



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

August 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 fill out the enclosed form and send it in, 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

HSGL is moving our cemetery tour to September this year, in hopes that the weather will be less oppressive! We'll be visiting the graves of several significant Lansing families and individuals, including the Goodrichs and Darius Moon.

HSGL August Walking Tours

*Ladies of Lansing *New Tour for 2014**
Saturday, August 9 – 10:00am

Tour meets at Lansing City Hall Plaza
124 West Michigan Avenue, Downtown Lansing

Ladies to be featured include Betty Price, Lucile Belen, the Sister of Charity at St. Mary's, Rep. Cora Anderson, Sen. Eva McCall Hamilton, Dr. Anna Ballard, and others.

Church & State

Saturday, August 23 – 10:00am

Tour meets at Lansing City Hall Plaza
124 West Michigan Avenue, Downtown Lansing

Sites include the downtown post office, the Capitol, the Capitol Mall, First Presbyterian, St. Mary's Cathedral, Central United Methodist, and St. Paul's Episcopal, where we'll go inside at the end of the tour to enjoy their stained glass, as well as some cookies!

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.

Historic Funeral & Mourning Traditions

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.

**A Lansing Made Man:
The Life of Raymond W. Reed**

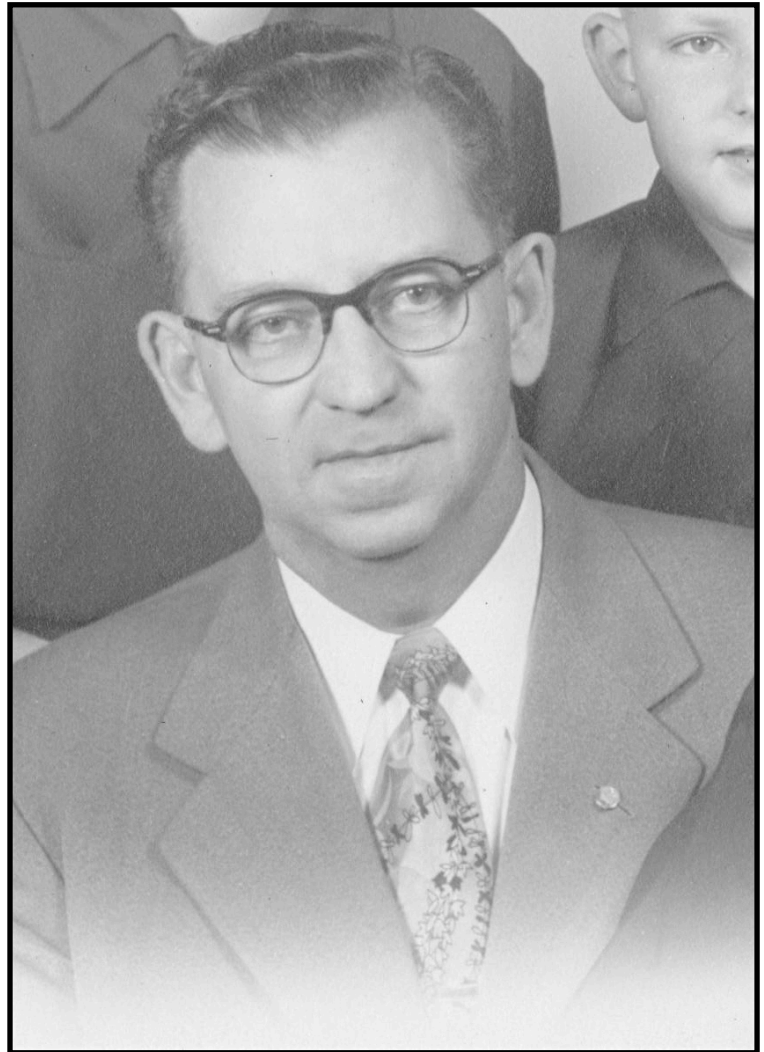
By Jacob McCormick

My great-grandfather, Raymond Wallace Reed is a man of significance in Lansing’s labor history. Among a variety of duties in the greater Lansing area, he served for twenty years as the president of UAW Local 650 for the REO Motor Car Company. I never had the privilege of meeting him, but after talking with relatives and conducting a lot of research I have constructed a fairly clear story of his life... and it all happened here in Lansing, Michigan.

Raymond Wallace “Ray” Reed was born in Lansing on August 24, 1904 to Eugene Lincoln “Linc” and Kathrine Edmondson “Katie” (White) Reed. The Reed family is recognized as a pioneer family in the Lansing area. Ray’s grandfather and great-grandfather moved to southern Clinton County in the 1830s and moved to Lansing a few years later. Raymond grew up on Pine and Ionia Streets in Lansing and attended the Michigan Avenue School. Based on family lore he had only an eighth grade education. His father, Linc, worked across Lansing throughout his life, at companies such as the Michigan Condensed Milk Company, REO, Seager Engine Works, Lansing Fuel Company and eventually for the Novo Engine Company as a Watchman until his death in 1920. When Linc passed away, Raymond was forced to leave school to provide for his family. Raymond was not an only child. He had two older brothers, Hubert and Asa, a younger brother, DeWain, and an older sister that did not survive to adulthood, Verna. In 1924 Raymond began work at the REO Motor Car Company in Lansing, he was only 20 years old.

By 1924 Ray had also purchased land on Berry Avenue on the south side of Lansing near present day Everett High School. He built a home on that property

which stood through the 1940s. Raymond married Cecile Mae Gordon at a minister’s home in Clare, Michigan on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1932. Raymond and Cecile were married for 53 years, until Raymond’s passing. The couple parented three children, two of whom are still living. In 1940 he built a new home on Berry Avenue. After the newer home was finished, Raymond and Cecile moved into the home with their two first born children. Ray’s mother, Katie, lived in the old home until her death in 1945, after which the structure was removed.



Raymond joined the UAW-CIO in May 1936. He served as a delegate for the Greater Ingham Industrial Union Council, 1939-1943, later known as the Greater Lansing Labor Council. Ray was an organizer of UAW Local 650 in Lansing in 1939 and served as a member on the executive board of Local 650 for eight years. He was a member on the top bargaining committee for Local 650 for six years. Raymond also served as a delegate to the UAW-CIO at international conventions from 1941 to

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1946. In November 1943 he was the UAW committeeman that led 22 workers on a 2 hour strike. On December 7, 1944, he led 50 workers on an 8 hour strike. He was also a part of the 8 hour, unauthorized, full plant strike on September 16, 1946. Raymond Reed was first elected president of REO's UAW Local 650 in 1944. His initial presidency lasted until 1946, however he was re-elected in 1948 and served until his retirement in 1964.

Raymond was a big football and baseball fan, especially of the Detroit Tigers. Ray was an avid smoker of pipe tobacco, he even had a personalized fob to hold his matches. He did a lot of doodling throughout his childhood and adulthood, it seemed as though it was a skill that came naturally to him, and many of his incredible drawings survive. His work life ran over into his family life as well, Raymond and his wife Cecile received letters and holiday cards from senators and even the White House throughout his years as a labor leader. Though the couple never had an official affiliation with a local church, they attended the Judson Memorial Baptist Church in Lansing throughout their marriage.

The year Ray was re-elected president of Local 650, 1948, was the year that the President of the United States Harry S. Truman came to Lansing. Truman made several Labor Day stops via train across Michigan, his stop in Lansing occurred at the Union Depot at about 11:00 AM on September 6, 1948. Truman gave a speech with his daughter, Margaret, off of the rear platform of the train. The platform was parked at the intersection of the railroad tracks and Michigan Avenue. President Truman met with local Democrats and labor leaders after his speech concluded – Raymond Reed was one of those local labor leaders.



Raymond served as president all through the rest of his career at REO. After 43 years of dedicated work for the REO Motor Car Company, he retired in 1964. With over four decades of employment with REO and twenty years as president of Local 650, he was a local and national labor icon. Not only was he president of Local 650, he also served as the president of the International Truck and Bus Council for a number of years. Raymond's work and dedication was honored in the 1946 book "Who's Who in Labor," which recognized countless men and women whose work made a significant impact on the North American labor force.

After his retirement, Raymond and Cecile remained living in Lansing but were able to vacation at their cottage at Bear Lake frequently. After living for 81 years and working for more than half of his lifetime, Raymond passed away on January 22, 1986 in Lansing. Cecile passed away just four years later in 1990. The two are laid to rest in Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens. This

Lansing made man lived a full life and left a large family of descendants to carry on his name and memory. The mark he made in Lansing is truly remarkable and the things he accomplished through his work and his presidencies are forever a piece of Lansing's history and should long be remembered.

Those of you who attended the REO Town walking tour in July will recognize the REO Town Depot as the place where President Truman stopped in Lansing for a speech and a visit with local labor and political leaders. The station is, of course, also where President Ford spoke during his 1976 reelection bid.

Raymond Reed's pipe tobacco case, his office sign, and his union card are on display in the Made in Lansing exhibit in Lansing City Hall.



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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

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