



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

September 2014

An Old Fashioned Christmas at the Knapp's Centre HSGL Annual Museum Auction

Saturday, November 15, 2014 - 4:00pm

Knapp's Centre – 300 South Washington Square

HSGL is looking for Christmas themed photos taken at, of, or in the Knapp's Centre for display purposes for our fall fundraising auction. We are also interested in any Christmas decorations or gifts from Knapp's that we might be able to include in a small pop-up exhibit. Please call (517) 282-0671 or e-mail info@lansinghistory.org if you have something you'd like to share.

In order to make the HSGL auction a success, we need your help in acquiring donations! Here are some suggestions for things that you can contribute:

Bottles of wine

Gift certificate or card to your favorite restaurant

Local collectibles & antiques

Holiday wrapping paper & gift tags

Holiday/winter decorations

Homemade treats and edibles

Stationary, books, and prints

Vintage jewelry, accessories, home goods and dishware

Sponsorships are also being sought. To become a sponsor or donate an auction item, please return the enclosed form, call (517) 282-0671, or e-mail info@lansinghistory.org.

DeepDale Cemetery Tour

Sunday, September 21, 2014 – 2:00pm

DeepDale Cemetery - 4108 Old Lansing Road

Join HSGL for a stroll through Deepdale Cemetery, founded in 1920. We'll be highlighting the stories of several local notables, including architect Darius and Ellen Moon, Arzeno Selden (the Stratosphere Man) Congressman Billie Farnum, photographer R. C. Leavenworth, and the Ebersole Family.

Pioneers, Reformers, & Millionaires

Thursday, September 4 – 7:00pm

Downtown Library – 401 South Capitol Avenue

HSGL welcomes member and author Liz Homer to chart the story of the Turner Family in Lansing history, with a focus on their interests in social reforms such as abolition, the rights of women and workers, education, and progressive reform in business and politics. Copies of her book will be available for purchase and signing.

Made in Lansing – A Night for Knitting

Thursday, September 11 - 7:00pm

Lansing City Hall – 124 West Michigan Avenue

Join local knitters Cindy McCormick (of Retro Creations) and Chris Triola (of Triola's Knitwear Studio and Objects-as-Art Gallery) to discuss the colorful history of small scale customized knitting and its evolution from traditional hand-operated machines to computer-enhanced production. The evening will include demonstrations of a 108 year old LeGare knitting machine.

The Orphan Train

Tuesday, September 16 - 7:00pm

Downtown CADL – 401 South Capitol Avenue

CADL presents Dave and Al Eicher, from the Historical Society of Michigan, to share stories and photos of the Orphan Train riders. From 1854 – 1927, Michigan became home to more than 12,000 orphans from the east who rode the train to find homes.

A Good Death

Thursday, September 18 – 7:00pm

Lansing City Hall – 124 West Michigan Avenue

HSGL is proud to announce that author, poet, and mortician Thomas Lynch will join us for a discussion about the evolving nature of the traditions involving death, funerals, and mourning.

**The Downtown Lansing Library:
Celebrating 50 Years**

by Anne Rau

On June 12, 1964, a small crowd gathered outside Lansing’s new library on 401 S. Capitol. School superintendent Forrest Averill cut the ribbon and dignitaries and Lansing citizens entered the gleaming new building. It was the culmination of years of work from library staff, school administration officials, architects, contractors and citizens groups.

The efforts to build a new library for Lansing had begun in earnest in the 1950’s. The need for a larger building had become crucial. Lansing’s population had boomed, especially since World War II. The beautiful but dated 1905 Carnegie library on Shiawassee Street was overcrowded and inadequate for the size of the city. On October 2, 1957, the Citizens Committee on Libraries meet for the first time to study the need for a new library building.. The Committee worked with library staff and the school administration to convince Lansing that it was time for a new library.

The efforts of the Citizens Committee on Libraries and the library staff were successful. On April 3, 1961, a 25-year \$1,900,000 bond issue passed for the construction of a new central library building in downtown Lansing. It was the first library bond in 60 years. The bond proposal had passed even though the architect, location and size of the building were yet to be decided. The Committee had determined that the need for a new library was so pressing that the site and architect could be worked out after funding was approved.

Kenneth C. Black and Associates of Lansing were selected as the architects shortly after the vote. Clarence Paine had taken over as chief librarian in 1959 and

worked closely with the architects and contractors on the building project. Several sites for the new library were discussed, including one directly across the street from the Carnegie building. A site at the corner of Capitol and Kalamazoo was ultimately chosen and purchased by the school district. There were two major deciding factors for the new library site. The first was the anticipation of foot traffic due to the proximity of the major department stores nearby: JC Penney, Knapp’s, and Arbaugh’s. The second was that Reutter Park was directly across the street. The park and its popular water fountain added to the aesthetics of the site.

Ground was broken on October 15, 1962 and the building quickly took shape. Almost exactly a year after the groundbreaking, the cornerstone ceremony was held on November 13, 1963. The process of moving the material from the Carnegie library to the new building began on June 3, 1964 and took just over a week. The move went quickly since only books were transported and not shelving or furniture. One piece of furniture that was moved was the very important card catalog.

The citizens and dignitaries who entered the new building on that June day in 1964 must have been struck by its size and appearance. The building was 75,721 square feet and covered six floors with a capacity for over 600 people. By comparison, the Carnegie Library was 14,535 square feet with a capacity for about 140 people. The volume capacity in the new building was 225,000. The Carnegie library’s capacity was 127,700 volumes.

The outside of the new library was very distinctive. The white tiled exterior was sometimes described as looking like a wedding cake or a jewelry box. The exterior was granux and fulget tile with small marble stones embedded in concrete. Ornamental Mo-Sai panels depicting the colophons of eight major publishers were the crowning feature. They were made of concrete with exposed quartz aggregate. The panels were displayed on all sides of the building and the layout was computed so that nowhere on the building was the same sequence repeated.

Abstract mosaics adorned the west side of the building facing Capitol Avenue. (In the 1993 restoration these were replaced with another design which reflects

Historical Society of Greater Lansing	
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www.LansingHistory.org	
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the original Mo-Sai panels.) Gardens were planned for east and west sides. At night, floodlights illuminated the exterior. A quote from the time: "The great beauty of the building can be seen at its best after dark, bathed in light."

The inside of the library had all new furnishings and shelving. The lobby had a terrazzo floor and a large walnut and marble Charge-Out Desk. Patron records were accessed from a system resembling a giant electronic rolodex. The walls on the first and second floor were birch wood with walnut stain. The Boys' and Girls' room on the third floor had knotty pine walls. The flooring was cork tile, except for the Boys' and Girls' room which was carpeted. The furniture was made of walnut and black leather. A brochure from the time describes the interior as "...A carnival of color: paprika, mossy greens and olive, with accents in white, coral, and yellow, against softly finished wood paneling."

The new library had many new features. There was now handicapped access. In addition to print material, it now lent art, LP records and film. There was even a drive-up service window on the south side where items could either be checked out or dropped off for return.

The building reflected the Cold War era; it met civil defense requirements as an official fallout shelter in March of 1964. In 1966 it was even recognized nationally as an "excellent fallout shelter." The original fallout shelter signs are still on the walls today.

On October 18, 1964, the building had its formal dedication ceremony. Clarence H. Rosa, a member of the school board and a great library advocate, accepted the building from the architects on behalf of the school district. The building was posthumously re-named for Mr. Rosa in 1991 and officially re-dedicated in his honor on March 7, 1993. His name can still be seen on the north side of the building.



Total cost for the new library was a little over two million dollars. There was no money left for the east garden, the local history room and the auditorium, but donations would provide those in the future. The Local History Room was dedicated in 1969 and was funded by Mary J. Parke in memory of her late husband, Forest S. Parke.

In January 1998, the building was leased from the school district to the newly formed Capital Area District Library. The library became part of the district library and left the Lansing school district. CADL continues the proud tradition of providing library service to the community from the location today.

The 1964 library is still studied today as a classic example of 1960s architecture. A quote from a brochure at the time: "The design of the building may best be characterized as contemporary but with a traditional warmth and dignity... Planned to be servant, not master of the flow of people and materials..."

All are invited to celebrate the library's 50th anniversary at 401 S. Capitol on September 28, 2014, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The day will feature tours, open hours for the Local History room, short films from 1965 about the building, a photo presentation and a reception. Library employees who worked at both the Carnegie and the 1964 libraries will share their memories, our living history of library service in Lansing.

Sources:

- Paine, Clarence. "Planning the Library." *Pioneer* Fall 1964: 5-15.
- Paine, Clarence S. "Lansing Builds a Nerve Center." *Library Journal* 1 Dec. 1964: 4111-4713.
- Stuart, Robert. "Hold Rite at Library." *Lansing State Journal* 12 June 1964, sec. A: 1.



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.*

Historical Society of Greater Lansing Silent Auction Ticket Order Form

Saturday, November 15, 2014 - 4:00pm-6:30pm

The Knapp's Centre - 300 South Washington Square, Downtown Lansing

Number of tickets _____ Total enclosed \$ _____ (\$15.00 per person)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.

Make checks payable to the **Historical Society of Greater Lansing**. Mail to P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901



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Silent Auction Event Sponsorships & Auction Donations

HSGL Silent Auction - Saturday, November 15, 2014 - 4:00pm-6:30pm
The Knapp's Centre - 300 South Washington Square, Downtown Lansing

- \$5,000 - Platinum Sponsor**
Top billing on all promotional materials, full-page advertisement in auction booklet (back cover or inside covers), 8 tickets to event
- \$1,000 - Gold Sponsor**
Full-page advertisement in auction booklet, 6 tickets to event
- \$500 - Silver Sponsor**
Half-page advertisement in auction booklet, 4 tickets to event
- \$250 - Bronze Sponsor**
Third-page advertisement in auction booklet, 2 tickets to event
- \$100 - Copper Sponsor**
Name included in list of sponsors in auction booklet, 2 tickets to event
(See reverse for advertising information)

Auction Item Donation

I can help the Historical Society by donating the following auction item(s):

Item Value \$ _____

- I will mail my items
- Please pick up my donation; it will be available for pick-up by _____

Donor Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I understand that my donation may be used by HSGL in any way necessary to benefit HSGL Programs.

Signature _____ Date _____

Make checks payable to the **Historical Society of Greater Lansing.**

Advertising Information

Below are representation of the sizes of advertisements for various levels of sponsorship. Advertisements must fit inside these dimensions to fit appropriately in the event program. Your black and white camera ready artwork should be in PDF or JPG format at 300dpi resolution, if possible. Please email artwork by October 31, 2014 to davemarvin@sbcglobal.net. If you have any questions or would like us to help prepare an advertisement, please feel free to call David Marvin at (517) 282-1156.

Full Page Ad

Finished Size 5" wide x 8" tall

Third Page Ad

Finished Size 5" wide x 2.75" tall

Half Page Ad

Finished Size 5" wide x 4" tall