

History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

January 2005

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*It's
Membership
Renewal
Time*

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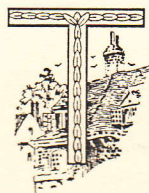
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Historic Explorer is published during the months of September to May by the HSGL. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.

PIONEERING

By D.B. Moon



The first log house my father's family occupied after landing in the wild woods of Michigan the year of 1854 they lived in until a new one was built. In 1861 the new house was started, and was finished and our family moved into it the year of 1861. The new house was built of logs same as the old one but larger.

Soon after we had moved into the new house, (Mother and eight children; Father had joined the Union Army.) there was a hard wind and rainstorm, a regular hurricane, and we thought our new house was doomed; but for all it shook, and trembled it stood the storm.

We had a fine young orchard that was loaded with apples, and peaches nearly ripe, and about all were blown off, and the fruit trees nearly wrecked. We also had a fine sugar bush of about 500 large sugar-maple trees, and about every tree was blown down. Some of the trees were twisted off by the wind as though they were small reed. After that storm, the land was cleared, the trees were cut into wood, and lots of it was logged up and burned.

Note, that new log house that an old time pioneer mother and her eight children moved into the year of 1862 is still about 1 and 1-2 miles South of Delta Center, Eaton County. It is owned by Wayne Lamerson, who lives there with his mother at the present time; Lamerson was one of the employees of F. N. Arbaugh store selling drygoods, a few years ago.

After my mother and her brood of children had moved into the house the fall of 1862, until I left home to learn the trade of carpenter

all kinds of things, and events happened, and the main one was the Civil War: and now I am going to tell what we young Americans did to help win the war.

Paid to Enlist

Civil war days were trying times for everyone; and though I was but a young lad, I can still remember how excited the men and women were and also us youngsters; and in 1863 when Lincoln made a call for 300,000 more recruits, they were war meetings in every school house around the country; at that time there was money raised (I believe by taxation) and new recruits were paid \$800.00 to \$1200.00.

During the Civil War I made a cannon. The barrel was about a foot long made from an oldtime rifle barrel that a blacksmith gave me, I made a two wheel cart and mounted the barrel on the cart, and when we boys could get the gunpowder we kept it hot.

That same cannon can be seen any day at my home, mounted on a pedestal in my back yard, the same old ramrod, hand made of hickory is in the barrel, and a piece of the iron chain that was used to draw it, is there still, and cut into the wood by an old time jackknife. That cannon is one of my most prized keepsakes, and every time I pass it, I can almost hear it say "Let's Go!"

In 1863 when a war meeting was being held at a school house one mile north of Delta Center, Eaton County we youngsters drew the cannon 2 and 1-2 miles to the meeting and there in front of the school house a bunch of us young Americans kept the cannon hot until past midnight. Talk about patriots, we youngsters were

Continued on Page 2



Join Us...

January 19, 2005: Historic Lansing Fires

with James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford. Please join us for a photographic tour of Historic Lansing Fires and the Lansing Fire Department. **Friend's Auditorium - 7:00 P.M.**

Pioneering, continued...

the real article; boys today don't know what real fun is, I see them many times, trying to amuse themselves by bouncing a ball against the side of a house, pitching marbles, and pennies for keeps the kind of amusement that's learning them to gamble, while in the time of the Civil War, boys wanted excitement; and besides we never had any pennies to pitch and if I had every played marbles for keeps, Mother would have spanked me, and sent me to bed supperless.

The year of 1864 Abraham Lincoln was murdered, and when the sad news came by telegraph to Lansing, the telegraph office was run by Alfred Beamer, and my brother Andrew Moon chanced to be alone in the office with Beamer when the news came, (There were no telephones) Beamer turned to Andrew and said "Lincoln has been assassinated," and my brother was the second person in Lansing to hear of Lincoln's death.

Celebrating the 4th of July

During the summer of 1864 four of us young Michiganders celebrated the 4th of July in the good old time way. The city of Lansing at that time was just a spot on the map. Everyone that lived in the country was poor in cash but in ambition, good health and honor they were rich indeed; I was living on the farm with Mother and my older brothers; it was seldom that I ever saw any money, and never had any of my own as boys do these days, but by saving every penny I could get my hands on during the forepart of the summer, I managed to have fifty cents to celebrate the fourth, and fifty cents was a lot of money for a youngster to have in those days.

The night of the July 3rd, four of us country lads slept in a barn on the hay mow and were up at one a.m. July 4th and started the celebration with the cannon that was used during the war meet-

ing, we had plenty of gun powder, and to start things going, fired about a dozen shots in front of my home which brought Mother out and she told us to scamper away from there. Then we drew the cannon 1 and 1/2 miles to a blacksmith shop on Delta Center, Eaton County. The owner of the shop (Gill Quishman) had told us we could use the forge to heat an iron rod to touch off the loaded cannon, as we had no fuses and it was primed with powder. We kept the cannon hot by constant firing until daylight, then back home ate some breakfast, then footed it over the rough roads barefooted eight miles to Lansing. And there we kept busy all day; at noon we were a hungry lot of kids; and we had very little money but we had a grand feast just the same.

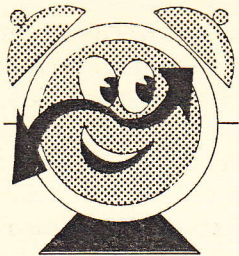
At that time a brother, (or cousin) of Ex-Governor Bagley kept a grocery just south of where the American State Savings Bank now stands and four hungry boys stood around a barrel (for a table) and ate crackers and cheese, with a glass of lemonade to wash it down. And Bagley charged us 15c for the four meals; and there were not waiter top tip. After dinner we commenced to look for new worlds to conquer; Fred Trostle, one of Lansing's merchants, kept a fun shop nearly opposite from where the Gladmer Theatre is, and we headed for his shop; Trostle sold us powder and gun caps and loaned us an old muzzle loading pistol. To load it you turned in a charge of powder, and then plenty of paper, or rags, well pounded down, then a cap, and Bang! And we kept it hot most of the afternoon. Then before I realized what I had done, I shot a hold through a strange boys pants leg, and presto!—I had a fight on my hands. But the boys saw me through, and no one was hurt much. And

Continued on Page 3



Lansing City Directory Ad, 1904

Attention All Members



*It's
Membership
Renewal
Time*

*Please Consider
A Gift Membership
for Friends and Family
in Support of Your
Society*

Membership Application 2005

Annual Renewals are due for the 2005 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.



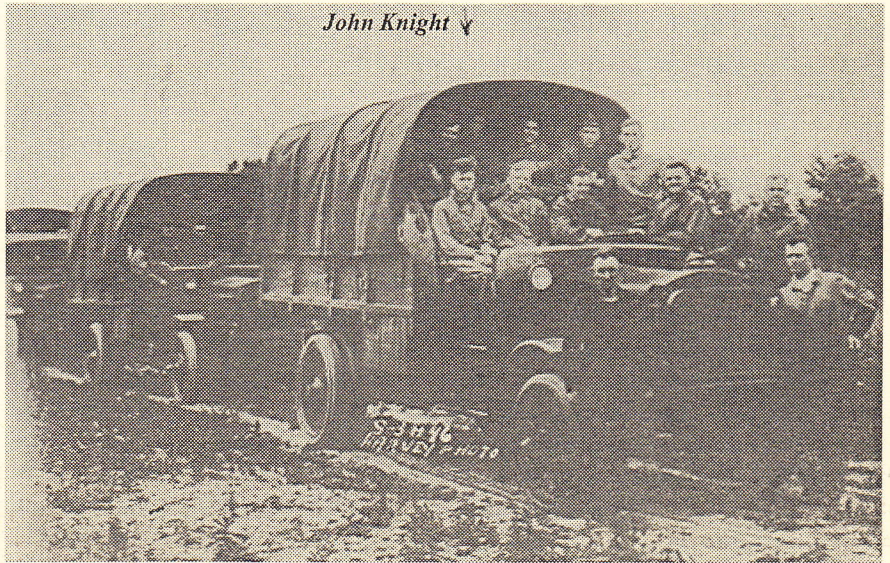
Images from Yesterday

June 24, 1919 - East Lansing, MI

"Just to let you know that I have not forgotten the neighbors and that I am well and like the place fine. Best regards to you and the Doyle family.

*John Knight, Co. B. Armory
U.S. Training Detachment
East Lansing, Mich."*

Message on the back of a real photo postcard mailed from East Lansing to Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Pioneering, continued...

after that glorious celebration we walked eight miles back home after dark. My fifty cents was all spent, and all I had to show for it was a lead pencil, a bunch of firecrackers, and a lemon. Imagine boys walking 16 miles over rough country roads besides the energy spent in the city, and eating one meal of crackers and cheese just to celebrate the Fourth!

(The) woods were full of wild game of many kinds. The swamps were alive with muskrats, otters, beavers, ducks, geese, snakes, and mosquitoes; and in the woods there were plenty of wolves, bears, deer, turkeys, coons, squirrels, partridge, porcupines, gophers, skunks, and even wildcats.

The most remarkable thing was that when these families moved their goods out into the woods there were no houses on their farms to move into.

What Did They Do?

The farm bought by Sands Moon had a clearing of about an acre on it. The trees had been cut down and partly burned up and a small log house had been started by the recent owner. The side walls were built of logs, but there was no roof built; just the outside walls, not even openings for door and windows. But that didn't dampen the ambition of the men and their pioneer wives, not a bit; they found a way. On an adjoining piece of land there was a vacant log house about 16x20 feet in size. It had one room with two glassless windows, one door, a stone fireplace in one end of the room, and a low chamber above, with a ladder to get to it.

The three families moved into that log hut and started to keep house. (Just give that a thought.) Twenty-nine human beings, 6 grown people and twenty-three children, the oldest a boy 17 years old (Andrew W. Moon. It was the good luck of the writer of this article to be the youngest (a baby).

My father was what was known as a Pennsylvania Dutchman, and his brightest guiding star (when a young man) was a blond, blue-eyed Scotch lass by the name of Mary Wiltse, whom he married in 1835, and took to Cattaraugus County, New York to live until they came to Michigan in 1854; on the new farm the family lived and flourished.

In 1862 my father enlisted in the Union Army at the time of the Civil war and died in 1864. His widow wanted all her boys to be with her on the farm. (But I rebelled.) On that farm I had grown from a baby to a lad of 16; then I was convinced that my education was about complete of the wild woods and one day when an older brother and I were hoeing corn in a field by the side of a swamp, I said to him, "Mart, I'm done. I won't work another minute on this farm."

Liberty, or Bust

He tried to bluff me, but my mind was made up, and I wouldn't stand for any bluffs. With that old hoe I cut up two or three hills of corn, threw my hoe as far as I could into the swamp, said goodbye, and started I knew not where, but I was sure I was on my way, barefooted, a pair of old patched overalls, a cotton shirt, and a straw hat, and not a penny of money to my name.

I took a fee-line across lots to the main road and id not go to the house; I was afraid to see mother at that time as she was opposed to my leaving home. I walked about four miles, where there was anew house being built, got a job at \$15.00 a month and stuck for three summers (7 months each) with the same contractor and the same wages.

Those three summers of work were no 6 or 8 hour days of work, they were from sunrise 'till sundown, except for the time taken to eat meals. I made my home at mother's farm on Sundays and during the winters attended the country school.

And while I am attending the country school, I'll let my story rest and tell a few events that happened in those early days.

When I left home at 16 years, I got my first job working on a house that was being built on a farm owned by a family named Eicher. The farm is in Delta township, Eaton County, about four miles west of Lansing on St. Joseph. Eicher was a carpenter by trade; when the first brick building was built at the southwest corner of Washington and Michigan Avenues, (where the J.C. Penney store is now) Eicher was employed there during the construction.

Scene of Tragedy

When the scaffolds were being taken down, he fell and was killed. His widow and children remained on the farm. On of her

Continued on Page 4

Pioneering, continued...

children was a fine little girl named Dora; that girl, Dora is living today not far from my home on South Logan street. (Mrs. Dora Bailey.)

The merchant we all know by the name of O.H. Bailey, doing business on west Ionia street, is her son. And I still remember how the little lad used to dig, grate, and peddle horseradish around the western part of Lansing to get the first real dollars to build the fine brick stores he is proud to do business in today. O.H. Bailey was not the kind of lad that drowned himself in booze, and wrecked cemeteries; he is self-made and has done a fine job. There were many of the same brand back in those days; they had the will-power, the ambition, and, as Teddy Roosevelt would say, "the guts to buck against the whole world, and win."

Now I will go back to the time I was getting my education in the country school, that I have mentioned.

First Contract

After I had worked three seasons to learn the business of building, I was 19. By that time I had decided to be a building contractor, and the summer I was 20 years old, took the job to do all the carpenter work, to build and complete a large frame house for Henry E. Porter of Eaton County. I did all the carpenter work myself without any help, and it took me six months, from April to October, and I worked every day except Sunday during that time, from daylight 'till dark, except for the time I took to eat. When the job was done I was paid in full for my six months work.

\$300.00, I had not spent a dollar; I had worked every day except Sunday and did not have any time to spend money. When did the country boy do with his \$300.00? In these times of leisure, and spending of money, the first thought would be an automobile, and time spent joy riding, or perhaps start a beer garden, and try to earn a lot of easy money, and there are many other things in this age that would soon absorb that hard earned cash.

But what I did was to buy what clothes I needed and then loan \$200.00 to a farmer at seven per cent interest; then I came to Lansing and bought a scholarship in H.P. Bartlet's commercial college, good for two winters of 5 months each. The country school was all the schooling I ever had, except two winters in Bartlet's College later, the winters of 1871 and 1872.


While attending the college I rented a room on the third floor of the Beck building (since burned, and rebuilt); the Louis Beck clothing store now. The room was at the rear of the third floor, and as there was no heat furnished, I bought an old cookstove, and wood from the country, heated the room a little morning and night, when I was not in school and cooking my own meals, (two each day) and there I lived for 5 months each winter from November 1st until April 1st. The room I furnished myself, with an old couch, a table of my own making, a chair, and a lamp that burned kerosene. The other things I were not china, cut glass, or silver plated, but just he same, I lived and flourished. There was no city water at that time, and the water I needed I drew from a well near by, by tying a pal on a rope and letting it down to the water. Many times the water in the pail would be frozen over with about an inch of solid ice; I never drank anything but cold water during the two winters of rooming there. (And I have never drunk tea at any time in my life.)

About the time I was 16 years old, I read the story of how Abe Lincoln strived to get an education; I wanted a fair one

myself and made up my mind if Lincoln could, I could. My mother and brothers were not wealthy, and could not help me. I could see it was up to me to do what I wanted and I never was sorry for doing what I did. That is the way the country boy worked to get what little education he had. I have always been a booklover and have more than 1,000 volumes of books in my home; I have read most of them.

There were many young men back 50 or 60 years ago, to show how many boys, deep in the wild woods of Michigan, did not have the chance in life, but struck out for themselves, while in this age they are pampered, and petted from the time they are born. The mothers will insist that Georgie never had the chance. Why in the name of common sense, didn't he go after the chance?

Many of the girls, and boys when they have graduated from our city schools cant write a readable letter or work an example in common fractions; they haven't learned the things that are really necessary. I know for I have a granddaughter that tells me her teacher gives her an example to take home at night and tells her to bring the answer to school the next day. Now ain't that a helluvway to teach a 12-year-old girl arithmetic?

When I was in school, I was required to go to the blackboard work out my example, take a teacher's pointer, and explain in detail to the rest of the class how and why I had done it. In that way the solution of an example was stamped on my mind in a way I never forgot. Perhaps minds were different back in the seventies. Who knows? 

Election Time Approaching

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In May, we will elect Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary & Treasurer) and four Trustees for the 2005-2006 year. Nominations will be accepted until April 15.

If you are interested, or know someone who is, in serving as an Officer or Trustee please contact:

Craig Whitford, Nominations
Tel: 517.394.4443

The Gift Depot

The following gifts will be available for purchase during our January 19, 2005 meeting.

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

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

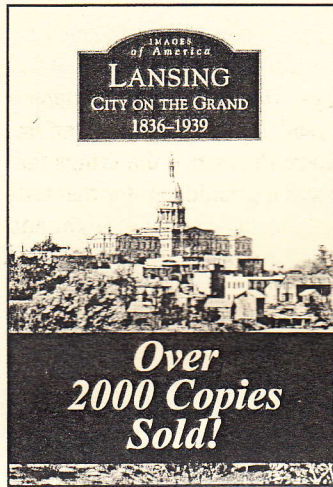
- 2 Lansing: City On The Grand, 1836-1939

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.



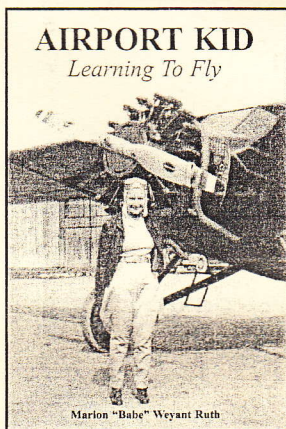
- 3 AIRPORT KID - Learning To Fly

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



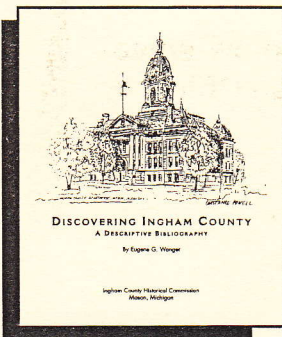
- 4 Discovering Ingham County
A Descriptive Bibliography

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



HSGL 2005 Calendar

Reserve these historic dates now!

January 19, 2005

Historic Lansing Fires
with James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford

Please join us for a photographic tour of Historic Lansing Fires and the Lansing Fire Department.

Friend's Auditorium - 7:00 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

March 16, 2005

To
Be
Announced

Friend's Auditorium - 7:00 P.M.
Capital Area District Library, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing

May 7, 2005

Ingham County Courthouse Centennial &
The David R. Caterino Collector's Showcase

Collectors from throughout Ingham County gather to share their collections of photographs, memorabilia and more. There is no charge for displaying your collection of local history artifacts. Our showcase this year will be held within the beautiful & historic Ingham County Courthouse.

Ingham County Courthouse - 10 A.M.-4 P.M.
Mason

May 18, 2005

Annual Dinner & Walking Tour in Historic
Old Town - North Lansing

with Bob Morris & Linda Peckham
Reservations are required for this evening filled with the history of North Lansing. Enjoy fellowship with area historians and history buffs, as well as a tour of the Old Town business district.

Ingham County Courthouse Centennial Celebration

1905 2005

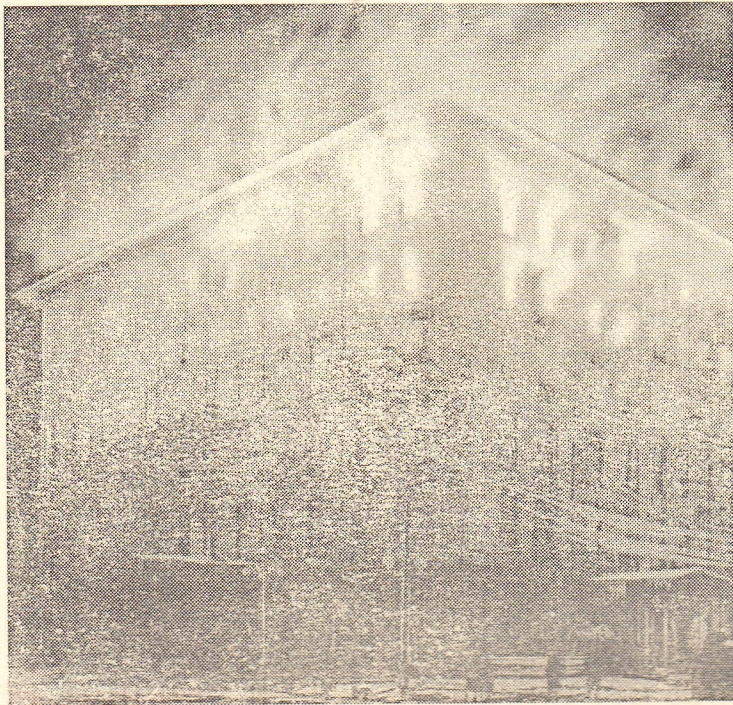


May 7, 2005

Mason, Michigan

Visit: www.ingham.org

This is #07!



Hotel Downey Fire - February 6, 1912

Historic Lansing Fires

with James MacLean & Craig A. Whitford

Through vintage photographs, Jim and Craig will take you on a journey through several of Lansing's most memorable and historic fires along with images of Lansing Fire Department equipment through the years.

Join Us...

Wednesday,
January 19, 2005
7:00 P.M.

Friend's Auditorium

Main Library - Capital Area District Library
401 S. Capitol, Lansing

483303+1119

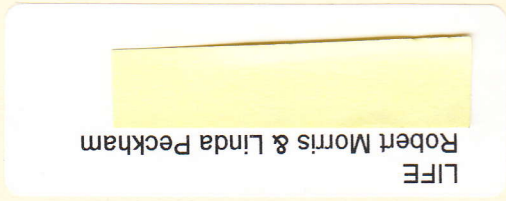
See Page 2

Time

Renewal

Membership

970



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