

**PIONEERS RECALL EARLY DAYS WHEN CITY WAS YOUNG**

**SEVENTY-FIVE PERSONS WHO LIVED IN LANSING FIFTY YEARS AGO ON  
STAGE AT BIJOU YESTERDAY.**

**SCENES AND INCIDENTS**

**RECOUNTED BY VENERABLE RESIDENTS WHO ARE HONORED WITH  
PLACE ON ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM**

**BIG AUDIENCE PRESENT**

**Those of Younger Generation Listen intently to Tales of Those Who Helped to  
Make Capital City of Michigan What it is Today — Benediction by Venerable Dr.  
Haze**

**State Republican April 16, 1909**

Silver-bowed men and women, whose forms were bent by the weight of years — the ones to whom the name of Lansing is dearest — met yesterday afternoon to live the old days again and to clasp hands, some for the last time, perhaps. Dim-eyed veterans marked the disintegration of time and the scars of war listened with ardor written on their faces to reminiscences of fifty years ago. In the auditorium of the Bijou theater the younger generations — by far the larger body — bent forward to catch every word, for the words recounted history not told by books. Yesterday was Lansing's fiftieth anniversary.

Seventy-five persons who lived in Lansing when it took on the responsibilities of a city fifty years ago, sat on the stage. Every available seat in the auditorium was occupied and the gallery of the theater was half filled. It was better than had been anticipated. It made those who live in Lansing proud of their homes. It thrilled the hearts of those who were conscious that Lansing had become what it is largely through their efforts. The program was lengthy, beginning shortly after 2:30 o'clock and closing at 5:30. It was a trying three hours for several of the older persons on the stage, yet Dr. William Haze and Mrs. Marian Turner, both past their ninetieth year, sat through it all apparently unwearied. At the close Mr. Haze pronounced the benediction, a pathetic soul stirring plea for the mercy of Him above upon the rising generations and His care of those near top crossing the bar. Tears from hundreds of eyes greeted the prayer from the totally blind, partially deaf and feeble man of 93 years.

Shortly after the time set for the beginning of the program Mayor John S. Bennett called the meeting to order and in a brief statement called attention to the purport of the gathering welcoming those present in the name of the city. He was followed by Joseph E. Warner, whose topic was announced on the program as "Why We Are Here." Mr. Warner took charge of the program throughout the meeting. He made a few remarks about those who have lived in Lansing fifty years and called on Rev. James T. LeGear for the invocation.

Rev. LeGear's benediction besought for the newer generations the spirit that had animated the hearts of those who had blazed the trail in the early days and had erected their humble homes in the wilderness from which they carved out a city, beautiful beyond the dreams of the most extravagant. He said that while those on the seats of honor were the living for, far more had passed to the bourne from which no traveler returns.

The more serious prayer was quickly contrasted in the following number of the program by the unique performance of Henry ("Doc") Lovejoy, who was announced by Chairman Warner in the stentorian tones of a circus ringmaster as "Not only the first white child born in Lansing, but a man who is backed by a \$1,000 purse against the world as the best bone soloist." Mr. Lovejoy was accompanied by the theater orchestra in "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Yankee Doodle," "Marching through Georgia," and other popular airs while he handled his faithful rattle bones with all the éclat of the true genius.

One of the most interesting pieces of reminiscence on the program was the paper read for Mrs. Marian Turner, 90 years old. Mrs. Turner took the floor when called on by Chairman Warner, who accompanied his announcement by the information that she was without a doubt the first white to set foot on the soil that is now the site of Lansing. Mrs. Turner paid her respects to the audience in a few words and gave her place to her daughter, Mrs. Marian Reasoner, who read a paper prepared by Mrs. Turner. The paper made the interesting statement that as early as 1836 Mrs. Turner with her father and three hired men, had traveled through Canada to Detroit; thence to DeWitt, where she waited until her father went on to Eagle township to establish a home. At the time of this settlement, the paper said, the nearest neighbor was a mile away, while the next, at what is now Portland, was five miles away. As soon as the population increased so there was a demand for a school, Mrs. Turner was selected to teach it for nothing and "board herself." She had thrilling experiences with the Indians in this school, at one time taking the entire school into the attic of the rude school house up a ladder.

The party in which she and her father went from Detroit to their new place of abode number twelve, and she relates that on their way from Detroit they stopped at the end of their first day's travel, in which they made the magnificent distance of nine miles, they were kept over night amid royal hospitality in a log cabin hardly large enough to accommodate half as many. This point was mentioned to illustrate the quality of hospitality that maintained in those days. After settling in Ingham county supplies for the family of twelve persons were to be obtained only at Detroit or Dexter. Flour at \$16 a barrel could be obtained at DeWitt.

Later Mrs. Turner taught school in Mason, meeting while there the man who later became her husband — James Turner, proprietor of a general store. They were married in October 1843 and moved to Lansing in 1847, whence they lived happily together until the death of the husband a few years ago. At the time of their advent upon the site of the present Lansing, a few acres were cleared on the east side of the river and that was about all there was to Lansing. In later years Mr. Turner became prominent in the local

community and was instrumental in a great degree in having the Michigan Central railroad built through Lansing.

“When I look out over this beautiful city, I see the smoke from the chimneys of its manufacturing establishments and its growth,” the paper continued, “it seems to me I am living in a dream and this is not the Lansing I once knew as a mere dot in the wilderness.”

S.L. Kilbourne was next called on. “Lansing As A Village,” was the luckless topic assigned to him., and after explaining that he could not talk on the topic by reason of the fact that Lansing never was a “village,” he diverged into recounting bits of history and personal reminiscences, apologizing for the latter, though excusing himself partially on the ground that on such an occasion the greatest interest lay in the personal recollection. He said:

“According to the best information I have, the first house on the site of where Lansing now stands was erected on the bend of the Grand river by John W. Burchard, who settled there with his wife, a son and a daughter, in 1843. Some time later he conceived the idea of building a dam across the river sinking the butts of trees in the river channel so that the wash of the water filled in the gravel and sand and helped with the work. Some of those old timbers are yet at the foundation of the present dam. Unfortunately Burchard was drowned after falling from a canoe in which he sought to prevent the breaking of the dam in a flood. My father was among those who made a search for the body in the waters of the Grand river. Later came the family of Joal Page, who brought into existence the first industrial enterprise — a sawmill. Lansing never was a village so far as being under the laws governing a village. Up to 1859, at which time it was incorporated as a city, the place with its population of 3000 apparently got along very satisfactorily as a part of the township of Lansing.

“The birth of a city is a significant event, just as in the lives of the parents the birth of a child significant. Lansing has had its own unique history. It has been endowed with peculiar advent ages. In one brief sentence it was made the capitol of Michigan, and its natural advantages have enabled it to keep pace with what has been unexpected of it and in other ways it has been kindly dealt with. Its future is as bright as the sun in the morning, young man and I congratulate you. We turn the city over to you, the new generations, trusting that you may treat it as fairly and with as much interest in the future as we have in the past.

“Lansing As A City,” was the topic of Judge Russell C. Ostrander, former mayor of the city, who followed Mr. Kilbourne. He also apologized for bringing his own personality into his remarks. He said he had come to Lansing by stage 51 years ago and had lived here ever since, had come long ago to love his home and added that he would rather have the respect of the people of Lansing than all the rest of the people of the world.

“I see there has been prepared quite a list of persons who have been here fifty years,” he said. “Of course there is little doubt that the committee did the best they knew how, but I fail to see that names of a good many women which it seems to me, ought to be there.

Where are the names of the women who were girls when I was young?" Here S.L. Kilbourne interjected the assertion that women never grow old in Lansing, which seemed to solve the riddle.

"At the time the state legislature selected the site of Lansing for the state capital they appropriated \$10,000 for erecting the buildings and \$1,000 for removing the archives, records and furniture from Detroit, which until that time, had been the state capital. It may appear that \$1,000 was a small amount for the work to be done, but it may have been the principle of the joke about George Washington, who was credited with throwing a silver dollar across the Potomac river in his day while no man could do it now, the explanation being that in those days a dollar would go further then it would now."



Recalling the early days of Lansing as a city, Judge Ostrander described the boundaries of the only three wards the city contained at the time. It was laid out for incorporation. He recalled the first city council, Mayor H.H. Smith, and pointed to Dr. William Haze as the only surviving member of the first city council. He said that neither Washington ave nor any other of the streets at that time were graded, that a street went about anywhere it pleased, and that the level of Cedar st was then much higher than now. He said that in 1845 there were only 80 persons in Lansing so far as is known, and that in 1858, the year proceeding the incorporation, there were only 600 votes cast. Recently there have been as high as 6,000.

"Stop and consider," he continued, "that with the state capitol located in a practically virgin wilderness; with the exodus of adventures toward the west in 1849; the war of rebellion in 1861, when the city being but two years old, its population was sapped of its best blood and brawn; with no railroad facilities connecting it with the outside world, and you will perceive that Lansing has done wonders. It is a credit to anyone living in it."

At this point Mrs. Roy S. Moore sang "Silver Threads Among the Gold," accompanied by the orchestra, and was enthusiastically applauded.

John Robson, former mayor and one of the pioneer business men of the city, was next with an interesting reminiscence upon early business men of Lansing. He said he came here 55 years ago by stage from Detroit to take a position as a clerk in the state of James I. Mead, who was located in North Lansing, or Lower Town as it was then called. He said further:

“I understand that the store of Bush & Thomas was probably the first mercantile establishment in Lansing. The big store in “lower town” at that time was that of Turner & Case. There were two general stores in “Middle Town,” Holmes & Wright being one of these. At these stores you could buy anything from a silk dress to a handkerchief and from a needle to a crowbar. In the store of Mr. Mead, for which I was working, there were two others, Amos Turner and B.F. Simons, Mr. Simmons later started in business for himself as a peddler and finally became proprietors of our own places of business.

“In the days when Lansing had spread out so that there appeared good opportunities for commercial activity, everyone was anxious to have a railroad through Lansing. It was largely through the favorable attitude of the merchants of Lansing that the first road was extended through from Saginaw to Jackson, opening up this city to the outside world,. Our firm of Mead & Robson contributed to the extent of purchasing \$300 worth of the stock of the company, payable in dry goods the class of stock we carried. At this time Alvin N Hart did as much as any man could do to help along such a proposition. He contributed flour, feed and many other things for which he never received compensation. At one time there was great need for quinine to relieve the railroad men of the ague that was raging among them. They came to us for a bottle of quinine, worth \$4 an ounce. They touched the soft side and we contributed the quinine — and many other bottles later, for which we received nothing. In this present day in Lansing we have the Lansing Business Men’s association, which is doing a wonderful work for Lansing. Every effort is being made to bring about a ‘larger, lovelier, livelier’ Lansing.”

At this juncture the choir of boys from the Industrial school filed upon the stage — forty of them — and sang. The next address was delivered by the venerable John N. Bush, nearly 90 years old. He stood straight and dignified with all the fire of the days when he used to “stump” the state in the interests of the republican party under the direction of the state committee. He had been assigned the subject of “Lansing During the War.” He said:

“I remember a notable mass meeting held in Lansing before that war which turned the north against the south, at which a stirring speech was delivered by Auditor General Daniel Case against the south, and well do I remember how that crowd was wrought up. At the close of the meeting a sheet was spread for signatures of those who would pledge themselves to oppose the south. It was signed, I remember by more than a hundred. This was but the preparation for the great struggle to come two years after. When the first call for volunteers rang through the north and men from every village and hamlet joined the movement toward the front, Lansing was not last or least. There was smallness in population, but largeness in enthusiasm and on the first call went Charles Foster, William Green, E.F. Sibert — and a dozen in all, who never came back. Many other sickened and died on the field.

“I remember that during that time the Hon. Cassius M. Clay, who was making speeches over the country for abolition, spoke in Mason. In the midst of the audience as he was about to speak appeared three or four men with a rebel flag, held aloft in defiance. The blood of the northern sympathizers in the gathering rose and men declared that they would tear down the colors, but the speaker interceded and begged the crowd not to interfere. He began to speak at once and turning the guns of his sarcasm loose on those men drove them from the crowd, glad to get away from his stinging rebukes.

“I have heard the boys tell how they have pored over letters from home or replied to a missive from wife or sweetheart while out on the field., coming to the conclusion that they would drop the terrible business of war and go home to the ones most dear to them, yet they have told me that when the call of battle sounded the resolution was forgotten and the fray welcomed. These are the evidences that these men with silver brows fought with the greatest good and the peace and prosperity of our homes attest to their valor. Now there comes a day when an appeal to reason rather than cold steel and leaden bullets brings about the greatest good, and I anticipate that no such tragedy as the civil war will ever again cast a cloud over this fair land.”

Allen S. Shattuck, the next speaker on the program, also recalled the mass meeting at which a hundred Lansing citizens attached their names to a pledge to oppose the south in connection with his topic, :”Lansing Citizens at the Front.” He pointed to S.L. Kilbourne as the only surviving person who had addresses that meeting. He said:

“May 13, 1861, the Lansing company was enrolled in the Third Michigan, June 13 they left going through Washington, Georgetown and other cities on their way to the front. On July 16 the Lansing men were preparing to take part in the first battle of Bull Run and the Lansing company may lay just claim to having fired the first shots of the battle. Later came the retreat to Washington. Williamsburg, Fair oaks in the latter the Lansing men being in the foremost. Eight fell dead and fifteen were wounded so severely that only three of them ever reported for duty again. Sure as a courier should be despatched approaching you could put it down that “Third Michigan to the front” would be in the text of the order from headquarters. There were Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg — few were the great battles not participated in by the Third Michigan until there was not enough left in the regiment to go into action. The Third Michigan never lost a gun in supporting a battery, and the boys always went as far as orders sent them. At the close of the war 28 of the Lansing company lay dead and 48 were wounded, only a few of whom were ever able to make a living afterward. Here the magnificence of the government in pensioning the men who fought for it comes in. We get better pensions than any nation on the earth.”

William C. Hinman, who was not scheduled for a speech on the regular program, was called on for a few remarks and he delivered himself of a remarkably original snake story. This story comes from Dakota, Mr. Hinman says, and is said to be a hint to the wise in relation to the devastating forest fires of the dry summers. Mr. Hinman told of the “pump” snakes. Which in case of fire, so he said, attach themselves end to end, thus

forming a line of hose from the nearest stream or well, pumping the water supply upon the fire and saving the property in danger. This story was a wide departure from the trend of the program. But the speaker added to the happy effect of his speech, the soul of wit-brevity and was given a hearty round of applause. He said his father came to Lansing in 1848 and that he came a short time after. The greater portion of the audience knew he was born here and the point was well taken.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ten Eyck, another person not on the printed program, also recalled a number of matters of interest regarding early Lansing, displaying a painting of one of the early Lansing residences, that of Chester Mosley, which formerly stood where the Lansing brewery now is. The painting is 18x24 inches and well preserved. She said she came to Lansing from Jackson in 1853 by a path swept almost clean by a cyclone a short time before. She related interesting school day recollections and experiences with Indians.

The last speaker on the program was former Mayor John Crotty, who evidently cut his address short because of the limited time remaining. He was the only one of the speakers on the program who had not been in Lansing 50 years, but it was explained by Chairman Warner that Mr. Crotty expected to be in Lansing fifty years hence, consequently he was qualified to speak on the topic "Lansing Fifty Years Hence."

"As a people in early days found Rome made of stone and left it made of marble, so may Lansing, found in the midst of a woods be turned into a city beautiful. Indeed one man here must be given credit for having used his efforts to beautify our city? That man is Fredrick M. Cowles. He met with the discouragements and rebuffs usually encountered under such circumstances, but he succeeded in a great measure, and Lansing today owes much of its beauty to his ideas.

"We have now just decided to build one of the finest school buildings in the state and other improvements are coming. But, if Lansing in the next fifty years developed in proportion to what it has during the fifty years just past, our wildest dreams cannot conceive the result. Perhaps where we go to Detroit in two hours or so by rail, we may in fifty years go by airship in four minutes. We may expect to see a museum of art, also. In that time the conditions causing accidents will probably be magnified many times and we may expect larger and more comprehensive hospital equipments, perhaps as fine a hospital as any in the world." In closing Mr. Crotty congratulated the fifty-year residents, congratulated the younger people present and predicted a future the brightest for Lansing, larger, lovelier and livelier than ever before.

The audience and persons on the stage were requested to stand while "Auld Lang Syne" was sung following the conclusion of Mr. Crotty's address. The benediction was then pronounced by Dr. Haze and the meeting broke up. Music throughout the program was furnished by the regular Bijou orchestra.