THE DEAL

The city of Ypsilanti invited the Haines Company of Kinderhook, New York to construct street railway within the city in October 1889. The following summer Charles Delemere Haines arrived here and determined that the city's population could not support its own streetcar system, but an interurban between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor might be viable. Haines proposed a 7.5-mile line running from downtown Ypsilanti to the eastern edge of Ann Arbor. Haines predicted the system would handle 500 passengers daily; at that time trains operated by the Michigan Central Railroad between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti carried forty.

DUMMY CREATED

The company was officially incorporated on August 30, 1890. The route ran west on Cross Street/Packard Road to the Ann Arbor city limits, near Wells Street. The company commenced construction on October 22 and the line was completed by mid-December. The company petitioned the Ann Arbor Common Council for permission to extend the line into that city, but was denied. The reason for denial was that the original motive power of the line came not from semi-quiet electricity, but from a rattling and hissing steam locomotive—which had been covered in boards to disguise it as a wood-sided wagon, so that it would be less alarming to horses. Ann Arbor residents opposed it banging through their streets. The AA&YRy therefore negotiated an arrangement with the Ann Arbor Street Railway for its electric cars to meet the dummy at the city limits and exchange passengers.

1891-1929: EARLY SERVICE GOT ROWDY

Regular service began on January 9, 1891, using steam traction. On January 26th the [continued overleaf]
Heritage News • January 2012

Michigan Historical Marker Restored

Commemorating the state’s Interurbans
-Bill Nickels

Before & After: The Michigan Historical Marker in Ypsilanti at Michigan Avenue and Park Street has been restored [see text below]

“YPSI-ANN” Was The First [continued from page one]

Ypsi-Ann’s owners purchased the AASRy, but the two companies continued to operate separately. The line carried 600 passengers daily, well ahead of projections. The improved connection between the two cities had social effects: students attending the University of Michigan and Normal College mixed on an unprecedented scale. Years later, a former Normal student remembered that:

“...the University of Michigan boys would arrive from Ann Arbor on the Ypsi-Ann Interurban to court the Normal College coeds, who were considered more attractive than the U-M coeds. As they alighted from the interurban at the stop at Cross and Summit Streets, a group of Normal College boys would greet them. A battle royal would ensue with most of the participants eventually being dunked in the fountain just east of Welch Hall...”

Trains operated every ninety minutes, at an average speed of eight miles per hour. The starting fare was ten cents.

LINES MERGED AND PROLIFERATED

On August 26, 1896, the two companies formally merged to become the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Electric Railway (AA&YRy). By November the route between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti was fully electrified, opening a direct route between the two cities with no need to change trains. The depot in Ypsi was on Washington Street, just north of today’s Michigan Avenue (then called Congress Street). The depot in Ann Arbor eventually was located on West Huron, where the Greyhound Bus Station is now. An intermediate depot in Pittsfield Township—a tiny building at the SW corner of Packard and Platt—later housed offices of the short-lived City of East Ann Arbor. On May 11, 1898, the Detroit, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor Railway (DY&AA) purchased the AA&YRy; a month later interurbans were operating all the way from Detroit to Ann Arbor, a forty-mile route.

END OF THE LINE

Under a variety of names, interurbans continued to operate on the Ypsi-Ann’s tracks, eventually coming under control of the Detroit, Jackson and Chicago Railway. The system finally shut down in 1929, in the face of steep competition from buses and automobiles. For years after the 1942 wartime scrap drives, it was believed that all of Ypsi’s tracks had been removed, but in 2004 crews rebuilding a section of Washington Street found a stretch of rails buried under the pavement.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board met in September to determine how the committed 2011 Home Tour funds and $500 donated by the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau would be spent to restore the Michigan Historical Markers at Prospect Park and Michigan Avenue at Park.

The marker at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Park commemorating the Interurban lines was removed and shipped for restoration during the week of October 10th. Restoration costs have increased because the State of Michigan no longer pays for the purchase of replacement posts. Revenue from the Home Tour was not enough to make up the difference.

The YHF Board decided that the Michigan Avenue marker would be restored and reinstalled with new posts at a cost of approximately $2,000. In addition, $1,000 would be set aside in a Heritage Foundation account for the future restoration of the Prospect Park marker.

Additional money donated by any interested organization or individual will be added to the account by the Heritage Foundation for the eventual work on the Prospect Park marker.

“MICHIGAN’S INTERURBANS
Michigan’s first interurban, the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, began operating in 1890. Pulled by a steam engine, the cars went west on Packard Road to the Ann Arbor city limits. Because of the low fares (10 cents one way) and frequent service (cars leaving every 90 minutes) the line was soon carrying over 600 passengers daily. Electric power was adapted in 1896. In a few years a network of interurbans was built in southern Michigan. The “Ypsi-Ann” became part of a Detroit to Jackson road that carried 5,300 passengers a day in 1902. It became possible to go from Detroit to Kalamazoo or from Bay City to Cincinnati on connecting lines. But the automobile, bus, and truck put the interurbans out of business in Michigan in the 1920s. The last interurban from Ypsilanti ran in 1929.

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Definition of “INTERURBAN”

Real-world lines fit on a continuum between wholly urban street railways and full-fledged railroads. George W. Hilton and John F. Due, in The Electric Interurban Railways in America, define an interurban as a system which shares most or all of four characteristics:

- Electric power
- Passenger service as primary emphasis
- Heavier, faster equipment than urban streetcars
- Operated on street trackage in cities but on roadside tracks or private rights-of-way in rural areas

The definition of “interurban” is necessarily blurry. Some streetcar systems evolved partly into interurban systems with extensions or acquisitions, while other interurban lines became, effectively, light rail systems with no street running whatsoever, or became primarily freight-hauling railroads with a progressive loss of passenger service.

Ypsilanti Really Started Something

The Detroit United Railway operated streetcar and interurban lines across southeast Michigan. Although many of the lines were originally built by different companies, they were consolidated under the control of a Cleveland-based group of investors. The company incorporated on December 31, 1900, and continued to expand into the early 1920s through new construction and the acquisition of smaller concerns. With the acquisition of the Detroit-Jackson line in 1907, it operated more than 400 miles of interurban lines and 187 miles of city street railway lines.

Beginning in 1922, however, the DUR began a process of devolution when it sold the local Detroit streetcar system to the city, under the management of the Department of Street Railways. The company continued to abandon or sell properties throughout the 1920s; on September 26, 1928, the remainder was reorganized as the Eastern Michigan Railways. The last of the DSR streetcars were sold to Mexico City.

Constituent companies of the Detroit United Railway

**Wyandotte Division**
- Detroit Suburban Street Railway
- Wyandotte and Detroit River Railway

**Orchard Lake Division**
- Pontiac and Sylvan Lake Railway Company
- Grand River Electric Railroad Company
- Detroit and Northwestern Railway

**Pontiac Division**
- Oakland Railway Company
- Detroit and Pontiac Railway

**Flint Division**
- Detroit, Rochester, Romeo and Lake Orion Railway
- North Detroit Electric Railway
- Detroit and Flint Railway
- Detroit, Utica and Romeo Railway
- Detroit, Almont and Northern Railroad
- Highland Park and Royal Oak Railroad

Rapid Railway System
- Detroit and River Saint Clair Railway
- Detroit, Mount Clemens and Marine City Railway
- Rapid Railway
- Detroit and Port Huron Electric Shore Line Railway
- Detroit, Lake Shore and Mt. Clemens Railway
- Detroit and Lake Saint Clair Railway

**Detroit, Monroe and Toledo Short Line Railway**
- Toledo and Monroe Railway
- Detroit, Monroe and Toledo Short Line Railway
- Detroit, Jackson and Chicago Railway
- Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Street Railway
- Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Electric Railway
- Detroit, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor Railway
- Ypsilanti and Saline Electric Railway
- Detroit, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Jackson Railway
- Detroit, Plymouth, and Northville Railway
- Jackson and Ann Arbor Railway Company
- Jackson, Ann Arbor and Detroit Railway
Into the WOODS…

Clearing up any confusion about three similar names in Ypsilanti history

The Historical marker re Michigan’s Interurbans stands in front of the former “Woodruff School,” often conflated with “Woodruff’s Grove,” the name of the original community founded here. The two are named for entirely different “Woodruffs” as is evidenced by the following descriptions, designations, and reviews of the period.

And then there’s Woodward and a completely different story…

Benjamin J. Woodruff

First settler, postmaster, tavern owner, guide to settlers who followed

Eponyms: Woodruff’s Grove - the settlement now under water in Ford Lake and the former downtown restaurant

Charles Woodruff

(no relation to Benjamin, above, although his father had the same first and last names)

Scholar, educator, editor, early proponent of the first motor railroad from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor

Eponym: The former elementary school, now called New Beginnings Academy

Augustus Brevoort Woodward

First Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court
Planner of Detroit’s streets
Volunteered to register the name “Ypsilanti” into the records of the Michigan Territory in Detroit

Eponyms: Detroit’s main street and maybe one in Ypsilanti if we can ever make up our mind. According Ypsi’s birdseye maps, in 1865 it was WoodARD, in 1870 it was WoodWARD, in 1890 it was WoodARD again, and in 1935 it was WoodWARD. It’s still called WoodWARD today.

Excerpts from

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN
HISTORY OF MICHIGAN
CHAS. C. CHAPMAN, & CO 1881

Benjamin J. Woodruff
b. New Jersey
d. Ann Arbor, February 16, 1874, aged 90

Courts and Bar of Washtenaw County
First session of court:
Monday, January, 1827 Hon. Samuel W. Dexter, Chief Justice, and Hon. Oliver Whitmore, Association, appeared and constituted said court. David E. Lord was the clerk. On Tuesday of that week, in the court’s second session, “Also, by order of the court, Benjamin J. Woodruff was permitted to receive a tavern license, Wm. Edy and Isaac Sims having entered into a recognizance with him.”

Election July 9, 1827
U.S. Representative
Henry Rumsey elected with 101 votes
Benjamin J. Woodruff third with 62
Charles:
The Other Woodruff
- Washtenaw County, Michigan, Chas. C. Chapman & Co, 1881

Charles Woodruff, well known throughout the State as one of the earliest supporters of the cause of education in this state, as well as one of its veteran journalist, was born in Seneca county, N.Y. He came to the Territory of Michigan early in 1836. Believing, in view of the liberal grants of land for school and University purposes that Michigan was to be pre-eminent in educational matters, and afford a good field for teachers, he prepared to the State of Pennsylvania, and, entering Allegheny College, remained until graduating in 1841. In 1842 he returned to the State of Michigan, and began the profession of teaching by establishing a private school, both for English and Classical students. This school, at its close, occupied a building where the seminary now stands, which was subsequently bought and furnished as a central school-house, as the choice of the surrounding districts. Relinquishing the business of teaching on the revival of the public schools, Mr. Woodruff has since devoted himself to an editorial career. The veteran journalist has long since passed the summer of this life, and yet continues to wield the pen with as much ease and vigor as he did long years ago. Throughout the political wars of almost half a century the influence of his journal has been felt and approved by that party in which he places some of his political trust.

And, from another source:
Portrait and Biographical Album

Hon. Charles Woodruff, editor of the Ypsilanti Sentinel, was born in Seneca County, N. Y., February 7, 1816, his parents being Benjamin and Freelove (Sandford) Woodruff. In common with the young men of that day he learned a trade—tailoring—after a meager education at the district school. In 1836 his parents moved to the then wild Territory of Michigan, settling in Pittsfield Township, at what is known as Carpenter's Corners, where they bought eighty acres upon which they resided until the spring of 1865. Besides the subject of our sketch, the family consisted of four boys; Benjamin F. a farmer living in the southern part of Wayne County; Henry, of Saginaw County, who was a Captain of Infantry in the Rebellion, and has since served Sheriff of Saginaw County, and a Representative and Senator in the legislature from the Clare County districts; Peter D. of Ann Arbor; and Dr. Frank Woodruff (deceased) of Detroit.

The first visit made by Charles Woodruff to Michigan was in the spring of 1836, at which time the city of Ypsilanti was a small village. He earned the means to complete his education by his needle, graduating in 1842 from Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa. Returning to Ypsilanti, he was variously employed until, in 1844, he purchased the Ypsilanti Sentinel, a newspaper established in December of the previous year by Gen. John Van Fossen, and has continuously conducted the paper ever since, the Sentinel being the oldest paper in Michigan under one management.

Mr. Woodruff has always been a staunch friend of higher education, and may justly be credited with a large share in the creation of the existing school system of Michigan. In the early years of his residence in Ypsilanti he conducted an academical school, which led to the establishment of the Ypsilanti Union Seminary, the pioneer of the graded schools of the State, and during almost the entire life of the latter institution he has been an earnest, active member of the Board of Education, holding at the present time the position of Secretary.

That he has been a prominent factor in the up-building of the city of Ypsilanti is evidenced by the fact that he served continuously in the Common Council's Alderman from his ward from its first session until he chose to retire, some fifteen ears ago. He once headed his party ticket as candidate for Mayor, but believing that one should not work for election, and being under the displeasure of a faction of his party because of avowed temperance principles, he was defeated by a narrow margin.

In the line of his profession, Mr. Woodruff has earned an enviable reputation as a writer, his articles being extensively copied, not only in the leading journals of the State and nation, but in those of foreign lands. This has been done without the aid of “press clipping” or “literary bureaus.” Aside from his work at home, he represented the Detroit Free Press, then published by Wilbur F. Story of the Chicago Times, at Lansing in 1844 and 1857, as legislative correspondent. He has also at times been an esteemed contributor to a number of metropolitan papers, among them the Chicago Herald. Since 1860 the Sentinel, established as a Whig paper, has been [continued overleaf]
Charles Woodruff  
[continued from page five]  
a consistent, but very independent, advocate of Democratic principles, supporting the regular nominees of its party with one exception. In the campaign of 1872, the nomination of Horace Greeley was more than straight-out Democrats could bear, and the paper hoisted the banner of O'Connor and Adams, our subject himself being the candidate of the “straights” for Lieutenant Governor.

Much might be written of the public life of Mr. Woodruff, of the predictions that have been fulfilled, of the numberless occasions where his opinions, held in opposition to the wayward views of the unthinking public, have been justified by results; but a critical view would not be approved by him. Suffice it, that the most notable of recent municipal improvements, the motor railroad connecting Ypsilanti with Ann Arbor, had been advocated by him for more than a score of years before it was built, and that men who greeted the suggestion with derision now acknowledge it wisdom.

Except for a period of six months, in 1878-79, a history of which may be given it illustrate Mr. Woodruff’s continual sacrifice of personal to public interests, and to show his love for and pride in higher education, he has personally conducted his business and been at his post year in and year out, without faction to rest. During the summer of 1878, the old building of the Ypsilanti Union Seminary having burned previously, a strong opposition developed against rebuilding, holding that ward primaries were all the city needed—that the High School should be abolished, and that those who sought academic education ought to pay for it at the State Normal School or elsewhere, not be taught at public expense. With an intensity of feeling characteristic of him and born of a perfect faith in education, the subject of our sketch fought for the institution that to-day is lone of the glories of Ypsilanti—one of the finest of the any fine High Schools of Michigan—and when, on the last day of August, 1878, a contract for the erection of the handsom-est and most substantial school edifice in the State was assigned, he fell victim of nervous exhaustion from which he was a long time recovering, being confined to the house for six months. Here was developed the old story of the ingratitude of mankind. School elections in Ypsilanti occur in September, and while it was uncertain whether or not the struggle might terminate fatally, the enemies of the school system, deprived of power, revenged themselves by choosing another to his place upon the Board of Education, an act as easy as it was disgraceful, since the vote is always a light one. He was soon again called to the work, however, and subsequent efforts to defeat him have been unavailing.

Mr. Woodruff has never sought office and has never held a position of emolument. His public work has always been of the kind that is repaid only by criticism and fault finding, if the officer follows the dictates of his conscience. But he has earned a wide reputation as an able, fearless, honest, independent writer and thinker, that will be a grander monument than riches nor high position.

October 28, 1850, Charles Woodruff and Mary M. Jones, daughter of Capt. James Jones, one of the earliest settlers of Ann Arbor, were married. They settled in the home still occupied by them, and have reared four sons to man’s estate. Of these the eldest and youngest, Charles M. and Caius L. are employed by Parke, Davis & Co., manufacturing chemists, of Detroit, while the third, A. Woodruff, has always remained at home, employed in the office of the Sentinel. Of the second son, who publishes the Michigan State Democrat at Cadillac, Mich., as well in managing the business of the Sentinel, a sketch appears elsewhere in this volume.
David Jerome Davis, 1938-2011

David lost his 2 1/2 year battle with cancer on November 2 at his home in Manchester. He is survived by his wife, Janet; daughters, Ellen Waara and Martha Waara (husband Charles Busha); and grandson, Joshua Waara.

The beautiful home of his design at Pleasant Lake is not the only monument to Dave Davis’s extreme talent. When the Depot Town Antique Engine Club started to replicate the 19th century Crossing Guard Tower at the crux of the railroad, Cross and River Streets in 1991, Davis called the president of the group and complained politely, “Hey! Those guys don’t know how to measure! I’ve been watching them work and, as well-intentioned as they are, they will completely lose it by the time they get to that complex roof line!” And the rest is local history. Davis pitched in and ironed-out the complexities.

Born and raised in Toledo, he interrupted his first job as draftsman at Owens Corning to spend four years in the Navy, mostly aboard the USS Independence during the Bay of Pigs invasion. David was retired from Ford Motor Company where he was an engineer for 33 years. Following retirement, he enjoyed numismatics and antiques. He designed and built his energy efficient home on Pleasant Lake dedicating a special room for his vast collections: the FROG (Finished Room Over Garage).

David was known as a numismatist, but his collections went far beyond coins, including knives, gloves, clocks, atlases and maps, post cards, and books relating to coins.

He was the President of the Pleasant Lake Association and walked the four miles around the lake daily. Our Ypsilanti history is richer for Dave Davis’s contributions.

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Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

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At least one Interurban car is being preserved
[From the personal collection of Frank Passic, Albion, MI, historian]

Top: Albion’s Car No. 26 when it was still in service in 1928
Bottom: Car No 26 in 1994, before being shipped to an Illinois museum

Where have all the trolleys gone?
-a la Pete Seeger
Where have all the trolleys gone, long time passing?
Where have all the trolleys gone, long time ago?
Where have all the trolleys gone?
Gone to scrap iron, every one.
Oh, when will we ever learn?
Oh, when will we ever learn?

What may be the last surviving car from Michigan interurban rail lines was removed from its landmark status in Albion and shipped to an Illinois museum in 1994. Interurban Car No. 26 sat for 60 years on Austin Avenue, where it served for many years as the residence of Frank and Dellie Gunn who maintained an antique store in the front portion of the car.

Originally, the car carried both passengers and freight on the Interurban Line that ran across Southern Michigan from 1903 to 1929.