

# History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

January 2009

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*It's  
Membership  
Renewal  
Time*

## Historical Society of Greater Lansing

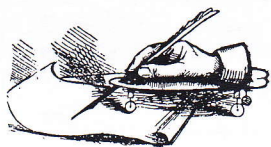
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*Historic Explorer is published during the months of September to May by the HSGL. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.*

## Lansing in 1859

Feb 15, 1859  
Act incorporates Lansing.

### Boundaries

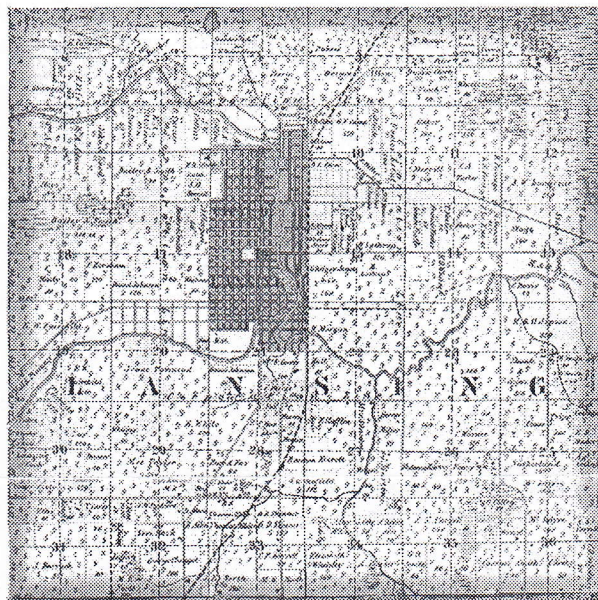
- N - North street
- E - East Street
- S - Mt. Hope
- W - line 10 rods west of Sycamore Street

Three Wards - divided by St. Joseph and Saginaw Streets.

Consisted of 7 1/5 square miles;  
4,800 acres.

### City Charter provided:

- Mayor elected for 1 year term
- Recorder elected for 1 year term
- Treasurer elected for 1 year term
- Clerk elected for 1 year term
- Auditor
- Marshall .
- 3 watchmen - 1 for each ward; one designated Captain of watch
- Health Physician
- Justice of Peace (First Ward)
- Justice of Peace (Second & Third Wards)
- 3 constables elected for 1 year term - 1 in each ward
- 6 alderman - 2 in each ward (one of which ward supervisor)
- 6 school inspectors - 2 in each ward, elected for 4 year term
- 6 directors of poor - 2 in each ward, elected for 1 year term



*Detail of Lansing Township with the Incorporated City of Lansing outlined in grey. From the Topographical Map of the Counties of Ingham & Livingston Michigan published by Geil, Harley & Siverd, Philadelphia, 1859.*

### To be appointed by Common Council:

- Fire wardens, Common criers, Pound-masters, Inspectors of fire wood, Weigh-masters and Auctioneers

### Feb 15, 1859

Legislature (PA 238 of 1859) authorized Township of Lansing to hold township elections within the city of Lansing; keep office of township clerk in city; resident of city may be appointed deputy township clerk. For several years after Lansing became City, Lansing township held annual meetings and elections held in city of Lansing. First annual meeting held out side of Lansing was in 1865.

## Join Us...

Thursday, January 22, 2009 - 7:00 PM: *Marvin on Myers: Researcher shares history of the Capitol's Architect.* 2009 marks the 100th Anniversary of architect Elijah Myers death and a renewed interest in his work. Valerie Marvin has spent two years researching the flamboyant Myers, a quest that has taken her to Texas, Illinois and Ohio. The Michigan State Capitol was constructed between 1872 and 1878. It is one of five state capitols Myers designed, but the only one he oversaw from beginning to end. Please join us in the Friend's Auditorium of the Capital Area District Library for this memorable presentation.

## *Congeaed Moisture Source of Lansing's Ice Supply for 1888*

*From the State Republican, January 14, 1888*

What You Will Have Next July to Remind You of the Present—How Much Frozen Matter it Takes to Go Round—Where most of it Comes From—Is it Good?

There are perhaps few citizens of Lansing who are not more or less interested in the capital City's ice supply. Ice is something that sends a chilling influence into all departments of life. If your nose bleeds during the torridity of summer your next best friend will suggest the propriety of touching a hunk of ice to your spinal column, and if it is only cold as ice ought to be it fills the bill.


You will want it in your ice boxes to keep your butter from getting too thin. You will want it that ice cream may be able to hold its place in the affection of your sons and daughters. You will want in your mint juleps and lemonades. In fact it will find its way into all domestic ramifications, and we want to know what it is. So the reporter, after an investigation is pleased to say:

### DANIELS & ELLIS

May not lead as ice dealers, but they think they do, and imagination is capable of carrying one into the 32<sup>nd</sup> heaven. These gentlemen have not yet begun to cut ice, but they are already making preparations. They want it to get just a trifle thicker. In the meantime they have a new two horse scraper at work clearing off the ice and getting it in readiness for cutting. All their ice will be cut above the city sewerage, and they expect to put into their seven ice houses at least 2,800 tons.

### WELLS AND CLEAR

Just below the Shiawassee street bridge the scene is clearly animated. The Wells & Clear scraper, with Mr. Clear at the wheel, is getting the ice in condition for cutting, which will begin Monday. They will put about 3,500 tons of ice into their five ice houses. That which they will cut below the Shiawassee street bridge will be sold to meat dealers and those who do not use it in actual consumption. That sold for domestic uses will be cut upriver entirely beyond the city sewerage.

Now the readers of the State Republican know where their ice is coming from next summer. If anyone has any objections now is the time to kick. 



The Clear-Bauer Company cutting 'up river' ice just west of the Logan Street Bridge and on the south bank of the Grand River in 1917. Prior to the advent of the icemaker and refrigerator, ice for the home was cut from the river to allow the storage of goods that would spoil if not kept cool. In the center of the photograph the conveyor for moving the ice from the river and into the storage sheds is visible. The ice would be packed in sawdust and straw and last until September or October. Why was it called up river ice? Well many people believed that prior to sewage treatment it was better to cut the ice up river of the city. The Pure Ice Company purchased the Clear-Bauer Company in 1920. FPML/CADL.

## Lansing Pioneers

Special from the April 6 1901 State Republican


When it was decided in 1847, to move the capital of Michigan away from the dangerous Canadian frontier and tuck it safely away among the forests of Ingham county. John Thomas of Oakland county was a member of the house of representatives and took part in the important discussion. We smile now at the thought of the three little towns of Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich, with interlying stretches of farm land threatening the 12 miles of solidly build water front which faces them across the blue straits. Apprehension of a war with England was not the only reason for the change of capitol, but it was spoken of, and we have our right to smile.

Rep. Thomas, who was father of Mrs. E.R. Merrifield, was one of three commissioners appointed from the legislature to drive out into Ingham's almost untouched wilderness and select a site for the capital. They supposed with everyone else, that Lansing would lie principally upon the east side of the river, near Main st. and along the latter street toward the fair grounds. So Mr. Thomas and two other gentlemen, Daniel S. Lee and Charles P. Bush, entered into a speculation and bought the property where A.A. Piatt's power house stands, intending to build a dam and a flour mill at that point. Let it be said in passing, that the prompt energy of Mr. Seymour, who build the Seymour house and started the milling industry at North Lansing, frustrated their plans. It had another effect also; it started growth in another direction, and that portion of Lansing which was expected to be the center of the new city, was not built up for a number of years.

In October, 1848, Mr. Thomas, with his family and stock of dry goods, moved to what Mr. Merrifield calls a charming reminiscent article, "the place of great expectations." Their caravan of 12 heavily loaded wagons drove through the autumn forest to the infant capital. They made their home in a large house on the corner of River and Main sts, which had been built for a hotel. A bridge carried Main st across the river, and on the corner of Cedar st Mr. Thomas established the first dry goods store in Lansing. There was practicality nothing at "middle town," except the Hudson House, which was in the process of building, and was finished

in time to accommodate some of the legislators of the secession of 1849.

The society event of the season was the opening of the Benton house, on the North West corner of Washington and Main sts. Charles P. Bush was proprietor of the new hotel, and cooks and waiters were engaged from one of the steamers plying between Detroit and Buffalo. Lansing first marriage took place at the Benton house. Mr. Bush's daughter was the bride, and, William Hinman the groom. Mrs. Merrifield was the bridesmaid, and the then secretary of state, George W. Peek, was best man.

Mrs. Merrifield has watched Lansing's growth from the city's infancy. She saw the first shanties springing up over the tract of land upon which the city stands, and has gathered spring flowers along Grand st. During one spring flood she had an experience not so pleasant to remember as the culling or the wake robins. The Main st bridge was greatly weakened by the pounding ice and had been condemned by the city officials. With her little brother and Squire Ward, Mrs. Merrifield stood on the bridge watching the swollen waters. Suddenly the bridge shifted to the west, broke loose and began to go down. Mrs. Merrifield had barely time to jump ashore, while her brother and Mr. Ward were carried down by the bridge. 

### 1850 Census report:

#### Population of Lansing: 1,229

Ingham County: 8,006

State population approx: 400,000

Number of dwelling houses in county:	1,597
Number of families	1,603
Lansing Township	241*
Number of inhabitants	8,643
Lansing Township	1,229
Number of occupied farms	1,084

Pounds maple sugar produced 166,004

30,000 from Vevay - "the largest sugar bushes in State"

Number of flour mills 8

Barrels of flour produced 5,260

Number of saw mills 24

Produced 3,610,000 feet of lumber.

Bushels of corn raised (yr. end June 1, 1850) 95,270.

Pounds butter produced: 144,080

Pounds of cheese made: 13,243

\* Lansing contained largest number of families in county.

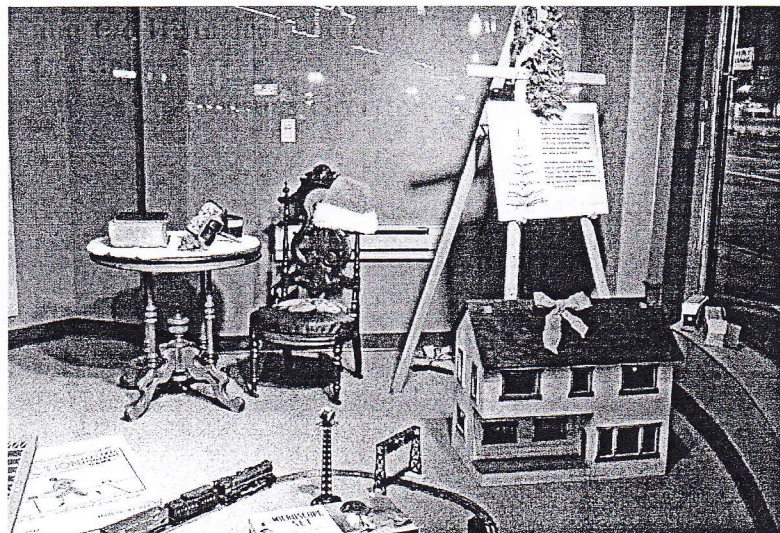
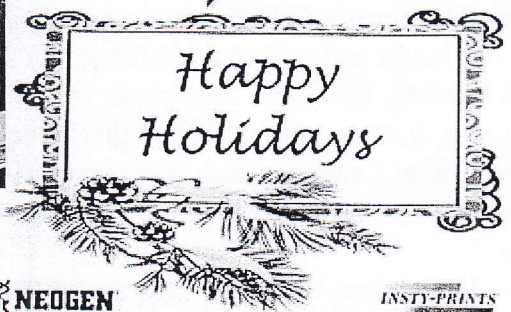
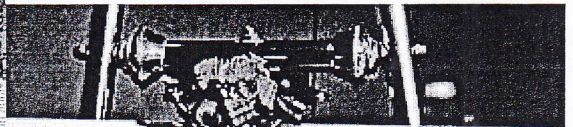
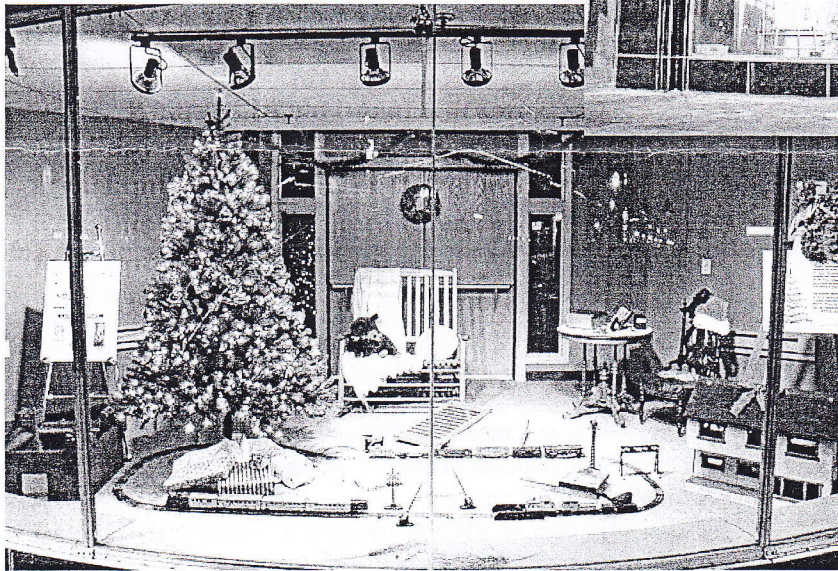
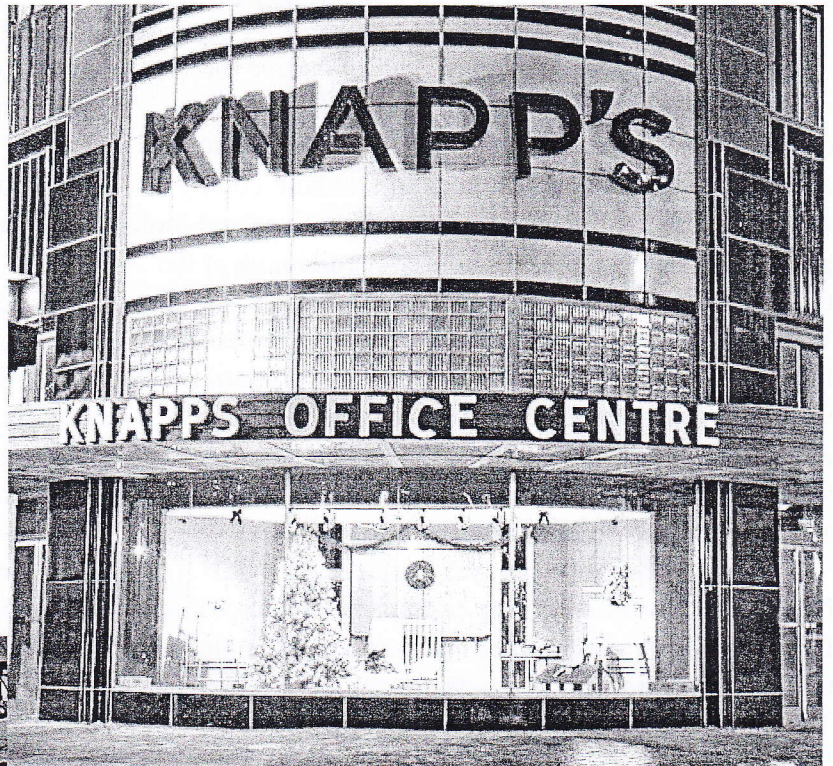
# Knapp's Window Display - Christmas 2008

Knapp's Department store was a holiday tradition for many Lansing-area families. The major attractions were this window display and pictures with Santa.

For decades, animatronic toy scenes entertained shoppers, children and those just taking in seasonal cheer.

This display celebrates that heritage with generous support from the Eyde Company, Neogen, Insty-Prints, the Capital Area District Library, the Lansing 150 Celebration and the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.

- Seasons Greetings



## The Gift Depot

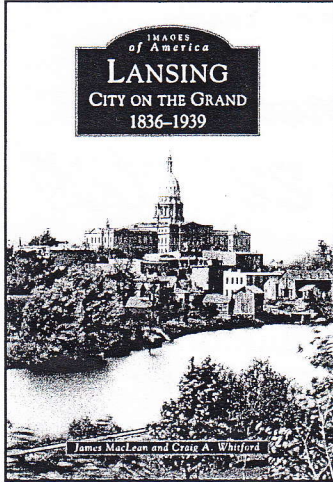
The following gifts will be available for purchase during our January program

**1** Give the Gift of History with a membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Individual Memberships: \$15/year  
Family Memberships: \$25/year

**2** Lansing: City On The Grand, 1836-1939

By James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford



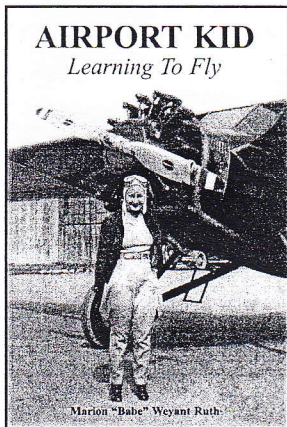
Lansing's history as the capital of Michigan began with a legislative mandate in the 1835 State Constitution, which required that the seat of government be moved from Detroit in 1847. The result – the emergence of a new capital city on the banks of the majestic Grand River – allowed Lansing to cultivate a world-class community based in government, education, the automotive industry and entrepreneurial achievements. This book features more than 200 historic photographs that document the dynamic capital city during its pivotal first century, from the pioneer era to the inception of the Olds Motor Vehicle Company and through the eve of World War II.

**\$19.99**

Published by Arcadia, An Imprint of Tempus Publishing, Inc.

**3** AIRPORT KID - Learning To Fly

By Marion "Babe" Weyant Ruth and Craig A. Whitford



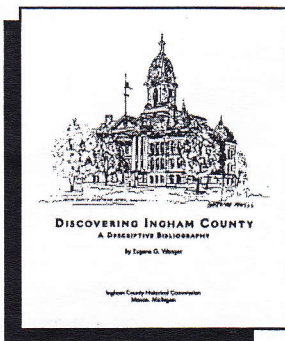
The true account of Lansing's most famous aviatrix - Marion "Babe" Weyant, a teenage girl with a passion for aviation and a desire to take flight. Originally written by Babe in 1936, the story traces her adventure from 1931 until soloing at the age of 18 in 1936. Over 150 photographs and vintage news clippings are featured in 96 pages, capturing the excitement of her journey, the pilots she encountered and her interest in aviation which she continues to share.

**\$20.00**

Published by Michigan Historical Press, Lansing

**4** Discovering Ingham County  
A Descriptive Bibliography

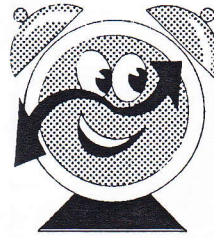
By Eugene G. Wanger



This 100+ page edition is a sequel to Mr. Wanger's *INGHAM COUNTY HISTORIES: An Annotated Bibliography for Students, Buffs and Collectors...* "an interesting and useful guide for discovering the history and historical resources of Ingham County, The Capital County of Michigan..." Published by the Ingham County Historical Commission.

**\$15.00**

Published by the Ingham County Historical Commission



It's Membership Renewal Time

As a new year of programs begins, it is once again time to collect membership dues. *Please look at the top line of the mailing label on this newsletter.* If it reads "08/09", your dues for this year have already been paid. If other numbers appear, such as "07/08", please send your dues as outlined in the Membership Application found below. *Thank you!*

**Historical Society of Greater Lansing Proudly Presents**

**The Founding of Lansing With David Votta**

**February 19, 2009 - 7 PM**

*Friend's Auditorium-Capitol Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing, Mich.*

## Membership Application

Please accept my  New  Renewal membership in the *Historical Society of Greater Lansing*. I have enclosed:

\$15 Individual  \$25 Family  
 \$150 Life or \$\_\_\_\_\_ Gift

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Historical Society of Greater Lansing*

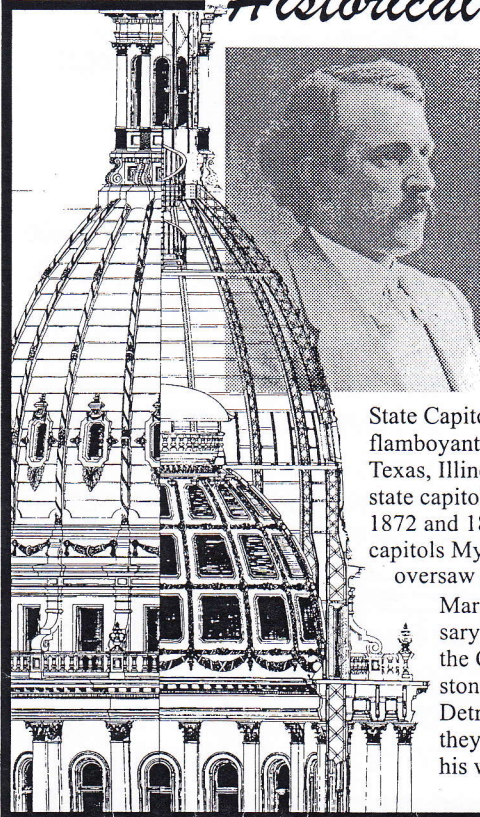
P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.

Thank you for your support of our programs and activities.

# Historical Society of Greater Lansing

## Marvin on Myers



On Thursday, January 22, 2009 state capitol staffer Valerie Marvin will conduct a presentation at the Downtown Lansing branch of the Capital Area District Library on Elijah Myers, architect of the Michigan

State Capitol building. Researching the flamboyant Myers has taken Marvin to Texas, Illinois and Ohio. The Michigan state capitol was constructed between 1872 and 1878. It is one of five state capitols Myers designed, but the only he oversaw from beginning to end.

On March 5, 2009, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Myers death, the Friends of the Capitol will mark his grave-stone at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit with a plaque. Currently they are establishing an archive of his work.

Researcher shares history of  
*Capitol Architect*

*With Valerie Marvin*

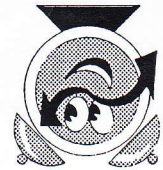
Join Us... *Thursday,*  
*January 22, 2009*

*7:00 P.M.*

**Friend's Auditorium  
Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing, Mich.**

*Time  
Renewal  
Membership  
97¢*

*Please RUSH to:*



**Change Service Requested**

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

Help Preserve the Memory of  
*America's Greatest*  
*Capitol Builder*

*Elijah E. Myers*

The Architect of the

*Michigan State Capitol*



## *The Greatest Capitol Builder of the Gilded Age*

The "Gilded Age" (approximately 1865 to 1900) marked one of the greatest building booms in American history. Public buildings of all kinds—schools, prisons, hospitals, courthouses—were under construction. Probably the most important of all these public building projects, however, were the state capitols rising across America.

This was the golden age of capitol construction and Elijah E. Myers was its most important architect. Myers designed more capitols than any other architect in American history. He is largely responsible for creating our shared idea of what a capitol building should look like. Although he did not invent the form of a central dome flanked by balanced wings, his design for Michigan, Texas and Colorado established the model for almost every capitol to come. These buildings have become American icons, their familiar domes and columns punctuating the American landscape and serving as the very symbol of our democratic form of government.

## *Michigan's Forgotten Master Architect*

Myers rose to prominence when, in early 1872, he won a national contest to design Michigan's new state capitol. Myers, who was living in Springfield, Illinois, at the time, moved to Detroit, his home and headquarters for the rest of his life. It was in Detroit that Myers achieved his greatest fame and success. It was here that he designed the capitols of Texas and Colorado which, along with Michigan's capitol, are the monuments which have proven his most lasting legacy.

Myers was extraordinarily prolific. In addition to capitol buildings, he designed hospitals, town halls, prisons, schools, churches, courthouses and private homes. One of the first architects to enjoy a national practice, his buildings spanned the nation from coast to coast. Yet, when he died in 1909, Myers slipped into obscurity and his contributions were largely forgotten.



## *Renewing a National Treasure*

In 1989, Michigan began a highly successful, award-winning restoration of its Myers capitol, by then 110 years old. Neglected for many years, the building had nearly been torn down. Restoration not only returned the building to useful life, but rescued its history and stimulated new interest in its architect. When the Michigan State Capitol was named a National Historic Landmark in 1992, it was largely because of the role it played in establishing Myers's career and in establishing the domed capitol as a national symbol.

## *A Mystery: What Became of Elijah Myers?*

When Myers died in Detroit on March 5, 1909, he was so quickly forgotten that even his grave site was lost. Some questioned whether he was buried in Michigan at all. With the centennial of his death approaching, and with new appreciation for his role in building America, it seemed important to find him.

Several years spent combing archival records and visiting every historic cemetery in Detroit finally paid off in 1999. Elijah Myers was found at last. He is interred in Detroit's Woodlawn Cemetery with other members of his family in a plot purchased by his son-in-law, Baxter Gilman. Today, Woodlawn Cemetery is located on busy Woodward Avenue, across from the Michigan State Fairgrounds. At the turn of the century, however, it was the newly-fashionable, rural burial-place of Governor Hazen Pingree and later of many auto barons.

Myers's simple marker, almost overgrown, records only the years of his birth and death. Nearby is a granite stone bearing the names "Myers" and "Gilman." There is nothing to indicate that one of America's great architects lies buried nearby. The only reference to his illustrious career is an elegant Corinthian column sculpted in high relief on one corner of the stone, a silent tribute to his designs for the capitols of Michigan, Texas and Colorado.

*Photo: State Archives of Michigan*

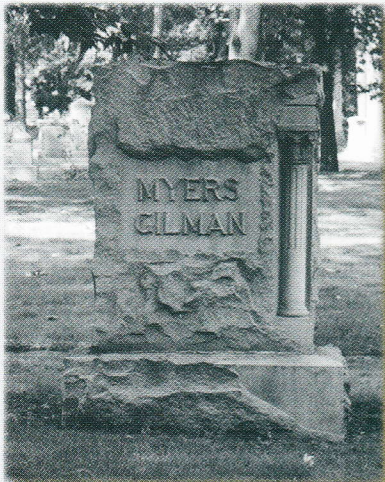
## *Saving History: The Myers Centennial Commemoration*

As we approach the centennial of Myers's death in March 2009, the time has come to ensure that Michigan's master architect is never lost or forgotten again. Plans call for special publications—including the first exhaustive catalogue of his buildings—and events celebrating Elijah Myers and his contributions to Michigan and national architectural history.



*Note:*

The Friends of the Capitol, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of the Michigan State Capitol and its history. **All donations are tax deductible.** Please include a return address if you desire a receipt for tax purposes.



This is a project of the

*Myers Centennial Commission*

**Chairs**

Representative Steve Bieda  
Senator Tom George  
Mr. Kelly Keenan

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Eugene Hopkins  
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Dr. Edward Blews  
President, Friends of the Capitol, Inc.  
Kerry Chartkoff  
Executive Director, Michigan Capitol Committee  
Matt Van Acker  
Director, Michigan State Capitol Tour and Information Service  
Valerie Marvin and Barb Thumudo  
Myers Archive Project

*Commemoration Plaque*

Central to these celebrations is a project to adequately mark Elijah Myers's grave for the first time. A bronze plaque will commemorate the centennial of his death, briefly recount his historical significance and permanently record his proud title as America's greatest designer of state capitols. A second bronze plaque will be mounted in the Michigan State Capitol, visited annually by over 100,000 people.

This project is endorsed by the Friends of the Capitol, Inc. and the Michigan Capitol Committee, the legislative-executive body charged with the oversight of Myers's masterpiece, the Michigan State Capitol.

*How Can You Help?*

The cost of casting and mounting a bronze plaque at Myers's grave site and another in the Michigan State Capitol is being funded entirely through donations. Any amount, large or small, is greatly appreciated.

*Who Do You Contact?*

To contribute to this worthwhile project, make checks or money orders payable to:

*Friends of the Capitol  
Myers Marker Project*

**Send your contribution to:**

**Capitol Tour Service  
Michigan State Capitol  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514  
Attn: Matt Van Acker**

**Or call 517.373.5157 for more information.**



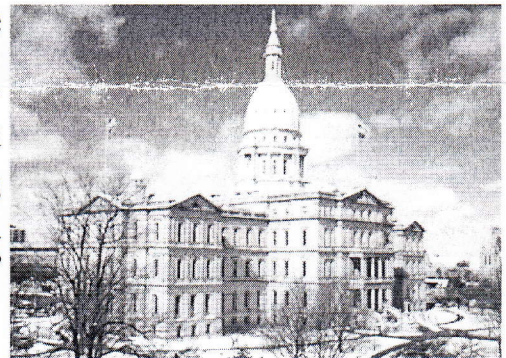
The Historical Society of Greater Lansing presents:

## Architect Elijah E. Myers History Program



Valerie Marvin of the Michigan State Capitol Tour Service will discuss the life and career of Michigan State Capitol architect Elijah E. Myers.

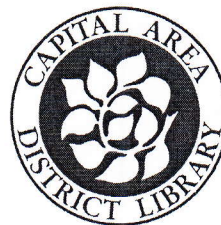
Myers designed buildings across the nation, including the Michigan, Texas, and Colorado State Capitols. Marvin is part of a team researching Myers's career in anticipation of the upcoming centennial of his death, which occurred on March 5, 1909.



### Thursday, January 22, 7-8 pm

2009

**Downtown Lansing Library  
Auditorium  
401 S. Capitol Ave.  
(517) 367-6346**



***Lean on Us***

cadl.org

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