

Town Crier

HISTORICAL SOCIETY of GREATER LANSING

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HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE GRAND RIVER by Ford Ceasar

Long before the first settlers arrived in Michigan, the Chippeway (Ojibway) Indians called the stream Washtenong which meant "Big River" to the Indians.

Nathan L. Cooley, the first male white child to be born in Lansing Township or in present Lansing came into this world in a small cabin built not far from the River near the South Waverly Bridge. He was born January 6, 1840.

Alfred M. Cooley who lives at 3535 Moores River Drive is the great grandson of Jacob Cooley. He has the original title to the land signed by President Van Buren. Moores River Drive is adjacent to the Grand River on its South side.

Col. John Burchard was the first recorded death due by drowning in the Spring of 1843, at Seymours Dam while attempting to repair a break in the dam. His canoe capsized and his body was recovered several miles downstream.

James Turner built the first large mansion on the high banks at the North end of the "big bend". Later this was known as the Dodge Mansion and is now the Great Lakes Bible College. The Mansion was started in 1853.

Ransom E. Olds built his first car in a little shop along the banks of the Grand on River Street. This area is now called Kalamazoo Plaza.

The first covered bridge crossed the Grand at "Lower Town". It did not last long however, in as much as an early Spring flood took it out.

Waverly Park at the turn of the century was a place for amusement and recreation. Located at the South Waverly Bridge, it could be reached from downtown by a small steam launch or by electric street car.

THE RIVER GRAND

THE RIVER GRAND, a TV show produced by Charles E. Floyd, radio and TV producer for the Office of Information and Education of the Michigan Department of Conservation, will be presented to the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, Wednesday, March 13, at 8:00 P.M., at the Kalamazoo Street School, 519 Kalamazoo Street.

The show which will be on film gives a hard look at the results of a half century of use and abuse of Michigan's second largest watershed. It's the story of a three-way municipal, industrial and recreational squeeze on a 300-mile river system our forefathers saw fit to label: THE RIVER GRAND.

Floyd was born in Sioux City, Iowa, has lived most of his life in Michigan. He received his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1950.

He joined the Conservation Department's education division in 1948, handling the news release service, writing feature articles and fulfilling special requests from newspaper and radio editors.

In 1952, Floyd assisted with the production of the Department's magazine and the following year was promoted to associate editor of the publication.

Beginning in 1954, he switched from newspaper and magazine work to launching the Department's weekly television program. At first it was carried only on the originating station, WKAR-TV, Michigan State University. Growing interest in the program resulted in a "network" of 13 Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin stations carrying it by 1956.

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EXHIBIT FOR THIS MEETING:

--is prepared by Carl Hammond of Eaton Rapids. Mr. Hammond a free lance writer will furnish pictures and memorabilia on EATON RAPIDS.

PUBLICATIONS

HISTORY OF THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH --a talk by John R. Cook, Chief, Office of Public Health Information, Michigan Department of Health, given at the October 1962 meeting is available to all members. If you haven't picked up your copy at the meetings they will be mailed to you after the March meeting.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO CIVIL WAR BUFFS

A continuing exhibit relating to Michigan in the Civil War can currently be seen at the Detroit Historical Museum, Woodward at Kirby. Among the interesting items on display are uniforms, weapons and equipment. The museum is open 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Tuesday through Sunday. Closed Mondays.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

The RICHARD SLEATERS are vacationing in Florida. We are looking forward to an exhibit prepared by them on their return.

NEW MEMBERSHIPS ADDED:

Ed Kirkby, John Fuller, Mrs. Lois Glass, John Curry, Bruce Harding, Lorraine Brandon, and Rajee R. Tobias.

The River Grand, Continued

The program "Michigan Conservation" won first place at the American Exhibition of Educational Radio-Television programs held in Columbus, Ohio, in 1956. It received first place awards from the American Association for Conservation Information for the years 1959 and 1960 and first place for TV spots in 1961. Floyd has received similar honors for distinguished educational TV productions from the Michigan Outdoor Writers Association.

IN MEMORIAM

Our sympathies are extended to Mrs. Bernard Coggan at the death of her husband, February 21, 1963. Mr. and Mrs. Coggan were both members of our Society and contributed much of themselves to our work.

APRIL 10th MEETING

Due to the illness of Mrs. Rose Brunson who was to speak to us on the "Negro Migration Into Michigan" at the March meeting, Mr. Floyd very graciously accepted this engagement and Mrs. Brunson will speak to us in April.

APOLOGIES

Our membership list which was included in the last Town Crier omitted through error three of its members: Geneva Kebler, Virginia Summers and Mrs. Harley Franks. Please accept our apologies.

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