michos Confectionery. (top left)



Ernie's ice cream parlor. (Ivory photo collection Bentley Library) (bottom left)

Joan Weber donated this set of ice cream dishes (soda, banana split and sundae) to the YHS Museum. (bottom right)



The Michos family continues in the food business today with their involvement in the Cottage Inn Pizza in Ann Arbor.

Weber's Drugs in Depot Town at 37 E. Cross from 1921 to 1981: Joan Weber was a cataloger for the libraries in the Ann Arbor School District, she and Marcia have known each other since 1967. Joan's parents, Alfred and Caroline Weber, bought the drugstore in 1921. Joan worked there as a teenager and has donated a set of ice cream dishes (soda, banana split and sundae) to the Museum. She has lots of fond memories of her mother making the chocolate sauce to serve on the sundaes and learning to make malted milks and sodas.

Some of the other stores mentioned were Ernie's at 220 W.

Michigan, Miller's Dairy Farm Store and Zwergle's Normal Book store on campus.

A mystery came out of her research into ice cream stores on the south side of Ypsilanti, with Amos Washington being one of the names mentioned. Marcia encouraged that more work be done on this topic.

The ice cream served after the speech was provided by Go Ice Cream, 10 N. Washington Street. Rob Hess began in 2009 making ice cream at home. Zingerman's helped him with their commercial license, and he sold ice cream from his bicycle, before crowd sourcing his store front! Visit his walk up window to try some!



Here and There Around the Village

PART 1

BY C. TINO LAMBROS

Our "Village" had many places to go to and things to do.

We created and adapted those activities.

We found ways to keep busy and mostly out of trouble.

FOOD: Growing, hungry, teens were always looking for eateries. On the west side we hung out at McNaughton's Drive-in on Washtenaw (now Dom's Bakery). They had the best French fries and loud, exciting pin ball machines. The north had the Chick-Inn. On the east was Gabriel's Hoagies, both still going strong. None of us even knew what a hoagie was, but we quickly found out. Stan's Cafeteria on Ecorse, (later a Big Boy), Kluck's and Bill's hot dog stands are still favorites. Downtown Terry's Bakery continues to be the spot for a good glazed donut, while I loved lunchtime cherry tarts from Superior Foods on West Cross. Haab's was always a special place to stop. We could buy a large

bag of their French fried shoestring potatoes for 27 cents that lasted the walk all the way to Recreation Park. Charlie Carras always gave you plenty to eat at his restaurants, first the Ambassador Restaurant. I believe that was on the southeast corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron Street. Then he moved a little north across Michigan on Huron with Carras's, next to my Dad's bar, The Ypsi Tavern.

Other eateries I recall – Gingham Inn (My sister called it the Gingerham Inn), Casa Nova, The Town and Country – this one was only around for a little while. They had 15 cent hamburgers. My friend Mike Dickerson could put away a dozen or so at a time – especially if he could win a bet on

how many he could eat. The losing bettor paid. But with Mike's eating reputation, he never got many takers. An ice cream stop at Miller's (KFC on Michigan Avenue now) old-fashioned ice cream parlor was always a treat, especially coming home from the Happyland 4th of July Carnival at Waterworks Park. And the Michigan Avenue/River street DQ, - first I recall was Bill and Betty's, then school friend Bill Madden, then Kevin Kerr. Now...another new owner.

ENTERTAINMENT: When we weren't going to the Martha Washington or Wuerth Theaters, the Ypsi-Ann Drive-in on Washtenaw (now a strip mall) was a great place to go. There was also the Wayne Drive-in and the Scio Drive-in. The Martha Washington was our "neighborhood" theater now the Art I. (now that's quite a transition). Kids movies, top run blockbusters, and those Saturday matinee Western Serials. I was hesi-



Kids living in north Ypsilanti often hung out at the Chick-Inn.

tant about attending the Wuerth Theater as it had a dubious reputation.

We grew up at the tail end of the “Golden Age of Radio”. We listened to the great radio shows – Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, The Great Gildersleeve, The Shadow, Dragnet, Our Miss Brooks, The Whistler, The Lone Ranger, the Soap Operas, variety shows, and more. We sat in our darkened living room with only the light from the radio and the lights reflected on the walls from passing cars outside. You could let your imagination run wild and visualized the program settings and characters as you listened.

A favorite local radio show from WHR, 1600 AM (WAAM) was “Ollie’s Caravan”. This was the “Top 40” record hits of the day. Ollie “Scooby-do” Mc Laughlin was the host and he had his “Scooby-do Club” for his faithful listeners. On occasion he would interview some of us on his show, stopping in unannounced.

T.V. was emerging in the 50’s and many radio shows moved to T.V. We had 3 major channels, sneak in Windsor’s channel 9 and if the wind was blowing in the right direction, channel 11 or 13 out of Toledo, or channel 6 from Lansing. Six may have been the only channel to get Lion’s home game, snowy reception at best. Games were “blacked out” if you lived too close

to Detroit. Those tall, spiny aerials perched on your roof were quite the sight. Of course, some folks would climb to their rooftops to manually turn the aerial to find the best reception. Later the wealthier amongst us purchased mechanical turners. Next came indoor antennas sitting atop your tv. One learned to expertly wrap those “rabbit ears” in aluminum foil,

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then adjust the “rabbit ears” just right for maximum reception. A skill lost to modernization! It was easy to keep track of three channels and the shows you wanted to watch.

In elementary school most of us went home for lunch and had lunch in front of the tv with Soupy Sales – White Fang, Blacktooth, Willy the Worm, Soupy Sez, and more. Soupy had an adult evening show at 11:00 PM nightly. Soupy became the “poster boy” for pie-throwing. Detroit’s own Soupy became nationally known for this and every famous star who came to town had to be hit in the face with a Soupy thrown pie – including the likes of Frank Sinatra. Soupy even had a morning show we could watch before school. We were the first to be Mousketeers and hurried home from school to see Annette Funicello. Then we were Bandstand groupies with Dick Clark while local stations had their own Bandstand imitations. For most of us, Ed Sullivan and Dick Clark were the two main sources we had to see our favorite stars “live and in person”.

Sunday was The Ed Sullivan Show. He was hokey but you were exposed to a wide variety of entertainment. You learned to appreciate talent in all entertainment arenas. Tuesday night was The Red Skelton Show. Even into college, if you didn’t get to the T.V. room early, you had to stand. Yes, a communal tv room.

It was good, wholesome entertainment. It was certainly syrupy and clean as we watched “Leave it to Beaver”, “Ozzie and Harriett”, “Make Room for Daddy”, and more along the same genre. Even the “violent” police, westerns, and war shows were quite pure. Comedians on the public media were funny, but never used unacceptable language. Their humor and popularity had staying power for decades. This was before four-letter words became funny. It is said their nightclub acts were quite different from their radio and T.V. presentations.

Allan King, Milton Berle, Jackie Gleason,

It was good, wholesome entertainment.
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son, Jack Paar, Steve Allen, Joey Bishop, Bob Newhart, George Carlin, Buddy Hackett, Bob Hope, Johnny Carson, and others. They could tell jokes, drag out a story, and get laughs without using profanity, even though Carlin and others pushed the censors. It wasn’t that their humor lacked off color content, but they did it professionally using innuendos, looks, pauses, and other devices. Audiences had to use their intelligence and creativity to enjoy and appreciate the subtleties.

Michigan State Normal College (EMU) was another place to hang out. The Detroit Lions used their facilities for preseason camp in the 50’s and early 60’s. Briggs Hall was a locker room. The team stayed in the dorms. The

practice fields were along the Huron River Drive corridor, fenced in and tree-lined so someone driving by could not see in very well. We spent many hours watching the pros work out. Everything was quite open. The Lions had great teams then, winning several championships and having many All Pro and Hall of Fame players on those teams. We got to know them on a first-name basis. They used our bikes and gave us rides to and from the practice fields. At that time the roads were dirt, soft sand, and after a rain, mud. Nothing like riding on the back of your bike with a 250-pound lineman pedaling your little thin-wheeled English bike. Some bikes actually survived. The last days of practice they would give away their practice footballs. I got to know Yale Lary and he handed me one.

The players gave autographs freely. Their bubblegum card pictures were taken right at EMU’s old athletic fields – now the Mc Kenny Union parking lot. Yes...we got bubble gum with our trading cards! It’s probably just a coincidence but the Lions haven’t been the same since they left Ypsi.

As cars replaced bikes and walking, our “Village” expanded. There were new areas to explore, not that we went very far. After all gasoline got as high as 25 cents a gallon. We hoped for a price war and the price may fall to a nickel a gallon or less. And with our summer jobs paying \$1.50 an hour, a gas war was big stuff. All your passengers chipped in a quarter and you could get enough fuel so your parents didn’t notice how many miles you put on in a night. Of course if one got a summer job at the Ypsi Ford Plant or the Rawsonville Ford Plant, one could earn close to \$4.00 an hour. That was BIG money! Few of us had our own cars, but we managed and had a great time.

(Tino Lambros grew up in Ypsilanti and has written a series of stories of his experiences growing up that are included in a series in the Gleanings.)



Parachute Jump of Ellie Rose

BY JAMES MANN

The DC-3 at rest in the snow covered farm field.

The morning of December 24, 1944, was bright and clear with a sun filled sky above Ypsilanti. It was a good day for a flying lesson. Eleanor “Ellie” Cramer, later called Rose, was 18 years old that day and she wanted to earn her pilot’s license. The lessons she was taking cost her half of her \$44.00 weekly paycheck from the A & P, but the thrill made it worth the price. She asked her neighbor and flight instructor, Don Gridley, for a lesson.

The two arrived at the Ypsilanti City Airport at Carpenter and Morgan roads, where she met an acquaintance, Don Silkworth, who told her she would need to wear something warmer than the jacket she had on and loaned her his fur lined flight jacket. She was also wearing a pair of wool slacks and under the slacks, a pair of nylons, a rationed item during the war years.

She complained about carting a parachute along, because having to sit on the parachute left her with little space in the cabin. Because of her 5-foot 6-inch height her head would hit the roof of the cabin. In fact, they rarely wore parachutes. The lesson that day including learning how to recover from a tailspin, a parachute was mandatory. The plane was a Taylorcraft owned by the Ypsilanti Air Service. The airport runways were not paved, and it had snowed, so the plane had been out-

fitted with skies.

Eleanor successfully completed her lesson, and after about 45 minutes, they began the return to the airport. Eleanor was about two miles south of the Ypsilanti airport, and flying straight, as she oriented herself for the landing. What they did not know, was they were not alone in the sky.

Another plane was in the sky, a DC-3, in service with American Airlines, on Flight 21, scheduled to fly from New York to Chicago, with an intermediate stop in Detroit. The flight left Detroit with 15 passengers on board, most of them U. S. servicemen. The plane was also carrying a load of mail. The pilot was Captain Victor Evens, with First Officer J.

Richards Lyons. Stewardess Mary Brauer had just served lunch to the passengers. The flight path was to follow red civil airway number 12. The weather was good, and the plane proceeded westerly at the assigned altitude of 2,500 feet. First Officer Lyons was leaning forward to tune the auxiliary receiver, when he saw a yellow plane coming down from above.

“Something yellow coming from above the left wing flashed past and the ship veered to that side,” said Captain Evens later.



Interior of the DC-3 after the landing.

"I took over the controls and landed in a farmer's field."

Stewardess Mary Brauer told the passengers to fasten their seat belts. She noted that there was no panic.

"I kept the landing wheels retracted but they extended enough from below the fuselage so that they protected the bottom of the plane from damage."

He set the plane down on the snow-covered rolling hills of the Gilbert Dicks farm, at 1183 Willis Road. Careening some 800 feet through the snow and plowing through three fences before coming to a halt. No one on the plane was hurt.

"We had just completed a regular instructional flight and were headed back toward the Ypsilanti airport," said Gridley soon after, "when I heard a bursting noise and found the entire tail of my plane was gone."

"I decided to abandon the plane, so I told Miss Cramer to bail out."

"It was the first time she had ever worn a parachute; on such flights we rarely wear parachutes. As soon as she realized the difficulty we were in, she went quickly over the side at 1,200 feet. I saw the airliner ahead of me about a mile but didn't realize that it had hit us or that it was in trouble."

As Eleanor perched on the strut of the plane, Gridley told her to jump and then count to ten, before pulling the ripcord. Pulling the ripcord too soon could cause her parachute to become entangled with the plane. Years later, Eleanor recalled she jumped from the plane, and counted, "1-7-10."

The parachute opened and she floated down to earth, as she did, she saw how the earth was covered in deep snow for miles around her. She did have one item of concern, that is, the nylons she was wearing, after all, Eleanor had to stand in line for an hour to buy them. She had not been told how to steer the parachute, but did manage to avoid a grove of trees, and landed safely in a snow-covered cornfield.

Gridley bailed out at 700 feet and landed near Eleanor in

the field. The plane crashed on the Murray Farm, about five miles east from where the DC-3 had come down. The wreck burned and was a total loss. A ski from the plane was found imbedded in the left wing of the DC-3.

Tom Bennett and his wife Blanche had heard the roar of the DC-3 as it passed over their house on Willis Road. Tom and his father-in-law made their way through the snow to the plane and were relieved to find everyone unharmed. Tom led the passenger and crew to the Bennett home, where Blanche, with the help of neighbors and friends, plied them with coffee and food. The mail on the plane was collected by Tom's son, who carried the mail to the house on his sleigh, and there guarded it until collected by postal authorities.

The crew and passengers were taken by bus to the airport at Willow Run, where they were to take a plane to Chicago. The weather prevented that plan, and the passengers and crew were taken to Detroit and completed the trip by train.



From left to right First Officer J. Richards Lyons, Stewardess Mary Brauer and Captain Victor Evens.

Soon after a crew from American Airlines removed the wings from the DC-3 and hauled the craft to Willow Run. A new left wing was flown out and attached to the plane. Then the plane was flown to New York for an overhaul and returned to service in January of 1945.

Eleanor returned for another lesson two days later, but this time the skies got stuck in the snow and tipped the plane over breaking the propeller. Eleanor got out of the plane, and said, "That's it." She never had another lesson flying

again. Soon after, she took up downhill skiing.

An investigation into the accident concluded Gridley was not at fault. He continued flying and died in 1998 at the age of 92.

Eleanor married Art Rose and continued to live in Ypsilanti. She kept the ripcord from the jump for the rest of her life. She passed away in 2014.

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

Small Churches of River Street

BY JAMES MANN

Some buildings on River Street appear to be out of place, not fitting in with the rest of the cityscape. One such building stands at 802 North River Street. It is a square block of a building and seems out of place with the line of houses that line the street.

The story of this building begins on August 7, 1948, when twenty-three people joined to form the charter of the First Christian Church under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. LaMar. The LaMars purchased the lot at 803 North River in 1949 and the basement was laid the same year. The corner stone was set in 1950. Building of the structure was carried out by members of the Church community from 1949 through 1951. The Dedication service was held on April 1, 1951. Several Improvements were made to the building in 1957 and in 1960 a parsonage was purchased.

The First Christian Church continued to hold services here until 1967, when a new building was completed at 4859 Ellsworth Road. Today the community, The Church of Christ, is now on East Cross Street. The building on North River be-



The First Christian Church at 802 North River Street. Today it is the AA Meeting House.



The Evangelistic Mission Tabernacle at 311 North River Street under construction in 1941.



The Ypsilanti Community Church at 311 North River Street after the fire which destroyed the building. Today the site is a parking lot.

came the home of The Spiritual Israel Church and Its Army, which continued to hold services there into the 2000's. Today the building at 802 North River is the AA Meeting House.

At one time there stood at 311 North River Street, on the corner of North River and Photo Street, a small church building. This was built in 1942 by members of the Evangelistic Mission Tabernacle. Work on the building was completed by July of that year, and six months later in December of that year, all debts were paid off. The community celebrated by a special service, which included the burning of the mortgage.

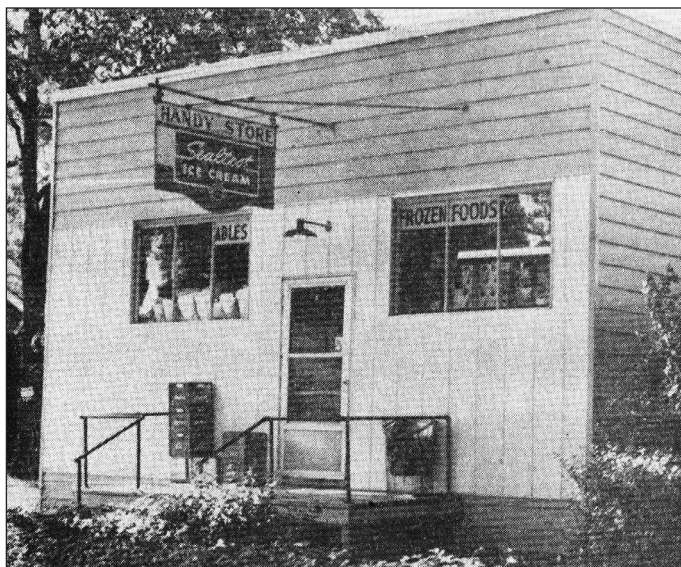
"The lovely new building," reported The Ypsilanti Daily Press of December 30, 1942, "with brick veneering, has a main auditorium seating capacity of 500. The beautiful semi-indirect lighting plan, against the paneled ivory ceiling, presents a most pleasing atmosphere. The elevated oak flooring, with holstered opera chairs, affords much comfort in the services. The sidewalls have beautiful auburn-colored windows, and a combination of buff sand finished plastering and plain colored knotty pine wainscoting. The large 40 by 16 foot circular platform, with walnut pulpit desk and large grand piano of ivory and old gold color, offers ample space for the speaker, choir and orchestra."

The Evangelistic Mission Tabernacle continued holding services here into the mid-1960's and then it was occupied as the Wesley Temple. Then, by 1980, it was the Christ Temple Church. Finally, by 1990, it was the home for the Ypsilanti Community Church. The building was destroyed by a fire in the early 2000's. The cause of the fire was electrical. The building was demolished, and the site is now the second parking lot to the Sidetrack Restaurant.

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

Home & the Handy Store – The Village Core

BY C. TINO LAMBROS



The Handy Store was located on Sheridan Street.

Wherever we roamed around the “Village” we always returned to our homes and neighborhoods. There were very few sleepovers. Our families, friends and lives centered on home. It was our gathering place, our shelter, our security. It didn’t matter where we gathered, we felt these core values.

There always seemed to be something going on at the Lambros residence. Our yard was good for hide and seek, flashlight tag, kick the can, baseball and football. Sidewalks were for roller-skating, hopscotch, jacks, bike races, and jumping rope. Most of our games were not gender specific. We took part in all activities. In fact, Mom was the only one that could double-Dutch jumping rope and she always won the pogo-stick competition. We played a form of porch baseball throwing a tennis ball at the steps. A home run was when the ball landed on West Cross in the air. The porch itself was for relaxing and meeting neighbors, reading, marathon card games or Monopoly, and getting away from the heat inside the house. With Dad working late and Mom rising early, someone was awake all but a couple hours a day.

Whatever the activity, wherever we were, after a tough day of serious play, be it hot or cold, one place we were sure to end up was the neighborhood grocery store. Most neighborhoods had their own – Summit, Abbey’s, Oakley’s, Howard’s, John’s, the Tower Market, and more. On the West side there was only one place to go - Dykman’s Handy Store. It was an institution. Edd and Laura Dykman owned and operated the Handy Store for many decades. Edd was definitely one of the “Villagers” that helped raise generations of youngsters. The Handy Store was on Sheridan Street, about a half block east of Oakwood.

Those grocery stores were great places; narrow aisles, shelves packed with all the food choices one needed. Items on the top shelf were within reach with those long poles with the “clamping claw” on the end. As one walked around, the weathered, creaky wooden floors announced your where-

abouts. Fresh vegetables and fruits, canned goods galore, dairy products, soft drinks, and at Dykman’s, fresh meats. Edd did his own meat cutting and had sides of meat hanging in his walk-in freezer.

Ed greeted everyone with his wide, friendly, inviting grin - a warm welcome. You knew you would receive quality service and Edd would back it up. He knew everyone in this part of the “Village” and everyone knew Edd. My first memories of the Handy Store began about the time I started school. Edd gave me the nickname “Fat Boy”. Being a bit chunky, I suppose it fit. In high school I outgrew that nickname with my “fit”, teen body. In later years, however, I grew back into it. In all the years I was “Fatboy”, I never once felt it was derogatory or that I was being singled out. It was Edd’s way and only Edd ever used that nickname.

The Handy Store was a block away or through our backyard. If Mom sent me to the store at night, I could go through the dark, threatening alley one house away, or the dark shadowy backyard between the neighbors’ garages. As a preteen, I always made a game going to and from the Handy Store. A loaf of bread was a football and I was a great running back. I was a Korean War soldier escaping the enemy or secretly running through enemy lines. Sometimes I just ran as fast as I could to avoid being too scared for too long. The Handy Store even improved my imagination.

If money was short for the week, Mom would send us to the store and have Edd “put it on the bill”. Edd would write it out and file it away. The weekend would come and the “bill” was paid. No hassle. No questions. Just complete trust and faith in your neighbors. Most neighbor villagers received this trust. True honesty. Real friendship. The perfect neighbor. The father-figure. The favorite uncle. The brother-in-law everyone hopes to have.

Edd knew everything that went on. He was a part of so many families. Families grew, moved away, and came back for visits. The Handy Store was a must stop. We all updated Edd

on what was happening in our lives. I'm sure he was invited to countless graduations, weddings, anniversaries, and so many special gatherings.

As kids, we hung out there a lot. At first there was a small front porch about ten feet wide. Sometimes we blocked the entranceway. Later a full-width porch was added that we felt was just for us guys to hang out. There was a definite respect for the Handy Store. Guys like to feel their invulnerability and sneak a candy bar or a bag of chips from a store. The Handy Store was off limits. It was not an option. No matter who came into our neighborhood it was made perfectly clear that there would be no law breaking at the Handy Store and we would protect its premises. It was everybody's store. Dykman's just happened to own it.

If one was adventuresome or needed a few coins for a Pepsi, a trip under the porch might be in order. Many a coin slipped through the wood slatted porch. If desperate enough one could fight through spider webs, strange creatures and general filth under the porch. It seemed worth it at the time.

One special neighbor in the late 1940's was Phyllis Diller. She lived near the corner from the Handy Store on Oakwood where Sheridan ended. This was long before she became the famous comedienne. When she and Fang (her famous ex-husband) moved away, she kept in touch with the Dykmans. Even when she became a celebrity her years at the Handy Store remained important to her. She never forgot the kindnesses of the Dykman's. If she was performing nearby, Phyllis always sent a couple of choice tickets to the Dykmans.

When Phyllis was interviewed on National Public Radio (NPR) the owner of the Tap Room called in to say when he bought the tap room from John Faris, John told him of the many times Phyllis sat at the bar telling jokes and entertaining the patrons. Ms. Diller confirmed this, and then went into a story about Edd Dykman and the Handy Store. As a young wife, she had little or no cooking skills. She could not put together a dinner for her family. Every morning she would walk to the Handy Store. She and Edd would put together a dinner for her to take home and prepare. Edd would suggest the menu, give her cooking instructions, put the meal together, and Phyllis would prepare it that evening. This turned out to be a daily routine for the two of them. Ms. Diller praised and thanked Edd on this show for all his help and patience. She never forgot the good will and respect she received from Edd.

Edd lived the life many of us strive for. He was always there to help in times of need. We learned much about life and how to treat people from Mr. Dykman. All through high school I had a yearly bet with Edd. We bet a steak dinner on how I would do in wrestling. Each year I would visit with my money to buy Edd a steak after losing our yearly wager. Each year I returned home with my money and a steak. There was



Phyllis Diller was a visitor at The Handy Store during the time she lived in Ypsilanti.

never a discussion. He wouldn't listen that I didn't earn it based on the bet. Edd waved it off and I had a great meal.

The Handy Stores of the world provided more than just food and drink to the "Village". It gave us friends and neighbors like the Dykman family. It was another of those warm places to go. It was a welcome center to one and all. It was another place one returned to if one were away. Everyone fit in. Everyone was cared about and welcomed. The Dykman's raised more than their wonderful family. They helped raise hundreds of children and touched the lives of so many families.

Edd and Laura happily lived out their lives; their children, grandchildren and hundreds of friends stopping in their home to visit them. Our families – our neighborhoods - our Dykman's Handy Store – all played a big role in who we were and who we would become.

Edd, Laura and The Handy Store were our Village Core.

(Tino Lambros grew up in Ypsilanti and has written a series of stories of his experiences growing up that are included in a series of the Gleanings.)



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