

Brought to you by the Northville Chamber of Commerce

Northville History Makers

Celebrating Northville's History

*T*hough we are not able to celebrate the festival, we can celebrate those whose stories inspire us.

A celebration of Northville's history has been the essence of our Heritage Festival since the event's inception three decades ago. And what a history it is!

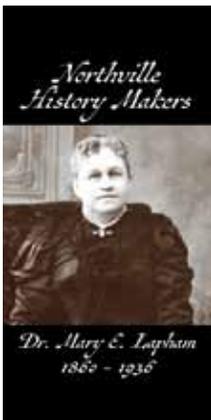
From the pioneers who traversed uncharted territory nearly two centuries ago to the industrial-era mavericks who made our community one of the largest manufacturing areas in Wayne County, Northville's first 100 years were marked by extraordinary growth and change.

The 20th century saw Northville men and women off to two world wars and Northville Township became a hub for state-of-the-art institutions such as Maybury Sanatorium and the Wayne County Training School. Village residents voted for City incorporation in 1955, and approved an unprecedented downtown improvement plan in 1978.

The 21st century has brought change and opportunity to enhance our community and recommit to our historical roots.

In addition to celebrating Northville's historical milestones, we also recognize the people who shaped our community. In 2018, we marked the inaugural presentation of our festival feature, History Makers, honoring Northville's most notable influencers. Look for downtown banners celebrating Francis R. Beal, Dr. Mary E. Lapham, David Clarkson and Sarah Ann Cochrane; you'll also find their stories here. Join us in celebrating Northville's rich history!

— *Special thanks to local historian Michele Fecht, for her research and assistance in our History Makers program.*



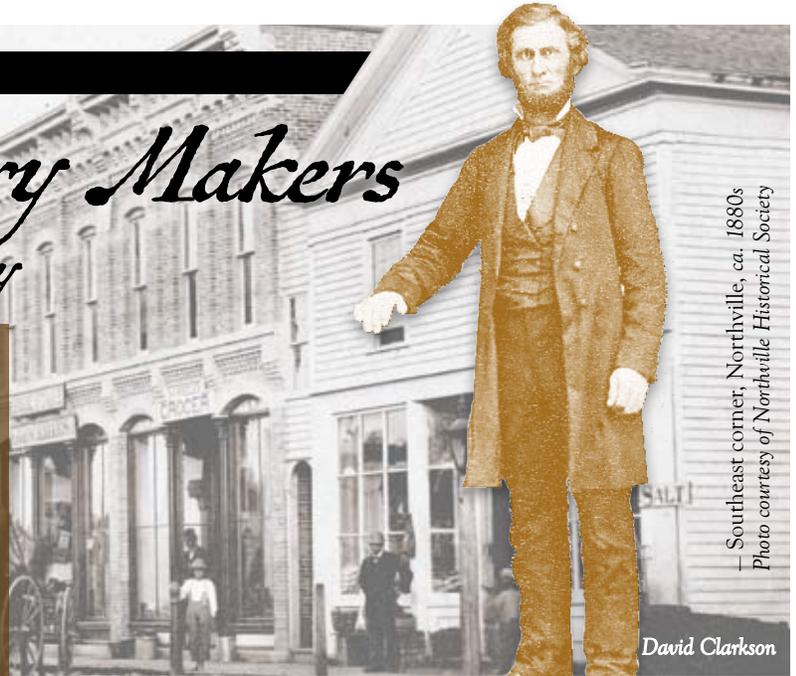
Dr. Mary E. Lapham

Born in Northville in 1860 to Jared and Martha Gregory Lapham, Mary Lapham's legacy of altruism began in Northville and continued throughout her life. She longed to be a doctor but was discouraged in that pursuit by her father. She served as cashier in her father's bank, J.S. Lapham & Company, but kept test tubes and a microscope in a vault to study during cashiering breaks. In 1889, the village council asked her to chair Northville's library organizing committee; she was later elected president of the Ladies Library Association. She donated the first 250 books to the library and gifted the library

building to the community (it is now the New School Church in Mill Race Village). She also served as a trustee and treasurer of the Northville School Board.

She joined Lucy Stout Dowd in organizing the Northville Woman's Club in 1892 and served as the organization's second president. She also was a member of the Northville Woman Suffrage Association.

Following her father's death, Lapham attended the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1900. She pursued graduate studies at the University of Munich in Germany. The scourge of tuberculosis in the early 1900s led Lapham to Switzerland where she studied therapeutic



pneumothorax or artificial collapse of the lung for treatment of lung disorders.

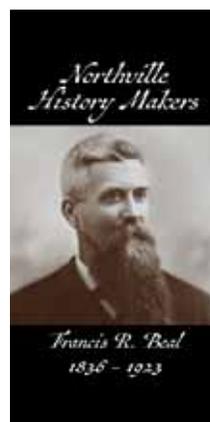
In 1908, she opened the Highlands Camp Sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis in Highlands, North Carolina, and was the first physician in the United States to successfully treat tuberculosis with the new collapse therapy method.

In January 1918, the Highlands sanatorium burned. Called to head a Red Cross mission in war-torn Europe, Lapham left for France in 1918 and set up a dispensary and hospital in LaRochelle for refugees from France and Belgium. In 1919, Lapham was appointed director of medical services for the Red Cross in Prague.

Lapham returned to the U.S. in 1920, and served as head of tuberculosis research at Johns Hopkins University and later at the University of Pennsylvania. She became the first woman president of the American Sanatorium Association (now the American Thoracic Society). She did not rebuild her Highlands sanatorium.

She retired to St. Augustine, Florida, where she died on January 26, 1935 at age 75. She is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.

— *Highland Historical Society Archives*
Photograph by Murdock Bros of Windsor, Ontario, ca. 1905



Francis R. Beal

Francis Beal was born in Northville in 1836, less than a decade after the community's first settlers staked their claim. The son of James and Rachael (Light) Beal, he followed in his father's footsteps as a journeyman cabinetmaker until 1863, when he opened a hardware store on Main Street.

In 1864, Beal persuaded Charles G. Harrington to convert his small foundry into a furniture factory after receiving an order of school desks for the Northville Union School. By 1873, Beal pulled out of the hardware business and with the help of several prominent community leaders incorporated the

Michigan School Furniture Company.

Over the next decade, the Michigan School Furniture Company became Northville's most dominant and profitable business. Its school desks and accessories (globes, blackboards, pointing rods) soon led to the addition of church pews and pulpits. Innovation in design and manufacturing

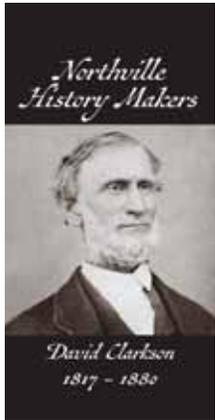
included Charles Harrington's folded school seat, the first in the nation to be sold commercially. Beal, who took out numerous patents, originated the first curved-back school seat and the noiseless seat hinge.

In 1887, the company reincorporated as the Globe Furniture and Manufacturing Company with Beal as president and general manager. It became the catalyst for a myriad of other Northville manufacturing including organ makers Granville Wood and Sons, Columbia Refrigerator Company, American Bell and Foundry, Ely Dowel Works, Victor Sleigh Company, Stanley Air Rifle Company and others. At its peak of production – with 200 workers employed – the Globe became the largest school and church furniture manufacturer in the world. It opened several branch offices in the U.S. and Canada to meet demand, and fueled the economy of the village as well as lumber mills throughout the area. The company also owned and operated Northville's first electric street lighting system.

By 1890, Northville had become Wayne County's third largest manufacturing area. Detroit and Wyandotte were the largest, respectively. The residential area north of the manufacturing complex housed Globe workers and became known as Bealtown. Beal Street also is named for the manufacturer. Fire destroyed the Globe factory in 1899.

In addition to his business prowess, Beal also was a community leader. He served as Village President from 1870-71, was superintendent of the Methodist Church Sunday School for 25 years, and was a past master of the Northville Lodge, No. 186. Beal died on April 5, 1923 in Detroit at age 86. He is buried in Northville's Rural Hill Cemetery.

– Photo courtesy of Northville Lodge, No. 186



David Clarkson

David Clarkson was born on March 13, 1817 in Somerset County, New Jersey, but moved at the age of three with his family to Ovid, Seneca County, New York. His mother died on March 12, 1824, just a day before David's 7th birthday. His father remarried later that year.

David's father died in 1830, and the following spring, at the age of 14, David left his five siblings and stepmother to journey to Michigan with the Capt. William Dunlap party. William and Sarah Dunlap, having adopted David, brought him along to help clear the wilderness. They traveled to Buffalo

on the Erie Canal aboard the canal boat Shark and then across Lake Erie on the steamboat *New York* before arriving in Detroit.

In a series of pioneer sketches published in *The Northville Record* from 1874 to 1878, Clarkson described the journey to Northville. "The streets of Detroit were one continual mud hole, and the roads through the country were worse if possible." The trek from Detroit to the edge of Plymouth Township (which would become Northville) was heavily wooded, muddy marsh. It would take three days to travel approximately 30 miles.

Clarkson labored at clearing the land, building cabins, hauling goods by ox team to and from Detroit, and grinding grain at John Miller's gristmill – Northville's first gristmill and the catalyst for much of the community's growth in its early years.

In 1844 Clarkson married Sarah Ann Bradley, the daughter of Northville pioneers Harvey Stone and Maria Rose Bradley. David and Sarah had seven children, all born in Northville.

Clarkson would become one of Northville's most prominent citizens. He was a founding member of the New School Church (now located in Mill Race Village), and a Northville school board trustee. Clarkson held the title of school director in 1859 when it was decided that the village needed to construct a larger school building than the former New School Church structure which had been converted to a school after the church

disbanded in 1849.

After years of preparation and fundraising, the Northville Union School opened on September 4, 1865 with Clarkson serving as a school board member and treasurer.

In addition to his community service, Clarkson's pioneer sketches in *The Northville Record*, a rare first-hand account and invaluable record of Northville's early history, are perhaps his most lasting contribution.

David Clarkson died on August 20, 1880 at the age of 63. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery.

– Photo courtesy of Troy Schmidt



Sarah Ann Cochrane

Sarah Ann Cochrane was born July 28, 1832 in East Poultney, Vermont, to Sylvester and Hannah Cochrane. Sylvester was a circuit-riding minister with an itch to travel west. The Cochranes left Vermont for the Michigan territory in 1837 (the same year Michigan became the 26th state) heading through Canada and entering the U.S. in Detroit.

In her written reminiscences, Cochrane relayed the arduous trek of the early pioneers:

"It goes almost without saying that the roads on the route were simply appalling . . . For days we walked more miles than we rode, my mother carrying me on her hip with one arm while with a long pole in the other hand she tested the depth of the mud before each step. My father was obliged to lead his team over corduroy roads where the logs floated and rolled in liquid mud."

From Detroit, the family spent five weeks traveling to a small community near Lansing that would become the "Vermontville Colony" named by Sylvester Cochrane. In 1842, the family left Vermontville for a brief stint in Howell before the Reverend Cochrane was called to minister a new Presbyterian church of the "new school" variety in Northville. It remains today as the New School Church in Mill Race Historical Village.

In her writings, Cochrane noted that Northville in 1842 "was past the pioneer stage and quite attractive, and the community of excellent repute . . . my mother was contented to live in Northville from the day of her arrival to the last days of her life."

The New School Church lasted only a few years, at which point her father established the Northville Academy, where young men studied before entering university. Sarah and her brother, Lyman, helped with the teaching until 1857 when the school closed. In 1858, Cochrane graduated from the Young Ladies Seminary in Monroe, and returned to Northville to reopen the Northville Academy as a school "for young ladies." It closed in 1860.

She was active during the Civil War in work for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, and later a devoted advocate for the temperance cause.

In 1883, following the death of her parents and brother, Cochrane joined the Detroit Public Library. She made an in-depth study of the Dewey Decimal System and it was under her supervision that the library was cataloged. When she resigned from the staff in 1906, she was the second assistant librarian.

Before her death in 1917, Cochrane wrote several papers of her family's history. Among those papers – now housed in the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library – are her invaluable reminiscences of the arduous trek to Michigan and Northville's early history.

When it organized in 1926, the local National Society Daughters of the American Revolution named its chapter after Sarah Ann Cochrane; she was a descendant of five Revolutionary soldiers. The local organization continues to meet today.

– Photo courtesy of the Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.