

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SPRING 2022

Memories of the "YPSI BAR DINNER"

BY JOHN M. BARR SR.



The Ypsi Bar Dinner has been held at Haabs for many years (photo courtesy of John Harrington).

The closing of Haab's restaurant in March of 2022 prompted me to jot down some memories of "The Ypsi Bar Dinner". Michigan attorneys are required to belong to the State Bar of Michigan. The Washtenaw County Bar Association is a voluntary bar association. The Ypsi Bar Dinner is a group of local attorneys who just get together for dinner once a month. The dinner was in existence for some time when I started attending in 1960. I believe it was started by Judge James Breakey. Breakey was appointed Washtenaw County Circuit Judge in 1945 and lived in Ypsilanti in a Greek Revival mansion on Huron Street. I think that Judge Breakey thought it was good for the Bar and attorneys to get together to

break bread once a month, to encourage comradery and professionalism.

In 1960 the Ypsi Bar met on the third Wednesday of the month (except December) at the Huron Hotel on the corner of Washington and Pearl in downtown Ypsilanti. The hotel had a fine restaurant and meeting room.

The meeting was in the large ground floor meeting room on the east side of the hotel. All the diners sat at one long table. The menu was set (by the judge) and was crème of mushroom soup, side salad, New York Strip Steak, baked potato and a green vegetable. Dessert

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www.ypsihistory.org

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

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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

BY BILL NICKELS

Raising enough money to meet and possibly exceed expenses is a problem faced by all non-profits including YHS. Our 2021/2022 Annual Appeal generated about \$8,000 which is about 13% of our annual budget. Considering that our membership is likely solicited by several or many worthwhile non-profits, we are grateful that many of our members thought their donations to YHS were worthwhile. THANK YOU!

With the earnings from a major donation by Joe Lawrence last year, we are finally able to proceed with some major building projects. Our thirty some year old handicap ramp that enables us to be compliant with the American Disabilities Act finally needs to be replaced. As written about earlier, a Boy Scout Eagle project replaced the floor of our rear porch. We now need to hire a contractor to repair the rear porch column. These two items make up our construction agenda during the upcoming season.

Our website is slowly becoming an important arm of the Ypsilanti Historical Society. Members can now click on "Support" at ypsihistory.org to pay their dues and make a donation. We were able to have that feature available for 2022 membership renewals and found it well used!

We received the analytics for our website's Photo Archives. From February of 2021 to February 2022, there were 3,012 users! 2,912 users were from the United States, 33 were from Canada, and 17 each were from Cyprus, Greece, India and Poland. During the year, 19 % were returning users and 81 % were new users. Our website's Photo Archives is extremely popular! Use of photos from our Photo Archives is free; we only ask that users give YHS credit for photos they use. Access to the Photo Archives is found by clicking on "Outreach" at ypsihistory.org.

During the first year of COVID, Ypsilantians submitted pictures that described how COVID affected their lives and how they observed that

COVID affected the greater Ypsilanti area. Volunteer Russ Kenyon downloaded the collection. That is the first step towards to having the photos searchable from our website's Photo Archives.

We are fortunate to have both the U of M and EMU nearby. U of M hosts our website's Photo Archives and EMU is our graduate intern partner.

The City of Ypsilanti was founded in 1823 – next year is our bicentennial year. Evan Milan, our Museum Advisory Board Chair, is also chair of the Bicentennial Committee planning next year's celebration. Evan is asking Ypsilantians near and far who are interested in helping plan the celebration to contact him at evanmilan93@gmail.com.

Finally, except for our two EMU graduate interns, our museum and archives operates with volunteers. Jerry Jennings has been the person responsible for maintenance of our building and two apartments. His knees are now making it difficult for him to inspect the needs of our buildings and do the household type repairs that are sometimes needed. If you or somebody you know around the Ypsilanti area who likes to do odd jobs around their house and might be interested in doing the same around our hundred and sixty year old building, let me know by contacting me at yhs.museum@gmail.com. The good feeling of getting things accomplished and the enjoyment of being part of the museum team will be their rewards.

With the light snow during the middle of March, I think winter is finally over. Enjoy nature's way of inviting us to spend more time outdoors.



The closing of Haab's
will leave a
huge hole in
downtown Ypsilanti
and Haab's will be missed
by many, including
the Ypsi Bar.



was always a hot fudge over vanilla ice-cream parfait.

The December meeting was hosted by Judge Breakey at his Huron Street home. The December menu was always baked ham, scalloped potatoes and green peas with white cake for dessert. Younger members were expected to attend and act as servers. There was an after dinner gathering and short program in the third-floor ballroom and one or more Justices of the Michigan Supreme Court usually attended. There was no alcohol served at the December meeting and it was discouraged at other meetings. As a result, after the December meeting, younger members would congregate at the Gondola restaurant and bar at Washtenaw and Cornell in Ypsilanti for after dinner libations and tall tales.

The hotel at the time was owned by Bill and Mary Claire Anhut. Bill, an attorney, and Mary Claire, sold the hotel in the 1970's and Bill joined our firm.

Attendees included Judge Breakey and attorneys Ellis Freatman, Jr., Al Deotte, Henry Arkinson, Bob Fink, Gene Calder, Gordon Gable, Frank Shepherd, George Stripp, Dick Roberts, Ed Deake, Vanzetti Hamilton, Dwight Dibble, Don Lawrence, Ed Tripp, Bob Ulrich, Bill Barnes, Booker Williams, Paul Jackson, Jerry Lamb, Ken Bronson and me. There were usually about a dozen in attendance. One attorney would host the dinner cost, until the dinner was moved and then, because of increased atten-

dance, three attorneys would split the cost.

Ever since I have attended the Ypsi Bar Dinner there has been no agenda, no resolutions or business, no officers, and no rules, except that talking business is discouraged. However, war stories are ok, and even encouraged. In the old days some of the members took northern Michigan fishing trips that generated a number of stories.

The Pear law firm has kept the member roster and sent out monthly reminders for many years.

After Bill Anhut sold the hotel, the Ypsi Bar continued meeting at the hotel and then at Woodruff's Grove, the newly named restaurant at the hotel. The location was then changed to the Washtenaw Country Club. With more women lawyers and the Country Club rule of no women in the "19th Hole" bar, the group changed to Haab's restaurant as the preferred dinner location and has continued there until this time.

Haab's started as an Ypsilanti restaurant in 1934. It was once voted as one of the best steak houses in the Detroit area by a Detroit newspaper. The closing of Haab's will leave a huge hole in downtown Ypsilanti and Haab's will be missed by many, including the Ypsi Bar. Goodbye, old friend!

(John Barr Sr. is a long-time Ypsilanti attorney and has served as Ypsilanti City Attorney since 1981.)

HAAB'S RESTAURANT

*Serving the
Ypsilanti Community
for over 80 years*

*All good things must
come to an end*

*Thanks
for feeding and
providing memories
to the community for
all of these years!
You will be missed*

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FUN & GAMES AROUND THE VILLAGE

BY C. TINO LAMBROS



Each neighborhood has its favorite lots and each had its uniqueness and character. Many great football and baseball games were played at the First Baptist Church on West Cross Street. A powerful drive was from home plate near West Cross onto Washtenaw. But then, the church kept expanding and our great wide open ball field disappeared. On Elm Street was "Shady Diamond" (Hefley Park). Trees grew along Elm Street, third base line. Along the first base line, quite a distance away, was the Langer House, most in foul territory. You never wanted to hit the ball near their house. Sherman Street, next to my friend Gene Overton's house by an alley, was another diamond. Third base was a huge tree while Gene's house was along the right field foul line, across the alley. There was another field on Pearl Street near Wallace and another on Pearl near Owendale. Often we played two (maybe three) touch football games on the Wallace Boulevard (not boulevards). Now that's a narrow field.

In our "Village" we could always find something to do. We organized our own entertainment. Most fun and games began around home and spread from there, a short walk or a bike ride away. Any vacant lot was adaptable for activity. As we outgrew our yards we moved to larger venues. My brother managed to knock out two of the three picture widows in our house, which was one clue we had outgrown the yard. I thought he should have made it a triple before we moved on.

Each field had its own ground rules. Most were long, narrow, bumpy fields. Houses were off limits and an automatic "out" if you hit one, although some were long drives that became a challenge. Some ground rules were one field hitting, pitcher's box or pitcher's hands out, ghost runners, work up and on it went. Lord help you if you were the only left-hand batter playing! They were either forced to hit to the opposite field or all the fielders made a giant, reluctant shift to right field. Breaking a window could quickly end a game, especially if there was only one ball. Some of our fields turned into new homes, while others became "NO BALL PLAYING kid's parks."

Sunday football games became a West side legend. These games were played well into our twenties. They ended up at Frog Island, the only field large enough to hold us. It was organized

madness with as many as twenty or more on a team. Finally, they ended when it was necessary to have a doctor and an ambulance in attendance at all games.

Many of us took up golf and are still trying to play that crazy game. Pat's Par 3 (now Miles of Golf) was the beginning

course. Then we moved to Ann Arbor Municipal and Huron Hills (now along Geddes Road, now U of M Intramural fields, a swim club and lots of other buildings). Often one could sneak a few holes at the Washtenaw Country Club. On occasion a late-night visit to a course was in order to grab a flag with your favorite number, as long as that number was from 1 thru 18. Soon miniature golf and Putt-Putt came along for our enjoyment.

Bowling was always a good activity. Most of us started bowling at Temple Lanes, now the lower level art gallery of the Riverside Arts Center. The Masonic Temple Lodge was upstairs and eight lanes down stairs. Picture eight lanes between the pillars. Saturday morning was Junior Bowling League. Lots of high schoolers took part. Jim and Peggy Wilbanks were the owners, coaches and our hosts. After Temple we moved to the new Thunderbird Lanes on Michigan Avenue, Ypsi-Arbor, Colonial Lanes in Ann Arbor, and Lodge Lanes in Belleville. Down the street from Temple Lanes was the Strike Bar. Upstairs were a couple of lanes and downstairs a pool hall.

Those who enjoyed swimming had a few choices. I was never one for swimming activities being a non-swimmer and your basic "chicken of the sea." Often the Parks' Department had "splash parties" or open swims at the high school, even free swimming lessons. A few friends had cottages. Most of the time Silver Lake got the nod. One could spend all day there, have a picnic, and enjoy the water. On occasion we'd take sleeping bags and sleep overnight there. Close by was another local youth hang-out – Susterka Lake, off Huron River Drive, just east of Rawsonville Road in Belleville. The diving boards were a major attraction there, especially the high board. The remnants are still there if you cruise and look closely – southside of the Rawsonville Road.

Many activities were discussed and hatched at McNaughton's on Washtenaw (now Dom Bakery) over a

Water towers were a great attraction, not "THE WATER TOWER", but a couple on the West side.

coke, burger, their great fries and a pinball machine. At this time pizza places were becoming popular and we often planned our evenings over these "new" food treats. Near the old high school was the very first Dominos that we frequented.

Now I'm not saying I took part in these events but suffice it to say I "heard" about them. When we felt adventuresome and a bit out of control, we (I mean they) had several options. In our days these were pranks, youthful exuberance, and mischief. Nowadays one would probably be arrested or pursued by law enforcement.

There were stories of a mysterious light or glow in the fields on Denton Road, north of Michigan Avenue. Several carloads of us would venture out late at night to witness this unexplainable phenomenon. We'd sit in cars by the side of the road and stare into the darkness. No talking, although there was always nervousness. Don't get out! Stories circulated that friends were beaten up or attacked by unknown beings when they left the safety of their vehicle. It was said some were found the next day, alive, but hanging from tree branches. I never saw the light. I never saw anyone who was beaten up. I never left the safety of the vehicle either.

Bennett's Castle on Geddes Road was another dangerous haunt. Bennett was a union buster for Henry Ford in the 1930's and lived in a large, well-fortified house in the country. If you found the main gate open you could drive up the long, winding driveway and get close to the house. Harry Bennett had not lived there

for quite some time and had passed away, but rumors of armed guards and vicious attack dogs on the property still existed. It was usually late on a very dark night. We would creep through the trees and bushes, quietly getting as close as we could to the "castle." Most often deep, loud, angry barking dogs somewhere in the darkness, had us running back to our cars. Once friends Jim Bishop, Jeff Heath, Pat Budd and I canoed to the Castle on the Huron River – in daylight. This was great fun and we could see so much more of the grounds and buildings.

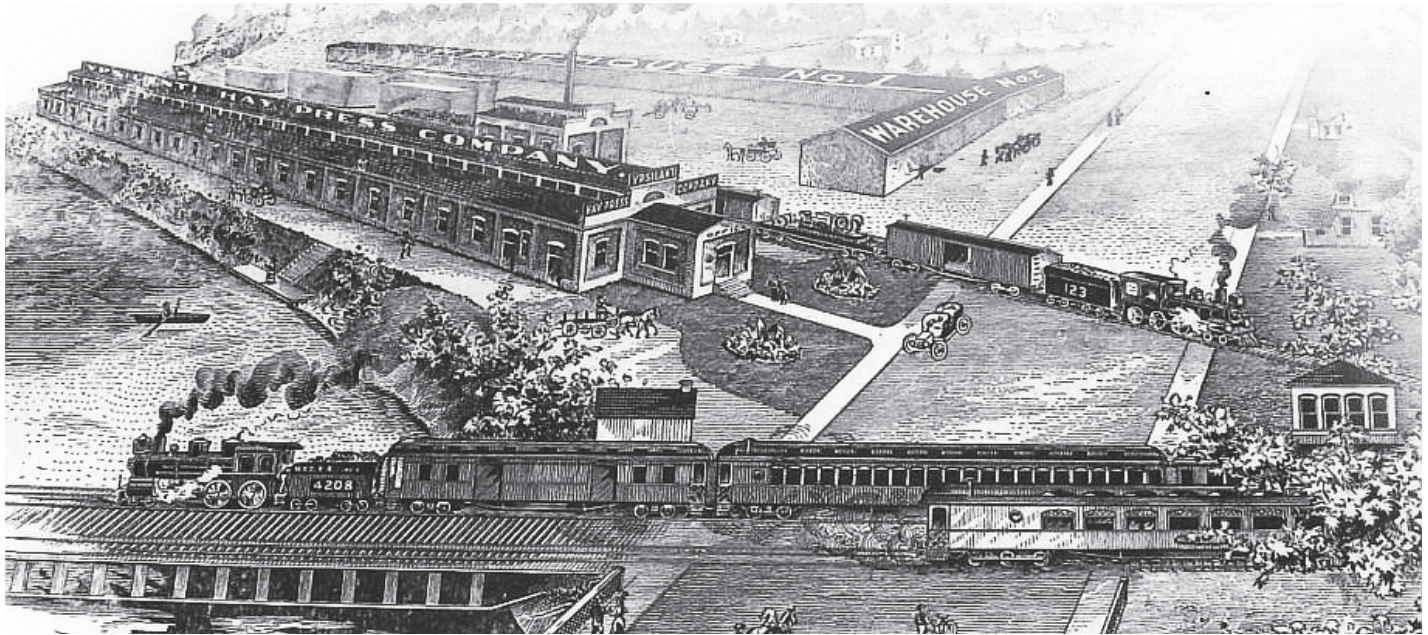
Water towers were a great attraction, not "THE WATER TOWER", but a couple on the West side. It is said that the one behind Estabrook could be entered. Those more daring and more water proficient claimed to have swum in that tower. Now I have no way of proving or disproving this, just passing along what was told to me. I do know that one Halloween my brother and some friends were planning something out there when their cars got stuck in the mud and their evil deed was aborted. Just west of Hewitt Road was another, smaller water tower that no longer exists but is now a small tot-lot for children. For something daring, a few pals may climb the tower and affix one's name and other graffiti to its side. I am only relating what I read on the tower from the safety of the ground. Since that tower no longer exists, it must be that these things never happened.

Ah, yes! Sweet memories. Each of us has them from one's own youth and neighborhoods and friends. So different yet so much the same. One thought leads to another and another. Some unhappy! Some emotional! Some better forgotten! Yet some cherished! Some beloved! Some we still laugh about. And ... they are ours.

(Tino Lambros grew up in Ypsilanti and has written a series of articles about "...growing up in Ypsilanti!" for the Gleanings.)

INDUSTRIES on Forest Avenue

(between the Huron River and Norris Street) BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ



1909 drawing of the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company two years after opening.

Growing up at the corner of Forest Avenue and River Street, I must have walked past the industrial site on Forest Avenue just east of the railroad tracks at least 1,000 times in my life. Long occupied by the Motor Wheel Corporation, the site was always an eyesore with broken concrete and pallets stacked to the sky. In spite of the many times I passed by, I never gave much thought about what was produced on that site and how long it had been in operation. I recently set out to find answers to that question, and the results are here in this article.

Let's start by going back to what the site was like prior to industrialization. In the 1800's the site was located on a beautiful stretch of land on the banks of the Huron River. When I was growing up in the 1970's, our neighbor was an elderly life-long Ypsilanti resident by the name of Frank Lidke. My siblings and I used to call him "Uncle Frank" and he was very fond of telling stories. One story he liked to reflect upon was how, as a youngster, he was paid to walk the neighborhood cows down Forest Avenue to the Huron River each day for grazing and drinking. Before school, young Frank would walk down Forest Avenue and other nearby streets and the cows would come out of their barns, on their own, and join the herd walking to the river. After school, he went back to the river where the cows formed their herd again and followed him back up the hill to their yards and barns.

The Swaine family at the corner of Forest Avenue and River Street had one of the first cement paved sidewalks in the

city, and the cows wanted to walk on the sidewalk instead of the dusty or muddy dirt road. Young Frank had a hard time keeping the cows off of the Swaine's sidewalk, but he was aided by an angry Mrs. Swaine who would come out of her house waving her arms and yelling at both the cows and him!

The area where Frank Lidke led the cow herd on Forest Avenue near the Huron River and train tracks was precisely where an industrial site would be located just a few decades later. In the late 1800's, this property was on the outskirts of a wetlands area known as "the Bayou" which was bordered north to south by the Highland Cemetery to Forest Avenue, and west to east the Huron River to Norris Street. How different things must have looked in those days with trees, swampy land, and hilly terraces. Industry started

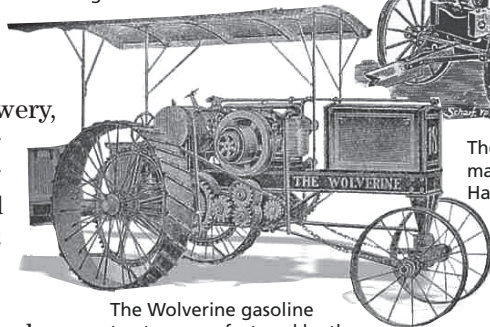


1916 photo of the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company's main entrance at 207 Forest Street.

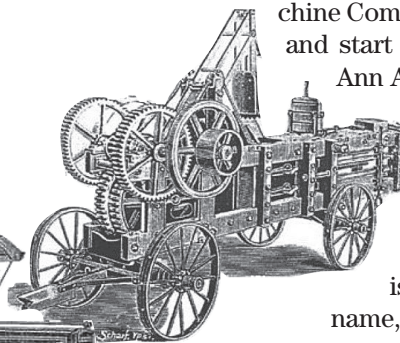
catching up with that pristine landscape on Forest Avenue in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In that time-frame, several industries established themselves on the stretch of Forest Avenue from Huron Street to River Street including Jacob Grobe's brewery, the Hay and Todd Underwear factory, the Michigan Ladder Company, and Swaine and Wallington's Malt House, part of which to this day happens to be my family's car garage. Nearby Frog Island was also bustling with industrial activity, with multiple mills operating along the natural river and the mill race built by Mark Norris.



The Wolverine Hay Press logo on the cover of their catalog.



The Wolverine gasoline tractor manufactured by the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company.



The Wolverine Hay Press manufactured by the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company.

chine Company to realize his invention and start a new company called the Ann Arbor Hay Press Company.

The Ann Arbor Machine Company sued Christensen over the name of his company, but within about a month of first registering his new company name, John Christensen won a court battle against the Ann Arbor Machine Company that allowed him to keep the name. The Ann

Arbor Machine Company appealed the decision, and Christensen decided not to challenge and lost the rights to use the name Ann Arbor Hay

Press Company. Christensen had an even better idea

in mind, in 1907, Christensen partnered with Frank T. Newton in Ypsilanti, who provided the new company's capital and negotiated with the Ypsilanti Council to provide funding for the building on Forest Avenue. The new company was called the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company. John Christensen received his patent for the bale tying mechanism on December 31, 1907, and the company commenced to produce the Wolverine Hay Press. Incidentally, the Ann Arbor Machine Company continued to manufacture the rival Ann Arbor Hay Press for many decades after the dispute.

In the Winter 2008 issue of the Gleanings, Pamela German and Veronica Robinson wrote about the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company in an article titled "Gone, But Not Forgotten". The article provides some insight into the types of products produced by the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company.

The claim was made that the facility was the "Largest Factory in the World devoted exclusively to the manufacture of Hay Presses." The Ypsilanti plant specialized in belt-powered presses that were available with wood or steel frames to suit the purchaser. The 1910 offerings of the Wolverine Balers included a number of sizes including 14x18, 16x18, 17x22, and 18x22, so that baler operators could regulate the length of their desired bales. In 1912, the Ypsilanti Hay

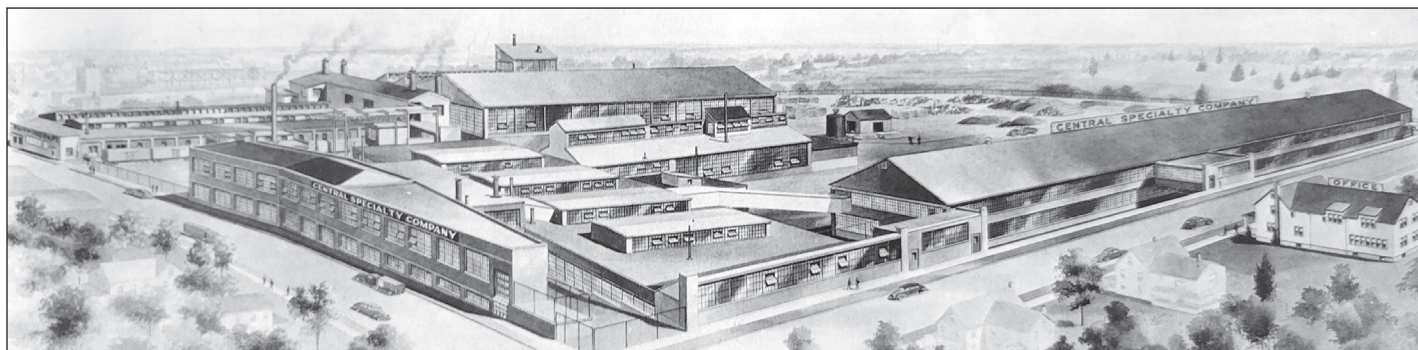
A new industry was about to join those companies in 1907. A newspaper article from March of that year stated that "The Ypsilanti Council voted to put up a \$11,000 building for the Ann Arbor Hay Press Company." It further stated that the "company agrees to employ at least 25 hands for five years" and "The Hay Press Co. expects to employee 100." Hay presses were used for compressing and baling hay. The newspaper article referred to the development of the industrial site on Forest Avenue between the Huron River and Norris Street that would become the home to the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company.

The reference in the newspaper article to the Ann Arbor Hay Press Company is a little confusing. There was a longstanding company in Ann Arbor called the Ann Arbor Machine Company, formerly the Ann Arbor Agricultural Company that produced a mechanical farming product called the Ann Arbor Hay Press. The Ann Arbor Hay Press Company existed only briefly, established by an employee of the Ann Arbor Machine Company named John Christensen who wanted to add a wire tying mechanism to the Ann Arbor Hay Press. Christensen left the Ann Arbor Ma-



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Central Specialty Site artist's drawing from 1938.

Press Company was also building tractors with the Wolverine name that utilized 18, 25 and 35 horsepower engines. Each tractor had a sliding gear transmission and a pair of forward speeds off a two cylinder opposed engine.

According to the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company ads, their Wolverine hay presses put more weight into hay bales than any other press on the market. They also claimed that hay baled on the Wolverine brought \$1.00 more per ton to the farmer. The Wolverine brand tractor was advertised as being able to plow, drill, cultivate, husk, shred, cut ensilage and run a farmer's hay baler and separator. Unlike the Wolverine hay baler product that was powered separately and belt driven, the Wolverine tractor included a gasoline engine and was self-propelled. The newspaper ads of the day claimed that the Wolverine tractor was built for the big farm or ranch and at the same time wasn't too big for the small farm. Ads claimed it could do the work of 8 or 10 horses.

On June 9th, 1910 there was a substantial fire that destroyed a large portion of the newly built factory. In order to assure customers that everything was going to be all right, the company sent out press releases across the country that read:

Daily papers convey the intelligence that a disastrous fire at Ypsilanti, Mich., June 9th, destroyed a big portion of the famous Ypsilanti hay press factory. Patrons of the concern, however, may rest easy with reference to any contracts they may have for hay presses for future delivery. The factory is running just as usual and deliveries were made from the day of the fire up to the present time without any delay. The Ypsilanti press is one of the good ones in the market and those who contemplate the purchase of a press will do well to write for circulars and price list to the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company, 207 Forest St., Ypsilanti, Mich.

After Frank T. Newton left the business to explore other interests, his old business partner in the ladder industry, John S. Haggerty, took over as president of the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company. From 1915 to 1929, the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company licensed and manufactured nearly identical hay balers under the Greyhound brand that were available

from the Banting Manufacturing Company, a general agent out of Toledo, Ohio. Apparently, both the Wolverine and Greyhound balers were manufactured in the Ypsilanti plant until a second disastrous fire of unknown origin finally halted production in February of 1919. The 1919 fire damage was \$25,000, and the loss from the fire was more than all of the fires combined in the city of Ypsilanti in 1918. At the time, the investment of the company totaled \$65,000, and they were manufacturing Wolverine Hay Presses, Wolverine Paper Balers, Grey Iron Castings and General Machine Work. Despite the stoppage of Wolverine hay press and tractor manufacturing at the Ypsilanti location, the Banting company continued to offer Wolverine parts at least into the late 1940's.

The next company to occupy the industrial site on Forest Avenue was Central Specialty in 1919. J. H. Lonskey, was born in Vincennes, Indiana, November 4, 1879. After time spent in charge of several large foundries, he moved to Detroit and organized the Central Specialty Company in 1911 as an iron foundry which poured castings for the automobile and plumbing industries. In 1917, Central Specialty started producing individual piston ring castings. As Central Specialty outgrew their Detroit location, Lonskey set his sights on the purchase of the assets of the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company which already included a foundry. In 1919, Lonskey moved to Ypsilanti and organized the spinoff company of Central Specialty called the Ypsilanti Foundry Company, which was incorporated for one hundred thousand dollars. The reason why Ypsilanti was chosen as the new location was because of the adequate labor supply, it was the ideal location near the automotive center of industry, it was fairly close to the parent company, the former occupant of the site already operated as a foundry, and the contour of the land was ideal for a foundry. Twenty-eight acres were acquired, which gave room for expansion.

J.H. Lonskey served as secretary of the Detroit-based Central Specialty Company and was simultaneously the president of the spinoff Ypsilanti Foundry Company. The Ypsilanti Foundry Company manufactured piston rings and other automotive components including the intake manifold for the Hudson Motor Car Company and a power steer-

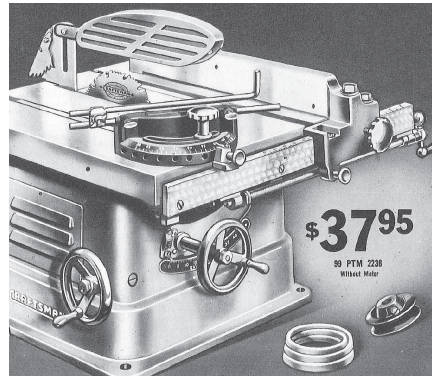
ing pump body for the Chrysler Corporation. The Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum's newsletter from Spring 2014 published a good article about the various industries located at the site of the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company, called "Forest Ave – Century of Industry" by Nick Williams. From the article we learn about a change in output of the Central Specialty plant:

In 1928, Detroit based Central Specialty sold out to its subsidiary (the Ypsilanti Foundry Company). With the purchase, the Ypsilanti Foundry Company assumed the Central Specialty name. Shortly after, the main office moved to Ypsilanti and manufacturing discontinued in Detroit. With the decline of the auto industry during the depression, 1930 to 1935 were difficult years for Central Specialty. Over time, manufacturers supplied their own piston rings which led to Central Specialty discontinuing production (of piston rings) in 1940.

At the time of the merger of the Ypsilanti Foundry Company back to Central Specialty in 1928, the assets of the company totaled \$750,000. Around 1932, Central Specialty Company started manufacturing machinery and accessories for the Sears, Roebuck & Company. These items carried the Craftsman, Companion, Dunlap and Fulton labels depending on their level of quality. Machinery and accessories with Sears source code "103" were manufactured in Ypsilanti. Central Specialty had its own casting and machining facilities. The business with Sears developed rapidly and by 1941 had expanded to two and one-half million dollars in sales annually.

The various Sears tools manufactured by Central Specialty in Ypsilanti included:

- 6", 7", 8" tilting table bench saws
- 8" & 9" tilting-arbor bench saws
- 8" & 10" builder saws



Sears Craftsman 8 inch saw from 1941 catalog manufactured by Central Specialty.

- 10" industrial floor model saw
- 4-1/4", 4-3/8", 6", 6-1/8" jointer-planers
- 6" hand-feed planer
- 4"x36"8" & 6"x48"9" belt and disk sanders
- 4"x36" bench belt sander
- 11", 12", 18", 24" scotch yoke action scroll saws
- 24" walking beam action scroll saws
- 8", 9", 10", 12" swing wood lathes
- 1/2" cutter bore shaper
- 9", 12 1/4", 13 1/2", 15", 15 1/2" swing drill presses
- 12" 2-wheel band saw
- 12" 3-wheel band saw
- belt driven 4" & 6" bench grinders
- belt driven polishing heads

By July of 1941, the rapid growth of the business indicated need for additional capital, so the first public sale of Central Specialty stock was sold. At that time, the main office for Central Specialty was located across Norris Street in a converted house. The onset of World War II required a shift to the development of wartime products because of labor and material shortages. Ann Arbor-based King-Seeley Corporation acquired Central Specialty in October of 1944. Besides wood/metal-working machinery, King-Seeley in Ann Arbor also manufactured Thermos bottles,



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metal lunch boxes, picnic coolers, refrigeration components, and products that supported the war effort. The Central Specialty Division of King-Seeley, located in Ypsilanti, was responsible for woodworking and metalworking machinery. As a division of King-Seeley, Central Specialty diversified manufacturing included instrument panels, gauges, speedometers, governors, Army and Navy defense products, along with their Sears line of power tools. As a result of the acquisition, the Ypsilanti plant experienced a major expansion, including the building of the administration building in 1949.

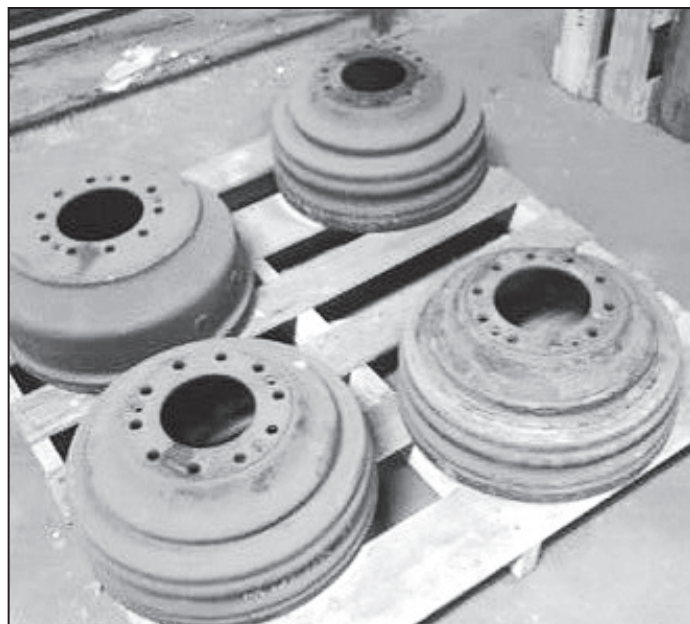
From the article "Forest Avenue – Century of Industry" we learn more about the next decades of Central Specialty:

Between 1938 and 1963, led by Walter Gaskell, Central Specialty filed over twenty power tool patents with the United States Patent Office. They were drill press, jointer, planer, radial arm saw, and power tool part patents. In 1964, Central Specialty lost their contract with Sears which, by then, made up nearly 70% of the production at the plant. At that time, with the loss of Sears' business, Central Specialty sold out to Motor Wheel Corporation in June. Like other buyers before them, Motor Wheel found the foundry portion of the business attractive.

The specifics of the sale from Central Specialty to the Motor Wheel Corporation were described in detail in an article in the Ypsilanti Press from June 22, 1964:

The Motor Wheel Corporation of Lansing and the King-Seeley Thermos Company of Ann Arbor announced jointly this morning that Motor Wheel has purchased King-Seeley's Central Specialty Division in Ypsilanti. The price was not disclosed. King-Seeley will continue operations at the foundry until early next year, with Motor Wheel beginning operations there on a gradual basis in the near future before assuming complete control. Central Specialty, the third largest employer in Ypsilanti and the fourth largest in the area with more than 450 employees, has operated since WWII as a division of King-Seeley. Motor Wheel officials said in Lansing that only a skeleton crew will be retained. They said that as new business develops it hopes to expand its staff to 100 or 200 employees. Originally the company had planned to purchase also the old Sudzee Soap Company building on North Huron River Drive, but upon further investigation decided it was not necessary. The transaction involves buildings with total floor space of 290,000 square feet and 21 acres of land, as well as foundry equipment, according to John H. Gerstenmaier, Motor Wheel president, and A. Neil Gustine, King-Seeley president. Gerstenmaier said the company will produce brake drums for passenger automobiles not presently within Motor Wheel's production capabilities.

The Ypsilanti Press article continues with additional details:



Motor Wheel Corporation brake drums.

Motor Wheel is a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co, of Akron, Ohio. Central Specialty announced last December that the plant would be sold because it had lost a long-time contract to produce power tools for Sears Roebuck and Company. The contract, which the plant had had since the early 1930s, apparently was given to the Emerson Electric Company of St. Louis, Mo., which manufactures fans, motors and appliances. The power tools manufactured for Sears made up nearly 70 per cent of production at the Central Specialty plant. The plant also produces gray iron castings for the automotive industry. King-Seeley officials said today that no plans have been made to transfer the foundry employees to other company plants. The Central Specialty Company was established in Detroit in 1911 and moved to Ypsilanti in 1919. General jobbing and automotive castings were the products manufactured until 1915, when the Detroit Piston Ring Company asked the firm to make piston rings for it. In 1919 it moved to its site at 720 Norris Street at Forest Street, its present address. By 1930 it had become one of the largest piston ring producers in the country, producing rings for Charles Lindberg's "Spirit of St. Louis" which made the world's first trans-Atlantic flight. In 1928 the firm was sold to the Ypsilanti Foundry Company, and in 1944 became a division of King-Seeley Corporation.

Motor Wheel Corporation used the Ypsilanti site's foundry to produce automobile brake drums and disk brake rotors. Remarkably, employment grew to about 800 employees in the 1970s. This is the time frame that I remember vividly as a small child growing up a block away. I can recall all of the hustle and bustle coming from the plant at that time. A large parking lot was built adjacent to the Highland Cemetery which was full of cars throughout the day and night and

supported multiple shifts at the plant. At quitting time, the number of cars heading down River Street would jam up traffic for at least an hour. There were also numerous 18-wheel trucks that drove up and down Forest Avenue, Norris Street, and River Street all day long. The train tracks had a spur that led directly into the Motor Wheel industrial site to bring in supplies and carry out end products. I remember one time when an 18-wheel truck was attempting to turn from River Street west onto Forest Avenue and it ran over the curb and flipped over on its side. Fortunately, the driver wasn't hurt, but it made quite a spectacle for the neighbors watching as tow trucks righted the fallen truck and trailer. Former Ypsilanti Mayor Pete Mur-

dock worked at Motor Wheel where he was active in the UAW union and served as the local UAW chapter's safety steward. Another interesting bit of trivia about Motor Wheel is that Ypsilanti's infamous serial killer, John Norman Collins, worked at Motor Wheel at the time of the Michigan Murders.

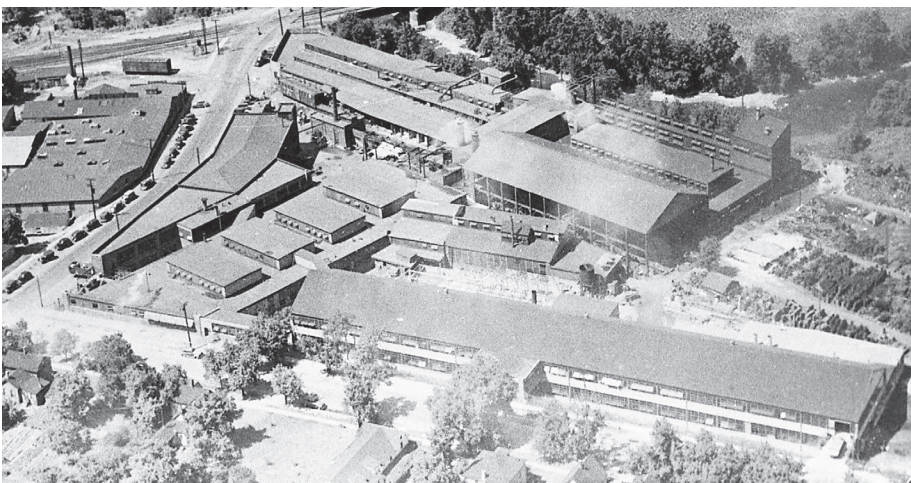
Motor Wheel continued producing brake products for several decades at the Ypsilanti site. In 1996, Motor Wheel company executives attempted to reduce costs by asking the union to reduce wages and benefits by about 65%. When the proposal was rejected by the workers, the company announced it would close the Ypsilanti plant. The Motor Wheel compa-

ny still exists to this day and is based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It continues to make drum brakes and brake adjusters for the automotive industry.

The industrial site, foundry, and factory at the corner of Forest Avenue and Norris Street stood empty for several years, but are now owned and operated by Bay Logistics, which is based in Byron Center, Michigan. Bay Logistics provides warehousing, storage and distribution for the auto industry. The old administration building is now owned by The Arbor Brewing Company, which was opened in 2006 by Matt and Rene Greff as The Corner Brewery. It is nice to see that both the industrial factory and administration buildings are still being used and continue to be part of the story of the site that was first developed over one hundred years ago.

The industrial site on Forest Avenue between the Huron River and Norris Street has seen six different companies occupy the property over the past century that has produced products ranging from hay balers, tractors, piston rings, table saws, drill presses, brake drums and beer. All this started with an \$11,000 gift from the city of Ypsilanti to jumpstart a business that grew into one of the city's largest employers at one time and is now a staging area for parts distribution as well as a brewery. Many of the former buildings have been torn down over the years, but the ghosts of the thousands of products manufactured there and the thousands of employees who toiled in the foundries and manufacturing facilities live on. In my future walks past the site on Forest Avenue, I will think of those who used to work there and the products they manufactured that were distributed across the country for over 100 years.

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



Comparison of industrial site at Forest Avenue and Norris Street from 1925 (top) and 2021 (bottom).

Dr. Amasa Kinne's Civil War Letters — *Describing the Horrible Realities of the War*

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ



In America we all learn about the Civil War in books and videos - names, dates, battles and so forth - which we don't remember, but in this article, I would like to share with you the more personal account of an Ypsilanti physician. Dr. Amasa Kinne during the Civil War, through letters he sent to his family in Ypsilanti. You may forget part of the contents, but if you are like me, you will always remember how Civil War rations of bologna were made or how rivers, which supplied hundreds with drinking water, were polluted by the government shooting horses at riverside and then dumping them in.

I want to reintroduce you to the one term mayor, school board member and man of honor, dignity and compassion – Dr. Amasa Kinne. You first met him in the Summer, 2021 edition of the Gleanings which you can read on line in the Ypsilanti Historical Society web site. Amasa was a man of conscience and had many challenges in his life. He was one of seven sons born to Nathan and Elizabeth Farrington Kinne, a prosperous Vermont farmer. Nathan's plan was to provide each of his sons with a farm but Amasa had a calling to help others through medicine. His letters reveal that he lived very sparsely while a student at Dartmouth on the small allowance his parents provided. In order to continue his education once he graduated in the class of 1837, he became a teacher in a one room school house for a year with 40 students. As if that were not challenging enough, he taught them everything from beginning letters of the alphabet for the 5-year-old pupils to Latin and Greek for the older students. He was so poor that he chose a middle bedroom in the rooming house that he lived in so that he didn't have to heat it in the cold Vermont winters. Amasa found that by standing near the wall separating him from the boarder's room next door he could barely warm himself with the little bit of heat provided by his neighbor. The money which would have been spent on fuel for the stove in his room could be saved and applied for tuition for medical school. Soon after graduating from the Department of Medicine at Dartmouth in 1841 he married the love of his life – a

woman named Susan Smith, who he described to his family in letters as perfection itself. He practiced medicine in New Hampshire for nine years and was also a Justice of the Peace. Susan and Amasa had three children. Perhaps hoping that a change in climate would ease his wife's suffering with rheumatism and a weak heart he moved to the growing village of Ypsilanti in 1850. His sister MaryAnn had emigrated to the village in 1830 with her husband, Justus Norris. Through Amasa's letters, it seems that he had visited her in the frontier western settlement of Ypsilanti. In 1859, only nine years after he arrived and opened his practice Susan died, leaving him a widower with three young children. He felt that his luck was changing when, while visiting his niece, Helen Norris, who taught at Albion College, he met his soul mate, Jennie Bristol who was a 28-year-old teacher. They married on April 3, 1862, when Amasa was 49 years old, despite his father's objections. In a letter to his mother, Amasa asks her to intervene with his father on Jennie's behalf. From their affectionate letters to each other it seems that they loved and appreciated each other and were a good match.



Jennie Bristol Kinne.

You might be wondering how it was that Amasa, an intelligent, gentle, much loved and respected physician became part of the Civil War. Amasa was not only a dedicated physician but an acute businessman and together with his brother-in-law, his first wife Susan's brother, Frank Smith, he was partners in a book and variety store at 104 West Michigan Avenue. Harvey Colburn tells us in the 1923 book *The Story of Ypsilanti*, that the store became a recruiting office for the Civil War. So many students and faculty at the Normal (now Eastern Michigan University) enlisted to fight for the cause that the college closed down during the war years.

Dr. Kinne's son explains the reason Amasa left his young wife, baby daughter, cozy home and thriving practice in Ypsilanti to help with the war in the preface to the collection of letters by stating "There were times in the Civil War when the battles came so close together as to make them seem to the soldiers in the field, at least, almost contin-

uous. At such times, the lack of sufficient care for the many sick and wounded who were brought into the Army Depots in such great numbers, was obviated by the call to the colors of Volunteer Surgeons. The Rolls of Honor contain the names of many such who left their homes and work, often at great sacrifice, to serve their country without other compensation than the satisfaction of the performance of duty. Among them were some of the most eminent of the profession. Among the thirty-three from the State of Michigan, who responded to the call of the Adjutant-General, which was issued on May 12th, 1864, was my father, the writer of these letters. He was at that time fifty-one years of age, a graduate of Dartmouth, A.B. 1837, M.D. 1840, and had been building up a substantial practice, after the fashion of those times, in both medicine and surgery in the little town of Ypsilanti."

He continues, "The Michigan contingent was sent to join the Army of the Potomac under the command of General Grant who had crossed the Rapidan on May 5th. Not all of the thirty-three were assigned to Fredericksburg, however. Some were sent on to White House and City Point as the army advanced. Most of these volunteers remained as long as they were needed but a number returned in a greatly impaired state of health. My father was among those who could not endure a life of so great hard-ship; he was invalided home with a severe case of jaundice which incapacitated him for service or for professional duty for many weeks. This accounts for the brevity of the series...which gives an impression of the profound effect of the war on 'Northern Patriots', rather than a complete story."

I will provide you with some of the content of his letters and if you are interested you can visit the Ypsilanti Historical Society archives and read them in their entirety. The first letter in the collection is to his son Willard, who is working on the farm of his Aunt Mary Ann Kinne Norris Beach, Amasa's oldest sister. Amasa writes this while onboard the steamer Lizzie Baker off Fort Powhatan in June, 1864. He tells Willard why he left his home, practice and family to go on this journey. "The report came by telegram that 3,000 wounded men were lying at White House that the surgeons were overworked and that some of the poor fellows had not been dressed or attended to in four days." His conscious would not allow him to stay at home while so many were suffering.

Amasa writes his son that his journey began at Detroit where he took a boat to Cleveland, Ohio and then traveled via Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Baltimore to Washington, where he received a pass to travel further, closer to the battle. He is on the James River on a mail boat, detained along with many other boats. "We are a little higher up the river now than we were yesterday. The river here is full of boats, tugs, barges and transports, as they can lie and be free to obey orders...A little ways up the river in plain sight, is a pontoon bridge over which Army of the Potomac is now passing and has been for the last two days and nights...We drew army rations for the first time last night." This consisted of boiled pork and hard tack. Previously Amasa had stocked up in Washington D. C. and was provid-



Kinne & Smith Store at 105 W. Congress which served as a Civil War Recruiting Office.

ed with tin cups, crackers, tea, coffee, sugar and bologna sausage. Amasa provides this disturbing detail, "This last article they say is made of horse meat, dog meat, &c. We saw them, a few miles below Washington shooting army horses and tumbling them into the river...Perhaps this is to prevent their being made into sausages...It was a sickening scene..." He tells Willard that he is sleeping on the boards of the deck using his carpet bag for a pillow. Amasa presents himself as a very honest man and is outraged by the "copperheads" making money off of the government and the war. "There is a great deal said about dishonesty in relation to army supplies." He tells Willard an example of this - the government purchasing horses which are placed in pastures as "reserves" being sold back to the government until this practice was stopped when it was deemed necessary to brand them.

The next letter is to his young wife and in this letter he repeats some of the same information he wrote to Willard but leaves out the making of bologna and shooting of horses. As he heads for Pittsburgh from Ohio, he mentions that "There are six of us (meaning physicians) and there is also a party of four from Battle Creek, another of two from Ann Arbor and another of two from Pontiac." He tells her "I had a state room in the bow of the boat, Star of the West, last night and the lake being rough I got dizzy. I felt as Jonah did after he had been swallowed by the whale. We are in good spirits and expect to reach Washington Sunday morning. If you should want more money you can...draw some from Bob Hemphill's bank. Excuse this very haste and with much love and many kisses. Yr. Aff Hsbd. A. F. Kinne"

Once Amasa arrives in Washington D. C. on June 12, 1864, he spends the day going through the hospitals with the physician in charge. He is astonished that the supply and command posts are being moved to the south shore of the James River, in fear of invasion. He tells Jennie that "The fatal swamps of

the Chickahominy, where McClellan lost by either death or sickness more than sixty thousands of his men are thus forsaken and the fight is opening anew on the south of the doomed city..." (meaning Washington D.C.)

He asks Jennie "How do you get along, my poor dear, with so many duties and cares? I am afraid I shall have to worry about you some." And then again his character shines through in his writing as he says "We ought to make sacrifices in such times as these but what may seem such in passing, we shall find when we come to look back upon them, were only slight annoyances."

A few days later, Amasa is on board a mail boat in search of a battle and patients to tend only to find "there was no army when he landed at his destination. The troops were gone or leaving and everything indicated that that place, as a base of operations was being rapidly abandoned." He describes his own situation to his wife. "I slept out of doors last night...I have not received any army clothes or blankets yet and so when night came I spread down some newspapers and lay down upon the promenade deck, which is open on all sides, with my overcoat about me and my carpet sack for a pillow." While still aboard the mail boat the next day searching for wounded soldiers he seems discouraged as he writes "I am in good health today and

the voyage interests me very much. But whether I am to do any good or not, does not yet appear." Over the past few days on the mail boat which was named Lizzie Baker, Amasa has traveled down the Potomac River which he describes as "most beautiful" and picturesque and a "delightful country". He passes Mt. Vernon, somewhat "pretentious planter houses" and much "virgin nature". From the snug little boat he views West Point and Yorktown. Along the York and Pamunkey Rivers he describes a shore "covered with trees as far back as the eye can reach." From the boat he can see "the old Jamestown of 1607. It is in ruins now, only the chimney stacks remaining." Finally, the boat lands at the Depot of Wounded Head Quarters of the Potomac of June 18, 1864.

Amasa writes "Darling Wife, I am ashore and I have arrived here at the right time. There are not many wounded men here yet but fighting at Petersburg has been going on for some days and thousands of wounded men will be brought in here soon, probably before the hospitals are ready for them. I wish you could be here for a little while just to see the war in all its horrible reality. No tongue or pen can describe it. The confusion and bustle and noise and turmoil are such as I could give you no adequate idea of. I have seen Major Dalton the medical officer to whom I am to report but he

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had just landed, was going to select a site for hospitals and asked me to call again. There are some 16 or 18 Michigan Volunteer Surgeons here and I can assure you they are glad to see us. We were on the rivers four nights and five days, that is we were aboard on Tuesday at 10 o'clock A.M. and landed this Saturday morning. I have seen a pontoon bridge. We lay below it all afternoon yesterday and until 10 o'clock at night. All day and all night Tues., Wed., Thurs. and Friday and a great many crossed at other points. They were driving the cattle over while we lay there. We did a watch and counted and made an estimate of the number. There must have been from 8000 to 10000 in that drove." He tells his wife that he saw his niece Helen Norris Estabrook's husband going out to the front along with his 9th corps and then sent him a note for some of the teamsters to give him.

The doctor continues, "Some wounded negro soldiers are being brought in now. We saw 300 greyback (author's note – Confederate soldiers) on a boat in the river yesterday whom these very fellows took. They took a fort also and there was a black flag flying over it. And when the colored boys charged upon it the rebs shouted 'Fort Pillow' & 'No Quarter'. I asked a bright looking young contraband what they did with the prisoners they took there? 'I don't want to see them again' he replied with a wide smile, 'We didn't take any prisoners. We cleaned them all out.'"

This is where the letters home end. Most likely Amasa continued writing to his "loving wife" Jennie. Amasa's son, whether Edmund or Willard we don't know, has told us that the doctor then became the patient himself and was sent home very ill with a severe case of jaundice which incapacitated him for several months. However, Jennie does not mention her husband in a small Civil War diary which she wrote in as late as April, 1865 so it seems that he is still working as a physician or else recovering a year later but not yet at his Cross Street home and with his family.

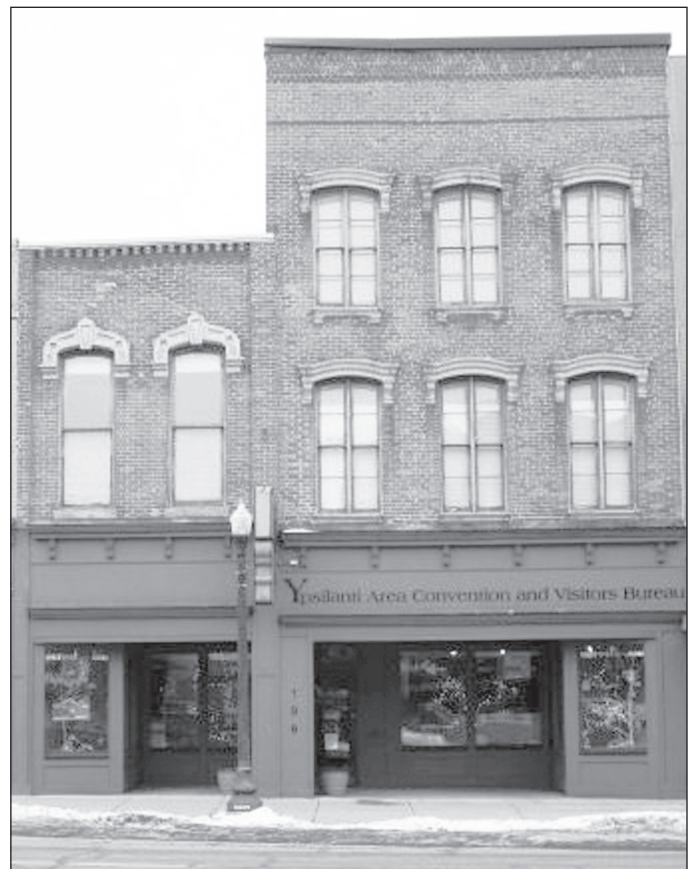
There is only one intact letter written by his young wife who is snug in their small home and practice on the northwest corner of West Cross Street, adjacent to the Union School. It is dated June 24, 1864. It is a friendly missive and she shares news of friends and family and of course the weather and she responds to Amasa's description of his trip on the mail boat down the Potomac River. Jennie writes "I hope it is not as warm there relatively as here the last few days have exceeded the hottest August days of last summer. Wednesday P.M. the hoped and prayed for shower and it came, the first drop of rain since you went away. The leaves and turf seemed to express their thankfulness as plainly as the human kind. I tried watering the strawberry bed two nights...I fear the berries we have to can will be scarce unless we have frequent showers...By this time you must be well into your work, a sad work, isn't it? Yet a glad work too, for there is in it the saving of human life; we were

much interested in your description of down the Potomac."

She makes a little joke to her doctor husband about his going away and wrote that his son Willard thought that it was a good thing for his horse that he was away, referring to the busy life of a doctor who made house calls with his horse and carriage. Jennie tells Amasa that their baby is "asleep in the parlor where it is cool. She kisses me for Papa every day and runs to the window to see if he is not coming to give her a ride on his back." Jennie's mother lives with them and sends a message to Amasa "Tell Doctor we get along nicely, but should not feel bad if he were here to do the chores, a round –a-bout (sic) way of telling you you are very much missed. We were up and stirring this morning at 5 o'clock, so we have a long day. At night it is so warm that I can neither read nor sew nor work."

She gives him a little news from his friends in Ypsilanti. "Kirk says you had better have stayed at home, can't do any good there, if a man is to die, he'd die for all the doctors in the land. I did not try to argue his Irish fatalism out of him, only consoled him by saying, 'his opinion was only one man's opinion.'...So you see your friends have not all forgotten or forsaken you, last of all, the dear ones at home... Your loving wife, Jennie."

We do know that once he recovered his health and came



Contemporary View of 105 West Michigan Avenue.

Museum Advisory Board Report

BY EVAN MILAN AND KOREY MORRIS

At its founding in 1961, the Ypsilanti Historical Society was not predestined to take root in our community as it has. As we look on from the Spring of 2022, it is hard to imagine an alternative; an Ypsilanti without the dedicated work of the Historical Society would only be lacking. At its founding, though, the Society was housed in only a small dedicated section of the Ypsilanti Public Library, and would not find its home at 220 N Huron Street until 1970.

The impressive home on Huron street is an oft' mentioned point of pride for the Society, a living monument to the founders of Ypsilanti. But, the Ypsilanti Historical Society, and the Asa Dow home in which it stands, would be a shadow of its current self, if not for its dedicated volunteer members. The artifacts and stories of our community would lie idol, if not for the life breathed in by our dedicated society of Ypsiphiles; without our members, Ypsilanti would have no memory.

Every member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society is leaving their indelible mark, in one form or another, on our community. With so many contributing their time and resources, it is daunting to imagine the acknowledgment that could possibly encompass everyone. I have not had the honor of working with many of our members; however, over the past year, I have had the great privilege of working closely with a member of YHS who's work helped lift our Society to its lofty position.

Virginia Davis-Brown has served on the Museum Advisory Board for, she has informed me, a total of 32 years. Serving from January of 1983, Virginia has been an invaluable asset to the endless, and at times thankless, task of maintaining our very impressive museum. Having lived in and around Ypsilanti, Virginia has an encyclopedic knowledge of our community that few can boast of; lending her surplus of facts and anecdotes, that have come to fill our museums rooms as plentifully as any of the tangible pieces, we are privileged to hold an oral collection unmatched by so many others. The Ypsilanti Historical Museum would not be the living piece of our community that it is today, if it was not for Virginia's leading force. There is not a portion of our museum that has not benefited from the touches that Virginia, often working in tandem with Karen Nickels and Kathryn Howard, have imparted to them.

At our last Advisory Board meeting, on February 12, the



Volunteer, Nancy Taylor showing the museum's collection of Easter figurines.

board accepted the resignation of Virginia Davis-Brown. With over three decades of outstanding service, the entire board wishes Virginia the best of as she pursues her many other commitments. Virginia, she has assured me, will still be near at hand as the museum begins to weather a new phase.

As we move into a new season and see signs for cautious optimism for the future, there are many impending developments for the museum. The Omicron variant, that spiked so rapidly in the early days of 2022, has appeared to bring the COVID-19 pandemic into more control. Infection rates, as well as severe illness and mortality rates, are dropping rapidly. At this time, we are cautious to prematurely suspend our visitor mask requirement; however, provided there is

continued improvement, I foresee vestiges of pre pandemic life returning to our museum.

With a vacant chair to fill on the Advisory Board, after some consideration, we found an ideal candidate in Timothy Sabo. Tim has been with YHS as early as the spring of 2018. Having devoted his time and energy, repeatedly, to the monumental task of decking our halls for Christmas and serving as a docent, in addition to his own studies in the Historic Preservation program at EMU, not to mention his 2-minute commute to the museum from his home, Tim will be an asset to the future of the Ypsilanti Historical Museum.

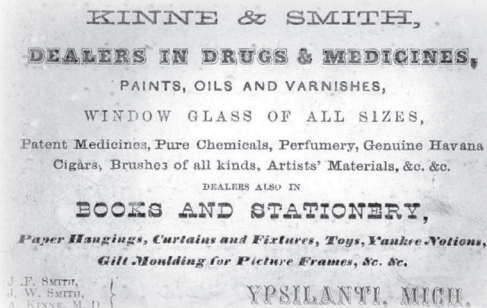
New displays are in the works for our visitors to view. For two years, a large portion of which was spent behind the pandemic's closed doors, we have been celebrating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment; we are now pivoting to celebrate the 112th anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts of America. Through the efforts of our local Boy Scout troop, we have gained a back porch fit to serve the Asa Dow home. Additionally, visitors will note a collection of detective plates celebrating the many attractions of historical significance in our city, as well as a collection of glass eggs in anticipation of the coming spring holidays.

The future may be unknowable at this point, but there appear to be many burgeoning opportunities. I have no doubt that there is a bright future before the Ypsilanti Historical Museum which can do no less than match it's past.

back from the Civil War, Dr. Kinne continued not only his practice but was an influential member of the Ypsilanti School Board for four terms and active in local, county and state medical societies.

In the publication Portrait and Biographical Album of Washtenaw County, 1891, published by the Biographical Publishing Company, we learn more about the man

who "has won an excellent reputation as a physician and the good will of the citizens. His office, one of the finest in the county, is supplied with a full line of medical literature and every convenience for the prosecution of his studies and investigations in the science of therapies...For forty-one years he has made his home at the same corner (Author's note – corner of Cross and Adams); he came here in the prime of a vigorous manhood and in the same pleasant home he is passing the declining days of a well spent life. Though almost four-score years old, he is hale and hearty, and his excellent preservation of the faculties of body and mind he owes in no small measure to his temperate habits. (Authors note – he didn't consume alcohol). He has always been considered one of the best physicians in the county and has been called in consultation in critical cases even beyond the limits of this section of country. For many years he has been a member of the County Medical Society, the State Medical Society, and the National Medical Association...The cause of education has ever found in him a warm friend and his time and abilities have been cheerfully given to the promotion of educational facilities. He served as a member of the School Board for nine years and rendered efficient service in advancing the standard of education."



Kinne & Smith advertising card.

The biography goes on to discuss his family with Jennie mentioning that their son died of Scarlet Fever at the age of nine and surviving children are daughters Florence and Genevieve and their

16-year-old son Edmond.

"The various members of the family find a religious home within the Presbyterian Church and are always ready to promote the various benevolent enterprises which appeal to their charity". This narrative does not include the information that both daughters would graduate from not only the Normal College but were among the first women graduates of the University of Michigan and that Florence would have the honor of being the first female faculty member of Yale University years before it admitted women students in 1916. Amasa died on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1894 in Ypsilanti at the age of 81, leaving the world a better place and is now resting with his family at Highland Cemetery.

In my next article I will share with you the short diary that his wife Jennie kept during the end of the Civil War, describing her personal experiences in the small village of Ypsilanti with her husband away for the cause. I am sure that neither Amasa or Jennie Kinne could imagine you reading their letters nearly 160 years after they were written and I hope that like me, you now have a more personal view of the bloody Civil War and some of the people that made sacrifices in the name of freedom.

(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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The home of Glenn and Doris Arnold, his widow Doris continued to live at the 319 S. Washington Street family home until her death in 1984.

Glenn B. Arnold and the Indigenous Code Talker Program

BY SCOTT SLAGOR

Ypsilanti has been the proud home to many veterans. Among that list is Col. Glenn B. Arnold, who held a life-long career in service that earned him recognition across the state.

Glenn B. Arnold was an Ypsilanti-area native, born May 5, 1891, to Charles and Minnie Arnold.¹ He grew up on a farm in Superior Township and attended Ypsilanti High School. In 1909, on his 18th birthday, Arnold enrolled in the National Guard. After graduating high school, he studied engineering at the University of Michigan before being commissioned in 1914.²

He served on the US-Mexico border from 1916-1917 before entering World War I and serving in the 32nd Division's 107th Field Signal Battalion in France.³ By the end of the war the twenty-eight-year-old had reached the rank of Major. After the war, Arnold served as Divisional Signal Officer for the Michigan National Guard and was promoted to Lieu-

tenant Colonel in 1923.

In 1924 he married Doris Bell, from Hartford in Van Buren County. The marriage license notes they were both living in St. Louis, Missouri at the time, indicating Lt. Col. Arnold was likely stationed there. The Arnolds returned to Ypsilanti ca. 1927, settling at 1001 Sherman Street. They had two children, Seth B. (1931) and Susan M (1935). The Arnolds resided at 1001 Sherman Street until 1936 when they moved to 319 S. Washington, the home of Lt. Col. Arnold's widowed mother.⁴

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Lt. Col. Arnold held various civilian jobs but retained his position as the as Signal Officer for the 32nd Division. However, in 1940 he was called back into service full-time as the U.S. began to prepare for the possibility of war.

A contemporary history of the National Guard in Michigan lauded Arnold's work in the Signal Company of the 32nd Di-

vision declaring the company was among the best in the army thanks in a large part to his direction.⁵ In the early 1940s, the 32nd Division was stationed at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. Lt. Col. Arnold served as Signal Corps Director for the Division and led training in various radio communications.⁶ The Signal Company was comprised of 250 men, mostly from Ypsilanti. Among their duties was the task of laying around 250 miles of telephone wire in rural central Louisiana.⁷

In 1941, sources credit Col. Arnold with the inception of an Indigenous code talker program to be used during the division's war game maneuvers. A newspaper article submitted to the Congressional record from the Green Bay Press-Gazette states that Arnold had the realization that "[indigenous] dialects had no roots with the English language and that there were too many of them to make it probable that the casual listener would understand the correct one."⁸ Thus Arnold selected 17 Indigenous servicemen from northern Michigan and northern/western Wisconsin from the 32nd Division to spearhead this experiment. Members of the group spoke slightly different dialects but were still able to successfully communicate. Overall, the program

was challenged to find participants, as many of the Indigenous servicemen did not know their native language, spoke too different a dialect, or could not successfully translate it.

Further research is needed to fully develop the context between Lt. Col. Arnold's experiment and the broader Indigenous Code Talking programs in World War II. Historical evidence indicates that indigenous languages had been used to conceal military information since the colonial period. During World War I, the U.S. employed Comanche and Choctaw soldiers speaking in their native languages to foil enemies.⁹ As a World War I veteran, this may be where Col. Arnold got the idea.

In World War II, many indigenous languages were used across Europe, North Africa, and the South Pacific, including: Chippewa, Menomonee, Choctaw, Hopi, Comanche, and Creek. The most well-known indigenous program was the Navajo Code Talker program, which excelled because the language was nuanced, spoken rather than written, and used as the basis of code rather than simply using the language directly. The inception of the Navajo program has been credited to a man named Philip Johnston.¹⁰



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The 1940s were overall a career building decade for Arnold. In addition to the 32nd Division, Arnold was briefly called to serve in the U.S. Iranian Mission, although sources vary on the date. An Ypsilanti Daily Press article indicates that in 1940 he served on the U. S. Military Iranian Mission in Washington, D.C - although a second article from the Escanaba Daily Press notes that the mission was in 1942.¹¹ Further research indicated the real date is likely sometime in the fall of 1941. The U.S. Military Iranian Mission was created by President Roosevelt on September 27, 1941.¹² The mission established a Lend-Lease weaponry program to British allies in the Persian Gulf, as well as construction support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The headquarters were established in Iraq in October of 1941. Further research is needed to know the full extent of Lt. Col. Arnold's involvement; however, one could infer from his previous experience that it was related to the planning and logistics of communication facilities.

In 1942, with the onset of the United States' direct participation in World War II, Lt. Col. Arnold returned home to Ypsilanti and was assigned to the Michigan Selective Service Headquarters.¹³ By 1943 he had become Chief of Operations and advanced in rank to full Colonel. In 1945 he was promoted again to Deputy Director before being named Draft Director in 1948.¹⁴

Col. Arnold retired from the National Guard in May of 1951 but continued to work in a civil service capacity as Director of the Selective Service. On December 6, 1951 he suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized. He planned to return to work after showing signs of recovery, but unfortunately passed away on February 5, 1952.¹⁵ His obituary ran statewide in newspapers from Detroit to Ironwood. Governor Soapy Williams issued a statement on his death, saying "the State has lost one its most conscientious and more experienced public servants. He was a man of absolute integrity and high ideals and great abilities."¹⁶ A resolution of condolence was adopted unanimously by the State House of Representatives.¹⁷ His funeral was held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Ypsilanti. He was honored with a firing squad from the 32nd Division Signal Company and taps played at the gravesite.¹⁸ Fellow Division members served as pallbearers. Later, the Army would dedicate the state's Selective Service Headquarters building in his memory, located at 1120 May Street in Lansing.¹⁹

Although Col. Arnold served in various locations around the world, his home address was consistently Ypsilanti. After Glenn's death, his widow Doris continued to live at the 319 S. Washington Street family home until her death in 1984. His burial site can be visited at Highland Cemetery.

(Scott Slagor is a graduate of EMU's Historic Preservation Program and was the Preservation Planner for the City of Ypsilanti. He is now employed by the State of Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office.)

Endnotes

- 1 Detroit Free Press, "Col. Arnold, Draft Chief, Dies at 60," (Detroit Free Press, February 6, 1952), 23; Ironwood Daily Globe, "Col. Arnold's Rites, Friday," (February 9, 1952), 10.
- 2 Detroit Free Press, "Col. Arnold, Draft Chief, Dies at 60," (Detroit Free Press, February 6, 1952), 23.
- 3 Ypsilanti Daily Press, "Col. Arnold Deputy Chief," (Ypsilanti Daily Press, September 28, 1945), 1.
- 4 Polk, R. L. & Co. Ypsilanti City Directory (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co, 1936), 95.
- 5 National Guard "Personnel, Michigan National Guard," Historical and Pictorial Review of the National Guard in Michigan (Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1940) 11.
- 6 Ypsilanti Daily Press, "Lt. Col. Glenn Arnold Will Supervise Troops," (July 3, 1941), 3.
- 7 Times Staff, "Officers Praise Ypsilanti Boys in Signal Corps," (Detroit Times, July 20, 1941), 3.
- 8 Green Bay Press-Gazette, "Indians at Microphones ensure Secrecy for 32nd Division Men," (August 23, 1941), 3.
- 9 New Mexico Department of Military Affairs, Patriotic Legacy: the Navajo Code Talkers and the use of Native American Languages in the Defense of America, (December 1995), 2.
- 10 New Mexico Department of Military Affairs, Patriotic Legacy: the Navajo Code Talkers and the use of Native American Languages in the Defense of America, (December 1995), 2.
- 11 Ypsilanti Daily Press, "Col. Arnold Deputy Chief," (Ypsilanti Daily Press, September 28, 1945), 1; Escanaba Daily Press, "Services Friday for Col. Arnold," (Escanaba Daily Press, February 6, 1952), 1.
- 12 Johnson, Lt. Col. Danny M. "The Persian Gulf Command and the Lend-Lease Mission to the Soviet Union during World War II," National Museum of the United States Army, <https://armyhistory.org/the-persian-gulf-command-and-the-lend-lease-mission-to-the-soviet-union-during-world-war-ii/>, accessed February 26, 2021.
- 13 The Daily Telegram "Promoted" (Adrian, Michigan, November 27, 1943), 3.
- 14 Battle Creek Inquirer, "Col. Arnold Named to State Draft Post," (September 28, 1945), 3; Detroit Free Press, "Col. Arnold, Draft Chief, Dies at 60," (Detroit Free Press, February 6, 1952), 23.
- 15 Lansing State Journal, "Col. Arnold to be Buried in Ypsilanti," (February 6, 1952), 2.
- 16 Lansing State Journal, "Col. Arnold to be Buried in Ypsilanti," (February 6, 1952), 2.
- 17 Detroit Free Press, "Col. Arnold, Draft Chief, Dies at 60," (Detroit Free Press, February 6, 1952), 23.
- 18 Ironwood Daily Globe, "Col. Arnold's Rites, Friday," (February 9, 1952), 10.
- 19 "Arnold Building to be Dedicated." (Glenn B. Arnold, Family File, Ypsilanti Historical Society).

In Memoriam

In Memory of Joan Groh

John and Marlene Barr
Pamela Hemminger
Amy Ryan
Timothy & Peggy Shannon

In Memory of Katherine Farmer

Daniel and Lynne Farmer

In Memory of William Anhut

Jill and Rob Arcure	Pamela and Marian Jording/Shuey
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Carolyn Belden	James Nelson Elaine Quirk
Patrick Cleary	Alvin and Janice Rudisill
Judith and George Goodman	Monika Sacks
Kathleen and Gary Groeetum	Jane Salcau
Gerald and Mary Jennings	Brian and Julia Sullivan
Jeffrey and Pamela Jording	Daneen Zureich

The Historical Society would like to thank those who have sent memoriams in remembrance of friends and loved ones, these are the recent memoriams we have received.



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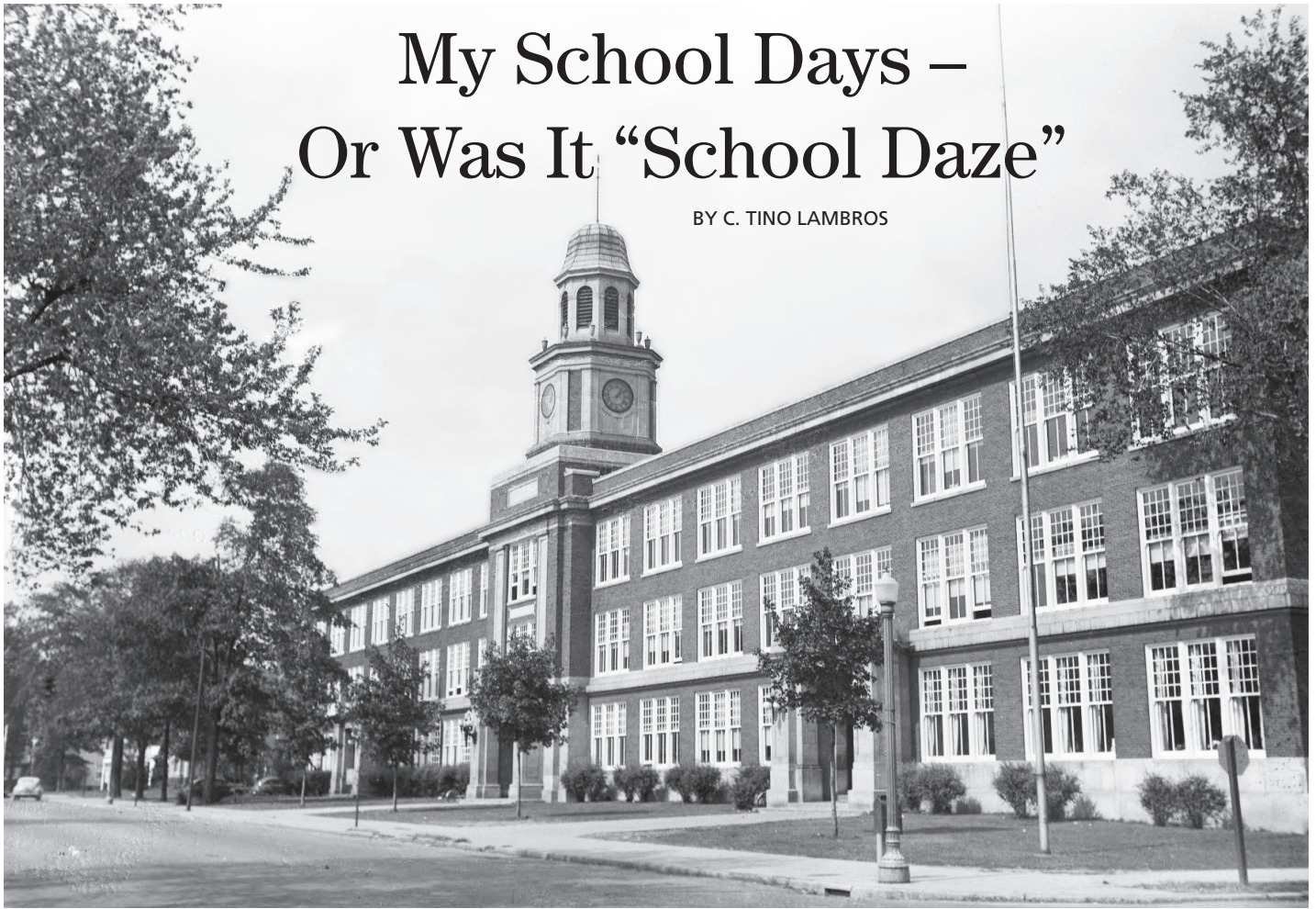
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My School Days – Or Was It “School Daze”

BY C. TINO LAMBROS



The old Ypsilanti High School building that is now Cross Street Village, independent living for seniors.

We have our school memories – Teachers, Friends and Events. I offer a few names. Each of us has personal thoughts and memories to add.

I entered the first kindergarten class at Estabrook Elementary. We walked to school, home for lunch, back to school and back home again after school. Most everyone did. The playground was huge, extending beyond the area of the current high school athletic fields. Often we went so far out we couldn't hear the recess bell ring. We could not go into the woods, though.

Around 3rd grade we built an elaborate underground fort out there. There was lumber and rocks and lots of dirt. It had a main front entrance and a “secret” hidden escape exit. It was large enough to hold a dozen or so. We could walk across the roof, jump on it, and it didn't move. An architectural marvel! We had great fun during recess. Loads of creative, imaginative scenes were played out. During one vacation, the “powers that be” dismantled it, most likely a safety hazard.

We played lots of baseball and football in our limited recess time. Most of the time we had large teams covering the diamond. On a rare occasion when we were in early elementary, Dan Matevia and I became a two-person and played against everyone else who wanted to challenge us. Rather

cocky for 3rd and 4th graders.

Before Estabrook, the “old High School” was K-12. Most Ypsi students at the time had Miss Skeels for kindergarten. I was quite a discipline problem, but by the end of kindergarten, Miss Skeels had me shaped up. Lots of memorable teachers – Miss Driscoll, Mrs. Marks, Mr. Davis, Miss Allette, Mrs. Warmington, music with Mr. Fry (Do you remember the Mr. Fry song? The correct version, Guys!). And who could forget art with Mrs. Heddle. She and Mr. Fry travelled to all the elementaries in Ypsi, as I recall. So once a week they walked into your class with cheers from students - a break, one day art: the other vocal music. The principal was the distinguished Mr. Lockwood and his ever-efficient secretary, Mrs. Pebbles. All students knew Mr. Thayer, the custodian. He was as much a part of the educational system as any teacher or administrator. His children attended school with us and were our friends.

Ypsilanti was quite unique for a city its size. There were five high schools – Ypsi, Willow Run, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and St. Johns. We had friends at all those high schools. We knew them from our neighborhoods, Recreation Park, Little League or were classmates from elementary school. Many switched schools from junior high to high school.

We moved on to junior high. Ours was the last class to com-

plete 7-12 at the old high school. That was quite an experience – tiny 7th graders mingling with 12 graders. All in all, it was just fine, except having an older brother and sister in the same building. We joined 7th graders from all over the city. For many of us, it was the first time we were in school with black students. I found out later that it may have been the first time black students were in school with white students. The high school students put us youngsters in our place. We weren't about to mess with them, a self-policing society.

It was good times for me, and I had a terrific experience, although one of my first experiences as 7th graders was a classmate slashing an assistant principal with a straight razor. That wakes up a seventh grader in a hurry.

The next 5 1/2 years settled into a relatively calm school life. We caught the tail end of some legendary local teachers and the beginnings of some youngsters – Mr. Shadford, Mr. Batterson, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Borusch, Miss Jacobs, Miss Raticzak, Mrs. Weaver, Mr. Goodsman, Mr. Kokales, Mr. Clark, Mr. Racine, Mr. Binder, Mr. Minkoff, Miss Kokales, Mr. Canfield, Mr. Steinmeyer, Mr. Buccas, Mr. Albert, Miss Crothers, Miss Connor, Mrs. Boutell, Mr. Helvey, Miss O'Connor, Coach Isbell, Mr. Waterman, Mr. Bohn, Mr. Haddick, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Lee, Mr. Moffett, Miss Lister, Miss Slade, Miss Lidke, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Wiltse, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dusbiber, Miss Isminger, and Mr. Donohue. And the wonderful, well-respected, outstanding chemistry teacher, Doc Sinden. We were the last to have the honor and privilege of being in his class. He left at semester time ill and never returned. One of my highlights was getting a "B" on his semester chemistry exam.

The old high school had character. Three floors, the fun of running up and down the stairs and sliding down the banisters. Careful at the end! What great times, except during wrestling practice – running up and down three flights of stairs and around those long hallways was brutal. There was the off-limits door to the clock tower. I never got into the clock tower to climb the stairs to the clock. Later classes did and gutsy, brave souls in earlier years did. Many alumni left their names inside the clock tower. Later when old YHS was converted to a senior apartment residence, it became a regular stop for my post-teacher employer. I begged the manager to let me go up, but she held strong and would not allow it. DARN!!!

The roomy, well-stocked second floor library was almost the entire length of the front hallway. I spent first hour study hall in there reading the morning Free Press. Now days I could probably have my morning coffee there too.

The tunnels under the old high school were interesting. Many athletic teams used the smelly, musty locker rooms above the swimming pool. The wrestlers took the back stairs to the tunnels to get to the "pit", the old basement wrestling room. One never knew what to expect roaming through the

dark, threatening tunnels. Practical jokers would jump out of the dark shadows to scare you or jump on you. Often the tunnels were used to settle personal scores with no witnesses or administrator interference. One might even come across a young couple enjoying a romantic interlude.

The auditorium was a special place. It was large for its time. It had a balcony. Concerts, plays, assemblies, and all kinds of events took place there. It had a great old organ. Often Mr. Albert would play it during his break. The entire school would fit in there with seniors in the center section. How many magazine sales assemblies did we attend there? Our "good friend", Joe Shields, would come in and try to pump us up to sell magazines.

Lunchtime was the sprint to the basement cafeteria to get to the front of the line. Down three flights of stairs or take the forbidden shortcut across the courtyard or race from one end of the school to the other. Whichever method one took, one always tried not to get trampled flying down the stairs. A couple years we had a good hour to go out for lunch. Many would walk to the campus area or downtown to some eatery. There were no fast food places.

Other images - In the spring, Mr. Bohn, our auto shop teacher, would take the jet engine to the courtyard, and fire it up. It always drew a crowd. Very exciting.

We rode our bikes to school and parked them safely (mostly) in the courtyard. Bikes were ridden to Frog Island for gym classes, J.V. football games, track meets, and various practices. Football games at Eastern's Football Field (Now Mc Kenny Union parking lot). Ypsi, St. Johns, and Roosevelt all used that field for their games, as I recall. After the games, walking to the high school gym for "exciting" dime dances and sock hops. What more could a 16-year old want!

The gym area was always busy. Practices. Games. The Shrine Circus. Donkey basketball games. School dances – usually with live bands – Chuck Ritz, (in his Pat Boone white bucks), and his Dance Band. It was a small, intimate place for athletic contests. There wasn't much room between the bleachers and the basketball floor. There were many wrestling meets with fans sitting on the floor, close to the mats. If you spent any amount of time in the gymnasium, you got to know two of the most famous characters in Ypsi.: Legends, Fixtures. The two custodians – Frank and Leo.

They were fun years, a good time to grow up. School has always been full of interesting characters, full of personal ups and downs, goods and bads, successes and failures. Each of you can be with your own thoughts, your own memories, with your own nostalgic past.

Yes, it was mostly good times!

(C. Tino Lambros grew up in Ypsilanti and has written a series of articles for the Gleanings.)

Frank T. Newton

BY ROBERT ANSCHUETZ

Frank Thomas Newton was born in Cherry Hill, Superior Township, on September 30, 1867. His parents, Thomas and Sarah Ellen (Seymour) Newton were born in England, immigrated to Washtenaw County, and purchased 110 acres of farmland in Superior Township. The couple had three other children - all girls. Frank T. Newton grew up on his family's farm, and by his 18th birthday obtained a third-grade teacher's certificate and taught for seven terms in Wayne County. In 1890, he moved to Ypsilanti where he gave up teaching to enter the insurance business at both the Central Life Insurance Company and the Equitable Life Insurance Company. On September 11, 1892, Newton married Ella E. Tyley, a native of Wayne County, and they had one child, Charles Thomas Newton.

In 1898, Frank T. Newton along with brothers Clifton and John Haggerty founded the Newton and Haggerty Ladder Company in Detroit. Clifton Floyd Haggerty and John Strong Haggerty had been involved in their father's brick manufacturing business, the Haggerty Brick Company. John S. Haggerty was also involved in banking and later served as the Secretary of State of Michigan from 1927-1930. And yes, there is also a road in Belleville named after him since John S. Haggerty, who at one time was the Wayne County Road Commissioner in the 1920's and 1930's.

The 1899 Ypsilanti City Directory shows that the family was living at 114 Babbitt Street. In 1903, while still active in industry, Frank T. Newton took a step toward returning to his farming roots and purchased a 260-acre farm just a few miles from Ypsilanti where he raised over 150 tons of hay annually and raised 70 head of Durham steers. By this time, Newton's interests had become equally devoted to both farming and industry. As if that wasn't enough to keep one person busy, Newton served as the Washtenaw County Sheriff from 1905-1906 and moved to Ann Arbor for a while serving in that capacity.

In 1907, Newton provided the financial capital and teamed with John Christensen to form the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company on Forest Avenue near the Huron River and Railroad tracks. The Ypsilanti Hay Press Company was ironically located across the street from the Michigan Ladder Company. If Newton had played his cards right six years earlier, he could have had large industrial sites across the street from each other. In 1901, Ypsilanti had been negotiating with the Newton and Haggerty Ladder Company to



Frank T. Newton (1867-1931).

relocate from Detroit to Ypsilanti. The offer was for \$5,000 moving expenses and the property worth \$1,000. After several months of trying, Ypsilanti pivoted and provided the ladder company site on Forest Avenue to Melvin Lewis, A.G. Huston, and Edgar S. Geer who created the rival Michigan Ladder Company.

Instead of moving the Newton and Haggerty Ladder Company to Ypsilanti, the August 5, 1906 issue of the *Detroit News* reported the pending move of the company from Detroit to Ann Arbor as follows:

The securing of the Newton Haggerty Ladder Co. of Detroit is the first step in the campaign of the Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce toward making Ann Arbor a factory town. Three acres of ground have been purchased southwest of Ferry Field, with a frontage of 30 feet on the Ann Arbor railroad and this will be presented to the Haggerty Company as a site.

Once the ladder manufacturing building was constructed, the Newton and Haggerty Ladder Company moved its headquarters to Ann Arbor in 1908. The location was at 401 E. Stadium, near where the University of Michigan's basketball arena, the Crisler Arena, is now located. The ladder company remained in business at the site until 1919.

By his 40th birthday, Frank T. Newton had served as a Sheriff, ran a successful farm, and was riding high with two highly successful businesses - the ladder company and the hay press company. In 1908, the Detroit Free Press published an article headlined "'Build Up the Town,' is Cry of Ypsilanti Hay Press Man." The article stated that that Newton was "the center of the industrial life of the city and that around him the commercial growth of the city will encircle." That story turned out to be prophetic. Within a couple years of the article, Newton gave up his interest in the Ypsilanti Hay Press Company, but strove to achieve even higher aspirations.

After retiring as Washtenaw County Sheriff, around the year 1910, Newton and his family moved back to Ypsilanti and lived at 110 Park Street for at least 10 years. If 110 Park Street sounds familiar, this was the house that Preston Tucker lived in while designing his famous Tucker Torpedo automobile. The house at 110 Park Street was built in 1910, so it is quite likely that it was the Newton family who were the first residents of the house. The Newton family later moved to 216 S. Huron Street in a beautiful home across the street from where the Gilbert Senior Living Residence is now located. In August of 1911, Newton became the sales manager for the Jackson Motor Car Company. He also owned much stock in the company, and his total income from his involvement in the car company was over \$10,000.

Frank T. Newton wasn't satisfied with all that he had accomplished at an early age. In 1909 he decided to enter politics where he was elected as a Republican to the Michigan State Senate from 1909-1912, representing the 12th District of Michigan that included Ypsilanti. Newton's political career ended in 1912, when he chose to remain focused on his various business interests. In a January 15, 1912 article in the Detroit News, Newton was quoted as saying "It would be a big money

sacrifice to accept any public office. Between managing our ladder factory at Ann Arbor, and my work with the motor car company, I'm a little busier than I ever was before in my life. Maybe in a few years or so I will be back in the political game again."

Frank T. Newton later served as a Director of the Ypsilanti Savings Bank. He also was on the board of managers of the Michigan State Fair. Starting in 1922, Newton was appointed as a United States Marshal of the Eastern District of Michigan by three consecutive presidents. He was first appointed as Marshal on July 1, 1922 with an act of President Harding, and subsequently reappointed by Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. Many reforms in the handling of prisoners and fingerprinting Federal prisoners were instituted by Newton.

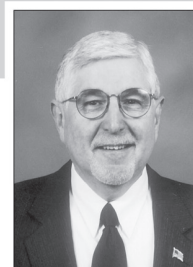
Frank T. Newton was a member of the Freemasons in both Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, the Shriners Club, the Knights of Pythias in Ypsilanti, the Elks Club in Ann Arbor, and the Odd Fellows in Wayne. He died at the young age of 64 at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit on October 23, 1931 and is interred at the Highland Cemetery. At the time of his death, he was still a resident of Ypsilanti living at 216 South Huron Street.

Newton's biography in the book "Past and Present of Washtenaw County" by Samuel W. Beakes, 1906, sums up his life as follows:

Mr. Newton is a genial, whole-souled man, making friends wherever he goes by reason of a courteous disposition and kindly spirit that enables him to recognize the good qualities in others. His popularity is well deserved and his record in fraternal, political and business circles is indeed commendable.

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

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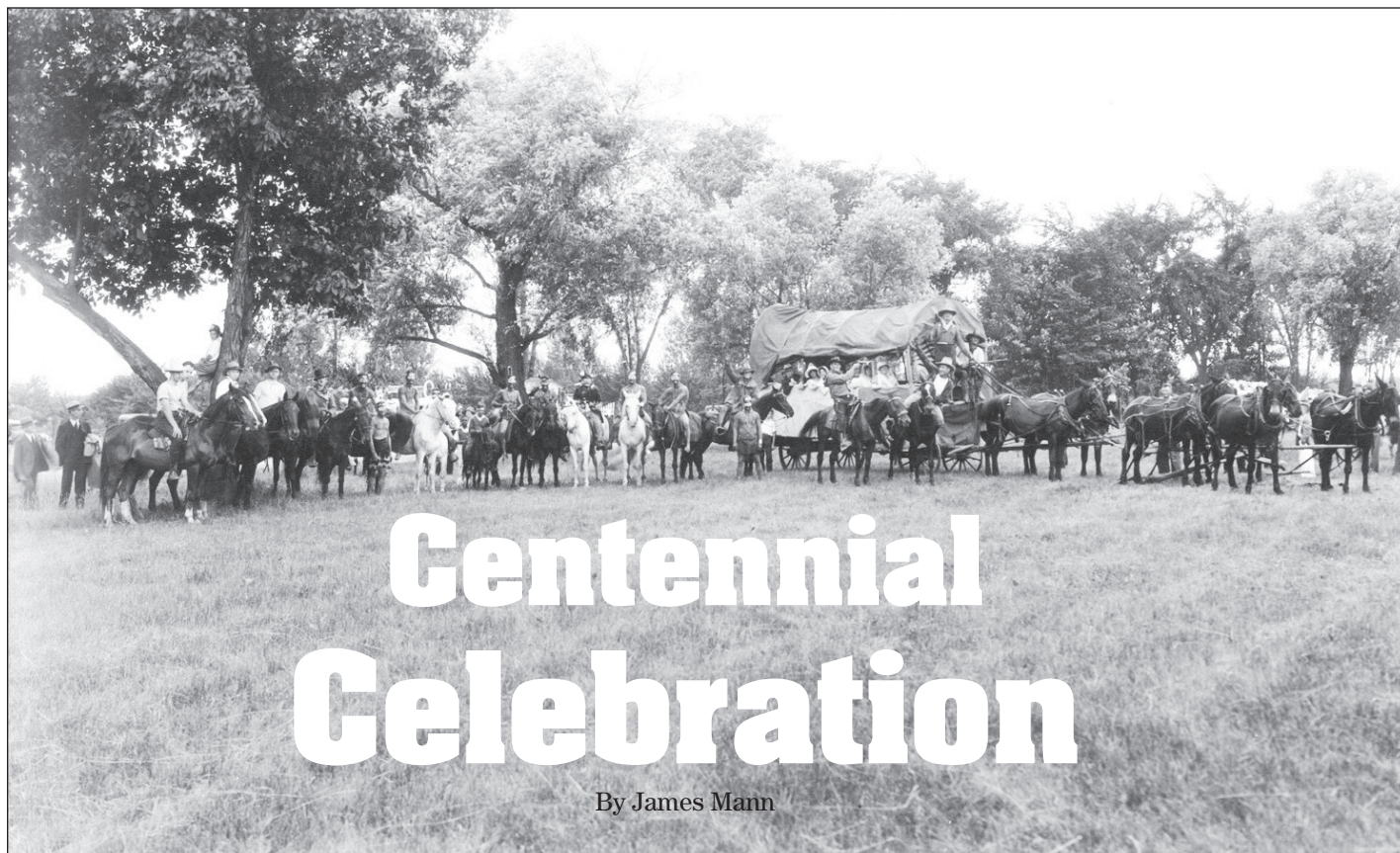
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A few of those who took part in the Centennial Celebration.

A casual visitor to Ypsilanti in May and June of 1923 may have wondered at the fashion sense of the young women of the city. Stopping by the shops and other businesses of the city, a visitor might have found the young ladies attired in the styles of a century before. These young women were preparing for the centennial celebration of the founding of the city. The celebration was scheduled for the first week of July, but the ladies of the city wished to be comfortable in the long dress and hooped skirts before then. After all, it takes time to prepare for a centennial celebration.

The Ypsilanti Kiwanis Club prepared for the centennial, in part, by taking apart a log cabin at Whittaker and putting it back together again at Gilbert Park in Ypsilanti. Some of the

logs were so heavy that twelve men were needed to move them. The purpose of the cabin was to arouse the pioneer spirit in the children. To achieve this, a three legged kettle and a baking oven, as well as other items from pioneer days, were displayed in the cabin. A Mrs. Whitcomb operated a spinning wheel at the cabin during the days of the celebration.



Women of Ypsilanti, attired in the style of 1823, stand in front of the log cabin in Gilbert Park. After the celebration the cabin was donated to the city, but no provision had been made for its upkeep. The cabin fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1928.

As part of the celebration a committee had been formed to oversee the publication of *"The Story of Ypsilanti"* by Harvey C. Colburn. The committee was composed of Carl E. Pray, professor of history at the Normal College, Mrs. P. R. Cleary, and Miss Florence Shultes. The idea of the history was conceived from meetings of the Ypsilanti Chapter of the Daughters of



The stage coach that left Detroit and made the journey to Ypsilanti, and in spite of outlaw gangs such as the Rotarian's, arrived in time for the celebration.

the American Revolution. The study of early American history had led to an interest in the early years of Ypsilanti.

"Excursion into the past of Ypsilanti revealed treasures and with enthusiasm the ladies of the organization gave themselves to the task of collecting material and preparing papers dealing with various phases of life in the early town. Many of these papers, read in regular meetings, stimulated the chapter to fresh zeal," noted the preface of the work. Papers read at meetings of the chapter were incorporated into the finished work. The completed work was published in time for the celebration.

The Centennial Celebration was scheduled to be held on the first four days of July of 1923. The first day of the celebration was Sunday, July 1, 1923. On that day all the roads to Ypsilanti were crowded with traffic, as visitors came from miles away for the celebration. As they arrived "Welcome" signs were on display as a greeting. Hotel accommodations were filled to capacity. Local families opened their homes to take in visitors.

All day Sunday the streets of the city

were crowded with people. They wandered up and down the streets of the city, admiring the displays in the shop windows of family heirlooms, photographs and antiques.

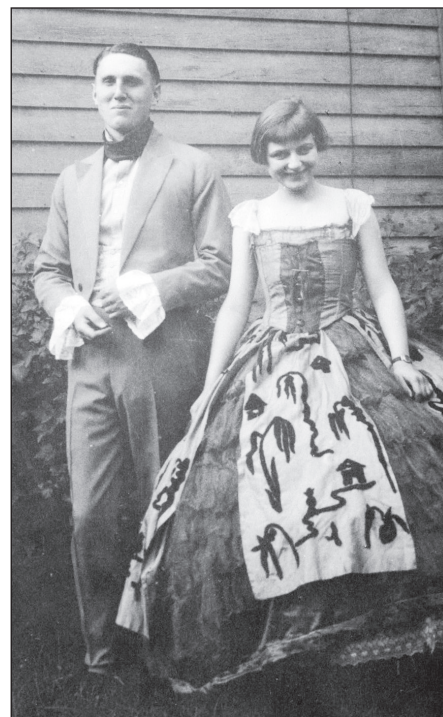
The windows of Wertley and Gardener were very interesting because there were shoes showing the styles of days past. The buckled shoes and boots, the white kid party slippers and the children's shoes looked strange when placed beside the modern shoes.

The formal opening of the Centennial Celebration was a Union Service of the local churches held in Pease Auditorium on Sunday evening. The next event of the Centennial Celebration began on the morning of Monday, July 2, 1923, not in Ypsilanti, but in front of the Detroit City Hall. At 8:45 am a stage coach of 1823 vintage was parked in front of the Detroit City Hall. After a brief program, the stage coach set out on a journey to Ypsilanti, as several hundred people watched. The coach was driven by Joseph E. Warner as it started up Woodward Avenue. From Woodward the coach was turned onto Grand River, then onto Warren and then onto Michigan Avenue, once

known as the Chicago road. The journey was not without its risks as just east of Dearborn, the coach was held up by an outlaw gang, the Ypsilanti Rotarian's, and forced at gun point to attend a dinner in the town hall. After escaping this horror, the party continued on, arriving at the log cabin in Gilbert Park at about 5:30 pm.

As the coach was making its way to Ypsilanti programs were held in the city. At 1:30 pm the Ypsilanti Rotary Club placed a marker at the corner of Ballard and Emmet streets, to mark the site of the John D. Pierce residence. He had been the first Superintendent of Public Education in the State of Michigan. At 3:30 pm the Daughters of the American Revolution unveiled a marker at Prospect and Grove, at the site of Woodruff's Grove, the first pioneer settlement in Washtenaw County.

The centennial ball was held that evening in the Normal College gymnasium, with everyone present attired in a costume belonging to a time prior to 1900. This was said to have been the biggest social event in the histo-



Everyone in town, it seemed, dressed in the style of 1823 for the celebration. Here is Foster Fletcher and Iva Ribble in their outfits.



The actors in the pageant were local people. Here are the men dressed as Native people.

ry of Ypsilanti up to that time. The program for Tuesday and Wednesday, July 3 and 4, included a picnic dinner, bands, baseball games, rides on the stage coach, tours of the log cabin and more. The main event of the celebration was held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. This was The Pageant of Ypsilanti. The pageant was held on the grounds of the Normal College, in the natural amphitheater behind the Science Building, now Sherzer Hall. The cast of the pageant numbered 1,200 local people in the roles of Native People, French fur traders, British soldiers, pioneers and others from the past of the city. Daniel L Quirk, Jr. was the director.

"The pageant portrayed the early history of Michigan and particularly Washtenaw County. Episode one showed Indians and Jesuit mission-

*The Centennial Celebration
was scheduled
to be held
on the first four days
of July of 1923.*

aries, the French in power. Episode two showed the Indians under British rule and Pontiac attempting to start an insurrection. Episode three showed a trading post in 1809, established by Gabriel Godfroy and the promulgation of the ordinance of 1787. Episode four showed the first settlement in Washtenaw County. Episode five, the dedication of the Normal College. Episode six showed

the people of Ypsilanti helping the Negroes escape from slavery and the boys of '61 and '65 responding to Lincoln's call for volunteers," reported The Detroit Free Press of July 3, 1923. "The last episode," continued the account, "showed the spirit of old Ben Woodruff and how agriculture, industry and education had united to build Ypsilanti. The pageant was attended by 8,000 people."

The pageant concluded with a character called "The Dreamer," symbolizing the future, who admonished the audience to "Look forward, Ypsilanti." The Wednesday evening performance of the pageant was followed by a grand display of fireworks.

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

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Ypsilanti Historical Society
Spring Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, May 22, 2022
at 2 p.m.

The meeting will take place at the

Ladies' Literary Club
218 North Washington Street

The speaker is
Tom Nolte
of the
Railroad Museum
in Grass Lake

*He will be speaking about
the Interurban system*



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