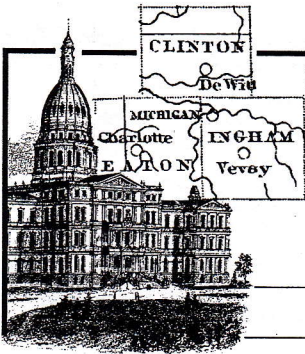


R: Fri. Dec. 18-2009

www.lansinghistory.org



# History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

December 2009

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Christmas Memories	1
President's Message	3
Victorian Era Clothing	3
Forest Parke Library Hours	3
Knapp's Pedal Cars	4
Caterino Showcase	5
Gift Depot	5
Membership Application	5
Knapp's Christmas Window	6



## Historical Society of Greater Lansing

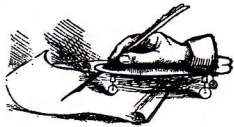
Executive Board

### Officers

- Doug Johnson  
*President*
- Richard Hathaway  
*Vice President*
- Valerie Marvin  
*Secretary*
- William A. Atkinson  
*Treasurer*

### Trustees

- Harry Emmons (2008-10)
- Nathalie Winans (2008-10)
- Robert "Rock" Hudson (2009-11)
- David Votta (2009-11)



How to contact us...

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

Tel: 517.484.8802

E-mail: johnsond72@comcast.net  
www.lansinghistory.org

### Craig A. Whitford, Editor

History Explorer is published during the months of September to May by the HSGL. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.

## Christmas Memories

### J. W. KNAPP COMPANY

For 75 years the J.W. Knapp Company was an institution in downtown Lansing. In 1896, three partners, Reynolds, Jewett and Knapp, purchased N.F. Jenison Dry Goods Store at 123 North Washington Avenue and opened a retail store with 6,000 square feet of space on February 1st. In 1908 the business incorporated as J.W. Knapp Company and moved to 220-226 South Washington Avenue. During 1928 the store was renovated and expanded at a cost of \$15,000 in an attempt to compete with F. W. Arbaugh Company.

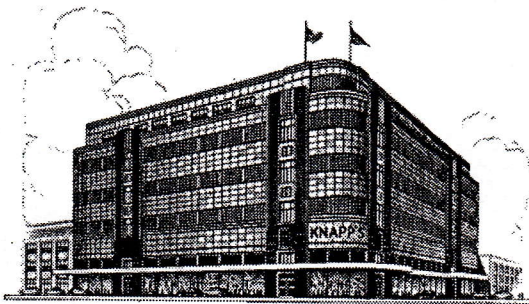
In 1936 the Hotel Downey, at the corner of Washington and Washtenaw (300 S. Washington) was razed to make way for the new 90,000 square foot art deco J.W. Knapp's store. The Grand Opening was held in March, 1938. The department store operated in downtown Lansing until 1972 when it closed and opened a store in the Lansing Mall.



This photograph shows the store's location at 220 South Washington Avenue, and to the left one can see the Hotel Downey before it was torn down and replaced with the new Knapp's building in 1936. (FPML)

The parent firm of J.W. Knapp Co. went bankrupt in 1980.

Fortunately, for the time being, the building still survives with most of its 1938 exterior appearance intact. It is



This drawing depicts the new art deco Knapp's building. The structure was designed by the Bowd-Munson Co. and constructed by the Christman Company.

one of Lansing's architectural gems. During the past two Christmas seasons, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing has worked with the Eyde Company and various groups and individuals to utilize the curved corner glass display area

Continued on Page 2

## Join Us...

...throughout 2010 for another season of historical programs and activities which highlight the many aspects of the history of our area. The History Explorer will be delivered to your home on a bi-monthly basis with articles, news and announcements of upcoming events. If you haven't renewed your membership for the upcoming season, a membership form is included in this issue. If you're still looking for that last minute gift for the Holiday Season, please consider giving a gift membership to a family member or friend - it's a gift that will keep giving throughout the coming year!




Harmon's Story, continued from Page 1

for a seasonal display to be viewed and appreciated by all.

As the season is upon us, let's take a step back to the Knapp's department store at Christmastime 1924. The windows are highly decorated with displays to entice children and adults alike. Thoughts of their wish list and the gifts they might give to one another come to mind as they pass by the brightly lit windows. Perhaps it will be a warm wool coat and perfume for mother, a handsome tie or gloves for father and yes – there are plenty of dolls, buggies, games, wagons, cars, trucks, sewing and cooking sets, toy phones, pianos, steam engines and much more to excite the children. A life-size and colorful image of jolly old St. Nick himself stands at the center of it all – Christmas has arrived in Lansing. A large poster in the window offers an opportunity to shake Santa's hand and give him your wish list for Christmas morn.

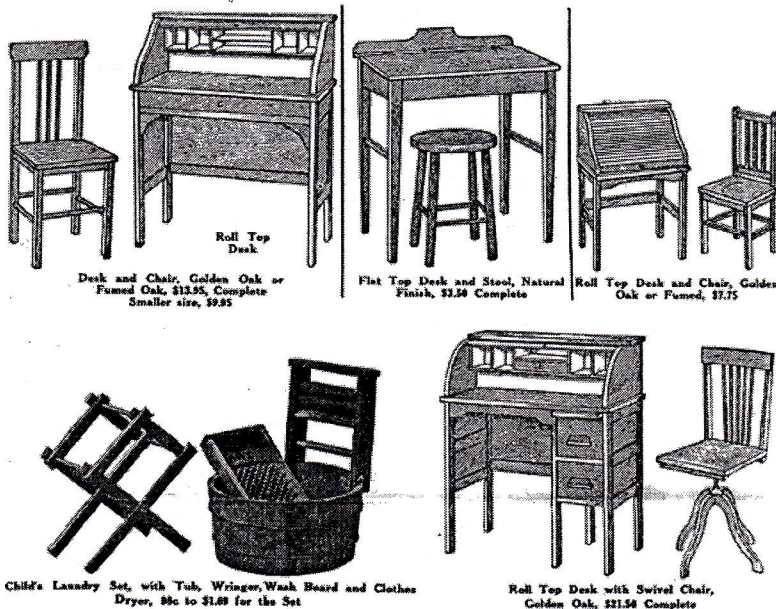
Reproduced within this issue of the *History Explorer* are images from Knapp's Toyland Christmas catalog of 1924. Among the pages featured you will find toys from a much different time period –

## Christmas Gift Suggestions



**J. W. KNAPP COMPANY**  
The Reliable Department Store  
LANSING, MICHIGAN

### Let the Little Girls Learn to "Keep House"



**Roll Top Desk**

**Desk and Chair, Golden Oak or Fumed Oak, \$11.95, Complete**  
Smaller size, \$9.95

**Flat Top Desk and Stool, Natural Finish, \$3.50 Complete**

**Roll Top Desk and Chair, Golden Oak or Fumed, \$7.75**

**Child's Laundry Set, with Tub, Wringer, Wash Board and Clothes Dryer, \$6c to \$1.89 for the Set**

**Roll Top Desk with Swivel Chair, Golden Oak, \$21.50 Complete**

## Santa's First Doll Show!

A wonderful display of dolls—American-made and imported—including talking, walking, sleeping and singing dolls with the cutest dresses and childlike features. Just a few are listed here:

**"PAPA-MAMA" Dolls**, dressed in pink crepe, with hat to match, shoes and stockings. Bend one way and they say "Ma-Ma", bend backward and they say "Pa-pa". **\$3.75.**

**CENTURY Dolls** that walk and talk. All dressed and ready for an adopted home. **\$1.69 to \$6.48.**

**EFFANBEE Dolls** from **69c to \$14.95.**

**MADAME HENDREN Dolls** range from **\$1.25 to \$9.45.** Talking, walking and sleeping dolls, for **\$4.98.**

**PETITE BABY Sleeping Dolls**, fully dressed, **\$5.98.**

**DUTCH Doll** with Holland Dress and shoes—says "Ma-Ma" too—for **\$3.95.**

Large size walking and talking Doll with pale blue taffeta dress, lace trimmed—**\$18.50.**

**HARMONICA JOE** who plays the mouth organ **\$1.98.**

**ORTED JOINTED DOLLS** with bisque and moving eyes. **9c to \$1.75.**

**RACTER DOLLS** for little girls to dress.

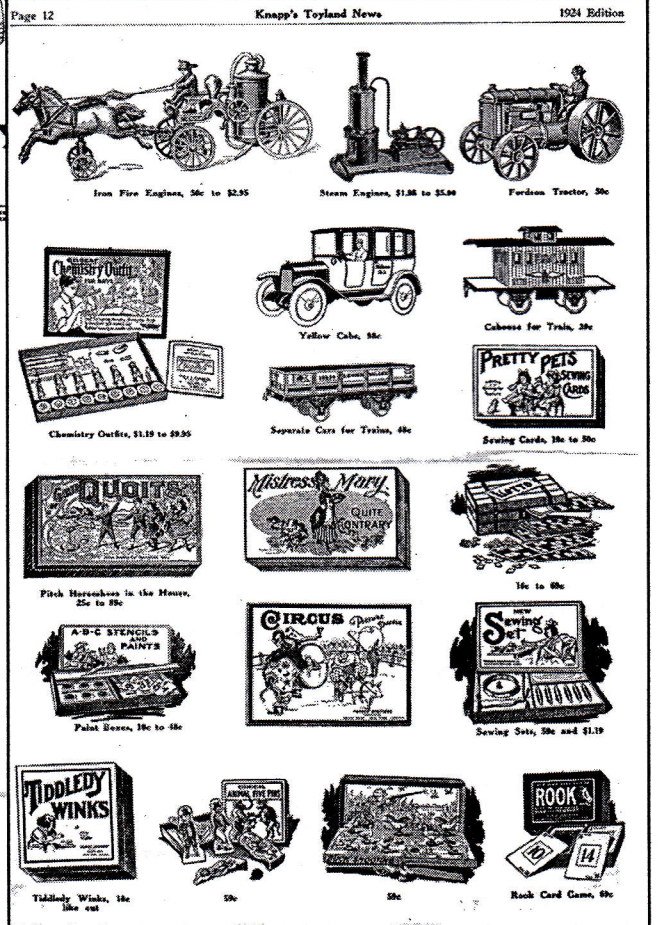
**OCOLATE BABY" Dolls** for those who wish sky beauties.

What you will not find are video games, computers, cellular phones and other such items which entertain our youth today. The catalog describes their offering as "practical gifts and useful gifts." I'm sure you'll agree.

*Enjoy the offering and  
Happy Holidays!*

Continued on Page 4

Page 12 Knapp's Toyland News 1924 Edition



**Iron Fire Engines, 5c to \$2.55**      **Steam Engines, \$1.88 to \$5.88**      **Fordson Tractor, 50c**

**Yellow Cab, 50c**      **Cabnet for Truck, 50c**

**Chemistry Outfit, \$1.19 to \$9.95**      **Separate Cars for Trains, 40c**      **PRETTY PETS SEWING CARDS, 10c to 50c**

**QUILTS**      **Mistress Mary, QUITE CONTRARY**      **16c to 60c**

**Pitch Horseshoes in the Hour, 25c to 90c**

**A-B-C STENCILS AND PAINTS**      **CIRCUS**      **Sewing Set, 50c and \$1.19**

**Paint Boxes, 10c to 40c**

**TIDDLEDY WINKS, 10c**      **ROCK & ROLL CARD GAME, 60c**



**President's Message**

**Doug Johnson**

During the holiday season be sure to visit the display of Santa Claus figures from the 1940's and 1950's in the corner dis-

play window of Knapp's Department Store Downtown on Washington at Washtenaw. The collection of approximately 25 Santas are from the Michigan State University Museum and are a specialty of Val R. Berryman, Curator of History at the Museum. Don't miss these delightful reminders of Christmas past.



A terrific crowd joined us during October at the Lansing BWL's South Cedar Water Conditioning Plant to see the Depression era murals painted by Frank Cassara and Charles Pollock under the Work Projects Administration. After hearing about the artists and the restoration of the murals, the group explored the immense gallery where the final water conditioning occurs. The art deco-styled equipment – alongside modern engineering tools – provided sights rarely available to Lansing-area residents.

Mark January 21<sup>st</sup> on your calendar. Nathalie Winans will be discussing Victorian Era Clothing Styles in Mid-Michigan. Illustrations will include period photographs from the Local History Photography Collection of the Capital Area District Library.

*Happy Holidays!*

*Check out the Historical Society of Greater Lansing on the web at*

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

**Victorian Era Clothing Styles in Mid-Michigan with Nathalie Winans**



**7:00 P.M.  
Thursday,  
January 21, 2010**

**Friend's Auditorium  
Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

Watch for details in the January issue of *History Explorer*

**Forest Parke Library & Archives**

*Research local history at the Downtown Lansing Library!*

The Forest Parke Library & Archives, (formerly the local history room) is OPEN to the Public the first and third Saturday of the month from 10 AM to 2 PM.

Volunteers from the *Historical Society of Greater Lansing* will be available to assist patrons.

Local History holdings do not circulate, only inventoried materials are available and special rules and regulations will apply.

**1st & 3rd Saturday's  
10:00 AM to 2:00 P.M.**

**Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

David Votta, Local History Reference Librarian  
517.334.1521; Email: [dvotta@cadl.org](mailto:dvotta@cadl.org)



Page 16

Knapp's Toyland News

1924 Edition

# MADE - IN - LANSING AUTOMOBILES

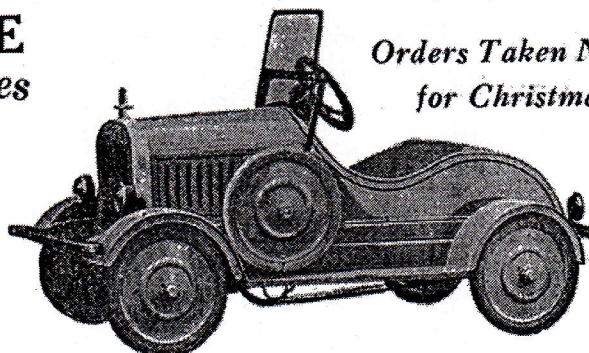
Wonderful New Models by the Dail Steel Products Company

## WOLVERINE DE LUXE

*Equipped With Balloon Tires*

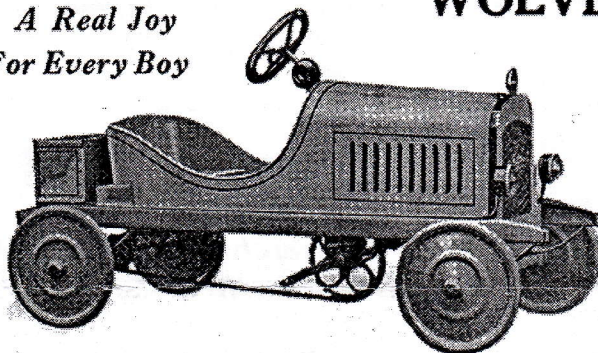
The Wolverine No. 630 represents the last word in Juvenile Automobile construction, a classy, durable car equipped complete with balloon tires, pressed steel Crown Fenders, Running Boards, Bumpers, Headlights, Tail Light, Horn, Shellerite Steering Wheel, two-piece adjustable Windshield, Instrument Board and extra wheel with cover, Filler Cap with cast Aluminum Motor Meter threaded to screw into filler cap.

Color may be choice of either Light Blue Body and Orange Wheels and running gear, or Cream Body with Red Wheels and running gear. Auto about 45 inches long.



*Orders Taken Now  
for Christmas*

*A Real Joy  
For Every Boy*



## WOLVERINE SPORT MODEL

The Wolverine No. 625 is built along the lines of racer and sport model, with body 37 inches long and finished in snappy blue with black trimming and motor meter on radiator.

Equipment—Trunk on rear. Two headlights with non-glare lense. Shellerite Steering Wheel.

Gear—Easy running. Bicycle roller chain drive, with chain tightener feature and adjustable for child from 3 to 9 years. Enameled in Orange.

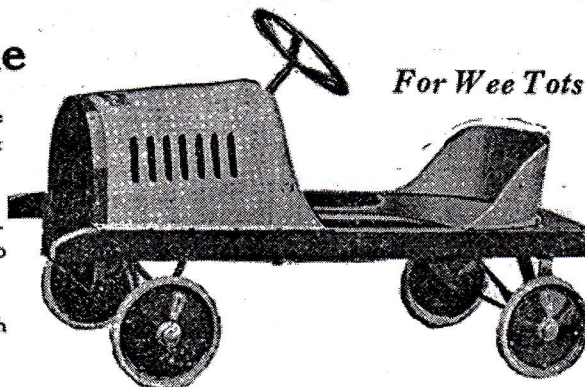
Wheels—10-inch double disc and riveted. Roller bearings. 3/8-inch Tires. Enameled in Orange with Nickeled Hub Caps.

## The Wolverine Walk-Mobile

Just like illustration. Place young boy or girl in one of these and see the smile that won't come off. A great present for Christmas.

It is propelled by the feet with a walking motion. Looks and steers like an auto. Helps young children to learn in walking. Perfectly safe. Cannot tip.

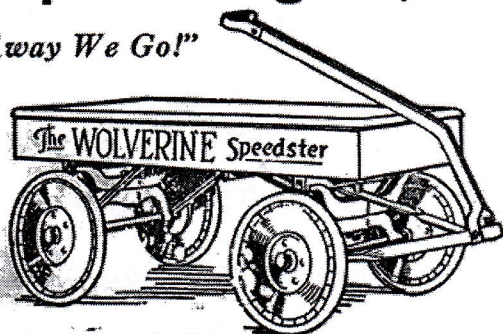
Fitted with 6-inch double disc wheels and 1/2-inch rubber tires. It's the joy of a little tot's life.



*For Wee Tots*

## Speed Wagons, Bikes and Scooters, Too

*"Away We Go!"*



The Wolverine Speedster, as illustrated, is the large size that retails at \$10. It has 10-inch double disc, riveted wheels and 3-4 inch rubber tires.

WOLVERINE SPORT, medium size, comes at \$8.00 and the WOLVERINE JUNIOR at \$5.00. All made here in Lansing by Dail Steel Products Co.

WOLVERINE BIKE has three wheels but does not tip over like a high velocipede.

WOLVERINE SCOOTER has two wheels, 10-inch double disc, rubber tires and goes to beat the band.

Knapp's 1924 Toyland Catalog also featured Lansing made pedal cars and wagons!



## Shake Hands With Santa Claus

**He's Here! Jolly Old Santa Claus Has Arrived at Our Store!**

Of course, you'll want to pay Santa Claus a visit. And he will be glad to see you, too! So come in, boys and girls, say "Hello" to Santa Claus and tell him what you would like to find in your stockings on Christmas morning.



Hello Santa!

### *The Gift Depot*

✿ **1** Give the Gift of History with a membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Individual Memberships: \$15/year  
Family Memberships: \$25/year

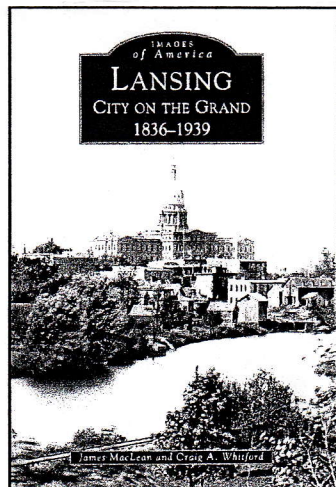
✿ **2** Lansing: City On The Grand, 1836-1939

By James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford

Lansing's history as the capital of Michigan began with a legislative mandate in the 1835 State Constitution, which required that the seat of government be moved from Detroit in 1847. The result – the emergence of a new capital city on the banks of the majestic Grand River – allowed Lansing to cultivate a world-class community based in government, education, the automotive industry and entrepreneurial achievements. This book features more than 200 historic photographs that document the dynamic capital city during its pivotal first century, from the pioneer era to the inception of the Olds Motor Vehicle Company and through the eve of World War II.

**\$19.99**

Published by Arcadia,  
An Imprint of Tempus Publishing, Inc.



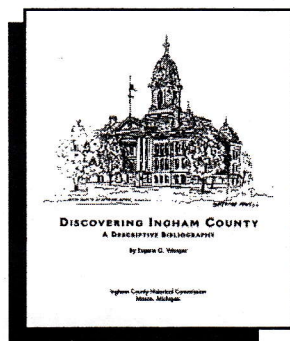
✿ **3** Discovering Ingham County  
A Descriptive Bibliography

By Eugene G. Wanger

This 100+ page edition is a sequel to Mr. Wanger's *INGHAM COUNTY HISTORIES: An Annotated Bibliography for Students, Buffs and Collectors...* "an interesting and useful guide for discovering the history and historical resources of Ingham County, The Capital County of Michigan..." Published by the Ingham County Historical Commission.

**\$15.00**

Published by the  
Ingham County Historical Commission



Historical Society of Greater Lansing  
Proudly announces the 11th Annual

**David R. Caterino  
Collector's Showcase**

*The History of Greater Lansing*

**Saturday, May 1, 2010**

**10:00 AM to 4:00 P.M.**

**Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

If you collect history of the greater Lansing area and would like to share it with the public we invite you to join us as an exhibitor.

If you are a local author or artist of the greater Lansing area we also invite you to participate.

**Help us fill the Gallery with History!**

For an application or more information contact:

**Doug Johnson, President**

517.484.8802; E-mail: johnsond72@comcast.net

*Give a Friend a Gift Membership in the  
Historical Society of Greater Lansing*

## Membership Application

Please accept my  New  Renewal membership in the *Historical Society of Greater Lansing*. I have enclosed:

\$15 Individual     \$25 Family  
 \$150 Life or \$\_\_\_\_\_ Gift

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Historical Society  
of Greater Lansing*

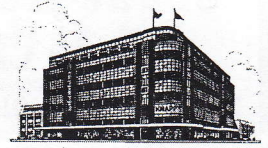
P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901

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

Thank you for your support of our programs and activities.



Happy Holidays to you and your family!



J. W. KNAPP COMPANY

During the holiday season be sure to visit the display of Santa Claus figures from the 1940's and 1950's in the corner display window of Knapp's Department Store Downtown on Washington at Washtenaw. The collection of approximately 25 Santas are from the Michigan State University Museum and are a specialty of Val R. Beryman, Curator of History at the Museum. Don't miss these delightful reminders of Christmas past.

Historical Society of Greater Lansing



09/10  
Timothy Bowman  
401 E Willard, #10  
Lansing MI 48910

Please RUSH to:

Change Service Requested

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

