

# Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Electric Trolleys in Washtenaw County



Have you ever wondered what really happened to the electric trolleys in Washtenaw County? We learned the

answer to that question and more on February 20, 2011, a snowy, Sunday afternoon in Chelsea.

Hazel Barr, the Volunteer Coordinator at Chelsea Retirement Community greeted the capacity audience in the auditorium and introduced our guest speaker. H. Mark Hildebrandt is a co-author (with Martha A. Churchill) of *Electric Trolleys of Washtenaw County*, and a retired pediatrician. He shared a lifetime of knowledge about steam and electric rail systems.

In order to survive, trolleys had to offer something special. A rapid and easy way to get to town was very appealing. (Continued on page 3)



First Michigan Infantry members. 1861-1865

Archives of Michigan

## Behind the Lines

### THE CIVIL WAR – MICHIGAN & WASHTENAW COUNTY

Michigan seemed far away from the battles being fought from 1861-65 in the U.S. Civil War. But that didn't stop the men and women of the State of Michigan and Washtenaw County from serving in and being affected by the war. Their stories and ways of life will be on display from April 10 through the end of October at the Museum on Main Street in Ann Arbor. You will learn about the Civil War soldiers who once lived in this very house. Find out why President Lincoln proclaimed "Thank God for Michigan" and how Michigan troops captured Confederate President Jefferson Davis as he tried to escape disguised as a woman – but he said he grabbed his wife's cloak by mistake.

(Continued on page 5)

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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: Focus on WCHS Board Members

As with most organizations the success of Washtenaw County Historical Society is supported by three legs of a stool: (1) financial resources, (2) paid staff and (3) volunteers. In several earlier letters I have briefly discussed the role of our board. While we have a number of volunteers (more are needed), our board members, all volunteers, are directly responsible for our continued success. There is a lot of heavy lifting required. Thought I would from time to time review a board position to acquaint our members with the breadth and depth of activity.

The Treasurer's duties entail management of cash starting with regular stops at our post office box, depositing checks, maintaining the banking relationship, balancing the checkbook and keeping the financial records (accounting). Bills have to be paid (all the regular items like utilities, alarm system, supplies, advertising, etc.) but also insurance contracts need to be obtained, withholdings calculated and payrolls prepared. Multiple quarterly and annual reports must be prepared and sent to State and Federal offices including the Annual 990 (non-profit tax return), payroll withholdings submitted, and multiple reports and payments to the Michigan Unemployment Commission. Monthly financial reports are given to board members for their review depicting all transactions and balances and year to date comparisons with the prior year.

Of course, Patty Creal, our most able Treasurer, does all of this and, additionally, chairs the Building and Grounds Committee and in summer works in our gardens. This is just one example of the work performed by volunteer board members.

Leslie Loomans



Photo: Steve Schewe

#### Washtenaw County Historical Society

P.O. Box 3336

Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

Phone: 734-662-9092

email: [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)

#### Museum on Main Street

(at the corner of E. Kingsley & Beakes)

500 N. Main Street

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

#### Museum Hours

Saturday & Sunday,

12 noon – 4:00 PM

and by appointment

Check us out, on the web and

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



# Electric Trolleys of Washtenaw County: WCHS February Program

*Trolleys Continued from page 1*

Dr. Hildebrandt's presentation was a combination of images of the trolleys and vintage street scenes, stories and members of the audience sharing their own memories and experiences. Questions and answers that followed were as informative and entertaining as the talk itself.

## Electric Cars

Electric streetcars and interurbans appeared in Washtenaw County in the 1890s and were ideal for public transportation. Ann Arbor's first electric streetcar was built in 1890 and ran on rails, drawing its power from a pole reaching upwards to overhanging electric lines.

This five-car operation ran from the Michigan Central station (now the Gandy Dancer). The cars were stored in a barn opposite the present-day Treasure Mart. In 1894, a disastrous car barn fire burned all 5 of the cars. The streetcar was out of business for a couple of years until new cars were purchased. Two sorts of seasonal cars were then used: the open (windowless) car for summer, and the closed car for winter.

## The Interurbans

Ann Arbor streetcars moved people around town. Busy interurbans shuttled Ann Arborites to neighboring communities all over southeastern Michigan and beyond. In 1891, the state's first interurban was built. The steam powered line between Ypsi and Ann Arbor was named the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Electric Railway. In 1895 the line was converted from steam to the much cleaner electricity. Interurbans used a telephone to communicate between trains and the terminals.

The Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Electric Railway Company expanded in 1897 with a line following the south side of Michigan Avenue into Detroit, changing its name to the Detroit, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor Electric Railway. The cars that had two poles were used to measure the electricity usage from Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti to Detroit.

A new station was opened at Main and Huron (now the Greyhound bus station). A line was built between Ypsilanti and Saline in 1899, and the rail was extended to Jackson in 1901.

Local interurbans were involved in two major accidents. Tragedy struck in 1917 on the interurban line between Ann Arbor and Chelsea. As the regular interurban left the Chelsea station and headed into the country, an extra car from Battle Creek headed towards Chelsea on the same line. The cars collided head-on, killing 17 people. One of the fatalities was Theodore Stanger, father of longtime *Ann Arbor News* (now [annarbor.com](http://annarbor.com)) photographer, Eck Stanger.

Another involved the freight car service that the interurbans ran at night, after passenger service ended for the day. On August 5, 1927, two sets of two cars were pulled uphill on Huron. As the cars were being recoupled, they slipped loose and began rolling



*The room began to fill as friends and attendees greeted each other*

back downhill, faster and faster as they traveled the mile back to downtown. At Main Street, where the track curved, the cars jumped the track and smashed into the Farmer's and Mechanic's Bank at Main and Huron, demolishing the bank's entire facade.

## End Of The interurbans

Interurban ridership decreased as auto usage increased. Busses last about 15 years, street cars last about 30 years. The interurban started in 1890 and died in 1930, a lifetime for the equipment. It was not practical to replace them. Tracks stayed in the street until 1942 when they were pulled up for the World War II scrap metal drive.

## Birth of Light Rail Vehicles

Light rail vehicles are a form of urban rail public transportation that have a lower capacity and speed than heavy rail and metro systems, but higher capacity and higher speed than traditional street-running tram systems. There is talk of using LRV in Ann Arbor from North Campus to parts of the town, talk of putting suburban rail transportation in place, but it all takes more money than rider income can generate. ♦

*History of Electric Cars and Interurbans portion by local writer Laura Bien, Impressions, 11/05*



# Anne Ella Carroll: A Military Genius

Written by *Susan Nenadic*, WCHS Board member and retired teacher

When the history of this war is written," President Lincoln stated in 1862, "Anna E. Carroll will stand a good deal taller" than her father, Thomas King Carroll, a former governor of Maryland. Sadly, Lincoln was wrong. Instead she has been all but erased from the historical record. If the modern world hears of a woman active in the Civil War, it will hear about Clara Barton or Harriet Tubman or maybe Sarah Edmonds - not Anna Carroll. Her contemporaries, however, recognized her as a highly educated woman who was extremely astute in politics.

Anna Carroll (1815-1894), a dedicated nationalist, celebrated Lincoln's 1860 election by freeing all her slaves. Then she turned her able hand to writing letters, news articles and pamphlets responding to the vitriolic secessionist propaganda that quickly inundated the North. She was particularly supportive of Lincoln's controversial use of his presidential powers in the early days of the war. Many historians credit Miss Carroll with keeping Maryland, a state strongly sympathetic to the South, from seceding.

In 1861 President Lincoln asked Miss Carroll to go to St. Louis to assess the possibility of a Union invasion of Texas. She was accompanied by Judge Lemuel Evans.

Instead she returned to Washington with very different plan. Her research included long conversations with a Mississippi riverboat pilot, Captain Charles Scott. Scott provided Carroll with the navigational details necessary to her ultimate report in which she advised Lincoln to ignore Texas and the Mississippi River in favor of driving deep into the upper South along the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers using a combined force of the army and the navy's new, untested, ironclad gunboats. Her plan was accepted. While the Confederates spent the holiday season of 1861-2, smugly rejoicing over their early victories on the fields of battle, Lincoln and his cabinet were putting Ella's plan into motion.

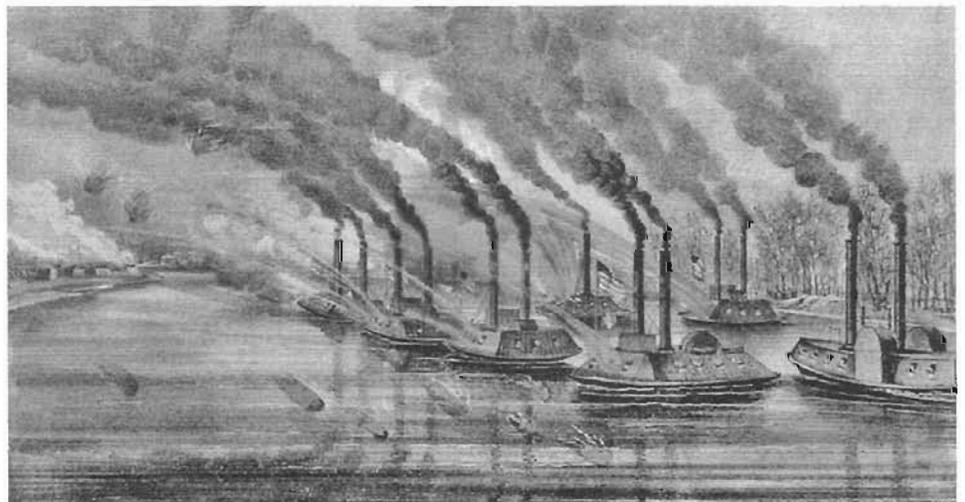
The resulting capture of Forts Henry and Donelson in February 1862 gave the Union its first taste of victory. Andrew H. Foote's ironclads proved their worth paving the way for Ulysses S. Grant's army. Their combined victories cut deep into the western, rebel occupied territories, opening the entire region to Union supply boats and troop movement.

Confederates were shocked by the quick turnaround of events. Northern newspapers transformed Brig. General Grant, an unknown entity from a small town in Illinois, into a household word.

Soon everyone was calling him "Unconditional Surrender" Grant because, when Confederate General Buckner, commander of Fort Donelson, requested terms, Grant had replied, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." And Buckner surrendered. Grant's honeymoon with the press, however, was brief.

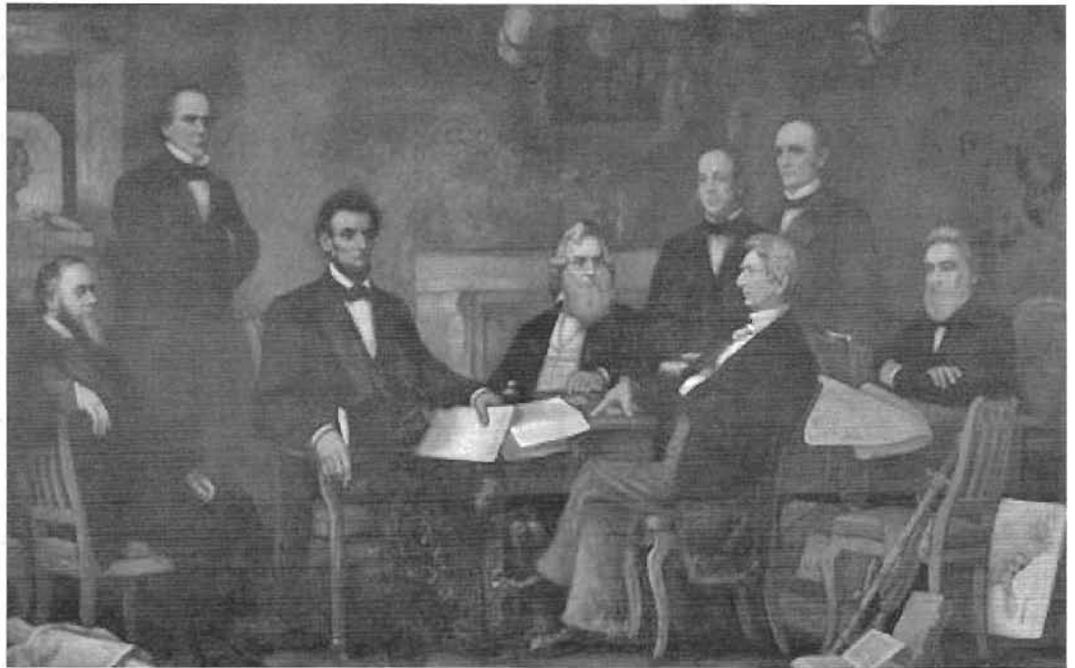
By April, he arrived at Shiloh where both the Blue and the Gray experienced their first real blood bath of the war. Of the almost twenty thousand soldiers either killed or wounded at Shiloh, 10,162 wore the Blue. Immediately newspapers began to vilify Grant as an incompetent drunk and to demand his immediate resignation.

Lincoln, however, refused. *"I can't spare this man," the President said. "He [unlike McClellan] fights."*



*Battle of Fort Henry by Currier and Ives*

While not a public figure like General Grant, Miss Carroll continued to advise the Lincoln administration and to publish Union propaganda. Her efforts in support of the Lincoln administration and the prosecution of the war, while virtually unknown today, clearly were apparent to at least some of her contemporaries. In 1864 when Francis Carpenter painted his fifteen foot wide canvas immortalizing the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, he included Lincoln, the members of the President's cabinet and an empty chair. Many art historians feel confident that the chair littered with maps and journals represents Anna Carroll in her unofficial, yet highly respected, role as advisor to Lincoln.



*Neither Lincoln nor Congress had any money to purchase Carpenter's painting in 1864. Fourteen years later, Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson of New York bought it for \$25,000 and donated to the U.S. government.*

But Lincoln was assassinated and times change. Women's activities in the Civil War quickly faded from sight as the image of the war morphed into a male only, battle oriented event. By the 1880s Miss Carroll, a woman raised in wealth and privilege, found

herself growing old and in financial need. Finally a bill was introduced in Congress to grant her a pension. It was not just any pension but a pension equivalent to that given to major generals. Unfortunately, somewhere in the chaos surrounding President Garfield's assassina-

tion, that bill slipped into obscurity. Instead, Congress ultimately granted her a \$50 per month pension for "important military service rendered by her during the late Civil War." That pension provided Anna Carroll with a modest income until her death on February 19, 1894. ♦

*Civil War Continued from page 1*

### **Civil War Soldiers once lived in the Museum on Main Street**

This house was built in 1835 and added to in 1839. During the Civil War it was occupied by the family of Samuel Ruthruff. The children, with their ages as listed in the census of 1850, three years before their move to Ann Arbor from Superior Township, were Henry, 23 Samuel, 22, Daniel, 21, William, 20, Harrison, 18, Mary, 16, Harriet, 14, Edwin, 12, Chester, 11, George, 8, John, 6, Sarah Ann, 3, and Emma Althea, 11 months. The father and the five oldest boys were listed on the census as farmers.

Civil War news must have been eagerly awaited at the Ruthruff home because two of Samuel's sons served in the war, according to the *Washtenaw County History of 1881*. Edwin, the eighth child, was in the Second Infantry and John, the eleventh child, in the Twentieth Infantry. Both were privates. The Second Infantry is said to have participated in "many of the most desperate battles of the war." The Twentieth, composed of about half Washtenaw men, participated in 30 battles and skirmishes. ♦

## **Behind the Lines**

*— The Civil War —*

*Michigan and Washtenaw County*

You are invited to the

### **Opening Reception**

**Sunday, April 10, 2011**

**12 Noon - 4 PM**

**The Museum on Main Street**

500 N. Main • Ann Arbor • 734.662.9092

*Bring a friend or neighbor!*

# How to Research, Write and Publish a Book

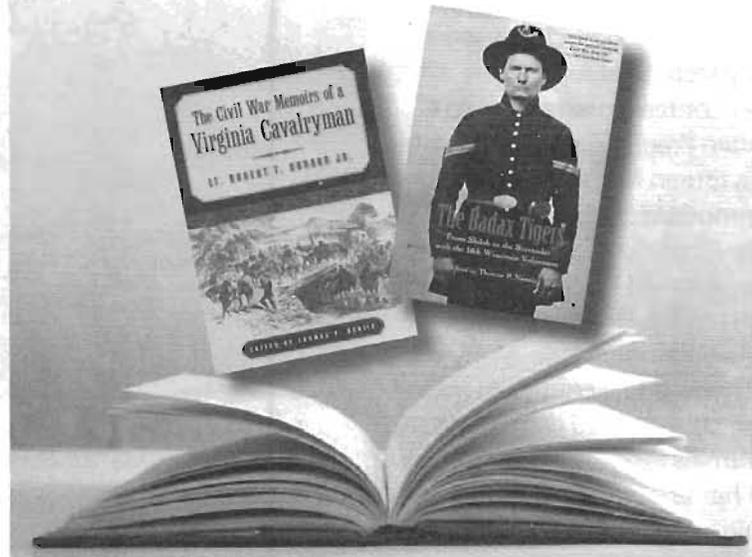
Author Tom Nanzig gives an inside look at finding and researching publishable material in an archival setting, how to edit the material, and tips for finding a publisher to produce the final polished product.

**Sunday, March 20, 2011 • 2-4 PM**

Ann Arbor District Library, Main Branch  
343 S. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan

ABOUT THE PRESENTER: **TOM NANZIG** is the author of *The Civil War Memoirs of A Virginia Cavalryman*. He has written four other books about the Civil War.

*This is a free program and open to the public.  
Bring a Friend!*



## Mary Vogel's Black Silk Wedding Dress, June 1885

In 1995, Russell Dunnaback and his cousin, Maxine O'Neill, both long-time members of our Society, donated a black silk wedding dress that had been worn by Mary Weimann at her June 1885 marriage to Martin Philip Vogel.

In 2002, the staff at the Museum on Main Street mounted an exhibit of antique wedding dresses that were in our collection and Russell Dunnaback came to 'visit' his grandmother Mary Vogel's wedding dress.

We chatted about the three Vogel brothers who were butchers in downtown Ann Arbor and that his grandmother had been widowed and bought a house on West Huron Street where she took in boarders.

In the 1920 and 1930 Federal Census the John Dunnaback family, Mabel Vogel Dunnaback and Russell, lived with Mary Vogel at the boarding house address.

Last month we learned that Russell Dunnaback had died at age 98 and that the family directed memorials be sent to the Washtenaw County Historical Society. We plan on using these monies for future exhibit expenses.

*Pauline Walters*



# MARCH-APRIL 2011 EVENTS

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. For the most recent listings check out [www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium](http://www.hvcn.org/info/wchs/consortium)

## *The Saline Area Historical Society*

### **Tales from the Ypsilanti Archives**

**Sunday, April 3, 2-3:30 PM**

Saline District Library  
555 N. Maple Rd., Saline, MI  
734-944-0442

Laura Bien, local history author, will offer lighthearted stories that will transplant us to the bygone days of Ypsilanti.

Education programs are free and open to the public; light refreshments will be served.

## *The Pittsfield Historical Society*

### **Women of the Civil War**

**Sunday, April 17, 2:00 PM**

Pittsfield Community Center  
701 West Ellsworth, Ann Arbor  
734-971-2384

Email: [donbet@comcast.net](mailto:donbet@comcast.net)

Susan Nenadic will give a lecture concerning women who participated in the Civil War. Education programs are free and open to the public.

## *Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan*

### **Genealogy Lectures and Classes**

**Sunday, March 27, 2011, 1:30 P.M.**

Education Center Auditorium, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Campus  
5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan. Use Parking Lot "P"

Email: [gswcmi@gmail.com](mailto:gswcmi@gmail.com)

The lectures and class are free and open to the public. Visitors are welcome

**LECTURE:** "Slave Research: It's a Needle in a Haystack" Dr. Deborah Abbott. Learn the methods, techniques and resources needed to recreate this incredible journey to freedom. **CLASS:** "Black Descendants of Old Ann Arbor" presented by Jean Dixon Winborn.

## *The Kempf House*

### **The Quest for Harmony in Campus Architecture**

**Wednesday, April 6, 12 Noon**

Kempf House Museum  
312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor  
734-994-4898  
[www.KempfHouseMuseum.org](http://www.KempfHouseMuseum.org)

Frederick Mayer, retired Assistant Director of Capital Planning for the University of Michigan, will illustrate the efforts and problems involved in making the architecture of facilities on the Ann Arbor Campus more compatible.

## *Historical Society of Michigan*

### **Michigan History Day**

**Saturday, March 19, 2011**

Our district (8) competition  
Detroit Historical Society, Detroit

**Saturday, April 30, 2011**

State final event at Grand Valley  
State University, Allendale

Michigan History Day is an educational competition designed to encourage students in grades 4-12 to explore historical subjects. [www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org)  
517-324-1828

### *William L. Clements Library* **Opening Guns: The First Year of Civil War**

**Now — June 3, 2011** This exhibit presents the year 1861 through the written word of the soldiers and civilians who experienced the war between the Union and Confederate states. It is open to the public in the Main Room of the Clements Library Monday through Friday from 1:00-4:45 PM. The Clements Library is located at 909 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor. 734-764-2347.

### *Bentley Historical Library* **Rally Round the Flag!**

**Now — June 30, 2011** As the call to "Rally Round the Flag Boys!" was issued, Michigan responded by sending nearly 90,000 Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines. About 14,700 of these would never return. Come explore episodes and faces of Michigan in the war at the Bentley Historical Library's commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 1150 Beal Ave., Ann Arbor, 734-764-3482. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9AM-5PM, Saturday 9AM-12 Noon.

# Behind the Lines

– The Civil War –

*Michigan and Washtenaw County*

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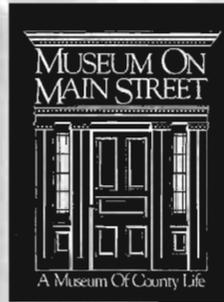
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## Save these dates WCHS Programs March-April, 2011

### Behind the Lines

#### Opening Reception

**Sunday, April 10, 12 Noon - 4:00 PM**

The Museum on Main Street

500 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor

(at the corner of E. Kingsley & Beakes)

### The Civil War

Tom Collier on the Civil War. This is a joint meeting with the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County.

**Sunday, April 17, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM**

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital,

Education Center Auditorium

5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. Use Parking Lot "P".

**The Washtenaw County Historical Society offers free monthly programs September-April (excluding December & January) for our members!**

## Michigan and Washtenaw County Life in the Civil War

What was it like for the residents of Washtenaw County during the Civil War? What was life like for the soldiers? Stop by the Museum on Main Street and see "Behind the Lines". The exhibit opens on Sunday, April 10 and runs through October, 23 2011, with programs offered in Spring, Summer and Fall.

One of the benefits of being a member of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is the opportunity to participate. If you have any Civil War artifacts in your collections and want to share them with the Museum please call Judy at 734-662-9092 or email [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net) for more information.