

# Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

YHS Museum & Archives

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



SPRING 2009

## The Gilbert Mansion

By Michelle Woods

To the outside world Ypsilanti, Michigan is probably best known as home to Eastern Michigan University. To current and former residents, it is probably the city's historical buildings and landmarks that come to mind. When I think of Ypsilanti, it immediately brings to mind a home located at 227 N. Grove. It was the summer of 1982 the first time I saw the Gilbert Mansion.

As a child I spent my summers at the Huron Valley Boys and Girls Club. I was no more than five years old the first time I saw the Gilbert Mansion, but I remember it like yesterday. The Gilbert Mansion was built in 1861, making it well over one hundred years old when I was a kid. I guess that's part of what made it so fascinating.

Throughout a good portion of the 1980s, the mansion was vacant and in complete disre-

pair. As I recall, all of the doors and windows on the lower level were boarded up. The paint was peeling and dirty, and the landscape hadn't been touched in years. The resi-

dence looked as though it were a haunted house from a movie scene, appearing almost menacing on a stormy day. Yet on the contrary, it held some sort of whimsical charm on a bright summer day. I was completely enamored with the home and its ominous presence. I could spend hours staring at the place in awe, almost in a hypnotic state. The place was so

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Michelle Woods at about age five.



An old photo of the Gilbert Mansion at 227 N. Grove before its restoration.

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## Ypsilanti Historical Society

220 North Huron Street  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
Tel: (734) 482-4990  
www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org

## Gleanings Staff

Editor \_\_\_\_\_ Al Rudisill  
Assistant Editor \_\_\_\_\_ Peg Porter  
Design & Layout \_\_\_\_\_ Keith Bretzius  
Advertising Director \_\_\_\_\_ Pam German  
Finance Director \_\_\_\_\_ Karen Nickels  
Distribution \_\_\_\_\_ Pam German  
If you have suggestions for articles or if  
you have questions contact Al Rudisill at  
734-476-6658 or al@rudisill.ws.

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# From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

Our current major project is to expand and resurface the Museum parking lot and repair the sidewalk and parking lot entrance. The Historic District Commission has approved a plan to expand the parking lot 10' toward the house which will provide us with three additional parking spaces. Plans are being drawn up and we expect to gain final approval from the city and pave the lot in the next couple of months. Concurrently with the paving project will be a fundraising effort by our Endowment Fund Board to raise the \$20,000 needed to pay for the project.

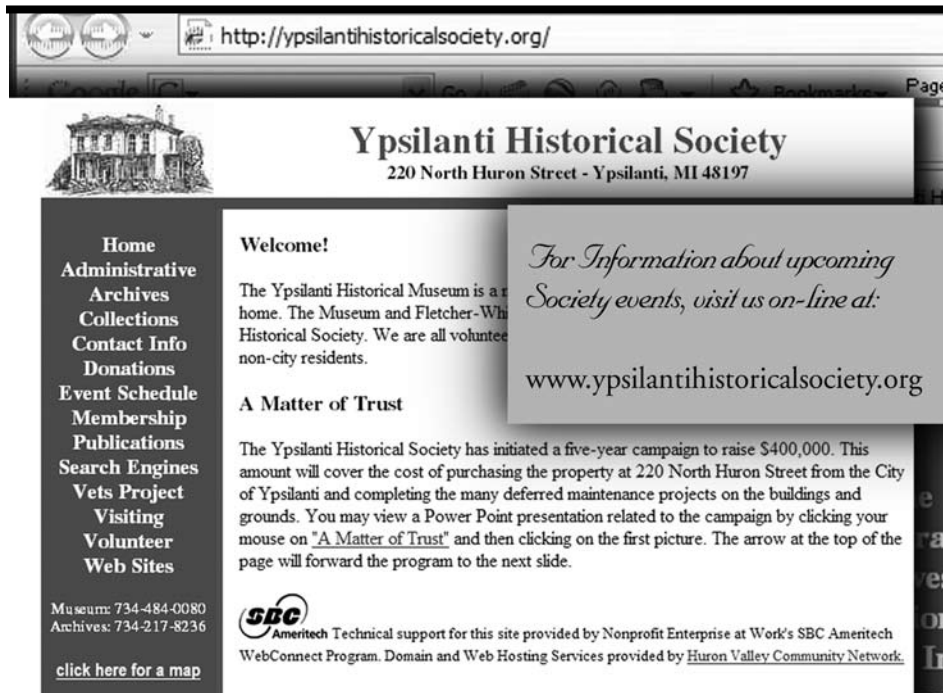
Our next quarterly meeting will be held on Sunday, May 6. We are very fortunate to have Tom Dodd as our speaker. The title of his presentation will be "Discovering 19<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture Through Reverse Didactic Encounters." Emphasis will be on using the built environment as an active learning resource. Tom has retired after 50 years of teaching but he just can't stop. He will take us down the same path that has been followed by hundreds of his students as he compared the built environments in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.

The YHS yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 6. This is an important fundraising

activity for our organization as we raise several thousand dollars that support the operational expenses associated with running the Museum and Archives. Ron Rupert is providing storage space for us prior to the sale so if you have items to donate please call Bill Nickels (734-483-8896) or Al Rudisill (734-476-6658) to arrange for a pick-up. We extend our sincere thanks to Bill and Karen Nickels for hosting this event.

Pamela German, our Intern from the graduate program in Historical Preservation at EMU, will be graduating at the end of April. Pam has done a great job of coordinating the efforts of our many volunteers in the Museum and she will be missed. We will be interviewing candidates to fill her position in the next few weeks.

We are always looking for volunteers as docents for the Museum or research assistants for the Archives. Both the Museum and Archives are open from 2:00 to 5:00 pm from Tuesday to Sunday. If you are available during that time and are interesting in helping us preserve the historical information and artifacts of the area, or educating the general public about our history, please give me a call at 734-476-6658. ■



The screenshot shows the website for the Ypsilanti Historical Society. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the URL <http://ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org/>. Below this is a header section featuring a small image of a historic building and the text "Ypsilanti Historical Society" and "220 North Huron Street - Ypsilanti, MI 48197". The main content area is divided into several sections: "Home Administrative Archives Collections Contact Info Donations Event Schedule Membership Publications Search Engines Vets Project Visiting Volunteer Web Sites", "Welcome!" with a paragraph about the museum and Fletcher-White Historical Society, "A Matter of Trust" with a paragraph about a five-year campaign to raise \$400,000, and "For Information about upcoming Society events, visit us on-line at: www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org". At the bottom, there is a footer with contact information for the Museum (734-484-0080) and Archives (734-217-8236), a "click here for a map" link, and technical support information for SBC Ameritech and Huron Valley Community Network.

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## The Gilbert Mansion

*continued from front page*

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grand that I used it as a landmark. I always knew we were almost home when returning from field trips, because you could see the highest peak of the house just above the trees while driving up Park Street.

Given the house was right next to the club grounds, my friends and I would find ways to slip away so we could snoop around, even though we knew good and well we weren't supposed to be there. Although only a few steps away from the club, hanging out around the mansion was like being in a completely different world. Gone was the hustle and bustle of the club, only to be replaced by the hissing of cicadas and the cooing of pigeons who had taken over the rooftop. As a game we would dare each other to walk up to the front porch, and the first one to run away was chicken. Amusingly, I remember pretending to be Nancy Drew, always trying to solve "The Gilbert House Mystery." To this day, I can't tell you what the so-called mystery was. I guess that is something only a child can figure out.

Each summer was the same until around 1985. That fall my family relocated out east. Gone were summers spent at the Boys and Girls Club and Gilbert Mansion. It would be nearly fifteen years before I would return.

As an adult, the places I once knew as a child seem quite small. I was now in my early twenties; I hadn't been back to Ypsi in years. It was merely coincidental that I happened to be back in the area, so I decided to take a drive through the old neighborhood. The



*The Gilbert Mansion at 227 N. Grove as it stands today.*

first stop on my list was my old elementary school on Ecorse Road. Then I decided to cruise past my old stomping grounds on South Prospect. Last but not least, the Boys and Girls Club crossed my mind and Gilbert Mansion of course. Given its prior condition before I left, I honestly wasn't expecting the house to still be there. Curiosity got the best of me though so I hung a left on Michigan Avenue and started toward Park Street. Just a few moments after making a right onto Park, there it was, the highest peak of the house just above the trees and you know what, it looked exactly the same way it did when I was a kid. As I got closer I realized something was very different. Gone were the boarded up windows, unkempt landscape and peeling paint from the 1980s. Gilbert Mansion had been restored to its former glory. There are no words that can express the way I felt.

While both my childhood and the 1980s have come and gone, I can still recall the eerie nostalgia of the Gilbert Mansion as though it were yesterday. When I think of Gilbert Mansion, it takes me to a completely different time and place. Today I can drive up Park Street and see the highest peak of the house above the trees, just as it was over twenty years ago. As our today turns into yesterday and future generations come and go, the only existence that will never fade are the footprints of time. Even when I'm gone, I suspect the marks they leave will still remain. They may change but I know they will never fade. ■

*(Michelle Woods grew up in Ypsilanti and still recalls many childhood memories about the places and people in her neighborhood.)*



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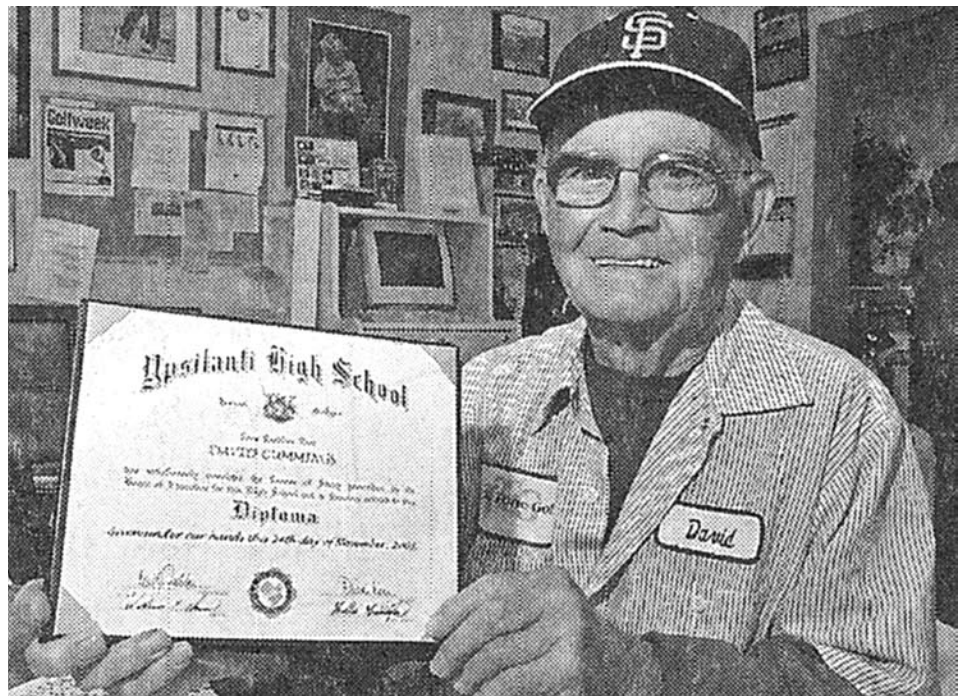
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# Diploma Received Sixty-One Years Late

By Kelsey Hart

A single book report prevented David Cummings from graduating with his class in 1942. Cummings was a star diver on the Ypsilanti High School Swimming Team. Three months before graduation, he failed to turn in a book report on time. As a consequence, his teacher, Miss Davis didn't allow him to dive in the state meet. His participation in the meet would have secured the state title for the school that year. The Team did take second. His classmates and his coach petitioned the teacher to allow him to turn in the book report late. Miss Davis would not break. "She frequently held students back," David said. Austin Norton, David's classmate, said "She stopped a lot of kids back then." In his anger and frustration, David threw his books in the corner and proceeded to walk out and never came back.

Although Cummings would have liked to graduate with his class, the lack of a high school diploma didn't stop him from other achievements. David enrolled in the military, and became a medic on the front lines during World War II in Belgium, France, and Germany. He served in the military until 1946. When he returned to the United States, he married his first wife, Virginia



David Cummings in 2003, at age 81 years of age, displaying his new high school diploma.

and they had four children. He distributed newspapers in California and Arizona and later became a merchant marine. His wife passed away in 1968.

During his merchant travels, David met a Korean woman named Kuni. They moved to Modesto, California and he retired in 1980.

In 2001 he began to work part-time at a golf course in northern California that provided him with the perk of playing for free in the afternoons. At the golf course, David met many other World War II Veterans who played there. They spent time sharing their fascinating life and war stories with each other.

*continued on page 21*

## Correction to Winter Issue:

In the article "Gone But Not Forgotten" the Dixboro General Store was included as a defunct business. It is in fact still in business, under different ownership, in the same location at the intersection of Plymouth and Cherry Hill Roads. The store carries gifts, some furniture and, in season, a unique garden shop.



Cummings's classmates attended a YHS Board of Education meeting and received the diploma: (left to right) Dorothy Norton, Austin Norton, David Zublke (School Superintendent), Diane Kerr (School Board President), Doreen Binder, and Bud Furtney.

# A Horse Named "Ypsilanti"

By Gerry Pety

A few weeks ago Edward Byrom of the United Kingdom contacted the YHS Archives via email about an oil painting he had of a horse named "Ypsilanti." The painting was by the painter G. Paice and Byrom believed that his grandfather was possibly a groom for the horse during the years 1903 and 1904. So, our Archives staff went to work to find the untold story of "Ypsilanti" the racehorse.

We asked around but no one had ever heard of a horse named "Ypsilanti" and not even James Mann, our local historian, could recall ever hearing about this horse. We did find out there was a farm named the Deep Run Farm just a mile or so south of Michigan Avenue on Huron Street. The farm was situated on 250 acres at the corner of Stony Creek Rd and South Huron/Whittaker Rd. The farm was owned and operated by George Hammond (1847-1930), who loved horses and raised them for racing and other purposes. It had several horse mews (an area of stables built around a small street) one being a 40 stall unit over 200 feet in length, and a one mile, circular "improved" horse track designed and built by a concern from the city of Chicago. So it must have been quite the operation and we can only surmise the actual size and business activity of this horse farm plus other horse farms that existed in this area.

Mr. Hammond purchased this farm in 1869 and owned it for 50 years before selling it to George Slaughter who further improved the facilities to a state of the art horse breeding and training concern. Deep Run Farm just pops up all over the internet when you look up history of Harness Racing, which is the only horse racing allowed in Michigan since the early 1930s. Before that time, racing was similar to that allowed in other states like the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, or the Belmont Stakes, etc. So, there is a possibility that the horse in the oil painting was somehow connected to the city of Ypsilanti here in Michigan.



The oil painting of a horse called "Ypsilanti" painted by G. Paice.

## Pedigree Online Thoroughbred Database

Ypsilanti (USA)  
b. 1898

Galore (GB)  
b. 1885

Stefanette (GB)  
b. 1884

The Pedigree Online Thoroughbred Database indicates that a horse called "Ypsilanti" was sired by "Galore" and "Stefanette," both born in Great Britain.

A check of the Pedigree Online Thoroughbred Database indicates that a horse called "Ypsilanti" was sired by "Galore" and "Stefanette" both born in Great Britain but that "Ypsilanti" was born in the United States.

According to the August 2, 1902, issue of the New York Times the horse was owned by Richard Crocker. **"Crocker's Horse Ypsilanti Won:"** London, Aug 1. Richard Crocker's Ypsilanti won the Chesterfield Cup, (handicap, of 400 sovereigns, added to a sweepstakes of 13

sovereigns each, for three-year-olds and upward, distance one mile and a quarter) at Goodwood to-day. According to the on-line encyclopedia Wikipedia, Crocker was head of Tammany Hall in New York City and for some time almost completely controlled that organization. "As head of Tammany, Crocker received bribe money from the owners of brothels, saloons and illegal gambling dens. He survived...attacks on Tammany Hall corruption and became a wealthy man...After Crocker's failure to carry continued on page 21

# Former Neighbors Discovered Hiding Out in Apartments

By James Mann

Everyone should have a hobby, it is said, and no doubt Ypsilanti architect Ralph Gerganoff had his pastimes. One of these may have been turning old homes into apartment buildings. He did this at least twice - turning old mansions into what he may have considered modern structures. The two stand on each side of North Washington Street between Washtenaw and Cross Streets, incongruous among the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses around them. Still, the original houses are still there amid the additions, visible to those who look closely.

A native of Bulgaria, Gerganoff came to America and attended the University of Michigan, College of Architecture in 1917. He moved to Ypsilanti in 1927, and established his office at 206 North Washington, an address that had never before existed. His office was an addition built onto the house at 210 North Washington. This house had been the home of Don Carlos Batchelder.

**210 North Washington Street:** Don Carlos Batchelder was born at Stratford, Orange County, Vermont, on July 13, 1834. He moved to Ypsilanti in 1852, and worked as an apprentice in the marble cutting business with his brother Hiram on South Washington Street. He became proficient as a letterer and carver and, in 1855, moved to Janesville Wisconsin, where he went into business for himself. He returned to Michigan in 1859 and settled in Ann Arbor. In the fall of 1862 he entered the army as a Second-Lieutenant of Company F, 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry. He saw no action during the Civil War, but resigned his commission because of ill health in 1863.

Batchelder returned to Ypsilanti and may have rejoined his brother Hiram in the marble and granite trade. In 1879 Hiram became one of the organizers of the Ypsilanti Carriage



Photo A: Batchelder's house in its original configuration.



Photo B: Gerganoff added a wing for his office.

Co., and assumed the management of the business. In September of 1867 Don Carlos married Maria E. Morton. They are listed in the City Directory for 1873-74 as living on River Street between North and Cross Street. Maria Batchelder died at the age of 35 in September of 1876, within a few days of their anniversary.

The next available directory is for 1878-79 which lists Batchelder as living on the east side of Washington Street. At this time there was no street numbering system in Ypsilanti, when the houses were numbered, the one where

Batchelder lived became 210 North Washington Street. Don Carlos Batchelder married for the second time on November 5, 1879 to Emma K Dolson, who was some twenty years younger than her husband (Photo A).

At this time in 1879, Don Carlos joined with Robert Hemphill Sr. to form the private banking firm of Hemphill, Batchelder & Co. which later became the Ypsilanti Savings Bank. In 1888 the bank moved into a new building, long known as the Ypsilanti Savings Bank Building, which is the present day City Hall. He also had an interest in mining

in Missouri, and was a partner in a feed and grain business with Oliver Ainsworth. Their mill was at on Michigan Avenue, space now occupied by The Bank of Ann Arbor and Salon West Eleven.

Don Carlos Batchelder died at 9:30 a.m. on December 30, 1915, at the home of his daughter Florence in Evanston, Illinois at the age of 81. Emma Batchelder returned to her

home on North Washington Street, when she lived until her death in 1924. After her death, the house stood vacant until 1928 when it was turned into apartments by Ralph Gerganoff.


Gerganoff began his remodeling of the house by adding, at ground level, a single-floor office space with basement, to the north side of the house toward the rear. He used this space *continued on page 8*



*Photo C: A third floor and a new brick front façade made the old house look newer.*



*Photo D: Another office wing served to disguise the original structure even more.*



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**Former Neighbors Discovered  
Hiding Out in Apartments**  
*continued from page 7*

as his office. Although this is attached to the original house, with the address of 210 North Washington, the office has the address of 206 North Washington (Photo B).

Then he bricked over the original house and added a third floor. He would also add a modern brick façade to the house. Later, perhaps in the 1950's, Gerganoff added additional space to the ground floor section at the front of the part he used as his office. The original house is lost from sight, but traces can still be seen, when one looks closely (Photo C & D).



*Photo E: Deubel's house in its original configuration.*



*Photo F: The Deubel house after Voorhees' alterations.*



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As Gerganoff worked on the house at 210 North Washington, he must have stopped to gaze across the street, at 211 North Washington and wondered what he could do with that structure. In time, he would change that house as well.

**211 North Washington Street:** This house was the home of William Hamilton Deubel and his wife Mary. William H. Deubel was the son of William and Sally Deubel, who arrived in Ypsilanti 1875 when he purchased the Ypsilanti City Mills which stood on the east

“The buildings add little to the historic nature to the houses on the street and appear out of place. Still, over time, these unique residences have become part of the local landscape.”

side of the Huron River, facing Cross Street. He would operate this mill in partnership with his son Frank. The family also purchased The Huron Flouring Mill which was located on the Huron River, off Water Street, just north of Michigan Avenue Bridge. This mill was operated by the Deubel brothers, including the younger William (Photo E).

William Deubel is first listed as living on North Washington Street in the 1888-1889 City Directory. There are no copies of the city directory for the years between 1879 and 1888. William Deubel died on July, 15, 1907. His family is listed in the city directories as living at 211 North Washington until 1924.

The city directories list a George W. Voorhees as living in the house until 1934. He may have been a brother of Mary Deubel, as Voorhees was her maiden name. Ralph Gerganoff purchased the house in 1935, and later recalled it was an old run down mansion with weeds around it growing three feet high. He turned the house into a six- unit apartment house, and then expanded the building three times, until it held 32 apartments (Photo F & G).

In 1962 Gerganoff sold the building to



*Photo G: The old house designs are completely hidden, but the third floor addition is still pronounced.*



*Photo H: A new front façade cloaks the building's elegant history quite effectively.*

Theodore G. Tangalakis, owner of the Campus Drug Store. Gerganoff said taxes on the structure in 1935 were \$25, and in 1962 were \$3,000 a year, reported The Ypsilanti Press of August 31, 1962. Gerganoff continued to use the space across the street as his office (Photo H).

Gerganoff most likely saw his actions as a business investment and gave little regard for the appearance of the buildings on a residential street. The buildings add little to the historic nature to the houses on the street  
*continued on page 20*

# They Called Him “Yip”

By George Ridenour

On November 28, 1942 there appeared in the Detroit Free Press, buried on the sports page, a brief announcement. The announcement read: *“Funeral services for Frank (Doc) Owen former Detroit Tiger and Chicago White Sox pitcher will be held at McFarland Funeral Home... Owen died of a heart attack last Tuesday. He was employed at the Ford Motor Company...”*<sup>1</sup>

The Ypsilanti Press on November 30, 1942 in a brief note in the obituary section included the following: *“Succumbed in Fordson Hotel Dearborn. Married twice. Wife Eula (Carson) died 15 years prior. Survivors: Brother Edward and niece Marion Owen of Des Moines, Iowa.”* Information followed that burial would be in Greenlawn Cemetery in Detroit.<sup>2</sup>

“Frank was an Ypsi boy who deserves to have his name known to our generations.”

A former pitching great with the Tigers, the Chicago White Stockings, and then the Chicago White Sox was little remembered by the time he died in Dearborn in 1942. Frank Malcolm “Yip” Owen was born in Ypsilanti on December 23, 1879. His parents were Dr. Frank and Mrs. Georgiana (Webb) Owen. Frank played baseball in the local sandlots. He grew to be 5’11” and weighted 160 lbs.



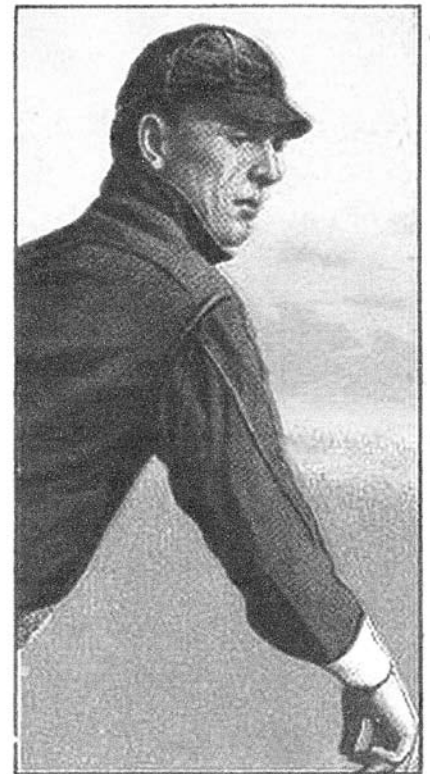
Frank Malcolm “Yip” Owen.

While not much is know about his life in and around Ypsilanti (which was common in those days of baseball) let me give you a peek into the “baseball” Yip who in his day made himself quite a name and became a part of the history of the Chicago White Sox (even today).

The Baseball Library.com makes the following points about Frank and his career:

- He was one of the best right-handers in the American League.
- He won 64 (!!) games for the White Sox.
- On July 1, 1905 he became the first of only (10) American League pitchers ever to win “two complete games in one day.”
- He was the FIRST pitcher (American League) to steal home!

Frank made his first start with the Detroit Tigers on April 26, 1901 and finished his career with the Chicago White Sox on May 12, 1909.



OWEN, CHICAGO AMER.

The Frank Owen baseball card.

His greatest years were with the Chicago White Sox. He was a major force in helping the “Hitless Wonders” as they were called with the 1906 World Series.

The Chicago White Sox Media Guide<sup>3</sup> provided by Chicago White Sox Media Relations shows the following tributes to Frank:

- 1906 World Series he pitched in Game 2 (Went 6 innings).
- Giving up six hits, three runs, three

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- walks and two strikeouts.
- His 6.0 innings pitched in relief still stands as a White Sox postseason record.
  - In 1906 Owen led the White Sox in:
    - Wins with 21 in 1904
    - Games with 42 in 1905/1906
    - Games started with 38 in 1905 and 36 in 1906
    - Completed Games with 34 in 1904, 32 in 1905 and 27 in 1906
    - Led in innings pitched with 315.0, 1904, 334 in 1905 and 293 in 1906

Talk about a work horse!! Finally he was rated as having great control and his pitches were the: fastball, changeup, curveball and slider. He was a great team leader. Above all he was considered a GREAT clutch performer. He appeared in the 1904 All-star game.

After the 1909 season was done he came back to live in the Dearborn area. He played sandlot baseball and even managed a few

teams. He worked for Ford Motor Company. Records show him to have been in security and a chauffeur.

Although married twice no children are listed. He died in Dearborn at the Fordson Hotel on November 24, 1942. He is buried in the Greenlawn Cemetery, Detroit.

He is not forgotten. A check of EBay shows that there are still baseball cards of Franks. They are going for \$13 to over \$100 depending on the quality.

Frank was an Ypsi boy who deserves to have his name known to our generations. A boy named YIP who became a baseball legend (at least with the White Sox). To bad he isn't here for the Tigers! ■

*(George Ridenour is a volunteer in the YHS Archives and a regular contributing author for the Gleanings.)*

<sup>1</sup> "Services Saturday for Frank Owen," Detroit Free Press, November 28, 1942.  
<sup>2</sup> "Frank Owen" The Ypsilanti Press, November 30, 1942.  
<sup>3</sup> Josh Lewis, Frank "Yip" Owen 2009 *Chicago White Sox Media Guide*, Chicago White Sox Media Relations, March 4, 2009.

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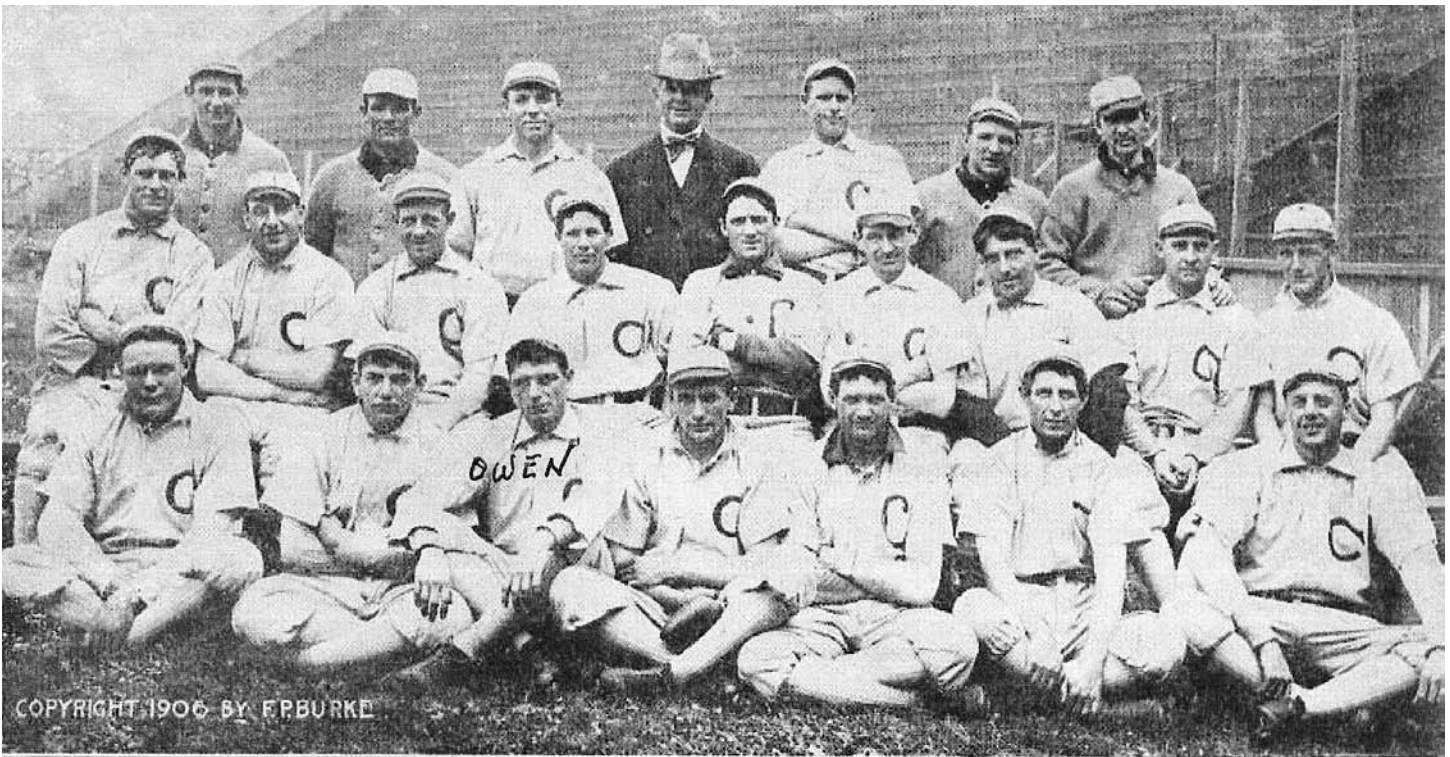
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**White Sox, 1906 Team.**—From left to right : (Top row) Hart, McFarland, Davis, President Comiskey, Isbell, Sullivan and White. (Middle row) Walsh, Smith, Roth, Hahn, Dundon, Donohue, O'Neill, Tannehill and Rohe. (Lower row) Towne, Altrock, Owen, Patterson, Dougherty, Jones and Fiene.

*The 1906 Chicago White Sox World Series team.*

# 1909: A Look Back in Time

By Peg Porter

For the young, 100 years seems a long time. As we grow older, our sense of time shrinks. From the perspective of history, a century is not a very long time at all. What was happening in 1909? Here are a few examples:

## *Internationally:*

- Edward VII, son of Queen Victoria, was King of England. He would die the following year, bringing the Edwardian Era to a close.
- There was political turmoil in Europe with the expansion of the German Empire and related events that would lead to World War I.

## *Nationally:*

- Theodore Roosevelt was in the final year of his presidency. He would be succeeded by William Howard Taft.
- The Pittsburgh Pirates won the World Series against the Detroit Tigers in seven games (sound familiar?) Two baseball legends played on the opposing teams, Ty Cobb for the Tigers and Honus Wagner for the Pirates
- Mary Pickford began her career in silent movies.
- Irving Berlin emerged as a popular lyricist and would become one of the country's most prolific and popular songwriters.
- The "Gibson Girl" imagined by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson typified the young American woman, active, accomplished and attractive.

## *Locally:*

- In 1910, Washtenaw County's population was 44,714.
- Ypsilanti's Masonic Temple was dedicated on May 5, 1909.
- Music professor Frederick Pease passed away in March.

*continued on page 13*



*Baseball legend Ty Cobb played for the Detroit Tigers in the 1909 World Series.*



*In 1909 King Edward VII was the king of England.*



*The "Gibson Girl" as created by illustrator Charles Gibson seemed to set the national standard for feminine beauty.*



*Mary Pickford, America's first sweetheart, began her career in the silent movies in 1909.*



*Ypsilanti's Masonic Temple was dedicated on May 5, 1909.*

- The Cross Street Bridge was completed in 1909.
- Daniel Lace Quirk celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. The citizens of Ypsilanti presented him with 91 roses, each separately delivered by sixth graders at the Central School.
- The Interurban was a popular form of transportation. There were a few motor cars but they were outnumbered by horse drawn vehicles.
- The Opera House (later the Weurth Theater) provided both live entertainment and silent movies.
- The following decade (1910 to 1920) would bring major changes worldwide. World War I would devastate much of Europe, the Russian Revolution would have an impact lasting most of the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the automobile would become widely used, new roads built and the world would begin to seem smaller. ■



*The Cross Street Bridge over the Huron River was completed in 1909.*



*Daniel Lace Quirk celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday in 1909 and was presented with 91 roses by the citizens of Ypsilanti.*



*In 1909 the Ypsilanti Opera House, later the Weurth Theater, provided entertainment for the citizens of Ypsilanti.*

*(Peg Porter is the Chair of the YHS Membership Committee and a regular contributing author to the Gleanings.)*

## Membership Report

*By Peg Porter, Membership Chair*

As of February 28<sup>th</sup>, there were 37 new memberships since August 2008. Since our goal is 80 new memberships by the end of August 2009, we are almost at the half-way point. The best resource for recruiting new members is our current membership. If at least 50% of our current members recruit one new member, we will go over the top.

When we first set our goal of 80 new memberships, several people said we'd never be able to do that. So count yourself in the 50% recruiter group and prove the naysayers wrong! ■

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# Charles McKenny Union: An EMU Icon

By Pamela German and Veronica Robinson

Charles McKenny, President of Eastern Michigan University, (then Michigan State Normal College) from 1912-1933, is credited with proposing the building of a comprehensive student center in 1924. Michigan State Normal College would be the first teacher's college to have a student union on campus.

“Charles McKenny Union was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.”

After the U.S. stock market crash in 1929, plans for the union were altered to reflect the smaller amount of money raised towards its construction. During the cornerstone dedication ceremony on January 17, 1931, Mrs. Dessalee Ryan Dudley (MSNC c/o 1900) spoke as the alumni representative. *“The cornerstone of this building is loyalty. Brought into being in part by the fruits of our labors, it will speak to future generations of the devotion to this school of its great body of alumni.”*

McKenny Union was designed by architect Frank Eurich, Jr. of Detroit. Its design was similar to the popular Collegiate Gothic style that was common throughout this period, but with a twist. The architect added Art Deco touches to its central tower and the result is a unique mix of old Gothic styles and the popular Art Deco lines and shapes. The Charles McKenny Union was dedicated on Saturday, October 24, 1931.

McKenny Union was first expanded in 1963 and reopened in 1966 with a rededication ceremony on Saturday, April 30. The new McKenny Union had several new additions including a bookstore in its basement, and even a bowling alley.

In 1992, McKenny Union was, again, expanded – this time at a cost of \$7.6 million. This expansion was completed in two phases. In the first, the roof was replaced, a loading

dock was expanded and a new bookstore was constructed on the first floor. The second phase consisted of the installing of a new passenger elevator and the completion of barrier free access to the building. To mark its reopening, the school held a week long celebration January 11-15, 1993, which included nightly events in the union. McKenny Union Director Ceil Paulson said of the union and its reopening in 1993, *“Historically, student unions have been called the ‘living rooms’ of the campus, where students extend their classroom learning experience. That’s what a student union is all about, a place where the entire campus community, faculty, staff, and students, can come together to share experiences beyond the classroom.”*

Charles McKenny Union was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. In 1999 student leaders designated a renovation of their union as one of their highest rated priorities on campus. As a result, McKenny Union closed in 2006 for an infrastructure upgrade and remodel. In November of that year, the new EMU student center opened on campus replacing McKenny Union as the central hub of student activities on campus. When completed, McKenny Union will



President Charles McKenny of the Michigan State Normal School (served, 1912 – 1933).

house University operations offices such as Human Resources and Career Services and continue to host events and meetings in its historic ballroom. Though the EMU student body has outgrown McKenny Union as its ‘student living room,’ this historic structure will continue to play an active role in the lives of EMU students for years to come.

Information for this article was gleaned from the YHS archives and EMU’s McKenny Union Virtual Online Tour.

*(Pamela German and Veronica Robinson are*



Construction of McKenny Hall, C. 1931.

graduate students in the Historic Preservation Program at EMU and serve as Interns in the YHS Museum and Archives.)

(Note: Peg Porter, YHS Membership Chair,

has indicated that her parents, Don and Ruth Porter, were married in the formal lounge in McKenny Union on February 10, 1937, and celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary there in 1987.) ■



Completed McKenny Hall, C. 1946 – 1950.

## You Are Invited!

By Lynda Hummel

Watch the mail for your invitation to the Ypsilanti Historical Society's Fund Raiser to be held late spring at **J. Neil's Mongolian Grille and Keystone Underground Martini Bar**

The opening of **J. Neil's** this spring has been much anticipated by our community and promises to be well worth the wait. Our host, **David Curtis**, promises fresh, healthy stir-fry in a fun, smoke free environment.

If you haven't peeked in the windows yet... you will be struck by how the gorgeous jewel tone colors on the walls mingle with the original brick interior wall. The sparkling exposed tin ceiling adds to the perfect blend of historical, modern and industrial interior design.

We will save the spectacular lower level as a surprise experience when you attend the first of what will become an annual spring fundraiser for the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

The building at 200 W. Michigan Avenue, known by many of us as the Kresge Building, was once a large wooden building housing the original Hawkins House Hotel.

Built in the 1840's, at the corner of what was then Congress and Washington streets, the building was named the Union Block and was home to a wide variety of local businesses. The Kresge Company moved into the building in 1928 and remained there until 1966. ■

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# Nothing Less Than a Miracle

By Dale Leslie

What happens when one farm family joins another farm family in their homestead? **Nothing less than a miracle.** It was 1934, by God's Grace most Michigan farms were self-sufficient and always had a source for food, water and a roof over the resident's head during the Depression.

Dan and Grace Patrick of White Oak Township pondered an offer by their son-in-law, Ivan Galpin of Superior Township. The Patrick clan consisted of two parents and seven children, one boy and the remaining six were girls.

Ivan and his wife, Gladys Patrick Galpin, invited the senior Patrick, wife Grace and their family into their large farmhouse at 6820 Plymouth Road, the Galpin Homestead. Dan Patrick would assist Ivan in operating the vast Galpin farm in exchange for a home for his family. Dan was a horse whisperer and brought his own team of horses which made small work of each farm task.



Dan Patrick with his daughter Grace.



Ivan and Dan Patrick on the Galpin Farm. A trip to the barn with a pail was an everyday early morning ritual.

Two of the Patrick's teenage daughters, Grace and Wilma (Billie), needed a ride to the Ypsilanti High School when classes began in the fall. It was said that Richard Leslie of the nearby hamlet of Dixboro had a car he would

be driving to school. His sole passenger was Clinton (Bud) Leslie, his brother.

As dawn broke on the first school day, Richard and Bud came cruising down Plymouth



Richard and Grace pause in front of the Martha Mary Chapel in Greenfield Village where their marriage took place on August 25, 1940, six years after they met.



Road and stopped at the foot of the Galpin driveway and honked the horn. Shortly, two attractive young women walked the 30 yards to the Leslie car. Both Richard and Bud saw stars in their eyes as they helped their passengers hop on board. A few years later, Richard married Grace and Bud married Billie. Two brothers married two sisters.

“As dawn broke on the first school day, Richard and Bud came cruising down Plymouth Road...Both Richard and Bud saw stars in their eyes as they helped their passengers hop on board.”

Another romance blossomed later between the youngest sister, Merna, and a Navy man, Roger Francis Place. Also, Dan Patrick, Jr. met his future wife, Eleanor, at a dance above the Dixboro Store.

This wonderful story resulted in four long and storied marriages for the four couples and produced a total of twelve offspring.

If Dan Patrick in 1934 had declined Ivan Galpin’s invitation to move from White Oak Township to the Galpin farm, this story of love and compassion and a sharing of life’s burdens and joys would never have happened nor reported by the author who would not be here. ■

*(Dale is the son of Richard and Grace Leslie. He and his wife, Linda, live in Ann Arbor. Dale grew up in Dixboro and moved with his family into Ann Arbor when he entered the fifth grade. Their two sons followed a similar tract to Dale: Lawton, Slauson and AA Pioneer HS. You see, some history does repeat itself!)*



*Above: The Washtenaw County Courthouse, sitting where the current courthouse is located, where wedding licenses were purchased by Richard and Grace in 1940 and Clinton (Bud) and Wilma (Billie) in 1942.*

*Right: Author Dale Leslie.*



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# Gone But Not Forgotten: Ypsilanti Area Dairies

By Pamela German and Veronica Robinson

Early in Ypsilanti's history, many families kept cows to furnish their families with milk and butter. As the Midwest began the process of industrialization and more citizens went to work in specialized labor, Ypsilanti's dairies came to the fore, delivering milk in horse-drawn wagons. In 1851 Ypsilanti dairies produced over 40,000 pounds of butter.

By 1892, a group of farmers founded the Ypsilanti Dairy Association in order to cooperatively improve both their products and their marketing strategies. The Association was

“In 1851 Ypsilanti dairies produced over 40,000 pounds of butter.”

located on Spring and Race Street, southeast of downtown Ypsilanti. These farmers sold most of their products locally, and according to a 1942 newspaper, any surplus was sent to Detroit and cities on the east coast.

Joseph Warner, an employee of the Ypsilanti Dairy Association from 1897 to 1898, owned about a half-dozen cows of his own and in 1914 founded the Warner Dairy. In 1934 Warner's business was worth about two million dollars and by 1942, they had absorbed another area dairy – the Lewis Creamery.

1930 saw the founding of the Ypsilanti Dairy by Fredrick J. Peters Sr., who originally trained as a plumber. His two sons, Fred Jr., and Art as well as his daughter, Bernadine helped run the dairy, performing office and delivery duties. Eventually, the dairy began producing ice cream products in addition to milk, coffee cream, buttermilk and chocolate milk.



*The Ypsilanti Dairy Association barn.*



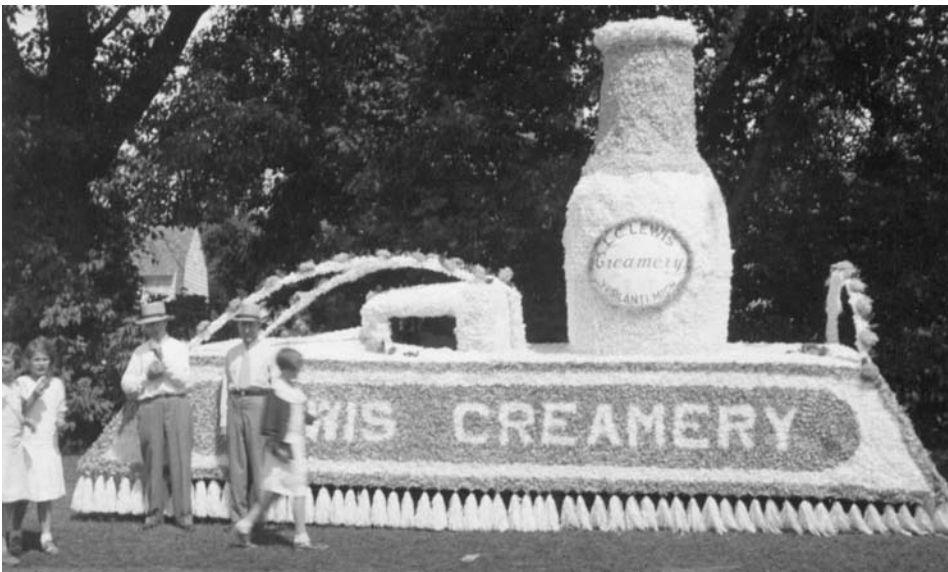
*The Warner Dairy in 1928, located at 1024 W. Michigan Avenue.*

According to the 1923 *Washtenaw Post*, 42 different milk dealers supplied Ypsilanti with butter, milk, cottage cheese and various other dairy products.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it became more and more difficult for small dairies to sustain their business due to competition with larger corporations, increasing suburbanization of the U.S. population and rising land values.

Many of the Ypsilanti dairy owners found other employment including Fred Peters of the Ypsilanti Dairy which closed in 1965. Though these icons of another era no longer exist in great quantity, they continue to exist in the collective memory of Ypsilanti as a large part of our heritage.

**Gone But Not Forgotten - Spotlight on Bella Vista Dairy:** Bella Vista Farms was *continued on page 20*



*A Parade float for the Lewis Creamery.*



*Bella Vista Farms used to occupy 465 acres along South Huron.*



*Bella Vista Dairy delivery trucks covered the region in the 1940s.*

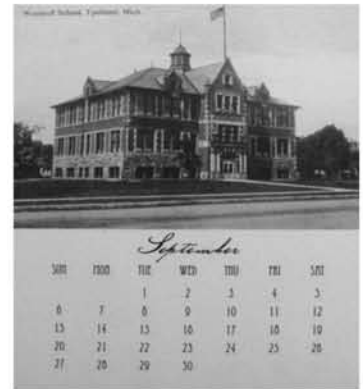
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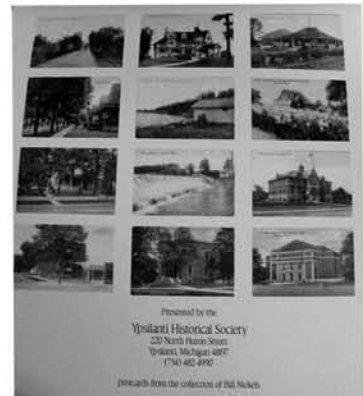
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## Gone But Not Forgotten: Ypsilanti Area Dairies *continued from page 19*

---

founded in 1922 by Ferdinand “Fred” Palma Sr. It was located at 1084 South Huron Street in Ypsilanti. His son, Fred Palma Jr., ran the farm after his father became ill in 1934 and continued after his father’s death in 1938.

According to a 1954 advertisement in the Ypsilanti Courier, Bella Vista Farms covered 465 acres. It was a certified dairy, and also had one of only three certified herds in the state of Michigan. At the time of the article, the herd at Bella Vista numbered 150 strong. In order to operate the farm there were twelve buildings on the land set aside for dairy production including four cow barns for the herd. The dairy had twelve employees whose work was dedicated to caring for the herd. The employees lived on the land in one of the five buildings reserved exclusively for them.

Bella Vista produced a variety of goods for sale and delivery in the local community. During World War II, the dairy delivered to Willow Run Village. Some of the products available for purchase included: homogenized vitamin D milk, pasteurized milk, chocolate milk, coffee cream, whipping cream, cottage cheese, buttermilk, yogurt,



*A Bella Vista Dairy milk bottling line in 1948.*

skimmed milk and an orange drink.

By 1981, the dairy and the remainder of its land were sold off to Morgan-Mitsubishi Corporation, a New York state developer. The dairy had already been parceled off, and the developer purchased the remaining 130 acres. The buildings that remained were set afire on September 14, 1981 in a controlled burn managed by several local fire departments. Today where Bella Vista Farms once

stood, modern development now resides. As you drive by the McDonald’s and the nearby stores, you can imagine the once proud dairy that operated on site. It may be gone, but it is not forgotten. ■

*(Pamela German and Veronica Robinson are graduate students in the Historical Preservation Program at Eastern Michigan University and serve as interns in the YHS Museum and Archives.)*

---

## Former Neighbors Discovered Hiding Out in Apartments *continued from page 9*

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and appear out of place. Still, over time, these unique residences have become part of the local landscape (Photo I).

*(James Mann is a prominent local historian, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*

(Editor’s Note: A future article will discuss the architectural legacy of Gerganoff including several notable examples of apartment buildings, some in the Art Deco style. Interestingly, Ann Arbor preservationists have been active in preventing the demolition of 801 Kingsley as a historically significant building.)



*Photo I: Today’s apartment house stands as a monument to the concept of “re-muddeling.”*

## Diploma Received Sixty-One Years Late *continued from page 4*

Although he didn't graduate with the Ypsilanti High School Class of 1942, he attended their 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> class reunions. At the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion, he mentioned to Austin Norton, a classmate, that he wished he had received his diploma. That got Austin thinking and after efforts on the part of several of David's classmates that wish came true on November 24, 2003. The Ypsilanti School Board Trustees granted David Cummings a high school diploma based upon the board's decision to grant diplomas to those who left for war prior to graduation. This new policy began with the class of 1942 and has been carried on since. Who would have thought that sixty-one years later at the age of eighty-one, David Cummings would be receiving his diploma?

Cummings sent a card to his classmates expressing what the diploma meant to him. "I'll

never be able to put into words the thrill you have given me. What's so wonderful about it all is I have always found all the best memories were my high school days and all my friends at Ypsi High. The people that I work with and my family cannot imagine all the effort you have made to make all of this possible. My children have told me there's no way they could experience the events that took place in their time in school that did in our times. The people I work with said I was very fortunate to have such great classmates. That is something that I have always felt."

One late book report, a stern and unbending teacher, and sixty-one years without a diploma was finally resolved in 2003 due to the efforts of classmates and friends. Even David's World War II veteran buddies have a hard time topping his story. ■

*(Kelsey Hart is a junior at Dexter High School and the granddaughter of YHS President Al Rudisill. Thanks to Austin Norton for providing the information for this story.)*

## A Horse Named "Ypsilanti" *continued from page 5*

*the city in the presidential election of 1900 and the defeat of his mayoralty candidate, Edward M. Shepard in 1901, he resigned his position of leadership in Tammany and was succeeded by Lewis Nixon."*

After winning the Chesterfield Cup in 1902 "Ypsilanti" was entered into the Great Jubilee Handicap Race at Kempton Park in Middlesex, England in 1903. It was a race for horses 3-6 years of age. Well, Ypsilanti won the "purse" that day in May, 1903 which was quite an accomplishment. In 1904 Ypsilanti won the race again! Glory Be! Each of the purses was worth 6,500 pounds sterling or about \$600,000 in current US dollars. Ypsilanti went on to win subsequent races of lesser regard in England for both the 1903 and 1904 racing seasons earning over \$4,000,000 in current dollars for a racing syndicate. Ypsilanti was a celebrated racehorse in the racing circuits all over England! Later "Ypsilanti" was returned to the United States but we have not been able to determine where.

Other research conducted revealed that the horse "Ypsilanti" was involved with the Druid's Lodge Confederacy, a group of gentlemen who ran a racing stable in England around the turn of the century. Nothing was left to chance. According to "*The Independent*" web site: "*Stable staff were padlocked into their quarters each night and their mail always opened, to prevent news of the latest Lodge plot leaking to the bookmakers. The Confederates cheated like mad, and gambled like lunatics - except that their plunges rarely failed. Paul Mathieu's definitive account of their 10-year reign of terror in Britain's betting rings (The Druid's Lodge Confederacy, the Gamblers Who Made Racing Pay, pub J A Allen) helpfully updates some of their successful coups to modern money. Ypsilanti, in the 1903 Great Jubilee Handicap, is reckoned to have made them the equivalent of pounds 4m.*"

There are many holes in this story that we may be able to fill in with information gathered through future research. If any of our readers have any information about the horse named "Ypsilanti" we would like to hear from you. ■

*(Gerry Pety is the Director of the YHS Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)*



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# News from the Fletcher White Archives

By Gerry Pety

Wow, since the beginning of the year, we have really been bustling! In February we broke our own record for numbers of students and historical researchers with 55 people. Usually, February is one of our slower months. We are also ahead for the month of March! Since the middle of January we have been supplying several of our downtown and depot town eateries with back copies of the *Gleanings*. Since that time people have responded to our "outreach program" and are coming to both the YHS archives and museum. Let's keep the ball rolling!

We also have been actively using our underutilized backroom to supply us with material for our archive's exhibit which we hope to change every month or so. Starting in April we have two very interesting exhibits: One on Buffalo Bill Cody, who had family here in Pittsfield Township and brought his entire Wild West Show to Ypsilanti in 1900 and again in 1910. Our smaller display will feature the Early Pioneers of Ypsilanti starting in April, and in May it will be

changed to Ypsilanti's Role in The Civil War. Even if you may not want to do any research, stop by and view the exhibits, our volunteers have put a lot of effort into creating these wonderful displays and we hope the membership and the public will enjoy them.

We are on the hunt for items that are unique to this city and the surrounding area. Too many times people have items that really should be in a museum or the archives for everyone to view and use for research; but instead keep them, just to have their relatives 'toss' the items out upon their death. This is such a waste! If you have such items we would be love to be custodians of such treasures.

We are searching for old posters, pictures and fliers having to do with attractions that have come and gone in Ypsilanti like, Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show or Ringling Brothers Circus. We are also looking for family files. If your family has a history in Ypsilanti or the surrounding area and you have genealogy/history/pictures we would love to have copies of them in our files. We provide the file folders and everything to get you started and you can add to it any time you wish. We presently have over 1,750 family files!

Thanks to Jose Salame for contributing the book and CD about the Ford production facility here in Ypsilanti. It was put together by Jose and a number of his fellow workers from that facility. It is now in our Library Collection. They spent a great deal of time, effort, and their own money to bring this bit of Ypsilanti Ford history together. Thank you Jose! ■

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## METHOD OF PAYMENT (please initial):

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. An immediate cash payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. An immediate cash payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ with annual cash payments of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in each succeeding year for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. An immediate cash payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ with the balance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable through my estate upon my death. I have consulted a lawyer and I understand the balance is an irrevocable pledge that my estate will be obligated to pay to the Ypsilanti Historical Society. This Deferred Pledge Agreement may also be satisfied in part or in full by payments made by me at my discretion during my lifetime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. I pledge that the total amount of my contribution to the Ypsilanti Historical Society will be payable through my estate upon my death. I have consulted a lawyer and I understand this is an irrevocable pledge that my estate will be obligated to pay to the Ypsilanti Historical Society. This Deferred Pledge Agreement may also be satisfied in part or in full by payments made by me at my discretion during my lifetime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Transfer of “other assets” such as securities, other personal property or real estate interests. *(Note: The Society reserves the right to accept or reject gifts of other assets pending a due diligence review of the assets, their transferability and the appropriateness of acceptance of such other assets by the Society. This review will be conducted by legal counsel for the Society.)* Donor to provide description of assets being transferred.

**EXECUTION:** Executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Donor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Donor Address \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Donor City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCEPTANCE:** The undersigned, being a duly authorized officer of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, does hereby accept the within contribution/pledge.

Ypsilanti Historical Society Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERPRETATION:** This Agreement shall be interpreted under the laws of the State of Michigan.

*Ypsilanti Historical Society, Inc.*  
 220 North Huron Street  
 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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**Membership Application**  
*Ypsilanti Historical Society, Inc.*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Type of Membership</b> |          | <i>New</i> | <i>Renewal</i> |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|----------------|
| Single                    | \$10.00  | [ ]        | [ ]            |
| Family                    | \$15.00  | [ ]        | [ ]            |
| Sustaining                | \$25.00  | [ ]        | [ ]            |
| Business                  | \$75.00  | [ ]        | [ ]            |
| Life                      | \$200.00 | [ ]        | [ ]            |

*Please make check payable to the  
 Ypsilanti Historical Society and mail to:*

**Ypsilanti Historical Society**  
**220 North Huron Street**  
**Ypsilanti, MI 48197**

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