

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

YHS Museum & Archives

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



FALL 2011



"Keep Smiling" Brown in the goat-drawn cart with a load of children

"Keep Smiling" Brown *By James Mann*

Ypsilanti is a city with character; some say this is because it is a city full of characters. Be that as it may, one such character from the past was Wilber "Keep Smiling" Brown, who was one of the best known of local characters. When in the early 20th century ill-health forced Brown to give up physical work, he found another way to support himself, his wife and four children. He became an expert weaver of cane, rush and splint for furniture, as well as a grinder of knives, saws, scissors, and a repairer of household utensils and umbrellas. "He deliberately made himself a character to attract business, letting his hair grow to shoulder length, wearing a derby with a jaunty red feather and getting about in unusual vehicles," wrote Cyrd E. Lamb for a profile published by *The Detroit News Pictorial* of May 25, 1940.

"...he was one of the best-known of local characters"

Shetland ponies, and then switched to Rocky Mountain burros and finally four goats. To carry his business to the surrounding country and towns, he placed his goats in the back seat of an old car which pulled his wagon.

He made two vehicles; one was a covered wagon with his traveling workshop in the rear. In the back of the wagon was a small gasoline motor to power his grinding wheels. To travel the city streets, Brown used an unusual source of power to propel his wagon. At first he used

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Ypsilanti GLEANINGS is published 4 times a year by the Ypsilanti Historical Society, 220 N. Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

If you notice some changes in this issue of the GLEANINGS it is because Tom Dodd has joined our editorial staff. Tom is assisting with editorial duties as well as doing all the design and layout for the publication. Tom is a retired teacher of Art, English, and Journalism, and served as editor of the *Depot Town Rag* for over 30 years. We welcome Tom to our staff and look forward to his expertise in helping us continue to serve our membership and the wider Ypsilanti community with the publication of the GLEANINGS. I want to thank Keith Bretzius, who has done the layout and design for the GLEANINGS in the past, for his dedicated efforts in setting up the original design for the GLEANINGS. Keith has won several state level awards for his design and creativity and whose expertise enabled the GLEANINGS to win the 2009 Historical Society of Michigan award for "Outstanding Newsletter."

The Museum Advisory Board has done an excellent job with exhibits and the 1860s Civil War Exhibit has been extremely popular. If you have not seen this exhibit, please visit us before September 18 as that

is when the exhibit will close. Shortly after the close of the Civil War Exhibit the Quilt Exhibit will open and will run from September 25th to October 9th.

The extended open hours during the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival provided the opportunity for many out-of-town visitors to spend time in the YHS Archives and Museum. Many of those who stopped by were first time visitors and we heard many comments about how surprised many were about the wide variety and number of displays and exhibits included in the Dow House. The Archives was also very busy with out-of-town visitors seeking information about parents and/or relatives who lived in Ypsilanti during earlier times.

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

Ypsilanti Historical Society

220 North Huron, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

<http://ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org/>

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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 and operated by the Ypsilanti Historical Society. We are all volunteers and our membership is open to everyone, including

A Matter of Trust

On-Line Bookstore: Click to visit the YHS on-line bookstore on the history of

around Ypsilanti. You can pay for your order using your credit card and the secure "Google Checkout" system. Pick out a book for family members or friends and we will ship it to any address within the continental United States.

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For information about upcoming Society events, visit us online at:
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“Keep Smiling” Brown’s cart and Rocky Mountain burros in 1919

“Keep Smiling” Brown [continued from page 1]

Brown loved to give rides to children, and had made a phaeton, a light four-wheeled horse-drawn (or in this case goat-drawn) vehicle, with two facing seats. Brown had woven the seats himself from wicker materials. The pneumatic wheels came from an auto junk yard. He used this to add to his income by taking children for rides at reunions, homecomings, and other public gatherings.

“He early adopted the motto, ‘Keep

Smiling,’ and made it so well known it became his nickname,” wrote Lamb. “He had himself listed in the telephone directory as A. F. Smiling Brown.”

Brown was the subject of a second profile in *The Detroit News Pictorial* on August 5, 1945. Brown died on February 2, 1959.

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



The Friendly Feud

Many think the friendly feud between the cities of Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor is a recent trend. However, the following poem appeared in the *Ann Arbor Courier* on January 14, 1891:

YPSI & ANNIE

(A Romance of Two Cities)

Sweet Annie and Ypsi
For Years have been famed,
As possessing for each
Green envy, untamed.

Whenever old Ypsi
Would boast with a zest
Of the Greek in his name,
And the Gaul ‘neath his vest,

Fair Annie with scorn
From her Arbored repose,
Has on every occasion
Presented her nose.

And Ypsi so stung
By the maiden’s keen wit,
Has often retorted
In language that hit.

He’s called her red-headed,
And hinted that she
Was not always pure
As a maiden should be.

This thing has gone on,
With increasing hate
To the utter disgust
Of all neighbors of late.

But all ways have a turn;
There’s an end to their scorn;
And the incense of orange
On zephyrs is borne.

The two now are wed,
And Ypsi and Annie
Are billing and cooing
And spooning as any.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**QUARTERLY
MEMBERSHIP
MEETINGS**

2 pm Sunday,
December 11, 2012

2 pm Sunday,
March 11, 2012

2 pm Sunday
June 10, 2012

2 pm Sunday
September 9, 2012

**QUILT
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Ypsilanti History – It’s a Test! By Peter Fletcher

Turn to page 20 of this issue to check your answers.

1. Prior to World War II, Ben Burbank operated a retail business at 25 South Huron Street. What did he sell?
2. Before the days of municipal trash collections where were the city dumps located?
3. Name the local family who had a business making excellent chocolate candy in the 1920s and '30s?
4. Is Ferris Street named after the Ferris Wheel of carnival fame?
5. During our Civil War how did they know which communities to return the bodies of “unknown soldiers” to if they were truly unknown?
6. What branch of the U. S. Military was our local Armory on South Huron Street on Ford Lake connected with?
7. Which former U. S. President was the State Normal College lab school named after?
8. How many of the general practice Medical Doctors can you name who had offices in Ypsilanti before World War II?
9. Do you remember the words and the tune to the song used to promote the “Henry J.” auto built here?
10. What cruelty was visited upon some children confined to an iron lung during the polio epidemics of the 1940s and '50s?
11. Name in chronological order the fuels used to heat buildings during the last 150 years.
12. Give the prices of some common commodities in the 1930s, such as gas, bread and adult movie tickets.
13. Identify some of the popular national radio programs in the 1930's.
14. What was the common alternative use for auto running boards?
15. Give the first names of the men these cars were named for: Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Cadillac, DeSoto and Dodge.
16. When the wreck of the “Titanic” was finally located on the Atlantic Ocean floor by Robert Ballard, what special Michigan connection unfolded?
17. What peculiar event did Ypsilanti—along with the rest of the USA—encounter within minutes of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas on 11/22/63?
18. Ypsilanti was part of a gesture of common decency to Japanese Americans living on the west coast following the Day of Infamy – 12/07/41. What was it?
19. A recent History Channel series on World War II said the War was won in Detroit referring to the high amounts of equipment built here. Identify some.
20. Why did old fashioned telephone 3-digit phone numbers often end with the letter J or W?
21. Where in this area can you clearly read a familiar Latin phrase?

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

The YHS Family Bible Collection

By Sally Whiting

The first encounter I had with a family Bible was in my grandmother's cavernous attic in Charles Town, West Virginia. I was in elementary school and had begun to read voraciously, but I had never seen books like these before. Four of the huge volumes were resting on a dusty shelf. I was afraid to open or even touch them - for one thing, I wasn't sure I'd be able to even lift them. How could a book be so big? I assumed that they were filled with magic spells and that this confirmed my grandmother was, indeed, some kind of sorceress in secret.

When my mother later explained that they were Bibles, I was almost disappointed. Bibles? How boring! But she went on to explain why these particular Bibles were important to the family, and showed me the pages where my great-great-grandmother had recorded the births of her children, and the dates of their weddings. A second hand solemnly noted the date of her death.

When my mother later explained that they were Bibles, I was almost disappointed

This is probably a familiar story to most people who have found family Bibles of their own; too large for normal bookshelves, they end up stashed in an out-of-the-way part of the house and become coated with decade's worth of dust. In my grandmother's case, after she died the Bibles ended up going to my aunt's house after we'd cleaned out the Charles Town house. By this time, the books were not merely dusty, but covered in bat droppings. That anyone decided to keep them at all is entirely because of what was written inside.

I personally haven't looked at my own family's Bibles in years; my next encounter with such Bibles was here at the Ypsilanti Historical Society. I began volunteering in February, working with



The YHS Bible Collection is stored on the second floor of the Museum but all family information has been transcribed and placed in folders in the Family Collection.

University of Michigan graduate student (now graduated!) Liz Skene on a project to catalog the Family Bible Collection and add that information to the archival database. The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County had already made good progress on the transcription and cross-filing front, so in some cases all we needed to do was add the listing to the archival catalog.

The Bibles themselves are housed in a room on the second floor of the museum; 26 of the large family volumes are shelved along with a collection of other

books from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of the Bibles are from the mid- to late 19th century, with a couple of them dating from earlier: one from the 18th century, and another from 1662. Both are in German and likely crossed the Atlantic with their original owners.

Family Bibles hit their heyday in the mid-19th century in America. A quick browse through the collection here reveals that many of them were given as gifts between newlyweds in the 1870s. Some have no records written beyond the initial dedication; *[continued overleaf]*



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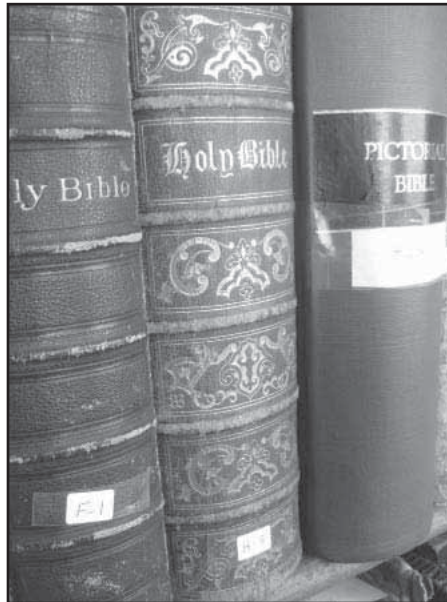
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The YHS Family Bible Collection

[continued from page 5]



Many of the Bibles are very fragile and would be damaged if handled by visitors to the Archives.

others go two or more generations into recording their grandchildren's marriages. The Bible for the Tefft family even has a 1980 birth recorded in ballpoint pen.

Safely stored in the museum, the family Bibles in the Ypsilanti collection are a great resource for anyone interested in local family history, even if the books themselves are generally not worth a lot.

Most preservationists encourage people to focus on transcribing information that was handwritten in the Bibles before the ink fades into illegibility. Preserving the book itself is generally a secondary concern; the information stored within its pages is far more valuable than the trappings. An excellent resource for anyone interested in their own local family history is the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw

County, where volunteers continually add transcribed information from family Bibles. Most of the records in the YHS Bible collection have been added to this database as well.

Family Bibles are a great find for anyone interested in their own family history

As far as actual storage goes, most family Bibles do end up stashed in bat-infested attics like my grandmother's. Another popular choice is the moldy, flood-prone basement. These are far from ideal conditions; temperature fluctuations and humidity will quickly warp pages and break down the binding, making the book very difficult to handle without causing damage. Many of the Bibles in the YHS collection have suffered conditions like this before coming to the museum.

Family Bibles are a great find for anyone interested in their own family history. If you're unsure how to protect the book against wear and tear, most preservationists would recommend storing it in a box and preferably not keeping it in an area of your house prone to extreme temperature or humidity fluctuations. But above all, be sure to make a note of what it is and record the genealogical information it holds, so that future generations don't lose out on this valuable resource.

(Sally Whiting is a regular volunteer in the YHS Archives and is now working on our Map Collection.)

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The Mystery of the Civil War Blood Vials

By Laura Bien

“Somewhere in the attic of the science building (now Sherzer Hall) on the Normal College campus there should be two bottles, one containing blood-saturated coal cinders and the other containing the remains of whole blood, the first shed in the Civil War.”

In the spring of 1951, Mrs. E. H. Lamb brought a yellowed newspaper clipping into the offices of the *Ypsi Daily Press*. She'd found it in a book where her mother had placed it. The clipping contained information so unusual that the *Press* ran a front-page story.

The bottles, the *Press* article reported, were from a Civil War confrontation in Alexandria, Virginia, on May 28, 1861. Shortly after Virginia seceded, Union troops entered Alexandria, including members of the 1st Michigan Regiment commanded by Orlando Wilcox and the 11th New York Regiment commanded by Colonel Elmer Ellsworth. Ellsworth spotted a large Confederate flag on the roof of Alexandria's Marshall House Inn. He entered the inn and cut down the flag. On his way downstairs, he was shot by James Jackson, the hotel's proprietor - who was himself shot by Corporal Francis Brownell.

The New York and Michigan soldiers there were mindful of the event's historic gravity. They cut up the blood-soaked stair runner and chipped pieces from the stained stairway as souvenirs. Today a piece of the Confederate flag that Ellsworth removed is in the Smithsonian.

“No one on the campus knows how the vials appeared at the college,” reported the 1951 *Press* article. The vials were said to contain samples of spilled blood from both Jackson and Ellsworth. “(I)t is assumed that some alumnus or friend, who was a member of the First Michigan Infantry at that time, sent them.”

Perhaps it was Brownell himself. After the war, Brownell became a federal pension examiner, whose work involved travel. In November of 1885, he visited Ypsilanti. “At the Follett House (a Depot Town hotel) was Francis E. Brownell, who avenged the death of Col. Ellsworth at the Marshall



Only recently scanned by George Ridenour from a glass-plate negative at the Ypsilanti Archives and never before published, this photo offers a rare glimpse of part of the onetime “museum” in today's Sherzer Hall, where the mysterious blood vials were thought to be stored—they may even be visible in this picture

House in Alexandria, Va.,” read a November story in the 1885 *Ypsilanti Commercial*, adding that he was here on official business.

Had Brownell donated the blood vials at that time, it seems likely that the Normal News student newspaper would have commented on the event. The October 1885 through February 1886 issues do not mention the vials. The chatty “Locals” column, however, printed other important news tidbits.

“Gum!” announced the October 1885 issue. “All the rage. Girls can not talk enough, so [they] resort to gum that they may exercise their jaws.”

In 1885 the college had a motley collection of bones, preserved specimens, antlers, and other bric-a-brac that it called a natural science museum. The December 1885 *Normal News* noted some recent acquisitions to the museum: skeletons of a frog, snake, and fish, some corals and shells, and a number of prepared bird skins, one from a hawk that measured forty-seven inches from wingtip to wingtip. The paper made no mention of the blood vials.

If not Brownell but another member of the Michigan contingent in Alexandria donated the vials, when might that person have done so? One likely time could have been spring of 1894. Brownell died March 15, 1894, and the newspaper clipping presented to the *Press* was written on the occasion of his death. The clipping was from an unknown, non-local paper, but it may be the vials were donated in his memory.

Once again the *Normal News* is silent on the subject, though 1894 issues continued to post updates on the ever-expanding museum collection. “Several hundred mosses and liverworts have also been added . . . Prof. Macoun generously added a package of ferns and lycopods.” Other additions included sedges and catkins.

The final place in history in which to rummage around for the blood vials is February of 1951, when the *Press* story ran. One would think that the *Normal News* would investigate the story, but the next issue that came out following the *Press* story doesn't mention it. The lead story revealed that celebrated jazz drummer Gene Krupa would perform at the upcoming J-Hop dance. Following issues are also mum.

By 1951, the onetime museum had been forgotten. Upon receiving the old clipping, the *Press* had quizzed Dr. Clarence Loesell, then the director of EMU science programs. Loesell told the *Press* he had no idea about any such onetime museum. Somewhere in time, the tusks, skulls, shells, and liverworts had disappeared, as had, for nearly a century, the name of the vial-donor.

A final search around the most likely date of the old newspaper clipping, Brownell's death in the spring of 1894, finally solves the mystery, in an April 6, 1894 *Ypsilanti Commercial* article.

“It was David A. Wise . . . who sent to the Normal, thirty-three years ago, the bottles containing blood of Col. Ellsworth and his slayer Jackson. He says he scraped up the blood from the floor, after the bodies had been removed, [continued overleaf]

Civil War Blood Vials

[continued from page 7]

enclosed it in the vials, and sent them to Prof. Welch, the Principal of the Normal. [First Lieutenant] Wise was the first man to enlist in this county." Wise is listed on the first enlistment roll taken in Washtenaw, along with 70 other men from Ypsilanti and nearby communities.

At the time of his enlistment, the Pennsylvania-born Wise was a 35-year-old Ypsilanti deputy sheriff living on the southwest side of town with his wife Sarah, his 6-year-old son Frank, and his infant daughter Alice. David and Sarah had married in Ypsilanti on August 8, 1852.

Wise survived the war, mustering out in the spring of 1862. He passed away February 4, 1899 and is buried in Highland Cemetery.

In 1989, Sherzer Hall suffered a devastating fire that gutted most of the building. EMU did not demolish the building but undertook the greater expense of rebuilding the 1903 hall. The restoration was a success. Wise's dusty old vials remains a mystery.

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CONTRAST & COMPARE: Have we conflated the brothers?

FATHER:

Constantine Ypsilantis

Born:

1760, Constantinople, Ottoman Empire

Died: 24 June 1816, Kiev, Russia

Nationality: Moldavian

Ethnicity: Greek

Known for: Prince of Moldavia

Title: Prince

Term: 1799-1801 and 1802-1806

Predecessor: Alexandru Callimachi

Religion: Orthodox Christian

Spouse: Ralu Callimachi

Children:

Alexander Ypsilantis 1792-1828

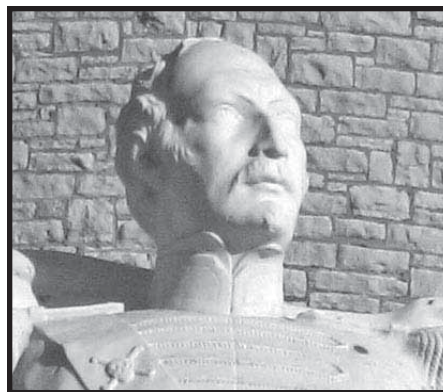
Demetrios Ypsilantis 1793-1832

Plus three more sons

Parents: Alexander Ypsilantis 1725-1805

Relatives:

Alexandru Callimachi, father-in-law



**Oh, Dimi,
we hardly
knew ye!
The search
continues
beyond our
Museum
walls**



SONS:

#1. Alexander Ypsilantis

Place of birth:

Constantinople, Ottoman Empire

Place of death:

Vienna, Austrian Empire, 1702

Death: 1828

Allegiance:

Russian Empire, Greek revolutionaries

Years of service: 1805-1821

Rank: Major General

Battles/wars:

Napoleonic Wars - Battle of Dresden

Greek War of Independence

#2. Demitrios Ypsilantis

Place of birth:

Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, 1793

Place of death:

Nafplion, Greece, 16 August 1832

Allegiance: Russia, Greece

Years of service: 1814-1832

Commands held

Moldavia and eastern Greece

Battles/wars

Greek War of Independence

-Battle of Dervenakia

-Battle of Petra

No sooner was Peg Porter's story (page 9) filed, than editors and composers began to look anew at the visage of D. Ypsilantis to see if he was the guy we had always thought. Readers are encouraged to do the same—and see if we really recognized our local hero after all....

NOTE: According to Jeffrey Stross, M.D., University of Michigan, Ypsilantis had Myotonic Dystrophy, a genetic condition affecting the face and head. It is characterized by premature baldness, cataracts, and rigidity of the facial muscles. The condition sometimes causes the muscles of the face to "freeze." Actually, it was Demetrius' brother, Alexander, who is mentioned in medical literature. However, Demetrius appears to have had the same condition. It is possible that Alexander was the subject of some portraits since both brothers were viewed as heroes of the Greek Revolution and strongly resembled each other. These factors could influence portraiture and determining the "best likeness."

SOURCES: Personal communication; the National Library of Medicine.

The Ypsilantis: Constantine, Alexander, and Demetrius

By Peg Porter



Constantine Ypsilantis



*Alexander Ypsilantis/Ypsilanti
in Filiki Eteria attire,
National Historical Museum of Greece*



Demetrios/Demetrius Ypsilantis/Ypsilanti

Recent issues of GLEANINGS have contained articles on identifying an accurate representation of Demetrius Ypsilanti. Various artists have tried their hand at producing such a representation. Since the Greek Revolution occurred early in the 19th century before the advent of photography, the portraits of Ypsilanti vary significantly. One obvious cause is that there were two Generals Ypsilanti, Alexander (1792-1828), and his younger brother Demetrius (1793-1832). Their father **Constantine** (1760-1816) took part in the early plots against the ruling Ottoman Empire. Constantine also developed close ties with the Russians and eventually sought refuge in Russia where he died. As a result, there were at least three Ypsilantis associated with the Greek War of Independence. Younger brother Nicholas, also accompanied his brother Alexander to Greece on a mission.

Alexander became a general in the Russian army as did his younger brother Demetrius. He fought with distinction in the Napoleonic Wars, losing an arm at the Battle of Dresden. Alexander took leadership of a secret organization that advo-

cated for Greek independence. Alexander was on his way to major success in leading revolts in Walachia and Moldavia when the Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich convinced Tsar Alexander to withdraw his support, leaving Alexander stranded. He would seek refuge in Vienna.

His brother, **Demetrius**, was less well known than his older brother. He also fought for the Russian army. Once the Greek Revolution was underway, he became a leader in the fledgling government. His involvement in the capture of Tripoli and his resistance to the Turkish forces in 1825, brought him to the attention of the larger world. It is for these actions that community leaders in Michigan named their growing settlement Ypsilanti.

The Greek revolt inspired widespread sympathy in Europe and the United States who viewed Greece as the cradle of western civilization. The religious differences between the two parties (Greek Orthodox) and the Muslim Ottoman Empire brought not only the support of individuals but that of governments of France and Great Britain.

There is, however, another issue contributing to the difficulty of identifying an accurate image of Demetrius. The brothers bore a strong resemblance as young men; as they grew older their looks began to differ. Alexander had a form of muscular dystrophy affecting the facial muscles. This caused his muscles to sometimes freeze turning a smile into a grimace. His sharp features became even sharper. Demetrius, on the other hand, had softer, rounder features. It also appears that Demetrius had a lighter complexion with reddish hair while Alexander was dark-haired. Some portraits of General Ypsilanti appear to be pictures of Alexander, not Demetrius. This is true of the picture in the foyer of the Ypsilanti Historical Museum!

SOURCES: South African Greeks: Greek War of Independence; the Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia; personal communication with Jeff Stross, M.D., University of Michigan.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: A longer and more detailed discussion of the events leading to the Greek War of Independence was prepared by Doris Miliman, late City Historian, and can be found in the GLEANINGS Archives.



Museum Advisory Board Report

By Kathryn Howard,
Chair-Museum Advisory Board

Since our spring issue of GLEANINGS there have been many exciting and interesting activities at the Museum.

With the opening of the 1860s Civil War Exhibit in June we have had many tours and visitors. The Exhibit has proven very interesting to the public. Many visitors have found names of their ancestors and many have given us more information. The Exhibit will end on September 18.

The Heritage Festival was held in August and the Museum and Archives had extended open hours. Although the attendance was down this year, those who visited indicated they enjoyed the new and updated presentations including the Civil War "Lost Ypsilanti" exhibit. Lower attendance was probably due to the uncertain weather during the Heritage Festival.

We are getting ready for our Quilt Exhibit starting September 25th through October 9th. If you have a handmade quilt

you would like to exhibit, contact Rita Sprague at 483-3600 or the Museum Office at 482-4990. We expect 100 lovely quilts. We are fortunate to have very talented people in our community. Hours will be regular Museum hours, with an opening reception on Sunday, September 25th.

Our exhibits for the autumn season will be store items that Ypsilanti merchants advertised and sold. Many items were made and sold in Ypsilanti in those early days. The mannequins will have new costumes and will be ready for the autumn season.

Our two interns are very good in helping with our extra activities. Lauren has completely redone the Solarium. Many more new plants have been added.

The new Calendars for 2012 are here and can be purchased in the Archives. Where the Gift Shop was is now the reception room—called "The Heritage Room"—with portraits of residents of Ypsilanti and our past ancestors.

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Cemeteries found on the EMU Campus

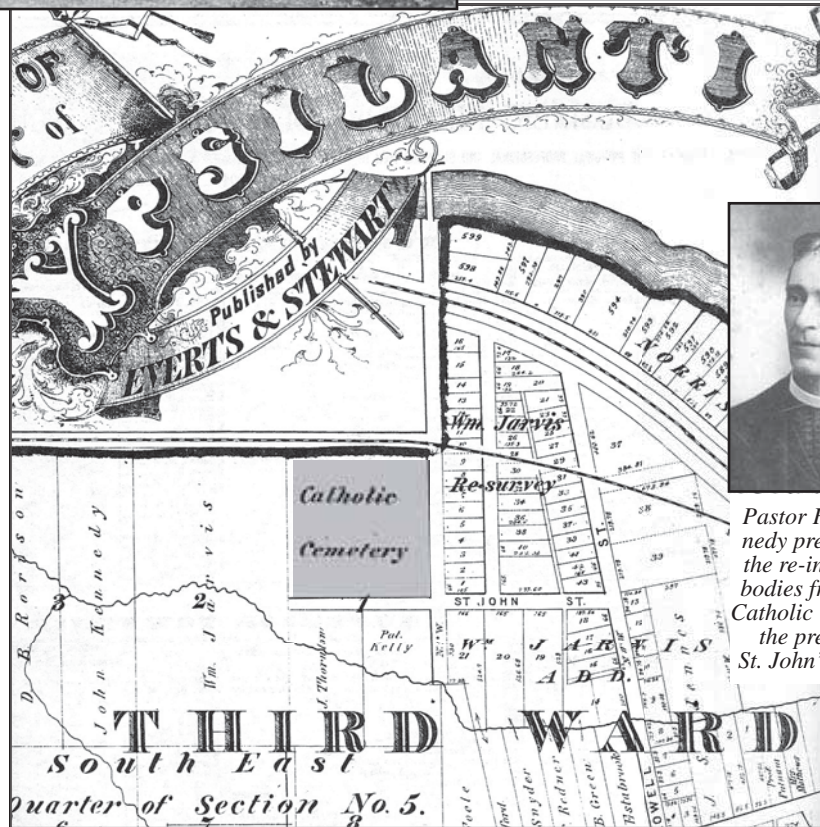
By Laura Bien

The church, built from 1856 to 1858 on Cross Street, was dedicated to St. John the Baptist

The recent excavation of forgotten graves is not the first time bones have been found on the northeastern part of EMU's campus. "A bulldozer clearing the site for Eastern Michigan University's new physical education building has uncovered part of a human skull and a large human bone," read an article in the August 30, 1961 *Ypsilanti Press*. The article reported that the bones were found "200 yards north of the Buell-Downing residence hall area on the campus." (The intervening Putnam/Sellers/Walton/Phelps residence complex was not built until 1966 & 1968).

The paper contacted officials who said "...the normal procedure when cemetery ground is sold is to have the bodies removed and replaced in another cemetery...apparently this grave was unmarked at the time the others were moved." Those officials were members of the local Catholic diocese, since the land was once a Catholic cemetery operated by St. John the Baptist Church.

In 1874, the square parcel occupied the land bounded on the south by the then-longer St. John's Street and on the east by a now-vanished road parallel to and west of Ann Street. The plot was bounded on the north by the now-vanished Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railroad curving northwest from the Ypsilanti depot, and on the west by a large land parcel owned by prominent Ypsilanti farmer William Jarvis. Today, the onetime site contains the Physical Plant on its northeast corner, almost all of the Putnam/Sellers/Walton/Phelps residence complex, the Wise residence hall



Pastor Frank Kennedy presided over the re-interment of bodies from the old Catholic Cemetery to the present-day St. John's Cemetery

The Catholic Cemetery on this 1874 plat map occupied land on the present-day northeast corner of EMU's campus

(but not the DC 1 dining commons), the northern half of Buell residence hall, and a sliver of the east side of University Park.

The land had been purchased from Jarvis with a gift of money from Civil War soldiers. Belgian-born St. John's pastor Edward Van Paemel "...was so solicitous of the welfare of Civil War troops housed in the Thompson building at the depot," says one church history, "that when they left they donated \$500 to the parish" [the equivalent of \$7,000 today]. "This was used to buy space for a cemetery at the foot of St. John's Street near

Forest Avenue." The men were members of the 14th Michigan Infantry.

By the late 1880s, it was clear a larger space was needed. The purchase of a new plot of land was reported in the April 13, 1888 *Ypsilanti Commercial*. "Owing to the present condition of the St. John's cemetery, the Rev. Father De Bever has purchased for the sum of \$1,400 [\$33,500 today] 14 acres on the corner of River Street and the north line of the township, for a new cemetery" [the present-day St. John's Cemetery]. The article continued, "The ground which is hilly and well suited

[continued overleaf]

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Cemeteries *[continued from page 11]*

for the purpose is directly opposite Highland Cemetery. The old ground will bring enough to meet all expenses incurred in buying and improving the new burial place." Contrary to this projected sale, the old cemetery land wasn't sold. On the 1895 Ypsilanti plat map, it still appears labeled as the "Old Catholic Cemetery."

According to the Washtenaw County Genealogical Society's county cemetery directory, the Old Catholic Cemetery was "vacated" (bodies removed) in 1900, and moved to the present-day St. John's cemetery. On the next available historical plat map, that of 1915, the land is bare and unnamed.

The re-interment occurred under the leadership of Pastor Frank Kennedy, who served the church from 1892 until 1922 and had a reputation for a brilliant intellect, having passed his state board teaching examinations at the age of 11. During his tenure, Kennedy undertook several renovation projects, "tearing the cupola off the rectory and removing horse sheds," reads one church history. "Kitchen, dining, recreation rooms and a library were added. The front lawn was filled with dirt from the old cemetery and was landscaped." Despite Kennedy's work, the main church building, built in 1858, was becoming inadequate for the congregation. Kennedy died in 1922, and was followed by pastor Dennis Needham who planned a grand new church.

The Old Catholic Cemetery is not the only cemetery discovered on the grounds

A year later, Needham secured permission from diocese officials and sold the land to EMU. The church needed the money from the land sale to build the imposing present-day Romanesque structure. Detroit architects McGrath and Dohmen designed the structure. The sale helped begin construction, but funds remained tight. The basement of the present-day church was completed in 1924, but work stopped there for some time - though services continued in the basement.

Construction of the entire building wasn't completed until 1932, with a final total

cost of \$98,000 [about \$1,550,000 today]. Decoration of the interior took another decade. Finally around WWII it was done.

The Old Catholic Cemetery is not the only cemetery discovered on the grounds of EMU. In the 1940s, according to one witness, the start of construction for the onetime Pine Grove Terrace apartments (demolished in 2005-2006 to make space for the Student Center) revealed "a dozen or more old, old bones." The witness was 1920s EMU student Edward Heyman, and his recollection of the scene is reproduced here: "In the early 1920s the northwest corner of Michigan State Normal College was a field of weeds and brush. The college decided to clean it up. A number of college students who were working part time to help pay their college expenses were sent up there, near the corner of the present Collegewood Drive and Hillside Court, to clean it up and to plant "baby" pine trees. As one of these students, I was interested in the area and especially in the fact that Professor William H. Sherzer, head of the Department of Natural Science, told us that the area was the site of an early Indian cemetery.

The trees were planted and the area was called Pine Grove or Pine Grove Park. Digging to plant the pines did not go deep enough to uncover any graves.

In the 1940s the college decided to build a number of apartment houses there, for married students. Seeing the pine trees, which I helped plant years before, being cut down and basements being dug, I walked over to the area to see what was happening. In the debris of the digging were a dozen or more old, old bones. The man in charge of the excavation said they were Indian bones, that the digging had uncovered remains of several graves . . ." --Edward Heyman March 10, 1970."

Today the EMU Student Center's peaceful Kiva Room overlooks the onetime site. Whether Native American or Catholic, one hopes that the spirits of all of those once interred on EMU's grounds are at peace.

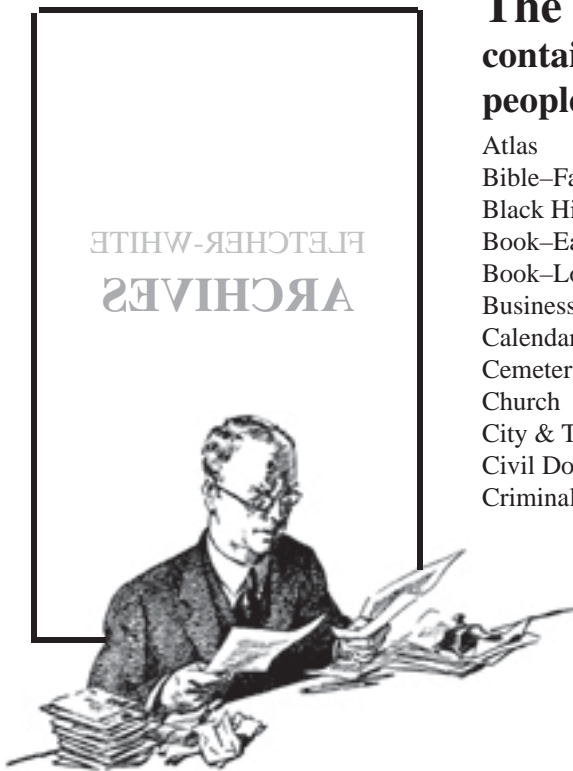
[Laura Bien is a history columnist with the Ann Arbor Chronicle and the Ypsilanti Courier. Her second book, "Hidden Ypsilanti," will be published in late 2011. This article first appeared in the Ypsilanti Courier.]

The Ypsilanti Historical Archives contains the following collections related to people and places in Ypsilanti's history:

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Atlas | Diary | Obituary |
| Bible-Family | Education | Organization |
| Black History | Directory-City & County | Photograph |
| Book-Early Education | Family | Postcard |
| Book-Local History | Family History Capers | School |
| Business | General Subject | Tax Assessment Rolls |
| Calendar | Gleanings | Telephone Directory |
| Cemetery | Location-Street | Willow Run |
| Church | Map | Yearbook-Education |
| City & Township | Michigan Pioneer | Ypsilanti Government |
| Civil Docket | Newspaper | Veterans Project |
| Criminal Docket | News Clippings | |

The Archives are located in the basement of the Museum. The main entrance is on the north side of the Museum. You may park in the Museum parking lot or in the church lot across the street.

HOURS: The Archives are open Tuesday through Sunday from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm except on national holidays. Serious historians and researchers, who need additional times or days, should call Gerry Pety at 734-572-0437 to make further arrangements.



News from the Fletcher-White Archives

By Gerry Pety

The weather outside is frightful but down in the YHS Archives the temperature is absolutely delightful! In fact, Richard and Polly Sprague came all the way from Portland, Oregon just to cool off and do research with the help of our staff of talented volunteers. Good to have the Sprague's back here in their hometown! There is plenty of really hot weather left this summer so come on down to our comfortable hideaway!

Well, we got a chance to try out our microfilm reader that we received in the spring and it is just the coolest thing to do research with. You can actually read the images without temporarily losing your eyesight. With just a little instruction our guests can use it too. Thanks again to all of you who participated/contributed to the cause. It is really something that we have needed for a very long time.

We continue to receive a significant number of contributions for our various collections. Even though some of them are not large or momentous, they still add to the information that we rely on to do research. Some of these items end up inspiring our writers or helping place a little history within reach of an understanding of what happened many years ago. Some of these stories from James, Laura, George, Jan, Peg and others

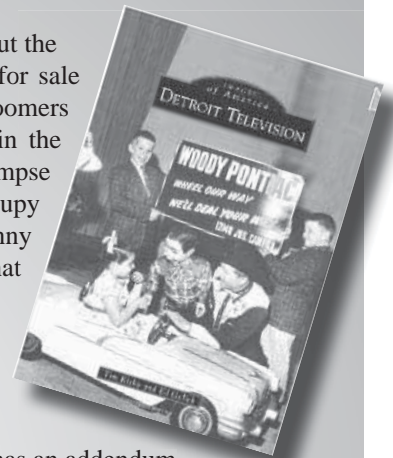
end up in the "GLEANINGS," which you are enjoying right now. So don't throw it away if you believe it may contain something of value for us or other historical societies.

Besides the books we carry about the history of this area, we have for sale a book for all of you baby boomers about early Detroit television in the '50s and early '60s. It is a glimpse back to the simple days of Soupy Sales, Sagebrush Shorty, Johnny Ginger and all of the favorites that warped our young minds.

This book really explains a lot about who we are and why we all turned out sooooo strange.

Ed Golick is the author and he has an addendum website with many of the "interesting" videos mentioned in the book. We have a limited number of these books on sale in the Archives. It would be a great Christmas stocking--stuffer so come on down and take a look at it: "Detroit Television" by Ed Golick and Tim Kiska, part of the Images of America series by Arcadia Press.

[Gerry Pety is Director of the Fletcher-White Archives and a regular contributor to the GLEANINGS]



Ypsilanti History

An Update on the Digital Ph

By Debi Hoos-Lemke



In 1938 the American Legion sponsored a Fourth of July parade in Ypsilanti, featuring the Washtenaw County Drum Corps. This photograph was donated by Laura Catherine (Oakes) Newcomb who was a local resident and amateur photographer.

The Digital Photo Archives Project, the collaborative project between the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the University of Michigan Library's Digital Library Production Service, has grown again. Over the last year, 150 additional photographs have been added to the database.

How the Project Works: The Ypsilanti Historical Society selects photographs from its archives collection of historical photographs, researches the photographs, enters them in the database and scans a copy. The database and the scanned photographs are then transferred to CDs and delivered to the Digital Library Production Service at the University of Michigan. The DLPS uploads everything to the website, which makes the photographs and information accessible to everyone free of charge.



The July 1923 Ypsilanti Centennial celebrating the city of Ypsilanti's 100th anniversary. John S. Miller took this photograph of the Rotary and Kiwanis officers arriving by stage coach from Detroit. The stage coach was driven from Detroit City Hall to Ypsilanti on the old territorial road, now Michigan Avenue. As they passed through Dearborn they were high-jacked and forced to attend a banquet in their honor before continuing on to Ypsilanti. The Photo Archives collection also contains more than 50 photographs of the Centennial Celebration.

(Debi Hoos-Lemke is a student in the Archival Administration Program in the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University. She is serving an Internship in the YHS Archives.)

If you have photographs you would like to donate to the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives or have questions about the digitization project, please contact Al Rudisill at al@rudisill.ws.



This photograph, taken by G.E. Waterman, dates back to 1893 when the city of Ypsilanti was hit by a cyclone. The cyclone did significant damage, including the damage shown in this photograph to the west side of Huron North to Pearl Street. The collection has more than 50 photographs of this significant event in Ypsilanti history.

y in Photographs: Photo Archives Project

To view the photographs, go to our website, <http://www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org>, click on publications, then Photo Archives. Alternatively, you can go to the University of Michigan Library's website and access the database directly at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/ypsilanti-historical-society-photograph-archives>.

The Photo Archives project is a diverse collection covering all aspects of Ypsilanti history. The earliest photographs in the collection are from the 1850s. Subjects covered range from people, automobiles, trains, planes, events, buildings, school and colleges, organizations, cemeteries and much more. This article highlights six of the photographs in the collection and the Winter GLEANINGS will highlight another six photographs.



A studio photograph of the Class of 1892 of the Michigan State Normal Conservatory in Ypsilanti. The young women are identified as follows: Mary A. Dickinson (piano); Minnie Wilber (pipe organ); Nora C. Babbitt (voice); Oriska M. Worden (voice); Avonia Dawson (piano); Abba Owen (violin); Bertha Day and Georgia M. Cheshire (piano). (Mrs. Gass).



This photograph of the James Gass Family was taken in 1835. Standing: Cynthia, East, Lydia, Rebecca, North; Seated: James Gass, South West, Kittie and Velora, (Mrs. Gass).



A B24 comes home to Willow Run Airport in February 1946, following completion of its World War II duties. The crew of #139 is welcomed by the members of the Edsel Ford American Legion.



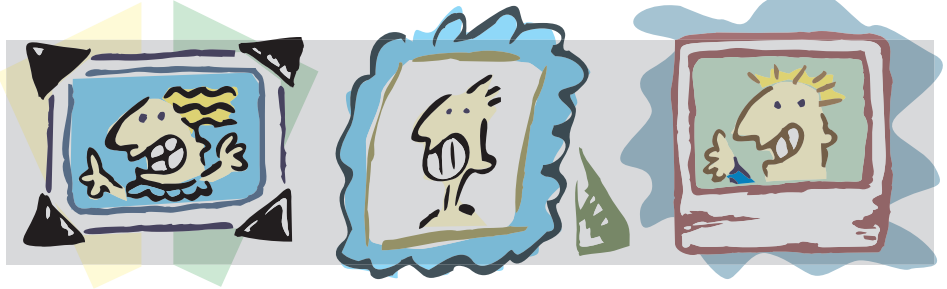
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“Not everybody trusts paintings but people believe photographs.”

—Ansel Adams

“There’s no question that photographs communicate more instantly and powerfully than words do, but if you want to communicate a complex concept clearly, you need words, too.”

—Galen Rowell

“To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time’s relentless melt.”

—Susan Sontag

“To take photographs means to recognize - simultaneously and within a fraction of a second - both the fact itself and the rigorous organization of visually perceived forms that give it meaning. It is putting one’s head, one’s eye, and one’s heart on the same axis”.

—Henri Cartier-Bresson

“If you have a box of old photographs with no names or dates on the backs, the next generation will not know who they were or why the photos were taken. Take the time to add information on the backs now; after you’re gone, nobody will be able to figure them out.”

—Ypsilanti GLEANINGS



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Abortion for Wicked Purposes

By George Ridenour

Dr. William G. Cox, M.D. was born on April 2, 1831 in Middlebury, Schoharie County, New York. He was born to Quaker parents. He attended school and worked on the family farm until he was 19 years old. Following in the steps of his brother, he decided to pursue the study of medicine. He studied in 1851 in Virginia under the supervision of his brother, a doctor, and taught school to provide himself with income. He was to become a noted homeopathic physician.

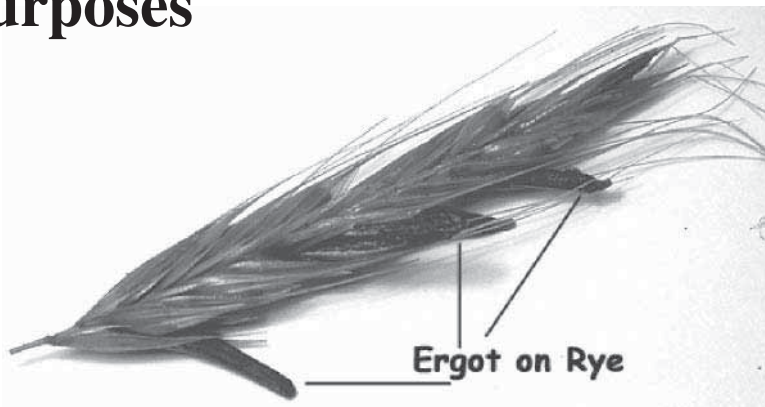
In 1854, he settled in Kalamazoo County, Michigan and in 1855 he moved to the Ann Arbor area to continue his tutelage in medicine. In 1856 he entered into the medical department of the University. He moved, while studying, to Ypsilanti to begin the start of his practice. He was a successful physician. He was described in the Representative Men of Michigan (1878) as "...always courteous in manner, genial and sympathetic in nature, he won the esteem of a large circle of friends and patrons."

William Cox married Josephine S. Bagg, the daughter of one of the pioneers of Detroit, Dr. Joseph Bagg, on December 18, 1862. He then decided in 1871 to move his practice to Detroit. The children of William and Josephine Cox were Charles R. and Jessie (twins) and later Charles E.

The Ypsilanti Commercial of March 15, 1873 had a brief piece which is quoted: "...We are very sorry to learn from the Detroit dailies that Dr. Cox, recently of this city, had been arrested on a charge of abortion for wicked purposes. The Dr. gave bail in the sum of \$5,000. We did not allude to the matter last week, in hopes that the report would prove false. We always had a high opinion of the Dr. while a resident of this city."

The Ypsilanti Commercial received a long explanation of the trial and charges in a piece by Dr. Cox which was published on April 5, 1873. The article cited clarifications and explanations made by Dr. Cox to the people of Ypsilanti. The trial was con-

Ergot of rye, a fungus from the rye plant, was used by physicians of the time for various ailments including the treatment of pregnant women. In later times it was described as a hallucinogen



cerning the death of his patient Mrs. Hoyt. Dr. Cox was alleged to have given her "Ergot of Rye" which induced abortion and her death. Along with the abortion charge Drs. Davenport and Gustin testified that Dr. Cox was guilty of malpractice.

(Note: Ergot of rye is a fungus from the rye plant. This was indeed used by physicians treating pregnant women. Yes, it could induce abortion. In later times ergot was described as a hallucinogen. When there was hemorrhaging or blood flow, the prescribed treatment at the time was lead and opium. Ergot of rye was used for other treatments than abortion by physicians of the time.)

"...he has been acquitted of the charges alleged against him"

Dr. Cox in his editorial admitted that he had written a prescription but for another patient living miles from Mrs. Hoyt. Finally, the ergot of rye episode was stricken from the record. Again, he states: "...at the time of her death Mrs. Hoyt was NOT pregnant...There was NO mystery in the last sickness and death of Mrs. Hoyt...at the time of her death Mrs. Hoyt was not pregnant and had not been for months or even years prior to her death. She was taken Thursday evening, February 27, 1873 with a violent attack of what is properly called 'spotted fever...Such is the sum and substance of this great sensation case. It was a case that should have never attracted public attention...it would not have appeared in court...but for the interaction of private parties and private

interests." (Note: Dr. Cox was a famous and established homeopathic physician at the time of this trial).

The Ypsilanti Commercial of March 22, 1873: "The friends of Dr. Cox in this city will be glad to know that. It was proved by competent witnesses of this city, Dr. Tripp and Dr. Baqtwell concerning that the woman who was alleged to have died from the affects of abortion, died from the affects of disease. It was shown that there was no abortion. The trial elicited great interest in Detroit. The Doctor ought to go for the parties implicated, for false arrest. If physicians or any other citizen can be arrested and put to serious inconvenience on such flimsy pretenses, we have come to a curious pass."

The 1900 United States Federal Census from Precinct 7, Miami, Dade County, Florida shows Dr. William G Cox, Josephine, Charles, and daughter-in-law Addie. He is shown as a physician and owner of a dry goods store. Nothing further is shown of him after this date.

Checking with Highland Cemetery, we find that he bought 12 plots in 1866. There is an Adeline" listed as interred in the plot. Three other plots are for "others but not listed" and the cemetery is not sure if anyone is buried in the three graves or, if so, who they are!

Thus ends (on a mystery) the story of Dr. William G. Cox.

[George Ridenour is a member of the YHS Archives Advisory Board, a volunteer in the Archives, and a regular contributor to GLEANINGS]

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Wicked Washtenaw County:

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Tales from the Ypsilanti Archives:

Author Laura Bien offers up a diverse sampling of offbeat and lighthearted stories that will transplant readers to the bygone days of Ypsilanti - from the fight Ypsilanti waged against standardized time to the gloom apparent in an Ypsilantian's Depression-era grocery receipt. Enjoy these and other quirky tales from what life used to be like in Ypsilanti.

\$19.95

Footnotes in History

by James Mann (192 pages):

Footnotes in History first appeared as a weekly column in the *Ypsilanti Courier* on April 1, 1999. Every week for several years after that, local historian James Mann chronicled the small stories of Ypsilanti history. These are the "footnotes" of Ypsilanti history, the tales of people and events that are now all but forgotten.

\$19.95

Ypsilanti in the 20th Century

(128 pages): Ypsilanti in the 20th Century includes over 200 pictures of history of Ypsilanti from early 1900 through 1975. The book is a companion to Ypsilanti - A History in Pictures and chronicles the growth of Ypsilanti in the twentieth century. Authored by local historian James Thomas Mann.

\$19.95

The Story of Ypsilanti

(327 pages):

...written by Harvey C. Colburn for the centennial celebration of the city in 1923. This reissue was published by the Ypsilanti's Bi-Centennial Commission to commemorate America's two hundredth birthday in 1976. The objective of the book was to tell the story of the several periods of the city's history in as vivid a manner as possible.

\$9.95

Down by the Depot in Ypsilanti

(174 pages):

... written, edited and designed by Tom Dodd and James Mann. It was initially published by the Depot Town Association in 1999. This package of stories tries to merge the "real history" (Mann) with the "local folklore" (Dodd) of that tiny commercial district in Ypsilanti, Michigan known as Depot Town.

\$14.95

Helen Walker McAndrew - Ypsilanti's Lady Frontier Doctor

(18 pages):

... was originally written by William McAndrew, Jr. in 1923 in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of The Ypsilanti Business and Professional Women's Club. The current version was edited with additions by Albert P. Marshall in 1996.

\$4.95

The "Real McCoy" of Ypsilanti

(32 pages):

... written by Albert P. Marshall and originally published in 1989. Elijah McCoy, the son of a former slave, was an inventor who lived in Ypsilanti and registered more than forty patents in his lifetime. Albert Marshall, now deceased, was a Professor at Eastern Michigan University and a recognized scholar of African American history.

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Over the years a number of songs have been written about Ypsilanti! Probably the most popular one to local residents was the “comic” song “Ypsilanti” published in 1915. The song was published by Jerome H. Remick & Company, who at the time, was probably the largest music sheet publisher in the world. Although the song itself never hit the “big time,” Alfred Bryan who wrote the lyrics, went on to pen “Peg O’ My Heart.” Egbert Van Alstyne who wrote the music, wrote “In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree” in 1905, and then in 1916 wrote “Pretty Baby.”

The song has been controversial over the years because of the “YIP-SI-LAN-TI” pronunciation of Ypsilanti and the use of the terms wop, skee, goo and spoo. At the time Wop was a derogatory term for immigrants who were in the United States without the appropriate papers.

Ypsilanti

By Alfred Bryan
& Egbert Van Alstyne

I’ll sing you a song that’s not very long
It’s crazy as crazy can be
The verse is as short as a pistol report
And the chorus is longer than me.

CHORUS:

Ypsilanti, Michigan
Ypsilanti wish again
I’ve got an auntie who lives in a shanty
In Ypsilanti, Michigan!

The great Russian Czar
threw away his cigar
Sunday night when I sang it for him;
He ordered me shot
right there on the spot
And I juggled the ball on my chin.

CHORUS:

I sang it one night to the Kaiser alright
And he thought I was talking in French.
He gave me a cross, a great big iron cross,
And it hit me right square in the trench.

CHORUS:

A woof is a woof and a goof is a goof
And a skee is a skee all the time;
A rose has a scent, but it hasn’t a cent,
And ten of them haven’t a dime

CHORUS:

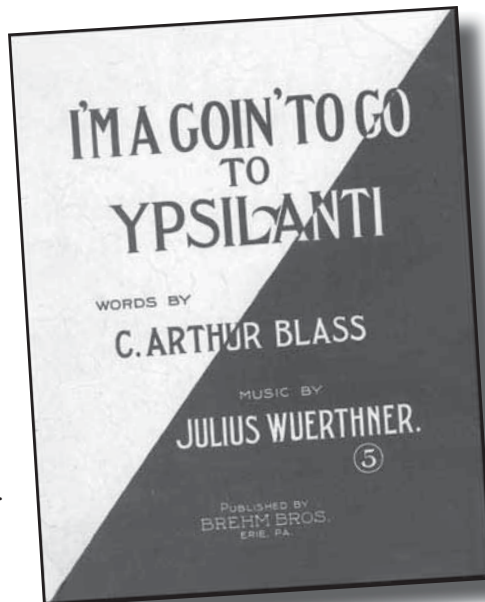
A wop is a wop and a cop is a cop
And hair doesn’t grow on your brain;
A goo is a goo and a spoo is a spoo,
Please excuse me, I’m going insane.

Ypsilanti Songs!

By Alvin Rudisill



The “Yip-si-lan-ti” song was controversial because it was billed as a “comic” song and the use of some derogatory words



In 1910 the Brehm Brothers from Erie, Pennsylvania published the song “I’m A Goin’ To Go To Ypsilanti” [Referring to the practice of “Michigan Men” coming to Ypsi to court the MSNC co-eds, viewed as preferable to the M Bluestockings!]

(Al Rudisill is the President of the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the Editor of the GLEANINGS.)

Another piece of music titled “I’m A Goin’ To Go To Ypsilanti” was found in our “Music About Ypsilanti” files in the YHS Archives. The words for this piece were written by C. Arthur Blass with music by Julius Wuerthner. It was published in 1910 by the Brehm Brothers of Erie, Pennsylvania. Not much has been found about this song but it is interesting that they compared Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor.

I’m A Goin’ To Go To Ypsilanti

By C. Arthur Blass
& Julius Wuerthner

There’s a little town we know,
where the fellows love to go,
It’s a town not very many miles from here.
Where the girls are bright and sunny
and far sweeter yes than honey,
There a fellow always gets a smiling cheer.
When you’re laden with deep sorrow
and you’re thinking of the morrow,
of your studies and your troubles
cares and woes.

Ypsilanti is your harbor,
It’s far different from Ann Arbor,
It’s your refuge from the cruel knocks and
blows.

CHORUS:

I’m a goin’ to go to Ypsilanti,
I’m a goin’ to get myself a girl,
I’m a goin’ to have a great old time,
you bet,
I’m a goin’ to set the town a whirl,
I’m a goin’ to take in all the ball games
I’m a goin’ to see a show or two,
I’m a goin’ to go to Ypsilanti,
Why don’t you?

When you reach this town I’m sure,
you will find that it’s a cure
As your worry and vexation disappears.
And you’ll swear by all that’s true
That you never can feel blue,
When you’re with the pretty girls
that you call dears.

But you soon begin to sigh
as departing time draws nigh,
and Ann Arbor once again draws
on your mind.

Then you make a resolution
Ypsilanti’s the solution,
Of your problem girls-a-plenty
there you’ll find.



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Ypsilanti History Test Answers

(for the test on page 4)

1. He sold fur coats and also provided storage for them in the summer.
2. The east side of South Huron at I-94, the west side of the 300 block of South Grove and some vacant land on the north side of East Forest east of the railroad.
3. The Gaudy family.
4. No. It is named after a former Michigan Governor, Woodbridge N. Ferris.
5. Most bodies had enough uniforms on them to allow identifying the home area of the unknown.
6. The Signal Corps.
7. President Theodore Roosevelt.
8. J.J. Woods, Harold DeBarss, David Robb, Henry Scovill and Lyle Frost.
9. The Scottish tune "The Campbells Are Coming" and the words began *America's cheering the 'Henry J,'*
The car that saves money in every way,
It's smart and it's tough and so little to pay,
You ought to start driving a 'Henry J.'
10. They were put on display at circus side shows.
11. Wood, coal, oil and natural gas.
12. Gasoline: five gallons for \$1.00. Bread: 10 cents a loaf.
Adult movie tickets: Adults - 50 cents each and children 10 cents each.
13. The Lone Ranger, The Green Hornet, Lum and Abner, The Shadow, Our Gal Sunday, Lorenzo Jones and His Wife Belle.
14. Tie on extra Baggage.
15. Louie Chevrolet, Chief Pontiac, Ransom Olds, David Buick, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, Hernando DeSoto and Horace Dodge.
16. Robert Ballard was a personal friend of Jerry Roe of the Michigan Historical Society so the first films of the wreck were shown to the public in Lansing, Michigan.
17. So many tried to use the telephone, the phone system collapsed.
18. America offered to relocate these people to mid America and find them jobs.
19. Bombers, tanks, guns, jeeps and command autos.
20. This was the method used to designate party lines, i.e., multiple users on the same line.
21. The Civil War Monument in Highland Cemetery has our National Shield with *E Pluribus Unum* on it. (Out of many, one.)



Peck Street Primary at the left with the daughters of Frederick Swaine's partner, L. C. Wallington – Maude and Ethel May, with Florence Swaine on the right

All that remains of the hopes and dreams of a family of 19th century English immigrants to Ypsilanti is a brick building, used as a garage since the 1920s, and an adjoining brick wall. If those remaining structures could talk, they would tell an interesting and sad tale of misfortune that must sound familiar to many investors and business people today.

The small garage, now standing about 100 feet east of the old historical home at the northeast corner of River Street and East Forest, started life as the second school founded in Ypsilanti. Built in 1839 by Joseph and Sophia Peck, and named the Peck Street Primary, it was situated a small distance across from the original Peck homestead built in 1824. The Peck home was located on what was then called Peck Street, now a driveway off North River on the property of the historical home later constructed there.

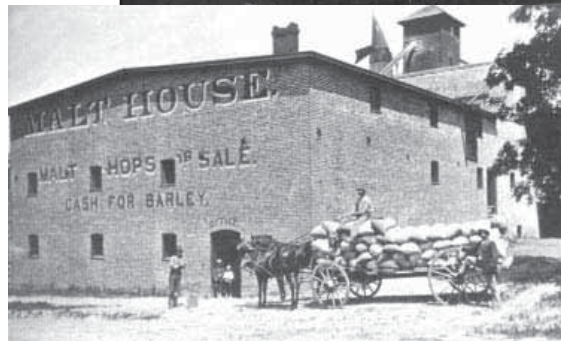
Reportedly, Sophia Peck had served as a “school marm” in the Pecks’ native state of New York, and, believing in the value of a good education, had encouraged her husband to build the school in Ypsilanti. As it happened, the Peck Street Primary flourished, and in 1850 it was sold to the 4th Ward School District for \$40. It then became one of the first “graded” schools in Michigan, which meant that students attending it advanced from grade to grade based on performance standards, rather than simply using textbooks to learn skills at their own pace. By 1866, the small graded school was bursting at the seams with 99 pupils, and the school board decided to replace it with a larger four-room building at the

From Peck Street Primary... to Malt House...to Garage: A Story of Broken Dreams!

By Janice Anschuetz



Maude and Ethel May Wallington outside the Malt House in the snow




The Malt House fronting East Forest. Worger George in front with a shovel

corner of Prospect and Oak. That new school, named the 4th Ward School, was eventually built in 1878.

The story of the original Peck Street Primary continues with a man named George George, who had immigrated with his family to Ypsilanti from Kent, England in 1863. George purchased the defunct Peck Primary and, with the help of his son Worger George and son-in-law Leonard C. Wallington, converted it into a small malt house. Ypsilanti was home to several breweries at the time, and malt was essential to the industry. It was made from barley bought from nearby farmers, which

was sprouted in the malt house, with the help of steam equipment, and dried. The resulting malt was then supplied to the breweries, where it was combined with yeast, hops, and other constituents as a basic ingredient for brewing fine beer.

A further turn in the story came with the arrival of a visitor to the George family from the town of Dorset, in Kent, England. This was a “cousin” of sorts by the name of Frederick John Swaine, who had come to the United States to “seek his fortune.” Taking a shine both to Ypsilanti, and to the daughter of George George, a young beauty named Eliza (called Lizzie), Swaine decided that this was the place he wanted to stay and invest his inheritance. He married Lizzie in 1874, became a partner in the malt business with her family, and built a fine home just west of the malt house. That home is now proudly occupied by the writer of this piece, and



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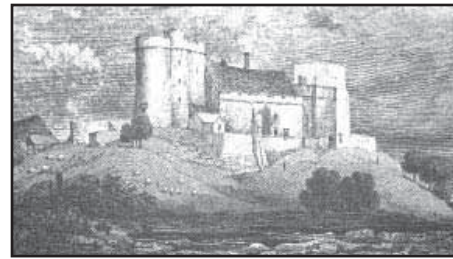
Eliza (George) Swaine
her husband, nearly a century-and-a-half later.
[continued overleaf]



Frederick Swaine

From Orphaned Baby to Successful Businessman and “Father of Classical Music in Michigan”

Frederick Swaine was orphaned as a one-year-old baby and raised by relatives in Kent, England, where he was well educated. He spent part of his childhood living with an uncle in a palatial homestead -- Lympne Castle, near Romney Marsh, in Kent. His father and grandfather were considered to be among the finest brewers in Great Britain, and had been licensed for several generations to brew beer for the royal family. It was no wonder, then, that young Frederick found himself drawn to the George family and their malting business. In them he could make real his dreams of winning his fortune in America.



Lympne Castle and Church in Kent where Frederick Swaine grew up as a boy

After their marriage, Frederick and the former Lizzie George moved from the George/Wallington residence at 627 North River to their fine new home at what is now 101 East Forest. There they soon became pillars of Ypsilanti’s genteel society. Frederick bought out his partners

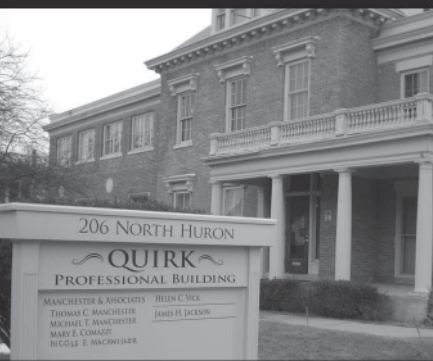
in the malt business and greatly enlarged the malt house. The new structure, which measured 50 x 94 feet and was three stories high, now fronted East Forest Avenue rather than Peck Street. What had once been the entire Peck Street Primary had become the steam room for the malt house. On stationary and business cards, Frederick Swaine presented himself as “Maltster and Dealer in Barley, Malt and Hops.”

The Swaine business thrived. With his savvy, drive, and investment capital paving the way, Frederick increased the sales of beer grains from 11,000 bushels

in 1874 to 40,000 by 1880. In addition, his education, talents, and interests added much to the growing Ypsilanti community. He became a good friend of Frederick Pease, who founded the music program at the Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University). The relationship was so close that, after Pease had carefully selected a fine rosewood square grand piano for the Normal school, Frederick Swaine purchased an identical one for the parlor of his home. [That piano has since been restored by the present owners of the home and still stands in the same parlor in all its original stately grace.] By the

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end of his life, Swaine's influence on the music program at the Normal College, his patronage of local concert halls, and his various roles as a gifted actor in Gilbert and Sullivan plays in the Ypsilanti Opera House had brought him such recognition that he was characterized in his obituary as "The Father of Classical Music in Michigan."

The Dreams are Shattered

Regrettably, as we see happening all around us today, economic vicissitudes have a way of shattering the dreams of even the best businessmen. Frederick Swaine would come to suffer the same fate in his day.

His malt business continued to thrive until the mid-1890s. But its future was always uncertain, since it depended on the willingness of local breweries to pay a price for his products high enough to cover the costs of the barley and hops he bought from farmers, and still allow a profit.

In Frederick Swaine's case, it happened that, when his huge three-story malt house had been gorged with produce purchased with money borrowed from the Ypsilanti Savings Bank, a supplier in Kansas City, Missouri offered the breweries in the area grain products at a price three cents a bushel less than Frederick could sell them for. The breweries quickly changed suppliers and left him in dire economic circumstances. He had borrowed heavily from the bank to fill the malt house, and now found himself \$16,000 in debt. He died suddenly soon afterwards, without a will, in April, 1897.

Swaine's obituary tells us much about his death, as well as his life. The cause of his death at the age of 47 is cited as "nervous prostration." This was a Victorian term for a nervous breakdown, which was then thought to have a physical basis as a "disease of the peripheral nerves." Most likely, this successful young man died from great frustration and worry caused by his inability to figure out a way to save his home, business and family from a weighty burden of debt.

In the obituary, which was published in the local papers of the time, Frederick is



Malt House connected to Peck Street Primary. Part of the West wall remains as a brick wall today, as does the Peck Street Primary. This shows the first cement sidewalk in the City of Ypsilanti that the town cows liked to walk on while going to pasture at the river

described as an honest man, well read, interested in politics, charitable, an initial organizer of the Ypsilanti Musical Union, choir director of the German Lutheran Church, an actor and singer, a student of the German language, and a devoted husband and father. The obituary states that "While Mr. Swaine has not been well for months, he did not finally give up until the Sunday before his death, at which time it was found impossible to build up the nervous system. Nervous prostration, resulting in congestion of the brain, was the immediate cause of death."

The Ypsilanti Savings Bank appointed its own Robert Hemphill as administrator of the heavily indebted estate. Hemphill quickly published a newspaper article indicating that he would continue to operate the business of buying and selling grains for brewing. "As administrator of the estate of the late Frederick J. Swaine," Hemphill wrote, "I am requested by the heirs of the estate to say that the business of buying barley and manufacturing and securing malt will be continued by me for them, so that parties having barley to sell can depend on getting the highest market price at the old stand, corner of Forest and River street, Ypsilanti, and orders for malt will at my hands receive prompt attention, and customers may depend on the same courteous treatment in the future as in the

past." This newspaper article was dated one week after Swaine's death – April 21, 1897. The business continued under Hemphill's supervision until November, 1904, when it was "closed out" with the sum of \$4,000 still owed to the bank.

This sad story of broken dreams continues with a court case against Robert Hemphill brought by Frederick's widow, Lizzie, and his two daughters. The women argued that the amount of \$4,000 supposedly owed the bank was fraudulent and should be set aside. They contended that Hemphill either should have sold the business when Frederick died or run it year by year only if there were a profit and not a debt. The case eventually went to the Michigan Supreme Court, where, on May 8, 1911, its opinion was rendered and published.

The summation of the case indicates that Mrs. Swaine put the entire amount of the insurance money granted to her after her husband's death - \$5,650 - into the business, and, further, that the business paid out to her and her daughters nearly \$9,500. It also notes that men employed at the malt house did work at the Swaine home and that the home was heated by the malt house (probably excess steam). The judges determined that the Swaine women and Mrs. Swaine's brother were aware that the business had lost money in the fourth year, but were part of the decision



*Florence and Jesse Swaine and friends outside the Malt House in a donkey cart.
The Swaine house is to the left*

making process to [continued overleaf]

continue to operate the business, along with Hemphill, and so they were equally culpable in the loss.

The published decision in the case states that “the losses during the latter part of the operation appear to have been caused in part ... by competition with large manufacturers of malt, who sold at prices so low that this small plant could not make a profit of it” It further describes the widow’s efforts to save the situation: that she daily traversed the one-hundred feet from her home -- which she was in

danger of losing to the bank -- to the malt house, in order to inspect the books, and that she had asked her brother, also in the malt business, to come from Kansas City to try to help save the business and the livelihood it provided. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court decision denied both the case brought by the Swaine women, and any claims made by Swaine’s widow, in favor of Robert Hemphill, who had once been a friend of the family.

In an insurance map of 1909, we find that the building that had originated as the Peck Street Primary and then become a malt house is in use as a storage area for

ladders – probably by the nearby ladder company on East Forest Ave. In 1912, the same property, then owned by a carpenter, George Jackson, was torn down, except for the part that was the original Peck Street Primary, and the bricks sold and used to build the interurban barns on Michigan Avenue near River Street. The two lots on which the expanded malt house once stood were sold, and Sears and Roebuck homes were built on them by the Lidke and Bortz families. In a final change, what was once the Peck Street Primary school, which educated hundreds of Ypsilanti children, was turned into a garage, and a brick wall now defines what had been the west wall of the building.

Frederick Swaine’s widow Eliza and her two daughters, Florence and Jesse Swaine, were able to save their home and enjoy it for the rest of their long lives. Jesse died in the same room and bed in which she had been born some 89 years earlier. Both daughters, who grew up on the same property as the Peck Street Primary, became teachers and influenced many a young life in Ypsilanti, Wayne and Detroit, helping make good on the vision of Joseph and Sophia Peck when they first opened Ypsilanti’s second school.

The son of Worger George (Frederick Swaine’s brother-in-law and former business partner), Edward Shutts George, was also interested in education and served on the Ypsilanti School Board for many years. George School, on Ecorse Road, is named for him. As a child, Edward would have played with his cousins, Florence and Jesse Swaine, at the site of the Peck Street Primary, which had been founded in 1839 to provide a basic education to children in the frontier wilderness of Ypsilanti.

If buildings could talk, the modest brick structure that still remains about 100 feet east of the Swaine House at Forest and River – though three walls have fallen down and been replaced, and it now serves only as a prosaic garage -- would have a poignant story to tell. Hearing it, we could surely learn even more about the hopes and dreams of English immigrants to the new world, and of fortunes won and lost.

(Janice Anschuetz is a local historian who is currently researching and writing her third book – a history of one of her ancestors and their role in the shaping of England and America.)

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At the rear of the mausoleum is a stained glass window that is protected by a wrought iron grill and a sheet of clear plastic

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Highland Cemetery's Brayton Mausoleum, built in 1913 or 1914, was the first mausoleum built in Washtenaw County

Highland's Brayton Mausoleum was the first in Washtenaw

By James Mann

The first mausoleum built in Washtenaw County is the Brayton Mausoleum in Highland Cemetery. The mausoleum is located in Lot 4, Block 64, of the cemetery. The mausoleum was built in 1913 or 1914, by Zackman & Armet of Ann Arbor, at a cost of about \$6,500. The architect was Herman Pipp of Ann Arbor, who is perhaps best remembered as the architect of Nickels Arcade.

"The tomb is of sarcophagus design with corners relieved by Tuscan columns and surmounted by a dome top," reported *The Daily Ypsilanti Press* of January 2, 1914. "The exterior," continued the account, "is made of Vermont gray granite, and the interior which comprises four crypts is finished in Italian marble." "The grill doors and vents are of standard bronze," noted the account. There is a stained glass window in the rear wall of the mausoleum. "A part of the monument was so large that it was necessary to send out of the city for apparatus to unload it from the car on which it was shipped and transported to the cemetery."

The lot on which the mausoleum stands was purchased by Jennie L. Brayton on June 14, 1910. Her father, Jerome R. Brayton died on August 27th of that year, and was interred on the lot. It is likely his remains were disinterred and placed in the cemetery's receiving vault during construction of the mausoleum.

Jennie Brayton was the daughter of Jerome and Rachel Brayton, and was born on January 14, 1863, at Seneca Castle, Ontario County, New York. When Jennie was still young, the family moved to the Village of Rawsonville, east of Ypsilanti. She married Dr. Flores Eugene Holmes, on September 4, 1913, and moved with him to Ypsilanti. The couple had no children. Dr. Holmes died in 1924, and was entombed in the mausoleum, as was Jennie Holmes' mother. Jennie Holmes died at her home in Ypsilanti on March 7, 1931, and was entombed with her family on March 10, 1931.

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

Other mausoleums at Highland Cemetery



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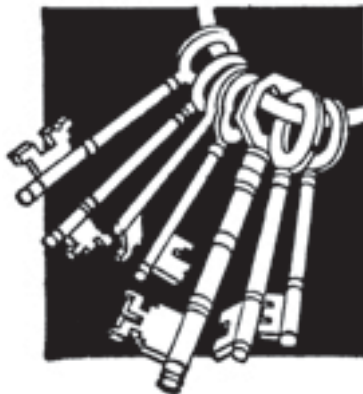
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The Ypsilanti Historical Society's house museum was built in the 1860s by Asa Dow who came from Chicago to go into business with D.L. Quirk. Following the death of his wife, Mr. Dow sold the house to the Lambert Barnes family who lived in it for forty-seven years (1875-1922).

The magnificent stairway in the front entry hall, with its splendid curve, spindled bannister and sturdy newel post, was expertly carved from the wood of a butternut tree.

The stenciling, on the left of the doorway and above the door, once followed the steps. Several rooms have stenciled borders with other unique designs. This work is found in no other structure in Ypsilanti.

The Ypsilanti Historical Museum and Archives are open Tuesday through Sunday from 2 pm to 5 pm. Docents are available to guide visitors through the Museum.

