

HSGL Newsletter

Official Publication of the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

November 1996

The Duryeas and the Automobile

Delayed by snow last March

**Program, Nov. 20
7:00 p.m., Library**

LANSING'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

Beginning in 1835, land speculators William Townsend and Bushnell and James Seymour bought property at the great horseshoe bend of the Grand River, an ideal site along one of Michigan's major rivers. A few hardy settlers soon made their way into this area, men from New York named North and Cooley and others.

Floods and swamps and forests meant slow growth, though, and it wasn't until 1843 that John Burchard bought land at the rapids (in North Lansing) and built a dam. Unfortunately, he drowned at the dam the next spring and the site was abandoned. Others came to rebuild the dam and a sawmill for Seymour about 1845. Population: 88.

Then in March of 1847, after a heated debate, the State Legislature voted to move the seat of the capital from Detroit to Lansing Township. The new town was named Michigan, Michigan, (changed to Lansing a year later). By 1850, the population had jumped to over 1200.

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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.

Continued.

As Lansing and the State lay plans for the 150th birthday of the Capital City, a small book has been given to the Society, by Fred Olds of Illinois, which offers its early history in a unique style:

...before there was a Lansing... a man named Page pushed into the unbroken wilderness for the purpose of turning over a "new page." His wife had turned over several new Pages before they left the "haunts of civilization."

Identifying who erected the first frame house is as confusing as finding the name of the oldest inhabitant. By 1849 there were dozens who claimed that distinction.

There was a fire department in Lansing, but where were the "masheens" when a building burned?

The author, an M. Dash, exhorts us to believe only the history found collected in his book, published in 1870.

- L. Peckham

Historical Society of Greater Lansing EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Updates:

• Linda Peckham was appointed to the Governor's Commission for the Sesquicentennial of Lansing as the Capital City. Meetings took place in September and October, and recommendations go to Mayor Hollister and Governor Engler this week. An implementation committee should be set up soon.

• **Family History Project.** We continue to seek families who have lived in Lansing or the surrounding area for many years, and special recognition will go to families who have lived here since 1847. Forms for the Sesquicentennial Family History Project are due on January 10, 1997. If your family has lived in the Lansing area for at least 100 years, please call 372-3385.

• The status of the Lansing Public Library is still in limbo. In December 1997, the Library will be separated from its funding source, the Lansing Public Schools; proposals for a new district library are being discussed but are incomplete. We have many concerns about the Local History Collections housed at the Library.

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:

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 Ransom Everett House at 131 E. Miller Rd is now on the State Register.

The City of Lansing is hiring a Historic Preservation Planner. If interested, contact the Lansing Planning Dep't.

A Preservation Directory, listing organizations and companies with information and preservation skills, will be published soon.

We sadly announce the death on October 11 of Paul Scott, a member of the Historical Society and a volunteer in the Local History Room. Our condolences to his family and friends.

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

Wednesdays

12-3 p.m.

**Second 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 _____

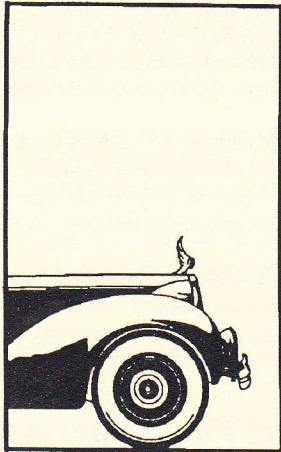
Address _____

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.

7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 20, 1996

Lansing Public Library

Friends Auditorium

Sponsored by: Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.

The Public Is Invited

Linda Peckham/Bob Morris

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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**PLEASE
SIGN UP
A New
HSGL
Member
TODAY!**



APPLICATION
LANSING SESQUICENTENNIAL PROJECT: FAMILY HISTORY
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

During the Sesquicentennial of Lansing in 1997, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing, assisted by the Mid-Michigan Genealogical Society, will recognize families who have lived in the Greater Lansing area for 150 years, since the founding of the town in 1847. Also, certificates will be given to those who have lived here for 100 and 125 years.

"Greater Lansing" is defined as the following townships and all of the communities within them: Alaiedon, Aurelius, Bath, Delhi, Delta, DeWitt, Eaton, Lansing, Meridian, Vevay, Watertown, Wheatfield, Williamstown, and Windsor.

To apply, use this page to establish your relationship to your direct-line ancestors who settled in the Lansing area on or before 1897. List proofs on the left, and attach *copies* of proofs to this sheet. "Proofs" include birth/baptism/death certificates, marriage licenses, wills, deeds, census records, pension records, family Bibles, pioneer accounts, obituaries, city directories. Name of Ancestor/Date of Arrival in Greater Lansing: _____

Deadline: *January 10, 1997.* Send to the *Historical Society of Greater Lansing, 311 Seymour Street, Lansing MI 48933.* All materials will be made available for viewing and research.

PART I. ANCESTRY

PROOFS	FAMILY CHART
_____ _____ _____	1. Your Name _____ Spouse _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	2. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	3. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	4. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	5. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	6. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____
_____ _____ _____	7. Child of _____ and _____ b./Place _____ m./Place _____ d./Place _____ Township(s) of Residence _____

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PART II. NARRATIVE HISTORY On this page, write a short narrative history of the primary people on your family chart.

Date _____ Signed _____

Phone _____ Address _____