

# YPSILANTI GLEANINGS

## PAST SCENES and OLD TIMES

### YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY~ PUBLICATION~



Ypsilanti Historical Museum  
~ 220 N. Huron Street ~

September 1974  
CHOCOLATE SHOP & DRUG STORE

September 1974

"NEWSLETTER"

"MEMORY IS THE DIARY THAT WE  
ALL CARRY ABOUT WITH US"

Fr: "The Importance of Being Earnest" Act 11

By: Oscar Wilde (1856-1900)

Nothing can stop change - we all know that. But pleasant memories are with us always. This brief reminder is for all of those people who can still taste in their minds the bittersweet chocolate sundaes from "Gaudy's Chocolate Shop" and the chocolate or coffee ice cream sodas from Weinmann-Matthews Drug Store. And for those who never gathered in the drug store after a football game nor ever browsed through Gaudy's - a short vignette of the past.

\*\*\*\*\*

George Milne Gaudy (1864 Stratford, Canada - 1944 Alma Masonic Home Michigan), came to Ypsilanti when he was eighteen and learned the bakery business from Horatio Haskin at 28 East Cross Street. By 1886 Gaudy had set up his own business at 17 West Congress, (Michigan Ave.) - "Star Bakery" where, according to the 1888 City Directory, he was the Manufacturer and Dealer in ice cream, bread, cakes, pastry, confectionery, fruits, nuts, cigars, etc., which also announced "Ordered Work a Speciality" and "promised delivery daily to all parts of the city". In the early 1900's the location of the shop was at 119 Michigan, (the present location of the Terry Bakery), and prior to World War I a final move was made to 24 North Washington.

A recent letter from Mrs. Annie Laurie Lambie Melvin who once worked in the Bakery and Chocolate Shop, gives a fine picture of its operations:

When I first started in Gaudy's they were on Michigan Ave. and they had a bakery on one side of the store and candy on the other, with a space for ice cream in the back corner with an old fashioned soda fountain. That was back in the day when bread was five cents a loaf or six loaves for a quarter. I don't think Frank Smith ever dipped chocolates, he and Mr. Gaudy made all the candy, ice creams, salted peanuts and punch for the parties. Frank Smith and his wife Margaret served as butler and maid or whatever you called them at the best parties. I was also there when he took the store on Washington Street. (This last move was made about 1914 for

in 1905 the building was occupied by Edward B. Dolson, bicycles and sporting goods and automobiles. Mr. Dolson was the first local representative for Ford Automobiles succeeded by Schaible and Wiedman and in 1912 by Pickles & Bassett, Plumbers and the Washtenaw Home Telephone Co.) There was a vacant lot north of the store full of burdocks, tin cans and rats, lots of rats. Next door was a fruit market and next to that Jay Moore, (J.E. Moore Furniture Store).

During the time the store was located on Michigan the name was changed from "Bakery" to "Gaudy Chocolate Shop" in recognition of the candy making which won state-wide renown for the Gaudy name.

George Milne Gaudy was a member of the Masonic Lodge and served in public office for many years: Mayor (1904-05), Councilman, Assessor, Supervisor and Relief Administrator and Postmaster for nine years (1925-34).

The following hand written letter was received by George M. Gaudy when he was Mayor.

To: Geo. M. Gaudy, Esquire  
Mayor of the City of Ypsilanti  
Michigan, U.S.A.

Dear Sir:

The members of the family, Ypsilanti, including my wife and myself, are deeply sensible to the kindest invitation addressed to them by the City of Ypsilanti, celebrating the home coming of the first residents on the twenty first day of June 1905.

Fully appreciating the honors addressed to the memory of our illustrious grand-uncle, Demetrious Ypsilanti. They beg you to receive with their deepest thanks their truest and most heartfelt wishes for the welfare and prosperity of the city that bears their name, to which they feel themselves bound by a link of most cordial sympathy.

They consider it as an honor to write their names as expressing their feelings.

With great respect, we have the honor to be, sir,

Very truly yours,  
(signed)  
Immanuel Prince Ypsilanti  
Theodore Prince Ypsilanti  
Johanna Ypsilanti Countess Pappenheim  
Chanelee Ypsilanti Princess Schillingsphinz

Podictiact, May 24th, 1905  
Bohemia, Austria

The short notice following, "Ypsilanti Commercial" July 27, 1888, is proof

that the Gaudy Bakery Shop was one of the hubs of city communication.

Hugh Locke says he wishes those who owe him for popcorn would call at G.M. Gaudy's and settle before he makes a special collection; he says there is about \$12.00 due him and he will put some names on the dead beat list before long.

When Harold, one of the Gaudy's sons returned from the war he took over the operation of the business. Marjorie Lambie Troutveter, Ann Dusbiber and others prepared the popular lunches. Harold Gaudy died in December of 1941 and his wife, Ellen, assumed operation of the store until May of 1944. The location of the store at 24 North Washington was taken over by the Ypsilanti Art Shop operated by Miss Helen T. Sellman.

\*\*\*\*\*

The very best history of the WEINMANN-MATTHEWS DRUG STORE which we have is one recently sent to us by Mr. Fred H. Weinmann from his home in Florida:

In 1898 my father, Mr. E. Fred Weinmann, and Mr. Ernest D. Matthews entered the drug business with their first store at 29 North Huron. In 1903 they incorporated with C.W. Rogers who owned and operated the Erastus Sampson Drug Store at 118 West Congress, as it was known at that time. (Erastus Sampson owned and operated a Drug Store as early as 1842 in a frame structure at this location which was destroyed in the tremendous fire of March 1851. The Sampson Drug Store opened again that year for business in a new brick building at the same location. A drug store occupied this building which is still standing for the next 120 years.) The store was then re-named Rogers, Weinmann and Matthews. In those days, in addition to being a drug store, they handled paints, wallpaper and newspapers. For many years the store was opened at 6 A.M. to accomodate the painters and decorators. Another store was opened on West Cross Street and was know as "Rowima". (A clever combination of the first two letters from the names of the three owners.) Later Mr. Weinmann and Mr. Matthews purchased Mr. Rogers interests with the exception of the "Rowima" store which he retained.

In the early 1903 Weinmann and Matthews purchased a store in Saline, Michigan which Mr. Weinmann operated for a few years. At that time the telephone exchange was located and operated in the store. It was in operation only during store hours.

Sometime between 1912 and 1915 the Company purchased two drug stores in Jackson, Michigan which they operated for a few years.

In the late 1920's Ralph D. Matthews and Fred H. Weinmann joined their fathers in the enterprise. In 1927 Weinmann and Matthews Co. purchased the Mercer Drug Store located

at 36 North Washington; corner of Pearl and Washington. (This is the location of the old wooden structure known as the "Ark". John Miller, the photographer, bought the property about 1915 and replaced the "Ark" with a two storey modern brick building.) The two stores were operated until 1946 at which time the Washington Street store was closed and consolidated with the Michigan Ave. store.

I will add a few episodes that may be of interest to include in your story.

In 1903 the Rexall Drug Co. was formed by Louis K. Liggett. The Weinmann Matthews Co. held a Rexall franchise from that original date. As you mentioned, many people enjoyed the delicious chocolate and coffee sodas served at our soda fountains. Mr. Louis A. Weinmann, brother of E. Fred Weinmann, made the syrup concentrates in a mammoth kettle in the back of the Michigan Avenue store. We had soda fountain customers who we saw only once a year, on their way to or from the University of Michigan football games. At that time all traffic went directly through Ypsilanti via Michigan Ave. to get to Ann Arbor. Many older citizens may remember going to the second floor of the Michigan Ave. store to choose wall paper for their homes. For the Christmas season, starting on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, this same second floor was converted into "Toyland" until World War II.

It was a joyous time in which to do business in Ypsilanti. We hope that the merchants and business men at present continue to enjoy the wonderful community co-operation which we remember.

E. Fred Weinmann (1872 Saline-1948 Ypsilanti) worked for John Frank Smith whose "Smith" Drug Store was at 104 Congress. (Michigan) Frank Smith came to Ypsilanti after graduating from Dartmouth College in 1858. The Smith Drug Store made and sold ice cream -- a chocolate sundae cost you five cents. Weinmann was always active in the Community and a Charter Member of the Ypsilanti Kiwanis Club.

Ernest D. Matthews (Ypsilanti 1874-Ypsilanti 1934), his partner, was a great reader and always had the books of the new authors in the book section of the store on Congress Street. In that section you found Edgar Lee Master's "Spoon River Anthology", Zane Grey's latest novel and later "In our Time" and "Torrents of Spring" by Ernest Hemingway. Rogers, Weinmann and Matthews, truly three remarkable Ypsilanti citizens.

Sometime ago Arthur J. Howard told us that when a young man, he traveled on business throughout the western states and how the one thing he really missed in hot weather were the sodas he had at Weinmann-Matthews. Each time he came to a new town he would go into the local drug store and have a soda -- they were never as good. Finally, in a small town in Nebraska he found a drug store whose sodas were "almost as good as Weinmann-Matthews chocolate soda". Many times, particularly on hot summer days, we have heard other people say, "Boy, wouldn't a bittersweet chocolate sundae or a chocolate soda taste good right now!" The Gaudy Chocolate Shop and the Weinmann-Matthews Drug Store