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The Muser

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Muskegon Tuberculosis Sanitarium, commonly known as "The San," opened in 1925.

TB or not TB?

by Beryl Gabel, Archivist

Today, when most Muskegon residents think of the old Northshore Hospital, they envision a crumbling building, long abandoned. Yet, when the building was first constructed as the Muskegon Tuberculosis Sanitarium, it was considered modern, a structure of hope where people came to heal. How did a building that once stood for health and treatment in the first half of the 1900s later become a foreboding place people avoided? To try and answer this question, we must first look back in time.

In the early 1900s, many Muskegon doctors and nurses had one thing continuously on their minds: tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis, commonly known as TB or consumption, is an infectious disease caused by strains of mycobacteria and it usually attacks the lungs. Before antibiotics, a large percentage of infected people either died or remained immobilized, and the only recommended treatment was rest and fresh air.

Conscious of the rise in TB cases, in 1905 the Muskegon County Medical Society began working with the state to develop a sanitarium. Muskegon doctors and nurses formed the Tuberculosis Association in 1919 in hopes of finding a way to decrease TB outbreaks. In 1920 there were 131 cases of TB and 40 people died of tuberculosis in Muskegon County. The county later received a \$100,000 bond to build a brand new building with room for 50 beds in 1921. Muskegon Tuberculosis Sanitarium, commonly known as "The San," opened in 1925. People came from all over Michigan and neighboring states. In 1928, due to the increased number of cases and the demand, there was an addition built to accommodate 30 more beds for patients.

Once a person became a patient at the sanitarium, he or she was expected to follow a strict protocol. Some of the sicker patients were not even allowed to get out of bed. Patients were restricted from activities until they could walk a short distance without getting tired. When patients weren't in their rooms resting, they could eat in the dining room and watch plays performed on the small stage. Many patients remember the sanitarium as a place where everyone felt like family, a place where good memories were formed. Patients especially remember times when everyone dressed up for a special Halloween party.

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Halloween Fun 1938

Lakeshore Museum Center

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Hackley & Hume

Historic Site
484 W. Webster Ave.

Fire Barn Museum

510 W. Clay Ave.

Scolnik House

of the Depression Era
504 W. Clay Ave.

Mercantile

430 W. Clay Ave.

The Mission of the Lakeshore Museum Center is to preserve and interpret through exhibits, education and programs, the natural and cultural history of Muskegon County.

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Depression Era Fun!

by Sharon McCullar, Registrar

Look carefully in the Scolnik House and you will find an idea that you can copy for your next party! During the Depression Era, money was often in short supply, so birthdays, graduations and other events were opportunities to celebrate creatively.

Several years ago, a generous donor (we'll call her Mrs. A. to protect her privacy) invited curators to her house to look for artifacts to use in the Scolnik House. Mrs. A. sat down and began to tell us her memories of a childhood in the Great Depression. Then she sent her husband to get "the suitcase." Carefully, she unpacked items, telling us about her mother wearing this or that. Then she smiled and asked "Have you ever worn a paper dress?" A paper dress?! This was why we had come—to get a cool story—and the artifacts to go with it.

She pulled out a dress, made with layers of crepe paper over an old slip, with matching crepe paper hat. This dress was party costume and favor, all in one. The hostess



provided the crepe paper and the guests provided a base garment and creativity. Everyone made colorful dresses and then took their creations home. Mrs. A. gave us that dress and hat to care for and exhibit.

The paper has grown brittle and is starting to fade, so hands-on use at the Scolnik House would be too destructive for it. Therefore, we have

decided to move the original into storage. But we want Mrs. A's legacy and intent to live on in the exhibit, so we made a new dress to put in the house for hands-on discovery. With the help of several other curators, I sewed up a simple muslin dress and followed instructions in a 1922 craft booklet and my creative impulse. Layers of tissue and paper flowers stitched to the muslin base resulted in a lovely dress that is stable and durable enough to handle.

You will find this replica dress and the 1922 craft book in the Scolnik House which is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 4 pm. If you want to try this at your next party, I will be happy to tell you where to get rolls of crepe paper and the simple child's dress pattern I used to replicate Mrs. A's creation.

The Importance of a Good Frame

I am often asked why artwork should be framed, and that question is usually followed by another, asking why it should be done by a professional framer (i.e. not me). The answer is pretty simple—the better the frame, the better the protection it provides.

As the Curator of Exhibits, it is my responsibility to make sure that any artwork we display is properly and safely secured. The materials I have on hand allow me to frame artifacts fairly quickly so that they can go on exhibit temporarily.

A frame's construction is of particular importance, just like the framework of a house. It provides a structure that holds all the other materials together, and gives them support. Artwork is often not of a standard size, and a frame needs to be built specifically for it.

But is a permanent frame really that important? Yes, it definitely is. Recently one of the framed pieces of artwork on display in the auditorium of the main museum fell because the hanging wire broke. The frame was solidly built so the

TB or not TB?

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The sanitarium was also an important place for research and discovery. In 1960, there was an outbreak of TB when an untreated Whitehall youth unwittingly infected 90 children. Dr. Robert A. Clowater treated the children at The San by administering a new drug, isonizod, which prevented a widespread epidemic. By 1963, antibiotics and other drugs were so effective that the sanitarium was turned into a rehabilitation treatment center, and became known as the Northshore Hospital.

It seems that things went downhill from there. In 1971, a mental health unit was added, and in its first two years, 733 patients were served. The hospital was then transformed into a mental institution in 1973. It was at this point that the building couldn't seem to shake the stigma society attached to mental institutions at the time. People began to describe the building as "an eerie place" or a "haunted place" after a girl committed suicide. Northshore Hospital was abandoned in 1977, and after deteriorating over several decades, the building was finally demolished on June 21, 2000.

38 school or group tours from April through June

Three events on the grounds of the Hackley & Hume Historic Site

Have we been busy?

Why, we've been busier than a tick at a hound dog convention! From April through June, the Historic Sites have welcomed 38 school or group tours and have had three events on the grounds of the Hackley & Hume Historic Site. We had an opening reception for the *Unsolved Mysteries: The Shipwreck Thomas Hume* exhibit, the Victorian Girl program, and storyteller Michael Deren, who helped us experience what it was like to be an 1875 ship's captain through stories and songs. We've also had three walk-through style tours accommodating a group attending the Questers District Luncheon, Hot Rod Power Tour members and a bus tour from Indiana. And the season has just begun!

Thank heaven for our fantastic volunteers! Without you, we simply could not be as flexible, nor could we continue to accommodate large groups with the quality tours we are known for.

KIDS!!!

I am allowed to do tours only when no one else is available (it has been rumored that my tours tend to go over the allotted time). Some of my favorite tours are with school groups. The questions I get, or just the observations made, often make me view what I see or say in a different light.

One Christmas I had a home school group with a wide range of ages on a tour. We admired the Hackley first parlor Christmas tree and discussed how Mr. and Mrs. Hackley would have entertained or held special events in the room. We then moved on to the second parlor. I had just explained the window in the chimney and the split flue when a small boy, maybe about four years old, pulled on my jacket. I looked down at this very curious little face and asked him if he had a question. He anxiously asked, "How does Santa get down that chimney? He's too fat!" I suddenly had a room of kids



Santa's chimney

absolutely silent. I just smiled at him and said "Remember when we were in the last room with the big beautiful Christmas tree and I told you that it was the room that would be used for very special times? Well, I think Santa would have used that chimney to come down and it's plenty big enough for him to fit." I was amazed I had come up with an acceptable answer and even more amazed that not one of the big kids laughed or made fun of this little boy.

Recently, I showed a group of third graders the photo of Mrs. Hume and her cat in the library. We "noticed" the kitty wasn't on the window seat and decided we'd keep a look out for it as we continued the tour.

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That naughty kitty!



Test Your Knowledge:

How many teachers lived in the Hume House in 1920?

Answer to last Test Your Knowledge:

What programs are playing on the radio in the upstairs living room of the Scolnik House of the Depression Era?

The downstairs radio plays a variety of programs including "The Shadow," "The Lone Ranger," Jack Benny, and jazz by Glen Miller.

Upstairs, the radio plays a few Fireside Chats by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and a speech by Adolph Hitler.

The President's Fireside Chats were very popular events and Americans would sit by the radio to listen as the President urged them to have faith in the banks and in his New Deal.

If you had a crystal set or broadband radio, when the atmosphere was just right, you could receive radio stations from Europe. This would be a way to keep track of what was happening overseas.

Sign Ups

This year I have been sending out emails to volunteers when it is time to sign up to guide for the following month. The volunteers can email the dates they want to work and I put the dates down on the master calendar. Judy Klemetti (thanks Judy!) then follows up by calling those who do not have email addresses. Signing up by email saves Judy and I many hours of phone tag. So, if you have not given me your email address and would like to be contacted via email, please send it to dawn@lakeshoremuseum.org and I'll put you on the contact list.

"Unsolved Mysteries: The Shipwreck Thomas Hume" explores the disappearance of the lumber schooner in Lake Michigan 120 years ago. The exhibit is on display in the City Barn at the Hackley & Hume Historic Site.

KIDS!!

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We finally finished the tour in the kitchen and the kids immediately spied the naughty kitty drinking out of the fancy china cup on the counter. For a brief second several kids thought the cat was real. I laughed and said, "No it's a stuffed cat." One boy immediately asked, "They stuffed Mrs. Hume's cat?" After several squeals and "that's gross" comments, I was able to explain it was never a real cat and came from the toy store. I sure was glad I hadn't activated the darn thing to move or meow. I was afraid it would knock the cup over and break it if I turned on the motion-activated switch. Had it moved, I'd probably have had a few of the parents squealing too!

So, when you're guiding a tour of mixed ages, remember that what makes sense to the adults in the group may take on a completely different meaning to the kids. This is what we mean when we say, "engage the visitors," and that includes ALL of the visitors on the tour. Be especially aware of the kids and if they look confused or bored, make an extra effort to include them. Ask them if they have questions or to help you locate a certain carving or count fireplaces. One of the volunteers will ask the kids on her tour to help her keep track of the number of people living in the Hume house as they go from room to room and she talks about them. The parents lose track, but the kids almost always get it right.

Keep in mind that everyone, yourself included, will enjoy their Historic Site experience a lot more if the kids are enjoying themselves, and who knows, you might just spark an interest in history in a child who will grow up to become the next generation guide for the Historic Sites. My motto is "You're never too young to be recruited! And you're never too old to learn a new trick or two!"

Speaking of Kids

I am collecting cute quips or funny comments made by the younger set for a future newsletter article. If you have had one of the munchkins say something particularly funny or profound during the tour, let me know. And, if you have a technique for engaging the younger set that really works for you, please share it with the rest of us. As I said previously, "...we're never too old to learn a new trick or two!"

by Mindy Conley, Curator of Exhibits

only damage was a few popped nails in the corner of the frame that hit the floor first. The glass did not shatter, the backing did not come loose, and the artwork is still secure within the frame. Only the backing paper, sealing the backside of the frame, tore. These repairs can be easily and inexpensively made, and the artwork can go back on display in fairly short order.

While a professional frame job may seem costly, the loss of the artwork would be even more so. The frame is like homeowner's insurance. We hope we'll never need the protection it provides, but we sure are glad to have it in place when something happens.

The better the frame,
the better the protection
it provides.



New Insight on Huls Mastodon

by Melissa Horton, Curator of Education

This spring, the Museum invited mastodon expert Dr. Adam Rountrey to come speak to the public on mastodons and mammoths of the Great Lakes region. As interesting as his lecture was, my favorite part came after the public left for the night. The University of Michigan's Dr. Rountrey graciously took a look at the Museum's resident mastodon and what he told us has now changed the story that we will tell!

The mastodon was discovered by the Huls family in Rothbury in 1963. Dr. Rollin H. Baker, Director of the Michigan State University Museum in East Lansing, visited the site and confirmed that it was indeed a mastodon. According to Dr. Baker, the animal's age could be determined from its milk teeth, which had not been shed. He determined that it was nine to 10 years of age.

When the remains were donated to the Lakeshore Museum Center in 1987, we had no reason to challenge this information and have interpreted the remains as a "youngster" for the last 24 years.

When Dr. Rountrey looked at the remains, he knew immediately that she was no baby. He guessed on first glance that she was much older than 10 and asked for photographs to be sent to him so he could compare them to the University of Michigan's collection. It turns out that she was between 30 and 40 years old at the time of her death. Mastodons have a lifespan similar to elephants today and could live up to 65 years of age. With this new information, I will be rewriting the label and we can no longer call her our baby.

Save the Date

by Joni Dorsett, Communications Director

The 2011 Lumber Barons' Ball will be held at the Lakeshore Museum Center on **Saturday, October 1**, so mark your calendars now. This will be the 18th year for this annual fund raising event. The evening includes a gourmet progressive dinner, live entertainment, live and silent auctions and an opportunity to tour the Museum and see what's new.

Volunteers are working to solicit items for the silent auction and secure corporate sponsors. The auction is a great way to showcase your business to the over 200 guests in attendance and to support the museum. All proceeds from the Ball support our Education Programs and Exhibits. Corporate sponsorships are available for \$600 and include admission for six guests and recognition in all printed materials. Individual tickets are \$75.

If you would like more information about the event, to be put on the invitation mailing list or would like to make a donation for the auction, please contact Joni at 722-0278 or joni@lakeshoremuseum.org

Calling All Collectors

For nearly 20 years, we have highlighted the collections of Muskegon County residents in two display cases. Our list for future exhibits is getting short, so we are asking our readers who have collections or who know collectors to get in touch with us.

Through the years we have featured toy pianos, Snoopy, decorative boxes, Sherlock Holmes memorabilia, Santas, cuckoo clocks, Pez containers, the Wizard of Oz, Pinocchio, lighthouses, model ships, campaign buttons and much more. Collections are on display for four months in locked cases.

Do you have a collection you would like to share in our Collector's Corner? Muskegon County residents can contact the museum at (231) 722-0278.



Lakeshore Museum Center

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Lakeshore Museum Center and Mercantile Hours

Weekdays 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Weekends Noon – 4 p.m.

Hackley & Hume Historic Site,
Fire Barn Museum and
Scolnik House
of the Depression Era
Now open through October
Wednesday—Sunday
Noon to 4:00 p.m.

The *Muse* is published six times a year by the Lakeshore Museum Center, formerly the Muskegon County Museum. The Museum is located at 430 W. Clay Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49440. Phone 231-722-0278 or email at info@lakeshoremuseum.org.



Sixth Annual Cemetery Tour

by Jacquelyn Huss, Associate Curator of Education

Join the Lakeshore Museum Center for our Sixth Annual Cemetery Tour. This year's tour will feature Oakwood Cemetery, on **Saturday, September 17 at 10 am.**

Learn about gravestone symbology as well as the history of some of Muskegon's notable families. One of the featured plots is that of Thomas and Margret Hume's two sons, George and Thomas (Tim), and their families. Other featured plots include the Emery family, the Hume grocers, and the Clocks. Call 722-0278 to reserve your spot in this year's tour.

Large white bronze marker belonging to William (1871-1941) and Maud (1873-1913) Jacobsen, and their children.

Blue Star Museums



The Lakeshore Museum Center is participating in the Blue Star Museum program and will offer free admission to the Hackley & Hume Historic Site to all active duty military personnel and their families through Labor Day 2011. Active duty military includes Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and active duty National Guard and Reserve members.

We are one of over 1,300 museums across America participating in this program. Last summer, 300,000 military family members visited participating museums. Museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative, including more than 500 new museums this year.

To find out which museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.