

R: Sat. Feb. 13-2010

www.lansinghistory.org



# History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

February 2010

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## Historical Society of Greater Lansing

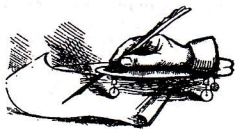
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**Craig A. Whitford, Editor**

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

## Spirit Land

### ANNUAL CAMP MEETING OF SPIRITUALISTS AT HASLETT PARK

State Republican 7/26/1890

A Tame opening Thursday-Delay in Preparing the Grounds – Noted Mediums and Troops of Spirits Will be There Tomorrow, and More to Follow.

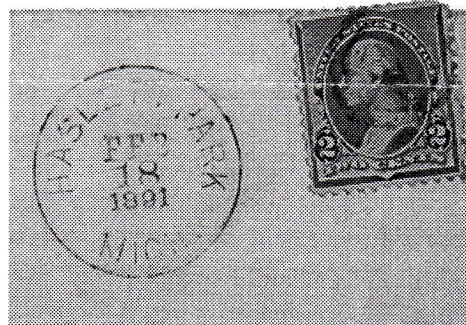
Dropping off a train at the little hamlet on the south shore of Pine Lake<sup>1</sup>, perhaps a dozen miles east of Lansing on the C. &G.T. railway, about the first prominent feature the will attract the eye of the tourist, as he endeavors to notice his surroundings, is the large board sign a few rods west of the depot, and on the north side of the track. It is an ample sign; and apparently once wore a vernal hue; but time has given it a pale and somewhat dingy look. The elements have not, however, succeeding in effecting the large rustic letters which surmount the pale green field and form the single legend

“HASLETT PARK”

If one has spent too much time in this curious study of his surround-

ings before arousing to action, he will probably pass under this sign and enter upon a pedestrian tour upon a plank walk which penetrates the swamp for a distance of perhaps three hundred yards. The walk is flanked with an impenetrable fringe of rank grass and bushes, beneath which the black and oozy soil presents an appearance so manifestly treacherous that he would be rash, indeed, who trusted his weight upon its surface.

Pursuing his walk with no special sign of terminus visible in the vista, our explorer finally reaches the end of his walk, only to find a small and somewhat primitive dock at his right upon the line where the black ooze ends, with a sedgy border, and the waters of Pine Lake open to view. On the other hand stretches the dank and impenetrable swamp. Had he been a few moments earlier he would have found a small but remarkably neat steam yacht waiting to bear him over the dancing



Continued on Page 2

## Join Us...

Saturday, February 20, 2010 from 11 am to 3 pm for the African American Family History Showcase. This day-long celebration of African American culture will feature displays and table talks from local and national organizations. Guest speakers include: Retired MSU Geography Professor Morris Thomas from 11:30 am-12:30 pm and Professor Tukufu Zuberi of PBS's The History Detectives from 1-2 pm. This event is co-sponsored by CADL, the Friends of Lansing Libraries and the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.

*Spirit Land, continued from Page 1*

waters of the lake to the haven of his desire. As it is he is in a veritable "slough of despond."<sup>2</sup> Nothing remains but to retrace his steps to the starting point, and follow the dusty wagon road around the top of the ridge for a distance of three-quarters of a mile. This route is scarcely more charming than the first, for the track that winds through the tilled fields is filled with rag-weed, beans and potato tops.

Rising to the top of the ridge at a certain point, the pedestrian beholds, at one sweeping glance, Haslett Park, the great campground of the spiritualists of Michigan, now again wakening to life under the influence of the pilgrims who are arriving from all parts of the state to participate in the annual camp meeting.

Descending the slight declivity one enters a street, flanked on either side with cottage of various styles of architecture .not elaborate, but bearing a cozy look, and affording a full view of the open waters of the lake and exposed to the breezes, tempered by the waters. This street, which is about 80 rods in length, is intersected at right angles by another of about equal length, also occupied by booths and cottages, and marking the line of Haslett Park proper, comprising some 20 acres of natural woodland, gently undulating and sloping towards the lake and enclosed with a wire fence. There are no cottages within this enclose, the only permanent building being the auditorium, a building about 80x90 feet in area, elevated on stone piers and roofed, but without sides. Here all public gatherings are held, but as yet all is quiet and serene. No antediluvian shade is visible. No noble red man's spirit peers at one from behind the stems of the giants of the primeval forest, and no war whoops echoes through their umbrageous corridors. The dainty and fleet footed spirits of red maidens, long since departed to the spirit land are not as yet apparent to ordinary mortals, unless they may peer from the "laughing eyes of brown" gray or blue appertaining to their sisters of the blood of the paleface, of which not a few were seen in the grove, or gathering the white lilies that lifted their waxen faces to the sun from the bosom of the lake. The great "spirit conductors" were conspicuous by their absence. No noted mediums had arrived with their "invisible company of souls;" but a number of them were expected today, when all this scene of bucolic quietude may be changed.

### Spiritualist Camp Haslett Park

There is a certain charm, however, in the quietude, which tends to relax formality and promote hospitality and social interchange of thought, and even the whistle of the little steamer, with its freight of humanity to swell the throng, conveys a disagreeable shock at times because of its suggestiveness of an outside world full of action, bustle and strife. Yet this *dolce far niente*<sup>3</sup> is doomed to the rude interruptions when the real business of the meeting comes forward as it probably will tomorrow.

Among the recent improvements at the park is a two story frame building located at the head of the principal street outside the enclosure, known as the "Mediums' house." It was erected during the present season by the "mediums' protective union," of which Dr. A. W. Edson of this city is president; is 50x32 feet in size, and contains 16 rooms two of which are designed for office and reception rooms, and the others for the use of members of the union. This will doubtlessly be a headquarters for the principle mediums in attendance. Several cottages have also been added. The entire location is a desirable one but must be greatly improved before it meets the demands of such a resort.

The little yacht "Belle Haslett" plies between the depot and the Pine Lake house on the north shore, meeting all the trains and stopping at Haslett Park each trip. It is evident that the Pine Lake house and grounds are recovering all their old time popularity under the able management of H.J. Olney, the new proprietor. Everything is neat and wears a hospital air, and the hotel cuisine is unexcelled by anything in central Michigan. Visitors are emphatic in their commendations.

Sunday will mark the real commencement of the meeting at Haslett Park, although it was to have opened on Wednesday. It has not been advertised as extensively as in previous years but is expected to present unusually interesting features and the local attendance will doubtlessly be large. **RE**

<sup>1</sup> Lake Lansing

<sup>2</sup> Is a deep bog in John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*

<sup>3</sup> Pleasant idleness

*Articles, News & Announcements  
are always welcome.*

## President's Message

Doug Johnson

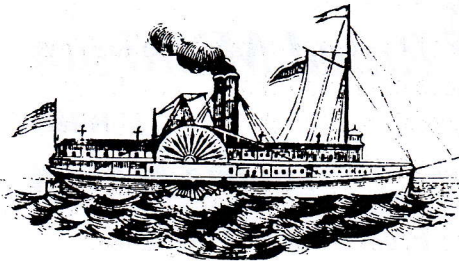
This month, two topics call for attention. First, a brief discussion of the idea that our community needs a museum in which to display Lansing area history. Second, a quick look at an exciting program coming in June.


Your Society has been interested in creating a museum of Lansing history since its founding in 1947. In fact, one of the group's original purposes was to create a place to display materials and objects illustrative of Lansing's historical heritage. As we all know, such a bricks and mortar facility has not come together thus far. However, from time to time the topic is raised for consideration. This occurred last fall and you deserve to have the benefit of your Board's discussion.

We reached two primary conclusions after doing our own analysis and consulting with two Lansing individuals who are veterans in this cause. The first and most critical conclusion is that for a Lansing Historical Museum to become a reality, the core of people who are deeply passionate about making it happen has to grow substantially larger than it is today. Second, for a museum to be successful, there must be a substantial collection of objects, materials, documents, and so forth that would make it a desirable place to visit. These must be located but not necessarily literally acquired at this time. In other words, if we had a museum of Lansing history, what would be on display? We believe that the myriad other elements of creating a successful museum – funding, facility, auspices, etc. – could be wrangled into place if these two keys were moved substantially forward.

A reader might respond to these findings with disdain, remarking that our current economic environment is certainly not conducive to launching ambitious new ventures. However, our purpose in having this discussion is not to ask for financial donations. It is frankly to test whether there are people in Lansing who have an interest in bringing time and energy to work on a multi-year project to bring a Lansing Historical Museum into being. Our hope is that such an effort might reach its critical mass as the Lansing economy is restored to health. Or, in the best case, such a project could itself become a component of Lansing's success.

So, dear readers, who wants to participate in making this museum a reality? Can you suggest items or collections around which a museum could be built? I look forward to continuing this discussion.



Turning now to peek several months ahead, on **Thursday, June 24**, we will meet on the *Michigan Princess* riverboat on the Grand River for "*An Evening with Mark Twain*." This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mark Twain's death. We will be treated to an evening of stories by the master himself. To get you thinking, a 1950 article in *Michigan History* magazine was entitled, "Mark Twain's Lansing Lecture on Roughing It." The evening will also see our Annual Meeting with election of next year's officers. Details forthcoming but mark the date today! 

[www.lansinghistory.org](http://www.lansinghistory.org)

## Forest Parke Library & Archives

*Research local history at the  
Downtown Lansing Library!*

The Forest Parke Library & Archives, (formerly the local history room) is **OPEN** to the Public every Tuesday evening from 5 to 7 p.m.

Local History holdings do not circulate, only inventoried materials are available and special rules and regulations will apply.

**Every Tuesday**

**5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.**

**Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

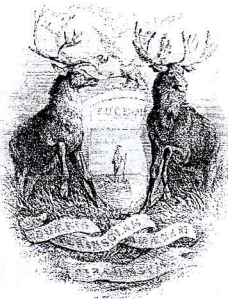
David Votta, Local History Reference Librarian  
517.334.1521; Email: [dvotta@cadl.org](mailto:dvotta@cadl.org)

Coming March 18, 2010...



**The Men Who  
Ruled Michigan  
with  
Valerie Marvin**

*From the time Michigan declared herself a state in 1835, it has been led by a variety of confounding and complex governors. The infamous boy governor, the governor who made his living "on the sins of the people", the governor who married his daughter, the governor who was thrown off the state supreme court and sent to jail. The governor who campaigned on his farming strengths, the governor who built a bridge, the governor who waged war. Who were these men, and what are their stories? Come and learn about some of Michigan's more interesting - and infamous - governors.*



*Valerie Marvin works for Visitor Tour Services at the Michigan State Capitol. She is an architectural historian, who earned her Master's in Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University in 2009. She is known for her research on Elijah Myers, architect of the Michigan State Capitol, and one of the leading architect's of government buildings in the latter half of the 19th century. Currently she serves as an officer with the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.*

**7:00 P.M.**

**Thursday, March 18, 2010**

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

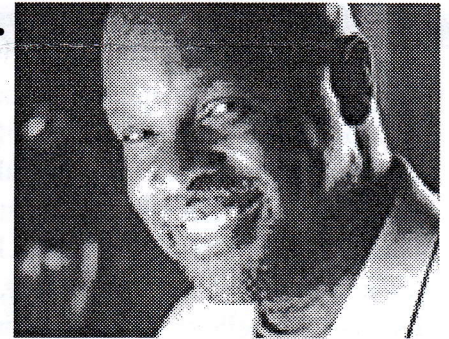
*For more information  
Doug Johnson at 517.484.8802  
or via email at johnsond72@comcast.net*

**African American Family  
History Showcase**

**Saturday,  
February 20, 2010  
11 AM - 3 P.M.**

Join our day-long celebration of African American culture featuring displays and table talks from local and national organizations. Guest speakers include: Retired MSU Geography Professor Morris Thomas from 11:30 am—12:30 pm; and Professor Tukufu Zuberi, from PBS's History Detectives, 1 pm—2 pm.

**From PBS's History Detectives...  
Professor Tukufu Zuberi  
at 1:00 P.M.**



Author and historian Dr. Tukufu Zuberi from PBS' popular show "History Detectives" will be a guest speaker at a special Black History Month event. During the day-long African American Family History Showcase, Dr. Zuberi will speak on the topic of social upheaval during the Civil War. His appearance at 1 pm will be followed by a Q & A period.

**Capital Area District Library**

**401 S. Capitol, Lansing, Mich.  
For More Information  
Contact CADL at 517.367.6300**

*This event is co-sponsored by  
Capital Area District Library,  
the Friends of the Lansing Libraries  
and the  
Historical Society of Greater Lansing*

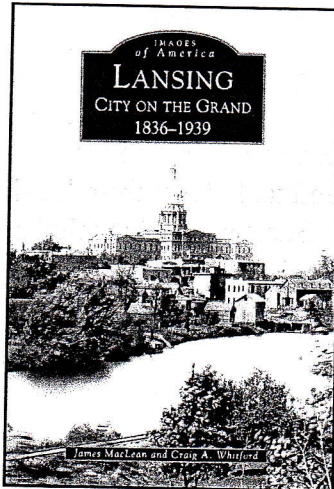
## The Gift Depot

**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.

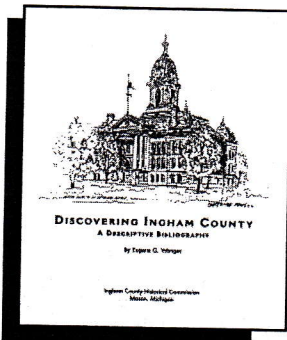
**\$19.99**

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

**3** Discovering Ingham County

A Descriptive Bibliography

By Eugene G. Wanger



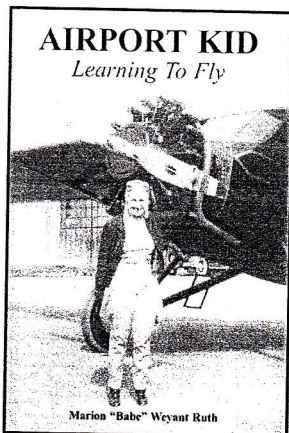
This 100+ page edition is a sequel to Mr. Wanger's *INGHAM COUNTY HISTORIES: An Annotated Bibliography for Students, Buffs and Collectors...* "an interesting and useful guide for discovering the history and historical resources of Ingham County, The Capital County of Michigan..." Published by the Ingham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

**\$15.00**

Published by the  
Ingham County Historical Commission

**4** 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

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Proudly announces the 11th Annual

**David R. Caterino  
Collector's Showcase**

*The History of Greater Lansing*

**Saturday, May 1, 2010**

**10:00 AM to 4:00 P.M.**

**Capital Area District Library  
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

If you collect history of the greater Lansing area and would like to share it with the public we invite you to join us as an exhibitor.

If you are a local author or artist of the greater Lansing area we also invite you to participate.

**Help us fill the Gallery with History!**

For an application or more information contact:

**Doug Johnson, President**

**517.484.8802; E-mail: johnsond72@comcast.net**

*Give a Friend a Gift Membership in the  
Historical Society of Greater Lansing*

## 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.

# African American Family History Showcase

Join our day-long celebration of African American culture, featuring displays and table talks from local and national organizations. Guest speakers include:

Retired MSU Geography Professor Morris Thomas 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Professor Tukufulu Zuberi of PBS's The History Detectives from 1-2 pm.

## Saturday, February 20, 2010

### 11 AM - 3 P.M.

### Capital Area District Library

401 S. Capitol, Lansing, Mich.

For More Information Contact CADL at 517.367.6300

*All ages are welcome  
to attend*

*All ages are welcome  
to attend*

This event is co-sponsored by CADL, the Friends of the Lansing Libraries and the Historical Society of Greater Lansing



4891033048 0076

09/10  
Timothy Bowman  
401 E Willard, #10  
Lansing, MI 48910

*Please POST to:*

Change Service Requested

P.O. Box 12095 Lansing, MI 48901

*Historical Society  
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