

Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

January 1986

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

MEETING: Tuesday, January 28, 1986 - 7:30 pm
LOCATION: Hutchinson House (High/Scope Foundation)
600 North River, at Forest
PROGRAM: YPSILANTI: A PANORAMA OF ITS PAST ON POST CARDS
SPEAKER: Mr. Ray Vorce

COME ON -- it's that time again to relax and reminisce, perhaps dream a little, and reflect upon HOW IT USED TO BE. Mr. Vorce has agreed again to be our entertainer in showing us some of the best of his formidable collection of Ypsilanti post cards.

REMEMBER back in Old '82 when he delighted us with his twelve minute movie of "Ypsilanti in 1928"? (There was even time for a replay!) AND REMEMBER two years before that (November 1980) when Mr. Robert LaRue delighted a large and lively audience with his "Then and Now" slide show of Ypsilanti landmarks?

THIS TIME Mr. Vorce will be able to project his cards onto a large screen through the use of an opaque projector and we will be able to see those post cards of Ypsilanti landmarks and streetscapes as we have rarely, if ever, seen them.

WE GUARANTEE that there will be more post card collectors at the end of the evening than at the beginning, though the bug has been caught by quite a few of us already! And what better way - so simply, so easily - to capture a sense of history about THIS OLD PLACE, so ...

JOIN US in the classic splendor of the Hutchinson House, for a pleasurable experience in learning more about ourselves, our community, and our history!

THIS IS A PUBLIC MEETING - Non members welcome!!

REFRESHMENTS provided through our refreshments chairperson,
Dr. Judith Williston.

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IT HAPPENED IN YPSILANTI IN 1985!!!

WINTER GOT YOU DOWN?? Just in case the long, cold winter has driven you into deep depression, the Heritage Foundation wants to present a compendium of some of those positive improvements which have occurred in Ypsilanti over the past year. By remembering the past and the GOOD THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED AROUND US, perhaps we can more eagerly look forward to another productive year.

Dr. John Watling's Dental Office (119 North Huron), the distinctly Romanesque brick and stone building just across from St. Luke's, came in for some much needed restoration and rehabilitation last fall and this winter. Did you know, for example, that the twin box bay windows on the north side were almost completely rebuilt by a firm in Bridgewater? Or that the back entryway will soon receive major upgrading at the hands and imagination of architect Denis Schmiedeke? Thank you, owner Oscar Haab, for your investment in that unique, 1893 landmark.

Ralph Ellis, HDC member and owner of Ypsilanti Cycle, reached the completion of his fantastic restoration of his Gothic Revival commercial building at 118 West Michigan by installing appropriate paneling under the street-level display windows. Thanks, Ralph and Val!

oo

The Miracle on Pearl Street - did you watch it happen? The brothers Chris and Steve White, two great guys, of Osprey Construction Co, Novi, brought two important, derelict structures at 611 and 613 Pearl back to life from oblivion, highlighting all the best features with handsome paint colors. Welcome to these new owners and their tenants! Ypsilanti hopes to see more from you, Chris and Steve - Thanks!

Darby's Shoes building has a new owner who plans to renovate and live in! It's Patrick Easto, a professor in the Sociology Department at EMU. Hooray - and welcome! And the Greene's Jewelers building has a new owner too, Gary Maxton, and reportedly, improvements will soon take place there. Two transformations to look forward to in 1986!

A VERY WARM WELCOME to Richard and Mary Balsbaugh, who have purchased not one but two neglected buildings at 207 and 211 North Adams and are now hard at work transforming them into the elegant properties they should always have been. "How could any owner let such beautiful properties go so far down hill?", they asked. Mary says this is the first New Year's Day she has spent removing wallpaper! They're living in the corner house themselves and will rent newly-created apartments in the other. Welcome, already dear friends!

And to all other new residents and owners - WELCOME!!

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The delightful, nearly secret, little public walkway from the south end of College Place to Pearl Street was repaired by city workmen. Thanks, City of Ypsilanti!

Can you find the two-story, red brick structure hidden on Ferrier Street (can you find Ferrier Street?!), just off River? It's worth the search to see the handsome new doors built by Don Randazzo for this building where Dave Wheeler and Mike Huizenga, electrical engineers, repair, monitor and certify utilities instruments.

The Rileys, of 313 East Cross, transformed their Queen Anne and its barn with a cheerful new color scheme and lots of repairs. We know you're moving right along on the interior as well. Thank you, friends!

Tim Vachon's painstaking and patient work on his and Sarah's house at 516 North Adams makes that long-abused place more beautiful every day. Note the horizontal board siding on the front porch.

18 & 20 North Washington on the Mall, housing Peg's Golden Griddle, experienced a major transformation from ugly duckling to showpiece when the period storefronts were reconstructed and all the best features of the buildings were highlighted with splendid paint colors. Again, thanks, architect Denis Schmiedeke and owner Oscar Haab!

oo

Depot Exchange in Depot Town exchanged its ramshackle rear image for a full-scale rehab, with new windows, repair work, and a painted-on-the-wall sign right out of the 19th Century! Thanks for that much-needed improvement to Depot Town's River Street image, Steve and Linda.

And thanks, Sidetrack, too, for your east facade rehab! Clearly, that whole end of Depot Town is no longer "just a pretty face"!

oo

All over town, handsome buildings are emerging from behind false facades and synthetic siding - each one like the unwrapping of a Christmas package - a wonderful gift to this once tired old town now coming to life again!

Remember the shabby grey asbestos shingles at the SE corner of Hamilton and Forest? Look again - another miracle has happened. A complete new clapboard siding job, with the help of some City-administered funding, has transformed this corner of the Historic District into a visual delight in blue and cream. Thanks, Jerry and Michelle Diepenhorst, for bringing back a handsome Carpenter Gothic! You've done a splendid job!

Maxe Obermeyer, you did it! You did it! You transformed the ugliest old LUMP on North River (232) into - what it has always been underneath - a perfect gem of a simple, vernacular Greek Revival! Thanks, and ever thanks!

At 206 West Forest, owner Cecil Meador is removing asbestos shingles to reveal the original, handsome clapboard siding - another swan emerging!

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301 North Washington - do you remember the dull, old white house on that corner - not a bad example of Queen Anne, but nothing to... Hey, wait, what's this? Ypsilanti's version of a Painted Lady, in pink and blue highlighting all her best features! Thanks, Lis Knibbe and Tim Clarkson!

Numerous facade improvements were made this past year downtown, among them Willoughby's and Puffer Red's - the whole community appreciates improvements like these! Thank you!!

Joe Lawrence's commercial Italianate at 5 South Washington, just south of the National Bank, went from a lesson on how to remuddle an historic building (glass block inserts and all) to a great example of how ultra-modern offices can be incorporated into reconstructed historic structures. Now the law offices of Pear, Sperting, Eggan and Muskovitz, it offers us a treat to remember how ugly became beautiful. Thanks, architect Lis Knibbe and owner Joe Lawrence!

Let's thank, too, the two attorneys who have rehabbed a series of buildings on the east side of the first block of North Huron, both back and front, inside and out, making them into more attractive shopping areas and quality apartments, as well.



The Martin Avenue bungalows, Hanchett Residence Park (1910s), San Jose, Calif., are all individual in design, yet they display salient characteristics of the style and relate to each other in overall massing, scale and texture. (Barbara Friedman and John Murphy)



YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION

510 Pearl Street
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March 1986

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

MEETING: Tuesday, March 25, 1986 - 7:30 pm

LOCATION: Hutchinson House (High/Scope Foundation)
600 North River, at Forest

PROGRAM: An Historical View of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth
Century Furniture for the Restored House

SPEAKER: Dr. Richard B. Leinbach, Associate Professor of Design;
Department of Human, Environmental and Consumer
Resources, Eastern Michigan University

If you're reading this HERITAGE NEWS, you probably have some interest in old things, but how much do you really know about them? If you collect antiques or old pieces of furniture for your house or apartment, you probably have some idea of period or style of the objects you possess - or do you, like some of us, choose on the basis of 'gut' response: either you like it or you don't? Whatever the case, it's always interesting to learn more about the objects around us - to tease the brain and sharpen the eye, to expand our horizons and better appreciate our immediate surroundings.

We already know Richard Leinbach for the beautiful, superbly detailed drawings he has contributed to the Foundation's calendars over the years (see back of this issue); but he is also an expert on the history of furniture, as well as other subjects related to interior design.

We have asked him to share with us his expertise in the area of furniture for the restored house. Since Ypsilanti has no architecture earlier than the 19th Century, he has decided to talk mainly about the styles most popular from about 1850 to World War I.

Professor Leinbach will SHOW US SLIDES to distinguish among the several styles of those decades, with the purpose of helping us appreciate both what we have and what we might collect. And even if you don't collect, a trained eye can make life more interesting and fun!

So come, and be pleasantly educated! You may discover you own an East-Lake sideboard and don't even know it! Or you may recognize that you've had coffee at a Renaissance Revival table in Depot Town and never even known it! Or you may suddenly realize that the old chair you passed up on the curb last week was a genuine piece of Stickley!!

SO, DO COME!! Bring a friend, and join us on this early spring evening.

OPEN LETTER
FROM THE PRESIDENT

In a slide show with taped audio presented to the visitors at the 1979 Heritage Festival, I stated that Ypsilanti was at a crossroads. I was referring to the preservation movement, how far it had come and what the prospects for the future seemed to be. Today we have passed the crossroads and are on our way toward a revitalized community based on preservation and utilization of our best resource: our historic buildings.

No one who remembers Ypsilanti ten or fifteen years ago can deny that some pretty miraculous changes have taken place. Do you remember Depot Town in 1974, for example, when Bev and Don Shankwiler bought the Artrain building? The place inside looked like London after the blitz and tackling it had to take the courage of mighty brave adventurers and, given what the rest of that old business district looked like then, such an investment must have been taken as madness by many. Yet in 1977, when the Heritage Foundation held its September meeting in Shankwiler's imaginatively renovated building, things had begun to happen all along that part of Cross Street and a new spirit had emerged - the spirit of Depot Town. Today the spirit is very much in the flesh, and Depot Town is a vital, living area popular to thousands all over southeast Michigan.

Back in the mid-seventies, North Huron Street was crumbling. The old city hall (now Old Town Hall) was rapidly decaying and all the buildings along that historic streetscape were neglected and abused - except for our museum, which stood amidst the ruins as a proud symbol of our heritage. Now that street, with nothing gone 'cutesy' as in so many revitalized towns, glows in pride in the late afternoon sun, a solid statement about a past worth remembering, preserving and using.

All over Ypsilanti, in the face of much negativism and ignorance, greed and apathy, houses have been maintained and restored. From Summit on the west to Prospect on the east, houses that were on the endangered list have been picked up, labored over, and brought back to life. From Buffalo to Forest, too, transformations have taken place. Each of us has his or her own list, but I remember admiring and lamenting the splendid gingerbread Queen Anne at 35 South Summit,

which ten years ago looked like it might not survive. Houses all over the East Side needed attention, too. What is now High/Scope was not in the best of shape as an apartment structure and the wonderful Gothic Revival house at the corner of North Grove and High was in dire straights. On the south side, I troubled over the Glover House (now Child and Family Service) at 118 South Washington, in a severe state of decay and worsening. On the north side, there was the Stachlewitz house at 601 West Forest, almost in ruins.

When one remembers these images, it's a little easier to face the dregs of leftover winter 1986 in Ypsilanti. Everywhere one turns now, one sees improvement year after year. Small projects as well as big ones contribute to the new sense of faith emerging that Ypsilanti can't lose, that the old idea that this was a town without an identity is dead, and that a new sense of community pride is spreading well beyond the city limits.

The origins of this pride go back many years to the days of Nat Edmunds' tireless battle to save five buildings along North Huron. Two were lost, but three were saved, superb examples of Richardsonian Romanesque, Italian Villa and Greek Revival - now among our most cherished possessions. Again, Nat herself can better tell you about the six separate times she saved the Ladies Library (Starkweather mansion) from destruction.

Then came Jane Bird and the organization of the Heritage Foundation, whose immediate purpose was to save the Towner House, the oldest building on its original foundation - now the Towner House Children's Museum on North Huron. Both Nat and Jane were influential in the beginnings of that organization, and within only a few years, a new kind of pride in our architectural heritage had emerged, with the development of an historic structure marker award program, the Heritage calendar (which annually presented a series of local historic buildings drawn by local artists), and a series of public presentations designed to rouse interest in preservation and enlighten people about the advantages of saving old buildings. A walking tour was initiated along North Huron in 1977, and in 1978 the Foundation's first annual Home Tour was held, now a centerpiece for the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

Meanwhile, Nat and Jane were working within the political structure for preservation, aiming for a stronger base from which to protect the city's rich heritage. Through time-exacting surveys, an historic district was established in 1973 and placed on the State Register of Historic Places. Soon it would be on the National Register as well. A strong ordinance was written and gained City Council's approval in 1977. An Historic District Commission was appointed by the Mayor, with Council approval, and the first Historic District Commission meeting was held in the small room behind the furnace in old City Hall in February 1978.

Since that time, preservation has become an integral part of city policy. Meeting every two weeks, the Commission reviews all applications for building permits in the historic district for work which will include exterior change of any sort.

The District itself, soon after its establishment, was enlarged, at the petition of the neighborhood, to include a significant part of the East Side beyond Depot Town. That made for an enormous District of over 700 buildings, and the work at times was grueling for the seven-member Commission, whose membership has remained remarkably stable over the years, with some seemingly permanent fixtures, alas, like myself, and some new blood-and-minds, such as our most recent addition, Scott Diels, architect to Tom Monaghan. Members are appointed according to law: some with proven records in historic preservation, some who live in the District, one an attorney, one an architect or builder with preservation expertise, etc.

Only one who has served on the Commission since its inception can know how much work has gone into reviewing the hundreds of permits which have come before us. There have often been meetings which went on non-stop from 7:00 until after 11:00, with on-site field trips on week-ends. But then, perhaps it takes that experience to know the impact the Commission has had on this entire preservation movement.

Preservation is the key word - and it's difficult to appreciate the meaning of the term when one has no idea of what might have happened, but didn't - what might have been destroyed, but wasn't -

because of the Historic District Ordinance. Yet some of us can look back and KNOW that certain buildings - important buildings - would not be here today without the protection of law and the work of the Commission. It's also difficult to see "what might have been" unless one knows first-hand the work of the Commission - how structures would have been changed, sometimes altered out of recognition, and property values lessened by poor workmanship.

Anyone who owns or buys an old building knows the work involved in maintaining or restoring that property. The work seems endless, but harder to deal with is the depression of seeing negative changes in buildings in the neighborhood - changes which affect not only that property itself, but reflect upon the character of the entire area and cut the value of one's own investment in sweat and cash.

The Ordinance has gone far to lessen the number of such negative changes, because the Historic District encompasses the entire central part of the City; and this protection has meant an enormous difference in our total image and has provided a more stable base for investors all over town.

Movement now is into Ypsilanti, not out of it. Enthusiasm is high, property is selling, people are moving in, most encouragingly into downtown. Lowered interest rates are a big help. Still, people want assurance that their investment is safe. A tight Historic District Ordinance is a major way of protecting those investments which are so vital to the continued revitalization of Ypsilanti.

Jack Harris

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER !!

The 5th Annual Awards Dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 14, at 6:00 pm, at the Ladies Literary Club, 218 N. Washington.

The special event of the evening will be the Annual Presentation of Historic Structure Markers. The owners of the marker buildings will be our special, honored guests.

Members (or non-members) wishing to attend, call Judy Williston, evenings, 483-1347, to tell her what you will bring to this always enjoyable, delicious pot-luck dinner!

HOUSE FREE TO GOOD HOME

Proposed Church Expansion Requires New Site for Parish House

One of Ypsilanti's historic houses is looking for a good home. The former parish house of the First Congregational Church occupies the only available site for the church's planned addition. The church is looking for someone willing to adopt the house - free of charge - and move it from its lot at 214 North Adams.

The house, built about 1892, the year the fieldstone facade of the present church was added, features bay windows and fishscale shingles. Inside, it boasts a living room, parlor, study, half-bath, dining room, kitchen and mud room downstairs, with three or four bedrooms and bath up. Maple parquet floors, a fireplace, and an elaborate front staircase (there's also a back stair) are among its beauties.

House moving is not for the timid. The house is large and in an area of many trees and overhead wires, factors which could make moving costly and difficult. However, it is structurally sound, and the price is right.

Questions should be directed to Nan Plummer at 485-4430.



WATCH FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF
HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKER AWARDS
IN THE MAY HERITAGE NEWS
AND
THE YPSILANTI PRESS!!

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May 1986

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

MEETING: Wednesday, May 14, 1986 - 6:30 pm
LOCATION: LADIES' LITERARY CLUB
SPECIAL EVENT: 5th ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKER AWARDS



RECENTLY, the Eastside owner of an Historic Structure Marker was in the garden, working, when a couple of visitors walked by. From Wayne, they explained that they often come to Ypsilanti for the pleasure of walking about our historic town, just enjoying the architecture. They asked about the marker on the building and were told that awards were based upon restoration and maintenance of properties. For the owner, the marker is a BIG THANKS FOR A JOB WELL DONE; for others, especially visitors, it says WE KNOW WE HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL AND WE'RE PROUD OF IT!

THE EAGLE EYES of the Historic Structure Marker Committee have made their annual survey and have selected ten properties to receive markers this year. The Board of the Foundation has approved and owners have accepted receipt of the markers under conditions laid down by the Foundation.

NOW, comes the Banquet and the Awards Ceremony. HOW COULD YOU MISS IT? The marker presentations, the luscious outlay of food in the long dining room to be gathered and carried by the plateful into the elegant front parlor of the Club - these are the ingredients of a very special social gathering during Preservation Week, 1986.

NO BUSINESS MEETING, no speaker, just presentation of the Awards and slides of the ten properties will be shown. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND - MEMBER OR NOT - and you haven't as yet been called, simply pick up the phone and call our Banquet Chairperson, Judy Williston, 483-1347, and suggest what you might bring.

(Marker recipients are NOT, of course, expected to bring a dish, since they are our honored guests!

The OWNERS of the following buildings will be awarded Historic Structure Markers and will be our very special GUESTS OF HONOR, Wednesday, May 14:



RALPH ELLIS & VAL BAAS for their shop & residence at
118 W. Michigan
Built: circa 1852
Style: Gothic Revival



OSCAR HAAB for his commercial restoration at
18 & 20 North Washington
Built: circa 1865
Style: Italianate



JOSEPH LAWRENCE for his commercial structure at:
5 South Washington
Built: circa 1865
Style: Italianate



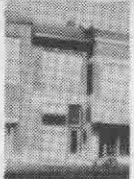
DONALD O. NAFE for his residence at
144 North Normal
Built: circa 1890
Style: Queen Anne



MARTY McMILLAN & DONNA WHITE for their residence at
35 South Summit
Built: from 1855 thru 1894 1893
Style: Queen Anne & Eastlake



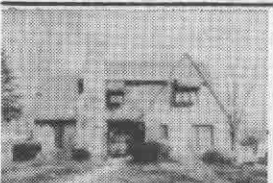
DAVID E. YOUNG for his residence at
110 North Hamilton
Built: circa 1915
Style: Dutch Colonial Revival



OSCAR HAAB for his commercial structure at
56 North Huron
Built: circa 1925
Style: Period Mediterranean & Tudor



DAVID & LINDA REPASKY for their residence at
709 Cambridge
Built: circa 1925
Style: Period Tudor



DALE & PEGGY RICE for their residence at
529 Fairview
Built: circa 1934
Style: Period Tudor



WILLIAM WRIGHT & JANET WEBER for their residence at
921 Woods Road
Built: circa 1936
Style: Period Medieval English

YPSI TO KAZOO: LET'S GO !!

Let's take the HAPPY JOURNEY from Ypsilanti to her sister city, Kalamazoo, for the 1986 Spring Meeting of the Saarinen (Michigan) Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians to be held in Kalamazoo on Saturday, May 17 and Sunday, May 18. Three attendance options are offered: Saturday only, Sunday only, or both days. The meeting is co-sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of Art Librarians of North America.



The SATURDAY program promises to be rich in visual delights as well as informative for those interested in the community's magnificent past, the dating of an old house, color and design theory in 19th Century architecture, and urban renewal through historic preservation in Kalamazoo. Speakers include Peter Schmitt, Louis and Annette Conti, Roger Parzyck, and Richard Spiegelmeyer. The program will take place in the midst of a rehabilitation project, Kalamazoo House (by Louis Conti), just nearing completion. Lunch will also be served there. A tour of several selected restored mansions will conclude Saturday's program.

The SUNDAY program will be a tale of two cities, or two groups of Frank Lloyd Wright houses built 35 years ago. ANYONE interested in learning more about the work of Frank Lloyd Wright should not miss this opportunity to experience first-hand a guided tour of two Wright-designed communities, hear about their unique plats of circular lots, explore the interiors of four (4) Wright houses, and learn first-hand about their design by their original owners.

The cost for Saturday, including lunch, is \$25.00 per person; for Sunday only, \$15.00; for both days, \$35.00 inclusive. To go, send a check and attendance option to: Janet Kreger, Treasurer / Saarinen Chapter, SAH / 727 N. Capitol, Apt. 200 / Lansing, MI 48906. Send NO LATER than Monday, May 14th. For additional information, call Denis Schmiedeke, President of the Saarinen Chapter, at (313) 483-7622 in Ypsilanti.

THE TOWNER HOUSE IN ACTION ...

Over 1000 local school children will be partake in educational (and FUN) activities at the historic Towner House Children's Museum over the coming weeks. For further information, call Judy White at 482-6610 and/or watch the local Press for further publicity.

HERITAGE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO EMU PRESERVATION STUDENT

The Heritage Foundation has again awarded a \$500 scholarship to an EMU student. Cynthia Voelkl, a graduate major in historic preservation, has been recommended by the Director of the Historic Preservation Program, Dr. Marshall McLennan, and accepted by the Board of the Foundation as this year's recipient. Cynthia has proven herself to be one of the most competent interns ever to have worked with the Historic District Commission. Congratulations, Cynthia! You have already made an important contribution to historic preservation in Ypsilanti, and we hope to see more of you in the coming months.

Ypsilanti HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Nat Edmunds is coordinating details of events that will make up the biggest and most impressive Heritage Festival ever. Under the co-chairmanship of Sandy Knight and Al Shelton, the various committees are well underway with plans. To volunteer your services to any of the projects, call the Visitor & Convention Bureau, 482-4920, NOW!

Here are only some of the dozens of exciting Festival events:

CIRCUS! HISTORIC HOME TOUR! Children's Activities at the Towner House! Heritage Parade! Special Tours and Events inside many of our magnificent churches! Pioneer and Civil War Encampments! Arts and Crafts! Riverboat Gambling Tent! Pancake breakfasts, barbeques, and chicken dinners galore! Jazz concerts, special exhibits, esoteric patter in DepoTown pubs, open houses - including the majestic Water Tower!

Set the dates on your calendar now - August 22, 23, 24.



ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR:

East Side, West Side, and Midtown - all will be represented on this year's Heritage Foundation Historic Home Tour. This is not, like so many others, a decorator's tour. This is a chance not only to get a good view of Ypsilanti's architectural history but a rare opportunity to get inside at least five beautiful private residences. Variety and individuality will again be the keynote features of the tour. In some cases, you may still be able to glimpse restoration in progress; but in all instances, you will undoubtedly go away with a very positive, up-beat impression of Ypsilanti.

With pride and pleasure, then, we announce this year's Home Tour, to include the following:

- Bob & Sherri Strauss - 1124 Grant (Colonial Revival, on Tour in 1982, but country-style interior has been completely redone)
- Barry & Diane LaRue - 427 N. Hamilton (Queen Anne, with late 19th Century furnishings and decoration)
- Scott & Mary Riley - 313 E. Cross (Queen Anne, with renovated and redecorated interior)
- Don Bronson - 106 N. Adams (Queen Anne, the Mark Harris house, now two apartments)
- Paul & Penny Schreiber - 922 Pleasant Drive (Colonial Revival)

DATE: Sunday, August 24
TIME: Noon to 5:00 pm
PRICE: \$4.00 Adults
\$3.00 Senior Citizens
\$2.00 Children under 12



Guides are needed - volunteers please call Jane Van Bolt, 483-6972

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AUGUST 1986

* SPECIAL EDITION *

Ypsilanti, MI

THE YPSILANTI HERITAGE FESTIVAL

August 22, 23, 24

SPECIAL EVENT: 9th ANNUAL YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION HOME TOUR

DATE: Sunday, August 24, Noon to 5:00 pm

TICKETS: Adults \$4.00 - Seniors \$3.00 - Children \$2.00

Available at ticket booths in the Festival area:

1. On the Cross Street Bridge
2. In front of the Historical Museum on Huron Street

HOMES ON TOUR

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. 1207 Pearl Street | - Cape Cod 1934, with additions |
| 2. 1124 Grant | - Colonial Revival 1926 |
| 3. 106 North Adams | - Queen Anne 1892 |
| 4. 427 North Hamilton | - Queen Anne 1892 |
| 5. 313 East Cross | - Queen Anne 1880-1894 |
| 6. Starkweather Memorial Chapel
(in Highland Cemetery) | - Richardsonian Romanesque 1888 |

(See reverse side for map)

SEE HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PROGRESS -

VISIT SOME OF YPSILANTI'S FASCINATING HISTORIC STRUCTURES !!

Dr. John Watling's Dental Office (119 North Huron), the distinctly Romanesque brick and stone building just across from St. Luke's, has come in for some much needed restoration and rehabilitation which began last fall and is still continuing. Notice the twin box bay windows on the north side which were almost completely rebuilt by a firm in Bridgewater. The handsome new back porch is the design work of architect Denis Schmiedeke, who has planned and supervised the restoration. Thank you, owner Oscar Haab, for your generous

investment in this unique, 1894 landmark!

Ralph Ellis, Historic District Commission member and owner of Ypsilanti Cycle, reached the completion of his restoration of his and wife Val Baas' fantastic Gothic Revival commercial building at 118 West Michigan by installing appropriate panels under the street-level windows. One of the first 'unveilings' on Michigan Avenue, it was a real gift to the community.

DEPOT TOWN welcomes Festival visitors this year with several changes ...

Depot Exchange has exchanged its ramshackle rear image for a full-scale rehab with new windows, repair work, and a painted-on-the-wall sign right out of the 19th Century! Thanks, Linda and Steve, for that much-needed improvement to Depot Town's River Street image.

And thanks, Sidetrack, too, for your east facade rehab! Clearly, that whole end of Depot Town is no longer "just a pretty face"!

Gary and Carolyn McKeever have apparently survived the stress and shock of decision-making and execution of the partial demolition and rebuilding of the entire east wall of their commercial property at 29 East Cross, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, buildings in Depot Town. A major investment for the McKeever's - a MAJOR STATEMENT about the significance of maintaining the historic character of old neighborhoods! Thanks and deep appreciation, Gary and Carolyn!

A fond farewell to Bonni Rosen-Fine's "And Everything Nice" and a warm welcome to Marge and Dave Gauntlett's "The Cricket Box".

Welcome, too, to Depot Town's newest new business, "Pedler's Path". (Festival visitors, take a good look at this building, which houses both Pedler's Path and Miller's Ice Cream, because it won't look the same next year!)

Standard Printing did a major overhaul on its large building in Depot Town. Note particularly the metamorphosis in the entryway to what used to be the Eagles' Hall: new door, new sidelights, new transom, and elegant lighting in the stairwell. And, the new rear entry is worth walking around the building to see. Thanks, Carol and Loren Hansen!

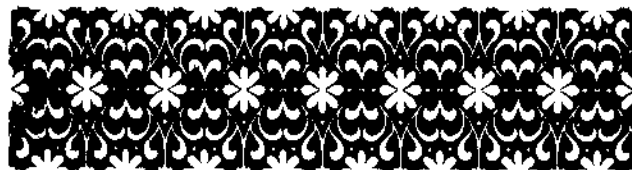
OVER THE BRIDGE AND UP THE HILL from Depot Town ...

The Victorian brick coach house behind Old Town Hall is experiencing a full-scale renovation. Also note the new fence, which echoes Old Town Hall's Second Empire details - another Denis Schmiedeke design. All in all, an enormous task, but what a treat it will be when finished, especially when viewed from the new Cross Street Bridge! Thanks, Chuck Soule and Karl Andrews!

Applause to Tom Conway for the spiffy new paint job on the old fire station!

301 North Washington - do you remember the dull, old, white house on that corner - not a bad example of Queen Anne, but nothing to ... Hey, wait, what's this? Ypsilanti's version of a Painted Lady, in pink and blue highlighting all her best features! Thanks, Lis Knibbe and Tim Clarkson!

Farther down Washington, notice the new paint job at 172 - thanks to those owners for reviving such a handsome house for all of us to enjoy once again.



According to the Historic District Commission Chair, the MOST BEAUTIFUL SIGHT IN TOWN is scaffolding all up and down MICHIGAN AVE!

Darby's Shoes building has a new owner and renovations have begun! It's Patrick Easto, a professor of Sociology at EMU. He has also invested in 217 West Michigan (the former Gas Co office next to Library Park), and interior renovation and exterior restoration are underway. Hooray - and welcome!

Thanks to Paponetti's Pasta for their bright, inviting new look at 17 East Cross.

While you're on your way to the Recycling Center, note the absence of the old garages and the presence of the new stairs at the rear of Miller's Ice Cream - thanks, Rex and Sally!

Can you find the two-story, red brick structure hidden on Ferrier Street (can you find Ferrier Street?!), just off River? It's worth the search to see the handsome new doors built by Don Randazzo for this building where Dave Wheeler and Mike Huizenga, electrical engineers, repair, monitor and certify utilities instruments.

The Greene's Jewelers building has new owners, too - Gary and Chris Maxton. Improvements are underway there, also. Another exciting Michigan Ave transformation to watch this summer!

The Mack & Mack building (211-215 West Michigan) has new owners, Tom and Jean Fagan, who plan to open a mini mall with living quarters above. Already the fifties facade has come down and plans are approved for facade rehab - another tremendous asset to the entire downtown streetscape!

Much appreciation to Bill Durant, who not only rehabbed a very nice building but established a Hallmark card shop at 113 West Michigan. Another contribution from a committed community supporter!

All over town, handsome buildings are emerging from behind false facades and synthetic siding - each one like the unwrapping of a Christmas package - a wonderful gift to this once tired old town now coming to life again!

18 & 20 North Washington on the Mall, housing Peg's Golden Griddle, experienced a major transformation from ugly ducking to showpiece when the period storefronts were reconstructed and all the best features of the buildings were highlighted with splendid paint colors. Thanks to architect Denis Schmiedeke and owner Oscar Haab!

Remember the shabby grey asbestos shingles at the SE corner of Hamilton and Forest? Look again - another miracle has happened. A complete new clapboard siding job, with the help of some City-administered funding, has transformed this corner of the Historic District into a visual delight in blue and cream. Thanks, Jerry and Michelle Diepenhorst, for bringing back a handsome Carpenter Gothic! You've done a splendid job!

At 206 West Forest, owner Cecil Meador is removing asbestos shingles to reveal the original clapboard siding on this bungalow - another swan emerging!

The delightful, nearly secret, little public walkway from the south end of College Place to Pearl Street was repaired by city workmen. Thanks, City of Ypsilanti!

Tim Vachon's painstaking and patient work on his and Sarah's house at 516 North Adams makes that long-abused place more beautiful every day. Note the horizontal board siding on the front porch.

Tim is now restoring the porch and building a board and batten garage for Tom and Betsie Warner at 214 North River. As some of you recall, the Warners moved their house from North Adams a few years ago.



Thanks, Ricky Balkam, for your commitment to teaching local history at Ypsilanti High!

Thanks to the owner of 101 West Michigan (Sterling Vision) for the massive paint stripping of the brick there - great improvement!

Maxe Obermeyer, you did it! You transformed the ugliest old LUMP on North River (232) into what it had always been underneath - a perfect gem of a simple, vernacular Greek Revival! Thanks, and ever thanks!

The image of Prospect Park was enhanced last fall when a ceremony was held in dedication of the State of Michigan Historic Site Marker. Congratulations, Lynn Tabor and the Marker Committee! And thanks to the neighbors who tend the flowers around restored Luna Lake!

To Ray Vier, owner of Ray's Marathon service station at Washtenaw and Washington, thanks and thanks again for the wonderful petunias that brighten the street there. Ditto to the owners of Old Town Hall! Sweet people planting sweet petunias, making this one of the sweetest towns to live in! Thank you!

And may we give ourselves a modest hand for the Foundation's expanded selection of publications, new in 1985: Guide to Ypsilanti Historic Architecture; the 1986 Calendar, much complimented for its photographic, chronological presentation of architectural styles; the reprinted Souvenir of Ypsilanti; a fresh new format for the newsletter, Heritage News; and now, just printed, the 1987 Calendar.

Many new businesses have opened in all three main shopping areas of the community - West Cross Street (University Village), Depot Town and Downtown - look for them and give them your support!

For the loving care given the wonderful little front yard garden at 313 Pearl Street, owner Mr. Ralph Vance has our sincerest thanks! Your efforts have been much appreciated and enjoyed!

To Nicholas Shanks, of 229-231 North River, for the restoration progress made on the porch, the paint job, and the restoration of the capitals to the pillars - thank you!

To the friends who own 321 East Cross - thanks, not only for the quality of the restoration work done on the house, but for the charming little outbuilding built to match in the back yard! Little things sometimes make all the difference!

To the guys with the exotic garden at 14 South Summit - thanks again!

To everyone who tended a garden, adopted a planter box, tucked flowers into a neglected little corner, adorned a building with hanging baskets, and to Mary Kisor, who planted morning glories in her neighbor's yard! - thank you! The town is blooming as never before and it's wonderful!

To ALL those people who have made a real effort (and investment) to maintain their property - THANK YOU!

The huge Queen Anne delight at 35 South Summit: have you seen it lately? It got a perfect paint job late in 1985 and now looks almost good enough to eat in pink and cream! Thanks, owners Marty and Judy!

Improvements are already obvious at 212 Washtenaw (the beautiful Italianate we all worried over for so many years), even though new owners Alan Heezen and Wanda McGlasson only recently purchased the house. Alan says he has not made a decision about repairs since they moved in - the house makes all the decisions!

And an Ypsilanti welcome to our newest newcomers, Clayton and Caryl Eshleman, who have just purchased the handsome 1920s brick house at 210 Washtenaw and who will have moved in from California just in time for Festival.

And to all other new residents and owners - WELCOME!

Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

September 1986

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

MEETING: Tuesday, September 23, 1986 - 7:30 pm
LOCATION: The Coffee Shop, The Freight House, Depot Town, Ypsilanti
PROGRAM: THE SUMMER OF '86: Problems We Have Faced and Solutions We Have Found in Restoring/Renovating OLD BUILDINGS in Ypsilanti

For the most part, this will NOT be a formal program. While we are asking a handful of old-house (or building) owners to speak for five minutes each about the problems they have faced, we hope to turn this first of the Foundation's social evenings of the season into a MOST USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE FOR ANYONE WHO OWNS OR CONSIDERS OWNING AN OLDER BUILDING.

The following are some of the problems we hope to address - with solutions:

- I. What to do with the old kitchen to make it more functional ...
- II. How to decide which contractor to get - and how to get him ...
- III. Which plumbing to do yourself and which to contract out ...
- IV. Choosing paint colors for the old house ...
- V. Problems with interior wall surfaces - and how to solve them ...
- VI. Insulation - what comes first, second ...

As a starter, Jack Harris will present
a MINI SLIDE SHOW entitled

THE LOST SUMMER OF '86: the continuing saga of restoring a Civil War Era cottage in Ypsilanti.

Jack bought a house in March from the State of Michigan. He photographed it. Then he began working, particularly on the exterior, as well as interior systems. He has learned a lot about bringing back the derelict old house. He will talk for a few minutes about his experiences and show you the transformation he has made - a transformation which MAY, he hopes, make the LOST SUMMER worthwhile!

COME!!! BRING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH YOU AND SHARE THEM WITH THE REST!
(Gentle suggestion: let's not make this a useless gripe session. Come with one experience you have had and can share - an experience that could be helpful to others!)

COME! You need not be a member to attend! The meeting is open to all!

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED!!

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOME TOUR - the 1986 report:

After a rain-doused parade on Saturday, Sunday dawned sunny and beautiful, as usual, for the 9th Annual Historic Home Tour. This year the Foundation chief fundraiser drew a record crowd of 510, plus another hundred or so guides, ticket sellers, and otherwise working participants. Ticket holders were able to view a variety of houses from an 1880s Queen Anne in almost original condition, to a 1930s Cape Cod that had been gradually but vastly enlarged to hold all kinds of collectors' surprises. There was a house for everyone's taste, whether it be country antique, cozy family ambiance, or modern renovation.

This year's tour also included a look at Starkweather Memorial Chapel in Highland Cemetery - Ypsilanti's rarely seen masterpiece of Romanesque Revival architecture in glass and stone and wood - drawing attention to the recent drive by Bill Durant of the Highland Cemetery Board of Trustees to preserve this deteriorating landmark. (Harold Britten, another Board member, reports that after a close look at the wonders of that building, he has become an advocate of preservation - at least of the Chapel!)

Nancie Loppnow, chief guide for the Chapel, and Doris Milliman, city historian, created an excellent walking tour of the cemetery which led tour participants to the graves of some of our best-known founding citizens. We hope that the Cemetery Board will find the walking tour to be a foundation for more extensive tours of this very significant local historic site. (TOUR GUIDES ARE AVAILABLE AT DURANT'S FLOWERS, AS WELL AS AT THE CEMETERY OFFICE.)

A GREAT BIG THANKS from the Board of the Heritage Foundation to all the people who made this tour possible:

The Home Owners: Mary Kay & Scott Riley, Joann & Bob Gillman, Diane & Barry LaRue, Mark & Barbara Harris (and their renter, Don Bronson), and especially Bob & Shari Strauss, for being both home owners and chief guides;

To the Highland Cemetery Board, with special recognition to Bill Durant for taking the leadership again in this drive to save one of our most precious, but threatened, landmarks;

To the Chief Guides for making all arrangements for each home and for writing the brochure descriptions: Nancie Loppnow, Emily Brown, Grace Sweeney, Bettie Dodd, Penny Schreiber, and Bob & Shari Strauss;

To Norton's Flowers for the beautiful arrangements in each location;

To Joe Mattimoe for seeking out donors to carry most of the cost of printing the brochure/ticket;

To Denis Schmiedeke for taking the brochure photos;

To Karen & Bill Nickels for taking responsibility for tickets sales, set-up and removal of our Festival booths, and a host of related responsibilities;

... and to the many guides and ticket sellers without whom the tour would not be possible - WE APPRECIATE the contribution that each of you made and look forward to another successful year in 1987!

THANKS, AND EVER THANKS!!!

**Heritage Foundation 1987 APPOINTMENT CALENDAR
Features the TOWERS OF YPSILANTI**

The YHF is proud to announce its 1987 appointment calendar, a major addition to the historical records of Ypsilanti. Designed, produced, and printed by artists and artisans within the walls of our fair city, the calendar focuses upon a month-by-month display of one of the most cherished features of our architectural heritage: the towers of Ypsilanti.

Filled with memorable quotations in support of the recognition and preservation of old buildings, the calendar displays meticulous photographs of some of our most beloved towers, with accompanying informative text, all done by local architect and photographer, Denis Schmiedeke. Details of architectural styles are discussed, along with interesting, little-known historical facts about the individual towers. We are reminded, for example, that the Starkweather Memorial Chapel was a gift to the community by Mary Ann Starkweather in memory of her late husband (shades of Queen Victoria's own memorial to her beloved Albert, the Albert Memorial in London!) at the beginning of Ypsilanti's greatest tower building era, 1889 to 1898.

The Foundation believes that this significant record of our history will be of increasing value to local historians. It should prove to be a wonderful gift item for friends and relatives, here and away, as well as a wonderful conversation piece for all of us. As a practical appointment calendar, it will be useful almost immediately. The cost, at \$4.00, is almost shockingly low, when set against comparable calendars.

Orders, small and large, may be had from our official Calendar Salesperson, Dr. William Fennel, member of the Board. Write him at 202 South Huron or call 482-1071.

"Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance."

-- Deuteronomy 27:17

"We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build, but by those we have destroyed."

-- The New York Times

(Both quotations taken from the many varied and wonderful quotes, selected by our typist, Jane Bird, to be found in the 1987 Calendar.)

AVAILABLE AT SEVERAL LOCAL BUSINESSES!



Broad Street
Newark,
New Jersey



SPECTACULAR IMPROVEMENTS!

Driving around Ypsilanti these days can be a treat (while not ignoring all the problems that still remain to be tackled). Especially in downtown and in Depot Town this month we are seeing spectacular improvements. Downtown's most visible projects are the work of newcomers, Tom and Jean Fagan at 211-215 West Michigan, and Gary and Chris Maxton at the former Greene's Jewelers, where the facade is beginning to glow and sparkle after years of neglect. In Depot Town the most astonishing addition (after this summer's wonder-of-wonders in the rebuilding of the McKeever's commercial building) is the enormous cornice on the Follett House, which should add immensely to the value and character of this historic structure.

Between these two historic commercial centers, we have watched the transformation of the Quirk Mansion (Old Town Hall) Carriage House, from derelict old storage bin to productive office spaces. Owners Chuck Soule and Karl Andrews have "busted a gut" (to use the vernacular) and spent more than a penny to make that transformation possible. The Historic District Commission, too, has cooperated with these two dedicated preservationists to make a barn once again part of a "vital, living area" (from the HD Ordinance). That meant allowing the building of balconies overlooking the park (what a vantage point from which to view the glories of one of our long neglected natural resources!). This follows the pattern of other buildings along historic Huron Street - especially the balcony at the Ladies Library building. At the front of the carriage house, the decision was to allow the addition of a modern conservatory, which fills the opening where the ugly and not original garage doors had been. The Commission suggested that in this case - where nothing genuinely historic was being removed from the building and where no structural change was being made - that there should be no effort to 'fake it'. This follows national guidelines and, indeed, it is hoped that what will emerge by the addition is an even sharper image of the building's glorious facade, the brickwork itself, the doors and windows, as well as the stonework and elaborate cornices - all of which remain THANKS TO TWO ENERGETIC YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE BEEN WILLING TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THIS MONUMENTAL PROJECT.

FOUNDATION ASSISTS IN ESTABLISHING STARKWEATHER FUND

When Mary Ann Starkweather had a lovely little Romanesque Revival style chapel built in memory of her late husband in Highland Cemetery in 1888, it was at a cost of \$10,000 - a hefty sum in those days. The cost of maintaining the chapel was to come from general cemetery funds. However, in recent years those funds have not been sufficient to carry out the repairs that a building requires after almost a century; and, because of the increasing state of disrepair, the chapel has become less attractive for use in burial ceremonies and its deteriorating condition threatens its continued existence.

Thanks to the leadership of Bill Durant, the situation may be changing. Bill, a recent addition to the Highland Cemetery Board, took an immediate interest in the Starkweather Memorial Chapel. When the Home Tour committee learned of the condition of the building and Bill's renovation plans, it added the Chapel to the buildings on Tour.

Subsequently, the YHF Board voted \$500 seed money to establish a STARKWEATHER MEMORIAL CHAPEL FUND. In upcoming weeks, Bill will be announcing the fund in hopes that others in the community will want to donate to this most worthy cause. He estimates the cost of repairs to roof, ceiling, windows, door frames, and other necessary work at over \$20,000.

TAKE AN HOUR to visit what may be one of the most beautiful and historic cemeteries anywhere. Nancie Loppnow and Doris Milliman created a short walking tour of the graves of such families as the Towners, Ballards, Quirks, Starkweathers, and Cornwells - available at Durant's Flowers and the cemetery office.

FIRE at LEWIS HOUSE - ARSON

The fire which destroyed an original door and brackets overhead was deliberately set - the arsonist is at large. Watch your own property and your neighbor's carefully!

Give any information or suspicions to Fire Marshall James Roberts, 482-9778.

