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Historical Society  
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TOWNSHIP

CARRIER

Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901

VOLUME 18, NO. 1

FALL, 1976

New Programs  
And Projects  
For a  
New Year

& BiCentennial Forum

## Historical Society of Greater Lansing Programs, 1976-77

George Wiskemann, vice president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, announced the programs for the year. All take place at 7:30 p.m., the third Wednesday of the month.

Just prior to the Christmas season, on Nov. 17, Orvil and Mildred Thomas will present "Land of Toys," featuring their collection of nostalgic playthings. The program will be at the Turner-Dodge House in North Lansing.

Lee Hartman, author of the Michigan Natural Resources publication, *Michigan Barns, Our Vanishing Landmarks*, will present an illustrated lecture on barns, Jan. 19. The program will take place in the Lansing Main Library, downtown Lansing.

The Feb. 16 meeting, at the LCC Capital City Airport facilities, will be on restoring antique aircraft—the preservation of the history of aviation. The speaker, Les Steen, is director of media services for the Lansing School District and a member of antique and experimental aircraft organizations.

Phil Mason, one of the founders and a past president of the historical society, will give the March 16 program. It is tentatively scheduled for the Gier Park facilities in Lansing. Dr. Mason is director of the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. The title of his program has not been announced.

In April, the society will join with the Friends of Historic Williamstown for the program "Township IV North,

Range I East," the story of Williamstown (the township) and Williamston (the city). Gloria Van Dusen, president of the Friends, will be principal speaker. The April 20 program will be at the historic Branch School, Sherwood and Branch Roads, northwest of Williamston. It will be the annual community night program for the society.

(Continued on Page 6)

### Historical Society of Greater Lansing receives National Recognition

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) has announced that the Historical Society of Greater Lansing is the recipient of its Award of Merit for 1976-1977. The AASLH National Awards Committee voted the award during the Association's annual meeting which was held in Albany, N.Y., Sept. 18 and 19. The honor was given to the Historical Society of Greater Lansing for its "vigorous program in several Mid-Michigan counties."

Plans are now being made for presentation ceremonies.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing received an award last year from the Historical Society of Michigan.

### Recent Publications

*Bulletin No. 1*, help from experienced as well as beginning researchers. *Bulletin No. 2*, a Federal Census Content Chart 1790-1900. *Occasional Paper No. 7*, cemetery inscriptions and records of Windsor Township. *Occasional Paper No. 8*, cemetery inscriptions and records of Carmel Township. Mid-Michigan Genealogical Society, c/o State Library, 735 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48913.

*Historical Tours of Clinton County*. Illus. \$3. Clinton County Historical Society, Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879.

*A Corner of Ingham . . . Stockbridge*. 105 p., illus., \$5 (add \$1 for postage and handling). Stockbridge Area Bicentennial Committee, Att: Janet Boyd, Box 334, Stockbridge, MI 49285.

*Michigan in Novels*. 20 p., free on request, relates to adult fiction since 1950. State Library, 735 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48913.

*Guide To State Records*. 300 p. plus index. Valerie Browne, comp. History Division, Mich. Dept. of State, Lansing, MI 48918.

*As the Eagle Soars; An illustrated History of Eagle, Mich. 1834-1976*. 38 p., illus. Hiram Hazen, Eagle, MI 48822.

*Grand Ledge Remembered*. 68 p., pictorial, \$5. Grand Ledge Historical Society, 406 N. Bridge, Grand Ledge, MI 48837.

*Windsor Township: Heritage and Horizons*. 242 p., illus. Thelma Caruss, Dimondale, MI 48821.

*Pictorial Lansing: Great City on the Grand*. 176 p., illus., \$6.50. Helen Grainger, 410 Center St., Mason, MI 48854.

*At the Campus Gate, A History of East Lansing*. 192 p., illus., East Lansing Bicentennial Committee, 410 Abbott, East Lansing, MI 48823.

### Dues are Due

Historical Society of Greater Lansing membership costs are due by Sept. 1. If you have not paid, please send your check now.

The costs: Junior — \$2.50; Regular — \$5; Family — \$7.50; Patron — \$10; Organization and Business — \$25 to \$100.

Historical Society of Greater Lansing, Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901

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the historical society of  
greater lansing



and Bicentennial Forum

Box 12095, Lansing, Mi. 48901

VOLUME 18

NO. 1

FALL, 1976

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*Anyone wanting to be on  
a committee or work on a  
project should call Jack  
Thompson, ED7-2277.*

## HSGL Awards

Historical Society of Greater Lansing Awards of Honor were given to three people, Sept. 25, for their contributions to the advancement of history in the Michigan capital region: Faye Hanson, who directed the Bi-

centennial events for DeWitt, one of the most outstanding programs in the state;

Mike Hughes, reporter for the *State Journal*, who has written a number of interesting (and accurate) articles about local history, especially in the area of preservation;

and Ken Speake, reporter for WJIM-TV, whose series, "Eye on the Future," shows that there are many remarkable places of history in the Greater Lansing region.

The society presented an award to Winifred Olds, of WILX-TV, on her program, "Info-Ten," Oct. 9. The award was for her work as moderator of the program and her help in promoting historical and Bicentennial events.

## Necrology

Manning Curry  
May 7, 1910 — Sept. 6, 1976

Vernon Babbitt  
July 27, 1902 — Sept. 12, 1976

## Africa . . .

. . . not a distant place, but once a school district in Williamstown Township.

In 1863 a school was constructed on the north side of the Red Cedar River. Since most of the people of the district were black abolitionists, they named the school Africa. Even the road in front of the school, now Sherwood Road, was called Africa Road.

The school was later named Branch School, after N. C. Branch, an area farmer. He and his wife, Laura, had 11 children. In 1848 a blood dysentery entered their home leaving five children dead in ten days. Mrs. Branch's mother died of shock seven days later. A row of small, white tombstones in nearby

Foote Cemetery silently relates this sad event. Mr. Branch was killed by a train in 1897.

The building ceased being used as a school in 1961. Attacked by vandals and the wind, shorn of its bell and cupola, the old school was scheduled for destruction in 1973. But a group of local residents went before the Township Board to ask for the responsibility of restoring and maintaining the building. The group incorporated as the Friends of Historic Williamstown, dedicated to preservation and possible restoration of historic sites in the township.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing's April 20 program will be held at the Branch School.



## Home Tours

The 13th annual Marshall Historic Home Tour, Sept. 11-12, has been added to the growing list of successful history related activities which have come to be expected when they happen in Marshall. About 1,400 volunteers worked on different phases of the event, according to John Collins, president of the Marshall Historical Society.

"That is pretty remarkable for a town with a population of only 7,250," Mr. Collins said.

The Owosso Area Bicentennial sponsored a tour of historic and architecturally significant homes in the Owosso-Corunna region, Sept. 25. Homes included two which had been built in the late 1830s by early pioneers, Victorian houses complete with gingerbread carpentry and cupoles, and an imposing turn-of-the-century example of industrial achievement. Many of the homes were open to the public for the first time. All displayed fine antiques.

Visitors to a home tour festival filled St. Johns, Sept. 25. Period homes, Midwest adaptations of classic styles, and examples of comfortable modern-living with antiques pleased the crowd. The event was sponsored by the Clinton County Historical Society in association with the St. Johns Homecoming Weekend.

## HSGL Helps With Home Tours

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing assisted with the hosting of one of the buildings on the Mason home tour, Sept. 11, as part of its ambassador program. The tour was sponsored by the Mason Area Bicentennial Commission.

On Dec. 4, the society will be helping again with the Grand Ledge Christmas home tour. Members of the society will be at the Wood-

Culver house, 207 Madison, to act as tour guides and to put on craft demonstrations. The Grand Ledge tour will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a candlelight tour from 6 to 9 p.m. Anyone interested in working on this project should call Jack Thompson, society president, at ED7-2277, or Geneva Wiskemann, ambassador committee chairwoman, at 484-0607.



The Wood-Culver House, one of the stops on the Dec. 4 Grand Ledge home tour.

## On The Historian's Calendar

Beginning in September. "Michigan and the World at Work." The Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Beginning Sept. 18. "The City's Attic: 122 Years of Collecting." Grand Rapids Public Museum. Features hundreds of objects from the museum collection, filling the West Building main hall. Coming up: "People of the Grand."

Nov. 3-6. Annual Meeting, Historical Society of Michigan. Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum. Dearborn Inn, meeting headquarters.

Nov. 6. Quilt Show, Haslett Middle School.

### Christmas Home Tour

Saturday December 4  
Grand Ledge

#### on tour:

Wood-Culver House, c1854  
Granger-Garlock House, c1870  
Campbell-Wirbel House, c1886  
Canada Settlement School, c1887  
Kent-Trinklein House, c1891

11 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
with candlelight tour  
6-9 p.m.

Wilson-Bliss House, c1900  
Fitzgerald House, c1909  
Baptist Church Parsonage-Merrifield House, c1911  
Hamill Home, 1974

*Antique Show and Sale at the Grand Ledge High School, sponsored by The Greater Lansing Area Antique Dealers Association*

Tickets \$4 at the Grand Ledge Library Club Rooms and at all tour stops on the day of the tour or by mail from

Grand Ledge Bicentennial  
Home Tour Committee

P. O. BOX 121 — GRAND LEDGE MI 48837  
(Make checks payable to Grand Ledge Area ARBC)



During the Bicentennial year, 1976, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing has mailed the Town Crier — free — to entire memberships or leadership groups of historical and Bicentennial organizations in Clinton, Eaton, Ingham and parts of Shiawassee and Ionia counties, as well as to government officials and members of the media. The computerized mailing list has been kept up to date with the help of representatives of these groups.

Lansing Community College has contributed the postage as one of its Bicentennial projects. It has also made available free self-adhering mailing labels to the various organizations. (The person to call for these is Bob Bouck, 373-7400.)

Because of the tremendous costs of publishing, printing and mailing the Town Crier, after this issue the Historical Society will probably no longer be able to mail the magazine to non-paying individuals and groups.



# Preservationists Unite!

With the printing of this partial directory of area preservation efforts, members of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing preservation committee plan to serve as a clearing house for such endeavors and to create an instrument for cooperation and communication. It is our intention to keep the list current, adding new projects and updating those presently included. We shall continue to make the directory available, either as a part of the *Town Crier* or as a separate publication.

If you are working on a preservation project — large or small, private or public — and would like to be listed, please complete our preservation information sheet which we shall send you upon request. Write to: Historical Society of Greater Lansing, Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901.

What are the common goals of preservationists? How can we help each other? What can we do jointly to strengthen the preservation movement, not only in the vicinity of Lansing but throughout the country? Your responses to these questions can be added to your preservation information sheet.

*New York Times* housing writer, Ada Louise Huxtable, has referred to preservation as "an environmental necessity . . . an important social tool for the retention of neighborhood health."

And it is becoming increasingly clear that there is more at stake than structures. How do people relate to these structures and what happens when they are torn down?

In the Lansing area, as elsewhere, it is well to think of various preservation undertakings as components of a total program and to consider how they can work in combination to form a sturdy social fabric of service to all of us. Together, these efforts can become a vital force, a basis for useful community values.

When we save these buildings and places we are saving the things that people cherish and for which they are willing to work. The fiber of a neighborhood is delicate and elusive. The demolition of just one building which has meaning for people can seriously damage morale. But on the brighter side, when a building is saved, particularly if it is saved through community endeavor, the positive impact is immediately visible. One success often leads to another and a cooperative spirit is fostered.

As Ada Louise Huxtable has pointed out, not just once but many times in recent years, we are recognizing more and more the potential for older buildings. Duplication of these buildings is impossible but preservation or restora-

tion is usually practical and economically sound. It is fortunate, then, that we are seeing a yearning and a nostalgia (particularly among young people who are rejecting some of the shiny products of current society and turning toward the comforting remnants of the past.) This awareness is a developing process and it is useful to remember that, even when we fail to retain a specific structure, through our attempt we have added to the momentum of the preservation movement; and this momentum will provide, for the next try, a better opportunity for success.

—Bette Downs, Chairwoman

HSGL Preservation Committee

*Turner-Dodge House*, North Street near Turner Street, Lansing

Contact: Lansing Jaycees, Don Hartwick, 487-6108

Owned by the City of Lansing, this brick home dates back to 1853 when it was built and occupied by James Turner. In 1899 Frank Dodge, who had married James Turner's daughter, Abby, purchased the house and made several additions. Now, renovation is underway with Lansing Jaycees in charge. Help is welcome at work sessions held each Tuesday from 7 - 11 p.m.

Although renovation is in process, meeting rooms are available for community groups and many events have been held at the home during the past year. Extensive wooded grounds are an important feature of Turner-Dodge House and outdoor events can be scheduled.

Another project relating to the Turner-Dodge House is publication of a booklet describing the property and its history. This is a joint undertaking of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and the North Lansing Community Association.

*Pink School*, grounds of Cedar Street Elementary School, Ash and Cedar Streets, Mason.

Contact: Mason Area Bicentennial Commission, Sandra Dika, 144 East Ash Street, Mason 48854, 676-1046

The Pink School has been pink since it was built in 1855. A one room school with Greek revival architectural details, it served the Mason area continuously until 1964. During the summer of 1976 the school was moved from the corner of College and Columbia Roads near Mason to its present location and its restoration is the major Bicentennial activity of the Mason Area Bicentennial Commission.

Once work on the building is completed, it will become a museum of area



Preservation projects may serve many uses. An example is the Turner-Dodge House, the setting for the North Lansing Art Show, Aug. 27-29. Among the artists displaying their works on the lawn of the house was Debra Matteson of East Lansing.

— photo, Jack Thompson



history. Restoration funds were raised Sept. 11 when the commission sponsored a tour which included visits to seven historic homes, two churches, and a railroad caboose.

Volunteer workers are needed Saturdays beginning at 7 a.m. Those wishing to help are asked to telephone Mrs. Dika who is scheduling special tasks for special days.

*Darius B. Moon House*, 116 South Logan Street, Lansing

Contact: Committee to Save the Moon House, Inc., chairperson, Diana Reedy. For brochure and contribution form, telephone Bette Downs, 351-5752 or write to Save the Moon House, Inc., 2205 North Grand River Avenue, Lansing 48906.

This Eastlake Victorian house, recently placed on the State register of historic sites, was designed and built in 1894 by local architect Darius B. Moon for his own use. Although Mr. Moon designed houses for many prominent Lansing residents, few remain.

The house is currently vacant and in the likely path of the Logan Corridor. Committee members and friends are partially restoring it at its present location. Tentative long range plans call for moving to the Grand Mill site. (See below for description of the Grand Mill project.)

Immediate needs: Funds and person power to paint and secure the building for the winter. Work sessions are held Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m.

*Orchard Street Pump House*, Orchard and Chittenden Streets, East Lansing

Contact: Jeremy Mattson, Bailey Community Association, office, 353-0755; home, 351-8082

With \$29,000 assured from the City of East Lansing's community development funds to finance the pump house restoration program, it is expected that bids for the work will be let in November. The City of East Lansing will administer the funds and retain title to the property but the Bailey Community Association has been the driving force behind the project.

Although a relatively recent structure, built in 1934 and designed by local architect Harold Childs, the pump house has historic significance because it was among the first municipal water softening systems in the country. The technology in this field has changed rapidly and the pump house is now obsolete as far as its original purpose is concerned.

However, its new use will be equally

important for it is anticipated that it will serve as an information center where East Lansing residents may seek answers for any questions that may be concerning them. One drawback is that the structure can have no bathroom facilities because it is located over one of the city's water wells.

Although major restoration will be completed under contract, volunteers will be needed soon for painting, landscaping, and related tasks.

*Grand Mill on the "East Bank"*, area

## Help

Preservation efforts are rewarding. All need assistance. Review the possibilities and offer your help by getting in touch with the program that interests you. Your support will mean a great deal to the dedicated and hard working preservationists.

bounded by Michigan Avenue, Mill Street, Kalamazoo Street, and the Grand River

Contact: Reniger's, 200 Mill Street, Lansing 48901, 485-7291

Grand Mill on the "East Bank" is a five acre complex comprised of eight river front buildings dating from the 1880's. All buildings are presently used for offices and wholesale and retail operations. Future plans call for a shopping area featuring craft shops where artisans and craftspeople will be producing their wares. It is anticipated that the development will blend with

the Red Cedar bike path and park areas comprising the City of Lansing's downtown urban renewal program.

Ample parking and an old time sandwich shop and ice cream parlour will be among the attractions, with emphasis placed on architectural features of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The area was a bustling center of activity from 1847 until 1880 when waterfront development and water traffic were crucial to Lansing's economy.

*Charlton Park Village and Museum*, 2545 South Charlton Park Road, Hastings 49058

Contact: Frank Walsh, director, above address, 616-945-3775

Charlton Park is a unique combination of historic buildings plus a recreation area featuring playgrounds, a baseball diamond, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, hiking and nature study areas, and a beach. Throughout the area there are restrooms, drinking water, grills, and picnic tables.

Located on Thornapple Lake and the Thornapple River, the development has gradually expanded and several structures have been moved to it from other locations. In addition to a museum there is an 1885 church, the Bristol Inn constructed in 1850, a school, machine shed, blacksmith shop, and carpenter/cooper shop. Individual visitors as well as groups are welcome.

Charlton Park is administered by Barry County Parks and Recreation Commission, Hastings.



The Historical Society of Greater Lansing conducted tours of the Turner-Dodge House, Aug. 27-29 as part of the North Lansing Community Association Art Show. An estimated 2000 people went through the building in small groups, some standing in line for over an hour to get in. Up to eight guides were kept busy at any one time. The society is now working on a tour book.

— photo, Jack Thompson



# A Tale of Two Churches

On Feb. 4, 1843, the Congregationalists of Portland organized the first Congregational Church in the village. During their first decade they met in the Wadsworth Mill or the Red Schoolhouse, or in private homes. In 1853 they built their church. It was the first church in the village and continues to be the only one of the early houses of worship still in use.

It was located on the flat area at the edge of the Grand River. But the town did not flourish there, so in 1877 the members moved the church to its present location, on a bank, high above the river. In 1916, Rev. E. E. Branch wrote in his *History of Ionia County* that at that time it was "materially enlarged and improved at an aggregate expense of \$6,000."

Around 1900 the rear of the structure was altered and the gallery widened. In 1914 a two-story, 30' x 36' wing was added to make room for a parlor, Sunday school rooms, a social room and a food service area.

The nucleus of strength and foresight of the ten charter members had held firm through separation by some of the members to form the Presbyterian Church in 1867 and through the pressures of social and religious changes over the years.

Today the wooden structure still stands, a characteristic example of the Greek Revival style of architecture common in the southern part of the Lower Peninsula during the 1840s and 1850s. Its corner pilasters, capitals and low gabled pediment help make the building a cultural treasure. The church members, under the leadership of their minister, Rev. Ronald Lehr, have committed themselves to its preservation.

The first phase of restoration will include the excavation and completion of the basement and the construction of two small additions to the apse. The total cost for this is estimated at \$100,000. An additional \$250,000 will be needed for the completion of the balcony and restoration of the first floor.

"The past 133 years have proven that there is a place for us in the community of Portland," Rev. Lehr affirmed. "With that privilege of place, comes the responsibility to meet the needs of those we serve."

In Dimondale, 25 miles from Portland, it was a special Sunday service for Rev. John Toth and the members

of the First United Presbyterian Church as they gathered together June 13 to unveil the second official State historical marker in this rural Eaton community. The sign (State marker no. 390) reads.

"In 1846, Congregational services were conducted by the Rev. Joseph Smith in the home of one of Windsor Township's earliest residents, Nathan Pray. In 1875, 19 years after the town of Dimondale was platted around the mill of Isaac Dimond, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians jointly built this structure. The Community's first church, it was formally purchased by the Presbyterians in 1877."

(Dimondale's first State marker, erected in 1974, identifies the Underhill store built in 1851. These two markers, along with a book by Thelma Caruss, *Windsor Township: Heritage and Horizons* (1976), are alerting residents to the history which surrounds them.)

The congregation of the Presbyterian Church have removed the bell from the steeple, replacing it with automatic chimes, and are going to preserve it in a permanent exhibit. Their questions to the Historical Society of Greater Lansing about the history of the bell prompted this report from the society's References and Resources Committee. The information came from reference books, the Cincinnati Historical Society, and the office of the assistant secretary of state for Ohio.

The bell is marked "Blymyer, Norton & Co." Romaine's *A Guide to Trade Catalog, 1744-1900* states that, although the Massachusetts Historical Society has Paul Revere's manuscript account book listing the bells cast for New England churches, schools and other public buildings, no printed catalogs of that period survive.

We were in better luck with Blymyer Norton & Co. It grew from the Clark (or Clark's) Sorgo Machine Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio. Directories offer evidence that William H. Blymyer was president of Clark's Sorgo Machine Co. in 1864. The name of the company varied, and by 1867 was Blymyer, Norton & Co., the one stamped on the Dimondale bell.

A printed catalog of 85 pages illustrating steel composition bells available in 1875 is in the collections of the New York Historical Society. The Cincinnati Historical Society reported a catalog, *Agricultural Machinery and Cane Mills Manufactured by Blymyer, Norton &*

Co. (successors to Clark Sorgo Machine Co.,) for 1867 which describes bells offered at that time:

"From the experience of many years in the manufacturing of the cheaper class of bells, we find that the Steel Composition surpasses all others in the combination of those qualities most sought for by intelligent purchasers of bells. They are larger than the bronze bells of same weight, can be heard as far. In purity, richness and volume of sound, they are almost equal to the regular bell metal; and as they cost less than one third as much, they are within the reach of the most feeble churches. Hundreds are now in use in all parts of the country, and none have broken or failed to give satisfaction. The style of mounting gives an easy motion, and secures it against much of the jarring so common in the ringing of bells. Church bells warranted for one year...

	bell and	mounting	price
dia.	weight		
28 in.	250 lbs.	400 lbs.	\$ 60
36 in.	650 lbs.	800 lbs.	125
40 in.	800 lbs.	1000 lbs.	165

The company which was the subject of our search became the Blymyer Iron Works Company and formally incorporated Feb. 20, 1886. It had 3,000 shares at a par value of \$5. It dissolved Dec. 29, 1927.

## HSGL Programs

(Continued from Page 1)

The society's annual meeting will be held May 18 at the town hall in Eagle. It will include a country style dinner, entertainment, the election of officers, and the annual president's talk. The title of the program by the president, Jack Thompson, will be "A Mullett is Not a Fish," the story of the surveyor, John Mullett.

Two programs of the society already have taken place. The Sept. 25 meeting included a picnic and an evening of music. Karen Domanski, assisted by Mike Jolley on the guitar, featured old-time instruments and songs. Their informal concert included the auto harp, hammered dulcimer, banjo, mandolin and lumber jack, as well as a sing-along.

The society's annual ethnic night on Oct. 20, the week following Columbus Day, was on the origins of the local Italian community and the Italians' contributions to the culture of Michigan. Bill Castellani, a member of the Board of Directors of the Italian-American Club of Greater Lansing, was the speaker.



# Meetings on Preservation And American Studies

Two conferences have been planned which are of interest to historians. The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, with the Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield, offers a conference, "Their Buildings Now: A Workshop for the Care of Old Buildings," Thurs., Nov. 11 - Sat., Nov. 13. The Historic resources Committee of the National Institute of Architects, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Southeast Michigan Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology, and the Michigan History Division of the Department of State will be co-sponsors of the event.

Registration will begin at 7 p.m., Nov. 11 at the museum, followed by an evening wine party and tour of the conservation laboratories.

The Friday program will begin with a welcoming address by Karl Grumel, dean of the Lawrence Institute school of architecture. Betty-Lee Frances, president of the Southeast chapter of the architects' association, will chair a session highlighted with speeches by two architects, J. Henry Chambers, and Robert C. Mack. Their topics will be the deterioration of building materials and human erosion.

A series of seminars involved with building and plant material analysis specific to architectural preservation will follow. Topics will include rectified photography, research and preservation of historic building hardware, paint, masonry, wood, archeology, someone to pick up the pieces, historic landscape, and building moving.

Additional specialists for the afternoon workshop will include Penelope Batcheler of the National Park Service, the restoration architect for Independence Hall in Philadelphia; Edward Francis, architect; Carl Johnson, land-

scape architect; Charles H. Martinez, executive board member, Michigan Archeological Society; Richard Neuman, preservation-urban designer; Greg Morrison, architectural historian; and Carl Johnson, building moving contractor.

Dinner, "Remember When," will be at 7:30 p.m. at the Lawrence Institute. Each dinner table will include a notable restoration expert. The keynote address will be given by Ms. Batcheler.

The Sat. Nov. 13 program will begin at 9 a.m. with tours to sites and buildings that represent seminar topics. The participants will have box lunches for the noon meal. Busses will return to the Lawrence Institute at 2:30.

Registration forms are available from Lawrence Tech Preservation Workshop, 21000 W. Ten Mile, Southfield 48075. Fees, payable to the workshop, are: SE-APT members \$35; students \$5; others \$45; spouses and guests \$5; tour \$12; Friday lunch \$6; Friday dinner \$15.

The second conference will take place when the American Studies Association of Michigan (ASAM) will hold its annual meeting, April 1 and 2, 1977, on the campus of Michigan State University. The subject will be "Current Trends: Research in American Studies."

ASAM is a chapter of the national American Studies Association, devoted to the study of American culture, broadly defined. The membership includes scholars and students of American studies, both on campus and off campus. College or university affiliation is not a prerequisite of membership.

Recent meetings have focused on the rise of American industrialism (March, 1976, Henry Ford Museum) and poverty and progress (March, 1975, Delta College).

Interests reflected in the association include women's studies, architectural preservation, racial minority experience, painting as a reflection of American life, popular culture, and the economic and philosophical implications of American politics, to name a few areas.

A flyer on the 1977 meeting will be distributed in the near future. It will call for participants, papers, panel discussions and media presentations. The

exact nature of the meeting will depend on the response of those interested. Any ideas for presentations will be welcomed and carefully considered, according to Jeremy Mattson, secretary-treasurer of the state association.

The MSU American Studies Association (MSU-ASA) publishes a newsletter, the *Examiner*, three times a year. The winter issue contained the proceedings of the annual meeting of ASAM. Other issues have focused on such things as baseball and McCarthyism. A subscription to the *Examiner* comes with membership in MSU-ASA, with dues of \$3 per year.

Correspondence to the American Studies Association should be directed to Jeremy Mattson, Dept. of American Thought and Language, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

## Sundry

Rev. Ronald P. Byars, pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of Okemos, has been selected as a member of the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Historical Society headquartered in Philadelphia. Founded in 1852, it is one of the oldest and largest religious historical societies in the U. S.

Rev. Byars attended his first board meeting in October. He is a native of Nebraska and has served the Okemos congregation for nearly eight years.

— • —

The Michigan Bicentennial Commission has a new office, located on the third floor of the Hollister Building in downtown Lansing. Its telephone number is 517-373-1976.

— • —

The Curwood Castle in Owosso is open to the public every Sunday. The Owosso Public Library is currently featuring an exhibit of books written by James Oliver Curwood, well-known author and builder of the castle.

— • —

The Lansing Camera Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

— • —

The Fred Schworer family have turned their century-old home on US-27 north of Lansing into a museum. Five generations of the family were savers of practically everything, so the house became a storehouse of what is called trivia. The museum, which opened in July, welcomes visitors Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is charged.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing has been having a column in the *Greater Lansing Guest*, the monthly information magazine for visitors staying in hotels, motels, etc. The society thanks Billie Knaup, publisher, for giving us another means of getting out the word about the Michigan capital region.



# Early Newspapers in Ingham County

— Everett William Downing

After Michigan was admitted to the Union as the 26th state, the population began to increase and the newspapers, usually politically motivated, started to spring up in the different cities throughout the state. It was 46 years after the first paper was printed in Detroit that the publishing of newspapers reached Central Lower Michigan. The person holding the distinction of being the first to start a newspaper in Ingham and Clinton Counties was Mark A. Child.

Mr. Child started the *Ingham County Telegraph* in Mason in April of 1842. The paper depended upon the revenue from publishing the tax lists for survival. After the election in November, 1842, the authority for letting the publishing of these tax lists refused to have them printed in the *Telegraph*. Undaunted by this political turn of events and faced with extinction, in December of 1842, Mark Child moved his press to DeWitt and started the *DeWitt Clintonian*, the first newspaper in Clinton County.

Although there was a newspaper

started in Grand River City, on the boundary line between Eaton and Clinton Counties in Watertown and Delta Townships, Child's *Clintonian* is usually listed as the first paper published in Clinton County. *The Grand River City Courier*, named after that city, has faded into obscurity and little is known of it other than its name. Like other cities of that time (1837) it was just a "paper village".

Child's reputation as a humorist often evidenced itself in his comments. He reported that one of his regular subscribers, Alfred Gunnison, living a few miles east of DeWitt, paid for the *Clintonian* in shillings and not in "raccoon tracks" as was the custom of some of the other early settlers.

In 1845, Child sold the *Clintonian* to Milo Blair. Blair then sold his interest to John Ransom. Ransom started a new paper, *The Clinton Express* in 1850, and moved the *Express* to St. Johns in 1857. The name was changed to the *Northside Democrat*, then to the *St. Johns Democrat* which was suspended in 1858. Later the *St. Johns Herald* was published in St. Johns, but lasted only six months.

Other early newspapers in Clinton County were:

*The Clinton Republican*, established in DeWitt in 1856 by Henry Hilton and later moved to St. Johns.

*The Clinton Independent*, a Democratic newspaper, started August 20, 1866 by J. H. and J.A. Stevenson in St. Johns.

*The Register*, established July 1, 1866 by James Wickwire in Ovid.

*The Messenger*, first published in Maple Rapids by J. A. and F. O. Dickey, April 17, 1874.

After Mark Child moved his paper from Mason, a Democratic newspaper appeared, published by the partnership of G. W. Raney and R. S. Cheney who shipped the printing materials to Mason from Jackson.

Both men were partners in publishing the *Michigan Democrat*, which had a life span of only 10 months, the last issue being published just before the election in 1844. The materials from this newspaper were purchased by a partnership of John H. Child and H. P.

## Olds in Ohio

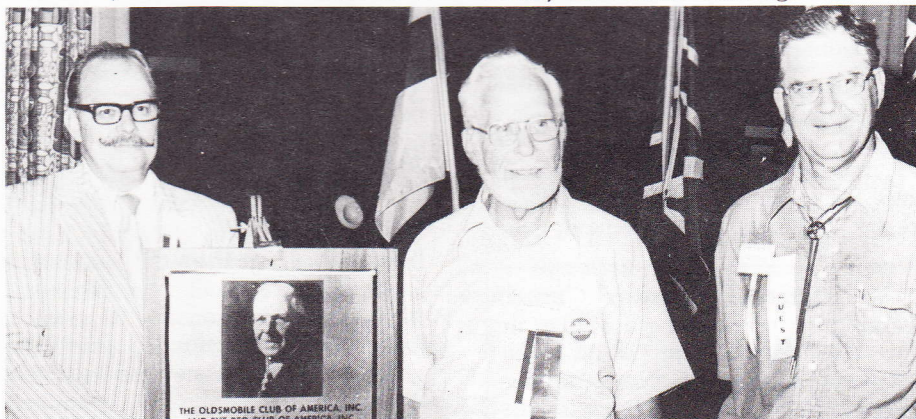
Participants in the 1976 Oldsmobile and Reo National Meet, an annual event for collectors of old cars, travelled from Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, New York and Canada to Geneva, Ohio, in late August. The three day meet was one of the largest ever held.

Members of the Olds Anderson family of East Lansing were there to take part in the dedication of a plaque honoring Mr. Anderson's grandfather, Ransom E. Olds, the automobile pioneer, who was born in Geneva in 1864. Pliny Olds, Ransom Olds' father, had settled earlier in Saybrook Township, Ohio, then had left farming to open a blacksmith and machine shop in the village of Geneva. The Olds family home, Ransom's birthplace, was on the corner of West Main and Eagle Streets. The boy, Ransom, spent his youth and school years in Geneva before moving to Cleveland and, in 1880, to Lansing.

In Lansing, young Olds worked with his father in a two-story machine shop at the corner of East Kalamazoo and River Streets in Lansing. The site is marked by a marble monument in the

plaza, the marker a gift to the city from the Olds family in 1953.

R. E. Olds' daughter, Gladys Olds Anderson, is a member of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.



A plaque to honor R. E. Olds, Lansing auto pioneer, was presented to Donald Miles (left), president of the Geneva (Ohio) City Council, by Russell Yoder, president of the Oldsmobile and Reo National Meet. On the right is R. E. Olds Anderson, grandson of R. E. Olds.

— photo courtesy the Geneva Free Press



Stillman and the *Ingham Herald* newspaper was born. Mr. Stillman withdrew soon after the first publication in December 1844 and J. H. Child, brother of Mark Child continued publishing for more than a year.

On March 21, 1845, the Michigan legislature passed a law which governed the publishing of tax lists, changing them so the auditor general instead of the county treasurer had complete control of the awarding of tax advertising. It was with this law in mind that Ruben S. Cheney and Wilbur F. Storey, both of the *Patriot* in Jackson, took some printing materials to Leslie and "printed" a few copies of the *Ingham Democrat* and had an affidavit sworn before the local probate judge that the paper was printed in Ingham County, thus acquiring the printing of the tax publishing of Ingham County by means of this improvised *Ingham Democrat* newspaper. The office was based in Mason and there were some bad feelings over the method used to gain the tax advertising and some of the printing materials were stolen from the office. Storey and Cheney sent more equipment from Jackson and continued to publish the *Democrat*. In 1845, H. P. Stillman along with E. W. Danforth and Dr. Minos McRoberts bought the *Democrat* office from Cheney and Storey.

Wilbur F. Storey was later to buy

the *Detroit Free Press* in 1853 and still later in 1861 bought the *Chicago Times* from Colonel McCormick. Storey became a legend in the history of Chicago's journalism.

The first newspaper established in Lansing was the *Lansing Free Press* on Jan. 11, 1848, by Bagg and Harmon, both from Detroit, moving to Lansing after the city was named the Capital of Michigan. The *Lansing Free Press* lasted only a few months. The *Michigan State Journal* established by Munger and Pattison, Dec. 25, 1848, is the descendant of the *Free Press*. The *Michigan State Journal* established by Munger continued publication until 1862 when it was suspended. The *Free Press* and the *Michigan State Journal*, with mergers and acquisitions form the lineal descendant to the present *Lansing State Journal*.

Other early papers in Ingham County were:

The *Primitive Expounder* moved to Lansing from Ann Arbor by J. H. Sanford on January 1, 1849. This paper was an organ for the Universalist Church and not regarded as a newspaper but as a religious periodical.

The *Ingham County News* — established in Mason, June 23, 1859. An interesting sidelight in the publishing of newspapers in Ingham County is the use of the same type for Volume I,

No. I, of the *Ingham County News* by D. B. Harrington on June 23, 1859 and for the first paper printed in Detroit in 1809, the *Michigan Essay*. The type made history also when it was used by B. F. Barnett in his paper *Public Sentiment*, published at Grass Lake during the "great conspiracy" — the railroad war in southern Michigan during the early 1850's.

The *Williamston Enterprise* established June 6, 1872 by William S. Humphrey and with changes of ownership and editors is published currently.

*East Lansing Community Life* — established January 10, 1919 by the Businessman's Association, with Glen S. Kies, managing editor.

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## North Lansing Against The World

Ralph Swan, president of Keep Michigan Beautiful, announced that the North Lansing Community Association will receive an award for its promotion of projects to improve the urban green and street scene in the newly established North Lansing historic district.

The KMB award is given annually to outstanding community, city, county and state organizations and individuals for effective contributions to beautification, restoration or preservation projects.

The award was presented to Jim Winckler, president of NLCA, at an awards luncheon, Oct. 26, at the Hospitality Inn, 3600 Dunckel Drive, Lansing.

The North Lansing Community Association has made an offer on a building in the newly designated Historical District comprised of the oldest commercial area of Lansing's original Lower Town. The association plans to renovate

the building for a meeting place and office, with upper level rooms available for rental.

Jean Hirschy of the Lansing Writers Club said that for the club project of writing a Gothic novel with implications of outer space, it decided to use the floor plan and visual environment

of the Turner-Dodge House in North Lansing for the setting. Each member will write a chapter which will be critiqued by the other members, then the individual parts will be joined into a continuous story. Although the setting will be in a large house patterned after the Lansing house it will be located in Northern Michigan in the story.

If you are interested in the club, contact Jean Hirschy, 517-484-1928.

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# WITH THE SOCIETIES

THE LAKE ODESSA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY had two summer activities. For the second Art in the Park Day, the society had a table with some artifacts of by-gone days, sold past issues of the *Bonanza Bugle*, the society's quarterly newspaper, and collected dues for memberships.

For the Lake Odessa fair parade the same week, the society had a float featuring an antique kitchen complete with cook stove, cupboard filled with dishes, a rocking chair and a table. Virginia Yonkers was rolling cookie dough on the table while her granddaughters were playing with a doll and a cradle nearby. And Urah Wortley rocked in her rocking chair. A display of kitchen items was mounted on the end panel of the float.

New officers for the society are: Delos Johnson, president; William Cunningham, vice-president; Gordon Rohrbacher, secretary; and Lottie Hough, treasurer. Directors are Myra Smith (historian), Elaine Garlock (publicity), Dean Cunningham, Harry Marvin, Kathryn Gardiner, Virginia Yonkers, and Nancy Cunningham.

The society meets on the second Thursday evening of the month, October through May, except December.

THE SHIAWASSEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY has two members, Donna Sandford and Margeret Zdunic, cataloging American Indian artifacts which have been found in the county. What started as a Bicentennial project may take several years to complete. The two women have cataloged nearly 900 items from three separate collections.

They have experienced many problems, not the least of which was obtaining good archaeological photographs.

"We felt that photography would be an auxiliary to our record," Ms. Zdunic said. "It not only confirms what we find, it also makes it all the more vivid and convincing."

The photographs and data are to be preserved in an archival repository, most likely the Michigan Archaeological Collection at the University of Michigan.



Projectile point (arrowhead) from Vernon Township, Shiawassee County. (Actual size)

— photo, S.A.W. Studios, Oakley

## It's Been Happening in Clinton

More than 600 visitors have come through the doors of the Clinton County Museum since it opened to the public, May 9. The museum, at 1009 S. Oakland St. in St. Johns, is accessible from 2 to 5 p.m., Sundays.

The establishment of the museum was the result of the combined efforts of the county Bicentennial committee, board of commissioners and historical society. Each had plans for a museum. Through Hila Bross, a member of both organizations, the plans were coordinated. Members of the committee to work on the project were Tom Hollen, museum committee chairman for the historical society; Harold Martin, county commissioner, Estelle Geller, Mable Engles, Nina Waldron, Wanda Ryan and Mrs. Bross. Other people worked at various stages of the project.

The county commissioners offered a house, owned by the county on South Oakland Street, for a year to see how

the project would go. The house, a Victorian cottage built in the 1880s, has six rooms.

The county will maintain the property. The historical society is in charge of the building and the utilities. It has received items on loan from private collections and has other items in its own collection. With the number of articles available, it will be able to change some of the displays from time to time as well as to keep other displays permanently.

The emphasis of the museum is Clinton County, items produced there and artifacts, pictures, mementoes and papers of people who have lived there.

The Clinton County Bicentennial Commission is preparing a time capsule to be placed in the vault at the county building. A plastic-lined steel container will hold an American flag, a 1976 telephone directory, cucumber and radish seeds from the Vaughan Seed Company of Ovid and a series of articles about the Bicentennial observance.

The Round School near Fowler has been donated to the Fowler School Board by the Vance family, the owners of the building. The Clinton County Historical Society has pledged \$1,000 for restoration purposes. Lesser amounts from the county Bicentennial commission and individuals also have been pledged.

THE BELLEVUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY made application to the Miller Foundation of Battle Creek for funds toward the building of the Bellevue Memorial Museum. The foundation answered with a grant of \$10,000. This, with money collected through donations, has brought the museum fund close to its goal of \$20,000 for construction of the building. Land for the museum was given by Vera Beebe, a former Bellevue resident. The museum will be adjacent to and accessible from the township library. Ground breaking ceremonies were held Sept. 1.

THE PERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY had work crews busy in the MacQueen House, 127 E. First Street, preparing it as a museum, according to Dan Lewis, a director of the society. Light fixtures are being replaced, the kitchen with its wood-fired stove is now workable, and the two front parlors have been decorated and appointed.

The society is establishing a reference



Clinton County Historical Museum



library to include the Halsed collection of photographs relating to people, places and events of the town.

Local elementary school children toured the house during the spring. The Perry society has planned several events including a Christmas open house and an official opening as soon as the house is ready.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC MERIDIAN named as officers for the year, Elaine Davis, president; Judy Wilson, vice president; Judy Andersen, secretary; and Wes Olds, treasurer.

THE WATERLOO AREA FARM MUSEUM is a historical society in the process of maintaining and restoring a group of farm buildings to which appropriate units are added from time to time.

This summer about eight to ten families plus children of all ages came out to the farm at 5 p.m. once a week to work on house cleaning and painting.

The Waterloo society has been working on the restoration of the farm for some 15 years. And, with the exception of one, small Bicentennial grant to help with the reconditioning of the barn, all of the funds have come from what is taken in during Pioneer Day each year. On the second Sunday of October, the buildings and grounds are the settings for a number of demonstrations and activities.

On Pioneer Day this year (Oct. 10) the museum had all the old favorite demonstrations — brick-oven baking, blacksmithing, wood carving, spinning, quilting and the making of soap, sauerkraut, baskets, brooms, bobbin lace and butter. The Waterloo Band and the local Bicentennial chorus give concerts and the 1st Michigan Volunteer Regiment Buffs from Brighton staged an encampment and drill. A number of old car owners had their machines on display. And the visitors were able to buy plants, food, books, produce, weeds and dried arrangements.

## Two New Societies

People of Kalamo Township met in June to form a society, lead by Alvin Morehouse, president and a senior at Bellevue High School. Della Serene, a junior, was named secretary. Trustees are Margaret Herman, Rosy Perkins, Sara Cook and Jackie Goddard. Meetings, beginning with a 6:30 p.m. potluck supper, are scheduled for the last Tuesday of each month. They are held in the Kalamo Township Hall.

Some members are collecting photographs of by-gone days of this Eaton County community. One member is searching for primary sources about the township, which was organized by the laws of 1837-38. Others are looking for evidence concerning a folk story about a sycamore tree that stood near the town. The story tellers said that it was so large that a horse could be turned around in it. It supposedly was cut down with the intention of shipping it to Marshall, but was so large that it could not be moved.

We congratulate this new organization on its involvement of young people in leadership roles. Faces of

those who gather in Kalamo, whether their ages are 8, 19 or 90, are all young, with an interest in their community and an enthusiasm for preserving it for the future.

Another historical organization, the Mason Historical Society, held its first meeting Sept. 28 in the Mason city hall. MiaBell Humphrey served as honorary chairwoman.

A highlight of the evening was the display by Shareen Wentland of the original landscape blueprints of the Pink School.

The Mason home tour project, held this year by the city Bicentennial committee, will take place next year by the Mason Historical Society. Pam Ling will be chairwoman of the tour.

The Mason society elected Helen Grainger, president; Lyman Freshour, vice-president and Cathy Carter, secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Grainger is also an officer of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.

The Mason Society set its second meeting for 7 p.m., Oct. 19, with supper in the community room of the city hall.

THE VERMONTVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY has planned its programs to maintain the unusual heritage of the community. At a spring meeting, members and guests participated in an old fashioned sugaring-off party. Village and township dignitaries were special guests.

A night to honor the memory of Rev. Sylvester Cochrane was planned for the Sept. 23 meeting. He was the organizer of the pioneers who emigrated from Vermont and established the Union Colony at Vermontville in 1836. Much

of the early emphasis on education and religion can be traced to his leadership. It was under his guidance that the present Academy was built in 1843 to serve both as a school and a place of worship.

The Academy, still owned by the Congregational Church, is now the home of the Vermontville museum, maintained by the historical society. Trustees of the church, members of the historical society and members of other local organizations are considering sources of financial assistance to cover the cost of extensive repairs that are needed. The goal for the first stage of restoration is \$5,000.

On Sept. 14, thirty people interested in the preservation of the Academy met to determine the action necessary for restoration. Work began in October to repair the crumbling foundation and to install a new floor on the lower level.

Contributions may be sent to Dave Fleming, minister of the Vermontville Congregational Church, or to Hildred Peabody, Vermontville, MI 49096.

## Is Your Organization a Member of The Historical Society of Greater Lansing?

Our projects and programs which you are reading about in the *Town Crier* (including the *Town Crier* itself) take money. If your group would like to help, why not through a membership? The dues for organizations and businesses are any amount the member chooses between \$25 and \$100.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING

BOX 12095, LANSING, MI 48901



# Record Savings

Early in 1974 the Horizons Committee of the Eaton County Bicentennial Commission initiated a project to survey and microfilm certain township records for permanent preservation. Originally the plan had been to cover the township records in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties, with preliminary arrangements being made with the county officials. Township records are considered to be the most in need of survey and preservation. The Michigan History Division expressed its enthusiasm for the project.

Although the application for funds from the Michigan Bicentennial Commission was denied, the decision to go ahead without funds was made for a survey in Eaton County.

The survey began in 1976. First it was determined where the township records for Eaton County were located, the dates they covered, their condition, whether or not they were endangered, and how conformity to the established retention and disposal schedule approved by the State Administrative Board was being met.

In the presence of the township clerks, the records were examined and selected, then cleaned, demolded, identified and described. The leather bindings were treated with preservatives. Then the records were delivered to the office of the county treasurer for microfilming.

The filming was done in an established county film facility by trained personnel at times when their work loads permitted. Geneva Wiskemann, past president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and former archivist for the State of Michigan, did the survey work, preparation of records, creation of a descriptive finding aid and the follow through with the county personnel. The only cost, paid for by the townships, was for the purchase of microfilm.

As of July 1, four townships had been completed. A summer hiatus occurred while the regular microfilming for county offices was brought up to date and while the facilities were being moved to the newly constructed courthouse. Additional townships are scheduled as soon as the film center is functioning again.

When the filming is complete the State Archives will have one set of the filmed records, with copies available at a minimal cost to the county. The original

records may be retired to the Archives if the townships are unable to provide adequate storage.

"We are enjoying excellent cooperation with the individual clerks, the Eaton County Officers Association, and the county commissioners, clerk, and treasurer," Mrs. Wiskemann said. "Several stray record series have been located and minutes of now defunct one-room and two-room schools have been added to the items filmed."

The conditions and quantities of the surviving records vary from township to township, she added. For example, only the proceedings of Chester Township have proved complete from 1839 to 1975. In Benton Township, the record begins in 1893, comprising only four volumes and one folder with long

gaps appearing in the dates of most of the minutes.

Among unusual items she found were records of the Brookfield Mutual Telephone Company and the Chester Community Association and histories of individual schools and churches.

She said that in many cases, she found the proceedings, the record series considered the most important, improperly stored, dirty and infested with silverfish.

"In one township, an open room and window in the storage area had allowed the destruction of records by water and mold," she explained. "Extensive materials, including 25 volumes of assessment rolls, 1921 to 1936, were beyond reclamation."

"These experiences have emphasized the great need for such a project," she emphasized. "The surveying and microfilming will continue through the Bicentennial era."

## Marker Program

One of the most successful projects sponsored by Bicentennial and historical organizations of the multi-county area has been the historic site and building marking program.

In the fall of 1975, representatives of history related organizations met to work toward a standardized marker for historic sites and buildings which do not qualify for the official State of Michigan marker, but which are important to the local communities.

A uniform design, size and color was selected and a firm located for manufacturing the signs at a cost of \$80 each. Chosen was a two part marker in green with silver lettering, made of anodized aluminum and designed to carry the name of the sponsoring group, an illustration and 25 to 30 words of text.

Since the first marker was dedicated at Gunnisonville School, others have been erected in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties. One marks the century old portion of the parent church of the Trinity Methodist Church of Delta Mills; one tells the story of the namesake of the new Burchard Park in North Lansing; two are in Grand Ledge marking the island and the building which served as city hall and fire barn and is now a craft center; another at Sharp Park gives the information: "This land, cleared by the forefathers

of the Sharp family, is preserved in the memory of William J. Sharp, by the People of Delta Township."

The DeWitt Bicentennial Commission has placed three markers — one at the site of Clinton County's first retail store (built by Jesse Foote Turner in 1839 on Webb Road), the site of the first grist mill at Dill and Locust Streets, the site of the first jail in the county, on East Washington Street.

Other signs in Clinton County mark the site of the Campeau Trading Post near Maple Rapids and the Coleman House (Park House - French's Tavern) north of St. Johns. Still another honors Abigail Corbin Peck, a patriot of the American Revolution cited for her service as a nurse. She is buried in Boughton Cemetery, North Riley.

A marker for the GAR Hall of Post 283 in Sunfield has been prepared and is awaiting dedication.

Applications for the markers and materials giving supporting facts are retained by the organizations serving as clearing houses for approval in each county. These agencies offer assistance, keep the official file of historical evidence and take part in dedicatory programs. These are official functions of the Horizons Committee of the Eaton County Bicentennial Commission, the Clinton Historical Society and the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.



# 126 Cuspidors

When you see pictures of some of the bearded worthies who were supervisors when the Ionia county courthouse was built, between 1884 and 1886, you may think they never made a mistake and had a self-righteous time telling you about it. Staring out, from faded brown photographs, they all seem to look pleased with their own propriety, like truant officers.

But they were human. Old records prove it.

After years of renting quarters for various county offices and functions, a motion passed at the annual, or October, meeting of the supervisors in 1882, establishing a committee to report on the advisability of building a courthouse at the next meeting, in January 1883.

The building committee was composed of Chauncy Waterbury as chairman, with E. P. Gifford and Levi Shotwell as members. The committee reported that, yes, a new courthouse was advisable. Thereupon, the Board of Supervisors voted to put the question on the spring ballot, that \$45,000 should be raised to build a courthouse, \$15,000 in each of three years.

By April 11, 1883, the canvass was reported. The courthouse proposition carried the county's 20 precincts by 3,426 to 1,483.

David W. Gibbs of Toledo, an architect who lived from 1836 to 1917, supplied the plans. Gibbs and his firm specialized in courthouses, jails, and other public buildings, and designed many in Ohio. He was the architect for the old Eaton county courthouse in Charlotte. In 1886, the year the Ionia building was dedicated, he won a competition for the state capitol building in Cheyenne in what was then called "Wyoming Territory." Locally, the plans seem to have been well-received, although the size of the building cut down on the amount of pasture available for the sheriff's cow and horses.

Getting the courthouse built was another story. The original contractor

went bankrupt in 1885; various legal actions connected with him gave the court something to do for several years, not that there wasn't enough. (Some of our predecessors had strong predilections for murder, bigamy, horse-stealing, bastardy, fighting, and other forms of rugged individualism and free enterprise. It's a small relief to discover that turpitude we humans seem to have always with us.)

The final cost of the building was over \$57,000—counting heating, plumbing, lawn grading, water-mains, and other "extras," although the \$45,000 voted almost covered the bare building. (It's a great relief to discover that, for all our contemporary shortcomings, we didn't invent the cost-overrun—just the phrase.)

Furnishings for the offices cost something over \$5,300 more, for a total of at least \$62,300—almost 30 percent more than the electors had voted to levy upon themselves. During construction the county treasurer often borrowed money to pay contractors and suppliers, prior to or in excess of the tax collected for courthouse building purposes. There isn't any evidence that those bearded, solemn-looking supervisors went back to the people for any supplemental levies. They appropriated from the general fund, after the \$45,000 were expended. They probably knew some old saying about not stirring up unnecessary trouble in the middle of a courthouse—especially an uncompleted one.

How to operate the courthouse did concern them at several meetings; they proposed, resolved, voted, laid down rules and regulations; some of them knew what they wanted. On January 10, 1886, at the first board meeting held

in the new courthouse, Supervisor E. D. Lambertson rose and offered the following resolution:

"Resolved by the Board of Supervisors of Ionia County that Smoking and Spitting on Floors be entirely prohibited within the Court House of the County, and the Janitor is hereby authorized and instructed to see the same is vigorously enforced."

At least someone wanted to keep things nice. The resolution was supported—and then tabled "until the balance of the board was present." Later the same day, the resolution was called up, and passed as regards smoking only. The supervisors' journal explains, without explicit comment, what happened in regard to spitting on the floors, for the next item is the detailed report of the furnishings committee.

Among a raft of other things, including chairs, desks, mirrors, bookcases, sofas, ladies' writing desks, and a good deal else, appears a simple one-line item:

"We have purchased of Messrs. Amphlett & Sanderson, 10 1/2 dozen cuspidors — (for) — \$89.48."

One hundred and twenty-six cuspidors in the Ionia county courthouse! In an age of fires set by cows kicking over kerosene lanterns, the supervisors weren't taking any chances: NO SMOKING. CHEWING AND SPITTING PERMITTED. Besides, the furnishing committee already had purchased the cuspidors—and the price wasn't bad; about 71 cents each.

Now about those bearded men in those old pictures: perhaps they couldn't smile; perhaps they had cuds somewhere and were looking for the nearest cuspidor, uncertain that they could wait until the photographer had finished recording them for posterity.

— RUSS GREGORY

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing thanks Bill Smith and Meijer, Inc. of Grand Rapids for the gift of 48 historical American flags and display stand.

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# Grand Ledge Plans

The Grand Ledge Area Historical Society launched its monthly programs, Sept. 27, with a talk on genealogy. The programs are part of a three-pronged project year for the society. Aside from the regular monthly meetings, which feature local people on local historical subjects, the society is also in the process of publishing a pictorial history of Grand Ledge and establishing an archival collection of local history in the Grand Ledge Public Library.

The society programs this year will cover such topics as the history of local homes, the Indians, the furniture industry, schools, and a repeat program with members bringing historic artifacts to share.

The Board of Directors of the society, with the help of others, has worked this summer in collecting and selecting photographs for a book to depict high points in local history. The book, in both soft and hard covers, is expected to be published in early December. It will contain more than 180 pictures.

Negotiations with the Board of Trustees of the Grand Ledge Library were completed this summer and a permanent collection of local history was established in a room of the library. Library personnel will cooperate with society members in building the collection. A permanent display will also be shown in the main library reading rooms.

Meetings of the society are held regularly on the fourth Monday of the month in the Michigan National Bank community room. Anyone interested in local history is invited to attend.

Officers of the society are Lorabeth

Fitzgerald, president; Christ Goutis, vice president; Lynda Trinklein, secretary; and Neil Holihan, treasurer. Board members are Dr. and Mrs. Fred Garlock, Dr. Charles Baribeau, Sr., Lyle Huhn, Frances Reihmer, Bob Bouck and Marilyn Smith. Geneva Wiskemann is honorary past president of the organization, founded in November, 1975.

Mr. Bouck and Mrs. Wiskemann are also officers of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Smith and Dr. Garlock are members.

Olive drab trucks with men and equipment rolled into Grand Ledge, Oct. 16 and 17, to help keep the "Grand" in Grand Ledge. During the summer the visual environment along the river was improved by many area residents who gave long hard hours to the Bicentennial Commission approved project. But the removal of large fallen trees and deadheads required special expertise and equipment. It came from the 1463rd Transportation Company, Grand Ledge; E Company, 113rd Engineers, Grand Rapids; and other Michigan National Guard unit technicians who work at the facility on North Hartel Road near Grand Ledge. The National Guard information officer said that there may have been as many as 150 men working.

The river cleanup project, under the leadership of Nancy Block, heritage committee chairwoman, received a small grant from the Michigan ARBC. Major contributors have been the workers of all ages who picked up debris, filled holes, hauled decaying trees and brush and developed green thumb areas where there had been none.

The Kap and Kerchief Shoppe, an official project of the Grand Ledge Bicentennial Committee, will be recognized by the Michigan Bicentennial Commission for its unique contributions during the Bicentennial commemoration. The project has involved people of all ages in the creation and showing of Colonial costumes based on those which research proves were worn by individuals during the Revolutionary era. A fashion show, narrated by Betty Jean Jones and scheduled by Nancy Block, has touched a total audience of over 6,000 the many times it has been given. The shows have raised about \$1,000 for the support of Grand Ledge area Bicentennial projects including a band gazebo which was ready for use on July 4.

Mrs. Jones is a member of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.

There is a new roof on the Canada Settlement School at the corner of M-100 and Strange Road south of Grand Ledge. Members of the local 4-H group, school alumni and friends are renovating the brick building for continued use in its country setting. The renovators have prepared the painted woodwork for refinishing and have secured the building against winter weather.

The school, complete with furniture, students and a teacher, will be open to the public as part of the Grand Ledge home tour, Dec. 4.

For more information on the school, call Alice Veltman, 627-5629.

## East Lansing Sculpture

A dedication ceremony for a sculpture designed and executed by Melissa Williams, a local sculptor, was held Oct. 17 in East Lansing to complete a time capsule project started in May.

Ms. Williams' design was chosen by a selection committee composed of a cross-section of professionals from the community.

The sculpture was placed on the lawn in front of the East Lansing High School. At the location is buried a time capsule which contains memorabilia from the children and the staff of the entire East Lansing school system.

—Lola O'Meara



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# The Michigan National Guard's First Airplane

Robert B. Casari

Mr. Casari of Chillicothe, Ohio, is currently researching the histories of army aircraft between 1908 and 1919 is what is expected to be a two year project. He is author and publisher of a series of books, Encyclopedia of U. S. Military Aircraft.

On December 14, 1915, the Aero Club of Michigan undertook a campaign to raise funds to establish an aerial reserve for the State of Michigan. The Aero Club of America offered to contribute 10 percent of any amount raised for the purchase and maintenance of an airplane.<sup>1</sup> A committee, headed

by Russell A. Alger, raised \$11,770 for this purpose during December and January, 1916,<sup>2,3</sup> to which was added \$1,180 from the Aero Club of America.<sup>2</sup>

On Jan. 31, 1916, the Aero Club of Michigan bought an L.W.F. airplane from the L.W.F. Engineering Company of College Point, Long Island, N. Y. and donated it with a three-man crew to the National Guard.<sup>2</sup> The airplane was an L.W.F. Model V powered by a 135 h.p. Thomas engine and was an advanced design for its day featuring a veneer-covered fuselage of an unusually clean shape. The biplane, designed

by Charles F. Willard, had a high performance.<sup>4</sup>

The Michigan National Guard's L.W.F. was placed in service at Camp Ferris, Grayling. There, according to one report, it was apparently joined by another L.W.F. owned by the Aero Club of Illinois.<sup>5</sup> During the early summer of 1916, Harold W. Blakely demonstrated the Illinois machine at Camp Ferris, flying to an altitude of 1,500 feet.<sup>5</sup> Blakely was the L.W.F. company test pilot. He did not want to fly the airplane much since the field was small and rough and the airplane might be damaged; it was intended to go to Mexico with the Michigan National Guard troops.<sup>5</sup> Company A engineers (apparently of the Michigan National Guard) had recently finished the landing strip. Training was to begin after pontoons arrived so flights to and from the lake could be undertaken.<sup>5</sup>

The L.W.F. of the Michigan National Guard was used at Camp Ferris until August, 1916. There, on the 18th, a severe storm damaged the camp greatly. Winds turned over the airplane several times before blowing it into the lake.<sup>2,6</sup> Since the Guard had no funds for repairing the machine, it was returned to the Aero Club of Michigan<sup>2</sup> with title to the airplane.

The damaged machine was returned to the factory where it apparently remained for many months. War was declared against Germany and the Central Powers on April 6, 1917, generating a need for every available and suitable airplane for the Army. On July 13, the repaired L.W.F. was purchased from the Aero Club of Michigan and placed in service by the Signal Corps.<sup>7</sup> Its career in Army operations is not known.

## NOTES

1. Michigan Aviation Historical Committee, *A Chronology of Michigan Aviation, 1834-1953* (Michigan Department of Aeronautics, 1953), pp. 9-10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. *Aerial Age Weekly*, 6 Nov. 1916, p. 191.
4. Martin Cole and H. L. Schreiner, "Charles Willard - The Creative Years," *American Aviation Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring 1976), p. 64.
5. *Aerial Age Weekly*, 31 July 1916, p. 591.
6. *Aviation*, 1 Sept. 1916, p. 92.
7. Tabulation of Signal Corps aviation orders, author's collection.

## Aviation History

Two recent acquisitions contribute to LCC's growing program for air age education. Nationally-known aviation artist, Harold Hawkins of Lansing, has given 19 original watercolor paintings to the college, according to Wes Van Malsen, public information officer. The board of directors accepted the gift, appraised at \$57,000, at their meeting, Sept. 20.

The paintings toured the state during the past months, under the auspices of the Michigan Aerospace History Committee, a Bicentennial approved group devoted to the preservation of Michigan's rich aviation history. The series, called "Michigan's Wings," includes paintings of a 1908 Wright, a DH-4, a Curtiss JN-4 (known as the "Jenny"), a Ford Stout Pullman, an Ox-5 Travel-Air and similar crafts important to Michigan and pioneer aviation. It also includes the Driggs Skylark, built in Lansing. This shop built by Ivan Driggs was well designed and served as an excellent trainer and sport airplane. (The Lansing Chamber of Commerce and local newspapers announced the establishment of the new \$100,000 company in Lansing in the spring of 1926.) The Machine was powered by a two-cylinder motor rated with 30 horsepower, with a wingspread of 30 feet. It was designed to sell for less than \$2,000 which was about one-fourth the

average price for the time. The company became a victim of the Great Depression.

Art Davis, Lansing air pioneer, made history with the Waco Taperwing, the subject of another painting. Another plane depicted, the Abrams Explorer, has been proclaimed ahead of its time. The Explorer was recently returned to Lansing when it was given to Lansing Community College by the Smithsonian Institute. It is being restored by LCC.

The paintings will be displayed in LCC's aviation facility at Capital City Airport or in a museum proposed by the Aeronautics Museum Foundation.

Four full-color, 13" x 20" lithographs, numbered and limited, of the Ford Stout Pullman, Ford Tri-Motor, Stinson Detroit and Ox-5 Travel-Air, are available from the Aerospace History Committee, 5580 W. State Road, Lansing, MI 48906. Single prints are \$10; a set of four is \$35.

A 1940 vintage DC-3 is another recent acquisition by the College. It was obtained for \$500 from the U. S. Forestry Service through the Department of Health Education and Welfare. It arrived in excellent condition and is approved and licensed for use in multi-training and type rating. It will carry up to 27 students on training field trips.



# Old Settlers' Reunion

Lansing descendants of the Old Settlers Reunion of Isabella, Mecosta and Montcalm Counties hosted the reunion at School Section Lake, Mecosta County, Aug. 21. Some 300 descendants gathered to share picnic baskets, swim in the warm lake waters, participate in the planned recreation and just plain visit on this, their 42nd consecutive reunion.

The picnics really began around the turn of the century by black pioneers who migrated into the three counties shortly after the Civil War. They came from Southern and Eastern Ohio and Southern Ontario. One or two families came as early as 1861.

Many were ex-slaves who came via the underground railroad to Ohio and Canada. Some had received tracts of bounty land granted by the federal government. One such person was Grandson Norman whose land patent was signed by Pres. Andrew Johnson and was dated Oct. 20, 1865. Others obtained homesteads granted under the Homestead Act of 1862. But some purchased "cut-over" land left by lumbering companies. Mecosta County advertised in the *Big Rapids Magnet* 20,000 acres for as little as \$1.50 to \$4 per acre, as late as 1875.

Today many descendants still occupy the farms developed from these lands and proudly boast of the Michigan Centennial farm markers.

A portion of the Saturday's program (they always are held on the third Saturday of August) is always dedicated to those descendants who have died during the year since the last reunion. Homage is also given to the early pioneers whose spirit they revere.

The direct descendant travelling the farthest to attend came from Seattle, Wash., and the oldest in attendance was 91 years old. One couple received a prize for having been married 56 years.

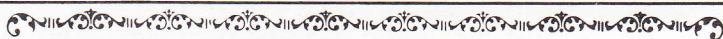
The Sunday following the reunion, the participants gathered at the Wheatland Church of Christ to again worship where their ancestors first worshipped. The church is 107 years old.

Lansing will host the Old Settlers again next year on the third Saturday in August. They hope to present the group with a charter designating the group as a non-profit organization.

— Marguerite Jackson  
a direct descendant



Gratiot County rededicated its courthouse in Ithaca, July 24. Built in 1902, it is one of the finest examples of its genre in the state. The speaker for the program was Mike Washo, deputy director of the Michigan History Division and a member of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing. — photo, Jack Thompson



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