



WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PLANNING, IDEA MEETING FOR PLANT SALE SLATED

Do you do any kind of craft or handwork? Or do you have some ideas of simple projects to make? Even if you don't, would you be willing to learn and make some simple items to supplement plants at the annual WCHS plant sale?

Chairman Lois Foyle would like to make the sale bigger and better than ever. She invites you to come to a planning and idea meeting Monday, March 13, from 12 to 2 p.m. in Liberty Hall at Ann Arbor Federal.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS! TIME TO PAY 1978 DUES

Calling all WCHS members and those who would like to join: 1978 membership dues are now due and payable to Ethelyn S. Morton, secretary, at 2708 Brockman Blvd., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48104.

Dues are \$3 per person, \$6 for a couple. Membership includes monthly programs and *The Impressions*, published September through May.

Angela Dobson, membership chairman, and Mrs. Morton, plan to mail reminders soon. Remember, WCHS needs you—everyone of you.

MAPLE SYRUP OUTING PLANNED IN MARCH

March is maple syrup time in Michigan, as well as in Vermont and elsewhere, and Vice-President Leigh Anderson is making plans for a special WCHS outing to learn about local syrup making and hopefully to see it made, if nature cooperates. The outing will probably be on a Saturday. More details later.

GREAT SAUK TRAIL, OLD CHICAGO ROAD WILL BE HERB BARTLETT'S TOPIC AT FEBRUARY WCHS MEETING

A retired highway engineer, who became interested in the old Chicago road as a teenager in Coldwater when he saw a section of the old corduroy surface uncovered, will talk about the road at the next WCHS meeting.

He is Herbert H. Bartlett, a past president and board member of WCHS. His topic is "The Great Sauk Trail and Its Successor, The Old Chicago Road." He will speak at 8 p.m. Thursday, February 23, in Liberty Hall at Ann Arbor Federal Savings, Liberty at

Division Streets, Ann Arbor.

Bartlett was a waterboy on a sewer construction project in Coldwater when he saw logs from the old road uncovered. His great-grandfather had kept a tavern on the road near the Hillsdale-Branch county line.

Bartlett came to Ann Arbor in 1909 and was graduated from the U-M College of Engineering. Researching the history of the road from one end to the other has been a longtime special project of his. He will illustrate his talk with maps.

ST. ANDREW'S COBBLESTONE CONNECTION TO BE FOCUS OF PUBLIC PROGRAM FEATURING HISTORY, DANCE, FILM

Cobblestone Farm Association will join with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in a special program at 8 p.m. Wednesday, February 22, to commemorate the fourth anniversary of Cobblestone and the sesquicentennial year of the church congregation.



BLIZZARD OF '78 STOPS JANUARY 'ICE AGE' PROGRAM

The WCHS program on Michigan in the Ice Age which was to have been January 26 had to be postponed because of the "Blizzard of '78."

Vice-President Leigh Anderson has re-scheduled the program for April. Dr. Gerald R. Smith, director of the U-M museum of paleontology and associate curator of the museum of zoology, will speak on "Ice Age Animals and Environments in Michigan."

The connection between the two is that Dr. Benajah Ticknor, the naval surgeon who built Cobblestone Farm house in 1844, was a senior warden of the vestry of St. Andrew's in 1855.

Guy Larcom and Wystan Stevens will narrate the program featuring events in the history of the church and excerpts from Dr. Ticknor's diary. The Cobblestone Country Dancers, directed by David Park Williams, will dance popular 19th century New England dances including the Ticknor Quadrille and Hull's Victory, named for the Commodore of the U.S.S. Constitution. There will be piano and fiddle accompaniment.

A new film produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "A Place in Time," will be shown.

The program will be in the church recreation room at 306 N. Division St. The public is invited. Parking is available in the church lot and behind Community High School.

GREAT BLIZZARD OF '88 RECALLED

The recent "Blizzard of '78," January 26-28, which forced cancellation of the WCHS meeting and almost everything else in several states invites comparison with the legendary "Great Blizzard of '88."

The 1888 storm crippled New York City and much of the northeastern United States March 11-14 that year, but extended west no farther than Buffalo, according to Author Hal Butler in *Nature at War*.

Ann Arbor newspapers of March 1888 report on "The Horrors of the Storm" in the east but suggest only that spring was a little late in Ann Arbor although there were severe storms to the north and west during that month.

The *Ann Arbor Courier* of March 21 reported that "Ice yachting is the pleasure of North Lakers just now" while the March 16 *Ann Arbor Argus* said "An ice boat on Silver Lake, belonging to James Watts, makes a mile in a minute and a half."

The March 14 *Courier* said "John Doch of Manchester has harvested 800 tons of ice this winter." Both papers carried advertisements of a downtown merchant's sale of damaged merchandise because a water pipe had burst. Presumably it froze.

Butler says 400 people died in the 1888 storm, 200 in New York City alone. A Long Island farmer became lost going from barn to house, stumbled exhausted into a snowdrift and froze to death.

Two hundred boats were sunk or grounded from Chesapeake Bay north, according to Butler, and hundreds of horses and cattle froze. Boston was "snowed in" and Philadelphia "buried," he says, but its effect on New York City is best known.

The big storm was a surprise to everyone including the Weather Bureau, he said. The forecast was "cooler, light snow." But similar to the recent blizzard here, a cold front with gale winds and snow

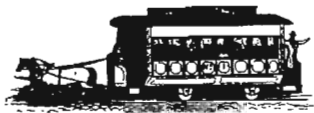
collided with a warm front.

The 1888 snowfall was 20.9 inches and drifted as high as 18 feet, Butler says. Remnants of some drifts did not completely melt until June or July it was reported.

A December 26, 1947, snowfall of 25.8 inches in New York City finally exceeded the snowfall of the 1888 storm and was the deepest on record but did not qualify as a blizzard because there were no accompanying winds.

The U.S. Weather Bureau defines a blizzard as a severe winter snowstorm accompanied by low temperatures and winds of at least 32 miles an hour, Butler notes.

The word "blizzard" is derived from blast and bluster and came into general use in North America during the particularly frigid winter of 1880-81, he says.



The *Argus* story, dated New York, March 13, says, "The hardest snowstorm of the year by far raged in New York City Monday. . . . Traffic was almost suspended. . . . Thousands of persons were blockaded on elevated railroads. . . . Horse cars were entirely unable to move. People in suburban towns found it almost impossible to reach the city.

"In hundreds of streets loaded wagons have been abandoned and horses taken to the nearest stables. . . . The oldest person never saw its equal."

A Philadelphia dispatch says, "In this city the storm was the worst ever known, traffic being almost entirely suspended. Houses were unroofed and trees uprooted. The Pennsylvania Railroad was brought to a standstill. No trains were sent out Tuesday."

Train No. 6 with about 50 New York legislators on board left Rochester at 10:30 a.m. Monday,

March 12, 1888, and became stalled in snow five miles east of Schenectady at 5 p.m. that day, the *Argus* says.

Food on the train was gone and ham and potatoes were obtained from the nearest house, 40 rods away. A Rochester millionaire and a Buffalo statesman cooked for hungry passengers. Next morning a relief train took them to Schenectady, where five trains were stalled with no prospect of getting out today (March 13), the *Argus* says. A stock train was snowed in ahead of No. 6. "The stock all froze to death last night," the dispatch said.

The *Courier* reported "A terrific snow and windstorm prevailed on the 8th throughout Minnesota and Dakota" and that "All railways in Northern Michigan were blocked by snow on the 22nd and in some towns the thermometer registered 25 degrees below zero."

The *Courier* continued, "Storm, ice, and high water damage are reported from various points in the west on the 20th. In portions of Dakota and Minnesota the heaviest snowfall of the winter prevailed and in Western Kansas and Nebraska heavy storms of sleet and snow damaged fruit and livestock."

Darkest Hours by J. Robert Nash, listing various disasters throughout history, notes that a five-state blizzard in 1886 killed 80 percent of the cattle in Kansas and that a February 8, 1891, blizzard in the mid and northwest United States has been called the worst ever known. Frozen winds of 30 to 80 miles per hour struck Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, and 23 died.

While some residents of Montana and the Dakotas have questioned that the New York "Blizzard of '88" was the worst winter storm ever to hit the United States, Butler says it has become a part of American folklore, helped by a

club of survivors, "The Blizzard Men of '88" some of whom survived into the 1950's.

At any rate, it probably affected more people. New York was the biggest and most congested metropolis in the country, and one-fourth of the nation's population lived in the northeast part of the U.S., Butler points out.

Here in Ann Arbor and the midwest where there has been some speculation that another ice age is coming, perhaps residents tired of shoveling snow might emulate a couple of New Yorkers of 1888.

Butler relates, "One man finding a fifteen-foot-high drift in front of his house put a sign on the snow pile: THIS SNOW FOR SALE. Another facetiously placed a notice on a snowdrift that said: LOST IN THIS PILE OF SNOW, A VALUABLE DIAMOND. FINDER MAY KEEP IT."

The Ann Arbor Courier, March 14, 21 and 28, 1888, in Michigan Historical Collections, U-M Bentley Library. *The Ann Arbor Argus*, March 16 and 23, on microfilm in U-M Graduate Library.



THE MILK MAN COMETH

"The Mills Brothers have made a change in their mode of delivering milk which is greatly appreciated by their patrons. Instead of serving milk in the old way, sitting in the wagon and ringing a bell at the doors of their customers while some woman waded out through snow or mud to the milkwagon or by filling a pail suspended from a tree or hitching post and then leave the milk to be drunk by some mischievous boys or to freeze until someone can rescue it, they now deliver it in the houses in clean glass pint or quart bottles, which are air tight."

From *Ann Arbor Argus*, March 23, 1888.

Editor's Note: The Mills brothers were sons of Stephen Mills, the local pioneer builder of adobe houses in Greek Revival style, discussed in the September, 1977, *Impressions*.

J. STERLING MORTON, FOUNDER OF ARBOR DAY EXPELLED BY U-M, BECAME AGRICULTURE SECRETARY

Remember "The Case of the Ill-Gotten Elm" told in the April 1977 *Impressions* by former Ann Arborite Fred Bishop? Bishop related how a couple of University professors swiped young trees to plant in their own yards. One was observed by the irate owner, a German farmer, who made the tree-napper dig up his newly planted tree and return it to the farmer's woodlot.

Well, not only did some U-M professors take trees; the University earlier expelled the man who later founded Arbor Day twice!

He was J. Sterling Morton who entered the University in 1850. He was later Secretary of Agriculture in the second cabinet of President Grover Cleveland and mentioned as a Democratic nominee for president in the 1890's.

Young Morton was editor and founder of the first U-M student publication, *Peninsular Quarterly and University Magazine*. A sketch in *Michigan and the Cleveland Era* suggests that he was "probably not an excellent student" and apparently "concentrated in the field of extracurricular activities."

Late in Morton's senior year, a few weeks before graduation, the U-M Regents dismissed a member of the medical faculty, Dr. J. Adams Allen, a friend and fellow Chi Psi fraternity brother of Morton's. At a citizen protest meeting that evening, Morton, ever

a man of strong convictions and sharp tongue, spoke on behalf of his friend. Next day he was informed that he was "removed from the privileges of the University."

His dismissal so close upon dismissal of a prominent faculty member stirred letters to editors and editorial attacks in Michigan. President Tappan and the faculty hastily reconsidered and reinstated him, but two weeks later re-expelled him and that was final.

After dismissal he worked as a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*. He married a Detroitier and the young couple moved to the newly opened territory of Nebraska late in 1854 where he became an important figure. He was soon a member of the legislature and editor of the *Nebraska City News* among other things.

He started Arbor Day in 1872. By 1892 it was a state holiday in every state but one.

Although he belatedly accepted a bachelor's degree in 1858, he sarcastically declined a U-M honorary degree in the 1890's.

Through the years he "seemed to take special delight in granting favors to not-too-successful Michigan graduates, and then reminding his father of the relative failure of these possessors of Dr. Tappan's diplomas."

Cleveland appointed him to his cabinet even though Morton was his severe critic. Morton had said

IT'S TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN WCHS

Dues are \$3 per person, \$6 for a couple, for 1978 calendar year. WCHS meets monthly, September through June. Membership includes subscription to *The Impressions*.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code _____

Send with check or money order to Mrs. Ethelyn Morton, Secretary, 2708 Brockman Blvd., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104.

Cleveland was unfit to be president and "the President has a big belly. His brains are not proportioned to it."

Not even George Washington and Abraham Lincoln escaped his barbed pen, however. In connection with his criticism of Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, he also castigated Washington for his handling of the Whiskey Insurrection, calling him a "poor old fogy" and "an ass."

He died in 1902 and the *Chicago Tribune*, never his supporter, had a good word for his "unswerving honesty and undoubted ability." "He has frequently been alluded to as the most prominent citizen of Nebraska, but his prominence extended all over the United States," the *Tribune* said.

One of Morton's four sons was Secretary of the Navy under Theodore Roosevelt. Two others founded and carried on Morton Salt Co.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society—Harold Jones will talk about how to get started tracing your family tree at 8 p.m. Monday, March 13, in the McKune Memorial Library. February meeting canceled.

Dexter Historical Society—Annual arts and crafts fair Satur-

day, March 18, at Dexter High School. A variety of crafts will be demonstrated and luncheon served. Admission is charged.

The museum, closed during the winter, will be open to the public from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 8.

Manchester Historical Society—8 p.m. Monday, February 27, at Emanuel United Church of Christ.

Milan Historical Society—7:30 p.m. on third Wednesday of month at Milan Community House.

Saline Historical Society—8 p.m. Tuesday, February 21, at Saline High School.

Ypsilanti Historical Society—Easter egg decorating program 2-4 p.m. Sunday, March 12, at the museum, by Esther Ensign and others.

YPSILANTI ELECTS OFFICERS

Ypsilanti Historical Society elected three new board members—Ann McCarthy, Michael Philbin and A. P. Marshall—at its annual meeting in January. The board then re-elected Dr. William Edmunds as president and Herbert Cornish as vice-president. Secretary Dottie Disbrow and Treasurer Fred Peters serve by appointment.

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CAN YOU DATE THIS?

The following is quoted from an Ann Arbor newspaper:

"This matter of population has already become one of the most perplexing political problems of the time, and philanthropists and statesmen are propounding schemes for the amelioration of the increasing want and misery which is an inevitable result of an unregulated and rapidly increasing population . . . The population market will become glutted.

"This monstrous misinterpreted doctrine of 'Increase and multiply' has been the life curse of thousands and thousands of fathers."

It also said a following article would tell how to limit children. Date of above item will be in next issue.

LANSING MAN TO SPEAK

Richard Hathaway of the Michigan State Library staff in Lansing will speak at the next meeting of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, February 26, at Washtenaw Community College. He will speak on how genealogists can use the state library. A 1 p.m. individual help session is held before each meeting.

WASHTENAW COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEETING

8 P. M. THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 23, 1978
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