



**Ypsilanti  
Heritage  
Foundation**

**23rd Annual  
Historic  
Home  
Tour**

**Sunday, August 20, 2000  
12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.**



## *Welcome*

to the 23rd annual Ypsilanti Historic Home Tour. Since 1977, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has been pleased and proud to present one of our community's most important resources, our wealth of historic architecture. Once again, Ypsilanti residents have graciously agreed to open their doors so that we all may see and appreciate the results of this community's historic preservation efforts. We take this opportunity to thank them.

This year's tour is a walking tour, featuring seven historic properties located in the central City. Five of the properties are landmark buildings on North Huron Street, Ypsilanti's nationally recognized historic streetscape. The sixth property is Cross Street Village, an adaptive re-use project that is converting the old Ypsilanti High School to apartment homes for residents 55 years and older. The seventh property is a Commercial Italianate building in Depot Town, shown as a work in progress.

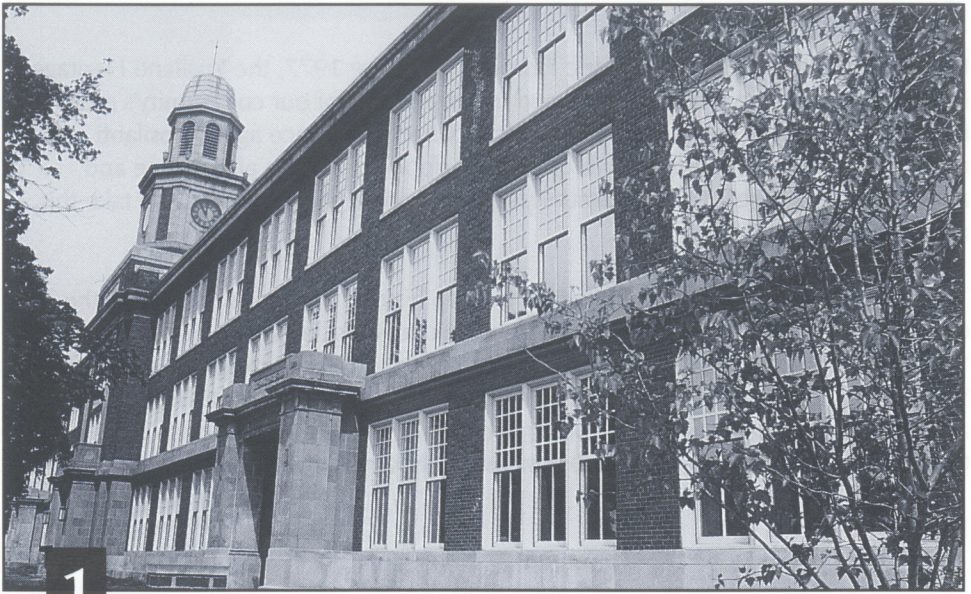
Enjoy the tour!



*Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation*

### **Please Note:**

- Although the structures are numbered for your convenience in the brochure, you are free to visit them in any order you wish.
- Visitors may be asked to remove shoes.
- As a courtesy to the homeowners, PLEASE: no food or drink, smoking, pets, unsupervised children, strollers, or photography inside the homes.
- The ticket holder expressly assumes all responsibility for any personal injury or property damage occurring while on tour.



## 210 W. Cross Cross Street Village

In September of this year, the first units of Cross Street Village, a community of apartment homes for residents over 55, will be ready for occupancy in this historic building. It will be the first time in 156 years that a building on this site has been used for purposes other than education.

There have been four buildings on this site, tracing their history back to the Tecumseh Hotel, constructed during the 1830s to house patrons of a proposed railroad that was never built. Following the hotel's failure, Charles Woodruff opened a school in the building, called the Nunnery, in 1844. Subsequent schools located on this site followed: the Ypsilanti Seminary, the Union School, the Central School, and, finally, the Ypsilanti High School, which was housed in this building until 1973. Of the four buildings that have occupied this site, two have been completely destroyed by fire, while the third was damaged by fire and rebuilt. (Despite the history of this site, it was purely coincidence that a fire house was built across the street in 1898.) The third building was later demolished, to make room for the current Neo-Classical Style structure, which was opened in 1916. The 1916 building, and an addition completed in 1930, were designed by R. S. Gerganoff. A mid-1950s addition is thought to be the work of his office as well.

In 1998, American Community Developers, of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, bought the building and began the adaptive re-use project to convert it into apartments. The interior plans for Cross Street Village are the work of Progressive Associates and Elisabeth Knibbe Architects. When finished, the building will contain 103 very individual and creative living spaces that preserve and incorporate many of its original architectural elements



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## 411 N. Huron

### Steve and Elaina Hoxie

This High Victorian Italianate home is one of the finest examples of this style in the City. Constructed in the 1860s, it is believed that this house and the one next door, at 415, were built by the same talented carpenter.

The floor to ceiling flattened arch-shaped windows are showcased by bracketed pediments, meticulously detailed with elegant cutout ornamentation. The widely overhanging eaves are supported by many decorative brackets, a hallmark of this architectural style. And, although the original exterior color scheme of the house isn't known, current owners Steve and Elaina Hoxie have made a plausible decision in painting the house dark green with white and peach trim. The Victorians loved color!

The interior, previously divided into apartments, has been reclaimed by the Hoxies and once again is a single family dwelling. Twentieth century upgrades, such as the kitchen and first floor bath, have been sensitively done, making the home livable while retaining its historic integrity. The dining room features a large bay window wall and a graceful curving stairway leading to the second floor. Original crown molding and pine floors can be seen throughout the house.

The pale peach walls of the dining room, along with oriental carpets and the hunter green and white color scheme of the main parlour, all serve to create a pleasing and elegant mood, which will remind visitors of the genteel Victorian age represented by this gracious home.



**209 N. Huron**  
**John and Pattie Harrington**  
**Joe Lawrence**

Built in 1921 by Edward and Jennie Quirk Cornwell, this handsome Tudor Revival Style home is distinctive, not only as an excellent example of its style, but also because it represents the merger of two of Ypsilanti's most prominent families, the Quirks and the Cornwells. Both families were active in business, industrial, and community affairs and resided on this street: the Quirks across the street at 304 N. Huron and the Cornwells next door at 201 N. Huron. Edward and Jennie were both in their fifties when they married and had no children, so this house was designed primarily for entertaining. Many notable people were guests at the Cornwell house, including Henry Ford and Michigan Governor G. Mennen Williams, who was married to Jennie Cornwell's niece.

Because the house as designed was too large for its 80' x 170' lot, it was situated facing south toward the Cornwell Mansion, not toward Huron Street. It was constructed of stucco, spread over wooden lath, and wooden beams, stained dark brown, in the classic Tudor Style. The stucco was finished using the "pebble-dash" or "drydash" method, and some of the original plaster panels still exist around the protected verandah area and on two of the northwest gables. Decorative plaster panels can be seen on all of the gables and along the roofline on the south side of the house.

The house has had a number of owners since the Cornwells and was divided at one time into 13 rooms and apartments. It is now owned by John and Pattie Harrington and Joe Lawrence. John and Pattie's residence is on tour and features a large foyer with an ornate winding staircase, a living room with a marble fireplace and built-in leaded glass book cases, original chandeliers and sconces, and the original butler's pantry.



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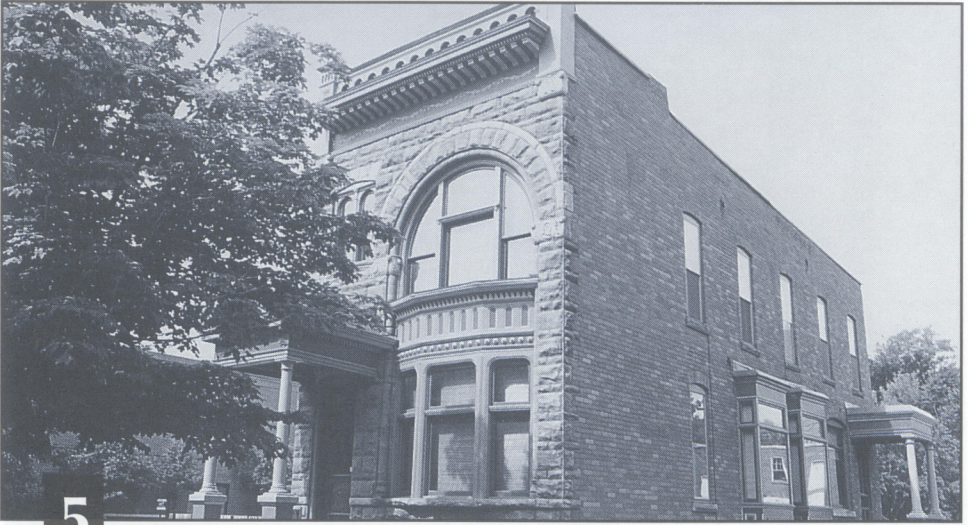
## 121 N. Huron

### Doug and Mary Kisor

Doug and Mary Kisor's spectacular Italian Villa home was not always a place that Ypsilantians looked forward to visiting. It was the home and office of Dr. John Andrus Watling, the first college-educated dentist to practice in Michigan.

In an era when few dentists had any formal training, Dr. Watling began his profession by apprenticing with Dr. O. M. Carlton. He practiced in Ypsilanti and Detroit before entering the Ohio College of Dental Surgery in Cincinnati, graduating in 1860. Following graduation, he returned to Ypsilanti to set up his practice, married his wife, Eunice, in 1864, and built this home for his new bride in 1865. Dr. Watling used the front of this house as his office until he relocated his practice to 119 N. Huron (stop # 5 on tour.)

An outstanding example of the Italian Villa architectural style, this home features a tall tower, front gable with hipped hoods over the street-side windows on the first floor, and an ornamented bay window on the side. A casket door was once located adjacent to the tower, with its own protective porch and iron tower cresting. Inside, rich parquet floors of walnut, oak, and butternut still adorn the main living areas of the first floor. And a circular stair in the tower provides access from the main entrance hall up to the lookout chamber at the tower's peak.



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### 119 N. Huron Blake Hayes and Mary Seelhorst

Detroit architects Mason and Rice are believed to have designed this Richardsonian Romanesque Style structure, built as the dental clinic for Dr. John Andrus Watling, co-founder of the School of Dentistry at the University of Michigan. Dr. Watling first housed his practice next door, at 121 N. Huron, (stop # 4 on tour.) Later, he purchased the house that originally stood on this site and moved his offices to this neighboring property. In 1892, he demolished the house to make way for his new dental clinic, and this building continued to be used as a dental office through the 1960s.

The design of this building and the materials used in its construction are beautiful examples of the architectural style of Henry Hobson Richardson, best known for building Trinity Church in Boston. Its facade of red and gray sandstone exhibits details of classic Romanesque Style, popularized by Richardson. Note also the tall parapet, the stamped metal cornice, and the frieze below, encrusted with festooned swags.

This home is a true gem today thanks to the previous residents, Denis and Jane Schmiedeke, who worked diligently to restore it during the 1980s. The Schmiedekes beautifully restored the floors, windows, woodwork, and more. Floors of ash and yellow pine, with intricate designs, are seen throughout the home. The two strikingly detailed oak and glazed-tile fireplace mantels are original. The stenciled Art Nouveau frieze in the front room is new and was designed using decorative elements from the building itself. Current owners Blake Hayes and Mary Seelhorst invite you to enjoy this historic site, which they call home.





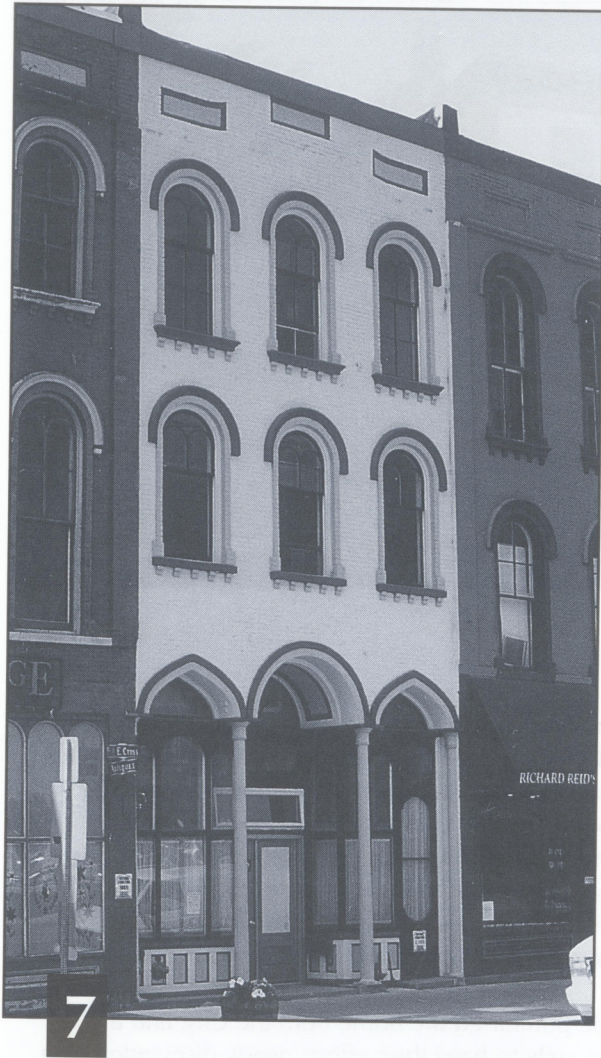
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## 214 N. Huron Cheryl Farmer

This stately Italianate home was built between 1851, when the property was deeded to grocer Frederick Andrews, and 1856, when it first appeared on the City map for that year. It retains its characteristic Italianate features, such as the elaborately detailed entryway and the low roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets. The bay windows and the porch on the south and east sides of the house are later additions. The essential interior character of the house has remained, despite having been divided into apartments and having served as a continuing education center for Washtenaw Community College during the 1970s.

In 1979, Paul and Gerry Woodside purchased the home from the City, and a year later began a four-year renovation, only to have their efforts nearly dismantled by a serious fire in 1984. Current owner Cheryl Farmer, who serves as Ypsilanti's mayor and is also a practicing physician, purchased the house from the Woodsides in 1988. Building on the renovations done by the Woodsides, Mayor Farmer removed temporary walls to restore an open floor plan to the porch and added another interior staircase to access the second story. In addition, the original bannister was restored, and the bathrooms were gutted and refurbished with period fixtures.

Mayor Farmer's affinity for her community and the people who live here is evident throughout her home. The lovely front gardens that complement the classic lines of the house, the old maps documenting the City's growth and change, and the artwork by local artists on display are all evidence of how this homeowner expresses her pride in Ypsilanti.



## 52 E. Cross Bill Labedski And Linda Yohn

From 1904 until 1911, this Commercial Italianate Style building was the stage for one of the most well known, colorful, and infamous chapters in the history of Ypsilanti. Here is where Warren Lewis, better known as "Count Lewis," ran the Lewis Horse Exchange, an off-track betting parlor where gamblers from Detroit came to play the horses. Above the Exchange was another business of questionable legality: the establishment of "Ma Bush" and her girls of "negotiable affection."

Unlike other Commercial Italianate buildings in Depot Town, 52 E. Cross, built c.1870, has a distinctive, arched lower cornice line. It features the round top windows typical of its style. The beautiful cast iron posts within the storefront facade are most likely a mail-order detail, shipped in by rail. It

replaced an earlier wooden structure and its brick construction was considered "fireproof" for its day.

Following its days as the Exchange, the building suffered from neglect and the ups and downs of Depot Town's economic climate. Then, in the early 1970s, it became the planning office for the first visit by the Artrain and is still known by many as the "Artrain Building." In 1974, sculptor Beverly Shankwiler and her husband, Donald, bought the building and converted it to a three story townhouse. Following the Shankwilers' lead, other artists and business owners moved into the area and helped spur the redevelopment and economic growth of the neighborhood.

Current owners Bill Labedski and Linda Yohn bought the building in 1999. They have recently moved in, and the building is a work-in-progress. On tour is Bill's business, Vital Signs, and the couple's unique, light-filled, two-story residence.



- |                          |                  |                 |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 - Cross Street Village | 4 - 121 N. Huron | 7 - 52 E. Cross |
| 2 - 411 N. Huron         | 5 - 119 N. Huron |                 |
| 3 - 209 N. Huron         | 6 - 214 N. Huron |                 |



TOWNER HOUSE 1837

## The Towner House 303 N. Huron

This tenacious little house has been part of the Huron Streetscape for far longer than any of its more stately neighbors. The Towner House has stood on its original site and foundation, in this harsh midwestern climate, for the remarkable period of 163 years.

Buildings similar to the Towner House, in the Greek Revival Style, were built

during a major period of growth in Ypsilanti when immigrants were arriving in this part of the country by means of the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825. Based on the form and proportions of Greek temples, the style reached Michigan by the 1830s and fast became one of the most popular and distinctive American architectural styles.

From the standpoint of architectural history, the Towner House is a rarity. It is one of only a handful of houses of post and beam construction remaining in Washtenaw County. Its vernacular Greek Revival Style, Gothic Revival porch, Michigan basement, and haphazard additions (now removed), make it a unique testament to the pioneer era of early Michigan.

In 1836, the property on which the house stands was deeded to Marcus Lane and Arden H. Ballard for a consideration of \$181.37. Lane became the sole property owner in 1837 and built the house in that year. The house exchanged hands several times over the years, and was eventually purchased by Norman K. Towner, for whom Towner Street is named, in 1851. His descendants would reside in the house for more than 90 years, giving the property the name by which it is known today. Following the death, in 1943, of Tracy Towner, one-time mayor of Ypsilanti, the house once again had several owners until the First Presbyterian Society of Ypsilanti purchased it in 1972. The Presbyterian Church retains ownership today.

In late 1999, the Towner House Foundation was formed to oversee the restoration of the house and to raise funds for its continuing maintenance. Through the Foundation's efforts, the house will serve as a monument, helping to educate the public about Ypsilanti's, and Michigan's, earliest settlement days.

To find out more about how you can help support the efforts of the Towner House Foundation, call John Harrington, Foundation Chair, at 734-482-4209.

### ***The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation,***

is a non-profit organization dedicated to the idea that one of Ypsilanti's greatest resources is its wealth of historic architecture. The Foundation seeks to increase public understanding and appreciation of these architectural links with our past, and works to promote the conservation, rehabilitation, and utilization of these important community assets.

The Foundation publishes its newsletter, Heritage News, six times a year and distributes it, free of charge, to its membership by mail, and to the general public at various locations throughout the City. **The Foundation's website address is [www.yhf.org](http://www.yhf.org).**

Since 1977, the Foundation's Historic Structure Marker Awards Program has recognized more than 129 homes, businesses, churches, and other community buildings in Ypsilanti for their significant historic architecture and continuing, sensitive maintenance. The annual Historic Home Tour is sponsored by the Foundation, and proceeds from the tour fund an annual scholarship, the Marker Awards, and education programs on preservation-related topics, which are held throughout the year and are open to the public. This year the Foundation is also pledging a portion of the tour proceeds to the Towner House restoration.

For more information on the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation or to find out about becoming a member, contact Henry Prebys, Foundation President, at (734) 487-0595.

### ***The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation extends sincere thanks...***

To the Archives of the **[Ypsilanti Historical Museum](#)** for information useful in the preparation of this brochure.

To **[Norton-Durant Florists and Gift Shops](#)**, 2900 Washtenaw, Ypsilanti-434-0020, for their beautiful arrangements which grace the homes on tour.

To **[Judi Monaghan](#)** for the management of our mailing list.

To **[Michael Harper](#)** - 645-2100, for the framing of the commemorative photos.

To **[Lisa Mills Walters](#)** for additional editing and proofing.

And to all of our **[volunteer ticket sellers and guides](#)**.

### ***Home Tour Committee:***

Peg Du Fresne, Chair; Rochelle Balkam, Jonnie Bryant, Kyle Bunton, Nancy Chapman, Carol Cramer, Jennifer Goulet, Tamara Kutter, Nancie Loppnow, Mary Ann McDonald, Pamela Newhouse, Mary Nickson, Barbara Saxton, and Edie Sherman

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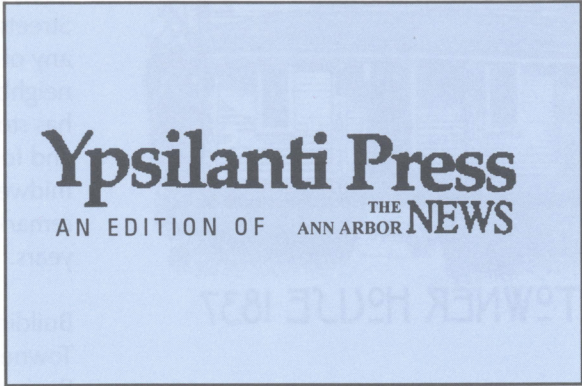
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The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation and the Home Tour Committee would like to thank our corporate underwriters, sponsors, and patrons whose generosity and support make this tour possible.



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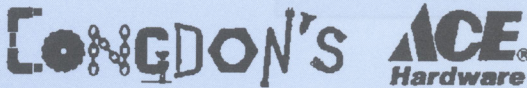


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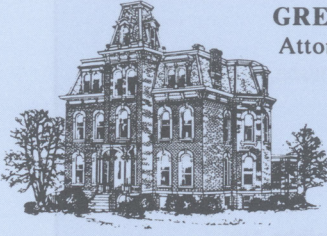
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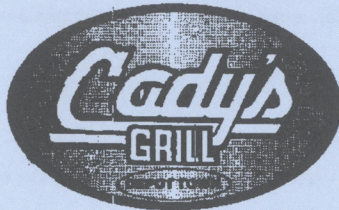
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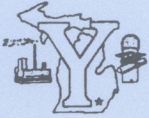
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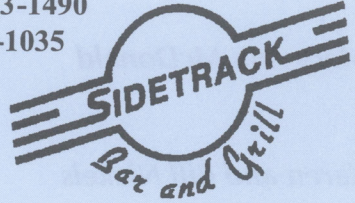
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## NOTES

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## TICKET

- 1 - Cross Street Village
- 2 - 411 N. Huron
- 3 - 209 N. Huron
- 4 - 121 N. Huron
- 5 - 119 N. Huron
- 6 - 214 N. Huron
- 7 - 52 E. Cross

### Ticket Prices:

\$10.00 Day of Tour

\$ 8.00 in Advance

