

November 2011



ILLUMINATIONS

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

Spring Programs Coming in 2012

The Historical Society announces three exciting programs for Spring 2012. Full details will be in our February issue.

The Historical Society

of University City

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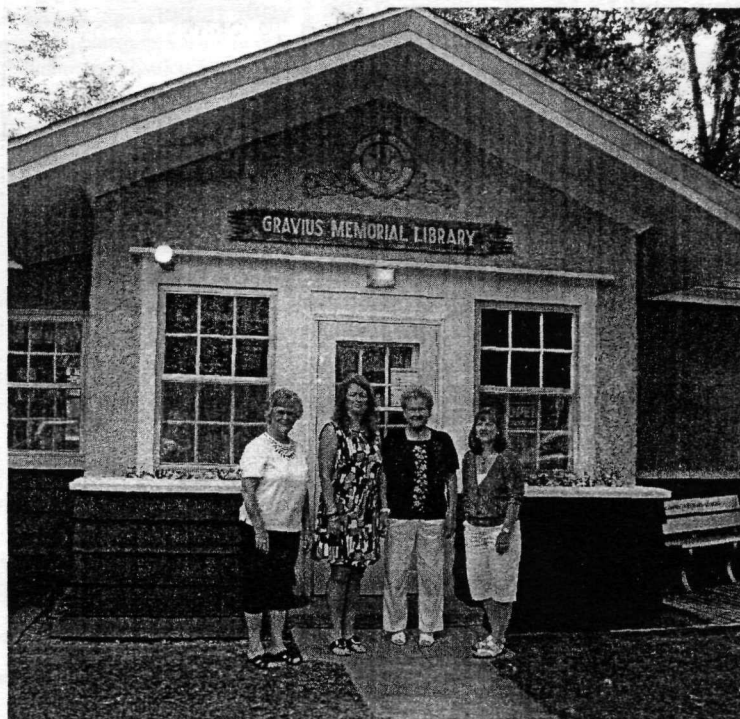
March 5: State of the City: To celebrate founder E.G. Lewis's birthday, Mayor Shelley Welsch and City Manager Lehman Walker will discuss their plans for meeting the challenges facing University City. This is a follow-up to the highly successful debut event last year. It will be held at City Hall.

April 19: *University City Schools: Our First 100 Years* Booksigning. Alan Spector will speak about and sign his book on the history of U. City schools at the library. It was published to mark the Centennial of U. City schools in 2011. Spector, a 1964 graduate of U. City Senior High, is also the author of *Hail! Hail! U. City High*. The lavishly illustrated book will be on sale for \$50.

May 22: U.S. Grant at White Haven. Pam Sanfilippo, site historian at White Haven, will talk about Grant's years in St. Louis and his marriage to Julia Dent, who lived with her family at White Haven in South St. Louis County.

Holiday Gift Ideas Inside!

Enclosed is a flyer listing books, videos, posters and other merchandise offered by the Historical Society.



Marine, Illinois Chapter House 100th anniversary

Members of the Board of the Gravius Memorial Library celebrate the 100th birthday of their building, which started life as one of the chapter houses of E.G. Lewis' American Women's League.

Photo: Sue Rehkopf

A Message from the President by Eleanor Mullin

FIRE!!! Oh, sorry, let me amend that. FIRE STATION! As you know, our city council overwhelmingly passed the bill to build a new fire station at Vernon and Westgate. There is a proposal to build a new police station at Midland and Olive. I'm not here to debate the necessity and wisdom (or lack thereof) of these proposals. I'm concerned, as we all should be, about the future of the existing building. My alarm (pardon the pun) comes from an article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* on October 12th. The second to last paragraph states: "Walker said Monday that he would propose demolishing that building, originally a printing house".

Really? That building is part of our renowned Civic Plaza, on the National Historic Register. Civic Plaza is an integral part of what makes University City unique. My 'reliable grapevine' notes that there has also been talk of razing the Delmar and Harvard buildings, and finding a developer for, who knows what, condominiums, retail usage.

I believe I speak for many of us when I say if I wanted to be surrounded by new buildings, if I didn't care about history (and beauty I might add), there are a lot of communities I could move to.

These proposals are, thankfully, not imminent, and may indeed be pie-in-the-sky. As I stated in the last newsletter, I can't fathom why people believe that preserving history and progress are mutually exclusive.

Having said that, I think we need to learn a lesson. We entered the debate over the Chuck Berry statue too late to have any impact. Ditto for the fire station. We must start now to make our voices heard. Please write, email, or phone your council member, Mayor Welsch, and Mr. Walker. If these buildings are to be abandoned, repurpose them! Let's not let any more of our history be destroyed in the name of progress.

Early Days at Mt. Olive School

With the closing of Nathaniel Hawthorne School, the Historical Society received an old scrapbook containing a collection of photographs, programs and newspaper clippings about the School. Two items that really caught my interest were a typewritten letter to Mrs. Coiboin from Mrs. Annie Morgan, and a typewritten history of the first Mount Olive School. Typed on what was originally inexpensive second sheet paper, they appear to have been sent to Mrs. Coiboin at the time of the 25th Anniversary of the School District, and the publication of "The Romance of a Quarter Century of Education." In 1959, Mrs. Coiboin sent both items to Mr. Brooks who was the principal at Hawthorne for many years. I've retyped Mrs. Morgan's letter and her history. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did. (The creative punctuation is all hers!)

Sue Rehkopf

February 6th, 1936

Dear Mrs. Coiboin,

Enclosed you will find some of the reminiscence of the day and age of old Mt. Olive School.

Of course, I could go into detail more explicitly, but I do not think that necessary for it is only a little of its history and ways and method of those days which seem almost obsolete at this date, but nevertheless, true.

I was about ten or twelve years old, when I was a pupil there at different times. There are not many of the old scholars living today but a great many that remember thirty or forty years back. It would have been nice to of had a home coming at this silver Jubilee. I trust you will get some information out of this and it will help you with your paper.

Am enclosing a composition written forty-nine years ago, which I consider quite a master piece for a girl fifteen years of age.

Thanking you for your invitation, I remain with any help to you I can be.

Very truly yours,
Mrs. Annie V. Morgan
St. Louis, Mo.

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The First Mount Olive School

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photo: Historical Society Archives

To the best of my knowledge Mt. Olive School was built in the year 1860. The structure consisted of a two story building, the lower story was of rock and the second story of lumber, so constructed as to use the basement for school and the upper story for religious services.

This property on which the building stood is located on the North and South Road, one block north of Olive St. Road and was given by a Mr. and Mrs. Martin Hanley, a pioneer family and to be used and kept for school and church education forever.

One of the first teacher's was an Englishman coming here in 1845, his name was Thomas W. Goldie, known in those days as pioneer educator, he taught in private families and boarded around for services rendered to children of said family, finally became teacher at Mt. Olive at a salary from \$25.00 to \$40.00 per month. He retired to private life in 68. The furnishings at that period were rough and crude, oak benches and desk, where three or four sat side by side- also the old cannon stove which was either red hot or stone cold according to the time one arrived at school. I remember the old water buckets and tin dippers that stood on the window sill and it was a treat to be chosen to go to the spring and get the water, said spring was about 100 yards North of Olive Road on Spring Avenue. We all drank from it and are here today to tell you we knew little about germs and cared less.

We had no principals in those days to take the unruly boys and girls too, and the punishments meted out to them were not always pleasant to see, as bad boys were lifted off the floor by the ears and stood on a bench, others wore dunce caps, or stood in the corner with their faces to the wall, Making faces at the teacher when his

back was turned and creating more laughter than punishment, but no one suffered very much.

We had on school bells too call us and I doubt if the old clock kept correct time, but the old teacher after taking his hour or more for a nice little nap at noon would step to the door and call books, books, books, so time marched on and others took up the art of learning. Other teachers, a Miss Snow had a private school for a time and opened school with prayer and song. Others that gave their time and talent to the three R's namely a Miss Wash, Mrs. Jones was a daughter-in-law to the Hon. Johnathan Jones of the Jones Commercial College of St. Louis, a Miss Stella, Miss Rosenberger, Mr. Crossman and Mrs. Norman Windsor, now President of Childs Conservation work and others.

I recall the Arbor day tree planting, some of those that helped with the work have passed on, but memories and trees remain a glowing tribute to those happy school days. I can call to mind the playlets or drama as they are called now under trying difficulties, the rough stage, where boards were laid across wooden horses, curtains made of flimsy material, that would pull open or shut at their pleasure. We had no better and no other schools did, so there was a time where ignorance was bliss. The school Christmas tree was always and exciting event, pop corn, cranberries, apples and peppermint stick candy played a most important part in ye olden days, and the giving to the teacher a present, a book or a picture, but it was doing the things pioneer school children loved to do. We did so love the spelling matches and was so proud to stand alone and spell down the school and sometimes go down on a word like pigeon. Time has marched on and from now on the younger generation can take up the years and follow through to the present time where every possible facility is at the door of every child and no reason for any child to go without an education in all walks of life.

I was told that Mount Olive derived its name from Olive Road and Olive Road was named by some early French settlers, who planted Olive trees hoping to raise olives here, as they did in their country, but it was a failure as a crop, but the word Olive

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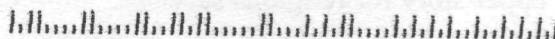
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Inside:

Historical Society Gift Catalogue
The First Mount Olive School
Fire Station Controversy

David Linzee
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Mt. Olive continued

is very much in evidence today.

I think what remained of the old building burnt down about twenty five years ago. The upper floor had blown off in a storm a number of years ago and it was roofed over and the school still continued there. At the time of burning it was a meeting place for the Boy Scouts of this Community.

In going back over the years, it comes to my mind they moved to the Olive Road about thirty years ago and built there a two room school with hall in between and the furniture was very much in keeping with better schools, had desks, tables, chairs, black boards, a fairly good library and piano which seemed quite wonderful to some of the scholars who sat in the benches at old Mount Olive. There were two teachers principal and assistant, a Miss Evens and Singleton later a Miss Young, Miss Lanigan and so on up to the present day one of them being a Miss Stauf, who is now teaching at Hawthorne having given a most wonderful record of good work to the scholars of Old Mount Olive.

**Winners of the 2011 Circle in the Square
Quilt Show**

- Best of ShowNancy Hahn
First Prize:Doris McCall
Sandy Panagos
Terri Kanyuck
Katy Conde
Marjorie Hoeltzel
Suzanne Marshall
Dolores Keaton (small quilt)
Second Prize: Linda Gabel
Wanetha Ebker
Jeanne Wilton
Nancy Hahn
Suzanne Marshall
Lynn Isenberg
Cherie Moore (small quilt)