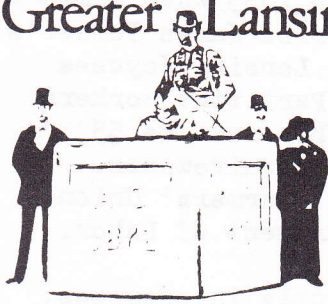


Historical Society
of Greater Lansing



Preservation Directory

UPDATE



May, 1977

Prepared by Preservation Committee, Historical Society of Greater Lansing,
Box 12095, Lansing, Michigan 48901
Bette Downs, Compiler

(If you are working on a preservation project which should be included in the next edition of this directory, please send information to the above address.)

Now, more than ever before, there are reasons for preservationists to unite. With the ominous pressures of contemporary society relentlessly increasing, there is a yearning for a quieter way of life and this is reflected in concern for older buildings of fine design and historic importance.

Too often, modern structures are monumental exercises in spatial relationships which ignore human scale and create anxiety. They are based on the notion that bigger is better. Most of us would welcome the opportunity to visit a giant fun house but we wouldn't care to live in one. Perhaps this is why people who enter some of our dramatic new edifices express the uneasy view that they want to escape to a more cozy environment. Moreover, Americans are finally realizing that preservation is an economic as well as a social necessity; that the vast resources we have, in the past, taken for granted are, indeed, limited and that we'd better explore every possible way to conserve.

Thus, the modest listing of preservation projects included in the fall, 1976 issue of Town Crier, publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, is herein expanded. Projects previously mentioned are updated and new ones have been added to the list which is, however, far from complete. And it never can be complete. This is because preservation is a vital force in this and other communities. By preserving, we are engaged in a continuing history-making process. New activities are regularly undertaken. Guarding our past is a present, vibrant movement which is changing, growing. Today's preservation project could fail tomorrow but, given the impetus we are seeing on every side, we do not expect this to happen often and we are confident that new efforts and new successes will strengthen this already healthy movement.

HELP!

Preservation efforts are rewarding! All need assistance. Review the possibilities and offer your help by getting in touch with the program that interests you. Your support will mean a great deal to our dedicated and hard-working preservationists.

TURNER-DODGE HOUSE, North and James Streets, Lansing
Contact: Lansing Jaycees, Donald B. Hartwick, 323-2928

Owned by the City of Lansing, this brick home dates back to 1853 when James Turner built and occupied it. In 1899 Frank Dodge, who had married James Turner's daughter, purchased the house and made several additions. Now, Lansing Jaycees are supervising the renovation and operation of the building. Part time workers are making improvements and additional employees are needed. They must be 55 years of age or over -- men or women --and must meet low income requirements. They are hired through Green Thumb, a subsidiary of the National Farmers' Union, and operating funds are provided through the United States Department of Labor.

Mr. Hartwick emphasizes that, although renovation is currently in progress, this does not preclude use of the facility. An additional service is provided by the Historical Society of Greater Lansing which will arrange tours on request. For tour inquiries, telephone Geneva Wiskemann, 321-1746.

Still another activity relating to Turner-Dodge house is preparation of a booklet describing the property and its history. Now in process, this publication is a joint undertaking of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and the North Lansing Community Association.

NORTH LANSING HISTORICAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, Turner and Grand River Streets and adjoining area, Lansing

Contact: North Lansing Community Association, Veronica Smeltzer, chairperson, rehabilitation and implementation committee, 482-3810

The north Lansing commercial district was Lansing's original downtown and most of the structures were built from the 1860's through the 1920's. Several castiron front buildings, remnants of a mill which operated on the Grand River, and a comfort station, now being restored by the Community Design Center, are among the district landmarks.

On April 30, 1976, the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, accepted the north Lansing historic commercial district for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, thus culminating extensive work by the North Lansing Community Association in cooperation with other organizations and agencies. Following approval by the Lansing City Council of a grant of \$225,000 in community development funds, plans are now being completed for restoration of buildings within the district. Any property owner whose building is listed on the National Historic Register is eligible to participate. Staff members of the Community Design Center and the Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State, are cooperating with the City of Lansing and the North Lansing Community Association in the restoration program.

PINK SCHOOL, grounds of Cedar Street Elementary School, Ash and Cedar Streets, Mason

Contact: Mason Area Bicentennial Commission, Sandra Dika, 227 East Cherry Street, Mason 48854, 676-5845

The Pink School has been pink since it was built in 1855. A one room building with Greek revival architectural details, it served the Mason area continuously until 1964. During the summer of 1976 the school was moved from the corner of College and Columbia Roads near Mason to its present location and its restoration

has been the major bicentennial activity of the Mason Area Bicentennial Commission.

Funds and person power are needed to complete the work with current emphasis on replacement of a leaking roof. To donate time or money, telephone Ms. Dika.

Helen Grainger is president of the newly organized Mason Area Historical Society and this group is assuming responsibility for the interior of the school which eventually will become a museum of area history. Contributions of books and artifacts have already been made and additional items are welcome. Calls regarding gifts should be directed to Ms. Grainger, 676-1384.

DARIUS B. MOON HOUSE, 116 South Logan Street, Lansing

Contact: Save the Moon House, Inc., chairperson, Diana Reedy

Direct telephone calls to Bette Downs, 351-5752; mail inquiries to Diana Reedy, 533 South Grand Avenue, Lansing 48933.

This Eastlake Victorian house, recently placed on the state register of historic sites, was designed and built by local architect Darius B. Moon in 1894 for his own use. Although Mr. Moon designed houses for many prominent Lansing residents, few remain.

Still located at its original site, the house is scheduled for removal to the Grand Mill site on the Grand River at Mill and Kalamazoo Streets because it is in the likely path of the Logan Corridor. (See following description of the Grand Mill project.) Consequently, major emphasis of the Committee is on fund raising to assure the costly journey. A descriptive brochure and pledge form are available and the Committee is distributing note paper with a sketch of the house by Eddie Maier.

All interested persons are invited to a Moon house potluck dinner to be held Friday, June 17 at 6 p.m. at Turner-Dodge House and inquiries and reservations should be directed to Bette Downs. A scale model of the Moon house by craftsman Lewis H. Smith, Jr. will be on display and there will be a tour of the Turner-Dodge House, entertainment, and prizes.

Other activities relating to the Moon house include exterior painting and additional improvements which are feasible at the present location. Several area artists and photographers have depicted the fanciful house. Future uses under consideration include a youth hostel and an architectural museum.

GRAND MILL ON THE EAST BANK, area bounded by Michigan Avenue, Mill Street, Kalamazoo Street, and the Grand River, Lansing

Contact: Reniger's, 200 Mill Street, Lansing 48901, 485-7291

The eight river front buildings comprising a five acre complex now known as Grand Mill date back to the Civil War and early post Civil War periods. They were part of a busy center when waterfront development and water traffic were crucial to Lansing's economy.

At present, the Grand Mill structures are used for offices and wholesale and

retail operations. In the future it is anticipated that use will shift to a shopping area featuring craft shops where artisans will be producing their wares. An artists' cooperative patterned after those already established in Savannah, Georgia is the device for achieving Grand Mill objectives which include the opening of an old time sandwich shop and ice cream parlor.

Space for the Darius B. Moon house has been set aside in the area formerly occupied by the Capitol Area Transportation Authority. A river walk now nearing completion and extending from Oakland Avenue to Kalamazoo Street will provide an attractive access to the area and steps are now being taken to obtain designation as a historic district.

ORCHARD STREET PUMP HOUSE, Orchard and Chittenden Streets, East Lansing
Contact: City of East Lansing Recreation Office, Charles Yakemonis, 509
Burcham Street, East Lansing 48823, 337-1781

Although recent -- built in 1934 -- the Orchard Street Pump House is historically important because it was among the first municipal water softening systems in the country. It was designed by local architect Harold Childs, a pioneer in a field in which fast moving technology has made the pump house obsolete as far as its original purpose is concerned.

New uses will be related to community activity and the building will be available for small gatherings. Administrative details will be handled jointly by the Bailey Community Association and the City of East Lansing Recreation Office under the direction of a five member board comprised of three neighborhood representatives, a recreation office staff person, and a recreation commissioner. As of April 25, interior and exterior work were nearing completion and the board was meeting to work out details concerning use of the building.

CHARLTON PARK VILLAGE AND MUSEUM, 2545 South Charlton Park Road, Hastings,
49058

Contact: Frank Walsh, director, above address, 616-945-3775

Charlton Park is a unique combination of historic buildings moved to Thornapple Lake and the Thornapple River from various locations. Additions which will be ready for visitors by summer, 1977 are a bank and turn of the century office building which will house an insurance office, a lawyer's office, and a photographer's studio. Future exhibits now being prepared will include an 1860 Greek revival house with an attached doctor's office, a hardware store, a general store, and a newspaper office.

A refreshment stand will be opened during the summer of 1977 and among facilities available to visitors are a beach and picnic, hiking, nature study, and sports areas. Annual events open to the public are a gas engine show, July 9 and 10; a blue grass music festival, July 24; an antique auto show, August 21; and a folk life festival, September 17 and 18. For additional information and fee schedule, write to Mr. Walsh requesting the Charlton Park brochure.

GUNNISONVILLE SCHOOL, 1454 Clark Road, Lansing 48906
Contact: George Anderson, principal, 374-4228

The present one room Gunnisonville School, now supplemented by a larger, contemporary structure, was built in 1907. However, it is the third log structure to occupy the site, the first having been built by Elihu Gunnison in 1836 and the

second in 1883. When, in 1969, the Gunnisonville School District merged with Lansing, use as a kindergarten was discontinued. Now, as a result of a restoration idea developed by Mr. Anderson and Parent-Teachers Association head Nancy Cheney, the log schoolhouse is a living history laboratory where children come to experience education as it existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Needed improvement of the building was realized through the work of a restoration commission headed by area resident Oliver Angell in cooperation with the Lansing School District. The project received bicentennial funds and labor was contributed by members of the community.

These days the school is in constant use by students but community groups may meet there on a limited basis. Although basic restoration is complete, new activities are contemplated and financial contributions are welcome. There is a coal shed to be upgraded and there ought to be a flagpole in front. The children use slates and these are expendable. A "regular" teacher's desk and other furnishings in keeping with the period would add to the authenticity of the operation.

WOMEN'S CLUBHOUSE OF LANSING, 603 South Washington, Lansing 48933, now the Master's House

Contact: Women's Clubhouse Association, Mrs. Archie Fraser, president, 4685 Woodcraft Road, Okemos 48864 and Koinineo Ministries, Inc., Muriel and Richard Welch, 603 South Washington, 489-8447 or 487-1908; home address, 2729 West St. Joseph, Lansing 48917

"Architecturally significant to its time and worthy of restoration" was historical architect Richard Frank's evaluation of the Women's Clubhouse of Lansing, a prairie style structure dedicated on June 1, 1914 and financed through fund raising efforts of the Women's Clubhouse Association plus contributions by Lansing industrialist and inventor Ransom E. Olds. Designed by Lansing architect Thomas Ernest White, the clubhouse was considered a model during a period when similar buildings were springing up around the country for use by the many flourishing women's groups of the time.

With a decrease in emphasis on women's organizations, the clubhouse fell into disuse and had been vacant for several years when the Junior League of Lansing engaged Mr. Frank to appraise its future — if any.

Now, in a unique working relationship, the Women's Clubhouse Association retains ownership of the property and it is being restored and used as a nondenominational youth center by Koinineo Ministries, Inc. under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Welch. Koinineo is a Greek word meaning fellowship. Work continues, city safety regulations have been met, and regular activities are scheduled. These include a coffeehouse every Friday and Saturday from seven until 11 p.m., concerts, and speakers — all open to the public. Meanwhile, the Women's Clubhouse Association continues its spring and fall antique shows and sales to raise funds for taxes, maintenance, and materials. Next show and sale will be October 7, 8, and 9, 1977 at the Lansing Civic Center. Association affiliates will begin meeting at the clubhouse in the fall. Neighboring residents are now assisting with work on the building but additional volunteers and funds are required. There is an immediate need for folding chairs.

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP HISTORIC VILLAGE, Central Park, west of Meridian Township
Municipal Building, 5100 Marsh Road, Meridian Township

Contact: Friends of Historic Meridian, Post Office Box 196, Okemos 48864,
Elaine Davis, president, 349-1993; Carlene Webster, restoration chairperson,
349-2141

Meridian Township Historic Village currently consists of two major structures, the Plank Road tollhouse and an 1864 midwest Greek revival farmhouse. Both buildings were moved to their present location from other nearby sites where they were a part of the original farming community.

The tollhouse is almost completely restored and can be reserved for meetings by calling Ms. Davis or Ms. Webster. Volunteers are needed for work on the farmhouse with most sessions scheduled for Saturdays. Contributions of furniture are also requested and, since an addition was built in the 1880's, emphasis is on that period. Skilled and unskilled workers are welcome and there is a special need for carpenters to work on the floors in the immediate future. Also, dry wall is being installed.

Both buildings will be open from seven until 10 p.m. the evening of July 4. Tollhouse cookies and lemonade will be served and the public is invited.

THE LION'S DEN RESTAURANT, once Squire Haven's house, 213 South Grand Avenue, Lansing

Contact: George Sinadinos, 489-2496

1858 is the approximate construction date of this rectangular home built and occupied by Squire Haven. Passersby can see, at the top of the cupola, a glass symbolizing the toasts proposed by the squire on completion of his house.

Private dining rooms and an ever growing collection of antiques are features of the popular restaurant now operated by Mr. Sinadinos. Continuing use is reassurance that preservation is a certainty despite the contemporary character of adjacent parking areas and buildings.

THE DEPOT RESTAURANT, once the Grand Trunk Railroad Station, 1203 South Washington Avenue, Lansing

Contact: 371-3456

Built to resemble a medieval castle, the Grand Trunk Railroad Station was an important addition to buildings of architectural note in the Lansing area. Completed in 1903, the towered structure is representative of the elegant era of the nation's railroads, but was endangered following termination of its use as a station. Current use as a restaurant has eliminated that danger and the owners have retained the original character, combining the features of a train station with those of a comfortable eating establishment.

LEDGE CRAFT LANE LTD., Bridge and River Streets, Grand Ledge, 48837
Contact: Marilyn Smith, president, 627-5170; Dorothy Johnson, tour chairperson, 627-6217

Now a center of bustling arts and crafts retail shops, the Ledge Craft

Lane building began in 1885 as Fireman's Hall and continued as a police station and city hall until 1970. It remained vacant until its renovation by the present occupants in 1974. In 1975, Ledge Craft Lane was chosen state community achievement award winner.

Shops are open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until five p.m., Friday night until seven p.m. For large groups and for those who cannot visit during regular hours, special arrangements may be made by telephoning Ms. Johnson.

ONE TWENTY IN THE SHADE, INC., once the Lansing Woman's Club, 120 West Ottawa, Lansing

Contact: Karen Bazner, director, 487-4470

Lansing Woman's Club, the city's oldest women's organization, was housed in part of this group of 1890 buildings which are among the last surviving commercial structures of the late Victorian era. Inside and outside restoration have been undertaken by the five people who now operate the second floor art gallery known as One Twenty in the Shade. Exhibits change every three and one half weeks and both one man and group shows are featured with many works available for sale.

Staff members report that additional work on the building is required and volunteers are needed. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. until four p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and one p.m. until four p.m. on Sunday.

CLINTON COUNTY MUSEUM, 1009 South Oakland Street, St. Johns, 48879

Contact: Tom Hollen, director, above address

A six room Victorian cottage built in the 1880's has a new lease on life as a result of action taken by the county bicentennial committee, board of commissioners, and the historical society. The commissioners offered the structure and the historical society is in charge of operating it. Hours are two until five p.m. on Sunday. Opened for the first time in May, 1976, the museum is in need of volunteers to staff and maintain it.

WATERLOO AREA FARM MUSEUM, 9998 Waterloo-Munith Road, three miles west of Waterloo Village

Contact: mail inquiries, Mrs. S.A. Beckwith, Stockbridge 49285; reservations, Mrs. Guy Russell, 313-475-1426

The Waterloo Area Farm Museum consists of an 1855 homestead, barns, and other restored buildings which were obtained from the State of Michigan about 15 years ago by the Waterloo Area Historical Society. The museum is open from one until four p.m. every day except Monday during June, July, and August. In May, large groups are accommodated by appointment. The homestead is fully furnished and visitors are conducted on guided tours.

Beginning in early April and continuing until September, visitors who wish to volunteer their services are welcome each Monday from 4:30 p.m. until early evening. At this time, cleaning and restoration activities are carried out. Also, throughout the year the Society holds educational meetings which are open to the public.

The major event undertaken by the Society is an open house held annually on the second Sunday of October from noon until five p.m. Pioneer crafts are demonstrated, many items are sold, and food is available. Proceeds from this event, attended by thousands of visitors, are used for operation and expansion of the museum. Among recent restorations are a windmill, an ice house, a milk cellar, a bake house, and a farm workshop. This season, stones will be carried to the premises from nearby locations for construction of barn foundations.

Admission to the museum is \$1.00 for adults, 25 cents for children from five to eleven, and children under five are admitted free of charge.

JOSHUA SIMMONS HOMESTEAD, Livonia

Contact: Livonia Historical Commission, Shirley Bishop, president, 33001 Five Mile Road, Livonia 48154; 313-421-2000, extension 353

Now ready for previews, the Joshua Simmons homestead and related buildings are scheduled for official opening in September, 1977 under the auspices of the Livonia Historical Commission. In addition to the pioneer residence of Mr. Simmons, the complex features a carriage house, a barn, a general store, a Quaker meeting house, and a Methodist church and parsonage. The homestead dates back to 1840 when the Simmons family settled in the Farmington area. Joshua Simmons, Sr., father of the Farmington pioneer, served as a soldier during the Revolution and is buried in the North Eagle cemetery near Lansing where a historic marker has been placed in his memory.

ACADEMY AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Vermontville

Contact: Vermontville Historical Society, Dean Hansen, president, 2200 Clark Road, Woodland, 48897

Both the Academy and the Congregational church are on the National Register of Historic Places and the Academy is now the location of the Vermontville museum. Built in 1843, it served both as a school and a place of worship. Since extensive repairs are needed, trustees of the church, members of the historical society, and members of other local organizations are concerned with raising funds, having set an initial goal of \$5,000. Contributions may be sent to Hildred Peabody, Vermontville, 49096. Meanwhile, work began in October to repair the crumbling foundation and install a new floor.

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And in conclusion, some preservation tips from the speakers at the Historic Preservation conference held in Grand Rapids on May 6 and 7, 1977 —

Carol Hale, Central Neighborhood Association, Traverse City: "We need to change our objectives from self-preservation to preservation of the whole."

Janet Kreger, Michigan History Division, Department of State: "It is important to work toward consciousness raising and the development of community sensitivity."