

# Ypsilanti Historical House Tour



*Sunday*  
*August 24, 1980*  
*12-5 p.m.*

sponsored by  
the  
Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

A Part of the Ypsilanti Yesteryear Heritage Festival



## *Harris Residence* *106 North Adams Street*

A young couple interested in antiques, Mark and Barbara Harris purchased their home in 1968. Mark describes its condition then as "dilapidated and terrible." Although the major features of the house had not been altered by remodeling, much needed to be done to repair the damage from years of neglect and poor maintenance.

The exterior displays several elements characteristic of Victorian architecture. Its finely balanced, asymmetrical composition, multi-gabled roof, and polychrome stone block foundation make it a dignified example of the Victorian period. Note the many exterior decorative elements such as the brackets and finial of the second-story corner window.

The house was built for Dr. Thomas Shaw to be used as an office as well as a residence. The original sign identifying Dr. Shaw's medical practice may be viewed at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum. Following Dr. Shaw's death, his daughter, Mary, ran a haberdashery at the residence.

The attached carriage house, with both front and rear doors, is original. The carriage entered and stopped, allowing passengers to exit under cover to the house. Then the team of horses was taken out through the rear to the barn which still stands beyond the house.



## *Venner Residence* *103 North Adams Street*

This brick home, owned by Tom and Anne Venner, is one of the earlier Gothic Revival style homes found in Ypsilanti. The steeply-pitched roof is outlined by gingerbread verge boards consisting of an elaborate curvilinear design. This design is repeated on the posts supporting the front porch roof. Also typical of the Gothic Revival style are the lanceted second-story windows. On two of these, the tracery forms a quatrefoil centered in the arch.

Records indicate this house was constructed for Cicero Millington between 1856 and 1859 on property purchased from Samuel Linn for \$1,500. An outline of the house appears on C. S. Woodard's 1859 map of the City of Ypsilanti. The map indicates the same basic structure with three porches on the street sides and two on the north side of the west wing. The small north wing is an addition—note the different style of porch. Inside, the joining of the two parts of the house is noticeable.

In 1866, Millington sold the house to grocer Charles King for the sum of \$6,000. It remained in that family for 110 years.

Venners' contemporary art collection is strikingly juxtaposed with the finely carved fireplaces and elaborate moldings and ceiling medallions of the Victorian interior.





## *Lindsay Residence* *116 South Adams Street*

Alexander Nulan was 20 when he and his bride, Genevieve, arrived at Ypsilanti in 1892. Alexander was employed by local hardware merchant, Fred Schaffer. The Nulans resided on Prospect Street while saving to eventually purchase the newly-built home at 116 South Adams. Following Alexander's death in 1943, Charles Lamb took possession of the house and, together with the Episcopal Church, he sponsored the Dutch family of Henry Overkleeft who resided there.

After their tenure, the house fell prey to abuse and neglect. It became a poorly-kept rooming house and eventually was a haven for itinerant drug peddlers and the various types they attract. By the spring of 1978, conditions had degenerated to such an extent that the City found it necessary to declare the house unfit for occupancy.

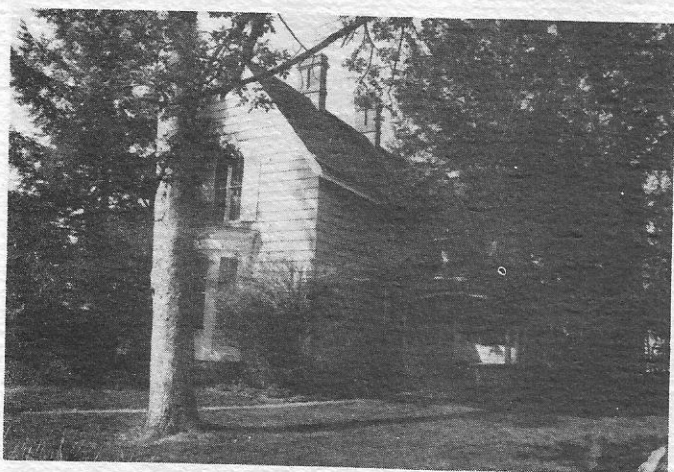
Several months later, Ms. Lindsay, armed with broom, scraper, and paint brush, began the task of rescuing the once well-kept home from the wrecker's ball. Dedication and much hard work have restored the sense of quiet elegance the house once held for Alexander and Genevieve Nulan. Behind the simple Doric columns and under the metal-clad roof we see a revival in the truest sense. Signifying more than the salvation of an old house, it is a step in the revitalization of a neighborhood.



## *Campbell Apartment 107 West Michigan Ave.*

The building at 107 West Michigan Avenue has stood witness to many changes in Ypsilanti's development. In 1894 that address was 107 Congress, and Francis King operated a shoe store on the ground floor while residing above. Frank DeWitt, also a shoe salesman, next owned the building until James Clark and Arthur Ament established the A & C Baking Company there. This business closed in 1925, and an auto sales firm occupied the space through part of 1926. After standing empty for two years, the building housed the Ypsilanti Fish Market until 1945. Before James Campbell became the sole owner in 1978, the J & G Food Service and the firm of Jenks and Campbell could be found at this address.

Thrift is combined with comfort in the utilization of the space above the jewelry store as a residence. During the Depression years, the area rehabilitated by the Campbells was the third in a series of five interconnecting coldwater flats. These five flats shared a common bathroom and were heated by coal-burning stoves. Later used for storage, the 19' x 42' area was nearly a shambles from years of decay when the project of creating a new use for this long-neglected space began January 7, 1978. On March 10, after scarcely ten weeks of intense but carefully planned construction, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell moved into their fully-remodeled living quarters nestled in down town Ypsilanti.



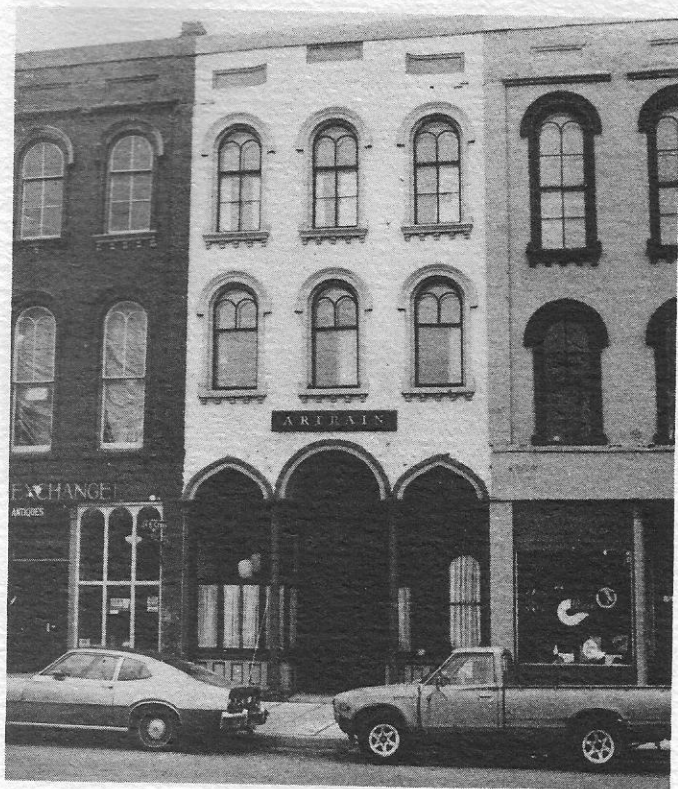
## *Mattimoe Residence* *301 North Grove Street*

The sight of a house, trussed and on wheels, lumbering down a street is unusual—in any age. Can you imagine what excitement such an event would have caused in 1861? In that year, Charles Woodard moved what was once the gymnasium of Benjamin Follet's estate from its original site on North River Street to its present location several blocks away at the corner of High and North Grove Streets. Woodard converted the rectangular gymnasium into an elegant residence and in 1863, added a two-story wing with two side-porches to the rear of the house.

The floor plan is unusual for a Gothic Revival style house. Instead of the more common central hallway, we find one running on a perpendicular to the entry way along the front of the house. The beautiful interior woodwork is butternut. Note the unusual curvature of the stairway sheltered by giant pines, the finely proportioned bay window at the east end of the house is original.

Gertrude and Adah Woodard resided here until 1938 when they sold the property to Fred Dieterle. It was sold again before being purchased by present owner, Joe Mattimoe, as the perfect setting for his collection of antique furniture. Having redecorated the interior, Mr. Mattimoe's future plans include removing the siding to restore the clapboard exterior and replacing the picket fence that once enclosed the lawn.





## *Shankwiler Studio & Residence 52½ East Cross Street*

A few people thought Don and Bev Shankwiler were "crazy" when they decided to purchase a 3-story, mid-nineteenth century commercial building in the heart of Depot Town with the intention of converting it into a residence and an artist's studio. The challenge was enormous: the ground floor looked like a bomb had struck it—a gaping hole in the first floor greeted the prospective buyers. Literally tons of debris had to be removed before the monumental feat of turning the near-ruin into an architecturally and aesthetically fascinating living space could begin in earnest.

The Shankwilers removed the tin ceiling over the ground floor, restored it to perfection, and reinstalled it to its original glory. They built an innovative loft, reached by a metal stair, into part of the ground floor area. The second and third floors were designed as living space—the entire project a startling combination of the old and the new.

The building gained its present title, The Artrain Building, by having served as a display area for children's art and as an office for the Artrain, a traveling exhibit of Michigan artists; but it had had a long and varied history before that time as a nineteenth century saloon, a confectioner's shop, a photographer's studio, a feed store, a house of ill-repute, and other expressions of life of the city.



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Harris Residence
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Venner Residence
3. 116 South Adams Street  
Lindsay Residence
4. 107 West Michigan Avenue  
Campbell Apartment
5. 301 North Grove Street  
Mattimoe Residence
6. 52½ East Cross Street  
Shankwiler Studio and Residence

\*Tickets and Information

Numbers are for identification only.  
Houses may be toured in any order.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation extends sincere thanks to those whose generosity has made possible the printing of this brochure.

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