

Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The View from The Big House



On Sunday, October 17th, about twenty-five members of the Washtenaw County Historical Society met at

the Junge Family Champions Center in Ann Arbor for The Big House Talk and Tour of Michigan Stadium.

Dr. Robert Soderstrom, author of *The Big House, Fielding H. Yost and the Building of Michigan Stadium*, gave us an enlightening, in-depth narrative and visual presentation.

He described just how innovative Yost was in building the stadium and the significance of the Ohio State games. We learned the story behind college football's first trophy "The Little Brown Jug" (see page 6), how UM became "Champions of the West" and where the idea for the stadium tunnel came from. (Cont. on page 3)



Members of the Washtenaw County Historical Society Group talk about the tour near the 50 yard line. (L-R) Board president, Les Loomans, WCHS member Ann Edwards, WCHS board member Ralph Beebe and WCHS member Lois Foyle.



The book written by Robert Soderstrom begins with the season of 1922 that laid the cornerstone and concludes with the stadium dedication game in 1927 that pit Michigan against its infamous rival, Ohio State. It is a fascinating story.

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ACCORDING TO MICHIGAN LEGEND, Yost was impatient with slow players, he would say: "Hurry up! ... If you can't hurry, make way for someone who can!" Fielding "Hurry Up" Yost was a successful businessman, author, lawyer, coach and visionary leader in molding college football into a national sports phenomenon. He won six national championships, 10 conference titles, the first Rose Bowl and invented the linebacker position in the early 1900s. As Athletic Director he built Yost Ice Arena, UM golf course and Michigan Stadium, then the country's largest college stadium. Today, his pillarless, 109,901 seat stadium is the WORLD'S largest college stadium and 3rd largest in the world overall. (Cont. on page 4)

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: The View from Our House

It's really quite easy to remember the years our house, the Museum on Main Street, was constructed: the rear portion in 1835 and the front in 1839. Michigan, of course, became a state in 1837. In fact, President Andrew Jackson signed a bill making Michigan the twenty-sixth state on January 26, 1837. Actually, the citizens were ready for statehood as early as 1835, but the dispute over the Toledo Strip delayed Congressional action. No less than two conventions were held right here in Ann Arbor, the second on December 14, 1836.

So our house (the original portion) was here as statehood was decided on. One wonders if the Kellogg family was aware of the happenings downtown at the County Courthouse.



Do stop in to see the current exhibit, but even when there isn't an exhibit, stop to take a close look at our house. Generally, someone is there most weekdays. Sections of the walls have been kept open to show split lath and brick nogging construction. As a member you may be able to peek upstairs and be shown ceiling lath and names and heights of children written on the inside of the attic door. It's a neat piece of history.

LESLIE LOOMANS

November Updates

Would you like to get your issues of *Impressions* digitally? The Washtenaw County Historical Society prints and mails our newsletter in black and white to be cost effective. If you would like to see your *Impressions* delivered to your email address as a full color PDF, let us know! You can email Pauline Walters at wchs-500@ameritech.net.

We want to hear your ideas and opinion about *Impressions*. If you have ideas for articles, stories you have written or would like to write, contact Beverly Willis at the Museum on Main Street: 734- 662-9092 e-mail: wchs-1000@ameritech.net.



Washtenaw County Historical Society
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Museum on Main Street
(at the corner of E. Kingsley & Beakes)
500 N. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

Museum Hours
Saturday & Sunday, 12 noon – 4:00 p.m.
and by appointment

The Big House Talk and Tour, continued

Champions of the West

On January 11, 1895, the presidents of University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Northwestern University, Purdue University and Lake Forest College met in Chicago to discuss the regulation and revenue of intercollegiate athletics.

In 1896, at the meeting that established the conference, Lake Forest was not there and was replaced by Michigan. The organization was then called the Western Conference: Purdue, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Chicago, and Northwestern. That's where the line "Champions of the West" comes from in Michigan's song "Hail to the Victors"

The Big House and Ohio State

Yost became Michigan's athletic director in 1921 after a successful coaching career from 1901-1920. In 1921 UM boasted the largest college stadium in the country, but lost the game to Ohio State that year.

In 1922, OSU built their new stadium. Skeptics thought the huge stadium would never be filled, but on October 21, 1922 over 70,000 fans came out for the dedication game against Michigan. Michigan won 19-0 and won their first Big 10 title since 1904.

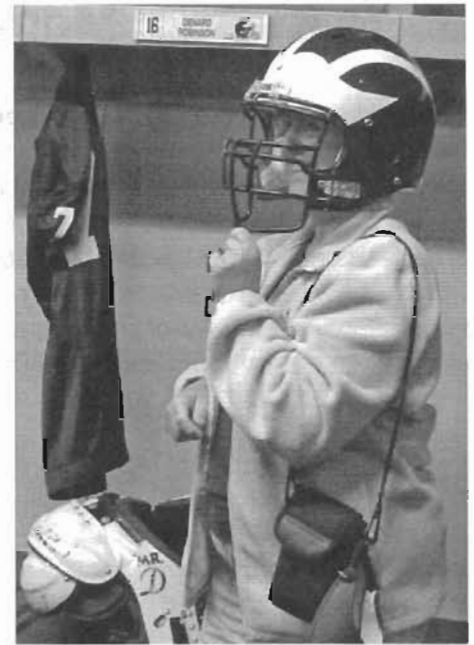
Over 6,000 of those fans were from Ann Arbor, and UM only had 10,000 students.

They traveled by train, the largest percentage of Michigan students to this day that ever attended an away game. In 1923, the Wolverines were undefeated National champions.

Construction on the Big House began in 1926. Fashioned after the Yale Bowl the stadium's original capacity was 72,000, but Yost made certain to install footings that could allow for up to 200,000 seats. The new stadium, with a capacity of 84,401, was dedicated in 1927 when Michigan played Ohio State. Michigan emerged from the tunnel to play and win 21-0.

The Coliseum in Ann Arbor

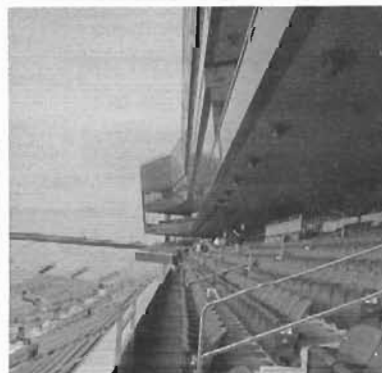
When planning Michigan Stadium, Yost spent a lot of time visiting and studying stadiums. He compiled a scrapbook of the stadiums he was inspired by and it is available for public viewing at Bentley Historical Library on North Campus. In the middle of the scrapbook are 3-4 pages of ancient Roman stadiums they have a tunnel from the outside that goes onto the floor of the arena. Yost's idea for the UM tunnel came from the ancient Roman coliseums.



After the talk, we went to the locker room, tried on helmets and pads and took lots of pictures by favorite players lockers. A trip through the treatment room led us back outside into the lobby of the Jack Roth Stadium Club. We then took the elevators up to tour the club level and skybox suites and see the Heisman Trophies. The view of the field from the inside is as impressive as the view of Ann Arbor on the outside.



There's only one way to enter the playing field at the Big House, and that's through the tunnel at the 50-yard line. Walking through, one cannot help but thinking of all of the great players and coaches over the past 83 years, who have come down that tunnel and stepped onto the field.



It was inspiring to learn about one of the greatest eras of college football history and experience the Big House in Ann Arbor for ourselves. ❖

53 Years Ago: Memories of Fielding H. Yost *November 1957*

This excerpt is from an article written in 1957 by Ernest J. Allmendinger for the November *Impressions*. After seeing Michigan Stadium in October 2010, it seems appropriate to look back to October-November 1957 and find stories written even then, 53 years ago, about Fielding Yost. You can find this article and one by Fred Lawson (also about Yost) in their entirety on our website at www.WashtenawHistory.org. On the home page, click on Washtenaw Impressions archives for all issues printed from 1943-2009. They are available to view and download as PDFs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Ernest Allmendinger played right guard and right tackle at Ann Arbor High School for teams that lost one game in three seasons. Allmendinger played the guard position at the University of Michigan from 1911-1913 under Fielding Yost. He worked for 34 years as an engineer for the Washtenaw County Road Commission from 1921-1954, and after that for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.

I met the Coach in 1911, my first year on the Michigan Squad, during our preliminary practice at Whitmore Lake. We put up at the old Stevens House. My first instructions were how to catch a football. Here is a snapshot of the Coach telling me some thing like this:

"The hands and arms are extended to receive the ball on a punt or pass. The ball is led into a pocket formed by one hand on the bottom, one on the top, so the ball can't bounce out and the body forms the inside of the basket. Don't fight the ball, y'know."

The Coach was full of lively, pithy sayings. About Sportsmanship he would tell us, *"We don't have time to think of dirty football; you can't do your best when you are thinking of getting even. But there is nothing in the rule book that says you can't hit so hard that his slats rattle. This is not a game of tiddlywinks, Y'know."*

To deflate one's ego, the Coach would say, *"I don't care what you have done, or what you can do, it's what you do do that counts with me."*

To the young center candidates, on passing the ball to the quarterback, Mr. Yost would demonstrate and run off this rhyme:

*"Not too high,
Not too fast,
Not too low
Not too slow"*



"Most Cordially, Fielding H. Yost - Hurry Up" The car is an eight-cylinder Packard, a gift to Yost from "several hundred alumni" on the day before the new stadium was dedicated in October 1927. Yost personally wrote a thank you to each of the donors.

To the quarterback he would say, *"That's an awkward way of passing the ball - be a ballet dancer, - have rhythm, with a lot of Zing - y'know!"*

To quiz the engineering students he would tell them they were playing with a prolate spheroid. I can see him demonstrate to the line men. How to line up properly, to get the proper stance, head and eyes up, feet well apart like you were lifting a heavy weight, hips down, cleats dug into the ground, twisted in so you can't be pushed or pulled around. In this way you get the initial *"charge, the Zip, the Zing, the smash-bang that gives you the impetus to get in the other backfielder"*.

He constantly reminded his players that they represented their friends, the University and the thousands of alumni. He referred to the players as "His Boys" and was proud of them. "Bottles" Thompson was captain in 1912, and a few days before our big game, our captain received word of a death in his family. We were at Dave Willets' training table. The Coach got up, spoke a few consoling words and then mentioned Saturday's Pennsylvania game. We wondered how he would meet the situation. The Coach looked up and down the dining table and said, "Tex, you've got to fill in for Bottles tomorrow." (Cont. on page 5)

Memories of Fielding H. Yost (Cont.)

Tex Meek, a big gangling boy who was no fullback, was thunderstruck. So were we. Tex was a great kicker and punted Michigan out of trouble that Saturday afternoon.

He was a keen observer. I once sat with him at a basketball game in Yost Field House, Michigan playing Cornell. Cornell was exceptional that night, very hot, seldom missed the basket. Shooting fouls they put them right in the middle of the hoop. Michigan's time: everything wrong, missed the free throw completely. Next time Cornell tried it was perfect again. I said, "coach, they never even hit the basket!" Coach replied, "We don't either!"

Along came World War I, and I remember how proud Mr. Yost was when in 1917 at Soldier's Field in Chicago, he refereed the game between the Great Lakes Jackies and Fort Sheridan Army team.

He had eight Michigan players on the Army and the Jackie team. Albert Benbrook, Jimmy Craig, Stub Millard and myself were on the Army team. Aggie Hildner, Loucks, Phil Raymond and another Michigan player were on the Jackie (Sailor) team. The Jackies averaged about five years younger and had plenty of time to practice; we practiced after 9 P.M. in the tan bark riding hall. Score Army 7, Jackies 27. Yost smiled!

Last Monday I had a pleasant visit with Mrs. Yost. The Coach married Miss Eunice Fite of Nashville in 1906. In 1910 Fielding Jr. was born and three grandchildren now range in age from 9 to 16 years. I wanted to learn of an incident about the Coach which isn't usually written in biographies. Mrs. Yost related how her husband got started in business.



Yost points inside the box seats portion of a sparkling new Michigan stadium in 1927

A lawyer in one of the big Detroit office buildings dropped his wallet. The Coach called to him, picked it up - and friendship and business started right there. This lawyer was in charge of property in Tennessee - they had a lot of information about this area. They talked of development, water power, coal and oil. There were 3 rivers and 10 creeks feeding into the large streams. The Coach suggested Dan Macgugin, who was Mrs. Yost's brother-in law.

They all worked together for six years, meeting utilities people, hydro-electric developers, builders of dams and power plants.

The Coach made many of the negotiations with the people on the watershed because he knew them and they knew him. This started in 1910. Mr. Yost at this time was spending only 2 months in Ann Arbor coaching the Michigan teams. The rest of the year he studied land contracts, easements, contour high water lines, land clearing methods and hiring lawyers. The developers depended on Mr. Yost and he was pleased in their confidence in him when he showed

Mrs. Yost a check for a million dollars for him to use in development of the area. And this at a time when stock markets were unstable. Many business opportunities followed; some were accepted, but Ann Arbor was never left out of the picture.

I have taken a few notes from "Football for Player and Spectator" written by Yost in 1905.

"Hurry up and be the first man to line up."

"Hurry up - Football is a game of Hurry, hurry, hurry!"

"Hurry up - and block your man hard when you should block."

"Hurry up - and learn to control your temper; if you cannot do this you'd better quit the game."

"Hurry up and help your own runner. Never let him go it alone."

"Hurry up and do as your coach and trainer advise you. If you know more about the game than they do, it's time for you to quit."

"Hurry up!"

On August 21st, 1946, Fielding died, a great friend, a fine leader, a true sportsman was the Coach. ❖

The Little Brown Jug

College Football's Oldest Trophy



October 31, 1903, Michigan traveled to Minneapolis with a 28-game winning

streak. Keene Fitzpatrick (Michigan trainer) did not trust Minnesota to provide the Wolverines with clean drinking water. He sent student-manager, Tommy Roberts, to buy a five-gallon jug for 30 cents for Michigan to store its own water.

In the greatest upset of that season, Minnesota tied Michigan 6-6, the only points Michigan allowed that season. The tie ended the Wolverines' winning streak. After the game, 20,000 Minnesota fans stormed the field in celebration, and during the chaos, Minnesota custodian Oscar Munson stole the jug from the Michigan sideline and brought it to Minnesota Director of Athletics, L.J. Cooke, to commemorate the upset.

Later that season, UM Coach Fielding Yost sent a note to Cooke asking for the jug back. Cooke wrote back, "If you want it, you'll have to win it." Michigan did that when the teams met up again in 1909, and 1910. Minnesota and Michigan met up again in 1919 after Michigan rejoined the Big Ten Conference, marking the first year that Minnesota won the jug outright ❖

Image from www.mgoblue.com

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WCHS membership as a birthday or
holiday gift to someone
call Pauline at 734-662-9092.
www.WashtenawHistory.org

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL CONSORTIUM

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 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

Celebrate! The Bentley at 75 Years

Now through December 22, 2010

Visit the Bentley Historical Library to learn how Dr. Lewis G. Vander Velde's dream of creating an internationally-renowned collection of archives documenting the University of Michigan and Michigan and her people came to fruition. The exhibit is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM-12:30 PM. Bentley Historical Library, 1150 Beal Ave, Ann Arbor. www.Bentley.umich.edu

The Kempf House

Saturdays and Sundays, December 4 & 5, and 11 & 12.

A German Family Christmas will be celebrated on Saturdays and Sundays, December 4 & 5, and 11 & 12, with house tours, 1-4 pm. This restored 19th century Greek Revival home will be decked out with a traditional tree and decorations reflecting a German-American family's celebration of the holidays in the early 1900's. Christmas cookies will be served. Admission free. Donations appreciated.
Kempf House Museum, 312 S. Division St., 994-4898.

Genealogy Lecture

Sunday, December 5, 2010, 1:30pm-4:30pm

"Electric Interurbans in Washtenaw County and Milan" with Milan attorney, historian, and author Martha Churchill. The class will be "Religious Affiliations: Quaker and Baptist" with GSWC panel. Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County. **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. Free. 483-2799.

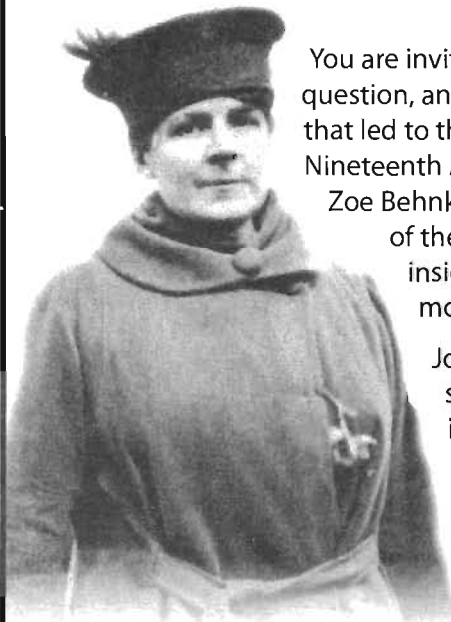
Detroit Observatory Open House

Sunday, December 5, 2010, 1-4 p.m.

The Detroit Observatory is the oldest extant observatory in America to retain its original telescopes from the 1850s in working condition in their original mounts. Take the free half-hour guided tours of this restored 19th-century observatory museum. Pull the rope and rotate the telescope dome! 1398 E. Ann Street (at Ann and Observatory), Ann Arbor, www.Bentley.umich.edu/observatory/

WCHS MONTHLY PROGRAM: NOVEMBER

“Why did Washtenaw County vote against suffrage, not once, but twice?”



You are invited to get the answer to that question, and learn more about a movement that led to the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Jeanine DeLay and Zoe Behnke from the League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area, will bring a unique insight into the women's suffrage movement in Washtenaw County.

Join us and discover the events, supporters and detractors that impacted the movement in southeast Michigan.

{ Mrs. Daniel L. Quirk, Jr. of Ypsilanti, founder, Ypsilanti Equal Suffrage Association in 1912

Sunday, November 21, 2010 • 2-4 PM

Glacier Hills Retirement Community, Hanson Room
1200 Earhart Road • Ann Arbor

For more information call

The Museum on Main Street
734-662-9092 or email
wchs-500@ameritech.net

This is a free program and open to the public, bring a friend!

Please bring your stories, buttons, banners and memories about the first time your mother or grandmother voted.



LIBERTY AWAKES
IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

WHEN WOMEN WON THE VOTE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR

“Liberty Awakes” Exhibit January 8-February 27, 2011

The Museum on Main Street, 500 N. Main Street in Ann Arbor. View original and replica artifacts and memorabilia—everything from broadsides, banners and voiceless speech scripts to a tea set, parade dresses and cookbook recipes for the cause. Presented by The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area.

Have you seen this button?

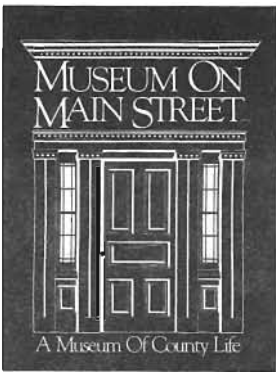
Do you have any Washtenaw County Women's Suffrage items or memorabilia? The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area is still looking for some items for next year's exhibit: Liberty Awakes in Washtenaw County.



Exhibit Wish List

If you, or someone you know, has any of these items to loan for this exhibit, please call the Museum on Main Street, 734-662-9092 or email **wchs-500@ameritech.net**.

1. Candlestick Telephone
2. Kardes brand carbon paper box
3. Kellogg's cereal boxes, vintage 1910s
4. Typewriter, vintage 1910s
5. Votes for Women Buttons
6. Washtenaw County/Michigan ballot for 1912 election
7. Voting Machine used in 1912
8. Michigan Grange, WCTU, National Association of Colored Women, Maccabees literature
9. Michigan anti-suffrage literature
10. Suffrage song sheet
11. ERA document from 1920s



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Renew YOUR membership for 2011

Electric Trolleys of Washtenaw County

Sunday, February 20
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Chelsea Retirement Community
805 West Middle Street

The Washtenaw County Historical Society • www.WashtenawHistory.org

Save these 2011 dates! Upcoming WCHS Programs

Electric Trolleys of Washtenaw County

H. Mark Hildebrandt, retired pediatrician and life-long student of history, will talk about the long-gone street cars that travelled between Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and environs. The book is available in our Gift Shop.

Sunday, February 20
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Chelsea Retirement
Community
805 West Middle Street
Chelsea

Women in the Civil War

Jane Schultz presents a lecture on Women in the Civil War

Sunday, March 20
Time: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Ann Arbor District Library
343 S Fifth Ave, Ann Arbor

The Civil War

Tom Collier on the Civil War, 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"

150th Anniversary of the Civil War



Sergeants of the 3rd Michigan Infantry. Photograph. C. 1861.