

H S G L Newsletter

Official Publication of the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

March 1995

Charles H. Mead

Artist

&

Photographer

It has often been repeated that "a picture is worth a thousand words." For Lansing historians, the drawings Charles H. Mead executed between 1868 and 1873 are priceless images of the Lansing landscape under change.

The late 1860's and early 1870's ushered in the Industrial Age for the city of Lansing and the rest of the nation.

During this time Mark Twain lectured in one of Lansing's first theaters – Mead's Hall – and the cornerstone for the new capitol was laid.

Charles H. Mead was the son of Lansing pioneer merchant James I. Mead. Charlie, as he was called, worked in the family business through mid-1876 when

the *Lansing Republican* reported that he had purchased Engleharts Photograph Gallery and "once again occupies a place where he can do some good."

Careful review of his drawings reveals that Sundays were his day to take pen and paper in hand and capture various street scenes and activity about the city. His artistic skill and business sense prepared him for his new adventure into photography and portrait art.

A new enterprise requires advertising to get the word out. Mead took charge with both his wit and art creating "comic-like" characters such as Mr. Pod Snap and Mr. Slinkbottom to appear in his newspaper display ads. Mead

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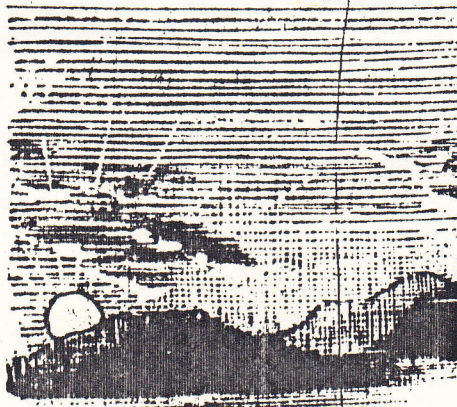
Charles H. Mead, Cont.

continued to record images of Lansing and its residents through the photographic medium, many of which are historic classics.

Mead's photographic business continued through December, 1879 when his partnership with J.S. Jennings was dissolved. In succeeding years Mead did etching for ad cards and newspapers, became a traveling agent, patent medicine merchant and returned to the family Dry Goods business in the late 1880's. Mead died in Lansing on November 7, 1912.

Sometime before Mead's death, Lansing historian and author, James P. Edmunds came into possession of more than 40 of Mead's drawings, dating from c. 1868-1874. Very few of the drawings have ever been published or displayed. The Edmunds collection of Mead drawings now resides in the archives of the Local History Room in the Lansing Public Library. On Wednesday, March 16, 1995 you are invited to a special showing of Mead's art and the history behind the artist.

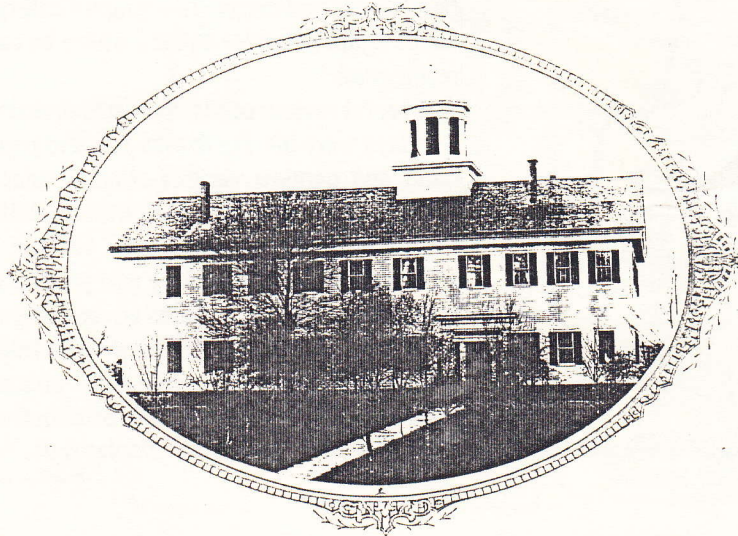
Art Gallery.



"And departing leave behind us
Footsteps in the sands of time."

Tracks are all well enough, they are indispensable. But imagine yourself carefully taking up and framing the tracks of some dear friend.

We are making Oil, Ink, and Crayon Portraits a specialty. Fine and Artistic Photography is our Business. C. H. MEAD.



Lansing History Showcase

Saturday, April 29, 1995

9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Lansing Public Library

This exciting Society event will showcase local collectors and their collections. Admission is FREE. Donations for the local history room will be gladly accepted.

For more information:

Dave Caterino
Tel: 517/726-1157

The Historical Society seeks donations of local historical materials, such as papers or photos, especially of those related to our programs. All donations are made available to the public through the Local History Room at the Lansing Public Library. Please contact the Historical Society at 372-3385.

Board Meetings are held on the third Wednesdays of October, February, and April. Any business may be addressed to the Board before or at the meetings. All are invited.

Who do you know who should belong to the Historical Society? Send in your membership, and recruit a member.

Lansing Public Library Local History Room Hours

Tuesdays
12-3 P.M.

Wednesdays
12-3 and 5-7 P.M.

First Saturday of each month
9:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

The *HSGL Newsletter* is published bimonthly from September through May. Articles and news of historical interest may be sent to the Historical Society of Greater Lansing P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901. Linda Peckham, President. Tel: 517/372-3385.

Give a Gift that Gives All Year . . .

Membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Membership Application

*Historical Society
of Greater Lansing*

P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

Annual Membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing is due for the 1994-1995 program year. Please clip and return this coupon with payment.

New Renewal

Enclosed: \$10 Individual \$15 Family \$150 Life Gift

Name _____

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The *Historical Society of Greater Lansing* is a non-profit corporation, and we appreciate your support.

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

proudly presents

The
Artistry of
Charles H. Mead

By Craig A. Whitford

Lansing's premier, but little-known, 1870's artist and professional photographer. The son of a pioneer family, Charles Mead left many photographs, pencil drawings, and ingenious advertisements, our best visual record of Lansing as we moved into the Industrial Age.



THERE NOW !! THAT'S something like it. Why in the name of Julius Caesar folks will fool away their money at Tom, Dick, and Harry's, when they can get such pictures as this of C. H. MEAD, is more than any fellow can tell.

7:30 P.M.

Wednesday, March 15, 1995

Friends Auditorium—Lansing Public Library

January & March Programs sponsored by the Board of Water & Light

The Public Is Invited

Elaine Davis
4611 Arrowhead Dr
Okemos, MI 48864

Historical Society
of Greater Lansing
P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

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