

# HSGL Newsletter

Official Publication of the  
*Historical Society of Greater Lansing*

March 1997

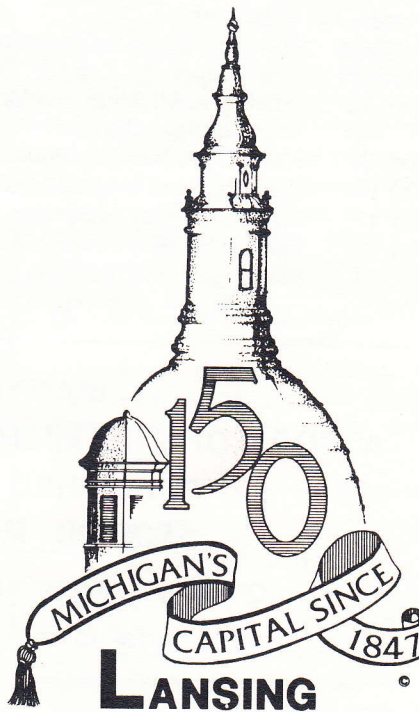
## *Lansing:* *Michigan's Capital for* **150 YEARS!**

Program, March 20  
7:00 p.m., Capitol Building

On March 16, 1847, Governor Greenly signed the legislation that would relocate the Capital of Michigan, then in Detroit, to a wilderness in mid-Michigan known only as Lansing Township. Advocates of other locations, such as Owosso and Calumet and Marshall, howled; land speculators, especially James Seymour and William Townsend who already owned land here, smiled; legislators shook their heads.

This was a land of woods and swamps, with a few Native Americans led by Chief Okemos, a small young settlement at the dam (North Lansing), and a population two years earlier in the entire township of only 88 people.

When the site was selected, in the block bounded by Washington and Capitol on the east and west, and by Allegan and Washtenaw on the north and south, there was no town around it. An entire town had to be created to be the capital city: "Michigan," Michigan was platted immediately, the land was cleared, stores and liveries and hotels and a post office were set up, and the race was on.



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.

## *Celebrate the Sesquicentennial!*

The Executive Committee of the Sesquicentennial has been hard at work. Between March 1997 and January 1988, you will find commemorative events, speakers, publications, walking tours, exhibits, and such activities as Vintage Base Ball, the Sesquicentennial Birthday Party, and a New Year's Eve costume party. We are co-sponsoring many of these events.

Also, watch for television spots on Lansing History, generously done by HSGL Trustee Mark Ducker, assisted by Rick Cantwell, Dave Caterino, Larry Lawler, Jane McClary, Linda Peckham, Jacquie Sewell, Martha Taylor – and Channel 6.

If you are on our mailing list, you have already been invited by the Governor and the Mayor to the Opening Gala of the Sesquicentennial, to be held at the Michigan Historical Museum on March 18.

That evening, the Sesquicentennial brochure will be distributed. It's a Calendar of Events and a Timeline of Lansing: The First 50 Years. HSGL members Harry Blanchard, Dave Caterino, John Curry, Larry Lawler, Linda Peckham, Craig Whitford – and others – worked on the Timeline.

### Events to note now:

- March 18 Opening Gala of the Sesquicentennial, 5-7 p.m.
- March 20 "The Race to the Capital," Rm 351 Capitol Bldg., 7 p.m.
- April 12 "Michigan, Michigan and Early Lansing"  
Michigan Historical Center, 10-4
- April 25 Statewide Arbor Day, Potter Park
- May 10 "Lansing Land Use and Landscape," Tour, Soc of Arch Historians
- May 12 Exhibits in City Hall, Hist. District Commission, 5 p.m.
- May 22 Pioneer Families Awards/Annual Dinner, Lansing Center, 6 p.m.
- June 14 Sesquicentennial Birthday Party, Capitol Lawn, 1-4.  
Includes Architectural Scavenger Hunt, Hist. Dist. Comm.

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### WANTED

**A COPY OF THE MICHIGAN FREE PRESS,  
PUBLISHED IN 1848  
\$500.00 REWARD**

Offered by a member of the Historical Society

**Call or write to the Historical Society**

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The Historical Society seeks donations of local historical materials, such as records, papers or photos. All donations are made available to the public for viewing and research at the Local History Room at the Lansing Library.  
Contact the Historical Society at 517-372-3385.

## News & Announcements

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• **Volunteers Needed.** This year, Lansing is celebrating 150 years as the Capital City of Michigan. Thanks to all the volunteers who have called to help with HSGL projects and with the Sesquicentennial. We still need volunteers to help with the following:

- The Mead Cards
- Reproduction of Historic Maps
- New Brochures: write, layout
- Distribution of material

• **Call for Nominations.** In May, we will elect Officers and four Trustees for the 1997-98 year. Nominations will be taken until April 16.

At our February Board Meeting, Jane McClary was appointed to the Board to fill the term of one vacant seat. She is the former Local History Librarian, and we welcome her.

Unfortunately, due to illness and retirements, we have two more seats vacant. If you want to help promote Lansing's history, especially during this Sesquicentennial year, we want to hear from you. Interested? Call Donna Wynant, Nominations, at 483-4075.

• **Brochures.** We have several "people" brochures in the works:

- *Darius Moon*, by Diana Reedy;
- *James Turner*, by Jacquie Sewell;
- *Metta and R.E. Olds*, by Pat Heyden;
- *Charles H. Mead*, by Craig Whitford.

*Significant People Buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery*, a brochure with biographies of 33 people, by Linda Peckham, will be reprinted soon.

*Historic North Lansing: A Walking Tour of Lansing, Michigan's "Old Town,"* by Michael Rawson, Robert Morris, and L. Peckham, also will be reprinted soon.

• **Lansing Public Library.** As you know from the newspapers, in December 1997, the Library will be separated from its funding source, the Lansing Public Schools; proposals for a new district library are underway. We have many concerns about the Local History Collections housed at the Library.

• **Search for Old Families in Family History Project.** We have received about 35 applications for the family history awards. What a delight they are to read! Rick Cantwell volunteered to computerize all of the information, and he has produced family trees and indexed *over 900 names*. All of the families have been invited to the Gala Opening of the Sesquicentennial, and the oldest three or four families will be featured on display boards that night.

We now are contacting known "old families" from whom we have not heard.

At the Annual Dinner on May 22, recognition will be given by Mayor David Hollister to families who have lived here for 100 and 125 years, and special recognition will go to families who have lived here 150 years and more.

We will continue to seek this valuable information. If your family has lived in the Greater Lansing area for at least 100 years, please pick up a form at the Lansing Library or call 372-3385.

• **January Program.** "The Olds Family and 100 Years of Oldsmobile" was greatly enjoyed by about 50 people who braved the snowstorm to hear Pat Heyden and Helen Early. Much of this information was made public for the first time. Our thanks to Pat and Helen for their wonderful presentation.

• **Apologies** to General Motors, who sponsored our program in January. Their name was inadvertently omitted from the flier.

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### Membership

Membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing costs only **\$15** for a family, **\$10** for an individual. As a special incentive, dues paid now will be entered for the 1997-98 year.

Mail check to the address on front.

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The Historical Society of Greater Lansing  
and The Friends of the Capitol, Inc.  
proudly present

# The Race to the Capital

by Jerry Lawler

The relocation in 1847 of the Capital of Michigan from Detroit to Lansing caused confusion, anger, and hope. This program will give us a behind-the-scenes look at the most famous move in the State's history. Presented by a major researcher in Lansing history and Director of Capitol Facilities.



7:00 p.m.  
Thursday, March 20, 1997  
Room 351 at the Capitol Building  
(Park and enter on the west)

*Free • The Public Is Invited*

Lansing Public Library  
401 S Capitol Ave  
Lansing, MI 48933

LANSING PUBLIC LIBRARY  
HISTORICAL COLLECTION

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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Lansing, Mich.  
Permit No. 636

### Historical Society of Greater Lansing

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**FREE**

**Sesquicentennial  
HERITAGE CELEBRATION!**

# **Michigan, Michigan and Early Lansing**



**Special Postal  
Cancellation**

**Documents  
Early Maps  
Souvenirs**

**Speakers  
Exhibits  
Photos**

**Mask-Making by ARTSPACE  
Creatures of the Woods and Swamps**

**Performances by Boarshead  
"Put Another Handle On Your Mitten"**

**Saturday April 12 10 am-4pm**

**Michigan Historical Center  
717 W. Allegan Lansing**

**EXHIBIT of MICHIGAN BATTLE FLAGS at the MUSEUM**

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**Sponsored by the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and  
Loomis Ewert Parsley Davis & Gotting, P.C.**