



November 2015

# ILLUMINATIONS

quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

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## Fun and Games with the Historical Society! Program on Bagatelle



*Children playing Bagatelle*

At 7 pm January 12, 2016, the Historical Society along with the University City Library will host a special program on the history of the game of Bagatelle and its influence on the development of Pinball. The lecture, given by Boardmember Ed Nickels, will feature games from his private collection. The program is being presented in conjunction with the display of Bagatelle games in the library's gallery on the second floor during January.

On display will be over 60 rare and antique bagatelle games spanning over 100 years from the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s. Included will be several games made by the Northwestern Products Company of St. Louis from the late 1920s through the 1940s.

The hour presentation will conclude with a question and answer period. Audience members will have the chance to actually play one of the rare games that Ed will bring to the lecture.

More programs are coming in the spring. On Sunday April 17, the Society will hold special tours of City Hall. On Saturday

May 14, former St. Louis County preservation historian Esley Hamilton will lead a walking tour of the Civic Plaza. Complete information on these exciting programs will be in February *Illuminations*.

## Regional Meeting At Jefferson Barracks

The semi-annual meeting of the region's historical societies was held Oct. 10 at Jefferson Barracks. This was the workplace of Daniel Gonzales before he moved up to the job of St. Louis County preservation historian. Both Gonzales and Esley Hamilton, his predecessor, attended the meeting. Attendees had the chance to tour the exhibition "Courageous and Faithful: the Cavalry at Jefferson Barracks." The show displayed such artifacts as a Sioux war club, cavalry sabers and a buffalo coat. It told the story of the U.S. Cavalry in the nineteenth century.

At a meeting following the visit, Gonzalez gave a talk about websites and the free tools available to nonprofits. Societies then took turns providing updates on their activities. Bridgeton is interviewing longtime residents and putting the tapes online. Sunset Hills holds a candlelight tour of the Sappington House during the holidays. Old Trails opens its Bacon Log Cabin on the first and third Sundays of the month. Wildwood has received a \$10,000 grant to repair its 1852 Hencken Place house. Webster Groves has added a north Webster tour to its roster of self-guided walking tour booklets. Fenton holds a Christmas fundraiser. Kirkwood decorates its Mudd's Grove House for the holidays. Clayton held a fall festival at Hanley House. A Clayton Heritage Center is planned for the Center of Clayton. The local societies will meet again in the spring.

## Recognizing U. City's Century Homes Plaque program

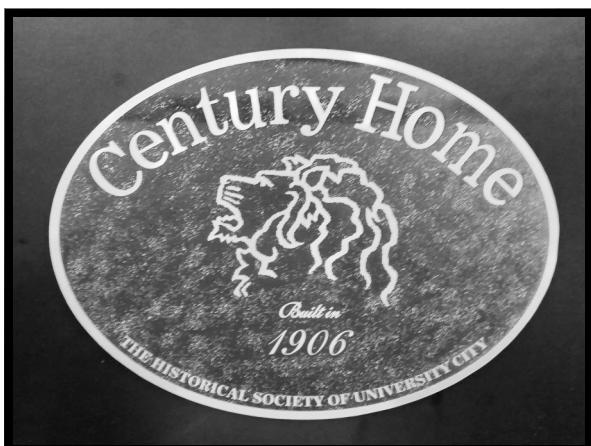
by Sue Rehkopf

In the coming weeks, our next round of "Century Home" letters will be in the mail. Each year we send these to another group of U. City homeowners whose houses we know are 100 years old or older. This year the focus is on 1914...the first year for which we have U. City building permit records, and at the same time playing catch-up for some earlier homes for which we've been able to locate construction dates.

But if you know your house was built in 1915 or earlier, you don't have to wait for a letter from us--you may apply now. Send us an email with the date your house was built and any details you know about its early history along with your name, address and phone number. We'll check your date against any records we may have, and work with you to order your plaque.

Century plaques are \$110 for members, \$135 for non-members who also receive a one year Historical Society membership. Plaques are made from rigid high density plastic (brass, in addition to being very expensive, would also be subject to theft — those metal thieves are ruthless) and each plaque is customized for its house.

If other houses in your neighborhood may be 100 years old, be sure your neighbors know about this program. Details are on our website <https://ucityhistory>, or email us at [ucityhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:ucityhistory@hotmail.com).



## History Round-Up

### Lion rehab, Civic Plaza Preservation & More

\*Restoration of the statue atop the Lion Gate on the north side of Delmar (commonly called the Lioness) was completed last fall. (See *Illuminations* Nov. '14) Work on the Lion on the south side was delayed, first by winter, then by construction of the roundabout. But restorer André Borrelli returned in October and has completed work on the south Lion.

\*Don Fitz of University Heights has led a petition drive for a proposed amendment to the City Charter that would require a vote of the people before any building in the Civic Plaza (except Delmar Harvard School) could be demolished or sold. The petition drive ended Oct. 31, having collected 3528 signatures, 52% more than required. The St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners certified 2933 valid, 15% more than required. The next step is for the City Council to approve placing the amendment on the April 2016 ballot.

\*Boardmember Ed Nickels has donated to the HSUC copies of *The Woman's Farm Journal*, published by E.G. Lewis in the early years of the Twentieth Century, filling holes in the HSUC collection. The Society thanks Ed for this very welcome gift.

\*At the Mildred Lane Kemper Museum at Washington University, the exhibit "World War 1: War of Images, Images of War" runs until Jan. 4. It features satirical illustrated journals, print portfolios, postcards, photographs, a war diary and art by soldiers. Free admission.

\*The Overland Historical Society's Annual Candlelight Tour is from 3 to 7 pm Sat. Dec. 12 and Sunday Dec. 13, at the NE corner of Lackland Road and Gass Ave. Refreshments. Donation \$3 per adult. Children under 12 free.

\*At the Missouri History Museum, the exhibition "Coffee: The World in Your Cup & St. Louis in Your Cup" continues until Jan. 3. Artifacts, images, photos and maps tell the story of one of the world's most popular drinks and most widely traded commodities. St. Louis has long been a center of coffee business and coffee culture. Free admission.

## Annual Meeting

### *Author recalls memorable local personalities*

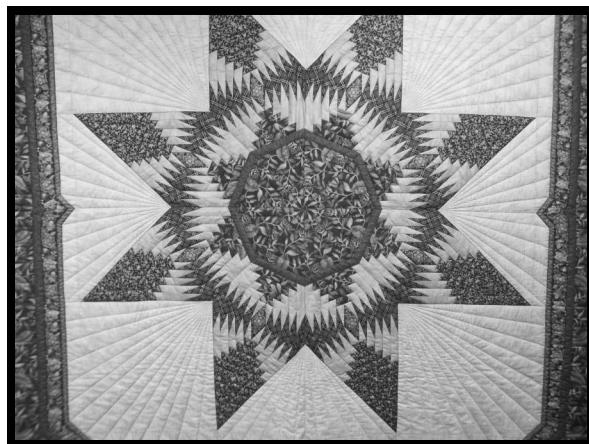
At the annual dinner, held Sept. 28 at the University City Public Library, President Eleanor Mullin announced that spring programs would include a walking tour of Civic Plaza with Esley Hamilton, semi-retired preservation historian of St. Louis County. Restoration work on the Gates of Opportunity will be completed in spring by André Borrelli. In addition to restoration of the lion statues, City Hall has approved rehab of the pediments that support the statues. Elsie Glickert and Bob Kaufman have been named boardmembers emeriti. A new member, Liz Beall, has joined the board. Treasurer Frank Reedy presented a report showing that the association's finances are in robust shape.

The main speaker was Carol Ferring Shepley. Of her book, *St. Louis Illustrated Timeline: Blues, Baseball, Books, Crooks, Civil Rights and the River*, she said, "I wanted to put all kinds of things in. St. Louis is so rich." She started her account long before the founding of the city with Big Mound, built by the Mississippians around 900 AD. It endured almost a thousand years. It was leveled by real estate speculators in 1869, disappearing like most of the rest of the ancient earthworks that gave St. Louis the name Mound City.

She then gave lively accounts of some of St. Louis's key figures from all periods. Founder Pierre Laclede was proud of his library, one of the largest on the frontier. August Chouteau, who laid out St. Louis, intended from the first that it should be one of the continent's great cities. William Greenleaf Eliot came west as a missionary. In 1849, he was president of the school board and managed to pass a bond issue to fund education in 1849, a year of fire and plague. His grandson was T.S. Eliot. James Yeatman founded the Mercantile Library as well as the Sanitary Commission. J.N. McDowell was a surgeon educator who insisted that students learn anatomy by dissection of human bodies. He gave sculptor Harriet Hosmer the opportunity to study anatomy after

Harvard Medical school turned her down because she was a woman. Virginia Minor founded the Missouri Suffrage Association. Luther Ely Smith put playgrounds in the slums and championed the Arch for decades, but did not live to see it. Before becoming mayor, Raymond Tucker was the smoke abatement commissioner who cleaned up the city's air after decades of contentious stalemate and worsening pollution. Lawrence K. Roos was a "rich man of integrity" who cleaned up county government. W.M. Reedy edited a popular literary journal. Marion Rombauer was a socialite who had to find a way to make money after her husband's untimely death. She didn't know how to cook, but immersed herself in the subject and wrote *The Joy of Cooking*.

St. Louis is a "peculiar mix of North and South," Shepley said, and the tensions have produced many dramatic personalities. Jacques Clamorgan wanted to leave his estate to his freed slaves but was thwarted by the courts. Abolitionist editor Elijah Lovejoy became a martyr to freedom of the press. Percy Green climbed the Arch when it was under construction to protest the exclusion of minority workers from the project.



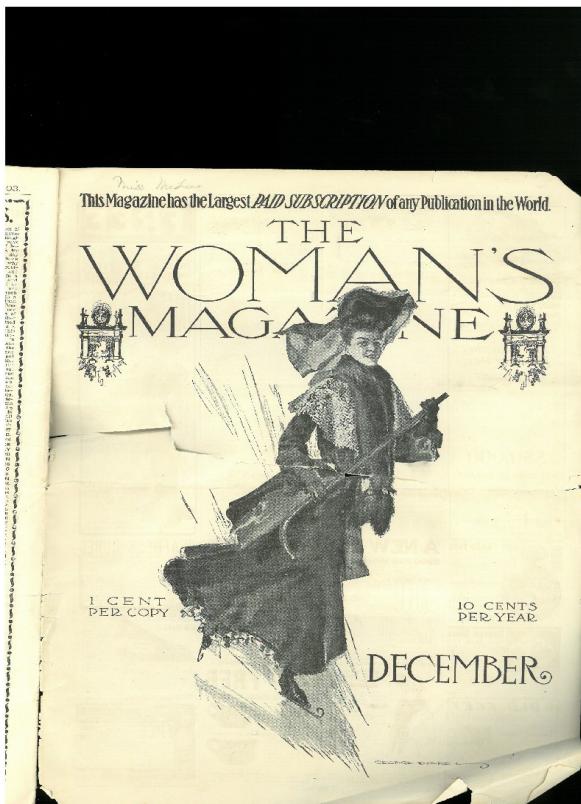
*Detail from "Kismet" by Gloria Seibel, quilted by Carol Bishop. Judges' Choice at The Quintessential Quilt Show, sponsored by the Historical Society and directed by Circle in the Square Quilt Guild, which was displayed in the library during October.*

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## Skating on Tiny Feet

This fashionable sportswoman appeared on the cover of *The Woman's Magazine*, University City founder E.G. Lewis's flagship publication, in December 1903. The issue carried an article called "Building the World's Fair" (which would open the next summer) and "The Story of the Dead Letter Office" (in Washington, D.C.), as well as recipes for plum pudding and other Christmas delicacies, fashion news and "Curious Facts," such as: "According to the monks of the Hospice of St. Bernard, their famous dogs save on average 20 lives per year on the mountain."

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