

History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

October 2015

HSGL's Auction at Eastern High School Field House

Saturday, October 10 - 4:00pm-6:30pm

\$15 per person

Tickets may be purchased by returning the enclosed form, online at www.lansinghistory.org, or at the door.

Grab your favorite Quaker and head down to Lansing's 1928 Eastern High School to support the HSGL museum fund! HSGL is pleased to partner with the Lansing School District for our annual auction, which will be held at the Eastern High School Don Johnson Field House. Originally built for the Boys Industrial School, a reform school founded by the State of Michigan in 1855, the field house was acquired by Eastern High School in the 1970s.

The event includes the opportunity to bid on 100 items, including unique antiques, gift certificates to local businesses, homemade treats, theatre tickets, weekend vacation getaways, MSU memorabilia, vintage records, auto services, memberships and tickets to Michigan museums, and more!

Tickets are \$15. The evening includes both a silent and live auction, light hors d'oeuvres, and a tour of part of Eastern High School, including a classroom, the auditorium, and the historic social room.

Kositchek's Celebrates Its 150th Anniversary

Thursday, October 22, 2015 - 4:00pm - 8:00pm

113 North Washington, Downtown Lansing

Join the Kositchek family for a reception to celebrate Kositchek's 150th anniversary in Lansing. This event will be an opportunity for community members to relive some of their Downtown Lansing memories. Business attire is preferred.

From Sepia to Selfies: 150 Years of Lansing Photography

Open Monday to Friday - 10:00am - 5:00pm

10:00am - 4:00pm the second Saturday of every month

Exhibit closes at the end of December

Fourth Floor, Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo

HSGL is pleased to partner with the Library of Michigan and Central Michigan University's Clarke Historical Library for our newest exhibit, From Sepia to Selfies. The exhibit chronicles the history of the photographic process, while showcasing more than 300 Lansing photos, many of which have never been publically exhibited before.

The photos by professional and amateur photographers include more than 150 years of Lansing photographic history and explore how we see ourselves and our environment. Included are dramatic photos of calamities, fires, and disasters; tender loving photographs from family albums, Lansing celebrities, lost buildings, Lansing daredevils, news photographs, sporting photographs, and a large collection of photos chronicling demonstrations and celebrations at the Capitol.

Photography themed programs will be held in November and December. More information will be available in the November edition of *The History Explorer*.

HSGL mourns the death of Patricia "Pat" Heyden, local Lansing historian and author of "Behind the Badge, The History of the Lansing Police Department" and "Love, Lives and Labor" about Ransom and Metta Olds. Pat served as an HSGL board member for many years.

Eastern High School: The Early Years

By Valerie Marvin

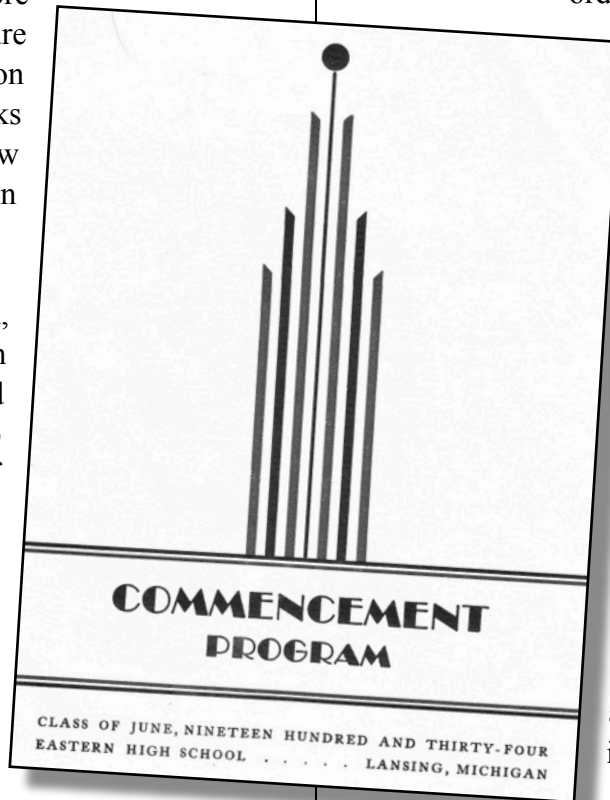
The birth of Lansing's high schools began in July of 1868 when the local Board of Education decided to build a two-story wooden building for the purpose of educating older students past the eighth grade. Costing only \$2,286, far below the contract's original allowance of \$3,000, it opened in November of 1868, only to require an addition four years later. In 1873 the district issued bonds for a larger, more permanent, brick and stone structure which was subsequently built on Capitol Avenue, only three blocks from the Capitol building. The new Lansing High School opened in 1875.

Lansing's growth, though, meant that even this new, stylish building with its mansard roof and ornate cresting, would not prove to be adequate for long. The turn of the 20th century brought unprecedented numbers of people to Lansing. Many came to work in the auto factories and assorted parts suppliers that seemed to be multiplying overnight. Others, including African-Americans from the South and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe came to work in the service industry, holding positions as barbers, waitresses, construction workers, tailors, and domestic servants. Others opened restaurants, ran neighborhood groceries, and rolled cigars.

Lansing, a drowsy town of only 16,485 in 1900, was home to 57,327 by 1920. Homes intended to house one family suddenly housed three. The streets teemed with horses, cars, and pedestrians. Churches, the public library, and above all else, the Lansing school system, struggled to keep pace with this phenomenal growth.

By 1917 Lansing High School, later known as Lansing Central, had received two major additions. Still, the space for students was completely inadequate. In order to educate everyone, two shifts of classes were offered each day, in the attempt to provide twice the number of students with an education using the same square footage of space. The district, though, knew that this make-do solution was only temporary, and that a new, large high school was necessary--as soon as possible.

When the new Eastern High School opened in 1927/1928, the transition for some students was difficult. Instead of all attending one school together, students were now split between Eastern and Central based on their home address. The 1929 yearbook includes this inscription in the front:



"It seems to be the fate of many when serving most ably, to go 'unwept, unhonored, and unsung.' Eastern's faculty has been taken too much for granted, I now realize since becoming a senior. Let me take this opportunity then to express my appreciation, small tribute though it may be, though by so doing I may be reversing all precedent.

"The instructors and advisers exert a tremendous influence over each and every student they come in contact with. It was the encouraging support of a teacher that brought many of us through that first strange year as sophomores; it was the spirit and enthusiasm of the faculty that made possible many of the extra curricular activities during our junior year, and now it is the friendships which we share with teachers as well as with students that make us loath to leave Eastern. A Senior."

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

P.O. Box 12095 ~ Lansing, MI 48901
www.LansingHistory.org

Officers & Board Members

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Valerie Marvin – President | Jesse LaSorda – Trustee |
| Bill Castanier – Vice President | Erik Nelson - Trustee |
| Ron Emery – Secretary | Zig Olds - Trustee |
| Tim Kaltenbach – Treasurer | Bob Rose - Trustee |
| Joan Bauer - Trustee | Roni Sionakides - Trustee |
| Harry Emmons – Trustee | Anne Wilson - Trustee |

Indeed, the school was in good hands. Mr. Dwight Rich was the school's principal, while Ms. Faye Baumgardner served as the Assistant Principal. Fifty-four teachers labored to teach their students subjects including English, the Social Sciences, Latin, Spanish, French, Science, Mathematics, the Industrial Arts, the Commercial Arts, Music, Art, Physical Education, and Home Economics. Students graduating with a degree might go on to attend the nearby Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science or the Lansing Business University. Others would obtain jobs in the auto industry or with the State of Michigan. Some female students married upon their graduation, eager to set up housekeeping using their knowledge gained in classes focused on nutrition and child rearing.

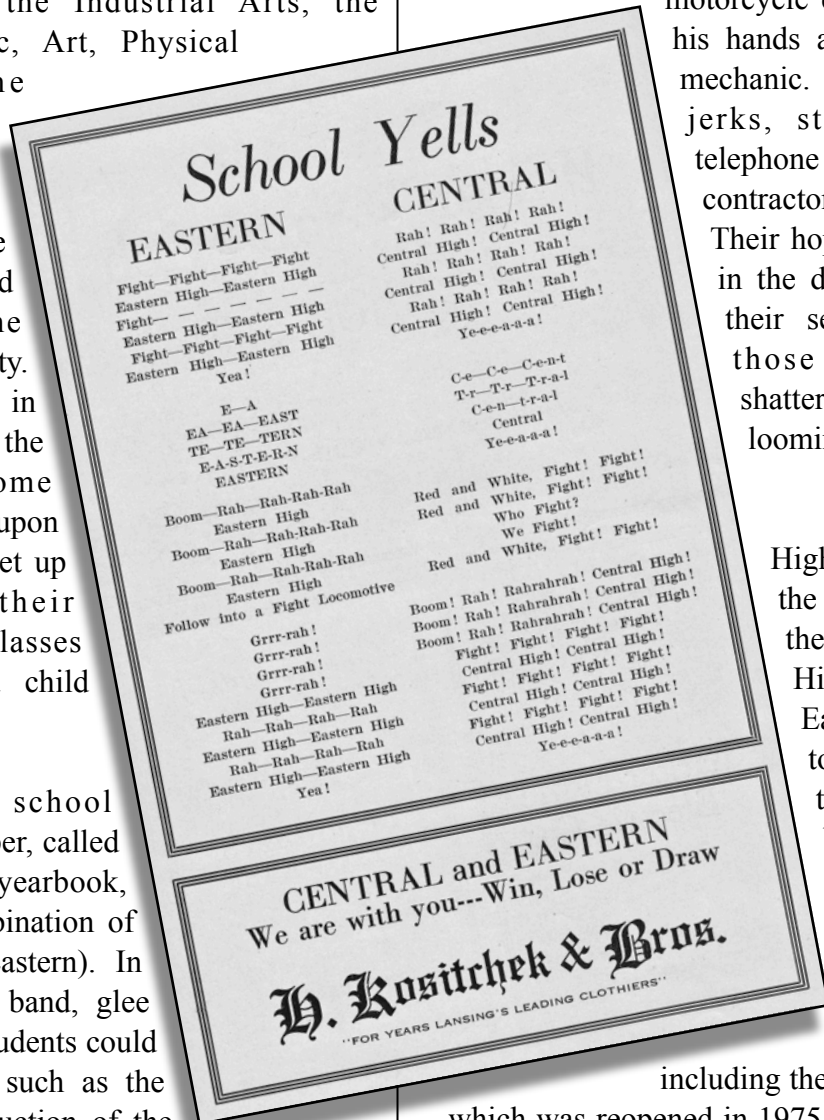
Students at the school published both a school paper, called the *Easterner*, and the yearbook, called the *Lantern* (a combination of the words Lansing and Eastern). In addition to the traditional band, glee clubs, and athletic teams, students could also participate in groups such as the Banking Council, the production of the Annual Opera, the Girl Reserves, the Hi-Y Club, the Tumbling Club, and the Auditorium Club, which provided ushers for events held in the building's large auditorium. Some clubs, like the Fur and Feather Club, which promoted hiking, camping, and the study of fish and fowl, had only male members, while the Dancing Club and the Girl Reserves, which worked to promote friendships and develop a higher moral standard, were only for the fairer sex. Some clubs defied modern stereotypes, such as the Cheer Leaders, who were all male. And for those students of a more academic bent, there was even a History Club!

The stagnation of the Great Depression in the 1930s brought Lansing's growth to a halt. The city would not boom again until the 1940s, when wartime production reignited Lansing's factories. The 1940 yearbook is filled with fresh faces of young people full of plans for their futures. Some, like Frank Zalewski, a motorcycle enthusiast, planned to use his hands and pursue a career as a mechanic. Others hoped to be soda jerks, stenographers, models, telephone operators, piano teachers, contractors, and fashion designers. Their hopes remain frozen in time in the descriptions found next to their senior pictures. Some of those dreams were likely shattered by dark specter of war, looming just over the horizon.

In 1942 Eastern High School lost its title as the newest high school with the opening of J.W. Sexton High School. Regardless, Eastern Quakers continued to learn, play, and laugh in their lovely English Tudor building. Their campus grew over the years, eventually coming to encompass part of the former Boys Training School campus,

including the Don Johnson Fieldhouse, which was reopened in 1975. This fieldhouse, home to many storied sporting rivalries including standing-room-only games of basketball featuring Everett's Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Eastern's Jay Vincent, will serve as the location for HSGL's 2015 auction.

HSGL is proud to partner with the Lansing School District to offer the public this opportunity to walk those hallowed halls again, and relieve some of the glory days of Lansing's oldest currently operating high school. We hope that you will consider joining us for this walk through Lansing history.





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.*