

# YPSILANTI GLEANINGS

PAST SCENES and OLD TIMES

YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~ PUBLICATION ~

JUNE 1997



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Ypsilanti Historical Museum  
~ 220 N-Huron Street ~

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JUNE 1997

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Office of Ypsilanti Historical Society is at 220 N.Huron Street

THE MUSEUM AT 220 NORTH HURON STREET IS OWNED BY THE PEOPLE OF  
THE CITY OF YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN AND OPERATED IN THE PUBLIC  
INTEREST OF THE YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY. A NON-PROFIT GROUP  
OF PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZENS. MUSEUM IS OPEN THURSDAY, SATURDAY AND  
SUNDAY FROM 2:00 - 4:00 P.M. ARCHIVES IS OPEN MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY  
FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 12:00 NOON.(CLOSED HOLIDAYS)  
TELEPHONE (313) 482-4990

Dear Friends of Ypsilanti History: From Peter Fletcher

The annual appointment calendar is doing nicely. The 1998 version should be ready for our Heritage Festival and you will want to purchase your supply early. We have already run very low on 1997 copies and this remains one of our most popular projects during the year...with a new assortment of original Bill Shurtliff pen and ink drawings taken from historic views of this area they will sell out quickly.

Many people have once more assisted in cleaning up the Museum grounds and planted traditional flowers to enhance the beauty of our home setting. We can always use your extra few minutes during the Summer Season to help in keeping the grounds neat and tidy so feel free to stop by any time to aid in this worthy endeavor. If you have extras of some perennial you think would add to our botanical inventory please let us know so we may include them at the proper transplanting time.

The Civil War event in April was a big success in many ways and we had a number of new visitors as a result. We hope this will be an annual rally as Ypsilanti played a very big part during this remarkable period in American History.

The recent dedication of the new memorial in Washington D.C. for President Franklin Roosevelt should remind us all that Ypsilanti is a part of so many important aspects of our nation's history. How many of you remember FDR's visit to Ypsilanti during World War II? He came to tour the Willow Run Bomber Plant as part of the campaign to spur wartime production of much needed military items and our B-24 Bombers were a key winning the war. For 10 extra points tell us about the first Presidential visit to Ypsilanti. Hint: It was a long time ago.

Acquisition of Miller Motors in Depot Town by your Society now means this significant artifact will be in the public domain forever. It was financed by private donations and involved NO Society funds. Extensive planning and engineering work to preserve the structure are under way. The neighboring Automotive Heritage Museum remains a very popular attraction and you will want to encourage people to visit it on a regular basis as displays change just as they do with our home museum.

Big thank you's go to Billie Zolkosky, our archivist, who continues to shepherd things along for us. City Historian Doris Milliman is once more on duty on a regular regimen and assists many with history questions. Jack Miller is our fountain of knowledge on cars and Virginia Davis does stellar service heading the Administration Committee. Suzy Wood has completely revamped and streamlined our financial data as our treasurer and we enclose a copy of her most recent report. All of our your directors remain hard at work on behalf of your Society and we know you will want to thank them each time you see them at one of the many events set for this summer.

TO ALL MEMBERS

The time has come when we not only ask for help with the yard but we beg, plead and appeal to you, you and you to help with the yard at the Museum. The City mows the grass now but we buy the flowers and TRY to keep the flowers weeded and fresh. I'm sure there is several people (maybe one or two) that could come down and help once in a while. Any time from 7:00 A.M. until evening. Any hours would be helpful. This would only be for summer. Just give us a call at the Museum and we will see what arrangements we can make. I know you want your Museum to look nice. We do too. We would like you to help with ideas if you wish. You could take it on as a project, or help with it.

WE NEED YOU.

Please help !!!!!

482-4990 or if you want you can call me at home in the evening.

482-8443

Thank you

Billie

## DEMETRIUS YPSILANTI

### OUR CITY'S NAMESAKE

An account of the Life and Service of the Greek Patriot,  
written for 'The Ypsilantian' by W. A. McAndrews.

November 15, 1896

I propose to write for the young readers of this paper a series of short articles upon the name of the place they live in. Very likely you know that Ypsilanti was the name given to this town many years after white men had lived here. "In the year 1809 there was a trading post somewhere along the line of Huron Street." In 1823 there was a settlement on the river bank a mile and a half or two miles below Congress Street bridge; but there was no town or village or settlement named Ypsilanti.

Woodruff's Grove, the down river settlement began to grow. Then came the first white woman ever in the limits of Washtenaw County; there was the first marriage; there was the first baby girl, Maria Stitts, and the first boy, Alpha Washtenaw Bryan; and there the angel of death made his first choice, Daniel Beverly or as some say, Walter Oakman.

When I was a boy, I saw embedded in the gravel of the river bottom down among the woods and pasture lands, hew timbers, which Judge Chancey Davis told me were parts of the Mill which old Benjamin Woodruff built in 1824 to grind corn for the settlers of Woodruff's Grove. I doubt not that you have seen them, or could find them by careful search. Perhaps you have tramped through the fields too and woods south of town that were the scenes of the earliest civilized life of this region. Now the sheep and cows are the only frequenters of what was the main street of the village. Hardly a trace of what was the parent of our town only can be found.

Woodruff's Grove did not, as a settlement, endure. One by one the settlers moved away and no one took their places. The most of them came up the river and settled on the level ground in the neighborhood of the present post office. After a time they met together and chose a name for their settlement. How did they happen to choose such an outlandish one? How did they happen to name the place Ypsilanti?

I presume you have heard that question asked a good a many times. There have been several different versions of the story of naming this place. One of the most absurd ones I can remember was told in school when I was a boy. It was said that old Major Woodruff and his friend, Bryan, came up from "The Grove" looking for good land. When they came to this neighborhood, the white men, each of whom had one Indian guide, separated. When they came to his neighborhood, Colonel Godfroy the trader and others in a post-and stockade. One mile by speedometer on Grove and Michigan Avenue from the marker at Grove and Prospect Streets(intersection). Three

quarters of a mile measured on the map in a straight line from Woodruff's grove to the bridge over the Huron River. The white men, each of whom had one Indian guide, separated. Major Woodruff and his guide who was a cross-eyed Indian, coming up the west bank of the stream, while Bryan and his Indian came up the East bank. Whoever found spring water first and a good place to camp was to notify the other by a shout. Pretty soon, when Woodruff and his cross-eyed companion came to the place where the mineral water Sanatarium is, they found a level spot and a spring of good water. Major Woodruff directed the cross-eyed Indian to give a loud "yip-ee", that is, an Indian signal cry, to the other party. "Yip, slant-eye, Yip,so slant-eye yipped and that gave the town its name.

I have heard also that when the first settlers came up the river with an Indian they looked for a place to camp and all at once the guide sneezed and said "Ypsilanti", which the story said, was the Indian word for good luck; and so they built the town on the spot.

At other times, I have heard that an Indian Chief named Ypsilanti had his wigwam here and so the settlers named the town from him.

I do not know how many more tales about the naming of this place you have heard, nor how many times you have been called upon to set right your friends who persist in describing an Indian origin to our city's name. Indian it is not. That is too common, our name is from a language that gave certain American cities the names, Athens, Corinth, Olympia, Monon and Ypsilanti; in a word Ypsilanti is from no other language than the Greek.

It is not hard to see how Greek names were given to Corinth, Mississippi, Athens, Georgia, Olympia and Washington. These are names universally associated with ideas of culture, beauty, and grandeur. A founder of a new city might very naturally call it by one of these names. Monon, the Greek word for "only", the only one", is readily understood as a suitable name for a town in Indiana; but Ypsilanti--what does it mean? and how did it happen to be chosen? This question with your indulgence, I will answer somewhat at length as I do not remember to have seen or heard, from even our oldest citizens, anything more than a very brief account of the word Ypsilanti and its associations with history.

If you had lived in any part of the United States in 1825 or for that matter in any part of the civilized world, the name of Ypsilanti would have been a familiar one to you. It was upon everybody's lips. Whenever Americans sat down together for a talk about the news they were not likely to finish without saying something about Mavrocordato, Marco Bozzaris, Colvetroni and Ypsilanti. For all the world was interested in the struggle of little Greece to free herself from the power of her oppressor, the terrible Turk. Mavrocordato, Bozzaris, and the others were the Grecian revolutionists who were leading the movement for liberty. The settlers who came up from Woodruff's Grove heard more about these men than they did of any one else and, just as at a later day, towns have been called Gladstone, Bismark, Blaine, or some

other name of a man prominent at the time, so our first citizens chose the name of a man at that time much admired.

The Ypsilanti family though Greeks, do not seem to have had their home in Greece at any period of their early career. You will remember that Greece ceased to be an independent country 338 years before the birth of Christ, when Philip of Macedon conquered her, and that she became a province of Rome. When the great Roman Empire extended all over the East many Greeks took up their residence in various parts of the Eastern Empire, and have, from generation to generation, remained away from the mother country. When, after hundreds of years, the Eastern Roman Empire fell to pieces and the savage Turks, who came from Central Asia, took possession of the land, there were Greeks living in great numbers throughout what is now Turkey-in-Europe and Turkey-in-Asia. In the city of Constantinople there is a great many of them dwelling in that part of the city where the light house or fanar stood. From their location they took the name Sanceriotes, just as now-a-days some people are called east siders or first warders or Ann Arborites, from the place where they lived. Any of the Greeks who is of such origin have the same terminations as Cypriotes, those who live in Cyprus; Sciotes, inhabitants of Goic etc. Among these Fanariotes or Greeks of Constantinople dwelling near the beacon light, there was a family whose name I find, spelled in various ways; Ypsilantis, Ypsilantes, Ipsilanti, Ypsilante and Ypsilanti. the career of this interesting family possesses peculiar attractions for us, because we hear their names so much; and so I propose to tell in detail who they were and what they did.

This articles has about 22 pages so I will continue  
it in our next issue. Billie

OUR HONORED FLAG

"...long may it wave..."

Children have crayoned it on paper with too few stars and too many stripes as their first notion of nationhood.

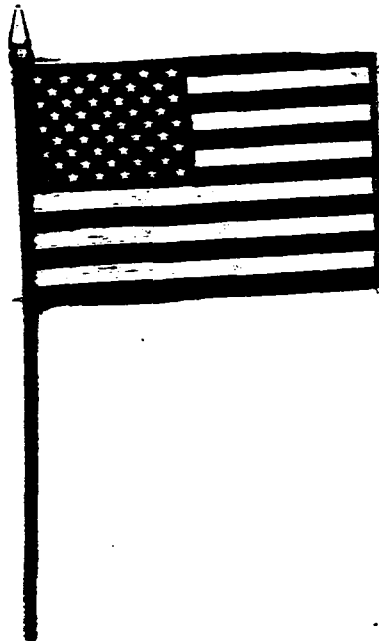
Prisoners of war have secretly fashioned it from scraps and rags as the center of their hope and defiance. Mothers and widows have kept it carefully folded as a reminder of honor and sacrifice.

Blurred like a hummingbird wing, it flies from the aerial of a speeding pickup truck in western Texas. Still as a painting, it hangs in the humid night air as the national anthem echoes over 40,000 fans at Baltimore's Memorial Stadium.

It is sewn on the uniform of the policeman in an Ohio town. It is printed on the T-shirt of a young woman roller-skating by a California beach.

It flutters beside a tombstone in a rural Pennsylvania graveyard because someone remembered. It hangs soaked in the rain on a Wisconsin porch because someone forgot.

It flies over battleships...and over car dealerships. It stands by pulpits...and hangs over bars.





## ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Have you been in the museum lately to see the new displays? If you haven't you are missing a lot. There are 2 new Civil War displays which are very interesting and several letters that were written in 1863 and 1864 to a soldier's family back in Ypsilanti telling about the war and how it is going. One says "some where in the woods near Atlanta". It would be interesting to bring children in to see how differently people wrote a hundred years ago.

We have wedding dresses again this year but most are ones that have not been displayed for some time. Don't miss the fan display in the Ypsilanti Room. There are some very unusual fans.

Each year the Administration Committee take a trip to another Museum to see how they do and get some new ideas. We went to Milan, Ohio which is the birthplace of Thomas Edison and the famous Doris Milliman and Marjorie Pearson. It is a lovely drive down there and a very interesting town with a lot of things to see.

In March Diane Schick and Cathy Kemling took part in the Business Expo which was a successful venture.

We have been fortunate to have worked with 5 students from Eastern Michigan Preservation Class on setting a Mission statement and also compiling a 5 year plan.

May 17th was the annual spring clean up and several people from the area helped clean the outside of the building. While on that subject we are in desperate need of people to keep the grass mowed and also keep the flower beds free of weeds. If you could help it would be greatly appreciated.

On April 19 we were open extra hours to accommodate the visitors from the Civil War Encampment that enjoyed visiting the Museum. Some found how difficult it was to go upstairs in hoopskirts. About 75 visitors were here.

The Docents Luncheon will be June 18th to honor our many friends that help keep the Museum open.

Heritage Days are coming up soon and this year we will need at least 100 Volunteers to help to assist for the three days. If you can assist, please let us know or you will be receiving a phone call.

Thank you again for your help and for helping in the future.

Virginia Davis  
Chairman.

Happy June and Summer???

I do believe we are the busiest place in town, new students, former residents and just everyone. New students are coming in for research work and that keeps Doris busy along with researching for information from inquirers that come in from some of our 50 states. The computer has been a great asset and I am sure it has a great future.

The Walking Tour sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce has been greatly appreciated by both the visitors and merchants. One can pick up a brochure at the Chamber Office, Museum and various stores in Town and Depot town. A little history of each of the 18 houses or businesses in the area has been put in the brochure.

We are looking forward to a busy summer. Remember next month July 20th is our 3rd picnic at the Museum. Bring your own table service, (plate, cup and tableware) and a dish filled with your favorite food to pass. The society will furnish the Meat and beverages (ice cream too). A good time will be had by all. If you are concerned with what to bring, feel free to call me at the office and I will tell you what I like.

If your friends or relatives happen to drop in, bring them, just call and let me know about how many we may expect. (Not necessary tho) It is nice to meet friends and chat with them during the dinner time and you do not have to hurry. We do live in a very rush rush time. Sometimes I wish we could slow down a bit.

Then we will be very busy during Festival time, August 15, 16 & 17th. By that time we will be ready to take our fall siesta. Can we rush it up a bit?

We thank Jennifer Goulet, Ed. Koryzno, Shannon Stumbo and of course the council for their cooperation with the City's budget that keeps us going. It is nice to have someone that is aware of how important our Archives and Museum is to our City.

We will be working with the Library to put some of our material on the Internet. A grant was received by them so this is something we will be working with this summer and winter to assist where we can. I look forward to doing what ever I can. Can you imagine us being on the Internet and will be able to give information about Ypsilanti all over the world.....Very interesting.

Another thought!!!! If you have not paid your dues, please do so, if you are not sure, give me a call and I will let you know. It costs a 32 cent stamp to send out reminders and this certainly adds up. We don't have too many that have not responded but some.

We are doing the Gleanings at the City Hall now, that is the printing of them. They have a big machine (it don't make coffee tho) and it can usually be done in about 4 or 5 hours. I remember

when we worked on it for several days. And then to collate them, staple them!!!! It used to take me at least a week. Now it copies, staples and spits them out. I am sure that the new way of doing things is improving. When I first came here 13 years ago(ugh) Frank and Rene' Burgess, and several others would help assemble them. We had a lot of fun, it was nice to have them. Things have changed so much. I guess all we can say is "remember the good old days". I think we had more fun then.

We have some very nice gifts that you may get to give on the spur of the moment. Diane and Cathy have kept us well stocked in the Gift Shop. Remember as long as the Archivies is open you may stop and check the Gift Shop out. We have the "History of Ypsilanti" by Harvey Colburn, Washtenaw County Atlas, Cranberry Glass, lovely candle holders, Ypsilanti crockery, Ypsilanti plates, some ball and jacks for the kids, base balls, toys of all sorts. I just don't have time to tell you everything, but there is LOTS. And it would be nice to see you.

Well I guess that is all my news for now. Looking forward to chatting with you at the Picnic.

Billie

## WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY

Over the years the Ypsilanti Historical Society has been the beneficiary of thoughtful and generous bequests which have made a significant difference in our ability to preserve Ypsilanti's splendid heritage and tell the remarkable story to newer generations.

You may find the following discussion helpful in your own plans or those of your friends and family as you are deciding what you want done with your estate.

Whenever people consider making or updating a will, all sorts of questions pop into their heads. Unfortunately, lots of them stem from a negative attitude. How much will it cost? How will I ever decide who will get what? Do I really have to think about my own death? Why do I have to do this  
NOW?

If these questions resemble your first thoughts, just remember this: a will is a good thing. Think of making or updating your will as an opportunity, not a burden. Having a better frame of mind leads you to ask much more productive questions, such as those that follow. Then you'll see that your will provides you with a privilege you shouldn't dismiss lightly.

### WHY IS MY WILL SO SPECIAL?

Your will is a way to be sure all of your property will go to those relatives, friends, and organizations and institutions you care about most, such as THE YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Without a will, the state will decide who gets what, without consulting anyone or considering the special needs and financial circumstances of your particular situation.

### BUT WON'T JOINT OWNERSHIP, LIFE INSURANCE, AND PENSION ARRANGEMENTS TAKE CARE OF THINGS?

Yes, up to a point. Remember, though, you probably have other assets to dispose of, such as personal effects, automobiles, your last salary check, an inheritance, or a pending claim or pension plan assets. And what if or and your spouse or other person who is the joint owner or policy beneficiary die in a common accident? Beyond that, too much joint ownership may result in a big tax bite out of the survivor's estate, something you can avoid with a good estate plan.

### WHAT SHOULD MY WILL DO FOR ME?

To begin with, your will lets you give specific possessions and amounts of money to individual and charitable organizations such as YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY. What remains is the residue of your estate, which you can then give in various proportions to your

spouse, children, relatives, friends, and charitable organizations. You can also set up trust arrangements through your will, and your will lets you choose an executor who is capable of settling your estate.

**DON'T CERTAIN BENEFITS IN THE TAX LAW TAKE THE STING OUT OF ESTATE TAXES?**

That depends on your circumstances. Under federal law, an estate of up to \$600,000. can pass tax-free. And there's an unlimited marital deduction for property left to a surviving spouse, either outright or in a qualified trust, if both are United States Citizens. But for gifts to your children, or to anyone else but a spouse, the value of the estate over the tax-free level (remember that amount is \$600,000.) will be subject to federal tax rates. The rates kick in at 37% and go up from there significantly.

**WHAT CAN I DO SO MY ESTATE WILL PAY AS LITTLE ESTATE TAX AS POSSIBLE?**

You can take full advantage of estate tax savings by creating trusts through your will. A trust provides you a way to manage your investments and provide income to beneficiaries, while at the same time sheltering your assets from estate taxes. Another superb way to minimize death taxes is to leave part of your estate to the charitable organizations you favor, such as YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

**WHEN SHOULD I REVIEW MY WILL?**

To be on the safe side, every three years. Better yet, look your will over whenever the answer to any of these questions is yes:

- Has your marital status changed?
- Do you have a new child or grandchild?
- Has a beneficiary died?
- Does your will fail to consider recent tax laws?
- Have you moved to or bought real estate in another state?
- Will new life insurance coverage or enlarged pension benefits affect your estate plan?
- Should you set up new trusts?
- Have you already disposed of an article mentioned in your will?
- Has your estate increased through your own efforts or by inheritance?
- Have your beneficiaries needs changed?
- Do you want to remember YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY?
- Is your executor no longer capable of settling your estate?

**ARE ANY OF MY MISGIVINGS ABOUT MAKING A WILL JUSTIFIED?**

Let's go ahead and address the "negative attitude" questions that we began with. As for the cost,

attorneys do charge for their experience and knowledge; but a properly drafted will can save you (in taxes alone) many times the fees you pay. The unpleasantness of confronting your mortality and dividing up your possessions pales when you consider the consequences of your loved ones' being deprived of the gifts you intended for them. And by procrastinating, you just delude yourself into believing there will always be time. The advantages of having a will in place that accurately addresses your goals and wishes most certainly outweigh any hassles or reasonable expense in making one.

#### HOW CAN I SET UP A WILL THAT BENEFITS THE MOST PEOPLE?

We recommend that you obtain the professional counsel of a lawyer who specializes in probate and estate planning. If you're considering a gift to YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY, we'll be glad to help you and your attorney design the best plan for you in concert with your philanthropic wishes, financial circumstances, and planning to reduce your estate and transfer taxes.

It is always helpful to have your attorney contact us about any questions or plans you may have for including the Society in your estate. Our gifts thus far from this source have all been unrestricted, but if you wish to designate some special interest or concern we would be pleased with that as well.

As we are a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization under the Internal Revenue Code your legacy will be completely protected and used to its maximum benefit to the community.

Please let us know if we may offer any assistance to you in your effort to remember the Society with a bequest.

Peter B. Fletcher, President  
Ypsilanti Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
RENEWAL

SINGLE \$5.00  
FAMILY \$10.00

BUSINESS \$75.00  
CONTRIBUTING \$200.00

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAIL TO: 220 NORTH HURON STREET  
YPSILANTI, MICH 48197

IF YOU HAVE NOT SENT IN YOUR DUES FOR 97 WE WOULD APPRECIATE

YOU DO SO SOON.  
THANK YOU

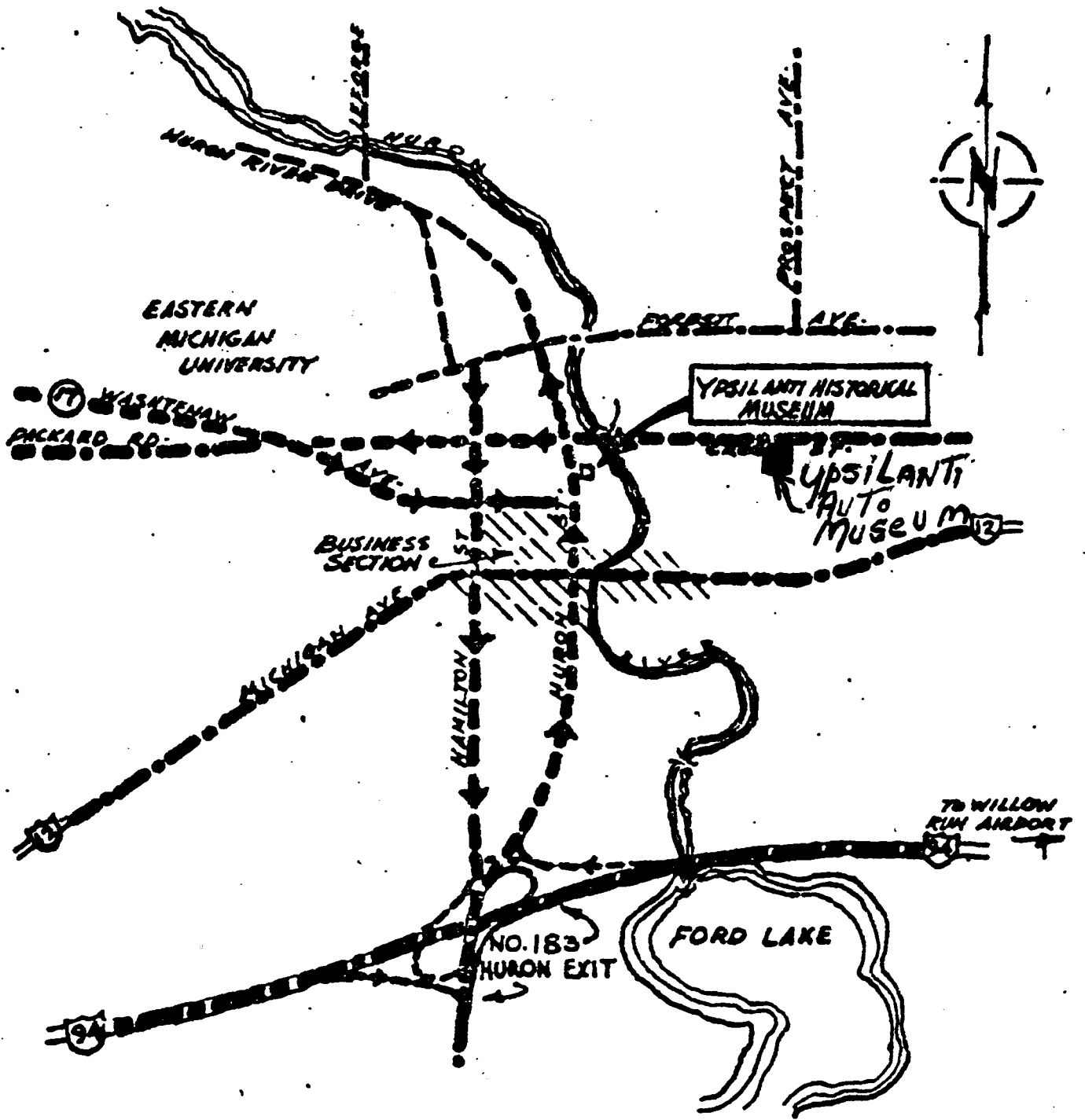
ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL 482-4990.

June 16, 1997

The Yard Sale on Saturday was successful. Special Thanks go to Bill and Karen Nickles, Paul Jameson, Ann McCarthy, Virginia Davis, and myself for all their work. They stayed the whole time. Karen gets two stars as she cut the grass. Our final total will be in the vicinity of \$400.00. We had a lot of fun, maybe next year you would like to help. We will be able to make room for you. So next spring be sure and check with the office.

Billie





## CITY OF YPSILANTI MICHIGAN

YPSILANTI HISTORICAL MUSEUM-220 N. HURON STREET

PHONE: (313)482-4990

DORIS MILLIMAN  
CITY HISTORIAN

BILLIE ZOLKOSKY  
ARCHIVIST

MUSEUM HOURS  
THURSDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY  
2 to 4 P. M.

ARCHIVES  
MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY  
9 to 12 NOON

*Atwood*