



Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When Spring Blooms on Main Street

This April when the garden awakens to the rhythms of Spring, it won't be the only thing blooming at the corner of Main and Beakes.

Our next exhibit will give visitors a look at courtship, dating and social recreation in Washtenaw County, and how the telephone, car and internet have changed modern-day socializing. We will tell this story using items from our collections (and yours!) concerning matters of the heart, dating, romance, and the occasional heartache.

What's Your Story?

Where was your first date or your favorite date? Was it dinner and a movie or coffee? Did you go on a picnic, or a walk or a dance? We would love to hear about it.

We want 75th wedding anniversaries, as well as first dates to be part of the exhibit. Email your memories, and photos if you have them, to wchs-1000@ameritech.net. Or feel free to stop by the Museum on Main Street when you see the white van in the parking lot.



Couple at a Dance (Bentley Historical Library)

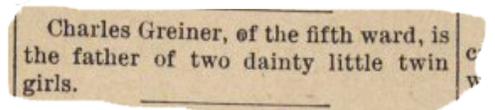
WCHS Membership Coordinator Opportunity

The Washtenaw County Historical Society is looking for a volunteer Membership Coordinator who will be involved in the design, implementation and oversight of the WCHS membership. This includes keeping the membership list, producing labels for membership mailings and developing creative ways to reach new members. If this sounds like something you would be interested in email wchs-500@ameritech.net.

Making History Fun for Families

Whenever children come to exhibits at the Museum on Main Street, they are just as interested in the history and details of the house. They imagine how one family with 13 children could have lived in the original space. Or after seeing the photo of the six Greiner daughters (see page 7), they love to read the inscription written in pencil on the back of the attic door: "Louise Greiner, Lillie, Mabel, Laura, Frieda, Ella, Pa G., Ma G., wrote this June 7, 1901."

Visitors of all ages have many questions about this 178-year-old home. Experience it when you stand on the original floorboards of a pre-Civil War home. Learn about it from our Museum Docent, John Kilar. He gives a great house tour.



Ann Arbor Argus, February 1893

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

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

With 2012 behind us, Society activity was launched in 2013 with January's Board of Director's meeting on the 16th. In addition to normal reports from officers and committee chairs (most of these are emailed ahead to save meeting time) the Collections Committee, headed by Judy Chrisman, presented a draft of an extensively revised Collections Policy. This document establishes criteria for acquisition, preservation and use of the Society's collections in accordance with accepted standards, best practices, and ethics of the museum profession. As such it will guide the management, maintenance, and development of historical collections of the Society. With extensive discussion and input at the meeting it is now expected to be approved at the February meeting.

A new committee, to be chaired by Anita Toews, was created to establish a Disaster Recovery Plan. Although draft elements of such a plan exist and certain practices (such as daily offsite backup of operating systems) are already in place, a comprehensive review and updating is needed. Focus will be on the Museum building, collections and Society operations. With completed analysis and review, actual writing of the Plan may be an excellent project for an intern.

With every new year there are new projects for board members and volunteers to undertake. The work of the Society continues.

Leslie Loomans

We look forward to your next visit!

Washtenaw County Historical Society

P.O. Box 3336

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)

Museum Hours

Saturday & Sunday, 12 Noon – 4:00 PM

and by appointment Monday-Friday

Call ahead 734-663-9092



Photo by Judith Tomer

Check us out, on the web and

www.WashtenawHistory.org



Historical Photos Tell a Community Story

When Quarry Photo on State Street closed, several photos in the back of the upstairs store attic were found. They appear to be taken over a time period from the 1870s-1900s. The Bentley Historical Library has photos looking north on State Street in the 1870s that show the old First Methodist Church with a finished steeple. This set of images donated to the Historical Society by Laura Graham and her father, the former manager of Quarry Photo, shows the steeple in construction. The building on the corner of William and State Street today is the home of Jimmy Johns and still has the bay windows facing William Street.

The WCHS is always glad to see any pictures, letters, artifacts, objects or family stories pertaining to county history to add to our collection. Items from the more recent past are also accepted. We are able to scan the pictures or documents and then return the originals to you. If you have items to donate, call Judy Chrisman at 734-662-9092 or email judychr@aol.com.

State Street Past to Present

When the U-M campus opened in 1841, there were only seven students. Ann Arbor, had a book store by at least 1832, so when the students arrived the stores just added text books to their inventory. After the Civil War more student-oriented businesses opened on State Street and facing N. University – a barber shop, a book store, and the street's first brick building, Mrs. West's Dining Hall at 324 South State. (State Street Area Association)



Facing State Street from North University in the 1870s. Across the street from the main entrance to campus, a small number of stores, Wahr's book store, Mrs. West's dining hall, and barber shop) opened to serve student needs.



The View from “Buttercup Hill”



One of the pleasures that comes from working as a docent at the Museum on Main Street is meeting and talking to nearby residents about local history. A location that I was always curious about was Hunt Park on Ann Arbor’s Northwest side (recently christened as The Waterhill Neighborhood). How did such a prime block of city real estate become a city park? In talking to several visitors I have developed a brief history of how Hunt Park came to be.

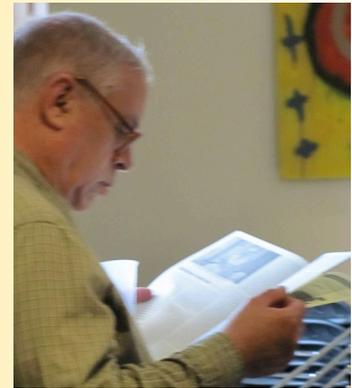
I imagine that before 1800 the area was a forested glacial hillside which was subsequently cleared and farmed by the early settlers of Ann Arbor. The area remained in agricultural use until after the Civil War when the city started to expand to the other side of the Allen Creek swamp. Roads and housing started to overtake the farm fields but the 1880 bird’s eye map of Ann Arbor (available at MoMS for \$8) still shows the future Hunt Park as an open field. Some referred to it as “Buttercup Hill”. It is probably the openness of the glacial hillside that prompted the Ann Arbor Railroad (AARR) to mine the area for gravel around the years 1901-03. This gravel was used to raise the grade of the railroad over several obstacles such as the Allen Creek swamp, nearby roads, the Michigan Central tracks and the Huron River. The area was mined all the way back to the edges of both Sunset and Spring Streets.

After the gravel extraction, the area was abandoned, left open and, as befitting many old gravel pits, became a dump for local residents. This use, as a dump, continued for almost the next 50 years. One former local resident who grew up at the corner of Spring Street and Summit Street in the 1930s remembers that as a teenager he used to take his .22 up to the dump and shoot at rats.

Around 1950, a joint project between the AARR and the State Highway Department resulted the “straightening” of Main Street and the erection a new bridge for the AARR over Main Street. The earth that was removed for this project was trucked back up the hill and used to cover up the dump. The property was then purchased by a GM executive by the name of Ormand Hunt who, in 1923, designed the first Chevrolet to compete successfully with Ford’s Model T. The property was later donated to the city for use as a park. The park was once noted for it’s excellent views of the U of M hospital, campus and downtown areas but the views are now obstructed by trees planted by the city of Ann Arbor.

The above information is largely based upon hearsay from former and present local residents. I would be interested in hearing of any additions or corrections. Please email me at wchs-500@ameritech.net. By John Kilar

Impressions



Reader Feedback

We cannot thank our readers enough for the support and feedback you have given us over the years. Your feedback is always appreciated. As we continue to share the history of Washtenaw County and the activities of the Historical Society, we hope that you keep the lines of communication open with more comments and suggestions for articles.

Email your comments and suggestions to

Bev Willis (Editor)
wchs-1000@ameritech.net
or Pauline Walters,
(Corresponding Secretary)
wchs-500@ameritech.net

Call 734-662-9092

Mail to

Impressions Feedback
PO Box 3336
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

Nov/December 2012 Impressions

In the article, “Kerrytown and Two Local Mayors”, it states that “Cecil Creal’s grandparents lived in the historic house at 420 North Fourth Avenue”, it was it was his wife’s grandparents who lived there. We apologize for this error and thank two readers for the correction.



Cheney J. Schopieray was the WCHS guest speaker at the Ann Arbor Senior Center on Sunday, November 18, 2012. The topic was "Remembrance—Through Music and Imagery." Schopieray is Assistant Curator of Manuscripts at the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. He is also the curator of a recent exhibit at the Clements on early American death practices—"So Once Were We: Death in Early America." Projecting images of objects in the collections at the Clements Library, Schopieray gave an informative talk that was a nice complement to the exhibit currently on display at the Museum on Main Street.

The lack of modern professional medicine and high mortality rates before and during the nineteenth century meant that everyone most likely knew someone who had passed away. Schopieray focused his talk on Christian Northerners, who remembered their lost family and friends through a variety of music and imagery. The specific practices differed depending on family tradition, denomination, and community custom, but the act of remembering was commonplace. Schopieray's lecture gave the audience an idea of the objects produced and consumed for the purpose of remembrance in the 19th century.

Before the Nineteenth Century

To highlight one of the Clements Library's collecting strengths, Schopieray began his talk by showing a few early images. Images from the period of European exploration and discovery illustrated how people from all different cultural backgrounds were moving to live in the same space, often adapting parts of other cultures into their own practices and resulting in interesting conglomerations of funeral and death customs. Prints from the New England Primer showed how the New England Puritans were so concerned with death and salvation that they used the theme

to teach their children reading, writing, and moral lessons. The Puritans were centrally concerned with salvation and teaching moral values to prevent the potential damnation of young children, the group with the highest death rate. Before the nineteenth century, there was little produced for consolation of the bereaved.

Change in Ideas of Death

By the late eighteenth and especially in the nineteenth century, an increasing number of Protestants in the United States focused their faith on a more personal relationship with God and a belief that they would meet their friends and relatives in the afterlife. Northern Protestants coped with death by focusing on the expectation of salvation rather than preventing damnation. Yet this focus on salvation and a pleasant afterlife was coupled with a sense of profound loss and sorrow manifest in letters of the time.

Collective Bereavement

Popular artwork and consumer items of the nineteenth century reflected themes of mortality and created a kind of collective bereavement that recognized the commonality of loss and let people know they were not alone in mourning their loved ones. Schopieray illustrated the commonality of mortality in popular culture by projecting on screen Rembrandt Peale's famous work *The Court of Death* (on display at the DIA), which toured the United States in 1823. He also showed a variety of *cartes de visite* death scenes, postmortem portraiture, and photographs of men and women in mourning attire and of funerary floral arrangements. Such items served as a visual memory of the lost and an appreciation of that person.

Sentimental Music

The sentimental imagery of death and mourning that was so popular in nineteenth century visual products also permeated the parlor music of the day.

Not simply confined to funeral dirges or spiritual music, themes of death and bereavement were commonplace in the lyrics of popular music, often collected as sheet music by individuals to be played on the piano and sung by families and guests in home parlors. Somber lyrics were often combined with lively upbeat music and illustrated with prints related to death and mourning on the sheet music itself. While passing around his own collection of death-related sheet music, Schopieray played a version of the song "Don't You Go, Tommy," which dealt with the theme of mortality by offering advice on how to properly live by practicing temperance and avoiding gambling and whiskey.

Personal to Public Loss

The loss of public figures was the most elaborate practice of collective mourning in the nineteenth century United States, beginning with the death of George Washington in 1799. Washington's death was collective mourning on a grand scale. Despite his wish to be buried without ceremony, the American people held mock funerals in cities and towns across the country and published tracks that described the speeches and activities of these funerals in elaborate detail. More than one hundred years later people were still writing songs in remembrance of Washington's death, and visiting his family tomb on Mount Vernon is a popular tourist activity. Similar materials were created with the death of Lincoln, creating a sense of community in mourning the loss of highly respected public figures.

Schopieray followed his talk with a question and answer period that focused mostly on the recently announced approval of plans to renovate the Clements Library. Refreshments and socializing closed the afternoon's event.

See the back page for the Winter 2013 Programs!

Explore Local History Online at www.WashtenawHistory.org

From A-Z the WCHS has links to websites packed with articles, photographs, post-cards, letters, oral histories and walking and driving tours. This issue highlights B-E. Jan Tripp, our webmaster, is always interested in new sites to add to our list. Please email your suggestions to him at Jan_Tripp@comcast.net

B The **Bentley Historical Library**, an independent library on campus, was established in 1935 by the UM Regents to carry out two functions: to serve as the official archives of the University and to document the history of the state of Michigan and the activities of its people, organizations and voluntary associations. The Bentley Image Bank has over 5,000 records and images, with links to finding aids with even more pictures. www.Bentley.Umich.edu

C **Cobblestone Farm** is a living history museum in a pioneer Michigan farm house. Restored to reflect its mid-19th century appearance, it provides a view of past rural county life. Read more about it at www.CobblestoneFarm.org

D The **Downtown Ann Arbor Historical Street Exhibit Program** is a series of permanent sidewalk exhibits at sixteen landmark sites throughout downtown Ann Arbor. Each exhibit has a theme. Exhibits throughout the downtown showcase the city's artistic heritage and the roles of business, banking, manufacturing and education in shaping the community. See the sixteen sites with their locations, themes, images and text at www.Aadl.Org/aastreet

E **Eastern Michigan University** Much of the history of EMU can be traced through various buildings on campus. Several are on the National Register of Historic Places, and the others also have a story to tell. Take a walking or virtual tour at www.Emich.Edu/walkingtour

Mystery Object Identified!

Thanks to everyone who identified our Mystery Object. We received many interesting answers from shaving kits to writing sets.



"I believe your mystery object is an inkstand. Each of the attached cups held one of the containers that accompany the base unit. The open container held ink and originally had an ornate lid, most probably with a pen slot. The right container also had a lid and was the sander for sprinkling sand on the slow-drying ink of the day, though this piece stylistically appears later than that time. The sander was generally filled through the top so there probably aren't other holes for filling. My best estimate, based on the photo, is that the inkstand dates from the 1850-1870 period. The numbers are most probably later additions, since they would have been inappropriate in that location and form." *Gary K.*

"I believe the pot with holes is a "sander" for "pounce". Writing sets came with this device to sprinkle on the wet ink to blot it after someone wrote. It had to have a concave/lipped surface so you could pour the sand back in. Does the glaze and decoration look like it could be from 1843? The open pot might be missing its lid, if it was meant for ink." *Betsy C.*

MoMS current exhibit has been well attended



"Rest in Peace: The Washtenaw Way of Death" has been quite a popular exhibit. Hundreds of visitors have come by and have shared their own memories and thoughts. The last day is Sunday February 17. We are open Saturdays and Sundays from 12 Noon-4 PM and by appointment. Call 734-662-9092.

If This House Could Talk...

By Susan Wineberg

Our building at 500 N. Main began its life across the Huron River in Lower Town at 1015 Wall Street. It was built in phases in the 1830s, with the oldest section (the middle room) dating to 1835 and the front section to 1839. A small side section was added in the 1840s.

The house is an extremely rare example in Michigan of an unremodeled 1830s house and, therefore, is an artifact itself. We have highlighted some of the unusual construction features with see-through examples of the brick nogging used for stabilization and fire prevention, the accordion lath (scored wood, not sawn) used in the walls in the rear room, and the wide board flooring throughout the house. Although often referred to as a Greek Revival style building, it is closer to the Federal Style found further east.

The builders of our house, members of the Kellogg and Warden families, were typical of the settlers coming to Michigan in this time period. They were millers, statesmen and merchants from Cayuga County, New York and probably came to Michigan via the Erie Canal. Land

speculation was rampant at this time and the Kelloggs bought and sold many parcels of land. The first member to arrive, Dwight Kellogg, had been a partner with Anson Brown and Edward Fuller in businesses and mills at Broadway and Pontiac. More members of the Kellogg family—brothers and sisters of Dwight (Ethan Warden was married to Dwight's sister) --- built homes on Wall Street and opened businesses on Broadway.



The Kelloggs also ran a grist mill on the Huron River. In 1839, the patriarch of the family, Charles Kellogg, arrived with his wife and lived here until his death in 1843.

Ann Arbor's Wall Street didn't live up to the financial reputation of its counter-

part and the Kelloggs did not prosper as they had dreamed. Many died here and are buried at Fair View Cemetery. Only one member, Dorr Kellogg (treasurer of our society in 1877), remained in Ann Arbor—the rest returned to New York State. The house stood empty after Charles' death in 1843 until it was purchased in 1853 by Samuel Ruthruff, a pioneer who had arrived in Washtenaw County in 1837 from Pennsylvania. He and his family lived in our house from 1853 un-

til 1877, despite almost losing it in the Panic of 1857. His son-in-law, Freeman P. Galpin, saved the day and the Galpins maintained ownership until 1889, 12 years after Samuel died.

In 1890, the house was purchased by Charles Greiner, a gardener who worked in the nearby greenhouses. His descendants occupied the house for the next 100 years. Greiner had six girls—look for

their names in pencil on the door to the attic. A descendant of the family later presented us with a turn of the century photograph showing Mrs. Greiner and her daughters in front of what looks like a farmhouse (and shows the original six over six windows). This was the state of Lower Town in the early 20th century.

Step Back in Time

A Walking Tour of Historic Ann Arbor

This self-guided, 4-mile walking tour will open your eyes to many historical locations and residences in Ann Arbor. The route starts and ends at the Museum on Main Street and takes walkers to Kerrytown, UM Central Campus, Downtown Ann Arbor, the Old West Side, and Lowertown. This walking tour is rated 1+ due to hilly terrain on city sidewalks (on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being easiest).

Download this podcast tour as an MP3 along with a guide (PDF) at www.WashtenawHistory.org.

The tour is sponsored by the Washtenaw County Historical Society and was prepared by Susan L. Nenadic and Grace Shackman.



Drawing by Michael Klement

There is still time!
You can renew your 2013
WCHS membership online at
www.WashtenawHistory.org

CURRENT RESIDENT OR

WINTER 2013 – WCHS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Unforgettable Dinnerware

Do you have a favorite plate, cup or set of dishes?

Some of our best memories are centered around sharing food and good times with family and friends. This program will celebrate this significant aspect of our daily lives through dinnerware, art, photographs and more from ancient times to the present. Presented by **Margaret Carney, PhD**, Director of The Dinnerware Museum.



Louis Comfort Tiffany, Finger Bowl

Sunday February 17, 2-4 PM

The Dexter District Library
3255 Alpine Street, Dexter MI

Book Talk & Signing with Karen Simpson

Karen is a former WCHS board trustee, passionate about the art of quilting, and the discipline of historical research. "Act of Grace" has won several awards, including the Silver Independent Publishers Book Award for visionary fiction. The novel is inspired by an incident that happened almost 15 years ago at a Klan rally in Ann Arbor.



Sunday, March 17, 2-4 PM

Malletts Creek Branch, Ann Arbor District Library
3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway (east of Stone School Rd)

Six free educational programs are a benefit of your WCHS Membership
You are welcome to bring a friend or two! For information, call 734-662-9092



www.WashtenawHistory.org
Email: wchs-500@ameritech.net