

- EST. 1958 -

WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2022

VOLUME 1

Connecting The Past
To The Present



128 North Drive

This was the home of Harry E. Crassweller (B.21 Jul 1911; D 21 Mar 2002) from 1960 until his death. He is the son of Lena and Harry G. Crassweller, grandson of MaryAnn and George Crassweller, and was married to Mary Kalman from 1960 until her untimely death (cancer) in 1965. They had no children. Keeping his home well maintained was subordinate to his *first love* of fishing and small game hunting.

The home was originally located closer to the street, and the neighbors on each side, when it was built in 1924. It likely had a crawl space type of foundation and wood clapboard siding.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

As we enter into the new year we think of new beginnings, resolutions and change. How can we do better and how can we learn from the past?

For the past few years Chris Stieler has been in the role of Historical Society President and he did a wonderful job. In his term we had several successful events such as pie and ice cream socials, Friday presentations, and Santa at the Library. However, he also faced a challenge that no other Wyandotte Historical Society President had to face, a pandemic!

COVID created new challenges that were never before seen. While there were many obstacles we pulled through as an organization and couldn't have done it without great leadership.

I'd like to thank Chris for the wonderful job that he did these past few years as President and I look forward to working with him in the future to help our society grow.

Mary-Johna Wein, President

Connecting The Past To The Present, 128 North Drive

(continued from the front cover)

In 1953 the then owner (Mary Leonard, per Abstract of Title), as told to me, decided to move the house back approximately 70 feet and convert it into a boat house. A concrete block foundation was placed. The frame home was relocated and fitted with asbestos siding. There is no evidence the home was ever used as a boat house after this relocation.

The home was purchased from the estate in 2002 by Harry's nephew Duane Denny and his wife Lorraine, and subsequently sold after renovation to their son Michael.

After the home was acquired, Duane began a major renovation. The front entrance at this time was through an enclosed aluminum patio which led to the basement door. Upon entering the basement, one would climb the stairs to get to the first level. This was completely abandoned with an entry to the first floor by a new front porch with steps placed on a new elevated driveway pitched to the street. The concrete driveway was highlighted with the look of embedded pavers.

With the home situated along the Ecorse Creek and close to the Detroit River, a nautical theme was applied to many details. The front and the rear hip roofs were converted to pointed gables reminiscent of a bow of a boat.

The house was surveyed for lead-based paint. All proper precautions were taken for the abatement of the lead-based paint. The asbestos siding was also removed and legally disposed. The house was entirely gutted of all systems and plaster. Exterior walls were reconfigured for door walls and windows. Highly efficient foam insulation was placed to exterior walls and the attic ceiling. Some interior walls were reconfigured to create a dining room to receive the morning sun and overlook the marine atmosphere. The home had all new electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems. The kitchen now had a dishwasher, disposal, and microwave oven, along with all new cabinets and countertops. New bathroom fixtures were installed and new flooring throughout. The exterior received vinyl siding. The new electrical system and cable conduits were underground. A seawall and dock were constructed.

While contractors were used in some specialty services, the majority of the work was designed and completed by Duane Denny and was aided by his sons Aaron and Michael. The home received a Certificate of Occupancy in 2009 .

Duane Denny

NOTE: For more information about the Crasweller Family go to our website at: <https://www.wyandottehistory.org> and from the top menu select "Explore". Then select "Document Center" and then "Families of Wyandotte".

Audrey's Capstone Project Telling the Stories of Servants

The new year always brings new and exciting potential and this year will definitely be that way for me! I am finishing up my Masters in Historic Preservation with a concentration in Heritage Interpretation and Museum Practice (with a further interest in curatorship and exhibit design) at Eastern Michigan University. Like any graduate program, I need to complete a capstone project and thesis paper to prove that I know my stuff, so to speak.

To preface, heritage interpretation is the way that museums engage their audience with collections, information, and ideas; which often includes physical elements like signage, handouts for guests, and educational materials that are given to tour guides so they can relay information to guests. Essentially, interpretation is the connection between audiences and what is shown in front of them in the museum. Interpretation is extremely important for museums and other cultural/natural sites because no one wants to walk into a room of artifacts with no information about them – what would be the point?

For my capstone project and paper, I am interpreting the kitchen, back pantry, butler's pantry, and servant's bedroom and bathroom in the Ford-MacNichol Home. This interpretation will better tell the story of the three young women who were live-in servants during the MacNichol's time in the house, as well as servitude in general in the Victorian era. This will also include some rearranging of artifacts in the rooms (specifically the back pantry) to better reflect the Victorian period. This is certainly not just an occurrence in Wyandotte, but many, many historic house museums (especially mansions like ours) focus almost solely on the rich and powerful that owned the house, and include almost little to no information about the workers that made the household function every day. While the rich families are certainly more than interesting, aren't the ordinary people who lived there just as interesting?

MacNichol Geo. P.	1890-30
— Tara	Wife
— Edward H.	Son
— Archibald H.	Son
— George P.	Son
Puls Marie S.	Servant
Striker Anna M.	Servant
Clausing Martha	Nurse

The discovery that servants were present in the house at one time only occurred a short while ago in 2012 and the servants are mentioned in the current interpretative materials at the museum, but not enough, in my opinion. These rooms have greater stories to tell and the servants that worked in the home deserve more than a sentence. The servants in the house that we know of include Marie S. Puls (cook), Anna M. Striker (house keeper), and Martha Clausing (nurse). After the MacNichol's moved, all three women stayed in Michigan either for a few more years or permanently then married, had children, and were housewives until their deaths. That is not an uncommon tale by any means for what happened to servants after their tenure in rich households. While their stories are not incredibly unique, this still presents an opportunity to understand what being a servant in the Victorian era consisted of. If you want more specific information on the servants, you'll just have to wait and come to the museum when this information is unveiled.

The five rooms will go over what the servants typically did in those respective spaces, in addition to how servitude changed from the 1890s to the present day. The project will be finished by August and more news will come as to an 'official' start date for tours that include the servant information. Change is inevitable in museums and museum staff believe this change will help further tell the full story of this beautiful Victorian home. We hope to see you when this project is finished and I hope you'll like it!

Audrey Wicklander, Museum Assistant

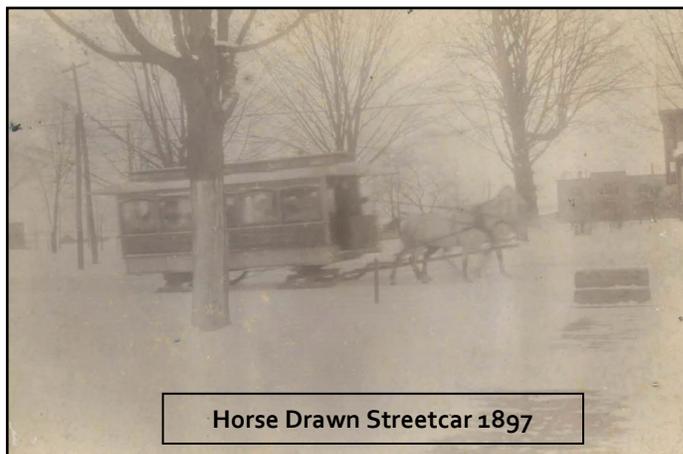
A Brief History of Snow Removal and Local Transit

Hello 2022. It's the new year and 2021 is almost behind us. As we look forward to a refreshed calendar and a year that is hopefully more prosperous than the last, we in Michigan must also get ready for Mother Nature's grip as we grapple with seemingly endless bounds of snow. We ready our shovels, tune up our snow throwing machines, retool the plows on our trucks, and check our bank accounts as we get ready to have the crews come out to take care of it for us. In 2022 we have luxuries that were not available to the Michiganders of yesteryear. While still an irritant for many today, historically, the practice of snow removal meant long hours, and in some cases, entire days filled with full crews working around the clock on one location. The work could be grueling, the weather biting, and the tools, lacking the sophistication of the new millennium.

What did the process of snow removal entail all those years ago? As one can imagine, like with most aspects of life, the realizations set forth for our growing nation as it pertained to this yearly occurrence grew with America. In the United States of the Revolutionary period and the following several decades, it was not uncommon for citizens to simply be snowed-in at their location. Many cities and towns did not feel a need to address the issue as the weather could be so temperamental and could change from day to day. If you were out for a ride or on an excursion and heavy snow began to fall, one may leave their horse behind in order to get to safety. In areas prone to more snow, it was not uncommon to carry snowshoes on your person in order to move along more freely if needed. Over time, this would change as more localities implemented ways in which to get around in the snow.

By the 1840s, Americans were fashioning long, straight or curved pieces to be placed onto or in place of the wheels on their carriages. These early ski-like features helped guide the horse-drawn vehicle over the snow. In Milwaukee in 1862, the first official horse-drawn plow came into existence, which would spread like wildfire, most other large cities adopting something similar. Large implements would be dragged behind a team of horses in an effort to clear the snow. Unfortunately, while this was a big win for the fight against isolation, the practice did not come without its detractors and deterrents. Due to the heavy streams of snow lifted at any given time, there had to be a place for it all to go, and most times, it was simply left at the side of the road or embankment. As the concentration was on main thoroughfares at the time, this meant blockages to homeowners and even businesses, causing rifts in communities.

By the end of the nineteenth century, more sophisticated methods of snow removal came into vogue. Plows and ice breakers were fitted onto the front of train engines for safer passage. Larger carriages, trams and trolleys were fitted with skis in place of wheels to further traverse the snow. The photograph in this article is one such example. Rare in its subject matter, it depicts a "horsecar" on skis, near the Downtown Wyandotte area, taken in January 1897. Shoveled sidewalk paths can also be seen in the photograph, which was another process that evolved over time, as city departments would eventually be created to oversee and implement removal programs. Of course, private residents were normally responsible for their own properties, much like today. Throughout its history, the city of Wyandotte has created and employed persons in various departments over the years to address the snow and ice. About \$495.00 was spent on such activities by the City for the calendar year 1929. This number equates to just



**A Brief History of Snow Removal
and Local Transit**

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over \$8,000.00 in 2021 dollars.

So, what about the process of shoveling snow? How has it changed over time? The particular practice has not altered much over the years. In fact, while shovels themselves have changed, modern pieces possessing sloped curvatures in the main section for greater removal and ergonomic handles to aid in health and safety, the implements are largely similar to what they were in 1900. Many Americans found themselves utilizing what they could, such as brooms of all sizes, spades and hoes. In larger cities and metropolitan areas, large teams of men worked alongside horse-drawn plows to remove the snow from the streets and sidewalks. In many cases, the white stuff would be placed in a wagon to be dumped offsite, normally in an open area or into the local waterway.

By the 1920s, the process of removing snow and ice from city streets and sidewalks had reached a new height, brought on by the advent and popularity of the automobile. Suddenly, new innovations gave way, such as tractors and trucks, and the ability to fit each with a permanent or removable plow. Further technological advances would create even more capabilities to combat against the piling of snow on our roadways. Vehicles continuously grew in size and shape, allowing for greater removal. In the 1960s, space satellites began to predict oncoming storms to allow for increased readiness of a weather occurrence – a reality unheard of in 1840s America.

As you are reading this, take a break to look out your window or toggle to the weather reports on the Internet or television. Is there snow on the ground or in the forecast? Get ready. As you do, recall the history of snow removal and count your lucky stars you will not be relegated to your home for days or need to affix bulky skis to your fashionable carriage! Happy New Year!

-Jesse Rose, Museum Director

**WANDERING OAKWOOD CEMETERY
George Cartwright**

In 1865 George organized the Wisconsin Plaster Company in Milwaukee. He stayed in Wisconsin only a short period of time before moving back to Michigan. In the summer of 1866 he founded the village of Elberta Michigan.



Geo. W. Cartwright

On September 11, 1878 George married Sarah J. Wolcott. Sarah was the daughter of Katherine Baisley Long and John Wolcott.

In the mix of my research I stumbled upon an old photo of the Cartwright stone with the inscription wrote out on the back. For years I thought it was the headstone for George but actuality it is the headstone for George’s first wife Sarah Wolcott Cartwright. The inscription on the stone once said “Sarah, wife of George Cartwright, wed 69th day, 103 year of the United States of America as a nation, fell asleep on the 256th day of the 104th year 16 March 1880” just 18 months after their wedding date. The stone also lists an infant born February 28, 1880 and died July 15, 1880.

George moved back to his home town of Grand Blanc after the passing of Sarah. He remarried on March 19, 1889 to Sarah M. David, together they had several children. George passed away on June 28, 1897 and according to his obituary he is buried in Oakwood Cemetery next to Sarah and their infant child.

Mary-Johna Wein, WOCA President

WELCOME

**Michael Denny and Ralph Hale
as
Our Newest Members!**

Return Service Requested

Wyandotte Historical Society

Burns Home

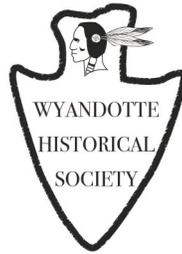
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The Museum will be closed for tours in January and February as Museum staff plan exhibits for 2022.

The Museum will reopen for tours on Thursday, March 3, 2022.

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