

# illuminations

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

## From Anschluss to U. City

*Hitler foe settled here*



*Schuschnigg in 1950*

In the World War II era, many European artists, intellectuals and other prominent persons escaped the Nazis and fled to America. Thomas Mann, Billy Wilder and Hedy Lamarr found refuge in Hollywood. Kurt von Schuschnigg ended up in University City.

Schuschnigg was less fortunate than the others, who got out before the war. He couldn't flee, because he was the Chancellor of Austria. Schuschnigg, a World War I veteran, lawyer and politician, became Chancellor when Austrian Nazis assassinated his predecessor in 1934. For four years he struggled against Hitler's attempts to absorb his country. In March 1938 German troops marched into Austria, and were welcomed by many Austrians. Schuschnigg felt that resistance would lead only to futile bloodshed. He resigned on March 11

and was arrested the next day. He spent the next seven years in concentration camps.

American troops freed him just before VE day. He emigrated to the U.S. and got a job teaching political science and international law at Saint Louis University in 1948. "On the street few recognize the teacher with the battered briefcase as a one-time world figure," wrote the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1949. He told the newspaper that he would have preferred to live in Oregon, which reminded him of his homeland. He found St. Louis rather hot. But he liked the Muny Opera and Budweiser. The Mississippi, he noted dryly, was the same muddy color as the "blue" Danube.

With his wife, daughter and son, he settled first in a Central West End apartment. Later he moved to a house in Kirkwood. In the early '60s he moved to an apartment at 7316 Pershing Blvd. in University City. He would drive his Studebaker to campus. He wrote books about the great events of the '30s. He was a frequent lecturer about world events on campus and around town and occasionally interviewed by the press. In 1969, the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* said he was known at SLU as "the tall handsome shambling professor of extreme courtesy and frustrating reticence to

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The Historical Society

of University City

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Historical Society and gift items

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at the University City Library.

## A Message from the President

by Eleanor Mullin

I'm pleased to report that on May 4, we accomplished one of our missions--The Lions were inspected by Bob Marti, the Midwest's only conservator of outdoor statuary. Our Fire Department graciously orchestrated the event with the equipment to take Mr. Marti up to the Lions. Board member Ed Nickels rode along to document the event, and will be sharing the pictures he took. We do not have the report yet, but Ed said there seemed to be a lot of surface cracking. So once that is in hand, we will begin the process of repair.

Esley Hamilton's program in April was well attended and received. We are lucky to have his expertise available to us.

Our new mayor, Shelley Welsch, attended the evening. As a founding member of the Sutter Meyer Society, her interest in our history is a given. Mayor Welsch contacted me within days of her election asking for historical pictures that can be displayed in her office. We look forward to her continued interest in, and promotion of the Historical Society during her administration.

Don't forget that our Century Home Plaque is available. I know a number of you live in homes that were built a century ago, and we are currently cross ref-

erencing information on this. Sometime this summer we will be sending a letter to owners of these homes. As a member of HSUC, your cost is \$100.00--non-members pay \$125.00 You don't have to wait for a letter--if you think your home is eligible and want a plaque, contact us.

2010 is another landmark year in the history of U. City. Our Fire Department and School District were both founded in 1910. And we hosted the Women's League Convention that year also. We intend to participate in celebrations for all of these.

Finally, I hope you have had success, or are about to, with my request that you 'recruit' new members for HSUC. I sent an email to a dozen friends--past and present residents, and, Bingo!-- four of them joined. I'll even up the ante--if you bring in five new members, we'll give you your choice of one of our pamphlets or prints.

Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting, Monday, October 4.

## A Block Too Far

*Historical Society criticizes trolley terminus*

Most U. Citians are familiar with the grand plan for a trolley running from the History Museum in Forest Park to the west end of the Delmar Loop. The hope of Joe Edwards and other trolley supporters is that the tram will be popular with tourists and other visitors and will help spread the Loop entertainment district eastward along Delmar to DeBaliviere. The Historical Society wishes the project well, but has reservations about the current plan for the west terminus.

The proposal is a roundabout in front of City Hall, and its supporters say it will improve traffic conditions and provide a handsome setting for the Lion Gates and City Hall.

The Historical Society believes that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. The plan would extend the trolley beyond a busy commercial area where it would be a convenience into a more serene institutional and residential area where it would be a nuisance. Parking spaces for City Hall would be lost, and emergency vehicles would be impeded. There could also be legal difficulties with the funding; the Civic Plaza is a registered Historic District, and it may be illegal to use federal funds to make such alterations to it.

The more practical and desirable alternative has the added benefit of being the historically accurate one. The old streetcar route that gave our neighborhood its name made a loop at Kingsland. The new streetcar should also end at the Kingsland intersection. This busy crossroads is the natural end of the commercial district. It also has the advantage of proximity to a large parking lot, where visitors could leave their cars and transfer to the streetcar.

## Quilt Winner

Maureen Harris of High Ridge won the Circle in the Square Quilters/Historical Society quilt raffle, held last October.

## Reflections on the Past

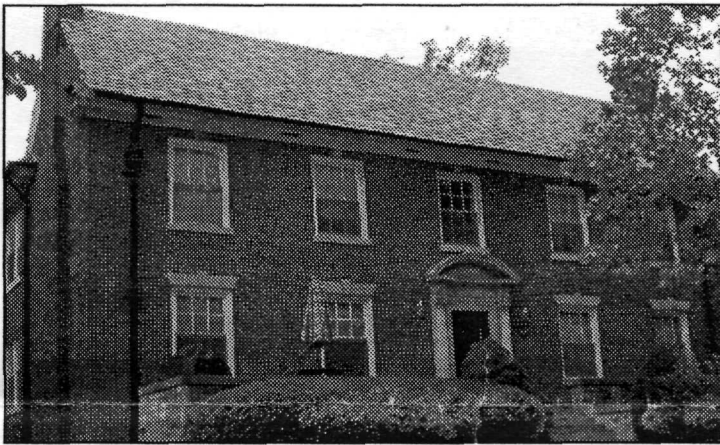
As part of the 2010 Sculpture Series, Catherine Graham of Washington University has placed imaginative, history-themed works along the Delmar Loop and Civic Plaza. A map is available at City Hall, 6801 Delmar.



Schuschnigg, continued from p. 1

talk about his past. He taught in a haze of his own cigarette smoke and the girls in his class would sit there and wonder whether they should dare to volunteer to sew the buttons on his old coat.”

When he retired in 1967, he said, “It’s a strange thing—St. Louis is the place I’ve spent, uninterrupted for the past 18 years, the best time of my life.” He moved back to his hometown of Innsbruck, Austria, to be near his children and grandchildren. He told a visiting reporter that he missed the clam chowder at Pope’s Cafeteria. He died in 1977. His personal papers are kept at SLU.



7316 Pershing, Schuschnigg's home

## Annual Dinner Preview

*And spring programs review*

The annual dinner has a new date: Monday, October 4. The speaker will be Harry Weber, native-born St. Louisan and nationally-known sculptor. The statues of famous Cardinals in front of Busch Stadium are his work. He will show a film about his riverfront statues of Lewis and Clark, and give us an update on the Chuck Berry statue soon to be installed in the Loop across from Blueberry Hill.

The spring programs featured speakers who brought to life U. City and St. Louis in the early years of the Twentieth Century.

On March 23, Ilene Murray gave a presentation on the book “University City, Missouri: Its People and Events 1906-1931” which she wrote with her late husband, Edwin Murray. “It was truly a labor of love,” she said, explaining that the early 1900s were a fascinating era: “There was so much excitement in the world—it was a fitting backdrop for the founding of U. City.” The book celebrates the individuals who helped the city begin. When the petition to incorporate was filed with

the state in 1906, most of the population lived on Olive Road or north. She uncovered some dubious signers, including children. “Was it legitimate?” she asked, and answered the question with a smile. “It got us U. City.” From the start, this was a community of education, the arts and diversity. Early residents included two female doctors, a mother and daughter, and a well-known sculptor. Five U Citians died in World War 1. In the ‘20s, the city had a population of 7,000. Mayor August Heman deserves to be remembered for picking up the pieces after founder E.G. Lewis left. Leading U. City was arduous; three of our first five mayors died in office. Famous later residents were William Bernoudy, architect, Bing Devine, Cardinals manager, and humanitarian Tom Dooley, M.D. Tennessee Williams graduated from U. City High in 1929. The book also contains genealogical information to help readers trace ancestors in U. City. It is available for sale at the public library, 6701 Delmar, or can be ordered at [ucityhistory.org](http://ucityhistory.org).

On April 20, Esley Hamilton gave the audience a slideshow tour of a city most of us had never seen before: St. Louis, circa 1900. It was a city growing fast, spreading west, building grand buildings— then knocking them down, because they’d fallen into disrepair, or gone out of architectural fashion, or had just been left behind in the east. Via Hamilton’s slides, we traveled to the “hospital corner” of Arsenal and Kingshighway, and viewed the now-vanished County Poor House and Social Evil Hospital (They didn’t mince words in the Victorian era!). Next was South Broadway, and a long stretch of row-houses, of which only one slice, the Eugene Field House, remains. We saw cast-iron buildings with brick frontages in Laclede’s Landing. Similar buildings survive in downtown Manhattan, but almost all are gone from here. We toured Washington Avenue, lined with fashionable shops and restaurants as well as the Lindell Hotel, which supplied material for the artificial ruin in the fountain of Tower Grove Park. Then it was off to the French Market neighborhood, similar to but more imposing than its southern neighbor, Soulard. Downtown featured imposing buildings housing important civic institutions: the Tudor style Central High School, the Second Empire style Four Courts Building, the many-columned Merchants Exchange and the Exposition Hall, which housed a convention hall and a music auditorium bigger than Powell Hall. “It’s hard to believe people let these facilities disappear from the city,” Hamilton commented, “but they did.” One of our last stops was Piety Hill, an area of imposing Protestant churches, all demolished for the Mill Creek Valley project in the 1950s. “They cleared the site for the developers,” Hamilton said, “but there were no developers.”



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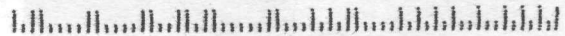
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*Inside--*

- \*Our view on trolley roundabout
- \*Annual dinner preview

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*City line marker on Manchester Blvd.*

### **The Big Spike**

A monument like this used to stand on the south side of Delmar Blvd, on the corner of Limit Avenue. It isn't there anymore. That's all I can remember about it, so I asked around. Former City Manager Ollendorf said, "The City didn't tell us when they put it up, and they didn't tell us when they took it down." St. Louis Alderwoman Lyda Krewson said it disappeared in the course of sidewalk repairs, date unknown. St. Louis County Preservation Historian Esley Hamilton remembered that it was there. The City Landmarks association didn't know anything about it, and the research librarians of U. City and UMSL couldn't find any information.

Time for an appeal to HSUC members. Anybody know when the Big Spike went up, and when it came down? The reasons behind its rise and fall? Were there ever any border spikes, besides those in U. City and Maplewood? Please email me at davidlinzee@yahoo.com if you have information.