

# THE LINCOLN PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

## NEWSLETTER

Established 1955

February, March, April, 2018

Hours: 1:00pm-6:00pm, Wednesday & Saturday

1335 Southfield Rd, Lincoln Park, MI 48146

313-386-3137

lpmuseum@gmail.com

www.lphistorical.org/ also on Facebook

### BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP

The Board of Trustees of the Historical Society announces the annual Spring elections for Board officers. Nominations will open at the general meeting on Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, and will close at the Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, at which time the election of officers will be held. Current membership in the Historical Society is all that is required to be eligible to hold office.

Board Offices include: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and four at-large Trustee positions. If you are interested in more information about serving on the Board, please contact the museum/society office at 313-386-3137, or via email at lpmuseum@gmail.com.

### & OUR 2018 SPEAKER SERIES BEGINS

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, noted historian George Gouth, of Taylor, will present a program on the Civil War era's "Iron Brigade", the famous Michigan 24<sup>th</sup> Division which was organized Downriver in 1862, responding to President Abraham Lincoln's call to arms; and on April 4<sup>th</sup> we will host a round-table headed by representatives from historical organizations located in the Downriver region. They will discuss both individual and shared missions. Join us for what is sure to be an interesting discussion.

The evening programs begin at 7:00 p.m. at the museum and are open to the public at no charge.

### A Special Thanks

The Historical Society's 2017 Annual Giving Campaign recently raised monies toward the new air conditioning system that was installed this past fall. Over \$600 was raised from member donations. We are very grateful to these generous friends for their contributions. Thank you!

### February Birthday Celebration for LP Artist Gary Grimshaw

On Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, the historical society will host a celebration for renowned poster artist, Lincoln Park native **Gary Grimshaw**, on what would have been Gary's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday. "Gary Grimshaw: The Master Artists Studio" exhibit continues at the museum and has been extended through early 2020. This special event will also serve to raise funds for both the Lincoln Park Historical Society and the Gary Grimshaw Legacy Foundation. One of the Foundation's important goals is to complete the copyright registration of Gary's works. Gary passed away in January of 2014.

Tickets to the affair are \$15 for Historical Society members and \$20 for the general public. The program begins at 2:00pm with a reception with tea and appetizers, followed by speaker **Mrs. Gary (Laura) Grimshaw** presenting a slide show and talk about Gary's life and art, along with special guest Detroit artist **Mark Arminski**. Other members of Gary's family and friends will be in attendance. Space is limited so please make your reservations early, by

contacting the museum office, open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1pm- to 6pm, or by phone 313-386-3137.

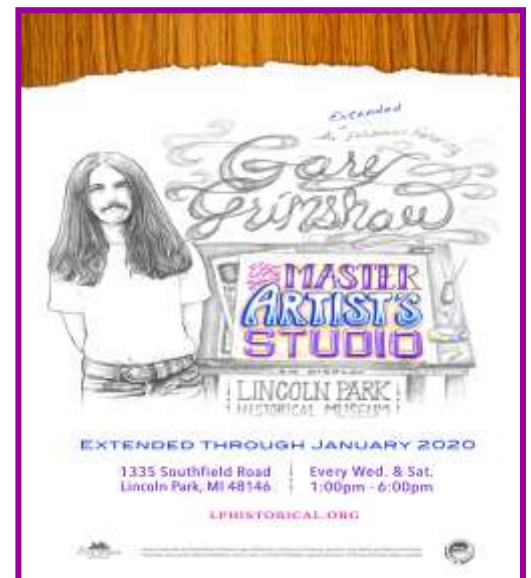




Photo: from *Engineering News Record*, Vol. 81, No. 17; October 24, 1918  
 [Ford Industries collection of the Lincoln Park Historical Museum]

## The War and the Ford Plant on the Rouge 100 YEARS

A century ago this month, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the ground was laid, literally, for a first production facility – a boat-building plant – at what would become famously known the world over as Henry Ford’s “The Rouge”. Negotiations with contractors and with the U.S. Navy were completed and papers were signed on that date. However, a little background is necessary.

Henry Ford had acquired the acreage along the Rouge River in Dearborn in 1916, with an eye for developing a future manufacturing complex benefiting from easy water approach by ships as well as having direct railroad access. Transportation issues were crucial to Ford’s determination to reduce costs and create a manufacturing hub for convenience and efficiency. Eventually, the raw materials, i.e., iron ore, coal, lumber, needed for production would all be transported from Ford-owned mines and mills directly to the plant. Vertical production it was called, controlling all elements of the manufacturing process toward creating an end-product, whether it be boats, cars, or tractors. It was a grand inspiration.

In April 1917, after nearly three years of U.S. neutrality during the world conflict, it was Germany’s unrestricted submarine warfare that finally brought the U.S. into the war. By the end of the year the Navy Department had reached agreement with Ford to produce submarine chasers, dubbed “Eagle” boats after a newspaper editorial called for “an eagle to scour the seas and pounce upon and destroy every German submarine.” It was hoped that construction could begin quickly as military mobilization all across the country was getting underway; factory production of materials and equipment and the drafting and training of troops were all set in motion over the summer of 1917.

With the speed of development and production demanded by the Navy Department, Ford’s expertise at mass production would seem an ideal fit. In fact, Ford’s system was a radical if not revolutionary departure from time-honored shipbuilding methods. Ford and the Navy

agreed that the submarine chasers, needing to be smaller than most naval war ships, would be more adaptable to mass production. At Dearborn he would employ, with some alterations, his assembly-line manufacturing process. However, production of the boats in Dearborn was delayed into early 1918 due to the small matter of needing a factory to make them.

That late Friday afternoon in February, 1918, before the ink on the contracts was dry, the building of the new plant took off with unprecedented speed. The photo displayed here shows work which began on Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, the excavation and concrete crews working in tandem to quickly lay the foundations. Over 25,000 cubic yards of concrete were placed. With a plant now covering some 18 acres including the major buildings: the huge 1,700 foot-long, 300 foot-wide “Building B” assembly plant, and the punch shop [tool and die], the entire enterprise was up and running in less than three months! Railroad tracks were used to bring in materials and equipment and access roads were constructed at the same time; the closest street car was almost two miles away. Two-thousand men were employed at the height of the construction operations, most of these trucked in. The first keel was laid in May and the boat labor force itself would climb to over 5,000 by the fall. [Information in the previous paragraph, including the exclamation point, was edited from articles published in the *Engineering News Record* issues of October 17, October 24, and October 31, 1918.]

The Navy had contracted for 100 of the anti-submarine ships, and finally on October 10, 1918, the first “Eagle” boat was launched. When the war ended a month later the plant had produced just three of the boats for the Navy. None of the boats were used in the war effort. While 60 “Eagle” boats were eventually completed and delivered, production on the remaining contract was halted by the Navy. Some of the boats were later used by the U.S. Coast Guard and saw use in World War II.

In 1919, Rouge Building B was re-tooled by Ford for other uses, primarily assembly of the popular Fordson tractor\*. Soon the plant was at a higher pace of activity with a product Ford knew much better than boats.

This year, in addition to marking a century of Rouge production, also sees the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first automobile to be completely built at the plant, the 1928 Model A. Along with our upcoming Rouge exhibit this summer, we will be hosting the **Downriver Model A Rendezvous** in Lincoln Park to take place on **Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>** at Youth Center Park. Stay tuned for more information in the May newsletter.

**Please plan to stop in the museum from June 6<sup>th</sup> through August 29<sup>th</sup> for the special exhibit: “The Rouge and the Model A”**

\*Prior to 1920, Fordson tractors had been manufactured elsewhere in Dearborn. More about that fascinating enterprise in our next newsletter.

## HERITAGE PLAZA

The 2018 dedication of new bricks for the Lincoln Park Heritage Plaza will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> on the museum lawn; orders for the bricks are being accepted through **Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**. Costs for the engraved bricks remain at \$100 for the 4" by 8" brick and \$150 for the 8" by 8" brick, with all proceeds helping the Lincoln Park Historical Museum. Order forms are available at the museum, at City Hall and at the LP Public Library, or call us for more information.

### A Request for Help

Looking ahead at the coming year, **we are seeking help in our current research on two fronts:** finding the names of Ford Rouge plant workers who resided in Lincoln Park and who may have been employed at the plant anytime between 1918 and the 1930s or later. We plan to collect names through the time of our summer Rouge exhibit and beyond.

We are also in the process of researching names of those who served from this area in The Great War, the First World War (1917-1919). These would have been members of Ecorse Township families living here before Lincoln Park was incorporated in 1921. We are fortunate to know of a few of these men, including two who served with the Michigan-based 339<sup>th</sup> Infantry or "Polar Bear" Division, assisting Allied efforts in North Russia against the Bolsheviks from the summer of 1918 to June of 1919: **Benjamin V. Goodell** and **Walter A. Pegouske**. Mr. Goodell suffered from gas poisoning during the war and died of complications in 1923. Lincoln Park VFW Post 552 was named in his honor when it was formed in 1930. Mr. Pegouske returned home from the war and raised a family in Lincoln Park. He was a founding member of American Legion Post No. 67.

In the years following the Great War, and as the area and nearby industry continued to grow, many young veterans moved to our city from elsewhere and started families and careers. These men in turn would help to found the city's two veterans organizations, American Legion Post 67 and VFW Post 552, chartered in 1930 and 1931, respectively.

## IN MEMORIAM



**Genevieve Rickerman**

December 27, 2017  
Society Life Member No. 100

**Audrey Sanders**

January 23, 2018

We share our sympathies with the families of these two great ladies.

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

The public is invited to attend all Historical Society events.

**Saturday, February 3** Museum re-opens; exhibit highlighting "Recent Museum Gifts" opens and runs through April 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 pm to 5:00 p.m.**

Gary Grimshaw Birthday Celebration (see front page article; ticketed event.)

**Wednesday, March 7, 7:00 p.m.**

Evening program meeting: "The Civil War 'Iron Brigade' and its Downriver Connection", with historian George Gouth.

**Wednesday, April 4, 7:00 p.m.**

Evening program meeting; election of officers; "Downriver Historical Round Table", with representatives of local historical organizations.

**Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> is the DEADLINE** for the 2018 Heritage Plaza brick orders; these will be dedicated on Saturday, May 19, 2018 at the museum.

**Wednesday, May 2 through May 30** Movie Props exhibit ; a lead-in to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Downriver Comic-Con held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at LP High School.

The Prop Guys are dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of rarely seen movie props, costumes and memorabilia. The museum's May exhibit will feature pieces from the collection of **Dylan Sides** and **Rudolph Michelle**, highlighted by a selection of cool movie props, including this miniature Johnny 5 from the film, "Short Circuit 2". Come see a piece of Hollywood history!



## WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL & CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION

A huge THANK YOU to all who supported efforts to raise funds toward replacing Lincoln Park’s First World War Memorial, a brass plaque that was stolen from the war memorial monument in 2013. All donations accumulated to a total of 1,100 dollars and will be used toward the cost of replacing the plaque and its installation; and to assist with cleaning and restoring both the marble memorial monument and the French 75mm field gun that sits alongside it in Memorial Park.

The famous “75” was the primary artillery piece used along the Western Front by the U.S. Army and the French alike. Lincoln Park’s “75” was acquired eighty years ago from the U.S. Ordnance Department as a part of the Lincoln Park World War memorial dedicated on May 30, 1938. [More about the war efforts will appear in our May-Memorial issue.]

The new memorial – which replicates the original 1938 plaque in size, design and text – will be dedicated at this year’s **Lincoln Park Memorial Day ceremony held on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>**, following the city’s Memorial Day Parade.

If you have ancestors who may have served in the Great War, we hope you will make plans to attend the ceremony on May 20th.

The centennial commemoration of the First World War continues across the country and the world through the coming year, with a culmination on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – the first world Armistice Day (Armistice Day was later changed in the U.S. to Veterans Day). The Lincoln Park Museum has plans for a special exhibit in the fall on the war and Armistice centennial.

For a concise, informative overview of the Great War, you might check out this webpage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXqppJ-L88U>

### *Lincoln Park Historical Society Board 2017-2018*

President/Treasurer	Jim Nelson
Vice President/Secretary	Dolores Walker
Trustee	Bea Partridge
Trustee/Membership Chair	Alyce Riggs
Trustee	Lucille Stroh

Board meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday at 1:30 P.M. The Society Newsletter is published quarterly. To be added to the email list and help us save on postage costs – and receive a color version of the newsletter – please send an email to: [lpmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:lpmuseum@gmail.com)

*Museum Curator & newsletter editor: Jeff Day*  
*Director Emeritus: Muriel Lobb*

The famed French “75” field gun was used by the U.S. Army in the First World War. The artillery piece now located in Memorial Park has been a part of the Lincoln Park War Memorial since 1938.



We are seeking information on the family of **Lyn “Buddy” Osborn** who lived on Lincoln Street in the 1930s and 40s. A LPHS class of 1943 graduate, Buddy served in the U.S. Navy and later enjoyed a Hollywood acting career. He died following brain surgery in 1958 at age 32. A special exhibit focusing on Buddy and his “Sci-Fi” career in Hollywood will highlight our next Holiday season.

