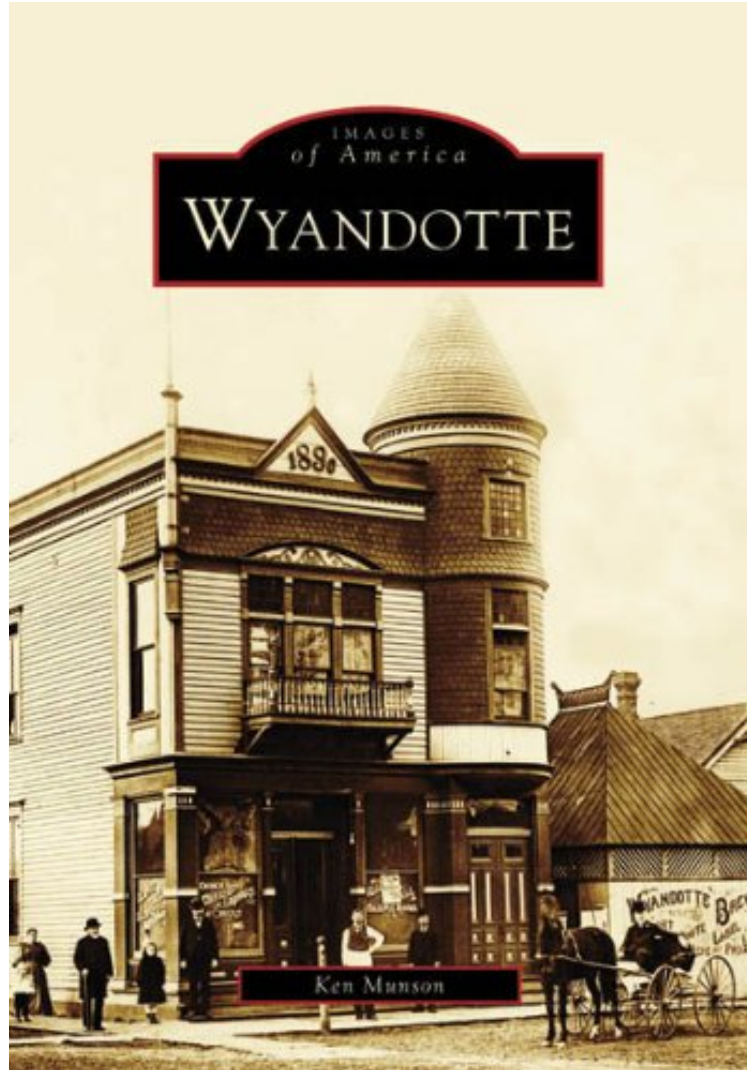


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Ken Munson

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Ken Munson : Wyandotte (MI) (Images of America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wyandotte (MI) (Images of America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Why not like it?By PurchaserHistory about the town I was born in. Why not like it?1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Stephen HendersonThe Images Of America Series is a wealth of information

Wyandotte, located between Detroit and Toledo along the Detroit River across from Windsor, Ontario, has enriched area history from the days of the first inhabitants, the Wyandott Indians and French farmers, through the industrial

ages of iron and steel. In latter years, Wyandotte has been the stage for the manufacture of the first steel rails and iron plate and was home to shipbuilding and chemical industries. All of these contributed significantly to the growth of the nation and to the continuing development of a great American city. Businesses, churches, and community organizations are captured in these historic photographs, along with the people whose commitment to hard work helped the city prosper and grow.

Publication: TriCitiesArticle Title: Many sides, stories can be found at houseAuthor: Joe TennisDate: 10/30/08Oh, Abijah! In the mid-1800s, this industrialist, Abijah Thomas, created the Holston Woolen Mills in Smyth County, Va. Thomas is also the reason why Thomas Bridge has that name along the South Fork of the Holston River. But for a true monument to this man, you must look at his fabulous octagonal house built in 1856-57 for the prominent landowner. This singular brick dwelling is Virginia's most sophisticated representation of Orson Squire Fowler's advocacy of octagonal architecture that caught the imagination of Americans in the reform movement of the 1850s, says *The Virginia Landmarks Register*, a history book published by the University Press of Virginia. Unfortunately, this octagonal house seems to have seen its better days. Doors and windows are boarded, and one tattered piece of plastic flutters at a top window, drifting in the wind with a spirit all its own. A prominent sign marks the place: PRIVATE PROPERTY. This brick landmark sits on a hill overlooking a public highway near Adwolfe, Va. And sometimes, you might see somebody on the street, staring and wondering: Is there anything there? Local authors Kimberly Barr Byrd and Debbie J. Williams included a photo of this home in their first book, *2005s Smyth County, Virginia: Images of America* (Arcadia Publishing). These women also told of a storage room, called the dark room by locals. Rumors that this room was used to punish slaves or to lock away unruly children were unfounded. Still, stories of the so-called Dark Room persist. And in 2007, Byrd and Williams took another look with their second book, *Smyth County Revisited* (Arcadia Publishing). This time, the authors note the Dark Room of this eight-sided house as a strange, windowless room. It is called the dark room by locals and harbors dark stains on the floor alleged to be the blood of slaves who were whipped there. In a more recent collection, *Ghosthunting Virginia* (Clerisy Press), author Michael J. Varhola dedicates an entire chapter to the Octagon House. Varhola describes the history of the home and shares some alleged hauntings, like the belief that Thomass spirit comes back each Dec. 1 in the form of an eerie, blue-white light. Yet, Varhola never went inside this home when he visited in the spring of 2008. And, he writes, I did not sense anything of a paranormal nature. Years before, the late Mack Sturgill explored both the legends and history of the home in his 1990 book, *Abijah Thomas and His Octagonal House*. Here, too, Sturgill also tried to set stories straight. As for the Dark Room, Sturgill provided a theory about the alleged blood stains on the floor. These, he figured, were probably caused by food spills from the canning jars stored inside the house. The house is listed on state and national historic landmark registers. About the AuthorKen Munson has been an active historic preservationist in the city of Wyandotte since 1977, beginning with his tenure as director of museums for the Wyandotte Cultural and Historical Commission. He has also worked with the Barrington Historical Society and Lake County Museum in Illinois. In 1981, Munson was selected to serve as the first director of the Henry Ford Estate, located on the campus of the University of MichiganDearborn, where he prepared a five-year restoration plan for the estate. He taught for 20 years as an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate Historic Preservation Planning Program at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti and continues to serve as a consultant to local historical agencies and museums and as a commissioner of the Wyandotte Cultural and Historical Commission.