

## MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners

From: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

Date: December 8, 2016

Re: Historic Plaque for 1137 Traver Street

This month staff received one application for a historic building plaque for the house at 1137 Traver. The Charles and Linda Waite House was constructed circa 1860 and is a contributing structure in the Broadway Historic District. The survey card and an article about the house that appeared in the winter 2015 Washtenaw County Historical Society Newsletter are attached to the application. The upright-and-wing house features a full-width front porch with Italianate brackets, wide board trim in the eaves, one-over-one windows, and a side wing with its own front porch. The side and rear walls, and the wing, are stucco.

The Historic District Commission will consider all of the following when reviewing an application for a historic property plaque.

- a) The building must be at least fifty years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).
- b) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.
- c) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.
- d) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

The owner has done significant work on the house to restore the front façade, and intends to continue work on the rest of the house as his budget allows. The largest visual improvement was the removal of aluminum siding on the upper half of the front façade and the removal of stucco and installation of new wood siding on the lower half. The owner undertook substantial investigative work before beginning, and made framing repairs to the corner posts and other repairs as necessary. Comparing the survey photo to today's front façade shows the very positive results of these efforts. Staff's only slight concern is that the two street-facing doors are not appropriate for the house, but these are easily remedied and staff has every confidence that these will be on the list of future work.

## Sample Motion

I move that the circa 1860s Charles and Linda Waite House at 1137 Traver meets the criteria for a City of Ann Arbor Historic Building marker based on its age, historic and architectural significance, and contribution to the history of Ann Arbor.

Broadway Historic District Survey Photo 2007  
Note aluminum on upper and stucco on lower front



## Historic Property Plaques

The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission considers requests for bronze plaques honoring significant historic buildings in the City of Ann Arbor. Plaques show the original or earliest known owner's name and the year in which the structure was built. Current property owners may apply to the Commission and, if approved, purchase a bronze plaque for their building.



### What criteria will be applied?

The Historic District Commission will consider all of the following when reviewing an application for a historic property plaque.

- e) The building must be at least one hundred years old, as documented by a combination of records (title search, tax records, wills, etc.).
- f) The building must have been maintained, over time, in its original condition, or must have undergone historically appropriate restoration or rehabilitation.
- g) The building may not have historically inappropriate features, enclosures or repairs.
- h) The principal facades of the building visible from the street or any public right of way must maintain integrity of form, materials, and architectural features consistent with the dominant period of the building.

If one or more of the criteria cannot be met, staff and the Commission will consider whether the building has special historic or architectural significance on a case by case basis.

The property must meet one of the following four criteria:

- 1) Listed or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or State Register of Historic Sites
- 2) Included in the Individual Historic Properties Historic District listed in Title IX of the Ann Arbor Register of Historic Places prior to 2001
- 3) Received an award from the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission
- 4) Others may be approved for a historic property plaque by the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission on a case-by-case basis

### How to Apply for a Historic Property Plaque

- 1. The current property owner should fill out the application and return it to the Historic Preservation Coordinator via email to [hdc@a2gov.org](mailto:hdc@a2gov.org), or by dropping

it off at the Planning & Development desk on the first floor of City Hall, 301 E Huron Street.

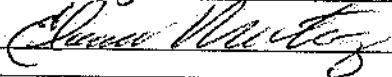
2. Be sure to include a description of how the property qualifies for a plaque (from the list above), and any information or history unique to the home. The application will be evaluated based on the information it provides.
3. After an initial screening by staff for completeness and content, the request will be placed on a Historic District Commission agenda for consideration. If the request is approved, the historic preservation coordinator will contact the plaque manufacturer (Arnet's, Inc. at 4495 Jackson Road) with the correct historic name and date of construction of the house. The cost of the plaque fluctuates based on the price of bronze, usually between \$175 and \$225. Arnet's will fax a proof to the Historic Preservation Coordinator, which the applicant must sign off on. Once the proof has been approved, Arnet's will manufacture the plaque and notify the applicant when it is ready to pick up. The applicant picks up and pays for the plaque at Arnet's at 4495 Jackson Road.
4. The applicant must mount the plaque on a visible spot at the front of the building, preferably near the front door, in a location that does not destroy or obscure historic architectural features of the building.

Questions? Please contact the Historic Preservation Coordinator at [hdc@a2gov.org](mailto:hdc@a2gov.org) or 734-794-6265 x42608.

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
APPLICATION for HISTORIC MARKER

100 N. Fifth Avenue Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734)794-6265 x42608 Fax: (734) 994-8312  
Historic District Email: [hdc@a2gov.org](mailto:hdc@a2gov.org); [www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org)

**Section 1: Applicant Information**

Name of Property Owner: ELMER MARTINEZ  
Address of Owner: 1137 TRAVEL ST  
Daytime Phone: (734) 972-9510  
Fax: ( )  
Email: elmermartinez123@att.net  
Signature of owner:  date: 11-18-16

**Section 2: Historical Information (attach additional sheets as necessary)**

Address of Property: 1137 TRAVEL ST  
Name of Historic District, if applicable: BROADWAY  
Name of First Owner of building: Charles & Linda Waite  
*Bibliographic Source:* Broadway Historic District Survey Report (attached)  
Date of Construction: circa 1860  
*Bibliographic Source:* Broadway Historic District Survey Report  
Additional history of the property—including ownership, evolution of the building and its use:  
See attached article from Winter 2015 Washtenaw County Hist. Society Newsletter

*(continue on reverse or on additional sheets)*

**Section 3: Photographs (attach or submit electronic copies of photos of the building)**

**Staff Use Only**

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of HDC Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Action: \_\_\_\_\_ HDC Approval \_\_\_\_\_ HDC Denial \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

*Broadway Historic District*  
*Resource Documentation*

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*Address:* 1137 Traver *Date:* ca. 1860  
*Historic Name:* Charles & Linda Waite House *Level:* Contributing



*Description*

<i>Style:</i>	Greek Revival	<i>Roof Shape:</i>	Front Gable
<i># Stories:</i>	2	<i>Roof Material:</i>	Asphalt
<i>Material:</i>	Aluminum, Stucco	<i>Plan Shape:</i>	Rectangular
<i>Windows:</i>	Replacement	<i>Porch Type:</i>	Full Front
<i>Window Type:</i>	Wood, Double-Hung	<i># Dormers:</i>	N/A
<i>Pane Type:</i>	1/1	<i>Dormer Type:</i>	N/A
<i>Character Defining Features:</i>	Upright and wing; wing has full-width, shed-roofed porch, supported by square posts resting on a concrete pad; Italianate brackets top off the porch posts; upright also has a full-width, shed-roofed porch supported by flat columns with square capitals; single-story, shed-roofed addition at the rear.		

*History*

<i>First City Directory:</i>	1882	<i>Context(s):</i>	
<i>Original Use:</i>	Residential	<i>Architect:</i>	Unknown
<i>Current Use:</i>	Residential	<i>Builder:</i>	Unknown
<i>Occupation (First Dweller):</i>	Unknown		

*Notes:* This Greek Revival begins the concentration of older homes at the south end of Traver. Beginning in 1888, Adam Rietz, a section hand on the Toledo, Ann Arbor and Northern Michigan Railroad, lived here. Rietz sold the house to Edward and Marie Flynn in 1922. The Flynn's stayed here until after WWII.

# Arzell to Ann Arbor: Working Class German Immigrants

By Ellamary Joanne Kane

Ann Arbor's German immigrant population in the late 1800s and early 1900s has been well documented by local historian Grace Shackman and others. Estimates suggest that in the late 1800s almost 50% of the residents of Ann Arbor were of German heritage. While my family is of mixed Irish-German background, my relatives were part of Ann Arbor's German community, including my great grandparents, Adam (1843-1922) and Dorothea (Hahn) Ritz (1848-1920), who resided at 11 Traver Street (later to be renumbered 1137 Traver Street) from the early-1880s to their deaths. The house, located in the Broadway Historic District, was recently listed for sale, and I saw photos of the rooms where I played as a child in the 1940s. While much has been written about the prosperous and famous among the German immigrants living in Ann Arbor, my family was of a more modest background reflected in their home and other similar structures along Traver Street.



Adam & Dorothea Ritz posing in the Kelley Photography Shop at 5 & 6 Huron St. The undated photograph is pre-1887 because the O. A. Kelley photography studio, at the Huron Street address, burned December 27, 1887 as reported in the *Ann Arbor Courier*.

## Adam and Dorothea Hahn Ritz

Adam Ritz was born in 1843 in Arzell, northeast of Frankfurt, Germany. He arrived in New York City aboard the ship *Borussia* on August 22, 1865, after debarking from Hamburg. Dorothea Hahn was born in Steinbach, a small town, northwest of Frankfurt and departed for the United States from Le Havre, France on the *Mercury*, debarking in New York City on May 20, 1864. She, like her husband, was part of the wave of German immigrants flooding New York City at that time.

Little is known of my great grandparent's life in New York City, as they do not show up on any of the traditional records, census, or city directories, used to track immigrants. I do know that they were married in Manhattan on September 22, 1867 at Holy Redeemer Roman Catholic Church, a traditional German Catholic Church. They had five children, Al (1868), Joseph (1870), Augustus (1872), Anna (1873), Marie (1876) all born in New York City.

Family lore, although undocumented, has Adam Ritz running a small cigar rolling firm, with four to five employees, that was shut down when one of his employees was found to have smallpox, a terrible scourge in the overcrowded working class neighborhoods of New York City. By the early 1870s, the Ritz family was on the move to Lucas County, Ohio, where they would reside for approximately 10 years while Adam worked on a variety of service related jobs including the railroad. While in Ohio, 3 more children, Elizabeth (1877), Adam (1878), Theresa (1882) were born.

It was the railroad work that brought Adam to Ann Arbor where he and his family, then consisting of his wife and 8 children, moved to in the early 1880s. The first documentation that I have of the family in Ann Arbor is when another son's birth, Antonio, was recorded in 1884 and their final child, George, was born in 1886. Also, in 1886, Adam and his children were listed in the Ann Arbor City Directory as living at 11 Traver Street.

*Continued on page 7*



The Ritz family in front of 1137 Traver Street.

Adam's main occupation, was working on the Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Northern Michigan Railroad as a section hand, then as a section foreman. This matched the similar working class occupations of his sons and neighbors. For a short time, starting in 1890, Dorothea ran a grocery store in the single story addition to the main house.

Adam continued to work in service related jobs, according to the listings I've checked in the Ann Arbor City Directories up to as late as 1917, when he was a watchman at the high school. He died in 1922 at 79 years of age having outlived his wife Dorothea by two years. Survivors included twenty-one grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. The home passed in 1922 to their daughter, Marie Ritz and her husband Edward Flynn upon the death of her father. She, her husband, and foster daughter Katherine Flynn, lived in 1137 Traver until selling the home to someone outside my family shortly after World War II.

As a small child in the 1940s, my family would drive from Detroit to visit our relatives living at 1137 Traver Street. We always brought a picnic basket of food for our lunch in Plymouth Park, a 1930s WPA project no longer existing.

The current photos of the home brought back vivid memories of playing in the neighborhood and home's interior. While it had running water in the 1940s, I was fascinated with hand operated water pump that still brought water to the kitchen sink.

## Early House History

Little is known at this time about the early history of the home at 11 Traver Street. The construction date has been narrowed down, with the help of Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley, to be around 1866. The house first shows up in the aerial sketches of buildings of Ann Arbor in this year, but not in similar maps from 1853, 1856 or 1864.

The architectural characteristics of the house design and the facade, in particular, also support a construction date in the 1860s. In the historic district survey by the city, they noted that... "this Greek Revival (home) begins the concentration of older homes at the south end of Traver."



The exterior of 1137 Traver appears to have weathered the last 150 years, or so, relatively unscathed, aside from the installation of aluminum siding and door replacements. The grocery store was located in the one story section on the left. Photo by Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley November 2014.



Adam and Dorothea Ritz at the rear of 1137 Traver.

11 Traver St. in this 1866 bird's eye view of Ann Arbor.



## The author would love to hear from you!

Ellamary Kane is a member of the WCHS and resident of Midland, Michigan. She visited Ann Arbor many times as a young girl to see her relatives of German heritage on both sides of her family. She would like to thank to Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley for their generous assistance with the production of this article. She also appreciated Joe Findlay's editorial support. Ellamary would appreciate hearing from WCHS readers with additional knowledge of the Ritz or Lucas families in Ann Arbor. Email Jim Kane at [jskane@verizon.net](mailto:jskane@verizon.net).





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