

## **Philetus Norris House**

17815 Mt. Elliot

Local	✓	8/14/95
State		
State Marker		
National	✓	1/28/92



**Philetus Norris House**

### **Historic overview:**

Philetus Norris was an explorer, union spy, cavalry man, land developer, sanitation expert, politician, poet, amateur archaeologist, and lover of freedom. He was the second superintendent of Yellowstone National Park from 1877-1881. Yellowstone was the first national park in the world created “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people”. Norris played a vital role in the exploration and early development of Yellowstone, and contributed significantly to the ethnographical and archaeological collections of the Smithsonian Institution. He constructed roads and trails and published the first tour guide to Yellowstone, and initiated the first wildlife management program.

Captain Norris also played a role in the development of the City of Detroit by establishing the Village of Norris, which later became part of northeast Detroit. The Norris House, built in 1870, is the oldest dwelling in this section of Detroit and one of the few remainders of the Village of Norris. The village was in Hamtramck Township; its boundaries were generally Seven Mile, Mound, Six Mile and Van Dyke. There was a hotel, wagon shop, sawmill, homes, a railroad station, and more. Most of the early residents were German Lutheran market gardeners. At its peak, the village had a population of 250. Shortly after 1890 the village became known as North Detroit.

The Norris family homestead was sold to William Lynch in 1916. Lynch, a teamster, had been a highway commissioner of the Township of Hamtramck. He sold the house in 1925, and it was converted to a three-family dwelling. In 1965 it was converted back into a single family home.