

● Winter 2015

Impressions

NEWSLETTER • WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A True Friend of History

In 1968, Ann Arbor News reporter Liz Elling wrote a series of articles about the growth of Ann Arbor from a small college town to a bustling metropolis. She identified two groups that contributed to the progress of the city by looking to its heritage: The Washtenaw County Historical Society and the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission. Pauline Walters (1928-2014) was committed to both organizations.

She was heavily involved with the WCHS's Museum on Main Street where you could usually find her upstairs working on things like the genealogy of old (and new) Ann Arbor families. Her office was the hub of historical inquiries, research, photograph and document scanning and discovery.

Pauline loved "this grand old house" at 500 N. Main Street as she often called the Museum. She donated a new cable hanging system for our exhibits and continually donated new bulbs and plants for the garden.

By 2014, she had already given more than three decades of time, expertise and resources to the community.

Pauline and Ralph Beebe, along with First Martin Corporation, sponsored the Uptown Theater wall display as part of the Downtown Ann Arbor Historical Street Exhibit Program. Pauline was also a member of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County and donated many of her papers, books in 2007 and 2009.

She served on the Board of Directors of the Kempf House Center for Local History for several years. She was also involved with the Alva Gordon Sink Alumnae Group, was past President of the Sara Browne Smith Alumnae Group and for many years was on the Board of the League of Women Voters - Ann Arbor.

Pauline received the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission's 25th Anniversary Preservationist of the Year Award in 2013 'for 35 years of service to the preservation community'. One of her favorite projects was working on the Geddes letters with volunteers Sally Silvennoinen and Roger Stutestman on the John & William Geddes Letters. See page two for Roger's reflections and the remarks of our president, Les Loomans.

By Bev Willis and David Ferguson

Memorial on January 10th

The family of Pauline Walters and the WCHS invite you to a Memorial on Saturday afternoon, January 10th, 2015, at 2 PM on the 3rd floor of the Michigan League, 911 N. University Avenue in Ann Arbor. Complimentary valet parking will be provided. Please join us to hear and share reflections, refreshments and remember the enthusiasm and light that Pauline brought to this community. For more information email wchs-500@ameritech.net or call the WCHS at 734-662-9092. The Museum will be closed on January 10.

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

WCHS

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Impressions

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WINTER MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Washtenaw County Historical Society lost our ultimate volunteer board of director's member with the passing of Pauline Walters in late November. Pauline served for many years as Corresponding Secretary and membership Chair. She served as President of the Society from 1991–1993 and 1999–2004.

Pauline supported the Society not only with her keen and insightful input, vast knowledge of the history of the citizens of Washtenaw County, literally thousands of volunteer hours responding to phone calls and emails, sending thank-yous to members and contributors, but, she also very generously provided financial support particularly focused on operation of Museum on Main Street.

Although the Museum on Main Street was officially open only Saturday and Sunday afternoons for viewing exhibits, if Pauline's car was in the parking lot (and it was almost every weekday), the front door was unlocked and she would greet and show around anyone who ventured in. She will be greatly missed.

Leslie Loomans, President



Impressions of a Friend – Pauline Walters

In May of 2010, I made a phone call that had a great - and surprising - impact on my life. The call was to the Historical Society and the person who took the call was Pauline Walters. I indicated my interest in volunteering there and in a crisp and business-like manner she got the information she needed and asked that I stop by and talk with her.

Our first face to face conversation revealed a Pauline who was not at all crisp and business-like. Her genuine warmth made conversation easy and it was made even easier by our both being history majors at the U of M. It was arranged that I'd come to the Museum and help out for several hours two days a week. Together we worked on mailings, updating membership lists, filing, and other office tasks... and then came "the letters."



"The Letters" are Online

www.aadl.org/geddes_letters

Anyone at all aware of the Historical Society's programs knows about the correspondence between the Geddes brothers in the first half of the 19th century. The Society had access to the letters and it was Pauline's desire - indeed, passion - to make them available to the public via a website. She personally funded the effort and gave her own time and labor to the task.

It was an ambitious project - not for the faint of heart. Pauline, Sally Silvennoinen, and I spent many, many hours decyphering and transcribing the Geddes letters. I'll always remember those moments when Pauline and I struggled to figure out what some of those markings were... detective work in which Pauline was a delightful and helpful partner. She knew how to use computer technology and I knew archaic words. She was Holmes and I was Watson.

"Friend" is a very inadequate word. It certainly isn't sufficient to describe the place Pauline had in my life. She was indeed a friend, but she was also an older, wiser sister, a source of generous and caring support, a wonder of a conversational partner, and a witty commentator on the absurdities of society... and she was one smart cookie! Pauline was the heart and soul of the Historical Society; she was loved, and she'll be deeply missed. *By Roger Stutesman*

The cover photo was taken by Susan Wineberg during the 2014 Annual Meeting at Sutherland-Wilson Farm in Pittsfield Township

New Acquisitions

• **Pistol, railroad spike and small brush** dug up from a privy in the area of WestWilliam and 4th St., now a UM parking lot—from Kenji Yano.

• **6 watercolors:** 4 Ann Arbor scenes, 1 Dexter scene and 1 Chelsea scene—from the estate of Daniel Bradt, an artist from Ypsilanti.

• **1842 Bible** presented to Willam P. Cole by his sister, Elizabeth H. Cole, in Ann Arbor, June 12, 1842—from Nancy Ford.

• **Three Kemnitz prints:** the Michigan Union, the Obstetrics building, part of the old Catherine Street Hospital Complex and the Cutting Apartments on the corner of S. State and Monroe –from Charles Thrall.

• **Old West Side,** Ann Arbor, Michigan environmental survey of a neighborhood conducted by Richard G. Wilson and Edward J. Vaughn—from Marlene Donoghue.

• **Shoe brush** J.F. Wuerth Co., The store known as Fiegel’s was started by J. Fred Weurth in 1900. He built the Orpheum theater in 1914 and the Wuerth theater in 1918.

• **Sky Blue Pink with Orange Polka Dots,** by James B. Parker & Thelma Wheeler Tucker—from James Parker.



What’s in Your Attic?

• **Riding boots and shape-retainer inserts** found in the attic at 1555 Washtenaw—from Holde Borcherts.

How you can Contribute

Email curator Judy Chrisman with a description of your items. Send it to judychr@aol.com.



Current Exhibit Features a Fan that was in the hands of a Direct Descendant

On June 2, we had a visit from the 4th great granddaughter of Ann Allen, Mary Sommerville. She is a descendant of Ann and her first husband, William McCue. She knew about the Bible Testament but not the fan, so she was delighted and surprised to see both. Mary has been to Virginia and saw the home of Thomas McCue

and Ann’s grave. You can see a photo of that home, the Bible Testament and the fan at our current exhibit. For more exhibit information see page 5.

Washtenaw Wanderers

There were two colorful flags at the entrance of the Museum on Main Street on Saturday December 13. One marked the starting point for the Washtenaw Wanderers Walking Club who followed a 10K/5K trail through downtown Ann Arbor and the U/M main campus. This event was part of a nationwide effort by the parent organization, the American Volkssport Association, to have as many members and guests walking simultaneously throughout the country during its “Time to Walk” Event. The reason for this event was the unusual combination of numbers that occurred on that date: 10-11-12-13-14 (the walk started at 10:11 on December 13, 2014). Thank you to Dorothy Steedle for reaching out to the Museum and to the more than 20 walkers who participated.

TROLLEY GARDEN UPDATE: The interurban tracks are being cleaned and sealed. The railroad ties are on location and plans are moving ahead for an installation in the museum garden in 2015. If you are interested in supporting this project with volunteer hours, a donation or in-kind service or artifact, please contact Anita Toews at toews@aol.com

The Museum on Main Street



500 N. Main Street (at Beakes & E. Kingsley) Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Exhibit open now through February 1

“The Family Bible: Art • History • Function”

Museum Hours: Saturdays & Sundays, 12 Noon–4 PM

Also open by appointment, groups are welcome.

Call 734-662-9092 or email: wchs-500@ameritech.net

The Washtenaw County Historical Society

P.O. Box 3336 • Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

WashtenawHistory.org



facebook.com/washtenawhistory

Ypsilanti Citizens Celebrate Michigan's First One Hundred Years



(L-R) Mr. and Mrs. Undgrot, Mrs. Saunders, Mrs. Pliny Skinner. 2nd Row: Mrs. Stadmiller, Mrs. Jack Willoughby, Mr. Weir, Mrs. Weir (seated), Mrs. Van Ellie (unknown), Mrs. Marietta Bentley, Mrs. Burrough, Mrs. Burrell, Miss Hardy, Mrs. Hutton, Mrs. G. Moorman, Gertrude Murray, Mrs. G. Ross, Mrs. Joslyn, Mrs. E. Frain, Jack Willoughby, Mrs. Spencer Davis, G. Moorman, Mr. Haig.

Ypsilanti citizens dressed in 19th century costume on the steps of the Ladies Literary Club at 218 N Washington Street in celebration of the State of Michigan's Centennial in 1837. During the 1930s Emil Lorch, then head of the University of Michigan Architecture program took a great interest in the Clubhouse. He called it "one of the best examples of Greek Revival Architecture in the entire country". The 1933 survey documents and commentary are placed in the Library of Congress and online at loc.gov

Are you interested in books on local history?

Have you ever wondered how many books can fit into a space that is about 6x10'? We can tell you over 125 titles about local history line the walls and shelves of the Gift Shop at the Museum on Main Street. You can find the latest works from area authors like James Parker, Grace Shackman, Russell Bidlack, Wystan Stevens, Brenda Bently, James Mann, Susan Nenadic, Patrick McCauley and Susan Wineberg. We also have the latest Arcadia book *Downtown Ann Arbor* by Patti Smith. *Downtown Ann Arbor* is a just published book that offers a glimpse into a not-so-distant past full of the people who built one of the most thriving downtowns in the State of Michigan.

In addition to books, there over 120 other items such as post cards, maps, prints, coffee cups, knickknacks, ear rings, bracelets, children's books, cozy throws and even a Hummel. Proceeds from the Gift Shop sales support the Museums programs. The Gift Shop is open during exhibit hours and by appointment. You can also purchase many of the items online at washtenawhistory.org. If you have questions, email wchs-500@ameritech.com. *By John Kilar*

Tea on the High Seas

This bone china tea set was used on the RMS Queen Mary - once the grandest ocean liner in the world. It will be featured in the exhibit "Tea" at Zingerman's Coffee Company and ZingTrain, opening January 26 at 3723 Plaza Dr., #5, Ann Arbor. For information email: director@dinnerwaremuseum.org



New Winter Exhibits!

ANNARBORDISTRICTLIBRARY 343 S. Fifth Avenue
January 17– February 26

"50 Ideas for the Future" The Huron Valley chapter of the American Institute of Architects celebrates its 50th anniversary with this exhibit of 50 buildings throughout five counties, including Washtenaw, that helped shape our community. And there are 50 ideas for the future. These buildings and a list of their architects, history, and significant notes about the buildings have also been placed in an app called "Field Trip". This app alerts you to the fact that you are in proximity to one of the buildings and you can stop, look and read a brief paragraph. *Ann Arbor District Library Downtown, 3rd floor.*

Lurie Terrace 50th Anniversary Art Exhibit Residents of Lurie Terrace Senior Center are exhibiting art works in a variety of media, including paintings, drawings, ceramics, photographs and quilts, to honor the 50th Anniversary of Lurie Terrace. Included will be a painting by Shata Ling, whose inspiration resulted in the planning and building of Lurie Terrace. *Ann Arbor District Library Downtown: Lower Level Display Cases and Multi-Purpose Room.*

The Family Bible: Art - History - Function

For the county's frontier farmers the Family Bible was a most treasured object. The Bible was the most printed, distributed, and read book in the United States through the 19th century, and nearly every family owned a Bible for education and devotion. Many Bibles contain the county's earliest civic and genealogical records, offering elements of family history for those who settled Washtenaw County.



From Ann Allen's Bible Testament to Anna Bach's Tussy Mussy, this exhibit offers a glimpse into the pasts of some of our early families and their stories. Learn about the history and significance of the family Bible as part of the material culture of Washtenaw County through the stories of some of the county's prominent families. The family Bible was a most treasured object for Americans in the 1800s. They were put on display in the home as pieces of art and passed down as a cherished family heirloom. The third room features more Bibles from the collection, Christmas trees and a kids table where they can sit and read some of the classic holiday books and stories. This is a family-friendly exhibit, free and open to the public.



See a tiny History of the Bible from 1847 and one of the more unusual Bibles in the collection that is also a purse.



Imagine holding the billfold, writing case, canteen and small Bible carried by Frank Kingsley during the Civil War. The Bible was a gift from his mother.

Explore Bibles in different languages, genealogy pages and see some of the family treasures that people tucked into the pages.

Open Now through February 1 on Saturdays and Sundays, 12 Noon - 4 PM
Weekdays by appointment. Groups are welcome, call 734-662-9092
or email wchs-1000@ameritech.net

Arzell to Ann Arbor: Working Class German Immigrants

By Ellamary Joanne Kane

Ann Arbor's German immigrant population in the late 1800s and early 1900s has been well documented by local historian Grace Shackman and others. Estimates suggest that in the late 1800s almost 50% of the residents of Ann Arbor were of German heritage. While my family is of mixed Irish-German background, my relatives were part of Ann Arbor's German community, including my great grandparents, Adam (1843–1922) and Dorothea (Hahn) Ritz (1848–1920), who resided at 11 Traver Street (later to be renumbered 1137 Traver Street) from the early-1880s to their deaths. The house, located in the Broadway Historic District, was recently listed for sale, and I saw photos of the rooms where I played as a child in the 1940s. While much has been written about the prosperous and famous among the German immigrants living in Ann Arbor, my family was of a more modest background reflected in their home and other similar structures along Traver Street.

Adam and Dorothea Hahn Ritz

Adam Ritz was born in 1843 in Arzell, northeast of Frankfurt, Germany. He arrived in New York City aboard the ship *Borussia* on August 22, 1865, after debarking from Hamburg. Dorothea Hahn was born in Steinbach, a small town, northwest of Frankfurt and departed for the United States from Le Havre, France on the *Mercury*, debarking in New York City on May 20, 1864. She, like her husband, was part of the wave of German immigrants flooding New York City at that time.

Little is known of my great grandparent's life in New York City, as they do not show up on any of the traditional records, census, or city directories, used to track immigrants. I do know that they were married in Manhattan on September 22, 1867 at Holy Redeemer Roman Catholic Church, a traditional German Catholic Church. They had five children, Al (1868), Joseph (1870), Augustus (1872), Anna (1873), Marie (1876) all born in New York City.

Family lore, although undocumented, has Adam Ritz running a small cigar rolling firm, with four to five employees, that was shut down when one of his employees was found to have smallpox, a terrible scourge in the overcrowded working class neighborhoods of New York City. By the early 1870s, the Ritz family was on the move to Lucas County, Ohio, where they would reside for approximately 10 years while Adam worked on a variety of service related jobs including the railroad. While in Ohio, 3 more children, Elizabeth (1877), Adam (1878), Theresa (1882) were born.

It was the railroad work that brought Adam to Ann Arbor where he and his family, then consisting of his wife and 8 children, moved to in the early 1880's. The first documentation that I have of the family in Ann Arbor is when another son's birth, Antonio, was recorded in 1884 and their final child, George, was born in 1886. Also, in 1886, Adam and his children were listed in the Ann Arbor City Directory as living at 11 Traver Street.

Continued on page 7



Adam & Dorothea Ritz posing in the Kelley Photography Shop at 5 & 6 Huron St. The undated photograph is pre-1887 because the O. A. Kelley photography studio, at the Huron Street address, burned December 27, 1887 as reported in the *Ann Arbor Courier*.



The Ritz family in front of 1137 Traver Street.

Adam's main occupation, was working on the Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Northern Michigan Railroad as a section hand, then as a section foreman. This matched the similar working class occupations of his sons and neighbors. For a short time, starting in 1890, Dorthea ran a grocery store in the single story addition to the main house.

Adam continued to work in service related jobs, according to the listings I've checked in the Ann Arbor City Directories up to as late as 1917, when he was a watchman at the high school. He died in 1922 at 79 years of age having outlived his wife Dorothea by two years. Survivors included twenty-one grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. The home passed in 1922 to their daughter, Marie Ritz and her husband Edward Flynn upon the death of her father. She, her husband, and foster daughter Katherine Flynn, lived in 1137 Traver until selling the home to someone outside my family shortly after World War II.

As a small child in the 1940's, my family would drive from Detroit to visit our relatives living at 1137 Traver Street. We always brought a picnic basket of food for our lunch in Plymouth Park, a 1930's WPA project no longer existing.

The current photos of the home brought back vivid memories of playing in the neighborhood and home's interior. While it had running water in the 1940s, I was fascinated with hand operated water pump that still brought water to the kitchen sink.

Early House History

Little is known at this time about the early history of the home at 11 Traver Street. The construction date has been narrowed down, with the help of Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley, to be around 1866. The house first shows up in the aerial sketches of buildings of Ann Arbor in this year, but not in similar maps from 1853, 1856 or 1864.

The architectural characteristics of the house design and the facade, in particular, also support a construction date in the 1860s. In the historic district survey by the city, they noted that... "this Greek Revival (home) begins the concentration of older homes at the south end of Traver".

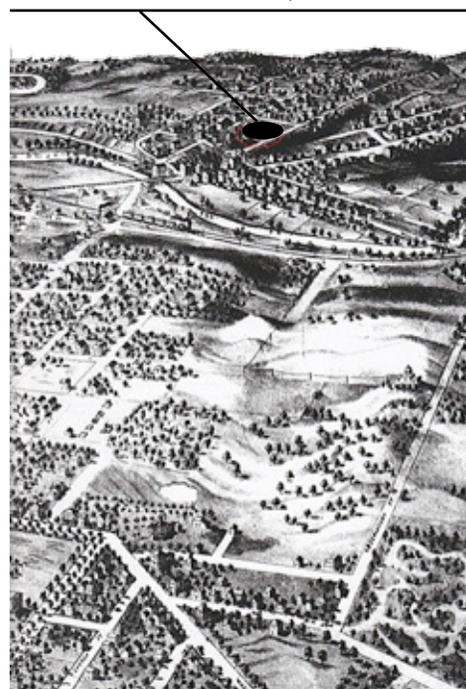


The exterior of 1137 Traver appears to have weathered the last 150 years, or so, relatively unscathed, aside from the installation of aluminum siding and door replacements. The grocery store was located in the one story section on the left. Photo by Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley November 2014.



Adam and Dorothea Ritz at the rear of 1137 Traver.

11 Traver St in this 1866 bird's eye view of Ann Arbor.



The author would love to hear from you!

Ellamary Kane is a member of the WCHS and resident of Midland, Michigan. She visited Ann Arbor many times as a young girl to see her relatives of German heritage on both sides of her family. She would like to thank to Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley for their generous assistance with the production of this article. She also appreciated Joe Findlay's editorial support. Ellamary would appreciate hearing from WCHS readers with additional knowledge of the Ritz or Lucas families in Ann Arbor. Email Jim Kane at jskane@verizon.net.

The Argus Corner

By Cheryl A. Chidester
Argus Museum Curator/WCHS



ACG members, Bob Kelly and Ron Norwood behind the Argus Table at the Michigan Photographic Historical Society Show and Sale that Conference participants get to attend.

The Argus Museum's biggest annual event, The Argus Collectors Group (ACG) Ann Arbor Conference was October 16-19th. Participants hailed from all around the country and Canada. The days were filled with exhibitions, presentations,

demonstrations, field trips, enjoyable meals and the camaraderie of attendees. On Saturday evening a sampling of some of the recently acquired artifacts of the Gambino Collection were displayed. The conference would not



2014 participants included (L-R) Milt Campbell and Richard Moore, who both worked in the Service Department, and Bob Mayer, who was employed by Argus 1957-1961.

be possible without the generosity of ACG members, museum volunteers, and local merchants who donated money, time and goods. This includes Mark O'Brien, Zingerman's Deli, Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary and Sandhill Crane Vineyards. The help and cooperation of the Washtenaw County Historical Society and other non-profit organizations also contributed to this year's success.

The Argus Museum is Often Graced with Visits by Former Argus Employees



Annabel Erskine with son Dean and daughter Bev

Recent guests include Annabel (Farmer) Erskine. Annabel inspected military sights, then cameras, from 1943 to 1949. Katherine (Katie) Keeton also recently visited the Museum. She was employed as a secretary to the company's Presidents and CEOs. Katie has participated in Museum's events in the past and has donated items to the museum's collections. This visit brought several boxes of Argus items, including a 25-year coin and a Profit Sharing Fund pin. Over the years, former Argus employees have contributed significantly to the collection.

The Museum Attracts Visitors of All Ages

Third and fourth grades classes from Summers-Knoll School were guests of the Argus Museum. They lined up to look through the cross-hairs of a M72, a Sherman Tank sight. They had studied photography and were interested in viewing Mark O'Brien's exhibition and learning more about the Argus Camera Company and the Museum.



As you may have guessed, the Argus Museum is a busy place – we are in need of volunteers and offer opportunities in several aspects of museum work such as conducting tours, participating in our oral history project, working with the collections, and helping design interactive displays. If you are interested in volunteering or have any other questions please email cchidester@onealconstruction.com.

The Argus Museum documents the history of the Argus Camera Company. It is located on the second floor of 535 W. William St, inside the Argus I Building. The museum is open M-F 9-5, or by appointment. Extended hours are available for special events. 734-769-0770.



The History of Hill Auditorium

In 1894, Professor Stanley and two other members of the University Musical Society met and decided that the campus lacked an adequate space for performances and convocations. Plans were drawn for a new auditorium in 1895. However, after showing the plans to numerous potential donors, no funding had been obtained by 1904. In that year, Regent Arthur Hill became interested in the project. In 1910, he bequeathed \$200,000 in his will toward construction of the building which would be named in his honor. Constructed on the site of the old Winchell House on North University Avenue, near State Street, the Auditorium was completed in 1913 at a cost of \$282,000 without equipment, and \$347,600 when fully equipped.

With a total floor space of 71,914 square feet, the main auditorium seated an audience of 4,300 in the balcony, gallery and ground floor. The stage itself could hold up to 300. The space was shaped like a parabola, for acoustic reasons, ensuring that each member of the audience experienced a similar volume and sound quality. A smaller recital and lecture hall in back of the second floor gallery could contain 400. This area housed the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments for several years. The Frieze Memorial Organ moved to the Hill Auditorium from University Hall in 1913. Although its name remained the same, the organ was replaced with a newer model in 1928. *Bentley Historical Library*

From the Catwalk to the Corridors

On Friday, October 17, more than 50 people gathered at the west entrance of Hill Auditorium for a guided tour of this cultural institution from Barry LaRue. He is the Senior Performance Hall Operations Manager of the University of Michigan and is responsible for the backstage activities at Hill Auditorium, Power Center, Rackham Auditorium and Mendelssohn Theatre.

We began the tour in the auditorium with a history of the building. Barry then gave us an insider's look at the workings of this amazing place from top to bottom. We were able to get an up close look at the Frieze Memorial Organ as it was lowered downstairs from the stage. We saw the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, and portrait gallery on the second floor. As we moved throughout the corridors of the building, Barry answered the many questions that people had along the way.

When we walked onto the stage of Hill Auditorium and looked out into the seats we sensed the emotional excitement that artists might experience before a performance. Barry talked about the shape of the space and sound quality it afforded.

The highlight was the trek to the second balcony and then even higher to the catwalk where he guided us to a point with a view of this cultural gem that took our breath away.



Early French Agriculture in Detroit

On Sunday, November 16 the Dexter Library was the site for Brian's talk about early French Agriculture in Michigan. More than two dozen people enjoyed this Power Point presentation and conversation. His style was so personal and friendly that it felt like we were talking amongst friends. Many of the images he shared are on display as part of a current exhibit at the UM Museum of Art (UMMA) that is open until January 18.

WCHS Vice president Jim Davis opened the program with a warm welcome and introduction of the guest speaker Brian Dunnigan. He is The William L. Clements Library's Associate Director and oversees its extensive collections of maps of the Americas. His particular interests in cartography are manuscript military maps and plans of the 18th and early 19th centuries, town and fortification plans, and the mapping of the Great Lakes.

The topic about agriculture during the French period in Detroit was particularly timely because of the discussion of urban agriculture in recent years.

Antoine de La Mothe-Cadillac founded Detroit in 1701. Agriculture was the primary business of most of the residents there. It was intended by Cadillac for it to be that way. There would only be a small number of traders and the large part of the population would farm. He wanted to establish a French settlement and colony on the Detroit River with a military garrison and French officials. He also wanted to attract Native Americans to settle nearby to create optimal trade for the French in the Great Lakes. He did not take into account the animosity between the different tribes and the impact that would have on his plans.

Once Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit was constructed in 1701, farmers planted winter wheat. It was the main crop for a number of years. The soil was fertile, the climate mild and considerable resources



RIVER VIEW OF DETROIT IN 1794. Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

existed, including large areas of cleared land and fresh water. Cadillac called it the earthly paradise of North America. By the 1740s there was a viable population of farmers in Detroit. In 1750 there were 483 residents (including 33 African and Native American slaves) and 1,050 acres under cultivation. In 1765 there were 801 residents and by 1776 there were 1500 residents in the city.

Ribbon Farms

By the end of the American revolution in 1783 there were 13,521 acres in cultivation along the Detroit river arranged in a ribbon pattern. They were on average 2 acres wide and 40 acres long. The benefits were farmers had access to water and keeping farm houses fairly close together was good security. For the first 30 years of Detroit's existence farmers lived in the fort fearing attacks from the Iroquois, working their farms during the day.

There was a general pattern of the houses and kitchen gardens being close to the river with orchards, crops, fields and pastures extending back where the ground was level and abounding with grass. The woodlots were at the very back. These long narrow ribbon farms had a great impact on the early and later growth of the city as it spread out in both directions east and west.

The Fire of 1805

For more than a century after it was founded by Cadillac, Detroit was a walled city of narrow streets, thatched roofs, houses and crowded buildings. This fed a devastating fire in 1805 that leveled the city in a few hours.

Some people moved across the river to Sandwich (Windsor), Ontario or to other nearby towns. But almost two thirds stayed nearby and helped rebuild the city. Governor Warren Hull and Judge Augustus B. Woodward devised a fireproof re-building plan with 120 foot avenues and lots of space for fire breaks. It was similar to Pierre Charles L'Enfant's design for Washington, D.C. Even today, Detroit's monumental avenues and traffic circles fan out in radial fashion from Campus Martius Park like spokes in a wheel.

Before the fire, the biggest ribbon farm was Cadillac's land. As Detroit shifted from French to British to American control, it became the King's land, then the public land. It ultimately became the area of donation lots for people who had lost their homes in the 1805 fire.

The talk was followed by many questions from the audience. Books and maps were available for viewing.

The Saints and History of St. Joseph Parish in Dexter

2014 marked the 175th Anniversary of the founding of St. Joseph Parish in Dexter. On Sunday, December 7, we were treated to a history of the Parish by Cindy Johnson, she is a secretary at the church and a member for 38 years. She talked about many of the changes that have been made to the interior of the church over the decades. She was assisted by Nita O'Brien, another parishioner, who passed around old framed pictures of the church and other objects associated with the church.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session and a tour of the church grounds, including the grotto. Guests enjoyed refreshments and further conversation in the basement. Each guest received a copy of *The Saints and History of St. Joseph Parish Dexter, MI*, a booklet on the history of the church. There is a copy available to read at the Museum on Main Street.

History of St. Joseph Parish

In 1840, when the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish built their small frame church building at the corner of Dexter-Townhall and Quigley Roads, on land donated by Mr. & Mrs. James Walsh, the Village of Dexter was growing. The railroad would arrive within a year, and Judge Dexter had commissioned Calvin Fillmore, President Millard Fillmore's brother, to build his home, Gordon Hall, just north of the Mill Pond. Fr. Thomas Cullen served the small mission parish of St. Joseph, as well as the parishes in Ann Arbor and Jackson. When Fr. Cullen returned to his home parish in 1852, St. Joseph Parish became a mission church of St. Mary, Marshall until 1854. In 1854 the Church was destroyed by fire. It was decided that the replacement church would be built in the village.

The cornerstone of the Dexter Church was laid in 1872, the steeple is 180 feet high. The statures began arriving in the 1880s. St. Joseph's is filled with beautifully crafted religious art.

The Cemetery

A small cemetery was soon established across the road from the original church. Today that church is gone and the last burial took place in 1910. Many tombstones and memorials were destroyed or lost; however, this cemetery was reclaimed and restored in 1980, when the remaining pieces of tombstones were arranged in the center of the old cemetery ground, and a plaque was erected "to preserve and to honor the memory of our ancestors," which you can visit today. There are records of the parishioners buried in that cemetery beginning in 1841.



Save these Dates for the Spring 2015 Programs!

The 2015 series begins on **Sunday March 15th** with a book talk and virtual walk around the "Architecture of Ann Arbor", with Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley. **Sunday, April 20th** features Dr. Jeffrey Jentzen, Washtenaw County Medical Examiner. On **Sunday, May 10th**, Fred Mayer will talk about the Central Campus Architecture and **Friday, May 15th** we'll take a tour of the Schembechler Museum and "The Big House". Members will receive the program series postcard with details beginning in late February. Call 734-662-9092.

The WCHS is always interested in your feedback Whether you receive your issues of *Impressions* by e-mail or home delivery we would love to hear from you. Please share any ideas and thoughts that you believe will enhance this quarterly publication. If you have suggestions for subjects you would like to read about, tell us. Call 734-662-9092 or email wchs-1000@ameritech.net.

2015 WCHS Membership Renewal

The Society appreciates your support, membership and program attendance. You are the reason this organization exists. Membership runs the calendar year and it's easy to join or renew online at www.washtenawhistory.org



Enjoy More History this Winter!



KELSEY MUSEUM
OF ARCHAEOLOGY

"Docent-Led Drop-In Gallery Tours"

Sundays, January 11 & 25, 2PM
434 South State St, Ann Arbor

Join us at the Upjohn Wing entrance on Maynard Street for a docent-led tour of the galleries. Among the museum's most significant holdings are 45,000 daily-life objects from the Graeco-Roman Egyptian town of Karanis, the largest in the world outside of the Cairo Museum. They have around 8,500 items of Parthian pottery, one of the largest outside Iraq.

Family Days

These programs at the Kelsey Museum are designed to teach children ages 5-12 about the ancient world through creative educational and hands-on activities. Contact Dawn Johnson at 734.764.9295 or check the calendar for information on specific programs and dates.
www.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHTENAW COUNTY

"Digital Archiving for Genealogists"

Sunday, January 25 - 1:30 PM

Education Center Auditorium at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital
5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan

This presentation covers the complete spectrum of capturing media from photos, books, home movies and audio recordings, creating computer files from the captured digital material, and archiving those files. Standards and equipment recommendations are covered. Emphasis will be placed on the best process to use to be successful. The meeting is free and open to everyone. The program will be presented by Mark Middleton, employed in the IT industry for over 20 years and has a Masters degree in Information Systems. The class following the presentation will be "**How to Determine if a Document is Trustworthy**", presented by Devan Donaldson, Ph.D. candidate at the U of M. For more information see the website- www.washtenawgenealogy.org or email info@washtenawgenealogy.org

2015

WASHTENAW COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

"The Forest in Winter"

Sunday, January 18 - 2:00 PM County Farm Park, Ann Arbor - Medford Lot

Winter is a peaceful time, but there is much life to be discovered under the bark and snow. Join naturalist Shawn Severance to experience the oak-hickory forest in winter. For more information see the website www.ewashtenaw.org or email severances@ewashtenaw.org

SALINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"The Boy Governor: Stevens T. Mason and the Birth of Michigan Politics"

Sunday, February 8, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Saline District Library, Brecon Room
555 N. Maple Rd., Saline, MI

Don Faber has written the definitive biography of the youngest state governor in American history. He is also author of *The Toledo War*, winner of the 2009 Michigan Notable Book Award. Former editor of the Ann Arbor News, he has served on the staff of the Michigan Constitutional Convention, won a Ford Foundation Fellowship to work in the Michigan Senate, and was a speechwriter for Michigan governor George Romney. The public is invited to this free program **For more information call 734-944-0442**, or email: salinehistory@frontier.com. or see the website at www.salinehistory.org

