

Ann Arbor 2024 Bicentennial History Subcommittee Report by Jeff Crockett November 24, 2024

The History Subcommittee for Ann Arbor's Bicentennial was pleased to plan and carry out numerous successful projects and activities to support the Bicentennial. Our committee work represents a remarkable collaboration with the following local historic preservation groups and organizations: the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation, the Washtenaw County Historical Society, the Old Fourth Ward Historic District Association, the Old West Side Association, the Ann Arbor District Library, the Bentley, the Kempf House, the Broadway Historic District, African American, Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County, and the Cobblestone Farm. Our members include Patrick McCauley, Susan Wineberg, Amy Cantu, Christine Brummer, Tom Stulberg, Christine Crockett, Patti Smith, Carol Mull, Karen Jania, Bev Willis, Grace Shackman, Fran Wright, Alan Haber, Pat Austin, Michelle McClellan, Norm Tyler, Ilene Tyler Ellen Ramsburgh, Ed Rice, WAP John, Paul Conway and Sherrill MacKay. We also recognize the contribution of Amy Karbo of Destination Ann Arbor who has posted our events, Timeline and Quiz on the A2 Bicentennial website, <https://www.a2bicentennial.org/>. Beginning in January, the timeline and quiz will be accessible at: <https://www.a2gov.org/Pages/Ann-Arbor-Bicentennial.aspx>. Collectively, over the past two years, we have spent hundreds of hours creating events and working on projects for Ann Arbor's Bicentennial. As the Bicentennial year draws to a close, we would like to submit a summary of the results of our work.

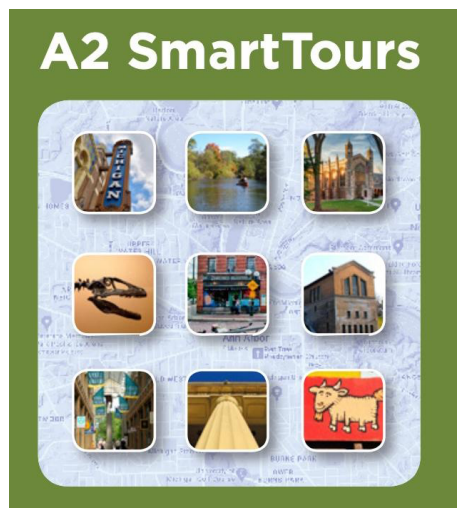
A2 SmartTours

The Bicentennial SmartTours project was created by local historians and preservationists to encourage the city's residents and visitors to learn more about the history of the city by offering 15 history tours. The tours include: The Ann Arbor Highlights Tour, the Downtown Tour, the Central Campus Tour, the Campus/State Street Tour, the Old Fourth Ward Tour, the North Division Street Tour, the Old West Side Tour, the Washtenaw/Hill Tour, the Lower Town Tour, the A2 Modern Tour, the Historically Black Neighborhood Tour, the Underground Railroad Tour, the Street Exhibits Tour, the Riverwalks Tour, and the Scavenger Tour. Narratives and photos for 177 sites were made available for smartphones, with the Ann Arbor District Library hosting the project as a long-term website.

The project has continued to expand its impact over the summer and fall. A number of walking groups are using SmartTours on a regular basis. Tours also have been hosted at the May 25th Celebration and by UM's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Presentations have been given to various groups, including guests in the city's Tübingen, Germany, Exchange Program, who fully enjoyed a narrated Downtown Tour. SmartTours has also been promoted through a two-minute video that for months has been shown prior to movies at the Michigan and State Theaters, as well as movie nights at SummerFest. Articles on SmartTours have been promoted in the Ann Arbor News, Ann Arbor Observer, and Concentrate Media, as well as a number of radio interviews

and on social media. Project resources have been made available for Ann Arbor Public Schools. The project's QR Code has been placed online, in printed media, and at the tables of local restaurants.

SmartTourists can keep track of their visits on a Checklist available online and at local libraries. Some individuals have now visited all 177 sites on the 15 tours and received a special Certificate of Completion signed by the mayor. Find the latest news on all that's happening at the SmartTours News website: https://tylertopics.com/a2st_news.html. The tours are online at aadl.org/a2st.



Timeline and Quiz

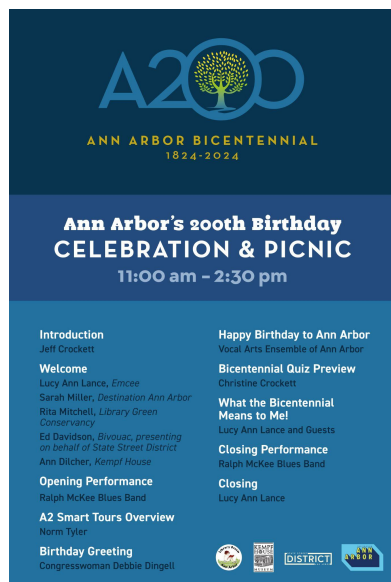
The first project was the Bicentennial Timeline, completed in the Spring, which provides a chronological record of key events that have occurred for each of City's 200 years. Susan Wineberg, Carol Mull, Christine Crockett and Jeff Crockett developed the timeline and quiz. The timeline can be viewed at <https://www.a2bicentennial.org/timeline-1>. The next project was the A2 Bicentennial Quiz completed in May, consisting of 200 questions. Since May, ten new questions have been added each week to the quiz website at <https://www.a2bicentennial.org/quiz>. They have appeared at trivia parties and community events. The quiz is expected to be completed on the website by mid-December. Beginning in January, the time line and quiz will transfer to the City's Bicentennial website at <https://www.a2gov.org/Pages/Ann-Arbor-Bicentennial.aspx>

200th Birthday Celebration & Picnic

One of the Bicentennial highlights of the year was the 200th Birthday Celebration and Picnic on May 25. Jeff Crockett collaborated in planning the event with Rita Mitchell (Library Green Conservancy), Sarah Miller (Destination Ann Arbor), Ann Dilcher (Kempf) House, and Angela Heflin (State Street District). Lucy Ann Lance was the Emcee. The program included music by the Ralph McKee Blues Band, an overview of A2 Smart Tours (Norm Tyler), a birthday greeting from Congress Woman Debbie Dingell, a performance by the Vocal Arts Ensemble of Ann Arbor, a Bicentennial Quiz Preview (Christine Crockett) and five guest speakers, speaking on the topic, "What the Bicentennial Means to Me." The multi-ethnic speakers included Bev Willis, Christine

Morales Hemenway, Artemis Leontis, Ali Ramlawi, John Metzger, Charles Newman, and Amy Seetoo. A cake from Big City Bakery was provided by the Library Green Conservancy. The event was very well attended and a thoroughly enjoyable celebration with exceptional performances and speeches. Two of the program posters were given to City Administrator Dohoney for display at City Hall. Posters will also be displayed in the Founders Gallery of the Michigan Theater, in the Museum on Main Street, and the Ann Arbor Public Library. For a YouTube recap of the celebration produced by Ann Arbor Cable Television, please visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6WC2gASbtk&t=64s..>



200th Birthday Celebration Program

Huron Street Historic Marker

The Huron Street Historical Marker project led by Patricia Austin, Grace Shackman, and Susan Wineberg is moving forward to correct the information on the stone plaque at [312 W. Huron Street](#), in front of the Arbor Atrium Building, bearing an erroneous history about how Ann Arbor got its name. The 1924 plaque currently states that our city derived its name from Ann Allen and Mary Ann Rumsey gossiping together under a grape arbor. This romanticized tale was published in "Godey's Lady's Magazine" and was never accurate. The goal is to add a plaque underneath the original that provides a factual account. The Ann Arbor Historical Foundation has committed to fund the project. Upon completion, the plaque is expected to be installed in the Spring of 2025.



Plaque at 312 W. Huron

Jones School Historical Marker

Christine Crockett participated in the Jones School Historical Marker project. Jones Elementary School served the north side of Ann Arbor from 1922 until it was closed in 1965 for desegregation. The building was reopened as Community High School in the fall of 1972. Community High alum and now teacher Joslyn Hunscher-Young has masterfully shepherded the activities of the committee throughout the past year with the goal of installing a commemorative historical panel on-site in a location to be determined.

Peace and International Justice

Alan Haber served on our committee, and he has continued the work of the Community Commons Initiating Committee. He is an Ann Arbor legend who helped found the Students for Democratic Society in 1960. He has long been involved in activating the Center of the Center by staging numerous events that support Peace and International Justice. This year, these events included an Earth Day celebration on April 18-21, Ann Arbor's 200th birthday celebration on the Library Lot on May 25, and International Day of Peace on September 20. The birthday celebration included the Really Free Market, where people brought personal items no longer needed to give to others for free. Alan is also planning a Human Rights Day event on December 10 in the 3rd-floor free space at the Downtown Library from Noon to 6 pm. He will present "Visions of the Commons," which includes local land back, reparations, and peace proposals, with lots of open mic sociability. The inspirational Garry Davis film "The World is My Country" will be shown on the creation of the human rights declaration. Visit annarbircommunitycomons.org for more details.

CREATING CONNECTIONS FOR
UNIFYING ACTIONS | **INVITATION**

Come Downtown on Earth Day April 22!

The Center of the City is hosting a free family friendly event to celebrate the many ways Ann Arbor Invests in Our Planet by showcasing local sustainability efforts and supporting the local economy with an afternoon event. Sponsored by the Ann Arbor Community Commons Initiating Committee.
www.annarborcommunitycommons.org

Details

🕒 Noon to 5pm and into the evening on SATURDAY April 22, 2023

📍 Center of the City Commons, Library Lane and 5th Avenue

💰 **FREE!** Free to attend. Donations welcome.

👥 Everyone is welcome! Open to the public, all are encouraged to attend.

🎵 Music, Art, Ideas, Local Speakers and Community Causes

👥 **Community Groups**

Local organizations are invited to show and tell their good works for sustainability and survival, and the wellbeing of Ann Arbor.

🎨 **Recreation and Activities**

Making art, children's games and play area. Speakers, Ceremony, Questions, Musics

🗣️ **Important Questions**

Community Discussions, Climate Consciousness, Repair and Reparations, Land Acknowledgement and Return.

🤝 **Volunteers Needed!**

Support the Center of the City by donating your time and efforts as Event Volunteers.

Earth Day Invitation

Kempf House

Ed Rice, President of The Kempf House and a member of the history subcommittee, shares that The Kempf House will once again open its doors this December to celebrate a traditional German Christmas. Come and join us and learn how Christmas was celebrated at the turn of the 20th Century. The museum will be open on December 8th and 15th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For more information about the Kempf House, visit <https://www.kempfhousmuseum.org/>



Teddy Kurihara's Antique Bottle Collection

Teddy Kurihara has an amazing antique bottle collection. In May, he showed a group from our committee his collection at his house. It includes many vintage bottles from Ann Arbor. Teddy shared that he is fascinated with the history of Ann Arbor. This city has a wonderful historical community with knowledge of many wonderfully detailed stories of the last 200 years of history here, but his main focal point is the artifacts that survived to tell these stories. Ann Arbor had many breweries, drug stores, dairies, soda works, and more businesses that had embossed glass bottles for their products, and his goal is to track down, categorize, collect, and understand how many of these glass antiques survived over many, many decades. From the quack doctors like Kellogg and Chase to the honest farmers like the Bolgos and McCalla families, their bottles and containers act as cherished memories and reminders of a simpler time in Ann Arbor. He is looking forward to continuously working with members of the Washtenaw County

Historical Society to raise awareness of such artifacts to educate the public and connect families with their very own history.



Teddy Kurihara with his antique bottle collection

Cobblestone Farm

Sherry McKay, President of the Cobblestone Farm Association, and Ellen Ramsburg, Board Member, are pleased to announce a holiday gathering on Sunday, December 8 (10 am-4 pm) throughout the decorated 19th-century farmhouse and grounds! Explore the farmhouse and grounds with docents stationed throughout to share stories and local history. Activities include cooking demonstrations on the wood stove, roasting chestnuts on the fire pit, loom weaving, wreath-making, and other crafts, Irish house musicians and more. Christine Crockett will present “Christmas: Why We Celebrate This Way. “ As always, this event is family-friendly! Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the "[Homegrown at Cobblestone](#)" fine arts and crafts show in the barn as well.



History of Energy in Ann Arbor

Incentivized by the Ann Arbor Bicentennial, Dave Konkle is working to prepare a history of energy in Ann Arbor from 1824 to the present. Dave Konkle helped found Michigan's first Municipal Energy Office in Ann Arbor, which he directed from 1988-2008. He is exploring how Ann Arbor used energy in its early days, and how that has changed over 200 years to get to the City's current goal of sustainable, clean energy. He plans to utilize historic documents, old photos and other images to present an entertaining and educational story about how Ann Arbor has become a national leader in local energy policies and programs. He is hoping to complete this project in 2025.

Washtenaw County Historical Society Update from Bev Willis

When members of the Bicentennial Coordinating Committee and the City of Ann Arbor started planning activities for the city's 200th anniversary, we all wanted to find a way to celebrate our rich local heritage. Our goal was to create fun, family-friendly, and educational activities that people could participate at any time. The Bicentennial History Sub-committee developed some successful projects that will live beyond 2024.

The Bicentennial Quiz is a fun way for people to learn about Ann Arbor's history. These 200 questions and answers can be used in any classroom setting and are perfect for group trivia and games. Some jump right off the page when you stand in front of the sites they're about, and you can experience that with your digital device and imagination. The Ann Arbor Smart Tours are fifteen self-guided tours of 177 places with a photo and story about its significance to Ann Arbor. The tours are online at aadl.org, and the quiz is at a2bicentennial.org.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society's exhibit at the Museum on Main Street has brought many new visitors through our front door. "Ann Arbor's Story: the First 50 Years" brought opportunities to share some of Ann Arbor's earliest artifacts from city founders and residents. The entries from our our Bicentennial Essay Contest for middle and high school students showed us the future is very bright. Their insight into what should be preserved for the next 100 years and why is truly inspiring. All of this community's engagement and support is deeply appreciated and acknowledged.

We have learned and gained so much from working with area historians this year. The Historical Society is looking forward to celebrating the next Bicentennial with you – that of Washtenaw County in 2026!



Universal Chord is a screenplay written by locals Christina Morales Hemenway and Trillian Krug. It's a historical fantasy about a 17-year-old girl who trades places with her grandmother's 17-year-old self in 1969—during the unforgettable "Summer of Love" in Ann Arbor. The movie will be the 6th feature film produced by Dancingstar Productions and directed by Morales Hemenway. With an estimated value of \$2 million, *Universal Chord* has just \$300,000 left to raise for physical production. They hope to shoot entirely on location in Ann Arbor, hiring many locals, and are very grateful to be an Ann Arbor Bicentennial Project! Ways to help can be found here:

<https://www.dancingstarproductions.com/universal-chord>. A fundraiser is scheduled to be held at the Hear.Say Lounge from 5 to 7 pm on November 30.



Timeline of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County History

Dave Taylor began a Facebook group devoted to the history of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County, as well as the University of Michigan. See [Timeline of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County History](#). A web page was created in 2016 that has grown to 1,819 pages with 3,700 pictures as of October 31, 2024:

http://davetgc.com/Ann_Arbor_Tragedies.html. The web page is updated daily. Please encourage other Ann Arborites, Ann Arbor Townies, and Washtenaw County Historians to join the Facebook group, reminisce about their past activities living in the Ann Arbor area, and improve the Timeline factoids. Since this Facebook Group began on May 3, 2017, there have been at least 36,662 photos put up with thousands of posts over the past 11 years, 2013-2024.

Sharing Ann Arbor's Bicentennial with Dexter and Dixboro by Tom Stulberg

2024 isn't just the Bicentennial for Ann Arbor. Dexter and Dixboro share that 200th birthday with us. In 1824, Judge Samuel W. Dexter purchased a large tract of land along Mill Creek that became what is now known as the City of Dexter. Originally named "Mill Creek Settlement," the platting of the village in 1830 saw the official name change to the Village of Dexter.

In 1824, Captain John Dix, a retired ship captain from the Eastern Seaboard, arrived in Washtenaw County and purchased about 450 acres of land in Ypsilanti Township at a cost of \$1.25 per acre. A portion of the land (legally known as Section Eighteen, Township Two in the District of Detroit and Territory of Michigan) would one day become the Village of Dixboro.

I had the privilege of being the liaison between Ann Arbor's Bicentennial Committee and the other two communities' committees. We met over coffee many times to discuss and plan our various events, and we had booths at each other's festivities. It was great fun and added energy to all of our parties. They joined us at our Birthday Party on May 25th, and we joined them at theirs.

Dexter had a long weekend of festivities from June 20th to 23rd. Highlights included a carnival with a Ferris Wheel, a parade, lots of music, and Dexter Jeopardy. Dixboro's long weekend of festivities was August 2nd-4th at their Village Green, where there is a

historical schoolhouse and the still active historical Dixboro United Methodist Church. Music, food trucks, and a wonderful presentation from a relative of founder Captain Dix all preceded the dedication of a Historic Marker and Bicentennial Rock.

The final joint celebration was Saturday, November 16th: The Thrill of the Mills, coordinated with Washtenaw County Parks. We started at the Dexter Cider Mill for an apple pressing demo and cider-tasting at Michigan's oldest continuously operating cider mill; stopped at Dixboro's Village Green for or a talk on 19th-century mills with Zingerman's Bakehouse experts, followed by a tasting of freshly milled, whole grain bread; and wrapped up the day with a guided tour of Parker Mill, Washtenaw County's last remaining 19th-century flour mill, with live milling demonstrations. The Mayor of Lowertown and Judge Dexter became fast friends, along with many others.



L to R, Patrick McCauley, Tom Stulberg, Mark Olexa, Christine and Jeff Crockett

2024 Community Award for Historic Preservation

On Friday, May 10, the Old Fourth Ward Historic District Association was awarded the 2024 Community Award by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network at their annual conference for 40 years of service for historic preservation and to the downtown residential community. Ilene Tyler and Jeff Crockett collaborated on the application.

The History Subcommittee has been pleased to participate in Ann Arbor's Bicentennial celebration. It's been an honor to serve and an expression of love to the city that has given us so much.

