

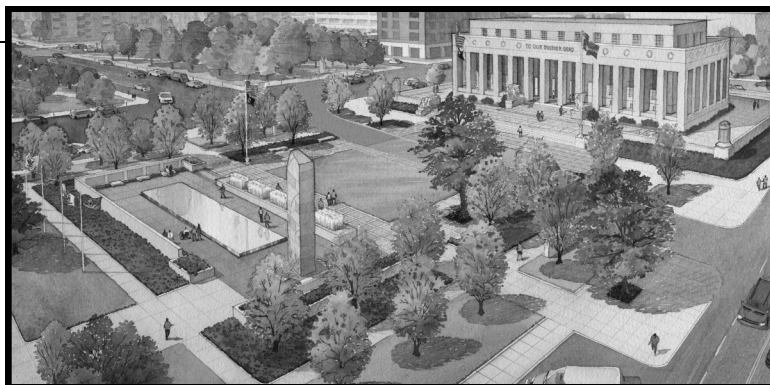
August 2016

ILLUMINATIONS

quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

Annual Meeting

*Hear about the new
Soldiers Memorial
and museum*



At our annual dinner Oct. 6 at the library, we will hear about the renewal of the Soldiers Memorial and museum downtown. Last November, the Missouri History Museum signed an agreement with the city of St. Louis for a multimillion dollar renovation of the memorial to create a museum to honor military service, veterans and their families. The museum will have a permanent exhibition and changing exhibits. In 1925, the city decided on a memorial plaza to honor St. Louisans who lost their lives serving in World War I. In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the Memorial, which was in the neoclassical style, with art deco sculptural figures. The military museum opened to the public in 1938.

Our speaker will be Karen M. Goering, managing director of operations for the Missouri History Museum. A thirty-year veteran of the museum, she served as acting director in 1987-8 when the museum was joining the Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District. She oversaw the planning and construction of the Library and Research Center 1988-91 and renovation and expansion of the museum 1996-2000. A recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Midwest Museum Association, she chairs the Forest Park Advisory Board and serves on the board of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

Reservations for the dinner must be received by Fri., Sept. 30.

TICKET ORDER FORM

Annual Dinner of the Historical Society of University City
6:30 pm Thursday Oct. 6 University City Public Library 6701 Delmar Blvd.

Your name and address: _____

Your email _____

Quantity: _____ member tickets at \$30 _____ nonmember tickets at \$35

Seeking Long-Established Local Businesses

A plea for information

The Historical Society of University City is creating a list of businesses that have been a part of our U. City business community for 50 or more years (any business open by 1966, and still operating today). If you know of one of these long-time businesses, or if you own or work for one, please email us at

ucityhistory@hotmail.com

Send us their name and address and any history you know about this business. Thanks for your help.

66/STL

Exhibition covers local stretch of famed road

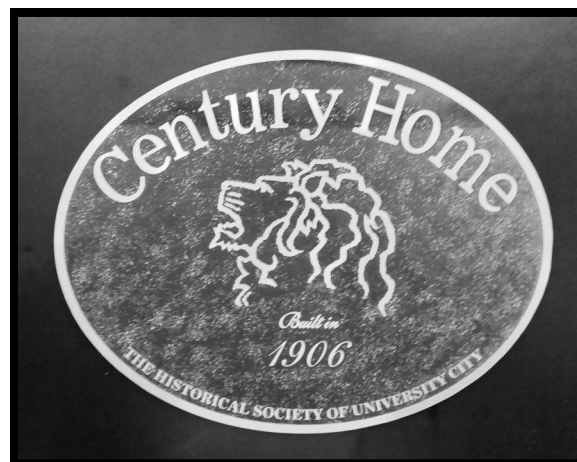
St. Louis was the largest city by far on Route 66 between its start in Chicago and end in Los Angeles. The exhibit at the Missouri History Museum covers the part of the Mother Road that passed through St. Louis, by ever-shifting routes. Highlighted are the Coral Courts Motel (where rooms rented by the hour for the convenience of truckers who might want an afternoon nap, not illicit lovers as local lore would have it), a truck from the Dust Bowl era and a vintage Corvette, built at the GM plant in north St. Louis. A video traces the road through the rest of Missouri. Though I-44 replaced 66 in the '80s, much of the old road remains intact, and businesses along it are reviving and catering to tourists who have not forgotten the good old days. The exhibition is free and continues until July 2017.

Here at HSUC

We're busy

*About 24 people from Laclede Grove Retirement Center toured City Hall with HSUC docents on July 25; another group tours Aug. 9.

*We continue to research Century Homes for our next mailing. But if you live in a University City house built in 1916 or before, you needn't wait to hear from us. Please get in touch with us (contact info below), providing whatever information you have on your house's construction date. *David Linzee, editor of this newsletter since 2009, is also a mystery novelist. His latest, *Spur of the Moment*, was recently published by Coffeetown Press of Seattle. It is set entirely in St. Louis, apart from a brief road trip to Chicago. The plot links two St. Louis institutions of international stature, one an opera company, the other a medical research center. Available as an ebook or paperback from amazon.com



The Historical Society of University City

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Bullfight in U. City

Dark side of World's Fair

The 1904 World's Fair brought people and customs from all over the world to St. Louis. Sadly, local showmen often exploited the visitors. An attempt to put on a Spanish bullfight ended in arson and murder.

It happened in what was not yet University City on Sunday, June 5, 1904. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter, Clark M'Adams, gave the location as "a quarter-mile southwest of the Epworth Hotel." The hotel still stands at Melville and Washington and is now an apartment building owned by Washington University. So the bullfight venue would have been in what is now Ames Place.

The show was mounted by Richard Norris, who advertised it in the *Post*, promising thrills and spectacle. Touts with megaphones were stationed along the streetcar lines to direct crowds headed for the fairgrounds to the bullfight. Admission was expensive at one dollar, but the sight of genuine Spanish toreadors in gold and black suits with red capes excited interest. The venue was a new amphitheater, described as the biggest in St. Louis, seating 12,000. It was half-full when the show began.

The Cummins Wild West Show, the opening act, marched from the fairgrounds to the amphitheatre but met a surly reception. One of the catcalls was, "We want a bull, not a Sitting Bull." So the matadors entered in the traditional procession. Among them was Manuel Cervera, introduced as "one of the most famous bull-fighters Spain has ever had, the favorite of the King."

Before the show could begin, deputies from the St. Louis County Sheriff's office arrived with orders to stop the fight. They jumped into the ring and got into a



Don Manuel Cervera

pushing and shoving match with the showmen, including Norris himself. The show was canceled, but Norris refused to refund the ticket money. The deputies could not control the angry crowd.

Deciding to put on the show themselves, some members of the audience went to the bullpens and brought the animals into the ring. The crowd was expecting fierce beasts imported from Spain, but these turned out to be "kind-eyed steers" from East St. Louis. Boys and men tried to get the steers to fight by pulling their tails and throwing things at them. The melee struck the *Post* reporter as hilarious, but it's likely to seem cruel to a reader today. "A woman from one of the humane societies"

(Continued on page 4)

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Address Service Requested

Inside

*Annual Dinner ticket order form

*Local businesses info sought

*U. City bullfight

(Continued from page 3)

leapt into the ring and tried to guide the frightened cattle out of the arena, but the crowd trapped them and continued to torment them.

The disorder intensified into "a riot in which windows were smashed, in which pistols flashed, and out of which came many a bleeding and broken head." Finally the mob set the amphitheater on fire. Happily the animals and the bullfighters got out alive. This was the first test for the World's Fair Special Fire Department. The amphitheater burned to the ground, leaving "a black round scar." But the firemen did succeed in preventing the fire from spreading to the nearby fairgrounds. Five men were arrested for arson and riot.

Three days later, the *Post* reported that Cervera had been fatally shot by another matador, the Irish-American Carleton Bass. Under arrest, Bass claimed that Cervera had attacked him with a knife. The bullfighters were arguing because they hadn't been paid and were stranded in St. Louis. Norris, by Bass's account, was a brazen con artist. He had brought the steers from East St. Louis. Seeing them, Bass had protested that the bullfight would be a travesty. Norris assured him it would never take place; he'd arranged with the sheriff to stop the show at the last moment, after he'd collected the ticket money. He persuaded Bass to parade the matadors for \$250. Cervera collected the check, but said it had bounced. Bass suspected he had pocketed the cash. This led to the fatal argument. Bass added that Cervera wasn't a real bullfighter at all.