Museography
is a publication of the
Kalamazoo Valley Museum and
Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Editor: Karen Visser
Writer: Tom Thinnes
Contributors:
Tom Dietz
Valerie Eisenberg
Paula Metzner
Patrick Norris
Design: Elizabeth King
Photography: Neil Rankin

KALAMAZOO VALLEY MUSEUM
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

James Melvin
Derl Oberlin
Carol Baker
Laura Eiler
Tom Fricke
Al Heilman
Jaye Johnson
Patrick Norris, Director

KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A. Christian Schauer, Chairman
Robert Kent, Vice Chairman
Anna Whitten, Secretary
T. Kenneth Young, Treasurer
Mary T. Gustas, Trustee
Susan L. Miller, Trustee
Jeffrey E. Patton, Trustee
Marilyn J. Schlack, President

Museography is published
three times a year:
Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Questions about Kalamazoo Valley
Museum programs described in this
publication may be directed to the
Kalamazoo Valley Museum offices.
Phone: 269.373.7990 or 800.772.3370
Website: www.kalamazoomuseum.org

Comments or questions about this
publication may be directed to the
KVCC Office of Marketing
at 269/488-4278.

KALAMAZOO VALLEY MUSEUM
230 N. ROSE STREET
PO BOX 4070
KALAMAZOO, MI 49003-4070

This magazine is composed
of recycled products and is
recyclable.

ON THE COVER: A Wedgewood urn (ca. 1785–1805) is typical of the treasures
featured in the new “A Legacy of Elegance” gallery. For more about the
gallery, as well as profiles of collectors A.M. Todd and
Susan Stebbins Stark, see the articles beginning on
page 11 of this issue.

Look for the * and the symbol at right throughout
this magazine—they indicate objects you can view
in the special Museography display case, located
next to the reception desk on the main
floor of the museum, or in other exhib-
it areas throughout the museum.

www.kalamazoomuseum.org
Since developments in the pharmaceutical industry have been much in the news and on the minds of Kalamazooans lately, it is fitting that we look back at its beginnings here.

“The history of any country,” Willa Cather wrote in O! Pioneers, “begins in the heart of a man or woman.” The history of Kalamazoo pharmaceuticals began in the imagination of a young doctor who lived not in Kalamazoo but in Hastings.

Few figures in Kalamazoo history loom as large as William Erastus Upjohn. Few undertakings have shaped modern Kalamazoo as the enterprise he began by tinkering in his uncle’s Hastings home. Here is how the story of Kalamazoo’s pharmaceutical history began.

William Erastus Upjohn was born June 5, 1853, to Dr. Uriah Upjohn and Maria Mills. Uriah Upjohn was an English immigrant who had attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City and, diploma in hand, lit out for the frontier with his brothers, William and Erastus.

In the 1830s, the frontier was located here in West Michigan. Uriah settled in Richland, became a pioneer doctor, and married Maria Mills, the daughter of a Gull Prairie pioneer and preacher, Deacon Simeon Mills. Together they raised and educated seven daughters and five sons. Six of their children became doctors or pharmacists.

Like all physicians of the time, Dr. Upjohn fought illness with medicines of his own making. He carried his pharmacy with him in his saddlebags as he rode from cabin to cabin on the Michigan frontier. His remedies were compounded and measured from bulk chemicals and medicinal plants. His equipment was simple: a handful of surgical instruments, homemade splints and bandages, small balance scales, a mortar and pestle, and a selection of drugs such as calomel, quinine, morphine, and ipecac.

Uriah Upjohn had been a teacher before he became a physician and, throughout his long career, he maintained a country doctor’s practical interest in science. He taught his sons and daughters to see the world with a scientist’s eyes—to be inquisitive, experimental, and, above all, pragmatic.

In 1868, when W. E. Upjohn was 15, Uriah Upjohn enrolled his oldest son, Henry Uriah Upjohn, in the University of Michigan’s medical school. To house his children, Upjohn rented a home, under the supervision of his oldest daughter, Helen. Four of the children—Helen, Henry U., James T., and William E.—graduated from medical school. Two daughters, Amelia and Mary, graduated from the School of Pharmacy.

W.E. is reported to have developed an interest in machinery from observing farm equipment. He accompanied his older siblings to Ann Arbor when his father rented the off-campus house for the Upjohn children/students. He completed high school in Ann Arbor and worked part-time in a local pharmacy. William E. graduated from medical school in 1875 and, at the age of 22, returned continued on page 23
Jazz, said to be America’s gift to the world’s anthology of music, has a Latino cousin, and its story, with all the wondrous sounds, is being told at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.

The next nationally touring attraction is “Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta,” a bilingual product of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. The saga of this legendary blending of Afro-Cuban music and American jazz that evolved in New Orleans and New York City has a 2004 booking at the downtown museum from Feb. 14 through May 31.

In the words of New Orleans jazz icon Jelly Roll Morton, jazz was born with a “Spanish tinge” that started to flower in the late 19th century as musical traditions from the Caribbean migrated to the southern United States. Mingling with the style of music evolving in New Orleans, new sounds and beats emerged.

By the late 1940s, musicians including trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie—he with the famous cheeks—began to fuse so-called “traditional jazz” with Afro-Cuban music, creating what Raúl Fernández, the University of California social scientist who served as curator of the exhibit, calls “a hybrid of hybrids.”

Fernández, a former citizen of Cuba who has done extensive research on the economic and cultural interactions between the United States and Latin America, chronicled this evolution in a book that bears the same name as the exhibit.

“Percussionists assumed a dramatic new importance,” he said. “New instruments found their...
way into the jazz lexicon, and the African heritage of both Caribbean and American music became more pronounced.”

The exhibition, which debuted at the Smithsonian in Washington in October of 2002 and has embarked on an 11-city tour across the United States, features:

- seven free-standing artifact cases full of musical instruments, such as one of Gillespie’s trumpets and a timbale used by Tito Puente, as well as paper documents;
- text panels in both English and Spanish;
- fabric murals that capture the origins, development and rise in popularity of Latin jazz;
- more than 100 vintage photographs;
- small percussion instruments for visitors to try in a hands-on music studio;
- and audio-visual units that showcase the talents of artists who created and spread this unique expression of rhythms.

An instructional video, with Grammy-nominated percussionist Bobby Sanabria, navigates visitors through a variety of instruments that blend to create Latin jazz. They’ll also be able to test what they learned about congas, bongos, shekeres, güiros and claves in the “hands-on” studio.

New York native Sanabria, a professor at the Manhattan School of Music, is also featured in a 20-minute documentary that complements the exhibition. “The Latin jazz tradition is one of America’s greatest musical contributions to the world. This showcase sheds some needed light on a genre of music that has long been kept in the dark and on some incredible musicians.

“I hope people will realize that this music is as American as the blues, country western, and rock ‘n roll,” Sanabria said.

“Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta” traces the northern migration to social clubs, concert halls and dance venues in New York City that were tolerant of an integration of American, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Caribbean musicians.

The movement spread to other major American cities that embraced “The Jazz Age.” On the West Coast, many local musicians, along with their colleagues from the East who had heeded Horace Greeley’s advice to “Head West, young man,” adopted the new blend of music as their own.

This was not a one-way migration, the exhibition demonstrates. The sounds of American jazz spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean as well.

Visitors to “Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta” will be able to take close looks at Gillespie’s instruments, a three-string Cuban guitar, conga drums, a five-key flute made of Cubanwood, timbales, maracas, and bongos. Also on view will be displays of sheet music dating as far back as the 1860s and including a 1940 copy of “The St. Louis Blues” by W. C. Handy.

What was explored and nurtured in such legendary locales as Birdland and the Palladium and what was exported from musical outposts in Cuba, Panama and Puerto Rico will be on view during the 2004 Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival.

Among an 18-member advisory committee that assisted Fernández in creating the exhibit were New York journalist Max Salazar, Cuban writer/musician Leonardo Acosta, historian Cristobal Diaz-Ayala, and writer Isabelle Leymarie.

Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta has been organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and America’s Jazz Heritage, A Partnership of the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund and the Smithsonian Institution. Additional support has been provided by BET Jazz.
They say that timing is everything... and in this case, it couldn’t be more true. The Smithsonian’s nationally touring exhibition, “Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta” will be on view at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to help celebrate the 2004 Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, taking place April 23 to May 8.

Included in the scores of globally known keyboardists scheduled to perform in concerts throughout Southwest Michigan will be two virtuosos who specialize in this jazz hybrid. Those who visit the exhibit, which will be based in downtown Kalamazoo through May 31, and who learn about the origins of this genre of music will be able to hear it played by world-class performers.

Booked also for the museum’s Mary Jane Stryker Interactive Learning Hall at noon on weekdays of the festival’s second week (May 3–8) will be the showing of a quintet of quasi-documentaries about famous pianists and their music. With details to be announced later, there will be no charge for these five features.

There will, however, be admission fees for the scheduled concerts of Hilton Ruiz (right) on Wednesday, April 28, in the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre and of Gonzalo Rubalcaba on Friday, April 30, in the Gilmore Theatre Complex on the campus of Western Michigan University.

The Rubalcaba trio will perform twice that evening at 7 and 10. Reserved-seating tickets for those two events are $30 each. The Ruiz concert fee is $12. Ruiz, who has also been booked for concerts in St. Joseph and Battle Creek as part of the Gilmore, is of Puerto Rican heritage. Raised in Manhattan when the mambo was beginning to impact American music, Ruiz, as a pianist and composer with impeccable jazz credentials, blends the Latin tinge into his renditions without losing the rhythmic ancestry of the jazz that evolved in New Orleans.

Rubalcaba, part of the festival’s tribute to American jazz that will include performances by legends Dick Hyman and Ahmad Jamal, honored his talents as a pianist, composer and bandleader in Havana. While his roots are Cuban, he’s embraced other forms of jazz expressed around the world in a style that is known for its “grandstanding power, yet always with a lightness of touch and a real finesse.”

Either before or after these performances, audience members are invited to the downtown-Kalamazoo museum to learn about the genesis of this form of jazz, about the legendary musicians who nursed it and rehearsed it, and about the instruments that produce those exotic sounds.

Details about the Gilmore festival and its roster of concerts are available by calling its office in the Epic Center at 269/342-1166 or on its web page at www.thegilmore.com.

More jazz stars at the museum during festival week

Concerts, a series of films about the legends of jazz, and an award-winning documentary by Ken Burns will complement the Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s exhibition of “Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta” on display through May 31.

Both professional performers and Western Michigan University music majors will be featured in “Friday Night Jazz at the Museum.” Their concerts will be sharing the every-other-week billing in the Mary Jane Stryker Interactive Learning Hall (ILH) along with movies that have jazz storylines.

On Sunday afternoons, from Feb. 15 through May 30, Burns’ 10-episode series about the origins and development of jazz will be in the spotlight.

The showings of the PBS documentary are free. There is a $5 fee for the movies and a $7.50 admission charge for the concerts.

For a complete schedule of jazz-related activities, see the inside back cover of this issue of Museography. You can also call the museum at 269/373-7990 or visit its website at www.kalamazoomuseum.org.
In an 85-year-old factory on Parsons Street just north of downtown, a dedicated group of craftsmen carry on a rich Kalamazoo tradition—building high-quality musical instruments.

The skilled workers at Heritage Guitar ply their trade in the same building that once housed the Gibson Guitar Company, the legendary manufacturer of mandolins, guitars, and other stringed instruments.

Yet even before Orville Gibson perfected his methods of making mandolins, Kalamazoo was home to other musical-instrument makers.

From the mid-19th century through the early 20th century, a melodeon or pump organ was a common item in the parlors of middle-class homes. Each provided entertainment in an era before radio and television.

In 1854, W. P. Blakeman, who had purchased the Detroit Melodeon Company, opened a branch in Kalamazoo near the corner of North Rose Street and Main Street (now Michigan Avenue). Blakeman & Gibbs, as the company was known, found a ready market for its instruments.

In 1866, Col. Delos Phillips, having returned from the Civil War, bought a half share in Blakeman’s firm. Three years later, in 1869, Phillips bought out Blakeman and the new firm produced primarily Star Organs. The Star Organ proved quite popular. Contemporary reports claim that as many as 20 percent of all household organs were built in Kalamazoo.

Phillips prospered and moved the factory from Rose Street to 144 Main St. in 1876. His business success led him to political prominence. Elected to the Michigan State Senate in 1868, he was an active leader of the Kalamazoo County Republican Party and was an elector in the 1876 presidential

Making Music in Kalamazoo

Above: the melodeon factory as it stood, ca. 1865. Above right: Col. Delos Phillips, maker of the Star Organ, shown below right.
Phillips did not operate the only organ company in Kalamazoo. The 1869–1870 City Directory lists an Empire Organ Company on Main Street between Burdick and Portage, but it does not appear in subsequent directories. During the 1860s and 1870s, the William H. Woodhams Company was a prominent retailer of pianos and organs.

Still, Kalamazoo’s most famous instrument manufacturer unquestionably was Orville Gibson. Born in New York, Gibson moved to Kalamazoo in the 1880s.

A musician who worked in a shoe store by day, he was unhappy with the quality of mandolins then available. Mandolins were the popular instrument of the early 1890s, and Gibson worked on developing a better way to build them.

By 1896, he had decided to carve them in one piece out of a solid block of wood. The quality of the sound was remarkable and the fame of Gibson mandolins spread.

Gibson was unwilling to compromise in his production methods despite the demand. In 1902, however, a group of local investors (Sylvo Reams, Lewis Williams, Leroy Hornbeck, John W. Adams, and Samuel H. Van Horn) persuaded him to form the Gibson Guitar–Mandolin Manufacturing Company.

In return for an initial lump-sum payment of $2,500 and monthly royalties for 10 years, Gibson agreed to teach the employees of the new firm his construction techniques.

The firm incorporated in 1904 and quickly became a success. It moved to larger facilities in 1911 and, just six years later, built the Parsons Street factory that is now listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Orville Gibson left the firm for unknown reasons in 1909 and moved back to New York. The company that carried his name continued to be an innovative leader in its field.

As musical tastes changed in the 1920s and 1930s, guitars replaced mandolins in many bands. Gibson, with Lloyd Loar as acoustic engineer, developed a series of guitars with carved backs and tops that proved enormously popular with performers.

Models such as the L–5 and the Super 400 acoustic guitars revolutionized musicians’ expectations for tone and volume. In the late 1940s and 1950s, Gibson worked with noted country guitarist Les Paul and developed a solid body electric guitar. Other innovations kept the company a leader in the manufacture of fretted instruments.

The list of performers who used Gibson guitars during their careers testifies to their high quality. Local favorites Rem Wall and the Green Valley Boys were loyal Gibson customers. Nationally renowned performers who played Gibsons include B. B. King, the Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, Charlie Daniels, and Bob Dylan.

The Gibson Company left Kalamazoo in 1984, but the ancestry of fine craftsmanship in making musical instruments continues to this day. Several Gibson employees organized the Heritage Guitar Company. They craft guitars that carry on the legacy that makes Kalamazoo famous throughout the world of music.
Make some guesses about these objects from the KVM collection. How old do you think they are? What were they used for? (Answers at the bottom of the page.)

#1
When thrift and efficiency were critical during the Depression, this device was found in many kitchens.*

#2
This would have been found at an early gas station.*

#3
This accessory (shown both closed and open) was used in the care of military uniforms.*

Ask the KVM!

Have a question about a person, object, or artifact that relates to the history of the southwest Michigan area? Send your question to Tom Dietz, KVM curator of research (269/373-7984 or tdietz@kvcc.edu), and you may see it answered in a future issue of Museography.
One of the more recent ethnic arrivals to add diversity to southwest Michigan is the Mexican community.

As recently as the 1940 census, only 33 individuals in Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren counties (the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek Metropolitan Statistical Area) indicated that they were born in Mexico. In the most recent census in 2000, some 12,989 people indicated they were of Mexican descent, an increase of 143 percent since 1990. This dramatically illustrates the changing demographics of southwest Michigan.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans have struggled to find acceptance in Michigan. The earliest Mexicans came to western Michigan as migrant farm workers, an occupation that did not earn them great respect. During the difficult years of the Great Depression, many Mexicans were rounded up and deported to Mexico. Estimates indicate that as much as 50 percent of the Mexican population of Michigan was removed. After 1960, Michigan's Mexican community grew.

As the census figures above indicate, Mexicans have settled in southwest Michigan in larger numbers in recent decades. Mexican Americans were attracted to Kalamazoo because of economic opportunity. In the decades after World War II, some first came to southwest Michigan as migrant workers following the fruit harvests along the Lake Michigan shore. Some Mexicans sought more stable employment and permanent residential life, and settled in Kalamazoo.

Given that most Mexicans and Mexican Americans are Catholic, St. Joseph Church in Kalamazoo's Edison neighborhood serves as one focal point in the life of the Mexican community. Nearly two-thirds of today's Hispanic community live in that neighborhood. Not surprisingly, some of the earliest Mexican businesses were established in that same area. Guadalupe Orta opened a small Mexican restaurant on Mill Street in 1982. It moved to Washington Street in 1986 and closed in the late 1990s.

Today, a Mexican business community is taking shape. Grocery stores, music stores, restaurants, and beauty shops are among these retail ventures, many located along Portage and Burdick streets.

As the Hispanic community grew, Mexican Americans felt a need to organize associations to provide support and assistance. In 1978, Jose Escamilla organized the Rosary Group, which incorporated as the Hispanic American Council in 1981. More than 20 years later, the council provides housing, employment, counseling, and educational services.

The election of David Juarez to the Kalamazoo City Commission in November of 2003 underlines the growing importance of the Hispanic community. The ethnic fabric of Kalamazoo County continues to diversify and be enriched by the many peoples who make up our community.
The artwork of Carmen Lomas Garza comes to life at the KVM this summer in a nationally touring exhibition created by the Austin Children’s Museum in Texas.

*In My Family/En mi familia* is based on Garza’s 1996 book of the same title, which won the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award.

The bilingual exhibition leads visitors through hands-on activities to experience life as Garza lived it growing up in a Mexican-American family in South Texas.

Four of her paintings have been turned into life-size settings: a family making tamales, a birthday barbecue, a dance, and “Cama Para Sueños” (a bed for dreams).

Families can try on clothing, learn how to make tamales, dance and pretend to play instruments, draw family pictures, cut paper banners, fill a piñata, and more. It’s a learning experience that feels like a party!

*In My Family/En mi familia* was developed by the Austin Children’s Museum in cooperation with Carmen Lomas Garza and the National Latino Children’s Institute, and sponsored by H-E-B. Additional support provided by Applied Materials Foundation, The Moody Foundation, State Farm Insurance, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

The newest exhibition fashioned from the Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s own collection is a snapshot of artistic creations from the 18th and 19th centuries that were held in high enough esteem to grace the mansions of the elite in both the United States and in Europe.

Showcased on the first floor in the space formerly occupied by the museum gift shop, “A Legacy of Elegance” was conceived, designed, researched and built by the museum staff based on portions of the collections of Albert May Todd and Susan Stebbins Stark (their stories begin on pages 12 and 14).

This genre of collectibles, which typically would be on display in an art museum, falls under the category of decorative or functional artwork, meaning that the pieces were either part of a home’s decor or actually used in daily activities.

The display contains 13 of the hundreds of paintings that Todd purchased either on his global journeys or on his regularly scheduled art-buying junkets around the country.

His fine-art collection, much of which was donated to the museum and other educational institutions, extended to rare books, enameled vases, and porcelains. The latter includes candelabra, soup bowls, tea services, fruit dishes, urns, and statuary.

Stark’s gift to the Kalamazoo museum included pewter, lustreware, and bottles. The largest collection was pewter of a utilitarian nature, as illustrated by a tankard, a whale-oil lamp, a milk jug, soup tureen, tableware, and containers used to measure liquids.

However, she also dabbled in the collection of fine-art pewter as artisans from around the world used the alloy containing lead, brass and copper as a medium for expressing their creative talents.

“A Legacy of Elegance” is scheduled to be on display through June 2004.
For an extended period of time, Todd dipped into his personal funds to collect art in various forms, not as investments nor to hoard nor squirrel those possessions away. His actions mirrored near-Socialism perspectives about the role of government and humanity’s responsibility to take care of its own.

His art collection was fashioned from a share-the-wealth philosophy intended to add to his community’s cultural amenities. To Todd, one of art’s prime purposes was to raise the masses through the appreciation of things beautiful.

In that way, he mirrored the feelings of a fellow entrepreneurial icon based in Kalamazoo, Dr. William E. Upjohn, who probably rarely shared Todd’s political viewpoints yet was credited with employment policies and work “bennies” viewed by some as rather radical for the times.

For decades, they lived a few houses from each other in the “Silk Stockings District” on West South Street in mansions that mirrored their success as capitalists. They died within months of each other at the dawning of the 1930s.

Rare, if existent at all, is the documentation—either written or photographic—that Todd, “The Peppermint King,” and Upjohn, “The Pill King,” ever acknowledged each other, interacted, or even crossed paths, which proximity dictates they must have.

If Dr. Upjohn wasn’t the first Kalamazooan to own a “horseless carriage,” the ever-progressive Todd was. Todd had the first telephone on the block and one of the first cars.

These two community giants with international reputations, who seemed to never mix socially or politically, left cultural legacies that few—if any—communities of Kalamazoo’s size—or even much larger, for that matter—can boast.

Newspaper headlines capture the essence of Albert May Todd, the essence of a man:

- 30 Paintings, Worth $100,000, Loaned to Three Kalamazoo Institutions by A. M. Todd, Peppermint King
- A. M. Todd Art Museum Will Be Thrown Open to Public This Afternoon
- Todd Collection Contains Rare Book Printed in 1485
- Teachers College Honors A. M. Todd Who Has Presented School with Many Works of Art

For an extended period of time, Todd dipped into his personal funds to collect art in its various forms, not as investments nor to hoard nor squirrel those possessions away. His actions mirrored near-Socialism perspectives about the role of government and humanity’s responsibility to take
Because of their generous philanthropy that stemmed from a shared vision of the value of the arts, those inheriting their community have come out as big winners.

The stress of trying to work his way through college impaired Todd’s health during his freshman year. The prescription was a walking tour of Europe where coincidentally he could gain insight into the continent’s flourishing mint industry.

The adventure took him through Great Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and other nations. Despite his agrarian roots, Todd was blessed with talent as a sketcher and he sampled Europe’s finest art collections.

He acquired encyclopedic knowledge about the cultivation of the mentha genus of plants, acquainted himself with distillation procedures, and nurtured his zest for artistic creativity. The experience remained with him throughout his 80 years of life. It was translated into one of the most extensive and valuable private collections of paintings, art objects and rare books in the Midwest.

When Todd returned to his roots in St. Joseph County in 1869, his baggage carried specimens of mint from European gardens and the nucleus of his art collection. After moving his operations in 1890 to where Dr. Upjohn was expanding his pill-making base, Todd built an immense company headquarters in downtown Kalamazoo. It was here, as his collection blossomed, that Todd opened its doors to allow the public to share his cultural wealth.

While his tastes changed to reflect personal philosophies, Todd remained an impulse buyer. If he saw it and liked it, he bought it, from paintings to inlaid crystal to vases. Art’s amenities addicted him.

On his many journeys, Todd would purchase rare and valued paintings, sculptures, carvings, porcelains, enamels, basketry, furniture, musical instruments and Egyptian antiquities.

The artistic, cultural, civic and political activities of Todd and Upjohn were proportional to their company profits. Upjohn, however, stayed in the background, almost in a non-partisan position, although he was extremely active when it came to establishing an effective form of city government.

Todd ran with the anti-establishment folks of his era, branded as something of a radical in how he viewed the role of government. Initially, Todd wore the colors of the Prohibition Party, serving as its gubernatorial candidate in 1894. Disenchanted with its leadership, Todd swung over to the Populists and then into the Democratic Party. Todd was in the vanguard of proposing the municipal ownership of public utilities.

These stances gained him national notoriety. He became a close friend of William Jennings Bryan, hosting “The Great Commoner” on the latter’s many visits to Kalamazoo.

While his neighbor down the road stayed out of the political arena, Todd jumped in frequently, running for public office several times. His lone victory came in 1896, the year of Bryan’s first quest for the presidency. Todd was elected to Congress from Michigan’s Third District as a Democrat. He won, despite the fact that Bryan’s Republican opponent, William McKinley, carried the district by 10,000 votes. For the next two years, he was Michigan’s only Democratic congressman. His grandson, Paul H. Todd Jr., would repeat that accomplishment a half century later.

“The Peppermint King” died in October of 1931 at the age of 81. His passing was marked not only as a man whose persistence in research and knowledge garnered him world fame in his profession, but as an internationally known art collector and bibliophile. Todd intended his prolific collections of 411 paintings, rare books and art work to be shared with others. Many of the paintings he carefully collected to deliver messages he believed to be important to the essence of humanity have been restored to their original beauty. They continue their mission to rejuvenate a man’s quest for his community.
Imagine having the money and the time to collect to your heart’s content. Then think of Susan Stebbins Stark who, from the time she was a young woman until her death in 1937 at the age of 73, did just that, collecting everything from shoe buttons to cannons.

Her house of 25 rooms positively bulged with collectibles, as did other buildings on the property. Following her death, an employee from the Edison Institute (now the Henry Ford Museum) made these observations: “I was amazed at the number of articles, there were actually thousands. I saw many kinds of glass, several hundred books, dozens of lithographs, some three hundred odd toy banks, a very large collection of miniature furniture, a large room full of pewter, many guns, sword-canes, hardware, etc. There was an unusual collection of lustreware including several fine pitchers and one of the largest luster bowls I have ever seen, [and] thousands of pieces of glassware, old coins, and campaign badges.… We next went to two old barns [that] also had shelves built from floor to roof, all being filled. There were spinning wheels, bicycles, hitching posts, pieces of furniture, beds, andirons, and fire place fenders.”

So, who was Susan Stebbins Stark?
“She was a fascinating and eccentric woman,” according to her nephew, Bob Stebbins, “but a dear sweet aunt who loved and enjoyed her family.”

Born Aug. 7, 1863, Stebbins lived her entire life in Lansing, sharing a home with her parents, Cortland Bliss Stebbins and Eliza Smith Stebbins, and two brothers.

Her father became the state’s first deputy superintendent of schools and was later recognized for his contribution to developing new school laws. After 20 years, he retired to help found the Lansing Wheelbarrow Company, which became one of the nation’s largest and a source of prosperity for the family. Susan’s mother served on the board of the State Industrial Home for Girls.

Susan appeared to have inherited her father’s love of history and expressed it through her passion for collecting. At some point she struck up an acquaintance with Byron Stark, owner of a Kalamazoo pottery shop, who shared her interest in antiques.

Susan and Byron traveled together in search of objects for their individual collections, but in the early 1900s, a single woman traveling alone with a single (and younger) man was not considered proper. On one of their trips, they found it necessary to stay in the same cabin. This was the last straw for Susan’s mother. She insisted Byron, age 30, marry Susan, age 45, to avoid a scandal. Their marriage in 1908 was strictly a business arrangement. Susan continued to live with her family in Lansing, and her husband maintained his residence in Kalamazoo.

Following her death in 1937 at age 73, friends and family were remembered in her will with gifts of clothing, furniture, or pieces of jewelry. But her antique collection was willed to the people of Michigan. In addition to the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, artifacts from Stark’s collection were also donated to the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, the Michigan State University Museum, the Michigan Historical Museum, and the Henry Ford Museum.

Top right: Susan Stebbins Stark, 1896. Photo courtesy Robert Stebbins. Items from her collection at the KVM include a pewter oil lamp (above left) and a lustreware jug (above right).
Our thanks to the KVM’s most recent donors!
If you ask the average person about Kalamazoo’s music scene, the chances are that she or he would mention the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, or perhaps the Bach Fest. This city and region have a richly deserved reputation for great music. That reputation, moreover, has long historical roots.

As early as the 1850s, less than 30 years after Titus Bronson first platted his village, Kalamazoo had a lively music scene. In 1855, Hiram Underwood, known as the “Sweet Singer of Kalamazoo,” was vice president of a state musical convention held here. That same year, Adelina Patti, then just 12 years old but later one of the most famous operatic divas of the 19th century, performed in Kalamazoo. Local German immigrants organized both a German Lyric Society and a Mozart Mannechor.

In the years after the Civil War, several bands provided entertainment. Crossette’s Silver Cornet Band performed for the festivities marking the centennial of American independence in 1876. The city directories of the 1870s through the 1890s list various musical groups, including the Kalamazoo Silver Cornet Band, the Kalamazoo Brass Band, the Kalamazoo City Band, and White’s Military Band.

Two men who contributed greatly to the city’s musical heritage also led popular bands. Chester Z. Bronson, later to be the first director of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, led Bronson’s Band in the 1880s while Sylvo Reams, who would later be one of the original investors in the Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Manufacturing Company, directed the Chamber of Commerce Band.

Kalamazoo music lovers felt they lacked a truly first-class venue until 1882 when the Academy of Music opened on Rose Street. Designed by the noted architects, Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, the 1,200-seat auditorium hosted many of the great touring performers of the day. The Academy would later be converted to the Regent Theater, home to vaudeville acts and silent movies, and then to an office building before it was demolished in 1967.

There were several African American bands in Kalamazoo in the 19th century. The Kalamazoo Colored Brass Band filed articles of association with the county clerk’s office but nothing more is known about the band. Gilmore Phillips, a violinist, organized the Phillips Brothers Orchestra that performed throughout the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Phillips family was among the earliest African American settlers of Oshtemo Township.

In the late 1890s, Charles Fischer organized Fischer’s Globe Trotters, a band that gained not only local but national and international fame as well. It traveled the country and the world, sometimes under the sponsorship of the United States government. Fischer’s band was a true example of the American music scene, blending elements of African American, European, and Native American music. The band’s success in the late 1890s and early 20th century helped to establish Kalamazoo as a center for music and entertainment.

The Hull and Arnold Quadrille Band and Orchestra, Constantine, Mich., ca. 1885.

The Hull and Arnold Quadrille Band and Orchestra, Constantine, Mich., ca. 1885.

world, performing in many well-known nightspots as well as on several round-the-world cruises. On a 1930 cruise, Albert Einstein sat in with the band and played violin for several songs. Although the musicians changed, the band played together for nearly 50 years.

Charles Fischer’s brother, Burton, put Kalamazoo on the musical map as well. An original member of the band, Burton Fischer founded the Burton E. Fischer Publishing Company, a leading publisher of sheet music in the 1930s.

The first decades of the 20th century saw other milestones in Kalamazoo’s music history. Professors at the Western State Normal School, later Western State Teachers College, made their contributions as well. Florence Marsh and Mildred Hanson staged operas while Harper Maybee, Glenn Henderson, and Julius Stulberg developed links between the college’s music department and the local community.

Chester Z. Bronson organized a short-lived Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in 1915 but the efforts of Leta Snow in 1921 led to the creation of today’s Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra. Bronson was the director when the KSO performed its first concert in December 1921 at the Masonic Auditorium. Since that debut, the symphony has developed into an outstanding institution, one of the jewels of the local cultural scene.

From his days as a junior at Kalamazoo Central High School to his mid-70s, drummer Bobby Davidson epitomized the Big Band Era in his home town for six decades. Davidson, who toured with several orchestras and once turned down an offer to join Lawrence Welk’s “Champagne Music Makers,” formed the band that carried his name in 1946 and kept performing well into the 1980s.

Kalamazoo’s love for music can be seen in the many festivals and organizations that the city has supported over the years. The Kalamazoo Choral Union sponsored performances from 1916 through 1924. Other groups then took the lead. That legacy continues to this day with such musical highlights as the Bach Fest and the Fontana Chamber Arts eagerly anticipated by local music lovers. The musical offerings of this region are so rich and numerous that no article can cover them all.

Another recent addition to the music scene is the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. The festival, with its prestigious awards, is slightly more than a decade old but it has already become internationally prominent, adding to Kalamazoo’s reputation as a center of outstanding musical entertainment.

When Hiram Underwood gained his nickname as the “Sweet Singer of Kalamazoo,” he was only performing for a local audience. Neither he nor his audience in the 1850s could have realized the legacy they were creating. A century and a half later, the entire region profits from the heritage they established.
That’s a question I’m asked all the time… and there’s never a simple answer. The “stuff” I’m referring to is the 51,000 items in the museum’s collection. It includes clothing to kitchenware, photographs to furniture… you name it—we’ve got it. But how do we get it?

It all started 120 years ago with a donation of coral, shells, and rocks from a local businessman, Horace Peck. Since then, almost all of the collection has come to the museum through donations from people connected with Southwest Michigan. Typically, when people think they have something that belongs in a museum, they give us a call. We get a couple hundred calls a year.

Each offer is researched and reviewed by the collections committee. We take each offer very seriously—whether it’s an old refrigerator or an elegant vase. We make our decision based on its history and significance to regional and local history.

Once it is offered to the museum it takes on a different value—not necessarily monetary value, but historic or cultural value. It potentially becomes something that will tell a good story, impart some significant piece of history, or demonstrate a slice of life.

There are other ways that museums add “stuff” to their collection—by trade or field collection. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum has done this only on rare occasions.

Our records indicate that the last trade we made was back in 1949 when we traded a china head doll for the coffin lid of our mummy. The last time we acquired objects through field collection (an archaeological dig in which museum staff are involved) was in 1966 when materials were excavated from the site of the Hazel Harrison cabin in Schoolcraft.

From time to time, we purchase items for the collection. These are usually little things that cost us maybe $5 or $10. But on occasion we have dipped into a Collection Fund used exclusively for the purchase of major objects related to the history of Kalamazoo and Southwest Michigan.

This fund is built through monetary donations to the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation. In the last 10 years we have used that fund only four times—each to purchase oil paintings that reflected aspects of regional history.

So, there are many ways that we add “stuff” to the collection but the bottom line is that it comes through you, for you and future generations to enjoy. We couldn’t do it any other way.

—Paula L. Metzner
Assistant Director of Collections Services

2003 KVM Donor List

| Alpha & Omega Ministries | David W. Altoft |
|Christopher & Marian Barnes| Eugene Burgwald|
|Sarah Howard Cleo| Adrian Clement|
|Marvin DeVries| Ruth Dibble|
|Wanita Dragicevich| Carolyn Earl|
|Kristina Eden| Valerie Eisenberg|
|T.P. Emerson| Ann Fifolt & Sandra Witek|
|Nort Fisher & Beth Fisher| Petzler Institute|
|Roger Freas| Eric Geib|
|Alice Gernant| Gaydene Gipson|
|John Michael Greiner| Marie Mackey|
|Barbara Bartzgerink| Mr. & Mrs. T. Magas|
|Espeth Inglis| Rebecca Janson|
|Daniel Jankowski| Pete Lafata|
|Chelsea Lampp| Rachel Lantis|
|Fred Lawrence| Mr. & Mrs. T. Magas|
|Christopher U. Light| Elizabeth Menck|
|Marie Mackey| Paula Metzner|
|Mr. & Mrs. T. Magas| Leon Miller|
|Margaret Rice| Donna Odom|
|Edwin Rodas| Reboule Palmer|
|Pamela Rooney| Mr. & Mrs. T. Parfet|
|Eric Schreur| Harold T. Prange|
|Jack Short| Mr. & Mrs. B. Rees|
|Sisters of St. Joseph| Margaret Rice|
|V. Jane Stahl| Edwin Rodas|
|Joyce Stevenon| Pamela Rooney|
|Richard B. Stohrer| Eric Schreur|
|Mark Stowe| Jack Short|
|Lynn Taylor| sisters of St. Joseph|
|Philip S. Thoms| V. Jane Stahl|
|Mark Vanderberg| Joyce Stevenon|
|Mr. & Mrs. R. VanLandegent| Richard B. Stohrer|
|Ellen Bos Vellenga| Mark Stowe|
|Eleanor Verbarg| Lynn Taylor|
|Karen Visser| Philip S. Thoms|
|Ken & Jill Weyenberg| Mark Vanderberg|
|Judy White| Mr. & Mrs. R. VanLandegent|
|Nancy Woods| Ellen Bos Vellenga|
|Kay Zuris| Eleanor Verbarg|

sunlamp; slide projector
miniature digital camera
toy stove
roller skates
oil painting; tablecloth & napkins
Upjohn products
Upjohn ID badge & photograph
Polaroid camera
toys
clothing; street sign
toy trucks
buttons; tea tin
glass plate negatives
horsehair blanket & mittens
bottle collection
ink blotters;
electromagnetic machine
television
postcard
family documents
home canning device
yo-yo; BSA membership card
mini-dress
House of David ashtray
autographed baseball equipment
souvenir spoon; letter opener
photos of paper mill employees
Kalamazoo Brewery bottle
J.B. Rhodes oil bottle spout
hairpins
Upjohn salesman’s bag
paper beater balls
State Rexall photographs
fishing equipment
postcards; milk bottle caps; board game
8-mm films
teapot
fur capelet
oil paintings
optometry chair, charts, photos
Civil War letters & photograph
KVP calendar; Lassies schedule
ladies’ spats
marionette
photograph
photographs
printing plates
prom dresses; hats
prom dress
minstrel costume; photograph
railroad watch
Kalamazoo stove; mixing bowls; doll
pedal car; Shakespeare minnow
bucket & display case; tokens
parachutes and equipment
refrigerator, filmstrip
toys, books, documents
A.V.U. invitation
stereoviewer and films
WKZO booklet
Kalamazoo souvenir plate
Red Cross pins & cap
WMU Homecoming pin
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

LATIN JAZZ: LA COMBINACIÓN PERFECTA
February 14 through May 31, 2004
This bilingual multimedia exhibition is a rich musical journey through the history of Latin jazz in the United States and the Caribbean. The exhibition explores the music, origins, cultural elements, instrumentation, and major figures of this genre using maps, audio-visual stations, vintage film footage, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, programs, and musical scores. Also included are instruments owned by jazz greats, including Poncho Sanchez and Dizzy Gillespie. Visitors old and young will enjoy creating their own Latin jazz sound in the hands-on music room using congos, bongos, and claves. Learn while watching an instructional video featuring drummer/percussionist Bobby Sanabria as he navigates visitors through the instruments and demonstrates basic techniques and rhythms. Free Admission
Latin Jazz: La Combinación Perfecta has been organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and America’s Jazz Heritage, A Partnership of the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund and the Smithsonian Institution. Additional support has been provided by BET Jazz.
The KVM is pleased to help support the 2004 Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, April 23 – May 8.
Check the museum and Festival websites for program schedules:
www.kalamazoomuseum.org
www.thegilmore.com

COMING IN JUNE:
IN MY FAMILY/EN MI FAMILIA
This bilingual, hands-on, nationally touring exhibition created by the Austin Children’s Museum in Texas is based on Carmen Lomas Garza’s 1996 book of the same title. The exhibition leads visitors through life-sized paintings and hands-on activities to experience life as Garza lived it growing up in a Mexican-American family in South Texas. Free
In My Family/En mi familia was developed by the Austin Children’s Museum in cooperation with Carmen Lomas Garza and the National Latino Children’s Institute, and sponsored by H-E-B. Additional support provided by Applied Materials Foundation, The Moody Foundation, State Farm Insurance, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.
FEATURED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS
Join us for family hands-on programs on Saturday, the Sunday History Series, our Spring Break activities, and a new Preschool Performance Series just for preschoolers and their caregivers. A star (★) indicates programs of special interest to adults. B indicates programs that include Brownie Try-Its. All programs are FREE unless otherwise noted. See the back cover of this issue for our special series of programs, “Make Way for Heroes,” offered during Spring Break Week.

JAM SESSION ★
Feb. 1, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6; 2 – 5 p.m.
Listen to K'zoo Folklife Organization music on the first Sunday of every month.

PRESCHOOL PERFORMANCE SERIES
Saturday, Feb. 7; 10 – 11 a.m.
Sid “The Rock” Ellis engages minds and hearts with his live puppetry and storytelling.

ALAMO & TEXAS TOWNSHIPS ★
Sunday, Feb. 8, 2 p.m.
Organized in 1838, these townships and their names reflect significant national developments of the 1830s. Join us for the first in a series about all of Kalamazoo County’s 16 townships.

ALL THAT JAZZ B
Saturday, Feb. 14; 1 – 4 p.m.
Come celebrate the opening of Latin Jazz with a hands-on program exploring different types of music and instruments. Brownies: earn your Making Music Try-it today (patches not included).

KALAMAZOO & THE WORLD, 1960 ★
Saturday, Feb. 21; 7 p.m.
In 1960, the U. S. Information Service featured Kalamazoo in an exhibition in West Berlin as a typical middle-sized American city. Scholars and local participants will discuss and reminisce about the exhibition.

MEXICANS AND MEXICAN AMERICANS IN MICHIGAN ★
Sunday, Feb. 22; 2 p.m.

LOUIE IN CONCERT
Friday, Feb. 27; 7 – 9 p.m.
The New York-based singer/songwriter returns for a fun evening of Latin Jazz celebrating the new exhibit. $7.50/person.

EL LOUIE FAMILY SHOW
Saturday, Feb. 28, 1 – 2 p.m.
Have you ever played a tummy guitar? Do you like to sing and dance? Join us for a high-energy participatory show with the bilingual performer. Louie keeps the crowd bailando and cantando! $5/person.

JOIN THE BAND B
Saturday, Feb. 28; 1 – 4 p.m.
Create all kinds of instruments and prepare to join a band. Brownies: earn your Sound of Music Try-it (patches not included).

PRESCHOOL PERFORMANCE SERIES
Saturday, March 6: 10 – 11 a.m.
PALamazoo Puppets and Susan Harrison, preschool Wolf Trap artist, entertain and educate in a participatory show of puppets and music.

GIRLS INVESTIGATE SCIENCE & MATH OPPORTUNITIES
Saturday, March 6; 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. (registration required)
Scientists and mathematicians lead three hands-on explorations in math and science for girls in grades 6 – 8. Science-related sessions just for parents will also be offered during this conference. Register by Feb. 13 through the Girl Scouts of Glowing Embers Council at 269/343-1516. The $10 fee (for each girl and each parent) includes lunch and materials.

WSTAR PRESENTS MASTODONS AND OTHER SENSATIONAL SCIENCE B
Saturday, March 6; 1 – 4 p.m.
Students from Woodward Elementary conduct science demonstrations and crafts, and State Sen. Tom George introduces paleontologist Dr. Dan Fisher who will talk about Michigan mastodons. Come in to see some old bones! Brownies: earn your Science Wonders Try-It.

FESTIVAL OF HEALTH
Saturday, March 13; Noon – 4 p.m.
Area fitness and health-care organizations provide information, games, and activities about how to take care of ourselves—from our brains, to our teeth, to our toes! This program includes information for all ages on traditional and alternative health care.

FRIENDS OF POETRY ★
Sunday, March 14; 3 p.m.
Come celebrate Kalamazoo in poetry at the first-ever “Artifactory.” Inspired by the history of local artifacts, area poets will present readings of new poems in this collaboration with the Friends of Poetry.

CARE OF FAMILY PHOTOS & DOCUMENTS ★
Sunday, March 21; 2 p.m.
Arcadia Commons Campus, Room 128
Learn practical tips for preserving valued family treasures. Bring your own documents and photographs for care advice.
Experience a journey into space with state-of-the-art technology providing spectacular sights and sounds to guide your imagination to locations and events throughout our amazing universe. All programs are $3 per person.

SPACE BUS
Saturday & Sunday; Jan. 3 – March 28; 1:30 p.m.
Stella Capella travels to the edge of the solar system, observing the major features of each planet along the way. An engine malfunction at Pluto sends the bus on a runaway path toward the stars, where the Twomblies rescue the Space Bus.

ORION NIGHTS
Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday; Jan. 3 – March 28; 4 p.m.
Winter nights are when Orion the Hunter and several of the most brilliant stars light the sky. Discover what the colors of winter stars indicate, and how the stars progress through their lives in this program of the mythology and science of winter stars.

NORTHERN LIGHTS
Saturday & Sunday; April 3 – May 30; 1:30 p.m.
On clear dark nights, a faint glow can sometimes be seen in the North. The light of the Aurora Borealis is tied to space weather events, generated by eruptions on the surface of the sun and the solar wind interactions with Earth’s magnetic field.

ISLANDS IN THE SKY
Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday; April 3 – May 30; 4 p.m.
Pacific Island cultures spread from island to island across the great ocean as natives followed the stars. Captain Cook’s observations of the Transit of Venus in 1769 brought him to the island of Tahiti, where he encountered the Polynesians and learned their navigational methods.

UNIVERSE THEATRE & PLANETARIUM

PROGRAMS no longer available

THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES
Have your next birthday party at the KVM – party packages offer something for any age group, 3 and up. Cost is $10 per child. Call 373-7965 or visit www.kalamazoomuseum.org for more information on each program:

- Preschool Parties (for ages 3 – 5)
- Planetarium Party (ideal for young children, ages 5 – 8)
- Challenger Birthday Blast-Off! (for ages 10 and up)
- Birthday Space Adventure (for ages 8 & 9)

LOOK AHEAD TO SUMMER:
FREEDOM CAMP!
July 12 – 16; 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
For ages 9 – 12
Explore the history and legacy of the Underground Railroad in Southwest Michigan. Go on field trips to visit some of the region’s historic sites, participate in role-playing, write praise poems, and view the planetarium show, Secrets in the Sky. Fee is $85 and includes snacks, transportation, and materials; campers bring their own lunches. Minimum number of campers is 15; max. is 30. Registration and payment are required by June 14. Space is limited, so call early for details at 269/373-7965! Proof of age required.

SCOUT PROGRAMS
Call for a complete listing of our Scout programs for both boys and girls.

VOLUNTEER ALERT!
Call 373-7986 and learn about the benefits of volunteering at the museum.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES
The museum is barrier-free. Sign language interpreters may be scheduled for programs with a minimum of two weeks notice. Assisted listening devices are also available in the planetarium. Our TDD number is 269/373-7982.
JUNIOR MISSIONS
This specially designed 90-minute mission is for children ages 8 and up. Pre-flight hands-on activities prepare the junior astronauts for their exciting flight in the Challenger Learning Center’s spacecraft simulator. Successful crews receive certificates and mission memorabilia. An excellent program for scouts and other clubs. Ages 8 & up; min. of 8, max. of 14 participants. Registration is required at least two weeks prior to mission date; $10/person.

CORPORATE TRAINING MISSIONS
Could your organization benefit from a hands-on experience that graphically shows the productiveness of teamwork and communication? If so, this three-hour experience, consisting of one hour of pre- and post-mission activities and a full two-hour simulation, is the opportunity for you! The CLC staff will instruct your group in the use of computers, robots, and other equipment in activities that build teamwork and leadership skills. The program is flexible and can be adapted to your company’s needs. For 15 – 30 participants; $25/person.

CHILDREN’S LANDSCAPE
Children’s Landscape is designed to introduce preschoolers and their parents to an interactive museum setting. Hands-on activities, exhibits, and programs are designed for children five and under. Children older than five may participate only if accompanying a preschool buddy, with the expectation that their play be appropriate to preschool surroundings. Free

Monday through Friday  9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
   Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.
Open until 5 p.m. during Spring Break
   April 5 – 9

CIRCLE-TIME PROGRAMS
Circle Time Programs are offered free of charge to families and preschool groups. Different stories, musical activities, games, and art projects will be offered each week. All programs are approximately 20 minutes long and begin at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday through Friday.

MONDAY: Preschool Math (ages 3–5)
TUESDAY: Preschool Science (ages 3–5)
WEDNESDAY: Preschool Stories (ages 3–5)
THURSDAY: Preschool Music (ages 3–5)
FRIDAY: Preschool Art (ages 3–5)

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC
February/March
The science, math, and fun of music will be in a new exhibit just for preschoolers.

ABC, 123
April/May
Discover the basics of reading and math in a fun and playful way.
to Hastings to begin his practice under the careful eye of his uncle, Dr. William U. Upjohn.

For the next 10 years, W.E. worked with his uncle, possibly preparing to take over his uncle’s practice. W.E. developed a reputation as a competent, caring physician, although not a particularly gregarious one. His patients recall him as concerned and caring but always seeming to be preoccupied.

In 1878 he married Rachel Babcock, the daughter of a Kalamazoo pharmacist. They had five children, one of whom died in infancy. The other four were Rachel Winifred Upjohn Light, William Harold Upjohn, Dorothy Upjohn Dalton, and Genevieve Upjohn Gilmore. While he practiced medicine, W.E. also continued his interest in mechanical devices.

Dr. Upjohn partnered with a Hastings man, Fred Sweet, to develop and market a clock powered by electro-magnetism. The clock was not a commercial success, although a working model long sat in the lobby of The Upjohn Company’s Henrietta Street office building in Kalamazoo. Some biographers speculate that Dr. Upjohn incurred a significant debt on the clock project and that the need to generate more revenue than a small country physician was likely to earn stimulated his interest in solving the medical problem of an effective pill.

In 1885, W.E. Upjohn turned his attention to the problem and began experimenting, behind locked doors, with possible solutions. Struck, he later wrote, by “the impulse to produce something better adapted to the use of the country physician,” he invented a new way of making and delivering medicine.

Rather than start with a paste, Dr. Upjohn introduced a starter particle into a revolving pan. As the pan revolved, the starter was sprayed with powdered medicine and a fine mist, gradually accumulating into a pill of appropriate dosage. Dr. Upjohn built his new pill layer by layer, like a snowball rolling down a hill. The resulting product was essentially dry to begin with and could not dry out over time. It easily dissolved when ingested. It was also friable; it could be crushed under your thumb.

His ingenuity had solved two problems: how to deliver medicine that would dissolve in the body and how to insure precise control over the amount and quality of the active ingredients. Dr. Upjohn received a patent for his process in 1885.

The prospects seemed so promising that he left his practice in Hastings and moved to Kalamazoo. With brothers Henry, James, and Frederick as partners, William E. Upjohn founded the Upjohn Pill and Granule Company. And in the friable pill, they found both a product and a trademark symbol that helped their enterprise grow. The rest, as they say, is history.

Perhaps somewhere in southwest Michigan today, another dreamy thinker is turning a mechanical problem around in his mind that will “produce something better adapted to the use” of us all. 

**Ask the KVM!**

Have a question about a person, object, or artifact that relates to the history of southwest Michigan? Send your question to Tom Dietz, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s curator of research (269/373-7984 or tdietz@kvcc.edu) and you may see it answered in a future issue of Museography.
On a winter day in February 1930, two trains approached Kalamazoo. The first went through the city without incident but the second train halted, waiting for the signal to proceed — a signal that never came.

Such a delay was unexpected from the switchman at Pitcher and Michigan. Frank Stowe, who carried an Official Railroad Standard watch, knew exactly the second train’s schedule, so railroad employees were sent to investigate. Sadly, as the first train passed, Stowe suffered a heart attack in the tower and died.

The Official Railroad Standard watch* had been developed in response to a deadly rail collision on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad on April 19, 1891. Two trains—a fast mail train and a slower passenger train—collided because the trainmen were using unreliable watches.

Although the trains’ schedules were known to those who controlled the traffic, their watches were not reliably synchronized. The two trains ended up on the same track at the same time, and more than 10 railroad employees and postal clerks were killed.

Webb C. Ball, an expert watchmaker from Cleveland, testified to the unreliability of those watches. As a result, he developed the Official Railroad Standard watch—an improved watch that remained synchronized when set to the correct time.

Engineers, conductors, and switchmen using them could be certain all were in agreement as to the precise time. As a result, railroad efficiency improved and fewer lives were lost in train wrecks.

In Kalamazoo, it was the watch’s reputation for reliability that alerted railroad employees that something was seriously wrong when Frank Stowe failed to throw the switch for the second train passing through the city.

What are we looking for?
The kinds of things museums look for might surprise you. It isn’t always a great work of art or a piece of fancy furniture... more often it’s the stuff of everyday life. Today the Kalamazoo Valley Museum is collecting for the 20th century. If it was used between 1900 and 1999, and can help tell the story of southwest Michigan, it may be just what we’re looking for. If you have something you think belongs in a museum, please contact Tom Dietz, curator of research, at 269/373-7984 or tdietz@kvcc.edu.

Our Wish List includes: Kalamazoo City Directories (before 1977) • Souvenir celery spoon from Kalamazoo • Toys & games (especially from the 1950s and 1960s) • World War II home-front memorabilia (such as items representing women going to work; Victory gardens; war bonds; Red Cross Canteens)