

RELIVING

The Rochester Era

March/April

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2013

Cheer Up! Celebrate March with Fun and Style — Join Us for Amy Elliott Bragg's Presentation on Detroit's Lost and Unknown Past —

Amy Elliott Bragg, local writer, blogger and “champion of the arcane history of pre-automotive Detroit” will present at the RAHS Library Lecture, March 7th.

Amy is the author of *Hidden History of Detroit* and the web site [Night Train to Detroit](#). She is also the co-founder of the Detroit Drunken Historical Society and frequently hosts irreverent tours of early Detroit with the Detroit Bus Company.

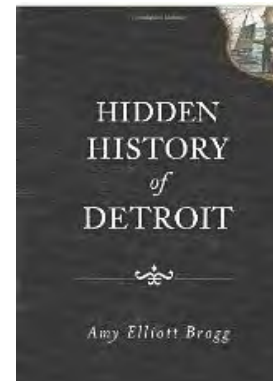
Attendees can expect a spirited and humorous discussion featuring Detroit's half-forgotten past and how exploring that past can rearrange, challenge, and totally up-end what we think we understand about the “D” — as we fondly think of it now.

Please join us after the meeting at Rochester Mills Brewery for a lively evening get together.

When: Thurs. , March 7th, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: The Multipurpose Room of the Rochester Hills Public Library, 500 Olde Town, Rochester, MI 48307.

All RAHS presentations at the Rochester Hills Public Library are free of charge and open to the public. Amy's book will be available for sale before and after the library presentation. Again, please join us for an after glow at the Mill.



Save This Surrey!!

Contact Jim Hopkins or Rod Wilson to Volunteer for a truly hands on, creative project. All skills are welcome: sanding, light carpentry, restoration, puzzle solving, a workout on your thinking and fun skills.

Will the surrey be up and rolling by Christmas? Maybe not, unless you help.

Brown Bag Luncheon Meetings

Tuesday, March 5th, Noon to 1 p.m., Rochester Community House The Secret Life of an Art Conservator!

How could anyone restore a \$100,000 painting that has been badly damaged in a car wreck? We will find out. LaVere Webster's work includes restoration of museum pieces and caring for a \$14 million art collection for 25 years.

Born into a family of artists and art collectors, Art Conservator, LaVere Webster, will present at the RAHS Bag Luncheon meeting on Tuesday, March 5. You won't want to miss this entertaining and artful afternoon as LaVere shares secrets of his profession, accompanied by slides of before and after projects.

LaVere explained by telephone to the Era that art conservators must evaluate damage, save what can be saved, and repair what can be repaired. The objective is to return a damaged treasure to its former glory and value. Restorative work requires cross-disciplinary knowledge of art, art history, appraisal, and the more hands on skills of painting, finishing, framing, and a degree in chemistry. Come enjoy an artful afternoon.

* * *

Tuesday, April 2nd, Noon to 1 p.m., Rochester Community House In Rochester Dinosaurs Are Not Extinct

Come and bring your lunch to the April 2nd Brown Bag Luncheon — where long time Rochester Resident Ginger Ketelsen will tell us about the origins of Dinosaur Hill, one of our great community assets!

Ginger will tell us how Dinosaur Hill began, first as an idea, then as a project that gathered community support. There are year around programs for all ages at this unique nature preserve, located in the City of Rochester. Find out what this beautiful gem has to offer.

This presentation is before Earth Day, which is celebrated nationally each year on April 22nd.

* * *

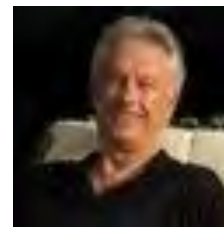
Coffee, tea and cookies provided (bring your lunch if you wish); Rochester Community House, Ludlow St., Rochester, Michigan – First Tuesday of the Month: Noon to 1 p.m.

Free admission, public invited.



1. Antique Child's Iron
2. Victorian Doll House Pets
3. Child's Tea Cup, w/Gerber Baby Silver Plate Spoons

President's Message



Hello to one and all. I hope by the time you read this message you will have been able to attend our Appraisal Day on March 3 and that all of the treasures that you dug out of the attic were worth far more than you thought. We will be posting information and pictures on our Facebook page so, if you were out of town or unable to attend, you will be able to get some feel for the excitement and fun that this event generates. A large thank you to Carol Tough and Janet Long for organizing and chairing this event for RAHS. Special thanks to the other helpers and assistants also.

Now for the big news: We are hosting this year's **Greater Rochester Inter-Service Club Dinner** at Great Oaks Country Club April 17. This year, through the efforts of our member Bill Potere, RAHS is able to have as our speaker Matt Cullen, President and CEO of Rock Ventures.

This is a big event for RAHS to host and we are hoping for a large turnout from our membership to hear this renowned speaker. For those who don't have or use electronic media you can contact me for more information about tickets, etc.

Don't forget that Greater Rochester Heritage Days are just around the corner on May 25 & 26. We have lots of fun and exciting events, which we are a part of, coming up over the next few months. I hope to see you at the Greater Rochester Inter-Service club Dinner, April 17th as well as our Brown Bag and lecture/meetings that are coming up soon.

Attributes for Emmer Ballard Story: As Found on Page 4

The First Congregational Church building on Walnut Street still exists but today it is, Smack Water Jack's. When you visit Jack's and linger in the warm spring sunlight that shines through the many windows of that establishment, think fondly of Emmer Ballard, of grace and of places and times when it all comes together.

(This feature honors Black History Month, which was in February, and Women's History Month in March)

BVC

Contact Information for RAHS Board & Committees

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 Jim Hopkins, Rochester Heritage Days 248-254-2520
 Carol Tough, RAHS Appraisal day 248-375-0084
 Jim Hopkins, Sidewalk Sales Booth, 248-254-2520
 Jo Ann Bourez, .Great Everything Sale 248-651-7526

Remembering Emmer Ballard

A faded photograph of a smiling black woman, sitting for the camera at the old Congregational Church was in a box of old photos from the original Rochester Era newspaper. My friend, Mrs. Frink, then age 98, said, "Oh, that's Emmer Ballard. It took a while to complete the research. Gail Kemler, RAHS Historian, told me that the occasion of the photo was Emmer Ballard's 80th birthday in 1938. An active member of the Congregational Church, Emmer throughout the years had worked with Sunday school children and was active with dinners and festivities at the church. When dinners were over, Emmer supervised the gathering up of good food and distributed it (privately) among those in the town who were in need.

While she was still able, on Sundays, Emmer rang the church bell – a big task since she was a small woman. The thick bell cord was in the church vestibule and took some strength to get the bell in the belfry to begin. Ringing the bell was a task church boys and girls coveted. Ringing the bell was an honor. Geraldine Lothery, lifelong Rochester resident, remembers visiting often with Emmer in her little house on East Alley/Mill Street. Ila Mae (Gray) Bendis remembers, as a child, watching Emmer walk to and from work at the Chapman House on Walnut Street. Even so, there isn't enough information to solve the riddle of Emmer.

She was born in 1857 or 1858 in Tennessee. In the 1870 Census, she is 13 years old, and named Emma Shoup. She is living with Adam Ramsey Shoup and his wife Sarah Elizabeth, whose families were first settlers in Michigan. Adam Ramsey Shoup's father, Conrad, was a veteran of the War of 1812 and purchased bounty land. In the 1860 Michigan Census, Adam R. Shoup does not appear, but his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Shoup is living with her parents, Jacob and Elizabeth Kline on their farm near Rochester. How the Adam Shoups came to live in Western Tennessee in 1870, a scant seven years after the Civil War, is a mystery.

Post-War Tennessee was roiling with political and social passion before and after the war. Obion County, District 13, Tennessee, is across the Mississippi River from New Madrid, Missouri. The Madrid Fault Line is famous for having created the worst earthquake in recorded America history (1811-1812). The frequently trembling earth fits the post-war 1870s setting of West Tennessee. In the 1870 census, Emma is identified as "B" for Black. The name, Emma Shoup, may have been a census error, or perhaps it indicates an adoptive relationship with the Shoups. However, after 1870 and for the rest of her life, Emmer's name is always Emmer Ballard.

By the 1880 Census, the Shoups are living Lake Orion, Michigan and Emmer Ballard, single, is in the household, as she would be until the Shoups died one by one. By 1890, widower, Adam Shoup, has moved to Rochester. In 1900, Marshall Shoup is living in the house and identified as Adam's son. Yet research supports that the Adam Shoups had no children of their own. The Shoups appear to be a couple with a heart for children.

Local census records show the demographics of our neighborhoods, which are a mix of ethnicities and color. Among the mix are names of some of our oldest settlers. Perhaps it was that our area was settled by New Englanders who brought their abolitionist beliefs with them. Michigan's proximity to the Canadian border historically involved it with the abolitionist movement and the underground railway. An active underground went from Pontiac to Utica and East toward Canada, from safe house to safe house. While work in our area was primarily farming, there was no need for forced labor. The work was done by large families, immigrants, free Blacks, Indians, orphans, widows, and sons and daughters without inheritance. This is not to deny that prejudice existed, but to say that in a time and a place, people seem to have found a way to get along together.

For me, in all of Emmer Ballard's good graces, I find it most admirable that for a woman of her time and climate, she was self-supporting, single, and owned her own home. This was rarely the case for any woman. In census records after 1900 until her death in 1957 at the age of 97, she owned her own home in a neighborhood of mixed ethnicities and backgrounds. If Emmer Ballard were alive today, what valuable stories she could tell of her times, from the pre-Civil War in West Tennessee, to Lake Orion and then Rochester, Michigan, from birth to her death in 1957 at age 97.

Note: While Emmer's Oakland County death certificate indicates she died at 97, if her birth year was 1857 or 1858 as census records tell us, she would have been 99 to 100 years old in 1957.

This essay is in honor of Black History Month (which was in February) and for Women's History Month in March.) **BVC**
(For attributes, see page 3 of this newsletter).

RAHS Evening Program for April 4th

DUR expert, Ken Schramm is our guest speaker at the Rochester Hills Public Library,. Schramm's topic is "Railroads From The Past". His slide show fits in nicely with Rochester/ Rochester Hills connections to the old South Hill Trestle that once carried electric railway carriages into the village.

Detroit was brought nearer to us by the DUR as farmers sent produce and dairy products into the city. The rail line went both ways, as it was possible for people to work in Detroit and commute to outlying towns and crossroads along the way.

Jack worked as superintendent of payroll with the Department of Street railways. His father was in charge of the railroad payrolls and was also an historian, he says in an interview with Dean Salley of Clarkston (qtd from internet source).

Come visit us on a sentimental journey back to mass transportation, its benefits, and finally — its demise.

Perhaps it is time to bring it back again?

Program starts at 7 p.m., Rochester Hills Public Library, 8:45 p.m. dismissal.

Oral History Meeting Announcement

Come to one of our committee meetings, if you have not yet done so, — our committee needs you!

If you are a good listener, typist, idea person, or just interested in oral history — our committee needs you!

Join us to help in any way that you can, for as long as you can. It will be so appreciated. Our committee meets on Saturday morning at 10 a.m. at the Dairy Barn in Rochester Hills Museum. Any and all are welcome. Our next meetings are March 9th, April 13th, and May 18th.

RAHS Thanks You! From Jo Ann Bourez

The following cheerful and efficient volunteers helped out (some came in several times) at this year's Great Everything Sale at Rochester Community House

Mary Howarth
Doug Steiger
Nancy Bujold
Jane Rodgers
Linda Pinkerton
Barb Plante
June Hopaluk - RAHS & OTHS
Colleen Barkham - RAHS & OTHS
Jo Ann Bourez - RAHS & OTHS
Sue Hohf
Edith Salinas
Carol Tough
Ginger Ketelsen
LaVere Webster
Gail Kemler
Janet Potton - RAHS & OTHS

Thanks you all SOOO much for your help in return for a lower rental fee for our Appraisal Day this year. I am proud of all of us!

Help Wanted!!

David Gifford at mtgiff@hotmail.com. Many hands make light work!

RAHS Members: Needed!

We have been asked to be the hosts of this year's Inter-Service Club Dinner on April 17th., cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. at Great Oaks Country Club. This is a yearly gathering of members of the area's nonprofit, volunteer, service organizations. RAHS has sent representatives for a number of years. As you can imagine, it will take a lot of volunteers to pull off a successful event. A committee has already been working on this for several months but now they need YOUR help. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks as varied as checking in guests on the day of the event, drink ticket sales, follow up phone calls to service organizations, helping with set up and take down, creating programs, etc. If you are able to volunteer to work at the event, or prior to the event, please contact

**Obit for the Monopoly Iron
A game piece since 1930**

The Monopoly Iron has been voted off the game board — receiving 31% in a Facebook election initiated by Hasbro. Contenders were a toy robot, guitar, helicopter and diamond ring — and a cat.

The cat won!



As of 2/28/13 a Hasbro retired iron was selling for \$19.19 on EBay

Join the Rochester Avon Historical Society today!

Bi-monthly newsletters-monthly meetings with guest speakers-downtown Rochester historical walking tours-monthly lunchtime talks by long-time area residents-oral history projects-book projects-research projects-and much more!

Rochester Avon Historical Society Membership Application

New Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

\$10 Student \$18.00 Individual \$25.00 Family \$35.00 Contributing
 \$75.00 Institution \$250.00 Patron

Areas of Interest – How would you like to participate?

Historic Research Genealogy Research Special Project Volunteer Antique Appraisal Day

Annual Picnic Oral History Historic Walking Tour Guide Fundraising Heritage Days

Sidewalk Sales Refreshments at Meetings Publications
Other _____

Mail to: Rochester-Avon Historical Society, P.O. Box 80783, Rochester, MI 48308-0783
RAHS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Revitalization of Detroit — Dynamic Topic!! Dynamic Speaker!!

Please attend the Inter-Service Club Dinner and get a first hand peek at what is planned for the City of Detroit. Our own Rochester Avon Historical Society is sponsoring the event. The dinner and talk has been an annual event since 1990. The idea of having this yearly dinner and meeting was started by C.O.R.E. (Community Organization Resource exchange), which was established in 1990 to foster cooperation and coordination among nonprofit organization in the greater Rochester area. An additional purpose is to disseminate information about the organization to the community. Each year one of the member organizations hosts this event, and this year it is our turn.

Our speaker, Matt Cullen, is widely known in southeastern Michigan. One of his accomplishments in 2012 was at the [Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion's](#) 65th Annual Humanitarian Tribute held November 7 at the MGM Grand Detroit. The event honors leaders who build relationships that create social justice and an environment where everyone feels included in their community. Matt Cullen, CEO of Rock Ventures LLC, was named one of the 2012 Humanitarians of the Year. He provides operational coordination and guidance to Dan Gilbert's portfolio of companies, and he's also president and chief operating officer of Rock Gaming LLC.. He was honored for being instrumental in the revitalization of the Detroit Riverfront, serving as volunteer CEO of the M-1 RAIL light rail line initiative, and for his involvement on numerous community boards and organizations.



Why We Care About Detroit's Revitalization

by Dave Gifford, RAHS Board Member

In reference to the revitalization of Detroit, Dan Gilbert, Matt Cullen, Illitch Holdings, Penske and many other major business leaders have committed to revitalizing the core of downtown Detroit. Rock Ventures has purchased over a dozen buildings in the past few years, including several along Woodward. The group typically purchases buildings that are not empty and often fills them with their own employees. They have persuaded Chrysler to move employees into the Dime Building and have renamed it Chrysler House. Rock Ventures is a major force behind the M1-Rail project, connecting downtown to the current train station, an area poised to make a comeback. The group has broken ground on a brand new parking structure ,with retail space below, located behind where Hudson's used to be.

It seems clear to me that their vision is a Detroit with a revitalized downtown, filled with residents, employees, entertainment, and an accessible and walkable waterfront connected to mass transit.

Detroit is our city, like people living outside of L.A., Chicago, Dallas, New York, think of these places as their city. We are so close to Detroit that we cannot escape its successes or failures. People are naturally drawn to cities and the urban experience and many of the younger generation want something more than the suburban experience. Cities are gritty, real, dangerous, but often produce great artists, musicians and innovations. Helping Detroit make a come back is good for all of Southeast Michigan, including Rochester and Rochester Hills. There is much to learn, much to think about.

* * *

Join us April 17th, Ticket Details in Presidents Message or contact David Gifford mtgiff@hotmail.com for tickets and info.



Antique Girls' Toys: Left to right —

1. Singer Sewing Machine, a gift with new Singer purchase;
2. Wooden Thread Spools w/adult and child-size thimbles;
3. Child's Irons, note: removable base for heating (L)
4. Brachiopods + broken flint arrowhead — from a box of child's treasures, Lake Huron cottage



From the Editor

Write or phone the editor if you have something you wish we would cover. Time and place photos are welcome. May accept memoir from readership.

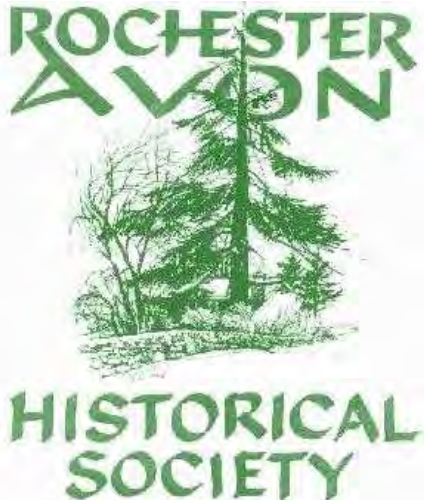
Payment is a mailed copy of the newsletter and your own byline. History related pieces, please.

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If you are not receiving your newsletter online and would like to — please contact me.

Celebrate Earth Day, April 22, 2013

Plant a tree, take a walk, write a poem, give a child a picture book on natural science: Plan to visit Dinosaur Hill in Rochester at least twice this year.



Rochester Avon Historical Society
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**Pride in
Preserving
the Past**