

# Found in Collection



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

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Spring 2019

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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

When I look back on this past year here at the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm, the words of Sarah Van Hoosen Jones come to mind. In describing her life on Van Hoosen Farm, she begins with “life was very full” and continues with “our life in a tiny village yielded the dropping in of neighbors quite frequently.” This describes exactly how I feel about this last year in the Museum’s archives and collections. With new exhibits on the way, we have had our heads buried in the collections conducting research, checking facts, and locating images and artifacts. We have also had the excitement of completing several preservation projects in the Van



Hoosen Farmhouse. Last but most certainly not least, we have had the pleasure of welcoming many new volunteers and interns into the archives. These “neighbors” bring a new vitality to the Museum’s archives and collections. They help us discover new things about our local history, make our collections available online, and preserve everything for this and the next generation. If anything, this newsletter is one of the ways to honor them and give them a chance to share the incredible things they do behind the scenes. I truly hope you enjoy reading about what we have all been up to this past year. As always, my door (or email) is open for any questions, research requests and local history artifacts you might have.

Sincerely,

*Samantha Lawrence*

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# A Look Back at the Dedication of the Rochester Hills Museum

Digitized and Compiled by Jordan Tolmie

The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm was not always a museum. For five generations, the Taylor and Van Hoosen Family lived in the Van Hoosen Farmhouse and owned most of the land around Stoney Creek Village. In 1972, the last member of the Taylor-Van Hoosen family, Sarah Van Hoosen Jones, passed away that implemented her final wish of giving the Van Hoosen Farmhouse, 350 acres, and several lots in Stoney Creek Village to Michigan State University. Determined to preserve the legacy of the Taylor and Van Hoosen families, the community rallied to save the Van Hoosen Farmhouse and in 1979, Michigan State gifted the Farmhouse to

Avon Township (now Rochester Hills) for use as a local history museum.

The Museum's dedication came a couple years later on a spring day in 1981. A group gathered in front of the Farmhouse to celebrate the Museum's opening and hear remarks from Avon Township Mayor Earl Borden, Congressman William S. Broomfield, and Director of Michigan History Division Martha Bigelow. Here is a look back at one of the most significant days in the 40-year history of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm!



Mayor Earl Borden speaking at the event



Dr. Martha Bigelow speaking at the podium



Audience watch the presenters



A crowd gathering in front of the farm house



Dairy Barn from across the way



A band of 'BanjoPlayers' entertaining the crowd



William Broomfield and Alice Serrel stand next to Dedication Plaque

Jordan Tolmie is a recent graduate from Central Michigan University 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 three years, she has volunteered at several museums including the Rochester Hills Museum, Meadow Brook Hall, and Troy Historic Village.



# Educating the Next Generation: The Intersecting Lives of Matilda Dodge Wilson and Sarah Van Hoosen Jones

By: Anthony DeMaggio

Matilda Dodge Wilson and Sarah Van Hoosen Jones, two notable, philanthropic women of Oakland County, accomplished incredible feats in their lifetimes.

Their accomplishments included contributing to the field of animal husbandry and genetics, making higher education more accessible to the Greater Detroit area, and ensuring that women were confident, empowered, and heard. As a Museum Assistant at the Wilson's former home, Meadow Brook Hall for many years, learning the story of Sarah Van Hoosen Jones and the Van Hoosen Farm was exciting. In this crossover of rich history on two powerful women of Oakland County, I seek to find the similarities and mutual community involvements between Sarah Van Hoosen Jones and Matilda Dodge Wilson.



Sarah Van Hoosen Jones (left) and Matilda Dodge Wilson (second from the right). Photo courtesy of MSU Archives and Historical Collection.

## Matilda

Matilda Rausch Dodge Wilson, born in Walkerton, Ontario in 1883 to German immigrants, could not have known throughout her childhood and teenage years that she would eventually become one of the richest women in the United States. Before working for ultimate auto-tycoon John Dodge in 1902, Rausch attended and graduated from Gorsline Business College in Detroit, Michigan, making her qualified for the position she held at the Dodge Motor Company. Eventually falling in love, Dodge and Rausch married five years later in 1907. Matilda and John Dodge gave birth to three children; Frances, Daniel, and Anna Margaret. When John and Horace Dodge, the co-founders of Dodge Motor Company, attended the New York Auto Show, they both fell ill with the Spanish influenza and died the same year in 1920. Matilda inherited John's share of the Dodge Brothers Motor Company, becoming one of the wealthiest women in the country.

With her new found fortune, she moved to the countryside with her family and new husband, Alfred Wilson, a lumber baron, who she met through the Presbyterian Church in Detroit, Michigan. The property located in Rochester, Michigan, was purchased by John Dodge before his death as a

get away from Detroit. This is where Matilda and Alfred Wilson relocated with their family, to build the astounding Meadow Brook Hall, an 88,000 square foot home constructed between 1926-1929. It was built to reflect the Tudor Revival architecture that Matilda fell in love with while visiting England, and contain over 100 rooms. Anna Margaret Dodge, the youngest child that was born from Matilda and John Dodge's marriage, passed away from complications of the measles in 1924 at a very young age, never occupying Meadow Brook Hall. Frances and Daniel Dodge would live in the home with their own suite, including a guest bedroom, guest bathroom, their own personal bathroom (Daniel having gold-plated shower heads), and a secret play area for each child above their bedrooms.

Matilda Wilson created a comfortable life for her family in Rochester, Michigan, and was a very philanthropic woman in the greater Detroit area. A commitment that she was particularly passionate about was supplying education to young adults. In 1957, Matilda and Alfred Wilson donated their estate and a sum of two million dollars to start the educational institution originally named Michigan State University - Oakland, now known as Oakland University.

Around the same time, another woman just 14 miles away in Stoney Creek Village was also expressing a passion and commitment to the education of young adults.

## Sarah

Sarah Van Hoosen Jones was born in 1892 to Alice Van Hoosen and Joseph Jones on her grandparents farm in Stoney Creek Village, Michigan. Though she had a father, he died when she was young and Sarah was raised by her mother, Alice, and her aunt, Bertha Van Hoosen. During Sarah's childhood, starting at age 8, she suffered from a series of medical problems. During this time, her distraught mother attempted to keep Sarah from contact with other people and moved the small child each time neighbors became too friendly. While her Aunt Bertha wrote to her as much as she could while running a busy medical practice at the same time in Chicago, Sarah, for the most part, had a very lonely childhood. The brightest times of her youth were spent in Oakland County, Michigan at Van Hoosen Farm. There, she found genuine happiness working with animals, and made it her ultimate goal to run the farm one



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

day. When she eventually earned her bachelor's degree in foreign languages from the University of Chicago, her aunt Bertha and mother Alice decided that she would continue her studies and enter medical school. Sarah's first thought was pondering how long she would have to run her own practice before she could purchase a farm of her own. A discussion of the realities of 20th century farming followed, and it was determined that Sarah would earn a graduate degree from an agricultural college. At the University of Wisconsin, Sarah completed an M.S. degree in animal husbandry, and then continued to be one of the first women in the United States to earn a doctoral degree in Animal Genetics from the University of Wisconsin. In 1921, Sarah was gifted the deed to the farm by her grandmother and namesake, Sarah Taylor Van Hoosen.

### **The Same Circles**

Sarah and Matilda's lives intersected quite closely. In addition to being passionate about agriculture and education, they were often doing similar things around the same time. Matilda started construction on Meadow Brook Hall in 1926 with completion three years later in 1929. During the same time period, the Van Hoosen women began making renovations to their family's farmhouse to make a comfortable life on the farm. Spearheaded by Sarah's mother, Alice Van Hoosen Jones, the farmhouse renovations included moving the house closer to Stoney Creek, adding three new wings, and furnishing the house with items from their international travels.

Matilda attended in Sarah's honor a Zonta Dinner held on November 13, 1958. The admission for this event was \$4.75, and was held in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Matilda and Alfred Wilson's signatures can be found in the guest book that Sarah kept for this event. This example of these women's lives intersecting shows that they supported each other in multiple ways. Photographs found in the collections at the Rochester Hills Museum suggest that Sarah also likely attended the Open House of "Meadow Brook Farms II" in Howell, Michigan, where Matilda and Alfred Wilson transferred most of their farm operation after donating their estate to Michigan State University in 1957.

### **The Gift of Education**

"The mutual interests and parallel paths of two local women today resulted in an educational milestone for Oakland County." Pontiac Press, September 21, 1959

A large part of their shared interests revolved around Michigan State University - Oakland (MSU-O). Matilda and her husband, Alfred, founded the University in 1957, by donating their estate and two million dollars. On November 7, 1956, Sarah donated her estate to Michigan State University as a place of learning for individuals interested in studying agriculture. Sarah also served on the MSU-O advisory committee from 1957-1963. A quote from Sarah's book *Chronicle of Van Hoosen Centenary Farm* exposes her commitment and passion to education. "As indicated, as a family, we had always been much interested in education. I had - through necessity and also desire - kept a close contact with Michigan State College. As I look back over my mother's fears that I would lack educational contacts by living on the farm, I smile to myself, for she, too, realized her fears were unnecessary as the years progressed."

### **Inspiring the Next Generation**

I am personally grateful for the contributions that these women made to education, as a current undergraduate and future master's student at Oakland University, and Archival Intern at the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm. I was able to find my passion for public history and education because of the amazing feats these women accomplished in their lifetimes. In conclusion, there was no lack of overcoming adversity for these women in the mid-twentieth century, especially when attempting to establish an educational institution, and contribute to the educational resources available to those who were interested in agriculture.

Anthony DeMaggio graduated from Oakland University in April 2019 with a bachelor's degree in history and is an aspiring museum professional. Finding a passion for museum work at Meadow Brook Hall as a Museum Assistant during his freshman year of undergraduate studies, DeMaggio became fascinated with preserving the past and making it available and viewable to the public. He is thankful for Madelyn Rzadkowski, the Director of Curatorial Services at Meadow Brook Hall, for helping him find this passion. He completed his internship as an Archival Intern at Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm in April 2019, and this article is the product of months of research and guidance under the direction of Samantha Lawrence, the Archivist at the Rochester Hills Museum.

Today, Meadow Brook Hall is a National Historic Landmark, offering tours, community programs, and special events. To learn more, please visit [meadowbrookhall.org](http://meadowbrookhall.org).



## Preservation Update

Caring for a 179-year-old home like the Van Hoosen Farmhouse takes a village. From daily maintenance checks to humidity and temperature monitoring to pest control, the Rochester Hills Museum relies on our facilities team as well as the entire museum staff to keep the Farmhouse in excellent condition. Ultimately, we strive to preserve this important piece of local history with the same level of care as the Taylor and Van Hoosen families. Every year, we aim to take on a project to restore an area of the Farmhouse back to what it was when the last family member lived there in 1972. With the support of this incredible community, we have accomplished two of these projects since last May!

### Wallpaper in Bertha's Bedroom

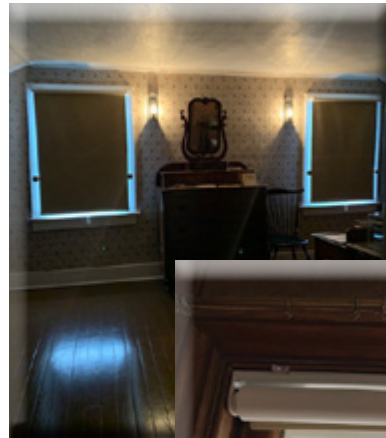


The reprinting of original wallpaper, plaster and roof repair, painting, and wallpaper installation in Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen's bedroom in the Van Hoosen Farmhouse was completed in the spring of 2018. Grant funding from the Rochester Junior Women's Club made this project possible. The Museum contracted with Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers to reproduce the original wallpaper design and Eco Painting completed the work. According to Van Hoosen Farm Secretary Alice Serrell, who stayed in Dr. Bertha's bedroom after she passed away in 1952, she and Dr. Sarah Van Hoosen Jones purchased the original wallpaper at Hudson's Department Store in 1952.

Thank you to Rochester Junior Women's Club for making this project possible!

### Roller Shades

One thing the Van Hoosen Farmhouse does not lack is natural light! While this is a great feature on the real estate market, it can be disastrous for the preservation of interior furnishings. With 50+ windows in the Farmhouse, the original furnishings belonging to the Van Hoosen family are subject to light damage on a daily basis. Quilts in Sarah Van Hoosen Jones' bedroom as well as the Sleeping Porch have significantly faded as a result of sun exposure. In an effort to prevent future light damage and replicate the original roller shades, the Museum contracted Sheer Shop to install new roller shades in over 40 windows of the Farmhouse. Grant funding from the International Questers organization, Winkler Mill Questers Chapter and Sarah Van Hoosen Jones Chapter as well as donations from the Museum's Collections Fund made this project possible.



# A Trip to See the Queen

By: Ashley Rotarius

By 1953, Sarah Van Hoosen Jones was entering a new phase of life. She had recently retired from her farming career and was still coping with the losses of both her mother, Alice Van Hoosen Jones and her Aunt, Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen. In Sarah's book, *Chronicle of Van Hoosen Centenary Farm*, she described how life without Alice and Bertha seemed out of the question, but as the days passed, she found herself adjusting to her loss, "for there was still much to live for." This new chapter of Sarah's life began with plans to take a six-week trip to Europe with her close friend and Van Hoosen Farm Secretary Alice Serrell in the summer of 1953.

The archives of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm have many of Alice Serrell's personal papers and keepsakes. Alice kept photos, postcards, travel brochures, newspaper clippings, menus and receipts. The items in the Alice Serrell Collection help us understand her life, and her time with Sarah as well. Through her collection, we even get a closer look at their 1953 trip to see the queen.

Alice's AAA travel card shows they took the European Tour 1-C, which left from New York on April 29th. Their stops included France, Italy, Switzerland, Amsterdam, Scotland and England, with planned arrival in London in time to witness the procession of Queen Elizabeth II on June 3rd.



Alice and Sarah sailed on board Cunard Line's RMS Queen Mary, one of the premiere ocean liners of the time. On board, passengers could take part in many activities, such as exercising in the gymnasium, swimming in the indoor pool, or relaxing up on deck. In one of their photos, Sarah and Alice can be seen relaxing in rented deck chairs. Evening events included catching one of the movies playing, listening to the string orchestra, and dancing.



Meals aboard the Queen Mary were quite opulent. One of the breakfast menus that Alice saved included choices of cold and hot cereals, fried Boston sole with lemon, eggs any way you wanted them, broiled breakfast bacon, minced chicken with green peppers, cold roast beef, rolled ox tongue, buckwheat and griddle cakes with maple or golden syrup, fruit compotes and a variety of breads with marmalade. To drink, there was tea, coffee, Nescafe, milk, Horlicks Malted Milk, Ovaltine and instant Postum.



Luncheon started with hors d'oeuvres of sardines, stuffed olives and tomatoes vinaigrette as well as choice of soup, salad, and coleslaw. The main courses were roast loin and leg of pork with applesauce. Side dishes included brussels sprouts, turnips, choice of potato- mashed, hashed or baked, fried Long Island scallops with tartare sauce and cold salmon with cucumber and mayonnaise. To drink, there was tea, coffee and wine. For dessert, there was ice-cream, baked custard, rhubarb pie and a compote of pears and plums with whipped cream.



Alice also saved her menu from their farewell dinner, and this was likely because there was a section for autographs. Inside are signatures from some of the people they made friends with on the ship. One says, "hope you don't run into any earthquakes, have a grand trip," likely referring to the Great Japan Earthquake of 1923 that the Van Hoosen women experienced on their travels. Another signature was from a man named Ron King, who was their waiter that evening! The meal included multiple courses. There was turtle soup, ravioli, lentil pie, baked clove York ham with madeira sauce, roast stuffed Vermont turkey with cranberry sauce, filet mignon with bearnaise sauce, as well as a cold buffet of roast beef, sirloin and lamb with mint sauce. Dessert included pudding, ice-cream, fresh fruit and coupe jacques.





Once they arrived in Europe, Alice and Sarah wasted no time seeing the sights. In a little pharmacy memo book with 1953 written at the top, Alice kept track of the photos they took. Some of the places they visited were the Notre-Dame, Arc de Triomphe, Versailles, Monte Carlo, The Vatican, Spanish Steps, The Colosseum, Michelangelo’s statue of David, Tivoli Gardens, and Mt. Pilatus. Alice and likely Sarah as well, even attended a special luncheon in Paris at the Eiffel Tower courtesy of AAA.



The last part of their trip was spent in London and Scotland. There they visited Cambridge, Westminster Abbey, Anne Hathaway’s Cottage and they even attended a cattle show. In her book, Sarah mentions this part of their trip. “We toured the great little Isle in a Morris Minor car, driving it ourselves, which was great fun.” The photos in Alice’s collection show that they did indeed drive one, and even stopped in the middle of a quiet country road to have a picnic lunch. However, the main reason they were in London was to witness the procession of Queen Elizabeth II. Alice, Sarah and thousands of others watched as the queen rode through the streets after she had been crowned. Postcards, photos, and a coronation program remain in the collections, a reminder of that momentous occasion.



Another notable restaurant they ate at was called The Five Flies in Amsterdam. This establishment was known for their chicken casserole, celebrity visitors and 17th century rustic interior and exterior. Alice saved menus, a napkin and a souvenir poster from their visit here. The poster is special because it looks as though the owner of the restaurant, Nicolaas Kroese may have signed it for them.

Though she had lost the two people she loved the most, Sarah did have much to live for. She spent the rest of her days in active retirement and traveled the world with her good friend Alice.

While in Amsterdam Alice and Sarah were given a sheet of paper that explained Amsterdam’s population, landscape, architecture, history, industries and monetary system. On the back of this sheet of paper, at the bottom is a handwritten list of items. This list included things such postage, newspaper, tea, doll, candy, and train fare. These were likely things that Alice and Sarah purchased or needed to keep track of while in Holland.

Ashley graduated from Oakland University in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in History and will be starting the Museum Studies MA program through the University of Leicester, UK in the fall. She wants to help museums educate, preserve and inspire, so that the history of the past can be shared with future generations. She lives in Rochester Hills with her partner, Jason and their dog, Eevee.

**“The ‘girls’ had not sold the farm but rather, together with their mother, had handed it down to the fifth generation.”**

*Sarah Van Hoosen Jones*



**With your help, we can continue to tell the story of the Van Hoosen family by preserving what they left behind.**

Your support will help us preserve our historic buildings and collections.

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

## Behind the Scenes in the Archives

Over the past four months, Ashley Servis Hufford, an archival intern from Wayne State University, has digitized and uploaded over three hundred photographs to the Oakland County Historical Resources (OCHR) website. While scanning and uploading photo after photo can seem monotonous, it requires focus, attention to detail, and organization.

These photos are just a small selection of what you can find on OCHR, all thanks to Ashley!



A group of Brooklands firefighters playing a game of water ball with two hoses. Water ball is a game used to help firefighters learn how to handle equipment such as hoses, nozzles, and other tools.



A view of a sign reading "Thelma G. Spencer Park, Avon Charter Township" at Thelma Spencer Park in Rochester Hills.



People riding horses through snow on a winter day at Thelma Spencer Park in Rochester Hills.



A close up view of a chipmunk eating a peanut on a picnic table in Thelma Spencer Park in Rochester Hills.



A daytime view of the lake and plant growth at Thelma Spencer Park in Rochester Hills.



A view of the Rochester Hills sign on Walton Boulevard.

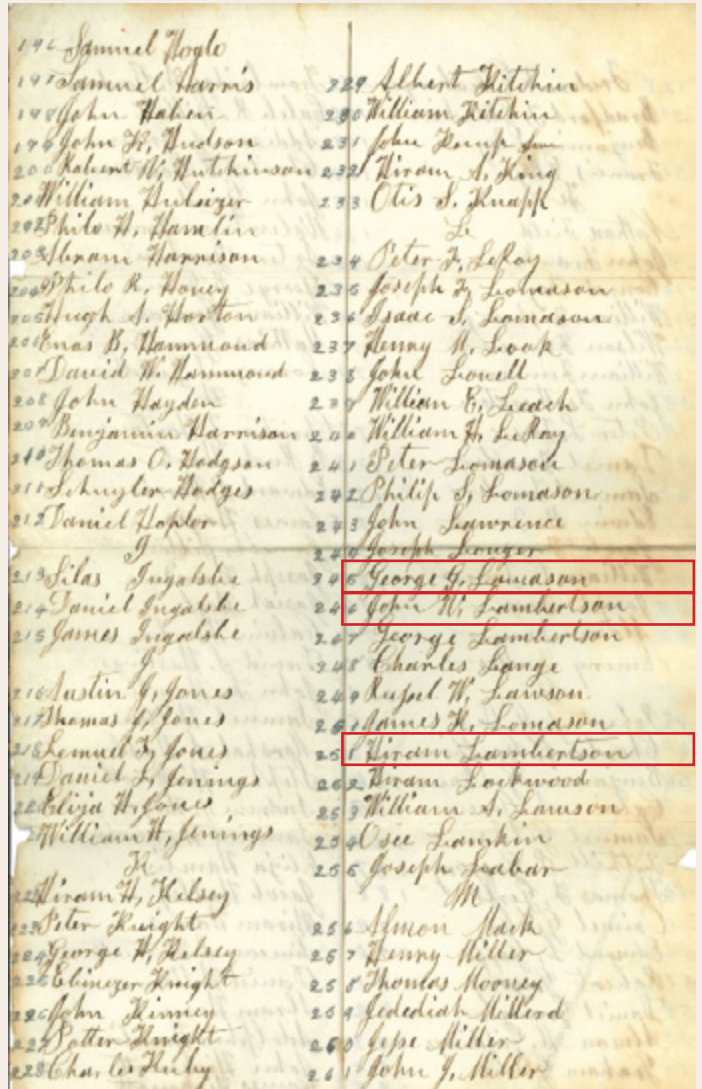
Ashley Servis Hufford is a graduate student at Wayne State University studying Library & Information Science and Archival Administration. She is passionate about working with digital materials, metadata management, and archival digitization.





# Election of 1860

When Abraham Lincoln was elected on November 6, 1860, what was Rochester's reaction? The election of 1860 was one of the most pivotal in United States History. Without newspapers or letters from that time, it is impossible to know what the local residents were feeling leading up to the Civil War. The Rochester Hills Museum does, however, have one link to this election in our collections. Earlier this year, a handwritten copy of the names appearing on the 1860 Registry of Electors for Avon Township was donated to the Museum. It was found tucked in the pages of a book. This copy with its cursive writing and yellowed pages looks exactly like the type of thing you would find in the archives. Although this document is just a list of names, it is an exciting piece of history for an Archivist. A single archival document can hold hundreds of stories, answer our lingering questions, and create new mysteries. This handwritten list is one of those documents.



## George Lambertson

Uncle George, as he was often called, came to Rochester in 1837 with his family and took up residence on Main Street. At his death in 1883, the Rochester ERA newspaper reported: "We will venture to say that he did not have an enemy in the world, for he was respectful and kind to all, always attending to his own concerns."

## John V. and Hiram Lambertson

Sons of George Lambertson, John and Hiram owned businesses in downtown Rochester. In 1847, John built the Lambertson House at the southwest corner of Main and what is now University. The Lambertson House, later known as the Hotel St. James, was one of two hotels in Rochester at the time. Together, John and Hiram operated a general store at the corner of Main and Fourth.



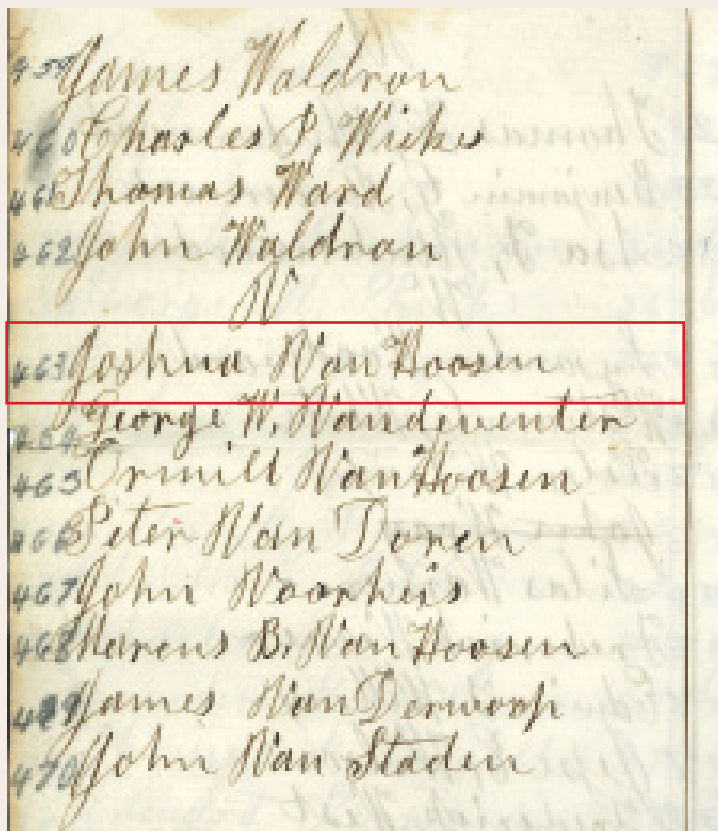
Continued From Page 11

### Joshua Van Hoosen

In 1854, Sarah Taylor married her childhood sweetheart Joshua Van Hoosen upon his return from gold prospecting in California. The success of his prospecting venture enabled him to purchase her family's ancestral home and the Taylor farm. Joshua and Sarah raised two daughters, Alice and Bertha. A progressive individual, Joshua favored higher education for women and men alike. His daughters were among the first women to graduate from the University of Michigan in the late 1800's. Joshua was progressive in his farming too. In 1865, he developed a plumbing system for the farm, which harnessed the spring waters from the hillside through pipes, made from tamarack logs. Joshua was able to bring water to the kitchen porch, a water trough at the roadside, and to a fountain in the front yard. Joshua's neighbors chided his creation and nicknamed the project, "Josh's Folly," but in the end his plumbing system was a success.



Another important fact to note is that Joshua was born in Canada and he was exempt from serving in the Civil War because he retained his Canadian citizenship. Why was he included on this list?



### What's Missing?

Among these 470 names, you will not find any Native Americans, people of color, or women. These groups did not yet have the right to vote. How many more names would be on this list if every group had the right to vote in 1860?

- 1870 – Non-white men and freed slaves are guaranteed the right to vote
- 1920 – Women are guaranteed the right to vote
- 1924 – All Native Americans are granted citizenship and the right to vote

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.

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

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