

# History Detectives 2023

Saturday, January 21, 2023

9:30am - 4:00pm

Grand Rapids Public Library

Ryerson Auditorium

[historydetectivesgr.org](http://historydetectivesgr.org)

10:30am - 11:15am

Vanished Market Avenue NW: From Fulton to Monroe | Team Photo | Grand Rapids Historical Society and Grand Rapids Public Museum

Imagine the fabric of old Market Avenue northwest: the long gone Eagle Hotel and Rathbun House; the Widdicomb Building and iconic Art Deco façade of Kresge's; the Mutual Home Federal Savings & Loan, Smith's Opera House, the Savoy Theatre, the old Greyhound Bus Station. Images of these vanished buildings and more abound in the collections of the Grand Rapids Public Museum Archives and the City of Grand Rapids Archives and Records Center. This presentation will include some of the earliest images of Grand Rapids along this vanished avenue.



11:30am - 12:15pm

Emmett Bolden v Grand Rapids Operating Company (Keith Theatre) | Jon VanderPloeg | Grand Rapids African American Museum and Archives and Kutsche Office of Local History at GVSU

In 1927 the Michigan Supreme Court held that African American physician Dr. Emmett Bolden could not be restricted to balcony seating. This landmark decision rejected the “separate but equal” doctrine 27 years before the U.S. Supreme Court did so in Brown v Board of Education. While many people know of the Bolden decision and its importance, few today know its legal underpinnings, and what it tells us about Michigan’s long legal history favoring a progressive view of human rights.



9:30am - 10:15am

50 Years Later: A Look Back at the Fight Over the ERA in Grand Rapids | Nora Salas and Ruth Stevens | Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council and Kutsche Office of Local History at GVSU

The 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment gave hope to supporters of full equality for women. A broader Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) for women, was introduced in Congress in 1923, where it languished for years. When it was finally pushed through in 1972, the countdown for ratification began. In Grand Rapids, the local chapters of ERAmerica, the National Organization for Women, the League of Women Voters, and labor organizations led the fight for ratification, while the increasingly influential Eagle Forum, with support from many religious organizations, warned of dire consequences if the ERA were to become law. Presenters Nora Salas and Ruth Stevens provide a local perspective on the political tempest generated by the seemingly straightforward language of the ERA with an eye to how the debate over the ERA has relevance today.

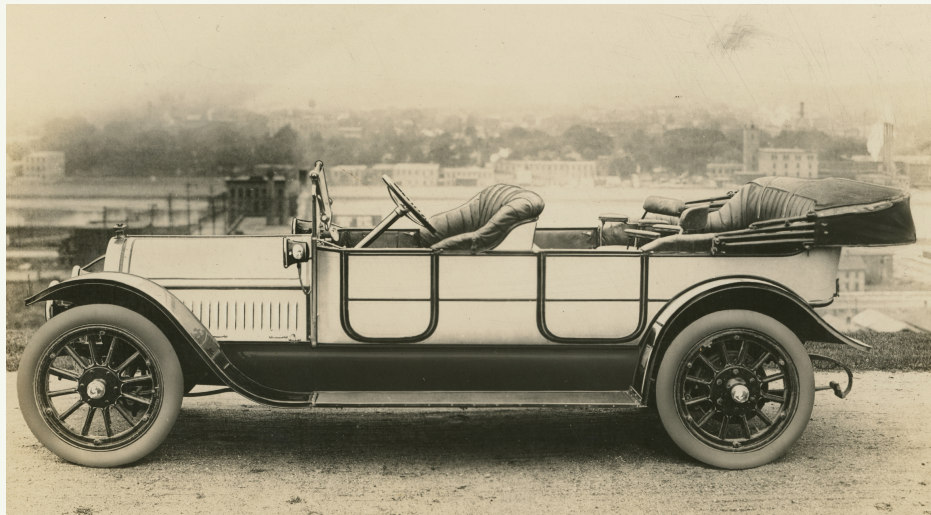
12:15 - 1:00pm

**Lunch - Reserve by Thursday, January 12**

Planning to stay the whole day? Bring your own lunch or order a boxed lunch from Schnitz Deli. Lunches are \$15 and must be reserved and paid for in advance. Choose a turkey, ham, or vegetarian sandwich. Also included in the lunches are potato salad, coleslaw, pickle spear, cookie, condiments, and bottled water.

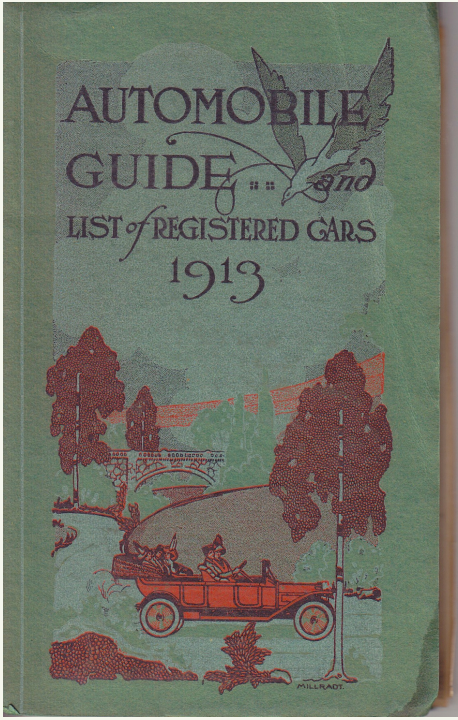
To reserve a lunch visit our website at [historydetectivesgr.org](http://historydetectivesgr.org)





1:00pm - 1:45pm  
 1913: Automobiles and Their Owners in Grand Rapids | Thomas R. Wilson | Grand Rapids Public Library and Grand Rapids Historical Commission

A few years ago, presenter Tom Wilson discovered a rare booklet, “Automobile Guide and List of Registered Cars 1913 in Central Western Michigan.” Organized by license plate number, it also gives the names of the auto owners, their addresses, and the manufacturers of their cars. Not surprisingly, the majority of cars were owned by wealthy men; but a number of women also owned autos, some of them electric vehicles. Wilson will share some of his interesting findings from this period of early Grand Rapids automotive history.



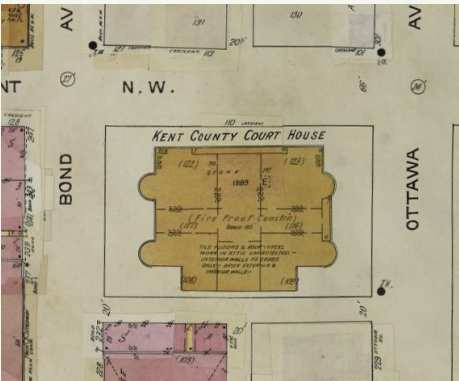
2:00pm - 2:45pm  
 The Beginnings of Sewage Treatment in Grand Rapids | Kayne Ferrier | Grand Rapids City Archives and Research Center

Today we expect clean water from our taps and toilets; but only in 1930 did the City of Grand Rapids begin providing water treatment services for itself, East Grand Rapids, and other contracted areas. Sewage treatment, in particular, began only on November 1st, 1930. So what happened before then? And what finally caused Grand Rapids to take action? This brief presentation on the history of Grand Rapids water sewage treatment will let you know!



3:00pm - 3:45pm  
 What Sanborn Maps Reveal about Grand Rapids | Adam Oster | Library of Michigan, Grand Rapids Public Library, and Western Michigan Genealogical Society

Produced for over 150 years, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are large-scale renderings of urbanized areas originally intended for determining the value of property destroyed by fire. Discover how these sophisticated, color-coded maps can provide valuable and detailed information about structures – and they way they are heated, ventilated, and built – within cities. See examples of early Grand Rapids Sanborn maps and learn techniques for navigating these essential resources as well as how to utilize them in uncovering the story of both Grand Rapids and its neighborhoods.



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