

# Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SUMMER 2025

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## YHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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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THE

## Electa Jane (Jennie) Pease D'Ooge

## COLLECTION

BY PEG PORTER



1909 Diary of Electa Jane (Jennie) Pease D'Ooge from the EMU archives.

*Archives have prioritized the stories of prominent citizens, white male business owners in particular, for generations. Rare are instances of documentary evidence of the female experience. Through the collection of Electa Jane (Jennie) Pease D'Ooge diaries and letters housed at the Eastern Michigan University Archives, we have a unique glimpse into almost 50 years of the daily life of a woman raising a family in Ypsilanti, Michigan in the early twentieth century.*

**B**orn in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Electa Jane “Jennie” Pease, re-located to Ann Arbor, Michigan with her family in 1857 and in 1885 she married Michigan State Normal College (MSNC) Latin Professor Benjamin D’Ooge. Jennie Pease D’Ooge, kept a daily account of life in Ypsilanti in 39

journals between 1886 and 1934. Previously microfilmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints in the 1990s, the family donated the diaries to the Eastern Michigan University Archives (EMUA) in 2016. With financial support from EMU Library Administration, EMUA digitized the diaries and letters of Electa Jane “Jennie” Pease D’Ooge in 2017, making them publicly available in 2019. Her daily journal from 1886 to 1934 chronicled the lives of the couple and their four children, including travel to Europe in 1899-1901 and 1908-1909, family vacations to their summer cottage in Charlevoix, and social engagements with faculty at MSNC. It is an extensive recollection of life in Ypsilanti at the turn of the 20th century, including the local impact of major national and world events. The diaries include family photographs, clippings, fabric samples, and other items she deemed significant.

Despite being digitally available, few could use the resources because of a new generation of researchers who cannot read cursive handwriting. An application to the LSTA grant program through the Library of Michigan and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to transcribe the journals and create more detailed descriptions and ultimately greater accessibility was submitted in 2022. After two years of transcription, we found Jennie D’Ooge to be an observant, sardonic, well con-

*The Electa Jane (Jennie) Pease D'Ooge Diaries*

*continued on Page 5*

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## From the **PRESIDENT'S DESK**

BY BILL NICKELS

An out-of-state friend sent me a website that lists the small towns in Michigan that have the best historic districts. They are Marshall, Saugatuck, Holland, Frankenmuth, and...YPSILANTI. This is a pretty good group to keep company with! They described Ypsilanti as having "one of the most interesting historic districts in the state." It further said, "Its downtown area is protected on the National Register of Historic Places and is a picturesque collection of 19th-century buildings and homes."

Because we have similar missions, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation president Anne Stevenson and board members Paul Schreiber and Don Randazzo joined our board during our May meeting. We discussed and agreed on ways we could mutually support each other. We first used their mailing list to invite their members to join us at our May Quarterly Meeting that featured an Ypsilanti postcard presentation. The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is best known for presenting "Historic Structure" markers to Ypsilanti buildings that represent a particular Ypsilanti architectural style.

We were all saddened when Jane Bird Schmedieke passed on September 11, 2024. Along with Natalie Edmunds, most knew them as the "mothers" of the Ypsilanti's Historic District. Jane received a dollhouse as a child in Wisconsin. She spent the rest of her life making and collecting 19th Century details to adorn it. When she passed, the dollhouse was in her bedroom as it had been for most of her life.

Her dollhouse was displayed in our museum briefly during the 1990s. She took it home and promised it would return one day. Recently, her daughter Anne and son Paul drove up in a truck to deliver the dollhouse, just as Jane had promised. It will be displayed in an enclosed case on the second floor hallway, with all the details she collected, just as it was thirty years ago.

Ypsilanti native Bob Arvin was an Ypsilanti High School and West Point graduate. His West Point classmates from seventy years ago and the local West Point parent's club sponsored a remembrance of Bob. Last month, they showed Brian Kruger's biographical movie "Where the Brave Dare to Tread" at the Emagine Theater in Can-



Anne and Paul delivered Jane's dollhouse to the museum.

ton. We took several of his artifacts to display during the reception. I was captivated by a ten-or eleven-year-old boy wearing an Army shirt as he spent several minutes studying the display. I couldn't help but wonder about the thoughts that went through his mind as he studied the display. As time goes by, stories from the past have a way of fading away. Hopefully, this program and our display helped keep the memory of Bob alive.

With the coming of summer, we completed our first 2025 maintenance pro-

ject. One of the roof's downspouts is connected to an underground pipe that dumps into a dry well. The underground pipe was plugged with roots forcing water to squirt out at the connection and leak into our basement archives. It is now fixed!

Our March Quarterly Meeting at the Ladies' Literary Club featured Eric Sizemore talking about Ypsilanti's historic Water Tower. At the end of the program, Eric invited those in attendance to visit the Water Tower. Attendees did so on Thursday May



We completed our first 2025 maintenance project. An underground pipe was plugged with roots forcing water to out at the connection and leak into our basement archives. It is now fixed!

**Edward Jones**



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29th. The 130-year-old Water Tower continues to function as a water pressure source for Ypsilanti's water system. We are all thankful that YCUA does such a good job maintaining the structure.

After our success having our March quarterly meeting available remotely, our attempt during our May quarterly meeting was another disappointment. Don't entirely give up on us, we are learning because of our disappointment! Our next quarterly meeting will be on Sunday, October 5th featuring Eva McGuire talking about the production of the Chevrolet Corvair right here in Ypsilanti.

We have decided to close the museum and archives on Sundays, leaving Saturday as our weekend open time. This will



YHF members toured the 130 year old water tower in May.

ensure that the museum and archives will be open every Saturday during the month!

People often do exceptional things that need to be noted. While our Archives Intern Connor Ashley was away attending to family matters, archives volunteer Russ Kenyon filled in and kept the archives open until Connor was able to return. THANKS RUSS! My neighbor, Sue Elliott, observed Tom Warner, Fofie Pappas, Nancy Taylor, Rick Katon, Linda Rex and Fred/Maria Davis managing our

June 7th Garage Sale. At the end, she gave us a \$100 donation for all the exceptional work these volunteers did! THANKS SUE! I deposited \$946.85 from the Garage Sale into our museum account.

As you have summer guests this year, remember to bring them to the museum for a visit. Here is hoping the summer of 2025 is memorable for you and your family.

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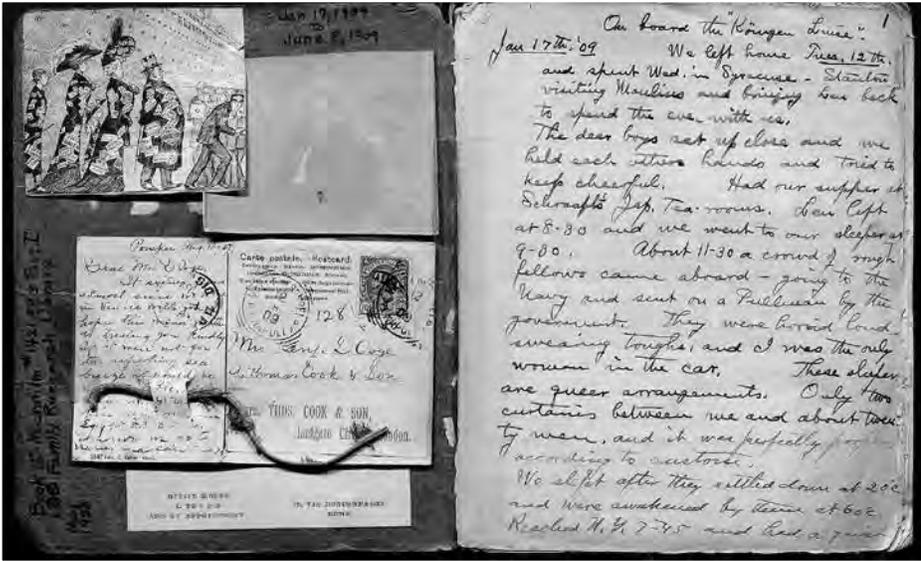
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Inside pages of the 1909 Electa Jane (Jennie) Pease D'Ooge Diary from the EMU Archives.

nected resident of Ypsilanti with deep ties to Ann Arbor. She details her home life, family, marriage, pregnancy, motherhood, friendship, and aging with exacting precision. D'Ooge writes accounts of establishing a home, the cost of goods and services, and the community of local organizations that are still active today, including the Ypsilanti Ladies' Literary Club and the University of Michigan's UMS Choral Union. Her interests in the arts, sports, domestic activities and travel provide a unique perspective on the female experience that is not often found in archives.

Between 2022 and 2024 the project, led by lead transcriptionist Katie Delahoyde, 20 diaries were transcribed, 12 enhanced descriptions and full-text searchable transcriptions were published and made available online through: <https://omeka.emich.edu/s/EMUarchives/page/jenniesjournals>. Eight additional enhanced descriptions and transcripts will be completed by the end of August, 2025. Public transcription events were held at the Ypsilanti District Library and Halle Library at Eastern Michigan University where a community of curious individuals gathered to transcribe and share D'Ooge's chronicle of a period in American history where emerging technologies revolutionized how humans worked, recreated, traveled

and communicated, i.e., introduction of gas lighting and stoves, a modern washing machine, movies and telephones. National and world events such as World War I, organized labor movements and the Great Depression were written about from the vantage point of a small town professor's wife and her immediate daily context who also revealed the much wider world in which she was a part of and of which she was a keen observer and interpreter.

When the transcription process was started, the detail to which she cataloged the interpersonal relationships she relied on as a young mother of a growing family was unanticipated. These artifacts provide a rare glimpse into the evolution of a woman from her twenties to her seventies in such vivid detail. In the first book alone, there were over 480 individuals and families mentioned by name. A short series entitled "Normal Park Gossip" will pull entries from the first 20 years of D'Ooge's diaries for the community to enjoy and explore in the greater context of present day Ypsilanti.

Look to future issues of "The Gleanings" for transcripts from "Jennie's Diaries."

*(Peg Porter is a resident of Ypsilanti and an Assistant Editor of the Gleanings.)*

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# Officer Down: Death of Douglas Downing

BY JAMES MANN

In the history of the Ypsilanti Police Department there has only been one on duty death, that of Officer Douglas Downing on Friday, July 11, 1975.

The events leading to the death of Officer Downing began on the morning of Friday, July 11, 1975, at the Detroit Recorder's Court. There, Ronald McCullough, age 27, was invited by James Grant, who was 48 years of age, and Gerald Hughes, age 31, to take part in a bank robbery. Grant told McCullough the robbery would take little effort. This was a branch bank in Ypsilanti, at 300 East Michigan Avenue, next to the Bomber Restaurant. Grant told McCullough the bank manager went to lunch at the same time every day, and there were only three tellers and they would be finished in three minutes.

McCullough agreed to take part in the robbery and accompanied by Gerald Hughes and Grant went with them to the home of Howard Hughes, who was 29 and brother of Gerald, in Ypsilanti. Then they, Howard Hughes, Gerald Hughes, James Grant, and Ronald McCullough, made their way with one of them driving a grey car, and the other three in an orange colored Cadillac to North Grove, near Cross Street, in Ypsilanti, where the grey car was parked, and the one driving the car got in the orange Cadillac, which had been stolen some time before. Now Howard Hughes drove to the parking lot behind the building where the bank was and backed the car to the rear entrance to the bank. Then at about 1:45 pm. the three entered the bank.

McCullough, because of an ankle injury, removed a shoe and entered the bank wearing only one shoe. Gerald Hughes helped McCullough by walking with one arm around him. James Grant walked in with them. As they entered, teller Terry Lee Hendricks saw them and noted how they "kind of staggered in." She told another teller they appeared to be drunk. Another teller noticed them and thought they were acting strange.

Suddenly, James Grant and Gerald Hughes leaped over the teller's counter. They leveled their guns and ordered the cash drawers to be emptied. The two were wearing ski masks. As the teller, Hendricks, emptied the cash drawer, the masked man asked, "Why don't you have more money in it?"

The men emptied rolls of coins into a bag which broke under the weight of the coins. The men then placed the coins into a waste basket. A female teller was forced by one of the men into the vault and ordered her to open one of the drawers. "You'll be a dead woman unless you open them." The woman was unable to open the drawer, but the man somehow forced it open.

A woman entered the bank while the robbery was under way.

She heard the sound of money jingling as someone shouted, "Shut up. Be Quiet. Won't nobody get hurt."

As she began to back out of the bank, a man in a white T-shirt and blue denim cap ordered her back inside.

Another witness who entered the bank during the robbery was Judy Deaton who heard someone shout, "Don't move! Don't push no buttons!"

As a drawer was being emptied the robber saw a one-dollar bill still in the drawer. He quickly pulled it out. By pulling the bill out he triggered a silent alarm and activated the cameras in the bank. At the same time the alarm notified the headquarters of the Ypsilanti Police Department the bank was being robbed.

At police headquarters Sgt. David Vernor was on desk duty. Vernor dispatched Officer Douglas Downing and two other scout cars to the bank. Vernor and Downing had had lunch together in the Bomber Restaurant, next to the bank, just fifteen to twenty minutes before the alarm was set off.

Inside the bank Gerald Hughes and Grant tossed a bag of money to McCullough, who carried it out to Howard Hughes who was in the car with the motor running. As McCullough started to return to the bank, he saw Downing approaching. He got in the car with Howard and said, "Let's get out of here."

Downing drew his service revolver and entered the bank. By now, the tellers and others in the bank were on the floor. As Downing entered, he shouted, "Hold it, right there!" At this, one of the robbers, most likely Gerald Hughes, jumped over the teller counter and struggled with Downing, and six shots were fired. Downing slumped to the floor and groaned. Police later said a shot was fired into Downing as he lay on the floor.

Postal worker Richard Shields was standing near the parking lot on Park Street when he heard shots fired from within the bank. Hearing tires squealing, Shields saw the orange Cadillac speed out of the lot and go the wrong way on a one-way street. Shields watched as the Cadillac sped down Park Street. Then he saw a man with a silver gun in his right hand running near the Salvation Army Building. The man ran across the street and jumped a fence. After



Douglas Downing.

this, he heard someone yell, "Get in the car!"

Shields had written down the license number and gave this to Ypsilanti Police Officer Claudius Wilcox who arrived moments later. Wilcox leaped back into his car and pulled up behind the Cadillac and followed it on South Grove Street and then on to East Michigan. He could see two men in the car that at one point seemed to be laughing.

When the Cadillac stopped at a traffic light at East Michigan and Prospect, the driver saw he was being followed by Wilcox and so pulled his hat down over his ears. Wilcox followed the Cadillac onto East Michigan and then onto to Ecorse Road at speeds of 55 miles per hour. The Cadillac veered out of control and jumped the curb and crashed into a fence and pole at the Owens service station.

Wilcox saw three men jump out of the car, one of whom had been lying down on the back seat of the car. Running after the men, Wilcox found Howard Hughes talking to a service station attendant about one and a half blocks from the scene of the accident. There, Wilcox arrested Hughes for robbery.

Some forty law enforcement officers swarmed the area searching for the suspects. One of these was Sgt. Ronald Ritter of the Sheriff's department, who saw a man hiding behind a clump of bushes. He ordered the man to come out. The man, Gerald Hughes, came out holding his hands over his head, while bleeding from his stomach. As he did so, he said, "I'm shot...hit bad. I think I'm dying." Gerald Hughes was placed under arrest and taken to the hospital for treatment of his wounds. His elbow was shattered. The bullet was extracted from where it had entered his stomach. Hughes recovered and later stood trial.

The third man who jumped from the car was Ronald McCullough who passed through a back yard where he found a T-shirt with a Ford Motor

Company logo on it. He changed into the shirt, picked up a bucket and began walking down the street, passing himself off as someone looking for day work. He was stopped and questioned by two police officers but convinced the officers he had not taken part in the robbery. Soon after, a woman gave him a ride to the car which had been parked by the men before the crime. McCullough drove it back to Detroit and parked it in front of the home of Gerald Hughes's parents.

As the three had fled the bank they left behind James Grant, who shouted as the car sped off, "Don't leave me here!" Seeing he had been left behind Grant ran out the front door of the bank onto Michigan Avenue. At that time, Ypsilanti patrolman Ronald Pfeifer who was responding to the dispatch, had parked his car on Michigan Avenue, across Park Street, in front of the old State Police building on the corner. He emerged from his car armed with a rifle, Pfeifer saw Grant run out the front door of the bank, while wearing a stocking cap over half his face and wearing black gloves. He had a gun in his hand.

"He raised the gun," said Pfeifer later, "and I ordered him to drop it. He did not and I fired a burst from my weapon at him. He fell. Then he started for his gun again and I discharged my weapon again. I ran to him and kicked the gun away from his hand."

Pfeifer then ran to the rear door of the bank where he found Downing inside the glass door. "I started yelling for him to get up. He wouldn't get up. I ordered the people out of the bank. I went to Officer Downing. He was on his back. All his reflexes were gone. There was a bullet hold in his chest. I loosened his tie. He stopped breathing."

Then Officer Pfeifer went through the rear door of the bank and shouted for those inside to come out. As one

*Officer Down: Death of Douglas Downing continued on Page 9*



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# We Have a New Editor of the Gleanings

BY ALVIN RUDISILL



Nancy Balogh is the new editor of the Gleanings.

Nancy Balogh is the new editor of the YHS Gleanings, beginning with this issue. She has been an active member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society for a number of years serving as a docent, a member of the Museum Advisory Board, and currently as Interim Chair of the Museum Advisory Board. Nancy was born in Taylor, Michigan, and has lived in the city of Ypsilanti for over fifty years. She graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a major in education. She served in the Peace Corp and then went on to teach bilingual education in the Detroit Public Schools.

It has been a pleasure and privilege for me to serve as Editor of the Gleanings for the past twenty years. When I took over as President of YHS in 2005 the Gleanings was written and produced primarily by members of the Board. In early 2005 the Board of Trustees approved the upgrading of the Gleanings to a more professional publication that solicited articles from non-board members and that was professionally laid out and printed.

In October of 2009 the Historical Society of Michigan gave the "State History Award" to YHS for "their outstanding newsletter" the "Gleanings." My wife and I, along with Peg Porter who was an assistant editor of the Gleanings, traveled to Mackinac Island to attend the annual conference of the Historical Society of Michigan and accept the award.

Nancy Balogh will be a great editor for the Gleanings and we are looking forward to seeing the results of her efforts.



The "State History Award" presented to YHS in 2009.



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of the tellers, Margaret Ann Arnold, came out the door she saw the body of Downing and recognized him, as he had lived across the street from her for seven years.

A few minutes after the robbery, Ann Arbor News reporter William Trembl arrived on the scene. He was a friend of Officer Douglas Downing and was known to the local law enforcement officers on the site. He was permitted to enter the bank while the investigation was underway. He wrote in a story that appeared in The Ann Arbor News on Saturday, July 12, 1975, that the inside of the bank felt dirty.

“Maybe,” wrote Trembl, “it was the unattended teller stations stark and cold behind the modernistic counter. It could have been the gaping, open doors of the vault against the east wall, dull-grey, forbidding. Perhaps it was the faces of the idle curious outside, peering through the rear glass door, searching, staring, and probing for something to see.”

Trembl noted the agents of the FBI and the State Police moving about the interior of the bank, with a grim quickness, steps muffled by the carpeting as they carried on with their work, “At the rear door a brown blanket covers the body of Patrolman Doug Downing,” wrote Trembl. “An ambulance attendant stands beside the body, waiting for orders.”

Downing died from three bullets to the chest, one entered the lung, another to the shoulder and a third to the lower left side of the chest, which penetrated the spinal cord. Two of the bullets were similar, but the third was different. This meant two guns were used during the struggle. Police later said one of the bullets was fired while Downing was down on the floor.

Douglas Downing was born on July 10, 1938, in Ann Arbor, the son of Russell and Hilda Downing. He was a member of the Air National Guard at Wayne Major Airport from 1954 to 1956 and had been a member of the U. S. Marine Corp from 1956 to 1959. He married JoAnn Hadley on September 10, 1966, the couple had no children. At the time of his death Downing was 37 years of age.

Funeral services for Officer Downing were held on Tuesday, July 15, 1975, at the Muhlig Funeral Chapel, with burial at Bethlehem Cemetery. As many as 800 law enforcement officers may have attended the service,

some coming from as far away as Peto-skey, Toledo, Grand Rapids and Cleveland. At the close of the grave side service, seven officers from the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department fired a 21-gun salute.

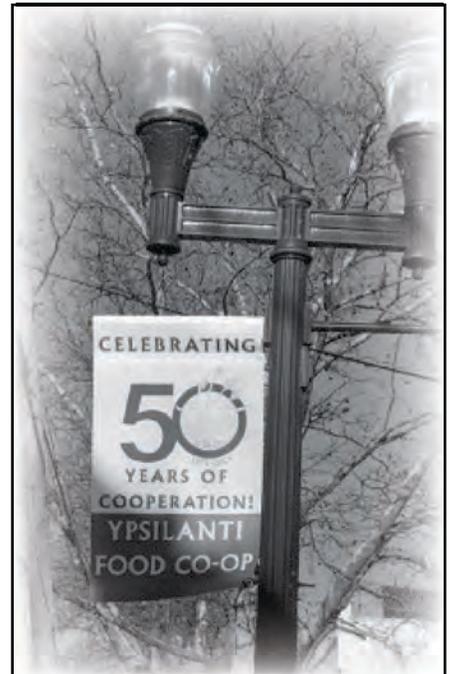
The same morning of the funeral, Ron-

ald McCullough was arrested in Detroit and that afternoon was returned to Ypsilanti and confined in the Washtenaw County Jail. Ronald McCullough may have thought he was in the clear, as his name had not been included in any of the news reports that followed the crime. He may have felt confident he had gotten away with the crime when on Tuesday, July 15, 1975; he walked into the courtroom of Recorder’s court Judge James Del Rio. He was there for a hearing on an earlier charge of carrying a concealed weapon. Two officers from the Detroit Police Department were in the courtroom waiting for him when he entered at about 10:15 am.

Howard Hughes, Gerald Hughes and Ronald McCullough were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Ronald McCullough died of natural caused at Jackson prison in April of 1991.

*(James Mann is a local historian, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*

**Trembl noted the agents of the FBI and the State Police moving about the interior of the bank, with a grim quickness, steps muffled by the carpeting as they carried on with their work . . .**



## **Celebrating 50 Years In Ypsilanti!**

The banners are up celebrating 50 years of cooperation in Ypsilanti - highlighting our legacy and thanking the strong community that has kept us thriving for half a century.

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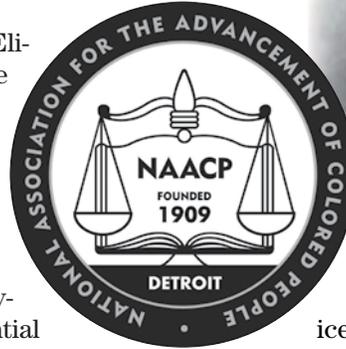
# Mary Eleanor Delaney McCoy - An Amazing Woman not to be Forgotten but Honored

BY JANICE ANSCHUETZ



Mary Eleanor Delaney McCoy.

Mary McCoy was one of the founding members of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP.



There is no doubt that former Ypsilanti resident Elijah McCoy, a black man who gained worldwide recognition for his 57 patents, intelligence, diligence, skills and ambition is not forgotten to history with several state and city historical markers to his credit, yet little is known of his wife who changed many lives for the better. What are the chances that an infant girl born at a safe house on the Underground Railroad while her pregnant mother was escaping slavery would someday be selected to march in a presidential inauguration parade? Please allow me to tell you what I have learned about Elijah's wife of 50 years – the amazing and honorable Mary Eleanor Delaney McCoy.

Mary Eleanor Delaney was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana while her mother, an escaping slave, fled to the north on a cold winter's day of January 7, 1846. Mary was primarily self-educated, although she did learn some fundamental skills at a freedmen's school. On February 25, 1873 she became the second wife of Elijah McCoy. Elijah's first wife, Anna Elizabeth Stewart (b. 1847, d. May 28, 1872), had died the previous year and is buried with a beautiful tombstone in the Highland Cemetery on River Street in Ypsilanti.

Mary and Elijah lived in Ypsilanti for the first five years of their marriage. Despite a degree in engineering, this black man, son of conductors on the Underground Railroad, was hired by the Michigan Central Railroad in Ypsilanti as a lowly "fireman and oiler." This meant that he had the back-breaking job of shoveling coal into the firebox of the steam engine trains and then getting off and oiling moving parts of the train so that they would not overheat or catch fire. Tinkering in his father's barn in Ypsilanti, he developed and patented an automatic oiling device. This saved the railroads thousands of dollars and he was quickly promoted to a position of authority, traveling the country to teach others how to install and use his device. The McCoy's moved out of Ypsilanti to a comfortable home at 5720 Lincoln Street in Detroit. It has been described as a white pillared home and is no longer there. Though the site of the home is now honored with a Michigan Historic Site marker, there is no mention of Mary, who, as you will learn in this brief narrative, was quite an amazing woman. Mary was not afraid to speak out for the rights of women or African Americans and she was determined to improve their lives using her voice, writings, time, leadership, influence and funds.

Mary was active in both civic and political activities in the city of Detroit, state of Michigan and the nation. The following listing of her volunteer work is only the "tip of the

iceberg" of her many accomplishments and enterprises. Mary was involved in so many organizations that she was referred to as the "Mother of Clubs," all of them dedicated to the advancement of African Americans. Here is a list of her accomplishments:

- She is honored as a member of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing for "working tirelessly to serve Michigan's women and children during the Jim Crow era."
- She helped organize the Michigan State Association of Colored Women which worked to improve the health, education and economic development of African Americans.
- She organized the Phyllis Wheatley home for Aged Colored Women in Detroit in 1897, which purchased an 11-room house where over 40 women lived.
- As the founding vice president of the Lydian Association of Detroit, the organization paid sick benefits, provided burial funds and supported charitable organizations in Detroit.
- She was founding vice president of the Sojourner Truth Memorial Association of Michigan, orga-



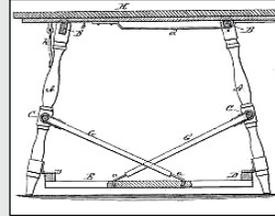
Mary McCoy is honored as part of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing for working tirelessly for black citizens during the Jim Crow era.

nized to provide scholarships at the University of Michigan for the children of former slaves.

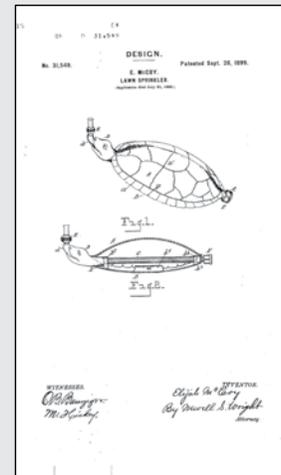
- She was a charter member and only African American woman to belong to the Twentieth Century Club of Detroit, appointed by the Governor of Michigan, which included some of the best-known women of the city.
- She was founder of the McCoy Home for Colored Children, an orphanage.
- She was a member and state organizer of the Colored Women's Clubs of Michigan.
- She was a charter member of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP.
- She was an active member of the order of the Eastern Star, Prince Hall affiliate.
- She had membership in the Willing Workers and the King's Daughter clubs at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Detroit.
- She found time to be active in the women's suffrage movement and also the Democratic Party.

And, if these accomplishments were not enough, this was at a time when all women were expected to stay home, keep house for their husbands, bare and care for children and stay quiet. Mary McCoy handled all of these duties as a poorly educated black woman who had escaped from slavery. Mary was honored by President Woodrow Wilson as a flag bearer from Michigan in his inauguration parade in Washington, D. C. on March 4, 1913. She also marched in the 1913 Woman Suffrage Parade in Washington D.C. and in 1920 she attended the National American Woman Suffrage Association's Victory Convention in Chicago. She was also recognized for her intelligence and leadership by Michigan Governor Woodbridge N. Ferris who appointed her to the Michigan Commission for the Half-Century Exposition of Freedmen's Progress held in Chicago, which celebrated the progress made by African Americans since Emancipation. A book was published by the event's commission from Michigan which documented this progress. However, Mary was deeply troubled by the epidemic of lynchings which were occurring across America after the end of World War I. Be-

The United States patent for the folding ironing board. It is said that Elijah created this for Mary, but it has been useful for all people who iron clothes.



Elijah McCoy's United States patent for a lawn sprinkler in the form of a turtle, said to be designed for the convenience of his wife Mary.



cause of this, she wrote and published a heartfelt appeal which stated:

*"To All Lovers of Humanity, Everywhere! Justice, where art thou? Thou Church of the Living God, why slumberest thou? Awake! Awake! Awake! And hear Ethiopia's cry for her people! Pray tell us, is there any premium on manhood? Is the Negro to educate himself and his children for citizenship only to be denied his rights? Is it just? Is it an exemplification of a Christian Civilization to allow his constitution to be tramped under foot by Anarchists? How long can it be said that the Star Spangled Banner waves o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave where every day we see humanity murdered by mob violence? Oh! How can a civilized nation stand by a human fellow being hung to a tree till dead, or burned at the stake and have his fingers and various other portions of his body cut off and mutilated, and used as souvenirs! Is this not worse than barbarism? Does Providence smile on such actions? Can a Christian Nation long exist under such conditions? We say NAY! NEVER! Several thousand persons have been burned at the stake in the past few years! Fellow workers of the Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, B.Y.P.U. and all*



636 S. Mansfield Ave.  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Tel: (734) 483-5811  
Fax: (734) 483-9701

*Ministers of the Gospel of any or all denominations, or any Christian worker, no matter who or where, help us as we extend our hands out to you in this appeal for succor in our hour of need, that we may be delivered from a thralldom worse even than that of slavery. Shall we appeal in vain? We beg of you, as followers of Christ and citizen of this, our great America, the land of the free, and the home of the brave, to lend us your aid in eradicating this evil, and by so doing you will help forward the movement towards solving the great Negro Problem which is now attracting the attention of all great minds. Yours for God, home and our native land, Mrs. Mary E. McCoy”*

The lives of Mary and Elijah changed drastically when in early 1920 they were involved in a tragic automobile

accident. Although seriously hurt, Mary continued to live for three years, though her health declined during this period. Shortly after their 50th wedding anniversary, Mary fell down the stairs of her house. The injuries that she sustained in the fall led to her death on November 17, 1923 at Detroit’s Dunbar Memorial Hospital for black patients. She was buried at the Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti. It was said that after Mary’s death, Elijah, always a reserved and serious man, showed signs of depression. His health continued to decline to the point that he was transferred to the Eloise infirmary in Westland, Michigan. There he died on October 10, 1929.

Despite all of her good works, her name is seldom mentioned in any of the historic plaques erected for Elijah, not even the one at their former home in Detroit. Some of her achievements were equally important to those of her husband, especially if you were a black orphan child or a homeless black person who had benefitted from her devoted work and determination by living with food and shelter. Recently, however, there has been some acknowledgement of Mary’s accomplishments. In 2012, she was inducted into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame. In 2016, Detroit’s Jefferson Station Post Office at 10721 E. Jefferson St. was renamed to the Mary E. McCoy Post Office Building. The bill to dedicate the name of the post office

to Mary E. McCoy was introduced by Michigan Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence and signed into law by President Obama on July 29, 2016. The dedication ceremony took place on November 9, 2016 at 11:00am.

From a baby girl born to an enslaved mother on a cold winter day at a stop on the Underground Railroad and without any formal education, Mary grew to become a warrior for the rights of all people. Mary Eleanor Delaney McCoy made a difference in our world to so many and served as a perfect partner to her husband, Elijah McCoy. It has been said that Elijah had two patents dedicated to her – one was the folding ironing board and another a lawn sprinkler. So, as you water your lawn in the summer months or iron a piece of clothing, think of Elijah and Mary McCoy and their lives well lived.



Elijah McCoy’s first wife Anna Elizabeth Stewart McCoy’s grave at Highland Cemetery. Mary is buried there also.

*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.*



The Mary E. McCoy Post Office in Detroit was dedicated in 2016.

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# YPSILANTI MUSEUMS



## Michigan Firehouse Museum

110 W. Cross St. – Ypsilanti 48197

734 547-0663

[www.michiganfirehousemuseum.org](http://www.michiganfirehousemuseum.org)

Hours: 12 to 4 Thursday thru Sunday

Admission (online pricing):

Adults - \$10 • Kids - \$5 • Kids (under 5) Free



## Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

100 E. Cross St. – Ypsilanti, MI 48198

734 482-5200

[www.ypsiautoheritage.org](http://www.ypsiautoheritage.org)

Hours: 1 to 4 Thursday thru Sunday

Admission: Adults - \$10 • Kids (under 12) Free



## Ypsilanti History Center House Museum & Archives

220 N. Huron St. – Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Museum 734 482-4990

Archives – 734 217-8236

[www.ypsihistory.org](http://www.ypsihistory.org)

Hours: 2 to 5 Tuesday thru Saturday

Admission: Adults – Free Kids – Free



## Michigan Flight Museum

47884 D St. - Belleville, MI 48111

734 483-4030

[www.miflightmuseum.org](http://www.miflightmuseum.org)

Hours: 10 to 4 Tuesday thru Saturday

11 to 4 Sunday

Admission: Museum Members – Free

Adults - \$13 • Seniors (60+) & Vets - \$10

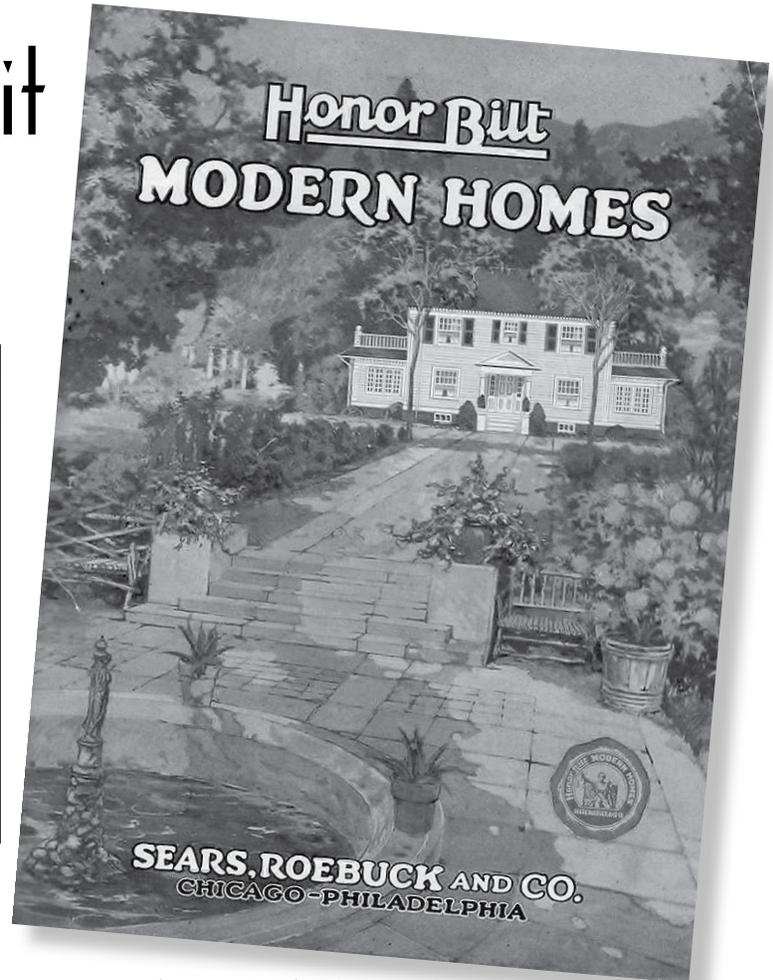
Kids (3 to 17) - \$10 • Kids (Under 3) – Free

# Sears and Additional Kit Homes in Ypsilanti

BY ROBERT ANSCHUTZ



1911 Sears Modern Home Catalog sales pitch – who could resist?



1922 Sears Modern Home Catalog Cover.

Ypsilanti private residences are known for their varied and beautiful styles, with many homes dating back to the 1800s. However, you may be surprised to know that Ypsilanti is also home to dozens of hidden treasures in the form of kit homes that were constructed in the first half of the 20th century. These kit homes, the most well-known being Sears Modern Homes, are all around Ypsilanti, but you just need to know where to look for them. This article will help guide you to a whole new category of Ypsilanti homes that you may have never known about before.

Throughout its history, Sears, Roebuck and Co. sold just about everything under the sun through their department stores and catalogs. Today, Sears is becoming a fading memory, as there are less than 10 department stores remaining in the United States. Many people who fondly remember the old Sears shopping experience are among those most fascinated to learn that the Sears product-line once included houses. As strange as it may seem, tens of thousands of American homeowners in the early 1900s purchased their houses from a Sears catalog as part of their pathway to living the American dream of home ownership.

I was fortunate to have grown up next to a Sears home in Ypsilanti on Forest Ave. The house was picked out of a catalog and built by my neighbor, Frank Lidke, so I have known about Sears homes for a long time. It turns out that many Ypsilanti residents began their path of home owner-

ship through the catalog route, as dozens of Sears kit homes were built in Ypsilanti. There were also several kit homes from other suppliers, including J.C. Penney. Additionally, there are many Ypsilanti homes that are claimed to be Sears homes, but are not. Undoubtedly, there are probably many more Sears homes in Ypsilanti that haven't been "cataloged" yet, and one of the purposes of this article is to provide information on how to determine if a home truly has a Sears pedigree.

First, a little history about kit homes. The first kit homes in the United States were offered in 1906 by the North American Construction Company of Bay City, Michigan. They sold their kit homes under the Aladdin Houses brand. That same year, a Sears manager named Frank Kushel suggested to Richard Sears that Sears should get into the kit home business. In 1908, Sears published its first kit home catalog, which offered 44 house styles ranging in price from \$360 to \$2,890. Sears opened its Modern Home division and sold its first home that year. Sears opened its own lumber mill in Cairo, Illinois to produce the lumber for the homes, and later expanded operations to Norwood, Ohio and Port Newark, New Jersey. In total, Sears sold more than 70,000 homes from 1908 to 1942 through their Modern Homes catalog. The majority of these homes were built on the East

Coast and Midwest sections of the United States. Michigan has a large number of these homes, and Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor are well represented with Sears homes.

Over the years, Sears Modern Homes offered a total of more than 370 designs in a wide range of styles. Each year's catalog had approximately 100 offerings. Early home designs were identified by a numbering system, but Sears began identifying them later with attractive model names. Some models were offered for many years, whereas others might only be in the catalog for a year or two. After perusing the catalog, a homebuyer would pick out a specific model of home along with the options desired. Starting in 1911, Sears offered financing and Sears financial officers were often listed as the lender in mortgage records for the houses. The lending terms typically included a down-payment of 25% and a relatively low monthly payment.

A few weeks or months after ordering a house, the materials showed up at the homeowner's nearest railroad station. The housing materials were then transported from the railroad station to the owner's lot. The average total

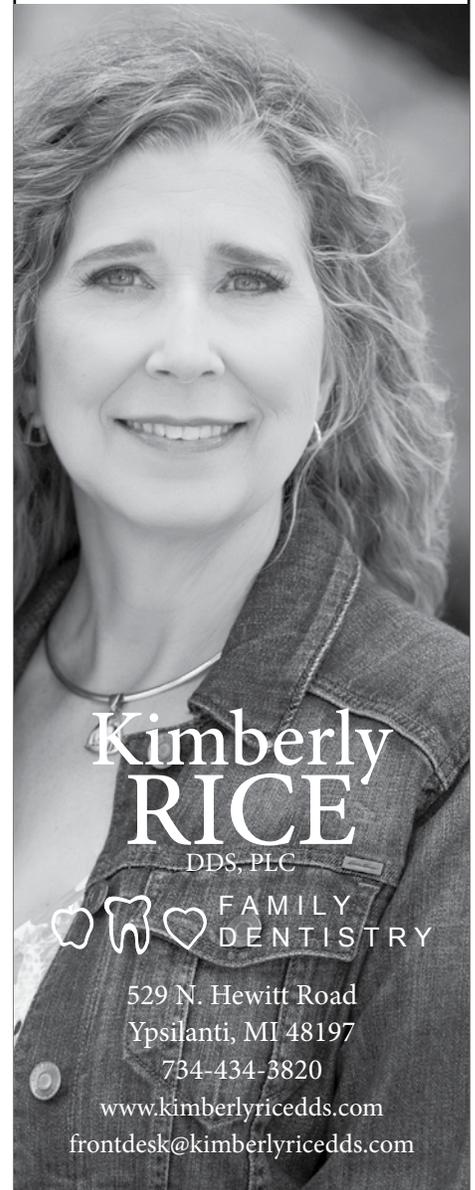
weight of the materials was approximately 25 tons per home. The home shipment included all materials necessary to construct the home, typically more than 30,000 parts, including the blueprints, lumber, hardware, paint, cabinetry, windows, shingles, plumbing, electrical, and heating. Masonry material such as bricks and concrete, due to the heavy cost of shipping, were purchased as part of the house, but Sears arranged local delivery of these materials. The vast majority of Sears homes were of wood construction, although bricks were sometimes used on the exterior of the building and there is a gorgeous example of a brick Sears Hamilton model home in Ypsilanti at 202 N. Wallace Blvd. There is another kit home in Ypsilanti constructed with a brick exterior that being the Montgomery Ward Cedars model sold under the Wardway brand located at 958 E. Cross St.

Many homeowners took on the task of constructing their homes by themselves, along with help from family, friends, and neighbors. Others hired local carpenters to complete the task. Some houses were built by developers

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**MATERIAL SPECIFIED FOR MODERN HOME No. 146**

**Craftsman Oak Stair Rail**, 1 1/2 x 1 1/2 inches, Price, per linear foot..... \$1.40

**Yellow Pine Kitchen Base**, 1 1/2 inches, Price, per 100 feet..... \$2.77

**Three-Member Cop Trim**, yellow pine, Price, per 100 feet..... \$4.00

**Three-Member Birch Baseboard**, 3/4 inch, Price, per 100 feet..... \$7.00

**Yellow Pine Window Sill**, Price, per 100 feet..... \$2.30

**Yellow Pine Window Apron**, Price, per 100 feet..... \$1.45

**Yellow Pine Casings**, 1 1/2 inches wide, Price, per 100 feet..... \$1.65

**OAK STAIRS**, Treads, Price, each..... 40¢  
Risers, Price, each..... 30¢  
Flank-Moulding, Price, per 100 feet..... \$2.16

**Oak Stair Nosing**, Price..... \$2.90

**Oak Apple Stair Nosing**, Price..... \$1.21

**Oak Threshold**, Price, each..... 4¢

**Front Door Lock**, Price, each..... \$5.49

**Stair Door Lock**, Price, each..... 99¢

**Plans, Specifications and Bill of Materials**, which we furnish free as offered on page 3.

**Core Molding**, Price, per 100 feet..... 30¢

**Outside Heavy Paint**, equal to Sherwin-Williams, Price, per gallon..... \$1.15

**Inside Door Lock Sets**, solid brass, Price, each..... 54¢

**Hinges and Screws to match trim**, Price, per job..... 28¢

SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1911 Sears Modern Home Catalog partial list of materials for a specific model home.

### Sears Fullerton Model



This Sears Fullerton model is a Foursquare style home located at 111 E. Forest Ave. originally built by Frank and Kitty Lidke in 1927.

### Sears Amsterdam Model



This Sears Amsterdam model is a Dutch Colonial located at 1209 Whittier Rd.

and sold to home buyers in completed form. It is important to note that Sears kit homes were not pre-fab houses. They didn't come assembled in pieces. Every board had to be nailed by hand. Aladdin pioneered pre-cut framing lumber, with Sears following suit in 1916. Pre-cut lumber pieces were stamped with codes of letters and numbers making the construction much easier. Sears estimated that using pre-cut lumber could save up to 40 percent on labor costs. Sears homes prior to 1916 are referred to as "catalog houses," whereas those built after this date are known as "kit houses." Occasionally, the homebuilder would make changes to the room layouts or trimming details.

Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor have many examples of Sears and other kit homes. Ann Arbor has over 200 kit homes, of which 70 are Sears Modern Homes documented in the national list maintained by SearsHouses.com. Ypsilanti has at least 79 kit homes, including 51 documented Sears Modern Homes. In Ypsilanti, Sears kit homes can be found distributed amongst many neighborhoods. The majority of these Sears homes were predictably built in neighborhoods that were being constructed in the early 20th century. Many of the homes were built in clusters around Ypsilanti and it is possible that each cluster of homes may have been built around the same time by the same builder and then sold to buyers in the neighborhoods. There is one example in Ypsilanti where two of the same model of Sears houses were built directly next to each other, with two Sears Ramsay models that were built at 107 and 109 N. Farmer St.

Essentially there are 6 neighborhoods in Ypsilanti with clusters of five or more Sears Modern Homes, with many others sprinkled around the city. These neighborhoods are Northlawn-Brookside (near Packard and Hewitt), Clubview-Fair-

way Hills (near Ellsworth and Mansfield), Normal Park (near Congress and Summit), Ainsworth Circle (near Michigan and Hamilton), South East Ypsi (near Davis and Ecorse) and Prospect Park (near Prospect and Holmes). Five Sears homes were built on Davis St. There was also an additional non-Sears kit home on Davis St. Unfortunately, two Sears homes were recently torn down, a Hathaway model located at 2780 Packard Rd. and a Rodessa model at 765 Davis St.

Of interest, is the Ainsworth Circle neighborhood which is a historically African-American neighborhood. Sears homes in this area consists of one on Middle Dr., one on S. Hamilton St., two on E. Ainsworth St., one on W. Ainsworth St., and another one on Ainsworth Circle. There is also a Sears home nearby on Jefferson St. There are also 3 other documented nearby non-Sears kit homes in this area. Sears home kits provided a means to obtain relatively inexpensive building materials and the Sears financing application form contained no questions about the race, ethnicity, or finances of the applicant, opening the door to many buyers who wouldn't have otherwise been able to secure a home loan. African-Americans in the first half of the 20th century were victims of discriminating redlining practices that denied loans and insurance to residents of certain neighborhoods based on their racial or ethnic composition. The redlining practice was made illegal in the 1968 Fair Housing Act, but in the first half of the 20th century it was very difficult for Ypsilanti's Southside African-American residents to obtain loans through local banks. With the ability to get a non-discriminatory loan through Sears financing, along with the opportunity of purchasing inexpensive kit homes, Sears provided African-Americans in Ypsilanti and around the United States a much easier path toward home ownership.

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Even in the Historic East Side neighborhood, where many of the homes were built in the 1800s, there are examples of Sears Modern Homes, including a Sears Fullerton four-square model at 111 E. Forest Ave. on property that once housed Frederick Swaine's Malt House. This is the house that is directly next to where I grew up and was built by Frank and Kitty Lidke in 1927. Frank Lidke hired an ox wagon to transport the materials for his Sears home from the Ypsilanti Railroad Depot to his house a few blocks away. The story of the Lidke's Sears Modern Home is documented in a Spring 2005 *Gleanings* article written by subsequent owner Marcia D. Phillips, titled "*The Fullerton House at 111 E. Forest.*" Several other kit homes are nearby, including several in the vicinity of Norris St., Holmes Rd., and Carver Ave. On Carver Ave., there is an interesting paradox of neighboring houses. The house at 934 Carver Ave. is a Wardway model sold by Montgomery Ward, and the neighboring house at 922 Carver Ave. is a Sears Sunlight model.

Sears Modern Homes came in many styles, including Queen Anne, Bungalows, Foursquares, Colonial, and Cape Cod. Ypsilanti is well-represented by many different styles. Out of the 51 Sears Modern Homes so far documented in Ypsilanti, at least 34 different models are represented. There are five examples of Hamilton models, a one-story bungalow, in Ypsilanti. The earliest Sears Modern Homes built in Ypsilanti appear to be a Princeville model located at 315 N. Adams St. built in 1914.

There were several different feature lines of Sears Modern Homes. The Honor Bilt line was established around 1918 and used high-quality materials. The Standard Built line (also known as the Econo Built) were a slight downgrade and often used for cottages or small dwellings. The Simplex Sectional line (also known as the Lighter Built) was a pre-fabricated portable building that could be easily assembled and disassembled and often used for cabins, garages, and storage units. Sears also sold barns in their catalogs. Sears Modern Homes typically had two or three bedrooms. The majority only had one bathroom. Models built in the 1930s and later often added a powder room.

In some of the early Sears Modern Homes catalogs advertised that they would sell the building plans, so it is possible that some very early Sears homes could have been built using locally sourced materials. However, Sears and other kit home suppliers made their money selling the materials needed to build homes, so they would have been undercutting their own business by not including the materials with the plans. Sears also provided plans for garages, sometimes matching the features on the homes that they were sold with, but they also offered generic garage kits. In many cases, the homeowners or builders would use their own plans and materials for garages, whereas many Sears homes were built alongside Sears garages. In some cases, a Sears garage was built alongside a non-Sears home. Andrew Mutch, a kit

home expert in Michigan, estimates that approximately 20-25% of the Sears homes he has seen also include a Sears kit garage.

Owning a home with a Sears pedigree has become desirable, so many owners with homes built during the period of the 1910s to 1940s, especially bungalows and colonials, like to say that their homes are Sears homes. Alas, many homes attributed as being Sears homes may actually be from another kit home manufacturer or not a kit home at all. Other kit home manufacturers include Aladdin, Gordon-Van Tine, McClure, Lewis, and Montgomery Ward, which manufactured home kits housing the Wardway name.

So how do you know if your house or a house that you admire on your street or neighborhood is actually a Sears Modern Home? There are several indicators that the experts look at including:

1. Date of construction: Sears Modern Homes were built between 1908 and 1942. Houses built outside of these dates are not Sears homes.
2. Paperwork: Blueprints, purchasing correspondence from Sears, or newspaper ads listing the specific home from the time of sale.
3. Public records: Sears mortgages and deeds from 1911-1933 and building permits located in city or county records.
4. Building material: Stamped lumber, shipping labels on wood or Sears Goodwill brand drywall.
5. Design: Comparing the house to Sears Modern Home catalog examples.

The SearsHouses.com website maintains a national list of Sears Modern Homes. The list isn't published on-line due to privacy concerns, but the website maintainers are very generous about sharing information with historical societies and researchers. Thus far, they have listed approximately 18,000 of the 70,000 Sears Model Homes built in the United States. The site administrators are passionate about documenting and authenticating the locations of Sears homes around the United States. They have been wonderful about sharing the location of all known Ypsilanti's Sears homes and other kit homes with the Ypsilanti Historical Society for use in this article. There are undoubtedly more Sears houses to be documented in Ypsilanti, but be careful to note that there are also hundreds of homes in Ypsilanti that look similar to a Sears home that actually aren't. If you think that you know of a Sears Modern Home in Ypsilanti that isn't recorded in the list below, please use the contact at SearsHouses.com to see if their experts can help determine if the house belongs on the national list. Also, if the home is on the list below but is not yet authenticated, you might be able to provide proof of an authenticated Sears pedigree following the guidelines above.

# Sears Kit Homes in Ypsilanti



Map showing the documented Sears homes in Ypsilanti. Are there any more out there xwaiting to be authenticated?

Address	Model	Year	Authenticated	Address	Model	Year	Authenticated
1209 Whittier Rd	Amsterdam	1926	Yes	1033 Washtenaw Ave	Kilbourne	1915	No
107 Middle Dr	Ardara	1925	Yes	524 Jefferson St	Langston	1920	No
2408 Whittier Rd	Barrington	1930	Yes	480 Dexter Ave	Oakdale	1927	Yes
570 Laverne St	Berwyn	1928	Yes	339 Holmes Rd	Olivia	1927	Yes
1389 E Forest Ave	Cape Cod	1932	Yes	446 Bergen Ave	Prescott	1928	Yes
757 Mildred St	Claremont	1929	Yes	315 N Adams St	Princeville	1914	No
2300 Harding Ave	Claremont	1929	Yes	107 Farmer St	Ramsay	1928	Yes
609 Norris St	Clyde	1920	No	109 Farmer St	Ramsay	1927	Yes
912 Grant St	Clyde	1925	Yes	1362 Davis St	Rodessa	1926	Yes
232 Oaklawn Ave	Crescent	1927	Yes	2324 Harding Ave	Rodessa	1927	Yes
301 N Wallace Blvd	Crescent	1923	No	610 Martin Pl	Rodessa	1926	Yes
915 N Congress St	Custom Design	1926	Yes	765 Davis St *	Rodessa	1930	Yes
986 Carver Ave	Farnum or Sunlight	1926	Yes	2431 McKinley St	Solace	1929	Yes
111 E Forest Ave	Fullerton	1927	Yes	705 Davis St	Somers	1927	No
660 Greenlawn St	Grant	1927	Yes	144 Ecorse Rd	Starlight	1926	No
202 N Wallace Blvd	Hamilton	1926	Yes	324 W Ainsworth St	Starlight	1925	Yes
205 E Ainsworth St	Hamilton	1926	Yes	922 Carver Ave.	Sunlight		No
214 S Hamilton St	Hamilton	1926	Yes	436 Ainsworth Cir	Sunlight	1925	Yes
260 S Mansfield St	Hamilton	1928	No	401 Holmes Rd	Vallonia	1927	No
39 N Hewitt Rd	Hamilton	1927	Yes	726 Davis St	Vinita	1926	No
467 Bergen Ave	Hampton	1926	Yes	1312 Leforge Rd	Westly		No
100 Lamay Ave	Hathaway	1927	Yes	2276 McKinley Ave	Windsor	1928	Yes
2550 Whittier Rd	Hathaway	1927	Yes	2433 Harding Ave	Windsor	1927	Yes
2780 Packard Rd *	Hathaway	1924	Yes	303 E Ainsworth St	Winona	1927	Yes
1185 Sweet Rd	Jeanette	1930	Yes	275 S Wallace Blvd	Winona	1926	Yes
706 Davis St.	Josephine	1927	Yes				

\* Demolished



**Sears Crescent Model**

This Sears Crescent model is located at 232 Oaklawn avenue in the Normal Park neighborhood.

**Sears Hamilton Models**



This Sears Hamilton model (above) is located at 260 S. Mansfield Street. There are several other Sears Model Homes located close to this one that were all built around the same time, possibly by the builder.



This Sears Hamilton model is located at 202 N. Wallace Boulevard. This is a rarer brick Sears home. Compare it to the wooden version at 260 S. Mansfield that was built with a reverse floor plan.

**Sears Kilbourne Model**

This Kilbourne Model at 1033 Washtenaw Avenue is an absolutely stunning Sears Model Home that currently lack definitive authentication.



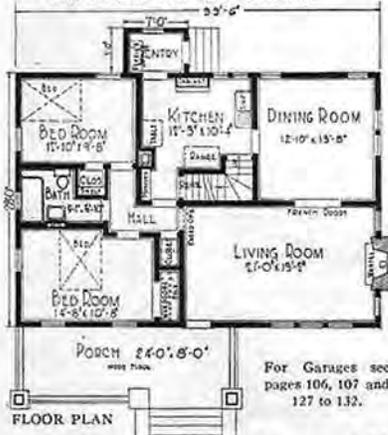


A CUSTOMER who built The Kilbourne bungalow recently wrote us as follows: "Our house has been the object of much admiration, not only from our friends, but strangers, who in passing by will stop to look at the artistic front. Many have remarked about the 'homey' porch. We have no hesitancy whatever in recommending Sears-Roebeck lumber, which came in plenty of time, and in splendid condition. Also must thank you for the courteous treatment and helpful suggestions you have given us. We know we saved nothing less than \$1,500.00."

The Kilbourne bungalow satisfies every family that has built it. Judge for yourself! The photograph and floor plan reproduced on this page show the reason why The Kilbourne is such an outstanding value. Observe the sloping roof, the dormer, the overhanging eaves, the fireplace chimney, the large porch and the massive porch pillars!

**The Living Room.** Size, 21 feet by 13 feet 2 inches. Interest is centered on the fireplace and mantel, at each side of which is a window. There are three additional windows overlooking the front lawn. The large size of this room allows for a pleasing arrangement of furnishings.

Can be built on a lot 45 feet wide



**Honor Bill**  
**The Kilbourne**  
 No. C17013 "Already Cut" and Fitted  
**\$2,423.00**

**The Dining Room.** French doors connect the living room and dining room. Floor size of the dining room, 12 feet 10 inches by 13 feet 8 inches, just the right size for the modern home. A double side window and two high sash windows provide light and air.

**The Kitchen.** From the dining room a swinging door opens into the kitchen. Size of kitchen, 12 feet 3 inches by 10 feet 4 inches. It has a built-in cabinet, No. C9260 and C9261 shown on page 105, space for sink, range, table and chairs. A double window affords light and ventilation.

In one corner of the kitchen there are five shelves, and on the opposite side a door opens to stairway leading down to the basement. At another end a door opens to stairway leading to the second floor. A door leads to the rear entry which has space for a refrigerator, and door to grade stairs.

**The Bedrooms.** A hall connects the living room, the kitchen, the two bedrooms, the bathroom, and the hall coat closet. The front bedroom, 14 feet 8 inches by 10 feet 8 inches, has a big combination double unit wardrobe, similar to No. C9266, as illustrated on page 105. Two front windows and one side window provide light and cross current of air. The rear bedroom, 12 feet 10 inches by 9 feet 8 inches, has a clothes closet, and a window on each outer wall.

**The Bathroom.** Room for furnace, laundry and storage.

**Height of Ceilings.** First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists.

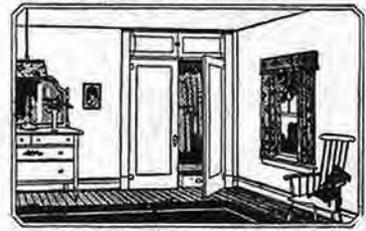
**What Our Price Includes**

- At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this five-room bungalow, consisting of:
- Lumber; Lath;
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- Porch Flooring, Clear Edge Grain Fir;
- Porch Ceiling, Clear Yellow Pine;
- Finishing Lumber;
- High Grade Millwork (see pages 104 and 105);
- Interior Doors, Two-Cross Panel Design of White Pine with Fir Panels;
- Trim, Back Band Style, of Beautiful Grain Yellow Pine;
- Windows, California Clear White Pine;
- Medicine Case; Wardrobe;
- Kitchen Cabinets; Brick Mantel;
- Eaves Trough and Down Spout;
- Heavy Water-Proof Building Paper; Sash Weights;
- Chicago Design Hardware (see page 116);
- Paint for Three Coats Outside Trim and Siding;



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**Wood Filler and Two Coats Varnish for Oak Floors;**  
**Two Coats Varnish for Maple and Yellow Pine Floors.**  
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 We guarantee enough material to build this house.  
 Price does not include cement, brick or plaster. See description of "Honor Bill" Houses on pages 12 and 13.

- OPTIONS**  
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 4-in. x 8-in. Style Oriental Asphalt Slate Surface Strip Shingles, guaranteed for seventeen years, instead of wood shingles for roof, \$48.00 extra.  
 Oak Doors and Trim for living room and dining room, \$69.00 extra.  
 Storm Doors and Windows, \$55.00 extra; with attic, \$78.00 extra.  
 Screen Doors and Windows, galvanized wire, \$36.00 extra; with attic, \$50.00 extra.  
 For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see pages 134 and 135.



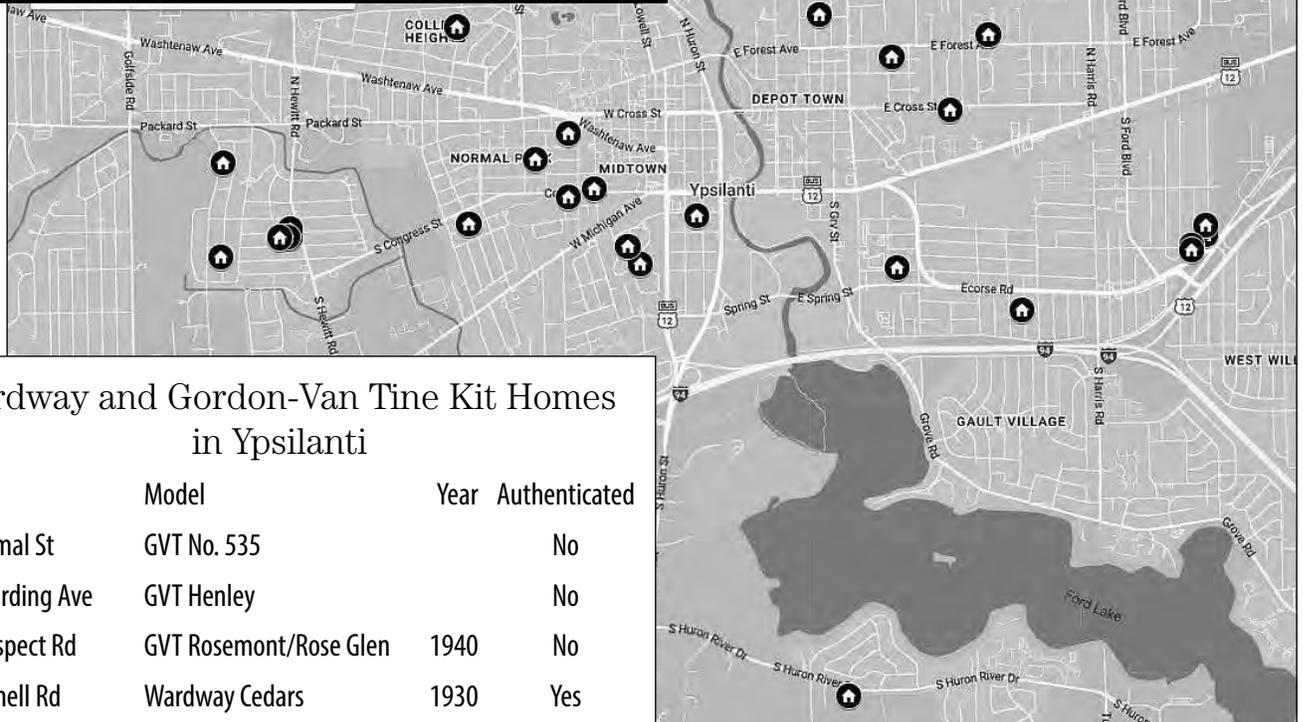
View of front bedroom showing wardrobe.

**For Our Easy Payment Plan See Page 140—For Our Information Blank See Page 137**

SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

The Kilbourne model brochure from the Sears Modern Homes catalog. There is a Kilbourne model at 1033 Washtenaw Ave.

# Non-Sears Kit Homes in Ypsilanti



## Wardway and Gordon-Van Tine Kit Homes in Ypsilanti

Address	Model	Year	Authenticated
3 N Normal St	GVT No. 535		No
2255 Harding Ave	GVT Henley		No
948 Prospect Rd	GVT Rosemont/Rose Glen	1940	No
723 Cornell Rd	Wardway Cedars	1930	Yes
958 E Cross St	Wardway Cedars		No
578 Pinewood Ave	Wardway Cranford	1929	Yes
731 N Redwood Ave	Wardway Cranford		No
2260 Harding Ave	Wardway Custom	1928	Yes
701 Virginia Pl	Wardway Dover		No
306 E Ainsworth St	Wardway Milford	1929	Yes
2269 Harding Ave	Wardway "Regional" model	1930	Yes
1270 Warner St	Wardway "Regional" model	1930	No
934 Carver Ave	Wardway "Regional" model	1931	Yes
358 Ohio St	Wardway Kelton	1929	Yes
322 Ohio St	Wardway Kenmore	1929	Yes
200 Middle Dr	Wardway Kenwood	1931	No
392 Dakota Ave	Wardway Maryland	1929	Yes
2307 Harding Ave	Wardway Mount Vernon		No
408 Dakota Ave	Wardway Newport	1929	Yes
7890 S Huron River Dr	Wardway Priscilla	1927	Yes
1008 Grant St.	Wardway Priscilla, GVT Tremont/Fairfield/No. 616	1925	No

Map showing the documented non-Sears kit homes in Ypsilanti. There are probably many additional kit homes to be found.

Here is a list of Sears kit homes in Ypsilanti that are maintained in the SearsHouses.com national list. Much of the definitive authentication was provided through public record searches for mortgages and deeds attributed to Sears financial officers.

Here is a list of Wardway and Gordon-Van Tine kit homes in Ypsilanti. Gordon-Van Tine supplied the plans and materials for Montgomery Ward homes under the Wardway name, so most of the Wardway homes also had a twin Gordon-Van Tine equivalent. In some cases, such as the Gordon-Van Tine Henley model at 2255 Harding Ave., the model was exclusive to Gordon-Van Tine. Expert authentication is often required to distinguish a Wardway from a Gordon-Van Tine home. There were several Wardway kits in Ypsilanti that didn't appear in any Wardway catalog, and were only sold in Southeast Michigan. Those particular homes are identified below as Wardway "Regional" models.



These neighboring homes have very different pedigrees. The home on the left at 934 Carver Ave. was sold by Montgomery Ward, whereas the home on the right at 922 Carver Ave. was sold by Sears.

Here is a list of Aladdin Company (Bay City, MI) kit homes in Ypsilanti. Aladdin was the first and one of the longest surviving kit home manufacturers. Aladdin was begun in 1906 by two brothers, Otto and William Sovereign, and continued to manufacture homes until 1981. In that time, it sold over 75,000 homes.

Address	Model	Year	Authenticated
911 Sheridan St	Georgia	1925	No
729 Davis St	Maples	1926	No
65 Hillcrest Blvd	Pasadena	Prior to 1940	No
913 Congress St	Pomona	1916	No
211 Ferris St	Pomona	1925	No

Here is a list of the only documented Lewis Manufacturing Company (Bay City, MI) kit home in Ypsilanti. There may be more Lewis kit homes in Ypsilanti. Lewis Manufacturing Company was named for George Lewis and his son Adna Lewis, who formed partnerships with Albert Miller and later G. H. Merrill. The Miller & Lewis Company was formed in 1879 and the Lewis Company continued until 1973. The Lewis Manufacturing Company had close ties with the Aladdin Company and manufactured Aladdin’s kit homes until 1914. Lewis had their own catalog from 1913 through 1926. Lewis produced its homes in a facility on the shores of Lake Huron and shipped them by rail all over the country.

Address	Model	Year	Authenticated
800 Hemphill St	Montawk		No

Here is a list of the only documented McClure (Saginaw, MI) kit home in Ypsilanti. There are probably many more McClure kit homes in Ypsilanti. The Ann Arbor Home Build-

ers Association reportedly built over 100 McClure homes in and around Ann Arbor. Michigan kit home expert Andrew Mutch has authenticated dozens of McClure houses in Ann Arbor and has observed several homes in Ypsilanti that appear to be matches for some of the authenticated McClure homes in Ann Arbor.

Address	Model	Year	Authenticated
324 N Clubview Dr. #3063		1928	No

With the high prices of new homes these days, it’s a shame that you can’t purchase a kit home any longer. But, then again, maybe you can! A search on Amazon.com shows several kit homes for sale that can be delivered to your door for less than \$20,000. Sure, the houses are small, are really mostly pre-fab homes instead of kit homes, and the quality is not the same as it once was. Will these Amazon.com kit homes still be standing 100 years from now? I doubt it.

I would like to give special thanks to several people who have helped tremendously with this article. My mother, Janice Anschuetz, started the first draft of this article and has been wanting to document and write about the Sears homes in Ypsilanti for quite a long time. Her conversations with our neighbor Frank Lidke about his Sears home provided information for both this article and the article by Marcia Phillips referenced above. SearsHouses.com is the definitive source of information for Sears Modern Homes. Judith Chabot of SearsHouses.com provided me with a list of Sears and other kit homes in Ypsilanti extracted from their national list of Sears Modern Homes that the site maintains and researches. Andrew and Wendy Mutch of Novi, Michigan, own a kit house and maintain a website, kithousehunters.com that showcases many of the kit homes in Michigan. Andrew Mutch was responsible for going through many Washt-



A Gordon-Van Tine Rosemont kit home resides immediately to the north of the Chick Inn Drive-In at 948 N. Prospect Rd. You can see this kit home peeking over the vintage hot rod.

enaw County records to authenticate most of the Ypsilanti kit homes on the national list. After reviewing a rough draft of this article, Andrew went back to the list of deeds from the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library and was able to authenticate the dates for many of

these Ypsilanti homes, and add over twenty-five additional Ypsilanti kit homes to the list. Several other members of SearsHouses.com also contributed to researching and authenticating some of the Ypsilanti kit homes. Several Ypsilanti residents answered a Facebook post asking for information about Sears homes in Ypsilanti. Leonard Silvenis provided information about Sears homes and other kit homes. Through the response of several Ypsilanti residents, we were even able to contribute a few new houses to the national list! Finally, the Sears Modern Homes Wikipedia page [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sears\\_Modern\\_Homes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sears_Modern_Homes) is a good resource for information about Sears Modern Homes and other kit homes.

*(Robert Anschuetz grew up in Ypsilanti in the historic Swaine house at the corner of Forest Ave. and River St. His next-door neighbors Frank and Kitty Lidke built their Sears Modern Home in 1927 and they lived there until they passed away. Robert is a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*

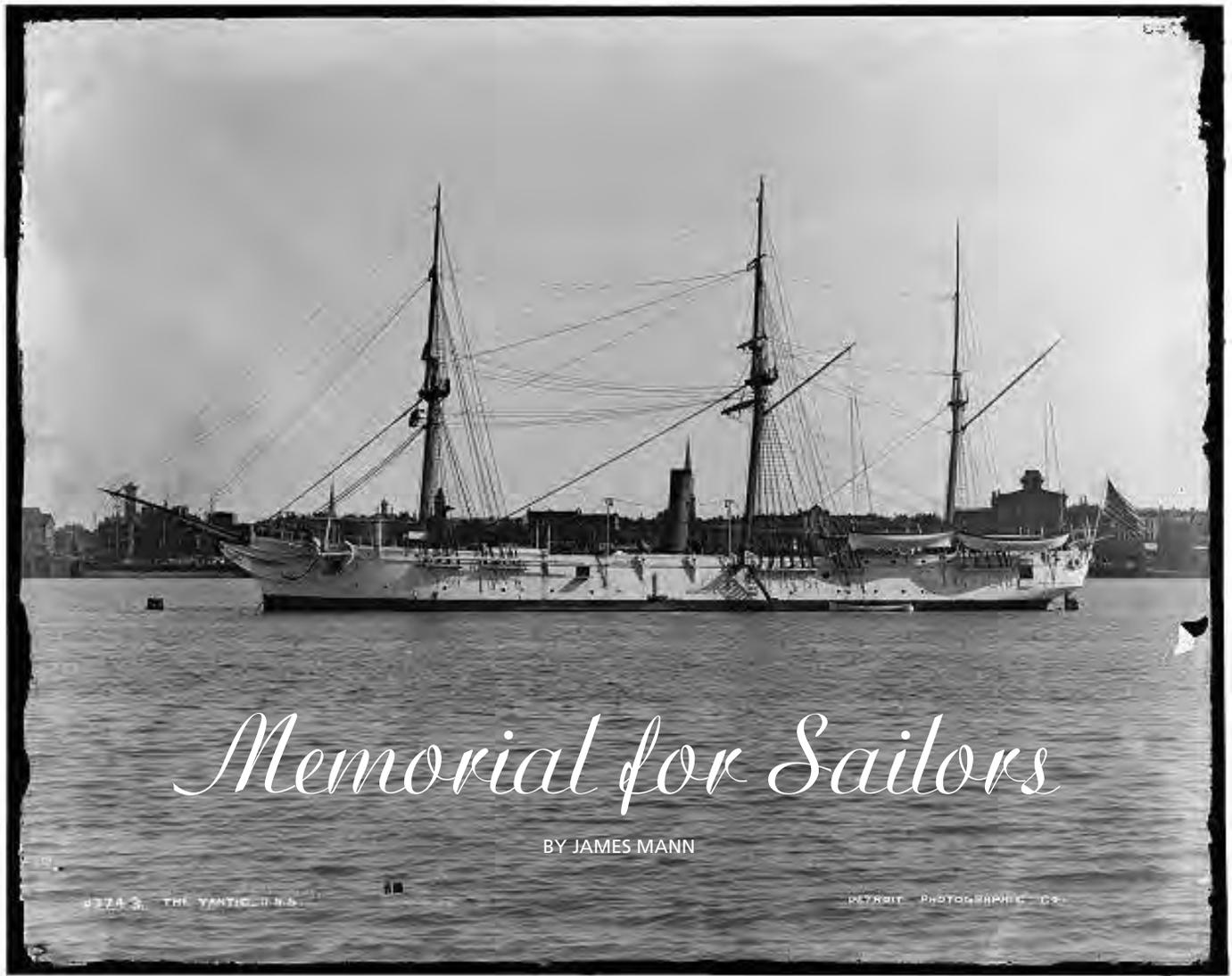


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# Memorial for Sailors

BY JAMES MANN

JUN 23, THE YANTIC, U.S.A.

DETROIT PHOTOGRAPHIC CO.

The first strewing of flowers was held on the deck of the U.S.S. Yantic while docked on the Detroit River. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Every year on Memorial Day the procession begins on South Huron, crosses Michigan Avenue and proceeds down North Huron turning onto Cross Street and stops on the bridge over the river. Here, on the bridge, flowers are dropped onto the waters below, to honor those who died at sea while in the service of their country. (Note, because this honors the dead, it is not a parade, it is a procession.) Then the procession continues to River Street and turns north to Highland Cemetery, where the ceremony is carried out, including the presentation of wreaths, a 21-gun salute and taps.

The origin of the custom of strewing flowers over rivers to honor those who died at sea has an Ypsilanti connection, as it was a graduate of the Michigan State Normal college, now Eastern Michigan University, who helped start the practice. James Mandeville was a native of Detroit who graduated from the Normal in 1891 and soon after began teaching at the Gillies School in Detroit. "It was on May 30, 1901, that he helped arrange the first floral service aboard the U.S.S. Yantic on the Detroit River," reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of Saturday, May 23, 1925.

"But Prof. Mandeville does not claim credit for conceiving the idea of the service. Mrs. Samuel B. Dixon whose husband unfurled the flag for Prof. Mandeville at the new Amos School first suggested such a service and called upon Prof. Mandeville to help."

"Prof. Mandeville drilled 20 children from Amos School for the first observance and on Memorial Day, with a company of naval veterans, and the speakers, they boarded the Yantic and sailed out onto the Detroit River where at 10 a.m. the ceremony was carried out."

The ceremony included an address by Detroit Mayor William Maybury, followed by an address by Prof. Mandeville with the children singing "America" and Prof. Mandeville's recitation of "Heroes of the Sea," of which he was the author.

"Then followed the benediction and the strewing of the flowers on the waters while the band played "Nearer, My God to Thee."

There appears to be no report of the ceremony held in 1901, so Prof. Mandeville may have been mistaken about the year.

# Museum Advisory Board Report

BY NANCY BALOGH, INTERIM CHAIRPERSON

The summer issue of the *Gleanings* bids a fond farewell to our past Museum Advisory Board chairperson, Evan Milan. Evan joined the museum as a docent at the end of 2018 and served until the pandemic closed the museum. In the summer of 2020 Jim Curran invited Evan to join the board and in the spring of 2021, he began his tenure as chairperson. Evan also served as a trustee from 2023 to February of 2025.



Brown Chapel

Evan was born and raised in Plymouth and graduated from EMU in 2016 with a degree in history. He has lived in and around Ypsilanti for the majority of his adult life. When Evan joined the Advisory Board, the museum had been shuttered for nearly a year and was emerging from a period unprecedented in recent history. Many volunteers did not return. Thanks to dedicated leaders like Evan Milan the museum began to slowly regain its footing. Of particular note is the well-researched exhibit on the Brown Chapel

that Evan created and is currently on display in the library. We thank Evan for his years of service in restoring our museum to its fine form and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

With the retirement of Evan from the board I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new chairperson. I have agreed to lead the Museum Advisory Board on an interim basis as another candidate is being sought. I began working as a docent shortly after the reopening of the museum following the Covid-19 Pandemic. I

joined the Advisory Board in January of 2024, becoming the secretary.

I arrived in Ypsilanti to enroll as a student at EMU and like many before me fell in love with our town and made it my home. I am honored to serve on a board that represents one of Ypsilanti's finest cultural institutions.

There was a report for the ceremony held in 1902, published by *The Detroit News* on Friday, May 30, 1902.

“Grizzled veterans of ‘61-65’ stood side by side with the younger men of ‘98,” the account reported. “The background was filled with schoolgirls each carrying one of June’s earliest roses. The day was cloudless, the skies vivid blue; and the waters tumbled and sparkled under the bright light, while a warm breeze caressed the flapping folds of an American flag at full mast.

The account further noted that: “A pretty incident was the singing of ‘America’ by 75 girls from the Amos school. Their young voices rendered the familiar song, with singular purity and sweetness.”

National Chaplain, A.S. McWilliams, led a prayer and Detroit Mayor Maybury “gave a short, eloquent address in his best style, after which the company sang the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ and Capt. Harris voiced many patriotic thoughts on ‘The Navy,’ old and new.

“Miss Minnie Weldenbien, with chorus, sang ‘Nearer, My God to Thee’ and the flag, which had been at full mast, was lowered to half-mast. Slowly marching along, 75 girls each dropped a rose over the rail. “Prof. Mandeville’s oration was filled with fine feeling. Many present were moved to tears.”

The U.S.S. *Yantic* hosted its first ceremony in 1901. Built in Philadelphia and commissioned on August 12, 1864, the ship was rumored to have been intended as President Lincoln’s private yacht but was instead deployed to search for the Confederate privateer *CSS Tallahassee*. The *Yantic* was said to have “the lines of a yacht with well deck and plenty of shear.” Constructed of African live oak it measured 179 feet long and 30 feet wide, with wide-spreading

Yard arms. The ship was originally armed with a 100-pounder rifled gun, a 30-pounder rifled gun, two 9-inch Dahlgrens and a 24-pounder and a 12-pounder gun. When launched it was said to be the prettiest ship to be seen in those waters. The *Yantic* saw active service in the American Civil War, and then in 1897 was sent to Detroit for service as a training ship with the Michigan Naval Militia. The *Yantic* sank beside her dock in Detroit on October 22, 1929, due to structural weakening of her wooden hull through natural deterioration.

Still, the first strewing of the flowers was held on her deck in 1901 and the ceremony still continues today throughout the nation.

*(James Mann is a local historian, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*

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