

# **“Historical Highlights- 1800-1975 Ypsilanti, Michigan”**

**Welcome to our online program covering historical highlights of the city of Ypsilanti, Michigan.**

# Northwest Ordinance

- The Northwest Ordinance was passed by the Congress of the Confederation on July 13, 1787.
- The Ordinance provided for the administration of the territory, and set rules for admission as a state.
- Michigan was admitted to the Union as a state in 1837.



Image found at:  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:Image:Northwest-territory-usa-1787.png>

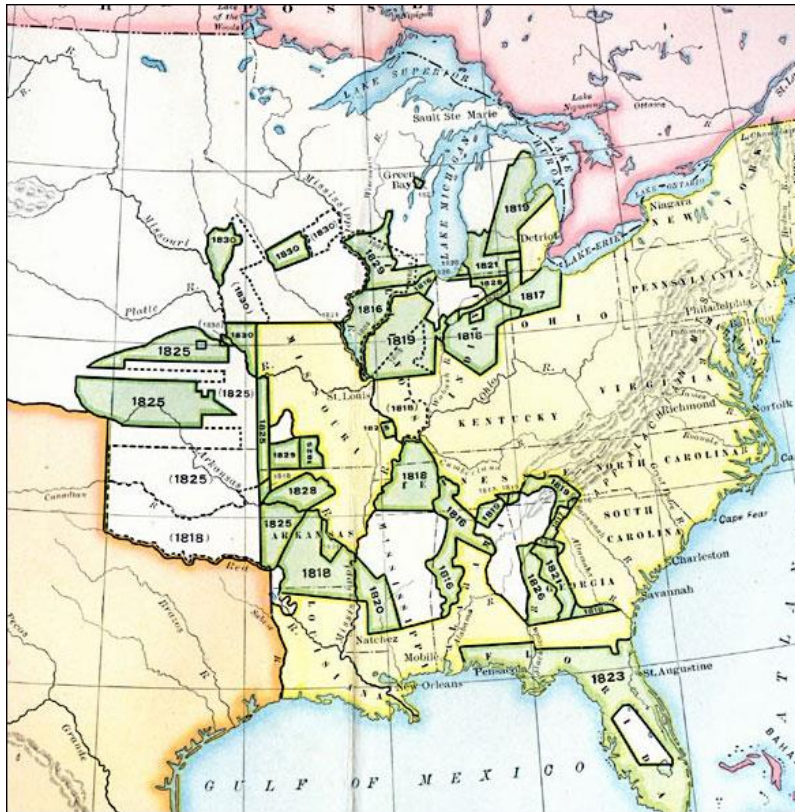
# The Early Days - Pre 1809



The Chippewa Tribe, [the Chippewa Tribe](#)  
[Beliefs of the Chippewa Tribe, Culture](#)

- In 1805, after the Revolutionary War, the region of Michigan was part of the Northwest Territory.
- The region included stretches of primeval forest and open prairie.
- Indian tribes in the area included Chippewas, Pottawatomies, Ottawas and Wyandottes.
- Herds of deer and solitary bears traveled the area.

# Indian Land Cessions



- Between 1807 and 1842, the Indians ceded all their lands in Michigan to the United States, except those set aside for reservations.
- In 1838, there was an attempt to remove the Indians of the lower peninsula to the west.
- Some Potawatomi were able to evade the soldiers and formed villages in various locations, including one in Cass County.

# Godfroy's Trading Post - 1809



Artifacts found at the Post

- In 1809, Gabriel Godfroy, Francois Pepin, and Romaine La Chambre built a log cabin on the convergence of trails, seeking trade with Indians.
- The log structure was known as “Godfroy’s on the Pottawatomie Trail.”
- The trading post burned and was rebuilt in 1815, but it burned again in 1820 and was abandoned.



# French Claims - 1811



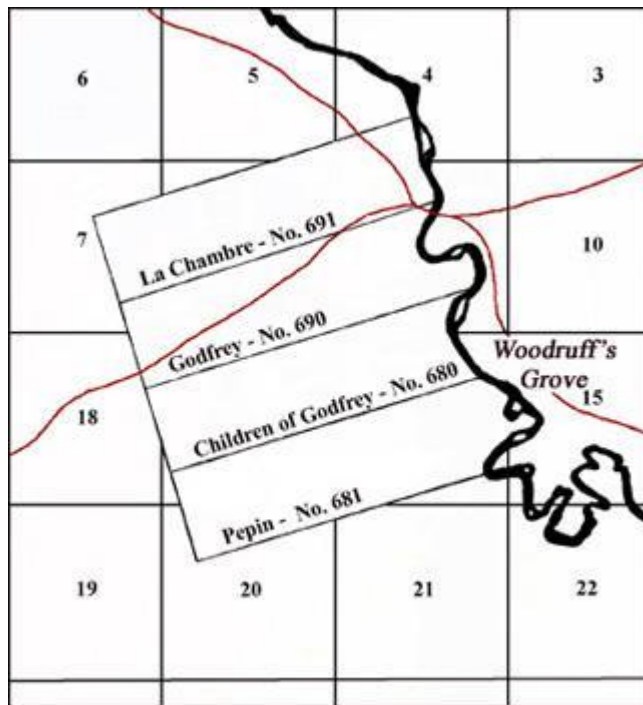
- In 1811, three Frenchmen took up huge tracts of land. Each track was approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide and 2 miles long.
- The deeds to these tracks, as yet not surveyed, were issued under the seal of President Madison.

# The Original Survey - 1819



- In 1805, Congress established the Michigan Territory.
- In 1819, the area of the Michigan Territory shown here was surveyed by Joseph Wampler.
- In 1837, Michigan was admitted to statehood.

# Woodruff's Grove - 1823



- In the spring of 1823, a group of settlers led by Benjamin J. Woodruff established a settlement east of the Huron River.
- In the same year, Governor Cass named the settlement Woodruff's Grove, and established a post office, with Benjamin J. Woodruff as Postmaster.

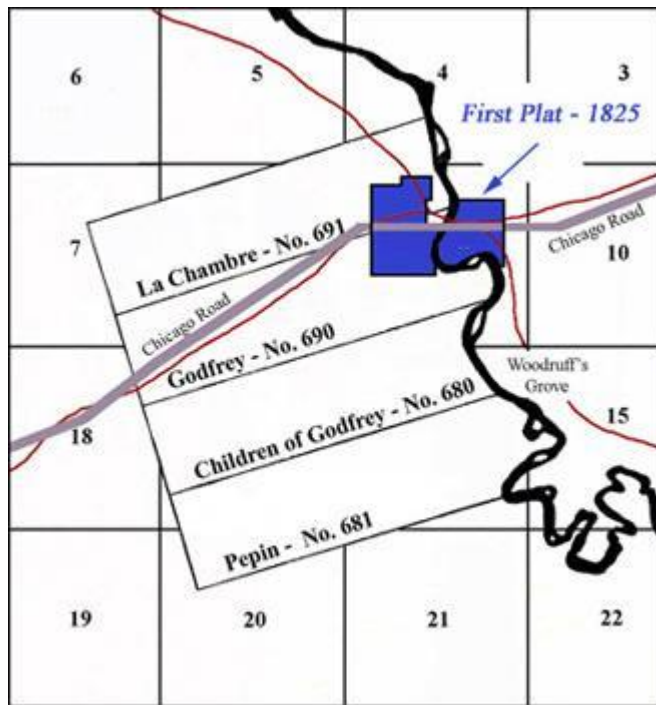


# Chicago Road - 1825



- In 1825, the Territorial Government commissioned a surveyor to lay out a road from Detroit to Chicago.
- The route followed the old Indian trail, to avoid bluffs and swamps.
- The road was  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile north of Woodruff's Grove, very close to where Godfroy's trading post had been located.

# The First Plat - 1825



- Three enterprising men named Augustus Woodward, John Stewart, and William Harwood, bought the land adjacent to the crossing and platted it for a village.
- Stewart wanted to call the new metropolis “Waterville,” Harwood wanted to call it “Palmyra,” and Woodward proposed the name “Ypsilanti.”

# Demetrius Ypsilanti



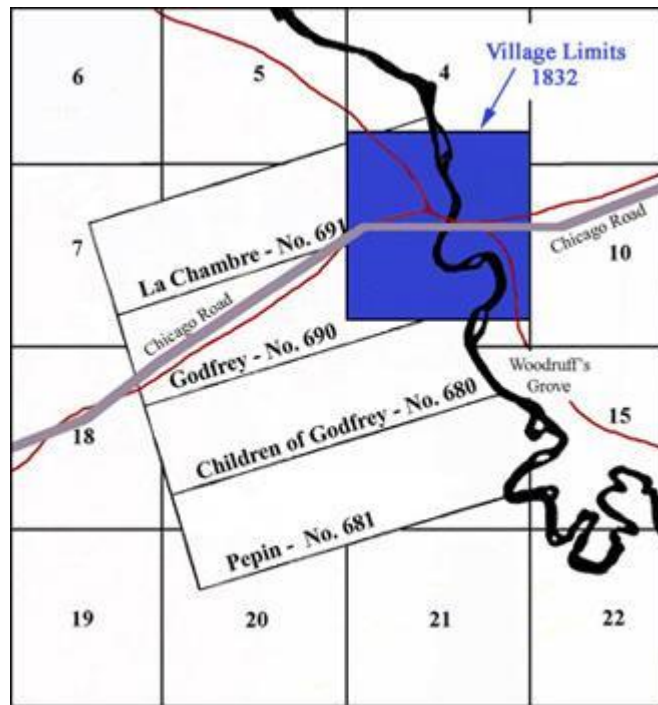
- Demetrius Ypsilanti was a field general in the Greek army during the country's struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire.
- A highlight of his heroism was his successful defense of the Citadel of Argos in 1824 where, with 220 soldiers, he held the fortress against an army of eight thousand.
- Having exhausted his provisions, he escaped one night beyond the enemy lines with his entire command, having lost not a single man.
- Judge Woodward was so fascinated by the military successes of General Ypsilanti that he recommended the new village be named after him.

# Detroit to Ypsilanti Stagecoach



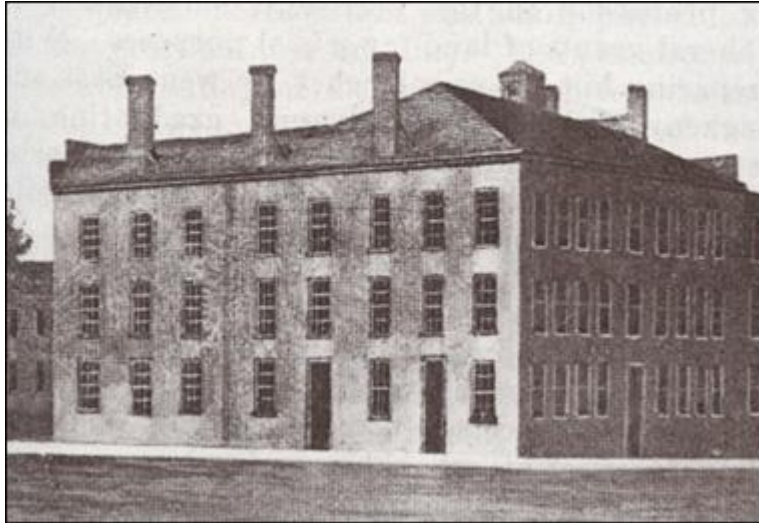
- By 1830 stagecoaches were the means of public conveyance between Detroit and Ypsilanti.
- Mail coaches with three drivers and three relays of horses were supposed to make the distance in fifteen hours.

# Village of Ypsilanti - 1832



- The settlement continued to expand, with additions to the original plat, and in 1832, a legislative enactment provided for the organization of the Ypsilanti settlement into a village.
- In 1838, the first railroad was completed between Detroit and Ypsilanti, and in 1839, it was extended to Ann Arbor.

# Ypsilanti Public Schools - 1840



- In 1840, Francis Griffin established a public school in the session house of the Presbyterian Church.
- In 1844, Benjamin Woodruff started a public school, which he eventually moved into a portion of the “Tecumseh Hotel,” shown on the left.
- In 1848, the building was bought by the Baptist Church for a private school called “The Ypsilanti Seminary.”
- In 1849, the building was sold to the local school district.
- In 1857, the building was destroyed by fire.

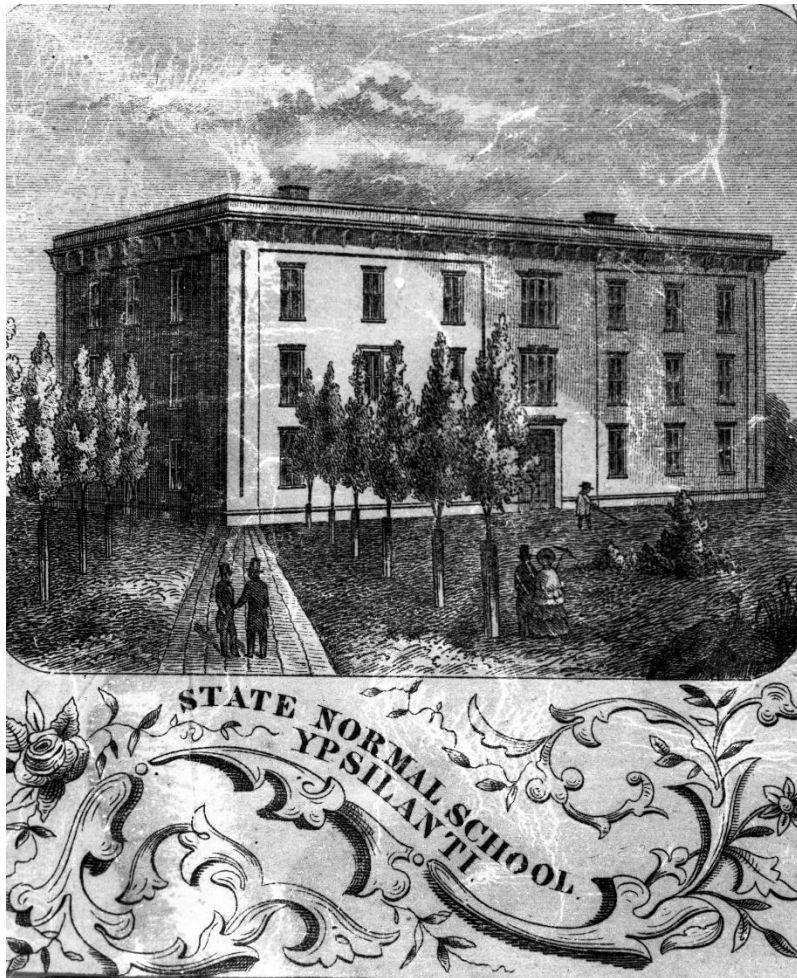


# Depot Town - 1849



- On February 8, 1838, the first train arrived from Detroit on the “Central Road.”
- Shortly after the arrival of the first train, 53 nineteenth-century mills were established along the Huron River, between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.
- In approximately 1849, a commercial district, including hotels, lodge halls, grocery stores, taverns, and other small businesses began to develop along River and Cross Streets.
- The picture on the left is of the centennial celebration of Depot Town.

# State Normal School - 1852



- The Michigan State Normal School was established by the Michigan Legislature in 1849, for the training of teachers.
- The first building was dedicated in 1852, and the first classes started in 1853.
- It was the first teachers' training school west of the Allegheny Mountains.
- Immediately following the dedication of the building, a six-week teachers' institute was held; 250 attended. Following the institute, the "State Teachers Association" was formed.
- On October 28, 1859, the original building was destroyed by fire. The new building was opened on April 10, 1860.

# Helen McAndrew - 1855



- Helen McAndrew and her husband arrived in Rawsonville from Scotland in 1849, then moved to Ypsilanti in 1850.
- The closest medical school that would accept a female student was in New York. Therefore, in 1853, McAndrew hired a maid to care for her infant son and moved to New York to attend medical school. She graduated in 1855 and returned to Ypsilanti, to set up practice as the first female doctor in Washtenaw County.
- As a female doctor, she was not considered to be “respectable” and could only treat those who could not afford the fees charged by Ypsilanti’s male doctors. Her reputation was firmly established after treating the wife of a prominent citizen, who had not responded to the best-known physicians in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

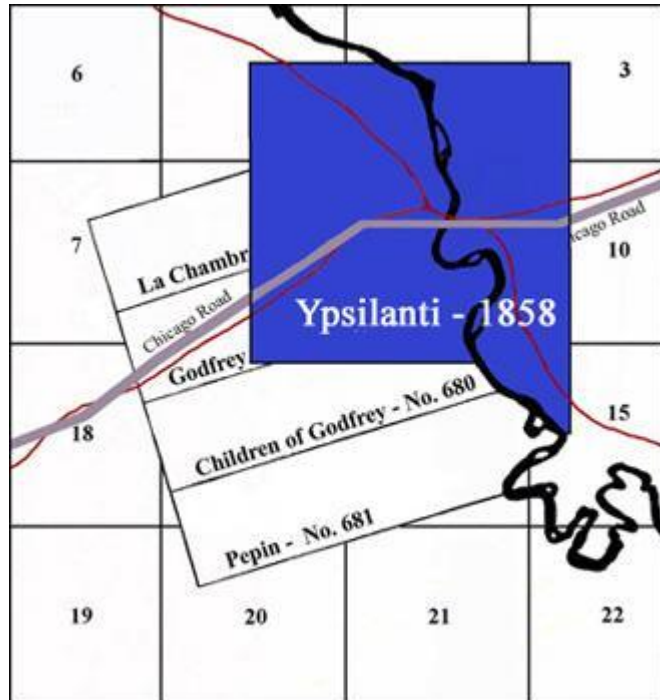


# Union School Dedication - 1858



- On August 17, 1858, the new Union School was dedicated. The New England Journal of Education said: “It’s the finest school building of its kind in America.” The cost of the new structure was \$35,400.
- The same day as the dedication of this building, the Ypsilanti gas plant was put into operation, and the homes of the city were made bright by the new illumination.
- The school building stood until 1877, when it was destroyed by fire.

# The City of Ypsilanti - 1858



- In 1857, the citizens east of the Huron River revolted and incorporated their area into the village of “East Ypsilanti.”
- However, a movement to obtain a city charter for the united villages immediately began, and in 1858 the two villages became the “City of Ypsilanti.”

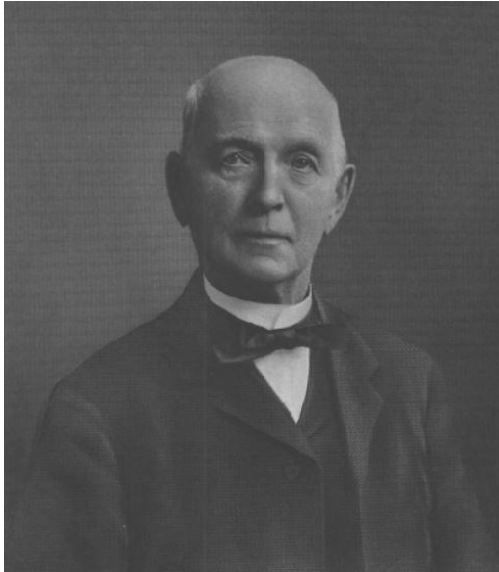
# Civil War Barracks - 1862



- This was the home of the 14th and 27th Michigan Infantry during the Civil War.
- The building is located on the corner of River and East Cross Streets.
- The building later became known as the Thompson Block.



# Daniel L. Quirk

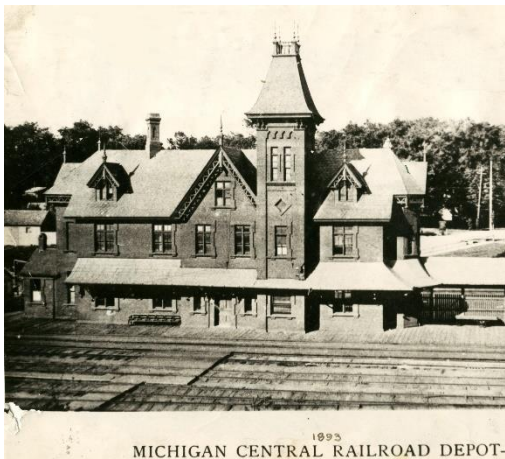


Samuel W. Beakes, *Past and Present  
in Washtenaw County Michigan*

(Chicago: S.J. Clark, 1906), 52.

- Daniel Quirk moved to Ypsilanti in 1863, after living in Ann Arbor and Chicago.
- Quirk was instrumental in establishing the First National Bank of Ypsilanti in 1864. He was also instrumental in constructing the Wabash Railroad from Detroit to Butler, Indiana; the Lake Shore Railroad from Ypsilanti to Hillsdale, Michigan; the Eel River Railroad from Auburn to Logansport; and the electric railroad between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.
- Quirk was also responsible for building the large woolen mills in Ypsilanti in 1865, and the Peninsular Paper Company in 1867.

# Michigan Central Depot - 1864



- A three-story railroad depot with a tower was built in Ypsilanti in 1864. The depot was considered to be the finest facility on the Michigan Central line, which ran between Detroit and Chicago. The depots of Detroit and Ann Arbor were compared to barns at the time.
- In order to attract the best qualified station master, the second and third floors of the depot were designed as living quarters.
- The upper two floors of the depot were lost to a fire in 1910.

# Michigan Central Gardens



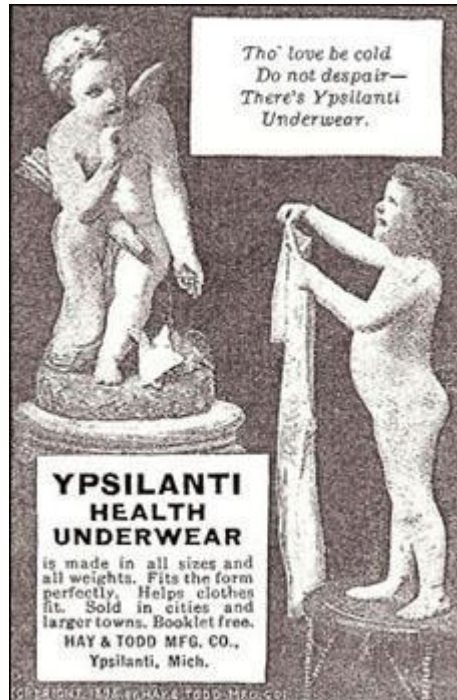
- Beautiful gardens were maintained beside the Michigan Central Depot. Young girls would board the trains that stopped in Ypsilanti and pass out flowers to passengers.

# Ypsilanti Woolen Mills - 1865



- In 1865, the Ypsilanti Woolen Mills were founded by some of the leading citizens of the city.
- The mill was built over the waters of the Huron River, at Forest and North Huron Streets.
- The Union Suit made by the company was displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.
- A special order was made for the Prince of Wales, at a cost of \$300.
- The mill ran into financial trouble in the early 1900s, and the buildings were razed by order of the fire marshal in 1933.

# Ypsilanti Health Underwear - 1865



- In 1875, the mill was sold to Hay, Wing, and Todd.
- Wing retired in 1876, and the company was renamed Hay & Todd, Mfg. Co.
- During the 1880s, the company specialized in manufacturing fine knit underwear.

**“NEVER A RIP  
NEVER A TEAR  
YPSILANTI UNDERWEAR”**

# The Famous Lady



- In the 1890s, the painting of the lady wearing a one-piece “Ypsilanti Union Suit” was considered risqué for the times.
- The painting was visible to passengers traveling on the Michigan Central Railroad.
- The company received many complaints, but the lady remained in place.



# Peninsular Paper Company - 1867



- The Peninsular Paper plant was constructed on the Huron River in 1867, to supply newsprint to the Chicago Tribune.
- After production ceased in 2001, the factory was demolished for the Peninsular Apartments development.

# Thompson Block - 1869



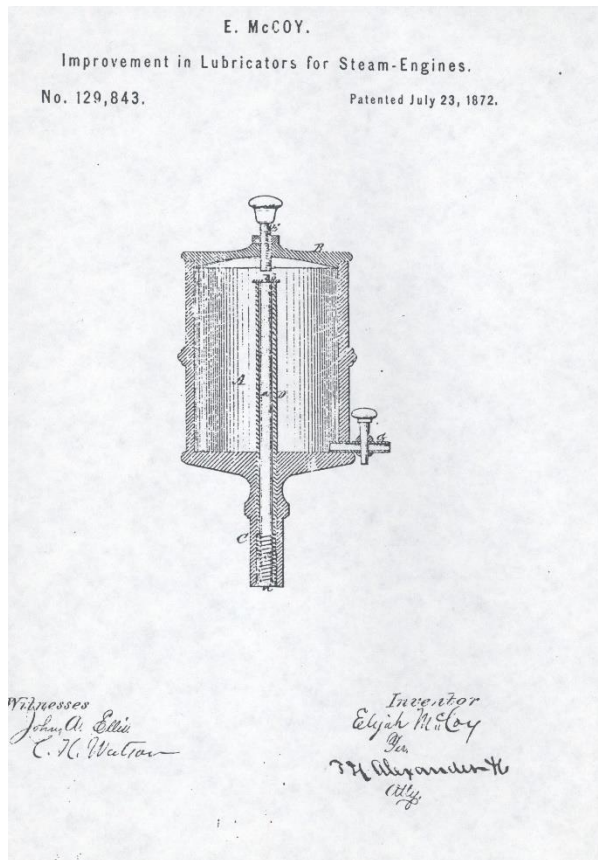
- The O.E. Thompson & Sons Company was established in 1857.
- The “Thompson Block” building was bought in 1869, to serve as a paint shop.
- O.E. Thompson & Sons manufactured and sold nine lines of products, including wheelbarrow grass spreaders.

# Elijah McCoy 1843-1929



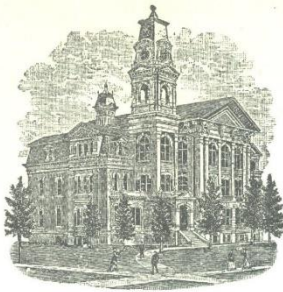
- George and Mildred McCoy were slaves, who had escaped to Canada from Kentucky.
- In high school Elijah excelled in science and mathematics. After graduating from high school, he went to Edinburgh, Scotland to serve a five-year apprenticeship, to train as a railroad engineer.
- After the Civil War, the George McCoy family moved to Ypsilanti from Canada.
- During his lifetime, Elijah McCoy registered more than 57 patents.

# "The Real McCoy"



- In 1872, Elijah patented a lubricating device for railroad and factory engines.
- The lubricating device allowed the engines to be lubricated as they ran.
- The purchasers of the lubricating device were wary of substitutes, and demanded “The Real McCoy,” which is where the saying came from.

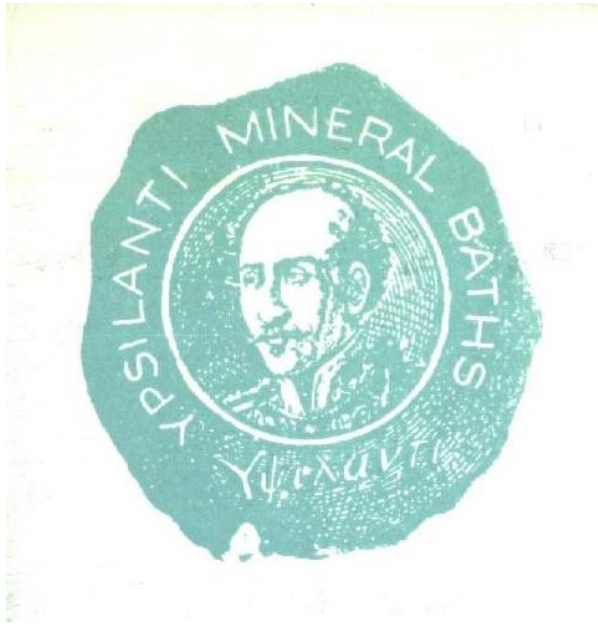
# Ypsilanti Union School - 1879



YPSILANTI HIGH SCHOOL

- The most striking feature of the new building was the 100-foot tower, with a clock and a bell.
- Most of the top two floors of the building were destroyed by fire in 1894 and rebuilt.
- The building was demolished in 1929, to make way for the east wing of the new high school.

# Ypsilanti's Healing Waters



- In 1882, the Ypsilanti Paper Company bored a deep well, and marketed medicinal mineral water.
- A number of sanitariums opened in Ypsilanti, which attracted visitors from throughout the United States.



# Tubal Cain Owens



- In 1884, Tubal Cain Owens dug an 800 foot well that produced reddish brown water. The water was described as having an “odor that sent strong men reeling.”
- In 1885, Owens acquired patent number 13127, for his trademark for Ypsilanti Mineral Water. The water was sold as far away as Boston and was particularly popular in Chicago.
- *“If you are sad, with sickness worn,  
And have the headache every morn,  
Just come and drink a healing horn,  
of Ypsilanti water.”*

# Natural Mineral Water



- The diseases the water claimed to cure included: Cholera Morbus, Dyspepsia, Hay Fever, Catarrh, Asthma, Nervous Debility, Alcoholism, Mercurial Poisoning, Nervous Headaches, Hemorrhoids, Rheumatism, Pleurisy, Neuralgia, Cancer, Bright's Disease, Diabetes, Erysipelas, Sciatica, Milk Leg, Salt Rheum, Blood Poisoning, Bruises & Cuts, Burns & Sprains, Mineral Poisons, Poison Ivy, Bee Stings, etc.
- The healing waters business took a major hit after the passing of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, which required an accurate listing of ingredients.

# Cleary College - 1883



- In 1883, Patrick Roger Cleary founded Cleary's School of Penmanship in Ypsilanti. Starting with only two students, he soon attracted more by offering other business-related classes.
- In 1889, the school's name was changed to Cleary Business College, and the facility moved to its third location on the corner of Michigan and Adams.
- Cleary College was the first college in Michigan to train commercial teachers.
- The building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1898.

# Ypsilanti Water Tower - 1890



- The Ypsilanti Water Tower was completed in 1890. It was the only water tower in the Ypsilanti water system until 1956.
- The tower is 147' tall, with an 84' base. It holds 250,000 gallons of water.
- The tower is a registered "American Water Landmark." It is also recognized as a "Landmark Tower" by the American Society of Civil Engineers. The tower was restored in 1976.
- In 2003, the tower was voted the "World's Most Phallic Building" by Cabinet Magazine in an international competition.

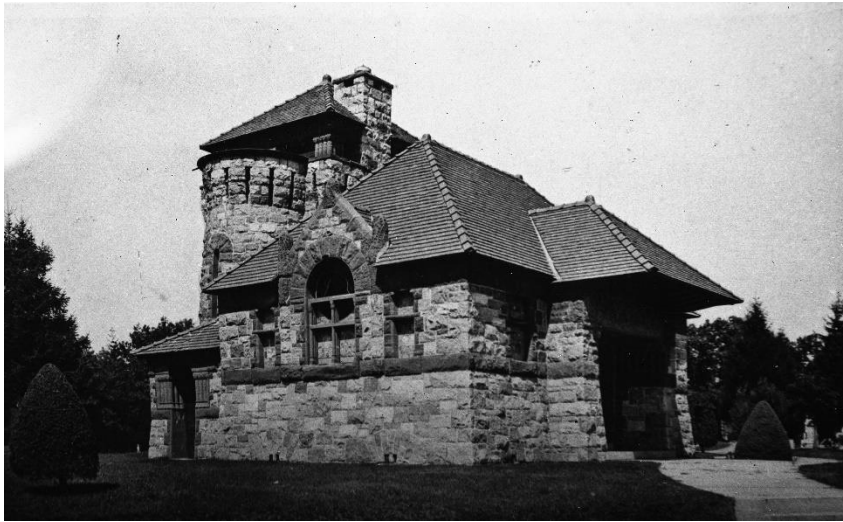
# Mary Ann Starkweather



- Mary Ann and John Starkweather married in 1839 and moved to a farm near Ypsilanti. John died in 1883, and the following year Mrs. Starkweather inherited a small fortune.
- Mrs. Starkweather had no children and used her inheritance to make contributions to local charities, churches, and the City of Ypsilanti.
- Over the years she gave the following: Hebe Fountain on South Huron Street, Starkweather Memorial Chapel at Highland Cemetery, and Starkweather Hall on the campus of Eastern Michigan University. Further, in 1890, she gave her North Huron Street home to the Ladies Library Association.



# Starkweather Chapel and Hall



Starkweather Chapel - Highland Cemetery



Starkweather Hall - Eastern Michigan University



# Starkweather Fountain and Library



Starkweather Fountain



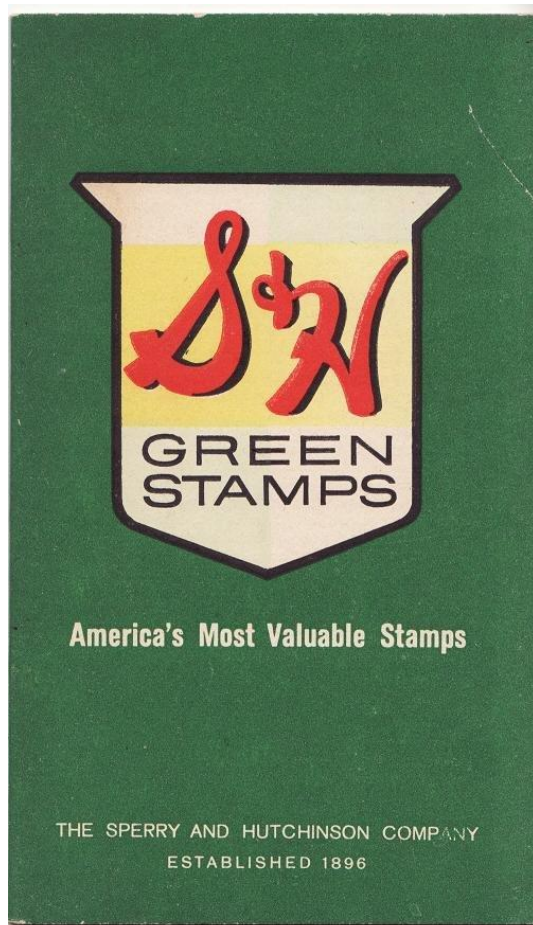
Ladies Library

# Normal School Gymnasium - 1894



- In 1894, Michigan State Normal College built a new gymnasium, and started a new major in physical education.
- Wilber Bowen was appointed chairman of the program and searched for ideas to help with the dedication ceremony.
- Arrangements were made to have the first basketball game west of the Allegheny Mountains played in the new gym on May 18th, 1894.

# S&H Green Stamps - 1896



William J. Kozersky, [S&H Green Stamps Saver Book, 1961](#).

[Unused \(kozersky.com\)](#)

- In 1896, Shelley Hutchinson and Thomas Sperry formed “S&H Green Stamps.”
- In 1918, Hutchinson lost his interest in the company to the Sperry Family through a lawsuit.
- From the 1930s to the 1980s, Green Stamps were very popular throughout the United States. In the 1960s, the company issued three times more stamps than the U.S. Postal Service.
- The company still exists, though it is now known as S&H Greenpoints. It now issues S&H Greenpoints for purchases on the Internet.

# The Hutchinson House - 1903



- Shelley Hutchinson purchased the property at 616 North River Street in 1898.
- Construction on the 30-room mansion began in 1903 and was completed for a total cost exceeding \$100,000.
- The house contained a swimming pool, billiard room, a ballroom with orchestra loft, and five bathrooms.
- The house was sold at public auction for \$14,000 in 1912.

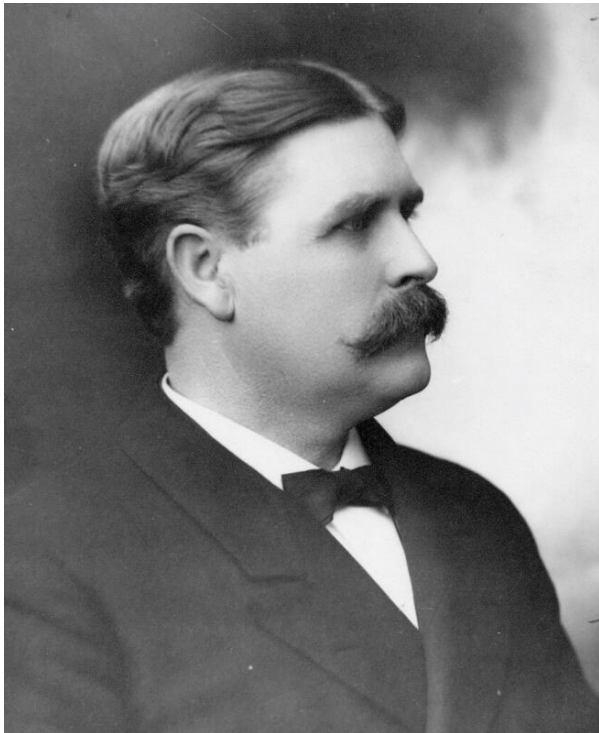
# The Electric Interurban - 1898



- Between 1898 and 1928, ten tracks radiating from Detroit connected almost every town within a 50-mile radius.
- Interurban cars traveled 50 miles per hour on the open road. It took one hour and 20 minutes to travel from Detroit to Ypsilanti, and another 20 minutes from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor.



# Michigan State Normal - 1899



- Richard Boone lobbied to establish Normal as a four-year college, and Normal entered the twentieth century as Michigan's premier teacher-training school.
- It was the first teacher-training school in the United States to have a four-year degree program.

Eastern Michigan University  
Archives, [Richard Gause Boone |  
President from 1893-1899 | Eastern  
Michigan University Archives | Flickr](#)

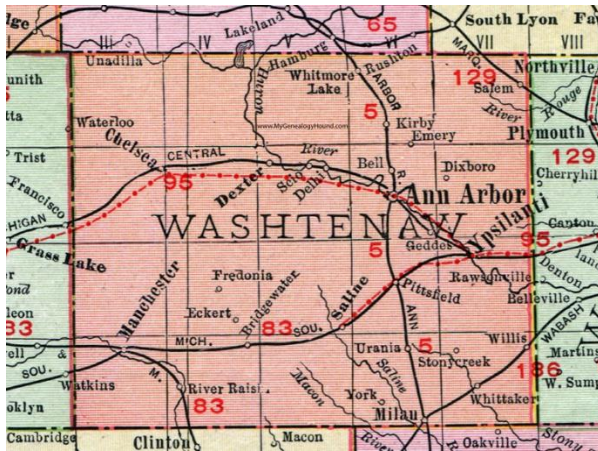


# Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co. - 1901



- The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company was started in Ypsilanti in 1901, and in 1904 was moved to Ionia, Michigan.
- During World War I, the company made observation balloon baskets and airplane seats, as well as turning out 2,000 pieces of furniture each day.

# Gertrude Woodard - 1901



[Washtenaw County, Michigan, 1911,](#)  
[Map, Rand McNally, Ann Arbor,](#)  
[Ypsilanti, Saline](#)  
[\(mygenealogyhound.com\)](#)

- Gertrude Woodard, Assistant Law Librarian at the University of Michigan, was the first licensed female driver in Washtenaw County.
- Every day, she drove from her home on Grove Street in Ypsilanti to the Law School in Ann Arbor, and back again.

# Mark Jefferson - 1901



- Mark Jefferson was appointed in 1901 as Head of the Department of Geography at Michigan State Normal College.
- He served as the Chief Cartographer for the American Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference following World War I, and personally oversaw the making of more than 1,200 original maps.
- The maps concerned not only national boundaries, but such subjects as language, ethnography, religion, and national resources.
- Many of Jefferson's students entered the field of geography, and Michigan Normal came to be called the "Nursery of American Geographers."

Eastern Michigan  
University Archives,  
[Mark Jefferson | Eastern  
Michigan University  
Archives | Flickr](#)

# Michigan Ladder Company - 1901



- The Michigan Ladder Company was established in 1901.
- Initially, the ladders were made by hand, and sold from a horse-drawn wagon.
- Before 2021, approximately 250,000 were produced each year. Inventories were located in 19 different distribution centers, to serve domestic and international customers.
- In April 2021, Michigan Ladder announced its closing.

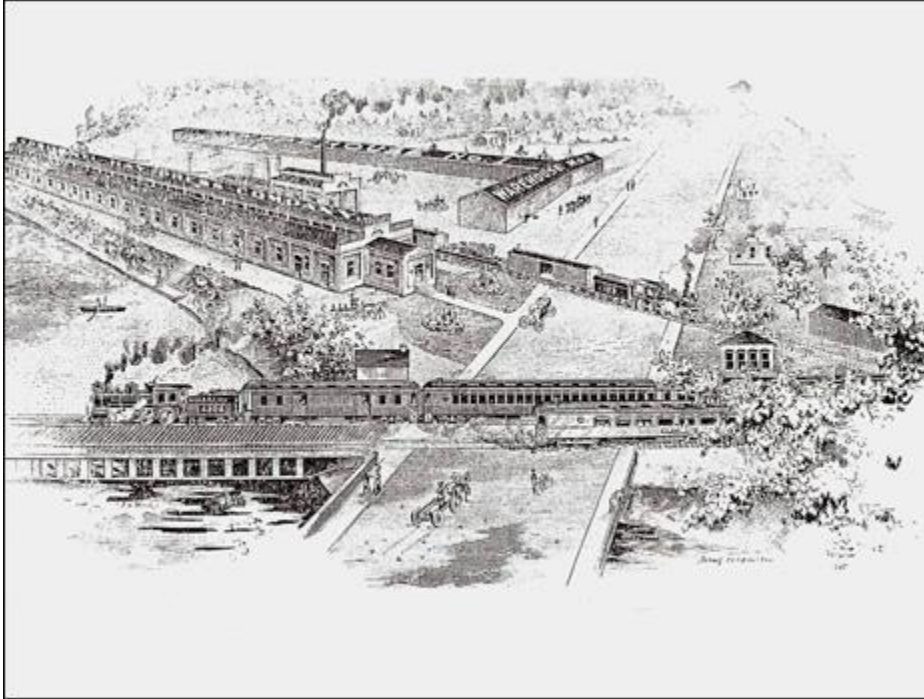
# Michigan Ladder Company



- Other items produced over the years by the Michigan Ladder Company include ironing boards, clothes racks, diving boards, work benches, poker tables, fiberglass boats, table tennis tables, kiddie climbs, and children's building blocks.
- Materials used for these products included wood, aluminum, and fiberglass.



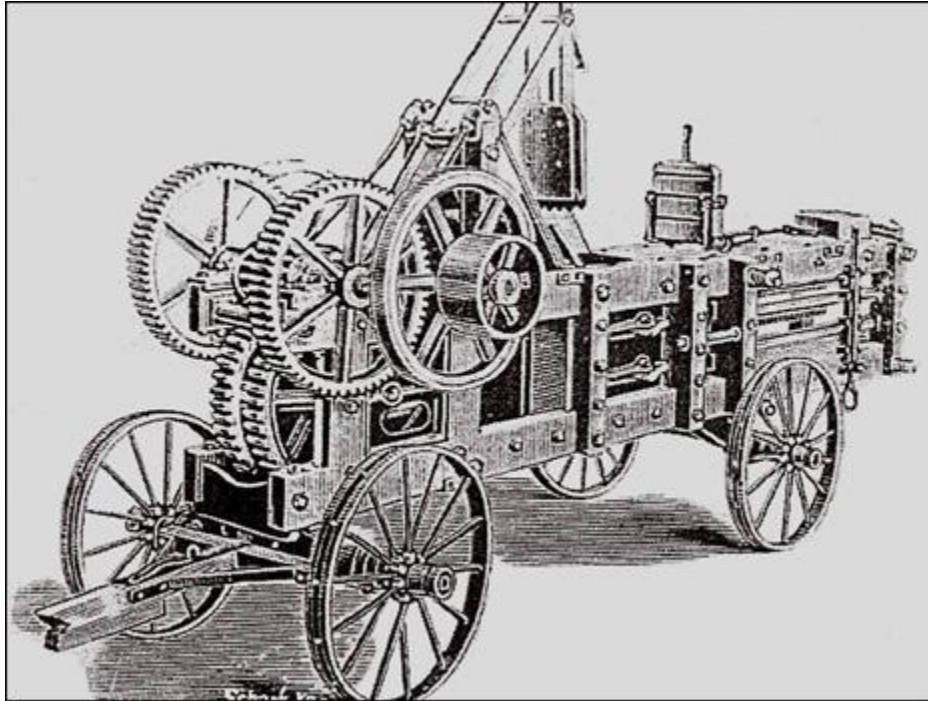
# Ypsilanti Hay Press Company - 1907



- In 1907, the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company moved to Ypsilanti and opened the largest factory in the world, devoted to the manufacture of hay presses.

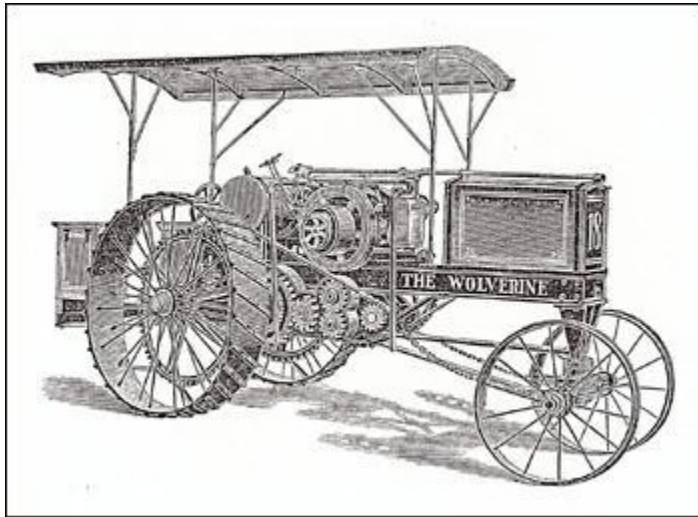


# The Ypsilanti Hay Press



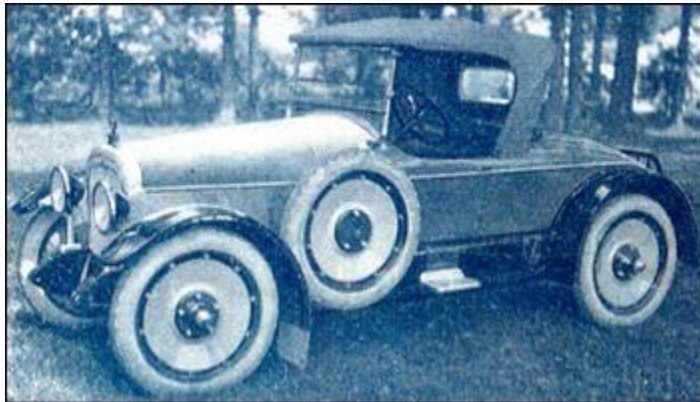
- The presses came in several sizes, and the length of the bales could be regulated by the operator.
- The presses were belt-powered, with wood or steel frames.

# Wolverine Gasoline Farm Tractor



- The Ypsilanti Hay Press Company also manufactured the “Wolverine” farm tractor in two sizes, 18 horsepower and 25 horsepower.

# Ace Automobile - 1920-1922



- From 1920 to 1922, the Ace Six automobile was produced in Ypsilanti by the Apex Motor Corporation.
- Apex Motors was located on South River Street.
- The Ace Automobile designs emphasized "square" coachwork lines.
- The make was absorbed into the American Motor Truck Co of Newark, Ohio, in 1923.

# Apex Motor Company - 1920-1922



- The Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum has offered a \$5,000 reward to anyone who can lead them to an “Ace” automobile still in existence

# John F. Barnhill - 1922



- John F. Barnhill was appointed in 1922 as Professor of Mathematics, at Michigan Normal College.
- In 1923, he organized a 50-piece marching band at the College.
- In 1924, Barnhill organized and directed the Ypsilanti High School Band.
- That same year, he organized and directed the Ypsilanti Community Band.
- In 1927, Barnhill organized the Ypsilanti Girl's Drum and Bugle Corps.
- Barnhill's bands played in all Ypsilanti parades, and in major parades throughout Michigan.

# Ford Ypsilanti Plant - 1932



- The original plant was built in 1932 with 63,000 sq. ft., and expanded in 1948, 1950, 1951, 1963, 1965, and 1983 to a total of 987,543 sq. ft. The plant initially produced parts for Ford Motor cars.
- During World War II, the plant manufactured generators and starters for various airplanes, armored cars, and tanks. A special department was established during the War, for manufacturing precision parts used in a Pratt-Whitney aircraft engine.
- After the war, the plant was converted back to the peacetime production of generators and starters.
- In 1982, the plant employed 1,800 people and manufactured starters, ignition coils, distributors, horns, struts, air conditioner clutches, and bumper shock devices.



# Willow Run Bomber Plant - 1941-1945



- Completed in 1941, the plant was the largest factory in the world under a single roof.
- The total number of B-24s built at Willow Run was 8,685, and during peak production, in early 1944, one bomber was produced every hour.

# Kaiser-Frazer - 1946



- The Willow Run bomber plant was sold to Kaiser-Frazer in 1946.
- In 1951, Frazer's last year, only 131 Frazer Manhattan Convertibles were produced. In 1952, the Manhattan name was transferred to the Kaiser line.
- In 1952, Kaiser-Frazer brought the manufacture of airplanes back to Willow Run, with the C-119 cargo plane, called "The Flying Boxcar."
- The Kaiser automobile was manufactured in the plant until 1953.

# Kaiser-Frazer - 1946



Image found at- [1951 Frazer Manhattan Convertible](#) | Hyman Ltd.

- The Frazer Manhattan convertibles were advertised as the "Pride of Willow Run."
- The luxury model Frazer Manhattan set new industry standards in coordination of color and fabric.
- Introduced as America's only four-door convertible, the Manhattan's top was fully automatic.

# Preston Tucker



Image found at- [987011.jpg \(2000x3000\)](#)  
([oldeststars.com](#))

- Preston Tucker was an entrepreneur and automobile designer.
- His family owned the Ypsilanti Machine Tool Company.
- He designed and built prototypes for his “Tucker Torpedo” automobile in Ypsilanti.
- A movie was produced in 1988 entitled “Tucker: The Man and his Dream,” that was directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starred Jeff Bridges.

# The Tucker Automobile - 1948



- The Tucker was the first automobile to be produced with airbags and seatbelts.
- The center front light on some Tucker models rotated with the steering wheel.
- Some models included 4-wheel disc brakes, fuel injection, and a rear engine.
- Some models had a padded safety dash.
- There were six exhaust pipes at the rear, each leading from a separate cylinder.
- A total of 50 Tucker cars were produced before production was halted.

# Domino's Pizza - 1960



- In 1960, Tom Monaghan and his brother James borrowed \$900, and took over an ailing pizzeria in Ypsilanti.
- In 1961, James traded his half of the business to Tom for a Volkswagen Beetle.
- In 1965, Tom renamed the business “Domino’s Pizza.”
- By 2006, over 8,000 Domino’s stores had opened throughout the world.



# Tom Monaghan



- Tom and his brother Jim bounced around from foster home to orphanage throughout most of their childhood.
- In 1983 Monaghan bought the Detroit Tigers baseball franchise. In the next year, they were World Series champions.
- Tom Monaghan is the founder of Ave Maria University, and the Florida town of Ave Maria.
- This picture shows him in the 1960s demonstrating his pizza throwing skills.

# Depot Town Today



- Today the Depot Town area of Ypsilanti is a modern shopping area and tourist attraction.
- Most of the buildings in Depot Town were built in the 1850s, and in most cases, they have been restored to reflect that era.
- Several lofts abound above the vibrant businesses & restaurants, along with many older homes surrounding the small village.
- It is a lively night spot for Eastern Michigan University students and, with Riverside and Frog Island Parks and antique shops, a nice place to take the family for dinner or ice cream.

# YHS Museum & Archives



- The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is an 1860 home, which is presented as a museum of local history.
- The Fletcher-White Archives are located in the basement of the Museum and contain a large number of collections related to the history of Ypsilanti, including “family” and “business” listings.
- The Museum and Archives are owned and operated by the Ypsilanti Historical Society.
- The YHS Museum and Archives are open from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Sunday.

# **“Historical Highlights- 1800-1975 Ypsilanti, Michigan”**

Thank you for viewing our program!