

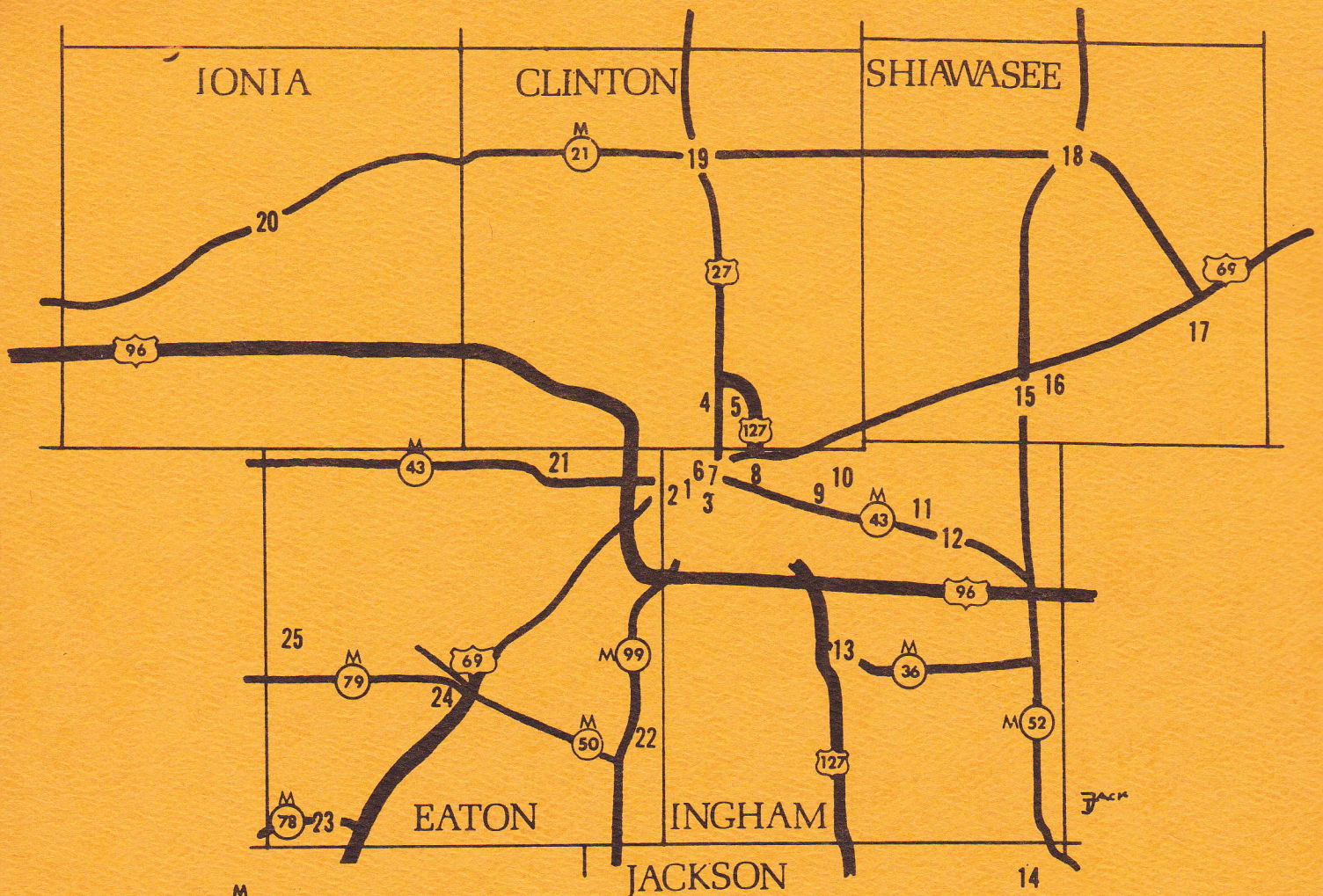
Historical Society  
of Greater Lansing


# preservation update



july 1979





LEGEND  
 HIGHWAYS   
 COUNTIES **EATON**  
 PRESERVATION SITES 12

PRESERVATION UPDATE  
 NO 3: JULY 79

*Compilation: Geneva Kebler Wiskemann*  
*Composition: Jack Thompson*  
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING

Groups offering assistance and support to preservation projects:

HISTORY DIVISION, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Lansing, 48918. Offers professional guidance in publications, historic site, archives and museum administration.  
 Contact: Martha Bigelow, director, 517/373-0510.

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION. 5580 West State Road, Lansing, 48906.  
 Contact; Geneva Kebler Wiskemann, chairperson, 517/321-1746.

EATON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION. 1396 East Broadway, Charlotte, 48813.  
 Contact: Christine MacGregor, chairperson, 517/543-6659.

INGHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION. PO Box 220, Mason 48854  
 Contact: Robert Picken, chairperson, 517/ 699-2907

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM, East Lansing 48824  
 Contact: Val Berryman, curator of exhibits, 517/355-2370

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING, Box 12095, Lansing, 48901  
 Contact: John Curry, president, 882-7450.



## PRESERVATION SITES

- 1** MICHIGAN THEATRE, 215 South Washington Av., Lansing, 48933.  
Contact: Tom O. Thompson, founder and president of DA CAPO, INC., at the theatre. 517/485-1234.

"The Lansing Strand was not built for today only, but constructed in the hopes that it might be a monument for years to come and a credit to the community even when the city is many times its present size. To that end the attractions which the theatre will present promise to be in keeping with the magnificence of the playhouse." -from *An Achievement*, opening night Souvenir Booklet, 1921.

DA CAPO, INC., chaired by John Fuzak, is a group who aim to transform the theatre, now The Michigan, back to its original function as an arts and entertainment emporium. Membership is open to all supporters of the plan to restore The Michigan as a major cultural complex. The Arcadian informs about a variety of performances by the DaCapo Singers, the 10 am Saturday free recitals on the restored theatre organ, personalities and progress in recycling this historical and architectural landmark.

- 2** DARIUS B. MOON HOUSE, 216 Huron St., Lansing 48915.  
Contact: Diana Reedy, chairperson, Save the Moon, Inc., 1101 North Larch St., Lansing 48906. 517/372-0545.

Darius B. Moon, builder and architect for many residences, and the original Methodist church in Delta Center created this Eastlake Victorian house for his residence in 1894. The house has been registered by the State of Michigan as historically important for its architectural significance and its association with Moon who died in 1939.

On May 20, 1978 the house was moved from 116 South Logan Street by Save the Moon, Inc., with the assistance of working volunteers from the Board of Water and Light, Michigan Bele Telephone Company and Continental Cablevision. It was moved to 216 Huron Street, property owned by Karen and Stan Kasuda. The house has been repaired and returned where ever possible to its original condition.

Tours are available by appointment. Call 374-8868 or 371-3899.

- 3** R.E. OLDS MUSEUM Will be located on Mill Street just south of Michigan Avenue. Contact: Mike Seward, secretary, R. E. Olds Museum Association, Inc., P O Bx 48901, Lansing 48901. 517/487-6340.

A fund raising program is underway for this unique museum depicting the automotive history of Lansing. Donations of money, historical items or other property to this non-profit organization will contribute to an early opening. Several types of membership benefits to persons of all ages.

Oldsmobiles, R. E. O. s, Durants and other Lansing made autos will be emphasized. Some will be featured on sets designed to portray life in the time the cars were manufactured.



**4** CATER HOUSE, 3925 North East Street, Lansing. Contact: Frederick C. Schworer, 2100 Northwest, Lansing 48906. 517/321-0995.

A typical farm home on the north edge of Lansing in Clinton County is being preserved and restored by a descendant of the early pioneers. Frederick C. Schworer grew up on the Centennial Farm surrounded by a family who kept things—buildings, furnishings, letters, diaries and an interest in the changing community.

This house was built in 1864 and added to in 1910. It remains without electricity and plumbing. Original furnishings are everywhere. Only the fresh wall paper on the lower level is new.

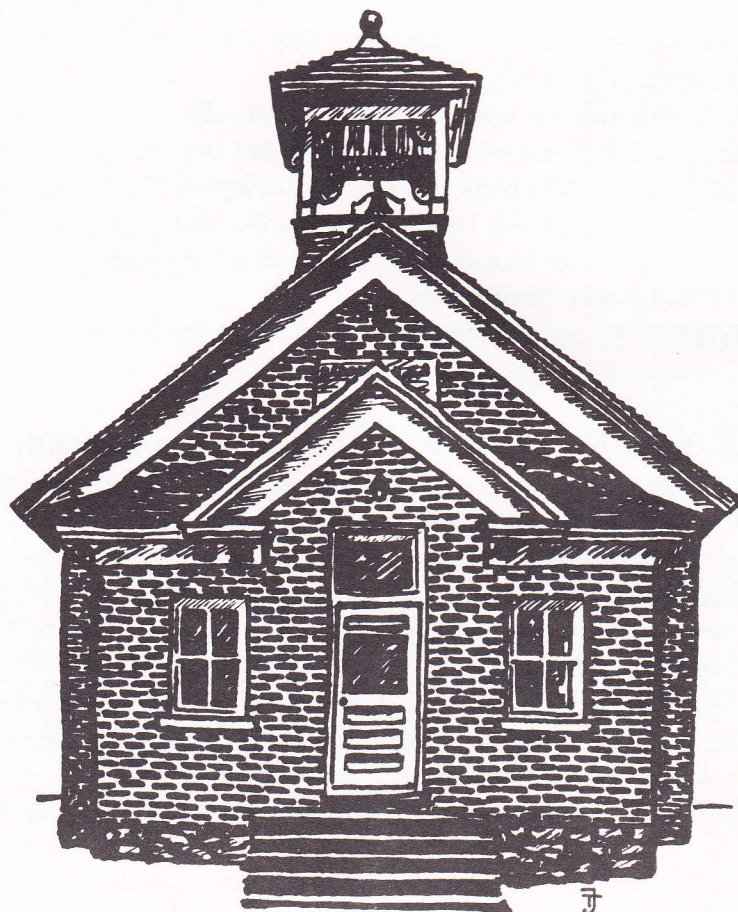
The great grandson of Mary Cater opens his personal preservation project to the public Memorial Day through Labor on Sunday 1-4 pm.

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

The 1907 one room school on the northeast corner of Clark Road and Wood Road in rural Clinton County is a type of museum most appreciated by many.

The Gunnisonville Restoration Committee in collaboration with the Lansing School District and aided by a Bicentennial grant has created an authentic restoration for use. It is often occupied by children who attend classes in the manner of rural students at the turn of the century.

The Clinton County Historical Commission with support from area residents will dedicate an official State of Michigan marker recognizing Elihu Gunnison, founder of the community, the school, church and cemetery which today form the Historical District.





**6** TURNER-DODGE HOUSE, 100 East North Street, Turner-Dodge Park, Lansing. Contact: Philip H. Dorland, deputy director, Parks Department, City Hall, Lansing 48933. 517/ 487-1270.

The house takes its name from James Turner, businessman and city mayor, for whom the main section was built about 1853. His daughter, Abbie, and her husband, Frank Dodge, purchased it in 1899.

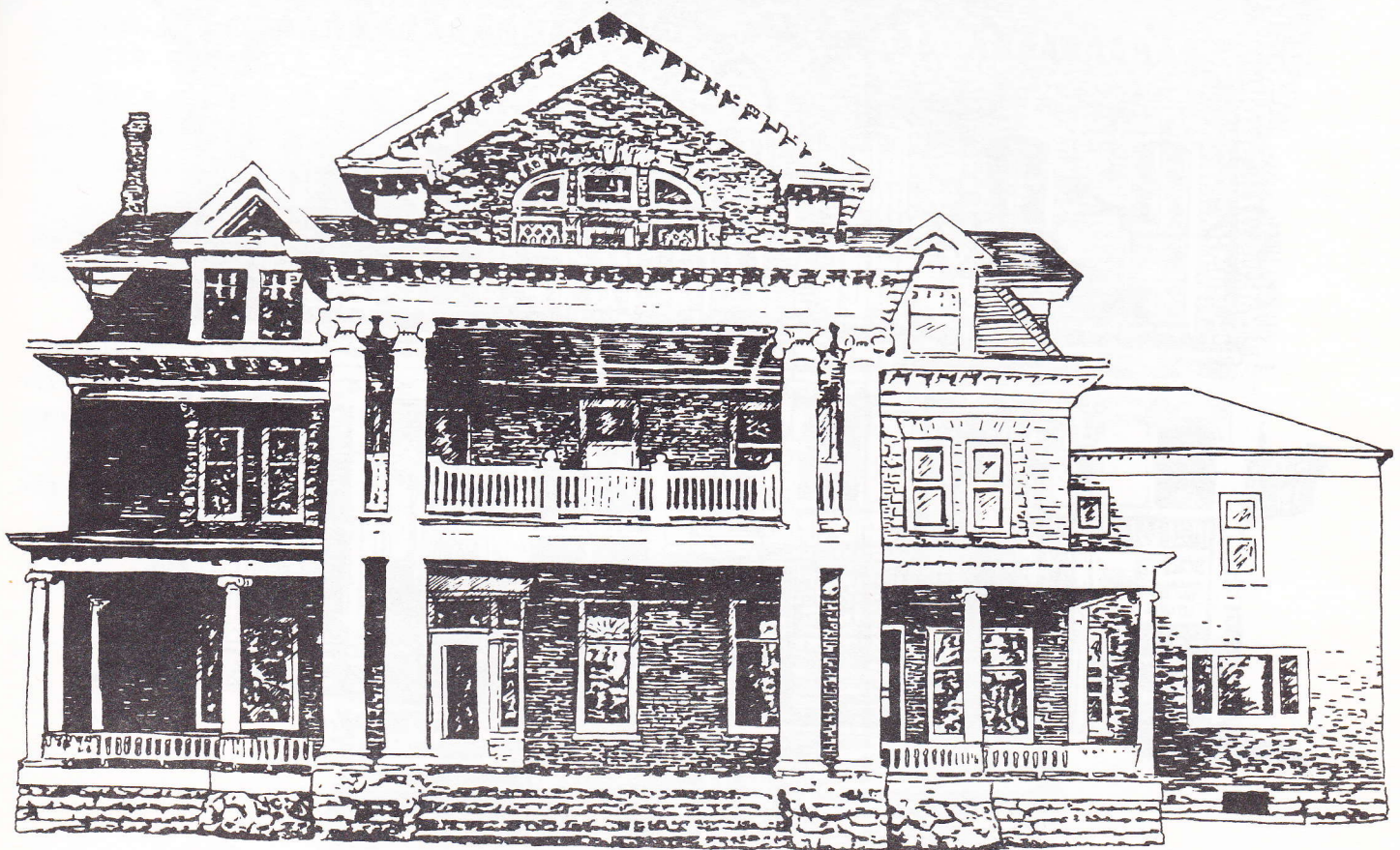
Dodge hired Darius Moon, local architect, to enlarge and re-design the house during 1900-1906. Moon's eclectic design results in a third story, an additional story to existing one story wing, a two story wing to the west, columns and porches. The family retained it until 1958 when it became the Great Lakes Bible College.

The City of Lansing acquired the land now called Turner Dodge Park including the house in 1974. Supervision of the renovation was leased to Lansing Jaycees. Workers in the Green Thumb program removed paint from oak and fruitwood trim, fireplace mantels and tin ceilings .

The Parks Department has resurfaced the lawn, replaced plantings, and created a gazebo and arbor. The play area is moved to the west side of the house where neighborhood children enjoy the open space.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing conducts tours during Arts Fête, an arts and crafts show, during August. A decorator showhouse, a fund raising event, sponsored by Shaarey Zedek Congregation will open mid October.

Tours by appointment by the Society, 517/321-1746.





**7** NORTH LANSING HISTORICAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT. Grand River Avenue, Lansing. Contact: North Lansing Community Association, 317 East Grand River Avenue, Lansing 48906. Between 1-5 pm 517/482 2770.

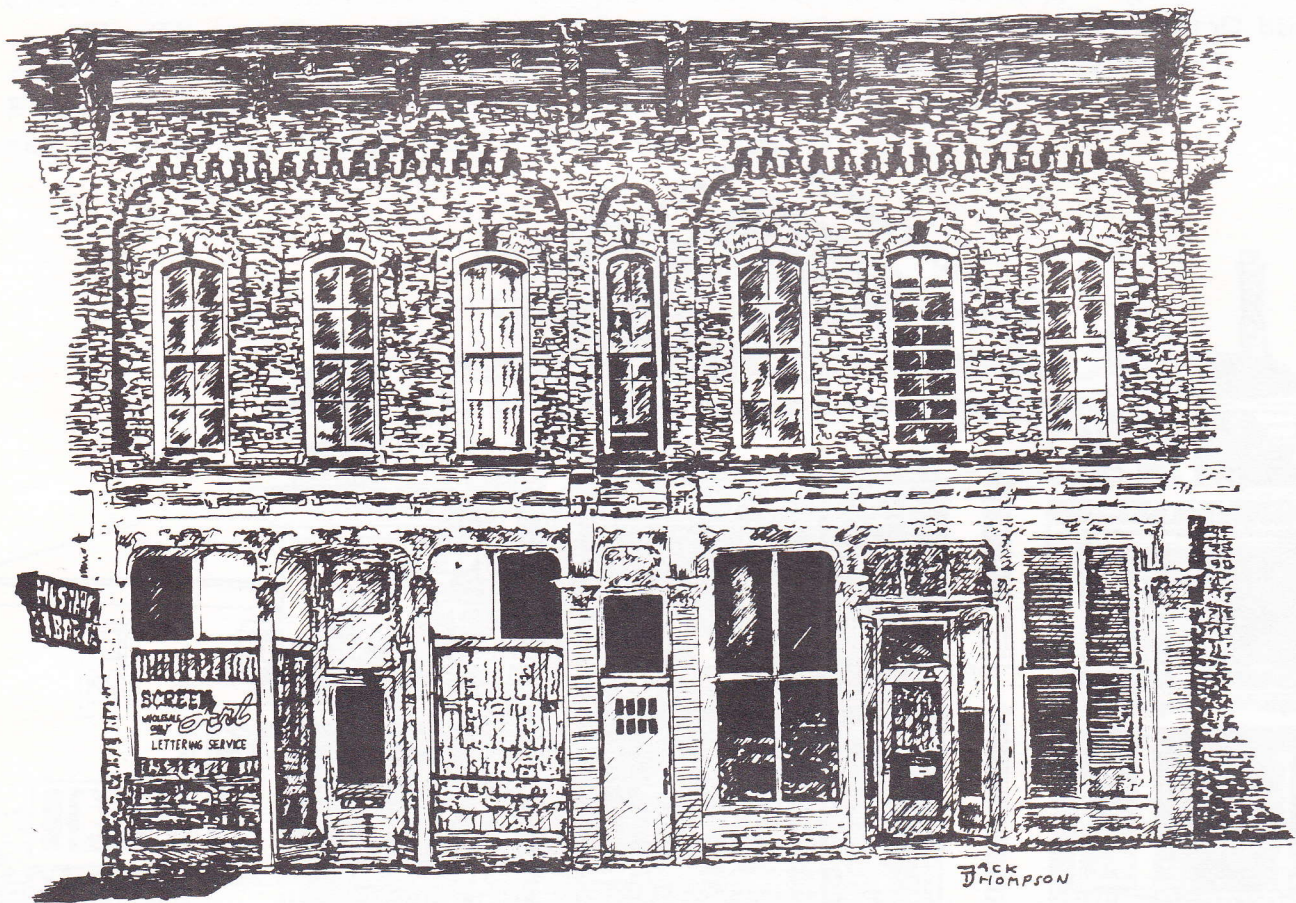
North Lansing was the site of Lansing's first commercial activity. The mills were first. Early records show Case and Turner operating a mercantile business on the corner of Turner and Franklin (now Grand River Avenue) in the 1850s. Turner Park is there now.

Many of the remaining buildings carry the names of German American families who invested in the area from 1860 through the 1920s. Remnants of a mill, a mill race turned into a street, castiron front buildings, a mix of architectural styles and a strong neighborhood feeling make the area unique in Greater Lansing.

Phase II of a facade restoration project made possible by a multi thousand dollar grant for preservation from the History Division, Michigan Department of State to the City of Lansing is in progress.

Redevelopment of Burchard Park, replacement of street and walk surface, improved lighting and plantings improve the visual environment.

An annual Funfest sponsored by the Association the first weekend in June each year, art shows, property clean up, informational publications and building improvements support a spirit of renewal in the District.





- 8** ORCHARD STREET PUMPHOUSE, 368 Orchard Street, East Lansing.  
Contact: Norman Smith, 522 Orchard Street, East Lansing 48823.  
517/332-2673 or Jeremy Mattson, 315 Orchard Street, East Lansing  
48823. 517/351-8082.

The East Lansing Bicentennial Commission and the Bailey Community Association generated interest in preserving this building, unused since the construction of a new water plant. In July, 1975 residents met for an ice cream social on the lawn and the work of preservation began.

The pumphouse, designed by local architect, Harold Childs, was built in 1934 as a Works Progress Administration project. It was among the first municipal water softening facilities in the country.

The building, much improved, is being used for community activities

- 9** MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP HISTORIC VILLAGE. Central Park, west of Meridian Township Municipal Building, 5100 Marsh Road, Okemos. Contact: Elaine Davis, 4611 Arrowhead Drive, Okemos 48864. 517/349-1993.

The Plank Road Toll House and the Grettenberger Farmhouse on the Historic Village Green continue to be refurbished for public viewing and use. The Toll house has been restored to its early, one room condition. It is used as a museum featuring changing displays and a meeting place in warm weather. The farmhouse, being restored and furnished in the style of the 1880s, remains a center of attention. Completion of the pantry and second floor are 1979 projects.

Tours by appointment. Open Saturday mornings during the farm market season, July-September. Annual 4th of July opening 6 pm to dark.

- 10** LOG CABIN, OUTDOOR EDUCATION SITE OF HASLETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Haslett. Contact: Jane Taylor, Haslett Public Schools, Haslett 48840. 517/339-9773.

This cabin was originally located on Haslett Road one half mile east of North Williamston Road in Williamstown Township. In 1888 it was sold to the Perkins family who lived in it for many years. Dr. Ervin VanDerJagt, professor emeritus of natural sciences at Michigan State University, purchased the land in 1958, and in 1971 he donated the cabin to Haslett Public Schools.

The cabin was dismantled, moved seven miles and reconstructed on the eighty-five acre Outdoor Education Site of the Schools. Most of the work was done by eighth grade students. The project and teaching materials it has generated have brought state and national awards of recognition.

The cabin was dedicated in May 1977. A tri county historical marker was added in 1979.

Tours by appointment.





**11** BRANCH SCHOOL, 993 Sherwood Road, Williamston. Contact: David Jones, 148 South Putnam Street, Williamston 48895. 517/655-4326.

The school constructed in 1863 on the north side of the Red Cedar River was called Africa, like the road in front of it. Later when the abolitionist movement was less prominent in the community, the school was named Branch for an area farmer.

It ceased as a school in 1961, and soon suffered loss of its bell and cupola. By 1973 it was threatened by destruction. The Friends of Historic Williamstown, dedicated to preservation and restoration, requested and got the responsibility for the building.

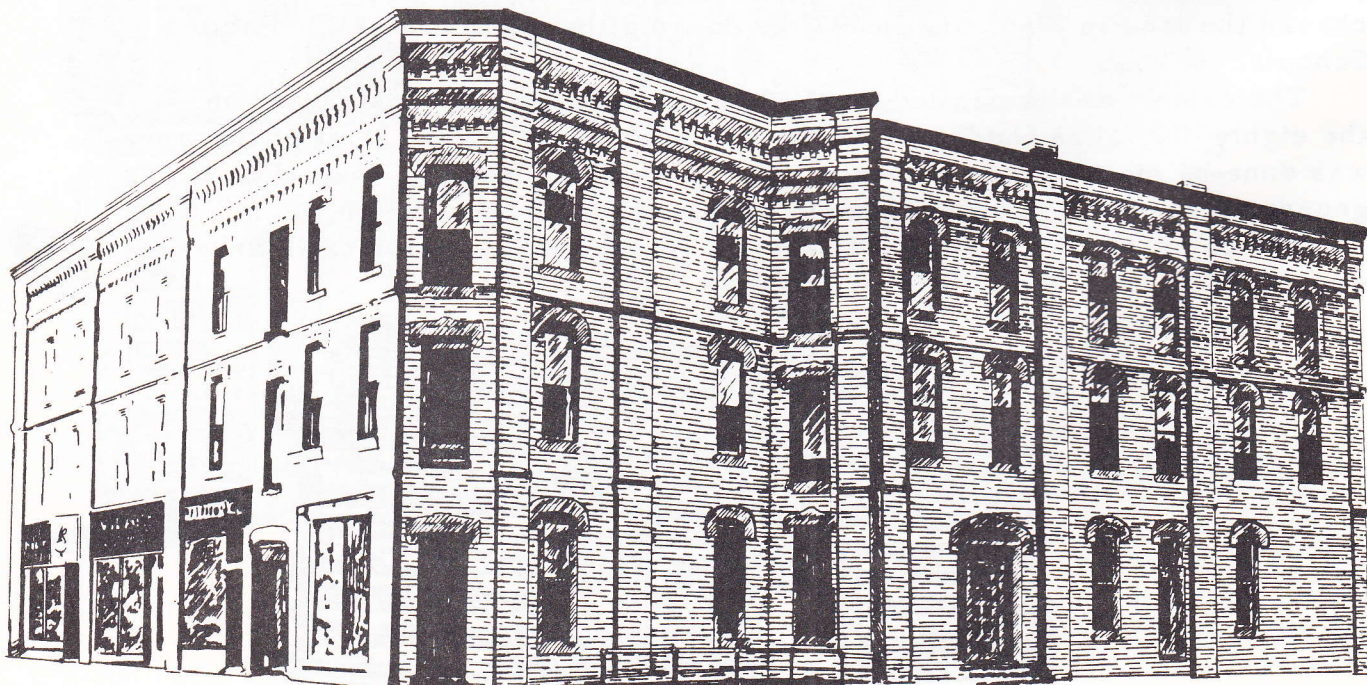
Now it is used as a meeting hall during the summer months.

A new project was initiated in June, 1979 the Friends acquired an unused depot and moved it to Grand River Avenue.

**12** WILLIAMSTON HOTEL, 104-106 Grand River Avenue, Williamston. Contact: John Laycock, president, Future of Williamston Corporation, 600 East Middle Street, Williamston 48895. 517/655-1523.

Country taverns and hotels are part of the Michigan scene, and for many the vanishing scene. In Williamston the Lombard House, the Glaser Hotel, the Spaulding House and Western Hotel are gone. The Andrews Hotel of the early 1900s is now the Williamston Hotel. It was dangerously close to demolition when townspeople organized the Future of Williamston Corporation and purchased it in 1973.

The Corporation supervised CEATA funded employees who removed lath and plaster from the second and third stories in anticipation of further renovation. The building is for sale.

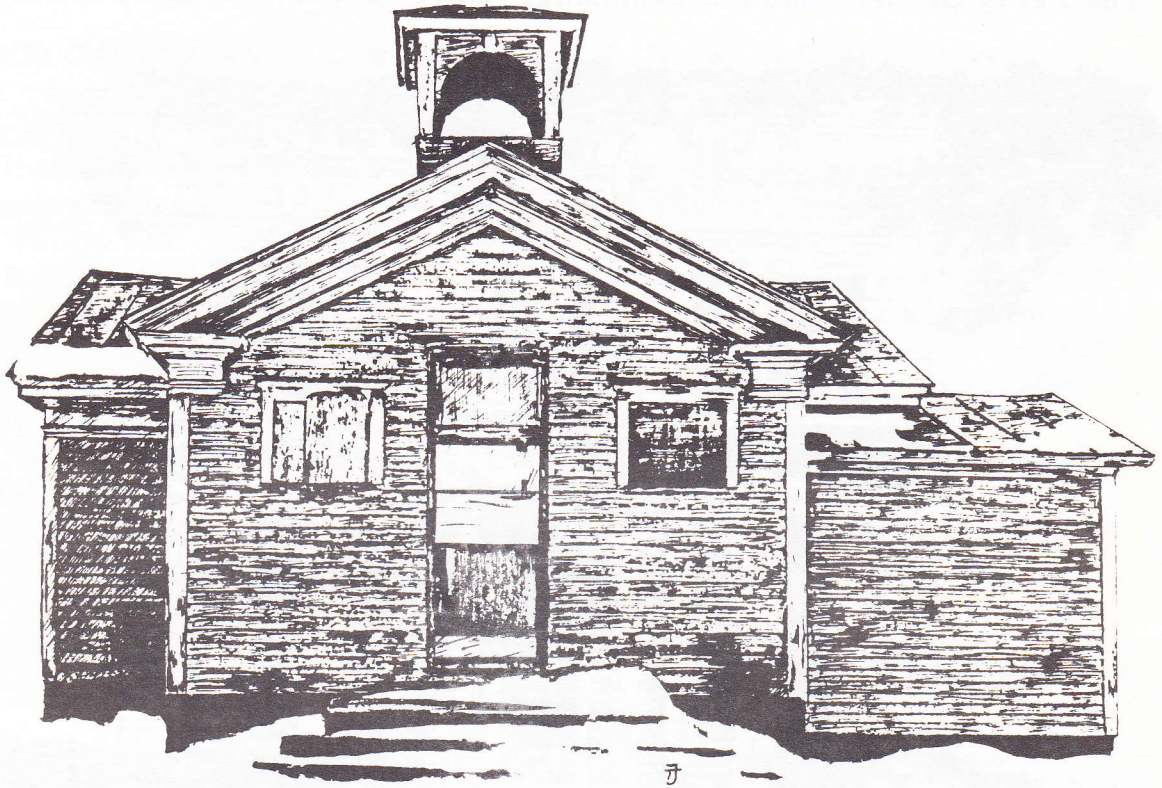




**13** THE PINK SCHOOL, Ash and Cedar Street, Mason. Contact: Helen Grainger, president, Mason Area Historical Society, 410 Center Street, Mason 48854. 517/676-1384.

A pink school, built as a one room Greek Revival structure in 1855 on the corner of College and Columbia Roads near Mason was the focal point of the Mason Area Bicentennial Commission. During the summer of 1976 it was reduced to its original dimensions and moved to the grounds of Cedar Street Elementary School.

The Society has recently received a gift of a bell and reconstruction continues as a project of the Society in collaboration with the Commission.



**14** WATERLOO FARM MUSEUM, 9998 Waterloo Munith Road, Stockbridge. Contact: Mrs. Guy Russell, 15600 Cassidy Road, Grass Lake 49240. 313/475-1426.

The Waterloo Area Historical Society has produced a learning center devoted to the pioneer experience and farming which is unique in Michigan.

The 1855 homestead, barns, windmill, bake oven and out buildings are enjoyed each day except Monday, 1-4 pm, during June, July and August.

The most recent addition to the complex is a hand hewn log cabin. Work on the fireplace continues, and furnishings are being selected.

The 1979 season of education in early American crafts has attracted over 200 adults. One day workshops for young people are similarly successful. Pioneer Day held annually on the second Sunday of October is a highlight of the museum's continuing program.



**15** MACQUEEN HOUSE, 127 East First Street, Perry. Contact: Lucile Griffith, president, Perry Historical Society, % City Hall, Perry 48872. 517/625-4550.

The house that Charles Calkins built in Perry in 1879 was used by the family until 1941. Bessie MacQueen, his surviving daughter, left the home to the village. After a period of rental, the house was turned to the Historical Society for a museum.

Refurbishing and furnishing the house by volunteers continues. Local business people have contributed a new roof and like necessities. The village provide utilities. Open by appointment.

The Perry Garden Club's Bicentennial flower garden decorates the lawn.



**16** HERITAGE MUSEUM, MORRICE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, 691 Purdy Street, Morrice. Contact: David Fahrenbach, at the school, 517/625-3143.

A farm oriented museum has grown from special projects in an imaginative course in local history. Small tools, farm equipment, fashions and fabrics and many items from the past are exhibited.

Centennial Week celebrated annually in May involves the entire community. Free bingo is offered the third Thursday of each month. Classes are offered to students and public in Indian culture, spinning, doll collecting and restoring and the like.

Open during school hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Open each day, except Sunday, during summer break 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.



**17** RAILROAD HISTORY MUSEUM, 205 Clinton Street, Durand. Contact: Norma (Mrs John) Ward, 420 Fitzgerald Street, Durand 48429. 517/288-3893.

A Grand Trunk Western baggage car, built in 1919, was purchased by area residents and is now operated by a Board of Trustees. Exhibits change in January, May and September.

Railroad Days is an annual event during the first weekend in May.

Open Saturday and Sunday 1-5 pm.

**18** CURWOOD CASTLE AND COMSTOCK CABIN, Curwood Castle Drive, Owosso. Contact: Sallysue Gale, 215 West Oliver Street, Owosso 48867. 517/723-4078.

A 9 member Historical Commission was recently appointed to oversee the historical and cultural aspects of Owosso's rapidly expanding program.

The yellow stucco studio of James Oliver Curwood overlooking the Shiawassee River is called a castle because of its architectural resemblance to a Norman fortress. It is open from 1-5 pm on Sunday, and by appointment.

Nearby is Comstock Cabin, claimed to be the first log house in Owosso in 1836. It is open as a pioneer home museum, Sundays 1-5 pm from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The annual Curwood Festival in June attracts thousands of visitors.

Walking tours of five historic districts being proposed for National Register designation are available at City Hall, Curwood Castle, Public Library, Chamber of Commerce and financial institutions.

**19** PAINE-GILLAM SCOTT HOUSE, 106 Maple Street, St Johns. Contact: John and Catharine Rumbaugh, co-directors, P O Bx 174, St Johns 48879. 517/224-2894 or 224 7402.

The Clinton County Historical Society opened new quarters in a fifteen room brick structure on Court House Square during Michigan Week '79.

The house was originally built in Italiannate style in 1860. It takes its name from the builder and the two doctors who were owners. The Society leased the property from the County, and began hours of work by volunteers to restore it to the 1890s when it was remodeled. Polished parquet floors and "attic finds" enhance the house museum image.

Space allows for a genealogy and oral history workroom, and demonstrations.

Open May 1-October 31, Wednesday 1:30-5pm, Friday 7-9 pm and Sunday 12-4 pm. Open November 1-April 30, Wednesday 2-8 pm and Sunday 12-4 pm. Donations welcome.



**20** BLANCHARD HOUSE, 253 East Main Street, Ionia. Contact: Ethel (Mrs George) Trautman, 132 East Lytle Street, Ionia 48846. 616/527-2466.

This Italianate residence was built in 1880 by John C. Blanchard, Sr., lawyer and first village president of Ionia. The exterior walls of variegated sandstone quarried east of Ionia adds distinction.

The Ionia County Historical Society purchased the home in 1974. The well built structure offers a splendid curving staircase, marble fireplaces, brass and crystal chandeliers, carefully selected woodwork, contemporary wallpaper and floor coverings inside; and a pleasant lawn beside a small brook outside.

The house is featured during the annual Society sponsored tour of homes in May. Open during July and August, Wednesday 1-5 pm and Sunday 1-5 pm.



**21** CANADA SETTLEMENT SCHOOL, South Hartel Road (M-100) at Strange Highway, Grand Ledge. Contact: Alice Veltman, 5739 Mt. Hope Highway, Grand Ledge 48837. 517/627-5629.

Oneida #1 District's red brick one room school was built in 1887 and served the educational needs of the community for 71 years. Furnishings included seating for 40 pupils, a recitation bench, teacher's desk and wood burning stove. Since its closing in 1958, the Mighty Minnie 4 H Club, serving over 100 young people between 10 and 18 years, have used the school for meetings and project work. The club initiated restoration and use received enthusiastic support during the Bicentennial.

Tours by appointment.

**22** INTERPRETIVE CENTER, 108 East Hamlin Street, Eaton Rapids. Contact: Police Department, Eaton Rapids 48827. 517/663-2335.

A collection of local materials brought together during the Bicentennial year shares space with the city Police Department.

**12** Open weekdays, 8 am-5 pm.



**23** BELLEVUE MEMORIAL MUSEUM, 212 North Main Street, Bellevue.  
Contact: Dorothy Larson, 532 West Capital Street, Bellevue 49021.  
616/763-9388.

A new facility for the display of materials depicting the heritage of Bellevue and Eaton County was officially opened February 5, 1978. The building was made possible by a grant from the Miller foundation and local residents.

Exhibits of a turn of the century dining room and a school room attract visitors. A growing collection of photographs and documents offers research sources to students of local history.

Open by appointment. Nearby and easily seen from the highway is a fire kiln leased from the county. It is claimed that this was a source of cement for the construction of Michigan's present Capitol.

**24** EATON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, Courthouse Square, downtown Charlotte.  
Contact: Christine McGregor, president, Eaton County Historical Commission, 1396 Broadway Street, Charlotte 48813. or Bertha Sederlund, secretary, 1940 East Clinton Trail, Charlotte 48813. 517.543-0709.

The preservation and use of the Courthouse in downtown Charlotte is a major project of the Historical Commission. Space vacated by governmental offices when a new facility was available is still used by a few agencies and as a learning center for Eaton history. Educational exhibits, tours and programs during Michigan Week are a forecast of future services.

The Commission is raising money to match a Survey and Planning Grant from the Michigan History Division. Partial restoration and recycling of the c1885 symbol of government is a continuing project of the Commission.

**25** VERMONTVILLE ACADEMY, CHURCH AND OPERA HOUSE, Vermontville.  
Contact: Martha Zemke, president, Vermontville Historical Society, Vermontville 48897. 517/726-0338.

Two meetinghouses on the village square resemble New England prototypes and are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Academy has served 136 years as a school, place of worship, townhall general store, and now a museum. This storehouse of artifacts relating to the settlers and their rural life is a major attraction during the annual Maple Syrup Festival held in the last week of April.

Open Saturday 1-4pm during July and by appointment.

The oldest Congregational Church in Michigan still offering worship services in its original building dominates the Square. The 120 foot high steeple, original pews, cathedral glass windows and interior Grecian arch makes this one of the finest examples of New England architecture for the period in the Midwest.

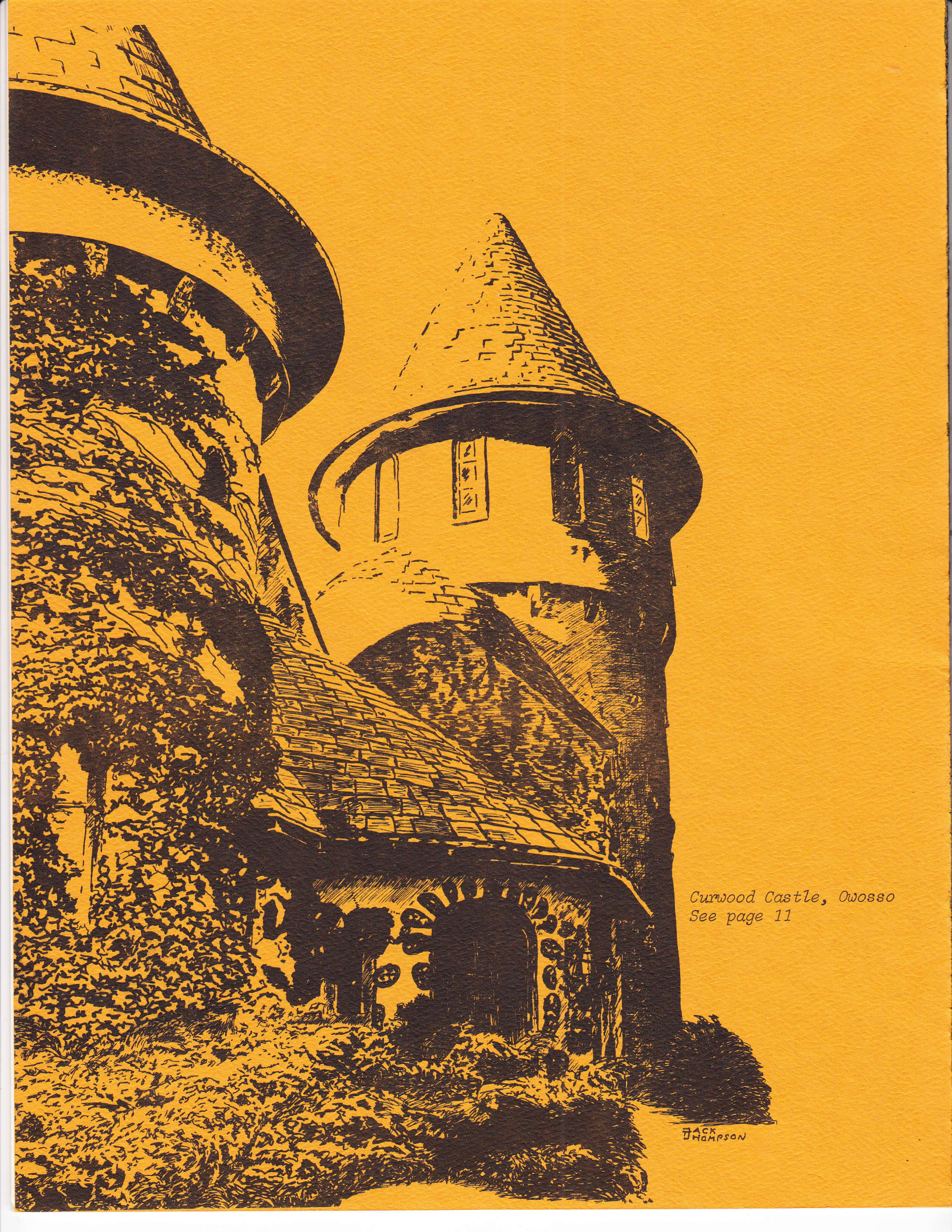
The Historical Society meets monthly in the Griswold Room on the lower level of the Church.

An official State of Michigan marker recognizes the significance of the Opera House. This is a Michigan Register of Historical Sites designation.

The present building occupies the site of the original structure which was destroyed by fire c1896. Reconstructed at the turn of the century with money furnished by the village and the township, the Opera House became the center for stock companies, medicine shows, political rallies, local theatricals and school graduation exercises.

The Mildred Allen Memorial Library is located on the first floor. The auditorium on the second floor is used for governmental meetings and elections. The community works to restore the hall to former attractiveness.





Curwood Castle, Owosso  
See page 11

JACK  
HAMPTON