



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

September 2018

Upcoming Events

Kickstepping Through the Years: The History of the Spartan Marching Band

by Jacob McCormick

Thursday, September 27, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing

Join HSGL for a program on the historic 148 years of tradition, innovation, and excellence of the Michigan State University Spartan Marching Band. Historian and Spartan Marching Band alumnus Jacob McCormick will share the history of the Big Ten's oldest band and its deeply rooted traditions. From its military origins beginning in 1870 through the introduction to the Big Ten in the 1950s, the SMB has performed nationwide and even internationally to much high acclaim. A collection of Spartan Marching Band artifacts will also be on exhibit during the program.

You are also encouraged to visit the Spartan Marching Band rehearsal, Monday through Friday, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the Forest Akers Trust Practice Complex on the corner of Shaw Lane and Chestnut Road on the campus of Michigan State University.

Double-Take: Greater Lansing in the Age of Stereographs

by Craig Whitford and Jacob McCormick

Thursday October 18, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing

We'll have you seeing double through the entertainment media of the late 19th and early 20th century—the stereograph. Historians Jacob McCormick and Craig Whitford will introduce you to the little-known world of greater Lansing stereoview images. They'll provide you with the history of the stereograph as well as an overview of those local and national photographers

that created them. You'll be treated to a tour of images captured as a double-photograph that, when viewed with a stereoscope, produces a three-dimensional view. Many of the images Jacob and Craig will present have not been seen before.

Moores River Drive Home Tour Features Lansing's Most Iconic Homes

Sunday, September 16, 2018

Brunch 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Home Tour 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

HSGL is pleased to be returning to Moores River Drive for a second tour featuring a new slate of homes on Sunday, September 16. The day starts with brunch at the historic Country Club of Lansing at 11:00 a.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour portions of the clubhouse and hear stories about its evolution and use for nearly one hundred years. (This experience is only available to those attending the brunch.) Combination tickets, which include the brunch and the tour, are \$55 per person, and **MUST** be purchased at www.lansinghistory.org or by calling 517-282-0672 by September 12.

The home tour, which features four homes on Moores River Drive and the beautiful Potter House at 1348 Cambridge, begins at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.lansinghistory.org or at the Country Club of Lansing the day of the event. Parking is available at the Club and at Frances Park.

A dedicated group of volunteers has spent the summer researching the Club and surrounding houses, and has turned up some interesting and rather surprising stories about the neighborhood's past. For example, did you know that Billy Durant, co-founder of General Motors, once leased a home on Moores River Drive?

On September 11, 1930, *The State Journal* reported that “William C. Durant, head of Durant Motors, and veteran automobile and truck builder, plans a domestic establishment in

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Lansing, where it is inferred Mr. Durant plans to spend more of his time. The corporation has leased the J.P. Hopkins residence, 1826 Moores River drive, and it is said Mr. Durant plans to maintain a domestic staff here so that he will have all the comforts of a home when in Lansing.”

Though certainly the most famous, Durant would not be the first industrialist to live at 1826. That honor belonged to its inaugural owner, John P. Hopkins, who, according to his 1929 obituary, “was a leader in the highly specialized drop forge business of this city, where he pioneered this line of manufacture and made Lansing one of the large producers of drop forging.” Over the years he served as the secretary-treasurer of the board of the Federal Drop Forge Company, formed in 1919, and the vice-president and general manager of Atlas Drop Forge.

Both John and his wife, Amy, appreciated the social and networking opportunities afforded to them in their new neighborhood. Though first and foremost a family home, their new Moores River Drive house (constructed 1916-1918) put them at the center of Lansing society. Here Mrs. Hopkins hosted many meetings of the Entre Nous Women’s Club, at which local ladies met to eat, read and discuss papers, enjoy musical performances, and discuss charity work.

Not all of Mrs. Hopkins’ gatherings, however, fit into her beautiful home. This was a woman who entertained in style—and for very large gatherings. Lucky for her she was a member of the Country Club of Lansing, the centerpiece of the new Riverside Neighborhood, as always intended by James Moores. The developer focused his riverside development around the construction of a golf course and “locker house” that would attract golf enthusiasts to the neighborhood from the very beginning. By 1921 the professionally redesigned course included a large clubhouse, perfect for social functions.

In 1922 Mrs Hopkins partnered with Mrs. Don Bates to host a Wednesday afternoon luncheon and bridge party attended by more than 100 ladies, including out-of-town and out-of-state guests at the still-new clubhouse, which was fronted by several vacant lots. In 1925 the Hopkins family marked J.P.’s birthday with dinner for fifty at the club. Not surprisingly, bridge formed the evening’s diversion. Just a

few weeks later on January 2 she returned with her almost ten-year-old twins, Austin and Amy, “and a number of young people” who enjoyed a skating party, after which they went to the Club for dinner.

Likewise, the Allen and Irene Black family, whose home at 2117 Moores River Drive had a spectacular view of the golf course, hosted many special celebrations at the Club. On Saturday, July 14, 1945, the Blacks were joined by 200 guests for their son Frank’s wedding to Miss Anne Kathryn Luce of Williamston. The wedding was carefully scheduled during Lieutenant Black’s thirty-day leave home, following an eighteen-month tour in Europe. The couple planned a brief honeymoon at the Luce Cottage on Thunder Bay before leaving for Camp Shelby, in Mississippi, where Frank had orders to report for duty on August 1.

The ceremony was held in the dining room, transformed into a chapel by a temporary altar trimmed with greens and white flowers. After the ceremony the bridal party received their guests in front of the fireplace in the lounge. Meanwhile, ladies served wedding cake in the card room and glasses of champagne from a table in the dining room. Undoubtedly the guest list included many neighbors of the groom’s parents.

Today, ties of friendship, business, and society continue to bind together the lives of the neighbors living on Moores River Drive and Cambridge Road. We hope that you will join us for another wonderful home tour as we visit some of Lansing’s most beautiful and beloved homes.



Featured Homes
1717 Moores River Dr.
The Home of Stephen and Karissa Purchase
Built in 1917 for Philip and Ethel Baker

One hundred and one years old, the Purchase home is a testament to the beautiful mixing of styles that flourished in early 20th century America. Many of these styles were nostalgic reinterpretations of old country forms, a fact that’s particularly ironic when considering that Europe was then engulfed in war. Perhaps by blending together English, Italian, and California, ideas architecture was trying to build a better, more peaceful world. For many years this house was home to the William Seamans family, best known as the proprietors of *The Style Shop*, one of downtown Lansing’s most fashionable women’s clothing stores.

Historical Society of Greater Lansing
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1826 Moores River Dr.
The Home of John and Judy Nash
Built in 1918 for John and Amy Hopkins

This year Judy and John Nash are celebrating their home's centenary. Constructed between 1916 and 1918, and attributed to the Greene Brothers of Pasadena, California, this elegant house blends together recognizable elements of the Arts and Crafts period with a traditional American form. The interior features beautiful refinished hardwood floors, an open staircase, a fireplace, and a dining room perfect for hosting family and friends. Here the Nash family carry on the entertaining traditions begun by Mr. John and Mrs. Amy Hopkins in 1918. Most in Lansing knew John as the vice-president and general manager of the Atlas Drop Forge, a major industrial power in the early 1900s.



2117 Moores River Dr.
The Home of Troy Wilson
Built in 1929 for Allan and Irene Black

The beautiful Wilson home was designed by Lansing architect Lee Black, the elder partner in a father/son team that built some of Lansing's most beloved structures. Interior features of the home included, in 1929, an upstairs study and library for Mr. Black, a large living room with built-in bookcases of English design, a dining room with a built-in china cabinet, a large central hall, rich English woodwork, and painted—not papered—walls. A children's playroom, a laundry room, a heating room, and a three-car garage comprised the large basement. Best of all, from a golfer's perspective, a flag-stone terrace immediately behind the home fronted onto the Country Club's course.

Mr. Allan and Mrs. Irene (Shumway) Black lived in the home from 1929 until 1960. Allan worked with his father Cyrenius in a Lansing based father/son law firm known as Black & Black for many years. He served during World War I, and, not long after coming home, became an assistant city attorney, and then counsel for the Central Trust Company and Capital National Bank.



2222 Moores River Dr.
The Home of Joe and Liz Smalley
Built in 2006 for Bruce Stewart and Barry Wood

The Smalley home is, without a doubt, an eye-catching contemporary structure that might, at first, seem unconventional in a neighborhood of Colonial Revivals and Tudors. A second glance, however, reveals a modern home very firmly routed in the Art Deco ideals of the 1920s and 1930s, when Moores River Drive was really coming into its own. Like many houses on the river side of the street, the structure enjoys beautiful views of the river. Great care was taken to preserve the curve of the natural landscape, including a deep slope and existing ravine.



1348 Cambridge Rd.
The Home of James McClurken and Sergei Kvitko
Built in 1926 for Ray and Sarah Potter

The home of James McClurken and Sergei Kvitko hardly needs an introduction, as it has played host to innumerable parties, soirees, meetings, and fundraisers since Ray and Sarah Potter first moved into it in 1927. The house is full of beautiful artistic details, beginning at the front door, where Sarah's cat lives on with its likeness in the lintel. Delicate moldings divide the ceilings and walls, and art tiles from A.C. Spark Plug's Flint Faience Tile line ornament the sun room. Carefully restored custom animal and woodland murals nod to the park Ray's parents donated to the City of Lansing that still bears their name today.

Parks, however, barely scratched the surface of the Potter family's gifts to the city. Dedicated philanthropists, Ray and Sarah put their wealth to work for the community. Both served on the boards of Sparrow Hospital for many years, and Sarah quietly cared for a large number of aged women who could not support themselves. Ray was also a founding member of the Greater Lansing Foundation, the predecessor of the modern Capital Region Community Foundation.



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