

Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BAD HABITS: DRINKS, DRUGS, AND DRUGS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORY

By Diana Mankowski

Our newest exhibit at the Museum on Main Street is the collaborative effort of two WCHS board members and a team of University of Michigan students. It is put on in conjunction with the University's College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Research Theme Semester "Hooked: Addiction, Society, Culture" and the UM Substance Abuse Research Center. It runs from February 4-April 29, 2012.

The exhibit tells a history of alcohol and drugs in the culture and industry of Washtenaw County. The county, Ann Arbor in particular, has hosted a number of notable events in the history of mind- and body-altering substances—Temperance crusader Carrie Nation's visit, performances by John Lennon and other rock acts in support of John Sinclair's efforts to legalize marijuana, and the opening (and eventual closing) of a Pfizer research facility—each of which finds its place in the exhibit.

Yet, the display also shows how Washtenaw County's history of drugs and alcohol is part of a larger, national story—one where Prohibition closed saloons and led to bootlegging and alcohol raids; where drug stores and

(Continued on page 3)



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This exhibit is a collaboration with the University of Michigan LSA Research Theme Semester titled: "Hooked: Addiction, Society, Culture" in conjunction with the UM Substance Abuse Research Center and the Washtenaw County Historical Society – Museum on Main Street.

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 – Achieving a Vision

While the Mission Statement is printed in every edition of *Impressions*, our Vision Statement is seldom seen in print and probably unknown even to many members. A vision, however, is that guiding statement that says this is what we are ultimately striving to achieve—it's the long run view of what the Society will become. So, *The Vision: Washtenaw County Historical Society is recognized as a valued resource of local history.* It may not sound audacious enough initially but, if achieved, it says that our Society would be recognized, respected and called upon by every area citizen engaged in any aspect of local history.

Certainly we are partway there. Daily there are phone calls, emails and letters which Pauline Walters, Corresponding Secretary, long-standing board member and past president, provides an initial response and then engages nearly (it seems) the entire community (both members and non-members) in coming up with answers. Emails fly back and forth by scores on each inquiry. Invariably the answer is found or, minimally, the inquiring party is provided with the highest probability path to follow in their research.

Achieving a vision is a long process. It takes people like Pauline, other board members present and past, employees, Society members and the countless community members who have engaged in the preservation and presentation of area history.

Les Loomans



Washtenaw County Historical Society

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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

Exhibit: Bad Habits: Drinks, Drags and Drugs in Washtenaw County History, February 4-April 29

Check us out, on the web and



www.WashtenawHistory.org

New Class on Local Architecture Starts this March at WCC

A new class on the history of architecture and architects in Washtenaw County will be taught this winter by Grace Shackman as part of Washtenaw Community College's Lifelong Learning program.

Unlike her spring and fall classes that are half walking tours, this one will be taught entirely in the classroom. Not only will this be pleasanter in a month when the weather is still iffy, but it will allow the use of examples from all around the county.

Taught in four sessions, March 20, 22, 27, 29, 7 PM-9PM, the classes will range from cobblestone to Mid-Century Modern buildings. Vernacular styles will be studied as well as specific architects including Gordon Lloyd, Albert Kahn, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Churches, U-M buildings, and private homes will be examined.

To register: go to WCC's Lifelong Learning website and ask for classes on architecture or follow the directions in WCC's winter catalogue. If you have questions, contact Grace at gmshackman@comcast.net.

2012 WCHS Programs Begin

Six free monthly programs are a WCHS membership benefit. Our first program for 2012 is a Book Talk and Signing with Carol E. Mull on Sunday, February 19 at The Pittsfield Township Administration Building, 6201 Michigan Ave. (at Platt Road) in Ann Arbor. See the back page for more information. Our November 2011 Talk was in Chelsea, see pages 4-5. News about the March program is on page 6.



New exhibit, continued from page 1

pharmacies made big money in the nineteenth century selling "magic cure-alls" that eventually became subject to regulation and professionalization; where smoking, an act that once seemed nearly universal, was recently banned on the University campus; and where D.A.R.E. programs teach kids to "Just Say No."

Included in the exhibit are a number of artifacts from the WCHS collection such as medicine bottles from historic local pharmacies, memorabilia

from local bars, and recipe books with popular cure-alls.

Historical photographs, posters, news articles, and documents will also be on display along with a chance for visitors to include their own memories of bar culture in the county. Help us collect a record of your favorite local watering holes, past and present.

The Exhibit is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 Noon to 4:00 PM and during the week by appointment. Call ahead to 734-662-9092 and we will be happy to have you stop in to view the exhibit.

Special thank you to Exhibit Contributors, Students and Vendors

Dawn Farm, Ypsilanti
Grafaktari, Ann Arbor
Impress (Ann Arbor Saline Rd)
Materials Unlimited, Ypsilanti
Pittsfield Township Historical Society
Jim Rees
City of Saline Police Department
UM College of Literature, Science & the Arts
UM Substance Abuse Research Center

Jackie Bradley
Emily Riippa
Rebecca Roundtree
Jessica May Oyler
Ryan Vanderwoude

For a schedule of events associated with the UM LSA Research Theme Semester, visit the UM Substance Abuse Research Center website at www.sitemaker.umich.edu/umsarc/lsa_research_theme_semester

Renew Your membership, Join the WCHS or Shop Online!

You can renew and pay for your annual membership or make donations and buy books online. Your credit card payment is made through PayPal, the most widely used method to securely submit payments online. Renew, join or shop at www.WashtenawHistory.org

A Conversation in Chelsea About Cooking Ephemera

Reported by Beverly Willis

The Society had our last program of 2011 on Sunday, November 20, 2011 at the Chelsea Retirement Community Theater in Chelsea, Michigan.

It was a fun and casual conversation between two friends who volunteer with the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive (JBLCA) at the Clements Library. Phil Zaret shared his experiences of reading through thousands of hand-written diaries and manuscripts for culinary references to create a searchable one-of-a-kind database. Joanne Nesbit shared an overview about cookbooks and what they can tell us about our history.

Together, they presented an insider's view of the incredible collection of culinary ephemera (paper collectibles, related to food) at the Longone Culinary Archive. The collection contains over 10,000 items dating back to the first half of the 19th century and extends to the middle of the 20th century.

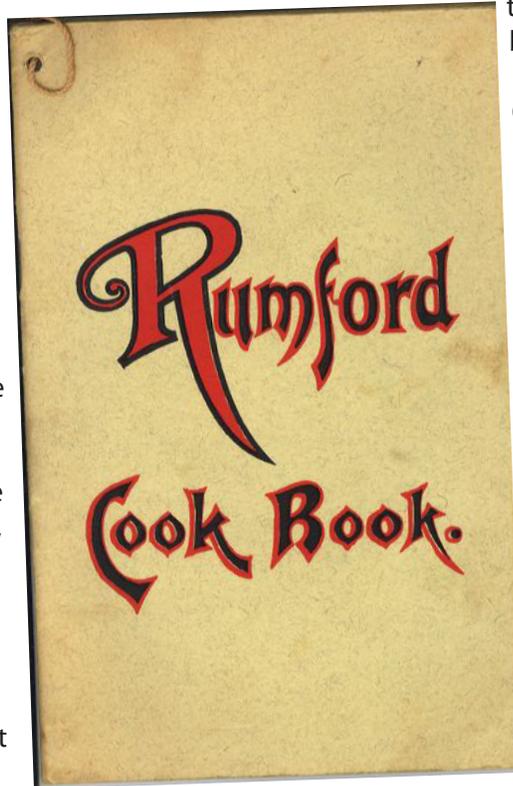
Nesbit spends one afternoon a week volunteering at the Clements Library working on the history of culinary practices. What she has learned as a volunteer is what a cookbook can tell you. Cookbooks can tell you about the economic situation at the time it was written or published. You can also learn a lot by the types of foods that are used in the recipe, and how many people it would serve. For example when large families were living together, you did not bake one loaf of bread at a time you did four or six loaves depending on the size of the family.

Cookbooks can tell you when commercial canning came about based on the ingredients in the recipes.

People used to sun-dry peaches or apple slices and now we have electric dehydrators. Cookbooks tell us about the changes in the technology of food preservation. Frozen foods started out as single items and then morphed into a frozen dinner and now back to specialty frozen single items like lasagne.

Nesbit brought several cookbooks with her for the talk and passed them around the audience. Many found a recipe or two that brought back a pleasant memory of our own. She began with describing the early cookbooks that were black and white paper pamphlets. Several of these contained items related to the marketing of food and medicine to children and their parents. Early packaged medicines and cough syrup they were advertising often contained alcohol, cocaine and morphine.

Later, they were printed in color, the illustrations were much different and photographs were included. One of the most famous books was put out by the Rumford Company (Baking Powder). A replica was passed around for people to see and pictured here. An original is at the Clements. And for immigrants, cookbooks were often printed in their native language on one page and English on the other.



Cookbooks tell us when it became popular for transporting foodstuffs around the country. Trains were now able to bring strawberries from California to the east, and bring lobsters from Maine, to the west coast. You can learn about the history of a culture through its recipes. The old ones are intriguing because they don't always give all of the ingredients. Nesbit has discovered some recipes will have all of the ingredients but it doesn't tell how much of each one. It tells you to make a batter and then you add as much flour as you think it takes to make a good cake batter. Then it didn't tell you what size pan to use or what the oven temperature should be or how to build the fire to bake the cake.

Cookbooks are also beautiful to look at. As the Mexican cookbook was passed around without really knowing the language you could look at the pictures and the words and begin to figure out what it is and how to do it.

Zaret has also worked with Longone who donated a huge collection of material related to American food to the library. In 1999, she began the process of cataloging it. It is a major culinary archive. Zaret volunteered in 2002 to help catalog this enormous collection food history and Jan told him about the manuscript culinary project. He met the manuscript

Continued next page

Cooking Ephemera, continued

curator who needed someone to read through the Clements manuscript collection and find food references. Clements Library has several thousand collections of letters, correspondence, journals, diaries, hand-written shipping manifests, and all kinds of stuff hand written by real people throughout American history. This was stuff your cousin or grandmother wrote, all one of a kind and only at the Clements.

Zaret began his work with the Civil War and Clements has the premiere collection of Civil War material in the world, probably 200-300 collections.

Zaret began reading the manuscripts but it was six months before he found anything resembling a recipe. He discovered that in real peoples lives, food was just a part of life and the cooking process was not necessarily something they shared.

He discovered in reading letters from women, their main preoccupation was clothing and they talked about it in amazing detail. He found letters that went on for pages about how they made a collar and illustrated it with several tiny drawings. A food reference would be "we had dinner, we had a pot roast".

He has been cataloging this material for nine years, eight hours a day, five days a week and has written over 92,000 records. Each record represents an individual letter and the food words become a record that forms a searchable database. He has read 750 collections of material written by three to four thousand different people and you can tell a lot from this collection of people. Its almost like over-hearing people's conversations. Participating in these real people's lives became fascinating.

Nesbit's work with the Culinary Archive deals with professionally produced commercial material mostly in the 20th century. Zaret deals with the average person in the 19th century and earlier and their private communications.

The two archives are unique in that you get a complete view of food, you know what they thought and did, what they ate and how they cooked. Zaret has found a few handwritten recipes and the first was from the 1830s, soon after people began writing down recipes and communicating them to each other.

By the 20th century, cookbooks and recipe exchanges became more common. The basic American diet had lots of meat and starches. Two-thirds of the recipes have been desserts, cakes, biscuits and puddings. About 1850 someone asked in one of the manuscripts, "Why do we want sauce? it masks the flavor."

The Manuscript Division contains favorite recipes from the 19th century in handwritten booklets. Phil shared one of his favorite stories about the Puffer sisters. Mary Sophia, Alice and another sister, Gertrude (1881-1970), who opened a roadside tearoom along old Route 1 in Nobleboro, Maine, based on the premise that "if each family here would make its own specialty and offer it for sale in our little community, we could all combine to create a successful food business." The Nobleboro Community Kitchen operated with great success for three seasons. They wrote a manuscript cookbook, typed it but it never got published. It tells their family history from 1775 and about their restaurant. It is at the Clements.



Joanne Nesbit and Phil Zaret

Researchers who have used the database Zaret is creating find it extremely valuable. The average handwritten letter is hard to read and even good handwriting can take 10 times longer to read than the typed word and up to 100 times longer if the handwriting is poor. Sometimes it takes several people to read and agree on the transcription of a letter.

Zaret believes that when he transcribes a manuscript or creates a food record it is one of the most important contributions he can make. This database allows scholars to maximize their efficiency in available research time. The *Culinary References Food and Society Database* is the only database of its kind in the world. The data will be extracted in a format that will be available to the public in the future.

The program concluded with the readings from a Civil War soldier's diary about the types of food they were getting and how it was – not very good. The talk was followed by questions and answers from the audience where many personal memories were shared. One attendee recalled his mother making up to twenty loaves of bread at a time, every week for a family of eight, and just how good the house smelled that day.

WCHS Endowment Fund News

The Society was very honored to receive a generous endowment fund gift in honor of Elizabeth Christine Wurster (February 9, 1919-August 8, 2009), daughter of Carl V. and Anna Jane Henby Wurster.

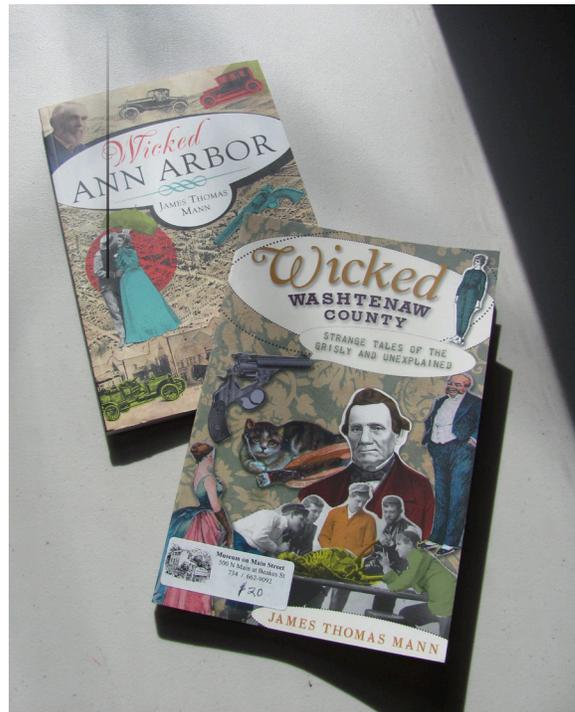
Elizabeth graduated from University High School, the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940 and University of Michigan Business MBA in 1942. She worked for Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and returned to Ann Arbor in 1992.

A gift like this has a very significant impact on the mission and work of the Washtenaw County Historical Society. Our mission is to educate and inspire our community to engage in the preservation and presentation of area history. Endowment fund gifts ensure the preservation of our community history will continue. They support the work of enriching our collections and keeping that history accessible for our citizens. They provide the foundation for maintaining the Society's greatest asset, the Museum on Main Street. We thank you for remembering the society in honor of Elizabeth C. Wurster.

WCHS Program – March 18

Discover what lurks in the shadows. Washtenaw County has a dark and sordid history, filled with unexplained murders and vicious crimes. Join local historian and storyteller James Mann on Sunday, March 18, 2012, location to be determined. He will recount the murders, planned disappearances and strange happenings around the county

The WCHS Gift Shop has copies of both of his books available for purchase at \$20 each. Call 734-662-9092 to reserve your copies.



Impressions by Email

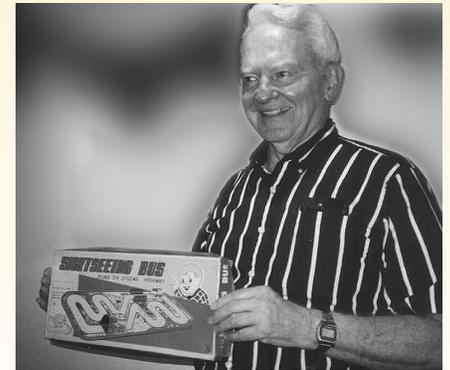
If you would like to receive your copy of the newsletter electronically as a full color PDF please let us know by email: wchs-500@ameritech.net

What's on your mind?

Do you have an idea, suggestion or comment about *Impressions*? Please feel free to share it with us, email the editor at wchs-1000@ameitech.net

We Remember Past Friends

Each WCHS board member makes a unique contribution that becomes part of the Society's history. In 2011 we lost three very special **Friends of History**:



Ralph Beebe was the recent past vice-president in charge of planning and coordinating presenters and locations for WCHS monthly programs. He was deeply committed to showcasing our local history in an informative and enjoyable manner. His vintage toy demonstration at the 1999 Holiday exhibit was a star attraction. *WCHS board service: 1999-2011.*

Lucille Fisher was an active member of the WCHS and served two terms as Recording Secretary. In 1984, a proposed new combined constitution and by-laws for the Society was approved by members at the annual meeting. Lucille Fisher and Pat Austin spearheaded the committee. Many changes were approved including merging the Program duties into the vice-president's duties. *WCHS board service: 1984-2000.*

Marjorie Hepburn lived in the Chelsea area all of her life and was very active in the Chelsea Historical Society and Washtenaw County History. She and Lucille served on the WCHS board together for six years. *WCHS board service: 1989-1994.*

History Programs & Events Around the County

The Washtenaw County Historical Consortium is a volunteer organization representing 27 museums, libraries, and historical attractions in and around Washtenaw County, Michigan. Member organizations can post their events directly to the online calendar and we will list as many as we can here. For more information see www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium

Kempf House

Open House Sundays

March 11, 18, & 25, 1-4 PM Visit this 1853 Greek Revival house, home of a musical German-American family; furnished with Victorian antiques including Ann Arbor's first grand piano, an 1877 Steinway. Admission free, donations appreciated.

Wednesday Noon Lectures

12 Noon-1 PM Kempf House
\$1: members, \$2: non-members.

March 7 *Keweenaw National Historical Park – Planning and Restoration*

March 14 *A History of the Dairy Industry in Michigan*

March 21 *Old Ann Arbor Postcards, Part II*

March 28 *What's It Worth? Buying and Selling Antiques*

KEMPf HOUSE MUSEUM

312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor

Bentley Historical Library

A Decade of Dissent: Student Protests at the University of Michigan in the 1960s

During the 1960s, college campuses around the country became sites of fervent change. Universities were no longer insular ivory towers but rather hot spots of student political activity. The University of Michigan was no different, and found itself on the forefront of this student activism. Admission free, Open Monday - Friday, 9AM-5PM, Saturday, 9 AM-12:30 PM.

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

**150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor
734-764-3482**

Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County

Sunday, February 26, 1:30-4:30PM

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium,

5305 Elliott Dr. (off E. Huron River Dr. at Clark Rd.). Use parking lot P. The lecture and class are free and open to the public, bring a friend! For more information contact: Marcia McCrary, President (734) 483-2799, gsbcmi@gmail.com

THE PROGRAM will feature Drew Smith presenting "Bring 'Em Back to Life: Developing an Ancestor Profile." **THE LECTURE** "Researching the Miltons" also presented by Drew Smith. A case study presents the research path and records used to learn about untimely deaths of Gennie and Gloria Milton in April 1940. This case study was the basis for an episode of "Down Under: Florida" at RootsTelevision.com, and the basis for an article in Family Chronicle magazine titled "The Milton Family Tragedy."

Winter Evening on Cobblestone Farm

Sunday, March 11, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

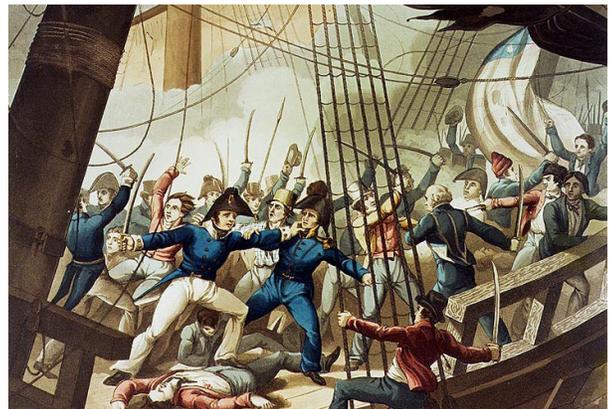
Step back in time to a slower paced era as you experience the delicious smell of cooking over the woodstove and see the historic Ticknor-Campbell house lit by candlelight. Costumed volunteers will offer tours of the house and a glimpse into traditional domestic winter activities. Don't forget to look for that perfect item in the gift shop. **COBBLESTONE FARM**, 2781 Packard, Ann Arbor, 734-794-7120. gtaylor10@comcast.net

The War of 1812: A Bicentennial Exhibition

February 27 - June 1, 2012

The War of 1812 has sometimes been called a forgotten conflict, one that resolved none of the issues that brought it about. This second confrontation between the United States and Great Britain did, in fact, have a considerable influence on the future development of the country as well as its relationships with Canada, Native Americans, and Europe. The bicentennial of the war of 1812 begins this year. To mark the events of 1812-1814, the Clements Library will present an exhibition drawing on the rich array of primary sources about this conflict found in its collections.

WILLIAM L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY 909 S. University Avenue, Ann Arbor.





Drawing by Michael Klement

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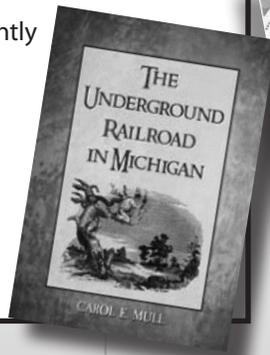
THE WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY – 2012 PROGRAMS

The Underground Railroad in Michigan

Sunday, February 19, 2012 • 2-4 PM

**Pittsfield Township Administration Building
6201 Michigan Ave. (at Platt Road) Ann Arbor**

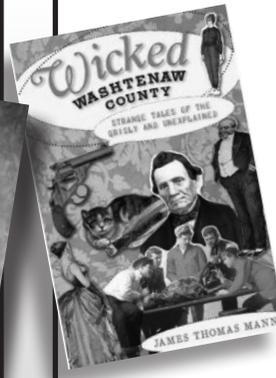
Drawing on the research for her recently published book, *The Underground Railroad in Michigan*, Carol E. Mull, will present a program detailing the history of Underground Railroad activities in the state and this area. Ms. Mull will take questions and have books available for purchase and signing.



Wicked Washtenaw County

Sunday, March 18, 2012 • 2-4 PM

**Bentley Historical Library
1150 Beal Avenue • Ann Arbor**



Washtenaw County has a dark and sordid history, filled with unexplained murders and vicious crimes. Join local historian and storyteller James Thomas Mann as he recounts the murders, planned disappearances and strange happenings around the county. The WCHS Gift Shop has copies of both of his books. Reserve your copies, see page 6.

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***Bring a
Friend!***



For information call **734-662-9092**
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