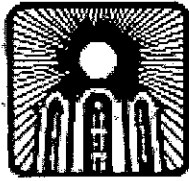


May 2012

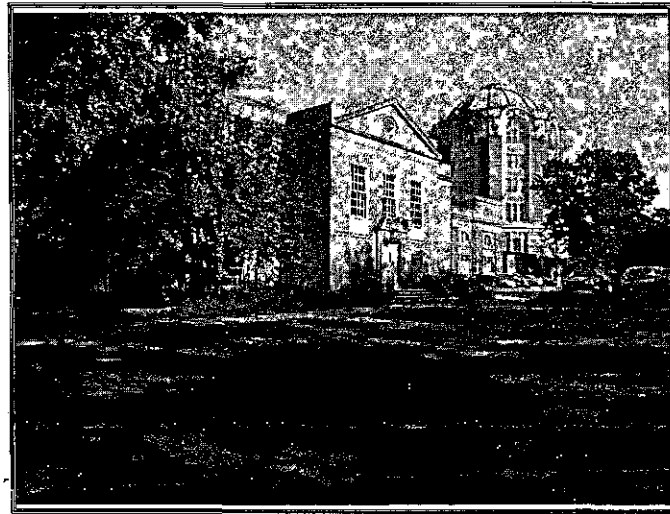


ILLUMINATIONS

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

Treasure Hunt

by Eleanor Mullin



The Old Library Building, 630 Trinity Avenue, with City Hall in the background.

The Historical Society

of University City

6701 Delmar Blvd.

University City, Missouri 63130

Books published by the

Historical Society and gift items

can be purchased year round at

the University City Library.

Visit our website at

ucityhistory.org and our blog at
patch.com

One day a few months ago, Sue Rehkopf got a phone call from a former board member, saying he saw a dumpster outside of the old library, and that many boxes of papers were being tossed into it. Sue emailed me, and I immediately emailed Mayor Welsch to state that we wanted to see what might be in the building of interest to the Historical Society.

The response was immediate. Jared Agee, Deputy Director/Building Commissioner, asked me to pick a time to go through the building. The following Friday afternoon, Sue, my husband T.J., and I met Jared.

The City is cleaning out

the old library building, and will be using it for storage of city documents. You may know that the second floor housed the University City Residential Service for many years, and a few other organizations. While there was plenty of 'stuff', it was not like we were crawling through a maze.

What a treasure hunt! First, we retrieved two original plat books whose location was known to us. We already had the third. Sadly, one is in bad shape, as it was simply laid on the floor and sustained water damage. Jared, seeing our interest in this, told us the City had scanned into

Continued on p. 3

May 2012

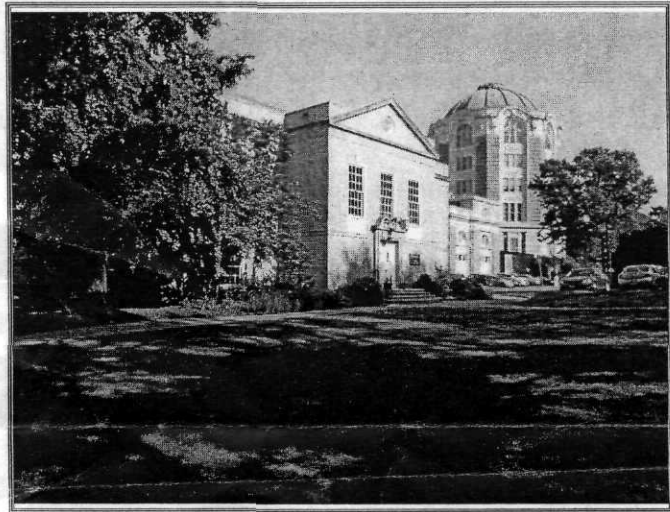


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A Message from the President by Eleanor Mullin

News abounds this spring! First, our website is finally operational, thanks to the help of Ying Lin, who generously volunteered her time and expertise. Ying formerly worked for the U. City Library. Ying, we can't thank you enough. The address is: www.ucityhistory.org. There will be additions, of course, but do take a look.

We have booked our annual dinner, which is to be Tuesday, October 9, at the Pasta House at Delmar and Bonhomme.

Charles Henry, City Manager from 1959 to 1975, has written a book, *A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011* about our city. He has graciously given us the rights to it, we are making several copies to be placed in various libraries, and it

will be posted on our website. He has also created a documentary about this. He is working with the U. City CALOP commission, and hopefully this will be available sometime this year. For more about this, see the article below.

This was a huge month for 'preserving our history.' Please read my article about what was molding away—some of it literally—in the old library building.

Finally, I know we are all concerned about craziness in the Loop. My husband asked me to point out that such disturbances are certainly historical—the Delmar Race Track was the site of more than one mob scene. (See our April 20 blog post "Trouble at the Track" on U. City Patch.) History does, indeed, repeat itself.

HSUC Publishes Book by Former City Manager

*Charles Henry was in charge during challenging
years for U. City*

The Historical Society has sponsored a new publication. Ten copies of the book *A History of Community Sustainability, 1958-2011* by Charles Henry, former City Manager of University City, have been printed. They will be donated to public libraries and schools. The lavishly-illustrated book is based on a presentation Henry gave at the public library when he visited University City in autumn 2009. Henry states that he focuses on "the progress of successful urban renewal projects in University City from 1959-1975." This was the period when the city battled "redlining" and other real estate practices aimed at encouraging and profiting from "white flight."

Henry, a native of Reading, Pennsylvania, graduated from Princeton University and went straight into the Navy, where he served in the Pacific campaign during World War II. He decided on a career in public service and returned to Princeton for a Master's in politics and public administration. He came to University City in 1959 and served as city manager for the next 16 years. He was also a consultant on the field staff of Public Administration Services, a prominent non-profit organization, which for 70

years or more focused on improving the operations of public agencies at all three levels of government, both here and abroad under private contracting arrangements.

Upon leaving University City in 1975, he was appointed City Manager of Eugene, Oregon where he served from 1975-1980. That time was the era of planning, financing and constructing most of the world class, Hult Performing Arts Center and also the Eugene Conference and Convention Center, the Hilton Hotel plus all the adjoining parking structures. This downtown development was created with a \$60,000,000+ investment of public and private funds—during a recession.

In 1981 after retiring from Eugene, he worked in Washington D.C. for the Housing and Urban Development Agency as an in-house consultant for research and development projects. In 1986, he returned to Eugene, where he served as a volunteer mentor for city managers.

Billikens at the Lion Gates?

University City is now so closely identified with Washington University that many people assume the city took its name for Wash. U. But in 1908, founder E.G. Lewis tried to lure Saint Louis University to his new community. Lewis had talked up Washington University's move to its new Hilltop (now Danforth) campus as one of the main benefits of the site of his new city in 1903. But he was fond of universities—he would eventually found his own, the short-lived People's University—and he had plenty of open space as well as high aspirations to make University City the Athens of America, so it's characteristic that he made a bid for the senior educational institution in the area. On June 21, 1908, the

St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Father James Sullivan S.J., a director of Saint Louis University, said Lewis had offered him two to five acres. They had toured U. City and Sullivan had favored a site on Delmar, just west of the Magazine Building (now City Hall). "It is not unlikely that the University will accept it soon," Father Sullivan told the *Post*. "University City is an ideal place." Obviously, the good priest's crystal ball was somewhat clouded. In fact, very clouded, because he said SLU was bound to move west: "We realize that business is pushing us away and that we will eventually have to go further away from the heart of the city, which Grand Avenue is getting to be."

Parks Tour

History and Nature

Sue Rehkopf, archivist of the Historical Society, and Ewald Winkler of the Department of Parks and Recreation will be the guides for a bus tour of U. City parks. Tours will depart at 1 and 3 pm Sunday, June 24. A reception with refreshments at Heman Park tennis pavilion will follow the tours. Tickets are \$50 and benefit the U. City Parks Foundation. Info: (314) 726-1417.

New Local History Book

From Hamilton & Harris

A new picture book by two leading local historians surveys the parks of St. Louis. Esley Hamilton, St. Louis County preservation historian, covers the far-flung and varied parks of the County, from Laumeier Sculpture Park in the southwest to Faust Park, with its carousel and butterfly house, in the west. Coauthor NiNi Harris, who wrote *Legacy of Lions*, the Historical Society's history of University City, covers City of St. Louis parks, from the old (Tower Grove) to the new (Citygarden). Peter Raven, formerly of the Missouri Botanical Garden, provides the Foreword. A book signing will be held at the Missouri History Museum at 7 pm June 19. *St. Louis Parks* is available online, in bookstores and at author events. For information, call (314) 644-3400. The hardcover book with color illustrations costs \$35.

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computers the next set of plat books and offered them to us. So we now have that set, too. Then we found several framed posters from past U. City Spring House Tours. We had retrieved some earlier, and now we have a complete set and some spares. Finally, T. J. had roamed off into the stacks, and discovered a few dozen printer's plates. Each eight-inch square shows a detailed section of the city. They were used to illustrate the 1931 Comprehensive City Plan. We had some already, and assume this completes the set.

We certainly had a productive (and dusty!) few hours. Keep this in mind when closing out/cleaning up a long lived-in U. City home, or the possessions of a long time U. City resident. Don't throw out those old articles/yearbooks/pictures if they involve our city. Get in touch, and one of us will be glad to look at your treasures.