



VOL. I NO. 1
Lansing, Michigan
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LANSING'S FIRST FIRE ENGINE A WORK OF ART

A dozen years before the cow kicked over Mrs. O'Leary's lantern, Lansing's Torrent Engine Company No. 1 was in business! Just a century ago, on October 27, 1857, this fire company, made up entirely of volunteers, was organized to protect the growing capital city from fire. Dues of ten cents a month were assessed on the members, and public contributions were solicited to purchase equipment. In 1858 an engine was ordered from a New York firm for \$1,100. Built of mahogany and inlaid with crescents and stars, and with solid brass fittings, the fire engine was a work of art. Sixteen-foot brakes on each side, moved by twenty men, provided the pumping power.

All of Lansing turned out to witness the delivery of the engine. Stores were closed, schools let out, and Washington Avenue was lined with spectators. Forty members of the fire company, dressed in colorful red shirts and black helmets, pulled the engine to the new fire house on East Allegan, on the present site of the Capitol Savings and Loan Building.

When the city took over fire protection in 1872, Torrent Engine Company No. 1 disbanded and the engine was sold to the city of Cheboygan, Michigan. Mr. J. P. Edmunds and Oscar L. McKinley located the engine in 1915 and arranged its return to Lansing. It now stands on the porch of the State Museum at 505 North Washington avenue. (Hours: Monday through Friday — 10:00 A.M. — 5:00 P.M.; Sunday — 2:00 P.M. — 5:00 P.M.)

NEXT MEETING

Of the Society

Thursday, March 28, 1957 — 8 P.M.
Lansing Civic Center — Parlors A & B

Featuring

BIRT DARLING

"A Century of Ingham County History"

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP TO PREPARE HANDBOOK FOR ANCESTOR HUNTERS

The Family History Interest Group of the Society met at the home of Mrs. Herbert Schoepke on February 12. Stimulated by the suggestion of the hostess, plans were made for the composition of a handbook for the use of those patrons of the Michigan State Library who are approaching the sport of ancestor-hunting for the first time.

The handbook will provide an outline of the library resources in Michigan Local History and Genealogy which all who frequent the Michigan Collection will find useful. It is hoped the guide will be ready in time for Michigan Week.

Tentative plans were made for the completion in spring of the Eaton Township Cemetery Record Project. The assistance of anyone interested in these or similar plans is welcomed. The next meeting of the Family History Group will be held April 16 at 7:30 at the home of Joseph Druse, 802 Cherry, East Lansing. Anyone planning to attend is asked to notify Joseph Druse.

THE GREATER LANSING
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

John Gray	President
George Wiskemann	1st Vice President
Mrs. Bernard Coggan	2nd Vice President
Joseph L. Druse	3rd Vice President
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505 N. WASHINGTON AVE.
LANSING, MICHIGAN

Heritage Is of The Past, Present, and Future With Many Duties to Perform

With this issue of HERITAGE the Greater Lansing Historical Society gives further evidence of its active interest in the history of this very important part of a very important state.

In the months ahead, this little publication will attempt to report activities of the Society and its members. It will try to bring to its readers reminders of the area's past. It will mention things of the present, and may even try to look into the future, on occasion.

One of its purposes is to serve as a means of communication among Society members. Another is to encourage others to become interested in the Society and what it stands for. And of course it will at all times encourage the continued development of a Greater Lansing patriotism among all who would enjoy that patriotism.

HERITAGE is of the past; it is of the present; it is of the future.

To be successful, it must have the cooperation of its readers. Contributions, suggestions, criticisms will be most welcome to those charged with the responsibility of putting HERITAGE together each month. The address: HERITAGE, 505 N. Washington Ave.

Familiar Byline Assures Next Meeting's Success

Some writers' bylines are like old friends. Interest perks whenever you see them.

Chances are, you and other STATE JOURNAL readers skip across the day's headlines to read first such features as the recent "Century Old Thoman Mill Yields to Progress," under Birt Darling's byline.

For his bylines are promises of good reading — promises stemming from scores of similar dramatic Lansing and Ingham County stories in THE JOURNAL with which Birt links past with present and points up tomorrow.

Thursday evening, March 28, the Greater Lansing Historical Society will enjoy his byline first hand. He will speak on "A Century of Ingham County History," at 8 o'clock in Rooms A and B in the Civic Center. The public is invited and it is pointed out that young people studying Ingham County history will find the meeting of special interest.

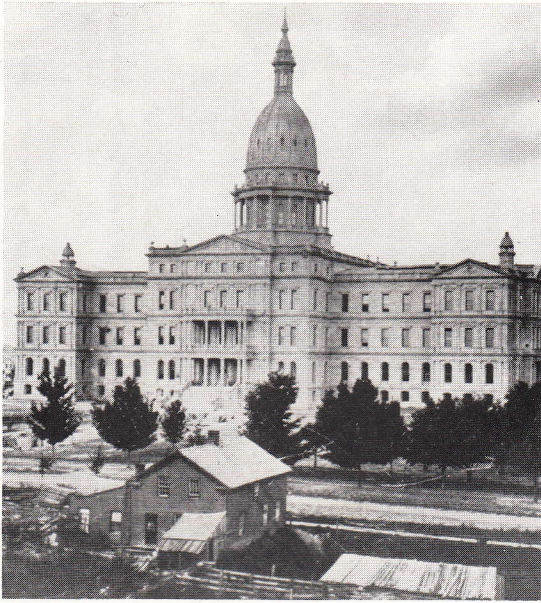
One of the Society's charter members, its first vice president, and chairman of its committee on historic sites, Mr. Darling is historian and staff writer on the STATE JOURNAL. He has been associated with the paper since 1937 and was historian in charge of its great centennial edition in 1955 which won a national award from the Association for State and Local History.

An artist too, Mr. Darling illustrated the Centennial's section about prehistoric Michigan, an interest area in which he began as a hobbyist and has become an authority. Almost any Sunday in good-weather months, you will find him on field trips, looking for Indian sites and recording his findings. He has a choice collection of Indian arrowheads.

Mr. Darling helped reestablish the Michigan Archaeological Society and is now its secretary. He was one of the founders of the Central Michigan Airmen's Association and later became an intelligence officer of the Civil Air Patrol when it was launched in 1941.

CITY IN THE FOREST, Birt's history of Lansing, published in 1950 and now out of print, is available at all libraries in this area.

The Darlings and their four children live at 1508 West Lenawee.



RESIDENCE OF THE JANITOR of the State Republican Building was the foreground subject for the cameraman who snapped this picture in 1880, or thereabouts. Mr. Driscoll was the janitor's name and the rather obscure structure in the lower right was the pen in which he kept his pigs. All this on the now busy corner of Michigan and Capitol Avenues in downtown Lansing. Of interest too, is the fact that the imposing building in the background was just about to have the glass installed in its first floor windows.

SENATE SECRETARY CHASE TAKES MEMBERS INTO PAST OF MICHIGAN'S CAPITOL

The role of Lansing and the Capitol Building in Michigan government down through the years was traced comprehensively by Senate Secretary Fred Chase at the Society's last meeting.

From the locating of the "Capitol in the swamp" to the present day, the speaker took his audience from fact to fact. He discussed actual construction of the building and mentioned that after 80 years "it is only one-eighth inch out of plumb."

The business session of the meeting included mention of an invitation to Society members from the Lansing Camera Club to attend meetings of that organization at 915 Townsend St.

Possibility of preserving a portion of the City Hall Annex was the subject of a report by Mrs. Edith-Eve Davis. Alderman Robert Brooks appeared to outline the position of the City Council in the matter.

Madison Kuhn Receives High Honor for Book on History of University

Highlighting the last meeting of the Society was the presentation to Madison Kuhn of an American Association for State and Local History Award for his book "Michigan State: The First Hundred Years." We are justly proud of our former president and fellow member.

Of the several hundred entries submitted for recognition, Mr. Kuhn's book was one of the four selected for an award. As you know, the American Association for State and Local History is the organization which publishes the outstanding magazine, "American Heritage," and which champions the cause of state and local history.

LANSING A DENSE FOREST? THAT'S WHAT RECORD SAYS

For those who doubt that Lansing was once a dense forest, pay heed to the following broadside, the original of which is now in the Archives of the Historical Commission.

WORK ON CAPITOL GROUNDS

Sealed proposals will be received at this office, until the first day of May next, for extracting the stumps four rods in width through the school section on Washington Avenue, on Michigan avenue from the river to Capitol Square, on entire block 115, where the present state buildings are situated, and on Capitol Avenue, adjoining said buildings. Said proposals will specify the price per stump for extracting all stumps over eight inches in diameter above the ground, and the like price for all under that size; and will be addressed to this office, endorsed "Proposals for extracting stumps." The bids will be open, and contract or contracts let, on the first day of May, or as soon thereafter as practicable. Security will be required for the early commencement of the work, and its prompt completion.

JOHN J. ADAM, Auditor General.
Lansing, April 5, 1848.

Two Historic Markers Located In This Area

The Lansing area comes in for two special considerations in the Historic Sites Marking program of the Michigan Historical Commission this spring.

In a special ceremony April 2 on the Capitol lawn a marker will be dedicated recognizing Lansing's role at the state's Capitol City.

Members of the Greater Lansing Historical Society are invited to attend the affair as special guests along with state and city government officials.

First of the area's special markers was scheduled for dedication March 24 at the Red Cedar Roadside Park east of East Lansing on Highway US-16. This marker calls attention to the fact that what is now a busy thoroughfare was the old Grand River Trail, once used by Indians and fur traders. The Trail later was important as the route which brought early settlers to Lansing.

Lansingites' Home Town Was Almost Swedenborg

El Dorado — capital of Michigan. Strange as it may seem, this was one of the names considered by the State Legislature in 1847 for the new capital to be located in Lansing township, Ingham County.

Other proposed names were Harrison, Huron, Franklin, Swedenborg, Cass, Tyler, Thorbush, Wright, Rushbridge, Kinderhook, Houghton, Washington, Fulton, and Marcellus. After a heated debate, the Legislature adopted the name Michigan. So, for almost a year, Michigan, Michigan was the seat of state government until in 1848 it was changed to Lansing.

ANNUAL MEETING IN MAY, OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

Plans for our annual meeting in May are getting under way this month. Let Miss Geneva Kebler know about your ideas for a program. This meeting will also be highlighted by an election of officers — so start thinking about the persons you want representing you next year.



LANSING'S BUSIEST CORNER IN 1880 was then as it is now — Michigan and Washington. The horse-drawn cars of the Lansing City Railway Company are long gone. So too are the 25-cent meals advertised on the sign over Michigan Avenue by the owner of a "Restaurant & Bakery." In the background is the City National Bank and east of it a number of buildings still recognizable.—Photo from the Edmonds Collection.

Society Members Figure Prominently in Report of New Library Books

Of special interest to historians and book lovers of the Greater Lansing area is the following report from fellow member, Mrs. Esther Loughlin, of the State Library:

Out of the Past — Into the Future, the imaginative pageant about the historic Marble Community, written and produced by our trustee, Blanche Coggan, a year ago, was published recently by Greenwich Book Publishers (\$2, 289 Fifth Ave., New York 17).

You will cherish this attractive little volume on your own book shelf. It is hailed, too, by Michigan groups who have a pageant to plan. It is an excellent model and offers sound how-to-do-it help.

The Lansing Poetry Club has just published an anthology of its members' work, *Evergreen Echoes*. One of the most active of Michigan's local poetry groups, organized in 1938, its membership is as wide as the Greater Lansing area. Member Hub Gallup of Williamston designed the attractive cover. Copies are still available from Joseph Cherwinski, Lansing, chairman of the anthology committee (paper, \$1.25; hard cover, \$2.50).