

# Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## WCHS Fall Educational Programs Start Sunday September 18

WCHS programs are held on the third Sunday of the month from 2-4 PM and are free for our members and the public. Refreshments are usually served. All Society members will receive a post card with information of the upcoming event and location. We try to hold our programs at interesting locations with a historical significance.

## Mark Your Calendars

Information about the September and October programs is on the back page. The November program will be held on the 20th. The 2012 Winter-Spring programs will be February 19, March 18 and April 15.

## The Museum Fence has been Restored

MoMS fence and exterior signage were repaired and restored this summer at the corner of Main & Beakes at E. Kingsley.

Fingerle Lumber Company replaced the broken spindles then repaired and re-used the original spindles when possible. The large newels were also repaired, and new cedar rails and skirts were installed.



Grafaktori, Inc. designed and installed attractive new signage that really updates our look. Fence painting is being completed now by Kevin Carlisle. All of the work has been carefully done with no harm to our garden. See page 3 for some before and after pictures.

## Your Membership Does Make a Difference

In 1857, membership in the Society was composed entirely of pioneers, limited to men and women who had been residents of the county for at least twenty years, and the membership fee was twenty-five cents a year.

In 2011, Washtenaw County Historical Society members are diverse in every way possible. Some have generations of history in the county and others have just arrived. Some have moved away and kept their membership and Michigan connection. All of our members are family. You are the special guests we invite to celebrate new exhibit openings, attend events and programs.

We like the way you share your ideas, volunteer when you can and just enjoy being a Friend of History. Your membership dues support our programs and the ongoing expenses of operating the museum. You are contributing to the success of this historic pre-Civil war house museum that provides enriching experiences for students, the citizens of our community and the many people who visit our area each year. **THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND OF HISTORY!**

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

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## The President's Letter: Preparing for Autumn on Main Street



As fall rapidly approaches Board members and staff are lining up tasks to complete before the new year—a strategic plan review, policy reviews (last year we added Whistleblower, Conflict of Interest and Document Retention policies), 2012 budget preparation, future program planning and future exhibit planning all in addition to daily on going activities.

During this past summer a special committee of the board was formed to review membership structure and dues levels. You will be pleased to know that the committee concluded that membership dues should not be increased. But you will be hearing more about structural enhancements and a revised membership form will be inserted in the November *Impressions*, the same timing as last year.

Our fence replacement project over the summer made quite a mess for a few weeks, but rebuilding was past due and looks great now! Drive by or, better, stop by and take a close-up look at the renewed fence and signs. The Board certainly wishes to thank everyone who made a special contribution toward the project.

In the past couple of years, in addition to normal maintenance (lots required on an 1835—1839 house) we have added storm windows, cured the roof of moss growth, added heating wires to prevent ice dams on the roof, replaced some gutters and downspouts and now replaced the fence and signage—all fairly major projects. Hopefully, we can get through a year or two without launching another major project.

*Leslie Loomans*



#### Washtenaw County Historical Society

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#### Museum on Main Street

500 N. Main Street

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

(at the corner of E. Kingsley & Beakes)

#### Museum Hours

Saturday & Sunday,

12 Noon – 4:00 PM

and by appointment for groups or individuals

#### Current Civil War Exhibit

"Behind the Lines"

Ends October 23, 2011

Check us out, on the web and



[www.WashtenawHistory.org](http://www.WashtenawHistory.org)

# Thank you to our fence donors for being a Friend of History



**BEFORE:** Broken spindles, rotting wood



**AFTER:** New and restored spindles, beveled skirt



**AFTER:** 10 new larger cedar posts were installed

Ralph P. Beebe  
Ralph H. Beuhler  
Elizabeth S. Bishop  
Susan Blake  
Anne & James Breiholz  
*In memory of Naomi James*  
Ross W. Campbell  
William & Janet Cassebaum  
Alice S. Cohen  
Richard Creal  
Jean Crump  
Angela J. DelVecchio  
Caroline Dieterle  
Joseph & Ann Edwards  
*In honor of Ryneason & Edwards ancestors*  
Tom & Cathy Freeman  
*In memory of Carol W. Freeman*  
Raymond & Suzanne Goodrich  
Cozette Grabb  
Jay & Margery Haite  
Patricia Hatch  
Peter & Rita Heydon  
Priscilla Hildebrandt  
*In memory of Marguerite & Nate Fairchild*  
Taylor & Charlene Jacobsen  
Mrs. Ted Kennedy, Jr.  
Barbara & Michael Kilbourn  
Alan & Sandra Kortesoja  
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Linda & James Wight  
Dorothy Novy Wilson  
Lars Bjorn & Susan Cee Wineberg  
*In memory of Marjorie Reade*

# Where Notable poets and authors lived the quiet life in Ann Arbor

## Memories and Musings

by Dale R. Leslie

Dale R. (for radio), as he is often referred to from his radio broadcasting days, is an avid writer primarily about local history

In a short drive around Ann Arbor you can see no fewer than 10 home sites where noted poets and authors resided.

With a stop at the Fairview Cemetery, the curious can find the inconspicuous grave of poet Robert Hayden who was raised in Detroit, later lived at 1201 Gardner Street in Ann Arbor and he taught at the University of Michigan in the 1970s.



Americans admire Hayden's widely anthologized poem about his father, "Those Winter Sundays," and his powerful poem

about the slave trade, "Middle Passage." A Hopwood Award recipient, Hayden's most notable tenure was as a consultant in poetry to the U.S. Library of Congress, later changed to Poet Laureate. He was the first African-American to hold the post.

Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew that poet Robert Frost had lived in Ann Arbor on two separate occasions. And later, acclaimed playwright and U-M alumnus Arthur Miller rented an upstairs apartment at 411 N. State Street when he entered the University in 1934.



This photograph was taken in 1925 by Frost's neighbor and friend, Jean Paul Slusser of the U-M art school, outside his rented house on Pontiac Trail.

I was surprised to learn about the former residence of author Betty Smith at 1314 Broadway St., whose published works include "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn."

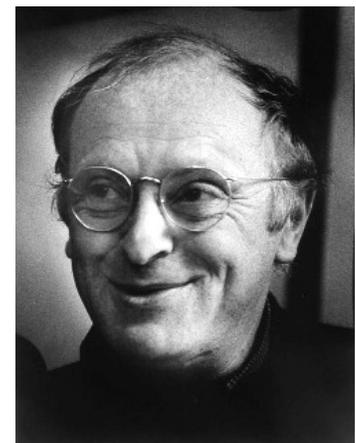


In the 1940s, Harriett Simpson Arnow, the author of the widely read novel "The Doll Maker," moved with her husband, a former journalist with the defunct *Detroit Times* newspaper, to a comfortable home in Ann Arbor Township. Other Ann Arbor notable resident-writers include poet in residence Jane Kenyon, 2896 Newport Road and Joseph Brodsky, a Russian-American poet, essayist, and Nobel Laureate in Literature, who lived at 309 Wesley Street.



In 1944, Ms. Arnow and her family moved to Detroit, a setting that would act as the inspiration for her best known work *The Dollmaker*. In 1950 the family made Ann Arbor home and Ms. Arnow's career soared to new levels.

It has been said that well-known people in the arts and politics prefer to reside in Ann Arbor because the residents respect their privacy. Robert Hayden, however, was an outgoing, familiar bus passenger in town. He would ride the bus from campus (State and William Streets) to Packard Road and Gardner Street, just a few steps from his home. ❖



Joseph Brodsky received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1987 and became the first foreign-born citizen to be appointed Poet Laureate of the United States, serving from 1991 to 1992. In this capacity he followed in the footsteps of an American poet whom he revered — Robert Frost, who had taught at Michigan some five decades earlier.

# 154 Years of Keeping Local History



On December 17, 1857, 19 citizens of Ann Arbor called for “a county convention for the purpose of forming a County Historical Association” to be composed of anyone from the townships who cared to attend. The first meeting of the Washtenaw Historical Society was held at the Court House and John Geddes was the chair. The objectives were “to cultivate social relations, collect and preserve biographical sketches and historical facts and reminiscences, and transmit the same to future generations”. No records of meetings beyond 1862 have been found to date. It appears the organization continued and that artifacts and archival material continued to be collected but the Civil War may have been the reason for the suspension of meetings.

On August 19, 1873 Gen. Edward Clark, President of the Ann Arbor Pioneer & Historical Society called for a meeting to reactivate the county society and we became ‘The Pioneer Society of the County Washtenaw.’ Alpheus Felch, ex-governor of Michigan, former Justice of the Peace, former U.S. Senator and a UM law professor was elected president. Members had to be a resident of the county for at least 20 years and dues were 25 cents a year. One of the goals was to publish a history of Washtenaw County

Mrs. J. H. Pierce was paid to compile the papers which had accumulated, and a Historical Committee was appointed to confer with publishers, relative to compiling and printing the *History of Washtenaw County*. In 1880 Mr. Chapman from C. C. Chapman and Company of Chicago, and others came to Ann Arbor and prepared the history, which was published in 1881. This 1,452 page volume is the principal source of information on the early history of Washtenaw County.

Because the Society was composed entirely of pioneers, many of them elderly when they joined, the membership gradually dwindled away. The Society held no meetings after 1925. In 1929, a new constitution was necessary because the organizers discovered that the old charter had expired in 1906. Believing that the pioneer designation was no longer appropriate and that the word county limited the activities of the Society too narrowly, they chose the name Washtenaw Historical Society with the idea that the activities might extend to an area beyond the county boundary. Members of the Pioneer Society were invited to become charter members of the new society. Upon expiration of that charter, the Society reincorporated in 1955. When that charter expired in 1985, we were reincorporated in perpetuity as a non-profit organization and the name was changed to Washtenaw County Historical Society. ❖

## There are lots of ways you can help the WCHS continue to grow and serve the community

Members can remember the WCHS in their wills when they make their estate plans. This is an excellent way to provide financial support to the Society. Another way to help the Society and your tax position is a gift of paid-up life insurance. Individuals may find themselves with a paid life insurance policy that no longer serves its original purpose of providing financial support for a spouse or children. By assigning the policy as a gift to the Society, the donor receives a tax deduction for a contribution in the amount of the cash-value of the policy. The Society receives the benefit of the policy upon the donor's death. Confer with your tax consultant before making any decisions.

Property may also be donated with significant tax advantages. The land you own can even be donated now while reserving the right to use it for the remainder of your lifetime. Gifts of Securities can also be advantageous to the donor in that capital gains taxes can usually be avoided. Some employers will match your donations to qualified charitable or educational organizations. ❖

## “A Step Back in Time”

The Washtenaw County Historical Society offers self-guided 4K and 10K walking tours of historical locations. The tours take walkers to Kerrytown, UM Central Campus, Downtown Ann Arbor, the Old West Side, and Lowertown. This walking tour has some hilly terrain on city sidewalks. A downloadable podcast tour is available at [www.WashtenawHistory.org](http://www.WashtenawHistory.org)

## Impressions by Email

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

# Summer at the Museum on Main Street



About 20 members of the Greiner family in town for a wedding toured the house this past June. The earlier Greiner family lived in the house from 1890 to 1915. On June 7, 1901 Louise and her sisters penciled their names on the door to the attic. The names can still be seen and the family saw them on their recent visit. They were given a postcard of the house from a 1900 picture and we took a 2011 group photo in front of the house. The front entrance is unchanged from the day it was added to the original structure in 1839.

## Civil War Exhibit ends October 23

"Behind the Lines" opened in April 2011 and over 700 people have seen the exhibit. Many visitors have completed the surveys and we appreciate the positive response. This August, WCHS member Ann Edwards shared a wonderful family treasure with us. Her husband Joe, had a grandfather named Isaiah Ryneerson who served in the Civil War. Ann brought the family history scrapbook and framed collection of his awards to the Museum. Come see them for yourself before the exhibit closes on October 23rd. One of Isaiah's sons, Elton J. Ryneerson, Sr., coached football at Eastern Michigan for 26 seasons. His teams compiled a record of 114-58-15. In one six-year period, from 1925-30, Ryneerson's teams won 40 games, tied two and lost just four. EMU's Ryneerson football stadium is named in his honor.

This excerpt about Isaiah is from *A Twentieth Century History of Berrien County Michigan* by Judge Orville W. Coolidge: "Isaiah had been reared upon the home farm in Ohio until eighteen years of age, early becoming familiar with the duties and labors that fall to the lot of the agriculturist, while in the winter seasons he mastered the branches of learning taught in the public schools. At the age of eighteen, however, he could no longer content himself at the plow when the fires of patriotism burned bright within his breast and accordingly, in 1862, he enlisted as a member of Company B, 110th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, under Capt. David B. Langston. He participated in the three days' engagement at Winchester, Virginia, and joined the army of the Potomac after the battle of Gettysburg. He took part in the battles of Brandy Station, Mine Run and the Wilderness and in the second day of the fight at the last named place, on the 5th of May, 1864, he lost his left leg at age 21. He was then sent to the general hospital at Washington, where he was honorably discharged on the 2nd of November, 1864. He made a great sacrifice for his country and was always found as a loyal and valorous defender of the Union cause. Certainly the nation owes to these soldier boys a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid". ❖

## MoMS Needs Help with the Garden

Fall is the time for garden cleanup. This is the time of the year when we begin thinking about putting our gardens to bed for the winter. One of our biggest jobs is preparing the garden for the cold months ahead and next springs planting. If you have 30 minutes to one hour per week this season to volunteer, and can help with some routine garden maintenance, please call 734-662-9092 or email [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)

## The Gift Shop welcomes our New Coordinator

We are looking forward to having Sally Silvennoinen, our new Gift Shop coordinator, join the WCHS team. We carry many interesting items including books about local history, post cards, note cards, gifts, and books pertaining to the current exhibit. All proceeds from sales go toward support of our Museum.



## The Kempf House

312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor  
[kempfhousmuseum@gmail.org](mailto:kempfhousmuseum@gmail.org)

**Sunday September 18 3-4:30 pm**

### Kaffeeklatsch Garden Fundraiser

in the historic Kempf House garden.

Serving coffee, tea, and tasty traditional German coffee cakes.

\$10 with reservation; \$12 at the door.

Space limited. For reservations call

734-994-4898 or email

[kempfhousmuseum@gmail.org](mailto:kempfhousmuseum@gmail.org).

**Wednesday September 21**

### Noon Lecture

"A Green Home Remodeled and Retrofit" Douglas Selby, CEO of Meadowlark Builders will discuss emerging technologies for making homes green, with an emphasis on the older home.

\$1 for members, \$2 non-members.

**Sunday September 25 1-4 pm**

Open House with guided tour. Visit this 1853 Greek Revival house, home of a musical German-American family; furnished with Victorian antiques including Ann Arbor's first grand piano, an 1877 Steinway. Admission free, donations appreciated.

**Wednesday September 28**

**Noon Lecture.** "The Genealogy of the Greek Revival Style of Architecture". Ilene and Norm Tyler, Quinn Evans architect and EMU preservation professor tell about their research in Greece into the style of several Ann Arbor homes. \$1 for members, \$2 non-members.

The Washtenaw County Historical Consortium is a volunteer organization representing 27 museums, libraries, and historical attractions in and around Washtenaw County, Michigan. Member organizations can post their events directly to the online calendar and we will list as many as we can in our newsletter. Check out [www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium](http://www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium)

## Salem Area Historical Society

**Saturday, September 17 10 AM-4 PM** 4th Annual Country Fair & Flea Market

## Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan

**Sunday, September 25 1:30-4:30pm**

### St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium,

5305 Elliott Dr. (off E. Huron River Dr. at Clark Rd.). Use parking lot P and look for the club's signs. The lecture and class are free. For more information contact: Marcia McCrary, President (734) 483-2799, [gswcmi@gmail.com](mailto:gswcmi@gmail.com)

The Lecture: "*Hookers, Crooks, and Kooks: Aunt Merle Didn't Run a Boarding House*" Each of us wants to ignore that scalawag, that counterfeiter, or that madam in our family, but the black sheep may prove the most interesting of all. Learn to examine clues in unusual and also common sources. Learn how they lead to locating more records.

The class: "*The Key to the Courthouse*" Do you want the magic key? The key to the courthouse? The way to unlock all the records within? Discussion includes books helpful in planning a courthouse trip; what the different names are for the court office; types of records; even what to wear and how to "pack" for the courthouse.

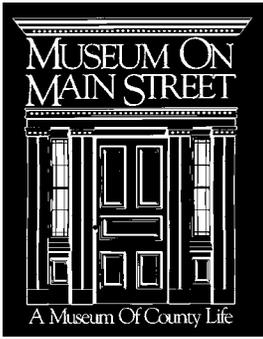
The Speaker: Jana Sloan Broglin CG, OGSF is a native of northwestern Ohio. She is a professional genealogist with over 30 years experience. Jana became a Certified Genealogist in 2005. In 2011, she became a Fellow of the Ohio Genealogical Society. Both result in the additions of CG and OGSF after her name.

## Visit the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

The collection of the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum includes 30 vintage automobiles with a historical connection to Ypsilanti. A 1933 Hudson Terraplane K Series Coach is the oldest in the collection up through a 1991 Chevrolet Caprice Police vehicle manufactured at Willow Run. The museum also includes Miller Motors, a fully preserved pre-war automobile dealership that still operates serving America's vintage Hudson fleet. Located at 100 East Cross Street in Ypsilanti. 734-482-5200. Open Monday - Friday from 1:30-5PM, Saturday 10: AM-5 PM and Sunday Noon to 5:00 pm. Admission is \$5 for adults. Children 12 and under are free when accompanied by an adult.



Carl L. Miller opened the Hudson Sales and Service franchise in 1927 as an automobile dealership and repair shop



PO BOX 3336  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48106-3336

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*Their crimes range from petty ones  
such as pickpocketing to the leader of  
a burglary gang involved in murder!  
Get the cold, hard facts at our  
September program.*

## Fallen Women & Female Felons

### WCHS FALL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

## Fallen Women & Female Felons

**Sunday, September 18, 2011  
2-4 PM  
Bentley Historical Library  
1150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI**

While the vast majority of known criminals were men, Washtenaw County did have some interesting women involved in crime. Their crimes range from petty ones such as pickpocketing and prostitution to the leader of a burglary gang involved in murder and a stock market scam artist. This program includes discussion of how the State of Michigan handled female convicts and the career of Emma A. Hall who was an early prison reformer and the first woman in Michigan to receive a state appointment. *Presented by Susan Nenadic* who has taught women's history for non-credit classes at Washtenaw Community College, UM, and Eastern Michigan University.

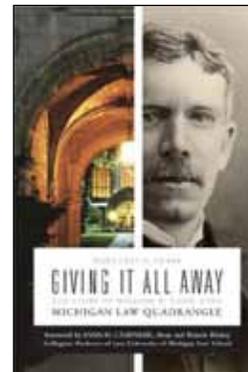


EMMA A. HALL (BENTLEY IMAGE BANK)

You are invited to come to this free program and bring a friend!  
**Call 734-662-9092 or email [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)**

## October Book Talk

***Giving It All Away: The Story of  
William W. Cook and His Michigan  
Law Quadrangle***



Margaret Leary, former Director of the Law Library at UM, will speak about her new book. This is a joint program with the Ann Arbor District Library.

**Sunday, October 16, 2011  
2-4 PM  
Mallets Creek Branch  
3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway  
(east of Stone School Road)  
Ann Arbor, MI**