

HSGL Newsletter

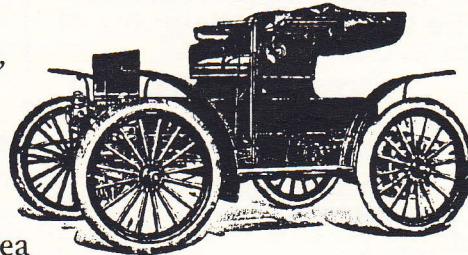
Official Publication of the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

March 1996

The Duryeas and the Automobile

It changed America from an agrarian to an industrial-based society. It became the primary transportation of commerce. It turned cottage industries into multi-billion dollar corporations. It made the suburbs possible.

The "it" is the automobile, and 1996 is being celebrated as the 100th anniversary of the American automobile industry. The celebration commemorates the efforts of Charles and J. Frank Duryea of Massachusetts, who in 1896, in their Duryea Motor Wagon Co., produced the first run of thirteen motorized vehicles.



As the industry struggled at the end of the 19th century, major contributions to the design and manufacture of a "horseless carriage" were made by several men living in Michigan. The names include Dodge, Ford, King and Leland, and, of course, R.E. Olds. These men, along with others, would make Michigan the automobile capital of the world.

Arguably, the automobile is the most liberating invention of the past century. It got us out of the house, off the farm, and across the country. Aside from the amazing technological

Continued on Page 2

The *HSGL Newsletter* is published bimonthly from September through May.
Articles and news of historical interest may be sent to the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing, P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901.
Linda Peckham, President. Tel: 517/372-3385.

Duryea, Continued.

advancements created by the automobile industry, it is the freedom of movement that makes us love our cars. Perhaps it is this freedom that Ransom Olds recognized when he wrote in 1896, "...all one has to do is turn the motor over to draw in a mixture of gasoline and air...and the engine at once starts and runs continuously...you have only to turn over a little more speed to secure a breeze and leave the dust behind."

On March 20th, we will mark the American Automobile Centennial with a featured speaker, Richard P. Scharchburg, Professor of Industrial History at GMI in Flint, and author of *Carriages Without Horses: J. Frank Duryea and the Birth of the American Automobile Industry*. Prof. Scharchburg will speak about the interesting personalities who shaped the beginning of the industry.

- by Mark Ducker

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Volunteers Needed

★ To help on **Multicultural History Day – May 11** at the City Market. *Call Pat Heyden, 882-9913*

★ To help on **Family History Project**. *Call Linda Peckham, 372-3385*

Lansing Sesquicentennial Project: Family History. To our delight we have received many requests for applications for the Family History project. These include many early families: Rose, Proctor, Barnes, Rolfe, North, and Miller, to name just a few. Applications available at the Local History Room, MMGS, or by calling 372-3385. Deadline: January 10, 1997.

HSGL Bookshelf Suggestions

Books will be available for purchase at meetings of the Society.

1878 Lansing City Directory

★ Under the auspices of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, board member Dave Caterino has reprinted and cross referenced Mudge's 1878 Lansing City Directory. The directory is indexed alphabetically by business and street. The reprint with index is 200+ pages. Available at \$15.00 (Add \$2.00 postage if ordered by mail).

Behind the Badge: The History of the Lansing Police Department

By Pat Heyden

★ This 256 page book features 85 photographs and illustrations, bibliography, glossary, index and a library binding. "Takes us on a historical walk through a century of police organization and development from its primitive beginnings to its current professional and technical excellence" – Noel Bufe, Director of the Northwestern University Traffic Institute. Available at \$22.98 (Add \$2.50 if ordered by mail).

Announcements:

Stained-Glass Lecture and Walking Tour in Downtown Lansing April 20, 1996, 10 a.m. -3 p.m., presented by Betty McDowell (517/627-8973) of the Michigan Stained Glass Census. Cost of \$8.50 includes lunch.

Multicultural History Day: Preserving Community

Come stroll the Lansing City Market - Photos, books, music, historical displays on **May 11, 1996** from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. The Historical Society of Greater Lansing will hold their Annual Dinner in the City Market at 5:30 p.m.

Notecards of Lansing, made from drawings done by Charles H. Mead in the 1870s, are available at The Mole Hole in Downtown Lansing, Curious Books in East Lansing, and the Local History Room of the Lansing Public Library. Price: \$6.00 for eight cards and envelopes. Special prices to members of the Historical Society at the Local History Room. Proceeds will be used to restore the drawings.

The **Historical Society** seeks donations of local historical materials, such as papers or photos, especially of those related to our programs. All donations are made available to the public through the Local History Room at the Lansing Public Library. Please contact the Historical Society at 372-3385.

Board Meetings are held on the third Wednesdays of October, February, and April. Any business may be addressed to the Board before or at the meetings. All are invited.

Who do you know who should belong to the Historical Society? Send in your membership, and recruit a member.

Lansing Public Library Local History Room Hours

Tuesdays

12-3 p.m.

Wednesdays

12-3 and 5-7 p.m.

First Saturday of each month

9:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m.

Give a Gift that Gives All Year . . .

Membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Membership Application

*Historical Society
of Greater Lansing*

P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

Annual Membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing is due for the 1995-1996 program year. Please clip and return this coupon with payment.

New **Renewal**

Enclosed: \$10 Individual \$15 Family \$150 Life Gift

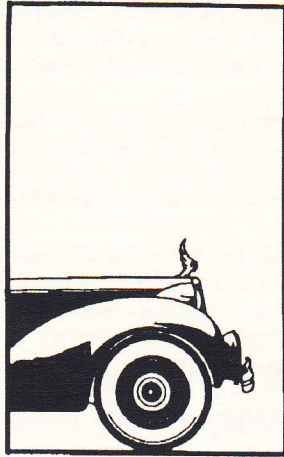
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The *Historical Society of Greater Lansing* is a non-profit corporation, and we appreciate your support.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing
proudly presents



Centennial of the Automobile

By Prof. Richard P. Scharchburg

We will mark the American Automobile Centennial with a featured speaker, Richard P. Scharchburg, Professor of Industrial History at GMI in Flint, and author of *Carriages Without Horses: J. Frank Duryea and the Birth of the American Automobile Industry*. Prof. Scharchburg will speak about the interesting personalities who shaped the beginning of the industry.

7:30 P.M.

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

R.E. Olds Transportation Museum

240 Museum Drive

The Public Is Invited

*Historical Society
of Greater Lansing*
P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

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U.S. Postage
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A New
HSGL
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TODAY!**