

SUMMER 2012

Impressions

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Early Residents Built a Lasting Foundation

By Ellamary Sheridan Kane

John (Johannes) Frederick Lucas was born in Albach, Hesse, Germany (where a Lucas house still stands) near Frankfurt on May 25, 1841, to Johannes and Catherina Lucas. Tragedy struck the family in 1851 as Johannes Lucas Sr. died, leaving Catherina alone to support her four children. The Lucas's neighbors soon made the grieving family an unexpected offer – passage to the New World, the hundred florin fare paid from the proceeds of Albach's community wood lot.

Whether the town's motivation stemmed from sympathy for a grieving widow or from fear that the Lucas family would become public charges, Catherina and her children soon set sail for New York on the *Lady Russell*, along with Catherina's brother, Casper Horn, and his family.

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John Lucas joined a thriving German community in Michigan. By the 1870s alone, more than 200 German speaking families had settled in Washtenaw County.



German-American Day on Ann Arbor's west side. West Liberty from Main Street with open countryside beyond, 1855-60.
(Bentley Historical Library)

The *Lady Russell* docked in New York harbor on July 9, 1852, but Catherina and Casper didn't linger in the city. They immediately set off for Ontario to live with their sister, who had previously emigrated to Victoriaville in Waterloo County. The siblings remained together until the 1860s, when Catherina moved her children to New Hamburg, Ontario.



The Lady Russell

By the time the family reached their new home, the now twenty year old John began to pursue his late father's trade as a stone and brick mason. He began his career with a three year apprenticeship in New Hamburg. In 1862, he married the German-born Elizabeth Roetting, and the couple had four children together. Elizabeth, however, died in 1871.

(Continued on page 4)

Our mission is to educate and inspire our community to engage in the preservation and presentation of area history

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The President's Letter

Our Society's Annual Business Meeting (the evening started with a potluck dinner and ended with a program on street names) was held May 16 with the one item of business being the presentation of the Nominating Committee's report for the election by the membership of members of the Board of Directors. I thought this might be an opportune time to remind everyone of the structure of the board and its activities.

Section 1, Article VI of the Bylaws states: "The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the officers, elected directors and directors-at-large." There are five officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer) elected for one year terms, twelve Directors with four elected each year for three year terms and directors-at-large for two years terms as appointed from time to time by the President and approved by the Board. This year, as typically happens, one director was also elected to a one year term and one to a two year term to fill vacancies.

In addition to the Annual Business Meeting the Board meets the third Wednesday each month except July and December. Meetings are held at the Museum on Main Street starting at 5:00 pm and generally are finished by 6:30 to 7:00 pm depending on the length of the agenda. Members of the Society are invited to attend. Additionally various committees of the Board and member volunteers meet as necessary to conduct committee activity.

It's good to remember that everyone who serves on the Board of Directors does so as a volunteer. Obviously they do so because of their desire to engage in the preservation and presentation of area history.

Leslie Loomans



Check us out, on the web and
www.WashtenawHistory.org



Washtenaw County Historical Society

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

Phone: 734-662-9092

email: wchs-500@ameritech.net

Museum on Main Street

500 N. Main Street

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

(at the corner of Beakes,

E. Kingsley & N. Main Streets)

Museum Hours

Saturday & Sunday,

12 Noon – 4:00 PM

and by appointment
for groups or individuals

Upcoming Exhibit

What's in Name? Streets and Roads of Washtenaw County
Opens June 10

Hooked: Addiction, Culture, Society



Drug Exhibitionism: Alcohol and Drug History in a Local Museum

By Michelle McClellan

As part of a semester-long series of events related to addiction here at the University of Michigan, a group of students researched and designed an exhibit called "Bad Habits: Drinks, Drags, and Drugs in Washtenaw County History" for a local museum. Co-sponsored by the College of Literature, Science and the Arts and by the University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center (UMSARC), the Research Theme Semester, included seminars, visiting speakers, a film series, and more. Those of us involved in the museum exhibit hoped that it would bring the semester's events into the community and also encourage student involvement with the county historical society, which runs the museum.

As the students and I, along with Diana Mankowski, a post-doctoral scholar from UM's History Department who managed much of the project, began thinking about the exhibit, our first challenge was spatial and organizational. The museum, located in a small historic home, has three rooms. How would these spaces structure our story? We decided to assign a substance to each room. This method allowed us to highlight local connections, an important consideration since the museum's mission is to preserve and showcase county history.

The students then embarked on their research assignments, concentrating respectively on alcohol, drug stores and pharmaceuticals, and cigarettes and marijuana. Research proved fruitful, if frustrating at times, and was a valuable learning experience. One student reflected, "I was really surprised at just how far back the history of drugs and alcohol go, in this county and in the country itself." Another student appreciated how national issues could be understood in a local context. Once students had identified major themes and events, we looked for artifacts. Some came from the museum's existing collections, others—such as a wine-making press—were loaned specifically for the exhibit, and still others—like a bar!—were purchased from Craig's List.

The front room, focused on alcohol, reflecting its preeminence as a normalized recreational drug and one that looms large in college culture. Temperance agitator Carrie Nation spoke in Ann Arbor more than a century ago, and a photograph documenting her speech on a sheer fabric panel was in the center.

The middle room centered on the development of pharmaceutical drugs, emphasizing that any division between medical and recreational use is sometimes in the eye of the beholder. Text panels relayed the early history of drug stores in the county, while a mocked-up storefront suggested a typical establishment of the late nineteenth century. This topic also allowed us to focus on the role of pharmaceutical companies in the area, particularly Pfizer which had a substantial presence in the county until quite recently. One corner of this room featured an exquisite collection of elegant lighters and ashtrays, which looked exotic, even bizarre, to many young adults and kids today.

The back room highlighted the experiences of John Sinclair, a local activist whose drug-related arrests in the 1960s and 1970s helped shape attitudes and regulations regarding drugs, especially marijuana, in Ann Arbor. Coupled with the material on Sinclair, we included text panels on the "Just Say No" campaign and the DARE program. Information about Michigan medical marijuana program rounds out the back room, suggesting to visitors that drug-related debates are far from resolved.

The process of doing this exhibit has underscored for me how challenging it can be to talk about drugs and alcohol in mixed company, as it were, and how objects, images, spatial relationships, and the implied authority of an institution like a museum can augment or trump the written word. On the reverse side of the Carrie Nation fabric panel, we hung a photo of a flapper with a flask in her garter (a relatively well-known image from the Library of Congress.) When the light was just right, the two images merge. I wonder now whether it isn't more persuasive in conveying early twentieth-century transformations in gender roles than any text I can produce, whether short or long.



University of Michigan professor Michelle McClellan was the guest speaker at our educational program on Sunday, April 15th. We met at the beautiful and historic Bethel United Church in Christ on Bethel Church Road in Manchester, Michigan.

The Life of John Lucas through the eyes of Ellamary Sheridan Kane

(Continued from page 1)

After considering his options, John decided to follow his half-brother, Henrich Kaiser Horn, who had already left Canada for Ann Arbor. Like his mother before him, the widowed John and his children left New Hamburg to build a new life in Michigan. There he found a wife, marrying Elizabeth Wagner in 1872. Together they had nine children, although two died in infancy.

John settled in Ann Arbor at an auspicious time for a skilled mason. The growing city was in the midst of a building boom, and John found steady employment with stone work for many commercial and residential buildings throughout the city. As his reputation grew, he was awarded sub-contracts for two hospital buildings for the University of Michigan's medical school.

In Michigan, John joined a thriving German immigrant community. In the 1870s alone, more than 200 German-speaking families settled in Washtenaw County. Ann Arbor supported three German newspapers



(where John frequently advertised his construction business), three German churches, and a variety of German cultural and recreational groups, including bands, choirs, and sports teams. Ann Arbor's German community even hosted a local celebration of Oktoberfest.

The national temperance movement understandably aroused considerable opposition within Ann Arbor's German community. While the university frequently hosted temperance rallies and speakers, John's name was included in an anti-Prohibition advertisement in the *Ann Arbor Courier* in 1887.

John's construction business steadily grew throughout the 1870s. In 1882, he built a grand new house for his

family on 6th Street, which remains today unaltered except for an awning over the front door. The Lucas home is featured in Marjorie Reade and Susan Wineberg's book *Historic Buildings of Ann Arbor, 2nd ed.*

By 1883, John had entered into a partnership with Charles Tessmer, forming Lucas & Tessmer. A few of their contracts included the 1883 award, for \$10,988, for the 6th Ward School on East University and the 1886 masonry work they completed on John G. Gall's new store on N. 4th St.

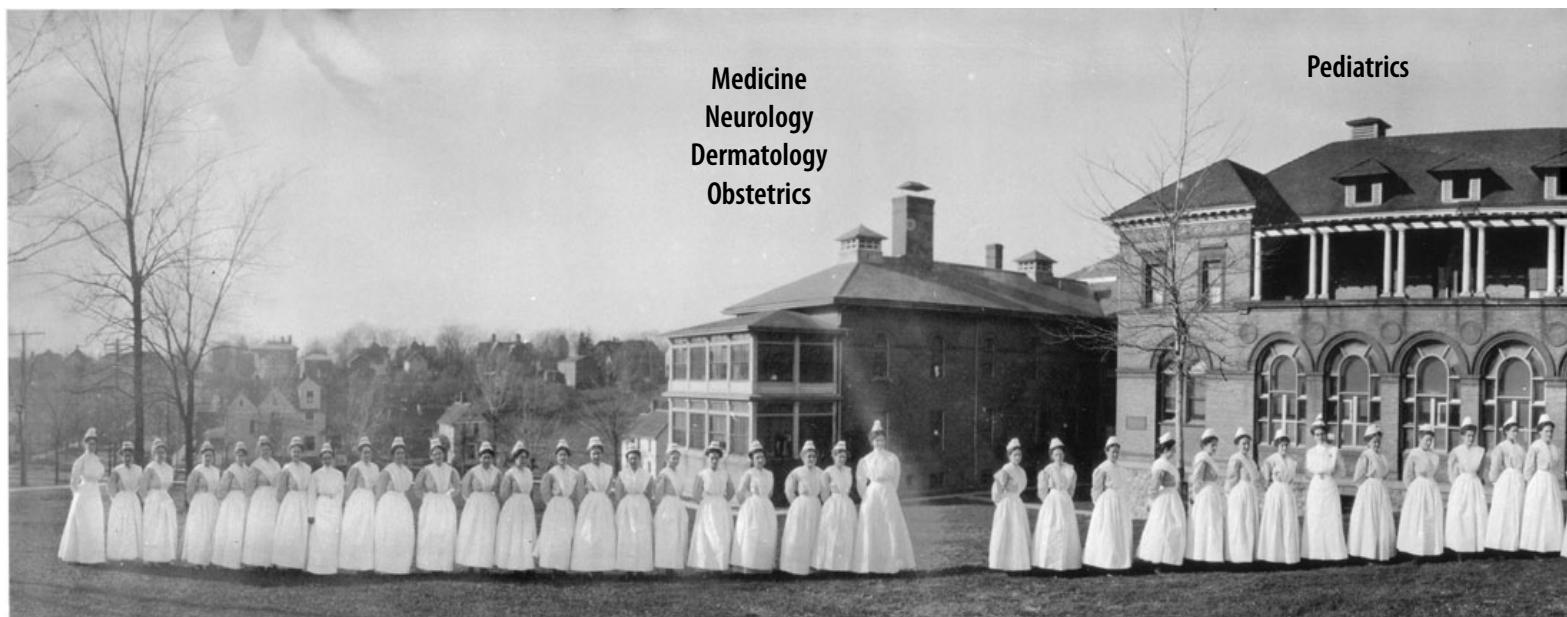
The contract for the new Sixth ward school house has been let to Lucas & Tessmer for \$10,988. It will be on East University Avenue.

Lucas & Tessmer have the contract for the new stone walk Joe T. Jacobs is to put down in front of his block, occupied by Fall & Hendrick.

The next report.

The Summit street bridge costs \$521.50.
Lucas & Tessmer have the contract.

Nurses pose on Catherine Street around 1910 in front of, left to right, the Medical Ward (originally the Homeopathic Hospital), the Palmer Ward, and the Surgical Ward (originally the Allopathic Hospital).



John was actively engaged in civic and community affairs, serving as the Ward 2 Fire Warden and travelling to Detroit as a delegate from Ann Arbor Lodge #27 of the Modern Woodmen of America to the Grand Lodge convention. Throughout their years in Ann Arbor, John and Elizabeth were devoted members of the Zion Lutheran Church, which was among the first churchs in Michigan to conduct services entirely in German.

In 1891, at the age of 50, John's fortunes began to dim. In April of that year, he and Elizabeth were injured in a horse cart accident on the streets of downtown Ann Arbor, which involved a run-away horse and cart. He subsequently suffered a severe arm injury on a construction site. By September 1891, he had withdrawn from his construction projects and died that December of tuberculosis. He was buried in an unmarked grave at the Forest Hill cemetery. Elizabeth remained in the family home until her death in 1896.

John's untimely death, though, did not end his impact on Michigan's construction industry. Given John's illness and subsequent death, he was unable to complete the masonry work on a university construction project. His bondsmen completed the project and sued the general contractor for the balance due to them. The Michigan Supreme Court eventually adjudicat-



502 Sixth Street John Lucas built his fine brick residence in 1882. Newspapers of the day took note of the "modern" Queen Anne style and the beautiful surrounding. (*Historic Buildings Ann Arbor, Michigan* Marjorie Reade and Susan Wineberg)

ed the dispute, ruling in favor of John's bondsmen in a notable contract case, *Rohde v. Biggs*, 66 N.W. 331 (Mich. 1896).

A complete catalogue of John's construction projects in Ann Arbor is unknown, but his twenty years in the city were indispensable to building the civic infrastructure at a critical time in the young city's development.

Ellamary Sheridan Kane, great granddaughter of John Lucas wrote this article with the assistance of her son Jim Kane and Ann Arbor historian Susan Wineberg. Ellamary is a genealogist in Midland focusing on the Lucas and Ritz families in Ann Arbor. She's most proud of her six children, 9 grandsons, and 3 great grandchildren. She would love to hear from readers who may know more about John Lucas' construction activities in Ann Arbor. Please email jskane@verizon.net



2012 WCHS Annual Meeting



President Les Loomans greeted about 25 WCHS members who attended the 2012 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 16 at the Milan Senior Center. The traditional potluck dinner was delicious. The following nominated slate of officers was elected unanimously.

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Vice President Karen Jania
Treasurer Patricia Creal
Recording Secretary Judy Chrisman
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WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

The guest speaker was Martha Churchill, an attorney, freelance writer and historian who pens a column for the local paper *The Milan News Leader*. She gave a very entertaining and informative presentation about the history of how the city of Milan and some of the streets got their names. Every time Milan got a new postmaster the name of the town changed. The city was founded in 1831 by John Marvin. By the spring of 1833, enough settlers had arrived to justify a post office, it was called Farmersville because it was primarily an agricultural settlement. Local flour mill operator, David A. Woodard, became the second postmaster and renamed the town Woodard Mills in honor of himself and also to get free advertising for his business. Between 1834 and 1836, Henry Tolan, the village's first druggist, served as postmaster in an acting capacity and changed the name of the post office to Tolanville. Both Marvin and Tolan still have streets named for them.

Residents chose to take the township name of Milan because it was located primarily in Milan Township. The township had been named by Italian immigrants in honor and memory of their homeland and one of its principal cities, Milano or Milan, with the emphasis on the last syllable. The River Raisin had all those little grapes growing and all of the wine lovers were so excited because of the grapes. There is even a town named Grape right along the Monroe-Saline Highway.



Guest Speaker, Martha Churchill

However, a considerable problem was encountered relative to the efficient delivery of mail. In the rural areas you didn't need a street name as much because you knew where Farmer Joe lived. But in town they did have street names. The main drag in Milan was called the Saline-Monroe Highway. Later on they called it Main Street and you knew where Main Street was because the next street over was First Street. Another street was Lamkin, named after the man who set up the first electric generating plant in Milan, he was called the "Thomas Edison" of Milan and had a huge generating plant in what is now the area of the American Legion. He also set up the water systems to get the fire department going. Lamkin Street became Ideal Street named after the foundry in town that employed half of the farmers.

The railroad system put time and place in order until the electric company came along. Its OK if the person who delivers the mail and all of the people in the village know where you live. But if someone is coming to fix the lights, they needed streets and numbers. It was jokingly added. they also assigned the house numbers because they wanted to know where to send the bill!



Board Members Tom Freeman, Anita Toews, Sally Silvennoinen and Pauline Walters in the front

Programs • Events • Exhibits

The Washtenaw County Historical Consortium is a volunteer organization representing 27 museums, libraries, and historical attractions in and around Washtenaw County, Michigan. For more information see www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium

The Greatest Generation

Sunday, June 24, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Honor Flight Michigan:

The Legacy Documentary

Don't miss this amazing film that documents the lives of several Michigan soldiers who served their country in World War II, and chronicles their Honor Flight journeys to see their memorial in Washington, DC. The film was

written, directed, and filmed by two Michigan film makers, Gabe Downey and Jon Mellow, in honor of their Greatest Generation grandfathers, both decorated WWII heroes. *Registration is requested.* Call 734-429-5450 or stop by the Adult Reference Desk at the library.



Honor Flight #21 Photo: Brad Ziegler

Saline District Library, Brecon Room, 555 N. Maple Road, Saline
www.Saline.lib.mi.us email: reference@salinelibrary.org

Independence Day on the Farm

Wednesday, July 4, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM Independence Day was the most widely celebrated holiday in the 19th century. We will revive the spirit of freedom with twenty-first century festivities at the farm.

Cobblestone Farm, 2751 Packard Road, Ann Arbor
email: gtaylor10@comcast.net

Windmill Tour in Saline

Sunday, July 22, 12 Noon - 5:00 PM

Celebrate 25 continuous years of the Saline Area Historical Society with a free Windmill Tour. Ride the bus with an on-board guide, walk, run, bike, or drive to three locations within a 5-mile radius, covering windmills and their uses from 1880-2012. Additional activities include tours of a furnished caboose, visit a 1950's farmhouse and farm with live animals and kids' activities. There will be oldies music in the upper barn with keyboard and singing. The Kiwanis and Lions Food Wagons will be on hand. The gift shop will be open. The first 100 kids will receive a free old fashioned pinwheel. The entire event is free.



Begin your tour at any one of three places: 1) Railroad Depot Museum 402 N. Ann Arbor St; 2) Braun Farm 1995 W. Bemis Rd; 3) Rentschler Farm Museum 1265 E. Michigan Ave. For information call 734-429-9621 email: burroak50@comcast.net

Around the County

Cobblestone Farm Market

Every Tuesday • 4-7PM

June 19- November 20, 2012

The Cobblestone Farm Market is a partnership between the surrounding neighborhood and the Cobblestone Farm Association. This market, which features organic, Michigan-grown produce, is committed to encouraging community and healthy living through healthy food access.

Market is in Buhr Park

West of Cobblestone Farm between Packard Road and the tennis courts
email: jeannine@wetmeadow.org



Lost Ypsilanti

Tuesday-Sunday 2-5 PM

July 15 through September 3, 2012

The Museum Advisory Board of the Ypsilanti Historical Society sponsors a "Lost Ypsilanti" exhibit each year featuring people, places, and things that once existed in our City.

Ypsilanti Historical Museum & Archives

220 N. Huron Street, Ypsilanti
734-482-4990

www.YpsilantiHistoricalSociety.org



Drawing by Michael Klement

WASHTENAW HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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What's in a Name? Find out at the Museum on Main Street this Summer

Using treasured artifacts from our collection,
this exhibit tells some of the stories behind the people
and events that shaped this area.

CURRENT RESIDENT OR

Check out our new exhibit at the Museum on Main Street

What do you think about when you drive down your street? Turn onto a county road? Walk down the historic streets of Washtenaw county's downtowns? Do you give thought to the name of the street you traverse, and what the story is behind that person or place? The exhibit "What's in a name? Streets, Roads & Stories of Washtenaw County" tells a variety of stories about the history and people of Washtenaw County. Visitors will see rare and treasured artifacts related to the county's earliest and most prominent residents. **The exhibit is open now and runs through September 10, 2012.**

**500 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor
at the corners of Beakes, E. Kingsley and N. Main Street**

For more information or to schedule a visit, please call
734-662-9092 or email **wchs-500@ameritech.net**.
Hours are 12 Noon - 4PM on Saturday and Sunday or by
appointment. Groups are welcome and if you see a
white van in the parking lot during the week, stop in!

www.WashtenawHistory.org



Streets, Roads and Stories in Washtenaw County