



# History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

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

August 2018

## Upcoming Events

### HSGL Returning to Moores River Drive for New Home Tour!

*Sunday, September 16, 2018  
Brunch 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Home Tour 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.*

HSGL is excited to announce that we are returning to Moores River Drive for a second tour featuring a new slate of homes this fall! Join us on Sunday, September 16, and visit some of Lansing's most beautiful homes, including the Potter House and a house designed by architect Lee Black. The homes range in style from Tudor Revivals to sophisticated Four Squares and a new retro Modern home with touches of Art Deco.

The day begins at 11:00 a.m. for brunch at the Country Club of Lansing, followed by the Home Tour, which starts at 1:00 p.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. Tickets for the tour only are \$20, and tickets for the brunch and the tour are \$55. Tour tickets will be available for purchase at [www.lansinghistory.org](http://www.lansinghistory.org) or at the Country Club of Lansing the day of the event. Brunch tickets must be purchased by September 12 at [www.lansinghistory.org](http://www.lansinghistory.org) or by calling 517-282-0671.

HSGL is also hard at work soliciting sponsorships and selling advertisements that will be featured in the tour booklet. Would you like to contribute in this way? See the inside sponsorship and advertisement form or visit [www.lansinghistory.org](http://www.lansinghistory.org).

We're also looking for volunteers willing to work two-hour shifts in a house, through half of the tour. Volunteers will receive a free home tour (only) ticket they can use to attend the houses during the other two hours. Email [job1211@sbcglobal.net](mailto:job1211@sbcglobal.net) or call 517-282-0671 to volunteer.

This fundraiser for the Historical Society of Greater Lansing is being generously hosted by the Moores River Drive Neighborhood Association and the Riverside Home Association. All proceeds benefit HSGL.

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### Foster School Celebrates 100 Years

*Friday, August 3, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
(Short program – 6:00 p.m.)  
200 N. Foster St.*

HSGL is joining the City of Lansing to celebrate Foster Street School's centennial. Now known as Foster Community Center, the former school is home to a branch of the Capital Area District Library, a gym, swimming pool, computer lab, and meeting rooms. The event includes informal tours of the building and a short program at 6:00 p.m. HSGL will be on-site scanning Foster School photos and ephemera, so please be sure to bring yours along!

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### Westside Neighborhood Walking Tour

*Thursday, August 9, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.  
New Tour Meeting Place –  
Dinsmore and Westmoreland Aves.*

Join HSGL for an all-new walking tour featuring eight beautiful early 20th century homes in the beautiful West Side Neighborhood. The tour starts at the intersection of Dinsmore and Westmoreland. We'll be visiting eight houses, including several English Cottage Tudor Revivals, Colonial Revivals, and a kit house! Along the way you'll learn stories

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## The Chase Family Collection: A Family And Community History In Photographs

By Jacob McCormick

On occasion, estates and family photographs can allow hunters of local history to rediscover families and individuals of importance to a community's history. Recently, this occurred for the City of Lansing. The Chase family collection recently came to light and, through an important collection of family photographs, the world was reintroduced to Mr. John H. Chase and family.

John H. Chase was born August 5, 1846, in Bedford, Michigan, near Battle Creek, the son of Daniel Saunders Chase and Lucy Younglove (Hicks) Chase. Daniel S. Chase died October 20, 1859, in Baltimore, Michigan, when his son John was just 13 years old. After his father's death, John went to live with his mother's family in Calhoun County. John remained in the Olivet, Michigan, area until 1874. While there he attended school at Olivet College and was admitted to the Bar Association just after graduating with a Bachelor's degree. He then moved on to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and earned his Master's degree and a law degree. For a time after his schooling was complete, he lived in Detroit and Battle Creek.

Ultimately, John Chase married Abbie Minerva Dunsmore in Battle Creek on October 20, 1879, and shortly thereafter moved to Lansing. For many years the family lived on Larch Street. Mr. Chase worked as an attorney in Lansing from his arrival in 1882 until 1887 when he was elected to public office. In 1887, Chase won the election for Justice of the Peace in Lansing. His term as Justice of the Peace expired May 4, 1891, and he subsequently resumed his work as an attorney in the City. He also ran an unsuccessful campaign for municipal judge in Lansing.

Mr. Chase was also a lifelong Freemason. His first initiation into the Masons was in Olivet on June 16, 1871. He was known to have been very familiar with Masonic history, able to provide most any information on the order

when asked. John was admitted to the Lansing Lodge No. 33 of the Free and Accepted Masons on September 21, 1885. He was granted life membership to the Lansing Lodge on September 4, 1911. At the end of his life, Mr. Chase was treasurer and "official coffeemaker" of the Lansing Lodge. He had also served as Grandmaster of the Lodge.

John Chase's death came unexpectedly on August 30, 1922. Mr. Chase was struck by a freight train that was switching tracks at the New York Central railroad crossing at Kalamazoo Street. An investigation and coroner's inquest was undertaken, and Lansing coroner Floyd Estes held a coroner's jury to determine responsibility for the accident that caused Mr. Chase's death. Nobody was held responsible, but it was recommended that gates be installed at the crossing at which the accident occurred.

John H. Chase, often referred to as "the pioneer attorney," had three children with his wife Abbie. Abbie (Dunsmore) Chase was born near Ypsilanti in 1857 and grew up near Dansville, Michigan. Abbie died in 1944, surviving her husband by more than 20 years. As interesting a life as Mr. and Mrs. Chase lived, their children each had fascinating lives as well.

The eldest child was Theron Philo Chase, born in 1880. Theron graduated from Lansing High School in 1899. He subsequently attended Michigan Agricultural College and graduated in 1903. While at M.A.C., Theron was involved in the ROTC program as a cadet. After his graduation from college, he was a designer and engineer for Oldsmobile in the very early years of the company. In 1908 Theron left Olds and moved to the Detroit area and worked through numerous auto makers, including Hudson, Chalmers Motor Co., King Motor Co., and finally General Motors, as an engineer and designer. Theron retired in 1948 and died in 1963.

The middle child was Lois Chase, born in 1882. Lois followed in her father's footsteps of public service. She graduated from Lansing High School in 1901. An employee of the Lansing city treasurer's office for many years, including as assistant treasurer, she ran for the city treasurer office in 1924. Lois Chase won three elections and served as Lansing city treasurer from 1924 through 1934, likely the



John Chase

### Historical Society of Greater Lansing

P.O. Box 12095 ~ Lansing, MI 48901

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

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first woman to hold that office, and only one of two women in an elected position in Lansing in the 1920s – the other being city clerk Bertha Ray. A lifelong resident of Lansing, Lois was a member of Pilgrim Congregational Church for 50 years, a life member of the Lansing Arbutus Chapter No. 45 of the Order of the Eastern Star, a member of the Bethel Shrine No. 11, and a member of the Degree of Honor No. 44. From 1937 until her death in 1950, she was an employee of the Ingham County Clerk's office in Mason.

The youngest child was Walter Ray Chase, born in 1885. W. Ray Chase graduated from Lansing High School in 1905. Ray also followed in his father's footsteps in Masonic circles. He was a life member of Lansing Lodge No. 33 of the Free and Accepted Masons, Capitol Chapter No. 9 of the Royal Arch Masons, and Lansing Council No. 29 of the Royal and Select Masons. Ray worked for Olds Motor Works and Fisher Body throughout his life. W. Ray Chase lived a long life; he died in 1984 at age 99.

At the time of John H. Chase's death in 1922, Lansing Mayor Jacob Ferle closed Lansing City Hall for the day of his funeral in order for the City to properly mourn the loss. Mr. Chase was a featured individual in the 1891 book *Portrait and Biographical Album of Ingham and Livingston Counties, Michigan*. John H. Chase and his family, once known by many and long-known by some, may now be known to all thanks to their remarkable photographic record spanning multiple generations.



**John and Abbie Chase  
with their Children**

The numerous photographs taken of the Chase family in a photo studio or by them on the streets of Lansing illustrate not only the family's history in the city, but the history of public service, fraternal orders, typical life and beyond in Lansing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is great historical value in family photos. They document our lives for future generations and record the history of the area in which we live. Just as the Chase family's photos have become an important record of turn-of-the-century life in Lansing, your family's photos will be an important historical record now and into the future.

## Upcoming Events - *Cont'd from page 1*

### Westside Neighborhood Walking Tour...

of some interesting early residents, including Patrick Carney Dinsmore (the Capitol Information Officer), John and Delia Watkins (the proprietor of the Coffee Ranch who also happened to own a fox ranch), J Ward Vorhees (Arbaugh's fur manager) and Peter Giovanes, (a Greek immigrant who owned the Diana Coffee Shops on East Saginaw and Washtenaw streets).

### Moores Park Neighborhood Walking Tour

*Saturday, August 25 – 10:00 a.m.*

*Tour Meets at Moores Park, 400 Moores River Dr.*

HSGL is excited to take a walk in the Moores Park Neighborhood, home to many beloved landmarks and beautiful early 20th century homes. The tour meets in Moores Park, where we'll discuss the history of the park, the pool, and the Otto C. Eckert power plant before going to check out some well-preserved houses and make a stop by St. Casimir, Lansing's traditional Polish parish formally established in 1921.

### Greater Lansing Postcard Show

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Greater Lansing Postcard Show on Saturday, August 11, 2018, at the Masonic Lodge at 2175 Hamilton Road in Okemos. Show hours are 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

### Lansing Ward History Project

Are you interested in the history of the Lansing ward where you grew up, or now live? Join the City of Lansing Department of Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement and the Local History Department of the Capital Area District Library to research one key landmark in the ward of your choice. Researchers will be responsible for finding images or maps of the landmark and writing three to four paragraphs of text about it. Project applications and more information are available at <http://goo.gl/Rqax6j>.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Please accept my application for:

- New Membership
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in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

I have enclosed:

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