Every Man's Home Is His Castle

By Wendy Blackie

Every man's home is his castle. Few of us could transplant ourselves into a neighbor's house without at least finding a better place to store the lawn mower, or arranging the cutlery drawer in a more 'convenient' manner! Nothing equals our own special castle, and yet, all of us know "some castles are more equal than others!" (Apologies to George Orwell.) Among Saline's "castles," a beautiful variety qualify as the top ten!

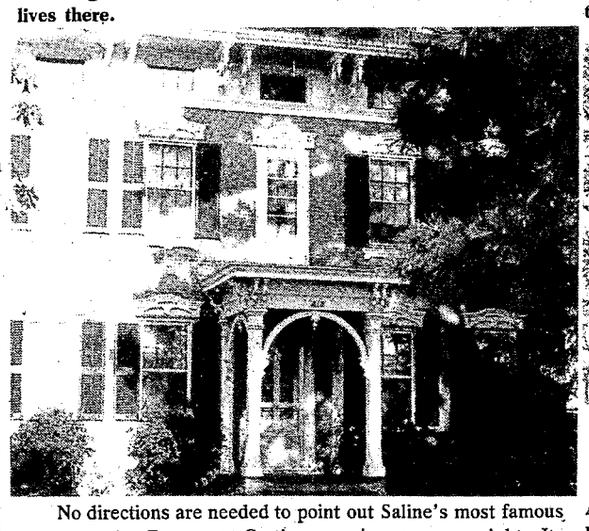
So just in case you can't make the horse and sleigh ride around Henry Ford's Greenfield Village in Dearborn this Christmas, we'll point out some interesting Saline dwellings to show your holiday visitors! Yes, it's true that Greenfield Village has already snaffled one of Saline's more famous homes [the First Baptist parsonage, birthplace of Saline native and writer George Matthew Adams, a friend of Henry Ford who bought the house and moved it to the Village in 1937] but we still have many to proudly show out-of-town guests. Bundle them into your own horse-powered vehicle, and you're off!

Entering Saline from the north on Ann Arbor St., the first house to point your finger to is the Harper-Janich home at 319. Built in 1893, its original owner was former State Senator Harper. We call this house Queen Anne because of its numerous gables and dormers, and tower on the corner. Don't overlook the sunburst and shingled designs facing the street! At 303 is another unique home (try to find another like it in Saline!) which has not been altered since it was built in 1900 for Charles Cool by local builder Elwood Rogers. Cool owned the Saline Mercantile Co.

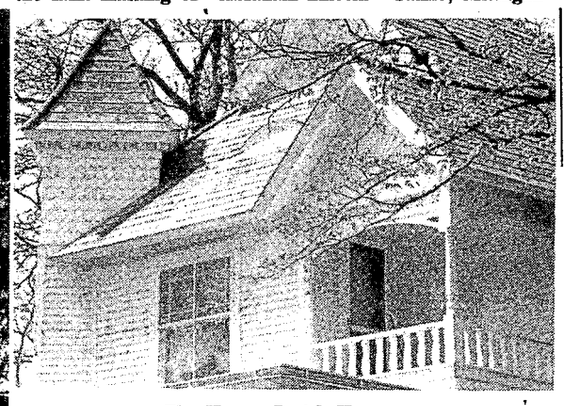
OF HARDWARE AND HARNESS

Although there are numerous eye-catching homes along this stretch of street, leave Ann Arbor at Russell to drive by the Sturm-Cammet house at 100. Another rare jewel in our City, this house was built by Saline's founder Orange Risdon for the Sturm family in 1873. Sturm was a prominent business man in early Saline, who specialized in the hardware and harness business. Direct YOUR horses back to Ann Arbor St. by taking lefts at the next two corner. As you turn right onto Ann Arbor, look to your right for a beautifully restored dwelling on the corner. Built around 1855 where a blacksmith shop once stood, this house has witnessed the passage of many renters. Dr. and Mrs. C. J. Prout purchased this cube-shape home in 1939; later they enlarged the south wing and replaced a full-width porch with its small colonial entrance. Present owners are the Prout's daughter and her husband Dr. Joe Mancari. The ornamental brackets under the eaves and the window details are worth a closer look!

A left at the four corners will take you down the old Chicago Turnpike. Rare and charming, on your left is the Trinity Lutheran Church, marked by a tall white spire. The church was completed in 1872 at the cost of $5,500. Other than some interior decoration and minor changes to the steeple, the building is seen today much as it was in earlier times when villagers called it The German Church. One block farther along, also on your left at 303 E. Michigan Ave. sits the Fosdick house on the corner. Built in 1918 it is a fine bungalow. Look up at the dormer; it's crowned with a full pediment [the triangular shape] over double windows. The original owner of the home, Pauline Fosdick, still lives there.



The Annin-Peoples House



The Harper-Janich House

No directions are needed to point out Saline's most famous dwelling, the Davenport-Curtiss mansion on your right. Its original owner was William H. Davenport who turned from storekeeper to banker, founding The Citizens Bank of Saline. In 1876 Davenport hired architect William Scott to design a home befitting his station in this early community. The result? A Second Empire beauty with mansard roof and dormers, so outstanding and so rare that today, still in mint condition, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After Davenport's death in 1909 the house remained in the family. Carl A. Curtiss, a close family friend and a bank employee, inherited the house; it is now the residence of his son Bliss A. Curtiss and family.

DON'T FORGET THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

Turning right at the end of the Curtiss property, whisk around to E. Henry St. The Curtiss storage barn and carriage house are two charmers in themselves! Coming up on your left, at 302 E. Henry is another Davenport home, this one built by William's son Beverly in 1873. Its tower and front porch were removed in 1945.

Two more stops before you rein in! Continue down Henry St., one of Saline's earliest, until you reach Monroe, and turn left. A visual treat is in store when you glimpse the Annin-Peoples house, a sophisticated structure that is the finest of its style in Saline and in a much wider area. The house is named after Joseph Annin who purchased the land from the State of Michigan in 1863, and had the house built when he retired from farming and moved to town. Legend has it that President Lincoln stopped here on his way to Jackson and that the faint marking of "Abraham Lincoln - Saline, Michigan August 23, 1863" on an attic beam is evidence of his visit to this house. The home is rumoured to have sheltered escaping slaves on their way north during Civil War times. Other occupants included owners Harvey Bennett, local builder, and John Hull, a director of the Citizens Bank. The Peoples family bought the house in 1918 and descendants live there still.

A picturesque spot to top off your Christmas "sleigh ride" through Saline is the Schuyler-Ford-Weller Mill. The present owners invite you to park your car here, and having admired the multi-storied mill and its environs, pay a visit inside. The Saline river served as power for the grist mill when Schuyler Haywood operated it for 10 years, turning out 125 barrels of flour a day. Schuyler, who built the mill in 1845, gave the name of his home town, Barnegat, N.J. to the thriving little settlement that grew up around it. The milling of flour ceased in 1925. Henry Ford purchased the building in 1937, and after dismantling and rebuilding it board by board to meet his strict standards, reopened it as the Ford Soybean Mill. Local farmers raised soybeans which Ford processed into machine oil and soy meal for plastic parts in his autos. A change of hands led to a change of name, Soybrands Inc., which was sort-lived. Following the residency of a summer stock theatrical company and an antique emporium, the mill is now fondly known as Wellers Country store.

Even a quick examination of this mill from its basement on up, will convince you that some castles ARE more equal than others!

[NOTE: Photographs of all these structures, and more information on several of them can be found in "Saline Has A Past In Its Future," a study of Saline's significant buildings, and a look at growing Saline. Available at City Hall, the Public Library, and The Reporter, this survey determined that the ten buildings described here are of local and/or national signifigance.]

In & Around SALINE

Scout Pack 474 Holds Genius Night

Cub Scouts from Pack 474 held their annual Genius Night Nov. 22. Each boy was given a bag of assorted goodies at the den meeting and from this a project was made and displayed. Assistant Cub Master Roger Benton presented awards to the boys by dens. Den #1 received the "Brightest" Award, Den #2 "Tops" Award, Den #3 "Real Gem" Award, Den #4 "Sweetest" Award and Weblo Den the "Corniest" Award.

Cub Master John Thompson introducted Janet O'Kunze and she accepted food items donated by the Cub Scouts on behalf of the Saline Area Social Services.

Awards for November went to Eric Huffman-Bobcat Badge; Paul Graham-Bear Badge, gold arrow and 1 silver arrow; Joey Benton-Wolf Badge and gold arrow; Steve Benton-Aquanaut, Showman; George Black-Artist; Robbie Briggson-Artist and Naturalist; Mike Chantelois - Artist; Robert Clark-Artist; Rick Feldkamp-Artist; Larry Haeske-Artist, Aquanaut, Athlete; Jon Heffington-Artist; Kevin Taylor-Artist; Danny Thompson-Artist; and Mark Valley-Artist.

The Pack Christmas Party will be Dec. 13.

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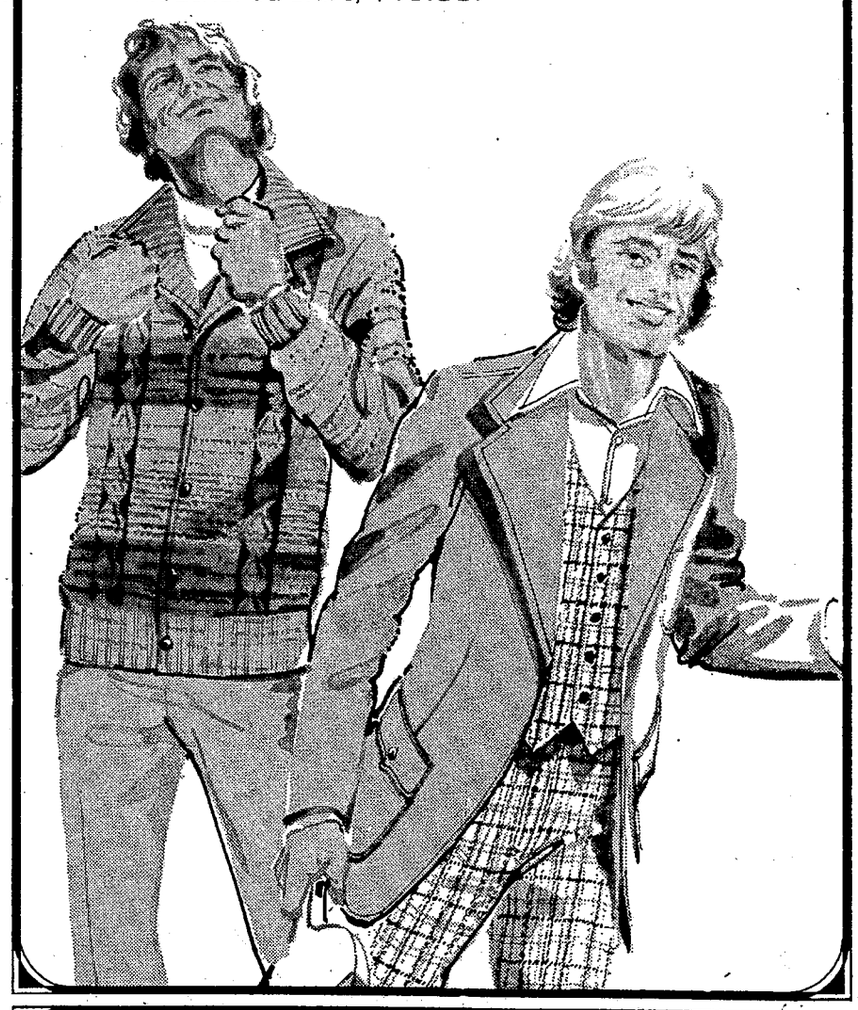
Heathered shirt, $18.00.



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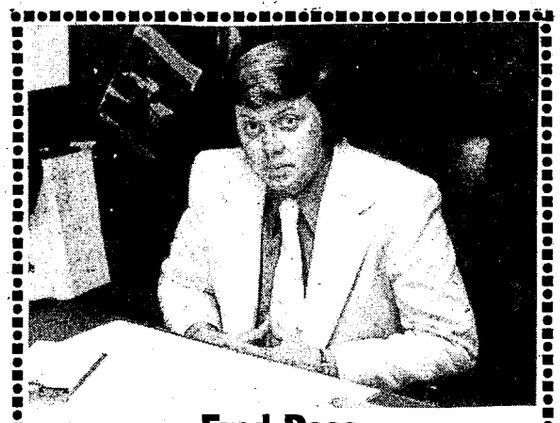

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