

History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing www.LansingHistory.org

May 2012

Potter House Museum Fundraiser

Friday, May 18, 2012 - 6:30pm to 8:30pm

The Historic Potter House - 1348 Cambridge, Lansing
\$50.00 per person

Mark your calendar's for HSGL's May fundraiser, a tour of the beautiful, historic Potter House. The owner of the home, HSGL member James McClurken, has graciously offered to open his home to the Historical Society for this special event. The evening will include an in-depth architectural tour of the home, led by Lansing architecture professor Jim Perkins. Please note that all of the money raised at the event will go towards our museum fund.

The home, which is truly a Lansing treasure, was built by Ray & Sarah Potter. Though its Tudor Revival style gives the home a traditional English feel, it is full of "modern" surprises, including the fact that the home is actually constructed of poured concrete! Designed by Harold Childs of East Lansing, the house is a fascinating combination of old-world excellence and modern American engineering

Perhaps what truly sets the Potter House above her peers are the stunningly beautiful hand painted murals that showcase exotic animals from around the world. These murals will be shown as a part of the house tour. Ray Potter, who commissioned the house in the 1926, is the son of James Potter, who gifted land to the City of Lansing for the establishment of a grand city park, today known as Potter Park Zoo. Like his father, Ray was a generous philanthropist who donated significant amounts of money to Lansing's Sparrow Hospital, as well as a variety of other institutions.

The generosity of the Potter family to the City of Lansing can be an inspiration to us all. If you would like to follow in their steps, and give a gift that will help establish a new Lansing cultural institution that will be valued for years to come, please consider partnering with the Historical Society of Greater Lansing in our efforts to raise money for a museum by purchasing a ticket to the event.

Jacobson's, I Miss It So!

On Thursday evening, May 10, Michigan author Bruce Allen Kopytek will regale society members with stories of the beloved Jacobson's department stores. Meet the founders of the chain, the Jacobson family, and learn how they grew one humble store to a mid 20th century chain offering customers premier products. The evening will include the opportunity to purchase a copy of Mr. Kopytek's book, *Jacobson's, I Miss It So!* and have it signed by the author.

When: Thursday, May 10th, 7:00 pm

Where: CADL Downtown Lansing, 401 N. Capitol Ave.

Our First Exhibit:

When Everyone Shopped Downtown

On June 2, 2012, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing will launch our very first exhibit in our new office space, in the Creyts building located at 831 N. Washington, titled *When Everyone Shopped Downtown*, on Friday evening, June 1, 2012 from 5:00 – 7:00 pm.

The exhibit will include artifacts from Knapp's, Arbaugh's, Hurd's The Style Shop, Marshall Music, Linn & Owens, and other historic Lansing stores. The exhibit will focus on the mid-20th Century, and will undoubtedly bring back many memories for a lot of you! We'd love to have you join us for the launch. We'll also be open the following day, June 2, from 10-4 for Be A Tourist in Your Own Town. Admission is donation only – either an object that you'd like to donate to our collection, or a monetary donation. We hope to see you there!

Annual Meeting

On Saturday, June 16 at 10:30 am, the HSGL will have our annual meeting in downtown Lansing. The meeting will consist of a walking tour of Washington Ave. called *Behind the Facades*, in which we'll talk about the some of the most prominent facades downtown, the various businesses that have occupied the storefronts over the years, and take a peak at the back of a couple of the buildings too! The tour will meet at the corner of Washington and Michigan Aves. The tour will last 60-90 minutes, and is free, though donations will be gratefully accepted.

After the tour we'll have a quick business meeting, where we'll vote on the slate of officers found below, and then enjoy lunch at Michigan Brewing Company. Please note that if you want to stay for lunch, you'll need to call 517-282-0671 or send an e-mail to info@lansinghistory.org to RSVP and reserve a spot. Please RSVP by June 8, 2012. Lunch, which will be ordered individually when we've completed our business, will be paid for by each individual upon the completion of their meal. We hope you can attend!

The proposed slate of HSGL Board Members to be voted on at the Annual Meeting is:

President: Valerie Marvin
 Vice President: Bill Castanier
 Secretary: Adam Beckwith
 Treasurer: Doug Johnson
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: Lille Foster
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: David Houston
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: Nathalie Winans
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: Harry Emmons
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: Jesse LaSorda
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: Joan Bauer
 Trustee 2012 – 2014: David Votta

No additional items will be on the agenda.

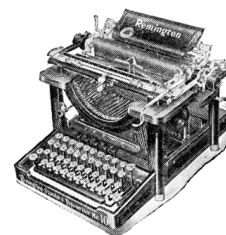
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

P.O. Box 12095 ~ Lansing, MI 48901
www.LansingHistory.org

Officers & Board Members

Valerie Marvin - President	Harry Emmons - Trustee
Bill Castanier - Vice President	David Votta - Trustee
Richard Hathaway - Secretary	Lille Foster - Trustee
Doug Johnson - Treasurer	Adam Beckwith - Trustee
Nathalie Winans - Trustee	

Pages from the Past Excerpts from Bygone Local News Stories



FROM LANSING'S PAST...A Profile of H.A. French
 'MAUD S.' WAS A CHAMP
 by THEODORE G. FOSTER, submitted by Lille Foster

*The State Journal, Sunday, May 1, 1960
 Lansing, Michigan*

Henry A. French was a perfectly normal farm boy in the Tom Sawyer tradition. That is, he didn't like chores to the point of drudgery.

Necessity being the mother of invention, Henry decided that there must be easier ways to help clear the original timber on his parents' farm in Windsor Township near Dimondale, particularly as regarded stringing and stretching of wire fence.

He conceived the idea of mounting a roll of fence wire on a reel at the rear end of a wagon. Also mounted on the wagon's rear was a posthole auger for boring postholes. This was to be ratchet-controlled and would eliminate the tedious task of hole digging by hand.

It worked, but Henry didn't bother to patent it. He also failed to follow through on a posthole digger on which he did considerable experimental work to the point of completing a working model.

INVENTED PUMP

In the late 1880s this one-time farm boy became intrigued with the idea of obtaining a continuous flow of water from a hand pump or a windmill. Up to that time a pump brought water to the surface on one stroke of the pump. With completion of his experimental model he this time obtained a patent and interested the Lansing Iron and Engine Works in its manufacture.

From his earliest days French was a lover of horse flesh, having been brought up in a family whose members were followers of harness racing and its champions. Among relatives of his parents were importers of Belgian horses. So, with invention of his fast-flowing pump it was only natural that he would

name it after the fastest harness horse in the country, the famous Maud S.

Maud S. first came to public attention in 1880 when she was a champion in the circuit in which she was entered. From then until 1884 she annually broke her own record and in the latter year was the first harness horse to beat the mark of 20. In 1885 she broke the world record.

FORMED COMPANY

The Maud S. Pump was patented, soon became as well-known nationally as the horse it was named for. In 1892 the Lansing Iron and Engine Works decided it was too valuable a property to be a mere sideline, and a stock company was organized for the sole purpose of its manufacture.

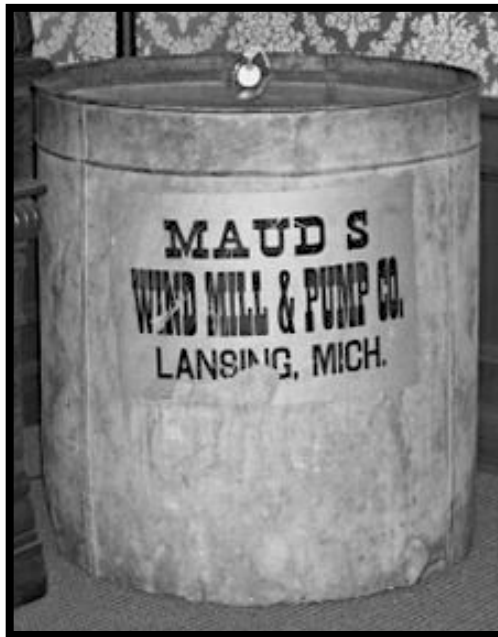
The new firm located on the west side of N. Cedar St., just north of E. Ottawa St., which in those days was known as Condit St. The building occupied had been erected for the Lansing Iron and Engine Works for its mill and supply department, was later occupied by the National Coil Company and in recent years by the Farm Bureau.

French's organization was named, aptly, the Maud S. Windmill and Pump Company with a capital of \$40,000. E.F. Cooley was named secretary-treasurer. Charles F. Smith was general manager and later became general manager of the Ideal Power Lawnmower Company.

RAPID GROWTH

Growth was rapid, and the farm boy-turned-inventor added another invention, a steel windmill tower, to his line the following year. Both the pump and tower were manufactured under patents obtained by French and controlled by the firm. At one time the company had agencies at Kansas City, MO.; Des Moines, IA.; Milwaukee, WI., Philadelphia, PA.; Union City, IN., and Galva, IL.

Peak operations seem to have been reached in 1895, with the plant employing 65 skilled laborers. At



this period of its history Maud S. was considered the largest maker of windmills, pumps, tank heaters and silos in Michigan.

With the advent of the gasoline engine the firm seemed destined for the same fate that has overtaken the horse since the introduction of the tractor. With a decline in sales the management sold rights of manufacture of pumps and the mill to Ebel Motor and Pump Company.

Henry French had one son, Jay H. French, who was at one time employed in the small engine assembly of Seager Engine Works, manufacturers of the Olds gasoline engines here. He later moved to Flint where he was employed by General Motors.

Capital City Collections

The HSGL recently acquired a copy of local t.v. legend Martha Dixon's Copper Kettle Cookbook for our collections. To learn more about what HSGL is collecting and how to donate, please visit www.lansinghistory.org. If you have something you'd like to donate, please e-mail us at info@lansinghistory.org or call 517-282-0671. Thanks! *Jacobson's, I Miss It So!*





Historical Society of Greater Lansing
P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Historical Society of Greater Lansing - Membership Application

Please accept my application for:

- New Membership
- Renewal Membership
- Gift Membership

in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

I have enclosed:

- \$20 Individual Membership
- \$30 Family Membership
- \$100 Business Membership
- \$_____ Additional Gift to HSGL

Member Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email Address _____

- Please Send The Newsletter
Via Email

Make Checks Payable to
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

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