
LIVING HISTORY

First Quarter 2011

January-March

Two Square Miles II – More Heroes of a Small Town

Clawson resident Bill Hayes has produced another fascinating book that highlights the accomplishments of Clawson residents. *Two Square Miles II, More Heroes of a Small Town*, takes up where the first book left off, with more stories of remarkable accomplishments by current and former residents. The book is available at the museum, city hall and Leon & Lulu. The cost is \$20, and all proceeds support the museum. If there should ever be a third installment in the series, Mr. Hayes has earned himself a place in the table of contents!

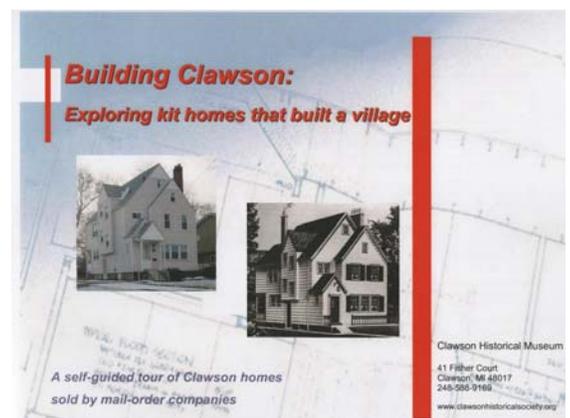
Kit Homes Tour is Here!

From 1906 through the 1930s, no fewer than seven US companies sold homes through the mail. Pre-cut and ready to assemble, these homes were offered in a variety of popular styles, including modest cottages, craftsman bungalows, substantial Tudor Revival homes of brick and stone, nostalgic Dutch colonials and even mini-mansions.

Sears, Aladdin, Montgomery Ward and Lewis Builders all found a ready outlet for their offering in Clawson, and many of these homes still stand in the community. *Building Clawson, exploring kit homes that built a village*, features over two dozen of these homes. The brochure includes background on the kit home phenomenon, as well as maps to help guide you as you explore the city. The brochure is available for \$2.00, or free with any book purchase.

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If you have information about a Clawson house that you believe is a kit home, let us know.

Museum Update

The museum closed for the month of January for annual maintenance and artifact care. During that month, we also replaced the wallpaper in the kitchen. The new paper is bright and cheerful, and very typical of the 1920s.



Many, many thanks go to Tim and Eva Burns for their excellent work on the kitchen paper. This project would not have been possible without their effort.

Be sure to visit the museum this winter and check out the updated kitchen.

Research Station Now Available

A computer research station is now available for patron use in our community room. Visitors may browse Clawson newspapers from the 1920s-1940s, view PowerPoint presentations with historic photographs, and listen to 1920s music and view video. As always,



history books, directories, yearbooks and other documents are available to researchers. Contact the curator for more information.

New Items at the Museum

A painting by local artist Leon Evarts has been donated to the museum from the Blair Memorial Library. The large oil landscape, painted in the 1930s, was donated to the library by the Clawson Women's Club. It is currently on exhibit in the museum's community room.



This painting is just one of the beautiful works by Leon Evarts that grace the museum's walls.

The Clawson Historical Society has purchased a new sign for the museum exterior, to replace the aging wooden sign. The new sign, which is being made by Sign-a-rama, will be installed in the spring.

Thank you Donors!

Thanks to Anna Rockwell and Roger Mollencopf for their donations. Your donations are appreciated.



Visit us at
www.clawsonhistoricalsociety.org

Old House Update

Decoding the past of a house.

As I researched the kit houses for the recently completed tour brochure, I had an opportunity to visit the interior of a very interesting home on Hendrickson. While it is likely not a kit home, it has some interesting features that I thought reader's might enjoy having a look at.

From the exterior, it is a typical bungalow home, like to many around town, probably built between 1915 and 1925. A pleasant porch with generous columns graces the front, and the interior features lathe and plaster walls and hardwood floors that the current owner is restoring to their former beauty.

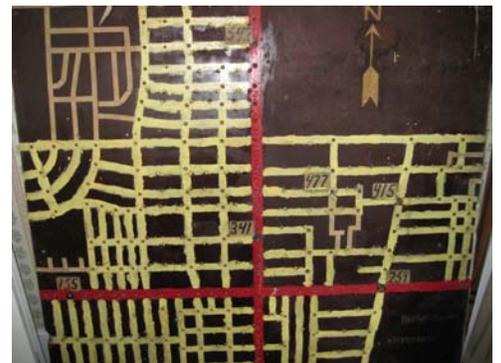
What was really unique about the little bungalow was a space-saving feature built into the stairway. Like many bungalows, this one has an upper floor, typically a 1/2 storey, that is entered via a staircase in the small hallway. To save floor space, however, the staircase ends about waist-height; the last three stairs actually slide under the staircase! When closed, they have the appearance of a built-in linen closet, typical also of the era. And they actually are drawers- each step has a hinged top that lifts to stow away whatever the homeowner needed to store. I had never seen this feature, and was impressed with the ingenuity of the designer who found a way to maximize both storage and floor space in a fairly small family home.

The home was built before houses had address numbers; directories of the day simply list a home as being, say, the second from the corner on the north side of the street. It takes a little detective work to figure out which homes were standing on a given date and who was living where. Likely this home was occupied by Russ Davis, a machinist, Clawson fire fighter, and later owner of a gas station on the northwest corner of 14 Mile and Main Street. In the basement of the house on Hendrickson was a large hand-painted wooden map from 1934, with all the streets marked. The fire department used the map to mark the location of fires. The map has been donated to the Clawson Fire Department.



Above: staircase/drawers folded away until needed.

Right: The first firemen to arrive took the truck to the fire, and marked the location of a fire so all firemen could find it.



From the Curator's Desk

January was a busy month, with cleaning and polishing, and wallpapering. Thank you to Tim and Eva Burns for the fantastic job on the museum kitchen. Would not have happened without you both!

In December we held holiday open houses, and had a pretty good attendance on Saturday, considering how close it was to Christmas. We had lovely homemade cookies donated by Deloris Kumler, holiday punch and music for our visitors.

I am hoping to offer more events this year for our community to enjoy. On June 12th the Michigan Vietnam Veteran's Traveling Memorial will be paying us a visit. Be sure to watch for more information about the event. And of course, the 4th of July is really just around the corner, although you'd never know it by the weather outside the window today!

Just a reminder that if you would like to receive the newsletter via email only, drop me a line at historicalmuseum@cityofclawson.com. Otherwise, you'll continue to receive the paper version. Please pass it on to a friend or neighbor when you are finished with it.

Check us out of Facebook, as well. Information on events and museum exhibits is updated frequently.

Until next time,

Melodie Nichols

Clawson Family File

Leon & Eaulia Evarts

Leon Evarts was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1891. At the age of 6 he did pastels and at the age of 11 he was studying painting under the noted artist Mathias Alten. At 17, he enrolled in the Chicago School of Art.

In 1915, he married Eaulia King, and in 1921, sold a painting and used the proceeds for a down payment on a home on West Tacoma in Clawson.

Leon worked as an illustrator for the Detroit Times, for a local art company, and as a freelance artist, but paying work was always secondary to fine art. Eaulia worked at a community newspaper to help support the family.

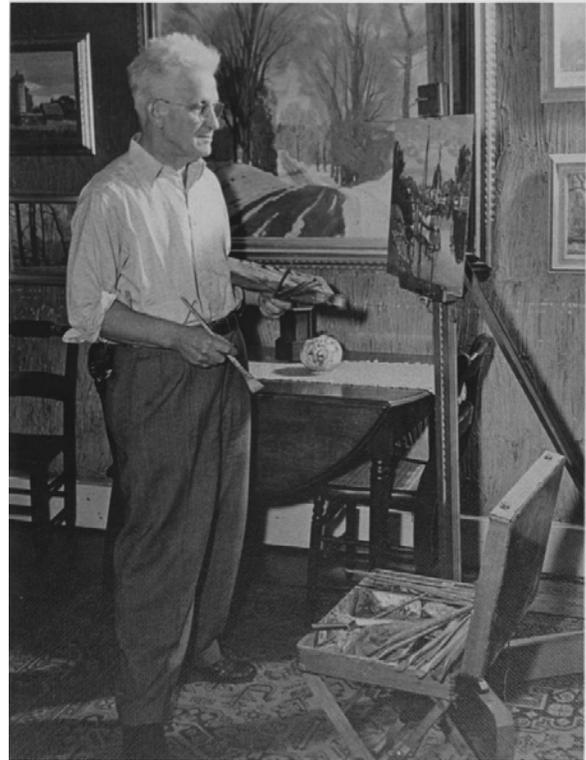
Evarts was a prolific painter, sometimes working 15 hours a day. He painted landscapes, portraits, figures and animals. His work was featured at exhibits at the DIA and has been at auction a few times.

While he did make one trip down the coast of the United States and into Florida to paint, most of his work is of a local flavor. Several pictures feature scenes of homes, farms, houses and fields that were found in Clawson or nearby Rochester.

Speaking of his work, Evarts told the Daily Tribune in 1949, "I paint what I like and when I like. If my work gives people pleasure, then I think I have accomplished something." He disliked Cubism, stating, "Cubism, futurism, and other advanced art forms are alright as a demonstration of art for the artist, but are not a means of reaching people." Evarts art displays a realism and captures the cultural flavor of rural Michigan that most people will find relevant, even in 2011. He told one reporter he wanted to paint art that people would understand.

Leon and Eaulia had three children, and several grandchildren, some still living in the Clawson and Royal Oak area. Leon died in 1953, Eaulia in 1966.

The museum has several Evarts works on permanent display, as well as many others that are exhibited periodically, including a portrait of Eaulia, an oil painting of Tienken Road in Rochester, and a sailboat that was likely painted during his trip to Florida.



Leon Evarts, 1949

Recent Group Tours

Ms. Turner's second grade class from Schalm Elementary visited the museum in December. Over sixty students toured the museum that day. Each student later drew a picture of their favorite object in the museum and included it with a thank you note to the tour guides. Some of their favorite things included the tall clock in the living room, the washing machine in the basement, and the player piano.

Thank you, Ms. Turner, for your interest in local history. Thanks also to Mary Anderson and Miriam Brewer for assisting with the tours and making the students' visit entertaining and educational.

