



# Historic



Virg Bernero, Mayor



# LANSING



## MICHIGAN



## THE CAPITAL CITY

Designated 1847



Incorporated 1859

**An Update to the Historic Lansing Memorandum of 1976**  
**July 2012**





**Virg Bernero, Mayor**

The Historic Lansing Memorandum of 1976 was the final report of a multiyear study to identify and protect historically significant places in the City of Lansing. The Lansing Historic District Study Committee was created in 1971 as a cooperation of the City of Lansing, the American Institute of Architects, the Greater Lansing Historical Society, and the Model Cities Policy Board. The Committee identified 110 places in Lansing that were considered historically, culturally, and/or architecturally significant to the People of Lansing.

This is the second update to the Memorandum (the last update was completed in 1983). The purpose of this report is to update and revise the history and current conditions of the significant places that were identified by the study, including the identification of those that have been demolished or renovated, provide current maps and photos, and make any revisions necessary in order to permit the Study's continued use in facilitating historical preservation policy in Lansing.

This update report is a project of the City of Lansing Planning Office with assistance from the Capital Area District Library.

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## Introduction:

### Brief History of Lansing:

For thousands of years before European settlers first arrived, the area now known as Lansing was home to various Native American populations. The earliest archaeological data in Mid-Michigan dates the first human population to around 9000B.C., before which glaciers still covered much of the land. The first native people to arrive in Michigan's Lower Peninsula built villages and hunted and fished along the Grand River (called the "Washtenong"). By around 3000B.C, they had set up complex trade routes extending from the Plains, through Eastern Canada, and down the East Coast. These Native Michiganders traded copper tools, furs, and other goods, and built burial mounds and early agricultural fields throughout the Lower Peninsula. The area around Lansing was home mainly to Algonquin peoples, and more specifically various different villages of the Potawatomi, Mascouten, Ottawa and Sauk tribes throughout the years leading up to European exploration and settlement. In around 800 AD, the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe tribes created an alliance called the Council of Three Fires, which was a peaceful trading alliance that joined the major tribes of Michigan from the Upper Peninsula to the Central and Southwest Lower Peninsula. However, conflicts between tribes became more prevalent in the 1600s, with increasing contact with other Ojibwe and Iroquois peoples, and rivalries between the Ottawa and Mascouten tribes. Large populations of Native Americans had started dying of European diseases such as small pox that spread and decimated villages decades before the settlers actually arrived in the area. Thousands more were displaced westward by disputes between the French, English, and Americans in the 1700s. Nevertheless, with few exceptions Native Americans welcomed early settlers into Michigan, often providing them with vital food and medical care through the first winters, and assisting them in homesteading and farming.

The first Europeans to explore Mid-Michigan, and bring back stories of the native tribes, were the French exploration expeditions. Early maps show that the French had traversed and mapped the Grand River by 1703. What is now Michigan was under French control until 1763 when the British victory at Quebec City turned French outposts at Detroit, Mackinac/St.Ignace, and Sault St. Marie over to the British. An early British survey of the area was done by Hugh Heward, an English fur trader who took a French expedition group up the Grand River in 1790. At this time, Lansing was described to be only dense forest with small one or two-family Native American settlements, thought contain outcasts of larger tribal villages to the Northeast and Southwest. One such resident however, was the famous "Okemos" who would come to be known throughout the United States for his leadership in joining Native American tribes and his tactical skills fighting on the British side during the War of 1812. "Okemos" means chief or technically diminutive or lesser chief. Okemos would later lead his band of warriors and Native Americans to establish a large village on the edge of the Red Cedar, the "City in the Forest". Today, the community of Okemos, Michigan (just east of Lansing) is located on the site of that city.

After the American Revolution, several American states including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York laid claim to Mid-Michigan. These disputes were resolved when the Northwest Territories were organized in 1787 by the Congress of the Confederation and surveyed using the Public Land Survey System. Although there were several areas still unexplored, the Territory of Michigan was established out of this in 1805, with the capital at Detroit. The Territory of Michigan would last until Michigan's



statehood was approved by Congress in 1837 (although the Territory was briefly taken over by the British during the War of 1812).

The Lansing area became a part of Washtenaw County which was formed in 1822. The township that is Lansing would not be surveyed until 1827, the last township to be surveyed in the county. It was surveyed by Musgrove Evans and officially called "Township 4 North, Range 2 West." Still uninhabited, a plan for a city near the convergence of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers was laid out in 1835 by a pair of brothers, William and Jerry Ford, from Jackson, Michigan. They called the city "Biddle City", and registered the plans with Jackson County, which only ever existed on paper. The story of the first white settlers in Lansing is disputed, but it is thought that several pioneers from upstate New York came to buy plots in the area. They brought with them the name of their hometown, Lansing, New York, which is in the Finger Lakes region. The name "Lansing" was likely in honor of John Lansing, Jr., a New York Delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Lansing gained notoriety for fighting for the inclusion of guaranteed rights in the Constitution and he ended up leaving the convention without signing, believing it to be a threat to liberty before the Bill of Rights was later added.

The State of Michigan, at its birth, had Detroit at its capital, however, the State Constitution included a clause stating that Detroit would be a temporary capital, and a permanent seat of government had to be established by 1847. The founders decided to move the capital out of Detroit because of the city's vulnerability to British attack from the Canadian side. It had also been custom to locate a capital outside of the State's major city in order to try to separate the government as much as possible from big business and a prevalence of corruption in the big city. In 1846, many cities in Michigan scrambled to replace Detroit as the new state capital. As the deadline approached for a decision, the Legislature was caught in a stalemate as cities such as Ann Arbor, Jackson, Marshall, and Mason fought hard for the political power and economic opportunity such a designation would bring. Members of the House of Representatives, frustrated by the indecision, finally decided on Lansing Township after they were given maps that highlighted Lansing as the "Center of Michigan" by early land owners James Seymour, George Peck, and William H. Townsend. The decision was met with disbelief and laughter that a barely populated township was now the new State Capital of Michigan. The Legislators initially renamed Lansing "The Town of Michigan", and there are still records in maps and postmarks that show of the city of "Michigan, Michigan". The name "Lansing" would stick however, and would be officially switched back on March 16, 1847. A large influx of settlers converged on the tiny town, and development began in a frenzy from the first two story dwellings, to the first roads, to the first hotel, to the first Capitol building. The township which had a population of 88 people in 1845, would reach 1,000 by 1850.

From Detroit, settlers came to Lansing along the Grand River trail, which was an Indian trail that still exists today as Grand River Avenue (the first plank road was not completed until 1853). Legislators followed that winter to open the first session of the State of Michigan Legislature in Lansing in January, 1848. Many legislators had to lodge with families in the area, as the room space and hotels needed were still under construction. The early families of the township, Seymour, Turner, Peck, Townsend, Barnes, and Cooley, were instrumental in making Lansing into a viable city and many of their descendents would play a vital role in the future of Lansing and the State of Michigan. Cooley would be recognized as Lansing's first white resident whose house was located on what is now Moores River Drive in 1835. Turner opened the first General Store, and Peck the first Post Office in 1847. Barnes became Mayor of

Lansing, and Seymour was a large landowner instrumental in bringing the capital and railroad to the city. The new capitol building, which still is in place today, was constructed in five years 1873-1878.

While Lansing was primarily a government city, as well as a fledging educational center with the Michigan Agricultural College established east of the city in 1855, early Lansing pioneers set their sights on making Lansing into a business center. The manufacturing spirit of Michigan was in its early stages as the Lansing Improvement Company was founded in 1873 for the purpose of drawing in business to the city. Prominent industries were drawn in by the city's investment in business, including the Clark Carriage Company, which manufactured horse-drawn carriages, the Lansing Wheelbarrow Company, which would become the country's largest wheelbarrow manufacturer, and the Bement & Sons Co. which manufactured cooking stoves used throughout the Midwest. The 1890s saw even more manufacturing business begin in Lansing including early factories for wind mills, steam engines, furnaces, custom shirts, cut glass, and brewing.

The most significant contribution to Lansing manufacturing however would come from Ransom E. Olds. Olds was born in Ohio, but moved to Lansing as a child in 1880 where he worked in his father's machine mechanic business building various factory and farm components and steam engines. Ransom started experimenting with steam engine carriages during his work, and ended up building his first three-wheeled horseless carriage in 1886, which could reach 10 mph, but had to be pushed up inclines. In the next ten years however, Ransom would incorporate the gasoline engine and perfect his designs, becoming one of the fathers of the automotive industry in Michigan. He pioneered the development of the assembly line and prominent Lansing business leaders would come to invest in Olds' new venture. It was primarily E.W. Sparrow who financed the Olds Motor Vehicle Company in 1897 and the Company was a successful manufacturer of gasoline engines for many years. Although carriages were also manufactured, these met less success as the automobile we know today, and the infrastructure needed to support it, was still being developed. Ransom branched off of this company to form the REO Motor Car Company in Lansing in 1904, for the sole purpose of building automobiles. Ransom's "Oldsmobiles" were manufactured in Lansing for the next 100 years, with spinoff factories supplying car parts and components springing up throughout the city.

During World War II, Lansing would become an important part of Michigan's "Arsenal of Democracy", with 26 different factories employing more than 33,000 workers to produce ammunition, machine guns, trucks, tanks, engines, and aircraft parts and instruments to be used in the war effort. In addition, more than 13,000 Lansing residents answered the call to service to fight in the war and many never returned. The post-war boom brought many people to Lansing and by 1960 the city's population surpassed 100,000 people. A major flood in 1975 highlighted Lansing's inclination to the flooding of the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers and served as a reminder of the great flood of 1904 which wiped out most of the bridges over the Grand River and large portions of downtown. The City had begun a program of buying up land and restoring flood plain areas. The April Flood destroyed 175 homes and caused \$50 million in damages.

Civil Rights activist Malcolm X grew up in Lansing after his father, Earl Little, moved the family to Michigan due to harassment by white supremacists in Omaha, Milwaukee, and East Chicago for his alleged radical sermons as a member of the United Negro Improvement Association. In Lansing, Earl was

killed in an apparent trolley car accident when Malcolm was six years old, and the surviving family struggled through the Great Depression. Malcolm's mother was later committed to an institution and Malcolm and his siblings would be moved around. Malcolm ended up attending Mason Junior High School where he found academic success and was elected Class President before his English teacher chided him for his dream of becoming a lawyer, declaring it was not a "realistic goal" for blacks. Malcolm X would later move to Boston and New York, and spend some time in prison before becoming a powerful voice for civil rights, differing from Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolence movement by asserting that blacks had every right to act in self-defense and fight for their freedom. He is widely known for his famous "Ballot or the Bullet Speech" in 1964. He converted to Islam and traveled to Africa and the Middle East before being gunned down in New York in 1965.

A few other notable people who have called Lansing "home" include plant explorer David Fairchild who introduced many of the foods we know today to the United States, basketball great Erwin "Magic" Johnson who attended Lansing's Everett High School and led Michigan State University to an NCAA title, Baseball Hall of Famer Jacquelyn Kelley and Cy Young Award Winner John Smoltz, influential TV news personalities Chris Hansen of Dateline NBC and Suzanne Malveaux of CNN, and Google co-founder/CEO Larry Page.

Listed in the pages below are several buildings and sites that celebrate and commemorate Lansing's history. Some other notable historic attractions in the city include the Potter Park Zoo, Michigan's oldest zoo, the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame, the Michigan Historical Museum and State of Michigan Library, the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum, the Fenner Nature Center and the campus of Michigan State University in nearby East Lansing. Among many annual events in the city are the Festival of the Sun and Moon in June, Common Ground Music Festival in July, the JazzFest in August, and the Silver Bells in the City Celebration in November. As you explore and learn about Lansing's many historical sites and structures, we hope you take pride in our city's history and recognize the importance of preserving and restoring our cultural resources for future generations.

-July 2012.

#### Sources:

Manassah, Sallie M., David A. Thomas, and James F. Wallington. Lansing, Capital, Campus, and Cars, East Lansing: Contemporary Image Adv. Ltd., 1986.

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## **Lansing History Timeline 1836-1940.**

- 1836: "Biddle City" platted by William and Jerry Ford where Lansing is today.
- 1842: Lansing Township organized.
- 1843: First house in North Lansing built by Col. John W. Burchard who also built the first dam on the Grand River in Lansing.
- 1846: First Methodist religious group formed.
- 1847: Lansing Township chosen for State Capital of Michigan.  
City originally named the "Town of Michigan".  
The First Capitol Building, a Greek Revival structure, was built in this year.  
First bridge across the Grand River built on Main St along with the first Post Office, and the Seymour Hotel.  
Merchant James Turner settled in Lansing.  
The First Presbyterian religious group formed. Present church built in 1953.  
Town name officially changed to "Lansing".
- 1848: First Lansing newspaper: "The Free Press".  
Michigan Avenue Bridge built.
- 1849: St. Paul's Episcopal religious group formed. Present church erected in 1914 by Samuel D. Butterworth.
- 1850: First Financial Exchange opened by J. C. Bailey.
- 1853: First Masonic Lodge formed.
- 1855: Michigan Female College opened.  
Michigan Agricultural College was established to the east of the city.
- 1857: The Torrent Engine Company becomes Lansing's first organized fire responders.
- 1858: Turner-Dodge House constructed, designed by Darius B. Moon.
- 1859: City of Lansing incorporated with a population of about 3,000.
- 1861: First railroad, the Amboy, Lansing, & Traverse Bay RR opened.
- 1864: Second National Bank of Lansing formed (an earlier First National Bank never opened).
- 1865: Lansing's first high school opened.  
Lansing resident Luther B. Baker captures John Wilkes Booth.
- 1866: A. Clark & Company started manufacturing carriages.  
The Jackson, Lansing, & Saginaw railroad opened, which would later become the Michigan Central Railroad.
- 1868: Kositchek's men's clothing company started in Lansing.
- 1869: Ionia and Lansing Railroad opened, which would later become a CSX railroad.
- 1870: First women admitted to M.A.C.
- 1871: First Library Association was formed. Mark Twain visits Lansing.
- 1872: Lansing Gas Light Company established by E.F. Cooley.  
The Lansing National Bank first opened.
- 1873: Mt. Hope Cemetery established.  
First publication of the Lansing Journal.
- 1874: Lansing Woman's Club established.
- 1875: Old Central High School built at a cost of \$50,000.  
The Great Ice Jam and Flood of 1875 hits Lansing (5 out of 6 bridges destroyed).

1879: New Capitol Building (started construction in 1874) dedicated by Elijah E. Myers, architect.

1880: Michigan School for the Blind opened in Lansing.  
P.F. Olds built his first steam engines.  
First Telephone Exchange.  
Morgan B. Hungerford House built by architect Darius B. Moon.

1881: Lansing Wheelbarrow Works established, would become the largest wheelbarrow manufacturer in the nation.

1882: Old Capitol Building burns down.

1885: First horticultural school in the nation formed at M.A.C. by Liberty Hyde Bailey.  
The City Waterworks was established.  
Lansing Wheel Company opened by W.K. Prudden.

1886: R.E. Olds builds his first steam engine.

1890: City's population reached approx. 13,000.  
The Central Methodist Church on Ottawa Street was built.  
The first electric streetcar operated.

1891: Roger-Carrier House constructed by architect Darius B. Moon.

1892: First Baptist Church on Capitol Avenue built (Boyd and Mead Architects)

1893: Lansing Police Department formed.  
John T. Hermann House built by architect J. Arthur Bailey.

1895: Lansing Fire Department formed.

1896: New City Hall at Ottawa and Capitol Ave built.  
Woman's Hospital Association formed (which would become Sparrow Hospital in 1912).  
Patent for gas engines awarded to R.E. Olds.  
Woodbury-Kerns House built by architect Darius B. Moon.

1897: Olds Motor Vehicle Company formed and a patent for a new motor carriage was awarded to R.E. Olds.

1902: The Union Railroad Depot and the Grand Trunk Railroad Depot opened.  
Michigan Manufacturers Association was formed.

1903: The Carnegie Library, funded by Andrew Carnegie and designed by Edwin A. Bowd, opened (Now part of Lansing Comm. Coll.).

1904: Great Flood of 1904 destroyed bridges and flooded large portions of downtown Lansing.

1915: Potter Park donated to the City of Lansing, would later become the first zoo in Michigan.

1921: The Strand Theater and Arcade opened.

1924: Old Newsboys Association formed to raise money for charity.

1927: Sophie Turner House built.

1931: Olds Tower constructed, now called Boji Tower.

1934: Kerns Hotel Fire killed 32 people. The Box 23 Club was soon established to provide volunteer assistance to the fire department.

1937: Knapps Department store built by the Christman Company.

1939: The Ottawa Street Power Station (now Accident Fund Insurance) built by architect Edwin A. Bowd.

Source: Peckham, Linda and Ray Walsh "Through the Years: A Pictorial History of Greater Lansing" East Lansing, MI: Vision Sports Management Group, 1997.

# Objectives and Legal Background of Historical Preservation Study

Unaltered

On August 3, 1970, Michigan's Governor William G. Milliken signed Public Act No. 169 into law, thereby giving our state's municipalities new and needed powers to promote and ensure historical preservation within their boundaries. To accomplish this objective the statute provides a means for identifying historically significant structures, sites and landmarks within the municipality, and sets out the legal mechanism and procedure by which the municipality can help preserve them. Implicit throughout is a faith in the ability of local units of government and their citizens to do the job and a belief that the rights and interest of affected property owners should be recognized and protected.

The first basic step in the process was taken by the Lansing City Council on January 11, 1971, when after considering recommendations from the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and members of the City Planning Department, and having received an offer of financial support from the Lansing Model Cities program, it unanimously created the Historic District Study Committee under Section 3 of the statute. In its recommendation to the Mayor and City Council, the Historical Society of Greater Lansing succinctly described the purpose and objective of the Committee as follows:

"The principal purpose of the *Committee*, as stated by the Act, would be to conduct studies and research and make a report on the historical significance of the buildings, structures, features, sites, objectives and surroundings in the city; and to make recommendations to you concerning the creation of one or more historic districts, which the Act authorizes you to establish.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing has for many years been vitally and actively concerned with the preservation of our historic Lansing heritage. But with the passage of time and the rebuilding of our city, the visible signs and landmarks of that heritage are fast being destroyed. We believe that a Historic District Study Committee under this new Act can provide valuable practical assistance to you in determining how the best of Lansing's visible historic heritage may be usefully preserved."

The City Council's resolution, after reciting that the proposed objectives set forth in the Act "are laudable and of great importance to the city of Lansing," set up the Historic District Study Committee as follows:

1. The committee shall consist of eleven (11) members which shall be appointed by Mayor and City Council as follows: Three (3) members shall be appointed from a list submitted by the Historical Society of Greater Lansing; two (2) members shall be appointed from a list nominated by the Policy Board of Model Cities; one (1) member each to be appointed from lists submitted by the Mid-Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Greater Lansing Fine Arts Council; one (1) from the City of Lansing Planning Department staff; one (1) professional Historian; one (1) lay member; and, one (1) City Council member to be selected by City Council.
2. The Committee will be convened by such person as Council may direct and at such time shall establish and elect officers and determine rules of procedure for the carrying out of the purposes stipulated in the Act.



3. Funds appropriated by the City Council, or made available to the Committee from any other source shall be held by the City Finance Director and paid out only as provided by the Committee. All Departments of the City shall be available to aid this Committee when called upon to do so. Upon assurance of funding for all or parts of study, Council will make advances to expedite the work of the Committee. All members shall serve without compensation except that members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses, compensated by City rates.

4. Preliminary report of the Committee shall be presented to Council within six (6) months after convening and final report with ninety (90) days thereafter. The Committee will continue to serve until dissolved by resolution of Council.

On March 22, 1971, the members of the Committee were appointed, with Councilman Roger T. May as Chairman.

To carry out its part in meeting these objectives, the Committee's role includes the following five functions:

1. To prepare its preliminary Report and Recommendations based on its studies and research, of which this document is the result.
2. To hold a public hearing on the Report and Recommendations after due notice, as provided by Section 3 of the statute, which is to be done 60 days after the Report and Recommendations have been transmitted to the City Council, City Planning Commission and the State Historical Advisory Council.
3. After the public hearing, to prepare and submit its final Report and Recommendations to the City Council, together with the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and a draft of a proposed City historic district and preservation ordinance.
4. To advise and assist the Mayor and City Council, and other interested groups, in attempting to save outstanding historic features threatened with immediate destruction. The Committee's current efforts, with the endorsement and support of the City Council, Historical Society of Greater Lansing, and many others to save the historic Benjamin F. Davis home on South Washington Avenue are being extensively reported by the press.
5. To preserve its voluminous historical investigation records for continuing use and development by the community.

The second and third basic steps in the process of implementing the statute follow the completion of the work of the Historic District Study Committee. These steps are the adoption by the Lansing City Council of the historic district and preservation ordinance and the appointment of a 7-member city Historic District Commission to administer it.

The principal functions of the ordinances are to establish and specify the property included within the historic district or districts, and to recite the substantive considerations and procedural safeguards to be observed to help preserve the historic structures and properties within the district or districts.

Since these considerations and procedures are clearly set out in the statute, a copy of which is appended to this report, they need not be repeated here. They may very generally be described as a method for preventing the destruction or inappropriate exterior alteration of historic district properties, at least until every reasonable avenue for their preservation has been explored. In addition to the historical aspects, the factors of public safety, general community interest, and financial hardship (if any) to the property owner must be carefully considered.

Further, any person or his representative may appear and be heard on any matter before the Historic District Commission before it reaches its decision; and if any person feels aggrieved by a Commission decision he is guaranteed the same rights of appeal as are granted by law to any applicant aggrieved by a decision of a zoning board of review.

To pursue these worthy objectives the Historic District Study Committee solicits the support of all the citizens and property owners of the City of Lansing.

## An Architectural History of Lansing 1840-1920

Architecturally, Lansing, the "City in the Forest" destined to be the home of Michigan's State Capitol and later in the nineteenth century an automobile manufacturing center, progressed from a city of log cabins and tents reminiscent of the contemporary California gold rush days to a city of gracious Greek Revival temples, Italian villas and Gothic cottages and churches' almost overnight during the late 1840's and 1850's.

Early log cabins whose windows were nothing more than greased sheets of paper, such as those built around the saw mill in "Lower Town" (now the North Lansing area around Turner, Grand River, and Race Street) and that of Jacob F. Cooley built during the winter of 1837-38 near what is now Moores River Drive and Waverly Road, gave way to much more sophisticated Eastern styles. Contemporary House Patterns Books and Builder's Guides were brought along by the early settlers coming from New York via the newly opened Erie Canal. Within fifteen years of the time that Lansing, then called "Biddle City" was platted in 1836, it can truly be said that "architecture" had arrived on the frontier.

The basic city plan for the present Lansing, then only a "city on paper," was platted and filed in Jackson County in 1836. The basic plan divided the area into sixty-five (65) blocks with each block containing approximately 16 lots. The streets were laid out in a grid pattern with the main street (then labeled Broadway and now a part of South Washington Avenue) extending north and south past numerous public squares. These squares were left open and identified as to future use: academy, public, church etc. This grid pattern has been maintained throughout the subsequent development of Lansing without any significant changes in use of designated areas until fairly recent times.

The architectural history of mid-nineteenth century America is one of a striving for expression in architecture combined with the concept of Romanticism in all the visual arts. The delicate refinement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Federal style was rapidly replaced, around 1820 by the stark grandeur of the Greek Revival Style, based on architectural and artistic copies of Classical Greek and Roman buildings.

By the time the State Capitol was moved from Detroit to Lansing for the opening of the 1848 Legislative session, there were already numerous beginnings of the Greek Revival and other historic styles of architecture in Lansing. It was only after the impetus of the relocation of the Capitol with its source of wealth and power, that Lansing became a boom town and literally changed overnight into a major power center. The resulting boom in building represents the true beginnings of Lansing's architectural history.

By the time of the Civil War, the Greek Revival Style, characterized by its columned porticoes, pilasters, white paint and classical details on cornices, window frames and interiors, had all but passed from the scene, not to be seen again until late in the century after the "picturesque" styles had run their course. Two major houses, both of which are rich in Lansing's history, remain as prime examples of the Greek Revival Style in this area. They are the famous "Governor's Mansion" at 2003 West Main Street and the John Kerr mansion now at 213 East Saint Joseph Street. The Governor's house was built around 1847-1849 for Governor Barry, who considered it too small for his wants and refused to live there. Built on the southeast corner of Allegan and Capitol Avenue this low-lying house was moved to its present site in 1925

by the architect Edwin Bowd, who lived in the house for many years. The exterior detailing, mainly in the pilasters and small entrance portico link this house with its more pretentious contemporaries known for their magnificent Greek porticoes.

Just prior to the Civil War, John Kerr, Lansing's second mayor and one of the leading citizens in the early days, built a grandiose temple porticoed house on Grand Avenue. Kerr was a leading State Government publisher and partly owned the State Republican Newspaper. Large sums of money were spent on the upkeep of this house and its original park. Now moved around the corner on East Saint Joseph Street and minus a wing, the house with its beautiful fluted Doric column, overlooks a busy expressway, -a far cry from the original old plank roads leading to Lansing when it was built.

The booming spirit of energy and growth which echoed the general American spirit of the period prior to the Civil War was further echoed in the various "picturesque" examples of architecture built in Lansing. The new wave of picturesque architecture resulted in a rash of Italian Villas, Gothic Revival Churches and smaller "Carpenter-Gothic" cottages. In commercial architecture; this was the era of the cast-iron front and a general jumble of fanciful architectural details.

Among the earliest Lansing builder-architects to work in the Italian villa mode was James Jeffries, who later died in the Civil War. Jeffries is accredited with designing the elegant Case-Wiest mansion (formerly at 827 North Washington Avenue) and possibly its neighbor, the Leach house (formerly 812 North Washington Avenue). Jeffries may also have built the Christopher Columbus Darling Villa among other stately Italianate houses in the City. Unfortunately, most of these beautiful houses with their classical proportions large brackets and scrolls, extended eaves, roof-top cupolas and fine architectural details, have disappeared, the only remotely connected example being the Squire Havens House-now more well known as the "1861 House" restaurant.

Such oddities as the Octagon House (the present site of Wurzburgs Department Store) and the myriad of vergeboard peaks and points of pre-Civil War Lansing have all but disappeared. Only a few towers, sparse cupolas and some vergeboards remain here and there along Lansing's oldest streets.

The second era of great prosperity in Lansing's history, due to the booming lumber and railroad business was best reflected in the most magnificent and sumptuous house ever built here, the Orlando M. Barnes Mansion, at 137 West Main Street. Typical of many of the New York State residents pioneering in Ingham County in the early days, O.M. Barnes saw the vast opportunities available in Michigan and proceeded to capitalize on them. Forming an immense fortune in lumbering and land interests by the time he was 48 (in 1872) he devoted most of his later energies to the erection of his magnificent Victorian Gothic house, -the "Barnes Castle".

This vast rambling house, crowned with an imposing tower overlooking both the Grand River and the booming State Capitol, contained 26 rooms, 11 halls and landings, 9 fireplaces, 6 staircases and 3 bathrooms (an unheard of luxury for the time). Begun in 1876 while Barnes was traveling in Europe eagerly purchasing books for his art library and furniture for his mansion, the house was being built by the Jackson, Michigan architect and designer, L.D. Grosvenor. The new capitol building was being built at the same time and Barnes hired some of the most skilled woodcarvers, stonemasons, and workmen coming

to Lansing by paying them more than the going rate for the Capitol project. Completed late in 1877 at a cost of \$46,000, the house was officially opened on January 15, 1878 with the biggest party ever seen in Lansing. Over 600 guests attended this gala opening, dancing, and toasting this palatial home until 2 a.m.

The grand opulence of the Barnes Mansion was short lived due to the financial panic of 1893 and the 1920's depression. O. F. Barnes, the son of the original owner, and his family left the mansion in 1924 and in 1957, after a quarter century of neglect, vandalism, and abandonment, this former showplace was torn down. Perhaps its best epitaph was written by Orlando Fleming Barnes and used as his bookplate: "My Father Cometh into a Wilderness and Buildeth a House on the Banks of a River."

By the last two decades of the nineteenth century architectural tastes were again shifting in Lansing as well as throughout the country. By this time the concept of "picturesque eclecticism" was blending the visual vocabulary of all previous styles of ornament and design: Classical, Gothic, Renaissance, English Tudor, Queen Anne/Eastlake and exotic wonders such as Turkish, Moorish, and Chinese. The prime survivors in terms of commercial buildings reflecting the mingling of late nineteenth century architectural styles are the numerous "frontier town" facades still standing in the North Lansing area, mainly in the East Grand River (formerly Franklin Street) Turner Street area. Other surviving examples in Lansing are the unusual facades (fronts) of Rouser's Drug Store and the upper (ca. 1890) areas of the (old) Woman's Club building at 118 West Ottawa Street. These brick, tile and wood facades exemplify the exuberance and visual experimentation of one of the most expansive eras in Lansing's history.

The leading private (residential) architect of the last decades of the century was Darius B. Moon, the architect who was responsible for the designing and building Lansing's second generation of "great houses", including the imposing homes of E.D. Sparrow, B.F. Davis, R.E. Olds, A.C. Stebbins, Henry Kositchek, H.M. Rogers, J. Stahl, etc. Time has dealt harshly with the architectural masterpieces of D.B. Moon, with only three houses remaining, one (the Kern's house on Townsend St.) being extensively altered, and the other two, his own ornate "gingerbread house" at 116 South Logan and the 1889 Benjamin F. Davis house at 528 South Washington Avenue, both abandoned and in imminent danger of total destruction. D. B. Moon worked in what has since been called the Eastlake or Queen Anne style, a style which reflected a return to work craftsmanship combined with new uses of tile, brick and leaded-glass "Tiffany" windows.

At the same time as local architects such as Darius B. Moon were devoting so much of their time to small exterior and interior details, national figures such as H.H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan were developing new ideas of architectural expression: the Richardsonian Romanesque and the "Chicago School" style of commercial buildings. Richardson returned to the heroic solid masonry forms of France and the Near East for inspiration and Louis Sullivan developed the new multi-storied structures destined to become the direct ancestor of the soon to be steel and glass skyscrapers.

In Lansing, most of the new Romanesque style buildings were represented at their best in churches (Central United Methodist), train stations (Union Railroad Depot) and civic buildings such as the massive old city hall. In domestic architecture, the Moore house on W. Genesee represents a translation into wood of the volumes and ornamentation of Romanesque architecture and the Jenison house on

Seymour Street reflects the strength and solidity' felt at the end of the century. At the same time, some of the early Lansing office buildings were rising to the dizzying height of four or five stories along Washington Avenue.

The revolutionary period which produced modern architecture as we know it today spanned the gap between the end of the 19th century and the First World War. Impressive new housing developments such as that of the present Moores River Drive-Cambridge Road area and the North and South Genesee Drive reflect the continuing use of the Dutch and English Colonial, Tudor, Swiss, and other popular styles. Expertly trained architects eliminated the carpenter-builder and despite their eclecticism excellent workmanship and a true love of craftsmanship, blended all the modern comforts with the traditional styles.

After the First World War the new International Style of architecture, characterized by flat unadorned surfaces, use of large windows and skeleton framework for the most part surpassed the period styles and led the way in the direction of twentieth century architecture-the way to utilitarianism and the use of all available space and elimination of all excess ornament. In the period of less than a century, the architecture of the city of Lansing had moved rapidly from the earliest log cabins, through a series of picturesque past styles and had emerged into the bright new glare of the 20<sup>th</sup> century glass and steel skyscraper.



## Methodology

Conducting a survey of the significant architectural and historical buildings and sites in Lansing or any other community is a lengthy project involving every form of activity from library research to old fashioned foot work. Perhaps the most important aspect of any historical building survey is the ability both to see the past history of any area, not necessarily in terms of "firsts" but in terms of a series of developments--a pattern of growth. The second most important concept is the visualizing of the entire city including its houses, public and commercial buildings, as exists today. Combining these two ideas will give an overall picture of the past, present, and hopefully the future of the historic buildings and areas of Lansing.

There are many tools which must be employed in a historic survey; extensive maps, both old and new, newspaper articles, existing books and public records, personal interviews with past and previous owners of property and, most important of all, a keen eye for both architectural as well as historic significance.

Using the Historical Register Inventory sheet form as a framework upon which to build, each block in the older areas of Lansing was studied and recorded building by building. This involved the earliest boundaries of Lansing as platted in the 1830's and all the areas encompassed by the 1859 Lansing City Map. Because of the retention of the first "Biddle City" plans, Lansing grew from a nucleus which is still the heart of the city.

By visiting the various buildings, interviewing owners, and using such city records as tax statements, deeds, and city assessor's records, much useful information was found. Many of the notable structures mentioned in earlier books and newspaper articles are long gone, but several buildings which played an important and significant role in Lansing history still remain, however changed from their original appearance.

Photography plays a major part in any historic survey. By photographing each major building and its neighbors, a visual reference source is quickly built up which may be returned to again and again. Using photographs, both old and new, the history of a building or area of the city may be traced in terms of changes, additions and subtractions from the original structure or structures.

After gathering the initial information on over 200 buildings or sites, the next vital step is sorting, dividing, and eliminating superfluous data. In this respect a strict system of criteria (see rating sheets) must be enforced. Each building must be rated (either plus or minus) in terms of condition, style, alterations, use, general environment, degree of endangerment, historical happenings and architectural importance, etc. Grouping buildings by date of construction, style and location, lend a sense of coherence and growth to a now confused city pattern.

In terms of architectural styles, Lansing buildings were compared and contrasted with major national trends, roughly spanning the period of 1840-1970, with more of an emphasis on being placed in

the pre-1900 buildings which, because of their location and condition are more likely to be in danger of demolition. It was found by examining the survey that the architectural history of Lansing closely paralleled that of the nation in terms of a succession of period styles: Federal (pre 1850), Greek Revival (1840-1860), Gothic Revival (1850-1870), Italianate (1850-1870), Mansard (1865-1880), Queen Anne-Eastlake (1875-1900), Romanesque (1885-1900), Colonial Revival- English Tudor Revival (1900-1930), and Modern (1930-present).

The basic purpose of the Historic District Study Committee, as spelled out by the Lansing City Council, was twofold: first to conduct a survey of these historic buildings and sites in the Lansing area and secondly to make specific recommendations as to the creation of historic districts. In order to accomplish both these goals with the information at hand, several consultants were called in for their professional services and advice, namely Mr. Richard Frank, a restoration architect and preservation planner, and Mr. James A. Bryant, the Historic Preservation Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources. These experts along with other interested authorities, who spoke to and aided the committee from time to time assisted in the final selection of both the historic structures and sites listed in the following survey as well as the recommendations as to the formation of a series of major and minor historic districts (this will be further elaborated on in our Recommendations).

The Historic Buildings and Site Survey itself has been divided into two general geographical areas as well as into sub-areas. The first major division is between a series of scattered clusters of buildings throughout the Lansing area (#1-71), and those historical buildings and sites located in the old "North Lansing" area, and area located near the Grand River around Washington Avenue, Turner Street, and East Grand River Avenue (#72-110). This general area contains the greatest density of both architecturally and historically significant buildings reflecting Lansing's past development.

Arranged according to their significance first and then type, style and location, the survey is further divided into houses, public and commercial buildings, parks, schools, churches, and finally factories. Accompanying photographs and maps help to unify the entire survey and point out the location of the most logical districts.

Throughout the following pages of the survey, the history of Lansing unfolds, a history told in terms of brick, stone, wood, and glass, a history beginning in the wilderness swamps and ending in tomorrow.

# Historic Buildings Inventory

1976 Memorandum Lansing

2012 Update

# #1

## Michigan State Capitol

100 South Capitol Avenue

Location: Block 249 -City of Lansing, occupying four city blocks -  
Bounded by Capitol, Ottawa, Walnut and Allegan Street -Owned by the  
State of Michigan and Free Public Access

1976: The architectural style of the Capitol is Palladian, which is a Renaissance reinterpretation of the architectural styles of ancient Greece and Rome. The building consists of a center section with a raised dome, and four wings extending north, south, east and west, forming a cross. The outside walls of the main portion are higher than the wings, and the dome, with its graceful lines, adds beauty to the complete building.

The dimensions of the building are 345'-2" by 191'-5" and 265' in height. Including the porticoes and steps it is 420' by 274'. It covers one and one sixth acre and had one hundred and thirty nine (139) rooms when first completed. Of twenty sets of plans submitted for a competition, architect Elijah E. Myers of Springfield, Illinois, plans were a unanimous choice of the committee on its first ballot, held January 24, 1872. On July 15, 1872, N. Osburn & Co. of Rochester, N.Y. and Detroit, Michigan, were awarded the contract to construct the Capitol for the sum of \$1,144,057.20, the work to be completed by December 1, 1877. On October 2, 1873, the cornerstone was laid, but the building was not completed until December of 1878. On January 1, 1879, the Capitol was dedicated as described in a paragraph from the Report of the Capitol Building Commission:

"The commission has aimed to erect a capitol worthy of the dignity of the State, massive and elegant, void of all trivial ornamentation and pleasing in appearance, of enduring material, substantial in construction, and perfect in workmanship, and while earnestly endeavoring the accomplish this, that we have not been unmindful of the injunction of the Legislature to make no expenditure exceeding the appropriation." And they did.



2012: Lansing's most recognizable landmark, the State Capitol building is very well preserved and landscaped and has had few exterior changes. It is often the site of rallies, protests, and celebrations on the Capitol lawn and the site draws thousands of tourists from around the country to Lansing every year.

**#2**

## Home of the First Oldsmobile

221 River Street

1976: In this building, located on the east side of River Street just south of Kalamazoo Street, Michigan's first Horseless Carriage was constructed and tested by R.E. Olds in 1887. In 1893, a second model (gas fueled and steam powered like the first) became the first American car sold for export (to Bombay) and probably the first sold anywhere in the world.

In making the first test on the streets of Lansing, to avoid ridicule, the test was made at 4:30 a.m. and cost Olds the price of nine quarts of milk in damages to a passing milkman whose horse bolted at the terrifying spectacle. Olds & Son Engine works were established in 1880 and today the building serves as the south portion of the offices of the Christman Company.



2012: The first R.E. Olds factory used to stretch south on River Street from Kalamazoo St. Today sits a small park with a stone marker designating the site of the beginning of the automotive industry in Michigan.



Photos Courtesy of the  
Capital Area District Library  
Local History Collection



**#3**

## Michigan Historical Museum (Former Turner House)

505 North Washington

1976: Built around 1927 as a replica of Mount Vernon, this imposing house located on a rolling hill on North Washington Avenue has been used since the late 1940's as the State Historical Museum. Donated by Mrs. James M. (Sophie) Turner, Jr., the house has been extensively altered for museum purposes.



2012: This is the campus of LCC. The Sophie Turner house and historical museum used to sit on the corner of North Washington and Genesee. This intersection no longer exists and the site is now the LCC Outdoor Amphitheater.



1942

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

1943





**#4**

## **Catholic Sisters of Charity House (former)**

311 Seymour Street

1976: Mainly of architectural note because of its Victorian Gothic trim and vergeboard, this imposing house dates from the post Civil War period and was the home of Judge William T. Carpenter, the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, around the turn of the century.



2012: The Catholic Sisters House is very well preserved, with artistic design, and remains in great condition.

**#5****F. Jenison House (Michigan T.B. and  
Respiratory Disease Association)**

403 Seymour Street

1976: One of the most imposing examples of the late nineteenth century Romanesque style "castles" built in Lansing by the prominent Jenison family. The house is now adapted to offices but much of the original exterior including tower, dormers and ornate brick work survives.



2012: At the Intersection of Seymour and Shiawassee, the site is well preserved and currently used as a law office.

**#6****Colonel Schneider Residence**

726 Seymour Street

1976: One of the "little gems" of early day Lansing architecture, this small Greek Revival cottage was built in 1854 and still has a lattice work gazebo (summer house) and the foundations of the original octagonal "privy" in the rear yard. The houses' most famous owner, Col. Frederick Schneider was born in Saline, Michigan, in 1840 and enlisted in the Civil War as a private with the Michigan Zouaves. He later served as a Colonel of the Second Michigan Regiment and years later an aid to Chief Marshal General William Humphrey at the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol in Lansing. Colonel Schneider was employed by the Auditor General's Office, where he was in charge of the Abstract Department for twenty-five years and was secretary to the Auditor General for four years. His biography lists him as "Past Commander of the Chas. C. Foster Post of G.A.R., and Republican and a Member of the Universalist Church." The house has been extensively restored by its present owners who blocked its planned demolition for a "modern" apartment complex parking lot.



2012: This small house on Seymour Street between Saginaw and Madison may have undergone exterior changes since the 1976 report. It is well preserved.



**#7****W. B. Thoman House,  
217 North Sycamore Street**

1976: Built in the ornate style of the 1880's this house, still located among a cluster of late nineteenth century houses on Sycamore Street, has been owned and occupied by the Thoman family since it was built in 1884. Lansing architect, Darius B. Moon, designed later (pre-1900) additions to the house and may also have been the original architect.



2012: This house on Sycamore north of Ottawa is occupied and well preserved.

**#8**

## Harry Moore House 222 W. Genesee

1976: Built around the turn of the century, this large Romanesque house with its tower, oval windows and ornate wood porches, represents one of the finest homes built in Lansing during that past epoch. Owned in 1906 by Harry L. Stone, its most famous later owner was Harry E. Moore, the President and General Manager of the Lansing Company and Chairman of the Board of the City National Bank.



2012: This unique building is well known locally and very well preserved. It is located on Genesee between Capitol and Seymour and is currently used for the offices of several different organizations.

**#9****Judge Q.A. Smith House (McClintock Company)****226 West Washtenaw**

1976: Although greatly altered and remodeled in later years, this house was listed on the 1859 map of Lansing. Its most famous occupant was Probate Judge Quincy A. Smith of the law firm of Smith & Hood. During the 1940's the Ingham County Republican State Central Committee was located here. Now used as a business, this old house has been attractively if not authentically restored.



2012: There is now an eight story parking ramp at this address on the corner of Washtenaw and Townsend streets, directly south of the Capitol. Little information was found on the house that used to be in this location, although it does appear in many maps dating back to the late 1800s. One news story from 1931 shows the site as the location of a proposed luxury apartment tower called Patrician Homes.



**#10**

## **Newbrough House (former Community Chest Building)**

615 North Capitol

1976: Built by William Newbrough around 1915, this imposing house is typical of the combination of many architectural styles popular just before the First World War. William H. Newbrough was President of the "New Way Motor Company," a gasoline engine manufacturing company. He was a nephew of Dr. S.D. Newbro, the famous phonographist. Newbrough worked for the E. Bement Company from 1883-1903 and then went to the Clark Automobile Company a year and a half before founding his own Company. From 1931-1951 the house served as the central headquarters for the Auto Owners Insurance Company.



2012: This widely recognized mansion on North Capitol Avenue across from LCC has been beautifully preserved and currently serves as the offices of Mourer Foster Insurance.

**#11****Clarence E. Bement House**

707 North Capitol Avenue

1976: This small, unimposing brick house on North Capitol Avenue was the home of Clarence E. Bement, the son and partner of E. Bement. The firm of E. Bement & Sons was at one time the largest business and source of employment in Lansing, manufacturing stoves, ranges, plows, cultivators and bob sleds.



1942

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



2012: This house was demolished relatively recently and is now a surface parking lot at the corner of Capitol and Saginaw.

## #12 M., J. Buck House

301 North Walnut Street

1976: Originally the home of M.J. Buck who was engaged in the furniture business for years in Lansing after the Civil War and who served as the City Treasurer for two terms. Buck was also well known in Lansing for Buck's (later Baird's) Opera House, presently the site of the Gladmer Theater. M.J. Buck's house has had several extensions and additions, but the interior still maintains much of its 19th century elegance.



2012: This house appears to be occupied and in good condition on the corner of Walnut and Ionia.



# #13

## The Flats

320-328 West Ottawa Street



1976: These are the last surviving examples of late nineteenth century townhouses and apartments. Built for speculation directly across from the Capitol Building, this series of four connected units, three stories high with their mansard roofs have been partially restored and are still occupied. They represent the last relatively unaltered group of such "flats" in Lansing.

2012: At the corner of Ottawa and Walnut across from the Capitol Building, these buildings have been designated a local historic district by the City of Lansing and now serve as the offices of various organizations. They have been recently restored and continue to be well preserved and locally renowned.

**#14**

## **Ed Verlinden House (Community Action Program-West Side Center)**

720 West Ottawa Street

1976: Although greatly altered in later years this originally elaborate Victorian house was the home of Ed Verlinden, who was at one time during the early decades of the twentieth century President of the Olds Motor Works, President of the Durant Motor Works and in 1931 became President of the Central Services Company. This house, dating from late in the nineteenth century was occupied by the Verlinden family from 1920-1922 and has had a succession of owners since then, the present being the State of Michigan.



2012: An empty lot now on West Ottawa Street between Sycamore and Butler.

1938

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District Library Local History Collection

# #15 William Johnson House, (now apartments) 1001 West Ottawa

1976: This house is of note because of one of its early owners, William Johnson, who was at one time the President of the Inter-Lake Business College in Lansing.



2012: This site is now the Michigan Hall of Justice, home to the State Supreme Court. The current building was built in 1999-2002.

1943



**#16**

## **Architect Darius B. Moon House 216 Huron Street**

1976: This elaborate Victorian Eastlake-style house was designed and built as well as occupied by Lansing's major late 19th century architect, Darius B. Moon. Moon built most of the elaborate homes of Lansing's leading citizens from the 1880's through the early decades of the 20th century. This house, one of the most complex in terms of wood carvings, towers, cupolas and porches, was the architect's own house, built in 1894. In later years this house was used as apartments and a major fire in the upper floors forced its boarding up in recent times. Also of note is an elaborate "gingerbread" carriage house in the rear.

2012: This house was moved from its previous location at 116 South Logan Street (Now Martin Luther King Jr.) and was designated a Local Historic District by the City of Lansing. It is very well preserved and in great condition.



**#17****Appleyard House, (now apartments)**

402 South Walnut Street

1976: Originally one of a matched pair of houses (the other standing on the corner of West Ottawa and Walnut Street), this large brick house with Italianate brackets and "icicle" carvings, was built in the mid-1870's by Mr. Appleyard who was the general building supervisor of the State Capitol building being constructed at the same time. Now greatly altered and turned into numerous apartments only certain exterior features remain of this once grand house.



2012: Although altered, this building is still well known locally and remains in good condition on the corner of Walnut and Kalamazoo.



**#18****William Kerns House (AF of L-CIO Building)**

606 Townsend Street

1976: Another turn of the century Lansing home designed and built by Darius B. Moon, Constructed in the heroic Romanesque style this house has had much exterior trim and porches removed but retains some of its original grandeur.



2012: In great condition, the Kerns house is well-known locally and boasts a State Historic Site marker. Now used for the offices of the Michigan Democratic Party, the building sits at the corner of Townsend and Hillsdale south of downtown.

**#19**

## A.B.C. Hardy House (Michigan Conference of Seventh Day Adventists)

620 Townsend Street

1976: Ornate three storied house built around the turn  
of the century and occupied at one time by A.B.C.  
Hardy, president of the Olds Motor Works.



2012: This site is now a small  
parking lot on the corner of  
Townsend and Hillsdale.

This house is thought to be the  
A.B.C. Hardy residence in 1947.

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

**#20****Edgar L. Cooley House,  
207 West Malcolm X**

1976: One of the last of the large Victorian houses built along Main Street in the late 19th/early 20th century this house was built by the architect Frank Dodge for B. F. Cooley, the founder of the Michigan Supply Company in 1903, and is still occupied by the Cooley family.



2012: Although there may have been recent alterations, this house is in good condition and sits on the corner of Malcolm X (formerly Main Street) and South Washington.



**#21**

## **Dr. Haze House (Michigan Baptist Convention)**

207 West Malcolm X

1976: The only other surviving house of the original houses built along this part of West Main Street, this large white house was built in 1917 and was occupied for many years by Dr. Harry Haze. Dr. Haze was born in Lansing in 1868. At one time he was mayor of the city, a member of the state Legislature, on the city council and later a collector of internal revenue. He graduated as President of his medical class from the University of Michigan in 1895. Dr. Haze was Vice-President of the Lansing Pure Ice Company and a director of the American State Savings Bank as well as a director of the Atlas Drop Forge Company.



2012: This beautifully restored house on Malcolm X St. now serves as the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame and is open to the public. Adjoining the house is Cooley Gardens, a public park that draws many visitors and has been declared to be "up there in the realm of great gardens in America."

**#22**

## "Governor's House"

2003 West Malcolm X

1976: For over a century this fine example of 1840's Greek Revival architecture has been Michigan's un-official Governor's House, although no governor ever lived in it. This house was built around 1847-9 on the southeast corner of Allegan and Capitol Avenue in Block 115 of Lansing. This block also housed the temporary capitol of Michigan and the house was listed as a "Governors residence" on the 1859 map of Lansing. The house was erected soon after the capitol was moved to Lansing as the residence for Governor John S. Barry, who refused to live in it deeming it "too small". Although it has always been known as the "Governor's Mansion," no governor ever lived in it. However, several state officials have, including two Auditors Generals of the Civil War period: Langford G. Berry (1861-1862) and Emile Anneke (1863-1866).

In 1925 Edwin A. Bowd, prominent Lansing architect purchased the house, cut it into sections, took it down from the hill it was on and moved it out to its present location on West Main Street where it was re-assembled. Bowd, who was the architect of many local buildings including the Ingham County Courthouse (now a registered National landmark), the Lewis Cass State Office Building and many Michigan State University buildings, lived in the house until his death several years later. Over its long life this house, with its several low-laying Whigs and Greek Revival corner pilasters and entrance, has had many owners and many purposes. In recent times the famous "Governor's House" has been extensively restored and remains today as a prime example of Greek Revival Architecture in the Mid-Michigan area.



**2012:** This house is occupied and in great condition on Malcolm X St. between Buffalo and Everett Streets.

**#23****Benjamin F. Davis House****528 South Washington Avenue**

1976: Work was begun early in 1889 on one of the most ornate and costly of Lansing's late Victorian mansions, -the Benjamin F. Davis house. B. F. Davis was the son of William and Mary Davis, pioneers who came from New York to Lansing in 1853. Davis came into local and state prominence as one of Lansing's first industrialists and bankers, founding the Lansing (Wheelbarrow) Company in 1881 and the City National Bank in 1886. In 1875, B. F. Davis married Miss Eva D. Sparrow, the sister of timber and land "baron," Edward W. Sparrow, thus joining two great fortunes and old Lansing families.

Architecturally the B. F. Davis home, the last intact home in Lansing designed and built by architect Darius B. Moon, is an outstanding example of the last phase of Victorian "carpenter Gothic" and picturesque architecture. Originally painted white and called the "white castle" the entire exterior is encased within a veritable cocoon of filigreed porches, balconies and most importantly, a Chinese pagoda on the roof with a wide "Saratoga-style" front columned veranda and porte-cochere below.

After the death of the last surviving daughter of B.F. Davis, Mrs. Edith-Eve Davis, the house greatly deteriorated and plans for demolition had already been partially been carried out on the interior when, in the fall of 1971, under the aegis of the Greater Lansing Historical Society, a lease was signed allowing more time for the development of a restoration plan and fund raising campaign.



**2012: This house was demolished back in the 1970s, and today the site is used as a parking lot on the corner of South Washington and West Hillsdale.**

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



**#24****IOOF Grand Secretary Office**

105 West Hillsdale

1976: Dating from the post Civil War period and originally used as a private house, this white columned mansion now houses the Grand Secretaries' office of the IOOF (Odd Fellows). The lone survivor of Lansing's pre-Civil War fraternal orders, the Capitol Lodge Number 45, IOOF was founded in 1850 and has occupied this house since 1916.



2012: This well restored building now serves as the offices of Transeth and Associates on West Hillsdale between Capitol and Washington Avenues.

**#25****Porter Apartments, (Capitol Park Motor Hotel)**

501 Townsend Street

1976: Among Lansing's most fashionable apartments in the pre-World War II era and the home of many of Lansing's leading citizens over the years, the Porter Apartments are now incorporated into the much newer Capitol Park Motor Hotel.



2012: This large apartment complex is still appears to be known as the “Porter Apartments” and remains in good condition on Townsend Street south of Reutter Park.



**#26**

## John A. Kerr House

213 East Saint Joseph Street

1976: Spoken of as Lansing's first great mansion, this stately Greek Revival House with its four Doric-columned front portico was built just prior to the Civil War by John A. Kerr, one of the most influential men in the history of Lansing. Still remembered as the man who gave Lansing its many trees, Kerr built a vast estate complete with a park. He was the first man in Lansing to use gas in his home and he manufactured his own supply on the premises. Kerr, an early publisher and newspaperman, withdrew as much as \$15,000 annually from his earnings of the "State Republican" newspaper for the upkeep of his house. He used to send a team and wagon to Detroit, over the Old Plank Road, before winter set in, to bring a supply of liquor, canned goods, etc. in preparation for his famous open houses which were the most elaborate staged in Lansing at this time. His hospitality and love of beauty were proverbial.

A closer look at this house will reveal the fact that it too has been moved from its original location. After the death of Kerr, who was killed in a train wreck returning from a Northern spa, his widow lived in the house until her death. Later most of the original grounds were sold off and the house moved a few feet to its present location on East Saint Joseph Street. An earlier side wing was removed and in more recent times. When the building housed the L.A. Davidson Construction Company offices, new rooms were added and extensive changes made in the interior.



2012: This house on East Saint Joseph appears to be currently undergoing extensive renovations, but exterior alterations preserve the historic beauty of the building.

**#27**

## **Governor Osborn & Governor Williams House**

615 South Grand Avenue

1976: While never an official Governor's residence, this elaborate white Victorian house built in the early 1900's has been the home of two of Michigan's most famous Governors, Chase Osborn and G. Mennen Williams. Last occupied by the Williams family in the 1960's, the house has in recent times served many uses such as a dormitory and state owned property.



2012: New townhouses are now on the lot where the Governor Osborn and Williams House once stood.

1968

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

**#28**

## Squire Haven's "1861" House 213 South Grand Avenue

1976: Now one of the most well known restaurants in Lansing, this large rectangular house with its brick piers, fancy hanging brackets and cupola on top of the roof was originally built as a mansion among mansions by Squire Havens in around 1858. The old legend of the Squire toasting the workmen upon completion of his new house and then having the glass placed on the very top of the cupola spire is born out by the presence of the original glass in one of the Brauer's "1861 House" restaurant dining rooms. Greatly altered even during the 19th century when owned by the Lawrence (Baking) family, enough of the atmosphere of early Lansing still remains, despite the encroachment of parking ramps and modern structures, to make this building one of the most historic and aesthetic remaining in Lansing.

2012: This location, abutting the Grand River on South Grand Avenue, is now a parking lot.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



**#29****29. 532 East Shiawassee**

1976: Although presumably doomed due to renewal and neglect, this Civil War period house is of visual importance because of the fine old Italianate doorway, overhanging bracketed porch cornice and stone bay window trim. Seemingly always used as an apartment house, most of the trim was only visible recently when tile corner building was demolished revealing the original entrance facade.



2012: This beautifully restored house still remains and currently serves as the offices of the Michigan Dyslexia Institute. However, new developments continue to threaten this building on East Shiawassee and Larch.



**#30**

## **James I. Mead House (Cedar Street Recreational Center)**

429 North Cedar Street

1976: Built shortly after the Civil War, this large Italian Villa style house with its round-headed windows, bay windows and third floor cupola, has served a variety of purposes over the years. It's original owner, James I. Mead, was the builder of the old Mead's Hall and this house was the center of much social activity due to the various theatrical and artistic people visiting here.

After the death of Mr. Mead, the house was sold to the Lansing Women's Hospital Association and given a substantial sum of money by E.W. Sparrow. The south wing was added and the entire building was used as a hospital. Currently the building serves as a Senior Citizens center and continues to be useful into its second century of existence.

**2012: This site is currently a parking lot for the large Riverfront Apartment Complex on North Cedar between Shiawassee and Saginaw.**



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

**#31****William and Mary Davis Farm House**

521 Torrence Court

1976: Arriving in Lansing in 1853 from New York State, William and Mary Davis built this farmhouse to house their family. Originally located in the Davis farm's center, the site is now bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, Mount Hope Avenue, Washington Avenue, and the Grand Truck railroad tracks. When Cedar Street was put in, it ran between the area of the old farm house and barn. William Davis died in 1875 and ownership passed to his wife Mary and one of their sons, B. F. Davis.

For many years the old farm house stood on Cedar Street until 1922 when it was moved to Torrence Court. The porch and shutters were removed and it was made into apartments as was the original barn. Quite elaborate when it was built, some of the original furnishings were kept until recent time in the B. F. Davis mansion on South Washington Avenue.



2012: This house, on Torrence Court off of South Cedar Street, is the original farmhouse at this address, with several exterior changes. The address was changed from 523 (in 1976), and is now 521 Torrence Court.



**#32**

## **Sagamore Hill Subdivision** off Logan, area of Blair Street



1976: Notable because of being one of the first major land and house developments to extend outside the boundary of the original platting of Lansing, this area was developed in around 1920.

2012: This neighborhood boasts colorful single family houses, wide streets, and good sidewalks.

**#33**

## **The Country Club of Lansing**

2200 Moores River Drive

1976: Long the social center of Lansing, the Lansing Country Club was formed in around 1921, a direct descendant of the Riverside Country Club formed on the same site in 1911. Set amidst rolling park land the Club House has had extensive changes and alterations over the years and still remains the gathering point for Lansing society.



2012: This is an active private golf course on Moores River Drive. The expansive property includes an 18-hole course and a private clubhouse, along with a swimming pool, tennis courts, a driving range, a pro shop, and a fitness club.



**#34****J. H. Moores Summer House****2126 Moores River Drive**

1976: James Henry Moores represents one of the great success stories in the Horatio Alger tradition possible only in late nineteenth century America. Born in Ohio, Moores became one of the last of the "timber barons" in Michigan, only to be wiped out like his rival O.M. Barnes in the Panic of 1893. Undaunted, Moores, who in his lumber heydays was called "the man who rebuilt Chicago" referring to the great mass of lumber sent to Chicago after the Great Fire of 1871, returned to Lansing in 1906 and proceeded to make another fortune by helping to organize the newly forming Atlas Drop Forge. Earlier Moores had formed the Laming Wheelbarrow Company, along with the Bement Company, one of Lansing's major early industries.

J. H. Moores is most remembered for his generous gifts of park lands to the city of Lansing. In 1909, he donated the beautiful park land, then called the Belvedere, overlooking the Grand River to the city. This eighteen acre park was later renamed Moores Park in his honor. Upon his death in 1918 another site, Frances Park, was bequeathed to the city in honor of Mrs. Frances Moores, his wife.

The Moores large brick house at 500 Townsend Street has given way to the present Y.M.C.A. building, but their summer house, a small cottage when first built in the first decade of this century, is still located on Moores River Drive, named in honor of J. H. Moores himself.



**2012: This house on Moores River Drive, across the street from the Country Club, is one of several large houses in the neighborhood that are very well preserved.**

**#35****Talbert Abrams House**

1310 Cambridge Road

1976: Although a modern house by comparison this beautiful cut stone and glass home is of interest not only architecturally but because of the prominence of its owner, Talbert Abrams, President and founder of Abrams Aerial Survey Corporation. The Abrams Aerial Survey Corporation has literally surveyed the entire world and in recent times some of their equipment has even journeyed to the moon with the astronauts. The house was laid out in the shape of an airplane.



2012: This house on Cambridge Road, south of Moores River Drive, has a beautiful façade and is an active residence.

**#36****Michigan State Governor's Residence**

2520 Oxford Road

1976: Long in coming, this imposing modern house built and originally occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Sober, is now the official residence of the Governor of the State of Michigan. The house was designed and built in 1959 by William Clark.



2012: The Governor's Mansion on Oxford Road has beautiful landscaping. The house is set back a ways from the street, with active security systems and personnel. It is one of two official Michigan Governor's residences, the other being on Mackinac Island. The house has a solar panel on the roof and is surrounded by gardens.



# #37 Ray Potter House

1348 Cambridge Road

1976: Deemed Lansing's most lavish home because of its marble staircases and ornamentation this imposing English Tudor style home was built by Ray Potter who was the President and Treasurer of the Michigan Screw Company during the 1920's. Presently owned by the Lansing Diocese, the house is used as the Bishop's residence.



2012: This is a large English Tudor Style Mansion and one of the largest houses in Lansing. Although there may be a few exterior changes, it is very well preserved and up kept.

**#38**

## Harry Harper House

1408 Cambridge Road



1976: Another of the great English Tudor style showplaces in Lansing, this beautiful house was built by Harry F. Harper who was, during various periods in his life, President and General Manager of the Motor Wheel Corporation, President of Driggs Aircraft, Vice-President of the Duplex Truck Company and Vice-President of the Michigan Aero Engine Company. This house has, for many years in more recent times, been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Davidson of the L.A. Davidson Construction Company.

2012: This sprawling stone mansion on the corner of Cambridge and Oxford has a large, well landscaped lawn, beautiful masonry, several gardens, and awnings over the windows.



**#39****Byrnes Farm**

3123 Delta River Drive

1976: Now reduced to 35 acres and originally owned by the Sneeberger family, the Byrnes farm has the distinction of being the only farm completely within the city limits of Lansing. The main house dates from 1894 and all the farm buildings are still intact.



2012: Up in the far northwest corner of Lansing on Delta River Drive, the Byrnes Farm House is currently occupied and well preserved. There is a newer addition in the back and is now located in a large neighborhood with several similar style houses surrounding it.



**#40****Hugo B. Lundberg House**

1701 Jerome Street

1976: Located on the corner of Jerome and Marshall Streets, this large square brick house with its dormers and tile roof was built for Hugo B. Lundberg, the President and General Manager of the Michigan Screw Products Company and later the Lundberg Screw Products Company, and is still occupied by his family.



2012: Just north of East Michigan Avenue, there are several large historic houses in the general area.

## #41 Rumsey M. Haynes House

1704 Jerome Street

1976: Work was begun in April 1929 on this large English Tudor style house built by the architect Lee Black for the Rumsey Haynes family. The Rumsey family had owned this property for three generations and at the time of construction it was open farmland just off Michigan Avenue in what was known as the Rumsey Michigan Avenue Addition. An important forbearer, Marshall E. Rumsey, grandfather of the builder of this house, came from Leslie, Michigan in 1890 and served two terms in the Michigan House of Representatives.



Construction on the house was completed in September 1930 and today, after over forty years, this elegant period house remains one of the showplaces of Lansing and is still occupied by the original owner.

2012: This large brick house has been very well preserved and is currently occupied.

**#42**

## **Union Railroad Station**

637 East Michigan Avenue

1976: Typical of the elaborate cut-stone Romanesque railway stations of the last decades of the nineteenth century this property was formerly owned by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. The long low silhouette and strong character of the building are derived from the Romanesque style of architecture developed by architects Louis Sullivan and H.H. Richardson. The use of such massive masonry enlivened by large arches and projecting towers dates back to Medieval Europe especially the fortified castles of England and France.

No longer used by the railroad as a passenger terminal, plans are underway for turning this depot into a restaurant capturing much of the elegance of the late nineteenth century "Gas-light" era.



2012: Clara's Restaurant on East Michigan Avenue is a locally known landmark and includes a dining car and a beautifully restored station. There is still the occasional freight train that uses the tracks behind it.



**#43**

## Grand Trunk Railroad Station

1203 South Washington Avenue

1976: Another victim of the demise of the great age of trains is this railway station. Built in 1903 in the form of a medieval castle complete with crenellated and battlemented towers, this building too has lost its original purpose. Of great architectural note, it is hoped that some new and useful purpose can be found for this fine building which should be saved as a major benefit to the architectural aesthetics of Lansing.



2012: As large high rises go up around it, the Grand Trunk Station has been preserved and currently sits beside an active rail line.



**#44****Rouser Drug Building**

123 South Washington Square

1976: Dating back to its founding in 1867, the Rouser Drug Company ceased operating in the fall of 1971. The present building, noted for its unusual terra-cotta-covered facade with an ornate cartouche bearing the mortar and pestle symbol of the pharmacist and engaged Ionic colonettes, was built around 1880 and is still owned by the Rouser estate. Most of the ornate interior, all except the old soda fountain which was removed in 1942, is untouched to this day. Old bottles, advertisements, posters, lamps and windows completed the atmosphere of a late nineteenth century drug store. The prescriptions were sent by basket along a cable system up to the balcony where they were filled and sent down again.

The Rouser building remains one of the most unusual ever constructed in Lansing and it is hoped that a new purpose will soon be found for it.

2012: The Korner Krust Bread Company recently left this location and this corner shop sits temporarily vacant. The building however is still beautifully up kept on a bustling street corner, and a new small business should be expected shortly.



# #45

## Michigan Theater and Arcade 215 South Washington Square

1976: One day late in December in 1919 one of those disastrous fires, so crucial to the sporadic building sprees in Lansing's history, leveled a declining rooming house and seven old buildings in the 200 block of South Washington Avenue. One of the oldest historic spots in Lansing, this was the site of the Columbus Hotel (dating somewhere between 1847 and 1852) built by Christopher Columbus Darling (whose ornate Italian villa house along with the later Prudden Auditorium was demolished in recent times for the Civic Center parking lot). The Columbus House itself gave way to other names and owners, among the last being the Hudson House.

Having already acquired the land previous to the 1919 fire, the Theater King, Colonel Walter Scott Butterfield, saw his chance to make the future Strand Theater and Arcade the grandest new building complex in this area. Hiring the noted Chicago theatre architect John Eberson at a cost of half a million dollars, construction was begun early in 1920 and the formal opening, originally planned for March, was held in April 1921.

All Lansing and Mid Michigan was awed at both the lavish interiors of the Theater, especially the main Louis XV-style auditorium, as well as the series of live stage performance and movies shown. Now most of the pre-depression glamour as well as decorations have been hidden by later modernizations and the live stage shows have vanished but the old Strand, long since re-christened the Michigan Theater, has celebrated its golden anniversary. The arcades, so novel for the period and presumably the ancestor of the modern shopping mall continue to be some of the most attractive and delightful shopping areas in Lansing.



2012: Still famous throughout town as “the Strand”, the old theater has been beautifully restored and converted into offices. The exterior façade has been very well preserved and visitors are welcome inside to see the unique decorative ceiling and large wooden staircase. The site boasts a State Historic Marker outside detailing the theater’s rich history.

**#46**

## **Lansing's Old Public Library (Lansing Community College)**

210 West Shiawassee Street

1976: For over half a century all the learning of the ages was located behind this Beaux arts classical facade, as any Lansing school age child or inquisitive adult knew. One of a vast network of similar-looking libraries donated by the immensely rich philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, this library was built in 1907. Now replaced by the more modern Lansing Public Library the older building serves a continuing useful purpose as part of the rapidly developing Lansing Community College complex of buildings.



2012: Still known locally as the Carnegie Library, this brick Classical building was the center of a recent large addition that is now called University Center at Lansing Community College.



# #47 Civic Center

505 West Allegan

1976: Despite its relatively new date of construction (the mid-1950's) the Lansing Civic Center will always be remembered, and counted a historic building primarily for the fact that this building was the site of the Michigan Constitutional Convention, a 1963 event which has had so great a lasting influence on Michigan government.



2012: The site of the Lansing Civic Center is now a parking lot and part of the large Capitol Complex behind the State Capitol building on West Allegan.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



**#48****Lansing Woman's Club (Old),**

118 West Ottawa

(Christian Science Reading Room and Liberty Loan Office)

1976: Of double significance, this group of two elaborate ca. 1890 buildings represents one of the last surviving commercial-style buildings of the late Victorian era as well as in part the home of the oldest organized woman's club in the city of Lansing. Founded on March 18, 1874, one afternoon during which a dozen women met at the home of Mrs. Ephriam Longyear (on West Main Street), the purpose of the club was "to furnish the stimulus needed by mothers and busy housewives to keep abreast with the stream of duty and progress."

The lower street levels of the two buildings have been modernized in recent years but the upper two to three stories still maintain much of their original appearance. Graceful brick arches with stone carving and delicate brick patterning make these buildings among the most visually interesting in Lansing.

2012: There are a few vacant spots in this building, but there are also offices and a coffee shop on the ground level. Although it is in the shadow of the newer state office high rise, the decorative brick façade is very well preserved.



**#49****Cherry Street School (Manson-Jackson & Kane, Inc.),****520 Cherry Street**

1976: The original Cherry Street School had been a private school on Walnut Street, between Hillsdale and Saint Joseph Streets when in 1883 it was moved to its present site on Cherry Street. Eleven years later, in 1884, the first school was demolished and the present structure built on the site at a cost of \$6,680.

After opening in September 1894 and with a later addition on the school in 1915, enrollment dropped sharply in the 1930's, and the school was closed in 1933. Used as a warehouse for years the building was later sold to Elmer Manson, a local architect. Today, after an extensive overhauling and refurnishing program, the former Cherry Street School represents one of the earliest and best examples of historic preservation and an adaptive use program in the Lansing area. Both the past and the present have been combined in a functional blend leading the way to the future.

2012: The Cherry Street School is part of the Cherry Hill Neighborhood Local Historic District. Although much of the original brick structure still stands, the building has also been renovated extensively and currently serves as a mental health facility. It is well preserved and up kept.



**#50****Interlake Business College Building**

231-237 South Washington

1976: During the last nineteenth century this large building with its round-headed windows and pilasters was the home of the Interlake Business College. Presently it is used for various businesses, shops and storage areas.



2012: The site of the Interlake Business College Building is now a parking lot on the corner of South Washington and Washtenaw.

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



**#51****Masonic Temple**

217 South Capitol Avenue

1976: Founded in Lansing in 1850, the Masonic Lodge has occupied this monumental building on Capitol Avenue for over four decades. Built by the Detroit firm of McColl Snyder, & McLean In 1929, the building is of architectural interest because of the way in which more traditional elements such as the two Doric columns in antis as well as piers and acroteria have been combined with a simplified geometric plan. The lavish Interior is based on ancient Roman Imperial architecture.

2012: This well known building in Downtown Lansing, south of the State Capitol on South Capitol Avenue, is now occupied by Cooley Law School and well preserved.





# #52 Western Union Telegraph Company

102 West Michigan Avenue

1976: No description

2012: In the picture below, the small building, two away from the YMCA, right next to the long pale building on the corner of Washington and Michigan, was the telegraph office.

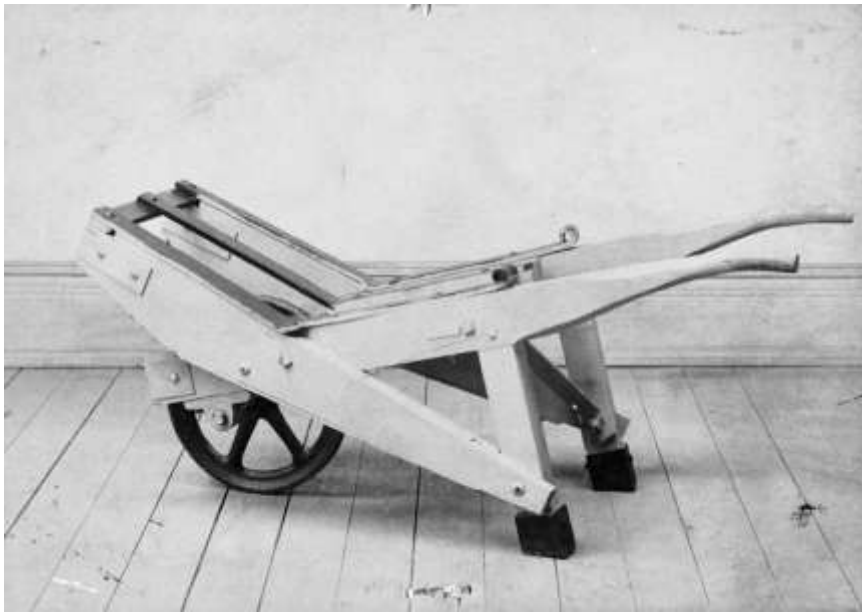


This is the Capital Tower labeled as 110 West Michigan Avenue, which currently sits at that location.

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District Library Local History Collection

**#53****Lansing (Wheelbarrow) Company (former)****Cedar & Saginaw Streets**

1976: Founded in 1881, the Lansing Wheelbarrow Company, later known as the Lansing Company, was one of the first major Industries in Lansing. Founded by B. F. Davis, E. W. Sparrow, C. B. Stebbins and A. C. Stebbins, the company reached its zenith in the 1930's when, in one year (1934), the company did over \$2,500,000 worth of business. Growing from an initial investment of \$8,100, the Lansing Wheelbarrow Company at one time made most of the wheelbarrows produced in America. Completely ceasing to operate only within the past five years, the original building, now a storage warehouse on the southwest corner of Cedar and Saginaw Streets, remains a somewhat faded but still extent reminder of one of Lansing's greatest industries. Part of the original offices were remodeled in 1959 and turned into the Salvation Army social services center.



**2012: This site on the Grand River is currently part of an apartment complex.**

**Lansing Wheelbarrow**

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

**#54**

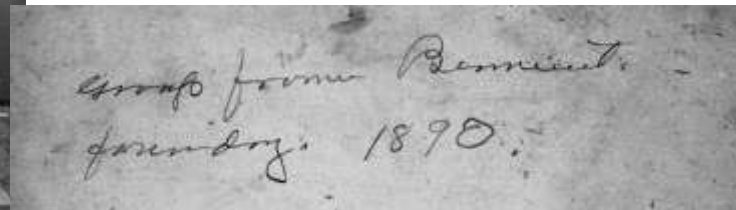
## E. Bement & Sons

located on South Grand between Ottawa and  
Shiawassee Streets

1976: Founded in 1869 as a partnership between Edwin Bement and his sons, E. Bement & Sons, employed a veritable army of workers at the turn of the century. Their large complex of buildings was the largest in Lansing at the time and their products, mainly stoves, farm implements, and famous sleds, were sold all over the United States, and even the world.



2012: The site of the Bement and Sons factory on the Grand River is now a modern parking lot, part of the Accident Fund/Ottawa Street complex.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



Michigan Avenue Bridge

East Michigan Avenue over the Grand River

1976: The Michigan Avenue Bridge, built in 1895 to replace an earlier (1879) bridge over the Grand River, was famous at the time of its construction as the world's widest bridge, being 234 feet long and 155 feet wide. Soon it will be replaced by a new bridge.



2012: The new Michigan Avenue bridge crosses the Grand River in the same place, in front of the Capitol and the Lansing Skyline.



Michigan Avenue  
Bridges 1890s



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



**#56**

## Old Central High School (Lansing Community College)

North Capitol Avenue

1976: Built in 1875, in the then popular style of the elaborated mansard roof and the “Paris of Napoleon III,” the old Lansing High School is now completely enclosed by later additions of the old Central High School building (the name changed to Lansing Central High School in 1928), and the more recent Lansing Community College. Only a few exterior signs remain visible of the first building and the entire interior has been changed and modernized.



2012: Most locals still remember Old Central which was recently demolished and now serves as a parking lot on LCC campus, North Capitol Avenue between Genesee and Shiawassee Streets.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

# #57 Genesee Street School (Lansing School District)

835 West Genesee

1976: Built in, 1912, the Genesee Street School, now used by the City of Lansing Board of Education, is the oldest elementary building still in use.



2012: The Genesee Street School is well preserved and now serves as the home of the Black Child and Family Institute, a community health and education organization.



**#58****J.W. Sexton High School, 102 McPherson Rd**

1976: Opening in January of 1943 after 2 years of construction, Sexton High School remains one of the major high schools in Lansing. Built by the Warren Holmes Company office, the school was named after Mr. J. W. Sexton, the superintendent of Lansing Public Schools.



2012: Sexton High School serves Lansing's West Side and is still active and very well preserved.

**#59****Eastern High School**

220 North Pennsylvania Avenue

1976: Built to relieve the old Central High School, Eastern High School opened its doors in the fall of 1928. It was designed by Irving Pond, a Chicago architect.



2012: Eastern High School on Pennsylvania just north of East Michigan Avenue has a separate gymnasium and is now part of a large complex that serves Lansing's East Side.



# #60 Boy's Vocational School (BVS)

400 North Pennsylvania Avenue

1976: A complex of buildings dating from the 1860's to the late nineteenth century "cottages" and more recent additions. It is the oldest educational facility in operation in the city of Lansing today.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District Library Local History Collection



2012: Most of this property is now a public park area used primarily by Eastern High School, and part of it was used for a new housing development called East Village.



**#61**

## Oak, or East Park

East Saginaw Street

1976: Notable because this area served as the first cemetery in Lansing dating from the 1840's, the graves were moved to what is now Mount Hope Cemetery in around 1870 and the site has been East Park and Oak Park ever since.



2012: This sprawling park boasts wide open green areas, rolling hills, and shaded paths, as well as a community center.



**#62****Durant Park**

City block bounded by Washington, Saginaw, Capitol, and Madison

1976: Donated to the City of Lansing early in the 20th century by W. C. Durant, the automobile genius whose factory eventually evolved into Fisher Body Division of General Motors, this is one of the earliest parks in Lansing. For many years noted for its "haunted house," the turn of the century mansion of Mortimer Cowles (gone now), the park contains a monumental triumphal arch entrance.



2012: Durant Park is noted for the gateway arches at the entrances.

**#63****Reutter Park**

block bounded by Capitol, Kalamazoo, Townsend  
and Lenawee Streets

1976: Noted for its beautiful fountain, dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Reutter, the name of this park was changed for the third time in 1944 (previously it has been called Third Ward Park and then Central Park) to honor J. Gottlieb Reutter, a German immigrant who, after settling in Lansing and becoming Mayor during the World War I era, played an important part in obtaining both the Durant factory and Durant Park for Lansing.



2012: The Park is very well landscaped and sits on the south side of Downtown Lansing.



**#64****Saint Mary's Cathedral**

219 Seymour Street

1976: Erected in 1911-1913 and just recently remodeled, this beautiful Norman-Gothic church is one of the more prominent Lansing landmarks. Built in a style emulating the great French cathedrals, this massive structure is noted for its rose windows and high bell tower.

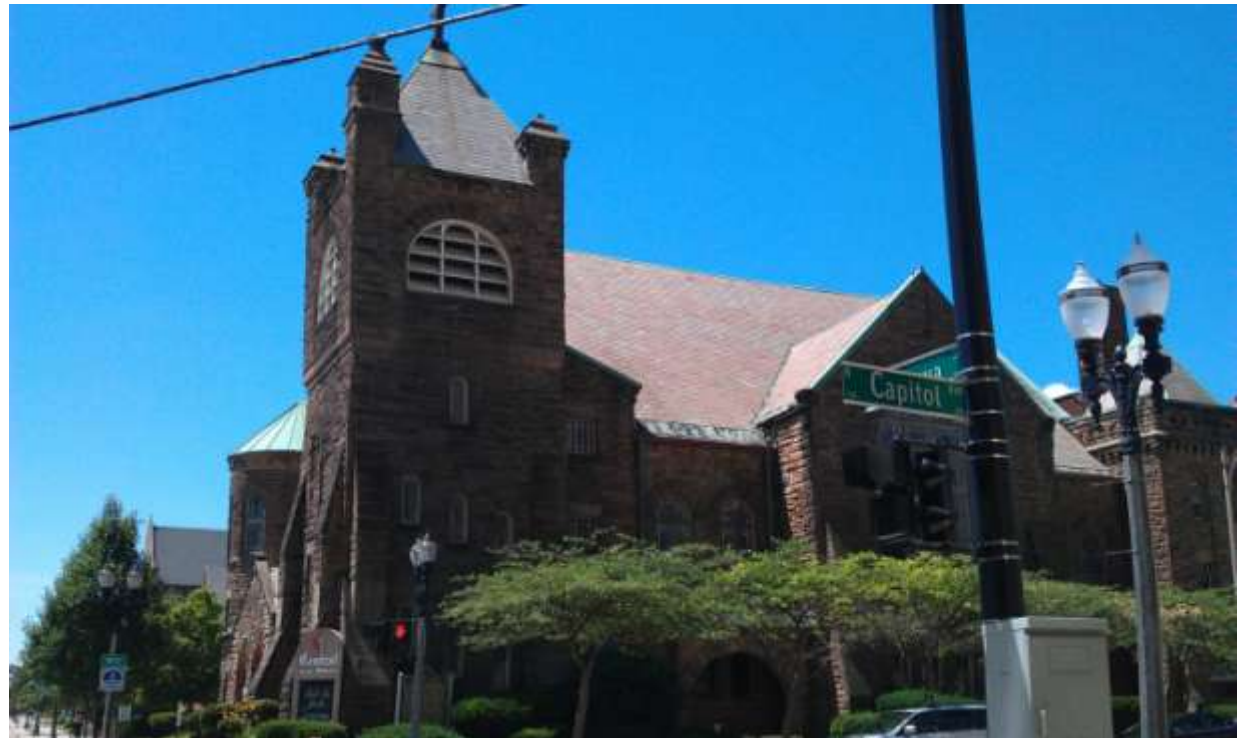


2012: Just north of the State Capitol, St. Mary's Cathedral is a beautiful structure and still active as a Catholic parish, home of the Diocese of Lansing.

**#65****Central United Methodist Church**

200 West Ottawa Street

1976: This massive Romanesque style stone church, built during 1888-1889, is noted for its beautiful woodwork and stained glass windows. The Central Temple House was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Scott in 1923. Later in 1942, the Scotts donated the Mary Sabina Chapel in memory of both their mothers.



2012: At the corner of Ottawa and Capitol across the street from the State Capitol, this old church is still an active congregation. The building is in good condition.

# Factories of Lansing

1976: Despite their general lack of great architectural distinction and aesthetic qualities it is necessary to include the various Lansing factories because of the major role they have played in the growth and development of the city.



**#66**

**Olds Motor Works**  
920 Townsend

1976: No description



2012: The Lansing/Grand River GM Factory is an active car manufacturing plant to the south of I-496. There are historical markers for when it used to be the Olds Motor Works factory, but today employees build luxury Cadillacs.

**#67**

**Reo Motor Car (Diamond Reo Trucks), Original Truck Plant**  
2100 South Washington at Mount Hope

1976: No Description



2012: Newer addition, listed as Discount Tire Company warehouse.

**#68** Durant Factory (Home of Durant & Star Autos)  
Fisher Body Division of General Motors  
401 North Verlinden

1976: No Description



2012: Large fenced off  
demolition field on Lansing's  
West Side.

Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection

**#69**

## Abrams Aerial Survey & Instrument

124 North Larch Street

1976: No Description



2012: On North Larch Street, this building, which once housed an advanced aeronautics instrument industry, is now home to the Paramount Coffee Company.



**#70** **Atlas Drop Forge**  
209 West Mount Hope Avenue

1976: No Description



2012: Now home to the Gerdau Special Steel Company, you can still see "Atlas" engraved above the door.

**#71** **Motor Wheel Corporation**  
1600 North Larch Street

1976: No Description



2012: Now the Demmer North Lansing Plant, an engineering and parts manufacturing facility.

# North Lansing “Old [Lower] Town”

1976: The earliest recorded history of Lansing begins in 1836 with the purchase of property by James Seymour in the town of North Lansing, also known as Lower Town. Although never a permanent resident, Seymour improved the water power along the Grand River bend, built saw mills, and was responsible for the founding of a city. The first permanent resident in Lower Town was Colonel John W. Burchard, who had a log house built in 1843 in the block near what is now East Grand River Avenue near Center Street and the sites of the previous “Seymour House” and later “Grand River House” Hotels.

Burchard built a dam across the Grand River in 1843 and planned to build a mill vital to the history of Lansing's early development several years before it was being considered for the site of the new State Capitol. Within a few years a plank road was built to Mason, a Female College (Miss Rogers School) was founded and the first bridge over the Grand River built. The forests were cleared and North Lansing was well on its way with hotels, houses, and businesses by 1847.

Because of its early beginnings and consequent growth in other directions (i.e. Upper Town and Middle Town) the area of North Lansing contains more historic buildings than any other area of Lansing. While the focal point is the East Grand River-Turner Street area, the entire district is significant in terms of historical development and surviving buildings. The sites extends from 2000 block of North Grand River Avenue down along West Willow Street to Washington Avenue, and then across the Grand River, moving in a circular fashion up East Grand River, Turner and Center Street, including the Turner-Dodge Mansion on East North Street.

# #72 Brisbin Farm and House

2001 North Grand River Avenue

1976: Shown in an 1895 atlas of Ingham County as being a part of the C.G. Burlingame property, this large farm, with its ornate Victorian brick and stone house, has been owned by the Brisbin family for generations. The house is an excellent example of late Victorian styling and the extensive land area offers a park-like setting close to more industrial areas of Lansing. There is also another old farm house with its own carriage house on the same property, at 2025 North Grand River Avenue.



2012: This the current site of the Camelot Hills Apartments on North Grand River Avenue.

OWNERSHIP RECORD			
Owner	MRS. ELIZABETH BRISBIN		Date 2-27-1940
Owner's	507 N. Grand River		Phone
Address	City Lansing	State	
PROPERTY	2001 N. GRAND RIVER AVE.		ASSESSED VALUATION
Legal Description:	Mrs. Elizabeth Brisbin (Owner)		\$ 7200
19439	TENANT	John D. Brisbin	\$
194			\$
194			\$
194			\$
194			\$
194			\$
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Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District Library Local History Collection



**#73****Leo W. Rosier House**

2026 North Grand River Avenue

1976: Owned by Orlando F. Barnes in the 1890's, this ornate Victorian farm house is located across the street from the Brisbin farm and still contains some of its carved wood trim.



2012: Although partially hidden behind some brush, the Rosier house is still in good condition on the corner of North Grand River Avenue and Spikes Street.

**#74****J.E. Warner House**

1230 West Willow Street

1976: Located a mile out on West Willow Street is this red brick apartment house, once the mansion and headquarters of J. E. Warner, a bearded and dignified showman and one-time mayor of Lansing. Although the animals and gold-gilt wagons once kept in the spacious yard in the 1870's and 1880's are gone, the house still has a strong interest because of the window and roof detailing done in stone and wood carving.

2012: This house on West Willow and Roselawn Avenue is very well preserved and in great condition.





**#75****Michigan School for the Blind**

1141 North Pine Street

1976: Originally founded as the Michigan Female Academy and appearing on this same location in the 1859 City map, this property with its classical porticoed main building is now best known for being the Michigan School for the Blind. Located here since 1880, the property covers a twenty acre site. Later additions were designed and built by Black and Manson architects.



2012: An extensive renovation of the School for the Blind, one of Lansing's most historic sites, is underway. Two of the buildings on campus have been completed, while the main building currently sits vacant on North Pine Street at the end of West Grand River Avenue.

# #76 Edwin B. Carrier House

200 West Willow Street

1976: Altered in recent years, this small "upright and wing" style house was originally the home of E. B. Carrier, one of the early Lansing merchants, who operated a Dry Goods store at 117 North Washington Avenue late in the nineteenth century.



2012: Near the intersection of Willow and Capitol, this house is unmistakable for its unique artistic façade.



# #77 Wilde Conservatory of Music

326 West Grand River

1976: Known to generations of Lansing musicians as a music conservatory, this large green painted brick building was originally a private house. Despite later changes, some of the old bracketed cornices and brick corner pilasters still remain.



2012: This Building sits at the corner of West Grand River and Walnut and is very well preserved.

**#78****Pulver Brothers Filling Station**

127 West Grand River

1976: This is one of the earliest surviving examples of the "eclectic" period in gasoline stations, built of brick in a modified bungalow style with wide overhanging cornices.



2012: This old gas station has been uniquely restored and converted into a café to become a North Lansing landmark at the corner of Capitol and West Grand River Avenues.

**#79****Newbro House**

101 East Willow Street (North end of Washington Avenue)

1976: Now the home of the North Side Action Center, this large house with a columned entrance and projecting turret was at one time the home of Dr. S. D. Newbro, the phonographist. He was one of the first students of shorthand and in those days shorthand was based on the principle of reproducing sounds phonetically, thus called phonography. Believing in his own principals, the Doctor changed the spelling of his name from its original Newbrough to a shorter Newbro. He also invented "Newbro's Herpicide," a liquid hair restorer which was advertised nationally for decades. Newbro's son, Dupont M. Newbro, eventually patented the restorer.

In 1920 the Saint Lawrence Catholic Hospital was established in this residence through the efforts of the Rev. Fr. O'Rafferty. Later, in 1924, his dream of a large, modern hospital was realized when they moved into the new Saint Lawrence Hospital on West Saginaw Street. This general area on Willow Street is also the site of the old Anderson and Bush Road Cart Company.



2012: This building may have had some alterations, but is in great condition on the end of Willow Street. It is now home to Capitol Area Community Services, Inc. which runs community health and education programs including a preschool.



**#80****Site of Indian Gardens**

behind 101 East Willow Street

1976: Located behind the North Lansing Action Center (Newbro House) running back from the foot of North Washington Avenue to the Grand River bend are the former Pottawatomí Indian gardens. Early settlers to North Lansing/Lower Town found numerous Indians in this area and continued to live side by side for some time. The most famous Indian from this time was Chief Okemos who often camped along the river in the general area as well as frequently visiting at the home of North Lansing pioneer James Turner Sr. during the 1850's.



2012: Unfortunately we could not find any information about an 'Indian Gardens' site ever being located here. The location behind 101 East Willow Street is overgrown woodland along the river bank. There is no evidence of any Native American site or historic site in any maps that we found.

**#81**

## North Presbyterian Church

102 West Grand River Avenue

1976: Another of the old Lansing congregations being formed in 1863, this large Romanesque style brick church with its corner bell tower and stained glass windows has been a landmark since the time of its dedication in 1916.



2012: This brick church on West Grand River Avenue, one block west of the Grand River bridge, is very well preserved and still active as the Epicenter of Worship Church.

**#82****George Washington Peck House (Colonial Apartments)****1025 North Washington Avenue**

1976: This white-columned mansion was the home of George Washington Peck, Lansing's first postmaster after the founding of the post office in 1847. Peck was one of the earliest North Lansing residents, coming from Detroit where he was the Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, in 1847 when the capitol was moved to Lansing (Middle Town/Biddle City). Peck became even more famous a few years later when he was named Secretary of State by Governor E. Ransom.

Peck, who looked very much like his contemporary Abraham Lincoln, was instrumental in the formation of the Republican political party. Jackson, Michigan, can claim the honor of having the "under the oaks" site where the Republican Party was officially formed, but many of the initial meetings were held in the Lansing home of George Washington Peck according to legend.

2012: See this well preserved white house on North Washington Avenue between Maple and Kilborn Streets.





**#83****Rounsville House**

1017 North Washington Avenue

1976: Listed in the 1906 Lansing Directory as the home of Dr. Frank M. Thoms, this house with its gables, porch and steeply pitched roof, is most famous as the former home of Fred N. Rounsville, the founder of the Rounsville Dray Lines, an early twentieth century business, and the Lansing Artificial Stone Company.



2012: This house appears to be occupied in great condition next to the George Washington Peck house on North Washington Avenue.



**#84****Lavey Funeral Home**

1003 North Washington Avenue

1976: Built in the 1880's as a private residence this large brick home with its stained glass windows, ornate interior woodwork and exterior stone and wood trim is one of the best preserved and situated examples of Lansing's early architecture. Still located on much of the original land this house is an excellent example of adaptive use, the key to successful preservation-making the best possible use of an old building without drastic alterations or changes.



2012: Now labeled as the Earl G. Kaplan House, this red brick building is notable for its unique window awnings on the corner of North Washington and Kilborn.

**#85****Darling-Bower House**

1035 North Capitol Avenue

1976: Built during the early 1880's, this elegant town house, for over a half century was the home of the Glenn Darling family and has, in recent years, been beautifully restored by its present owners. With the exception of the removal of the large front veranda, the house has been restored to a late nineteenth century appearance on the exterior and to an earlier period on the interior.



2012: This ivy-covered brick house near the corner of Capitol and Maple is still in good condition.



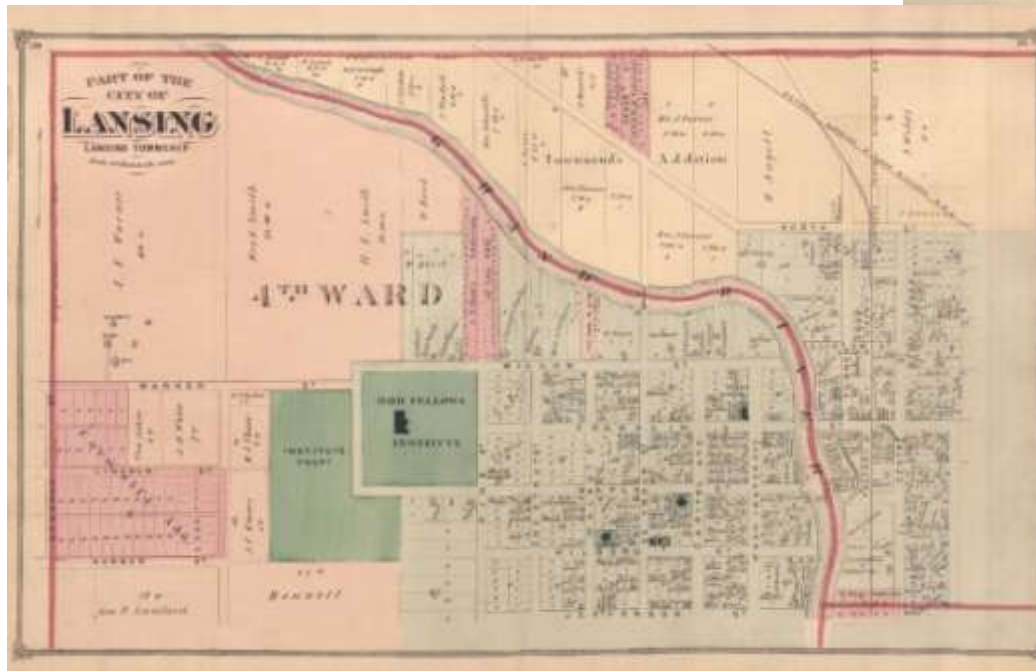
# #86

## Site of Lansing's First House and Early Dam Site, Race Street at East Maple

1976: John W. Burchard bought some Lower Town land from James Seymour upon which, in the fall of 1843, the first log house in North Lansing was erected (this is not to be confused with the Jacob Cooley Cabin of 1837, the land upon which it was situated not becoming a part of Lansing until much later). Burchard moved his family to the house and built the dam across the Grand River. At this point he was preparing to build a mill at the dam when the spring rains of 1844 broke the dam and Burchard, while out inspecting the break, was drawn under the waterfall and drowned on April 7, 1844. After his death, the Burchard family moved to Mason and the land and adjacent properties reverted to James Seymour. The site of the first house is marked by a rock and plaque at Center and East Grand River Street.



2012: Now the location of the  
Grand River Dam and Brenke  
Fish Ladder on the Lansing River  
Trail.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



1976: Here and there along Race Street and the river are some of the surviving mill buildings dating from Lansing's early days. The mills were the first industry founded in North Lansing and received their power from the waters of the Grand River.



2012: This site was the home of several mills in the 1860s including the Woolen and Grist Mills, the Parmalee Plaster Mill which produced fertilizer, as well as a foundry mill. What is now Race Street used to be a waterway inlet from the Grand River, called the Mill Race, which was used for dockage for the mills.

**#88****Roscoe Carl Feed Store (Former)**

1100 Block-Center Street

1976: Located in an area of early Lansing businesses, this two story building with front facade pilasters and ornate brick work at the roof cornice was, for many years, used as the R. Carl Feed Store.



2012: Friedland Industries Recycling/ offices in the 1100 block building of Center Street, well preserved in good condition.

**#89****Friedland Metal Company**

314 East Maple Street

1976: Another nineteenth century building still in use is the Friedland Metal Company building. The front facade has been modernized but the original wood cornice remains.



2012: Although it appears to be entirely modern, this is the building at the site of 314 Maple Street, still under the operation of Friedland Metal/Recycling Industries.



# #90

## Commercial Buildings

101-123 East Grand River Avenue

1976: This remaining group of commercial buildings and apartments extends from the north east corner of South Washington (Estes Furniture Company) and East Grand River and runs along the north side of East Grand River Avenue to the bridge over the Grand River. All except Estes Furniture Company are relatively unchanged in terms of their upper story facades. Most notable are the metal pulpit, bay window and elaborate brick work on #123 East Grand River Avenue.



2012: These colorful commercial buildings on the 100 block of East Grand River Avenue are almost entirely operated by local businesses of Old Town, and are a great place to shop!

# #91

## Rouse-Bopp Block, Commercial Buildings

(Includes 1132 North Washington Avenue, 1136 North Washington, and 100 Block of East Grand River Avenue)

1976: This grouping of four commercial buildings begins on North Washington Avenue and moves around the corner along the south side of the street (East Grand River). Currently used as the Northside Pharmacy and the Electric Shaver Clinic, the Rouse Building was built in 1897. While the lower floor has been altered, the upper areas of the Rouse still have their ornate brick work (pilasters, moldings, ornate patterns...etc.) and wood cornice at the upper roof line. The adjoining building on North Washington Avenue also has elaborate trim and the adjacent building on East Gland River Avenue has one of the most elaborate Eastlake-Romanesque upper facades ever built in Lansing. There are stone lintels, round-headed windows, ornate brickwork and wood cornices. The adjoining Bopp building is also in the Romanesque style but was constructed in masonry and stone.



2012: These brick office and small retail buildings on Grand River Avenue are in great condition and show off Old Town's authentic history.

1976: As a surviving group of four nineteenth century commercial buildings, these facades are the best in North Lansing in terms of a sense of unity and lack of serious alterations to the upper floors. Running the gamut from Italianate to Romanesque and containing all the fine building materials used at the time, (brick, stone, wood, and marble) they are a remarkable survival of past Americana.



2012: A design center and the 'SPIN' Bicycle Shop are a few of the business that operate in the beautifully preserved 200 block on East Grand River in Old town. Notice the artistic stone and brick masonry that gives this section of town its historic feel.



**#93****Smith Drugs (Bank) Building**

226 East Grand River Avenue

1976: The Columbian World's Fair of 1892-3 held in Chicago spelled the doom of both gingerbread and progressive architecture in America for several decades. The "Great White City" as it was called became Rome and Athens all over again in terms of classical-inspired architecture. The age of Beaux-Arts architecture, -a classical revival fostered in Paris-brought about a wave of Classic buildings.

The building at 226 East Grand River, originally a bank and now a drug-store, is a fine example of the pseudo-classical style of architecture prevalent during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The brick exterior contains a Roman triumphal arch motif as well as a large thermæ window, both adapted from ancient Rome and existing merely as an attractive facade decoration.

2012: On the corner of East Grand River and Factory Street, this building is notable for its grand front archway and its large Palladian windows.



**#94****Preuss-Reutter Block**

302-308 East Grand River Avenue

1976: Three out of the four brick commercial buildings in this grouping date from the building boom experienced in 1923-1924 along East Grand River. These buildings, rebuilt by the Preuss and Reutter families, are relatively severe in contrast to the much earlier building at 304 East Grand River with its ornate Italianate window cornice moldings dating from just after the Civil War. These window cornices still reflect strong shadows and patterns so popular with nineteenth century architects and builders.



2012: These brick office and small retail buildings on Grand River Avenue house a few small businesses including a ceramics studio.

**#95****Bethlehem Temple (Old First Methodist Church)**

500 East Grand River Avenue at the corner of Cedar Street

1976: In 1846 the First Methodist Church was organized in Lansing. From the time of its completion in 1918 until 1962, this large brick church on the corner of East Grand River and Cedar Streets with its classical portico and dentillated cornice served as the home of the First Methodist congregation. Since 1962 the church has been renamed -now called the Bethlehem Temple- and used as a Pentecostal Church.



2012: Up until recently this building hosted a nightclub called the Temple Club Lansing, and there are still occasional events held in this well preserved historic building.



**#96**

## **Cedar Street School**

1106 North Cedar Street

1976: Located in a large brick building just off East Grand River Avenue this school is one of the oldest in Lansing and has had continuous use for many decades. The first school was built in 1857-8 and the present built in 1918.



2012: Adjacent to the Temple, Cedar Street Elementary has been recently restored and is in great shape. The old school building currently hosts a fitness club, an art gallery, and some medical and business offices.

# #97 Former Northtown Theater

East Grand River-near Cedar Street

1976: Although closed for a number of years, the old Northtown Theater still remains here and could be reopened at any time.



2012: A Speedway Gas Station now sits at the corner of East Grand River and Cedar Street, with plans to expand.

Photos Courtesy of the  
Capital Area District Library  
Local History Collection

**#98****Commercial Buildings**

400-500 East Grand River-between Cedar and Larch Streets

1976: Still maintaining much of their "frontier town" appearance, this grouping of commercial buildings along the north side of East Grand River remains, for the most part, a coherent architectural unit, with only minor exceptions.



2012: The 400 Block of East Grand River is well preserved and home to a large pet store called Preuss Pets.



**#99****The Grand Hotel**

403 East Grand River Avenue

1976: Long a landmark in North Lansing, the Grand Hotel represents one of the oldest hotels in the city in continuous use. It is the lone survivor of numerous nineteenth century North Lansing hotels.



2012: There is a barber shop on the bottom floor and other retail and office possibilities in the old Grand Hotel building on the corner of East Grand River and Center Streets.

## Commercial Buildings

308-313 East Grand River—from Center Street to the old Railroad tracks



1976: Despite the modernization of the D & C Store, the other buildings are relatively unchanged from the period during which they were built early in the 20th century.

2012: This block is commonly filled with shoppers enjoying the Perspective2 urban studios, the Unicorn Tavern, and the Aggie Mae Bakery, among others.

# #101

## Affeldt-Preuss Block-Commercial Buildings including Lake Shore Railroad Tracks and Old Waiting Room, and North Lansing Comfort Station

303-313 East Grand River Avenue



1976: Another notable group of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings extending from Turner Street east to the old railroad tracks, on the north side of the street. The two most interesting buildings are the elaborate Romanesque facaded building in the center (above George's Barbershop and the El Sarape Cafe) and the former North Lansing Comfort Station and Waiting Room. A flattened masonry archway with keystone marks the entrance to this brick building fronting on East Grand River Avenue and extending back along the railroad tracks.

Several buildings in this same block were built by the Affeldt family in 1890 and 1924 and by the Preuss family in 1926 (#303-305, 311).



2012: The old tracks form the boundary of this block which hosts a Mexican deli, an art gallery, and an interior design studio.



**#102****House**

1214 Center Street

1976: Many of the houses built in this area of old North Lansing are among of the oldest in Lansing with some dating back to 1850. This once handsome Greek Revival house on Center Street was originally one of the loveliest in early Lansing, with its columned porticoes and elaborate Greek Revival front entranceway complete with side and transom lights (windows) framed in classic pilasters and moldings.



2012: This is a large wooden house with a worn appearance, but a good stone foundation and nice porch on Center Street north of Old Town.

**#103****House**

1300 Center Street

1976: One of the most charming survivals of the Italian villa style of architecture in Lansing, this house-although the porches and top cupola are gone, still has the corner pilasters, window trim and projecting cornice.



2012: This unique brick house on the corner of Center and Liberty Streets appeared to be vacant, or the site of some restoration work.

## Commercial Buildings

1208-1250 Turner Street (East side of Turner Street) including the old Grange Hall (#1250)



1976: With a few gaps here and there due to demolition or frequent fires, (the most recent victim being the Volunteers of America building), this group of buildings presents much the same appearance now as it did late in the nineteenth century. A variety of building materials and styles can be seen side by side with the most notable existing facades being the stone and brick Romanesque arches above the ABC Second Hand Store (1208) and the heavily rusticated masonry building (1224-Tom O'Brien and Associates), reminiscent of a frontier jail.

2012: In Old Town be sure to leave yourself plenty of time to check out the historic architecture and local businesses of Turner Street.



**#105**

## **105. Commercial Buildings**

1200 Block of Turner-West Side of Turner Street, North from East Grand River Avenue



1976: This is the last in a series of buildings preserving much of their nineteenth century appearance. There is almost total uniformity of ornate upper stories in a series of seven buildings from # 1209-1221. The lower story of the building used by Screen Art, Inc. has what may be one of the earliest and perhaps the last surviving examples of cast iron architecture in Lansing. Cast iron as a building material was developed during the mid-nineteenth century and was the ancestor of all pre-fabricated buildings. Its strength and ease of construction made the cast iron structures very popular but most have given way to later buildings or burned.



2012: The unique shops and restaurants of Turner Street make Old Town one of Lansing's premier tourist destinations.

**Old Auto Body Plant (Site)**  
307 Turner Street

1976: Due to a recent fire, nothing now remains of this large brick building located on Turner Street and running down to the Grand River which served as one of the early Lansing auto body plants and in more recent times the place of several experiments conducted by Kish Plastics on the idea of an electric car.



2012: Modern  
Townhouses now  
occupy the site of the  
Old Auto Body Plant.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



# #107

## Turner-Dodge Mansion

106 East North Street

1976: This large brick mansion with its white columned front portico and porches has played a vital role in over a century of Lansing history. It was originally built in around 1855 as a square Greek Revival house by Lansing pioneer, James Turner, Sr. Turner was responsible for bringing the Pere Marquette railroad to Lansing in its early days, owned vast land holding in Lansing, and served as one of the state's early senators and state treasurers. He was also mayor of Lansing. James Turner's youngest daughter, Abby Turner, married Frank Dodge and the second great period in the house's history began. The Dodge's remodeled the house around the turn of the century with the aid of Darius B. Moon who enlarged the original house and added the classical Ionic porticoes. Frank Dodge was also connected with the railroads, being among the founders of the Lansing-St. Johns railroad. During the early years of the twentieth century the Dodge mansion was one of the glittering social centers of the city. The groups of people visiting and being entertained here were among the most influential in the country at the time, a far cry from the time fifty years earlier when the Indian Chief Okemos used to camp in the back yard along the river and come up to the house to visit with James Turner.

After a period of vacancy, the historic Turner-Dodge mansion was utilized as the home of the Great Lakes Bible College. The house became a class building as well as dormitory until other secondary houses were purchased in adjoining land or built in the house itself. Soon, the house will stand empty again, as the Bible College moves to a new home in the country. It is hoped the Turner-Dodge mansion will again become a vital part of Lansing's future.



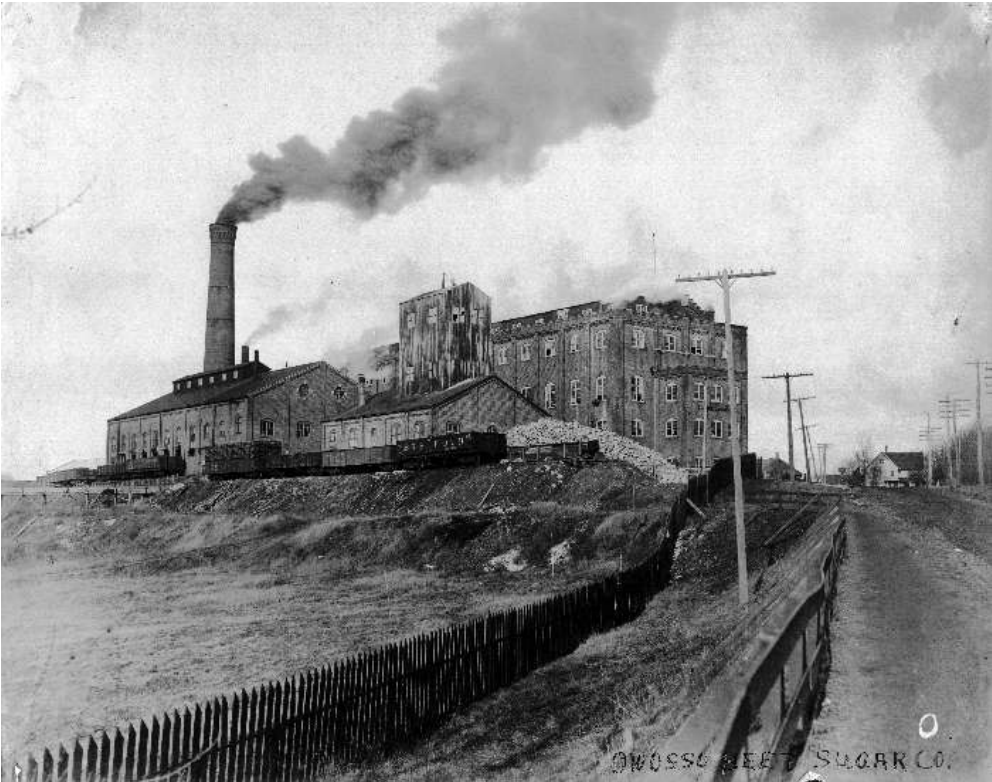
2012: A well known Lansing landmark, the Turner Dodge Mansion is on the National Register of Historic Places and is currently owned by the City of Lansing and operated by the Friends of Turner-Dodge as a museum and heritage center. The mansion also hosts community events and educational programs and is open to the public.



Sugar Beet Factory

North Grand River Avenue

1976: From approximately 1900 through the 1940s, the Sugar Beet Factory was one of the most famous industries and businesses in Lansing. Known throughout the country, the buildings now have been extensively altered and served a new purpose housing the Geo Worthington Company.



Photos Courtesy of the Capital Area District  
Library Local History Collection



2012: This is now the 1721 Building  
on the intersection of North Street  
and North Grand River Avenue.



**#109-  
110**

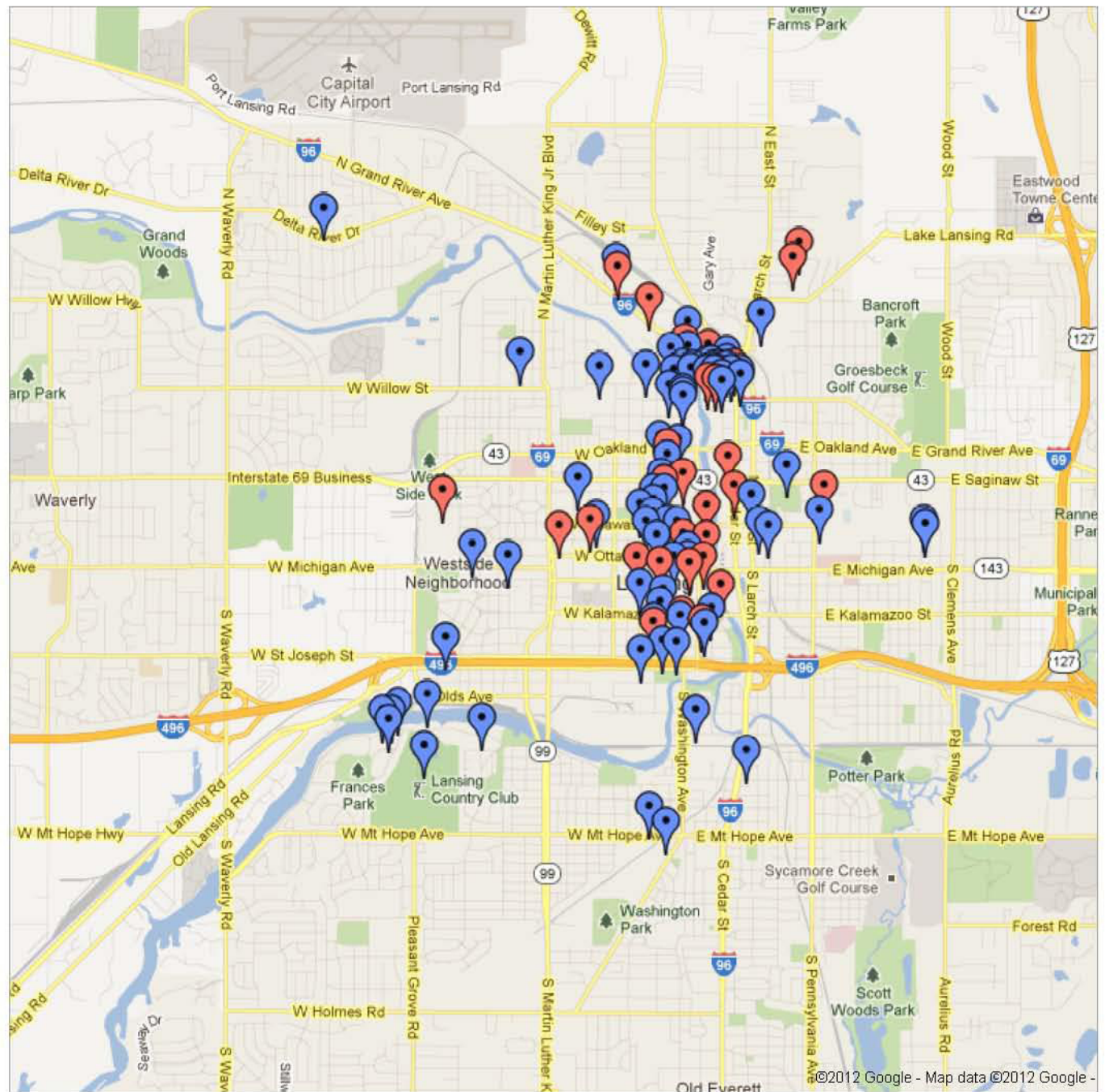
## **Round House & Coal Tipple, New York Central Railroad Lines McKinley and Gier Street**

1976: These two wooden structures, the old round house and coal tipple, are all that remains of the once powerful railroad empire centered in Lansing.




First came the river, then the railroads and finally the automobile,-each played an important part in Lansing's early history and each have left their mark on the landscape of Lansing.



2012: There are still signs of the old railroad tracks that used to run through the neighborhood. The property is now the industrial site of Bannasch Welding Inc. Unfortunately there was little information on a round house or coal tipple associated with the railroad company.



**Historic Lansing 1976 Sites**


-  1. Michigan State Capitol
-  2. Historic Site of First Oldsmobile/ REO Factory
-  3. Historic Site of Sophia Turner House/Former Michigan Historical Museum













Scan with  
Smart-  
phone or  
visit
































-  4. Former Catholic Sisters of Charity/Justice William T. Carpenter House  
311 North Seymour
-  5. F. Jenison House  
403 North Seymour
-  6. Colonel Schneider House  
726 North Seymour
-  7. W.B. Thoman House  
217 North Sycamore
-  8. Harry Moore House  
222 West Genessee
-  9. Historic Site of the Judge Q.A. Smith House
-  10. Newbrough House  
615 North Capitol
-  11. Historic Site of the Clarence E. Bement House
-  12. M.J. Buck House  
301 North Walnut
-  13. The Flats  
320-328 West Ottawa
-  14. Historic Site of the Ed Verlinden House  
720 West Ottawa
-  15. Historic Site of the William Johnson House
-  16. Architect Darius B. Moon House  
216 Huron Street, Moved from original location at 116 S. Logan (M.L.K.Jr. Blvd)
-  17. Appleyard House  
402 S Walnut
-  18. William Kerns House  
606 Townsend
-  19. Historic Site of the A.B.C. Hardy House
-  20. Edgar L. Cooley House  
207 West Malcolm X
-  21. Dr. Haze House  
213 West Malcolm X
-  22. Governor's House  
2003 West Malcolm X
-  23. Historic Site of the Benjamin F. Davis House
-  24. IOOF Grand Secretary Office  
105 West Hillsdale
-  25. Porter Apartments  
501 Townsend
-  26. John A. Kerr House  
213 East St. Joseph
-  27. Historic Site of the Governor Osborn & Governor Williams House
-  28. Historic Site of the Squire Haven's "1861" House
-  29. Shiawassee 532 House  
532 East Shiawassee
-  30. Historic Site of the James I. Mead House

-  31. William and Mary Davis Farm House  
523 Torrence
-  32. Center of the Sagamore Hill Subdivision  
Blair and Pettis
-  33. Country Club of Lansing  
2200 Moores River Drive
-  34. J.H. Moores Summer House  
2126 Moores River Drive
-  35. Talbert Abrams House  
1310 Cambridge
-  36. Michigan Governor's Residence  
2520 Oxford
-  37. Ray Potter House  
1348 Cambridge
-  38. Harry Harper House  
1408 Cambridge
-  39. Byrnes Farmplace  
3123 Delta River Drive
-  40. Hugo B. Lundberg House  
1701 Jerome
-  41. Rumsey M. Haynes House  
1704 Jerome
-  42. Union Railroad Station  
637 East Michigan
-  43. Grand Trunk Railroad Station  
1203 South Washington Avenue
-  44. Rouser Drug Building  
123 South Washington Square
-  45. Strand/Michigan Theater  
215 South Washington Square
-  46. Old Lansing Public Library  
210 West Shiawassee
-  47. Historic Site of Lansing Civic Center
-  48. Lansing Woman's Club  
118 West Ottawa
-  49. Cherry Street School  
520 Cherry
-  50. Historic Site of the Interlake Business College  
Building
-  51. Masonic Temple  
217 South Capitol
-  52. Historic Site of the Western Union Telegraph  
Company  
102 West Michigan
-  53. Historic Site of the Lansing (Wheelbarrow) Company
-  54. Historic Site of the E. Bement & Sons Industrial  
Complex
-  55. Historic Site of the Old Michigan Avenue Bridge/  
Replaced
-  56. Historic Site of Old Central High School

-  57. Genesee Street School  
835 West Genesee
-  58. J.W. Sexton High School  
102 McPherson
-  59. Eastern High School  
220 North Pennsylvania
-  60. Historic Site of the Boy's Vocational School
-  61. Oak Park  
601 Leshner
-  62. Durant Park  
719 North Washington Avenue
-  63. Reutter Park  
400 South Capitol
-  64. Saint Mary's Cathedral  
219 Seymour
-  65. Central United Methodist Church  
200 West Ottawa
-  66. Olds Motor Works Factory  
920 Townsend
-  67. REO Motor Car Company Factory  
2100 South Washington
-  68. Historic Site of the Durant Factory
-  69. Abrams Aerial Survey and Instrument Facilities  
124 North Larch
-  70. Atlas Drop Forge  
209 West Mt. Hope
-  71. Motor Wheel Corporation  
1600 North Larch
-  72. Historic Site of the Brisbin Farmhouse
-  73. Leo W. Rosier/Orlando F. Barnes House  
2026 North Grand River
-  74. J.E. Warner House  
1230 West Willow
-  75. Michigan School for the Blind  
1141 North Pine
-  76. Edwin B. Carrier House  
200 West Willow
-  77. Wilde Conservatory of Music  
326 West Grand River
-  78. Pulver Brothers Filling Station  
127 West Grand River
-  79. Newbro House  
101 East Willow
-  80. Historic Site of Indian Gardens
-  81. North Presbyterian Church  
102 West Grand River
-  82. George Washington Peck House  
1025 North Washington Avenue
-  83. Rounsiville House  
1017 North Washington Avenue



-  84. Lavey Funeral Home  
1003 North Washington Avenue
-  85. Darling-Bower House  
1035 North Capitol
-  86. Historic Site of Lansing's First House and Early Dam Site
-  87. Historic Site of Old Mill Remains
-  88. Former Roscoe Carl Feed Store  
1100 Center
-  89. Friedland Metal Company  
314 East Maple
-  90. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
101 East Grand River
-  91. Rouse-Bopp Block Commercial Buildings  
100 East Grand River
-  92. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
200 East Grand River
-  93. Smith Drugs (Bank) Building  
226 East Grand River
-  94. Preuss-Reutter Block  
302 East Grand River
-  95. Bethlehem Temple  
500 East Grand River
-  96. Cedar Street School  
1106 North Cedar
-  97. Historic Site of the Northtown Theater
-  98. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
400 East Grand River
-  99. The Grand Hotel  
403 East Grand River
-  100. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
308 East Grand River
-  101. Affeldt-Preuss Block Commercial Buildings  
303 East Grand River
-  102. Historic House  
1214 Center
-  103. Historic House  
1300 Center
-  104. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
1208 Turner
-  105. Commercial Buildings of Old Town  
1201 Turner
-  106. Historic Site of Old Auto Body Plant
-  107. Turner-Dodge Mansion  
106 East North
-  108. Historic Site of the Sugar Beet Factory
-  109. Historic Site of Round House Railroad
-  110. Historic Site of Coal Tipple

## Original Recommendations 1976:

After detailed research and consideration, it is the unanimous opinion of the Lansing Historic District Study Committee that the following individual or groups of structures become Historic Districts:

1. The Old North Lansing area (North Lansing Historic. District) focusing on the East Grand River-Turner Street area (Historic District Map #1)
2. Block 249 of the original plat of Lansing-the State Capitol Building (Michigan State Historic Site # 1)
- 3.The "Governor's Residence" -2003 West Main Street, Albin Wendrow House, originally built for Governor Barry -c. 1847-9 (Site #22)
4. Colonel Fred Schnieder residence -726 Seymour Street, built c. 1854- restored and presently occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sheldon. (Site #6)
5. State Historical Museum -505 North Washington Avenue, former Mrs. Sophie Turner house (Site #3)
6. Former Cherry Street School -520 Cherry Street -now the offices of Manson-Jackson & Kane, Inc. -architects (Site #49).

\*See accompanying Historic District Maps and legal descriptions for exact boundaries.

It is also recommended that the following areas be given careful consideration and further study in the near future:

1. Grand River Bend (area along the Grand River banks south of Kalamazoo Street -West to South Washington -Avenue -see map).
2. Westmoreland Subdivision -area of North and South Genesee Streets.
3. The two blocks north of the Capitol Building -on West. Ottawa Street
4. The Moores River Drive -Cambridge Road area.
5. The area in the 500 & 600 block of North Capitol Avenue.
6. The "1861 House".
7. The Rouser Drug Building, the Michigan Theatre and Arcade as they relate to the Washington Square concept.
8. The former Michigan Central and Grand Trunk Depots.
9. The former New York Central Round House and Coal Tipple.

The following are recommendations related to the development of an initial historic preservation program for Lansing. The recommendations are categorized into five sections: (1) City Legislation, (2) Organization, (3) Planning, (4) Information and Education, and (5) Finance.

1. City Legislation

It is recommended that the City Council, after appropriate public hearing, adopt the proposed historic districts and ordinance as specified in this report.

It is recommended that the proposed Zoning ordinance be adopted to aid in complimenting compatible land use development with historical district regulations.

It is recommended that the council and historical commission support H. B. 5314, enacting state enabling legislation protecting registered sites where state financing and contracts are utilized.

It is recommended that the Dodge Mansion and contiguous property be placed on the National Register for Historic Sites.

## 2. Organization

It is recommended that the City Council appoint a Historic Preservation Commission in keeping with P. A. 169, and with representation from Model Cities.

It is recommended that an historian/planner position be established within the Department of Planning, with specific duties related to historic district planning and regulation.

## 3. Planning

It is recommended that a historic trail be developed connecting the Central Business District, the Grand River Bend area and the Old North Lansing District. This trail should be jointly defined by the Historic Commission and the Grand River Waterfront Study Committee.

It is recommended that the Model Cities Design Center develop alternatives for a historic preservation signing program and that the Historic Preservation Commission adopt one of the alternatives and provide for an implementation program.

It is recommended that the City Planning Commission adopt as a high priority work item a study of trends in the proposed North Lansing District and their projected effect upon historical development.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission adopt a procedure for a joint Historic Preservation District/ Planning Commission review of all zoning petitions within the historic district boundaries.

It is recommended the Community College carefully consider the plans presented in this report and guide the future physical development of the institution along the lines indicated in this report.

It is recommended that the Community College attempt, wherever practical, to save the historic buildings it owns or will acquire in the future.

It is recommended that several sites -i.e. the Lansing Company, the Motor Body Works, and the Gauss Bakery -be considered for a future automobile museum.

## 4. Information and Education

It is recommended that the Chamber of Commerce be requested to participate in a city-wide campaign explaining the district and historic preservation.



It is recommended that the City Council initiate an historic old Lansing Day on possibly the incorporation date.

It is recommended that the Community College establish a Lansing History curriculum, at no charge, available to area residents.

It is recommended that a curriculum be established through the Lansing Community College for the study of ethnic groups in the Lansing area.

It is recommended that the Model Cities staff prepare an information brochure, both in Spanish and English, explaining the historic district and implications for Model Cities residents.

It is recommended that as many copies of this report be distributed as possible.

## 5. Financing

It is recommended that Model Cities Policy Board and City Council approve the expenditures of \$20,000 or sufficient funds to develop the North Lansing District Historic Preservation Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

It is recommended that the administration of the funds for the North Lansing District Historic Preservation Plan be jointly supervised by Model Cities and City Planning Department personnel.

It is recommended that a set of financing guidelines be developed in cooperation with city banking interest, Housing and Urban Development and the Small Business Administration to facilitate financial assistance and loans to persons in the historic district.

It is recommended that the City Parks and Recreation Department purchase the Indian Gardens area at the north end of Washington as an open space plot.

It is recommended that the Model Cities Policy Board and City Council appropriate monies in the next fiscal year for purchase of the Dodge Mansion and accompanying property.

It is recommended that the Historic Commission work closely with small investors, operative remodelers, philanthropic investors and business and industrial investors.

It is recommended that attempts be made to stimulate' private investment in the North Lansing area by alerting individuals and groups to the opportunity for investment in the area.

It is recommended that the Historic Commission take the lead for the North Lansing District in utilizing the Model Cities Non-profit Economic Development Corporation to be used for: (a) investing in critical single parcels of real estate and (b) investing in selected groups of properties in North Lansing.

It is recommended that the Historic Commission take the lead in organizing groups of families to purchase homes throughout the city that are identified in this report. In areas designated by Model Cities, the Commission will cooperate with the Model Cities Non-Profit Housing Corporation and other interests.

## **2012 Conclusion:**

Our research into the sites identified by the study in the early 1970s found that 81 of the 110 are still in existence and we were very pleased to find that most have been very well preserved and even enhanced by innovative techniques to restore their beauty and cultural significance. We expected some loss of historic sites in the city due to normal structural aging and several economic shifts and recession cycles over the past 35 years. There were a few historic sites that we found no record of, and as of now, we can only conclude that they have been lost to history. Of the 29 sites that have been changed or removed, there are about 10 that have since been turned into parking lots, or sit as vacant brownfields, which we hope will spark a renewed interest in historic preservation in our city. The citizens of Lansing eagerly adopted many of the recommendations of the original study, including organizing a Historic District Commission and providing for a Historic Preservation program of the City Planning Department, as well as identifying and adding several properties to Local Historic Districts and the National Registry of Historic Places. There is however, still much work to be done to save Lansing's remaining historic sites. Local historic districts will need to be expanded with broad community and institutional support, and more intensive procedures for demolishing older homes and culturally significant structures must be put in place. We salute those who have seen the beauty of Historic Lansing and instead of taking the easy avenue of tearing down and building up, have worked tirelessly to preserve and renew Lansing's great historic buildings and sites for future generations.

29 of 110 sites have been changed or removed since 1976:

- 9 are now used for parking, (surface or ramp structures)
- 5 are now public parks or greenspace
- 5 are modern apartments or townhouses
- 3 are empty lots
- 3 are currently industrial or commercial uses
- 2 are government offices
- 1 is a gas station
- 1 is a replacement (Michigan Avenue Bridge)

The City of Lansing Planning Office would like to thank Dave Votta at the Capital Area District Library's Local Historic Collections for his assistance and research work for the 2012 Update.

Compiled by Priyamva Kayal and Evan Gross, July 2012.