



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

October 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.

HSGL Collections Help Needed

We are taking in a lot of new and exciting items into our collection. Our wonderful collections volunteers, Anne, Judy, Roni, Mary, and Karen, are hard at work accessioning, photographing, and storing our objects. While they are doing great work, we need additional volunteers to help with this process. If you are interested and can help, please call (517) 282-0671 or e-mail info@lansinghistory.org.

Michigan Agricultural College Campus Life 1900 – 1925: A Postcard Book

Thursday, October 23, 2014 – 7:00pm

Downtown CADL – 401 South Capitol Avenue

Join author Stephen Terry for a remarkable armchair tour of Michigan Agricultural College's Campus at the beginning of the 20th century. The postcards depict everything from early sports teams to buildings lost to the wrecking ball and fire including Abbott Hall, the Women's Building, Chemistry, Engineering, Dairy, off-campus housing, and even the infamous underground tunnels. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Made in Lansing Lunchtime Series

Wednesdays from 12:10pm – 12:30pm

Lansing City Hall Atrium, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

October 8, 2014

The Lansing Wheelbarrow Company by Win Stebbins, descendant of a company founder.

October 15, 2014

Time, Railroads, and Industry: How Time Impacted Things Made in Lansing by Stewart Powell, owner of Linn and Owen Jewelers.

October 22, 2014

LorAnn Oils: From Okemos Pharmacy to International Corporation by John Grettenberger, CEO and grandson of the company's founder.

Please note that the Made in Lansing Exhibit will be open for viewing through October 22, 2014. The exhibit will be collapsed after this.

Other Historical Happenings

*Hillside Cemetery Walk
Saturday, October 18 – 10:00am
Delta River Drive, Delta Township*

Join archaeologists Bob Mainfort and Mary Kwas on Saturday, October 18, for a visit to the older section of Hillside Cemetery. The focus of the walk will be on gravestone art motifs, epitaphs, and historical connections. The event is co-sponsored by Delta Township Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries Department and Delta Township Historical Society. For information call (517) 323-8555.

*Preservation Lansing's Award Presentations
R. E. Olds Transportation Museum
240 Museum Drive, Lansing
Thursday, October 23 - 5:30pm-7:30pm*

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks served by roller-skating car hops. To RSVP call Barb Brooks at (517) 484-8066.

Lansing on Saturday Night in the 1950s
by Johanna Balzar

Perched on my father's shoulders, it seemed that I could touch the stars and moon in the cold night air. Some nights the stars twinkled brightly, and on others the buttermilk clouds rolled over them. Some nights were so cold, you could see a ring around the moon.

While my parents chatted with friends on North Washington Avenue, I scanned the mural of a cat carrying a kitten in her mouth, an advertisement for the the moving company on the building next to us. Across

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the street and slightly to the north, sat the State Historical Museum in a building replicating Mt. Vernon. Someday I hoped to see what was inside that big building with a cupola. A child, being up past 1:00am, coming out from a night of music and dancing, was not a typical childhood.

My father, Fordney Cushman, was a musician in the Bud Brooks Band, and the times I remember were at Bradley's Dance Hall, now a part of the LCC campus. This was the 1950s with all the hopes and possibilities that were held out before those of us called the Baby Boomers.

Bud Brooks was the drummer and organizer of the band. Bea, his wife, played the piano, their son, Bob, played trumpet, Harry Knowlton played the saxophone, and my father played sax, clarinet, violin, trumpet, and on rare occasion the guitar. The bass players changed from time to time. The only one I can remember was Eddie Garland.

There were three of us born in the spring of 1949. Linda Lee Knowlton was first, I was born about a week later on March 25, and Donald Addison Brooks a few days later in April. Our births came in the order our father's were seated in the band. June, Donnie's mother, and my mother Wilma, brought us to the dances most Saturday nights in the winter. Dances weren't held in the summer, as it was too hot and humid.

I began coming to the dances at slightly over one-week old. My mother made a bed for me in a dresser drawer. As a toddler, I can remember having a bed on the floor of the bandstand next to the piano, and squeezed in between the bass player, and Bud the drummer.

The bandstand had a curved ceiling with a woodland mural scene. I remember watching Bud's foot on the pedal of the drum, and the underside of the cymbals with Bud's brushes tapping their tops. Bea's fingers danced across the piano keys, as I watched them plunging up and down, her feet stamping the pedals, as I dosed off to sleep.

After stopping at the ticket office and cloak room, the dancers walked down a long terrazzo ramp with grid strips. The dance floor was terrazzo. Huge north woods scene paintings hung on the walls between brick wall

reinforcements. For lighting, colorful neon tubes were mounted on each of the reinforcements. Large ceiling fans helped keep the floor dry, and the dancers cool.

Cecil Bradley ran the dance hall. There was no doubt he was in charge. He called the square dances and the circle two-steps, and sprinkled a powder on the floor to keep the surface good for dancing. His eyes were on the crowd to make sure there was no misbehaving. If any of the dancers jitterbugged, he stopped them and pointed to the exit. Young people were astonished that they were being thrown out for dancing the latest craze.

The snack bar was made of glass brick with neon lights in them, making a rainbow of colors along the north side of the dance hall. Across from it, and down a small ramp were the pinball machines. Above the snack bar, was the cloak room, an open cantilevered balcony. It had constant movement of the checkers putting coats and hats on and off hangers and hooks.

The snack bar carried Nehi pop, New Era or Adam's potato chips, pretzels, hot dogs, assorted candies, and coffee. Sugar lumps were in a bowl, and Donnie and I would sneak one every chance we got.

The dancers moved to waltzes, fox-trots, polkas, the bunny hop, circle-two steps, and twirled to square dances. My father would stand with his violin next to the square dance caller, Mr. Bradley as they shared the microphone.

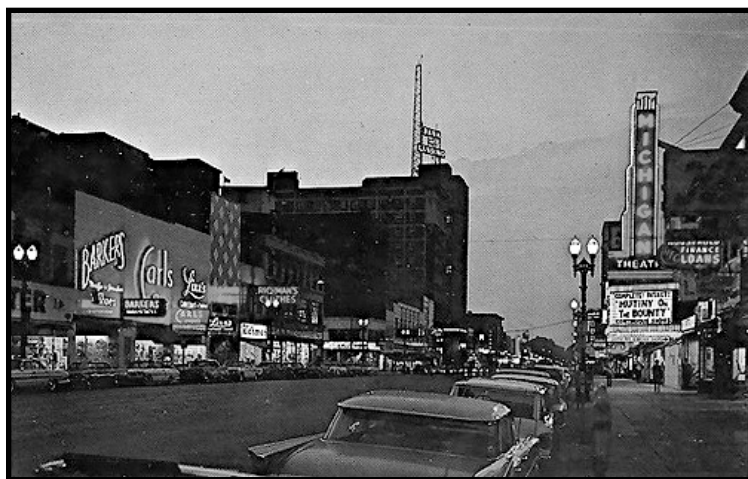
On occasion some friends of Mr. Bradley would bring their talented children to put on roller skating or baton twirling performances. They would arrive after competitions wearing their costumes and were very skilled and entertaining.

When I was about five years old, someone got the idea that it would be cute for me to sing a song each Saturday night. I sang "Wanted" many times, before my singing career ended. For a time, the music was broadcast live on a local radio station.

At intermission, we would often walk over to the Kewpee Restaurant on the southwest corner of Capitol and Shiawassee. The restaurant was done mostly in black,

white, and red with knotty pine walls. My father, mother and I almost always ordered an oliveburger. My mother and I had buttermilk. My father was disgusted by it. Sometimes my father also had cherry pie. There was a "no loitering" sign on the south wall.

We would walk back to Bradley's with the Eagle's Hall on our left, and the Winkin Pup Bar straight ahead. My parents said that was a bad bar, so I'd try to peak in as we passed. I could see the bar stools and the drinkers seated on them. I'd look for something exciting to happen, but never saw anything but a dim glow through the cigarette smoke from inside, and the sign with a a cocker spaniel type dog with a flashing red eye.



My mother loved being the wife of a musician. She danced with me and some of her friends. Now when I listen to songs from the thirties and forties, I can hear my mother humming the tunes. When the dance hall closed for the night, my mother took pride in helping my father carry out his instruments and music stands.

The music changed, and the behavior of the teen crowd with it. Fewer dancers came to Bradley's. Washington Avenue became a drag strip. One evening my parent's 1955 Chevy station wagon was sideswiped in a racer's U-turn. Another Saturday night, cousin Helen Cressman and her mother were run over and seriously injured by one of the drag racers as the two women left a restaurant and crossed the street.

Cecil Bradley went out of business and the hall became the Incline Teen Dance Hall in the 1960's. Later it was demolished for the expansion of Lansing Community College.



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 _____

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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