

# Found in Collection



From the Archives and Collections of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm

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Spring 2018

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*Found in Collection* is a phrase used in the Museum field to describe undocumented objects found within a Museum's collections whose donor, history, and significance are unknown. These items pose the exciting (and sometimes frustrating) challenge of figuring out where they came from.



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# A Note from the Archivist

It has been an honor working in the archives and collections at the Rochester Hills Museum for the past several years. As the Museum Archivist, I manage thousands of documents, photographs, and artifacts that make up the Museum's archives and collections. Managing these priceless collections includes a variety of activities such as cataloging, research, preservation, and digitization. While this can be challenging, there is nothing more thrilling than holding in your hands the diary of a civil war soldier or the survey plans for Auburn Road and realizing you are one of the few people to ever touch this item or to even know that it exists.



Perhaps, the most important part my job is to make sure I am not the only person to know that these items exist. Whether through digitization, an exhibit, or this

annual collections magazine, I am dedicated to sharing the Museum's collections with the local community and anyone else who is fascinated with our community's local history. Therefore, the purpose of this publication is to delve deeper into the Museum's collections by featuring never before shared artifacts and stories, discovering their history, and showing what goes into their care.

We are fortunate that we have a loyal and dedicated team of volunteers to thank for all of their work in cataloging, digitizing, processing, researching and writing articles for this publication. These dedicated volunteers have helped us accomplish huge feats, such as making our newspapers available online, and are an integral part of our success.

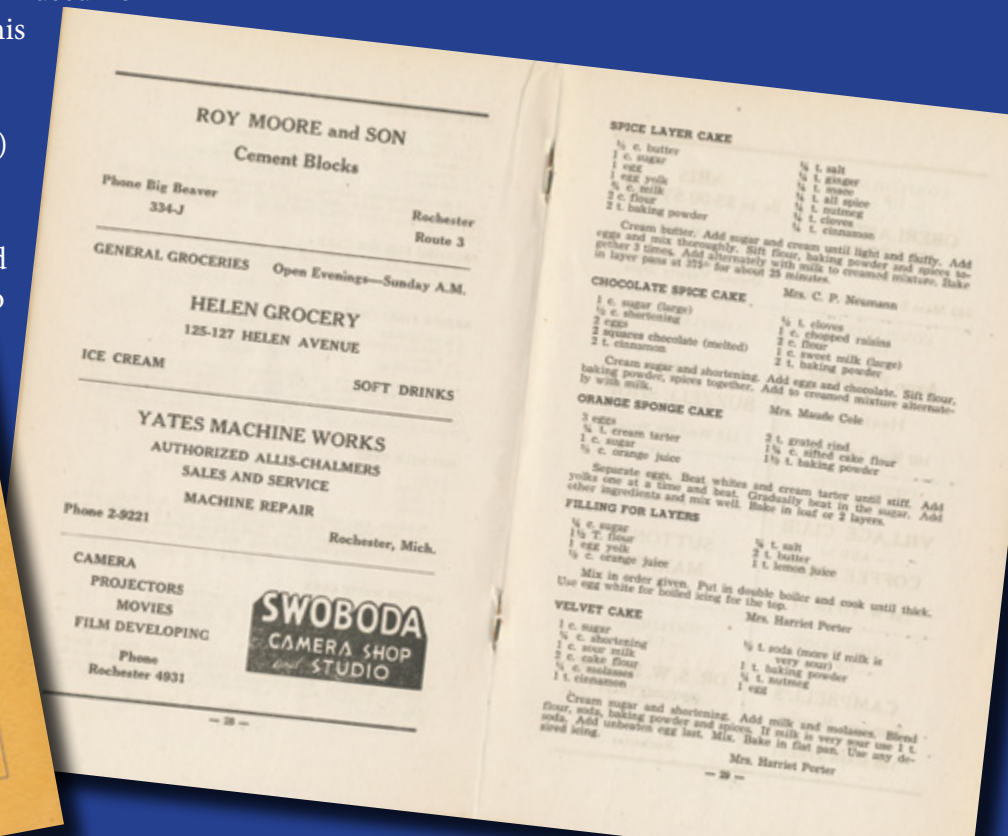
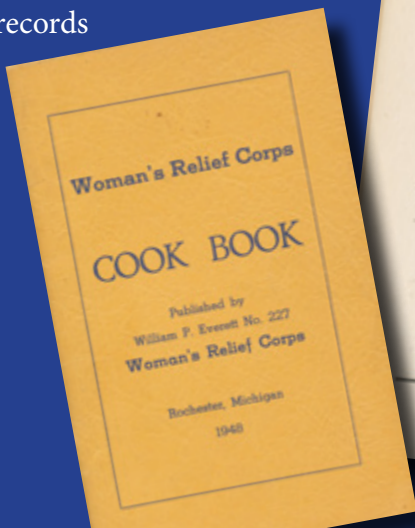
When we look at the history of the world – it is all local history. Enjoy ours!

*Samantha Lawrence*

Samantha Lawrence

# Artifact Spotlight

History isn't the only thing hidden in the Museum's collection... delicious recipes are too! This recipe comes from the William P. Everett No. 227 chapter of the Woman's Relief Corps. The Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) is the auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a fraternal organization for veterans of the Union Army who served in the Civil War. The WRC's mission is to preserve the records and history of the GAR.





## It's All in the Process

By Jordan Tolmie

What you see on display at the Rochester Hills Museum is only a small portion of the Museum's collections. While the goal is always to share our collections with the community, every item must be surveyed, processed, and cataloged before it can be placed on display. In this article, we'll discuss the behind the scenes work that goes into making our collections shareable.

### What does the Museum collect anyway?

Unfortunately, we cannot accept objects just because they are old. What we collect reflects the Museum's mission. In order to accept something into our collection, we have to evaluate if/how it can help us tell the story of the greater Rochester community or the Taylor and Van Hoosen families.



A few years ago, the Museum was offered a collection of material belonging to Kathleen (Kate) Wallace Hames who was born in 1930 and raised in the village of Stoney Creek in Rochester Hills, Michigan. We chose to accept this collection as it relates to Rochester history and more specifically to what life was like in the village of Stoney Creek.



### What is a collection?

A collection can consist of just about anything. Have you ever known someone who has a 'lot of quarters'? Maybe they collect quarters. How about someone who has boxes of toothpicks in a drawer; yes even toothpicks can be collected. However, for the Rochester Hills Museum, collections are typically from a local business, organization, or resident. Archival material may consist of published and unpublished materials, manuscripts, letters and photographs. There can also be objects such as clothing, tools, toys and furnishings. For example, *the Kathleen Wallace Hames Collection* is composed of items such as personal photos and documents, a sled, roller skates, farming tools and a family bible.



### How does the Museum keep track of what is in each collection?

The first step to discovering what is in a collection is to process it. Processing a collection consists of arranging the contents and documenting the selected arrangement.



Typically, a collection will be sorted into several series each representing a common theme. For the *Kathleen Wallace Hames Collection*, the personal photos and documents, including newspaper articles, made up one series while the bigger objects like roller skates and farming tools made another. By creating series, locating specific items within the collection is easier for researchers (and staff too).

After a collection has been arranged, the collection has to be documented with a finding aid and a catalog



record within the Museum's cataloging system PastPerfect. A finding aid describes the contents of the collection and their arrangement. Finding aids are an essential resource for Museum staff and researchers because "without these 'windows' on collections no one would know what collections existed or what was in them..."



case with the *Kathleen Wallace Hames Collection*, some of the objects were too large to store in boxes. However, all the personal photos and documents were organized into six acid free folders that filled one box.

### How does the Museum share collections?

With a limited amount of exhibit space, the Museum is exploring new ways to share collections with the community. Digitization has allowed for the Museum to make collections available online and share with an unlimited audience. You can check out the Museum's collection on HistoryPin, Facebook, and PastPerfect Online. The Museum has also started uploading finding aids to the website. Visit [www.rochesterhills.org/musarchives](http://www.rochesterhills.org/musarchives) to check them out!

### Where/how do you store collections?

The Rochester Hills Museum has several collection storage areas located within onsite buildings as well as offsite. In general, a collection needs to be housed in acid free folders and boxes to be preserved correctly. Depending on the size of collection items, some objects may need to be stored off site. This was the



Jordan Tolmie is a recent graduate from CMU earning a bachelor's degree in Public History with a minor in Museum Studies. She has always had a passion for public history and archives. Over the last two years, she has volunteered at several museums including Rochester Hills, Meadowbrook Hall, and Troy Historic Village. This is her first published article.

Region of Peel Archives, "How Do Archivists Describe Collections? (or, How to Read a Finding Aid)," Archives @ PAMA, February 29, 2016

## Our community has always been innovative.

Oakland Newsweek  
Computerized Library 1st In State



Pioneer surgeon  
Fought for women in medicine

THE FIRST ELECTRIC CAR  
REACHED ROCHESTER LAST  
WEDNESDAY.

At 3:30 last Wednesday afternoon the first electric car over the Detroit, Rochester, Romeo & Lake Orion Railway reached Rochester, stopping at the south end of the viaduct, just in-

With your help, we can continue this tradition by making our collections accessible anytime, anywhere.

Your support will help us digitize our collections and share them online.

Visit [rochesterhills.org/musdonate](http://rochesterhills.org/musdonate) to make a special gift to our collections fund.



## Preservation Update

The handmade Chinese rugs in the Van Hoosen Farmhouse have survived almost 100 years of torture... I mean wear from vacuums, pets, and daily foot traffic. In addition to a thorough cleaning in 2017, two of the rugs received new fringe this past March. As shown in the before photos, the rugs' original fringe was either nonexistent or severely damaged. The experts at Hagopian were able to add new fringe and take the rugs back to their former glory.

The Rochester Hills Museum is lucky to have thorough documentation on many objects originally owned by the Van Hoosen Family. Here's the history of the Chinese rugs in the Van Hoosen Farmhouse from Sarah Van Hoosen Jones herself:

*"While in China we purchased three casual rugs to be used in the house which we intended to build. We were in the earthquake of September 1, 1923 and having the rugs with us we lost them in the 'quake, since they were in the Yokohama Hotel which sank to the second story. When we were home and the house was planned we knew the sizes of the rugs required to fit the floors, therefore we wrote the factory in Peking asking them to make up a new set for us. Prices of Chinese rugs in the late twenties were not equivalent of domestic rugs, being lower in price.*

*So, today we walk in on hand-woven Chinese rugs, under a timbered ceiling in the entrance hall."*

*Sarah Van Hoosen Jones,*

*Chronicle of Van Hoosen Centenary Farm*



Chinese Rug Fringe (Before)



Chinese Rug Fringe (After)





# A Book a Day: The Library of the Van Hoosen Women

By Mikayla Benton

The women of the Van Hoosen family of Stoney Creek Village are extraordinary examples of well-read and well-educated woman. Each involved with her own passion, these women left behind rich histories of their family and contributions to the Rochester area. They were avid readers and collected books covering many subjects. A sampling is on



Farmhouse Library

display in the Van Hoosen Farmhouse. The book collection enhances our knowledge on the family's history through their unique inscriptions and objects sometimes stored inside them.



Farmhouse Balcony

The women began collecting books at a young age. This was not only limited to Bertha and Alice's generation; the family seemed to pass down a love of reading. For example, Sarah Van Hoosen Jones received a book for her eighth birthday in 1900 called *Wabeno the Magician* by Mabel Osgood Wright, according to a note inscribed on the inside cover.



Alice Van Hoosen Jones

Books were common and useful gifts; one could build up their own personal library while loaning them out to friends at the same time. Friends and family members gave the girls books as gifts for holidays as well. Another book, *Lady Jane* by Mrs. C.V. Jamison, was given to Sarah for Christmas a year later by her great aunt Julia Osborne. Julia was Grandmother Sarah Taylor Van Hoosen's sister. Not much is known about her, but in her book *Petticoat Surgeon*, Bertha described her aunt as a "lover of finicalities" and "a milliner by trade".

The youngest daughter of Joshua and Sarah Van Hoosen, Bertha would go on to become one of the most famous and highly regarded female doctors of her time. Her profession and passion for learning led her to many unique places around the world. One of her books, titled *Sweden*, was given to her by her friend Esther Jurbin before her 1934 departure to the country. Being such a well-known and widely traveled woman, Bertha crossed paths with many individuals, making friends and expanding her network of colleagues. A book called *The House of the Good Neighbor* by fellow physician Esther Lovejoy was gifted to Bertha by the author herself. Inside the book she wrote that Bertha possessed "a whimsical humor that has enlivened several conventions for me", likely referring to medical meetings that Bertha attended through her profession. Another one of her books, called *The Fat of the Land*, was about farming but written by another doctor that Bertha knew, Dr. Streeter. Tucked inside that book was a letter Bertha wrote, presumably to her sister, about the doctor and a new pug she was bringing into her home. "If you could hear in detail all about my dog," she wrote, "... you would die laughing."



Sarah Van Hoosen Jones



Bertha Van Hoosen

Alice Van Hoosen Jones was Bertha's sister and the oldest daughter. As a young woman, she had an interest in shows and entertainment and she enjoyed such activities with her sister. Books in the family's library reflect her interest in the theater. She owned a book called *The Best Plays of 1923-1924*, which is among the collection in the farmhouse library.

## 8. From the Archives and Collections of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm



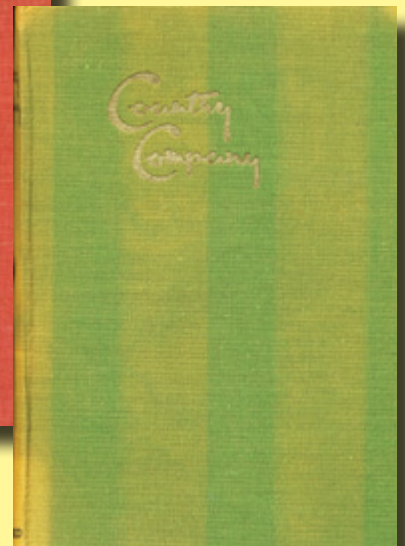
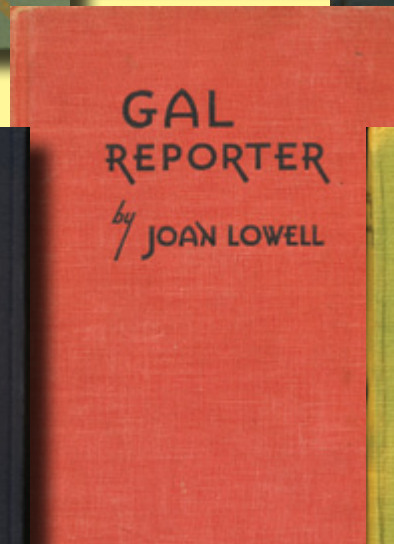
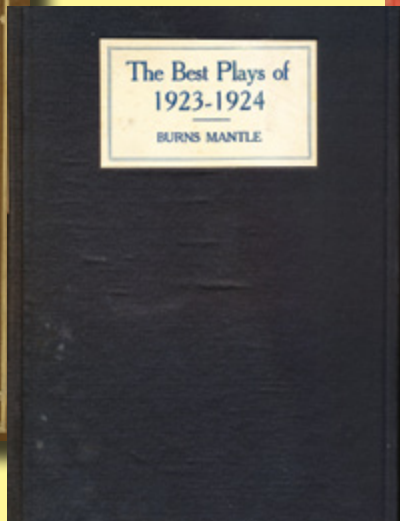
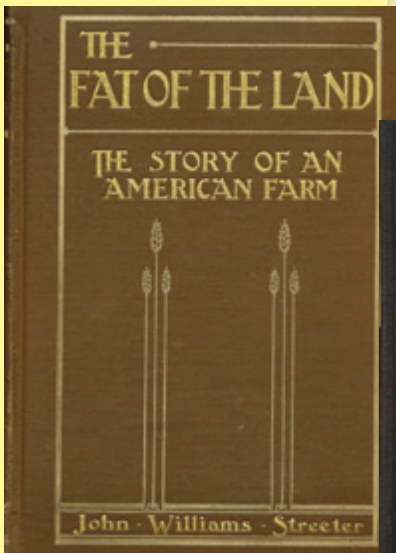
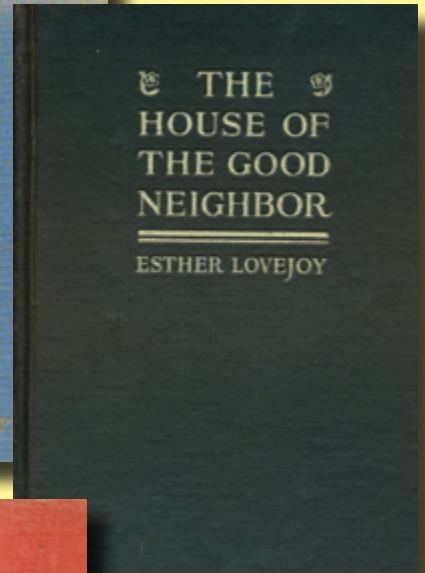
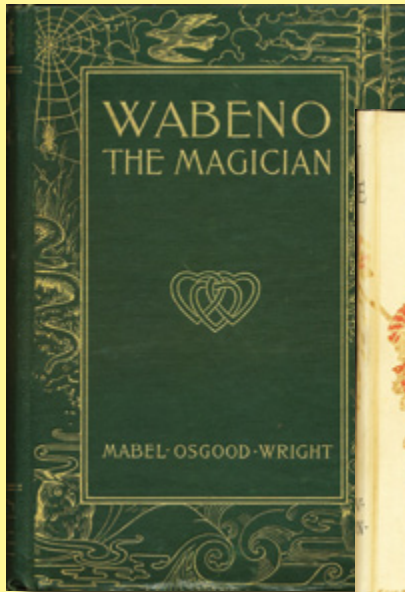
When Sarah Van Hoosen Jones took over caring for the family farm, she opened a small store on the property to help sell Van Hoosen Dairy products and goods made by local women during the Great Depression in 1938. To assist with sales, she hired Alice Serrell as the shopkeeper and eventually, farm secretary. Alice grew close to the family over the years and eventually came to live in the farmhouse until 1984. Some of her books are located in the farmhouse library as well. She too was likely an avid reader, since many books belonging to



Alice Serrell

her are located among the museum's collections. One of her books, *Gal Reporter* by Joan Lowell, contains an interesting inscription. Alice wrote that "this account is not authentic, the author confessed to fabricating the whole narrative", dating it 1982. Another book, *Country Company*, was given to both Sarah and Alice as a gift in 1953.

Mikayla Benton is a 22-year-old senior at Oakland University, studying history, English, and creative writing. She hopes to one day work in an archive while also doing historical research and writing fiction on the side.





## Who is She?

### Finding Clues in Unknown Photos

By Rachel Segall

With the advent of photography, history has gained an indispensable visual component that is not present in past eras. At its early stages, photography was only accessible to a very select few. However, as technologies improved, methods of developing film became easier. And, to this end, photography was able to extend to everyone. In this sense, photography has become an increasingly valuable asset to historians. Photographs can give glimpses into how and what types of clothing were worn, what architecture looked like, and even what events people found culturally significant. In this way, a deeper understanding of culture on all levels (including economic and social) can be extracted not just from official channels, but also from the people living within that culture. For example, the Civil War is considered one of the first wars to be visually documented and because of this, historians have a clearer view of how battles were fought, what soldiers wore, and what life was like in the camps. Without this visual documentation, the war would not connote the same feelings as it does today.

With all of this in mind, as well as the extensively large number of photographs being taken, both then and now, the process of creating context for the photos becomes tricky. This is especially so when photos are not labeled or donors are unknown. A prime example of this is a photo collection held at the Rochester Hills Museum, entitled *Unknown Photo Collection*, which consists of a collection of photos with very little context clues, which are made even more prevalent by the lack of donor information. There is no one to call and ask who these photos are of or where they came from. However, in processing and arranging the collection, some context could be extrapolated from the photos.

The collection itself consists primarily of professional photos, most of which come from studios. The studios range in dates from the late 1800s to the 1950-1960s. Exact dating on these photos is unknown as there is very little information on any of the photographs. However, a number of clues found within the photos themselves can allow date estimates. For example, cabinet photos were a common photo type seen

during the 1870s-1890s. The photos were set on sturdy cardboard backings, often sepia toned, and sent to relatives. They would be marked with the studio where they were taken either on the front or on the back. With this collection, the photos were found to be heavily centered around studios in Detroit. Whoever had owned these photos,



had a specific interest in photos from around the Detroit and Southeast Michigan area. However, it cannot be assumed that these are old family photos. Cabinet photos, especially in recent years, have become collector's items. They are cheap (often selling for less than \$100) and plentiful. So, while these photos may have been geographically similar, they are not necessarily related to each other or to their donor in a familial sense.

Photo typing is not the only way to identify date ranges or locations for photos. Particular styles of clothing can also be used to narrow date ranges down even further. For this reason, many photos from the

collection that were digitized were chosen based on the amount and type of clothing shown. In dating photos based on clothing, a good rule of thumb is to look to the younger people in the photo. Young people are often more in line with current fashion trends, and therefore, the dates can be more accurately assessed based on those outfits. Many of the photos showcase women wearing high collared, long dresses. Many of the women did not have bustles in their dresses, suggesting that the photos were taken later in the era, closer to the 1890s, and into the early 1900s. With this in mind, many of the photos can be dated to specific decades. This same technique can be applied to men's fashion.



Another method of dating photos is to look at the objects in the photo. In looking at the cabinet photos, this technique is not useful, but in the photos from the 40-50s, the scenery can show a great deal. For example, a photo from a Christmas party prominently features typewriters. In this case, the make and model of the typewriters can be taken and used to give a more precise date to these photos. Buildings and signs can also be used to date photos, even if those businesses no longer exist.

Another method for dating photographs is to look at the type of photo. Earlier, cabinet photos were mentioned, but other types include daguerreotypes, tintypes, ambrotypes, and carte-de-viste. Daguerreotype photos are often housed within small cases or boxes. These photo types were most prominent from the early 1940s-1950s. Tintypes, were popular just before the Civil War, and became a favorite among soldiers and civilians (especially in Victorian



post-mortem photography). Tintypes were also housed in a manner similar to daguerreotype photos. However, they are subject to darkening and age rapidly.

Ambrotypes appeared in 1851, and would be the next step in photography after Daguerreotype. Tintypes and Ambrotypes, however, are encased in a container with a front and not just a folder or frame. This is to help preserve the photo. In order to determine whether a photo is an ambrotype or a tintype, simply hold a magnet up to the photo. If it sticks, the photo is a tintype. Even the cases on these photos can be used to date a photograph. For example, wood casings lined with leather were common from around 1840-1865.

The *Unknown Photo Collection* consists mainly of cabinet photos and carte-de-viste photos. Carte-de-Viste photos were cheap and readily available to the masses. They consisted of a paper print mounted onto cardstock. These photos would be replaced, eventually, by cabinet cards.



With this in mind, the *Unknown Photo Collection* at the Rochester Hills Museum is largely a mystery. While many of the photos are able to be dated, very few have information regarding their context or the subjects within. If there is anyone who knows who any of these people are, or if they know to whom these photos may belong, or any connection to these photos or studios, please contact the Rochester Hills Museum.

Rachel Segall is an Oakland University alum and is currently a graduate student at Wayne State University studying library and information science, history, and archival administration. Her interests include medieval and local history. When she isn't studying, she can be found writing science fiction, taking her cat for walks, or hanging out with her book club in Detroit.



# The Everyday Life of a Master Farmer

By Molly Banes

Bringing history to life is no easy feat, yet the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm does it daily. The 16-acre grounds serve as a living reminder of yesteryear and the evolution of the community around us from settlement to modern times. The 1927 Dairy Barn, restored 1927 Calf Barn, and 1840 Farmhouse bring history to life with their presence as well as the exhibits and collections housed inside their walls.



Cows drinking from Stoney Creek, 1946. Alice Serrell Collection

Photographic evidence is one of the easiest ways that we can glean information about our predecessors. Sure reading a vivid diary entry could set your imagination on fire, but seeing an image of the same thing often makes it feel more real and gives the person or place an actual visual identity. Studying an image gives the viewer the opportunity to see all the small and often historically overlooked details that are essential to everyday life. From the technological advances that have changed the way our kitchens and living rooms look to the cultural evolution that shapes how we decorate and what we celebrate, the differences between life “then” and “now” are evident; but so are the similarities. The collections of photographs encompassing the lives of the families who made this farm their home, as well as historic photographs of Stoney Creek and Rochester Hills, held by the Rochester Hills Museum tell a story of the time before us that shaped the community into the place it is today.

The Van Hoosen Farmhouse, on the National Register of Historic Places, was built in 1840 by the Taylor family, the founding family of Stoney Creek. Following Sarah Taylor’s marriage to Joshua Van Hoosen it became home to sisters Alice and Bertha, who were among the first group of female graduates from the University of Michigan. Alice taught Latin and Greek

before marrying and having children, while Bertha went on to be a trailblazer for women in medicine and surgery. Although she held her primary practice in Chicago, Bertha would see and treat patients out of an office in the Farmhouse when she would visit home. Born in 1892 Alice’s daughter, Sarah Van Hoosen Jones, and farm secretary Alice Serrell were the last occupants of the historic home. Sarah’s love of her ancestral land led her to a master’s degree in animal husbandry, later a doctorate in animal genetics, and ultimately the title of Master Farmer in 1932, of which she was only the second woman to hold the title. Under Sarah’s care, the Van Hoosen Farm became one of the most successful farms in southeast Michigan in the 1930s and 1940s. While Sarah’s story and historical presence is large, she was also just a regular girl from Oakland County. We see this in the pictures Alice Serrell took of their home, their social gatherings, and their furry friends; which seems no different than some of the images we might take of our own lives.

Looking at images of the former life of the Van Hoosen Farm gives new context to the stories that you hear when touring the site. Being able to see an image of cattle lapping up water from the same creek that you drove over to get here brings the dairy farm back to life. Imagining Sarah Van Hoosen Jones sharing a seat with her beloved cat takes her out of the realm of trailblazing historical figure and makes her seem like your neighbor. It brings history out of the past and into the present.

Molly Banes is a graduate student studying Archival Administration in the Master’s of Information Science program at Wayne State University.



Alice Serrell playing Solitaire at her desk with her cat Chessie, 1958



Sarah Van Hoosen Jones' beloved cat, W.J. pawing at the Thanksgiving Turkey. Alice Serrell Collection



Clarence Edgerton shoveling snow at the Van Hoosen Farmhouse, 1958. Alice Serrell Collection



Sarah Van Hoosen Jones sharing a seat with her cat in her upstairs office. Alice Serrell Collection.



Clarence Edgerton mowing the lawn at the farmhouse, 1968. Alice Serrell Collection

To enhance understanding of the past through interpreting, preserving and collecting the history of the greater Rochester area for present and future generations.

### Museum Admission

Adults	\$5.00
Senior Citizens	\$3.00 (60 and over)
Students	\$3.00 (Grades K-12)

**Members Are Free!**

### Hours

Fridays and Saturdays  
12:00-3:00pm and  
by appointment

Please check our website  
for details.

[www.rochesterhills.org/museum](http://www.rochesterhills.org/museum)

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