

Where notables lived in A2

Wednesday, June 11, 2014 ★ Tour Guide: Dale R. Leslie



W.H. AUDEN

(1907-1973) 504 Brooklyn;
1223 Pontiac Trail

Born in England, he became an American citizen and is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. He lived in Ann Arbor while teaching at the University of Michigan (1940-41). The central themes of his poetry are love, politics and citizenship, religion and morals and the anonymous, impersonal world of nature. His one marriage was for the convenience of his bride who needed to be married to an alien to escape Nazi Germany.



ROBERT HAYDEN

(1913-1980) 1201 Gardner

Reared in Detroit, Hayden was a much-admired poet who earned the U-M's prestigious Avery Hopwood Award and served as Consultant to the U.S. Library of Congress (Poet Laureate); he's the first African American to hold the post. Hayden taught at the U-M in the 1970s. He resided modestly and commuted by bus to and from campus. His burial site in Fairview Cemetery was inconspicuous until recently.



ARTHUR MILLER

(1915-2005) 411 N. State

A U-M graduate, he had rented a student apartment upstairs at 411 N. State. An Avery Hopwood Award propelled his career as a successful playwright. In 1948, Miller built a small studio in Roxbury, Connecticut and within six days completed one of the classics of the world theater, Death of a Salesman. He earned the Pulitzer Prize in 1949. In 1956, he married actress **Marilyn Monroe** (shown above); they divorced in 1961. Miller's son-in-law is Oscar-winner **Daniel Day-Lewis**. In 2000, the U-M built the **Arthur Miller Theater** on North Campus.

+ OTHERS OF NOTE: Jane Kenyon, married to poet Donald Hall



2896 Newport Road (1947-1995) - Kenyon was born in 1947 in Ann Arbor and graduated from the U-M. She won an Avery Hopwood Award at Michigan. Later, Kenyon was New Hampshire's poet laureate. In 1995, she died suddenly from leukemia at the age of 47.



BETTY SMITH 1314 Broadway (1896-1972) - The noted author of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, the Brooklyn, NY native married **George H.E. Smith** and they moved to Ann Arbor so he could attend U-M law school. Although Betty had not graduated from high school, the University allowed her to enroll in classes. She honed her skills in journalism, literature, writing, and drama, winning a prestigious U-M Avery Hopwood Award. Following her divorce in 1938, she moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* was published in 1943. Her other novels include *Joy in the Morning*, based on her life in Ann Arbor.



ROBERT FROST (1874-1963) - A much-loved poet, Frost's 1925 Ann Arbor residence was a Greek Revival Temple (see line art) at 1223 Pontiac Trail at Kellogg St. The home, later named **The Robert Frost House**, was moved to Greenfield Village in 1936. Owner, U-M Art School professor Jean Paul Slusser, who rented it to W.H. Auden for a semester, built a replacement to fit the foundation. **Issac Newton Demmon**, a much-admired U-M mathematics and a history professor, often invited Frost to his estate on Washtenaw Avenue where AA First Presbyterian Church is located.



Ann Arbor House, Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan

1938 postcard of The Robert Frost House, rebuilt in Greenfield Village in 1936 -- when it was initially billed as the "Ann Arbor House."

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

(3 stanzas) Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took
The one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.



HARRIET SIMPSON ARNOW (1908-1986)

An American novelist who lived in Kentucky, Ohio and Ann Arbor, she earned her reputation as an expert on life in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. She married Harold B. Arnow and in 1950 they moved to a farm on Nixon Road, off Plymouth Road, in Ann Arbor. It was there she published her most famous work, **The Dollmaker**, in 1954. It's the story of a poor Kentucky family forced by economic necessity to move to Detroit; it reflected her own life as a tenant of public housing in the Motor City.

H.L. Simpson, pen name



JOSEPH BRODSKY 309 Wesley (1940-1996) -

Iosif Aleksandrovich Brodsky was a Russian poet and essayist. Born in Leningrad in 1940, Brodsky ran afoul of Soviet authorities and was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972, settling in Ann Arbor with the help of W. H. Auden. He taught at the U-M and in 1987 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature "for an all-embracing authorship, imbued with clarity of thought and poetic intensity". He was appointed United States Poet Laureate in 1991.

BRODSKY'S U-M COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

(DECEMBER, 1988) – "You have been educated at The University of Michigan, in my view the best school in the nation, if only because sixteen years ago it gave a badly needed break to the laziest man on the earth, who, on top of that, spoke practically no English, to yours truly.

"I taught here for some eight years; the language in which I address you today I learned here; some of my former colleagues are still on the payroll, others retired, and still others sleep the eternal sleep in the earth of Ann Arbor that now carries you.

"Clearly this place has extraordinary sentimental value for me; and so it will become, in a dozen years or so, for you. To that extent, I can divine your future; in that respect, I know you will manage, or, more precisely, succeed. For feeling a wave of warmth coming over you in a dozen or so years at the mention of this town's name will indicate that, luck or no luck, as human beings you have succeeded. It is this sort of success I wish to you above all in the years to come. The rest depends on luck and matters less."

TIDBITS & TRIVIA



by Dale R. Leslie

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DALE R. LESLIE is an Ann Arbor Townie with rural roots. He was born, baptized and lived in the hamlet of Dixboro until he was 10 when his family moved into town.

Dale's interest in local history began in childhood, cultivated by the local photo collection and reflections of his great aunt, Flossie F. Quackenbush (born in Dixboro in 1888), other Leslie kin and Dixboro matriarch, author, historian Carol Willits Freeman.

When the church celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1983, Leslie published a commemorative pamphlet, "Tidbits and Trivia; An informal look at the History, Traditions and the People of the Dixboro United Methodist Church."

Dale earned a M.A. from the U-M in Speech (Broadcasting) in 1971 and was President of Leslie Office Supply, Inc., a 36-year, family-owned business in Ann Arbor founded by his parents Richard D. and Grace P. Leslie.



The Village Green is at the center of the hamlet of Dixboro, located two miles east of Ann Arbor on Plymouth Road. Depicted, the Dixboro School, built in 1888, and the Dixboro United Methodist Church, completed 30-years prior (1858.) The Green & the one-room schoolhouse is owned by the active church (www.dixborochurch.org) featuring weekly Sunday worship and church school classes. The church is proud of its excellent music ministry.