

Historical Society of Greater Lansing
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NEWS

September 2001

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Historical Society of Greater Lansing

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This newsletter is published during the months of September to May. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.

BUILDERS OF THE TOWN

GhostWalk 2001

On Wednesday evening, September 19, the Historical Society will present "GhostWalk 2001" featuring short biographies of the lives of more than 15 of the "Builders of the Town." Our Mt. Hope Cemetery walk has always been a favorite among members of the Historical Society and we invite you to join us for the evening.

Now, step back in time and...

Imagine for a moment that you are planning a town in the 1840's, who would you want in your town?

Try the following:

Blacksmith - Solomon Lansing

Banker - Joseph C. Bailey

Educator - Delia Rogers

Lumberman - James W. Potter

Merchant, Investor - James Turner Joseph C. Bailey

Mill Owner - Edmund Parmelee

Manufacturer of farm implements, stoves and bobsleds - Edwin Bement

Publisher - Wm. S. George

AND OTHERS who are necessary to a pioneer town...



I. GILLETT, Jr.,
ARCHITECT!

Lansing, Michigan.

Designing, Drafting, Specifications and Estimates for Buildings made Promptly, in the Best Style of the Art.



James Turner

DAN'L W. BUCK
 WASHINGTON AVENUE,
 Lansing, Michigan.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF

CABINET WARE!

CHAIRS,

Willow Cabs,
and Coffins!

THE LARGEST STOCK OF

FURNITURE,

ON HAND,
 Ever Offered in Central Michigan!

Personal Attendance with Hearse,
 at Funerals, if desired.

Join Us. . .
September 19, 2001
6:30 P.M.

Mt. Hope Cemetery
 Corner of Mt. Hope & Aurelius Road

President's Message

Craig A. Whitford

Dear Friends:

I would like to personally welcome you to the 2001-2002 Program year for the Historical Society of Greater Lansing. As

you will notice by this newsletter, there have been changes, and as we progress throughout the coming year, you are invited to actively participate in the many planned activities.

Our September kick-off program is always a favorite with members – **GhostWalk 2001**. This year we will feature the lives of the builders of Lansing. I invite you to come and enjoy a fall evening at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Please enter at the main gate and follow the signs. The walk will be confined to a small area of the cemetery.

Benefits of Membership Renewal

It's membership renewal time!

I urge you to send in your renewal or new membership so that you will be able to enjoy the benefits throughout

the coming year. This year, your board of trustees has included, as part of your membership, a subscription to the **R.E. Olds Transportation Museum & Oldsmobile/GM Heritage Center** publication **Quarterly Review**. Every quarter you will receive this well-done glossy publication filled with articles of historical significance. The Summer 2001 issue featured articles on Howard Sober and his vehicle



transport company, a 1931 Reo Royale and much more.

Memberships may be mailed in to our post office box address. Bill Atkinson, your treasurer, will be on hand to collect memberships during the meeting.

“One of our goals for the coming year... Re-open the Local History room...”

As I mentioned earlier, there have been changes. More are in the works. One of our goals for the coming year, beyond our programs, is to re-open the Local History room in the lower level of the Capital Area District Library. We need volunteers to assist in cleaning and organizing the room as well as volunteers to staff the room during hours of operation. We are

looking for an active pool of 18 to 24 volunteers to assist us in this very important project. It has been several years since the Local History room has been open to the public. Our goal is to re-open the room for 4 hours every other Saturday to historians and researchers. Please let anyone of the board members know of your interest, or just give me a call or email.

Your participation, concerns and comments are always welcome. We want to hear from you. Please feel free to communicate with me by phone: 517.394.4443, fax: 517.394.0579 or by email at cawhitford@aol.com.

I encourage you to renew your membership today. If you are new to the Historical Society, I invite you to join. The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation and donations towards our many activities are always welcome.

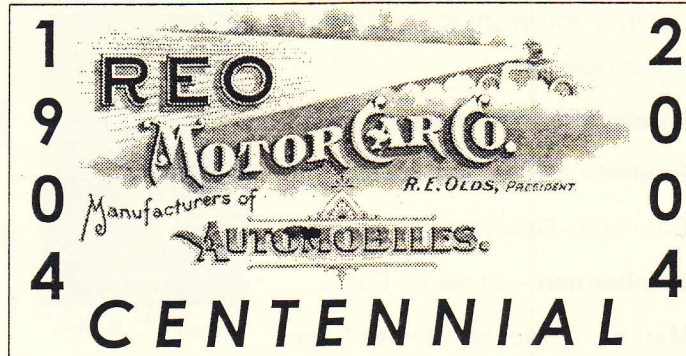
I look forward to seeing you during the coming season.

Ransom Eli Olds is generally regarded as Lansing's most famous citizen. In 18971 he founded the Olds Motor Works and went on to invent the famous Curved Dash Oldsmobile, the first mass-produced automobile. Then, in the spring of 1904, Mr. Olds abruptly severed his connection with the most successful automobile enterprise up to that time. On August 16, 1904, he incorporated his second great vehicle company, the Reo Motor Car Company.

Reo grew with the City of Lansing. The plant at 1333 South Washington, Lansing, Michigan, spanned dozens of acres. Hundreds of thousands of automobiles, trucks, buses, military vehicles and other products were manufactured there. The Company is fondly remembered for having built the world-famous Reo Royale classic car, the great Reo Speed Wagon truck and many other fine products. Thousands of Lansing families were supported by good-paying jobs at “the Reo.” As recently as 1973, Diamond Reo employed between 1,500 and 2,000 personnel.

The Reo Clubhouse was a community center for social events and recreation for over 50 years.

Reo flourished as a Lansing community-born and developed company. But nothing lasts forever. Car production ceased in 1936, and truck production finally ended in 1975. The clubhouse and



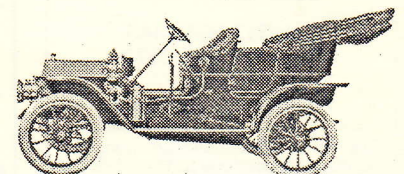
main plant were demolished in 1979. Almost all tangible reminders of Reo have disappeared from Lansing now, but Reo is far from forgotten.

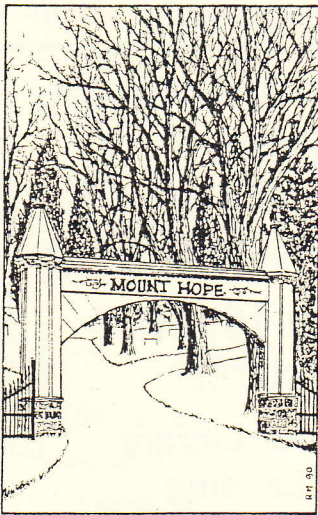
A committee of Lansing community volunteers has begun efforts to prepare to celebrate the 2004 centennial of the founding of Reo. A big “homecoming” is planned for the third week of July, 2004. It is projected to be a Thursday, Friday

and Saturday, July 15, 16 and 17, 2004, get-together in downtown Lansing for Reo retirees and those who worked for Reo, Reo car and truck restorers and enthusiasts, local history enthusiasts, and the community. The theme of the event will be a community celebration in remembrance of R. E. and Metta Olds, Reo employees, the products of the Company and the historical sites around downtown Lansing and South Washington Avenue associated with Reo in particular, and the motor vehicle industry in general.

The homecoming celebrants will join with the Greater Lansing community to visit, view and enjoy downtown Lansing's numerous parks, museums and other cultural institutions, and to view the old Reo sites and the commercial areas and residential neighborhoods which developed around the old Reo plant.

For information, contact Jim Neal: days -(517) 482-2400; evenings -(517) 332-7366.





Drawing by Robert J. Morris

A Brief History of Mt. Hope Cemetery

When Mt. Hope Cemetery opened in 1874, it was Lansing's fourth public cemetery. Some earlier burials, after 1845, took place at the northeast corner of Turner and Franklin (Grand River Avenue). In 1848, the state gave land to the new town for a burial ground on Saginaw near Larch. Only a few burials were made before that site was abandoned.

Then in 1851 James and Horatio Seymour sold 20 acres to the town for a cemetery on Saginaw nearer Pennsylvania, the site of the present Oak Park. This cemetery was in use until 1874.

In 1873, the city had purchased the 80-acre Miller farm at Mt. Hope and Aurelius for a larger cemetery, and from 1874 to 1880 nearly 1100 bodies were moved from Oak Park to Mt. Hope.

Mt. Hope is now one of three city cemeteries. North Cemetery, the oldest, began as the North family burial ground after their settlement here in 1836. It became the Delhi Township Cemetery in 1852 and was annexed to the City of Lansing in 1960. Evergreen Cemetery opened in 1930.

Mt. Hope is a beautiful rolling cemetery above Sycamore Creek. You will find Catholic and Jewish and Islamic sections; old sections for babies and paupers and the Boys' Vocational School; and for Latvians, veterans, and victims of the Kern's Hotel fire.

As you walk, watch for typical monuments with willow trees, symbols of death; unusual monuments, such as the stumps of the Longstreet family; and the special monuments to Civil War veterans and the unknown firemen.

Mt. Hope Cemetery owes its developed beauty to H. Lee Bancroft, Supervisor of Parks and Recreation from 1914-1957, who established the plans for landscaping and maintenance of all of the parks and cemeteries in Lansing.

HSGL 2001-2002 Calendar

Reserve these historic dates now!

September 19, 2001

Builders of the Town - GhostWalk 2001
Mt. Hope Cemetery - 6:30 P.M.
Corner of Mt. Hope & Aurelius, watch for the signs

October 3, 2001

Italian American Genealogy & History
with Carole Callard, Professional Genealogist, Library of Michigan
MSU Kellogg Center - 7:30 P.M.

November 14, 2001

Researching the History of Your Home
with Whitney Miller
Friend's Auditorium - 7:00 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

January 16, 2002

Michigan and the Civil War
with Shirley Hodges
Friend's Auditorium - 7:00 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

March 16, 2002

The David R. Caterino Collector's Showcase
Library Galleries, Lower Level - 10 A.M.-4 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

May 15, 2002

"Dinner on the Rails"
Annual Membership Dinner & Election
Clara's, Michigan Avenue, Lansing
Watch & Listen for Details

Quarterly Review

Historical Society of Greater Lansing
Historical Society of Greater Lansing
NEWS

BUILDERS OF THE TOWN
GhostWalk 2001

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NEWS

Join Us!
September 19, 2001
6:30 P.M.
Mt. Hope Cemetery
Corner of Mt. Hope & Aurelius

Enjoy the benefits of membership in the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Publications...

- **Historical Society of Greater Lansing NEWS**
- **The Quarterly Review** published by the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum & Oldsmobile / GM Heritage Center

Membership Application 2001-2002

Annual Renewals are due October 1, 2001 for the 2001-2002 program year.

Please accept my New Renewal membership in the
Historical Society of Greater Lansing. I have enclosed:
 \$15 Individual \$25 Family \$150 Life \$___ Gift

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Tel: (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

P.O. Box 12095
Lansing, MI 48901

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.

Thank you for your support of our programs and activities.

Join Us TODAY!



Italian American Families Begin Project with Presentation

The Italian American families in the greater Lansing area are documenting the histories of their immigrant ancestors. If you are interested in recording the genealogy of your family or ethnic group, join them on **Wednesday, October 3, 2001 at 7:30 P.M. at the MSU Kellogg Center.** Carole Callard, a professional genealogist with the Library of Michigan, will be the featured speaker. A genealogy guidebook and resource material will be distributed. Two Lansing historians, Jim MacLean of the Capital Area District Library and Craig Whitford of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing will do a presentation on Lansing history during the immigration periods. A photographic exhibit of early Lansing street scenes, Italian American businesses, traditions and festivals, will also be displayed. **There is no admission charge and is open to the public.**

This project is made possible by a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

www.lansingiac.org

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Proudly announces the

David R. Caterino Collector's Showcase

Saturday, March 16, 2002

10:00 AM to 4:00 P.M.

**Capital Area District Library
401 S. Capitol, Lansing**

If you collect history of the greater Lansing area and would like to share it with the public we invite you to join us as an exhibitor.

If you are a local author or artist of the greater Lansing area we also invite you to participate.

Please contact us today!

For an application or more information contact:

Craig A. Whitford
517.394.4443

Harry Emmons
517.485.5998

email: cawhitford@aol.com

*Historical Society
of Greater Lansing*

P.O. Box 12095 Lansing, MI 48901

Change Service Requested



It's 
*Membership
Renewal
Time*

Please RUSH to:

Historical Society of Greater Lansing
GhostWalk 2001 • Builders of the Town

Mt. Hope Cemetery
 September 19, 2001 6:30 p.m.

Pioneer	Grave	Dates		Presenter
Solomon Lansing	D	1814-1878	Blacksmith	Linda Peckham
Connection to John Lansing family, New York?				Jerry Lawler
Israel Gillett	F1	1827-1900	Architect	Linda Peckham
Joseph C. Bailey	F2	1811-1865	Banker	Craig Whitford
Smith Tooker	F34	1819-1887	Bridge Builder	Jerry Lawler
Wm. S. George	F9-10	1825-1881	Publisher	Craig Whitford
Delia Rogers	F18	1822-1887	Educator	Irene Dean
James Turner	A23	1820-1869	Merchant, Roads	Ron Turner
A.N. Hart	A6	18 - 1899	Mills	Jerry Lawler
Edm. Parmelee	A61	1812- 1888	Mills	
Sylv. Scofield	A62	1822- 1905	Saw Mill	
James W. Potter	F25	1843-1926	Lumberman	Jerry Lawler
Edw. W. Sparrow	F58	1846-1913	Businessman	Ron Turner
Orlando M. Barnes	F27	1824-1899	Attorney, Businessman	Patricia Heyden
Amanda F. Barnes	F27	1825-1921	Social Leader	
Edwin Bement	F102	1811-1880	Manufacturer	Harry Emmons
Daniel Buck	F3	1828-1908	Furniture, Undertaker	Linda Peckham