

FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing will be held in the Veterans Room of the Civic Center. Please use the Washtenaw Street Entrance. Geneva Kebler, chairman, announces that representatives of various patriotic societies will have an opportunity to tell about their activities. Local Civil War Buffs will highlight the program. Members and guests are encouraged to bring guns, books, or manuscripts which will be of interest to other members. Remember the time! 8:00 p.m. Remember the date! February 10. Remember the place! Veterans Room, Lansing Civic Center!

NEWS FROM WATERLOO

Mrs. Sidney (Hattie) Beckwith of the Waterloo Historical Society reports that a special education meeting will be held in the Christian Education Area of the church in Stockbridge from 7:30 p.m. Friends and members of the Society will display woodenware and domestic items as well as tradesmen's tools. The public and members of nearby historical organizations are most cordially invited Feb. 10.

WILX-TV PROGRAM

On January 11, 1965, Blanche Coggan and Ford Ceasar, two noteworthy historians in our area, with Winifred Olds presented a program over WILX-TV telling the history and areas of interest of members of our local society. Interests which are represented by "collectors, hobbyists, senior citizens, young people, journalists, professional historians, and anyone whose interests are in some way related to local history". Future hopes expressed were: a place to keep important material and exhibits; a junior society, ranging from elementary school through high school with history teachers to give demonstrations; and interested senior citizens who have time, to become members and help in the adventure of research. Our thanks to Winifred Olds and the staff of WILX-TV, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Leneweaver, Doyle Fitzpatrick, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Thomas, Geneva Kebler, George Wiske-man, and Blanche Coggan, the committee.

Blanche Coggan reports that she received several complimentary calls and before she left the studio in Jackson, "a phone call from Mrs. John Brisbin of Lansing informed me that the Daughters of the American Colonists were interested in helping with funds to mark some of the historical places that had been shown in slides during the telecast . . . I will speak before their February Meeting, showing slides with appropriate authentic data."

JANUARY MEETING

On April 28, the Lansing State Journal will be 110 years old. David Martens called the press the mirror of a nation and said that Lansing and the State Journal have grown together. Today's news is a chronicle of history but unlike other products, the publisher must produce a brand new product every day. He said, "Each paper has a distinct personality and is made up for its particular audiences. The State Journal serves 80,000 people and its size is determined by advertising--60% advertising and 40% news. If it were not for advertising, a four page newspaper, carrying only local news, would cost \$1.50.

The Journal's particular interest in youth is shown in the Youth Talent and Science Fair, journalism awards for school newspapers and individual writings, the newspaper in the classroom, tours and awards for the debate programs. A "Teen Page" appears regularly in the Journal. Slides of the 14 different departments of the State Journal were shown.

Mrs. Harmon Chamberlain, librarian, described her work as an aid to reporters. She provides research on previous stories, suitable pictures, as well as keeping a clipping file up to date. Her references include encyclopedias - "Who's Who?" - Bartlett's Quotations - Michigan and Lansing Histories. Clippings, photographs, and plastic engravings are matched. The average paper contains about 75 clips a day. The microfilm file dates from 1828 to the present time. This is frequently used by attorneys but students must now go to the Lansing Public Library for their research.

Also, in addition to the regular negative file is a file of historical negatives. These are not available to the public without written permission of the owner.

At the end of the meeting, Rajee Tobia announced that Mrs. Frances Bateman had presented the Society with the Bateman Collection of Survey Papers dating back to 1847, and books dating back to 1825.

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Items of Interest from the Business Meeting, Wednesday, January 20, 1965 at the State Museum:

Two committees, with a forward look, were appointed by President Tobia; Pathfinder Scouts and Present Historical Markers, Solon Weeks, chairman; Young Peoples' Historical Groups, Ford Ceasar, chairman.

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A " Letter of Inquiry with Suggestions " concerning the legality and procedure of the recent discarding and disposal of historical furnishings and furniture of the State Capitol was approved to be sent to proper public officials and County Historical Societies of the State.

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The valuable Records of the former Lansing Historical Society, which gathered much of

the material for the Lansing Centennial and marked the grave of the " forgotten Mayor of Lansing ", will be officially presented to the present Historical Society at a future meeting.

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Orchids to the State Journal Staff who so royally entertained our Society at its January meeting. Of especial importance were their gift copies of the Lansing Centennial Edition--a storehouse of historical information gathered by former friends who have paved the way for us.

YOUR FAMILY TREE

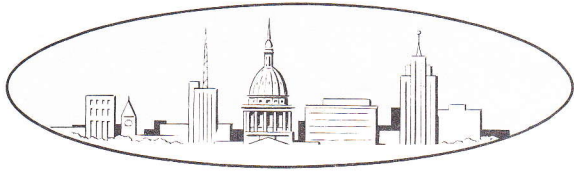
Due to popular request the Lansing YWCA is again offering the course " Your Family Tree " which is designed to introduce to its participants the art of searching for ancestors and enriching family life. Meetings include; a workshop at the Michigan State Historical Commission Archives; a Patriotic Society Round Table; Periodicals and other non-book materials; Research abroad; and a meeting at the State Library. If you are interested call IV5-7201.

All teachers are urged to take advantage of the Historymobile now located at Otto Junior High School. One hour's time is reserved for each class wishing to view it. Make your reservations while there is still time. The Historymobile will be moved April 1.

FEB 10-65	LANSING CIVIC CENTER	A PATRIOTIC ASSEMBLY	DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION SONS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION SOCIETY OF WAR OF 1812 CIVIL WAR BUFFS	GENEVA KEBLER
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING
P.O. Box 515
Lansing, Michigan





Historical Society of Greater Lansing

BOX 515 LANSING, MICHIGAN

February 18, 1965

OPEN LETTER FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING:

Michigan's Capitol is our state's foremost historical building and one of its top historical tourist attractions. It is a building that belongs not to the governor or the legislature or to the department of administration, but to each and every citizen of our state. Constructed in 1879, the building is a magnificent structure of that era, rich in the tradition and heritage of our state. Yet this landmark is at present in grave danger of losing much of its historical flavor and significance through the current efforts of the legislature to renovate the building.

We, the members of the Greater Lansing Historical Society, do strongly believe that the Capitol should be renovated and restored - not only to return it to its former appearance of grandeur but to provide more satisfactory working conditions. However, we feel that when this work is being undertaken, strong consideration should be given to the restoration of particular areas that are historically or architecturally significant in order to preserve the historical quality of the building.

We heartily support the current program under way to clean the exterior of the Capitol, and we commend the legislature for its foresight in providing funds for the restoration and preservation of the historic battle flags, which are proudly displayed in the rotunda. We urge that equal consideration be given to the cleaning and restoration of the portraits of our governors and supreme court justices.

However, we are less enthusiastic over the recent attempt to renovate the building; and we deplore the apparent attitude that the Capitol building belongs to the legislature alone - it belongs to the public as well!

In the past, this attitude has resulted in the removal from the Capitol of many architectural and historic fixtures which should have been preserved. In the 1930's the House of Representatives speaker's chair and rostrum were removed and replaced with ones that do not fit the architecture of the building. During the 1950's the glass ceiling panels were removed from the Senate Chamber and have somehow disappeared over the years. On several occasions all of the chairs of both the House and Senate have been replaced, with no consideration being given to the preservation of at least one example. Also in the 1950's the ornate fireplace, which once graced the governor's office, was removed. During that same decade, the original individual desks used by the Supreme Court justices were removed from the Chambers and disposed of.


Last year the beautiful plate glass ceiling panels, containing the engraved coat-of-arms of each of the twenty-five states which were in the Union at the time of the admission of Michigan as a state in 1837, were removed from the House of Representatives and replaced with translucent plastic. Although they did present a potential danger due to sonic booms, they could have been preserved and the legislators protected by the installation of a simple safety device to support each panel. The Historical Society of Greater Lansing urges that these panels be preserved by the Michigan Historical Commission Museum until such time as they might be restored to their former location.

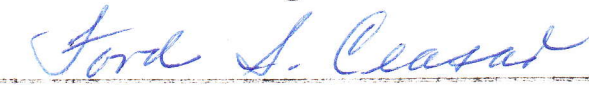
It is our understanding that present plans call for the replacement of all of the historic desks in the House of Representatives - desks that have been used by every legislator since 1879. In the Senate of the United States, the desks presently in use were installed nearly a century and a half ago. They are proudly occupied by our present senators; and to even suggest replacing them with more modern ones would be unthinkable.

We are also concerned over the possible removal of the historic Supreme Court Chambers upon completion of the proposed new court building. This is an extremely significant area of the Capitol, and it should be restored and preserved for posterity as one of the major historical features of the Capitol.

It is the feeling of the Greater Lansing Historical Society that the unfortunate trend toward stripping our Capitol of the visual evidence of its heritage should be immediately stopped, and that all efforts should be directed toward its immediate restoration and preservation.

We strongly urge that whenever a committee of the legislature is formed to undertake any renovation in the Capitol, both now and in the future, the advice of the state's principal agency whose prime function is the preservation of our heritage, namely the Michigan Historical Commission, as well as the state's building division, should be sought. These representatives should have the power to reject any plans which would tend to destroy any part of the historical character and significance of the building; and to urge the restoration of any areas in the building that they deem to be architecturally and/or historically important. We also urge that when any items are removed from the Capitol that the Historical Commission be given the first opportunity to select significant items for preservation in its collection; and secondly, that the standard procedures which govern the disposal of state-owned surplus and salvage property be followed in disposing of the remainder of the material.


Rajee Tobia, President,
Greater Lansing Historical Society


Ford Ceasar, Chairman,
Community Affairs,
Greater Lansing Historical Society