

History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

November 2004

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Historic Explorer is published during the months of September to May by the HSGL. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.

Michigan Condensed Milk Company

A THRIVING BUSINESS QUIETLY SPRUNG UP

Its Products Find Their Way to Many Eastern Seaside Cities and are Highly Praised- A Rapidly Growin Enterprise.

Condensed milk has become one of the world's necessities. The Michigan Condensed Milk Company is the successor of several industries which have existed on the same spot and is evidently much more prosperous that [than] any of its predecessors.



The original buildings of the plant, located opposite the shops of the Lansing Iron Works on Shiawassee street, and close to the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway, were erected by the late James I. Mead, for a flouring mill and chair factory. It was subsequently fitted for

cold storage, then became a butterine* factory, and three years ago was refitted in its present form, for the propose of condensing milk, and is doing a large and prosperous business, receiving at present, 40,000 pounds of milk per day, from different portions of the State. Besides the local receipts, two cars gather the daily supply as follows: One starts from Detroit, on the D.L.&N Railroad, and the other on the D.M.&G.H. Ry., running from Saranac to Durand, each stopping at all stations on their route. The daily product from the present supply is over 300 cases, or 15,000 pound cans. It is expected the supply will be doubled during the coming season, and the factory has ample facilities for condensing, and packing that amount. Every department is equally complete. All the cans are made in the company's shop by the aid of the latest improved machinery. They are then tested, labeled, and taken to a large room where they are filled by machinery, and the caps are placed in

Michigan Condensed Milk, continued...

position, ready for sealing, after which process they are ready for packing in wooden cases, which are delivered to the factory in 'shooks' and manufactured their. The goods are principally shipped to New York where the house has an office under the immediate charge of its vice president. The company also has an office at Chicago, and an agent at Sacramento, Cal. The shipments now average a carload or 600 cases, once in two days. Some of the products are shipped westward, but the market is chiefly in the eastern seacoast towns. The company has a paid up capital of \$100,000, and is officered as follows, James M. Turner, Lansing president and treasure; H.F. Parsons, New York, vice president; C.T. Rogers, Lansing, general manager; and H.A Farrand, Lansing, secretary. A.W Wright, of Alma, is also a stockholder and director,

*A substance prepared from animal fat with some other ingredients intermixed, as an imitation of butter.

August 23, 1913

"Do You Remember --" and "Home-Coming" Interviews

"Grading of Washington ave was as great an undertaking for the city of Lansing during the late fifties as was the construction of the Panama canal by the nation of the present generation' said Allison A. Nichols, treasurer of the board of education, and former merchant who recounted several incidents in the early history of Lansing which were recalled by home-coming reminiscences.

"Thompson and Hunter were contractors for the grading project. They were without government support in the enterprise and went broke financially as did several of their backers. I worked on the job and had the distinction of being one of the most popular men (small boys) on the job. I was given an ovation every morning before I could get my coat off, I would be hailed with Nicholas, Nicholas: water, water."

"I remember one hot day after the close of school, that I went to see the contractors and applied for a job. They looked me over and remarked that I was rather small but asked if I thought I could carry water 10 hours a day. I replied that I could and asked them what they would pay. Hunter said that 40 cents a day ought to be enough for a little shaver like me, but Thompson said that they would pay me 50 cents if I would work all day, so I went to work.

"My first task was to locate the nearest wells as the work proceeded for the entire distance from Franklin ave to Main st. There was no city water supply at that time and not every house had a well. I worked my full six days and during Saturday I thought all day of the \$3 coming to me, which was big money for a boy in those days. On account of the scarcity of money, payment was made by orders on stores. When I approached the paymaster my heart sank when he asked if I would take an order on a store. But I answered No sir, and he gave me the largest week's wages I had ever earned.

"Wages in the fifties averaged from \$1,00 to \$2,25 a day and high cost of living was a word unknown. Board was obtained at \$1,75 to \$2,25 a week and board always included lodging and frequently washing and mending.

continued on page

One Man Beat Eleven

"I have been interested in reading the accounts by former mayors of the early municipal affairs of Lansing," continues Mr. Nichols. "It reminds me of the time when I was president of the board of education in 1893 Eleven members of the board thought we ought to have an addition to the high school building or remodel the then inadequate structure. Mr. Randall now of Houghton, was the single opponent to the plan.

We called a meeting of citizens at Mead's hall, which was the largest in the city at that time. This building will also be remembered by many as the opera house in which many of the old time plays were given. Our purposes was to ask the citizens to vote money for the improvement at this school meeting.

"Randall, who was an active opponent, got busy and distributed circulars the night before praising the present facilities and making the point that the high school which the city than had was good enough. The auditorium was completely filled and we had not gone far into the meeting when it was made plain (plain) to the other 11 that Randall had us beaten. The proposition for an enlarged school building was voted down.

"We had many a stormy session of the school board that year. Many who were members will recall one occasion in particular, one, which ex Mayor C.J. Davis and Mr. Randall nearly came to, blows, when Davis threatened to impeach Randall. I hope Mr. Randall will return for the home-coming so that we may show him our splendid new high school. Building.



"It was during the war that the old Methodist church was dedicated, said Mr. Nichols in reply to an inquiry regarding the old structure which formerly housed the Central Methodist congregation. The occasion of the dedication was a memorable one, the legislature then meeting was adjourned in order to permit senators and representatives to hear Bishop Simpson at that time one of the nation's greatest speakers. The structure was the city's first brick church, and was erected on the present site of the Tussing building in 1863.

"There were but the two schools in this part of the city at that time including the Townsend st school and Central. Misses Roger's Female college was considered a splendid (splendid) institution, but my only acquaintance with it was in a social way. It was customary for the college to keep open house

Historical Society of Greater Lansing Needs your Help!

As many of you know the Capital Area District Library has made some major improvements to the Main Library this year. These major projects included: re-carpeting the first floor, adding a children's bathroom, installing a new circulation desk and furniture in the lobby, installing a freight elevator, and new landscaping outside the building. Given these substantial investments in the Main Library this year, and the need to focus their resources in other branches to replace furniture urgently needed and/or unsafe, CADL is not in a financial position to provide new furniture for the Local History Room.

Now that we have regular open hours in the Forest Parke Memorial Library and Archives, it would be nice to have attractive tables and comfortable chairs, as well as improved lighting for our patrons and researchers. On the back of the Donation form are pictures of the chairs and tables that we would like to purchase to replace those that have been used since the building was built in 1964!!! Donor/Memorial Plaques will be added to this furniture.

Tax Advantages of Charitable Contributions for Michigan Residents

Tax Laws encourage giving to the Capital Area District Library

With these tax advantages, the actual cost of a gift to the Capital Area District Library can be far less than the amount of the gift. This tax chart is intended to serve as a guide in helping you decide how much you contribute. You are encouraged to consult with your tax advisor to determine the exact cost of your gift depending on your tax situation. Information is based on the Internal Revenue and Michigan Tax codes as currently written and amended for the 2003 tax year.

| Joint Return for Michigan Residents* | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Annual Contribution | Federal Tax Savings | State Tax** | Actual Cost of Contribution |
| \$100 | \$14 | \$50 | \$36 |
| \$250 | \$35 | \$125 | \$90 |
| \$500 | \$84 | \$200 | \$216 |
| \$1,000 | \$224 | \$200 | \$576 |
| \$2,500 | \$644 | \$200 | \$1,656 |
| \$5,000 | \$1,344 | \$200 | \$3,456 |
| \$10,000 | \$2,744 | \$200 | \$7,056 |

***These figures are provided as a guideline, always consult with your tax advisor to determine the exact cost of your gift. Figures based on Marginal Tax Rate of 28%.**

**** Applies only to Michigan residents.**

The Capital Area District Library is a governmental agency not a non-profit organization. Donations to the library may be used as a charitable donation for individuals who itemize deductions on their Federal Income Tax Return and may also be used as a credit towards the individual's Michigan Income Tax Return.

Thank you for considering the Capital Area District Library as a recipient of your support.

Passing of a former Member

The passing of Joseph L Druse Friday, October 22, 2004 was a great loss for the Lansing area. Dr.

Druse was a charter member of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and the second president of the organization. He was well known in the organization for his work and kindness. His

work in the area of local history included his publications. **Pulpit and Prayer in Earliest Lansing; Death and Marriage Items Reported in the Lansing State Republican, 1855-1860; Evolution of Michigan Townships and Probate Records of Ingham County, Michigan.** It is a tremendous loss for the local history community. The Historical Society of Greater Lansing sends

Exhibit

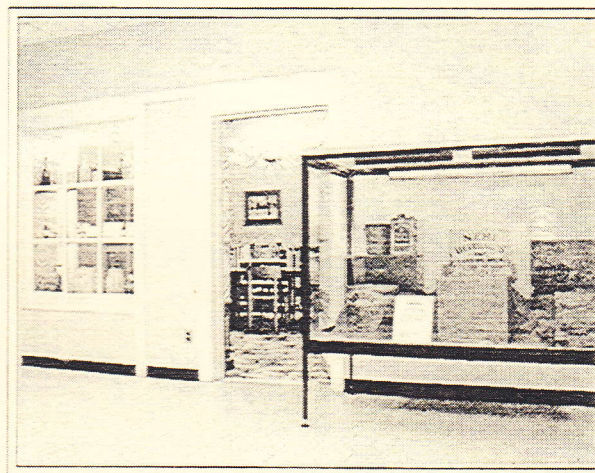
Tommaso Juglaris: A Capitol Artist, appearing in the Michigan Historical Museum's first-floor special exhibits gallery from October 12, 2004, through January 9, 2005

Local History News

It has been very busy in the Forest Parke Library and Archives. We completed our portion of the "Making of Modern Michigan" digital libraries project first in a field of fifty libraries. The images from the Edmonds Photographic Collection should be available on-line by December. Thanks go out to David Rumohr and Jim Heyden for their work, and a special thanks goes to Doug Johnson for an extraordinary effort on this project.

The collection constantly grows. We recently acquired a family collection including many photographs, and manuscripts concerning the Gladmer Theater and Lansing history dating into the late 19th century. The FPL&A now houses 13 additional boxes of Lansing real-estate records that will complement the Stebbins Collection. Additionally, the Lansing JCs are currently transferring their photos and documents to the archive.

On open Saturdays the volunteers are inventorying collections and taking steps to preserve photos and documents. Historical Society VP Harry Emmons is working on a special automotive collection. Finding Aids, or descriptions of the inventoried collections, will be available on our new website coming in 2005. Soon we will begin working on local history collections at select branch libraries, and as our collection grows we will need more volunteers to keep up and make the material available for research.

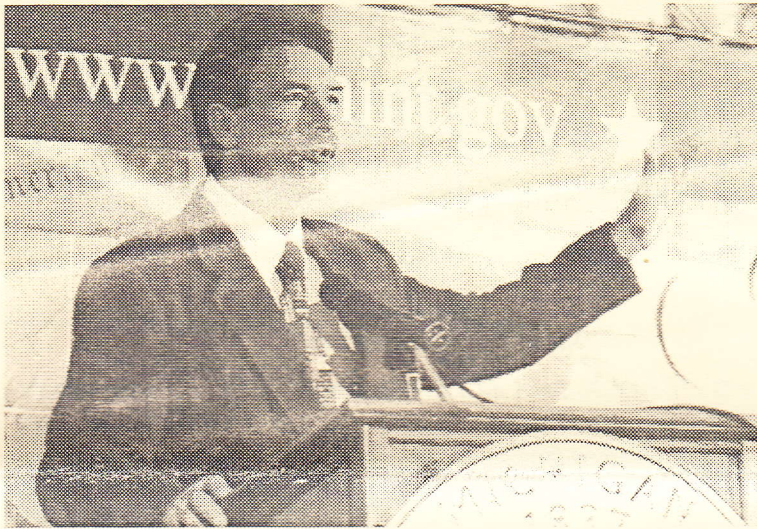


From the desk of David Votta

Adventures in Michigan's Past

Presented by Larry B. Massie

On Wednesday, November 17th the author, historian and acclaimed storyteller Larry B. Massie, will take you along on a pilgrimage into Michigan's colorful past. He will present vignettes featuring Indian chiefs, intrepid pioneers, salty Great Lakes ship captains and many others. Through costume and dialect, Massie transforms himself into living characters you won't soon forget.



Come join us at the Main Library of the Capital Area District Library for

Join Us...

Wednesday, November 12, 2004

7:00 P.M. Main Library

401 S. Capitol Ave

*Presented by the Historical Society of Greater Lansing
and the Capital Area District Library*

The Gift Depot

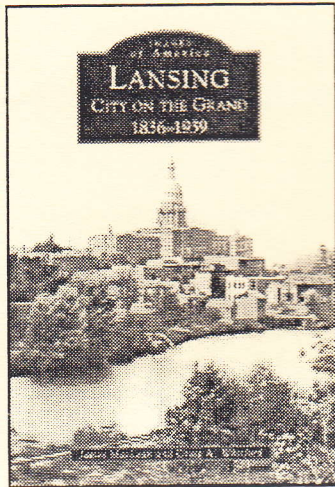
The following gifts will be available for purchase during our Local History programs and at local bookstores

1 Give the Gift of History with a membership in the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Individual Memberships: \$15/year
Family Memberships: \$25/year

2 Lansing: City On The Grand, 1836-1939

By James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford



Lansing's history as the capital of Michigan began with a legislative mandate in the 1835 State Constitution, which required that the seat of government be moved from Detroit in 1847. The result - the emergence of a new capital city on the banks of the majestic Grand River - allowed Lansing to cultivate a world-class community based in government, education, the automotive industry and entrepreneurial achievements. This book features more than 200 historic photographs that document the dynamic capital city during its pivotal first century, from the pioneer era to the inception of the Olds Motor Vehicle Company and through the eve of World War II.

\$19.99 (plus tax)

Published by Arcadia,
An Imprint of Tempus Publishing, Inc.

3 AIRPORT KID - Learning To Fly

By Marion "Babe" Weyant Ruth and Craig A. Whitford



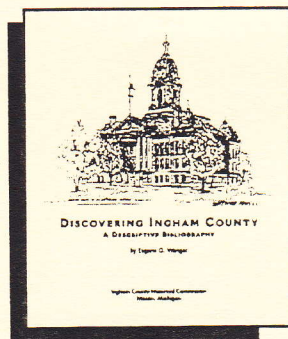
The true account of Lansing's most famous aviatrix - Marion "Babe" Weyant, a teenage girl with a passion for aviation and a desire to take flight. Originally written by Babe in 1936, the story traces her adventure from 1931 until soloing at the age of 18 in 1936. Over 150 photographs and vintage news clippings are featured in 96 pages, capturing the excitement of her journey, the pilots she encountered and her interest in aviation which she continues to share.

\$20.00 (plus tax)

Published by
Michigan Historical Press, Lansing

**4 Discovering Ingham County
A Descriptive Bibliography**

By Eugene G. Wanger



This 100+ page edition is a sequel to Mr. Wanger's *INGHAM COUNTY HISTORIES: An Annotated Bibliography for Students, Buffs and Collectors...* "an interesting and useful guide for discovering the history and historical resources of Ingham County, The Capital County of Michigan..." Published by the Ingham County Historical Commission.

\$15.00 (plus tax)

Published by the
Ingham County Historical Commission

Now available at local boostores Two new books on Lansing History

R.E. Olds and Industrial Lansing

By Michael Rodriguez

Upon the dedication of a new Capitol building in 1879, the city of Lansing was just beginning to emerge from the swampy wilderness of its recent past.

As industry began to take root along the banks of the Grand River, Ransom Eli Olds brought his father's motor shop to national prominence with advancements in gasoline and steam engines, and then horseless carriages. By the early 20th century, Oldsmobile became the world's first mass producer of automobiles and Olds had moved on to found a second car company, making Lansing the first Auto City. Through

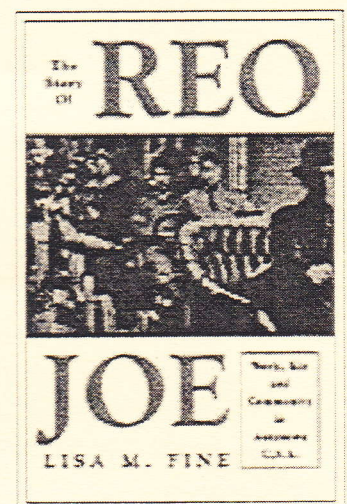


these efforts, Olds rose to become one of the nation's greatest industrialists and entrepreneurs. Using primary documents and historical images, this book traces the industrial history of the Capital City within the context of one of the 20th century's greatest entrepreneurs, R.E. Olds. Michael Rodriguez is a Humanities Librarian at Michigan State University and a resident of REO Town. He is the author of Detroit's Belle Isle: Island Park Gem, also published by Arcadia.

The Story of REO JOE

By Lisa M. Fine

Lisa M. Fine tells the Reo story from the workers' perspective on the vast social, economic, and political changes that took place in the first three quarters of the twentieth century. She explores their understanding of the city where they lived, the industry that employed them, and the ideas about work, manhood, race, and family that shaped their identities. The Story of Reo Joe is, then, a book about historical memory; it challenges us to reconsider what we think we know about corporate welfare, unionization, de-industrialization, and working-class leisure.



The Forest Parke Memorial Library and Archives need Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to work at the Forest Parke Memorial Library and Archives, according to coordinator David Votta.

"We urge all Society members to help out," said Votta. The Forest Parke Memorial Library and Archives will be open the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Volunteers are being asked to work 4-hour shifts. Duties will be greeting visitors, answer questions, and help to organize collections.

Call David Votta at 367-6305

Don't Delay!!!!

Reserve These Historic Dates

November 17, 2004

Larry Massie Michigan's Storyteller

Spend an evening with Michigan's premiere storyteller and historian. It is an evening you won't want to miss.

Friends Auditorium, Lower Level - 7 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

January 19, 2005

Craig Whitford and Jim MacLean present

Lansing's Historic Fires

Join us for an evening of examining the historic fires in Lansing that helped to shape the city.

Friends Auditorium, Lower Level - 7 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

There is no charge to attend either of these events.

LIFE
Robert Morris & Linda Peckham

Please RUSH to:

Address Correction Requested

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

