

History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

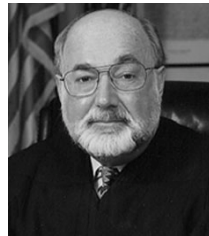
www.LansingHistory.org

November 2010

Judge William C. Whitbeck's *To Account For Murder*

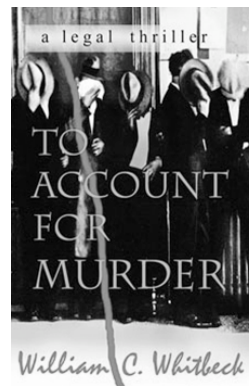
By Richard Hathaway

The January 11th, 1945 gangland execution of Michigan State Senator Warren G. Hooper of Albion is the most notorious example of corrupt ties between politicians and gangsters in our state's history. The Senator was brutally murdered after having his car forced to the side of the road on M-99 as he was going home to Albion from Lansing. Hooper was to testify the next day before a Grand Jury in Lansing that was investigating political corruption. The killers were never identified and much of the case remains a mystery. These events are the backdrop for the compelling legal thriller, *To Account For Murder*, by Lansing resident and Michigan Court of Appeals Judge William C. Whitbeck.



The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is pleased to announce that our organization will serve as co-sponsors of a book launch event for Judge Whitbeck's new novel. The event will take place at the Michigan Historical Center in downtown Lansing on Wednesday, December 1 at 7 p.m. The book, which is being published by The Permanent Press, will be sold at the event for \$28.00. Presale orders are being taken on amazon.com.

Copies will soon be available for purchase in local bookstores as well. Other co-sponsors of the event include the Thomas Cooley Law School, the Michigan State University College of Law, the Michigan Historical Commission, the Ingham County Bar Association, the Ingham County Legal News, and the Michigan Political History Society. We will also welcome Judge Whitbeck to our January 20 at 7 pm meeting (at the downtown CADL branch), at which he will present on the research that he did to write *To Account for Murder*.



Judge William Whitbeck is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School and Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism. He has been a lawyer in private practice and counselor to three Michigan Governors. For the past 13 years, he has served as a judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals where he served six years as Chief Judge. Judge Whitbeck and his wife

Stephanie, live in a twice renovated 1878 historic home that's just a short walk from the State Capitol in Lansing. On weekends he escapes to a cottage on Lake Michigan where he is finishing his second thriller.

For more information on Judge Whitbeck's upcoming novel, visit our website at www.lansinghistory.org to read an interview with the Judge conducted by HSGL's Secretary, Richard Hathaway.

A Note Regarding Dues

If you're not sure if you've paid your dues for this year yet, please flip to the back page and check our mailing label. The top line of the label should include one of the following messages:

- Membership expired October 2007 (or 2008 or 2009 or 2010)
- Membership expires October 2011
- Lifetime member
- Membership welcomed (for Prospects and Complementary)

If you feel that the information on your label is not correct, please contact Bill Atkinson at 989-587-6970 or watkinson@4wbi.net

A membership form has been included in this newsletter. Please remember that your membership dues are what enable the society to continue to fund quality programs and publications, such as the newsletter. If you need to renew, the amounts for membership are as follows:

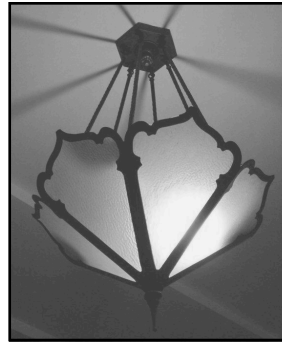
- Individual: \$15
- Family: \$25
- Life: \$150

Silver Bells Window Display

Don't forget to come and see the Historical Society's Silver Bells in the City display this holiday season! The display, which has been kindly put together and loaned by Val Barryman, will be up in the Knapp's corner window by Friday, November 19. HSGL board members will be there to answer any questions about the display. Silver Bells begins at 4:00 pm and runs until 9:00. Other highlights include self-guided tours of the State Capitol, the Electric Light Parade, Governor Granholm's last lighting of the state Christmas tree, and, of course, the arrival of Santa!

Eastern High School Tour

On Thursday, October 21 nearly 100 people came out to Eastern High School for a tour and talk co-hosted by Eastern High School, the Eastern High School Alumni Association, and the Historical Society of Greater Lansing. The evening began with a short program in the auditorium, during which former principal Eleanor Doersam gave a brief history of the school. Upon completion of the program, visitors were allowed to tour through the building and visit up to nine select sites, including two of the gymnasiums, the library, some classrooms, the band room, the courtyard, and the social hall. A highlight of the tour was certainly the courtyard, which has just been re-landscaped with the help of a generous donation from the EHS Alumni Association. The evening ended in the social room, near the main entrance, where the guests enjoyed light snacks provided by the alumni. To those of you who came out for the event – thank you!



Other Historical Happenings

The Grand Ledge Historical Society will host its annual holiday home tour on Saturday, December 4 and Sunday, December 5. The tour will include 6 area homes, as well as the Grand Ledge Opera House. For more information about attending the tour or purchasing tickets please call (517) 627-5112.

The next meeting of the East Lansing Historical Society on Sunday, December 5 at 2 pm will be a panel discussion about past Christmases in East Lansing. Up to five members of various generations of East Lansing natives will participate in the discussion, which will be open to the public at no cost. The ELHS meets at the East Lansing Community Center.

African-American History Showcase

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, February 26, 2011, when the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and the Capitol Area District Library will co-host the annual African-American History Showcase.

Wayne State University Assistant Professor of History Danielle McGuire will speak on the experience of African-American women during the Civil Rights Movement.

The President's Corner

Chances are that by this point of your reading, you've noticed our new newsletter layout. I would like to express my thanks to Craig Whitford, past president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, for all of the work he's done on the newsletter throughout the years. At the present time, my husband and I will be serving as the new editors.

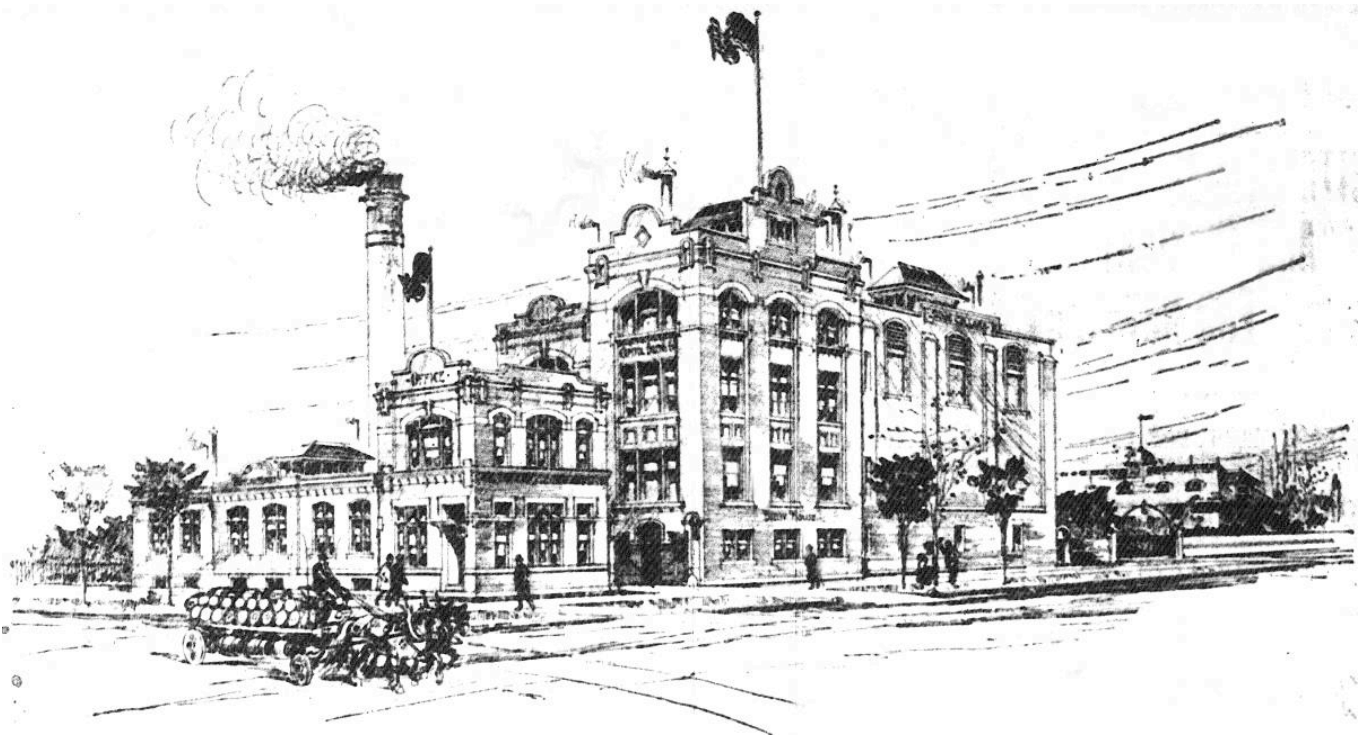
This fall has brought many changes for the society. We've updated our webpage, and will soon be adding a new feature to it. By the end of November, the website will include multiple walking tours of historic Lansing areas that can be downloaded and printed. Many societies across the country offer similar self-guided tours, which are popular with schools, locals, and tourists. The first two tours on our site will be a self-guided walking tour of North Cemetery (based on the information presented at our 2010 cemetery walk) and an architectural scavenger hunt of downtown Lansing, written by Linda Peckham and Robert Morris. If you know of other self-guided tours that would be appropriate to include, please contact me.

We are also excited to announce that our new newsletter layout will include a section of notices about upcoming programs offered by other area historical societies. In September some of us attended a joint meeting with the East Lansing Historical Society during which we watched Dave Muylle's film *Craftsman Style*. Members of both groups commented on how nice it was to join together. In order to encourage further dialogue between local societies, we hope to cross promote events with other groups. Each month we will feature one or two area societies.

If you have any suggestions for or feedback on the new newsletter, or any of the aforementioned plans, please send me an e-mail at vrmarvin@sbcglobal.net.

Best-

Valerie Marvin
President
Historical Society of Greater Lansing



An architectural rendering of the Capital Brewing Company

Lansing's Lost Brewery

By Jim MacLean

In 1907, a new brewery was planned for the city of Lansing. Many of the most prominent men in Lansing were involved in the planning and backing in the creation of this new company. However, in less than 30 days the dream was gone and the business was never started.

On November 5, 1907, the Lansing Journal announced that a new brewery would be formed in Lansing with a capitalization of \$150,000 of which \$75,000 was paid. The officers were President, John H. Algate¹, Vice President G.H. Ziegler², Secretary C.J. Prost³, and Treasurer, Henry Russell.⁴ They were to be assisted by Alexander A. Fordon of Detroit who was to be the manager of the new company.⁵ The brewery was to have a capacity of between 25,000 and 30,000 barrels a year.⁶

Later in November, the Lansing Journal (LJ 11/18/1907) announced that the brewery would be located on the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and South Street, would have a frontage on Washington of 124 feet and 144 feet on South Street, and would extend to the banks of the Grand River.⁷ President Algate announced that an agreement had been reached with the property owner, Herbert E. Johnson. The building was to be four stories and would include an artificial ice plant and cooperage; it was to be a miniature Anheuser Busch plant. Ground was to be broken in March 1908.

Later, on December 19, 1907, new board of directors and new officers were elected for the Capital Brewing Company. The board of directors was made up of G.H. Ziegler, Herbert E. Johnson⁸, C.J. Prost, H. Russell, and A.A. Fordon. The new

officers were president, G.H. Ziegler, vice president, Herbert E. Johnson, secretary, C.J. Prost, and treasurer, Henry Russell. There is no indication why John H. Algate was not included. The last mention of the brewery was in the December 24, 1908 State Republican, which stated that another \$15,000 in stock was subscribed, the greater part going to local persons.

Just why the brewery wasn't built remains a mystery. Its failure may have been a result of the Panic of 1907, a severe monetary contraction that occurred due to a run on the Knickerbocker Trust Company of New York City. Many state and local banking institutions failed as a result of the nationwide panic that began in October of that year.

Footnotes

¹ John H. Algate listed as a carpenter in the 1908 City Directory.

² Gottlieb H. Ziegler is listed in 1908 as being a dealer in hides and furs.

³ In 1908 Charles J. Prost ran a sample room, a beer saloon.

⁴ Henry was running City Bottling works in 1908.

⁵ Mr. Fordon is listed in the Detroit Blue book he seems to have been an inventor.

⁶ The State Republican from 11/5/1907 confirms all of the above information.

⁷ Block 194 lots 1-2.

⁸ Herbert E. Johnson was a real estate agent.

*The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.
Thank you for your support of our programs and activities.*



Make Checks Payable to
Historical Society of Greater Lansing
P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

Member Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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- Please accept my application for:
- New Membership
 - Renewal Membership
 - Gift Membership
- I have enclosed:
- \$15 Individual Membership
 - \$25 Family Membership
 - \$150 Life Membership
 - \$ _____ Additional Gift to HSGL

Historical Society of Greater Lansing - Membership Application



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