

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

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



SPRING 2006

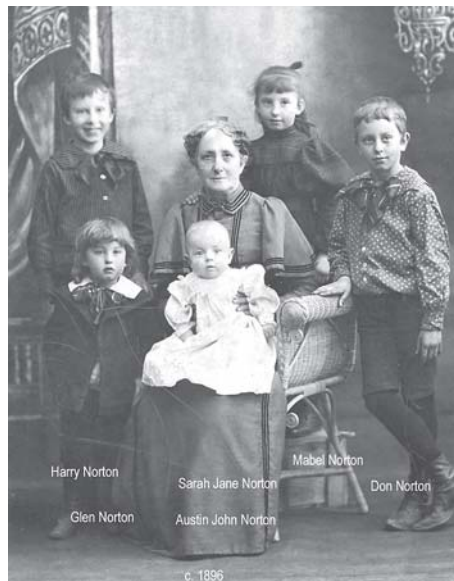
The Norton Family - 142 Years in Ypsilanti

By Austin, Dorothy, Cindy and Dennis Norton

The Norton family is fortunate to have diaries written by Sarah Jane Knapp Norton. The diaries, starting in 1864 and ending with Sarah's death in 1906, detail the everyday life of the times, and make possible the following brief history of the Norton family's early years in Ypsilanti. *These diaries have been put on DVD disks by Sarah's great great grandson, Dennis Norton and a set has been donated to the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives.*

Toward the end of the Civil War, Austin and Sarah Jane Knapp Norton and their young son Charles got the "western fever" as it was called then, and migrated westward from Sharon Springs, New York. They arrived in Ypsilanti on March 10, 1864, to the open arms of Sarah's mother who had already moved to Ypsilanti some years before. Sarah's father, Lucius Knapp had passed away sometime prior to 1862, and Sarah's mother, Zada Jones Knapp then married Timothy Showerman a member of another long time Ypsilanti family. Timothy was the widower of Zada's sister Eunice. Also living in Ypsilanti at the time Sarah and Austin came from New York were two of Sarah's aunts, Lucinda Jones Casey, and Mary Jones Elliott. Lucinda was the wife of Sam Casey who had a large farm on Prospect near Clark Road, and Mary was the wife of Parmer Elliott. A third aunt, Eunice Jones had married Timothy Showerman and was living in Ypsilanti at the time of her death in 1862.

As was not too uncommon in those times, Zada, the widow of Lucius Knapp, and Timothy, the widower of Zada's sister



1896 – Sarah Jane Norton with grandchildren.

Eunice, married in 1862 and were living in Ypsilanti in 1864. It is interesting to note that Nathalie Elliot Edmunds, a well known Ypsilantian, is a direct descendant of Mary Jones Elliot. So at one point in the late 1850s and early 1860s, four of the Jones sisters, Zada, Eunice, Mary and Lucinda were all living in Ypsilanti, having moved there some years before from Amsterdam, New York, just west of Albany.

After moving to Ypsilanti, Austin Norton worked as a stone and brick mason constructing cellars and chimneys. He built the foundations for many buildings which are still in existence. The diaries list the names of many well known Ypsilanti families for whom Austin built foundations
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In This Issue...

The Norton Family – 142 Years in Ypsilanti

Diaries written by Sarah Jane Knapp Norton beginning in 1864 provide insight into the early years of life in our city.

Lost Ypsilanti – The Malt House

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century the Malt House was the tallest structure on the city's northeast side.

Community Education at Eastern Michigan University

Faculty at Eastern Michigan University played a major roll in the development of community education programs throughout the United States.

Patrick Roger (P.R.) Cleary

P.R. Cleary was only 25 when he arrived in Ypsilanti in 1883.

Ypsilanti Tot makes a "Friend" of His Hero

Bob Willoughby meets his hero, Thomas Edison, at the "Light's Golden Jubilee."

Interesting Facts about the Prohibition Era

Michigan was one of the first states to vote in prohibition and the first state to repeal it.

Edd Dykman and "The Handy Store"

Everyone in Ypsilanti shopped at "The Handy Store" and all the patrons knew and respected Edd Dykman.

Finds: The Fletcher White Archives

Mr. Russell Steere took this interesting picture of the house at 219 South Huron Street over 60 years ago.

Interesting Facts from the Prohibition Era

Michigan was one of the first states to vote in prohibition and Detroit was the first major city in the country to go "dry."

Society Briefs:

From the President's Desk

Museum & Archive Hours

News from the Fletcher White Archives

Membership Application

Report from the Museum

Advisory Board

Advertising/Sponsor Application

From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

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Ypsilanti Historical Society

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www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org

This is our fifth issue of the newly formatted "Ypsilanti Gleanings." We have had a great deal of positive response to our new format and expanded content and we appreciate all the contributions made by authors and the volunteers. We also want to acknowledge our advertisers and sponsors whose financial support makes this publication possible. If you are interested in writing an article for the Gleanings or would like us to include articles on a specific topic please contact me.

We are in the process of negotiating with the City of Ypsilanti to purchase the museum and archives property at 220-224 North Huron Street. The purchase of the property by the Society would enable us to expend funds on deferred maintenance to the buildings and property. Any such agreement would include a "Right of Reversion" clause so that if the Society stopped using the property as a museum or archives the City would have the right to buy back the property at the same price it was sold to the Society. We are all interested in preserving the historical artifacts and written records of the people and places in Ypsilanti and the surrounding area and the transfer of ownership of the property to the Society seems to be a win-win situation for both the Society and the City.

In the next few months we will need to empty the basement of the Museum so

work can be done on the foundation walls and the support wall

Thanks to all the volunteers who regularly change the displays in the museum and who plan and conduct special events and displays such as the Underground Railroad, Art Show, Quilt Exhibit and Lost Ypsilanti Speaks. The hundreds of hours of effort by these individuals make the museum an interesting and educational place for all of us.

The Archives continues to be a busy place with visitors from all over the United States who are doing family genealogy research. We are also receiving many inquiries from visitors to our web site and Gerry Pety, archivist, is kept busy following up on requests for specific information about family members who once lived in Ypsilanti.

We are always in need of volunteers. The duties include a wide variety of possibilities such as serving as a docent in the Museum, researching articles for the Gleanings, assisting with the writing of grant applications or helping with maintenance of the building and grounds. If you would like to volunteer please give me a call at 734-484-3023 or email me at al@rudisill.ws. I will refer you to the appropriate team leader for assignment. ■



Ypsilanti Historical Museum and Archives

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Welcome!

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

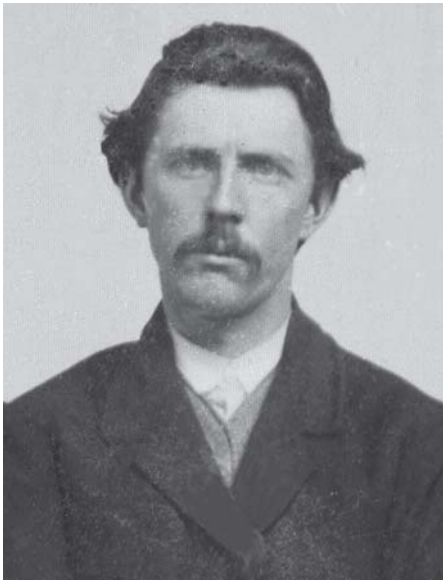
2005 Schedule of Events

Jan 11	Joint Meeting - All Boards
Feb 10	Board of Trustees Meeting
Feb 20	Quarterly Membership Meeting & Valentine Tea
Mar 11	Archives, Museum & Endowment Fund Advisory Board Meetings
Mar 31-Apr 17	Art Show
Apr 14	Board of Trustees Meeting

For Information about upcoming
Society events, visit us on-line at:

www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org

The Norton Family - 142 Years
in Ypsilanti - *continued from
front page*



1866 - Sarah's husband Austin, she called him Aut. He was born in 1836.



1889 - Frank Norton attended the Normal School and graduated with a teaching degree.

and in some instances entire buildings. These include Elliott, Gilmore, Kirk, Cornwell, Dusbiber, Meanwell, Bassett, Lamb, Ellis, Lawrence and more.

With no television, no telephones, no radios and no shopping malls, the social life of the times consisted mostly of visit-

ing friends and relatives, and entertaining them in their homes for tea and/or dinner. Many times a visit a short distance out of town would necessitate staying overnight as they evidently did not care to travel after dark. Visits in the afternoon often consisted of visiting a friend and leaving a calling card or perhaps staying for tea.

The weekly activities of the churches played an important role in their lives. The women of the family also had a very busy schedule washing clothes, ironing, baking bread, sewing garments, etc. Tending the garden was another important task, providing family with fresh fruits and vegetables as well as flowers for the parlor. It seems they made almost daily trips downtown to the grocer for a pound of butter (18 cents), to the post office, milliner, meat market and to the mill. During one snowy winter day Sarah walked downtown and saw men racing their horse drawn sleighs up and down Adams and Washington Streets. It seems as though times never change as now it is cars that race down Adams and Washington.

Austin and Sarah's second son Frank was born June 1, 1867. After Charles and Frank graduated from high school, their father taught them the art of masonry. Now father and sons could work as a team enabling them to take on jobs not only in Ypsilanti but in surrounding towns including Chelsea, Dexter and Saline. Records show they worked on the Training School at Normal, as well as the Ypsilanti Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. They built the Ypsilanti Congregational Church and finished the tower in time for a July 25, 1899 dedication. An engraved stone plaque still remains on the north side of the building, visible from Emmet Street. It reads "Norton Brothers, Builders" and also names the architect. In Chelsea, the Norton Brothers built the stone Methodist Church and the bank, both of which are still standing today. Austin was well known in the community and was elected Alderman on the Prohibition Ticket.

continued on page 19



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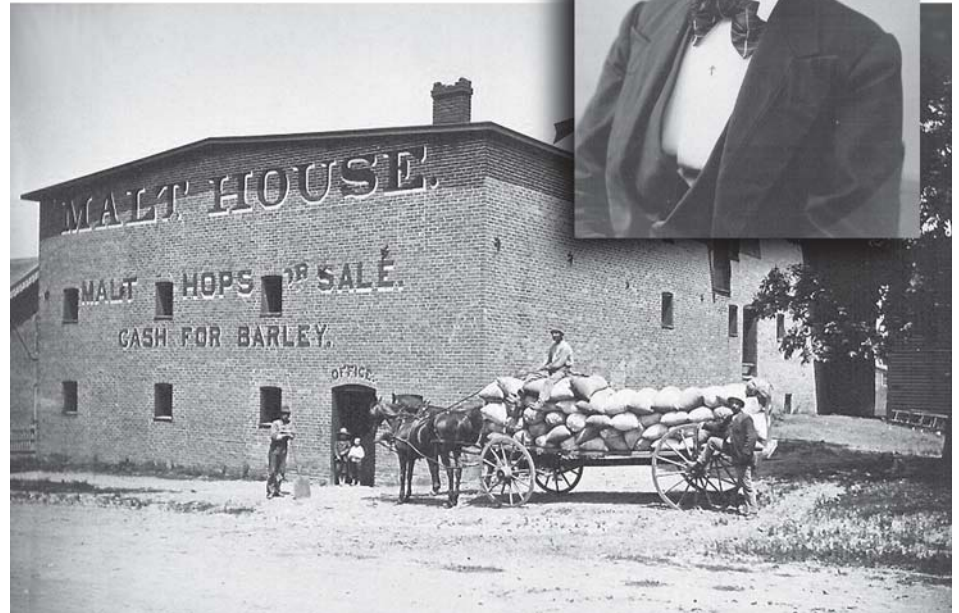
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Lost Ypsilanti- The Malt House

By Marcia D. Phillips

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century it was the tallest structure on the city's northeast side but a century later it is just a low wall. The Malt House that once stood at 111 East Forest Avenue is gone except for a small block building and partial wall on the northeast corner of Bob and Jan Anschuetz' neighboring property, and parts of the foundation buried under grass. But for over forty years, its brick three stories dwarfed the smaller surrounding houses and empty fields where Dwight, Stanley and Hemphill streets are now.

The Malt House was a tribute to Ypsilanti's booming business culture in the late 1800s and one man's ambition in particular. Frederick J. Swaine had come in 1871 to Michigan from Dorset in England where he had been raised in a castle, albeit as an orphan. He left his personal circumstances behind him, shrouded in secrecy, but he was clearly not a penniless orphan as his resources enabled him to visit friends in Ypsilanti,



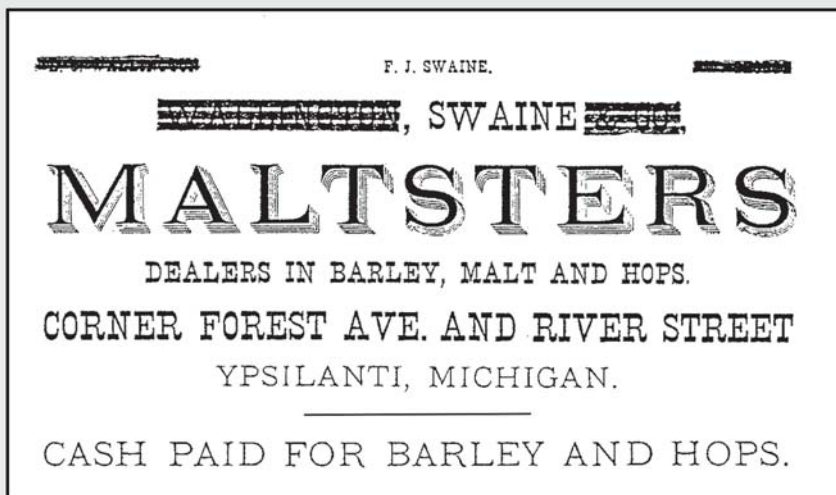
Right: Frederick J. Swaine.

Below: The Malt House at 955 Sheridan Street.

relocate here, marry, build a large home and invest in a small business allowing it to improve significantly, all within a few years. In the land where the self-made man was the measure of success, this young man found success on every side, in business and also his personal life.

Frederick married Eliza George, daughter of George George (yes, that was his real name) who had been deeded the property on the corner of North River Street and East Forest Avenue when the Peck Primary School had relocated from there in 1866. (In fact, the old school building was later incorporated into the Malt House.) He entered into the business of making malt (a necessary ingredient in the production of beer), a business already in operation, with brothers-in-law Worger George and Leonard C. Wallington (married to Eliza's sister Carrie). Swaine quickly became the sole owner. He dreamed big, enlarging the Malt House until it measured 50 x 94 feet in dimension and built a two story brick Italianate home beside it (still standing at 101 East Forest) practically the same year he got married. Swaine then identified himself on stationery as a "Malster" and "Dealer in Barley, Malt and Hops," skills that he must have learned even as he began in the business.

The malt business thrived; output increased from 11,000 bushels in 1874 to



A Malt House sign revised to show that Swaine had taken over sole ownership.

40,000 bushels in 1880. The first sidewalk in the city ran in front of the Swaine home and Malt House (the local cows preferred this sidewalk and had to be constantly chased off it when being herded toward the river bank by local boy Frank Lidke) and the residence was among the first to have electricity in town. Swaine became a local leader in business and politics and enthusiastically participated in theatrical productions. But he died suddenly in April 1897, leaving a widow and two young daughters (two sons had died very young), not

“In the land where the self-made man was the measure of success, this young man found success on every side, in business and also his personal life.”

as adept as he perhaps was at running the operation. The administrator of his estate, local banker Robert Hemphill, published in the newspaper that he would continue to honor commitments by buying barley and manufacturing malt, but that must have been a temporary solution. Fire insurance maps of 1909 show that a large portion of the Malt House was being used for the storage of ladders, no doubt for the young Michigan Ladder Company down the street. Anyway, Prohibition was a growing movement and it must have been obvious that the malt industry was ultimately doomed.

Within a few years, the property was sold to George Jackson, a local carpenter, who demolished the Malt House, planning initially to build two dwellings on the site with the bricks from it. Ultimately the bricks were used to build the Wrigley store on Michigan Avenue. Eventually one dwelling, a Sears kit home, was built on the lot in 1927 by newlyweds Frank and Kitty Lidke.

The April 13, 1912 *Ypsilanti Daily Press* described the Malt House as one of the

Interesting Facts about the Prohibition Era

By Gerry Pety

The prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and distribution of alcoholic beverages at the national level was to cease on January 6, 1920, through the passage by congress of the Volstead Act. However, Michigan was one of the first states to vote in prohibition and by 1910, 36 of Michigan's 83 counties were already dry and more than 7,000 saloons and 10 breweries had been forced out of business. On November 7, 1916, Michigan voted "dry" and Detroit was the first major city in America to go dry.

With the demise of commercial brewing, home brewing continued to grow in spite of the fact that police closed down hundreds of home brewing operations and restrictions were placed on the distribution of brewing ingredients. The emergence of home brewing was reminiscent of colonial times and techniques for making beer were relearned and improved. Making beer had once again become a family endeavor and Michigan and Ohio quickly became the center for large scale smuggling of ingredients as well as brewed beer.

It is estimated that 75% of the liquor smuggled into the U.S. during prohibition arrived along a route from the mouth of the Lake Erie and St. Claire Rivers, nicknamed the "Windsor-Detroit Funnel." Lake St. Claire itself and the Detroit River are dotted with many small islands which, with a short transit of less than a mile, were a smugglers paradise. Lake St. Claire was often referred to as the Jewish Lake because of the quantities of "hooch" being brought over the border by "The Purple Gang," a Jewish mobster group of the period.

Stroh's brought to market "Hopped Malt Syrup" with a label stating "Baking, Confections and Beverages with a Rich Bohemian Hop Flavor, Light or Dark." This did not sound like advertising for making cookies. Another popular item that came on the market was a "Bottle Capper" that could be used for the application of "crown" type caps used in the making of root beer. The machine sold for about \$2.00 and usually came with a large quantity of caps so consumers could get a head start on the new process. The directions that came along with the machine indicated the product was "not to be used with ingredients such as malt, dried hops, yeast and water."

Part of President Roosevelt's platform in 1932 revolved around the repeal of the Volstead Act which many feel really helped in his election. Eventually on that glorious day, December 5, 1933, it was again legal to produce and distribute beer nationwide. President Roosevelt was one of the first to taste legal brew on that date as brewers were allowed to "gear up" for production months in advance. ■

city's oldest landmarks in a story about its upcoming demolition on the front page, right next to coverage of the death of Clara Barton, another icon of the previous century gone. The article suggested that the Malt House be "preserved" . . . in pictures that is, as indeed it was before it was torn down. The story disappeared quickly as well

however, as coverage of the sinking of the Titanic eclipsed it on the front pages of successive newspapers. Largeness alone could prevent neither a new ship nor old landmark from disappearing into history.

All information has been gleaned from the resources of the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives and Bob and Jan Anschuetz. ■

Community Education at Eastern Michigan University

By Jack D. Minzey

Community education is an educational concept that became prominent in the early 1900's in several places throughout the United States, and indeed, throughout the world. It fostered programs which combined recreational activities with the public schools. Outstanding programs developed in Arthursdale, West Virginia; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Mississippi (The Tennessee Valley Authority); Georgia; Kentucky; Nambe, New Mexico; and the Philippine Islands. Professionals associated with this movement included John Dewey, Elsie Clapp, Calos Johnson, Maurice Seay, Dorothea Enderis, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

One of these professionals was a man named Wilbur Bowen. Professor Bowen was a faculty member at Michigan State Normal College, and he wove this concept into the classes which he taught and into his writings. In 1924, Bingo Brown, the dean of men and another legend at Michigan State Normal College, persuaded his brother in law, Frank Manley, to come to Ypsilanti to get his college education. Frank wanted to be a physical education teacher, and his choice of profession put him in constant contact with Professor Bowen and his philosophies. When Frank graduated in 1927, he was given a job in the Flint School System as a physical education teacher where he continued to promote the community education ideas which he had learned from Professor Bowen.

One of the people intrigued by Frank's ideas was Charles Stewart Mott. Mr. Mott was an influential industrialist and a politician. Fortuitously, he was also the



Professor Wilbur Bowen



Frank Manley



Jack Minzey



Donna Schmitt



Jackie Tracy



John Fallon

largest stockholder in General Motors and was thus able to add financial assistance to Frank's ideas. He originally gave Frank \$6,000 to develop community education in six elementary schools. This eventually led to placing a full time community educator in each of the Flint schools and the development of the premier community education laboratory in the world. The concept grew from one of recreation to changes in the school curriculum, maximum use of school facilities by the community, programs for adults, coordination of community agencies and the development of community councils. Soon, over 16,000 people a year were coming to visit the Flint Program.

Frank realized that there was a need for professional training of his community school directors, and he turned to his alma mater to provide this training. In 1950, Michigan State Normal College hired Dr. Fred Totten for the express purpose of providing graduate training

for the directors in Flint. Flint was designated as a residential center, and in the ensuing years, every community school director in Flint possessed a graduate degree from MSNC.

However, as community education began to expand to other communities across the country, Flint began to lose its trained directors. Frank then conceived the idea of a leadership-training program which would involve seven Michigan Universities with Eastern Michigan University being one of these. The plan was to identify 50 people who demonstrated great leadership skills and bring them to Flint where they could spend a year earning advanced degrees and also becoming community education experts. The idea was that then, as these young people pursued successful careers in education, they would practice their professions based on the principles of community education. To make this program attractive, the stipend for the participants was equal to

the salary of a school superintendent. This program, dubbed the Mott Intern Program, gained national renown and employers lined up to hire its graduates

Frank's next idea was to franchise community education through universities across the country. These community education centers were to develop programs regarding dissemination, implementation, and training related to community education, and they were to have seed monies for the purpose of financially motivating school districts, universities and state departments of education to get involved in community education. There were eight original centers of which Eastern was one. This number was later increased to sixteen and included institutions such as the University of Oregon, Arizona State, University of New Mexico, Texas A and M, University of Connecticut, University of Virginia, Florida Atlantic, and the University of Alabama. This number was then expanded into cooperative centers with each original center given the responsibility to develop satellite centers. Eastern's territory for development was southeastern Michigan, northern Ohio, Pennsylvania and western New York, and the cooperating centers which Eastern developed were Kent State, Syracuse, Indiana University (Pa.), Shippensburg, and the Departments of Education in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

One of the driving forces in perpetuating Eastern's role in community education was President Harold Sponberg. He used his influence to convince the Mott Foundation to take the community education center at Oakland University and give it to Eastern. He strongly believed in the community education philosophy and willingly gave his time to community education activities, including giving speeches at several community education conferences. He used university resources to manage Mott funds for their internship and other training programs. He also financially supported the National Community Education Association, especially during the year when the federal tax laws caused the Mott Foundation to withdraw their financial support. It is true that President Sponberg visualized a Mott-Manley College of Education

building, but he was truly a community educator at heart.

Legendary Accomplishments

Eastern's role in community education then became legend, including the following accomplishments.

- Literally hundreds of school districts in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Canada were impacted by the Eastern center through in-service and training.
- Almost every school district in southeastern Michigan received service from Eastern and most received financial assistance.
- Eastern had the most sophisticated graduate training program in the country. In 1975, a survey by the Mott Foundation discovered that 75% of the Community School Directors in the U.S. had received their training from Eastern.
- Eastern was instrumental in getting a basic community education class as part of the Michigan Administrator's Certification.
- In 1972, Eastern housed the National Community Education Association, and Eastern became the first institution to take out an institutional membership.
- John Porter, the former president of Eastern, has served on the Mott Foundation Board for the past ten years.
- Eastern awarded an honorary doctoral degree to Harding Mott and to Bill White, the current president of the Mott Foundation.
- Eastern has employed more community education trained personnel than any other institution in the United States. That list includes Jack Minzey, Clyde LeTarte, Bill Kromer, Pete Clancy, Jim Satterfield, Bill Hetrick, Jackie Tracy, Art McCafferty, George Kliminski, Tom Anderson, Donna Schmitt, Orv Kabat, and Duane Brown. All individuals in this group have been Mott Interns.

Career Highlights

Some of the highlights of these Eastern education trained personnel, other than being on Eastern's staff, are:

- Jack Minzey - Director of the Center for Community Education at Eastern,

continued on page 8

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Continuing Education at Eastern Michigan University - *continued from page 7*

Board Member, President, and Treasurer of the National Community Education Association, board member of the Michigan Community School Association and one of original eight people involved in founding that organization, member of the Editorial Board of the Community Education Journal, recipient of two distinguished service awards from each of the national and state community education associations, author of over 100 published articles on community education, presenter of over 500 keynote speeches throughout the United States and six foreign countries, contributor to 11 community education books, and co-author of three community education text books, elected to the National Community Education Hall of Fame.

- Clyde LeTarte - Associate Director for the Community Education Center at Eastern, one of the founders of the National Community Education Association, first president of the National Community Education Association, executive secretary of the National Community Education Association, recipient of the distinguished service award from the National Community Education Association and co-author of the three main texts in community education.
- Donna Schmitt - Associate Director and Director of the Community Education Center at Eastern, authored numerous community education articles, editor of a book on community education, president of the Washtenaw County Community Education Association.
- Jackie Tracy - Board of Directors of the Michigan Community Education Association, first woman President of the Michigan Community Education Association, Director of Community Education for the Chelsea Schools.
- Bill Hetrick - Associate Director of the Center for Community Education at Eastern, distinguished service awards from the Florida and Mississippi community education associations, distin-

guished service award from the national association, Director of the Center for Community Education at the University of West Florida, Director of Community Education at Mississippi Southern University.

- Bill Kromer - President of the Michigan Community Education Association, Director of the National Center for Community Education, Director of Community Education at the Hazel Park Community Schools.
- Pete Clancy - Assistant Superintendent for Community Education in Flint and then became General Superintendent, Director of the Community Education Institute at Eastern.
- George Kliminski - Center Director for Community Education at Kent State, Director of Community Education at the University of Wisconsin, acting executive secretary of the National Community Education Association, recipient of the distinguished service award from the national organization, elected to the National Community Education Hall of Fame.
- Duane Brown - Director of the National Center for Community Education, recipient of the distinguished service award from the national organization, elected to the National Community Education Hall of Fame.
- Jim Satterfield - developed a community education training program at the University of Kansas.
- Orv Kabat - Director of Community Education for Rudyard, Michigan, President of the Michigan Community Education Association.
- Art McCafferty - Director of Community Education at Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Tom Anderson - developed a community education training program at Ferris State University

All of these people have gone on to other successes, which have included deanships, college vice-presidents, college presidents, college professors, and the Michigan House of Representatives.

Community education remained relatively strong at Eastern until about 1992. After that date, the programs and services *continued on page 9*

Patrick Roger (P.R.) Cleary

By Ann Cleary Kettles (Grand Daughter)

Patrick Roger Cleary, known in Ypsilanti as "P.R." arrived in Ypsilanti in 1883. He chose not to use his given name in this country because of all the "Paddy and Mike" jokes in fashion at that time.

P.R. was born in Nenagh, Ireland in 1858. When he was eight years old both of his parents died. His father had been stock manager on the Tuthill estate bordering the river Shannon. When he and his younger sister, Annie, were orphaned, the Tuthill family took them in and cared for them for two years. During these years they received the education of English children which was not available to the Irish. When P.R. was ten and Annie was eight, the Tuthills put them on a ship sailing to the United States to live with their older siblings who had emigrated years earlier because of poor job prospects in Ireland.

The two children landed at New York and then traveled to Hubbardston, Michigan where P.R. worked for a time in the lumber camps and later attended grade school in town. He managed to finish grade school in two years and then went to the area high school, again finishing in two years. After again working, he applied to attend Valparaiso University in Indiana where he studied business subjects, all taught in a most practical method. He became very proficient in penmanship. This was most important in business at that time for it was well before the invention of the typewriter.

After graduation from Valparaiso, he set himself up as an itinerant penmanship teacher. He would publish an ad in many small town papers in Lower Michigan, and travel from one site to another, setting up penmanship classes. In his travels, Ypsilanti struck him as a perfect place to settle, for he could also



Patrick Roger Cleary.

teach at the Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University). In 1883 he opened his first class with two students on a second floor space on the corner of Michigan and Washington.

In 1885 he had enough funds to build a new college building at the corner of Michigan and Adams. He developed a Board of Trustees to advise him and help fund the college. After he had settled in Ypsilanti and built his college, P.R. resumed his courtship of Helen Clarke Jenks of St. Clair. She agreed to marry him and moved to the house he had bought at 11 North Normal Street. They both became very involved in Ypsilanti business and social affairs. They also had four children, Charles, Marjorie, Ruth and Owen, all attended Cleary College and the Normal College, later each worked at Cleary College either as recruiters of students or teachers.

P.R. and Helen later sold their home and moved to larger quarters at 7 North Normal, immediately next door. Helen was an early and active member of the Ladies Literary Club. She also was a gra-
continued on page 10

Continuing Education at Eastern Michigan University -
continued from page 8

began to decline. Materials were discarded, the center ceased to operate and the training program was greatly diluted. It did appear that the community education era at Eastern was reaching its end.

However, in the spring of 2005, a significant thing happened at Eastern that enhances the reputation of Eastern Michigan University related to Community Education and portends possibilities for the future. John Fallon was appointed President of Eastern Michigan University. John is a former Mott Intern and was actually in that program twice. He was later the community school director at Galesburg, Illinois and was a Community Education professional at Ball State University, which was one of the original sixteen community education centers. He was President of the National Community Education Association in 1979.

His wife, Sidney, was also a Mott Intern on two occasions and actually was in the Eastern Michigan University cohort group. She holds an Eastern Michigan University Master's Degree in Community Education. She also served as President of the National Community Education Association in 1980. In addition, she has a wealth of experience in community education. She was Program Associate for Community Education in the Flint Laboratory which was involved in the training of community educators. She also held positions as the Director of Training at the Midwest Community Education Development Center at the University of Missouri at St. Louis, Director of Research and Training at the Community Education Center at Ball State, and Interim Executive Director of the National Community Education Association.

It is not likely that there is another institution in the United States that could match the record of the number of outstanding employees at Eastern Michigan University with a background in Community Education, and more particularly, have a history of training as Mott Interns. ■

Continuing Education at Eastern Michigan University - *continued from page*

cious hostess to Cleary students at their new home where college parties were held.

P.R. continued to grow his college, adding courses in bookkeeping, accounting, shorthand, and later typing. During the early years of secretarial studies, all students were required to take dictation from P.R. prior to graduation. He kept up with changes in the business world in order to keep his curriculum current. He met with Ypsilanti businessmen and corresponded with men in Detroit, notably J.L. Hudson.

P.R. served as president of the college from 1883 until he retired in 1938 at the age of eighty and planned a trip to his homeland of Ireland. He purchased three tickets on a steamship, but Helen was ill and unable to go. The trip was planned for the summer of 1938 when Ruth was not teaching and could go. With the other ticket left, P.R. invited Owen's wife's sister Elizabeth to join them. He shipped a Ford car on the same



Groundbreaking for the second home for Cleary College occurred in 1958.

ship so as to have ground transportation for their travels throughout Ireland. This of course was well before Hertz or Avis rental car services. He began the tour in Nenagh where he had been born, also the Tuthill estate where he had been cared for, then Dublin where he visited Eamon deValera, Prime Minister of Ireland and the legislative house where he was recognized as an accomplished Irish emigrant. He also traveled to England where he was introduced in the House of Commons. He was happy to go to his "home of birth" and reflect upon the opportunities life in the United States had afforded him. The

following year Helen died leaving a deep void in his life.

In 1938 Owen J. Cleary, son of P.R. became President of the College and served in that position until the United States entered World War II. Owen was requested by the Governor to form the "Michigan State Troops" after the call up of the Michigan National Guard in 1942. P.R. again returned to the College as President and turned his large house into four apartments in response to the housing shortage in this area created by the influx of personnel to operate the defense plant at Willow Run Airport building B-24 aircraft. He asked Owen and his family, Marie, Ann and Patrick to move into the apartment across the hall from him, as he was alone in a very large house and aging. P.R. remained as President of the College until the end of WWII when he again retired and Owen returned to the Presidency.

After His retirement he began writing a history of Cleary College and posed for a bronze bust which is now displayed at the College, now "Cleary University." P.R. died in 1948 at the age of 90, having left his mark and contributed greatly to the lives of many students and friends. ■

NOTE: For more information on Cleary College, read the History of Cleary College by Nancy Snyder, available in the Historical Museum Archives.



The original Cleary College was built in 1885.

Ypsilanti Tot makes a “friend” of His Hero!

By Tom Dodd

Bob Willoughby can say of Thomas Edison, “He is my friend.” *OCTOBER 21, 1929: Light’s Golden Jubilee saw such guests at U.S. President Herbert Hoover, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., J.P. Morgan, Madam Marie Curie, Orville Wright, Will Rogers, and Ypsilanti’s ten-year-old Bob Willoughby. Henry Ford had invited Bob Willoughby’s grandfather John Riggs to the ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Edison’s invention of the electric light. Edison had long been young Bob’s hero and grandfather Riggs took him along to the event which also marked the grand opening of Dearborn’s Greenfield Village.*

Willoughby was in the crowd of more than 500 that morning when a special steam locomotive brought Edison, Ford, and President Hoover to Greenfield Vil-

“...I can only say to you that in the fullest and richest meaning of the term, He is my friend...”

lage for the ceremonies. Bob knew the Smiths Creek station was the one where Edison had been kicked off the train for selling newspapers as a youth. The day’s festivities included a tour of the Ford Rouge plant. While Bob and grandfather Riggs ate with the public at the former Clinton Inn (now Eagle Tavern in the



A young Bob Willoughby on Collegewood Street in Ypsilanti.

Village), Edison napped nearby at Ford’s Fair Lane estate.

The Museum galleries were ready just in time for the evening festivities and the nation listened eagerly to the radio broadcast of the commemorative events. NBC Radio broadcaster Graham McNamee reported “*Imagine the checked effect of black and white evening dress, the brilliant splashes of color provided by the uniforms of military attaches and the great stylists of Paris and Fifth Avenue ...I have attended many celebrations, but I cannot recall even attempting to describe one staged in a more perfect setting.*”

After the formal banquet, Edison, Ford and Hoover went to the Village portion of the museum to the reconstructed Menlo Lab where they recreated the

lighting of the first electric lamp. McNamee narrated, “*Mr. Edison has two wires in his hand; now he is reaching up to the old lamp; now he is making the connection... It lights! Light’s Golden Jubilee has come to a triumphant climax.*” That climax may have been greater than McNamee and his listeners could imagine. A ten-year-old in that vast audience was about to meet his childhood hero.

As the museum’s Independence Hall facade was bathed in miraculous light, a plane flew by with the word “Edison” and the dates “79” and “29” illuminated under the wings. Museum archivist Terry Hoover tells of car horns sounding, lights flashing on and off, and the world bathing itself in electric light in tribute to Edison. Terry Hoover said, “*People continued on page 12*

Ypsilanti Tot makes a "friend" of His Hero - *continued from page 11*

huddled around their radios, plunged into near darkness, using only candles or gas lamps for light, waiting for Edison's successful re-creation as a cue to turn on their lights as part of the celebration. Small towns and large cities put on elaborate light displays."

"After the reenactment, Ford, Hoover and Edison returned to the museum to hear Edison's speech, accolades from Madame Curie and President Hoover, and a radio address by Albert Einstein broadcast from Germany. Henry Ford, not wishing to steal the spotlight from his friend, did not speak or allow photographs at the evening ceremony."

Grandfather Riggs, worked his way to the stage with his young grandson in tow, gaining access to his old friend, Henry Ford. Ford understood their quest and introduced the lad to the evening's honoree. "I remember that he seemed terribly old to me. He was wearing a rumpled suit and looked very tired. He cupped his ear to hear me and asked what I planned to do with my life," says 86-year-old Willoughby. "That was what older people



Edison recreated his first successful electric light at the Jubilee.

did when they met youngsters in those days."

Willoughby did not disappoint the honored guest. "I'm going to be a foot doctor," he announced.

And he did. Dr. Robert Willoughby is a retired podiatrist, two years older now than Thomas Edison was at the time of their meeting. Edison passed away two years after the Jubilee event (Thomas Alva Edison: b.1847, d.1931 - 84 years). Bob Willoughby at 86 years of age is still attending the morning coffee group sessions in Ypsilanti.

Archivist Hoover points out, "The artifacts and buildings Ford gathered for his indoor and outdoor museums, now known collectively as The Henry Ford, have told stories of American innovation for 75 years. They will continue to inspire countless generations to come." Bob Willoughby is still inspired.

Bob Willoughby and Gleanings readers can hear a recording of that night's words from Thomas Edison via the Henry Ford Web site: www.thehenryford.org.

"Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen: I am told that tonight my voice will reach out to the four corners of the world. It is an unusual opportunity for me to express my deep appreciation and thanks to you



A special U.S. postal stamp was issued to commemorate the Jubilee.



Bob Willoughby at 84.

all for the countless evidences of your good will. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I would be embarrassed at the honors that are being heaped upon me on this unforgettable night, were it not for the fact that in honoring me you are also honoring that vast army of thinkers and workers of the past and those who will carry on, without whom my work would have gone for nothing.

If I have spurred men to greater efforts, and if our work has widened the horizon of thousands of men and given even a little a measure of happiness in this world, I am content.

This experience makes me realize as never before that Americans are sentimental, and this great event, Light's Golden Jubilee, fills me with gratitude.

I thank our President and you all, and Mr. Henry Ford. Words are inadequate to express my feelings. I can only say to you that in the fullest and richest meaning of the term, He is my friend. Good night."

Bob Willoughby can say the same thing today when remembering that great event: "Thomas Edison? I knew him. He was my friend." ■

Report from the Museum Advisory Board

By Virginia Davis-Brown and
Kathryn Howard



Even though the Museum was closed during January, the Museum was very busy. The exhibits all had to be changed, the Christmas Holiday decorations were put away and it was a good time to inventory "throw away and save." Also, we conducted one tour during the month.

We thank Irene Jameson for lending her wonderful collection of small lamps to the museum for display. Most of us never realized there were so many different kinds. It is people like her who are willing to share their display that help make the museum so interesting.

One of the four new exhibits arranged was the new Underground Railroad exhibit featuring the Aray Family generations, Starkweather home, Day, Harwood farms and many others. What chances they took! Would we be willing to get involved today?

The upstairs showcase features a display of beautiful antique china and crystal. The display of antique china hand-painted French plates are from the Michael Miller Collection.

The antique amethyst fruit dishes are from our own collection coming from the Babbitt Collection given by Mr. and Mrs. Courtland Sneiker several years ago. The beautiful ambedina pitcher and the other pitcher of cranberry glass are from Mrs. Helen Marshall. Plate and cup and saucer china are all from our collections. The bobbin lace pieces were made by Kathleen Campbell.

The two glass tables on the first floor contain an exhibit of leather postcards and a collection of fountain pens, both from Kathryn Howard's Collection.

The Interurban showcase now features a piece of rail from the tracks on Washington Street dug up when the City redid the street in 2004-2005. These exhibits were all assembled by Karen Nickels and Kathryn Howard. The Valentines of Ellen Gould were displayed during February for the Quarterly Meeting. We are now looking forward to the Art Show during April 6-23. The "Art Show Open House" will be held on April 9 from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm. Thirty-one artists have been invited to display their art. We look forward to a wonderful show as in previous years.

"Lost Ypsilanti Speaks" will start on July 16 and run through August 6. This year we will feature all new sites. The Quilt Exhibit is a few months away but why not get it on your calendar now so you won't miss it! Last year we had over 100 quilts on display. Dates for the quilt exhibit are September 28 through October 15. If you have a quilt and would like to display it please contact us.

We are still in need of Docents. If you can spare 2-3 hours per month we will train you. You will have the opportunity to meet some interesting people from all over the world.

Several tours have been scheduled through April. Our new Tour Chairman is Nancy Wheeler.

June 3rd is our Yard Sale, so please bring your 'treasures' to the Museum. On or after June 1st you may drop them off at Bill and Karen Nickels' at 311 N. Wallace Blvd. where the sale will be held. Thank you, Bill and Karen.

You can see the Museum has been busy and we welcome back the 'Snow Birds'. ■

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News from the Fletcher White Archives

By Gerry Pety

What a weird and wonderful winter we have had at the archives. It started very cold and then became almost spring-like in January and February. Seems that everyday was a complete surprise either because of the weather or the people that came from all over the United States to visit. I know that the spring weather will bring even more people from distant places to our doorstep. Now we only have to convince our members who live locally to come and visit. We have even had producers from PBS who are doing documentaries about this Ypsilanti area. They found the archives rich in information and pictures from the past. So break in those expensive sneakers you got from Santa Claus and run on down to the archives! We are open Mondays and Wednesdays from

9:00 am to 12:00 noon and Sundays from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.

To say that we have been busy is an understatement as we have been inundated with graduate students from Professor Ligibel's Historic Preservation Studies program at Eastern Michigan University. It is refreshing to see that they are being taught how to think and deduce the "who," "what," "where" and "when" of ownership of some problematic properties within the city of Ypsilanti. This is not always as easy as one might think when studying the histories of some of these parcels of land. The recording of ownership and transfer of properties was not always correctly attended to at the time it actually occurred, and this has required the city to find answers to some issues 50 to 100 years after the situation occurred. This has been a terrific learning experience for these students as they work with primary records, surveys, and directories. Dr. Ligibel's students bring vibrancy to the archives and we welcome them.

TA-DA! Our antique 1890 and 1865 maps are back. Through the generosity of Dorothy and Rodney Hutchinson

they are now protected and preserved for generations to come, and they look *MAGNIFICENT!* As you may or may not know, they were experiencing some problems that only a professional preservationist could handle. Thank you Mr. & Mrs. Hutchinson for caring so much!

We will probably be selling copies of the 1890 map in a very limited, full sized edition, on special acid free paper to raise funds for other preservation projects involving our Ypsilanti City Directories. The directories are in heavy use every day and we have to come up with a way to be able to use them while protecting them. We will keep the membership advised through the "Gleanings" about the map and preservation projects. If you are interested in purchasing a map or would like to see what this is all about, come and visit the archives. We will be taking orders in March; the cost will be about \$50.00. We expect to make no more than 100 copies and we expect an early sellout. Call me at the archives at 482-4990 during regular hours or at home at 572-0437. The maps will probably be available in May and will come in their own protective tubes. ■

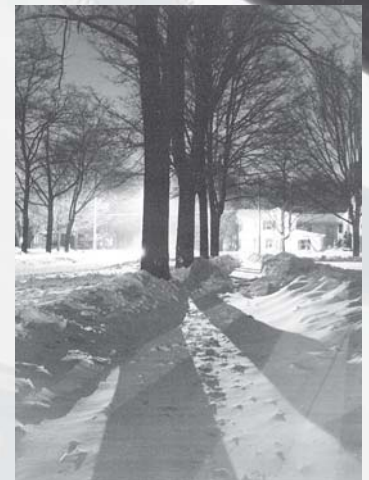
Finds

Fletcher White Archives

By Gerry Pety

Every once in a while you come across something that at the time it was produced was truly unappreciated or recognized. Such it was with a very striking photograph taken many years ago, sometime in the late 1930's or early 1940's. It was taken by what appears to be a "medium format" camera. A camera that either used a fairly large photographic plate of glass or one that used a very sensitive lens with high quality film of the period. In whatever case, the picture was captured by a Mr. Russell Steere, a neighbor of this 219 South Huron Street house address. The Steere family lived at 309 South Huron Street when this picture of a wintry scene was taken over 60 years ago.

Every once in a while when this picture is accessed by researchers in our "address file" at the archives, people ask if a copy of it is available. It is reminiscent of an Ansel Adams photograph in that it captured on film an instant in time that passes so quickly that we rarely stop to take notice. Seems that Mr. Steere did notice both the composition and effects of direct and reflected light, to stop what ever he was doing, and capture this alluring picture that is truly frozen in time for us to enjoy these many years later! If you should like to view the original or desire a copy, it is available. We can make an exact duplicate of the original at the Fletcher-White Archives for the astounding price of only two dollars. ■



Picture taken by Mr. Russell Steere in the 1930s or 1940s.

Edd Dykman and “The Handy Store!”

by Joyce E. Mammoser

“Times are tough, son. It’s time for you to get out on your own and find a job. Your brothers and I, we can handle what’s left of the farm.” Those were the words of Edd Dykman’s father back in the early 1930s. So young Edd packed his small brown suitcase and moved from the family farm in Fremont, Michigan, to Grand Rapids in hopes of finding something in the city. His sister, Marie, had told him that jobs were more plentiful there and that he could move in with her until he found something. It didn’t happen. He moved in with his sister but was unable to secure full-time employment.

Soon after New Year’s Day in 1932, Edd received a letter from his Uncle John. He

owned McClellons Five and Dime in Ypsilanti, and wanted to know if Edd would be willing to move south and manage the store under his supervision and training. Young and eager to work, he didn’t hesitate. He packed his few belongings in the same brown suitcase and, after saying goodbye to family and friends, was on his way.

Winter passed, and Edd learned. There were a lot of reasons he liked Ypsilanti, but the biggest reason was the young clerk at McClellons. Her name was Laura Deake. When he first saw her, she was wearing a gray skirt and a pink cashmere sweater. He found her exceedingly attractive. *Had she noticed him?* Edd thought. *He wasn’t sure.* And then on a warm spring day, her blue eyes met his, then quickly looked away. From that moment on he knew that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her.

Edd continued to be strongly attracted to Laura without really knowing much about her. Several weeks passed, and he could wait no longer. As he was leaving

work, he lingered by the cash register where she was checking out customers. She had a forthrightness and jolliness about her that made everyone love her. *What an intriguing lady,* Edd thought as his eyes followed the line of long black hair as it fell down across her shoulders. When the last customer left, he strolled over and with an air of confidence asked her if he could take her home. They talked for a long time. He was thrilled to finally meet her and could hardly keep his thoughts in order. During their courtship, the song, “I Met My Million Dollar Baby at the Five and Ten Cent Store,” was popular and became their song.

Uncle John liked Edd’s work. He had taught him a lot in a short time. The store had too much competition, though, with the flourishing S. S. Kresge Store nearby, and when an offer came to Uncle John to operate a store in Minneapolis, he put McClellons up for sale and moved west.

So, jobless again, Edd went back to farming, doing odd jobs for local farmers. Laura became a clerk in another store. Sometimes after work, while visiting with Edd, she would watch him pitch horse-shoes which was his favorite pastime.

Edd secured a job in 1937 with Tom Brooks of Brooks’ Market on Michigan Avenue. He and Laura were married that same year, and moved into the Deake Family home on Packard Road. He continued to learn about the retail operation as well as how to cut meat. About two years later, he was approached by a sales person from the local Bella Vista Dairy. He had noticed Edd’s hard work and lightheartedness and offered him a job. And so he began delivering milk to homes in the area.

Edd and Laura continued to save their money. In 1941, they rented a small neighborhood store at 955 Sheridan Street owned by a Mrs. Caderet. The store was called Waltons, and they renamed it The Handy Store. “Because,” Edd said, “it was handy.” At that time the area around the store was beginning to grow. It is the area known today as Normal Park.

continued on page 16



The Handy Store at 955 Sheridan Street.

Edd Dykman and "The Handy Store!" - *continued from page 15*

It was a time when the ladies would go shopping at the small store dressed in their finery. There were not any carts or baskets at that time. The customers would go up and down the narrow aisles, select their purchases and then take them to the counter. Edd catered to each person's every need, including home delivery. He knew the patrons and was well respected in the area.

One such customer was Phyllis Diller who lived around the corner on Oakwood Street. She was always the entertainer and in her outlandish way would ask Edd how to prepare the meat she was purchasing for dinner – sometimes she asked how to prepare the entire meal. When she left Ypsilanti for California, she never forgot the little neighborhood store and the kind family who ran it. If she was scheduled to perform at a theater nearby, be it Detroit, Windsor, or Toledo, Edd and Laura always received in the mail prior to the

performance, tickets for two of the best seats – and they never missed attending!

Edd made it a policy never to sell liquor of any kind at the store. The meat was always fresh. Whatever was left over on Saturday evening at closing time, was the Dykmans' Sunday dinner. Sometimes it was steak. Other times it was pork or beef, and sometimes both.

Edd and Laura raised three children during their years of running the store: Arthur Deake, Cora Mae, and Beth Marie. Art, the oldest, helped in the store during his junior high and high school years. Many of the neighborhood children never knew the family's surname. They thought Edd was Mr. Handy. Children loved to play whiffle



Laura and Edd Dykman.

ball in the lot behind the Handy Store parking lot. After the game they would go into the store for a soda pop, ice cream, or candy bar. It was a common occurrence to pass by the store and see six to eight kids on the porch at any given time. They were not privy to harmless pranks, and one Sunday after-

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noon in 1956, Edd had gone to the store to pick something up. And there, right on the porch, sat a bright red Volkswagen.

A few years later, in the summer of 1960, Janet Hughes who was sixteen at the time, backed her mother's pink Mercury station wagon into the store. Although there was not much damage to the car or to the store, Janet had to live down the fact that she was responsible for all the soda pops being knocked to the floor. It was even more embarrassing when her sister, Barbara, began dating Art and then ended up marrying him a number of years later.

The store was never open on Sundays. His church and his faith were an integral part of Edd's life. Reverend Shaw, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Ypsilanti

"Edd made it a policy never to sell liquor of any kind at the store. The meat was always fresh. Whatever was left over on Saturday evening at closing time, was the Dykmans' Sunday dinner."

for forty years, often said that Edd Dykman was the minister of the west side of Ypsilanti because of the way he conducted his life and his business. Beginning in 1949, the store also closed for three weeks in August for the family vacation. People knew that and accepted the fact that family was important to Edd and Laura. They were a family who loved to travel and never without a camera. Edd loved his camera and took hundreds of pictures every year. In their lifetime, they had been to all but four of the contiguous states in the U.S.

A robbery occurred on a June day in 1970. Edd was in the back room when a lone gunman entered the store. "Hand

over your cash!" the robber demanded. "Take the till, it's all I have," Edd mumbled. He then proceeded to flick a towel at the masked gunman. "Bang!" Edd fell to the floor as the gunman ran out the door. Edd dragged himself across the floor and to the telephone. He called the Police, and then he called Laura. He was found unconscious on the front porch of the store.

Laura had immediately called Art telling him that his father had been shot and was on his way to the hospital via ambulance. Art had no time to think. He grabbed his car keys and within seconds was weaving through traffic, honking a bicyclist out of the way, and screeching to a halt at the emergency room entrance. The nurses all gasped when in raced Art, clad in a tee shirt and under shorts. They quickly handed him a gown that matched the one that Edd was then wearing. The bullet had entered Edd's right cheek bone, went all the way through his throat, and lodged against an artery below his left ear.

Edd's life was spared. Every doctor at the hospital was amazed at his miraculous recovery. After six days, he returned home, but not to The Handy Store which he had purchased from Mrs. Caderet in 1962. Arrangements were made and the papers were written up, and in that same June of 1970, the store changed ownership. It then belonged to the Edwards Brothers. They owned it for two years and, in turn, sold it again. It remained open one year. The store was closed permanently in 1974 and then sold, torn down, and a new home was built on the existing foundation where it still stands today.

After the sale of the store, Edd and Laura purchased a travel trailer and enjoyed traveling around the United States in their retirement years. They continued to live in the Deake Family home (the only home Laura ever lived in) on Packard Road until 1994. They then sold their home and moved to an apartment in the Hunt Club where they resided until their deaths in 2000. ■



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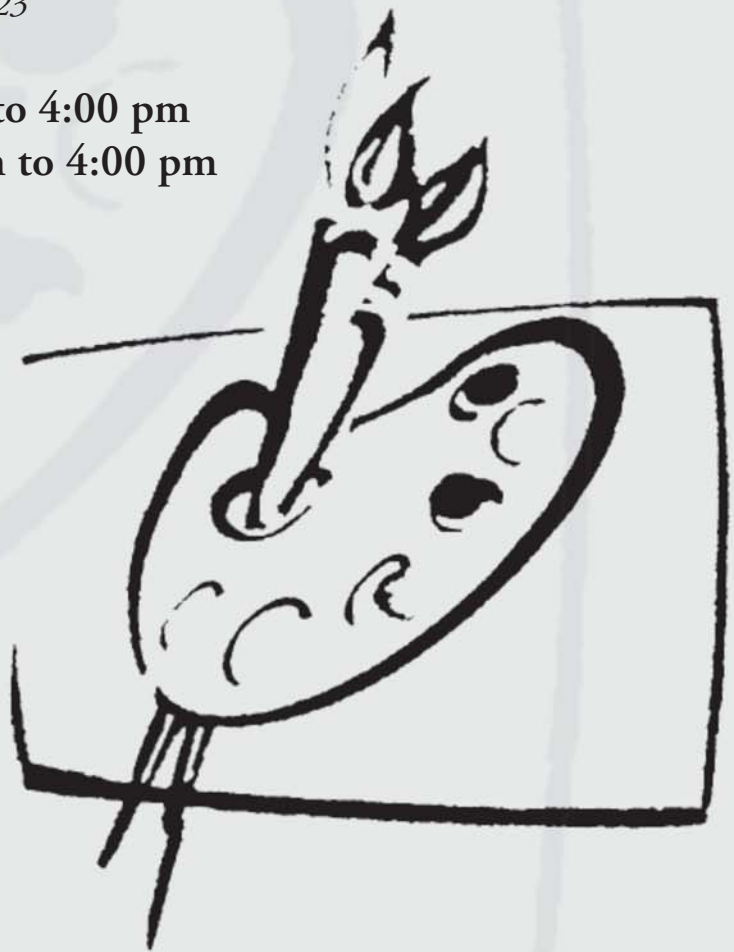
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The Norton Family - 142 Years in Ypsilanti - *continued from page 3*

As noted earlier, Frank Norton's brother Charles and later Charles' three sons Harry, Don and Glen were also masons who often worked on the larger projects with Austin and Frank. A grandson of Charles, Robert Norton, who graduated from Ypsilanti High School in 1941, continued the family tradition of masonry.

Frank Norton attended the Normal School and graduated with a teaching degree in 1889. He worked with his dad through the summer of that year and applied for and obtained a teaching job in Tucson, Arizona Territory. He had a teaching contract for \$80 a month and spent three winters teaching in Tucson, returning to Ypsilanti each summer.

During these years Frank was courting Lena Eisenlord, a fellow graduate of the Normal who lived in Farmington. The diary notes he rode his "wheel" to visit her there. During the summer of 1891 Frank built the stone cellar for his new home on Lowell Street before returning to Tucson for his last year of teaching. He arrived back home on April 13, 1892. That summer he built a small greenhouse, the beginning of Norton's Flower business. He grew mostly lettuce and cucumbers that following winter, selling lettuce for 15 cents a pound and cucum-

"During this time more greenhouses were built and the entire family worked various jobs planting, weeding and delivering flowers and plants to the area. There were many very cold nights when they worked shifts adding fuel to the furnace to keep the crops from freezing."

bers for 4 cents each to the local grocers, sometimes as far away as Detroit. He grew a few flowers and the next year added another greenhouse to increase his production. During this time he was still working with his father Austin and brother Charles. He also began to construct his own brick home at 735 Lowell Street. He was now able to grow more flowers and he hired a young man to



Frank's sons Stanley and Austin. They sang at churches all over town and charged 10 cents each.

work and watch the greenhouse while he did stone work. The demand for Frank Norton's flowers was growing and he sold carnations for 40 cents a dozen and roses for \$1.50 a dozen.

Frank married his college sweetheart, Lena Eisenlord, on September 18, 1895. They lived in Frank's newly completed house at 735 Lowell Street. Lena was in the first class of women to complete a four year course of study and graduated from the Normal at the same time Frank

did on June 26, 1889. She taught at Blissfield until her marriage to Frank six years later. They had four children, Austin, born July 4, 1896; Stanley, born June 6, 1898; Margaret, born July 27, 1900; and Dorothy, born November 5, 1903.

During this time more greenhouses were built and the entire family worked various jobs planting, weeding and deliver-



1895 – Frank and Lena Norton's home at 735 Lowell.

ing flowers and plants to the area. There were many very cold nights when they worked shifts adding fuel to the furnace to keep the crops from freezing. In September, 1896, Sarah rented two rooms to four young ladies attending Normal for \$1.00 each per month. The greenhouse was prospering and growing and Frank built an office for the business. Lena and Frank's mother Sarah did most of the delivering of flowers and plants. Many of the recipients of flowers were persons whose family names are familiar to this day. Wholesale products were often sent to Detroit on the "cars" as the interurban was called in the diary.

On Saturday, June 13, 1896, a diary entry mentions going to the bicycle races at the fairgrounds. Another favorite pastime for the family and friends was picnicking by the river up near the Paper Mill, a place Frank called Riverbrink.

One day Sarah rode as far as the Baptist Church with Will Meanwell. The Baptist Church at that time was located on the southeast corner of W. Cross and Washington Streets. From there she walked over to Depot Town to pay the meat bill at Smitties; then over town waiting to have a hat trimmed at Mrs. Martin's. The hat was 62 cents; the work on the hat was

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33 cents and Sarah furnished the trimmings. During another shopping trip in the spring of 1899, Sarah mentioned in the diaries that she purchased the following: bonnet, \$1.48; tablecloth, \$1.00; two dresses, \$1.35; two aprons \$1.00; gloves, 35 cents; perfume 35 cents; stockings, 34 cents; toys for the kids, 40 cents. She was an avid reader and made many visits to the Ladies Library for books and magazines. She mentions reading "Good Old Times" by E. Kellogg.

Sarah notes in the diary that on July 4 1899, the fireworks over the river caught a large oilcloth on fire and rockets and Roman candles went off in every direction. There was a mad rush to leave and many people were injured.

After a lengthy illness Austin died on December 2, 1905. The service was at the house with burial in Highland Cemetery. Eleven months later on November 5, 1906, after a short illness, Sarah died and was buried alongside her husband. With the death of Sarah went the wonderful writer of the diaries telling of our family's early activities and way of life.



1924 - Stanley, Ellen and Austin Norton in greenhouse.

The early 1900's were busy times for Frank Norton and his family. Frank was still working on occasion in the mason business with brother Charles but was spending more and more of his time in the greenhouses. In the meantime Lena had started her own business, a photo studio. An advertisement lists the fol-

"Stanley had become interested in orchids and decided to make that his hobby. He, along with son Austin and two others traveled to Mexico in 1941 to gather orchid plants. It was very successful as several bags of orchids were collected. He found others interested in orchids and with two other men founded the Michigan Orchid Society."

lowing services: *Expert Developing and Printing, Any size roll or pack developed for 10 cents... Prints up to 3 X 4 inches, 1/2 cents each... Prints up to 4 X 6, 3 cents each... Roll films for sale and cameras to rent, 10 cents a day.* In later years Lena became an accomplished painter. This hobby was cut short by blindness caused by glaucoma at age 69. With sublime courage she immediately took up the study of Braille. She soon mastered the system and was able to enjoy all the current books as well as the classics of literature. With the use of a straight edge guide devised by Frank, she continued to write letters and thus carried on a gratifying correspondence with family and friends. During this period she crocheted rugs, helped with mailing at the greenhouse office and had a role in the basic work of making floral sprays and wreaths, the colors of which she was never again to see. She also started composing poetry. Since she could not use a pencil for notes, Lena retained each poem in her memory and would later dictate to someone for a permanent record. These poems were put in book form and each family member is able to enjoy her writings.

Frank was active in the community serving as Alderman and also as the Mayor of Ypsilanti from 1912 to 1914. He also enjoyed painting as he and Lena shared their love of the arts together. To this

day, the family still enjoys many of these paintings in their homes. Frank was also skilled at taxidermy. He at one time had quite a collection of native Michigan birds along with some he had collected from hunting while in Arizona teaching school. He donated all his birds to the Science Department in Shezer Hall at

the Normal College. They were still there, in glass cases on the third floor, when Sherzer Hall was all but destroyed by fire in 1989.

Frank and Lena's son, Austin, was a founding member of the local Boy Scout organization in Ypsilanti which was formed December 12, 1910. The local troop made a demonstration of various skills. A remarkable event of this demonstration was the breaking of the world and scouting record for making a fire by rubbing two sticks together. This feat was accomplished by Austin Norton in approximately eleven seconds. In recognition, he was presented a specially ornamented set of sticks by Ernest Thompson Seton, head of the American Boy Scout organization. Austin also marched with the scouts in Detroit in September, 1911, as the honor guard for President William H. Taft. He was also an accomplished mandolin player and while in high school taught mandolin at University of Michigan.

World War I came along and Frank's and Lena's second son, Stanley, enlisted in the tank corps, serving in France. He returned home in 1919 only to have his brother Austin die of tuberculosis a short time later on June 4, 1919. Stanley's little sister Dorothy, died on August 7 from the flu during the pandemic of 1919. With the loss of two of Frank and Lena's

children, it was a sad time for the Norton family.

Upon returning from the war Stanley Norton worked for his dad and attended the Normal College where he met his future wife, Ellen Wallace from Bay City who was a student there. After graduating, she taught school in Capac before coming back to Ypsilanti after her marriage to Stanley on March 10, 1923. They moved into a new home at 737 Lowell Street. It was a beautiful, all stone house and was one of the last houses to be built by Frank. Stanley joined the floral business and it became Norton and Son, Florist. Stanley and Ellen welcomed the births of their two children, Austin (named after Stanley's late brother) on June 15, 1924 and Jean, on August 18, 1926. Austin began working in the greenhouses at the tender age of 9. He called himself the chief weed puller. His pay was 5 cents an hour and Stanley had to teach him the difference between a weed and a flowering plant. By the time he was 12 he had saved enough money to buy a beautiful new bike. It was a Montgomery Ward two wheeled bike with balloon tires and shiny chrome plated fenders. With this bike he was able to set up a magazine route. With the help of his mother Ellen, he enlisted the ladies hair salons selling Colliers, American Home Journal and a couple others. He won a prize for selling so many magazines. The prize was a No. 2 wood golf club called a brassie, the start of a life long love of golf.

In the early 1930's Austin and his cousin Tim Smith, son of Stanley's sister Margaret Norton Smith, worked with their great uncle, Charles Norton building a brick house on the northeast corner of Ann and St. John Streets. Austin and Tim were barely ten years old but could really pound the nails. They can now proudly



1954 - Austin and Dennis cementing the driveway at the greenhouses on Lowell.

look back at having worked with one of the men who helped build Ypsilanti.

Stanley's family all became involved in helping out in the greenhouses. Ellen would work in the flower shop and daughter Jean, while of high school age also helped out. Son Austin delivered flowers after school. When he was a junior in high school he took over one of his dad's winter jobs. The heat for the greenhouses was generated by burning coal. The hopper that fed the main boiler held $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton of coal and had to be filled every night at 11 pm, which would last until 8 am the following morning. This became Austin's job while he was in high school. The greenhouses used two rail car loads of coal every winter, and that was a lot of shoveling. Stan, as he liked to be called, was active in the community and like his father and grandfather served on the Ypsilanti City Council.

Stanley and Austin shared the job of fumigating the greenhouses for insects. It took 200 pounds of dried tobacco leaves every few months. The leaves were burned in flat round trays that were two feet across and which were hung in the greenhouses about 20 feet apart. They would begin in the farthest corner from the exit, light them as fast as they could go, and then quickly get out. All windows and doors were locked and shut tight to keep the smoke inside. One day a bunch of neighborhood kids, including Austin, tried smoking it. Boy, did they get sick! They all had a hard time telling their mothers what happened so they covered themselves by saying they had been eating green apples.

Stanley had become interested in orchids and decided to make that his hobby. He, along with son Austin and two oth-

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ers traveled to Mexico in 1941 to gather orchid plants. It was very successful as several bags of orchids were collected. He found others interested in orchids and with two other men founded the Michigan Orchid Society. He went on to become one of the national judges at orchid shows. The Michigan Orchid Society began by holding their first Palm Sunday Orchid Show at Norton's Greenhouses on Lowell Street in the early 1940's. This event continued for many years and became a very popular attraction, not only for local people but those from other areas.

On December 7, 1941, the U.S. declared war after the bombing by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, which changed the lives of everyone in the family. After graduating from Ypsilanti High School in 1942 Austin enlisted in the Navy, but was allowed to attend Michigan State Normal College for one year before going into active duty. He served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill in the Pacific. After discharge he married Dorothy Rice, his high school sweetheart. At this time he decided to go into business with his dad. He and Dorothy left for East Lansing where he enrolled at Michigan State University in the horticulture program. While there a son Dennis was born on May 25, 1947. That same year Frank Norton at age 80, the founder of Norton's Flowers, passed away. Lena Norton, due to her blindness, moved in with Stanley and Ellen who alternated with Lena's daughter Margaret Smith in caring for her. Still sharp of mind she died in 1956 at age 86.

Upon college graduation Austin, Dorothy and young son Dennis moved back to Ypsilanti into grandfather Frank's house on Lowell Street. A year later March 7, 1950 daughter Cynthia was born. After Austin returned to work in the business, Stanley had more time and became a well known figure at orchid shows throughout the country. One of the highlights of their travels was their trip to the International Orchid Convention in Bangkok where they were invited to a banquet at the royal palace.

In the 1950's it became evident that Eastern Michigan University was going to need the Lowell Street property for expansion of their campus. Norton's bought land on Washtenaw Avenue and in 1959 a store and two greenhouses were constructed and the business moved to its new location. The annual Palm Sunday orchid show continued to be a major attraction. At the age of 5 Cindy became an integral part of the family business. During the orchid shows she delighted customers and orchid lovers by greeting them as they arrived at the exhibit and offering paper and pencils to enter the prize drawing.

As young children both Dennis and Cindy have fond memories of traveling with their Dad in the big panel truck filled with geranium plants to the Eastern Market in Detroit. They left at 4 o'clock in the morning and a hot dog breakfast was the fare of the day. They grew up working in the family business. Through the years they pulled weeds, planted seedlings, learned floral design and were indispensable during holidays when the working hours were long. Austin served the community in many ways including his election to the Ypsilanti Board of Education. Austin's wife, Dorothy, having a Cleary College education in business took over the office management plus helping at the retail end when needed.

After graduating from Eastern Michigan University, Dennis entered the business. He already had much knowledge of the floral business working holidays and summers through his school years.

Through high school and after graduating from EMU Cindy entered and learned all the demands of the business: bookkeeping, sales clerk, greenhouse care, floral designer, wedding manager, gift ware buyer, managing day to day operations and becoming Vice President and partner with brother Dennis. Cindy left the business in 1991 when she relocated near New Orleans. Dennis was now sole proprietor of Norton's Flowers in as much as Austin and Dorothy had both retired.

During this time Ellen became ill and for several years Stanley lovingly cared for her. She died one day short of her 87th birthday

in 1988. The family had lost a wife, a mother, grandmother and great grandmother, and a great corsage maker. Stanley missed her but continued on living a full life with family and friends. He jokingly said he was just "hanging on by a thread" but the thread was pretty strong. In 1991 at age 93 the thread broke. The greatly loved patriarch of the family was gone.

Dennis had visions of broadening the scope of the family businesses by developing the Washtenaw Avenue property, and went on with perseverance and hard work to oversee the development of Fountain Square Shops consisting of 14 additional stores. The family still owns that shopping center. During the early 80s Dennis and a friend founded the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run which has become a great attraction for locals and tourists. Currently he is president of Michigan Aerospace Foundation, which is raising funds to rebuild the museum that was tragically destroyed by fire. Through his working years, Dennis volunteered and served on the Board of Directors for many local organizations including many Yp-

silanti Chamber of Commerce Committees, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum Board, the Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce Board, Ann Arbor Visitors and Convention Bureau Board, Ypsilanti Jaycees and many others.

Dennis married, and two children, Sheri and David, both worked in the business during their school years, Sheri in the office and sales and David in delivery and other jobs. Since Dennis's children had moved on to other endeavors and would not be continuing in the floral business, he retired and sold the business in 2001, leaving it in the hands of four of the former managers of Norton's, people who had been his managers for many years. So Norton's Flowers, the business Frank Norton started in 1892 continues on today in three locations, Washtenaw Avenue, Westgate Mall and Plymouth Road mall.

Over the years, the Norton's watched as what was the old Normal College and is now Eastern Michigan University grew up and eventually encompassed the old

homestead. After having been located on Lowell Street for 100 years since 1867, all that remains on the original property where the greenhouses and homes were is a large walnut tree planted by Stanley in 1923 when he moved into his new stone house with his bride Ellen.

Austin and Dorothy, retired since 1987, have lived on the west side of Ypsilanti since 1965. Cindy, who presently works for Pfizer, moved back to Ypsilanti a number of years ago and also resides on the west side of Ypsilanti. She is presently on the Board of Directors of the Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce.

Dennis and his wife Carol live just north of Ypsilanti, not far from the original Knapp farm on Superior Road where the first Austin Norton quarried stone for his mason business in the late 1800s. They have three children, Sheri, David and Michelle, and six grandchildren, Kaitlyn, Austin, Taylor, Spencer, Alexa and Sydney. It is fitting that David's sons, Austin age 11, and Spencer age 9, are proudly carrying on the Norton name. ■

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