

SILVER

continued from page 3

Coatings Polishing exposes fresh, reactive metal to the atmosphere and therefore to further tarnishing. Objects that will not be used can be lacquered for protection. This process involves the use of solvents to clean the metal properly (acetone or tri-chloroethane). It also requires spraying on the lacquer. Spray lacquering is a task best left to qualified individuals with the background and equipment necessary to do a good job. Poorly applied lacquers can actually cause more severe corrosion if small areas are left exposed. It is not advisable to wax polished silver, because the effect is too variable, and it is difficult to achieve a continuous, even coat. Most people who do not have access to professional services must accept the fact that they will have to polish their silver as needed.

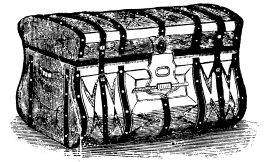
Handling Polished antique silver should not be handled with bare hands. Salts and oils from your skin can etch into any polished metal and may even cause permanent

damage. Soft cotton gloves, or any clean glove or rag may be employed for this purpose.

Storage A simple way to preserve fine silver, and to reduce the necessity for polishing, is to store silver properly. Maintaining an even, low humidity where metal objects are kept below 50% humidity will help. In most homes, this is difficult to ensure, but generally speaking, basements are often damp in the summer and, therefore, should not be used for silver storage. Humidity sensors are available. Silver Tarnish inhibiting cloth (not the polishing kind) is available from better fabric stores for storing silver. It should be wrapped around the silver piece; it protects the object by absorbing tarnishing pollutants. The wrapped silver may then be placed in a clear bag, preferably made of Mylar (turkey baking bags are good) or polyethylene clear plastic. Never use polyvinyl chloride plastic bags to store your good silver. Silver kept wrapped and stored properly can be taken out and enjoyed as often as you like with the minimum amount of polishing and trouble.

This article was contributed by Hank Prebys

Seeking Items for Traveling Trunks



The Heritage Foundation will take the past into the classroom by recreating traveling trunks. These trunks will include clothing and personal items such as hairbrushes and combs and other, more unusual pieces that an 1800s family might have owned.

Kids will get the opportunity to see and touch the items illustrating the differences—and similarities—between families from the past and those in the present.

If anyone has items they feel are appropriate to the project and are interested in donating or loaning them, please call Megan McCann at 484-6548.



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

Hank Prebys, President
Lisa Mills Walters, Secretary
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Jennifer Goulet
Pattie Harrington
James Mann
Megan McCann
Bill Nickels
Don Randazzo
Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber

visit our website at www.yhf.org

Heritage NEWS

JANUARY 2001

January
Meeting

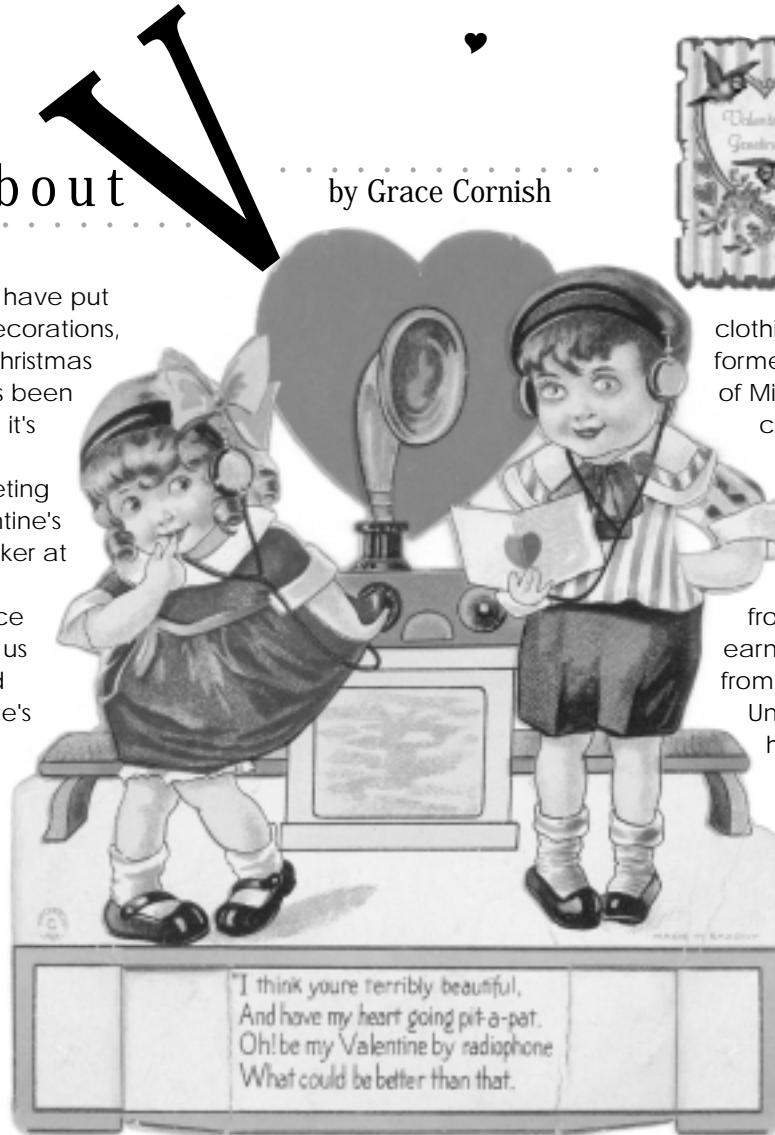
Tuesday, January 30
at 7:30 at the
Ypsilanti Automotive
Heritage Collection Museum
100-112 East Cross Street

More about

by Grace Cornish

Now that most of us have put away the holiday decorations, and the stream of Christmas cards in the mail has been reduced to a trickle, it's time to start thinking about the next "greeting card holiday"—Valentine's Day. The guest speaker at our January general meeting will be Grace Cornish, who will tell us about the origin and evolution of Valentine's Day cards.

Even though St. Valentine lived centuries earlier, the custom of exchanging valentines on February 14 can be traced to Geoffrey Chaucer, who mentioned that birds began to pair off on that day. The commercial printing of valentines themselves did not begin until approximately 1850. Germany, a leader in the art of printing, led the way in the production of valentine cards. Then, according to Grace, a woman in New York began making her own, and valentines began to be produced commercially. By the 20th century, valentines were much cheaper and easier to obtain, but



not nearly as fancy as their predecessors.

Grace has "dozens" of valentines and will show us some samples of several types from different eras. She became interested in valentines because, as she says, "They're pretty, and I just liked them." She is also known locally for her collection of fans, hats, and vintage



clothing. Her husband, Herb, a former professor at the University of Michigan, is a collector himself and has given talks on the many clocks he owns and displays.

The Cornishes are originally from Ohio, where Grace earned her bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University. She taught junior high school in Toledo before her marriage. The couple lived in St. Louis, Chicago, and Florida before settling in Michigan after World War II so that Herb could earn his doctorate at the U of M. They have lived in Ypsilanti for 50 years, where Grace has been active with the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the Presbyterian Church, serving as the latter's Director of Education for many years and teaching Bible Studies.

We hope you will join us, Tuesday, January 30 at 7:30, for what promises to be an interesting discussion. As always, refreshments will be served. Bring a friend!



This article was contributed by Lisa Walters



GHOSTS of the Past

by James Mann

One morning in October, between 8:45 and 9:00, Tom Dodd and I were walking east on Cross St.. We were just west of Olde Town Coin & Gold, when I happened to glance toward Aubree's Saloon. At that moment, I saw a sight that made me gasp, "Oh my God!" There, above the second floor windows, in letters so clear and white they could have been painted on that morning, where the words: THE OLIVER HOUSE.

Tom and I were standing in just the right place, at just the right time and looking at just the right angle; when the angle of the sun and the condensation in the air was just right, to make the letters visible.

It has been a long time since that building was known as The Oliver House, a good fifty years, in fact. The building that is now Aubree's Saloon was built in the late 1870s, and for many years was known as the Neat House. Then in 1907 the building was purchased by Oliver Westfall, and

operated as a "European Hotel" by him and his son Clarence. The Westfalls were gone by 1920, but the name Oliver House remained through a number of owners. The name Oliver House remained into the mid-1940s. Today, when a patron questions an employee at Aubree's about the letters, the patron is told it is the work of the ghost. When the letters are visible, the patron is told, it means the ghost is active.

There are no further details to flesh out the story of the ghost, but the letters themselves are, in a sense, a ghost of the past. An apparition, so to speak, of a time long gone.

The Oliver House letters are not the only ghost of the past haunting Depot Town. There are other apparitions of times past to be found there. Two of these, are just around the corner.

On display in Cady's Grill is a photograph of the east wall of Aubree's Saloon, taken in 1919, when it was still the Oliver House. Painted on the wall, between, the windows, are the words BUFFET and LUNCH. These words have long since been covered over with red paint, but can still be seen through the layers.

Directly across River Street from Aubree's is the Thompson Block, a big green wreck of the building. This is called the Thompson Block, because the Thompson family operated many of their business interests here from

1869 to 1950. They even had the family name painted on the Cross St. side of the building in the 1880s. The building has been painted over many times since then, but the Thompson name can still be seen.

Some ghosts of the past are engraved in stone. The next time you go to the Sidetrack, look down as you are about to enter. There, in front of the door, are the words NICK MAX. This is from the 1890s, when the building was the Nick Max Saloon, owned by Nickolas Max.

Engraved into the step at the entrance of Hons Flowers are the words McPerson & House. This is where the grocery store of Alpheous McPerson and his son in law Arthur House was. The store opened in 1901. McPerson died in 1912, but the name remained until the business closed in 1937. Now, all that remains, are the words engraved into the step. These are not the only ghosts of the past to be found in Depot Town, there are many more. There are the fading ads on the west wall of the Follett House, and the sign now partly covered by the awning in front of Me 'N' My Sisters Country Store, and the Teacher's Shop.

Depot Town is not the only place in Ypsilanti where such ghosts of the past can be seen. These can be found throughout the city. To see these ghosts, all you have to do is look.

Study shows Historic Districts Attract Visitors

The National League of Cities (NLC) recently conducted a study seeking to find the key components of a successful city economy. Based upon a survey of 463 cities, city leaders ranked entertainment and tourism as one of the top three contributors to a successful city economy along with sales and manufacturing. More than half of the city leaders (54%) listed entertainment and tourism ahead of sales and manufacturing. The survey also revealed that a local restaurant district and a historic district are two of the top five contributors to attracting outside visitors to cities. In an effort to enhance entertainment and tourism, cities reported having or

developing the the following attractions:

Event	# of Cities	Percent
Historic District	439	76%
Museum	318	69%
Farmer,s Market	286	62%
Performing Arts Center	264	58%
Restaurant District	287	58%
Festivals	254	55%
Outdoor Concert Venue	225	49%
Nature Preserve	221	48%
Waterfront Development	187	41%
Convention Center	187	41%
Sports Stadium	178	39%

Ypsilanti is right on target with our Downtown restaurants, Depot Town restaurants, Riverside Arts Center,

Ypsilanti Historical Museum, Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Collection, Michigan Antique Fire Museum, R & M Classics, Orphan Car Show, Heritage Festival, Elvis Fest, Frog Island Jazz Concerts, New Year,s Eve Jubilee in the Historic District, Huron River parks, Farmer,s Market, Ypsilanti Historic District, EMU sports, and EMU convention facilities. Our future may see the Marriott and the Parish House Inn continually booked, additional bed & breakfasts in our Historic District, tourists visiting our attractions, and new businesses catering to their interests. The future looks exciting!

This article was contributed by Bill Nichols



Last issue I excerpted one of Henry Ford Museum's "Care and Preservation" articles which was prepared by the museum's Conservation Department. In the intervening weeks, no one told me that the article was a waste of space or uninteresting, so I thought that I would prepare a synopsis of another one of the conservation articles.

Remember that the complete documents may be downloaded from the Henry Ford Museum web site (www.hfmvgv.org <<http://www.hfmvgv.org>>) or for a nominal charge, the museum's Conservation Office can mail them to you.

SILVER

Historical silver can be maintained for years of use and enjoyment provided that some basic care and attention is given to its preservation. The first step in the care of silver is to understand and minimize or eliminate conditions that can cause damage. The second step is to follow basic guidelines for care, handling and cleaning.

How do you know if it's silver? Most people know that silver is a white lustrous metal. Pure or "fine" silver is called Sterling if it is not less than 925 parts silver to 75 parts alloy. Silver objects, especially coins and jewelry, contain copper as an alloying metal for added hardness and this copper can corrode to form dark brown or green deposits on the surface of the metal. Silver is usually easy to differentiate from lead or pewter which are generally dark gray and not very shiny. If your object forms a white powdery substance anywhere on the surface, it indicates lead corrosion. This proves that the object is either not silver, or that it is silver plated.

Silver is often plated (deposited) onto other metallic alloys, almost always with an intermediate layer of copper in between. The earliest plating process, "Sheffield Plate", was developed in England in 1742. By the mid-19th century the process was largely replaced by electroplating (which used less silver) and is still the process used today. The base metal in plated artifacts may consist of any of the following metals or alloys: copper, brass, "German silver" or "nickel silver" (50% copper, 30% nickel, 20% zinc), "Britannia metal" (97% tin, 7% antimony, 2% copper), or a "base" silver containing a high percentage of copper. Hallmarks or other stamped marks on the underside can often aid in determining the composition of silver plated artifacts.

Tarnish (silver sulfide) is a form of corrosion characterized as a dense, thin black layer which disfigures the surface of silver objects. Silver will tarnish on exposure to air containing sulfide gases. Humidity in the air is also required for the corrosion to progress. Since the Metro-Detroit area has heavy industry and elevated pollution levels, as well as hot, humid summers, both criteria for tarnish are met in Ypsilanti.

Tarnish does not itself pose a threat to objects. Most damage to silver occurs as a result of the polishing

required to remove the tarnish. Over time, heavy polishing results in a loss of detail in raised areas of design. On plated objects, frequent polishing can actually remove the silver plating, leaving dull areas of exposed base metal which may be mistaken for stubborn areas of tarnish.

In rare cases where the silver object has been exposed to high airborne salt concentrations, "horn silver" may develop on the surface. This corrosion, silver chloride, is characterized a dirty purple or slate gray. It is dense, compact and usually quite difficult to polish off.

Old lacquers, applied in the past to protect the piece, may wear or peel off in some areas. This leaves the exposed silver to tarnish, while the rest may remain bright.

Abrasion and Denting Objects made of silver, a relatively soft metal, can be damaged by rough handling. Raised areas and handles are especially susceptible to denting and joint failure, so display pieces should be handled with care, lifting from the center of gravity, never by the handle or lip. If silver serving pieces are being used, their owners should accept a certain amount of wear and tear from handling and more frequent cleaning.

Repairs to valuable silver, which may involve soldering or raising and reshaping dents, should be done by a qualified metalsmith familiar with historical techniques or an art conservator. In some cases jewelers may be willing to do small repairs on silver artifacts.

Cleaning (Hire a housekeeper?) Old lacquers must be removed prior to cleaning. This is best done with acetone preferably by immersion. Acetone is a volatile solvent that should never be used in poorly ventilated conditions.

Polishing (Now here is where you really need a housekeeper!) Polishing with a mild abrasive is the only safe cleaning method conservators can recommend for historic silver. Commercially available "silver dips" may contain undesirable components such as hydrochloric or sulfuric acid which act too quickly and remove more metal than simple polishing does. Dips are too aggressive and silver that has been dipped usually requires further buffing to restore luster to the surface. Some commercial paste polishes (i.e. Duragilt) are quite abrasive and may scratch your fine silver. Hagerty's Foam polish and Twinkle for silver are thought to be somewhat less abrasive than others. Light polishing may be done using jeweler's cloth containing rouge (i.e. Bark Cloth, Hagerty Glove). A museum proven, safe polishing method is as follows:

For most polishing the museum uses fine calcium carbonate, Chalk (whiting), worked into a slurry or runny paste with equal amounts of ethanol (denatured alcohol, ethyl alcohol) and distilled water. The paste is rubbed across the surface, working a small area at a time, with cotton balls or clean cotton rags. Detailed areas may be polished with Q-tips or cotton wadding at the end of a bamboo skewer. Depending on the design of your object, it may not be desirable to OVER-CLEAN every crevice, as this decreases the overall contrast of the detailing. It is important to remove all residual polish with distilled water. Drying may be accelerated by adding ethanol.

Continued on page 4

TEXTILES continued from page 3

Storage & Display

The size and type of textile will determine the type of storage or display that is appropriate. There are three basic types of storage: flat, rolled and hanging. Flat storage is highly recommended particularly for fragile items because it provides even support which helps to minimize fiber damage. Flat storage can utilize drawers, trays, shelves or boxes. Wood and uncoated metal shelves and cardboard boxes which are usually constructed of wood pulp paper, should not be placed in direct contact with the textiles. Stacking and folding textiles should be avoided. If folding is unavoidable, folded areas can be padded with acid free tissue or polyester batting to eliminate creasing.

Rugs, quilts and large flat textiles are ideally rolled onto tubes with the decorative side facing out. The layers should be interwoven with tissue and the rolled textile should be covered with unsized, washed muslin or tissue.

Costumes can be hung if space is limited. Use padded, plastic hangers to

provide a wide surface of support. Rugs, quilts and costumes should be covered with a pre washed muslin. Tyvek also works as a dust cover.

Display: Small flat textiles such as samplers receive the greatest protection when they are properly framed under glass but this method should not be used on tightly woven or fragile textiles. Samplers and other loosely woven flat textiles should first be attached to a rigid support such as acid free board. It can be basted to a piece of unsized, washed muslin and then the muslin can be fastened to the support. Once the textile has been mounted it should be placed in a frame. Spacers made of strips of acid free mat board should be placed between the front surface of the sampler and the frame glass. This will provide air space between the glass and the textiles. UV filtering glass is recommended.

Heavy textiles like quilts and rugs may be hung using a Velcro support system. The aim of the Velcro is to provide even support in a variety of places on the back of the textile. Only sturdy textiles should be hung. If the textile is to

be displayed against a wooden wall, a piece of washed unbleached muslin should be sewn to the back of the textile to separate it from the wall.

Cleaning

The washing and repair of antique textiles should be done by a professional conservator. Commercial dry cleaning is not recommended. Harsh chemicals that can damage fragile textiles are often used and sometimes, the chemicals are not completely removed. Vacuuming is the only cleaning procedure for the non-specialist. However, caution should be used when attempting to clean fragile and degraded textiles. Begin by gently brushing dirt from the surface of the textile with a very soft brush. The surface should then be vacuumed using a low suction vacuum with a brush nozzle attachment. Place a nylon screen that has been edged with cotton bias tape between the textile and vacuum during cleaning. The screen will catch any loose fragments that could be detached during cleaning. Both sides of the textile should be vacuumed.



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

Hank Prebys, President
Lisa Mills Walters, Secretary
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Jennifer Goulet
Pattie Harrington
James Mann
Megan McCann
Bill Nickels
Don Randazzo
Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber

WANTED items for *Grandma's Trunk* call Megan McCann at 484-6548

Heritage NEWS

MARCH 2001

March
Meeting

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

7:30 p.m.

United Methodist Church
of Ypsilanti

209 Washtenaw Avenue

The life & letters of

*John
Geddes*

By Penny Schreiber



Wednesday evening, March 28, Russell E. Bidlack, University of Michigan professor emeritus and former dean of the School of

Information, will speak to the Heritage Foundation on "The Life and Letters of John Geddes." One of the earliest pioneers of Washtenaw County, Geddes came to Washtenaw County from Pennsylvania in 1824. Geddes wrote many articles in his old age recalling our county's beginnings. He died in 1889 at the age of eighty-eight.

Local historians, while grateful for Geddes's late-in-life memoirs, had often wished that his contemporary accounts, believed to have been written to family in Pennsylvania, had been preserved. No Geddes letter was known to exist until the spring of 1999 when a manuscript and postal history dealer named Stuart Goldman in Canton, Massachusetts, wrote to the Washtenaw Historical Society. He had purchased a large collection of old letters and papers found in an abandoned house in Groton, Massachusetts, pertaining to the Geddes family, including correspondence between John and his brother William Geddes. While curious about the letters' historical value, Goldman was expecting to sell them to individual postal history collectors. He declined to copy the letters for the benefit of Washtenaw County historians because it would decrease their value. Russell Bidlack stepped in and negotiated with Goldman to purchase the letters, which will eventually be donated to the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library.

In his talk Bidlack will read and comment on excerpts from Geddes's letters. The intricacies of a sawmill; the coming of the railroad to the county; state, local, and national political affairs; health concerns; social issues; and the lives of women are among the facets of pioneer life in Washtenaw County brought to life in the letters. Geddes's house still stands at the corner of Huron River Drive and Dixboro Road, halfway between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. He was a member of the Ypsilanti Presbyterian Church and he supplied the lumber to build it.

The meeting will be held at the First Methodist Church on Washtenaw at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments and informal discussion will follow Bidlack's talk.



For the next in my series of articles dealing with the care of antiques, I thought it might be useful to tell a little about caring for antique textiles and clothing. Remember, these articles are based upon a series of Care and Preservation articles developed by the Conservation Department of Henry Ford Museum.

Hank Prebys

Antique textiles and costumes can be maintained for years of use and enjoyment provided that some basic attention is given to their care. The first step is to understand and minimize or eliminate factors that cause damage. The second step is to follow basic guidelines for handling, display, storage and cleaning.

The Nature of Textiles

Most antique textiles are composed of natural fibers that may include wool, cotton, linen or silk. I'll focus on these natural fibers. Textiles that are composed of synthetic fibers may pose unique problems that may require consultation with a professional conservator.

Causes of Deterioration

There are a variety of factors that contribute to the degradation of textiles. These factors include poor environment, pollution and careless handling in addition to inappropriate storage, display and cleaning. Poor environments include locations where there are high light levels, extreme and fluctuating temperature and humidity levels, and pests.

Light

Exposure to either natural or artificial light can threaten the longevity of textiles. Both visible and ultraviolet light are responsible for damage. The Victorians didn't know what really caused damage, but they knew that light faded colors and "rotted" upholstery so they pulled the shades and inner drapes of their parlors to keep sunlight out.

Visible light is the wavelength we see. Ultraviolet light is the invisible, high energy wavelength of the spectrum. As it turns out, "UV" light is the most damaging type of light, capable of causing the greatest amount of damage in the shortest period of time. Ultraviolet light can be eliminated by

the use of ultraviolet filtering glass. These filters (either glass or Plexiglas) should be utilized in windows and picture frames if you are interested in protecting antique textiles.

Temperature & Humidity

Temperature and humidity are inter-related. In general, heated buildings have low humidity levels in winter. Conversely, humidity levels are high in summertime. Both extremes as well as fluctuations in temperature and humidity can cause damage to textile fibers. Textiles can become brittle when humidity levels are low. Permanent staining can occur from mold growth when humidity levels are excessively high. As it turns out, however, most often damage occurs due to the expansion and contraction of fibers in response to drastic changes in temperature and relative humidity levels. These changes can damage the resiliency, elasticity and strength of fibers. So, it's important to minimize extreme climatic fluctuations.

Heat can embrittle and discolor textiles (and synthetic fibers like rayon, nylon, polyester and acetate can become permanently deformed when exposed to high heat.) The temperature and relative humidity levels that are used as guidelines in museums are: Temperature 60-65 F/Humidity 50%.

Pests

A variety of pests can cause structural damage to textiles. These pests include clothes moths, carpet beetles, silverfish, firebrats and mice.

Clothing moths feed on protein such as wool and feathers. The silky white cocoon webbing of clothes moths is often found stuck to the surface of infested textiles. These moths are generally white in color.

Carpet Beetles also feed on protein material. Chewed holes, furry carcasses and small worm-like insects are an

indication of infestation. A colored powder consisting of insect excrement (frass) can often be seen near or under infested textile. Frass is generally the same color as the textile.

Firebrats and silverfish feed on starchy materials such as glue and fabric sizing. Silverfish are small, gray insects that have a scaly appearance and pinchers on their tail. Silverfish are found in dark, moist and cool environments such as basements. Firebrats are similar in appearance; however, they are somewhat darker in color and they prefer warm, moist and dark environment.

Pest Prevention

In general, good housekeeping is the best method for deterring pests. Periodic inspections and cleaning of storage areas provides the cheapest and safest method of prevention. If an infestation is detected, the textile should be isolated and sealed in a plastic bag until a professional conservator can be contacted. The use of pesticides is generally not recommended. Their residues are dangerous to humans and they can damage many fabrics.

At Henry Ford Museum, infested textiles are frozen to eradicate pests. The textiles are first placed in plastic bags. The air is then removed from the bag using a vacuum cleaner nozzle attachment. The bags are then sealed and placed in a large freezer. Since many pests have the ability to adjust their body temperatures in response to outdoor temperature, this method of eradication must be carried out during a warm time of year and the freezing process must be rapid to succeed in the eradication of pests.

Pollution

Pollution can originate from either outdoor sources or from objects in the indoor environment. Acid rain and a variety of other chemicals can weaken fibers. Cigarette smoke and aerosol sprays can deposit oily particles onto fibers causing irreparable damage. Other sources of pollution include wood, plastic, rubber, wood based paper, cardboard and newly painted surfaces.

Wood, plastic, rubber and newly painted surfaces emit chemicals that can discolor and degrade textiles. The storage and display of textiles in the

*The Hidden Heritage of the***UNDERGROUND RAILROAD** By James Mann

vicinity of these material should be avoided. Even rubber bands can cause problems. To control or at least minimize damage by external pollutants, the installation and regular changing of air conditioning and furnace filters is a great idea.

Inherent Instability

Antique silk textiles that were produced in the 19th and early 20th centuries are often chemically unstable because of a process called "weighting". Metallic salts were added to the silk to add weight and body to the fabric. Silk that has been treated with metallic salts containing iron and tin are particularly susceptible to accelerated degradation resulting in silk that is brittle and frayed. In order to minimize damage to these fragile fabrics, avoid physical stress during storage and display. Flat storage is recommended since it is the most effective method of providing even support for the entire textile. Acid-free tissue should be placed in between folds to give added support. Contact with water should be avoided; it can cause permanent staining.

Handling

A considerable amount of damage can be caused to textiles when they are carelessly handled. They should be laid out on a clean flat surface when being examined, cleaned, or being prepared for storage. Eating, drinking or smoking should be avoided in the vicinity. Since dirt, salts and oils from hands can be transferred to the surface during handling, clean gloves should be worn when touching textiles. If gloves are not available, hands should be frequently washed. If you want to preserve an antique costume, it should not be worn. Body oils and stresses due to modern body shapes will soon do in old fabrics. Large jewelry and belt buckles can snag or tear textiles and should not be worn when handling them. Do not use ink pens or markers in the vicinity of textiles; do not place any object on the textiles and when transporting them, the entire object should be supported from beneath. Textiles that are used i.e. rugs, drapes and costumes are also prone to rapid deterioration.

The care of Textiles

continued on page 4

The city of Ypsilanti is proud of the role played by some of its citizens in the Underground Railroad, in the days before the Civil War. The Underground Railroad was a secret network of people, who helped slaves escape from the South to Canada. Just about every old house in Ypsilanti is said to have been a station on the Underground Railroad, including some, that were built long after the Civil War. A restaurant in Depot Town once had a history of its building on the back of the menu, according to the history: "The building was built by veterans of the Civil War, and the basement was used by the Underground Railroad to aid escaping slaves."

The true story of the Underground Railroad in Ypsilanti will never be told in full, because most of the information is lost. All that is left is myth, rumor and a few facts. "Even the children of the families of those connected with the railroad knew little of what was actually going on about them," said Mary Goddard, in a paper read before the Ypsilanti Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in April of 1913. "The success of the institution depended on secrecy. So it happened that many of the leading workers died without having told even their children much, if anything, about their activities in the Underground Railroad. Some who may yet be living are unknown, and it is not easy to search them out. In these investigations many people have been visited, but few have been able to give any information, even though they were living in Ypsilanti at the time when the work of the Railroad was at its height."

"It was a railroad," noted one writer, "but with no time tables, no tickets, no fares, no president, no regularly organized company, no definitely laid out routes. Conductors it had and stations, but their names were kept a secret."

It was called the Underground Railroad because of the secret nature of its work, not because of any subterranean means of transportation. In every community that was a part of the Railroad, including Ypsilanti, there are stories of tunnels used to aid the escaping slaves. In Ypsilanti, it is said, a network of tunnels on the north side of Cross Street in Depot Town, were used to get

slaves to the Huron River, where they traveled by boat to Lake Erie.

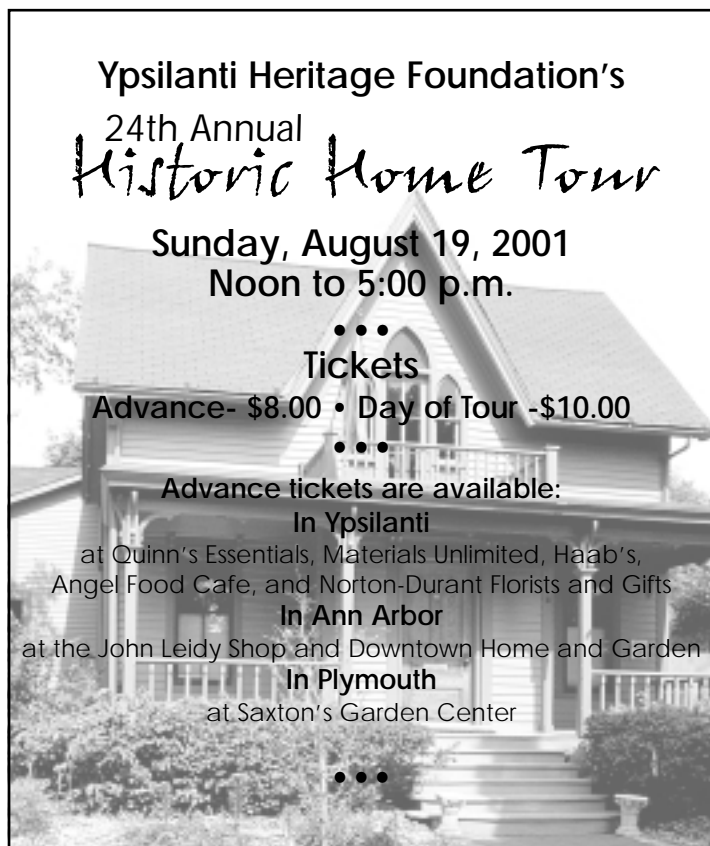
There was in fact a network of tunnels on the north side of Cross Street, but these were most likely never used by the Underground Railroad. As late as the 1860's, there was a railroad siding behind the buildings on Cross Street, where the alley is now. This siding went to the mill that was just north of the Cross Street bridge, where Me 'N' My Sister's Country Store and the Teacher's Shop is now. It was safer to use the tunnels to move back and forth from the main buildings to the out-buildings in the back, than to risk being hit by a train.

There was a second network of tunnels, that ran throughout the east side of Ypsilanti. The trenches to these tunnels could be seen on the banks of the Huron River, as late as the 1930's. These tunnels were large enough for a small child to walk upright. The tunnels were the work of the Michigan Center Railroad, to provide drainage, and not part of the Underground Railroad. There are homeowners in Ypsilanti, who point with pride to secret rooms in their homes, where they believe, slaves hid. Some of these rooms, however, date back only to the 1920's and Prohibition.

There are some homeowners, who just might be right about the secret rooms. Every now and then, evidence of hidden rooms come to light, usually when a house is being demolished.

When the Hatch Mansion, located next to the Huron Hotel, was razed to make room for a parking lot, in July of 1950. There was rumor that there were hiding places in the house. "A false floor approximately eight by 12 feet was found by workmen while tearing down the back section of the house between the first and second floors," reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of Saturday, July 29, 1950. "A space of four feet existed between the two floors. A small glassed-in square somewhat like a skylight in the ceiling of the first floor room permitted entrance to the cleverly concealed false room above."

Every now and then a hint of the Underground Railroad comes to light. It would be beneficial if it could be passed on to future generations; a lesson of what people can do for others.



Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's
24th Annual
Historic Home Tour
Sunday, August 19, 2001
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

•••

The following letter was received by the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation from Stephen & Kristine Mucher, 2001 Home Marker Recipients

Dear Mr. Randazzo,

Thank you for your recent letter recognizing our house as an historic structure. I had planned to get involved with YHF well before receiving this letter. You may or may not know that we purchased this home a few days before receiving your letter.

As such we are not the most deserving recipients of this honor. Nonetheless, I'm not sure you could find a more appreciative family, I am an historian and educator (Ph.D student at U of M). Kristine is similarly interested in history, preservation and gardening. We were attracted to Ypsilanti in part because of its traditional neighborhoods, diversity and the community commitment to preserving its rich heritage. As first-time homeowner we are especially excited about ensuring that 619 Vought continues to be a lens into the past for visitors and passers-by.

I was happy to see that YHF would recognize such a small structure. We will happily display the marker. We are in the process of making some changes to the home that will better reflect its likely appearance in the late 1920s. I plan to do some more research to find out exactly when the home was built. While our deed lists 1930, I have determined that 1927 is probably the best estimation at this point.

Please feel free to contact me. I look forward to getting involved in the community preservation effort.

Stephen S. Mucher



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

Hank Prebys, President
Lisa Mills Walters, Secretary
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Jennifer Goulet
Pattie Harrington
James Mann
Megan McCann
Bill Nickels
Don Randazzo
Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber

See you at the Home Tour - Sunday, August 19, 2001 noon - 5 p.m.

Heritage NEWS

AUGUST 2001
Good News Edition

September Meeting

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG IN YPSILANTI

Wed., Sept. 26,
7:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church
of Ypsilanti
209 Washtenaw Ave.
for details see page 3

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundations

24th Annual

Historic

Home Tour

On Saturday, August 18th, advance tickets for the home tour will be sold for \$8.00, 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 North Huron Street.

On the day of the tour, Sunday August 19th, tickets are full price (\$10.00) and are available only at the Home Tour ticket booth from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Homes On Tour



921 Woods Road
Megan McCann and
Len Lescosky

Ypsilanti architect R.S. Gerganoff designed this Period English Medieval-style home for Kenneth Ferguson, president of the United Stove Company in Ypsilanti.

The house was completed in 1941, although Ferguson died just two years later, his family continued to live in the house until the late 1950s. Since then there have been several owners, but except for a kitchen remodel sometime in the early 1970s, the house remains virtually unchanged.



220 South Huron Street
Marla and Rick Richardson

Built in 1870 by H.T. Glover for Samuel Barnard, then vice president of Peninsular Paper Company, this wonderful house was originally built in the Italianate style. Charles Newton, one of the home's best-known owners, had the house extensively remodeled in the 1930s to resemble a federal-style plantation house.

7, 9, 11 West
Michigan
Avenue
Phoenix
Contractors
Inc.



In 1888, Oliver A. Ainsworth contracted the Detroit architectural firm of Mason & Rice to build the O. A. Ainsworth and Co. Feed Mill & Grain Seed Storage at 514 and 515 Congress Street, (today 9 and 11 W. Michigan Ave.). The Ainsworth mill was highlighted by Romanesque arches and a prominent roofline—influences of the renowned architect H.H. Richardson.

The buildings exterior was brick with rusticated limestone sills. Mason & Rice also designed the neighboring Ypsilanti Savings Bank, today the Ypsilanti City Hall and Starkweather Chapel in Highland Cemetery.

105 West Michigan Avenue
Ambrose Wilbanks
and Jeffrey Kuhns



Until recently, this circa 1870 Italianate storefront building was hidden beneath a metal facade installed in the 1960s, when so many other commercial buildings were similarly disguised. Missing is the cornice which once topped the front facade, but the original brick is once again visible. New custom-made windows fit the typically Italianate segmental arched openings.

On tour is the two-story apartment on the second and third floors, newly created where no living space had previously existed. Other apartments can be found in other downtown buildings and it is hoped that more will be constructed, thus making downtown not only a viable commercial center, but a residential community as well.

HOME TOUR continued on page 2



Home Tour
continued from page 1

109 North
Huron Street
Chris Norman

Built in 1859 by the Worden family of Ypsilanti, the house remained in the family for at least thirty years before it endured a long stretch of careless ownership, conversion to multiple units, occasional office use, ongoing neglect, and, in 1988, a serious fire.

The preservation community, and very likely the house itself, breathed a huge sigh of relief when Chris Norman, a graduate of the historic preservation program at Eastern Michigan University, bought this Italianate house in 1999. Well qualified for the job and devoted to his task, Chris has begun a careful process of research, repair and restoration to undo the years of neglect.



Bob Dargel

The Dargel house, built about 1865, is a lovely example of Carpenter Gothic style, with its intricate gingerbread, steeply pitched roof, and many high gables. The gingerbread-trimmed porch across the front and the tall, hooded windows are also characteristic of the style. This house also offers a charming balcony door and windows framed with pointed gothic arches. The city records of 1876 list the owner as Eliza Dunham, widow of Dr. George Dunham, a dentist. City directories from the early 1900s indicate that Mrs. Dunham had beds available, which likely meant that she ran a rooming house for students of the Normal College.

Good News in Ypsilanti . . .

It Happened in Ypsilanti

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 Festival visitors. It's also a chance to say Thank You to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti.

By Jane Schmiedeke

Good News!

STREETS are the big news this year! The Michigan Ave median, complete with brick paving, planter tubs and traditional streetlights, is scheduled to be complete by the time we welcome Festival visitors.

...

And, on July 20, the City began work on a four-year program of repair and repaving that will improve every local street in Ypsilanti.

...

The addition to the FIRE EQUIPMENT MUSEUM, on Cross between Huron and Washington, is going up rapidly. This year's visitors can do a little sidewalk supervising – next year's visitors can view a much expanded museum collection.



...

Look up! At intersections all around the Historic District street signs are now topped with signs identifying the



"CITY OF YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT." Costs were shared by the Heritage Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce. The signs were installed by the City of Ypsilanti DPW.

Nice Work!

...



Repeat visitors to Ypsilanti may not even recognize the long-endangered TOWNER HOUSE! Now fully restored, painted and planted, it once again proudly takes its place in the Huron Street parade of architectural styles.

...

Even if you're not going on the Home Tour, don't miss seeing the OLD FLOUR MILL on Michigan just east of City Hall. The rehab is nothing short of spectacular!

...

FALSE FACADES are still disappearing from commercial buildings. Gone is the metal screen from 105 W. Michigan (an apartment here is on this year's Home Tour), a similar screen will soon be removed from the former Marsh Office Supply on Washington, and the much-hated wood awning is gone from the adult bookstore on Michigan Avenue. (And, the adult bookstore is gone, too!)



The big news at Eastern Michigan University is that relics from the TITANIC will be housed at EMU, the only repository in the United States for artifacts salvaged from the ill-fated ship.

...

The long dismal, ugly CITY HALL parking lot is newly curbed and paved and beautifully landscaped! What a spectacular improvement!

...

Out-of-town visitors who enter Ypsilanti from I-94 will notice some UNUSUAL LANDSCAPING at the interchange. Landscaping there is being done with native plants and trees in a pilot program which may have a major influence on the treatment of similar interchanges around the state.



A new state historic marker was installed this summer in front of the METHODIST CHURCH on Washington at Wash t e n a w .

...

The good folks who once owned Riverside Lawn & Garden on Forest Avenue are now operating MANTIS GARDEN SUPPLY on West Michigan – stop in!

...



Many Thanks

To the developers, American Community Developers, and the architect, Ypsilanti's Elisabeth Knibbe, to whom the community is forever indebted for the stunning rehabilitation of the old high school, on Cross Street between Washington and Adams. The long-vacant and endangered building is now the fully occupied CROSS STREET VILLAGE senior apartments. This springs ribbon cutting was a spectacular, festive and heartwarming occasion.

...

To YCUA (Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority) for the wonderful care lavished on the historic stone Water Tower and for the lights which circle the Water Tower during the winter holidays.



September Meeting

Chris Norman to speak on archaeological dig

On Wednesday, September 26, at 7:30 p.m., at the First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti. EMU historic preservation program graduate Chris Norman will speak to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation about an archaeological dig that took place behind his 1859 house on North Huron Street. When Norman removed an 1860 addition to the house, he offered to let his friend and fellow EMU student Stacy Tchorzynski head up a dig on the site before he replaced the addition. Back then, says Norman, the people who lived in the house "just opened the back door and threw their trash out." He says that he and Tchorzynski learned a lot about the historical context of the site and of the Ypsilanti area as a result of the dig. Norman will begin his talk, which will include artifacts and slides, with an explanation of what a "real" archaeological dig is all about. Tchorzynski, who studied anthropology at EMU and took courses in historic preservation, may join Norman that evening. She has written a soon-to-be-published paper about her research on Normans backyard, which has been assigned an official state archaeological site number.

...

To the SIDETRACK for the enormous lighted tree in the courtyard at Christmas.

...

To the YPSILANTI GARDEN CLUB for the plantings at the Towner House. The little Greek Revival has another new friend!

...

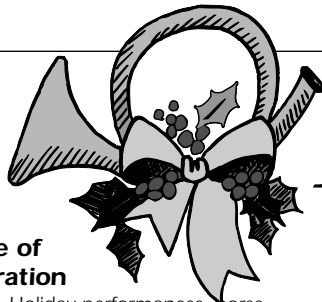
To EZELL AGNEW who keeps downtown streets and plantings looking great!

...

SPECIAL THANKS to all those folks who quietly and faithfully maintain their properties – who sweep and water, pick up and plant, repair and paint. If we missed mentioning you, know that without your effort Ypsilanti wouldn't be the great place it is!

...

Thanks to everyone who works to make Ypsilanti a better place to live: Police, Fire Fighters, City Manager, City Department Heads, City Employees, Mayor & City Council, Boards & Commissions and volunteers!



Holiday Events

Nov. 24 Tree of Hope Celebration

3:30 - 7:30 p.m. Holiday performances, horse drawn carriage rides, activities for the kids, holiday caroling in historic downtown Ypsilanti.

Dec 1 "A Kaleidoscope of Dance"

33rd Annual Holiday Ballet: Ypsilanti Area Dancers. December 1 & 2. 12:30 & 4 p.m., Ypsilanti High School, 2095 Packard. Tickets \$16 (children 12 & under, \$11) 482-6131.

Dec. 1 "Hits and Mis-Demeanors":

Young Actor's Guild. November 29-December 1. 7:30 p.m., Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti. Tickets \$6 (children, \$4) in advance and at the door. 913-9750.

Dec. 1 "The Glass Menagerie" EMU

Theater Department. November 30 and December 1, 2 & 6-8. 8 p.m., Quirk Theater, Ford St., EMU campus, Ypsilanti. Tickets \$6 (Thurs.), \$11 (Fri. & Sat.), & \$9 (Sun.) in advance up to 30 minutes before the show; \$8 (Thurs.), \$13 (Fri. & Sat.), & \$11 (Sun.) at the door. 487-1221.

Dec. 2 "Brass Blast II" EMU Music

Department. 2 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU cam-

pus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free.

Dec. 3 EMU Jazz & Percussion

Ensembles EMU Music Department. 8 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU campus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 4 EMU Collegium Concert: EMU Music Department. 8 p.m., Holy Trinity Chapel, 511 W. Forest, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 5 Flute Choir EMU Music Department. 8 p.m., EMU Alexander Recital Hall, Lowell at E. Circle Dr., Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 6 Barnhill Band EMU Music

Department. 7:30 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU campus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 7 Children's Concert EMU Music

Department. 10 a.m. & 12:15 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU campus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 7 Symphony Orchestra EMU Music

Department. 8 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU campus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 8 "Second Saturday Bird Walk"

Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. 9 a.m., Rolling Hills County Park, 7660 Stony Creek Rd., Ypsilanti Twp. 971-6337.

Dec. 9 5th Annual Ypsilanti Holiday Homes Tour.

1-6 p.m., various locations. Tickets \$10 in advance in Ann Arbor at Downtown Home and Garden and John Leidy's; in Ypsilanti at Quinn's Essentials, Me 'n' My Sister's, & Haab's Restaurant; in Saline at the Calico Cat, \$13 day of tour. 487-9669, 544-4690.

Dec. 9 42nd Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols EMU Music

Department/Campus Ministries. 3 p.m., Pease Auditorium, EMU campus, W. Cross at College Place, Ypsilanti. Free. 487-2255.

Dec. 27 Women with Wings West

7-8:30 p.m., 1107 Pearl, Ypsilanti. \$3 donation. 483-6420, 482-0553.

Dec. 31 New Year Jubilee 6p.m. - 1a.m.

Dance, sing and laugh out the old year with over 40 different performances in several different venues. This family event features story telling, music, dancing theatre, comedy, magic & more. For ticket information call 483-4444.



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

Hank Prebys, President
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Jennifer Goulet
Pattie Harrington
James Mann
Megan McCann
Bill Nickels
Don Randazzo
Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber

See you at the Home Tour - Sunday, December 9, 2001 1p.m - 6 p.m.

Heritage NEWS

NOVEMBER 2001

November Meeting

GEER HOUSE, Preservation Project

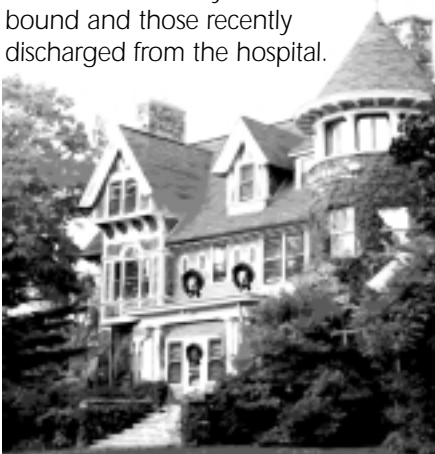
Wed., Nov. 28,
7:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church
of Ypsilanti
209 Washtenaw Ave.

Holiday Homes Tour Set for December 9th

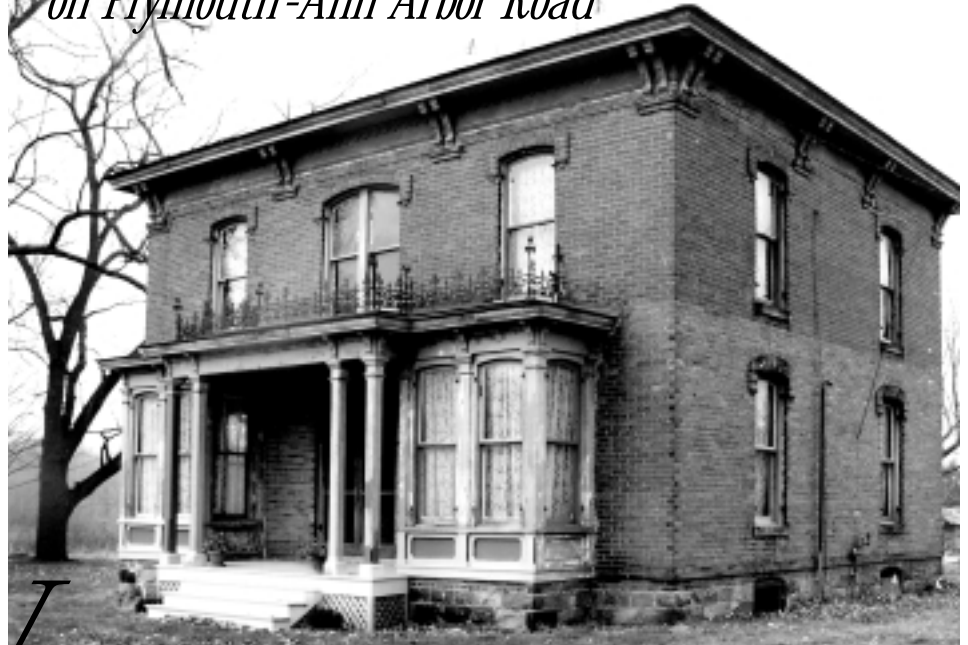
If you enjoyed the Christmas Home Tour last year, you're looking forward to going again!. If you missed it last year, you have a delightful treat in store on Sunday, December 9, 1:00 to 6:00. Seven properties, all wonderfully decorated for the holidays, as well as a refreshment stop at the Ladies' Literary Club – its all yours to enjoy on this years tour. Take a friend, take a neighbor, take your family! Advance tickets, \$10, will be available at Quinns Essentials and Me n' My Sisters Country Store in Depot Town, Haabs Restaurant in downtown Ypsilanti. Tickets will be available the day of the tour, \$13.00, at the Ladies' Literary Club and the Hutchinson Mansion.

All of the proceeds from the Holiday Home Tour go to Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels. YMOW, a non-profit organization, has served the City of Ypsilanti and surrounding areas for more than 25 years. It delivers more than 280 meals each day, six days a week, to the elderly, homebound and those recently discharged from the hospital.



Hutchinson Mansion - High/Scope Foundation featured on this year's Holiday Homes Tour.

A BATHROOM IN THE PARLOR *on Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road*



Jeanine Head Miller and Glenn Miller will speak to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation about their new project, the 1884 Geer House on Ann Arbor-Plymouth Road, just north of Ypsilanti. They will give their informal talk at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 28, at Ypsilanti's First United Methodist Church, 209 Washtenaw Avenue. The public is invited.

Please join us to hear about how a couple from Dearborn researched the history of their new old house, undertook the challenging task of preserving it, and even had it designated its own "historic district."

The brick Italianate former home of Milton and Kittie Geer is located between Plymouth and Ann Arbor. For many years it was part of a farmstead in Superior Township. In the 1920s the Barnes family bought the farm; the last of their children to live in the house died there in October of 1999. Many

of us remember the buildings as they fell on hard times, the barn collapsing and the house becoming derelict.

Glenn Miller had often driven down Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road past the house and imagined owning it. His wife, Jeanine, has always been fascinated by the romance of old buildings. Imagine their surprise when a friend told them that the property was for sale.

The Millers bought the house in May 2000. Come and hear all about the parlor, the 15-amp electrical service, and much more. They will also tell us about how they researched the history of the property, what they found once they took possession, the work they have already done, what their plans are for the future, and how and why they became a historic district.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

"Ypsilanti is a town in Michigan". . .

*Saul Bellow published his novel **Humbolt's Gift** in 1975. Bellow was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1976. Bellow makes reference to Ypsilanti in the story.*

• • •

"When he was done, he declared that he was going to sing "Goin' Home," an old American spiritual-used by Dvorak in the New World Symphony, he added as a program note. Then, oh Lord! I remembered that he had been homesick for Ypsilanti, and that he had pined for his sweetheart, back in the Twenties, longing for his girl, singing "Going home, going home, I'm a'goin' home," until my mother said, "For heavens sake, go then." And when he came back with his obese, gentle, weeping bride, this girl who sat in the tub, her arms too fat and defeating her efforts to bring the water as high as her head, Mama came into the bathroom and washed her hair for her, and tow-eled it.

They were all gone but ourselves."

• • •

*In the movie
"North by Northwest" 1959,
starring Cary Grant and
Eva Marie Saint*

• • •

There is a scene in the train station. While they talked, in the background you can hear the station announcer barking out the various trains that were about to leave. The conductor announces "train now leaving for Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Detroit."

Our 15 minutes of fame in Hollywood!

• • •

FICTION

BEFORE THE CHANGE

How could she not have known?

BY ALICE MUNRO

DEAR R.,

My father and I watched Kennedy debate Nixon. He's got a television since you were here. A small screen and rabbit ears. It sits out in front of the sideboard in the dining room, so that there's no easy way now to get at the good silver or the table linen, even if anybody wanted to. Why in the dining room, where there's not one really comfortable chair? Because it's a while since they've remembered they have a living room.

Do you remember this room? Heavy side curtains with 'Wine-colored leaves on a beige ground and the net curtains in between. Picture of Sir Galahad leading his horse and picture of Glencoe with a herd of red deer instead of the massacre. The old filing cabinet moved in years ago from my father's office but still no place found for it, so it just sits there, not even pushed back against the wall. And my mother's closed sewing machine (the only time he ever mentions her, when he says "your mother's sewing machine") with the same or what looks like the same array of plants, in day pots or tin cans, not flourishing and not dying.

So I'm home now. Nobody has broached the question as to how long for. I just stuffed the Mini with all my books and papers and clothes and drove here from Ottawa in one day. I had told my father on the phone that I was finished with my thesis (I've actually given it up, but I didn't bother telling him that) and that I thought I needed a break.

"Break?" he said, as if he'd never heard of such a thing. "Well. As long as it isn't a nervous break."

That's the way he still refers to panic

attacks and depression and personal collapse. Nervous breakdown.

There wasn't any big welcome when I got here, but no consternation, either.

I'd thought of kissing him-more brava-do than an upsurge of affection, more this-is-the-way-I-do-things-now. But by the time my shoes hit the gravel I knew I couldn't. There was Mrs. B. standing halfway between the drive and the kitchen door. So I went and threw my arms around her instead and nuzzled the bizarre black hair cut in a Chinese sort of bob around her small withered face. I could smell her stuffy cardigan and bleach on her apron and feel her old toothpick bones. She hardly came up to my collarbone.

Flustered, I said, "It's a beautiful day, it's been the most beautiful drive." So it was. So it had been. The trees not turned yet, just rusting at the edges, and the stubble fields like gold. So why does this benevolence of landscape fade in my father's presence and in his territory?

When the debate was over, my father got up and turned off the television. He won't watch a commercial unless Mrs. B. is there and speaks up in favor. Whatever she enjoys is permitted, even dancing cornflakes, and he may even say, "Well, in its own way it's clever." This I think is a kind of warning to me.

What did he think about Kennedy and Nixon?

'Aw, they're just a couple of Americans. I tried to open the conversation up "How do you mean.

"Just a couple of Americans," he said, as if the words might have got by me the first time.

So we sit there not talking but not in silence, because, as you may recall, he is a noisy breather.

R. THE waiting-room walls are scuffed all round where generations of patients have leaned their chairs back against them. The Reader's

Recognized in Books & Movies

Digests are in rags on the table. The patients' files are in cardboard boxes under the examining table. And in the house it's no better.

I asked what color paint he'd like for the office walls. Light green, I said, or light yellow?

He said, "Who's going to paint them?" "I am."

"I never knew you were a painter." "I've painted places I've lived in."

"Maybe so. But I haven't seen them. What are you going to do about my patients while you're painting?" "I'll do it on a Sunday."

"Some of them wouldn't care for that when they heard about it." "Are you kidding? In this day and age?"

"It may not be quite the same day and age you think it is. Not around here."

All I got to do in the end was throw out the Reader's Digests and put out some copies of Maclean's and Time and Saturday Night. And then he mentioned there'd been complaints. They missed looking up the jokes they remembered in the Reader's Digests.

"Too bad," I said, and I couldn't believe that my voice was shaking.

Then I tried to tackle the filing cabinet in the dining room. I thought it was probably full of the files of patients who were long dead. Mrs. B. saw what I was doing and went and got my father. Not a word to me. He said, "Who told you you could go poking around in there? I didn't."

R. THE two days you were here last year Mrs. B. was off for Christmas with her family. (She has a husband who has been sick with emphysema it seems for half his life) and no children, but a horde of nieces and nephews and connections.) I don't

Of course there could just as easily have been a car that dropped them off at the end of the lane.

And I was told-by Mrs. B., I think, not by him-that they came to my father for vitamin shots. I know that, because I would think, Now she's getting her shot, whenever we heard a woman make a noise, and I would be a little surprised that women so sophisticated and self-controlled were not more stoical about needles.

Even now, it has taken me weeks. Through all this time spent getting used to the ways of the house, to the point where I would never dream of picking up a paintbrush and would hesitate to straighten a drawer or throw out an old grocery receipt without consulting Mrs. B., who can never make up her mind about it anyway.

At lunch today, Sunday, my father laid a check beside my plate. Mrs. Barrie is never here on Sundays. We have a cold lunch of sliced meat and bread and tomatoes and pickles and cheese, which I fix when my father gets back from church. He never asks me to go to church with him-probably thinking that would just give me a chance to air some views he doesn't care to hear.

The check was for five thousand dollars. "That's for you," he said. "So you'll have something. You can put it in the bank or invest it how you like. See how the rates are. I don't keep up. Of course you'll get the house, too. All in the fullness of time, as they say."

A bribe? I thought. Money to start a little business with, go on a trip with? Money for the down payment on a little house of my own, or to go back to university to get some more of what he has called my unnegotiable degrees? Five thousand dollars to get rid of me.

I thanked him, and more or less for conversation's sake I asked him what he did with his money. He said that was neither here nor there.

"Ask Billy Snyder if you're looking for advice." Then he remembered that Billy Snyder was no longer in the accounting business; he had retired.

"There's some new fellow there with a queer name," he said. "It's like Ypsilanti, but it's not Ypsilanti." "Ypsilanti is a town in Michigan," I said.

"It's a town in Michigan, but it was a man's name before it was a town in Michigan," my father said. It seems it was the name of a Greek leader who fought against the Turks early in the eighteen-hundreds.

I said, "Oh. In Byron's war."

"Byron's war?" said my father. "What makes you call it that? Byron didn't fight in any war. He died of typhus. Then once he's dead he's the big hero, he died for the Greeks, and so on." He said this contentiously, as if I had been one of those responsible for this mistake, this big fuss over Byron. But then he calmed down and recounted for me, or recalled for himself, the progress of the war against the Ottoman Empire. It's always best not to interrupt. When he starts to talk like this there's the sense of a truce, or a breathing spell, in an undeclared underground war. I was sitting facing the window, and I could see through the net curtains the heaps of yellow-brown leaves on the ground, in the rich generous sunlight (maybe the last of those days we'll get for a long while by the sound of the wind tonight), and it brought to mind my relief as a child, my secret pleasure, whenever I could get him going, by asking a question or by accident, on a spiel like this.

Last night I came in at about ten o'clock. I'd been out at a meeting of the Historical Society, or, rather, at a meeting to try and organize one. Five people showed up, and two of them walked with canes. When I opened the kitchen door I saw Mrs. B. framed in the doorway to the back hall-the hall that leads from the office to the washroom and the front part of the house. She had a covered basin in her hands. She was on her way to the washroom and she could have gone on, passing the kitchen as I came in. ...