



# History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

[www.LansingHistory.org](http://www.LansingHistory.org)

July 2014

## **We're Going to the Knapp's Centre!**

The HSGL board is thrilled to announce that the Eyde Company has agreed to host the annual HSGL museum auction at the newly renovated Knapp's Centre! The date has been set for Saturday, November 15, 2014 and the theme will be An Old Fashioned Christmas at Knapp's! We hope that you'll put this event on your calendar now, so you can join us for this very special event.

In conjunction with the event, we'll be doing a pop-up exhibit about holiday celebrations at Knapp's. We are looking for objects, pictures, and stories about your memories of going down to Knapp's at Christmas time. If you have something that you would consider sharing with us, either as a loan or a donation to our permanent collection, please let us know at (517) 282-0671 or [info@lansinghistory.org](mailto:info@lansinghistory.org).



## **Made in Lansing Exhibit**

Please take time to stop by Lansing City Hall to visit HSGL's Made in Lansing exhibit, which runs through the end of October. Related programs will begin in the end of July, and run throughout the remainder of the summer and fall. Please stop by our website [www.lansinghistory.org](http://www.lansinghistory.org) for more information on programming.

## **HSGL July Walking Tours**

*REO Town \*New Tour for 2014\**

*Saturday, July 12 – 10:00am*

*Tour meets at the LBWL Grand Trunk Depot*

Buildings and sites featured include the depot, the REO Factory and REO Clubhouse site, two historic filling stations, and a former bank, among others.

*Downtown Alleyways \*New Tour for 2014\**

*Thursday, July 24 – 7:00pm*

*Meets at Lansing City Hall Plaza*

Explore the backsides of Lansing's downtown buildings, and learn about the important functions that alleyways have served.

*Lost Lansing*

*Saturday, July 26 – 10:00am*

*Tour meets at Lansing City Hall Plaza*

Lost buildings include the wooden capitol building, Lansing's only octagon house, the Barnes Castle, the old Post Office and City Hall building, and others.

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## **A Fond Farewell**

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing would like to thank our outgoing board members, Nathalie Winans and Adina Langer, for all of their hard work over the last several years. Nathalie, a longtime board member, will be focusing more of her efforts on the important work being done by Preservation Lansing, while Adina and her family will be moving to Atlanta, where she and her husband will be teaching at Georgia State College. Best of luck to both of you!

**The Man Behind the Guitar:**

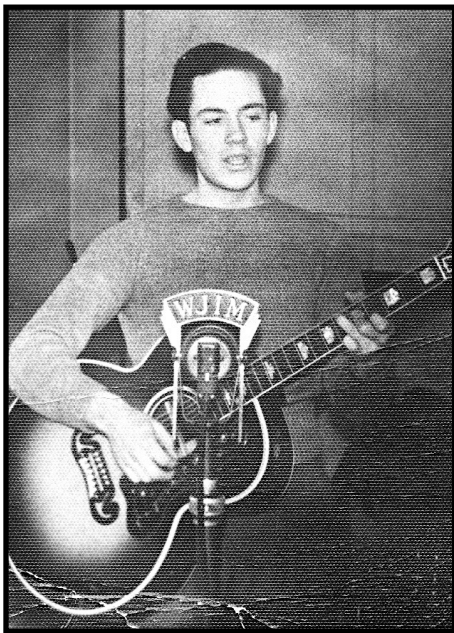
**The Life of Dick Poulton**

*By Jacob McCormick*

My great-grandfather, Dick Poulton was known around the whole state of Michigan, including Lansing as a skilled musician and guitarist. I had the privilege of knowing my great-grandfather until I was ten years old, but I was too young to realize the skill that he with a guitar in his hand. Through talking with relatives, a lot of research and my own memory I have been able to construct a clear overview of his life.

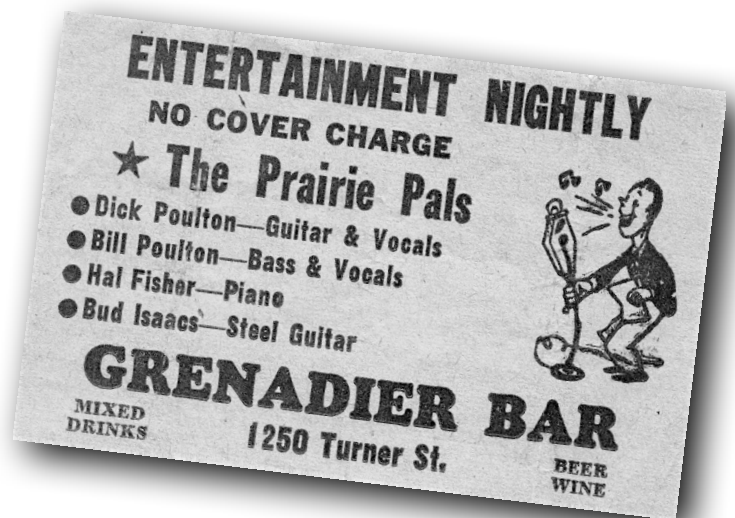
Richard Lloyd “Dick” Poulton was born on November 12, 1920 in New Lexington, Ohio to Chester Lionel “Chet” and Goldie Kathleen (Call) Poulton. He became interested in music and learned to play guitar when he was only seven or eight years old in the late 1920s. His musical talents did not come to Michigan until the mid-1930s when he moved to Alma and lived as

a boarder with a family for a number of years. By 1939 he had moved to Lansing and began working with WJIM. He was just 19 years old when he played on WJIM radio in Lansing. Dick lived in Lansing through 1940 when he began to play with “Rusty and his Dude Ranch Cow Hands” in the



Muskegon area. One of the band’s largest gigs was playing as the backup band for country music superstar Patsy Montana at the WKBZ Studio Auditorium in Muskegon on September 18, 1940.

On June 15, 1941, Dick married Lillian Burnett of Harrison, Michigan in Saint Louis, Missouri. In just three short years, 1944, they would have their only child, my grandmother. Dick enlisted in the United States Army on April 19, 1944. During Lillian’s pregnancy Dick was off at Army training camp. In September he arrived at Lillian’s side the evening before the birth of his daughter. He served over seas in Europe, primarily in Germany as a mechanic during World War II. Dick was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army on June 12, 1946.



After Dick and his brother, Bill, arrived home from World War II they began playing in the “Prairie Pals” band in Lansing. They often performed at the Grenadier Bar on Turner Street in north Lansing in the late 1940s. By 1949, Dick and his family moved near Detroit so that he would be able to be a part of a series of records produced by the Citation Record label. He played the twin guitar on the Citation records with a group known as “The Eagles.” In 1951, the family lived in Marysville, Michigan. While living in Marysville, Dick was in a band known as the “Rhythm Rangers” which played at Dutch’s Log Cabin in Port Huron. The “Rhythm Rangers” had a four year engagement at Dutch’s Log Cabin, from 1951 to 1955. In 1955, the “Rhythm Rangers” came to Lansing where they settled in

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- |                                 |                           |
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at the Saginaw Bar for nightly performances. He also taught guitar at the Norman English Studios in Lansing for twenty years. At one point in time Dick was offered the chance to play permanently with Marty Robbins, he



turned down that offer for a variety reasons.

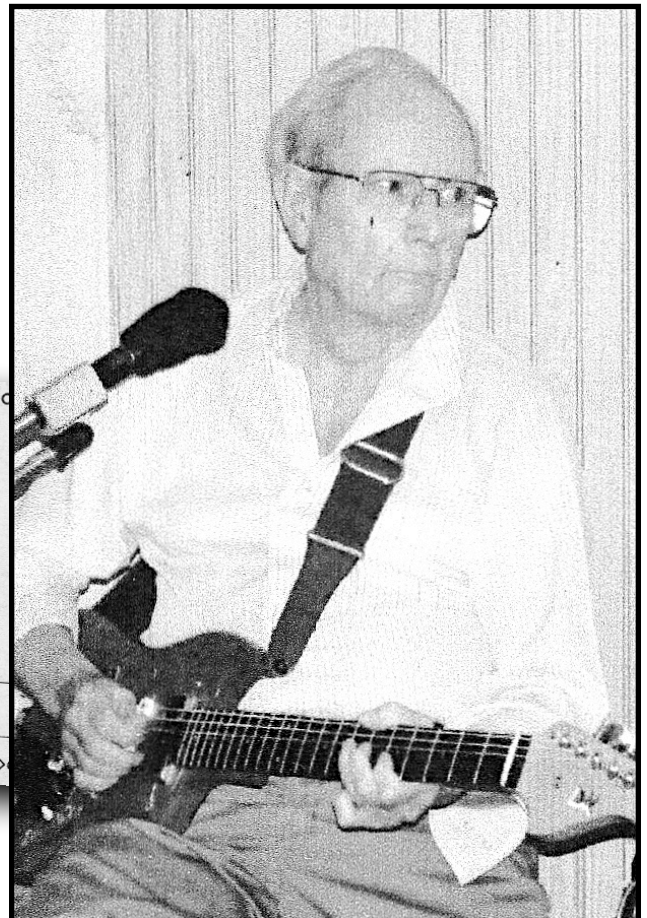
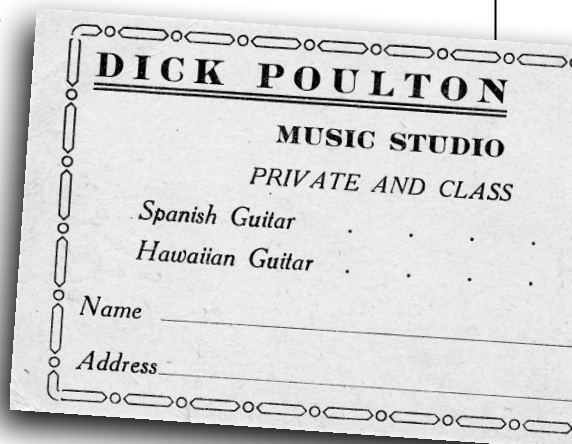
In the 1950s, Dick played in a band called “Bill Sova and his Ranch Boys.” The “Ranch Boys” included Bill Sova, Harold Sova, Rick Harvey, Dick Hoover, Don Bloomquist and Dick Poulton – the band, which specialized in country music, played on WTOM-TV in Lansing. In 1959, Dick put together a band called the Dick Poulton Trio. They recorded “Susie,” presumably for his daughter, and “Capital City Bounce,” probably in reference to Michigan’s capital city, Lansing. Dick’s daughter recalls the two songs frequently playing on the radio in Lansing. The songs came out on a 45 record under the VIN record label. In 1960, Dick traveled to Denver, Colorado to show off his

“self-built, never-to-be-forgotten combination Guitar-Mandolin,” and was dubbed as Lansing’s own “terrific entertainer!”

In 1964, Dick and Lillian opened the Patio Teen Night Club near their summer home in Harrison, Michigan. Dick built the club

in front of their home, both of which still stand today – the club has since been home to a variety of businesses. Perhaps his longest engagement with a band was from 1965 to 1977, during which time he played at the Red Rail bar on the north side of Lansing. However, in 1977 Dick had a severe motorcycle accident which forced him to retire from nightly gigs and put him out of work for an extended period of time. He did not, however, retire from music altogether. In his retirement he played with the “North Country Four” band in the Harrison area. Throughout his retirement the “North Country Four” played at various bars around Clare and Harrison. Dick’s wife Lillian passed away in 1983 and he passed away in 2005. The couple is laid to rest in Pleasant Plains Cemetery in Harrison. Much of his music still exists via recordings that he made in his retirement and records that he recorded throughout his life dating back to the 1940s.

*See a record with one of Dick’s songs on it in the Entertainment section of the Made in Lansing exhibit in Lansing City Hall.*





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Historical Society of Greater Lansing - Membership Application

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- 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
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