

and reminisces of the people and places in the Ypsilanti area.

## Education Night at the Archives By Al Rudisill

Education Night at the YHS Fletcher-White Archives will begin in April and will feature educational programs relating to historical people, places and subjects. The new programming has been made possible by the addition of new theater equipment recently installed in the Archives Education Center. The 56 inch high-definition television set with associated Blu-ray, dvd and video players was donated by Joe and Mae Butcko, life members of the Society. The "Joe and Mae Butcko Theater" comfortably seats 30 people and will assist us in reaching our goal of "...bringing together people interested in the history of Ypsilanti and the surrounding area."

A dedication ceremony was held on Thursday, January 13 to celebrate the opening of the theater. Following a few brief remarks by Peter Fletcher, the new documentary movie titled "The Girl in Centerfield" was shown. Joe and Mae Butcko were not able to be present but Joe Butcko Jr. and his wife Pat accepted a Certificate of Appreciation from the YHS for making the new theater a reality.

During April of this year the following Education Nights have been scheduled:

- Friday, April 8, 7:30 pm -"The Chicago Road"
- Friday, April 15, 7:30 pm -"Willow Run – World War II"
- Friday, April 29, 7:30 pm -"Historical Highlights of Ypsilanti"

James Mann, local historian and author, will introduce each program and lead a discussion session following the feature film and/or video. The sessions are free and open to the public, Popcorn will be served.



accepted a Certificate of Appreciation from Peter Fletcher on behalf of Joe and Mae Butcko.





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# From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

Several new projects have been completed since the publication of the last "From the President's Desk" report in the Winter 2010 issue of the Gleanings. First, a new theater system has been installed in the Education Center thanks to the generosity of Joe and Mae Butcko. Another project completed is the construction of a backlit box and the mounting of the Charles Stewart Mott stained glass portrait in the entrance to the Archives. The portrait was a gift to the Society by Jack and Esther Minzey.

Jerry Jennings and Bill Nickels assisted with the installation of a beam and supporting posts in the basement under the William Edmunds Ypsilanti Room. The beam was necessary to support the floor which had become unstable.

Beginning in April we will have an "Education Night at the Archives" which will feature historically significant movies and documentaries utilizing the new theater. James Mann is the coordinator and will also provide an introduction to each program and lead a discussion following the program.

Some time in April we will be losing Derek Spinei as an Intern in the Archives. Derek will be completing his graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University and will be joining the work force. Michael Newberry, who has been serving as the Intern upstairs in the Museum will be moving downstairs to replace Derek. Lauren Carpenter, another Intern from the EMU graduate program in Historical Preservation, will replace Michael in the Museum. Also, in January we signed a four-year extension with EMU on our Intern Agreement.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held on Sunday, May 1, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. We will have a very brief business meeting followed by a



EMU President Sue Martin and YHS President Al Rudisill sign a new Intern Agreement. In the center is Ted Ligibel who coordinates the graduate program in Historical Preservation at EMU.

program on "Historical Preservation in the 21st Century." The program will be presented by Derek Spinei and Michael Newberry, the two interns currently working in the YHS Archives and Museum.

Considerable effort is being put forth to develop a digitized database of all the collections in the YHS Archives. The database will be searchable via computer and will assist visitors in locating specific data contained in all 33 archive collections.

We are always looking for volunteers as docents for the Museum or research assistants for the Archives. Both the Museum and Archives are open from 2:00 to 5:00 pm Tuesday through Sunday. If you are available during that time and are interested in helping us preserve the historical information and artifacts of the area, or in educating the general public about our history, please give me a call at 734-476-6658.



# Lost Businesses of Ypsilanti... Packers Outlet

By Peg Porter



An early Ypsilanti grocery store. The pulleys on the right held string or twine to wrap customer's parcels.

The supermarket is a 20th century development. In the past, those who were not able to grow their own food relied on small grocery stores, and specialty shops such as the butchers or the bakers. In more rural areas the larger towns might have a General Store that sold food, clothing, household implements and almost anything else for which there was a demand. In towns and cities, grocery shopping occurred on almost a daily basis. You took your list to the grocer and waited while the order was filled or you called in your order with delivery as an option.

Selection was limited to what the grocer had in stock on that particular day. Since the icebox was used for storing foods that needed refrigeration, "stocking up" was pretty much limited to items the housewife had managed to preserve. As a result, purchasing and preparing food were time-consuming tasks.

By the late 1930s, Ypsilanti had two supermarkets, an A&P and Packers Outlet, both located on Michigan Avenue; the A & P was on the corner of Grove while Packers stood near the intersection with River Street. Supermarkets would have a significant impact on American life. Less time was needed for marketing, more types of foods became readily available affecting the American diet, and the cost of many goods was reduced. Ypsilanti's first two supermarkets had very different origins. The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company was founded in1859 as a mail order tea and spice business by George Huntington Hartford and George Gilman. The company opened stores along the East Coast to supplement their mail order business. In 1912 John Hartford pushed for the development of an economy store, limited assortment, cash and carry, no frills format. By the early 1930s, A&P had 15,737 stores nationwide including a number in Canada. A&P developed a number of house brands such as Eight O'clock Coffee and Quaker Maid products. Clearly they were the Goliath of the grocery business.

In the meantime, Charles Grosberg, a native of New York who settled in Detroit after his marriage, established a wholesale grocery business. His father-in-law, Joseph *continued on page 22* 

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# Voice of America Visits Ypsilanti

By Bill Nickels

After some time at the North American International Auto Show, Sean E. Liu, from the China Branch of Voice of America, spent time recently in Ypsilanti learning its history, and touring its museums and attractions.

Visiting our 1898 water tower was one of his first priorities; so we opened the doors and shared the tower's history and legends with Sean. Wanting to know the early history of our City, we told him about the founding of Ypsilanti at the crossroads of two Indian trails, namesake Demetrius Ypsilanti, the arrival of the railroad, gifting of land by the City for what eventually became EMU, and Henry Ford's contributions to the area.

Sean visited with Curator Matt Lee at the Michigan Firehouse Museum and learned that Ypsilanti has one of the top ten fire museums in the country. Following the visit with Matt, Sean learned about the long history of the Sidetrack Bar and Grill from co-owner Jessica French.

The home of Preston Tucker, the story of the Tucker automobile, the Bomber Restaurant and World War II history, and the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum were on Sean's list, but program limitations narrowed what he can use.

Sean will use the footage he recorded to prepare a 5-10 minute feature story for a weekly prime time program titled "Cultural Odyssey," that airs by satellite TV and Internet to about 30 million viewers in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, and Singapore. Chinese language programs are often picked up by other services and aired in other languages as well.

The Voice of America is the United States' noncommercial international network, currently broadcasting in 44 languages by radio, TV, and Internet to a global audience of over 100 million.

(Bill Nickels is an active member of the YHS, contributes in many ways to the maintenance and operation of the Museum and Archives, and is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



Sean E. Liu from the China Branch of Voice of America taking a picture of Larry Thomas inside the Ypsilanti water tower.



Sean E. Liu from the China Branch of Voice of America talking to Jessica French at the Sidetrack Bar and Grill.

### George H. Jackson: Soldier, Builder, Contractor & Inventor By George Ridenour

"George H. Jackson, was born in Vertram, New York on July 13, 1827. He died April 8, 1924. This brought to a close the life of one who had been in a true sense a "Michigan Pioneer." When he came west to Southern Michigan at an early age he was a promising engineer. On September 4, 1853, he married Ann Eliza Mosher, also of English descent. After serving throughout the Civil War he became a contractor and bridge builder and is credited with having constructed scores of bridges along the states' highways. At one time it was said that he had built more than half the houses in Ypsilanti. At the time of his death, he was the oldest member of the Fairbanks Post Army of the Republic and the Phoenix Lodge F and AM of Ypsilanti.

Mr. Jackson served in the Civil War and was considered due to his "ordinary" looks and physique to be "spy timber." He served in two units. He enlisted in company H, First Infantry on April 20, 1861 in Ypsilanti, at age 27. His horse was killed and he was injured when shrapnel penetrated his leg between his knee and ankle. He was mustered out on May 1, 1861 in Detroit, Michigan.

He reenlisted in Company D, Eleventh Infantry, as a Corporal on February 11, 1865 at Ypsilanti. He achieved the ranks of Sergeant and 1st Sergeant and was mustered out in Nashville, Tennessee in 1865.

His Granddaughter, Minnie Taylor Lewis, in her reminiscences of George Jackson coming to Ypsilanti describes the area as follows: "*He* had envisioned the future of Ypsilanti located in the beautiful valley of the Huron River. Fertile soils, artesian wells for a healthful water supply and power for several mills along its banks added up to the place of his dreams. Although continued on page 26



Jackson and Thomas Rice patented a device for safes or express cars that provided protection against robbers by automatically discharging a volley of shots when attacked.

# Demetrius! Where are you?

Looking down from the wall in the front entrance of the museum is a portrait of Demetrius Ypsilanti, for whom the city is named. There is a story behind how the portrait came to be there, a story filled with acts of kindness, mystery and some more mystery. You see, there are at least two other portraits of Demetrius, but no one is sure where the other two are now. Actually, there might be one or two other portraits as well, but no one can say where these are now, so the mystery deepens.

The first portrait of Demetrius to arrive in the city was a gift of the Greek counsel in New York City, who in the 1880's had inquired as to the origin of the name of the city. On learning the city was named for the hero of the Greek War for Independence, he presented a portrait of the hero to the city. This portrait was hung in the council chamber of city hall, then on Cross Street. This was considered to be a safe place for the portrait. Then somehow the portrait disappeared from the chamber. What became of the portrait, no one can say.

In the 1890's Prof. Strong of the Michigan State Normal College, had some correspondence with a Mr. E. D. Barff, Jr. of London, England. Mr. Barff noted the name of the community from which Prof. Strong was writing from, and informed Prof. Strong his father Mr. E. D. Barff had been the British consul at Zante, Greece, during the Greek War of Independence. There he had been a friend of Lord Byron, and was acquainted with the leaders of the struggle. The elder Barff was something of an artist, and had made portraits of the leaders. These included a portrait of Demetrius. He took great pains to procure a good likeness of the subjects.

Prof. Strong suggested that a photograph of the portrait of Demetrius would be valued by the city. He further suggested he would take on the trouble and expense to see the portrait placed in a place where it would be permanently cared for. His personal feeling



This might be the image of Demetrius provided by Mr. E. D. Barff of London, England and presented to the Ladies Library Association by Professor Strong. It may be the image in the Ypsilanti District Library in the Michigan Room of the Whittaker Road Branch.

was the best place would be the Ladies Library Association building on North Huron Street, which had recently be donated by Mrs. Starkweather.

Mr. Barff sent a photograph of the portrait to Prof. Strong, who had originally planned to present either a crayon drawing or an enlarged photograph of the portrait to the association. He found that an untouched photograph would be too pale and either a touched up photo or crayon would miss the likeness. In the end, Prof. Strong presented to the association the photograph taken directly from the drawing. Where is this portrait today? No one can recall seeing it. It seems to have disappeared.

The portrait in the entrance to the museum is by local artist Edward I. Thompson, who in 1934 made every effort to get a good likeness of Demetrius. He even used a step ladder to get up close to the bust of the general in front of the Water Tower, so he could take pictures of Demetrius from every angle. Then he went home and painted the portrait of Demetrius. After that, he then painted a second portrait of Demetrius and then a third.



This might be an image of the portrait of Demetrius presented by the Greek counsel in New York in the 1880's. The portrait was displayed in the chamber of the city council for many years before it disappeared. What became of the portrait is not known.

One of the portraits was displayed in the council chamber of City Hall, now on North Huron Street. At this time the council chamber was on the first floor of the building. Gertrude Woodard was so impressed with the portrait, she had a hand-rubbed walnut frame made for it. Then the council chamber was moved to the second floor of the building. The portrait, however, was moved to the third floor. At some point, Family Services Agency moved into the space on the third floor, and Demetrius gazed down on all the activity. When Family Services moved to 212 North Adams Street, the portrait went with them. The portrait was evidently placed in storage and forgotten until it was discovered in 1963.

To add to the mystery, a second portrait was found in the attic of City Hall, at about the same time. This one was "elegantly framed in carved oak, which was subsequently hung in City Hall," reported the Ypsilanti Press of November 13, 1963.

Then on April 30, 1966 Mr. and Mrs. James Vourlites walked into the office of the Ypsilanti Greek Theater with a gift. It was the third portrait of Demetrius by Thompson. "They told Greek Theatre President Clara G. Owens the painting had hung in their living room for years after they got it from a friend, who got it from a friend, who got it from a friend...." reported The Ypsilanti Press of May 1, 1966. The portrait was on display in the offices of the Ypsilanti Greek Theatre at 203 West Michigan, noted the report. What became of the portrait after that is not known.

The offices of government moved from North Huron Street to its current location on South Huron and Michigan Avenue in 1979, and the portrait of Demetrious went with them. This time the portrait was stored in a closet there. Found by Tim Conway in 1982, the portrait was turned over to City Historian Foster Fletcher. The painting measures 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet wide and 3 feet long. "Fletcher said to make sure it's not misplaced again, General Demetrius Ypsilanti will be hung over the fire place in the museum's front room—where they can keep an eye on him," noted the Ann Arbor News of March 20, 1982.

One mystery solved, but others remain. What became of the other two portraits? Where is the one donated by Mr. Barff to the library? What became of the one given by the Greek counsel so many years ago? Is anyone interested in organizing search parties to find out?

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



This image of the Ypsilanti brothers, Alerandros and Demetrius was presented to the city by Prof. Frank Ross of Eastern Michigan University. It is now on display in the library room of the museum above the thermostat.



## An Automobile Trip - 1915-Style By Januce Anschuetz

The label "Victorian woman" usually brings to mind a woman in a long gown with plenty of petticoats, a high neckline, long sleeves and gloves, sitting in an ornate parlor chair, drinking tea, and gossiping behind a hand-held fan. That was not the case, however, with Florence and Jessie Swaine. They are the adventuresome sisters who were born and lived in the Swaine House at the corner of North River and East Forest, and influenced many a youngster by becoming teachers.

In 1915, during their summer vacation from teaching, they traveled by car over 1,600 miles to see something of the country and share good times with friends. The ten-day circular trip took them from Ypsilanti, to Cleveland, to Pittsburgh, to Gettysburg, to Washington, D.C., to Atlantic City, to Philadelphia, and back to Cleveland, from where they returned to Detroit by boat. The following place-by-place account is their story. Although it is not signed, we can guess at its author, who at one point makes a reference to "mother and Florence." That makes it probable that it was written by Bertha Smith, who appears to be the daughter of Mrs. F. E. Smith. We can also infer that Dudley Smith, "whose party it was," and presumably the driver, is related to the other two passengers with the surname Smith.

This gem of a story allows us a look back into a time when an automobile offered a new way to travel and gasoline was about 14 cents a gallon. The narrative was found in the Ypsilanti Historical Museum archives, with other papers left to the museum by Florence and Jessie Swaine. Here it is, exactly as originally written:

### AUTOMOBILE TRIP:

June 27 to July 8, 1915 - The party was composed of Florence and Jessie Swaine, Edith Shaw, Mrs. F. E. Smith, Ruth and Bertha Smith and Dudley K. Smith, whose party it was. The car was a 1915 Paige Six.

The cities represented were Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Marshall, Detroit and Royal Oak; all of



The Swaine horse and buggy with Jessie in the front with Florence sitting next to her mother Eliza. The name of the horse was Nellie and she lived to be 30 years old.



Above: Part of the automobile trip party, in the boat on the way to Detroit from Cleveland. Florence is in the front row on the left next to Mrs. F. E. Smith. Jessie is on the far right.

*Right: On the first night of the trip the party stayed at the Regent Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio.* 

Michigan. The license of the car was 10031. The speedometer registered 524 miles when we left Ypsilanti.

The party left Ypsilanti at 10:30 Eastern Time and reached Toledo at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time, stopping to eat lunch by the roadside at Dundee. Passed through Woodville, Fremont, Clude, Bel-



levue, Monroeville, Norwalk, where we stopped and had ice cream and Edith Shaw called on a cousin. The Smiths called on the Bacons at Toledo, Wakoman, Ripton, Elyria. Arrived at Cleveland at 9:00 p.m. 699 miles. Called on the Wicks, (that is, the Smiths did). Spent the night at the Hotel Regent on Euclid Avenue near 105 Street. Left there at 9:30 Monday morning,



The party toured the Boardwalk in Atlantic City and stayed overnight at the Majestic Hotel.

June 28<sup>th</sup>. Passed through Bedford, Twinsburg, Hudson, Darwinville, Kent, Ravenna, Palmyra, Youngstown, stopped there and had water-melon. Time 3:30. 781 miles. Jessie Swaine and Edith Shaw had a mutual friend on whom Edith called up there. From there on to Pittsburgh passing through Sowickley, a very beautiful place, on

"This gem of a story allows us a look back into a time when an automobile offered a new way to travel and gasoline was about 14 cents a gallon."

into Allegheny, where we had supper and across the river into Pittsburgh at 9:00. Spent the night there at Hotel Anderson, speedometer registered 852 miles. Left Tuesday morning June 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:45. Drove around Schenley Park, which is a very beautiful park high up. Pittsburgh is very hilly. Business portion very unattractive. Saw the block house of Fort Pitt, which was built in 1764 – now owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. From Pittsburgh we went on to Gettysburg on the Lincoln Highway. Lunched in a field on the way across from an old oil well which we examined and where Florence Swaine lost the heel of one of her slippers. On this ride we went over the Allegheny Mountains and on the way into Ligonier had a race up hills and down with some Elks on the way to a picnic. Beautiful ride.

Stopped at Grand View Point, which is considered to be the best view point between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and certainly was very fine. Passed through Bedford, Harrisonburg, bought lunch, bolony (bad). Wonderful view. Had supper at Chambersburg, had frog supper 9:15 p.m. Lost suitcase on way to Gettysburg over mountains. Arrived at Gettysburg 12:00 p.m. Stayed at Eagle Hotel, had Harry Long for guide around battlefield and places of interest. June 30th. Battlefield 16,000 acres, cost 7 million. Went to Round Top Hill, Peach Orchard, Wheatfield, Cupps Hill. Saw where the fish hook line was, Spangler Spring and woods, Cemetery Hill and Seminary Hill. Left there at 12:45 p.m. Passed through Emmetsburg, Frederick (Barbara Fritchie), Hagertown, arriving at Washington through Chevy Chase at 5:00 p.m., going around Rock Creek Park and Zoological Park on the way in. Called on Mrs. Watling, rode around the city. Called for Mrs. Watling, took her with us, went in the Christian Science Church (note: Florence Swaine was a Christian Scientist), through the continued on page 20



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## For the Sake of Progress By Derek Spinei

While Ypsilanti may still boast some of the grandest Victorian homes in Washtenaw County, several more have been lost over the years. Perhaps the most stunning was the spectacular Gothic revival mansion which stood at 502 W. Forest Ave. With its vertical board and batten siding, intricate bargeboard, and imposing tower, it was the crown jewel of Forest Avenue which was at one time lined with impressive homes.

The house was built by Daniel Bushnell Greene, an insurance and real estate agent, and he lived with his son Edward Halmer Greene who was a job printer and manager for the Michigan Bell Company. Daniel was born in Northfield, Vermont in 1817 and settled in Clinton when he first moved to Michigan. Based on tax records, he likely built this stately manor in the 1870s but he and his son had already moved away at the time of Daniel's death in 1899.

The property never saw an extended period of stability, with most residents staying less than five years. However there were some very notable citizens who called 502 W Forest Steet home. After World War I, Mrs. Bessie L. Priddy, the Dean of Women at Michigan State Normal College, lived there and she was succeeded by MSNC professor Marvin Summers Pittman who was the director of rural education. By the 1950s there were renters living in the house and it had likely lost much of its original architectural charm. Eventually Eastern Michigan University bought the land, which was adjacent to campus, and demolished the house by 1961 to make room for the construction of Sill Hall.

Of course the Greene House was not alone on this street. Many other beautiful homes at one time populated Forest Avenue, but were eventually lost. This can't entirely be blamed on shortsighted school administrators of the mid-twentieth century who, like their civic counterparts, blindly equated progress with the wrecking ball. Even into the 1980s, these irreplaceable mansions were being razed by the university, many of which once housed the preeminent faculty of that very institution.

Thorough documentation of these structures may be lacking, but at least we have a visual record of what was, which can serve as a warning to current and future generations to think twice before embracing the new at the expense of the old. ■

(Derek Spinei is a student in the graduate program in Historical Preservation at EMU and is serving an internship in the YHS Archives.)

- 1. The Gothic revival mansion that once stood at 502 West Forest Avenue.
- 2. The house that once existed at 420 West Forest Avenue.
- 3. The house that once existed at 518 West Forest Avenue.
- 4. The house that once existed at 730 West Forest Avenue.



# Charles Stewart Mott Stained Glass Portrait

By Al Rudisill

The entrance to the YHS Archives has a new look! In January a Charles Stewart Mott stained glass portrait that was donated by Jack and Esther Minzey was installed in the North entrance to the Archives. Jerry Jennings built a back-lit frame that highlights the features of Mr. Mott. Jack Minzey was a national leader in the field of Community Education, a field that Mr. Mott supported and promoted throughout the United States. In the Archives entrance at the top of the stairs a plaque has been placed with the following inscription:

"Charles Stewart Mott (1875-1973) was a very successful industrialist, unique politician, distinguished citizen, dedicated community supporter and willing philanthropist. Over the years, there have been many associations with Mr. Mott, the Mott foundation and people and programs at Eastern Michigan University.

For the last thirty years of Mr. Mott's life, his primary focus was on the promotion of Community Education. This concept came about as a result of ideas presented to Mr. Mott by Frank Manley who had been motivated by his physical education instructor at Michigan State Normal College, Dr. Wilbur Bowen. Starting in Flint, Michigan as the "Mott Program", it later became known as "Community Schools" and then "Community Education." This led to an Eastern Michigan University training center in Flint, followed by Eastern's involvement in the Mott Inter-University Clinical Preparation Program for Leaders, and the subsequent development of the Eastern Michigan University Center for Community Education. Eastern Michigan University offered the first graduate degree in Community Education, operated the National Center for Community Education in Flint, Michigan, and offered the premiere community education training program in the United States. In addition to Frank Manley (the perceived Father of Community Education), faculty associated with the development of Community Education at Eastern include Dr. Fred Totten, Dr. Jack Minzey, Dr. Clyde LeTarte, Dr. William Hetrick, Dr. James Satterfield, Dr. Donna Schmitt, Dr. Duane Brown, and Dr. William Kromer.

Right: The Charles Stewart Mott stained glass portrait that now hangs in the entrance to the YHS Archives.

Below: Peter Fletcher presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Jack and Esther Minzey for the donation of the Charles Stewart Mott portrait and their continuing support for the YHS.





The stained glass portrait of Charles Stewart Mott was commissioned by the Mott Foundation, and for many years hung in a prominent place in the Mott Foundation funded National Center for Community Education in Flint, Michigan. When the National Center closed, the director gave the portrait to Dr. Jack Minzey who, in addition to serving as professor and administrator at Eastern Michigan University, was a national leader in the field of Community Education. Dr. Minzey donated the portrait to the Ypsilanti Historical Society in 2007."

On Thursday, January 13 a celebration of the hanging of the stained glass portrait was held in conjunction with the dedication of the new theater in the YHS Archives Education Center. During the celebration Peter Fletcher presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Jack and Esther Minzey for their donation of the stained glass portrait and their continuing support for the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

# City Council Budget Battles of the 1920s

By Laura Bien

It is wise to choose one's battles. For one hardheaded 1920 Ypsilanti alderman, the hill he chose to die on was a hill of toilet paper.

In that time, the city was halfway between old-time days and the modern age. Less than a third of its 7,400 residents had telephones. The Ypsi' phone directory was nine pages long. Due to a limited supply of electricity, many city factories deferred working hours to the night time. And an ongoing "sanitary sewer" project, viewed as a progressive upgrade from noisome urban septic tanks and privies, emptied directly into the Huron River.

Issues before the city council reflected this time of transition. At its October 4, 1920, meeting the council weighed the street commissioner's bill for oats for his horse. The bill had been carried over from a previous council meeting that had struggled but failed to resolve the issue of the horse's feed.

One alderman was fed up. "Alderman Worden said he had bought oats about the same time for 85 cents a bushel, while the charge for oats in this bill was \$1.35," reported the October 5, 1920 Daily Ypsilanti-Press. "Profound silence on the part of the other aldermen. Finally it was moved that the bill be paid, and the vote was 9 to 1 in favor."

Local gardener Frank P. Worden did not approve. A veteran city office-holder and recent candidate for mayor, he took a dim view of those who sought political perks. When at the same council meeting the Third Ward election inspectors submitted a bill for election-day refreshments, Worden bristled.

"The amount involved was \$2.35 (the equivalent of \$25 today) - just the kind of bill that the council had heretofore paid without a murmur," noted the paper. "But this particular bill was strenuously objected to by Alderman Worden: "The inspectors get \$10 (\$106 today) a day; let them pay for their



Left: The original rest room stood on the west side of Huron just north of Michigan Avenue.

own lunches,' he said." The other aldermen conceded, and voted it down.

Another bill was submitted for \$500 (\$5,300) of park improvements despite an emptied parks fund, said the paper. "When a fund is exhausted how can a bill be paid?' asked Alderman Worden. "Nobody has any authority in the charter to pay such a bill." His colleagues disagreed and approved the expense.

Worden had been overridden on the questions of parks and oats. He wasn't pleased. The next bill before council kicked off a two-month saga, led by Worden, that involved one of the city's most popular and prestigious charities.

Members of the Patriotic Service League included many of the city's most prominent citizens. The group raised money for wartime charity drives and opened a downtown employment office for returning World War soldiers. The P.S.L. raised funds for the erection of a war memorial plaque, visible today on the southwest side of Cross Street Bridge.

The P.S.L. also sought to refine civic life. In the spring of 1919, the group opened a municipal "Rest Room" at 29 North Huron, on the west side of the street just north of Michigan Avenue. The two-story facility offered an elegant yet comfortable parlor with easy chairs, tables of magazines to peruse, a telephone, and a writing desk with complimentary stationery. Another room contained a fainting-couch and basic medical supplies. The Rest Room also had several conference rooms and large and elegant bathrooms. An on-site matron presided over the Rest Room and welcomed downtown shoppers wearied from their labors.

The P.S.L. had originally split the cost of the Rest Room with the city, with the agreement *continued on page 15* 

# Ypsilanti History - It's a Test!

By Peter Fletcher Turn to page 24 of this issue to check your answers.

- 1. During the 1940's a group of teen age boys were treated to a free movie at the Wuerth Theatre every six months. Why?
- 2. What did these women have in common in the 1940's? Mabel Freeman, Hazel Milks, Irene Ungrodt, Esther Sturm, Nora O'Connor and France Young?
- 3. In World War II what was the major duty of the volunteer air raid wardens when night time air raids were staged:
- 4. Name the prominent Ypsilantian who is a direct descendant of General Robert E. Lee?
- 5. List the three daily Detroit papers of the 1940's that were circulated here.
- 6. Dr. O. Ray Yoder, Superintendent of the Ypsilanti State Mental Hospital had a simple theory on human mental health. What was it?
- 7. Many early family diaries and letters referred to frequent serving of a dish based on an ingredient not native to this area. What was it?
- 8. How many old time auto dealerships can you list and locate where no dealership exists today?
- 9. Between 1858 and 1867 Chauncey Joslin, Arden Ballard, Parmenio Davis, Benjamin Follett, Edgar Bogordus and David Edwards began what tradition continuing to this day?
- 10. A flexible metal red letter sign 8" x 15" reading "Sorry, Last Car" resurfaced from the 1920's. To what is it referring?
- 11. How many long ago closed Ypsilanti Auto dealerships can you name and where were they located?
- 12. Downtown Michigan Avenue had many gas stations. How many can you name?
- 13. What was the original name of the Ypsilanti Public Schools?
- 14. In the late 1930's a town character moved about with an unusual form of locomotion performing what service and known by what name?
- 15. Tell us about the plays and the stars the summer of the Greek Theatre here.
- 16. In 1943, 1944 and 1945 what empty public building was used to handle the overflow of grade school pupils the war brought to Ypsilanti?
- 17. In 1946 what was the weekly subscription rate for the Ypsilanti Press?
- 18. In the days before computers how were report cards presented for High School students?
- 19. Explain how telephones worked prior to dials where actual operators were needed for each call.
- 20. What should be done with those who question the accuracy of the answers provided for these queries?

Turn to page 24 of this issue to check your answers.



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# Two Killed by Interurban

By James Mann

Over time our means of transportation have improved so everyone can go further and faster than previous generations. Modes of transport have moved from the ox cart and horse to the car and airplane. One means of travel during this transition was the Interurban, a kind of trolley car or street railroad, powered by electricity. These electric cars traveled between the cities of Michigan and other states from the early 1890's to the late 1920's. The Interurban provided the comfort of a railroad passenger car for the short distance between cities such as Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. One unfortunate result of this improved transport were the accidents which sometimes occurred, and the deaths that resulted. One such fatal accident occurred on the night of Wednesday, April 6, 1904, between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

On the evening of April 6, 1904, Edna Thumm, who was employed by a hospital in Ann Arbor, went by Interurban to Ypsilanti for a visit. She was the daughter of Edward and Louisa Thumm, who lived just east of the city. The family may not have known she was in Ypsilanti that evening as it is likely she came to see Frank McCoy. How well Edna and Frank knew each other is not known, as they most likely kept their friendship secret because of the racial attitudes of the day. Edna was white and Frank was African-American.

Frank McCoy, who was better known as "Rass," was a well known character in Ypsilanti, and was the brother of Elijah McCoy the famous African-American inventor. Frank had a reckless nature and enjoyed taking a chance. He was employed as a chauffeur by Andrew Beyer, a multimillionaire who divided his time between Ypsilanti and Pittsburg. McCoy was moderate in his speed when Beyer was his passenger, but would race through the streets when alone. Beyer paid McCoy good wages for his position, and McCoy was said to have been the beau of African-American society in Ypsilanti. For the ride back to Ann Arbor the couple was not in a car but were riding in a horse drawn carriage. It was a foggy night with limited visibility, making driving a risky act. Just east of Packard and Carpenter the horse stepped onto the track of the Interurban in front of the oncoming car. One account of the accident suggested Frank McCoy got lost in the thick fog, while another supposed the horse became frightened by the car and became unmanageable. In either case, the motorman of the electric car did not see the carriage until the car was almost upon it. The carriage was smashed to kindling wood, scarcely a whole spoke was found, but the horse was unharmed.



Edna Thumm died on April 7, 1904 from injuries suffered from an accident between a horse and carriage and the Interurban Railroad.

"The car was stopped", reported *The Ann Arbor Daily Times* of Thursday, April 7, 1909, "and the crew went back to the place of the accident. McCoy's body was found lying on the south side of the track with his legs across the rails and almost completely severed from the body. His right arm was broken and his head was badly smashed in and he was a frightful looking object." "As there was no sign of life," continued the account, "the body was left and Undertaker A. R. McAndrew of this city went out and brought the body to the undertaking rooms of Mack & Mack."

Edna Thumm had a cut in front of the right ear and another behind the ear, each as deep as the skull. The ear was cut through in several places and there was a severe cut on the top of her head. "The girl's injuries were internal and her case was seen to be hopeless from the first," noted The Ann Arbor Daily Argus of Thursday, April 7, 1904. "The seats in the car were arranged into a couch," reported The Ypsilanti Evening Press of Thursday, April 7, 1904, "and on this Thumm rested until Ypsilanti was reached, where she was taken into the waiting room. Doctors were quickly telephoned for, and her wounds were dressed as well as possible. Later a car was procured and she was taken to her home, one mile east of the city on a cot, where the injuries were again dressed, and she was made as comfortable as possible."

As she lay moaning in pain, a member of the family asked: "Who were you with?" "A good and true friend," was her answer, *The Ann Arbor Daily Argus* would report: "In the carriage were found several bottles of champagne."

Edna Thumm died at 4 o'clock in the morning of Thursday, April 7, 1904. "The direct cause of her death was," reported *The Ypsilanti Evening Press*, "however, probably due to suffocation from the blood which ran into her left lung, which was badly torn from a broken rib. There were also several abdominal injuries, among which was a severe tearing of the intestines, which would have produced death in a short time had not the other injuries been fatal."

An inquest into the accident was held on Tuesday, April 12, 1904. At the inquest Motorman Beeman testified that he was running about twelve minutes late and was running at a speed of not more than thirty miles an hour. "Then, when he saw the obstruction," reported *The Ypsilanti Evening Press* of Tuesday, April 12, 1904, "which was squarely across the track, he reversed his car and did all in his power to stop it, but it was impossible to stop under three or four hundred feet."

The jury returned a verdict that no blame was attached to anyone for the accident.

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

### City Council Budget Battles of the 1920s *continued from page 12*

that after a year, the city would assume all expenses. The city had a different understanding, claiming that the 50-50 split was permanent and all it had budgeted for, for the current fiscal year. At the October 4 council meeting, former mayor Lee Brown spoke up for the P.S.L., lauding its work and claiming that the city should henceforth pay the total cost of the Rest Room. Dissent arose. "Something like 15 minutes were occupied in hearing objections to paying incidental bills connected with the Rest Room, of which toilet paper was an item," said the paper. The issue was tabled.

At the next council meeting on October 18, the battle continued. "Just who will pay for the toilet paper for the Rest Room is still undecided," said the Press. "I don't see how the city can pay for the Rest Room,' said Alderman Worden [that] night to Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Quirk, who represented the Patriotic Service League and brought the minutes of their organization with them to show that they had not promised to help support the Rest Room this year, though they had set aside \$300 for that purpose." Worden did not back down. By December, the issue still wasn't settled. "What to do with the Rest Room again came before the council," said the December 7<sup>th</sup> Press. "Unless some action is taken soon, the rest room will have to be closed up, for the appropriation is about exhausted.

"It was referred to the Rest Room Committee who will meet the officers of the Patriotic Service League and see if some plan cannot be evolved to keep the room open."

The issue vanished from subsequent Council proceedings as reported in the paper, suggesting that the P.S.L. quietly yielded to the Rest Room Committee's strictures. If so, Worden's stubbornness had paid off.

But the Rest Room's days were numbered. By 1927, it had moved across the street and designated some of its space as an office for city social worker Inez Graves. Shortly thereafter, the Rest Room closed. The local police force took over the spot as a downtown station.

Gone was the fatigued shopper's elegant alighting-spot. ■

(Laura Bien is a local writer, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



In 1941 the former "Comfort Station" at 56 North Huron Street was used for a Police Station.



In the early 1980s Douglas Spicer, Attorney at Law, used 56 North Huron Street for his office.



# The Humble Hobby Shop

In the 1940s, Ypsilanti was home to one of the tiniest businesses in the state of Michigan. Terence S. Vincent's Hobby Shop at 103 1/2 North Washington was 4.5 ft by 10 ft. with a 12 ft. ceiling. No one seems to know where he came from, but according to a 1947 Detroit Free Press article he moved to Ypsilanti and opened his business because "it's a good way to retire" and keep up interest in persons and events. In a former life he was a newspaper man, having written 2,000 one-page stories and 400 radio transcripts. He continued writing accounts of his neighborhood while sitting in the shop waiting for customers.

To say he was an eccentric is an understatement. He was known to promote the sale of box kites for "kite fishing," whereby he would use a kite to drag fishing lines across the water while he relaxed on the bank. However his real specialty was "travelcraft," as he called things that go. A 1947 advertisement stated:

Terence Vincent's Aircraft Are "Easy To Make -Sure to Fly For Beginners"

Balsa - Wire - Cement - Dope - Boats - Wagons - Model Airplanes - Knives and Blades - Tissue -Thinner - Engines (Gas, Diesel, CO,) - Fuel.

Few business ventures can function in so small a space. Prior to the Hobby Shop, it served as a news stand and in the 1930s it was a taxi stand for the Wolverine Cab Company. More recently the space was part of Carty's Music until the commercial buildings on the northwest corner of Washington and Pearl Streets were demolished for an entrance to a parking lot in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

As for Mr. Vincent, he seems to have slipped through the cracks of history. After residing in a modest old house at 501 North Hamilton Street, he quietly disappears from the public record in the 1950s, with no evidence in the archives as to when he passed away or where he is buried. At least we know that for a short time he was able to bring joy to the children of Ypsilanti and enjoy his final years.

(Derek Spinei is a student in the graduate program in Historical Preservation at EMU and is serving an internship in the YHS Archives.)



Terence Vincent standing in the doorway of his Hobby Shop.



Terence Vincent demonstrating how to assemble one of the kits sold in his Hobby Shop.



Terence Vincent outside his Hobby Shop demonstrating how to fly a kite to potential customers.



In a former life Vincent was a newspaper man and he continued to write stories about his neighborhood as he sat in his shop waiting for customers.



Children looking at the window display in the front door of Vincent's Hobby Shop.

# The Bomber Restaurant

By James Mann

There are places that seem to have always been around, that warm comfortable chair, the never changing view out the window and the people who always give a greeting when someone enters the door. One such place is the Bomber Restaurant at 306 East Michigan Avenue which seems the same, but has changed over the years.

Florence Baldwin opened her restaurant in 1936, and called it the Baldwin Diner. Florence had just separated from her husband and opened her diner to compete with his Averill's Diner just down the block (Note: see Lost Restaurants of Ypsilanti article in Fall – 2010 issue of the Gleanings). Back then the Baldwin Diner was the quintessential diner, with the big horseshoe shaped counter at the back, and the cooks used a coal burner. Those were the days when a hot beef sandwich was 15 cents and a pork chop dinner was 25 cents.



The front window of the Bomber Restaurant shortly after Florence Baldwin changed the name from the Baldwin Diner.

Then came the years of the Second World War when the bomber plant opened at Willow Run, where Ford built the B-24 Liberator Bomber. To operate the plant, Ford brought in workers from Kentucky and Tennessee. Ypsilanti changed from a sleepy college town to a factory town seemingly over night. Florence changed the name of her diner to the Bomber and made the out of state workers feel *continued on page 19* 



## Ypsilanti Patents By George Ridenour

While searching through fortynine pages of patents attributed to "inventors" from Ypsilanti I came across patents which were, shall we say were "*unique*." Let me present you a brief cross section.

### Undershirt – William F. Kneip – April 12, 1892:

"This invention relates to improvements in undergarments which are made from elastic or ribbed knit or woven fabric. Undergarments of this class have commonly been made of front and rear body-pieces suitably joined at their side and top margins to form the body portion of the garment......"

Combination Undergarment – William F. Kneip - April 18, 1893: "This invention relates to an improved knit undergarment of the kind known as a "combination garment" or one in which a shirt and drawers are combined in one article, the invention being more particularly applicable to such garments as made for ladies......In a combination garment made in accordance with my invention, the garment is formed mainly by a piece or pieces of knitted fabric extending continuously from the top to the bottom of the garment through the body part and legs....."

### Equestrienne Tights – Joseph H. Pike - September 5, 1893:

"This invention relates to equestrienne tights, knit drawers, or similar garments for ladies, wear of that kind which is made of flexible knit or ribbed fabric, such as is produced by means of single thread knitting machines, such as those known as the "lamb" machines; the invention relating more especially to a construction by which the necessary fullness is provided in the rear portion or set of the



Undershirt – William F. Kneip



Equestrienne Tights – Joseph H. Pike

garment. The invention is applicable both to drawers alone and to combination garments or those consisting of a shirt and drawers made in one piece."



Combination Undergarment – William F. Kneip



Equestrienne Tights – Joseph H. Pike

Improvements in Stilts – Thomas J. Sheears - November 18, 1873: "The nature of my invention consists in the construction and arrangement of a stilt, *continued on page 27* 

# The Bomber Restaurant continued from page 17

welcomed. She added to the menu items that would appeal to the workers, such as beans with cornbread, red-eye gravy and Southernstyle grits. On the window was the image of a fighter plane, with unlikely shaped wings. The Bomber was filled with hungry workers at all hours of the day and night. She kept the place running in spite of war time rationing.

After the war Florence's son Yale "Red" Averill joined his mother in the business as a partner. Florence retired in 1976 and died in 1978. Red Averill sold the business in 1976. The new owners renamed the business Bob's Bar B-Q.

The restaurant was purchased in November of 1989 by Joseph Nellis, a local pharmacist. He hung a sign in the window: "The Bomber is Back." Nellis restored the name and began to remodel the interior on a World War II theme. The decorating included flags and photographs from the war years.

Then on December 21, 1989, just weeks after Nellis purchased the business, the building was gutted by fire. The restaurant had opened at 5:00 am that morning. The deep fryer started to emit smoke and was turned off, but the switch failed to work, and smoke continued to emit from the fryer. The fire was doused with a fire extinguisher, and the fire would seem to go out for a few minutes and then flame up again. Unable to contain the blaze, the flames spread from the kitchen.

Traffic on Michigan Ave. was rerouted for several hours because of the fire. Firefighters

## Lost Restaurants of Ypsilanti

(Postscript to article in Winter 2010 Gleanings)

Florence Buchanan writes on behalf of her mother June Averill Willoughby, "The diner was never called Russell's, that was the name used by the Bomber Restaurant for just a few months." She also noted that the diner was never moved and that for a time, both the diner and the restaurant operated at the same time.



After World War II Florence Baldwin's son Yale "Red" Averill joined his mother in the business as a partner.

had trouble staying on their feet, as water sprayed on the fire turned to ice in the belowzero cold. The loss to the fire was estimated at \$100,000.

The Bomber reopened after repairs were completed and improvements made to the building. The once narrow space was now wider and more open. Tables no longer had one leg shorter than the others, and new booths replaced the ones destroyed in the fire. The place ended up with pink walls, a Kelly green carpet, flowers on the tables and big wooden spindle-backed armchairs at the tables and counter. The regulars came back and new patrons came in the door.

Johanna McCoy and John Sebestyen purchased the Bomber in 1995, and continued the use of the name and the history. They painted the walls, hung new curtains, installed a new ceiling and made changes to the menu.

Mrs. Willoughby remembers that the dining car used for Averill's diner was pulled from Lincoln Park to Ypsilanti by two mules. The family believes that the diner was the first in the State to sell foot-long hot dogs. "People came from all over for the hot dogs and the draft beer." Some of them passed a billboard on Michigan that read, "Welcome to Ypsilanti, Home of 12,000 Friendly People."

Thanks to Mrs. Willoughby and Mrs. Buchanan for providing this additional information. We like to hear from our readers, particularly when they can add to our stories. ■



John Sebestyen was co-owner of The Bomber beginning in 1995 until his death on January 26, 2011.

In keeping with the 1940's theme, patrons began bringing in model airplanes of the war years, as well as photographs of B-24's, Willow Village, as well as other items, including uniforms and a hand grenade. The model planes now hang from the ceiling in simulated flight above the tables. On the walls are the photographs, rifles, posters and other items.

The Bomber restaurant made history of its own in 2003, when the Food Network showcased the Bomber Breakfast on a program about over the top portions. The Bomber Breakfast includes four eggs, a pound of potatoes and a pound of meat. This is the perfect meal to share with friends.

Today the Bomber is a part of the lives of those who stop in for breakfast or lunch, and many have been doing so for years. The regulars come in and expect to sit in the same chair in the same spot every time. There are the coffee groups who come in and sit at one of the tables to sip coffee and talk. The place has become a part of the personal history of the patrons. The Bomber will continue to have a history for as long as those patrons come for the coffee, the food and the company.

John Sebestyen, co-owner of The Bomber, died on January 26, 2011. All his friends from The Bomber miss him. Johanna McCoy, who co-owned and managed The Bomber, with John still runs the restaurant. The history of The Bomber continues.

(James Mann is a local historian, author and speaker who is a volunteer in the YHS Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.) An Automobile Trip - 1915-Style continued from page 9

Congressional Library, new Post Office and Station. Left Washington Friday, July 2nd at 12:30 p.m. (Note: the writer uses "a.m." for any time before 1 p.m. This is changed for clarity.) Spent two nights there at Hotel Ulster corner of 19th and Corcoran Streets. Thursday July 1st. Visited the Capitol, White House, National Museum where we saw Roosevelt's African Expedition specimens of animals. Went in the Smithsonian Museum, were taken around the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, seeing them making stamps and bills. Went in the Office Building of the Representatives. In the afternoon went out to Mount Vernon, saw house, tomb, kitchen, coach house, fine view. From there to Fort Meyer and Arlington Cemetery, Robert Lee's old home. Drove around the Potomac River on way back. Beautiful.

Started for Atlantic City, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, passed through Baltimore, distinguished by its red brick houses with marble steps and blue shades. 11:20. Some of the party visited the market and purchased cherries. Went through Belair and Osborne. Had lunch at Havre De Grace, 10 cent sandwiches. Watermelon down by the river. Crossed Susquehanna river over long bridge, Toll \$1.00. Beautiful view. Left 4:00 o'clock. Passed through Elkton, Md., Newark, Del. Arrived at Wilmington Del. at 6:00 o'clock, just in time to take the Ferry across Delaware River, arriving at Heon's Grove at 6:40. Got 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles out of the way just before reaching May's Landing. Rode into Pleasantville at the rate of 61 miles an hour some of the way. Very exciting. Splendid roads. Had tire trouble at Pleasantville causing delay of 3/4 hour. Reached Boardwalk Atlantic City at 11:00 p.m., where we stayed until 1:00 a.m. Spent the night at Majestic Hotel. Had supper (lobster) in restaurant on Boardwalk.

The car was run into at Atlantic City. Left Atlantic City July 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 2 p.m. had tire trouble on the way out. Speedometer registered 1429 miles. Spent the morning on Boardwalk. Mother, Florence Swaine and B. Smith rode in chair. Passed through avenue of trees to Hammonton. Arrived at Camden Ferry just in time to go right on over into Philadelphia. Policeman greeted us with "It's a Long way to Tipperary" when he saw our Michigan License. Time 5:35 - 1490 miles. Rode around city, passed Independence Hall, Betsy Ross' house, Franklin's grave. Had tires



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than \$1400.

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is concerned. But what we are particularly concerned with is value. We want to sell you this car, not because it is the **lowest priced** seven passenger "Six," but because we consider it the **greatest** value — dollar for dollar — in the entire motor car industry.

Flexibility and Power have heard much of The Paige "Six"-start on high gear-down to three mile-

up until it is flying 50 miles an hour That is Paige Flexibility. hat is Parge reasonable for a marging start, on high gear, climbs steep hills without a marging protest. That is Parge Power. These stime argunts," Every

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#### Paige Model Fairfield 6-46

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The ad in the January, 1915, Saturday Evening Post for the Paige Automobile produced by the Paige-Detroit Motor Car Company.

mended. Hunted up Dudley's friend. Michigan license caused considerable comment. Also damaged car. Spent the night at Continental Hotel. Had dinner at Automat. Retired at 12:30. Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, breakfasted Roof Garden Hotel Continental, Philadelphia, left 9:50 a.m. Speedometer registered 1615 miles. Visited Navy Yards, saw battle ships – Massachusetts, Indiana, Alabama, Illinois, Cruiser Brooklyn, Collier Mars, Columbia, Hancock. Went through the South Dakota, the largest of those there. From there went out to Fairmont Park onto Wisenhicken Drive (very beautiful) (hills and valleys). 1:15

along Lincoln Highway through Germantown, Chestnut Hill, Willow Grove, beautiful homes and road. Doylestown 3:30 p.m. 1672 miles. Had orangeade, on through Lehigh Valley, into Easton, Delaware Valley, Blue Mountains, stopped at Kittakinnly Hotel while some got postcards. This is in the Delaware Water Gap, very beautiful.

Through Stroudsburg, Mount Pocono. Spent the night there at Mount Pleasant House, \$12.00 for party of seven, wanted \$5.00 to \$7.00 for one. Had dinner there. Left July 5th, Monday

morning at 6:40 - miles 1647. Arrived Wilkesbarre 8:30 through beautiful scenery, raining part of the way. Had breakfast at Wilkesbarre and tire fixed, leaving there at 12:00 noon. Sat on steps of house, helped string beans for lady, Mrs. Eddy. 1689 miles. Passed through Berwick, Bloomsburg, Danville, Milton, Williamsport, Newberg. Took haven into Bellefonte at 9:30 p.m. Policeman spoke to us for not parking where we should. Grand Home Coming week, big celebration. Lady Bicycle rider on tightrope, husband walking upside down below her, fireworks streaming down. Very wonderful. Had supper there, sandwiches, etc. Arrived at Phillipsburg, Pa. Hotel Sheffer (nice place, good breakfast) at 12:45 over high mountains, fine drive but dangerous. Left at 8:30 a.m. July  $6^{th} - 1872$  miles. Went through coal mine, owner or the man who leased it took us through. Very agreeable, fat mule Pat (pulled) the coal wagon. Through Clearfield town, policeman spoke to us for turning around in the middle of the block. Oil wells. From there through to Painsville into Cleveland, over unpaved roads and interurban car track. Reached Cleveland 11:45 Hotel Regent, supper at 12:00 -2127 miles. Left Cleveland Wednesday morning July 7th at 10:30 a.m. by boat. Ended trip by dinner at Library Park Hotel, Detroit, given by D. K. Smith. Number of miles by auto from Ypsilanti, 1603; from Detroit 1635. 125 gallons of gasoline. Cost: \$17.72.

June 27, number of miles	209
June 28, number of miles	153
June 29, number of miles	192
June 30, number of miles	120
July 1, number of miles	66
July 2, number of miles	199
July 3, number of miles	86
July 4, number of miles	132
July 5, number of miles	228
July 6, number of miles	<u>253</u>
TOTAL MILES	_1635

From the statistics above, it can be calculated that the cost of gas would have been about fourteen cents a gallon and that the travelers' brand-new Paige would have averaged around 13 miles per gallon. Because seven people went along on this adventure, we can assume that they traveled in the seven-passenger Paige "Town Car," which sold for a hefty \$2,250. In advertisements for this six-cylinder car, the public would have been awed by references to its "Richelieu Blue" color, its wheels of a "deep rich red," and a narrow bead of red that "added a touch of distinctive individuality to the front of the radiator." Company literature stated: "The strikingly beautiful body design of the Six-46 is now set off with a painting finish so rich and lustrous that it is positively mirror-like. To secure this lasting brilliancy requires 24 days of painting and hand rubbing until it is ready for the final exquisite finish."

The seven-passenger town car had an open driving compartment in front with room for just one passenger. The back section, which was enclosed, would hold three passengers on the seat and had two auxiliary folding chairs. The May 19, 1915 edition of "The Horseless Age" glorified this automobile by stating that the town car "is a vehicle of pleasure and utility for the folks whose social position in a community demands exclusiveness and the ownership of the finest equipage." The article goes on to note that the "driving compartment" was upholstered in hand-buffed French glaze long grain leather of select quality."

In the same article we read that there are two other color combinations available besides the one based on "Richelieu Blue," which is described as royal blue. Another color for the body and running gear was "Brunswick Green." This came with a black top and a gray Bedford cloth interior with a little green pattern on it. Still another color for the body of the car was "Battleship Gray." This had a black top, a running gear painted "Cleveland Gray," and a gray "Bedford cloth with a brown stripe" for the interior.

The Paige-Detroit Automobile Company announced its brand new six-cylinder Paige automobiles in the January, 1915 issue of the Saturday Evening Post, and the car was well received by a public interested in replacing their horses and buggies. One can only imagine the excitement and interest that our vacationing Swaine sisters and their friends created, when the Michigan license plates were seen on this brand-new touring car as far away as Atlantic City. ■

(Janice Anschuetz currently lives in the Swaine House that is located at 110 East Forest and is very interested in the history of the neighborhood.)



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Hours - 7:00 am - 4:00 pm Daily Carry Out & Catering 734-434-0100 2660 Washtenaw Road - Ypsilanti, MI 48197 Lost Businesses of Ypsilanti... Packers Outlet *continued from page 3* 

Wolf, was a retail grocer. The two businesses merged. A small chain of Wolf Cash Markets was established in and around Detroit, while the wholesale business continued to prosper. The Depression acted as an impetus to create a type of "hybrid" store, a warehouse type food store, self-service, featuring surplus or distressed merchandise from canners, packers and other merchandisers affected by the Depression. Grosberg would soon modify the concept to include national brands, meat and produce at lower prices than the small independent retailers.

Grosberg was an innovator whose marketing strategy would later be adopted by merchants such as Sam Walton. He was ahead of his time in another way: he recycled buildings. He used industrial buildings, automobile showrooms, furniture buildings, and in the case of Ypsilanti, the car barn that once housed the Inter Urban trolleys. He needed at least 5,000 square feet for his operation. Initially planks were laid on sawhorses to hold the cartons of merchandise. Meat and dairy products were sold behind a counter and produce was weighed and packaged by clerks.

My father, Don Porter, was the first manager of the Ypsilanti Packers. Dad had learned the grocery business while working for Lamb's, a well-established grocer in the heart of downtown. He started out as a delivery boy in his teens and ended up as a junior partner. After he married, it became clear that he needed a position that would bring increased income as well as longer-term potential. An innovator himself, he was a natural to manage this new type of store.

The grocery store shared a parking lot with Miller's Ice Cream on the corner of Michigan and River. When you entered Packers you faced a row of five or six checkout stands. The meat department was on the left side of the store with produce on the right. There was a loft at the back of the store that served as the manager's office. The center had aisles of canned and packaged goods.

Eddie Mayfield, the butcher, was a particular favorite of mine. Occasionally, he would come



Don Porter's Roosevelt High School graduation picture. He began work as a delivery boy for Lamb's Grocery while still in his teens.

JOHN G. LAMB & PHONE 1900 Groceries - Fruit - Veger EST. 1838	
Salesman Ypsilanti, Mich.,	193
Mr	No. R.
Address	
1 Quech Coats	23
1 Bruto Bieal	10
1 Q. No heat Break	10
1) Dodine Sall	10
10 # Susai	63
110les	18
	1011
16	197
18	01
180-	188
Celery	12
18.0 -	150
TQ CORRECT ERRORS RETURN THI	s SLIP

An order slip written in Porter's unique handwriting, a cross between printing and script.



The Ypsilanti car barn that was converted to house Packers Outlet.

to visit. One time when I was in the front yard he slowed his car as he approached and drove up with two wheels on the margin and two on the street. I found this stunt very funny and asked him to "Drive your car on the sidewalk, Eddie!" Eddie was a bit of a wild and crazy guy but hardworking. Later he would marry one of the checkers.

Dad hired a number of high school and college students to carry out groceries for customers and stock shelves. Some of them went on to become leaders in the community. Vanzetti Hamilton, the late African-American attorney, used to say, "Don Porter gave me a job when no one else would hire me."

The store held regular promotions. One was for Phillip Morris and featured a visit from Johnny the Bellhop. I had heard Johnny's "Call for Phillip Morris" on the radio and was excited at the prospect of meeting this "celebrity." Johnny was a Little Person. I think I knew this but became very shy when I actually went up to meet this man who was about my size.

Charlie Grosberg would come by the store almost every week. Dad got along well with his boss. After a meeting in the store, they would cross the parking lot to Miller's where Charlie would treat Dad to a dish of ice cream. My father, who was also a skilled carpenter, shared his ideas on shelving and displays with Grosberg. Soon Packers Outlet became Packers Supermarket with Dad acquiring regional responsibilities for layout and shelving of new stores in the growing chain.

The long hours, travel and talk of a pending merger combined with my father's increasing community involvement brought my Dad's supermarket career to a close. He went across Michigan Avenue to become a sales manager for Davis Motors. Less than two years later he was named Business Manager for the Ypsilanti Public Schools, a position he held until his retirement. In 1951, Packers merged with another chain to become Wrigley's Super Markets.

During the 1970s the large, chain supermarkets left Ypsilanti to establish stores outside the city. The city had one small supermarket in the downtown area. The neighborhood "Mom and Pop" stores held on for awhile but eventually most of them closed.

Today, there is a growing demand for food stores in cities. Few of the existing chains have established urban markets. The Ypsilanti Food Coop on River Street reflects this need. Corinne Sirkowski, General Manager, reports that business has more than doubled in the last two years. Charlie Grosberg's innovations (i.e., recycling existing buildings, focusing on meat, produce and groceries, no frills with an emphasis on customer service) seem even more relevant today. ■

## **Epilogue**: A & P filed for bankruptcy in December 2010.

Sources: 1. A & P's History (available on the web), and 2. Charles Grosberg: a Supermarket Pioneer, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, 1985.

(Peg Porter is the Assistant Editor of the Gleanings and regularly contributes articles)



Packers, 27 East Michigan Avenue, exterior around 1940.



Johnny, the voice of "Call for Phillip Morris" visited Packers on a promotional tour.

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# Answers to *Ypsilanti History - It's a Test!*

### Questions can be found on page 13.

- 1. Ypsilanti Press publisher George Handy thought hosting this would encourage dutiful paper delivery and recruit new carriers as needed.
- 2. They were the grade school teachers in the east end of the building at 210 West Cross Street.
- 3. They went about making certain no stray lights were on.
- 4. Rev. Melanie Lee Carey, Senior Pastor of the First United Methodist Church.
- 5. The Free Press, Times and News.
- 6. He felt humanity was divided into three groups: those who would never have a nervous breakdown no matter what, those who would surely have one regardless of ordinary life and the large middle set who may or may not and treatment should be concentrated on them.
- 7. Rice to make rice pudding.
- 8. Check your list with Jack miller at the Auto Museum.
- 9. They were Ypsilanti's first six Mayors.
- 10. It was displayed on the last Interurban car each day in the 1920's.
- 11. Again Jack Miller knows.
- 12. Yes, Jack has this list also.
- The Ypsilanti Seminary, hence the name of the school student paper The Ypsi Sem.
- 14. Keep Smiling Brown sharpened knives from a goat drawn wagon.
- 15. See archives.
- 16. Welch Hall on the EMU campus.
- 17. \$.24.
- 18. A cardboard card hand posted with the grades for each class by the individual teachers. The card was handed out to take home each six weeks and a parent had to sign on the back and the card was returned to the school.
- 19. A female voice with a smile would say "number please' and you would give her the number you wanted. She would then connect you unless someone else was already hooked to your requested number whereby you would be told the line was busy. For out of town calls you had to ask for "long distance."
- 20. They should be asked to volunteer to take over the writing of the quiz.

(Peter Fletcher is the President of the Credit Bureau of Ypsilanti and is widely known for his inspirational speeches.)

## Museum Advisory Board Report

By Kathryn Howard, Chair -Museum Advisory Board

Although we have experienced a cold and snowy winter at the Museum, we were warm and busy inside. Robert Southgate is now our Vice Chairman. Now Hurrah for our Spring and Summer activities.

We have several new exhibits you must see. We were given Joyce Mallory's collection of beautiful crystal vinegar and condiment cruets. There are thirty-seven that are now in the showcase of the Ypsilanti room. We also have two collections of Earnest Griffin's, one of silver tea spoons of Michigan State Normal College and Eastern Michigan University, the other case is spoons of Ypsilanti. The Kitchen case has baking powder containers of the past, spice containers, and utensils.

The Spring Art Exhibit is our biggest event from May 8th to 22nd. Our local artists will be showing their watercolor, oil and pastel work. If interested in displaying your work call Kathryn Howard at 734-482-7081 or Kathleen Campbell at 734-483-5693 for details. The "Lost Ypsilanti" group is working on an entirely new presentation of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War. The exhibit will start right after the Art Exhibit in late May and continue through June. The American Indian Exhibit is being refurbished and will be on view in late April.

We have had several tour groups go through the Museum including the Redner 2nd Grade Class from the Lincoln School District. We also had a large group of visitors from Germany. Coming on March 22nd is the Project Transition Group and on April 2nd a Yankee Air Force Museum Group will visit. We will soon have a Hands-on Exhibit for school groups touring the Museum.

The Gift Shop is now closed but you can purchase maps, calendars, pottery and other articles in the Archives downstairs. The Gift Shop will soon be a Welcome Room and display area for the Museum.

Do plan to visit us for the Art Exhibit and other interests. We will be showing over 100 paintings. There is no charge—and you will receive a warm welcome.

Have a wonderful Spring and Summer.

## Non-local banks think Pray Harrold is a religious newspaper.

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### George H. Jackson: Soldier, Builder, Contractor & Inventor *continued from page 5*

he suffered the rest of his life from the shrapnel in his right leg, he planned, organized and accomplished more than any man in his day. With wood and metal bridges, railroad bridges, business houses, schools, churches and homes, he forged from one to the other. Sixteen railroad bridges for the Michigan Central Railroad Company, between Detroit and Chicago was but one of his accomplishments..."

In the Mr. Jackson story by his Granddaughter, she describes the involvement of her Grandfather in the building of the well known YPSILANTI WATER TOWER as follows: "I must not fail to mention a real monument to all who contributed to its peculiar and unique beauty. The high round-domed water tower is located on what appears to be an island between West Cross Street, Washtenaw Avenue and North Summit Street. A cross was built into the stone masonry above the door and flowers at its base lend an atmosphere of sacredness. It was built in 1889 at cost of less than \$22,000. Grandpa spent many hours describing the methods and details especially in the metal and woodwork. As he was an engineer himself, he delighted in having a part in this magnificent accomplishment. The bust of Demetrius Ypsilanti guards its wealth of secrets. Full details of this giant structure are treasured among the Historical Collections of the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

Living in Ypsilanti he married Ann Eliza Moshier and had seven children some of whom died in infancy. Upon his death in 1924 he was buried in Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti in an UNMARKED grave! Another interesting item is that George Jackson, veteran of the Civil War, did not apply for his civil war pension *until he was 91 years old.* 

Again, his granddaughter, in 1966 decided to bring this to the attention of local veteran organizations. The American Legion, in 1966 decided to right this wrong. On Memorial Day, 1966 a special graveside ceremony was performed honoring George Jackson and his civil war service. Judge James Breakey was principal speaker.

Minnie, the granddaughter was born January 13, 1894 in Ypsilanti. She died on September 7, 1972 at a convalescent home in Whitmore Lake Michigan. She left the story of her grandfather and tales of his life for the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

While searching for patents related to persons from Ypsilanti I came across a patent by George H Jackson and in-law Thomas Jefferson Rice. The patent was applied for on March 13, 1894 and the letter for patent was issued on May 7, 1895. The patent was for a door or wall, that when attacked, automatically discharged a volley of shots.

This is a brief report of the life and the accomplishments of a little known citizen and patriot of Ypsilanti. ■

(George Ridenour is a member of the Advisory Board for the YHS Archives, a volunteer in the Archives, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

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### Ypsilanti Patents continued from page 18

as will be hereinafter more fully set forth." (Note: The "improvement" was the foot rest of the stilt)

### Improvements in Masonic Badges – James McCoy – October 17, 1876:

"The Invention is a new and improved Masonic Badge.....My invention relates to an improved Mason Badge that may be readily applied to the coat and adjusted to indicate the special degree of the wearer, or, when applied to a lodge-jewels, the degree of which the lodge is working."

### Individual Communion Service & Communion Cup Filler – Edward W. Ryan – November 5, 1895:

"This individual communion service for use in churches for the celebration of communion has for its object an improved form of cup adapted to hold the sacramental wine; a table on which the cup rests during parts of the ceremony, which provides seats for the individual cups so formed as to register with the cup and compel the attendant to place the cups in the proper position for convenient use.



Improvements in Masonic Badges – James McCoy

(Note: Rev. Dr. Ryan was a pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church for five (5) years in the 1890s and continued for six years longer as District Superintendent of Schools. He built the large house at the bend in Washtenaw Avenue. Prior to building the new house he lived at 607 Ellis and 212 Ellis Ypsilanti. He was married to Charlotte Hance and had 5 children) Ypsilanti patents show the diversity of inventions, thoughts, and the intellect of the early citizens of Ypsilanti. ■

(George Ridenour is a member of the YHS Archives Advisory Board, a volunteer in the YHS Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)



Equestrienne Tights – Joseph H. Pike



Individual Communion Service – Edward W. Ryan



Improvements in Stilts – Thomas J. Sheears



Communion Cup Filler – Edward W. Ryan

*Ypsilanti Historical* Society, Inc. 220 North Huron Street Ypsilanti, MI 48197



## News from the Fletcher-White Archives By Gerry Pety

The Indians used to say that "...every 7th year we have a colder than usual winter and every 21st year we have a real *wolly-booger* of a winter." Well, this must have been that 21st year. It is in line with what I remember from my teenage and college years when winters seemed really tough every year. Regardless of the weather outside, the archives are warm and even friendlier with the addition of two new archive assistants: Liz Skene is in on Fridays and Sally Whiting on Saturdays. We welcome you both!

Laura Bien, our onetime Friday Hostess, has moved over to Saturdays with George Ridenour and Lyle McDermott. So if you want to learn how to research and write history articles or even how to find those elusive pearls of history, come in on Saturday between 2:00 and 5:00 pm. Laura has a special penchant for finding: "... *the rest of the story.*"

When you visit us the next time at the Archives, we have made some major changes. The Museum Gift and Book Shop has been moved downstairs into the Archives. We have all of your favorite books regarding the history of the area, including those by your favorite authors: James Mann and Laura Bien. Also, in our Education Center we now have a 56" television set that can be used for historical movies, TV programs and Power Point presentations. The Education Center is now fully functional for our own programs and for outside groups and organizations renting these facilities.

The Archives also has on exhibit some new maps that are being fully utilized for the first time in many decades. The largest map is an aerial view of Ypsilanti taken in 1965. It was taken from an airplane before there were satellites used for such purposes. Our 1870 map of Ypsilanti is now under glass and the legend on the bottom has been reproduced to show details as to the businesses and street configurations of Ypsilanti in 1879.

Finally, in April Derek Spinei, our Archives Assistant Director, will be leaving us to find a real (better paying) job in his specialty of "Historical Preservation." I have been after Ted Ligibel to hold Derek back so we could have him in the Archives for several more semesters, but being the upstanding person that he is, he won't take a bribe! Derek, we all wish you well and we will miss you in the Archives. In his place, Michael Newberry, currently serving as the intern in the YHS Museum, will be moving to the Archives. This is a lateral move for Mike. He is already acquainted with the workings of the Archives and the databases used for inventory control.

(Gerry Pety is the Director of the Fletcher-White Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

