



# The Observer



The Observer Newspaper Group includes: REDFORD OBSERVER, LIVONIA OBSERVER, PLYMOUTH OBSERVER, PLYMOUTH OBSERVER and FARMINGTON OBSERVER  
★ SPECIAL FRONT PAGE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1965 PAUL M. CHANDLER, FOUNDER

## OBSERVER IS QUARTER-CENTURY OLD!

# 25 Candles on Our Cake Today!

The first edition of The Livonian, predecessor and parent of The Observer Newspapers, came off the press on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 1940.

Today—25 years and many milestones later—the newspaper you are reading marks this event with a special edition.

That first issue hit the streets of a sprawling, agricultural community which was just beginning to feel the start of urban growth. "Please close the gate so my livestock can't get out," pleaded the owner of a well in a Seven Mile Rd. barnyard on page one of that first issue.

But the front page also reported that 500 new homes were going to be constructed in the coming year. Livonia was starting its role as one of the fastest-growing suburbs when the first Livonian hit the icy, slippery roads of that winter a quarter-century ago.

During this 25-year span, many changes have come

to the 36-square-miles which The Livonia Observer continues to serve. And the changes, both good and bad, have continued to be chronicled without interruption in the pages of this paper.

Livonia has increased its population more than tenfold since that first issue; Livonia boys have marched off to the battlefields twice; the old Township form of government has been streamlined into a modern city; and an unbelievable transformation has come over the city's landscape.

Where once only fertile farmland punctured by a couple of subdivisions, a few stores, and a scattering of schools existed, Livonia today is the sprawling suburban community racing to add to its many fine residential subdivisions. Livonia today boasts the state's fourth-largest school system, two giant shopping centers, and an industrial belt that plays an important role in the metropolitan area's auto production.

The farms? They've almost disappeared. But if you look carefully, you can still find evidence of Livonia's rich agricultural heritage in parts of the city.

And if you look again, you'll find reminders scattered throughout the city of Livonia's past. An old schoolhouse, an aging church, weather-beaten tombstones, tell the story of Livonia's past.

It's this story—the growth and progress of Livonia, and of our city's aims for the future—that this special section of the Livonia Observer attempts to tell. We hope that you enjoy reading about your city's past as all of us begin looking toward the next 25 years.

## War Claimed Pioneer Brothers



ALFRED RYDER

Two Livonia men, both killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, were part of a Livonia family who pioneered settlement here and which continued contributing to the city's progress right through the 20th Century.

Alfred and John Ryder, born in 1842 and 1843 respectively, were the first children of George and Henrietta Ryder. George, in turn, was the son of David Ryder, the original settler of the family.

The Riders (before they changed the spelling of their name) settled in Livonia in 1827—138 years ago—after a trip down the Erie Canal into the old North Territory.

The family has remained here since, and have contributed much to the material and spiritual growth of the city. The deed to the land formerly owned by the family was signed by John Quincy Adams and remained in the family until 1939, when it was sold to the Ford Motor Company for the Transmission plant.

The two grandsons of David were killed at Gettysburg, after having joined the Union Army in 1861, and were later brought home to be buried in the Newburg Cemetery. The G.A.R. post of Livonia was named the John and Alfred Ryder Post and the post flag, charter, ceremonial sashes and tombstone markers are located in Bentley High School until such time as a permanent and appropriate resting place for them can be found.

The Riders have been prominent in local and school affairs until the turn of the century, with one of them being on the school board at Newburg almost from its beginning. In 1922, Don Ryder was put in charge of the Newburg Cemetery, where so many of the city's pioneers are buried.

## Thanks to Historians

Today's special section marking The Livonia Observer's 25th Anniversary draws on many sources for its material. One of the most important is the special edition commemorating Livonia's tenth birthday which appeared in June, 1950. Since more than 35,000 people have been added to Livonia's population in the last 15 years, The Observer's editorial staff felt this material was worth repeating.

Dominic Paris, Franklin High teacher and one of the founders of the Livonia Historical Society, is responsible for the long well-written story of Livonia's history. Our thanks, too, to Mr. Paris for his consultation on other matters. Other material is culled from two old-print ones: the 19th Anniversary Booklet issued in 1959, and "The Heritage of Livonia," published by the Optimist Club in 1952. The Livonia Public Schools' community relations director, Paul Lutzner, and the school text, "Our City, Livonia, Michigan," by Lester Savelle, were other aids.

Thanks also to Mike Costello, Kitty Schallie, Mrs. George Eckenwiler and Mrs. Betty Donnelly.

## The First Front Page

R.F.D. No. 4, PLYMOUTH, MICHIGAN

**LIVONIA TOWNSHIP'S OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER**

**The LIVONIAN**

**SEND YOUR NEWS TO THE LIVONIAN EVERY WEEK**

Vol. 3—No. 1 Wednesday, February 28, 1943 Plymouth, Michigan

### To Start New Bus Fare Plan

Parents of the children attending the Wilcox, Livonia Center and Elm schools will be approached within the next few days on the plan of purchasing tickets for school bus fares. A committee, headed by Mrs. D. W. Donnelly, has worked out a plan which it hopes to put in operation March 1 with the Coach company where parents will be sold tickets that will provide their children with one month's transportation at a slightly reduced rate.

The problem of supporting the bus has been an effort for the parents in view of the fact that some of the children who are given rides to pay for large daily, high bike back and forth to school and the minimum fee that must be paid often runs less than this.

A straight charge of \$10.00 a day is made for the bus and only through the financial aid of the Coventry Corporation has its maintenance been possible. Although, in the event all of the children did ride there still would not be enough to cover the total cost per month.

Tickets will be sold to parents every month, each being a different color so that the driver can distinguish them at a glance. Each will bear the child's name and also be counterchecked by some other person.

With this plan in operation, the several real estate firms and the Coventry Corporation, who now help pay the expenses, would be called upon to do less from a financial standpoint.

### Softball Teams to Organize Soon

According to an announcement by the Board of Directors of the Rosedale Gardens, softball teams similar to those which were organized last year will begin organization on April 1. Mr. Zeller and Mr. Folson will have charge of the project.

Four teams were included in the Rosedale Gardens softball league last year. The directors report that as many or even more will be sponsored this year. It is expected that the four or more teams officials will pick a team to compete in the Livonia softball league at Plymouth.

The Rosedale league will play on the newly developed recreation field in back of the club house at the Gardens. Men who wish to play are asked to see Mr. Folson or call Mr. Miller at Livonia 4281. The directors report that within two weeks a full schedule including teams and officials will be published in The Livonian.

### Registration at All-Time High

According to a report from Township Clerk Harry S. Wolfe, there are more registrations in Livonia township at the present time than ever before. Figures compiled last week indicated that 3,338 individuals are on township records as qualified voters.

The record number of registrations is an indication of the interest in Livonia township residents in their community and civic affairs and participation in the local government. Registration during the last year was:

### Request Residents to Vote April 1

Although candidates at the Livonia township spring election to be held Monday, April 1, will be unopposed, voters are requested to go to the polls as there are several vital township issues which may be decided upon at that time. Supervisor Jesse Ziegler reports that information concerning the issues cannot be given out at the present time. However, sometime during the next few weeks, a complete report will be made by The Livonian.

As a result of last week's primary election, the following Republican township officers will be voted for: Jesse Ziegler, supervisor; Harry S. Wolfe, clerk; Arthur Trapp, treasurer; Leo Nye, justice; Albert Nacker, member of board of review; Charles S. Wolford, highway commissioner; and Ray Owens, Charles H. Condit, John W. Whitledge and Miles Ham, constables.

### Present Cripple With Wheel-Chair

Probably the happiest boy in this part of the city this year on his birthday anniversary was Billy Rotarius, 13, who received a wheelchair as a gift from the Elm Girl and Boy Scout troops and Parent-Teachers' association.

From childhood, Billy has been a cripple. He has another, Bobby, who is similarly afflicted. But Bobby can stand up and walk with the aid of another person.

The two-boys are part of the five-child family of Mr. and Mrs. William Rotarius whose home is near the intersection of Plymouth and Middle Belt roads. Mr. Rotarius works at a garage about five miles from the home.

### Harry Wolfe Jr. Will Pitch Again

Harry Wolfe Jr. will start his fifth year in professional baseball when he reports March 15 to Bartow, Florida, spring training quarters for the Indianapolis ball club.

He recently signed his contract as a pitcher on the team. He received his prep training at the Farmington high school. Harry played at Charters, Pennsylvania, after graduating from high school. Last summer he was on the team at the Birmingham, Alabama club.

The Cooper school P.T.A. will hold a card and luncheon party Friday evening, March 1, at the school on Middle Belt road and Ann Arbor Trail. The Livonia Garden club has postponed its March 12th meeting to March 28 at 8:30 p.m. when it will meet at the home of Mrs. Ziegler on Six Mile road.

### Predict 500 New Homes in Livonia

Early indications are that Detroit's expected spring building boom will have a far reaching effect in Livonia township. A survey of local real estate men shows that there is an unusual amount of interest among people in this area who are looking for future home sites.

In anticipation of the building boom, township builders and suppliers are preparing for the trade and future Livonia home owners will be able to secure their workmanship and their supplies from concerns within the township.

A conservative estimate arrived at after compilation of the activities of local real estate firms as Edward Ziegler, Harry S. Wolfe, Edith and Edith to Ernest T. Durbin, of Meridian road, The ceremony will be held at the Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian church. Rev. Forsyth will read the canon.

### Announce Double Wedding Plans

Mr. and Mrs. William Durbin, of Stark road, announce the coming double wedding of their daughters, Sarah and Vincent. For activities of local real estate firms as Edward Ziegler, Harry S. Wolfe, Edith and Edith to Ernest T. Durbin, of Meridian road, The ceremony will be held at the Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian church. Rev. Forsyth will read the canon.

Miss Sarah-Davis is a graduate of Redford high school and her sister, Edith, graduated from Northville schools. Mr. Fox completed the education course at Redford high school. Mr. Durbin is a native of North Dakota.

### Presbyterians Buy New Organ

The Estey organ which was on trial last Sunday in the Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian church was approved by 85 percent of the members who voted on its adaptability to a church of that size.

This heavy vote for the acceptance of the organ means it is almost certain that it will be purchased according to plans of the church committee. The organ was organized last April. The committee at that time was authorized to purchase an organ as soon as the money was raised.

The organ is on approval from Grinnell Brothers. The instrument has an electrically driven bellows, but is of the type commonly known as a "reed" organ.

L. Spiller, a representative of Grinnell Brothers, played the organ at the church service Sunday. He accompanied the choir in their anthems. The regular church organist, Miss Adelaide Swenson, will play the organ regularly.

Although it is comparatively small, the organ has ample volume for the needs of the church, according to those who have played it. Under experienced hands it accomplished the lowest bass and the highest flute tones of the organ.

The organ will be left permanently in the church choir loft. Grinnell Brothers were to have sent a used organ for approval, but the unexpected sale of the church caused them to send the new organ which will be retained. It replaces a piano which has been used for many years.

Stanley Ziegler left Thursday for a month's vacation in California.

### Introducing The Livonian

For many years residents of Livonia township have desired a newspaper of their own. Township officials and leading citizens have been hopeful that a publication might be available so that township activities might be assembled in one place and spread about the community systematically.

The gathering and dissemination of news is the primary feature of a newspaper. Due to the several divisions of the township it has been almost impossible to focus the attention of all of the residents in any one place and it is with this thought in mind that The Livonian makes its appearance.

Until such time as it is deemed advisable to open an office several of your local stores have been designated as pick-up stations where regular calls will be made by employees of this paper to gather news items and advertising which you may desire to give us.

We feel you will appreciate the continued success of your newspaper, The Livonian, will depend upon the support given it by every resident of Livonia township. The activities of your family, your friends and your neighbors will be of interest to your neighbors, so do not hesitate to see that they are given the widest publication.

In case you are desirous of placing news or advertising in the paper, send us a note to the pick-up station, you may call telephone number 6 in Plymouth and designate your call as for The Livonian.

The Livonian will be published every Tuesday. It will be delivered to the subscribers from Plymouth, on that day. News or advertising material will be taken to the office on Monday. It will be impossible to secure publication of advertising for the Tuesday edition after that time.

We will do everything in our power to give you the best paper and we know that you will cooperate and help us bring another service to your home community which will help to make it a better place in which to live.

### Close the Gate!

"Please close the gate so my livestock can't get out," that is the only request made by John Grimm who has been supplying drinking-water from a well in his barnyard to neighbors in the vicinity of Seven Mile road near the intersection of Wilcox district for about 15 years.

It is reported that residents of the Wilcox district have been asked to collect water for washing purposes but have never been able to do so.

The Livonian is desirous of obtaining information relative to the reason why a well in the Wilcox district has not been constructed in this district of modern homes.

Residents of the locality requested that The Livonian publicly express their gratitude to Mr. Grimm for his patience, efforts and the past 15 years. And until an other arrangement can be made by which the water can be obtained, they said that they will remember and "close the gate."

### Wilcox P. T. A. Card Party Next Saturday

Under the capable direction of Mrs. Baron Benoit, arrangements for the card party and dance to be given by the Wilcox Saturday night are all completed. The evening's entertainment is being given at the home of Mrs. P.T.A. Mrs. Arthur Laing is president of the association. Reservations for the party are being accepted by the committee. It is urged to attend the party because the funds raised at the affair will be used for the purchase of ground equipment for the school. The committee plans to serve refreshments to all who attend.

## IN 25 YEARS:

## From Country Weekly To Modern Journal

It's not the kind of news that changes... it's only the people.

In glance at the headlines on page one of The Livonian's first edition 25 years ago, reproduced to the left, would seem to back up this statement.

Stories then and now evolved around the same general topics.

Officials were urging residents to vote April 1. Today, the same call is going out for the general election April 5.

Voting registration was at an all-time high, Township Clerk Harry S. Wolfe reported. Today, City Clerk Addison Bacon reports the same. Only then it was 3,326. Today, it's close to 40,000.

Construction of a record number of new homes was chronicled in that first edition. Today, the issue of how many and where to build new homes occupies much of the city fathers' business. And even a story about buses appears on both the first edition of The Livonian and on today's regular front page.

But, although new homes, elections, and bus service are still the things that interest Livonia, there has been a great change in the kind of newspaper which serves this city.

A quarter-century ago when the first issue of this paper came off the old flat-bed press in what is now the Plymouth Mail plant in Plymouth, distribution was limited to around 1,500 copies.

Today, because of the mushrooming population growth of this city and due to a modern concept of newspaper circulation, THE LIVONIA OBSERVER goes to more than 27,000 homes every Wednesday afternoon. And that's only part of the story. Together with its three affiliated publications, THE PLYMOUTH OBSERVER, THE REDFORD OBSERVER and THE FARMINGTON OBSERVER, its newest, more than 50,700 families get and read the paper carefully. And the press run rises almost weekly.

The growth of The Livonian over these 25 years is a story of marked, steady progress which has kept pace with the population increase in its home town.

When first we started, the paper was owned at the time by Sterling Eaton of Plymouth—was operated from a Plymouth office.

For most Livonia Township residents, this location wasn't convenient and shortly afterwards THE LIVONIAN had opened an office in a gift shop in Rosedale Gardens owned by Walter and Marie Clark. Mrs. Clark later became Livonia City Clerk.

In the early fifties, THE LIVONIAN had its headquarters at Surrey and Five Mile in Coventry Gardens before moving to its present building at 33050 Five Mile Rd.

During the past year, The Observer Newspapers has opened two offices, in the First Federal Building in Plymouth and at 33425 Grand River in Farmington.

The Observer has also kept pace with the community in the use of its weekly edition, in the growth of its personnel, in the editorial content of its publication.

Starting out as an eight-page, four-column paper in 1940, THE LIVONIAN grew even skimpier as wartime paper shortages cut the supply of newsprint to all publications. In 1943 and 1944, the paper took on the appearance of an 8x11" sheet with limited advertising and editorial coverage.

Then, following the war, in 1946, The Livonian underwent a major face-lifting and assumed its full-size format which it has maintained through today. The paper now averages 40-page editions weekly, a ten-fold growth from its first issue 25 years ago.

In 1955, The Observer was purchased from its former publisher by Paul M. Chandler who helped the paper continue to grow through the nine years up to his death last December. Chandler founded The Observer Newspaper chain and brought to the community an intense dedication and vibrant personality which was reflected in the lively coverage of community events in THE LIVONIAN'S pages.

Chandler's "Facts and Opinions" column was the (Continued on Back Page)