

John Burton-

A Life of Service

BY JUDY JACKSON



John Burton and Kirk Profit in 1989.

The former mayor and long-time councilman John Burton gave his life in service of Ypsilanti. He was a lover of people and a hater of discrimination. His folksy manner and wit were disarming and effective. His competitiveness and team spirit came from his love of baseball; his negotiating skills were learned with his work with the UAW; and his civic responsibilities came from his St. Louis upbringing.

John Burton was not only Ypsilanti's first African American mayor, but one of the first to be elected in the state of Michigan. John was one of the savviest political leaders of his era. He was also proof that the strongest leaders are the ones that have been trained to work well within groups, whether that means

working in teams, committees or councils. With his skills he brought the community together for the common good. He was a go-to advisor when people needed to get things done.

His Formative Years: John's parents, George and Dahlia Burton, met, married, and lived in Guthrie, Oklahoma in 1897. Guthrie was established in 1887 as a railroad station on the Southern Kansas Railway. In 1889, fifty thousand potential settlers including African Americans came to stake unclaimed lands around Guthrie, and John Burton's parents and grandparents were part of that migration. Dahlia's family

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FALL 2021

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

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

From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY BILL NICKELS

Our museum and archives opened right after the 4th of July. Graduate Intern Korey Morris wrote and posted the following description of our first weeks on our Facebook page ,

During the month of July, both the museum and archives were open Tuesday through Saturday from 2 to 5. Starting in August, we were able to schedule weekend docents to resume our traditional Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays) hours. Museum docents continue to be in need, particularly on the weekend. Applications and training appointments are available by calling the museum office at 734-482-4990. Becoming a docent is a great way to learn Ypsi's history! Historian James Mann's "Friday Night at the Movies" is expected to resume this fall. Look for a starting date on our Facebook page.

Our effort to tell the Ypsilanti African American experience is gaining momentum. Author Judy Jackson has her second article in this issue. London Gooden, a new volunteer writer, is working on two different articles which will appear in future issues. The daughter of Amos Washington, Beverly Washington, spent an afternoon reminiscing about her dad who was a part owner of a Harriet Street grocery store and community leader.

Board member Tom Warner will put the reminiscences together for the winter issue. In order to explain the African American full-service shopping district on Harriet Street, Beverly took us on a tour.

Greg Fournier was in town from California for a successful book signing in our Archives on Saturday July 17th. He had copies of his two most popular books, (the John Norman Collins story) and his recent (Detroit's mob during the 1930s). Along with Ypsilanti history books by local author James Mann, both of Greg's books are for sale in our Archives Gift Shop.

The carriage house behind the museum has been rental property with two apartments since it was converted to this use in the 1920s. When the Ypsilanti Historical Society purchased 220 North Huron from the City of Ypsilanti, we assumed the role of being a landlord. The rents subsidize the operation of the museum. Both of the apartments turned over long term occupants recently. We were fortunate to have Board Secretary Pattie Harrington, her husband John, and Jerry Jennings do the updating the apartments needed.

We recently received a picture from YHS member Donna Peebles showing the old Ypsi High School and her Ypsilanti High School friends partic-



Greg Fournier at the book signing in the YHS Archives on July 17th.



Initiation: circa 1948, left to right: Marilyn Furtney (Miller), Mary Scheffler (Massey), Donna Peebles (Sienko) and Joan Spannuth.

ipating in a high school initiation. Pictures like this photo that include an Ypsi area building and/or area Ypsilantians and/or a local activity are perfect additions to our Archives. They can be brought to our Archives any Tuesday through Sunday from 2 to 5 or mailed to Archives, 220 N Huron, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197.

Our fall Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday October 10th at 2 p.m. An accompanying program will tell the history of ice cream parlors in Ypsilanti and will feature a cup of local ice cream for all attendees. It will be held live at the Ladies Literary Club on North Washington Street and virtual using Zoom. COVID taught us that many of our out-of-state mem-

bers enjoyed attending too. Look for a September post card announcing the meeting. For virtual attendees, Zoom links will be emailed to the membership.

For the convenience of our membership, PayPal will become an option for paying dues and donating starting later this year.

It has been a busy reopening! It is a participatory Board of Trustees, a working Museum Advisory Board, our two Graduate Interns provided by EMU, and many volunteers that brought the Museum and Archives back to life and again serve the Ypsilanti community.



Harriet Street Tour, left to right: Judy Jackson, Beverly Washington and Tom Warner.



Pattie & John Harrington assisting with the updating of Apartment 224 in the YHS Carriage House.



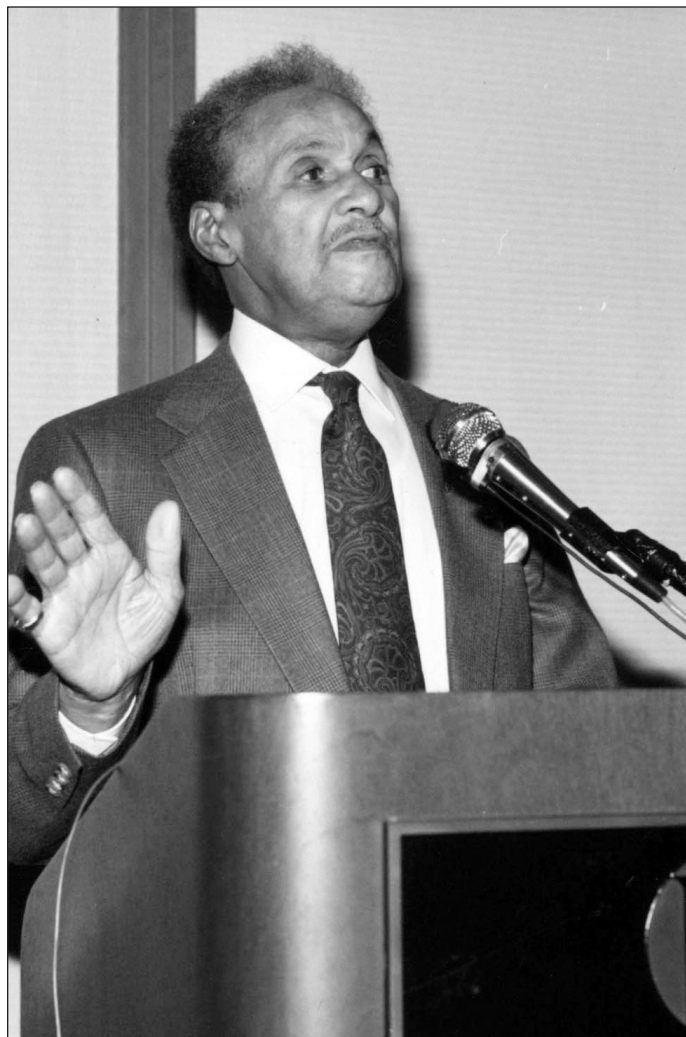
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John Burton held many leadership positions during his lifetime.

traveled from Tennessee and became farmers and business owners, George's family came from Arkansas.

At the time when George and Dahlia were married, Guthrie was the territorial capital of Oklahoma. When Oklahoma was annexed as a state in 1907, Guthrie was the state capital. However, in 1910, the Oklahoma state voters decided to move the capital to Oklahoma City which significantly reduced Guthrie's economic growth.

Also in 1907, Oklahoma state legislatures passed a series of "Jim Crow" laws, which sent a lot of African Americans fleeing the state of Oklahoma. This was around the time that George and Dahlia moved their growing family of four children: Ira, Sadie, Jessie and George from Guthrie to St. Louis, Missouri. John and his sister Goldie Burton were born in St. Louis. Even though Missouri was a former slave state, it was a border state, and had citizen sympathies to both the North and the South. At the time of the Burtons arrival, St. Louis was a thriving city with strong African American citizen groups, and influential African American newspapers that advocated equal education and equal housing

for its African American citizens.

According to the 1910 census, George, John's father, was an educated man who was a steadily employed Teamster. George rented a house for his growing family at 2609 Papin Street in Ward 15 of St. Louis, MO. John was born on July 18, 1910. According to the 1920 census, George had died leaving Dahlia a widow and head of the household. John was nine years old and only his older sister Jessie and younger sister Goldie were still living at home. After George's death, John's mother earned her living as a hairdresser.

John attended Charles H. Sumner High School. Sumner High School was the first African American high school established west of the Mississippi River and is still standing and operational today. He then went on to get his Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Stowe Teachers College, now known as Harris-Stowe State University.

Moving to Ypsi: John arrived Ypsilanti in 1936, following his brother, Irv Burton, who had already migrated to Michigan. He was hired at the Ford Rouge plant as a tool and die maker. In 1939 John married his wife, the former Willie Vaughn. In 1940 he rented a house at 219 South Adams in Ypsilanti and brought his mother from St. Louis to live with he and Willie. In October of that same year, he was drafted into the military during the World War II conflict.

Kaiser-Frazer Motor Company, located in Willow Run, hired John Burton as a tool and die maker; later he served as chair of the Union Bargaining Committee of Kaiser-Frazer Local 142 UAW.

In 1954, John Burton was appointed to the staff of the International UAW by Walter P. Reuther and worked for 21 years as a regional service representative. During his UAW career, John Burton negotiated labor contracts for local unions in Wayne, Washtenaw and Monroe counties. He also served under Roy Reuther as a Political Action Committee Coordinator for the 1st and 13th Congressional Districts. In 1975, at the time of his retirement, he was a regional education director.

It's All About Baseball: John was a professional baseball player. He started his sports career as a catcher for the St. Louis Stars which was part of the Negro National League. In the 40's in Ypsilanti, he played on the Ypsilanti Cubs along with Floyd "Flick" Kersey, Ben Turpin, Fred Grady, Jimmy Wilson, Richard Denard from Ann Arbor, J.W. Anderson, Leo Anderson, George Berry, Wally Franklin, Chester Gray, Sylvester Coleman, Johnny Bass, Harvey Fann, Clyde Bick, Pud Perry, and pitcher, Jack Williams. The Ypsilanti Cubs played in Major League parks while the local teams were on the road. The players also travelled to play for other teams, when the Ypsilanti Cubs were not playing, such as the Toledo Cubs and the Detroit Cubs.

In 1945, John was one of the first African Americans to play Class A professional baseball in Michigan. In his later years

The only thing that stopped John Burton's service to the community ultimately was his death after an extended battle with cancer on January 30, 1992. He was fortunate to receive many accolades before his departure.

he managed a baseball team.

Politics was his Destination: John Burton was first elected to the Ypsilanti Board of Aldermen in 1946. A new city charter was adopted in 1947, which called for at-large election of a City Council rather than the old ward system. John Burton was elected again in 1947 and served until 1948. John came back and won the election in 1950. He won re-election every two years after that until he decided not to run in 1966. He was elected Mayor Pro-Tem in 1949-1950 and again in 1959-1960.

In 1964, John Burton was elected as official delegate to the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, NJ.

In April of 1967 John Burton decided to return to the Ypsilanti City Council and was chosen mayor by the council. He was the first black mayor of Ypsilanti and one of the first to be elected in the state of Michigan. John Burton, Floyd J. McCree of Flint, and Henry G. Marsh of Saginaw were all elected as mayors within a few months of each other. All three mayors had similar stories. They all were long-time members of city councils (commissioner in McCree's case). They were all elected by their colleagues instead of city-wide elections because their communities had city manager forms of government.

Featured in the July 1967 issue of Ebony Magazine, John talked about the 18 grueling years he spent on Ypsilanti's City Council. He described the other members as being generally hostile to him because of his race. He said that one of his liberal colleagues once even told him, "My fa-

ther helped free the nig****". His election was notable nation-wide and he even received a congratulatory telegram from Vice President Herbert Hoover.

John Burton was re-elected in 1968. During his tenure as mayor, he was able to complete the construction of North Huron River Drive and the bridge that was built crossing the Huron River at Factory. He also had the city of Ypsilanti designate 220 North Huron Street to be used as the Ypsilanti Historical Society Museum and Archives.

Continued with Civic/Public Service: In 1967 John Burton was the City of Ypsilanti's representative to the Washtenaw County Board of Supervisors. He was a member of the Inhalation Therapy Committee of Washtenaw Community College and the Scholarship Committee of Wayne State University.

In 1969, he was appointed to the newly created Board of Control for the University of Michigan Medical Center. The Board of Control replaced the University Hospital Board.

John served on the Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Southeastern Michigan, Michigan Public Health Department Advisory Council, and served on the board of directors of the Washtenaw United Way. He served as co-chairman of the 15th District Democratic Organization, was delegate to the National Democratic Convention, trustee of Chelsea Community Hospital, regional chairman of the Michigan Civic League and member of the advisory councils for adult education at EMU, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University.

In 1985, the then Governor Blanchard appointed John Burton to complete the unexpired term of Dr. Warren Board as an Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Regent. In 1987, he was reappointed to a full eight-year term. He served as EMU Regent Board Chairman in 1989 and 1990, and then served as Chairman of the Student Affairs, Finance and Faculty Affairs Committees on the EMU Regent Board.

Service, Service, Service: John Burton was a member of Second Baptist Church in Ypsilanti. He was a member of the NAACP and the Omega Psi Phi fraternity. He was a member of the Business and Professional League and, the National Urban Coalition Committee. John was member of the Advisor Committee for Washtenaw Community College and a member of the Royal Arch Masons, Shriners, Knights Templar, and Elks Lodge.

The only thing that stopped John Burton's service to the community ultimately was his death after an extended battle with cancer on January 30, 1992. He was fortunate to receive many accolades before his departure.

(Judy Jackson is an Ypsilantian, recently retired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a member of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County and a new contributor to the Ypsilanti Gleanings.)



The front view of Mellencamp's store prior to renovation.

Mellencamp's – The Center of My “Village”

BY C. TINO LAMBROS

I kept telling myself that last day, “*It’s just a clothing store.*” I stood in line with my new clothes. It was a strange feeling. I looked around the store. The shelves were almost empty. The bare, creaky wood floors – the stairs to the basement – the now empty display windows. My sales friends cashed me out for the last time. The day Mellencamp’s closed.

My mind wandered back to an earlier time, over three decades before. My relationship with Mellencamp’s began when I became a Cub Scout. Mellencamp’s was the place in my “village” to get scouting supplies: down the stairs, back in the corner - uniforms, camping equipment, handbooks, merit badges. There were two Scout items I just had to have – a canteen and a waterproof match holder. The canteen was before carrying a water bottle was fashionable and I have no idea why I needed a waterproof match holder. I wasn’t a camper or a smoker or an arsonist. But, I remember feeling pretty cool possessing those two things.

Next came Little League. My coaches were the Goodsmans brothers. They were a terrific combination of personal skills, integrity, and baseball knowledge. Harold was my first principal in my teaching career. Clarence was part owner of Mellencamp’s. My relationship with Mellencamp’s grew even more. The “Village” was never far away.

Whether riding my bike or driving the family car, a trip down-

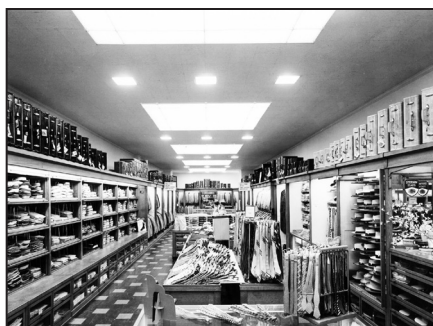
town included a stop at Mellencamp’s. Mostly these stops were personal in nature and not shopping. My good friend Ron Seamans and I would visit together. We would drop in on Clarence Goodsmans and Al Walton. They had a way of focusing on you and only you when talking to them. Mr. Goodsmans could look you square in the eye, not wavering from you, and make you feel like you were the only person in the world. He had a warm, friendly, welcoming smile, a twinkle in his eye, and a handshake as strong and as powerful as any. Clarence was sincere and had a wonderful sense of humor. Trusting. Loyal.

Mellencamp’s was the place to buy high school athletic apparel – sweaters, varsity jackets, and accessories to go with them. Clarence set me up with my YHS jacket. I picked out several additions to make it really neat. He allowed me to work out my first experience with credit and time payments. I must have been 16 at the time. He had faith in me that I would be able to pay for the jacket.

My source of income was cleaning Dad’s bar, The Ypsi Tavern, once a week. This was after closing on Saturday night, or more technically, Sunday morning after 2:30 AM. I would restock the coolers, take the empty cases downstairs, sweep and mop the floors, clean the tables and counters, clean the restrooms, and other odd jobs. For this I was paid \$4.00. Monday I would make my \$2.00 payment at Mellencamp’s. I still had \$2.00 spending money for the rest of the week.

Eventually the jacket was paid off and I felt great pride and personal satisfaction in the accomplishment. Thinking back, this was an incredible gesture of trust and support from Mr. Goodsman.

Twice a year Mellencamp's had their amazing "Clearance Sales." Ron and I always called them "Clarence Sales." Most items were half price or better. Name brand quality suits and sport's coats, shirts, ties, sweaters, everything was on sale with no limits. I especially took advantage of it when I began my teaching career. Clarence would take care of me in fine fashion and often added more discounts. He knew my sizes better than I did. He chose wonderful combinations for me. It was a positive shopping experience. Although there are those of my family and friends who believe



A view of the inside storage shelves and display cases in Mellencamps.

Clarence set aside a personal pile of hard to get rid of clothes, just for me. They knew I would wear and buy any combination, especially if Mr. Goodsman said so.

Ron and I knew our friendly stops would not always be surface chats with "Hi, how are you's" and light talk. Clarence, at any moment, could

give you that deep, penetrating look, a serious expression would come across his face, and out would come a thought-provoking, in-depth question. If you were on the receiving end, there was no place to hide or look. Your eyes were locked to his. There was no floundering or avoiding a response. How's school? College? Your grades? Aren't that good? Why? Your athletics? Why aren't you in the lineup? How's your marriage? Divorce? Family? Do you have job choices? Why? Where? Explain!

And yet, we went back time after time – for over thirty years – from junior high school well into adult life. It was inevitable that sometime during our visit one of us would be on the hot seat. As difficult as it may have been, it was o.k. When we were talking with Clarence we were the most important




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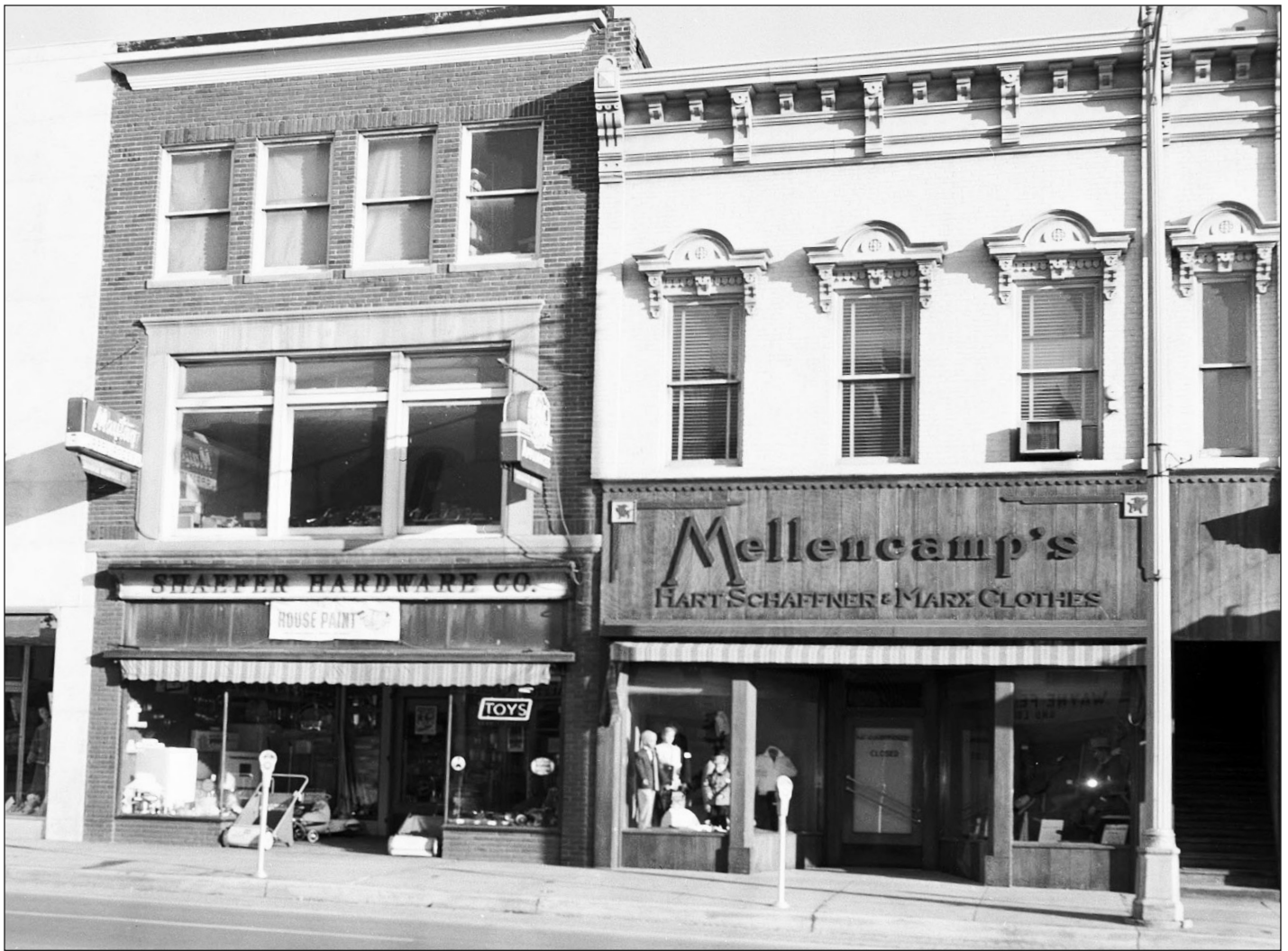
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The front view of Mellencamp's store after renovation.

person in the room. He cared about you. He truly wanted to know about you and what was going on in your life. He wasn't judgmental or nosey. Clarence wasn't preaching to you. He was being a friend, a confidant, someone we could trust. Ron found a way out and moved to Holland, Michigan and left me to fend for myself.

Ron and I golfed with Clarence and Al on many occasions. We took our mighty, youthful swings and put our impressive drives well off the tee. Clarence and Al took their easy, controlled, mature swings, even disposition, and generally beat us badly.

Nothing lasts forever. The closing of Mellencamp's was one of those things. With my last purchases all packaged up, I turned and looked around one last time. Mellencamp's! This was the center of my downtown village. It kept me coming back. So many memories. So many talks. We had been through so much together - high school, athletics, graduations, college, marriage, divorce, remarriage, families, careers.

I felt badly walking out that last day. One last Clarence smile, eyes twinkling, and a very firm handshake to put his

finishing touches in place. It was eerie, a little because a great downtown institution was closing, but it was more. It wasn't right. It was like taking advantage of an old and loyal buddy in his time of despair. You don't do this to friends. Al and Clarence were Mellencamp's to me. Two friends. Two class guys. They gave themselves to their job - care, attention, genuine interest in you.

It was my "village" center. Everything else radiated from Mellencamp's. As we grow older we experience change. We move on. I don't think I've been to a clothing store on my own since my Friend closed. My wife does my clothes shopping for me. It's not the same. Different sales people every time.

I walked out onto Michigan Avenue as the door closed behind me. Another chapter in my life in the "Village" completed. I walked to my car, put my purchase away, and told myself - "It's just a clothing store." NEXT - Home and the neighborhood.

(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.)

Museum Advisory Board Report

BY EVAN MILAN AND KOREY MORRIS

On May 15th Evan Milan was elected Chair of the Museum Board of Advisors subsequent to the resignation of Jim Curran, who had previously held the role. Jim Passed away on May 21st after a brief battle with cancer; his years of service provided to the Ypsilanti Historical Society have been invaluable. For filling the interim role of chair, and for assisting in the transition of the role, we are indebted to Nancy Wheeler and Molly Wright, thanks to you both for your time and effort.

After a long period of dormancy, activity is picking up in the museum. The welcoming of visitors into the museum began for the first time since May 13th 2020 on July 1st of 2021. We have been encouraged by the amount of enthusiasm that we have seen by the community; groups have come through nearly every day during our hours of operation. Though we are again welcoming visitors into our facility, it is important to remain vigilant while COVID-19 remains a menace, and the Delta Variant is sweeping across the nation. At this time, we do request that all visitors, as well as docents, wear a face covering while touring and when in close proximity to others. Molly Wright has donated a box of disposable masks for those who come in lacking PPE.

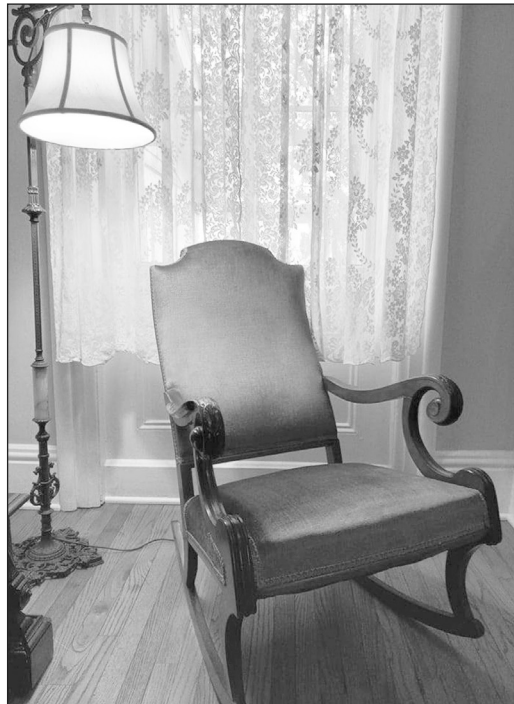
Guests coming into the museum will notice that many changes have occurred since they last walked through. We are excited to have recently acquired a new piece into our collection; a humble green rocking chair newly resides beside the dining room fireplace. Though this chair is not a native to Ypsilanti, nor was the man who rocked in it, the ideas that may have been formed from its repose deeply impacted the city. This chair was from the estate of Henry Ford, who's farm industry, Willow Run Bomber Plant, and that which became the Rawsonville Assembly Plant all contributed to permanently placing Ypsilanti in the annals of American Histo-

ry. The chair was donated to the Museum by Bill and Mary Claire Anhut.

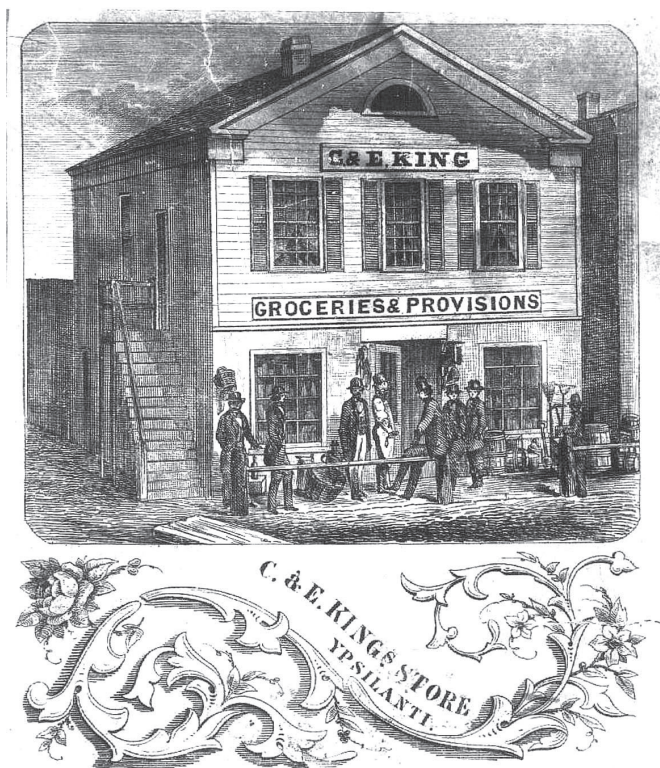
We will continue to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Woman's Suffrage in the United States as the display to which it is dedicated was erected shortly before the closure of the Museum in May of 2020. On display is an example of the clothing of a Suffragette, an American flag of the period bearing 48 stars, and a number of artifacts representing the movement. In addition to the celebration of Women's suffrage, we will continue to celebrate diversity throughout Ypsilanti's history. We will be in the process of bringing forward the stories of People of Color whose stories have not yet been properly told.

While these activities have taken place, our Museum Graduate Assistant, Korey Morris, has been tirelessly working on a number of projects. The Board of Trustees for the society wants to work on increasing our community engagement, so Korey is working on creating mobile and hands-on exhibits that our society can easily set up and use at farmer's markets, street fairs, and other Ypsilanti events. Work-

ing with the Ypsilanti District Library, Korey and Bill Nickels have installed a Native American Stoneware exhibit on the library's second floor that encourages research on the collection's physical and cultural histories. Working with Rick Katon, Korey and Rick are in the process of updating our docent reference materials to make volunteering at the museum an easy and enriching experience. Korey is also assisting Pattie Harrington in updating our current brochure, to make sure it is reflective of our entire collection and all of the services available here at the museum and archives. If you would like to volunteer in the museum, please reach out to Korey. We would be delighted to have you join us in sharing Ypsilanti's history.



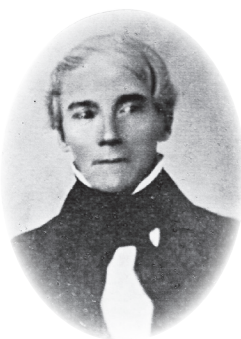
Chair donated to the Ypsilanti Historical Museum by Bill and Mary Claire Anhut that was previously owned by the Henry Ford Estate.



Sketch of the first King store which burned in the 1850s.

The Kings of Ypsilanti

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ



George King came to Ypsilanti from London and started a much-needed store in Ypsilanti.



Sons Charles and Edward King ran the store after the death of their father.



As we all know, Ypsilanti was founded in 1823, long after the Revolutionary War and no longer ruled by mad King George, yet Ypsilanti has had a series of Kings who were welcomed here from London, England in the 1830s and contributed much to the pioneer community. With the help of the research of one of their descendants, Margery King Webb, as well as hundred-year-old newspaper articles, old letters, obituaries, and books, their story unfolds. It is especially timely now that what had been their building and store on the SW side of Huron and Congress has been restored, with the name C. KING & CO. on it in bold letters.

After reading this article, I hope that you will understand what the King family has meant to Ypsilanti. I met Margery when I was researching my Gleanings article about another of her ancestors, Frederick Pease, for whom Pease Hall at Eastern Michigan University is named. She is the rare type of genealogist who goes the extra mile and to the sources with her research. She verifies any fact available to her and is extremely well organized and generous in sharing information with others. I'm not the jealous type, but I come close to it when thinking about Margery's historic Ypsilanti family. If I could trade my genes with anyone it would be Margery. I've researched and written articles about other prominent Ypsilanti founders who were related to her including Post, Hewitt, Gilbert, Pease, Peck and now the King family. I will list the Gleanings articles and links to them at the end of this article If you would care to read them.

The Kings of Ypsilanti came from London England where their children were baptized at St. Leonard's Shoreditch

Church. George Richard King's parents were Enoch and Mary. He was born in 1804 and died March 9, 1849. George married Maria Howland and they had 4 children. Their oldest son Charles E. King (1823-1891) married Susannah Sewell of Ann Arbor. Their son Edward Howell King (1830-1908) married Julia Ann Palmer. Daughter Elizabeth King (1838-1857) married William Peck and lastly Maria Ann King (1828-1913) married George W. Gilbert. The young family is said to have made the trip across the Atlantic Ocean around 1833. It seems that Elizabeth was born in Ypsilanti.

The February, 1974 issue of the Gleanings provides a great deal of information about the family and family business once they arrived in Ypsilanti. In a well written and informative essay originally written in 1944 by Charles King Lamb, a descendant of George and Maria, we discover interesting tidbits about the Charles King store located at the southwest corner of Michigan and Huron Streets. The author, Charles King Lamb, the son of John G. Lamb, nephew of Charles King, was born in Ypsilanti in 1893 and died February 8, 1970. Charles King Lamb attended the University of Michigan and was on the board of the First Savings Association and Highland Cemetery. His article was first published in Washtenaw Impressions #5, 1944 for the Washtenaw Historical Society, and the descriptions of the family's grocery store are so vivid you can almost imagine yourself shopping there. Another thing I like about his article is that he relates the history of the store to the history of Ypsilanti. I hope that you find Charles King Lamb's narrative as interesting as I did.

"The founding of the King Grocery Store in 1838 followed

the settling of Ypsilanti by only fifteen years. At the time there were about 120 houses in the village. Many log structures remained but among them were ambitious edifices of stone, brick, or frame construction. The food problem was often a pressing one and much reliance was of necessity placed upon wild game. At first all groceries were brought from Detroit. The road was almost impassable to an ox team and it sometimes took three days to make the thirty-mile trip. For years, after its opening, the Detroit road ran through seas of mud and over miles of jolting corduroy; no teamster thought of leaving home without an axe and log chain to cut poles to pry his wagon out of the mud. For a time the road was so impassable that travelers had to come from Detroit by way of Plymouth and Dixboro. For visiting and trading, settlers gladly endured a twenty or thirty mile ride over bottomless roads. As early as 1829, settlers in the St. Joseph Valley (author's note – this is St. Joseph near Lake Michigan) journeyed 150 miles to Ypsilanti to get a few rolls of wool carded at Mark Norris' Mill, to buy a little tea and dry goods, or replenish the whiskey barrel. The transportation of heavy freight was dependent

on the Huron River; flat-bottom boats were poled up the river to Rawsonville Landing, some getting through as far as Ypsilanti."

George King first got a job operating the Stack House Hotel for a year before going into the grocery business with his two sons. The railroad had come to Ypsilanti by that time and overnight stays were often needed by travelers while waiting to catch a connecting trail. The small but ambitious King family knew that there was a need for a grocery and supply store in the small village of Ypsilanti and so on New Year's Day, 1838 opened for business. The first store, called George Richard King, was located at 40-42 East Michigan Avenue and by 1840 it had relocated to a frame building at 101 West Michigan Avenue, the present site. George R. King died in Ypsilanti at the young age of 45 years old in 1849. His son-in-law George Washington Gilbert describes George's death in a letter written to his brother John. It reads as follows: "March 10, 1849 Dear Brother, we have had a very sudden death in our family. Mr. King died yesterday at 12 o'clock as we were walking up from his store to his house, on arriving at Grants corner he was attacked



Charles King's house 103 North Adams Street.

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with a fit of coughing and ruptured a blood vessel. He died in about three minutes, there was none of his family present but myself until after his death. It was a sudden and very unexpected blow to his family. The funeral will be attended at 2 o'clock tomorrow." (author's note – this would suggest that he suffered from TB, as many did at that time.)

The business was inherited by his two sons, Charles and Edward and the name of it changed to Charles and Edward King Brothers. Edward decided to become a farmer and Charles bought out his share of the mercantile in 1867. Edward used the money to purchase farm land along the Huron River not far from the original Woodruff's Grove but on the west side of the Huron River. It became known as King's Flats. Henry Ford purchased the land when he flooded the river to form Ford Lake. Family legend is that the frame store on Congress Street, now Michigan Avenue, burned around 1858 and while the three storied brick building that we see today was being constructed, business continued around the corner on South Huron Street. Charles then ran the store with the help of his son, also named Charles. Around this time Charles built a new house on nearby 103 North Adams Street for his growing family consisting of a wife Susan Sewell and two children.

The store sold about anything and everything that was needed in not only the village but surrounding farm lands and villages, kind of like a Victorian version of Walmart. Charles King Lamb goes on to tell us more about it and in doing so gives us more information about the economic history of Ypsilanti. "In the early days it was the custom for farmers to bring their produce to the store to trade. Due bills were then issued for each transaction and the buyers, in turn, used them as negotiable paper in making their purchases in the village. At the end of the year the merchants' accounts with each other were balanced only once a year. Charles King & Co., (as the store was then called) was the first store to start cash transactions; that is, they closed



Outside of King's store showing John G. Lamb, Charles King, R.W. Hemphill Jr. and O. S. Smith.

each deal instead of allowing credits and debits to continue for a period of time."

Lamb tells us about the merchandise offered which gives us a clue as why such a large three-story building was necessary. Fortunately, the museum archives contain a rare photograph which gives us a glimpse inside of the store. You can imagine the amazement of the average housewife when she walked into the building carrying a hand-woven basket over her arm. "Nearly everything was sold in bulk and there were no canned fruits or vegetables. Coffee was sold in the green berry and later roasted in the home. The main staples at this time were flour, which was often sold by the barrel, sugar, tea, coffee, soap, and potatoes; and also a complete line of bulk seeds, lime and cement, the latter being purchased by the

car load. Common barrel salt was also purchased by the car load and was the only kind used at the time." It should be remembered that salt was used as a preservative for beef, pork, pickles cabbage, cheese, butter, and so forth.



John Lamb. When Charles King died, Lamb took over ownership of the store.

Lamb refers to the original account book of the store dating back to 1838. A surprising array of commodities are listed including hay, spring water wheat, buckwheat, cigars, venison, poultry, pork, whitefish, beer and of course whiskey. The King store was famous for its cheese and would purchase about one hundred cases at a time which were packed in 30-pound molds. The merchants would open them periodically, grease them – top and bottom – and then turn them. This process had to be repeated periodically for from four to six months until they were ready to sell. Cider was purchased by the barrels and held until it turned into vinegar and was offered for cleaning, cooking, disinfectant and canning. These barrels were held on the third floor of the large store.

Another interesting fact that Lamb explains is that "Dairy butter was another item of which a very large volume was sold. The buying of butter was a great problem because

no farmer's wife wanted to be told that hers was not up to par. In fact, the store, in its efforts to be tactful, sometimes purchased butter when they knew it would have to be sold to packers for a few cents a pound. To be a good butter-tester was quite an art and a store-keeper prided himself on his ability to distinguish good butter. The process used to keep dairy butter sweet was to place a layer of cheese-cloth on top, then cover with a layer of salt, about a half inch, then another layer of cheese cloth. A paper was then tied tightly over the top and the crocks packed in barrels placed in the basement. This process would keep it sweet for several months."

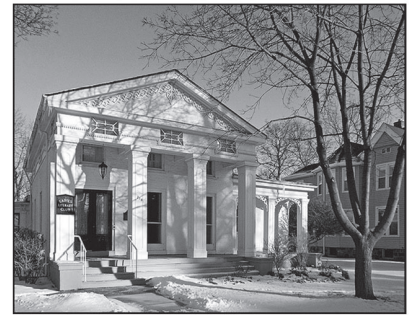
You can imagine the delight that such a store would provide the small village and that families would come from far and wide to shop there. Lamb continues..."the store handled wash-boards, lamps, wicks, chimneys and burners. The only laundry soap available was yellow soap in bars, and sal-soap soda was the only water softener; blueing came only in quart bottles (author's note -blueing was used to make white clothes look even more white and clean clothes were dipped in a diluted rinse of it. I was born over 70 years

ago and this was a staple while doing the laundry and even old ladies with white hair rinsed their hair with it often giving them a type of blue hue.) Black pepper came in 150 pound barrels, and the old fashioned cracker barrel containing Vale and Crane crackers was a regular store feature. Pickles came in 50 gallon casks and molasses only in 60 gallon barrels to be sold in bulk."

This brings us to the Civil War years. Lamb tells us that this was a difficult time for the store because commodities were in short supply and prices soared very high often with revenue tax added on to help pay for the war. The store continued under the ownership of Charles and his son Charles, with the addition of a nephew John Lamb, sometime after 1873. The elderly Charles suddenly died in 1891 at the age of 68. The obituary published in the Ypsilanti Sentinel is short and poignant. Charles sat down to eat dinner with his family, fell over, was lifted and placed on a couch and stopped breathing 15 minutes later. A heart attack was suspected. The obituary indicates that his wife, Susan Sewell, who he married in 1850 "proceeded him to the unknown." He left behind



Inside of King's Grocery Store.



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C. King & Co. building today at the SW corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron Street.

two children: a daughter Mrs. John Wortley and son Charles E. King. He was described as a man who seemed to enjoy his retirement years. The article reads "Known to every person in the vicinity, and knowing everybody, he was always ready for a salutation, and had a smile for each." His character was also described. "The deceased was a thoroughly honest businessman, a citizen whose character was above reproach. By strict attention to business he had attained a competency, which afforded him in his later years an abundance of leisure to do as he pleased."

Charles King's granddaughter Harriet King Wortley (1861-1971) was married to John G. Lamb (1858-1926) and John Lamb joined his uncle Charles in managing the store. Charles E. King is mentioned in the book *Past and Present of Washtenaw County Michigan* by Samuel Breakes, published in 1906. He states that Charles was born

in Ypsilanti in 1851. He mentions that Charles grandfather and father started the store and that he is now carrying on their work. Charles King attended the public schools in Ypsilanti and then graduated with a major in literature at the University of Michigan in 1873. "He at once became connected with the business...and has since devoted his time and attention chiefly to this enterprise, as a dealer in staple and fancy groceries, though he is now serving as the vice-president of The First National Bank of Ypsilanti. His political support is given the men and measure of the Democratic party."

Under the direction of John Lamb and Charles King, the business continued to adjust to more modern ways. The invention of the telephone brought with it a new home delivery service. Even though there were only 25 telephones in Ypsilanti in 1910, an order could be phoned in and after making a home delivery, a boy on a bicycle

was expected to go door to door to take more orders and once finished would spend the remainder of the work day in the store. This continued until about 1933 and by then the home delivery system had become a cooperative for downtown merchants so that other items from other stores could be included in the order.

Lamb tells us more about the store. "At the time John G. Lamb went into the store, the wages paid were \$3 a week. Up to 1920, store hours were from 5:30am to 9:00pm on weekdays and midnight on Saturdays. On holidays stores were always open until noon...The policy of the store was always cleanliness and orderliness but not until after 1920 was any effort necessary for display. The windows were more or less used for holding bulk containers to relieve congestion in the store. From 1920 to 1925 new fixtures were introduced which were to revolutionize the grocery business; display

was the new element; counters in front of the shelves were removed and price tags placed on each item. This enabled the customer to examine the merchandise and know its cost. The Lamb Store (which is what the King store was then named) was remodeled, adopting these new ideas, in 1929. This new era was largely brought about by the chain stores who were masters in the art of mass display. They forced the service stores to be on their toes every minute; the problem was to buy in large enough quantities to get the best possible prices in order to meet the competition of the chain stores."

Unfortunately, though in business for over 100 years, the King, then Lamb grocery store closed its doors for good in July, 1942 after serving generations of Ypsilantians and their rural neighbors. So, here I will end the story of

the Charles King family and their important business which served a pioneer community, with sincere hope that the newly revived King building and its tenants will succeed and last as long as the original – over 100 years -and hope that we can all enjoy the renovated ambiance and perhaps even raise a toast to another hard working and honest Ypsilanti family who have left a legacy of their talents and dreams, and achievements – THE KINGS OF YPSILANTI.

Gleanings articles about families relat-



Margery King Webb has been very helpful in sharing her genealogical research to make this article possible.

ed to the Kings can be found at: Peck Family - Peckville, Summer 2010, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/36313>; Gilbert Family - The Gilbert Family, Part I, Spring 2013, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/222476>; The Gilbert Family Part II, Summer 2013, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/234028>; Hewitt Family - Walter B. Hewitt: A Success Story Worthy of Dickens, Summer 2012, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/219328>; Post Family - Samuel Post: Ypsilanti's "Squeaky Clean" Politician, Fall 2012, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/219328>; Pease Family - Frederic H. Pease, A Man For All Seasons, Spring 2012, <https://aadl.org/ypsigleanings/219318>.

(Janice Anschuetz has lived in the historic east side of Ypsilanti for over 50 years. She is an Ypsilanti historian and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



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Growing Up in Ypsilanti in the 1970's – Prospect Park

BY ROBERT AND ERIC ANSCHUETZ

Tee-Ball field at Prospect Park.

Prospect Park served as both the playground for Adams Elementary School and also as a large public park for the east side of Ypsilanti. In addition to swing sets, a merry-go-round, and a jungle gym, the park had a baseball field and two tennis courts. In the 1970's, the tennis courts were in pretty bad shape and they did not always have the tennis nets installed. There were also basketball hoops on the side of the paved area that shared the tennis court as a playfield. During the school year, the tennis courts served as the "field" for the Adams School kick-ball games held during recess. Today, Ypsilanti children use this same court for skateboarding.

Adjacent to the tennis courts was a large field that was used for football, kite-flying, running around, and organized tee-ball. In the 1970's the tee-ball league that played at Prospect Park was made up of teams that all ended with the word "Sox." There were the Green Sox, the Black Sox, the Blue Sox, the White Sox, and even the Maroon Sox. The team that we both played on was the Red Sox. We only played one season in tee-ball, but it was a positive experience, and we enjoyed it a lot. This organized tee-ball league played all of its games and practiced exclusively at Prospect Park. Our tee-ball coach often made us run around the bases and timed how fast we

could accomplish the feat. We were small for our age, but we were also quite quick! We felt the pride of being some of the fastest runners on the team. We never hit the ball very far, but we both distinctly remember never being thrown out at first base the entire season. We were fast enough that unless there was a perfectly fielded ball, accompanied by a perfect throw (which rarely happened in Ypsilanti tee-ball), there was no way that we were going to be out. Eric distinctly remembers one game where he was on first base with the game tied in the bottom of the last inning. The ball was hit to the outfield, and Eric raced around all of the bases to score the winning run. He remembers being greeted at home plate by the whole team and he felt like a hero. That singular event served as the pinnacle of Eric's athletic "career."

Prospect Park was not only a playground, but it also had historical significance. At one time, Prospect Park was the home of Ypsilanti's cemetery. Later, all of the graves were dug up and moved to Highland Cemetery at the north end of River Street. One historical relic that remained in the park was a large cannon. It was far enough away from the swings and other playground equipment that none of the kids from Adams School really went near it at recess. That was good, because it was very tempting to climb on that cannon, and the kids were sternly



Cannon at Prospect Park.

admonished not to even think about climbing on it. In the 1970's there even used to be actual cannonballs cemented into the base, but these have since been removed.

One weekend day, our Dad took us to the park when we were in 2nd or 3rd grade. We played on the swings and monkey bars, and then wandered over to the cannon. Our Dad helped Eric (and probably Robert, too) to the top of the cannon. It was fun for a while on top of the cannon. It was about five feet tall and the view was great. Within moments, however, Eric had fallen face-first onto the concrete that served as the foundation for the cannon. His face was a bloody mess, having been scraped completely on both sides. There was nothing much to do other than to bandage up a scraped face, so Eric returned to school on Monday with a face that looked like something out of a horror story. We were raised by our parents to never tell a lie, but we were also raised to respect our teachers. When asked what had happened, Eric said that he

fell down, but he certainly did not say that he had been climbing on the forbidden Prospect Park cannon. Eric's teacher surely must have known that there was something to the story that he was not telling, but Eric was not questioned any further and never told anybody at school what really caused the terrible-looking injury.

Once a year, Adams school used to hold an indoor after-school carnival for the pleasure of the students. Inexpensive tickets could be purchased to play various games such as fishing for prizes, hoop toss, ball throwing, etc. Games were played and prizes were won by pretty much all who participated. One game had a fishing pole with a magnet attached as a hook. The pole would be lowered behind a short wall and the object would be to use the magnet to catch paper fish that had metal paper-clips attached to their mouths. Behind the privacy wall, the teacher who volunteered to manage the game would purposely attach the magnet on the pole to the paperclip on the fish's mouth to make sure everyone came out a winner. For one or two years, this event was extended outdoors to Prospect Park and opened up to the community for an event known as the Ypsilanti Penny Carnival. Many of the same games were set up in the park, and they probably added games that took advantage of the basketball nets and open fields. One of the games that was available to play was to toss darts at balloons that revealed prizes as they were popped. Eric was lucky enough to have his picture taken for the Ypsilanti Press as he played this particular carnival game.

The caption reads: "'Apple' strike back! Ten-year-old Eric Anschuetz lines up a winner at darts Thursday at the Ypsilanti Penny Carnival at Prospect Park." In the winter, the two adjacent tennis courts at Prospect Park were flooded with water and served as the community ice skating rink. Neither of us were very good at ice skating. We suffered from weak ankles and poor-fitting hockey skates.

Friday, August 13, 1976



'Apple' strike back!

Ten-year-old Eric Anschuetz lines up a winner at darts Thursday at the Ypsilanti Penny Carnival at Prospect Park. For more "penny ante" action see page 4. (Press Photo by Sumner W. Fowler)

Eric Anschuetz throws darts during the Ypsilanti Penny Carnival as covered in the August 13, 1976 edition of the Ypsilanti Press.

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Nonetheless, we enjoyed walking down to the ice rink almost daily in the winter to skate. Our main memory of those days was how cold it was. It seems unimaginable now that the ice would stay frozen for months on-end, but it did. We usually walked to the park, about half a mile from our house, carrying our ice skates. More often than not, it was so cold that by the end of the night the laces became frozen tight and we ended up walking home with our skates still worn on our numb and tired feet. We would finally take off our skates at home and warm up our feet by putting them directly on the radiator in the family room.

To make the ice skating more enjoyable for the kids, adult supervisors at Prospect Park would organize games to be played on the ice. The skating game that we played the most was an organized game of tag, called "Pom Pom Pullaway." The best skater was usually chosen to start in the middle

of the ice all alone, with all of the other skaters lined up along one fence of the tennis court. More often than not, there were enough skaters to form a solid line across both tennis courts. At the whistle, all of the skaters tried to skate to the opposite end, while the fast skater tried to tag as many people as possible. Each of the tagged skaters then went to the middle to help the other skater tag people as the rest of the group skated back the other way. Usually, the best skater knew the other fast skaters and tried to tag them first to get as much help as possible. This meant that we would last several rounds before being tagged because we weren't talented enough to be singled out in the early rounds. Our sister, Arlea, was actually a much better skater at the time than we were, and she could actually perform some rudimentary figures and spins. The older boys in the neighborhood often would play ice hockey in another frozen area

in the outfield of the tee-ball field. We would sometimes bring our hockey sticks and a puck to play on the weekend, but we weren't good enough to play an organized game.

To younger Ypsilanti East Side kids of the 1970s, Prospect Park was like an amusement park. It had so many things to do during each and every season of the year. It was our Adams Elementary School playground at recess, and we came back in the evenings after school and also on the weekends to bond with neighborhood friends and forge our own adventures.

(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti during the 1970's in the historic Swaine house at the corner of Forest Ave. and River St. Many of his childhood activities took place at Prospect Park.

Eric Anschuetz, identical twin brother of Robert, shared the same Ypsilanti childhood experiences as his brother.)



Tennis courts that used to serve as ice skating rinks in the winter.

YPSILANTI

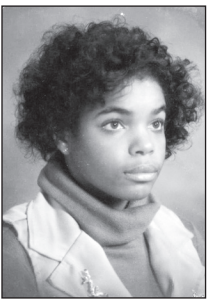
Keeps Calling Me Home

PART II

BY JUDY JACKSON

In 1968 my family moved to Decatur, Illinois from Ypsilanti, but we still considered Ypsilanti our hometown, and returned to visit once or twice a year usually around the holidays. My parents did not sell our old house at 472 S. Hamilton, instead they had my grandmother move there while she rented out her house next door. I kept in touch with my childhood friends like Laura Jean Hamilton, JoAnn Hardwick, Charles Ramsey and Scott Robinson and visited with them when I came to town.

In the 1970s, my grandmother, Florence Reese, opened a new restaurant called Granny's Soul Food located on Michigan Avenue next to the new Ypsilanti fire station. Pearl Roberson helped her run the restaurant and helped with the cooking. It had space for patrons to sit down and eat and it was always full. She had a jukebox that played 45s and each month she updated the record selection and saved the old ones for me. I still own the record collection and the restaurant's neon sign. Unfortunately, she had to close the restaurant when the owners sold it to the city of Ypsilanti. She always planned to open another restaurant, but the opportunity never arose. I found blueprints that she had drawn up for a new restaurant.



Laura Jean Hamilton, a childhood friend of Judy Jackson.

Freshman Year at EMU (1978-1979): Ten years after we moved to Decatur, I returned to Ypsilanti to attend Eastern Michigan University (EMU) in the Fall of 1978. At that time the tuition cost for a full load of 15 credit hours and housing was two thousand dollars per semester. Excited to be there, I was housed at Walton Hall, and there is where I met some of my friends for life: Portia McIntosh, Carlene Milledge, Regina Edwards, Michelle Morgan and Susan Heard (who stayed in Sellers Hall). Walton Hall dorm rooms



Portia McIntosh, Carlene Milledge, Regina Edwards and Susan Heard in Walton Hall on the EMU campus.

had two students to a room and shared a bathroom between two rooms. My roommate was Beatrice Vasquez, from Wyandotte, Michigan. We called her "Beattie". Beattie was far more worldly than I was. She was on her own and working her way through school.

EMU Faculty Strike: We had been at school less than a week when there was a faculty strike that lasted a month. EMU was a commuter school, so there were a lot of students who attended school but did not reside in student housing. There were also students who stayed in student housing,

but their homes were nearby so they temporarily went home during the strike. This left the campus and dorms empty except for administrators, international students and out-of-state students like me.

My parents wanted me to stay in the dorms and not at my grandmother's house so I could learn how to live on my own. Unfortunately, I didn't have a car, so leaving campus was challenging. At that time there were not any fast-food restaurants in a reasonable walking distance. Fortunately, my cousins Donald and Ronald Alexander visited me or picked me up when they finished their workday.

Loved those EMU Parties: Neither I, nor my parents knew about EMU's reputation of being a "party" school. When the faculty strike was over, and everybody got back on campus, the parties went full force. Let me emphasize that I led a sheltered life in Decatur Illinois. My father worked for the city, and so his family had to limit their activities. While growing up there were a lot of places I could not go to and things that I could not do that many of my contemporaries could.

I had just turned seventeen when I arrived at EMU and I was a rules follower. At that time in Michigan, the legal age of drinking was 18, so I could not indulge like other freshmen could. Incidentally, six months before I turned eight-

teen Michigan changed the drinking age to 21, and I graduated when I was 21, so I missed out on that whole experience. Regardless, I still enjoyed the campus parties.

The parties went from Thursday through Saturday. Thursday night there was always a party at the Hideaway, a campus diner that was underneath the cafeteria between Walton Hall and Sellers Hall. It usually started by 8:00 p.m. and was over at 11 p.m. (because it was a school night). On Fri-



Judy Jackson just after graduating from high school and heading for EMU.

day and Saturday nights there were always fraternity or sorority parties at McKinney Union. Sometimes two competing parties went on simultaneously in different ballrooms. At that time the university allowed parties until 4:00 a.m. Due to some spontaneous fighting between EMU students and Ypsilanti locals McKinney Union changed the party closing times to 2:00 a.m.

I prepared for those EMU parties and developed a ritual. To get my proper rest for the weekend celebrations, I ate my dinner at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, and religiously took a nap for 3 or 4 hours before getting ready at 9:00 p.m. While my dorm mates slept in on weekend mornings, I was up early to start my weekend study routine.

Even with my preparedness, I did not get the best grades that first semester, although I was luckier than most. There were many who flunked out that semester because of those same beloved parties. My grades revealed the truth, partying is not a scholarly pursuit.

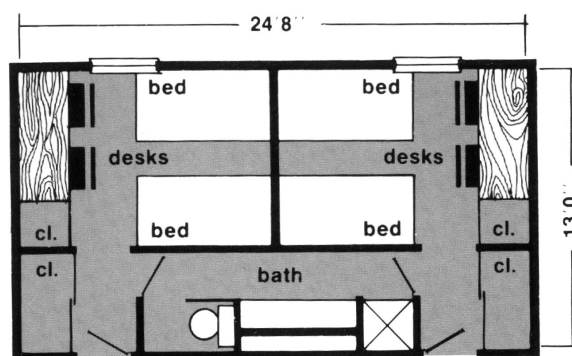
Sunday Dinners after Church: During that time, I attended Second Baptist Church on 301 S. Hamilton Street in Ypsilanti. Rev. O.C. Turner, PhD, the pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church that I belonged to in Decatur, Illinois sent a letter to Pastor B.T. Hopkins, PhD of Second Baptist Church requesting that I be established as a guest member of Second Baptist Church, while I was matriculating at EMU. I had known Pastor Hopkins all my life and always felt welcomed at Second Baptist Church. I guess this letter of introduction was a recognized formal procedure. I always brought a lot of my classmates from EMU to church with me. The lure was that they could join me for Sunday dinner cooked by my grandmother. My popularity was attained through Granny's food.

Sophomore and Junior Year (1979-1981): My sophomore year at Eastern Michigan University represented new changes. Since Walton Hall was a freshman dormitory, I could not stay there. We had to select new housing, and I chose Goddard Hall. Goddard Hall was known to be the dormitory, where the scholars lived. I think there was some grade point average criteria to stay there. I wanted to live there because it was right next to the library and Pray Harrold, where the business classes were taught. I asked Michelle Morgan to be my roommate. She lived across the hall from me at Walton Hall. Michelle and I stayed roommates for the next two years, and she became my best friend. Michelle was extremely studious, so she was a great influence on me, and our schedules complimented each other. I was an early morning studier and she loved to study late at night.

We rented a mini fridge, and my grandmother kept it full of food. She took me grocery shopping every two weeks. My grandmother also bought me a toaster oven, a double hot plate and electric teapot. While others were eating in the cafeteria, full of unseasoned food, I was broiling steak, baking potatoes and boiling corn-on-the-cob for myself and Michelle. I also had unexpected visitors who would drop by between classes to see if I was in and check out my food supply, they said they were checking on me, but I knew what they were really wanted, free food!

Student Activism: Politics, service and civic activities were a part of my family's DNA, so I decided instead of pledging a sorority I wanted to be involved in student government. There was a national election that was coming up and I helped coordinate a voter registration drive on campus. I joined the Student Defenders Union and the Ypsilanti Tenants Union. Greg Mathis (known as Judge Greg Mathis, retired Michigan District Court Judge, and best known for the "Judge Mathis" court room reality TV show, also an EMU graduate) was also working as a Student Defender at that time. When someone resigned from the Student Senate, I was recommended to take their place. When that senate term was over, I ran for student senate for the first time and got the most votes! I think it was brand recognition via my grandmother's food that won the race.

Best/Phelps-Sellers/Walton-Putnam



The layout of Judy Jackson's dorm room at EMU.

At the end of my sophomore year, the director of the Ypsilanti Tenants Union was graduating and asked if I would take his place. I worked at the Ypsilanti Tenants Union for both my sophomore and my junior years, advocating for the rights of student tenants and non-student tenants.

Prince Comes to EMU: The highlight of my junior year without a doubt was the Prince concert in March of 1981. At that time, Prince was promoting his second album that was self-titled "Prince." I learned about his music through the album collection of my roommate, Michelle Morgan. Michelle catered to all types of music, such as R & B, eclectic jazz and hard rock. She exposed me to artists like The Police, Michael Franks, Gil Scott Heron, Jean Luc Ponty and Led Zeppelin. Jean Luc Ponty's music helped me to focus while I studied, but my pretest hype music was always Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir."

I loved Prince because he represented the idea of being free to be yourself. Prince was a music artist who could not be defined with labels, his music was funk, R&B, rock, new wave, soul, synth-pop, pop, jazz and later hip hop.

It was not just the Prince concert that was memorable, but what happened leading up to it. The concert was held in Bowen Field House. Bowen Field House was not the best venue, but I had attended other concerts there without incident. For the Prince concert, EMU sold the tickets with open seating, which meant that whoever got there first got the best seats. Michelle and I were one of the first to arrive and

stood very close to the doors leading into the field house. Others lined up behind us. The door opening was below ground; there was a landing leading to the doors, and stairs leading to the landing. Five minutes before the doors were to open, people started pushing forward and filled the landing. Michelle and I found ourselves pinned to the door, scared for our lives because we thought we were going to be crushed to death. There was no crowd control. Fortunately, we found relief when the doors finally opened. We were upset, but not upset enough to let it ruin our concert experience, because Prince delivered!

Senior Year (1981-1982): I moved off campus my senior year with my friend, Regina Edwards, and I started to feel more like an adult. The apartments were located across the bridge on LeForge Road. My grandfather, Robert (Shorty) Reese, who was a mechanic at a Chevrolet dealership in Monroe, MI, bought me an olive green, 1975 Delta 88 Oldsmobile. It was big, heavy and a bit of a rust bucket, but



Robert "Shorty" Reese, the grandfather who gave Judy Jackson her first car.

it was my first car and I loved it. That winter there was a blizzard, and the snow hit when I was on the wrong side of the bridge and needed to get to my apartment. There was a backup of cars on the road because most of the cars could not get across that LeForge Rd bridge. The road leading to the bridge was on an incline and every car that attempted to cross would slide back down the hill. Eventually, the drivers had to turn around and find an alternate route. My big green machine made it through that night and every other time. It got to a point where some of my friends just left their cars at the apartment building parking lots, and I ferried them across the bridge.

At the beginning of my senior year I was in a quiet despair. I loved EMU so much and had made such a great life there, that the thought of leaving was disheartening. I enjoyed the school, I loved being on campus, and I loved being back in Ypsilanti. By the beginning of the second semester of my senior year, I accepted my fate and graduated in August of 1982. Unfortunately, I did not have a job waiting for me, so on the last day of class my dad, who had already packed up my things in his car (against my protests), picked me up from campus and took me back to Decatur Illinois. I had to leave my car and once more say my goodbyes to Ypsilanti.

(Judy Jackson is an Ypsilantian, recently retired from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, a member of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County and a new contributor to the Ypsilanti Gleanings.)



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Henry T. LeFurge (1844-1904).

The LeFurge Family in Washtenaw County

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ



Jacob LeFurge and his family were pioneer settlers of Washtenaw County in the 1840's. There are various spellings of the family name including LeFurge, Le Furge, Lefurge, LeForge, Leforge, and LaForge, but no matter the spelling, the family made its mark in the area and the name still greets us to this day on Leforge Road and at the LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve.

Jacob LeFurge was born on May 3, 1786 in Piscataway, New Jersey. It was there that he married Sarah Bannel and they had four sons, Benjamin (1810), Isaac (1813), Rizpah (1816), and David (1821). Benjamin and Rizpah probably died as infants, because they did not accompany the young family when they acquired land in Michigan and moved here from New Jersey around 1840. The LeFurge family acquired farmland in Superior Township, and started farming there early in the development of Washtenaw County. The surrounding settlements to the LeFurge farm were comparatively few, with the forests being largely uncut and the land unclaimed for farming.

The two LeFurge sons, Isaac and David, entered land claims in Superior Township where they prospered as land-owners and farmers in Washtenaw County. Isaac LeFurge married Catherine Teneyck in New Jersey prior to moving to Michigan. Catherine's father, Philip Teneyck, accompanied the LeFurge family to Michigan. Isaac and Catherine LeFurge had three children born in Superior Township who were among the first-generation settlers born in the Ypsilanti area, Isaac Jr. (1844-1846), Henry T. (1844), and Jane (1849). Isaac LeFurge died at a comparatively early age, his death resulting from an accident. While running to head off sheep on his farm he fell over a rail and his neck was broken. His widow, Catherine, afterward became the wife of Sheldon Gridley, who resided on a farm three miles southwest of Ypsilanti. Catherine's father, Philip Teneyck, was later killed in a railroad accident.

Much is known about Henry T. LeFurge from a biography in *Past and Present of Washtenaw County, Michigan* by Samuel Willard Beakes, 1906. The young Henry T. LeFurge attended school in Superior Township while he helped aid his father Isaac LeFurge in the operation of the family



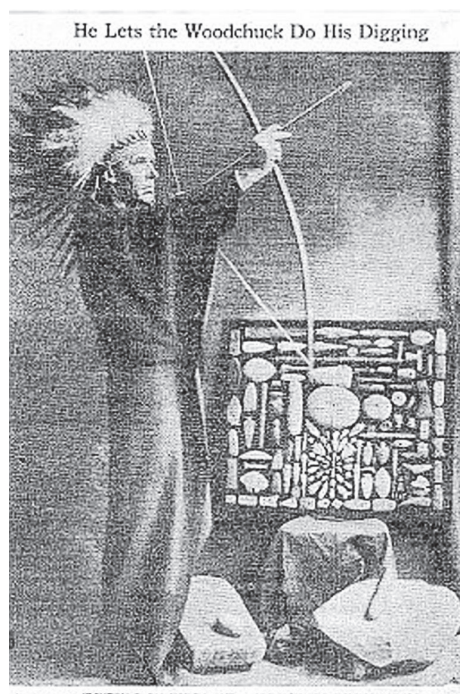
Insley Boyce LeFurge
(1853-1915).

farm. Henry T. became familiar with the duties of farming at an early age, which became one of his many future career paths. Henry T. LeFurge was only eighteen years old when the Civil War began. On August 6th, 1862, he enlisted for service as a member of the Twentieth Michigan Volunteer Infantry under Captain Allen of Ypsilanti. His company participated in several skirmishes. While taking part in the battle of Spottsylvania on August 2nd, 1864, Henry T. LeFurge sustained a bullet wound in the leg that necessitated his remaining at the hospital until being honorably discharged on July 7th, 1865, well after the war had ended.

Following his return from the war, Henry T. LeFurge began farming three miles west of Ypsilanti, and while residing there married Cornelia A. Ammerman, a daughter of Isaac and Rachel Ammerman. Isaac Ammerman came to Michigan

in 1865, settling in Wayne County near the Washtenaw County line. Isaac Ammerman's death occurred on his homestead farm, after which his wife took up residence in Ypsilanti while Henry T. and Cornelia LeFurge moved to Wayne County and resided on the Ammerman farm for a short time.

Henry T. and Cornelia LeFurge later left the farming business and moved back



Clinton LeForge (1885-1949) shown in Native American dress from an article in the Ypsilanti Daily Press, August 26, 1935.

to Ypsilanti and resided at 509 North Adams Street. Henry T. accepted a clerkship in a hardware store, in which he was employed for a few years. Henry T. entered into partnership with John Taylor and together they operated a hardware store for several years, when Mr. Taylor was succeeded by Thomas Green. Henry T. LeFurge afterward bought out his second partner's inter-



Dwight and Cora LeFurge Peck.

est and continued the business alone, his store being located at No. 21 North Huron Street. He had a well-equipped establishment carrying a large and carefully selected line of goods.

On March 19th, 1904, while at work in his store, he accidentally stepped back into an elevator shaft and fell through, crushing his head. He never spoke again and after lingering for one hundred hours died on March 23rd. Following Henry T. LeFurge's death, Cornelia LeFurge sold the business to a Mr. Shaeffer. Henry T. LeForge was a member of the Masonic Lodge and the Grand Army Post, and both organizations participated in his funeral services. In politics he was a Republican, while he and his family held membership in the Presbyterian church. Henry T. and Cornelia LeFurge had one child, Alice M. LeFurge, who was a graduate of Ypsilanti High School.

The other son of Washtenaw County Pioneer family Jacob and Sarah LeFurge was David LeFurge. David was born on October 16, 1821 in New Jersey. David LeFurge married Henrietta Gale and had three children, Isaac Henry (1852), Insley Boyce (1853), and Julia (1854).

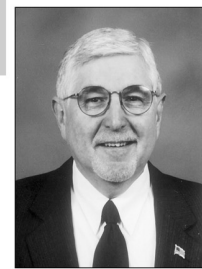
Isaac Henry LeFurge married a woman named Catherine and lived until 1921 in Ypsilanti. Insley Boyce LeFurge married Mary Ette Gale, and they had two children, Cora (1878) and Clinton Isaac (1885). The Gale family was yet another pioneer family in Washtenaw County. Insley and Mary LeFurge owned a 160-acre farm on Paper Mill Road near the Peninsular Paper Company on the Huron River. It was Clinton Isaac LeFurge

who changed his name from LeFurge to LeForge. Subsequently, Paper Mill Road was renamed to Leforge Road in the 1930's when the Detroit Edison Company supplied the road with electricity.

Writer and historian Gregory A. Fournier wrote an interesting series of blogs posted on his website For-nology.com about Clinton LeForge (July 10 and 17th, 2017). In these writings, Fournier describes Clinton LeForge as a very interesting citizen of Ypsilanti. Fournier wrote: "In his mid-thirties, Clinton changed the spelling of his last name to LeForge. While looking through an heirloom family Bible, he found the names of twenty-two Leforge (sic) ancestors recorded on the flyleaf dating back to January 12, 1723. Almost 200 hundred years later, Clinton chose to adopt that spelling and capitalize the letter F. LeForge is how his name appears in most public documents."

After earning a law degree from the Detroit College of Law, Clinton LeForge changed professions from a farmer to a lawyer. One of his claims

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Henry T. and Cornelia LeFurge Residence at 509 N. Adams Street.

to fame was that he extensively studied Ypsilanti-area Native American culture and artifacts. He collected over 3,000 artifacts from his own property and from along the Huron River. When he died, his Native American collection of artifacts was valued at almost \$2,500 and was sold to a private collector. Clinton was married to Edith Grace Clinton, and they had four children.

Clinton LeForge's sister, Cora, married Dwight Peck. The Peck family owned a large farm on the north side of Forest Avenue that ran from Prospect Street to River Street. Much has been written about the Peck family, including a comprehensive article written by my mother, Janice Anschuetz, entitled Peckville, which was published in the Summer 2010 issue of *The Gleanings*. This connection is especially interesting to me, because I grew up in the Swaine House at the Corner of Forest Avenue and River Street, which was once a part of Peckville.

The LeFurge family name lives on to this day. In addition to Leforge Road, we also have the LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve, which is located at 2384 N. Prospect Road in Superior Township, the site of the LeFurge family farm. Over the course of 12 years, the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy made five land purchases to consolidate 325 acres of farm land and natural habitat along Prospect Road in Superior Township. LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve now protects a wonderful cross section of southern Michigan habitat types. Trails wind

throughout wetlands, meadows, agricultural lands, and, of course, the wonderfully preserved LeFurge Woods. LeFurge Woods is said to be an example of a Washtenaw County boreal forest, meaning the trees had never been molested by humans. The LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve is also an excellent birding location, with over 190 species being sighted there.

(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti during the 1970's in the historic Swaine house at the corner of Forest Avenue and River Street. He is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve.



Leforge Road Street Sign.

Estelle Downing: First Woman on Council

BY JAMES MANN

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, giving women the right to vote, was ratified on August 18, 1920. The amendment not only granted women the right to vote, but gave women the responsibility of serving on juries and holding elected office. One who had campaigned for these rights was Estelle Downing.

Estell Downing was born on a farm near Romulus on March 17, 1862. She was one of six children. She became a teacher at a nearby rural school at the age of sixteen. She attended Olivet College from 1893 to 1895. She then served as a teacher at Inlay City and Traverse City. To earn her life certificate, Downing enrolled at the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University. Soon after that, she became an assistant to Professor Florus A. Berbour of the English Department. Downing earned her life certificate in 1898 and was appointed to the faculty in the English Department at the Normal College.

In 1903 Downing received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan, and her Master of Arts degree from the University of California, where she had studied in 1911 and 1912. Downing became an activist for women's rights during her time at the University of California. She had a magnificent speaking voice, with a masterful power of expression, and spoke at every opportunity for women's suffrage. She spent her vacation time of 1912 campaigning across the state of Michigan for women's suffrage. Then in 1918 she gave a memorable speech in Pease Auditorium before a capacity audience. Then, after women had gained the right to vote in 1920, Downing was elected to the Ypsilanti City Council in 1921. She was the first woman to hold such an office in the state of Michigan, and perhaps the nation.

"Miss Downing is not one of those who believe that women are better able to carry on government than men nor does she think that they will correct all the mistakes that the men have made," noted The Daily Ypsilanti Press of Monday, May 2, 1921. "What she believes is that men and women, working together, should be able to do vastly better than either working alone. She thinks that it is only natural that women should help with government as they have been doing in practically every walk of life in late years, and it is with this thought that she takes her seat in the Ypsilanti Common Council, prepared to do her best for the city in the capacity of alderman."

There was, however, one problem that had to be overcome first. That evening, Ypsilanti Mayor Theodore E. Schaible, said to be a courtly and courteous gentleman, opened the meeting of the council with a short address. "May I ask that councilmen and all persons in the audience kindly refrain from smoking during regular council meetings." This was for the benefit of Miss Downing. "I asked the lady why she did not visit the council meetings, explained Mayor Schaible," and she said, "I did come to a meeting, but in about 20 minutes the aldermen smoked me out. I think we can easily refrain from smoking for the hour and a half we are in session."

Miss Downing served only one term on the council, as she chose not to run for reelection for a second term.



Estelle Downing photo from the 1922 Aurora, the EMU Yearbook.



Downing Hall on the Eastern Michigan University campus was named in honor of Estelle Downing in 1957.

Estelle Downing retired from the faculty of the college with the rank of professor in 1938. She died on December 4, 1950. Downing Hall was named in her honor in 1957.

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



The Huron Hotel on the northeast corner of Pearl and Washington was at one time the only major hotel in Washtenaw County.

Downtown Ypsi – The Village Shopping Mall

BY C. TINO LAMBROS

Downtown Ypsi was my village shopping mall. Michigan Avenue and its adjacent streets met all shopping needs; clothes, shoes, home repair, cars, gasoline, furniture, food, entertainment, toys, sporting goods and more. The shopping area was smaller than many super malls today. But my village stores were warm, personable, individual and inviting places. Also, they were owned and operated by “village neighbors.”

Labor Day signaled the end of summer and the beginning of school. Mom would get her four Lambros “ducklings” cleaned up, well-dressed, lined up and off we’d go. This was serious business and we had to look good. Clean underwear in case we were in an accident, clean socks to buy new school shoes,

and no smelly, dirty tennis shoes. Mom got on her finest, as well, including a fancy hat with a veil. This was a special occasion, especially Friday night or Saturday.

We walked down Washtenaw to Ballard Street to Michigan Avenue. The first couple of blocks were “scary” for me. I hurried or stayed close to Mom. First was the Greyhound Bus Station. Next was the ominous and unique looking architecture of Cleary College. Across Adams Street was the threatening hangout Ernie’s, then the Wuerth Theater, then quickly past the Willow Run Hotel, and to the safety of Grinnell’s Music Store. WHEW!!! I survived the trip again.

Michigan Avenue from Washington

to Huron Street was the main shopping area. On the corner was Kresge’s with an entrance on each street. Goods were displayed on counter tops. We looked at everything. In the back were birdcages, fish tanks, and small creatures to amuse us. It was a great place to waste time while the women shopped. We left through the Washington Street door, passing bolts of oilcloth hung on the back wall. Oilcloth was used as kitchen tablecloths. I still smell that distinct oilcloth fragrance – if you can call it that.

Down Washington was the Food and Drug Mart, then Mc Clelland’s, another “dime store.” We got most of our school supplies here. The Martha Washington Theater was close to the Pearl Street corner. Everybody went there to see first run movies. That “other” theater

was where the “other people” went to see movies. I hit the tail end of the Saturday serials, westerns, and children’s movies. We always got a pin or a button with a cowboy picture on it – some very valuable souvenirs. Many Saturday afternoons we lined up way around the corner down Pearl Street.

Sid’s Barbershop was on the corner. Carty’s Music Box and Weidman Ford, later Butman’s, were down Pearl. The imposing Huron Hotel on the northeast corner of Pearl and Washington was the only major hotel in the county. All the visiting college athletic teams and important dignitaries stayed there.

Back toward Michigan Avenue, we “ducklings” continued passing stores with familiar villagers names – Young’s, Marsh’s, Hayward’s, The Clarke Shoppe, Walker’s. On the Michigan Avenue corner was Cunningham’s Drug Store – with entrances on both streets. I recall great burgers, fries, and cherry cokes here. The block from Washington to Huron Street was where villagers got together – our Main Street.

Big, stone drinking fountains were on all the corners. Bikes parked all along the street. Lots of neighbors and friends were there. It took quite a while to complete the one-block journey. The store names along both sides of Michigan Avenue were familiar – Mack and Mack, Mich Con., The Avon, M-Bar, National Bank, Ypsi Savings Bank, Willoughby’s, Shaffer (I think they had one on each side of the street with different specialties), Terry Bakery, Freeman, Bunting and Bower, and the Ambassador, Sally Shear’s, Winklemans, Allison’s, Mellencamp’s, Moffett’s, Brien and Stevens (later Peterson’s), Pears, and those jewelry stores – Moray’s, Seyfried’s, and Jenks and Campbell’s. Other names – Dixie Shop, Bell Bar, Congdon’s, Temple Lanes, Strike Bar, Chapman’s and more. So many familiar villagers’ names and places of business.

After getting school supplies, shoes were next. Brien and Stevens was our store of choice. We always got stuck with Cal Peterson as our sales person. He later became part owner. Cal was an outgoing, jovial person that always had a smile that filled his entire face. (As a matter of fact, the last time I saw him about a year ago, he still had that smile.) On one memorable shoe-buying trip when I was about 10, Cal was the ever-pleasant salesman. I don’t recall being any more rude or obnoxious on this trip than other trips. Besides Mom Lambros would not allow such behavior – especially in public. After I happily made my shoe decision and was ready to prance on out, Cal, with an even bigger grin, picked me up, carried me to the back of the store, and dumped me in a trash bin full of old, empty shoe boxes. I floundered but got out unscathed. Now! I doubt that you’d ever get this sort of customer service at Johnston and Murphy’s or Footlocker or Nine West or Sibleys and still want to go back for more.

Mellencamp’s was my favorite. We boys did our clothes shopping in the basement where the Boys’ Department and the ever-popular Scouting Departments were located. By the time we left Mellencamp’s it was time to head home. First we went to Dad’s bar, The Ypsi Tavern, on the corner of Huron and Michigan, just up from Haab’s. We’d get a corner booth and

enjoy a Pepsi or an Orange Crush in those brown bottles. A few bags of chips were thrown in for our snack. Chips then seemed to have these large air bubbles. If you carefully popped a bubble, you could dunk a chip in your drink, fill up the bubble, and enjoy a Pepsi-chip dip. From Dad’s bar, we went home. If we were tired and full of packages, we’d get a cab. If not, we’d happily walk home. Often, “villagers” were going our way and they’d graciously take us home.

It was a grand time to be in Downtown Ypsi. As we got older we rode our bikes or drove our cars to town without a worry in the world. It was comfortable, friendly, and safe. It was a place to meet friends. A place to catch up on fellow villager’s lives. A place to hang out. A place that was part of your family.

Many of you will remember names and places that I forgot. You have your favorites, your special friends and villagers. These were people you knew, you ran into, you talked with, went to church with, went to school with, you trusted to do business with. It’s a part of who we are today. Yes, it was the “village” meeting place. It was a carefree place in an untroubled 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 of the Gleanings.)

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The Story of Cleary College

BY PATRICK ROGER CLEARY II

In two years Cleary moved his School of Penmanship to the Union Block on Congress Street (now Michigan Avenue), and by 1885, he had 175 students.

At one time Cleary College was a landmark in Ypsilanti's downtown. Gleanings summer 2016 edition carried an article on the History of the Cleary Family in Ypsilanti that described the founder, Patrick Roger Cleary, the establishment of the College and its history in broad terms. This article will detail the College's history and the reasons why the College is no longer located in Ypsilanti.

Armed with his new business and teaching skills, Patrick who liked to be called P.R. set out to earn his living as an itinerant teacher of penmanship, traveling throughout southeastern Michigan, holding evening classes and teaching any student willing to learn. Then, on October 8, 1883, Ypsilanti welcomed a new era when the ambitious and talented twenty-five year old Irish immigrant opened a school of penmanship and created an institution that continues to thrive today, 138 years later.

P.R. arrived in Ypsilanti in 1883. Impressed by the vitality of the little town, he decided to start his own school of penmanship. His School of Penmanship opened for business on the evening of October 8, 1883, in a second floor, two-room space over a shoe store on the northeast corner of Huron and Congress Street (now Michigan Avenue) with only two students, the Babbitt sisters. Thus P.R. Cleary became the innovator. From the beginning, Cleary College was co-ed. He opened new career paths for women in business: shorthand, stenography and secretarial science. Women now had new opportunities other than teaching. From the

school's beginning, there was never discrimination against women. In 1885 he offered the first night classes in the area to permit the working man or woman to continue their education.

Through his persistence and industry, the school grew rapidly. Within two years, he moved the school to larger quarters in the Union Block on Congress Street (now Michigan Avenue), and by 1885, he had 175 students.

Recognizing the potential application of his teaching principles, Cleary renamed his school "Cleary Business College." In this environment he was able to implement his most fundamental principles of education: 1) Students should learn in the same environment where they will be working; 2) A grounded education should be provided to include English, mathematics, and civics; and 3) Students should be afforded a social environment. In 1885 he graduated and placed a student who was the first teacher of commercial subjects in the Michigan Public School System. The next year, Cleary opened Michigan's first summer school for teachers in commercial subjects.

In 1887, P.R. recognized that, with the growth his college was experiencing, he needed even larger quarters. Thus, he decided to build a permanent building for the college. He purchased a lot at Adams and Congress Street of 132 ft. each way for \$2,200.00 from Mr. Joseph McIntire. Following purchase of the lot P.R. went to Detroit to consult with

E.E. Myers and Son, Architects to make plans for a suitable building. After arranging financing by subscribing \$2,500 from local sources and initiating a mortgage of \$7,500, construction began in 1889.

His first graduating class was held in 1888 and they were the honorees of Ypsilanti's first college commencement ceremony. At this ceremony, the class presented P.R. with a gold-handled cane in recognition of their high regard of him. P.R. was only 30 years-old at this time. This cane is now the core of Cleary University's ceremonial mace. In 1888 P.R. Cleary was the first to develop placement services for his students. He would travel about southeast Michigan interviewing businessmen to determine their needs for employees. He would then tailor his curricula to meet those needs.

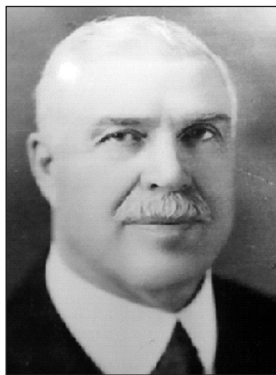
The new building was completed in 1891. That year, P.R. expanded his curriculum of business subjects to include English, civics, and business mathematics. The college had teaching "offices" which simulated places of business, such as a real estate office, a bank, and an insurance office, to name a few. Also, the students began publishing a four page monthly paper called the Cleary college journal. This was the beginning of Cleary college periodic newsletters.

Despite its continued growth, the College was not immune to mother nature. On Wednesday April 12, 1893, a tornado did significant damage to the college building. P.R.'s courage and determination became evident, however, as he surveyed the damage the next day. He posted notices on the wreckage that said, "Classes will resume in all branches of work next Monday, April 17th!" One of the worst losses of the event was almost all records of the first 10 years of the College.

By 1900, Cleary was offering 20 courses plus the first telegraphy training. Enrollment was 150 students. A man that would have significant effect on P.R., his family, and the

College arrived in Ypsilanti in 1912. Charles McKenny had a distinguished career in education, having been a professor at Olivet College, and later Principal of Central State Normal College in Milwaukee. McKenny was named President of Michigan State Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) in June 1912.

One of McKenny's first acts as President was to propose to P. R. that they join together in petitioning the State Board of Education to accredit Cleary College's commercial course. The result of this petition was that, in 1913, Cleary College



Charles McKenny was named President of Michigan State Normal College in 1912.

and the Michigan State Normal College began collaborating in the first joint college program approved by the state. In this program, high school business teachers could study education at the Normal College and business subjects at Cleary College. In 1919, Charles McKenny's son, Arthur, married Marjory Cleary, P. R. and Helen's daughter. The McKenny family has been closely involved with both the Cleary family and the College ever since.

By 1925, enrollment had grown to 325, and Cleary courses were given credit at both the University of Michigan and the Normal College. In 1933 the College was 50 years old and P.R. wanted to ensure that



Architect's design of the new building for Cleary College circa 1888.



The original Cleary College building in 1893.



"Cyclone" damage to Cleary College, April 12, 1893.

it would continue in perpetuity. As such, all assets were turned over to a board of trustees. The same year, Cleary College became an accredited school of business.

P.R. retired in 1940, and the Board of Trustees appointed his son Owen Jenks Cleary President of the College. When World War II began, Owen went on active duty with the Michigan State Troops, and P.R. temporarily took over the presidency. During both World War One and World War two, Cleary would attempt to fill with qualified women jobs vacated by men who had gone off to war.

The Board of Trustees of Cleary College appointed Owen J Cleary as President in 1940. However, after just one year, World War II commenced and Owen was called to military service that lasted five years. Upon resuming the Presidency, Owen realized that the current college building would have to be replaced before long. But plans for a new building would have to wait.

Owen Cleary ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor in 1946 but in so doing gained a statewide reputation for his skills. In 1948 he was elected Chairman of the Michigan Republican State Central Committee expanding his contacts with influential people throughout the state. While he was being active statewide, he had formed a group of influential Ypsilanti citizens including Donald Silkworth and Daniel

Quirk who were making plans to raise money for a new school building.

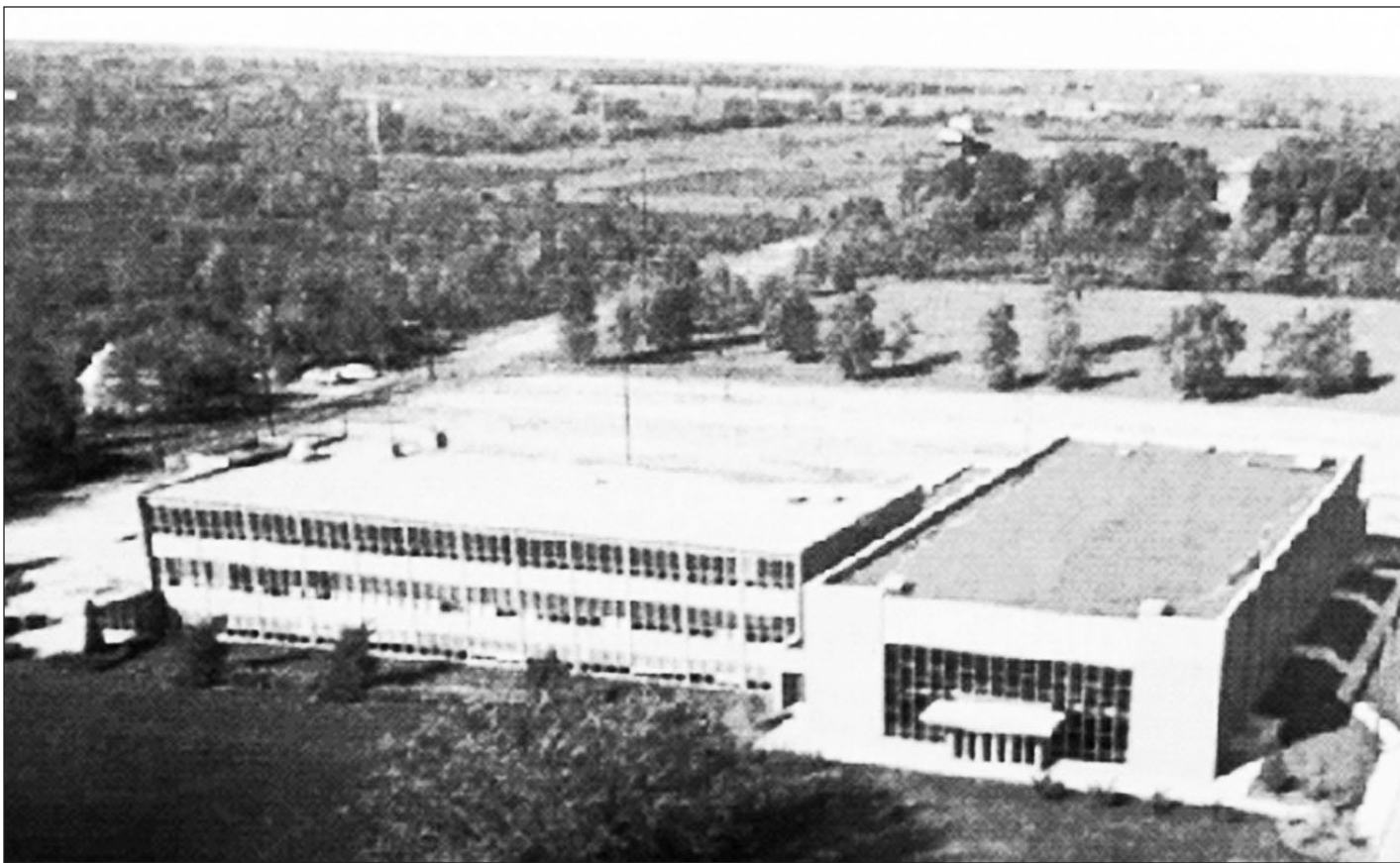
Early in the 1950's twenty acres of land were purchased at the corner of Washtenaw and Hewitt roads for the new building and Silkworth set out about making the new building a reality.

In 1952, Owen Cleary was elected Michigan's Secretary of State, and Donald Silkworth became the principal fundraiser for the College, with the goal of erecting a new Cleary College campus on Washtenaw Avenue in Ypsilanti.



The Board of Trustees of Cleary College appointed Owen J. Cleary as President in 1940.

Silkworth was the dynamo behind the building fund drive. The City of Ypsilanti contributed \$50,000. Foundations and Corporations contributed \$100,000.. Another \$50,000 was needed and



The cornerstone for the new Cleary College building was laid in early 1960.

was contributed by Silkworth himself. The cornerstone was laid in early 1960.

In September of that year, Owen Cleary passed away at the age of 60, and Silkworth was named President.

In 1961, with classes being held in the new building, enrollment began to increase. By the mid-1960s, over 1,400 students were enrolled in Cleary College's 146 classes. But after 1965 enrollment at Cleary College to begin declining due to the opening of the publicly funded and less expensive Washtenaw Community College (WCC).

In 1970 a merger offer was tendered to Cleary College by Eastern Michigan University. EMU's premise was that Cleary would become EMU's business school. Don Silkworth was highly opposed to this move and vetoed the effort. Silkworth passed away in late 1970 and Cleary College lost a great benefactor. In 1970 Walter Grieg was named the fourth president of Cleary College. The ensuing years witnessed continuing decline in enrollment due in part to WCC, but also to lagging recruiting.

Grieg retired in 1974 and Cleary entered a four year period administered by two caretaker Presidents: Lynn Brennerman (1974 – 1976) and James Perry (1976 – 1978) who had been named by the Board of Trustees. In 1974 another

bid for a merger was tendered by the Detroit Institute of Technology that would see Cleary College becoming an outreach center for DIT. This initiative was defeated after a contentious struggle within the Board of Trustees. From 1974 to 1978 both enrollment and graduations dropped. 1974 saw 120 graduations. By 1978 that number had fallen to 75 and enrollment was 459. At this point, the Board of Trustees contacted Gilbert Bursley who had been a friend of Owen Cleary and named him President.

Bursley brought to the college a persona well acquainted with the areas where Cleary was lacking. He brought college banking practices back from Detroit to Washtenaw County for ease of access and oversight. He hired a Development director to commence fund raising and re-established contact with the Alumni. Most importantly, he opened a second campus in Livingston County, an area not served by a college or community college. He then modernized both the facilities and the curriculum. These moves reversed the fortunes of the college and enrollment began rising reaching 765 by 1980.

Of note, from 1970 to 1978, the college did not encourage participation by the Cleary and McKenny families. However, In 1979 Ann Cleary Kettles and Owen Jenks McKenny were appointed to the Board of Trustees commencing a



View of the front of the new Commons Building on the Cleary University campus.

continuing presence of both families

Although Bursley retired in 1983, four years earlier he had set in motion the process to get Cleary accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Harry Howard was named President in 1984. He aggressively pursued the regional accreditation that Bursley had initiated. The accreditation process was new and difficult for Cleary. Dr. Howard engaged Dr. Albert Heugli, President Emeritus of Valparaiso College to assist in steering Cleary to accreditation. Full accreditation was achieved in 1988.

In 1987 Robert “Bob” Lyons was appointed to the Board, where he would exercise leadership for 15 years. In the preceding three years, the College had fallen into financial difficulty and suffered from lack of maintenance. Lyons saw his first job as Board Chairman was to raise the morale of the staff and faculty and to put the college back in satisfactory fiscal condition. He urged Dr. Howard to retire and sought a new President.

In 1989 Tom Sullivan became the Ninth President of Cleary College. He was to bring the school through financial difficulties in the 1990’s. The latter part of this decade saw Cleary’s finances strengthen and enrollment increase.

A new accelerated 13 month Direct Degree program in 1990.

In 1994 the College began offering online courses. This capability enabled many mid-career adults to finish their education.

Also in 1994 U.S. News and World Report ranked Cleary as among the top 20 specialty colleges in the nation.

However, by 1996, Sullivan realized that he would need a new building. In 1998, having been approached by a commercial realtor interested in the three acres upon which the college building sat, he applied to the City of Ypsilanti Zoning commission to rezone the remainder of the College’s property to permit replacing the campus building on the remainder of the property. His attempts to secure both neighborhood and City support failed so Cleary College completed the sale of its frontage, retired its bonds, purchased a replacement facility in northwest Ann Arbor near the intersection of Plymouth Road and U.S. 23 and moved into its new quarters in the spring of 1999. In the end, his strategy was to move the school first to Ann Arbor and then permanently to Howell. That action was finally completed in 2015.

The College became Cleary University in 2002 following approval by the Michigan State Board of Education and the NCA.

2007 The Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Center opened increasing the Universities educational capability. The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) opened in 2010 providing support and guidance for start-up businesses. The CIE was the first of its kind in Livingston County

2012 reintroduced athletics to Cleary initially with men’s and women’s cross country and golf teams.

In 2015 construction of new campus housing marked



Arial view of the Commons Building.

achievement of a long desired dream.

Jayson Boyers became the tenth President of Cleary University in 2015. His administration saw vastly increased enrollment, construction of a second dormitory, improved curriculum, increased participation in 16 sports, building of a new stadium and most importantly, fiscal soundness.

Boyers left Cleary in 2020 and the Provost, Dr. Emily Barnes was named by the Trustees as interim President to serve during the search for a new President. In May 2021 Dr. Alan Drimmer was selected as the eleventh President by the Trustees and began his tenure in July 2021.

Today the Cleary and McKenny families remain deeply involved with University matters. Anne McKenny, great granddaughter of the founder has been a Trustee since 1992 and Patrick Roger Cleary II, grandson of the founder, a trustee since 2004.



View of the layout of the Cleary University campus including the stadium.

(Patrick Roger Cleary II has served on the Board of Trustees of Cleary University since 2004 and plays an active role in University affairs.)



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