

# Heritage NEWS



Good News  
EDITION

See details  
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## Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation 41st Annual Historic

## Home Tour

The 41st Annual Historic Home Tour, on June 24th is shaping up to be a memorable event. We will be showcasing homes throughout the city, including Tudor, Colonial Revival, Victorian, and Queen Anne architectural styles, a work in progress, newly built affordable housing and a brick & mortar depot town business.

We would like to thank all of you for your support of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation since its inception in 1974. Funds that are raised through

our annual home tour this year have been designated to go toward the Highland Cemetery Starkweather

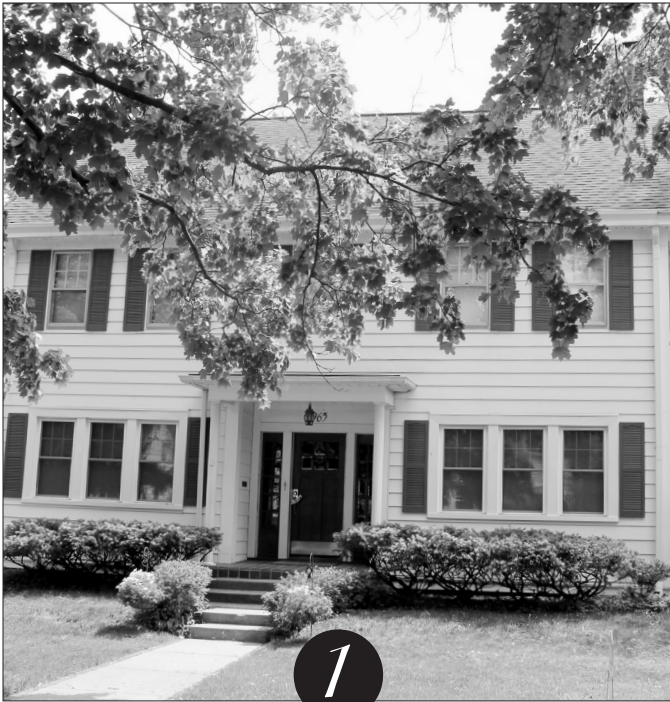
Chapel restoration.

Ticket vouchers to the tour can be purchased in advance online at [www.yhf.org](http://www.yhf.org), in Ypsilanti, at Haab's Restaurant, Salt City Antiques, Materials Unlimited, Eyrie, Cultivate Coffee & Tap, Norton-Durant Florist & Gifts, Whittaker Road Aubree's and in Ann Arbor at Downtown Home & Garden. Tickets are \$15.00 and available for purchase on the day of the tour at the Home Tour ticket booth in front of the Towner House, 303 N. Huron as well as pre-sale locations.



Home Tour proceeds will be donated this year to support the restoration of the Starkweather Chapel.

## 2018 HISTORIC HOME TOUR



965 West Cross Street

*Dawn & Jason Keech*

This stately Colonial Revival anchors the Normal Park neighborhood along the northern border. The house was built in 1922 for Joseph Thomas Gourley and his wife, Emma. Joseph was the president of the Ypsilanti Lumber & Coal Co. at Parson and Lincoln Streets near Depot Town. Built in the style of early Georgian Colonial homes, the house retains its characteristic features, including the strict window symmetry, a centered entry with a paneled door atop a raised step, a side porch, and the traditional color of white with green trim. The interior character of the house is largely unchanged, with original woodwork in every room, beautiful French doors, high ceilings, picture rails, and lots of natural light from the many windows throughout the home.

The house changed hands many times over the years, and in addition to the Gourleys, has been the residence for a physical education instructor at EMU (Michigan State Normal College, at the time), a Great Lakes ship captain, a local accountant, and even a religious boarding house for Servants of the Word, a local ecumenical brotherhood.

The current owners, Jason and Dawn Keech, moved into the house in November of 2016 after outgrowing their first Normal Park home on Westmoorland. As their key requirement was to remain in Normal Park, they wasted no time in grabbing up this neighborhood classic when it became available. The house required very few projects for the new homeowners, and aside from building a new patio in the backyard, they have primarily focused on making the house work for their family. The sleeping porch off the couple's bedroom was converted to a closet, and the finished third floor space serves as Dawn's office and a play area for their daughters. With the help of Carol at Salt City Antiques, they have found many furnishings that are as unique as the house itself.

While the family loves every inch of this house, some of their personal favorites include the rainbow glass collection in the dining room, sitting by the huge picture window in the living room, entertaining on the back patio, and the view of EMU and the water tower from the third floor.



18 South Normal Street

*Elisa & Jeff Guyton*

This spacious home was built in 1927 in a mixture of Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival styles. The windows are new and might have been casement windows originally, but the peaked roof, with its steep slope, are typical of Tudor. It was designed with a classical center hall, the living room on one side and dining on the other. The house is enhanced by the surrounding trees, some of which predate its construction.

The first owners were George Millage, an insurance agent, and his wife, Hazel. They may have had difficulty maintaining this large home during the Great Depression, and by 1936 the house was vacant. From 1938 to 1948, it was the home of the Cyrus Camp family, owners of Camp Publishing in Depot Town, for which Photo Street is named. The firm did a large number of school photos and hand tints. Over the next 60 years the house was occupied by a series of families, eventually becoming a fraternity house, and in the early 2000s, a rooming house.

The present owners, Elisa and Jeff Guyton, came on the scene in 2013 and have restored the house by updating the mechanical systems and kitchen, cleaning up old paint and soil on the original woodwork, refinishing the floors, and giving new life to all areas. They are to be found in good weather either on the airy screened-in porch or in the back yard, where the new deck and play structures welcome all ages.



## 2018 HISTORIC HOME TOUR



215 South Washington Street

*Chantal & Pace Nielsen*

This work-in-progress at 215 South Washington was built between 1893 and 1894, and was the home of William Kishlar, a dry goods merchant. This house, and the house next door (221 South Washington), was built by George Kishlar, William's father, a well known carpenter and building contractor.

A grand old mansion with 5 bedrooms, it was divided into efficiency apartments some time in the 1970s. The previous owner purchased it in 2012 with the hope of returning it to a single family home. Thus, he completely gutted the house. The current owners purchased the house in this unfinished condition, and are working to restore it to its previous splendor as a gem on South Washington. At this time, the carriage house has been updated with new wooden doors, a new roof and the beginnings of a fresh coat of paint. The porch has been restored, front landscaping has been placed and the beginnings of a fresh coat of paint can be seen on the outside of the house.

Owners, Chantal and Pace Nielson plan to move into 215 as soon as they can, but right now, this is a weekend project. They have seen big improvements in a short amount of time, and are excited to see how the restoration develops. They exclaimed, "When it's finished we will have it back on the Home Tour".



733 Maus Avenue

*Tasha Palmer*

The seven new homes on Maus Street are part of Deborah Strong Housing, named after longtime housing advocate and former chairperson of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission. Strong lived in Ypsilanti for 30 years, serving nearly 20 years in various leadership roles on the Board of Commissioners. The development includes the rehabilitation of existing public housing as well as the construction of new affordable housing units.

Tasha Palmer and her family reside at 733 Maus, and Tasha is a member of the current housing board and an employee of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District. Her daughter has won national acclaim for her essay "What Home Means to Me," accompanied by her prolific artwork, in which she has incorporated the image of her father, who passed away last year. Tasha's eldest son is a multi-media artist working for Ward 1 Productions, a youth-driven creative media company, and the family is thriving in the living space they have occupied since its completion in 2016.

They enjoy the natural light flowing into the living room and kitchen area, the ample counter space, and convenient laundry nook off the dining room. Tasha believes that the new homes have invigorated the neighborhood, making it a desirable place to raise her family.

## 2018 HISTORIC HOME TOUR



21 East Cross Street

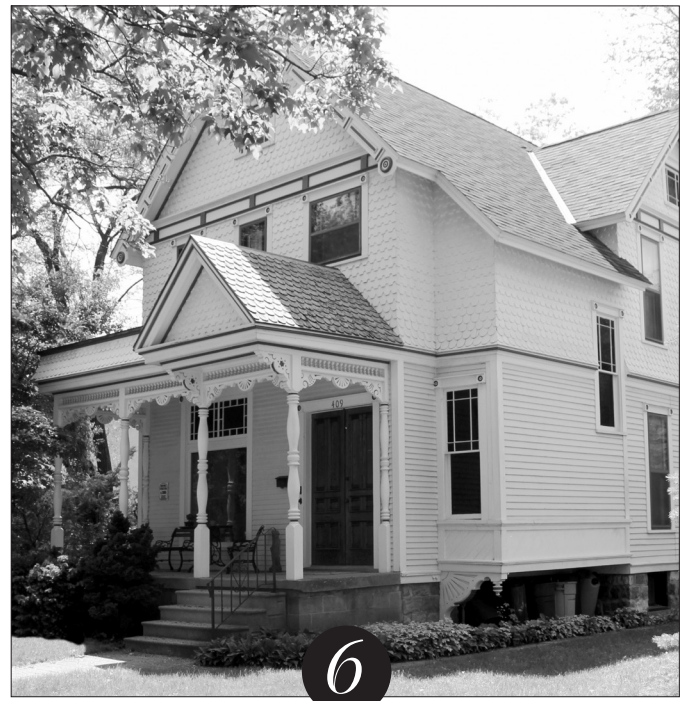
## Brick &amp; Mortar Modern General Store

*Sherri & Zachary Schultz*

Sherri and Zachary Schultz have a love of Depot Town history and were excited when 21 E. Cross became available. They appreciate the original floors and ceiling of their space. They opened their “general store” in July 2017, less than one year ago. Sherri is one of the founding members of DIYpsi, and her passion is in finding objects that can be recycled and repurposed in artistic ways. Zachary shares the passion and enjoys creating things from salvaged materials. The store has provided them with an outlet for their creative energies. They have made most of the furniture and fixtures in their store. They have obtained materials from a non-profit called Detroit Architectural Salvage and have also salvaged material from renovations at The Riverside Arts Center. The store currently has a wide range of items for sale, and their goal is to expand to include more general items that people of the community might need and seek out locally.

The brick Italianate structure, built in 1859, was originally the Huron Hotel and came to be known as the Follett House after Benjamin Follett bought out the other owners. Follett was very active in the Ypsilanti community, having served as mayor from 1860–1861, and was responsible for the establishment of the first “safe” bank and the construction of Ypsi’s first city hall. In the early days, the building was considered the grandest hotel on the Michigan Central Line. The hotel’s third floor included a ballroom (Follett Hall) that hosted many traveling musical and theatrical companies. There were tunnels at the rear of the building that may have been part of the Underground Railroad.

By the 1890s, however, the hotel business was failing, and as early as 1910, the first level was divided into five storefronts and the upper floors utilized for storage. The storefronts of “The Follett House” have been around since 1910 and have changed hands several times over the years, serving as home to Quinn’s Essentials, Fantasy Attic, and Compass. Sherri and Zachary believe that it may have even been the Farmers General Store at some point in the distant past.



409 North Adams Street

*Gillian & Adam Gainsley*

There is some dispute about the year the Queen Anne house at 409 N. Adams St. was built: It is first mentioned in an Ypsilanti city directory in 1888, another city record states 1893, and the plaque on the house reads 1895. While the home has had as many as six owners, many original features are still intact, surviving the reconfiguration of the single-family home into a duplex in the late 1950s by its third owner.

Connie Krump purchased the duplex in 1983. When she married Jay Simcoe, a restoration carpenter, he stripped and refinished the woodwork in the entry as a wedding gift to his bride. Connie and Jay lived in the home until the mid-1990s, when they moved to Ann Arbor and maintained 409 N. Adams as a student rental for the next 18 years.

Adam Gainsley and Gillian Ream Gainsley bought the home from Connie and Jay in 2014, when Gillian was 7½ months pregnant with their first child. Considering this their “forever” home, the Gainsleys have undertaken a number of updates (with some much-appreciated help from their parents), including the updating the kitchen floor, tiling the bathrooms, tuck-pointing the foundation, leveling the basement floor, and adding new insulation. Visitors will enjoy the many graceful elements throughout this elegant home, as well as hearing plans for future restoration.

Special mention goes to Kim Clarke, who wrote a research paper that provided valuable background on this home. The paper is on file at the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives.

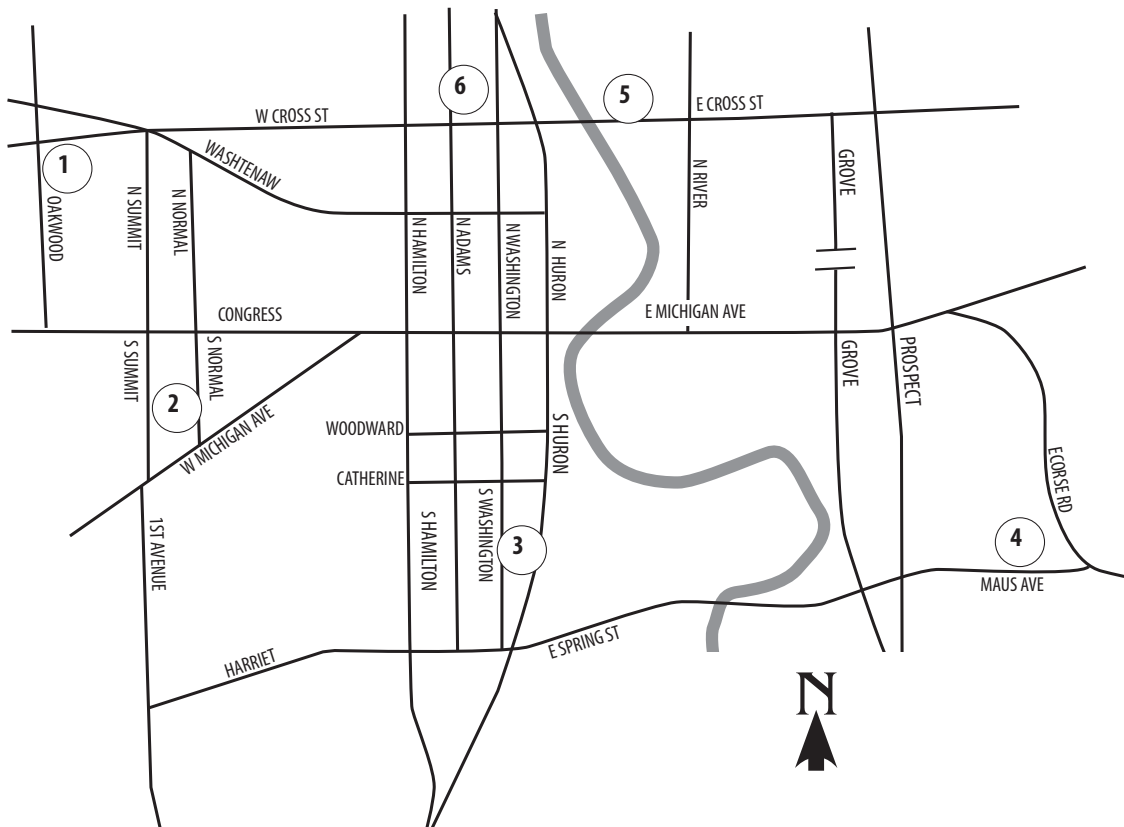
Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation  
**41st Annual**  
*Historic*  
 ARCHITECTURAL  
**HOME TOUR**

Advance vouchers are on sale in Ypsilanti at Haab's Restaurant, Norton-Durant Florist & Gifts, Salt City Antiques, Eyrie, Cultivate, Whittaker Road Aubree's & Materials Unlimited, in Ann Arbor at Downtown Home & Garden. On the day of the tour, tickets are available at the Home Tour ticket booth in front of the Towner House at 303 North Huron Street, and at all of the pre-sales locations.

Vouchers can be Redeemed for a Home Tour Ticket Bookleton the day of the tour, by presenting the voucher at any of the 6 home tour locations.

### *Key to the Tour*

- ❑ 1. 965 West Cross St.
- ❑ 2. 18 South Normal
- ❑ 3. 215 South Washington St.
- ❑ 4. 733 Maus Avenue
- ❑ 5. Brick & Mortar  
Modern General Store  
21 East Cross St.
- ❑ 6. 409 North Adams



**Sunday, June 24th from noon-5pm** - Tickets are \$15



# GOOD NEWS IN *Ypsilanti*

This year we have some spectacular projects to be excited about. Work is underway at some of Ypsilanti's finest historic structures!



## THOMPSON BLOCK

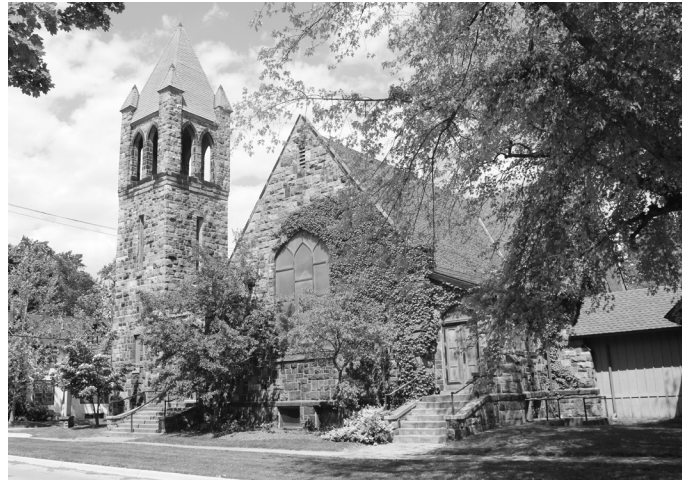
Located at the corner of River Street and East Cross Street, reconstruction and renovation of the Thompson Block is once again underway. The development is being driven by the real estate developer 3mission with Dick Mitchell of Mitchell & Mouat Architects and the Lansing based company Kincaid Henry who is carrying out the reconstruction. Most of the work that has been done so far was to stabilize the structure and determine what parts of the building could be saved. They are adding a new foundation, structural support, floors, and a roof. It is estimated that construction could wrap up by the spring or summer of 2019.

The developers were interested in saving the building because of its history and the Depot Town location. The building was built across from the railroad around 1860 and designed to house residences, but was also used as civil war barracks, a wagon and carriage retailer, a volunteer firehouse and a car dealership.

The building has long been an eyesore and the new development has the potential to spur growth in the neighborhood. There is a restaurant and bar slated for the main floor of the building and loft apartments for the 2nd and 3rd floors.

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Steve Pierce and Maggie Brandt recently purchased the church a year after they first looked at it. It is in bad need of repair but they want to repurpose the 130 year old church into a community meeting space. They got their inspiration from The Old Church Concert Hall in Portland, Oregon. The plan is to transform the space into an event venue called the Ypsilanti Performance Space or the "YPSI" where a variety of events will be held like concerts,



weddings and other special events for individuals and the community. There will be a concert hall, reception hall, conference room and the basement meeting area.

The YPSI's property consists of two conjoined buildings and a parking lot. One building, known as "north hall" was constructed in the late 1800s, and will continue to feature most of the church's original fixtures, including the stained glass windows, pews, and organ. This area will be converted into a concert hall seating up to 250 people. The reception hall and basement can be used for additional space, or to hold standalone events. The "north hall" is in need of extensive repair, especially the roof, so the concert hall, reception hall, and basement likely won't be ready to host events for at least a year.

The newer building, known as "the annex" which was constructed in the 1980s, consists of a conference room, office space, and bathrooms, that have already been renovated. Mackmiller Manchester PLLC law firm has settled into three of the four rentable offices. The conference room, which holds 60 people, will be available to book for \$75 an hour.

Anyone who wants to get involved in the YPSI can get in touch by visiting [www.ypsi.org](http://www.ypsi.org), calling (734) 252-YPSI, or stopping by the building when the doors are open.



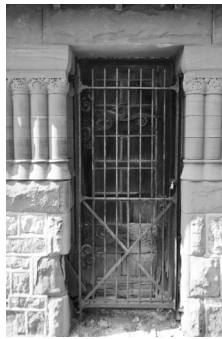
Annex building.



## STARKWEATHER CHAPEL

The Starkweather Chapel at Highland Cemetery is being lovingly restored and will resume its proper place in community life.

Highland Cemetery, located at 943 North River Road in Ypsilanti, Michigan, was dedicated on July 14, 1864. The cemetery was designed by James Lewis Glen of Niles, Michigan. The Starkweather Chapel in the cemetery was designed by George Dewitt Mason and Zachariah Rice of Detroit in the late 19th century Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style, it was dedicated in 1889. The Chapel was the gift of Mary Ann Newberry Starkweather, niece of



Chicago entrepreneur and philanthropist, John Newberry. The windows are by the Tiffany Glass Company. Long out of use, the building and its ornaments and contents have fallen into a state of serious disrepair. Barry LaRue one of the Highland Cemetery Board Members and longtime preservationist has taken on the challenge of restoring the chapel. So

far many emergency repairs have been made to protect the structure and its contents. The next large restoration will be the replacement of the roof with tiles that are similar to the original tiles. There is a go-fund-me page set up for the restoration of the Starkweather Chapel if you are interested in contributing to the restoration or contact Barry LaRue by email [blarue@umich.edu](mailto:blarue@umich.edu).



## QUEEN ANNE RESTORATION

The lovely Queen Anne house at 215 S. Washington owned by Pace & Chantel Nielsen is not only being restored but will be on this year's Historic Homes Tour as a work-in-progress!

Truly, the very best of GOOD NEWS!







The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

## Heritage News

945 Sheridan | Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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*See you at the Home Tour - Sunday, June 24, 2018 - noon-5pm.*

Heritage News is the newsletter of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. It is published and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail.

[www.yhf.org](http://www.yhf.org) • like us on facebook

## Historic Markers

**I**N YPSILANTI

The 44th annual Heritage Foundation's Marker Award Banquet is set for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 19 at the Ladies' Literary Club. Be sure to save the date and help us celebrate this years' nominees.

Homes or buildings are nominated for this special award by the following criteria:

- The property is within the boundaries of the City of Ypsilanti
- The property predates 1950 and has an identifiable architectural style
- The property is well and appropriately maintained
- The grounds are maintained
- Rental property, the property has had appropriate maintenance for at least two years
- The property has been developed sensitively
- The siding on the property is what was originally intended or could have been used originally.
- The windows are original or identical to the original in size and configuration
- Porches, railings and steps are appropriate to the period and style of the building
- Any additions are compatible

### JOIN YHF TODAY!

#### Membership Categories

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The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is recognized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization by the US Federal Government.

Make Check Payable to: **Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation**

Send Payment to: Claudia Pettit - Membership Chair

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