

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 1999

Ypsilanti, MI

MEETING: Wednesday, January 27, 1999--7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: The Freighthouse Coffee Shop
Depot Town
Ypsilanti, Michigan

PROGRAM: *The Mystery of the Ypsilanti Underwear Lady
& Other Tales of Ypsilanti's Lost Heritage*

SPEAKER: James Mann

Legend has it that the model for the famous 18-foot-high painted lady who once graced the Ypsilanti Underwear Factory was a comely local lass. And did you know that this same factory, built in 1865 and originally known as the Woolen Mill, was the scene of Ypsilanti's second murder? How about this: in 1912, Ypsilanti's mayor ordered the arrest of the city's baseball team for the crime of playing on Sunday! These are just a few of the always interesting, sometimes strange, and long forgotten stories from our city's past that our January speaker, **James Mann**, will bring to life for us on the 27th.

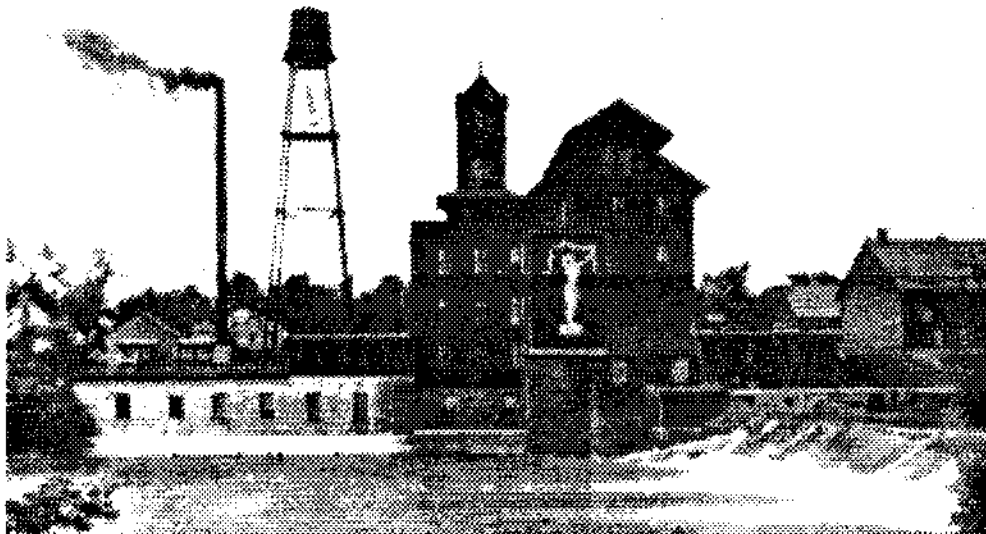
Although he promises to include "as much mystery, murder, mayhem, and humor as possible," the real focus of James' slide presentation will be the several 19th century structures which, because of fire, tornado, or ignorance, are lost to us forever. Concentrating on the Starkweather Fountain, the Normal Fountain, the Normal Gymnasium, the Opera House, and the Woolen Mill, he'll also tell us about some of the elegant homes, now demolished or in decrepit condition, that once lined our streets. We'll learn about the role of each in the history of Ypsilanti and of the people who lived and worked in them.

Born and reared in Detroit, James came to Ypsilanti in 1977 to attend Eastern Michigan University. Graduating in 1980 with a degree in English Language and Literature, he decided to settle in the area and has "felt at home here ever since." An Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation member, he began researching and writing about local history in 1992. In addition to being a regular contributor to the Heritage News, he has written for The Depot Town Rag and other local publications. As a paid professional, he wrote the history of the Ypsilanti Fire Department in 1995, as part of its centennial celebration. Currently, he is working on a number of projects concerning local history "solely to satisfy my curiosity."

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And on January 27th we'll reap the benefits of that curiosity as we hear the colorful tales about what we once had and have since lost. *The Mystery of the Ypsilanti Underwear Lady & Other Tales of Ypsilanti's Lost Heritage* is the story of preservation battles waged and lost and, sadly, of battles never engaged in at all. It is a story of missed opportunities, as many of these buildings could have been saved and rehabilitated. And it is a reminder, once again, of the ongoing need for historic preservation in Ypsilanti and in communities across the country.

As always, general meetings of the Heritage Foundation are open to the public and refreshments will be served. So tell your neighbors. This will be a program of interest to everyone who lives in and loves Ypsilanti. The woodburning stove will be fired up at the Freighthouse Coffee Shop, making it the perfect place to go to get out of the January cold. See you there!



Picture from the post card collection of Lisa Walters

"THE HIKER" TO BE RESTORED

Councilmember Barry LaRue, working with YHF board member and fellow councilmember Bill Nickels, will be introducing a resolution similar to the one that created the Demetrius Ypsilanti Sculpture Commission back in 1993. The purpose of the resolution is to create a board that will oversee the restoration of "The Hiker," a Spanish-American War sculpture that sits at the intersection of Washtenaw and W. Cross.

Meanwhile, the city awaits the outcome of a grant submission to the Save Outdoor Sculpture! group, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. Venus Bronze Works of Detroit is the logical choice for technical assistance and have already provided an assessment and estimate on cost of restoration.

If all goes well, we will see physical work on the statue this summer and a possible re-dedication either in time for Heritage Festival or this fall.

MICHIGAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION NETWORK 1999 CONFERENCE

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Michigan's statewide preservation organization, presents its 19th Annual Conference, Thursday-Saturday, April 22-24, 1999, at St. Mary Conference Center, Monroe, Michigan. "DOING IT RIGHT: Getting the results you want through good preservation," features 45 speakers in two tracks on Friday and Saturday--one track focusing on "How To" skills, the other addressing the conference theme in depth.

The Thursday program is something new, a Construction Trades Symposium. Union contractors and craftworkers in the "trowel trades" fill the two-track program with live demonstrations on the "lost" techniques of historic construction and in present-day preservation techniques.

Friday's special events, which are free or discounted for conference attendees, also are open to non-registered individuals with advance tickets. They include a luncheon with keynote address by Andrew Ladygo, President of Preservation Services Inc. of Fredericksburg, Virginia; a late afternoon reception and the Annual Preservation Awards; and an evening benefit dinner dance at the Monroe Golf and Country Club.

Conference fees go up to \$125 for Thursday's symposium and \$155 for the Conference on Friday and Saturday, with discounts for MHPN members and others. Display space for vendors and organizations is available. For information, write: MHPN, P.O. Box 720, Clarkston, MI 48347-0720; Fax (248) 625-3010; or phone (248) 625-8181.

MORE ABOUT THE NETWORK...

THE MICHIGAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION NETWORK began in 1979 and was recognized as a non-profit organization in 1990. It has grown to become Michigan's statewide organization, whose leadership and more than 1,200 members preserve and promote the preservation of the state's historic architecture, neighborhoods, farmsteads, and landscapes. Members are residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and agricultural property owners, students and educators, governmental officials and historic district commissioners, architects and people in the building trades, developers, realtors, bankers, and preservation volunteers and professionals. The interests of members extend from revitalizing the neighborhoods in which they live and the commercial downtowns where they work, to such activities as developing much-needed housing in some of Michigan's oldest urban centers, adapting all types of historic buildings for current uses, and highlighting the rich rural, agricultural, and shoreline heritage of Michigan.

The Network currently sponsors two major statewide conferences each year, training workshops for communities that need design assistance or have local historic district commissions, and technical assistance programs sponsored jointly with organizations as varied as the Michigan Historical Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Michigan Municipal League, and the Michigan Department of Transportation. Through its quarterly newsletter, the Network informs members about local, state, and national preservation activities and legislative issues. Its senior leadership maintains a demanding schedule of Saturday preservation workshops, general education programs given to groups ranging from the Rotary to local nature conservancies, public meetings related to the passage of local protective ordinances or the reuse of important historic buildings, short-term telephone assistance as well as long-term community mentoring, and one-time programs that go to the heart of specific local issues.

OVERHEARD...

In keeping with our regular practice of bringing our readers positive news, we'd like to pass on a comment that was made to one of the Holiday Home Tour homeowners. A couple, who identified themselves as being from Detroit, told this homeowner how much they envied those of us living in Ypsilanti, because there were so many people here interested in historic preservation and that we were obviously doing something about it.

It's gratifying to know that people in other communities are aware of this, and we at the Heritage News hope that Ypsilanti preservationists keep this in mind when we sometimes get discouraged over what seems to be slow progress.

As always, feel free to pass on to Lisa Walters any positive comments you hear, so we can publish them in future editions of the News!



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102 N. Wallace Blvd.
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Heritage News
Lisa Mills Walters, Editor-in-Chief (485-3683)
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March 1999

Ypsilanti, MI

MEETING: Wednesday, March 24, 1999--7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Ladies Literary Club
218 N. Washington
Ypsilanti, Michigan

PROGRAM: *The Greek Revival Style in Southeastern Michigan*

SPEAKER: Mary M. Culver

Architectural guidebooks tell us that the earliest identifiable style to be found in southeastern Michigan is Greek Revival (c. 1830-1860), which was sweeping the country at the time our area was being settled. So it was natural that some of the earliest buildings of any consequence in Washtenaw County were built in this style. We wrap up our 1998/99 calendar of membership meetings with a look at the Greek Revival Style, its origins, history, and diagnostic features, all within the contexts of American expansion and southeastern Michigan's settlement. Our guide will be **Mary M. Culver**, local preservationist and noted speaker on the subject, who describes the style as her "most favorite topic!"

The Greek Revival Style began in Europe during the mid-18th Century with a resurgence of interest in all things having to do with ancient Greece. By the 1920s, it had spread to America. As a new nation, the United States was searching for a national architecture, and the classic forms of the style, and the Grecian ideals it represented, seemed to fit the bill. In addition, Americans strongly identified with modern Greece's struggle, in the 1820s, for independence from Turkish rule, as they had themselves recently gained their own independence during the American Revolution and had successfully defended it in the War of 1812. As the popular style spread across this country, it was adapted from published designs and applied to every conceivable building type.

An advocate for the rescue of Ypsilanti's Towner House and Salem's Rider House, Mary Culver works as a planner and consultant in adapting historic resources to today's uses. A native of Washtenaw County, she earned a graduate degree in Historic Preservation at Eastern Michigan University. She also teaches preservation and architectural history at EMU and Washtenaw Community College, and her research has been published in such popular magazines as *Old House Journal* as well as more scholarly periodicals.

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Mary will illustrate her program with slides showing a variety of local examples of the Greek Revival Style, including the Kempf, Lund, and Wilson-Wahr Houses in Ann Arbor, the Blum-Schmidt House in Lodi Township, and Wednesday night's meeting site, the Ladies Literary Club. From simple rectangular cottages and pretentious porticoed mansions all the way to octagons, and with construction materials ranging from brick and adobe to cobblestone and clapboard, we'll learn how and why this versatile style became, over time, a distinctly American architectural expression.

As always, general meetings of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation are open to the public, so bring a friend! Refreshments will be served.

LOCAL PRESERVATIONISTS PRODUCING DEPOT TOWN HISTORY

Our very own Tom Dodd and James Mann, both YHF members who need no introduction to our regular readers, have been asked to write a history of Depot Town. Our Heritage: Historic Ypsilanti will be published by the Depot Town Association. The 200-page book is now in the early stages and is expected to be available for this year's Heritage Festival. We know that every YHF member will want an autographed copy!

SPEAKING OF THE HERITAGE FESTIVAL...

Former YHF Board Member and President Jack Harris, who also needs no introduction to our members, is representing the Heritage Foundation on the Heritage Festival Board of Trustees. This board, created by YHF founder and former Heritage Festival Chairperson Nathalie Edmunds, will help to bring Ypsilanti's heritage back to the Festival. We're glad to see that Jack is keeping busy in his "retirement" ...now if only he could find time to write for the Heritage News!

HDC FACT SHEETS AVAILABLE

Thinking of renovating your historic home? Members of the Historic District Commission remind us that fact sheets are available for the taking at City Hall. Homeowners can get several pages of information on the following topics:

- Renovation procedures for porches, roofs, windows, and more
- Policy and procedure regarding demolition or moving of structures within the Historic District
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Historic District Commission meeting information
- Questions and answers about the Historic District

Whether residing in the Historic District or not, preservation-minded folk will want to consider this information before undertaking any renovation projects. Call Assistant City Planner Brett Lenart at 483-9646 for more information.

PAINT For Sale: Nine gallons (eight unopened, one nearly full) Sherwin Williams exterior latex A-100 House & Trim, terra cotta color, \$10 a gallon. Will deliver. Call Jane Schmiedeke at 487-2474.

HISTORIC REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT

A long-time initiative of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network was signed into law by Governor Engler in late January. The historic rehabilitation tax credit provides a 25% credit against either the state income tax or single business tax.

Rules are being promulgated by the state at this time. The state does not expect to have them prepared before this fall. However, if you are planning some building improvements and your house is in the historic district, you can still apply this year and complete a project this summer.

According to the Bureau of History, you will need to document the project with color photographs prior to commencing work. Close up views of original finishes, peeling paint, window frames, etc. will be critical to determine whether the proposed project will degrade the building's original fabric.

Roofing, appropriate siding, windows, awnings, porch repair, heating and air conditioning, wiring, and plumbing are all examples of allowable projects. The key is to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation when making modifications.

Once the project is complete, document the finished product with photographs and provide detailed receipts, local HDC approval, building permit applications, drawings, manufacturer's specifications, etc. The Bureau of History will evaluate each project and make a determination.

City Councilmember Barry LaRue has additional information from the state and would be happy to share such with interested property owners. Call him at 482-2327 or email him at "blarue@umich.edu"

In addition, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, Ypsilanti Historic District Commission, Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, and other preservation groups throughout the county will host a public informational meeting; time and place to be announced later. Watch for more information in the May Heritage News.

YHF TO CREATE WEBSITE

Foundation member Eric Walters will soon be creating a website for the YHF. Plans are for the site to include a brief history of the Foundation, our mission statement, board membership information, and more. We'll update the site with the publication of each newsletter and other information of interest to our members. Suggestions? Call Eric Walters at 485-3683.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PART OF EMU GRAD STUDENT FAIR

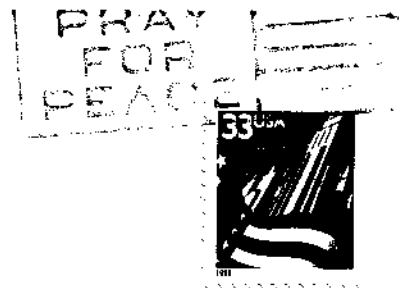
The Graduate Studies Office at Eastern Michigan University will hold its first annual Research Fair on March 22 at McKenny Union, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Among the graduate students giving oral presentations will be Monica Kuhn, former HDC intern, speaking on The Ypsilanti Historic District Property Value Study, and Philip Smith, whose presentation is entitled A Floor Plan Typology for the Bungalow. The Fair will also feature poster displays created by other graduate students in the Historic Preservation Program. For more information call Lisa Walters at 485-3683 (home) or at 487-0048 (the Graduate Studies Office).

1999 MARKER BANQUET SCHEDULED

The YHF Board has set the date for the annual Marker Awards Banquet. We'll be honoring deserving homeowners at the Ladies' Literary Club on Wednesday, May 26, at 6:30 p.m. Mark your calendars now for this social event of the season. Details will follow in the May newsletter.



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May 1999

Ypsilanti, MI

MEETING: Wednesday, May 26, 1999--6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Ladies Literary Club
218 N. Washington
Ypsilanti, Michigan

PROGRAM: 22nd ANNUAL HISTORIC STRUCTURE
MARKER BANQUET AND AWARDS

So far, the spring of 1999 seems to be following in the footsteps of the spring of 1998! That's two years in a row of wonderfully warm weather and beautiful spring flowers! This bodes well for our annual spring event, the Historic Structure Marker Banquet. Once again, we take the opportunity to recognize and honor deserving property owners for the work they've done on their historic buildings. Since its inception, the Marker Program has recognized more than 125 homes, businesses, and churches in Ypsilanti for their significant historic architecture and continuing, sensitive maintenance.

The following owners of buildings will be awarded Historic Structure Markers this year and will be our special guests of honor on Wednesday, May 26th, at the Ladies Literary Club:

Eric and Lisa Walters for their home at **102 N. Wallace Blvd.**
Style: Modified American Four-Square, built 1927

Joe Lawrence for the house at **601 Emmet St.**
Style: Carpenter Gothic, built c. 1870

Eugene and Anne Lidster for their home at **629 Osband St.**
Style: Craftsman Bungalow, built 1923

Robert and Jill Arcure for their home at **208 Elm St.**
Style: Tudor Revival Cottage, built 1932

Mark and Patty Allen for **The Chick-Inn Drive-In** at **501 Holmes Rd.**
Style: Vintage Drive-In Restaurant, built 1955

The Riverside Arts Center for the **Masonic Temple Building** at **76 N. Huron St.**
Style: Classical Revival, built 1909

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Since the Marker Banquet is always a very popular and well-attended event each spring, we urge you to contact one of the Banquet Chairpersons as soon as possible if you plan to attend. Call Shirley Durrett at 485-2054, Karen Nickels at 483-8896, or Penny Schreiber at 483-5688 to R.S.V.P. and to let them know what dish you might like to bring to supplement our table. (Marker Recipients are not expected to bring a dish, since they are our special guests.)

The evening begins with punch and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m., with dinner following at 7:15 p.m. The Marker program and presentations to recipients will follow. So do join us as we celebrate this glorious spring of 1999 and our treasure-trove of historic architecture. REMEMBER: space is limited, so call now!

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN AT THE 1999 YPSILANTI HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Do you remember the first Heritage Festival (actually, the "Yesteryear Festival")? Or the fifth or the tenth? Do you remember when it was a great big block party/reunion/celebration, when Ypsilanti truly celebrated its history, its people, its heritage? Well, it's back! This year's festival, the 21st annual, may not be the biggest ever, and it certainly won't be the most expensive, but it may just prove to be the most fun!

Festival organizers, headed by former Festival Chairperson Nathalie Edmunds, are looking for community members to get involved: join a committee, work at an information booth or activity sponsored by your club or organization, present a display, or take part in any number of other ways. To learn more, attend a Festival general meeting, held every first and third Monday at 7 p.m. at the Depot Town Freighthouse; call 734-327-2051; or email the Festival planners at ypsifest@juno.com.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is pleased to announce that this year's Historic Home Tour will return to its former place on the Sunday of the Heritage Festival, August 22. Last year we had several compelling reasons for moving up the Home Tour to the previous Sunday of the Festival, and we explained those in the pages of this newsletter. However, we were approached earlier this year by the Festival Committee with a request to return to our former schedule. Given the new slant of this year's Festival (or the return to the old!), we believe a return to that schedule is most appropriate.

The Historic Home Tour Committee, chaired by Peg Du Fresne, is always in need of guides and other volunteers. Call Peg at 482-8666 if you're interested in getting involved. If you'd prefer to sell Home Tour tickets at the booth in front of the Historical Museum on Huron Street, call Lisa Walters at 485-3683.

HERITAGE FOUNDATION WEBSITE UPDATE

By the time you read this, the new Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation website should be up and running. The address for this website is <http://community.mlive.com/cc/yhf>. Among the first features of the new site will be color photos of the buildings being awarded Historic Structure Markers this year. We hope to regularly include the latest newsletter but also some features you won't find in the News, like color photos and up-to-the-minute announcements. Comments or suggestions? Email Eric Walters at ypsiwalt@bignet.net.

THE GIRLS AT OUR HOUSE

Thanks to longtime YHF Board Member and former President Hank Prebys for sharing the following story with us.

Sometimes it's the stories about people who lived in them that help to make old houses interesting. The same family lived in our house from the time it was moved to its current location in 1860 until the mid-1930's when the daughters of the man who moved it left the place to spend their last few retirement years at the downtown "residential" hotel.

By that time, they were old ladies noted for their eccentric behavior. We were told by a long-time neighborhood resident that children were frightened by their odd, old-fashioned dress. Their age and their drab, long skirts, combined with their tired and dark gothic house, made the kids keep their distance. If the truth be told, I suspect that like a lot of people in the early 1930's, the sisters didn't have a lot of cash to spend on clothes or on fixing up the house. But once, these were vital, energetic, self-supporting women.

Last year, Joe found a thimble just lying on top of the dirt in the garden in an area that he had worked in many times. Upon closer inspection, we noticed to our amazement that the German Silver thimble was engraved with the initials *A.L.W.* One of the "girls," as we think of them, was Ada L. Woodward. The sewing tool must have been lost by her at least sixty years ago, and it's still shiny, a fitting object to remind us of Ada because she was the one who stayed home and kept the house after their father and mother died.

The other sister, Gertrude, was an entirely different sort. She became the librarian for the University of Michigan Law School, and she traveled each day to Ann Arbor. I imagine that she used the little train that connected Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, but that must have been inconvenient if only because the stop was several blocks away from the house. So, it is not surprising that while visiting Lockport, New York, around 1903, she purchased an automobile from the factory where it was made. Gertrude had her brand new "Covert" Motorette shipped by train back to Ypsilanti. Now she was going to be able to come and go at her own schedule.

In order to operate her new auto, Gertrude became the first female to become a licensed driver in Washtenaw County. Each day she would motor up Packard Road to the University, and in the evening she would motor back to her home in Ypsilanti. She must have been quite an adventurer. There is a story, which was mentioned in a 1937 Ypsilanti newspaper article about the sisters, that a certain University Law Professor would react violently when Gertrude passed by his classroom window driving her Motorette. "That damned woman!" he would mutter as he slammed the window shut to keep out the noise.

Today, Joe and I occasionally feel the spirits of the two women around the house. We don't think of them as sinister or dangerous. Quite the opposite, they playfully close a door now and then or they make a rumble or other odd noise to let us know they are around, but mostly they seem to look after us, and sometimes they lead us to little "house gifts" like the thimble. I think "the girls" enjoy the fact that their home is still cared for and that they have become part of its story.

Joe Mattimoe and Hank Prebys live on Grove St. in the Historic District.

**YPSILANTI COMMUNITY BAND ANNOUNCES
1999 "CONCERTS IN THE PARK" SERIES**

Continuing its tradition of giving outdoor concerts during the summer months, the Ypsilanti Community Band announces its 1999 schedule of concerts in our neighborhood parks, as well as its additional outdoor performances:

Park Concerts

Thursday, June 10 th	Prospect Park - 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, July 1 st	Recreation Park - 7:30 p.m.*
Thursday, July 15 th	Candy Cane Park - 7:30 p.m.

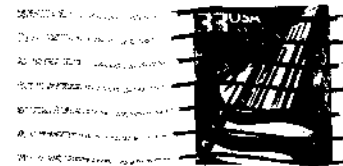
Other Outdoor Performances

Monday, May 31 st	Yankee Air Force (Willow Run Airport) - noon (tentative)
Thursday, June 3 rd	"Discover Downtown Ypsilanti" - N. Washington St. (street will be closed between Pearl & Michigan) - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 27 th	Belleville (Victory Park) - time TBD
Thursday, August 5 th	Depot Town
Saturday, August 21 st	Ypsilanti Heritage Festival (Riverside Park) - 5:00 p.m.

*annual 4th of July concert and Pie Sale

The Community Band's outdoor concerts are great occasions to gather family and friends, pack a picnic basket, and enjoy a warm summer evening at one of our historic parks. The concerts are free, but donations to the Band are, of course, gratefully accepted.

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AUGUST 1999 ** GOOD NEWS EDITION!! ** Ypsilanti, MI

SPECIAL EVENT: YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION'S 22nd ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR

DATE: Sunday, August 22, 1999, Noon to 5:00 p.m.

TICKETS: Advance--\$8.00 Day of Tour--\$10.00

Advance tickets are available:

- In Ypsilanti at Quinn's Essentials, Materials Unlimited, Haab's, Angel Food Cafe, and Norton Durant Florists and Gifts
- In Ann Arbor at the John Leidy Shop and Downtown Home and Garden
- In Plymouth at Saxton's Garden Center

On Saturday, August 21st, advance tickets will also be sold from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Home Tour ticket booth, located in front of the Ypsilanti Historical Museum at 220 N. Huron Street. **On the day of the tour, tickets are full price and are available only at the Home Tour ticket booth. The ticket booth will open at 10:00 a.m.**

FEATURING:

**1035 Washtenaw
Wayne and Pat Woodside**

An outstanding example of the Craftsman Bungalow Style, this intriguing house was built in 1927. The interior is filled with many Craftsman touches, including wood floors, molding, trim, multiple built-ins, and classic beveled glass.

**959 Sherman
John and Kristi Martin**

Evoking feelings of an East Coast urban row house, this delightful Georgian Revival Style home, built in 1937, has many exterior features which hark back to the Colonial period. The current owners have continued refurbishment on the house, adding a second story wing, opening up a screen porch, and enhancing the lush gardens.

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**Town Hall School
West Circle Drive
Eastern Michigan University Campus**

Several generations of students were educated at this historic one-room school built in 1895. As EMU's Sesquicentennial project and through the efforts of the Friends of Town Hall School, it was rescued and moved from Pittsfield Township to its current site. Inside are several period objects representative of 19th and early 20th century one-room schools.

**212 Washtenaw
Al Heezen and Wanda McGlasson**

Originally built as a parsonage for the First Methodist Church in 1871, this home is a wonderful example of the Italianate Style. It was saved from the wrecking ball, and its current owners have made tireless efforts over the past thirteen years to restore its 19th century charm and grace.

**29 E. Cross
Suzanne Shaw**

Built in 1849, this Federal Style commercial building is located in the heart of Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. On tour is a spacious, light-filled corner apartment featuring big windows, high ceilings, and plenty of wall space for the owner's eclectic art collection.

**310 E. Cross
S. Ashleigh Dietz**

Major restoration, under the current owner's creative hand, has rescued this beautiful Queen Anne Style home from years of neglect. Built in the 1880s, this home features an inviting Victorian parlor, an elegant library, period wallpaper, cherry woodwork, and a beckoning bay window.

The Historic Home Tour is an event of the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival, Aug. 20, 21, and 22, 1999. A portion of the proceeds from this year's tour have been pledged to the restoration of "The Hiker" statue.

IT HAPPENED IN YPSILANTI IN 1998-99

The Heritage Foundation presents its ANNUAL GOOD NEWS ISSUE, reporting on some of the improvements that have occurred in Ypsilanti over the past year, for our own delight and that of our visitors. It also allows us an opportunity to say Thank You to all of those who have helped make this a better place to live. This News issue is the Foundation's gift to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENTS

The **Towne Center Senior Citizen** high-rise at the corner of Hamilton and Michigan Avenues looks attractive, as always!

The **fountain** in the "mini-park" next door to the library is running, and does it look nice and cool on the hot summer days! While you can't jump in, you can sit and enjoy the cool breeze.

The facade of **Citizens' Bank** has been removed, finally revealing the handsome original building.

It's been a long time coming, but a contract has been signed with regards to restoration of the exterior of the **City Hall** building. Keep watching!

Flowers bloom all over downtown, thanks to miracle worker Ezell Agnew, who is on the job again, planting and caring for flowers everywhere and tirelessly keeping all of downtown looking neat and clean. We can't thank him enough!!

Angel Food Cafe, a new restaurant on Michigan Avenue east of Huron Street, has added outdoor seating. Also at that end of town are plans to redevelop the **Water Street** area.

Moving north on Huron, the **Riverside Arts Center** continues to thrive and boasts new signage. **St. Luke's Church** is rehabbing their masonry, and across the street, the **Breakey Inn** is in new hands with its new owner, an architect, working out of the building.

Through a unique cooperative agreement between the First Presbyterian Church and the City of Ypsilanti, the original 1837 portion of the **Towner House** has been stabilized and re-roofed. Repair of the windows and front porch will be undertaken when financial contributions make that possible. Congratulations and thanks to the two parties for saving this community treasure.

The **Methodist Church** on Washington and Washtenaw has undergone a major re-roofing project.

Thanks to everyone who plants **window boxes and curbside gardens** all over town.

DEPOT TOWN NEWS

Quinn's Essentials has moved into the space formerly occupied by Remington's, and the **Tucker's Cafe** has expanded its space into what used to be Miller's Ice Cream.

Cady's Grill displays lovely hanging baskets. Thanks to everyone in Depot Town who plants and tends to the tubs and half-barrels of flowers.

Market Alley now boasts benches and historical plaques. Check it out!

At the east end of Depot Town, work continues on the addition to the **Ypsilanti Auto Museum** and the historic Miller Motors building. Next door the former MESC building will soon emerge as the home of the **Frog Island Brewing Company**.

EAST SIDE...

A new home has been constructed at **224 River Street** with the approval of the Historic District Commission.

315 N. Park has undergone a major rehab and addition. Nearby at 301 N. Park, **Marino Engineering** has added a retaining wall and landscaping.

The home at **325 E. Cross** boasts two new porches, front and side, and new railings.

Prospect Park is looking great, especially since Ypsi Pride Day when members of the Ypsilanti East Side Neighborhood Association cleaned it and planted flowers.

The owners of **305 Maple** have restored the original tower window, a unique feature of a unique house. Looks great!

At **314 Maple**, the artificial siding has been removed and the house beautifully painted cream, lavender, pale green, and rose.

Riverside Lawn and Garden has been gutted and will soon become a classic car show and salesroom.

At **410 N. Huron** we find a major addition, a new paint job, and extensive gardens.

...WEST SIDE

Further west, we find an addition on the Jankowiak Funeral Home; **Old Ypsi High** boasts new windows in its transformation into Senior Citizen apartments; and **St. John the Baptist Catholic Church** has a wonderful new sympathetic addition.

Eastern Michigan University is constructing a new building for the College of Health and Human Services. **Goodison Hall** has been torn down, and the old library will be the site of the new College of Education. The **Bruce T. Halle Library** has been open for more than a year now, but if you haven't been there yet, go take a look!

At **Recreation Park**, the picnic shelter has undergone removal of its walls and was painted a pleasing shade of green on Ypsi Pride Day by members of the Normal Park Neighborhood Association. The sign at the **Senior Center** next door has been straightened up and repainted, although it will soon be replaced with a new city sign including a message board. The **Rose Garden** there is looking better every year!

Homes at two corners in **Normal Park--N. Wallace and Pearl, and Grant and Elm--**have been painted by one of Ypsilanti's best housepainters. Thanks, Ron!

SPECIAL THANKS to all those folks who quietly and faithfully maintain their properties. Your efforts keep Ypsilanti looking good! If we missed you, know that your work is still much appreciated.



FROM BAZAARS TO BANQUETS

1999 marks the 25th anniversary of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. Charter member Don Randazzo shares with us his reflections on this history.

Back in 1974, Jane Schmiedeke asked me if I wanted to be part of a small group of people who were interested in historic preservation. I think she saw me restoring the exterior of a house at the time and decided that I was that sort of person. She was right. A group of us would get together occasionally and discuss what we could do to interest others in historic preservation. That is briefly how the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation began.

The preservation mentality among homeowners was starting to grow. Business owners also began to realize that under the porcelain and sheet metal facades were some very attractive buildings. People looked around and noticed that Ypsilanti did indeed have architecture worthy of preservation.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation recruited members, and for a small annual donation people supported our endeavors. We needed to raise additional money to publish newsletters and to establish our own preservation fund. I remember the bazaars at the Ladies Literary Club where volunteers donated crafts and other items for us to sell before Christmas. In the spring we would have our annual flower sale at the corner of Huron and Cross Streets.

So many generous people gave of their time and talent to make our organization a success. Two of the most notable are Nat Edmunds and Jane Schmiedeke. I would be remiss if I didn't mention them as being very instrumental in the success of our early efforts.

We leased the Towner House in November of 1974 and devoted a lot of time, energy, and money to make the house habitable. Gary Decker lived there for a while and did much to enhance its appearance.

The Foundation would enter a float in the annual Heritage Festival parade. We began our bi-monthly membership meetings where topics of interest were presented, free of charge to everyone. These would run from fall to spring. In May our annual marker banquet recognizes the efforts of people who have restored and maintained structures of architectural significance. I believe there are 125 markers (and counting) on buildings to date. We also, for many years, produced a calendar featuring photographs of historic Ypsilanti structures.

In 1993 the Ypsilanti City Council adopted a resolution that allowed the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association to begin fundraising efforts to restore the statue of Demetrius Ypsilanti. In June 1995 the statue was rededicated. Here again the efforts of so many dedicated people have made this possible.

The Historic Home Tour at Festival time is one of our important events. Currently Peg DuFresne is leading that effort with the help of dozens of volunteers. This year's tour promises to be another successful and enjoyable event.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation will continue to support and encourage restoration projects. We are going stronger than ever after 25 years, and I am sure future generations will look back and appreciate the efforts of so many hard-working people to preserve our architectural heritage.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
THE 1999/2000 YHF GENERAL MEETING PROGRAMS

Wednesday, September 29, 7:30 p.m., Location TBA
The Evolution of the White House
Wayne Waltrip

We open our 1999/2000 program series with a look at what is perhaps our country's most famous historic structure: the White House. From Dolley Madison's rescue of the famous Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington when the British set fire to the mansion in 1814, to Jackie Kennedy's well-publicized restoration of its interiors in the early 1960s, the White House has fascinated us for nearly 200 years. Wayne Waltrip, our September speaker, combines his backgrounds in Political Science and Historic Preservation to present a political and architectural history of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, spiced with little-known anecdotes about some of the "First Families" who lived there.

Tuesday, November 23, 7:30 p.m., Location TBA
Old Detroit
Brian Dunnigan

In 2001, the city of Detroit celebrates its 300th birthday. To coincide with the tercentennial, our November speaker, Brian Dunnigan, is researching a book on old Detroit to be published by Wayne State University Press. Featuring maps, plans, views, and sketches of early Detroit from 1701 to 1837, it's one of the few books published about the history of French and British Detroit designed for general audiences. Join us on November 23rd, as Brian, Curator of Maps at the Clements Library, tells us about the book and his "sleuthing around" at the Bentley Library, the Burton Historical Collection, and even the British Museum in search of images for this ground-breaking new work!

Wednesday, January 26, 7:30 p.m., The Freighthouse Coffee Shop, Depot Town
A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words: Collecting Ypsilanti Postcards
Lisa Walters and Bill Nickels

Collecting historic picture postcards has become a very popular pastime, and two of the hobby's most ardent enthusiasts are our own YHF board members, Lisa Walters and Bill Nickels! Between them they have collected hundreds of Ypsilanti postcards, mostly from the 1920s and '30s, but some from as early as 1906. On January 26th, Lisa and Bill will discuss and present images of dozens of old Ypsilanti postcards, including familiar landmarks like the Hutchinson House and the Ypsilanti Savings Bank (now City Hall), as well as cards depicting places that no longer exist, like the Starkweather Fountain and the Depot Gardens. We'll indulge in some Ypsilanti nostalgia and even learn a little bit about the history of postcards and card publishers.

Wednesday, March 29, 7:30 p.m., St. Luke's Episcopal Church
From Graveyards to Play Yards: A History of the Ypsilanti Park System
James Mann

Today, parks seem so much a part of city life, oases of nature in our urban environment, it's hard to realize that the concept of the municipal park is only a little more than one hundred years old. Ypsilanti is blessed with several, and in his March 29th presentation, James Mann will tell us about the history of Prospect, Riverside, Frog Island, Recreation, and Peninsular Parks. We'll learn that parks were an outgrowth of the garden cemetery movement, that Prospect Park was, in fact, a former cemetery, that what is now Recreation Park was once one of the finest race tracks in southeast Michigan, and that little-known Peninsular Park has a gruesome history as "some of the most blood-soaked ground in Washtenaw County!"

As always, general meetings of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation are open to the public, and refreshments are provided.

MICHIGAN HISTORIC TAX PRESERVATION CREDITS

Another bit of good news!

Historic preservation tax credits are available to encourage investment in Michigan's historic resources. The program provides for a possible 25% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of homes in Ypsilanti's Historic District. Administrative rules, procedures, and application forms are being developed and are expected in December of this year.

This program will provide financial incentives to homeowners, commercial property owners, and businesses to rehabilitate historic commercial and residential property. The program covers only the years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. If the program proves successful, the legislature may extend it at a later time. Qualified rehabilitation expenditures may be made during 1999, but owners should be careful to ensure that their project meets all of the technical conditions imposed by law. Also, and most important, the projects must be certified by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Lansing.

To qualify for the tax credit, rehabilitation expenditures must be for work which is planned and undertaken in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and is certified by the SHPO. The credit may be 25 % of the taxpayer's qualified rehabilitation expenditures and must be equal to or greater than 10 % of the State Equalized Value of the property rehabilitated. The resource must be held for five years after the project, or part of the credit may be forfeited. The projects covered include painting (interior or exterior), architect fees, roofing, electrical, furnace, air conditioning, porches, interior repairs, insulation, plumbing, and a host of other projects that may make the property more livable.

The process is complicated but doable. For help, call the City's Community and Economic Development Department at 483-9646, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at 517-373-1630, or visit the SHPO web page at www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/html.

Thanks to YHF Board member Hank Prebys for this report.

THE TRIANGLE APARTMENTS

The Triangle Apartment building rises up over the intersection of Washtenaw and Emmet, looking like a barn on steroids. Few today know the reason for the construction of this local landmark at 712 Washtenaw. The apartment house was built in 1913 to provide shelter for the "homeless" members of the faculty of the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University.

There had been a demand for such a house for some time, as Ypsilanti had no apartments except those rented to students. The promoters of the plan included Arthur G. Erickson, principal of the Normal High School Department and later Superintendent of the Ypsilanti Public Schools, and Clemens P. Steimle, the Registrar of the Normal College. Once the house was built, both Erickson and Steimle lived there.

"The house will have two fronts," reported the Normal College News of April 25, 1913, "one on Emmet and the other on Ellis (Washtenaw). It will be built of tapestry brick up to the second floor and shingled above, the roof being of gambrel shingles. There will be three floors, as well as a basement and a sub-basement. The three floors will contain ten apartments, two on the third and four on each of the other two. Each apartment will consist of a living room, one or two bedrooms (six of the ten will have two bedrooms), a kitchen, bath, and closets. The basement is to be fitted up with a restaurant, service apartments, kitchen, and a laundry. All of these rooms will be equipped in first class shape and the appointments will be of the very best."

When the building opened, it fulfilled its intended purpose of providing shelter to members of the Normal College faculty. According to the 1914 Polk Directory, all of the tenants were affiliated with the Normal College. Most are listed as either assistants or instructors. The directory also lists the Triangle Terrace Cafe, apparently the restaurant mentioned in the above description.

Over time the make up of the tenants changed, and now few, if any, members of the faculty reside there. The tenants now are more likely to be students. The Triangle Terrace Cafe disappeared in 1929, most likely a victim of the Great Depression.

Although the building no longer fulfills its original function, it continues to make an impressive landmark.

Thanks to YHF board member James Mann for his research on this building.



Triangle Apartments postcard courtesy of Lisa Walters' collection

THE ACCIDENTAL ARCHAEOLOGIST

Inspired by Hank Prebys' story in an earlier edition of the News in which he mentioned finding artifacts in his garden, Ypsilanti Mayor and YHF member Cheryl Farmer sends us this tale of her findings. Readers, feel free to follow suit!

When you live in a home that was built in 1855 and sits along a major Native American throughway, surprising things can turn up in the garden!

My first "finds" were pottery and china fragments. I thought they were just urban trash and threw them out. Then one day I realized that the weight and designs on the fragments suggested they were of a much earlier era. Because there was no municipal garbage pick-up in 1855, throwing something "out" meant only as far as the backyard. Now I keep any fragments I find. I do not have enough to actually reconstruct anything yet--only enough to whet my appetite.

One day I found a "lucky penny" while weeding. Taking a closer look, I saw that it had an "Indian head" on one side and was dated 1865--a time when a penny was really worth something!

Another day I was digging a big hole to plant a pine tree and came across what looked like a huge root right in the middle of the hole. There is not a tree in sight near this spot, so I was puzzled as to the source of the root--puzzled and also frustrated by the work I anticipated as I brought my ax up from the basement in order to remove the root. To my surprise, the ax sliced through quite easily. When I pulled the wood out of the hole, I found it was hollow and had a black coating inside. I showed it around to a few people and learned that it was probably a section of old municipal wooden water pipe!

My most recent "find," and probably my oldest treasure, is a smooth stone tool with one sharpened edge that my research at the Historical Museum informs me is a hand adze. It is cool and comfortable to hold, and I can imagine it being used to scrape a buffalo hide clean. (Did buffalo roam in Michigan?)

The most amazing "find" to date is a completely intact glass bottle embossed with the words "Frank Smith Druggist Ypsilanti, Mich." It looks exactly like one on display in our Historical Museum. What next?

If you live in a historic home and haven't yet begun to garden around it, get started! The floral rewards will be great, and treasure hunting is just another added incentive!!

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES YPSILANTI A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE: OUR POLICE FORCE, FIRE FIGHTERS, BUILDING INSPECTORS, CITY MANAGER, CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE PROUD TO BE FROM YPSILANTI.

Always, thanks to those **business organizations** who work so hard to keep Downtown and Depot Town looking good and thriving, including the **DDA, CBC, DTA, DTDDA, and the Mainstreet Project.**

MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOUNDATION

As of this year, the Heritage Foundation will be giving complimentary trial memberships to those persons whose homes are honored with a marker or are featured on the Historic Home Tour. For those who are already members, you should receive your billing soon. If you would like to join the Foundation, send your check, payable to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, to Joe Mattimoe, YHF Treasurer, 301 N. Grove, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. Individuals: \$10; Family: \$15; Contributing: \$25; Sustaining: \$100; Life: \$1000. **HELP MAKE HISTORY!**

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Lisa Mills Walters, Secretary
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Rick Leyshock
Bill Nickels
Hank Prebys
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