Historical Marker - L1468C - The Kerns Hotel Fire / The Box 23 Club (Marker ID#:L1468C)

Significant Date:
Two World Wars and the Depression (1915-1945)

Registry Year: 1987 **Erected Date:** 1987

Marker Location

Address: East side of Grand River near Michigan Ave

City: Lansing

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Ingham

Township: Lansing

Lat: 42.73434900 / Long: -84.55021700

Web URL:

Front - Title/Description

The Kerns Hotel Fire

At 5:30 A.M. on December 11, 1934, the fire alarm outside the Kerns Hotel sounded. The 211-room, four-story brick hotel that stood on this site had 215 registered guests. Before the last embers of the fire were extinguished, thirty-two people were known dead and forty-four, including fourteen firemen, had been injured. Two of the injured people died later. Among the dead were seven Michigan legislators and five unidentified people. Many guests escaped by descending four fire ladders, and eight people jumped into life nets. However, the fire spread through the hotel's wooden interior so rapidly that many people were trapped in their rooms. Seventy-two members of the ninety-seven-man Lansing fire force fought the fire using eight of the force's eleven pieces of fire apparatus.

Back - Title/Description

The Box 23 Club

The firemen who fought the Kerns Hotel fire were aided by the Lansing and Michigan State Police, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Volunteers of America, and citizen volunteers, who brought the firemen hot drinks and dry gloves. Some of those volunteers later decided to form a club to support the work of the Lansing Fire Department. The club took its name from Fire Alarm Box 23, at Ottawa and Grand, from which the first alarm for the Kerns Hotel fire was sounded. The Box 23 Club was formally organized on December 11, 1937, the third anniversary of the fire. Its membership, which is limited to twenty-three people, pledges to support the Lansing Fire Department and to provide aid at fires when requested to do so by the fire department officer in charge of the fire.