

Hear Ye!



Historical Society of Greater Lansing

TOWN CRIER

Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901

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R. E. Olds: Auto Industry Pioneer

Writing about Ransom E. Olds for a Lansing-area audience could be compared with the problems one would face in discussing Henry Ford with a Dearborn group. You know in advance that the audience is familiar with the details of the subject's life, and at this date there are still likely to be a number of people who were personal acquaintances of the person you are discussing. Thus you feel especially constrained to have something new to say about an otherwise familiar subject.

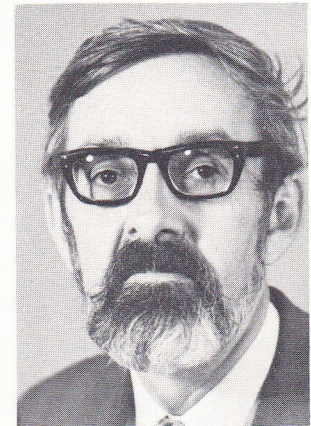
The news about Olds is not that he was one of the most important pioneers in the development of the automobile industry. We all know that, and, although it was my belief that Olds had not received the attention that he deserves that led me to write a new biography of him, the history books generally include Olds in any listing of the major automotive pioneers. But the strange thing about Olds, which really justifies the appearance of the third book-length study of the man that has been published, is that he has been accorded his place in history for what turn out to be, on closer examination, the wrong reasons. However, when the myths and errors and inaccuracies that have come to surround Olds' activities are stripped away, we discover a man whose importance has been increased, not diminished, and who is a much more believable human being.

As one examines Olds' early years it becomes evident that his family deserves far more attention than has been the case in past biographical accounts. Olds' wife Metta, their two daughters Gladys and Bernice, his sister Sadie, his brothers Emory and Wallace, and especially his father,

Pliny Fisk Olds, the founder of the family business that evolved into the present giant Oldsmobile operation, all contributed in a variety of ways to Olds' development and ultimate success. But great as their contributions and those of Olds' associates and employees undoubtedly were, one should not make the mistake of denying to Ransom Olds the credit that is rightfully his. It was, after all, he who made his family's name world famous.

He had, first of all, the necessary mechanical ability in a business that was always involved in the manufacture of machines of some type. Between 1891 and 1941 he was the successful applicant for thirty-four patents awarded by the United States Patent Office. In the records of this office in the National Archives, which were overlooked by previous researchers, only four of these thirty-four patents list someone else as co-inventor with Olds. In all other cases, the patent application records show that Olds is designated as sole inventor, and unless one is to believe that in every instance Olds and his attorneys and the witnesses and the notary public perjured themselves, we must assume that Olds was, as he swore in each application, the sole inventor.

Mechanical ability alone, however, would not assure success in the early days of the auto industry. That industry's history is strewn with the wreckage of unsuccessful companies, founded by men of undoubted mechanical competence who lacked the managerial skills needed to run such a business. Olds had this ability — up to a point, at least. From the time he became his father's partner in P. F. Olds & Son



— George May
Eastern Michigan University

(George May is author of *R. E. Olds; Auto Industry Pioneer*, available from the Wm. B. Eeerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave. S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49503. The cost is \$12.95 per copy).

in 1885, young Olds was the dominant figure in the company. It was he who turned their attention to the production of a small, uncomplicated steam engine and who then successfully pushed its sales until by the early 1890's the Olds name was becoming familiar to users of such engines in areas far beyond the confines of Lansing. It was also Olds who, after visiting the Chicago World's Fair in June, 1893, and witnessing the extent to which the exhibits there revealed the growing popularity of gasoline engines, returned to Lansing to begin work, with the acknowledged collaboration of his employee Madison

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R. E. OLDS
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Bates, on the development of an improved gasoline engine. The engine was patented in 1896 and immediately became the company's top-selling product.

Thus, before he began to manufacture automobiles, Olds had behind him over a decade of administrative experience, in which time, as revealed in records that are among the newer additions to the R. E. Olds Collection at Michigan State University, sales under his guidance each year topped the previous year's record. And Olds had achieved this record without outside financial help. P. F. Olds & Son was incorporated on July 31, 1890, but the state corporation records refute the claims of earlier writers that this action was taken to secure outside investments. Not until 1897 was any of the company's stock held by anyone other than Olds, his father, and Olds' brother Wallace. The very fact that Olds had been able to build up this prosperous engine business with only

his family's resources was an impressive demonstration of managerial skills that made it easier for him to obtain the help from outsiders that he subsequently saw he needed to enter the more complicated business of manufacturing horseless carriages.

When Olds began to experiment with carriages is not entirely clear because Olds, like Ford and other early auto pioneers, had difficulty in recalling the dates of these activities. But what is clear is that Olds was well ahead of his contemporaries, experimenting with steam power in the mid-1880's but then concluding by the early 1890's that steam was not an efficient method of powering a road vehicle. Then in 1896, when Olds successfully completed a gasoline-powered horseless carriage, he announced in his application for a patent on certain of the vehicle's features that his intention was to produce a relatively inexpensive car that would be simple to operate and would have just enough to meet the average person's driving needs, a remarkable forecast of the emphasis on cars for the masses that would become the symbol of the successful Michigan automobile firms of future years. In the years after 1896, Olds strayed somewhat from this goal only to return to it in the fall of 1900 with his first Oldsmobile, a name given to his little one-cylinder runabout. Olds was by no means the first to come out with such a car but he was smart enough to see that the public was interested in this kind of automobile. Employing the mechanical and managerial skills that he had acquired in the preceding decade and a half, Olds made his runabout the most popular car in the country within a few months after putting it into production.

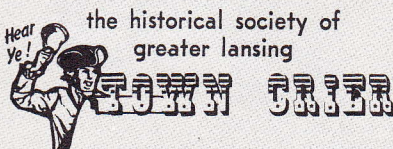
The famous fire that destroyed Oldsmobile's Detroit plant in March, 1901, had nothing to do with Olds' decision to concentrate on the runabout. Even though Olds himself in later years liked to make it appear that the fire, by destroying all but one runabout, had forced him to abandon all of the other larger models that he was then working on, the fact is that he had decided weeks earlier to concentrate his efforts in 1901 on runabout production and the promotion of this car, to the exclusion of other models, was well under way by the first of March.

By that time, Olds' company had received hundreds of orders for the runabout, indicating that Olds had again, as in the case of earlier products, accurately assessed the public appeal of this car. Sound business judgment, not luck, accounted for Olds' success.

Sales of the Oldsmobile within two years soared to annual figures of several thousand cars, unheard of in that period. This led Olds and his staff to make important improvements in production techniques, pointing towards the more sophisticated mass production of a later day, and the promotion and marketing of the car. Most important, Olds' success with the cheap runabout pointed the way to others in Michigan in particular as to the direction to head, causing Michigan by 1904 to have acquired a dominance in American automobile production, based on production of cars in the lower priced brackets, that it has never relinquished. This remains Ransom Olds' major contribution.

Olds and Oldsmobile did not long remain a team, since Olds in 1904 left the company that produced his namesake car. The explanation for this break is, together with the misinterpreted importance of the 1901 fire, an aspect of Olds' career most in need of clarification. The seeds of Olds' difficulties were sown earlier when he had sought outside financial assistance in order to pursue his automotive plans. In accepting help first in 1897 from Edward Sparrow's Lansing-based investors and then in 1899 the far larger financial transfusion supplied by Samuel Smith's Detroit group, Olds had not shown good judgment. He ended up relinquishing actual control of his company, when other methods probably could have been employed to obtain the needed funds without sacrificing the control that Olds had exercised over the business since he first joined his father in 1885. For a time, Olds' backers allowed him to run the company but as some of them, especially Samuel Smith's son Fred, became more familiar with the business they began to question and object to Olds' methods. The disagreements between Olds and the Smith forces over company policy and over who was to be in charge, not a dispute over the kind of car they should produce, as has been asserted

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Regular meeting dates are the third
Wednesday of each month, except
June, July, August and December.

Cemetery or Cultural Property?

Views of cemeteries in Clinton County — The Richmond Cemetery is about as big as someone's backlot, complete-

ly surrounded by farmed land, and nearly obscured by trees and brush. Only the rugged lilac bushes in spring-



One of a few remaining stones in Richmond Cemetery.

time bloom remind us that stones still mark a few graves of pioneer families.

Sharp contrast is seen in the well groomed rural cemetery where cast metal markers of the 1870s are preserved.

The Clinton County Historical Commission urges citizens to request aid for uncared for and damaged burial grounds from their township supervisors. Assistance is available through CEATA funded workers and the Community Development program.



2 shots of cast metal markers well preserved and quality examples of outdoor sculptures.

R. E. OLDS — CONTINUED

in the past, are what led to the decision of the directors in January, 1904, to remove Olds from his managerial post, a decision that caused Olds to feel that he had to sever his remaining ties with the company. (Details of the power struggle within the Olds Motor Works are revealed not only in new materials in the R. E. Olds Collection but also in previously unused copies of the board minutes in the private collection of Dennis Castele of Lansing.)

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Olds' automotive career is the quick comeback that he made after his ouster from the Olds company. In the summer of 1904 Reo was organized, a development in which Olds was intimately involved from the outset, although in his usual self-effacing way he always depicted it as something that had come as a total surprise to him when, after the stock had been subscribed, he was asked to head up the new enterprise.

Within a couple of years Reo's sales were pushing it ahead of Oldsmobile, and at this point Olds increasingly withdraws from an active role in the company's management. He probably recognized that he was not adapted to the difficult task of running a big business in the constantly more complex climate of the booming auto industry.

Unlike Henry Ford and Billy Durant, who failed to recognize similar failings in themselves and by their refusal to step aside almost destroyed their companies, Olds was at best only on the periphery of the automotive world during most of the last forty years of his life. Thus, little blame, as well as little credit, can be assigned to him for Reo's subsequent checkered fortunes.

Olds chose to step to the sidelines also because he had nothing more to prove — and there were so many other things that interested him. Travel, yachts, his church, educational institutions, politics, as well as his involvement in real estate, banking, and a continuing fascination with machines kept him busy enough during the last half of his life. Glen Niemeyer, by entitling his 1963 biography, *The Automotive Career of R. E. Olds*, was singling out what is of course the most important aspect of Old's life, but it obscures what is perhaps the most interesting point about Olds the man. Here was no one-career, one-interest human being. Instead, the very diversity of his interests is perhaps the real key to an understanding of one who remains Lansing's most famous citizen but who was at the same time a considerably more complex individual than many may have imagined.

Photos courtesy Keneva K. Wiskemann



Clinton County and Genealogy

— Dale Calder

I was born in Bingham Twp., Clinton County and graduated from a one room school in Olive Twp. known as the County Farm. Having graduated from Rodney B. Wilson High in St. Johns, I joined the U.S. Navy on board the U.S.S. Donner, L.S.D. 20 which visited Europe, the Near East, North and South America. After 2 years in Madison, Wisconsin, I entered Lansing Community College receiving my A.A. Degree in 1963. Michigan State University conferred M.A. Degree on me majoring in French and minoring in Social Sciences. After teaching high school in Marion, Michigan, I made application for acceptance at the Universite de Paris (La Sorbonne), Paris, France with graduation and a M.A. Degree in French and French Civilization in 1968. As an instructor of Western Civilization at Lansing Community College, it remained only a short time before I accepted a position teaching Genealogy courses for Adult Education in the St. Johns Public Schools which has proved to be most gratifying, and which constitutes my current endeavor. Journeying back to my high school days at Rodney B. Wilson, it is to be noted that my initial interest in genealogy can be attributed to influence of a history teacher, 23 years of genealogical research culminated in my authorship of the *Brya Genealogy* in 1976 and I am beginning the manuscript for the *Calder-Rowland Genealogy*. In addition to being a member of the Clinton County Historical Society, S.A.R. and S.A.C., I am most honored to hold the elective office of President of the Clinton County Genealogical Society.

If there is one thing in the whole wide world as uniquely belonging to Clinton County and no other, it can be manifested in the names of those who comprise the list of Clinton County Pioneers, for they have left us along with their legacy of accomplishments, a proud genealogical heritage.

From where did this unique group of Clinton County Pioneers come?

In 1835, 2 years before Michigan entered statehood and 5 years before Clinton received the status of a county, Michigan Fever had reached epidemic proportions in New York State and Western Pennsylvania. The 1850 Federal Census for Clinton County reveals that, of this wave, 85% came from N.Y. State and 15% from Western Pennsylvania, terminating in about 1850. They settled land in the southern portion of our county.

Of the second wave of Clinton County Pioneers, it can be said that the vast majority migrated from the State of Ohio and a majority immigrated from Germany settling in the central and western portions of our county and it had a duration of 30 years from 1850 to 1880.

By 1880, a third wave of immigration had found its home in the northern area of Clinton County comprised of families from Central Europe principally Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia ending with the advent of this century. Thus, three waves constitute the formation of our county's population.

Who were some of these prominent people that left their mark on this county? Of the many that merit our consideration, I have chosen the following:

1. Joshua Simmons of Eagle
2. Abigail Corbin Peck of Riley
3. George D. Hill of DeWitt
4. William Van Sickle of Ovid
5. Alexander Calder of Olive

JOSHUA SIMMONS of Eagle

He was born Aug. 3, 1763 or 64 in Dighton, Mass. At age 15 or 16 he enlisted Nov. 1, 1778 in Capt. Walker's Co. Col. Sparhawk's Regiment of Massachusetts Troops. About Apr. 1, 1779 he began 3 months of service in Capt. Bates' Co. of Co. Richmonds Regiment. On Nov. 1, 1780, he reenlisted in Capt. Bates' Co. for another 3 months aiding in the construction of

the fort at Butts Hill. Joshua Simmons removed after the war to Bristol, Ontario County, New York and then to Livonia, Michigan with his sons. As an old man, he came to reside in Eagle Township, Clinton County, Michigan about 1835 where he passed away Jan. 28, 1840. He married Ruth Andrus or Andrews and to this union were born 2 boys and 6 girls. He is buried in the North Eagle Cemetery, formerly the Simmons Cemetery. In 1940, the D.A.R. placed a small marker on his grave and on the 5th day of October, 1974, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing marked his grave with an even larger marker to remind us of his patriotism.

ABIGAIL CORBIN PECK of Riley

She was born in 1747 near Danbury, Conn. and married Oct. 13, 1776 in Danbury Phineas Peck. They had enjoyed less than a year of matrimonial life when their town and home was burned by the British in the Battle of Danbury in 1777. She assisted in dressing the wounds of the soldiers and keeping them supplied with water. After the war, she and her soldier husband removed to Seneca County, New York. As a widow of a soldier, nurse to the wounded, Abigail Corbin Peck journeyed to Riley Township about 1840 with her children and left this world there in 1848 at 101 years of age. However, no monument ever marked her grave in the Boughton Cemetery. After being declared a Patriot by the D.A.R., the Clinton County Historical Society placed an inscribed marker near her grave August 29, 1976.

GEORGE D. HILL of DeWitt

He was born in 1839 at Sullivan, Ashland County, Ohio and removed with his family as a young man about 1850 to DeWitt Township, Clinton County. He enlisted June 10, 1861 at Vevay(now Leslie), Ingham County for 3 years in the 3rd Michigan Inf. After 3 years as a musician on the fife, he had never encountered the enemy in

battle and our George D. Hill considered himself a man of action. Once discharged Dec. 15, 1863, he joined October 23, 1863 the toughest Calvary outfit in the Army of the Potomac if not the entire Union Army — the 1st Michigan Cavalry which along with the 5th, 6th and 7th Michigan Cavalries made up the famous Michigan Brigade under the command of the gallant Lieut. General George A. Custer of Little Big Horn fame. As the 1st Sargent in Co. "I", George D. Hill left Mount Clemens, Michigan to join the Union Forces at Camp Stoneman near Washington.

In March of 1864, the 1st Michigan joined General Sheridan and Lieut. General Custer's 5th, 6th, and 7th Cavalries at Culpeper, Va. Sergeant Hill fought at Yellow Tavern, Va. May 11, 1864; at Hanoverstown, Va. May 27th; at Hawes Shop, Va. May 28th; at Cold Harbor, Va. May 31 and June 1st with no wounds. Then came the wild battle at Trevillian Station, Va. June 11, 1864 between Gen. Sheridan and Gen. Custer for the Union and Gen. Wade Hampton and Gen. Fitzhugh Lee for the Confederate States of America which ended in defeat for Gen. Sheridan. One of the 470 wounded that day turned out to be none other than Clinton County's 1st Sargent George D. Hill. After his wounds had healed in a Washington, D.C. hospital, Hill returned to fight the Battle of Winchester, Va. Sept. 19, 1864, receiving wounds in the head and on the arm. For his bravery, he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant Sept. 25, 1864.

In March of 1865, 2nd Lieut. George D. Hill found himself at the Battle of Five Forks, Va. and Apr. 1, 1865 he received a promotion to the rank of Adj. in command of Company "A". Five Forks set the stage for the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House Apr. 9, 1865, but, before the surrender could be signed, a skirmish took place Apr. 8th between the 1st, 5th, 6th and 7th Michigan Cavalries and Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and guess who fell wounded — our George D. Hill, receiving such a severe gun wound in his left elbow that amputation was required. At Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2nd Lieut. Hill was mustered out Nov. 28, 1865.

In spite of his missing left arm, he enlisted July 26, 1866 as a 1st Lieuten-

ant in the 42nd U.S. Infantry and fought in the Indian Wars, but not under Gen. Custer's Command. Then George D. Hill received the rank of Brevet Captain March 2, 1867 for Gallant and Meritorious Service and retired with the rank of Captain Mounted Dec. 31, 1870.

WILLIAM VAN SICKLE of Ovid

He was born in 1802 in Seneca County, New York and removed to Ovid Township, Clinton County in 1838. William made a small clearing in the wilderness and built his cabin, but no further effort did he put forth to clear the forest. Since he always had money, people considered him an industrious bachelor, nevertheless residents began to speculate as to his business. Henry Leach of Scioto Twp. Shiawassee County like others wondered, but unlike others, he undertook his own investigation. Convinced of illegal activities, he then alerted the authorities in Detroit. A posse moved on horseback arriving near the cabin and surprised William Van Sickle and 3 other members of his gang namely, Ward, Skiff and Gridley as well as a woman in the act of printing Mexican money. When enough counterfeit money had been made, William Van Sickle would fill up a large black valise and walk to Detroit by way of the Grand River Road where he would exchange it for American dollars at the bank. After conviction in Court, William Van Sickle and his gang of counterfeiters were incarcerated in the "Tameracks" for a time. Thus, to this day, this settlement and school bear the name "Bogus School and Settlement". It is interesting to note that, in spite of this lawlessness, William Van Sickle had no problem being elected as Justice of the Peace of Ovid Township in 1840. He was a brother to my great great great grandmother, Maria Van Sickle Nelson.

ALEXANDER CALDER of Olive

He was born in 1800 in or near Glasgow, Scotland and came to America in 1819. His marriage to Soloma Rowland occurred in Herkimer County, New York in about 1826, she being a direct lineal descendant of Charlemagne. Alexander Calder holds the distinction of being the first permanent land owner of Olive Township in 1835, buying his land from Capt. David Scott. Leaving Erie County,

Pennsylvania, he lived in DeWitt in 1836 with his wife and 3 children, working for Capt. Scott a year. During this period, Capt. David Scott's two sons became deathly ill and Alexander Calder walked all the way to Dexter, Michigan, a distance of some 75 miles to locate the doctor with whom he returned in time to sayve to boy's lives. He is a resident taxpayer in 1841; a voter in 1844; a School Inspector in 1841; a Township Supervisor from 1853 to 1855; a Justice of the Peace in 1846, 1850, 1854 and 1861 at the time of his death. He deeded a portion of his 120 acres as a gift to the Olive School District No. 4 in order that a school might be built. His name is found on the list of original members of the Clinton County Agricultural and Horticultural Society. This man of great civic pride and pioneer spirit and accomplishment expired May 18, 1861 in Olive Township on his homestead and is buried in DeWitt Cemetery.

These are but a very few of the total thousands of pioneer men and women who lived and are buried in Clinton County, but can we find their graves? In the case of so many of them, we would be hard pressed to walk up to those marble or granite monuments marking their resting places. Is it because we do not know the name or location of the cemetery where they are interred? No! Then why can't we just visit these monument of our pioneer ancestors? Because, believe it or not, way too many of these monuments, gravestones and entire cemeteries, have been disgraced by human neglect. The growth of young forest, as dense as those cleared by the pioneers of this county, has blotted them from view and thus, has the local fame of many of the county's old families been also blotted out.

I propose to you a solution to this shameful condition that you can remedy by a single telephone call to your township supervisor urging him to request the Clinton Development Commission under Mr. Woolfe's direction to set to work restoring and clearing these once well kept cemeteries.

Mr. Woolfe has the tools and manpower. You have only to make that one call to your township supervisor. Thank You.

Buffalo Soldiers Historical Society

— L. David Nealey

The first casualty of the American Revolution was a sailor and ex-slave — Crispus Attucks. At one point in the revolution, ten percent of Washinton's forces were Black.

In the War of 1812, almost every American ship included Black sailors. They were most important during the battles of New Orleans and Lake Erie.

Between 200,000 and 400,000 Blacks participated in the Civil War in the 1860's. They fought and died on both sides of that war.

Following the Civil War, Black cavalrymen and infantrymen served in the West from the Mississippi to the Colorado Rivers. They fought Geronimo in Arizona and traveled by bicycle from Ft. Missoula, Montana to St. Louis, Missouri (1900 miles). They charged the Spanish at San Juan Hill and according to some historians, they saved Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1889. In 1916, Black soldiers followed Pancho Villa deep into Mexico and later served as the first United States military units to enter the country on a goodwill expedition.

In World War I, Black soldiers served with the American Expeditionary Forces and the French Army. Confronted with the enemy and American prejudices, the Black soldiers nevertheless did an exceptional job. The entire first battalion of the 367th Infantry was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French. They awarded the entire 369th Infantry Regiment the Croix de Guerre and cited 171 Black officers and soldiers of the 369th for exceptional gallantry while under enemy fire. Twenty-one Black soldiers of the 370th Infantry Regiment received the Distinguished Service Cross, won the Distinguished Service Medal, and 68 the Croix de Guerre. Three officers of the 371st Infantry Regiment won the French Legion of Honor, 123 soldiers were awarded the Croix de Guerre, and 26 won the Distinguished Service Cross.

Black pilots and crewmen trained at Tuskegee Institute during World War II and today, the "baby service" is proud to have the first Black four star general commanding one of its most important elements.

The contribution made by Blacks to the armed forces of the United States has been a long and significant one. It has been left out of so many history books and museums, that it is almost a crime. A group of Black and White residents of Flagstaff, Arizona, are now planning to establish a museum and research center in order to learn and tell the real story.

The Buffalo Soldiers Historical Society will collect, study, present, and disseminate information and military regalia related to the Black military experience in America since 1636. The museum and its research program will include all branches of service and also quasi-military organization, i.e. Army, Navy, National Guard, ROTC, Civil Air Patrol.

The museum will be the first collection of military history and regalia dedicated to Black soldiers and to their units. Arizona has been selected as the location of the museum because of the long association between Black units and the state. The museum will have a series of displays that will show the Black military experience in the

form of drawings, photographs, dioramas, official documents, slide-talk shows, movies, and mannequins. The museum will serve as a training facility for youths and adults interested in Black history, museology, and library sciences.

The Buffalo Soldiers Historical Society will establish a statute of a Buffalo as a monument to the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry Regiments — the Buffalo Soldiers. The statue is approximately six-feet high and eight-feet long, and has been donated to the Society by the City of Flagstaff.

Historians and military leaders will be invited to the museum to do original work, and to publish papers and books concerning the Black military experience.

The Society is currently soliciting financial donations and historical material for this project. Photographs, documents, sculptures, drawings, books, regalia, and other material related to Blacks in the military are needed. Contributors will be notified of the value of their donations for tax purposes.

Please send your contributions to:

L. David Nealey, President
Buffalo Soldiers Historical Society
3923 N. Geneva Circle
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Michigan Author Remembered

The 100th anniversary of James Oliver Curwood's birth in Owosso was celebrated there June 10-11. A Curwood film festival was offered at the Junior High School on Saturday and Sunday, with a graveside ceremony at Oakhill on Sunday morning.

There was a parade, arts and crafts market, antique car and tractor show, a blue grass festival; poster and story

contests, folk dancers and more.

"Curwood's home at the intersection of Williams and Shiawassee streets was open to the public for the first time," Margaret Zdunic chairperson of Shiawassee County Historical Society events, said.

General chairman was Jerry Collamer, 312 West Main Street, Owosso 48867, 517/723-5483

Oral History

The many in this area involved with oral history happily anticipate a national meeting of the Oral History Association at Michigan State University, October 25-28, 1979.

Patricia L. Pilling, instructor for the Society sponsored course in oral history at Lansing Community College, is project coordinator for Wayne State University's "Workers Look at Their Jobs and Their Union: An Educational Approach Through Oral History." This project is carried out by Wayne State University and the United Automobile Workers under a planning grant funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

She shares the goals and guidelines of the Association.

GOALS AND GUIDELINES: ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Preamble

The Oral History Association recognizes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information in spoken form and encourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights and obligations for the creation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable.

I. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE

- A. The interviewee should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project to which contribution is being made.
- B. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and in recognition of the costs and effort involved, the interviewee should strive to impart candid information of lasting value.
- C. The interviewee should be aware of the mutual rights involved in oral history, such as editing and seal privileges, literary rights, royalties, and determination of the disposition of all forms of the record and the extent of dissemination and use.

- D. Preferences of the person interviewed and any prior agreements should govern the conduct of the oral history process, and these preferences and agreements should be carefully documented for the record.

II GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- A. Interviewers should guard against possible social injury to or exploitation of interviewees and should conduct interviews with respect for human dignity.
- B. Each interviewee should be selected on the basis of demonstrable potential for imparting information of lasting value.
- C. The interviewer should strive to prompt informative dialogue through challenging and perceptive inquiry, should be grounded in the background and experiences of the person being interviewed and, if possible, should review the sources relating to the interviewee before conducting the interview.
- D. Interviewers should extend the inquiry beyond their immediate needs to make each interview as complete as possible for the benefit of others and should, whenever possible, place the material in a depository where it will be available for general research.
- E. The interviewer should inform the interviewee of the planned conduct of the oral history process and develop mutual expectations of rights connected thereto, including editing, mutual seal privileges, literary rights, prior use, fiduciary relationships, royalties, rights to determine disposition of all forms of the record, and the extent of dissemination and use.
- F. Interviews should be conducted in a spirit of objectivity, candor, and integrity, and in keeping with common understandings, purposes, and stipulations mutually arrived at by all parties.
- G. The interviewer shall not violate and will protect the seal on any information considered confidential by the interviewee, whether imparted on or off the record.

III. GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORING INSTITUTIONS

- A. Subject to conditions prescribed by interviewees, it is an obligation of sponsoring institutions (or individual collectors) to prepare and preserve easily useable records; to keep careful records of the creation and processing of each interview; to identify, index, and catalog interviews; and, when open to research, to make their existence known.
- B. Interviewers should be selected on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill; interviewers should be carefully matched to interviewees.
- C. Institutions should keep both interviewees and interviewers aware of the importance of the above guidelines for the successful production and use of oral history sources.

The following are suggestions from Ms. Pilling for creating an oral history record of lasting value to researchers:

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN ORAL History folder

- * 1) Biographical information on the interviewee.
- * 2) A short biographical note on the interviewer.
- * 3) Dates of contact with the interviewee by telephone or in person.
- * 4) List of bibliographic sources used.
- * 5) List of personal references consulted.
- * 6) A rough sketch map of the community in which the person lives or a paragraph of basic facts on the industry or field with which the person is associated.
- * 7) Dates of pre-interview and interview(s).
- 8) Comments on location of interview, general atmosphere and notation of who was present besides the interviewee and interviewer.
- * 9) Date or dates of the rehearing(s) of the tape.
- * 10) Date of signing and inclusion of a copy of the legal release form for the tape.
- 11) Photograph of the interviewee

(Continued on Page 8)

ORAL HISTORY
(Continued from Page 7)

- and/or any building or landmark with which he/she is/was associated.
- * 12) Time-index of the tape.
 - * 13) Basic list of questions asked by the interviewer.
 - 14) Notation of how the interviewer felt the rapport situation did or did not affect the interview.
 - 15) Verbatim transcript.
 - 16) Edited transcript with comments and corrections by interviewee.
 - 17) Notes on grammatical and/or other changes in the transcript.
 - 18) Clarification of material in the transcript such as spelling, meaning of acronyms, etc. List of proper names and places.
 - * 19) Time taken to prepare tape and transcript and a note on the length of the tape.
 - 20) Cost statement of the interview (this item is optional).
 - a) cost of tape(s)
 - b) mileage (gasoline, etc.)
 - c) xeroxing
 - d) copy of photographs or other documents by means other than xeroxing
 - e) typing of transcript
 - f) miscellaneous expenses
- * Strongly recommended for inclusion in folder
- If verbatim transcript is not possible. Suggest 10 min. excerpt of tape be transcribed.

Why Oral History?

Why spend time recording the memories and experiences of ordinary people: the farmer, laborer, a small town family doctor or the merchant down the street? Michigan's early history has been well documented and twentieth century records are more complete and better preserved. So why oral history?

Because these personal experiences provide a record of the everyday life of the people which will not be found in contemporary records or publications. We live in rapidly changing times and historians have met the needs and demands of a changing society with more sophisticated and scholarly publications, but local history — the folk history — has been left by the wayside.

Local history is a part of Michigan's history that has always appealed to each new generation and it is the part

of history that is the most interesting to our young people. Even the very young like to listen to Grandmother's tales about her childhood, and it is through oral history, tape recording these memories, that our local history will be preserved.

The impact of political, economical and social changes upon the community are often emphasized in the reminiscence of the people who experienced the changes, and the recordings of these memories will be of value to future researchers, historians and genealogist, even though their value is not always immediately recognized at the present time.

— Libbie Spoelma
*Chairperson, Oral History
Committee
Clinton County Historical Society*

The Clinton County Historical Society has completed several Oral History Tape Recordings which will be made available to interested persons for review. The tapes are indexed for convenience in locating a particular subject or area of interest. Each tape contains a brief family background and biography, they all focus on Clinton County and its people, on the farms and in the cities and villages. There is much

information on early buildings, business establishments, churches and schools. The way of every day life is portrayed, personal experiences and local events are also included, and amusing anecdotes provide the listener with a chuckle now and then.

We believe the reviewer will find these tapes informative and interesting for further information contact Libbie Spoelma, phone 489-7710.

Preservation Update

Preservation Update, February, 1978, is a fresh compilation of information about 23 preservation sites in the Capital Region (Eaton, Clinton, Ingham, Ionia and Shiawassee counties). Copies are available from the Society, P. O. Box 12095, Lansing, Mi. 48901 or 517/321-1746. Here is a sample entry:

OLD GUNNISONVILLE SCHOOL,
1454 Clark Road, Lansing 48906.
Contact: George Anderson, principal,
Gunnisonville School, 517/374-4228.

A 1907 one room school stood unused since 1969 when the Gunnisonville district merged with Lansing School District. It was considered too important to the community to be ignored by local residents. Funds from

the Michigan Bicentennial Commission and local parent-teacher-alumni groups made the renovation possible.

Now it is used regularly as a demonstration classroom and a public meeting place for fifty or less people.



Old Gunnisonville School

The post office of Gunnisonville, Clinton County, was established in 1891 with Boyden F. Hubbard, first postmaster. It was discontinued on

April 15, 1901. But the community with its church, school and adjoining cemetery survives as a homogeneous remnant of rural living.

Clinton County Crazy Birdman

— Shirley Karber

Philip Parmalee was born in Mather-ton to Sadie and Charles Parmelee, March 8, 1887. He had one sister, Helen. The mother was killed when she was thrown from a buggy. Later Mr. Parmelee remarried and another son, Robert, and daughter, Hazel, were added to the family. The family moved around a great deal. Mr. Parmelee worked as a machinist in what is now the Jessie Jones Building.

Hazel was a very small child when Philip went into his first business venture with his father, making gas engines. She remembered him oiling her roller skates and giving her 50c if she wouldn't cry when she got her vaccination. Hazel also recalled some of Philip's mechanical genius. He would sit on the porch and cover his eyes and tell what kind of car was coming by the sound of the engine.

In 1908 at the age of 21, Philip became a test driver for the Buick Motor Car Co. at Flint. He resolved then that he wanted to fly and joined the first group to be trained by the Wright Brothers at Simms Station, Dayton, Ohio in 1910. He was a special protegee of Wilbur Wright.

Cliff Turpin and "Hap" Arnold were some of his classmates. Turpin was to become his friend for life, and later his business and flying partner.

After training, Parmelee became a member of the Wright Exhibition team.

He flew at the Michigan State Fair, Detroit, September 1925.

He first gained nationwide fame when he flew from Dayton to Columbus, Ohio carrying approximately 50 pounds (5 bolts) of rajah silk. It was a publicity stunt but it was recorded as the first commercial cargo flight. The silk was valued at \$1,000 by a New York City firm. He flew the 62 miles in 55 minutes and a Columbus firm paid \$5,000 for the stunt. A tie made of this material is on display at the new Smithsonian air and space museum in Washington, D. C.

A friendly but keen rivalry developed between Parmelee and Lincoln Beachey, who were reputed to be at

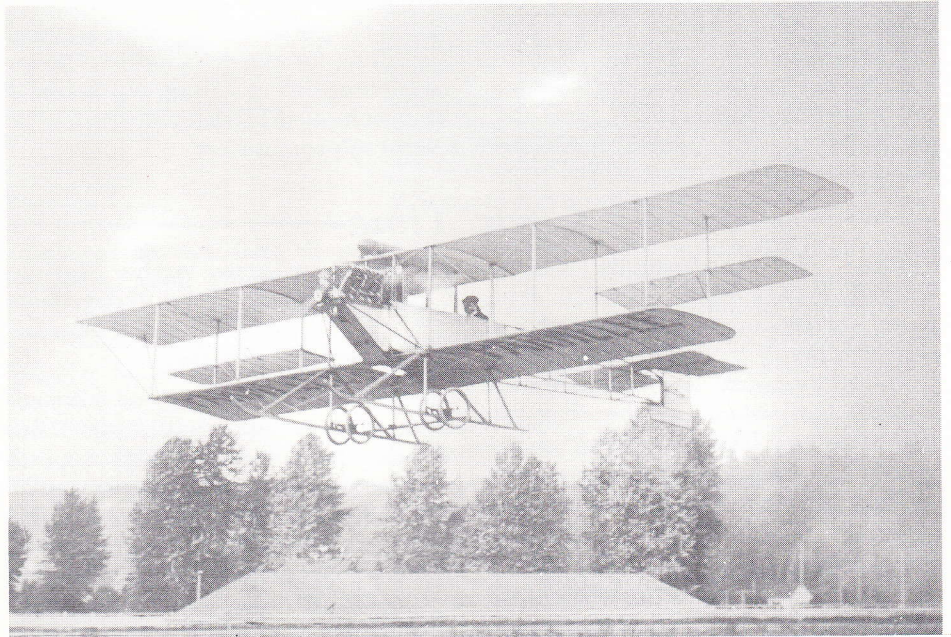


Photo courtesy of Hazel Parmelee McKeachie.

the time the nation's greatest stunt fliers.

The story was told that Parmelee had complimented Beachey, then a novice, for his good flying performance at the San Francisco aviation meet, with these words: "Keep it up, kid. You'll make a flier some day."

And Beachey, irked by the 'kid' remark, is said to have replied: "Yes, and when I do I'll beat you at anything you start." Beachey flew on to fame and death at 28.

In 1925 Parmelee was at the San Francisco meet held at Selfridge Field. The meet was of a military nature and they made a number of flights carrying Army officers on experimental military exercises. During the meet Parmelee carried Lt. Myron Crissy of the U.S. Coast Artillery on several bomb dropping tests. Live bombs weighing about 12 pounds were used. The tests were highly effective, and surprisingly accurate. This was undoubtedly the first time live bombs were ever dropped from a plane.

In these early days of aviation pilots were called "crazy birdmen." Planes were known as 'flying machines' and aviators did not fly a plane but made ascensions. Pilots knew little or nothing about aerodynamics, stresses

or air pressures. They were master pilots of wonderful courage, and had that 'sixth sense' known as 'flying feel.' They flew by instinct and they flew well. They contributed a great deal to history on our leg up to the stars.

Parmelee was killed in 1912 while barnstorming in Seattle. His biplane suddenly tilted sideways and crashed 400 feet into a farmer's field three miles from the starting point.

That same day Parmelee had received a letter from his father urging him to quit flying, it said, "You're bound to get caught sometime and I wish you would leave flying for my sake, if not your own."

By proclamation of the mayor of St. Johns, all business was suspended the forenoon of Parmelee's funeral at the Methodist Episcopal Church on June 7. He was buried in East Plains Cemetery near Matherton beside his father and mother. He was 25 years old.

The Clinton County Historical Society authorized a tri-county marker for the cemetery. It was dedicated Memorial Day, May 29. A State marker honoring Philip Parmelee will be placed at the Capital City Airport in 1979.

Michigan Capitol Centennial

1879 - 1979

Celebration of the Michigan Capitol Centennial has stirred to life as the History Division, Michigan Department of State announces forthcoming publications, exhibits, re-dedication of the historical marker on Capitol Avenue, and more.

Brent Robinson, executive of J. W. Knapp Co., is chairman of a planning committee for the celebration. He reported that lists of willing workers are being compiled for assignment to the several sub-committees.

Sugar Time

When the Vermontville settlers arrived in Michigan in 1836 they found the Indians making sugar from sap from Maple trees. They were using wooden equipment like hollowed out logs for the pails and spiles. The settlers improved the equipment down thru the years so today they use very modern equipment in the syrup making.

By 1850 there had been a big improvement and the 1850 census of Eaton County, Vermontville township shows that out of the 41 families that were settled in the township 37 of them made maple sugar.

For the year 1850 21,380 pounds of sugar were produced. The largest producers were Jacob Fuller and Daniel Barber each made 1500 pounds of sugar, Artuman Smith and William Hopkins 1200 each and Philetus Sprague made 1100 pounds. The Sprague sugar bush is still in produc-

tion today owned by Archie Martin. A lot of the sugar bushes today have been cut and sold for lumber and the land cleared for farm crops.

In the 1800's the sap was boiled down to a medium ball stage than stirred by hand and made into one and two pound sugar loafs than stored and used as needed. They would shave off the sugar and use like we use granulated sugar today, for table use and cooking. Today the sap is boiled to syrup which is used in cooking and pancakes. Also they cook it down to sugar for fancy candies and cooking. Today they have equipment to stir it by electricity which is a lot easier and quicker than by hand.

There are lots of syrup and candies at the annual Vermontville Syrup Festival held the last week-end in April.

— Barbara Wright, Vermontville

Major Survey Projects in Progress

The Resources of American Music History project is conducting a nationwide survey of libraries, archives and other collections, on order to locate as many sources as possible for the study of music in the United States, from colonial times to World War II, writes D. W. Krummel, director of the project at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The published directory resulting from the project should have many users. Categories listed of special concern are sheet music, song books, other printed music, manuscript music, programs and paybills, music catalogues, organization's papers, personal papers, pictures and sound recordings.

You can help by reporting availability or materials or names of those interested in music history to Resources of American Music History, Music

Building, The University, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

A three-year nation-wide survey of archives, manuscript repositories, libraries and historical agencies for unpublished material pertaining to the history of women in the United States from colonial period to the present is nearing to a close at the University of Minnesota.

The results of Women's History Sources Survey will be published in late 1978 by R R Bowker Company as a multi-volume reference tool. Holdings can still be reported to Andrea Hinding, curator, University Libraries, Social Welfare History Archives Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

Francis X Blouin, Jr. reports the Immigration Sources Project under the supervision of Robert M. Warner, Director of the Michigan Historical Col-

New Reference Tool Coming

An index to "Topographical Map of the Counties of Ingham and Livingston, Michigan" . . . published by Geil, Harley & Siverd . . . Philadelphia, 1859" is completed. The index with a photographic reproduction of the 55 1/2x71 inch wall map will be published in atlas form in the spring by the Livingston County Historical Society and this Society.

The 10-12,000 names of owners abstracted from the original map have been checked against the 1857 and 1858 tax rolls in county treasurers offices for clarification of name spelling and completion of names not spelled out on the map.

lections of the University of Michigan, and himself have discovered a multitude of records both here and abroad. "A variety of ethnic church records exist and provide the best systematic data on ethnicity," he says. "We have found many ethnic associations and clubs have maintained and preserved their minutes, membership registers and publications. Newspapers are an important source and we have uncovered a number of unique copies."

The project is not designed to interpret or catalogue materials, but to locate documents concerning immigrants and their Michigan descendants for possible copying for preservation and use in the Bentley Historical Library. Now the search is on for materials existing in private hands. "We have found that a few individuals with strong ties to ethnic groups have become unofficial historians and have accumulated important collections," continued Blouin.

Interested individuals should contact the project directors at the Bentley Historical Library, 1150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor 48109.

Commission Day

October 27, 1978 has been set for a new conference in Michigan devoted to the needs and activities of historical commissions. The event, sponsored by the Michigan History Division, Department of State and the newly organized Clinton County Historical Commission, will take place at Kellogg Center, Michigan State University.

All historical groups, especially the varied commissions appointed as local governmental units, are urged to participate. For information about program and reservations contact the Division, Department of State, Lansing 48918 (517/373-0510) or Clinton County Historical Commission, 5580 W. State Road, Lansing 48906 (517/321-1746).

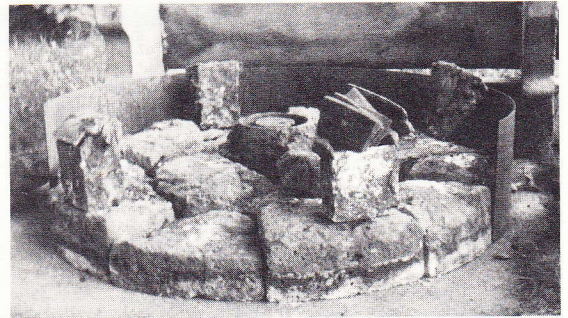
Scott Estate Research

The landscape planning division of Lansing's Parks and Recreation Department was recently assigned the task of outlining the site improvements to be accomplished on the newly acquired, former Gertrude Scott Estate. The Scott Art and Garden Center is slated to be moved to this new location as a result of the land exchange with Oldsmobile. Due to the historical and cultural significance of this property an exacting examination and research procedure is being followed, the product of which will set the tone and direction of these improvements.

Charles Schroll, landscape draftsman with Lansing Parks and Recreation, is requesting the assistance of a number of organizations and individuals in the research. Any information, first-hand accounts, news clippings, or photographs of the Scott home, sunken and formal gardens, or other associative landscape elements would be greatly appreciated, as well as instrumental in re-establishing a landscape of rare beauty for the people of the Lansing area to enjoy.

Fall, 1978

The Mill at Wacousta



Wacousta Mill Stone — Weight Approx. 2 Tons

One of the very first efforts of the Waterloo Joint Stock Company in 1837 in what was to become present day Wacousta was operation of a mill. From a hand written Memorandum Book for the Milling Business," dated that year we read about customers, amounts and kinds of grain: spring wheat, barley, oats, buckwheat and corn. History books record that the Daniells family revitalized a decaying milling business there in the mid 1850s, and it was then that this stone was purchased from France. The mill at Wacousta has been gone for many years, but a stone has survived and is a treasured yard decoration in Watertown today.

During the winter of 1977 the metal binder broke allowing the pieces of stone to separate. One of George Wiskemann's summer projects was to turn the stone over, replace the fill

beneath it and replace the cement cap on the bottom so that the water worn stone could be rebanded, placed with the grooves on the top and the whole secured for a long existence.

With a little planning, motive power, a gin pole and care this was accomplished. And in the doing George learned what was on the underside of a mill wheel! Beneath the stone was more stone, groat, broken glass (some nearly an inch thick) and pieces of metal. On each corner of the compass where boxes for balancing the wheel. Two of the boxes were opened to disclose a variety of rusted cut nails and leaves of lead. The remaining boxes were replaced as found. "A hundred years from now someone else should have the same thrill of discovery that I had," says George, "when they get into above the ground archeology!"

Additions for Bookshelf

"Ingham County Histories; an annotated bibliography for students, buffs and collectors" is the late 1977 compilation by Eugene G. Wanger, chairman of the Ingham County Historical Commission. The 78 page paper cover monograph is illustrated with "Nine Ingham Rarities."

"The plan of this book is to include everything written as history about Ingham County or any part of it excluding newspapers and periodicals . . . adding biography, fiction and things I have found interesting in thirty years of Ingham history collecting," writes Wanger in the preface.

The publication is available in local bookstores and from the Ingham County Historical Commission, Mason.

* * *

The Bicentennial History of Bath Charter Township by Harold Burnett is expected to be available this spring. About 200 pictures will illustrate the history of the past 150 years of this Clinton community. Pre-publication orders may be placed with the author or Bath Charter Township, 14480 Webster Road, Bath 48808, for \$12.

* * *

Four volumes of local histories presented by authors of twenty-five articles are new publications from the Michigan History Division, Department of State. Comprising the Bicentennial series is A Wind Gone Down: Fire and Ice; A Wind Gone Down: Out of the Wilderness; A Wind Gone Down: Smoke Into Steel; A Wind Gone Down: West Running Brook. Available from the Division, Department of State, Lansing 48918 or 517/373-0510.

Conservation of the Historic Rural Landscape

— Robert Miller
*Michigan History Division
Michigan Department of State*

The "historic rural landscape" — oh, what images that phrase brings to mind. A bright spring day with birds singing and buds bursting as you walk barefoot over the cool, damp, freshly plowed earth toward a grove of trees through which runs a rapidly flowing stream. Or, perhaps a lazy day in August when the dust from the unpaved road mingles in your nostrils with the sweet aroma of new-mown hay and a "gone fishing" sign hangs in the window of the country store. Even those of us who no longer go barefoot and who worry about PBB and 100% parity still occasionally succumb to such a Currier and Ives vision of rural America and lament the passing of the "good ole days."

But even if the jingle bells of the one-horse sleigh have been replaced by the roar of the snowmobile, there is still something about the rural and small town life that is attracting Americans away from their cities and back to rural areas. Maybe you can't keep Johnny down on the farm once he's seen New York or Chicago or Lansing, but many of his urban cousins are now journeying "back to the land."

The United States farm population, which had been declining throughout the twentieth century has now been stabilized for about ten years. In addition, for the first time in this century, small town populations are growing faster than urban areas. Businesses and people are relocating to rural areas. This is a healthy sign for rural areas that have been suffering economically for the last thirty years. Between 1940 and 1970 there was a net out-migration of 28 million people from rural to urban centers. It has been estimated that rural areas lost 30 to 40 percent of their business enterprises during that same thirty year span. The impact of this economic decline on the rural landscape was obvious; abandoned farms, run down houses and outbuildings, abandoned businesses in town.

But if this trend is reversing, there must be a reason. What is the attraction? Why are people moving to rural areas?

The reasons are complex and have to do with the continuing problems of the cities and increasing dissatisfaction with the suburban dream. But perhaps there is also a resurgence of belief in that most persistent of American myths; the purity of the countryside and the virtue of the small town. At least a part of the attraction is the historic rural landscape and the lifestyle that created it. People moving to the country are attracted by the romantic historic rural landscape of Currier and Ives. But that landscape is not just a romantic fantasy. Many of the elements of that landscape do exist. The houses, barns, fields, streams and roads — those elements that make up the traditional family farm — are the most prominent features of the historic rural landscape. They represent a lifestyle in tune with nature, where the tempo is set by the changing seasons and fortune is controlled by the elements. Other features of this historic rural landscape include the country church, and, of course, the town; with its main street and, in some cases, the court house.

But because it was a particular lifestyle that created the historic rural landscape, changes in that lifestyle have already changed the landscape. The one room school which was once a major element in the rural lifestyle is gone, replaced by consolidated school districts. The railroad, itself a major shaper of the landscape, has fallen on hard times and the railroad station, once a focal point for many small towns, has either been torn down or turned into a museum. And the country store has given way to the shopping center. The changes in the school system were an effort to improve the quality of rural life. The passing of the railroad was a result of changing

transportation methods. But the shopping center, while influenced by many changes, in an interloper on the historic rural landscape. It is not something that grew out of the rural lifestyle but rather it is an urban element transplanted to the rural scene, often at the expense of the traditional main street economy.

And this is the mixed blessing of the new found prosperity of small towns and rural areas. For as much as rural areas need the businesses and jobs that are relocating out of urban centers, those businesses and the people who come with them are bringing along a new lifestyle which is altering the historic rural landscape. The former urbanite is used to running into a chain store to make a quick purchase and then leaving. He is unaccustomed to lingering to visit with the store proprietor to get the news of the town. He may enjoy living in an idyllic setting on a back road, but he complains about the smell when the farmer next door begins to spread manure in the spring.

As the suburban lifestyle spreads out from the cities or develops around the small town, the landscape begins to change. The harmony of the natural and manmade environments which resulted from a lifestyle dependent on nature is disrupted by the lifestyle that consumes nature. New houses have lined the roads and spread across the fields with little concern for the natural features of the land. Apartment houses have appeared in rural settings, miles from the nearest city. The "For Sale For Development" sign has become a semi-permanent feature of the landscape. And, in some instances, the city itself, in the shape of high-rise office towers, has been transplanted to the country. The non-farm population of rural areas has traditionally been involved with supplying goods and services to the farm population. But as industry and non-farm related enterprises move into rural areas, the traditional aspects of rural life become more urbanized and the quiet small town residential street can be changed into a fast-food paradise.

There is no doubt that many rural areas need economic help and that attracting industry is one way to boost a sagging economy. New people in town can bring new ideas and new vitality, as well as new money. And all

of this may be beneficial. But is it possible to survive prosperity? Is there a measure of reality in the romantic myth of rural purity and virtue that is worth preserving? Can you really keep Johnny down on the farm by bringing the city out to him? The presumption behind this presentation is, of course, that there is something about the historic rural landscape that is worth conserving; that it is important to maintain a diversity of landscapes and lifestyles within our society. Everyone is familiar with the line that goes "New York is a great place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there." But as hard as it may be to believe, many people do want to live in New York and they need someplace to visit, too. The New Yorkers version of the saying may go, "Ionia County is a great place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there."

The ironic thing is that the very influx of people and money which could be the salvation of rural areas may also bring about the demise of the very characteristics which made them such an attractive alternative to urban living. An agricultural economy created the historic rural landscape but the new economy of rural areas is, for the most part, non-agricultural. The problem, then, becomes one of trying to conserve the most desirable aspects of the landscape while still accommodating the changes that are going to take place. The most important thing for the local community to do is to evaluate what in its own history makes it unique. What is it in the history of a township or village that is worth conserving? What can be used as a basis of community identity to strengthen the community in the face of change? When attempting to assess the historic resources of a community, it is normally the buildings that are inventoried and documented. But it is also important to assess the relationship of the buildings to the open spaces and to each other. In many small towns, the houses are set on much larger lots than is common in cities. If an approach street into a small town is lined with large houses set back from the road with sweeping front lawns, then such a simple thing as widening the street may completely destroy the setting for those houses. The relationship between houses and barns is another feature of the landscape which should be ex-

facing a road with outbuildings clustered around the "farmyard." But in some communities it is more common to find the house and barns facing each other on opposite sides of the road. You can use topographic maps to trace the patterns of roads around hills, along stream beds, between small villages. Does the historic pattern of roads add to the character of the landscape? Did the existence of streams affect the patterns of settlement? Was the area made up of large farms or small farms? These are some of the characteristics of the historic rural landscape that should be considered when deciding what should be maintained and how future changes and development might be controlled and directed.

Whether rural communities have been declining or expanding, they have always been changing and they will continue to do so. In the past that change has been determined by economic and technological developments as they affected the agricultural economy. Today, the changes more often involve non-agricultural technologies and economies. In order to maintain their identity while accommodating these changes, rural communities need to evaluate their agricultural past and attempt to conserve its best features — those features that represent a harmony between the natural and man-made environments.

In order to do this, however, farmers and townspeople must work together. They must cooperate and take an active role in channeling and shaping growth. If a local community abdicates its responsibilities, development decisions will, by default, be made by narrow, private interest groups. Across the country, residents of small towns and rural counties are awakening to the concept of political and economic self-determination. They are electing public officials who support public rather than private interests, who work to develop community oriented goals and policies. You can reexamine the cultural system of your community by exploring its past. And by understanding and conserving its past you can greatly influence the shape of its future.

Massive amounts of money are being spent today to conserve and rebuild our nation's cities, to make them more beautiful and more livable. But if,

while rebuilding our cities, we allow the historic rural landscape to be destroyed, then the nation, the city dweller as well as the farmer, will suffer the loss. For even if the urbanite never touches a bamboo pole, he still benefits from the knowledge that he lives in a country where it is possible to hang out that sign that says "gone fishing."

The following agencies may be contacted for information and assistance in conserving the historic rural landscape.

Michigan History Division
Michigan Department of State
Lansing, Michigan 48918
(517) 373-0510

Director: Dr. Martha Bigelow
Land Resource Programs
Division

Department of Natural Resources
Mason Building
Lansing, Michigan
(517) 373-3328

Chief: Karl Hosford
American Rivers Conservation
Council

317 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

National Wildlife Federation
1412 16th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

*Publishes: Conservation
Directory*

Administers: Natural Resources
Defense Fund

Small Towns Institute
P. O. Box 517
Ellensburg, Washington 98926
Publishes: Small Town

Public Act 150 of 1970
Natural Beauty Roads
Check with County Road Commission-or
Information Services, Dept. of
Natural Resources

National Trust for Historic
Preservation
Midwest Office
407 S. Dearborn Suite 710
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Farmers Home Administration
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Contact:

Robert L. Mitchell
1405 South Harrison Road
Room 209
East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 372-1910

With The Societies



MASON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY officers are: president, Pamela Campbell Ling; vice president, Lyman Freshour; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Ellsworth Brown.

The special event this spring was the open house at the Pink School (under restoration) and the first annual spelling bee, May 20 involving all 4th, 5th, 6th graders in Mason schools. \$25 savings bonds were the awards.

Officers of EATON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY for 1978 are:

Gladys Wilkison, president; Charles Larson, vice president; Caryle Lord, 2nd vice president; Robert Gierman, secretary; Lela Palmer, treasurer.

Directors: Keith King, Lucile Colizzi, Larry Ballard, Wilbur Estell, Jean Frazier, Ion McLaughlin, Richard Larsen (Immediate past president).

Ever heard of "Soapy" Williams, Bennie Oosterban, Daniel Buck, Austin Blair, Noel Fox, John Patriarcho, John Hannah? they and many others are in:

LANSING, JACKSON, ANN ARBOR, AND AUTOMOBILES

BY David Morris. It is a history of life before and after the auto in Ingham, Jackson, Eaton, Calhoun, Livingston and Washtenaw Counties. It includes events like the Flint sit-down strike, Goose Lake Rock Festival, Jackson Prison Riot, Extensive bibliography, index and notes for students.

Edition limited to 311 copies, hardback, 300 pages illus. \$7.89 — Order from the author, 1037 Linden, East Lansing, or from bookstores.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC MERIDIAN officers are: Elaine Davis, president; Judith Wilson, vice president; Judith Anderson, secretary; J. Wesley Olds, treasurer.

Projects: (1) Restoration (completed) and maintenance of an original toll house, formerly near Parklake Rd./Grand River Avenue intersection, when tolls were collected for the Lansing to Howell (and to Detroit) plank road.

(2) Restoration of a farmhouse built in 1865, formerly (and continuously) owned by the Grettenberger family. It is to be restored and furnished as a typical farmhouse of the 1880's time period. Two rooms are completely restored and one of those (a bedroom) is furnished. Donations of furnishings for the farmhouse from the late 1860's to 1890 are being accepted.

(3) Pioneer Biographical Research is being pursued by several members. Photographs, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, etc. pertaining to the past history and people of Meridian Township are being sought. Oral histories are also recorded.

(4) Photograph collection - Through donations of photographs and copying photos loaned, a visual collection is being assembled. They are valuable reference and research tools as well as being used for display in conjunction with old maps of the township.

PERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY officer for 1978 are: Lucille M. Griffith, President, 531 N. Watkins St., Perry, Mich. 48872; Melonie Burch, Secretary-Treasurer, 322 S. Main, Perry, Mich. 48872.

THE VERMONTVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY scheduled several interesting activities for the spring months.

Its Thursday, March 30 meeting, followed the usual 7 o'clock carry-in supper in the Griswold Room of the Congregational Church. The program under the direction of Rev. David Fleming highlighted the interesting events in the 140 year history of the local Congregational Church.

As usual, the Vermontville Historical Society joined the community in helping to make the Maple Syrup Festival an interesting and rewarding time

for its many visitors. Members kept the Museum open to the public on Friday afternoon, April 28; all day Saturday, April 29; and Sunday afternoon, April 30.

The May 30 regular meeting featured Audra Frances of Saginaw after a 7 o'clock potluck in the Methodist Church. Following a visit to Grandma Moses, Mrs. Frances was inspired to put together the unique program she presented that evening.

Officers for the present year are Martha Zemke, president; Don Shepard, first vice-president; Carl Thrun, second vice-president; Phyllis Kilpatrick, secretary-treasurer; Esther Shepard, program chairman. Elected to the Board of Trustees are Floyd Amspacher, David Fleming, Dean Hansen, Ava Kroger, Kate Snider, Robert Todd, and Reinhart Zemke.

THE NORTH LANSING COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION is unique in the 26 neighborhood associations in the Greater Lansing area because of the historic commercial district and the site of Lansing's beginnings.

Meetings were devoted to planning the Fun Fest on June 23, and 4, examining plans for the proposed Riverfront Walk extension in North Lansing, implementing the Historic District Facade Restoration Program and study of land use in preparation for the 1980 overall city plan.

New officers are Don Wilson, president; Dick Clark, vice president; Paul Livingston, treasurer; and Marna Wilson, secretary. New board members are Ray Brennan, Bruce Tracy, Pat Smith.

Office hours of NLCA are 1-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Gay Kruger, referral specialist and secretary, offers information and assistance.

THE CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY at their annual meeting on March 9 elected the following officers: Alta C. Reed, president; Hila Bross, vice-president; Peg Lennon, corresponding secretary; Nina Waldron, recording secretary; Sharon Worrel, treasurer.

Dues are \$2 payable to the Clinton County Historical Society, Box 174, St. Johns 48879.

**TABULATION of BUILDINGS DESIGNED by
DARIUS B. MOON**

	Houses	Businesses	Quasi-Public	Farm Bldgs.		Total
				houses	Barns	
Built	140	41	13	50	22	266
Confirmed Extant	21	5	5	—	—	31

***Moon House
Saved***

The long threatened South Logan Street residence was in process of sale to an individual who plans to restore it as a family home. The house has now been moved to space on nearby Huron Street.

Locations:

Lansing	Battle Creek	Riley	Watertown Twp.
E. Lansing	Sunfield	Grand Ledge	
Eaton Rapids	Bancroft	Harbor Springs	
Mason	Alpena	Delta Twp.	
Leslie	Gunnisonville	Lansing Twp.	
Biloxi, Miss.			
Chicago, Ill.			

In addition, there are, in Lansing, several houses and at least one commercial building that exhibit the 'design characteristics' of Moon's work.

NB: all figures are approximate

Courtesy Save the Moon

Indian Trade Beads Exhibit

The Grand Rapids Public Museum hosted the exhibit "Beads: Their Use by Upper Great Lakes Indians," Sept. 18 through Nov. 13. Supported by two grants totaling \$31,983 from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this exhibit documented the historical, social, cultural and economic roles of trade beads in Native American society from 1615 to the present.

The exhibit presented a fascinating array of Indian trade beads as well as objects decorated with intricate beadwork. Various themes were explored in the exhibit to demonstrate how the changing functions of the trade beads reflect the cultural adaptations of Native Americans which resulted from their contact with European cultures.

These themes included: the archaeological significance of prehistoric beadwork; Indian use of the beads prior to European contact; changes in the economic value of the beads upon the arrival of white settlers; adaptation of the beads in ceremonies during Indian conversion to Christianity; and the European adoption of Indian beadwork.

To better appreciate this exhibit, visitors viewed photo essays as well as a documentary film which demonstrated the various techniques used in beadwork. A free brochure and an exhibit catalogue were available. The exhibit was planned in 1975 by the Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum with the help of a \$2,000 Humanities Endowment grant. A more recent grant of \$29,983 from the Humanities Endowment has supported the completion and installation of the exhibit.

After leaving the Grand Rapids Public Museum the exhibit is traveling to various sites in the Great Lakes area. It opened in early December at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, and in 1978 is touring to Duluth, Minnesota; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Alpena, Michigan; and Springfield, Illinois. Gordon L. Olson, assistant director of the Grand Rapids Public Museum, is coordinating the exhibit.

The Indian trade beads exhibit is just one example of the Humanities

Endowment's continuing interest in Native American history and culture. Through another Humanities Endowment grant of \$38,757, Grand Rapids Public Library is preparing a series of interpretive booklets from its collection of transcribed oral history interviews with elders of the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi Indian tribes.

The library's booklets will cover such topics as: the history of the area's Indian settlements; personal views of significant events; characterizations of prominent personalities; descriptions of the way of life in rural Indian settlements; and legends, traditional beliefs, and myths. Much of the material concerns the time period between 1860 and 1930. Louise Millar, assistant director of the library, is supervising this project.

Once completed, the booklets will be distributed to branch locations of the library, Indian organizations and community centers in Western Michigan, and the Grand Rapids public schools through the auspices of the Indian education program.

Chief Okemos

In doing the painting of Chief Okemos, I decided to represent him as a younger man. The existing photo and newspaper reproductions show him to be a much older man, not suggesting in the least the formidable person of his young days. Rather than have him remembered as a broken old chief of those photos, I chose to portray him more or less at the height of his career.

Even though he was a man of small stature and seemed to have narrow shoulders and to be short, standing about five feet four inches: his stature as a great leader with courage and skill in warfare were well recognized by the tribes he represented. He was elected chief by all of the four or five tribes because of his bravery and cunning.

These outstanding facts are worthy attributes to remember him by: though the battle for the future of his tribes and land was lost. — So here is my painting of him. I indicate him as a proud younger warrior perhaps in his early or middle 40's, attired in a colonial officer's coat, or one of a similar design—appealing to his good trading instinct — a medallion of tasteful design and make, a sunwheel design perhaps. A formidable war club, painted blue and studded on the sides in a Chippewa or Ottawa design — his favorite bone handled English hunting knife, always with him, eppelets adorning the shoulders of his coat. These too were favorite articles of trading worth, much prized when available — His hands are crossed in front of him, perhaps reluctantly, as though they were tied.

He is standing alone against a background of lush Michigan fall landscape — autumn — perhaps the beginning of his own autumn, and against the colorful turbulent sky symbolizing the ever oncoming storm of the whites — the colonists — the farmers — the lumbermen — that were steadily pushing him and his people from their natural heritage and the lands they loved.

The expression on his face and his whole countenance is that of peace-

ful submission — a sadness in the realization of what that ever coming storm could mean to all his people.

I look at what I have painted and

realize that I have actually reinstated the Chief to his rightful position that he should be remembered as having. A powerful chieftan — a man of exceptional courage — a wise leader of his people and indeed a Chief to contend with as well. — I wish him well forever.

— J. S. de Martelly "76



Chief Okemos

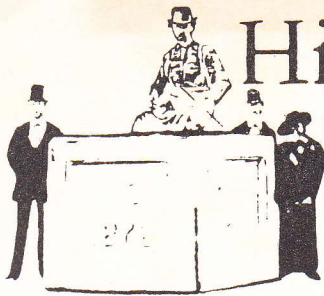


photo courtesy Geneva Wiskemann

The search for items of art created from the clay indigenous to the Grand Ledge area continues. Several unique items were included in the folk art exhibit prepared by Michigan State University during the Bicentennial.

These have twice been the topic for Grand Ledge Historical Society meeting programs.

Have you seen this example? It was modeled and fired to mark the grave of a child near Grand Ledge. It carries the date of 1940 and the name of the artisan underneath.



Historical Society of Greater Lansing

BOX 12095
LANSING MI 48901

BE SURE TO JOIN US THIS SEASON FOR A FASCINATING SEASON OF HISTORY!

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| SEPTEMBER 23, 1978 | Kick-off picnic at the Wiskemann Farm. |
| October 18, 1978 | MSU Museum. "Genealogy" presented by Mary Jane Trout. |
| November 15, 1978 | Ethnic Night -- The history of the Amish. |
| January 17, 1979 | Tentative program regarding the Centennial Celebration at the Capitol Building. |
| February 21, 1979 | Tentative - Antique Fakes, Forgeries and Reproductions - at the Turner-Dodge House. |
| March 21, 1979 | Tentative program on Frontier Cooking - at Turner-Dodge House. |
| April 18, 1979 | Turner-Dodge House Tour and slides of the Moon House move by Diana Reedy. Discussion of our next planned project for preservation in Lansing. |
| May 16, 1979 | "Changing of the Guard" dinner with Geneva Wiskemann, President, as speaker. |

For more information concerning programs or locations, call:

Geneva Wiskemann, President 321-1746

Barbara Nyboer, Vice-President 393-9748

Historical society
of Greater Lansing MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I am enclosing, for the amount and membership category indicated, a check payable to
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior (high school age or younger) \$ 2.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$ 10.00 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General \$ 5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$ 25.00 - \$ 100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$ 7.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$ 25.00 - \$ 100.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$ 100.00 |

This membership is: New Continuing
Dues are payable by June 1 and are to be paid by Sept. 1 of each year.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Historical society
of Greater Lansing

a non-profit organization devoted to the appreciation
of our history and our heritage.

We have monthly meetings --- September through June, except December --- with
programs featuring a wide variety of topics and speakers.

Our works include educational and informational projects and conserving our
heritage through physical preservation, oral and written records and markers. Much
of this involves working with other history oriented organizations in this area.

Our newsmagazine, the TOWN CRIER, keeps members informed of historical activ-
ities in the Michigan Capital Region and offers articles about the past life of
the area and its people.

If this is the organization you would like to belong to, fill out the appli-
cation above and return this envelope, with your dues enclosed, to the --

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