

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

YHS Museum & Archives

Official publication of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, featuring historical articles and reminiscences of the people and places in the Ypsilanti area.



SPRING 2008

Brooks Food Center: An Ypsilanti Institution

By Roger Brooks, with Wilfred Brooks

When Dan Brooks opened his new grocery store at 412 West Michigan in 1948, he and his sons, Wilfred and Thomas, were the toast of the town. The store employed the most up-to-date technology to offer perhaps the most complete line of grocery products and

food and housewares - later consolidated on one floor - brightly lit with fluorescent lighting, and boasted a modernistic design that featured a porcelain-covered steel facade as well as Ypsilanti's first automatically-opening "electric eye" doors.



Dan Brooks backs his delivery truck up to the front door of his market at 44 E. Cross St. which he bought from D. L. Davis in 1932, while an unidentified clerk begins to unload goods for the store.

kitchenware in the city. Before long, many residents considered Brooks Food Center the place to go in Ypsilanti for quality meats, fresh produce, premium canned goods, and frozen foods.

Helping convey the notion that the store carried *everything*, small stacks of canned baby bees, chocolate covered ants, and rattlesnake meat were prominently displayed on the meat counter for all to marvel at and joke about. The new store included two floors of

Within three years, Dan Brooks was named "grocer of the year" by Detroit's WJR radio personality Ron Gamble. A quiz show was broadcast from the store, and the word about the Brooks market spread around southeastern Michigan.

The 1950s and 1960s may have been the heyday of the Brooks market, but the connection of the Brooks family to the food business started much earlier. David Brooks
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From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

The last few months have been busy with the renovation of the basement of the Carriage House and filing applications for approval of the Museum as an entity in the existing residential and office zone. The Museum is now in conformance with City zoning codes after filing a text amendment that had to be approved by the City Council and a follow up application to the City Planning Commission to approve the Museum as an entity in the existing zoning area.

The renovation of the Carriage House as an expansion of the first floor apartment continues with an expected completion date of May 31. The apartment will have two bedrooms, two bathrooms, an office, kitchen and living room. If you know of anyone interested in renting an apartment with the best view in Ypsilanti (overlooking Riverside Park and the Huron River) please contact me.

Yard Sale – June 7th: We hope to have our biggest and best ever yard sale this year. If you have items to donate please call one of the following volunteers for pick-up: Al Rudisill (476-6658); John Pappas (482-1462); or Bill Nickels (483-8896).

Chair – Membership Committee: We are looking for someone to coordinate our membership promotion efforts and serve as Chair of our Membership Committee. If you are interested please call me at 476-6658.

Grounds Committee: We will be doing some additional landscaping on the property this spring and summer and are looking for volunteers to serve on the Grounds Committee and assist with planting and maintenance of the yard and flower gardens.

Art Exhibit: Our annual Art Exhibit will start April 13 and run through April 27. We will have many pieces from outstanding local artists.

Lost Ypsilanti Exhibit: Our Lost Ypsilanti Exhibit will start July 20 and run through August 31. This year the exhibit will feature people as well as places.

MotorCities Sign: Thanks to Bill Nickels for all of his efforts in the design and installation of the new MotorCities sign that will be placed by the entrance sidewalk to the Museum. Bill also coordinated the renovation of the Historic Marker sign in the front yard of the Museum.

We will be losing our two EMU interns at the end of April. Katie Dallos and Jessica Williams will complete their graduate programs in Historical Preservation and enter the full time job market. They have both provided outstanding service to our Society and will be missed. Interviews with potential replacements are currently being conducted in conjunction with the Historical Preservation Program at EMU. ■



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Welcome!

The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is a home. The Museum and Fletcher-Wheeler Historical Society. We are all volunteers non-city residents.

A Matter of Trust

The Ypsilanti Historical Society has initiated a five-year campaign to raise \$400,000. This amount will cover the cost of purchasing the property at 220 North Huron Street from the City of Ypsilanti and completing the many deferred maintenance projects on the buildings and grounds. You may view a Power Point presentation related to the campaign by clicking your mouse on "A Matter of Trust" and then clicking on the first picture. The arrow at the top of the page will forward the program to the next slide.

For Information about upcoming
Society events, visit us on-line at:

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Brooks Food Center:
An Ypsilanti Institution
continued from front page

(1747-1826), Dan's earliest identified ancestor, was a farmer in New Jersey who served in the Revolutionary War not as a soldier but as an assistant commissary general in charge of food procurement for the army. Long after the war, he bought a government lot near Ovid, New York, in the Finger Lakes region and farmed the land until he died.

His grandson, David Brooks (1794-ca.1875), helped to incorporate the Livingston County (New York) Horticultural Society and the county Association for the Importation and Improvement of Stock. According to a county history, he was one of the association's agents "sent to Europe to select and purchase stock from the celebrated herds of the Old World." His own shorthorns, including the noted bull John O'Gaunt and the cows Lady Rose and Dairy Maid, were widely admired.

David's son, Alexander Simpson Brooks (1817-1896), bought farm land in Oakland County, Michigan in 1839 and, following a wave of immigration to southern Michigan from upstate New York, moved his family there three years later. In 1849, he returned to New York and in a harrowing trip through violent storms brought pure blooded Durham cattle and Merino sheep

"Helping convey the notion that the store carried *everything*, small stacks of canned baby bees, chocolate covered ants, and rattlesnake meat were prominently displayed on the meat counter for all to marvel at and joke about."

back to Michigan. Although emaciated and the butt of jokes when they arrived, these herds flourished and, according to a county history, soon stood "ahead of any in Michigan." Located adjacent to what is now Northville Downs, his farm also produced a thousand bushels of wheat annually.

Alexander's son, Henry Brooks (1850-1938), married Eva Long and moved to Ypsilanti to ensure that his children had access to suitable educational opportunities. He, too, was a

farmer, and he kept a dairy herd. His milk route took him from his home on River Street to locations around the city. At times he drove his herd along Ainsworth Lane, now Oakland Street, coincidentally immediately adjacent to properties that his son and grandson eventually purchased.

Daniel R. Brooks (1894-1973) was the youngest of five children of Henry and Eva. When Dan was 11 years old, he was hired to clean out ashes from the furnace at D. L. Davis and Co. grocery store at 44 E. Cross Street, a few doors from the railroad tracks. The store was one of several that competed in the Depot Town area, including A & P and Kroger. At that time, Davis specialized in produce, dairy products, canned goods, and dry goods such as bolts of cloth. Over the years, Dan took on more and more responsibility at the store, and he saw the benefits and challenges of running a business.

Dan considered himself a modern person and he reveled in having a sense of control over his own destiny. He also liked having the latest inventions and bought a car as soon as he could afford it. The car gave him a reach beyond his home town, and he soon began paying visits to Hamburg in nearby Livingston County where he met Lottie Blades, a school teacher whom he married in 1917. They took up residence on North Street and soon had three children: Warren Wilfred Brooks (1918-), Thomas Henry Brooks (1921-1978), and Donald Elton

Brooks (1923-1944). They also lived at 426 N. Huron and in later years at 525 Fairview Circle.

At some point in the 1920s, Dan took over managing the store as Davis edged toward retirement. In 1932, in the depths of the Depression, Dan bought out Davis, and by 1935 the store became known as the Dan Brooks Market and later Brooks Food Market. In 1934, Dan expanded the business by adding meats (quality meats were later



One of the handbills that Dan Brooks had kids drop on front porches in the 1930s.

a major attraction at the store) and poultry supplied by Lee and Cady in Detroit. Eggs, fruit, and produce were mostly supplied by local producers around Ypsilanti, but Dan also drove a panel truck to the Eastern Market in Detroit to buy produce and fruit wholesale twice a week. Oysters came by parcel post from the east coast.

Dan was a smart entrepreneur, but his formal education ended at 10th grade. His business was greatly assisted by his accountant, A. B. Curtis, who coached him about key business practices, and also by Gene Towner, an Ann Arbor businessman who helped teach him about marketing strategies. One sign of Dan's aggressive business sense was his use of weekly mimeographed handbills that informed potential customers of the store's offerings and advertised weekly specials. He hired youngsters to deliver the handbills door to door; dropping the workers off at the start of the route and picking them up at the end to make sure the sheets actually got delivered.

He also initiated a much appreciated four-times-a-day home delivery regime. In the *continued on page 22*

Washtenaw Community College – In the Beginning

By Guy Hower

I was very fortunate to be one of the first employees at Washtenaw Community College and I thought I would share some of the experiences I remember from those first few months. In 1965 a proposal was presented to

Drive right across from St. Joseph Hospital as the future site for the new college. Since buildings could not be built immediately, and the Board wanted to start the college by September of 1966 this meant that other

been hired as the Dean of Students. The College was being operated out of a building at 205 Huron in downtown Ann Arbor. Housed in this building were a few top administrators who had determined that the College would start with both two-year occupational programs as well as typical college coursework that would be offered to freshman and sophomore students who could then transfer the credit to four year universities. Courses offered included English, Literature, World History, American History, Psychology,



WCC main classroom from 1966 to 1968. The facility was built in 1943 as an elementary school (Foster School) for children of workers at the Bomber Plant at Willow Run Airport.

the voters of Washtenaw County to approve a new Community College and pay for it with a property tax levied on all property owners in the county. The proposal was approved and later that year an election was held and seven people were elected to form the first Board of Trustees. The Board purchased a 240 acre piece of land on Huron River

temporary facilities were needed. Many other things needed to be accomplished if a group of students were to be selected and enrolled in a little over five months.

I was hired and started to work at WCC on April 6, 1966 as a counselor. I was the first counselor hired by David Pollack, who had

Sociology, Humanities, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and many others.

They also approved occupation programs in Auto Mechanics, Auto Body Repair, Welding, Numerical Control, Data Processing, Metallurgy, Sales, Accounting, Business Management, and Secretary Courses. Many challenges existed including the fact there were no facilities where the classes could take place, no textbooks for the various courses, no equipment for laboratory activities, and no classroom furniture for students or teachers. Finally, the most critical problem facing the Board was the lack of faculty to teach the vast number of courses being suggested.

The first order of business was to locate facilities. The College purchased a number of buildings in Willow Run on Clark road and on Midway Street. These buildings included

“I remember my first day at the college. With great anticipation I, and another faculty members who also had just been hired, went out to see our new facilities...When we arrived the building was boarded up but we found a door in the rear that was ajar. We pushed it open and saw rats scurry for cover.”



The former St. Alexis Church and Parish Hall was used for registration, data processing and maintenance for the WCC Willow Run campus.



This former parochial school was used for classrooms and as a "Children's Center" for children of students and WCC employees.

an elementary school building which had not been used for two years and was renamed. Also purchased was a condemned bowling alley which also had not been used in over a year. The Saint Alexis Church building was also purchased along with other associated buildings used by members and staff of Saint Alexis. Another building purchased had served many different businesses over the previous few years, most recently as a butcher shop. Quonset huts, which also had not been used in years, were also purchased as well as a building located on Carpenter Road just south of Michigan Avenue. That is where the automotive and welding courses would be offered. Renovations started immediately at these facilities since classes would start in less than four months.

The Board started hiring faculty immediately. The individuals hired were challenged to

develop a syllabus for the courses they would teach. They were also asked to select a text book for each of the courses. Desks and chairs were purchased and equipment requirements for laboratory classes were determined and the appropriate equipment purchased. A catalogue of courses was written and published even though we did not have faculty to teach many of the courses. An admission application had to be printed and ads were placed in local papers urging interested people to apply for admission. Acceptance letters were sent to students and they were instructed to make an appointment with a counselor so they could choose the courses they were going to take.

I remember my first day at the college. With great anticipation I, and another faculty member who also had just been hired, went out to see our new facilities. I knew that my *continued on page 6*

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Washtenaw Community College – In the Beginning
continued from page 5

office would be in the bowling alley which would be renamed the Student Center. When we arrived the building was boarded up but we found a door in the rear that was ajar. We pushed it open and saw rats scurry for cover. The building was a shambles and it was difficult for me to believe that in four months I would have an office in the building, and that the building would also house a student center including vending machines. When I eventually occupied my office I found that a juke box had been located on the other side of one of my office walls. Lucky for me the walls had no insulation so I had the benefit of hearing the full sound.

Next we visited the deserted Elementary School which would become the main classroom building. There were no locks on the doors so we went in. The building had many windows in the halls and in the classrooms. Since the building had not been occupied in many months, almost all of the windows had been broken and glass was everywhere. The building was in need of a major cleaning and repainting. We later learned that this building would be renamed College Hall. We returned to our building in Ann Arbor and hoped that all of the renovations could be done before school started. In spite of our doubts our excitement and commitment never waned.

When we started meeting with students to plan their programs, we had to use folding chairs and cardboard boxes for desks. The first floor of the building was occupied by the President and other top administrators so we had to use the basement. We helped each student select classes and told them that reg-



WCC also purchased the former dairy distribution center on Carpenter Road to house the Automotive Services Program. Top photo shows facility in 1966 and bottom photo shows facility in 1979 following renovation and expansion.



This house on North Huron Street served as the "Ypsilanti Center" and was used for classes and student counseling.



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istration for these classes would happen some time in August in College Hall. They were as nervous and excited as we were. Over the next few months, many amazing changes occurred. The buildings were repaired and painted, faculty were hired and desks and equipment were purchased and placed in the classrooms. Windows and new walls were in place and the buildings began to look like they could be used. Many faculty members were hired and started purchasing books, supplies, and equipment. Registration did occur in the College Hall's Gym as planned. It was overwhelming. We had over 1,000 brave students register for classes for the Fall 1966 Semester. The next fall we had over 2,000 students and for the third fall we had over 3,000 students.

I have many fond memories of this first year. There was a bond between all of the faculty and staff since we had been through so much together. We had worked so many hours under pressure and were forced to make deci-

sions we only hoped would happen. Many of our dreams for the college did happen. Things moved ahead sooner than we thought possible and this led WCC to become a very dynamic College.

The students who started at WCC were true pioneers. One of the students was named Gary Owen. Gary spent two years at Washtenaw Community College and then transferred to the University of Michigan. He was later elected to the Michigan legislature and eventually was elected to the office of Speaker of the House. Gary is just one of the many outstanding individuals who got their start at Washtenaw Community College.

Some of the pictures in this article were taken after the facilities had been renovated. Believe me, most of the buildings did not look as good as they are shown in the summer of 1966. ■



This former Willow Run Village fire station served as the WCC Administrative Building in 1966.



In 1967 this building served as the Technical Center for the WCC Willow Run campus.



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History of the Doctoral Degree at Eastern Michigan University

By Dr. Jack D. Minzey

There is an old proverb about three blind men trying to describe an elephant. Each man describes the elephant in terms of the part that he is touching, and thus, no two descriptions are the same. In a like manner, the description and history of the doctoral degree at Eastern Michigan University is told in many diverse ways, depending on when the person telling the story became involved and to what degree. There are certainly many persons currently involved with the doctoral degree who can describe its present status better than I, but there is not one who has had a long term involvement or a more intimate association with the degree in its formative stage than I, and so I feel well qualified to tell its history. In fact, I feel compelled to do so, since I am not aware that anyone else has recorded the events and circumstances leading up to the implementation of this degree.

My first association with the degree was in 1967. In a conversation with Harold Sponberg, President of Eastern Michigan University, he described three goals which he hoped to achieve at Eastern: 1) a center for community education; 2) a new college of Education building called the Charles Stewart Mott/ Frank J. Manley Building; and 3) a doctoral degree in school administration (Educational Leadership). In the early 1970's, the Department of Educational Leadership was undergoing an external evaluation, and our consultant was the Department Head of School Administration at Arizona State University. In his final report, he assessed our Educational Specialist's Degree, which was a 32 hour degree above the Master's Degree and was our terminal degree for school administrators. At that time, about one third of our master's graduates continued on into the Specialist's Degree plus we had a large number of students from other universities who came to Eastern for that degree. Our consultant was gratified with the quality of the degree and stated that it exceeded most of the course requirements of other universities in their doctoral program. He suggested that we consider adding a research component and offer a doctoral degree.

Two years after that recommendation, Dr. Clyde Letarte, a member of the Educational Leadership Department, was appointed Associate Dean of the Graduate School. One of his first efforts was to attempt to develop a doctoral degree at Eastern. He first requested the Educational Leadership Department to submit a proposal for such a degree. A pro-

posal was written, but it was rejected by the Graduate School because it lacked substance and quality. Dr. Letarte then wrote his own proposal. This proposal was to create a Doctor of Art's Degree for teachers at the Community College level. This plan was submitted to the North Central Association, but it was discouraged because it was felt that there was no demand for such a degree.

Assuming that we might not get our own doctoral degree, it was proposed that we contact another university to see if we might offer a joint doctoral program. The one university which seemed interested was the University



Dr. Jack Minzey was intimately involved with the development and approval of the first doctoral degree at EMU from 1967 until it was finally approved and implemented in 1991.



President Harold Sponberg in 1967 proposed that a doctoral program in Educational Leadership be developed at EMU.



In 1981 former Vice President for Instruction Bruce Nelson was given released time to write the initial doctoral degree proposal.



In 1989 Provost Collins took the doctoral degree proposal to a meeting of the Michigan University Vice Presidents where the Council voted eight to seven to approve the program.

of Michigan. The Graduate Dean and I met several times with representatives from the U. of M., but we were unable to come to a satisfactory agreement. The University of Michigan was willing to use our faculty to teach some of their courses, but they insisted that the degree must carry their name, the tuition be paid to them, and the curricula be overseen by their faculty. In short, they were willing to employ our staff as visiting professors to teach their classes. This did not meet the needs we felt we had, and so we did not pursue this idea further.

During the following years, Dr. Gary Keller became the Graduate Dean, and he was extremely interested in developing a doctoral degree at Eastern. In 1981, he got the Board of Regents to approve the offering of a doctoral degree,

“When Harold Sponberg promoted the idea of a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, he was really looking for a way to move Eastern Michigan University into the realm of being a doctoral granting university, and he saw Educational Leadership as the most promising way to get there.”

and he solicited proposals from the various departments. Ten proposals were submitted, and the choice came down to two proposals, Educational Leadership and Psychology.

There were several reasons why the Educational Leadership proposal was finally selected. One reason was that the Psychology program was submitted with an extremely high budget, and funds were not available to support such a program. In addition, however, the Educational Leadership proposal was extremely well written. Our department had spent a great deal of time researching our discipline, and we were able to show that there was a great need for such a degree and that the existing doctoral programs were unable to keep up with this demand. We were able to show that by 1990, there would be a need for 3,600 new doctoral degrees in school administration, and that at the current rate of graduation, there would only be 850 degrees awarded by that year. We had also obtained 300 students' signatures on a petition and 200 alumni signatures of support for such a degree at Eastern as well as having support from our Department Advisory Committee and 13 other administrative organizations in the State of Michigan. In

addition, all the course work for the proposal was already in place, and the program would not require new faculty.

The nature of our proposal was also unique. We had given Dr. Bruce Nelson released time to write the proposal. He had been the former Vice President for Instruction at Eastern, and he had proved to be a quality writer. Further, he was able to grasp the uniqueness of our plan and compose it into a scholarly document. The essence of our proposed degree was that it was to be a post Specialist's Degree built upon our existing specialist's program, just as our Specialist's Degree was built upon the Master's Degree. The specialist's program consisted of 32 hours above the masters. The core of the program consisted of classes in Leadership Theory, Analysis of Research,

Organizational Theory, a field based research project (thesis), and an internship. In addition, there were 16 hours of electives in specialist level classes in Educational Leadership. There were also six cognate hours in graduate work from other departments. At the doctoral level experience, there were to be an additional 24 hours. These hours consisted of Ethics and Policy Analysis, a doctoral seminar, statistics (inferential, analysis of variance), a cognate in Guidance and Counseling or Curriculum, and a dissertation. Our plan was to take 10 students per year from persons who were graduates of our specialist's program and who were also currently employed administrators. Residency was to be accomplished through summer sessions so that students would not have to quit their jobs to be in our program. Another advantage which we saw in this plan was that we would already have students who had completed the specialist degree and thus would be able to start immediately on the doctoral part of the program. We believed that since all of our graduates would already have positions in school administration, placement would not be a problem. We also perceived that all of our students who did not finish our *continued on page 10*



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History of the Doctoral Degree at Eastern Michigan University *continued from page 9*

doctoral program would still have a Specialist's Degree and thus would minimize the impact of the "all but the dissertation" syndrome which often happens at other doctoral degree granting institutions.

Our plan was written in 1981 and accepted by the university input system and the Board of Regents in 1982. Since we had just completed a North Central evaluation in 1981, it was felt that we could include our degree under the previous visit. However, what appeared to be a positive move toward the doctoral degree soon ran into trouble. It was at this time that the State of Michigan began to encounter massive

"However, another three years went by without any action... there was not a positive response to a request for reactivating the efforts toward a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Then in 1989, Provost Collins contacted me and said that Dr. Porter wanted us to move ahead immediately with the doctoral degree and that it needed to be rewritten and updated in two days."

financial problems. To alleviate part of the problem, all higher education was scrutinized. Major cutbacks in university funding took place, and there was even talk of eliminating some of the duplication in higher education by closing some of the state universities. Eastern became a prime target for such action due to its proximity to the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. In regards to our specific doctoral proposal, Governor Blanchard refused to give it support. This in turn caused our state representative and Speaker of the House, Gary Owen, to also oppose this degree. As a result, Dr. John Porter, President of Eastern, withdrew the proposal rather than risk any impact on Eastern's state funding. In addition, in order to placate the state government, the university president's created a system in which all new programs in higher education had to be approved by a state wide board consisting of the vice presidents from each state university. Our plan was submitted to them, and as anticipated, they turned it down.

During the ensuing years, there was little discussion of the doctoral degree. As the Department Head, I did regularly send memos to the Dean, the Provost and the Graduate Dean requesting that we reinstate our request. However, there was no movement, and it appeared that the issue was dead. Then in 1986, new interest was sparked regarding the degree. Two Regents (Dr. Genevieve Titsworth and Dr. William Simmons) resurrected interest in the degree. Both of these Regents were active administrators in Education, and they produced a document entitled "Creative Strategies – A Time for Action". This document had several plans for improving the College of Education, and proposal number 11 was a Doctoral Degree in Leadership (Interdisciplinary). This plan was accepted by the Board of Regents in August, 1986, and while it did

not result in much in the way of action, it did remind the university community of the need for a doctoral degree.

However, another three years went by without any action, and although my memos to the various administrators continued, there was not a positive response to a request for reactivating the efforts toward a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Then in 1989, Provost Collins contacted me and said that Dr. Porter wanted us to move ahead immediately with the doctoral degree and that it needed to be rewritten and updated in two days. I rewrote the document over the weekend, and Dr. Collins took the proposal to a meeting of the Michigan University Vice Presidents. Dean Scott Westerman and I attended the meeting, but Dr. Collins made the presentation. He was very persuasive in his comments, and the Vice Presidents Council voted eight to seven to approve our request. It was notable that all the institutions who had a doctoral degree voted against us. It was also

interesting that during the intervening years since we had begun our request for a doctoral degree, several of the doctoral level institutions had implemented parts of our proposal into their existing programs.

We now proceeded with a plan for implementation. We assumed that the North Central Association would approve us as had been previously discussed, and so we spent our time on the details of admitting students. We developed and oversight committee consisting of Dr. Ron Goldenberg (Graduate Dean), Dr. Don Benion (Vice President for Instruction), Dr. Scott Westerman, (Dean of the College of Education), Dr. Jack Minzey (Department Head of Leadership and Counseling), and Dr. Donna Schmitt (Professor of Educational Leadership). There were some attempts by members of this committee to make significant changes in the program and to make it more traditional in nature. However, through this committee's efforts, we were able to justify the content of the program, develop admission standards, prepare exams, and develop a selection process for admitting candidates to the program.

It was at this time that we were informed by the North Central Association that too much time had elapsed since our last visit by them and that we would have to have a special visit for approval of our program. In March, 1989, such a visit took place. It turned out to be another setback for our proposal. The visitation team consisted of two people. One was the President of the University of Dayton. He was a history major, and his institution did not have a teacher education program. The second was a woman who was the Dean of the College of Education at the University of South Dakota. She was a home economics major, and her institution had no doctoral programs. They had two problems with our proposal. First, the president was somewhat of an elitist and had difficulty dealing with a program that gave doctoral degrees to school administrators. The second problem was that both of them could not seem to deal with a doctoral program that had some non traditional aspects to it. Since neither of them had any experience with a Specialist's Degree, they could not comprehend the connection which we were making in our program. As a result, they at first denied our request. Our committee members reacted quite aggressively, and they finally agreed to grant us probationary status

for a period of five years. Five years later, we did have another evaluation of the status of our doctoral degree and due to the achievements we had made and the influence of Dean Jerry Robbins, we did receive final approval.

Once we had probationary approval from the North Central Association, we were now ready to put the plan into operation. Because we had no one on our staff who had extensive work in a department with a doctoral degree, it was decided that we needed to obtain more credibility by bringing in some experienced doctoral faculty. Since I was in the process of retiring, a new department head, Dr. Martha Tack was employed and she brought with her experiences related to working with a doctoral program. In addition, a doctoral coordinator, Dr William Hetrick, was hired to give professional direction to our degree. Our budget was increased to provide more supplies and materials, each faculty member was given a computer, and travel budgets were increased. There was also more released time given to faculty for research, and the faculty was increased by four professors.


In the fall of 1991, ten students were selected for the first doctoral level class at Eastern. This was to be the beginning of the first doctoral program at Eastern Michigan University. It had sufficient resources and above all, a dedicated staff which was committed to the success of its students. The program does appear to have lost much of its uniqueness, but that was to be expected since the professionals employed to give direction to the program were not a part of the original planning and were inclined to implement a program which mirrored their own experiences at other institutions. However, the program has blossomed into a quality program. This was apparent when the program successfully received final approval from the North Central Association during their focus visit in 1996. Even more important is that since the faculty in the Educational Leadership Program created and maintained such an excellent doctoral program, Eastern Michigan University was recognized as a bona fide doctoral level granting institution, and made possible the creation and addition of other doctoral level programs.

To fully appreciate the impact of this degree on Eastern Michigan University, one needs to know how degree status is determined in *continued on page 17*

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The “New” Old West Side

By Margaret Porter

Prior to World War II, Wallace Boulevard on Ypsilanti’s west side marked the boundary of residential housing. This neighborhood is known as Normal Park. The Woodbury home, 311 Wallace, is a classic example of early 20th century architecture.

Beyond Wallace lay woods and further west, open fields. Beginning in the mid-thirties, with the nation emerging from the Depression, several large homes were constructed along Westmoorland as well as Sherman. The east side of Mansfield was now the western boundary for this newer neighborhood.

My parents, Don and Ruth Porter, broke ground for their “dream house” in 1940. It was the first, and for many years the only house, facing Owendale. The lot was heavily wooded, as were the two vacant lots between our house and Westmoorland. Just around the corner of Owendale and Westmoorland stood the home of Howard and Naomi Hand. Howard was a General Motors executive, active in community affairs. Our other neighbors on the corner of Owendale and Sherman were J. Don Lawrence, the attorney, and his wife Christine. Across Owendale, on the southwest corner of Westmoorland a stately white colonial was the home of Dr. Butler, a faculty member at then Michigan State Normal College. This house was later sold to Bill and Nathalie Edmonds.

Other neighbors included the Fred Weimans, he a pharmacist whose avocation was performing as a clown; the Bancroft Briens, shoe store owners; Don and Margaret Martin, he a doctor and she a former Miss Ypsilanti. Going east up Westmoorland, was the Bisbee home, lumber company owners; two homes belonging to the Augustus brothers; and opposite, the Ben Sovey’s, greenhouse owner. At the eastern end of Westmoorland and Wallace, behind the Woodbury house, a later owner



The Woodbury House, 311 Wallace, constructed in 1921.

installed a tennis court, something that impressed me on my childhood excursions.

It was a pretty and prosperous neighborhood. The homes were all two stories set on good-sized lots. There were traditional Colonials, Dutch Colonials, Tudors, and some Cape Cods. Several of the neighbors had beautifully landscaped yards. As a child I was entranced by the Hand’s gazing ball and the little nooks and crannies of their garden. But my favorite place was the little woods next to our house. In the spring it was filled with wild flowers, violets and buttercups mostly, with an occasional “jack in the pulpit” or a treasured trillium.

As I grew older, I liked to organize “hikes” across the fields beyond Mansfield to the little creek. My mother always warned me to stay away from the woods that bordered each side of the field and not to play in the creek water. The latter I obeyed, the woods exerted a strong appeal though.

After World War II, many of the vacant lots, including my beloved little woods, became construction sites for new homes.

These new homes were generally smaller and occupied by families with young children. Both my brother and sister had many neighborhood playmates. New neighbors included the Fulfords, the Joslyns, the Congdons, the Goodings, and the Seyfrieds. Estabrook School was built after the war to meet the needs of the changing neighborhood. Its construction signaled the beginning of a school-building boom in Ypsilanti.

My parents sold the house on Owendale in 1987, the same year they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Although I was grown and living in Washington, D.C., the loss of “our house” saddened me. I visited Ypsilanti regularly and almost always drove around the old neighborhood. Now I am back living in Ypsi in a neighborhood west and north of where I grew up. This area was once woods as well. I love my new home but a part of my heart will always be on Owendale and in the old neighborhood.

Acknowledgements: My thanks to Bill and Karen Nickels for information about the Woodbury house. ■



The Home of Howard and Naomi Hand, 1227 Westmoorland, constructed around 1938.



Weiman Home, 1305 Westmoorland.



Above: Owendale, about 1990, Porter Home in foreground (1941); Bennett House (1950).

Left: Owendale, around 1946, looking north towards Cross Street. The author trying out her first pair of roller skates with help from father Don Porter.

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Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show Comes to Ypsilanti

By George Ridenour

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show began in 1883 and ended in July, 1913. He did, as well, appear in two other Wild West shows during the years 1914-1916. He died in 1917. Did he ever appear here? Well, now we know the answer. So let's begin with his first appearance in Ypsilanti on July 28, 1900.

The newspaper of the time is the best source for the color and pageantry of an event not seen in Ypsilanti in many years. The *Washtenaw Times* of Saturday, July 28, 1900 reported the following items: 1) "Buffalo Bill will give two performances today rain or shine;" 2) "The Buffalo Bill company arrived to the city at an early hour this morning occupying 46 cars;" and 3) "The Buffalo Bill parade will be held this morning at 9:30 o'clock through the principal streets of the city."

Let's imagine the day and the arrival of the Wild West show on that morning of July 28, 1900. The newspapers of the day had been advertising the event for a week. The cost was 50 cents, children under nine years half price, and reserved seats, \$1.00. Tickets could be purchased at Rogers Book and Drug Store at 118 Congress Street in Ypsilanti. The sound of unloading could be heard through Depot Town and the surrounding areas in the early morning hours of July 28. Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show had arrived!

Forty-six cars filled with animals, bands, and personalities including Annie Oakley, multitudes of Cossacks, Indians, Mexicans, Spaniards, Filipinos, and cowboys! The famous Roosevelt's Rough Riders fresh from the charge up San Juan Hill. The parade through the main streets of Ypsilanti was to reach three miles and include bands and educational displays.



Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show visited Ypsilanti twice in the early 1900s.



Annie Oakley participated in the Wild West Shows with a shooting demonstration.



Pawnee Bill and his wife Mary participated in the second Wild West Show that visited Ypsilanti.

Perhaps, as a color commentary, we should quote the *Washtenaw Times* article of the time:

"Buffalo Bill and his big show arrived in the city early this morning in 46 cars over the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern from Adrian. Col. Cody occupied his private Pullman and the whole outfit was sidetracked in the Michigan Central yards. The procession started at 9:30 o'clock and was headed by Buffalo Bill himself in a handsome spider with a footman behind and a pair of fine speckled white horses in front. After passing up Adams Street and down Cross over the river, the parade turned into River Street and then back on Congress, the grounds where the exhibition occurred. When the procession arrived back at the exhibition grounds several thousand people were there to witness the free exhibition announced to take place at that time."

Well, what did they see? Most town folk preferred the night show. The 2:00 pm show was filled with thousands from "out of town." Here's an idea of "The Show."

"Applause filled the grounds. The riding was wonderful, while the historic old Deadwood coach chased by Indians that yelled in this most bloodthirsty style, awakened shouts of excitement as it dashed about filled with Winchesters popping from every corner of it... The feature part of the performance was the Battle of San Juan hill, when a strong force of real army men in khaki attacked the Spanish garrison posted around a realistic and practical block house and carried out the details of the famous fight with considerable spirit. The fight looked real and the men fought like mad... The greatest individual interest of the day centered on the Cubans and Filipinos, large contingents of which are with the show. They are genuine representatives of their respective people and they look it... The best thing about the performance is that it is by real men doing real work, not actors playing a part. They are all real actors in great events of which they are actually a part. In this respect Colonel Cody's show is the greatest ever organized... you see real men engaged in real events to which all have been born and bred and in which the acting is life itself."

A glimpse of the evening performance was provided in the article:

"The evening performance was attended by an even larger crowd than turned out in the afternoon, and as the natural picturesqueness of the entertainment was heightened by the lights, it may be hailed as an even greater success than its forerunner."

Famous personalities included in this very show were:

"Miss Annie Oakley with many of her new shooting features. Johnnie Baker, who leads all the sharpshooters, will be seen!"

Newspapers articles of the times glowed with articles of the diversity of the show which included Hawaiian lady riders, United States Cavalry, Cuban Rough Riders and Russian Cossacks. They extolled not only the entertainment of the show but reflected and reassured the Ypsilanti Public of the educational value of the show and exhibits.

While in the Washtenaw County area Buffalo Bill visited relatives. The Cody family had first come to the area in 1833 in the person of John Cody. He is shown in the 1840 US Census in Pittsfield Township. He was a farmer and ten years later had living with him David (29) and Lovina (25), Lucinda Pritchard (11), and Pat McDaniel (20), a farmer. He had 3,500 acres of land. By 1860 John nearing 70 had 8,000 acres with a value of \$21,280 and by then had two farm hands working the farm along with a son and daughter-in-law. By 1880 David was living there with Louise (38), his wife and children William (7), and May (6).

In 1900 David is now 80 and is still married to Louisa. They are living in the Cody residence along with William and Catherine and their children Charles and newborn David Charles. They now have a Servant and a farm hand. In 1910 William, Katherine, Charles, Grant, and Catherine along with a servant resided at the Pittsfield Township property. The general occupation of the men is helping in the farming operation. Throughout the 1920s the family resided in the area and all maintained occupations in farming.

continued on page 16

Museum Gift Shop

Have you visited the Museum Gift Shop recently? If not, you may want to stop by!



Among the many offerings are stoneware items, books, trivets, bells, Elijah McCoy plaques, note cards, book markers, pens and pencils, t-shirts and much more.



The gift shop is open from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm Tuesday through Sunday. There are many items to choose from for personal use or as gifts.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show
Comes to Ypsilanti
continued from page 15

Finally, in 1930 (the last available US Census) Catherine is a widow and living with her are Charles D. 31, and Grant Burkhart Cody 29 (he died on August 27, 1961 in Pittsfield Township). Again, all are farmers. Catharine died in June, 1976. Platt maps of 1874 provide a drawing of the "residence of David Cody" (Section 20&21 Pittsfield Township Michigan).

What about today? Is anything left of the house? Fortunately, the answer is YES. The Cody Farm is still standing. The house is estimated to have been built in 1860 with additions over the years. The house as well as "out" buildings remain. Across Textile Road from the Sutherland-Wilson Farm is the Cody Farm. We have confirmed that these were "shirrtail" relatives of Wild Bill Cody (William F.) and that he did visit and sleep there on occasions when he was in Michigan. On at least one occasion, it was reported "...that Wild Bill Hickock accompanied Buffalo Bill on a visit to the farm." (Pittsfield Historical Society-Historic Textile Road in Pittsfield www.pittsfieldhistory.org)

Time to say Goodbye(?):
Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show came back to Ypsilanti for one last performance. Again, anticipation followed his return. His farewell performance took place on July 12, 1910. Amazingly, little was written in the Ypsilanti Daily Press of July 13, 1910.

Announcements of the time show that the show was set at the Reinhart Show Grounds on Hamilton Street in Ypsilanti. The show was held for one day only on Tuesday, July 12, 1910. Emblazoned across the announcements was:

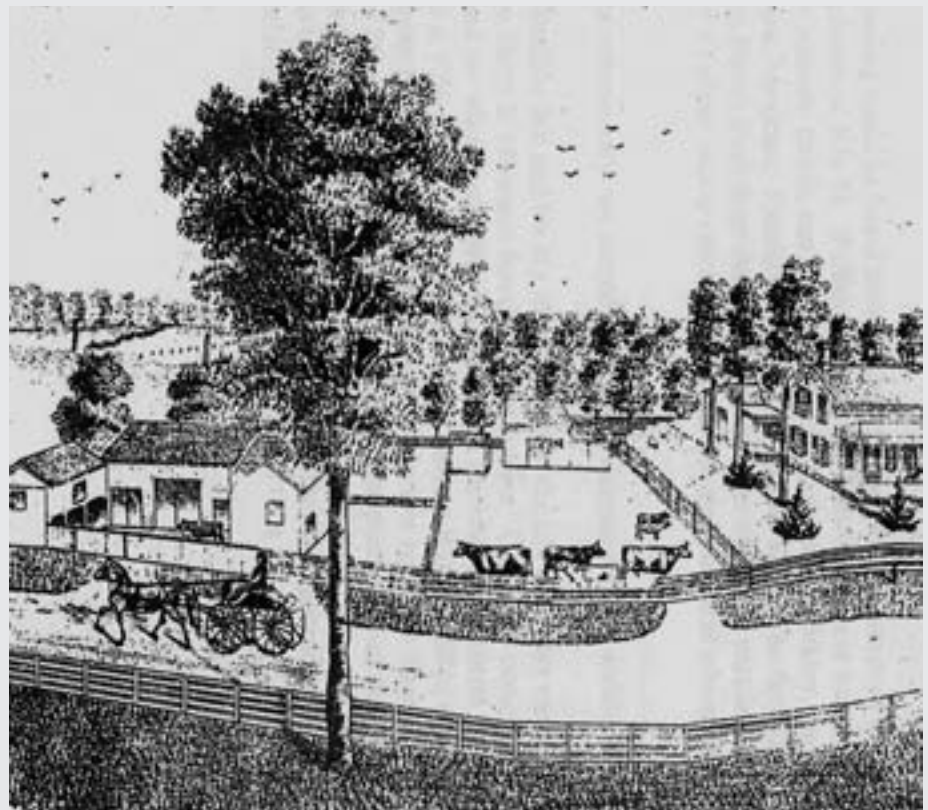
**Buffalo Bill's Wild West
and
Pawnee Bill's Far East
now announce
Buffalo Bill's Last Visit
to this city**



Advertising flyer from the Wild West Show in 1900.



Advertising flyer from the Wild West Show in 1910.



Sketch of the residence of David Cody in 1876 located in section 20 and 21 of Pittsfield Township.

Presentations were announced as being from “both sides of the earth” and Pawnee Bill’s show was “an oriental spectacle” while Buffalo Bill’s was “historic and genuine.” The show was to have “Colonel William F. Cody the only and original Buffalo Bill with his roughriders of the world.” Acts included in the magnificent show were: Wild Bucking Broncos, Rhoda Royal’s 20 trained Horses, Football Playing Horses, Rossi’s Musical Elephants and Ray Thompson’s Trained Range Horses.

Realism Runs Rampant...Peerless Pageant of Pleasure!

Two Exhibitions Daily, 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm rain or shine. Admissions including seats were 50 cents. At the exhibition admission was \$1.00 all tickets could be bought at Spasbury’s Drug Store at 112 Congress Street in Ypsilanti. The Ypsilanti Daily Press featured a story about three youngsters who “walked” all the way from Ann Arbor to see the show. The three had no money but walked 10 miles to see the show. *“Barefooted, hatless little urchins from Ann Arbor...having no money they were only able to sneak into one of the sideshows and later found by the police and barely able to walk from fatigue and hunger they were driven back to Ann Arbor by two police officers. Oh, all three were reported as saying: “they saw the fat woman and liked her.”*

Reported in the *Washtenaw Times*, as well, was the following comment: *“Thieving is inevitable on or near the grounds of a large traveling show, but the Wild West detectives and local police worked with a will yesterday and kept losses down to a minimum.”* Even Pawnee Bill’s show had been plagued by thieves and pickpockets who took advantage of the draw of the shows to break and enter into houses of locals who were at the shows. Items stolen were reported as: diamonds, watches, robes, and lots of jewelry.

The summer of 1910 was the last year that Buffalo Bill played in Ypsilanti. He went on with his show and appeared in two other productions with other showmen of the times. However, Buffalo Bill did a series of plays known as Buffalo Bill’s Combination. It played in Marshall, Battle Creek, Saginaw, Bay City, Grand Rapids and Detroit but never again did he appear in Washtenaw County.

Now the story has been told and a nagging historical question answered: Did Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show appear in Ypsilanti. **Yes, He Did! ■**

Contributions by:

- Lyle McDermott, Volunteer, Ypsilanti Historical Society and Lynn Houze, Curatorial Assistant, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming
- *Washtenaw Times* July 13, 1900
- *Ypsilanti Daily Press* July, 1910

History of the Doctoral Degree at Eastern Michigan University continued from page 11

higher education. Higher education institutions are limited to a particular degree level. For example, community colleges, by law, are only allowed to award associate degrees. Private colleges and universities are granted a specific degree status according to the articles of incorporation. Any exception to this must be achieved through a set of regulations governed by the Michigan Department of Education. Public colleges and universities are limited to the degree status identified in their original charters and again, changes must go through procedures established by the Michigan Department of Education as well as approval by various professional accrediting agencies.

When Eastern Michigan was first approved as Michigan State Normal College, it was given the right to award bachelor’s degrees. Also, in 1889, they were actually given permission to award a master’s degree in pedagogy. During the tenure of President Charles McKenny, that degree was eliminated, but they obtained permission for again granting the master’s degree in 1938 through a joint program with the University of Michigan in the training of teachers. The specialist’s degree came about in 1966 when Eastern was able to obtain permission for awarding a degree above the master’s degree. The point is that it is usually very difficult for an institution to move to another level of degree status, but once that permission is given, additional degrees can be offered without going through the rigorous process of an outside evaluation.

When Harold Sponberg promoted the idea of a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, he was really looking for a way to move Eastern Michigan University into the realm of being a doctoral granting university, and he saw Educational Leadership as the most promising way to get there. Now, his dream has come true, and several departments at Eastern are either offering or in the process of offering doctoral degrees based on internal criteria and procedures. ■



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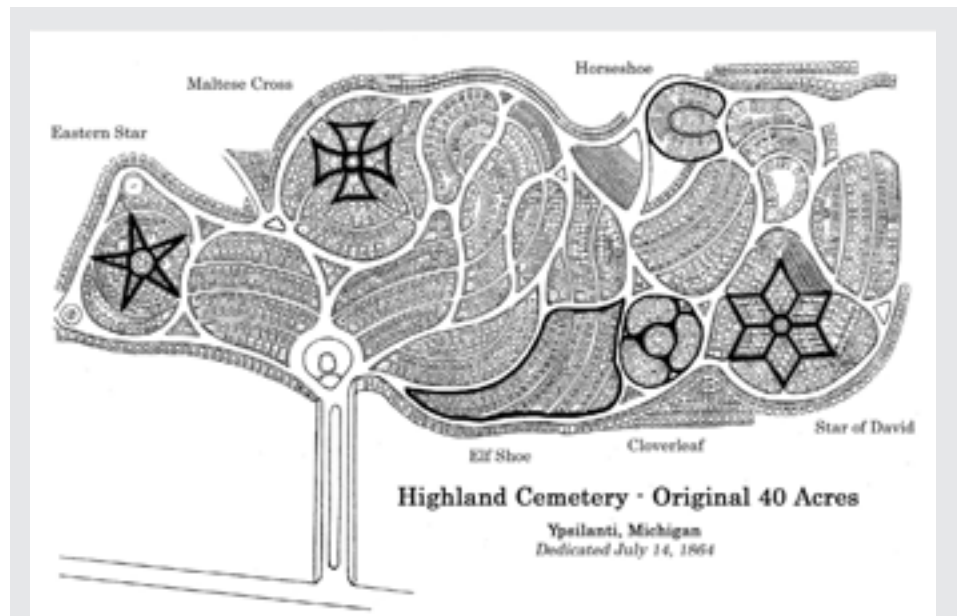
Highland Cemetery – The Beginning

By Al Rudisill

Highland Cemetery is located on land that once belonged to Native Americans, then to the French who were granted claims to it in 1811 after the Revolutionary War, then to English and American settlers who arrived in Ypsilanti from New England, New York and other places. In 1863 it became the property of the stockholders of a “joint stock cemetery association” that was set up by twenty-five prominent men of the City.

The twenty-five men drew up “articles of association” that required the stock of the association be sold in shares of \$50 and... should be limited to \$10,000 in the aggregate.” The articles further provided that the enterprise be under the management of a board of nine directors to be elected by the stockholders. The following gentlemen were chosen: B. Follett, D. Showerman, F. K. Rexford, H. Batchelder, E. Bogardus, A. S. Welch, M. L. Shutts, D. L. Quirk and J. L. Rappelye. Officers elected were: A. S. Welch, President; F. K. Rexford, Secretary; and B. Follett, Treasurer. One hundred-forty shares were eventually sold raising \$7,000 for the purchase and development of Highland Cemetery.

The directors proceeded at once to purchase a tract of land of approximately forty acres that many of them had considered as eminently adaptable for use as a cemetery. The property consisted of portions of the farms of G. S. Hibbard and B. Miller. The soil was light, warm and easily worked and more



Above: The original forty acres of Highland Cemetery as designed by Colonel Glen and dedicated in 1864.

Right: Author Douglas Keister indicated the Maltese Cross could represent the Military or a secret society like the Knights of Pythias.



than half the property was covered with native trees, including oak and hickory. The remainder of the property consisted of grassy knolls and pleasant valleys that were ideal for the development of a natural garden-like setting of winding drives, walks, shrubs, flowers, monuments and ornate sculptures.

There were commanding views, one overlooking the city and the other overlooking a long stretch of river scenery.

The Highland Board moved quickly in July of 1863 to employ Colonel James Lewis *continued on page 19*

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The City of Ypsilanti Tugboat

A tugboat named “The City of Ypsilanti” was recently spotted by Ron Guidebeck on portage Lake. Some research revealed the following facts related to the boat. According to current owner Herb Blattenberger the hull of the boat was built on April 19, 1919 by the General Shipbuilding Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The tugboat was evidently brought to the Ypsilanti area initially by Spencer Davis and his son Jim shortly after World War II. Spencer and Jim purchased a flotilla of lifeboats that had been used on liberty ships with the idea of selling them for a profit. However, according to a story in the Spring 1993 issue of the “Cliffs Landing” newsletter, the business venture was a bust:

“As might be expected, the greatest - and only – reward was from the one they kept for themselves at the cottage. The “Spirit of Ypsilanti” became one of the earliest dreams of this dynamic father and son team. The business venture was a bust. Production problems plagued their endeavor and tempers flared as the design and plan were modified and adjusted. Still, many happy hours were spent cruising the chain of lakes on their hybrid version of an “ocean liner.”

However, the 1993 story probably had the name incorrect as Herb Blattenberger has the original sign from the tug which clearly indicates the name was “The City of Ypsilanti,” rather than the “Spirit of Ypsilanti.” ■



“The City of Ypsilanti” tugboat was recently seen on Portage Lake and further research revealed the current owner is Herb Blattenberger.



This tugboat was one of the early renovations of “The City of Ypsilanti” or another one of the flotilla of lifeboats bought by Spencer Davis.

Highland Cemetery – The Beginning *continued from page 18*

Glen of Niles, Michigan to lay out and map the cemetery grounds. He proceeded that fall, with suitable assistants, to lay out the grounds in a “natural garden-like setting” which reflected the trends for cemetery design in America, France, England and other countries in Europe. When efforts had to be terminated because of the severity of winter, Glen then spent his time projecting in elaborate detail the layout of the entire forty acres. In May of 1864 Glen and his assistants resumed work on staking out the roads and beautifying the landscape. An article in the July 1, 1864 Ypsilanti True Democrat, indicated: “...to say that the results of Col. Glen’s protracted labors are highly satisfactory to the Board is but a mild expression. The truth is, in this direction he is an accomplished artist. His method of embellishment is pre-eminently the natural one.”

If you look at an aerial view of the original layout of Highland Cemetery you can see a number of distinct figures designed into the winding roads and paths. The figures include an Eastern Star, a Maltese Cross, a Horseshoe, an Elf Shoe, a Cloverleaf, and a Star of David. The reason for, and the meaning of, these figures remains a mystery since a review of early Highland Cemetery Board minutes, newspaper articles including several from 1864, and Highland Cemetery literature from 1864 to the present failed to reveal even a mention of the figures. An inquiry to Douglas Keister, author of *Stories in Stone – A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography*, brought the following response: “...the design certainly indicates that certain areas were reserved for certain groups...Eastern Star indicates a Masonic Area, Star of David, Jewish, Maltese Cross could be Military or a secret society like the Knights of Pythias. A wild guess for the elf shoe could be Babyland.” However, there is no evidence that any priority was ever given for the burial of members of certain groups within the blocks where the figures exist. Further, other cemeteries designed by Colonel Glen do not contain figures like those in Highland Cemetery. ■



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- _____ D. I pledge that the total amount of my contribution to the Ypsilanti Historical Society will be payable through my estate upon my death. I have consulted a lawyer and I understand this is an irrevocable pledge that my estate will be obligated to pay to the Ypsilanti Historical Society. This Deferred Pledge Agreement may also be satisfied in part or in full by payments made by me at my discretion during my lifetime.
- _____ E. Transfer of “other assets” such as securities, other personal property or real estate interests. (*Note: The Society reserves the right to accept or reject gifts of other assets pending a due diligence review of the assets, their transferability and the appropriateness of acceptance of such other assets by the Society. This review will be conducted by legal counsel for the Society.*) Donor to provide description of assets being transferred.

EXECUTION: Executed this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Donor: _____ Signature: _____ Donor Address _____

Witness: _____ Signature: _____ Donor City, State & Zip _____

Witness: _____ Signature: _____

ACCEPTANCE: The undersigned, being a duly authorized officer of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, does hereby accept the within contribution/pledge.

Ypsilanti Historical Society Officer Signature: _____ Date: _____

INTERPRETATION: This Agreement shall be interpreted under the laws of the State of Michigan.

How Times Have Changed!

The bill included with this article is the Grace Hospital bill for the birth of Marilyn Freatman (Begole) in 1927. The cost of Labor Room services amounted to a total of \$10.00. The board and room and general care charges for the eleven day stay was \$3.50 per day for the mother and \$1.00 per day for baby Marilyn. The total bill was \$59.50. The back of the bill provided an explanation of the excessive cost of the delivery and eleven day stay:

“An Explanation and a Request: The cost of running a hospital is very high...In explanation of the high cost of hospital care it may be stated that in addition to all the departments of a hotel, we are obliged to maintain an Ambulance Department, an X-Ray and Radio-Therapy Department, a Surgical and Operating Department, a Nurse Training School with trained nurse Supervisors and Instructors, a Department of Physio-Therapy and Hydro-Therapy, a large suite of Laboratories, a completely stocked Drug Store, an Anesthetic Department with a corps of Anesthetists, a large group of Resident Medical Interns and an Attending Staff, comprising many of the leading physicians, surgeons and specialists in the city.

The equipment and personnel for many of these departments are highly technical, specialized and expensive. Notwithstanding the above, your hospital bill per day has been less than you could obtain board and room in a first class hotel.”

STATEMENT

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DETROIT, MICH. JAN 21 1927

ACCOUNT OF *M. Begole*
Mother and Baby

TO THE GRACE HOSPITAL DR.

W. L. BABCOCK, M. D. DIRECTOR

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Services of Anesthetist	<i>11 @ 1.00</i>	<i>11.00</i>
To Nitrous Oxide Gas		
To X-Ray Examinations		
To Operating Room Services		<i>10.00</i>
To Laboratory Examinations		
To Board of Special Nurse		
To Ambulance		
To Telephones		
To Special Medicines		
		<i>59.50</i>

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We don't have the exact cost of what a hospital today would charge for the delivery room and an eleven day stay by a mother and baby but I think it would be safe to say it would be considerably more than the cost of board and room in a first class hotel. Oh, the good old days! ■

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Brooks Food Center: An Ypsilanti Institution *continued from page 3*

beginning, a delivery man would handle orders from all of the local markets in Depot Town on a cooperative basis, but eventually it seemed that one or two stores were generating most of the traffic and the cooperation over deliveries ended. Dan's son, Wilfred, who ran some of the deliveries, remembers an unfortunate accident when the uninsured Brooks delivery truck was struck in the side by another vehicle. He also remembers being chastised by his father, somewhat later, for stopping to visit a special girlfriend on his rounds, a certain Sylvia Burrell, daughter of Mayor Ray H. Burrell, who lived at 912 N. Congress Street. She became his wife in 1939.

Business flagged in Depot Town in the mid-1930s and Dan Brooks decided to move uptown. In 1936, he bought land at 406 W. Michigan Avenue and built a new store. This was a step up from the place in Depot Town and represented the latest in grocery store technology. He continued to offer meats, now from Swift and Co., and kept offering the four-time-a-day delivery schedule.

Before long, the Brooks Market was selling frozen foods, an entirely new product line which had been introduced by Clarence Birdseye to retail outlets in Massachusetts on an experimental basis in 1930. Aimed at those who wanted fruit, vegetables, and meat out of season, frozen foods at first were a glamour product because until after World War II few households had refrigerators that could keep them frozen.

In a canny move, Dan Brooks also decided to keep his store open on nights and Sundays. This was a compromise against the demands of time with family, but it gave him an edge against his big competitors, which still included A & P and Kroger (which had relocated right across the street). Eventually, extended hours became the norm for groceries and many other kinds of businesses.

Yet another innovation at the Brooks Market was self-service. When the store was owned by Davis, customers were served by a clerk behind a counter who assembled requested items and totaled the bill. The new concept

allowed the customer to browse through the goods, as if in a library with open stacks, picking out needed items themselves and maybe a few things that weren't needed but looked interesting. It put the customer in the driver's seat, saved staff resources, and sold more merchandise.

The scale of the market grew slowly but significantly over the years. In 1933, annual sales (less sales tax) were \$23,777. By 1939, at the new location on Michigan Avenue sales were up to \$50,275, they topped \$56,193 in 1944, and in the post-war surge they exceeded \$72,546 in 1946.



Dan Brooks moved his grocery from Depot Town to 406 W. Michigan Avenue in 1936.



Dan Brooks appears ready for business in his newly constructed uptown store at 406 W. Michigan Avenue in 1936. Offering fresh meats and self-service, the market was on the cutting edge in southeastern Michigan.



Dan Brooks was named "grocer of the year" in 1951 on Ron Gamble's WJR radio program. A radio quiz, with give-a-ways, was held on-the-air.

Dan's oldest son, Wilfred, worked at the store as a youth, but struck out on his own for interesting work at Mackinac Island State Park for a couple of summers in 1937-38. Joe Thompson, the local Dodge dealer and chair of the state park commission, helped him land the job. Soon after their marriage, Wilfred and Sylvia moved to the Island, and Wilfred worked as Assistant Park Superintendent. Life was pleasant there in the frozen-in-time atmosphere that made the Island famous. The couple lived in the building outside the fort walls previously used as a morgue. Their first daughter, Joyce, was born there in 1939.

Dan paid for flying lessons for Wilfred and Tom, and they flew back and forth to help out at the store when needed. Once, lost in the fog, the brothers found their way back to Pellston by following railroad tracks. On another occasion, running out of gas, they made an emergency landing on the golf course of the Island's famous Grand Hotel.

The onset of World War II brought many changes. Store hours at the market were cut back and deliveries ended. Wilfred was classified 1-A by the Selective Service for a while, but received a deferment because he returned to Ypsilanti in the fall of 1942 to work in the store (an essential occupation). During the war years, he served in the Michi-

gan National Guard. Tom, however, joined the Air Force and served in both European and Pacific theaters. Donald enlisted in the Army in 1943, trained at Fort Hood, Texas, and was sent to France following the D-Day invasion. He was killed in action there in August 1944.

During the war, Ypsilanti became famous for its role in war production. Among other things, nearby auto factories were temporarily retooled to produce B-24 bombers, and thousands of workers - many from the rural South - surged into the area to man the assembly lines. During the 1940s, Ypsilanti's population grew by a remarkable 51 percent. Ypsilanti's retail businesses, including the Brooks market, struggled at first to keep up with demand but ultimately benefited significantly from the area's growth.

After the war, the Brooks market - now known as Brooks Food Center - continued to thrive and soon outgrew the space at 406 Michigan Avenue. A small addition was made to the back, but it was inadequate. A new building was required, and the space next door at 412 Michigan was just right. The existing house was bought and moved by Wilfred's father-in-law, Ray Burrell, and, as previously noted, the new store was built in 1948. At the same time, the business

"Yet another innovation at the Brooks Market was self-service...The new concept allowed the customer to browse through the goods, as if in a library with open stacks, picking out needed items themselves and maybe a few things that weren't needed but looked interesting."

was incorporated with Wilfred serving as president, Dan as Vice-President, and Tom as Secretary. The old space was used as a restaurant for a short while, then as a coin laundry.

With help from the Lee and Cady warehouse in 1951, a cooperative advertising group was formed among several independent grocers in Washtenaw County, including Brooks *continued on page 24*



For many years, the Brooks Market entered a float in the 4th of July parade competition, and they occasionally won in their category. Here, in the late 1930s, Sylvia and Wilfred Brooks prepare for the parade.

Brooks Food Center:
An Ypsilanti Institution
continued from page 23

Food Center. This gave the participants an economical way to announce sales and special offerings in the local newspapers. It also allowed them to compete for visibility with the growing number of chain stores.

In order to promote better pricing through cooperative buying power, the Brooks' decided in 1960 to affiliate with Super Foods Services, a division of the Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA). The IGA brand further helped the market compete with the chains.

Dan Brooks had an extensive network of business associates and friends, including Fred Walton, Jack Willoughby, George Elliot, Alex Longnecker, Morgan Abbey, Fred Meyers, Jake Dieterle, and many others. But he had a mercurial temperament and sometimes crossed swords with his sons and even his own customers. More than once, after an outburst, his son, Tom, retreated to the local movie theater. But afterwards, Dan would joke and laugh as if nothing had happened.

If Dan brought big ideas and a network of associates to the business, Wilfred and Tom contributed steadiness, common sense, and a willingness to work long hours. Throughout the 1950s, Dan gradually reduced his involvement in store operations and formally retired in 1957. He continued to be involved, giving advice to his sons, and stirring up his popular mustard and radish potato salad, but he and Lottie spent more and more time traveling to favorites haunts like Mexico and Arizona. Meanwhile, Wilfred and Tom kept the store open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm every day of the year, except Christmas. They split the hours and vacation time, and they alternated trips to national trade groups like the National Association of Retail Grocers of the United States (NARGUS).

By now, the sons had growing families of their own that made their days busier than ever. Wilfred and Sylvia had four children: Joyce, Roger, Nancy, and Sally. Tom had married Dorothy Hand in 1949 and had two children: Tom, Jr. and Susan.



The Brooks Market helped introduce frozen foods to Ypsilanti. Here in, 1951, Dan Brooks stands in front of one of the self-service coolers.



The market maintained a large parking lot at the rear of the store. At some point in the late 1950s the checkout counter was moved to the back of the store and the front door was no longer used as an entrance.



The Brooks Food Center team, Wilfred, Dan, and Tom, along with Wilfred's daughter Sally, ca. 1953.



Pat Murphy (left) and Russell Forsyth (right) were loyal employees at Brooks Food Center in the 1950s and early 1960s.



Dan Brooks, Wilfred Brooks, and Tom Brooks at the 1967 grand opening of their new IGA Foodliner market in Petersburg.



Brooks Food Center at 412 W. Michigan Avenue as it looked in 1961. The coin laundry next door, 406 W. Michigan Avenue, was the site of the grocery from 1936 to 1948.

Through the years, Brooks Food Center was well served by several long-time employees, including Wally and Richard Shingledecker, Pat Murphy, Russell Forsyth, and Ken Mericle. Wilfred credits Murphy with teaching him how to cut meat. Forsyth was a member of the Ypsilanti Fire Department - later chief - and he was often called away from his duties at the market to fulfill his fire-fighting responsibilities. Mericle was known for his jaunty waxed moustache and his extensive collection of Kaiser-Fraser cars.

The business continued to thrive, so in 1967 the brothers opened a second store under the IGA banner in Petersburg. This was a major expansion, and it required a significant effort by the whole family. Wilfred and Sylvia made a special effort to become involved in that community as well as Ypsilanti. Sylvia helped out in many ways, including paying

bills and doing payroll, although the formal accounting was still done by A. B. Curtis and Co. In 1982, total sales at the Ypsilanti store reached \$1.32 million; Petersburg sales added another \$1.15 million.

Robbers and thieves were a recurring threat to the Ypsilanti business. At one point, intruders climbed onto the roof at night, cut a hole, and lowered themselves into the store to help themselves. Like his father, Tom could be a bit short tempered, and he was especially irritated by shoplifters. Once, he chased a miscreant out the front door of the store and down the street, finally tossing a meat cleaver at him. In 1978, tragedy struck when gun-toting robbers entered the Ypsilanti store, demanding money. While Wilfred worked to open the safe, Tom sought to leave the store in disgust, and the nervous gunmen killed him.

Dan Brooks died in 1973 and his wife, Lottie, followed in 1986. Both Wilfred's wife, Sylvia, and Tom's wife, Dorothy, died in 2000. After Tom's death, it became increasingly difficult for Wilfred to run the business in two cities without a full working partner. Finally, in 1985, the markets in both Ypsilanti and Petersburg were sold and the corporation was dissolved. The Ypsilanti store, initially sold to Jin Moon, became a Korean market; today, it is operated as Dos Hermanos, a Mexican market.

For more than 80 years, the Brooks family served the Ypsilanti community through the food business, building a reputation for high quality products and customer service. One of the last major food-oriented family enterprises in town, the Brooks market made a lasting impression on the community and set a high standard for today's food emporiums. ■

Museum Advisory Board Report

By Virginia Davis-Brown, Advisory Board Chair

Wow, what a winter! I'm not sure it is over yet, but there are signs of spring and as the snow leaves there are little sprouts trying to come up through the cold soil. The pussy willows are coming out and that is a sure sign of spring. We will just keep waiting and it will be here very soon.



Things are happening at the Museum also as we go into spring. The doll display is gone and we thank Irene Jameson for sharing her wonderful collection with us.

Our new display will be Ernie Griffin's collection of bottles from Ypsilanti dairies. I did not know that there were so many dairies in Ypsilanti. Can you remember when the milkman came to the house with your milk?

Starting April 13 and running through April 27 we will be holding our annual Art Exhibit featuring artists from the local area. Put the dates on your calendar and make plans to bring the family or a friend for a wonderful afternoon out and see what talent is out there.

The annual calendar has been set and you might like to review it on the YHS web site (at ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org) so you won't miss anything.

Lost Ypsilanti will start July 20 and run through August 31. This year, I am told, it will be people as well as sites. You will want to come in and see how Ypsilanti has grown and changed and learn more about some of the people who have made our city so great.

As you start your spring cleaning you may find that old dress or something that grandma had in the 1800s or 1900s or those older children's clothes that you or your siblings wore and you are not sure what to do with them. Why not give them to the museum so they will be taken care of and put on display so others can come and see them.

September seems like a long way off but it will be here before we know it. If you are a quilter, know of someone who quilts or have a quilt you would like to put on exhibit please call 482-4990 or 484-0080 and we will send you all the information.

Some of you have met our interns from the graduate program in Historical Preservation from Eastern Michigan University and found them to be helpful and pleasant. They will both be graduating and leaving us at the end of April. We want to thank Jessica Williams and Katie Dallos for all their help and support. We will miss both of them and wish them the best as they pursue their careers. They will be in our thoughts and prayers.

Remember the museum is a wonderful program for any organization or school group and we have tours available either during our regular open hours or at other pre-arranged times. For more information or to schedule a tour please call the museum at 734-482-4990.

Hope to see you soon at the Museum and remember the Tiffany window is on display. ■

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Wayside Signs & the Historical Museum

By Bill Nickels

Our Historical Museum is one of six Ypsilanti sites about to receive a Wayside Sign from MotorCities. MotorCities is a National Heritage Area and an affiliate of the National Park Service dedicated to telling the automotive history of the metropolitan Detroit area. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and MotorCities are cosponsors of the Wayside Sign program that will eventually have signs throughout the area telling the automotive history of sites in southeastern Michigan.



The new MotorCities sign that will be placed alongside the sidewalk entrance to the Museum.

All of the signs will have similar styles and will display the MotorCities and National Park Service logos. When 220 N. Huron was an apartment house, it housed war workers during World War II and now archives much of the automotive history of our area.

Ypsilanti will be the first community to have their signs installed later this spring. Our 2' x 3' Wayside Sign will be installed by Huron Sign Company on the walkway that leads to the museum porch. The project is funded by the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, Ypsilanti Convention & Visitors Bureau, MotorCities, and MDOT. ■

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