



Residence of James Turner, *Lansing Ing Co*

## WELCOME TO THE TURNER-DODGE HOUSE

A house, especially one which has stood for many years, reflects the ethnic background, social and economic status, intellectual interests and taste of those who made it a home. As you walk through the house you will see a variety of architectural and decorative designs. The house grew and changed in appearance through the years in keeping with its residents.

The main section of this house was built for James Turner about 1853. Drawings and photographs show it with two central stories balanced by one story wings on either side.

Turner came to Lansing from New York to oversee investments of the Seymours. New opportunities for business opened to him when the Capital moved here in 1847. He operated a store in the original business district at the corner of present day Turner Street and Grand River Avenue. Turner Park is there now.

James Turner married Marian Monroe of Eagle, Michigan, and had a son, James M., and three daughters, Marian, Eva and Abby. He was involved in the Howell to Lansing plank road, the Ionia to Lansing railroad, the Female College (now the site of the Michigan School for the Blind), and land.

Abby Turner married Frank Dodge an Ohioian who served as a Democrat in the Michigan House of Representatives in 1882 and commissioner of the United States Court. He gained notoriety as defense lawyer in a case originating from the Saginaw Valley Labor Strike. He served Lansing Common Council, Ingham County Board of Supervisors and various state-wide organizations.

The Dodge family purchased the house in 1899 from the widow of James Turner. She continued to live in the house which was enlarged to easily accommodate eleven.

During 1900-1906 Dodge hired Darius Moon, local architect, to enlarge and re-design the house. Moon's eclectic design results in a third story, an additional story to each existing one story wing, a two story wing to the west, columns and porches.

The family remained after Dodge's death in 1929 until 1958 when it was sold to the Great Lakes Bible College.

The grounds, now Dodge Park, were sold to the City of Lansing in 1974. The following year the Jaycees leased the house and began a project of renovation. Care is taken to preserve the historical integrity of the structure which is the only building in Lansing, except the Capitol, on the National Register.

Many of the jobs in process are funded by the City to prepare the house for a meeting place for small community groups and like uses.

Frank Dodge McLean, one of the last of the family to live in the house is contributing valued information. Family photographs in his collections are a research source for re-building the grounds surrounding the house, plantings and lawn furnishings.

The Green Thumb Program has provided workers who are removing many layers of paint from oak and fruitwood interior trim, wall coverings and dirt. They are replacing plaster and tin ceilings removed by electricians.

The Parks Department plans to complete the play area, gazebo, protection for the patriarch Beech tree and ground improvements by the fall season.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is preparing a guide for tourists.

Arrangements for use of the building may be made with Donald B. Hartwick, Lansing Jaycees, 517/323-2928 or Philip H. Dorland, supervisor of Lansing's Parks, 517/487-1278.