



May 2015

ILLUMINATIONS

quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

The Big Store

Famous-Barr is subject of program



*Join us at 7 p.m. Monday
June 8 at the University City
Public Library, 6701 Delmar,
for the final program of our
spring season.*

For 95 years, St. Louisans went to Famous-Barr to buy the things they used every day and to celebrate the moments that happened only once a year. Customers might bump into Sophia Loren while shoe shopping or confide in Santa Claus during a visit to Toyland. May Company purchased the Famous Clothing Company in 1892 and acquired the William Barr Dry Goods Company 19 years later. In 1914, Famous-Barr opened the doors of its iconic downtown location, treating folks across Missouri and Illinois to almost a century of spectacular window displays and legendary luncheons.

Edna Campos Gravenhorst is an author and historical researcher; this is her second career after spending twenty-five years in sales and merchandising. Her books include *Southwest Garden*, *Benton Park West*, *Historical Home Research in the City of St. Louis*, *Té de Canela/Cinnamon Tea*, *Ay, Mija! Why Do You Want To Be an Engineer?* and *Ay, Mijo! Why Do You Want To Be an Engineer?*

A Message from the President By Eleanor Mullin

For those of us invested in the history of our city, let me make two literary allusions that I believe summarize recent events concerning our Civic Plaza: "Now is the winter of our discontent," and "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." You may be nodding in agreement at the first statement, but wondering how I can say it is "the best of times."

It's simple: the level of community interest in Civic Plaza has risen dramatically. People who love the unique look and history of our city are now concerned that it may be lost. Citizens who previously have simply enjoyed living here, but never thought of actively participating in local government are now, indeed, active. Historically, isn't this what our country is based on?

No matter where you stand on this, or any issue--let your voice be heard.



Art in the Loop
Local history recalled

Hands of Change by Sarah Hull of Washington University combines historical photographs of public protests in St. Louis with concrete hands reaching up from the ground to make a statement on activism and community. The work located near the south end of the Ackert Walkway in Parkview Gardens is part of the 2015 University City Sculpture Series, organized by the University City Commission on Arts & Letters.

University City and the World's Fair



On April 21, Carol Diaz-Granados gave a program at the library entitled *Digging up the 1904 World's Fair*, about her archeological project in Forest Park. This excerpt describes the connections between the Fair and University City founder E.G. Lewis.

In 1903, when the 1904 Fair was well on its way to becoming a reality, E. G. Lewis decided to set up a village of tents where visitors to the Fair could stay. There was going to be a need for places to stay and Lewis, forever the entrepreneur, was right on top of things. Camp Lewis, or Tent City (top photo) as it came to be known, was northwest of the fairgrounds on land slated to become a residential area (University Heights One). Lewis's Tent City included a huge restaurant double tent (middle photo), a hospital staffed with a full-time doctor, a barber shop, a recreation tent with glass cases filled with souvenirs, a nursery and more.

Lewis ordered an extremely large (80 inch) searchlight from General Electric for the top of the Woman's Magazine Building (now our City Hall) (bottom photo). It shone on both the Fair and on his Camp Lewis/Tent City. It is said that the light could be seen in far-distant locations.

Approximately 200,000 people visited the 1904 Fair daily, for its seven-month duration. Buildings representing 42 states and structures or exhibits produced by 62 visiting nations, American Indian tribes, The Philippine Igorrot exhibit, lots and lots of people and various foods, souvenirs, rides, and shows covered 1,275 acres of Forest Park's western portion and spilled over onto the Washington University campus and Wydown Terrace. It was possibly the most exciting time in St. Louis's history -- and University City played a part!

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Address Service Requested

Inside

June 8 Program: Famous-Barr
U. City & the Fair

New Shows at History Museum

Two exhibitions at the Missouri History Museum take a close look at the urban fabric of St. Louis. *Lost Buildings*, which continues until July 19, is a photo exhibit featuring structures that have disappeared but are still remembered, including the Arena and Coral Courts Motel. Other buildings featured include ones from the early days of St. Louis: the Rock House, disassembled to make room for the Gateway Arch, and the French colonial style houses of the city's founding families. There are mansions, courthouses, skyscrapers, theatres. Also included are photos of some famous old buildings that have survived, and pictures of the "Most Endangered Buildings," as determined by the Landmarks Association.

A Walk in 1875 St. Louis opens May 30 and continues until Dec. 6. Big blow-ups of the famous Compton & Dry "Pictorial St. Louis" panorama are the centerpieces of this show, which will delve into such questions as "What did slang sound like in 1875? What were St. Louis neighborhoods like? What did St. Louisans do for fun? What foods did they eat?" The exhibition will cover the whole city, from millionaires' mansions to teeming slums. Both shows are free at the Museum, 5700 Lindell Boulevard. Info: mohistory.org

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