



Town Crier

HEAR
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Volume 7 - No. 3

HISTORICAL SOCIETY of GREATER LANSING

P. O. Box 515, Lansing, Michigan

November, 1965

THE NEGRO IN MICHIGAN HISTORY-TRIP II

Michigan's Negro history group has gotten off to a lively beginning. Trip #1, to Addison and the surrounding area proved so interesting and fruitful that a second trip was planned almost immediately. On Sunday, October 31, the group visited the following towns in search of more facts on early Michigan's Negroes.

Eaton Rapids

Visited the Hugh Hall home, 507 Canal Street, where Whistlin' Major once sat on the steps and whistled after his work was done.

Quakertown

Visited the John Mott Academy building which was established in 1838. At the corner of Gibbs and Devereaux stands Quakertown monument where the original meeting house stood, now used as a granary. The Oliver Hampton Underground Station was the first house East from M-99 on Devereaux Road, now Rose Cottage Farm. Rice Creek still produces rice. Indians more than 100 years ago canoed on this same creek to gather rice for their meals. Visited Gibbs Centennial Farm, and identified the site across the road where the Isaac Clawson home had stood, and where a Negro, when Clawson was summoned to war, had noticed Clawson's huge family and substituted for him on the firing line.

Concord

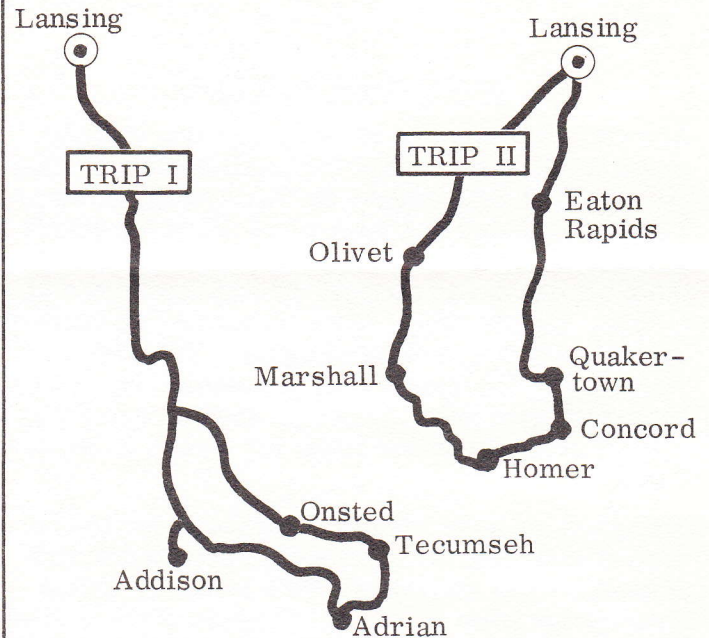
Visited the Thomas McGee Station where men gathered and laid out the underground routes in 1838. The leader, Rev. John Cross of Illinois, dedicated his life to laying out underground networks. It was necessary to have a station every 10 miles so the horses could go and return the same night to avoid suspicion. There was also the James Taylor and Lewis Keeler residences in Concord to see.

Homer

Milton Barney's cobblestone home, once a hide-away for fugitive slaves is now a funeral home. The door to the entrance to the tunnel in the basement which lead down to the lake "40 rods" away remains nearby but the entrance to the tunnel is now sealed off.

Cook's Prairie

Cook's Prairie, with its Baptist Church was identified as an underground.



Marshall

Visited the George Ingersol house, 302 West Mansion, where the Adam Crosswhites were hidden when the Kentucky slavecatchers were attempting to recapture and return them to the plantation; the John D. Pierce home at 314 Mansion; and the home of Jabez Fitch, West Prospect and Kalamazoo Streets, the white columned underground mansion built by Fitch in 1839. Fitch met his death in 1843 as a result of a falling wall of a Presbyterian Church he designed and was building and planned to donate to the community. Mr. Harold Brooks, a lifetime Marshall historian, now lives in this magnificently structured mansion.

A conference was held with Mr. Brooks in his office. He related incidents pertaining to the underground railroad and its operation in Marshall, particularly, the Crosswhite case. A boulder marks the spot where Adam Crosswhite was captured. Nine hundred feet north and 8 degrees west stood the Ferguson Farm on which the Crosswhites had lived about 8 years and the site of the Crosswhite Cabin Kentucky Raid of 1847.

(continued)

Senator Roger Johnson (Democrat, Marshall) piloted us through Marshall's historical spots reviewing the Crosswhite kidnapping episode and the Great Oak under which the Rev. John D. Pierce, Congregational Minister, and Elder Isaac Crary stood when they introduced Michigan's public educational system.

Olivet

Visited the residence of Mr. Oramel Hosford.

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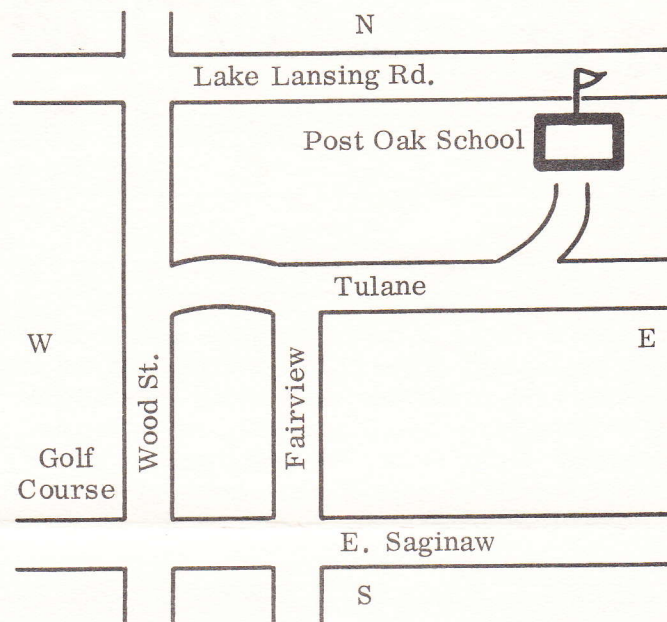
NOVEMBER MEETING

Are you interested in knowing how our youth's tastes are being whetted for local history? Then come to Post Oak School on Wednesday, November 10, at 8:00 p.m. and hear Mrs. Frances Schneider, a counselor in the Lansing Public Schools, tell of the program being carried through under her direction. Is this youth group an untapped source for membership? Let's investigate. This being American Education Week, it seemed fitting that we investigate what the public schools are doing to inspire interest in our youth for things of historical value.

The study of local history in schools and the securing of material for it is well illustrated in this sentence from an October 30th letter to Doyle Fitzpatrick from Ernest J. Wessen of the Midland Rare Book Co., Mansfield, Ohio. Quote:.. "with red-hot genealogists in the field; with great University libraries fighting for local history, because of the new concept of teaching history"... etc.

We urge all members to attend this meeting to hear Mrs. Frances Schneider tell us what Lansing Public Schools are doing about it.

NOVEMBER MEETING LOCATION
Post Oak School



Our very sincere "thank you" to Sheriff Kenneth Preadmore for hosting a most successful meeting at the Ingham County Jail. It was a very rewarding experience.

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Funds for the Wirth Johnson Memorial are being received by Treasurer, Mary McNeeley. Many friends have donated an amount to be given to the Michigan State Library where it will be used to strengthen printed sources to Michigan's rich local and family history. Contributions may be directed to the Fund c/o the Society, P.O. Box 515, Lansing.

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