

Northville Cemetery History¹

Selected Northville and Local Area History³

Julia A. Robinson deeds a strip of land, "to be used as a Public, free burying ground," thus creating Oakwood Cemetery on Cady street² Mar. 10, 1835

1850 John Sands, cabinet maker, is living in Plymouth Township⁴

1853 John Ovenshire moves to Northville and embarks in the furniture and undertaking business⁵

early 1870s By this time, John Ovenshire and John Sands are in the furniture and undertaking business together⁶

Apr 1875 Ovenshire and Sands dissolve their partnership and continue their businesses independently⁷

1882 Marion A. Porter buys into the furniture and undertaking business of his father-in-law, John Sands, forming Sands & Porter^{8,9}

Rural Hill Cemetery Association is formed Oct 1885

Property for Rural Hill is purchased Dec. 17, 1885

First interment at Rural Hill Cemetery Apr 1886

First family lot deed is issued at Rural Hill July 15, 1886

Aug 1892 John Ovenshire dies, bringing his furniture and undertaking business to a close¹⁰

July 9, 1894 Eloise Post Office is established at the Wayne County Almshouse in Nankin Township¹¹

Apr 1898 Northville Township is formed from the north half of Plymouth Township¹²

Aug 1901 John Sands dies, bringing Sands & Porter, furniture and undertaking, to a close¹³

May 1902 Marion A. Porter receives a diploma in embalming from the Michigan State Board of Health¹⁴

Dec 1906 Marion A. Porter sells undertaking business located at 111 N. Center St. to Schrader Brothers⁹

Burton Abstract and Title Company transcribes Northville cemetery records, including a reading of gravestones at Oakwood and a recording of burial records for Rural Hill Apr 1908

Rural Hill Cemetery Association is reorganized and chartered for another 30 years July 8, 1908

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1911	Wayne County Almshouse Complex in Nankin Twp adopts the name Eloise ¹⁵
1915	By this time, the Eloise Complex in Nankin Twp consists of three divisions: the Poorhouse, the Psychiatric Asylum and the Tuberculosis Sanitarium ¹⁶
Mar 1917	Edward [Edwin] Sessions purchases the house on Main St. that will later become Sessions Hospital ¹⁷
1919	Mrs. Harry (Mary T.) Bovee, a graduate nurse, opens Bovee Hospital at their residence on Main St., with Dr. Tom Henry as surgeon ¹⁸
1920	Mrs. Edwin (Winnifred) Sessions opens Session Hospital in one room of their residence at 520 W. Main St. ¹⁹
May 1920	Dr. Tom Henry opens Henry Hospital, a 10-bed private hospital on Main St. ²⁰
1921	Maybury Sanitarium opens as Detroit Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium ²¹
Oct 1921	Henry Hospital closes after the illness and death of Dr. Tom Henry ²²
May 1922	Bovee Hospital closes ²³
1923	Tuberculosis Sanitarium at Eloise is phased out and transitioned into the Hospital and Infirmary ¹⁶
Jan 1923	First mention of Sessions Hospital in <i>The Northville Record</i> ²⁴
4.5 acres are added to west side of Rural Hill Cemetery	bef. May 1923
	July 1923
	Eastlawn Sanitarium, a private tuberculosis sanitarium, moves from Detroit to Northville. It was located on Buchner's Hill, where Allen Terrace now stands. ²⁵
Mausoleum is erected at Rural Hill	1924
	Dec 1924
	Atchison Clinic (and later Atchison Hospital) opens at 48 W. Dunlap St. (Address changes to 501 W. Dunlap in Dec 1926.) ²⁶
	Sept 20, 1933
	Mrs. Winnifred Sessions sells Sessions Hospital, now at a 10-patient capacity, to Miss Irene Fennell, who will continue running it under the same name ²⁷

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New Cemetery Association is formed due to failing finances
June 1937

Oct 1937 Casterline Funeral Home opens at 122 W. Dunlap St.²⁸

Northville Village Commission informally accepts responsibility for the care and appearance of the cemetery
Apr 1943

Sept 18, 1945 Eloise Hospital in Nankin Township is renamed Wayne County General Hospital and Infirmary²⁹

Jan 1947 Schrader Brothers move business to 404 W. Main St.³⁰

Rural Hill Cemetery Association sells cemetery to the Village of Northville
June 7, 1948

1952 Northville State Hospital opens³¹

Rural Hill Cemetery acquires 21 acres on south end
bef. 1953

Mar 1953 Phillips-Bahnmler Funeral Co. purchases Schrader Brothers' Northville location³²

Dec 1955 Eastlawn Sanitarium is converted into Eastlawn Resthaven, a convalescent home³³

Nov 1956 Bahnmler Funeral Home, 404 West Main St, is purchased by Dempsey B. Ebert³⁴

1959 Community General Hospital replaces Sessions Hospital at 520 W. Main St.³⁵

Dec 1959 St. Mary's Hospital opens in Livonia³⁶

Mar 1960 Atchison Hospital at 501 W. Dunlap St. closes, but continues as a medical clinic³⁷

Jul 1961 Community General Hospital at 520 W. Main St. closes³⁸

Dec 1964 Northville Convalescent Center opens in the former Community General (Sessions) Hospital building³⁹

Aug 4, 1969 Maybury Sanitarium closes⁴⁰

Aug 1974 Northville Convalescent Center at 520 W. Main St. is renamed Wishing Well Manor⁴¹

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	Feb 1976	Eastlawn Resthaven closes ⁴²
First Rural Hill Transcription by Robert Geake (Michigan State Senator) and Jack W. Hoffman (author of <i>Northville: The First 100 Years</i>)	1977	
	1984	Wayne County General Hospital and Infirmary (formerly Eloise) in Nankin Twp closes ⁴³
	1988	Wishing Well Manor at 520 W. Main St. becomes Star Manor of Northville ^{44, 45}
2nd Rural Hill Transcription by Northville Genealogical Society, with Gloria Collins as editor	1990	
3rd Rural Hill Transcription by Richard & Patricia Allen of the Northville Genealogical Society	2003	
	May 2003	Northville Psychiatric Hospital closes ⁴⁶
4th Rural Hill Transcription by Joe & Jen Brodzik of the Northville Genealogical Society	2021	

Citations

¹ All entries in this column refer to Rural Hill Cemetery, unless otherwise noted. For a more detailed history of Rural Hill, see "Rural Hill History" on Rural Hill Cemetery Database homepage

² "History of Oakwood Cemetery is Dug Up by Earl L. Reed." *The Northville Record*, June 3, 1954, 3.

³ All locations are in Northville, unless otherwise stated.

⁴ 1850 U.S. census, Wayne County, Michigan, population schedule, Plymouth, p. 368b, dwelling 63, family 63, John Sands; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 19 March 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 366.

⁵ "She Has Lived Eighty-Eight Years." *The Northville Record*, August 10, 1906, 1.

⁶ "Improvements." *The Northville Record*, October 11, 1873, 3.

⁷ "Business Changes." *The Northville Record*, April 10, 1875, 3.

⁸ Silas Farmer, *History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan, Vol. 2*, (Detroit: S. Farmer & Co., for Munsell & Co., New York, 1890), 1439.

- ⁹ "M. A. Porter to Retire." *The Northville Record* , December 28, 1906, 1.
- ¹⁰ "Another Landmark Gone." *The Northville Record* , August 4, 1892, 1.
- ¹¹ Walter Romig. *Michigan Place Names*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 182.
- ¹² "Two Good Tickets." *The Plymouth Mail* , April 1, 1898, 1.
- ¹³ "Michigan, U.S., Death Records, 1867-1952," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 19 March 2021), entry for John Sands, 26 August 1901.
- ¹⁴ "Northville: The City in Brief." *The Northville Record* , May 30, 1902, 5.
- ¹⁵ Joan Richardson. "Like Little Eloise, the Hospital Just Grew Up." *Detroit Free Press* , May 17, 1982, 3A.
- ¹⁶ Patricia Ibbotson. *Eloise: Poorhouse, Farm, Asylum, and Hospital* , 1839-1984. Arcadia Publishing, 2002.
- ¹⁷ "Northville Newslets." *The Northville Record* , March 23, 1917, 5.
- ¹⁸ "Northville Has Private Hospital." *The Northville Record* , November 7, 1919, 1.
- ¹⁹ "Miss Fennell Buys Sessions Hospital." *The Northville Record* , October 6, 1933, 1.
- ²⁰ "Northville Newslets." *The Northville Record* , May 28, 1920, 11.
- ²¹ "Says Sanitarium Leads Country." *The Detroit Free Press* , November 29, 1921, 2.
- ²² "Dr. Tom B. Henry Dies." *The Northville Record* , October 28, 1921, 4.
- ²³ "Local." *The Northville Record* , May 5, 1922, 5.
- ²⁴ "Local." *The Northville Record* , January 12, 1923, 5.
- ²⁵ "East Lawn Sanitorium Dedicated." *The Northville Record* , July 20, 1923, 1.
- ²⁶ "Professional Cards. Dr. R. E. Atchison, Physician and Surgeon." *The Northville Record* , December 5, 1924, 4 and December 17, 1926, 2.
- ²⁷ "Miss Fennell Buys Sessions Hospital." *The Northville Record* , October 6, 1933, 1.
- ²⁸ "Casterline Remodels Home Into Funeral Chapel." *The Northville Record* , October 22, 1937, 1.
- ²⁹ "Eloise No Longer." *The Detroit Free Press* , September 19, 1945, 1.
- ³⁰ "Announcing the New Schrader's Funeral Home." *The Northville Record* , January 31, 1947, 5.
- ³¹ "Mental Hospital Receiving Patients." *The Northville Record* , March 20, 1952, 4.
- ³² "Letter from Schrader's Funeral Home." *The Northville Record* , March 12, 1953, 2.
- ³³ "Announcing Eastlawn Resthaven, Incorporated." *The Northville Record* , December 1, 1955, 11.
- ³⁴ "Announce Purchase of Bahnmiller's." *The Northville Record* , November 22, 1956, 5.

- ³⁵ "Hospital Staff Set; Plan Open House." *The Northville Record* , August 27, 1959, 1.
- ³⁶ "St. Mary Hospital." *The Northville Record* , November 25, 1959, 7.
- ³⁷ "Atchison Hospital Closes 'Temporarily.'" *The Northville Record* , March 10, 1960, 1.
- ³⁸ "It's Official Now: Hospital Closing Doors this Week." *The Northville Record* , July 27, 1961, 1.
- ³⁹ "Officially Opens." *The Northville Record* , December 17, 1964, 8.
- ⁴⁰ "An Era Ends." *The Northville Record* , August 7, 1969, 1.
- ⁴¹ "Business Briefs." *The Northville Record* , August 15, 1974, 3B.
- ⁴² Jack W. Hoffman. "Eastlawn Closing Ends Era." *The Northville Record* , 3 Mar 1976, 1.
- ⁴³ Michael Bencsik. "It's the End of the Line for Eloise." *Detroit Free Press* , September 27, 1984, 1A.
- ⁴⁴ "Rezoning Request May Spur Change." *The Northville Record* , June 2, 1988, 7A.
- ⁴⁵ "Obituary for Walter W. Wilson." *The Northville Record* , July 21, 1988, 13A.
- ⁴⁶ "NPH Closure Has Us Thinking." *Northville Record* , May 15, 2003, 16A.