

First Log House built in Lansing October 13, 1841

**John W. Burchard First White man to settle in this section of State —
Joab Page came here a few years later
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The first white man to settle in this vicinity was John W. Burchard, who came to this part of the state 72 years ago and erected a log house in the wilderness on a site near the corner where Center and Wall sts. intersect. On October 13, 1841, he had purchased of James Seymour a tract of land adjacent to the dam at the north side, including the water power rights. After building his house where he lived with his wife and two children, he began the construction of a dam, completing it the same year. Preparations were being made by Burchard to erect a mill, when a flood in the spring of 1844 caused a break in the dam. While ascertaining the extent of the damages caused by the flood, Burchard, who was in a canoe, was drawn under the fall of water and drowned. Shortly after his family left and the land and water privileges became the property of James Seymour.

Mr. Seymour had located lands where the city of Lansing is now situated by entries in the United States land office in 1835, 1836 and 1837. Others, who located lands on the site of the present city of Lansing, were Isaac Townsend and Frederick Bushness.

Joab Page Settles Here

Following Mr. Burchard's death, Joab Page, then living in Vevay township, was induced by Mr. Seymour to move to the north side where Mr. Burchard had build a house. With Mr. Page came his three sons-in-law: Whitney Smith, George Pease, and Alvin Rolfe. Other pioneers settled in this section of the state about that time included John N. Bush, Lansing oldest living pioneer resident. Others who settled here at that period were the late D.W. Buck and the late F.M. Cowles.

Lansing's growth was slow, the population increasing little until 1847 when the capitol was located here. Then temporary quarters were succeeded by hotels and business places.

There were no roadways and not until 1849 was a two-plank side walk constructed. The walk was built on Washington ave. Later a walk was laid on Franklin ave.

Three Sections to the City

In the early days there were three sections composing the city of Lansing. The oldest part of the city was known as Lower Town and was located on the north side. Middle Town extended from Kalamazoo st on Washington ave to Ionia st. Upper Town included the settlement that sprung up south of what is now Kalamazoo st. There was a cluster of stores at main and Cedar sts. Bush & Thomas starting a general store there in 1848. Each settlement has its own interests in those days and there was no small rivalry between them. The sectional names were preserved for years after the three settlements merged into one city.

The three establishments sprung up around bridges. There was a bridge at Franklin ave. and another at Main st. and subsequently one at Michigan. The location of the capitol in the square where the old state block is now situated gave Middle Town an added importance. The capitol was completed and ready for occupancy December 1, 1847.

It was first decided to call this city the town of Michigan. Later the name was change to Lansing, principally through the efforts of early settlers who came from a town of that name in New York state.

The growth of Lansing in the early days was dependent to a large extent upon the location of the capitol here, and the construction of a new state house here added much to the city's prosperity and assured the permanency of the growth of the city.

Although the act of locating the capitol here was approved in 1847, there was talk for several years subsequently of moving Michigan's seat of government elsewhere, but the erection of a capitol building did much to settle matters, and a new life began in Lansing.

Not Incorporated as City

Lansing never was incorporated as a village; it was part of the township of Lansing, until incorporated as a city on April 15, 1859. Soon thereafter public improvements began. Washington ave was graded from Main st to Franklin ave. and sidewalks built. Hotels were constructed, business places erected and home provided to meet the steadily increasing population.

Manufactories were instituted, beginning with saw mills and potteries at the north side. A foundry was established on Race st. by James Turner and a brick yard was operated by James Beal in 1850. There was a carding mill, also at the north side, and latter a cooper shop was opened. Lansing continued to grow industrially until at the present time the product of Lansing's factories is as diversified as that of any city in the state.

The first railroad into Lansing was completed as far as the north side in the fall of 1862. During the next ten years other steam railroads were constructed and the city now has four steam lines in addition to the Michigan United Traction company's interurban lines to St. Johns, Owosso and Jackson. The first street railway was completed in 1886. It was operated as a horse car line until 1890 when electricity replaced horses as a motive power.